

# *O Lago de todos os Recursos*

Homenagem a  
**HÉLIO OSVALDO ALVES**



*"The Age of Intellect"*



University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies  
Centro de Estudos Anglisticos da Universidade de Lisboa



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## O LAGO DE TODOS OS RECURSOS

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## Introdução

Quando, em Janeiro de 2003, o Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves nos deixou, quatro grandes amigos que se foram despedir dele ao Minho conversavam, no regresso, lembrando com todo o carinho esta figura única, a sua qualidade científica, o seu calor humano, o seu incomparável sentido de humor e, à chegada a Lisboa, formularam a sugestão de, de alguma forma, lhe ser prestada homenagem na Faculdade de Letras.

A sugestão que partiu dos Professores Alcinda Pinheiro de Sousa, Luísa Flora, Teresa Malafaia e Carlos Viana Ferreira foi imediatamente acolhida pelos Professores Álvaro Pina e João Flor, responsáveis máximos pelo Departamento de Estudos Anglísticos da Faculdade de Letras e pelo Centro de Estudos Anglísticos da Universidade de Lisboa. Com o seu apoio, e com a colaboração empenhadíssima de um grupo mais alargado de colegas, o Instituto de Cultura Inglesa tomou a iniciativa de organizar um colóquio em homenagem ao Professor Hélio Alves. A direcção do Instituto de Cultura Norte-Americana desde logo se associou à iniciativa, que foi apoiada, ainda, pelo Conselho Directivo da Faculdade de Letras.

Esta iniciativa obteve um caloroso acolhimento entre os colegas e discípulos do Professor Hélio, que compareceram em grande número, para prestar o seu testemunho de amizade e apreço, tanto através da apresentação de comunicações de índole científica, como através de palavras de reconhecimento e afecto. O presente volume de estudos em homenagem ao Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves reconstitui essa ocasião de encontro e procura reflectir quer a dimensão científica do acontecimento como a sua dimensão afectiva. Assim, o livro que agora se apresenta é composto por duas partes. A primeira, com o título de ‘Testemunhos’, reúne as palavras com que amigos, colegas e discípulos recordaram a pessoa de Hélio Alves. A segunda parte, ‘Comunicações’, inclui os textos de carácter científico apresentados e debatidos no colóquio, realizado em Novembro de 2003.

‘O lago de todos os recursos’ é uma expressão que o Professor Hélio tomou de empréstimo a E. P. Thompson, e adaptou, para baptizar um dos seus estudos sobre a ideia de Cultura. Escolhemos esse título para o colóquio que deu origem a este volume por ele sugerir as infinitas possibilidades de estudo e análise que se contêm na palavra Cultura, bem como a diversidade de escolhas e aproximações que os estudos de Cultura proporcionam. Entre essas aproximações, marcadas por um cunho muito pessoal, que o Professor Hélio nos deixou, recordo apenas um *limerick* autobiográfico, incluído no seu *Pensar sem Senso*, que nos cinco versos da sua estrutura imutável contém muito do sentido de humor e do sentido de cultura, como toda uma maneira de viver, do seu autor:

Havia um certo autor de livrinhos  
Que resolveu tomar outros caminhos  
Pôs-se a pensar  
E a matutar,  
E viu que os caminhos iam dar aos livrinhos.

*Luísa Leal de Faria*  
*Lisboa, Março de 2004*

# Testemunhos



# Relatos Pessoais

*Rui Gonçalves Miranda / Fernando Xavier Gonçalves*

Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho

Com os nossos relatos pessoais procurámos transmitir um pouco da experiência de todos os alunos de Licenciatura do Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves.

Antes de conhecer o Doutor Hélio pessoalmente, já muito conhecia sobre as suas aulas. Era difícil não se ouvir falar do Professor Hélio quando se entra para um curso de Inglês na Universidade do Minho. No meu caso, especialmente. A minha irmã tinha sido sua aluna uns anos antes (tive mesmo a oportunidade de estar presente numa ocasião em que ambos conversavam) e um meu amigo e colega de casa tinha feito um exame de Cultura Inglesa uns dias antes de as aulas começarem. Também os nossos colegas de Inglês-Alemão, como tinham esta disciplina no seu primeiro ano, falavam já das suas aulas, assim como os nossos colegas de curso mais velhos.

Falava-se de aulas diferentes, de um sentido de humor apurado e de um rigor inquestionável. Um ano antes, comprara um livro de poemas de William Blake que, sem o saber, havia sido traduzido pelo Professor Hélio. O que fazia todo o sentido, visto que o que conhecia de William Blake, na altura, me havia sido transmitido pela minha irmã, que, por sua vez, o aprendera nas suas aulas de Cultura Inglesa.

Portanto, quando entrei para a Universidade, desconhecia quase tudo, menos que teria um professor “muito fixe” no segundo ano. O consenso em torno das qualidades do Professor Hélio era, no mínimo, impressionante. Sobretudo porque vinha do público mais difícil de contentar: alunos universitários, ocupados sobretudo, como geralmente sempre estamos, em encontrar e apontar defeitos a (quase) tudo e todos que se nos deparam pela frente. Mas nem com tudo o que me havia sido dito eu me pude deixar de surpreender.

Se por mais não fosse, sempre me lembraria daquelas aulas pelo material criteriosamente seleccionado, pela disposição cuidada e atraente com que o conhecimento era transmitido. Cada aula tinha o carácter de uma conferência, de uma palestra construída em detalhe e, ao mesmo tempo, com espontaneidade. Lembrar-me-ia, ainda, pela autonomia que nos era concedida no nosso estudo e pela maneira como o conhecimento era exposto, e nunca imposto. Não se pense, no entanto, que o ensino praticado seria neutro, ou desapaixonado. Muito pelo contrário. Havia uma transmissão de valores sociais e humanitários, sobretudo de ideias e acções que visaram sempre, de uma maneira ou outra, o progresso social das civilizações rumo à liberdade, à igualdade, à paz entre os povos e à solidariedade entre os homens.

Mas havia muito mais. O que tornava as aulas diferentes poderia ser não tanto o que era ensinado (que o era também), mas sobretudo a forma como era ensinado. A matéria era transmitida como conhecimento, e as aulas eram mais que meras e contínuas preparações para um teste. Eram estradas de conhecimento, horizontes rasgados com referências a eventos, personalidades e obras de arte. Muito do que li a seguir, e muito do que continuo a ler, conheci-o por seu intermédio. E mesmo que a atenção dispensada aos alunos pelo Professor não fosse maior que o habitual (e era-o), a maneira como esclarecia uma dúvida ou elucidava uma questão deixava sempre transparecer uma educação e delicadeza raras. O Doutor Hélio acolhia sempre o aluno com um sorriso.

Havia, no entanto, ainda algo mais. Era a sua presença cativante, o fascínio que transmitia. Os alunos universitários, sempre ansiosos por horas de “furo”, não se entusiasmavam quando o Professor Hélio, fosse por que motivo fosse, não podia comparecer. Os alunos sabiam que não ganhavam uma hora livre, mas que perdiam, antes, uma hora de liberdade intelectual e de educação cívica e pessoal. Os alunos, apesar de todos os seus defeitos, sabem respeitar e agradecer. Respeitam e agradecem a simpatia do Doutor Hélio, a sua dedicação, e o seu exemplo ilustre e respeitável, dentro e fora de aula.

Na consciência de que, de todos os presentes, os alunos que aqui representamos foram os que de menos perto privaram com o Professor Hélio, nem por isso a sua influência foi menos importante. Como modelo a seguir, como personalidade a respeitar e a recordar com saudade, o Doutor Hélio Alves representa aquilo que, idealmente, todos gostaríamos

de vir a ser, quer a nível pessoal, quer a nível profissional. A sua postura será para sempre, como sempre o foi, acarinhada por todos os que tiveram a felicidade de se cruzar com o Professor Hélio na Universidade.

*Rui Gonçalves Miranda*

**A**s aulas de Cultura Inglesa eram um intervalo para reflexão. Acabava-se com as matérias chatas e teorias vagas sem atracção, para uma aula de pura educação cívica. O Doutor Hélio não nos dizia para agirmos de esta ou daquela maneira, apenas nos levava até à encruzilhada para, a partir desse momento, tomarmos as nossas escolhas. E lá íamos crescendo, não *ao som de*, mas à luz de Paine, Blake, Hogarth e outros que podiam surgir-nos como tão desinteressantes e inúteis numa qualquer outra aula. Mas, naquela, apareciam iluminados por essa luz que alguns professores têm e emprestam às matérias que nos dão. Talvez das aulas do Doutor Hélio Alves não se possa dizer que nos era *dado* algo, mas vendido. E a nossa moeda era o esforço de pensamento que fazíamos. Tudo o que pedia de nós era algum espírito crítico. Afinal nenhuma outra disciplina se adequava tanto aos nossos tempos como aquela, que não surgia como algo longínquo que tínhamos que estudar para sabermos um pouco mais da vida naqueles tempos, mas que estudávamos para percebermos um pouco mais os nossos dias.

O Professor tinha a sua ideologia, não o negava, nem o escondia. Tinha opiniões a dar, tinha ideias, não se mantinha neutro. A magia estava em ensinar-nos sem querer que aprendêssemos a sua ideologia, mas que construíssemos as nossas. Abria-nos os olhos e a mente. Essa magia não se ensina em disciplinas pedagógicas, é algo que já faz parte da nossa vocação para sermos professores, não se ensina, nem se aprende, mas o Doutor Hélio dominava-a como poucos. Lembra-me uma passagem das *Sete Cartas a um Jovem Filósofo* de Agostinho da Silva:

Do que você precisa, acima de tudo, é de se não lembrar do que eu lhe disse; nunca pense por mim, pense sempre por você; (...) São meus discípulos, se alguns tenho, os que estão contra mim; porque esses guardaram no fundo da alma a força que verdadeiramente me anima e que mais desejaria transmitir-lhes: a de se não conformarem.

A única palavra que se encontra para descrever o Doutor Hélio não é um adjectivo, é um nome: Professor. Não é por ser essa a sua profissão, mas porque o era em si: tal como um Padre o é sempre, dentro ou fora da igreja. O Professor Hélio Alves representava aquela ideia romântica de Mestre, dedicava-se por inteiro aos seus alunos. Lembro-me, após a 1ª Frequência, na qual apenas tinha escrito meia página e tinha acabado por desistir, de ter falado com o Doutor Hélio e ele me ter perguntado a razão de ter desistido e que tinha lido o que tinha escrito e aquilo estava correcto. Isto tocou-me, este interesse pelo aluno, pelos seus problemas. O simples facto de ter lido o que tinha escrito, mesmo tendo desistido, conta muito, e este tipo de apoio não é comum.

Não é fácil falar sobre o Professor Hélio, porque há sempre muito que fica por dizer, porque algo parece que falta em dizer que é o exemplo que gostaríamos de seguir quando professores. Algo parece que falta em dizer que o colocamos bem lá em cima, não por ele o querer, mas exactamente porque estava e queria estar tão ao nosso nível.

*Fernando Xavier Gonçalves*



# Testemunho de Profunda Gratidão

*Helen Santos Alves*

Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho

Foram, e são, inesquecíveis os momentos que tive a dita de viver durante este Encontro. Não só pela amizade e dedicação que todos demonstraram sentir pelo Colega e Amigo que tinha partido para sempre, mas também pela autenticidade que existia em cada um dos que apresentaram os seus trabalhos, em cada um que esteve presente a dar o seu apoio – quer orientando, quer moderando, quer prestando a sua atenção –, todos vivendo dentro daquele espírito que comungava dos mesmos ideais, das mesmas inquietações, e das mesmas esperanças que se encontravam no íntimo do Hélio e que se dirigiam a um tão desejado futuro pleno de uma genuína felicidade; uma felicidade só tomada possível pela aceitação inteligente de uma justiça aberta a todas as ideias e vontades que levassem ao bem-estar de todos os cidadãos sem exceção.

Foi difícil conter a comoção que me inundava e que, embora tivesse a sua origem na tristeza da perda irremediável que sofri, me encheu a alma de uma alegria profunda por sentir que esse espírito do Hélio se encontrava igualmente presente no meio dos seus Amigos e Colegas que, em muitas ocasiões, ainda em vida, lhe proporcionaram a vivência feliz dessa amizade. Sinto-me muito grata por isso.

Agradeço do fundo do coração tudo o que fizeram, e não posso deixar de realçar o encanto que foi os organizadores terem tido a ideia de convidar a Universidade do Minho, a todos os níveis, a participar nesta homenagem. Foi enternecedor para mim assistir ao painel evocativo da sua memória, e foi muito sentida a generosidade que tiveram quando me proporcionaram o privilégio de poder transmitir a minha gratidão e a gratidão dos nossos Filhos, que ficaram profundamente sensibilizados com a homenagem prestada ao Pai e Amigo que tanto queriam poder continuar a ter presente.

Um profundo “Bem-haja” para cada um e, em particular, aos queridos Amigos que tanto trabalharam para tornar possível este Encontro tão especial.



# Hélio Osvaldo Alves

*Joanne Paisana*

Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho

How does one bear witness to a man's life work, his effect on those he has come into contact with, and the legacy he has left behind? Doutor Hélio Alves would have been the first to agree that it is not quantity but quality that matters – not the number of pages one writes but what one says. Thus, succinctly, I am pleased to be able to publicly thank a friend and counsellor, Hélio, for having had confidence in my capacities and for having given me the opportunity to do what I do today – teach 'his' English Culture course. I obtained my first post at the Universidade do Minho through his auspices, and was later invited to help lecture English Culture. I was encouraged to take the important step of writing a doctorate thesis, and through his guidance/supervision I was able to see the project through. Hélio helped me to increase my knowledge of my own native country, and my eyes were opened to different ways of 'seeing' what can so often be masked. Ever patient and able to see the humorous side to things, Hélio taught students of all ages about eternal truths as well as about more mundane topics. His legacy lives on through his work, a large number of books and papers which are of great value to students of English Culture (as well as others). This will ensure that he is not quickly forgotten, and that his vision is perpetuated.



# Recordando o Prof. Hélio Osvaldo Alves

*Lúcio Craveiro da Silva*

Presidente do Conselho Cultural, Universidade do Minho

O Prof. Hélio Osvaldo Alves, falecido a 5 de Janeiro de 2003, pode-se dizer, que pertenceu à primeira e “gloriosa” geração que criou a Universidade do Minho pois foi convidado ainda pela Comissão Instaladora a 21 de Outubro de 1975 para docente de inglês embora já antes estivesse a prestar a sua colaboração. Destaco, desse tempo, uma reunião de professores, realizada excepcionalmente em Guimarães, em que, depois de terminado o trabalho, ele se propôs amenizar o final da reunião com música escolhida em que pude admirar, pela primeira vez, o Carmina Burana. Recordo este facto porque nele desponta uma característica do Prof. Hélio Alves: juntar com relativa frequência ao trabalho sério e exigente do professor universitário um ambiente repousante de bom humor com iniciativas de arte e de bom gosto.

Mas a linha mais frisante do seu perfil de homem e de universitário, tão rico e variado, foi a sua entrega constante e competente ao desempenho dos cargos que exerceu tanto no Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas como no Conselho Cultural.

De facto, desde 1982, ininterruptamente até 1990, foi Presidente da Comissão de Gestão da Unidade Científico-Pedagógica de Letras e Artes, comissão a que pertencera desde 1975, cabendo-lhe executar a mudança da estância inicial e provisória da Rua D. Pedro V para o actual edifício de Gualtar.

Dentre as suas numerosas iniciativas culturais desse tempo, merece especial relevo, a título de exemplo, a planificação e organização do “V Encontro da Associação Portuguesa de Estudos Anglo-Americanos” realizado na Universidade do Minho de 4 a 6 de Maio de 1984, e o “Encontro de Linguistas” na U. M. em Novembro de 1985, cuja edição bilingue das Actas publicou em colaboração com a docente Helen Santos Alves. Em 1986 organizou, conjuntamente com o Departamento de Filosofia e Cultura, da

então UCP-LA, o Colóquio “Portugal - Da Revolução Francesa ao Liberalismo”, que constituiu a primeira manifestação no país comemorativa dos 200 anos da Revolução Francesa. Editou as Actas deste Colóquio, nas quais se incluiu também, com a colaboração da Biblioteca Pública de Braga, o catálogo do *Fundo Barca-Oliveira*, valioso conjunto bibliográfico depositado naquela Biblioteca.

Promoveu ainda muitas outras actividades culturais que é impossível enumerar sequer, mas não podemos deixar de frisar sobretudo as suas frequentes iniciativas no lançamento e organização dos Estudos Ingleses pois então, nesse tempo, foi responsável pela “Área de Estudos Ingleses”, tendo coordenado os grupos disciplinares de Cultura, Literatura e Linguística Inglesas. Em 1996 foi nomeado Coordenador da Comissão Interna de Avaliação da Licenciatura do Ensino de Português-Inglês, tendo elaborado o respectivo *Relatório de Autoavaliação que o Conselho Académico aprovou por unanimidade. A sua autoridade e competência mereceram reconhecimento mesmo fora da U.M. tendo sido por isso convidado para membro da Comissão Permanente de Aconselhamento Científico do Centro de Estudos Anglisticos da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa.*

Há ainda outra actividade sua que exige também uma menção muito especial. Desde 1990, como membro do Conselho Cultural, foi incansável coordenador do “Prémio de História Contemporânea”, instituído na Universidade do Minho com base numa doação do Prof. Victor de Sá, sendo responsável por todas as acções necessárias à sua divulgação e concretização e que obteve notável êxito devido à sua dedicação e inteligente empenhamento. O Doutor Hélio Osvaldo Alves licenciara-se em Filologia Germânica na Universidade de Coimbra (1960) e obteve o seu PhD (Doutoramento) na Universidade de Londres, em 1982, na especialidade de cultura inglesa; apresentou e defendeu a tese sobre: *The Painites. The Influence of Thomas Paine in Four Provincial Towns: 1791-1799.*

Recordar a sua presença na U. M., generosa, actuante e competente é um acto de justiça; mas sobretudo para aqueles amigos companheiros de liça que ele convidou, em vida, a Folgoso é também um acto de profunda saudade.

# Sobre o Prof. Hélio Osvaldo Alves (1938-2003)

*Manuel Gama*

Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho

**T**odas as vidas têm um início e um fim. O *antes* do início e o *depois* do fim de qualquer vida é que é problemático. Sobre alguns aspectos da pessoa e da vida do Prof. Hélio Alves é relativamente fácil falar, quando o convívio se prolongou por vários anos.

O Prof. Hélio Alves chegou à Universidade do Minho, para leccionar a primeira aula no Largo do Paço, na semana anterior ao Natal do distante, mas politicamente marcante, ano de 1975.

Durante quase três décadas o Prof. Hélio Alves desempenhou as três funções principais do académico universitário: professor, investigador e gestor/administrador.

I. A leccionação é, parece-nos, o domínio onde o professor deixa a marca mais profunda e indelével, mesmo no nível universitário, onde o acto educativo não perde a sua substância. O binómio ensino-aprendizagem é um processo envolto em mistério. Perante o que é ensinado, de igual modo para todos, a aprendizagem é diversa, intensiva e extensivamente. Mas o que fica, sejam conteúdos científicos, aspectos didácticos, valores, exemplos de vida, persiste de forma mais ou menos perene, que a mensurabilidade rigorosa não pode alcançar. O docente não pode deixar de ser pedagogo, nem está na sua mão dirigir o alcance e repercussão dos seus actos enquanto tal. É certo que o fruto da investigação é mais visível e analisável. No entanto, a poeira dos tempos pode encarregar-se de encobrir, com o esquecimento, toda a produção. Felizmente que neste Colóquio – em boa hora pensado e concretizado pela Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa – irá ter lugar um “Painel Evocativo da Memória do Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves enquanto Pedagogo”. Programado para ser o acto final do Colóquio, ficará como um momento alto e marcante na evocação de uma vida, a vida do Prof. Hélio, em que os vivos darão

testemunho do que ficou vivo do seu pedagogo. Os alunos são para o pedagogo aquilo que o canteiro de flores é para o jardineiro.

2. O Prof. Hélio foi também homem de ciência. Orientou as suas investigações para a língua e literatura inglesas. Interessou-se por alguns aspectos da cultura portuguesa. No entanto, a “menina dos seus olhos” foi a cultura inglesa, sendo até pioneiro na sua entrada na Universidade portuguesa. Debruçou-se sobre vários aspectos do pensar, sentir e agir dos ingleses, mas os costumes e o problema da questão social foram por si eleitos como os principais. Este Colóquio relevará alguns vectores do seu pensamento, outros ficarão para investigadores vindouros.

3. Ao nível da gestão, após o seu doutoramento – altura em que, ao universitário, é acometida toda a espécie de tarefas –, em 1982, com a tese intitulada *The Paines: The Influence of Thomas Paine in Four Provincial Towns, 1791-1799*, desempenhou, entre outros, os cargos de Director de Curso, Director de Departamento, Director-Adjunto do Centro de Investigação (Centro de Estudos Humanísticos), Presidente da Unidade Científico-Pedagógica de Letras e Artes (entre 1982 e 1990), actualmente designada Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas.<sup>1</sup> São tarefas que consomem muito tempo e energias e que, entre a nobreza e a ingratidão, pouco relevo costumam ter nos *curricula* dos universitários. Trata-se do papel de gestor *inter pares*.

É verdade que as pessoas passam e as instituições ficam. Ainda assim, o factor humano é sempre o mais importante, pois sem a energia e a vontade humanas há uma tendência natural para a inércia, para o marasmo. O Prof. Hélio exerceu as diversas actividades administrativas com muito empenho e dedicação e, sobretudo, a Presidência do Instituto foi desempenhada durante um período difícil, simultaneamente de crescimento (acompanhando a expansão de toda a Universidade do Minho) e de consolidação, em condições precárias, nomeadamente de espaços. Dessas tarefas se reflectiu a sua produção científica. Ao analisarmos as datas das suas

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<sup>1</sup> No modelo matricial da Universidade do Minho, o cargo de Presidente de Instituto ou Escola (unidades equivalentes às Faculdades das Universidades Clássicas) inclui a direcção, cumulativamente, do Conselho Científico e do Conselho Directivo.



publicações, constatamos um quase hiato durante esse período de tempo, que é compensado pelo grande número de títulos dados à estampa desde o início dos anos noventa até ao final dos seus dias.

O convívio, durante cerca de vinte anos, levaram-me a ver no Prof. Hélio um exemplo. O seu empenho pessoal e institucional, a sua honradez, a sua ironia geralmente mansa, o seu sentido de justiça, o seu estoicismo, marcaram sulco no meu percurso vital. Nesta sociedade tecnocientífica, em que se procura fazer a dissolução do sujeito, o Prof. Hélio soube manter-se ele mesmo, protegendo a sua identidade através da preservação da liberdade, da *sua* liberdade.



# O Construtor de Estradas: Homenagem ao Professor Hélio Alves

*Maria Filomena Louro*

Departamento de Estudos Ingleses e Norte Americanos, Universidade do Minho

**N**a minha condição de representante do Departamento de Estudos Ingleses e Norte Americanos da Universidade do Minho, na impossibilidade de a Professora Ana Gabriela Macedo estar presente devido a outros compromissos na mesma data na Universidade do Porto cabe-me a honra de neste momento e nesta homenagem lembrar a pessoa do Prof. Hélio, (como os alunos o lembram) e o seu trabalho dedicado ao desenvolvimento do Departamento. Aproveito para agradecer ao Instituto de Cultura Inglesa este convite endereçando também a toda a organização os cumprimentos da nossa colega Ana Gabriela Macedo.

Como ontem bem lembrou o Prof. Manuel Gama, Presidente do Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, os anos dedicados ao trabalho administrativo que o nosso organigrama preconiza tornam o progresso da investigação uma tarefa mediata, frequentemente interrompida. Esses foram os anos que o Professor dedicou a assegurar que o departamento funcionasse em todas as suas vertentes, dando tempo aos jovens assistentes, entre os quais me incluo, para que preparassem as suas graduações. Nessa capacidade criou uma área de estudos ingleses, a anterior designação do departamento, onde imperasse autonomia de cada docente dentro de um quadro muito claro de formação. Foi por certo chamado a desempenhar essas funções pela sua já conhecida competência de pedagogo.

Na minha entrevista para o lugar de assistente estagiária fui informada que os nossos alunos de então, futuros licenciados em Ensino de Português e Inglês, deveriam receber do departamento o máximo contacto com a língua. Assim deveria ensinar em inglês, e a bibliografia devia ser também na mesma língua. As disciplinas de Linguística, Literatura Portuguesa e das Ciências da Educação eram dadas em português, pelo que ficavam 9 a 12 horas de contacto com a língua por semana. Se bem que esta estratégia causasse estranheza em alguns quadrantes, cedo percebi a bondade do

projecto, tão diferente do que eu própria tinha frequentado, saída jovem licenciada de um plano de estudos elaborado e votado em 1974-75, novíssimo, radical nas suas propostas mas conforme aos modelos das universidades clássicas. As convicções pedagógicas do meu director não interferiram mais na esfera das minhas competências.

As suas directivas pedagógicas tinham-me influenciado mais do que eu antecipava porque só durante o ano percebi que este Doutor Hélio que partira para Inglaterra para preparar a sua tese, era o autor do meu primeiro livro e método de ensino de Inglês que usei no ensino unificado, por onde brevemente tinha passado. Cortesmente se chamava *This Way Please*, Edições ASA. Um excelente convite, seguido por um outro que a sua investigação e orientação identificam como um prolongamento na pedagogia de toda uma filosofia de vida, *The World in your Hands*, Edições ASA para os cursos complementares.

Para além das várias conferências organizadas no âmbito do departamento e o vasto número de publicações que aqui foram já referidas ao longo do colóquio, gostava de realçar outros aspectos do seu trabalho. Tendo em conta a necessidade de formação contínua dos docentes promoveu no nosso departamento cursos intensivos de reciclagem para professores de Inglês nos anos 88 e 89, com muito sucesso, interpretando o conceito de formação ao longo da vida que tão necessário se torna. Este esforço foi mais tarde continuado pelo Departamento, como as Jornadas do Inglês, no intuito de criar um espaço de formação e reflexão sobre a língua inglesa num ambiente de debate científico mas abrangendo um leque mais vasto de intervenientes e colaboradores.

É com sentida vénia que aqui presto homenagem a uma das suas últimas propostas ao Conselho Científico por ocasião de uma candidatura a estudos de doutoramento. Talvez consciente de a sua própria tese de doutoramento ter promovido a criação em Portugal da área de saber em Cultura Inglesa, perante um projecto de investigação em cultura irlandesa, propôs ao Conselho Científico do Instituto de Letras a criação das áreas de saber em Literatura Irlandesa e Cultura Irlandesa, que vieram a ser publicadas em Diário da República em 10 de Março deste ano. Desta iniciativa já resultou a atribuição de um grau de Doutor em Cultura Irlandesa, por equivalência, na Universidade do Minho.

Voltando aos títulos dos seus manuais escolares, eles levam-me ao que eu penso que hoje identifica para mim a imagem de professor que o

Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves representa. Um ditado árabe diz que os pais são o arco e os filhos a flecha. Por todo o cuidado que os seus alunos lhe mereciam, o professor Hélio não se constituía como figura parental, nem tampouco pela sua discreta modéstia procurava criar à sua volta uma classe de discípulos venerantes que seguiam o mestre, repetindo o seu gesto. A liberdade, integridade sua e dos outros sempre foi um dos seus *leitmotifs*, como muitos antes de mim tiveram oportunidade de comprovar.

Os alunos que privaram com ele puderam constatar que os princípios que defendia teoricamente eram também aqueles que regiam a sua vida. Essa integridade num professor é um dos melhores exemplos para a formação do carácter de um jovem estudante e um futuro professor.

Com o seu saber, empenhamento, rigor científico, disponibilidade para os seus alunos, acompanhados do seu tão característico humor, o Professor Hélio ocupou-se numa tarefa discreta e humilde cujo valor dificilmente se quantifica. Com essas alfaías construiu estradas de integridade, sabedoria, empenhamento social e filantrópico, trouxe à memória ideais antigos para os divulgar e fazer novos, fazendo para que ficasse feito, não para sua glória pessoal.

Assim a imagem de professor que eu encontrei ao pensar neste tributo é discreta, sólida e segura, a do construtor de estradas. Não as fez para si, mas para que na sua capacidade de cidadãos livres, os seus alunos pudessem percorrê-las e encontrar eles próprios o seu caminho.

Havia um homem em Guimarães  
Que à fome dos pobres deu leite e pães;  
Aos que queriam a sede da ciência satisfazer  
Um curto limerick, cultura vasta  
E uma estrada larga p'ra percorrer.



## Evocação do Professor Hélio

*Maria Georgina Ribeiro Pinto de Abreu*

Escola Secundária José Régio, Vila do Conde

**T**endo sido convidada a dizer umas palavras acerca do Prof. Hélio, dei comigo a tirar da estante alguns livros seus, e a folheá-los. Depois de ler as dedicatórias com saudade, fui reler algumas páginas. E nelas encontrei, por inteiro, o pensamento do Prof. Hélio, completamente coerente com a pessoa que conheci, ao mesmo tempo exigente e generoso, às vezes desencantado, mas sempre cheio de força.

Assim, ao acaso, peguei no volume *Toda uma Maneira de Viver*, onde a sua generosidade está bem patente na vontade de publicar trabalhos de seus ex-alunos de mestrado e de doutoramento, por compreender a frustração de alguns ‘dos artesãos do mesmo inacabável ofício’, como refere nas ‘Palavras Prévias’ que abrem este volume de ensaios de Cultura Inglesa, gesto esse que muito significou para mim e, estou certa, para todos os que nele participaram.

Seguidamente, veio-me parar às mãos o seu livro de tradução de poemas de Stephen Crane *O Sapo no Horizonte*. Reli a ‘Introdução’ e lá encontrei o intelectual inspirado, interpretando a poesia de S. Crane da única maneira que para si faria sentido: uma quase desesperada mensagem de crença na vida e no homem, a consciência de que esta só tem significado se tivermos uma atitude positiva em relação ao futuro, mesmo sabendo que nunca se verá o ‘horizonte’. Porém, o significado da vida, escreve o Prof. Hélio, está precisamente no ‘perseguir o horizonte inatingível’, nem que para isso seja preciso pagar o preço de uma relativa solidão intelectual; é que, como nos lembra na referida ‘Introdução’, ‘perseguir o aparentemente inatingível só pode ser apanágio de quem recusa a identidade que outros lhe querem impor’ porque a vida ‘é uma vasta solidão agitada, tal como o mar para o marinheiro naufragado’. É este seu pensamento, e posicionamento perante os acontecimentos e as pessoas, que fazem do Prof. Hélio uma influência intelectual marcante para mim.

Fui sua aluna de mestrado, e com ele fiz a tese. Lembro o impacto que teve em mim a sua interpretação do que era a Cultura Inglesa. Foi, assim, inesperadamente, que a Cultura Inglesa me surgiu como algo de muito dinâmico, mas nada consensual ou pacífico, como aliás a própria vida. Assim era a Cultura Inglesa, ela também uma luta incessante, muitas vezes inglória, por aquilo em que se acredita, feita de avanços e recuos, mas tendo sempre por pano de fundo, como referência principal, a procura da dignidade humana por parte daqueles a quem ela sempre foi negada. Trata-se de uma opção intelectual arriscada, porque nada confortável.

Por isso o próprio Prof. Hélio se interroga, ainda na referida 'Introdução', onde existirá um lugar para a dignidade humana encontrar asilo: 'haverá recanto onde, ela possa, mesmo acocorada, fazer notar a sua presença?'. Penso que a resposta está no último parágrafo do seu artigo 'O Lago de todos os Recursos': é na ideia de Cultura como lugar de diferentes experiências e tradições, onde cada um faz as suas escolhas pessoais sendo que algumas dessas escolhas, como as feitas pelo Prof. Hélio, são 'eventualmente transmissíveis' a todos os que com ele tiveram o privilégio de trabalhar e de aprender que, acima de tudo, é preciso 'perseguir o horizonte, vagamente inatingível', mas sempre tão à mão, é preciso querer 'atingir a fulgurante bola de ouro vogando nos céus, que lá continua escarnecendo de todos os nossos esforços'.



# O Professor Hélio enquanto Pedagogo

*Olga Natália Moutinho*

Escola Secundária Aurélia de Sousa, Porto

Começaria por assinalar que a minha vinda a este colóquio na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa se deve a um imperativo de consciência. Seria revelador de insensibilidade profunda, ou mesmo de ingratidão, o que se não coaduna com os meus parâmetros de vida, não responder a este apelo de, embora singelamente, homenagear o Professor Hélio.

Depois de ao telefone com a Doutora Luísa Leal Faria termos definido que este painel fosse de evocação à memória do Professor Hélio enquanto Pedagogo, reflecti que isso seria porventura redutor dada a emergência das características do Professor Hélio enquanto Pessoa. Contudo, após reflexão mais cuidada, logo me senti mais tranquila dado que as duas vertentes não são, de modo algum, incompatíveis. É, portanto, essa perspectiva mais abrangente da figura do Professor Hélio que tentarei retratar/lembrar aqui.

Sendo um Homem de grande saber, com uma competência científica ímpar, em constante e séria actualização, e de que é prova a qualidade da obra que nos legou, o Professor Hélio, sem se colocar no alto de uma torre de marfim, concebia o Ensino como um processo interactivo e dinâmico, não cedendo nunca, como por vezes acontece nas nossas universidades, à comodidade da mera exposição teórica.

Enquanto pedagogo não se regeu por formas institucionalizadas de realizar a Educação que não respeitam a riqueza da essência do aluno e valorizam exclusivamente a cognição reprodutora, postergando as demais dimensões do processo educativo.

Ora, o Professor Hélio, tendo a cabal noção desta insuficiência, procurava sempre supri-la, elevando os seus alunos à categoria inalienável de Pessoas, rejeitando liminarmente essa abordagem linear, porventura utilitarista, e bloqueadora do real crescimento do discente.

O trabalho pedagógico desenvolvido pelo Professor Hélio, e falo na

qualidade privilegiada de sua orientanda da dissertação de mestrado, facultava aos discentes um crescimento pessoal a todos os títulos assinalável que provinha da sua elevada estatura intelectual e de um trabalho criterioso, mas também, cumulativamente, da sua capacidade (diria mesmo inata) para criar nos seus seminários e sessões de trabalho um clima propício ao despertar/aprofundar da curiosidade intelectual, estimulador de apropriações críticas, favorável a juízos valorativos. A sua docência tinha a intenção nítida de desenvolver e acentuar rasgos de individualidade nos seus alunos.

De acordo com esta filosofia educacional, o trabalho de orientação de teses de mestrado não se direccionava portanto, pois tal seria inconciliável com o perfil intelectual e pedagógico do Professor Hélio, na indicação normativa de caminhos a seguir, mas sim, sem sonegar pistas, e sempre apontando vias conducentes ao enriquecimento da investigação em curso, fomentar a autonomia do mestrando na busca de fontes de informação que aprofundassem saberes, tanto pela descoberta de novos dados, como pelo acesso a novas formas de os perspectivar, a diferentes modos de pensar, agir e criar.

E para a construção deste paradigma construtivista da Educação, o Professor Hélio não só disponibilizava, generosamente, a sua biblioteca pessoal, como se empenhava, denodadamente, na sistemática actualização dos materiais bibliográficos dos Centros de Recursos da Universidade do Minho. A este propósito, é de toda a justiça sublinhar que muito do espólio do CEHUM e da Biblioteca Geral são fruto da sua intervenção, e que, muitos alunos de mestrado de outras universidades são aconselhados a enriquecerem as suas pesquisas para trabalhos e/ou dissertações de Cultura Inglesa na Universidade do Minho, o que atesta do reconhecimento, no meio académico, dessa mais-valia que decorre, em elevado grau, do brio profissional do Professor Hélio.

Para além de todas estas preocupações e opções metodológicas que visavam otimizar o processo educativo, o Professor Hélio, pelo profissionalismo com que desempenhava a função docente, pela sua dedicação inextinguível e pela sua conduta empenhada e responsável, foi indubitavelmente um exemplo de grande valia para todos quantos exerciam ou viriam a exercer a profissão de professores. O Professor Hélio criava assim condições que promoviam o saber, o conhecimento científico, mas que fomentavam, paralelamente, pelo chamado currículo oculto, pelo seu exemplo, transformações qualitativas que prodigalizassem ao aluno a possibilidade de

desenvolverem características mais profundas enquanto profissionais e enquanto pessoas.

Acresce a tudo isto que o Professor Hélio tinha o dom peculiar de estabelecer com os alunos um relacionamento informal e amistoso, o que, dilatando o comprometimento dos discentes, defraudadas não fossem as expectativas neles depositadas, se convertia num trabalho mais fecundo, mais consentâneo com os constantes incentivos que nos dispensava, e, em última análise, num produto final de qualidade superior. Essas relações de cordialidade e até mesmo os laços de amizade que estabelecia com os alunos não implicavam, todavia, um decréscimo de rigor, um aligeirar de exigências, ou seja, o facilitismo, por que alguns docentes, por vezes, enveredam, infelizmente, para que se isentem de alguns incómodos.

Há ainda que realçar que dos objectivos educacionais do Professor Hélio fazia parte a luta contra a injustiça social, a defesa dos direitos dos mais desfavorecidos. Com efeito, das suas apreciações críticas passava a noção clara de que, em determinadas circunstâncias, competia ao cidadão romper com a hegemonia tradicional, e, tornando-se na consciência viva do mal-estar nas sociedades, descobrir vias alternativas ao servilismo obediente e sempre renascente. A acção educativa do Professor Hélio extravasou largamente as paredes da sala de aula, porquanto visava também dotar o maior número possível de pessoas de capacidade de analisar o que se passa, de exprimir essa análise e a de aplicar em benefício da acção comum, tanto à escala dos grupos restritos como à escala da sociedade global. Educar significava, pois, para o Professor Hélio, fazer de cada aluno um ser responsável e civicamente actuante. Lembro aqui que me disse, um dia, ser bastante que um só aluno entendesse a premência desta atitude interveniente para considerar que a sua acção de educador valera a pena. Estou certa que muitos foram os alunos em que o Professor Hélio provocou modificações, quiçá permanentes, de conduta.

Após a conclusão do Mestrado, tive, juntamente com outras orientandas do Professor Hélio, o grato ensejo de publicar um artigo, baseado embora na dissertação já sujeita a provas, num livro coordenado pelo Professor Hélio e editado pela Universidade do Minho – *Toda uma Maneira de Viver: Ensaios de Cultura Inglesa* – livro esse onde o Professor Hélio escreveu justamente o artigo que serviu de mote a este colóquio. A possibilidade, nada despicienda, de dar a conhecer a um público mais vasto o nosso trabalho, que, de outro modo, ficaria, como disse o Professor Hélio

nas “Palavras Prévias”, confinado ao “pó das prateleiras” das bibliotecas, revestiu-se de um significado muito especial para os que nele colaboraram, tanto mais que, segundo o Professor Hélio me confidenciou num dos últimos contactos que com ele estabeleci, os alunos das subseqüentes edições de Mestrado incluíam esses ensaios nas suas fontes de investigação.

A publicação deste livro – para cujo lançamento tive o honroso convite de fazer parte da mesa e de proferir algumas palavras – revelou também muito da personalidade do Professor Hélio. Sendo um projecto virado para o exterior, já que visava, a um tempo, dilatar a proficuidade da pesquisa e análise crítica intrínsecas às dissertações elaboradas – no seu dizer, “amostras válidas” de um “trabalho sério e original” – pondo-as ao serviço da comunidade, e a outro, estimular os seus autores ao prosseguimento de trabalhos de investigação, esta iniciativa ilustra bem os princípios solidários, humanistas e pedagógicos que nortearam a vida pessoal e profissional do Professor Hélio. Cumpre, aliás, salientar o enorme, e visível, entusiasmo que o Professor Hélio colocou neste projecto – para o qual contou, como declarou no discurso então proferido, com o apoio de sua esposa, a Doutora Helen.

No almoço de comemoração que se seguiu à cerimónia do lançamento de *Toda uma Maneira de Viver*, o Professor Hélio não se poupou a esforços para assegurar o bem-estar de todos, levantando-se frequentemente para que nada faltasse a qualquer dos seus ‘convidados’, o que denota o seu constante empenhamento em criar um clima de convivencialidade sadia entre os que com ele colaboravam.

Gostaria também de fazer aqui menção ao modo como o Professor Hélio reagia a agradecimentos e outras manifestações da nossa sensibilização quer perante as suas sugestões e empréstimo de materiais quer pelas oportunidades a que nos dava acesso. Fosse pessoalmente ou em conversa telefónica interrompia sempre essas expressões de reconhecimento com frases como: “Deixe-se lá disso”, “Cale-se” ou “Ponha-se lá fora”. Fruto porventura de alguma timidez, esta atitude revelava inequivocamente também o propósito de desvalorização do seu contributo para o que entendia ser o nosso sucesso.

A manutenção dos contactos posteriores à conclusão do Mestrado, geradora de prazer recíproco, confirmaria estarmos perante um Homem de uma simplicidade extrema, perante um Homem que, não obstante a sua craveira, nos tratava como iguais.

O convívio com o Professor Hélio – como, de resto, fora já uma realidade nos vários jantares de confraternização que a edição de Mestrado que frequentei efectuou – era algo profundamente apetecível dada a boa disposição contagiante, o humor inteligente e a crítica mordaz que sobressaíam, naturalmente, das suas intervenções, e que não deixavam ninguém indiferente.

A Cultura em Portugal perdeu um vulto de uma envergadura ímpar. A Universidade Portuguesa (em especial a do Minho) está também mais pobre pela cessação da actividade docente e de investigação do Professor Hélio.

Pessoalmente, também me sinto mais pobre com o desaparecimento do meu Amigo Hélio. Com ele aprendi/cresci – cientificamente, pedagogicamente e humanamente. Daí ter-me juntado, nestes dois dias, a este abraço, saudoso, ao Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves.



# Comunicações





# **Iluminismo e Liberdade: O Debate no Feminino**

*Adelaide Meira Serras*

Universidade de Lisboa, CEAUL/ULICES



## Iluminismo e Liberdade: O Debate no Feminino

**L**iberdade e Iluminismo constitui um daqueles binómios conceptuais quase irrefutáveis aos olhos do estudioso de tais matérias. Se se atentar nos pressupostos filosóficos que forjaram o pensamento iluminista europeu, depressa se verifica que o debate sobre a liberdade perpassa tanto as teorias do conhecimento dominantes, como as análises e reflexões de índole política. Perspectivar tal binómio no feminino poderá, no entanto, parecer se não incorrecto, talvez inusitado, constatadas as práticas do poder no masculino que a ênfase na verdade e na racionalidade, tão caras ao iluminista, veio legitimar.

Na verdade, o processo de afirmação do ser humano, iniciado no período do Renascimento, parece atingir a plenitude numa fase em que os êxitos alcançados no âmbito das ciências da natureza propiciam uma atitude de maior confiança, mesmo arrojo, nas tentativas de melhor compreender e moldar o universo em que o homem se alberga. As descobertas de Isaac Newton no domínio da Física constituem disso exemplo. Desvendar os segredos da Natureza, consubstanciando-os em leis universais, permitiria não só ao sujeito cognoscente entender o que o rodeia, mas dominar esse meio envolvente da forma mais benéfica para a humanidade. Noção idêntica norteia o racionalismo cartesiano – René Descartes, *Discurso do Método*, 1637 – ao enunciar um método para aceder ao conhecimento aplicável a todos os objectos do saber. Aliás, a crítica epistemológica travada entre racionalistas e empiristas de ambos os lados do Canal da Mancha (não descurando as controvérsias e discordâncias entre filósofos de cada uma destas correntes) evidencia a inquietude intelectual sentida e que Kant tão bem sintetizaria no seu opúsculo *Was ist die Aufklärung*, dado ao prelo em 1784 no periódico *Berlinische Monatsschrift*:

Enlightenment is humankind's release from self-incurred tutelage.  
Tutelage is the inability to make use of one's understanding without

direction from another. Self-incurred is the tutelage when its cause lies not in the lack of reason but in the lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Dare to know! Have the courage to think independently! – that is the motto of the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

Filosofar era, pois, questionar o adquirido, confrontá-lo com outras possibilidades, experimentar, protestar numa constante surpresa de quem se lança numa demanda infundável, independentemente das circunstâncias geográficas, religiosas, ráticas, ou de classe ou gênero do sujeito racional. E, embora o canône iluminista nos remeta de imediato para grandes figuras masculinas, há que alargar o escopo invocando, também, contributos femininos como o de Margaret Cavendish que, mais de um século antes de Kant proclamara no seu poema a duas vozes “A Dialogue betwixt Learning and Ignorance” (1653):

*Learning*      *O Ignorance, how foolish thou dost talk!*  
                          *Is't happiness in Ignorance to walk?*  
                          *Can there be Joy in Darkness, more than Light?*  
                          *Or Pleasure more in Blindness, than in Sight?*<sup>2</sup>

A breve trecho a prática de pensar em liberdade não se limitaria à relação epistemológica entre o ser humano e a natureza, abordando inevitavelmente as relações de convívio entre os homens. A consciência da transitoriedade e diversidade não colidia com as perspectivas da invariância universal, nela se incluindo o homem como peça da natureza que era num mundo mecanicistamente estruturado. Na verdade, o ser humano sempre se movera instigado pelas mesmas paixões, só variando em aspectos de somenos importância, como os gostos e os maneirismos de cada tempo e lugar. Todos desejam segurança, estabilidade, justiça, felicidade, como asseveram os contratualistas como Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651), John Locke (*Two Treatises of Government*, 1689) ou Rousseau (*Le Contract Social*, 1762) a

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, I. “*Was ist die Aufklärung*”, Robert Ginsberg, ed., *The Philosopher as Writer*, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987, p.64.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Cavendish, “A Dialogue Betwixt Learning and Ignorance”, *Poems and Fancies* (1653), Robert Demaria Jr., ed., *British Literature, 1640-1789, An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 351-352.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Isaiah Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, *The Proper Study of Mankind, An Anthology of Essays*, Edited by Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer with a Foreword by Noel Annan, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp.246-248.

par dos apologistas da unicidade das culturas, tal como Vico,<sup>3</sup> ou do estudo comparativista desenvolvido por Montesquieu (*Lettres Persanes*, 1721; *Esprit des Lois*, 1748), ou ainda defensores do probabilismo como David Hume. Neste sentido, o empenho dos *philosophes* – designação que, na época, abrangia pensadores liberais e escritores parisienses de meados do século XVIII e, mais tarde, viria a contemplar pensadores que formularam um conjunto de ideias simultaneamente rico e consensual que, na opinião de Thomas Munck, constitui a essência do Iluminismo<sup>4</sup> – levá-los-ia a reflectir sobre as ciências do homem, desde a antropologia à teoria política. Conhecida a natureza humana e as suas verdadeiras necessidades, restava determinar quais as melhores soluções para as satisfazer em cada comunidade.<sup>5</sup>

A liberdade de pensamento e consciência, como frequentemente era referida na época o exercício do juízo independente e do livre arbítrio face a questões do foro religioso e ético, deu origem ao chamado livre pensamento (Collins, *Discourses of Free Thinking*, 1713) marcado pelo cepticismo quanto às verdades reveladas, por vezes a par de uma atitude de abertura e/ou tolerância para com doutrinas e crenças consideradas não ortodoxas, como é o caso de Voltaire ou de John Locke (*A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 1689). Todavia, para além da análise e da crítica doutrinária, esse exercício autónomo do homem enquanto ser racional também se aplica às questões da ética e das consequências das suas condutas no plano colectivo. A política afirma-se, assim, como uma das matérias mais relevantes a ponderar face às propostas que vão surgindo, em parte fruto do exercício intelectual de inúmeros pensadores, em parte como consequência de acontecimentos e circunstancialismos de pendor social e histórico.<sup>6</sup>

A crença na capacidade cognitiva e agencial do homem, para retomar o lema kantiano, implica idêntica crença na via de aperfeiçoamento das

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment, A Comparative Social History 1721-1794*, London: Arnold, 2000, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Alleged Relativism in Eighteenth-Century European Thought”, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity, Chapters in The History of Ideas*, Ed. Henry Hardy, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959, 1990, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> É neste sentido que Norman Hampson aponta a eventual existência de dois períodos distintos no Iluminismo, o primeiro de 1715 a 1740 em que a estabilidade política se reflectiria na adopção, em termos religiosos, do deísmo e a segunda de 1740 a 1763 em que as guerras europeias e a agitação social coincidem com um cepticismo crescente. Norman Hampson, *Iluminismo*, tradução de Rafael Gonçalo Gomes Filipe, Lisboa: Editora Ullisseia, 1973.

condições de vida dos indivíduos e das sociedades, quer se partisse de uma visão mais desencantada da natureza humana, como é o caso de Hobbes ou Bernard Mandeville, quer se acreditasse na bondade dos homens e no seu natural pendor para viverem em conjunto, como Shaftesbury ou Condorcet (*Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, 1794). Tomados em consideração os factores que obviavam à felicidade do todo, havia que criar modelos sociais passíveis de corrigir desvios de conduta lesivos para o bem-estar e para a propriedade de outrem, assim garantindo uma progressiva harmonia em todos os quadrantes. Por vezes as medidas a tomar poderiam parecer duras e autoritariamente instituídas, como nos regimes despóticos em que um governante iluminado pelos saberes adquiridos e imbuído de objectivos benfazejos impunha as leis que entendia necessárias aos seus governados. Aliás, déspotas iluminados, femininos ou masculinos, como Maria Teresa de Áustria, Catarina da Rússia, ou o Marquês de Pombal granjearam tal fama que deixaram na penumbra outros sistemas igualmente iluminados, mas cuja competência legislativa e executiva se repartia por mais do que uma instância do poder e abrangia uma pluralidade de indivíduos, de que é exemplo a Grã-Bretanha.

A solução britânica da repartição do poder entre a Coroa e o Parlamento iniciara-se, afinal, com a Revolução Gloriosa (porque judiciosamente planeada) de 1688, concretizando-se na monarquia constitucional de Guilherme de Orange e de Maria Stuart. Além das sobejamente conhecidas restrições ao poder real estatuídas na Declaração dos Direitos (1689) que obrigava os monarcas, assiste-se ao reconhecimento da igualdade estatutária entre rei e rainha, ficando estipulado que, por morte de um dos cônjuges, o outro continuará no desempenho das funções reais, sem restrições de género.

A presença de figuras femininas em posições sociais hegemónicas prende-se, todavia, em primeira instância, com determinantes tradicionais, como a condição de nascimento e só num plano secundário com alterações ideológicas coetâneas. Já no que respeita às classes médias inglesas, depa-ramo-nos com factores de certa forma contraditórios. Por um lado, o maior desafoço económico decorrente do incremento nas manufacturas e nas transacções comerciais na Europa e no império, veio propiciar o alívio de algumas tarefas domésticas e, portanto, períodos que podiam ser dedicados ao lazer e, também, à aprendizagem, equiparando as mulheres setecentistas dos estratos sociais médios e superior ao nível intelectual dos seus

contemporâneos masculinos. Ter por esposa uma companheira habilitada a partilhar dos mesmos interesses e espiritualmente fortalecida por uma mente bem exercitada constituirá um desejo bastas vezes difundido quer na escrita periódica em franca expansão na altura, quer na literatura de ficção cujo público receptor era significativamente feminino. Por outro lado, contudo, a estabilização política a que se assiste depois das convulsões sociais provocadas pela Guerra Civil do século XVII, vem pôr cobro ao desafio à autoridade do patriarca doméstico que o momento revolucionário havia deixado vislumbrar.

A ausência de uma identidade própria para a mulher e a separação jurídica, e socialmente assimilada, da coexistência de duas esferas de acção, uma dedicada à *res publica* onde os homens se moviam e a doméstica ou privada reservada às mulheres, provam à saciedade o carácter marcadamente patriarcal do Iluminismo, como o afirma Roy Porter, citando a propósito um passo da *History of Women* de William Alexander (1779) – “We allow a woman to sway our sceptre, but by law and custom we debar her from every other government but that of her own family”.<sup>7</sup> Tal asserção encontra-se plenamente corroborada, por seu turno, nos limites de género apostos à definição de cidadania enunciada por Diderot na *Encyclopedie* na qual as mulheres são referidas juntamente com as crianças e os servos apenas como membros da família de um cidadão.<sup>8</sup> O vazio de direitos políticos para a mulher associava-se, pois, à fragilidade do seu estatuto cívico que se revelava fosse nos actos mais significativos da sua vida, como a decisão de contrair matrimónio ou a luta por uma carreira profissional, fosse na trivialidade de um quotidiano em que a imagem feminina continuava objectificada, ou presa ao anátema bíblico de Eva, a tentadora. A referida fragilidade estatutária, em sinonímia com a pressuposta debilidade física e mental colocavam-na “sob tutela”, na expressão de Kant, cerceando-lhe a liberdade de pensamento e, sobretudo, de participação na esfera pública, ou seja, a liberdade positiva segundo a designação de Berlin.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Roy Porter, *The Creation of a Modern World, The Untold Story of The British Enlightenment*, New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000, pp.320-321.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment*, p.211.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, p. 194.

As ideias, porém, não conhecem fronteiras nem geográficas, nem biológicas, e criados que estejam os factores de divulgação que, no caso inglês, se verificavam na literacia das mulheres das classes médias e aristocrática e na profusa oferta de obra formativa e informativa sobre os vários ramos do saber, quer em periódicos, quer em livros, bem como na anuência já tradicional em alguns sectores do protestantismo dissidente quanto à participação pública feminina embora restringida à matéria religiosa, ou seja, apenas admissível quando ao serviço de Deus.

Eis, pois, um cadinho algo complexo que induzirá algumas pensadoras a intervir no debate sobre a liberdade, ousando saber, mesmo quando os *curricula* que lhes eram destinados pecavam pela superficialidade ou pela ausência do ensino de matérias consideradas difíceis para a mente feminina, como a matemática, a geometria e as línguas clássicas, ou pelo carácter fútil das disciplinas que versavam o cuidado com a aparência e as boas maneiras, impedindo, deste modo, a aquisição de um conhecimento solidamente estruturado e orientado para a utilidade pública.

Na esteira do mote baconiano “Saber é Poder”,<sup>10</sup> algumas mulheres conseguiram aceder às ideias iluministas quer no que respeita ao acesso ao conhecimento como Margaret Cavendish, que deixou obra filosófica e científica, ou Mary Astell cuja dedicação pelo estudo, aliada ao desejo de uma maior autonomia para as suas contemporâneas, a levou a preconizar a criação de uma academia feminina, ou ainda Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, que terá aprendido latim de forma autodidáctica e cujas viagens à Turquia redundariam num legado epistolográfico em que a observação atenta de outra cultura se constrói com rigor e sensibilidade. Poderíamos, também invocar exemplos de persistência bem sucedida no que toca a uma carreira profissional: Aphra Ben, Delarivière Manley ganharam o seu sustento através da escrita e Mary Robinson repartiria a sua actividade pela carreira de actriz (aliás muito vilipendiada) e pela prolixa obra literária que foi produzindo ao longo da vida.

Não se pretende de modo algum resvalar para enumerações vazias de sentido, mas demonstrar que a apregoada divisão das esferas entre os ele-

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hélio Osvaldo Alves, “Saber é Poder”, *As Carroças da Subversão (1803-1822)*, II, Figueira da Foz: Cemar, 2002, pp. 221-243.



mentos dos dois gêneros não parece ter sido tão consistente que resistisse às tentativas de mulheres que, despertadas para os ideais iluministas, reclamaram para si em primeiro lugar a liberdade de pensamento e consciência, que, por seu turno, as levou a traçar os seus próprios caminhos, quer na senda do conhecimento, quer na reivindicação de um estatuto de cidadania plena, quer, por absurdo que pareça, na defesa da identidade tradicional feminina, embora com um novo apreço pelo seu desempenho enquanto esposas e mães.

Sarah Fyge Egerton, autora de diversos poemas vindos a prelo entre as últimas décadas do século XVII e início do século XVIII constitui um bom exemplo do desabrochar de uma nova mulher, mais exigente consigo própria e com a sociedade em que se integra. Embora ainda não almeje uma identidade política equiparável à dos homens, em diversos momentos defrontou família e amigos assumindo-se como paladina das mulheres em geral, mesmo tendo de quebrar as regras de boa etiqueta que proibiam que uma escritora publicasse a sua obra, em especial tratando-se de matéria polémica em termos dos costumes e do recato feminino, como ela nos diz:

My Sex forbids I should my Silence break,  
 I lose my Jest, cause Women must not speak.  
 Mysteries must not be with my search Prophan'd,  
 My Closet not with Books, but Sweet-meats cram'd,  
 A little China, to advance the Show,  
 My Prayer Book, and seven Champions, or so.  
 My Pen if ever us'd imploy'd must be,  
 In lofty Theme of useful Housewifery,  
 Transcribing old Receipts of Cookery:  
 And what is necessary 'mongst the rest,  
 Good Cures for Agues, and a cancer'd Breast,<sup>11</sup>

O retrato de mulher delineado neste poema com o título “The Liberty” é sintomático da asfixia intelectual e emotiva sentida pela autora. O espaço privado da sala e da cozinha, a dormência recebida de pequenos prazeres

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<sup>11</sup> Sarah Fyge Egerton, “The Liberty”, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703), David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry, An Annotated Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, p.12.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Fyge Egerton, “The Liberty”, p.12.

ou da leitura, única, do livro de orações actuam como grilhetas para quem busca outros desígnios e o direito de interagir com os seus semelhantes:

My daring Pen will bolder Sallies make,  
And like my self, an uncheck'd freedom take;<sup>12</sup>

À semelhança de muitas outras mulheres coevas, Sarah Egerton vê na palavra escrita o instrumento da sua libertação pessoal e social, quase numa inconsciente invocação bíblica da força do Verbo para construir a mudança, uma mudança aqui de contornos ainda pouco precisos, mas que não hesita em reclamar liberdade para o género feminino.

Será um igual grito de liberdade de participação na esfera pública que norteará *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman* (1792), redigido por Mary Wollstonecraft no ardor do espírito de profunda viragem que a Revolução Francesa acarretara.<sup>13</sup> O bem conhecido lema – Liberdade, Igualdade e Fraternidade – adequava-se na perfeição aos anseios que as mulheres, francesas ou inglesas, vinham a manifestar desde há algum tempo. O direito à educação reclamado por Mary Wollstonecraft para ambos os sexos reflectia a necessidade de um processo igualitário na aquisição dos saberes, para que também as mulheres pudessem ser mais úteis ao colectivo, tanto na sua qualidade de esposas e mães, como, implicitamente, enquanto cidadãs de corpo inteiro. Com tal intuito, procura desmistificar o arquétipo feminino que a ideologia ortodoxa masculina instilara e instalara como perspectiva social única, ou, pelo menos, dominante:

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists. I wish to persuade women to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity, and

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<sup>13</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, Edited with An Introduction by Miriam Brody. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

No que respeita às ideias e aos eventos que forjaram a Revolução Francesa consulte-se Hélio Osvaldo Alves, *Razão e Direitos. A Influência da Revolução Francesa em Inglaterra (1789-1802)*, Vol. I, Figueira da Foz: Cemar, 1999 e *As Carroças da Subversão (1803-1822)*, Vol. II, Figueira da Foz: Cemar, 2002.

that kind of love which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.<sup>14</sup>

Ao apelar à capacidade racional das mulheres, em detrimento da imagem/objecto da mulher adorno, Mary Wollstonecraft visa libertar as suas congéneres de hábitos de obediência e submissão que as levava a quase dirimir a sua identidade de agentes pensantes e capazes de actuar. Num registo mais irónico Mary Leapor, num poema intitulado “Man the Monarch”, atribui à inveja e à cupidez dos homens os esforços em que, ao longo dos tempos, eles se empenharam para impedir as mulheres de participar em termos equitativos nas tarefas públicas. A justificar as discriminações infligidas, repete-se o argumento da debilidade do intelecto feminino:

And better to secure his doubtful Rule,  
Roll'd his wise Eye-balls, and pronounc'd her Fool.<sup>15</sup>

Contudo, a avidez de dominar o chamado “sexo fraco”, faz dos homens déspotas irrisórios – “Domestic Kings”<sup>16</sup> – governantes sem real poder, já que o baseiam em falsidade e em paixões irracionais, pouco adequadas, afinal, à consagrada mente masculina.

