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Sumário | Contents

A Prefatory Note

Miguel Ramalhete | University of Porto

In 2014, *Via Panorâmica* offers two issues: its current annual issue and a special issue composed of selected papers presented at "Relational Forms II: An International Conference on Literature, Science and the Arts", held in December 2012 at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto. Both issues reflect the growing internationalisation of CETAPS and of *Via Panorâmica*, while continuing to represent several of the lines of work developed by the researchers associated with CETAPS.

Although it also draws on selected papers presented at "Relational Forms II: An International Conference on Literature, Science and the Arts", the focus of the current issue is more distinctly literary and cultural, ranging from an account of the life and legacy of William Morris to an analysis of communication strategies used by two presidents of the United States of America: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Barack H. Obama. Several of the papers engage with practices of rewriting, from the dynamics and compromises of literary translation for commercial publishing, in a first-hand account of the translation of *A Book of Silence*, by Sara Maitland, to the politics of anthologizing and the issues of exclusion and representativeness that it inevitably entails, in the case of volumes IV and V of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. The focus on rewriting as a strategy which is never devoid of political meanings is given centre place in a reading of Angela Carter's unfinished libretto for an opera based on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. The issue of adaptation also forms the conceptual axis around which revolves both an account of Elizabeth Bishop's immersion in Brazilian culture and an analysis of the fictionalisation of this experience by Marta Goes, in the play *A Port for Elizabeth Bishop*.

Finally, this issue also includes two external contributions: a psychoanalytically-based scrutiny of the character of the Grandmother in Flannery

O'Connor's short-story "A Good Man is Hard to Find", and a translation of Irwin Shaw's "Main Currents of American Thought", originally published in the August 5, 1939, issue of *The New Yorker*.

For her editorial collaboration in both these issues, I would like to express my warm thanks to Márcia Lemos. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge João Ribeiro's swift and skillful work on the final stages of these issues.

William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites

Ensaio

Maria Cândida Zamith Silva | FLUP – CETAPS (Portugal)

I refuse to make myself really unhappy for anything
short of the loss of friends one can't do without.

William Morris

To bring William Morris to your minds today as a living personality I will, paradoxically, recall Robert Blatchford's statement in his obituary, in the *Clarion*, October 1896:

> I cannot help thinking that it does not matter what goes into the *Clarion* this week, because William Morris is dead. […] It is true that much of his work still lives, and will live. But we have lost him, and, great as was his work, he himself was greater … he was better than his best […] In all England there lives no braver, kinder, honester, cleverer, heartier man than William Morris. He is dead, and we cannot help feeling for a while that nothing else matters. (qtd. in Naylor, 202)

In *Some Reminiscences,* his Pre-Raphaelite partner William Michael Rossetti describes him as "about the most remarkable man all round […]. He was artist, poet, romancist, antiquary, linguist, translator, lecturer, craftsman, printer, trader, socialist; and besides, as a man to meet and talk to, a most singular personality" (143).

These opinions are both impressive and accurate, and they give us a rather clear picture of the man. Unquestionably, however, there is even more to it; and the above excerpts may lead us to try and investigate what there is worth recalling beyond the man's achievements. William Morris was, as a human being, an indefatigable worker, a trustworthy friend, and, mainly, a mixture of D.

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Quixote and Lancelot, always in quest for his ideal world. As a utopian writer and thinker, the society he imagined is one of the most optimistic and happy ones: his *News from Nowhere* is known all over the world and it keeps its power to entertain and teach us a few important lessons about happiness and conviviality. The honesty of his writings and the passion of his involvement in every new project he embraced, his changes of opinion, his in-and-out participation in the socialist movement, are notorious and remarkable. Also remarkable is his discovery, research and translation of the Nordic magic Sagas and the traditions of Iceland, his capacity to pursue one dream after another with unflinching enthusiasm, his conviction that Art, Beauty and Happiness should be for everyone. In later years he would explain his position: "I want to be happy, […] and I find it difficult to believe that that is not the universal desire: so that, whatever tends towards that end I cherish with all my best endeavour" (*Collected Works, Vol. XXIII*, 81). All this is true, immense, and humanly and socially important.

Nevertheless, conditioned by subject restrictions I will not be dealing today with the bulk of these overwhelming topics. My concern is centred around and derives from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848 by a group of very young and revolutionary English painters, influenced by John Ruskin and his writings.

