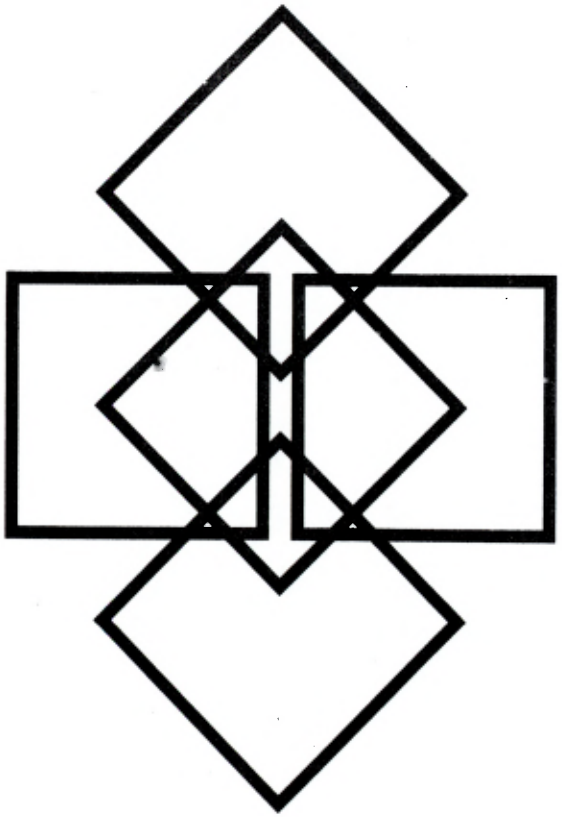
ESTUDOS ANGLO-AMERICANOS



ISSN 0102-4906

Nº 19-24 1995/2000

Diretoria da ABRAPUI (1998-1999)

Presidente: Carlos Daghlian
Vice-Presidente: Heloísa M. F. Boxwell
Secretária: Cristina M. T. Stevens
Tesoureiro: João Carlos Gonçalves

Estudos Anglo-Americanos

Diretor
Carlos Daghlian

Comissão Editorial
Alfredo L. C. de Carvalho, Carlos Daghlian, Francisco Gomes de Matos, Hilário I. Bohn, M. Antonieta Celani, Peter J. Harris

Conselho Consultivo
Angela B. Kleiman, Anna M. G. Carmagnani, Carly Silva, Cristina M. T. Stevens, Dilvo I. Ristoff, Francis H. Aubert, Heloísa M. F. Boxwell, José Roberto O' Shea, José Luiz Meurer, Julian F. Nazario, Kanavillil Rajagopalan, Laura P. Z. Izarra, Lúcia Pacheco de Oliveira, Luiz Angélico da Costa, Luiz Paulo da Moita Lopes, M. Jandyra Cunha, M. Helena V. Abrahão, Mary A Kato, Michael H. Smith, Munira H. Mutran, Nelson Mitrano Neto, Nora Ther Thielen, Peonia Viana Guedes, Sandra R. G. de Almeida, Sara Viola Rodrigues, Sigrid Renaux, Sonia Zyngier, Stella M O. Tagnin, Tereza Marques de O. Lima, Vera L. Menezes de O. Paiva, Vílson J. Leffa, Ubiratan Paiva de Oliveira

A Comissão reserva-se o direito de fazer adaptações de caráter editorial.

Revisão deste volume: Peter James Harris
Arte e Diagramação: Amandio Martinez

Toda correspondência relativa a *Estudos Anglo-Americanos* deverá ser enviada a *(mailing address)*

ABRAPUI
Caixa Postal 164
15001-970 S. J. Rio Preto, SP
BRASIL

HOMENAGEM

Prof. Dr. Paulo Vizioli
1934 • 1999

AO LEITOR

Este volume é dedicado à memória do Prof. Dr. Paulo Vizioli, falecido em 1999, a quem muito devem os estudos anglo-americanos no Brasil.

O Prof. Vizioli exerceu vários cargos universitários de relevância. Além disso, convém ressaltar que foi sócio fundador da ABRAPUI e, por muitos anos, membro da Comissão Editorial desta revista.

Damos, a seguir, um sumário dos fatos principais de sua biografia e registramos as suas publicações dos últimos anos.

Nasceu em Piracicaba (SP), a 19 de julho de 1934. Quatro anos mais tarde, mudou-se com a família para São José do Rio Preto, cidade em que fez os estudos primários e secundários. De 1954 a 1957, freqüentou, na Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras da USP, o curso de Letras Anglo-Germânicas, e, em 1958, fez o curso de Especialização em inglês e alemão, na mesma universidade. Uma vez formado, lecionou latim, português e inglês em ginásios e colégios oficiais da capital e do interior, atividade que interrompeu para, como bolsista Fulbright, freqüentar cursos de pós-graduação e realizar pesquisas na Universidade de Yale, Estados Unidos (1959-60). De volta ao Brasil, passou a integrar o corpo docente do Curso de Língua Inglesa e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana da Universidade de São Paulo, instituição em que cumpriu todas as etapas da carreira acadêmica, chegando a *Professor Titular* em 1976. De 1964 até sua aposentadoria em 1987, foi o responsável geral pelos cursos de inglês da USP, tanto os de graduação quanto os de pós-graduação. Exerceu igualmente funções administrativas, tendo sido chefe de departamento, vice-diretor da Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, vice-presidente da Fuvest e membro, por oito anos, da Comissão Especial dos Regimes de Trabalho junto à Reitoria. Fez também, sob o patrocínio da Comissão Fulbright e do Conselho Britânico, várias viagens de estudo e pesquisa, visitando o Chile, os Estados Unidos, a Inglaterra e a Escócia. Finalmente, de 1988 a 1991, foi Professor Colaborador, nas áreas de Teoria Literária e de Tradução, junto ao Instituto de Biociências, Letras e Ciências Exatas da UNESP (Campus de São José do Rio Preto). Paulo Vizioli era casado com Sophia Reinhardt Vizioli, e tem um casal de filhos. Seus trabalhos escritos compreendem obras de crítica literária e tradução de poesia. Entre as primeiras figuram ***PATERSON e o Problema do Poema Épico Americano Moderno*** (1965), sobre William Carlos Williams, e ***James Joyce e sua Obra Literária*** (1991), além de cerca de uma centena de artigos em jornais e revistas especializadas. Como tradutor, publicou: ***Poetas de Inglaterra*** (1970), em colaboração com Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos, ***Poetas Norte-Americanos*** (1976), ***William Blake: Poesia e Prosa Selecionadas*** (1984 e, em edição revista e ampliada, 1993), que lhe valeu o Prêmio Jabuti, ***John Donne, o Poeta do Amor e da Morte*** (1985), ***William Wordsworth: Poesia Selecionada*** (1988), ***Geoffrey Chaucer: Os Contos de Cantuária*** (1988), pelo qual recebeu o Prêmio Nacional de Tradução do I.N.L., ***W.B.Yeats: Poemas*** (1992), a coletânea ***Literatura Inglesa Medieval*** (1992), ***Derek Walcott: Omeros*** (1994), ***Alexander Pope: Poemas*** (1994), ***S.T.Coleridge: Poemas e Excertos da "Biografia Literária"*** (1995) e ***A Balada do Cárcere de Reading***, de Oscar Wilde. Possui também dois trabalhos ainda inéditos, que são: ***A Inglaterra e o Gênio Céltico: Elementos Não-Ingleses na Poesia Britânica do Século XX***, que foi sua tese de livre-docência, e ***Italianos à Mesa***. Ocupou a Cadeira nº 39 da Academia Paulista de Letras.

Livros

• *Alexander Pope, Poemas.* São Paulo: Nova Alexandria, 1994.
• *Derek Walcott, Omeros:* Prefácio e Tradução. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994. *S. T. Coleridge, Poemas e Excertos da Biografia Literária.* São Paulo: Nova Alexandria, 1995.
• *Oscar Wilde, A Balada do Cárcere de Reading* (Edição Bilíngüe). Tradução e Introdução de Paulo Vizioli. São Paulo: Alexandria, 1999 (Com data de 1997).

Artigos e traduções em periódicos

• Tradução de quatro poemas de W. B. Yeats (textos extraídos do livro *W. B. Yeats: Poemas* - Prefácio e Tradução de Paulo Vizioli - S.Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994, 1a. reimpressão), na revista *Caras*, Edição No. 73, Ano 2, No. 13 (31 março 95).
• "Dose tripla de Henry James nas Livrarias" (Resenha de três romances de H. James), *Cultura* Nº 758, *O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (11 março 95), p.1.
• "Um Cenário Africano para a Obsessão" (Resenha do romance de William Boyd, *A Praia de Brazzaville*), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE*, S. Paulo (10 junho 95), p.7.
• "Um Shakespeare traduzido que soa natural" (Artigo sobre as traduções de *Medida por Medida e Coriolano*),*Cultura* Nº 774, *O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (1º julho 95), p.2.
• "Heaney, às voltas com o mito" (Artigo sobre Seamus Heaney e tradução de seu poema "Follower"), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (25 nov. 95), p.5.
• Excertos de Chaucer e três poemas de Blake (Reimpressão de traduções), *Revista Brasileira*, Fase VII: Ano I, No. 4 (julho, agosto e setembro de 1995), p.122-8.
• "Ironias bordadas de Jane Austen" (Artigo sobre o romance *Sense and Sensibility*), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (24 fevereiro 96), p.5.
• Tradução do poema de Seamus Heaney "Saint Francis and the Birds" ("São Francisco e os Pássaros") e reimpressão do artigo "Heaney às voltas com os mitos", *ABEI Newsletter* (Publicação da Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses), São Paulo (10 janeiro 96), p.3 e 4.
• "Shakespeare na versão de Charles e Mary Lamb", *Caderno 2 (Cultura), O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (2 março 96), p.6.
• "As armas teóricas de um escritor compulsivo" (Artigo sobre Anthony Burgess), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (23 março 96), p.7.
• *Apresentação* do livro de poesia de Donizete Galvão, *Do Silêncio da Pedra*, São Paulo: Arte Pau-Brasil, 1996 (p.7-9).
• "Sai em bem-cuidada tradução um clássico da crítica inglesa" (Artigo sobre Samuel Johnson e seu *Prefácio a Shakespeare*), *Caderno 2: Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (10 agosto 96), p.10.

• "Inspiração e ética, nos versos apaixonados de Dante" (Artigo sobre o volume *Lírica* de Dante), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (31 agosto 96), p.7.
• "Joyce e Walcott: dois Homeros de nosso tempo... e suas verdes ilhas", *Crop* (Revista da Área de Língua e Literatura Inglesa e Norte-Americana, FFLCH / USP), Nº 3 (dezembro 96), p.11-19.
• "O homem que quis educar Londres" (Artigo sobre George Bernard Shaw ensaísta) - *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (11 janeiro 97), p.7.
• "*O Povoado* é um Faulkner de leitura fácil" (Artigo sobre William Faulkner), *Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (29 março 97), p.D8.
• "Novas Literaturas em Inglês: Dilemas e Distorções", *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (10 maio 97), p.8.
• "Romance coroa carreira de Eudora Welty" (Artigo sobre Eudora Welty e seu romance *A Filha do Otimista*) - *Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (14 junho 97), p.D7.
• "A Vida e a Obra de James Joyce" (Reimpressão de artigo publicado no jornal *O Estado de S. Paulo* em 1982 e na revista *Ilha do Desterro* em 1984). Capítulo do volume *Joyce no Brasil*, organizado por Munira Mutran e Marcelo Tápia. São Paulo: Editora Olavobrás/Abei, 1997, p.107-117.
• "A hora e vez de Hopkins, o comportado transgressor" (Artigo sobre G.M.Hopkins) - *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (19 julho 97), p.6.
• "David Lodge põe existencialismo no 'romance universitário'" (Artigo sobre o romance *Therapy* (Terapia) de David Lodge), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (29 novembro 97), p.7.
• "O mundo vassalo de um desejo incontrolado" (Artigo sobre o romance *The Comfort of Strangers* (Ao Deus-Dará) de Ian McEwan), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (20 dezembro 97), p.6.
• "Barbara Heliodora revisita o 'cisne de Stratford'" (Artigo sobre o livro *Falando de Shakespeare*), *Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (27 dezembro 97), p.D4.
• "Um clássico do romance vitoriano sai no país" (Artigo sobre *Daniel Deronda*, de George Eliot), *Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (24 janeiro 98), p.D1 e D2.
• "A União Européia e o rolo compressor da globalização" (Artigo sobre o livro de Ida Magli, *Contro L'Europa: Tutto quello che non vi hanno detto di Maastricht*), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (14 fevereiro 98), p.5.
• "A presença de Camões em literaturas de língua inglesa", *Revista da Academia Paulista de Letras*, Ano XLVII, No. 111 (julho 1998), p.20-27.
• "Nobel irlandês elege afinidades políticas e bucólicas" (Artigo sobre Seamus Heaney), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (8 agosto 98), p.1.
• "Versos bucólicos de Seamus Heaney saem em português" (Reimpressão do artigo anterior), *Cultura, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (26 setembro 98), p.D8.
• "Oscar Wilde em grande momento", *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (17 outubro 98), p.5.
• "Um romance para romper com a tradição e impulsionar autores" (Resenha do livro *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, de Laurence Sterne), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (12 dezembro 98), p.4.

• "John Dos Passos, uma visão apavorante do capitalismo", *Caderno 2 O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (27 fevereiro 99), p.D4.
• "As muitas faces de um enigmático dramaturgo inglês" (Artigo sobre William Shakespeare), *Cultura-Caderno 2, O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (14 março 99), p.D4.
• "Walt Whitman, o profeta da nação americana" (Artigo e traduções), *Caderno de Sábado, JORNAL DA TARDE* (29 maio 1999), p.1D.

• • •

Tendo sido até agora o número de artigos que tratam de Literatura maior que os relativos a Língua Inglesa, gostaríamos de contar, nas próximas edições, com um maior número destes últimos, a fim de que se pudesse chegar a um equilíbrio.

Como se pode observar, foi alterada a composição do Conselho Consultivo e da Comissão Editorial, ficando a direção da revista, por sugestão de diversos colegas, atribuída a Carlos Daghlian.

A Comissão Editorial continua a ser constituída por seis participantes, sendo três especialistas em língua e três em literatura. O número de membros do Conselho Consultivo foi ampliado, para maior representatividade.

Agradecemos às colegas que deixam o Conselho Consultivo pela sua colaboração.

• • •

Em razão de diversos problemas ocorrentes, houve um acúmulo de trabalhos para o presente volume, o que desejamos não venha a repetir-se. A previsão é de que lancemos um volume menor, porém todos os anos. Para isso, torna-se necessário que os trabalhos sejam enviados até 31 de outubro de cada ano, para publicação no ano seguinte.

A Comissão Editorial

ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE
BAKHTIN'S CONCEPT OF HETEROGLOSSY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF HUMOUR IN *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*
Lourdes Bernardes Gonçalves 13
BARDOLATRY – SEAN O'CASEY AS A SHAKESPEARE WORSHIPPER
Peter James Harris 21
KERRY: O OUTRO ENCANTAMENTO DE J. M. SYNGE
Geraldo Ferreira de Lima 31
LIFE INTO TEXT: JUST A MIRROR OF A CULTURAL MOMENT?
Munira H. Mutran 45

BRITISH LITERATURE
TRAVELLER'S NOTES: HARDY COUNTRY
Olga Creidy 53
THEORIES OF FICTION IN RICHARDSON, DEFOE, AND FIELDING
Giséle Manganelli Fernandes 57
FEMALE QUEST NARRATIVES: MARGARET DRABBLE'S THE RADIANT WAY, A NATURAL CURIOSITY AND THE GATES OF IVORY
Peonia Viana Guedes 69
THE GREAT UNKNOWN: A BRITISH EXPLORER IN IMAGINED BRAZIL
Laura P. Zuntini de Izarra 77
EDMUND AND THE NATURE OF VILLAINY IN *KING LEAR*
Maria Cristina A. Nasser 91
THE PERFORMANCE IS THE THING: THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY AND *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* -1982, 1992
José Roberto O'Shea 101
COMPLICATIONS: OR WHEN SHAKESPEARE LAUGHS
Aimara da Cunha Resende 117

NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE
A POÉTICA PÓS-MODERNA e *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*
"TO THE RUSHING WATERS SAY: I AM": RILKE
Futin Buffara Antunes 133
TIMELESS PEOPLE IN AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE: THE FEMALE ANCESTOR IN MAYA ANGELOU AND TONI MORRISON.
Mail Marques de Azevedo 139
DRAFTS AND FRAGMENTS ABOUT AN INTENSE FRICTION
Monique Balbuena 145

CATCH-22: A LUTA CONTRA O ESTABLISHMENT
Eliane Borges Berutti 163
THE PAIRING OF WOMEN IN HAWTHORNE'S NOVELS
Maria Cristina Pimentel Campos 171
THE BLUE ROSE OF ST. LOUIS
Beth Cardullo 181
STEVEN SPIELBERG'S DUEL: EXPERIENCE ON THE ROAD
João Carlos Gonçalves 185
CARSON MCCULLERS E CLARICE LISPECTOR:
UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO
Vera Márcia Paráboli Silva Vidigal Milanesi 189
BEYOND LITERATURE AND CULTURE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE 1950s[1]
George Monteiro 203
THE DRAMATIC WORLDS OF ALBEE'S
THREE TALL WOMEN: A CROSSING OF BOUNDARIES
Sigrid Renaux 221
NARRATIVE, IDEOLOGY, IDENTITY, AND UTOPIA IN (POST) MODERN
AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S FICTION
Roland Walter 235

OTHER LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
MALTESE POETRY IN ENGLISH: TRENDS OF THE 60s AND 70s
Thomas Bonnici 281

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SPEECH ADJUSTMENTS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Diógenes Cândido de Lima 295

BOOK REVIEWS
DILVO I. RISTOFF'S *JOHN UPDIKE'S RABBIT AT REST*
- APPROPRIATING HISTORY. NEW YORK: PETER LANG, 1998.
João Carlos Gonçalves 303
UPDIKE'S RELIGIONS: MAKING HIS GOD THE HOST OF ALL BEINGS
José Endoença Martins 309
THE PRESENCE OF CAMÕES DE GEORGE MONTEIRO
Marisa P. Lajolo 317
OUR OWN STORIES: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICE
NORINE DRESSER. WHITE PLAINS, NY: LONGMAN, 1993
Diógenes Candido de Lima 321

NORMAS DESTA REVISTA 323

ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

BAKHTIN'S CONCEPT OF HETEROGLOSSY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF HUMOUR IN *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*

LOURDES BERNARDES GONÇALVES

All texts, according to Mikhail M. Bakhtin, are constructed out of the absorption and transformation of other texts. In his view, history and society are considered as texts, and so Julia Kristeva's conception of *intertextuality* is expanded to encompass a more general dialogue. An interplay of texts is thus established among the author, the intertexts, real and imaginary interlocutors and the communicative context. Bakhtin's *dialogism*, the constant interaction of various texts, proposes the apprehension of the text as a process. Each enunciation is full of echoes and reverberations from other propositions which, in turn, refute, confirm, complement and depend on others.(Robert STAM, *Bakhtin: Da teoria literária à cultura de massa*, 73.)

According to Bakhtin's conception of *heteroglossy*, in a text there are various languages, or rather sub-languages, in permanent dialogue. These different languages correspond to the interaction of the basic text with other texts, in their broader conception, such as what the psycho-linguists call "knowledge of the world" or "previous knowledge", and also to that originated from the conversations among the characters themselves. The Russian linguist sees a character in a novel always as an ideologist, who introduces a particular point of view of the world, aspiring to a social significance (Mikhail BAKHTIN, *Questões de literatura e de estética: A teoria do romance,* 135). Although essentially bearing in mind the novel, the dialogue of texts is noticeably present in the drama, where one can also find dialogism on the two basic levels mentioned above, that is, within the text, with different characters, and in a more general perspective, through intertextuality.

The level of interaction which will be in focus in this work will be the dialogism of the languages of contexts and "knowledge of the world", brought into contact

with the play script of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. What will be seen is that, whereas the usual practice is to have the other texts confirm, or at least give support, to what is in the basic text, Wilde's practice is to contradict this information, causing a break in the normal expectation, and with this practice achieve humour.

One of the texts in dialogue with the literary text of the play is the social and cultural background of the nineteenth-century English society in its broader manifestations, to such an extent that it may be considered the Western social reality of modern times. Many of the established values and "truths" are questioned here. As a first instance, one may consider the expected reaction to marriage. Husband and wife are assumed to be devoted and attracted to each other. In dialogue with this accepted fact, one finds Lady Bracknell referring to her recently widowed friend, Lady Harbury, in the following terms:

> *"LADY BRACKNELL: [...] I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger." (Vyvian HOLLAND (ed.),* Complete works of Oscar Wilde, *Act I, 328.)*

Her nephew Algernon confirms the situation, by saying:

> *"ALGERNON: I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief." (Act I, 328.)*

With this statement, the change in the hair colour from white to gold indicates a break of expectation, as in the first quotation, and this results in humour.

The fact that a woman is attracted to her own husband is ridiculed by Algernon, who thus refers to the disposition at a dinner table:

> *"ALGERNON: [...] She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent... and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase." (Act I, 327.)*

Canon Chasuble also emits a view quite in disagreement with the common expectation, as can be seen in his dialogue with Miss Prism:

> *"MISS PRISM: No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.*
> *CHASUBLE: And often, I've been told, not even to her." (Act II, 345.)*

Furthermore, marriage is supposed to be a respectable and edifying institution, which is contradicted by Algernon when talking to his servant:

> *"LANE: [...] I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.*
> *ALGERNON: Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?" (Act I, 321.)*

Continuing the topic of family relationships, the usual respect a child is supposed to show for his/her parents is subverted in the play. Gwendolen refers to her mother, Lady Bracknell, as if the old lady were the child:

> *"GWENDOLEN: [...] Mamma has a way of coming back into a room that I have often had to speak to her about." (Act I, 329.)*

> *"GWENDOLEN: Mamma! I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you." (Act I, 331.)*

> *"GWENDOLEN: [...] Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three." (Act I, 338.)*

Algernon belittles the importance not only of a father but indeed of all relatives in one's life, which is corroborated by his friend Jack(Ernest) Worthing, although the latter sees advantages in the relationship between mother and son:

> *"ALGERNON: [...] Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.*

> *ALGERNON: Relations never lend one any money, and won't give one credit, even for genius. They are a sort of aggravated form of the public.*

> *JACK: [...] Mothers, of course, are all right. They pay a chap's bills and don't bother him. But fathers bother a chap and never pay his bills. I don't know a single chap at the club who speaks to his father.*

> *ALGERNON: Yes! Fathers are certainly not popular just at present." (Act I, 335.)*

The roles set by society to characterise a gentleman and a lady are ironically distorted by Wilde's treatment. The predominance of reason, and the hypocrisy and moralism typical of Victorian times is confronted with the characters' views. So, Cecily Cardew, Mr. Worthing's ward, comments ambiguously to her governess, Miss Prism:

"CECILY: [...] I suppose that when a woman is dressed rationally, she is treated rationally. She certainly deserves to be." (Act II, 342.)

And Miss Prism criticises Cecily by saying:

"MISS PRISM: [...] The fact is, you have fallen lately, Cecily, into a bad habit of thinking for yourself. You should give it up. It is not quite womanly ... Men don't like it." (Act III, 356.)

With Algernon, Cecily maintains the following dialogue:

"ALGERNON: [...] I thought that every woman had a mission of some kind, nowadays.
CECILY: Every female has! No woman." (Act II, 344.)

With a few words Algernon defines a gentleman, rather through trivial actions he does *not* perform, to Mr. Gribsby, the solicitor:

"ALGERNON: [...] How perfectly silly you are. No gentleman has any money." (Act II, 350.)

"ALGERNON: [...] No gentleman ever takes exercise. You don't seem to understand what a gentleman is." (Act II, 351.)

There is also an inversion of roles to be found in the play, uttered by Gwendolen:

"GWENDOLEN: [...] And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? " (Act III, 362.)

The duties of the upper-classes are also ridiculed, as can be seen in this speech of Algernon's about his servant Lane:

"ALGERNON: Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility." (Act I, 322.)

On the issue of Victorian hypocrisy, too, some comments are made by Jack about sincerity:

"JACK: [...] it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful

position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind." (Act III,, 366.)

Lady Bracknell, in many ways a representative of Victorian values and position, reveals absolute partiality to money where match-making is concerned, and speaks quite candidly about it:

"LADY BRACKNELL: A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young girl, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time." (Act IV, 374.)

Intertextuality can also be found in the play where some speeches distort the meaning of well-known proverbs, which can be considered as a sub-language in the broader language of "knowledge of the world". The texts interrelate here contradictorily, as in the previous phenomena of heteroglossy analysed in this work. Thus, "Marriages are made in heaven" becomes:

"ALGERNON: [...] Divorces are made in heaven." (Act I, 323.)

"Do not wash your dirty linen in public" is transformed into:

"ALGERNON: [...] It is simply washing one's clean linen in public." (Act I, 327.)

And "Two is company, three's a crowd" is converted into:

"ALGERNON: [...] You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none." (Act I, 327.)

The language of Logical Reasoning establishes a dialogue within the text of the play, where a breakdown in logic exposes behaviour which people take for granted. The subject of illness is a target for this type of criticism in the play. The Victorians somehow considered it a weakness to give in to sickness, and the illogical position of taking illness for something that could, and should, be avoided is very close, in fact, to the real situation. So, there are various speeches uttered by Lady Bracknell to that effect:

LADY BRACKNELL: [...] I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life." (Act I, 329.)

Knowing that Bunbury finally died because, according to Algernon, the doctors "found out" he could not live, the old lady affirmed:

> *"LADY BRACKNELL: He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. " (Act IV, 372-3.)*

Facts which cannot be controlled are dealt with as controllable, against all logical reasoning. The fact that Jack was found in a bag at a railway station is, in Lady Bracknell's view, blamed on him:

> *LADY BRACKNELL: [...] To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune... to lose both seems like carelessness. (Act I, 333.)*

In some cases, the confrontation between the use of different kinds of language is played in a lighter aspect, where the intention of being comic is clearly perceived. The subject of diaries, that is, the fact young women keep diaries, and the function of these writings, is basically a source of humour, although one may detect a reference to a possible excess idleness of upper-class young ladies, and the frivolity of their minds in their illogical remarks:

> *"CECILY: I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, should probably forget all about them." (Act II, 340.)*

> *"CECILY: [...] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication." (Act III, 357.)*

> *"GWENDOLEN: [...] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train." (Act III, 363.)*

And so one could go on, showing how Wilde used heteroglossy, this constant dialogue of languages, always leaving expectations unfulfilled, and with this trick conjuring up a comic situation.

Although some critics suggest that the eccentricity of some of the speeches endangers the quality of the play as a whole, the contradiction of usually accepted texts represents to Wilde a break from the old hypocritical reasoning in vogue in his time, permeated as the traditional texts were with the faults of an excessively moralistic society. But all this is done very artistically, true to his position as an aesthete, which holds that no artist is supposed to prove or teach anything, but only to introduce beauty into the world. Wilde is not standing outside Victorian Society

and criticising it fiercely, but, as Isobel Murray puts it, "standing inside and satirising it gently for the benefit and amusement of its members." (Isobel MURRAY, Oscar Wilde: *Lady Windermere's Fan, The Importance of Being Earnest,* 9.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BAKHTIN, M. ***Questões de literatura e estética: teoria do romance.*** Editora UNESP, 3ed. São Paulo: 1993.

FOREMAN, J. ***Complete works of Oscar Wilde.*** Collins. London: 1967.

MURRAY, Isobel. ***Oscar Wilde: Lady Windermere's Fan, The Importance of Being Earnest.*** The British Council's Notes on Literature, n.47 . London: 1981.

PIRES, O. ***Manual de teoria e técnica literária.*** Editora Presença, 2ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: 1985.

STAM, R. ***Bakhtin: da teoria literária à cultura de massa.*** Editora Ática, São Paulo: 1992.

Universidade Estadual do Ceará
Universidade Federal do Ceará

BARDOLATRY – SEAN O'CASEY AS A SHAKESPEARE WORSHIPPER

PETER JAMES HARRIS

(This article was taken from the first chapter of the doctoral thesis, "Sean O'Casey's Letters and Autobiographies: Reflections of a Radical Ambivalence," defended at FFLCH, USP, or 17th. November, 1999.)

In his preface to *The Shakespeare Myth*, Graham Holderness traces the formal inauguration of Bardolatry (the idolatrous worship of Shakespeare) as a British national religion to David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769.[1] According to Christian Deelman, in his book on the subject, this cultural event "marks the point at which Shakespeare stopped being regarded as an increasingly popular and admirable dramatist, and became a god."[2] Before this date, however, the Bard of Avon had been transformed from a highly successful Elizabethan playwright into an object of cultural pilgrimage. Graham Holderness's book is mischievously dedicated to the memory of the Reverend Francis William Gastrell, the tetchy minister who, in 1756, bought New Place, the house that Shakespeare purchased for his retirement, and who, three years

---

[1] The word Bardolatry itself was coined by Shaw, in the preface that he wrote to his *Three Plays for Puritans* (1901) in 1900, in which he referred to Garrick as an example of those actor-managers who were responsible for "the long line of disgraceful farces, melodramas, and stage pageants . . . hacked out of [Shakespeare's] plays as peasants have hacked huts out of the Coliseum," and who were, nonetheless, "the most fanatical of his worshippers." Noting that Shakespeare's works were once again receiving "genuine" productions, he dismisses the bowdlerisers and their ilk with the remark, "So much for Bardolatry!" – George Bernard SHAW, "Better than Shakespear?" *Three Plays for Puritans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946) 32-33.

[2] Christian DEELMAN, *The Great Shakespeare Jubilee* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964) 7.

later, irritated by the constant flux of tourists knocking at his front door, demolished it. Before this, however, resenting the invasion of his privacy by cultural tourists peering over his garden wall, he had cut down the famous mulberry tree, reputedly planted by Shakespeare himself. Soon after this act of cultural vandalism, as Graham Holderness reminds us, the tree "very quickly began, like the wood of the true cross, to increase and multiply into innumerable relics and souvenirs."[3] Indeed, research by Ian McIntyre, for his forthcoming biography of David Garrick, reveals that it was precisely the inducement of the freedom of the city of Stratford-upon-Avon, to be presented in a box made of the wood from the very same mulberry tree, that first planted the seed of the idea for the Shakespeare Jubilee in Garrick's mind.[4] The deification of Shakespeare was completed by the analyses of Romantic critics like Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) and William Hazlitt in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, published in the same year. The English Romantic critics had undoubtedly taken their cue from the German writer, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, who justified his translation of Shakespeare's complete works in 1809 by awarding him canonic status along with poets like Homer and Dante, arguing that Shakespeare was indispensable reading for every family just as the Bible was.

In the twentieth century, the pairing of Shakespeare's works with the Bible as indisputably required reading for every literate person was famously echoed in the beachside library that Roy Plumley had thoughtfully given all of his castaways in his long-running BBC radio series *Desert Island Discs*. In his perception of Shakespeare as being as essential to human life as food and water, Roy Plumley gave confident voice to the same unquestioning adulation which makes it inconceivable for a Christian to doubt the existence of God: one does not need to justify a truth which is deemed, by those who believe in it, to be universal. It is this spirit of faithful adhesion to an obvious truth which characterises many of the pronouncements upon Shakespeare made by the Irish dramatist Sean O'Casey in his autobiographies and letters. Indeed, it is an appropriately Bardolatrous coincidence that O'Casey died in 1964 – the quatercentenary of his idol's birth.

For Christopher Murray, a distinguished O'Casey scholar, who was responsible, amongst other things, for the Special Issue of *Irish University Review*, dedicated to Sean O'Casey on the centenary of his birth, in Spring 1980, there is no question that it was precisely the Bible and Shakespeare that were the principal influences upon Sean O'Casey. However, he is careful to stress that, in his opinion, O'Casey's relationship with Shakespeare was not one of Bardolatry:

> *Next to the Bible, Shakespeare is probably the greatest literary influence on O'Casey's plays: the history plays, in particular, offered him a model for dramatising politics colourfully. His general view of Shakespeare, however, was far from idolatrous; he was quite impatient, when he lived in England with the gentility of the productions he saw. He believed in a Shakespeare stripped of the cultural trappings which, until the 1960's, rendered the plays elitist.*[5]

[3] Graham HOLDERNESS, ed., *The Shakespeare Myth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 3.

[4] See the extract from Ian McINTYRE's book, entitled "The God of his Idolatry," in *New Writing 8*, ed. Tibor FISCHER and Lawrence NORFOLK (London: Vintage, 1999) 83-97.

Although I hesitate to take issue with such a justly respected critic as Professor Murray, it must be pointed out there is a fundamental difference between a play and its production on stage. The fact that O'Casey disliked the presentations of Shakespeare's plays that he saw in England does not in any way suggest that this was accompanied by a disenchantment with the playwright who wrote them. By examining the language that O'Casey used in his non-dramatic writing to describe Shakespeare I hope to be able to demonstrate that his view of Shakespeare was, indeed, idolatrous or, more exactly, Bardolatrous.

References to Shakespeare are a strikingly common feature of O'Casey's non-dramatic writing: in a writing career spanning more than half a century O'Casey cites Shakespeare as the ultimate example of the Great Writer, an object lesson for all other writers, and yet, curiously, amongst the hundreds of mentions of Shakespeare's name, there is not one which offers any analysis of the nature of Shakespeare's greatness. It is as if, for O'Casey, Shakespeare is ineffable, a god-like being, the mere mention of whose name serves as testimony of his worth.

Although it may seem at first sight surprising that someone who so wholeheartedly espoused the Irish Nationalist cause that he was prepared to gaelicise his own name from John Casey to Sean O'Cathasaigh should serve as a mouthpiece for the very writer who represented 'par excellence' the extent of the English colonial influence on Irish culture, the reasons are not hard to find. In the Protestant home of his childhood Shakespeare occupied a central position, in the midst of other works drawn from the canon of English Literature. After O'Casey's father, Michael, wasted away from the back injury he had sustained from his fall from a ladder at work, it was from the volume of Shakespeare's Works that he asked the six-year-old Sean's older sister, Bella, to read – although, to her shame, she was too wrapped up in her own life to accede to his request. Much later in Sean O'Casey's life, when he had been fired with his brother Archie's enthusiasm for the theatre, he was reminded by his mother that, as good Protestants, she and his father had never allowed themselves the sinful frippery of theatre-going except, naturally enough, to watch plays by Shakespeare:

> *. . . you should remember that neither your father nor mother was ever in a theatre, except to see the wondhers of Shakespeare's plays, done be God-fearin 'men, full of honest laughter, dimmin' with tears whenever the occasion called for them . . .*[6]

[5] Christopher MURRAY, *Twentieth-century Irish Drama: Mirror up to Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) 89.

[6] Sean O'CASEY, *Autobiographies I* (London: Papermac, 1992) 304.

It is scarcely surprising that, subject to such parental influence, the repertoire of Archie and Sean O'Casey's amateur theatrical company should have been largely drawn from Shakespeare's plays. In the chapter entitled "Shakespeare Taps at the Window" of the second volume of his autobiography, O'Casey recalls the time when, as an eleven-year-old boy, he was to play the imprisoned King Henry the Sixth to his older brother's "hunchbacked Duke of Gloster" in a scene from *King Henry VI, pt. 3*. He remembers that he had learned the part from one of three volumes of the *Works of Shakespeare* that his sister had won as a prize while studying at teacher training college:

> *Big and stately books they were, packed with pictures of battles, castles, and marching armies; kings, queens, knights, and esquires in robes today and in armour tomorrow, shouting their soldiers on to the attack, or saying a last lone word before poor life gave out; of mighty men of valour joining this king and reneging that one; of a king gaining a crown and of a king losing it; of kings and knights rushing on their foes and of kings and captains flying frantic from them; of a frightened man, with a naked sword in his hand, meeting a roaring lion in a city street; of men on a bare and bony heath sheltering each other from lashing rain, stormy wind, and noble lightning turning the jet-black sky into a deadly dawn of a day of wrath; of murderers slaying men, women and children, with many other pictures of stirring and delectable things that happened before order, fair-play, and civility took root in the world.*[7]

O'Casey's language skilfully suggests the attraction of an illustrated edition of Shakespeare for an eleven-year-old boy whose attention was equally drawn to such contemporary titles as *Deadwood Dick* and *Frank Reade. Junr., and His Electric Airship*. Thus it was that, supported by his mother's testimony that his father "had always held by Shakespeare as the greatest writer of all time," Sean's costume basket was filled with wardrobe items for *Macbeth*, *King Henry the Sixth*, and *Richard the Third*, as well as with clothes for the characters in *The Shaughraun*, *The Colleen Bawn*, and *The Octoroon*, the best of Boucicault's plays.

As he grew into adolescence O'Casey's enthusiasm for the derring do of Shakespeare's plots came to be replaced by an almost religious fervour for Shakespeare's inspirational quality as a writer although, typically, he fails to specify what precise qualities in Shakespeare's writing filled him with such spiritual fire:

> *He would never be now without the light that lighteth every man coming into the world; for surely this had something to do with that light; was*

---

[7] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies I* 192-193.

> *that light which could never be quenched. The light of other days would light the days to come. Shakespeare in his way, Marlowe, Goldsmith, and Ruskin in theirs, were lights showing him where to plant his feet safely; kindly lights guiding him to a fuller light in the future.*[8]

O'Casey's discourse here is that of the evangelist who has found the true path, a certainty accompanied by the self-righteous notion that all other paths are inferior. This sense of pride drawn from his association with Shakespeare, arguably the inevitable satisfaction felt by a socially disadvantaged youth who has had to educate himself against all odds, is an element which characterises much of O'Casey's subsequent writing about Shakespeare. O'Casey refers specifically to this sense of pride in the opening chapter of the third volume of his autobiography, when he describes his feelings as a twenty-two-year-old manual worker on the Irish railways in 1902. After an inauspicious start he had quickly developed his physical strength to the point where he was the only man in his gang capable of mounting a ladder with a heavily laden hod and balancing it with equal ease on his right shoulder or on his left:

> *God, he felt proud all right. Felt as proud as he did when he first fell into step with Shakespeare. His body now was in fine alignment with his mind.*[9]

Perhaps the most striking expression of O'Casey's sense of pride in his association with Shakespeare comes at an earlier moment, in the second volume of the autobiography, when he recalls an incident that occurred while he was working as a stock boy for a wholesale chandlers. Seeking to impress the pretty Alice Boyd who worked with him he challenged his rival for her affections to an impromptu general knowledge contest in which most of the questions were designed to reveal how familiar the adolescent O'Casey was with the work of Shakespeare. Not surprisingly, since he, himself, is setting the questions, O'Casey wins the contest and satisfactorily reveals the ignorance of his fellow worker to the watching Alice, bolstering his own self-esteem in the process:

> *For the moment Johnny existed only for himself, and in himself. They were foolishness; he was wisdom. He had the whip hand over them, for he knew more than they did; he knew that, now. His mind was a light that lighteth every man that cometh into this world. He was well over their heads . . .*[10]

---

[8] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies I* 349.

[9] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies I* 409.

[10] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies I* 277.

After having allowed himself the luxury of such immodest self-congratulation, the young O'Casey attempts to enlighten one of his co-workers who had been a bystander to the contest as to the qualities that made Shakespeare so fascinating. In language reminiscent of the Romantic critics who so admired the generic nature of Shakespeare's mind, O'Casey explains to his uninterested listener that:

> *Some fools think [Shakespeare's] dull . . . but I'm tellin' you he's not dull; he's all life 'n loveliness; ay, an' even brisk with battle, murder, an' sudden death! There's th' gentleness of the calm lake, if you want it; and there's th' crash o' th' tumblin' waves of a stormy sea . . .* [11]

One is reminded of Victor Hugo's elevation of Shakespeare to near god-like status when he affirmed that "Shakespeare decants Nature." For O'Casey, logically enough, if Shakespeare was a god, then he, himself, as a privileged 'intime' of the master's message, was an acolyte of the temple.

Indeed, from this point on, O'Casey seems to have taken tremendous pleasure in his ability to speak in the tongue of "th' great Shakespeare." His biographers record how visitors to his house would be challenged to memory contests quoting passages from Shakespeare, and his widow, Eileen, remembers how, even in his last months, as a frail old man of eighty-four, he would ask her to check the accuracy of his recall:

> *Sean knew so much of Shakespeare by heart that we could pass many hours in a test of memory: he would quote long passages and ask me to check that he was word-perfect.* [12]

It must be said in passing that Leslie Rees, an Australian visitor to O'Casey's home in London in 1930, casts some doubt on the infallibility of the dramatist's memory, alleging that, although O'Casey attempted to quote long passages from *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*, he "usually dried up after a few pentameters."[13] Nonetheless, the overall impression one obtains from O'Casey's writing is that of someone who knew and loved Shakespeare's writing so well that he considered him with the affection accorded to an old friend who, as old friends do, needed to be defended from the attacks launched by those who enjoyed a less intimate acquaintance.

Such an attack came from AE (George Russell), who helped Yeats to form the Irish National Theatre, later to become the Abbey Theatre. O'Casey devotes an entire chapter of the fourth volume of his autobiography to dismantling the exalted

---

[11] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies 1* 278.

[12] Eileen O'CASEY, *Sean* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971) 294.

[13] Leslie REES, "Remembrance of Things Past: On Meeting Sean O'Casey," *The Sting and the Twinkle*, ed. E. H. MIKHAIL, and John O'RIORDAN (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974) 48.

reputation enjoyed by AE in the Dublin of the 1920's. He scornfully describes AE as "Dublin's glittering guy," a "Mr. Talkinghorn talking on things political, spiritual, artistic, philosophical, and rural, about which he knew as much as a new-born chicken." But O'Casey seems to have been most perturbed by AE's attack on Shakespeare, which he quotes at length. According to AE, "nothing is revealed in the Shakespearean drama except character," and he goes on to accuse Shakespeare of having led literature into a "blind alley." O'Casey describes AE's comments as "terrible," and goes on to imply that AE's lack of intimacy with the Bard effectively disqualified him as a Shakespeare critic:

> *But then he couldn't stand Shakespeare's* Sonnets, *didn't like his plays, and no wonder, for Alexandre Dumas, Zane Grey, and others like them, were the literary nectar his gods gave him.*[14]

The argument appears to be that only those who consider themselves to be friends of Shakespeare may be granted the authority to criticise him: somebody who admired Dumas could not possibly be expected to write intelligently about Shakespeare.

It was shortly after this, following the hostile reception awarded to *The Plough and the Stars* in February 1926, that O'Casey decided to leave Dublin's provincialism behind him, and moved to London. To his enormous surprise, in the land of Shakespeare itself, the English failed to treat their national playwright with what O'Casey considered to be an appropriate degree of respect. He, himself, wasted no time in going to see a production of a Shakespeare play performed by English actors. On April 2nd that year the Dublin newspaper *An Poblacht* (The Republic) published an extract from a letter from O'Casey in which he explained how he had spent his first St. Patrick's Day away from Ireland:

> *St. Patrick's night was spent by me – on the invitation of Sybil Thorndike – in the company of an old buttie whom I first met about twenty golden years ago named Billy Shakespeare. I enjoyed his company during a fine performance of 'Henry the VIII' . . . I didn't even wear a shamrock in the course of the day.*[15]

O'Casey was soon to be disappointed by the discovery that the intimate relationship that he felt he enjoyed with Shakespeare was not shared by the majority of the English theatre-going public. Indeed, in 1939, he was to write to Mikhail Apletin, the secretary of the Foreign Commission of Writers' Union of the U.S.S.R., in London, expressing his profound sense of disappointment that

---

[14] O'CASEY, *Autobiographies 2* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1984) 178.

[15] O'CASEY, "Mr Seán O'Casey and St. Patrick's Night," *An Poblacht* (The Republic), 2 April 1926, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. David KRAUSE (London: Cassell, 1975) 1: 187.

Shakespeare was "nor wept nor sung nor honoured in his own country." He goes on to lament the fact that "millions and millions have never seen a play of his, and he has been so neglected that very few actors are able to play a principal character in any of his plays," and he closes his letter with a reference to the irony that it had to be a foreigner who called the attention of the English to this state of affairs:

> *By the way, dear friend, I'm an Irishman, and it's rather amusing that an Irishman should have to rebuke England for the stupid neglect of one of her greatest sons.*[16]

This perception of Shakespeare as a prophet neglected in his own land is one that echoes throughout O'Casey's writing in the years he spent in London, evidently causing a 'true follower' like himself considerable discomfort.

It upset O'Casey, for example, to observe the amount of attention lavished upon a contemporary playwright like Noël Coward to the detriment of Shakespeare. Responding to the review of his collection of essays, *The Flying Wasp*, that the drama critic George Warrington had published in *Country Life* in March 1937, O'Casey closed his letter to the magazine with the suggestion that:

> *. . . if Mr Warrington murmured "our Shakespeare," instead of murmuring "our Noel," he would be doing more honour to himself and to the English Theatre.*[17]

The reference is, of course, to the Lord's Prayer, and the Bardolatrous implication, tongue-in-cheek though it obviously is, is that Shakespeare is a far more worthy object of worship than Noël Coward.

Sean O'Casey, then, saw an intimate knowledge of and profound respect for the writing of Shakespeare as being essential for theatregoers and drama critics alike. More significantly, he also believed that it was vital for any playwright to pass through a form of ritual initiation into Bardic techniques before even setting pen to paper. In an interview with George Walter Bishop, published in *The Observer* of 6th October, 1929, O'Casey expresses his belief in characteristically dogmatic, prescriptive style:

> *Recently I read in an article which offered advice to young playwrights that Mr. Noël Coward and Mr. Frederick Lonsdale should be studied. Shakespeare, the Elizabethans, the Restoration dramatists, and Shaw are the men to study.*
> *I would make it a penal offence . . . for any man to write a play without being able to declaim two or three of Shakespeare's plays by heart. Shakespeare was my education. When I was a boy in Dublin thirty years ago, the Benson Company came to the city, and I spent all my small wages and went without food in order to see all the plays that were performed. I could hardly read or write at the time.*[18]

O'Casey here testifies to a fanatical zeal in his own early response to Shakespeare which once again begs the question as to what precise aspects of his writing drew the young man to his work. What is certain is that his zealous faith never left him and, furthermore, appears never to have been subjected to any period of doubt.

In his description of the quasi-religious phenomenon of Bardolatry, Graham Holderness stresses the importance occupied by Stratford-upon-Avon as the Mecca for the Shakespeare pilgrim. True Bardolator that he was, Sean O'Casey made two pilgrimages to Stratford, in 1953 and 1954. O'Casey's wife Eileen's account of the first of these visits conveys something of the spirit of reverence which appears to have descended on this devout follower of the Shakespeare faith:

> *[Sean] certainly enjoyed the Shakespeare country as a tourist, the cottages at Shottery and Wilmcote, the sturdy Birthplace, the Grammar School, Holy Trinity Church by the Avon, and Hall's Croft where the prescriptions of Shakespeare's son-in-law, Dr John Hall, fascinated him. He and Niall liked to probe into everything and they would spend a long time looking at the books in the show-houses: they loved Dr Hall's eccentricity. In fact there was nothing in and about Stratford that we did not examine thoroughly; and as it was such a success we repeated it in the following year. Sean, who hated hotels, was quite at home in the Shakespeare and would sit happily at night in its lounge.*[19]

Significantly, he did not go to see a play by Shakespeare at the Memorial Theatre! According to Eileen O'Casey, the reason for this was that he was suffering from a mild attack of bronchitis and he had a "dramatist's horror of coughing during a play", However, one of O'Casey's biographers, Gary O'Connor, suggests that the reason was quite different: according to him, O'Casey drew considerable pride from the fact that it had been a number of years since he had set foot in any theatre, appalled as he was by declining standards on the English stage.[20] In a letter written shortly after his return home after his first visit to Stratford, O'Casey acknowledged that seeing a play there had never been one of his objectives:

---

[16] O'CASEY, "To M. Apletin," 31 May 1939, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. KRAUSE, 1: 801-02.

[17] O'CASEY, "To *Country Life*," 10 April 1937, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. KRAUSE 1: 665.

[18] O'CASEY, " 'Shakespeare was my Education': Interview with the Author of *The Silver Tassie*," George Walter BISHOP, *The Sting and the Twinkle: Conversations with Sean O'Casey*, ed. E. H. MIKHAIL and John RIORDAN (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974) 44.

[19] Eileen O'CASEY 225.

[20] Gary O'CONNOR, *Sean O'Casey: A Life* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988) 360.

. . . I and the family travelled to Stratford-on-Avon, they to see the plays specifically; I to meditate on the places that knew the Poet in the body so many, many years ago.[21]

For O'Casey, the temple had become profane.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DEELMAN, Christian. *The Great Shakespeare Jubilee*. London: Michael Joseph, 1964.

FISCHER, Tibor, and NORFOLK, Lawrence, eds. *New Writing 8*. London: Vintage 1999.

HOLDERNESS, Graham, ed. *The Shakespeare Myth*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.

MIKHAIL, E. H., and O'RIORDAN, John, eds. *The Sting and the Twinkle: Conversations with Sean O'Casey*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974.

MURRAY, Christopher. *Twentieth-century Irish Drama: Mirror up to Nation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

O'CASEY, Eileen. *Sean*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971.

O'CASEY, Sean. *Autobiographies 1*. London: Papermac, 1992.

—. *Autobiographies 2*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1984.

—. *The Letters of Sean O'Casey: 1910-1941*. London: Cassell, 1975. Vol. 1 of *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*. Ed. David KRAUSE. 4 vols. 1910-1964.

—. *The Letters of Sean O'Casey: 1942-1954*. New York: Macmillan, 1980. Vol. 2 of *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*. Ed. David KRAUSE.

O'CONNOR, Gary. *Sean O'Casey: A Life*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988.

SHAW, George Bernard. *Three Plays for Puritans*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946.

Universidade Estadual Paulista,
São José do Rio Preto

[21] O'CASEY, "To Brooks Atkinson," 20 September 1953, *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*, ed. KRAUSE (New York: Macmillan, 1980) 2: 993-94.

KERRY: O OUTRO ENCANTAMENTO DE J. M. SYNGE

GERALDO FERREIRA DE LIMA

Nas *Ilhas Aran* Synge havia se defrontado com uma natureza indomável e entrado em contato com um homem que, enfrentando todas as forças indômitas dessa natureza, criara uma linguagen que lhe causava encantamento. Esse encantamento que começa em Aran, sobretudo em relação à fala, continuará em Kerry. Em termos de elaboração de sua estética rural, se não adquire o *status* de Aran, por se constituir a principal fonte catalisadora dos elementos da linguagem forjada por Synge, representa o estágio final de um caminho que, iniciado em Wicklow, nos faz, às vezes, sentir diante de um efeito típico de *tromp l'oeil* - o artifício que em pintura nos dá a ilusão da perspectiva. Se o próprio Synge não tivesse dado tanta ênfase a Aran, talvez Kerry representasse em sua obra mais do que a simples ilusão pictorial que, à primeira vista, parece expressar.

Kerry, situado no sudoeste da Irlanda, é uma região cheia de montanhas e lagos, e durante centenas de anos tem se destacado pela sua beleza natural. Juntamente com Clare e Galway, situados ao norte, está nos limites da isoglossa do dialeto *Gaeltacht*. Apesar do grande fluxo turístico atraído pela beleza dos lagos de Killorney, Kerry ainda mantem características primitivas de um povo bilíngüe que, diferente do de Aran, falando mais inglês que irlandês, apresenta uma linguagem "colorida cheia do vigor e charme natural próprios de um povo rural"[1] associado a um rico passado arqueológico.

Em 1903 Synge visitou Kerry pela primeira vez. Robert, seu irmão, visitara Kerry nesse ano, e se hospedara com Philly Harris em Mountain Stage "numa cabana no alto de uma colina de onde se podia contemplar a baía [de Dingle]."[2] Recomendado

[1] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*. p. 149.

[2] *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

pelo irmão, Synge se tornou, durante os três verões seguintes e o outono de 1907, hóspede dos Harris. Mais tarde, descreveria o prazer suscitado por Kerry:

> *I was singularly pleased when I turned up the boreen at least to this cottage where I lodge, and looked down through a narrow gully to Dingle Bay. The people bade me welcome when I came in, the old woman kissing my hand. There is no village near this cottage, yet many forms are scattered on the hills near it; and as the people are in some ways a leading family, many men and women look in to talk or tell stories, or to buy a few penny worth of sugar or starch. Although the main road passes a few hundred yards to the west, this cottage is well known also to the race of local tramps who move from one family to another in some special neighbourhood or barony.*[3]

Como ocorreu em Aran, o interesse de Synge em conhecer cada vez mais a alma irlandesa leva-o a mergulhar de modo cada vez mais profundo na cultura rural. Em Kerry, no afã de elaborar uma linguagem que melhor se adequasse ao seu projeto literário de elaboração de uma dramaturgia cada vez mais lingüística e ideologicamente irlandesa, mas universalizante em sua semântica, Synge vai à Great Blasket Island, onde supunha poder encontrar uma realidade tão interessante quanto encontrara em Aran. A julgar pelo que escreve a Lady Gregory uma semana depois de chegar a Blasket, não só o que vê supera suas expectativas em relação a Aran, mas tudo que já houvera visto:

> *[...] I am writing out on a mountain top as I have difficulties in finding a place in the house. I have been here for a week today, and in some ways I find it the most interesting place I have ever been in. I sleep in a little cot in the corner of the King's*[4] *room and in the morning - on state occasions - the princess comes in when we awake and gives us each dram of whisky and lights our pipes and then leaves us to talk. When I get up and go in to the kitchen the little queen brings me a bowl of water to wash my face and the princess holds me a towel. In the evening there are often 20 or 30 people in the house dancing and getting on. The old king himself is the only person who speaks to me in English, so I am thrown back on my Irish entirely, and I have great trouble with it sometimes.*[5]

[3] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 260.

[4] O Rei, a quem Synge se refere, só é identificado uma vez, em todos os seus escritos, como Shawn Keane: na carta que escreveu a Lady Gregory em 20.08.1905, uma semana depois de chegar a Great Blasket Island. Em nenhuma outra anotação de Synge aparece o nome do Rei, cujo título, segundo David Greene, "aparentemente não era hereditário". (Greene & Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 202).
Greene, entretanto, aceita a conclusão a que chegou o estudioso de cultura Celta, Robin Flower, que em 1910 conheceu o Rei, em cuja cabana se hospedou, como fizera Synge cinco anos antes. Flower identificou nele traços de uma sucessão real através de seu verdadeiro nome Pádraig O Catháin, de origem irlandesa.

[5] Carta a Lady Gregory. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, v. 1, p. 122.

Embora considerando Blasket "o lugar mais interessante já visto", em termos qualitativos, as dez páginas, que escreveu nos dezesseis[6] dias vividos lá, comparadas com as sete escritas durante as duas semanas passadas em Aranmor, se equivalem. Como a narrativa sobre Aranmor, a de Great Blasket está centrada na descrição da paisagem, dos tipos humanos, suas vivências, mitos e na relação homem-terra na qual o caráter do primeiro é determinado pelo segundo. Comparando-se as 134 páginas sobre as ilhas Aran e as 45 sobre Kerry, escritas em idênticos espaços de tempo, há um grande *deficit* em relação a Kerry, que Synge, em sua última visita, pensou poder corrigir. Escrevendo a Molly, diz: "Estou encantado em ter visto esse lugar no inverno - é inverno aqui - assim poderei reforçar muito meu livro sobre Kerry."[7] Synge desenvolveu a idéia de escrever um livro sobre Kerry motivado pela publicação de *The Aran Islands* e do contato, cada vez maior, com a cultura rural desse condado do sudoeste irlandês. A princípio, planeja um livro sobre as Ilhas Kerry e outro sobre Wicklow:

> *I was delighted [...] to hear that you think so well of my book on Aran. It is a great relief to me to find that it is thought well of after all. It was refused by publishers often in London for three or four years so that I had begun to think it was a failure. I hope to do a book on Wicklow - peasant life, more or less of the same kind, in the next year or two, and perhaps another on the Kerry Islands.*[8]

Às vésperas de ir a Great Blasket Island escreve a Lady Gregory:

> *[...] tomorrow and the next day I move on bag and baggage to the Great Blasket Island! It is probably ever more primitive than Aran and a I am*

[6] Há uma controvérsia quanto ao tempo de permanência de Synge em Great Blasket Island. Para David Greene, foi de 16 dias. (Greene & Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 202). Para Ann Saddlemyer, 14 dias: de 13 a 27 de agosto de 1905. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, v. 1, p. XXIV. Na carta para Lady Gregory de 20.08.1905, Synge escreve: "Hoje faz uma semana que estou aqui." Considerando a data da volta de Blasket, 27 de agosto, como inequívoca, o período de 2 semanas, como quer Saddlemyer, está correto. Adotamos o período de 16 dias como o mais adequado, por se tratar de uma afirmação feita pelo biógrafo oficial, que, apesar de não mencionar a fonte, deve ter tido acesso a alguma fonte que Saddlemyer não teve. Em uma carta a Nathalie Esposito, escrita em 08.09.1905, Synge fala do período e do contato com a família do Rei: "*In August I was out for a fortnight on the Great Blasket Island off the Kerry coast, and I had a wonderful time there. I slept in a corner of the King's room - there is a king of the island - and his two daughters attended on me - one of them - who was married a few months ago and still lives in her father's house - a curiously charming person.The girls had no English so I had to get on with them as best I could in Irish. Every evening twenty or thirty men and girls used to come up into our house to dance and amuse themselves in the kitchen so that I feel so miserably lonely for weeks after I leave it. Here I am in another peasant cottage but the people are more civilised and they haven't got the peculiar attractiveness of the islanders.*" *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, v. 1, p. 128.

[7] Carta a Molly Allgood. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, v. 1, p. 68.

[8] Carta a James Peterson. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, v. 1, p. 22.

wild with joy at the prospect. If all goes well I may stay there for some time. [...] I am to go out in a curragh on Sunday when the people are going back from Mass on the mainland, and I am to lodge with the King.[9]

Em *In West Kerry*, relata sua chegada a Blasket em um dia de "indiscritível alegria":

> *I came out to-day, a holiday, to the Great Blasket Island with a school master and two young men from the village, who were coming for the afternoon only. The day was admirably clear, with a blue sea and sky, and the voyage in the long canoe - I had not been in one for two or three years - gave indescribable enjoyment. We passed Dunmore Head, and then stood out nearly due west towards the Great Blasket itself, the height of the mountains round the bay and sharpness of the rocks making the place singularly different from the sounds about Aran, where I had last travelled in a curragh. As usual, three men were rowing - the man I have to stay with, his son, and a tall neighbour, all dressed in blue jerseys, homespun trousers, and shirts, and talking in Irish only, though my host could speak good English when he chose to.*[10]

A "indiscritível alegria" do primeiro dia, entretanto, não parece ter-se mantido em Synge como ocorrreu com Aran, pois, depois da referência ao livro sobre as Ilhas Kerry "mais ou menos do mesmo tipo [de Aran]", feita na carta a Paterson, nenhuma outra será feita. Em 9 de setembro de 1908, quando preparava o artigo "*In Wicklow. On the Road*" para o *Manchester Guardian*, publicado em 10 de dezembro desse ano, a menos de quatro meses de sua morte, a idéia de um livro exclusivamente sobre as Ilhas Blasket já lhe parecia completamente fora de cogitação. Nesse dia, escreve a Molly: "Decidi reunir todo meu material sobre Wicklow e Kerry em um livro e publicá-lo tão cedo quanto possível, embora haja nele muito trabalho a ser feito."[11] Mais de uma semana depois, em outra carta dirigida a ela, Wicklow já não parecia fazer parte do livro que pensava publicar: "Tenho trabalhado em meu livro sobre Kerry desde ontem - isso me dá dor de cabeça, mas tenho que fazer algo."[12]. Antes de poder ver suas propostas de livro sobre as Ilhas Blasket, Kerry ou Wicklow realizadas, a doença de Hodgkins o vitimaria.

A maior das Ilhas Blasket, a Great Blasket tem quatro milhas de comprimento, e uma de largura. A descrição de Synge ao aproximar-se dela é de que "parecia uma montanha erguendo-se do mar".[13] Meio século depois de Synge, escreveria David Greene:

---

[9] Carta a Lady Gregory. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*. v. 1. p. 120-1.
[10] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 246-7.
[11] Carta a Molly Allgood. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*. v. 1. p. 196.
[12] Carta a Molly Allgood. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*. v. 1. p. 199.
[13] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 247.

> *It rises from the sea level on the east side to magnificent cliffs nine hundred feet high on the west side. Until quite recently when a summer guest house was opened on the Great Blasket, the islands have been unoccupied except for grazing cattle in summer time, since the Irish government, recognizing the plight of a people no longer able to earn a living on their isolated island, moved them to the mainland and built houses for them which look down from the heights of Slea Head across the bay to the slanting green fields their fathers and grandfathers had tilled.*[14]

Em 1905, quando foi a Great Blasket, Synge encontrou uma natureza "contorcida e magnificada de forma extraordinária," e "as mais belas crianças já vistas"[15] entre as 132 pessoas pertencentes às 25 famílias que habitavam a ilha, aparentando comunhão com a solidão insular em que viviam:

> *In the evening of Sundays and holidays the young men and girls go out to a rocky headland on the north-west, where there is a long, grassy slope, to dance and amuse themselves; and this evening I wandered out there with two men, telling them ghost stories in Irish as we went. When we turned over the edge of the hill we came on a number of young men lying on the short grass playing cards. We sat down near them, and before long a party of girls and young women came up also and sat down, twenty paces off, on the brink of the cliff, some of them wearing the fawn-coloured shawls that are so atractive and so much thought of in the south. It was just after sunset, and Inishtooskert was standing out with a smoky blue outline against the redness of the sky. At the foot of the cliff a wonderful silvery light was shining on the sea, which already, before the beginning of autumn, was eager and wintry and cold. The little group of blue-coated men lying on the grass, and the groups of girls further off, had a singular effect in this solitude of rocks and sea; and in spite of their high spirits it gave me a sort of grief to feel the utter loneliness and desolation of the place that has given these people their finest qualities.*[16]

Ao escrever o Prefácio de *The Tinker's Wedding*, e ao afirmar que "na maior parte da Irlanda [...] o povo, dos *tinkers* ao clero, ainda tem uma vida e uma visão da vida que são ricas e geniais e cheias de humor,"[17] talvez não fosse temerário inferir de tal afirmação que ela estaria diretamente vinculada ao que Synge vivenciou em Great Blasket Island. Lá Synge viu um povo vivendo na "solidão e no isolamento", lutando contra as adversidades de uma natureza indômita e mesmo assim capaz de extrair da aridez de suas vidas em rochedos perdidos num Atlântico

---

[14] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*. p. 201-2.
[15] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*. p. 252.
[16] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*. p. 253.
[17] J.M.Synge. *Preface. The Tinker's Wedding. Plays*. p. 33.

revolto, a beleza que ele captou. Ao apreendê-la transformou os gestos rústicos e as palavras desses camponeses insulares em uma arte que os transcendentalizou. Na descrição de uma noite na cozinha da cabana do "Rei," em Blasket, Synge, como em sua arte, vê na música o meio através do qual a rudeza da vida rural se transforma em beleza:

> *A little later, when the talk was beginning to flag, I turned to a young man near me - the best fiddler, I was told, on the islands - and asked him to play us a dance. He made excuses, and would not get his fiddle; but two of the girls slipped off and brought it. [...] Then he played a polka and four couples danced. The women, as usual were in their naked feet, and whenever there was a figure for women only there was a curious hush and patter of bare feet, till the heavy pounding and shuffling of the men's boots broke in again. The whirl of music and dancing in this little kitchen stirred me with an extraordinary efect. The kindliness and merry-making of these islanders, who, one knows, are full of riot and severity and daring, has a quality and attractiveness that is absent altogether from the life of towns, and makes one think of the life that is shown in the ballads of Scotland.*[18]

Great Blasket Island, além de fornecer elementos para a elaboração de sua estética rural, inspirou-lhe a criação da personagem Margaret Flaherty, a Pegeen Mike de *The Playboy of The Western World*, para a qual tomou como modelo a filha do "Rei," seu anfitrião, na ilha. O impacto causado pela hospitalidade dela no dia de sua chegada a Blasket seria assim descrito:

> *My host [The King] had gone on in front with my bag, and when I reached his threshold he came foward and shook hands with me again, with a finished speech of welcome. His eldest daughter, a young married woman of about twenty, who manages the house, shook hands with me also, and then, without asking if we were hungry, began making us tea in a metal tea-pot and frying rashers of bacon. She is a small, beautifully-formed woman, with brown hair and eyes - instead of the black hair and blue eyes that are usually found with this type in Ireland - and delicate feet and ankles that are not common in these parts, where the woman's work is so hard. [...] In a few minutes the little hostess came down and stood beside me - she thought I should not be left by myself when I had been driven away by the dust - [...]*[19]

[18] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 256.
[19] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, passim, p. 247-55.

Essa "mulher de pequena estatura, belas formas, de cabelos e olhos castanhos" que se transfigurará em Margaret Flaherty - a "bela garota de cerca de vinte anos e olhar rude"[20] de *Playboy*, também inspiraria a Synge o poema *On an Island*:

> *You're plucked a curlew, drawn a hen,*
> *Washed the shirts of seven men,*
> *You've stuffed my pillow, stretched the sheet,*
> *And filled the pan to wash your feet.*
> *You've cooped the pullets, wound the clock,*
> *And rinsed the young men's drinking crock;*
> *And now we'll dance to jigs and reels,*
> *Nailed boots chasing girls' naked heels,*
> *Until your father'll start to snore,*
> *And Jude, now you're married, will stretch on the floor.*[21]

Synge chegou a considerar as Ilhas Blasket "mais primitivas que Aran," e viu na "selvageria da paisagem o claro e o frio e o brilhante como aquilo que se vê em um sonho."[22] Ao partir, considerou-se "apenas um intruso, um refugiado num jardim entre quatro mares,"[23] e confessou:

> *It is curious I have a jealousy for that Island - the whole island and its people - like the jealousy of men in love. The last days I was there a stranger - a middle-aged and simple-minded man from an island district- [was staying there too] and all the time I was making arrangements to come [away] I was urging him, I hardly know why, to come away also. At last I was succcessful and he came away in the canoe beside me, but without any particular plans. He made his own way to this village where he meant to stay a few days in the same inn, and I saw him in the afternoon. Then he disappeared. I made inquiries and I heard he had been seen late in the evening riding quickly towards Dunquim where one leaves far the Island. An inexplicable but fearful jealousy came over me; who was he that he should enjoy that life and quiet when I had left it? Who was he that he should sit in my place by the chimney and tell stories to the old men and boys? I was walking about my room in extravagant rage when I heard his step on the stairs, and he had been out for a ride only. What mystery of attraction is in that simple life.*[24]

[20] Didascália introdutória do Ato I de *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, 107.
[21] J.M.Synge. *Poems*, p. 35.
[22] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 248.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[24] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 258-9.

Para quem tão intensamente viveu Great Blasket, a ponto de sentir "ciúme, como o ciúme de homens apaixonados," e chegou a projetar um livro sobre essa ilha, o que Synge escreveu,[25] se comparado, por exemplo, com o que escreveu sobre Connemara, parece pouco. Por outro lado, se considerarmos que em Blasket ele estava mais "ouvindo" que "dizendo," no sentido de que estava extraindo do universo real e mítico do ambiente rural da ilha a substância com que nutriria definitivamente sua obra dramática, então pode-se compreender melhor porque Synge já não mais se mostrava empenhado no livro sobre Kerry a partir do impacto que o encontro com Blasket lhe havia proporcionado.

Assim, como ocorreu com Aran, consciente das conseqüências da doença de Hodgkins, talvez tenha preferido dar ênfase ao projeto sobre Kerry isoladamente, a partir de sua "base" estabelecida em Mountain Stage. Garantia assim a exeqüibilidade de uma idéia que, ainda que não contemplasse Blasket, como inicialmente desejara, deixou a sensação de que se não tivesse sido abreviada sua existência, essas ilhas perdidas na imensidão do Atlântico Norte de onde ele "podia ver rochas pontiagudas de diversas ilhas desabitadas,"[26] talvez tivessem tido outra importância em sua obra.

De acordo com suas Anotações, Synge chegou a esboçar uma peça sobre Great Blasket Island, que denominou apenas como *Idea for a Play* e que Ann Saddlemyer deu o título de *Smugglers' Island.*[27] Embora difícil de prever, quem poderia negar, a julgar pelo esboço de *Smugglers' Island,* que um outro *Playboy* não teria surgido daí?

Conjecturas à parte, ao contrário de Great Blasket, em Mountain Stage, Synge ouviu dos irmãos Harris - Philly e Denis - histórias sobre Oisin, e os heróis Fenian além de referências a lugares míticos como Tir-na-nOg e Celtic Valhala "que achavam ter existido no outro lado da baía na península de Dingle."[28] Em Mountain Stage, Synge ouviu também histórias sobre fatos reais e folclóricos. "Em Aran, Synge anotou apressadamente as expressões irlandesas que ouviu e as traduziu para o inglês. Mas em Mountain Stage as expressões idiomáticas e as palavras inventadas que ele ouviu foram em inglês. Ele começou a pensar que aqui, como em Aran, estava ouvindo o dialeto de suas peças."[29]

De Danny-boy ouvirá a alusão a nomes de lugares, carregados de tristeza e melancolia, ligados a mulheres e marinheiros mortos em naufrágios, e os contará em *In West Kerry*:

> *'Do you see that sandy head?' he said, pointing out to the east, 'that is called the Stooks of the Dead Women; for one time a boat came ashore with twelve dead women on board her, big ladies with green dresses and*

[25] O único artigo sobre Great Blasket foi publicado em *The Sanachie*, n. 5, Outono de 1907.
[26] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 248.
[27] Ann Saddlemyer. Unpublished Material. In: J. M. Synge. *Plays I*, p. 227.
[28] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 149.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

> *gold rings, and fine jewelries, and a dead harper or fiddler along with them. Then there are graves again in the little hollow by the cuceen, and what we call them is the Graves of the Sailors; for some sailors, Greeks or great strangers, were washed in there a hundred years ago, and it is there that they were buried.*[30]

A referência ao local cujo nome se origina no episódio narrado por Danny-boy aparece na fala de Michael James em resposta à repreensão de sua filha, Pegeen, por deixá-la "toda noite sozinha no bar:"[31]

> *Isn't it the same whether I go for the whole night or a part only? And I'm thinking it's a queer daughter you are if you'd have me crossing backward through the Stooks of Dead Women, with a drop taken.*[32]

Synge também usa a expressão "naked as an ash-tree in the moon of March" que registrou em sua caderneta de Anotações de Kerry,[33] convertendo-a em "naked as an ash tree in the moon of May" na fala de Christy Mahon quando dialoga a sós com Pegeen, e entabulam uma conversa que se encaminha para uma crescente intimidade, interrompida pela inesperada intromisssão da Viúva Quin:

> *It's that you'd say surely if you'd seen him and he after drinking for weeks, rising up in the red dawn, or before it maybe, and going out into the yard as naked as an ash tree tree in the moon of May.*[34]

Ao disputar Christy com a Viúva Quin, Pegeen recorre a uma história contada por Philly Harris sobre uma mulher de Cahirciveen que "amamentou um Carneiro no próprio seio" e ao serví-lo ao médico, este "detectou os elementos de um cristão nele."[35] O uso da expressão por Pegeen imprime à Viúva Quin, um caráter apóstata. Com isso, Pegeen deixa claro a Christy que, como anti-cristã, a Viúva Quin não merece seu amor, deixando então o caminho livre para ela, que se sente cada vez mais atraída pelo charme do *Playboy*. Na tentativa de afastar definitivamente a Viúva Quin da concorrência pelo coração de Christy, Pegeen enfatiza o efeito apóstata da amamentação do carneiro trocando o Doutor da história original pela figura eclesiástica de um Bispo:

> *It's true the Lord God formed you to contrive indeed! Doesn't the world know you reared a black ram at your own breast, so that the Lord*

[30] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 264.
[31] J.M.Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, p. 110.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[33] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 150.
[34] J.M.Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, p. 120.
[35] *Cf.* David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 150.

Bishop of Connaught felt the elements of a Christian, and he eating it after in a kidney stew?[36]

Numa noite quando estava passeando numa vila em Kerry, Synge conheceu um homem "que sabia ler gaélico e era cheio de entusiasmo pela velha língua e de desdém pelo inglês."[37] Esse homem lhe contou sobre os franceses de Fécamp, "católicos e decentes,"[38] que costumavam trocar seu "grass tobacco"[39] pelo fumo irlandês. Dessa história tirou a expressão que usa na continuação do discurso invectivo de Pegeen contra a Viúva Quin:

> *Doesn't the world know you've been seen shaving the fox skipper from France for a threepenny bit and a sop of grass tobacco would wring the liver from a mountain goat you'd meet lepping the hills?*[40]

Synge recontaria essa história em *In West Kerry* eliminando a expressão "grass tobacco", usada por Pegeen:

> *'The Frenchmen from Fécamp,' he said, [...] Then he told me about their tobacco; one of them is called hay-tobacco, and if you give them a few eggs, or maybe nine little cabbage plants, they'll give you as much of it as would fill your hat. Then we get a pound of our own tobacco and mix the two of them together, and put them away in a pig's bladder - it's that way we keep our tobacco - and we have enough with that lot for the whole winter'.*[41]

A geografia de Kerry desperta um encantamento que em Synge parece inesgotável. Qualquer cicunstância geográfica se apresenta como um oportunidade para expressão de embevecimento, neste caso, um simples passeio matinal:

> *I walked up this morning along the slope from the coast to top of Sybil Head, where one comes out suddenly on the brow of a cliff with a straight fall of many hundred feet into the sea. It is a place of indescribable grandeur, where one can see Carantuohill and the Skelligs and Loops head and the full sweep of the Atlantic, and, over all, the wonderfully tender and searching light that is seen only in Kerry.*[42]

---

[36] J.M.Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, p. 123.
[37] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 240.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 241.
[39] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*, p. 150.
[40] J.M.Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, p. 123.
[41] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 241.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 245-6.

Esta geografia na forma de referentes "idealizados", como o "Stooks of Dead Women" da história de Danny-boy, ou referentes facilmente identificáveis no território de Kerry, são transportados para o ambiente tragicômico de *The Playboy of the Western World* onde adquirem uma nova conotação. Ao localizar os acontecimentos de *Playboy* em Mayo, fazendo alusões a lugares situados em Kerry, Synge produz duplo efeito. Por um lado, explora a visão universalizante da concepção rural irlandesa, na medida em que, sendo Mayo o epicentro da ação de *The Playboy of the Western World*, essas alusões a Kerry, de um certo modo, corroem esse epicentrismo fazendo com que haja um equilíbrio entre as ações ocorridas em Mayo - pseuda morte de Christopher Mahon e seu desdobramento - e as alusões a Kerry. Por outro lado, essas alusões representariam o tributo de Synge àquele embevecimento gerado não só pela geografia de Kerry como pela linguagem e pelo folclore aí apreendidos, que o levaram a afirmar:

> *The talk of these people is almost bewildering. I have come to this cottage again and again, and I often think I have heard all they have to say, and then some one makes a remark that leads to a whole new bundle of folk-tales, or stories of wonderful events that have happened in the barony in the last hundred years. Tonight the people were unusually silent although several neighbours had come in, and to make conversation I said something about the bullfights in Spain that I had been reading of in the newspapers. Immediately they started off with stories of wicked or powerful bulls, and then they branched off to clever dogs and all the things they have done in West Kerry, and then to mad dogs and mad cattle and pigs - one incident after another, but always detailed and picturesque and interesting.*[43]

As alusões geográficas feitas por Michael, Christy e Pegeen abrangem a cidade de Munster, o território de Munster, a Baía de Dingle e o próprio condado de Kerry[44] e demonstram o nível de "contaminação" que essa geografia exerceu em Synge. Uma mostra dessa contaminação é seu relato, que sendo do espaço geográfico de Dublin, foi confundido como pertencente ao de Kerry:

> *Before long I got into talk with the old man next me, and as soon as I did so the women and girls stopped their talk and leaned out to hear what we were saying. He asked first if I belonged to Dingle, and I told him I did not. 'Well,' he said, 'you speak like a Kerry man, and you're dressed like a Kerry man, so you belong to Kerry surely.' I told him I was born and bred in Dublin, and that I had travelled in many places in Ireland and beyond it. 'That's easy said,' he answered, 'but I'd take an oath you were never beyond Kerry to this day.'*[45]

---

[43] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 277.
[44] J.M.Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World. Plays*, p. 114, 118, 119, 162.
[45] J.M.Synge. *In West Kerry. Prose*, p. 278.

A influência de Kerry em Synge ultrapassa os limites de sua dramaturgia e prosa, e atinge sua poesia. O poema *Beg-Innish*, uma das ilhas Blasket é uma transcrição poética da experiência vivenciada entre camponeses e pescadores de Kerry, que poderia ser o retrato de Mountain Stage ou Great Blasket Island, onde as evocações das danças noturnas na cabana de Philly Harris ou na do "Rei", Shawn Keane, se entrelaçam com as redes de pescadores de Dunquim secando ao sol, e representam o entrelaçamento de pessoas, que, vivendo uma existência longe dos códigos oficiais determinados por instituições dos mais diversos matrizes, convertem a aridez de suas vidas em uma realidade rica, harmônica e cheia de primitivismo:

> [...] And seven weavers from Dunquin,
> To dance in Beg-Innish.
>
> I'll play you jigs, and Maurice Kean,
> Where nets are laid to dry.
>
> Till stars look out to see the dance
> Where nets are laid to dry.
>
> We'll have no priest or peeler in
> To dance in Beg-Innish [...];[46]

Inspirado em Kerry, Synge ainda escreveria *The Mergency Man*, baseado em uma história que lá ouviu, e o poema *In Kerry*, sobre o qual diz David Greene:

> [*In Kerry*] is an interesting example of how he was able to transform an unsuccessful love lyric by endowing it with a grotesque element he heard in Kerry. The first version of the poem[47] was an uninspired piece in which the speaker asks the rhetorical question of why his love for his mistress has enhanced for him the beauties of nature. Not until he remembered a story he heard in Kerry, and used in *The Playboy of the Western World*, was Synge able to transform the lyric into something more characteristic of his own personality.[48]

Em 1902 Synge escreveu o poema *Queens*. Entre 1902 e 1907 vários rascunhos do poema foram feitos. Em um desses rascunhos,[49] Kerry aparece no primeiro verso de uma das estrofes:

[46] J.M.Synge. *Poems*. p. 37.
[47] No de *Poems*, Robin Skelton apresenta as diversas transformações a que o poema foi submetido até alcançar a forma definitiva onde a alusão a Kerry desaparece.
[48] David Greene & Edward Stephens. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*. p. 150-1.
[49] J.M.Synge. *Poems*. p. 35.

> Queens who went west naked for moss in Kerry
> Or rowed in Rome the golden wherry,
> And are these all — I ask your pardon —
> And dead as the door nail of Shawn MacKarden.
> Are all these ladies of love and laughter
> As dry as Mahony's chimney rafter?[50]

Aran, como o próprio Synge afirmou, lhe causara encantamento. A experiência que aí vivenciou é considerada o ponto de partida para a elaboração de sua estética rural. Apesar disso, as evidências sobre a influência dos dialetos e dos *modi vivendi* de Wicklow e Kerry no processo de elaboração dessa estética nos levam a afirmar que, sem a base adquirida em Wicklow durante seu aprendizado de escritor, e sem o outro encantamento que Kerry lhe proporcionaria na maturidade, talvez Synge, apenas com o ferramental lingüístico apreendido em Aran não tivesse elaborado uma dramaturgia erigida em bases tão sólidas, capaz de, não só modificar a linha de ação traçada pelos fundadores do Movimento Dramático Irlandês, como também consolidar definitivamente sua estética rural através de uma dramaturgia inovadora e polêmica que encontrou no *Abbey Theatre* seu melhor veículo.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 35. Na versão final, Synge eliminou a estrofe na qual aparece o verso com a alusão a Kerry.

BIBLIOGRAFIA

GREENE, H. David, STEPHENS, Edward M. *J. M. Synge 1871-1909*. New York: New York University Press, Revised Edition, 1989.

SYNGE, J. M. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*. (1871-1907), Ann Saddlemyer (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983. v. 1.

____. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*. (1907-1909), Ann Saddlemyer (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984. v. 2.

____. Collected Works II. *Prose*. Alan Price (ed.). Washington: Colin Smythe & The Catholic University of America Press, 1982.