A reivindicação de direitos para as mulheres conheceu alguns revezes, precisamente na fase imediatamente após a Revolução Francesa, não só por parte de autores masculinos, mas também provinda de vozes femininas. Um dos casos a assinalar é o de Anna Laetitia Barbauld, escritora de sucesso, mulher instruída na Academia de Warrington que lhe proporcionou o conhecimento das línguas clássicas e do francês e do italiano, além do estudo das ciências naturais e do pensamento moderno. Mais, o círculo religioso Unitariano em que estava integrada constituía um dos núcleos mais radicais do protestantismo dissidente, pelo que família e amigos sempre incentivaram a sua actividade como escritora, propiciando-lhe, até, a publicação da sua obra. Todos estes factores nos induziriam facilmente a supor tratar-se de mais uma voz a pugnar pelos direitos até aí negados à mulher. Não obstante, em “The Rights of Woman”, Barbauld adopta um

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<sup>14</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Leapor, “Man the Monarch”, David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry, An Annotated Anthology*, p. 292.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Leapor, “Man the Monarch”, David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry, An Annotated Anthology*, p. 292.

tom herói-cómico ao dirigir-se à Mulher. A caracterização da inferioridade e sujeição femininas efectua-se de maneira demasiado enfática, reveladora do intento subjacente:

Yes, injured Woman! Rise, assert thy right!  
 Woman! Too long degraded, scorned, opprest;  
 O born to rule in partial Law's despite,<sup>17</sup>

A paródia à obra de Mary Wollstonecraft, que o título do poema já sugeria, acaba por se desmascarar quando Barbauld, baseando-se na lógica dos afectos, recusa a possibilidade de homens e mulheres terem direitos próprios, isto é, serem cidadãos e cidadãs em igualdade. A poetisa prefere adoptar a perspectiva de uma guerra de sexos, uma quase recriação da querela entre homens e mulheres que se desencadeara no século XV, na corte de Carlos V de França.<sup>18</sup> Assim, o homem só pode ser senhor ou súbdito, nunca um igual, pelo que não trará liberdade à mulher:

Try all that wit and art suggest to bend  
 Of thy imperial foe the stubborn knee;  
 Make treacherous Man thy subject, not thy friend;  
 Thou mayst command, but never can be free.<sup>19</sup>

A liberdade de recusar um lugar mais responsável e interventivo na sociedade é, pois, ainda uma alternativa que se prefigura perante quem já ganhou a informação suficiente para temer uma aventura de contornos incertos. Barbauld corroborava, deste modo, o sentir de muitos iluministas que acreditavam possuir a mulher um intelecto tão dotado como o do homem, e que, portanto, merecia e devia ser instruído, mas lhe negavam maior liberdade social, económica e, muito menos, política. A premissa do reconhecimento da mulher como sujeito cognoscente pleno, não funcionava em relação consequential lógica para a sua entrada cabal na esfera pública. Todavia, as mulheres iam actuando como criadoras, divulgadoras e

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<sup>17</sup> Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "The Rights of Woman", David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry, An Annotated Anthology*, p. 481.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400-1789", *Signs*, Volume 8, N. 1, Autumn, 1982, 4 - 28.

<sup>19</sup> Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "The Rights of Woman", David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry, An Annotated Anthology*, p. 482.

consumidoras de bens e de ideias, e, ainda como paladinas de uma sensibilidade que os vindouros associariam à imagem do homem moderno.

Parafrazeando o passo de Kant anteriormente citado, o que ressalta nos escritos destas mulheres sobre a liberdade é a sua capacidade de ajuizar de forma independente, sem tutelas, com a coragem de desafiar o costume e a provável censura de contemporâneos e contemporâneas, ousando aprender contra a autoridade patriarcal que, de uma forma ou de outra, pervagava a opinião pública. Como disse Lady Mary Montagu:

I am persuaded if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Doctor Swift has supposed) it would be an established maxim amongst them that a mare could not be taught to pace.<sup>20</sup>

Mulheres houve, porém, no setecentismo britânico que se apropriaram do ideal libertário do Iluminismo e tomaram as rédeas em suas mãos.

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<sup>20</sup> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Comet of The Enlightenment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 526.



**William Blake: ‘Showing the Two Contrary  
States of the Human Soul’  
or Creating Conditions of Possibility  
for Representing Humanity**

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## William Blake: ‘Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul’ or Creating Conditions of Possibility for Representing Humanity

Born in 1757, William Blake, poet, painter and prophet, wove in his poetry an intricate web of creativity, originality and integrity, revealing an insight and artistry that a twenty-first century reader and critic can but appreciate. The exhaustive and divergent comments on Blake’s art and the power it exerts is a difficulty that we have to face and bear in mind when we read Blake detached from a more canonical literary criticism which generally deals with the symbolic, political, prophetic, mystic and quasi-religious quality of his poetry.

Never denying the aesthetic, imaginative, symbolic and prophetic value of Blake’s poetry, what we propose here is a bringing together of two antinomies: high culture and common culture; an understanding of literature as a form of signification within the means and the real conditions of its production. In other words, a reading of some *Songs of Innocence* and some *Songs of Experience*<sup>1</sup> as a cultural practice in a time when England was ripe to acknowledge new forms of poetry, with a new phrasing and imagery, as a challenge to more conventional habits of thought. We need to keep in mind that the eighteenth-century was an age of intensely formal poetry, with Alexander Pope as the key figure and with his insistence on rhyme and on rhythmic symmetry. Whereas Pope wrote for an educated and sophisticated elite under the premise that poetry and culture were on the verge of extinction at the hands of some barbarians, William Blake had no such restriction, writing in a simple language and using a very simple rhyme, approximating the patterns of spoken language. The use of this simple language with its implicit repudiation of Augustan, classical models, enables us to see Blake figuring another context: the beginnings of Romanticism.

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<sup>1</sup> From now on referred to as *SI* and *SE*, respectively.

Indeed, in Blake's works we can identify a change in the structures of feeling, a change which refers to the contradiction between his consciousness of the dominant ideology and the continuous, emergent creation of other discursive practices, with new meanings and values (Williams 1977:132).

William Blake revealed in his work, in his own individual wisdom and morality, a whole range of the emerging characteristics of the period, a turning away from the classical past, a significant importance given to childhood experience, a dynamic view of history, as well as emotion. As all pioneers, Blake was, to a great extent, isolated from the social context, though highly responsive to the events of his time, as well as to the economic and political changes in Britain. Blake lived during a time of intense social change: the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution all happened during his lifetime. These changes gave Blake a chance to see one of the most dramatic stages in the transformation of the Western world from a feudal, agricultural society to an industrial society where philosophers and political thinkers such as Locke and Paine championed the rights of the individual.

In spite of the fact that William Blake only really entered the literary canon in the mid-nineteenth-century, when an anthology of the *Songs* came to light, his human, social and individual agency made of him an active cultural agent, defying and resisting the hegemony of the ideological and cultural structures of his time, opening space for the construction of contexts of experience of humanity, within a tradition which has almost nothing to do with 'high literature', but is instead composed of theological dispute, political tract and Dissenting criticism (Rylance and Simons 2001).

Writing a kind of poetry which was and still is, to some degree, controversial, creating poems which were critical of a society thought to be almost perfect, Blake wanted people to question what they had always done, and whether it was morally right. He did so by using varying techniques that set up clashes between ideologies and value systems.

The subtitle of *SI* and *SE* is 'Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul'. The word 'contrary' had a very specific and important meaning for Blake; the language and vision not just of Blake but of poetry itself insists that the contraries are equally important and inseparable. In the Argument of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake wrote that 'Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries

spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell'.<sup>2</sup>

William Blake sought to transform the energies generated by conflict into creative energies, moving towards mutual acceptance, reconciliation and harmony. He was prepared to take on this difficult task even in relation to the most polarized and apparently most mutually exclusive contraries, as he indicated in his challenging title *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

By describing at the outset innocence and experience as 'contrary states of the human soul', Blake is warning us that we are not being invited to choose between them, that no such choice is possible or desirable, and that we are not going to be offered the truism that innocent joy is preferable to the sorrows of experience.

It is through the representation of experience, in a knowable space of communication, that the poet draws conditions of possibility (Sinfield 1992) for the creation of the subject and of the object. Indeed, as Raymond Williams (1973) puts it, this invention, this creation of a map of possibilities is both a question of object and of subject. It is a question of object to the extent that through a new form of writing poetry, Blake constructed new structures of feeling, articulating literature with social experience, giving to the reader the social, and affective patterns of his time; but it is also a question of subject, as these songs are the product of the subjects involved in this creative process. As Williams argues in 1973, the subjects (writers) position themselves as observers of reality and articulate to the other subjects (readers) an imagined reality which needs to be known. According to Pickering (1997) all aesthetic and cultural experience is also social, as it belongs to forms of sociability and it is necessarily related to different identities; by reading *SI* and *SE* as conditions of possibility for the human being, we are considering the category 'experience' as the individual experience, in an intersubjective involvement of the social representations of experience and the lived consciousness of the subjects.

Most of the poems in *SI* lacking contraries, lack also energy, progression and complexity. They mime the state of infancy in its simplicity and

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<sup>2</sup> In Keynes, Geoffrey (ed.) *Blake, Complete Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 (all references to Blake's poems are from this edition).

vulnerability. But even in those poems where there is no overt foreshadowing of experience, there is an element of desperation in the joy, because we cannot avoid supplying the knowledge that the joys depicted are exclusive to infancy and very short-lived.

There are many poems<sup>3</sup> from which Blake cannot keep out the shadow of experience; several of the apparently carefree poems are deceptive when looked at more closely. That is the case of the 'Introduction' to *SI*, which looks like a very clear and not at all difficult poem, as it tells an obvious story, in short lines with an easy and regular rhyme and metre, in a simple vocabulary.

In the 'Introduction' the poet moves through three phases: first he pipes, which always seems to Blake to suggest a purely natural and spontaneous music, the child responds with laughter; then he sings a song about a lamb, and the child weeps. Singing a song, since it involves language and a fixed melody, is more complex and although we are told that the child weeps 'with joy', the fact that we weep for both joy and sorrow perhaps indicates that they are closer than they seem. Finally, having persuaded the singer to turn poet, the child then vanishes, so that the written songs the poet produces have no live audience. He writes so that 'every child may joy to hear', but he can have no assurance that they will, since the use of 'may'<sup>4</sup> in the final line creates a crucial uncertainty that makes us ask the extent to which the world of 'Innocence' is already an artificial ideal, prolonging and protecting innocence from change, by writing 'joy' into a book. This repetitively and re-inforced idea of innocence, of natural nature has in the poem several elements that imply their antithesis, as this innocent world has an opposite, or a contrary, still outside the poem.

Moreover, the reed the piper converts into a pen is 'hollow', which cannot avoid a certain incongruity; the incongruity is even bigger when we are told that in order to write poems the speaker has to 'stain' the clear water. The word 'stain' introduces, in however dilute a form, the idea of sin and corruption. As a matter of fact, in the very act of celebrating childish innocence, the poet corrupts it through his inability to prevent the shadow

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<sup>3</sup> cf. 'The Echoing Green'; 'The Divine Image'; 'The Chimney Sweeper'; 'Holy Thursday'.

<sup>4</sup> A modal of epistemic possibility which, according to L. F. Paul Høye. *Adverbs and Modality*. London: Longman, 1997, indicates that the proposition expressed by the speaker can not be inferred as true, but it can not be also inferred as false.

of his own experience falling over the scene, and this drives away the spontaneity he is seeking to express.

'The Echoing Green' from *SI* is another poem which seems on the face of it wholly cheerful. But the first stanza implies that sunrise and spring are greeted with such happiness because they bring an end to the darkness of night and to the severity of winter. The second stanza introduces happy old people, but their memories of their 'youth time' imply that a lifetime has slipped away without noticing. In the first stanza the green echoed with laughter, in the second with memories across a chasm of years. In the final stanza the green does not echo at all. The ending of the poem:

And sport no more seen/On the darkening green

refers literally only to dusk, but surely suggests something more ominous and permanent.

The opposite world inferred in the 'Introduction' to *SI* and the ominous something of 'The Echoing Green' is found in the 'Introduction' to *SE*, where we find a poem full of metrical irregularities, with a variable length of lines, with a more complex rhyme; while in the 'Introduction' to *SI* the form seems to lull us, here it keeps us alert, involving and destabilising the reader.

In the opening line the reader is commanded to 'hear', but in the rest of the stanza we find two acts of listening and two voices: the voice of the Bard and the Holy Word<sup>5</sup> heard by the Bard, creating, thus, a moment of ambiguity. This Holy Word deprives both Adam and Eve of their innocence and sentences the human race to mortality in 'sorrow', 'pain', and 'sweat'; in fact, God's final words giving 'dust' as the origin and the end of human life evoke a cycle of pointlessness, which can be understood in the whole range of poems from *SE*, where Blake creates images, in a tone of despair for the sterile social and cultural conditions of his time.

The Bard contrasts with the Piper, who is only aware of the present moment's sensation, whereas the Bard is much more aware of time and of change to the extent that he has a prophetic vision of a new dawn and of Earth's awakening. His insight excludes the world of innocence, just as this world is a much more limited one in the sense that it excludes experience.

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<sup>5</sup> Referring to Genesis, Chap. 3.

This 'Introduction' to *SE* has a number of words with a negative connotation and feeling, as 'ancient', 'lapsed', 'weeping', and the repetition of 'fallen fallen'; 'worn' and 'slumberous mass', evoking an atmosphere of weariness and sadness, that is recovered in 'London'. The world of experience is cold, sad and despairing bounded by strict limits and apparently having no energy to escape to them.

Both the Piper and the Bard share the perceptions of the state in which they exist; the former shares feelings of 'glee' and of 'joy' with the innocent world surrounding him; similarly, the latter shares Experience's perception, as he hears the Holy Word and feels the need to renew the 'fallen light'. However, their function differ, as the Piper composes and writes songs that will give joy to children living in the protected world of Innocence, the Bard calls Earth, Mankind to throw off her chains and arise; thus, William Blake creates conditons of possibility for himself as a poet and for Humanity: either to celebrate joy, or as revolutionary poet to call people's consciousness to the evils of civilisation.

One example of Blake's disapproval of changes that happened in his time and an appeal to his fellow citizens to the evils of the epoch comes in his poem 'London', from *SE*, where Blake describes the woes that the Industrial Revolution and the breaking of the common man's ties to the land have brought upon him. In 'London', Blake paints the modern city under the sign of man's slavery, the agony of children, the suffering Soldier and the Whore. The narrator in 'London' describes both the Thames and the city streets as 'charter'd' or controlled by commercial interests; he refers to 'mind-forg'd manacles'; he relates that every man's face contains 'Marks of weakness, marks of woe'; and he discusses the 'every cry of every Man' and 'every Infant's cry of fear'. He connects marriage and death by referring to a 'marriage hearse' and describes it as blighted with plague. He also talks about 'the hapless Soldier's sigh' and the 'youthful Harlot's curse' and describes 'black'ning Churches' and 'blood down Palace walls'.

In this poem William Blake further explores the effects of the Industrial Revolution and sets up more clashes between contemporary ideologies and value systems. Blake expresses his critique through the usage of a progression of symbols that spread out from the 'charter'd street' to encompass the whole city where the narrator notices in every face he encounters 'marks of weakness, marks of woe'. The city is therefore represented as an alienating and constricting environment and every person is marked by it.

There was a common vein of thought in England of this period that London was the greatest city in the world. This ideology seems to clash with the fact that the city seems to squeeze the life out of people. Blake uses figures that are clearly disempowered by society, the chimney-sweeper and the harlot to present to the reader the debilitating effect of a society governed by the greed and economics of the individual.

The victimization of the soldier is depicted in a similar fashion, with his blood running down palace walls, 'the hapless Soldier's sigh/Runs in Blood down palace walls'. This demonstrates the narrator's value system of opposing institutions that are destructive to the individual, such as the monarchy and the Church. However, this clashes with the ideology of the time, which was what these two institutions were without fault, and that society was more important than the individual.

Throughout the poem, Blake uses symbols of constriction, 'mind-forg'd manacles' and repetitions such as 'In every cry of every man, in every infant's cry of fear' which creates a contrast to the lyrical quality of the poem. Furthermore, the repetition of the word 'every' is an attempt to highlight the fact that not only a select few are dissatisfied with the Industrial Revolution but rather everyone is unhappy about how it has influenced their lifestyle.

However, it is at the first line of the fourth stanza, 'But most thro' midnight streets I hear', that we get a fuller understanding of Blake's vision. 'But most' means: what I have described so far is not the full horror of London, as it gives the city in which young girls are forced into prostitution; in which their exile from respectable society, like the unhappiness of the Soldier, expresses itself in a physical threat to another. The Soldier accuses the Palace with his blood; the prostitute curses with infection the young husband who has been with her; the 'plague' finally kills the new-born child.

'London' begins with the verb set in the present tense. This implies that the poem concerns timeless realities unbounded by references to any particular incident, presenting a picture of London as a symbol of fallen humanity.

William Blake wanted society to question the way it did things and whether or not these actions were morally right. He achieved this through his poetry, relying on the intelligence of the reader to draw his own conclusions, having now been presented with an alternative point of view. A prophet of the condition of modern man, William Blake was one of the

most far-reaching figures in the intellectual liberation of Europe that took place at the end of the eighteenth century.

The central subject of *SI* and *SE* is that of the child who is lost and found. In its symbolism, we may understand this central theme as the loss and finding of Humanity itself; it is the great theme of all Blake's work – the 'real man, the imagination', that has been lost and will be found again through human vision. Experience is the 'contrary' of innocence, not its negation. Contraries are phases of the doubleness of all existence in the mind of man; they reflect the condition of the human struggle. As hell can be married to heaven, so experience lifts innocence into a higher synthesis based on vision. Experience is not evil; it merely shows us the face of evil as a human face, so that we shall learn that the world is exactly what man makes of it.

In the world of Innocence the child speaks to the lamb and marvels in its soft and bright goodness, over which stands the Jesus who is himself a lamb.<sup>6</sup> In Experience we stare into the fiery eyes of the Tyger and think ourselves lost in the 'forests of the night'.<sup>7</sup> But the Tyger is the face of the creation, marvelous and ambiguous; he is not evil. Blake does not believe in a war between good and evil; he sees only the creative tension presented by the struggle of man to resolve the contraries. What has been created, by some unknown hand, is a fiery furnace into which our hands must go to seize the fire. 'The Tyger' is a poem of triumphant human awareness; it is a hymn to being.

Had Blake believed in God, the contraries which are presented to man's mind by experience would have been easy to explain. For him the contraries exist not because God willed it so in his punishment of man's transgression. They exist because man's gift of vision is blocked up in himself by materialism and rationalism. Every man, by the very nature of life, is engaged in a struggle, against the false materialism of the age, to find his way back to perfect human sight. But vision restores his human identity. With the aid of vision, and through the practice of art, man bursts through the contraries and weds them together by his own creativity.

To read *SI* and *SE* as an answer to the hegemonic structures and ideology enables us to consider William Blake as an active agent in the

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<sup>6</sup> cf. 'The Lamb'.

<sup>7</sup> cf. 'The Tyger'.



making of his own history, an active agent who, by means of his creative power, contributes to the changing of the existing structures of feeling, or in other words to the articulation of an ontological and an epistemological (Probyn 1993) level of existence, where the subject reveals the political and ideological conditions of possibility for Humanity. The centrality of 'experience' enhanced in both *SI* and *SE* produces an articulation of text, poet and reader, in a dynamic process of discursive alliances.

Read as a whole, the set of texts belonging to both *SI* and *SE* can be understood as a knowable representation of experience, structured by historical, social, political, intellectual and religious conditions and aiming at re-creating, in the space of literary communication, conditions of possibility for the human being, in an attempt to re-root what the formations of the time were starting to up-root (Bauman 2000).

In both *SI* and *SE*, William Blake drew maps of possibility for human kind, where the poet (Piper and Bard), the figures of his imagination and the readers are able to move and to acknowledge conditions of possibility for a social and an individual existence. These poems, and in particular 'London', are an invention of a shared space of experiences, they are the result of a process of creation of an interpretative context, in a poetical act which involves author and readers in the task of making sense of what is written and what is read.

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# **On Trans(at)l(antic)ation: “Cultural Studies” under the Hammer of Poetry**

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# On Trans(at)l(antic)ation: “Cultural Studies” under the Hammer of Poetry

For the common citizen, culture is ordinary,  
in every society and in every mind

Raymond Williams

Monolingualism is a curable disease

Edward Said

As I reflect on the some fifty years’ epistemes of the career as an Anglicist of Hélio Osvaldo Alves, I begin by re-asserting that early dominant and ever relevant – if generationally differentiated – grounding he shared with, say, Raymond Williams in respect of their expectations that, for the common citizen, ‘Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind’. For those unfamiliar with Williams’ broader concerns, the context from which I have taken these orienting terms is as follows: ‘We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life – the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning – the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of those senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep and personal meanings’ (Williams, 1989: 4). Immediately it should be clear that Williams was reacting unequivocally against any or all presuppositions that ‘deep and personal meanings’ might be the prerogative of any one, let alone a ‘refined’, sensibility, *contra* the would-be-educators of that (in Williams’ British location, post-World-War II, post-rationing, yet still post-Arnoldian, latter-day Leavisite) brigade or communion that held that ‘literature has a civilizing mission’.

In responding to the invitation to meditate on the relationship between literary criticism and cultural studies, my own least concern with regard to the latter will be to reinvent the wheel. For that is my UK-local perception of what has been attempted by a largely but not exclusively US-derived institutionality, in politically correct re-appropriations of an early and unpretentious attention to contexts of, say, the Birmingham school of the mid-1950s and the respective subsequent enterprises of Richard Hoggart, Williams himself and, later, Stuart Hall. I am mindful of the subsequent horror of Hoggart and the hesitation of Hall regarding current misappropriations of the term ‘Cultural Studies’ whereby academics, belching undigested theories of the last thirty years, seem to have taken over, emphasizing ever more the complexities of signifying and ever less the urgencies of accessible critical practice. If I, too, reflect on the difference between merely using the label and the painstaking intellectual commitment demanded by any effective analysis of particular cultures, it is precisely because it is dangerous to heed, or defer to, the many who now regard the practice of literary criticism and the application of critical theory as being inimical to the pursuit of political and historical questions. The need to locate social inequalities will always be more urgent than the analysis of texts; but what cultural studies are not also critical studies? Principally, I suggest, those that opt for messages which, though loudly blared, cannot be allowed to conceal any ideological agenda or insufficiently explicit theoretical infrastructures that they might be seeking to exploit.

As I turn to the body *politic*, the interplay of physical, linguistic and political aggression operating between and within sovereign states and their peoples, so blatant in the never-to-be-finished colonial project and in its after-effects, may be shown by other cartographies, spoken in other accents. A ‘state of conflict’, whether or not officially declared, will habitually find expression as powerful as any open warfare or clandestine policy of control. In focussing on bodies as performative as they are political, I shall draw, too, on a metaphor of co-habitation. Textual analysis will insistently be used and will be seen to interact with a number of different partners. It will never be, nor allowed to be, the dominant one. For what will be important is not the priority of literary criticism over cultural studies, or of translatability over untranslatability, but rather the priority of the differences operating between and within such polarities. In the process, the latently symbiotic relationship between critical discourses and the

literary objects they analyse will be forced to perform, and be performed, in similar oscillations.

As a comparatist, I have chosen to focus on several examples of what, in a broader research project, I term frontier poetry.<sup>1</sup> In analysis of the texts in question, ever-fluctuating power relations will be shown to resist, often forcefully, sometimes humorously, ever effectively, the labellings of restrictive sign-systems. The poems will ask – whatever else they might be heard to say or be seen to show: How have different literatures engaged with historical and cultural events? How have they generated *excess*? And they will demand of their readers: What do you do with that excess? How do you 'translate' your experience of any representation of history that will always exceed the writing of it? 'Border' poems might come to be characterized by their tendency to pose further such questions. How are the tariffs of immigration from language to language to be levied and paid? And at what inter-personal cost? At issue in the poems I shall focus on will be, not least, the excessive (body) language of racial stereotyping and ethnic *untranslatability*. How, and by whom, is the emigrant-cum-immigrant to be heard, viewed, photographed, classified... entered? Border crossings will be shown to entail considerably more, therefore, than geographical, economic, political, linguistic and cultural 'events'. In doubting whether any of the currently in vogue cultural studies can account for the excesses generated by such crossings, I insist that literature still highlights the differences such cultural studies strive to explore. The less literature itself is read, the more the institutional discourses of criticism and, encroachingly, academe, will purport to appropriate, as discoveries or revelations, those perceptions assumed to derive – in eras prior to the un/clothed empire of *homo academicus* – from unapologetically and illimitably performative texts. The frontier that I cross, and from where I write, is at the interface of an 'Old Country' of literary semiotics and the strongly sign-posted 'New Territories' of the dis-united states of Cultural Studies.

For all the distance and difference between identifiable regional political conflicts in the USA *versus* Latin America dialogics of unequal power-blocks, and that shuttle-space of Latino writing from which I take

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<sup>1</sup> See my "Cultural Studies" at the limits: the body politic of border poetry', forthcoming in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, a special *festschrift* number for Donald Shaw, edited by Robin Fiddian and Alex Longhurst, University of Liverpool Press, 2005 (in press).

my first example, the performative construct still derives from persistent colonial insistencies and resistances:

### **Freefalling toward a Borderless Future**

*Performed live, voice filtered by delay effect; with a live simultaneous translation into French, Gringñoñol, or Esperant. Soundbed: A mix of Indian drums, Gregorian chants, and occasional police sirens.*

...per ipsum ecu nipsum, eti nipsum  
et T. Video Patri Omni-impotente  
per omnia saecula saeculeros  
I see  
I see  
I see a whole generation  
freefalling toward a borderless future  
incredible mixtures beyond science fiction:  
cholo-punks, pachuco krishnas,  
Irish concheros, butoh rappers, cyber-Aztecs,  
Gringofarians, Hopi rockers, y demás...  
I see them all  
wandering around  
a continent without a name  
the forgotten paisanos  
howling corridos in Fresno & Amarillo  
the Mixteco pilgrims  
heading North toward British Columbia  
the Australian surfers  
waiting for the big wave at Valparaiso  
the polyglot Papagos  
waiting for the sign to return  
the Salvadorans coming North (to forget)  
the New Yorkers going South (to remember)  
the stubborn Europeans in search of the last island  
    – Zumpango, Cozumel, Martinique  
I see them all  
wandering around  
a continent without a name  
el TJ transvestite  
translating Nuyorican versos in Univisión  
the howling L. A. junkie  
bashing NAFTA with a bullhorn



El Warrior for Gringostroika  
 scolding the First World on MTV  
 AIDS warriors reminding us all  
 of the true priorities in life  
 Lacandonian shamans  
 exorcising multinationals at dawn  
 yuppie tribes paralysed by guilt & fear  
 grunge rockeros on the edge of a cliff  
 all passing through Califas  
 enroute to other selves  
 & other geographies  
 (*I speak in tongues*)  
 standing on the map of my political desires  
 I toast to a borderless future  
 (*I raise my glass of wine toward the moon*)  
 with...  
 our Alaskan hair  
 our Canadian head  
 our U. S. torso  
 our Mexican genitalia  
 our Central American cojones  
 our Caribbean sperm  
 our South American legs  
 our Patagonian feet  
 our Antarctic nails  
 jumping borders at ease  
 jumping borders with pleasure  
 amen, hey man

(Gómez-Peña, 1985; revised in 1995; 1996:1-3)

A classic/al case of polysemy here performs an archetypal positive-cum-negative carnivalizing. Mockery by inversion updates the reader on the Latin sub- (or pre-) text of *Latino*. For Mass-ending (*Ite, missa est*) read mass sending-up of the (un-) completable (droopy) project of omnipotent patriarchy. In the era of 'T. Video', I see, I see and, again, I see you, but only via my deferred panopticon of sempiternal erotic longing. *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* is now but a shadow *Confiteor*, a long-lost totalizing guilt replicated in scopophilic trebled stare at a future of 'incredible mixtures'. In this literary pre-figuration – or is it proleptic defiguring? – of hybridity theories, the self-styled *performero* Guillermo Gómez-Peña

stages a corrective to any theorist of cultural studies, Latin American or other, who in order to think movement, has to suppose some prior stasis. To suggest that hybridity was not always already there would be to re-perform that very reductionism which made the thinking of hybridity difficult (or censored) in the aetiologically unsound ‘first’ place. Colony? An early performance, of 1985, prefaces a border poetics that he was to develop across a decade or more in an internationally acclaimed series of ‘prophecies, poems and *loqueras* for the end of the century’, subtitle of his *The New World Border*. Hallucinations of no new world, but rather of one ‘free falling towards a borderless future’, bode, inseparably, the *Credo* of an anomalist and utopianist trip wherein cultural memory will play tricks on the ear and the here, the eye and the I.

Compass-points flee centrifugally from national identity markers. Culture and language lapse into polyglot parroting of a futile nostalgia for semiosis – a ‘waiting for the sign to return’ – amidst a neo-Babelic investment in ‘the true priorities’. And what are they? Shamanic manics performing behind the ‘Lacandonian’ mask of disoriented non-being in a virtual acting-out of the post-psychoanalytical nightmare-cum-‘political desire’: ‘I am not [*my erasure*] wherever I am the plaything of my thought’ (Lacan, 1966:136). The poem thus dramatizes a heady millennial lunacy: ‘I toast’ therefore I am... incomplete; ‘with...’ (-out you/all). A putative wandering consciousness, ‘enroute to other selves’, would re-embody an Alaskan to Antarctic kin-graft, despairing in-corporation of (albeit hemispheric) plenitude. ‘Other geographies’ are revealed as dystopia. For ‘a borderless future’ is soon discovered to have been visited already by the ever-unexorcised ‘multinationals’ who, long since, have trampled all national borders, leaving as imprints but the bullish index of their stock exchange futures.

‘Political desires’ point ever to re-configurations of a *body politic*. The monstrous semiotic mapping of *homo americanus*, spawned by the hippy-Frankenstein magus of the poem’s finger-snapping interlocutor cannot escape a sinister cultural loading in its North-South, head-to-toe, re-anatomizing. For the (macho) body still has balls, giving rise to impregnating threats in the projected ‘jumping [of] borders’. In the readers’ mind’s I, little doubt is left as to where the post-ease pleasure will come from. Whether I/you agree (‘amen’) or not... be persuaded (‘hey man’). Gómez-Peña, self-styled ‘nomadic Mexican artist/writer [...] a border sisyphus’, offers

retrospectively his manifesto of *mistranslatibility*:

Since I don't believe in the existence of *linguas francas*, my choice not to translate (or to purposely mistranslate) the sections in Spanglish, Gringoñol, bad French, and indigenous languages is part of an aesthetic and a political strategy. I hope that this is apparent to the reader who, at times, will feel partially "excluded" from the work; but after all, partial exclusion is a quintessential contemporary experience, que no? The 'Glossary of Borderisms' at the end of the book contains some conceptual clues that might help when travelling across my performance continent. (Gómez-Peña, 1996: i-ii)

His personae perform ever *intra-*, ever dialogically, address-less but addressing: Literature *is* the culture ever at and beyond the frontier of all studies. But Gómez-Peña already and always knows as much. If your model were to be, for instance, psychoanalysis, he would have a couch-confrontation for/with you, too:

### XXX: El Hamlet Fronterizo

TWO VOICES:

me ama/no me ama  
 me caso/no me caso  
 me canso/no me canso  
 chicano o mexicano  
 que soy o me imagino  
 regreso o continúo  
 me mato/no me mato  
 en México/en Califas  
 to write or to perform  
 in English or in Spanish...  
 I forgive you,  
 I crave you  
 ansiosamente tuyo  
 de nadie más  
 frontera mediante...  
 te espero, mi loca, te sigo esperando...  
 you are it, tu sangre, tus cicatrices...

(Gómez-Peña, 1996: 230-1)

'Country matters' as little (or as much) for the *Performero* as for the Bard. Just think. Schizo-poetics. Or feel yuh self. No blur in the mind?

Have *you* ever been picked up by the (border) fuzz? It hurts... splits you up, brings tears to your I/s.

To be or not to be... outrageous? Fortune forever slings the critic against the 'frontera mediante' of poetry and poetic analysis. From border performance to Nuyorican calligram, I shall now stretch appropriation beyond the limit of the semi(er)otic necessity of (un)translatability. On display will be another body politic, posing; re-posing the challenge for a no-longer capitalizable semiotics. How is the sign, constructed not on the (im)possibility but rather on the (un)necessity of interlingual translation to be (uncomfortably) accommodated *within* the other('s) culture?

### Asimilao

assimilated? que assimilated,  
 brother, yo soy asimilao,  
 asi mi la o si es verdad  
 tengo un lado asimilao.

You see, they went deep... Ass  
 oh..... they went deeper..... SEE  
 oh, oh,... they went deeper... ME  
 but the sound LAO was too black  
 for LATED, LAO could not be  
 translated, assimilated,  
 no, asimilao, melao,  
 it became a black  
 spanish word but  
 we do have asimilados  
 perfumados and by the  
 last count even they  
 were becoming asimilao  
 how can it be analyzed  
 as american? así que se  
 chavaron  
 trataron  
 pero no  
 pudieron  
 con el AO  
 de la palabra  
 principal, deles gracias a los prietos  
 que cambiaron asimilado al popular asimilao  
 (Laviera, 1985: 54)

When, under pressures of globalization, travelling theory runs the risk of turning into travelling *cliché*, the commentator on literary and cultural studies will ask, again: what happens to representation on the other side? What further confrontations and (lack of) negotiations await migrants often forced, and reluctant, to supplement the already precarious term of their mobility by the ever-problematic prefix *in-*? Perhaps the most celebrated representation of the dilemmas broached by such questions is Tato Laviera's 'Asimilao' from *AmeRican*, of 1985. The poem re-embodies, moves beyond, choreographs updated sights and sounds of the ever-staged but far from one-sided West's *I* story. New Yo Rican eyes like to see in America, ears like to hear in America. *I* shall be seen in America, *I* shall be heard in Ame-Ríc-ah. Dis/play – dis-respect? – draws overtly and humorously on the resources of the calligrammatic genre in general and deploys, in particular, its postcolonial palimpsest upon the outline configuration of a body political, subsumed into a complex dynamics of race, rape, resistance and pride. But to what effect?

In performance, I wilfully distort Laviera's calligramme, mis-treating it as a malleable intertext that inverts as it replicates Sander Gilman's contours of nineteenth-century scopophilic projections of Otherness, sketched as follows: 'when the Victorians saw the female black, they saw her in terms of her buttocks [...] In a mid-century erotic caricature of the Hottentot Venus, a white male observer views her through a telescope, unable to see anything but' (Gilman, 1986: 231). But butt? Can poetry ever capture a photographic (or mirror) state without providing a stage on which are performed not only the exoticisms but also the eroticisms – indeed the strange pathologies – of an inherited Eurocentrism and a gendered gaze? The process of self-realization, in poetry, as distinct from the narcissistic construction which fixes self in a mirror-state, will divulge a restless, unfulfilled, performative subject strutting its identity on a mirror-stage – inseparably from a constructed (or is it deconstructed?) gendered identity for the reader. Teasing theatrics produce in the ogler an illusion which is self-delusion. The rising temperature of any voyeurism momentarily threatening to melt down the implicit differences of gender, colour, class and economies of a post-colonial relation is suddenly turned *inside* out. As the shapely text shoulders responsibility, a left-to-right scan traces aporia at the heart:

You see	Ass
oh	SEE
oh,oh	ME
but	black

Inserted, inserted again, re-inserted, pushed, pushed hard, pushed harder, is the scandalously repressed history of male – as well as of female – rape. And not only on the ships. For, as I write, it is a fact that one of the highest incidences of rape recorded in the USA today is that of young black males in prison (Ladipo, 2001). A scream of pain – inside – scandalously unheeded – outside – seeks to fill that space of judicial recognition, and action, which legislation and its history have rendered excessive. ‘Too’ hot to handle for a *mere* cultural study?

they went deep  
 they went deeper  
 they went deeper  
 the sound LAO was too...

Yet mine is no *mere* deconstructive appropriation. Tato Laviera’s poem has pushed itself and me to the limits of critical intervention. I dis-member what it would re-member. *Mea maxima culpa? Et tu...* (you) Brute! In my own view(ing) of ‘Asimilao’, the would-be empowered strikes back. In a reverse telescoping, the configuration both shows itself to and looks at its other, exploiting a simultaneity of neo-, post-, and intra-colonial optics, dialogics, and logistics. Calligrammatically, the poem performs as a verbal/visual highlighter of politico-cultural relations. Through ear and eye, the threat of a re-colonizing assimilation is challenged in the very representation that identifies its dominant moves, its violating strategies. Primitive accumulation would appropriate, and desires to oppress, the worker in the very act that drives a divorcing wedge between the body and its access both to its own production *and* to its self-representation. ‘Asimilao’ radically disavows the possibility of an outside/inside economy whilst drawing attention to the impossibility of self-definition other than via the tropes of the post-colonial. Insertion becomes inversion.

Inversion – deconstruction – of what? The ploy of a, whenever convenient, neo-colonizing assimilation of the other conforms to what Derrida has characterized as the ruse of a universalizing dominance:

oriented, calculated, deliberate, voluntary, ordered movement: ordered most often by the *man* in charge. Not by a woman, for in general, and especially in wartime, it is *man* who decides on the heading, from the advanced point that he himself is, the prow, at the head of the ship or plane that he pilots. (Derrida 1992:14)

*L'Autre cap*, Derrida's French title, less ambiguously than the English version, *The Other Heading*, foregrounds masculinist promontory, protuberance, excrescence. The mode of resistance, the topological man-to-man manoeuvre of 'Asimilao', however, is not to avoid violent scopophilia ('SEE') or 'deep' synecdoche ('Ass'qua 'ME'). Rather does it (en)tail a depiction and a projection of 'deeper' being, a defiantly intra-colonial identity construction. The point is emphasized, I suggest, by a comparison. Stuart Hall, in respect of postcolonial subjectivity, has returned, in a recent radio interview, to the notion of 'a hyphenated sense of belongingness'. To regard the possibility of *assimilation* in traditional colonial terms, via such a mischievous equation as *Ass-SEE-ME = elation* (i. e. for the scopophilic voyeur), would be to license the outside to change the inside. Result? Victory to the libidinally dominant, and the abolition of otherness. Hall, however, reminds us that 'difference is here to stay'. And, pertinently, he continues: 'the only way we have of negotiating [...] is through the visual clues. Commonality defines us, otherwise racism will' (Hall 1999: radio interview). In this light, 'Asimilao', hands-on-hips, feet firmly on the ground, might be seen to negotiate obstinately, from a position of inner strength deriving from outer pressures. Painful input is converted into, inviolability is constructed on, the forceful output of a subject whose self-image takes (the form of) a stance, and whose voicing accentuates, albeit beLATEDly, a twice-LAOd resistance. The structuring of the poem transfigures the repeatedly absorbed 'oh'... 'oh, oh' of colonial abuse into a diphthongized (i. e. both and neither) AO of post-colonial negotiation.

Performatively, as well as semantically, 'Asimilao' indeed proclaims untranslatability. Its voice mouths dissent, refuses to be 'assimilated', mocks shock through 'que', and spurns adoptive brother-hood(s). Playful interlingualism and *trompe l'oeil* flow from the poem's head and shoulders through a predominantly Anglified upper body until it stands Hispanically on its own two feet. I have deliberately avoided the terms English and Spanish insofar as bilingualism is not the point: for 'if it is to be thought radically [...] being must be conceived of as presence or absence on the

basis of play and not the other way round' (Derrida, 1981: 292). Playing in a no less theoretical spirit, but in an appropriately different 'popular' tone, the poem admits that 'we' include those who, in the past, have cosmetically masked the odour of being perceived as other. But, 'by the last count', now 'as they say, it is pay-back time' – the U. S. is learning its Latin lesson: 'In the past decade, the Latino population has grown by 38% compared with the national growth rate of 9%. By 2005, Latinos will be the largest minority in the U. S.; by 2050, they will make up a quarter of the nation' (Campbell, 1999: 2). While it asks an empirical, even a statistical question, 'how can it be analyzed as american?', the poem does not shy away from yet another cultural differentiality. For as strong as the dual language tensions are those 'black'/'prietos' – 'spanish'/'melao' (i. e. honey-coloured) dynamics which have combined to bring about a far-from synthetic, radical, closure-in-process. Transformations are triggered, but not completed, by change ('cambiaron'). The point made is that literary and theorizing performances function in negotiated complementarity. So, the poem recommends, recognize the performers, thank them: 'deles gracias' (as distinct from *Deo gratias*). Parodic blasphemy terminally serves as a *non serviam*. Look and listen, in the performance of 'Asimilao', not for theological closure but for ideological exposure.

In a poetics of cultural and linguistic untranslatability. Emphasis will fall again on the (im)possibility of semiotic categorizing, cataloguing, archiving, in a transatlantic locus of non-acculturation as threatening as any border performances staged within the art-lands of *homo americanus*. Now the addressee is that smug *homo academicus* on this, the other side of the Pond:

### **Listen Mr Oxford Don**

Me not no Oxford don

Me a simple immigrant  
From Clapham Common  
I didn't graduate  
I immigrate

But listen Mr Oxford don  
I'm a man on de run  
and a man on de run  
is a dangerous one



I ent have no gun  
I ent have no knife  
but mugging de Queen's English  
is the story of my life

I don't need no axe  
To split/up yu syntax  
I don't need no hammer  
To mash/up yu grammar

I warning you Mr Oxford don  
I'm a wanted man  
and a wanted man  
is a dangerous one

Dem accuse me of assault  
on de Oxford dictionary/  
imagine a concise peaceful man like me/  
dem want me serve time  
for inciting rhyme to riot  
but i tekking it quiet  
down here in Clapham Common

I'm not a violent man Mr Oxford don  
I only armed wit mih human breath  
but human breath  
is a dangerous weapon

So mek dem send one big word after me  
I ent serving no jail sentence  
I slashing suffix in self-defence  
I bashing future wit present tense  
and if necessary

I making de Queen's English accessory/to my offence

(Agard, 1988: 5-6)

'Offence' epitomizes the crisis of original and copy, ownership and appropriation. As a virtual parody of deconstruction's by now classic procedures, it situates only in order to dislocate all assumptions regarding

primacy or aetiology. The poem's confronting of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity is self-indulgently multi-layered. A 'Me'/'me' re-doubled subject refuses the status of 'I', opting provocatively for the 'standard English' object pronoun, disjunctively emphatic as part of the unspoken (but doubly written) '[Listen to] Me/me'. The far from essential epithet of 'simple' is not delivered until a play with the double-bind negation of 'not no' has been exploited; firstly to distance the subject from place ('Oxford') and voice ('don') of authority; secondly, to put that 'Oxford don' in his place. The reminder of institutional power's trajectory (don<dom<dominus>dominance) is inscribed as inseparable from the institution's dependence on its (illusory) binary – Clapham – not only now the site of the 'immigrant' but also, epithetically, the distant habitat of the 'Common' man. The one who underpins that English class-system which does allow graduation (though never *pro omnibus*), but with controls no less stringent than those operating at immigration pressure-points from Heathrow to Sangatte.

For translation specialists of a traditional bent, the voice of the poem says: 'Mr Oxford don' has inserted himself and his language, canonically, into the deconstructable locus of all standard English enunciation. I therefore translate not (no!) an original text but (yes!) a hierarchical counterfeit of supposed *arch-écriture*, paradoxically constructed by arch (that is, posing) orality. Accent, syntax, grammar, norms, canons... behold the unspoken elements of an apparently inexistent original which performs, nonetheless, according to the unwritten rules of 'good' behaviour, of manners, and of access to the Establishment. One can hardly begin to grasp the implications of cultural translation, then, unless the dismantling mechanisms of not only a post-structuralist but also, and inseparably, a post-colonial discourse are incorporated into the body of translation theory, semiology and, no less, cultural studies.

In a recently concluded joint project on 'Intercultural Transfer', the Brazilian critic Else Vieira and I have drawn on poetry to show how creative literature in border(ized) zones has consistently engaged with, and in, critical discourses more readily associable, in some cultures, with the traditions of philosophy, political theory or even literary criticism (Vieira, 1999, 2000 and 2002; McGuirk, 1997, 2000 and 2002). The texts to which we have had recourse deal differently with colonial imprints highlighted by particular and culture-specific territorial and border relations, as in the complementary

performance-poems to which I now wish to refer. Treatments of the colonial, the postcolonial and, here, let there be no doubt, the intra-colonial, will be shown to emphasize how pervasive differences *between* are represented inseparably from no less invasive differences *within* societies. Whether the tensions provoked by discursively as well as geographically shifting boundaries arise from, or within, Latino expression of the 1980s and 1990s, or across the Caribbean and other borders of the poems I now address, a strongly performative strain will be seen consistently to characterize the staging of often raw, day-to-day, contacts-cum-confrontations.

Vieira has strategically juxtaposed Laviera with the London-based Guyanese John Agard. His 'Listen Mr Oxford Don' is an instance of the literary representation of metropolitan minority identity, as post- and neo-colonialism interact with globalization in generating spaces of tension between the local and the transcultural. Traditions such as the oral and the performative, repressed and overwritten by colonial history, undergo a rendering visible (as distinct from a surrendering, invisible). In her calculated mis-hearing of *otic* and *optic* as inseparable, she reconfigures Derrida's trope of *The Ear of the Other*, and challenging dogmatic colonizers of language to protest, she sees and hears the approximating of a migrant's discourses to the overtly enunciated conditions of postcoloniality. Thus, she presents invisibility and orality as weapons taken up, rather than gestures passively re-projected, by struggling subjects who turn to denunciatory effect the very markers of the supposedly subaltern. Such performance poetry – not least in play (at antics) in a (dis-)united queendom – affords me a further, deconstructive, comparison between literary criticism and cultural studies. A long-standing resistance, on the part of the proponents of *transculturation*, from Fernando Ortiz, through Angel Rama and beyond, involves a radical, if problematic, alternative to those policies of *acculturation* underlying all melting-pot theories. The terms themselves indeed set interaction against authority but become habitually locked into a repetitive binarism. No such relation pertains in the refusal of border poetry to broach even a putative trans-simulation. The *frontera* text *mediante* stumbles at the first term/turn, calculatedly refusing 'assimilation', let alone the comfort of an unencumbered linguistic room of its own. It performs that play which is the disruption of presence *and* absence, precisely undoing its own locatability: for the place of an aporia is at the border 'or the approach of the other as such' (Derrida, 1993: 12).

Key zones of the Agard poem – already impressively claimed as a whole by Vieira for post-colonialist/subalternist readings – might here, and strategically, be re-crossed with a view to showing how they operate in dialogue with the aporetic border-lines of Gómez-Peña and Laviera, with the aporetics of Derrida, and even more pertinently, with a poetics of cultural and linguistic untranslatability. Emphasis will fall again on the (im)possibility of semiotic categorizing, cataloguing, archiving, in a transatlantic locus of non-acculturation as threatening as any border performances staged within the art-lands of *homo americanus*. Now the addressee is that smug *homo academicus* on this, the other side of the Pond:

‘No Dialects Please’, my final example, by the Grenada-born, London-based, Merle Collins is a poem constructed, culturally speaking, on differences *within* no less discomfiting than Agard’s mocking concentration on differences *between*. It is a strong instance of a literary text which might be said, again, to highlight in intensity the differences explored by such as Paul Gilroy’s *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*, one of the most celebrated cultural studies titles of the period in question:

### **No Dialects Please**

In this competition  
 dey was looking for poetry of worth  
 for a writin that could wrap up a feeling  
 an fling it back hard  
 with a captive power to choke de stars  
 so dey say,  
 ‘Send them to us  
 but NO DIALECTS PLEASE’  
 We’re British!

Ay!  
 Well ah laugh till me boushet near drop  
 Is not only dat ah tink  
 of de dialect of de Normans and de Saxons  
 dat combine an reformulate  
 to create a language-elect  
 is not only dat ah tink  
 how dis British education mus really be narrow  
 if it leave dem wid no knowledge

of what dey own history is about  
is not only dat ah tink  
bout de part of my story  
dat come from Liverpool in a big dirty white ship  
mark  
AFRICAN SLAVES PLEASE!  
We're the British!

But as if dat not enough pain  
for a body to bear  
ah tink bout de part on de plantations down dere  
Wey dey so frighten o de power  
in the deep spaces  
behind our watching faces  
dat dey shout  
NO AFRICAN LANGUAGES PLEASE!  
It's against the law!  
Make me ha to go  
an start up a language o me own  
dat ah could share wid me people

Den when we start to shout  
bout a culture o we own  
a language o we own  
a identity o we own  
dem an de others dey leave to control us say  
STOP THAT NONSENSE NOW  
We're all British!  
Every time we lif we foot to do we own ting  
to fight we own fight  
dey tell us how British we British  
an ah wonder if dey remember  
dat in Trinidad in the thirties  
dey jail Butler  
who dey say is their British citizen  
an accuse him of  
Hampering the war effort!  
Then it was  
FIGHT FOR YOUR COUNTRY, FOLKS!  
You're British

Ay! Ay!  
 Ah wonder when it change to  
 NO DIALECTS PLEASE!  
 WE'RE British!  
 Huh!  
 To tink how still dey so duncce  
 an so frighten o we power  
 dat day have to hide behind a language  
 that we could wrap roun we little finger  
 in addition to we own!  
 Heavens to mercy!  
 Dat is dunceness, oui!  
 Ah wonder where is de bright British?

(Collins, 1987: 86)

The crisp imperative of the poem's title proves to be but interrupted. It awaits implicit completion by a dominant metaphysics so present that a latent assumption can be deferred until an impersonal but authoritarian voice booms out. Announcers of so-called open competition blurt the unstatedly obvious: 'We're British!' (Don't you know). To anyone familiar with the cultural clichés of London theatre-going since the swingin' sixties, an echo of the famous comedy *No Sex Please, We're British* undercuts a historically constructed "language-elect" in mocking memory of a national semi(er)osis non-erect; stereotype of a nation where only the upper lip was supposed to be stiff. Evocative of the days of black-and-white TV, where the only alternative colour was the unseen *Blue of Peter*, that open-to-all viewers childrens' programme of many an immigrant's cringin' sixties 'common' British Broadcasting (in-)Corporation heritage, the poem textualizes exclusivity-cum-exclusion. Clichéd meanings are inverted: what 'dey was lookin for' is virtually a pastiche of a traditional pedagogy's prescriptions for poetry. What they *get* turns 'hard', 'captive' and 'choke' into ciphers of age-old and colony-wide interdiction; is not (dear brute/us) in their 'stars' but in their selves, that they are treated – still – as underlings.

Echoes less of Cassius than of two already cited post-colonial theorists resound. Stuart Hall's 'Commonality defines us, otherwise racism will' (Hall, 1999: radio interview) is re-emphasised as an easily abused pairing: *you* may enter the competition... but ever as racially marked. Else Vieira's 'struggling

subjects [...] turn to denunciatory effect the very markers of the supposedly subaltern' (Vieira, 2002: in press): *my* amusement is such 'ah laugh till me boushet near drop'. Out of the *patois* mouth of babes and sucklings pours proof of how the subaltern *does* speak, talk back, give lip; *will* enter not only 'this competition' but also that contest, that struggle, that conflict of an 'education' broader than mere 'British', more naughty than narrow, more laughing than law-breaking. Proprietary rights are easily turned into owners' wrongs: 'knowledge/of what dey own history is about' *reads* as part of a putative school-lesson's content; but may be *heard*, broken down, re-iterated, as an about-turn in routine assumptions of just who owns what when it comes to 'my' story. No small irony is the meta-textual dimension of a poem that has now entered the classroom, anthologized on the 'United' Kingdom's national curriculum of school pupils invited to see its dis/investment in slavers' CAPITAL/s, to hear its cultural difference, to observe its deferring to no master... nor to his discourse. The six capitalized phrases stand out and stand up (though *not* to attention), initially maintaining the polite veneer of persuasion, 'PLEASE'. The historic colonial project is no less explicitly conveyed by the first three. Their message is clear: make sure *we* can understand you speaking *our* language; don't get uppity but remember who *you* (still) are; and don't think that that Edward Said nonsense about curable monolingualism applies to *us*... but, just in case, remember, too, that your own/other languages don't count (and never have).

Only after the subject under construction is forced by 'the law' (not to cry Woolf but) to 'go/an start up a language o me own', room for manoeuvre that rapidly 'ah could share wid me people' and, soon, further disseminated 'when we start to shout/bout a culture o we own/a language o we own/a identity o we own', is skin-deep courtesy dropped: 'STOP THAT NONSENSE NOW'. Primitive accumulation of CAPITAL is nakedly reasserted. Again, it would appropriate, and desires to oppress, the subject, driving a divorcing wedge between the body and its access both to its own production and to its self-representation. The subject, however, proclaims both a particular history and a pertinent cultural memory. When a precursor's primary bodily production, the voice, had been raised in the past, it had prompted but a similar veto:

an ah wonder if dey remember  
 dat in Trinidad in the thirties  
 dey jail Butler

who dey say is their British citizen  
 an accuse him of  
 Hampering the war effort!

Long before ‘the *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury in 1948 [when] Caribbean immigration to Britain was a mere trickle’, with people aboard ‘who regarded their “Britishness” as non-negotiable’ (Phillips and Phillips, 1998: 1;5), thousands had responded to the call ‘FIGHT FOR YOUR COUNTRY, FOLKS! You’re British’. ‘When England was at war, we were at war’ (*ibid*: 20) was the broad Caribbean assumption, and from that same island where the ‘hampering’ Butler had been jailed, ‘of the 250 of us who came [to the Royal Air Force] from Trinidad alone, 52 were killed’ (*ibid*: 28). Whence the sarcastic perplexity of ‘Ay! Ay!/Ah wonder when it change to/NO DIALECTS PLEASE!/WE’RE British!’.

As the poem closes, the educationally and culturally subaltern emerge, are denounced, as being those benighted dunces unaware that monolingualism is not a disease for empowered citizens. A cure is still needed only for those interlocutors on whom the British Empire’s sun has long since set, leaving but an aporetic interrogation of them: ‘ah wonder where is de bright British?’. Yet, *The Sun Also Rises*: ‘London is the most linguistically diverse city on earth [with] 307 languages spoken by the conurbations’ children. The first survey of modern London’s languages showed that only two-thirds of its 850,000 schoolchildren speak English at home [...] The total of 307 clearly-identified languages excludes hundreds more dialects and may well be an underestimate, given that several local authorities had no detailed records’ (Charter, 2000:18). Loca(l) authorities... mad, but they make one ‘l’ of a (*cultural*) difference.

### ‘de’? Coda

To the British, ‘bright’ or other/wise, of Merle Collins’s projection; to the States-side inter-lock you-tors of Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s ‘El Warrior for Gringostroika’; to [‘los que] no pudieron con el AO de la palabra principal’ of Tato Laviera; to that *dom/in/us* all who, for John Agard, can only sing ‘Police, police me’. To all who never wait for the other’s next line... border poetry sings out: Listen! ‘I don’t want to sound complainin’ but you know there’s always pain in’... any cultural study unmediated by the semiological complexity of literary criticism, reductive of – or further policing – the subject under analysis.



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# **George Orwell and Popular Culture in the 1930's**

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## George Orwell and Popular Culture in the 1930's

Between 1939 and 1945 George Orwell wrote a number of essays on the popular culture of his day: 'Boy's Weeklies' (1940), 'The Art of Donald McGill' (1941; about picture postcards), 'Raffles and Miss Blandish' (1944; about detective stories) and 'Good bad books' (1945; about books that are readable but don't quite make it as 'literature').

Although as part of his duties as a book reviewer for the *New English Weekly* he had already written on adventure stories and historical novels, his concern with popular culture seems to have developed into a full-blown interest precisely during the war years.

At first sight, this may seem a strange thing for a political writer, like Orwell, to be doing in time of war. Surely he should be concerned with and writing about the much more pressing and immediate political and historical issues that war poses to the individual and the writer (as he did, for instance, in *Homage to Catalonia*).

Adding to the strangeness of this temporal coincidence between the reality of the war around him and his (shall we say for the time being) 'retreat' into the more peaceful realm of mass culture is the fact that his interest in the subject all but disappears after 1945. When we think about Orwell's postwar production, we find precisely the sort of texts he is best remembered by, essays or journalistic pieces that deal with the relationship between art and society, the writer and politics, language and power: 'Politics and the English Language', 'The Prevention of Literature', 'Politics vs. Literature' (1946), 'Writers and Leviathan' (1947). This, most people would say, is the typical Orwell, the writer of polemic tracts, directly engaged with the topical issues of his time, making a stand on the political theories and social ideologies of the day.

Is his interest in popular culture, then, something marginal to the bulk of his writing, a mere phase he went through for a few years to distract or

divert himself – and his readers – from the harsh realities of life in wartime by conjuring up the happy times when people read adventure stories and laughed at the saucy humour of seaside postcards? Do we treat it as a mere curiosity in terms of his career as a writer, as a one-off with no precedent and no sequel, even when (as some critics do) we recognize the groundbreaking nature of these essays and Orwell's influence on the post-war emergence of Cultural Studies?<sup>1</sup>

Is Orwell's interest in popular culture between 39 and 45 simply a coincidence?

I am not a great believer in coincidences of this kind, and if I have learned something about Orwell in the 20-odd years that I have been studying him, it is that with him everything fits. Let me make this clearer: I believe that Orwell spent his life and career in trying to link up what we, in our everyday life, have come to regard as unconnected, attempting to establish a relationship, otherwise indirect and often hidden, between literature and politics, the individual and History, art and ideology and yes, culture and all of the above.

The best place to start in our attempt to understand the role that his essays on picture postcards, adventure stories, thrillers and youth literature play both in his work and in his political project is precisely the rest of his wartime production, i.e., the other essays he wrote between 1939 and 1945. Here we find some of the major essays, 'My Country Right or Left' (1940), 'The Lion and the Unicorn' (also 1940), 'The English People' (1944), and also some minor but in this context significant ones like 'A Nice Cup of Tea' (1943) and 'In Defence of English Cooking' (1945).

When we look at the sum total of his wartime essays, a picture begins to emerge – Orwell spent the war years reflecting on what we might call 'England and Englishness', that is, in trying to determine what made the English 'English' and in deciding if there was an England 'that was forever England' or whether this abstract entity could and should radically change at that particular moment in history. We can then begin to understand his

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Raymond Williams: 'In the Britain of the fifties, along every road that you moved, the figure of Orwell seemed to be waiting: If you tried to develop a new kind of popular cultural analysis, there was Orwell; if you wanted to report on work or ordinary life, there was Orwell; if you engaged in any kind of socialist argument, there was an enormously inflated statue of Orwell warning you to go back' (384).

concern with the print and visual forms of culture that the mass of the people consume and which are supposedly part of the common heritage of the country.

As for the political – and literary – project Orwell was engaged in, let us hear what he himself says about it, in a much quoted passage from ‘Why I Write’: ‘Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic Socialism, as I understand it’ (*CEJL II* 28).

To go back to my earlier rhetorical question about coincidences – the answer is, emphatically, ‘no!’.

What I am arguing in this paper is that Orwell’s interest in popular culture, far from being a passing interest or a marginal theme in his work, is in fact part and parcel of his vision of the ‘democratic Socialism’ that he wished to see established in England, a concern that had informed his writing since *The Road to Wigan Pier* (published in 1937) and which, in a different form, is still present in his final novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. And, of course, it is perfectly consistent with his inquiry into what England was and could be in the future.

Let us then very briefly review the early stages of the process by which Orwell linked his views on mass culture to a literary and political agenda before we move on to the essays themselves and see how they fit into the overall picture.

What Orwell indicated as a decisive turning-point in his life and work has its first literary expression, although a somewhat twisted and polemic one, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In the second part of the book Orwell mounts an attack on Socialism and socialists as they existed in Britain at the time. I won’t rehearse here all his arguments against ‘all that dreary tribe of high-minded women and sandal-wearers and bearded fruit-juice-drinkers’ (*RWP* 160) that he believed constituted the visible face of Socialism in Britain in the 1930’s; in our present context, let us simply note that the main point he was trying to make with such violent diatribes against the socialist movement was that Socialism had no appeal to the masses and that it alienated the ‘common man’ precisely because it was eccentric and constituted by the sort of people we would now call ‘weirdos’. It was also ‘ex-centric’ and ‘un-English’, removed from the central or mainstream culture of the English people, therefore alien, incomprehensible and unappealing (if not actually revolting) to the great majority of them. Thus, as a political

movement, Socialism in this form was not only ineffectual but actually counter-productive.