This movement was started by John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and William Holman Hunt (respectively nineteen, twenty and twenty one years old) as a protest against the conventional Victorian art represented by the Royal Academy and the imitators of Raphael. They wanted to institute a new way of art, "with the aim of returning to 'Nature', while rejecting what they saw as the moribund academic tradition stemming from Raphael and Renaissance classicism" (Bird, 120). In a way, they were the English counterpart to the French Impressionist movement, with the particularity that their innovative and

revolutionary project was anchored to the past, to the values and techniques of Fra Angelico and other Pre-Raphael painters. They wanted to transplant those medieval values and techniques to their time, adapted to guarantee a brighter and happier vision of Nature, and more Beauty for all. This aim was in unison with the ideas displayed in John Ruskin's writings, particularly the chapter "The Nature of Gothic" in the 2nd volume of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53). Therefore, no wonder that Ruskin gave the group his public approval and came to be considered by some as their spokesman (*apud* Vogt, 131). This important position and support of such a renowned figure in the artistic and literary milieu helped to change the initially very hostile and critical public view of the Brotherhood into a more positive approach.

William Morris was introduced into this community by his school mate Edward Burne-Jones. They had come to Oxford with the intention of taking holy orders, but they both were more strongly attracted by the ideas and style of life of that selected group of artists who rebelled against the conventions to bring something new to the arts. After sharing lodgings in London for some months they joined the Brotherhood, and this was an opening trend to the whole of Morris's subsequent life, orienting him in the pursuit of his dreams to find innovative, purer, and equalitarian ways to spread happiness for all the strata of society.

Before becoming one of the Pre-Raphaelites Morris had found the time to get interested in architecture and to start a life-long friendship with Philip Webb, who would later design the famous Red House for him. With the Pre-Raphaelites, Morris acquired that craving for liberty of thought and artistic creation for all, which became the distinctive features of his character throughout his life. He quitted architecture for painting, and it was as a member of the Brotherhood and under the tutoring of Dante Gabriel Rossetti that he produced the most remarkable of his (rather few) paintings, "Queen Guenevere" (also known as "La

Belle Iseult", on display at Tate Gallery, London) in the year 1858, the same year when he published his poem "The Defense of Guenevere". In the company of those irreverent artists he was often the target for friendly jokes and sketches, particularly concerning his stout figure and abundant curly hair, and also his never appeased appetite, as can be seen in many of Burne-Jones's drawings, as, for instance, "Morris eating" or "Morris reading his poems to Burne-Jones".

He himself accepted and even joined the joyful teasing group, same as he didn't mind accepting the nickname *Topsy* which Burne-Jones had chosen for him due to his restlessness, clumsy and brusque movements and gruff voice, and which was generally used in the group.

Besides the painters and other artists, Morris became acquainted with the painters' models, and among them he met the beautiful eighteen-year-old Jane Burden; he soon fell in love with her and they were married in 1859. They had their honeymoon on the Continent, where they visited with particular interest the beautiful Gothic cathedrals which instilled in Morris the devotion for the times and mores of the Middle Ages, when each artisan could be proud of his creation and see it as a finished and personal work of art. He loathed the massive mechanisation that sprang from the Industrial Revolution because he believed, as he said much later in a lecture, that "the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; […] genuine art is an unmixed blessing to the race of man" (*Collected Works, Vol. XXIII*, 54).

William and Jane (Janey) had two daughters: Jenny (Jane Alice), who came to suffer from epilepsy, and May (Mary), who would accompany her father's activities and later become the publisher of his Collected Works in twenty-four volumes. They lived for some time in the Kent beautiful Red House which Philip Webb designed and Morris decorated helped by Rossetti, Burne-Jones and

Swinburne. According to Rossetti, the Red House was "more a poem than a house but admirable to live in too" (qtd. in Naylor, 14). In reality, this Red House may be considered as the first manifestation of what would later be known as the Arts and Crafts style.

Among the all-masculine community of the Pre-Raphaelites, women were merely beautiful accessories to the men artists, although some of them also practised tapestry work, or even painting or other artistic activity. The most exquisite and beautiful of all was Elizabeth (or Lizzy) Siddal (the Ophelia in the famous painting by Millais), who learnt and practised to be a reasonable painter herself. Rossetti entertained a long *liaison* with her; in 1860 they were finally married but two years later she died of consumption. The widower's grief was so great that he buried all his poems (many inspired by her) in her coffin; however, in 1869 he was repentant of his action, and he succeeded in obtaining permission to have the corpse exhumed, thus recovering the poems.