____. *Plays*. Ann Saddlemyer (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

____. Collected Works III. *Plays* Book 1, Ann Saddlemyer (ed.). Washington: Colin Smythe & The Catholic University of America Press, 1968.

____. Collected Works IV. *Plays* Book 2, Ann Saddlemyer (ed.). Washington: Colin Smythe & The Catholic University of America Press, 1968.

____. *The Aran Islands*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1988. [This edition is a photolithographic facsimile of the 1911 edition printed by Maunsel and Company Limited].

____. *Poems*, Robert Skelton (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana - UEFS

LIFE INTO TEXT: JUST A MIRROR OF A CULTURAL MOMENT?

MUNIRA H. MUTRAN

"St Augustine wrote the story of a God-tortured soul; would it not be interesting to write the story of an art- tortured soul?"
George Moore

At the end of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Stephen Dedalus, ready to leave Dublin, writes in his diary: "Welcome, O Life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience."[1] Similarly, on the last page of D.H.Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), the young Paul leaves the past behind:

> *Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming glowing town, quickly.*[2]

Both novels end in a poetic, perhaps tragic, tone since the young artists have consciously abandoned a way of life, and are now facing a new beginning. Their (great) expectations may or may not become reality; what the future reserves for them is not revealed.

Confessions of a Young Man (1888), the first of George Moore's autobiographies, after a brief introductory chapter, begins with a scene of departure.

---

[1] James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Signet Book, 1952, p. 190.
[2] D.H.Lawrence. *Sons and Lovers*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, p. 511.

Unlike the experiences of Joyce's and D.H.Lawrence's heroes, Moore's narrative of the change in his life is told with an irony which will pervade the whole book. This is the young man leaving London:

> *At last the day came, and with several trunks and boxes full of clothes, boots and pictures, I started, accompanied by an English valet, for Paris and Art.*[3]

The ironic tone is probably achieved because, though describing the period of 1873-1879, *Confessions of a Young Man* was written much later. In a backward glance Moore considers and examines with the eyes of an older man, in a self-mocking, self-deprecating mood, even at times with sarcasm, the young man he had been.

What kind of autobiography is this? It is not, obviously, the classical example which describes a lifetime from the cradle (with flashbacks building the family history) until old age, seeking to reveal a personality. It is a slice of Moore's life, maybe the most exciting and interesting years of his youth in London and in Paris. In a letter to Édouard Dujardin in 1887 the writer talks about it:

> *I am writing a book called "The Confessions of a Young Man." A young man goes to Paris to study painting - I develop his character through the three schools - romantic, naturalist, and symbolist; he returns to London and I continue the development of his character. The idea: to contrast the art of two great cities Paris and London.*[4]

I think that this is an over-simplification because Moore does much more than contrast the art of the two metropolises.

First, *Confessions of a Young Man* scrutinizes the self, as Narcissus looks at his own image, but with a difference: he addresses and provokes the reader. For example, though Moore states that "I fain would show my soul in these pages, like a face in a pool of clear water,"[5] showing an introspective mood, he also establishes a dialogue with the reader: "Chance, dear reader, is there such a thing as chance? Do you believe in chance?"[6]

Second, *Confessions of a Young Man* contrasts two cultural atmospheres in the decades of the 70s and 80s. In this sense, besides the literary value of Moore's autobiography, which at times resembles a wonderful novel, it is a mirror of a cultural moment.

George Moore (1852-1933) spent his childhood and adolescence partly in Ireland, where he was born, and partly in London, for his father, a landed Irish gentleman, was a member of Parliament.

---

[3] George Moore. *Confessions of a Young Man*. Montreal and London, McGill - Queen's University Press, 1972, p. 55.
[4] Ibid. Introduction, p. 1.
[5] Ibid. p. 53.
[6] Ibid. p. 62.

In London Moore became an art student, and educated himself, allowing, as he tells us, "his mind to grow and ripen under the sun and wind of modern life, in contradistinction with the University man, who is fed upon the dust of ages."[7] He read Shelley and nearly all the English lyric poets; Kant, Spinoza, Darwin, Mill; Scott, Dickens (whom he knew by heart), Thackeray (who left no deep impression on his mind), George Eliot and many other writers. At the same time, he was a dandy enjoying the London night-life in clubs, restaurants, theatres and salons.

In 1873, less than a month after his twenty-first birthday, Moore arrived in Paris. In contact with the exciting Parisian atmosphere of boulevards, cafés, studios, art galleries, different literary and artistic movements, exotic men and women (from his point of view), the young hero, like Pater's Marius, in search of a philosophy of life and an objective for his existence, faced many dangers; as he confesses, what saved him was the intensity of his passion for Art. "Like every young man of twenty", he writes, "I was on the look-out for something to set up that would do duty for an ideal."[8]

On his arrival Moore experiences a decadent atmosphere which would culminate in the 80s and 90s. As early as 1857 Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (with resonances from Poe) had shown the mood of an end, a fall, a decadence, announcing, even then, the mood of the fin-de-siècle. Mallarmé, in "Plainte d'Automne"(1864), translated by Moore in his autobiography as an example of decadent literature, states that he loved all that the word *fall* expresses: his favourite season of the year is the last weary days of summer, which immediately precede autumn; his favourite hour is when the sun rests before disappearing; and his favourite literature is the dying poetry of the last moments of Rome."[9] Théophile Gautier's Preface to *Fleurs du Mal* insists on the analogy between literature and a 24-hour day: both have a dawn, morning, afternoon, evening and night. The moment they are living in France, according to Gautier, is like the sunset hour; but isn't there as much beauty in the sunset as in the dawn, he asks. He concludes that Baudelaire's style is decadent, "nothing more than art in its point of extreme maturity which is achieved when civilizations get old."[10]

The idea of *fall* will appear later in Yeats's "Autumn of the Body" (1898), in Pater's *Marius, the Epicurean* (1885), and in Huysman's *À Rebours* (1884). Decadent art, which for some is an expression of late romanticism, in opposition to Parnassian poetry and Realism, seeks to find a new way of expressing the world. Moore's art - tortured soul first seeks expression in painting. Soon he gets weary of it because he comes to think of the delineation of a nymph, or a youth bathing as a very narrow channel to carry off the strong full tide of a man's thought[11]; then, after his attempts at writing comedy, he concludes that "it was,

---

[7] Ibid. p. 53.
[8] Ibid. p. 57.
[9] Ibid. p. 170.
[10] Fulvia M.L.Moretto. *Caminhos do Decadentismo Francês*. São Paulo, EDUSP, 1989, p. 42.
[11] George Moore. *Confessions of a Young Man*, p. 63.

of course, very bad."[12] Having abandoned M. Julien's studio, he still had a strong interest in the visual arts; the day of the opening of the exposition of the Impressionists is registered with richness of detail, showing young men, including Moore, despising the impressionist paintings with boisterous laughter, puzzled at such modernity, having become, as Moore has it, "used to a grammar of art, perspective, anatomy, and la jambe qui porte."[13]

The older Moore would see the Impressionists from a different perspective in *Confessions of a Young Man*, and discourse on the history of French painting, establishing sources and links, and showing why the novelty had struck those insolent young men.

Moore's life in Paris allowed him to become acquainted with Mallarmé, Zola, the Goncourts, Huysmans, Manet (who painted his portrait), Degas, Pisarro, Hugo, and many other representatives of various literary and artistic movements. Too young to discern what he wanted, he picked up friends, books and ideas at random. He was, for sure, from the very beginning an adept of the decadent attitude towards art. His exotic, decadent apartment, where he was to spend so much time reading, and writing his decadent stories or poems, like his "Roses of Midnight," is recalled by the older Moore with irony. It is worth quoting:

> *The drawing-room was in cardinal red, hung from the middle of the ceiling and looped up to give the appearance of a tent; a faun, in terracotta, laughed in the red gloom, and there were Turkish couches and lamps. In another room you faced an altar, a Buddhist temple, a statue of Apollo, and a bust of Shelley. The bedrooms were made unconvention with cushioned seats and rich canopies; and in picturesque corners there were censers, great church candlesticks, and palms; then think of the smell of burning incense and Wax and you will have imagined the sentiment of our apartment in Rue de la Tour des Dames. I bought a Persian cat, and a Python that made a monthly meal of guinea pigs.*[14]

Moore settles in this apartment and reflects about art and literature. Hugo, Musset, Gautier, Shelley, Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Poe, Villiers, Rimbaud, Zola, Balzac, all of them deserve comments, criticism, a bold ulttering of opinions. This part of *Confessions of a Young Man* becomes as significant for the literary history of the period as Moore's comments on painting are for the discussion of art in the 70s, 80s and 90s. It is valuable because it provides a unique view of an Anglo-Irish artist, an outsider, whose cultural background allowed him to see everything with wonder, but also with detachment. A comparison of Moore's impressions with the impressions of his contemporaries, and later with twentieth - century literary history might fill in many gaps or clarify many aspects of cultural

[12] Ibid. p. 66.
[13] Ibid. p. 71.
[14] Ibid. p. 75, 76.

history. In such a short paper it is impossible to do that; however, I hope to pursue the subject in one of the chapters of my project on the cultural scene in London and in Paris at the turn of the century through the autobiographies of Yeats, Moore and Wilde.

Before concluding, I want to emphasize that besides being a search for identity, and a mirror of a cultural moment, *Confessions of a Young Man* is most importantly a revelation of how Moore, immersed in the cultural atmosphere of London and Paris in the 70s and 80s emerged after attempts at painting, comedy, short fiction and poetry, a great novelist. He absorbed, assimilated, or discarded. He was, for example, strongly affected by Gautier's *Mlle de Maupin* (1835), as were Wilde and many others of his generation, but at the time he is writing, he thinks "my old rapture and my youth's delight I can regain only when I think of that part of Gautier which is now incarnate in me."[15] These are important words because they show the process he had to go through while exposed to a great amount of ideas, attitudes, literary and artistic movements, and people; filtered by Moore's temperament, the aspects that become part of him would, in the future, characterize the novelist. He, like Yeats in his autobiography, also sees his experience as an imprinting of impressions on wax:

> *I came into the world apparently with a nature like a smooth sheet of wax, bearing no impress, but capable of receiving any; of being molded into all shapes.*[16]

The process of assimilating and selecting or rejecting can be clearly seen in some of the scenes mentioned, when the twenty-one year old Moore, impressed by the cult of decadence, is parodied by the other Moore, who reveals the ridiculous excesses of an otherwise serious attempt to use a different language, attitudes and way of thinking to depict a sick, dying civilization, like Poe, Baudelaire, Gautier, Huysmans, Villiers, Pater and Wilde did.

Moore's departure from Paris is told in a melancholic tone, when "the feast is over for me", "quand mourut ma jeunesse", Moore writes. However, as *Memoirs of My Dead Life* (1906) shows, one lives different lives, in different periods - one death leads to another life. Moore's narrative of his experience in Paris is a picture of a cultural moment and of the birth of a writer. Having survived the decadent cult by reading one of Zola's articles, he had realized, still very naïvely, that his poems "Roses of Midnight" could be naturalist if they were called "Poems of 'Flesh and Blood.' "

He arrives in London, "covered with 'fads' as a distinguished foreigner with stars. Naturalism I wore round my neck, Romanticism was pinned over the heart, Symbolism I carried like a toy revolver in my waistcoat pocket, to be used in an

[15] Ibid. p. 63.
[16] Ibid. p. 49.
[17] Ibid. p. 149.

emergency." This is the satirical Moore again.[17] However, in London, he seriously goes back to English tradition establishing contrasts and re-evaluating English writers, a period which marks a change of direction best described by Moore himself:

> *... having saturated myself with Pater, the passage to De Quincey was easy. He, too, was a Latin in manner and in temper of mind; but he was truly English, and through him I passed to the study of the Elizabethan dramatists, the real literature of my race, and washed myself clean.*[18]

Universidadė de São Paulo

[18] Ibid. p. 166.

BRITISH LITERATURE

TRAVELLER'S NOTES: HARDY COUNTRY

OLGA CREIDY

The West Country, England's most popular and successful holiday area has a vast coastline with some of the best scenery in Britain, such as golden sands, rugged cliffs, sheltered coves and small fishing villages.

A famous novelist of this part of the country is Thomas Hardy, one of Britain's best-loved writers, who wrote novels, poety and short stories, several of them made into films for the cinema and TV. Some of his works have also been broadcast by one B.B.C. to the great delight of the listeners, and viewers.

Dorset's famous novelist was born in 1840 at Higher Bockhampton, five kilometers away from Dorchester.

Hardy's birthplace, a typical thatched cottage, is a Museum now. It is a large two-storey building, in its parkland setting, with several rooms open to the public. It houses many relics belonging to the writer such as pieces of furniture, the table and chair he used when writting his works, a large library with philosophy, history and literature books, as well as many pictures on the walls.

Many places in Hardy's novels can be identified in Dorset. Literary pilgrims enjoy visiting these places which served as the setting for so many of his works as well as those which refer to his own life. People usually begin their visit in Dorchester, the county town, founded by the Romans. This large, fine holiday resort attracts many tourists. There is a splendid collection of Roman remains in its museum and a marvellous wild-life section which is much appreciated by naturalists. Dorchester is a charming place with a rural atmosphere although not far from the sea side. They have a very active and busy fair on Wednesdays, and people roaming the countryside around the town will see large valleys and green hils, apple-orchards as well as stone villages and thatched cottages whith are characteristic of the region. In the town shops tourists can find a large variety of

handicrafts of the region, and West Country pottery, the pride of Dorchester. Travellers usually spend some time in a tea-room where they can taste the delicious 'Dorset Cream Tea' with different kinds of cakes, or the famous 'Lobster Tea' which is served in many places in town.

Important places to visit in town are Saint Peter's Church, a beautiful 15th century construction, the Roman Theatre where artistic performances are still held in summer time, and the Poor People's Asylum.

But tourists also like to see the private school where Hardy studied when he was a young boy. The school on the outskirts of this cathedral city, has retained much of its original character, and it still has its lawns and trees in the park around it. The building itself is a small masonry construction which has not changed much since Hardy's time.

Local bus routes cover the whole region and provide excellent services. With so much to see literary pilgrims can choose from a good selection of coach tours, ranging from short evening trips to full-day tours visiting the different places.

Literary pilgrims come to Dorset on account of Hardy's magic. Here - in the 'Wessex' of his novels - they enjoy wandering around and visiting the places mentioned in his books. Going towards the north of the country pilgrims will reach a countryside of farms and valleys with small towns such as Shaftesbury and Sherborne, well-known places with Hardy associations. They also like to roam on the grounds of the historical remains of Maden Castle, the largest earthwork in Europe, dating back to the Iron Age, and three kilometers south-west of Dorchester.

Besides that, along the Dorset coast there is a fascinating variety of beaches, cliffs and banks. Some people begin the tour at Poole Harbour, the second largest natural port in the world and famous yachting centre; then, going west, comes Swanage with its calm beach and the ruins of the historical Corfe Castle nearby. The dramatic way nature has fashioned the coast can be seen at Durdle Door, the natural arch carved by the sea. Continuing the coastal tour people reach Weymouth, a holiday resort, then Abbotsbury noted most of all for its swannery but also famous for the annual 'Garland Day', an old English custom. And to complete the coastal tour pilgrims reach Lyme Regis, the lovely beach with tourists, amenities to offer its visitors, an ideal place for those wanting a holiday retreat with lots to see locally. The 'Buena Vista Hotel', on Pond Street, is open from March to December. Lunch-time visitors eat at the restaurants, where fresh fish is a speciality of the menu. Light meals are also served in the lounge.

Hardy spent a few years away from his beloved Dorset: while studying Gothic architecture under Sir Arthur Blomfield in London, and when attending classes at King's College, Cambridge. Hardy was much impressed by the architecture of King's College Chapel - this fine example of the Gothic Perpendicular Period, famous for its fan-vaulted ceiling and its 16th century stained glass windows.

Hardy knew the West Country well and loved that part of England. As a young architect he restored the Church of St. Juliot, near Boscastle, in Cornwall. But

Hardy loved Dorset most of all. He had a house built according to his plan and when 'Max Gate', at Dorchester was ready, he moved into it and spent the rest of his life there.

'Max Gate', large and comfortable, is a Museum now. It contains Hardy's furniture, books, pictures on the walls and personal belongings. The place, open to the public, is much visited by those who appreciate the excellence of style in the works of this famous writer.

The British Tourist Authority has made a film about THOMAS HARDY and his native Dorset in which all the places related to this great writer are included.

Hardy passed away in 1928 but his work is still much read by an evergrowing number of people.

The city of Dorchester built an important monument to Hardy, work of the sculptor Eric Kennington. It is a bronze life-size statue of the novelist, erected in his honour and placed in the city park.

THEORIES OF FICTION IN RICHARDSON, DEFOE, AND FIELDING

GISÉLE MANGANELLI FERNANDES

Introduction

In the eighteenth century, prefaces, prefatory chapters and postscripts (the last two ones are not so frequent as prefaces) are the way authors find in order not only to exchange ideas with the public, but also to try to make clear for themselves the kind of writing they are producing. It is the beginning of the genre. That is why the practice of prefaces is so common at the time. In prefaces, the writers discuss the problems they have to face and how they handle them. Hence, one of the functions of prefaces is to debate the process of literary creation.

The purpose of this paper is to study the contents of some prefaces, prefatory chapters and postscripts by Samuel Richardson, Daniel Defoe, and Henry Fielding in order to focus on their main ideas concerning the new kind of writing that was born at the time. As a matter of fact, these three writers are considered the founding fathers of the novel and they are really conscious that they are writing something new, for a public composed mainly of women.

It is essential to say that these three writers belong to a society of religious and moral ethics still linked to Puritanism, which means, a strict obedience to these principles. Moreover, some other rules control people's behaviour such as the important role given to appearance, Christianity, paternalism, class differences, lineage, and the writers are still connected with the classical tradition. Furthermore, there is a great prejudice against novels, regarded as despicable texts.

Through the reading of prefaces, prefatory chapters and postscripts, it is possible to realize that their authors focus upon two main questions. moral and formal to instruct the reader. To show how it is done is the main objective of this work.

Pretending to be the editor, someone who can judge more impartially than the author, Samuel Richardson discusses these two matters in his prefaces. As far as morals are concerned, one can say that novels were written to instruct mainly the youth on how to behave according to middle-class social rules. Virtue, for instance, is something to be praised; material values do not count at all. Since the rise of the bourgeoisie, nobility of heart was more important than any aristocratic title. Moreover, vice was to be condemned and, therefore, the characters in the novel had to mirror this image: the good ones, would be rewarded, whereas the wicked ones would fail and suffer because of their natural qualities. It is important to teach youth religion and morality in a way that would unite the *dulce et utile,* according to the Horatian principle.

Thus, men have to be taught about how to deal with money, not spending it immoderately; with passion by subduing it; and people who like intrigue should be persuaded to reform themselves. Women, whether virgin, bride or wife, have rules to obey and Richardson proposes practical examples.

But all of these regulations have to be presented in so lively a way that it would catch the attention of the reader all the time, involving him with the story. However, one formal point is fundamental: not a single idea could be different from this context of purity, that is, no contradiction would be allowed, which means a unity of action, reflecting the classical doctrine.

Asserting that he does all of this in *Pamela,* Richardson explains why he decides to write the book in the form of letters: since they are based on truth and nature, one may conclude that, in letters, people generally tell their innermost feelings, they really expose themselves and they would give a sort of credibility and verisimilitude to the book, to represent real life.

Clarissa, written in the form of letters exchanged chiefly by two young ladies and two gentlemen, is also a religious/moral teaching project. The men talk about sex (a forbidden subject to Puritanism), but they do observe their other moral obligations. It is true that one of them reforms and the other, although qualified to general hatred, is decent in his images and language. An evident contradiction is then established: perversity hidden emitting moral appearance. Richardson tries to justify the liberties taken by his characters, comparing his story to other writers' characters and subjects. It is important to point out another formal aspect clearly stated here: Richardson was worried about how to construct a character and how to make him coherent to the whole plot. A character could not be totally immoral, he/she always had to have some decent qualities; if he were wicked, his conscience would constantly warn him. In epistolary novels, the characters have an unusual taste for writing letters, not emiting any detail; they are fond of writing. The main characters write more often; the others are occasional writers.

Another formal characteristic discussed is length. In the letters, characters speak freely not only about their lives but also about other people related to the

story; thus, a lengthy work is expected. The characters have, then, the opportunity to discuss and reflect about events and also to write conversations. Furthermore, an epistolary novel offers the reader the opportunity to know human nature better, because through letters all doubts that come to the human mind will be revealed. Thus, the author has his model of an ideal reader and acts as a tutor, conducting the reactions of the reader in a paternalistic attitude, leading him to project himself and, consequently, to a cathartic effect.

Richardson confesses his insecurity as far as length is concerned, reporting that the "editor" had submitted the letters to prudent friends who would give their opinions of what should be left out. In this part, he discusses the efficiency of epistolary novels, because one of the "chosen friends", suggested that he should write in the form of narrative as well as eliminate everything that was not related to the main character; in this way, the story would not have its progress retarded. Other readers, however, suggested that the story should neither be condensed to a dramatic unity nor be transformed into a narrative, since its reflections and observations, its most important part, would be lost. The development of the story should happen slowly, without very busy scenes, making the whole not variable. This is done to maintain the central point of the plot.

Concerning the method, Richardson defends the epistolary novel, for it lets the letter-writers talk about problems with their hearts open, which is not allowed by the dull narrative style. He also criticizes novels in general that are improbable, whereas epistolary novels carry a certain degree of probability to represent real life. Instruction was the basis of the story and only parts or characters that did not have anything related to them could be omitted, because one day, every man looks for more than amusement and needs more knowledge. Once more, one can see him trying to conduct the reader to have the reactions he imagined. Moreover, Richardson wants to warn parents on how to advise their girls about marriage: the right man is one of probity, nobility of heart, politeness (Puritan principles of a strict moral upbringing), not of pleasure since a reformed rake does not make the best husband, according to the writer. The opposite was a widespread belief at the time.

After having received several letters with different opinions about the book, Richardson explains that his project was a religious one when writing *"Clarissa,* since God had left men in this world, where good and evil are mixed, putting men to the proof, and it was expected from writers a *'poetical justice,'"*[1] that is, the punishment or reward the characters deserved. It is closely related to the classical belief that the writer had a sort of, god-like" power with a missionary function, when deciding the fate of the characters.

As he thinks that critics would not consider ideas about religion, he justifies his method through Aristotle's *Poetics*[2], the theory of tragedy, a classical aesthetics.

---

[1] RICHARDSON, Samuel. *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (Postri pt). London: Penguin, 1985, p. 1495.

[2] ARISTOTELES. *Arte Retórica e Arte Poética.* Trad. Antônio Pinto de Carvalho. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1964. (Clássicos Garnier)

The crucial aim of a tragedy is to cause terror and piety in the audience, and Aristotle named this moment catharsis. If virtue and innocence are always happy, the stories do not have this effect. According to Aristotle, when a character has an unhappy ending, the audience likes him better (a bad character always strikes the audience because he is the one who favours the development of the plot). There are some possibilities to explain why this happens: 1) People like to see others' misfortune (sadism); 2) People like to suffer (masochism); 3) Self-resignation (when one sees the other's suffering, he remembers his good fortune); 4) People like to show sympathy for others (solidarity). In short, tragedy teaches men to feel pity for those who deserve it. Clarissa was so virtuous a girl that Heaven only could reward her. Her death is a sign ofvictory; it makes her, therefore, a winner, not a loser. The author, according to Christian belief, does something that had never been done before: the temporary suffering of good characters in the past was justified by pagan principles and when the heroes of the tragic poets died, they perished; Clarissa, instead, is going to heaven, where there is the hope of an eternal happy life. This is the greatest reward that a Christian expects, no matter how much he has suffered on Earth. For a Christian reader, this end is extremely meaningful.

Richardson states that the formal aspect related to the slow development of the story is peculiar. If the story is to represent real life, he could not cut out parts that were important for the maintenance of probability (verisimilitude), after all, nature is "imitated" there, as the Aristotelian concept of mimesis established. That is why length is necessary. . first, to support the unity of action, second, to avoid any contradiction throughout the story. He could not, for instance, make Lovelace suddenly a good person after years of wickedness, unless there was a fact to justify the change, a cause-effect relation, otherwise the author would not be concerned with verisimilitude. The mere fact of marrying Clarissa would not make him someone virtuous. This would not be probable at all. Although he is not an unbeliever, there are people of his class whose actions dishonour their faith. Richardson adds that the bad ones were punished, respecting one of the most important objectives of his writing: instructing by giving examples.

One must take into account that the definitions of the tens "novel" and "romance" had not beenestablished at the time to understand why Richardson states that *Clarissa* may disappoint a reader who likes romances and novels and is used to intrigues and adventures. The reader has to regard *Clarissa* as a new kind of novel, one which seems to be taken from real life, about common men and ordinary life, appealing to the heart, a novel whose characters are well controlled, not only a novel with scenes of duels and imaginary love affairs, unlike the novels of chivalry. Notwithstanding the common aspect between them, a moral and heroic function, in a book like *Clarissa,* there are no adventures and supernatural agents like the novels of chivalry had. The experienced reader will find in novels such as *Clarissa* entertainment as well as instruction.

For Richardson, this book is not merely a novel because it is more than entertainment.. it contains moral and religious principles to be taught to the reader

in an interesting way. The writer criticizes romances that only meant to ridicule, to present serious adventures or to mix both. *Clarissa* is much more than that: it is "a history of life and manners."

Sir Charles Grandison is another Richardsonian character whose life is guided by religious and virtuous principles, also written in the form of familiar letters, it is intended to divert and instruct, One point that should be mentioned is that Sir Charles has some attitudes more suitable to a faulty character. The story thisshows how human nature is imperfect, representing man as he is. Moreover, the author decides to keep the character with his failures, instead of creating a sudden and improbable change just to have a happy ending. It was important to show that man can reach a degree of virtue, although faulty, when facing the facts of everyday life. It indicates another similarity with the novel of chivalry, since the knight had to face several obstacles as his virtue had to be observed. The main target of a knight was to be virtuous to conquer the Holy Grail.

A Puritan Novelist

Daniel Defoe also has the aim of instructing the reader by presenting a true story, not fiction, through the example of his characters who accept the fate reserved for them by Divine Providence, as Puritans like Defoe believed. He realizes how difficult it is for the reader to accept his story as genuine, since there are many novels and romances being read at the time. Although he may present a character whose life is full of crimes, this is done in order to show how disadvantageous such a disastrous way is. Some parts were shortened not to offend the reader but without leaving aside the most important aim, the moral. The penitent part should be written in the same lively way as the criminal one.

Defoe considers that his books are written for those who know how to read them, that is, those who know how to profit from his recommendations, the application that they may find for their own lives, creating, thus, a sort of "ideal reader", someone who would take advantage of Defoe's teachings.

The author decides to write ingeniously a story full of various entertaining events to instruct the reader, giving him virtuous and religious principles to be applied to real life. Thus, the examples are taken from reality, become true in the fictional universe, and can return to real life again in the form of application. That is why vice and corruption have to be published to be discouraged, but not as playwrights did, representing them but failing to recommend virtue and generous principles of conduct, corrective principles. Throughout the book, there are things to be learned if the reader is willing to, always with religious assumptions. It is not necessary to use obscene language or to write a text full of vulgarities to teach the reader. All evil things have to be condemned; all good things, praised.

Defoe argues that his characters speak a standard of language according to their occupation or social classic. It is based on another aspect present in

Aristotle's *Poetics:* the character had to be coherent in his words and actions according to necessity and verisimilitude.

Insisting on the fact that virtue meets honour, vice, unhappiness, and sin, shame, Defoe is sure of changing the character of a wicked reader, leading him to repentance. It does not matter whether the character's story is true or only a parable; what does matter is its utility in instructing the reader. Even the entertaining parts of the book were made for the reader's instruction and improvement

- he can profit from the reading and also enjoy himself. This shows the double function of the textL: to instruct and to entertain, according to another Horatian principle *ridetido castigat mores,* a feature also effectively developed by the playwright Gil Vicente in the Middle Ages.

Defoe states that his *Roxana* is based on facts; therefore, his book is a history, not a story. Roxana reproves her behaviour and she regrets it; her repentance is what the reader has to incorporate. The act of criticizing herself leads the reader to reflect upon these cases. It is important to notice that even when she meets success although she is a wicked woman, her conscience makes her feel guilty all the time and she cannot sleep because of her reflections. The criminal scenes should be exposed in order to instruct the reader. However, if he does not use the instruction in a correct way, it is due to his own depravity.

More Flexibility in Representation

Henry Fielding, the last author to be discussed in this paper, explains that his kind of writing has never been tried before in the English Language. He discusses the epic and the drama that are divided into comedy and tragedy, although the first one was lost. He cites Homer and Aristotle whose works about tragedy are widely known. He defines *Joseph Andrews* as a "comic romance", that is, "a comic epic poem in prose,"[3] different from comedy or tragedy: its plot has a greater number of events, various characters, its action is enlarged; people of inferior ranks and manners are included. Mockery may be admfitted in style and where characters and sentiments are natural it is not mockery any more, it may be considered on the level of the sublime. This thought is an announcement of what, many years later, Erich Auerbach would defend in *Mimesis,* that is, the mixture of genres and tones in literary works.[4]

Fielding intends to differentiate his book from those of romance writers and burlesque writers. He states that the burlesque provokes laughter which contributes to eliminate sadness and evil feelings. Fielding himself being a playwright had had some success with the burlesque on stage. He is a comic writer, and the insertion of the low in his works, reveals a certain tone of modernization.

---

[3] FIELDING, Henry. *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews.* New York. Penguin, 1979, p. vi.
[4] AUERBACH, Erich. *Mimesis A representação da realidade na literature ocidental.* Trad. George B. Sperber & Suzi F. Sperber. São Paulo. EDUSP/Perspectiva. 1971.

He makes a parallel between the caricature in painting with its exaggerations and the burlesque in writing affirming that the comic writer and the painter are correlated: the monstruous is easier to paint and the ridiculous is easier to be described. He affirms that the ridiculous is present in his work. This idea is close to a realistic vision of art in line with Auerbach's theory. Aristotle comments that villainy is not the object of the ridiculous and does not define what it exactly is. Fielding, then, starts to explain what the ridiculous is for him. Its real source is affectation whose origins are either in vanity or hypocrisy. When the reader discovers it, he feels surprised and pleased; even more surprised and pleased when affectation comes from hypocrisy, since it is more ridiculous to find out that a certain character is exactly the opposite of what he pretends to be. When the ridiculous comes from hypocrisy, it is allied to deceit; when it comes from vanity, it is engaged with ostentation. The ridiculous may also come from the adversities and tragedies of life and from the flaws of nature.

Fielding adds that vices, objects of repugnance, introduced in the book, are not the main structure in scenes and are caused by the frailties of human nature. Moreover, he states that his story is based on nature. It is possible to establish a relation to Aristotle's ideas of *mimesis:* imitation of nature, included in the process of literary creation. Besides, the characters and actions he describes are taken from his observations, but it does not mean that they are real. They may have been changed by the author, being true in fiction, to fit the verisimlitude of the story. By so doing, he is, in fact, creating fiction, as he admits that what counts is the truth in fiction, which is perpetual, not the reality out of it.

The subject he offers his readers is a vast one: human nature, as with Richardson and Defoe. Some readers may consider it too common a subject since it is present in all plays, novels, romances and poems. It does not matter, though. What makes a difference to the work is not the subject itself, but the way the author deals with it according to his competence. This will actually give the reader mental entertainment. The process of the construction of a novel displayed by Fielding is a different manner of handling the facts, a sign of the way to modernity.

His method of writing is different from those who describe in detail months and years without any striking event, following the same rhythm and resembling a newspaper which must have a certain number of words no matter whether there is news or not. He pursues a totally opposite technique: whenever there is a great scene he discloses it to the reader, whereas an uneventful period is ignored. It means that the criteria to choose what is really important have to be as accurate as possible. He does this because he thinks it to be more advantageous to the reader who will not waste time and will be able to fill in the missing periods of time with his imagination. It is more exciting an activity for the perspicacious reader to foretell what the action of a character will be according to his personality than to judge someone's nature by his attitudes. That is why some chapters are long and others, short; some contain one-day happenings; others, include years of occurrences, some parts of the story stand still, others go faster. Hence, as far as

form is concerned, it is fair to say that Fielding is much more flexible than Richardson and Defoe.

Fielding justifies his privilege of choosing a method: since he is the father of a new sort of writing, he can invent rules for it as he wants. He creates these regulations to please his readers, he writes to keep their interest and hopes that they will give him the honour he believes he deserves.

Fielding makes clear the distinction between his book and romances, which are producted not according to nature but by intemperate minds and histories whose authors got their inspiration drinking glasses of beer and who, expect the reader to do the same when reading them. He took all the opportunities he had to embellish the work with similes and descriptions, in order to refresh the reader's mind, not to bore the reader to death as the others do in their large volumes. For him, the technique of ornamentation is important to prepare the reader for the reception of a main character, something that had not been done by the tragic poets. The heroine has to be introduced with a noble style so the reader will revere her. He insists on the fact that his heroine is a reproduction of nature and that any countrywoman would be as perfect as his heroine is described.

He does not deny that his book is a work of fiction and questions some of Aristotle's doctrine as far as the unities of time (the tragic play should last at most one day) and place are concerned. He does not agree to an established number of acts (five) as was done in the past. He also blames the critics of the time for the tediousness of the plays, since they censured all comical aspects in them. Some rules were fixed without any resemblance to truth or nature. Fielding certainly knew the role of the critics, as he was censured and had to stop writing plays. He realizes the importance of Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, the ancient ones, and Dacier and Bossu, among the French, and some in England, but he fiercely reprehends the attitude of the critic who censors books and plays because of a character or a dialogue that does not please the audience or a critic of that audience. It seems that the critics were very powerful, dictating the laws to be followed by authors. These critics misinterpreted simple form and content. The writer is against the manner of judgement of critics, which is close to condemnation.

He proposes a new current of knowledge. the contrast, which allows several successful authors to show the beauty of inverse qualities of someone or something. Through contrast, the reader is able to appreciate the attractiveness of good things versus bad ones.

As serious writers and poets often compared the world to a stage, Fielding recalls that some words formerly used on stage are regarded as common in everyday life, the theatre of nature. Since the theatrical performance is a representation, or rather, imitation of reality, as Aristotle declared the tragedy to be, it is possible to consider the majority of human beings actors (the Greeks had the same name to refer both to the player and the hypocrite). Passions move this theatre and force

man to make decisions without too much reasoning. The reactions on the stage resemble real life.

When he mentions the marvellous, he alludes to Aristotle and declares that he intends to keep his texts according to the rules of probability, for Aristotle wrote that verisimilitude is what happens or is possible to happen. The marvellous surprises the reader, but it is not incredible; on the contrary, it makes incredible facts seem reasonable. Thus, something impossible may be probable. He thinks that those who write scenes of private life, as he does, do not risk being improbable, as they take examples of vice and virtue from the world. Ghosts are the only supernatural elements that authors were allowed to use at the time, and Fielding advises other writers not to employ them amply, and not even mention fairies, mummery and elves. Therefore, man has to be the highest subject of historians, as he classifies himself, and poets.

As the main point of writing is human nature, the actions of the characters should be according to what man can really do; one action may be appropriate for one person but impossible for another. A man acts in conformity with his nature. If an author does the opposite, he will be in trouble trying to solve such a divergency. The author who follows these rules captivates the reader, yet this is not easy, since only rare talented writers can create good stories and write them satisfactorily. After all, to write poems, an author must have great knowledge, whereas to write romances and novels, it is necessary just to have pens, ink, papers and the ability to deal with them. But these instruments require a certain learning of the belles-leters and history to be properly used. Moreover, nature gives authors skills to write, but human nature has to be learned in the world. Historians must understand the characters of men to have a sort of "conversation" with all classes of men, either the upper or lower ones to be able to describe them as accurately as possible, with the affectations or politeness of the former and the simplicities or rudeness of the latter. Fielding warns the reader, addressing him directly, not to regard a character as a bad person because he is not perfect. Human beings are virtuous and evil, and a good writer must retain these characteristics and vary their performances.

Fielding argues that since Cicero stated that an orator should have certain qualities, a writer should, at least, have some knowledge of the subject he writes about. For instance, a writer who fails in describing the upper or lower classes is someone who does not know anything about their habits. This can be properly done just by conversation, that is, their customs should be seen, not only read and learned through books. Fielding thinks that it was necessary to have had some personal experience with a certain reality in order to describe it. He, as a comic writer, asserts that he does not really need to know the dull life of upper classes, pursuing ambition. Women should frequently be compared to the behaviour of upper classes, since they do not have any character, thinking merely of ambition and vanity. His actual object is the lower classes which produce comic characters, although he was an educated man and, therefore, knew the upper class standard of living and thinking.

Another quality that a historical writer must have is *genius*, defined by Fielding as:

> *that power, or rather those powers of the in, which are capable of penetrating into all things within our reach and knowledge, and of distinguishing their differences. These are no other than Invention and judgment. And essentially they are both called by the collective name of genius, as they are of those gifts of nature which we bring into the world.*[5]

However, he criticizes invention as a creative faculty claimed by romance writers. Invention is, for him a perspicacious penetration into the essential characteristics of the things man observes. This, invention almost only exists simultaneously with judgement.

Furthermore, a historian must feel his work, that is, laugh in the parts the reader will laugh, or cry where the reader will cry. (Although Fielding points out that instead of laughing with the writer, the reader may, sometimes, laugh at him).

Fielding, very differently from Richardson and Defoe, does not agree with some religious writers who reward virtue with happiness and punish vice with misery, stating that this is not true, because the idea of happiness is too much varied: it may include poverty, envy or ingratitude. After all, human nature is made of contrasts, of several different aspects.

According to Fielding, prologues and prefaces should be short, they serve the critic to start preparing his censorship, and those people who read only to say they have read a book, may begin at the fifth page instead of at the first one. There is a certain contradiction in his statement, because although he argues that those texts should not be long, he does something unusual: he structures *Tom Jones* in a way that each books has a prefatory chapter; they are many and constitute another long text inside the book.

Were he a tragic writer, his objective with *Tom Jones* would be over when the main character had had a lot of suffering. Nevertheless, he is a comic writer, whose function is to make his main character as happy as he can. Under no circumstances will he use supernatural elements, as the ancients found in their believed mythology, to help Jones; he decides to do it only by natural means.

His objective with *Tom Jones* was to be entertaining company for the reader, emphasizing, thus, amusement, not instructive principles as Richardson and Defoe did.

[5] FIIELDING, Henry. *Tom Jones*. London. Penguin, 1969, p. 437.

Concluding Remarks

In prefaces, prefatory chapters and postcripts, the so-called founding fathers of the novel, Richardson, Defoe and Fielding, discuss the methods and conceptions of writing. The texts reveal the *Zeitgeist* and the way the three authors faced the world. It was a time in which, as a consequence of Puritan influence, strict moral and religious values were to be observed. In style, the authors are still too much in line with the classical tradition.

Besides moral teachings, they were concerned with fictional elements, such as the problem of mimesis; the epistolary technique versus narration, justifying why one and not the other, the subjects to be treated and the manner of approaching them; length; construction and description of characters, rewarding the good ones and punishing the bad ones to give the reader examples; reality versus fiction; the relationship between text and reader; the concept of love; the model of the ideal reader; the concept of contrast; the nature and function of literature divided into instruction and entertaniment; the necessary qualities of a writer; the verisimilitude of the text; the use of the marvellous.

Although the three writers belong to the same period in English Literature, it is possible to say that Richardson and Defoe are much closer to traditional values whereas Fielding, also with classical tradition in mind, discusses and practises certain changes that, many years later, will lead to modernity.

As the novel was an indefinite genre, the exact vocabulary to classify literary works could not be defined either. The is series of questions makes the texts worth reading. It is fascinalting to see how these "pioneers" faced prejudice and carried on wilh their work. For the moden reader, it is an opportunity of getting in touch with the very beginning of the novel and understanding how difficult it was and how many doubts the writers had until the novel was finally established as a genre at the end of the eighteenth century.

FEMALE QUEST NARRATIVES: MARGARET DRABBLE'S The Radiant Way, A Natural Curiosity AND The Gates of Ivory

PEONIA VIANA GUEDES

Mythic, archetypal, and feminist critics claim that quest plots reflect one of the most fundamental and encompassing myths of humankind. While C. G. Jung believes that the quest myth images the process of individuation,[1] Joseph Campbell identifies the quest as the "monomyth" underlying literature, mythology, and dream life,[2] and Northrop Fyre calls it "the central unifying migth" which subsumes all literary genres.[3] In all these approaches to the quest myth, our understanding of the journey for selfhood and wholeness has been limited by the assumption that the quester is always male. Noting that the supposedly "universal" narratives of myth are generally carriers of ideological systems which are historically, culturally, and politically determined, contemporary feminist critics such as Carol Christ, Annis Pratt, Carol Pearson, Katherine Pope, Lee Edwards, and Rachel Blau Duplessis stress in their works the feminine and/or feminist variations and patterns of the quest myth.[4] All these critics, however, agree that the quest itself is a paradigm which speaks to us all.

The quest is the central element of the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of development, which emerged in 18th-century Germany with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's*

---

[1] C. G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality*, trans. Stanley M. Dell (New York: Farrar and Rhinehart, 1939).

[2] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968).

[3] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957).

[4] Carol Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest* (Boston: Beacon, 1981); Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981); Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, *The Female Hero in American and British Literature* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1981) Lee Edwards, *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1984); Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985).

Apprenticeship. In the traditional *Bildungsroman* the male hero is forced to leave home - a typically rural environment - and strong family ties, and step out into the wide world. On the "road of trials," the male hero runs into risks, faces dangers, fights battles, and "slays dragons." The male hero also engages in love relationships, which function as steps in his education; makes his choice of partner and profession; re-assesses. This narrative pattern of search for identity and integration into society constitutes the core of the *Bildungsroman* plot, which has evolved - with major or minor variations - over the past two hundred years.[5] The quest motif is central to the *Bildungsroman* and it parallels both the archetypal journey of the hero described by Joseph Campbell and other myth critics, and C. G. Jung's view of the human being's inner development towards maturity and psychological wholeness.

Contemporary feminist critics have pointed out that the structure of the traditional *Bildungsroman* presupposes a range of social options available only to men[6] and that patriarchal society has hardly encouraged women to strike out on a path to self-discovery. Indeed, the heroine of the 18th- and 19th-century *Bildungsroman* generally finds herself coerced into accepting her "proper" societal role - marriage and motherhood - or into stepping aside from these roles and paying the price for her rebellion - physical or spiritual death.[7] Twentieth-century women authors have tried to replace the endings in marriage or death by creating narratives which offer a different set of choices to the female hero[8] and question the traditional images of female socialization. Recent feminist research across disciplines also suggests that women's lives do not conform to male paradigms of identity, experience and development and thus need to be examined separately from men's lives.[9]

Margaret Drabble's novels[10] - have consistently focused on the female experience and the struggle of women to find definition and fulfilment, their quest for selfhood and wholeness. Drabble's latest works - *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989), and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991) have the quest motif as

[5] Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974).

[6] Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, *The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979).

[7] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979).

[8] The female hero, from my point of view, is the active subject of the quest plot. The heroine, on the other hand, is the object of male attention or rescue in quest plot; her role is that of accessory in the male quest.

[9] Nancy Chokdorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Bereley: U of California P, 1978); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982).

[10] Margaret Drabble, *A Summer Bird-Cage* (1963), *The Garrick Year* (1964), *The Millstone* (1965), *Jerusalem the Golden* (1967), *The Waterfall* (1969), *The Needle's Eye* (1972), *The Realms of Gold* (1975), *The Ice Age* (1977), *The Middle Ground* (1980), *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989), *The Gates of Ivory (1991)*.

the structuring device that links the three novels and connects the lives of the three central female characters in the trilogy: Liz Headleand, Alix Bowen, and Esther Breuer. These women's quest for selfhood and wholeness spans four decades, and the personal dimension of their quest is set against the State-of-England question, establishing a link between the private and the public spheres in the trilogy. Although *The Radiant Way*, *A Natural Curiosity*, and *The Gates of Ivory* present elements of the *Bildungsroman*,[11] Drabble departs from the realistic conventions of the genre to create a text that is definitely a "blueprint" for female quests, for the representation of the contemporary female struggle towards selfhood and wholeness.

Margaret Drabble's decision to make three women the central characters of the trilogy can be seen as part of a set of strategies that challenge the traditional conventions of both the *Bildungsroman* and of the quest plot. Rachel Blau DuPlessis claims that some 20th-century women writers have tried to avoid the promotion of any individual character to a position of importance in a narrative becauses this indicates conformity with dominant values and social hierarchies. DuPlessis argues that the construction of group, multiple, or communal protagonists "is a way of organizing the work so that neither the development of an individual against a backdrop of supporting characters nor the formation of a heterosexual couple is central to the novel."[12] In Drabbles's trilogy, Liz Headleand, Alix Bowen, and Esther Breuer represent three attitudes towards knowledge and experience. Considered together they represent relevant psychoseual and sociocultural aspects of the construction of women in contemporary society. Drabble uses other emancipatory strategies in the construction of her female heroes, such as the effacement of the clear bondaries of the individual ego, on which the archetypal male quest is typically centered. The move from a central individual protagonist to multiple or communal protagonists challenges the patriarchal emphasis on individuality and dominance.

Drabble's trilogy opens with the three protagonists getting ready for Liz Headleand's New Year's party, which is supposed to "bid farewell to the 1970s."[13] The celebration happens at a point of significant historical, social, and political changes, and provides "a room full of riddles" (*RW* 34), where guests "attempt to formulate what, for them, had seemed to be the conventions of an eclectic, fragmented, purposeless decade"(*RW* 30). The three protagonists are in their mid-forties, and seem to have come to a successful conclusion of their social quests.[14] They have experienced university life, marriages, love affairs, childrearing,

[11] *In The Radiant Way*, for instance, Drabble makes a clear analogy, between Liz Headleand's situation and that of Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

[12] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985) 163.

[13] Margareth Drabble, *The Radiant Way* (New York: Ivy, 1987). All references to this text will be identified parenthetically by the initials *RW* and the page number.

[14] Carol Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest* (Boston: Beacon, 1980). I use Christ's division of female quests into social and spiritual.

widowhood, professional careers, and have made their mark in the world. In the traditional *Bildungsroman* or in quest plots the protagonists' journeys would have been completed, but in Drabble's trilogy the New Year's party is a turning point, a "call to adventure," the beginning or, better saying, the resuming of the protagonists' search for selfhood and wholeness.

To make the reader appreciate what brings these three women together on the eve of a new decade, Drabble sends us back to the 1950s when Liz, Alix, and Esther first met at Cambridge. As the narrator mockingly points out, their coming together there and then is necessary related to the social and historical changes in England for "in Jane Austen's day they would never have met at all" (*RW* 79). The three women only meet because they are the product of the postwar British education system that has allowed them to pursue education at Cambridge, to trail the "radiant way" of equal opportunities dreamed possible in the fifties and sities. These young female heroes have qualities that enable them to face the journey ahead, and which distinguish them from the heroines of traditional plots:

> *Liz, Alix, and Esther were not princesses. They were not beautiful, they were not rich. But they were young, and they had considerable wit. Their fate should, therefore, be in some sense exemplary: opportunity was certainly offered to them, they had choices, at eighteen the world opened for them and displayed its riches, the brave new world of Welfare State and County Scholarships, of equality for women; they were the élite, the chosen, the garlanded of the great social dream. Adventure and possibility lay before them... (RW 83)*

The young wome's plans and ambitions reveal their different approaches to knowledge and experience. Liz applies to read Natural Sciences, with a view to Medicine, while Alix applies to read English Literature, and Esther to read Modern Languages. Spurrred "by a strong desire on the part of all three of them to enter upon a new life" (*RW* 80), the three female heroes share their dreams and aspirations in a Cambridge dorm room:

> *"I would like," said Liz... "to make sense of things." By things, she meant herself. Or she thought she meant herself. "I would like," said Alix, "to change things." By things, she did not mean herself. Or thought she did not mean herself. "You reach too high," said Esther, "I wish information. That is all." (RW 81)*

As the intrusive narrator half-mockingly, half-wisely points out, the three young female heroes have a lot to learn about themselves and about their true aims in their quest towards selfhood and wholeness. Poised at the starting point of their "road of trials," they seem quite different from each other, products of different backgrounds and experiences. At this stage of the quest, their "treasure" is

freedom and unlimited possibility. They, though not aware of this then, have all "exited the garden" of previous dependency on parental authority and have the open road ahead of them. They differ from the male quester in the sense that they are marked by their marginality as female and have to set a path for which there are very few guideposts. They are supported, however, by the female bonding they establish with one another, which is going to help them in their journey:

> *They did not know then, were not to know for many years, were never fully to understand what it was that held them together - a sense of being on the margins of English life, perhaps, a sense of being outsiders, looking in from a cold street through a lit window into a warm lit room that later might prove to be their own? Removed from the mainstream by a mad mother, by a deviant ideology, by refugee status and the war-sickness of middle Europe? None of this would have meant anything to them... They thought they found one another interesting. And so they became friends. (RW 85)*

In the years that follow, Liz, Alix, and Esther take different paths but their quests unquestionably move them towards self-awareness, a more robust sense of identity, fulfilment in love and careers. A survey of the three women's lives over almost three decades shows that the three female questers have journeyed along the "road of trials," have "slain dragons," and have reassessed their youthful aspirations and values. By the end of 1979, when the trilogy opens, the three women believe they have left their major battles behind, that mid-life has brought them successful integration into family and social circles. Thoughout the years they have kept their female bonding with one another, they have even developed a kind of communal identity, their ego boundaries have become less clearly defined. As the narrator comments:

> *One cannot, really, wholly differentiate these three women. In their mid-forties, after more than half a lifetime of association, they share characteristics, impressions, memories, even speech patterns; they have a common stock of knowledge; they have entered, through one another, worlds that they would not otherwise have known. They have pooled their discoveries, have come back from other regions with samples of leaf, twig, fruit, stone, have turned them over together. They share much. (RW 102-103)*

In this passage Drabble represents the patterns of the female quest carried out by Liz, Alix, and Esther in the trilogy.

The emphasis of their quest is not - as in the traditional male quest - on individuality and dominance, but on establishing relationships and sharing "treasures" with fellow questers. These patterns stress the fluidity and multiplicity that characterize the feminine; the emphasis on the "common stock of knowledge," on the discoveries pooled together, represents a kind of behaviour that challenges the search for individuality glorified by patriarchal society.

On the eve of a new decade Liz, Alix, and Esther seem to have reached stability and believe they are "safe" in their middle years, that they will be able to step back from the struggle and adopt the role of "observer, non-combatant" (*RW* 13). This would be the expected ending of a traditional *Bildungsroman* or of a classic quest plot. But in Drabble's trilogy a "call to adventure" sounds for all three middle-aged female heroes, challenging them to embark on quests that will force them to face unresolved issues in their pasts and come to terms with crucial decisions they made as youths, with past experiences that influenced their lives, and with their family, social, and cultural ties. For each of the three protagonists, the new "call to adventure" forces her to move beyond the familiar and secure life she has established for herserlf.

For Liz Headleand the "call to adventure" is both the breaking up of her marriage to her second husband, Charles Headleand, and the death of her mother. Liz's search for the true pattern of her own life leads her back to her childhood home in Northam, and forces her to confront the mystery surrounding the disappearance of her father during her childhood. A successful psychologist, an expert in all kinds of family problems, Liz Headleand has consistently hesitated to explore the dark corners of her own psyche, and the intrusive narrator comments wryly: "It is evident to Liz Headleand, as well as to the reader, that she is concealing something from herself. But what is it? Does she know what it is?" (*RW* 137). Cleaning up her mother's house, Liz comes upon an old volume of her reading primer, *The Radiant Way* (*RW* 366). The mystery of her father's absence is gradually solved as the primer brings back repressed recollections of childhood sexuality, and old newspaper clippings reveal the fate of her father as a child-molester suicide. In a kind of ritual cleansing of the dark secrets of her past, Liz goes into an overnight sweating fever and, the following day, decides to burn the clippings about her father, thus undergoing a kind of rebirth process (*RW* 369). The next important stage in Liz's quest for selfhood and wholeness comes when she is forced to confront and come to terms with the mother figure, the monstruous mother of her subconscious.[15] This reconciliation finally sets Liz free, she is truly reborn, and wakes:

> *...to a new world, a shining, guiltless world... She was reborn. New waves of energy poured into her, her brain fizzed, her body leapt into action... From the moment of revelation, she began to lose weight and to gain strength. It was as though she had emerged overnight, purged, from a long torpor.*[16]

[15] Annis Pratt, in Chapter VIII of *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981), argues that this phase of the mature quest "is most often a confrontation with figures in the memory, from the past, rather than the actual battle undergone by the male hero of the traditional *Bildungsroman*" (140).

[16] Margaret Drabble, *A Natural Curiosity* (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 276. All references to this text will be identified parenthetically by the initials *NC* and the page/number.

The final stage in Liz's quest for selfhood and wholeness is her journey to Southeast Asia in an attempt to track and bring home a friend, Stephen Cox, who had disappeared in Cambodia. Though Liz is not able to bring Stephen home alive, her journey into "the heart of darkness" forces her to confront and try to make sense of the social and political horrors of contemporary society. Returning to England, Liz organizes a memorial service for Stephen and feels ready to resume her life. On a very affirmative note, Liz speaks of her outlook on life and of her integration into family and society: "Another grandchild, what fun! Ah, life is amazingly exhilarating, thinks liz, as she turns back to her house full of people."[17]

Alix Bowen's "call to adventure" is the loss of faith in social causes she goes through in the early 1980s as a consequence of the crumbling of the social and political expectations of the Left in England in the Thatcher years - the collapsing of a vision of a just society. Alix's falling out of faith leads her to wonder if she has been fighting "the wrong battle" (*RW* 32), and causes her to develop an almost morbid interest in social deviancy and criminal behaviour. In an attempt to understand the roots of contemporary violence and criminality, Alix examines the violent past of England - Celtic ritual sacrifices, Roman and Anglo-Saxon mass murders, and all sorts of more recent atrocities. This leads Alix to confront and resolve questions within herself about evil and violence, to overcome her paralyzing fear of demonstrating aggressive, violent emotions. The most significant episode in Alix's quest is her confrontation with, and victory over, the Gorgon-like figure of Angela Malkin, the evil mother of Paul Whitmore. After a physical confrontation,, in which Alix, brandishing "her tin and her knife," succeeds in scaring the "dragon", there is a mystical moment of communion with nature that marks the experience of transformation, of rebirth in Alix's quest for selfhood and wholeness:

> *She struggles out of her soiled garments, and stands there, naked, gazing upstream, her feet sinking in the mud... Her heart leaps with delight. She knows she is particulalry blessed... The water is cold, but she braves it. She splashes, immerses herself limb by limb, rolls in it, cleanses herself... She rises, dripping, newly baptized, and clambers to the bank, and dries herself. (NC 288)*

Esther's mid-life quest is more closely connected with questions of unresolved sexuality. From her Cambridge days, Esther has created a "fiction" about her romantic/sexual life, keeping her affairs secret from her friends, hinting at incestuous feelings for an older brother, dating mysterious older married men. Now she is afraid she has "wasted her entire adult emotional life on a fantasy" (*RW* 328). Esther's "call to adventure" is her decision to explore and accept her sexuality, to face her lesbian inclinations, and to embark on a new life in Bologna with young,

[17] Margaret Drabble, *The Gates of Ivory* (New York: Penguin, 1992) 458. All references to this text will be identified parenthetically by the initials *GI* and the page number.

"radical-feminist-lesbian-Marxist" Elena Volpe (*NC* 187). One year later, Esther is not sure any more of having made the right choice and decides to consider the marriage proposal of Roberto Oxenholme, the "well polished, cultivated, not too heterosexual, *fin de siècle, fin de millenium Man*" (*NC* 187). Although they agree on an unconventional marriage, each living in his/her own apartment, little by little they become more and more emotionally involved, and this signals the freeing of Esther's long-repressed feelings and sexuality:

> *...Robert squeezes her arm. Suddenly a great lightness of heart fills Esther; a white wave of happiness... Anything and nothing can be said. she is saved, she is rescued. (GI 301-302)*

As can be seen from this presentation, the quest motif is the underlying structuring device in Drabble's trilogy. Although *Bildungsroman* and quest narratives are not traditionally the preserve of women authors, these genres acquire different dimensions in female-authored or female-centered narratives. The quests of the three female heroes in Drabble's *The Radiant Way, A Natural Curiosity*, and *The Gates of Ivory* parallel the structure of traditional male quests but introduce elements that are typical of female experience and of female development. Providing variations on traditional quest patterns, Drabble has contributed new models for female heroes. The trajectory of the three female questers over four decades offers a fascinating view of the changing roles of women in society and creates new paradigms to represent female consciousness.

THE GREAT UNKNOWN: A BRITISH EXPLORER IN IMAGINED BRAZIL(*)

LAURA P. ZUNTINI DE IZARRA

According to David Spurr in *The Rhetoric of Empire,*[1] the twentieth century version of Latin America has been an interchangeable representation of the natural and social phenomena condensed in the proverbial "banana republic" which survives from its earlier manifestations in nineteenth-century natural and moral philosophy. Brazil is part of that historical European imaginary, and the way twentieth-century travellers see this country mirrors the way its inhabitants see themselves through the eyes of the Other. Peter Fleming, Ian Fleming's brother, came to Brazil in 1932 attracted by an advertisement in *The Times* on an expedition to the rivers of Central Brazil which, if possible, would ascertain the fate of Colonel Percy Fawcett. In 1925 the Colonel, his son, Jack, and a friend, Raleigh Rimmell, went after a Lost World, a city of crystal, in an unexplored region of the country and never reported back. After two years of silence, many speculations arose about their fate, and some explorers went after them constructing different versions of their disappearance and of the place where they were supposedly massacred by the Suyá or by the Anauqua indians, in the upper Xingú region. The aim of this paper is to deconstruct Fleming's reinvention of Brazil in his book *Brazilian Adventure*[2] in the light of the European imaginary, which was mainly constructed from the iconography that has been produced since the colonial times. The ironic portrayal of the exotic Otherness constructed by nineteenth-century mythological

---

* Acknowledgement: The first ideas for this paper originated after reading Ana Maria Belluzzo's introduction "A propósito do Brasil dos viajantes". In: REVISTA USP. *Dossié Brasil dos Viajantes*. No. 30; junho/agosto, 1996. São Paulo, pp.10-19.

[1] Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire. Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993. p.165.

[2] Fleming, Peter. *Brazilian Adventure*, 1933.

representations of the country and its people is the writer's medium to deconstruct them and to reveal that there is a gap between what was seen and what was said in the texts. Thus, his book raises an interrogation between reality and its multiple representations, between the denotative literal language and the connotative symbolic language present in the pictorial and verbal narratives.

Since colonial times, the iconography of the various civilizations of South America has made paradoxical references to the Edenic state of purity of the landscape and its inhabitants and to their demonization through images of chaos and violence endemic to less civilized peoples (figs. 1 & 2). However, according to Barthes[3], painting and designs are not purely denotative representations; there is always a style constructing a meaning. Besides, the conditions of production of the traveller's iconography reveal the intertextual and intercultural conditions of interpretation of the reality they were portraying. The visual narrative does not only depict a fact following the moral conventions of representation of the time but also the feelings, perception, memory and colonial subjectivity of the observer and the relationship between him/her and the image. Therefore, the constructed cultural texture shows a semantic game focusing on various interplays of meanings according to the different socio-political and religious contexts of the centuries.

Foucault, in *Les Mots et les Choses*[4], says that similarities played an important role in the construction of knowledge of the Western culture in the sixteenth-century. In my opinion, one of the ways of representation through similarities known as *convenientia* has been privileged since the time of colonial encounters. Two completely different cultures define each other coming together, touching their borders and also absorbing the properties of the Other. Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*[5] calls this space the "contact zone" in which peoples, geographically and historically separated, "*come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.*" Pratt's asymmetrical relations of power are seen in the first European pictures of the "discovery", where the indigenous culture is denied in order to follow the pictorial as well as the moral and religious conventions of the time. The native is painted wearing clothes and kneeling in front of the colonizer or of his God holding a cross and/or a flag in the name of that alien God and/or the King; for example, "The Magi Adoration" (1505) an oil painting attributed to Vasco Fernandes (fig.3) or the illustrations of Father Antonio Vieira's life among the Brazilian natives in the seventeenth century (fig.4). Thus, the travellers create analogies from the symbolic representations of the new landscape and its inhabitants, producing irradiating spaces between what was seen and how it was represented. Moreover,

---

[3] Barthes, Roland.(1980) *A Câmara Clara*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1984.

[4] Foucault, Michel. (1966) *Les Mots et les choses*.Trans. by S.T. Muchail. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1985.

[5] Pratt, M.L. *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London & New York: Routledge, 1992. p.7.

Figure 1: Rugendas, João Maurício.

Figure 2: *REVISTA USP*, São Paulo (30): 8-19, Junho/Agosto, 1996. p.11.

Figure 3: *REVISTA USP*, São Paulo (30): 8-19, Junho/Agosto, 1996.

Figure 4: *REVISTA USP*, São Paulo (30):32-45, Junho/Agosto, 1996. p.43.

Figure 5: ***REVISTA USP,*** **São Paulo (30):32-45, Junho/Agosto, 1996. p.45.**

the sixteenth-century reconstruction of the unknown was made not only from artistic pictures but also from travel diaries. Travellers were asked to systematically register all kinds of observations that would bring knowledge of new experiences to future travellers. All these narratives as well as the geographic descriptions of nature (cartography) were centred in the hands of the first Admiral, the Duke of York, and the Royal Society[6], where future political actions were defined in relation to the "new world".

While in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the travellers used scientific orders to label species of the three natural realms, romantic attitudes influenced the nineteenth-century European imaginary, producing a new order derived from the encounter between reason and sensibility. Thus discourses of observation and experience are present in anthropological and social documents as well as in aesthetic-scientific works such as Alexander von Humboldt's which fed the imagination and curiosity of the Europeans for tropical regions. José Teófilo de Jesus's oil on canvas, "Allegory of America" (1820), is a condensation of the Europeans' imaginary (fig.5): the new land with exotic oversized fruit on the trees (banana, papaya, jack fruit, cashew), dense vegetation, river and sea, wild and domestic animals (the jaguar and lion, the bull and the horse, monkeys) and wild and domestic birds and reptiles are all around the indian woman, who is sitting like a queen with a feathered hair-dress and skirt, holding a parrot in

[6] See Laura Burman's M.A. dissertation "Os Cadernos de Viagem de Maria Graham. A Visão de um Novo Império", PUC/SP, 1987.

one hand and stepping on a snake, showing her power over all earthly possessions - the natural world and a treasure of gold. This is also an analogy of those Christian pictures that show the divine power of the Virgin over God's Creation.

The Victorian paradigm was to bring into being the "discovery" itself through a wide variety of texts such as letters, diaries, travel books, a name on a map, philosophical essays, economic reports as well as pictorial texts which take possession of the Great Unknown in a Derridean act of writing as opposed to blankness. The paradigm described here is re-enacted at the beginning of the twentieth century either to support the imperial expansion or to deny it through innocent ways of "seeing" the other.

Peter Fleming opens his travel book with a foreword satirising the tradition of the genre:

> *Most expeditions have serious, scientific, non-committal books written about them. But ours was not that sort of book. Only an alienist could have chronicled our activities either seriously or scientifically.*

He tries to highlight the benefits of his journey to Central Brazil even though nothing was achieved. He writes sarcastically that the expedition *may claim* to have thrown a *"little (but not much) light, of a confirmatory nature,"* on the mystery surrounding Fawcett's disappearance and ironizes the importance of taking possession of something through "naming" saying that beyond the completion of a 3000 mile journey under *amusing conditions*, nothing of importance was achieved unless *"the discovery of one new tributary to a tributary to a tributary of the Amazon"* without mentioning its name throughout the whole book.

The conventional means of Victorian discovery rhetoric pointed out by M.L. Pratt are also present in *Brazilian Adventure*, though many times in reverse. For example, landscape is aestheticized when the writer is moved by the exotic vegetation:

> *We came at last to the clump of very tall trees. We passed the cordon of indolent palms which fringed it. We crossed the hard cracked bed of a dried up pool which had given the trees their extra cubits. (p.242)*

However, he constantly undermines the idyllic images and mythical allegories of Brazilian nature with humour:

> *From the jungle unknown birds sent out stealthy, isolated calls across the moonlit water. A dog barked in the village, and someone said it was a wolf. From time to time a huge fish broke the water with a surreptitious splash. The camp fire glowed in accordance with the best traditions. (p.121)*

When Major Pingle, an Englishman living in Brazil and leader of the expedition, decided to abort it because it was unsafe to continue, only a small group, led by Fleming, which afterwards split in two, decided to attempt to reach Fawcett's last camp. From the moment they were left alone at the port of the Tapirapé Indians called São Domingo, the narrative acquires density of meaning through the presence of adjectival modifiers: *"the river became lovelier and lovelier and more nearly impassable."* When the first group (formed by Fleming, Roger and Neville), marched from the port to the inland Tapirapé village to get food and guides for the journey south-west toward the Kuluene, the narrator refers to their environment as an antique fairyland, *"a green, an old-established, an incalculable place"*. The reader notices that the landscape is seen simultaneously as a painting, provoking aesthetic pleasure, and as a fraud, provoking disillusion mainly when references to the explorer's imagination and home culture are made. For example, the impressive image of the first alligator, five feet long, hunted by some men in the party showed them that that was "The Real Thing". But after some days the alligator turns into a fraud. For two months they saw him every day, they slept within reach and swam in his waters. *"He was content to look malignant and live on his reputation"* (p.152). Fleming subverts the white man's awe which constructed the "Terrors of the Jungle". He says awe exists when men *"had imperfect comprehension or control"*. Awe had a *"touch of the monstrous."* Blending humour and disillusion in his meta-discourse he says that in the past men went in awe of real things, *"like Tyrants, and Thunder, and Snakes"*. Now the nursery game of marvelling at what Science has discovered has ended although there is still a residuum of awe at certain outlandish things. The alligator is included among these things for it is the last of the dragons and connotes an evil creature but, as with most of the terrors of Central Brazilian jungle, the touch of the monstrous disappears, turning odd things into a fraud:

> *In the dry season Matto Grosso is more of a health resort than a White Man's Grave.* (p.153)

Nevertheless, paradoxically, he destroys the imagined abundance of the jungle which was always seen as a source of food and makes it known as a desert and a place of suffering and starvation. He concludes that the evil reputation of an unknown region is due to two very good reasons: the few men who have been to these places want to make a good story out of their experiences and those who have not been there have a good excuse for not going. Both attitudes strengthen the power position of the "civilized" over the "uncivilized".

The author also re-evaluates scientific theory ironically when he affirms that he could have written extensively of the birds but knew that the reader would not benefit by a catalogue where the illustrations are in *mostly ill-chosen* words. According to him, despite all the useful data that explorers bring from the Great

Figure 6: Rugendas, João Maurício.

Unknown, common sense points out that their visit will be entirely valueless, the region will continue being the Great Unknown and though there has been some a reduction in the area of the Untrodden, it will still arouse some prejudice in their mind.

> *On your return you will write a book in which you will define at some length the indefinable sensations experienced on entering territory never entered before by a white man; but you know perfectly well that these sensations are no more than the joint product of your imagination and literary precedent - that at the time you were feeling only tired and hungry, and were in fact altogether impervious to whatever spurious attractions the epithet Untrodden is supposed to confer on a locality.* (p.240)

I think that Fleming in *Brazilian Adventure* is definitely *writing back* the colonial attempt to "illuminate" the darkness of Central Brazil when referring to the natural and animal worlds, but he is also *writing forwards*, though ambiguously, the power relations of the encounter between Europeans and people from underdeveloped countries as depicted by João Maurício Rugendas in the nineteenth century (fig.6).

Pratt's convention of the relation of mastery predicated between the seer and the seen is present in reference to the country and its people. *Procrastination, delay and uncertainty* define Brazil in chapter7:

(...) Procrastination on principle - procrastination for procrastination's sake - I learnt quite quickly to expect.
(...) Delay in Brazil is a climate. You live in it. You can't get away from it. There is nothing to be done about it. It should, I think, be a source of pride to the Brazilians that they possess a national characteristic which it is absolutely impossible to ignore. (p.59)

When Fleming describes Rio de Janeiro he writes that Brazil's national motto, Order and Progress, *"has not that rich flavour of irony which is too often, alas, the chief recommendation of public watchwords"*. Nevertheless, Rio still aroused feelings of disappointment and the reversal of the motto wasprincipally applied to their expedition when they reached São Paulo just at the outbreak of the 1932 Revolution. Many comments comparing the foreign culture with their own show an ambiguous degree of superiority on the part of the observer. For example, it sounded *"odd"* when the crowd in Ribeirão Preto, a "pleasant little town", clapped where *"one would have expected cheers"* as the troops marched *aimlessly* about the streets:

According to our standards of applause, it should have signalized the accomplishment of some difficult or curious feat; and one found oneself instinctively searching the devoted ranks for some soldier who was balancing his rifle on his chin, or swallowing his bayonet, or doing card tricks on the march. (p.84)

Conflicting statements give credit to the same crowd that is implicitly described as uncivilized when an impressive moment of patriotism - the singing of the National Anthem - becomes the object of ridicule immediately after because the first part of the music was repeated again and again by mistake. Fleming observed that *"the crowd discharged patriotic obligations with a deprecating air"* despite their loyalty to a convention. And he adds:

They admitted the loss of their dignity and wrote it off with a good grace. They made the best of an unnatural situation by doing the natural thing. This does not happen often among civilized peoples.

Different Brazilian Indian tribes were described ironically in the limits of the "contact zone". When he meets the "ferocious" river indians of the banks of the Araguaya, the Carajás, he praises how they *'have held out pretty well against the forces of enlightenment"*. He despises the civilizing process and those who have transformed into *"regrettable hybrids which spring up, fully trousered, wherever the dragon's teeth of civilization are sown on aboriginal soil."* (p.118). However, he is sarcastic when he reaches to the village of Santa Isabel, where the Brazilian government had established a post to *"disseminate culture and enlightenment among the aborigines"* . There were the remains of three layers of civilization:

The wheel had come full circle. The naked Indians who had endured the cannon of the eighteenth century and the kindergarten of the twentieth were still there. They were not so naked now, and not nearly so numerous; they had picked up a few of the white man's bad habits and some of his diseases, and the clothes which he insisted on their wearing had made them more susceptible to the cold at night, and so to fever. They were dying out, but they were still there. They came to meet us, with feather head dresses and ceremonial spears for sale, asking exorbitant prices. They had learnt one of the first lessons that contact with civilization teaches a primitive people: that sacred things are the easiest to sell ...(p.148)

Fleming cannot avoid using some stereotypes when he represents the Carajás in contrast with the Chavantes who inhabit the Matto Grosso bank of the river and are known for their evil reputation - "bad Indians" and perhaps cannibals. The Carajás are *"nice, cheerful, rather silly people: children in most things"*. These critical statements are clear referents which tie the description of natives to the explorer's home culture and signal the superior position of the observer. He adds with a nostalgic and paternalistic attitude as well as censorship:

It was sad to see them being civilized; but their numbers are dwindling fast , and before the process of civilization is complete I think the tribe will be extinct. Even in Paradise, you cannot afford to be as improvident as they are." (p.149)

The Tapirapés, another tribe that lived at São Domingo, were also described as warm-hearted, uncritical, and childish because they were genuinely impressed and delighted when Neville killed a big alligator. They were merry people and their humour was better than the Carajás'. They constantly used the word "Ticantó", and Fleming and his group repeated it every time they wanted to communicate with them as if it were a magic word that opened the way to mutual understanding. His way of seeing them predicated the relation of mastery:

The Tapirapés grinned and gave their quavering cry and chattered to each other with an air of mischief, watching us all the time out of the corners of their eyes, so that we felt like grown-ups at a children's party. (p.187)

The Chavantes were described through the vestiges they left in the jungle. Legend credited them with a *towering stature* but their trail revealed another fraud - they were small. Nevertheless, the proximity of these hostile Indians and scarcity of food made the pseudo-explorers give up their expedition when they were within a hundred miles of the place where Fawcett met his death .

For Fleming, the heroic dimension of their deed is fulfilled with the overcoming of all the geographical, material, logistical and political barriers they faced when they separated from the main group. Moreover, their way back becomes a personal race against Major Pingle and his men to get first to the places they have to stop for food and to find a boat that could take them to the sea-port in time to catch the ship that would take them back to Europe. A rhetoric of presence and delay unveils a psychological tension generated by the articulation of a typical colonial desire of dislocation. The re-enactment of the desire of being in the place of the other provokes a reversal of Fleming's power of perception of evaluating the Unknown: now he tries to possess it using stereotypical images of power relations between civilized and uncivilized peoples. Delay, incongruity, disorder, triviality, a proliferation of differentiations, uncertainty and relations of subordination and possession are articulated through metaphors in the description of the people and places every time they were delayed on their journey back to the Amazon. With the exception of Queiroz, one of their guides who helped them with "*an admirable and un-Brazilian despatch*", and the captain of the last boat that took them to the port, their prejudice about Brazilians was confirmed: first, through the denial of the native's identity in the case of Queiroz and secondly, through the description of the crew:

> *If they liked you, and you kept them in good temper, they worked well. But unfortunately they hardly ever looked as if they were working well. Time means nothing to the Brazilian, has no value for him.* (p.306)

They also met three Brazilians from São Paulo whom Fleming described as "*cheerful, aimless vagabonds*" and caricatured each of them according to the stereotypes suggested by their appearances: Herman (26) was the adventurer full of dreams, Cassio (21) was the idealist striving for action and with a "*capacity - rare in Brazil - for restlessness*", and Oscar (22), once a student of law in Manchester, was old-fashioned and melancholic. When he refers to food, generalizations proliferate. He affirms that Brazil is very far from being "portion-minded" even in times of scarcity. Brazilians believe in Promised Lands and men are not greedy but merely improvident.

Besides the suspense the author creates with the race back to the Amazon, the most striking descriptions are those that refer to the starving people of the villages they passed by on their way back to "civilization":

> *They are inured to the emptiness of the present; and no doubt for them, as for most of us, the past always manages to seem as if it had not been empty.* (p.285)

Fleming's way of seeing and acting was also that of a collector of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the journey, Neville bought from the Indians at the mouth of Tapirapé a blue and gold macaw, whose name was

Polly. But by the end, even the sex of the bird turned out to be a fraud: it was a he instead of a she. When they were inspected in Portugal, their luggage contained exotic odds and ends: the grotesque and flaming bill of a toucan that Roger shot, the skull and horns of a deer, among other things they had used in the jungle.

Despite Fleming's attempts to change the imperial imaginary, his discursive reinvention of Central Brazil produces mutations as well as continuities. His perception becomes fragmented when he converts local knowledge and discourse into European national knowledge and associates them with European forms and relations of power. Moreover, he refers to the Indians in an ahistorical way, implying that other parts of the world have no history. This dehumanizing habit engaged the European metropolitan readers of his time to continue with expansionist enterprises in imagined Brazil. In recent decades this expansionism has gained worldwide rhetorical power through the use of ecological discourse that aims at the internationalisation of the Amazon to preserve its rainforests. This discourses has *silenced* the evidence that the main forces of destruction in that geographical space come from international interests represented by multi-national companies.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that power relations between developed and emergent countries nowadays still repeat paradigms of the rhetoric of the discovery and of the nineteenth-century imaginary. An alternative to reverse this fact is to ask ourselves critically how and why travel writings from the 60s onwards have been producing a reinvention and a "*conversion*" of "the rest of the world" into a "polluted" and menacing space. What are the conditions of production and interpretation of these new images? They need to be contested in relation to the country's oral and written history, economic and political treaties and propaganda, as well as to its contemporary media images created by the tourist industry. This is another untrodden path worth journeying along.

Universidade de São Paulo

EDMUND AND THE NATURE OF VILLAINY IN *KING LEAR*

MARIA CRISTINA A. NASSER

I have no Brother, I am like no Brother:
And this word (Love) which Gray-beards call Divine,
Be resident in men like one another,
And not in me: I am my selfe alone. (3 Henry VI, V. 4)

This Manifest, uttered by Richard, Duke of Gloucester in *Henry VI*, could be uttered, as well, by Edmund in *King Lear*, as we shall see in the development of this article. What is important to stress is that both characters share one essential feature in their construction: villainy. But what makes a villain? A villain is, essentially, someone who performs villainous, evil deeds. What is evil? Again, by definition, it is something which is not good. What is goodness? It depends on the standards of morality of a society in a given period of its history. Thus, to be a villain means to go against the morality of a time.

I do not intend, here, to justify Edmund's attitudes based on a moral relativism - although I do believe that morality is relative. What I intend is to discuss the conceptual, ideological support for Edmund's attitudes and deeds. To expose the reasons why he goes against the regulation principles of traditional society: mercy, pity, love, human kindness, gratitude. To trace the nature of Edmund's *nature*.

According to John Danby in *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* - an extensive study of *King Lear* in regard of the dramatization of the word "Nature" and its meanings - "the words "nature", "natural", "unnatural" occur over forty times in *King Lear*" (19). It shows us the importance of the idea of Nature in the play, as well as to Elizabethan society. It is valid to remember that although Lear was supposed to have lived sometime around the seventh or eighth century before

Christ, the concepts and attitudes of the characters are those with to which the audience was accustomed to, i. e., based on Elizabethan patterns.

King Lear may be called a drama of ideas since its characters stand for two main different meanings of the word Nature. The choice and/or acceptance of one meaning determines the way the characters think and act. The characters play ideas not in the way of the old Morality plays, like an abstract Morality thesis, but in a way that only the new Elizabethan drama could adequately express - as "animated ideas", "living thoughts". These two main different meanings of Nature run throughout the play, strongly contrasted and mutually exclusive, dividing the characters in two parties. On one side we have Lear, Gloucester, Kent, Albany, the "good" characters of the play, representing the traditional and orthodox view of Nature in Elizabethan times. On the other, we have Edmund (followed tacitly by Lear"s wicked daughters), who articulates a new, revolutionary view of Nature.

In the sixteenth century, although the forces that transformed the concept of Nature to something closer to our understanding were already at work, the general thought of the time was still linked to the "chain of Being". The Universe was stratified in levels where each being had its fixed position in a rigid hierarchy which encompassed the divine and the mundane. Northrop Frye, in *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, gives us a summarized picture of the levels of the universe to an Elizabethan audience:

1. Heaven (the place of the presence of God), symbolized by the sun and the moon, which are all that's left of the original creation.

2. Higher or human order of Nature, originally, the "unfallen" world or garden of Eden, now the level of nature on which man is intended to live as continuously as possible with the aid of religion, morality and the civilized arts.

3. Lower or "fallen" order of physical nature, our present environment, a world seemingly indifferent to man and his concerns, though the wise can see many traces of its original spendour.

4. The demonic world, whatever or wherever it is, often associated with the destructive aspects of nature, such as the storm on the heath. (106)

The levels that interest us, in the analysis of the play, are the second and third level, i.e., respectively, the benign nature often (but not always) invoked by Lear, and the malignant nature manifested by Edmund.

Nature was, then, thought of as an ordered and beatiful arrangement, to which we should adjust ourselves. This beautiful arrangement kept the ideas Reason, Nature, God, (as King and Father) and Man close together, it was something normative for human beings. As Danby sees it, it is impossible to talk about Nature without talking also about pattern and ideal form; about Reason as displayed in Nature; about Law as the innermost expression of Nature; about Custom which is the basis of Law and equally of Law as an expression of Nature's pattern; about Restraint as the observance of Law, and the way to discover our richest self-fulfilment. (21)

Man's nature is directed to a maximum to be realized: "our richest self-fulfilment". Only through the observance of Reason, Law, Custom and Restraint, men, co-

operating with each other, could achieve the higher order of nature to which we were originally destined.

The two parties in *King Lear* have two Natures and two Reasons. Reason was the mediator between Nature and Authority. As Sidney Shanker properly comments, "Nature, Reason, Authority, are the triad of essential ideas at the core of the play. The cristis in one affects the others." (149) Nature is a rational arrangement created by God; there is a direct connection between man's logical order and the order of the physical universe. As Nature is bound to God, Man is bound to the order of Nature, observing his rightful place in a community. What held Man in his proper place and held the community together in love, obedience, authority, loyalty, was Reason. In so far as man was reasonable, he would conform.