From this point on, Orwell set out to redefine Socialism in ‘English’ terms, a project that led him to reconsider the nature of ‘Englishness’ and, of course, to an inquiry about the habits, tastes, interests and views on life of this figure he always liked to call the ‘common man’: what is he like? What does he think of politics (if at all)? What does he read? How does he amuse himself? What are his ethical and moral values? How does he react in times of crisis? What does he think of his own country? Etc., etc.

Orwell did not leave us a theoretical, philosophical or sociological definition of this vague and abstract entity, the ‘common man’ – and he has been criticised for it, mainly by the Left and for an obvious reason: because this term carries no class overtones. In fact, it seems deliberately to avoid them and to rely on a common-sense notion of what an ‘ordinary’ person is (we all know what the ‘common man’ is, so why bother?).

But Orwell was not a political theorist or a philosophical thinker and certainly not a pure, unconditional marxist. He was instead a political writer (both words carry the same weight with him), and he did leave us a novel – *Coming up for Air* – where he rehearsed his ideas on the matter. George Bowling, the protagonist, a middle-aged, fat, balding insurance salesman, who has just got his first set of false teeth, is also a hen-pecked husband, an avid reader of low-brow novels, an adulterer whenever he gets the chance and someone who claims that war or no war, fascism or no fascism, he will carry on his life as usual, is precisely the figure of the ‘common man’. It is as close as Orwell ever came to explaining what he meant by the expression. George Bowling is also, very clearly, the figure of the survivor, someone who endures hard times with a resilience and humour that redeem this otherwise dull and commonplace hero.

Some of you may at this point be thinking of a famous phrase from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: ‘If there’s hope, it lies in the proles’ (NEF 59). George Bowling is not a prole in the strict sense of the word (he belongs to the lower middle-class), but he is meant to convey the same feeling of hope for the survival of a culture (a popular rather than a high-brow culture) against all odds, under the threat of war or in the midst of a totalitarian regime, a culture that is described as being both conventional and transgressive, ethical but not religious, conservative but not right-wing, patriotic but not nationalistic.



These, among others, are the traits and characteristics of the (English) 'common man' that Orwell attributes to George Bowling and that we also find, in extended form, in his analysis of popular culture.

I would like to look in particular at his essay 'The Art of Donald McGill' to exemplify my point and to give you some idea of what Orwell did in these essays and of the sort of conclusions he drew from his study of popular culture.

Donald McGill postcards were, according to Orwell, the most typical of the kind of mildly-obscene, naughty postcards that had been for sale, mostly in sea-side resorts, ever since he could remember. He had a whole collection of these and similar postcards that he had been amassing since childhood and which provided him with a basis for the general points he makes about them.

This is how Orwell writes about Donald McGill's art:

Your first impression is of overwhelming vulgarity. This is quite apart from the ever-present obscenity, and apart also from the hideousness of the colours. They have an utter lowness of mental atmosphere which comes out not only in the nature of the jokes but, even more, in the grotesque, staring, blatant quality of the drawings. The designs, like those of a child, are full of heavy lines and empty spaces, and all the figures in them, every gesture and attitude, are deliberately ugly, the faces grinning and vacuous, the women monstrously parodied, with bottoms like Hottentots. (*CEJLII* 185)

Not a particularly promising introduction to these postcards, but we can look at some of these pictures and see if Orwell was describing them accurately.<sup>2</sup>

I've chosen 3 different types of postcards: 1. postcards that include sexual innuendo; 2. postcards that deal with the contemporary social situation (the Depression); 3. postcards that deal with war and patriotism.

So, what does Orwell do with this material? First, he makes an inventory of their habitual subject-matter, and then reveals the social, moral, ethical and sociological assumptions and conventions that underlie them.

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<sup>2</sup> At this point, some Donald McGill postcards were shown. For copyright reasons, they cannot be reproduced here, but a good selection can be found in Elfreda Buckland, *The World of Donald McGill*, or on the internet site [http://www.showbizmemorabilia.biz.PO004\\_7\\_pu.jpg](http://www.showbizmemorabilia.biz.PO004_7_pu.jpg).

For example: he notes that sex is one of the recurrent themes of these postcards, and usually appears in the form of ‘illegitimate babies, newlyweds, old maids, nude statues, women in tight bathing-dresses and cuckolds’; the conventions underlying these topics are: ‘marriage benefits women only’; ‘men are trapped into marriage’; ‘sex-appeal vanishes after the age of 25’ (*CEJL II* 186).

One other example: politics: they deal with ‘any contemporary event, cult or activity which has comic possibilities (for example ‘true love’, feminism, ARP, nudism’); the political outlook is a ‘radicalism appropriate to about 1900’; ‘they are not only not patriotic, but go in for a mild guying of patriotism’ (*CEJL II* 187); very few mention the war although some express ‘a mild anti-Hitler sentiment’ (*CEJL II* 188).

And a final one: stereotyping: he points out that ‘foreigners never or seldom appear’; the usual stock figures are the Scotsman, the lawyer (always a swindler), the clergyman (always a nervous idiot) and the suffragettes who have reappeared as ‘Feminist lecturer or Temperance fanatic’; and he notes that the Jew joke, significantly, has disappeared since the rise of Hitler (*CEJL II* 187).

From these very brief examples we can now understand why critics like Raymond Williams consider Orwell a precursor of Cultural Studies: he was one of the first to take as his object of study material/print artefacts from popular culture, to try and discover the codes by which they work, and to extract from them a meaning that he clearly believes is socially constructed and ideologically determined.

I am not claiming, of course, that Orwell is a sophisticated cultural critic. Some of his methods and the conclusions he reached strike us today as somewhat crude and simplistic – not to say politically incorrect. He did, however, break ground in considering these subjects worthy of serious study and in attempting to relate them to the dominant culture of the day. And, we might add, he was also innovative in trying to integrate his cultural analysis into a whole social and political project.

In other words, at this point Orwell needed to know what the ‘common man’ was like so that he could find a place for him in his vision of a democratic Socialist Britain. This is what he was looking for – and found – in picture postcards, comics and detective stories.

To move my argument quickly to its final conclusion, let me use a short-cut and quote a few passages from ‘The Lion and the Unicorn’

(published a year before 'The Art of Donald McGill), and for our purposes significantly subtitled 'Socialism and the English Genius':

All the culture that is most truly native centres round things which even when they are communal are not official – the pub, the football match, the back garden, the fireside and the 'nice cup of tea'. (*CEJL II 78*)

But in all societies the common people must live to some extent *against* the existing order. The genuinely popular culture of England is something that goes on beneath the surface, unofficially and more or less frowned on by the authorities. (*CEJL II 78*)

It is only by revolution that the native genius of the English can be set free. (*CEJL II 108*)

And finally, the very epic ending to this essay:

By revolution we become more ourselves, not less. There is no question of stopping short, striking a compromise, salvaging 'democracy', standing still. We must add to our heritage or lose it, we must grow greater or grow less, we must go forward or backward. I believe in England, and I believe we shall go forward. (*CEJL II 133-4*)

Let me now lay alongside these a passage from 'The Art of Donald McGill' which sums up the point Orwell was driving at from the beginning of the essay and is presented as the final conclusion to the more detailed analysis of the postcards:

What they [these postcards] are doing is to give expression to the Sancho Panza view of life.[...] He is your unofficial self, the voice of the belly protesting against the soul.[...] But though in varying forms he is one of the stock figures of literature, in real life, especially in the way society is ordered, his point of view never gets a fair hearing. Codes of law and morals, or religious systems, never have much room in them for a humorous view of life. Whatever is funny is subversive, every joke is ultimately a custard pie, and the reason why so large a proportion of jokes centre round obscenity is simply that all societies, as the price of survival, have to insist on a fairly high standard of sexual morality. A dirty joke is not, of course, a serious attack upon morality, but it is a sort of mental rebellion, a momentary wish that things were otherwise. (*CEJL II 192-3*)

The areas of juxtaposition between the passages from 'The Lion and the Unicorn' and this one from 'The Art of Donald McGill' are obvious. They

seem in fact, to be variations on the same theme: a common, communal popular culture which is the very epitome of Englishness but, paradoxically, exists beyond or below the official, dominant one, that works in opposition to it – in fact rebels (however momentarily) against it – with humour as its main weapon. A culture that is if not subversive at least transgressive, poking fun at the forces of law and order, what Orwell refers to in another passage from ‘The Art of Donald McGill’ as a ‘chorus of raspberries from all the millions of common men’ when they hear ‘the proclamations of generals before battles, the speech of fuhrers and prime ministers, the solidarity songs of public schools and left-wing political parties’ (*CEJL II* 193).

A culture, in short, that, very much like Orwell himself, has a horror of any kind of fanaticism or orthodoxy and will resist them simply by being what it is: made up of English ‘common men’, who keep up a healthy tradition of dissent. This was Orwell’s revolutionary army, a force that he thought had been forgotten, ignored and bypassed by the Socialist movement, but that according to him should be brought to centre stage of any socialist revolution in England.

In the early years of the war, Orwell did literally believe that such a revolution was possible, and that the war against Hitler could and would be turned into an occasion for radical change in England. This is, in fact, what he explicitly advocates in ‘The Lion and the Unicorn’, going as far as laying down a political programme in six points, including the nationalization of transport, banks and industries, a reform of the educational system, and the beginning of decolonisation.

It was a project that strikes us today, with the benefit of hindsight, as both ambitious and naïve. It was also at once very simple and extremely complex. He was proposing an England that would drastically change but retain some of its traditional values of ‘justice’ and ‘common decency’, a socialist England well rooted within the imaginative centre of the nation, where patriotism and Socialism would not be opposing forces or antagonistic ideological positions but would somehow converge and fuse to give rise to a new/old country that would be different, but still recognizable and appealing to the ‘common man’.

An impossible project?

Orwell was the first to admit, in an article he wrote for *Partisan Review* in the immediate aftermath of the war, that he was wrong in thinking the war would bring about a revolution in England.

Whether from then on he lost hope in the possibility of an English democratic Socialism is a debatable point. One school of thought (I am afraid the prevailing one) argues that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be read as Orwell's admission that revolution, *any* revolution, is doomed to failure, and that both novels reveal the pessimism and disillusionment of his later years.

Another school of thought (in which I include myself) believes that Orwell's fiction of a socialist revolution was disconfirmed by postwar reality, but that he made the necessary adjustments to continue doing exactly what he had been doing since at least 1936: telling people what they did not want to hear.<sup>3</sup>

He had told the middle-classes that they could not survive a miner's daily work or live on his unemployment benefit; he had told supporters of the empire that 'when the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys' (*CEJL I* 269); he had told socialists that they should use patriotism, the love of the nation and of some of its traditional values as a revolutionary force and not dismiss them as simply right-wing and reactionary; and after the war he told the nation, in *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, where the nation should *not* go, to a totalitarian society that, in his view, was potentially already there.

In Benedict Anderson's felicitous phrase, Orwell was creating or recreating an 'imagined community', the community of the English nation. And I believe he was trying to recreate it, not as a myth, an abstract entity that exists outside geography and history and that is impervious to both; rather, he thought about it as a 'fiction', an imaginative construct well-rooted in a place and a past but capable of change, proud of its traditions but also deeply self-critical, a community centred on a popular, transgressive and irreverent culture – for him the best antidote against totalitarian forces and authoritarian ideologies.

And he was doing this against what he saw as the two prevailing and pernicious myths of the 1930's and 40's: the reactionary, right-wing myth of an 'England that is forever England', the essentialist myth of a nation unchanged and unchangeable; and against the myth of the left-wing

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<sup>3</sup> See his definition of liberty: 'If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear' (*CW* 260).

intelligentsia of a deracinated, internationalist Socialism that had, paradoxically, taken root and bloomed in the Soviet Union.

Orwell believed in neither of these, and he spent the last few years of his life and career in trying to demolish these myths and in proposing an alternative to both.

I can't resist finishing up my paper with one of my favourite Orwell quotes, which to me represents this transgressive side of Orwell, so often forgotten by critics who would tame him and claim him for their own causes. It is, again, stuff that is straight out of the world of Donald McGill, and it encapsulates for me Orwell's resilient optimism and also his feelings of uncertainty about the future:

When sea-sickness and adultery have ceased to be funny, western civilization will have ceased to exist. (*CEJL I* 185)

This is, ultimately, the great nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: the world of Donald McGill has ceased to exist.

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### Abbreviations

- RWP* – *The Road to Wigan Pier*
- NEF* – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- CEJL* – *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*
- CW* – *The Complete Works of George Orwell*





# George Cruikshank and his Bottle

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## George Cruikshank and his Bottle

A suitable subject for a tribute to my friend/colleague/advisor Doutor Hélió Alves was not difficult to find. His interest in eighteenth/nineteenth-century caricature, along with his knowledge of nineteenth-century drink abuse/reform made George Cruikshank an obvious choice. Yet I am only able to write this paper because of the opportunities, help and encouragement I received over the years from Doutor Hélió himself. For that I express here my profound gratitude. I am sure he would not have endorsed the radical anti-drink stand taken by Cruikshank in his later years. Nevertheless, I feel sure that he would have applauded the fact that Cruikshank promoted his teetotal convictions, however unpopular and no matter the cost to himself, in the belief that he was helping people to improve themselves. This was a quality he so admired in the political radicals he devoted so much of his own time to studying.

George Cruikshank (1792-1878) had a love-hate relationship with alcohol. He held these emotions consecutively, however, not simultaneously. This paper will focus on two remarkable, but very different, works of art produced during his anti-drink period, or rather roughly the last thirty years of his life. They are his eight-part glyphograph series *The Bottle* (1847) and his gigantic oil painting *Worship of Bacchus* (1860-2).<sup>1</sup>

George Cruikshank made over 15,000 drawings in his lifetime.<sup>2</sup> His early, biting caricatures, especially those produced for William Hone's cutting-edge political satire, along with his later whimsical, comic sketches

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<sup>1</sup> An etching and engraving of *Worship of Bacchus* was produced in 1863.

<sup>2</sup> 'Drawings' is used here as an all-embracing term. In fact, he produced sketches, etchings, portraits, wood-engravings, caricatures, watercolours and oil paintings for portraits, magazines, books, toys, song sheets, broadsheets, and pamphlets.

in *Life in London* (1821), his illustrations for the first English edition of *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (1827), and those completed for Charles Dickens' *Sketches by Boz* (1836 & 1837) and *Oliver Twist* (1837-8), plus illustrations for seven Harrison Ainsworth novels, are probably Cruikshank's best known and most highly regarded pieces of work. There is no denying that the quality is generally much higher than that of his later temperance efforts. This, along with a general misunderstanding of, or even aversion to, his crusading temperance propaganda (for propaganda it was), is probably the reason contemporaries accorded it a secondary status.<sup>3</sup>

From 1849, George Cruikshank was a teetotaler, which means he believed nothing but total abstinence from alcoholic liquor would ensure safety from drink addiction and ultimate ruin. He believed that moderate drinking was no guarantee against future alcoholism. At the time *The Bottle* was conceived, Cruikshank was not an abstainer, however. Indeed, he had a reputation as an abuser of strong drink. This was deservedly acquired from his youth, when he frequently spent time in the drinking places of London and often ended private dinners with a display of drunken theatricals.<sup>4</sup> His father was a heavy drinker, and his death, supposedly after winning a bet to see who could down the most whiskeys (Patten, *A Revaluation*, 225) greatly affected George, as did witnessing his elder brother Isaac Robert's slow decline through drink abuse. By 1847, George had unsuccessfully tried to stop his own drinking various times.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Bottle***

*The Bottle* was not Cruikshank's first anti-drink work. He had produced 'The Gin Shop' which appeared in *Scraps and Sketches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 1829; 'The Pillars of a Gin Shop', in *My Sketch Book*, 1833; and 'The Gin Juggernaut', in *My Sketch Book*, 1835. These were all allegories which told a tale in one plate, however. In 1847, Cruikshank followed in William Hogarth's footsteps, producing a moral narrative in eight separate scenes, called *The*

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Ruskin declared '[Temperance] has warped the entire currents of his thoughts and life' (quoted in Patten, *A Revaluation*, 253).

<sup>4</sup> A famous 1833 drawing of Cruikshank by Daniel Maclise has him seated on a barrel in a pothouse, pipe in hand and tankard by his side. Cruikshank did not like the image.

<sup>5</sup> Burns pinpoints the reason for his failure: 'Social custom had hitherto proved too strong for perseverance in well-doing' (Burns, 149).

*Bottle*.<sup>6</sup> It tells of the ruin of a prosperous working-class family through drink abuse, and points out the dangers of moderate drinking. It was a small part of the vast array of self-help literature with which the Victorian public was bombarded.

In 1847, Cruikshank's career was at a low ebb and *The Bottle* was an attempt to earn money as well as to impart a message. He deliberately avoided using expensive copper plates for the etching, preferring the cheaper glyphograph method, so that a wider public could be reached. This meant a rougher finished product, but Cruikshank was willing to forfeit technique in order to reach the working class. Although the end result was flat and lifeless, the public response to it was amazing, with reportedly 100,000 being sold in the first few days at a shilling a set. Superior quality editions were also available at 6s and 2s 6d. Eight stage versions of the drama were performed, and there was a waxworks representation, poems, illustrated lectures, sermons and other ephemera. Cruikshank forsook his copyright, uncharacteristically, which enabled a prolific number of imitations to be produced in print.<sup>7</sup>

Success was further guaranteed with the backing of the temperance world. Magic lantern shows of *The Bottle* attracted large audiences and many a slide was used to illustrate a temperance lecture or provide instructive entertainment at a Band of Hope function. Cruikshank showed the plates to the chairman of The National Temperance Society, William Cash, who liked the work but was perplexed by the fact that the artist could draw the effects of strong drink so vividly and yet still drank himself. Cruikshank reflected on Cash's words, and became a campaigning teetotaler not long afterwards.<sup>8</sup> It was as if the enormous success the plates achieved had given him a quasi-religious conversion experience. He was proclaimed by the

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<sup>6</sup> See Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* (1735) and *Industry and Idleness* (1747) for comparison.

<sup>7</sup> All the plays were in minor theatres, some in Ginshop Saloons or Tavern Theatres. Charles Mackay composed a poem which begins: 'Weep, children, weep! Be tears of anguish shed [...]'. Matthew Arnold also wrote a sonnet after being moved by the prints (Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 246).

<sup>8</sup> Biographers automatically assume that this means he signed the teetotal pledge, when in fact he declared 'I am pledged to the Almighty on the faith and honour of a gentleman' and did not sign on principle (Whittaker, 233). This alters nothing regarding his enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

staunch teetotaller Thomas Whittaker, as ‘[a] valuable trophy to our cause. [...] a constant figure in our movement and a welcome light at our meetings for many years’ (Whittaker, 232).

Unfortunately for Cruikshank, the enormous popularity of his *Bottle* series did not signify financial gain. Plagiarists in Britain and abroad produced their own versions of the moral tale. Moreover, the more expensive editions, designed for the upper end of the market, did not sell as well as the cheaper counterparts. The appeal was most definitely to the lower-middle and the working-class in general. Although they bought copies in their thousands, the low price meant great financial profit was unlikely. Even the popular sequel, *The Drunkard’s Children*, produced in 1848, was not enough to stave off temporary bankruptcy.

The plates will now be described in detail. All except the fourth and the eighth are set in the dining/sitting room of an upper working-class home. This gives continuity and allows the observer to easily detect the progressive degradation that the family experiences.

Plate one:<sup>9</sup> a happy family of parents and three children enjoy a meal. Numerous markers of prosperity are discernible, from the grandfather clock by the door to the blazing fire in the grate. Ornaments abound, as do flowers and furnishings. The caption reads: ‘The Bottle is brought out for the first time. The husband induces his wife “just to take a drop” (Moderate drinkers were known as ‘little drop’ men precisely because they believed such a small quantity could not be harmful).

Plate two: a dramatic change has occurred. The husband now slumps by a cold hearth, hands-in-pockets, badly dressed, oblivious to the pleading stares of his two youngest, hungry children. The cat licks the empty plate while the mother sends her eldest out to get drink via the pawnbroker’s. It is evident from the stark faces, bare cupboard and general disarray that things are not going well. The caption reads: ‘He is discharged from his employment for drunkenness: They pawn their clothes to supply the bottle’.

Plate three: the family is losing its possessions, but husband and wife carry on drinking. The wife casts a glance at the bailiffs, but her face has become transformed by drink and she is incapable of reacting. Only the eldest girl appears as in plate one, although her expression has changed

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A.

from contentment to anxiety. The clock on the mantelpiece, proud symbol of working-class prosperity, is now broken. Ornaments have been replaced by a tankard. The family remains self-contained, however, cut off from the outside world, wallowing in their own self-made misery. The caption reads: 'An execution sweeps off the greater part of their furniture: they comfort themselves with the bottle'.

Plate four: the scene is now the street. The boy begs from a passing woman. His state of dress contrasts starkly with the two children who look on. Meanwhile, the wife, baby and elder girl, shoeless, await the father as he leaves the tavern, bottle in pocket. The girl turns towards the boy, away from the gin shop, but the wife looks forlornly at her husband, caught in the grip of drink. The caption reads: 'Unable to obtain employment, they are driven by poverty into the streets to beg, and by this means they still supply the bottle'.

Plate five:<sup>10</sup> the table now bears the coffin of the youngest child, her life forfeit to drink. The room is greatly denuded of furniture. The mother and the girl have strength enough to weep but the boy stares hopelessly into the pathetic fire. The man stands, haggard, hatless, clutching his bottle. His face has a quasi-manic look on it, for he is beginning to lose his reason. The clock has disappeared from the mantelpiece. The caption reads: 'Cold, misery and want, destroy their youngest child: they console themselves with the bottle'.

Plate six: things worsen as violence takes over. The husband attacks his wife while the children attempt her defence. For the first time an outsider enters their world, alarmed at the noise. Her horror mirrors the reaction expected from the observer. The room is now almost totally devoid of furniture, and what there is, is upside down, just like their lives. The caption reads: 'Fearful quarrels and brutal violence are the natural consequences of the frequent use of the bottle'.

Plate seven: the wife lies dead. The police arrest the husband who is beside himself with horror and incomprehension. The girl cries, comforted by an officer of the law. The neighbours now invade the room, but it is too late. They cannot help. Apart, in the bottom right-hand corner, the boy stands alone, pathetic in his misery. The bottle lies smashed on the floor.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A.

The caption reads: ‘The husband, in a state of furious drunkenness, kills his wife with the instrument of all their misery’.

Plate eight: the degradation is complete. The children have taken on the role of prostitute and pimp, and visit their father in the madhouse. He sits in the corner, arms folded, trembling, having no money to purchase drink. The observer is once more in the confines of a room but the circumstances are far different to those of the first plate. The caption reads: ‘The bottle has done its work. It has destroyed the infant and the mother. It has brought the son and the daughter to vice and to the streets, and has left the father a hopeless maniac’.

Not all contemporaries agreed with Cruikshank’s reasoning, that drink caused poverty and misery and not *vice versa*. Charles Dickens, for example, appreciated the moral tale but was unhappy about the causes. He thought it ‘should have begun in sorrow, or poverty or ignorance – the three things in which, in its awful aspect, it *does* begin’ (Patten, *A Revaluation*, 249). He denied, therefore, that drinking customs or social drinking could produce the evils Cruikshank so starkly portrayed. He was also blind to the problems of alcoholism in respectable society. Cruikshank’s temperance work was one of the reasons for the later break-up of their personal friendship.

In 1879, William Bates described *The Bottle* as ‘somewhat unsatisfactory, whether as a work of art, or as a moral lesson’ (Patten, *A Revaluation*, 165). In 1992, William Feaver thought the series ‘an artless, captioned, all purpose morality play’, and indeed it is. It would never be popular to an audience of the twenty-first century, for more subtlety would be required. However, *The Bottle* touched a nerve that caught the Victorian popular imagination, spawning ‘Bottlemania’, a merchandising heaven. Earthenware services were decorated with *Bottle* designs, walls were placarded and windows decorated with them. It appeared at the right time, when the public had been awakened to the problem of over-drinking by the temperance campaigners. *The Bottle* entertained audiences who saw it performed at the theatre or in slide shows. Whether it actually converted anyone to teetotalism is difficult to say. It must have induced a number of people to at least try to stop drinking. Drunkenness was increasingly socially unacceptable – and recognised as dangerous. *The Bottle*, along with its 1848 sequel *The Drunkard’s Children*, at least revived Cruikshank’s flagging professional reputation and put his name on the lips of thousands of people once again.



## Worship of Bacchus<sup>11</sup>

Cruikshank was following a familiar early nineteenth-century trend when he painted his gigantic *Worship of Bacchus*. In 1820, Haydon had enjoyed a rare success with *Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*, for example, and panoramas and dioramas, both staged and painted, had attracted crowds to the Surrey Gardens as late as the 1850s. Although large canvasses were increasingly less popular by 1860, a few artists still enjoyed success with them. In 1862, eighty thousand people paid 1s each to see Frith's *Railway Station* in a gallery next to the Haymarket Theatre (Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 402).

Cruikshank's oil painting measures 7 feet 8 inches high by 13 feet 4 inches wide (2.36m by 4.06m). The artist described his picture as 'a mapping out of certain ideas for an especial purpose' (Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 409-10).<sup>12</sup> His didactic intention was plain. By dramatising the terrible dangers of drinking he wished to stop people doing so. He believed that the shock treatment would work. Richard Dorment, in his review article of the Tate Britain exhibition of the restored painting, 2001 (see page 11), calls the painting a 'diatribe against drink. [...] A delirious vision of hell on earth' (Dorment, [www.theartnewspaper.com](http://www.theartnewspaper.com)).

The canvas is crowded with one thousand figures arranged into numerous vignettes, all in varying stages of drunkenness. It is divided into horizontal lines, intersected at the mid-point by a vertical element constituted by a giant statue of the wine god, raised cup-in-hand. Those in the foreground, at the bottom, are engaged in seemingly innocuous celebrations or rituals (a baptism, a wedding, a wake, a dinner party, etc.), while those at the top, in the background, in larger numbers, are in the final stages of alcoholism. The eye travels automatically from bottom to top, passing over scenes such as a sailor being flogged for letting his ship catch fire, to a runaway train on the very edge of the painting, on the right, its intending damage left to the viewer's imagination. Scenes of violence – muggings, beatings, robbery, murder – are flanked by scenes of conviviality – singers, a harlequin, clubs of Freemasons and Odd Fellows. A police

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>12</sup> For details of the long production process from inception to finished product see Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 402-20.

station, reformatory, ragged school, house of correction, two hospitals, a cemetery, a workhouse, jail and a lunatic asylum are all placed at the top of the picture, showing the inevitable end for drinkers. The gallows is not forgotten. The sky is fouled by smoke from the chimneys of breweries and distilleries.

As with *The Bottle*, the picture lacks subtlety for Cruikshank has posted moral signs in various places: ‘Horrid abyss of Ruin and disgrace into which Clergymen fall who sacrifice themselves at the Shrine of Bacchus’; ‘Sacrificed at the shrine of Bacchus, father, mother, sisters, brothers, wife, children, property, friends, body and mind’. All sections of nineteenth-century British society are represented, as well as British colonialists foisting alcohol on previously teetotal cultures. On the left, established clergy offer drink to a Muslim, while on the right Dissenting clergy offer it to a Hindu. Both refuse. This is an interesting comment on British imperial behaviour. The temperance propagandists’ denunciation of the drunken behaviour of British troops in India and elsewhere was incessant in the 1860s.<sup>13</sup>

George Cruikshank painted *Worship of Bacchus* on his own initiative. It was not commissioned. The time and effort he put into the work over a two year period prove he believed in its intrinsic value, both as a money-winner as well as a propaganda tool for the temperance cause. This belief was largely misplaced, however, for the painting never made much money even though it had a sponsoring committee of temperance people promoting it. After a vigorous subscription effort that raised several thousand pounds, most of which went to pay off the debts Cruikshank incurred while painting the picture, the canvas still returned very little financial reward to its creator.

The oil painting was first exhibited to the public in August 1862. The venue was a small rented gallery next to the Lyceum Theatre, London. Despite previous assurances from supporters, and what proved to be false hopes raised by the favourable opinions received after the exhibition of the preliminary watercolour version in 1860, the expected public did not materialise except in very small numbers.

Not even a move to Exeter Hall, a favourite venue for temperance occasions, encouraged the public, general or temperance, to enter.

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<sup>13</sup> Temperance societies were set up in various regiments stationed abroad in an attempt to counter the debilitating effect of excessive drinking in the military.

Cruikshank's first biographer, Blanchard Jerrold, described the scene in the exhibition room of Exeter Hall on one particular day.

It was empty. There was a wild, anxious look on his face when he greeted me. While we talked, he glanced once or twice at the door, when we heard any sound in that direction. Were they coming at last, the tardy, laggard public for whom he had been bravely toiling for so many years? Here was his last mighty labour against the wall, and all the world had been told that it was there. [...] A great committee of creditable men had combined to usher it with pomp into the world. All who loved and honoured and admired him had spoken words of encouragement. Yet it was near noon, and only a solitary visitor had wandered into the room. (Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 413)

The painting was accompanied in Exeter Hall by a retrospective exhibition of Cruikshank's work; eleven hundred sketches, studies, water-colours, etchings, etc. This provided an opportunity for his much-acclaimed earlier caricatures and book illustrations to be examined by a new generation. However, not even the praise afforded by some critics could alter the public's lukewarm reaction. The acclaim of some was counterbalanced by the derision of others. William Michael Rosseti called Cruikshank 'a master craftsman' but thought *Bacchus* 'Not a good picture, and can scarcely, we think, be considered a good total-abstinence lecture'. On the other hand, William Makepeace Thackeray was enthusiastic about it (Patten, *George Cruikshank vol. II*, 414).

Despite disappointing attendances both in London and the provinces, temperance advocates maintained the idea that the giant oil canvas had changed the hearts and minds of the nation. The temperance historian Dawson Burns wrote proudly that after being seen by many thousands of people in various parts of Britain, 'it became the property of the nation' in 1869 (Burns, 150). The nation was not grateful. Despite having been presented to the National Gallery, it was quickly transferred to the store room of the South Kensington (now Victoria and Albert) Museum, where it slowly deteriorated. It was not until May 2001 that the public really saw the picture again. It was put on exhibition, restored to its full glory, in the Tate Britain between May and December of that year. A BBC documentary (broadcast 2 June on BBC 2), presented by art critic Andrew Graham-Dixon, entitled *1,000 Ways of Getting Drunk in England*, examined the picture and its relation to drinking culture. The Tate initiative was part of

its in-focus displays which place individual works of art in their social, historical and aesthetic contexts. The aim is to examine the ways in which art has helped to mirror and shape ideas of national identity. Tate Britain's publicity described *Worship of Bacchus* as 'one of the most original, ambitious and didactic works in the history of British art' (Indepth Arts News). Great praise indeed. Just over one hundred and thirty years were required before the painting's originality and ambitious purpose were recognised.

We can learn a lot about Cruikshank and his times from this painting, and would be poorer for not having saved it. Recent Home Office reports show a similar relationship today between drink, crime and social erosion as that observed by Cruikshank, making *Worship of Bacchus* relevant to a twenty-first-century audience.

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Appendix A



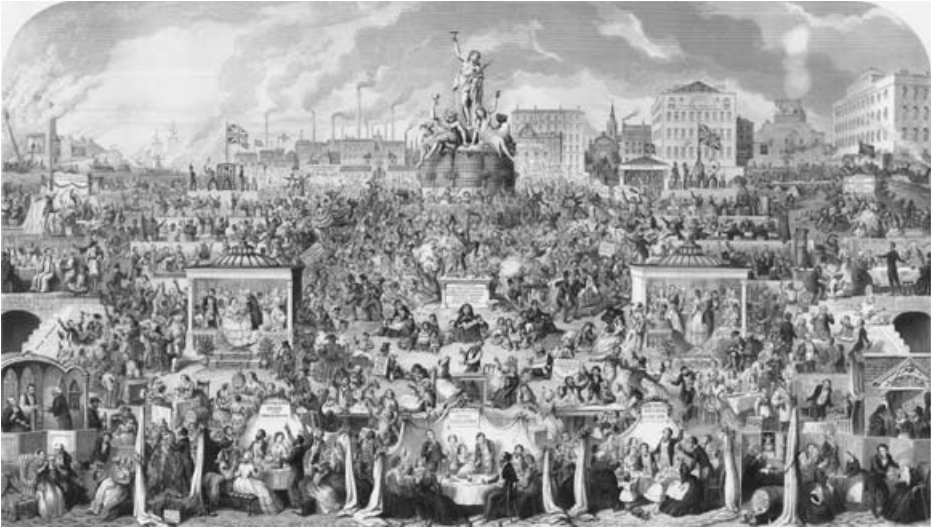
*The Bottle*, plate 1



*The Bottle*, plate 5

The Bottle plates 1 and 5;

[http://www.bugpowder.com/andy/e.cruikshank\\_the.bottle.html](http://www.bugpowder.com/andy/e.cruikshank_the.bottle.html)



The Worship of Bacchus; <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/jgoodliffe/bacchus/>

# **Como Roubar Cavalos aos Caras Pálidas: Poesia e Contra-cultura em Joy Harjo**

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## Como Roubar Cavalos aos Caras Pálidas: Poesia e Contra-cultura em Joy Harjo

Quem atravessar, por estrada, as planícies do sudeste e sudoeste dos Estados Unidos não deixará de apreciar a beleza dos cavalos que trotam livremente pelas quintas e *haciendas*. Parte destes animais descende do cavalo cruzado de raça andaluza com árabe, introduzido no Novo Mundo pelos conquistadores espanhóis, no século XVI (Tindall, 1999: 26, 27). As tribos ameríndias depressa descobriram as potencialidades dos equídeos: permitiam-lhes perseguir os búfalos; atacar com rapidez os inimigos; transportar pessoas e bens; impressionar o pai da noiva, ao qual eram oferecidos.

Neste contexto, o cavalo, ou *cão-espírito*, era sinónimo tanto de riqueza como de prestígio entre as tribos, havendo chefes que se gabavam de possuir um milhar de animais (Zimmerman, 1997: 49). Penetrar num rancho, a coberto da noite, iludir os colonos, e surripiar uma ou várias montadas constituía não apenas um teste à bravura e destreza dos jovens ameríndios, mas também uma provocação aos invasores.

A poeta ameríndia Joy Harjo (1951- ), membro da tribo dos Muskogee, também rouba os cavalos – mas de forma metafórica e artística. No meu breve ensaio, analiso como a escritora se apropria deste elemento e o transforma num poderoso símbolo de contra-cultura.<sup>1</sup> Para tanto, analiso alguns poemas da obra *She Had Some Horses*, aquela em que os cavalos são um símbolo mais frequente e plurissignificativo. Recorro ainda à opinião de diversos ensaístas (sobretudo Rhonda Pettit e Norma Wilson), e a uma entrevista inédita que Harjo me concedeu em Junho de 2001.

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<sup>1</sup> Entendo aqui contra-cultura como uma posição ideológica, protagonizada por um indivíduo ou grupo, membro de uma ideologia dominada ou marginal, que questiona e provoca a hegemonia WASP, na sua totalidade, ou relativamente a aspectos políticos, étnicos, sexuais e artísticos.

Os equídeos constituem uma presença tão constante na produção de Harjo que os leitores se sentem naturalmente intrigados. Numa entrevista a Bill Moyers, a poeta explica esta paixão através de uma experiência marcante que tivera quando estudante universitária:

I was driving my little red truck from Albuquerque to Las Cruces and somewhere halfway between those cities a horse appeared to me. I could smell the horse and I could see it at the edge of my vision, and this horse was a very old friend, someone I hadn't seen in a long time. [...] I had tears running down my eyes because it was so good to see this horse whom I hadn't seen in years. I noticed that for me certain forces seem to take two or three years before they come into being, and it took about that long before the poems with the horses began to emerge (Moyers, 1996: 45-46)

Lendo esta tocante descrição, o leitor quase acredita que os cavalos sempre fizeram parte da fauna e mitologia da América do Norte, ao ponto de neles encarnarem os vivos e os antepassados. Tal é parte integrante da estratégia de Harjo para criar contra-cultura: apropriar-se de um símbolo do inimigo, roubar-lhe a arma, e usá-la contra o antigo dono.

Note-se a ironia deste processo: os cavalos foram imprescindíveis para a submissão e pilhagem dos territórios ameríndios. Em 1519, o conquistador Hernando Cortés fez cair o Império de Montezuma graças aos cavaleiros – que pareciam aos ameríndios fundir-se com o próprio animal, formando um único ser, fantástico e aterrador. Os cavalos também desempenharam um papel de relevo nas expedições subsequentes, que reconheceram e colonizaram os territórios da Nova Espanha. Como observa um dos soldados de Francisco Coronado, líder da exploração de 1540-1542: “The most essential thing in new lands is horses. They instill the greatest fear in the enemy and make the Indians respect the leaders of the army” (Tindall, 1999: 27).

Séculos mais tarde, a cavalaria norte-americana, em particular o sétimo regimento, protagonizou diversas batalhas e chacinas na costa leste. Só no massacre de Wounded Knee, em Dezembro de 1890, pereceram pelo menos duas centenas de sioux, metade dos quais mulheres e crianças (Wearne, 1996: 78, 79). Por sua vez, sobretudo após o *Homestead Act*, em 1862, as caravanas, constituídas por dezenas de carroças cobertas, puxadas a cavalo, levaram os pioneiros rumo a oeste, para ocupar territórios outrora pertencentes a várias tribos.

Um segundo passo da estratégia da escritora consiste em investir com valores eufóricos os cavalos. Rhonda Pettit afirma que, na poesia de Harjo, os equídeos apresentam um rol de qualidades particularmente apreciadas na cultura ameríndia: a lealdade, a graça, a beleza, o instinto (Pettit, 1998: 24). No poema “Skeleton of Winter”, por exemplo, os cavalos são apresentados como os mais antigos aliados do ser humano na natureza:

There are still ancient  
symbols  
    alive  
I did dance with the pre-historic horse  
years and births later  
near a cave wall  
late winter  
    (Harjo, 1997: 30)

Noutros poemas de Harjo, os cavalos assumem conotações francamente negativas. Em “The Black Room”, são descritos como corcéis negros e representam os traumas e ansiedades que assaltam uma mulher durante o sono:

Maybe there were some rhythms that weren't  
music. Some signified small and horrible deaths  
within her – and she rode them like horses into  
star patterns of the northern hemisphere, and  
into the west  
    (Harjo, 1997: 25)

No poema “What I Should Have Said”, os cavalos encarnam os amantes afastados nos sentimentos e no espaço – um encontra-se em Santa Fé, outro em Albuquerque:

I love you. The words confuse me.  
Maybe they have become a cushion  
keeping us in azure sky and in flight,  
not there not here.  
We are horses knocked out with tranquilizers  
sucked into a deep sleeping for the comfort  
and anesthesia death. We are caught between  
clouds and wet earth  
and there is no motion  
    either way  
no life  
to speak of  
    (Harjo, 1997: 50)

Por alargamento, estes amantes – uma mulher e um homem incomunicáveis e desunidos –, podem talvez representar os ameríndios e os euro-americanos, em busca de uma forma de se relacionarem. Harjo utilizará esta analogia sobretudo na obra *In Mad Love and War* (1990) que, como o título indica, se debruça poeticamente sobre questões como o ressentimento e a reconciliação inter-étnicos.

As ambivalências do cavalo como símbolo animal são apresentadas na primeira parte do poema “She Had Some Horses”, que dá título à obra (Harjo, 1997: 63, 64). A autora lista os diversos tipos de cavalos, através de um paralelismo estrutural, repetitivo, a lembrar as orações tribais. Quase todos os versos principiam por “She had some horses who...” ou “She had some horses with...”; alternando com as estrofes pares, surge a mesma expressão – “She had some horses” – o que contribui para o ritmo e musicalidade do texto.

Na segunda estrofe, a autora identifica os cavalos com os elementos da natureza: “She had some horses who were bodies of sand”, “ocean water”, “blue air of sky”, “clay”, “red cliff”, etc. (Harjo, 1997: 63). Na quarta, são-lhes já atribuídas características humanas: ora são cavalos mal comportados, que se riem demasiado, atiram pedras aos comboios e lambem lâminas de barbear, ora seres afáveis, que dançam com as mães e não se intrometem na vida dos outros (Harjo, 1997: 63).

Nas estrofes seguintes, a autora prossegue a ladainha, realçando as diferenças e antagonismos: tal como as pessoas, alguns cavalos têm nome, enquanto outros mergulham num total anonimato; alguns receiam exprimir os seus sentimentos, outros fazem-no aos brados; alguns acreditam estar salvos, outros rezam pela redenção.

Finalmente, na última estrofe da primeira secção, em apenas três versos, Harjo sumaria e abarca toda a variedade anteriormente apresentada: “She had some horses she loved./She had some horses she hated./These were the same horses” (Harjo, 1997: 64).

A propósito deste apanhado desconcertante, Norma Wilson sugere:

The horses represent diverse facets of an individual’s psyche, or various types of people, from the aloof and self-centered to the servant of others. [...] Moving toward an acceptance of the whole human condition, Harjo blends human and nonhuman nature and conflicting feelings and attitudes, acknowledging the constant duality of love and hate between human beings who are emotionally close to one another (Wilson, 2000: 114)

Na mesma linha, na referida entrevista a Moyers, Harjo reflecte sobre a ambivalência do cavalo como símbolo na sua poesia: “I see the horses as different aspects of a personality which are probably within anyone. We *all* have herds of horses, so to speak, and they can be contradictory. Those contradictions are a part of me” (Moyers, 1996: 48, 49). Nesta terceira fase da estratégia de criação de contra-cultura, Harjo integra os seus opostos, representados pelos vários cavalos. Assim, a poeta compreende (no sentido de *integrar e perceber*) o eu e o outro; dá-se conta de que os cavalos do inimigo são também os seus; de que opressor e vítima partilham, afinal, aspectos semelhantes – pois todos somos humanos, nas ambivalências e contradições.

Em Junho de 2001, numa entrevista escrita e inédita, perguntei a Harjo: “If ‘the real revolution is love’, to what extent can poetry, in general, encourage a better understanding between Native Americans and European Americans, and help to end what you call ‘the huge monster of violence’?” A escritora respondeu:

[...] to enter into the stream of poetry is to enter into love. Love is a force that’s been downplayed, relegated to romance. By love I mean compassion, a compassion that makes a story that is able to continue with dignity, despite shame, despite all attempts to thwart it. Compassion enables a people to see beyond the senses, beyond the mind, to the level of god in which all life is connected. We acknowledge our enemies, those who have tested us, those who hate us, but retain a dignity and keep singing. It is easier to pick up a gun or a bomb and kill those who have killed you. That is called ‘power’ in this postcolonial world. Real power is in compassion. Poetry has taught me this (Mancelos, 2002: XIII)

Ao apropriar-se dos cavalos, símbolo do poder euro-americano, ao reclamá-los para si e para os seus, ao investi-los com qualidades apreciadas pelas tribos, Harjo constrói uma poética de contra-cultura. Não se trata apenas de trazer o rio dos brancos para o leito dos ameríndios – mas sim de o fazer correr na direcção da nascente; de o devolver para que quem enviou as águas se contemple nelas; e se veja como é visto; e vendo-se se *conheça* mais do que *reconheça*.

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# **Cromwell e os Stuart no Romance Histórico de José Hermenegildo Correia**

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# Cromwell e os Stuart no Romance Histórico de José Hermenegildo Correia

## I

A conturbada evolução política da Inglaterra seiscentista, uma vez passada e tornada legível nos quadros da História, suscitou diversos entendimentos e avaliações ao longo do tempo. Numa primeira instância, reposta e confirmada que foi a ordem dentro de um sistema monárquico, em 1660 e depois em 1688-89, recaiu, dir-se-ia que inevitavelmente, o labéu de traidores, de hipócritas, de fanáticos, de sacrílegos, de sanguinários sobre o partido puritano e republicano. Mais tarde, uma apreciação mais objectiva dos factos e a transformação dos valores éticos e políticos permitiram uma reavaliação do processo histórico, e em particular uma reapreciação pela positiva da figura de Oliver Cromwell. Como é sabido, destacou-se nesta reconsideração Thomas Carlyle, a quem ficou a dever-se um trabalho marcante de investigação histórica que resultou na publicação de *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, em 1845, precedida de uma reinterpretação da personalidade e da acção política do Protector, valorizado como exemplar do “Herói como Rei”, na Palestra VI da série *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, proferida em 1840 e publicada no ano seguinte.<sup>1</sup>

Tomo por objecto deste breve apontamento a obra de um medíocre homem de Letras, ou melhor, de um homem que se deitou a escrever, português e contemporâneo de Carlyle – mas contemporâneo apenas casualmente, não em espírito –, que, sem dúvida imbuído das mais piedosas intenções, não tratou de reabilitar mas antes de denegrir a memória de Cromwell – se pode colocar-se a questão nestes termos.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlyle coloca o tipo de “The Hero as King” no centro do processo da História humana: “He is practically the summary for us of *all* the various figures of Heroism” (Carlyle 1993: 169).

José Hermenegildo Correia (ou apenas Hermenegildo, como mais correntemente o tratavam os coevos) era um modesto operário tipógrafo, que ficou órfão com poucos meses de vida e que, como tal, teve acesso a pouca instrução. Provendo-se de algum dinheiro, tornou-se a certa altura impressor (ou editor) e depois tradutor e autor de vários livros – segundo ele próprio confessa, no desejo de poder sustentar melhor a mulher e os filhos.

Publicou, da sua lavra, uma série de obras de circunstância, menores mesmo no contexto da sua produção: o *Relatorio sobre os infelizes acontecimentos que tiveram logar no Palacio das Necessidades por ocasião do fallecimento da Nossa Augusta Rainha*, o *Opusculo ao Consorcio dos Excellentissimos Srs. Marquez de Saldanha, e Conde de Farrobo...*, e outros títulos afins (veja-se a listagem no final deste artigo). Trata-se de opúsculos que poderão despertar o interesse de quem queira historiar a arte da lisonja, mas que não têm, de certeza, mais interesse nenhum.

Traduziu Hermenegildo *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, de Alexandre Dumas pai, em 1846-47, escreveu em 1852 um romance que não é de todo pertinente para os meus intentos, intitulado *O Diabo em Lisboa ou os Mystérios da Capital*, coisa mais ou menos tenebrosa, e finalmente escreveu dois romances históricos: o primeiro, com o título *Oliverio Cromwell ou Os Stuarts de Inglaterra (Historia de Quatro Nações)*, publicado em seis volumes entre 1853 e 1857;<sup>2</sup> o segundo, que continua o enredo daquele, com o título *Isabel Cromwell, ou a Guerra do Parlamento. Historia da Europa*, publicado em quatro volumes em 1859 e (julgo) 1860.<sup>3</sup>

Estes dois romances são obras de escasso mérito literário mas aos quais se pode reconhecer certo relevo documental, na medida em que traduzem uma determinada interpretação da problemática política britânica do

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<sup>2</sup> As *quatro nações* aludidas no subtítulo não serão talvez as quatro que constituem o Reino Unido mas, com maior verosimilhança face ao conteúdo da narrativa, a Inglaterra, a França, o Império Germânico, aliás em desagregação, e a Espanha, que à época dominava Portugal.

<sup>3</sup> A produção literária de José Hermenegildo Correia parece esquecida – o que, aliás, não custa a perceber –, não constando da generalidade das obras de referência. Maria Leonor Machado de Sousa integra *O Diabo em Lisboa* no seu levantamento da literatura de terror em Portugal (Sousa 1978: 426). Na esteira daquela investigadora, Jacinto do Prado Coelho menciona a mesma obra a par de outros títulos reveladores da voga dos “mistérios” ou ficções de “terror grosso” (Coelho 1982: I.288 n.). Naquele que é o mais aturado estudo sobre o romance histórico português, Hermenegildo não é sequer mencionado (cf. Marinho 1999).

século XVII. Tal interpretação, aliás, não será porventura destituída de implicações para a conjuntura portuguesa de meados do século XIX, que o autor, em certos pontos, mal disfarçado de narrador, comenta com azedume. Aliás, *Oliverio Cromwell* ostenta dedicatória ao rei D. Fernando II e está particularmente cheio de reflexões acerca do que deve ser o carácter e a conduta de um monarca, bem como de advertências acerca da presença nefasta de cortesãos.

Os romances caracterizam-se por um estilo muito pouco cuidado, por vezes com deploráveis erros sintácticos (de concordância, por exemplo) e até ortográficos. A estrutura é muito confusa em certas fases, chegando-se ao ponto de se perder de vista Olivério, no romance *Oliverio Cromwell*, durante umas cento e cinquenta páginas seguidas, e durante mais de duzentas e cinquenta seguidas no romance *Isabel Cromwell*; e só surgindo Isabel, na obra que lhe é epónima, a meio do terceiro volume, não figurando em mais do que vinte e seis páginas num total de perto de seiscentas. Há numerosíssimas digressões (pela situação vivida em outros países, e com especial interesse pela relação Portugal-Espanha e pela Guerra dos Trinta Anos na Alemanha), incoerências de vária ordem, incluindo anacronismos e variação no nome de algumas personagens, e ainda intromissões da voz autoral que constituem verdadeiras quebras de *decorum*. Há episódios que não parecem servir para nada e pedaços de diálogo com pouco nexos. Há até desconforto com o nome de Cromwell, que ora aparece aportuguesado para *Cromuel*, ora muda de *Oliverio* para *Oliveiro* (isto já a meio do segundo romance – cf. *IC* III.78).<sup>4</sup> De resto, as obras – em particular a primeira – parecem compor-se de alguns lugares-comuns do romance histórico e do romance gótico: personagens perversas; intrigas de corte; crimes nefandos; premonições e superstições; uma mulher fatal; obscuros ensaios científicos e um veneno misterioso; um fantasma; segredos terríveis e identidades ocultas; uma paixão incestuosa; calabouços.

Neste universo mais ou menos terrífico, povoado de paixões mesquinhas por parte de uns e de fraquezas por parte de outros, surge Cromwell como um ambicioso destituído de escrúpulos, uma espécie de Ricardo III

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<sup>4</sup> Usamos as siglas *OC* e *IC* para designar sucintamente as duas obras que mais nos interessam na presente circunstância, respectivamente *Oliverio Cromwell* e *Isabel Cromwell*. Os passos relevantes são identificados mediante indicação de volume e página.

maquiavélico à maneira de Shakespeare. Procedo a uma sinopse da acção dos romances, em torno da composição desta figura, sinopse na qual, não duvido, encontrarão os presentes motivos de estranheza, familiarizados que estão com a melhor verdade que a historiografia tem sabido apurar. Paráfrases e resumos são coisas fastidiosas, por regra, mas não encontro outra maneira de cumprir os meus objectivos.

A acção de *Oliverio Cromwell* tem início no ano de 1611, partindo de um episódio em que o pai de Cromwell recebe em sua casa em Huntingdon a comitiva real, com Jacques I (*sic*) à cabeça. A acção de todo este romance decorrerá mesmo no reinado de Jacques (concentra-se no período que vai daquela data até 1620), o que dará azo a representar-se com fôlego a situação política e moral da Inglaterra num período em que Cromwell está ainda longe da cena política. Fica patente a existência de inimigos externos, como a França e a Espanha, e de instabilidade política no reino – ou nos reinos britânicos –, nomeadamente no que respeita ao perigo de sublevação dos Católicos (alude-se à Conspiração da Pólvora), aos Presbiterianos e aos Puritanos.

Curiosamente, o rei Jacques interessa-se por Olivério e decide tomá-lo sob sua protecção, pelo que é como pajem da casa real que ele figura até que a sua raiva para com os poderosos vem ao de cima e ele cai em desgraça, como veremos. A caracterização moral de Oliverio, desde que entra ao serviço da família real com apenas doze anos de idade, é clara nos seus traços fundamentais: ambiciona o poder, mesmo que para o alcançar tenha de converter-se em assassino (diz o narrador que ele está decidido a tornar-se conhecido “[...] embora seu nome fosse escripto com o fume-gante sangue das victimas que lhe seria mister immolar á sua insaciavel ambição de reinar [...]”, *OC* II.8); é orgulhoso, rancoroso, vingativo; despreza a corte, com seus modos de adulação corrupta; é artiloso e no fundo traidor premeditado dos príncipes que finge servir.

Em tudo isto, Jacques caracteriza-se por soberba e desprezo do povo, por certa ingenuidade política no que respeita às intenções de soberanos rivais e por um carácter frouxo, que Jorge Villiers, conde e depois duque de Buckingham, abusivamente domina.<sup>5</sup> É uma figura, aliás, afectada – e

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<sup>5</sup> Em torno de Buckingham há hipóteses de articulação com o romance de Dumas que Herme-negildo traduziu. Porém, deixaremos para outra circunstância o exame desse nexos, como aliás de toda a problemática da recepção da obra romanesca de Dumas em Portugal. Apenas

quase sempre exemplificativa – das ideias expendidas na obra acerca dos reis e dos seus favoritos (em sentido político). De resto, é sintomático do clima de intriga vigente na corte, bem como do sentimento de impunidade dos cortesãos, que o conde de Somerset, principal ministro do rei antes de Buckingham o ser, mande matar o príncipe de Gales, que sabe ser seu inimigo. Se na obra se diz mal dos reis em geral, diz-se ainda pior dos ministros de todas as épocas e de todos os países (se calhar foi por isso que Hermenegildo teve de acabar de escrever o romance na cadeia).

Por seu turno, o príncipe herdeiro, Henrique – exceção neste romance em que quase não há personagens caracterizadas positivamente e em que dos Ingleses em geral fica mesmo uma impressão muito pouco favorável<sup>6</sup> – é dotado de grandes qualidades, nobre de carácter, inteligente e corajoso, porém doente (“[...] unica esperança do povo Inglez”, diz-se, quando ele está no leito de morte, *OC* II.5), enquanto o seu irmão Carlos surge como uma figura tibia e excessivamente bondosa, de carácter “[...] fraco, docil, e penetravel” (*OC* I.38).<sup>7</sup>

O negregado Olivério obtém ascendente sobre o espírito deste Carlos ingénuo e influenciável, o que, como é óbvio, acentua a gravidade moral da sua oposição posterior. Ao mesmo tempo, cai também no agrado do rei Jacques. É desta posição de certa proeminência na corte que a sua altivez o perde, quando, provocado numa discussão (sobre as suas próprias aspirações pessoais e o poder dos reis), golpeia por duas vezes o príncipe Carlos com um punhal – acontecimento aliás premonitório. Olivério é preso, e é mesmo Carlos quem se compadece da sua desdita, conseguindo do rei a sua libertação (mas sem que ele volte a ser admitido na corte), visitando-o na

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para que se perceba a pertinência dessa pesquisa, recorde-se que Cromwell é personagem de *Vingt Ans Après*. Em nota no final da sua versão de *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, Hermenegildo diz que aparecerá brevemente *Vinte Annos Depois*, “[...] fazendo a continuação dos Tres Mosqueteiros [...]” (Dumas 1846-47: IV, 296).

<sup>6</sup> Seja na substância da acção romanesca, seja em comentários do narrador e das personagens, transparece uma notória anglofobia. Um “verdadeiro Inglez” é um homem que sucumbe à cobiça e se deixa corromper (cf. *OC* II.21); é um bêbedo (cf. *OC* V.71; *IC* I.25) e solta muitas imprecações (cf. *IC* I.25). Por outro lado, diz-se que as ruas de Londres estão infestadas de criminalidade, mesmo da mais sanguinária (cf. *OC* III.47; V.17), e que abundam as prostitutas (cf. *OC* V.106).

<sup>7</sup> Quando, já rei, for obrigado a enfrentar os revoltosos da Escócia, há-de-se-lhe notar “[...] falta de firmeza e decisão [...]” (*IC* III.111).

prisão, professando-lhe amizade e pedindo-lhe até desculpa, absurdamente, pelas mortificações que lhe causou. Nesse momento, tanto Olivério como Carlos têm visões da desgraça futura deste último no cadafalso, mas nem assim deixam de ser feitas promessas de ajuda do príncipe ao preso.

Enquanto Carlos fica muito atormentado no período em que está desprovido da convivência do seu pajem, Olivério, uma vez liberto, passa por uma fase de dissipação, entrega-se a uma “[...] vida de estravagancia e de deboche” (*OC* III.33), seduzindo filhas e mulheres de amigos que o amparam. Politicamente, fica remetido à obscuridade por vários anos, vivendo como simples comerciante.<sup>8</sup>

Em *Isabel Cromwell*, passados cinco anos sobre a acção do romance anterior, está já Carlos no trono e tem a funesta lembrança de chamar Olivério para ir tomar de seu partido assento nos Comuns, que o rei acabara de encerrar. Olivério recusa, alegando estar muito ocupado com os seus negócios mas na verdade por puro cálculo político. Com Essex, Strafford, Falckland, Turner e Pym, forma um partido contra Buckingham. A prazo, Olivério aparece subitamente titular de um lugar no Parlamento (sem que se explique de que modo o alcançou), após alastrar-se a agitação nos Comuns, a ponto de Carlos ser obrigado a libertar dois parlamentares que mandara prender. Chega mesmo a ser discutido num comité dos Comuns se é Carlos I ou o duque de Bragança, D. Teodósio, que seria herdeiro do duque de Lencastre, quem tem direito à coroa de Inglaterra.

No Parlamento vai-se evidenciando Olivério. Morto que está Buckingham, que foi assassinado, o adversário a atacar passa a ser o próprio rei, e agora decide-se Olivério a usar a arma da religião. Na verdade, o autor não faz nada deste elemento, parecendo até confundir o que nas questões do tempo é católico, anglicano, presbiteriano e puritano. Diga-se, a propósito, que, nos dois romances, são escassíssimas as referências ao facto de Cromwell ser puritano, e em nenhum momento aparece a religião como autêntico fator ou dado impulsor das suas acções (embora a certa altura surja como arma, argumento ou pretexto – cf. *IC* III.66-68).

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<sup>8</sup> Mesmo assim, havendo inimizade jurada reciprocamente entre ele e Buckingham, o duque encomenda a um criado o assassinato de Olivério. O criado falha e é ferido. A morrer, confessa por escrito ter sido mandado por Villiers. Assim, Olivério fica de posse dessa formidável arma política que é uma confissão incriminatória para o ministro, mas nunca terá oportunidade de a utilizar.

De modo semelhante, é de assinalar que, ao longo de toda a acção, Cromwell se mostra indeciso ou recusa comprometer-se quando se discute se é melhor o sistema monárquico ou o republicano, como se as grandes opções políticas fossem meramente instrumentais à prossecução da sua ânsia de poder.<sup>9</sup>

Nessa altura de recrudescimento da oposição parlamentar, Carlos conferencia mais uma vez a sós com Olivério, desagradado de que este tenha falado em desabono da rainha. Aqui se nota a generosidade, mas também a desilusão, de Carlos. Diz ele: “[...] para [toda a] parte vos sigo como amigo, em todos os logares que vos encontro é como meu inimigo” (IC III.71). Com certa candura, o capítulo em que isto se passa intitula-se “O Anjo e Demonio”.

Vêm depois a agudizar-se as dissensões, com guerra na Escócia, na qual sofrem derrotas os exércitos do rei, e mais uma vez com a dissolução do Parlamento em Inglaterra. Reunida em nova sessão a Câmara dos Comuns, lembra-se Olivério de visar o conde de Strafford, seu antigo aliado contra Buckingham e agora o principal esteio do governo de Carlos I. É o próprio Olivério que se faz confidente de informações com que Strafford conta para salvar-se no processo que lhe movem, e que consequentemente o trai.

A acção do romance queda-se pelo ano de 1641, com Strafford preso na Torre de Londres. Diz-se, em jeito de epílogo, que ele será executado e que o rei se verá obrigado a viajar pelas províncias, tal é a crescente oposição do Parlamento à sua autoridade. Fica-se, assim, no limiar da guerra civil, que seria objecto de obra a apresentar com pouca demora ao público, intitulada *O Rei, e o Parlamento, ou Cromwell e seus Filhos*, obra que não chegou a aparecer.<sup>10</sup>

Neste ominoso quadro, destaca-se como figura de sensibilidade e boa moral a filha de Olivério, Isabel Cromwell. É uma atraente rapariga, de casamento contratado com o filho de Strafford, que ama e que a ama. Recusa-se a exultar (ao contrário de seu pai) com a derrota das armas do

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<sup>9</sup> Há uma sistemática anatematização do republicanismo, aliás, pela voz do narrador e de várias personagens, que terá, porventura, consequência ou intenção tópica para o momento da escrita dos romances – o período da Regeneração.