These years were not fortunate to Morris's sentimental life either. Without Lizzy, and after a brief *affair* with another model, Fanny Cornforth, Rossetti saw Jane again as a lovable woman, at the same time when she herself was getting tired of her husband's continuous involvement in one after another absorbing project. Meanwhile, Morris had become ill with rheumatic fever and he was forced to reduce the intensity of his life; and so, much as he regretted it, he had to give up his beloved Red House. In 1865 he established the family residence in London, in the top floor above his Bloomsbury workshop of Queen Square. Jane had resumed her occupation as painters' model and she hadn't forgotten her liberty of thought and behaviour. Some of Rossetti's best pictures, such as "Mariana"[1], "Pandora"[2], or "Bruna Brunelleschi"[3] have her as a model, and their intimacy gave rise to gossip and caricatures in *Punch*. However, Morris seemed to accept everything to keep Janey happy. This became even more crucial when he decided to take over the lease, with the widowed Rossetti, of "a little place

deep down in the country, where my wife and children are to spend some months every year"[4] – a country home close to the River Thames, on the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire borders. When Morris went in his tour to Iceland with Charles Faulkner and his Icelander friend and at one time teacher Eiríkr Magnússen, Rosseti stayed on with Jane and the children. Openly unmoved, Morris discreetly confesses to a friend that he has been "backwards and forwards to Kelmscott". He affirms that "nor indeed does it spoil my enjoyment of life always, as I have often told you: to have real friends and some sort of aim in life is so much, that I ought still to think myself lucky", but nevertheless he cannot help mentioning the "selfish business"

> that Rossetti has set himself down at Kelmcott as if he never meant to go away; and not only that keeps me away from the harbour of refuge (because it really is a farce our meeting when we can help it) but also he has all sorts of ways so unsympathetic with the sweet simple old place, that I feel his presence there is a kind of slur on it.[5]

This shows how he cherished Kelmscott Manor and also how the relationship Janey/Rossetti distressed him. But his natural kindness and goodwill prevail when he exclaims a few lines below "O how I long to keep the world from narrowing in on me, and to look at things bigly and kindly!" At last, when the situation became untenable Morris finally broke up with Dante Gabriel and the latter left Kelmscott Manor. After that the family went to the Continent, in a long visit to Italy.

In 1861 Morris had created the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. where he was the managing partner, counting with the contributions of leading Pre-Raphaelite artists, particularly Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Their works became widely known and appreciated, and they got important commissions for churches and public buildings, of which one

can find good examples in, for instance, the stained glasses of St. Michael's church in Forden, Wales (1873), or the tapestry *Adoration of the Magi* of the Exeter College (1890). Notwithstanding the commercial success, however, the firm was dissolved in 1874, probably when the situation at home became untenable, but more openly perhaps because Morris wanted to be the sole owner and decision maker. Morris's firm was superseded the following year by a new one, Morris & Co. Some of the old partners took it very badly that they should be abruptly "dismissed", and a long lasting estrangement installed itself among the several families involved, as it can be detected from a photograph showing the Burne-Jones and Morris families together in that year 1874.[6] Although some kind of relationship was in time renewed, the old camaraderie of the first years of the Brotherhood was never brought to life again.

During these troubled years, driven by the adverse circumstances together with the wish to abandon painting to dedicate his efforts and money to promote the so-called minor arts, Morris had taken the decision to quit the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Some of the artists followed him in his new projects and, although no association was officially established, they came to constitute a second version of the revolutionary group. Morris had become more and more interested in the ways of medieval arts and crafts, wanting to bring beauty to the houses, furniture and objects of everyday life. He was at the core of the Arts & Crafts Movement, having been the main creator of its characteristic style of simplicity and beauty, although the actual name itself was only coined in 1887 by T. J. Cobden Sanderson. The movement soon acquired international scope, with repercussions all over Europe and also in North America and other continents. Morris had been persistently learning and practising every one of the crafts he wanted to develop and make accessible to the public, although – understandably – he never succeeded to make them reach and benefit the lower classes he wanted to promote. Naturally, each article being unique and a true work of art, it

could not be accessible to lower budgets within the prevailing capitalist system of the new society. Frustrated in his equalitarian efforts, Morris turned his energies to his poetry and to the different decorative arts in which he now excelled.