In any case, as all men do not reason in the same way, Nature provides the Law. If one could not conform to Reason one should conform to the Law. Not to an external law, but the Law of man's inward constitution. The Law of Custom. "Custom is the expression of the inner pattern of Nature, the basis of Law, and the practical guide for man." (Danby 25) Those who obey Custom also respect authority, revere age and tradition, are loyal and make a *motto* of service.

Summing up, the Elizabethan man who believed in an orthodox concept of Nature would conform (and act accordingly) to his proper place in society, i. e., the proper position and relation in regard to the grand universal pattern. It seems very probable (looking at all his plays) that Shakespeare was supportive this view, although he could feel and understand the disturbances to this pattern. Very often, Shakespeare shows us societies consumed in corruption and chaos due to disobedience to the "natural order" of things. *Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Measure for Measure, The Tempest*, among others, and above all, *King Lear*, are plays that present the evil effects of breaking the complex Nature-Authority.

In *King Lear*, the trangression of the "natural order" turns the world upside down. Children dominate their fathers, subjects their kings; due to their own follies and painful absurdities, to the predominance of the individual over the social, men are lost in a world that lacks sense and order, they are lost in chaos. Most characters - mainly Lear and Gloucester - act this way by folly and ignorance. The only one that shows awareness and articulation about the reasons for his attitudes against the established order of Nature-Authority is Edmund.

Edmund, the bastard. In Elizabethan society, to be a bastard meant to be an outsider. Edmund's struggle in the play aims at breaking the walls of his bastardy to win a place in his society. A complete non-conformist, he aims not only at a proper place, but the highest place of all. He aims at being king. He stands for the new man in an order. I believe that we cannot help feeling him much closer to us in his understandable claim for 'a place in the sun' than the characters who subscribe to the orthodox morality. His mistake is to take the Machiavellian maxim "the ends justify the means" to the letter.

This new man and new attitude towards life symbolized by Edmund was already known to Shakespeare's society. From my point of view, Shakespeare, although

supportive to the orthodox concepts of life, was, up to a certain point, sympathetic to this new man. As one of the greatest minds of the period, I am sure that Shakespeare could devise the two currents of thought of his time and fathom the possibilities of each one. I imagine him attracted to - though, at the same time, worried about - the fierce individualism, strength of mind, animal vigour, appetite, impatience and iconoclastic force of characters like Edmund. Otherwise, he would not have been able to produce villain-heroes, or heros-villains, so interesting, so vivid, and so human, as Edmund, Richard, Iago, Macbeth.

"I am my selfe alone" seems to be an ideal *motto* for the type of the New Man. "It represents the shift from the absolutes of God and society to the single absolute of the individual" (Danby 64). Starting from a basic motivation - a physical, social, and/or emotional drawback - the individualist Shakespearean hero-villain would make an act of choice, consciously directing himself against the established order. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III, in my opinion, the epitome of the hero-villain, declares:

> *I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,*
> *Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,*
> *Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time*
> *Into this breathing world scarce half made up,*
> *And that so lamely and unfashionable*
> *That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;*
> *Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,*
> *Have no delight to pass away the time,*
> *Unless to spy my shadow in the sun*
> *And descant on mine own deformity.*
> *And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover*
> *To entertain these well-spoken days,*
> *I am determined to prove a villain*
> *And hate the idle pleasures of these days.*
> *(Richard III), I. 1.18-31)*

The same conscious attitude of chosing villainy and rebellion against a "dissembling Nature" is clear in Edmund's soliloquy. Edmund's bastardy works in the same way as Richard's crookedness. With both Richard and Edmund we feel that their resentment is understandable and their attitudes, up to a certain extend, justified. They are the "enemy within" a society that created them and rejected them. They are put outside their society by faults that were not originally theirs. Richard was not guilty of his malformation at birth (a shape that Heavens are responsible for). As well, Edmund is not responsible for his bastardy. Since the access to social conventions and to the whole of social consciousness is denied to them, they become experts in self-consciousness. They do not belong. They aim at destroying the "natural order" that keeps them apart, at unveiling the mask

of social conventions that holds society together, like pity, love, gratitude, brotherhood.

Edmund knows that customs can be unreasonable, and societies unnatural. Thus, it is to a different, revolutionary concept of Nature that Edmund commits himself:

> *Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law*
> *My services are bound. Wherefore should I*
> *Stand in the plague of custom, and permit*
> *The curiosity of nations to deprive me,*
> *For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines*
> *Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?*
> *When my dimensions are as well compact,*
> *My mind as generous, and my shape as true,*
> *As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us*
> *With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base? Base?*
> *Who, in the lusty sheath of nature, take*
> *More composition and fierce quality*
> *Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,*
> *Go to th'creating a whole tribe of fops*
> *Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,*
> *Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.*
> *Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund*
> *As to th' legitimate, if this letter speed,*
> *And my invention thrive, Edmund the base*
> *Shall top th' legitimate. I grow, I prosper.*
> *Now, gods, stand up for bastards. (I.2.1-22)*

After a brief appearance in act I where Edmund plays the polite young gentleman and watches Lear acting out the paradigm of authority, power and custom, he opens act II with the most "scandalous self-annoucement." (Danby 32)

The Nature invoked by Edmund is not the same Nature mentioned by Lear when he says that Cordelia is "a wretch whom Nature is ashamed / Almost t' acnowledge hers." (I. 1.213-14) This soliloquy subverts the ideas involved in the concept of orthodox ideology. Edmund bounds his services to the Law of a Lower Nature, preferring the lower orders to the superior ones, where he could find no place for him. The orthodox view keeps the ideas of Nature and God close together. The nature of the goddessto whom Edmund dedicates himself is savage and fierceful; she dwells in a world where man is the king of beasts; her Law is the "Law of the Jungle" where only the strongest and fittest survive. To serve this law deeds are authorized that may be considered villainous by the superior order of Nature.

Edmund asks why he should respect a hateful convention like custom, if all it did was to deprive him of his rights. If he was not inferior to his brother Edgar in

physical or intellectual attributes why he should be branded with baseness? Edmund seems to play with the words "Base", "Baseness", "Legitimate", as if he were digesting their significance to him. By the way, we can feel in Edmund an ironic force, a special sense of humour, a detachment, that allows him to reason and philosophise on his own misfortunes. His rebellious, romantic cry "Now, gods, stand up for bastards," is just, in my opinion, mocking the theological oratory of his time.

Edmund is, above all, a rationalist. It is only that Reason for him was something different from the Reason of Lear or Gloucester or, at least, something which led to different conclusions. For Edmund, the whole world is amoral. There is not a supreme intelligence guiding our lives. We have from life what we make of it. We are free to manipulate and overwhelm Nature. In Edmund, the sense of separation from nature and superiority to it goes with a sense of individual separation from the community and a sense of superiority to his fellows. "Reason is no longer a normative drive but a calculator of the means to satisfy the appetites with which we were born." (Danby 38)

For his father, Gloucester, representative of the orthodox view, the influence of "The Stars", i.e., the influence of a predetermined Nature which guides us, is clearly accepted:

> *Gloucester: These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of Nature can reason it thus, yet Nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked "twixt son and father. This villain of mine (Edgar) comes under the prediction, there's son against father; the king falls from bias of Nature, there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all the ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose these nothing. Do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished; his offence, honesty. Exit*

For Gloucester, the signs of nature reveal and explain "unnatural" occurrences. They are symptoms of a disease that affects all the natural world, including men. Edmund sees no connection in Nature save those of material cause and effect. We are masters of our fates. Paraphrasing Cassius, I say that Edmund knows that "the fault... is not in our stars,/But in ourselves, that we are underlings." (Julius Caesar, I.2.140-1) Edmund knows that, at some time in their lives, men have the power to control what they will become. If, for instance, we are under the control of others (underlings) we must not blame the stars under which we were born, but our own weakness. If Chance, not Destiny, has been unfair to us - as it has been with him - we should do whatever is necessary to prove our superiority to it and to other men. Thus, with the leave of this father, he says:

> *Edmund: This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains of necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star. My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. (I.2.112-44)*

Therefore, believing himself to be master of his own destiny, Edmund becomes a man of action. He acts in pursuance of his purposes, ignoring whatever feelings he might have for those in his way. He aims, first, at his brother's land, then - as the prospect broadens - to the crown. He regards men and women as pieces in the great game he is playing. His only true interest in them is in their utility in providing him wity ways to reach a higher step to his ultimate purpose. "They are for him divested of all quality except their relation to this end; as indifferent as mathematical quantities or mere physical agents."(Bradley 250)

Goneril and Regan, together with Cornwall and Goneril's servant, Oswald, are villains made of different stuff. With the exception of Oswald, who is a contemptible fellow who chose to serve and be loyal to Goneril, the others are guided by Appetite, and not by Reason. Their appetite make them birds of prey, savage human-beasts who seem to take pleasure in cruelty, as in the scene when Gloucester has his eyes plucked out. While Edmund is the intellectual mentor of villainy in the play, they are merely tools for his purposes. The sisters may be said to have been as fooled by Edmund as Gloucester and Edgar were, for instance, since they devoted their love - lust seems a better word - to someone who has never loved them.

Edmund's end seems a bit controversial. He dies as a knight, fighting the disguised Edgar. When he is about to die and hears from Edgar about his father's death, he says, "This speech of yours hath moved me,/And shall perchance do good: "(V. 3.202.-3) Was Edmund really touched by this father's death? Was he repenting? Soon after, when he hears about Goneril's and Regan's deaths, the fine irony and detachment are back: "I was contracted to them both: all three/Now marry in an instant." (V.3.230-1) Later, he seems touched when he considers himself beloved by the two sisters, and, sincere when he says, "...some good I mean to do,/Despite of mine own nature." (V. 3.245-6) Thus speaking, he sends a messenger in an attempt to cancel the execution of Lear and Cordelia - an act which is the most frequently evoked sign of his repentance - and dies. Many see in his last speech the negation of the Nature he has commited himself to before, a statement

of repentance, and a final submission to the will of God. I have a different opinion.

From my point of view, the key speech concerning Edmund's end is when he says, "... The wheel is come full circle; I am here." (V.3.176) He is deadly wounded, he knows he is about to die. The game has been played and is now lost and done. As a rationalist, he reasons that nothing else can be done in favour of his cause. As a good player, he accepts defeat with nonchalance and elegance. Edmund's final attitude is not of repentance for his villainy, it is of acceptance. He accepts his own responsibility for what has happened, he does not deny the "neutral" Nature he believedin. When he says he wants to do some good despite his own *nature*, he is using the word in the traditional sense to stress his mastery - and his superiority - ove a situation he has created. His very particular Reason tell him that Lear's and Cordelia's deaths are useless to him now he is dying. The logical thing to do is to spare them. I do not mean that his attitude is completely without of feeling, but it is rather a stoic feeling of recognition of just retribuition. This acceptance of defeat as a possible consequence of deeds done may not be so touching as true repentance and submission to a higher order, but it is very positive, notwithstanding. It is not a nihilistic view of life. It may seem amoral, but it is not, absolutely, immoral. Edmund's nature of villainy has never been based on immorality, but rather in lack of morality.

Edmund's end, as well as the other characters' ends - with the possible exception of Cordelia's death (a discussion which is out of the scope of this work) - marks Shakespeare's picture of Stoicism in the play. Men are responsible for their deeds and must endure the consequences. The synthesis achieved in the end of the play shows that blind commitment to old conventions (thesis) as well as savage individualism and total disrespect to the established (antithesis) are destructive just the same. Tolerance, true compassion and authentic morality - a morality which is not externally required, but rather immanent to our human condition - are the way out of chaos and corruption. As any solution destined for the future - not just Shakespeare's future, but, unfortunately, our future - it is utopian, but it is the trustworthy synthesis of Lear's Nature and Edmund's Nature. Real genuine human nature remains a mystery in the play inasmuch as it a mystery to us all.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Greenwich, CN: Fawcett, 1963. 247-253.

Danby, John F. *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A study of King Lear*. London: Faber & Faber, 1949.

Frye, Northrop. *"King Lear." Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Ed. Robert Sandler. New haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. London: Longmans, 1959.

---, *King Lear*. New Jersey: New American Library, 1987.

---, *Richard III*. New Jersey: New American Library, 1988.

Shanker, Sidney. *"King Lear*: "Ideology" as Structure." *Shakespeare and the Uses of Ideology*. Eds. Carolyn Ruth Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely. Urbana: U of Illinois P. 1985.

THE PERFORMANCE IS THE THING:
THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY AND *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* -1982, 1992[1]

JOSÉ ROBERTO O'SHEA

Whether *Antony and Cleopatra* is, in Coleridge's words, "the most wonderful" of all Shakespeare's plays, or in Shaw's, "folly gone mad erotically," the play has always been a director's *bête noire*. The playtext's ample geography and complex thematizing of vulgarity and majesty, comedy and deferred tragedy— only through Cleopatra's suicide, showing the "magnificent but mildly ridiculous mid-lifers finally rising to their own hyperbole" (Paul Taylor, *Independent*)—have challenged—and often defeated—many a company. It is here that Performance Studies and Criticism can make a contribution—and not only to stage but, occasion, to page. If Michael Jamieson's premise for Performance Studies is correct, that is, if "the way characters and scenes have been presented in the theatre often sheds light on their significance, and suggests possibilities of interpretation which might not occur in the study" (53), research into past performances and contrastive study of ways in which the complexities in any given playtext, (for my purpose, *Antony and Cleopatra)*, have been dealt with on stage can facilitate the understanding of how theatrical considerations influence meanings which a production incorporates. No doubt, despite isolated voices of antitheatricalism (see Barish and Berger in bibliography below), it seems "no longer necessary to stress that the text of a play is only its starting point, and that only in production is its potential realised" (Bratton and Hankey ix); hence the basic aim of Shakespeare Performance Criticism: simply put, to describe and assess how his

---

[1] I analyse the other two RSC productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* (Trevor Nunn's 1972 and Peter Brook's 1978) in two articles: "Nunn's/Suzman's 'No-Nonsense' Cleopatra: Production and Reception," and "Brook's/ Jackson's Level Cleopatra: Production and Reception," forthcoming, respectively, in *Anais do XXVIII SENAPULLI* (Ouro Preto, Jan./Feb. '1996) and in *Ilha do Desterro*, "Shakespeare Studies."

texts have been realised in production and received by critics and audience (Mulryne, Bulman, and Shewring vi).

Applying elements of a working methodology suggested by Jay Halio, I have selected the two most recent Royal Shakespeare Productions of *Antony and Cleopatra*—Adrian Noble's 1982 and John Caird's 1992—for contrastive study. The materials I have examined include production prompt books, videos, programs, photographs, press reviews and cuttings.[2] Despite Halio's disclaimer that his book "provides no recipes for productions or formulae for critical judgments" (2), the "questions" he advances can supply a working methodology to inquiries into performances: What was the ultimate text used in the production, and how can changes and cuts be justified in terms of the production's conception and effect? What is the set design, and what effect does the set have on the production? How are characters interpreted, and to what extent does subtext delivery illuminates such interpretation? In what ways do spectacle, stage business, musical and other effects contribute to, or detract from, the production's conception? Finally, is the overall interpretation of a playtext in performance successful, in what ways?[3]

To find a performance's text, first of all, it is crucial to realise that "the script used in the theatre is never precisely the same as the text published in whatever edition the playgoer may have read" (Halio 4)—neither is it intact, as a text that serves as the production's prompt book, I might add. Invariably, there will be cuts and changes made by adapter, translator, director, actor etc. Words, lines, whole speeches or even scenes may be deleted, or changed around; cultural references or words that might be abstruse to a modern audience may be discarded or updated; names might be substituted for pronouns, to aid character identification etc. And how could it be otherwise? After all, if the evidence from multiple-text plays indicates that neither Shakespeare nor his collaborators regarded the scripts as beyond revision or untouchable, why should not modern producers, directors (or even translators) adapt and revise in an attempt to streamline a show, reduce playing time to a certain limit, or make a performance entertaining and significant to a particular audience? (Halio 9).

Analysis of the prompt books of the two RSC *Antony and Cleopatra* productions I have studied can illustrate not only this streamlining tendency but also the extent to which the altered scripts advance the productions' conceptions.[4]

---

[2] The research was made possible by a CAPES grant and much enabled by the excellent holdings and support by the efficient staff of The Shakespeare Centre and The Shakespeare Institute Library, at Stratford-upon-Avon.

[3] Rather than simply immersing myself in Halio's model and adopting it wholesale, I attempt to make it my own. After the contributions of New Historicism, Cultural Materialism, and Deconstruction to critical theory, I am, for example, disregarding Halio's quest for what may or may not be a legitimate, essential "Shakespeare" (pp. 1, 3, 8, 11), and his concern with finding a production's "coherence" (72-82).

[4] The text used as promptbook for Noble's production was the New Penguin *Antony and Cleopatra*, edited by Emrys Jones (1977), for Caird's, the *Complete Oxford-Compact Edition*, in which the play is edited by Gary Taylor (1988). The prompt books, under accession numbers, respectively, S3239 and 4332, are held at the Shakespeare Centre Library, in Stratford-upon-Avon.

With Michael Gambon and Helen Mirren in the title roles, Adrian Noble's production had its first performance on 6 October 1982, at The Other Place, in Stratford-upon-Avon, with Press Night on 13 October. The next day in *The Guardian*, Michael Billington, despite reservations, admits: "the production gives you the profile of the play very clearly indeed." Billington submits that Noble understands the play as being "intimate, fast moving. . . rather than a Hollywood epic" and rightly reminds us that Peter Brook's production four years before had been "predicated on the same principle."[5] Further assessing Noble's overall intimate conception, Billington argues that its main advantage is that it provides hero and heroine with a "recognisable human face." Far from being demi-gods, the two are here rendered "fallible mortals."

Some 375 lines have been cut in Noble's prompt book. Quite how have these alterations streamlined the action and highlighted Noble's conception of an intimate drama? In regard to the former, a number of minor cuts were introduced, for instance, cultural or historical references that might be unfamiliar to many in the audience, e.g., superstition regarding the courser's hair supposedly turning into a snake when left in water (1.2.194); Octavius's mentioning of Antony's defeating Hirtius and Pansa (1.4.58); Cleopatra's reference to Narcissus (1.5.96), and to the "boar of Thessaly" (4.13.2); Antony's reference to "Phoebus' car" (4.8.29) and to Nessus, Alcides, and Lichas (4.12.43-45).

Noble's intimate conception of the story is clearly emphasised to the detriment of the play's epic dimension by means of certain key cuts. For one thing, Civil troubles are made much less of a threat in and outside Rome; the absence in Antony's speeches of a reference to letters by worried friends summoning him back to Rome (1.2.182-84) and of details of Sextus Pompeius's might (1.2.184-90 and 1.3.49-54) at once soften Antony's own rendering of the political crisis in Rome and make him highlight Fulvia's death as a pawn for Cleopatra. Moreover, there is not only less Civil trouble in the West but there is no trouble at all at the Eastern end of Roman territory: Ventidius is not dispatched to Parthia in commission (1.3.31-32 and 41-43); in fact, there is no Parthia, 3.2 being entirely cut. With less political trouble in and outside Rome, initial attention can be made to focus on Alexandrian revels, the impact of the news of Fulvia's death, and Antony's departure. Yet, the action does move on swiftly to the only Civil trouble extant: the "rebellion" started by Fulvia with Lucius's help, instigated perhaps to get Antony back to Fulvia herself.

One cut, at least, seems unaccountable, precisely considering Noble's conception of intimate, as opposed to epic, drama. As is known, especially early on in the text, the lovers' intimacy is fraught with game-playing and manipulation, even if mainly one-sided; regrettably, Cleopatra's early acknowledgement of her own deceitfulness is missing; so is Antony's confession that she can manipulate him, as 1.1.42-43 have been cut:

---

[5] Brook's production opened at The Royal Shakespeare Theatre on 4 October 1978, with Alan Howard and Glenda Jackson in the title roles.

Cleo. I will seem the fool I am not,
Antony will be himself.
Ant. *But stirred by Cleopatra.*

Now if we turn to the prompt book for John Caird's production, we shall find comparable concerns and procedures in operation. The production opened on 29 October 1992 (Press Night 5 November) at The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, with Richard Johnson and Clare Higgins in the main roles. If Noble's conception foregrounded intimacy, by contrast, Caird, in the words of the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer, "takes up the challenge of the epic" (Spencer). Reviewing the production for *Shakespeare Survey*, Peter Holland states that its "unequivocal view of the lovers was supported by some firm cutting" (181). As usual, the script contains changes of a minor and major nature, and it pays to investigate the extent to which these can be justified by conception. Along with the 300 lines or so cut, minor changes were introduced, for example, to intensify a joke, as when Mardian adds one "indeed," at "for indeed I can do nothing madam" (1.5.15), or to update language, "you are" substituting for "thou art" at 2.2.114 and elsewhere. Once again, by now predictably so, gone are references to the courser's hair, to Hirtius and Pansa, to Nessus etc., as well as half the long list of sixteen kings allied to Antony at 3.6.70-3. Surprisingly, however, especially in a production that takes on the "epic challenge," details of Pompey's might are once again absent, the text moving directly to the news of Fulvia's death; and, once again, there is no Parthian scene; Holland rightly approves of the cut in favour of added "concentration on the central action," despite the consequent diminution of the play's geography.

Yet, cutting can at times oversimplify. The absence of Seleucus' crass betrayal of Cleopatra over her declared wealth to Octavius (5.2.140-50), for instance, makes it "almost too easy" for her to "achieve a formal tragic emotion for her death" (Holland 181-2). In fact, Holland goes on to conclude that "the refusal of complexity was strongly characteristic of [Caird's] production style" (182). Hence, if cutting and streamlining will not necessarily reveal hitherto unsuspected or underemphasized elements of a playtext, the questions remaining are what to cut? How far to cut ? (Halio 10). Surely, each production has to answer these questions for itself.

For Halio, finding the set design of a production is "to reflect upon the possible reasons for the design that has been used and to decide whether or not the experience of the play is thereby enriched or distorted by the visual elements of the production" (4-5). For my purposes, I shall again apply Halio's formulation with an adjustment: the "experience of the play" which he refers to as being subject to either enhancement of distortion, as I see it, is not an absolute quantity but is constructed by the audience and by whoever is analysing text and performance. In any event, as we begin to examine the set design of a specific production, it pays to consider the physical characteristics of the actual theatre

and stage, and, again, to go back to what we believe is the production's overall conception.

Antony and Cleopatra is known for its intense stage traffic, in the words of Dr. Johnson, "the continual hurry of the action," and in a much less known but not less emphatic voice, "one huge, dramatic river of action" (Desmond P. *Yorkshire Post).* As I mentioned earlier, Noble's production was staged in The Other Place, the RSC's studio theatre, seating between 80 and 160 spectators very close to the actors. The open stage is an indefinite darkened area surrounded by the audience on three sides. Noble's *mise-en-scène*, running for three hours, with one ten-minute intermission, accordingly, presented the text of "a mighty epic [unfolding] in a small, intimate space. . . a studio version of *Antony and Cleopatra*" (McGarry). If we consider the studio nature of the theatre and Noble's conception of the play as intimate drama, there is really no need of elaborate sets. Moreover, as many have pointed out, precisely because of "the continual hurry of the action," if ever a Shakespeare play could do with sparse sets, it is *Antony and Cleopatra*, interestingly enough, perhaps the "most image-packed of all" (Wardle). Nadine Baylis's set was very much an empty space,[6] with virtually no scenery to stand between audience and actors, promoting an inevitable sense of physical closeness.

For example, a mere raised platform provided perspective, at 4.15 (the famous 'monument scene'), "slipping finally into the guise of the fateful monument" (McGarry). The one technical device used was a split-level set, to point out the dividing line between the two cities and move swiftly from Rome (on top) and Alexandria (below). In the eyes of the *Daily Express* reviewer, Noble "strips down the palaces of Rome and Africa to a pure white floor with a black balcony above" (Roper). Some members of the audience, however, possibly seduced by designer's theatre, appear to have missed lavish settings. In fact, a sophisticated reviewer such as Billington pointed a finger at one trade-off of the production's swiftness and economy of set, writing that if the transitions from Rome to Egypt are "wonderfully swift," the stark "contrast between the two worlds is sketched in rather than developed." From the blocking and scene changes marked in the prompt book and observed in the production's video, however, I would argue that the sparse set design was highly appropriate to the challenging "confines" of TOP and to Noble's conception.

Sue Blane's design for John Caird's "epic" production established an expected counterpoint. Although the *Financial Times* reviewer dismissed it as "*Son et Lumière* at the Sphinx" (Rutherford), Blane's set only appeared to be bulky. Katherine Duncan-Jones's reaction was typical. Her first impression was of a "massive set" with "hunks of masonry," dismissed as "pure Hollywood corn." Yet, she admits that, gradually, the set reveals its "interlocking Romano-Egyptian elaboration." Holland found Blane's set full of "grandeur," and his description is

[6] At this point, we are again reminded that the previous RSC production of the play was Brook's 1978, pretty much an "empty space" style of production, despite being housed at the 1,500 seat, ample, proscenium-staged Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

as good as any: "four pairs of massive shutters like sections of [ancient, ruin-like] walls and monuments, rough stone on audience left, rendered brick on its right, drawn back for the Egyptian scenes and closing in for the Roman scenes" (*Survey* 183). No doubt, far from being cumbersome, Blane's set provided the agility needed to tell a tale of ample and ever-switching geography in a large space. Billington found her design "marvellous" and wrote: "Scene melts filmically into scene"; Robert Butler (*Independent on Sunday*): "location was fixed swiftly and clearly"; and Paul Taylor concluded: "The flexibility of the set allows Caird to give this restless play a strong narrative energy" (*Independent*).

Observation of the production's video can attest that indeed the worlds of Egypt and Rome overlap in remarkable swiftness, visually framing each other. The most splendid example of this is the visual realisation of the public double throning of the lovers in Alexandria, in chairs of gold on a silvered platform (3.4), disclosed upstage to the audience, even as Octavius disapprovingly rants on Antony's giving away kingdoms to Cleopatra and her progeny. Exposing a fascinating, hitherto visually undisclosed aspect of the play, Caird and Blane provide us with a scene we have always wanted to see.[7]

As is known, lighting and music are vital elements in any production. Leo Leibovici's lighting for Noble's/Baylis's sparse-set was as crucial as to define setting, encoding Rome in bright light and Egypt in mellow or shadowy light. In keeping with the concept of sparseness, the production had a "basic black-and-white look" (McGarry), a darkened stage with localised lighting, evincing a chamber atmosphere which, again, would reinforce the production's emphasis on intimacy. Yet, at her death (5.2.360), Cleopatra sits up in her golden throne, shining the splendour of her Egyptian robes and crown, bathed in golden light in her majestic moment of triumph over Octavius—if all alone. The rest of the stage is in deep darkness and the audience experiences an intense moment, at once grandeur and intimacy.

By contrast, D. Hersey's light design for John Caird's main stage production was invariably grand and bold, surely setting the "epic tone" (Butler). The production's opening scene, for example, presented us with the lovers silhouetted against an unidentified angry sky. Later, in Egypt, the ancient stone walls appear in golden light; in Rome, they close in claustrophobically, "blotting out the sun" (Spencer), undoubtedly suggesting the world of constriction and discipline that Antony had forsaken for sensual delight.

George Fenton wrote the music of squealing bagpipes and muffled drums to help establish setting (Wardle) for Noble. As to Ilona Sekacz's score for John Caird, although the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer found the drumrolls "intrusive"

---

[7] Likewise, in a recent production of *Antony and Cleopatra* staged by the Northern Broadsides Company at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon (October 1997), director Barrie Rutter opens the performance by providing the audience with a scene many of us have wished to see: a ridiculous boy Cleopatra "squeaking" the Queen's "greatness / I'th' posture of a whore" (5.2.220-21).

and passed a dreadful sentence—"shoot the percussionists"—all in all, the production's "ponderous martial music"(Milne), with drummers providing "thunderous" battle sounds, was considered "properly operatic" (Holland 184), one critic hoping the score would "be available on tape as soon as possible" (Edmonds).

Antony and Cleopatra's ample geography is not the only staging difficulty. Character is always a problem. If "finding the character is perhaps the most difficult problem an actor has to solve in approaching an important role" (Halio 31), in this play, the roles, especially the protagonists', have always posed daunting challenges to performers. Besides, in a play such as *Antony and Cleopatra*, acting is not just a matter of finding a way into one of the main roles; here, successful stage realisation depends on interaction, on the two protagonists working closely together to establish the relationship that their roles demand.[8] The actors playing Antony and Cleopatra are expected to live up to their mutual—and to other people's—fabulous descriptions:

Ant. She is cunning past man's thought. (1.2.146)

Cleo. His face was as the heavens. (5.2.79)

Eno. ... her own person / It beggared all description (2.2.202-03)

Oct. No grave upon the earth shall clip in it / A pair so famous. (5.2.357-58)

How do the title roles fare in these two productions, in terms of physique, personality, overall impact? Playing beside Helen Mirren's Cleopatra, Michael Gambon's Antony was a "grizzled, soldier" (Billington), a somewhat "aged Antony" (McGarry), "an oak-tree of a man" (Roper). For Irving Wardle, Gambon conforms to a traditional idea of Antony: "leonine, densely bearded and light on his feet." Playing beside Clare Higgins, Richard Johnson's Antony, except for Peter Holland who found him unattractive and lacking in "sexual charisma" (183), was also praised, again, as a "grizzled, blustery. . . [if] ageing Antony" (Butler). Surely, in vocal virtuosity, movement, and physical appearance, Johnson was very much the old, dying lion Enobarbus refers to at 3.13.95.

Besides the similarities in physique between the two Antonies, there is further likeness in personality. In Noble's production, Antony's dotage is underlined, as his reason clearly gives way to passion and rashness. Gambon plays an Antony who is overly fierce and determined, "a man of startling doubts and contradictions. Impulsive yet curiously melancholic" (Coveney), given to "sudden rushes of blood to the head" (Billington). Indeed, in performance, much is made of his impulsiveness in accepting to marry Octavia (2.2.149-54); of his blinding rage when finding Cleopatra with Thidias, in fact, striking and hauling Cleopatra across the stage—only to make up soon after, saying he is "satisfied" (3.13.167). Johnson's Antony also dotes; for one thing, he is too naive, seeming "too large-hearted ever to guess at the extent of Cleopatra's manipulations" (Duncan-Jones).

---

[8] Certainly the same could be said of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Othello and Desdemona, Romeo and Juliet, Posthumus and Imogen, Benedick and Beatrice etc.

Despite a few negative comments, e.g., Francis King's (*Sunday Telegraph*), for whom Gambon lacked "both the heroic presence and the nobility of diction essential to the role," Michael Gambon's Antony was generally well received. In the words of one critic, he showed "willingness and ability in great roles"(Desmond P.).[9] Gambon's depiction was thought to be an "unsentimental portrait of an old campaigner suffering what Enobarbus calls 'diminution of brain'" (Billington), his interpretation displaying "total... devastation of spirit and body" (Desmond P.).

Richard Johnson played a well-spoken Antony whose lines were enunciated with reassuring technical clarity. However, his return to the role did not seem to live up to the high expectations of those who had seen him playing the part twenty years before opposite Janet Suzman, under the direction of Trevor Nunn, in a highly successful production. Holland's reaction was typical: "Returning to the role which he had played at Stratford in 1972... Johnson was quite simply too old and too wearied" (182-83). And even though Duncan-Jones stressed that in Johnson's interpretation, Antony's "bungled suicide gets the disquieting blend of tragedy and farce just right"—the *Birmingham Post* reviewer going on to qualify Antony's tragic moment as rendered in "touching clumsiness" (Edmonds)—Johnson was felt to be lacking in more ways than one: "It is fair enough to play Antony as a plain man and a soldier," wrote the *Sunday Telegraph* reviewer, "but the dash and charm are missing" (Milne). Found unattractive, Johnson's Antony "could do nothing to project a reason for Cleopatra's fascination with him to match his justifiable fascination with her" (Holland 183).

As has too often been pointed out, Cleopatra is "the greatest challenge any actress is likely to attempt" (Desmond P.), "Shakespeare's most complex heroine. . . a woman of unfathomable ambiguity" (McGarry). Mythicizing apart, perhaps the first thing to be said about Helen Mirren's Cleopatra was that, physically, she surprised, not conforming to the character's received idea: hers was a Macedonian Cleopatra, a blonde, in Wardle's phrase, "an un-Egyptian woman." She was seen as a "natural look" Cleopatra, with "toned-down pale features in a land supposedly running riot with exotic colour" (McGarry). She was "no statuesque Egyptian enchantress," but "skittish," "giddy" (Billington), "positively kittenish" (Radin). Yet her "slim, diminutive and vulnerable appearance" contrasted with a "tour-de-force, a barnstorming performance" (McGarry). By contrast, at least as far as "physique du rôle" was concerned, Clare Higgins's Cleopatra seemed more predictable, even though the *Sunday Telegraph* praised her "foxy good looks and mercurial manner" (Milne).

In terms of costuming, in Adrian Noble's sparse production, accordingly, women's outfits were generally unelaborate, except at the moment of Cleopatra's majestic death. The clinging, almost transparent muslin dresses and sheets of

[9] Prior to his Antony and Lear with the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1982, Gambon had played Brecht's Galileo at the National Theatre in London.

cloth draped over the shoulder, by Baylis (who did costumes as well as sets), were thought to be "cleverly designed" (Coveney); one critic's surprise might be typical of the general audience's: "Nothing could be more unexpected than the sight of a Queen of the Nile who is not a raven-haired tyrant dripping with gold from neck to ankle" (Roper). Moreover, scarves caused quite an impact. Cleopatra makes her first appearance tugging on Antony at the end of a long scarf made from the same material as her dress; Antony later wears one of her scarves when he learns of his defeat; and Cleopatra prepares for suicide draped in the blood-stained cloth (a shroud?) which had been used to haul the dying Antony up to the monument. For *The Observer*, the scarf is a noose, "a symbol of the killer instinct that lurks in obsessive sexual love" (Radin).[10]

The main point of Baylis's costumes seems to have been the affirmation of Cleopatra's development, the one aspect most highly praised in reception. To be sure, Cleopatra's gowns, hair and overall physical appearance reiterated her development from mirth, to attrition, to despair, to grandeur. Plain and in tones of silver and lavender in the opening scenes, in which, "an Egyptian nymph" (Roper), "barefoot, . . . she gambols, she leaps, she stamps her foot, she cries" (Radin), her gowns become red and orange at the Battle of Actium, and dark in Act 5, after Antony's death, for a modern audience, an unmistakable sign of mourning. Likewise, her golden hair, initially down and bouncy, in Act 5 is darker and tied up, contributing to a haggard, severe physiognomy.

If Sue Blane's sets were successful, the same, however, cannot be said of her costumes. "The women wear unflattering corrugated silk," complained *The Sunday Telegraph* (Milne). And Malcolm Rutherford went so far as to suggest that the costumes were likely to have "come out of a dressing up box kept in the attic in case somebody wanted to play charades" (*Financial Times*). Yet, as was the case with Mirren's, Higgins's costumes can be evaluated as to the extent to which they might support character development, and, in that respect, at least Higgins's hair dressing seemed effective. By the point in the action when, in "shuddering wails" (Holland 182), Higgins's Cleopatra states: "the odds is gone, / And there is nothing left remarkable / Beneath the visiting moon" (4.15.66-8), she has abandoned her reddish wigs, considered "distractingly dreadful" (Milne), and appearing in the cropped (black) head of a soldier.

As to Cleopatra's personality, "infinite variety" has always been on the horizon of expectation of many a playgoer and reviewer: "We see a woman of infinite varieties (sic) . . . wily and cunning and fierce but with a very full heart," writes Desmond P. referring to Helen Mirren (*Yorkshire Post*). Indeed, Mirren's Cleopatra was a "mercurial woman who [could] undergo half a dozen emotional gear changes in a minute" (Billington). For example, at 2.5., not knowing what she is about to

[10] The use of scarves promotes yet another point of contact between Noble's and Brook's productions. In the famous "monument scene" (4.15), we recall that Glenda Jackson, Paola Dionisotti (Charmian), and Juliet Stevenson (Iras) toss their long, white scarves horizontally out to Antony and drag him to them over a red carpet.

hear, she initially pampers with cushions and gold the messenger of the dreadful news of Antony's marriage to Octavia. then proceeds to sock the hapless man in the jaw, soon afterwards, only to greet with joy his makeshift catalogue of Octavia's physical defects. Apart from "variety," it was the development which Mirren imparted on Cleopatra that deserved encomia. Billington wrote: "What Ms Mirren accomplishes better than anyone I have seen is the character's transition to marble constancy after Antony's death." And David Roper echoes: "after the death of her lover. . . the shrill and passionate young woman becomes the dignified and strong Queen."

Clare Higgins may have seemed more predictable in terms of physique than Helen Mirren, but she was equally praised for development. "From a deliberately lightweight beginning, all girlish gypsy," wrote Duncan-Jones, Higgins grows into a richly complex Cleopatra"; Higgins provides a "fascinating Cleopatra—moody, wilful, brassy at first and regal later" (*Birmingham Post*, Edmonds); "Higgins's Cleopatra starts off with a raucous lack of majesty, but her regal manner deepens and quietens after Actium" (*Independent on Sunday*, Butler). In Act I, for instance, joking around and being affectionate to her inferiors, she makes no show of rage. Not unlike Helen Mirren's approach, only as of 2.5., again, the famous scene with the Messenger, does she demonstrate her wrath. Even Malcolm Rutherford (*Financial Times*), who seems otherwise to have abhorred the production, grants Higgins's development: "a slut *until* she puts on her robes after Antony's death and has her immortal longings" (my emphasis). Indeed, much stage business was created to make her look like the seductress she is, as when at 4.2.1 she sits on the floor embracing one of Antony's followers, later in the same scene goes about touching the soldiers, as if entertaining the troops, and, before exiting, caresses a soldier's back and neck. Yet, at Antony's death (4.15), Higgins was a shattered, moving Cleopatra, playing her tragedy in operatic tones. Interestingly enough, Higgins's Cleopatra died not only in majesty and ecstasy but also in wrath, angrily wishing she could hear the asp "call great Caesar ass / Unpolicied!" (5.2.306-07)[11]

The overall impression made by Helen Mirren was highly positive: "superb" (*Yorkshire Post*, Desmond P.); Mirren's Cleopatra is a performance which "for glamour, fire and pathos is unlikely ever to be forgotten. . . 'a lass unparallel'd'" (*Sunday Telegraph*, King); in a production stripped of sets, and regal trains, for that matter, "splendour arises from the characters, none more so than Helen Mirren's breathtaking Cleopatra" (*Coventry Evening Telegraph*, McGarry). And although in words that might enrage gender studies scholars, Billington tops it all: "this Cleopatra lives like a woman but dies like a queen." Clare Higgins made quite an impression too. Benedict Nightingale writes: "this is the most complete Cleopatra I have seen in ages" (*Times*). After Antony's disintegration, Duncan-Jones argues, only through Cleopatra's rhetoric can he recover stature. And echoing Duncan-

[11] That is, outwitted in "policy" or statecraft (Jones 283).

Jones, Kirsty Milne concludes that Johnson's Antony is "somewhat perfunctory about his own death"; it is Higgins who makes up for it with pathetic "howling" (*Sunday Telegraph*).

Johathan Hyde and John Nettles played Octavius, respectively, for Noble and Caird. Hyde was "sleek-haired" (Billington), "unsmiling" (Desmond P), "tight-lipped and tense" (King) Octavius, "unusually impassioned" (Billington), "an icicle" (Desmond P), "grimly puritanical" (Radin). In Hyde's Octavius, Antony had a "magnificent adversary. . . not the usual cold-blooded boy, but a saturnine watcher. . . who finally breaks down when he takes the death weapon in his hands" (Wardle). Echoing Irving Wardle's remark ten years later, Robert Butler stresses that "John Nettles makes Octavius a formidable Roman adversary" (*Independent on Sunday*). In fact, Nettles's Octavius, like Hyde's, was not the "usual coldfish" but "a man hungry for triumph" (Billington); surprisingly, however, Nettles's Octavius is a sensualist— as he unrestrainedly joins in the romping feast aboard Pompey's galley at 2.7.114; he also has quite a temper as, shouting, he denounces Antony's betrayal at 1.4.56, 3.4.1, and 4.1.1.

Enobarbus was played by Bob Peck, for Noble, and by Paul Jesson, for Caird. Peck was a "fine, thoughtful . . . heavy Enobarbus" (Billington); the "ideal casting for a grizzled, increasingly disillusioned" character (King). At times, surely at 1.2.138-41—when he affirms that "between [women] and a great cause they should be esteemed nothing"—he played "a cynical, sentimental misogynist" (Desmond P.). Even if now and again "too near in concept" to Gambon's Antony (McGarry), he was one of the characters believed to have gained "immeasurably from close audience contact" at The Other Place (Coveney). Paul Jesson was considered a "well-spoken Enobarbus" who, along with Clare Higgins's Cleopatra, managed to "uphold the honour of the production" (Milne). After the ephemeral victory at the battle of Alexandria, when Cleopatra, disingenuously, says to Antony: "It is my birthday!" (3.13.189), memorably, Jesson's Enobarbus roars in laughter, at once a brilliant subtext of street wisdom, cynicism, and further suggestion of Antony's dotage.

Indeed, delivery of subtext and creation of stage business should help build character and advance the tale. Let us resort to Halio's straightforward, working definition of subtext: "meanings lying beneath or between the lines that indicate to the actors the way to speak them" (3).[12] A number of examples of clever delivery of a subtext can be marshalled from either production. In Noble's, at 5.2.134, Cleopatra kisses Octavius's hand, visibly role-playing her subservience to him; at 5.2.232, before her suicide, as she waits for her women to bring her royal attire, she kneels and washes her hands and face, suggesting a ritual of purification before the sacrifice and displaying herself, while speaking in a deep, touching voice. An unnamed *Daily Telegraph* reviewer registered the moment as unusually

[12] Again, for my purposes, I would have to revise Halio's definite and absolute "**the** way to speak them," for the indefinite and relative "**a** way to speak them" (my emphasis). Once revised, the definition is useful.

"moving," and admitted being "awed and impressed." Most importantly, at 5.2.312, as mentioned earlier, Mirren's Cleopatra died in great majesty, sitting up straight in her throne, in full regal dress, crown and all.

In Caird's production, at 1.3.13, Higgins played Cleopatra's lines drawing on a subtext that showed her in control of the situation, visibly knowing the content of the Messenger's initial news from Rome, manipulating a doting, credulous Antony. A little later in the same scene (lines 86-90), however, as Antony indicates that he is indeed leaving her, she is brilliantly unsure of herself, and, with eloquent pauses in mid speech, hesitates, groping for words to hold him back:

> *Cleo. Courteous lord, one word. (pause)*
> *Sir, (pause) you and I must part, (pause) but that's not it. (pause)*
> *Sir, you and I have loved, (pause) but there's not it.*
> *That you know well. (pause) Something it is I would— (pause)*
> *O, my oblivion is a very Antony,*
> *And I am all forgotten.*

And at 1.5.12, Higgins played a flippant Cleopatra who poked at Mardian's crotch with the Egyptian sceptre, when stating that he was "unseminared"; she repeated the gesture at 2.5.8, then with the billiards cue.

Stage business in Caird's *mise-en-scène* is effective, and, of course, it did not aim solely at Cleopatra. A blind Soothsayer at 2.2 reads Charmian's skull (instead of her hand), slaps Iras before telling her foreboding fortune, and exits quietly into darkness. There is little room for banter the way the oracle is staged. The Soothsayer gone, it is Charmian who, now in rampant mockery, jokes Alexas's fortune. Later, the Soothsayer makes a sinister, Angel-of-Death figure, whirling centre stage at the moment of Enobarbus' death (4.10.29). Eventually (at 5.2), "caked with mud like an Indian mystic" (Edmonds), he returns as the Clown, bringing Cleopatra's "liberty", for Michael Billington, ably reminding us "of the tale's tragic destination." The problem of such a choice, however, was attentively caught by Holland: the sinister Soothsayer just about "excised the scene's comedy in favour of an eerie supernatural control" (Holland 182).

Caird's "monument scene"(4.15) was done in solemn pathos, under soft, pale light. Instead of heaving the dying Antony up, Cleopatra and her women, holding on to fixed ropes, surprisingly, came down to him on a lowered platform, in a clever piece of stage illusion (Duncan-Jones would disagree). Soon after, as Proculeius and the Romans enter from above and soldiers descend on hanging ropes, Cleopatra and Egypt are literally and symbolically down. And enacting a clear reason for Iras's always baffling death, Caird makes her steal a bite from the asp while robing her mistress (5.2.279).

Despite isolated negative criticism, the overall effect of Adrian Noble's production was positive. Complaints that the production was "lightweight," a "narrative drama rather than a gut-wrenching tragedy"—a shortcoming which would have nothing to do with the performances of the protagonists, but with

"the unrelenting haste which often sacrificed language to action" (Billington)—or that the actors did not consistently enact a tragedy (Wardle), do not stand the rigor of detailed analysis. Noble's intimate conception of the play, so deftly realised in The Other Place's intimate space, seems to have pivoted on the tragedy of Gambon and Mirren, as they created an "electric partnership," an intimate affair that was, at once, "passionate, violent, physical" (Coveney), and doomed.

Likewise, despite negative criticism, especially in regard to costuming and Richard Johnson's comeback, the overall effect of John Caird's production appears to have been positive: "A successful mainstream production" (Butler), "a winner [filling] a stage with life and colour" (Spencer). Besides, Caird's *Antony and Cleopatra* was thought to have solved "many of the problems of the [play's] defective construction, the geographical restlessness, the use of rhetoric to glorify sexual passion" (Billington). Ultimately, the show was received as "romantic," ending, as it had started, with an intimation of immortality: a glimpse of Antony and Cleopatra embracing in some "Elysian future" (Billington), we recall, a repetition of the production's opening scene, now played against an indigo sky. Larger than life, at once breathtaking and ludicrous, the final tableau was in keeping with the play's complex juxtaposition of magnificence and ridicule, pathos and bathos.

Two sets of conclusions will implicate the productions themselves and their inscription in the cultural context. On the production level, detailed analysis indicates that each had its pros and cons. That such conclusion may seem a truism is irrelevant. What matters is the application which directors, producers, translators, actors, drama students and teachers, critics, playgoers etc. may be able to draw from the research findings and germane critical reflection. As regards the insertion of the play itself and two productions here examined in the British theatrical and cultural context, it will be interesting to recall that *Antony and Cleopatra* experienced a revival in the nineteenth century once a woman ruler—Victoria—was on the throne. Moreover, the play has been staged in the twentieth century more than ever before, when another woman ruler—a second Elizabeth—is on the throne. Small wonder, since, by 1972, when Janet Suzman played Cleopatra, the Women's movement had developed a consciousness in some audiences, at once, of the social conditioning, as well as the power and the liberation of women. Glenda Jackson's 1978 Empress became linked in the public mind with her own move from actress to Labour Party politician. In the 1980s and 1990s a new woman ruler—Mrs. Thatcher— (in fact, for the first time in British history two at once in power) was the head of Britain, for one thing, "a figure viewed as ambiguously as Cleopatra might ever have been" (Dunsinberre 61-62). In this respect, Caird's production was seen by Juliet Dunsinberre to embody a "Thatcherite statement. . . in post-Thatcher recession, where escaping into Romantic love heralds a return to theatrical and political conservatism" (62). I want to conclude by going back to the notions of *dramatic development* and *partnership* between the protagonists and by posing such notions at the centre

of what is, in my view, an effective conception of the play. *Antony and Cleopatra* presents a highly complex—and developing—disjunction between the vulgar behaviour of the title-role partners, played out, in fact, less in intimacy than in public, and the epic claims made for them, initially by others, eventually by each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barish, Jonas. *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1981.

Berger Jr., Harry. *Making Trifles out of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997.

Billington, Michael. "Antony and Cleopatra, The Changeling: Stratford-upon-Avon". *Guardian* 9 November 1992.

—. "Tragedy Kissed Away." *Guardian* 14 October 1982.

Bratton, J. S. & Julie Hankey. "Series Editors' Preface." *Shakespeare in Production*: A Midsummer Night's Dream. Ed. Trevor R. Griffiths. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. ix-x.

Butler, Robert. "Theatre". *Independent on Sunday* 8 November 1992.

Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996.

Coveney, Michael. "Antony and Cleopatra/Other Place, Stratford." *Financial Times* 14 October 1982.

Coursen, H. R. *Reading Shakespeare on Stage*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1995.

—. *Shakespeare in Production: Whose History?* Athens: Ohio UP, 1996.

—. *Shakespearean Performance as Interpretation*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. "Death on the Nile". *Times Literary Supplement* 20 November 1992.

Dunsinberre, Juliet. "Squeaking Cleopatras: Gender and Performance in *Antony and Cleopatra*. *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*. Ed. James C. Bulman. London: Routledge, 1996. 46-67.

Edmonds, Richard. "Infinite Variety Keeps This Affair Fresh". *Birmingham Post* 7 November 1992.

Farrer, Martin. "Love Affair Mars RSC's Effort". *Burton Mail* 7 November 1992.

Ford, David. "A True Partnership." *Worcester Evening News* 14 October 1982.

Halio, Jay, L. *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988.

Holland, Peter. *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

—. "Shakespeare Performances in England, 1992". *Shakespeare Survey* no. 46. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 159-89.

Jamieson, Michael. "Shakespeare in Performance." *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*. New Edition. Ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford & New York: Oxford UP, 1990. 37-68.

King, Francis. "Happily, She's Tamed." *Sunday Telegraph* 17 October 1997.

McGarry, Peter. "A Breathtaking Cleopatra." *Coventry Evening Telegraph* 14 October 1982.

Milne, Kirsty. "Voice That Launched a Thousand Smokes". *Sunday Telegraph* 8 November 1992.

"Mirren's Awesome Cleopatra." *Daily Telegraph* 14 October 1982.

Mulryne, J. R. *Shakespeare in Performance*: Antony and Cleopatra.

Mulryne, J. R., J. C. Bulman & M. Shewring. "Series Editors' Preface." *Shakespeare in Performance*: Cymbeline. Ed. Roger Warren. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989. vi.

Nightingale, Benedict. "A Cleopatra of Infinite Variety". *Times* 7 November 1992.

P., Desmond. "The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company in 'Antony and Cleopatra'." *Yorkshire Post* 15 October 1982.

Radin, Victoria. "Sex-kitten Shows Her Claws." *Observer* 17 October 1982.

Roper, David. "Golden Girl Helen Shows Regal Touch." *Daily Express* 14 October 1982.

Rutherford, Malcolm. "Oh! What a Carry On Up the Nile". *Financial Times* 7 November 1992.

Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. New Penguin Shakespeare. Ed. Emrys Jones. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.

—. *The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra*. *The Complete Works*. Ed. Gary Taylor. General Editors Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988. 1001-35.

Spencer, Charles. "A Comedy of Bewitchment". *Daily Telegraph* 9 November 1992.

Styan, J. L. *The Shakespeare Revolution: Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977.

Taylor, Paul. "Bliss and Easeful Death on the Nile". *Independent* 7 November 1992.

Trewin, J. C. & A. C. Sprague. *Shakespeare's Plays Today: Some Customs and Conventions of the Stage*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1970.

Wardle, Irving. "Antony and Cleopatra: Other Place, Stratford." *Times* 15 October 1982.

Wells, Stanley, ed. *Summerfolk: Fifty Years of Shakespeare and the Stratford Theatres*. Ebrington: Long Barn, 1997.

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

COMPLICATIONS: OR WHEN SHAKESPEARE LAUGHS

AIMARA DA CUNHA RESENDE

Popular culture may be appropriated in dramatic texts in different ways with different purposes. This appropriation in Shakespeare's work seems to produce a semiotic net basically constructing and deconstructing laughter, dichotomically pointing towards free but somehow organized and reorganizing mirth on the one hand and decentering, bitter, ambivalent irony on the other. While in the comedies there is some sort of free merriment in the appropriation of popular culture, here called *comic laughter*, in the tragedies one finds the sort of ironic expression that Guido Almansi (1978) names *tongue-in-cheek*, here called *bitter irony*.

Generally speaking popular culture develops between two poles, Carnival and Lent. Since the Middle Ages the battle between Carnival and Lent has populated the human mind, from Brueghel and Bosch to the common man. Fat Carnival (always a man), a glutton and a drunkard, young, jovial and lascivious, opposes the thin woman Lent, who only eats fish, drinks water, hates dancing and sexuality, loves order and work. In the Renaissance, a time of change, this battle seems to be intensified and duplicated in different kinds of public shows. It was a time of political pressure and simultaneous instability, urging measures of control that would uphold the dominating classes and waylay the repressed feelings of the people, originating what Steven Mullaney (1983) calls *rehearsals* - the representation of the disturbing Other followed by its total effacement. These rehearsals are embodied in the various rites of public entertainment, in the license typical not only of Carnival, but of all festivities following in its wake such as May Day, Twelfth Night, Saint Bartholomew's Day, summer games and harvest festivals. These opportunities for public liberation, necessary to the balance of authority and individuality, were well illustrated with the metaphor of the barrel of wine, said by French monks in the Middle Ages to represent their notorious

celebration of Fool's Day: like the wine which, if not let loose from time to time, will burst the barrel, they too, oppressed and repressed, could come to bad terms with the established religious order.This license, necessary to the balance of social stability, liberating tensions and manipulating insatisfaction, may nevertheless become an uncontrolling force threatening the ruling system and can easily be turned into motives for riots and subversions.

Desirable and feared, licensed and controlled, fascinating and menacing, the theatricality of public entertainment in the Renaissance was part of an entire institution designed to *stand in authentic place.* Spectacle was everywhere, both in representations of political power, such as pageants and executions, and in those of supposedly simple entertainment of the common man , such as bullfights, bear baiting, cock fights, exhibitions of lunacy and annual festivities. They all belonged in the same realm - that of the world turned upside-down, of free familiar contact and eccentricity. Elizabethan theatre itself was part of a liminal world, the threshold where clarity is lost, where you may belong and not belong, simultaneously state or deny. Physically, the theatre of Elizabethan London was on the outskirts of the town; artistically, most of it was situated on the ambivalent planes of entertainment and threat. Its texts often dubiously represented and *rehearsed* before the dominating system but paradoxically subverted that same order that they seemed to uphold. Shakespeare, a London playwright, member of the Lord Chamberlain's and later the King's Men, followed the same course. He wrote *Macbeth,* for instance, and *King Lear,* to please James I. But he also inserted in these plays parodic elements such as the inverted use of the Bible, free familiar contact, mirth and sorrow interfused with irony. And in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Bottom, the self-centred rustic/player talks of the lion that would frighten the ladies, a comment on the King's fear of having his charriot pulled by lions on his entrance into London after the coronation, a fear that James pretended to be his concern for the women's fragility. In *King Lear,* for example, Shakespeare created Edgar to intensify the legend of the first Brutus whom the King endeavoured to make his subjects identify with himself in his earnest to appear as the promised ruler endowed with divine power to unite the three parts of the island. But at the same time that he made Edgar the future good King who would rule over the reunited realm, Shakespeare also presented him masked as a doubly false bedlamite. One will never know exactly what he meant. One can only choose one's own reading and/or apply it to one's own approach.

In his use of folklore and public entertainment the Bard had two different ways of dealing with laughter. I will not discuss *comic relief* which is part of the structure of Renaissance tragedy in general and not specifically Shakespeare's contribution to laughter. He uses it, and well, but follows the general construction of manipulation of tension characteristic of English tragedy. I will here consider his ways of laughing and of making people laugh: the first, *comic laughter*, being the open laughter of comedy, found in works of the kind seen in Aristophanes and, later, in all sorts of public entertainment in the Middle Ages and the

Renaissance. The second, *bitter laughter,* concealed, ambivalent, disturbing, is found in his tragedies.

In Shakespearean comedy there are all sorts of classical appropriations of popular culture. Elements found in games, dances, songs, story telling, divinations and the continental Commedia del'Arte are scattered throughout his comic plays and romances: shipwrecks, separated and supposedly lost twins, as can be seen in *Twelfth Night* and *The Comedy of Errors;* the forest with its mystery and its life giving nature, keeping within its boundaries mythical heroes of the Robin Hood kind, as is projected in Duke Senior of *As You Like It;* the mythical journey of ordeal as in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; the symbolic rebirth of May Day, with misunderstandings, crossed lovers, fairies and elfins such as one may see in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* This and so much more... This sort of appropriation was overtly offered to the spectator as part of the entertainment he had in his festive world. It was made of elements common to the one single stock of popular culture that enveloped Renaissance English life. The men and women that went on a Sunday afternoon to Bedlam Hospital to relish a display of lunacy, or - to the amazement of a German traveller - to an alehouse to drink among a *promiscuous* lot, or shout and cheer at the sight of a bear tied to a pole and being attacked by dogs or of cocks fighting, these men and women also enjoyed watching on the stage people being fooled, elfins disturbing people's lives or Fools making intelligent puns, criticizing their betters and ridiculing those in power. Most of this they also experienced in fairs and market places or during May Day festivities. The stage of Shakespearean comedy is the twin brother of the market place. In both you'll find the grotesque side by side with beauty: prostitutes, "nouveaux riches", gentlemen, drunkards, pick-pockets, rustics and tricksters, they are all there in a lively free familiar contact but still in a world properly ordered. Born of the stock of entertainment that permeates the leisure of an Elizabethan, the comic laughter that Shakespearean comedy a rouses reflects and re-establishes order despite its appearance of disorder. In so doing it disrupts normative constraints but it also enhances popular yearnings for better life as it permits some sort of concrete experience of living in a world different from the everyday social burden of difference and subordination. As Michael D. Bristol (1983: 642) says,

> *Parodic travesty provides plebeian culture with an alternative epistemology to the categories of official ideology based on a closed system of ranks and métiers and the fixed assignment of traditional symbols to express that system. Misrule is much more than a disruptive negation of established ideological forms, however. As the basic rule for interpreting social reality from the plebeian perspective, it substitutes participation for detached observation, material categories for the ideal, and economic and communal process for abstract social structure.*

In Shakespeare's comedies one laughs because fun comes directly and unveiled from its popular source. A fool *is expected* to ridicule others, experience with language, creating fun out of the deviation from "normality", highlighting order through the opposition to the norm and common sense. Supernatural beings and myths emerge from story-telling, May Day, and other sorts of public entertainment in appropriated stylized forms that reinforce the system as they point towards the comicity of being different from the normal man. This is, for instance, the case with Puck, the elfin in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* who complicates situations just as his prototype in folklore, Robin Goodfellow, is heard to do in stories told by old wives on winter nights. Foolish people in the comedies (Malvolio, Dr. Caius, Polonius, Gremio) make us laugh just as the crowds laughed at the scape-goat or Carnival King. Popular types in Shakespearean comedy a rouse mirth from association with eccentricity. They are signs of difference, pointing towards degree and order. As happens in festive rites, Shakespearean comic characters and situations complicate the routine and normality of everyday life, momentarily paralysing the established order as they simultaneously demonstrate the necessity of abiding by this same order. The appropriation of folklore then becomes laughable because it exhibits the folly of being different. At the end a return to normality leaves behind no trace of incongruity or disorder but has left, perhaps, some hope of change and improvement, some expectation of upgraded social condition.

Take, for instance, Malvolio, in *Twelfth Night.* Dull, foolish, pompous, he easily falls into the trap prepared for him by Maria, the maid, supported by the noblemen Sir Toby and Aguecheek. Maria writes him a letter bearing an imitation of the signature of their lady, Olivia. In this letter there are hints of Olivia's love for him (a love we as audience/readers know does not exist). As Malvolio reads the letter and comes to his conclusions he unfolds to the audience his ridicule and the self-centered view that makes an easy prey of him.

Malvolio: (reads) I may command where I adore,
But silence, like a Lucrece knife,
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore;
M.O.A.I. doth sway my life.

"M.O.A.I. doth sway my life" Nay, but first let me see.
Fabian: What dish o'poison has she dressed him!
Sir Toby: And with what wing the staniel checks at it!
Malvolio: "I may command where I adore". Why, she may command me: I serve her; she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity; there is no obstruction in this. And the end, what should that alphabetical position portend? if I could make that resemble something in me. — Softly! — M,O,A,I,—
Sir Toby: O! ay, make up that: he is now at a cold scent.

Fabian: Sowter will cry upon't, for all this, though it be as rank as a fox.
Malvoilo: M, Malvolio; M, why, that begins my name.
Fabian: Did not I say he would work it out? the cur is excellent at faults.
Malvolio: M,— But then there is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation: A should follow but O does.
Fabian: And O shall end, I hope.
Sir Toby: Ay, or I'll cudgel him, and make him cry, O!
Malvolio: And then I comes behind.
Fabian: Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.
Malvolio: M,O,A,I; this simulation is not as the former; and yet, o crush this a little, it would bow to me, for everyone of these letters are in my name. Soft! here follows prose.

" If this fall into thy hand, resolve. In my stars I am above thee; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. Thy Fates open their hands; let thy blood and spirit embrace them; and to insure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough, and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity. She thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say, remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee.
The Fortunate-Unhappy.

(II. v., 117-175)

As Malvolio determines - from his folly - the meaning of the reticent message, we laugh because we know what is behind the text : the handwriting is not Olivia's, she abhors yellow stockings and cross-gartering, Sir Toby (the kinsman he is to *be opposite with*) will not respect Malvolio. As the steward comes to his own and only conclusions the audience/reader foresees what is to come. He is the typical Carnivalesque king with his false crowning and inevitable decrowning. The Carnival sense of the world permeates this and the other comedies. In the above example, for instance, there is free familiar contact in the plotting of the trick on Malvolio, with masters and servants together as equal in mischief and merriment; the scape-goat is present inured in exccentricity; there is an anonymous letter. All is joyful but nothing is relative. The fun of the situation originates in and is controlled by a sense of disrespected order and reversed status. Malvolio *should*

be conscious of his position. He is not. As a result he becomes the scape-goat, the Carnival king falsely crowned only to be decrowned, thrown into ridicule and shame: he is later treated as a madman and thrust into a dark room while Maria and her companions relish the show. At the end of *Twelfth Night* after various other appropriations of this kind, tension is relieved and the audience/reader may reenter normative everyday life. One senses the necessity of the preservation of social norms. At most these norms may be ignored for a limited time - just for fun. But Lent will certainly come and win the battle against Carnival.

The letter, a traditional element in popular entertainment (Bakhtin, 1984), is also present in the tragedy *King Lear*. But now, instead of mirth, it conveys danger. Willing his brother Edgar's death, Edmund invents a letter the handwriting of which resembles his brother's. He finds a way of showing it to his father, Gloucester, a rousing his anger and launching Edgar's disgrace. This message is conspicuously related, in the text construction, to popular belief in astrological powers. As a sign in the textual construct, the appropriation now points not to mirth but to catastrophe. It is not simple transposition of elements from popular culture. In its use what matters is the subversion reinforced by the ambivalent attitude towards belief in the power of the stars.

Gloucester: Give me the letter, sir.
Edmund: I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.
Gloucester: Let's see, let's see.
Edmund: I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.
Gloucester: This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of old tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar'

(I. ii., 46-59)

Gloucester: These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing. Do it carefully. And the noble and true- hearted Kent banished! his offense, honesty! 'Tis strange!

[Exit]

Edmund: This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, - often the surfeit of our own behaviour, - we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under "ursa mayor"; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

(I. ii., 115-149)

Disbelief sounds in Edmund's words. But it is counteracted by the events then taking place. One becomes puzzled and lost when faced by these events and the forward and backward movement of the text itself. The ambivalent validity of *heavenly compulsion* is highlighted as being an unstable positioning of truths that may be easily turned into folly, all depending on how you remake the discourse. As a sign, the letter points to catastrophe. It is not mere transposition of elements from popular culture. In its use what matters is the subversion of previous texts. This subversion is reinforced by the ambivalent attitude towards belief in astrological powers. Shakespeare deals with it in the same way as he recreates madness by masking it with the image/name of the false bedlamite, and subverts canonized texts such as the Bible through ironical usage of intertextuality. The letter and elements in popular culture are here metamorphosed and relativized. Now there is no place for irresponsible comic laughter. What comes out of it all is uneasiness before impending doom. Order is disturbed and *discord follows*. Appropriation blurs limits and opens the way to new possibilities. As audience to this scene one does not know right from wrong. Is Edmund the only one to blame ? If Gloucester had not been so naïve - both in relation to the letter and to natural disturbances, if - Shakespeare might suggest - mankind in general, his audience included, were not so gullible, if popular culture were more "reasonable", the tragic occurrences to follow this act of Edmund's might have never taken place. But different elements concur to make this moment of

appropriation of popular culture one of unbalance and relativity. From now on, more than once, the scape-goat Edgar/Lear will be crowned and decrowned, common sense and general truth checked and stripped of their one-sided meanings, the world will be turned upside down. Appropriation here brings forth ironic, bitter laughter. The feeling of lack of sense in living, of the oneness of death and birth, of the insignificance of earthly power subverts all established canons and leaves behind a trace of emptiness. Here Shakespeare achieves romantic irony through a verbal construct that displaces firm grounds and opens the text up to new meanings. As D.C. Muecke (1982 : 31) says,

> *Irony... is a way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning might signify: there is a perpetual deferment of significance... Irony is saying something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretations.*

The theatre, itself a marginal activity, and conspicuously present in ceremonies aiming at entertaining the people at the same time that it shows this same people's defined roles and inferior status was another characteristic borrowed text. The play within the play, reproducing as *mise-en-abyme* popular entertainment both at playhouses and in the streets of England, does so differently in comedies and tragedies. The former assimilate it in the same way as is generally done in comedy with all other sorts of popular culture, reinforcing the established order, making one laugh because what is assimilated goes against this order later to be put back in its proper place. There is ridicule and no ambiguity. In tragedy, though, the same appropriation, the play-within-the-play, takes on the form of bitter irony. It reproduces scenes seen somewhere else, but empties them of their former meanings, offering the possibility of new readings thus *activating an endless series of subversive interpretations.*

Let us take the *Pyramus and Thisbe* scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the player's declamation in *Hamlet*. In the former we have the rustics performing before Duque Theseus, his bride and friends, a play expected to celebrate love, as it is the Duque's wedding. Now we come to the final scene, taken from the Greek myth, when Thisbe finds Pyramus dead:

Thisbe: Asleep, my love?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak! Quite dumb?
Dead, dead! A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks

Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan!
His eyes were green as leeks.
O, Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword:
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:
[stabs herself]
And farewell, friends;
Thus Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.
[Dies]
(V. i., 332-356)

In this scene the play-within-the play inverts the classical myth mainly through malaproprisms and silly explanations of the text by the actors themselves. Idealized feminine beauty, with its stereotyped visualization such as the *red lips*, the *marble white face*, the *scented breath*, the *pink cheeks*, is made fun of through inversion in the description Thisbe giv of her beloved and love is presented as something laughable. The Greek love myth, stripped of its former dignity and language, becomes a game. Comic laughter is formed out of the transformation of the serious with a definite purpose : this is a *rustic performance*; its writer and actors are ignorant and we had seen them before in their social and intellectual inferiority. It is all they have to offer. Once more appropriation points towards order and stability. This is a time when such foolery is allowed. It is a moment of festivity and we can here find reasons for release of tension. Only some, though, while the wedding ceremonies last. As the play-within-the play ends we are left with a hilarious feeling of superiority. Like Theseus, we react merrily to it because we know that *our sport shall be to take what they mistake.* (V.i., 190).

In *Hamlet,* nevertheless, the play-within-the play is pregnant with doubt. At the prince's request the actor presents Aeneas's tale to Dido (II. ii, 498-549). It is so full of emotion - is that emotion ? - that Hamlet feels disturbed. It is after this scene that the young royal expresses his incapacity of "proper" filial behaviour. We may find the player's scene a bit ridiculous with its excessive pathos. It sounds like tragi-comedy. But it moves in the opposite direction. And that is because Hamlet follows it with his own play-within-the play. As the player ends his speech Hamlet tells Polonius to take the actors to their lodgings and then starts his own performance, the Hecuba monologue:

Hamlet: O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I:
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damm'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie in the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
Swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be
But I am pidgeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O! vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!

(II. ii., 584- 624)

With his monologue Hamlet charges the player's speech with intensity and initiates ambivalence - Did the player really feel so much emotion? Or was it a mirroring within the prince of his own feelings? Did Hamlet himself really mean what he said in his monologue? Or was he rationalizing once more and thus expanding his doubts and wasting his time? What does Shakespeare mean about outbursts of emotion just a little before Hamlet gives his lesson on the art of acting with its emphasis on decorum? We watch the play-within-the play, we hear the prince and we remain puzzled and mute. *Tongue-in-cheek* is all we are left with. Just bitter irony. The sense of universal irony permeates both appropriated and appropriating texts, juxtaposing them and leaving behind a track of limitlessness and formlessness that clears away all possibility of a final, "essential" word. There will remain only new ways to subversive interpretations.

Shakespearean tragedy thus appropriates other texts but this is borrowing of a different kind. Here one is concerned with a sense of relativity that brings with it a feeling of hopelessness and at the same time some sort of relief due to the realization that we really are *such stuff as dreams are made on* and that *our little lives are rounded with a sleep*. After all, why give oneself airs if man is *no more than this* - a beggar and a lunatic, speaking strange words, *full of sound and fury signifying nothing*? The sense of joyful relativity that comes with the realization of one's own worthlessness juxtaposes the anguish experienced at the attendance at a performance that reproduces for us the meaninglessness of our existence. Part of this mixed emotion a rises fromthe text itself, a construct based on other creations be they written canonized works or popular oral productions. All forms of borrowings, though, create new signs, new ways of telling the same old story, that of man's stay on earth. What interests us here is the kind of appropriation that comes from popular culture and that, differently from the comic laughter found in the comedies, does not carry an overt meaning or any pre-established form of comic entertainment. In Shakespearean tragic laughter one is never sure whether to laugh or cry as one is not told exactly what is meant by the spectacle presented. We are here faced with *l'abominable tongue-in-cheek*, irony of the best - or worst? - kind: the puzzling idea that *to be is not to be...* In his tragedies Shakespeare goes to the rich source of folklore in order to create new texts and try his expertise in novel constructions. He borrows from the madhouse *(King Lear, Hamlet)*, from the supernatural and the underworld *(Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello)*, form the outer, exotic world of mystery and threat *(Othello, Titus Andronicus, Antony and Cleopatra)*. But he now subverts these realms, creates free familiar contact to decentre values, where, in the comedies, order is maintained as a norm; he turns the world upside-down, where there was an established system; he relativizes the accepted truth where it had been emphasized. The Bard plays tricks on us when he pretends to reproduce, as he does in the comedies, elements from everyday life or bits of entertainment from popular pastimes. When he borrows from them and points towards the folk origins recreating and reinforcing the status quo, he is dealing with comic laughter. When his borrowing disturbs the

very system from which it comes, subverts the original text and in so doing tells us *this is not so neither is it thus*... then we are face to face with bitter laughter, the ironic spasm that makes us shiver with fear and shake with mirth. It is when we watch old King Lear, garlands on, uttering nonsense/poignant criticism, making fun of Gloucester's blindness and affirming his royal status while running away like a fool or a madman in the market place, we laugh this very kind of bitter laughter. We do not know where the limit lies between sanity and insanity. We cannot distinguish an old abused king from a Carnival Lord of Misrule or scape-goat. "Who is who?", "What is what?" become then our questions. The realization of the impossibility of one truth, the awareness of the ridicule of all established values of any kind and the unbearable - because against one's feeling of individuality, one's EGO - sense of relativity in everything alive gives rise to an unsufferable repressed laughter.

Orality is a bulwark of popular culture. In Renaissance England, with the predominance of illiteracy, hearing and seeing conveyed messages, not reading. Stories passed on from father to son; old wives' tales, gossip, anecdotes, magic formulas, encantatory rites were "performed" everywhere. Oral narrative occupied the centre of these performances. One of the most intense of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Othello* is *the* play of story-telling. The Moor, eccentric because not white and not European is the Other within the Venetian/European society. Embodying the marvellous of the adventure tales of the time, devil-hero-victim, the Moor is the great story teller, the one who says that

Her father lov'd me, often invited me,
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year - the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd,
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery, of my redmption thence
And portance in my travel's history;
Wherein in antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak, such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline;

But still the house-affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse. Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man; she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She love'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd:
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.
(I. iii., 128-170)

To his story the Duke replies : *I think this tale would win my daughter too.* (I. iii., 171)

This strange, alluring man who knows how to tell a story is nevertheless duped by another story-teller, one who puts on mask after mask, whose ironic rhetoric wins all and decentres their truth : Iago. A fiendish story-teller, a foil to Othello, in his self- description Iago summarises the bitter irony informing the whole play: *I am not what I am.* (I. i., 65). The play itself, permeated with and encapsulated within irony, seems not to be what it is, or, in unfolding before the audience its typical folklore tale of supernatural and otherness, disjuncts its apparent oneness to create a myriad masks where order has no place, where Iago himself, who says he has one purpose, is ironically and psychotically lost in the search for a motive for his destructive impulse. A tale masks another tale that has masked another tale... Desdemona's narrative of the maid who sang the *willow tree* song, Othello's tales of war, slavery and conquest, or his story of the wondrous handkerchief, and Iago's different narrations of sex, adultery and loyalty, all make up a strange tale to be heard on dark winter nights. Here the parodies/masks of orality, of

narratives told and retold, ironically subvert the play's very construct, giving origin to the ambivalent play on words where it is not pun that matters but bitter irony pointing towards the relativity of human values, power, sentiment.

Shakespeare's world is a stage of fools, be they comic or tragic characters. His discourse will display the human predicament always somehow pointing towards the lack of sense in taking life too seriously. *What a piece of work is a man!* says Hamlet, but his creator shows us that this piece is too complex to be thoroughly understood and *this goodly frame, the earth,* too full of mirth and tragedy to be clearly apprehended. What is left us is just to watch the human condition and sometimes merely laugh, sometimes ironically smile, with *tongue-in-cheek.* for nothing is absolute. As Lear says, there is a place for tears in life: *When we are born, we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools* (IV. vi., 187-8). But from then on, Shakespeare might suggest, let us laugh, ridicule, relativize truth, decentre constructions... and live.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

ALMANSI, Guido. *L'affaire mystérieuse de l'abominable 'tongue-in-cheek'.* Seuil, POÉTIQUE nov., 1978, 413-426.

BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World.* Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984.

_____. *The Dialogic Imagination.* Trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981.

BRISTOL, Michael D. *Carnival and the Institutions of Theater in Elizabethan England. ELH,* 50, 1983, 637-654.

_____. *Carnival and Theater: plebeian culture and the structure of authority in Renaissance England.* New York and London, Methuen, 1985.

EVANS, G Blakemore. *The Riverside Shakespeare.* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.

LAROQUE, François. *Shakespeare's Festive World.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

_____. *Shakespeare: court, crowd and playhouse.* London, Thames and Hudson, 1993.

MUECKE, D. C. *Irony and the Ironic.* The Critical Idiom. London and New York, Methuen, 1970.

MULLANEY, Steven. "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: the rehearsal of cultures in the late Renaissance". *Representations* 3, Summer 1983, p.40-67.

Centro de Estudos Shakespeareanos

NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE

A POETICA PÓS-MODERNA E *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW* "TO THE RUSHING WATERS SAY: I AM": RILKE

FUTIN BUFFARA ANTUNES

Gravity's Rainbow contribui para a teoria literária contemporânea com uma reafirmação - original e pynchoniana - de elementos e estratégias que distinguem uma obra pós-moderna, principalmente no que diz respeito à produção e recepção de texto, quando então o leitor torna-se participante ativo envolvido na produção do significado, sentindo-se livre em suas respostas ao texto: preenche lacunas e vazios de indeterminação tendo consciência de uma plurissignificação cuja interpretação dependerá, como um desafio, de sua experiência e cooperação.

A metaficção, uma das manifestações do pós-modernismo, é evidente em várias passagens de *Gravity's Rainbow*, quando uma auto-reflexão deixa entrever como o texto é processado, e revela elementos ideológicos em sua elaboração. A auto-referencialidade é um modo de constituir a realidade por meio da linguagem. Assim, romances (como *Gravity's Rainbow*), na colocação de Robert Coover, citado por L. Hutcheon, tornam-se:

> *historically mediated forms. Historiographic metafiction, therefore, works to situate itself in history and in discourse, as well as to insist on its autonomous fictional and linguistic nature.*[1]

Hutcheon comenta que a mediação de forças contextuais, com determinantes históricos, sociais e também ideológicos, faz com que "fiction is never only autonomous"[2] *Gravity's Rainbow* deve ser focalizada como metaficção historiográfica: deve ser contextualizada em sua produção e recepção. Isso implica a intertextualidade que marca presença como elemento (considerado pós-moderno) estruturador na obra,

---

[1] V. L. Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, XIV

[2] Ibid., XV

e que define o quadro teórico de referência, ou é por ele definida. A intertextualidade, como traço pynchoniano, embora comum a outros escritores e épocas diversas, de certa forma subjaz outros elementos da poética de *Gravity's Rainbow*. A obra ilustra, em sua essência, constante diálogo entre o passado e o presente, história e literatura, elementos a compor o universo do homem. Como Dotorow em *Ragtime* e Coover em *The Public Burning*, Pynchon dramatiza situações em que suas personagens encontram personagens históricas, ou personagens históricas fazem parte do mundo ficcional — em um diálogo entre ficção e realidade, quando então paródia e ironia dramatizam a continuidade de um passado em um presente crítico. "Emplotments" tecidos por referentes históricos e imaginários remetem o leitor a contextos culturais marginalizadores e marginalizados, responsáveis por uma das grandes tensões no livro: é o contexto dos Preteridos em uma polaridade com o dos Eleitos.

No processo de significar, discursos múltiplos se interpenetram: Nabokov, Orwell, Whitman, Borges, Rilke, Rossini, Dickinson, são vozes que ressoam no universo do romance, ao lado de figuras históricas como Nixon, Kennedy, Malcolm X, Eisenhower, Stalin, Hitler, von Trotha, Marx, Weber, Calvino, von Braun, Liebnitz, Kekulé - além de muitas outras presenças na "confrontation and dialogue among world-views and ideologies in the novel, its orchestrated polyphony of voices".[3] Tal polifonia emerge de um poderoso campo e forças — o social, evidenciando uma nota foucauldiana de significados culturais, quando o conflito entre o Poder — They, The Force — ou The Elect, e a Resistência — We, The Preterite — subjazem, de várias formas o discurso ou enunciação pynchoniana. *Gravity's Rainbow* é uma obra politicamente engajada: Pynchon reescreve o passado, atento aos anos 60, mostrando a continuidade no presente, de forças socias que retratam o Poder e a Autoridade. A postura do autor é uma de constante questionamento, perguntas sem respostas, parodiando discursos para legitimar o Poder, na tentativa de desmistificar valores aceitos como positivos. Como bem afirma Hutcheon, "the 1960s were the time of ideological formation for many of the postmodernist thinkers and artists of the 1980s"[4]

Pynchon, nos anos 70, já refletia uma formação ideológica derivada do ethos da aludida década. Hutcheon prossegue seu comentário sobre o pós-modernismo e os anos 60, argumentando que talvez:

> *the 1960s themselves (that is, at the time) produced no enduring innovation in aesthetics, but I would argue that they did provide the background, though not the definition, of the postmodern ..., for they were crucial in developing a different concept of the possible function of art, one that would contest the Arnoldian or humanist moral view with its potentially elitist clan bias... . One of the functions of art in mass culture, argued S. Sontag, would be to 'modify consciousness'.*[5]

---

[3] Mc Hale, op. cit., p.166
[4] V. L. Hutcheon. *The Poetics of Postmodernism*, p.8
[5] Ibid.

A modificação da consciência das personagens principais, trabalhada por experiência levada a limites de (in)tolerância é percebida pelo leitor. Slothrop, Katje, Pokler, Enzian, são personagens que despertam para uma realidade de pesadelo, realidade cujo centro está ausente, decentralizada. Tais personagens, ao passar por uma crise de liberação de uma ideologia imposta pelo sistema, repensam sua situação, em uma reavaliação de suas vidas. No questionamento de forças dentro de seu contexto histórico-cultural, atestam uma condição pós-moderna.