<sup>10</sup> Da ideia de que “Cromwell é enfim detestado de todos, e por seus proprios filhos” (IC I.[viii]), avançada em jeito de sumário no prólogo (“Ao Publico”) de *Isabel Cromwell*, pode talvez inferir-se que o terceiro romance da série representaria a relação entre Cromwell e os filhos como sendo de oposição, à semelhança da oposição entre o rei e o Parlamento.

rei e quer a Strafford como a um segundo pai, visitando-no na prisão e pedindo ao rei que o proteja (o rei promete salvá-lo mas não consegue). Em tudo isto, e ainda no ser apodada de *anjo celeste* (IC IV.109), Isabel opõe-se a Olivério, de cuja perfídia tarda a aperceber-se. No que a este respeita, encontra-se uma verdadeira demonização, sugerida já a espaços em *Oliverio Cromwell* mas sobretudo explicitada no segundo romance, onde se lê que ele anda com “pensar maligno” e “levando o diabo no coração”, ou tendo um “coração sanguinário” e urdindo uma “infernai maquinação” (cf. IC I.21, 47; IV.101).

Patentemente, Hermenegildo dá rédea solta à fantasia, talvez para suprir falhas de correcta informação histórica. É inaudito, julgo eu, que James I tenha empregado Cromwell como seu pajem e lhe tenha tomado amizade, e que Carlos I tenha sido amigo dedicado – e esfaqueado – de Cromwell, e que Cromwell fosse amigo e aliado político do conde de Strafford, e que estivesse para casar a sua filha com o filho dele antes de o fazer condenar à morte, e que essa filha fosse de simpatias regalistas, etc.

Ao mesmo tempo, nota-se uma dependência de fontes francesas, algumas das quais são indenticadas no texto – trabalhos de Rapin Thoyras, de Millot, do padre Barras...<sup>11</sup> E trata-se de uma influência de que se ressentem as obras, não tendo a pouca preparação do autor permitido que se contornassem certas dificuldades. Por exemplo, o rei James é referido como *Jacques*, fala-se na *câmara Étoilée* (a *Star Chamber*, obviamente) com uma naturalidade de estarrecer, fala-se, de modo semelhante, em *Lord Mére* (por *Lord Mayor*), chama-se *Rhin* ao Reno e *Douvres* a Dover, etc. O Cromwell de caricatura que nos oferece Hermenegildo resulta de fraca competência cultural, e é também esta que explica, no plano mais elementar da elaboração textual, uma incapacidade, por vezes grave, de empregar conceitos e vocabulário, remetendo de forma inteligível e não distorcida para os referentes históricos e geográficos do enredo.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Talvez por isso, do geral conceito de pusilanimidade ou de perfídia que o autor faz dos monarcas se livrem os reis de França focados em OC III.90-94 e poucos mais.

<sup>12</sup> O chistoso verbete que Innocencio Francisco da Silva dedica a Hermenegildo no seu *Diccionario Bibliographico* (1858-1923: IV.368) denota, algo desbragadamente, as limitações de formação do impressor-autor, ao mesmo tempo que revela pouca simpatia da parte do meio literário coevo.



## II

Abordemos agora a questão de outro ponto de vista. Importa notar que as incursões de Hermenegildo em domínios da história britânica seiscentista, por extravagantes que sejam em alguns dos seus aspectos, se inserem num contexto de interesse, algo alargado, por aquela problemática que se encontra reflectido na publicação entre nós de livros e de artigos em periódicos, e ainda na representação de dramas e récitas de ópera, em meados de Oitocentos. Passo a alinhar alguns dados que configuram significativamente esse interesse por parte dos intelectuais e, porventura, do público português dessa época. Porque o tempo de que disponho é limitado, menciono apenas três textos, exemplificativos de três tipologias diferentes.

(1) *O Panorama*, que foi o mais conseguidamente enciclopédico dos periódicos portugueses da época romântica e aquele que apresentou contributos de maior valia para dar a conhecer ao público português as realidades das Ilhas Britânicas, publicou em Março de 1838 um artigo intitulado “Oliverio Cromwell”, de autor não identificado. O artigo estrutura-se sobre um delineamento biográfico que parte, com certo assombro, da ideia de que aquela figura cometeu feitos de certa forma impensáveis. A vida de Cromwell resume-se nisto:

Privado daquelles meios d’influencia, que dá ou o nascimento ou a fortuna, auxiliado unicamente pela força do seu character, e pelo concurso de circumstancias extraordinarias, Cromwell chegou a commandar exercitos, a derribar o antigo governo do seu paiz, a fazer com que fosse um rei justicado no cadafalso, e a apossar-se do supremo poder com auctoridade tal, como nunca exercitára monarcha algum da Inglaterra. (Anónimo 1838: 91)

O artigo acentua, depois, o carácter negativo, imoral, mesmo hipócrita desta carreira. Põe ênfase nas relações de Cromwell com o exército e o Parlamento, no caminho da tomada do poder absoluto e ao serviço de uma ambição pessoal sem limites, sempre justificada com a vontade de Deus ou uma comissão divina que Cromwell pretenderia conhecer. Aliás, não falta a insinuação de que o seu “entusiasmo religioso” era fingido, como não falta referência à sua juventude dissoluta, antes dessa fase supostamente pia, que mina a autenticidade do imperativo moral que Cromwell invocava para a sua conduta. Assiste esta leitura algo faceta ou céptica do homem a menção de pormenores anedóticos, que julgo espúrios, como estes:

Cromwell assignou o seu nome na ordem de execução [de Carlos I] com aquellas bobices, que costumava misturar com as acções mais graves; mascarrou de tinta a cara de Martyn, que assignava immediato a elle. Pouco tempo havia que fôra Carlos degollado, Cromwell fez abrir a tumba para lhe tocar na cabeça, e se affirmar se realmente estava separada do corpo. (91)

À parte o que de mórbido possa haver em detalhes deste tipo, o texto não deixa de apresentar dados de natureza mais propriamente histórico-política. Reconhece que, ao dissolver o Parlamento, Cromwell não estava a fazer nada de inusitado, pois apenas tomava uma medida já adoptada por Carlos I, com a vantagem de ser mais poderoso do que ele. E, se é manifesto certo desagrado pela pessoa de Cromwell, o artigo não poupa elogios ao seu governo, que, diz, foi avisado, probo, justo, instaurou a tolerância de crença religiosa, tornou-se respeitado pelas outras potências e fez prosperar o país, em particular pela promoção do comércio por via marítima. Nos termos do texto, algo paradoxais: “Pond[o] de parte a illegalidade das medidas de Cromwell, illegalidade de que talvez se visse obrigado a usar em uma epocha de rebelião e de tramas, vereis que a usurpação deste homem celebre foi gloriosa” (92). O elogio vai mesmo a este ponto: “[...] se compararmos a energia do seu governo com a fraqueza do que elle destruiu, e com a corrupção do que lhe succedeu, confessaremos que nenhum soberano governou os tres reinos até alli, e ainda muito depois, com tanto saber e gloria” (92). A perspectiva é peculiar: parece que Cromwell, antes de chegar ao poder e para lá chegar, era destituído de todas as virtudes; no poder, foi o melhor governante que podia ter calhado em sorte à Inglaterra e por aí tudo o que fez se justifica.

(2) Em 1842, no Volume V do *Archivo Theatral*, um periódico lisboeta integralmente preenchido com traduções do teatro francês, surge o drama de Cordellier Delanoue *Cromwell, e Carlos I.º* [sic]. Como nos romances de José Hermenegildo Correia, encontra o leitor algumas surpresas, se espera uma fidelidade escrupulosa aos factos dos quais pode ser produzida prova histórica. A acção decorre num período que vai de vésperas da guerra civil, em 1628, até à execução do rei, recaindo sobre este, em última análise, a responsabilidade de desencadear os acontecimentos que acabarão por lhe ser fatais. A sua atitude é mesmo de certa amoralidade cruel: “[...] se contra toda a probabilidade persistir a rebelião... embora: é sangue que se derrama; e que nos importa a nós isso? a nossa vontade, o nosso capricho

não vale mais que a vida de milhares de homens?” (Delanoue 1842: 12). Por outro lado, atribui os problemas que enfrenta no reino a influências de Richelieu e de Mazarino (cf. 12, 29), o que reflecte certa incompreensão dos reais motivos do descontentamento, que aliás um Pym, no texto, claramente explicita logo no começo da acção (cf. 1-2).

À arbitrariedade do governo de Carlos contrapõe-se, num importante passo do drama, um Cromwell conciliador. Já durante a guerra, surge na tenda de campanha do rei, de noite, para, segundo diz, “[...] cara a cara, longe de teus malditos Conselheiros, e de meus fanaticos sectarios, regularmos ambos os negocios desta pobre Inglaterra, que perde todo o seu sangue por cada uma das nossas feridas”. Cromwell apresenta-se aqui como combatente corajoso e político íntegro, que quer assegurar as prerrogativas da nação, não derrubar a monarquia. Enquanto afirma quão diferente ele próprio é de Carlos, acrescenta:

Porém eu não quero a tua morte, quando a tua vida possa alliar-se com a tranquillidade da Inglaterra; quero que renunciés a uma parte d’esses direitos, que dizes haver recebido do ceo, para segurares outros que receberás de nós; quero equilibrar o teu poder com o poder do povo, para que um não possa opprimir o outro; quero ver em tuas mãos uma balança, e não um ceptro.

E, dir-se-ia que todo bondade, acrescenta: “Eu não ameaço, supplíco” (30). Carlos, orgulhoso, não acede a firmar um tratado. Cromwell mostra-se ainda disposto a prestar-lhe homenagem como rei, assim opte ele pela justiça e não pelo capricho; porém, “[...] a liberdade politica, a liberdade de consciência não podemos dispensá-la” (31).

O rei, obviamente, perde a guerra. Sendo preso e condenado, Cromwell oferece-lhe ainda uma oportunidade de fuga, que Carlos aceita mas que é gorada. O drama termina com solenidade. No dia da execução, Carlos diz perdoar a Cromwell e sai para o patíbulo. Cromwell pega na coroa e lamenta: “Pobre cabeça sem corôa! pobre corôa sem cabeça!”. Mostra-se incapaz de decidir se o rei é um tirano ou um mártir. Fora de cena, Carlos diz morrer inocente e na fé da Igreja Anglicana. É depois depositado um esquife no palco, lendo-se a seguinte didascália: “Cromwell ficando só, olha em roda, chega ao esquife, e levanta com hesitação a cobertura” (35, em *itálico* no original). Nada mais acontece.

Pelo meio destes acontecimentos surgem alguns dados de pura fantasia. É o caso de uma viagem que Cromwell faz a França, para se encontrar

com Richelieu (dirá mesmo, depois, que foi dele amigo chegado e que com ele aprendeu a arte da política; cf. 9) e para, no dizer de uma adversário, se “[...] compromette[r] em uma aventura escandalosa com uma rapariga plebéa [...]” (8). Essa rapariga aparecerá em Londres treze anos depois, para embaraço de Cromwell, então com assento no Parlamento. De resto, por esta altura revela-se ele no pior do seu carácter: aparece, com pouca dignidade, a pedir a Straffort “Um emprego político, uma patente militar, um officio de Igreja, [...]: uma pasta, uma biblia, uma espada, como quizerdes [...]” (8) – isto depois de ter escrito libelos contra o rei e contra o Parlamento. E apresenta-se desamparado, supersticioso, assustado mesmo das desgraças que pensa pressagiadas no seu destino.

Strafford não se compadece, o que lhe será fatal, pois a Cromwell, na sequência dessa entrevista, oferece-se acidentalmente a oportunidade de, sendo tomado por seu secretário, receber das mãos do próprio rei documentos comprometedores que entrega ao Parlamento. Constituído este em câmara de justiça, decidirá a prisão e a morte de Straffort, sucesso que leva Carlos a interpelar Cromwell nestes termos: “E agora vós, que entrastes neste palacio para nelle deixar rastos de sangue, homem ou demonio, fallai; quero saber quem sois: Oliveiro, ou Satanaz?” (27).

(3) No mesmo ano de 1842, a Imprensa Nacional publicou uma tradução da *Historia de Cromwell* de Abel François Villedieu. Trata-se de um longo estudo historiográfico, muito documentado com fontes inglesas, cheio de pormenores biográficos e políticos, culminando na restauração da monarquia inglesa em 1660. Aliás, o estudo tem a particularidade, relativamente invulgar na sua época, de tratar com desenvolvimento o período em que Cromwell esteve à frente dos destinos da Inglaterra, não se concentrando pois especialmente no período que termina com a execução de Carlos I.

Se o autor francês alcança certo distanciamento de análise histórica, o tradutor – um tal M. S. da C. Couraça – não se exime a propor ao público uma sùmula moral do conteúdo do livro, em tom francamente crítico, num texto colocado em posição introdutória:

Sem pertencer a partido algum quando lhe convinha, pertencendo a todos quando d’elles precisava, desprezando ora um, ora outro, segundo mais ou menos d’elles carecia; sem fé politica, sem religião, podendo dizer-se que viveu entregue ao acaso até uma certa época, vemos nós este homem celebre apoderar-se dos destinos de uma Nação, e de livre faze-la escrava. (Villedieu 1842: v)

De qualquer modo, o próprio historiador deixa transparecer maior simpatia por Carlos I do que por Cromwell e pelos puritanos. Muito significativamente, afirma, com certa ironia, que “Esta tragedia da morte de Carlos 1.º, foi dirigida por artificios secretos, e praticada por fanaticos, que, pela maior parte, acreditavam fazer uma obra santa” (120). E, comentando o processo judicial, diz que

[...] n’estes dias Carlos soffreu todas as vexações, que o genio democratico se compraz em lançar sobre a grandeza humilhada: o presidente Bradshaw o interrogava com toda a dureza do seu fanatismo; (1649) todavia conservava-lhe aparentemente o titulo de rei. Carlos, contraditado, interrompido, e constrangido na sua defeza, mostrou bastante presença de espirito, e eloquencia, e fez pasmar seus juizes pela inflexibilidade, que sustentou em negar a auctoridade d’este tribunal. (121)

De resto, noutro ponto do relato, designa os puritanos como “[...] fanáticos imbecis, tantas vezes enganados por seu senhor [...]” (393), e acusa Cromwell de ser um “[...] despota odioso [...]” (396). O fanatismo daqueles e o despotismo deste são ideias recorrentes ao longo da obra.

### III

Que razões terão levado os literatos portugueses de meados do século XIX a interessar-se desta forma pela conjuntura britânica de duzentos anos antes? Presumivelmente, a sua própria experiência de uma guerra civil ou até de vários conflitos civis, de alterações constitucionais mais ou menos profundas, de lutas pela tolerância e até pela liberdade religiosas, da oposição do governo representativo ao poder absoluto dos monarcas (para muitos, pondo-se o problema da ditadura mesmo na vigência do regime liberal – pense-se no período cabralista). Por outro lado, não deixará de ter importância o destaque que ao longo de todo o século XIX, para o melhor e para o pior, tiveram as relações entre Portugal e o Reino Unido, mormente nos planos político e económico, o que, a juntar a um significativo trânsito de cidadãos entre os dois países e a numerosas oportunidades de convivência entre os dois povos, quanto mais não fosse graças à presença de comunidades britânicas implantadas no Porto e em Lisboa, terá suscitado, quando não interesse genuíno, alguma curiosidade.

É este, pois, sumariamente caracterizado, o contexto no qual fazem algum sentido – ou no qual continuam a não fazer sentido, em alguns dos seus aspectos, do ponto de vista do rigor histórico – as tentativas de José

Hermenegildo Correia de interpelar e de interpretar os profundos sobressaltos sociais e políticos que marcaram a vida britânica em meados de Seiscentos. Fica claro que não é pelo mérito literário dos escritos de Hermenegildo que o evoco. Eles são um bom exemplo do modo como os mecanismos de selecção canónica, em muitos casos encarados pela posteridade como injustos, arbitrários ou, pelo menos, contingentes, por vezes acertam ao votar ao esquecimento certas obras e certos autores. Pela minha parte, não pretendo reabilitar o escritor Hermenegildo, que o não merecem, nem a sua craveira de intelectual, nem os seus dotes de romancista. Tomo os seus romances como pretexto para abordar a questão que é de facto interessante, e que se prende com o modo como a cultura portuguesa de Oitocentos se relacionou – imaginativamente, ideologicamente – com a cultura inglesa, neste caso com atenção específica à primeira das revoluções que marcaram o século XVII.<sup>13</sup>

A este propósito, e muito em particular na circunstância presente, é-me grato lembrar as palavras de encorajamento que do Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves, certa vez, recebi, vendo-me ele empenhado em alguns ensaios nesta área de estudos. Foi apenas uma de várias amabilidades que lhe devo, e que decorreram naturalmente da generosidade que todos conhecemos ao Professor Hélio.

É este, o do romance histórico de José Hermenegildo Correia, um episódio do relacionamento entre os dois países – aliados mas desconfiados – que lança alguma luz sobre certos aspectos da cultura do Portugal liberal-romântico mas que não deixa de ser um episódio menor.

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<sup>13</sup> Um apanhado plenamente representativo das representações portuguesas desta problemática teria talvez, num extremo da cronologia, a anónima *Relaçam Sumaria & verdadeira do estado presente do Reyno de Irlanda...* de 1644 e os folhetos produzidos por ocasião do casamento de Carlos II de Inglaterra com D. Catarina de Bragança; no outro extremo, certos escritos críticos e políticos de Fernando Pessoa. Isto para não falarmos, até, do modo como a história britânica do século XVII tem sido estudada e ensinada nas nossas universidades, no âmbito de diversas especialidades, ao longo de décadas.

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# **Standing Armies, War Powers, and Selective Service – A Reflection**

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# Standing Armies, War Powers, and Selective Service

## – A Reflection

The current military role of the United States in the world is a product of certain historical developments which I would like to outline. First was the gradual weakening of the republican animus against a standing army. This animus survived into the nineteenth century and was only overcome in the middle of the twentieth, with the arrival of the Cold War. The second development was the gradual shifting of military responsibility, despite explicit Constitutional stipulation, from the legislative to the executive branch of government, that is, from the directly-elected representatives of the people in Congress to the President, his appointed administration, and the permanent executive bureaucracy. Third was the abandoned experiment with selective service, tried during the Civil War, relied upon in the World Wars, and surviving until the Vietnam engagement. The draft was abolished during the presidency of Richard Nixon. The American military having become a volunteer organization has facilitated executive exercise of American military power.

Henry Thoreau, in the opening paragraph of “Civil Disobedience”, makes the following unusual comparison:

The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. (Thoreau, 203)

As often as I have read this passage, being intent on Thoreau’s theme, I hardly paused over Thoreau’s odd reference to a standing army. After all, Thoreau is attacking the American war against Mexico and a standing army made that war possible. Perhaps I never did more than wonder: What do these many and weighty objections involve? Well, they involve an old story and a long story and one we have been persuaded to forget.

Let me begin at one of the beginnings. In 1688, in *The Declaration of Rights*, the Lords and Commons charged King James II with “endeavour[ing] to Subvert and Extirpate the Protestant Religion, and the Laws and Liberties of this Kingdom,” in part “By raising and keeping a standing Army within this Kingdom in time of Peace, without Consent of Parliament”. Then in subsequent passages of *The Declaration* the Parliament, turning the monarchy over to the keeping of Prince William of Orange, declared, “That the raising or keeping a standing army within the Kingdom in time of Peace, unless it be with Consent of Parliament, is against Law” (Rakove, 41-3). Of course the entire story of the struggle between the Stuarts and the Parliament – civil war, regicide, commonwealth, restoration – form the essential context for this and comparable articles in *The Declaration of Rights*. The story in America is related, but the North American colonies, with their own legislatures, provided most of their own defense through local militias, and they had their own struggles with representatives of the crown, governors sent out to the colonies (only Rhode Island and Connecticut chose their own governors); even so, these aggravations, though continuing, were infrequently disruptive of political life. Regular English troops made a substantial appearance in the thirteen colonies only during and subsequent to the French and Indian War. At the conclusion of that war, when Parliament set itself the task of reorganizing the Empire, indeed, of rationalizing imperial structure, then Parliament made the error of trying to legislate for colonies some of whom had legislative, indeed, constitutional histories of a hundred years, or in the cases of Massachusetts and Virginia almost one hundred fifty years. The revolutionary fight came over the issue of taxes, but it was truly a battle over legislative legitimacy and over legal rights and responsibilities which belonged to the chosen legislatures of peoples accustomed to thinking of themselves as possessing the “rights of Englishmen”, those which had been most significantly specified in *The Declaration of Rights*. Thus, “Declarations and Resolves” of the Continental Congress in October 14, 1774, include this resolution, which is merely an application of the apposite article of *The Declaration of Rights* to the American condition: “Resolved... That the keeping a Standing army in these colonies, in times of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony, in which such army is kept, is against law” (Rakove, 66). And, ultimately, *The Declaration of Independence* (1776) in the considerable list of “injuries and usurpations” committed by

King George III against the American colonies, as part of his attempt to establish “an absolute Tyranny over these States”, asserts this “Fact”: “He has keep among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures” (*The Debate on the Constitution*, I, 950).

As Garry Wills had pointed out, in England, during peaceful times, “the militias were parliament’s tool to keep the king from having a regular revenue for standing forces” (Wills, 87, n. 46). And the militias in the American colonies become states served the same purpose, during the Continental Congresses and under *The Articles of Confederation*. In fact, *The Articles* specify that the army shall be only sufficient, according to the determination of Congress, “to garrison the forts necessary for the defence of each state”, though each state was encouraged to maintain its own “well regulated and disciplined militia” (*The Debate on the Constitution*, I, 956-7). Further, no state should engage in war or lesser military action without “the consent” of Congress, and such Congressional decisions under *The Articles of Confederation* required a vote of nine of the thirteen states.

*The Constitution* of 1787 granted Congress power, “To raise and support armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years” (I: 8: 12). Our particular interest here in standing armies is in the infinitive “to raise” as much as “to support” – that is, Congress had the responsibility to activate the whole process of establishing a permanent army. In addition, the new constitution specified, “No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law” (I: 9: 7). And this power was granted within the clear context that “All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress” (I: 1: 1), and not in any executive or judicial organ or officer. You will note as well that if *The Constitution* seems to have successfully limited the executive as no English power had heretofore, legislative authority for funding a standing army is limited to a single Congress. That is to say, the voters may turn out of office the entire Congress as punishment for its energy – or fervor. And the new Congress, in any event, has the opportunity and right to deny funding to any military adventure the preceding Congress had committed it to.

This was all clear enough to Alexander Hamilton when he argued for the ratification of the new constitution. Anti-federalist objections that standing armies were not explicitly condemned in the new constitution did not impress him, and the absolute prohibition of standing armies by the

state constitutions of Pennsylvania and North Carolina seemed to him total overreactions to any threat in American circumstances. In “Number XXVI” of *The Federalist* the nationalist Hamilton explained:

The legislature of the United States will be *obliged* by this provision [I: 8: 12], once at least in every two years, to deliberate upon the propriety of keeping a military force on foot; to come to a new resolution on the point; and to declare their sense of the matter by a formal vote in the face of their constituents. They are not *at liberty* to vest in the executive department permanent funds for the support of an army. (*The Federalist*, 199)

Hamilton is further certain that either vocal minorities in the Congress or, at last, vigilant state legislatures will “sound the alarm to the people”, and awaken them to the encroachment of executive power.

Others, however, were doubtful. The state of New York, in ratifying the new federal constitution (1788), appended “Principles Affirmed and Amendments Proposed”. Among amendments their representatives in Congress where enjoined “to exert all their influence and use all reasonable means to obtain a ratification of” were these two following: 1) “That no standing army or regular troops shall be raised, or kept up in time of peace, without the consent of *two thirds* [italics mine] of the senators and representatives present in each house”, and, in an especially determined mood, 2) “That the Congress shall not declare war without the concurrence of *two thirds* [italics mine] of the senators and representatives present in each house” (*The Debate on the Constitution*, II, 542). The recommendations of the New York Convention were, of course, not adopted, but their proposals suggest an interesting reflection. Note that *The Constitution* provides treaties be made by the President “by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate... provided two thirds of the Senators present concur” (II: 2: 2). Could it be that the members of the ratifying convention in New York thought a two-thirds vote to raise and fund an army and a two-thirds vote to declare a war consistent with a similar Senate majority to reach the terms of peace or to form peaceful alliances? A further implication is that a military institution, dependent upon a legislative act in its founding, funding, and use, needs the bipartisan and recurring support of a two-thirds majority, not only in the peaceful resolution of armed struggle but also in the making of war itself, if the rights of the people are to be protected.

It becomes obvious that the questions of a standing army and the power to declare war are intimately related. The crux of the matter lies in the conflict between the war powers of the Congress (I: 8: 11-16) and the role of the President as commander-in-chief (II: 2: 1). It is explicit in word and intention that Congress has the sole power to declare war: “To declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water” (I: 8: 11). Specifically, this means that Congress declares war and also gives instructions to private and public vessels at sea, away from easy communication with their home ports, to take particular military actions short of war itself. In small military engagements as well as war itself Congress possesses the sole power to initiate hostility or respond to the hostility of others. Article One, Section Eight of *The Constitution* continues, in the subsequent five paragraphs, to grant power to Congress “to raise and support armies”, “to provide and maintain a navy”, “to make rules” for the governance of the army and navy, “to provide for calling forth the militia” of the states for national purposes, and to take the major share of “organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia”. The President, on the other hand, “shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into the active service of the United States” (II: 2: 1). Congress makes the legal decisions about war and lesser hostilities, and raises and funds the armed forces and possibly the state militias as well. The President in executing these legal decisions – and merely executing them – is providing *civilian* leadership to the military establishment. *The Constitution* is clear enough. Alexander Hamilton thought so: in “Number LXIX” of *The Federalist* he maintains that the President’s role as commander-in-chief “would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral of the Confederacy”, while “the *declaring* of war” and “the *raising* and *regulating* of fleets and armies... would appertain to the legislature” (*The Federalist*, 398). In 1793 James Madison, writing as “Helvidius” in a pamphlet exchange with Hamilton (“Pacificus”) outdoes Hamilton in emphasizing the limits of presidential power.

Those who are to *conduct a war* [i.e., Presidents] cannot in the nature of things, be proper or safe judges, whether *a war ought to be commenced, continued, or concluded*. They are barred from the latter functions by a great principle in free government, analogous to that which separates

the sword from the purse, or the power of executing from the power of enacting laws. (Madison, 543-4)

To Madison historical experience confirmed the incapacity in any war leader to distinguish either national security from his chosen policy or public good from his political glory. And four years later, in April, 1797, he reconfirmed the point in a letter to Thomas Jefferson:

The constitution supposes, what the History of all Govts. demonstrates, that the Ex. is the branch of power most interested in war, & and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the Legisl. (Madison, 586)

In major military engagements against Mexico and Spain, in the nineteenth century, the Presidents went to Congress for a declaration of war, though from 1893, when the American Marines helped to overthrow the native Hawaiian government, until the present I count at least a score of military engagements, mostly in and around the Caribbean, but including those in Korea and Vietnam, undignified by a declaration of war. Woodrow Wilson, who had requested a Congressional declaration to enter World War I and still acknowledged during the national debate for Senate ratification of the Versailles Treaty that Congress had the responsibility to declare war, had on his own authority ordered troops into Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico twice between 1912 and 1916. This high-handed foreign policy was condemned after 1920 by an isolationist administration and Congress, and during the 1930's a proposed amendment to *The Constitution*, which would have required a popular referendum to go to war, failed to pass Congress, though it had near majority support in the House of Representatives.

George Washington had complained bitterly of the disorder in the ranks of the state militias during the Revolutionary War. He preferred to fight with a regular army. Congress raised and continued to sustain a small army and an essentially defensive navy until the humiliation of defeat in the War of 1812, after which Congress better supported a small military establishment. The defensive need was there: the United States had an open frontier with the eastern Indians, and contested borders with the British to the north and northwest and with the Spanish to the south and west. These required some organized national defence. Something of the republican animus against a standing army was forgotten, but legislative responsibility seemed a guarantee of constitutional safety. The pattern of policy was to



keep on duty an officer corps with largely unfilled regiments, which volunteers could fill in time of crisis. The Florida Cession, the brief war against Mexico in the 1840's (that misuse of a standing army by a standing government which Thoreau lamented in "Civil Disobedience"), the subsequent Mexican Cession, and the resolution of the border dispute with Britain over the Oregon Territory brought the army to new duties in the South, Southwest, and Pacific Coast. But the army remained so small that ambitious young officers resigned commissions because they could not feed their families on their salaries nor see any prospects for advancement in rank. Both Grant and Sherman, as prominent examples, resigned commissions in the army in the years after the Mexican War to search for other ways of making livelihoods and careers. Of course, during the Civil War the ranks of the army grew, though mostly with short term volunteers, but Congress returned to its old pattern during the Indian wars of the late nineteenth century and during "the splendid little war" against Spain in 1898. In the first decade of the twentieth century the army had remained very small. America did resort to a draft call during World War I, sending one and three-quarter million men to the Western Front; however, this large conscripted force was demobilized thereafter. Once again the old tradition of a small military establishment, essentially discouraged by mean Congressional funding, persisted. Stephen Ambrose reminds us, "In 1939, on the eve of World War II, the United States had an Army of 185,000 men with an annual budget of less than \$500 million" (Ambrose, xi). The United States had bases in the Pacific and took a confident, high-hand in Caribbean and Central American affairs, but it still had no "entangling alliances" and few extra-hemispherical ambitions. The modest size of the army demonstrates that Congress retained control over the army – it had been "raised" long since but it still needed "support" on a biannual basis, not always an easy matter with a large majority of isolationist senators and representatives.

Throughout 1940 the army and military budget grew steadily but slowly as Congress and President Franklin Roosevelt restrained General Marshall's estimates of American defensive needs. When war came to America in December, 1941, the national effort eventually put over eleven million men and women on land, sea and in the air. Selective service made such numbers possible. By 1947 those numbers had been cut to about two million and even as the Cold War began, the American military forces shrank further to about one and a half million in 1950 (Ambrose, 76 ff).

To be sure there were still large occupation forces in Germany and Japan, and conscription continued at lower levels, but there was no popular interest in maintaining larger forces, agitation for the curtailment of the draft grew, and, on the whole, the government and the nation felt secure under the umbrella of atomic weapons. Briefly, then, between 1945 and 1950 the army and Congress along with it attempted to return to some modified version of its old ways. The worsening Cold War, and Korea most specifically, brought the great change.

President Truman took America into Korea, under the cover of a UN Security Council resolution, claiming he did not need a declaration of war. The armed forces grew again, through heightened conscription, to more than three million, a figure sustained for over twenty years, until the draft was abolished, the war in Vietnam began to wind down (at least on the ground, if not in the air), and Congress with the Pentagon resolved to remake the armed forces into an all-volunteer, technologically modernized organization.

There is no longer any draft (required military service) in the country. The draft was abolished during the Vietnam war. President Nixon, that tactical genius, bribed the angry student resistance to the war into silence with the abolition of the draft. The passing of selective service meant the army would be professional henceforth, and, therefore, a citizens' rebellion against any war would be that much more difficult. That subtle consequence went largely unobserved by politicians or the press at the time, or since.

In 1973 Congress passed The War Powers Resolution, over a presidential veto, limiting the circumstances in which the President could commit troops to military action before seeking Congressional approval. What seemed a victory at that time makes gloomier reading today, now that we have learned to read between the lines. The Resolution really accepts that the Congress has in some measure negotiated away its power to declare war. "It is the purpose of this joint resolution to fulfil the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgement of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities..." (Fisher, 218). The framers, of course, had in mind no such formal consultation with the executive branch. Yet here, after the Vietnam fiasco, Congress is petitioning that the President consult with them. The President resented its presumption and vetoed the resolution. He lamented that Congressional

discussion of war or lesser hostilities, prior to commitment of troops, would tie the hands of the Commander-in-chief. And you wouldn't want to tie the President's hands, he insists. But the most casual inquiry into the matter of Congressional war powers reveals, rather, that discouraging executive power is what the American system intended. Nevertheless, Presidents find ways to untie their hands.

The size of the armed forces from 1975 to the present, notwithstanding American withdrawal from Vietnam and the end of the Cold War, has not changed very significantly. It remains volunteer; only the budget increases. It is what we would call a large permanent military establishment – it is “a standing army”. But not to worry. Alexander Hamilton observed:

Schemes to subvert the liberties of a great community require time to mature them for execution. An Army, so large as so seriously to menace those liberties, could only be formed by progressive augmentations; which would suppose not merely a temporary combination between the legislature and executive, but a continued conspiracy for a series of time. Is it probable that such a combination would exist at all? Is it probable that it would be persevered in, and transmitted along through all the successive variations in a representative body, which biennial elections would naturally produce in both houses? (*The Federalist*, 199-200)

The unlikelihood of such a sustained event convinces him that the power to raise and support a standing army is safely placed in legislative hands. From the permanent army's ambitions and greed we have Congress to protect us. In this matter, at least, the famously hard-headed Hamilton seems born under some dispensation of that laudable cynicism we call realism.

The Presidents have taken the making of foreign policy and the making of war itself entirely into executive hands – and the legislature has conspired by its diffidence, or cowardice. Now the President has a million or more professional army at his disposal, and he turns to Congress, not for a declaration of war, but for a legislative motion of approval of his intentions and decisions. That is how we got into Vietnam, into the Persian Gulf in 1991, and back into the Middle East again. When, months after the invasion of Iraq, Congress pressed the President about consultations and decisions made in his inner circle prior to the invasion, the President equivocated, claimed “executive privilege” and declined to provide such information. The Congress itself does not have unfettered access to CIA

intelligence – only the President and selected (and unelected) members of his administration do. The head of the CIA reveals to Congress classified information consistent with the Congressional “need to know” and the bureaucratic “need to protect its sources”. So, the Congress, the directly-elected representatives of the people, charged by the people with powers “to raise and support armies” and “to declare war” is invited to concur with Presidential policy though denied information shaping the war decisions of the government. Congress shows no inclination to deny funding to the CIA or to the military establishment in response to this executive defiance. Indeed, Congress demonstrates insufficient awareness, let alone outrage, that it is being defied. Congress has forgotten what Madison called “a great principle in free government”, that those who *conduct a war* cannot be “proper or safe judges” of whether *a war ought to be initiated, continued, or concluded* (Madison, 543-4). For a start, members of Congress might review the long struggle of a Parliament with an English king who felt confident in maintaining a standing army while manipulating a legislature to keep it funded, or acquaint themselves with *The Declaration of Rights* (1688). They could dwell a little on American history, browse again in *The Declaration of Independence* or *The Articles of Confederation* or the writings of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, or they could take a brief swing through the articles of *The Constitution*. None of this should prove too demanding, but it is patent that members of the modern American Congress read little and reflect even less. Either that or, rendering short-sighted support for current administrations, selfishly bent on their own political campaigns, careers and purposes, they are incapable of identifying and representing the historical, political rights of the American people. Hamilton, sanguine about legislative watchfulness, really had no idea at all.

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# **‘At So Sweet a Figure’: Bárbara Englished**

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## ‘At So Sweet a Figure’: Bárbara Englished

In Hélió’s rich intellectual legacy, his work as a translator should not be overlooked. He translated Blake<sup>1</sup>, Black American poets<sup>2</sup>, the barely known poems of Stephen Crane<sup>3</sup>, and the even more obscure poems of Landeg White.<sup>4</sup> Were we part of some shared agenda? Or was Hélió celebrating diversity? In Braga in 1997, in collaboration with the municipal library, he organised as a joint launch: *An Evening of Blake and White*. I coped with this as a case of from the sublime to the ridiculous. But the question remains: what project included me?

The chronology would suggest that having begun with me and found he could make a decent shot at translating poetry, he moved on to more ambitious challenges. The more I reflect on this explanation the more plausible it appears, but two facts seem to contradict it. The first was the scrupulous attention he gave to my poetry, which he translated with care and with great skill. So far as I know, I am the only poet alive to testify what it was like being translated by Hélió. He was never happy until he had captured the feeling at the core of a poem, nor satisfied unless his versions worked well as Portuguese poems. There are, in fact, several poems in *Superfícies e Interiores* that I prefer in their Portuguese reincarnation. The second fact is the warm encouragement he gave to my own project of

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<sup>1</sup> *A Águia e A Toupeira: Poemas de William Blake*, introdução, selecção, tradução e notas de Hélió Osvaldo Alves. Citânia, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> *Também Eu Sou a América: Poemas de Escritores Negros Norte-Americanos*, introdução, selecção, tradução e notas de Hélió Osvaldo Alves. Citânia, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> *O Sapo no Horizonte: Poemas de Stephen Crane*, introdução, selecção, tradução e nota cronológica de Hélió Osvaldo Alves. Edição do tradutor, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> *Superfícies e Interiores: Poemas* (de Landeg White), introdução, selecção, tradução e notas de Hélió Osvaldo Alves. CEMAR, 1995.

translating *The Lusíads*. I had sent him my first draft of Canto One, and when we met on Coimbra B station in September 1994, ostensibly to discuss his versions of the poems in *Superfícies e Interiors*, he announced at once and without the normal preliminaries, ‘I don’t feel I’m missing my octavos’. It was just the encouragement I needed at a time when I was preoccupied with questions of form. Rightly or wrongly, Hélió didn’t feel that his beloved *Lusíads* were falling into barbaric hands. The letter he sent me congratulating me on its publication in 1997 is among my most precious possessions.

Some eighteen months ago, I sent him a copy of my translation of ‘Endechas a Bárbara Escrava’. I didn’t know at the time that this was the beginning of what has now become for me the major project of attempting to translate the whole of Camões’s lyrical poetry. Hélió passed away in January last year before I was able to tell him of this. His response to my version of the ‘Bárbara Escrava’ poem was that he had read it with tears in his eyes, and when I was thinking of what contribution I could make to this colloquium in homage to Hélió, some discussion of this poem, to which he had so given his blessing, seemed the most appropriate.

### Endechas a Bárbara escrava

Aquela cativa  
 Que me tem cativo  
 Porque nela vivo  
 Já não quer que viva.  
 Eu nunca vi rosa  
 Em suaves molhos  
 Que pera meus olhos  
 Fosse mais fermosa.

Nem no campo flores,  
 Nem no céu estrelas  
 Me parecem belas  
 Como os meus amores.  
 Rosto singular,  
 Olhos sossegados,  
 Pretos e cansados,  
 Mas não de matar.

### Stanzas to the Slave, Barbara

This slave I own  
 Who holds me captive,  
 Living for her alone  
 Who scorns to live,  
 I never saw woven  
 In soft bouquets  
 One dog rose lovelier  
 To my gaze.

The flowers in the field,  
 And the stars above  
 In their beauty, yield  
 To my love.  
 Distinct in feature,  
 Eyes dark and at rest,  
 Tired creature,  
 But not of conquest.

Ca graça viva,  
Que neles lhe mora,  
Pera ser senhora  
De quem é cativa.  
Pretos os cabelos,  
Onde o povo vão  
Perde opinião  
Que os louros são belos.

Here dwells the sweetness  
By which I live,  
She being mistress  
Of whom she is captive.  
Her hair is raven,  
And the fashion responds,  
Forgetting its given  
Preference for blonde.

Pretidão de Amor,  
Tão doce a figura,  
Que a neve lhe jura  
Que trocara a cor.  
Leda mansidão,  
Que o siso acompanha;  
Bem parece estranha,  
Mas bárbara não.

Love being Negro  
At so sweet a figure,  
The blanketing snow  
Vows to change colour.  
Gladly faithful  
And naturally clever,  
This may be expedient,  
But barbarous, never!

Presença serena  
Que a tormenta amansa;  
Nela, enfim, descansa  
Toda minha pena.  
Esta é a cativa  
Que me tem cativo,  
E, pois nela vivo,  
É força que viva.

Quiet presence  
That silences storms,  
All my disturbance  
Finds peace in her arms.  
This is the vassal  
Who makes me her slave,  
Being the muscle  
That keeps me alive.<sup>5</sup>

Now I know very well this poem has long been the focus of a great deal of Portuguese scholarship. My contribution is very simple – to describe the difficulties of reproducing this sixteenth-century lyrical masterpiece in twenty-first century English, including one difficulty that I haven't been able to resolve, which means in turn that I am presenting you with a problem.

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<sup>5</sup> Portuguese text from Luís de Camões, *Obras Completas com prefácio e notas do Prof Hernâni Cidade, volume I, Redondilhas e Sonetos*. Livraria Sá da Costa, 1947, 92-94. English text from Landeg White, *Where the Angolans are Playing Football: Selected and New Poetry*. Parthian, 2003, 150-51.

Translation is the art of compromise, literary translation more so than any other kind. The first compromise is, of course, between the languages involved, in this case sixteenth-century Portuguese and modern English. But there are others, between the competing aims of the translation – between the need for scrupulous linguistic accuracy, and the wish to convey something of the poem’s extreme lyrical beauty and its emotional depth – what Helen Vendler has recently called ‘the sincerity effect’<sup>6</sup>. In the case of ‘Endechas a Bárbara Escrava’, so strong is this ‘sincerity effect’ that although we know nothing at all about the original Barbara most readers are persuaded that she must have been a real person and that Camões indeed loved her.

But there is a further compromise that has to be attempted, between the literary conventions and at least one literary theory of the sixteenth century, and those of today’s world, which is where my version runs into difficulties.

As everyone knows, the poetic conventions Camões is deploying here derive from the Petrarchan tradition, that immense body of love poems, normally sonnets, modelled on Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, completed in 1374. In these poems, the lady is praised in extravagant terms, though often (at least in Petrarch) in surprisingly simple language. She is mistress, he is slave, she is jailer, he is prisoner, she is beautiful, cruel, unattainable, she is the sweet enemy, and so on – mixing a great deal of hyperbole and oxymoron, that became more and more extravagant with Petrarch’s first imitators.

By the second half of the sixteenth century, a good deal of poetry was being produced that echoed in order to question the Petrarchan mode – Shakespeare’s ‘My Mistress eyes are nothing like the sun’ is only the most famous example among hundreds of others. But it is hard to feel that any of these reactive poets – from Wyatt to Donne – goes quite as far as Camões in questioning the convention. We know him to have been a soldier in the early colonial society of Goa (or perhaps Macau), and the poem describes a female prisoner whom he has made his apparently reluctant concubine, and with whom he has fallen in love. It is this rather dreadful yet marvellous situation to which the Petrarchan conventions are applied, providing

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<sup>6</sup> Vendler, Helen, ‘Camões the Sonneteer’, in *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* 9. University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, 2003, 20.

Camões with the astonishing opening lines 'This slave I own/Who holds me captive', and the equally astonishing conclusion 'This is the vassal/Who makes me her slave' – it's impossible to imagine any poet since the late seventeenth century deploying such startling metaphors. Having turned the social and poetic conventions upside down, Camões is able to subvert other Petrarchan modes – the conventions that white skin, an alabaster neck, a bosom like snow, hair like gold, and so on, are all the mark of the desirable mistress. So Barbara becomes 'Distinct in feature/Eyes dark and at rest', her 'hair is raven/And the fashion responds/Forgetting its given/Preference for blonde', and finally 'Love being Negro/At so sweet a figure/The blanketing snow/Vows to change colour'.

All this is relatively straightforward, and capable of paraphrase, and consequently translatable. But there was also a literary theory that governed contemporary poetical practice and, like all literary theories, it was ephemeral and has long since been superseded. I am referring to what Erich Auerbach terms the 'doctrine of types', the belief that different styles were necessary for different levels of literary representation. It is this assumption, which Auerbach discusses at length in his masterpiece *Mimesis*,<sup>7</sup> that leads Shakespeare to make his lords and ladies talk in blank verse and the underlings to talk prose.

The comparisons Camões deploys in stanza one and the first point of stanza two are thoroughly hackneyed. Barbara, his mistress, is beautiful as a rose, as lovely as the meadow flowers or the stars in the heavens. What is startling about these comparisons is not the images themselves, but the fact that they are being applied to a slave girl. The language appropriate for addressing a lady of rank is being used to describe the lowest of the low. How does a translator working in 2003, when the doctrine of types has long since become anachronistic, convey that sense of shock, that deliberate confusion of register? Almost every English speaker to whom I have shown my version has commented that they like stanzas three to five, but that the beginning of the poem seems weak, because conventional. How explain, except by way of footnotes, that being conventional is precisely the point. The images normally applied to ladies are being applied to a slave.

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<sup>7</sup> Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis: the Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. William Trask. Princeton University Press, 1953.

My way of dealing with this has been to cheat. I don't compare Barbara to a rose but to a 'dog rose', that wild rose from the English hedgerows that is just as lovely as the cultivated varieties but normally overlooked. This makes the image work for a modern English reader, but it is close to being the opposite of Camões's purpose. Then, in the first four lines of stanza two, I compress Camões's two images (of flowers in the field and the stars in the heavens) into one swift clause, manipulating the prosody to speed up the rhythm and get the lines over as quickly as possible. The focus of the poem shifts rapidly to the final three stanzas.

I never got round to discussing this problem with Hélió, but it is one that would have intrigued him. His whole career was devoted to resurrecting and promoting the voices of the 'Barbaras of this world, the excluded, the marginalized, the neglected, and his books – especially the two volumes of documents of English social history between 1789 and 1822<sup>8</sup> – will continue doing so for future generations of students.

Last January, I was privileged to join a huge crowd of mourners at Hélió's funeral in Guimarães. It took me by surprise to find no less than five priests presiding over the occasion. Somehow, in the Welsh manner, I had always assumed that Hélió's radicalism included a certain anti-clericalism. That evening, after returning home, I read again his long poem *Serras de Folgosinho*<sup>9</sup>, with its celebration of Nossa Senhora de Assedace, and felt I had learned a whole new side to his character.

Even after his passing, Hélió continues to educate me. I am very glad to have been able to contribute to this *colóquio* in homage to him.

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<sup>8</sup> Alves, Hélió Osvaldo, *A Revolução Francesa em Inglaterra: As Ideias e Textos. Vol. I Razão e Direitos (1789-1802)*, and *II As Carroças da Subversão (1803-1822)*, CEMAR, 1999 and 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Alves, Hélió Osvaldo, *Serras de Folgosinho: Itinerário de Saudades*, CEMAR, 2000.

# **John Ruskin and William Morris: A Mark on Future Ages**

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## John Ruskin and William Morris: A Mark on Future Ages

Ruskin's interest in architecture was first expressed while he was still an undergraduate at Oxford. For Ruskin, the organic forms of Gothic architecture represented a kind of landscape, and he argued that when Renaissance buildings supplanted the Gothic, landscape painting was developed to supply the images of Nature that cities now lacked. Nature was the template, not just for good architecture, but also for a good society.

Ruskin's turn to Gothic in 1849 with *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* was prompted by the economic and political changes that produced the destructive work of 'the Restorers, or Revolutionists'. The 'lamps' of the title were the moral categories governing good building he wished to see applied in contemporary design. These principles were expressed in the threatened pre-Renaissance buildings of Venice. Ruskin's original romantic perception of the city gave way to a more critical understanding of the mediaeval builders and the values of their society. This change affected his drawings, which became more accurate, and then purely investigative, as in his notebooks he constructed an architectural history. *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3) is about much more than stones however; it is an argument about the rise, decline and fall of empires that Ruskin applied to the England of his own day.

William Morris was early aware of the dangers of ignorant restoration. By 1877 it was not just bad restoration but the whole concept to which Morris objected. Because the nineteenth century had no living style of church architecture, restoration was inevitably a forgery. 'The whole surface of the building is necessarily tampered with; so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away from such old parts of the fabric as are left'; 'Such an ordinary thing as a wall, cannot at the present day be built in the same way as a mediaeval wall was.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> May Morris, i.110,154.

This followed from Ruskin's understanding that the life of mediaeval craftsmen was the foundation of Gothic architecture. Morris also drew from Ruskin his conviction that the protection of the past was an essential social duty of the present. It was 'no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong, partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us'. These words by Ruskin were printed by Morris in the manifesto of S.P.A.B. (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings).

But Morris, because of his hope for change as well as his growing social understanding, saw the protection of ancient buildings as part of the work for a different future. The time would return when seeing beauty in daily surroundings would once more be a common pleasure, 'almost the greatest of all harmless pleasure.'<sup>2</sup>

Morris asked in one of his letters to the press: 'Is it absolutely necessary that every scrap of space in the City should be devoted to money-making, and are religion, sacred memories, recollections of the great dead, memorials of the past, works of England's greatest architects to be banished from this wealthy City?'<sup>3</sup>

In his first lecture, *The Lesser Arts*, Morris referred to the 'restoration' of ancient monuments: 'Thus the matter stands: these old buildings have been altered and added to century after century, often beautifully, always historically; their very value, a great part of it, lay in that...'

So in 1877 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings or 'Anti-Scrape' as its followers called it due to the appreciation of old textures was formed to resist 'restoration' which had by then become quite a fashion.

Morris managed to rescue the churches at Kelmscott and Inglesham from proposed restoration, both these buildings of genuine antiquity are kept alive by their use, they are part of a living space, their imperfections inseparable from their charm.

Morris threw himself whole-heartedly into the campaign. He accepted no more commissions for stained glass in old churches. In the first years Morris was secretary and remained the leading spirit on S.P.A.B. committee. He

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<sup>2</sup> May Morris, i 146.

<sup>3</sup> Letters, i,478.

was also a frequent official visitor for S.P.A.B., which wasn't always a success. On being shown a piece of nineteenth-century Gothic carving in a cathedral, he burst out: 'Why, I could carve them better with my teeth'. During the first five years over a hundred cases were being handled a year. Through foreign correspondents a certain amount of work was also done in Italy, Egypt and India.

Ruskin's delight in the colour, encrustation and sculpture of Venetian architecture appealed to contemporary architects such as George Gilbert Scott, William Butterfield and George Edmund Street. His moral argument also inspired two Oxford undergraduates, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. Burne-Jones wrote in 1853 that Ruskin was 'in prose what Tennyson is in poetry, and what the Pre-Raphaelites are in painting'. While reading Ruskin, Morris found his vocation as a designer, and Burne-Jones his as a painter. His architectural ideas influenced Edward Woodward, the young Irish architect chosen in 1854 to build Oxford University's new Museum. The Pre-Raphaelite sculptors Thomas Woolner and Alexander Munro had commissions, while Rossetti, Hughs, Morris, Burne-Jones and other members of the widening Pre-Raphaelite circle were engaged in decorating Woodward's other Oxford building, the University Union's new library and debating hall.

*The Stones of Venice* undoubtedly was influential on contemporary art and architecture. The multi-coloured brick and stonework of Verona and the marbled and encrusted surfaces of Venice became part of the repertoire of Victorian architects. Ruskin's evocation of Pre-Renaissance Venice appealed to Burne-Jones's mediaevalism, his concern for the life of the craftsman appealed to Morris; none the less there is a distinction to be made between Ruskin's critical mediaevalism, where the past is used to deplore the present, and the romantic mediaevalism popular with Rossetti, Morris or Burne-Jones, where the past is an escape from the present.

As early as 1856 Ruskin had suggested that works by Rossetti and G.F.Watts represented 'the dawn of a new era'. These were not in the naturalistic mode popular at the Royal Academy, nor did they deploy Holman Hunt's symbolic realism. They were works of the imagination, at the same polarity in Ruskin's aesthetics as Turner's visionary allegories, with which he compared them. They presented neither the natural world, in terms of landscape, nor the contemporary world, in terms of people or events, but an ideal constructed out of images drawn from the past, in order to render atmospheres and emotions rather than tell stories.

After Ruskin published the final volume of *Modern Painters* in 1860, he turned his attention from the visual economy to the political economy that supported it, beginning with his most celebrated work of social criticism, *Unto This Last*. For five years he was silent, in print at least, on matters of art. His silence reflected a crisis felt throughout Victorian culture as a confident materialism became undermined by religious doubt. Ruskin's abandonment of Evangelical Protestantism in 1858 was part of a wider shift of feeling. Artists sought new forms of transcendental expression, finding inspiration in an imaginary past. Beauty became the new religion, art for art's sake its doctrine. From these cross-currents there emerged the Aesthetic movement, which reached its apogee in 1877 with the opening (by Sir Charles Lindsay) of the commercial Grosvenor Gallery as a 'palace of art' in order to challenge the authority of the official exhibition bodies and find new patrons for the contemporary avant-garde.

Ruskin's attack on Whistler's work there, and his defeat in the case that Whistler brought against him, appeared to signal that he had lost touch with contemporary art. The idea of a picture that appeared to do *nothing*, however, was beyond Ruskin's comprehension. Whistler's legal victory over his critic, who advocated not only the Beautiful, but the True, obscured Ruskin's contribution to Aestheticism ever since. Ruskin had always insisted on the higher importance of the imagination. And in the later 1860s he defended an approach to painting that became one of the strands within the art of the 1870s. Ruskin's relationship with the artists associated with the Aesthetic movement was more complex, and more positive, than the clash with Whistler suggests.

During the 1860s Ruskin's view of the world began to darken. He lost none of his belief in the importance of art, but his faith in people's ability to respond to its moral significance weakened. His art criticism became social criticism as he explored the reasons for the destructive greed that left people blind to the beauty of nature and indifferent to the value of art.

Since 1856 and for over thirty years, Morris had been evolving radical new ways of working, not in principle but practice. This is what made him a much more practical design reformer than John Ruskin: he was involved in the techniques of the workshop. He could demonstrate how the thing was done. In a totally convincing way he showed the wrong-headedness in separating the design process from the making: one was a necessary stage towards the other; the designer and maker could be one and the same

person, the person who came to be defined as artist-craftsman. Another false perception he attacked was that the fine artist had no role in industrial production. Morris had designed for many factories and workshops, on varying scales and in different materials, and had proved this to be patently untrue.

Morris's strength, the principle he passed on to another generation of artist-craftsmen, derived from the acquisition of skill. Nothing was embarked on in his workshops that he did not know how to do himself. The sheer range of crafts he covered was also influential: these were mainly crafts to do with furnishing and building, deriving from architecture as the 'mother art'. The ideal of fellowship, the working bond of brothers traceable back to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, inherent in the founding of Morris, Marshal, Faulkner & Co., was extended by Morris in his lectures into a more generalized vision of workshops and idyllic small-scale factories, gregarious, productive, joyful places with built-in training schemes and mutual support systems on the lines of the mediaeval guilds. The most radical innovation was of course the social one: the concept of the educated person pursuing what might be known as handwork but in fact was manual labour, traditional occupation of the artisan.

Ruskin's claim was that the social structures of the Middle Ages allowed the workman freedom of individual expression tragically absent in the Victorian age. He argued against the division of labour in the Victorian factories and the way it inevitably dehumanized the operatives: 'if you will make a man of the working creature, you cannot make a tool'. He attacked the monotony of the Victorian industrial system, with its morally destructive cycles: boredom and monotony at work, followed by pursuit of leisure completely unconnected with the work or workplace.

Ruskin challenged the traditional view that a designer should not also be a maker: it seemed to him unsatisfactory to the point of immorality for one man's thoughts to be executed by another man's hands. His most startling proposals arose from what he saw as an incorrect distinction between manual labour and intellect:

We are always in these days endeavouring to separate the two; we want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman, and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought often to be thinking, and the thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen, in the best sense.

The complexity of Ruskin's relationship with the painters and poets of the Aesthetic movement is demonstrated by his connection with a picture, a portrait of Whistler's model and mistress Joanna Hiffernan. In April 1865 Swinburne wrote a poem in its honour, supplying his own speculative narrative for the story less image. Two of the four verses were reprinted in the Royal Academy catalogue, and the whole poem, on gold paper, was attached by Whistler to the original frame. Ruskin, who knew Swinburne through Rossetti, was so impressed by the poem, that he asked him for a copy. In 1865 the future litigants were therefore both in possession of manuscript versions of the poem. It is possible that its reference to roses, although there are none in the painting, appealed to Ruskin because of his love for Rose La Touche, but the effect of the picture is consistent with Ruskin's aesthetic principles. Nor were Whistler's references to the new fashion of Japonisme in the jar and the fan necessarily objectionable. It was only after Ruskin's legal defeat by Whistler that he began to tell people to 'put Oriental Art entirely out of your heads'.

I never saw anything so impudent on the walls of any exhibition, in any country, as last year in London. It was a daub professing to be a 'harmony in pink and white' or some such nonsense; absolute rubbish, and which had taken about a quarter of an hour to scrawl – it had no pretence to be called painting. The price asked for it was two hundred and fifty guineas.

When Ruskin made this comment in a lecture at Oxford on 27 October 1873, it was clearly directed at Whistler, but he did not name the artist, exhibition, or a specific picture. Ruskin's attack, mentioning a price and the manner of execution, anticipates his criticisms of 1877. The rapid execution and lack of detail exemplifies the lack of 'finish' that Ruskin, along with most of his audience, expected in a painting. The vague, out-of-scale figure on the foreshore and the placing of the date and Whistler's monogram do not conform to Ruskin's principles of composition. Yet he had preceded Whistler in applying musical analogies to painting. He had himself used the expression 'harmonies of gold with grey' in relation to Turner and praised 'the intense harmony of colour' in Millais. In *The Stones of Venice* he argued: the arrangement of colours and lines is an art analogous to the composition of music, and entirely independent of the representation of facts. But facts, and a moral purpose, there had to be, and a painting apparently having neither was another matter. Ruskin's description of Whistler's 'willful imposture' was printed in the *Spectator*, and Whistler

sued for defamation. The case did not come to court until November 1878. Ruskin had had his first mental collapse in February that year, and did not appear. His instructions to his defense council were unrepentant: Whistler was ill-educated because the price demanded was unjust, the analogy between painting and music was misunderstood, the work was not art but ornament, unfinished and empty of ideas. Whistler dominated the trial with arguing the case for art for art's sake. Whistler won, but the derisory award of a farthing's damages without costs led to his bankruptcy. Ruskin resigned his Slade Professorship, partly in disgust, partly because of his mental depression.

During Morris's campaign for a general improvement in the setting of town life, his lectures both in their broad vision and their sense for detail, are extraordinarily prophetic of the twentieth-century environmentalism. Victorian towns made him depressed and resentful, he regarded them with open hostility, 'the mere stretch of houses, the vast mass of shabbiness and uneventfulness, sits upon one like a nightmare'.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, instead of burying himself in a vision of Utopia, as he might have done and as he is probably thought to have done, he contributed with some extremely practical suggestions for improving urban life. Morris became an important influence in the development of town planning in Britain.

In 1892 William Morris, as an artist, craftsman, social reformer and disciple of Ruskin, published a special edition of the central chapter of Ruskin's great work, *The Stones of Venice*. Morris said in his preface, 'it is one of the most important things written by the author, and in future days will be considered as one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century. To some of us when we first read it ... it seemed to point out a new road on which the world should travel'. Part IV shows Ruskin's engagement with Gothic and Venetian architecture from his early enjoyment of its picturesque decay, through his increasingly serious study of its history, to his development of principles governing the moral and social purpose of architecture, and their articulation in the design of a new building, the Oxford Museum.

For Ruskin the Oxford Museum was a social as well as aesthetic mission: 'literally the first building raised in England since the close of the fifteenth

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<sup>4</sup> Letters ii, 438.

century, which fearlessly put to new trial this old faith in nature, and in the genius of the unassisted workman, who gathered out of nature the materials he needed'. The Irish stonemasons, who carved its decorations, were examples of the workers that he wished to see liberated from industrial production; the roots of Ruskin's social criticism are to be found here. The London Working Men's College was founded in 1854 under the leadership of F.D. Maurice and others, who wished to offer working men the sort of education available to the middle class, as opposed to the technical instruction available in the voluntary Mechanics' Institutes or the Government Schools of Design. Ruskin's argument in his chapter on 'The Nature of Gothic' was that industrialization was turning men into machines, and provoking social discontent. As a teacher at the College – he said his aim was 'directed not to making a carpenter an artist, but to making him happier as a carpenter'.

He taught regularly on Thursday evenings from 1854 to 1858. While Ruskin taught an elementary class in landscape drawing, he quickly recruited Rossetti to take a more advanced class in figure drawing and colour. Burne-Jones first saw Rossetti at the College, and in 1856 regularly met Ruskin after the Thursday classes. Burne-Jones himself taught at the College from January 1859 to March 1861, first as an assistant to Ford Madox Brown who sourly observed in his diary in 1857 that Ruskin was 'widely popular with the men and as absurd and spiteful'. Among the clerks, carpenters and printers Ruskin taught, were a number of men who later became his assistants. The London Working Men's College also not only brought Ruskin into regular contact with Pre-Raphaelite artists, but encouraged him to see himself as a teacher as well as a critic.