A period of great intellectual activity followed his personal crisis. From the late 1860s to the end of the next decade Morris published intensely in poetry: *The Life and Death of Jason*, *The Earthly Paradise*, *A Book of Verse*, *Love is Enough*, and *Sigurd the Volsung*; in addition to the translations of Horace's *Odes* and Virgil's *Eneida,* besides some Icelandic sagas. In 1868 Morris describes himself in *The Earthly Paradise* as

> Dreamer of dreams, born out of my time,
> ……
> Telling a tale not too important
> To those who in the sleepy region stay,
> Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

And in "September" he makes one of the rare confessions of his sorrow:

> Look long, O longing eyes, and look in vain!
> Strain idly, aching heart, and yet be wise,
> And hope no more for things to come again […]

In 1878 Morris rented a new house, *The Retreat*, in Hammersmith, which he baptised as Kelmscott House. From its windows one could follow the traditional Oxford/Cambridge race, a particularity which Morris appreciated. And he made at least two boat journeys from there to his country manor. In 1881 he moved his workshops to Merton Abbey, in Surrey, where he disposed of suitable facilities to dye and print his textiles, design and make tapestries, rugs and carpets, or any other kind of household materials. By that time he wrote to his

wife describing the suitability of the site, emphasising its location: "Wardle and Webb are gone today to have a look at those premises at Merton […] There are decided advantages about the […] place; first, it would scarcely take me longer to get there from Hammersmith than it now does to Queen Square […]" (qtd in Naylor, 143).

Until his death in 1896 Morris never ceased to write and publish poems, cultural or political intervention articles, translations of classical texts or Icelandic Sagas. He also sponsored the publication of several journals, from *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856) to the socialist *Commonweal* (1885). He received an invitation to teach poetry in Oxford (1877), and an assignment as Poet Laureate (after the death of Tennyson in 1892), both of which he declined. In the meantime he helped found the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* (1876), he was made "Honorary Fellow of Exeter College", Oxford, he was a delegate of the *Socialist League* at the "Congrès de la Deuxième Internationale" in Paris (1889), he was elected "Master of the Art Workers' Guild" (1892), and he founded the "Kelmscott Press" where his poetic works were published, together with those of some eminent poets such as John Keats, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He so cherished his Kelmscott Manor that his two subsequent sites were named after it. Along the years, the activity of his workshop had also increased considerably, whilst Morris busied himself studying and practising new crafts, creating designs (which would become famous) for wallpapers, fabrics, tapestries, carpets, embroideries, iron works, books, tiles, stained glass, pieces of furniture, or any kind of decorative or useful objects for the house.

Since the early 1880s Morris's concern for the working classes took a more political trend and he tried to establish an official movement which might have a say in Government on their behalf. But none of the existing alternatives quite satisfied him, not even the Socialist League, the initial ideals of which were being

twisted to suit personal or party interests. He also quitted the Socialist Party for the same reason. The problem was that, as V. Dupont states, "son propre idéal humanitaire dépasse l'économie. Il est à la recherche du bonheur, non pas de la surabondance des biens matériels" [his own humanitarian ideal goes beyond the economic. He looks for happiness, not for over-abundant material assets] (Préface, 52). He remained, however, a fighter for equality of rights against all the odds until his death and he did not spare his efforts and involvement together with his money. As Naylor says: "There was no sudden conversion, and no violent transition between Morris the Romantic and Morris the Revolutionary; he was consistent in all his thinking, in his theory as well as his practice, always relating his ideals and interpretation of the past to his hopes and fears for the future" (17). He fought for his ideals with his pen, his voice and his money: with his pen he wrote *News from Nowhere* and a great number of articles in different periodicals to reach a vast array of readers; with his voice he was a clever and persuasive preacher in parks and at street corners, or while marching at the head of crowds, same as lecturing in conference rooms; on 13th November 1887 (the *Bloody Sunday*) Morris marched with the protesters and he was taken to jail with most of them; with his money he helped financing social or political projects which he thought useful, including the Arts & Crafts movement or the Independent Labour Party. At the same time, he never forgot his passion of hope for the art "that will make our streets as beautiful as the woods" (May Morris, *Collected Works, Vol. XVI*, xvj) or the optimism as expressed in the last words of his lecture "Make the Best of It": "Have you not heard how it has gone with many a cause before now? First few men heed it; next most men condemn it; lastly all men accept it; and the cause is won" (*Idem*).