Vemos que em *Gravity's Rainbow*, como romance experimental, o texto ou escritura substitui a mimese. Podemos considerar que na linguagem está "o próprio espelho do problema essencial do homem e da sua existência", pois "a essência ambígua do real pode apresentar-se e exercer-se nas estruturas do discurso constituído em imagem"[6] A obra deixa de ser a representação de um mundo — torna-se um mundo constituído pela leitura de uma experiência. Assim, teorias convencionais do romance como gênero representativo ou mimético devem ser reavaliadas ou reconsideradas diante da liberdade do leitor, e da leitura, na criação de um universo ficcional (ou "novelistic") tecido pela linguagem, e em que a ação e personagens fazem emergir a subjetividade imanente ao ato de ler e escrever. Pynchon articula um mundo que espelha uma poética narrativa refletindo uma ruptura com a tradição realística evocadora de H. de Balzac e de teorias dos séculos 18 e 19. Todavia, *Gravity's Rainbow* atesta uma continuidade com a tradição de *Don Quixote* na preocupação evidenciada pelo processo da criação literária e no movimento (como acima mencionamos) do leitor levado a:

> *participate in the artistic process by bearing witness to the novel's self-analysing developments. The narrator-novelist has, from the start, unrealistically entered his own novel, drawing the reader into his own fictional universe*[7]

Tal continuidade implica ainda no recurso paródico que permeia *Gravity's Rainbow*, fazendo-se sentir nas várias dimensões — religiosa, histórica e científica que fluem na intertextualidade e intersubjetividade do livro.[8] Pynchon repete o que L. Hutcheon observa em Cervantes: "that in the novel form the narrative act itself is, for the reader, part of the action."[9] *Gravity's Rainbow* oferece muitos exemplos do leitor sendo trazido para o mundo ficcionnal da obra. O narrador, repetidas vezes, dissolve a ilusão de realidade dirigindo-se ao leitor, usando a segunda pessoa - You - em um discurso direto. Tal procedimento, mesmo já constatado em produções anteriores ao pós-modernismo, acentua uma tendência dessa estética: fazer o leitor parte do contexto — como agente ou paciente, eliminando distâncias ontológicas. O You do discurso pynchoniano é sinédoque

---

[6] Maurice Lefebvre, *Estrutura do Discurso Da Poesia e da Narrativa*, p.52
[7] L. Hutcheon, op. cit., p.9
[8] Ibid., p.24
[9] Ibid., p.5

da humanidade. Sua narrativa torna-se narcissista, ecoando L. Hutcheon. [10] Antecipa mesmo as expectativas do leitor numa auto-referência e, por vezes em uma avaliação externa. Eis alguns exemplos do You pairando no livro, em um diálogo entre a voz que narra (quem ?) e um leitor-receptor-ouvinte:

> *Is the baby smiling, or is just gas? Which do you want to be? (131.)*
> *ou*
> *There is time, if you need the comfort,to touch the person next to you, or to reach between your own cold legs (760.)*

Nesta citação observamos um dos múltiplos exemplos de prolepse, quando a imagem do Foguete V-2 desloca-se no tempo e no espaço para o presente do segundo governo de Nixon, para um teatro em Los Angeles, em uma visão apocalíptica que envolve o leitor-espectador, ameaçado pela Technologia de morte. Como em Cervantes, o leitor-audiência torna-se parte do mundo ficcional, eliminadas barreiras entre o real e o imaginário, vida e ficção — tendência pós-moderna repetindo outros escritores em obras consideradas clássicas ou literatura maior, como Calvino, Nabokov, Borges, além do autor de D.Quixote. Analepses também são bastante freqüentes em *Gravity's Rainbow,* outro fator de fragmentação da narrativa. As anlepses sempre recordam quadros de preterição e autoridade, em uma temática de colonização/desumanização a ressaltar dominantes históricos e ideológicos — uma característica pós-moderna.

Recordaremos agora outros elementos a documentar a contribuição de Thomas Pynchon para o panorama literário da atualidade — ora estendendo atributos modernistas, ora reagindo contra eles, ocasionando então rupturas em cânones que causam impacto na literatura contemporânea e apontam necessidade de lentes apropriadas para focalizar uma estética revolucionária e elaborar uma teoria que dê conta da poética pós-moderna.

Suas personagens são textualizadas, não se prestando à definição de "actantes". São partes de um desígnio que responde pela obra como um todo. O leitor as reconstitui através de certos traços ou características pessoais que a narrativa vai revelando. Pynchon abandona a caracterização tradicional de um modo original. Slothrop é desmembrado, dessubstanciando-se e perdendo sua identidade. Além disso, os nomes das personagens (como caricaturas ou figuras alegóricas)— Katje Borgesius, Slothtrop, Blicero, Pointsman, Enzian, dentre outros, sugerem tipos ou "retratos" teofrásticos, segundo La Bruyère [11] Contudo, queremos ressaltar que não há opacidade escondendo a vida interior das mesmas.

O Plot (e sub-plots) não se desenvolvem segundo uma relação causal em uma tradição de ordem e coerência. Em determinado instante da narrativa, Pynchon antecipa a crítica do leitor e ironiza: "You will want cause and effect. All right"(630). E passa para outra situação descartando relações causais. Episódios são jutapostos sem seqüência

[11] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics,* p.41
[10] L. Hutcheon, op. cit.

lógica, constituindo parataxes, com espaços em branco ou "buracos negros" que então devem ser preenchidos pelo leitor "com sua própria trama, ou não haverá significação para ele"[12]. Os vários sub-plots ocorrem paralelamente, exibindo-se então uma fragmentação na narrativa a desafiar princípios estéticos convencionais. Nas ultimas páginas a fragmentção é total, tornando bastante difícil a compreensão da seqüência de episódios breves, em cenas rápidas, quando então parodia temas, discursos e situações várias com grande maestria. O leitor intui a leitura do autor com relação à vida como sendo fragmentada, desconexa, inconsistente: gaps a serem preenchidos. A mobilidade autoral desloca-se não apenas de um foco de significação para outro, ocasionando shifts no ponto e vista e tom, como também nos níveis de narrativa, passando do plano do real para o do imaginário ou onírico, do animado para o inanimado, por meio de metalepses que ressoam J. L. Borges. A pluralidade de mundos é refletida na heteroglossia que "tends to exert a centrifugal counterpressure on the text"[13] e em heterotopias freqüentes em *Gravity's Rainbow.* Além disso, analepses, já acima referidas, causam "desordem" na coerência linear.

Pynchon renova meios literários exaustos, na consciência de que, parafraseando J. Barth, "artistic conventions are liable to be retired, subverted, transcended, transformed, or else deployed against themselves to generate new and lively work."[14] Desta forma, continuando o pensamento de Barth, Pynchon processa uma literatura de "replenishment", tornada possível pela riqueza de possibilidades de uma estética considerada ou denominada pós-modernista, na qual convergem, simultaneamente, experiências variadas — em que o absurdo e o lógico, a ciência e a ficção, o fato e o fantástico coexistem. Em Pynchon, e na estética pós-moderna, ressalta uma inclusividade quase infinita, quando então temas, estados psíquicos, modos literários, perspectivas ou pontos de vista, comédia e drama, paródia e sátira, expressionismo e impressionismo, sexo e misticismo, cultura e contracultura — para citar alguns elementos que se evidenciam quantitativa e qualitativamente na obra, e a definem como enciclopédica — coexistem no microcosmos de *Gravity's Rainbow.* Esse inclusivismo remete, talvez alegoricamente, ao macrocosmos da vida em sua simultaneidade e diversificação, o que redunda em uma relatividade. Isto significa uma aceitação de possibilidades variadas de descontinuidades, de respostas não pré-determinadas por alternativas polarizadoras e excludentes: o zero ou o um, numa visão que condiciona Paranóia. É uma visão de probabilidades (simultaneidade e inclusivismo) que, por sua vez, condiciona Anti-Paranóia. A ambiguidade que persiste até o final de *Gravity's Rainbow* tem como referencial a imagem borgesiana de labirinto, implicando em multiplicidade de direções - caminhos que se bifurcam: pluralismo.

Sintetizando a poética do romance de Pynchon que se revela aos teóricos literários, observamos que a metáfora de um "quantum jump" resume e condensa o modo literário (original) do autor em seu livro: mobilidade e transformação, um

[12] T. Coelho, *Moderno Pós-Moderno,* p.104
[13] Mc Hale, op. cit., p.166
[14] J. Barth, "The Literature of Replenishment", in *Atlantic Monthly,* 245 (1) p.65-71, January 1980

"pulo" quântico no tempo e no espaço provocando descontinuidades e deslocamentos em termos de "character focus, plot movement and stylistic development."[15] Além disso, "the novel moves from one place to another in all possible directions."[16] O movimento do eléctron, de um anel para outro, na explicação de Pearce, gera mudança, ganhando velocidade e energia. Estendendo a metáfora quântica, o romance desenvolve-se numa contínua transformação e energia — em um eco da contemporaneidade pós-moderna do mundo Ocidental. Como já observamos, a imagem de transformação paira na epígrafe de Wernher von Braun que abre o livro, bem como nas freqüentes alusões a R. M. Rilke.

Gravity's Rainbow faz lembrar que "nenhuma teoria se aplica o tempo todo a todos os fatos a que deveria aplicar-se. Por isso, a ruptura entre fatos e teorias pode ser sinal de progresso."[17] Um certo "anarquismo teórico"[18] é a condição mais adequada na avaliação de uma obra como *Gravity's Rainbow*. Pynchon apresenta uma condição pós-moderna, ou seja, no pensamento de Mc Hale, "an anarchic landscape of worlds in the plural,"[19] o que implica em sistemas abertos — ressoando a física moderna — em uma visão de alternativas. Pynchon faz lembrar que a literatura é um experimento constante sempre alerta a um contexto sócio-ideológico, e a forma expande-se em uma descaracterização, não mais significando um despertar e uma satisfação de desejos (ou expectativas), evocando K. Burke.[20] Antes reflete o caos social. A arte, como a vida, é multifacetada, polissêmica e aberta.

BIBLIOGRAFIA

BARTH, John. "The Literature of Replenishment" *The Atlantic*, 245, January, 1980, 65-71.

BRADBURY, Malcolm, ed. *The Novel Today — Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction*. Fontana Collins, 1977.

COELHO, Teixeira. *Moderno Pós-Moderno*. Porto Alegre:,L & PM Editora, 1968.

HUTCHEON, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative — The Metafictional Paradox*. London and New York: Methuen, 1984.

——— *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

MC HALE, Bryan, *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1987.

RIMMON-KENAN, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction Contemporary Poetics*. London: Routledge, 1991.

FAFIPAR, Paranaguá

[15] R. Pearce, op. cit., p.226
[16] Ibid.
[17] T. Coelho, op. cit., p.107
[18] Ibid.
[19] Mc Hale, op. cit., p.37. Tradução minha
[20] V. M. Bradbury, ed., *The Novel Today*, p.200

TIMELESS PEOPLE IN AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE: THE FEMALE ANCESTOR IN MAYA ANGELOU AND TONI MORRISON.

MAIL MARQUES DE AZEVEDO

As an African-American writer, Toni Morrison is deeply concerned with reclaiming and preserving the cultural identity of her ethnical group, threatened by the influence of the dominant white majority. The massive migration of black Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North and the consequent press for integration inevitably brought on a distance from communal life, and a severance from ancestral roots, which the author deplores:

> *We don't live in places where we can hear those stories, any more; parents don't sit around and tell their children those classical, mythological, archetypal stories that we heard years ago.*[1]

To counter the movement away from African traditions, she chooses to write for *her* people what she calls "village literature, fiction that is really for the village, for the tribe."[2]

Like the elders of the tribe who have the task of preserving ancestral wisdom and instructing the new generations, the older members of the black American community provide the connection with their people's roots. As the author argues, one of the distinctive traits of Afro-American literature is that:

[1] MORRISON, Toni "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," in *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation, Evans*, Mari, ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1984.

[2] MORRISON, in an interview with Thomas LeClair, "The Language Must Not Sweat: A conversation with Toni Morrison", in GATES, Jr., Henry Louis & APPIAH, K. A., eds. *Toni Morrison*. New York: Amistad, 1993, p.370.

there is always an elder there. And these ancestors are not just parents, they are sort of timeless people whose relationships to the character are benevolent, instructive and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom.[3]

Consistently, Toni Morrison's fiction is peopled with the figures of "timeless people", keepers of the tradition, a role which she ascribes to the elder women in the community. Such is Pilate, in *Song of Solomon*, a natural healer and reconciler, because in her cultic role she preserves the cultural tradition and participates in the regeneration of the Afro-American. Baby Suggs in *Beloved* plays a similarly relevant role: she is the preacher, in a culture in which the spoken word is instrumental in the maintenance of tradition. Eva Peace, the matriarch in *Sula*, on the other hand, illustrates Morrison's frequent reversals of received assumptions.

In order to observe how Morrison constructs a character who deviates from accepted ideas of the community elder, i have chosen Eva Peace as one of the poles of my analysis which contraposes autobiography - Maya Angelou's *I Know Why Teh Caged Bird Sings* - and the same situation: young girls living in a practically all-female household, from which male relations are conspicuously absent, and controlled by the awe-inspiring figure of a domineering grandmother.

The contrast or reality X fiction will give us a notion of Toni Morrison's particular view on issues of black American community life, as well as the possibility or observing her characteristic literary mode of representation.

In *I Know Why Teh Caged Bird Sings*, the first volume of her autobiography, Maya Angelou evokes her childhood in the American South in the 1930s. Aged 3 and 4 years, respectively, Maya and her brother Bailey join the thousands of frightened Black children who traveled alone toward newly affluent homes in the North which proved to be a disillusionment. Thus, they arrive in "the must little town"of Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their paternal grandmother, Mrs Annie Henderson, whom they come to call Momma.[4]

In Morrison's novel *Sula*, the title character, a wild rebel, has a tempestuous relationship with her grandmother, ironically called Eva Peace.

There are striking similarities between the factual and the fictional grandmothers: both are physically impressive; both had been abandoned by husbands who left them to cope with small children; both hold a commanding position in the community and are extremely distrustful of whites. But here the similarities end.

From Angelou's linear, First person narrative there emerges the image of a stalwart, strict, hard-working, but loving Momma, a representative figure in the community, and successful in business, thanks to her "miraculous ability to be in two places at the same time"[5]

---

[3] MORRISON, "Rootedness...", in Evans ed., p. 339.

[4] ANGELOU, Maya, *I Know Why Teh Caged Bird Sings*. London: Virago Press, 1990, p.6-7.

[5] ANGELOU, op. cit.,p.7

The Bible is her every minute guidance and although she thinks nothing of whisking the children out of their sleep on the coldest of nights, when their cleanliness is not satisfactory, or of whipping a child for misbehaving in church, she goes to extremes to defend her own. Little Maya holds her grandmother in absolute trust and faith to the point of endowing her with magical powers. Afflicted with a tremendous toothache, the child watches as her grandmother confronts the white dentist who curtly refuses to treat the little girl, - as he would rather "stick (his) hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's." Her faith unshaken the child reckons they were going home where "she (Momma) would concoct a brew to eliminate the pain and maybe give me new teeth too."[6]

The grandmother's magic turns out to be her cunning in demanding the payment of ten dollars' interest on a past loan to the ungrateful white dentist, the necessary amount to take the child to the colored dentist in a neighboring town.

Momma's ancestral wisdom, which made her house the center of the community, second only to the church, allows her to be a sure guide for the younger generations, pointing out to them "the paths in life that she and her generation and all the Negroes gone before had found, and found to be safe ones."[7]

What marks Angelou's narrative is her profound admiration for her grandmother, the infinitely strong nurturing black woman, whose seldom demonstrated but "deep-brooding love" "hung over everything she touched." Caution is a quality developed by Black Americans in order to survive in a hostile environment, and as the author remarks: "Knowing Momma, I knew that I never Knew Momma. Her African-bush secretiveness and suspiciousness had been compounded by slavery and confirmed by centuries of promises made and promises broken."[8]

Reverently, Angelou draws a magnificent portrait of a strong black woman who neither corresponds to the Euro-American myth of the black Mammy of popular film, nor to that of the black woman as "the mule of the world" a passive, nurturing, self-sacrificing, uncomplaining burden bearer. Her conclusion is a hymn of praise to all African-American women:

The fact that the adult America Negro female emerges as a formidable character is often met with amazement, distaste and even belligerence. It is seldom accepted as an inevitable outcome of the struggle won by survivors, and deserves respect if not enthusiastic acceptance.[9]

In *Sula*, the very beginning of the narrative, in the peculiar style of fairy tales, "In that place..., there was once a neighborhood" signals a different world. An entirely different kind of order is established by Eva Peace, the only creator and sovereign of a grotesque realm, who is herself a source of wonder: abandoned by her husband in extreme poverty, she disappears for eighteen months. When she returns she is missing a leg but has a substantial income, whose mysterious origin is never explained.

---

[6] Ibid, p. 186.

[7] Ibid, p. 46.

[8] Ibid, p. 189

[9] ANGELOU, op. cit.,p.195

Three generations of women Eva, her daughter Hanna, and her granddaughter Sula live in an enormous ramshackle house, where Eva establishes herself as a queen and "directs the lives of her children, friends, strays, and a constant stream of boarders." She is an imposing sovereign, in spite of her ridiculous throne: a rocking chair adapted to a children's wagon. "Although people had to look down at her in her wagon, they all had the impression that they were looking up at her, up into the open distances of her eyes".[10]

Where Momma's good looks are recognized by everybody, the only information the reader has about Eva's is that her leg was magnificent. It was stockinged and shod at all times and in all weather, and a constant source of admiration for the male callers that came to play checkers and to talk.

Eva proves to be protective and benevolent when she adopts three boys and gives them a home. However her choice follows "a private scheme of preference and prejudice, "and the boys, who are left pretty much to their own devices, are indiscriminately called Dewey. By robbing the eweys of their names, Eva also robs them of their identities, and of their links with their ancestors.

In time, the omniscient narrator informs the reader, nobody was able to tell them apart, although when they first came they had completely different physical characteristics, "They became a trinity with a plural name... inseparable loving nothing and no one but themselves."[11]

Besides reversing assumptions, Eva's characterization is ambiguous: charitable impulses are contrasted to absolute destructive indifference. However, Morrison reserves judgement and asks the reader to do the same, by using delaying techniques such as the dots that interrupt the above quotation and mark a time break, functioning as stop signals.

Motherly love is another incongruity in Eva. When questioned by Hannah about whether she had loved them as babies, Eva replies "I kept you alive, didn'I? "Her supreme act of love toward Plum, her only male son who had returned from the war a drug addict, is to rock him into sleep, drench his body with kerosene and set fire to it. She recalls how hard it had been to bear him and to keep him alive, but now he was helpless as a baby "trying to climb back in my womb (...) Godamercy I coudn't birth him twice".[12]

This act lines Eva Peace up with such goddesses as the Greek Hecate with her demands for human sacrifice. As Eve, she is related to Adam's first wife in Hebrew legend, symbolic of the terrible mother.[13] Like a deity or a queen she is endowed with the power of life and death over her subjects.

But, again, no voice of authorial judgment intrudes and the reader is left to wonder about obvious gaps in the text: neither the characters' feelings nor the community's reactions are disclosed; no funeral takes place, no police action is

[10] MORRISON, Toni *Sula* New York: Plume, 1973, p.31.
[11] MORRISON, op. cit., p. 39.
[12] Ibid, p. 71.
[13] CIRLOT, J. E. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985.

mentioned. Morrison deliberately establishes a dialogue with her audience, leaving gaps that allow the reader" to participate in the creation of meaning as the reader works *with* the author in the construction of the book."[14]

Later in the narrative, Eva's characterization suffers another 180 degrees turnabout: watching from her upper floor window as a yard fire envelops Hannah whose clothes start burning, Eva smashes the window pane and throws herself out of the window, trying unsuccessfully to aim her body at the burning figure. She is again the mother who sacrifices herself for her children, as she had done in the past. Good and evil coexist in Eva, as good and evil coexist in African literature.

In the role of the wise ancestor, Eva's bequest to her daughters was manlove: "The Peace women loved maleness for its own sake." Eva, in spite of her age and her lameness "had a regular flock of gentlemen callers (...) and there was a good deal of teasing and laughter."[15]

Hannah, the daughter, takes sexual pleasure wherever she can find it, but she does it so naturally, with such a lack of guile that not even her partners' wives can be angry with her. She is happy in her choice of path.

Eva's advice to her granddaughter Sula, the rebel out to "make herself", who returns home after an unexplained ten-year absence is, "Ain't no woman got no business floatin around without no man." Sula's reply shows a disrespect that is equally deviant from expected behavior, "Cause you was bad enough to cut off your own leg you think you got a right to kick everybody with the stump".[16] Later on Sula clinches matters by interning Eva in an asylum, to the chagrin of the community, for whom this is an unforgivable crime. From beginning to end, Sula's and Eva's relationship is based on suspicion and ends in mutual hatred.

Thus, Eva is a contracictory and perplexing realization of the female anchestor, a cruel goddess who devours her offspring and who preaches male love, in contraposition to Momma's legacy of courage, faith in God and homespun wisdom.

A question poses itself: if Morrison is interested in notions of community and ancestry - a corollary of her concern with the preservation of African-American cultural identity - why does she treat the subject of the "elder of the tribe" through examples of dislocation?

What is possible to observe in the text of *Sula* is that there are two facets to Eva Peace, and the mythical Eva is counterbalanced by Eva the woman who, like Angelou's Momma, is created out of the lived experiences of black women. The sacrifice of her leg indicates courage and commitment to her children; her weird way of life and her strange bequest to her female descendants show *independence of mind*, strengths which the Euro-American stereotype of the black Mammy denies. Eva's character like Toni Morrison's fiction itself is an alignment of fantasy and reality, her own literary mode for representing African's traumatic experiences on American soil.

[14] MORRISON, "Rootedness (...), in Evans ed., p. 341.
[15] MORRISON, *Sula*, p. 41.
[16] Ibid, p. 92.

More than reversing expectations and sterotypes, Toni Morrison's peculiar treatment of her subject recognizes the dimensions and strengths of black women. Morrison is above all creating an African-American literature, whose peculiarities have to be evaluated in their specific context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANGELOU, Maya. *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings.* London: Virago Press, 1990

CIRLOT, J. E. *A Dictinary of Symbols.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985.

EVANS, Mari, ed. *Black Women Writers: A Critical Evaluation.* New York: Anchor/ Doubleday, 1984.

GATES, JR., Henry Louis & APPIAH, K. A. eds. *Toni Morrison.* New York: Amistad, 1993.

MORRISON, Toni. *Sula.* New York: Plume, 1973.

----------"Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," in EVANS, Mari ed. *Black Women Writers: A Critical Evaluation.* New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1984.

Universidade Federal do Paraná

DRAFTS AND FRAGMENTS ABOUT AN INTENSE FRICTION

MONIQUE BALBUENA

"This is not a work of fiction/not yet of one man," writes Ezra Pound in Canto XCIX (p.722). Wallace Stevens struggles to reach the "Supreme Fiction," as in his long poem of maturity, "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction." This difference alone serves to establish the division between two of the finest American poets of the 20th century. Such a division has obviously been observed by critics and has determined two clear trenches in the literary war.

The enormous distance that exists between Pound and Stevens has been shown again and again. It has also prompted the establishment of two groups of admirers and critics who share nothing more than a distaste for each other. I believe that the mind works through comparisons and discrete similitudes; that it operates by finding similarities in what is different, and differences in what is similar. It is difficult to flee the natural Manichaean tendency and accept beauties that are unique in themselves, without homogenizing them into a forced and unifying gesture. Establishing connections and contrasts (and even finding similarities, tenuous as they might be), is, nevertheless, a useful step in attempting a first understanding of the two poets. And contrasting the critical appropriations of their works is a way of identifying the main conflicts that have preempted a reasonable co-existence.

Pound wrote about war — his poetry, as well as his private life, enmeshing the politics of his time. With *The Cantos*, he is looking to compose a modern epic, one that, like any epic, borders on history and mythology. But he wants an all-encompassing epic, one in which all discourses are included, all voices are heard, and facts are registered. At one time Pounds intends to speak with the authority of history and to speak of the divine - temporal and atemporal woven together into a single structure: the poetic. More than that, perhaps, Pound envisages the possibility

(or the illusion) of having history and mythology speak for themselves, and make themselves heard through the many voices that come and inhabit the poem.

Pound conceives his *Cantos* as a sophisticated school-book: a book to instruct princes. This instruction should contain the full range of human experience, including political, social and economic concerns as well as the mental and spiritual powers that also inform such experience. Pound discusses and narrates economics, proposing reforms that would restore order in the world and reclaim justice and wisdom. The "court poet" wishes to act in the factual world, helping transform the course of events and define an administrative, economic and political order — human institutions and concrete achievements are poetic realms. The didactic goal of the poem meets the teleological: "and that I tried to make a paradiso/ terrestre" (Notes for CXVII et seq., p.816).

Wallace Stevens' poetry does not explicitly acknowledge the current events of his time — or, at least, certainly not like Pound's. His work, too, a work of almost a lifetime, prefers to present the alterations suffered not by a world that has undergone two World Wars, but of a mind in an incessant process of auto-reflection. Stevens does not want to "tell the tale of the tribe," and yet he has the equally ambitious project of elaborating the history of man as being in the world. His point of departure is the death of gods who leave men living alone in a chaotic and painful world. "To see the gods dispelled in mid-air and dissolve like clouds is one of the great human experiences. ...we shared likewise this experience of annihilation" (*O.P.*, 260). Stevens' poetry reflects on the menacing possibility of a schism between the mind and the world. While thinking, such poetry exposes the paths taken by thought — the many paradoxical turns; the spinnings and comings and goings of a process that reaches an ever growing level of abstraction.

There are studies that contest the view that Stevens was not interested in civic affairs. They usually point to the Coda of *Notes,* an address to the soldier of the Second World War, as a clear instance of his awareness of historicity. Stevens' personal correspondence also reveals an attraction to Benito Mussolini and his politics (something that, ironically enough, makes him akin to Pound). But the differences are striking between a poetry that has history at its core and one that merely hints at it. Stevens' poetry, however, is impregnated with reflexions about temporality, change, repetitive patterns and the human condition, and specifically, that of the artist in the world.

Stevens' poetry, particularly in *Harmonium*, is full of color and a lively brilliance, but his plotless characters are usually in the singular: they are one, and they, too, are alone. Stevens does not sound like anyone else, and to add to this atmosphere of solitude, he also states that "One does not write for any reader except one" (*O.P.*, 191). When we hear the single voice of the woman singing by the sea in "The Idea of Order at Key West," or when we face the interminable voicing of the poet trying to arrange his thoughts and give some order to his world, we remember the overpopulation of Pound's poem. Pound is not alone: he brings to life the voices of the dead, and the oldest voices of English and the oldest voices of

Western tradition are in communion. Among them, are voices that had never before been part of a poem — the authorized voices of historical documents.

The poets' conception of poetry and of its function in the world informs their options. Pound's collage technique suits his desire to have a text in which there is no plot, where multiple time frames and voices coexist in juxtaposition, where many genres leave their traces. It is a technique that allows, through a vast collection of events, to gather the whole of a culture in discontinuous fashion, and claim that it is the expression of the world. As Octavio Paz points out[1], this technique derives from and expands the French Simultaneism of Cendrars and Apollinaire. Simultaneist experiences also attempted juxtaposition and simultaneity, shattering syntax and linearity, and finally fusing time and space.

At this point there are some issues that need to be discussed. As has been said, Pound's use of the collage technique was an appropriate one to develop his view of poetry: one that had something to say to the world, that did not atrophy in a supposed autonomy or inwardness. Marjorie Perloff, commenting on Stevens' aphorism that "There is a life apart from politics," affirms that "Pound would have taken strong exception" to that, since "Poetry must, on the contrary, relate to the whole of a man's life."[2] Elsewhere she criticizes the absence of factual history or of politics in Stevens' poetry, and throughout her argumentation this seems to be a crucial point in defining Pound's "modernity" and Stevens' "conservatism."

Perloff praises Pound's "historical consciousness" and the fact that he "plays the role of the historian but paradoxically treats the past as if it were here and now."[3] And against Stevens' attachment to the Romantic lineage, his supposed *Make It Old* as opposed to Pound's *Make It Old*, she states: "... the *Cantos* defy Romantic paradigms"[4], or "The point, in any case, is to bypass Romanticism."[5] This refusal of any vestige of Romanticism is developed through insistent contrast between Pound's heteroglossia (achieved by a new technique) and concreteness of language, and Stevens' "solitary consciousness," his denial of the past and ex- and in-tense use of metaphor. Perloff takes a side in this old and often renovated

---

[1] See Paz, Octavio. *The Other Voice*, pp. 50-1. Paz regrets that American criticism is so unwilling to acknowledge this precedence — would Kenner agree that the Poundian parataxis is not a Poundian invention? Paz writes: "American critics, with the exception of Roger Shattuck, the poet Kenneth Rexroth, and a few others, never refer to the French origins of Simultaneism; they persist in repeating Pound's claim that his method of *presentation*, as he called it, grew out of his translations of Chinese poetry and his reading of Fenollosa. I have attempted on various occasions to correct this error, but because of the extraordinary influence of Anglo-American culture, the critics — and they include a goodly number in Latin America and even France — adhere to the canonical version. No one wants to see the *Cantos* and *The Waste Land* as a product of the Simultaneism introduced ten years earlier by Apollinaire and Cendrars. A product, of course, that was also a creation: not an imitation, but a grafting, a new plant, one vaster, more complex, and more powerful than the original."

[2] Perloff, Marjorie. "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era," p.491.

[3] Id. ibid., p.504.

[4] Id. ibid., p.503.

[5] Id. ibid., p.505.

fight against metaphor ("Etonnant, disait récement le philosophe Jacques Derrida, comme ce vieux sujet retrouve de jeunesse aujourd'hui!," quotes Jacques Darras).[6] She condemns the "country of metaphor"[7], but ironically, comments on "Pound's endlessly teasing allusions":

> *Why does "Taishan" appear in line 2 of Canto LXXXI?*
> *Because the high peak seen from his prison cell at Pisa reminds the poet of the sacred mountain of China, the home of the Great Emperor. And where does the Mount Taishan motif reappear? Some sixty lines later, when "Benin" (the friendly black soldier whose face reminds Pound of a Benin bronze) supplies him with a "table ex packing box," a gift "light as the branch of Kuanon."* [8]

If Pound refers to the black soldier as "Benin" because he reminds him of a Benin bronze, Pound is corroborating something we have said before: that the mind operates through comparisons and discrete similarities. It perceives, or understands, the world better when it establishes connections with what is known, even if it is to define differences — the mind is comparative. The high peak in Pisa is also, in Pound's eyes, the sacred mountain of China (and we couldn't get there using Michelin maps...), and the gift is not light, but "light as[9] the branch of Kuanon." It seems clear that we are dealing here with metaphors. Perloff avoids using words

[6] In *Arpentage de la Poésie Contemporaine*, Jacques Darras writes in a section entitled "Dragonnades contre la métaphore," pp.268-269: "'La luttle contre la métaphore est sans fin' écrit un critique de poésie, en France, en 1982. Phrase étonnante de pugnacité et de naïveté non moins certaine dans son inconscience d'elle-même! 'La lutte contre la métaphore' est bien évidemment une métaphore dont on conçoit qu'il faille en effet la pourfendre sans fin puisqu'elle s'obstine à persévérer là où l'on décide qu'elle doit finir. ... Mais aussi pourquoi vouloir lutter contre la métaphore? Quel impératif esthétique catégorique contraindrait le poète à lui témoigner son hostilité? ... Quelle équation imperceptible a bien pu se produire dans l'imaginaire européen pour désigner ainsi l'image comme victime à proscrire de la Cité?" As we have seen, this "imperceptible equation" was produced not only in the European imaginary, but in the American as well. And here when I say American I mean North American and South American: coincidentally, 1982 was the year in which was written the essay on which Darras is commenting in the text above, the year when Perloff wondered whose era this was after all, and the year in which a Brazilian poet, Sebastião Uchoa Leite, published a new book , *Isto não é aquilo* [This is not that]. In this book there is a poem that ends with the following verse: "vamos destruir a máquina das metáforas" [let's destroy the machine of metaphors]. Title of the poem: "A morte dos símbolos" [The Death of Symbols]!

[7] Perloff, Marjorie. "Revolving in Crystal: The Supreme Fiction and the Impasse of Modernist Lyric," in Gelpi, Albert (1985), p. 42. Perloff calls Stevens' *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* "a kind of antimeditation, fearful and evasive, whose elaborate and daunting rhetoric is designed to convince both poet and reader that, despite the daily headlines and radio bulletins, the real action takes place in the country of metaphor."

[8] Id. "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era?," p.494.

[9] In Altieri, Charles. *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry*, p.345, we read: "... the 'as' is the quintessential grammatical index for metaphor, as it sets in motion chains of reverberations."

such as "analogy," because they seem derogatory to her, and she usually saves them for Stevens, as in "Stevens's rage for order, his need to make analogies, is at odds with Pound's deployment of metonymic linkages, his creation of Cubist surfaces or aerial maps where images jostle one another."[10] Pound, too, refused to accept that he had created a wonderful metaphor when he made an analogy between his method of composition and his idealization of the ideogramic character of the Chinese language. He insisted it was literally true. Perloff leans on the word "allusion," but like the (mis)use of the metaphor "fight against metaphor" to supposedly destroy metaphors, Perloff repeats Pound and makes use of metaphor, even without acknowledging it. The metaphorical reasoning is congenial to metaphor; language itself is already a metaphor. As Michel Déguy puts it, "le dire est essentiellement métaphorique ou comparatif."[11] Therefore, simply denying metaphor an important place in our lives or in a craft that depends on verbal language seems a bit excessive.

Perloff also presents the technique of juxtaposing different facts, events or voices as a radical rupture with Romanticism. It is a device that would go against the Romantic model of the "I" as a "Solitary Singer," and partake in the process of exploding the norms of the lyric. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some links between Pound and Romanticism. And to the dismay of some critics, in this same innovative technique, in which the dreaded word — analogy — is included. Once more I quote Octavio Paz:

> *Simultaneism, sometimes called Poetic Cubism, was yet another manifestation, often crude but nearly always effective, of the cardinal principle of Romantic and Symbolist poetry: analogy. A poem is totally propelled — and impelled — by the complementary action of affinities and oppositions between its parts. A triumph of contiguity over succession. Or, more precisely, a fusion, spatial and temporal, of the two. The axis of the two great poetic movements of the first half of the twentieth century — Simultaneism and Surrealism — was the same as that of Romanticism: the vision of universal correspondence and the consciousness of a break, of death. The ambiguous relation of Romanticism to Western religious traditions and revolutionary political movements also reappeared in nearly*

[10] Perloff, Marjorie. op.cit., p.500. It is amusing to share some quotes from Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era*: "And this, which he saw in the ideograms with an eye Emerson had trained, enabled Fenollosa for the first time to restore metaphor, 'the swift perception of relations' (Aristotle's 'hallmark of genius'), to the heart of a poetic process not peripheral to but concentric with the most intent working of the focused mind." (p.230); [in Fenollosa's notebook] "Certain themes recur: that language springs from creative metaphors in which 'man and nature come to brotherhood'" (p.289.).

[11] In Darras, Jacques (ed.). *Arpentage de la Poésie Contemporaine*, p.179. Déguy says more: "Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait de différence essentielle entre métaphore et comparaison (c'est une chose aussi vieille qu'Aristote). ... La moindre apposition, substantif, épithète, est pour moi de l'ordre de la comparaison. Si je dis, écrivant un roman, 'le couchant lubrique', c'est une épithète, une épithèse, une épisynthèse comme dit le vieux Longin. C'est implicitement une comparaison. Toute synthèse est comparaison, recèle un 'être comme'."

all the great poets of our century. Since its birth, modern poetry has been simultaneously an affirmation and a negation of modernity. [12]
(italics added)

There is also the interest in other — and so-called exotic — civilizations that is a direct descendant from the Romantics.

Poets adopted the haiku, and the Noh theater influenced Yeats and other playwrights. Ezra Pound translated Chinese poetry. In short, the first third of the twentieth century was the culmination of a long process of discovery ofother civilizations and their various visions of reality andhumanity. ... It was the natural result, the extreme consequence, of the aesthetic evolution that began with Romanticism ...[13]

Still another aspect may be pointed out. As a school-book for Princes, Pound's *Cantos* was intended as a text that would have the power to influence the real world. In order to write the moral history of our age, Pound was definitely interested in economics, and he expected his poem to act on a political, social and economic order. For this he pontificated and maintained a didactic stance. Pursuing ethical standards, presenting what he considered proper values, Pound also discussed the Magna Carta and the societies that were able to live peacefully under equitable and sane laws. As anti-Romantic as he is, we cannot help but remember Shelley, in his *A Defense of Poetry*: "Poets are the secret legislators of mankind." From this point of view, Pound ends up having a secret vinculum to Romanticism...[14]

What prompted this discussion, though, was the the inability of many critics to accept or take pleasure from different poetics. As if a first choice should be made and everything that did not resemble or did not align with it had to be crossed out as invalid. Hence the establishment of dichotomies claimed as absolutes, from which one single choice is possible or, worse, acceptable: form/content, history/mythologizing of the self, outwardness/inwardness, epic/lyric, concrete/abstract, political/personal, etc. The list could be endless... One is expected to take sides. It is a sign of inconsistency to enjoy at one time two poets that are taken as the bases of antagonistic critical groups to develop theoretical projects. For the other, each group can only reveal an extreme bad taste, let alone absolutely defective theories.

Each poet has his own particular view of the world, and his own disposition and temperament. He has at his disposal multiple devices and materials — free

[12] Paz, Octavio. op. cit., p.52.

[13] Id. ibid., p.46. Likewise, Michael Bernstein writes about Pound: "*His poem was to push the Romantic theory of 'organic growth' to its limits* by taking as its model not a single plant but the very history of its age." (in *The Tale of the Tribe*, p.116, italics added.)

[14] Charles Altieri aligns Pound with the Romantics in a contrast with Stevens: "If there was to be a plausible modern embodiment of nobility, it could not take Pound's essentially Romantic form — that of the solitary, visionary culture hero, locating in intensity of structure what could not otherwise be expressed within the confines of social reality." (in op. cit., p.321)

verse, short verse, metrics, metaphorical poetry, committed poetry, collage technique, etc. — which he chooses according to his temperament, taste, or the function he believes such materials will perform. If he thinks the formula at which he arrives is the best one (and it may be the best one *to him*, the one most suitable for both his tendencies and purposes), it is very possible that he will start judging other poets' production according to the standards he set for himself. His form becomes *the* form, his materials, the *right* materials, his poetics, *the* poetics. [15] If poets may behave like this, what can we expect from critics? They pick their choice and range the trenches,[16] usually much more worried with the choice of materials than with the results the poet may attain through his poetic practice while working with those materials. Results and consistent practices are eventually overlooked in this common urge to state "the inescapable poetic truth." But it is understandable that the "truth" they manage to create in the literary world defines their identity and establishes their reputation as critics. If they "discover" the "right" poet and offer the "definitive" reading of his work, their names and that of the poet are bound to go side by side for a long time, and the critics' posterity is assured. By hierarchizing authors, critics prepare the material with which to build their historical models, the ones that are "objective" and "authorized." Hence the urge for one single and monolithic truth.

It is equally possible that a critic finds in a particular poet elements that are essentially congenial to his theoretical projects, and he then adopts this poet's work as his privileged object of study. A critic also has his own temperament and will naturally choose to work on a poet/writer whose works somewhat align with his preferences and indagations. A choice is already a statement, and there is nothing primarily wrong with partiality in criticism. (Baudelaire once wrote: "I am

[15] I am indebted to Susanne Langer, in *Feeling and Form*, p.246: "There are countless devices for creating the world of a poem and articulating the elements of its virtual life, and almost every critic discovers some of these means and stands in wondering admiration of their "magic." It may happen that a poet himself falls in love with a poetic resource, as Swinburne did with alliterative words and Browning with the sound of conversation, and uses it so freely and obviously that one hears the technique itself instead of perceiving only the virtual events it serves to create. The poet has become a theorist, like the awe-struck critic (a critic who cannot be awe-struck is not equal to his material), and is tempted to set up a recipe for poetic work. If other writers are impressed with his recipe they form a "school," and perhaps issue a manifesto, asseverating the essential nature of poetry, and as a corollary the basic importance of their technique, which achieves the essence. The poetry of the past, and especially the recent past, is then censured as "impure" in so far as most of it does not strive for this essence (not to attain it is unsuccessful rather than impure; but to *aim* at anything else is considered as importing non-poetic factors, adulterating the poem)."

[16] Symptomatic of this radical partisanship, or absolute rhetoric, is a note in Perloff's essay "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era," p.510, in which she diminishes the possible "articulation" of the critic Denis Donoghue because he happens to like or "find value" in both Stevens and Pound: "Denis Donoghue, in most respects the proponent of the Stevensian "august imagination," is also able to find value in that "school-book for Princes," the *Cantos*. Perhaps — and this is a point to ponder long and hard — the catholicity of taste that allows Donoghue to appreciate both Stevens and Pound represents a critical position less firmly articulated and therefore finally less authoritative than that of a Harold Bloom or a Hugh Kenner."

not interested in criticism that is not partial.") But if this movement of conjoining poetical work and previous theoretical projects may sometimes bring prolific results, it also risks suffering from a typical *malaise* that may be called "the critical fallacy." Such common critical practice consists of creating a well-defined theoretical frame and then, and only then, setting out in search of a poetical work that fits in this frame and justifies the theory. The elements that do not quite match with the theory are described as unworkable or as flawed. Or else they are aptly suppressed or brilliantly converted into something else by means of a particular reading.

One must acknowledge that once the text is on the market and accessible to the reading public, its author does not control it anymore. Intent, desired or planned meanings are undoubtedly part of the set created by the author, but ambiguity, an important characteristic of the literary work, confers upon it multiple possibilities of reading and understanding. And an author is also made by the readings he raises. Gide wrote in *Paludes:*[17]

> *si nous savons ce que nous voulions dire, nous ne savons pas si nous ne disions que CELA ... Attendons de partout la révélation des choses; du public, la révélation de nos œuvres.*

If a work of art is likely to receive several different yet valid interpretations in a synchronic point of view, it is usually received very differently over time. Now we are not dealing with ambiguity, but with the ever changing criteria of judgment and evaluation that ultimately define the "value" of a work of art. The perception, or judgment, of a such a work is shaped according to a combination of literary and extra-literary factors. Each historical moment has, besides its moral, ideological, religious and cultural values, a set of literary norms and exigencies that are characteristic to it. They naturally imply the possibility of multiple readings of a work in a diachronic perspective. The values and criteria in force at a certain historical moment configure, then, the poetics of that moment.

Having written over many years, Wallace Stevens underwent many theoretical appropriations, as critics from several tendencies used Stevens (or modeled their own Stevenses) to ground their arguments. From his first publications in magazines until his eventual collected poems at the end of his life, Stevens was the "vigorous example" of many distinct constructions. After his death his reputation grew even further, as did the number of studies about his poems. He was used by those who wished to to defend the position that literature, and especially poetry, was an elitist realm, and the poet, an elitist misanthrope. He was an example of literary modernity, as well as that of a "New England poet," that is, a genuine voice in the American landscape. He was at first the poet of sensibility and fragment, and afterwards the poet of thought and construction. But Stevens was also an important instrument in an earlier canonical dispute: he was used to contest the traditionalism, the authority and the supremacy of T.S. Eliot.[18] If Eliot was central to the canon

[17] Gide, André. *Paludes*. p.9.

then, and much of the criticism founded upon readings of his work — especially the New Criticism —, Stevens was gradually acquiring a reputation that could measure forces with him. In a revisionist movement, he represented a viable possibility to which some critics were holding in order to rebel against Eliot's dominance. Stevens himself was not immune to this confrontation, and wrote in a letter:[19]

> *After all, Eliot and I are dead opposites and I have been doing everything that he would not be likely to do.*

In this same wave, several critics, starting to produce what was called "critical theory" (as opposed to "literary criticism"), and yearning to debunk the New Criticism and its assumptions, elected Stevens' poetry as the recipient or focus of their own poetics. Some of their names: Northrop Frye, Frank Kermode, Joseph Riddel, J. Hillis Miller, Frank Lentricchia, and Harold Bloom. John Newcomb offers the diverse reasons for this common choice:[20]

> *There was no single quality of Stevens and his work which attracted all of these critical theorists to him : Frye admired Stevens' ability to synthesize fleeting individual perceptions into a coherent system of understanding; Kermode and Lentricchia valued Stevens' notion of "fictions" as flexible and pragmatic heuristics for existence; Bloom valorized Stevens' kinship with the English Romantic tradition; Miller and Riddel saw Stevens as a poetic exemplar of their interests in concepts of phenomenological reality and linguistic undecidability. One element common to the thought of all these theorists, despite their varied treatment and evaluation of the terminology and traditions of Romanticism, was a turn away from the autotelic product-text of New Criticism, towards seeing literature as a process grounded in updated versions — humanistic, existential, mythical, agonistic, phenomenological — of the Romantic poetic subject.*

As we have observed, any author is open to receiving manifold readings. His work contains more than it seems, and a reader, any reader, will see it the way he is prepared to see it. The reader's previous readings, his sensibility, his interests, even his conception of language and of the world are elements that play a part in the perception and the reception of a work. An author then acquires more shades,

[18] Another poet who had a very strong influence as an anti-T.S. Eliot model was William Carlos Williams.

[19] Stevens, Wallace. *Letters*. p.677. It is interesting to observe that years later, in another canonical dispute, the lack of interest showed by Stevens towards Pound, and vice-versa, would be used as a supposedly legitimate argument to justify the impossibility of a taste that encompasses both poetics.

[20] Newcomb, John. *Wallace Stevens and Literary Canons.*, p.208.

different angles, contortions and distortions that end up being, nevertheless, facets of his own image. This fact points to the necessary care one must have when attempting a new reading, in order not to fall in to the illusion of "truth." There are readings that are more apt to answer certain questions posed by the work. There are sensitive readings, and readings that do not manage to arrive at any conclusion they had at first proposed for themselves. There are readings that seem more appropriate to respond to such or such a concern. There are readings that will certainly attract one's preferences. But all those readings are not *correct*, in the sense that they do not hold the rights of an immutable or unquestionable truth. They are not inscribed in the pure dominion of essences, but are a result of a series of factors responsible for their production. The "definitive" reading is never the last one, because the conditions of its arousal inevitably change and another reading is made possible to co-exist with it or even to supercede it.

In an extreme diligence to supercede previous theoretical assumptions and to develop his own particular poetical system, Harold Bloom also elected Stevens as his major modernist poet. The Bloomian Stevens, though, is a predominantly, if not exclusively, Romantic poet, placed at the end of a chain that moves from Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, until it arrives at Stevens himself, as the contemporary manifestation of American Romanticism, by way of Emerson and Whitman.[21] Bloom wants to restore the Romantic canon, and in a way in which it may be reinstituted as *his* canon, his own creation.

I am particularly interested in Bloom's stance because it stands in direct opposition to that of the main Poundian supporter, Hugh Kenner. Bloom and Kenner's exchange has become notorious,[22] and in their simple opposition of terms, or in their mutual unacknowledgement of poets, they resemble each other remarkably. Harold Bloom, however, is more ambitious than Hugh Kenner in the use of his elected poet. He is interested in building a theoretical arsenal in order to join battle against his own precursors: the New Critics and, afterwards, the French structuralists. His concern is not to read Stevens' poetry on its own, but to

[21] In *A Map of Misreading*, p.193, Bloom writes: " I have been tracing the visionary company that inhabits two shadows of influence, the Miltonic tradition that goes from the poets of Sensibility to its culmination in Yeats, and the Emersonian tradition from Whitman to its completion in the last phase of Stevens."

[22] Kenner, in *The Pound Era*, dismisses Stevens' poetry as "an Edward Lear poetic, pushed toward all limits" (p.517). In *A Map of Misreading*, Bloom retorts that "now the antiquarian Hugh Kenner has dogmatized this myth [of Modernism] into the Pound Era, a canon of accepted titans. Pretenders to godhood Kenner roughly reduces to their mortality; the grand triumph of Kenner is his judgment that Wallace Stevens represented the culmination of the poetics of Edward Lear" (p.28). Years later, in *The Poems of Our Climate*, Bloom tries to equal the dismissal shown by Kenner throughout his book, affirming that Frost "seems [to him] Stevens' *true* twentieth-century rival, rather than Eliot, Pound, or Williams" (p.68, italics added). Then Bloom suggests that we should start calling this period "the Age of Stevens (or shall we say the Stevens Era?)" (p.152). In "The Modernist Canon," Kenner tries to explain: "I account for [the absence of Wallace Stevens from the canon I use] by his unassimilability into the only story that I find has adequate explanatory power: a story of capitals ..." (p.373).

gradually shape the image of a Stevens that may legitimize his theory of genealogical feud and of Stevens as the major twentieth-century manifestation of the model of "English Romantic crisis-poetry." And in a way he is more ambitious than Kenner because, as opposed to him, Bloom ultimately wants to place himself on a level with Stevens — in his terms, he wants to be the "strong poet" who manages to "misread" and "misinterpret" his "father," and who ends up deciding what he [the father] has written, for

> *Criticism may not always be an act of judging, but it is always an act of deciding, and what it tries to decide is meaning. (italics added)* [23]

In *The Visionary Company*, references to Stevens are not yet systematic but occasional, occurring whenever Bloom wants to affirm the persistence of certain images or ideas in the present day. As Newcomb puts it:[24]

> *In general, very few references in The Visionary Company allowed for any contrast, or even difference, among Stevens and Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, or the other poets he discussed; most references to Stevens fit a rigid pattern of identity such as "or, as Wallace Stevens says in our own day." ... Bloom used Stevens, then, as a sort of infinite reservoir of remarks and illustrations which could be brought in whenever the critic wanted to demonstrate the existence of a "Romantic tradition" extending past the middle of the nineteenth century.*

Later on Stevens acquires a more central place in Bloom's thought. Not only does Bloom expand and define his theory of rivalries between precursors and young poets, always with Stevens in mind, but he names one of the "characters" of this story after him: the "ephebe" of *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*. Bloom continues this pattern of dialogue while writing and acting out his own theory. In the "Preface to the Second Edition" of *The Visionary Company*, he lists names of colleagues and critics by whom he has "been influenced most," but we should not delude ourselves: he names his precursors only to state, throughout his works, that he performed the necessary "act of misprision," that he overcame their anteriority and successfully established a new genealogy. He strives to be unique and "original."[25] His dialogue, though, is certainly not exclusive to the critics with whom he disputes an interpretation, but with the very poet who is being interpreted, for, as a critic, he, too, is a poet.

[23] Bloom, Harold. *The Map of Misreading*. p.3.

[24] Newcomb, John. op. cit., p.222.

[25] The quotation marks are due to the fact that according to Bloom's theory no one is truly original, since one's identity is established in the relationship between texts. But Bloom's strong poet reveals his power in the ability to *imagine* himself, that is, his origin, and then create himself and his reader. Hence, "originality."

Influence, as I conceive it, means that there are no texts, but only relationships between texts. These relationships depend upon a critical act as it governs writing, and reading is therefore a miswriting just as writing is a misreading. As literary history lengthens, all poetry necessarily becomes verse-criticism, just as all criticism becomes prose-poetry. (last italics added) [26]

Stevens is an interesting case for Bloom, since he is a solitary poet who keeps repeating that he "doesn't read much poetry" and "has no influences."[27] Bloom's job is then to point to Stevens' precursors, while explaining that the poet does not recognize them because he was victorious in his battle and managed to surpass them. Stevens is Bloom's model, and Bloom's theory is his response to Stevens' poetry. As a strong ephebe, Bloom cannot escape his own anxiety [28] and, ultimately, his own fate of usurping Stevens' text. As a critic he has to *decide* the meaning of Stevens' poetry; he has to *complete* the poetic text so that it gains full significance; he has to *re-write* it:

To live, the poet must misinterpret the father, by the crucial act of misprision, which is the re-writing of the father.[29]

It is also as a poet that Bloom has to re-write Stevens and fill the voids that were left in such a way that prevents any new reading that does not include Bloom — "*Only a poet challenges a poet as poet*, and so only a poet makes a poet." [30] Now Stevens is Bloom's precursor, and since Bloom is a strong reader and a strong poet, Stevens has been vanquished by him. Stevens has now become part of Bloom's genealogy; therefore, he has been created by Bloom and is to be remembered as such. And this is also Bloom's guarantee against oblivion, his warranty of immortality.

a poem is written to escape dying. Literally, poems are refusals of mortality. Every poem therefore has two makers: *the precursor, and the ephebe's rejected mortality.* (italics added). [31]

---

[26] Bloom, Harold. op. cit., p.3.

[27] But actually I could say that in Stevens, even more than in Pound, one hears the whole tradition of English poetry echoed. The many voices are all behind him, in an intense dialogue, and yet Stevens sounds like no one else.

[28] Even in victory, anxiety persists. What Bloom writes about poets is entirely applicable to himself, concerning his double belatedness: "Poets tend to think of themselves as stars because their deepest desire is to be an influence, rather than be influenced, but even in the strongest, whose desire is accomplished, the anxiety of having been formed by influence still persists." (in *The Map of Misreading*, p.12.)

[29] Id.ibid., p.19.

[30] Id.ibid., p.19.

[31] Id.ibid., p.19.

Bloom is the triumphant man, the overpowered poet who won his psychic/genealogical battles among theoreticians and poets alike, guaranteeing his place in the lineage that is to be continued through new battles. Although the logic of his own theory predicts his eventual defeat (that turns out to be a sort of victory because it affirms its validity), Bloom expends much effort making sure his descendants find the task difficult.

One of the functions of criticism, as I understand it, is to make a good poet's work even more difficult for him to perform, since only the overcoming of genuine difficulties can result in poems wholly adequate to an age consciously as late as our own. All that a critic, as critic, can give poets is the deadly encouragement that never ceases to remind them of how heavy their inheritance is. [32]

Bloom, however, made everything a little more difficult not only to the belated poet, but to the reader, belated or not. His unnecessarily complicated terminology, his "revisionary ratios," his (let us be nice here and use his own terms) "strong misprision" of Hebrew words and Kabbalistic concepts, force any reader to cross a *prodigious scholar's dark* jungle before getting to the point. They remind the reader incessantly of how heavy their reading is: "This multiplication of terms is more than a little maddening."[33] Bloom seems to affirm his authorship, and his authority, at every moment, making them more important than the subject with which he is dealing. He imposes his presence and seeks to make his voice an unmistakable one.

In this process, though, we can see more clearly how he appropriates Stevens to his theoretical model. The Stevens that interests him is an exclusively aesthetic, antipolitical, individualistic Romantic one. Bloom romanticizes Stevens even further: he dismisses the poet's attachment to "modern philosophers" such as Bergson, Whitehead, Santayana and James because Stevens supposedly tends to be reductive whenever he follows them, and because "when *he is most himself*, his vision of change is Lucretian and Shelleyan." [34] Bloom does not pay attention to the diversity of Stevens' poetic language, to his innovative word formations or to the different lexicons that he uses in an attempt "To compound the imagination's Latin with/The lingua franca et jocundissima" ("Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," *C.P.*, p.397). The Bloomian Stevens seems much more self-assured of the triumph of human will and imagination over nature than the other Stevens(es) that constantly revolves on the interplay between mind and reality and often arrives at a moment of balance, co-dependence, interactive integration — "an interdependence of the imagination and reality as equals" (*N.A.*, p.27). The former

---

[32] Id.ibid., p.10.

[33] Here we borrow Bloom's comment on the many Emersonian translations of *ethos, pathos* and *logos*. (in *Poems of Our Climate*, p.4.)

[34] Bloom, Harold. op. cit., p.191. (italics added)

is more assertive, agonistic and apotheotic. The latter allows himself several contradictory statements along his work, a less heroic or self-sufficient stance, and a more human integration in the natural cycles:

... But to impose is not/To discover.
("Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," C.P., p.403.)

Two things of opposite natures seem to depend
On one another, as a man depends
On a woman, day on night, the imagined//
On the real. This is the origin of change.
("Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," C.P., p.392.)

... not balances
That we achieve but balances that happen,//
As a man and woman meet and love forthwith.
("Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," C.P., p.386.)

> *The significance of any piece of literature must lie, supposedly, in what the author says; yet every critic who is worth his salt has enough literary intuition to know that the way of saying things is somehow all-important. This is especially obvious in poetry.*
> *... The essential task of criticism seems to be to determine what the special mode of expression is, and how serviceable it is for saying what the author wants to say.*
> Susanne Langer (1953)

As to what concerns the jousts between Pound's and Stevens' supporters, one of Rochefoulcaud's maxims seems quite appropriate: "Polemics would not last so long if only one of the sides were right." The dispute on the concept of modernism has not resumed — everyday we hear of more modernisms, and we still have no clue of how our era will be remembered in three hundred years. It is perhaps useful to remember Jakobson's notion of the "dominant" to account for both the co-existence of different functions in a work, or a genre (with the predominance of one of them in a definite time), and to the process of change in the hierarchical scale of compositional elements and devices. Elements formerly seen as secondary may become essential, and they all continue to interact with each other, undergoing the sliding movements ("*glissements*") that ensure continuity and change, and ultimately form what we know as literary history.

> *... des changements continuels dans le système des valeurs artistiques entraînent des changements dans l'évaluation des manifestations concrètes de l'art. Ce qui, sous l'angle de l'ancien système, était minimisé ou jugé imparfait, synonyme de dilletantisme, d'aberration, ou, simplement, d'erreur, ou ce qui était considéré comme hérétique, comme décadent, comme dépourvu de valeur, peut apparaître, et, dans la perspective d'un nouveau système, être adopté, comme valeur positive.*[35]

The simple contraposition of Pound's "*how*" (style, technique) versus Stevens' "*what*" (content, subject matter) does not seem to solve the problem. Those aspects may be taken as the dominant element in the poets' works, but the way the discussion is led not only intends to place the poets "in a monolithic olympus of literary value." [36] but also to shape them as a monolithic block. Pound developed the technique of collage and juxtaposition, and took part in the movement of "classicization of modernism," with the *estilo all'antica* that we can find in other exponents of the twentieth century avant-gardes, such as Picasso, De Chirico, Maillol, Stravisnky, Satie, Eliot, Joyce, Cocteau and others. The "manner" was undoubtedly very important, but that was the same Pound who wrote:

in
discourse
what matters is
to get it across e poi basta
(LXXIX:486)

Since he is writing an epic, therefore a narrative, with plot and subject matter, Pound is also concerned with what he writes. "The tale of the tribe" has to be *communicated*, and must even be able to perform the pedagogical and reformative functions to which it is assigned. Pound, too, has truths he wishes to convey.

Stevens approaches many philosophers in his inquiries, and his poetry bears the signs of this association. But if we are to view such practice as solely related to the theme, we can but partially apprehend it. This "rendering of thought" depends on the way it is done, on the ability the poet has to manipulate his material. Valéry writes a very demystifying comment:

---

[35] Jakobson, Roman. "La Dominante," in *Questions de Poétique*, p.150.
[36] Newcomb, John. op.cit., p.241.

Je déteste la fausse profondeur, mais je n'aime pas trop la véritable. La profondeur littéraire est le fruit d'un procédé spécial. C'est un effet comme un autre, obtenu par un procédé comme un autre. — Il suffit de voir comment se fabrique un livre de pensées — j'entends profondes.
(italics added) [37]

The discussion about the intermingling of the political and poetical usually leads the contenders once again to the old issue of purity against impurity. In the case of Pound's and Stevens' supporters, their attitude, through different paths, arrive at very much the same point. Perloff is emphatic in her identification of Stevens' MacCullough as an Aryan, a WASP:

MacCullough connotes racial purity; unlike, say, MacSweeney, which is Scotch-Irish, it is not contaminated. ... Indeed, given the context of European fascism, the very naming of "the MacCullough" brings to mind the stereotype of Aryan purity, the master race. [38]

Surprisingly enough, while demanding the political in the poem, criticizing Stevens' apolitical stance as well as his political one — for she quotes Letter 295, in which Stevens refers to Mussolini —, Perloff remains completely mute about Pound's political and ideological choices, fascism and anti-Semitism. Bloom, in turn, alleging the unacceptability of Pound's political affiliations, dictatorially rejects the whole of his poetical work as well as any theoretical accomplishment of his supporters.

If critics find it difficult, if not impossible, to appreciate different poetics, poets are sometimes more sensitive to discover useful or pleasant approximations in another poet's texts. One may not agree with all of the fundamentals of a poetics yet still find attractive fragments, brief illuminations worth keeping or even processing in making one's own poetry.

According to an essay by Alan Golding, this is what happened to Louis Zukofsky. Conventionally linked to the Poundian tradition, Zukofsky presents, nevertheless, several affinities with Stevens' work. Golding quotes from Zukofsky's essays "his and Stevens' 'use of horses and donkeys throut our poems'," "a partial coincidence or community of elements between two figures," and the strong statement: " [I] felt that my own writing ... was closer to him than to that of any of my contemporaries in the last half century of life we shared together."[39]

Contradicting Kenner's assertion that Stevens' poetry is "rhythmically dead," Golding shows that what Zukofsky liked in Stevens were his ear, his music and his diction. But he rejected his ideas, what he considered Stevens' excess of

[37] Valéry, Paul. *Œuvres*. Tome II, p.640.
[38] Perloff, Marjorie. "The Supreme Fiction and the Impasse of Modernist Lyric," p.59.
[39] Golding, Alan. "The 'Community of Elements' in Wallace Stevens and Louis Zukofsky," in Gelpi (1985).

philosophy: "His music throut has not been impaired by having philosophized." In a dialogue with Perloff, Golding says: "What Zukofsky valued in Stevens was "the words" — the style, not the ideas; the manner, not the matter." [40]

Zukofsky reaches two poetics and grasps the elements that he considers most congenial to his own view and practice of poetry:

... in reading others, poets tend to take what they want and leave the rest. Zukofsky, because he was most interested in what the poet makes, naturally took a lesson about making even from Stevens, someone more interested in what the poet says. ... Zukofsky found in one aspect of Stevens' work some-thing to reaffirm the definition of poetry as song that he had already picked up from Pound's writings and translations of Provençal poetry. In so doing he partially bridged the gap between the Stevens and the Pound-Williams views of poetry, using his reading of Stevens to implement Pound's advice that the budding poet "fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language, so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement." [41]

Zukofsky's example shows us that an approximation, or, at least, the non-exclusion, of these two and thus far main traditions of poetry in twentieth century America is not a naïve democratic desire. It is a viable path that can be attempted by other poets and hopefully, one day, by the critics, who already may have developed a broader concept of canon as they redefine their own task. Then, these words will never be so meaningful:

He had to choose. But it was not a choice
Between excluding things. It was not a choice

Between, but of. He chose to include the things
That in each other are included, the whole,
The complicate, the amassing harmony.
("Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," C.P., p.403.)

[40] id.ibid., p.125.
[41] id.ibid., p.127.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALTIERI, Charles. *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

BERNSTEIN, Michael André. *The Tale of the Tribe: Pound and the Modern Verse Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

BLOOM, Harold. *A Map of Misreading*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

————. *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1995.

————. *The Visionary Company*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1971.

DARRAS, Jacques. *Arpentage de la Poésie Contemporaine*. Amiens: Trois Cailloux, 1987.

GIDE, André. *Paludes*. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française: 1920.

GOLDING, Alan. "The 'Community of Elements' in Wallace Stevens and Louis Zukofsky," in *Wallace Stevens: The Poetics of Modernism*. ed. Alberto Gelpi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 121-40.

JAKOBSON, Roman. *Questions de Poétique*. Paris: Seuil, 1973.

KENNER, Hugh. "The Modernist Canon," in *Canons*. ed. Robert von Hallberg. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1984, 363-75.

————. *The Pound Era*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California, 1973.

LANGER, Susanne. *Feeling and Form*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

NEWCOMB, John. *Wallace Stevens and Literary Canons*. Jackson, London: University Press of Mississippi, 1992.

PAZ, Octavio. *The Other Voice*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991.

PERLOFF, Marjorie. "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era?" *New Literary History* 13, no.3 (1982), 485-514.

————. "Revolving in Cristal: The Supreme Fiction and the Impasse of Modernist Lyric," in *Wallace Stevens: The Poetics of Modernism*. ed. Alberto Gelpi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 41-64.

POUND, Ezra. *The Cantos*. New York: New Directions, 1989.

SCHAUM, Melissa. *Wallace Stevens and the Critical Schools*. Tuscaloosa, London: The University of Alabama Press, 1988.

STEVENS, Wallace. *The Collected Poems*. New York; Vintage Books, 1990.

————. *The Necessary Angel*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

————. *The Letters of Wallace Stevens*. ed. Holly Stevens. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966.

————. *Opus Posthumous*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

VALERY, Paul. *Œuvres*. Paris: Pléiade, 1960.

University of California, Berkeley

CATCH-22: A LUTA CONTRA O *ESTABLISHMENT*[1]

ELIANE BORGES BERUTTI

Catch-22 (1961) de Joseph Heller não tem como pano de fundo a Guerra do Vietnã. Seu cenário é, sim, a Segunda Guerra Mundial, da qual o próprio Heller participou, em 60 missões aéreas de combate. O escritor traça no romance um perfil do universo da guerra sem o realismo convencional - o que permite discutir, metaforicamente, a intervenção dos Estados Unidos em outros países.

Heller aloca a ação de seu livro na ilha de Pianosa, no Mediterrâneo. Todavia, conforme ele mesmo explica, essa ilha é "muito pequena e obviamente não poderia acomodar todas as ações descritas. Como o cenário deste romance, os personagens, também, são fictícios"[2]. *Catch-22* foi escrito quase duas décadas depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial, quando os Estados Unidos já haviam intervindo na Coréia e estavam se instalando no Vietnã. Ao recriar a participação norte-americana na Segunda Guerra Mundial, em um painel em que aparecem nada menos que 60 personagens, Heller deixa claro que o alvo de seu romance não é o exército alemão mas sim o próprio exército norte-americano. Cabe a este último representar o papel de braço do *Establishment*, constantemente desumanizando os soldados, reduzindo homens a objetos.

O capitão Yossarian destaca-se dentre esses 60 personagens porque é o único que questiona a autoridade e racionalidade do *Establishment*, lutando contra ele

---

[1]Este artigo é extraído da tese de doutorado *Danças de Clio e Calíope: uma leitura interdisciplinar dos protestos dos jovens norte-americanos nos anos 60*. Todas as traduções são de minha autoria.

[2] Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*. New York : Laurel, 1990. p. v

para salvar sua própria vida. Quando ele afirma repetidamente: "Eles estão tentando me matar", o pronome "eles" não se refere apenas aos alemães mas a seus próprios comandantes. Fazendo uso do absurdo e do humor negro, Joseph Heller critica de forma impiedosa o tão vangloriado exército norte-americano que, no romance, em nome da razão e do patriotismo assume controle absoluto da vida de seus homens.

A estrutura da narrativa de *Catch-22* não é linear e cronológica, mas sim repetitiva e cumulativa. À medida que determinados episódios são repetidos, novos detalhes lhes são acrescentados. "[...] a 'linha narrativa' da estória assemelha-se à trajetória de uma aeronave que, desejando aterrissar, sobrevoa o aeroporto em círculos várias vezes, antes de receber autorização e fazer a aproximação em linha reta."[3] Isto é exatamente o que acontece com a morte de Snowden, episódio central do romance não apenas por seu caráter estrutural mas também por seu aspecto temático. Nos primeiros 38 capítulos, Yossarian lembra-se da morte de Snowden oito vezes. Cada vez que essa morte é enfocada, novos detalhes vão se acumulando até Yossarian conseguir se lembrar do episódio todo:

> *"Yossarian também estava com frio, e tremendo incontrolavelmente. Ele sentiu calafrios por todo o corpo enquanto ele encarava desesperançado o segredo que Snowden tinha derramado por todo o chão. Era fácil ler a mensagem em suas entranhas. O homem era matéria, esse era o segredo de Snowden [...]"*[4]

Finalmente, no penúltimo capítulo do romance, o absurdo da guerra e o humor negro com que foram tratadas diversas situações cedem ao horror diante da morte e da fragilidade do ser humano, revelado pelo segredo de Snowden.

Ao ter consciência do absurdo da guerra e do risco de vida que corria para manter-se na ativa, Yossarian finge estar doente e é internado no hospital. Com isso, ele evita voar as missões que lhe são designadas. No entanto, sua doença simulada causa confusão e perplexidade entre os médicos do hospital.

> *"Yossarian estava no hospital com uma dor em seu fígado que parecia ser icterícia. Os médicos estavam confusos pelo fato de que não era realmente icterícia. Se sua doença se transformasse em icterícia, eles poderiam tratá-la. Se não se transformasse em icterícia e desaparecesse, eles poderiam dar-lhe alta. Mas por ser quase icterícia confundia-os o tempo todo."*[5]

---

[3] Walter James Miller, A Ficção de Joseph Heller, in: Richard Kostelanetz, org. *Viagem à Literatura Americana Contemporânea*. Rio de Janeiro : Nórdica, 1985. p. 266

[4] Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 442

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1

Assim como a linguagem deste parágrafo denota o absurdo da situação, a própria situação em que Yossarian se encontra denota, por sua vez, o absurdo da guerra. Em outro parágrafo, também pode-se observar como a linguagem mostra a total falta de lógica da guerra:

> *"Orr seria louco se realizasse novas missões aéreas e equilibrado se não o fizesse, mas se estivesse equilibrado, ele teria que realizá-las. Se as realizasse estaria louco e não precisaria fazê-lo; mas se ele não quizesse realizá-las estaria equilibrado e teria que realizá-las."*[6]

Ao discutir os limites entre loucura e equilíbrio, Yossarian demonstra entender a falta de lógica que permeia a guerra, de modo geral, e o alto comando do exército norte-americano, em particular. O coronel Cathcart constitui um exemplo pertinente do último caso. Ao longo do romance, o coronel constantemente aumenta o requisito oficial de 40 missões aéreas de combate, com o objetivo de atingir fama através da guerra. O risco de vida a que expunha seus homens era totalmente negligenciado por sua ambição. Seu escopo era ver sua fotografia no *Saturday Evening Post*. Para tal, tentou implantar em seu próprio esquadrão o que vira publicado nesse referido jornal. O capelão faria orações antes de cada missão para levantar o moral de seus homens. Quando o capelão Tappman chamou a atenção para os ateus, o coronel replicou que ateísmo era contra a lei. E se não fosse ilegal, era, de qualquer modo, anti-americano[7].

Yossarian também se familiariza com a expressão *catch-22*[8] que dá título ao romance. Deve-se ressaltar que essa expressão "tornou-se um código para qualquer ordem burocrática que se contradizia na sociedade, usada por pessoas que nunca leram o romance"[9]. Em um diálogo entre Doc Daneeka, o médico do esquadrão, e Yossarian o *catch* é revelado:

> "Catch-22, *Doc Daneeka respondeu pacientemente, [...] diz que você sempre tem que fazer o que seu oficial de comando diz para você fazer."*
> *"Mas o 27º esquadrão da Força Aérea diz que eu posso ir para casa com 40 missões."*
> *"Mas eles não dizem que você tem que ir para casa. E os regulamentos dizem que você tem que obedecer cada ordem. Esse é o* catch.*"*[10]

---

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 40

[7] Referência à campanha macarthista dos anos 50. Sobre a influência do macarthismo no romance ver Joan Robertson, They're after Everyone: Heller's *Catch-22* and the Cold War. *Clio*, v. 19, n. 1, 1989. pp. 41-50

[8] A tradução dessa expressão é ardil-22.

[9] Jerome Klinkowitz, *The American 1960s: Imaginative Acts in a Decade of Change*. Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1980. p. 31

[10] Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 53

Além de entender a total falta de lógica de *catch-22*, Yossarian estende sua compreensão um pouco adiante - ele se convence de sua inexistência:

> "Catch-22 *não existia, ele estava certo disso, mas não fazia diferença. O que importava era que todo mundo pensava que existia, e isso era muito pior, porque não havia nenhum objeto ou texto para ridicularizar ou refutar, para acusar, criticar, atacar, corrigir, odiar, insultar, cuspir, rasgar em frangalhos, pisar em cima ou queimar."*[11]

Ao chegar a essa conclusão, Yossarian percebe que essa expressão não passa do "princípio usado pelas pessoas no poder para justificar seu uso ilógico do poder"[12].

> "Catch-22, *assim, serve como uma palavra talismânica para o telos mortal e mistificador do estado moderno burocrático. A máquina de guerra apropriou-se de toda a linguagem e, portanto, de toda a razão. Parece não haver nenhum ponto fora desse universo totalitário do qual pode-se atirar um nome a ele e desta forma trazê-lo ao alcance do entendimento racional."*[13]

Seria interessante recordar aqui alguns episódios referentes à Guerra do Vietnã para entender como a máquina de guerra se apropriou da linguagem e da razão "para justificar seu uso ilógico do poder". Após o assassinato do presidente Kennedy[14], Lyndon B. Johnson aumentou consideravelmente o número de tropas norte-americanas e armas com o objetivo de não "perder o Vietnã". Uma das estratégias usadas foi a conhecida "Resolução do Golfo de Tonquim". Em agosto de 1964, a Marinha declarou que dois *destroyers* norte-americanos tinham sido atacados pelo Vietnã do Norte nesse golfo: o USS *Maddox* e USS *Turner Joy*. Prontamente, Johnson pediu ao Congresso permissão para tomar as medidas necessárias para evitar futuras agressões. Anos depois, com a publicação dos famosos *Pentagon Papers* em 1971[15], a versão oficial do ataque aos *destroyers* foi desmentida. A Resolução do Golfo de Tonquim não passou também de um *catch-22*: uma manobra política para justificar perante o Congresso e a opinião pública

---

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 410

[12] Raymond Olderman. *Beyond the Waste Land: a Study of the American Novel in the Nineteen-Sixties*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. p. 99

13David Marr. *American Worlds since Emerson*. Amherst : The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988. pp. 183-184.

[14]Por ocasião da morte de Kennedy havia 16 mil conselheiros militares norte-americanos no Vietnã. G. Tindall & D. Shi, *America*. New York : W. W. Norton & Company, 1989. p. 883

[15]Quando Daniel Ellsberg passou para a imprensa os *Pentagon Papers*, o movimento contra a Guerra do Vietnã teve prova contundente para desacreditar o governo norte-americano.

não apenas a invasão do Vietnã do Norte mas também a "escalada"[16], isto é, o grande aumento de contigente norte-americano no distante país asiático.

Outro *catch-22* que favoreceu a escalada da Guerra do Vietnã foi a morte de sete soldados norte-americanos em 5 de fevereiro de 1965, seguida de novos ataques vietcongues na semana posterior. O assassinato dos sete *marines* foi usado, de forma ilógica, para justificar perante a opinião pública a presença de mais de 100 mil homens no Vietnã, em março. Com a operação "Trovão Rolante", o Vietnã do Norte foi intensamente bombardeado pela força aérea norte-americana com o escopo de cortar o envio de suprimentos e homens ao Sul.

Além de atingir hospitais no Norte, os aviões norte-americanos tinham como alvo aldeias do Sul onde havia a suspeita de apoio aos vietcongues. Desfolhantes químicos[17] e napalm também eram usados contra o inimigo. Um programa secreto da CIA, a Operação Fênix, criou dezenas de centros de interrogatório onde a tortura era usada contra suspeitos vietcongues.[18] A violência e brutalidade da guerra foram capturadas na imagem que chocou a opinião pública internacional - a do chefe de polícia do Vietnã do Sul atirando na cabeça de um prisioneiro vietcongue em plena luz do dia em uma rua de Saigon. Outra imagem que também chocou a opinião pública foi a do massacre de Mylai[19]. Sob a alegação de estarem salvando o mundo da ameaça comunista, os Estados Unidos dizimavam a população civil do Sudeste asiático. Enquanto autoridades militares norte-americanas escondiam da população os números alarmantes relativos às baixas e a real situação da guerra, os discursos transmitiam exatamente o oposto. Tanto o presidente Johnson como outras autoridades não se cansavam de garantir aos norte-americanos que a vitória no Vietnã estaria assegurada em questão de meses. Mas a ofensiva do *Tet* foi difícil de ser explicada à população. Em 31 de janeiro de 1968, no ano novo lunar vietnamita, os vietcongues aliados às tropas do Vietnã do Norte invadiram 37 cidades no Sul, incluindo Saigon e tomaram uma parte da embaixada dos E.U.A.. Depois de reforço enviado pelo Pentágono, Saigon foi recuperada mas não o moral norte-americano. Tanto a revista *Time* como a *Newsweek* pediram em seus editoriais pela retirada das tropas norte-americanas

---

[16]Uma expressão criada pelo Departamento de Defesa na época do Vietnã. Dados sobre a escalada: no fim de 1965 havia 184 mil soldados no Vietnã; no fim de 66, havia 385 mil soldados; no fim de 67, havia 486 mil soldados. Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties*. Toronto : Bantam Books, 1987. p. 242.

[17]Um desses desfolhantes, o Agente Laranja, causou cancer em pessoas atingidas, que processaram a companhia e o governo norte-americano, ganhando a causa. Somente no ano de 1967, os E.U.A. desfolharam 1.7 milhões de acres no Vietnã do Sul. Gitlin, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

[18]Os militantes contra o Vietnã consideravam essa operação um "assassinato de massa". Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: a History*. New York : Penguin, 1991. p. 617

[19]Uma companhia da infantaria norte-americana exterminou cerca de 300 civis em Mylai, uma aldeia no Vietnã do Sul. Karnow, *op. cit.*, p. 31

do Vietnã. Em entrevista ao jornalista Peter Arnett, um major fez a seguinte declaração sobre Ben Tre: "Foi necessário destruir a cidade para salvá-la."[20] O major não identificado resumiu a tática do exército norte-americano na Guerra do Vietnã. Devo acrescentar que essa declaração também poderia ter sido feita por um dos 60 personagens de Heller a respeito do absurdo da guerra.

A ofensiva do *Tet* custou a Johnson a possibilidade de reeleição. Richard Nixon conseguiu eleger-se, pois prometeu, dentre outras coisas, acabar com a guerra em seis meses. Após sua posse, a promessa não foi cumprida; para o presidente a intervenção dos E.U.A. no Vietnã deveria continuar até a "paz com honra". Não obstante, esse objetivo nunca foi atingido. A guerra somente terminou em abril de 1975, com a queda de Saigon e, certamente, sem a almejada "paz com honra".

Outro personagem do romance de Heller que permite questionar a máquina de guerra é Milo Minderbinder, 27 anos, oficial encarregado do rancho dos soldados. Milo visualiza a oportunidade de tornar-se rico com a guerra através do mercado negro. Ele cria uma corporação chamada *M&M Enterprises* para a qual todos os soldados colaboram com sua quota de sacrifício: morfina, paraquedas e outros objetos vitais para sua segurança são negociados por outros de maior valor comercial para a empresa. Todavia, ninguém tem acesso, na prática, ao dinheiro da corporação mas, teoricamente, todos são acionistas. Os soldados também são obrigados a pagar um preço alto para comer. Milo Minderbinder distribui comida e morte em prol de negócios e lucro. Ademais, Milo negocia com o inimigo, os alemães, com o objetivo de lucro. "O que é bom para *M&M Enterprises* é bom para o país", afirma Milo repetidamente, ecoando ironicamente as palavras de Charles E. Wilson.[21] "As táticas do mercado negro tornam-se o símbolo de Heller para a própria livre empresa; elas defendem o direito do consumidor de pagar preços mais altos ou morrer de fome."[22]

M&M Enterprises é uma corporação criada na guerra em que não apenas o conceito de inimigo desaparece mas também o lucro é soberano. Outro conceito que também é questionado no romance através de Milo é o de patriotismo. Como exemplo, cabe citar o negócio que envolveu a ponte em Orvieto tomada pelos alemães. Às autoridades militares norte-americanas, Milo oferece seus serviços pela operação de bombardeio, cobrando o custo total da operação mais 6%; aos alemães, Milo propõe seus serviços pela operação de ataque anti-aéreo, cobrando do inimigo o custo total da operação mais bonus de 1.000 dólares por avião norte-americano abatido. Pode-se concluir que para Milo o conceito de patriotismo foi

---

[20] *Apud* Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America*. New York : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988. p. 70

[21] "O que é bom para a General Motors é bom para o país". Wilson foi presidente da General Motors e, posteriormente, secretário de defesa do governo Eisenhower.