William Morris published a version of the 1886 edition of chapter 6 of volume II of *The Stones of Venice*. This edition was the fourth publication of Morris's Kelmscott Press, founded in 1890. Morris had become a socialist, a political position he has first declared in a lecture at Oxford in November 1883 at which Ruskin had taken the chair, declaring Morris to be 'the great conceiver and doer, the man at once a poet, an artist and a workman, and his old and dear friend'.

Morris and Burne-Jones read *The Stones of Venice* together at Oxford in 1853, and Morris abandoned his plans to enter the Church in favour first of architecture, then after meeting Rossetti, painting, contributing to the Oxford Union murals, and then applied design through the formation of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., in 1862, which became Morris & Co.,



in 1875. He also had a parallel career as a composer of epic sagas. His work in founding the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 coincided with and supported Ruskin's campaign in Venice to protect St. Mark's. Ruskin gave Holman Hunt his private view of Morris in a letter of October 1885: 'Morris has wasted an awful lot of himself in rhyming and that damned glass – he ought to have been the center of all serviceable manufacture for us, from the Oxford Union days'.

In his preface to the Kelmscott edition Morris emphasized Ruskin's 'ethical and political' contribution to the Victorian visual economy: 'it is just this part of his work, fairly begun in 'The Nature of Gothic', and brought to its culmination in that great book *Unto This Last*, which has had the most enduring and beneficial effect on his contemporaries, and will have through them on succeeding generations'. John Ruskin, the critic of art, has not only given the keenest pleasure to thousands of readers by his life-like description, and the ingenuity and delicacy of his analysis of works of art, but he has let a flood of daylight into the cloud of sham-technical twaddle which was once the whole substance of "art-criticism".

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# Edgar Allan Poe: O Artista e o seu Duplo

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## Edgar Allan Poe: O Artista e o seu Duplo

**A**lguns dos mais famosos contos de Poe apresentam-nos personagens-artistas que não resistem à inclinação de perpetrar actos criminosos, noutras encontramos seres criminosos que demonstram possuir capacidades artísticas, provando-se assim a intenção do autor em unir estes dois grupos através de uma perversidade comum, vendo no artista um duplo do criminoso e no criminoso um duplo do artista.

Em *The French Face of Edgar Allan Poe* (1957), Patrick Quinn chamara já a atenção para o facto de Poe se interessar pelas zonas mais negras da psique humana, observando que: “In the stories of psychological terror it is the author himself who speaks as the criminal hero” (Quinn 1957:235). Esta objectividade dramática do autor permitir-lhe-á atingir essa consciência do mal que Jung defendia ser indispensável a uma total integração psíquica. Em “The Fall of the House of Usher”, Usher e Madeline não existem somente como personagens independentes, pois podem ser considerados objectivações do inconsciente pessoal e colectivo do narrador, ao qual as dimensões concretas das personagens dão uma existência real. Todo o conto pode ser interpretado como um sonho, sendo os habitantes da casa tomados como reais apenas pelo narrador, do qual se tornam duplos, evidenciando que os pólos opostos da personalidade humana não se devem excluir mutuamente, mas devem antes coexistir em integração. Muitos dos contos de Poe tornam-se parábolas deste dualismo, tema central de muita ficção gótica de fins do séc. XVIII e do séc. XIX, como será o caso de *Wieland* de Brockden Brown, *Doppelgänger* de Hoffmann, *Penthisilea* de Kleist e *Peter Schlemihl* de Chamisso, que anteciparam não só obras de Poe mas também de Dostoievski, Wilde, Stevenson e James.

Já Schlegel tinha observado que o antigo diálogo com Deus havia sido interiorizado, daqui resultando uma duplicidade e dualismo intrínsecos que são a nossa condição de ser, sendo necessário reconhecer o nosso ser

interior como essencialmente dramático. Também Hegel vira o pensamento moderno essencialmente marcado por uma duplicidade da personalidade, uma Natureza Dividida, onde o conflito é permanente. Obras psicanalíticas sobre duplos literários como a de Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1971), têm indicado perspectivas de leituras freudianas sobre personalidades fragmentadas. Rank apresenta uma teoria da personalidade baseada no trauma do nascimento, observando que o duplo pode ser reportado ao problema essencial do ego, sendo a sua criação devido a uma projecção por uma personalidade retida numa certa fase do desenvolvimento do seu ego amado narcisicamente. Segundo Rank, o problema reside em que paradoxalmente o duplo se torne numa ameaça, num rival da personalidade original, dado que: “originally created as a wish-defense against a dreaded eternal destruction, he reappears in superstition as the messenger of death” (Rank 1971:86).

Esta ameaça torna-se bem explícita num poema escrito por Heinrich Heine e musicado por Schubert, intitulado “Der Doppelgänger”: “(...) / Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Hohe, / Und ringt die Hande vor Schmerzengewalt; / Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe – / Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt./ (...)”. Sabe-se também que este horror de ver o outro usurpar a sua identidade emocional e física é igualmente tema central de *O Duplo* de Dostoievski. Assim considerado, o motivo do duplo dará origem a leituras da alteridade como um “mal”. Em “Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre”, Frederick Jameson vê a oposição conceptual entre o bem e o mal como a categoria organizativa mais importante do romance, concluindo:

“It is becoming increasingly clear that the concept of evil is at one with the category of Otherness itself: evil characterizes whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a very real and urgent threat to my existence. (...) The point, however, is not that in such figures the Other is feared because he is evil; rather he is evil *because* he is Other, alien, different, strange, unclean, and unfamiliar” (Jameson 1975:140).

Este tormento provocado pelo “Outro” existe porque o duplo se apropria da identidade motivando um questionamento da consciência, sendo esta uma prova de que ele é um ser humano real. Tudo isto levou Stephen King a concluir, em *Danse Macabre*, que, “what scares us the most about Mr. Hyde, perhaps, is the fact that he was a part of Dr. Jekyll all along”

(King 1981:282). Também Tzvetan Todorov concluiu que “le double incarne la menace: c’est l’avant-signe du danger et de la peur” (Todorov 1970:152). Na obra de Rank atrás mencionada, o autor cita um poema de Richard Dehmel intitulado “Masks”, onde se repete o verso: “You are not I – but I am you”. Igualmente Arthur Machen em *The Great God Pan* não resiste à seguinte interrogação “I say I am a man, but who is the other who hides in me ?” (Jackson 1995:95). É nesta base que Freud vê o duplo como algo sinistro (*unheimlich*) e como uma poderosa fonte de terror. O seu comentário é sobre este assunto elucidativo:

When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the ‘double’ being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted – a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect. The ‘double’ has become a thing of terror, just as, after the collapse of their religion, the gods turned into demons (Heine, ‘Die Götter im Exil’) (Freud 1994:358).

Também célebre pela sua perspectiva psicanalítica do “Outro”, Jacques Lacan dá-nos conta da natureza desta ameaça do duplo em relação à personalidade original descrevendo-a como um conflito com o que denominou “fase do espelho”, quando o ego se diferencia do que o rodeia e se define autonomamente como um indivíduo. Lacan situa esta fase numa época do desenvolvimento após os seis meses de idade em que a criança ainda não sente discrepância entre a sua personalidade e o outro, pois encontra-se num estado de narcisismo primário em que ela é o seu próprio ideal. Esta fase corresponde a uma identificação, onde se pode encontrar o que Lacan referiu como “la matrice symbolique où le *je* se précipite en une forme primordiale” (Lacan 1996:90). Este estado original entra mais tarde em conflito com a construção cultural do ego, o *Je-idéal*, análogo ao super-ego de Freud. Os desejos naturais próprios dessa fase de narcisismo primário vêem-se limitados pelas condenações e medidas normativas que reprimem os instintos, os quais se terão de sujeitar às determinações desse outro “Eu” social. O ego deixa, assim, de ser considerado uma unidade indivisível, para no seu interior se estabelecer uma luta entre duas partes divergentes da personalidade. Este conflito, onde Lacan viu a origem do que chamou “desintegração agressiva do indivíduo”, é provocado por um “drama de inveja primordial” (Lacan 1996:95), pois o reconhecimento do outro passa por uma luta de morte, procedendo-se a uma dialéctica da negatividade, em que o desejo do homem se define como a necessidade de cada indivíduo

fazer reconhecer o seu desejo de forma absoluta, levando inevitavelmente ao desenvolvimento de instintos de destruição para anular e aniquilar o “Outro”. Mas como, através desta teoria da alteridade, o “Outro” é uma representação do “Eu” e um lugar onde se constitui o sujeito, essa aniquilação acaba por se transformar numa autodestruição, numa autêntica tragédia do desejo em que “le désir de l’homme est le désir de l’Autre” (Roudinesco 1997:84).

A tendência para o impulso do perverso das personagens de Poe traduz esta fragmentação de carácter, colocando-se o indivíduo perante a necessidade de regresso a uma identidade primordial que a cultura e as normas sociais impostas proíbem, desenvolvendo-se assim um fascínio pelo proibido que subjaz à atracção pelo “Outro”, esse desejo por algo diferente que transcende todas as normas, crenças ou tradições culturais. É neste sentido que se deverá entender o transcendentalismo de Poe, pois ele baseia-se nessa própria natureza do impulso do perverso, nessa constante inclinação em transgredir normas, que em “The Black Cat” o autor traduziu pela expressão “to violate that which is *Law*”. Reconhecendo também nestes instintos de destruição da natureza humana os inimigos de uma determinada cultura e civilização, em *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud comenta: “I take up the standpoint that the tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man, and (...) it constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture. (...) This instinct of aggression is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct we have found alongside of Eros, sharing his rule over the earth” (Freud 1990:49).

Assim, o transcendentalismo de Poe não se fundamenta nas meras abstrações de preceitos morais defendidos pelos transcendentalistas da Nova Inglaterra e pelos seus mentores europeus como Kant, Carlyle e Coleridge, por si criticados pela pouca autenticidade dos seus ideais: “You mistake me in supposing I dislike the transcendentalists – it is only the pretenders and sophists among them” (Ostrom 1948 :259). O seu é mais um transcendentalismo psíquico que transporta o indivíduo na aventura da descoberta do que está para além da razão, motivado pela atracção incontrolável do desejo do “Outro”, dessa outra face da realidade e da consciência, onde se ocultam os mistérios do inconsciente. Segundo Lacan, “l’inconscient, c’est le discours de l’Autre” (Lacan 1996:24). A aventura, que toda a sua obra desenvolve em busca deste “Outro”, integra-se nessa sempre persistente necessidade de Poe em rejeitar as “self-evident truths”



aceites pelo pensamento do seu tempo incapaz de se predispor a aceitar “outras” verdades igualmente válidas. Em “Mellonta Tauta” (1849), o autor apresenta uma caricatura da epistemologia ocidental chamando a Aristóteles “Aries Tottle” e aos Americanos “Amriccans”. Poe critica a ligação destes últimos aos factos e compara as suas atitudes com a do presumido erudito que “must necessarily see an object the better the more closely he holds it to his eyes”. (Poe 1984:876). Apresentando-se sob a forma de um diário escrito durante uma viagem futurista de balão em 2848, o conto transforma-se numa sátira social, onde se critica o despotismo da democracia americana em sujeitar o indivíduo às massas, dando origem à criação de “odious pleasure seekers”, em cujo cérebro nenhuma invenção genuína surge, sendo somente capazes de apreciar viagens rotineiras.

Esta rejeição de Poe em relação aos métodos epistemológicos de indução e dedução do pensamento ocidental, preterindo-os a favor dos poderes da intuição, faz parte da sua crítica à falta de vivacidade intelectual dos seus contemporâneos e da sua estratégia de ataque às categorias fundamentais do sistema cultural. “The Fall of the House of Usher”, “Morella” e “Ligeia” demonstram este empenho do autor em subverter categorias estabelecidas, violadas pela ressurreição das personagens femininas que desrespeitam as fronteiras impostas entre os vivos e os mortos. O próprio pensamento expresso em “Mesmeric Revelation” (1844), de que a morte é essa “painful metamorphosis” (Poe 1984:724), traduz o desejo de a personalidade se poder metamorfosear no “Outro”, vencendo as barreiras impostas pela mortalidade da vida terrena, ao passar-se de um estado rudimentar para outro mais completo, perfeito, primordial e imortal. Nisto consiste o verdadeiro transcendentalismo de Poe, através do qual ele constrói o seu próprio *Je-idéal*, obtido por uma ruptura com esse ego social imposto.

Considerar a morte como uma transmutação da vida é uma ideia tão transgressiva como a de criar personagens perversas que retiram prazer do crime ou desenvolvem desejos de autodestruição, transformando-se em grotescos perigosos que ameaçam a ordem cultural, tornando-se, como *Frankenstein* ou *The Last Man* de Mary Shelley, numa negação absoluta dos seus valores. “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Black Cat” e “William Wilson” são três contos em que essa transgressão é mais radical e onde mais se sente o desejo do autor em descobrir-se “Outro”, em penetrar na psique humana como se esta fosse uma região do globo totalmente inexplorada. Trata-se de uma experiência semelhante a uma das suas aventuras marítimas, sendo

a isso igualmente levado por “a curiosity to penetrate the mysteries of these awful regions” (Poe 1984:198), aí experimentando sensações tão terríveis como as que advêm de se ser apanhado no vortex de “A Descent into the Maelström”, de se estar sujeito aos terrores de instrumentos de tortura activados em “The Pit and the Pendulum” ou de ser impelido para o abismo de uma catarata em *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Nesta aventura se lança Poe, como as suas próprias personagens, por um “desejo irresistível de conhecer”, que para si é uma parte essencial da imaginação.

Metamorfoseando-se em indivíduos dominados por instintos criminosos, o autor irá poder submergir bem fundo nas profundezas dessa “blackness of darkness” da alma humana, descrita em “The Pit and the Pendulum” como o resultado de “a mad rushing descent as of the soul into the Hades” (Poe 1984:492) e comparável em *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym* à sensação de ser enterrado vivo, que tem por consequência: “to carry into the human heart a degree of appalling awe and horror not to be tolerated – never to be conceived” (Poe 1984:1153). Nos três contos atrás mencionados, os narradores vivem nas trevas do seu terror da alma, como o marinheiro em “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, devido a um sentimento de culpa motivado por um assassinio irracional. A morte do albatroz, no poema de Coleridge, assemelha-se à morte do gato preto em “The Black Cat”. Ambos representam a parte animal da natureza humana, destruída pelos actos criminosos das personagens. Sendo comum que, nos sonhos, as imagens de animais apareçam frequentemente sempre que os instintos são negligenciados, compreende-se que as personagens em questão vivam obcecadas pela constante presença desses seres na sua memória. Elas são o símbolo de uma parte reprimida da psique humana, sendo o maior pecado destas personagens, não o facto de terem assassinado animais, mas o facto de não possuírem consciência do poder destruidor de um inconsciente reprimido. Se o “Ancient Mariner” era culpado de não ter uma visão suficientemente vasta que lhe permitisse “to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a grander and better world” (Coleridge 1996:81), acostumando-se antes à trivialidade da vida comum, também o narrador de “The Black Cat”, ao restringir excessivamente a sua afectividade ao mundo animal, numa fase inicial da sua vida, esquece-se do mundo dos homens e da sua verdadeira natureza. A sua substituição dos animais pelas afeições de “the paltry gossamer fidelity of mere Man” explica, segundo Daniel Hoffmann, o fascínio e ansiedade do narrador acerca dos desejos sexuais, culminando no

assassinio da mulher. Tudo isto nos faz inevitavelmente lembrar as aves embalsamadas de Norman Bates, em *Psycho*, e do que na verdade também se ocultava por detrás desta propensão da personagem, que Hitchcock esclareceu numa entrevista a François Truffaut, dizendo: “He knows the birds and he knows that they’re watching him all the time. He can see his own guilt reflected in their knowing eyes”(Truffaut 1958:282). É por isso que estes animais se transformam numa maldição: o albatroz, inicialmente uma ave de bom agouro, torna-se, após a morte, numa ave vingativa, e Pluto, um simples gato de estimação, transforma-se numa bruxa disfarçada, pelos seus extraordinários poderes de recriminação do acto criminoso, dando crédito à superstição popular associada aos gatos pretos. Algo muito semelhante acontece em *The Birds*, o célebre filme de Hitchcock, em que “aves do amor” (*love birds*) se transformam em aves do ódio, deixando de ser simples aves vulgares para passarem a ser pássaros que arrancam os olhos dos homens. Sendo ao mesmo tempo algo familiar e estranho, estes animais tornam-se muito *unheimlich*, pois na verdade personificam o inconsciente humano, dando-nos conta de uma psique atormentada com a sua própria divisão e dissociação, sendo o acto perverso uma forma irracional de o indivíduo pôr termo ao desespero desse conflito interior dilacerante, de que o próprio autor foi ao mesmo tempo criador e vítima.

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# **A Cidade Utópica de William Morris: Simbologia e Transcendência**

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## A Cidade Utópica de William Morris: Simbologia e Transcendência

“If I could but see a day of it!”

William Morris, *News from Nowhere*

**A**o começar a escrita de *News from Nowhere*, William Morris teve o cuidado de colocar a narrativa três pontos afastada da realidade, à boa maneira platónica, de forma que, ao dizer-se ‘o narrador’, não se esteja a nomear uma pessoa mas um conceito abstracto. Na peugada de *O Banquete*, Morris poderia ter chamado Apolodoro ao primeiro interveniente (o que inicia o relato), Aristodemo ao que lhe contou a ocorrência (“says a friend”, 3) e Gláucon a William Guest (“a man whom he [our friend] knows very well indeed”, 3). Quanto àquele que é a razão de ser e o cérebro iluminado da situação narrada, esse não deixa de ser o seu autor, William Morris, com a sua ideologia socialista; assim como o criador e estruturador de *O Banquete* é Platão, embora carregando Sócrates aos ombros.

No caso vertente, necessário como se torna referir um narrador – Morris, o seu amigo, ou o amigo do seu amigo –, ele será tomado apenas como o agente passivo do desenrolar dos acontecimentos, depois de ter sido o seu engendrador inconsciente.

Falemos então do narrador: sócio de uma Liga socialista, descontente com a situação do país quanto à justiça social, cansado e desiludido, vai imaginando com deleite a cura para os males do seu tempo: a operação/ /revolução que extirpará a causa do mal e, após a necessária intervenção e a ‘convalescença’ da sociedade, o estabelecimento da felicidade eterna para todos. O tempo real em que o narrador vive é invernos, nocturno, malsão, provoca-lhe desconforto e náusea; o tempo antevisto em sonhos é o que ele gostaria de atingir: “If I could but see a day of it!”. E, com o formular desse desejo, a fada da felicidade, a imaginação, essa incomparável ‘reine des

facultées’, realiza-lho de forma inexcedível transformando o tempo cronológico em tempo psicológico. Ele apenas atravessou o túnel definitivo e inevitável que o levou da obscura vida terrena à bem-aventurança onde a feliz eternidade é um dia e um dia (ou uma noite) é a eternidade. Para efectuar decisivamente a passagem e consolidar a mudança teve de “adormecer”, ou seja, mergulhar no rio Lethes do esquecimento, submeter-se ao baptismo no Jordão que transformou o homem velho dos “old bad times” no homem novo da “Jerusalém conquistada”; e teve de se deixar conduzir pelo barqueiro do Aqueronte, que virou costas às trevas e o orientou para o paraíso da cidade de Deus, como corolário do seu progresso de peregrino na cidade terreal.

O tempo foi subvertido: o soturno Presente terrestre desapareceu, deu lugar ao inefável Futuro da grande expectativa e ao Passado da mítica Idade Média sem máquinas nem fumos de fábricas, uma época de companheirismo, poesia, beleza; de prazer no trabalho manual e comunitário e, sobretudo, da alquimia que transforma o feio em belo, o vil metal em ouro de lei. Como sempre que actua a imaginação, esquece-se o presente que desagrada e, passando-o pelo cadinho mágico do alquimista, cria-se e vive-se o presente eterno de beatitude.

*News from Nowhere* é o resultado do diálogo que William Morris idealiza entre o presente e o futuro: por um lado, a tentativa de resposta à sua própria pergunta no *Commonweal* em 1886, a respeito do justificado descontentamento dos trabalhadores – “how can that discontent be used so as to bring about the New Birth of Society?” (Briggs, ed. 1984, 148); e, ao mesmo tempo, um discorrer filosófico tributário dos diálogos socráticos de Platão, em que não se atinge uma conclusão definitiva, o diagnóstico fica em aberto (“I had perhaps dreamed of such a bridge”, 8).

Enquanto William Morris foi construindo mentalmente a sua cidade utópica, burilando e acrescentando pormenores, ela manteve-se viva, exequível, do lado de cá da realidade. Porém, quando deixou o seu pensamento atravessar o túnel que liga a existência terrestre ao insondável “outro lado”, plasmando o seu projecto num quadro trans-existencial de figuras de estatuária, mais que de vida, o projecto perdeu a capacidade de progresso indispensável a todo o ser vivo. A felicidade existente em *Nowhere* deixou de ser a felicidade que cada um idealiza, diferente da de todos os outros, apenas igual na intensidade da aspiração, e passou a ser a simples versão de um socialista-idealista de propostas pouco concretas para além da reversão completa do *status quo*. Os habitantes de *Nowhere* são demasiado felizes,



demasiado permanente e inalteravelmente alegres e contentes com tudo<sup>1</sup> para serem possíveis – e até desejáveis – do lado de cá da realidade; isto é, para pessoas humanas terrenas. As personagens repetem constantemente o cliché “we feel so happy” (48), “healthy and happy” (49), “we are happy” (72), “we are too happy” (102), expressões que, numa análise freudiana, seriam consideradas como *leitmotiven* de repetição-compulsão. Este cliché de conveniência não precisaria de ser afirmado por quem não conhecesse outro estado de alma; e, no contexto, parece querer comprovar o bom êxito da revolução, cujo objectivo era “to make people happy” (92). Aliás, o próprio narrador insiste em descrições como “happy and friendly expression” (12), “happy-looking” (14), “this happy and lovely folk” (200) ou “happy-looking men and women” (208). O facto é que *News from Nowhere* quer ser o espelho de uma existência comunitária feliz e modelar, mas, como diz Fernando Pessoa num dos seus sonetos ingleses,

but one side of things the mirror knows,  
And knows it cold from its solidness.  
A double lie its truth is; what it shows  
By true show's false and nowhere by true place.<sup>2</sup>

Também na “Autopsicografia”, em que o poeta chama fingidor ao poeta, encontra Massaud Moisés “um fingimento em torno do fingimento” e, reforçando a ideia, afirma: “mais uma vez, a esfinge diante do espelho, finge que finge olhando-se a si própria” (Moisés 1998, 54). Talvez seja lícito perguntarmo-nos se William Morris e a sua narrativa não estarão na mesma situação. Parecendo apoiar esta ideia, vão aparecendo no texto indicativos da sua condição onírica e insubstancial, como, por exemplo, a frase enigmática do narrador, com que termina o capítulo XXIX: “And so on we went up the Thames still – or whither?” (195).

No mundo verdadeiro, cada qual é uma personagem *redonda*, que vai vivendo a sua caminhada de progressão à maneira do peregrino de Bunyan, vencendo os escolhos com a ajuda das protectoras virtudes, sempre aspirando a uma qualquer ideia de perfeição. *News from Nowhere* tem dificuldade em atingir o tridimensional: apresenta-se mais como um filme ou um quadro de vida idílica; mas um quadro uniformemente claro não tem expressão

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<sup>1</sup> Até Dick se afirma feliz, embora Hammond confesse que “he was very unhappy” com a falta de Clara (55).

<sup>2</sup> *Poesia Inglesa*, p.258, Sonnet XXVI.

nem fala à sensibilidade, e a luz demasiadamente intensa ofusca e cansa em vez de iluminar. A beleza de um quadro, como a da vida, é feita de um jogo e alternância de contrastes. A felicidade é feita da luz depois das trevas, do riso depois das lágrimas, da primavera depois do inverno, da confiança depois da dúvida. Tal como não há permanência, também não há perfeição do lado de cá da morte. É verdade que William Morris fala do descanso depois do trabalho, mas até essa afirmação se aproxima muito da simbologia do descanso eterno depois dos trabalhos terrenos.

Diz Santo Agostinho: “é no todo, isto é, na perfeição plena, que está o repouso: o trabalho está na parte. Por isso nos esforçamos enquanto conhecemos em parte” (Agostinho 2000, 1167). Em *Nowhere* trabalha-se com alegria, é certo, mas não se atinge a perfeição completa, não é ainda o Paraíso; ou, então, é um Paraíso de fachada, onde se infiltraram algumas serpentes de perversidade e conflito.<sup>3</sup> À primeira vista, há um clima de completude, de realização plena, que *News from Nowhere* quer transmitir; mas de imediato ressalta a colisão com vislumbres de atritos ou incompreensões, e com a necessidade tão humana de movimento e trabalho, que pressupõe o esforço para atingir algo. Algo que, num projecto utópico, ou, antes, no projecto de um utopista, pode apenas ser a perfeição, o ideal. Porém, se as palavras, com as quais é descrita a desejada cidade ideal, se apresentam como “contentes” e definitivas, elas necessariamente afastam-se da verdade construída na mente do seu autor, que queria uma cidade para homens e não para espíritos incorruptíveis.

Numa narração há sempre duas verdades: a do autor e a das palavras. A verdade do autor é geralmente inquestionável para ele, mas a verdade das suas palavras contradiz, por vezes, o seu próprio sentir. As palavras sabem para onde vão: ‘ali’ é sempre ‘ali’, e ‘aqui’ é sempre ‘aqui’. Ao passo que o ‘ali’ de quem escreve depende do ‘aqui’ em que ele/ela se encontra. Por isso mesmo é que muitos escritos ficam “datados” e obsoletos em pouco tempo. O ‘aqui’ de William Morris era um ‘antes da revolução’ que ele preconizava; e o ‘ali’ da sua cidade ideal libertara-se da revolução e das suas sequelas, qual quadro próprio para ser pendurado no museu da humanidade, um exemplo de imutabilidade para ser observado e criticado pela sempre mutável humanidade em marcha. E, nas meias-tintas do fundo, não chegam a impressionar os resíduos de imperfeição.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. p.35: “perversity and self-will are commoner than some of our moralists think”.

Para que a cidade utópica de Morris, fixada em palavras, pudesse permanecer ideal em palavras como era ideal no seu pensamento criativo, ela teria de ser transcendente – ultrapassar as contingências da mortalidade, do envelhecimento e da corrupção. Mas, nesse caso, facilmente se transformaria numa Cidade de Deus, “que não peregrina na mortalidade desta vida mas reside, sempre imortal, nos Céus” (Agostinho 2000, 1061), em vez de retratar a cidade ideal dos homens “prisioneiros da horizontalidade férrea do dia-a-dia” (Oliveira 1972, 7), os homens que podem parecer-se “com certos empregados do metropolitano que vivem habitualmente nos limites estreitos e rígidos do mundo subterrâneo e mal se lembram da cidade da superfície” (Ibid.).

Se procurarmos a simbologia da travessia do túnel, todas as perspectivas estão abertas à imaginação, incluindo a da passagem tenebrosa que leva os seres humanos ao não ser ou a uma nova luz. Nada pode ser materialmente demonstrado; tudo pode ser emocionalmente desejado. William Morris não seguiu, aparentemente, por esse caminho, mas a sua proposta de um reino de felicidade depois da revolução assemelha-se muito a uma expectativa de bem-aventurança na vida futura, muito ao jeito de uma cidade de Deus alcançada para a eternidade. A beleza, a eterna juventude, o comprazimento da contemplação, todos os ingredientes de uma beatitude paradisíaca se encontram conjugados para fazer da Londres do futuro a Nova Jerusalém anunciada na Bíblia. Santo Agostinho descreve a Cidade de Deus em continuidade com a cidade terrena, transposição em que os anjos fazem a ligação do humano ao divino, não em hierarquia de valores mas em distinção de categorias e dignidades.

No entanto, *News from Nowhere* é, nitidamente, mais platónica que agostiniana: embora em diferentes moldes geográficos e estatutários, *Nowhere* paga tributo à ordem e ao bem comum, não de uma forma tão radical como a Utopia de Thomas More, da qual parece querer corrigir os excessos,<sup>4</sup> mas seguramente partidária dos ensinamentos socráticos. Nomeadamente em *O Banquete*, como argumenta Philip Leon, Platão “is a man among men, philosopher and politician, deeply concerned with the chief problem of human existence: ‘how can men learn to live together?’” (56). Será talvez legítimo afirmar que, mais que uma visão, como o narrador classifica no final a sua história, o relato é uma argumentação dialéctica, uma tese que

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. introdução de Morris à tradução de Ralph Robinson da *Utopia* de Thomas More, em 1893.

o autor apresenta à consideração da humanidade para questionação íntima, estudo e discussão, com vista à possibilidade de concretização de uma Cidade de Deus na Terra.

Entretanto, muito tempo antes e sem revolução, sem fuga para o futuro e até mesmo sem pôr o problema à questionação dos outros, conseguiu Robert Owen a materialização de uma pequena Cidade de Deus na Terra, uma Nova Jerusalém, a sua New Lanark, que bem podia ter sido o modelo para imitação universal até ao estabelecimento verídico de algo muito semelhante ao sonho/visão de felicidade de William Morris. Owen nem precisou de eliminar o fumo de fábrica: bastou-lhe dar a cada elemento de progresso o seu lugar adequado e a sua importância relativa. E o “pequeno universo” criado por Owen era bem real, de forma nenhuma “a refuge for mere destitution”, como a personagem ‘nowhereana’ Hammond classifica os falanstérios imaginados por Fourier (65). Mas Owen não se limitou a sonhar: trabalhou, concretizou. Ao passo que todo o trabalho que William Morris fez, para além da escrita, esteve longe de servir o seu sonho; constatação que, aliás, muito o penalizava. Em *News from Nowhere*, um livro, foi preciso uma guerra para construir a cidade da paz; e é nesse mesmo livro que se preconiza, como ideal, o fim da “plague of book making” (20). É Dick que afirma:

“we don’t encourage early bookishness: though you will find some children who *will* take to books very early; which perhaps is not good for them; but it’s no use thwarting them; and very often it doesn’t last long [...]; so, I don’t think we need fear having too many book-learned men” (31).

É caso para o leitor se questionar como é que as crianças podem aprender a ler antes dos quatro anos só com os livros que encontram dispersos, num ambiente em que a leitura é menosprezada. Quanto às fábricas do progresso, eliminadas em *Nowhere*, o sonhador utopista que as baniu esqueceu-se de considerar as consequências das previsões maltusianas, num mundo idealmente propício para a propagação da espécie. Mais previdente a este respeito, Thomas More contempla o estabelecimento de colónias em territórios externos no caso de excesso de população, ao passo que a proposta de Morris/Hammond nesse sentido apenas refere, abstractamente: “Of course, also, we have helped to populate other countries – where we were wanted and were called for” (74).

Segundo Santo Agostinho, não haveria que elogiar os anjos em detrimento dos homens, pois uns e outros têm o seu lugar e a sua dignidade. Do mesmo modo, parece que não seria preciso eliminar o progresso científico e material para conseguir um mundo harmonioso e feliz: bastaria atribuir a cada coisa a sua importância relativa e pôr todas ao serviço comum. Afinal, como tão claramente foi dito há milénios, é preciso apenas “dar a César o que é de César e a Deus o que é de Deus”. Ou, para quem não queira conceber a ideia de Deus, é preciso não confundir a dignidade de um parafuso com a da máquina, nem a dignidade da máquina com a do ser humano dotado de capacidade para a construir. O “sonho” de William Morris era o da igualdade e da dignidade humana, apenas maculado pela sua obsessão de “holy war against the age” (Bloom 1993, 191) e pela sua fé numa ideologia de destruição, de túnel de trevas com ressurreição dolorosa.

Os sonhos, segundo Freud, são a tentativa de realização de desejos. Mas é perigoso pensar que se pode viver de dia no sonho da noite. A luz do dia faz fugir e desaparecer as trevas e os medos dos pesadelos; mas também – tal como aconteceu às moedas de Guest em *Nowhere* (10) – faz oxidar e escurecer a prata com que a lua feiticeira franjou tudo aquilo em que tocou na noite do encantamento, quando iluminava os momentos de beleza e amor com o seu olhar complacente de maravilhoso e imaginação. Na realidade, e como disse Santo Agostinho: “É, de facto, muito diferente conhecer um objecto na própria ideia segundo a qual foi feito e conhecê-lo em si mesmo” (Agostinho 2000, 1061).

O que torna a utopia de Morris mais aliciante – e também mais utópica – é o facto de contemplar uma comunidade activa e feliz onde, contra todos os hábitos e inclinações humanas, cada qual não está minimamente interessado em obter poder e ascendência sobre os outros, limitando-se a contribuir para o bem comum. Esta é uma qualidade sobre-humana, que transforma todos os habitantes de *Nowhere* em verdadeiros santos dignos dos altares, como, aliás, se infere das próprias palavras de Hammond ao explicar porque se lhes tornou habitual “acting on the whole for the best”, enquanto no século XIX “it was so hard, that those who habitually acted fairly to their neighbours were celebrated as saints and heroes [...] after they were dead” (80). Segundo as teorias de Freud desenvolvidas sobretudo em *Civilization and Its Discontents*, uma tal situação nunca seria possível visto que a natureza humana é imutável, tendo sido moldada desde o início da existência pela necessidade compulsiva da obtenção da felicidade e da sua

conservação. Por outro lado, é precisamente essa característica que leva o homem a idealizar e escrever utopias, depois de as ter sonhado. Pois, se temos de concordar com tantos detractores da Utopia, afirmando e questionando-nos com Aaron Branahl: “Human beings are naturally self-centered. Complete cooperation is not possible because the conflict of interests is inevitable. Obviously, Utopia is not possible. The question then becomes: should we even try to achieve it or simply accept defeat?”, também temos de concordar com a declaração seguinte do mesmo autor: “Though a peaceful, global utopia is not achievable, the human condition is definitely improvable” (Branahl 2002, 1). E, sendo assim, os utopistas como William Morris, que partilham com a humanidade o seu sonho de uma natureza sadia e ridente que possa camuflar e – quiçá – substituir a floresta onde vagueiam, brutos, os lobos do homem, só podem ser favoráveis e dinamizadores. A esperança de “days of peace and rest” (4) é universal; e cada qual sonha com o que lhe parece ser o melhor caminho para atingir o objectivo.

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# **William Hone – Parodist and Radical**

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# William Hone – Parodist and Radical

*À memória do Prof. Hélio Osvaldo Alves*

## Introduction

William Hone (1780-1842), petty bookseller, publisher, antiquarian, journalist and author, individualist and autodidact, possessed of a passion for justice and for books was, above all, a rebel. As such, he has been an underestimated figure of Pre-Victorian English culture; then, rebels like Hone are usually relegated to the margins of history – when they are not totally erased.

A man of varied talents therefore, William Hone produced violent anti-government parodies in partnership with the leading caricaturist of the day, George Cruikshank (1792-1878). According to Marcus Wood,<sup>1</sup> Hone and Cruikshank's was the most widely circulated and influential satire printed during the period 1815-22, the period Thompson designated as 'the heroic age of popular radicalism'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Hone's surprising acquittal of charges of blasphemous and seditious libel in three historic trials in 1817 made him famous, this fact posing such questions that there appears to be, to use Marsh's words, a 'Hone problem', at once literary and political.<sup>3</sup>

The 'Hone problem' lies in the difficulty of interpreting the complex whole made up of his life, work and the underlying political context. The manner in which the literary and the political are intertwined in Hone's parodic-satiric production turns it into 'a whole way of life' because only a

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<sup>1</sup> Wood, M., 1994, *Radical Satire and Print Culture 1790-1822*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, E. P., 1991, *The Making of the English Working Class*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 660-780.

<sup>3</sup> Marsh, J., 1998, *Word Crimes. Blasphemy, Culture and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 24.

global approach can uncover its lasting appeal and influence.<sup>4</sup> Hone was an early 19<sup>th</sup> century radical struggling to have a language, and therefore, a culture, for language is, quoting Bakhtin, ‘the heart of any culture’.<sup>5</sup>

This essay focuses on Hone’s activity as author and publisher of political parodies between 1815 and 1817. Some of these parodies were produced in partnership with the caricaturist George Cruikshank.

### The Formative Years

*Both read the Bible day & night  
But thou readst black where I read white*  
William Blake

The first child of William Hone and Frances Maria Stawell Hone, the younger William Hone was born in Bath in 1780, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, during the week of the Gordon Riots in London. His mother attributed the tumultuous temperament of her first child to this coincidence. When the young William was three years old the family moved to London, where his father had found employment as a clerk in a solicitor’s office.

The primary source of knowledge of Hone’s early years is the incomplete autobiography *Memoirs from Childhood*, which reviews the first 20 years of his life and is included in Hackwood’s work *William Hone: His Life and Times*.<sup>6</sup> There, Hone’s very first words go to his father, a Dissenter, who is described as ‘a man of exemplary piety’, ‘decidedly religious’, constantly having ‘a Bible of small size in his pocket, and a larger one at home, daily used’.

The religious exacerbation of the father, who forced the twelve year-old-child to learn extensive passages of the Bible by heart, may have later on induced Hone to reject not only the Bible but also all that it represented, namely religious faith. Indeed, when Richard Watson’s book *An Apology for the Bible* was published in 1796, in reaction to the 1795 publication of Paine’s *Age of Reason* and given to Hone’s father, he passed it on to the son in order to convince him of the truthfulness of the Bible; it had, however, the opposite effect increasing his religious scepticism:

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<sup>4</sup> Williams, R., 1993, *Culture & Society. Coleridge to Orwell*, The Hogarth Press, London, p. 325.

<sup>5</sup> Clark, K., Holquist, M., 1984, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, H.U.P., Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 291.

<sup>6</sup> Hackwood, WM., 1912, *William Hone: His Life and Times*, T. Fisher Unwin, London.

Until the *Apology* informed me, I never conceived the Bible had been, or could be, doubted or disbelieved, and, strange to say, although Bishop Watson proved the untruth of much that Paine had written, yet the Bishop's work alone created doubt in me who had never doubted before (Hackwood: 45).

Even though Hone didn't share his father's religious fervour, in the *Memoirs* he shows great admiration for the intensity and sincerity of his father's religiosity and righteousness of character. The way in which the elder Hone transmitted to his son such qualities as self-reliance and a sense of right and wrong taught the young Hone the courage to commit himself and, consequently, to suspect the established social, political and religious institutions'.<sup>7</sup> Hone's father may have unconsciously taught his son how to face the world politically, and Hone's parodies can be the outcome of this world-view.

As a child, Hone saw his father constantly reading the Bible; for him, that fact may have acted as a motivation to read, for he showed a precocious love of books. This early obsession with books and printing is so evident in the *Memoirs* that it is difficult to overstate the lasting influence of books in Hone's life. Those that were central in the shaping of Hone's cultural background were *Pilgrim's Progress*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and, above all, *The Trial of John Lilburne*. Hone read *Pilgrim's Progress* when he was nine years old and its effect was immediate and intense. One of the most reissued books of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, John Bunyan's book deals with civil resistance against power, offering an allegory for the struggle against authority (the Government, the legal system and even religious institutions), symbolised in Christian's fight against Lord Luxurious and Lord Carnal Delight. Even without understanding the allegory, Hone read and reread the volume. Young Hone was thus finding his cultural identity and his place in a cultural tradition.

After the death of his little brother, his father gave him a copy of *The Book of Martyrs* and Hone was fascinated by it. He says that 'the plain narrative of their [the Martyrs'] sufferings and fortitude animated me to enthusiasm'.<sup>8</sup> This is significant; then, fortitude and suffering were going

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<sup>7</sup> Grimes, K., 1998, "Fragments of a Biography", in *The William Hone Bio Text*, [www.uab.edu/english/hone](http://www.uab.edu/english/hone).

<sup>8</sup> Hackwood, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

to be his life companions. However, the single most important influence of his youthful years was *The Trial of John Lilburne*. It is the story of the 17<sup>th</sup> century leveller John Lilburne, tried for high treason in 1649 for publishing two pamphlets criticising Cromwell for the abuse of civil liberties. Hone was eleven years old when he read it, and was very touched by the spirited defence of a wrongfully accused man. Recalling the impression caused by reading this book, Hone writes in the *Memoirs*:

Since the *Pilgrim's Progress*, no other book had so riveted me. I felt all Lilburne's indignant feelings, admired his undaunted spirit, rejoiced at his acquittal, and detested Cromwell as a tyrant for causing him to be carried to the Tower, after the Jury had pronounced him to be free from the charge (Hackwood: 40).

These were the central texts of Hone's self-education, which was richer and more varied than was usual for most self-educated writers of the time.<sup>9</sup> Rooted in the works of the Protestant Dissenters of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, these texts represent a rich and coherent popular tradition with which Hone identified himself. So complete was this identification that Hone has transfigured himself during his trials in 1817 becoming a kind of fictional character, a 'dramatis persona', thus investing his defence with the symbolic meaning of a literary text.

### **Radical London and Radical Hone**

In the 1790s, in Hone's formative years, London was the centre of the debate of new ideas influenced by the French Revolution. This debate had been launched by the sermon 'On the Love of our Country', held by Dr. Richard Price on 4 Nov. 1789. After that sermon, Prof. Hélio Alves argues, the small snowball of intellectual, social, political and religious non-conformity no longer ceased to roll and to grow, disturbing the relative calmness and stability of the well-behaved middle-class struggle for parliamentary reform.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the lack of information concerning Hone's life in the 1790s, we know that in 1796 when he was just sixteen, he became a member of the London Corresponding Society (LCS) influenced by radical acquaintances

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<sup>9</sup> Smith, O., 1986, *The Politics of Language 1791-1819*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 171.

<sup>10</sup> Alves, H. O., 2002, *As Carroças da Subversão (1803-1822)*, Cemar, Figueira da Foz, p. 18.

and also certainly by the spectacular acquittal in 1794 of Hardy and other members of the LCS accused of high treason. During this period, his *Memoirs* portray a confused and divided young man, troubled by his lack of religious belief, unable to find peace of mind and wondering if his knowledge of books ‘was of any use’.

In the following year, 1797, he lives at Lambeth, studies the Bible methodically and continues for a time as a lawyer’s clerk. In 1800, at the age of twenty, he marries Sarah, the daughter of his landlady, Mrs. Johnson, and establishes himself in the book and stationery business, opening a circulating library in Lambeth, where he sold cheap books and stationery, thanks to a gift of £100 from his mother-in-law. This new professional situation enabled him to be in touch with what he loved most – books and prints.

In spite of this happy circumstance, Hone has never showed the least inclination – or even luck – for business. Always better reader than salesman, his lack of talent for business didn’t prevent him, however, from acquiring in antiquarian circles a solid reputation of a well-informed scholar of old books, prints and other ‘antiquities’; in 1811, he was established in Ivy Lane, and was considered an expert in the valuation of old and rare books.

With a firmly established reputation in the book trade, the year 1814 marks a turning point in Hone’s life in more ways than one. In January, he takes up the position of editor and reviewer of the *Critical Review* (CR), a Whig monthly magazine. But Hone didn’t stay long on the job. In June 1815, he announces his retirement in the pages of the CR ‘on account of the Political Character lately assumed by this Review’. In fact, Hone had repeatedly expressed in the CR his indignation about several issues of the day, namely the Corn Laws, bursting out: ‘But why should we think, when millions think in vain?’ or publishing the accounts of the inquest on the shooting in early March 1815 of Edward Vyse, a 19 year-old young man who was taking part in a demonstration against the Corn Laws that were being debated in the Commons. On the one hand, in the CR Hone had found his ideological voice; on the other hand, he had to pay the price for this discovery.

Another significant event marks 1814: Cruikshank does the first work for Hone, in connection with one of Hone’s philanthropic projects. According to Wardroper, Hone had met George Cruikshank in 1811, when

the caricaturist was only 19 years old.<sup>11</sup> It would be a friendship and a professional relationship of many years, and in 1815 another partnership with George Cruikshank proved rewarding. After having seen *La Pie Voleuse*, a melodrama playing in London about the story of a young woman wrongly accused of thefts actually done by a magpie, Hone immediately saw the analogy between the play and the real Fenning case, the case of Elisa Fenning, a young servant-girl who had been found guilty of the murder of her master's family, and executed by hanging. With the family in serious difficulties, he quickly wrote the story of *The Maid and the Magpie* and urged George Cruikshank to illustrate it. Its sale supported Hone's family for four months.

Hone was no doubt moved by the belief that this case was a good example of 'a horrendous miscarriage of judicial power',<sup>12</sup> for the girl had been convicted just on circumstantial evidence; but the question remains whether he also had an eye for sensationalism, for the topics that would sell. In fact, Hone was at this time very active as editor of cheap publications of the kind we would today associate with tabloid journalism, showing a keen eye for the immense possibilities of publicity and advertising. According to Hackwood, he didn't disdain to publish cheap tracts and broadsheets, ballads, 'last dying-speeches', material of the so-called 'gutter literature', which the public were anxious to buy in the days when newspapers were expensive. During the time when Hone had his Fleet St. shop, he published this kind of sensationalist material. *The Power of Conscience*, issued by Hone in 1815, is a sixpenny tract mentioned by Hackwood as a 'good specimen of this trumpery stuff':

It is of the 'catchpenny' type, consisting of eighteen pages of sensational stuff, which includes the confession of Thomas Bedworth, delivered at Newgate September 18, 1815, for the murder of Elizabeth Beesmore in Drury Lane, relating, among other things, his horrible sufferings occasioned by constant supernatural visitations of the murdered woman and other dreadful apparitions – all of it, of course, 'from the original paper now in the possession of the publisher' (Hackwood: 104).

With a large, and still growing, family to support, Patten argues that Hone could hardly afford to ignore the market for 'catch-penny'

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<sup>11</sup> Wardroper, J., 1997, *The World of William Hone: A New Look at the Romantic Age in Words and Pictures of the Day*, Shelfmark Books, London, pp. 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Grimes, K., 1998, "Fragments of a Biography", in *The William Hone Bio Text*, [www.uab.edu/english/hone](http://www.uab.edu/english/hone).

publications.<sup>13</sup> He nevertheless concedes that in Hone's case there wasn't only commercial opportunism but also philanthropic effort. Rickworth thinks that most of Hone's non-satirical output has a serious intention, only he has realised from the beginning the impact obtained by associating text and image.<sup>14</sup> Grimes also stresses the difference between Hone's and other voices of the 'ephemeral press' in the sense that Hone's motivation was the will to expose and attack what for him were the cruelties and injustices of the social and political world around him.<sup>15</sup> This motivation, which compelled him to act in a political way, makes all the difference because it contains a moral value. Above all else, it is this quality that we are going to find in his parodies and satires, even if Hone may not always have been aware of this 'driving motivation' behind his work, as Ann Bowden suggests.<sup>16</sup>

In the publishing activity of the years 1815-16, Hone therefore combined a certain commercial sensationalism, typical of the 'catch penny' publications, with a political intention in the logic of the 'watchdog press'; that is, in his output he combined a political stance of hostility to the government with popular, striking forms and style, accessible to a large-scale lower-class reading public, of which *The Maid and the Magpie*, or the case of Edward Vyse, are illustrative. Therefore, between 1815 and 1816 Hone brought out over twenty publications focusing upon murder trials, inquests into deaths during public disturbances and a range of trial literature dealing with sex scandals, libel, freedom of the press and blood-money convictions. If his talent lay in the capacity to catch the topics of the day, his originality certainly also lay in the way he has worked his material and in the purpose of his work. It was in this mixture of sensationalism and political criticism that Hone's and Cruikshank's satiric fire began to burn; and when they lit that fire with the fuel of the quasi revolutionary post-war radicalism, they managed to scorch the political establishment.

In fact, following the end of the Wars in 1815, serious economic depression burst out, leading to widespread unemployment and to a

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<sup>13</sup> Patten, R. L., 1992, *George Cruikshank's Life, Times and Art*, vol. 1: 1792-1835, The Lutherford Press, London, p. 124.

<sup>14</sup> Rickworth, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Grimes, K., 1998, "Fragments of a Biography", in *The William Hone Bio Text*, [www.uab.edu/english/hone](http://www.uab.edu/english/hone).

<sup>16</sup> Bowden A., 1975, *William Hone's Political Journalism, 1815-1821*, University of Texas, Austin, p. 75.

revival of protest in the form of hunger riots and machine breaking. Interpreting the significance of this protest, Prof. Hélio Alves argues in favour of the existence of an increasing revolutionary tendency in the social protest fostered by the economic post-war difficulties.<sup>17</sup> This revolutionary tendency reached a peak in the years 1815-19, the years designated by Thompson as ‘the heroic age of popular radicalism’ because, after 1815, radicalism was not a minority propaganda affair with a few organisations and writers, as it had been in the 1790s, but generalised libertarian rhetoric, a battle between a radically minded population and the unreformed Parliament.<sup>18</sup> That explains why most radical rhetoric in general, and journalism in particular, was about the exposure of the abuses of the ‘borough-mongering’ or ‘fund-holding’ system – taxes, fiscal abuses, corruption, sinecures which were seen as stemming from a venal, self-interested clique of landowners, courtiers, and placemen. Henry Hunt, the orator at the Spa Fields and Peterloo said in November 1816: ‘what is the cause of the want of employment? Taxation. What is the cause of taxation? Corruption’.

The increase of radicalism went hand in hand with the boom of the popular press, whose pioneering voice was Cobbett. He wrote in his famous ‘Address to Journeymen and Labourers’, in November 1816: ‘As to the cause of our present miseries, it is the enormous amount of the taxes, which the government compels us to pay for the support of its army, its placemen, its pensioners’. This simple, direct language had never been printed before. For the people, it was seductive, for the authorities it was subversive; and it became still more seductive and subversive when it created a demonology – the Prince Regent, Castlereagh, Sidmouth, the spies Oliver, Castle and Edwards, among others. Its most influential voices were journalists like Wooler and his *Black Dwarf*, Carlile and his *Republican* or William Hone and his satires. A new political force was coming of age: the radical Press.

The appearance after the Wars of publications directed at a new, working-class public was only made possible by the increase of literacy<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alves, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 660.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Stone, quoted by Olivia Smith, *op. cit.* p. 161, calculates that, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the literacy of the lower classes rose to 60 per cent.



and of the reading habit among the new working classes of the industrial revolution. For the first time new ideas, fostered by the political debate caused by the French Revolution, were making contacts with a new public through the printed word. Their vehicles were Paine's *Rights of Man* and cheap newspapers where the people read subversive ideas written in their own language. This radical press emerged from the great mass of cheap publications that the poor read.

But what did the poor read? They read almanacs, chapbooks and ballads dealing with scandal, executions, natural disasters, murders, last dying speeches and confessions. It was from this sensationalist 'literature' that cheap periodicals sprang up after 1815, offering something more important, because more dangerous, than mere escapism; this evolution was perceived as a threat by the ruling classes. The problem for them was not, O. Smith points out, that, after the Wars, the people were reading more, but that, shifting from ballads, chapbooks and almanacs, to pamphlets and newspapers, they were reading unconventional material.<sup>20</sup> It is true that few workers could afford to buy a newspaper; but it is also true that public houses, and even barbers' shops, took in newspapers, which could be read aloud to those customers who could not read.

From 1816 to 1819 therefore, with Cobbett as pioneer, the radical press managed to stir the social and political waters, bringing politics to the 'common people'.<sup>21</sup> Cobbett was a pioneer in the process because he found the means to speak to the people in a language that the people would recognise as theirs, and also because he made his *Political Register* accessible to the working people. This was perhaps the most important factor. Appearing as one sheet of paper with four wide columns, and containing just the editorial essay, it avoided the stamp duty and cost only twopence. With this innovation, Cobbett created a new type of journalism that with its simple language and rhetorical questions was so effective and successful as none had been since the days of Paine. Convincing the poor that the main cause of their distress was political, rather than economic or any other, and that the solution would only come with a sweeping parliamentary reform, he was making direct contact with a completely new public and bringing politics

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<sup>20</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> Cranfield, G. A., 1978, *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe*, London, Longman, p.90.

to them in a complex interaction with their culture, thus strengthening a sense of communal political identity among the disenfranchised. In this sense, we can also say that this new journalistic style, with its direct and powerful language, was supportive of a distinctive political culture.<sup>22</sup>

Cobbett's journalism had followers. After his flight to America in 1817, others continued his work. Thomas Wooler's *The Black Dwarf* and its sarcasm, *The Gorgon*, *Hone's Reformists' Register* all tried to fill in the gap left open by Cobbett. A biting example of *The Black Dwarf's* sarcasm is given below:

Give Lord Castlereagh a couple of bad potatoes and a little cold water for his daily sustenance, and see what STUFF his LOYALTY could be made of. Put George Canning in the workhouse of Bethnal Green, and allow him half-a-crown a week (and that is more than he is worth to the state) and hear then what beautiful tropes and similes he would find for the Constitution. (26 February 1816).

Hone also took part in this revolution editing a radical paper, *Hone's Reformists' Register and Weekly Commentary*, which was actively anti-Whig and, in Cranfield's words, solidly political.<sup>23</sup> In the following small piece, which appeared in the newspaper on 15 March 1817, Hone's condemnation of the system of borough mongering is crudely factual:

#### Borough of Gatton

Proprietors	ONE	Sir Mark Wood, Bart., M.P.
Magistrates	“	“
Churchwardens	“	“
Overseers of the Poor	“	“
Vestrymen	“	“
Surveyors of the Highways	“	“
Collectors of Taxes	“	“
Candidates at last the Election	TWO	Sir Mark Wood, Bart., M.P.
His Son, Mark Wood Esq., M.P.		
Voters at the last Election	ONE	Sir Mark Wood, Bart., M.P.
Representatives returned		
At the last Election	TWO	Sir Mark Wood, Bart., M.P.
His Son, Mark Wood Esq., M.P.		

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<sup>22</sup> Warral, D., "The Radical Press Community in Regency England", in Behrendt, S. C., (ed.), 1997, *Romanticism, Radicalism and the Press*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, pp. 137-8.

<sup>23</sup> Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

*Hone's Reformists' Register and Weekly Commentary* came to an end on 25 October 1817; Hone had been in prison, his health had been badly affected, and he was in financial difficulties, as always. Others took over, like *The Medusa, or Penny Politician*, begun on 20 February 1818, and having as motto: 'Let's Die like Men, and not be Sold like Slaves'. It addressed to 'the public, alias the "ignorantly-impatient Multitude": ...O Ye factious, seditious and discontented crew! Will you never believe that you are happy...?' Sarcasm was again the weapon used.

This press revolution was short-lived. In 1820 the golden years of the radical press had come to an end as a result of the approval in Parliament of 'The Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act' and 'The Publication Act' (two of the famous Six Acts of 1819), to revive only at the end of the decade. Some newspapers resisted, but their high days were gone. On 6 January 1820, the last issue of the *Weekly Political Register* in its cheap form appeared with a farewell from Cobbett:

And now, TWOPENNY TRASH, dear little twopenny Trash, go thy ways! Thou hast acted thy part in this great drama. [...] Thou hast frightened more and greater villains than ever were frightened by the jail and the gibbet. And thou hast created more hope in the breasts of honest men than ever were before created by tongue or pen since England was England.

With their highly successful parodies (in this essay, parody is taken in broad sense, including many types of satire, imitation and linguistic 'invention'), Hone and Cruikshank were going to link popular print culture and radical press.

### **The Parodies, the Trials and the Parodic Trials**

With 'a lively conception of wit and an irresistible propensity to humour' born out of his experience of the radical press and of his antiquarian expertise,<sup>24</sup> Hone starts to produce satiric pamphlets at his Fleet St. shop in 1815. When in 1815 the government no longer had the war as an excuse for stifling uncomfortable voices, the radical writers took the opportunity to execrate the unpopular Liverpool Government and the equally unpopular Prince Regent in a way that was unprecedented in scale and variety.

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<sup>24</sup> *The Reformists' Register*, 25 October 1817; quoted in Rickworth, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

One of the first comic-satiric pamphlets by William Hone is *Buonaparte Phobia, or Cursing made Easy to the Meanest Capacity*, which announces, in Marsh's words, 'a dangerous talent for political satire'.<sup>25</sup> In this pamphlet Hone creates the character of 'Dr. Slop', a mock nickname for Robert Stoddard (imaginatively translated 'Dr. Zurrapa' by Prof. Hélio Alves<sup>26</sup>), lead-writer and chief editor of *The Times*. *Buonaparte Phobia* is a satire on the use of language: Stoddard is a gentleman, yet he curses in the most vulgar way, in a 'brutish perversion of language'.<sup>27</sup> Through the character of 'Dr. Slop', Hone criticises the accepted idea that certain forms of language are permitted if used by educated people in places of power, but not if they are used by the lower classes; in this case, they are considered obscene and vulgar.

This satire was reprinted with a Preface in 1820 in which Hone says that it is 'my parodic will and pleasure that he [Stoddard] continue to bear it [the name of 'Slop'] during his natural life'. After his dismissal from *The Times* in 1816, Stoddard founded the *New Times*, nicknamed 'Slop Pail' by Hone, and translated 'Balde do Zurrapa' by Prof. H. Alves.

In the two and a half years following 1815, Hone publishes a lot in this trend; one of the most popular satires of this period was published in 1816 – a half-sheet broadside with the title *Hone's View of the /Regent's Bomb, Now Uncovered, / For The Gratification Of The Public/ In St. James's Park Majestically Mounted On a Monstrous Nondescript, Supposed to Represent Legitimate Sovereignty*. Cruikshank illustrated it with a hand-coloured engraving of the cannon at the top. This was Hone's comic response to the offer, by the King Ferdinand of Spain to the Regent, on his birthday, of a cannon (the bomb, in Hone's words), which was to be displayed on the Regent's birthday. The comic effect is given by the linguistic pun 'bomb'/'bum', referring to the Regent's 'ample posteriors'. After the engraving by Cruikshank, there is a prose account of the unveiling ceremony:

It having, for some time past, been customary for the Prince Regent to indulge curiosity, by some spectacle on the Anniversaries of his birth, on Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1816, preparations were duly made, and His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to cause his *Bomb* to be uncovered, in which state it will henceforth remain for public inspection.

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<sup>25</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Alves, *op. cit.*, pp. 169, 214, 225, 239.

<sup>27</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

After stating that ‘this View of the fundamental Features of the Prince Regent’s bomb is particularly dedicated’ to Lord This Castlereagh, the ‘bomb’/’bum’ pun is repeated throughout the three-column verse text, the final stanza being as follows:

For roundness, smoothness, *breech* and *bore*,  
 Such *Bomb* was never seen *before*!  
 [...]  
 This mighty *Bomb* shall grace thy fame  
 And boast thy glorious Regent’s name!  
 [...]  
 And centuries hence, the folks shall come,  
 And contemplate – *the Regent’s bomb*!

This parody is remarkable and significant in several ways. Besides being an example of what M. Wood designated Hone’s ‘violent satiric impulse’,<sup>28</sup> it also shows clearly how radical printers and publishers were continuing a tradition of plebeian ‘unrespectability’ and irreverence which was often hard for those in power to bear. This might have been the case with this satire by Hone. Bowden, Patten, and others, think that it was this comic, even burlesque, portrayal of the Regent that marked Hone for government prosecution at the first opportunity.<sup>29</sup>

That opportunity came in 1817. Agitation for Reform had risen in 1816 and reached a peak of intensity in the winter of 1816-17 with the Spa Fields meetings, which started the mass platform campaign for Reform. This mass agitation continued with petitions for universal suffrage, some of them being signed by half a million distressed artisans, demobilised soldiers, factory operatives and others. On 28 January, when the Regent was returning from the opening of Parliament, his coach was attacked by an angry mob and its window smashed by a stone or bullet. In retaliation, Parliament suspended the *Habeas Corpus Act*, hired spies as informers, and Lord Sidmouth issued his famous Circular Letter, allowing magistrates to arrest anyone selling apparently seditious material. A period of political persecution of political writers, such as Wooler (editor of *The Black Dwarf*), Cobbett and Hone began. In 1817, sixteen people were prosecuted by ex-officio informations.

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<sup>28</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Patten, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

Repression was thus the result of the conviction on the part of the government that the radical disposition of many sections of the population had to be held down by force.