Morris's final great manifestation of the Beautiful, the Kelmscott Press, which "was also his final, perhaps his only, self-indulgence" (in Naylor, 18), published some 50 fine press editions of classical and contemporary works. The

last and most magnificent of all was *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer now newly imprinted*, with illustrations by Burne-Jones. Morris himself contributed with the designs for the full-page woodcut title, plus the borders for the pictures, six large initial words and all the ornamental initial letters, large or small. This *Kelmscott Chaucer*, as it came to be known, is a major piece of art and the last one supplied by William Morris's efforts in his Middle Ages style.

If one attempts to trace any kind of predecessors to William Morris, such a task will end up with a nearly complete failure. Besides the medieval artistic references of all kinds, one may consider, as possible inspiration for the floral designs, old representations from the times of Greece and Crete, designs carved or painted on the remnants of walls of temples or palaces; also the 'indiennes', the exotic fabrics brought from the Far East by the East Indian Companies after the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama opened the maritime way to the western trade; connected to these, the Alsacian textile manufacturers who produced beautiful copies of the fashionable fabrics up to the late nineteenth century, some of which still survive – it should be remembered that there was an old French tradition of textile printing workshops (the names of Christophe-Philippe Overkampf, Jean-Baptiste Huet or the Haussmann brothers of Rouen come to mind);[7] and further, nearer at hand, the famous British symbol, the five-petal Tudor rose. However, William Morris had always the knack of making something new and his very own out of the artistic manifestations he admired in the past, because he was a born creator of art, never an imitator. Indeed he was, unquestionably, the initiator of a multifarious artistic movement which aimed at bringing more beauty to everybody's daily surroundings, with such success that it came to spread all over the world.

His predecessors are hard to find, but he does not lack successors. Indeed, the fame of William Morris's designs soon reached most of the European and North American countries, and, after his death, many disciples and followers

were keeping his memory and heritage alive. A great number of high middle class houses were for decades embellished with wallpapers donning Morris's floral designs.

During Morris's own lifetime and shortly after his death, a number of very 'avant-garde' modernist movements adopted similar or adapted floral designs, nature inspired gardens, medieval like furniture, architectural choices, and so on. Some copies of original Morris's designs are still being produced to this date in relatively large quantities by modern mechanized means, adapted to wall papers, bedspreads, wall-hangings, or cushions, and can be purchased through www.william/morris.co.uk. Among them, for instance, is the Jane's Daisy bedspread, based in a wall-hanging dated from the early 1860s, designed for the Red House and possibly embroidered by Morris himself, his wife Jane and her sister.

In the literary field, W. B. Yeats, whose career "serves well as a bridge between early and late periods of collectivism and modernism" (Tratner, 135) was so keen on Morris's ideals and poetry that in his early years he tried to imitate his ways. In "I See Phantoms", for instance, he shows himself "unwilling to give up his cherished optimism, […] the hope of the happiness of William Morris" (*Idem*, 152). Yeats himself said in *Bookman*, in 1896: "In the literal sense of the word, and in the only high sense, he was a prophet; and it was his vision of that perfect life, which the world is always trying […] to bring forth, that awakened every activity of his laborious life" (qtd. in Naylor, 202). Charles Dickens expressed openly his appreciation for the man and his ideas. And in the late 1880s George Bernard Shaw was a regular speaker at the meetings of the Socialist Democratic Federation in the Coach House (Kelmscott House).

Morris's influence on J. R. R. Tolkien was still stronger and more durable. As it can be inferred from his letters, one of the greatest influences on his writings was "the Arts & Crafts polymath William Morris". He wished to imitate his prose

and poetry romances. From him he took hints for names of features in, for instance, *The Lord of the Rings*, and he dealt with Icelandic subjects and legends which Morris made accessible and popular. One good example is *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, a verse retelling of the Norse Völsung cycle, published posthumously by his son Christopher Tolkien in 2009 (Harper Collins).[8]

In *The Letters of Henry James* (1920), one can read: "Morris himself is extremely pleasant and quite different from his wife. He impressed me most agreeably. He is short, burly, corpulent, very careless and unfinished in his dress […] He has a very loud voice and a nervous, restless manner and a perfectly unaffected and business-like address. His talk indeed is wonderfully to the point and remarkable for clear, good sense . . . He's an extraordinary example, in short, of a delicate sensitive genius and taste, saved by a perfectly healthy body and temper" (qtd. in Naylor, 204).