[22] Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 265

substituído pelo de capitalismo. E quando se viu à beira da falência, não hesitou em negociar com os alemães para bombardear sua própria unidade militar. Por esse contrato milionário negociado com o inimigo, foi julgado nos Estados Unidos mas perdoado quando abriu seu livro de contabilidade. Milo Minderbinder conseguiu provar o lucro que teve assim como convencer ao júri de que todo o povo norte-americano participava desse lucro por ser acionista. Obviamente, ele não dividiu seu lucro com ninguém. Em sua defesa, Milo revela o papel do governo norte-americano na guerra e discute a importância da livre empresa:

> *"Numa democracia, o governo é o povo",[...] Nós somos o povo, não somos? Então, nós deveríamos ficar com o dinheiro e eliminar o intermediário. Francamente, eu gostaria de ver o governo sair da guerra totalmente e deixar o setor todo para a indústria privada. Se nós pagarmos ao governo tudo o que devemos, nós estaremos encorajando o controle do governo e desencorajando outros indivíduos de bombardear seus próprios homens e aviões. Nós estaremos tirando seu incentivo."*[23]

Uma outra forma de questionamento de patriotismo aparece no romance em um diálogo entre um velho italiano de 107 anos que vivia em um bordel e Nately, um soldado norte-americano de 19 anos. Na citação seguinte, o italiano expõe suas idéias:

> *"O que é um país? Um país é um pedaço de terra cercada de fronteiras por todos os lados, geralmente artificiais. Ingleses estão morrendo pela Inglaterra, norte-americanos estão morrendo pela América, alemães estão morrendo pela Alemanha, russos estão morrendo pela Rússia. Há agora 50 ou 60 países lutando nessa guerra. Ora, certamente, não vale a pena morrer por* todos *esses países."*[24]

A experiência e o cinismo do velho italiano que já havia passado por muitas guerras e ocupações em seu país contrasta com a inocência, entusiasmo e "patriotismo" de Nately. O último limita-se a repetir expressões e jargões sobre a guerra como se fossem conclusões próprias, tais como: "É melhor morrer de pé do que viver de joelhos" e "Tudo aquilo por que vale a pena viver vale a pena morrer". Entretanto, para o velho italiano as frases certas são exatamente ao contrário: "É melhor *viver* de pé do que morrer de joelhos" e "Tudo aquilo por que vale a pena morrer vale a pena viver". Torna-se claro que a experiência de mais de cem anos em um país como a Itália lhe ensinou a manter-se vivo, daí a importância que o velho atribui à vida e não à morte.

---

[23] Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 258

[24] Ibid., pp.245-246

Para o protagonista do romance, a vida também é muito mais importante do que a morte por uma causa "patriótica", pois Yossarian não se esquece do segredo de Snowden - o homem é matéria. "Quando Yossarian decide que sua vida tem importância, ele está tomando uma decisão moral sobre a santidade da existência humana."[25] Yossarian tenta, em vão, fazer uso da simulação de doença e loucura para escapar da morte. Outra forma do capitão lutar contra o *Establishment* reside em atitudes individuais de rebeldia. Recusa-se a usar uniforme por causa do soldado morto em sua barraca, recebendo, portanto, sua medalha nu. Também participa nu, em uma atitude de protesto, do enterro de Snowden que assiste de uma árvore. Finalmente, Yossarian opta pela deserção do exército ao embarcar em um bote rumo à Suécia.

> "A waste land *criada na ilha de Pianosa pela combinação da guerra, o exército, e o sistema de economia de iniciativa privada força o personagem principal de Heller, Yossarian, a tornar-se um relutante* Grail Knight. *Mas, em um mundo enlouquecido, ele só pode redimir-se, ou mais precisamente, preservar-se [...]* "[26]

Sob o olhar de Jerome Klinkowitz, o capitão Yossarian é uma força política em seu romance pois "debate noções convencionais de autoridade e até de ordem racional na guerra"[27]. Klinkowitz também lembra que, no início dos anos 60, o crescimento rápido na educação deu origem a turmas numerosas de *freshmen* e *sophomores*[28] nas universidades, cujos professores eram jovens doutorandos. Estes professores introduziram em seus cursos romances que não faziam parte do cânon literário, entre eles *Catch-22*. Faz-se relevante assinalar que esses jovens universitários viram no romance citado um exemplo de rebeldia que logo imitariam contra o alistamento obrigatório na Guerra do Vietnã. "[...] na opinião da juventude da época, Heller e seu romance foram mais identificados com a questão antibélica [...]"[29]

A luta de Yossarian contra o *Establishment* através de ação individual e pacífica lembra a atitude pregada por Henry David Thoreau no ensaio "Civil Disobedience". Cumpre salientar aqui que essa mesma atitude foi tomada pelos jovens convocados para a guerra do Vietnã ao queimarem seus cartões de recrutamento no Central Park, em Nova Iorque, por exemplo. Assim como os jovens rebeldes que se mobilizaram contra a Guerra do Vietnã nos anos 60, Yossarian não apenas questiona mas também nega-se a participar do Sistema através de sua máquina de guerra.

---

[25]Frederick R. Karl, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*: Only Fools Walk in Darkness, in: Harry Moore, ed. *Contemporary American Novelists*. Carbondale : Southern Illinois University Press, 1965. p. 136

[26]Olderman, *op. cit.*, p. 96

[27]Klinkowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 20

[28]Alunos do primeiro e segundo anos respectivamente.

[29]Stephen W. Potts, *Catch-22: Antiheroic Antinovel*. Boston : Twayne Publishers, 1989. p. 8

THE PAIRING OF WOMEN IN HAWTHORNE'S NOVELS

MARIA CRISTINA PIMENTEL CAMPOS

The growth of the feminist movement in the twentieth century has led scholars to a greater interest in works either written by women or about women. In face of Hawthorne's portrayal of women, his works have been subject to the analysis of his female characters. It is my objective in this paper to discuss Hawthorne's presentation of his pairing of women in his four major novels, *The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance* and *The Marble Faun.*

The nineteenth-century was a period during which society started to question the century old cultural heritage concerning women and their roles in society. It was then that cultural traditions prescribing woman's behavior were brought to awareness, reexamined, and rethought. Feminists' voices manifested themselves in favor of a change in woman's position in society. Hawthorne was part of this environment. He and his wife Sophia had a personal relationship with Margaret Fuller, whose position might have sharpened Hawthorne's interest in women's condition. According to Nina Baym, *Hawthorne's phrasing and rhetoric make it clear that he was familiar with and influenced by* the feminists' ideas.[1] There is no doubt that Hawthorne is sympathetic to women's condition and favorable to their demands. In *The Blithedale Romance* he clearly states that society should, for itself and for women, *open all its avenues to the passport of a woman's bleeding heart.*[2]

---

[1] Nina Baym, "Hawthorne's Women: The Tyranny of Social Myths," *The Centennial Review*, 15 (Fall, 1971):271.

[2] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: The Modern Library, 1965): 581. All further references to Hawthorne's novels - *The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun* - are from this edition and included within brackets in the main text.

In general, Hawthorne's work shows his concern for women. He frequently portrays women who are victims of a society in which patriarchal principles make the male the dominator. Human beings, both male and female, are oppressed by society; however, the man has had a privileged position in relation to the woman. Hawthorne is then interested in the understanding and the improvement of the human condition and sees awareness as a way to pursue these ends. It is significant that the Hawthorne who has those concerns emphasizes the romance genre of his four novels. His (un)*veiled* romances are revealed as a genre by the author himself. Nonetheless, the veil imagery in *The Blithedale,* as well as the veiled events in the four novels and the indeterminacy of the texts, lead us to search for what is concealed. The veil imagery and the ambiguity of the texts function as a motif which indicates that there is much to be revealed. In this context, the veil imagery would be the means to bring one to consciousness, a bringing forth and revealing. In Heideggerian terms one should identify what is concealed and be able to reveal.[3] Hawthorne's portrayal of women could lead the readers, specially those of the female sex, to an awareness, a change in behavior, or at least, a change in the way of thinking.

The question of how the reading of novels about women might have modified the woman's self-concept and behavior has been analyzed by Nina Baym. Her reply to this question is that there are no statistics that can prove it, nevertheless, *the novels might as much be evidence of a change as cause of it; or, like so many other things, the novels may have been both a sign of change and a contribution to it.*[4] Hawthorne's portrayal of women undoubtedly calls the reader's attention to women's condition. He indirectly makes a plea for reevaluation and change. In writing about women's position in society he emphasizes the inadequacy of their condition.

In all four novels society is oppressive. Patriarchal fundamentals prevail. Yet, Hawthorne's portrayal of women, in general, is sympathetic. His female characters are endow ed witha grandeur of spirit. Strong women are characterized by pride, dignity, and moral integrity. Hester's way of facing that Puritan society is dignified in *The Scarlet Letter.* Phoebe is able to humanize and reconcile the cold world of the Pyncheons and the Maules in *The House of the Seven Gables.* In *The*

[3] Heidegger's proposal is to unveil, to reveal the truth in language and thinking. To Heidegger, there are two ways of revealing the essence: "challenging forth" [techne], and "bringing forth" [poiesis]. The moment of revealing is a moment of truth. Man has to try to unconceal what is hidden because the constant effort to understand it is the way that leads to freedom. See Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977).

[4] Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978):27. See also Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Davidson discusses the influences the early novels had on the education of women. The novels opened up women's minds through messages which highlighted the importance of women's education. Moreover, the early novels provided a social message for equality.

Blithedale Romance, Zenobia represents the manifestations of feminist's ideas and in *The Marble Faun*, Miriam displays a superiority over man.

It is interesting to notice the pairing of women that Hawthorne presents in his novels. The duality of the characterization leads the reader to inquire about Hawthorne's constant use of the pairing of women. The oneness of the two female characters which is possible through a psychoanalytical interpretation can be seen from a different methodological approach as the complementing of one by the other. The full personality is separable into two different female characters. Each woman standing by herself is incomplete and to a certain extent seems to possess the features that her pairing does not. The author's portrayal of women in pairs reminds us that he was the brother of two sisters: Elizabeth, the older, had a strong and independent character, and Louisa, on the other hand, was of a more delicate personality. As a father, Hawthorne had two daughters. The older one, Una, was described by her father as having a strong-willed personality. *She steps so boldly into the midst of everything, shrinks from nothing, has such a comprehension of everything, seems at times to have but little delicacy, and anon shows that she possesses the finest essence of it; now so hard, now so tender; now so perfectly, unreasonable, soon again so wise. In short, I now and then catch an aspect of her, in which I cannot believe her to be my own human child, but a spirit strangely mingled with good and evil, haunting the house where I dwell*[5].

The complexity of human behavior and, more specifically, women's, seems to be an enigma to Hawthorne. Both the fair and the dark ladies, the one who is delicate and passive, as well as the one who is strong, passionate, independent and reacts to her unfavorable condition in society, have his attention and consideration. He sees positive qualities in both and yet, neither is ideal. This does not mean, however, that Hawthorne was trying to identify an ideal type of woman. On the contrary, there is evidence enough in his works of his disbelief in perfection for human beings. But, as he is interested in understanding and desiring the improvement of the condition of women in society, he depicts both types in an attempt to show their strengths and weaknesses. Each one has positive and negative qualities. The fair lady has an ephemeral quality that is not reflexive of earthly creatures. The dark lady, on the other hand, lacks spontaneity, and certain feminine delicacy. Perhaps a more harmonious female character would be the one able to retain a little of each one.

The male character in Hawthorne's novels is attracted to the fair lady, passive and feminine, since he does not feel intimidated by her inoffensive presence. The fair lady does not violate the man's masculinity. He feels stronger than she and as such can be comfortable in his position of superior. Though looking for support, he goes to a woman as a protector. Society has placed him in this position, and in

[5] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The American Notebooks*, vol. VIII, ed. Claude M. Simpson, *The Centenary Edition* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972): 430-31.

order to avoid failure or show weakness, he avoids the dark lady - the strong willed woman. In this way, both man and woman are victims of social conventions. Yet, it is the man in this system who exercises the power. The idea of emptiness that we get in Hawthorne's relationship between man and woman is probably due to this lack of harmony between the couple. The pairing, then, is also suggestive that this idea of complementing could be applied to the relationship between man and woman, in which, having different features, one could be the complement of the other.

The choice of Hawthorne's daughter's name *Una* may be an indication of the fusion of the two ladies; a balance between the traits of their personalities in a single woman. Walter Herbert comments on interesting points concerning Hawthorne's family. As a female child, his daughter could come to represent the embodiment of the future woman. The name Una was first given by Spenser to his *maiden of holiness*, who was the image of a passive angelic doll. Una's counterpart was the monster Duessa *whose loathsome duplicity, secret erotic filth, and quest for domination suitably embody male horror.* The word *Una* means uniqueness and as such indicates completeness and oneness, as *Duessa* suggests duality. Herbert adds that one of Hawthorne's friends, George Hillard, responded negatively to Hawthorne's decision to name his daughter after Spenser's character, arguing that the name should *rather be kept and hallowed in the holy crypts of the mind, than brought into the garish light of common day.*[7] Hawthorne's reply was as follows:

> *The name has never before been warmed with human life and therefore may not seem appropriate to real flesh and blood. But for us, our child has already given it a natural warmth; and when she has worn it through her lifetime, and perhaps transmitted it to descendants of her own, this beautiful name will have become naturalized on earth; - whereby we shall have done a good deed in first bringing it out of the realm of Faery.*[8]

Hawthorne's attitude emphasizes once again his awareness of woman's condition, his sympathetic support and desire for a change. Moreover, in naming his daughter after a fictional character and thus bringing it to earthly the sphere, Hawthorne shows his belief that a change would occur. The demythologizing of

---

[6] For a more detailed analysis on this subject, see T. Walter Herbert, Jr., "Nathaniel Hawthorne, Una Hawthorne, and *The Scarlet Letter:* Interactive Self-hoods and the Cultural Construction of Gender," *PMLA* 103 (May 1988): 285-297.

[7] Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, vol. 1 (N.p.: Archon Books, 1968):276.

[8] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Letters, 1843-1853*, ed. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson, vol. 16, *The Centennial Edition* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985)

the name is the first step to a conscious externalization of a wish and hope for a coming change in the conceptualization of the woman.

Hawthorne's female characters represent human beings yet they are dichotomized in their womanhood due to their inadequate possibility of fulfillment as women. His repetitive pattern of pairing women indicates that he has not found an answer, a solution to the question of an appropriate portrait of a future woman. His recapitulative technique of pairing them emphasizes his anxiety and sympathy towards women's position. Moreover, it shows his own doubts presented through the ambiguity of his representation. Though possessed with ambiguous elements, the pairing might be a suggestion of a possible way out for the woman's condition.

In the criticism on *The Scarlet Letter*, some scholars allude to Hawthorne's recent experience with the death of his mother, others report to a troublesome relationship between him and his daughter Una.[9] What seems to be a common agreement among the critics of *The Scarlet Letter* is that, either in relation to his private or his public life, woman was a constant concern in Hawthorne's life. The maternal figure of Hester with the child in her arms is marginalized by that community without any deeper judgment of the existent preconditions of her vulnerability, to emphasize, instead, the sin of adultery. There is no doubt that Hawthorne, in telling Hester's story, is claiming the desirability of a better place for women. He is criticizing a society in which there was no chance of an acceptance for whatever was not prescribed within its norms of behavior. The symbol of the scarlet **A** emphasizes the austerity and discrimination agaistthe woman in that society. The **A** retains, however, a number of different meanings. The revealing of their meanings depends on each one's ability to see, identify, and understand. Hester's self is concealed in her way of dressing. Hester's complete womanhood is revealed when, in contact with nature, she puts her hair down and throws the scarlet **A** away in an attempt to free herself. But, surprisingly, it's the little Pearl who rejects this attitude. Pearl's behavior might indicate that a change would not be possible in Hester's generation. It is interesting to observe that Pearl as a child embodies the qualities of both the dark and fair ladies. The child behaves spontaneously, without the pressures of society, though not accepting it in her mother. The way Hester dresses Pearl and the way the girl behaves indicate that she has also internalized for herself the concealed self of her mother. The hope, then, would be in Pearl, the future woman of a new generation; yet, it would not be in New England.

In The House of the Seven Gables, Hepzibah does not seem to be made of flesh and blood, as she is pretty much a product of a system in which the powerful dominate the weak. As a woman she has no alternative except to cultivate a hatred towards Judge Pyncheon whom she believes has destroyed her brother's life as well as hers. Although finding herself in a terrible situation, she still conformist

---

[9] See Herbert 287-288.

society's preconceptions of what being a lady means. *Poor* Hepzibah, as she is frequently called, cannot distinguish and separate reality from the idealized, or better, imposed *status quo*. She is not able to understand the inadequacy of her position. Although a victim of the Pyncheons, she still finds pride in being a Pyncheon lady. She is the portrayal of a woman who, having been raised under the title of a *lady*, has never been able to realize her own position, being deluded by this conventional *status*. She has never looked upon herself as an independent human being. At the age of sixty, Hepzibah is completely unprepared to face the world's reality. The strength she finds in herself to act (though inadequately) and reopen the cent-shop for survival is related to the love she feels for her brother. If it were only for herself, she would not find strength to act. Hepzibah cannot be considered either a dark or a fair lady. She embodies woman's lack of self-realization due to the inability of seeing herself as an independent self. Her counterpart could be Alice Pyncheon, though she does not live to develop herself, and as a distant past is only a memory. Early in life she is caught and destroyed by the hatred of the two families. Alice's beauty is what makes her more vulnerable and definitely a target for Maule's (and also her father's) manipulation. She is treated as an object. In the episode in which Maule is trying to hypnotize her, we can see the male power of dominance over woman. The two women then are representations of inadequate conventions of a patriarchal society. One is only a phantasmagorical memory which can only make darker the ghostly life of the other.

Phoebe is a combination of the dark and fair ladies. *The young girl, so fresh, so unconventional, and yet so orderly and obedient to common rules, as you at once recognized her to be, was widely in contrast, at that moment, with everything about her* (*The House of the Seven Gables*, p. 284). Although not considered a *lady* by the proper Hepzibah, Phoebe is a Pyncheon, full of life, intelligent, and delicate. She fits well in all circumstances. She is even able to manage her relative's cent-shop with natural ability, which it was not believed a woman was able to do, because instead of profit, she would bring debt in a short time. In this way, Hepzibah's attempt to earn her living through a cent-shop seems the more improbable. This would possibly have been true, as her first day indicates, if it were not for Phoebe's intervention. This can be illustrated by the following words:

> *Then, also, the augury of ill success, uttered from the sure wisdom of experience, fell upon her half-dead hope like a clod into a grave. The man's wife had already tried the same experiment, and failed! How could the born lady - the recluse of half a lifetime, utterly unpracticed in the world, at sixty years of age - how could she ever dream of succeeding, when the hard, vulgar, keen, busy, hackneyed New England woman had lost five dollars on her little outlay! Success presented itself as an impossibility, and the hope of it as a wild hallucination.*
>
> *(Seven Gables, p.271)*

We see in *The House of the Seven Gables* the development that has occurred in woman's behavior. Both Alice and Hepzibah are hopeless objects in the hands of male dominators. Alice's delicate appearance is contrasted to Maule's physical strength. He is also able to possess her mind. Hepzibah has annihilated herself in order to protect her child-like brother. She is able to lead him because he is as inoffensive as a child. Phoebe, a product of later generations, represents the woman who has freed herself from conventions, and as such, she is able to retain her beauty and liveliness. There is no doubt, however, that experience and suffering do affect Phoebe and as a consequence she becomes less bright in happiness. Nonetheless, she does maintain her qualities and develops her womanhood. With Phoebe's achievement at the end, there is the suggestion that experience in life is not always an instrument of destruction against a maiden's brightness and hope. Thus, in *The Scarlet Letter* and in *The House of The Seven Gables*, Hawthorne highlights that changes in women's condition might be the role to be played by the coming generations.

In *The Blithedale Romance*, the author presents the contrasting figures of Priscilla and Zenobia: the fair dripping Priscilla and the exuberant Zenobia. Their characteristics are opposites. However, as the novel develops, Hawthorne exchanges their features. Priscilla becomes less pale, even rosy, her hands become warm and Zenobia, on the other hand, becomes pale with cold hands. The intermixture of the qualities of the two ladies is subtle and significant. Zenobia could be considered as a slight manifestation of a feminist with characteristics which still oscillate between the existing patriarchal fundamentals, a desire for a change and her awareness of the woman's limited condition. Zenobia's flowers might be an indication of the duality in womanhood. She wears a natural tropical flower at the Blithedale Farm as she wants to conceal her true identity and assume a new one, and yet, she is not able to divorce herself from her urban heritage which makes her an experienced, independent woman. The symbolism of the two different flowers might then reinforce the idea of duality of a personality that has been dichotomized in order to accomplish a desired position. It also indicates dissatisfaction with existing reality since Zenobia wears two contrasting, different flowers. Priscilla, on the other hand, is adorned, by Zenobia herself, with wild flowers, and at the end, when Zenobia gives Priscilla her own flower it is as if the older sister were passing to the younger the part of her womanhood which Priscilla lacks. In this way, Zenobia's gesture implies a complementing of qualities of one in esch. Hawthorne this suggests that if Priscilla is able to internalize the inherited womanhood passed to her from Zenobia, and still keep her own innate qualities, she would be able to become a more *elaborated flower* whose attitudes and actions would represent developments and achievements towards a future woman.

Alice, for instance, is attracted to Maule by his physical strength, which makes her vulnerable and, consequently, completely dominated by his mind. It is interesting that both Zenobia and Priscilla are also subject to Westervelt's power.

Both Maule and Westervelt are attributed witha mesmeric powers. It is ambiguous how they really exercise power over the women. On the other hand, Hawthorne, in endowing them with mesmeric qualities may suggest even more the absurd and inexplicable behavior of male dominance and female submission. But the new generation brings change. Though having inherited mesmeric powers from his ancestors, Holgrage does not act in the same way.

In *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne again presents two ladies, Hilda and Miriam, fair and dark ladies, contrasting personalities, yet presenting characteristics in common. Both are beautiful, intelligent, and lively. There is no doubt, however, that Miriam is a more powerful character than Hilda. Hilda has still to develop her womanhood. Strength is one of Miriam's outstanding qualities. Her self-awareness of being a woman and as such able to endure sufferings and dramatic situations makes her superior to her friends. As a woman, whose understanding of life is deeply developed, Miriam is conscious of her ability to endure all kinds of suffering and still love. The following passage illustrates this:

> *Rest your heart on me, dearest me! I am well able to bear it; for I am a woman, and I love you!*
>
> (The Marble Faun, *p. 703)*

Both women are artists. Hilda, however is a copyist painter which suggests that she is only able to reproduce the existing social patterns. Hilda's inability to understand and assimilate the true nature of human beings leads her to isolate herself in her dove-cote tower. Hilda's enclosure denotes her unconscious dissatisfaction with the real world. It is interesting to observe that Hilda, a New England girl, leaves her native land in an unconscious search for identity. But she is obsessed by the idea of remaining pure due to her internalized cultural concepts. Miriam, on the other hand, as a more experienced woman, has initiative and rationality, yet she is extremely humane. She is able to rationalize her feelings and then separate emotions from actions. She can love her friends without being judgmental. On the other hand, Hilda, although loving Miriam, *casts her off* (*The Marble Faun*, p.773), because of her severe preconceptions of goodness. Hawthorne explicitly shows the inadequacy of New England society's idealized view of woman's innocence and purity. Virginia Birdsall remarks that *it is Hilda who needs humanizing by contact with experience and not Miriam who can hope to find redemption by association with innocence.*[10] Hilda's exposure to a different environment and her relationship with her close friends in Italy enable her to experience a new reality, which she rejects at first, but leads her to a better understanding of the real world. The image of the white domino is associated with

[10] Virginia Ogden Birdsall, "Hawthorne's Fair-Haired Maidens: The Fading Light," *PMLA* 75 (March - June 1960): 252.

the existence of black spots. In this way, the white domino suggests that Hilda has finally grown into a higher understanding of the meaning of innocence and this she is able to descend from her tower forever.

The description of the female characters' condition within the different social environments depicted in these four novels leads the reader to visualize Hawthorne's portrayal of women as a process of cumulative experiences either in terms of individual achievements or of Western civilization moving towards the modernization of cultural values. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne removes himself from his time and depicts colonial New England. Although a strong woman, full of strength, dignity, and pride, Hester has no way out. She cannot avoid the fate that Puritan society has imposed on her. Little Pearl is the embodiment of Hester's repressed inner thoughts and feelings and as such she represents her mother's expectations of a better life. Yet, when Pearl grows up, she leaves for Europe. This might indicate that New England society, though having already been touched by Hester's exemplary behavior, was not ready for a real change in relation to women. In *The House of The Seven Gables*, Phoebe represents a new generation which is able to express its own ideas. Her spontaneous, well disposed personality enables her to be a mediator in the conflicts of the two families. In *The Blithedale Romance*, Zenobia does have feminist traits which are destroyed but her attitude has opened up positive perspectives in nineteenth-century America. Finally, in *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne removes his story to Europe. Several changes occur. The two women have grown emotionally. Hilda, a Puritan young American girl, becomes able to have a new vision of the world and return to America. Her return to her native land might indicate that America was then open to incorporate changes.

It is in *The Marble Faun* that Hawthorne becomes most ambiguous. He still shows his struggle towards the understanding and improvement of human condition. He is aware of the difficulty which is involved in his attempt. A way to show his persistent interest yet not presenting a definite solution is reinforced by the indeterminacy of the texts. At the end of *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne plays with the reader, referring to mysterious passages in the novel that might be unclear and have raised some questions. This playfulness and intrusion of the author reinforce his intention to be ambiguous. The human condition, or better, restricting to the scope of this paper, women's position is a quest that Hawthorne was very conscious of. It is as if the condition of woman in society haunted Hawthorne's mind. This can be represented by Hester, Zenobia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Miriam, Hilda, or any other woman. They are all in the same world and they all have to carry a burden for being what and how they are.

In spite of his ambiguity, of the impossibility of determining the indeterminable, Hawthorne provides evidence enough of his belief in woman's self-realization as an individual. This evidence suggests that transformations are likely to occur since the dynamics of civilization depicted in the novels guarantee social progress. Thus, Hawthorne, undoubtedly, has shown in these four novels an advancement towards a better place for women in society. Woman's condition,

as he portrays it, is limited; nonetheless, he shows that there is hope for change. What is more important is that Hawthorne's writings showing his concern about women's condition have opened the way to reevaluating women's position in the world.

Universidade Federal de Viçosa - Viçosa - MG

THE BLUE ROSE OF ST. LOUIS

BETH CARDULLO

Laura Wingfield of *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) hardly qualifies as a Romantic superwoman, a majestic ego eager to transcend the "mereness" of mundane human existence. (In his narration of the drama at the same time as he plays a part in it, together with his final, leavetaking from the domestic misery/ménage(rie) of his mother and sister, Tom owns that role.) But she does represent the kind of person for whom the Romantics of the early nineteenth century felt increasing sympathy: the fragile, almost unearthly ego brutalized by life in the industrialized, overpopulated, depersonalized cities of the Western world. The physically as well as emotionally fragile Laura escapes from her mid twentieth-century urban predicament (in St. Louis, to which her family has migrated from the rural-pastoral South), as someone of Romantic temperament would, through art and music - through the beauty of her glass menagerie and of the records she plays on her Victrola. She failed to graduate from high school, but fondly remembers a choral class she took with gentleman Jim O'Connor and the three performances of *The Pirates of Penzance* in wihich he sang the baritone lead. Instead of attending Rubicam's Business College, as her mother had planned, Laura went daily to "the art museum and the bird houses at the Zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I've been spending most of my afternoons in the Jewel Box, that big class house where they raise tropical flowers" (33).

Like a Romantic, then, Laura has a love for Nature in addition to Art—a nature that is artfully memorialized in her collection of little animals made out of glass, and that is painfully absent from the area surrounding the Wingfield apartment, which Williams describes as "one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living units that flower as warty growths in overcrowed urban centers of lower middle-class population [,] and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved

section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism"(21) . Indeed, even Laura's name signifies her affinity for the natural together with the transcendent: "Laura" is derived from the laurel shrub or tree, a wreath of which was conferred as a mark of honor in ancient times upon dramatic poets, military heroes, and athletic victors; and "Wingfield" brings to mind the flight of birds across fields of, let us say, dandelions [(in Scene 7, Jim offers Laura a glass of "dandelion wine" (89)].

Jim's nickname for Laura, "Blue Roses," itself signifies her affinity for the natural—flowers—together with the transcendent—*blue* roses, which do not occur naturally and thus come to symbolize her yearning for both ideal or mystical beauty and spiritual or romantic love. That beauty is also symbolized by Laura's favorite among the animals in her glass menagerie, the fabled, otherworldly unicorn. And that love comes to her, however fleetingly, in the person of her namer, Jim O'Connor, who beatifies Laura by emphasizing what is special, even divine, about her and downplaying her physical disability:

> *You don't have the proper amount of faith in yourself.*
> *I'm basing that fact on a number of your remarks and also on certain observations I've made. for instance that clumping you thought was so awful in high school. You say that you even dreaded to walk into class. You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education because of a clump, which as far as I know was practically non-existent! A little physical defect is what you have. Hardly noticeable even! Magnified thousands of times by imagination! You know what my strong advice to you is?*
> *Think of yourself as* <u>*superior*</u> *in some way!...*
> *Why, man alive, Laura! Just look about you a little.*
> *What do you see? A world full of common people! All of 'em born and all of 'em going to die. which of them has one-tenth of your good points! Or mine! Or anyone else's, as far as that goes—gosh! Everybody excels in some one thing. Some in many! (99)*

In this speech Jim adopts a Romantic-subjective view of human creation, as opposed to a naturalistic, deterministic, objective one, and in equating Laura with a blue rose he unwittingly recalls that Romantic symbol of longing for the infinite, of unrequited yearning for absolute emotional and artistic fulfillment: *die blaue Blume*, or the blue flower, drawn from the representative novel of early (German) Romanticism, Novali's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802)[1]. I Laura

[1] This prose romance is about the evolution of a poet, his apprenticeship to his art and search for the archetypal symbol, the blue flower, which had appeared to him in a dream. Similary, *The Glass Menagerie* is about the evolution of the poet Tom and his effort, through the art of this play, both to find himself and to rediscover or memorialize his sister. The character of Tom, of course, is based in part on Tennessee Williams himself, whose given name was Thomas, even as Laura is modeled on William's beloved sister Rose.

thinks that "blue is wrong for-roses" (106), but Jim insists that it's right for her because she's pretty "in a very different way from anyone else... The different people are not like other people, but... other people are not [so] wonderful. They're one hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're common as—weeds, but—you—well, you're—Blue Roses!" (105)

Laura is indeed different, but her difference stems from her physical frailty in addition to her fragile prettiness. I'm referring not only to the "childhood illness [that] has left her crippled, one leg slightly shorter than the other, and held in a brace" (5), but also to her frequent faintness, nausea, and colds (see the references thereto on 32-33, 72, 75-76, and 83) together with her bout with pleurosis as a teenager (mentioned on 35 and 93). Jim misheard "Blue Roses" when Laura told him, back in high school, that she had had pleurosis, an inflammation of the thin membrane covering the lungs that causes difficult, painful breathing (note a breathless Laura or Laura's catching her breath on 32, 74, 76, 88, 92, and 102-103). His oxymoronic misreading, however—similar to Williams' own "mishearing" of "glass menagerie" for "grass menagerie" (the enclosure where a collection of <u>live</u> wild animals is kept) —suggests the oxymoronic existence of Laura Wingfield, a young woman of this world who simultaneously, like the frail creatures of her glass menagerie, seems physically unfit for or adapted to an earthly life. She is too good for this world, the Romantics might say, and for this reason she could be said to be sadly beautiful or bluely roseate.

The lighting of Laura, called for by Williams in the "Production Notes" to the play, is as different or special as she is: "The light upon Laura should be distinct from the others, having a peculiar pristine clarity such as light used in early religious portraits of female saints or madonnas" (9-10). Beyond this, Williams suggests that the light surrounding Laura, as well as Tom, Amanda, and the Gentleman Caller, show " a certain correspondence to light in religious paintings, such as El Greco's, where the figures are radiant in an atmosphere that is relatively dusky" (10). "Relatively dusky"—that is, "blue," one of whose definitions is "balefully murky," as in the "deep blue dusk" from which there issues a "sorrowful murmur" in Scene 6 (83) as a summer storm abruptly approaches and Laura becomes too ill to sit down to dinner with her gentleman caller, her mother, and and her brother. Williams calls for "dim" or "poetic" atmospheric lighting throughout *The Glass Menagerie* (see the "Production Notes," 9, and Scene 1, 21 and 23), however, not just during the scenes that occur at twilight or dusk (Scenes 3, 5, and 6). He writes that such faint illumination is "in keeping with the atmosphere of memory" (9) in this memory play, but it must also be remembered that the time from twilight to dusk—the time of dim or poetic lighting—was the Romantics' favorite because, in this misture of darkness and light, it is more infinite, more all-embracing, than any other part of the day. In addition, twilight-to-dusk suggested to them a mind that was half awake and half asleep and therefore in sentient retreat from the workaday world.

Twilight can thus be seen as the retiring Laura's favorite time of day, despite the fact that Jim Calls it—or its artificial equivalent, candlelight—*his* favorite in the following exchange:

> *Amanda. We'll just have to spend the remainder of the evening in the nineteenth century, before Mr. Edison made the Mazda lamp!*
> *Jim. Candlelight is my favorite kind of light.*
> *Amanda. That shows you're romantic!.... Very considerate of [the electric company] to let us get through dinner before they plunged us into everlasting darkness, wasn't it, Mr. O'Connor? (87)*

Jim comes to his "date" with Laura in Scene 7 "carrying [a] candelabrum, its candles lighted, in one hand and a glass of wine in the other"(88). The wine, in combination with his warmth and charm, gradually "lights her inwardly with altar candles" (97), which is Williams' way of saying that Jim's apparent love has touched Laura's soul by way of her eyes. This naturally is the manner in which romantic or spiritual love, as opposed to animalistic or carnal lust, works, and has been thought to do so since the early Renaissance when the sight of Dante's Beatrice (whose name means "blessed") created a hunger for empyreal rather than fleshly beauty: by touching the spirit in emulation of God's love for mankind, man's love of God, and Mary and Joseph's immaculate conception of the baby Jesus. When Laura realizes that she has misperceived Jim's intentions or that he has unintentionally misled her—that he is already in love with another woman—"the holy candles on the altar of [her] face" accordingly are "snuffed out" (108). Indeed, at the end of the play Laura herself blows out the candles that Jim had brought to their encounter, and she does this in recognition not only of Tom's departure from her life but also of the Gentleman Caller's. The implication is that no gentleman caller will ever enter her life again, will ever be gentle enough in a society so crassly materialistic to perceive her inner beauty, to appreciate her love for beauty, to understand her unnatural, if not supernatural, place in a world ruled by science and technology (knowledge and power, in the words of Jim the aspiring engineer (100) instead of heart and soul. In such a world, waiting for the second global war of the century and therefore soon to be "lit by lightning" (115) from bombardments, Laura is figuratively condemned to live out her existence in an "everlasting darkness"(87) that will literally be descending on millions of other human beings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*. New York: New Directories, 1966.

Department of Theatre
University of Michigan

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S *DUEL*[1]: EXPERIENCE ON THE ROAD

JOÃO CARLOS GONÇALVES

Steven Spielberg's *Duel* externally resembles most American road movies. The story line is simple enough: a man leaves his house in his car for a short business trip somewhere. On the way there suddenly appears a big tanker which starts, for no plausible reason at all, trying to kill him by throwing itself against his much smaller vehicle. The whole film focuses on this terrible trip which ends up with the man succeeding in destroying the bigger vehicle. This summary would be sufficient to make anyone dismiss the film as another Charles Bronson-type of entertainment, but when you wath it it becomes quite clear that this is no run-of-the-mill movie at all.

In Brazil *Duel* received the name *Encurralado* (literally, at bay), which, in spite of being a rather static title for a very dynamic film, draws our attention to the part of the confrontation that is in that position, namely, the protagonist, and also gives prominence to the pervading animal connotations in the movie. This focusing on the protagonist in the Brazilian title is suitable since the point of view is predominantly his. We drive *with* David. A recurring and impressive image is the onrushing diesel-truck seen through the rear window of David's car. Perhaps the literal translation *Duelo* was avoided for the easy association it would have with a *western* for potential Brazilian audiences.

First, the heroic image has nothing to do with our driver, David Mann (played by Dennis Weaver). There are very clear elements to the story which make it an effective representation of something much bigger than what is usually found in matinée films. David is noticeably immature when the story starts and his evolution

[1] DUEL (1972) 90 minutes, Directed by Steven Spielberg, with Dennis Weaver, Tim Herbert, Charles Peel.

into another human being during the process of fighting instinctively for his life, like an animal in the jungle, is crystal clear. Contributing to this reading of the film are several factors: 1. It is very important for the film structure the fact that the truck driver is never clearly seen by David; 2. David is always alone in his life-or-death fight against the truck; 3. The gratuitousness of the violence against him and the need to rise up to the inexplicable threat make David understand something basic in human life, whatever that may be.

Factor 1 makes David gradually understand that this encounter is something very important in his life, even a rite of passage, although he is an adult; there is nothing personal in the fight, it is not the battle of two individuals, but rather the story of a boy-man experiencing the pains of growing into a full man before the world's inherent violence. The image of the truck reminds us of the whale in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, for Ishmael comments on the fact that the animal is so big that it does not seem to have a face at all, which makes the threat it poses even more terrifying (Chapter 79. *The Prairie*. pp. 333-335)[2]. Man seems to have less fear of things he can understand, however frightening they may be.

The only things we see, with David, of the mysterious driver are his boots and half of his legs showing from under the parked truck at a roadside gas station at the very beginning when the aggression displayed up to that point has consisted only of some smoke thrown on David's face by the slow-moving truck in front of him. Later on, with the duel already in full swing, the truck driver's arm sticks out of the window inviting David to continue with the dangerous game. The same arm had appeared once before when it signaled that the road was free for David to pass and there was in fact another car coming in the opposite direction whin had almost killed him.

The long, dark grey tanker looms tall and menacing ; it looks as if it has been intensively put to use and its image provides no specific signs of identification. On the front bumper it carries, accordingly, six plates of different states, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, Montana and New Mexico. These dirty rusty plates serve a double purpose: 1.The excess of identification is no identification at all and the truck remains as mysterious as ever, especially in contrast with the clean blue California plates of David's car, with the letters PCE (peace?); and 2. Coming from different places at the same time, the vehicle server as a symbol of today's latent violence. On its back it ominously has the usual word FLAMMABLE, which, due to the specific circumstances, acquires conspicuous force. Right below this word we have its repetition in smaller type, which may be seen as an indication that even the smaller one (David) can be ignited by anger and react, in an after-the-fact reading. Its hue even reminds one of the skin color of dinosaurs in Spielberg's later movies. These are the more tangible contours of David's enemy. It came right out of the blue and has no immediate identification. Human indices are systematically absent from this adversary. When the truck is parked by the

---

[2] Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. New York: The New American Library, 1961.

roadside waiting for David's car to catch up, David finally decides he wants to see the person behind the wheel and settle matters with him personally, but the truck moves off before he can reach it on foot. The driver avoids meeting David face to face. All David is left with is his battle with a thing that wants to kill him.

Factor 2 adds to David's bewilderment and terror: there is no sympathy for him on the highway against this mysterious enemy. It is somehow his personal battle and it cannot be shared. Two events may be selected in order to show his isolation in this plight.

When, after being thrown off the highway by the speeding truck, David hits a fence with his car in front of Chuck's Cafe and an elderly bystander comes over to ask him if he's all right, he is practically whimpering and complaining about the results of a mild whiplash; after he tells the man someone has tried to kill him, the man expresses of disbelief and leaves signaling to a pal of his saying, "He's all right", meaning "Don't worry, this is just another urban sissy who shouldn't be driving alone on a highway." Soon afterwards at the cafe he comes to blows with a man he mistakes for the truck driver, for he had noticed the abominable truck was back, parked outside Chuck's. As a result the people at the bar start seeing him as a very weird specimen indeed.

The second event sets David even farther apart from others and reveals the ambiguity concerning the truck. David, after stopping to help, with no success, the driver of a school bus that would not start, finds, to his utter amazement, that the truck returns and protectively manages to ease the bus full of children back onto the highway making it start again. The pattern of association is quite clear: David is alone against the world on the other side. The children inside the bus had teased him by making faces at him through the rear window while he was trying to give the bus a push from behind. All of a sudden he had seen the truck was coming back, panicked, and tried to protect the children from it and was seen as a sort of maniac by the bus driver and all the infants.

Factor 3 points in the direction of finding a possible meaning attached to David's trial. For gradually he starts accepting the terms of the nightmarish situation he is in; he stops trying to understand the reasons and starts running for dear life. That'is when the change in David occurs. The fact is that, like an animal at bay having to fight for its life, he has become a very dangerous animal himself. This becomes more evident when he stops being civilized about the whole thing, he gives up trying to see some sense in it and reverts to a cave man's basic necessity of keeping body and soul together.

When David starts his trip he hears on the car radio a talk between a listener and the station in which the former expresses his doubts as to whether he is the head of his family or not. David is conspicuously silent during this conversation. A few minutes later another listener says he "plays meat" to inform what his job is. "Now, come on, man," is David's reaction to this expression; little does he imagine that he himself will be the meat played with in the miles to come, as in a cat-and-mouse routine. At his first stop along the highway David calls up his wife and we learn that he is also having

problems as the head of his family. His wife suggests that he did not live up to his role as a husband when, at a party the previous night at his home, he saw a man make amorous advances at her and did not protect her. She does not mince words about it and tells him she felt practically raped in front of the people. He faintly protests but recognizes his fault and promises he will be back the same day. There is a telling piece of dialogue when at the gas pump the attendant suggests that he should have the radiator hose replaced, to which David answers he will do it later. "You're the boss" says the attendant, and David replies half to himself, "Not at my home. I'm not." In another phone call he insists with the operator to get his name right and spells it out carefully, M-A-N-N; he still wants to convince people around him.

The allegorical dimension of the film is already suggested by the protagonist's name; frail immature man/David has to face strong primeval animal-machine/Goliath, and the result brings David to a new unexpected status. As was already stated, things start to change when David accepts the terms of the duel; it is his fight and he cannot escape it. All thatis left for him to do is maintain his stance and stand the trial to the end. In a typical Hollywood sequence, which is, however, redeemed by its context, David manages to i am the accelerator of his car with his suitcase and throw it in a frontal collision with the truck after jumping out of the speeding car. As a result, the big truck runs over the car and falls with it into a precipice onto the rocks below. During the fall in slow motion the soundtrack provides the sounds of a mortally wounded enormous beast until the debris of both vehicles settles down on the bottom. The car soon disappears engulfed by the size of the bigger vehicle and all that is left to see are the remnants of the truck. There are no traces whatsoever of the human being inside, instead we are left with the last moments of the animal/machine. Its heartbeat consists of a stick rubbing against a revolving wheel, which is soon to stop; its blood is the oil dripping slowly from the steering wheel; and its dying breath is provided by a very small electric fan with a small white ribbon attached to it.

Up above David dances around in frenetic exultation for his victory at first, and then he slowly sits on the ground with the yellow late afternoon sun behind his head and plunges into sad meditation and tiredness. The hard lesson must have been learnt, David is certainly a different man now. His wife may well be in for a surprise when he returns home.

Duel raises some questions; among them the following can be listed: *Are today's social restrictions and lifestyle emasculating?*; *Does the possibility of cruel deviations occur when such restrictions are even momentarily lifted?*; and *Does man have to return to a pristine barbaric condition in order to solve this problem?* A sad *yes* seems to be presented by the film as the answer to these disquieting questions.

IBILCE/UNESP

CARSON MCCULLERS E CLARICE LISPECTOR: UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO

VERA MÁRCIA PARÁBOLI SILVA VIDIGAL MILANESI

A literatura comparada, como disciplina, surgiu na França e, nos seus primórdios, significou uma tomada de consciência do cosmopolitismo literário e um desejo de se estudar a literatura historicamente. Como marco oficial de seu aparecimento temos o livro teórico do inglês M. H. Posnett, intitulado *Comparative Literature* e publicado no ano de 1886.

É sabido que, no decorrer dos anos, o conceito sobre essa disciplina sofreu uma evolução, pois entre o rigor positivista da escola francesa e a "abertura" permitida pela escola norte-americana houve um longo caminho a percorrer.

Dentre as diferentes concepções dessa disciplina aderimos à de René Welleck, para o qual a literatura comparada é uma atividade específica que possibilita uma visão mais ampla das obras em estudo.

Englobando, então, a comparação da literatura de um país com outra ou outras e a comparação de literatura com outras esferas da expressão humana (filosofia, história, ciências sociais, etc.), os estudos de literatura comparada não se devem ater a mera descrição de influências. O importante, para a literatura comparada, é a chamada transmutação das formas, ou seja, as transformações que cada autor ou nação impõe a seus empréstimos.

Comparar significa, pois, buscar projeções, sinônimo de coincidências, paralelos, contrastes, afinidades, ressonâncias, correspondências.

Esse trabalho, cujo objetivo é o estudo comparativo entre as obras *The Ballad of the Sad Café*, de Carson McCullers e *Laços de Família*, de Clarice Lispector, não se deterá, portanto, na análise minuciosa de nenhuma das obras citadas, mas buscará, através e apesar dos paralelos, mostrar o que há de específico em cada uma delas.

Iniciaremos com a apresentação das duas escritoras: biografia, bibliografia, contexto histórico-social e caracterização geral de suas obras, com uma primeira

observação dos seus pontos convergentes. Nessa etapa nos limitaremos à fortuna crítica, ou seja, não haverá, de nossa parte, nenhuma contribuição original.

Finalmente, na síntese, buscaremos a especificidade de cada uma delas, fechando o círculo que entendemos haver em qualquer tipo de trabalho comparativo. É nessa última etapa que se situará nossa possível contribuição.

Antes de expormos as características literárias de Carson McCullers e Clarice Lispector convém apresentar aqueles aspectos bio-bibliográficos que julgamos importantes.

Tula Carson Smith nasceu em Columbia, Georgia, em 19 de fevereiro de 1917 e morreu em 29 de setembro de 1967, vítima de hemorragia cerebral. Desde criança mostrou um grande interesse pela música (que posteriormente influenciou sua obra literária) e pela literatura, e por isso escolheu justamente a segunda quando se viu forçada a abandonar a primeira. Ao deixar a Lulliard School of Music, de Nova York, voltou para a Columbia, ingressou em um curso para escritores e impressionou um de seus professores, escritor profissional, que a ajudou a publicar seu primeiro conto "Wunderkind". Estava iniciada sua carreira de escritora.

Casando-se com Reeves McCullers, Carson mudou-se para Charlotte, onde publicou seu primeiro romance *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter.* Mas seu casamento fracassou e Carson passou a viver com George Davis, editor que publicou sua obra *Reflections in a Golden Eye.* No inverno de 1940 Carson sofreu seu primeiro derrame. Em 1942 seu conto "A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud" foi publicado no *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1942;* nessa época ela já gozava de grande prestígio no meio intelectual americano.

A escritora ganhou, em 1943, uma bolsa da Fundação Guggenheim para a elaboração de sua novela *The Ballad of the Sad Café.* que foi publicada nesse mesmo ano.

No ano de 1946 recebeu outra bolsa dessa mesma fundação para *The Member of the Wedding.* Com o famoso escritor de peças teatrais Tennessee Williams Carson adaptou essa obra para o teatro, e a convite dele, mudou-se para a Europa a fim de dirigí-la. Nessa viagem, foi acompanhada de seu primeiro marido, com quem tinha se casado novamente.

Em Paris, Carson McCullers sofreu mais dois derrames, ficando com o lado esquerdo paralisado e perdendo parte de sua visão direita. Duas tragédias, então, aconteceram: o suicídio de seu marido (que talvez nunca se conformara com a idéia de ver sua esposa realizando seu grande sonho de tornar-se escritor famoso) e a morte de sua mãe. Escrevendo com muita dificuldade física, produziu nessa época a peça *The Square of Wonderful,* que não alcançou o sucesso da primeira. Seu último romance *Clock Without Wands* só foi publicado após sua morte, em 1967, ano em que foi também publicado seu *Sweet as a Pickle and Clean as a Pig,* livro de poemas para crianças.

Em 1971, sua irmã, Margarita G. Smith, publicou *The Mortgaged Heart*, uma coleção de contos, poemas e ensaios que puseram em evidência mais uma de suas qualidades: uma grande percepção crítica.

A vida de Carson McCullers foi marcada por dificuldades, tanto a nível físico quanto afetivo, mas, ao invés de escolher o caminho mais curto como o de seu marido Reeves, a escritora trilhou o mais estreito: o da batalha com as palavras.

Conforme pudemos verificar, o período de maior produção literária de McCullers foram os anos 40, período em que, segundo os historiadores, há uma diminuição do interesse dos liberais americanos pela reforma social. Essa diminuição seria causada em parte pelo surgimento do totalitarismo na Europa e em parte pela guerra. Adotando uma visão mais pessimista do homem e de sua realidade, os novos liberais dos anos 40 restringiram suas aspirações sociais. Essa tendência política aparece na literatura como uma rejeição da experiência pública e uma visão mais particularizada da relação entre o homem e a sociedade, focalizando principalmente a alienação. Os sonhos de um novo mundo com direitos iguais para todos não estavam realizados. No começo dos anos 40 havia ainda muito desemprego nos Estados Unidos, mais motivo para o desencanto dos liberais com qualquer tipo de plano governamental.

Após essa breve exposição do contexto em que se insere a obra de Carson McCullers, devemos salientar que, embora esses dados expliquem o pano de fundo político, social e econômico que deve ter influenciado escritores como ela, não podem oferecer uma interpretação completa de sua arte. Quanto à produção literária de Carson McCullers vemos que um de seus principais temas é o isolamento espiritual em que vivem os homens. A própria escritora afirma que a incapacidade física de vários de seus personagens espelha sua incapacidade de dar ou receber amor. Podemos dizer que o pessimismo de McCullers é uma amostra da reação à ênfase dada aos aspectos sociais nos anos 30 pelos escritores dos anos 40. Através dos conflitos de seus personagens, McCullers vai em busca da identidade humana. Os temas sociais, quando existentes, estão subordinados à sua visão da incapacidade humana de comunicação, e conseqüente solidão.

Na maioria dos romances e contos de McCullers há um grande esforço por parte dos protagonistas para estabelecer contatos efetivos com outros personagens. Por contato queremos dizer aqui algo diferente de meras relações superficiais, que signifique a possibilidade de uma auto-realização, nunca a sujeição a esquemas reificantes. Mas a necessidade de realização é vencida por uma total incapacidade de comunicação que leva o homem a um isolamento destrutivo. Longe de serem heróis, seus personagens são, na maior parte das vezes, pessoas desajustadas, vítimas do processo de reificação comum na sociedade moderna. Apesar disso, conquistam facilmente a simpatia do leitor, que num processo catártico, vê neles suas frustrações reveladas. Assim, o leitor tem sempre a impressão de que aquela situação é sua velha conhecida, de modo que até mesmo o que é anormal parece familiar. Como exemplo, o estado absurdo de solidão não parece referir-se a casos isolados, mas sim fazer parte da própria natureza do ser humano. É comum, também, em seus personagens, uma profunda contradição: o ser apaixonado imagina o ser amado de uma forma totalmente diversa da que ele é. Tal contradição é causada pela impossibilidade comunicativa e reflete a

complexidade da natureza humana; aparece, por exemplo no conto "The Ballad of the Sad Café".

Trabalhando com situações rotineiras, McCullers usa uma linguagem clara e simples, o que não lhe faz perder nada da profundidade alcançada por sua temática. Assim, consegue produzir uma obra que permite dois tipos de leitura: uma superficial e outra profunda, num nível subjacente. Esse tipo de dicotomia está presente, também, na obra de Clarice Lispector, como veremos a seguir. McCullers possui a capacidade de fundir o comum com o exótico, o prosaico com o poético, o simples com o complexo e isso nos permite distingui-la como uma das mais criativas escritoras de sua geração.

Em sua tese, intitulada *Tragic Aspects of Love in the Works of Carson McCullers*, Giovanni Bonardelli faz uma alusão ao gosto musical de McCullers ao afirmar que "Os trabalhos de Carson McCullers compõem uma grande sinfonia que trata da tristeza da solidão humana. Esse é o ponto central de todas as suas canções".

O tema da solidão humana também é recorrente na obra da escritora brasileira Clarice Lispector, sobre a qual passaremos a discorrer a seguir.

Nascida na aldeia russa de Thetchelmik, no dia 10 de dezembro de 1925, escala da viagem de seus pais na sua imigração para o Brasil, Clarice Lispector viveu dos dois meses aos doze anos em Recife, de onde mudou para o Rio de Janeiro. No Rio, fez o ginásio e a faculdade de Direito; interessando-se principalmente por Direito Penal, chegou a idealizar uma reforma do sistema penitenciário brasileiro.

Sua formação literária se iniciou sem muito critério e foi guiada sobretudo pelos títulos mais sugestivos, como o *O lobo da estepe*, de Herman Hesse. Casando-se com o diplomata Mauri Gurgel Valente, viveu doze anos no estrangeiro (Itália, Suíca, Estados Unidos, Inglaterra e França), mas sempre se considerou pernambucana. Essa situação de isolamento no exterior favoreceu a vocação literária de Clarice. Em 1960, separada do marido, voltou para o Brasil e teve seu prestígio consolidado com a publicação de *Laços de Família* e *A maçã no escuro*.

O final de sua vida foi marcado pelo cansaço e desalento, quando, vivendo apenas de uma pequena aposentadoria como escritora e insignificantes direitos autorais, precisou recorrer ao jornalismo e traduções para sobreviver. Assim como Carson McCullers, passou por grandes dificuldades físicas, quando teve sua mão direita mutilada por um incêndio provocado por um cigarro; apesar disso continuou a escrever até praticamente sua morte, em 1977.

Suas principais obras são: romances - *Perto do coração selvagem* (1944), *O Lustre* (1946), *A Cidade sitiada* (1949), *A maçã no escuro* (1961), *A paixão segundo G.H.* (1964), *A aprendizagem ou a linguagem dos prazeres* (1969); contos - *Alguns contos* (1952), *Laços de Família* (1960), *A legião estrangeira* (1964), *Avia crucis do corpo* (1974).

Vivendo mais ou menos na mesma época de Carson McCullers, Clarice Lispector produziu a maior parte de sua obra entre os anos de 1945 e 1964, período em que o panorama político-social brasileiro se caracteriza principalmente por uma crescente industrialização; por certa regularidade instável no plano das instituições e da história

política, marcada, por exemplo, no processo de sucessões presidenciais, que giravam em torno da manutenção de interesses econômicos; pela passagem dos modelos de organização e progresso social nacional-populistas para os do nacional-desenvolvimentismo e pela evolução cultural graças às atividades universitárias que discutiam, por exemplo, problemas sociais. Não devemos nos esquecer de que o incremento à industrialização causou o agravamento de certos problemas como o crescimento urbano desenfreado e o esvaziamento da mão de obra camponesa, mas tudo isso estava camuflado pelo espírito de euforia que parecia envolver todo o país.

Poderíamos considerar, então, que Clarice Lispector possuia uma consciência crítica da realidade, pois seus contos parecem denunciar a falsidade do equilíbrio existente. Assim, sob a aparência de tranqüilidade há, no íntimo de seus personagens, um emaranhado de angústias, frustrações, desilusões que o evento mais íntimo faz explodir.

Isso acontece, por exemplo, no conto "Amor", que a simples visão de um cego mastigando chiclete desencadeia no personagem um total desequilíbrio, que só é relativizado na sua visita ao Jardim Botânico. Poderíamos, pois, pensar em uma oposição entre a cidade, representada pela vida burguesa do personagem e o campo, representado pelo Jardim Botânico. Embora a sociedade agrária se mostre mais eqilibrada, o personagem opta pelo equilíbrio aparente da sociedade burguesa. Essa oposição se faz também presente nos contos "Uma galinha" a representante da natureza é mais "humana" do que os próprios homens), "A imitação da rosa" (um elemento natural desencadeia o equilíbrio da personagem), "A melhor mulher do mundo" (oposição entre a visão dos homens da cidade e a ingenuidade dos habitantes da mata) e "O búfalo" (identificação total homem-animal).

Em Clarice não aparece a preocupação em seguir a linha regionalista iniciada nos anos trinta e renovada com Guimarães Rosa. O espaço predominante em sua obra é a cidade grande, e não o sertão, e dentro dela, o mundo interior de seus personagens. Talvez esse intimismo seja um reflexo homológico da passagem dos modelos de organização nacional - populistas para os nacional-desenvolvimentistas, a que já nos referimos.

Fica patente, aqui, certa semelhança de contexto em que se encaixam as duas escritoras em estudo.

Segundo Luiz da Costa Lima, os contos de Lispector teriam a seguinte esquematização comum: "a vida cerca os personagens de conforto, a segurança do seu dia a dia domestica da potência agressiva do mundo. Deste quase se afasta o imprevisto. Mas de súbito, por mais perfeito que seja o círculo de segurança, e por força inesperada irrompe na existência das criaturas a sensação inédita, o contato perigoso. O impacto do que existe atinge os que eram até há pouco protegidos. Assim acontece com a normalíssima e pacífica dona de casa que, de repente, se depara com o olhar imutável do cego, assim se repete com a personagem que visita o zoo e encontra o búfalo. Aos poucos, o conto irá se extinguindo com o retorno à normalidade." (Lima, Luiz da Costa. *Porque Literatura*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1969, p. 101)

Esse esquema coincide com a visão de Affonso Romano de Sant'Ana, que evidencia nos contos de Clarice, a existência de quatro fases:

1. Colocação da personagem em determinada situação;
2. Preparação de um evento discretamente pressentido;
3. Ocorrência de um evento;
4. Desfecho em que se mostra a situação da personagem após o evento.

(Sant'Anna, Affonso Romano de. *Análise Estrutural de romances brasileiros*, Petrópolis: 2ª edição, Vozes, 1973, p. 34.)

Cabe observar que, embora as histórias curtas de Clarice Lispector gravitem ao redor de uma célula dramática ou episódio único, elas diferem do modelo tradicional do conto por terem essa unidade dramática preenchida por uma ação mais intensa do que externa. Essa ação interna é representada, principalmente, pela ocorrência do chamado *momento epifânico*, experiência que a princípio se mostra simples e rotineira, mas que acaba por mostrar toda a força de uma revelação inesperada. Tal momento não precisa ser excepcional, basta conferir lucidez ao personagem; é pelo momento epifânico, que o personagem vê pela primeira vez, a realidade de sua vida escancarada à sua frente. A epifania não é apenas objeto da literatura, mas é também focalizada pelo pensamento filosófico existencialista, ao qual Clarice está vinculada.

Tanto a filosofia existencialista quanto a literatura clariceana se ocupam com a busca da verdade e o momento epifânico se coloca aí por englobar um encontro do "eu" com o mundo real, no qual há o "objeto" (no plano literário o "outro", o "não-eu"), representado, pelos seres humanos e irracionais e pelas coisas. Então, a realidade exterior é um território a se descobrir e essa descoberta se dá graças à revelação do momento epifânico. A revelação inesperada do momento epifânico desvenda para o personagem sua verdade existencial, e produz entre ele e a realidade exterior uma total identificação. Mas esse instante é fugaz: o ser deve voltar à sua cegueira mental, à opacidade de sua vida, à total falta de identificação "eu-outro". A não-identificação "eu-outro" se reflete nos diálogos, que são, na verdade, monólogos, nos quais cada participante está interessado apenas no seu drama existencial.

Os personagens de Clarice, na maior parte mulheres, parecem ser sempre iguais, porque encarnam situações-paradigmas dos seres humanos, do que resulta a mesma sensação a que nos referimos ao comentarmos a obra de Carson McCullers: o leitor vê nos personagens suas frustrações reveladas.

Gilda Salem Szklo se refere a essa capacidade de suscitar no leitor a liberação de sentimentos "enterrados" do seguinte modo: "Tanto nos romances como nos contos de Clarice Lispector fica-nos a estranha impressão de que mergulhamos num mundo de fatos e situações familiares, nossas conhecidas desde sempre". (*Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais*, 31.03.1979, p.7.)

Dentro da visão existencialista, "ser é ser com", ou seja, a existência do "eu" só é possível graças à existência do objeto, do "outro". Esse "outro" pode ser um homem (geralmente em situações de incomunicabilidade, apesar dos diálogos),

um animal ou até mesmo um vegetal. É justamente a incapacidade dos homens de se comunicarem através da linguagem que permite, na ficção de Clarice, que o "outro" pertença ao mundo animal ou vegetal. Esses seres destituídos de razão têm a vantagem de permitir ao personagem uma identificação mais imediata, porque, sem o "auxílio" da linguagem, podem se transformar no que o "eu" procura. Essa identificação homem-animal culmina numa antropormorfização dos animais (por exemplo em *A Galinha, O crime do professor de matemática, O búfalo*) e na zoomorfização, vegetalização ou mineração dos homens (respectivamente em: *O crime do professor de matemática, Amor, Feliz Aniversário*). Em *Laços de família* podemos dizer que há uma evolução: no primeiro conto há apenas uma vegetalização de Ana e no último há uma antropomorfização do búfalo e uma zoomorficação do personagem.

O que dissemos da linguagem de Carson McCullers vale também para Clarice Lispector. Na leitura de Clarice, é válida, pois, aquela dicotomia entre nível superficial e nível profundo, como vemos no seguinte comentário:

> *"...essa linguagem, ao contrário do instrumentalismo de um Guimarães Rosa, apresenta uma superfície plana e quase coloquial. Dela se poderia dizer que é uma escritora que não sabe escrever, e por isso mesmo escreva tão bem. É que essa falta de instrumentalismo na linguagem nada tem a ver com a complexidade do texto, na medida que o texto possa ser ou não complexo em linguagem do tipo clássico ou em linguagem do tipo barroco. Essa complexidade sobretudo resulta de sua experiência humana em base existencial, porque a fenomenologia e o existencialismo não estão ausentes de sua ficção, embora a sua ficção não se confunda com nenhuma corrente filosófica"*

(*FILHO*, Leodegário A. de A. - "A metacomunicação na linguagem de Clarice Lispector," in *Vozes*, Petrópolis, 66(10): 29-38, dez. de 1972.

Podemos ver, também, em Clarice, um gosto pelo oxímoro, pela comparação, pela metáfora e, principalmente, pela repetição. Sobre essa última figura há o seguinte trecho: "(...) a repetição me é agradável, e repetição acontecendo nom mesmo lugar termina cavando, pouco a pouco, cantiga enhjoada diz alguma coisa" (*A Legião Estrangeira*, Ed. do autor, Rio de Janeiro, 1964, p. 1975).

Em *Laços de família*, a repetição se concretiza tanto a nível vocabular quanto a nível temático. São diversos os exemplos de repetição de palavras ou frases, e um deles é, em "A imitação da rosa", a repetição da expressão "de volta à paz noturna da Tijuca". A nível conceitual podemos observar, por exemplo, a repetição da alusão à modificação das pessoas nos momentos de despedida, nos contos "Laços de família" e "Feliz aniversário". Essa técnica da repetição pode ser considerada mais um recurso para possibilitar uma maior identificação do leitor com o texto já que a repetida constatação da realidade do texto pode tornar a sua mais transparente.

Como pudemos observar, os pontos convergentes da obra de Carson McCullers e Clarice Lispector são aqueles relacionados com o tema da solidão humana, do qual trataremos a partir de agora. Definida como o estado do que se encontra ou vive só, como isolamento, ou ainda como a situação ou sensação de quem vive isolado numa comunidade, vemos que a solidão implica dois pólos, pois nem todo aquele que está só se sente só e esse sentimento pode surpreender um homem mesmo quando está entre outros. Esse estado ou sentimento tem sido cantado pela literatura desde as mais remotas idades. Basta citarmos as queixas das cantigas medievais ou a ânsia de solidão, que para os românticos foi um meio de superar a identidade social e alcançar uma harmonia final com a natureza. O que muda é a forma de abordagem, decorrente das diferentes visões de mundo dos escritores de diferentes épocas.

Na sociedade moderna a solidão é uma das grandes frustrações do homem que, sujeito e objeto de um processo de reificação, pode encontrá-la em sua própria casa. A solidão torna-se, então, aquela dor amarga, aquele sofrimento penoso que culmina no alheamento dos outros e por fim de si mesmo. Na sociedade moderna dá-se um empobrecimento do conteúdo afetivo dos relacionamentos inter-humanos, o que limita as possibilidades de auto-realização dos indivíduos. Formam-se, assim, homens solitários que, ao invés de se relacionarem com os outros, buscam uma relação consigo próprios. Mas nem mesmo esse projeto é viável, pois a reificação impede sua realização.

No que diz respeito aos personagens de Carson McCullers e Clarice Lispector notamos que há grupos que, se por um lado possuem certas características comuns, por outro, possuem algumas que os diferenciam. Daí, justamente, a possibilidade de estudá-los comparativamente. Há, nessa perspectiva, a figura do professor, do adolescente, dos velhos e dos casais, que são comum às duas obras em estudo.

O professor, figura que oscila entre a representação do raciocínio lógico e o sentimento aparece em *Laços de família* nos contos "Preciosidade", "Começos de uma fortuna" e o "Crime do Professor de Matemática" e, em "The Ballad of the Sad Café", nos contos "Wunderkind" e "Madame Zilensky and the King of Finland".

Depois das mulheres, os adolescentes são os tipos mais comuns de Clarice Lispector e aparecem em "Começos de uma fortuna" e "Mistério em São Cristóvão" e, na obra de McCullers, em "Wunderkind".

Os velhos surgem como seres que, apesar de altamente reificados, reagem contra o meio que os pressiona. Todos reagem à sua moda: a velha de "Feliz Aniversário, o velho vigiado pelo jovem de "O jantar" e a velha que se vale da mentira como fuga à realidade, do conto "Madame Zilenskey and the King of Finland".

Os casais, por sua vez, marcam o ápice do fracasso da busca de identidade entre o "eu" e o "outro". Casamentos fracassados são comuns em Lispector e McCullers e aparecem em "Devaneio e Embriaguez de uma Rapariga", "Amor", "The sojourner", "A Domestic Dilemma".

Há ainda aqueles personagens que substituem sua relação com um ser humano por uma com outro elemento da natureza, seja ele do reino animal, vegetal ou até mesmo mineral. Dentre eles temos o personagem do conto "A Tree, a Rock, a Cloud", com sua ciência do amor, o professor de "O crime do professor de matemática" e a mulher de "O búfalo".

Fica, pois, patente, que em todos esses conjuntos de personagens há uma constante dualidade "eu-outro" e essa característica já foi apontada por nós como um dos aspectos da visão de mundo existencialista.

Dos contos que estudamos, "Amor" e "A Domestic Dilemma" se prestam bastante a um estudo comparativo, já que ambos retratam situações semelhantes, de instabilidade a nível pessoal e familiar, focalizando principalmente o problema da inadequação da mulher aos seus papéis sociais e da total incomunicabilidade entre os seres humanos.

Em "Amor" poderíamos dizer que há uma diluição da ação na idéia, pois, a um número reduzido de ações da protagonista, corresponde um grande volume de reflexões. O enredo é simples: de volta para casa, Ana vê, pela janela do bonde, um cego mastigando chiclete e esse fato a perturba tanto que ela perde a noção de tempo e de espaço, descendo além de seu ponto. Dirige-se então, para o Jardim Botânico, onde fica meditando sobre a existência. De lá, se dirige para sua casa, onde encontra o filho e tudo mais nos seus devidos lugares. Ajuda a empregada a preparar o jantar, recebe parentes para comer e vai dormir. Mais importante do que essa seqüência de ações, é a evolução do pensamento de Ana no decorrer da narrativa porque está intimamente ligada ao tema da solidão.

Embora seu título possa sugerir, à primeira vista, a existência de um relacionamento inter-pessoal, o conto "Amor" retrata a situação de solidão e incomunicabilidade da mulher e do ser humano em geral. Vemos que essa frustração é geral pela afirmação da protagonista de que "após descobrir que também sem felicidade se vivia", ... "criara enfim algo compreensível, uma vida de adulto" (p. 16). Essa vida de adulto corresponde a um mundo no qual as pessoas estão fechadas dentro de si mesmas, pois toda tentativa de aproximação das demais é fracassada.

É fácil perceber que o equilíbrio desse tipo de vida é aparente e, apesar da afirmação da personagem de que "Estava bom. Assim ela o quisera e escolhera" (p. 17), vemos que essa opção é questionada a partir de uma simples visão de um cego mastigando chiclete. Tal visão passa a ter para ela uma significação bastante complexa, pois faz com que toda sua aparente segurança seja posta à prova. Ela é de súbito tomada por um sentimento de instabilidade das coisas, de "ausência da lei", que a faz agarrar-se "ao banco da frente, como se pudesse cair do bonde" (p. 19).

Após essa constatação, Ana é como que magicamente conduzida ao Jardim Botânico onde consegue se sentir em comunhão com o mundo que a rodeia, pois aí consegue entender a engrenagem social de que participa. Esse é o único momento do conto em que há uma certa interação, mas devemos notar que ela se dá entre um

ser humano e outros não-humanos. A interação homem-homem inexiste e marca a oposição entre a sociedade burguesa e a sociedade agrária já citada nesse trabalho. A conscientização e o sentimento de comunhão são tão estranhos ao ser humano que Ana se sente culpada. Assim que se dá conta deles, se levanta depressa, pois... "se lembrou das crianças, diante das quais se tornara culpada"... (p. 22).

Dentro dessa perspectiva, o lugar seguro para Ana só pode ser sua casa, pois aí estão todos os componentes de seu mundo "estável". Mas assim como, após o nascimento, o útero materno não pode ter a mesma significação para o recém-nascido, que não precisa mais dele para sobreviver, Ana estranha sua casa e sua antiga maneira de viver, agora nova para ela... "que nova terra era essa?" (p. 22). Apesar de abraçá-la, o filho não é capaz de entender sua inquietação. Não há, portanto, possibilidade de real comunicação entre eles. Com o marido acontece o mesmo. Ana não ousa sequer compartilhar com ele sua nova experiência.

Apesar de parecer intuir alguma modificação na mulher o marido não procurava nenhuma espécie de aproximação dela. Preocupando-se apenas com sua proteção, invalida qualquer possibilidade de comunicação e interação, deixa-a apenas só e "segura": "Num gesto que não era seu, mas que pareceu natural, segurou a mão da mulher, levando-a consigo sem olhar pra trás, afastando-a do perigo de viver" (p. 25). Ana se deixa levar e mergulhar no seu antigo estado de frustrante solidão. Como um ser humano solitário "Antes de se deitar, como se apagasse a vela, soprou a pequena flama do dia" (p. 25).

Em termos de enredo, "A Domestic Dilemma" também possui uma estrutura simples: Martin, homem de negócios em Nova York, regressa à casa após um dia de trabalho, bastante preocupado com o que vai encontrar. Quando chega, encontra os filhos sozinhos, já que a mulher está no quarto embriagada. O estado de Emily é deplorável e Martin a impede de cuidar das crianças. É ele quem prepara o jantar e dá comida aos filhos. Quando estão na cozinha, Emily aparece e acusa o marido de estar colocando os filhos contra ela. Vendo a má qualidade da cena que está se desenrolando na frente dos filhos, Martin convence Emily de levá-la para a cama. Após dar banho nos filhos, o pai os coloca para dormir. Finalmente, vai para sua cama e não consegue impedir que um sentimento de ternura por sua mulher se apodere dele quando "For the first time in that evening he looked at this wife" (p. 146). Assim como Ana, do conto "Amor", Martin fica o tempo todo pensando. Mas suas análises não lhe proporcionam nenhuma solução para o "problema doméstico".

Em "Amor", Ana é, ao mesmo tempo, protagonista e narrador, embora o foco narrativo seja de terceira pessoa. "A Domestic Dilemma" apresenta o mesmo tipo de foco narrativo, com a diferença de que conhecemos a história pelos olhos do marido. Logicamente a mudança de ponto de vista acarreta uma mudança estrutural concernente aos personagens: Ana pode ser conhecida profundamente pelo leitor, mas Emily não, nós a conhecemos pelos olhos de Martin. Apesar de se identificar formalmente com Martin, a nível temático Ana se identifica com Emily, por sua condição de mulher solitária e incompreendida. A diferença entre as duas é que Ana se amolda ao falso equilíbrio de sua vida e Emily não. Enquanto Ana, fugindo

das possíveis solicitações do Jardim Botânico volta à sua vida frustrante dizendo-lhe sim, Emily lhe diz um não, que nada mais é do que o seu alcoolismo. Esse vício se transforma em sua tentativa de solução para o problema existencial, que, ao invés de se resolver, torna-se cada dia mais grave.

Pela aparência externa, Emily é culpada pelo esta do caótico de sua casa e de seu casamento, mas se analisarmos sua situação veremos que ela é mais vítima que culpada. Emily é vítima de um ambiente isolado, do egoísmo inconsciente do marido e, sobretudo, de sua própria incapacidade de se adaptar às novas condições de um meio diferente daquele em que fora criada. Essa incapacidade reflete outra: a de dar, que se vincula com a má vontade de seu marido de receber; todas as suas tentativas de fuga de seu mundo de fantasia são barradas pelo marido, que vê nelas uma ameaça à família. À Emily só restam a vergonha e a auto-piedade, que geram, por sua vez, a fuga no álcool.

Mas as mulheres não são os únicos personagens solitários. Quanto aos homens vemos que, em "Amor", o marido parece possuir um papel secundário, surgindo apenas como o representante da falsa segurança de Ana, mas, apesar de praticamente não agir, ele é um oponente à realização pessoal da mulher porque ela prefere se deixar levar pela comodidade de sua visão de mundo do que pela dela. Apesar de não ser objeto da análise de Ana, obviamente seu marido é também um ser solitário. Sua não-nomeação pode sugerir certa generalização.

Como em "A Domestic Dilemma" o marido é o fio condutor da narrativa, suas reflexões nos permitem analisá-lo com mais detalhes. Julgando agir acertadamente, Martin não percebe que, ao invés de ajudar a esposa a abandonar o vício, ele a confina cada vez mais, à medida em que vai assumindo seus papéis dentro de casa. O marido se recusa a reconhecer qualquer tipo de responsabilidade pelo estado de sua mulher e essa responsabilidade existe, pelo menos parcialmente, já que, se por um lado a transferência do casal para o norte implicou sua ascensão profissional, por outro, foi a causa do desequilíbrio de Emily, que é incapaz de aceitar sua nova situação de solidão.

O egoísmo de Martin se reflete também na sua constante preocupação com a opinião alheia, o que tem a implicação evidente de que seu "eu" está em primeiro lugar. A cegueira de Martin relacionada ao seu egoísmo o impossibilita de encontrar uma solução para seu problema. Martin é um personagem complexo: assim como outros de McCullers, possui características masculinas e femininas, que se revelam principalmente em seu "instinto maternal" ao cuidar das crianças, e também mostra que, como todo ser humano, é capaz de ver seus sentimentos de amor, ódio, compaixão e desprezo se mesclarem com grande facilidade.

A falta de comunicação efetiva presente nos dois casais parece indicar uma lacuna característica dos relacionamentos humanos em geral. O que está em destaque, então, não é a vida particular de Ana ou de Emily, mas sim o fracasso da maior parte dos relacionamentos humanos. Os personagens são envolvidos apenas com o seu "eu", o que impossibilita a fecundidade da relação "eu-outro", gerando a frustrante solidão que as acomete.

O espaço também tem papel importante nos dois contos, chegando, em certos trechos, a ser simbólico. Em primeiro lugar é interessante notar que há uma oposição entre o espaço externo e o espaço interno. O início dos dois se dá no espaço externo: tanto Ana quanto Martin estão na rua, de volta para casa. (Ana no bonde e Martin no ônibus). Uma diferença já se impõe, então: para Martin o ônibus é apenas um meio de transporte, dentro do qual ele se isola no seu drama interior. Já Ana apesar de também estar isolada, tem a visão do cego de dentro do bonde e é justamente a partir dela que se desencadeia seu momento epifânico. De volta a casa (espaço interno) ambos refletem sobre sua situação, mas enquanto a reflexão de Ana já se completara no espaço externo (Jardim Botânico), a maior parte da reflexão de Martin se faz em sua própria casa, à medida em que as ações vão se concretizando.

Outra oposição concerne à estação climática: enquanto em "Amor" é verão, em "A Domestic Dilemma" é inverno. O verão, obviamente, se associa à luz, e, nesse sentido, estaria relacionado ao momento de lucidez do personagem. Por outro lado, as trevas características do inverno se relacionam com a falta de lucidez de Martin, com o estado obscuramente confuso em que se encontra. O quadro sombrio da visão de Martin pela janela do ônibus pressagia os escuros momentos de tensão e desespero em casa e a continuidade de um implica a continuidade do outro.

Claro está que predomina nos dois contos o tema da solidão, como resultado de uma completa incomunicabilidade entre os seres humanos. Os dois narram as drásticas conseqüências da incapacidade do homem para comunicar os seus verdadeiros sentimentos em uma época materialista. O processo de reificação a que o homem está submetido é tão grande que destrói seus valores mais ricos e autênticos. A grande diferença no tratamento desse tema está, a nosso ver, no fato de que Clarice Lispector proporciona aos seus personagens um momento de lucidez, em que eles acordam para a realidade vazia de suas vidas, enquanto Carson McCullers induz o leitor a analisar a vida de Emily e Martin e a tirar conclusões a seu respeito porque ambos estão cegos, seja pelo vício, seja pelo egoísmo. Abordando o mesmo tema, tanto Carson McCullers quanto Clarice Lispector conseguem ser únicas em suas obras.

Quando fizemos nossa exposição sobre as características gerais das duas escritoras, foi dito que ambas possuem uma linguagem "simples". Cabe, aqui, uma diferenciação nesse adjetivo: enquanto para McCullers a simplicidade se manifesta pelo uso de vocábulos comuns e pela "construção direta", Lispector a encarna de maneira diferente; para ela, as palavras usadas são corriqueiras, mas o arranjo entre elas já permitem, até mesmo aos leitores mais desavisados, a intuição de algo mais profundo (alcançável ou não).

Em outras palavras, poderíamos dizer que, a simplicidade de Carson pode conduzir a uma leitura apenas superficial e a de Clarice não, pois seu texto é organizado de forma a, no mínimo, se prever a existência de um significado mais profundo, intuição essa que é reforçada pelas constantes figuras de linguagem (mais raras em McCullers).

Além disso, "A Domestic Dilemma", conto mais longo do que "Amor", tem narração feita de uma forma mais tradicional, com uma mescla de ações, diálogos e discurso indireto livre. Em Clarice, as ações e os diálogos são mais escassos, com total predomínio do discurso indireto livre. Disso fica claro que, enquanto em McCullers há um certo equilíbrio entre idéia e ação, em Lispector essa se dilui naquela.

BIBLIOGRAFIA

BONARDELLI, Giovanni - *Tragic Aspects of Love in the Works of Carson McCullers.* Tradução de Mary Amazonas L. de Barros. Porto Alegre, 1975.

BOSI, Alfredo. *História Concisa da Literatura Brasileira.* São Paulo: 2ª edição, Cultrix, 1980.

CÂNDIDO, Antônio. *Vários escritos.* São Paulo: 2ª edição, Duas Cidades, 1977.

COUTINHO, Afranio. *A literatura no Brasil.* Rio de Janeiro: 2ª edição, Editorial Sul Americana, 1970.

EVANS, Oliver. *Carson McCullers: Her Life and Work.* London: Peter Owen, 1965.

GUYARD, Marius François. *A literatura comparada.* São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1956.

LIMA, Luís da Costa. *Porque Literatura.* Petrópolis: Vozes, 1969.

MOISÉS, Massaud. *Clarice Lispector: ficção e cosmovisão.* Humboldt, 1971.

MOUNIER, Emmanuel. *Introdução aos existencialismos.* Tradução de João Bernard da Costa. São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1963.

SANT'ANNA, Affonso Romano de. *Análise estrutural de romances brasileiros.* Petrópolis: 2ª edição, Vozes, 1973.

BEYOND LITERATURE AND CULTURE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE 1950s[1]

GEORGE MONTEIRO

When in *Moby-Dick* (1851) Ishmael wants to convey the sense of what his experience on an American whaler has meant to his education, he boasts that his university was a whaling ship, not Harvard or Yale. One of Melville's Brazilian translators, faced with the task of conveying the cultural significance and true measure of Harvard and Yale Universities (obvious enough to an English or American reader), chose not to translate Ishmael's references literally. For Harvard and Yale he substituted Columbia, a choice calculated to make the right sense to readers who were far more likely to know about Columbia University's international primacy among universities in the United States. After all, Brazilians such as Gilberto Freyre and Afranio Coutinho, to name only two scholars among many possibilities, had made their scholarly twentieth-century pilgrimages to Columbia University and New York City.