Although Hone wasn't directly involved in the Spa Fields Meetings, he had published in December 1816 and January 1817 several accounts of these meetings with transcripts from the speeches by radical orators such as Henry Hunt. Worse than that, in January and February 1817, thus in the interim between the Spa Fields riots and the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, he published four two-penny pamphlets parodying the Church Catechism, the Litany and the Athanasian Creed. They were sold quickly, in London and the country – perhaps as many as a hundred thousand in less than two months. When Cruikshank saw them, he advised Hone against their publication, but Hone replied: 'The children must have bread to eat'.

These parodies were: *The Late John Wilkes's Catechism of a Ministerial Member*, *The Political Litany*, *The Sinecurist's Creed* and *The Bullet Te Deum*. We shall never know the exact motives that led Hone to publish his biblical parodies. Was it revenge upon the Bible, the Book that had brought him both literacy and misery, as Joss Marsh suggests?<sup>30</sup> Or was it the influence of his paternal nonconformist inheritance of violent dislike of the established church and clergy and their policing role over the lower orders, as Wood suggests?<sup>31</sup> Whatever the motive, Hone repeatedly stated later in trial that he never meant to ridicule religion with his parodies but to criticise a repressive government.

Curiously enough, however, the authorities prosecuted Hone only for the first three parodies mentioned above, ignoring *The Bullet Te Deum* probably because a well-publicised prosecution would only serve to increase its popularity. In fact, *The Bullet Te Deum; With the Canticle of the Stone* had all the chances to become another editorial success; once more, Hone's comic and satirical talents were fully at work: *The Bullet Te Deum; With the Canticle of the Stone* was Hone's response to a semi-official form of thanksgiving which was printed in newspapers and read in churches for the Regent's escape from a so-called 'assassination attempt' when a stone, or 'bullet', was thrown at the royal carriage on the Regent's return from Parliament, on 29 January 1817.

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<sup>30</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

The title of the first prosecuted, *The Late John Wilkes's Catechism of a Ministerial Member Taken from an Original Manuscript in Mr. Wilkes's Handwriting, never before printed, and adapted to the present Occasion* suggests that Hone had worked from an unpublished manuscript parody by Wilkes. In fact, the manuscript in Wilkes's own handwriting was discovered by M. Wood in the British Library and reprinted in his work *Radical Satire and Print Culture*; it seems to confirm Hone's assertion, thus reinforcing the idea of the dialogical, even authorless, nature of satire. Besides, the memory of Wilkes, radical jester, free press campaigner, editor of a radical paper, *The North Briton*, besides fellow-parodist of the 1760s, could only raise anger in a Tory government.

Apart from updating political references, Hone's *The Late John Wilkes's Catechism of a Ministerial Member* is remarkable in political and literary inventiveness, particularly in the combination of sarcasm and holy language to get at a corrupted political system, which is juxtaposed to the disregarded sufferings of the people, as the following excerpt shows:

**Question:** Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief.

**Answer:** I believe in George, the Regent Almighty [...] And in the present Ministry, his only choice, who were conceived of Toryism, brought forth of William Pitt, suffered loss of place under Charles James Fox, were execrated, dead and buried. In a few months they rose again from their minority; they re-ascended to the Treasury benches, and sit at the right hand of a little man in a large wig; from whence they *laugh* at the Petitions of the People, who pray for Reform, and that the sweat of their brows may procure them bread.

**Q:** What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

**A:** First, I learn to forswear all conscience, which was never meant to trouble me, nor the rest of the tribe of Courtiers. Secondly, to swear that black is white, or white is black, according to the good pleasure of the Ministers. Thirdly, to put on the helmet of impudence, the only armour against the shafts of patriotism.

The second parody to be prosecuted was *The Political Litany, or General Supplication*. The form of *The Political Litany* was taken from the Litany of The Book of Common Prayer. Using the call-and-response form to dramatise the social, economic and political demands of the reformers, it simultaneously satirises the political practices of the Parliament of the day. Once more Hone combines holy language and political jargon to emphasise the

injustice of the sufferings of the people, which are the result of the imbecility, vanity, corruption and falsity of those in power. In this case, the effect is more emotional than purely comic, although the repeated response of the humble people, in chorus form, is dramatically comic:

From the blind imbecility of ministers; from the pride and vain glory of warlike establishments in time of peace,

*Good Prince, deliver us!*

From all the deadly sins attendant on a corrupt method of election; from all the deceits of the pensioned hirelings of the press,

*Good Prince, deliver us!*

In this time of tribulation – in this time of want of labour to thousands, and of unrequited labour to tens of thousands – in this time of sudden death from want of food,

*O Rulers, deliver us!*

That it may please ye to deprive the Lords of the Council, and all the nobility, of all the money paid out of the taxes which they have not earned,

*We beseech ye to hear us, O Rulers!*

The third parody to come to trial was *The Sinecurist's Creed, or Belief*, which borrowed its form from The Book of Common Prayer's Athanasian Creed. This satire is clearly a political attack on three prominent figures of the Liverpool Cabinet with Hone, once more, showing his gift for metaphor and nicknames: Lord Eldon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, is 'Old Bags', Castlereagh, the Foreign Affairs Secretary, 'Derry Down Triangle' and Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, 'The Doctor'. The following excerpt is a good example of what Kevin Binfield calls the use of demonology as a socio-intellectual tool,<sup>32</sup> presupposing some sense of community of values in the audience:

Upon all suitable occasions may be sung or said the following CONFESSION— upstanding and uncovered.

Whosoever will be a Sinecurist: before all things it is necessary that he hold a place of profit. [...]

So Old Bags is a Quack, Derry Down Triangle is a Quack: and the Doctor is a Quack.

And yet they are not three Quacks: but one Quack. [...]

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<sup>32</sup> Binfield, K., 1997 "Demonology, Ethos, and Community in Cobbett and Shelley", in Behrendt, S. C., (ed.) *Romanticism, Radicalism and the Press*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, p. 157.



So likewise Old Bags is a Fool, Derry Down Triangle is a Fool: and the Doctor is a Fool [...]

For the Sinecurist's right faith is, that he believe and confess: that Derry Down Triangle [...] is [...] Perfect Knave and Perfect Fool [...] equal to Old Bags as touching grave Trickery: and inferior to the Doctor as touching his Mummery.

This was the moment the Government had waited for. The three Ministers in *The Sinecurist's Creed*, the 'co-eternal Co-charlatans' had indeed personal reasons not to forgive the comic logic of Hone's Trinitarian satire.<sup>33</sup> Although Hone had stopped the publication of these pamphlets before the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* at his father's request, as the demand only increased they were republished by Richard Carlile at his *Republican* office 'and sold by those who are not afraid of incurring the Displeasure of His Majesty's Ministers, their Spies and Informers, or Public Plunderers of any Denomination',<sup>34</sup> in Carlile's defying words. This act by Carlile didn't probably have any additional effect on the Government's intention to prosecute Hone, but Hone's persistence in the criticism of oligarchic oppression certainly did.

Hone was, in fact, incorrigible. Knowing there was impending prosecution against him, he continued to write satires and to publish *The Reformists's Register* throughout 1817, attacking in its pages the Cabinet's recent suspension of *Habeas Corpus* and Sidmouth's infamous 'Circular Letter'. Rickworth thinks that it was Hone's editing and publishing the *Reformists's Register* that put the political establishment against him, more than the parodies.<sup>35</sup> The fact is that on 3 May, he was arrested by a warrant from Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough and taken to the King's Bench prison – where Wooler was already jailed – because he couldn't afford to pay bail. He was released in July, and in August 1817 defiantly put out a parodic satire on Lord Castlereagh, the 'Noble Lord' of the title: *Official Account of the Noble Lord's Bite and His Dangerous Condition. Who Went to See Him, What was Said, Sung and Done at the Melancholy Occasion*.

The rumour that Lord Castlereagh had been bitten by a favourite dog was turned into a parody where the 'Noble Lord' was bitten in his own

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<sup>33</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Rickworth, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Rickworth, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

house (Parliament) by a ‘Bull’ dog (‘John Bull’, the English common man) named ‘Honesty’. The ‘Noble Lord’ was ‘infected’ by ‘honesty’, beginning to speak the truth about his radical political past, what greatly alarmed his peers. The result is a satire of politicians and a parody of political rhetoric. After ironically stating that all other newspaper reports were mistaken, the editor of this newspaper gives his own ‘true’ account:

On the day before the family were going into the country and busily packing up, his L–p was unsuspectingly amusing himself in the *house*. Several of his *servants* were absent, by permission, or the fatal effects, now likely to ensue, might have been prevented.

From the simple bite of an ordinary *house-dog* little is to be feared; but in this case there is the utmost danger. The animal who inflicted the wound is of the *Bull* breed, and is called *Honesty*. It is supposed to have entered the house with Sir F–B–d–t and his friends. [...] It was thought proper to administer something; but the Noble Patriot refused to swallow any thing his friends offered – repeatedly desiring to see Sir F–B–d–t and Mr. B–gh–m in private. [...] He said he would take the *responsibility* of sending for them on himself. The official personages, accustomed to this phrase in a parliamentary sense, smiled.

In a matter of days another satire followed about the trial of the dog ‘Honesty’: *Another Ministerial Defeat! The Trial of the Dog for biting the Noble Lord*.

Spurred by Hone’s incorrigible satiric impulse and by the successful conviction of other publishers, the Government moved ahead with plans to make him, along with Wooler and Cobbett, examples to all agitators. The Government’s anger was not so much directed at the content of Hone’s satires, as at their popularity and the popularity of the radical press in general. For Kyle Grimes, Hone was not tried for having written dangerous texts to the English church but, rather, for having issued and popularised works that, if published at all, ought properly to have been available only to an audience of ‘sensible men’. In essence, his offence was that he had transgressed the boundary between the elite and the common.<sup>36</sup>

Hone was brought to trial in 1817. His trials took place at Guildhall, packed with a sympathetic audience (about 20,000 people attended the

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<sup>36</sup> Grimes, K., “William Hone, John Murray, and the Uses of Byron”, in Behrendt S. C. (ed.), 1997, *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, p. 196.

trials), on three successive days 18, 19 and 20 December, the government thus cutting ‘one crime into piecemeal’ in an act of final and deliberate cruelty, as Hone himself stressed in court. In the first two trials Hone was charged with blasphemous and seditious libel, and in the third with blasphemous libel. Rickworth points out that, from the viewpoint of the Government, Hone must have seemed so obviously guilty: a poor self-educated publisher, physically debilitated by imprisonment, without legal advice, how could he defend himself against the leading law officers of the country?<sup>37</sup>

In spite of all the odds against him Hone had, so to speak, a card up his sleeve which proved to be a trump: the legal right to ‘speak for himself’ in court, that is, the legal right to conduct his own defence. For Hone, this right was as much an opportunity to ‘say everything’ as a necessity, for he had really no means to hire legal counsel. But the fact is that he was able to turn the necessity to his favour. Using his extensive knowledge of the history of popular and radical parody, he read in court a vast quantity of religious parodies that had never been judged blasphemous. He claimed that his parodies were ‘political squibs’ and not ‘blasphemous libels’, that parodies were ‘as old as, at least, the invention of printing and he never heard of prosecution for a parody, either religious or any other’.

To prove his point he brought each day an armful of books to the courtroom and read extensive passages from his, and others’, parodies gathered from his antiquarian reading to prove to the jury that parodies of Scripture, if done ‘on the right side’, that is, if they praised the Government, were not prosecuted. He therefore read parodies by George Canning, a member of the Cabinet, Martin Luther, Bishop Latimer, the Dean of Canterbury, who wrote ‘Our Pope, which art in Rome, hellish be thy name...’ and others. These parodies had not been prosecuted even if they were, as the Attorney General was forced to admit, ‘equally blasphemous and libellous’. He argued that the parody of Scriptural language was not intended to ridicule the church but to make his criticism of the state more emphatic. O. Smith points out that Hone, by openly assuming his criticism of the state, was ironically the only man accused of blasphemy who could speak against the state without being accused of libel.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rickworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-8.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

But, even if the evidence was, as O. Smith argues, ‘literary artifact’,<sup>39</sup> the significance of the trials was deeply political. Hone clearly emphasised this dimension by reading out and commenting parts of his satires thus proving that what he had written against the corruption and hypocrisy of the government was true, not libellous, and totally justified. Wood points out that it is a cheeky satiric use to read as part of his defence the very lines the prosecution had earlier recited as evidence for the case; if there was ridicule, Hone insisted, those who had rendered themselves ridiculous had no right to cry out because they were ridiculed; he had intended to laugh at them.<sup>40</sup> Stretching this argumentative line to the limit, Hone comes to a reversal of the trial situation: he accuses the government ministers of parodying their functions and, in doing so, he becomes the accuser, and the state becomes the accused, thus creating the parodic-satiric situation of the world turned upside down; by creating a decrowning double he is making his trials parodic.

To stress this parodic-satiric dimension of the trials, the effect on the large court audience of the reading of Hone’s prosecuted parodies was festively carnivalistic: whenever the attorney-general read, for example, the closing benediction of *The Political Litany*: ‘The Grace of our Lord the Prince Regent, and the Love of Louis XVIII, and the Fellowship of the Pope, be with us all evermore, Amen’, all distance between the powerful and the powerless was abolished by the profanation of the ‘sacred’ space of power by the satiric laughter of the crowd. This comic situation reached a climax when the outbursts of people’s laughter led to threats by the sheriff that he would arrest ‘the first man I see laugh’. Thompson considers Hone’s trials some of the most hilarious legal proceedings on record, and Rickworth is surprised that they have never been included in any list of famous trials.<sup>41</sup>

Hone’s strategy of defence was totally successful. He dramatised his sufferings and his family’s, portraying himself as a Protestant martyr in the tradition of Bunyan, Foxe and Lilburne, thus making good use of the literature of his childhood and giving a voice to his own culture. In the

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<sup>39</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-9.

<sup>40</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>41</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 792; Rickworth, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

third trial, exhausted, Hone spoke for eight hours, more emotionally and effectively than in the previous ones. He concluded saying again that the real motive for his trials was an attack on the freedom of the press, and that the prosecution had nothing but a political groundwork.

In the end, against all odds, he won three verdicts of not guilty in the epic confrontation of a powerless man against the organised power of state personified by Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough. Hone's trials gained, therefore, a symbolic meaning: on the defendant's bench sat, not only Hone, but also the struggle for the freedom of expression of a culture through one of its forms: parody. Marsh observes that in question was also the status of parody and of a whole culture seeking its acknowledgement.<sup>42</sup>

Hone fought an improbable battle against the state and won, perhaps because he forced the authorities to 'play' by his rules. In his self-defence he didn't use solemn or legal rhetoric, the weapons of power; instead, he staged delight and ridicule, through the language of parody and satire, in front of a trusted, almost powerful, audience. That was how the heavy machinery of power was defeated, at least until 1819. Prosecution cannot stand up in face of ridicule. Ridicule is the weapon of the powerless, but only when the powerless trust their own culture.

The immediate consequence of Hone's acquittal was Lord Ellenborough's resignation and Liverpool's Cabinet slow-down on its persecuting course on the radical press and the radicals. During 1818, the Government indicted no one for libel. The Government's aim to convict Wooler and Hone, so that they could be set as examples for all the other radical writers, had failed. Besides, the economic hardships of the post-war period had loosened, causing popular agitation to decline until economic depression and unemployment returned in 1819; with them agitation, and its natural consequence – repression – loomed again, this time with Richard Carlile as the main target of governmental persecution.

After the trials, Hone and Cruikshank capitalised on Hone's court victory. Cruikshank made an engraving of a four-page song published by Hone entitled *Great Gobble Gobble, and Twit, Twittle, Twit, or Law versus Common Sense, Being a twitting Report of successive Attacks on a Tom Tit, his stout Defences & final Victory. A New Song, With Original Music By Lay Logic Esqre. Student in the*

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<sup>42</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-5

*Law of Libel*. Patten suggests that the ‘twit, twittle, twit’ also recalls the Quack Trinity ‘All-Twattle’ (Eldon, Castlereagh and Sidmouth) in Hone’s parody of the Creed.<sup>43</sup> In this engraving,<sup>44</sup> Hone is a little tit perched on a rail, chiding a barnyard full of fowls. The jury are cockerels, the attorney general Shepherd is the largest of a group of geese representing counsel, Lord Ellenborough is a turkey-cock; above him is an owl with the head of Mr. Justice Abbott. Hone and Ellenborough exchange words:

Tom Tit (Hone) – ‘Let me remind you gentlemen! Of *your Own* vile Nonsense. Twit, Twittle, Twit’.

Turkey-Cock (Lord Ellenborough) – ‘This is not to be borne – what are we to be twitted to our faces; must I stay here for ever, the Object of profane Diversions? Fellow! – I charge thee, no more; *Gobble, Gobble, Gobble*’.

Hone published his trials in 1818, singly and in a collected edition, what contributed to his celebrity. Even if he was the most popular man in Britain after the trials, as most authors suggest, he was also penniless and sick. It appears that laughter was all he had gained with his trials. Public solidarity enabled him to open a new shop at 45 Ludgate Hill, and he seemed to be in high spirits, at least judging from his intention ‘to commence business as a bookseller upon a more respectable footing than hitherto’, as he writes in the ‘Address’ that precedes the account of the Third Trial. But that fresh start ‘of my new career in business’ never happened, in spite of his preoccupation with ‘respectability’. For two and a half years Hone wrote no satires. In 1819, however, triggered by the Peterloo case, his and Cruikshank’s parodic and satiric fire burned again with extraordinary vigour until 1822. From 1822 to 1842, the year of his death, Hone wrote no more satires. In 1837, five years before his death, Sir Francis Burdett considered Hone ‘an extinct volcano’.

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<sup>43</sup> Patten, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-9.

<sup>44</sup> Reproduced on the title page of this essay.

## Conclusion

*Profane parodical muse of Hone,  
be pleased to keep your distance*

*The Examiner, 1832.*

‘Was a laugh treason?’ Hone had asked his juries; they answered ‘No!’ But was that verdict enough to change the literary and political outcast condition of parody? Although the Attorney-General Shepherd lost the case in 1817, the battle against modes of literary expression that, like parody, ignored ‘sacred fear’ or ‘reverential awe’ was won. Hone walked away from his trials a comic hero, and the judge’s attempt to incriminate parody hadn’t been approved by the jury, but there was, nevertheless, not only a literary but also a political condemnation of parody outside the courtroom.

In fact, William Hone left no heirs. During the whole Victorian age his parodies were erased from literary history as the disapproved form of parody. The establishment cast out ridicule or invective, and so parody declined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, becoming general and private, disengaged from direct relationship with public figures and public affairs. It became the safety valve that the establishment needed, aseptic and inoffensive. With his satires, on the other hand, Hone had posed a threat not only to the purity of literature but also to the respectfulness of politics; however, the literary and the political, the popular and the highbrow could not co-exist.<sup>45</sup> Parody was outcast, and Hone, though genial, was as outcast as parody itself.

Perhaps was satiric laughter treason after all, because of its political significance. In this sense, parody was not only a violation of the ‘purity of literature’ but also a violation of the seriousness of politics; it was a fraudulent imitation, and a dangerous ‘diabolical double’ because it invited people to wonder what was really pure, fraudulent or diabolical – the original or the parodied. In this self-reflexive demythification, intellectual oppression was temporarily weakened by the power of laughter through the instrument of satire and parody. The ‘mind forg’d manacles’ frequently referred to in the 1790s had for a brief period between 1815-22 been broken and the people laughed and laughed.

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<sup>45</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

This cultural challenge had been possible only because there was a new, more confident and less fearful and hesitant audience than before, prompting a new power to radical writers. With their subversive and seductive language, radical writers exerted a powerful, albeit temporary, influence over the English culture because of their attitude of delight in linguistic and literary agitation, making common cause with an increasingly literate public.<sup>46</sup>

Only the increase of literacy and of democracy can, therefore, change the outcast condition of non-canonical modes of literary expression, giving cultural relevance to the work of marginalised authors like William Hone. Only then shall parody cease to be seen as a political and a literary threat because it will be part of a cultural whole; and culture, being a whole, shall contain the intellectual and literary traditions of all those who share the same language and will be in constant interaction with different ways of life. In this sense, the study of authors as William Hone can only make us more aware of the rich multiplicity and fertility of the English Culture for, quoting R Williams, ‘to know, even in part, the life of man, is to see and wonder at its extraordinary multiplicity and its great fertility of value’.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Behrendt S. C. (ed.), 1997, *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Williams, R., *op. cit.*, p. 337.



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# Tradução de um poema em tributo de amizade

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## Tradução de um poema em tributo de amizade

Some keep the Sabbath going to church,  
I keep it staying at home,  
With a bobolink for a chorister,  
And an orchard for a dome.

Some keep the Sabbath in surplice,  
I just wear my wings  
And instead of tolling the bell for church,  
Our little sexton sings.

God preaches – a noted clergyman,  
And the sermon is never long;  
So instead of going to heaven at last,  
I'm going all along.<sup>1</sup>

Há quem guarde o Dia do Senhor indo à igreja,  
Eu guardo-o dentro do lar,  
Com as aves como coro,  
Como cúpula, um pomar.

Há quem guarde o Dia do Senhor usando sobrepeliz,  
Eu só uso as minhas asas,  
E, em vez de dobre de sino,  
Canta em apelo à oração  
o sacristão pequenino.

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<sup>1</sup> R.W. Franklin, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998, vol. 1, n.236. Foi usada a versão [A].

Deus prega – um clérigo ilustre,  
 E o sermão nunca é comprido;  
 Em vez de ir, por fim, para o céu  
 Anda o céu sempre comigo.

Esta tradução é dedicada ao meu amigo pessoal Hélio Osvaldo Alves que, para além de grande amigo, foi também um investigador, professor e tradutor ilustre. A Universidade de Lisboa e, em especial, o Departamento de Estudos Anglísticos da sua Faculdade de Letras, orgulham-se da colaboração que por ele lhes foi prestada. Eu sinto-me muito grata pelo facto de o Hélio ter, literalmente, tido a generosidade de ser meu amigo e estou convencida de que não só “*he went to heaven at last*”, mas também de que, durante o tempo em que, neste mundo, nos fez companhia “*he was going all along*”.

Depois desta pequena nota de genuína emoção, limitar-me-ei a justificar as opções encontradas para fazer frente às principais dificuldades que o texto inglês apresenta no decorrer da tarefa de o traduzir para português:

1. No início da primeira e da segunda estrofes e relativamente à expressão “*keep the Sabbath*”, não desejei usar, em português, Guardar o Domingo, na medida em que, dessa forma, se perderia uma conotação vetero-testamentária muito marcada no poema. Não existindo, na nossa língua, versão correspondente, optei por Dia do Senhor, conseguindo assim reter, ainda que de modo ténue, a alusão ao Antigo Testamento;
2. “*at home*” foi traduzido por dentro do lar no intuito de conservar a rima;
3. “*bobolink*” pode traduzir-se por tagarela americana, ou, alternativamente, por pisco, termo português para a ave em língua inglesa designada por “*robin*”. De facto, apesar de todas as versões conhecidas do poema não usarem a palavra “*robin*”, ela aparece referida por Emily Fowler Ford, uma das amigas de infância de Emily Dickinson. Cito: “*The first poem I ever read was the robin chorister ... which she gave my husband years ago*”.<sup>2</sup> É evidente que tagarela americana, a tradução mais exacta do ponto de vista do sentido, dificilmente se adequaria e correria ainda o risco de não ser bem entendida pelo leitor, excepto se

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<sup>2</sup> Explicação constante das notas da edição usada.

com o auxílio de nota explicativa, intrusão que iria prejudicar o texto poético, do meu ponto de vista sem necessidade, uma vez que o que realmente interessa é o efeito da ave cantando no coro, em substituição do coro da igreja. Pisco não é fiel ao texto e enquadra-se mal. Por outro lado, “chorister” transformado em corista, ou membro do coro, também levantava dificuldades. Assim, ao optar por aves no plural e pelo substantivo coro, mantive o significado decisivo, resolvendo duas dificuldades interligadas;

4. Na segunda estrofe, também uma quadra, não foi possível manter o mesmo número de versos, nem a rima em idêntico lugar. “And instead of tolling the bell for church” teve de ser desdobrado em dois versos, uma vez que se tornava difícil integrar no mesmo verso o chamamento para o serviço religioso que o sino implica, chamamento esse, note-se, com conotação negativa, já que o termo usado é “tolling”, dobre, e expresso por “for church”. Optei, assim, por não desistir da rima, deslocando-a embora para os terceiro e quinto versos, aproveitando a semelhança sonora entre sino e pequenino e considerando que “little sexton” poderia perfeitamente ser traduzido por sacristão pequenino. “sings” que, no poema em inglês, vem em último lugar e rima com “wings” no segundo verso, recuou para o verso anterior;
5. Na terceira e última estrofe, preferi não explicitar o sentido de consequência que, no terceiro verso, o uso de “so” acarreta e que não é susceptível de ser conseguido, em português, por meio de uma palavra tão breve; recorro a elipse que, na minha opinião, não inviabiliza esse mesmo sentido. No quarto verso atrevo-me a uma tradução mais livre, capaz de sugerir rima imperfeita com o segundo verso, em substituição da rima perfeita constante da versão original. Aliás, “I’m going all along” não é de tradução fácil;
6. Por fim e não desejando entrar em mais alguns aspectos de pormenor, gostaria de justificar a escolha da expressão portuguesa Há quem para traduzir “Some”, palavra pela qual começa o primeiro verso das duas primeiras estrofes do poema. A alternativa óbvia, que seria utilizar as palavras Alguns, ou Uns, não me pareceu viável, na medida em que, em português, geralmente, se usam, acrescentando, depois, Outros, processo que anularia o paralelismo inicial patente nas duas primeiras estrofes e que a opção tomada mantém.





**A Roda da Fortuna  
na *Vida* de Thomas Wolsey**

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## A Roda da Fortuna na *Vida* de Thomas Wolsey

O nome de Thomas Wolsey constituiu, desde sempre, sinónimo metafórico de riqueza faustosa, tendo ficado na história e na memória como o epítome da opulência, levada ao exagero. Sentimentos de crítica e repulsa para com o poderoso ministro de Henrique VIII têm coexistido desde o século XVI e produzido escritos diversos de natureza díspar, sobretudo vilipendiadora. Após o auge da controvérsia religiosa, originada pela pretensão de que fosse reconhecida pelo Vaticano a nulidade do casamento régio, ambas as partes em conflito centralizaram em Wolsey a sua aversão e o seu ódio: os Católicos viam-no como o responsável principal pelo cisma; os Protestantes consideravam-no o grande inimigo da verdadeira fé, o traidor que personificava a tirania de Roma, interferindo, de modo insidioso, nos assuntos de estado. A linha detractora, que John Skelton inaugurou, tomou forma ainda em vida de Wolsey e estendeu-se até ao reinado de Isabel I, ao passo que a apologética, mais páli-da mas de vasta influência, tem em George Cavendish o seu exemplo maior.

*The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (1558) exhibe uma estrutura circular, iniciada pelo Prólogo e terminada pelo Epílogo, e é organizada em duas partes antitéticas que coincidem literalmente com as duas fases na vida do protagonista – ascensão e queda.

No Prólogo, o autor anuncia a sua pretensão de corrigir distorções e pressupostos vilipendiadores, que considera falsos, patentes noutros escritos. Com efeito, *The Life* inicia-se com a poderosa ilação “*Trewthe it ys*” (4/28),<sup>1</sup> que vai reger todo o texto e que estabelece uma antítese muito forte entre

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<sup>1</sup> Nas citações da obra de Cavendish, o primeiro algarismo corresponde à página e o segundo à linha.

verdade e não-verdade. Sucinto por natureza, com uma panóplia de informações amalgamadas, o Prólogo contém a apologia do Cardeal – que o texto ampliará até à exaustão e o Epílogo explorará de modo peculiar – e que é desencadeada pelo desejo de repor uma verdade que outros terão deturpado. O Prólogo consegue ainda resumir, de forma igualmente poderosa, o percurso do protagonista, marcado pelas duas fases perfeitamente antitéticas e nitidamente regidas pela Roda da Fortuna da tradição medieva. O modo de representação destas fases será, porém, assaz curioso, pois estabelece-se na proporção inversa da realidade. Ou seja, enquanto os vinte anos de glória de Wolsey são apresentados em escassas vinte e oito páginas, com um período intermédio de bonança descrito em mais ou menos sessenta, nas quais a Roda da Fortuna se encontra já no movimento descendente, o único ano de desfavor pleno e de queda explícita ocupa toda a outra metade do texto, de quase cem páginas.

Ao insistir, desde o início, na influência da Fortuna e dos Desígnios Divinos no destino do protagonista, que se revela incapaz de reconhecer o carácter dual e vão do seu percurso, Cavendish faz pressupor que o movimento contrário e o conseqüente descalabro se encontram subjacentes também desde o início. O grande motivo que percorre *De Consolatio Philosophiae*, de Boécio, adquire, assim, visibilidade notória neste texto renascentista, onde as facetas antitéticas da Fortuna surgem lado a lado, remetendo, em contínuo, para o sentido precário das ilusões, para a mutabilidade e para a precaridade das realidades terrenas. Diz Boécio:

O thow governour, governinge alle thinges by certeyn ende, whi refusystow oonly to governe the werkes of men by dewe manere? (...) we ben tormented in this see of fortune. (...) The amyable Fortune desseyveth folk; the contrarye Fortune techeth. The amyable Fortune byndeth with the beaute of false goodes the hertes of folk that usen hem; the contrarye Fortune unbyndeth hem by knowinge of freedde welefulness.<sup>2</sup>

A glória e o desfavor vividos por Wolsey são, como sabemos, o resultado da acção directa de Henrique VIII, ao passo que o relacionamento entre Rei e Ministro provou ser sempre excessivo. No texto, esse relacionamento é

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<sup>2</sup> Boécio, *De Consolatio Philosophiae*, trans. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. John H. Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977) 826, 845.

unívoco durante a fase ascensional e caracterizado por uma perfeição sem limites, sem qualquer elemento de discórdia, pelo que a posterior mudança de atitude do monarca, delineada eufemisticamente por Cavendish, assumirá contornos muito mais acentuados. O insucesso de Wolsey, junto do Papa, na obtenção daquilo por que o Rei mais ansiava parece inserir-se num conjunto amplo de circunstâncias adversas, mas terá sido, sem dúvida, a razão principal da destituição e do aniquilamento do Prelado. *The Life* exhibe uma preocupação constante em isentar Henrique Tudor de possíveis responsabilidades na queda do seu ministro favorito, realçando-se antes a influência nefasta que Ana Bolena e a sua presumível facção terão nele exercido e, sobretudo, a força incontornável do Destino, regido pela Roda da Fortuna, que fez do protagonista e também de Catarina de Aragão vítimas inequívocas.

A fase da elevação inclui, como é óbvio, o período em que Thomas Wolsey usufruiu de enorme prestígio, poder e riqueza. Mas o que se destaca de forma nítida acaba por ser a caminhada ascensional em si, imparável, metódica e muito rápida, abarcando esferas de grande eminência, no domínio secular e no domínio eclesiástico. O relato das audiências, das missões diplomáticas ao estrangeiro, das deslocações em Londres, dos banquetes, é sempre fluido e assenta num sentido fortíssimo de cor e movimento. Na fase de plena glória, o simbolismo centrado nas tonalidades impõe-se continuamente, através de diversos elementos emblemáticos que produzem descrições esplendorosas. O Cardeal, que também foi Chanceler, Arcebispo de York e Canterbury, Bispo de Tournai e Lincoln, Abade de St. Albans e *Legatus de latere* – representante permanente do Papa em Inglaterra – rodeia-se de uma imagética própria que transmite, no campo de visão, todo o simbolismo do poder e da opulência. O escarlate, como cor cardinalícia, e as suas gradações de púrpura, carmesim e encarnado em sedas e brocados, juntamente com o ouro puro e o dourado, combinam-se num fundo negro de veludos que, por sua vez, destaca a vivacidade da cor predominante. Acima de tudo, o escarlate, intrínseco à personagem, começa a prefigurar-se como a metáfora da ostentação que se contrapõe à discrição, porquanto tudo passou a ser excesso, emanado de Wolsey e prolongado na dupla face da sua Casa (Casa aqui no sentido lato dos vários edifícios que possuía e habitava rotativamente, destacando-se Hampton Court e York Place, em Londres). Com a imensidão de servidores, encena espectáculos majestosos, desde a simples deslocação diária a Westminster, no cumpri-

mento do dever governativo, ou à corte, até às recepções a Henrique VIII e a personalidades de outros reinos. A figura ocupava, na realidade, um plano semelhante ao do monarca, se não mesmo superior: como Cardeal e Arcebispo, era o mais alto dignitário eclesiástico; como *Legatus de latere*, estava investido de uma autoridade imensa que abarcava, em simultâneo, a esfera secular; como representante do soberano, que nele delegava quase tudo e depositava inteira confiança, exercia uma extensa autoridade régia. Curiosamente, nesta fase ascensional, não nos é transmitida a imagem de cristão, de homem de Igreja na sua verdadeira amplitude. Mesmo quando surge a oficial nas Catedrais de Canterbury e Amiens e a consagrar o Chanceler de França cardeal, está a exercer o lado protocolar do cardinalato e da nunciatura.

A fase do desfavor absoluto surge após o período intermédio da bonança, já referido, durante o qual a opulência é notória, mas que o autor vai minando, ao introduzir diversos elementos de desassossego, centrados em Ana Bolena, e várias considerações de cariz moralizador que remetem para o descalabro desde sempre pressentido:

ffortune (of whos fauour no man is lenger assured than she is dysposed)  
began to wexe some thyng wrothe w<sup>t</sup> his prosperous estate// thought  
she wold devyse a mean to abate his hyghe port (...)

**O waueryng/** and newfangled multitude ys it not a wonder to consider  
the inconstant mutabilitie/ of thys oncertyn world/

(28/36, 29/1-2; 100/28-30)

Nesta etapa e até ao fim, a imagem pujante de outrora começa a esvaziar-se em todos os sentidos. As atitudes daquele que se vê repentinamente banido do centro do poder, despojado de tudo (à exceção do Arcebispado de York, para onde é exilado), pautam-se por um desejo quase incontrolável de recuperar os favores do Rei e a antiga ordem. Até ao fim também, Cavendish vai esboçando uma imagem de vítima sofredora e injustiçada, enfatizando permanentemente a incapacidade terrena para alterar o Destino.

A nível dos elementos pictóricos e da imagética, a antítese com a fase anterior revela-se acentuadíssima. Os movimentos lentos dos anteriores percursos de Wolsey, em muito semelhantes aos *pageants* da tradição medieval, hiperbolizando toda a magnificência de uma imagem que se desejava constante, diferem em absoluto dos movimentos rápidos e impul-

sivos, num caos que a personagem deseja ultrapassar, e com a frugalidade de recursos que passam a caracterizar a sua ida para o exílio. O brilho, o fausto, a excelência de tecidos, mobiliário e insígnias, são substituídos por uma austeridade crescente, ao passo que as tonalidades garridas dão lugar ao branco e ao violeta, anunciando o despojamento em todas as vertentes e o novo tempo de penitência. Pela primeira vez, predomina a dimensão de cristão devoto que a natureza da fase de glória jamais abarcou. A caminhada rumo ao exílio revela-se, assim, por demais emblemática, ao metaforizar a caminhada rumo à interioridade, à contemplação e à submissão – pelo menos aparentemente – e ao evidenciar o sentido penitencial em quatro momentos cruciais, plenos de simbolismo: na mudança para o Mosteiro dos Cartuxos no início da Quaresma; na aceitação de cilícios, oferecidos pelos monges; na partida para York durante a Semana Santa; e na cerimónia do lava-pés a 59 pobres, cujo número corresponde, metonimicamente, aos 59 anos da sua idade.

Mas o processo de queda não se suspende em York, onde poderia eventualmente encontrar alguma paz nessa nova interioridade então percebida. A partir do momento em que recebe ordens régias para regressar a Londres, ao centro do poder, pouco depois de ter assumido pela primeira vez o Arcebispado de York, já que fora sempre um prelado *in absentia* e por isso muito criticado, os males físicos, antigos e crónicos, eclodem subitamente, podendo constituir face visível do processo lento de devastaçãõ social, bem como manifestaçãõ directa de um ego altamente ferido. O regresso, longe de significar a reabilitaçãõ ou o reassumir da posiçãõ privilegiada, pressupõe, sim, a iminência de um julgamento, de uma condenaçãõ e de uma execuçãõ, pelo que o movimento descendente rumo à capital do reino será metonímia do processo degenerativo causado pela doença. O regresso interrompido, já que Wolsey sucumbe a meio do caminho, evidencia uma série de ironias que a inevitabilidade do destino, afinal, provocou: se, por um lado, se viu liberto do vexame que enfrentaria em tribunal, perdeu a oportunidade de se defender, de se redimir e, sobretudo, de chegar à presença do Rei; se, por outro lado, a pretensa facção inimiga obteve uma vitória incontestável, no sentido de que sempre ambicionara o fim do Cardeal e o impedimento do seu contacto com o monarca, perdeu a oportunidade de o destruir no terreno, através de uma execuçãõ pública por alta traiçãõ. O que acabou por se tornar visível foi antes a vertente penitencial da vítima, quando se descobriu a camisa de crina por debaixo

das vestes, antítese perfeita da dimensão que os inimigos pretendiam ver exposta e condenada em julgamento. Poder-se-á então afirmar que, mesmo no ponto culminante da queda, a figura nunca deixou de impressionar de forma particularmente hiperbólica. O lugar intermédio entre York e Londres onde sucumbiu poderá, por sua vez, metaforizar uma condição que permaneceu sempre nebulosa: a figura proeminente foi destituída, mas não chegou a cair na totalidade; foi acusada de alta traição, mas nunca julgada, condenada ou executada.

O Epílogo completa de forma directa as considerações do Prólogo e resume o Desenvolvimento, recuperando e dando ênfase especial a pontos-chave do relato, em que Cavendish emitiu inúmeros juízos acerca de aspectos globais dos destinos humanos, primordialmente acerca da mutabilidade e dos desígnios da Fortuna, numa tentativa constante de reabilitar a imagem do protagonista, sempre delineado como vítima da inconstância e da falsidade. Por breves instantes, as derradeiras linhas fazem pressentir um tom cáustico em considerações acerca do carácter vão da fama, regido pelo movimento inexorável da Roda, e na crítica velada acerca da faceta secular do homem que deteve tão importantes cargos eclesiásticos. A apologia assim algo suspensa acabará, no entanto, por prevalecer neste relato assumidamente verdadeiro – “*Trewthe it ys*” – e evoluirá até um clímax que anáforas sucessivas destacam de modo particularmente enfático, deixando entrever considerações universais e perenes que abarcarão, afinal, qualquer tempo e qualquer espaço:

*O madnes/ O folyshe desier/ O fond hope/ O gredy desier of vayn honors,  
dignyties, and Ryches/ O what inconstant trust And assurance... / (188/9-12)*

Porque, lembrando Boécio, “*we ben tormented in this see of fortune*”.

## Fontes

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# **Hélio Alves, Edward Lear and George Cruikshank: uma Aliança Inusitada**

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# Hélio Alves, Edward Lear e George Cruikshank: uma Aliança Inusitada

*J'ai toujours eu peur des discours trop cohérents*  
Boris Cyrulnik, *Mémoire de singe et paroles d'homme*

**E**m gesto de despedida, o Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves ofereceu-nos um pequeno volume, *Pensar Sem Senso. Limericks Portugueses*, que consiste num conjunto de *limericks* da sua autoria em língua portuguesa<sup>1</sup>. Neste livro, Hélio Alves faz algo de desconcertante: utiliza uma forma prosódica inglesa, indissociável do nome do poeta e ilustrador vitoriano de nonsense, Edward Lear (1812-1888) e combina-os com as ilustrações de um contemporâneo oitocentista mais velho, George Cruikshank (1792-1878).

A combinação de poemas reminiscetes de Lear com desenhos de Cruikshank tem um efeito insólito e suscita interrogações. De facto, os *limericks* originais de Edward Lear são indissociáveis das ilustrações do mesmo autor, porque os desenhos constituem o contraponto gráfico dos poemas de que servem de referente ou comentário. Nos originais de Lear, os dois elementos – poema e ilustração – formam uma unidade inquebrável, um texto único cuja leitura se situa na interacção do desenho e dos versos.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hélio Osvaldo Alves, *Pensar Sem Senso. Limericks Portugueses* (Porto: Campos da Letras Editores, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> O conceito de *nonsense* entrou no vocabulário inglês como denominação de um tipo de verso devido ao sucesso das primeiras três edições de *A Book of Nonsense* de Edward Lear (1846, 1855, 1861). Cf. Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense* (compiled and edited with an introduction by Vivien Noakes) (London: Penguin Classics, 2001). Para uma análise da relação entre desenhos e textos de *A Book of Nonsense* (1861), cf. Maria J. G. A. B. Mendes, “O Sem-Sentido em ‘A Book of Nonsense’ de Edward Lear”, dissertação de Mestrado apresentada à FLUL (Lisboa, 1985), pp. 149-160.

Ao escolher George Cruikshank e não Edward Lear como interlocutor gráfico dos *limericks* portugueses, Hélio Alves mistura uma forma prosódica obrigatoriamente relacionada com a literatura do *nonsense* com um ilustrador cujo renome evoca em primeiro lugar a caricatura social. Hélio Alves, ele próprio, explica a escolha da seguinte maneira: “[...] o autor teve também a ousadia de chamar em seu auxílio outro nome ímpar da cultura inglesa do século XIX, o desenhador e caricaturista George Cruikshank (1792-1878) para, numa adaptação que achou apropriada, juntar a visão pictórica do artista à temática de alguns dos *limericks*, enriquecendo desta forma, **talvez inusitada**, não só todo o significado sem sentido desses *limericks*, como, obviamente, o próprio livrinho”.<sup>3</sup> A dedicação final do livro de *Limericks Portugueses* a Edward Lear e a George Cruikshank confirma que o autor tem plena consciência de estar a fazer algo de novo e é precisamente isto, o sabor peculiar do cruzamento de reminiscências de Lear com desenhos de Cruikshank que aqui gostaríamos de aproximar.

A combinação de versos reminiscentes do *nonsense* vitoriano em língua portuguesa e o traço incisivo de Cruikshank conferem a *Pensar sem senso* uma dimensão peculiar, – uma quarta dimensão por assim dizer– que chama o leitor para dentro do livro para ali sentir a atmosfera singela que emana de associações várias, ligadas a línguas, traços, autores, épocas e reminiscências diversas.<sup>4</sup> Mesmo antes de ser lido e *qua* objecto gráfico, o livro estabelece uma relação com quem o maneja e interpela o receptor pelo diálogo insólito entre Hélio Alves, Lear e Cruikshank. Se, como recordam Dan Sperber e Deirdre Wilson, “o estilo é o relacionamento”, percebemos que pelas convergências intertextuais, *Pensar sem senso* cria um estilo novo que, mesmo antes de ser lido, convida a tactear a atmosfera própria que

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<sup>3</sup> Hélio Alves, *op. cit.*, p.14. Recorde-se aqui também o estudo que o autor dedicou a Cruikshank: Hélio Osvaldo Alves, “The Bottle and Other Ruins. Some Less Eminent Victorians in Perspective”, *Anglo-Saxónica*, Série II, n.ºs 16 e 17, Edições Colibri, Lisboa, 2002, pp. 297-309.

<sup>4</sup> “Este nosso lugar reservado, esperado e exigido pelo pintor a pintar, faz parte integrante do seu quadro, devendo-se chamar *quarta dimensão*”, Manuel Cardoso Mendes Atanázio, “Artes plásticas e comunicação”, *Miscelânea de Estudos dedicados a Fernando de Mello Moser*, org. Comissão Científica do Departamento de Estudos Anglo-Americanos da FLUL (Lisboa, 1985), pp. 389-397, 394.

envolve os poemas.<sup>5</sup> Dizem os autores e cito a tradução de Helen Alves:

Diz-se às vezes que o estilo é o homem. Nós preferimos dizer que o estilo é o relacionamento. Do estilo de uma comunicação é possível inferir coisas como, por exemplo, aquilo que a pessoa falante considera serem as capacidades cognitivas e o nível de atenção do ouvinte, a quantidade de apoio ou orientação que ela tem vontade de lhe dar para o processamento dele da elocução dela, o grau de cumplicidade existente entre ela e o ouvinte, a intimidade ou a distância emocional entre os dois.<sup>6</sup>

É pois inspirados por estas palavras, que queremos aqui verificar o que podemos inferir da convergência de dois grandes artistas gráficos do século XIX no livro de Hélio Alves e a que tipo de cumplicidade e distanciamento o autor convida ao dedicar a sua obra a eles: “É uma honra para o autor destes limericks portugueses dedicar este humilde livrinho a Edward Lear e a George Cruikshank”.<sup>7</sup>

Para responder a estas questões, observemos os elementos de base que se cruzam no livro de Hélio Alves: a forma prosódica do *limerick*, a relação entre o *limerick* e a literatura do *nonsense* vitoriano propulsionado por Edward Lear e, finalmente, aquele que foi talvez o ilustrador mais célebre e prolífero na Inglaterra até a segunda metade do século XIX: George Cruikshank.

Até a data, ainda não foi avançada nenhuma explicação convincente para a denominação *limerick*.<sup>8</sup> Oriundo da tradição oral inglesa, o *limerick* é um curto poema narrativo de cinco versos<sup>9</sup> que começa obrigatoriamente com a fórmula ritualizada *There was*. O esquema de rima *aabba* e do metro acentual é inexorável e faz com que o(s) protagonista(s) do poema se atroje(m) pelas peripécias para um fim formalmente predestinado.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevância: Comunicação e cognição* (1995), tradução de Helen Santos Alves (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2001), p. 323.

<sup>6</sup> *ibidem*, p. 321.

<sup>7</sup> Hélio Alves, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Para um resumo da investigação em torno do nome de *limerick*, cf. Vivien Noakes, “Introduction”, Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense*, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>9</sup> O metro acentual do *limerick* proporciona uma disposição gráfica sobre quatro linhas, como acontece em certas edições.

<sup>10</sup> Três acentos no primeiro, segundo e quinto verso e dois acentos no terceiro e quarto verso: contando com as pausas, o *limerick* apresenta-se como uma composição rítmica binária de quatro vezes quatro batimentos: cf. M. Mendes, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-81.

Como ilustração da tirania que a forma do *limerick* exerce sobre os significados nele intrincados, observa-se um exemplo do século XX:

There once was a man who said, 'Damn!  
It is borne upon me I am  
an engine that moves  
In predestinate grooves:  
I'm not even a bus I'm a tram.'<sup>11</sup>

Como se pode observar, o *limerick* partilha da natureza da lengalenga, ou seja, das construções verbais impelidas por sonoridades, ritmos e rimas mais do que por motivações de significado. É da natureza da brincadeira verbal comunicar, não através da partilha de informações ou de significados encadeados por palavras, frases e textos, mas sim utilizando as palavras como objectos ou gestos sonoros que agem sobre o corpo e assim diminuem o espaço entre os interlocutores e o distanciamento inerente ao simbólico.<sup>12</sup> O tipo de interacção a que o jogo verbal convida pode ter muitos sabores e intencionalidades, mas estabelece-se sempre no limiar da capacidade de simbolização, mobilizando o corpo, pondo em relevo as dimensões para-linguísticas da comunicação e sublinhando deste modo a fragilidade do sentido mediado pela palavra.<sup>13</sup>

Não é por acaso que o *limerick* tem sido o meio privilegiado para todo o tipo de subversão, desde paródias bem-humoradas de sistemas filosóficos até à pornografia<sup>14</sup> A rigidez mecânica do poema é garante seguro contra infiltrações de sentimento e, ao responsabilizar a forma prosódica pela feitura do sentido, deixa livre de culpa (i.e. de relação) tanto o emissor como o receptor. Em última análise, o *limerick* tudo perdoa pela graça do

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<sup>11</sup> O autor é T. Hare, cit. em Gavin Ewart (ed.), *The Penguin Book of Light Verse* (Harmondsworth: 1980), p. 415.

<sup>12</sup> Para o valor comunicativo dos componentes tonais da enunciação, a sensorialidade da voz, o timbre, a melodia etc., cf. Boris Cyrulnik, *Mémoire de singe et paroles d'homme* (Paris: Hachettes Littératures, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> Para a relação entre a palavra e o corpo, cf. António Bracinha Vieira, *Etologia e Ciências Humanas* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1983) e Boris Cyrulnik, *La naissance du sens* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> O *limerick* e a pornografia são indissociáveis: G. Legman, *The Limerick* (London, Toronto, Sydney, New York: Granada Publishing, 1976) e *The Limerick, Les Hautes Études*, Paris, 1957 (colectânea anónima).

metro e configura-se admiravelmente como uma solução *a priori* para as contingências da vida.

Terá sido precisamente a inflexibilidade da forma que atraiu Edward Lear quando começou a utilizar a fórmula para os seus disparates verbais, a que ele próprio nunca chamou *limerick*, mas sim *nonsense-verse* ou *nonsense*. Tão prolífera foi a produção de *limericks* por parte de Edward Lear, e tão importante o sucesso dos seus livros de “disparates” que o seu nome se tornou indissociável da forma ao ponto de ser considerado o inventor do *limerick*.<sup>15</sup>

A popularidade que Edward Lear alcançou com as suas brincadeiras verbais proporcionou-lhe um nicho incontestável na paisagem cultural da época que, porém, não manifestou o mesmo apreço pela ocupação oficial do autor que era pintor paisagístico de profissão. Apenas muito recentemente é que as pinturas paisagísticas e as aguarelas de Edward Lear têm merecido uma reapreciação, como testemunha a retrospectiva da sua obra na Royal Academy of Arts em 1985.<sup>16</sup> Contudo, data de 1991 a primeira publicação dedicada exclusivamente ao pintor Edward Lear.<sup>17</sup>

É interessante reflectir sobre a posição à margem na sociedade vitoriana de Edward Lear. O autor vivia das receitas provenientes da obra pictórica e dos livros de viagens feitas no Sul da Europa e no Médio Oriente. O sucesso popular e a aceitação pelo grande público, porém, provinha dos livros de *nonsense*, originalmente escritos para crianças, mas bem cedo acolhidos pelo grande público em geral.<sup>18</sup> O lugar dúbio que Edward Lear ocupava na sociedade inglesa da época estava relacionado com a profunda ambivalência que caracterizava o autor, incapaz de levar a sério a sua actividade de pintor e, no entanto, muito susceptível às críticas dos poemas e

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<sup>15</sup> A definição de *limerick* fornecida pelo *Oxford English Dictionary* enquanto “*a form of nonsense-verse*”, é explicitamente associada a E.Lear: cf. *OED*, 1933, vol. VI, p. 298. Edward Lear publicou a primeira colectânea de *limericks* em 1846 sob o título de *A Book of Nonsense* (re-editada em 1855 e alargada em 1861) e mais três livros de “*nonsense*” em 1871, 1872, 1877, estendendo a denominação a todo o tipo de formas: histórias, baladas, abecedários, etc. Ver também nota 1.

<sup>16</sup> Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear, 1812-1888* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1985. Catalogue published in association with Weidenfeld and Nicolson).

<sup>17</sup> Vivien Noakes, *The Painter Edward Lear*. With a Foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales (Newton Abbot and London: David & Charles, 1991)

<sup>18</sup> Para a deslocação de *A Book of Nonsense* do mercado do livro infantil para o público adulto, cf. Dieter Petzold, *Formen und Funktionen der Englischen Nonsense-Dichtung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Nurnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1972).

desenhos por ele mesmo propagados como não-sérios: *nonsense*.<sup>19</sup> De facto, Edward Lear sofria de uma aceitação social “pelas razões erradas”. Uma análise atenta de *A Book of Nonsense* revela nos *limericks* temáticas obsessivas de retracção solitária ou de agressão violenta e nos desenhos, ora uma virulência grotesca, ora uma expressividade lírica sugestiva de união fusional. De vários modos, os *limericks* e os desenhos revelam uma grande sensibilidade para os sinais não-verbais inerentes à comunicação.

É num contexto de comunicação afectiva, pautada por risos e gestos, que Lear explica a origem de *A Book of Nonsense* que foi concebido no contacto directo que o autor teve com crianças, os filhos do mecenas para o qual então trabalhava.<sup>20</sup> Distanciado destas crianças, não apenas pela idade, mas também, e sobretudo, pela posição social, Edward Lear encontrou nos disparates originados pelo *limerick* uma possibilidade de comunicação hilariante para além das categorias sociais e culturais:

Long years ago, in days when much of my time was passed in a country house, where children and mirth abounded, the lines beginning, “There was an old man of Tobago, “were suggested to me by a valued friend, as a form of verse lending itself to limitless variety for Rhymes and Pictures; and thenceforth the greater part of the original drawings and verses for the first “Book of Nonsense” were struck off with a pen, no assistance ever having been given me in any way but that of uproarious delight and welcome at the appearance of every new absurdity. <sup>21</sup>

No entanto, quem observar hoje, a uma distância de mais de cento e sessenta anos, os “disparates” de Edward Lear, dá conta da obsessividade com que neles são atacados, zombados, pervertidos os pressupostos formais e pragmáticos da comunicação verbal.<sup>22</sup> Se, como escreve T. S. Eliot, “nonsense” significa “paródia de sentido”, podemos dizer que os *limericks* de Edward Lear não in/per/vertem apenas os contextos social ou culturalmente codificados da feitura de sentido, mas que atacam as categorias em que a linguagem representa o real.<sup>23</sup> Em consequência, e ao nível da pra-

<sup>19</sup> Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear: The Life of a Wanderer* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> Hélio Alves menciona as circunstâncias na introdução, “Limerickando”, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Lear, “Introduction” to *More Nonsense* (1872), *Edward Lear’s Nonsense Omnibus* (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Co, 1943, pp. 143-144.

<sup>22</sup> M. J. G. A. B. Mendes, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-160.

<sup>23</sup> Como diz Cyrulnik: “Parler, c’est transformer en informations techniques un langage non



gmática, o *nonsense* de Lear deleita-se em enfatizar a linguagem como sítio de desencontro ou de agressão e revela uma consciência aguda da tirania da linguagem que, alguns anos depois, será retomada com ênfase ainda mais forte por Lewis Carroll.<sup>24</sup> Poder-se-ia dizer que, com cento e cinquenta anos de antecipação, os dois autores do *nonsense* formulam críticas àquilo que, na pragmática, Grice há-de denominar o “princípio de cooperação” da interacção verbal.<sup>25</sup> Visto de um outro ângulo, observa-se que livros do século XIX, ao tempo considerados como poemas e contos para crianças, serão re-avaliados à luz das ciências da linguagem do século XX, para cujas aquisições os autores do *nonsense* contribuíram.

Observe-se, por exemplo, o seguinte *limerick* de Lear em que a interatividade inerente ao diálogo é zombada pelo insólito da situação, a irrelevância da pergunta e a ecolalia da resposta:



There was an Old man in a tree,  
Who was horribly bored by a bee;  
When they said, “Does it buzz?”  
He replied, “Yes, it does!”  
It’s a regular brute of a bee!”<sup>26</sup>

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verbal, auparavant émotionnel”, *Mémoire de singe et paroles d’homme*, *op. cit.*, p.227. T. S. Eliot, “The Music of Poetry”, *On Poetry and Poets* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1957, 1979), pp. 26-38, 29: “His (Edward Lear’s) non-sense is not vacuity of sense: it is parody of sense, and that is the sense of it”.

<sup>24</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* data de 1865 e, como o título indica, foi concebido como um conto de fadas.

<sup>25</sup> Dan Sperber, Deirdre Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse*, p. 161.

Um outro exemplar denuncia, através do desenho, a natureza metafórica da linguagem e mostra como a representação de conceitos depende de modelos do real tidos como partilhados por todos: no desenho, os olhos “invulgarmente grandes” pertencem a uma figura feminina com cabeça grotesca em que os olhos são *literalmente* desmesurados em relação ao tamanho do corpo:



There was a Young Lady whose eyes  
Were unique as to colour and size;  
When she opened them wide,  
People all turned aside,  
And started away in surprise.<sup>27</sup>

Em *A Book of Nonsense*, a ilustração é o contexto tirânico do *limerick* e os textos que resultam da união entre poema e desenho constituem, no seu conjunto, uma interrogação crítica da validade das representações humanas, sejam elas gráficas ou linguísticas. Neste sentido, os *limericks* de Edward Lear podem ser vistos como uma espécie de proto-modernismo, não apenas por causa das temáticas que anunciam de modo inquietante autores como Beckett e Kafka, ou pintores como Grosz e Beckmann, mas muito mais pela autonomia que a fórmula desenho-texto adquire perante as formas habituais da representação do real.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *ibidem*, p. 75.

<sup>28</sup> Para a relação entre livros para crianças da segunda metade do século XIX e o advento do Modernismo, ver Juliet Dusinberre, *Alice to the Lighthouse: Children's Books and Radical Experiments in Art* (London : Macmillan Press Ltd.: 1987, 1999).

Veja-se, como exemplo:



There was an Old man of Cape Horn,  
Who wished he had never been born;  
So he sat on a chair,  
Till he died of despair,  
That dolorous man of Cape Horn.<sup>29</sup>

A leitura de Edward Lear como poeta proto-modernista não se coaduna com a intencionalidade expressa pelo autor. No prefácio de *More Nonsense* de 1872, Edward Lear é peremptório em afirmar a ausência de todo o valor simbólico nos seus disparates. Mais especificamente – e o facto é importante para a relação entre Edward Lear e Cruikshank – Lear acentua a natureza não-caricatural dos seus desenhos que, segundo ele, nunca visam a crítica de um indivíduo ou da sociedade, mas sim um sem-senso absoluto:

“in no portion of these Nonsense drawings have I ever allowed any caricature of private or public persons to appear, and throughout, more care than might be supposed has been given to make the subjects incapable of misinterpretation: ‘Nonsense’, pure and absolute, having been my aim throughout.”

Por outras palavras, e ao invocar um sem-senso absoluto, Edward Lear posiciona-se como herdeiro do Romantismo que ele investa com uma “Ausência” centralizadora reminiscente – através da inversão – da “Presença”

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<sup>29</sup> Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse*, op. cit., p. 97.

transcendental de Wordsworth: “A Presence which is not to be put by”.<sup>30</sup>

O facto de, em 1872, Edward Lear poder negar aos seus desenhos uma interferência com o real demonstra que a denominação de *nonsense*, por ele mesmo introduzida em gesto dúbio de frivolidade, já estava implementada por influência do grande sucesso de *A Book of Nonsense* de 1846 e 1861. Pode-se concluir que Edward Lear criou, *malgré lui*, um estilo e uma sensibilidade novos, dando o nome a um espaço intermediário que assegura a separação que o eu mantém consigo mesmo e com os outros, entre a esfera do íntimo e a esfera do público.<sup>31</sup>

É aqui, na aceitação de um traço contrastivo que permite distinguir um desenho “nonsensical” de um desenho caricatural, que a relação de Edward Lear e George Cruikshank se situa.

George Cruikshank nasceu em 1795, vinte anos antes de Edward Lear. Ao contrário deste, Cruikshank era um ilustrador de relevo na cultura popular do tempo. Como escreve David Borowitz, a obra inicial que George Cruikshank executou em colaboração com o irmão Robert foi um dos produtos mais procurados da cultura popular do tempo:

“Their prints were being wooed by all the print sellers – Ackermann, Fores, Johnny Fairburn [...] Their prints were the rage of London, and crowds literally gathered around the shop windows, gobbling up each new print as it was exhibited. Remember that this was the great amusement of the age [...]”.<sup>32</sup>

Ambos os artistas, Cruikshank e Lear, nasceram dentro de uma rica tradição de caricatura gráfica, que já em 1813 tinha sido objecto de um estudo histórico: *A Historical Sketch of the Art of Caricature*<sup>33</sup>. Mas, enquanto Lear era um pintor cujos desenhos grotescos pertenciam a uma actividade paralela, dubiamente auto-denominada de *nonsense*, a arte de Cruikshank era claramente interveniente no mundo público. Como E. H. Gombrich demonstra, existem desenhos de Cruikshank que se anunciam como brincadeiras auto-

<sup>30</sup> William Wordsworth, “Ode (‘There was a Time’)”, *The Major Works* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, 2000), v.119.

<sup>31</sup> Pensa-se em *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) e no sucesso de Oscar Wilde em distinguir, entre ser e parecer “Earnest”:

<sup>32</sup> J. Hillis Miller, David Borowitz, *Charles Dickens and George Cruikshank* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1971), p. 77.