Forty years ago, as a student freshly adorned with a Bachelor's degree from another college, but one who had only recently discovered the pleasures and benefits of true reading and therefore wanted an opportunity to continue to read novels for a bit longer before turning to gainful employment—I, too, went off to Columbia. I would work towards the master's degree in English and American literature.

The City of New York was then definable—as it undoubtedly is still, though with much difference—as "accessibility to experience" (the definition, which I first heard in the mid-1950s at Columbia, was attributed to the poet Marianne Moore). It was a time when even the newcomer became an avid walker of the

---

[1] Delivered as the keynote address at "The American Fifties," a conference held at the Universidade Nova, Lisbon, Portugal, in January 1991.

streets. Saturday nights I walked the more than one hundred blocks from 116th Street down to the Village or, to vary things, walked them back.

Having come from a smaller university, I found Columbia University to be enormous, especially by the standards of the day. Twenty-five thousand students in attendance crossed and criss-crossed the central campus at 116th street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue all day long and well into most evenings. The buildings I got to know best were Philosophy Hall, which housed the departments of Modern Languages, English, and Comparative Literature, and Butler Library. The English Department had offices on the sixth floor of Philosophy Hall. There one passed doors bearing the names of the likes of F. W. Dupee, William York Tindall, Eric Bentley, Lionel Trilling, Richard Chase, Lewis Leary, Maurice Valency, Suzanne K. Nobbe, and Roger Sherman Loomis. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, a great student of Renaissance science and poetry, was Head of Department.

These were famous people. And in a day when the study of American literature was unquestionably valorized, there were no scholars more important than Richard Chase and Lionel Trilling. Chase's mentor. Daniel Hoffman, who subsequently wrote books on myth and folklore in literature, on Edgar Allan Poe and William Faulkner, was then teaching a proseminar for master's degree candidates, supervising at one time thirty to forty theses. In the mid-1950s, Richard Chase who since the late 1940s had published books on myth, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman, was thinking out *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957). Lionel Trilling, whose earlier work included books on Matthew Arnold and E. M. Forster, as well as the novel *The Middle of the Journey* (1947) and the enormously influential collection of essays *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), would in 1955 bring out *The Opposing Self*, a companion volume to the first collection. In the late 1950s one could not have foreseen that Chase would write only one more book, *The Democratic Vista* (1958), before his suicide at the end of the decade or that Trilling would go on to publish the troubled and troubling essays he collected as *Beyond Culture* (1965) or the subdued elegiac analysis of better times in the Anglo-Saxon world, a book based on the Charles Eliot Norton lectures he gave at Harvard University and that he published as *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972).

When I arrived at Columbia in 1954, Trilling was on leave, and although he returned the next year, I did not have the temerity to register for the famous class he taught in tandem with the historian Jacques Barzun. But I continued to read Trilling and, in the case of *The Liberal Imagination*, to reread him. Whenever I had difficulty writing a paper, for example, I would then (and for years afterwards) read at random in *The Liberal Imagination* until I found something that returned me to my own writing, even though my subject was usually quite foreign to Trilling's concerns in that seminal collection. If Robert Frost could say that he had been deeply influenced by William James, a teacher he had never had (James was away from Cambridge during Frost's two-year stay at Harvard), well, I would say that the teacher I never had was Lionel Trilling.

Richard Chase's course I signed up for and dutifully attended—one-hour lectures, twice a week, on twentieth-century American literature. He dutifully prepared lectures

that he read in a low monotone, lectures filled with biographical facts, dates, and plot summaries of novels. Once he atypically attempted to dramatize some point or other by looking up from his text, peering over the top of his glasses, and pointing to the building that could be seen out the west windows and informing us that Sinclair Lewis's fictional hero had studied law in that place. On another occasion he changed his routine by reading a book review he had just written in lieu of part of the dry lecture. The book, Millicent Todd Bingham's *Emily Dickinson: A Revelation*, ventured the then novel thesis that toward the last the Amherst poet became romantically involved with Judge Otis P. Lord, her father's friend. Why Dickinson was pertinent to his course on twentieth-century American literature, Chase did not bother to explain. Even after reading Chase's review in the *New York Times* a Sunday or two later, I was still not sure Dickinson belonged in a twentieth-century survey course.

It was in the *New York Times* as well that I read the anti-Emersonian, anti-Whitmanian poem, "That the pear delights me now" by the youngest of my teachers. Daniel Hoffman had recently published *An Armada of Thirty Whales* (1954) in the Yale Series for Younger Poets. I would find out later, but then I did not know just how this poem, a parable of man's eccentricity within Nature, could be related to what was being taught elsewhere in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, particularly in Trilling's course in "Modern Literature."

That the pear's boughs
delight me now is
inconsequential.

But after fragrance come
bull bumblebees.
On ozone wings they hum,

on hairyhorny knees
rudely they enter,
nuzzle, gnash, & guzzle

nectar of the pear.
Roystering honeymakers,
wholly unaware

of the dust their bristles brought,
of the lovestrong draught
they pour down those pear-pistils.

It's June now, and the petals
have dropped, dried, crumbled,
in dust they've blown away.

Bees snarl in thick thistles;
pearboughs, hung in the hot day,
sprout green nubs now. Birdcalls

drench the leaves like fragrance;
fruit grows opulent in
summer lightning, heat, rains.

Sensuous the pears hang
richly, sweet and bursting.
Pears plop down. Birds follow, thirsting.

Nights nip the earthskin tighter,
sap stops of a morning,
sunred leaves more harshly flutter;

old pears the starling pecked at
wrinkle in the waning shade.
Fruit sourly lies, rejected

till it's out of the earth invaded:
maggots rapaciously & noiseless
fatten on fermented juices

and the gristle wriggles through
their sniggling tails & slime
spreads beneath the peartree.

Some squush remains, though,
some meat around the seed.
When Indian Summer strains

the last warmth through the orchard
pearpits feast and feed
and stir, & burst, & breed:

Earthward plunge the tendrils.
That the pear delighted me
is wholly incidental,

for the flower was for the fruit,
the fruit is for the seed.[2]

---

[2] Daniel G. Hoffman, "That the pear delights me now," in *An Armada of Thirty Whales*, foreword by W. H. Auden (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/ London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 17-18.

Incidentally, imagine my surprise, many years later, to discover that as early as 1955, within a year of the appearance of Hoffman's *An Armada of Thirty Whales*, the Portuguese poet Jorge de Sena employed as an epigraph for his book of poems *As Evidências* lines from another Hoffman poem in that volume: "The seals in Penobscot Bay/ hadn't heard of the atom bomb,/ so I shouted a warning to them."[3]

There is no doubt about it. The mid-1950s at Columbia were a heady time for a young student, who quickly came to think that seeing his teachers' latest work in the pages of the *New York Times* or the *Partisan Review* was as natural as writing seminar papers. Columbia was filled with people of importance in the world of literature and literary study. Yet in the classroom, if some of them were less than inspired, others were decidedly good. But even the latter, as a rule, did not put their best efforts into their day-in-day-out teaching. They were writers, whose scholarly books, critical essays, poems, stories and novels were the natural outgrowth of their teaching lives. They were above requiring their students to read their books, perhaps, because they knew that they did not need to. Their students read their books as though they were expected to. That they did so gave the lie to the observation of William York Tindall (whose engaging, knowledgeable lectures I never missed—not even on Saturday morning at nine) that the second best way to keep a secret was to put it between the covers of a book, though the best way was to tell it to students. Or have I reversed the order here?

When late in the fall of 1954 I revisited Brown, my undergraduate college, one of my old teachers started the conversation by asking, "What's the noise, these days, coming from Morningside Heights" (the site of Columbia University)? He was not satisfied with my answer—that Lewis Leary was touting Charles Brockden Brown as the next American writer most likely to be "discovered"—but his question took root. "Noise" did emanate from Columbia, and I was there to hear it. All I had to do was pay attention and I could be a very minor party to big literary doings. By the time I was able to sort out those noises, however, even the principals were scrambling to make sense of the fundamental changes in American literary culture that were already under way in the mid-to-late 1950s.

The story I will now tell involves me only indirectly, though it is largely about students and teachers at Columbia. Most of them studied with Trilling in the 1940s and 1950s—Richard Chase, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Norman Podhoretz. What I know about them comes largely from the books, stories, and poems they have written. My main texts are Trilling's story "Of This Time, Of That Place" (1943) and his collections of essays, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950) and *Beyond Culture* (1965); Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957) and *The Democratic Vista* (1958); Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*—a record of flight from the East, from New York, from Columbia, that became a vade mecum for two alternative-culture generations (1957); Allen Ginsberg's poems, *Howl* (1955-56)

---

[3] Jorge de Sena, *As Evidências*, in *Poesia-I* (Lisbon: Moraes, 1977), 2d ed., p. 177.

and "A Supermarket in California" (1955); and Podhoretz's memoirs, *Making It* (1967) and *Breaking Ranks* (1979). In addition, I shall refer to Diana Trilling's essential essay, "The Other Night at Columbia: A Report From the Academy" (1958) and to Saul Bellow's novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970).

The 1950s saw a spate of non-literary books that purported to study American society. Three such books come immediately to mind: William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956), Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), and David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950).[4] Packard's semi-popular account, based on the more solid work of the social scientists, brought to the fore the notion that American advertising had pretty much turned the democratic masses in the United States into followers of anonymous commercial messages intended only to promote consumerism. The subtext of his book was that Americans were rapidly losing their ability to think for themselves. I recall a little cocktail party incident during that time when I was privy to a conversation among three young advertising types who attempted to outdo each in fantasizing about the ultimate advertising coup. To my money, the winner hands down was the dark-haired, lightly malicious woman who said that she would design the perfectly useless item, mount a television and magazine advertising campaign, and make certain that every man, woman, and child had one of these useless contraptions—a pocket pukka-hukka. *The Organization Man*, employing a series of assistant researchers and drawing on the roughly quantifiable evidence provided by carefully designed questionnaires, called attention to the growing appropriation of the corporate employee's traditional values of family, religion, and region by the growing national corporations. Again the subtext was that the individual's desire (and right) to decide things for himself was being successfully undermined not by the state but by the American corporation. Towering over *The Hidden Persuaders* and *The Corporation Man*, however, was the groundbreaking study *The Lonely Crowd*, the first published of these three books—in 1950. Drawing subtly and gracefully upon a wealth of evidence provided by American social scientists and the product, as the publishers announced, of "several years of research under the sponsorship of the Yale University Committee on National Policy" (2), this study purported to be nothing less than an anatomy of changes in American character, especially in the post-World War II years, and of how that character had emerged from its antecedents. Historically, decided Riesman, American character could be broken down into three categories, two of which were now largely historical, and the third of which was everywhere evident at mid-century. Roughly speaking, American character had gone through the first two categories, (1) tradition directedness, and (2) inner directedness, to emerge at (3)

[4] William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956); Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: D. McKay, 1957); and David Riesman (with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney), *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950)—reprinted in abridged form: Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1953).

other directedness. Although Riesman—actually I should say Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney (for, although they are seldom mentioned, *The Lonely Crowd* is a collaborative book)—although Riesman et al. did not emphasize the notion, the first two categories—tradition directedness and inner directedness—conformed roughly to conservatism and romanticism. Other directedness, however, seemed to ignore both. American character in the 1950s, according to *The Lonely Crowd*, took its cues and derived its values, not from heeding the voice of an identifiable and shared past or even from the inner voice of the Whitmanian "man in the open air," but from an attentive regard of the noises that came from the herd—the anonymous, homogenized voice of the populace at a rather low common denominator. If Vance Packard feared that there was an anonymous Madison Avenue advertising voice that shaped individual tastes, values, and opinion, and if William Whyte feared that legal but soulless beings—American corporations—usurped the husbands, wives, families, and citizens who were now asked to give over their primary loyalties to this overall corporate structure, Riesman feared the Tocquevillean nightmare of the imminent leveling tyranny of the democratic masses. For Riesman (and Packard and White) the solution—if one could be inferred—was to return to inner-directness, if only in some new form—to a new individualism, if you will.

Lionel Trilling reviewed *The Lonely Crowd*.[5] Praising the book for its astute detection and anatomizing of the realities of American character and for its thoughtful warning, Trilling decided that hands down the most valuable and informative analyses of American society in the 1950s were being done by the social scientists. In the nineteenth century and even into the first three or four decades of the twentieth century the best such work had been done by the novelists, he suggested, but by the 1950s, sad to say, it was to works such as *The Lonely Crowd* that one was advised to turn for insight into the workings of American society and character. Perhaps Trilling too easily reached this decision, for in doing so he had to ignore recent novels that had dramatized the discomfiting encroachments upon the inner directed self, perdurable books such as J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), the former with its boy-hero's attempt to hold onto a core of self in a society, to use Holden Caulfield's own word, that is utterly "phony," and the latter with its hero's kicking the traces of the suburbs and corporate life for a buoyant descent into the self in the then still radical form of a plunge into tribal Africa—a sort of mix-and-match hybridization of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899); that is to say, *Henderson* is a typically American mixture of sociological realism and mythic adventure as old as *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking tales, and as up-to-date as Ernest Hemingway's only recently published novel *The Garden of Eden*

[5] Lionel Trilling, "Two Notes on David Riesman," in *A Gathering of Fugitives* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), pp. 85-100.

(1986). It should have come with a resounding crash, this announcement by Trilling that he had lost all confidence in the contemporary novel's ability to serve as a resource for news about society and the self—especially given the masterly uses to which he had himself put the insights into society provided by the fiction of Jane Austen, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and E. M. Forster—but Trilling's doleful note was scarcely heard.

But the note did reverberate in the consciousness of Richard Chase, who had been Trilling's graduate student and who, in the 1950s was his younger professorial colleague. After having written books on Herman Melville (a strangely brave look at Melville's liberal politics within the context of mythology and American folklore), on Emily Dickinson (an attempt to delineate her individual talent within the salient traditions of Anglo-American poetry), and on Walt Whitman (a touching discovery of the etiology of the great poet's mission as a celebrating elegiac poet of "sane and sacred" death), Chase in 1955 began writing what would turn out to be his most influential book. The critical inquiry that resulted in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, which attempts to lay out the basis for defining the unique properties of mainstream American fiction, first reared its public head in a classroom lecture during the spring of 1955, when out of the blue, Chase read a version of "The Broken Circuit," a lecture he would give that summer at the Indiana School of Letters and that he would eventually turn into the historical-theoretical first chapter of his book. Chase was not the first to characterize the American novel as romantic fiction of lonely adventure, undertaken largely by (as Nina Baym so succinctly puts it) "men beset," but that he found it necessary to undertake this task as late as the mid-1950s calls for some looking into.

One major answer lies in the relationship that *The American Novel and Its Tradition* has to the book Chase brought to completion hard upon the heels of the publication of this book on American romance. *The Democratic Vista*, published in 1958, takes its title, not without purpose, from an essay, *Democratic Vistas*, by Walt Whitman, that champion of the self *en masse*, the self in a democratic society. Chase subtitled his book "A Dialogue on Life and Letters in Contemporary America." Incorporating earlier pieces he had published throughout the 1950s in journals such as *Commentary, Partisan Review*, and Irving Howe's *Dissent*, Chase recast them in the form of a play. The main thrust of Chase's worries is revealed in the opinions expressed by one Ralph Headstrong (a middle-aged, rather individualist university teacher who, Chase admits, is the author's spokesman) and a younger man called George Middleby (a surname echoing, perhaps, the Linds' title for their earlier sociological classic, *Middletown*), a man on the verge of abandoning an incipient professorial career in favor of life as a corporate man. The book is a rich trove of those issues, opinions, and positions that worried the serious liberal student of American literature and culture in the 1950s. But at the heart of every issue is the fear that American character is in imminent danger of losing its inner-directed edge, it historically engaging penchant for taking chances,

for going it alone in the face of quasi-mythic adventure and self-threatening adventure. One is tempted, in short, to characterize Chase's *Democratic Vista* as an American literary critic's attempt to weigh-in in the discourse then going on over the present state of American character in *The Hidden Persuaders*, *The Organization Man*, and *The Lonely Crowd*.

At the end of the decade, in an essay entitled "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," Trilling capped the controversy belatedly. It was a capping, as events would soon show, that was already unwittingly ironic.[6] In this autobiographical essay, Trilling expresses reservations about teaching modern literature in the classroom, especially since teaching such subversive texts has an unexpectedly deleterious effect on students. There are interesting surprises in this piece, if one thinks about it in the context of what I have so far said about Trilling, especially his concern about the nature and fate of American character in the 1950s. First of all, almost every text he teaches is European, not a single one of those he mentions is American. And several of the texts he does not consider to be, strictly speaking, literary. Nor did anyone consider them to be literary texts in the 1950s, not even Trilling who surely was among the first teachers to include them in courses on "Modern Literature.") What did the author of *The Liberal Imagination* think the Columbia University student needed to know to get some sense, if not mastery of, what "Modern Literature" was about? He began his course with *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer (and that "Sir," I interpolate, is employed naturally and quietly by Trilling, that great admirer of British society). But he did not assign the whole of that multi-volume study of ritual and myth, but merely the chapters dealing with Osiris, Attis, and Adonis—"those examples of myth which tell about gods dying and being reborn—the imagination of death and rebirth...." (14) The second of Trilling's prolegomenaic works was Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, for the way in which it established the notion that the Apollonian nature of Greek tragedy could not be understood without a recognition of its Dionysian basis. The first literary work Trilling includes is Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* for "its strange and terrible message of ambivalence toward the life of civilization." (19) In the geography of Kurtz's being, Trilling finds "the world of the darker pages of *The Golden Bough*..." (20) After Conrad the students take up Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, a story Trilling wants "not so much for its account of an extravagantly Apollonian personality surrendering to forces that, in his Apollonian character, he thought shameful... but rather for Aschenbach's fevered dreams of the erotic past, and in particular that dream of the goat-orgy which Mann, being the kind of writer he is, having the kind of relation to Nietzsche he had, might well have written to serve as an illustration of what *The Birth of Tragedy* means by religious frenzy, the more so, of course, because Mann chooses that particular orgiastic ritual, the killing and eating of the goat, from which tragedy is traditionally said to have been derived." (21) Trilling would then return his students to Nietzsche, to his *Genealogy of Morals*, especially

---

[6] Lionel Trilling, "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," in *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (New York: Viking, 1965), pp. 3-30.

for Nietzsche's notion that "the basis of society is to be found in the rationalization of cruelty." (22) Freud would come next, not the Freud of the early days of dream analysis and patient therapy but the social theorist of *Civilization and Its Discontents*. It is Freud's sense of the tragic, or stoic, sense of life that Trilling looks for here, a sense of life that recognizes the inevitability of the very "question of whether or not we want to accept civilization" given the ineluctable tragedy and pain it exacts from us. (23) With this late book by Freud, Trilling concluded what he called the prolegomena in his reading list in "Modern Literature," a list that would take up the first term of the course. The second term would lead off with Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*. Diderot's "envious, untalented, unregenerate protagonist was peculiarly relevant to the line taken by the ethical explorations of modern literature," writes Trilling. (24) "Nothing is more characteristic of the literature of our time than the replacement of the hero by what has come to be called the anti-hero, in whose indifference to or hatred of ethical nobility there is presumed to lie a special authenticity." (24) Then, on to Dostoevski's *Notes from Underground*, "for [Trilling explains] if I wished to emphasize the subversive tendency of modern literature, here was a work which made all subsequent subversion seem like affirmation, so radical and so brilliant was its negation of our traditional pieties and its affirmation of our new pieties." (25) After Dostoevski, Tolstoi—his *Death of Ivan Ilyitch*, "which so ruthlessly and with such dreadful force destroys the citadel of the commonplace life in which we all believe we can take refuge from ourselves and our fate." (25-26) Then two plays by Pirandello, "which, in the atmosphere of the sordidness of the commonplace life, undermine all the certitudes of the commonplace, common-sense mind." (26) At this point, Trilling moves on to his deepest worries over what he hopes to do in the course and what he thinks he actually brings about. The only other text he mentions is Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, but this leads him to Mann's statement "that all his work could be understood as an effort to free himself [that is, Mann] from the middle class," a statement that Trilling sees as descriptive of "the chief intention of all modern literature." (30)

Looking back at Trilling's essay from our own vantage—from a time that seems to have withstood the chaos of a rather inadequately defined post-modernism with its denials of the claims of badly outdated notions of the self, unfocused attempts at random political and social subversion, and somewhat over-blown claims for primacy of do-it-yourself and anything-goes modes of deconstructive analysis—one may be somewhat surprised at what it was that Trilling feared was happening when in his time modern literature was taught in the classroom. What Trilling feared was not that the radically subversive nature of the texts he put in his syllabus would inspire his students to engage in socially subversive acts, but that his students would so learn the classroom attitudes toward these monuments of modern literature that at worst they would see them only as domesticated works of literature, having little or no relevance to their quotidian lives. He feared, in short, that exposure to these subversive texts would have no genuine effect on his own—though he was too sensitive to nuance, distinction, and gradation to put the matter so crudely—his own other-directed, silently persuaded, in-

corporated students. But he could not rest even with this, for he feared further that perhaps he really had no business introducing them to literature that, taken to heart and its dictates followed, would radically undermine their relatively comfortable accommodation with the American society that in the 1950s was theirs, almost by birthright. Trilling believed in the notion of society, particularly in its traditional Anglo-Saxon liberal forms, and wished to preserve the idea of society, even as he deplored the bovine, unreceptive 1950s generations to whom he tried to teach modern literature. He wanted those hordes to respond fully to the subversive essence of that literature. But could one really desire the fulfillment of the prescription for freedom inscribed in Mann's work that "the end is not merely freedom from the middle class but freedom from society itself"?

Such was the influence of Trilling's teaching at Columbia University, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s, and especially after the 1950 publication of *The Liberal Imagination*, that no student of literature could possibly have been unaware of Trilling's notions regarding literature and society. There were many students who, like Richard Chase and Daniel Hoffman, followed in Trilling's footsteps as teachers of literature. Other students, though, did other things.

Norman Podhoretz, for example, became first a book reviewer and essayist, and then, at thirty, assumed the editorship of the influential journal *Commentary*, a position that, over thirty years later, he still holds. To Podhoretz, arriving at Columbia College in the late 1940s, the age seemed very much to be an "Age of Criticism." In his autobiographical volume, *Making It* (1967), Podhoretz confesses that at some point in the late 1950s he realized that in America the vocation of the critic-teacher no longer had the potential to carry one to the very center of intellectual power. The study of society principally through literature was not the way to power, it had somehow been revealed to him (the appallingly poor pay of teachers, including Trilling, whom he described as "one of the most intelligent men in the world,"[7] was, claimed Podhoretz, the catalyst to that discovery), and his intention, therefore, to become a critic-teacher had given way to other more direct ways to study and, importantly, influence culture—to participate, that is, more directly in political action. But when Podhoretz had started out at Columbia, he had thought otherwise. This is how, in 1967, he remembered those early days:

> *And so with the critics on the Columbia faculty itself—the late Andrew Chiappe, the late Richard Chase, F. W. Dupee, and especially Lionel Trilling—who became our mentors, our models, our gods. In the classroom as on paper, the critics were not only our guides to the secret riches of literature, they were our guides to philosophy, theology, and politics as well. As explicators of difficult texts, they taught us a method of reading and gave us a veritably gnostic sense of power; as theoreticians of*

[7] Norman Podhoretz, *Making It* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 96.

literature, they introduced us to the thrilling metaphysical categories which, banished from the philosophy department by the triumph of logical positivism, found a new home in criticism. As implicit polemicists for a neo-conservative (the New Critics) or neo-Marxist (the Partisan Review) point of view, they extended the boundaries of literature in general and their own work in particular to take in this world, as it were, along with the next. (41)

Despite his not having become a teacher-critic, however, one can still say, that if one allows for changes over time in their different politics, Norman Podhoretz has continued to concern himself, as Trilling always did, with problems arising out of the inevitable conflict of self with society.

But for all of Podhoretz's influence over the years as the controversial editor of *Commentary*, it is not Podhoretz, among Lionel Trilling's students, just as it is not Richard Chase or even Quentin Anderson (who belatedly wrote a Trilling-inspired and less than consciously cautionary study entitled *The Imperial Self: An Essay in American Literary and Cultural History* (1971)—it is none of these who has most affected American literature and culture and who has done so by posing, arguably, the greatest threat to Trilling's own liberal values, suspicion of the dictates of the romantic self, and deep faith in the notion that human beings need to work to maintain their lives within the workings of their social institutions. That subversive role belongs to the poet Allen Ginsberg, who along with Jack Kerouac, another Columbia University student, and William Burroughs, are rightly credited with initiating and giving impetus to the American Beat movement.

Even as a beginning student Ginsberg had had access to his professor Lionel Trilling. Diana Trilling, playing the role of the professor's wife, later recalled that Ginsberg's claim on his professor's attention lay largely in the fact that he—a precocious, talented son of a New Jersey poet— was always getting into some kind of difficulty. It is true that because of the intellectual promise shown by the aspiring poet, much—including very serious scrapes with the police—was forgiven the young man. But it is doubtful that Trilling was ever able to accustom himself to the young man's emerging asocial behavior, behavior deriving, as it did, from Ginsberg's quotidian privileging of irrationality and even clinical madness. Ginsberg had the kind of round-peg-in-a-square-hole talent and unharnessed genius that Trilling himself had already written about uncannily in the person of Tartan, the inspired, eccentric student in "Of This Time, Of That Place," a story published in the *Partisan Review* in 1943, two years before Ginsberg even arrived on the Columbia University campus. Ginsberg finally left Columbia and New York, though he did not do so for long. In 1957 he, with another Beat poet Gregory Corso, gave a reading at Columbia. Significantly, it was Diana Trilling who wrote an account of that evening, not Ginsberg's troubled if still basically loyal teacher. In "The Other Night at Columbia: A Report From the Academy," a wonderfully reasoned piece on the background, character, and present psychological makeup

of the Beat poet, Diana Trilling misses the most important thing.[8] She not only does not see that Ginsberg, and the other Beats are to be a large part of America's literary future—of the 1960s—but that they embody precisely the distrust of society and the radical repudiation of rationality that was most dangerous to the enlightened middle-class liberal values that (willy-nilly) she and Lionel had long since committed themselves to. Here is Diana Trilling's reasoned, but wrong-headed account:

... docile to culture, the "beat"... contrives a fate by predicating a fate. Like the respectable established intellectual—or the organization man, or the suburban matron—against whom he makes his play of protest, he conceives of himself as incapable of exerting any substantive influence against the forces that condition him. He is made by society, he cannot make society. He can only stay alive as best he can for as long as is permitted him. Is it any wonder, then, that Time *and* Life *write as they do about the "beats"—with such a conspicuous show of superiority, and no hint of fear? These periodicals know what genuine, dangerous protest looks like, and it doesn't look like Ginsberg and Kerouac. Clearly, there is no more menace in "Howl" or* On the Road *than there is in the Scarsdale P-TA. In the common assumption of effectlessness, in the apparent will to rest with a social determination over which the individual spirit and intelligence cannot and perhaps even should not try to triumph, there merge any number of the disparate elements of our present culture—from the liberal intellectual journals to Luce to the Harvard Law School, from Ginsberg to the suburban matron. (162)*

It would take the events of the next decade—the student uprisings first at Berkeley and then at Columbia itself (not to mention the tragedy of Vietnam)—to bring into focus the radical subversion of society as the Trillings knew it as it was embodied (seemingly) in Beat behavior, poetic and otherwise. Perhaps it was the fact that on his first return to Columbia Ginsberg had dedicated and addressed a poem entitled "Lion in the Room" to Lionel Trilling—a love poem, as Diana Trilling recognized—that blinded the professor's wife to the symbolic import of Ginsberg's appearance at Columbia that evening. When she returned home from the Ginsberg—Corso reading, there was a meeting going on in the Trilling apartment on Claremont Avenue—a meeting, as she says, of "the pleasant professional sort which, like the comfortable living room in which it usually takes place, at a certain point in a successful modern literary career confirms the writer in his sense of disciplined achievement and well-earned respect." (172) There were eight men in the room, including the poet Wystan H. Auden, who was the first to inquire about the Ginsberg—Corso reading. "I told him I had been moved," she writes,

---

[8] Diana Trilling, "The Other Night at Columbia: A Report From the Academy," in *Claremont Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), pp. 153-73.

He answered gently that he was ashamed of me. In a dim suffocated effort of necessary correction, I said, "It's different when it's human beings and not just a sociological phenomenon," and I can only guess, and hope, he took what I meant. Yet as I prepared to get out of the room so that the men could sit down again with their drinks, I felt there was something more I had to add—it was so far from enough to leave the "beats" as no more than human beings—and so I said, "Allen Ginsberg read a love-poem to you, Lionel. I liked it very much." It was an awkward thing to say in the circumstances, perhaps even a little foolish as an attempt to bridge the unfathomable gap that was all so quickly and meaningfully opening up between the evening that had been and the evening that was now so surely reclaiming me. But I'm certain that Ginsberg's old teacher knew what I was saying, and why I was impelled to say it. (173)

How much of the literary 1950s shows forth in this picture—this curious interleaving of the domestic with the professional! No one there, in the Trilling apartment, had the prescience, apparently, to see what fruit Lionel Trilling's seminal teaching had already borne and would bear over the next decade or two.

In 1967, when Lionel Trilling published his textbook *The Experience of Literature*, of all his Columbia students, with the possible exceptions of Delmore Schwartz (who was really more of a colleague when he and Trilling were fellow contributors to the *Partisan Review*) and John Berryman (who was really Mark Van Doren's protege, after all, not Trilling's), only Allen Ginsberg was represented. But Trilling did not choose to reprint "Howl," that rallying cry for irrationality and madness, but the relatively innocuous poem "To Aunt Rose" and "A Supermarket in California," the latter poem a humorous parody that tries to affirm Walt Whitman (and his acolyte Hart Crane) by genially subverting him. It is worth recalling in its entirety.[9]

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for I walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes!—and you, Garcia Lorca, what were you doing down by the watermelons?

[9] Allen Ginsberg, "A Supermarket in California," in *The Experience of Literature: A Reader with Commentaries*, compiled by Lionel Trilling (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 1314.

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans following you, and followed in my imagination by the store detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?

I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking bank and stood watching the boat disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

One wonders if the inclusion of this poem, rather than the longer "Howl" (which begins "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked/ dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix") or "Kaddish" (the poem about Ginsberg's mad mother in the form of the prayer for the dead) or any number of other more programmatically radical poems, was somehow intended as a belated return blow against forces that had worked against Trilling's own large and influential cultural primacy in the American 1950s. In the *Experience of Literature* Trilling comments tellingly on Whitman's great poem on death and poetry, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." Whitman, he writes,

thought that the celebration of the beauty of death was appropriate to America and pertinent to the health of the republic. In 1871 he published a great embittered essay, Democratic Vistas, in which he indicts America for its failure to fulfill its true moral and political destiny and speaks of the redemption that may yet come, in part from the good effects of an appropriate national poetry. "In the future of these States," he says, "must arise poets immenser far, and make great poems of death. The poems of life are great, but there must be poems of the purports of life, not only in itself, but beyond itself." The great poem of death, he says in sum,

will check the growing American vulgarity by bringing faith and large-mindedness. "Then will man indeed confront Nature, and confront time and space... and take his right place, prepared for fortune and misfortune. And then that which was long wanted will be supplied, and the ship that had it not before in all her voyages, will have an anchor." (911)[10]

Here, in going back to Whitman, Trilling offers us, if indirectly, not only an avenue into Ginsberg's mockingly bardic poem, but it also calls us to Richard Chase's *Democratic Vista*. There, in the spokesman's voice of Ralph Headstrong, Chase had summed up what he saw as having been his own function in the 1950s:

I have tried to show that American literature and the native habits of mind it reflects provide little or no basis for a conservative view of things but that they provide a tradition of radical criticism and democratic affirmation. I have sought out the grounds on which a cultural radicalism and humane avant-garde may be said to be alive at present and to imagine how they may assert greater influence in the future. In varying terms, some of them happily chosen, others not, this has been the arduous and sustained task of what will doubtless turn out to have been the most intellectually active decade of my life.[11]

Though there is no evidence that Chase recognized them as such and he would be dead before it became clear to everyone that they were, but the Beats, in 1958, were the radical wing of the avant garde in American literature. Trilling probably saw this particular handwriting on the wall, but, according to his former student, Podhoretz, who as late as 1970 tried to enlist Trilling in the fight against the renewed literary and political radicals, he would not take them on directly. "He allowed me to publish a section of *Sincerity and Authenticity* which I featured," writes Podhoretz in *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir* (1979),[12]

even though I found it characteristically muffled in its attack on the idea of insanity as a species of rebellion against the spiritual oppressions of middle-class society. This idea had been from the beginning (in Allen Ginsberg's declaration that the "best minds" of his generation had gone mad Howl and in Norman Mailer's celebration of the psychopath) a

[10] Lionel Trilling's commentary on Whitman is also available in his *Prefaces to The Experience of Literature* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 254-60

[11] Richard Chase, *The American Vista: A Dialogue on Life and Letters in Contemporary America* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 179.

[12] Norman Podhoretz, *Breaking Ranks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979). Podhoretz's early reactions to the Beats, in 1958, appear in "The Know-Nothing Bohemians," in *Doings and Undoings: The Fifties and After in American Writing* (New York: Noonday Press, 1964), pp. 143-58.

central element of the new radicalism, and it still figured in the work of serious thinkers like the psychologist R. D. Laing and in more popular form in a novel like Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.... It was also an idea profoundly repugnant to Trilling... (303)

In the same year about which Podhoretz writes—1970—appeared Saul Bellow's novel *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. There is a scene in that novel that has long reminded me of Lionel Trilling and the fate of his reputation following the late 1950s. I do not think that, apart from this scene, Mr. Sammler very much resembles Mr. Trilling, but Mr. Sammler's predicament does. The incident depicted takes place at Columbia University sometime in the mid-to-late 1960s. Mr. Sammler has been asked by "one of his ex-readers, young Lionel Feffer... to address a seminar at Columbia University on the British scene in the Thirties."[13] Because the idea attracts Sammler, he agrees to do it. The lecture goes well enough up to a point, and then it all goes wrong. He is interrupted by a "clear, loud voice. He was being questioned."

A man in Levi's, thick-bearded but possibly young, a figure of compact distortion, was standing shouting at him.

"Hey! Old Man!"

In the silence, Mr. Sammler drew down his tinted spectacles, seeing this person with his effective eye.

"Old Man! You quoted Orwell before."

"Yes?"

"You quoted him to say that British radicals were all protected by the Royal Navy? Did Orwell say that British radicals were protected by the Royal Navy?"

"Yes, I believe he did say that."

"That's a lot of shit."

Sammler could not speak.

"Orwell was a fink. He was a sick counterrevolutionary. It's good he died when he did. And what you are saying is shit." Turning to the audience, extending violent arms and raising his palms like a Greek dancer, he said, "Why do you listen to this effete old shit? What has he got to tell you? His balls are dry. He's dead. He can't come."

Sammler later thought that voices had been raised on his side. Someone had said, "Shame. Exhibitionist."

But no one really tried to defend him. Most of the young people seemed to be against him. The shouting sounded hostile. Feffer was gone, had been called away to the telephone. Sammler, turning from the lectern,

[13] Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1970), p. 38.

found his umbrella, trench coat, and hat behind him and left the platform, guided by a young girl who had rushed up to express indignation and sympathy, saying it was a scandal to break up such a good lecture. She showed him through a door, down several stairs, and he was on Broadway at One hundred-sixteenth Street.

Abruptly out of the university. (42-43)

The seeds of such cultural and social sedition had already been sown at West One Hundred and Sixteenth Street, running perpendicular to Broadway on the west and Amsterdam Avenue on the east, in the 1950s, but there was no sibyl I know of who saw them clearly and whole. Nearly everybody, following Lionel Trilling's lead, was rather portentously barking up the wrong tree.

Brown University - Providence, RI

THE DRAMATIC WORLDS OF ALBEE'S *THREE TALL WOMEN:* A CROSSING OF BOUNDARIES

SIGRID RENAUX

The debate in modern theater theory, whether "the theatre should be viewed primarily as an engaged social phenomenon or as a politically indifferent aesthetic artifact"[1] comes again to the surface when dealing with Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*,[2] which had its première in Vienna in 1991 and was awarded the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

On the one hand, the play is deeply biographical and thus can be seen as an aesthetic artifact. As Albee himself has stated in the Introduction, "I knew my subject - my adoptive mother(...). (...) what I wanted to do was write as objective a play as I could about a fictional character who resembled in every way, in every event, someone I had known very, very well". In his translation of "fact intact into fiction", Albee also emphasizes that he did not want to write "a revenge piece", "for I felt no need for revenge. We had managed to make each other very unhappy over the years, but I was past all that, though I think she was not". Further, he concedes that he "did admire her pride, her sense of self. As she moved toward ninety, began rapidly failing both physically and mentally, I was touched by the survivor, the figure clinging to the wreckage only partly of her own making, refusing to go under".[3]

On the other hand, in a larger and more philosophical context, the play also becomes a socially engaged phenomenon, as it emphasizes Albee's views on the process of aging for, being "touched by the survivor", he created simultaneously

---

[1] Carlson, M. *Theories of the Theatre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984. p. 454.

[2] Albee, E. *Three Tall Women*. New York: Plume, 1995. All subsequent references to the play are taken from this edition. Page numbers appear in parentheses after the quote.

[3] Ibid. Introduction.

the figure of a composite woman who, in her relation to herself, her son, and the others, transcends the model to encompass "our culture's aged and their thwarted ties to offspring".[4]

Thus, although I will be discussing *Three Tall Women* primarily as an aesthetic artifact, by examining the elements which compose the dramatic world of the play, the second approach will necessarily impose itself when dealing with the figures of these three women who, in revealing the truths and illusions of their lives, reflect not only our own cultural values and prejudices but even acquire mythical connotations.

Considering that, according to Keir Elam, dramatic worlds are hypothetical constructs, recognized by the audience as counterfactual states of affairs but embodied *as if* in progress in the actual here and now,[5] Albee, in the first act of *Three Tall Women*, provides us with this hypothetical, counter-factual dramatic world which nevertheless is accessible to us, as it was generated by the real world through the *symmetry* which exists between the virtual reality of the three women on stage and our own reality: an old dowager (identified as A), cared for by a protective middle-aged nurse (identified as B) and attended by a visiting young law clerk (identified as C), remembers her past life while she struggles with her own physical infirmities and mental confusions. During the progress of their conversation, she suffers a stroke - the only significant event which simultaneously marks the end of Act I.

In Act II, however, the relationship of the two worlds becomes *asymmetrical*, for it is no longer based on our actual world, but on a surreal one to which we have no access, except if accepting it as a magical reality, for it requires the suspension of our logical and physical laws: we see a life mask of A propped up in bed, probably in coma, as her three embodiments (A,B and C) confront each other on the stage, in a fantasy conversation, revealing, through their remembrances, how the other was in the past, is now or will be in the future. As Albee confirmed (when asked, in an interview about *Three Tall Women*, if sexuality is viewed differently by A, B, and C):

> *By the same person.* In Act II, they are the same person. *After all, C is anticipating a mature life, B is in the middle of it, and A is remembering it. And, of course, that is why everything is a little bit different, in some way. They remember differently, they anticipate differently, they participate differently. But it is all the same thing viewed in a rather rational manner, I suppose.*[6] *[My underlining]*

---

[4] Luere, J. "Objectivity in the Growth of a Pulitzer: Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*". *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 7 (Spring 1995): p.1.

[5] Elam, K., *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Methuen, 1980. p. 102.

[6] Bhasin, K. "Women, Identity, and Sexuality": An Interview with Edward Albee. *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 7 (Spring, 1995): p. 28.

At the same time, a small link to the actual world is established through the only significant event half way through the act: the arrival of a young man - the dowager's son - who remains mute at her bedside up to the end.

Therefore, Elam's statement that our access to the dramatic world is "conceptual and not physical, since one must begin from where one is and WE are placed within this actual world of ours",[7] becomes even more significant in this play, for if the access to the first part is already conceptual, the more so when we reach the second part, in which we have to go a step further in our recognition of a supra-rational realm of existence which lies beyond our powers to understand. As Elam further confirms,

> *Counterfactual worlds are actual only for their supposed inhabitants, and we can never genuinely experience their condition, since this involves the transformation of the 'here'(our physical context) into a remote and hypothetical 'there'. Perhaps the only exceptions to this 'here'-bound condition which limits the full conceivability of other worlds are oneiric ('dream world'), hallucinogenic (other-worldly-'trips') and psychotic (e.g. schizophrenic) experiences, which allow the individual's context to be alienated and an alternative state of affairs to be perceived as more immediately real.*[8]

This exceptional experience is exactly what takes place in the second act, in which this "other world" can be considered simultaneously as either oneiric, hallucinogenic or schizophrenic, in relation to the dowager and her visiting son. In other words, "A", already distanced from our world by being near death, might be viewing her former "selves" from "beyond", while simultaneously participating in it. Similarly, the son, sitting at her bedside, could thus be viewed either as A's wish-fulfilment - she would like to see him before she dies, so she views him as she views her other selves - or as having "actually" come to visit her on her deathbed, thus representing a virtual reality, as Albee, in real life, met his mother again on her deathbed after twenty years of estrangement.

Taken a step further, we could even say that Albee is simultaneously observing himself through the young man in the play participating in his mother's last moments, something which he also acknowledges in the Introduction: "writers have the schizophrenic ability to both participate in their lives and, at the same time, observe themselves participating in their lives. (...) I suspect it was this (frightening?) talent that allowed me to write *Three Tall Women* without prejudice, if you will".[9]

---

[7] Elam, p. 110.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Albee, *Three Tall Women*. Introduction.

Consequently, in terms of the arrangement of events, there is no ideal, well-knit plot in the Aristotelian sense of the word. Nevertheless, if we consider the characters' actions - their physical movement, dialogue and gesture, as well as motives and thoughts - as "plot", one could say that in the first act, plot is seen as developing horizontally *in time* - the three women's actions in their syntagmatic relations - while in the second act, plot, although still developing in time with the appearance of the young man, is mainly vertical or *simultaneous* - A in her deathbed "viewing" selected stages of her life as a whole, paradigmatically.

Albee's two-act structure is thus also a perfect example of the tension between the Heraclitean and the retrospective patterns of time[10] - the first seeing time as specious present moving constantly into an unknown future and the second seeing a completed portion of time with a definite shape - for both patterns are plainly visible in the horizontal plot of Act I and the vertical plot of Act II. This tension becomes projected even in the dialogue of the play, as, in Act I, A complains to B about not being able to remember, while B tries to comfort her, by stressing that "somewhere in there" she does:

> A: *Which eye was...? Well, I don't...* (becomes weepy) *I can't remember! I don't know which eye was the glass one!* (Full weep.) *I... can't ... remember. I... can't ... remember!*
> B: (moves to A, to comfort.) *Now, now; now, now.*
> A: *I can't remember!* (Sudden venom.) *Get your* hands *off me! How* dare *you!*
> B: (Retreating.) *Sorry; sorry.*
> A: (To B; tearful again.) *Why can't I remember anything?*
> B: *I think you remember everything; I think you just can't bring it to mind all the time.*
> A: *(Quieting.) Yes? Is that it?*
> B: *Of course!*
> A: *I remember everything?*
> B: *Somewhere in there.*
> A: (Laughs.) *My gracious!* (To C.) *I remember everything! (51-2)*

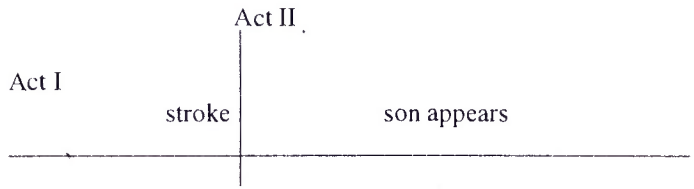
This is exactly what will happen during the whole of Act II, when "A", propped up in bed, is able to view herself retrospectively at different stages of her life, as C,B and A remember the past, comment on the present and conjecture about the future. But taken simultaneously, retrospective time acquires a definite shape, as life/time is "experienced" in its completion by "A", not "*beyond* it, of course, but sort of to... one side", as she comments near the end. The transition from the first to the second act or from not remembering to remembering everything is already foreshadowed almost at the end of the first act, when A, already propped up in bed and in a stream-of-consciousness state anteceding her stroke, answers to B:

10. Carlson, *Theories of the theatre*. p. 485.

> *The things we're able to do and the things we're* not. *What we remember doing and what we're not sure. What do I remember? I remember being* tall. *I remember first it making me unhappy(...). I remember, and it comes and goes. I think they're all robbing me. I* know *they are, but I can't prove it. I think I know, and then I can't remember what I know.(...) (58-9)*

Consequently, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and dénouement - Freytag's pyramidal structure - lose their strict purpose in the play, as they appear discharacterized or fragmented throughout the interaction of the three women in both acts. Nevertheless, we could still speak of a rising action or even turning point at the end of Act I, with A's stroke, of another climactic moment in the middle of Act II with the son's arrival and of denouement at the end of Act II with A's recognition of the happiest moment of her life, thus making the play have, after all, a loose but simultaneously complex plot structure.

Considering the simultaneity or verticality of the plot in the second act, though, making the end of first act practically coincide with the end of the second, we could even speak of peripeteia - the "sudden change" of the stroke, the moment of "suffering" - happening simultaneously with anagnorisis - her moment of "recognition" of truth - thus creating another dramatic architecture for the play: cross-like, in which the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection - the fantastic reality of Act II with its retrospective or vertical time, is projected into the axis of combination[11] - the virtual reality of Act I with its improvisational or linear time.



This projection of Act II on Act I produces a blurring between their formal functions. Act I is a series of actions occurring in a single place within a consecutive time while Act II is formally a sequence to Act I but functionally it is a series of actions separated from the remainder of the play by the fact that we are in an abstract or surreal world in which the same character can be seen living three different stages of her life simultaneously.

Accordingly, unity of action, place and time is achieved again on two different levels: on the realistic level of Act I, as a series of "actions" performed by three characters, in a bedroom, during one afternoon. On the surrealistic level of

11 Jakobson, R. "Linguistics and Poetics". In: *Style in Language*. Ed. Thomas A.Sebeok. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1971. p. 358.

Act II, one character experiencing, in coma, a series of events "performed" by her former selves in the same bedroom during the whole of her life. Seen together, both form a single whole, as the first act is "absorbed" by the second.

At some level, the construction of a dramatic world will also involve elements of myth. These are brought to the surface, in *Three Tall Women*, in terms of characterization, for taking into consideration Albee's statement that A, B, and C are "the same person" in Act II, the play presents striking parallels with Freud's interpretation of the theme of the three boxes, which pervades many scenes in mythical narratives, folklore and literature. In them, man finds himself facing three boxes (of gold, silver and lead) or three women, among whom he has to choose one. Freud sees in this choice the three inevitable relations man has with woman: the mother, the lover, the annihilator; or the three forms that the mother-image adopts throughout life: as mother herself, as the beloved chosen in her image, and finally as mother earth, who again receives him in her bosom. As Freud also points out, it is the silence which accompanies this last image of woman which must be interpreted as a sign of death or as the goddess of death herself.[13]

In Albee, the conscious/unconscious elaboration of this theme becomes even more poignant, due to the biographical element of the play, as he presents the composite figure of his adoptive mother, near death, first as three different women, and then as the same woman at different life stages, while he himself, as the son, is present in the second act. Thus, in Act I, A is "a very old woman; thin, autocractic, proud, as together as the ravages of time will allow", B looks "rather as A would have at 52" and C looks "rather as B would have at 26". This physical similarity, which seems casual in the first act, will become functional in the second act as A, B and C simultaneously embody the Freudian mother-figure at different ages.

Similarly, their clearly defined roles in the first act - the invalid dowager having as foils and confidantes her caregiver and the law clerk - acquire mythical connotations relevant in the second act as C portrays A in her youth - the "beloved" - and B portrays A in her middle years - the "mother" - while A is herself as she was before the stroke - old, but "thoroughly rational" - and, together with her other self - "A" in bed - both would become the representation of the third woman: mother earth, "death" receiving man in her bosom, as the son comes to her bedside. These Freudian roles, which become externalized in the dialogue, simultaneously enhance and are enhanced by the dominating theme of the play: how to come to terms with life, love, and, mostly, death.

The gradual identification of A, B, and C with the mythical three women starts at the very beginning of Act I, as A announces "I'm ninety-one", thus also establishing

---

[12] Freud, S. "O Tema da Escolha do Cofrezinho". In: *Psicanálise Aplicada. Obras Completas de Sigmund Freud, vol. XI*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Delta S.A., s.d.p.133-145.

[13] Dickinson, E. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. ed. Thomas H. Johnson. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960. p. 262.

from the outset the motif of the inevitability of old age, leading to death, embodied in the third woman. As C discusses A's physical and mental senility with B, not only is this motif concretely presented but simultaneously also the attitude taken towards it by C: her youthful incredulity that she will begin to lose her strength, and that she has "got only a little time". In counterpoint, B expresses a more realistic and even fatalistic posture towards death, as she is halfway through life:

> *C: It must be awful. (...)*
> *To begin to lose it, I mean - the control, the loss of dignity, the...*
> *B: Oh, stop it! It's downhill from sixteen on! For all of us!*
> *C: Yes, but...*
> *B: What are you, twenty something? Haven't you figured it out yet?* (Demonstrates.) *You take the breath in... you let it out. The first one you take in you're upside down and they slap you into it. The last one... well, the last one you let it all out... and that's it.You start... and then you stop. Don't be so soft. I'd like to see children learn it - have a six-year-old say, I'm dying and know what it means.*
> *C: You're horrible!*
> *B: Start in young; make 'em aware they've got only a little time. Make 'em aware they're dying from the minute they're alive.*
> *C: Awful!*
> *B: Grow up! Do you know it? Do you know you're dying?*
> *C: Well, of course, but...*
> *B:* (Ending it.) *Grow up. (13-14)*

The motif of old age/death as embodied in A is taken up again with more force in the middle of Act I, when A becomes aware not only that her friends have died, moved away and changed - "I don't have any friends anymore; most of them are dead, and the ones aren't dead are dying, and the ones aren't dying have moved away or I don't see anymore" - but that she herself is subject to the ravages of time, as she has lost her beauty and height - thus humanizing her image: "I was tall and handsome; (...) (*Weeps*) I've shrunk! I'm not tall! I used to be so tall! Why have I shrunk?!".

The identification of A with the third woman is completed, in Act I, when she has a stroke and is reduced to silence - this sign of death - while her last words convey again her deep sense of loss - the hatred of her own family and the leaving of her adopted son:

> *(...) I think they all hated me, because I was strong, because I* had *to be. Sis hated me; Ma hated me; all those others,* they *hated me;* he *left home; he ran away. Because I was strong. I was tall and I was strong.* Somebody *had to be. If I wasn't, then...* (Silence; *A* still, eyes open. Has she shuddered a little before her silence?) *(60)*

Act I ends significantly with the indication "*A alone; still; silence*", enhancing once more the interpretation of the silence which accompanies this last image of woman, as a sign of death or as the goddessof death herself.

Consequently, although on the realistic level of Act I the mythical connotations of A.B, and C with the three women are more evident in A - as the central character, who marks the beginning and end of Act I, as she will also mark the beginning and end of Act II - the motif of old age/death contaminates all three, thus making them share a common concern, and foreshadowing their future amalgamation. Nevertheless, it is in the suprarational reality of Act II that the Freudian interpretation of the theme of the three boxes achieves its fullest impact, as we observe "A's" tripartite former selves - A, B, and C - in interaction with themselves and then with the young man.

The importance of A's role as the embodiment of Freud's third woman becomes again foregrounded as the second act starts with the image of A - now "A" - propped up in bed, with a breathing mask over the nose and mouth, thus giving continuity to the former act. As B and C comment on "A's" condition, C, as in Act I, shows youth's stubborn refusal to accept change and death - the reality of the stroke -, while B's middle-aged stance, again as in Act I, strikes a conciliatory if fatalistic tone in relation to the theme:

> *B:* (General) *No change.*
> *C:* (Wistful.) *No?*
> *B: That's the way it goes.*
> *C:*(Shudders.) *Yes?*
> *B:* (Grim.) *Something to look forward to. (No response from C.) No?*
> *C:* (Hard.) *I don't want to talk about it; I don't want to think about it. Let me alone.*
> *B:*(Sharp.) *It's worth thinking about - even at your age.(65)*

At the same time, our recognition that A, B, and C are actually the same woman at different life periods is emphasized when C vehemently asserts to A "I will not become ... *that*!" - pointing to "A" - "Nor will I become *this*"- pointing to B - displaying her stubborn refusal to accept the change that has taken place in her seniors to be her own future, while B's hooting answer "Hah!" (69), corroborates her middle-aged awareness of the inevitability of change, and justifies her condescending attitude towards C.

However, it is with the appearance of "A's" son, aptly introduced by a short dialogue among the three women -

> *C:* (Wonder.) *I have children?*
> *B:* (None too pleasant.) *We have one; we have a boy.*
> *A:* (Same.) *Yes, we do. I have a son.*
> (He appears in the stage right archway, stands stock still, stares at "A"on the bed.)(88-9)

- that the Freudian parallelisms become more evident, even if in relation to B and C they exert different functions, for they will project the contradictory roles this tripartite woman has played in the young man's life: C, as the potential "lover" or "beloved" chosen in the mother's image, is physically attracted to him; B, representing the "mother", but almost Freud's figure of the annihilator, hates the very sight of him; A, the old "mother/death", attracts him to her, as she accepts as natural his repentance and grief towards "A":

> *B:* (Seeing him; sneering.) *Well, fancy seeing you again.* (Sudden, and enraged, into his face.) *Get out of my house!* (He doesn't react.)
> *C:* (Rising.) *Stop it!* (Moves toward him.) *Is... is that him?*
> *B: I said, get out of my house!*
> *A: (To B.) Do be quiet. (To C.) Let him alone; he's come to see me.* (He goes to "A", sits on the bed stage right of her, ... takes her right arm; shoulders shake, puts his forehead to her arm, or it to his forehead, becomes still. Does not react to anything about him until indicated.) *That's it; do your duty.*
> *C: He's... my goodness. How nice; how handsome, how very...*
> *B: You woldn't say that if you knew!*
> *A: Shhhhhhh.*
> *B:* (To A.) *She wouldn't* (To him.) *Filthy little...*
> *A: Shhhhh. Shhhhh. I don't want to think about that. He came back; he never loved me, he never loved us, but he came back. Let him alone. (89-90)*

In this way, and taking biographical data into account, we could say that Albee has "deconstructed" the Freudian image of C as the "lover" by not developing the young man's relationship with her in the play: C (Albee's adoptive mother while still single) does not recognize him as B and A do, for she has not met him at the age of twenty-six (Frances Albee was thirty when she and her husband Reed adopted Albee at the age of two weeks). Further, the fact that Albee is a homosexual could also suggest that this kind of love would be unknown to him.

This restraining of the role of the "beloved" makes the hatred B feels for him, as the middle-aged adoptive mother, become even more poignant, as she utters:

> *I'll never forgive him. (...)*
> (Rage.) *He left!! He packed up his attitudes and he left!! And I never want to see him again"* (To him.) *Go away!!* (Angry, humiliated, tears.)*(91-2)*

and as she accuses him, in a later passage, of getting himself:

> *thrown out of every school he can find, even one or two we haven't sent him to, sense he hates you, catch him doing it with your niece-in-law* and *your nephew-in-law the same week?!(95)*

Here the "inevitable" Freudian mother-son relationshipbecomes inverted, for the mother-figure hates him for leaving her while he detests her for not understanding him (as in real life, the young Albee's youth lacked parental understanding).

A, in contrast, seems to be already "beside" - not beyond - hatred, even if she still resents the fact that he comes back to see only after twenty years, when he is told she has had a heart attack:

> *"That's a long enough sulk - on both sides. (...) But he came to me (...) we look at each other and we both hold in whatever we've been holding in since that day he went away."(91).*

As she explains to B,

> *"(...)You* do *want to see him again. Wait twenty years. (...) be all alone; you* do *want to see him again, but the terms are too hard. We never forgive him. We let him come, but we never forgive him"(92).*

And it is this ambiguous attitude in relation to the young man - B unforgivingly repelling the son while A, on the one hand "lets" him come, attracting him to her, receiving him in her bosom while on the other hand she is still "tall", unforgiving, imperious - that brings to a full revelation the theme of the amalgamation of the three women, as C asks B "Did we... did we drive him away? Did I change so?", repeats the question to A "How did we change?", to the young man "How did I change?", and then repeating the questions emphatically, thus provoking B's sarcastic explanation to the audience:

> *She wants to know how she* changed. *She wants to know how she turned into* me. *Next she'll want to know how I turned into* her. *(*Indicates *A.) (93)*

Thus, through these controversial roles not only does the biographical element become highlighted, in Albee's interpretation of his adoptive mother's attitude towards him, but concomitantly mother-earth's ambiguous relationship with man is again foregrounded, as A later sits on the bed, opposite her son, and accuses him of not caring for her and just pretending he cared, while in her premonition of being dead, she is simultaneously projecting "A"'s unconscious thoughts:

> *(*Speaks directly to him; now he can hear her, can respond.*)*
> *I had a premonition.(...) I died, you see, and when I did it - when I died - I was all alone... no one there in the room with me - the hospital room (...) (*Suddenly weepy.*) Why didn't you take me out of there?!(...) (*He tries to touch her, to comfort her.*) Don't you touch me!! There I was, and I was in a coma, in and out, in and out. (...) You brought me flowers, you brought freesia. You know I love freesia; that's why you bring them to me, because I* love *them! Why do you do that?! You hate me; why do you do that?! What do you want?! You want something. Well, you just wait. You'll get what's coming to you. (...) There was no one there with me and I was* dead*! No one! Just the chauffeur and the maid. I was there an hour, and I was dead, and then you came in, and you had your flowers, your freesia. (...) you stopped and you...* thought*! (*Loathing.*) I* watched *you* think*! And your face didn't change. (*Wistful.*)Why didn't your face ever change? (...) and you decided, and you walked over to the bed, and you touched my hand, and you bent down, and you kissed me on the forehead... for them! (...) (*Softer*) And then you stood up, still holding on to my hand, as if... what? You didn't know what to do with it You held on to my hand, and my hand wasn't warm anymore, was it? My hand was cold,* wasn't *it (Pause).* Wasn't *it?*
> *(*He looks at her once more, shudders, weeps, looks back at "A". A moves away from the bed.*)(105-6)*

Here the reality of the dream world becomes even more complex: if we consider both "A" and the young man as real, for he neither seems to be aware of A, B, and C as embodiments of "A", nor react to their speeches - this surreal/real world receives one more turn, when A sits on "A's" bed and speaks directly to him and he can hear her, and respond, as if "A" had become conscious again through A, or as if A has become one with "A". This is substantiated by the fact that A's speech mirrors what has happened and what will happen to "A": aware that she is lying in coma, and having simultaneously the premonition she is dead and that her son comes to visit her, would give her the ability to watch what the others are doing and thinking. Moreover, A's speech also foregrounds the symbolic connotations of the bed for, if in Act I it denoted a place of rest, here it acquires reverberations of cohabitation, secrecy as well as of being a place of reflection, anguish, languishing sickness and death.

The young man, in turn, is not allowed by A to touch her, as he had touched "A"'s arm and stroked her face when he arrived, as if A, actually "A" before the stroke, still felt grievances towards her son while "A", already to "one side"of death, accepts his tribute - his look, touch, and grief. This alternative of having the son at her bedside, also being a projection of "A"'s wish fulfilment to see her son before she dies or as a figment of her imagination, is corroborated by the fact that "A" through A does not "allow" him the right to speak or defend himself against her accusations.

The suggestion remains, then, that it is actually with mother-earth that the image of Albee's adoptive mother is identified, and it is with her that he has the real relationship - not the lover (C) whom he has not met, Nor the mother (B) whom he abandoned, but with this third image of woman, the goddess of death herself, who simultaneously as "A" attracts and as A recriminates him .

If the roles performed by the "three tall women", embodying different stages of Albee's adoptive mother, have at the same time built up a complex and varied parallelism with Freud's basic representations of woman, thus intensifying the emotional density of the play, these roles produce at the same time an even more far-reaching effect: through A,B and C's simultaneous concerns with, and remembrances of, childhood, family, married life, loneliness, sickness and age, their attitudes towards life, love, and death are laid bare. It is then that we realize that the movement of "A's" three former selves leads from unawareness in C, to awareness in B and to transcendence in A, as they try, in their effort to attain self-understanding, to define where "the happiest moment" in life should lie.

And it is as a consequence of C's emphatic refusal again to accept the change that will take place in her, as the embodiment of A's younger self - "I ...will... not... become... you. I will *not*. I... I deny *you*" - that A's own vehement denial of her former selves and of her son - "I'm *here*, and I deny you *all*; I deny every *one* of you" - leads to this reflection about "the happiest moment", which will simultaneously become the climactic moment of the play. As C introduces the theme:

> *C: Is it like this? What about the happy times... the* happiest *moments? I* haven't *had them yet, have I? All done at twenty-six? I can't imagine that. I had* some, *of course, some of what probably will* be *the happiest (...) I* know *my best times - what is it? happiest? - haven't happened yet. They're to* come. *Aren't they? Please? I'm not a fool, but there* is *a lot of happiness along the way.* Isn't *there?! And isn't it always ahead? Aren't I* right*? (...)*
>
> *B: (...* Shakes her head to *C*, not unkindly.*) Silly, silly girl; silly baby. The happiest time? Now; now... always. This must be the happiest time: half of being adult done, the rest ahead of me. Old enough to be a* little *wise, past being* really *dumb...(...) Standing up here right on top of the middle of it* has *to be the happiest time. (...)*
>
> *A:* (Shakes her head; chuckles; to *B* and *C.) You're both such children. The happiest moment of all? Really? The happiest moment?(*To the audience now.*) Coming to the end of it, I think, when all the waves cause the greatest woes to subside, leaving breathing space, time to concentrate on the greatest woe of all - that blessed one - the end of it. (...) There's a difference between knowing you're going to* die *and* knowing *you're going to die. (107-9)*

And, as A reasserts in her last words to the audience:

> *(...) I was talking about... what: coming to the end of it, yes. So. There it is. You asked after all. That's the happiest moment (A* looks to *C* and *B*, puts her hand out, takes theirs.*) When it's all done. When we stop. When we can stop. (110)*

Thus, through C, B, and A's realization of where the "happiest moment" in life should lie - in the future, present, or past - the theme of old age/death as embodied in the mythical "mother earth" has become, simultaneously, the great message of the play: for A, having transcended her former selves and reached "the point where you can think about yourself in the third person without being crazy", is able to give them and us a message, not from "*beyond*" life, "but sort of to ... one side": a positive message, in which old age, in spite of its infirmities and senility, still allows you to evaluate life and death with the judgement that only *living* can give you - a dispassionate and concomitantly humane judgement, which in its acuteness of vision retrieves Emily Dickinson's poem "The heart asks pleasure - first":

> *The Heart asks Pleasure - first -*
> *And then - excuse from pain -*
> *And then - those little Anodynes*
> *That deaden suffering -*
>
> *And then - to go to sleep -*
> *And then - if it should be*
> *The will of its Inquisitor*
> *The privilege to die -* [13]

For this reason, if viewing the play as an aesthetic artifact has already revealed the existence of two dramatic worlds, in which the reality of the dream world of Act II with its vertical structure becomes more real than the virtual reality of Act I, with its horizontal structure, it is actually when the inmost natures of the "three tall women" are revealed to us - as embodiments of the same woman and thus as the three forms that the mother-image adopts throughout life - that the play can be viewed not only as an aesthetic artifact, biographically, but simultaneously as a socially engaged phenomenon. Even more, it can be considered as a profound statement about human nature, in our relationship with the "other" and - in our process of aging - how we come to terms with life and with death.

UFPR

NARRATIVE, IDEOLOGY, IDENTITY, AND UTOPIA IN (POST) MODERN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S FICTION

ROLAND WALTER

> *That time I asked him to try to understand my feeling ways. That's what I called it. My feeling ways. My voice felt like it was screaming. What do they say about pleasure mixed in the pain?*[1]

In the postmodern world of "l'écriture," which, according to Roland Barthes, is characterized by "la naissance du lecteur" and "la mort de l'auteur,"[2] a world, as stated by Jacques Derrida, of endlessly unhinged meanings, which both governs language and places it for ever beyond the reach of a stable knowledge,[3] fragmented, isolated characters are adrift and drowning in a mass conformist society. It seems that in much of postmodern fiction the crisis of *experience* and *storytelling*, which Walter Benjamin described in "The Storyteller,"[4] has intensified during the passage from modernity to postmodernity.

The storytelling voices of black women writers, however, attest to the opposite. Established by the poet Phillis Wheatley, who began to publish her work in 1773, and by authors such as Harriet Wilson, Frances E. Watkins Harper, Nella Larsen, and Zora Neale Hurston, the voices of black women writers throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s initiated their crescendo in the creative works of Ann Petry, Margaret Walker and Gwendolyn Brooks. Since 1970, with

---

[1] Gayl Jones, *Corregidora* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 50.
[2] Roland Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 66-67.
[3] Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967). See also his *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967)
[4] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 83.

the publication of Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, and of Toni Cade Bambara's anthology, *The Black Woman*, the multiple voices of black women writers "have come to the forefront of Afro-American literary creativity,"[5] creating a powerful blues/gospel/jazz session. Works by Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Paule Marshall, Toni Cade Bambara, Jamaica Kincaid, Ntozake Shange, Adrienne Kennedy, Kristin Hunter, Gayl Jones, Maya Angelou, June Jordan, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, Rita Dove, Gwendolyn Brooks, and others, manifest the consistency, vitality and quality of this feminine movement.[6]

While black male writers such as Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Ernest Gaines, Ralph Ellison, and Ishmael Reed - Jean Toomer being an exception - tend to reduce black female characters to the role of desirable sexual objects or minor figures who help the male protagonist in his search for identity and self-definition, black women writers reject the falsifications of black women's experiences and the concomitant stereotyped images of black women in Anglo-American and Afro-American literature.[7] According to Mary Helen Washington, "the main preoccupation of the Black woman writer has been the Black woman herself - her aspirations, her conflicts, her relationship to her men and her children, her creativity. The Black woman writer has looked at the Black woman from an insider's point of view ...."[8] In this process, black women writers have been re-creating experience in an effort to write against the fragmentation of identity, the loss of cultural roots, and the falsification of *her*story and to create a new black feminine consciousness in and through literature. The dialectical structure of their writings is based upon the consciousness of duality, of being a colored woman, the tensions between different ways of perceiving values and reality, and the friction caused by the interaction between generation, class, race, and gender. The impulse to erase and re-create which imbues their novels, this dialectics which produces an ideology of difference by emphasizing the aesthetic and spiritual character of the black woman's experience, this endeavor to reconstruct memory, myths, and legends, to re-present figures and events from the past in order to resist racism, discontinuity, fragmentation, acculturation, and reification, this act is an impulse of salvation and liberation. In this process

---

[5] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *Reading Black, Reading Feminist* (New York: Meridian, 1990), 2.

[6] A similar trend is discernible in Chicano and Native American fiction. The scope of this paper makes it impossible to include other ethnic literatures. This analysis, however, can be regarded as part of a larger, comparative project focusing on several key-aspects in Chicano, Native American, and Afro-American literature.

[7] Lorraine Bethel, "This Infinity of Conscious Pain: Zora Neale Hurston and the Black Female Literary Tradition," in *But Some of Us Are Brave. Black Women's Studies*, eds. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia B. Scott, Barbara Smith, (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982), 177.

[8] Mary Helen Washington, ed. *Black-Eyed Susans: Classic Stories by and about Black Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), x.

the act of writing becomes a political act, a social practice,[9] which turns the narrative into a socially symbolic act with an implicit ideological utopian function intent on finding imaginary solutions to existing social conflicts and contradictions.[10] This function embraces the relationship between the individual and the collective as well as between life as it is lived and experienced imaginatively. This being the theoretical framework of the following analysis, which will concentrate on the development of a black female literary tradition from the 1930s to the 1990s, focusing on the black woman's search for identity and the implicit creation of a specific feminine consciousness, I now want to elaborate on the substance of this framework, hoping to suggest a method of interpretation that will provide a ground for the development of a way of reading Afro-American literary texts (and minority texts in general) as a group of works that intentionally exploit their marginalized status to and exclusion from the body of majority literature.[11]

The problem of narrative structure and of its relationship to the thematic aspects of texts is of great importance in my analysis of black women's fiction. The novel allows us to seek, absorb, and understand new experiences by discovering new forms and rhythms, "grasping and reconstructing the stuff of social change in the living substance of perceptions and relationships."[12] Based on its "worldliness," that is, its existence in "circumstance, time, place, and society,"[13] a text is characterized

---

[9] An engagé act, in the Sartrean sense, which attempts change through revelation: "L'écrivain engagé sait que la parole est action: il sait que dévoiler c'est changer et qu'on ne peut dévoiler qu'en projetant de changer." Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 30. In an interview Toni Morrison described the role of the black artist in the unfolding development of black culture as one to "bear witness or effect change - improvement - take cataracts off people's eyes in an accessible way. It may be soothing; it may be painful, but that's his job - to enlighten and to strengthen. ... novels are important because they are socially responsible." Bessie W. Jones and Audrey L. Vinson, *The World of Toni Morrison. Explorations in Literary Criticism* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1985), 145.

[10] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

[11] This marginalization and exclusion is, according to Gates, the consequence of "logocentrism and ethnocentrism" marching "together in an attempt to deprive the black human being of even the potential to create art, to imagine a world and to figure it." Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *Black Literature and Literary Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 7. Conventionally extrinsic, supplementary, or inessential to the majority text which it borders, a minority text is simultaneously intrinsic and essential, inasmuch as the priority of the center depends entirely on the oppositional relation of center to margin. Yet to call attention to this margin is to destroy its marginal status, and consequently to collapse the center in a general unsettling of oppositional hierarchies. This is exactly what characterizes black women's fiction (and minority literature in general): the process of giving voice to marginality and the implicit concern with finding a voice, which Gates regards as the defining feature of Afro-American literature. See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[12] Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: NLB, 1976), 34.

[13] Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 35.

by a *dialogical* nature of meaning, a meaning, however, which is never truly present but achieved through the free play of the signifier and constructed through the potentially endless process of referring to other, absent signifiers (Derrida). By enacting a plurality of voices (Bakhtin), a narrative production seen as a socially symbolic act does not only reflect the ideological formations within which it arises, but puts ideology to work, creating its own textual ideology in a dialectical process.[14] Ramón Saldívar has pointed out that this activation of the components of our social life "- words, ideas, desires, intentions - " produces a revaluation and/or devaluation, a reorganization, and reinterpretation of them, a process which he has called "the dialectic of difference."[15] Dialectical readings of a minority text, which Jameson has called ideological analysis,[16] can therefore reveal the contradictions between cultural matrices which create truths and set them as coercive norms that claim universality,[17] and those which create a counterhegemonic resistance to the dominant ideology, attempting to create what Göran Therborn has called an "alter-ideology."[18] Following Jameson, a narrative in general instantiates ideology as a substance of our collective (imaginary) thinking about history and reality[19] and "must" therefore "be informed by ... a political unconscious, that all literature must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community."[20] This subtext, however, is not "immediately present as such," as it constitutes "the underside or *impensé* or *non-dit*" of the text.[21] According to Jameson, it is the critic's task to analyze this textual "underside," this "mystery" of the text (which symbolizes the mystery of the cultural past, the absent, suppressed cause of history - the non-revolution) "within the unity of a single great collective story," which is the history of class struggles, or in Marxist terms, the history of "oppressor and oppressed."[22] Therefore, continues Jameson, "it is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity."[23] This type of ideological

[14] Terry Eagleton, op. cit., 80.

[15] Ramón Saldívar, "A Dialectic of Difference: Towards a Theory of the Chicano Novel," *Melus* 6.3 (Fall 1979), 73-92.

[16] Fredric Jameson, op. cit., 12, 81. Ideological analysis is seen here as a critical rewriting of a cultural text's historical and ideological subtext.

[17] On this topic see Louis Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review, 1971), Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), and Michel Foucault, *Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) and *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House, 1973).

[18] Göran Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology* (London: NLB, 1980), 28.

[19] A rationale which is based upon Althusser's definition of the ideological as "a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." Louis Althusser, op.cit., 162.

[20] Fredric Jameson, op.cit., 70.

[21] Ibid., 81, 49.

[22] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" in Karl Marx, *On Revolution*, trans. S.K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 81.

[23] Fredric Jameson, op.cit., 20.

analysis allows the critic of ethnic literatures and discourses to grasp the meaning of the decentered subject, and the implicit emphasis on the collective, the historical, and the political with its utopian function.

All this applies to black women writers and their texts, but as black women they have been subject to an even more radical decentering: the oppression of the white colonizer and the colonized black male.[24] In the following analysis of several novels by black women writers from the 1930s to the 1990s I will focus on what seems to me one of the most important aspects of this body of literature: women's search for identity.[25] In this process, I will examine the dialectical relation between the individual and the collective identity and the implicit notions of feminine consciousness, community, and history.

Robert B. Stepto identifies the "quest for literacy and freedom" as the basic idea in black men's literature.[26] The central quest in black women's writings arises out of the realization that black women are the "mules of the world" and is an attempt to transcend this status, to survive whole, as Alice Walker put it,[27] and to establish a literary voice of their own.

Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) raises fundamental issues in this context.[28] The image of the black woman as "de mule uh de world" (29), Nanny's narrative - a narrative that delineates her internalization of the white value system - and Janie's two marriages render a description of black women's oppression in which black men play a major role. Nanny, Janie's grandmother, an ex-slave who has suffered racial and sexual oppression, wants to prevent Janie from being a mule. Instead she wants her to "pick from a higher bush and a sweeter berry" (28), to be like white folks, getting married (40). It is Nanny who chooses Janie's first husband, Logan Killicks, a farmer, who has sixty acres and, according to Nanny, is able to offer protection and economic security. Logan, regarding Janie as a commodity of his personal gratification, is unable to live up to Janie's conception of love and marriage. This rather romantic notion of a young girl, who passively waits for things to come under a blossoming tree (actually she imagines herself as "the sanctum of a bloom" which is penetrated by "a dust-bearing bee" 24), contains already the germs of her adult activism: Janie takes love as something *shared*, an "embrace" that produces "shiver" and "delight" in both the bee and the bloom. Common to black women's literature is a high awareness of the problems and contradictions in the relationship between the sexes, an acute sense of sexual politics. In contrast to many characters in white

[24] Michele Wallace posits the black woman as "the 'other' of the 'other'." See her *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978).

[25] One could argue that the search for identity is *the* theme of American literature.

[26] Robert B. Stepto, *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979).

[27] John O'Brien, ed., *Interviews with Black Writers* (New York: Liveright, 1973), 192.

[28] Based on this fact, her narrative has to be considered a political act. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

women's novels, however, black female protagonists like Janie are not reduced to victims, but are committed to actively changing their lives. Janie develops from a young girl passively waiting for love to come into a woman who determinedly pursues her dreams and takes risks by giving up security as well as respectability. Hurston delineates a protagonist who, by moving from bondage (marriage) to freedom (cohabitation), takes control of her destiny (body and mind, that is, her individual identity) in spite of attempts on the part of the black community to force her into a narrow, confining role - a static community with individuals "whose dreams (are) mocked to death by Time." They passively watch the "ships at a distance" which carry their wishes on board. "For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon." For Janie, however, "the dream is the truth" and she acts and does things accordingly (9). This opening passage of the novel indicates the pattern of Janie's search for selfhood: she dreams, acts, experiences, thinks, and acts accordingly. When Janie breaks with Logan and takes off with Joe, she begins to take control of her life and to form her individual identity in an active way. This second marriage, however, can be seen as a continuation of the first one in that Joe's patriarchal attitude, his aspiration for money and power,[29] and the implicit internalization of the white value system literally silence Janie's voice. He forbids her to participate in the storytelling on the porch. By arguing that he did not marry her for "no speech-makin," that a woman's place is "in de home," and that "somebody got to think for women and chillun and chickens and cows" because they "don't think none theirselves" (110), Joe declares himself the master of Janie's body and mind. In this passage Hurston stresses a very important point: voice signifies visibility and identity. It is through her voice and a preceding process of consciousness-raising that Janie is able to establish her individual identity, to pass from an imposed invisibility to a consciously created visibility. This process reaches its climax when Janie verbally attacks her husband's abusive patriarchal attitude, literally stripping him of his masculinity: "Talkin' bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life" (123). Shortly after this scene Joe dies and, given the structure of the plot, one could argue that Janie 'kills' him through her new-found weapon: her voice. This individual voice, the symbol of Janie's self-definition,

[29] Which is, according to Irigaray, a male obsession. See Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977), 161.

[30] Hailed by some critics as the epitome of egalitarianism and questioned by others (based on Janie's alleged passivity and on her narrative silence - the story is told by a third-person omniscient narrative voice in free indirect discourse) the relationship between Tea Cake and Janie comes very close to Janie's dream of sharing everything on an equal basis. On this topic see, among others, Michael Awkward, "The inaudible voice of it all: Silence, Voice, and Action in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," in *Studies in Black American Literature, Vol. III: Black Feminist Criticism and Critical Theory*, eds. Joe Weixlman and Houston A. Baker, Jr. (Greenwood, Florida: Penkevill, 1988), 57-109; Robert Stepto, op.cit., 166; Missy Dehn Kubitschek, "Tuh De Horizon and Back: The Female Quest in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," *BALF* 17 (1983), 109-115; Judith R. Berzon, *Neither White Nor Black. The Mulatto Character in American Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

meets the collective in the final part of the novel, when she and Tea Cake, her new lover,[30] are "on the muck" in the Everglades: "Only here, she could listen and laugh and even talk some herself if she wanted to. She got so she could tell big stories herself ..." (200). Janie's individual identity is steeped in the Afro-American collective experience as she gradually becomes a storyteller. After Tea Cake's death, Janie returns to Eatonville and tells her story - her experiences - to her friend, Pheoby. Her voice, which is now the voice of the Afro-American oral tradition, conveys her new-found self-definition: "It's uh known fact, Pheoby, you got tuh go there tuh know there. ... Two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves" (285). At the end of the novel, Hurston makes an important distinction. In Janie's case, voice is based upon *experience* and thus symbolizes individual self-definition, while the voices of those in the black community who gossip about her amounts "tuh uh hill uh beans" (285). Janie's achievement of an integrated self (voice) is based upon three interrelated elements which, in Jungian terms, constitute her experience of self-individuation: imagination (dreams), action, and experience. Unlike Janie, those who passively live their lives and talk for the sake of talking (those with evil tongues) have no truly individual personality. In this process, Hurston problematizes the black community - the white world being no explicit subject in the novel - which she creates through the oral texture of the narrative. Gates has called the novel a "speakerly text," a text whose "rhetoric structures seem to exist primarily as representations of oral narration, rather than as integral aspects of plot or character development,"[31] and I would add that this oral subtext in the novel creates communality between the teller of the story and the listener (Pheoby), who, by being instigated to gain experience, can become a potential storyteller herself; it also includes the reader, given the fact that (s)he reads and listens at the same time, so that the narrative is, as Maria Tai Wolff observed, "both Janie's story and the reader's, the teller's, and the listener's."[32] Moreover, Hurston's text creates the black community of Eatonville through the vernacular structures of actual speech: it is community in the making.

Images of black women shaping their lives, being survivors, who are able to overcome brutalization and oppression, are predominant in black women's literature. We find them in Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha* (1953), in Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), in Toni Cade Bambara's novels and short stories, in Toni Morrison's and Gloria Naylor's novels, and in Alice Walker's novels and short stories, although Walker, like Naylor and

[31] Henry Louis Gates, "Zora Neale Hurston and the Speakerly Text," in *Southern Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Jefferson Humphries (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 150. In an unpublished manuscript, "Reading Zora: Discourse and Rhetoric in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*" (Yale University), Henry Louis Gates and Barbara Johnson state that "the very subject of this text would seem to be not primarily Janie's quest, but the emulation of the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structures of actual speech."

[32] Maria Tai Wolff, "Listening and Living: Reading and Experience in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," *BALF* 16 (1982), 32.

Morrison, in accordance with her theoretical model of black women as suspended, assimilated, and emergent characters, also portrays black women as victims.[33]

Starting from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, one can observe that the possibilities for black women, the options in their lives gradually develop. Bambara's women, for example, start with far more education, political awareness, and self-awareness, but their attitudes - their strategies for survival - still reflect Hurston's Janie: composure, willpower, a strong sense of the black community, humor, scepticism toward material achievements, and criticism of what Julia Kristeva has called the "symbolic contract."[34] One of the strategies for survival is a basic solidarity among women. Throughout black women's literature, one finds women sitting together (often on porches, in beauty parlors or kitchens), talking about their lives, sharing pleasure and pain, laughter to keep from crying, like Hurston's Janie and Pheoby, Bambara's Sweet Pea, Morrison's Sula and Nel, Walker's Celie and Shug, and Naylor's women: sisterhood of women mothering one another, holding each other in survival against racism and male irresponsibility.[35] This feminine communality goes beyond the black community and establishes universal bonds between women, as the following passage from Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* shows - a passage in which Mattie rocks Ciel back to life after the death of her daughter and the departure of her husband:

> *Mattie rocked her out of that bed ... into a blue vastness just underneath the sun and above time. She rocked her over Aegean seas ... so clear the fresh blood of sacrificed babies torn from their mother's arms and given to Neptune ... She rocked her on and on, past Dachau, where soul-gutted Jewish mothers swept their children's entrails off laboratory floors. They flew past the spilled brains of Senegalese infants whose mothers had dashed them on the wooden sides of slave ships. And she rocked on. ... It would heal.*[36]

In *Sula* Toni Morrison underlines the importance of sisterhood as a means of survival, that is, as a useful and necessary way to prevent and/or heal alienation and fragmentation. After catching Sula sleeping with her husband, Jude, Nel broke with Sula and only after Sula's death did she realize her mistake: " 'All that time ... I thought I was missing Jude'. And the loss pressed down on her chest and came up into her throat. 'We was girls together,' she said as though explaining

---

[33] On this theoretical model see Mary Helen Washington, "An Essay on Alice Walker," in *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature*, ed. Roseann P. Bell, et al. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1979), 133-149.

[34] She sometimes employs this term to refer to the Patriarchal Law. See Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Signs* 7.1 (Autumn 1981), 13-35.

[35] Male irresponsibility is a recurrent topic in black women's literature. Alice Walker made it clear that Grange Copeland's main insight is "prompt accountability for one's choices, a willing acceptance of responsibility for one's thoughts, behavior, and actions." Alice Walker, *The Third Life of Grange Copelund* (New York: Pocket, 1988), 345.

[36] Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place* (New York: Penguin, 1983), 103-104.

something. 'O Lord, Sula,' she cried, 'girl, girl, girlgirlgirl.'"[37] Although Nel's insight comes too late, she understands the real source of her pain, the fragmentation caused by her decision to end their friendship. Toni Morrison makes the question of guilt the central issue of the novel's last part by questioning cultural categories of good and evil and whether it is worth ending a friendship between women because of a man: who sets the rules and why? Who is right and who is wrong? In her typical way of raising questions without giving us clear-cut answers, of suggesting in a highly metaphorical language,[38] Morrison implicitly undermines and subverts the entire patriarchal moral code. In other words, Morrison deconstructs dualistic (patriarchal) thinking, a unilateral view of things that excludes the other.[39] Her novels can be seen as prisms that refract truth into many dazzling beams: truth is multilateral and relative.[40] In fact, her texts seem to suggest that nothing can be taught because the value lies in the experience (echoing Hurston's Janie), or as the unidentified narrator in *Jazz* put it: "Say make me, remake me. You are free to do it and I am free to let you ...."[41] Herein resides the ethics of Morrison's deconstructive feminism: an activism which makes judgements but does not supply the means of legitimating those judgements as transcendental truths.

The making and remaking of "womanist" bonding in Alice Walker's creative works implies the utopian function of "survival and wholeness of entire people,

---

[37] Toni Morrison, *Sula* (London: Picador, 1991), 174.

[38] In contrast to Alice Walker's "anecdotal narrative," which, in comparison to Morrison's "stylized discourse," is more suited to translate Walker's concern with storytelling and actual speech. On this topic see Susan Willis, *Specifying* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), especially her introductory discussion and chapters 4 and 5.

[39] In terms of Hélène Cixou's "écriture feminine" Morrison transcends the masculine impulse to imprison reality in rigid hierarchical structures. See Hélène Cixous, "Le Sexe ou la tête?" *Les Cahiers du GRIF* 13 (1976), 5-15. Trans. Annette Kuhn, "Castration or Decapitation?" *Signs* 7.1 (Autumn 1981), 41-55.

[40] This is also the reason why she confronts the reader with different perspectives of the same scene or episode in a Faulknerian way. See my analysis of *Jazz* in "The Dialectics between the Act of Writing and the Act of Reading in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*, Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*, and Toni Morrison's *Jazz*" in *The Southern Quarterly* (Spring 1997).

[41] Toni Morrison, *Jazz* (New York: Signet, 1992), 265. This remark, a direct invitation to the reader - the entire novel is characterized by a dialogue between the narrator and the implied reader - can be taken as an epitome of the creation of community through the "speakerly" texture of the narrative (and in this sense, as an example of intertextuality between Hurston and Morrison). The reader is in it, that is, as Morrison stated in several interviews, he plays an active role not only in the creation of what Iser has called "the pragmatic meaning" of a text, but in the entire creative act. The reader becomes a narrator who stands for the community, asking questions, observing, describing, with all of them having the same amount of knowledge and information. This "egalitarianism which places us all (reader, the novel's population, the narrator's voice) on the same footing," epitomizes the collective aspects of the text's political unconscious. See Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," in *Toni Morrison*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1990), 226 and Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

male *and* female."[42] She creates alternative communities (often with a rural Southern touch, as in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, *Meridian*, and *The Color Purple*) with men and women living together, sharing an experience which is not based on property ownership for the purpose of accumulation but on the satisfaction of basic human material and spiritual needs. Especially in *The Color Purple* and *The Temple of My Familiar* these imaginary solutions of social contradictions (Molly Hite calls them "fairy-tale happy endings"[43]) implicitly re-create an Edenic ideal of harmony between human beings, male and female, and between humanity and the natural order. In *The Temple of My Familiar*, a millennium-spanning novel which broaches aspects of Central American, African and African-American life and reality, Walker, in a fragmented series of conversations between an old couple, Lissie and Hal, and a history teacher, Suwelo, uses orality and the aesthetic mode of magical realism to express her notion of womanist collectivity. The principal role in these conversations, which bear the characteristics of ritual enactments of the collective memory, is played by Lissie, one of Walker's most striking protagonists: a conjure woman who preserves and transmits the ancient secret meaning of words, the past, and history by means of her magico-realist worldview - a worldview that catalyzes mythic worlds and realities. Lissie symbolizes Walker's concern with the past, history, and memory as a means of re-creating the collective spirit of the black experience in the past, which is the present and points to the future, and thus to resist fragmentation and discontinuity. Lissie is a magician with many lives and no definite form, a woman who "remembers everything."[44] In four fragmented, orally transmitted dream memories Lissie describes her several lives: a lion who lived in peaceful union with women until men established the patriarchal order; a pygmy who lived/lives with her cousins in trees; a man who was expelled from his tribe because of his pale skin; an African woman who was sold into slavery and survived the Middle Passage. By using different tenses, times, and settings, Walker creates a fluid time-space continuum, a radical "*present*-ation of time,"[45] in which mythical time and historical time are interwoven, forming, as in Faulkner, a chronic present in which today began ten thousand years ago (*Intruder in the Dust*). These devices deconstruct the Western masculine way of thinking which is characterized by empirical, rational linearity and supplant it by a feminine magico-realist *Weltanschauung* which reveals the hidden layers of reality, shedding light on the subconscious of the Afro-American psyche. In this process of re-creating myths, legends, and history through words, dreams, and memory from a womanist perspective, Walker reappropriates Lissie with language tied to

---

[42] Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. Womanist Prose* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), xi.

[43] Molly Hite, "Romance, Marginality, and Matrilineage: *The Color Purple* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist*, op.cit., 435.

[44] Alice Walker, *The Temple of My Familiar* (New York: Penguin, 1990), 65. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text.

[45] An expression used by Carlos Fuentes with regard to Faulkner's treatment of time. See John King, ed., *Modern Latin American Fiction: A Survey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 141.

the ur-matriarchal social structure whose characteristics - (artistic) freedom, (magic) creativity, peaceful cohabitation, and wholeness - subvert masculine rational thinking, domination, greed, and narrow-mindedness (Cixous/Irigaray). As Janie does in Hurston's novel, it is through voice, the ancient creative power of spoken words,[46] that Lissie simultaneously creates and expresses her visibility, identity, and worldview. Furthermore, this constitution of identity through voice[47] implies a deconstruction of the patriarchal *written* discourse: "I did remember everything I was talking about ... Some people don't understand that it is the nature of the eye to have seen forever, and the nature of the mind to recall anything that was ever known. Or that was the nature ... until man started to put things on paper" (80). Lissie's statement, directed to an African scholar, "a man from one of these big schools ... a well-educated, smooth-talking zombie" (75), connotes the political unconscious of the magico-realist worldview and its oral subtext: a rectification of the official written *his*tory, of the falsified truth, the dominant ideology, through an alter-ideological womanist discourse. It is in Lissie's revelation of the traces and consequences of this oppression and marginalization as well as in the implicit delineation of an alternative that the political unconscious finds its utopian function and the novel its ethical significance.[48] The key word of this alternative, which can be conceived as an imaginary solution to the alienation and fragmentation of the individual, to the history of struggle between freeman and slave, rich and poor, man and woman, is imagination. This is maybe best exemplified by the going away present which Suwelo receives from Lissie and Hal: two self-portraits whose centers consist of mere outlines of the two, surrounded by blue space. Suwelo has to reimagine his friends, a creative activity that stands for the transcendence of definite forms, rationalism, a unilateral view of reality, and for the potentiality of change. The portraits can be regarded as the apex of the talk sessions insofar as they provoke Suwelo to use his imagination and overcome his chauvinistic alienation. Lissie's oral dream memories and the implicit magico-realist worldview have a profound impact on Suwelo's conscience and attitude. They liberate him from his phallocentric view and initiate him into the magic essence of femininity. He becomes willing to understand his wife's epiphanies, work out their marital crisis, and join his new self with her and their friends in an androgynous utopian space of blissful sexual and artistic creativity - a space whose carnivalesque characteristics recall the one at the end of *The Color Purple*. Furthermore, they enable Suwelo to insert his individual identity in the Afro-American collective.

---

[46] See Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

[47] This birth of a womanist woman implicitly dialogues with Beauvoir's famous statement that one is not born a woman but becomes one, that is to say, the cultural gender identity of women. Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).

[48] Georg Lukács, drawing upon the Hegelian dichotomy of the concrete and the abstract, matter and spirit, described the novel as an attempt to recapture the lost concrete unity between life and essence, matter and spirit.. According to Lukács, the ultimate ethical significance of the novel is utopia, that is, a world in which man and the world converge again. Georg Lukács, *Theorie des Romans* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962), 87-90.

His decision to write an oral history of his people, to use the past - the key of the old ones, this "fabulous, mysterious universe" (218) - points to his new-found collective identity steeped in a magico-realist worldview.[49] On the basis of Jameson's definition of the political unconscious as "a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community" it can be argued that the oral magico-realist subtext of the novel symbolizes this meditation and carries as its utopian function the creation of community.[50]

As a womanist speakerly text, the passages of Lissie's spoken dream memories bear striking similarities to what Hélène Cixous has described as "écriture feminine" and Luce Irigaray as "le parler femme." Toril Moi has correctly observed that "Irigaray's vision of femininity and of feminine language remains almost indistinguishable from Cixous'."[51] Both stress the fact that the feminine mode of writing reflects women's psychology and morphology, that "women sexualize their discourse,"[52] that "by writing her self, woman will return to ... her immense bodily territories."[53] Cixous views the act of writing as a possibility for women to seize "the occasion to *speak*" and "to forge for herself the antilogos weapon," that is, "to become *at will* the taker and initiator, for her own right, in every symbolic system, in every political process": "As subject for history, woman always occurs simultaneously in several places. Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces ... In woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history. As a militant, she is an integral part of all liberations."[54] Although this characterization applies to many characters in black women's writings, it especially holds for three protagonists: Lissie in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*, Pilate in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, and Mama Day in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*. These protagonists are *creators*, that is, they stand for the Afro-American woman as catalyst of the past, history, the mytho-magical world and its cultural roots, and of change. Lissie and Pilate achieve what Borges'

---

[49] Therefore I propose a slight revision of Gates' notion of a speakerly text (see footnote 31): in a speakerly text the rhetoric structures, being representations of oral narration, exist as integral aspects of plot *and* character development.

[50] As in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and in *Jazz*, this community includes the reader. On the call-and-response structure of the narrative see Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 187, 209, 221. See also Roland Walter, "Magical Realism and Orality in Contemporary Afro-American Women's Literature: Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* and Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (a manuscript presented at the IV Seminario Sobre Cultura Afro-Americana: Voz, Memoria y Literatura in La Habana, Cuba, August 19-23, 1996).

[51] Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London/New York: Routledge, 1985), 143.

[52] Luce Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous. Toward a Culture of Difference* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993), 33.

[53] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1.4 (1976), 880.

[54] Ibid., 880, 882.

magician in "Las ruinas circulares" is unable to do: both re-create a man, namely Suwelo and Milkman respectively (Mama Day tries to do the same, but she fails because of George's rational worldview[55]). Lissie and Pilate re-create a man by steeping his selfhood in Afro-American group history and experience, which in both cases implies a radical change of male attitude: Suwelo and Milkman overcome their chauvinism and supplant it by a more understanding attitude towards women. Milkman, who goes down South in search of gold and finds his identity instead, owes not only his life to Pilate (she 'works roots' on his father and mixes special herb potions to counteract his mother's attempted abortions) but also the fundamental knowledge that to know oneself in the present one has to know one's genealogical past. She initiates young Milkman (in her opinion one of "the dumbest unhung Negroes on earth" who does not learn anything in school because he is taught the official history based on falsified truth[56]) into his search for identity through oral storytelling (35-55), and is therefore responsible for his change of attitude toward women. Milkman, having used women during his childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, changes on his journey in search of gold/identity and *shares* love with a woman for the first time in his life. Morrison describes this reciprocal non-sexist love relationship as follows: "She put salve on his face. He washed her hair. She sprinkled talcum on his feet. He straddled her behind and massaged her back. She put witch hazel on his swollen neck. He made up the bed. She gave him gumbo to eat. He washed the dishes. She washed his clothes ... He scoured her tub" (288-289). Lissie and Pilate are magicians who make and remake the past and men in the Afro-American cultural context - that is, they render experience as a historical process in which individual and collective self-definition cannot be separated - and thereby constitute the link between the present and the primary rites of man. They stand for woman whose worldview is "cosmic," whose "unconscious is worldwide," and who dares to make "vertiginous crossings of the other(s) ephemeral and passionate sojourns in him, her, them, whom she inhabits long enough to look at from the point closest to their unconscious ... and then further, impregnated through and through with these brief, identificatory embraces, she goes and passes into infinity." Furthermore, "she alone dares and wishes to know from within, where she, the outcast, has never ceased to hear the resonance of fore-language. She lets the other language speak - the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death."[57] This cosmic, atavistic nature characterizes their magico-realist worldview, a worldview based upon a dynamic harmonious relation between woman and her surroundings and between the present and the mytho-magical historical past. In

---

[55] See Susan Meisenhelder, " 'The Whole Picture' in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*," *African American Review* 27.3 (Fall 1993), 405-419. Although this article is a good analysis regarding George's internalization of the white value system, it does not analyze Mama Day's magico-realist worldview.

[56] Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (New York: Signet, 1977), 37. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text.

[57] Hélène Cixous, op. cit., 889.

Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*.[58] Mama Day, the community's midwife and guardian of tradition, a conjure woman and visionary, revives the past through visions and brings it into the present in order to shed light on the mythic legend of her family and the island's origin. The source of her magic power lies in her close and dynamic relation to nature. Mama Day is as deeply rooted in nature as in the past and in history. She seems to be a part of nature, reading its mind, understanding its manifold languages and deciphering its messages. As most of her epiphanies happen in nature, her magical insights seem to be extensions of natural forces, that is, her ratiocination is enlarged by "forces beyond ... control" (291), by forces imaginatively felt, sensed, and believed in. At one point, for example, she listens "under the wind" and hears the sounds of "a long wool shirt passing" and of "heavy leather boots, ... the humming-humming of some lost and ancient song" (118). By means of this harmonious magico-realist relation between Mama Day and nature - a dynamic relationship where events and things can continuously receive new dimensions and meanings - Mama Day is able to unravel the mysterious past and, by saving Cocoa's life, to determine the present and the future.[59] By using magical realism in combination with orality as distinctive devices of style, structure, and contents, Walker, Naylor and Morrison aesthetically convey Irigaray's definition of "le parler femme" as being characterized by "simultaneity" and fluidity: a simultaneous "property that never fixes itself in the possible identity of the self to another form. Always *fluid* without forgetting the characteristics of fluids which are so difficult to idealize: this friction between two infinitely neighbouring forces that creates their dynamics. Her 'style' resists and explodes all firmly established forms, figures, ideas, concepts."[60] Lissie, Mama Day, and Pilate are emblems of the pivotal role of women in the Afro-American experience. On the basis of black male writings one may think that only "the fathers ... soar" but in Morrison's words from *Song of Solomon*, "the children may know their names" (epitaph). While staying behind and transmitting the essence of the African-American experience, women "soar" in a cosmic way. In this process, they are delineated as the principal actresses not only of their own destinies, but of men's too (and herein lies another fundamental difference between black male and female fiction): in their function as guardians of the secrets and mysteries of the word, myths, legends, and history they become actresses of cultural transformation, catalysts of utopia.

Fathers soaring in quest of freedom and literacy, that is, black men on the move - on trains, in cars, on the road - is one of the central images in black male literature.

[58] Gloria Naylor, *Mama Day* (London: Vintage, 1990). Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

[59] The way this harmony is carried by a harmonious magico-realist discourse has been analyzed in my "Realismo mágico e oralidade na literatura afro-americana e chicana contemporânea dos EUA," a manuscript presented at the ABRALIC Conference 1996 in Rio de Janeiro, and in a very detailed form in my *Magical Realism in Contemporary Chicano Fiction* (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1993).

[60] Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*, op.cit., 76. The translation is mine.

Traditionally, women are described as staying in one place, most often the plantation, the family and home, as taking care of the children, building the nest, thus having only a limited experience and vision of the world. From nineteenth century autobiographical narratives to contemporary texts one can distinguish three different ways which characterize the male character's quest in black male literature. First, as can be detected in Frederick Douglass's 1845 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, the pattern of self-control, of self-restraint as a means to achieve moral and intellectual equality with white society. In the twentieth century the nature of the male character's quest changes. It can be described as an introspective one, a quest whose objective was the integration of the educated protagonist with the illiterate black masses.[61] From the publication of Richard Wright's *Native* Son (1940) onward, this quest becomes more and more externalized in the sense that black community, once the object of the quest, becomes, as in Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1947), an obstacle to its success. Until the 1960s the objective of this quest can be summed up as the protagonist seeking recognition from and within white society. This kind of quest is still the dominant structure of some important contemporary texts, but in novels such as Ernest Gaines' *My Father's House* (1978), *A Gathering of Old Men* (1983), or Wesley Brown's *Tragic Magic* (1978), to name just a few, which still focus mainly on black male self-portraiture, the black male's attitude begins to be questioned and critically examined.

In general one can say that in black women's literature awareness of these opposites - man leaving and women staying behind as well as their implied symbolic meaning, liberty versus constraint - is present. Nel's longing for journeys in Morrison's *Sula*, her desire to see the world and her actual immobility, is typical here as well as the fact that the only trip she makes initiates her sense of identity and pride. The symbolic meaning of movement as freedom and access to greater self-awareness underlies the characterization of such contrasting figures as Mem and Meridian, Sula and Nel, Pilate and Ruth. The direction was given by Hurston: Janie's journey with Teacake to the Everglades, after years of staying in the same place and constricted roles, signals the beginning of the experience of a fuller self. But, as Deborah McDowell correctly observes, in contrast to the majority of male characters, these women are also able to settle down: Janie, Vyry, Lutie, Polly, Pilate, Sula, Meridian, Mattie, Cocoa, and Lissie, among others, are capable of doing both things, so that their journeys lack the taste of flight it often has in black men's literature.[62] And since the female slave narrative, especially Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), black women's fiction has focused less on the individual performance of their characters but rather on the relation between personal development and the community, which implies female bonding.[63] In this process, black women writers have problematized the notion of black community. Hurston

[61] See, for example, Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923) and Langston Hughes' *Not Without Laughter* (1930).

[62] See Deborah McDowell, "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism," *Black American Literature Forum* 14.4 (1980), 157.

criticizes "the evil tongues" of the black community, people who, based on their limited experience, their internalization of the white value system, and their materialist alienation ostracize Janie. Ann Petry, in her novel *The Street* (1946),[64] describes the evil winds that sweep through the streets of Harlem in the 1940s. This "cold November wind blowing through 116th Street" (1) becomes a hurricane which destroys the life of Lutie Johnson, a young black woman, who desperately struggles to survive and raise her son amid the violence, poverty, and racial dissonance of Harlem. The novel's harsh discourse of social realism, tinged with naturalist shades, demystifies the northern 'haven of liberty', an illusion cherished by many blacks in the South. Petry, by describing and condemning the animalization of black people in ghetto-like living conditions, people who, like animals in a zoo with no space to move, growl, roar, and rage at the bars of their cages (325), points out the reason why "the street ... became both mother and father and trained your kid for you, and it was an evil father and a vicious mother..." (407):

> *Streets like the one she lived on were no accident. They were the North's lynch mobs, she thought bitterly; the method the big cities used to keep Negroes in their place. And she began thinking of Pop unable to get a job; of Jim slowly disintegrating because he, too, couldn't get a job, and of the subsequent wreck of their marriage, of Bub left to his own devices after school. From the time she was born, she had been hemmed into an ever-narrowing space, until now she was very nearly walled in and the wall had been built up brick by brick by eager white hands (323-324).*

It is racism that transforms Harlem into a cage and black men into animals craving for young women such as Lutie, turning her life into a constant danger zone: the dominant feeling which characterizes Lutie throughout the novel is fear. Ann Petry tells the reader in an impressive way that this vicious circle of violence, hatred, and corruption, which characterizes the moral swamp of Harlem, is a dead-end street where murder reigns freely.

---

[63] On the difference between female and male slave narratives see Nelly McKay, "Reflections on Black Women Writers," in *Feminisms. An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, eds. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 249-261, as well as Frances Foster, " 'In Respect to Females...': Differences in the Portrayals of Women by Male and Female Narrators," *Black American Literary Forum* 15.2 (Summer 1981), 66-70. Barbara Christian offers the following explanation of sisterhood as a recurrent theme in black women's fiction: "Partly because of the matricentric orientation of African peoples from whom they were descended, partly because of the nature of American slavery, African-American women have had to bond with each other in order to survive. African-Americans as a race could not have survived without the 'female values' of communality, sharing and nurturing." Barbara Christian, "Gloria Naylor's Geography: Community, Class, and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*," in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., op.cit., 364.

[64] Ann Petry, *The Street* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). All further references are taken from this edition.

Gloria Naylor's female community of Brewster Place, in her novel *The Women of Brewster Place*,[65] is located on another dead-end street, this time in Philadelphia. Brewster Place is "the bastard child of clandestine meetings" (1) between local white politicians, creating a ghetto, at first for European immigrants, and later for poor blacks. This is the only but very important reference to racism in the novel (as in Hurston's novel, white society does not constitute an explicit topic): it hovers over the story as an invisible shroud, not there, yet present as an invisible reality. The "multi-colored Afric-children" who populate Brewster Place have traveled up North, fleeing from "the starving southern climates" (4). Naylor uses a geographical space, a street, a place, to depict a group of women, their childhood experiences, their adolescences, their struggles, their emotions, their relationships with men, in short, their social practice. As in black women's literature in general, community is more than space; it is even more than time and space, a chronotope in the Bakhtinian sense, because it is constituted through and lives in the telling and the listening, in the mode of living and thinking. The definition of place in black women's fiction is therefore much more than a static setting and becomes a character, a living cosmic space.[66] In Naylor's case, this place rendered as character, as living cosmic space, is carried by the narrative style and structure. The opening and closing chapters, called "Dawn" and "Dusk" respectively, represent the beginning and the end of this particular black neighborhood, of this community and its history of transients, metonymically. The remaining chapters deal with the stories of seven women. Third-person narration interspersed with free indirect discourse, dialogues, flashbacks and flash-forwards, interior monologues and introspective analysis shed light on their fragmented destinies. Time-shifts and a changing narrative perspective add to the non-chronological character of the narrative: the past becomes the present while pointing to the future. This fluidity, this simultaneity creates an implicit time-space continuum which undermines and subverts the apparent linearity of the surface temporal frame set between the mid-1930s and the 1980s. Consequently, the stories could happen any day, any place in any black urban neighborhood between dawn and dusk.

I have already mentioned that Naylor's novel is an example of black sisterhood. Yet, like Walker and Morrison, Naylor does not idealize the notion of community and communality. Instead, she problematizes it by closely scrutinizing her characters' social practice. While Ann Petry emphasizes racism as the determining

---

[65] Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place* (New York: Penguin, 1983). Subsequent references will be given in the text.

[66] This definition of place as character, a living cosmic space, is a dominant feature in many Chicano and Native American novels. Joyce in *Dubliners*, Anderson in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Dos Passos in *Manhattan Transfer* and Faulkner in his novels treat place in a similar way: the social and cultural milieu of the narrative forms a multi-dimensional structure which becomes the fictional center. In this process, the setting - place - is background and foreground, time and space, at the same time and the individual character and the role (s)he plays within the novel are both absorbed and overshadowed by this world of communal experience in which time becomes space and space becomes time.

factor in her characters' lives, Naylor, like Walker and Morrison, without disregarding this fact, focuses on the relationship between black men and women as *the* crucial factor in her characters' lives. In the novel, women suffer because they *are* women, that is, they are wounded because they are (ab)used by men and because they let themselves be (ab)used. This is the basic underlying message of the narrative portrayal of Mattie Michaels, Etta Mae Johnson, Lucielia Louise Turner, and Cora Lee. "Ruined" by a single sexual encounter, Mattie is beaten up and kicked out of the house by her father. Deeply affected by these two incidents, Mattie abstains from male relationships and dedicates her life to the upbringing of her only son, Basil. It is Basil, a pampered "little boy who would always need her," who seals her fate by depleting her savings and thus causing her move to Brewster Place. Etta Mae, an uppity flapper, is forced to leave her community and live at the expense of men. Lucielia Louise is unable to end her relationship with Eugene, who constantly leaves her, because of a variety of reasons that range from social pressure to sexual desire, and Cora Lee, before being 'liberated' by Kiswana, lives in a fantasy world and is obsessed with having babies. She does not care about men except for getting pregnant. These women are characterized by their inability to "shine alone" (60), that is, they fail because they are unable to live through themselves, to build an individual identity, a truly independent consciousness. In living through others, each of these women characters is a blank that "like a mirror, reflects the masculine,"[67] or, following Irigaray, their femininity is repressed and reappears as man's specularized Other.[68]

Naylor's most severe criticism of the black community is voiced in the chapter on "the two," the lesbians who for most residents do not even have specific names. The story describes the physical and psychological effects of the community's ostracism of Lorraine and Theresa. According to the narrator, "the difference" collides with the "predictable world" of the average person, who, based on "fears" and "childhood nightmares," condemns those who differ from him/her, and Mattie sums up the community's fear and their "funny feeling" towards Lorraine and Theresa's love: "Maybe it's not so different ... maybe that's why some women get so riled up about it 'cause they know deep down it's not so different after all ... it kinda gives you a funny feeling when you think about it that way, though" (141). Unlike Walker in *The Color Purple*, in which ,to the implied reader's surprise, the lesbian relationship between Celie and Shug does not cause any severe criticism and ostracism on the part of the community (in the rural South, on top of that), Naylor uses the theme of lesbianism to condemn the narrow-mindedness of those people within the black community who need the marginalization of others in order to legitimize themselves. They are like those people in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* who are condemned by Janie for their "evil tongues," people who never realized their potential as individual,

[67] Andrea Nye, *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 151.

[68] See especially her *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

independent human beings, who lack experience in their "predictable world" (132). Yet, Naylor's critique goes beyond that because she implicitly denounces the black community's internalization of white racist thinking as the basis of intra-black homophobia. Therefore, although gang-raped and killed by men,[69] Lorraine dies because the women of Brewster Place (with the exception of Kiswana) marginalize her. Naylor's novel, by means of an implicit problematization of the black community, urges women to base their sisterhood, which should be all-encompassing, on strong individual identities (such as Kiswana's) which are not imbued by what W.E.B.Du Bois called "double-consciousness."[70] Only then will they be able to truly take control of their destinies. The women of Brewster Place seem to be in control but are not, as they remain conditioned by and unable to free themselves from racist, patriarchal societal mores.

In her second novel, *Linden Hills*, Naylor continues her critical examination of the black community. Linden Hills, a northern suburb of upper middle-class blacks, an "ebony jewel" that is also a "beautiful, black wad of spit right in the white eye of America,"[71] is not a community but an agglomeration of houses whose *whitewashed* facades veil the splintered, reified souls of black people, male and female - black people whose lives are determined by the maxim of "making it," who sell out to "success," "progress," and "power." The narrative's surface describes the characters' crack-up (a la Fitzgerald), but its political unconscious lies in Naylor's capacity to show the links between class, race, and gender in a historical process. While Brewster Place is the result of racist city planners, Linden Hills is founded by an ex-slave, Luther Nedeed, who in the 1820s realized his dream to develop a community of an élite which could prove to white America that black people can be successful. In order to get the permission from the Nedeeds to live in Linden Hills, one had to be rich, or at least willing "to turn the memory of our iron chains into gold chains" (12). In other words, the creation of black power based on white materialist values implied the repression ("to forget and make the world forget..." 10) of black history. Thus, whereas the creation of Brewster Place is an imposed act, the one of Linden Hills is a willfully chosen one, a fact that connotes the class distinctions within the black community: while the inhabitants of Brewster Place, the poor blacks, have no chance to become the full masters of their destinies, the ones of Linden Hills, middle-class blacks, have the chance to do so. This interplay of race and class, delineated in a developing historical process, cannot be separated from the gender question. In an impressive, in African-American literature hitherto unique, manner, Naylor shows how Nedeed's dream of Linden Hills - a dream which is rendered by

[69] The animalization of men in ghetto-like living conditions, street-toughs, caged in a three hundred-foot alley, who base their male power on "what lay curled behind their fly ... human beings with an erection to validate" (43-44) their shattered, fragmented, and alienated egos in a world and a society that do not even allow them to watch the ships on the horizon, to dream about future possibilities, is similar to the one denounced by Ann Petry in *The Street*.

[70] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1961), 16.

[71] Gloria Naylor, *Linden Hills* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 9. Further references are given in the text.

means of multiple male and female points of view and perspectives and fragmented discourse - is a patriarchal myth, namely, the idea that the son has to duplicate the father and must be separated from the mother and her influence. This implies that the mother's voice must be silenced, forcibly repressed, that the suppression of her story is the basis of the patriarchal myth, which is the Nedeeds' developing dream of Linden Hills from one generation to the next. While other novels by Afro-American women writers broach the issue of class,[72] Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* reveal as their political unconscious the devastating influence the patriarchal order has upon the black community: doomed from the beginning since it is based upon violence against women, Linden Hills is rotting from within as is symbolized by the characters' crack-up. Thus, Naylor achieves two principal things in *Linden Hills*: she demystifies what Althusser, among others, has called the false consciousness, that is, in this case, the ideology of the patriarchal order and the implicit materialist value system, on the one hand, and the (historical) official discourse that carries this ideology on the other. The demystification of this discourse, which hovers over the *dit* as its *non-dit* throughout the entire diegesis, is explicitly revealed in the episode dealing with Linden Hill's historian, Braithwaite. Completely separated from the rest of the community (this demonstrates his alienation in a Marxist sense), Braithwaite chronicles the events of Linden Hills. He himself has chosen his seclusion, for only then, he thinks, can he be objective. Of course, this man, convinced that he knows everything, does not understand the essence of what is really going on in Linden Hills, namely the forces that cause the disintegration, the destruction of the community. *Linden Hills*, like *The Women of Brewster Place*, based on its demystifying counterhegemonic discourse of resistance to the dominant ideology, establishes an implicit alter-ideology that radically denounces and deconstructs patriarchy, materialism, and consumerism within the black community.[73]

Among contemporary black women writers, Toni Morrison's discourse is equally radical with regard to the capitalist patriarchal order.[74] Like Naylor, Morrison focuses

[72] Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Ann Petry's *The Street*, Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*, Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *The Color Purple*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha*, Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, and Andrea Lee's *Sarah Phillips*, among others.

[73] In *The Women of Brewster Place, and Linden Hills*, as well as in her latest novel, *Bailey's Cafe* (1992), which can be seen as a continuation of her denunciation of capitalism insofar as she describes the lives of society's scum, the down-trodden, the detritus, those who have no place else to go but Bailey's Cafe, Gloria Naylor's socially symbolic narrative does not contain an imaginary solution to the social contradictions. However, I see this utopian function expressed in her third novel *Mama Day*, precisely in Mama Day's magico-realist cosmovision. See my "Magical Realism and Orality in Contemporary Afro-American Women's Literature: Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* and Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*," op. cit.

[74] This does not exclude Alice Walker's discourse. Her equally strong denunciation, however, is somewhat weakened by certain structural inconsistencies, especially in *The Color Purple* and in *The Temple of My Familiar*, which let her endings appear rather improbable on the level of discourse (see Roland Barthes, "L'effet de réel," in his *Le bruissement de la langue*, op.cit., 167-174). This also implies that the narrative's utopian function in Walker's works is rather abstract than concrete in a Blochian sense.

upon the black community a as place defined by a group's social practice, and like Naylor and Walker she scrutinizes this place, this community in its historical process.[75] Like her female colleagues, Morrison writes against the discontinuity, the fragmentation, alienation, and reification of the individual subject, whom she sees as a product of postmodern capitalist society.[76] In an interview she said the following: "When I talked to a very young black girl recently, it seemed to me that she had never heard of anything. They're grown up like they never had grandmothers. Or if they had them, they never paid them any attention. Kill your ancestors, you kill all. There's no future, there's no past, there's just an intolerable present."[77] Given the fact that according to critics such as Hassan, Lyotard, Harvey, and Jameson, among others, postmodernism is characterized by total ephemerality, discontinuity, fragmentation, and chaotic currents of change,[78] one could argue that the counterhegemonic discourse of contemporary black women writers transmits resistance to this postmodern trend by outlining imaginary *concrete* utopian solutions which posit the potential survival of an individual existing within the communal, mytho-magical, historical horizon of the Afro-American cultural experience.[79]

One of the most telling examples of this discourse can be found in Morrison's *Sula* and *Song of Solomon*. *Sula* focuses upon the friendship between Nel and Sula, but it begins with a place: "In that place, where they tore the nightshade and blackberry patches from their roots to make room for the Medallion City Golf Course, there was once a neighborhood."[80] Morrison continues to describe this place, its coming into existence, its development

[75] Morrison's interest in the past, in history, in the myths and legends of black folklore as a key to the understanding of the present is a well-known fact. Unique, however, is the way she implicates the reader in the historical experience of black people. Although Morrison expresses this historical process through the theme of *displacement* in all of her novels, it is in *Beloved* and in *Jazz* that she makes the reader *live* this experience: "The reader is snatched ... into an environment completely foreign ... Snatched just as the slaves were from one place to another ... without preparation and without defense." Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," in *Toni Morrison*, ed. Harold Bloom, op.cit., 228.

[76] This is why most black women writers resist the tendency to isolate the individual.

[77] Anne Koenen, "The One Out Of Sequence': An Interview with Toni Morrison," in *History and Tradition in Afro-American Culture*, ed. Günter H. Lenz (Frankfurt: Campus, 1984), 213.

[78] See Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) and his essay "The Culture of Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture and Society* 2.3 (1985), 119-132; Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

[79] According to Ernst Bloch, a concrete utopia is based on imaginary ideas which "continue existing things toward the future possibilities of their difference, their betterment," in contrast to an abstract utopia which is based on "abstract utopian reverie." A concrete utopia, according to Bloch, expresses hope based on reality. See Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 163-165. The translation is mine.

[80] Toni Morrison, *Sula* (London: Picador, 1991), 3. Further references will be given in parenthesis.

from the past to the present, its people, gradually introducing her two protagonists into the story line. Like Naylor in *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Linden Hills*, and *Mama Day*, or Paule Marshall in *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, Morrison begins her novel by describing the origin of a place, a neighborhood and its historical development. Based on my argumentation in the preceding paragraphs, this structural device is of utmost importance because it establishes the connection between the individual (in this case Nel and Sula) and the neighborhood, the dialectical relationship between the individual and the group: place being (part of) a character. Within this framework, Morrison delineates her most intriguing, contradictory and therefore human female protagonist: Sula, who wards off the attack of white boys by cutting off the tip of her finger, who accidentally kills a child, who leaves her neighborhood, goes to college, and comes back estranged, who sleeps with her best friend's husband without the slightest pangs of conscience, who, cherishing her freedom more than everything, destroys her only satisfactory relationship with a man by wanting to possess him, who watches her mother burn to death without batting an eyelid, and who, by putting her grandmother into an old people's home, commits her most serious crime in the eyes of the community. Sula, the symbol of freedom and loneliness, of an anarchic and bourgeois attitude, of a postmodern *dislocated* self,[81] Morrison's most enigmatic character, does not fit in anywhere. Sula can be seen as an egocentric outlaw who is marginalized by the community because she cuts herself off from responsibility to anyone other than herself at a time (the 1940s) when survival was being based upon taking care of each other.[82] In short, Sula lacks any sense of community; she refuses to acknowledge the need for and the importance of the group in the process and as a basis of self-definition,[83] preferring "the free fall ... a thing to do with the wings ... a full surrender to the downward flight" rather than the unadventurous life of a married woman, a spider "whose only thought was the next rung of the web, who dangled in dark dry places suspended by their own spittle, more terrified of the free fall than the snake's breath below"

[81] Or, according to Paul de Man, "a self caught up entirely within mutability." Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. C.S.Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 181.

[82] However, one should not overlook that Morrison criticizes the internal split of this black community. Actually, one could argue that it is Sula who creates the communal spirit of this neighborhood through her difference, that is, the neighborhood's communality is based on Sula's marginalization and thus is rather artificial than natural. This interpretation is furthermore corroborated by the community's dissolution (destruction) after Sula's death. Therefore, it is pointless to consider Sula or the community as emblems of evil, as some critics have done. I would rather argue that Morrison does in *Sula* what she does in all of her novels: she shows the many sides of what we take for granted, or as Morrison would say, there simply is and you make and remake it.

[83] On the intertextual relationship between Sula and Cain see Carolyn M. Jones, "*Sula* and *Beloved*: Images of Cain in the Novels of Toni Morrison," *African American Review* 27.4 (1993), 615-626.

(120). Sula's tragic fate does not mean that Morrison defends a traditional role of woman in the novel. On the contrary, by declaring her sympathy with Hannah, Sula's mother, who also sleeps around with other wives' husbands, Morrison does not condemn but problematize the notion of (and the desire for) freedom. But whereas Sula *takes*, her mother *gives*.[84] What characterizes Hannah and Nel is their nurturing spirit. They can give freely without a thought of return while Sula is unable to do so. Both Hannah, who gives lust and satisfaction, and Nel, who gives love and compassion, are emblems of female mothering, of women who do not want to impose themselves on anybody. If it weren't for Morrison's implicit deconstruction the reader would be able to establish this notion as one of the text's messages. The relativity of truth and meaning, however, is emphasized in one of the most beautiful love affairs in black women's fiction: the short-lived relationship between Sula and Ajax. In this episode Morrison delineates Ajax as a truly free spirit, a man who treats Sula as an equal, does not speak down to her, and refuses to "baby or protect her" (128). Ajax never tells Sula when he will return and seems to live outside the bonds of man-made time and regular work. He is one of Morrison's symbols of spontaneity and freedom. When Sula begins to discover what possession is, when she begins to want him for herself, to worry about his irregular visits, and to act on this impulse, the desire to put shackles on Ajax by saying "lean on me" (133), he leaves her. In this episode Sula behaves like Nel, developing for the first time caring feelings for somebody, wanting to mother, to give, to nurture. Ajax's spontaneity and freedom is dialectically opposed to the shackles of marriage, mothering and nurturing. Once again the reader is confronted with the multiple layers of meaning that Morrison's open texts offer in a Faulknerian way, this intra-textual deconstruction and/or reconstruction of what has been said before with which Morrison stresses the relativity of meaning and truth.

Another particular characteristic of Morrison's style and structure should be mentioned here. In all of her novels she says less than she signifies, that is, her texts' metaphorical style and gap-filled structure, which rely very much on reader participation, connote the *non-dit*, the important something that operates beneath her language. No sexual language accompanies the lovemaking scene between Sula and Ajax, a scene dominated by the images of mud and water, portraying Sula's innermost thoughts. Sula imagines herself first rubbing then scraping her lover's skin in an effort to lay bare one layer of skin after the other, the black, the gold, the alabaster one. While making love to Ajax her thoughts assume the metaphorical expression of reverse penetration:

[84] In the interview with Anne Koenen (see footnote 77) she says, "The woman that I feel most affection for is Hannah" (209). Hannah's (and Nel's) generous attitude corresponds with what Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" describes as the realm of the *gift* that characterizes the feminine libidinal economy in contrast to the realm of the *proper* linked to the masculine libidinal economy. See also her "Castration or Decapitation, " op.cit., 48-50 and *La Jeune Née* (Paris: UGE, 1975), 147.

Then I can take a chisel and small tap hammer and tap away at the alabaster. It will crack then like ice under the pick, and through the breaks I will see the loam, fertile, free of pebbles and twigs. For it is the loam that is giving you that smell. ... I will put my hand deep into your soil, lift it, sift it with my fingers, feel its warm surface and dewy chill below. ... I will water your soil, keep it rich and moist. But how much? How much water to keep the loam moist? And how much loam will I need to keep my water still? And when do the two make mud? (130-131)

This metaphorical 'oceanic' water/mud imagery, conveyed through lyrical stream-of-consciousness writing - water being the feminine element *par excellence* - evokes the episode which depicts Nel and Sula as adolescents playing with sticks, grass blades and soil, a scene which connotes the two girls' awakening sexuality (58). Furthermore, by describing how Sula 'takes' Ajax, Morrison foreshadows Sula's desire to take possession of Ajax and its doomed outcome, as he "will crack ... like ice under the pick..." Sula, I have said, acts very much like Nel throughout her relationship with Ajax, but as this lovemaking scene suggests, she also becomes a little girl again, a child playing with water and loam. In fact, Sula imagines the water and the loam which, together, between the two of them, *could* make mud. This is the moment when Sula, the independent flapper, tries to come closest to another person. The questions, however, intimate that this is only a short moment's dance, that nothing lasts, that death is lurking behind orgasmic heights, or in Jimmy Cliff's words, "the harder they come, the harder they fall." In terms of Cixous' *écriture feminine*, a writing which is not determined by the sex of the author, the language of this particular scene *seems* to convey an oceanic mergence with the world, with nature, an endless giving, an evocation of a child's pleasures. According to Cixous' rather essentialist notion, woman is characterized by the capacity to move freely, to become the other, to be "sea, sand, coral, seaweed, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves. ... Heterogeneous ... she is the erotogeneity of the heterogeneous: airborne swimmer, in flight, she does not cling to herself; she is dispersible, prodigious, stunning, desirous and capable of others, of the other woman that she will be, of the other woman she isn't, of him, of you."[85] Sula fails ultimately because she is unable to merge with Ajax, to give, to become the other, because she clings to herself. Sula's desire for possession stops her in midflight, while Nel, at the end of the novel, seems to have learned to move freely, that is, to nurture without imposing on others, without giving up her individual freedom, while at the same time accepting the freedom of others. This process of learning something, which Morrison has described as one of her writing's main objectives,[86] implies the experience of suffering and pain expressed

[85] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," op.cit., 889-890. This view of woman as a fluid subject is very similar to Luce Irigaray's (see footnote 60).

[86] On Morrison's didactic mode of writing see her statements in the interview with Anne Koenen (footnote 77) on page 213.

in the novel's last sentence, the omniscient narrator's comment on Nel's illuminative cry, " 'O Lord, Sula,' ... 'girl, girl, girlgirlgirl' ": "It was a fine cry - loud and long - but it had no bottom and it had no top, just circles and circles of sorrow" (174).[87] Although being a spiral of sorrow, life nevertheless offers the possibility of learning. Nel learns that Sula was right, that there was no difference between them, that the meaning of good or evil, right or wrong is relative. By realizing that she never missed her husband but that she did miss Sula, Nel becomes Sula - a fact that is also stressed by her taking on Sula's mark: Nel is Sula's other in "sameness of difference."[88] This symbolic female bonding, which transcends death and what Cixous might call patriarchal binary thought, becomes the basis of her new-found identity and consciousness.[89]

Morrison's problematization of the black community, suggesting through the relationship between Sula and the community that no true communal spirit exists, that like Linden Hills, the Bottom is rather a place, a neighborhood than a community, carries a rather pessimistic tone: "These young ones kept talking about the community, but they left the hills to the poor, the old, the stubborn - and the rich white folks. Maybe it hadn't been a community, but it had been a place. Now there weren't any places left, just separate houses with separate televisions and separate telephones and less and less dropping by" (166). The socially symbolic narrative in *Sula* implies as its utopian function the insight that human beings are able to learn through suffering, that it is, however, impossible to win any battle because victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools, to use Faulkner's fundamental notion in *The Sound and the Fury*. Morrison does not offer us clear-cut imaginary solutions to existing conflicts and contradictions yet she suggests them: the community's fragmentation is an effect whose cause lies in the separateness characterizing the relationship between individuals such as Nel and Sula and one possible way to overcome this destructive abyss is to *learn* how to deconstruct oneself, to think for oneself in order to be able to read one's text into the other's on the basis of non-appropriation, that is to say, to bond in difference.[90]

[87] This comment is a telling example of Morrison's open endings and metaphorical style.

[88] Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, eds. Richard Kearney and Mara Rainwater (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 455.

[89] Based on my analysis I would argue that Morrison's *spiral* writing entails what Cixous with regard to Lispector's writing has described as a "relentless practice of de-egoization," that is the transcendence of masculine writing which *appropriates* the other. According to Cixous, "the process of de-selfing" which characterizes feminine writing celebrates what Lispector in *The Hour of the Star* has called "transfiguration into others," that is, multiplicity and differentiality. See Hélène Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity," tranlated by Ann Liddle and Susan Sellers, in Susan Sellers (ed.), *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 14-19 and Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, translated by Giovanni Pontiero, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986), 20.

[90] This train of thought, though based on Derrida's attack on metaphysical thought, was sparked by Gayatri Spivak's "Feminism and Critical Theory," in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer (New York: Longman, 1994), 519-34 and "Bonding in Difference," in *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, ed. Alfred Arteaga (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 273-85.

In *Song of Solomon*.[91] Morrison continues to problematize the notion of community in its historical process, adding new aspects such as a severe criticism of materialism and the patriarchal order, the reliance on myth, and the structural device of journey - a mytho-archetypal expression - and focusing upon a man in search of identity.[92] The theme of journey is as prevalent in black women's literature as in black male fiction and is closely associated with the issues of identity and history.[93] According to Susan Willis, journey in black women's fiction "is not just a structuring device upon which the author might conveniently string the incidents of plot. Rather, the notion of travelling through space is integral to the unfolding of history and the development of the individual's consciousness with regard to the past." In this process, the character discovers herself, "who she is - not as an individual, but as a subject who gathers up the collective experience of black Americans; and who then, in writing about that experience, gives shape and substance to the self in history."[94] Although Morrison focuses on a man's journey, the protagonists, one could argue, are those affected by Milkman, namely his sisters Lena and Corinthians, his cousin and lover Hagar, and his aunt Pilate. Milkman conditions his older sisters' lives, using them at will. Lena voices Milkman's chauvinist attitude before his journey:

> *You've been laughing at us all your life. Corinthians. Mama. Me. Using us, ordering us, and judging us: how we cook your food; how we keep your house. ... You don't know a single thing about either one of us ... Our girlhood was spent like a found nickel on you. When you slept, we were quiet; when you were hungry, we cooked; when you wanted to play, we*

[91] Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (New York: Signet, 1978). Further references will be given parenthetically.

[92] On the structural use of myth see Juan Villegas, *La estrutura mítica del héroe en la novela del siglo XX* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1973). This excellent study is based upon Joseph Campbell's anthropological study of myth, journey and hero in *El héroe de las mil caras* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959). See also A. Leslie Harries, "Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*," *Melus* 7.3 (Fall 1980), 69-76.

[93] Journey in African-American literature signifies not only spacial but also spiritual movement within a historical process. It embraces the journey from Africa to the United States, the so-called Middle Passage, the journey from the South to the North, and the one from the North to the South (including the Caribbean and Africa), the cradle of Afro-American culture. Robert B. Stepto called the novels characterized by this type of journey "narratives of ascent and immersion," distinguishing it as a principal characteristic of "the Afro-American pregeneric myth of the quest for freedom and literacy." Robert B. Stepto, "Ascent, Immersion, Narration," in *Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1987), 5-8. See also his *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979). Based on Stepto's important analysis, which focuses mainly on male authors, it is necessary to study this phenomenon in black women's fiction. In light of this "ascent-and-immersion" theory it is for example worth noting that Alice Walker in *The Temple of My Familiar* intensifies and condenses this type of journey by using the structural and stylistic devices of orality and magical realism (Lissie's spiritual movement).

[94] Susan Willis, "Black Women Writers: Taking a Critical Perspective," in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, eds. Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London/New York: Methuen, 1985), 220.

> *entertained you ... everything in this house stopped for you. ... And to this day, you have never asked one of us if we were tired, or sad, or wanted a cup of coffee. ... Where do you get the right to decide our lives? ... I'll tell you where. From that hog's gut that hangs between your legs. Well, let me tell you something, baby brother: you will need more than that (216-217).*

Morrison uses the portrayal of Milkman's childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood to show not only how the patriarchal order functions in this black family, but also to what extent it has damaging effects on Milkman's sisters: the stifling of their potential experiences, their lives. Lena blames her and her sister's spinsterhood on Milkman and implicitly accuses her father Macon Dead of having established this patriarchal order in the family.

It is through the dichotomous delineation of Macon Dead and his sister Pilate that Morrison shows and criticizes the links between patriarchy and materialism and the implicit system of domination and repression based upon exclusion rather than inclusion, upon the internalization of the dominant value system and erasure of the past and history, a system that produces alienated characters. In *Song of Solomon* Macon Dead represents this system and its characteristics most strongly. His maxim, the one he teaches Milkman, is to "own things. And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too" (55). Milkman's father is the emblem of what Morrison has once called "thingism," that is total reification.[95] He has internalized the bourgeois commodity fetishism to such an extent that he regards his family and his tenants as aquisitions and future investments. Macon's dialectical antithesis is his sister Pilate, an earthy woman, who establishes a woman-centered anarcho-alternative community that, as one critic put it, "consistently operates without regard for middle-class conventions or the expectations of men."[96] Pilate, the one with no navel (the ur-mother), who carries her name in a little box as an earring and who instructs Milkman in the history of his family through storytelling,[97]

[95] On reification see Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (London: Merlin, 1971), Lucien Goldmann, *Propos Dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), and Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971) According to the definitions of these authors, reification means the transformation of all human functions and qualities into commodities and the implicit alienation, fragmentation, and dehumanization of human beings. Regarding this issue one should also consult Jean-Paul Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Vol. I. (Paris. Gallimard, 1960).

[96] John N. Duvall, "Doe Hunting and Masculinity: *Song of Solomon* and *Go Down, Moses*," *Arizona Quarterly* 47.1 (Spring 1991), 108.

[97] As in many Afro-American novels, the theme of 'naming' plays a crucial role in *Song of Solomon*. The Deads received their name from a "Yankee" in 1869 when Milkman's grandfather, who could neither read nor write, registered with the Freedmen's Bureau. Later, when his wife found out that the Yankee had misunderstood her husband and put his name down as Dead, she liked the name because "it was new and would wipe out the past" (54). Based on this fact, one could interpret Milkman's journey as a search for his real name. When he finds out that he is the descendant of Solomon, an African slave who had magically escaped by flying back to Africa, he knows the origin of his family, he is renamed, that is, his true individual identity is linked with the collective one. The political unconscious of this process of renaming, initiated by Pilate's storytelling, lies in the reappropriation of identity on the part of the oppressed, the colonized: the margin becomes center and source through the guidance of women, namely Pilate and Circe.

lives in a house with no electricity because she does not like to pay for it, lights the house "with candles and kerosene lamps," cooks with "wood and coal," and lives "pretty much as though progress was a word that meant walking a little farther on down the road" (27). Together with her daughter Reba and her granddaughter Hagar, she lives a life based on spontaneity and non-accumulation:

> *No meal was ever planned or balanced or served. Nor was there any gathering at the table. Pilate might bake hot bread and each one of them would eat it with butter whenever she felt like it. Or there might be grapes, left over from the winemaking, or peaches for days on end. If one of them bought a gallon of milk they drank it until it was gone. If another got a half bushel of tomatoes or a dozen ears of corn, they ate them until they were gone too. They ate what they had or came across or had a craving for. Profits from their wine-selling evaporated like sea water in a hot wind ... (29).*

This household, based on equal sharing in contrast to Macon's male-dominated one, has been described by Susan Willis as "a utopian reworking of the smalltown principle with none of the latter's narrowminded attitudes or the poverty generated by the town's unequal and dependent relationship to the city."[98] It should be added, however, that it is a *concrete* "utopian reworking" that expresses hope based on reality (Bloch). Morrison, in delineating Pilate's earthy alternative lifestyle,[99] does not get absorbed in abstract reverie, as is attested by Hagar's vulnerability to consumer fetishism. Hagar, realizing that her lover Milkman is not interested in her any more, embarks upon a buying spree of useless commodities (garter belts, panties, nylon slips, skirts, etc.) in order to change herself, to make herself right for him. Typical of Morrison, she does not explicitly condemn Hagar's attitude but suggests her criticism by means of an image. Hagar, while coming home from this buying binge, is caught in a heavy downpour, catches a cold, and dies. This image with its implicit criticism of commodity culture reveals one of the most important aspects of Morrison's writings: namely, the deadly connection between patriarchy and capitalism. It kills black women, doubly oppressed by a racist society and a misogynist culture, because they internalize the dominant value system. Morrison does not acquit her women characters of blame, but, as in *The Bluest Eye,* she actually denounces an ideal of beauty that is determined by white society and the patriarchal notion that beauty determines the value of women, a notion internalized and therefore perpetuated by black women.[100]

---

[98] Susan Willis, "Black Women Writers: Taking a Critical Perspective," op.cit., 226.

[99] Morrison has commented upon the dichotomy of Pilate's anti-materialist utopia and her brother's capitalist philosophy - a dichotomy that structures the novel's opening - as follows: "Pilate is earth. Her brother is property." See her interview with Anne Koenen (footnote 77), 215.

[100] Hagar's attitude implies the following equation: to change her appearance for him means to become white. Capitalism offers her an illusory way to buy whiteness through consumption. In other words, the dominant ideology veils economic and racial difference and replaces it by an allegedly equal ability to consume, even though what is consumed is a white image.

In Pilate's house, via Pilate's oral lessons, Milkman begins his journey through the past, through history, to self-knowledge.[101] Milkman, however, is completely unaware of this process. He is so deeply imbued with his father's materialist thinking that he is unable to understand the implicit meaning of Pilate's stories. Consequently, his decision to travel to the place where his father and aunt were born is triggered by Pilate's reference to gold, which she and her brother left in a cave. It takes another female guide to magically transform Milkman's quest for gold into one for identity. In Danville, Milkman still does not know the location of this cave. The clue comes from a woman who helped deliver his father and Pilate, a woman named Circe who is believed to be dead but appears to be alive, talking to Milkman. In this magico-realist episode, which is characterized by a harmonious discourse transmitting a harmonious worldview[102] and in which Morrison deconstructs a purely rational conception of reality through the creation of a magico-realist time-space continuum, Milkman is literally enchanted by Circe (the allusion to the Greek goddess is obvious). Although Morrison suggests Milkman's dream-like, visionary epiphany at the beginning of this scene,[103] Milkman is unable to understand the latent meaning of Circe's words as she herself tells him: "You don't listen to people. Your ear is on your head, but it's not connected to your brain" (249). That he has been transformed, however, is symbolically hinted at when Milkman leaves the old living spirit and starts heading for the cave. On his way to the cave, still propelled by the idea of finding gold, Milkman is literally stripped of his material possessions - his watch,

---

[101] Thus his journey begins as a spiritual movement and becomes a spatial one in the last part of the book.

[102] In *Magical Realism in Contemporary Chicano Fiction* (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1993), I argue that a magico-realist discourse is characterized by harmony: the natural and supernatural categories of reality are harmoniously intertwined (in contrast to the antinomic discourse of the fantastic). The naturalization of the supernatural categories is achieved by means of basically three devices: a matter-of-fact style, the characters' nonhesitant attitudes, and authorial reticence. Furthermore, I maintain that this discourse transmits a harmonious worldview, a worldview which posits the individual living in harmony with nature, his surroundings, and the collective. For a more detailed discussion see especially the concluding chapter (129-137).

[103] On epiphanies in magico-realist experiences see Alejo Carpentier's prologue in *El reino de este mundo* (La Habana: Letras Cubanas, 1984), 5-11.

[104] In this passage Morrison's language connotes what Cixous in *La Jeune Née* has described as one of the basic characteristics of feminine writing, namely the voice of the mother, "the deepest, most ancient and adorable of visitations." Morrison's language is very *maternal* in this episode and evokes the bond between feminine writing and the mother as source and origin of the feminine voice. The voice in each woman, according to Cixous, is more than her own as one can hear in it "the first voice of love which all women preserve alive ... in each woman sings the first nameless love." Both Cixous and Morrison (as well as Walker in *The Temple of My Familiar* and Naylor in *Mama Day*) signify the voice of the ur-mother, a fact that attests to their texts' universality. 'Signify' is meant here in terms of Henry Louis Gates' definition in "The 'Blackness of Blackness': A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (June 1983), 685-723. The translation is mine and based on *La Jeune Née*, op.cit., 170-172.

his Florsheim shoes, his suit and shirt - so that when he enters the cave through an entrance made of boulders, "one with a kind of V-shaped crown" (254), he has already undergone a partial ritual of purification, one that brings him in close contact with nature (he has been scratched by branches, bruised by rocks, and soaked in a stream). The dominant water imagery (the water of the stream and Milkman's sweat) and the boulders' V-shaped crown connote Milkman's entering the earth - the womb - in that cave.[104] Although he does not find gold in the cave/earth/womb, he stumbles upon another precious treasure: "his mind had begun to function clearly" (260). Though Milkman is freed from his commodity fetishism, he is, in fact, reborn and thus prepared to pass the following rites of passage which enable him to discover his origins - that he is a descendant of Solomon, an African slave who magically flew back to Africa[105] - and to literally enter the past, this particular historical process, by surrendering to the air and riding it; he is not immune to death and defeat, that is, his experience might not necessarily be crowned with success (in the above-mentioned Faulknerian sense). The novel's metaphorical open ending - "For now he knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrendered to the air, you could *ride* it" (341), an image that insinuates Milkman's symbolic sexual liberation from chauvinism, his newly established collective identity, as well as his possible death - seen in connection with Pilate's death, suggests what Morrison regards as one of the predominant dangers nowadays, namely the disappearance of history, traditions, and cultural roots which explain the present and constitute individual and collective identities and without which the individual drowns in a mass conformist consumer society. Milkman's ambiguous liberational flight, given the fact that it confronts the reader with the reality of slavery - the very starting point of African-American history in the United States - does not only point to the African roots of the African-American experience, but also suggests that true liberation, true equality has not yet been achieved in the United States. I agree with Susan Willis' statement that "with the myth of the 'flying Africans' ... Morrison transforms the moment of coming to grips with slavery as an allegory of liberation."[106] However, I think that Milkman's journey and hypothetical death suggest that the ultimate stage of this liberation has not been reached yet. Does not Morrison's painterly, poetic language, her explicit imagery which conceals an almost immeasurable wealth of implicit ideas - this political unconscious as Jameson would say - deconstruct our very essentialist notion of truth, judgement, and the meanings with which we invest words? In this sense Morrison is very postmodern. Like Lacan, Derrida and Barthes among others,[107] Morrison

---

[105] On the symbol of flying in Afro-American literature see Virginia Hamilton, *The People Who Could Fly* (New York: Knopf, 1985), Gay Wilentz, "If You Surrender to the Air: Folk Legends of Flight and Resistance in African-American Literature." Melus 16.1 (Spring 1989), 21-32 and Grace Ann Hovet and Barbara Lounsberry, "Flying as Symbol and Legend in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*," *CLA-Journal* 27.2 (Dec. 1983), 119-140.

[106] Susan Willis, *Specifying. Black Women Writing the American Experience*, op.cit., 96.

implicitly analyzes the production and conception of meaning through her radical deconstruction of meaning being fully present in the Logos. By means of an open-ended play between the presence of one signifier and the absence of others, this free play of liberated signifiers, Morrison demonstrates in an impressive way that there is no transcendental signified. Consequently, there is no such thing as absolute freedom, liberation, victory, defeat, or absolute anything. The only absolute, fixed thing in Morrison's texts is that there *is*. And as with jazz, everybody is in it and can make it and/or remake it because Morrison in and through her *texts* sets us free and allows us to do so.

As I have mentioned before and implicitly revealed through my analysis, black women writers use their counterhegemonic discourse to create a black feminine consciousness in and through literature, a consciousness steeped in history and the collective Afro-American experience. An important aspect of this consciousness is the attitude towards the female body and sexuality. It is a topic which has been articulated again and again but has received different approaches and answers. While it is true for all women writers before the late sixties that describing sexuality was restricted by society's notions of proper subjects for women's literature, black women's history further prevented a freer approach.[108] The stereotype of black women's promiscuity resulting from and justifying their sexual exploitation in slavery and after, made it advisable to avoid any further action which might be interpreted as a reinforcement of these prejudices. In addition, a history of experiencing sexuality as violence (like rape or enforced pregnancies) influenced black women's attitudes toward sex. The association of sexuality with violence is apparent in Nella Larson's *Quicksand* (1928), Ann Petry's *The Street* (1946), Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), and in Gayl Jones' *Corregidora* (1975). Sexuality is not dealt with in an explicit way in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, although the blossoming tree implicitly describes both Janie's awakening sexuality and identity. This image appears again in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in which Janie's yearning is signified in the description of Pauline waiting at the gate because seasonal changes have begun to affect her. Pauline, having moved from the South to the North, from the countryside to the city, recollects her feelings in a flashback: "I begin to feel those little bits of color floating up into me - deep in me. That streak of green from the june-bug light, the purple from the berries trickling along my thighs. Mama's lemonade yellow runs sweet in me. Then I feel like I'm laughing between my legs, and the laughing gets all mixed up with the colors, and I'm afraid I'll come, and afraid I won't. But I know I will. And I do. And it be rainbow all inside."[109] This, however, was a long time ago. Now, living in a storefront, her husband brutalizing her, her son estranged, her daughter, Pecola,

---

[107] See for example Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975), 3-4, 30-31, 43-45, 65.

[108] On this topic see Gerda Lerner, ed. *Black Women in White America. A Documentary History* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

[109] Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York: Washington Square, 1972) 103-104. Further references are given in the text.

on the verge of madness, yearning for blue eyes, Polly experiences what all black women feel after losing their "funkiness": the denial of sexual pleasure redefined as indecent. By having internalized this bourgeois lesson of the patriarchal order, they turn into alienated and fragmented objects who, annoyed by and disdaining bodily contact, fake orgasms for the sake of their husbands' satisfaction, that is, they become instruments of their husbands' sexual gratification (69). Typical of Morrison, the notion of sexuality and sensuality is problematized in her writings, that is, she tries to give us as many sides of the problem as possible. In *The Bluest Eye* she delineates the alienating influence of bourgeois society on young black women who leave southern cities:

> *These sugar-brown Mobile girls ... go to land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement: home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; ... Here they learn the rest of the lesson ...: how to behave. The careful development of thrift, patience, high morals, and good manners. In short, how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions (67-68).*

Black women, according to Morrison, lose their spontaneity, their naturalness and sensuality, "this funk," and "wipe it away ... fight it until it dies ... The laugh that is a little too loud; the enunciation a little too round; the gesture a little too generous ... and they worry, worry, worry about the edges of their hair" (68). Frigga Haug calls this socialization of women "female sexualization," a sexualization of body and mind, resulting in alienation.[110] Morrison goes beyond a mere description of this fact by desexualizing and resexualizing her characters via explicit sexual imagery - Morrison's writing *is* female body: a body reappropriated, absorbed and expressed in and through writing - and the portrayal of *active* women, that is, her language incorporates the idea of the female body, the female genitals as *active*: "... she pulled from his track-lean hips all the pleasure her thighs could hold,"[111] or, "He swallowed her mouth just as her thighs had swallowed his genitals."[112] In this deconstructive and reconstructive process of consciousness-raising Morrison demystifies the sexualization of black women and the images which produce femininity and the sexual as (patriarchal) commodities, restoring a sense of self to potentially dispossessed women - "border subjects" occupying an "interstitial" cultural space[113] - without ignoring the complexity of this exploration of self.

---

[110] Frigga Haug, ed., *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory* (London: Verso, 1987).

[111] Toni Morrison, *Sula*, op.cit., 125.

[112] Ibid., 131.

[113] Mae G. Henderson, ed., *Borders, Boundaries, and Frames* (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), 5.

Like Paule Marshall in *Brown Girl, Brownstones*,[114] Alice Walker fails to capture women's experience of positive sex convincingly.[115] Her description of Mem's first sexual encounter with Brownfield in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is characterized by vague images. Walker manages, however, to bring literary power to sexuality experienced as violence, as in her delineations of Mem's later years with Brownfield or in her depiction of Meridian's first sexual experiences in *Meridian*. Reading Walker's descriptions of menstruation, sexuality, and pregnancy, one is struck by the frequent underlying image of weakness, dependence, and death; an image of the female body regarded as woman's enemy, a trap, which evokes the one in Nella Larsen and Margaret Walker's writings. A girl's first menstruation, for example, is frequently described as an initiation into the repressive order of the patriarchal system.[116] The reason for the destructive potential of the female body is the everpresent danger of getting pregnant. The danger of pregnancy in Walker's novels spoils women's free play, inhibits them from realizing their sexual fantasies and desire. Pregnancy ends women's dreams of independence and reduces women to an animal-like corporeal existence;[117] it connotes death. Episodes like the Wild Child in *Meridian* or the white woman's death in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, where Walker equates the woman's "big belly" with "her own tomb," are indicative of this attitude.[118]

Closely associated with the topic of female sensuality and the development of a woman's consciousness, her identity, is the recurrent use of nature imagery in black women's fiction. As this characteristic is absent in black male fiction, one could deduce that black women's fiction is earthy. It's earthiness is most strongly embodied in characters such as Lissie, Mama Day, Pilate, and Circe: relating to and suggestive of earth and nature, but also multiple and cosmic in the Cixousian sense.[119] Alice Walker's *Meridian* gives one of the most striking examples of how a conscious choice of imagery - the Sojourner tree - is used to show the development of a woman's self (signifying upon Hurston's in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*). The same tendency to use natural images of a life growing and

---

[114] In the sexual act Selina is reduced to passivity; sexuality is happening to her. This can be regarded as a major flaw, given the fact that throughout the novel Selina is delineated as a keen and active woman who looks forward to sexual experience.

[115] The exception is *The Temple of My Familiar*. Fanny initiates the sexual act with Arweyda and plays an active role during intercourse (445-449).

[116] Her most brutal description of misogyny linked with colonization can be found in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (New York: Pocket, 1992).

[117] See for example the description of the pregnant Josie in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* or of Celie in *The Color Purple*.

[118] Alice Walker, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (New York: Pocket, 1988), 210. Brownfield, Walker's most vicious male character, knows of women's vulnerability, their bodies' treacherous fertility, and uses it against them.

[119] In her works Cixous has identified herself with Medusa, Electra, Antigone, Dido, and Cleopatra. She has declared that "I am myself the earth, everything that happens on it, all the lives that live me there in my different forms." This could have been Lissie speaking. See Hélène Cixous, *La venue à l'écriture* (Paris: UGE, 1977), 52-53. The translation is mine.

changing despite neglect or destructive and oppressive forces can be seen in all the common flowers in black women's fiction. Take Alice Walker's *Revolutionary Petunias*, Gwendolyn Brooks' dandelions in *Maud Martha*, or consider Alice Walker's "common but pretty ferns and leaves," Vyry's gardens in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*, or Paule Marshall's "a herb most bruised" in *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, among many others. In Gwendolyn Brooks' words: "But dandelions were what she chiefly saw. Yellow jewels for everyday ... She liked their demure prettiness second to their everydayness; for in that latter quality she thought she saw a picture of herself, and it was comforting to find that what was common could also be a flower. And could be cherished!"[120] The strength of this image lies in its ambiguity and the complexity with which it mirrors black women's existence and identity. It contains the capacity to bear ordinariness and being considered ugly in a society that has an exclusive conception of beauty. But it also contains a certain rebellious human quality that surviving and living in the invisibility-visibility interface demands.[121] Again, one can find a development from Hurston's *blossoming* pear tree to Marshall's *bruised* herb and Walker's *revolutionary* petunias, a development characterized by the historical process of the African-American experience in the United States. In all cases, however, the image attests to the earthiness of black women's fiction and deconstructs the stereotype of black women's superhuman strength because common flowers and weeds are stubborn, persistent, and beautiful but also delicate, fragile, and mortal.

Raymond Williams convincingly argued that cultural domination, or hegemony, "has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified" simply because it is continually being "resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own."[122] Black women's fiction (and minority fiction in general) proves Williams' claim that hegemony is far from being a static constant, that hegemony, on the contrary, is "never either total or exclusive."[123] By means of an aesthetic process of re-creation and redefinition, a deconstructive literary process that translates into that active kind of progressivism called utopia, black women overcome their 'story' of history, what Kenneth Burke has called the "fall" into unfreedom.[124] In this process they define their consciousness, their identity, on the basis of their difference (within which self is the multiple, visible other), their marginalization, destabilizing, in fact, transcending the dichotomy of center and margin which underlies both the dominant Anglo-American and male Afro-American ideology. One could also argue that this implies a carnivalesque process of throning and

[120] Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1993), 2.

[121] See Barbara Smith's comments on the invisibility of black women in her essay "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," in *But Some of Us Are Brave*, eds. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia B. Scott, Barbara Smith, op.cit., 157-175.

[122] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 112.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (Los Altos, Ca.: Hermes Publications, 1954).

dethroning in the Bakhtinian sense: to give voice to the margin - a *speaking* margin - signifies that the margin cannot be a margin and implicitly shatters the hierarchical relation of center and margin.[125] This strategical positioning of marginalized female voices[126] undermines the dominant patriarchal discourse, revealing its contradictions, masks, and falsehood (the intricate and interrelated workings of race, class, gender and sex in the constitution of power relationships) while creating a counterhegemonic discourse, a rhetoric, which, following and developing Burke's analysis, I call *constructive* "negativism" of totality[127] as it deconstructs and re-creates images of black women who are *organically* interwoven with the Afro-American collective experience in its historical process. The role of such a rhetoric lies in its utopian consciousness for (radical) social change. This fascinating rhetoric, which in the process of deconstruction and re-creation *conserves* the past within the present - which conserves and negates - points to the future via utopia: it is a liberational discourse encouraging "cultural revolution" through its demystification, destabilization and alternative utopia.[128]

This cultural revolution, a dynamics of opposing tensions that organizes social reality as a total structure and produces its potential transformation, is characterized by a concrete utopia in black women's fiction. Based on reality, this utopia is inscribed in the narrative by means of a radical reconstruction of daily, domestic life and space. The home, once a prison, is transformed into an alternative space of (artistic) creation and freedom. The realization of women's potentials does not lie in an imitation of the patriarchal order, is not characterized by a system based on hierarchy and power, but resides in a revolutionary *feminine* consciousness. This new consciousness, which has been developed since the publication of Phillis Wheatley's poetry in the 1770s and Harriet Wilson's novel *Our Nig* in 1859, an earthy and cosmic one, situates the black woman outside the symbolic contract (Kristeva) but within the horizon of Afro-American culture. It is a consciousness that includes rather than excludes, that envisions a future for both man and woman through a transformational process characterized by pleasure and pain (Gayl Jones). It redefines relationships, heterosexual, homosexual and lesbian ones, within and outside bourgeois capitalist society as well as lifestyles based on material accumulation and non-accumulation. One of the most striking features of this redefinition of social relationships and lifestyles is an expanded family which

[125] Mikhail Bakhtin, *La poétique de Dostoievski* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 169-177.

[126] See Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, eds., *The Nature and Context of Minority Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). In the 'Introduction' they write that "becoming minor is not a question of essence ... but a question of ... subject-position ..." (9).

[127] See Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 111. This rhetoric can also be seen in the light of Adorno's analysis of narrative and discourse as "negative thought." See Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970). On the concept of totality, see Georg Lukács' writings, especially *The Historical Novel* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

[128] On "cultural revolution" see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, op. cit., 94-102, and Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 148.

breaks the traditional unit composed of husband, wife, and children and constitutes a community that includes friends and neighbors. The notion of an extended family can be seen in connection with the vision of return to the South, the rural cradle of cultural roots and traditions (in contrast to the alienating North). This utopian vision of alternative human social relationships and lifestyles is carried by a discourse whose characteristics range from harsh social realism and naturalism to magical realism. This discourse not only re-creates and transmits the feminine (and male) voice but it *is* this voice: the oral texture of many narratives is the most effective and impressive device which achieves the immersion of the individual in the collective. It is community in the (literary) making. The most innovative manner of reconstituting and re-creating community, which links the African-American community with the universal community of mankind, is the simultaneous use of orality and magical realism, the use of a "speakerly" magico-realist narrative texture.[129] By deconstructing a purely rational view of reality and revealing a *cosmic* one, magical realism, understood as an aesthetic mode, is a device which counters the degraded life of the spirit advanced by bourgeois capitalism and the subject-object split that has characterized modern thought since Descartes with a utopian solution: the delineation of women such as Mama Day, Lissie, Pilate, and Circe as guardians of myths, legends and the past and as re-creators of man through the ancient sacred power of the word. The utopian function of this "alter-ideology" (Therborn) consists in its resistance to discontinuity, fragmentation, acculturation, and reification which characterize the racist patriarchal order. In this regard, black women's fiction in the United States attests the fact that literature is an instrument re-creating characters as sociopolitical beings, that black women writers are revolutionary writers who, within the dominant hegemony and ideology, put a cultural counterhegemonic force into action, a force that causes something to happen: liberation in the (literary) making. It is a liberational type of contemporary fiction because it offers a *humanizing* perspective and meaning by attempting probable explanations, interpretations, and understanding of the (post)modern

[129] To my knowledge this combination of orality and magical realism exists only in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* and in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*. Magical realism, however, is more widespread, especially in Morrison's novels. In *Sula*, the magical is present in the Deweys and the plague of birds which precede Sula's return, in *Song of Solomon* it appears in the myth of the flying African, in Pilate's missing navel, and in Circe, in *Tar Baby* it is used by the author in the episode of the blind horsemen who inhabit the island and in the episode of the swamp 'women-trees' talking to Jadine, and in *Beloved* the magical essence converges in the living spirit of Beloved. I disagree with critics who assign Morrison's novels to the category of the fantastic: see for example Grace A. Epstein, "Out of the Blue Water: Dream Flight and Narrative Construction in the Novels of Toni Morrison," in *State of the Fantastic. Studies in the Theory and Practice of Fantastic Literature and Film*, ed. Nicholas Ruddick (Westport/London. Greenwood Press, 1992), 141-147, or Gary W. Daily, "Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Rememory, History, and the Fantastic," in *The Celebration of the Fantastic*, eds. Donald E. Morse, Marshall B. Tymn, and Csilla Bertha (Westport/London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 141-147. An excellent essay on Morrison's use of magical realism is P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Past-On Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call," *Feminist Studies* 18.2 (Summer 1992), 369-388.

world, reality, and self. This distinguishes contemporary Afro-American women's fiction from what is called metafiction, new fiction, or surfiction.[130] The postmodern fantasy that characterizes most novels of this genre - a fantasy that can be traced back to Jorge Luis Borges' texts - reflects a deconstructive impulse questioning all we take for granted about reality, history, meaning, language, and experience and, according to Lance Olson, a belief "in the impossibility of total intelligibility ... in the production of a universe without ... truth, or origin."[131] This destructive negativism, which creates a state of "silence" through a torrential rain of words, far from being "holy"[132] and from constituting "an innovation in consciousness,"[133] displays a *dehumanizing* mise-en-abysme perspective. This perspective is based on the belief "in the endlessness of the possibilities of the imagination to create,"[134] a process, I would argue, in which these possibilities become arbitrary and lead to dehumanizing meaninglessness.

The liberational humanizing perspective which characterizes Afro-American women's fiction is based upon and an intrinsic element of the drive for self-definition and redefinition, the need to write/hear words filling the spaces of the unsaid, the voids of the official (historical) discourse and its ideological distortions. This search for selfhood, an exploration of self through both personal and group history, is linked with the search for place among one's people. If, according to Said, the word culture suggests "an environment, process, and hegemony in which individuals (in their private circumstances) and their works are embedded," if it "is in culture that we can seek out the range of meanings and ideas conveyed by the phrases *belonging to* or *in a* place, being *at home in a place*," and, finally, if culture "is used to designate not merely something to which one belongs but something that one possesses," then this search for selfhood, involving collective self-definition, implies cultural redefinition.[135] It is a revolutionary redefinition in that its "womanist" criticism[136] aims at what Michel Foucault calls "the insurrection of subjugated knowledge," the rediscovery, revaluation and rectification of knowledge/experience suppressed by political/patriarchal/epistemological

[130] This genre includes authors such as John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, John Hawkes, William Gaddis, John Gardner, William Grass, Ronald Sukenick, Raymond Federman, Robert Coover, Richard Brautigan, Steve Katz, Eugene Wildman, Gilbert Sorrentino, Richard Yeats, Walter Abish, John Irving, and Ishmael Reed, among others.

[131] Lance Olson, *Ellipse of Uncertainty. An Introduction to Postmodern Fantasy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987), 117.

[132] Ihab Hassan, "The Literature of Silence," *Innovations: Essays on Art & Ideas*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan, 1968), 108.

[133] Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 14.

[134] Gerhard Hoffmann, "The Fantastic in Fiction: Its 'Reality' Status, its Historical Development and its Transformation," *REAL*, 1 (1982), 364.

[135] Edward W. Said, op.cit., 8-9.

[136] Alice Walker's term should be understood as black feminism. See Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, op. cit., xi-xii. On the distinction between black and white feminism see Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 1-15.

systems.[137] Black women writers do not only recover their manifold voices through writing, "blow(ing) up the Law" in this process,[138] but use their voices to show clearly that in the current atmosphere of simulacra and media-image distortions, of what Homi Bhabha has recently called our "disjunctive global experience,"[139] a reconciliation of subject and object/nature is indeed desirable.[140] Therein lies their writing's ethical significance (Lukács): to problematize/understand their position as individual and collective subjects and develop/reveal ways to act and struggle, that is, to suggest imaginary solutions to what Jameson has called our "spatial" and "social" postmodern "confusion."[141]

---

[137] Michel Foucault, *Power /Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 81.

[138] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa, op. cit., 887.

[139] Homi Bhabha in a speech given at the 5° Congresso ABRALIC, July 31, 1996, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

[140] This concrete utopia has nothing to do with the nostalgic abstract Marxist vision of history, this golden age before the fall (capitalism), this original moment of myth and union with nature.

[141] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, op. cit., 54.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, Theodor W. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy*. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review, 1971.

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House, 1970.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *La poétique de Dostoievski*. Paris: Seuil, 1970.

Barthes, Roland. *Le bruissement de la langue*. Paris: Seuil, 1984.

—. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill & Wang, 1975.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *Le deuxième sexe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1949.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken, 1969.

Berzon, Judith R. *Neither White Nor Black. The Mulatto Character in American Fiction*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

Bloch, Ernst. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Toni Morrison*. New York: Chelsea House, 1990.

—, ed. *Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987.

Brooks, Gwendolyn. *Maud Martha*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1993.

Burke, Kenneth. *Counter-Statement*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968.