<sup>33</sup> Citado em E. H. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive. Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), p. 209.

suficientes mas o grosso da sua arte é dominado pela intervenção crítica na sociedade: “Like most humorous artists, Cruickshank harnassed his fertile imagination to the service of causes, social and political, but [...] earlier examples have no such purpose: nonsense had become an acknowledged category of harmless fun”.<sup>34</sup>

Ao contrário de Edward Lear, que procurava desenhar formas pre-conceptuais à maneira do desenho da criança, a arte de George Cruikshank entrava em diálogo com os discursos do seu tempo, quer com os livros que ilustrava, quer com questões sociais e culturais que satirizava ou denunciava.<sup>35</sup> A quantidade da sua produção – calcula-se em mais de cinco mil o número de desenhos de Cruikshank – é, em si, elucidativa para a compreensão do artista como intervencionista, mais interessado em comentar através dos desenhos de que em criar formas novas.<sup>36</sup>

Um primeiro contraste entre Lear e Cruikshank é o contexto em que os desenhos de ambos aparecem: Cruikshank é um profissional cujo trabalho é dirigido à praça pública; Edward Lear começa por desenhar os desenhos de *nonsense* para crianças, numa actividade à margem e num estilo que os dissocia do real. Cruikshank utiliza representações que são do domínio público e, ao deformá-las para fins satíricos, critica ao mesmo tempo que acolhe a diversidade da vida e as idiosincrasias humanas. O artista ajudou a criar a iconografia do século XIX e os seus desenhos valem também pela informação documental que contêm. Os grotescos de Edward Lear, pelo contrário, aproximam-se de composições abstractas que servem de referente para os *limericks* com os quais constituem textos auto-suficientes que se substituem ao real.

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<sup>34</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive*, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>35</sup> Seria interessante abordar a arte de Lear e de Cruikshank a partir de um referente obrigatório, William Hogarth. Hogarth deplorava “that which of late years got the name of caricature”, dizendo que: [caricature] is or ought to be totally divested of every stroke that has a tendency towards great Drawing: it may be said to be a Species of Lines that are produced rather by the hand of chance than of skill: [...] the early scrawlings of a Child which do but barely hint an Idea of a Human Face”, citado em E. H. Gombrich, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>36</sup> David Borowitz, “George Cruikshank: Mirror of an Age”, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-90. Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Art of Caricature* (London: Orbis Publishing, 1981) Em E. H. Gombrich and E. Kris, *Caricature* (Harmndsworth, The King Penguin Books, 1940), os autores observam que a palavra “caricature” começou a ser usada em finais do séc. XVIII com Gillray e Rowlandson, figuras charneiras na evolução do desenho satírico enquanto arte popular. Neste ensaio, os autores mencionam Edward Lear, mas não Cruikshank.

Um abismo separa a arte de Cruikshank dos desenhos de *nonsense* de Edward Lear. As figuras de Lear não estão situadas no espaço: são auto-suficientes na repetição obsessiva de contorções de agressão ou esgares de alienação. Trata-se de figuras descontextualizadas cujo único suporte é o traço no papel e o espaço branco da folha. As ilustrações de Cruikshank, pelo contrário, seduzem pela atenção ao pormenor dos adereços e cenários. As figuras de Cruikshank vivem no mundo, as de Lear estão suspensas no vazio com sugestões de uma dimensão arcaica anterior à capacidade simbólica do ser humano.

O universo de Edward Lear afasta-se do mundo colorido e sociável de George Cruikshank e vira-se para um sítio de silêncio, sem reverberações familiares. Tanto nos desenhos como nos textos, Edward Lear aproxima-se de uma dimensão aquém da palavra e sugere as raízes subterrâneas daquilo que, em Cruikshank, é transformado numa linha que estabelece um elo cúmplice com o mundo do humano.

Mas aquilo que mais distingue os artistas ao ponto de constituir as suas assinaturas pessoais é o traço. Basta folhear as páginas de *Pensar Sem Senso* para saborear a dimensão lírica do traço de Cruikshank, um traço fino, mas enérgico que é convidativo à participação do observador na graça e leveza dos desenhos. Diz Borowitz de Cruikshank:

“After the fall of Napoleon in 1815 [...] he began a refinement of caricature that presaged a tenderness and grace, earnestness, lively sympathy, and modesty which were entirely his own, and earned for him the sincere admiraion of all who knew him throughout a long and busy life.”<sup>37</sup>

Com Charles Dickens, cujo romance *Oliver Twist* ilustrou, Cruikshank partilha a vitalidade vibrante e o gosto pela encenação. O crítico Robert Patten comenta a aliança entre os dois artistas do seguinte modo: “Cruikshank’s wiry, pulsing line and keen sense of dramatic design yields plates that are highly energized and theatrical”.<sup>38</sup> E embora sejam conhecidos os comentários de Baudelaire sobre a violência que Cruikshank também revela, a verdade é que a expressividade a que o poeta francês alude nunca chega à

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<sup>37</sup> Borowitz, *op. cit.* pp. 73-4.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Patten, “George Cruikshank”, in Paul Schlicke (ed.) *Oxford Reader’s Companion to Dickens* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 2000), p. 148.

estranheza alienante das deformações dos desenhos de Edward Lear:

“Si l’on pouvait analyser sûrement une chose aussi fugitive et impalpable que le sentiment en art, ce je ne sais quoi qui distingue toujours un artiste d’un autre[...] je dirais que ce qui constitue surtout le grotesque de Cruikshank, c’est la violence extravagante du geste et du mouvement, et l’explosion dans l’expression[...] Le seul défaut qu’on puisse lui reprocher est d’être souvent plus homme d’esprit, plus crayonneur qu’artiste.”<sup>39</sup>

Se lermos bem as palavras de Baudelaire, este terá compreendido que, em Cruikshank, o empenho ético se antecipava, nem que por muito pouco, sobre o impulso estético. Lear, pelo contrário (até porque a responsabilidade para com a sua arte pôde ser atribuída ao contexto de “disparatadas” para crianças), é mais transgressivo na sobriedade forte de um traço que desfamiliariza e que é frontal, essencial, desornado.

Olhando para a junção inusitada de Edward Lear e George Cruikshank em *Limericks Portugueses*, queremos pensar que a ligação entre o Professor Hélio Alves e Cruikshank está na celebração da vida, na atenção ao outro, na valorização do pormenor, daquilo a que mais ninguém presta atenção: “tenderness”, “grace”, “earnestness” and “lively sympathy”, “modesty”, os adjectivos com que Borowitz caracteriza Cruikshank, que também evocam Hélio Alves. Recordam o empenho social da sua vida e obra e convidam-nos a prosseguir.

Mas a reverberação de Lear também existe em *Pensar Sem Senso*, na reminiscência do *nonsense* e de tudo o que a ele está associado. Confere ao livro um sabor a silêncio e uma brancura que falam de um sítio para além ou para aquém da palavra, o sítio para onde, no fim de tudo, cada um se deve retirar. *Pensar sem senso. Limericks Portugueses* diz que *sense* e *nonsense*, Cruikshank e Lear, o privado e o público não se excluem. O livro de Hélio Alves transmite um reconhecimento tácito e respeitoso da morte, ao mesmo tempo que a festa da língua portuguesa, aliada ao lirismo vital de Cruikshank, exorta à vida. Hélio Alves legou um *momento vitae*, uma advertência da vigilância necessária para integrar a força vital em formas onde o sentido individual se cruze com as direcções e orientações mais abrangentes da comunidade.

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<sup>39</sup> Charles Baudelaire, “Quelques caricaturistes étrangers”, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1961), p. 1016.





***Ragged London in 1861* de Hollingshead:  
Uma Digressão à Geografia da Pobreza**

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## ***Ragged London in 1861* de Hollingshead: Uma Digressão à Geografia da Pobreza**

A premência de uma reestruturação de modos de sustento, decorrente de alterações nos processos de produção na Grã-Bretanha e da conseqüente erosão de determinadas actividades,<sup>1</sup> assim como a busca de um novo hedonismo libertador das amarras do puritanismo que, castrador, vinha ganhando cada vez mais consistência, funcionaram, ao longo do século XIX, entre outros factores, como mola impulsora de resposta aos ímans da metrópole.<sup>2</sup> Motivações de ordem económica e social – como, de resto, Lord Tennyson ilustra, em “Locksley Hall”, ao descrever o entusiasmo do filho dum lavrador, em evasão à labuta na sua aldeia natal, quando “[...] at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn / / Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn [...]”<sup>3</sup> – paralelamente à prevalência da taxa de natalidade sobre a de mortalidade,<sup>4</sup> conjugavam-se pois para fazerem de Londres a maior cidade do mundo em termos demográficos. Apresentando, em 1861, uma taxa de crescimento superior a 30% – só na área administrada pelo *Metropolitan Board of Works* – comparativamente a 20 anos antes,<sup>5</sup> a cidade crescia em proporção, esten-

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<sup>1</sup> Para um estudo circunstanciado sobre os sectores mais afectados pelo desemprego entre 1790 e 1870, ver Burnett, J., 1994, *Idle Hands*, London, Routledge, caps. 1, 2 e 3, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Para conhecer alguns dos argumentos e iniciativas tomadas com vista a combater as actividades recreativas tradicionais dos pobres, consultar Hammond, J. L. & B., 1978, *The Town Labourer*, London, Longman, pp. 161-3; Cole, G. D. H. & Postgate, R., 1976, *The Common People, 1746-1946*, London, Methuen, p. 307; BEST, G., 1994, *Mid-Victorian Britain*, London, Fontana, pp. 231-3. Best aponta as diversas razões subjacentes às correntes migratórias que então fluíam para os centros urbanos, e fornece dados relativos à proveniência da população que se fixou em Londres entre 1851 e 1881 (*Ibid.*, pp. 28-33.)

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson, A., “Locksley Hall” (1842) (<http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/index.cfm>.)

<sup>4</sup> Best, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25. Sobre as atribuições deste Conselho e a forma de gestão do Município de Londres, ver Briggs, A., 1977, *Victorian Cities*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp. 319-326.

dendo tentáculos, década após década, que devoravam as zonas rurais circundantes. Tal não se traduziu, todavia, num decréscimo da sua densidade populacional, porquanto a inexistência de uma rede de transportes, e mais tarde o seu custo, armadilhou a grande maioria da população trabalhadora no centro de Londres.

Como Dickens notara, em 1848, em *Dombey and Son*, ao aludir à transmutação de uma pradaria aprazível num “disorderly crop of beginnings of mean houses, rising out of the rubbish, as if they had been unskilfully sown there”,<sup>6</sup> a cidade crescia de forma anárquica. Com efeito, a par de artérias novas que surgiam nas áreas de maior desenvolvimento económico, havia um conjunto de vielas esqualidas, nas traseiras das quais se localizava uma rede labiríntica de pátios interiores e becos sem saída, de visibilidade diminuta a qualquer transeunte, por mais atento, o que se devia à natureza acanhada e esconsa das aberturas que lhes facultavam acesso.

Nesse emaranhado confuso de bairros de delimitação imprecisa, onde, no retrato de Mayhew “when once in the heart of the maze it is difficult to find the path that leads to the main-road”,<sup>7</sup> amontoava-se, em domicílios de pequena superfície, uma grande parte da população londrina. Esses “back settlements” de total congestionamento humano e de iniludível degradação social, não raro a paredes-meias com as áreas mais civilizadas – como catedrais<sup>8</sup>, ruas chiques de grande bulício comercial e moradias sumptuosas<sup>9</sup> –, pareciam incógnitos às classes mais abastadas, que, em fuga crescente à influência contaminadora do ambiente urbano, respondiam, em meados do século, ao apelo dos subúrbios, ou, em recusa ou por impedimento de mobilidade, optavam por abrigar-se num casulo reconfortante, desviando o olhar do império do feio e do mefítico.<sup>10</sup>

Londres consistia, portanto, como outras capitais europeias, numa cidade rica e numa cidade pobre. A rica situava-se na zona ocidental da

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<sup>6</sup> Dickens, C., 2003, *Dombey and Son*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, cap. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Mayhew, H., 1968, *London Labour and the London Poor*, vol. I, London, Dover Publications, p. 109. Neste passo, Mayhew descreve Rosemary-lane.

<sup>8</sup> O “Devil’s Acre” – um dos mais sórdidos desses “rookeries” – situava-se justamente junto à Abadia de Westminster. (Doré, G. & Jerrold, B., 1970, *London: A Pilgrimage*, New York, Dover Publications, pp. 42-3).

<sup>9</sup> Chesney, K., 1976, *The Victorian Underworld*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, p. 136.

<sup>10</sup> Horn, P., 1997, *The Victorian Town Child*, Thrupp, Sutton Publishing, pp. 6, 21.

cidade, dentro do perímetro delimitado por Kensington, Hanover Square e o Tamisa. A toda a sua roda estendia-se aquilo a que Françoise Barret-Ducrocq designou como *Povertypolis*, e cuja forma ia adquirindo novos contornos cada vez que se implementavam esquemas de desenvolvimento urbanístico.<sup>11</sup>

O tráfego entre estes dois mundos processava-se de maneira assaz desigual. Enquanto as classes trabalhadoras eram compelidas a invadir os domínios dos endinheirados para se ocuparem de um sem número de encargos relacionados com o abastecimento e a manutenção das partes mais prósperas da capital, raro os que viviam em abundância ousavam penetrar nos quarteirões consagrados aos pobres.

Este alheamento relativamente ao território da pobreza recrudescia à medida que, com a deslocação dos mais favorecidos para *West End* e, sobretudo, para os subúrbios, se consolidava a divisão espacial entre as classes. A burguesia urbana teimava, inconscientemente, ou convenientemente, em não atentar na dimensão da miséria. Numa época em que a expansão imperial prosseguia célere, afigurava-se que “The great mass of the metropolitan community are as ignorant of the destitution and distress that prevails in large districts of London [...] as if the wretched creatures were living in the very centre of Africa”.<sup>12</sup>

Esta ausência de compreensão do outro, de integração do outro em si – factor inescusável ao exercício de uma cidadania efectiva – levou a um estranhamento mútuo que era manifesto, segundo um comentador dos contrastes londrinos em 1856, na atitude comportamental que ambas as partes assumiam aquando de um fortuito contacto: “They surveyed each other with much the same curiosity and astonishment as would nowadays be exhibited by a native of this town at the appearance of an Esquimaux in Hyde-Park or Regent Street”<sup>13</sup>

A Londres de meados do século XIX perfilava-se, assim, com as duas faces gémeas de Jano: uma olhando, ativa, na direcção da montra deslum-

<sup>11</sup> Barret-Ducrocq, F., 1991, *Love in the Time of Victoria*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> James Grant declarou-o, em 1842, em *Lights and Shadows of London Life*. (Citado por Green, D. R., 1995, *From Artisans to Paupers: Economic Change and Poverty in London, 1790 – 1870*, London, Scolar Press, p. 186).

<sup>13</sup> Citado em May, T., 1995, *An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1760-1990*, London, Longman, p. 128.

brante do Império e do progresso; a outra, semi-escondida, avistando pátios interiores miseráveis, enxameados de gente depauperada e insatisfeita.<sup>14</sup>

Ora, a concentração dessa turbamulta em recessos lúgubres fez reacender, ou intensificar, a apreensão pelo poder degenerador das cidades, algo de que William Cobbett, na esteira de Rousseau, fora, algumas décadas atrás, um dos expoentes máximos. A sua constante denúncia do “Great Wen” (terminologia com que se referia a Londres), onde, na sua óptica, os seres humanos se tornavam fisicamente mais débeis e, acima de tudo, axiologicamente mais relaxados,<sup>15</sup> ganhava agora nova dimensão junto das classes médias, que, cientes da perigosidade do ajuntamento das massas, eximidas, ademais, do controlo outrora exercido nas pequenas localidades por via do contacto e influência pessoais como meio de obviar à destruição das relações hierárquicas existentes, temiam o fermentar de algo explosivo tendente a ameaçar a ordem social ‘desejável’, e, como resultado, a aniquilar as prerrogativas que haviam alcançado.<sup>16</sup>

A presença de relações de anonimato, dominantes em vastas zonas de Londres, conferia a sensação de se estar, como já Wordsworth fizera notar, perante uma comunidade não reconhecível, misteriosa, susceptível de se não reger por leis de identidade social,<sup>17</sup> o que era tanto mais plausível quanto era certo que a acumulação de um número excessivo de homens, mulheres e crianças em espaços exíguos era propícia a descontentamento popular em latência.

Esta metamorfose na percepção por parte da classe média relativamente aos pobres urbanos – de indivíduos reconhecíveis para pobres em massa – complementarmente à consciencialização de que a pobreza estava agora segregada também a nível geográfico, foram factores indutores do emergir de uma nova abordagem do problema,<sup>18</sup> até porque a memória dos

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<sup>14</sup> Barret-Ducrocq, F, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Derry, J. (coord.), 1968, *Cobbett's England*, London, The Folio Society, pp. 15-6.

<sup>16</sup> Para uma informação cabal sobre as consequências da aprovação da Reforma Parlamentar de 1832 para os diferentes segmentos da sociedade, consultar Dinwiddy, J. R., 1987, *From Luddism to the First Reform Bill*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, cap. 4, *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> William Wordsworth, em 1799, no Sétimo Livro de *The Prelude – Residence in London* – equacionara o novo fenómeno da multidão metropolitana com problemas de autoconhecimento e de identidade social. (Williams, R., 1984, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*, London, The Hogarth Press, pp. 16-7, 157-8).

<sup>18</sup> Green, D. R., *op. cit.*, p. 181.

conflitos sociais dos anos quarenta advertia da contingência de que os mais carenciados fossem permeáveis a políticas diferenciais difundidas, pensavam, por demagogos destituídos do sentido da responsabilidade,<sup>19</sup> o que, a verificar-se, podia mesmo comprometer a missão civilizadora do Império.

Estes receios, confirmativos de que, no terceiro quartel do século, a perturbação quanto à Londres marginal se não circunscrevia aos riscos de contágio biológico ou aos efeitos degenerativos da vida em áreas superpovoadas, mas abrangia já a repercussão desse tipo de vivência na moral das classes trabalhadoras, constituíram o impulso para o recrudescer da prática de visitar as áreas e habitações dos mais pobres.<sup>20</sup>

Este movimento de visitas domiciliárias, que englobou um grupo de filantropos ligados a organizações beneficentes, um outro de agentes estatais envolvidos na operacionalização da Lei dos Pobres ou na inspecção de condições sanitárias, e ainda um outro de observadores sociais, incluindo romancistas, jornalistas e sociólogos, visava uma recolha de informações fidedignas quanto às carências do agregado familiar, bem como ao merecimento, pelo seu carácter impoluto, de um amparo oficial ou privado que obstasse á sua nefasta desmoralização.

Ora, no Inverno de 1860-61 – um dos mais rigorosos de que havia memória – Londres apresentava um quadro passível de produzir justamente esse efeito indesejável. Debatendo-se, durante dias a fio, com temperaturas abaixo de zero, a cidade, dilatando embora as formas de divertimento e folia aos milhares que acorriam a Hyde-Park para fruírem os prazeres da neve, submeteu a graves privações um elevado número de trabalhadores de ocupação temporária, sobretudo daqueles cujo ramo de actividade paralisara na sequência directa ou indirecta da conjuntural inavegabilidade dos rios, o que associado à resultante subida dos preços de muitos bens de primeira necessidade, os lançou numa situação de miséria de tal modo extrema que,<sup>21</sup> empurrando multidões para fora de portas, quer para, em longas filas

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<sup>19</sup> Briggs, A, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Green sublinha mesmo a preocupação sentida com o socialismo e o ateísmo (*Ibid.*).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209. A título de exemplo, refira-se que, enquanto o número de visitas efectuadas *pelo London City Mission* em 1856 foi de cerca de 56 mil, esse número rondou 2 milhões oito anos depois (*Ibid.*, p. 204).

<sup>21</sup> Wohl, A., “Introduction” em Hollingshead, J., 1986, *Ragged London in 1861*, London, Everyman’s Library, pp. vii, xiii.

junto a *workhouses* ou a *soup-kitchens* obterem assistência, quer para, no caso de a não conseguirem, recorrerem à mendicância ou mesmo a assaltos a armazéns de géneros alimentares,<sup>22</sup> deu visibilidade, embaraçosa por certo, à precariedade laboral dessas classes na base da pirâmide social londrina.

É neste enquadramento, em que os clamores dos moralistas subiam de tom, até porque os distúrbios concitavam as atenções da plataforma radical, que o director de um jornal afecto às classes médias – o *Morning Post* – incumbiu, em Janeiro de 1861, John Hollingshead de elaborar um trabalho de investigação que aquilatasse do impacto das baixas temperaturas desse Inverno junto da população trabalhadora da metrópole. Sob a influência nítida das teorias do grupo *Disraeli's Young England*, defensor da solidariedade governamental como antídoto para a bipolarização classista, o *Morning Post* apelava nas suas páginas, dez dias antes da publicação do primeiro artigo de Hollingshead, a um forte altruísmo caritativo por parte das classes médias e altas, tanto mais que dois ou três dias de geada tinham sido o bastante, não apenas para imobilizar a produtividade, como para esvaziar as escassas poupanças familiares e suspender as vendas a crédito – “The more the cold increased without, the greater were the squalor and misery within”.<sup>23</sup>

Porventura alheado das expectativas que o jornal depositara no seu estudo, Hollingshead iria empreender uma intrépida sondagem ao viver social, doméstico e laboral da Londres desesperada. Convicto de que a reportagem de investigação “requires a strong chest, a power of doing without sleep, of sleeping upon shelves, stones, clay, or hurdles, an observant eye, an even temper, and a good memory”,<sup>24</sup> o jornalista revelou, de facto, uma energia e denodo ímpares no exercício das competências que lhe foram consignadas, que concluiu num notável espaço de tempo (menos de uma quinzena), e em que incorporou uma multiplicidade de fontes, desde entrevistas e visitas domiciliárias a uma série de documentos de natureza estatística, mormente relativos a quantias dispendidas com o pagamento de rendas, ao número de residentes por acre e aos montantes desembolsados pelas Uniões de Paróquias no apoio à indigência.

<sup>22</sup> A este propósito, ver artigo publicado no *Morning Star* de 18-1-1861 (*Ibid.*, p. 5.).

<sup>23</sup> *Morning Post*, 11-1-1861 (*Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.).

<sup>24</sup> Hollingshead, J., “Great Eastern Postscript” (1859) publicado em *All the Year Round* (*Ibid.*, p. xi).



O resultado do seu trabalho – uma série de 10 artigos intitulados pelo *Morning Post* “Horrible London” e publicados, sob anonimato, nos últimos dias de Janeiro – constituíram a base para *Ragged London in 1861* lançado alguns meses mais tarde.<sup>25</sup>

Sem o sensacionalismo característico de estudos anteriores, num tom de inquérito desapassionado, desprovido de exagero ou de mera ênfase de aspectos mais pitorescos, da sua exposição ressalta, óbvio, o primado da exactidão e do rigor sobre o do efeito, o que se não traduz numa escrita fastidiosa, mas, ao invés, fecunda em imagética, como quando, por exemplo, assegura que “the metropolis [...] is [...] not relieved from the spectre of starvation which dances before us at our doors.”<sup>26</sup> O autor considera-se mesmo pioneiro nessa dilucidação objectiva e factual da cidade, porquanto “the sweepings of society have seldom been carefully traced to their hiding-places, and fancy neighbourhoods have been created upon paper and peopled with the phantoms of imagination.” (*R.L.*, p. 9), o que, a seu ver, se não coaduna com os registos dos “duros contornos do facto”, que, “if truthfully given, have little romance, little beauty, and little variety” (*R.L.*, p. 7).

Na realidade, quando deu a sua pesquisa por encerrada, o autor sentia-se exaurido de ânimo,<sup>27</sup> pois “wherever you sink a shaft – whether in the centre or in the outskirts – [...] you will find endless veins of social degradation” e “in all [his] journeys through the holes and corners of London [he has] found a terrible sameness [...]” (*R.L.* p. 117).

Esta cinzenta monotonia reveste-se de um cariz ainda mais dramático pela abrangência das incursões do jornalista à Londres trabalhadora, pela cobertura – mais exaustiva do que a de inquirições similares prévias – a todas as partes da metrópole: de *West End* a *East End*, passando pelo Norte e pelas regiões então amiúde ignoradas a Sul do Tamisa.

Tendo calcorreado extensas zonas, deparou-se com cenas infundáveis de uma pobreza pungente e de uma sobrelotação ultrajante que se não cingiam, como muitos então criam, à zona oriental da cidade (*R.L.*, pp. 8, 17, 58). As acanhadas margens superlotadas da cidade de Londres – “a disgrace to any country that prides itself upon its civilization” (*R.L.*, p. 11)

<sup>25</sup> Wohl, A., op. cit., p. vii, xiv, xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Hollingshead, J., 1986, *Ragged London in 1861*, London, Everyman’s Library, p. 6. Doravante a obra será referenciada pela abreviatura *R.L.*.

<sup>27</sup> Wohl, A., op. cit., p. xiv.

– patenteavam uma classe trabalhadora esfaimada, andrajosa e imunda “[who] burrows in holes and corners at the back of busy thoroughfares” em “ill-constructed, ill-ventilated lurking nests of dwellings” ou em “low, black houses” semelhantes a estabelecimentos prisionais para anões ou a casas de bonecas, erigidas, ao arrepio de toda a decência pública, para mera conveniência do mercado de trabalho, e pelas quais, não raro, era coagida a desembolsar elevadas verbas, simplesmente “for the privilege of living within the sound of the factory bell” (*R.L.*, pp. 7, 12, 38, 44, 92).

Nos “[...] sewer-like courts and alleys” onde se aglomerava, “half-buried”, uma imensidade de gente, Hollingshead esbarrava-se incessantemente com crianças descalças que brincavam na rua “digging in the dustheaps”, com recém-nascidos de palidez facilmente detectável ainda que por debaixo de uma sujidade atroz, com meninos comendo pão barrado de fuligem, com bebês criados em berços improvisados “[from] an old box or an egg-chest”, com crianças subnutridos que “shivering within the bare walls” – visto que toda a mobília fora confiscada para que a renda em atraso fosse liquidada – “[had] nothing on them but sacks tied round their waists” (*R.L.*, pp. 6, 23, 31, 35, 41).

Todavia, o que ressalta do grande painel oferecido por Hollingshead à reflexão dos seus leitores é o perfil da esmagadora maioria das famílias desta população infantil. Muito mais empenhado em captar o *modus vivendi* e o sentir da grande frota de trabalhadores contratados sazonal ou temporariamente<sup>28</sup> – porque muito mais representativos das classes mais baixas – do que em compilar dados sobre o submundo londrino, como Mayhew fizera uma década atrás, Hollingshead, na sua digressão à “Londres Esfarrapada”, lidou sobretudo com homens e mulheres que desempenhavam uma ampla gama de ofícios, que não sendo geradores de estabilidade, eram de incontroversa honradez.

A despeito de não negar a existência de cidadelas de crime e de antros de prostituição nalgumas localidades (*R.L.*, pp. 26-8, 33, 89, 173), os pobres que entrevistou e perscrutou eram, no essencial, pacíficos, diligentes e honestos, tendo, além de tudo, sido reveladores de um espírito de independência instigador de hábitos de frugalidade, de rejeição categórica

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<sup>28</sup> Para um conhecimento aprofundado acerca do trabalho temporário e ocupações acidentais, ver Jones, G. S., 1992, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, caps. 3, 4 e 5, *passim*.

de ajudas externas e até, nalguns casos, de encobrimento da miséria, bem como dissuasor do recurso à mendicidade (*R.L.*, pp. 12, 16, 32, 74). Confrontados com o despedimento massivo despoletado pelos rigores daquele inverno diligenciavam, estreneamente, no sentido de obter um qualquer meio de sustento digno:

[The hard-working poor] sit in their wretched rooms, looking into each other's faces, drooping over bare shopboards, bare benches, bare tables, and half-empty grates, hoping and praying for work. They only ask to be employed. They tramp through miles of mud – they stand for hours in work-room passages – they bear rain and cold, and hunger without murmuring, and they clear their little households of every saleable article rather than beg. (*R.L.*, p. 59).

O decurso da crise viria, porém, a abalar os esteios da moldura ética de alguma dessa gente, que, não vislumbrando a perspectiva de obter colocação a curto prazo, e sabendo que alguns dias de inactividade forçada eram sinónimos de fome, debilidade e até mesmo morte, acorreu às autoridades paroquiais na derradeira esperança de evitar o pior.

Esta luta pela sobrevivência atingia um grande grupo de trabalhadores fiéis às suas velhas artes, que factores variegados – designadamente a instituição de políticas comerciais mais flexíveis ao abrigo do *French Treaty* de Cobden homologado em 1860,<sup>29</sup> assim como mudanças na tecnologia e mesmo na moda – tinham feito declinar,<sup>30</sup> e para quem “it is not easy in middle life, with energies kept down by low living, little recreation, and bad air, to turn the mind and fingers into a fresh trade”. Era o que sucedia justamente com milhares de tecelões de seda de Bethnal Green e de Spitalfields, que, desestruturados nas suas vivências psico-sociais, descreiam que ventos mais risonhos lhes viessem a soprar (*R.L.*, p.39).

Inúmeros marceneiros enfrentavam igual sorte. Meses de inactividade e subsequente penhora ou venda dos seus haveres abandonava-os a uma dieta nutricionalmente tão pobre que ou contraíam doenças incuráveis, e, porque o hospital lhes dava alta, deambulavam pelas ruas até que a morte,

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<sup>29</sup> Cole, G. D. H. & Postgate, R., *op. cit.*, p. 337.

<sup>30</sup> Para um retrato penetrante sobre as artes mais afectadas, em Londres, pelas modificações civilizacionais decorrentes da industrialização, ver Thompson, E. P. & Yeo, E. (coord.), 1973, *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the Morning Chronicle, 1849 – 1850*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp. 113-577, *passim*.

redentora, lhes batesse finalmente à porta, ou cometiam suicídio (como Thomas Bates, já que nem sequer a *workhouse* de Shoreditch concedia em acolhê-lo), ou ainda pereciam de inanição na rua ou quando, já tarde, davam entrada nessa instituição (como foi o caso de Samuel Bailey de Bethnal Green) (*R.L.*, pp. 43, 98-9, 101-2).

Hollingshead presenciou, no entanto, num número elevado de sapa-teiros, fabricantes de brinquedos e costureiras situações de privação igualmente dramáticas, provenientes do estancar de encomendas por parte dos respectivos negociantes, e assistiu, paralelamente, à dirupção económica e degenerescência física de, entre muitos outros, lavadeiras, vendedores ambulantes e tendeiros, verificando, amiúde, que estes “die like sentinels, at their posts” (*R.L.*, pp. 31, 35-6).

À parte a erosão de múltiplos ofícios tradicionais e a incapacidade do sistema em criar um qualquer mecanismo reparador da prostração em que os seus artesãos mergulhavam, especialmente em momentos de depressão negocial como o existente no período em apreço, as condições climatéricas adversas tiveram um efeito cataclísmico junto de todos quantos desempenhavam funções fora de portas: trabalhos ligados à construção civil, ao sector rodoviário e ao comércio naval estagnavam.

Porventura o barómetro mais preciso da empregabilidade londrina, o tempo funcionava como factor natural aleatório de desocultação de uma realidade de que as classes dirigentes não podiam seguramente vangloriar-se. Com efeito, a condição de insolvência dos trabalhadores das docas e dos desembarcadouros, que representavam, por exemplo, metade da população de certos bairros de Whitechapel, chegava a arrastá-los, após se terem desfeito dos seus bens, à situação de desalojados, ou à contracção de enfermidades fatais, como sucedeu a um estivador de St George-in-the-East, que depois de “[hanging] about the docks in the keen weather, day after day, waiting for ships that never came [...], came home wet, miserable and hungry, took to his scanty bed, and never left it again” (*R.L.*, pp. 26, 30-1, 36).

Por toda a Londres, Hollingshead presenciou palcos de vida abaixo do limiar da pobreza e da dignidade, testemunhou cenários de morte provocada pelos motivos mais díspares – “deaths from privation, deaths from want of breast milk, deaths from neglect, deaths from cold – or, in plain unsavoury words, from utter starvation”. Estes óbitos que se não podiam escamotear, porquanto ocorriam na via pública e eram alvo de divulgação

na imprensa, erguiam-se como autênticos escândalos públicos – como o da morte de dois cidadãos no dia de Natal desse inverno, um à entrada da *workhouse* de Marylebone e um outro duas horas após admissão na mesma. Era clarividente que muitos poderiam ter sido evitados, tivesse o deferimento dos pedidos de subvenções sido atempado, ou a *workhouse* servido de porto de abrigo aos que o solicitavam, por mais malquista que essa instituição fosse a seus olhos (*R.L.*, pp. 59, 77-8, 97).

Sem poder para financiar mais do que 1/3 dos requerimentos feitos nesse sentido,<sup>31</sup> e sabendo-se que homens e mulheres de vida dissoluta, não raro, levavam a melhor aquando da distribuição de alimentos, não obstante a exigência de cartas de recomendação por parte dos funcionários das Uniãoes Paroquiais (*R.L.*, pp. 78, 178-92), o país assistia à privação de um mar de gente, o que era germe de enfermidades várias exacerbadas ainda pelas condições sanitárias em que vivia.

O inadequado abastecimento de água, aliado à carência de uma rede de saneamento básico, acarretaram que baixos índices de higiene fizessem parte da cultura vitoriana da pobreza.<sup>32</sup> Vivendo em zonas como Agar Town, no Norte, em que “water-pumps [...] have [...] been destroyed, [...] the water is kept in a hole; dustbins are unknown [...], the usual public privies are another rarity [and] the tiles of the huts are broken off” ou como em Bethnal Green, a Oriente, onde as casas ladeavam “two dustheaps, a pool of rain and sewage, mixed with rotten vegetable refuse, and a battered, lopsided public privy”, se dispunham em redor da pior espécie de matadouros,<sup>33</sup> ou apresentavam a face de verdadeiros currais dado porcos e humanos partilharem o mesmo espaço, não é de estranhar que o jornalista tenha inferido que, por vezes, “donkeys roam about the place as clean and well housed as their masters” (*R.L.*, pp. 38, 45, 69-70).

Se o ambiente exterior não era de modo algum consentâneo com a prevenção da doença, o espaço interior das habitações ainda o era em menor escala. Nos aposentos de dimensões diminutas que ocupavam imperava,

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<sup>31</sup> A provisão de apoio paroquial, mesmo acrescida da filantropia privada, foi de menor impacto em comparação com o declínio estrutural da economia local (Green, D. R., *op. cit.*, p. 210).

<sup>32</sup> Sobre as implicações deste facto, ver Wohl, A. S., 1984, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain*, London, Methuen, pp. 61-5.

<sup>33</sup> Os matadouros constituíram, à época, um dos maiores problemas metropolitanos (*Ibid.*, p. 84).

por via de regra, a cor negra: o negro da sujidade de corpos e roupas, e o negro da escuridão originada ora pela inexistência de janelas, ora pela sua vedação com papel, na tentativa, vã, de minorar a intensidade do frio que transpunha os vidros partidos. Pernoitando famílias inteiras em quartos análogos a poços de água pela sua estreiteza ou a poços de minas pela sua pouca altura, Hollingshead constatava – como, aliás, Charles Kingsley reafirmaria poucos anos depois numa das suas conferências sobre matérias sanitárias intitulada “The Two Breaths”<sup>34</sup> – que isso implicava a indevida oxigenação do sangue, o que era altamente nocivo para a saúde dos moradores, a quem, ironicamente, era concedida uma quantidade de ar respirável cinco vezes inferior à usufruída por criminosos cumprindo pena prisional”. (*R.L.*, pp. 25, 31, 44, 58, 124-5).

O ar era tanto mais impuro e, logo prejudicial, quanto maior fosse o número de pessoas que o inspirava, e a verdade é que uma grande parte das classes inferiores vivia em subdivisões de antigos edifícios ou moradias outrora imponentes, por detrás de cujas fachadas se ocultava a sobrelotação e todo o tipo de inconveniência social e sanitária, quando não mesmo o subarrendamento de compartimentos, onde se admitiam “as many families or individuals [...] as the floor [could] possibly hold” (*R.L.*, pp. 25, 45). Por outro lado, as pequenas casas construídas mais recentemente em substituição das que haviam sido demolidas por iminência de ruína não pareciam oferecer qualquer vantagem por mais ínfima – “the new structures sink to the level of the old” (*R.L.*, p. 37).

Todavia, o que mais se evidenciava nos locais que o autor inspeccionou foi o facto de o problema da sobrelotação se ter adensado com os programas de demolição sanitária que tiveram início na década de quarenta e com o desenvolvimento económico de diversas zonas. É certo que a construção de novas artérias abolira muitos bairros degradados da cidade. No entanto, essa reforma urbana levada a cabo com o alegado pretexto de decepar a miséria e a imundície a que esses edifícios davam guarida,<sup>35</sup> mais não fez do que dividir esse cancro ao meio e remeter cada uma das partes para as áreas adjacentes, criando tanto a ‘colonos’ como a ‘colonizados’ redobradas difi-

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<sup>34</sup> Kingsley, C., “The Two Breaths” (1869) em *Sanitary and Social Lectures and Essays* (<http://www.mastertexts.com>, cap. 3).

<sup>35</sup> Chesney indica como principais motivos para esta reforma o desanuviamento do tráfego e a premência de criar novas zonas comerciais (Chesney, K., *op. cit.*, p. 129).

culdades. As escavações efectuadas para a construção das Grandes Linhas do Caminho-de-ferro também não lograram modificar a natureza abjecta dos pardieiros que engoliram (*R.L.*, pp. 53, 67, 200). Os responsáveis por esses apregoados melhoramentos urbanos, que não passaram de “[mere] quieting doses for grumbling ratepayers, and schemes for benefiting one corner of London at the expense of another” (*R.L.*, p. 86), olvidaram o dever de providenciar o realojamento dos desalojados a custos compatíveis com a sua condição. O seu estatuto económico estava longe de lhes abrir as portas dos apartamentos que se erguiam nas novas vias onde outrora haviam residido. Daí que lhes não sobejasse outra saída senão a de “huddling together”, com todas as implicações de ordem moral que tal acarretava. O seu quotidiano nesses locais, Hollingshead constatava, estava repleto de “debasing lessons” (*R.L.*, pp. 53, 118).

Esse processo de compressão de áreas já superpovoadas pela irrupção de milhares das vítimas das ordens de despejo resultantes das remodelações da estrutura urbana da cidade – como sucedeu, por exemplo, aquando da construção de Victoria Street – teve ainda o efeito perverso, até porque os proprietários desses casebres, cientes da maior procura, subiam as rendas para assim dilatarem os seus proventos, de fazer emparceirar num mesmo espaço cidadãos de conduta irrepreensível com gatunos e prostitutas (*R.L.*, pp. 53-4), ou seja, com as chamadas *dangerous classes*.<sup>36</sup>

Esta proximidade dos pobres honestos com o território da burla e da devassidão dava sinais claros de recrudescer. Um trabalhador invisual que se dedicava à leitura da Bíblia nas ruas, “feeling the raised letters with his hand”, acabou por, na impossibilidade de, com o frio, prosseguir essa tarefa, ver-se compelido a recolher a um asilo de marginais. Acrescia ainda que o delíquio causado por condições habitacionais tão repulsivas fazia da rua um chamariz para muitas crianças e da taberna um fascínio para muitos adultos (*R.L.*, pp. 26, 58, 70-1). Em demanda de algum colorido que anestesiasse a aura de sofrimento de que estavam envoltos, corria-se o risco de que esses pobres viessem também a enveredar por trilhos que asfixiassem de vez as suas convicções axiológicas, que os expelissessem para os guetos dos voluntariamente refractários.

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<sup>36</sup> Acerca da origem deste termo, consultar Emsley, C., 1987, *Crime and Society in England, 1750-1900*, London, Longman, p. 31.

Se esse era o espectro que pairava nas mentes dos guardiões da moral, Hollingshead, atónito, pelo contrário, perante a dimensão limitada do vício em face das circunstâncias experienciadas, denuncia, quase em primeira-mão,<sup>37</sup> o movimento de construção de Habitações Modelo para os pobres, uma vez que a despeito da sua qualidade genérica e da provisão muito mais adequada de infra-estruturas, as classes de pessoas que aí se albergaram não eram aquelas para quem habitação decente estava de outro modo fora de questão. O autor concluía-o depois de nova investida “into the holes and corners of London”, a fim de poder ajuizar se os novos blocos habitacionais se impunham, como o discurso oficial alardeava, como resposta humanista ao alojamento dos “lowest of the low”. Detendo-se numa apreciação aturada das características dos edifícios e dos residentes das Habitações Modelo erigidas por três entidades beneficentes distintas,<sup>38</sup> o jornalista verifica que os beneficiários do privilégio dessas rendas artificialmente mais baixas são “chiefly the higher class of labourers and artisans”, por outras palavras, a aristocracia do labor. Os verdadeiramente pobres continuavam postergados nas vielas e pátios onde abundavam matérias tão residuais como eles próprios o eram em termos de empregabilidade. A falta de um rendimento que lhes permitisse custear a renda desses novos apartamentos, mesmo quando em plena actividade, cumulativamente à obrigatoriedade de proceder à sua liquidação com antecedência,<sup>39</sup> mantinha-os “rotting up in their filthy, ill-drained, ill-ventilated courts”. A galhardia filantropa permitia-se, portanto, dedicar-se a empreendimentos sem rentabilidade financeira para mera protecção dos economicamente protegidos,<sup>40</sup> o que não abonando em favor dos seus patronos, desmerecia também os seus beneficiários. O facto de se mostrarem “willing to sacrifice a portion of their self-respect” e “content to accept anything that they do not fully pay for”, apesar de gozarem de boa saúde, de vigor e de desempenharem

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<sup>37</sup> Wohl, A., “Introduction” em Hollingshead, J., *op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>38</sup> Tratava-se dos blocos erigidos pela *Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes*, dos mandados construir por Miss Burdett Coutts em Bethnal Green, e os pertencentes à *Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes*. Para mais pormenores, ver Jones, G. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Segundo Best, as ‘habitações modelo’ materializaram “o nobre ornamento da filantropia vitoriana” (Best, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 44-5).



trabalho especializado, estável e bem remunerado, eram para Hollingshead sinais claros de um baixo nível moral (*R.L.*, pp. 102-13).<sup>41</sup>

Desmontando o orgulhoso exibicionismo nacional, veiculado numa catadupa de “pamphlets [...], reports, tracts and prospectuses” (*R.L.*, p. 103) perante estas reformas – a panaceia para o problema habitacional dos pobres – Hollingshead, não apenas descortina corrupção moral em segmentos sociais ditos respeitáveis, como comprova que as condições físicas e sociais do ambiente em que os pobres se movimentam, porque inalteradas ou ainda mais deterioradas, persistiam como fonte de falência ética.

A despeito das vultosas verbas dispendidas em prol dos mais carenciados, nos diferentes cantos da cidade habitavam a míngua, a imundície e a doença. Essa a razão pela qual o autor escarnece, repetidamente, da sua cruel toponímia. Nomes como “Mount Pleasant”, “Angel Place”, “Rose Passage” e “Dove Court” perfilam-se em total antítese à essência dessas localidades, sustentando, por outro lado, que “Blackchapel” e “St George-in-the-Dirt” consubstanciariam de forma bem mais hábil as realidades de “Whitechapel” e “St George-in-the-East” (*R.L.*, pp. 23, 67, 86).

Em face da persistente insolubilidade destas questões sociais, Hollingshead iria, defraudando, porventura involuntariamente, as expectativas postas pelo *Morning Post* no trabalho que o mandara a elaborar, ao invés de tecer os aguardados encômios às teses que advogavam a potencialização da generosidade do público de molde a apaziguar as tensões desse momento crítico, reprovar todo e qualquer tipo de caridade, uma vez que essa política secular, e mais recorrente na Inglaterra do que em qualquer outra nação, não se constituía como “the royal roads to cleanliness and plenty”. Do seu ponto de vista, urgia, em matéria de trabalho social, que o coração desse lugar à razão, para que pessoas benevolentes “who act from impulse rather than reflection” não fossem “hourly pained by seeing their gifts misapplied”. Vultosas quantias provenientes quer de organismos oficiais quer da iniciativa privada eram ingloriamente dispendidas num país que, apesar de todo esse esforço, “allows hundreds of its children, in its metropolis alone, to be annually starved to death” (*R.L.*, pp. 2, 98, 119-21).

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<sup>41</sup> A sua crítica seria igualmente válida para as habitações “Peabody Trust” erigidas alguns anos mais tarde, pois falharam também no desígnio de albergar as camadas mais baixas da população (*Ibid.*).

Crítico acérrimo da Lei dos Pobres, pelo que pesava na bolsa dos contribuintes e pela sua comprovada inoperância, o autor, irónico, vislumbra já a construção de um grandioso Museu alusivo a essa lei, da arquitectura e decoração do qual farão parte exclusivamente os bustos e imagens dos cidadãos que o sistema deixou perecer à fome apenas naquele Inverno (*R.L.*, pp. 97-102). Aquilo que, contudo, reputa de mais pernicioso é o facto do auxílio paroquial e privado promover comportamentos indesejáveis numa classe que, desmoralizada por tamanha caridade, não encontra estímulo para a salutar independentização e elege a comodidade da esmola (*R.L.*, pp. 121-4).

Embora a grande parte do material que coligiu demonstrasse, à saciedade, que muitos dos que se situavam no fundo da escada social, seguiam as prescrições morais da classe média, o que, mesmo assim, os não impedia de virem a engrossar as fileiras da indigência, quando a sua precária base de sustento era atingida por um Inverno mais agreste, Hollingshead, denotando alguma ambiguidade, incriminava-os pela inépcia de melhorarem a sua condição individual sem apoios externos. Fiel às doutrinas de Samuel Smiles, e parecendo olvidar o elevado número de homens e mulheres que tentavam de tudo (até a penhora dos seus bens mais preciosos) antes do recurso à caridade, o autor enfatiza as “maravilhas do espírito de iniciativa”, da energia individual como “the only principle that tends to assist the poor without demoralizing them” (*R.L.*, pp. 76, 122).

A maior esperança para que a condição dos pobres se eleve reside, porém, para Hollingshead, naquilo a que Malthus apelidou de “moral restraint”, ou seja, na recusa de uma nupcialidade precoce, no auto-controlo sexual e, sobretudo, da natalidade. Equacionando a reprodução em excesso com a miséria e a sobrelotação, Hollingshead preconiza a abolição de todo o tipo de caridade, pois cada vez que “large-hearted men and women rush forward to help the neglected”, verifica-se o crescimento da classe dos não auto-suficientes. A multiplicação dos pobres é, na sua perspectiva, geradora de pauperismo, porquanto satura o mercado de trabalho, o que, por seu turno, num ciclo vicioso imparável, faz baixar os salários a níveis incompatíveis com a sobrevivência autónoma, amplificando a regularidade da filantropia (*R.L.*, pp. 2, 86, 121-2).

Nesta linha de pensamento, Hollingshead mantém que o trabalho que recai sobre os clérigos, com o propósito de verificar a existência de focos de indigência para os poderem atacar, é inacabável e infrutífero. Na tarefa

da educação de crianças dos bairros mais degradados entrevê também, ecoando as teses de Cobbett,<sup>42</sup> alguma vacuidade, visto que “ragged schools are often of little good unless they can give food [...]”. Na escola e no púlpito o papel do eclesiasta, por mais esforçado e sagaz, manifesta-se de similar futilidade, pois tanto a criança como o adulto rápido esquecem os ensinamentos ministrados e as perorações escutadas quando entram “in [their] domestic hell” (*R.L.*, pp. 24, 113, 122-3).

Seria, por conseguinte, totalmente insensato persistir numa política de apoio à pobreza cuja falência se mostrava por demais evidente. A curto prazo, e porque o sistema educativo só poderá vir a dar os desejados frutos pela internalização dos princípios do espírito de iniciativa e da abstinência malthusiana nas gerações futuras, há que, temporariamente, pôr “os credos na prateleira”, e, como recomendava o movimento Socialista Cristão, a que alude de forma apologetica, fundar “‘soap and water societies’, ‘scrubbing-brush societies’ and such like combinations”, isto é, incutir hábitos de higiene na população (*R.L.*, pp. 112, 125).<sup>43</sup>

Poder-se-á dizer que o cáustico ataque do autor aos males da caridade indiscriminada, juntamente com a sua defesa dos postulados malthusianos como meio de combate à pobreza, debilitam o valor do conjunto de materiais cuidadosamente coligidos sobre os efeitos corrosivos do ambiente dos bairros e do emprego incerto. Há, no entanto, que reconhecer que o que emana prioritariamente do seu estudo é a ostentação do selo inconfundível, porque alicerçado em bases sólidas na vasta incursão aos territórios da pobreza e no contacto com um grupo amplamente diversificado de ramos de actividade, de uma análise interactiva e documental de valia inestimável.

Numa época de riqueza nacional sem precedentes,<sup>44</sup> em que a Grã-Bretanha se estabeleceu como “the world’s workshop, the world’s carrier,

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<sup>42</sup> Ver, por exemplo, Cobbett, W., 1985, *Rural Rides*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 265-6.

<sup>43</sup> A este propósito, ver Kingsley, C., “The Massacre of the Innocents” (1859), *op. cit.*, cap. 10. Nesta palestra o autor exorta as mulheres das classes mais altas (da Associação Sanitária de Senhoras) a instruírem as famílias na prevenção da doença.

<sup>44</sup> Entre 1851 e 1881, o rendimento nacional quadruplicou; as exportações sofreram um aumento de 61% nos 12 anos que mediam entre 1848 e 1860 (BEST, G., *op. cit.*, p. 100; May, T., *op. cit.*, p. 173). Para uma análise detalhada dos motivos que favoreceram esta rendibilidade negocial, ver Cole, G. D. H. & Postgate, R., *op. cit.*, caps. XXVI e XXVII).

the world's clearing house, the world's banker, and a good deal else",<sup>45</sup> fruindo portanto de uma ascendência incontrovertida sobre a família das restantes nações, a obra de Hollingshead surge como um retrato impiedoso da 'outra Londres' de Vitória, da Londres de que o *Establishment* desviava o olhar, ou, na impossibilidade de o fazer (como no Inverno de 1861) etiquetava, de forma indiscriminada, de ociosa e indecorosa.

As histórias obsidiantes em torno das quais o jornalista desenvolveu o retrato da "Londres Maltrapilha" emancipam, pelo menos até certo ponto, essa gente anónima da visão maniqueísta que, correlacionando a sua aparência exterior à sua realidade interior, os rotulava de pobres, feios e maus, num esquema explicativo da sua situação que se afigura de mnemónica de vida fácil ou autodesculpabilizante.

Paralelamente, fica provado que nem todos se deixaram corromper pela "dissolute city" e se entregaram a "evil courses", como Luke de que Wordsworth nos dera conta no seu poema "Michael".<sup>46</sup> Com efeito, muitos foram os que tentaram reorganizar-se de maneira digna, que regiam a sua conduta de acordo com o ideário vitoriano da ética, muito embora esse esforço de vida independente lhes tenha tornado a vida mais custosa do que a outros que, sendo possuidores de uma fibra moral mais débil, optaram por viver como párias da sociedade.

Da leitura da obra ressalta também, claro, que os anos 50 e 60 – o chamado Período de Ouro do Vitorianismo – foram, não obstante, imensamente famélicos. Inúmeras famílias enfrentaram uma pobreza não menos dolorosa do que a de décadas precedentes, pois existia um extracto social para quem a vida era permanentemente de fome e desespero, e um outro para os quais a existência era, de acordo com o fluxo e refluxo da prosperidade, intermitentemente permeada de insegurança, míngua e ansiedade.<sup>47</sup>

Arrancados frequentemente ao mundo do vivente, do colorido que as pequenas localidades donde eram originários representavam, e mergulhados no mundo da civilização euclidiana, porque incolor e uniforme, da

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<sup>45</sup> Pike, E. R., 1967, *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Wordsworth, W., "Michael" (1800), em Peacock, W. (coord.), 1969, *English Verse*, Vol. III, London, OUP, p. 592.

<sup>47</sup> Best, G., *op. cit.*, p. 144.

grande metrópole, que os conduzia quase sempre a uma litania de esperança perdida, esses homens e mulheres com quem Hollingshead conviveu não raro sofriam a bancarrota emocional, identificando-se, por certo, com o latoeiro que, alguns anos atrás, confessara a Mayhew que Londres para onde migrara fora “the theatre of all [his] misery to come”.<sup>48</sup>

*Ragged London in 1861* patenteia, além do mais, uma abordagem metodológica pioneira, que, por assim dizer, faz a ponte entre análises precedentes de pendor antropológico, que viam o homem como ser individual em abstracção, e os métodos sociológicos – que viriam a emergir na década de 90 com os estudos de Booth e Rowntree<sup>49</sup> – em que o homem é encadrado na sua condição biopsicocultural, ou seja, em interacção social, à lupa da sua consciência colectiva.

O valor desta obra impõe-se, pois, não pelas soluções avançadas, mas pela diagnose minuciosa que John Hollingshead apresenta da enfermidade que assolava a nação, mas também pelo carácter inovador, porque em transição para um estádio menos empírico de investigação social, do seu esquema analítico.

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<sup>48</sup> Mayhew, H., *op. cit.*, p. 356.

<sup>49</sup> Wohl, A., “Introduction” em Hollingshead, J., *op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

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**A Lisboa do Imaginário de Fernando Pessoa:**  
*What the Tourist should see*

*Rogério Miguel Puga*  
I.S.E.C., Lisboa





## A Lisboa do Imaginário de Fernando Pessoa: *What the Tourist should see*

“Names full of cloud and seagulls, the surf-crash  
of a South-Western coast, the tidal swing of the Tagus:  
names full of the weather of Portugal,  
the long empty roads, the eucalyptus trees,  
the rice fields and the Atlantic promontories:  
the sardine grilling over charcoal in side-street bars,  
the street-markets, the churches full of God’s calm shadow,  
citizens with head-colds riding in the trams,  
the yellow trams of Lisbon. [...]”

John Wain, *Reflexões sobre o Sr. Pessoa*, edição bilingue, 1993, p. 14.

“No city or landscape is truly rich unless it has been given  
the quality of myth by writers, painters, or by association  
with great events.”

V. S. Naipul, *The Enigma of Arrival: A Novel*, 1987.

Em 1925, Fernando Pessoa redige *Lisboa: What the Tourist Should See* [(L) primeira edição 1992], um guia turístico dedicado aos visitantes de língua inglesa, nomeadamente “[...] the average British [...]”<sup>1</sup> que, de acordo com as cartas da Inglaterra de Eça de Queirós (1966: 509-510), faz a sua aparição no continente durante a *travelling-season* sempre acompanhado pelo guia de viajante. Pessoa descreve alguns locais e percursos da capital portuguesa, Queluz e Sintra, bem como a vida cultural e a imprensa escrita lisbonense, remetendo o próprio título da obra para a direcção que

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. apontamento do autor em folha solta (*apud* Teresa Rita Lopes, 1997: 11).

o olhar do turista deve tomar. A paisagem descrita encontra-se impregnada de símbolos, espaços e referências histórico-culturais que se adensam à medida que o espaço se torna familiar, remetendo esta mesma dimensão para “[...] o fascínio de uma geografia [cultural] pessoana [...]” (Marina Tavares Dias, 1998: 8) presente no poema de John Wain que utilizamos como epígrafe e que se relaciona igualmente com o tema da viagem na poesia e prosa do escritor (*vide* Beatriz Berrini, 1990: 49-71; Teresa Rita Lopes, 1998), fruto não só mas também da forma diferente de o poeta observar e filtrar a capital através das aprendizagens na África do Sul (H. D. Jennings, 1984: 85-90; João Gaspar Simões, 1973: 63-90; Maria José Lencastre, 1981: 31-104). Sendo já longa a tradição da elaboração de roteiros e guias de viagem em língua portuguesa<sup>2</sup> e até inglesa<sup>3</sup> sobre os monumentos, os costumes e as paisagens de Lisboa, Fernando Pessoa contribui assim com um outro texto-retrato pessoal para o já longo rol de obras sobre a metrópole portuguesa, podendo a sua obra ser considerada um misto de guia turístico e de roteiro (também sentimental).<sup>4</sup>

As quarenta e duas páginas dactilografadas em inglês que compõem o texto, pronto a ser publicado, foram encontradas na Biblioteca Nacional, em 1988, por Maria Amélia Gomes, e, de acordo com Teresa Rita Lopes (1997: 11), o título do projecto mais geral de promoção de Portugal onde esta obra se insere é “All About Portugal”, tendo como objectivo dar a

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<sup>2</sup> A título de exemplo, vejam-se os roteiros sobre Lisboa: Eduardo Brito Rodrigues, *Guia de Viajantes ou Roteiro de Lisboa...*, 1791; Inácio Paulino Morais, *Itinerario Lisbonense...*, 1804; e os guias: Paulo Perestrelo da Câmara, *Descrição Geral de Lisboa em 1839 ou Ensaio Histórico de tudo Quanto esta Capital Contem de mais Notavel, e Sua Historia Política e Literaria até ao Tempo Presente*, 1839; *Guia de Viajantes em Lisboa e suas Visinhanças*, 1845; *As Bellezas de Lisboa e seus Arredores: Guia e Roteiro da Cidade*, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Em língua inglesa, vejam-se, entre outros: *The Strangers' Guide to Lisbon or an Historical and Descriptive View of the City of Lisbon and its Environs*, 1847; Dr. Charnock, *Bradshaw's Illustrated Hand-book to Spain and Portugal: A Complete Guide to Travellers in the Peninsula*, c. 1865, (sobre Lisboa: pp. 153-160); Joaquim António de Macedo, *A Guide to Lisbon and its Environs Including Cintra and Mafra*, 1874; A. C. Inchbold, *Lisbon & Cintra: With Some Account of Other Cities and Historical Sites in Portugal*, 1907 (sobre Lisboa: pp. 1-100).

<sup>4</sup> Classificação baseada nas definições do *Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa Contemporânea*, 2001, vol. 1, p. 1950 (“guia: [...] publicação cuja finalidade é fornecer informações a turistas, viajantes [...] sobre um determinado assunto ou [...] local”) e vol. 2, p. 3282 (“roteiro: descrição escrita e pormenorizada de uma viagem. Itinerário [...]. Indicação por escrito da localização e direcção das ruas, caminhos, praças, largos [...] de uma região ou povoação [...]).”)

conhecer “[...] o comércio, a literatura e a arte [...]” aos estrangeiros,<sup>5</sup> ao grande público, servindo também de propaganda do país e contribuindo para o enriquecimento cultural e literário do mesmo. Aliás, como o autor afirma (2000:260), a forma “como os outros nos vêem”, ou seja, “a opinião dos estrangeiros [...] é sempre interessante”. Qualquer viagem e momento de escrita sobre a deslocação no espaço relacionam-se intimamente com a identidade e o sentimento de pertença do viajante-observador-autor, adquirindo as especificidades locais determinadas nuances a partir do filtro e emotividade expressa pelo narrador ao longo de descrições que constituem a denominada *travel writing* actualmente estudada no âmbito dos *Cultural Studies* e da qual os *guide books*, hoje tão populares, fazem parte. O que torna este guia deveras especial é o facto de ser redigido por um dos maiores nomes da literatura portuguesa que, ao longo do texto, questiona a forma de ser lisboeta e até portuguesa e desvenda ao visitante uma nova forma de encontrar e conhecer Lisboa, sendo esta uma das funções da *travel writing* (Paul Fussell, 1987), quer sobre o familiar quer sobre o longínquo, como o demonstram escritores como D. H. Lawrence (*Sea and Sardinia*, 1921) e Jan Morris (*Journeys*, 1984).

Pessoa identifica e remete o olhar do turista para as estátuas que materializam as façanhas dos heróis nacionais, de Nuno Álvares Pereira e Afonso de Albuquerque ao Marquês de Pombal – cuja estátua se encontra em construção – tornando o espaço da cidade expressivo ao evocar o seu simbolismo rumo ao passado histórico. Relativamente a espaços expressivos, Eugene Victor Walter (1988: 204, 111) afirma:

A place is dead if the physique does not support the work of imagination, if the mind cannot engage with the experience located there, or if the local energy fails to evoke ideas, images, or feelings [...] [a city is] a container of presences that include ancient images and memories. These presences enter the feelings that make a town, and they help to settle a place [...]