—, *Permanence and Change. An Anatomy of Purpose*. Los Altos: Hermes Publications, 1954.

Campbell, Joseph. *El héroe de las mil caras*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.

Carpentier, Alejo. *El reino de este mundo*. La Habana: Letras Cubanas, 1984.

Cixous, Hélène. "Le Sexe ou la tête?" *Les Cahiers du Grif* 13 (1975): 5-15. Trans. Annette Kuhn. "Castration or Decapitation?" *Signs* 7.1 (Autumn 1981): 41-55.

—. *La jeune née*. Paris: UGE, 1975.

—. *La venue à l'écriture*. Paris: UGE, 1977.

—. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1.4 (Summer 1976): 875-893.

Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit, 1967.

—. *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. New York: Anchor, 1973.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1961.

Duvall, John N. "Doe Hunting and Masculinity: *Song of Solomon* and *Go Down, Moses*." *Arizona Quarterly* 47.1 (Spring 1991): 95-115.

Eagleton, Marry, ed. *Feminist Literary Theory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1986.

Eagleton, Terry. *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*. London: NLB, 1976.

Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Random House, 1952.
Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1987
—. *Go Down, Moses*. New York: Vintage, 1973.
—. *Intruder in the Dust*. London: Picador, 1993.
—. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Vintage, 1954.
Foreman, Gabrielle P. "Past-On Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call." *Feminist Studies* 18.2 (Summer 1992): 369-388.
Foster, Frances. " 'In Respect to Females...': Differences in the Portrayals of Women by Male and Female Narrators." *BALF* 15.2 (Summer 1981), 66-70.
Foucault, Michel. *Archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.
—. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Random House, 1973.
—. *Power/Knowledge*. Trans. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1972.
Gaines, Ernest J. *A Gathering of Old Men*. New York: Vintage, 1983.
—. *In My Father's House*. New York: Vintage 1978.
Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. New York: Methuen, 1984.
—, ed. *Reading Black, Reading Feminist*. New York: Meridian, 1990.
—. "The 'Blackness of Blackness': A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey." *Critical Inquiry* 9 (June 1983): 685-723.
—. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and Barbara Johnson. "Reading Zora: Discourse and Rhetoric in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*." Unpublished manuscript (Yale University), 1992.
Goldmann, Lucien. *Propos Dialectique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.
Gramsci, Antonio. *Lettere dal carcere*. Turin: Einaudi, 1965.
Greene, Gayle, and Coppélia Kahn, eds. *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*. London/New York: Methuen, 1985.
Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Who Could Fly*. New York: Knopf, 1985.
Harries, Leslie A. "Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*." *Melus* 7.3 (Fall 1980): 69-78.
Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
Hassan, Ihab. "The Culture of Postmodernism." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2.3 (1985): 119-132.
—. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
—. "The Literature of Silence." *Innovations: Essays on Art & Ideas*. Ed. Bernard Bergonzi. London: Macmillan, 1968: 93-108.
Haug, Frigga, ed. *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory*. London: Verso, 1987.
Henderson, Mae, ed. *Borders, Boundaries, and Frames*. London/New York: Routledge, 1995.

Hooks, Bell. *Feminist Theory. From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press, 1984.
Hovet, Grace A., and Barbara Lounsberry. "Flying as Symbol and Legend in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*." *CLA-Journal* 27.2 (Dec. 1983): 119-140.
Hughes, Langston. *Not Without Laughter*. London: Macmillan, 1969.
Hull, Gloria T., Patricia B. Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. *But Some of Us Are Brave*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1982.
Humphries, Jefferson, ed. *Southern Literature and Literary Theory*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1990.
Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
Irigaray, Luce. *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. Paris: Minuit, 1977.
—. *Je, tu, nous. Toward a Culture of Difference*. New York/London: Routledge, 1993.
—. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.
Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974.
—. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
—. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
JanMohamed, Abdul R., and David Lloyd, eds. *The Nature and Context of Minority Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Jones, Bessie W., and Audrey L. Winson. *The World of Toni Morrison. Explorations in Literary Criticism*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1985.
Jones, Carolyn M. "*Sula* and *Beloved*: Images of Cain in the Novels of Toni Morrison." *African American Review* 27.4 (1993): 615-626.
Jones, Gayl. *Corregidora*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
Kearney, Richard, and Mara Rainwater, eds. *The Continental Philosophy Reader*. London/New York: Routledge, 1996.
Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy*. New York: Aitken & Stone, 1990.
King, John, ed. *Modern Latin American Fiction*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987.
Kristeva, Julia. "Women's Time." *Signs* 7.1 (Autumn 1981): 13-35.
Kubitschek, Missy Dehn. "Tuh De Horizon and Back: The Female Quest in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*." *BALF* 17 (1983): 109-115.
Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand*. Westport/London: Greenwood Press, 1969.
Lentricchia, Frank. *Criticism and Social Change*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Lenz, Günter H., ed. *History and Tradition in Afro-American Culture*. Frankfurt: Campus, 1984.
Lerner, Gerda, ed. *Black Women in White America. A Documentary History*. New York: Pantheon, 1972.
Levine, Lawrence W. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
Lispector, Clarice. *The Hour of the Star*. Manchester: Carcanet, 1986.
Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Conscience*. London: Merlin, 1971.
—. *The Historical Novel*. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
—. *Theorie des Romans*. Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962.
Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
Marshall, Paule. *Brown Girl, Brownstones*. New York: Random House, 1959.
Marx, Karl. *On Revolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.
Meisenhelder, Susan. " 'The Whole Picture' in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*." *African American Review* 27.3 (Fall 1993): 405-419.
Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. New York/London: Routledge, 1985.
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Signet, 1989.
—. *Jazz*. New York: Signet, 1992.
—. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Signet, 1977.
—. *Sula*. London: Picador, 1991.
—. *Tar Baby*. New York: Signet, 1983.
—. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Washington Square, 1972.
Morse, Donald E., Marshall B. Tymn, and Csilla Bertha, eds. *The Celebration of the Fantastic*. Westport/London: Greenwood Press, 1992.
Naylor, Gloria. *Bailey's Cafe*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.
—. *Linden Hills*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
—. *Mama Day*. London: Vintage, 1990.
—. *The Women of Brewster Place*. New York: Penguin, 1983.
Nye, Andrea. *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man*. London: Croom Helm, 1988.
O'Brien, John, ed. *Interviews with Black Writers*. New York: Liveright, 1973.
Olson, Lance. *Ellipse of Uncertainty. An Introduction to Postmodern Fantasy*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987.
Petry, Ann. *The Street*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974.
Roseann, Bell P., et al., eds. *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1979.
Ruddick, Nicolas, ed. *State of the Fantastic. Studies in the Theory and Practice of Fantastic Literature and Film*. Westport/London: Greenwood Press, 1992.
Said, Edward W. *The World, the Text, the Critic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Saldívar, Ramón. "A Dialectic of Difference: Towards a Theory of the Chicano Novel." *Melus* 6.3 (Fall 1979): 73-92.
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Qu'est-ce que la littérature*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948.
—. *Critique de la raison dialectique* Vol 1. Paris: Gallimard, 1960.
Sellers, Susan, ed. *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.
Singleton, C.S., ed. *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969.
Spivak, Gayatri Ch. "Feminism and Critical Theory." *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. New York: Longman, 1994. 519-34.
—. "Bonding in Difference." *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*. Ed. Alfred Arteaga. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994. 273-85.
Stepto, Robert B. *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative*. Urbane: University of Illinois Press, 1979.
Therborn, Göran. *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology*. London: NLB, 1980.
Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. New York: Liveright, 1975.
Villegas, Juan. *La estrutura mítica del héroe en la novela del siglo XX*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1973.
Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. Womanist Prose*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.
—. *Meridian*. New York: Pocket, 1986.
—. *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. New York: Pocket, 1993.
—. *The Color Purple*. New York: Pocket, 1985.
—. *The Temple of My Familiar*. New York: Penguin, 1990.
—. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. New York: Pocket, 1988.
Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee*. New York: Bantam, 1967.
Wallace, Michele. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. New York: The Dial Press, 1978.
Walter, Roland. "Magical Realism and Orality in Contemporary Afro-American Women's Literature: Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* and Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*." Paper presented at the IV Seminario Sobre Cultura Afroamericana: Voz, Memoria y Literatura. Casa de las Americas, La Habana. 21 Aug. 1996.
—. "Realismo mágico e oralidade na literatura chicana e afro-americana contemporánea dos EUA." Paper presented at the 5° Congresso da ABRALIC. Rio de Janeiro. 01 Aug. 1996.
—. *Magical Realism in Contemporary Chicano Fiction*. Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1993.
—. "The Dialectics between the Act of Writing and the Act of Reading in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*, Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*, and Toni

Morrison's *Jazz*." *The Southern Quarterly* (Spring 1997), 1-12.
Warhol, Robyn R., and Diane Price Herndl, eds. *Feminisms. An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991.
Washington, Mary Helen, ed. *Black-Eyed Susans. Classic Stories by and about Black Women*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975.
Weixlman, Joe, and Houston A. Baker, Jr., eds. *Studies in Black American Literature, Vol III: Black Feminist Criticism and Critical Theory*. Greenwood, Florida: Penkevill, 1988.
Wilentz, Gay. "If You Surrender to the Air: Folk Legends of Flight and Resistance in African-American Literature." *Melus* 16.1 (Spring 1989): 21-32.
Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
Willis, Susan. *Specifying. Black Women Writing the American Experience*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.
Wilson, Harriet E. *Our Nig*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates. New York: Vintage, 1983.
Wolff, Maria Tai. "Listening and Living: Reading and Experience in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*." *BALF* 16 (1982): 29-33.

OTHER LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

MALTESE POETRY IN ENGLISH: TRENDS OF THE 60s AND 70s

THOMAS BONNICI

Introduction

The history of Maltese culture reflects the foreign encounters, or more exactly, the foreign occupations the islands has had to endure throughout the centuries. It is a complex process of influences, adaptations and reactions. As one of the facets of culture, its literature has been conditioned by these contacts and it flourished in proportion to the stages of awakening and awareness of the Maltese as a people with a culture specifically different from that of their neighbours. The fate of Maltese poetry has not been different from that of some nations whose literature was not on a par with that of other European languages. It was only very slowly that the ancient Semitic tongue of the natives, regarded as dialectic Arabic or barbarian by foreign occupiers and even by Italian-educated Maltese, was studied, cultivated and had a literature of its own.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the place of poetry written in English by Maltese authors within the context of a historical environment other than the British one. The poets analysed flourished in the 60s and 70s and they were selected because of the different trends they showed from the poets of a former generation. Moreover, since the span of their activity coincided with momentious political events, the themes of existence, postcolonialism and the return to origins were tackled in order to see how they constructed their world view in the throes of the identity questions that ensued.

The Language Question

The history of poetry in Malta goes back to the Arab occupation (870-1090) of the Maltese islands. At the court of the Sicilian kings where, even after the Norman reconquest, Arab scientists, philosophers and poets still thrived, poets from Malta wrote their verses (still extant) in Arabic (AMARI, 1937: 702). During the late Middle Ages the language of Malta was Arabic of the Maghrebian stock (AQUILINA, 1989:229). Due to Sicilian political influences and close social contact the Romance superstructure was grafted on to the Semitic structure of the language. From 1230 Arabic characters were not in use anymore in documents of the period. (SCHROTH-KOHLER, 1977: 520). The c. 1480 poem by Peter Caxaro is written in almost pure Semitic Maltese with perhaps only two words of Sicilian extraction (WETTINGER & FSADNI, 1968: 46). However, the Maltese language was the means of communication between the natives. Although not altogether ignored by the authorities, it was banned from the public and private archives which were written in Latin or Sicilian in the fifteenth century and in Italian in the sixteenth. Italian in its Tuscan form became a vehicle of culture but poems in Maltese were still sparsely written as may be seen in excerpts from Giovanni Bosio's *Dell'istoria della Sacra Religione ed Illustrissima Militia di S. Giovanni Gierosolimitano* (1602) and de Soldanis's *Nuova Scuola dell'Antica Lingua Punica Scoperta nel Moderno Parlare Maltese-Gozitano*. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the multinational Order of the Knights of St John (the government at that time), the Church and the Inquisitor adopted Italian as their language and did not interfere with the ancient language of the people. It is important to note that the idea of aristocracy and sophistication of the great number of knights speaking Spanish, Portuguese and French living in Malta during two hundred years prevented them from intermingling with the local population. Thus, the number of loanwords from these languages is practically insignificant in the native language. Italian, however, was the exception. Hundreds of words were incorporated into the Semitic structure of Maltese, which many scholars erroneously used to consider as a sort of dialectic Italian. It can be thus concluded that, from the Middle Ages up to the present, Maltese, as a spoken language, has the historical priority while as from the 16th century Italian was the general written medium in the island.(FRIGGIERI, 1989: 2)

In the linguistic field a breakthrough occurred through the efforts of Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829) who, according to the dictates of the Romantic period, insisted on the revaluation of Maltese due to its antiquity, popularity and symbolism for the nation (CACHIA, 1988:14). Besides insisting on the national language as a definition for one's country, Vassalli insisted on its resourcefulness as a stronghold against the foreign ruler. However, in 1800, some years after the publication of his two great works, *Grammatica Melitensis* (1791) and *Liber Dictionum Melitensium* (1796), the British defeated the French, who had occupied the island for two years, and Malta became a British colony. Consequently, as from the first decades of the

nineteenth century another linguistic element and a new literary interaction formed themselves. Although the first fifty years of British rule in Malta "are an undisguised despotism" (FRENDO, 1990:49), slowly the English language (in 1838 *Harlequin* and *The Malta Times* were the first newspapers in English) and English literature (*Robinson Crusoe*, translated into Maltese by Richard Taylor, was published in 1846) became active items in this linguistic turmoil (FRENDO, 1990:63). As a result the language question was installed: the traditional literary presence of Italian (at that time increasingly virulent through the presence of Italian exiles during the Italian *Risorgimento*) was vying with the constant British efforts to eradicate the former element and introduce English.

Although Maltese started to be written intensively as from the 18th century, during the 19th century Italian continued to be the literary medium of educated people. Only in 1912 the poet laureate of Malta Dun Karm Psaila began writing in Maltese while retaining his former 'Italian' ideological and poetical principles. On the other hand the English language continued to be a bone of contention. It was both considered the language of British colonial domination and, at the same time, a linguistic asset in the modern world. The massive importation of English books, the introduction of the English language and its literature in the school syllabus, the infiltration of British culture in a section of the population more susceptible to change did not diminish the steady high rate of literary production in Maltese from the 1930s to the present. Taking into consideration the fact that English is a very recent linguistic acquisition, it is important to note that some poets *did* express their emotions and their world view through this code.

New Lines

Keeping close to the Italian Romantic model the poetry (and the prose) of the 19th and of the first decades of the 20th centuries presents sings of patriotic inspirations, social and political concern and related themes. From the 1930s, however, poets begin adopting a more inward-looking attitude. Poets writing in Maltese and English seek "an intensified investigation of man as a passionate victim of his sensations as well as of the supreme forces of nature with which ... they can develop a psychological relationship"(FRIGGIERI, 1980: xxi). On the whole they were belatedly influenced by the Italian Romantic movement (Leopardi especially), by remnants of the Sturm und Drang state of soul and by anti-Kantian negation.

As far back as 1949 Joseph Aquilina, the leading linguist at that time, had pointed out the need for a renewal in poetry with more experimentation in form and more creativity in themes (AQUILINA, 1949: 39-41). He went unheeded for a long time. However, in the 1960s an anti-romantic controversy occurred with the new poets such as Charles Coleiro, Victor Fenech, Achille Mizzi (b. 1936), Daniel Massa, Mario Azzopardi, Philip Sciberras (b. 1945) and Albert Marshall (b. 1947). As a general rule Maltese writers were greatly influenced by English and American

novelists and in the case of poetry by Maiakovsky, Yevtushenko, Quasimodo, Gertrude Stein and Dylan Thomas (FRIGGIERI, 1980: xxiii). Critical essays and the new political situation (Malta became independent in 1964) helped create a new national awareness and thus more complex attitudes in the creative field. Poems of this period are characterized by a radical contestation of traditional patriotic and religious themes of a nocturnal, introverted and emotional nature. Needless to say, what this group insisted on had already been discussed in all the major international poetic manifestoes and representatives such as Pound, Eliot, Apollinaire, Mallarmé, Cummings and Ungaretti. In the wake of these reflections, the Literary Revival Movement was born in 1967 and a magazine *The Pulse* began to be published. With regard to form, the Beat Generation poets especially Kerouac and Ginsberg influenced the Movement and poetry came to be considered as "an event, a happening, an action perhaps, not a still-life or an experience put down, placed, regulated." (THOMAS, 1957:36). Following English and American poetry the new Maltese poets began using syntagmatic, paradigmatic, graphological, grammatical and lexical deviations. Prose poems became more numerous and the overall ideology was that the poet should escape towards, and not from, reality.

The Theme of Existence

The 60s have been considered a political and literary watershed. The political struggle against Britain, the aspirations that this produced and a sort of falling action felt soon afterwards present an identity crisis in Maltese poets. Metonymically this may be seen in the skepticism of the poets and in the transitional forms adapted by them. Charles Coleiro (b. 1935), one of the founders of the Literary Revival Movement and a highly prolific writer, writes poetry in a compromise between the old forms and the more recent achievements in poetic idiom. It is interesting to analyse the following poem as a sample of transitional veins of his work:

"Meditation"

An open window at home
brings to full view
a hundred closed windows
of a hospital
a ship great and huge
streaming on a sea of tears
laden with fears
and agonies of humanity
sailing for ports
in the realms
of eternity.

Some metaphors and clichés common to a certain type of romantic poetry are still there. However, detachment, restraint and objectivity are present in the construction of a chaotic, worsening human situation. The fears and agonies of the present bring greater havoc to humanity since its future is so uncertain "in the realms / of eternity". The poem *"Anatomy of a Century* enumerates through chained metaphors the dehumanisation of mankind. It shows Coleiro's indignation at the worsening of human relationships in the 20th century. The grammatical deviations and the colloquial diction of the poem symbolize man's hopelessness and his state of panic achieved under the guise of "progress the portraits spell / for progress is the theme".

The highly controversial poet Mario Azzopardi (b. 1944) has perhaps written the best representative poems of paradox, doubt and lack of faith in man. Featuring allusions to the Bible, Chaucer and Eliot, the following poem shows the antithesis of expectations arising from Christ's resurrection:

"April Song"

Springs breathes flowers over the mouths of beggars.
A yellow christ rehearses his perennial
moundy drama. Love whispers are emaciated and
April brings pools of sorrow to dry on tombs.

Pierce the side of a dying man
with the sound of rock,
and heavy steps will beat the pilgrim's road
to the harbour with no anchors,
the sighing womb of drowning sailors.

April is a month of half-lit lamps
scattering memories like bird skulls in the dust.

Contrary to the European medieval tradition of *Natureingang* or the *descriptio terrae vernantis* and to the Christian Easter environment recalling the Death and Resurrection of Christ in springtime, *April Song* is much more pessimistic and hopeless than the "Journey to Emmaus" episode in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. While Christ's passion is portrayed as an annually repetitive action without any real meaning, love and sorrow for Christ's death are parodied as an empty ritual. The adjectives (such as "yellow christ" and "moundy drama") the poet uses connote the worthlessness of Christianity's central event. Moreover, the two disciples' journey to Emmaus which ended in happiness because of the risen Christ's apparition is portrayed as hopeless ("harbour with no anchors") and they themselves are doomed to despair ("drowning sailors"). If for Eliot "April is the cruellest month, .../ ... mixing / memory and desire", Azzopardi's (pictorial) existential idea of life is a

mound of worthless skulls in the dust: there is neither any resurrection nor any renewal. Instead of heralding a new life, spring brings degeneration, vain recollections and a faint hope which is immediately dispersed as merely histrionic and a fraud. Actually Azzopardi disrupts the foundations not only of the Christian religion but even denies the possibility of man's victory over blind forces.

Postcolonialism

Victor Fenech (b. 1935), the editor of three poetic anthologies and of the leading literary review *The Pulse*, is famous for his search for new poetic forms and syntactic patterns. From a series of vignettes he constructs a political discourse which establishes post-colonial attitudes and commitments. The following poem is a satire deep in "sly civility" dedicated to the former metropole.

"London Pictures"

This bronze colossus
of a city.
London - and I
and eight million people:
every man an island
blank walls and blind alleys.

"He who is tired of London
is tired of life" -
Searching
for a soul
lost in Piccadilly.

"Sweet Thames run softly 'til
I end my song"-
Cold callous river:
meandering incision
through the city's heart.
Sweet Thames. Grey dirty river.
Both puncture and relief.

Open Browning's heart - Italy.
Open mine - London.

For all it is
I love (hate)
this massive masculine city.
London: my echo.
My rainbow and my fog.

The allusions from canonical authors such as Donne, Johnson and Eliot (and Spenser) connoting and satirizing the celebration of marriage between the poet and the city make a deep contrast with the sordid place and the river. The antitheses describing the city and the river denote the ambiguity people feel when they sense the colossal weight of the metropolis. If London is synonymous with insensitivity, loneliness and lack of human relationship, these are also the negative qualities found in the author's soul when he "loves" the city which, in contrast to Italy (identified with love) engenders the existence of its opposite. Ironically the natural elements, essentially ephemeral, disrupt the apparent invincibility ("bronze colossus", "massive masculine city") of the city that ruled the empire.

The anti-colonial stance is even more pronounced in the poetry of Lino Spiteri (b. 1938). Conscious of writing in the language of the colonizer and bridging the gap between the literary form and normal speech Spiteri's outright confessionalism is a witness of the awareness colonized people should have in their colonial encounters. In his poems he has the apparent simplicity of Blake coupled to Milton's concept of duty:

"Warning"

My sons,
touch not the rose
that grows
on people's tongues.
Let your bare flesh
bleed on the briars
that crowd the hillside;
eat of the prickly shrubs
liked famished
foolish goats.
But beware the rose
that grows
on people's tongues.
It's poisonous.

My sons, expect no favours,
never ask for any;
those that give want.
Insist
On just one thing:
that which is yours.
Your rights are holy.
If they are denied
you'll be like slaves.
Death is no worse.

Written at a time of great political upheaval during the decolonizing of Malta by Britain, *Warning* is a scathing criticism against those who compromise with the colonizers and would like to see a perpetual occupation under the pretext of progress, grandeur and status. The material benefits ("rose"), including the English language ("tongue"), that the British bring to the natives are dangerous and the poet prefers that people fight for the independence of their homeland with sacrifice (briars and prickly shrubs are a constant on a rocky island). The suspicion ("those that give want") of the native is transformed into a positive approach to their rights of freedom. Like Wordsworth in his *Sonnets dedicated to Liberty* Spiteri urges his fellowmen not to be slaves any more since political dependence is worse than death.

The colonial experience of the Maltese, especially the awareness achieved during British rule, produces in the "collective" mind of the poet sympathy with other downtrodden people. Solidarity with oppressed people and with women whose subjection is considered a trope of postcolonialism is revealed by Lillian Sciberras (b. 1946) in her poetic works. *To a Chilean Woman* is constructed on a narrative plot: Dolores's (oppressed people's and all women's) tiresome work which only enriches other people; the possibility of an autonomous life; the collective farm as an achievement; local and international repression; the destruction of the utopia; Dolores's suffering for her ideals; her last appearance in the poor village; the epitaph hastily placed on the burial site. Built antithetically the poem is the representation of hopelessness and suffering alternating with a utopic vision. Even though the final stanza is out right defeat, the words carved on her tomb train to inspire victory over all oppression. However, Sciberras perceives the sense of futility and impotence of a Third World person whose work only benefits the people of industrialized countries:

She worked where she could
for owners she never met
for a wage she never bought
anything with
for a husband who lived
far away
she suffered
for children
she never fed.

The repetition of "she" seems to indicate the concept of a person who by herself does not have the possibility of achieving human dignity in a pre-conditioned Third World context contained by a capitalist and free-market economy. Contrastingly, the subject of the third and seventh stanzas is "they", implying the concept of peasants living collectively or sharing their wealth and consequently, bringing into existence a utopia:

They tilled the soil
and painted on a wall
with colours of fruits
a long and beautiful destiny
for every child.

Dignity has been recovered and hope dawns to for me downtrodden people. Brute force, however, is stronger and the epitaph ("Dolores, this time we have been defeated. / Next time it will be their turn to be the losers") is highly ambiguous. Although the "someone" who carved the inscription is Everyman who desires to see the turning of the wheel of fortune, the weak verbs and the indefinition of time indicate a certain resignation with regard to the people's lot. Sciberras resigns herself to the fact that the CIA, the soldiers and the landowners' victory is definite and no poor people's utopia will disrupt the evil established on earth.

The same note of almost tragic resignation is found in Sciberras's "epithalamion" poem *Beggarlike*. The relationship between landowners and peasants of the previous poem repeats itself in the male's phallocentrism which subjects the female. For women, marriage ("life's alley") is a way of life that seems to be like "stroll[ing] together", but actually it has the taste of bile.

Back to the Womb

The epistemological stance of the poet is to discover the *Ur-Welt*. He doesn't do this to escape reality but to face life, discover its meaning and share this knowledge with his fellowpersons. Taking into consideration the geography and the history of the island of Malta the poet seems to have two ways to understand reality: escaping towards the sea and into the innermost part of hinself.

The sea, older than man, mythology or the calculation of time, is a leitmotif in Maltese poetry, especially in that of Daniel Massa (b. 1937). Like Baudelaire, the poet considers the sea a mirror in which man contemplates his soul. In the first stanza of the poem *Delimara* (which is also the name of a place in Southeastern Malta renowned for its deep blue sea) the diver describes the world above sea level - a world in which he is not interested. Actually he is enchanted by the depth of the sea into which he "slid[es] / head first as from my mother's womb". The diver's new birth in the marine world is something obsessive, or rather, similar to the "the lure of the sirens". While at this point the use of the gerund conveys the image of the undersea currents ("seaweed, dancing rising / dancing"), the diver feels that he has arrived home after a long journey back to his origins and has thus recovered his identity. He recognizes the arcane marine environment where he lived "centuries ago"

- before time stilled the birth pangs of my race
- time shut the windows of my sense
- lacerated the chalk heels of my friends

The image is of the prelapsarian period and the above three tapering lines represent metaphorically the millennia-old postcolonial phase (the Romans used to mark the heels of slaves) of the Maltese people. Thus, the diver finds his true home in the free environment of the sea where:

... I slept
centuries ago
cradled in matrix of coral
in spiralling stalactites
with mollusc and grouper.

Returning to the sea, his home, he perceives that lack of fresh air ("lacking aqualungs / without snorkel to my vision") and protection ("[without] fishing rod to my arm") are no hindrance since freedom, autonomy and independence belong to him as a birthright. Under the sea man sees his true being and his vocation for liberty. Even if containment has overcome him in historical circumstances the sea brings him the pre-Fall view and confirms his conviction that "I was here before".

As may be surmised, Massa's poems are highly encoded with notions of rediscovery and regeneration particularly. Both elements take suggestive tonalities when analysed in the light of events culminating in the political independence of Malta and its aftermath.

On the other hand, the poems of Kenneth Wain (b. 1943) are a journey to the innermost part of the soul. Through a series of images taken from the visual arts, *Stillness*, a highly elaborated and symetrically built poem, tries to share with the readers the discovery of reality in immobility. The portraits of a snail, a reptile and air represent respectively three issues (lack of ambition, emotionlessness and calmness) converging towards self-knowledge. However, this seemingly efficient capture of the truth and of reality is an illusory achievement because:

what is held in time -
lives for a moment
dies when it moves
lives only as it is still.

Contrary to Massa's successful endeavour, Wain's philosophical journey towards reality leads to skepticism due to reality's unstable and ephemeral nature. In the case of Raymond Mahoney (b. 1949) the understanding of reality is hidden in the past which "reverberate[s] and pierce[s] the silent / infertility of wounded imagination". Memories, however, do not convey any relief. For Mahoney they bring sorrow and a sense of impotence. They are similar to Sophocles' aima palirruton or "blood flowing in the reverse direction". Thus, the poet cannot grasp reality since it is:

fragile, as arousing love between the sheets
striking arpeggios of an oscillating destiny.

Though Mahoney's poetry approaches a sort of modernized romanticism, the search for reality and truth is unending and represents an important trend of Maltese poetry in the aftermath of Independence. After the enthusiasm than ensued it seems that poetry entered an inward phase where rumination over the past became constant and a certain pessimism followed soul-searching. Maltese poetry seems to be, in the words of Kenneth Wain from *The Awesome Evening* :

the ethereal sounds of a man
[sprung] from the gulley of the street
the clatter of his life on
the pavement below
- then drawing further and further
swallowed in the distance
of the awesome evening.

Conclusion

Maltese poetry in English is not well known. With the exception of a few people it may possibly pass unperceived, even in its place of origin. This is what happened to Amos Tutuola's first, courageous incursion into English literature in the early 1950s. Steady production and poetic quality are capable of breaking up and penetrating the strongly guarded English canon. Even if Maltese poets writing in English, as the above sample showed, are highly influenced in their form and contents by European poetic manifestoes and movements and by British and American fellow poets, the fact that they write in the language of the erstwhile colonizers means a disruption of the linguistic code. This means that the English language is not the sole property of the English but may be used freely by people whose cultural tradition has been different. Marked as it is by colonialism, the venturing of these postcolonial poets into the mainstream of Anglo-American literature is a symbol of the abolition of the containment that British colonizers endeavoured to establish so that the colonized would not reach a "civilized" status. Maltese poets writing in English would perhaps make theirs *mutatis mutandis* Achebe's speech at the University of Leeds in 1964: "I would be quite satisfied if my [literary works] did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one of a long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them." (In PHELPS, 1984:331). WritinG poetry in English is their grasping and controlLing of the tools of self-definition through the use of the colonizers' tongue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AMARI, M. *Storia dei Musulmani in Sicilia*. Vol II Parte 2. Rome. 1937.

AQUILINA, J. "L-ilsien malti: dokument ta' l-istorja". In CORTIS, T. (ed.) *L-identità kulturali ta' Malta*. Valletta: Department of Information, 1989.

AQUILINA, J. *Studji Kritici Literarji*. Valletta: Lux, 1949.

CACHIA, L. *Mikiel Anton Vassalli*. Valletta: Printwell, 1988.

FRENDO, H. *Malta's Quest for Independence*. Valletta: Valletta Publishing and Promotion Press, 1989.

FRIGGIERI, O. *Saggi sulla letteratura maltese*. Msida: University of Malta Press, 1989.

FRIGGIERI, O. *Cross Winds: An Anthology of Post-War Maltese Poetry*. Paisley, Wilfion, 1980.

PHELPS, G. "Two Nigerian Writers: Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka". In FORD, B. *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*. Vol. 8. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984, pp. 328-343.

SCHROTH-KOLHLER, C et al. "Zwei staufische Diplome für Malta aus den Jahren 1198 und 1212". In *Deutsches Archiv*. 33 (1977), 519-520.

THOMAS, D. *Letters to Vernon Watkins*. London: Dent, 1957.

WETTINGER, G. & FSADNI, M. *Peter Caxaro's Cantilena. A Poem in Medieval Maltese*. Valletta: Lux, 1968.

Universidade Estadual de Maringá

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SPEECH ADJUSTMENTS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

DIÓGENES CÂNDIDO DE LIMA

Introduction

In the literature of second language acquisition (SLA), attention has been given primarily to the learner. However, with the decline of the influence of innatist theories of language learning, and with the advent of discourse analysis as a methodology for the study of SLA, the attention of researchers has shifted from analysis of the sentence level to analysis of the level of discourse.

Significant results have been produced in the field of conversational analysis with regard to speech adjustments made by the native speaker when attempting to communicate with speakers whose English proficiency is limited. These adjustments exhibit features that tend to simplify grammar by such phenomena as: elimination of articles, inflections, auxiliaries, and contractions; limited use of verbs and prepositions; replacement of all negative constructions by a "no" preceding the item negated, e.g., "no understand?"; limited and simplified vocabularies; short sentences; and clearly articulated speech (Ferguson, 1975). These adjustments vary with the situation. Parker and Chaudron (1987), in a review of the literature, stated that comprehension is more likely to occur with discourse elaboration or modification of the structures used in the conversation than with simplification at the linguistic level. There are several means of altering speech when native speakers (NSs) are conversing with non-native speakers (NNSs). One of these alterations is called "foreigner talk".

Foreigner talk (FT) is defined as a simplified register or a reduced and conventionalized variety of a language that is used by the speech community when speaking to people who have very little or no knowledge of the second language. It is similar, in many respects, to other simplified registers such as baby

talk (known now variably as motherese, caretaker speech, or child-directed speech), as well as to the approximate systems of a target language used by second language learners or learners' grammar books.

The common characteristics of these simplified language varieties seem to reflect universal processes of modification of the source language. Therefore, the study of FT may be of value to the field of SLA, in the sense that it may provide insights into the processes of the simplification of language.

Synthesis of the Studies

It is generally believed that features of FT discourse, such as slow rate, clear articulation, fewer reduced vowels, and the like, can help comprehension of the target language. It is also generally believed that simplified speech will make understanding easier. It is obvious that learning can take place only if the language being learned is understood. Even though understanding the language by itself does not necessarily mean or guarantee that learning will occur, it does, however, set the scene for learning to take place.

Researchers have investigated whether simplified forms or modified utterances as in FT facilitate comprehension for NNSs learning such utterances. The questions are: How is spoken discourse modified in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, and how does it affect comprehension? In an attempt to answer these questions, researchers in SLA have begun examining features of FT discourse. Several studies have been conducted with the objective not only of characterizing what constitutes these changes in speech but also of furthering the knowledge of how speech modification patterns affect the learner's comprehension. Studies related to FT in the ESL classroom by Chaudron (1982), Henzl (1979), Kelch (1985), Long (1983), Long and Sato (1983), and Schinke-Llano (1983) will be synthesized in this paper.

All si studies were conducted in the classroom. Long and Sato (1983) looked at the informal speech of NSs and NNSs outside the classroom. Outside classroom observations were also done in other studies, for contrasting purposes. The studies looked at discourse modifications of teachers and/or lectures addressed to second language learners. and phonological, morphological, syntactic, and discourse characteristics of FT, and their implications in language comprehension were also taken into consideration. Chaudron (1982) investigated phenomena of how foreign learners acquire knowledge of both concept and the language being taught. He focused on the modification of discourse by ESL teachers to find out if, in fact, this facilitated learning. Henzl (1979) reported on 11 teachers teaching their native languages. (Czech, German, and English). Subjects were asked to describe two different sets of information to three levels of students (beginning, advanced, and native speakers of each language) in order to compare speech samples. The first task was to describe an event in the street. Six tape recordings

for each subject were obtained, and the tapes were analyzed with respect to four different discourse domains: selection of vocabulary, syntatic structures, pronunciation patterns, and non-verbal communication. Kelch (1985) looked at features of FT that would aid comprehension. More specifically, Kelch focused on reduced rate of delivery and grammatical features such as synonyms, hyperonyms, and paraphrases. He prepared four versions of a passage about the eruption of the volcano on the Big Island of Hawaii. The pasage was read by a female NS of Standard American English. The first version reflected NS speech, while the other three versions were modified in rate of delivery. Long (1983) conducted a study in which two identical versions of an academic lecturette were prepared; one contained unadjusted NS discourse and the other was adjusted for NNSs by including FT features. Factual content of the lecturette was tested with a 20-item multiple choice test. Subjects were to complete a statement or a question by choosing one of four possible answers. There was an extra question to measure the percentage of comprehension of the lecturette by the students. Long and Sato (1983) researched the form and functions of teachers' questions and other patterns of linguistic input by examining teachers' classroom speech patterns and comparing these patterns to those in the conversations of NSs-NNSs outside the classroom. Schinke-Llano (1983) also investigated FT, but the context of this study involved limited English proficiency (LEP) and non-LEP students in the same classrooms. Three levels of student-teacher interaction were examined. First, directed (student-teacher) and non-directed (student-student-teacher) speech were analyzed. Second, four areas of the function of the interaction were studied: (1) instructional, (2) managerial, (3) disciplinary, and (4) miscellaneous. Third, the length of interaction was examined.

Methodology

All of the studies except Chaudron (1982) used the rationalistic paradigm, although with some naturalistic traces such as class observations, logs, and interviews. The paradigm used by Chaudron (1982) was naturalistic and descriptive in nature. The subjects in most of the studies were teachers teaching their native language, mainly English (Czech and German were also taught), and their students. Most of the students were foreigners from different language backgrounds. Their level of proficiency in the foreign language varied from beginning to advanced according to TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) results. The study by Henzl (1979) used NSs of English, Czech, and German as control groups. Schinke-Llano (1983) and Chaudron (1982) also used NSs of English for comparison. Most of the students for the studies were adults. However, Chaudron (1982) used high school students, and Schinke-Llano (1983) worked with elementary school children. The ages of the adult students, as a whole, ranged from 18 to 40 years old. There was no mention of the gender of the students. The teachers were all

adults. Their ages were not given. Only Long and Sato (1983) referred to the sex of the teachers. In the ESL classroom study, there were six teachers, three male and three female. In the conversational study, there were 36 NSs, 18 males and 18 females; the gender of the NNSs was not given.

The method for the selection of the subjects was not mentioned in four of the six studies. Kelch (1985) randomly assigned students to one of four groups. This was done in order to control possible variances in proficiency. Long (1983) also randomly assigned the 34 subjects to one of two categories: FT and NSs. Four of the studies also failed to note the length of time for the studies. Time may not have been an important factor because the focus of the research was on analyses of transcriptions of interaction between foreign students and their teachers and/ or NSs of the target language.

The main mean of data collection were tape-recordings of lectures and class observations. The researchers used a variety of measurements (e.g., constructed and standardized) to examine the results of the studies. All the researchers looked at the complexity of grammar, choice of the lexicon, FT features of synonym, paraphrases, and modification of sentence structure for better understanding by the foreigner. The constructed measurements assessed specific discourse modifications deemed important to the researchers. Since the majority of the studies were of the rationalistic design, with correlated variables, the methods used to analyze data were analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variant (e.g., Henzl, 1979; Kelch, 1985; Long, 1983; Long & Sato, 1983; Schinke-Llano, 1983). To analyze the data, Chaudron (1982) schematically surveyed the devices that can achieve the functions of elaboration such as questioning, repetition paraphrasing, and exemplification.

Findings

The main hypothesis in five of the six studies was that NSs of a language modify their speech directed to NNSs, and therefore comprehension should be higher among NNSs when speech was modified. It was also predicted that ESL teachers would adjust their speech according to their perception of the level of the students' competence.

Chaudron (1982) reported on the various phonological, morphological, syntactic, and discourse structures employed by teachers in attempts to communicate information through the elaboration of vocabulary. He calls our attention to the fact that learners may have a hard time finding out the difference between the lexical items and structures to be clarified. Alternative information and additional information may become ambiguous. Henzl (1979) found that, while retaining grammaticality, teachers manipulated phonological features by using clear articulation, a slower rate of delivery, less subordination, and shorter sentence length; increased use of the present tense, synonyms, and paraphrasing; and

decreased use of idioms. Teachers also reduced their rate of speech when speaking to beginners more than when talking to advanced learners. Kelch (1985) reported that some modification of the discourse helped comprehension to a certain extent. The ANOVA results indicated that the groups who received the passage containing a reduced rate had a significant increase in comprehension. However, there was no significance between speed and modification. Long (1983) indicated, through the application of a test, that average comprehension was significantly higher for the FT group than for the group that heard the NS version of the lecturette. Long and Sato (1983) revealed that "the speech of the six ESL teachers differed greatly from that of the NNSs in informal conversation with NNSs outside the classroom" (p. 280). Schinke-Llano (1983) showed that teachers directed much more of their speech to the non-LEP than to the LEP students. Non-LEP students received much more instructional time, whereas the LEP students received more managerial time. The results were not significant with respect to the length of time spent with LEP versus non-LEP students.

Conclusion

In the studies described above, there is evidence that a variety of phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and discourse features have been attributed to FT. Characteristics like slowness and loudness of speech, precise articulation, syntactic simplification, and choice of vocabulary items were noted repeatedly. Findings on how vocabulary is explained seem to be unique and point to new areas of inquiry. Research into ungrammaticality versus well-formedness of sentences in FT discourse seems to provide contradictory results. Results show that the comprehension of NNSs seems to be higher when spoken discourse is adjusted. Long (1983), however, points out that "some adjustments, such as repetition and use of a slow pace, may aid NNS comprehension, while others may have no beneficial effect at all." (p. 384)

Several studies have been conducted, but, as Schinke-Llano (1983) pointed out, all the classroom studies, except for one, "are based in ESL for foreign language classrooms, and all involve adult-adult commnunication. Thus, a major portion of second language learners, namely those in kindergarten through high school (K-12) setting, has yet to be considered in the FT literature" (p. 146). Additionally, Schinke-Llano (1983) points out that "for the phenomenon of FT to be fully characterized, analysis of its use in a variety of functional contexts is needed - from casual conversation to formal ESL instruction to instruction in content classes" (p. 149).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chaudron, C. (1982). "Vocabulary elaboration in teacher's speech to L2 learners." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 4(2), 170-180.

Ferguson, C. A. (1975). "Toward a characterization of English foreigner talk." *Anthropological Linguistics, 17*, 1-14.

Henzl, V. (1979). "Foreigner talk in the classroom." *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 17*(2), 159-167.

Kelch, K. (1985). "Modified input as an aid to comprehension." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 7*, 81-90.

Long, M. H. (1983). "Input and second language acquisition theory." In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input and second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Long, M. H., & Sato, C. J. (1983). "Classroom foreigner talk discourse: Forms and functions of teachers' questions." In H. W. Seliger & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom-oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Parker, K., & Chaudron, C. (1987). "The effects of linguistic simplifications and elaborative modifications on L2 comprehension." *UHWPESL*, 6(2), 107-133.

Schinke-Llano, L. A. (1983). "Foreigner talk in content classrooms". In H. W. Seliger & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom-oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia
Vitória da Conquista

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW: DILVO I. RISTOFF'S *JOHN UPDIKE'S RABBIT AT REST - APPROPRIATING HISTORY.* NEW YORK: PETER LANG, 1998.

JOÃO CARLOS GONÇALVES

As in his previous book on the Rabbit trilogy, the author centers his considerations on the historical scene, which he considers the best way to understand the meaning of John Updike's Rabbit novels, now forming a tetralogy with *Rabbit At Rest*. With investigative precision Ristoff measures the time of the story in juxtaposition with that of historical events in the eighties. He finds that Updike was meticulous in considering what was going on in the American historical scene then, and that these events had a decisive role in the construction of Harry's psyche and even determined it. In opposition to what happened in the other book, Harry Rabbit Angstrom now seems to be given some freedom to be more of an individual than was suggested before. The determinism with which the author saw Harry is considerably attenuated, so much so that we may conclude that scene-centered reading is, after all, only one more possible way of considering Updike's tetralogy.

Besides the Preface and the Introduction, the book is divided into eight chapters plus the Conclusion and three Appendices. The chapters deal specially with main themes in *Rabbit at Rest*. From the very beginning Ristoff points out protagonist Rabbit's quality as a representative of American middleness, particularly as *"the belligerent anticommunist, the angry nationalist, and the phallocentric racist."* (p. xiv), in spite of his basic honesty, sensitivity and humanness.

In the Introduction the author sets out the lines on which the book will be structured, namely, Updike's referentiality and his ever-present preoccupation with history, or the American scene for that matter; Rabbit's metaphorical mode of reality apprehension, which decisively affects his Weltanschauung, especially in opposition to his colleague Charlie's metonymical stance. Therefore, while Charlie can analyse and understand reality more objectively, Harry can not and tends to

project his feelings and prejudices on to what he sees in the external world, easily espousing America's current collective ideas about itself and the world at large, particularly those spread by the American media. As an immediate consequence, Rabbit is more of an acted-upon than acting protagonist – an easy target for external historical forces, which make him a fair representative of American ordinariness.

Ristoff efficiently comments on Hayden White's four modes of reality apprehension (the metaphoric, the metonymical, the synecdochical and the ironic) and, likewise, characterizes Rabbit's own. Of special importance is his distinction between history and scene, even though they are often used as synonyms in the book: scene incorporates the ordinary, the common, in other words, Rabbit's personal experiences. Besides the proximity of the narrator's and Rabbit's views of reality, Ristoff also stresses that history and story go side by side and sometimes it becomes very difficult to separate one from the other; the official history often being only one possible version of what has happened.

As for the chapters, the author presents – usually in footnote form – all the myriad links between contemporary history as registered by the media and Updike's text of *Rabbit at Rest*. He shows how much a historically well-informed reader can complete the writing of the story being told, since characters react to very specific historical elements, and even their evaluations are sometimes dependent on images related to the world represented through newspaper headlines and news programs on TV. These chapters concentrate on new historical forces which confront Rabbit as well as *his* America: international terrorism (*Chapter 2. The Plane of Death*); the end of the Cold War (*Chapter 3. The Death of an Era*); foreign debt and foreign domination (*Chapter 4. Debt Crisis and the Japanese Invasion*); feminism (*Chapter 5. The Threat of Feminism*); drug addiction (*Chapter 6. The Threat of Drugs*); AIDS (*Chapter 7. The Fear of AIDS*), and other disquieting circumstances present in the 1980s.

Chapter 1. *The World of Rabbit at Rest* stresses the centrality of the death theme in the novel. Rabbit worries about his personal end as well as the extinction of the values he has cherished all his life; accordingly, he goes with his wife to Florida for one half of the year, to that particular space dedicated to the old and decaying. The point the author makes is that the story depends on history for its building up; they go inextricably together, and the scene is the generative power of the story.

Chapter 2. *The Plane of Death* exposes Rabbit's preoccupation with the frequent plane crashes of the day, especially with the mid-air explosion of PanAmerican Airways Boeing 747 over the village of Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Unlike to everybody else in the story, Rabbit evinces a deep emotional response to this event. In the final analysis, Ristoff considers his reaction another example of his ideologically controlled mind, since the victims are mainly Americans. The protagonist's confusion of Lockerbie with Glockamorra is seen as a possible allusion to biblical Gomorrah, and punishment for one's sins. I think this confusion

could equally be related to Francis Ford Coppola's 1968 film *Finian's Rainbow*, in which the town of Glockamorra appears as the recollection of an idyllic place, more in keeping with Rabbit's emotional disposition concerning the event.

In Chapter 3. *The Death of an Era*, the author points out the perfect matching of the story's chronology and that of historical events, which is shown in more detail in Appendix 1, *A Chronology of Story and History*. The real events are placed side by side with the fictional ones, from December 1988 to September 1989. Even Rabbit's ideas concerning real facts coincide with opinions expressed in newspapers and on television. Characters are 'historicized' and Rabbit's attitude of trying to imitate President Bush (p. 57) has a curious counterpart in Updike's attitude concerning Clinton in the 1990s, defending the president's right to be left alone so that he can govern in peace.

In Chapter 4. *The Debt Crisis and the Japanese Invasion*, Ristoff seems to admit the status of the scene-oriented reading of the protagonist's attitudes. *Rabbit's fear and xenophobia find their justification in the American scene of the 1980s, or at least in one possible reading of this scene*. (p. 71) (my underlining). In his critical treatment of Rabbit, ristoff allows him considerably more leeway to improve his condition as a human being, in spite of the ever-present historical circumstances, which, in my apinion, appear merely like giant's fingers, still a matter of tangible elements in a much broader fictional context. Nevertheless, the pressure Toyota representative Mr. Shimada brings to bean upon the protagonist for his bad administration of the Springer Motors dealership is a good example of the U.S. position facing the Japanese economic impact of the period. Characters, such as Rabbit's son Nelson, are shown to appropriate current ideas concerning the Japanese presence in the American economy, especially those from television documentaries broadcast from 1987 to 1989.

Among the threats Rabbit has to face as a sign of the specific conditions of the 1980s is the presence of feminism, which appears as a threat to American male chauvinism as well. Its threatening role is shared with drugs and AIDS in the protagonist's mind in particular and in middle America's psyche in general. Harry's wife, Janice, has attained her cherished independent status by landing a job as a salesperson; his son, Nelson, is involved with cocaine dealers and is an addict himself; and the fear he has of getting AIDS is always present through Lyle, an HIV-positive homosexual also works as an accountant for Springer Motors and plays an active role as a cause of its financial problems, together with Nelson. Rabbit's personal environment, besides being a microcosm of crucial American problems, is continuously bombarded with news about these problems through TV documentaries, talk shows, statistics, newspapers and films.

In spite of points of progress women have made, it is shown that male dominance still prevails even in feminine minds. Rabbit, for his part, would prefer women – especially his own – to remain at home, ignorant, incompetent and easy to control. In the meantime, Janice and her husband appropriate attitudes concerning their sexes from the movies *Working Girl* (1988) and *The Return of Martin Guerre*

(1982), respectively. Since abortion is an important topic of the times, it serves as a theme for the conversation between Rabbit and Elvira, the female employee at Springer Motors. Harry's plight is summarized with *He is dying because his world is dying (p. 91)*, which seems to account for his present situation both as the story's protagonist and the prototype of American male middleness, certainly bound to be *redefined in the coming years (p. 91)*. In his xenophobia, Rabbit identifies feminist manifestations as well as the drug problem and the presence of foreigners with Russia and an international communist plot to destabilize his country. Through the appropriations of historical events and topics, Ristoff argues, Updike creates thoroughly *believable, historically situated individual (s)* (p. 121).

Having once been a high-school baseball star himself, from which he got his nickname, Rabbit gives a lot of attention to past and current sports heroes; he believes their attitudes on the field, in the courts and in life may have a higher meaning that could also be applied to his own life; he feels special sympathy for those who are aging and have to prove that they are still good at what made them famous once (*Chapter 8. A Few More Intimations, p. 125*). Behind all this there lingers the image of death waiting to take its toll, and Rabbit realizes it is really no use trying to relive his own past glory through his heroes.

In his Conclusion Ristoff brings focuses on the attention that Updike reserves for the individual, his protagonist. It starts with the epigraph chosen, *Brewer and all the world are just frills on himself, like the lace around a plump satin valentine, himself the heart of the universe, like the Dalai Lama. — John Updike, Rabbit at Rest.*

As this epigraph makes very clear, Ristoff's second paragraph in the Conclusion confirms that the whole emphasis of the book, and for that matter of the tetralogy, is on the individual. However important a role history plays in the Rabbit saga, the story is still undoubtedly his own, and the core of all that is said has to do with the protagonist's being in the world, and not with the world and its changing historical circumstances in themselves. *He views historical manifestations in terms of the values he brings with him from earlier decades; present history, in all of its manifold forms of expression, exists only as it exists for him, holds meaning for him, and can be applied to practical day-to-day life by him.... (p. 137).* (my underlining). This emphasis on the agent makes his processing of history essential in the construction of the novel; Harry is not merely a puppet controlled by strings he might not even know to exist. It would be a sad world in which a protagonist could be thoroughly explained as a result of external historical circumstances surrounding him; and that is certainly not the world shown in Updike's fiction, especially in the Rabbit tetralogy. In no way can one accept *the impossibility of Updike's text escaping the prison house of history (p. 106).* This prison house could be admitted only to the extent that every story is subject to general determinations of space and time; and the scene-reading would be *essential to perceive how Rabbit comes to life and how much his story is the story of middle America (p.157)* only in this sense.

Summing up, I think what is essential in the tetralogy is the protagonist's reaction to the historical scene and not the elements in that scene themselves; had they been different, Rabbit's (especially psychological) reactions to them would still have been center stage. Nevertheless, the careful examination Ristoff makes of the details of the American (and the world's) historical scene is far from being devoid of importance. It clarifies the determinations of space and time related to the context the protagonist belongs to; it also shows Updike's meticulousness in the building up of his Rabbit saga. Harry reacts to very precise and concrete stimuli from his moment and place in history. Still, it seems to me that a specifically literary critical approach – for instance concentrating on the narrative structure and the narrator's treatment of Rabbit's mind – would be at least as legitimate as the scene-centered reading proposed by Ristoff.

UPDIKE'S RELIGIONS: MAKING HIS GOD THE HOST OF ALL BEINGS

JOSÉ ENDOENÇA MARTINS

REVIEW

John Updike and Religion: The Sense of the Sacred and the Motions of Grace. Edited by James Yerkes. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., 1999. xiii + 290 pages

The real God, the God men do
not invent, is...Wholly Other.
We cannot reach Him; only He
can reach us
John Updike - Assorted Prose

If for Updike there is no doubt that we cannot reach God, then at least there is the hope that, after reading this collection of essays dealing with Updike's uncountable encounters with religion and religions, God will reach us. I myself have the feeling that the almighty God, Updike's God, has reached me in many different ways, but especially during the days I spent reading the collection and writing this short review. Actually, here is what I can say: that Updike's God was there, spying on me from the pages, involving me in the words of works, embracing and feeding me with his host, and establishing with me a communion that was inspiring and enriching in all possible senses.

Moving from the personal to the critical, *John Updike and Religion: The Sense of the Sacred and the Motions of Grace* places Updike's fictional works and literary artistry in a broad dimension of the American artistic scene as it extensively explores and intensively depicts the multitude of religious elements Updike employs and through which he constructs the dynamics of his literary enterprise. Actually, in the various discussions of Updike's fiction the sacred and the religious interconnect with the literary in such a dynamic and vital way that they profoundly stir the reader's personal spiritual sensitivities.

In its three long sections and fifteen thought-provoking essays, the book edited by James Yerkes illustrates the many ways in which Updike's literary and religious agendas creatively interact—how they collude or collide, carry or abandon, strengthen or weaken his literary vitality. In the process they critically evaluate a wide range of texts, from the autobiographical *Self-Consciousness* to the satirical, Hawthornean *S*.

When James Yerkes opens the book he introduces this collection of essays about the presence of religious concerns in Updike's works with two of Updike's own texts, the poem "Earthworm" and the acceptance speech "Remarks upon Receiving the Campion Medal" — both of which Updike himself proposed. In those texts, Updike establishes the connections between his literary artistry and his theology by explicitly saying, in "Remarks," that "the reading I did in my twenties and thirties, to prop up my faith, also gave me ideas and a slant that shaped my stories and, especially, my novels" (5). In fact, Updike's essays, stories, novels, and personal faith comments on his attract the interests of the writers and clearly signal that the exact purpose of the book is to scrutinize some of the most significant religious aspects of Updike's artistic production and to demonstrate religion as a fabric, or a web, that weaves the connections between his fictional artistry and theology.

The relationship between Updike's fictional artistry and theology is established in the first section of the book, "*Updike and the Religious Dimension*". The five essays elaborate the broad contours of Updikean theology.

First, in his effort to describe Updike's theological beliefs, Yerkes argues in his essay "As Good as It Gets" that Updike's understanding of human religious consciousness is best characterized "as our sense of an unavoidable, unbearable, and unbelievable Sacred presence" (10), a sense that tends to manifest itself both positively and negatively. Using primarily Updike's autobiographical *Self-Consciousness*, but expanding his analysis to other works of secondary criticism, Yerkes informs us that, despite calling forth a religious sense of origin, courage, hope, obligation and praise, Updike's notion of human self-consciousness is involved in forms of tension and ambiguity. As is true in the life of Rabbit Angstrom, they are "never fully or finally resolved" (11).

Going a little further in the same direction, Hewitt's essay "The Obligation to Live" enlarges Yerkes' analysis of Updike's autobiographical text and she discovers two key sentiments pervading the five memoirs of Updike's autobiography: first, Updike's decision to enumerate "his infirmities rather than his achievements" (36); second, Updike's determination to believe in the idea of God's existence and in the hope of immortality.

To affirm God's existence, however, is not sufficient for Upidke's characterization of religious beliefs. God must be defined more accurately. This is exactly what Schiff's essay, "The Pocket Nothing Else Will Fill," accomplishes by arguing that Updike's God is seen as dualistic and paradoxical, a God whom human beings adore and worship despite His throwing lightning bolts and His causing earthquakes. Schiff makes us understand that, in His paradoxical elements, "Updike's God is hidden yet visible, absent yet present" (51), a domestic God who "permeates every aspect of human life so that His presence is felt in and around households" (53). In Updike's *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, for instance, the sacred and mysterious presence of God is made unavoidable by Updike. Refusing to accept God's death, Updike reformulates his God by making Him moveable, and transforms Him by making Him move from domesticity to the cinema. As a moveable divinity, Updike's God moves as minister Clarence Arthur Wilmot's faith fails and moves as well.

If Schiff affirms that the motions of God's grace place Him everywhere, inside and outside domesticity, Ristoff's essay "When Earth Speaks of Heaven" places the sacred and the divine grace at a quite different level, taking them to the unfathomable space between Earth and Heaven. By doing so, Ristoff expands on Updike's literary views of religiosity. Updike's "religious understanding" depicted in *Brazil* goes beyond the Earth of Christianity in order to reach the Heaven which mixes Roman Catholicism, Candomblé, and the shaman's primitive magic. However, Ristoff argues that despite having involved the couple Tristão and Isabel in this triple religious experience, Updike's novel is "only contaminated by magic and religion, not guided by it" (78). However, Ristoff makes the reader realize that the novel "speaks to us of a God who, although in the background and never taken seriously by the characters, reminds us of life beyond the deadness of materiality" (78). In other words, says Ristoff, God's background presence in *Brazil* reveals to the readers those special moments when Earth speaks of Heaven, particularly in the irrelevance of racial differences.

Besides moving from domesticity to the cinema and from Earth to Heaven, another version of motion in Updike's grace takes his religiosity to *Toward the End of Time*. Malone's essay "Updike 2020" closes the first section dealing with Updike's religious concerns there. The novel's religious views are depicted through Ben Turnbull's and other characters' connections with both fantastic and mythic

elements rather than matters simply realistic. Malone sees the mythical elements of the novel associated with classical literature. For instance, he emphasizes the idea that humans being transformed into animals in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and other such classical texts permits Updike to turn the prostitute Deirdre into a doe, associate Ben Turnbull's wife Gloria with Robert Graves's White Goddess, and link Ben himself to the sacred oak king. Malone also depicts instances in which Updike's novel parallels the Gilgamesh epic and so Ben is shown similarly pursuing the meaning of death, eternity, and immortality. Besides, Malone believes that dealing with these mythical elements allows Updike to explore other themes: modern social failures as expressions of superficial scientific explanation and Ben's faith in marriage and sex as pure contractual forms of trade. Moreover, Ben's materialism leads to his neglect of religion and his loss of humanity symbolized in his operation for prostate cancer. Finally, there is his potential encounter with God through the earth's circumambient cloud ring he names torus, suggesting that God can reach us.

The second section, entitled *"Updike and the Christian Religion"*, moves beyond the general aspects of Updike's religious understanding in the first part and concentrates on more specific aspects of his Christian orientation. Initially, Pasewark's essay "An Umbrella Blowing Inside Out" deals with the problem of freedom in Updike's artistic perspective—freedom which turns into a kind of religion in American culture. Pasewark argues that "the religion of freedom is really the great American civil religion" (108), before which all other religions, including Christianity, "fall silent or complicit" (109). Pasewark suggests that, in the Rabbit novels, for instance, Harry, in his pursuit of that unnamable something, seems to be the executor of the myth of freedom associated with the idea of individual autonomy. Actually, freedom and goodness are deeply related in Updike's works and equally contribute to the construction of his literary characterization of Christianity.

In "What Is Goodness," Jodock searches for Updike's concept of goodness and finds it in the Lutheran roots which basically signals to "a profound moral ambiguity in humans" (124). Jodock emphasizes the view that Lutheran ambiguity is fictional because of Updike's view that a writer's responsibility is "to tell the truth as you know it, and not to get onto a preacher's platform" (142). Also, having Updike's Lutheran roots in mind, Jodock adds that the novelist's job "is to describe and thereby 'mirror' the reality, trusting that such a description is not only holy but also useful, that showing people the 'disappointment' they try to deny may open them to the 'leap' or 'orientation' that brings life" (143).

The analysis of the Protestant roots of Updike's Christianity continues in "Writing as a Reader of Karl Barth," Webb's essay, which establishes the relation between Updike's fiction and his reading of the German theologian Karl Barth.

Webb compares the theologian to Updike as fiction writer by explaining that for Barth the role of the theologian is to consider the world simply as it is, neither negatively nor positively. For Barth the theologian, the world appears ambiguous, dualistic and conflicting, that is, it appears "the good but fallen place for God to carry out our redemption" (148), a world where freedom to choose is essential. Webb also writes that Updike's appreciation of Barth's theological views allows him to portray in his novels Barthian characters whose lives do not intend "to persuade his readers that Christianity is true, and he does not try to initiate his readers into a spiritual journey" (149). Webb concludes that by neither defending God, nor condemning humanity, Updike echoes Barth and leaves a door open for his readers' personal decisions.

Similarly, Boswell's essay "The World and the Void" also connects Updike's literary Christianity to Barth's Reformed theology. Boswell informs us that, derived from Barth's dualistic view of God as creator of both the divine something and divine nothing, Updike's theology in *Rabbit is Rich* concentrates on the God of the nothing so that something may come out of it. Boswell argues that Updike's theology and blasphemy are related in the novelist's depiction of Reverend Campbell's homosexuality and Thelma Harrison's sodomy. In both cases, Rabbit's concerns with the anal cavity associate him with nothingness, however, Boswell insists that in his anal intercourse with Thelma, "Harry has finally experienced the 'underside' of sexuality, which is to say he now knows both the 'something' and the 'nothing' that sexual intercourse reveals to us" (176). Touching the void of nothing in order to fill it with something, Updike's characters seem to focus on the realm of work.

Thus, "Learning to Die," Kort's essay, links Updike's characters' sense of work and responsibilities to religion by showing the imbalance and frustration that goes on between these elements. He argues that the Protestant idea that work or vocation is seen as the locus of religious behavior and meaning cannot easily be developed in the individualistic American culture. In the Protestant view, work connects people with something more important and larger than themselves and their individual activity. Work suggests the idea of giving one's life for the sake of another. In other words, learning to die for the other is not possible in American culture where the individual's interests and preoccupations tend to substitute collective concerns. Examples of characters who privilege individuality and, therefore, neglect larger and more profound collective concerns are Jessie in *In The Beauty of the Lilies,* George Caldwell in *The Centaur,* and Harry Angstrom in *Rabbit, Run.*

Entitled *"Updike and American Religion,"* the third section of the book, echoes the concerns of the literary masters of the American past with whom Updike dialogues in his writings. It opens with Berryman's essay "Faith and Fiction" in

which he explores the relationships that both Hawthorne and Updike establish between faith and fiction. In his parallelism involving the two American novelists, Berryman argues that in *S* Updike reverses Hawthorne's religious concern of *The Scarlet Letter*. That is, while Hawthorne carefully considers his audience's common faith, disguising Hester Prynne's adultery behind suggestive elements, Updike is more realistic, and adultery, in *S*, is committed and described openly, because adultery for Updike's contemporary audience is "rarely a cause of individual damnation" (198). In fact, Hester Prynne's adultery represents a challenge to the moral law of the Puritans in New England, a religious challenge that is totally reduced to satirical elements in Updike's construction of Sarah Worth's sexual and religious lives.

The comparative analysis of Hawthorne and Updike continues in Plath's essay, "Giving the Devil His Due." Plath explores the treatment given to religious elements by both Hawthorne and Updike in the novels *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Witches of Eastwick*. Saying that while Hawthorne's novel takes place in mythic time and space, Updike's fiction occupies secular space and time, Plath establishes the differences in the religious views of the two writers. He argues that adulterous Hester Prynne is the martyr and, therefore, is marginalized and ostracized by Puritan society. Updike's three divorcees, Alexandra, Jane, and Sukie, on the contrary, belong to a society of martyrs whose witchcraft is seen as "a venture of women into the realm of power" (211). Further, Plath argues that Chillingworth, Prynne's husband, and Van Horne, the witches' seducer, play different roles: the former both leeches and heals Arthur Dimmesdale, Prynne's lover, in order to redeem the sinner; the latter leeches with no need of healing anybody because there is no sense of sin among his women and their community.

As a chronicler of American religion, Updike goes on echoing Hawthorne, argues Newman's essay, "Guru Industries, Ltd." Newman evaluates American religion by connecting Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* with Updike's *S*, but here the association between the two works is based on the relationships between material good and spiritual good. Newman writes that Updike reverses in *S*, Hawthorne's motto in Salem: that material good represents divine favor as a result of spiritual good, thus revealing the connections between Puritanism and Capitalism. Updike inverts the relationships of Puritanism and Capitalism by depicting how Sarah Worth, the Rajneeshee sect and its leader, use Indian transcendental beliefs for capitalist purposes, witnessed by their preoccupation with money and material good. In doing so, Updike develops a satirical view of the hybrid blend of Eastern and Western beliefs, and *S* therefore becomes a criticism of the materialism that uses and abuses religious beliefs.

In "Chaos and Society," Diamond shifts from the echoes of Hawthorne in Updike's works and explores the relationships between Updike's social concerns

and the life of President James Buchanan, who is the focus of his novel *Memories of the Ford Administration*. Diamond argues that Updike's discussion of Buchanan's personal and political failures can be used to show Updike's religious beliefs and how they lead him to political and social positions. As for Updike's religious beliefs Diamond writes: "he was born into the Lutheran Church and that Christianity and Lutheranism were not simply abstract religious designations taken as surface tokens but were essential elements in his personal identity, an expression of the fabric of his self-understanding" (151). Updike's Lutheran roots, Diamond believes, tend to justify Updike's skepticism towards revolution, his lack of sharper criticism towards his nation, and his praise of President Buchanan, who sought to avoid the civil war.

Finally, Updike's views of American Religion is closed with Greiner's essay "The World as Host," in which the essayist emphasizes Updike's search for middleness. Greiner explores Updike's views of middleness in the sixties and derives his views from his reading of Updike's writing in the sixties which, in Updike's opinion, is the decade of despair and decline in American society. Echoing Updike's concerns about the decade's radical positions, Greiner writes: "the decline of traditional heroism is a cultural indicator and sure sign that a society has drifted from faith to uncertainty" (260). The deaths of Kennedy and Eliot in the sixties are seen by Updike, Greiner argues, as "the shrinking of the political, cultural, and religious presence necessary to the moral health of a society" (262). Thus, reacting against that kind of political, religious, and cultural shrinking, Updike moves toward middleness, and his emphasis on the middleness of life centers on the world seen as the sacramental host of "courtesy and compassion and faith" (263), qualities that "continue to direct meaningful lives" (263).

It does not seem too much to repeat here again the idea that Updike's God, in the ways He has been discussed throughout the book, is Himself the Sacramental Host of all religiosities: literary, theological, personal, social, Lutheran, Christian and American. These religiosities were disguised or made explicit in the multitude of his works, both fictional and non-fictional, realistic and mythic, satirical and laudatory. The essays, in their varieties, interests, and expositions, have become spoken witnesses of Updike's vitalizing of American literature with his theological and literary artistry. Because of the theological concerns they express, the essays have turned into the host and bread that allow the Holy Communion between Updike's fictional energy and his audience's responses to literature—responses both illuminating and transforming.

THE PRESENCE OF CAMÕES DE GEORGE MONTEIRO

MARISA P. LAJOLO

O livro de George Monteiro *The Presence of Camões (influences on the literature of England, America & Southern Africa)* prima pelo rigor e pela abrangência, inaugurando um campo pouco trabalhado nas letras vernáculas, e nele estabelecendo patamar de altíssima qualidade. Com efeito, este livro ilumina caminhos da literatura comparada inscrevendo-se na vertente aberta no Brasil por Onédia Alvarenga com seu excelente (e hoje infelizmente raro) *Byron no Brasil*.

Ambos mergulham no mesmo coro de vozes anglo-portuguesas, viajando ao longo do diálogo entre literaturas de expressão vernácula e literatura de língua inglesa.

Ao longo das quase duzentas páginas de seu sóbrio e belo volume (The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), Monteiro rastreia leituras e reescrituras camonianas em língua inglesa com erudição e sensibilidade. Esses ingredientes são, sem dúvida, essenciais ao trabalho com poesia, sobretudo em momentos como o atual, em que a linguagem acadêmica tende a entupir e entulhar os estudos literários com um palavrório cifrado, que mais dificulta do que ilumina a leitura.

Com George Monteiro o leitor está livre de tais escolhos: com ele, navegamos por um texto cristalino, dele saindo mais sábios, enriquecidos e com certeza mais preparados para nossas próprias leituras.

A navegação proposta começa por inverter a tradicional direção dos estudos comparatistas. O projeto de Monteiro é seguir o rastro de um grande autor (Camões) de uma literatura periférica (a portuguesa) em literaturas hegemônicas (a inglesa , para ficar apenas nas literaturas-acima-de-qualquer-suspeita). Se é verdade, como diz Antonio Cândido, que a literatura portuguesa é *arbusto de segunda ordem no jardim das musas*, o que George Monteiro persegue neste livro é o papel deste *arbusto de segunda ordem* na fecundação de jardins de maior luxo.

Ou seja, George Monteiro vai acompanhar o percurso da obra camoniana em literaturas *de primeira ordem*, independentemente de esta superioridade fundar-se em qualidade textual ou decorrer do prestígio da língua de que se vale, o inglês, por sua vez beneficiário da centralidade política e econômica de comunidades das quais é língua nacional.

Rastrear a presença de Camões na cultura de língua inglesa começa, obviamente, pela história da tradução de sua obra. A tradução constitui, por assim dizer, o primeiro grau de materialidade que viabiliza a presença significativa e maciça de um escritor em uma comunidade lingüística distinta daquela na qual produziu sua obra. Assim, corretamente, disso se ocupam os primeiros capítulos do livro pelos quais George Monteiro conduz seu leitor. Ao rastrear as primeiras traduções de Camões para o inglês (a mais antiga, a de Sir Richard Fanshawe é de 1655), o autor instiga seu leitor a meditar, por exemplo, sobre o (por assim dizer) peso favorável que representou, para a inclusão de Camões no horizonte das leituras dos letrados ingleses, o soneto com que Torquato Tasso, em 1580, celebra a épica camoniana.

Na migração de um poema lusitano para outras línguas e outros públicos, o peso da aval de Tasso, poeta italiano acima-de-qualquer-suspeita é grande e fundamental: com certeza noções como *capital cultural* e *distribuição poder no campo* podem encaminhar respostas interessantes.

Assegurada por traduções a presença material de Camões no universo livresco da cultura inglesa, *The Presence of Camões* faz outro movimento, complementar deste, investigando a presença da poesia de Camões no imaginário de poetas e prosadores da língua inglesa. Agora o crítico tanto acompanha menções explícitas à obra camoniana por autores norte americanos do porte de Edgar Allan Poe e de Melville, quanto sua presença mais sutil e discreta em poetas como Emily Dickinsion .

A seqüência dos dez capítulos nos quais se divide o livro é bastante sugestiva da abrangência do arco no qual o autor inscreve a intertextualidade do texto camoniano: Tasso's legacy; William Hayley's Patronage; Elizabeth Barrett's Central Poem; Poe's Knowledge; Melville's figural Artist; Longfellow's Taste ; Higginson and Dickinson Tributes; Elizabeth Bishop's Black Gold; The Adamastor History; *Alma minha gentil* in English

Elencando e discutindo traduções - sobretudo inglesas - que desde 1655 disponibilizam Camões para leitores anglófones, George Monteiro escapa com elegância das ciladas de discussões que ancoram (ou encalham) em comentários relativos a "propriedade/impropriedade" ou a "correção/incorreção" de uma ou de outra tradução. George Monteiro evita, por outro lado, cair no escorregadio campo de uma presuntiva "impossibilidade" ou "indiscutibilidade" de uma ou de outra tradução, deste ou daquele gesto tradutório.

Nada disso.

O itinerário pelo qual este livro de George Monteiro leva seu leitor é a construção de uma narrativa que historia, coteja, discute e faz dialogarem várias versões de

Camões em inglês o que sem dúvida confere materialidade à tão atual discussão dos limites e horizontes da tradução, bem como ao peso do relevo político e econômico de uma sociedade no destino de seus escritores para além das fronteiras nacionais.

Se os que crêem em estética gostam de falar de *universalidade*, o mundo da tradução nos faz pensar em *internacionalismo* quando não em *globalização*. É a partir desta base histórica, que George Monteiro vai debruçar-se sobre alguns dos diálogos travados entre diferentes traduções.

Na perspectiva até aqui sublinhada do livro de George Monteiro, *The Presence of Camões* presenteou seus leitores com a erudição e finura da pesquisa em que se fundamenta: ficamos sabendo, por exemplo, de correspondência trocada entre Longfellow e D.Pedro II a propósito de Camões. Já na discussão e comparação de diferentes traduções, patenteia-se a extrema sensibilidade com que George Monteiro trabalha com o texto poético: é, por exemplo, com mão leve e amorosa que ele discute aspectos relevantes de sonoridade e de escolha lexical em poemas de E. Bishop, em cujos bastidores o crítico espreita um fundo camoniano .

Na delicadez e rigor destas análises o livro torna-se exemplar, muito sugestivo e absolutamente indispensável, quer para estudiosos de literatura portuguesa, quer para os comparativistas, quer ainda para quem se interessa por questões de teoria da literatura. Razões para que se torça para que *The Presence of Camões* ganhe tradução e edição brasileiras.

No sutil diálogo de diferentes escolhas de diferentes tradutores vislumbramos a riqueza, para os estudos de linguagem, de reflexões sobre *atos tradutórios* . O livro de George Monteiro fornece a leitores interessados, abundantes exemplos de traduções a partir das quais se pode meditar sobre a dimensão, por assim dizer, *metafísica* da tradução, já que é ela que permite ao homem escriba e leitor o sonho da legibilidade geral das culturas.

Nesta vertente que se debruça sobre a presença da obra camoniana no imaginário de prosadores e poetas de língua inglesa, merece especial recorte o capítulo que se ocupa da presença de Camões na literatura sul africana. A esse propósito, o livro abre vertentes sedutoras para os estudos comparativos. Que, para pesquisadores brasileiros, podem enriquecer muito as teorias que se ocupam da relação colônia/metrópole no que respeita a questões culturais.

O estudo de George Monteiro desvela a importância da figura de Adamastor na constituição da identidade sul africana e as diferentes formas pelas quais esta *identidade original* é trabalhada na literatura de lá. As formas pelas quais o autor vai buscar a re-escritura do Adamastor pela voz da África do Sul são inúmeras e uma das mais instigantes e promissoras é a análise de eventuais significados da presença de Camões como abertura de uma antologia dedicada à poesia sul africana.

É na leitura de uma novela sul africana de 1993 - *The First Life of Adamastor*- de André Brink (imperdoavelmente ainda não traduzida para português) que se encerra o percurso que palmilhamos com George Monteiro, acompanhando a

jornada de Camões épico na literatura de língua inglesa. O próximo (e último) capítulo cuida do antológico soneto *Alma minha gentil, que te partiste,* cujas diferentes versões inglesas George Monteiro discute, transcrevendo várias delas entre as quais a de sua lavra (1994) que encerra o livro e, fecha esta resenha:

Oh gentle spirit too soon lost
to this body of discontent,
at eternal rest in the firmament,
and I, earthbound, forever lost
in sadness. If in that most
ethereal place, memories bent
on life here are allowed, shunt
not the pure burning love you must
have seen in my eyes , and if you
see merit in my fixed hurt at losing
you, petition Him, that God who
cut short your earthly being,
to return me as swiftly to you
as you were swept from my seeing

OUR OWN STORIES: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICE
NORINE DRESSER. WHITE PLAINS, NY: LONGMAN, 1993

REVIEWED BY DIÓGENES CÂNDIDO DE LIMA

The backbone of *Our Own Stories: Cross-Cultural Communication Practice* is a collection of texts written by foreign students as partial fulfillment of their requirements for a composition class taught by the author at California State University in Los Angeles, California. The student writers were all newcomers to the United States. Their essays were the product of an assignment that required each of them to describe a situation in which cultural differences had caused a problem for them in the U.S.

Our Own Stories is intended for intermediate English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students, although it can easily be adjusted for use with beginning ESL students. Its main objective is to improve students' conversation and reading skills. The book is particularly appealing for the opportunities it provides for students to become familiar with aspects of American culture while exploring cross-cultural themes. Furthermore, the story entitled "Quit Pulling My Leg" is an excellent text to use for the in-depth study of U.S. idioms.

The book is organized into twenty different units. Each unit begins with a question for schema activation, followed immediately by a related story reporting students' personal experiences of cultural differences. There is a series of activities which follow each reading. The first activity is directed toward encouraging class discussion of the unit's topic. Teachers and students discuss the unit to find out what they already know about the particular cultural issue. Students are then asked to give true/false responses, followed by responses in phrases or sentences, and finally the students are asked to express their own opinions on the subject. Additionally, students are asked to describe their own customs with the purpose of encouraging them to understand and develop respect for each other's cultures. In addition to providing cultural knowledge, in an important section titled "Culture

Capsule," the book informs students of what is and what is not appropriate behavior in the U. S. in certain situations.

In order to build student language skills further, the book provides a set of exercises dealing with vocabulary development and expansion, role plays and interviews, and oral and written reports, intended as follow-up activities for challenge work.

The fact that the book is based on real-life experiences described by English-as-a-foreign-language (ESL) students *for* EFL students is a definitive plus. The stories are so real that anyone new to or outside of American culture can easily identify with them. In addition, the book provides opportunities for students to talk about their cultural differences in a safe environment where people may be less judlgemental of their habits and customs. The book is rich not only in interesting and varied ideas for discussion but also in activities that enhance the integration of language skills. The book format allows for flexibility in lesson planning and sucessful language usage activities.

The role of culture in language teaching, although controversial, is very important. The separation of a language from its cultural baggage strips students of very valuable knowledge. Although the theme of cultural adjustment is a universal one, there are cultural differences even within the same culture. The majority of the stories presented in the book were written by Chinese and Mexican students. However, both Asia and Latin America are comprised of countries whose peoples' cultural backgrounds vary greatly. For this reason, it would have been worthwhile to include the perspectives of students from different parts of the world, including the United States.

I enjoyed reading the stories, in spite of finding some of them to be, to a certain extent, exaggerated and illogical. For example, wearing a nightgown to class is not appropriate in any developed country. Peer pressure also occurs in any given culture. Further, it is perfectly understandable for someone to live at home after turning 18 without causing a rift in a friendship. Nonetheless, I would recommend this book, without reservation, for use in both EFL and ESL intermediate and/or advanced classrooms for either communicative or informative purposes. The use of this book is of particular benefit to EFL students because it will give them the opportunity to become familiar with many aspects of American culture without even setting foot in the U.S.

NORMAS DESTA REVISTA

1. *Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, revista editada pela ABRAPUI, publica artigos e resenhas sobre Língua Inglesa e Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.
2. Os trabalhos devem ser enviados em disquetes e digitados em *Word for Windows*, acompanhados de duas cópias impressas.
3. Todos os artigos devem conter *abstract* (até 250 palavras) e *keywords* (até 6).
4. As notas devem vir no final do trabalho.
5. O texto corrido, sem recuos, deve estar marginado à esquerda, sem divisão silábica. Usar o tabulador para os recuos inevitáveis; empregar a barra de espaços entre duas palavras, e apenas uma vez; usar a tecla <ENTER> somente para terminar um parágrafo.
6. Observe a seguinte formatação:
   - Fonte: Times New Roman;
   - Título: centralizado, em caixa alta, corpo 14;
   - Nome do autor: caixa alta, em *itálico*, alinhado à direita, seguido do nome da instituição a que está filiado em caixa alta e baixa;
   - Texto geral, em corpo 12, parágrafo de 5 mm, justificado;
   - Empregue *itálico* para palavras estrangeiras e neologismos;
   - Não empregue **negrito;** ele será utilizado para destaques, a critério da Comissão Editorial;
   - Não use grifos;
   - Empregue "aspas" para citações de até quatro linhas inteiras dentro de um parágrafo; trechos mais extensos, devem ser destacados, em parágrafo separado, com endentação de 10 mm, precedido e seguido de uma linha em branco;
   - Empregue 'apóstrofos' para citações dentro de citações;
   - Para os nomes de autores citados, empregue caracteres normais, caixa alta e baixa;
   - Bibliografia em corpo 10, justificado: sobrenome do autor em caixa alta. Entradas com endentação de 12 mm a partir da Segunda linha;
7. Os trabalhos devem ser enviados até 31 de outubro de cada ano, para publicação no ano seguinte.
8. Envie o trabalho para: ABRAPUI
   Caixa Postal 164
   15001-970 S. J. Rio Preto, SP
   BRASIL

Observação: Neste volume ainda foram aceitas as normas utilizadas pelos autores de cada artigo.