Esta é a mesma experiência/vivência que Pessoa captura na paisagem humanizada e monumental de Lisboa, nomeadamente no caso do Rossio, por duas vezes (*L*: 39, 63), do Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (*L*: 90) e do Parque

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<sup>5</sup> Vide nota 1. Para o contexto de produção da obra veja-se Teresa Rita Lopes, 1997: 25.

Eduardo VII, este ultimo teatro das lutas de Sidónio Pais – “o Presidente-Rei” – em 1917 (*L*: 81). O documento histórico transporta o leitor actual para uma Lisboa há muita transformada pela ‘marcha do progresso’, adquirindo, assim, um teor pitoresco que torna o texto uma agradável e informativa surpresa para os amantes da cidade, cujos espaços ao ar livre, monumentos e história são guiados pela focalização e filtro de Fernando Pessoa, que canta este espaço-tempo também através da sua arte poética, e que ao longo da narrativa veste a pele, ou calça os sapatos, do visitante, por entre “[...] the vast irregular and many coloured mass of houses that constitute[s] Lisbon [...]” (*L*: 31) e que podem ser apreciados de sete pontos de vista diferentes, as colinas que caracterizam a morfologia da urbe. A dimensão onírica da capital, qual Veneza, desvenda-se ao turista que chega por mar, sendo o desembarque nesta “abençoada região” (*L*: 30) descrito como rápido e eficaz, à medida que o olhar se torna cada vez mais particular e demorado em espaços específicos no centro da cidade. Em tom de introdução e convite, o cicerone dirige-se ao leitor, servindo-se da enumeração e da sugestiva repetição da expressão “worth seeing”, ou seja, o visitante terá acesso sobretudo aos principais monumentos e locais dignos de visita:

We shall now ask the tourist to come with us. We will act as his cicerone and go over the capital with him, pointing out to him the monuments, the gardens, the more remarkable buildings, the museums— all that is in any way worth seeing in this marvellous Lisbon. [...] Let him take his place with us in a motor-car and go on towards the centre of the city. On the way we will be showing him everything that is worth seeing” (*L*: 32).

Desfrutando da toponímia histórica, o visitante percorre a Rua 24 de Julho, olhando, por indicação do guia, ora para a direita ora para a esquerda, ouvindo breves descrições de edifícios como a Câmara Municipal e referências aos arquitectos que lhes deram forma. Aliás, o narrador refere constantemente o movimento no tempo e no espaço do automóvel em que a viagem é realizada, adquirindo a narrativa um carácter cronotópico (Mikhail Bakhtin, 2000: 84-259), como podemos observar a partir da utilização de expressões como: “Returning to the same street and turning to the left [...]” (*L*: 82); “As we go down the Calçada da Ajuda [...] Going along Rua do Jardim Botânico” (*L*: 88); “A few minutes more, and we are in front of the great monument that is the Mosteiro dos Jeronymos [...]” (*L*: 90). Os espaços e tempos (re)visitados conferem ao texto uma cronotópica, abrangendo o

conceito cronótopo as dominantes espaço-tempo do texto, que no caso da viagem pessoana de automóvel pela capital portuguesa não se poderão dissociar. Bakhtin (84) afirma:

The process of assimilating real historical time and space in literature [...]. We will give the name chronotope (literally, “time space”) the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature [...] it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space) [...], spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole [...] [and] the intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

O conhecimento que Pessoa tem da vivência inglesa do espaço lisboeta ao longo dos tempos, quer por interesse ou curiosidade próprios quer devido aos contactos comerciais nos escritórios onde trabalha, permite-lhe indicar, ao leitor britânico implícito, algumas quantias monetárias também em libras inglesas (*L*: 60, 68, 74, 82, 108), figuras históricas inglesas associadas a espaços da capital (*L*: 84, 98, 112, 116) e os nomes pelos quais determinados locais são designados pelos ingleses, como acontece com a Praça do Comércio/Terreiro do Paço, conhecida pelos últimos como “Black Horse Square” (*L*: 34), alusão mais tarde explicada através da referência à estátua de D. José I, da autoria do escultor Joaquim Machado de Castro. As simbólicas alegorias ou ecfrases do monumento são explicadas em pormenor, como acontece com as figuras do arco da Rua Augusta (*L*: 37), antes que o viajante chegue ao “coração da cidade”, a Praça D. Pedro V ou Rossio (*L*: 38), onde o visitante deve escolher hotel e, como acontece ao longo de todo o texto, a estátua central, a fachada do teatro Nacional Almeida Garrett e a estação do Rossio são interpretadas em pormenor; um olhar informado, portanto, como se verifica na descrição do mais imponente monumento da cidade, o Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (*L*: 90-92). Durante uma digressão ou aparte, o guia sugere que o “popular” mercado coberto da Praça da Figueira seja visitado a pé e de manhã para que se retire o maior partido do pulsar humano da cidade, presenciando o estrangeiro uma “animated scene” (*L*: 40). A narrativa regressa ao passeio de automóvel após este aparte – um entre muitos –, Avenida da Liberdade acima, por entre estátuas, cafés, cinemas e esplanadas, locais públicos onde qualquer visitante gozará momentos de “[...] rest and meditation [...]” (*L*: 76), como acontece nos miradouros e jardins da capital. A dimensão também exótica da cidade

é referida quando da passagem pela flora do parque do Campo Grande; do Chalet das Canas (*L*: 48); do jardim abaixo do miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara (*L*: 76); da “Edenic splendour” do Jardim Botânico (*L*: 78); da ignorada Estufa Fria (*L*: 82); do Jardim da Estrela (*L*: 84); do Palácio das Necessidades (*L*: 86) e da estatuária fúnebre no Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (*L*: 92), cujo imaginário se encontra intimamente relacionado com os Descobrimentos portugueses (*L*: 92-93), tal como o da Torre de Belém (*L*: 94-96).

As indicações dos itinerários a fazer pelo automóvel durante a visita ‘dramatizada’, como se de didascálias se tratassem, indicam ao condutor onde mudar de rumo. As curiosidades vendidas na Feira da Ladra, o Panteão Nacional e o labirinto de ruas de bairros industriais como Xabregas são também objecto de descrição e referência, cabendo ao Museu da Artilharia, junto à Estação de Santa Apolónia, o estatuto de “[...] most remarkable one in Lisbon [...]” (*L*: 54-56), ou seja, o texto encontra-se impregnado das preferências e vivências pessoais do autor relativamente à cidade em que habita e em que se passeia, conhecendo e indicando o horário de funcionamento dos mesmos. Alfama, “o velho bairro de pescadores”, tal como a Mouraria (*L*: 116), testemunhará ao turista a forma como Lisboa vivia no passado: “Everything will evoke the past here – the architecture, the type of streets, the arches and stairways, the wooden balconies, the very habits of the people who live there a life full of noise, of talk, of songs, of poverty and of dirt” (*L*: 56). O guia associa assim paisagem monumental, a topónimoia, as gentes e a alma da capital, numa alusão algo etnográfica, como que se dum processo de simbiose se tratasse, não se coibindo de criticar os restauros de que a cidade foi alvo após os “vários terramotos” (*L*: 58), referindo as marcas que o tempo deixa no espaço da memória histórica e colectiva. Relativamente à vida cultural, Pessoa refere o jornal *O Século*; a Academia das Ciências de Lisboa (*L*: 112-115); as actividades e curiosidades expostas na Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa e a sua ligação com o ultramar português (*L*: 62); museus como o Museu Arqueológico (*L*: 70), o Museu Bocage (Zoológico) (*L*: 76), o Museu Etnológico (*L*: 95) e o Museu de Arte Antiga (*L*: 102); os espectáculos do Coliseu dos Recreios, a Escola de Belas Artes; o Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea; a Biblioteca Nacional (*L*: 66); o Teatro de São Carlos, “[...] a first-class one [...]” (*L*: 68); a biblioteca do Palácio da Ajuda (*L*: 88); a Torre do Tombo (*L*: 106) e a Faculdade de Medicina no campo Mártires da Pátria (*L*: 118), edifícios dos

quais descreve a arquitectura e a decoração interior. O narrador refere ainda os típicos “coloured glazed-tyles”, lista os coches em exibição no Museu dos Coches (*L*: 100), as peças do Museu de Arte Antiga (*L*: 102-106) e informa o leitor inglês do nome de algumas instituições portuguesas em línguas europeias, conferindo ao registo um teor poliglota (*L*: 66). Os tesouros nacionais, únicos no mundo, como a capela de São João Baptista, na Igreja de São Roque, são elogiados e, através do termo “perhaps”, apresentados cautelosamente como ímpares:

“[...] for there is perhaps nowhere else anything of the kind which can bear comparison with it. [...] To the execution of this work the best artists of the time, in sculpture, mosaic, metal-work and other arts were all contributors. The chapel is a work of the highest art [...]” (*L*: 72-74),

recorrendo o guia a este mesmo artifício quando da descrição do apreciado e famoso aqueduto das Águas Livres (*L*: 82). O narrador da viagem dirige-se a um tipo específico de visitante, ao chamar a atenção do turista para o valor artístico da policromática igreja: “The tourist who has a sense of art should let his attention be taken by the magnificent branched candlesticks [...]” (*L*: 74), acabando por recolher informação junto dos turistas na cidade que inclui no seu texto (*L*: 79, 82, 90) a par de atalhos que se podem tomar em passeios a pé (*L*: 79) e rotas alternativas (*L*: 116, 121).

A algumas páginas do fim do guia, Pessoa prepara a conclusão, dirigindo-se de novo ao leitor para classificar a visita:

Having now effected this short but interesting visit to Lisbon, and having seen all that is most interesting, or, at least, is most likely to interest the tourist, especially if art and beauty appeal to him, it is natural that we should now return to the hotel, which, as we have said, will most likely be one in the very centre of the city” (*L*: 108).

Este mesmo excerto recupera temáticas e ideias desenvolvidas repetidamente ao longo da obra, chamando assim a atenção do leitor para os seguintes factos:

- 1) a visita é curta mas interessante, logo vale a pena, até porque,
- 2) recuperando a expressão já repetida “worth seeing”, o narrador afirma que o visitante tem acesso a tudo o que é “mais interessante” ou que mais o motivará, sobretudo se estiver interessado pela arte e pelo que é belo;

3) como o guia já afirmou, o hotel deverá localizar-se próximo do Rossio, o centro da cidade.

O entretenimento nocturno é ainda uma preocupação do autor que refere os teatros e o Club dos Restauradores (Maxim's), este último minuciosamente descrito, por entre outros passeios até que a visita à capital termina abruptamente. Segue-se um curto texto sobre a imprensa escrita de Lisboa, intitulado «Lisbon Newspapers» (L: 122-124) em que são listados alguns dos principais jornais diários, vespertinos, bissemanários e quinzenários da cidade, para o caso de o turista ler português, entre os quais o *Jornal do Commercio e das Colonias*, o *Diário de Noticias*, *O Século*, o *Diário da Tarde*, a *Ilustração* e o *Correio da Manhã*, entre outros. São ainda indicadas as moradas das redacções e a 'linha' editorial dos jornais, por exemplo de *A Época*, “[...] the Portuguese paper with the greatest number of subscribers, a defender of the catholic and Royalist cause [...] and *O Rebate*, Travessa da Agua de Flôr, the official organ of the Democratic Republican Party [...]” (L: 122). Esta original secção indica ao leitor a preocupação cultural e informativa subjacente à redacção do guia, familiarizando-o com as simpatias e antipatias dos órgãos de informação da capital portuguesa.

A última secção do guia, «A Visit to Cintra, Via Queluz» (L: 126-132), descreve um passeio desde Lisboa à romântica Sintra, via Queluz, avisando o autor:

The tourist who visits Portugal should not limit his sight-seeing to the capital, though he will find in it, as we have shown, many and many things to evoke both its artistic and his historical sense. Anyone new to Lisbon is at once struck by the unparalleled beauty of the Tagus basin, of the views that may be had from the top of its seven hills, of its gardens and monuments, of its old streets and latest arteries. But the suburbs are worth seeing for themselves. They are also full of beauties – not only natural, for the landscape is admirable around Lisbon, but also historical, for a great number of buildings to be seen there are strongly evocative of the past [...] (L: 126).

O excerto estende a capacidade de evocar o passado e a beleza natural aos subúrbios da metrópole prestes a serem descritos, informando o leitor que o percurso feito por automóvel pode perfeitamente ser realizado de comboio, num momento em que o narrador-guia chama a atenção para a sua própria narrativa: “It is to the point to mention, at this stage of our



narrative, that the small voyage we have been making on a motor-car can likewise be effected by rail” (*L*: 132).

Esta última parte comunica com o texto principal através da informação recuperada, pressupondo a prévia leitura deste último que é assim complementado. Retomam-se temas como as sete colinas que conferem ciclicidade temática à obra e resumem-se os atractivos da cidade, como que se este terceiro ‘capítulo’ se iniciasse com a conclusão do texto principal.

O movimento em direcção ao exterior de Lisboa, assegura Pessoa, valerá bem a pena, sendo o Jardim Zoológico, situado perto do populoso e ainda suburbano (prazenteiro) bairro de Benfica, apresentado, tal como o Parque Silva Porto, como um dos locais preferidos da população nos feriados, encontrando-se assim também descritos os hábitos dos habitantes da cidade. Após uma visita à Amadora, o turista chega a Queluz, cujo Palácio Real, minuciosamente descrito, é “[...] one of the most curious buildings of the time – sumptuous, noble, with fine gardens and a historic past that surrounds it with interest” (*L*: 130). Após atravessar várias “aldeias pitorescas”, pinhais e quintas que gozam de “bons ares” e “magníficas águas”, o viajante avistará o altaneiro castelo dos Mouros na Serra de Sintra, passando posteriormente pelo Cacém, de onde partem linhas férreas para as Caldas da Rainha e para a Figueira da Foz, “[...] two health and pleasure resorts which are very popular throughout the country and in Spain” (*L*: 132). Curiosamente a referência à vila de Sintra não ocupa mais que duas linhas e meia no final do texto, talvez devido à notoriedade que a localidade goza já entre os visitantes ingleses, dispensando, portanto, longas descrições, ao contrário das menos visitadas paragens e monumentos entre o Rossio e a serra.

Este texto concorre para o reforço da associação íntima da vida e da obra do Poeta à cidade de Lisboa e, como pudemos verificar, a sua estrutura narrativa é influenciada pela direcção e pelos espaços percorridos e representados, bem como pela subjectividade da focalização ou do ponto de vista de quem guia, descreve ou aconselha. O discurso pessoano, um olhar diferente de o de um nativo que nunca saiu de Portugal, dirige-se ao turista inglês, não familiarizado de forma profunda com a história nacional, elogiando de forma entusiasta quer os espaços quer os heróis portugueses e explorando o território já familiar para o autor. Através de inúmeros apartes e comentários (socio-políticos), a obra desafia o viajante e aborda detalhes práticos do acto de viajar como, por exemplo, a escolha de um

hotel, a forma mais prática de transporte na cidade e os diferentes itinerários possíveis, temáticas e realidades nas quais o narrador projecta a sua própria personalidade e preferências, bem como a memória colectiva de Portugal, enriquecendo assim a cidade, como sugere a segunda epígrafe deste nosso trabalho. Se o termo ‘turista’, recorrente na obra, apresenta diferenças semânticas do termo ‘viajante’, o século XX é considerado a ‘era’ do primeiro, e se o turismo em massa é um fenómeno social do mundo moderno (Dean MacCannel, 1976; Paul Fussell, 1980), esta mesma modernidade encontra-se presente na narrativa de que nos ocupamos e que apresenta ao leitor-receptor um itinerário pessoal, prescrito e pautado pela busca de uma Lisboa e dos seus arredores autênticos, pitorescos mas também modernos, atravessados por barcos, comboios, novas avenidas e constituídos por bairros recentes como Benfica ou a Amadora, locais cuja identidade humana é valorizada. *Lisboa: O que o Turista Deve Ver: What the Tourist Should See* assume-se assim como um título obrigatório no estudo da Lisboa literária ou da representação ficcional da cidade, como bibliografia quer primária quer secundária.

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**“Portugal an Avoided Land”?  
– An Englishwoman’s Travels in Portugal  
in the 1840s**

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# “Portugal an Avoided Land”?

## – An Englishwoman’s Travels in Portugal in the 1840s

### **Preface**

In seeking to pay tribute to the memory of Professor Hélio Osvaldo Alves, I wanted to speak about something that would reflect his open-mindedness, his spirit of adventure and his great intellectual energy. I would like to think that he would have enjoyed getting to know about the woman I shall be talking about in this short study.

### **Introduction**

This article started out by being a linguistic study of Dora Wordsworth Quillinan’s travelogue, *Journal of a Few Months’ Residence in Portugal and Glimpses of Spain*, (henceforth referred to as *Journal*), published in 1847, by Edward Moxon of Dover Street, London, a year after she had travelled mainly around the north of Portugal and Lisbon and its outlying areas. I soon realised, though, that what the book revealed extended beyond the field of functional linguistics. My article is, therefore, an attempt to try and catch a glimpse of the author writing about the times she briefly lived in.

Travel writing was very much in vogue in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a descendant of the Grand Tour which every young British man of means had to make in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to enrich his education and widen his culture, travel abroad was an essential part of a man’s formation before he came home, settled down and either took care of his estate, pursued a political career or as the age of Industrial Revolution dawned, went into business. With the growth of the middle class, interest in travelling abroad opened up new horizons. Many travellers were prosperous traders setting up new business ventures as Great Britain’s economic and imperial power was in the process of being consolidated; they were also diplomats forging wider official relationships with other trading or military partners. Wealthy, educated and usually professional men left on lengthy journeys for

other purposes that might have had something to do with the anthropological study of other other races and civilizations, or with archaeology so as to trace man's origins. There was also a scientific fascination with the flora, fauna and geology of other countries, as testified in the annals of the Royal Geographic Society.

Edward Said (1995: 15-21) mentioned that journeying to distant lands was sometimes motivated by the desire to seek out the exotic. This phenomenon represented a Romantic quest to find one's way back to nature and the purity and spiritualism of the primitive Church by examining what other religions had to offer. Wordsworth, for example, was an adherent and proponent of the secular post-Enlightenment myth that revealed distinctly Christian features, as his poem, *To Dora*, indicates.<sup>1</sup>

In effect such travel seemed to find confirmation that Western Europe, and particularly Britain, was heading in the right direction with its more democratic education, free-thought and new modes of organization in an increasingly industrialized society. Travel literature acted as a projection of Western views, and the success of a publication automatically held up the author-traveller as an expert – all the more so, if his assertions were borne out by evidence and experienced by subsequent travellers. No matter how unaware both writers and readers were of the intent, most travel literature produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century helped to support imperialist sentiment and the rightness of the British way.

In an earlier study,<sup>2</sup> on the work of other travel writers of the same era, between 1820 and 1847,<sup>3</sup> I had come to the conclusion that all four male authors were unswerving models of early Victorianism in their attitudes, upholding imperialist ideologies to a greater or lesser degree. I had come to the conclusion that they:

[...] reflected the successes and the prejudices of their own country's achievement. Achievement (leading to other forms of economic, political, social, cultural and interpersonal organisation and life) acted

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<sup>1</sup> *To Dora* (1816), in which he ends: “[...] advancing hand in hand, / We may be taught, O Darling of my care! / To calm the affections, elevate the soul, / And consecrate our lives to truth and love”. Extract taken from [http://www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/William\\_Wordsworth](http://www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/William_Wordsworth)

<sup>2</sup> Cf: V.E. Hartnack in E.R. Pedro et al., 2002, *Relatos de Viagens*

<sup>3</sup> The male travellers – cf. W.H. Harrison; W.R. W. Wilde; W.H.G Kingston and T McMahon Hughes.



as a yardstick by which to measure and compare the achievement of others – in this case: *Portugal* [...]. [They] were (directly and indirectly) sitting in judgment over Portugal’s achievement and measuring it against England’s. [...] on the scale between «barbarie» and the modern nation [...] Portugal still had a long way to go (2002:151).

Now, however, I wanted to concentrate on a female author who had visited Portugal during the same time as her four countrymen in order to see what her opinions were about the Portuguese people and the country she was visiting.

### Women’s travel writings in the 19th century

There has been some interesting research done recently into women’s travelling writings.<sup>4</sup> And the singular quality of this author, when compared to the four male authors analysed in the first volume of the *Relatos de Viagens*, is that she is aware of the limitations and constraints placed on her as a woman, as well as the form of solidarity she is expected to have, in keeping with other women of her nationality and class. She herself mentions this several times in her Preface and immediately gives us to understand how she rejects this role, not by directly contradicting others’ suppositions, but by simply affirming her own (unusual) views:

As for me, though of the sex in whom cowardice is no disgrace, I cannot say I anticipated hazard, or required much persuasion, in rambling out of the beaten tracks in a country where so few English ladies ever travel at all.[...] In looking over my notes, now that they are printed, I fear that some observations on English prejudice, near the end of this volume, may wear an ungracious air of censoriousness, as if I were lecturing my own countrywomen while praising the Portuguese (p xiii).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Apart from MacClintock and the authors listed in Ch. 6 – Femininism, in Rivkin and Ryan, see for example, the work of Mills, Sara (1994): *Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism*, London, Routledge; Morgan, Susan (1996): *Place matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women’s Travel Books about Southeast Asia*, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press; Robinson, Jane (1994): *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers*, Oxford, OUP.

<sup>5</sup> Except for quotations taken from the Preface, where the page number is given in Roman numerals, all other references to the text will be given as Wordsmith Tools Concordance numbers, first with the identifying word, then its place in the Concordance list and finally its word place in the text.

Study has revealed that women wrote differently from men in that they were more open-minded about people of other cultures and less inclined to judge individuals from a nationalistic or racialist point of view.<sup>6</sup> Being less politically informed, or rather, less politically aggressive about the mostly mainstream views they held, they tended to be less categorical about vocalising them. They were more likely to look at others from a more humane stance and include themselves in the panoramas they were depicting. Nevertheless, Dorothy Quillinan would seem to have developed a socialised – if not politicised – mission as she continued on her travels. Even if she had not set out with the idea of doing so, when it came to organising her diary for publication, she realised that she wanted to set odds to right and promote a sense of fair play (British?) with regard to the Portuguese. She wanted to argue for more pondered verdicts on the part of her compatriots concerning how they judged Portugal. In the Preface, she states:

My main inducement, indeed, to the publication of this desultory Journal is the wish to assist in removing prejudices which make Portugal an avoided land by so many of my roving countrymen and countrywomen, who might there find much to gratify them [...] My remarks are made in the spirit of my motto *por bem*, in answer to some of my friends by whom, I think, the Portuguese are misunderstood (pp. xi – xiii).

Naturally, female travellers, as women themselves, also gave more relevance to other women than did their male counterparts. Bearing this in mind, then, I set out to see how Dora Quillinan's attitudes differed from her four countrymen. I was interested in discovering whether she was writing as a woman; as a cultured member of the middle class – an amateur scholar of Portugal; as a humanitarian and Christian; as traveller to the «exotic»; as a British subject coming from a powerful industrialised nation overseeing an enormous empire or, finally, as a result of all of these things put together.

In the Preface of the travelogue, Dora Quillinan tells her readers:

If I had set out from home with the project of writing a book, I might as well perhaps have gone to Portugal as to any remoter quarter; for there is no accessible portion of the globe that has not been visited and

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. J. Sramek, 2000.

described; and after all the fightings and writings in and on Portugal, there is, I believe, no country in Europe that is less thoroughly familiar to us, none indeed which has been more imperfectly explored by tourists. It is still in fact a labyrinth to strangers[...] (p. vii).

The fact, then, is that Dora had not intentionally set out with the idea of writing but, in keeping her diary up to date while on her travels, had found material of sufficient interest to publish. She, at least, believed that her work would make a difference to the hitherto poorly informed British reading public as regards Portugal.

### **Dora (née Wordsworth) Quillinan**

The author’s biography is interesting in itself. She had come to Portugal, at the age of 42, to try and recover what was left of her health – she was fatally ill with tuberculosis and was to die the following year, right after the publication of the *Journal*.

In a letter to Samuel Rogers, her father, the poet William Wordsworth, mentioned that she was already ill in 1830, when she was only 26.<sup>7</sup> She had always been Wordsworth’s favourite child, although she had been sent to boarding school at the tender age of four to learn how to “become a useful girl in the family” (Jones:4). Once, when she was twelve and upon watching her at play on Midsummer’s day, Wordsworth felt a certain pang of anguish at the blows fate deals even the most innocent, and wrote in his poem, *The longest day addressed to My Daughter* (1817):

Dora! sport as thou now sportest,  
On this platform, light and free;  
Take thy bliss while longest, shortest  
Are indifferent to thee!<sup>8</sup>

Dora lived with the family in Grasmere in the Lake District in Cumbria, a close neighbour of the Coleridge and Southey households. She was brought up in the harshness of isolated country conditions where the

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<sup>7</sup> Mentioned in D. Kennedy (1997).

<sup>8</sup> Extract taken from [http://www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/William\\_Wordsworth](http://www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/William_Wordsworth)  
There are other poems Wordsworth wrote to his daughter: e.g. *Addressed to my Infant Daughter Dora* (1804).

family's income was largely subsidised by benefactors. Perhaps this fact may explain why she was not daunted by Northern Portugal's seeming remoteness from the niceties of more industrialised countries. Upon her death, she was buried in the Wordsworth family plot in St. Mary's churchyard, Rydal Mount, her father planting daffodils which still bloom today in a memorial field given her name. In spite of the fact that she was Wordsworth's dearly-beloved daughter, and that he never quite recovered his equanimity after her death, she spent most of her life suffering silently under his patriarchal although kindly presence. For example, she had to wait until she was 37 before she was able to marry Edward Quillinan, a minor Irish poet and translator of *The Lusiads*, 13 years her senior, because her father did not relish the loss of what Coleridge called «his petticoats». And yet, despite his possessiveness about his daughter, Wordsworth was also worried about his son-in-law's literary career. He wrote to friends to try and arrange other outlets that would distract Quillinan from his obsession about translating Camões' epic poem.<sup>9</sup>

His concern for Quillinan's literary future, though, was the complete opposite to what he thought about his daughter's literary merit. Dora's education was not to encourage her literary streak. In fact, she inspired her father's wrath when she went against his wishes and published her travelogue. It had to be done anonymously as Wordsworth, who had always been suspicious of female self-projection in the world of letters, wrote to the publisher, Edward Moxon, to say that "her mother and I don't like it" and Dora would "shrink from notoriety".<sup>10</sup>

Her *Journal*, however, reveals her talent and her letters, drawings and diaries are witnesses to her considerable artistic and literary achievement. Her family's literary background was certainly not lost on her (her aunt was Dorothy Wordsworth after whom she was named) and she was raised

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<sup>9</sup> Letter to Mrs Samuel Carter Hall, 8 February 1844, who was a publisher in Ireland after she had contacted Wordsworth asking him for literary contributions. He recommended Quillinan saying that it was "adviseable that he should vary his literary labours". Cf: W.H. Peal Collection: *Catalog of an Exhibition*, University of Kentucky Library and Archives. The translation of *The Lusiads* was to be finished by Quillinan's son, Luiz, after his death.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. D. Kennedy's reference to E. Selincourt, C.L. Shaver, M. Moorma & A.G. Hill (Eds.), (1967-1993): *The Letters of W. Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth* in 8 vols., Oxford, O.U.P., Ch. 5, 289-295.

with the daughters of Coleridge and Southey. In her penetrating study, *The Passionate Sisterhood*, Kathleen Jones describes how most of the women involved with the Lake District poets suffered the same fate as Dora and only one of them, Sara Coleridge, was to break away and become a poet of some renown.

In young adulthood, apart from close friendships with aspiring writers of both sexes, she had a long relationship with the writer, Maria Jane Jewsbury (until the latter’s death) and was friendly with one of the foremost women authors of the day, Felicity Hemans. So it could be said that due to her family surroundings, her friendships and her marriage, it was inevitable that Dora Quillinan would not remain silent and unpublished.

It is obvious from what she says in her travelogue, that she must have followed her husband’s translation work; she also mentioned that he knew the country and the ways of the people very well (People:19:22726). She was able to read sufficiently well enough in Portuguese to understand not only what was in the Portuguese newspapers and magazines, but also the Portuguese literary classics. By the time she arrived in Portugal, Dora had read such authors as Camões, Diogo Bernardo, Almeida Garrett and Pedro António Correia Garção, probably guided by her husband’s knowledge of the Portuguese literary scene.

Many of her trips around the North of Portugal were to see what heritage had been left by the Romans, and so she was also familiar with the Bishop of Coimbra’s historical studies and Argote’s anecdotes about the Romans in Portugal. She demonstrated that she had her own notions about the origins of Portuguese:

Asiatic, Greek and African settlers probably spoke a language barbarously compounded of many idioms till the sway of the Carthaginians in this country was superseded by the Romans 216 years before Christ. The Romans, during their long occupation here established their language more permanently (Portuguese:80:29,197).

This fact alone sets her apart from the four male travellers, three of whom did not understand Portuguese and had only read English translations of Portuguese history or English authors writing about the country.

She had come to Portugal with her husband (referred to as Mr.-), her female friend, Miss. J., and a cheerful bachelor, Mr. H, who continued on his way to America after the group had left Spain. The travelling party was accompanied by their man-servant who seemed a surprisingly enterprising

fellow, soon to find his way around. They all arrived by steamer in May 1846, stayed the summer at the Foz and in Oporto, venturing out on excursions and touring around Minho on horseback. At the end of autumn, they set off to Lisbon for a short while, visiting Sintra and the surrounding countryside before leaving for the South of Spain.

### **Analysing the *Journal***

The method I followed to obtain my data was the same as I had followed in the first volume of *Relatos de Viagens*: I looked at the three functions of a limited selection of nominal groups for the experiential and logical information they contained. I worked within Halliday's functional systemic-grammar framework and dealt with three word groups based on *Portugal*, *England* and words that could belong to either group, *home*, *people*, *country*, etc. Out of a total of nearly 71,000 words composing the *corpus*, I drew up a quantitative table of how often these words appeared:

**Table 1**  
**Portuguese and English identity**

Number of entries and number of analysed samples in the three nominal groups

	<b>WORD</b>	<b>Total Entries</b>	<b>Examples studied</b>
1	Portuguese	98	76
2	Portugal	69	47
	They	303	96
3			(85 referring to Portuguese)
			(11 referring – English)
4	Lusitania	4	1
5	Lusitanian(s)	5	1

	<b>WORD</b>	<b>Total Entries</b>	<b>Examples studied<sup>11</sup></b>
1	English	89	86
3	Un-English	2	2
3	England	22	20
4	We	650	11 (referring to the English)
4	They	11	(referring to the English)
5	British	2	2
6	Great Britain	2	2
1	Country	43	12 (Portugal)
2	Countries	4	4 (+ Portugal)
3	Countrymen	4	2(Portuguese) 2 (English)
4	Home	28	2 (Portugal) 7 (England)
5	Land	22	4 (Portugal)
6	National	3	1 (Portuguese)
7	Native	8	2 (Portuguese) 1 (English)
8	People	32	19 (Portuguese)

For the purpose of this study, I shall not be going into the different functions in the nominal group that depended upon whether these words occurred as heads or «things» in the sentence, or whether they occurred in pre- or post-modifying positions (for instance, as adjectives or adverbials). I shall be dealing with what happened after having sorted them out into their functions. I noticed that the author seemed to mention certain themes fairly consistently and that it was possible to group them into 7 topics:

<sup>11</sup> Words were excluded if they failed to suit certain criteria strictly describing the relevant and contemporary condition of being English/we, or Portuguese/they or pertaining to England or Portugal, home nation, etc. For example, in the case of the word “Portuguese”, geographical references to mountains town or rivers, were excluded, as were titles of people, measurements, distances and currency; translated names, stories by others which were retold; quotes; remote historical reference, or references to flora and fauna, etc.

**Table 2**  
**Broad topics in the functional elements of the nominal groups**

Rank	TOPIC	No. of cases	%Total (400)
1	The English towards Portuguese/Portugal their sympathies, criticisms and attitudes	73	+18%
	= mostly negative (not Dora's own views)	25	6%
	English criticism of Portuguese <b>women</b> (these views are not shared by Dora)	98	24%
2	The habits, customs and things of the Portuguese and also Portuguese skills and talents (mostly referring to labour)	71	-18%
	(Dora's description, not apparently judgemental except in praising the skills)	12	3%
		83	21%
3	Factors about the Portuguese as a nation and about their institutions: (Dora's ideas)	59	-15%
	– Positive references	24	6%
	– Negative references	35	9%
4	Dora's references to English people and things (including the English in Portugal, who earn some direct criticism from Dora)	33	+8%
5	Dora's references to Portuguese scholarship and academia (some criticism here)	32	8%
6	Dora's (sometimes quite critical) references to:	31	-8%
		16	4%
	• the political, social and economic situation	10	2%
	• wars, rebellions and civil unrest	57	14%
7	Comparisons with English people, things, customs and references to the author and her party of English tourists	29	+7%
		16	4%
	TOTAL	400	100%



As Table 2 shows, the first two most numerous topics concern the negative opinions of both the English visiting or residing in Portugal, or writing about Portugal on the one hand. On the other, are Dora Quillinan’s largely positive opinions about Portuguese habits, customs and skills. In effect, it is as if Dora Quillinan’s voice is raised in favour, trying to be heard above the din of protests and condemnations of the English community at large. Indeed, in the fourth section, she expresses direct criticism of English who are prejudiced against the Portuguese. Although groups 3, 5 and 6 speak of some of her criticism regarding some of the Portuguese institutions, academia, and the political and social state of unrest that seems to plague Portugal – as it does other European countries of the time – the topics that caught her attention are radically different from what interested her four countrymen on their travels in Portugal.

**Table 3**  
**The four male travellers to Portugal (1820-1846)**  
**Most frequently-mentioned Topics<sup>12</sup>**

1.	Society and People’s habits	42%
2.	Politics, political situation	23%
3.	Trade and Commerce	9%
4.	Military affairs and war	7%
5.	Religion, state of Church	7%
6.	Cultural matters	7%
	<b>Critical, negative judgements</b>	<b>75%</b>
	<b>Favourable, complimentary remarks</b>	<b>25%</b>

### Discussing the findings

The selection of Dora Quillinan’s most common topics confirmed what some researchers had found about other women travellers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly she reveals fewer prejudices about Portugal than her male counterparts. Where negative criticism about the Portuguese and Portugal was an overriding factor with them and covered mostly broad social and political subjects, Dora Quillinan refers to English attitudes towards the Portuguese and Portugal in first place.

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<sup>12</sup> Reference only to 546 functions of the words: *Portugal, the Portuguese* and *they*

She condemns harsh English opinions founded mostly on ignorance and gives the Portuguese the benefit of the doubt, preferring to see what is positive in them. As an example, she takes a mundane instance, explaining that:

we often heard of Portuguese meanness as to household arrangements and other matters that are simply conventional; and to which we apply the reproach of sordidness, because they differ from ours. This is surely inconsiderate. Many of our usages are open to similar censure from them, if they chose to make their particular notions the arbitrary rule of right or wrong. They might compare, for instance, with ours or with that of the French [...] (We:567:1342)

She at least attempts to understand habits and customs that are so different from the English, unlike some of the male travellers who often label the Portuguese as being backward.

Her surprise at some of the customs is because she is unfamiliar with life in Portugal. As time progresses and she travels around the country more, eventually moving south to Sintra, her astonishment abates in the same way that the people of the south fail to find anything strange about a middle-aged Englishwoman going around unaccompanied on foot with her sketchbook in hand, or riding her horse astride in men's clothes. Her first surprise upon landing in Portugal, "fresh from England", to use her words written several times in the *Journal*, is seeing the way Portuguese female bathers of all shapes, sizes and ages dress in blue canvas robes for their dips in the sea at the Foz. She is intrigued that families leave for the beach at dawn, stay after sundown, eat their main meal at about three in the afternoon before having their siesta and use all kinds of strange contraptions to transport themselves to the seaside. She comments that Sundays are a popular day for sea bathing, that the children of the poor also bathe with the wealthier inhabitants and that, in the main, the English bathers prefer to segregate themselves at their «own» beach of difficult, stoney access further along the Foz: "the *English praia*, as it is called, might seem to have been selected for them by their Portuguese shoemakers" (English:84:4156).

There are several customs that puzzle the author and she returns to them at different times in her account. One is the sight of dead new-born infants of the poor who are left in the churches of northern Portugal because, according to religious folk lore, they have become «angels». They look like perfect little wax figures at first, but to her horrid fascination she discovers they are real. And this brings her to the subject of the poor. Not

knowing about the harshness of the winters in Minho, Beira Alta and Trás-os-Montes, she insists that it is easier to be poor in Portugal: “One grand advantage that the poor of Portugal have over ours is their glorious climate. They require little food and little clothing [...]” (Portugal:44:8770).

Furthermore, she explains, the staple food of the poor are the vegetables they grow themselves where cabbage is a mainstay, though by the sea, she admits, people have enough fish and wine to go with their greens. Meat is a luxury and even among the wealthier Portuguese beef is a rarity and, when invited out, a dinner is not considered a dinner if it has mutton and not beef. A good meal depends on how much meat it has in it, she notes. The author does not go into the reasons and many of her statements are left as simple comments or assertions about what she has observed.

Her observations are, for the most part, made as a spectator taking note of this or that situation for the sake of posterity. She notes professional activity seems to follow a pattern: “As villages in Portugal are often occupied by people of one trade, so in the larger towns some of the streets are exclusively possessed by a particular class of artisan” (Portugal:69:7376). Women spinning in the streets; the numerous barking, scavenger dogs (“every house has one”), the bothersome and numerous vagrants and beggars at the gate who refuse to move off unless given generous alms or food; the restless horsemen and muleteers eager to “be on the go”, and the children’s dangerous fascination with fire-crackers on festival days, are all described as one-dimensional portraits.

Although she continually comments upon the charm and beauty of the Portuguese landscapes in Minho and around Sintra, many of her remarks are reserved for the people of Portugal. She is a keen observer of human nature and local habits. Thus her overall opinion of Portuguese inn-keepers is favourable: they are hospitable and tolerant of being woken up by a 5-person party arriving at their inns late at night when all are abed. She is enchanted with the cheerful young girls who are their *carreteiras* and the way they divide up the work, carrying enormous loads on their heads for long distances for only a few coins. And although she is disturbed by their noise, she notes how the builders repairing the house next door to her boarding-house work from sun-up to sundown and then go dancing and drinking all night long on festival days honouring the local saint.

The author observes that balls and parties are particularly appreciated as is the dancing at the *festas*, and that at public gatherings, she is amused to see:

in the interval between the last mass and the usual dining hour of the richer class of visitors; this same place is a sort of fashionable lounge, where well-dressed ladies sit in rows on wooden benches, and men stand round them, or cluster on the rocks: and so they stare at each other for two mortal hours, saying little, but looking pins and needles at each other's hearts, from under parti-coloured parasols, and brown or scarlet umbrellas. Many a subtle flirtation is carried on there, unsuspected by or connived at by the guardian elders, fathers, mothers, aunts" (They:50:50760).

Different from the male travellers who only look twice at the young vivacious creatures serving their meals, Dora Quillinan often speaks of the women: what they do, how they are dressed, how the polite classes amuse themselves; how prettily the girls sing and dance at social events and what visiting etiquettes there are among the Oporto bourgeoisie when calling upon each other. She also looks at working-class women and comments upon what sort of jobs they have, the way in which child mortality is dealt with among poor women and how they lead their lives out of doors. She spares more than a thought for the deprivation and suffering of the nuns after their convents were closed, and how they are generally ignored by local populations who once revered them. She mentions the petty envies of the village people with regard to her copious skirts that have enough material to get a jacket out of them and still look full, and their surprise at the way she rides in her male-like riding attire. As a woman she notices the details and is interested in the people for what they are, and not for what they represent.

Her criticism – when it comes – is not only aimed at others. It is also self-directed. For example, she has a very modest opinion of the picture she presents as a foreigner in Portugal. Her shame and frustration at her own poor conversational skills in Portuguese make her commit blunders. She feels embarrassed to go calling or accept dinner invitations, although she is aware that her refusals may be badly interpreted and taken as a slight by her Portuguese hosts:

Think how utterly impossible for an English woman but with few words of broken Portuguese on her tongue, to attempt to use them, knowing they must be overheard by everyone present[...] (Portuguese: 59:51742).

As she readily admits: how can she, as the focus of attention in a Portuguese sitting-room, possibly accept an invitation to visit when she knows all eyes and ears will be trained on her, listening to her stumbling over the language of Camões.

And this is a point she raises about the English residents in the area of Oporto, where she spends the summer months. She chides the English for their prejudices not only against the Portuguese, but, as she says: “the fact is, the English will ever carry English habits and English prejudices into foreign countries” (English:43:51069); and “[...] the English here, as all the world over, are too exclusively English in their tastes” (English:22:4014). Byron is not excluded:

[...] we too often dispense with [courtesy] in our comments on the Portuguese, but to which they are nevertheless well-entitled. Child Harold’s rash and unlordly sneer has become vulgar in the mouth of Echo[...] (Portuguese:63:305).

The English community’s criticism of the Portuguese in their own country is felt to be unjust particularly as most of it arises from ignorance. She notes that a couple of the English innkeepers in Portugal are either irritable and impolite to their Portuguses clients or even bar them from their inns – such as one innkeeper does when he only opens his doors to boatloads of English tourists docking in the winter at the Foz (English:34:61580). The English women of the Oporto expatriate community merit comment. In different chapters of the *Journal*, she says:

- English women are much too fond of crying down their sisters of Portugal (English:55:50873);
- [they] do not feel themselves equal to enter into conversation with the Portuguese and this makes friendly intercourse impossible and throws restraint over mere acquaintance (Portuguese:96:51407);
- Portuguese, though an easy language to learn to read, is a difficult one to learn to speak. English ladies will not even take the pains to learn to read it, making a comfortable cloak of a high-minded reason in which to conceal from themselves the true one, indolence-” It is great waste of time to learn to read a language which has but one book worth reading, Camoens”(Portuguese:79:51313);
- How can the English ladies know it to be true (the alleged over familiarity of Portuguese ladies on their balconies nodding to those they know passing

by), when with the same breath, they go on to complain of the meanness and inhospitability of the Portuguese (English:60:50996).

Nevertheless, the author hastens to add that she is not ungrateful of the kindness they show her as another English woman (and a Wordsworth, to boot): “Ungracious truly, and even ungrateful should I be, who am much indebted to the civilities of English ladies at Oporto, if I could intend to express myself with discourtesy to them” (English:20:1276).

The thought strikes her that, because they cannot be bothered to learn the language of their host country, and as a result, are misinformed and prejudiced because their contact with the local people is restricted and filtered through the few Portuguese they meet who speak English, they may be regarded just as ignorant or uneducated as the Portuguese ladies they criticise:

They go so far as to say that the mental endowments of the Portuguese ladies are so little cultivated, that they can find no better or happier employment for their precious time than sitting on the *esteira* (the mat), which is spread on the floor in the centre of the sitting-rooms, to gossip, and eat sweetmeats (Portuguese:57:50887).

The author also accuses the English community of constantly comparing life in Portugal with «home», with England, which emerges triumphant every time and is held up as a model of progress and enlightenment. She makes her own comparisons but chooses to base her observations on different values. In fact, many of her affirmations about Portugal and the Portuguese have to do with the English, and the way the Portuguese accept her English travelling party:

- I think in my account of our trip to the Minho country, enough is told about our reception at the houses of the Portuguese gentlemen to refute the assertion of want of hospitality in Portugal (Portuguese: 20:51064).
- [...] there is no backwardness whatever on the part of the Portuguese to associate with the English. The language no doubt is a great obstacle to friendly intercourse[...] (Portuguese:58:51271).

Her very Englishness leads her to make numerous comparisons between the things she sees in Portugal and the things she knows from England or «home». There are comparisons between dress fashions, meal-times and potters (who are still independent craftsmen in Portugal); opinions about

the poor of either country, the preservation of historical monuments (the Portuguese allow theirs to decay), the evidence of barbarity (the English cut their dogs’ and horses’ tails while the Portuguese trim their cats’ ears and tails) and the aesthetic notions about a garden layout. Dora Quillinan likes the English cemetery best in Lisbon, enjoys the English balls and picnics and appreciates English comfort in the Oporto houses belonging to either the English community or Portuguese who have once resided in England. She recognises that Portugal is good to the English who reside in Oporto and the latter are all the more gregarious and out-going for it:

Dinner parties were to be heard of almost daily among the English, and balls and evening parties, which both Portuguese and English attended, were very frequent (English:9:50752).

Nevertheless, it is in order to see Portugal and Spain and escape the poor English weather that has made her come to Southern Europe, so that her disappointment when she arrives in Foz to see so much Englishness around her makes her complain:

The first flower I saw in Portugal was our own little English sea-sand bladder-plant; and in the first room I entered, there was blazing in an English grate an English coal fire; but we went to the house of an English gentleman. Much, however, within the house, and all outside the house, were sufficiently un-English to satisfy my craving after foreign novelties (English:55:2724).

But the lack of middle-class English comfort must have been a trial at times. As she became increasingly more debilitated by her disease – although not a word of this is breathed in the *Journal* she must have found that, when not at home in the rented house at Foz, the precarious sleeping conditions, the dreadful state of the unpaved roads after a rainstorm and the general state of ignorance of the country folk were extremely trying at times. But far from levelling open criticism at these deficient conditions – apart from a mild exclamation: “rural Portugal never changes!” – Dora Quillinan merely describes situations and gives an often humorous account of occurrences. The perspicacious reader does the rest:

Unlike the opinion of many English residents in Portugal – who might there find much to gratify them if they could be persuaded that it does not deserve the reproach of being merely a land of unwashed fiery barbarians and over-brandied port-wine” (Land:15:973).

– and opposite to what is found in some of the male travellers’ writings, dirt roads, for example do not provide her with an excuse to deliberate upon the merits of macadamised roads and feats of engineering that keep apace with the need for industrialisation. Her travelogue is peppered with anecdotes describing how the party travels with its own hammocks and food supplies. For example, she mentions the time Mr. H fell out of his hammock much to everyone’s mirth; the local folks’ curiosity at her woman-companion’s bright red face from being over-exposed to the sun, and their hearty picnic lunches regaled a little too liberally with local wine. Some of her descriptions reveal how little used to outsiders the northerners were, such was their amazement at these sights. Often, in out-of-the-way spots, the members of the touring party had to bed down in a dirty, sparsely furnished «inn» and take care of their own needs, cooking their own food and seeing to their own bedding and toilet arrangements. It was no wonder that Oporto became a favourite city, precisely because it was deemed «an English city», offering comfort and British middle-class standards of cleanliness (English:15: 48576). After six months in Portugal, she was eager to be off to Southern Spain for the rest of the winter and thence back to her beloved England.

Thus, it is interesting to note that, opposite to the four British male travellers, she does not seem to have an ideological agenda; she does not tow a party line or support a cause. She has no business to conduct, no trade to push and no ulterior motive – except to improve her health and get to know the country as best she can. Like the other travellers to Portugal, she is interested in the scenery and in nature, and in its history. But unlike the male travellers, she is not interested in the Portugal of yore when it ruled the waves and was an important imperial power. She is not attracted to the history telling her about the founding of the Nation, the defeat of the Moors or the Discoveries, all with their masculine heroes and written from a male perspective.

Her interest lies in the mark imperial Rome left on Lusitania. She is attracted to the civilizational aspect that Rome exerted rather than the idea of military conquest. Her search is for vestiges of Latin script explaining the presence of a building, a road or a bridge, and describing how it may have changed the life of the place. She is exasperated because the local authorities fail to take measures to preserve Roman monuments; Roman buildings are transformed in butcher-shops and stables:



that a temple [is used] as a bire, or as a butchery, is but another and more convenient protestation against paganism. Even the disregard of successive generations of Portuguese of all classes, with now and then an individual exception, to other and not religious objects of Roman construction, such as aqueducts and amphitheatres, is little to be wondered at (Portuguese:88:28355).

But on the other hand she notes the impressive gateways to insignificant houses saying that they are important as historical monuments and reveal history in their coats of arms and mottoes, their stone *lápides* being as informative as the ancient Roman ones:

for the right perusal and due comprehension of lapidary inscriptions, various preparatory knowledge must have been acquired not only in the art of deciphering contractions, but also in the history both civil and political in the histories of the countries referred to (Countries:3:30222).

The question of protecting ancient monuments comes up time and time again and the author is struck by the lack of local council measures to protect and preserve age-old monuments. Perhaps it is by repairing and respecting what represents the country’s past, as “they tell of men and things that were, when Portugal was a nation”, that Portugal will be “a realm re-edified”. She also blames scholars for not giving them due attention or by not checking up on their data. For example, she refers to an obscure but popular historian named Argote who is particularly careless about the veracity of his sources and the accuracy of his translations. However, the scholar she singles out for particular disdain is the great Alexandre Herculano, whose articles she has read in the press:

We will forgive him all that nonsense, if he will truly and honestly digest the materials open to him, and give us an orderly and dispassionate compilation of facts. The history of Portugal – the most romantic of histories – is still unwritten; so we must console ourselves with such a one as we may get from Senhor Herculano, librarian to the King-Consort. He is a hater of the English[...] (English:51:69875).

But, despite the occasional barbed comment we rarely find any note of belittlement in her comments. Mostly, she merely makes observations. Her anger with Herculano, whom she accuses of being partial and subjective, is akin to that of her male counterparts. She is, after all, an English woman. For this very reason, any manifestation of anti-English sentiment on the part of others is impatiently tossed aside. Furthermore, a certain paternalistic

English note creeps in now and again particularly when she infrequently talks about politics. While still defending Portugal – although from a rather questionable stance – she says:

“Our old and faithful ally,” Lusitania, revolts at the airs of affectionate contempt with which she is patronised by England, and if we would reclaim any particle of her good-will, we should learn to repress our superciliousness, and “Be to her faults a little blind, Be to her virtues very kind” (English:15:360).

The passage would smack somewhat of parsimony, the very thing she accuses her countrymen of, had she elaborated upon the point. But for all her prickliness when it comes to defending England, she does not confidently assert that Britain possesses the overwhelming truth; she does not state the righteousness of the path Britain has taken, unlike some of the male travellers to Portugal. It is not politics *per se* that worry her; she does not single out the names of the powerful to heap scorn upon them, maybe because she basically believes that there’s nothing to be done – all Portuguese politicians are scoundrels, and she has no solutions to offer. Hers seems to be a position of mistrust of any kind of power, which is perhaps a more radical form of alienation than that expressed by her male compatriots who have at least created an ideal.

What distresses Dora Quillinan is civil strife and the almost constant state of warring between one faction or another. She says these rebellions seem:

to begin without a plan, to pause without a result, and after a sullen lull to be resumed without any definite aim. But for these turbulent humours the mass of the people are far less to blame than some of their upstart rulers[...] (People:23:457).

She states that war “intrudes on life”, and adds that the Portuguese army is poorly organised. She is obviously sympathetic to liberalism and disapproves of D. Miguel’s deeds as being “downright *Afranceses* ados in their paltry rancour against Great-Britain” (Great Britain:1:69649). Nevertheless, she agrees that: «when the country is not overrun with civil warriors, [you may] travel in Portugal as securely if not so smoothly as you can navigate the Thames[...]» (Portugal:60:685). Adding:

A stranger has little to apprehend from the natives even when they are in commotion, if he will but refrain from intermeddling in the quarrel.

If he has the good fortune to be among them as we were, between the moves, he is safe enough (Natives:3:520).

The author’s humanitarian spirit emerges when she asserts that “warring people are less to blame than their rulers” and the poor are weary of “carrying the burden of charlatans”. The “liberal(s) munsters”, she stresses, need to think less of power and more of the people who have no bread. She also throws in some criticism of Rome, “meddling in Portugal’s affairs” and the fact that the Vatican was not happy when Portugal regained her independence from Spain in 1640. However, on the whole her comments about the Church as an institution are not derogatory. In fact she questions the wisdom of disbanding and prohibiting the Jesuits. As for tolerance, she has mixed views. On the one hand, she admits that the Church of England in Oporto has never been bothered by the government even though it is considered to be heretical – maybe it has escaped persecution by the Inquisition because the «pomp» of a high church is also present. On the other hand, when considering the destruction of Roman sites of worship, she states that the Moors were more tolerant with the Portuguese and their Christian religion than the latter was with the Roman pantheists: “they [the Moors] were more tolerant than their enemies, for to these, when subdued and living peaceably under their rule, they did not interdict the free exercise of their religion” (They:255:29494).

Travellers from Britain in the 1840s hailed from a prosperous, industrious peaceful country and, as I saw with the male writers, tended to be impatient with other political and social realities that had not yet attained a state of single-mindedness and social progress in peace time that Britain had achieved. Dorothy Quillinan broadly agrees with this sentiment in her Preface:

The worst symptom in her modern character, and one indeed which to us at a distance does make the Portuguese appear ridiculous, is that everlasting *civil-warring* on a small scale, which seems to begin without a plan, to pause without a result, and after a sullen lull to be resumed without any definite aim. But for these turbulent humours the mass of the people are far less to blame than some of their upstart rulers, who, availing themselves of the evils of a disputed succession, have made the instability of the throne and the fever of the public mind subserve their dishonest ambition, like thieves to whom an earthquake or a fire is an opportunity for plunder (p. ix).

With Britain's industrialized, expansionist project in mind, the four male travellers were ever-mindful of Portugal's lack of industrial progress; the poor quality of the roads; the absence of a newly-invented railway system; the dirty flea-infested inns; the obscurantism of certain Church practices, and the depressing standard of literature, painting, music and learning which they found inferior in every way to that in Britain. As members of an affluent middle class that had a say in things, the future of their own country lay pretty securely in their own (male) hands. Dora Quillinan on the other hand, as a female, had very little access to power in or out of the home. Her space was not really her own. The subservience of Portugal to other imperial powers, and its role almost as a victim of its own lack of emancipation was very akin to her own status – thus her refusal to make categorical statements or outright condemnations, although criticise obliquely she does.

When referring to the Portuguese as a nation and speaking about their institutions, she has more negative things to say than positive, particularly when she is dealing with political, military, intellectual and cultural issues and basing her opinions on real and objective conditions, formed as a result of her direct experience with the local people. And in this, she is in a privileged position because many of her polite countrywomen would have been sheltered from such direct contact and would have had to form their opinions on hearsay.

But there are frankly positive statements, as these three examples among many bear testimony:

- The Portuguese and Gallegos are little given to petty larceny. Untold gold is perfectly safe upon your table[...] (Portuguese:75:7260);
- [...] in a huge quadrante of white marble, allegorical of the discoveries and triumphs of Portugal, [there are] *basso-relievos* of excellent workmanship [...] (Portugal:6:59582);
- [...] the creditors are not so hard in Portugal – they don't strip a debtor of everything[...] (Portuguese:39:1479).

Where she is critical, she is careful either to relate the concrete difficulties which the travelling party has experienced, or quote serious criticism through the words of the Portuguese themselves, and usually this only pertaining to the powers that be (the government, local authorities, the landed gentry) and never to the people either as individuals or as a

collective, as in, for example:

I believe, however, that it often happens in Catholic countries, when local authorities are accused of in– and roads they retained whenever it suited them, just as they retained walls, and watch-towers, and houses of the Moors, not from any sympathy with the makers, but from the commodiousness of the things made (Countries:4:52367).

The general ignorance of the Portuguese people, says an enlightened countryman of their own, the heedlessness of the magistrates, and the apathy of the government (Pombal’s administration excepted), have gradually caused the disappearance of many sensibility to the beauty or historical interest of ancient architecture[...] (Portuguese:54:28899).

There are ambiguous affirmations where the reader is only sure that the author is criticising (and not commending) if we read further, as these quotations from the text show:

- The Portuguese hatred of foreign domination, and of the memory of domination, has perhaps done more since their non-version to Christianity towards the demolition Roman antiquities than all the hammers of Northmen ever did, and the steadier hostility of time (Portuguese:71:29505);
- the Portuguese have a natural genius for quizzing. For myself, all I could say was “Yes” or “No”; all I could do was to look like a half-wit and all I could think of was, “When may we escape from this pincfold of ceremonious misery?” (Portuguese:78:51765);
- What it is now, it probably was a hundred years since, and for many previous centuries, for such remote lines of route in Portugal and Spain undergo little change (Portugal:49:34406).

In recalling the criticism of the male travellers, however, their representations of Portugal seemed to lie merely in the exterior signs they perceived and from the expectations they had formed about the country and its people prior to their journeys. They had primed themselves for the tour by reading history books and travel journals. In confronting the unknown that Portugal represented, they mostly confirmed what other writers had informed them about. Borne out by the limited evidence only of what they had seen (and not what they had **not** seen) the descriptions they had read now became reality, to be perpetuated in their own travel books – a reality that was in fact a projection of their own (often misapprehended) British views.

Dora Quillinan's sources of information seem to be wider than her male counterparts' – she makes an effort to collect as much evidence as she can not only by using her own powers of observation and trying to put herself in the place of others, but also by calling upon her husband's knowledge, as he had resided in Portugal before his marriage to her. She goes deeper into the contrast between the Portuguese and English approaches to life and recognises that what appears objectionable to the English, is because it is different. The conventions between the two cultures are poorly understood. Be that as it may, it seems that the situation may be changing, because, as she says:

all the English with whom I talked on the subject, and many of whom had lived for years in Portugal, confirmed my impression, though too ready, as we English ever are, to find grievous faults with any person and thing out of our own country (English:13:7386).

## Conclusion

In returning to my aim, to see what point of view Dora Quillinan was writing from, her condition as a woman was obviously very important for the humanist details and nuances she picked up on and that normally escaped male eyes. She refused to be drawn into political arguments and she identified with some of the slights suffered when in positions of subordination. What comes as a surprise is that her voice as a woman does not come over in a more forthright or overtly feminine way. Rather, it permeates throughout her writing – through her mention of the activities, lives and sufferings of Portuguese women that, perhaps, a male traveler would not have noticed, and through her choice of subjects for comment – usually involving people and their attitudes. Her feminine view of the world takes shape in her refusal to equate the Portuguese people with their governments; with her deliberate steering away from polemical political, military or religious issues (unless directly connected with the English), and with her few but amusing anecdotes about the traveling party's personal mishaps along the way.

But she was also an Englishwoman and when she thought her country was being attacked, she counter-attacked. Her constant comparisons between life in England and Portugal, her weighing up the negative and positive aspects of Portuguese things, people, situations and circumstances

automatically stressed her Englishness, no matter how understanding and objective she was. However, the fact that she placed a lot of the blame for ignorant or prejudiced opinions on the political representatives of England and Portugal, allowing both the English and the Portuguese peoples the benefit of the doubt, shows her humanitarian side.

As a traveller in ill-health, she was anxious to follow the sun while learning about the country’s social and cultural history, appreciating the magnificent scenery as she went along her way. Her curiosity about the habits and customs of the Portuguese people never seemed to be satisfied. Her reference to their skills and talents as well as to their failures and petty superstitions, and her refusal to generalise dubious political, military or institutionalised Church activities so as to condemn the Portuguese as a whole, gives us an idea of her tolerance and sense of justice. Again, the humanitarian side pushes through. She tries to be fair and give both sides of any picture she paints (recall the case of the Minho inn-keepers she had kept from their beds by inadvertently locking the passage door – the next morning, the bill reflected the inconvenience she had caused).

Finally, does Dora Wordsworth sit “in judgement over Portugal’s achievement and measure it against England’s” as her four male counterparts did in their travelogues about Portugal written during the same time? I believe not. From the outset, she embarks upon her travels with an open mind and a positive attitude. In the *Preface*, as we recall, she states:

My remarks are made in the spirit of my motto *por bem*, in answer to some of my friends by whom, I think, the Portuguese are misunderstood (pp. xi – xiii).

Far from passing judgment on the Portuguese, and evaluating them according to nationalistic criteria, she justifies her findings from what she has discovered on her journey:

As to the good qualities of the Portuguese people, I can truly say, “As I found the Portuguese, so I have characterised them” (Portuguese:49:899).

The most remarkable characteristic about Dora Wordsworth is that she has managed to give the idea that the constraints and conventions of the time imposed upon her sex and condition through social, cultural and ideological dictates mean very little to her as she wanders through Portugal. She has her own ideas, her own interpretations and her own list of priorities as an English woman, a humanist and a traveller. Furthermore, her excellent

prose and serious scholarship, as well as her humility, endear her readers to her – Dora Quillinan (née Wordsworth) is indeed worthy of her name in her own right.

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