Whilst in literature the "echoes" of Morris were individual since, as commented by someone shortly after his death: "It was a curious thing that here was a great artist and no school" (qtd. in *Collected Works Vol. XVI*, xxviij), the influence of his ideas in architecture was even more visible and general. A remarkable example can be noted in Catalonia, where a group of architects including Gaudi, Vilaseca, Domènech and Fontseré gave life to a project of revitalization of the industrial arts. Among these innovators, Luís Domènech I Montaner (1849-1923) is perhaps the one with a wider field of artistic interests stemming from Morris's examples. Besides being a remarkably innovative architect he was also a renowned industrial designer, whose tile panels, stained glass windows and exquisite pieces of furniture (mostly applied in churches and official buildings) owe much to the works of William Morris. Following the example of Morris, Domènech proposed to study the very composition of materials and develop specific designs that would integrate the traditional crafts, materials and techniques whose recovery was the basis of his entire repertoire

of ornamentation. With the exception of the Arts & Crafts Association, the *Castell dels Tres Dragons* (Domènech's workshop) was the first collective endeavour to bring craftsmen, artists and architects together in a shared project (*apud* Figueras, 205).

Further to the Catalonia example, it is imperative to mention the Deutscher Werkbund, a German association of artists, architects, designers, and industrialists, founded in 1907 in Munich at the instigation of Hermann Muthesius, who also wrote an exhaustive survey of the practical lessons of the English Arts & Crafts movement. The action and endeavours of the Werkbund were intensified in 1919 by the Staatliches Bauhaus, a school founded in Weimar by the architect Walter Gropius with the idea of creating a 'total' work of art in which all arts would eventually be brought together. The Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1925, to Berlin in 1932, and it was closed in 1933 under pressure of the Nazi regime. The Bauhaus style became one of the most influential currents in Modernist architecture and modern design, and it had a profound influence upon subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic, industrial and interior design, and typography.

In this context, the Portuguese works at Caldas da Rainha, the *Fábrica de Faianças das Caldas da Rainha,* should not be forgotten, since its original and colourful creations in glazed earthenware show unquestionable, rather avowed, debt to the work of William Morris and to the Arts & Crafts Association.

I believe that these examples illustrate the vast and persistent expansion of the ideas and message of William Morris, "one of the most versatile, energetic and original men of his time, a force that impinged decisively on the world of practice" (Leavis, qtd. in Naylor, 205). In short, a man for all seasons and for all kinds of people, a man with whom we can learn a lot, particularly the art of being happy.

[1] Oil painting, 1868-70, City of Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collection.

[2] Chalk drawing (a study for Pandora), 1869, Bridgeman Art Library, London.

[3] Bodycolour, 1878, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

[4] Letter to unknown recipient, Aug.-Sept. 1871.

[5] Letter to Aglaia Coronio, 27 Nov. 1872.

[6] Photograph by Frederic Hollyer (in *The Pre-Raphaelites and Their World*, p. 194 – *Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the V & A*).

[7] Further information can be obtained in the introductions to *18th Century Textile Printing*, *19th Century French Flowers*, and *Roses*, respectively by J. Jacqué, Susan Meller and Susan Meller. Joost Elffers Books. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991(edition 2005 Könemann, Tandem Verlag GmbH).

[8] In Wilkipedia, consulted 10 November 2012.

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"What a wonderful piece of work is a woman!": *Orlando* and *The Enigma of the Sexes*

Maria de Deus Duarte | CETAPS[1]

In the opening pages of *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf speaks of "the great problem of the true nature of woman" not only as a difficult question, but also as a problem she cannot solve. In itself a farsighted opening, it became a longer-term issue which underpins most of her novels and essays: and if she did not approve of conclusions, "that great problem" positioned Woolf as a spokesperson for her gender, and therefore many readers throughout the world appropriated her in feminist terms during the 1980s. In this paper I want to suggest how Angela Carter was able to expose these unsolved states of being through her opera libretto *Orlando: or, The Enigma of the Sexes*, an estranging homage to Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) which remained unfinished at the time of her death, but appeared in her collected dramatic works in 1996.

"For books continue each other, in spite of our habit of judging them separately".[2]

1. 'The great problem of the true nature of woman'[3]

In the opening pages of *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) speaks of "the great problem of the true nature of woman" not only as a difficult question, but also as a problem she cannot solve. In itself a farsighted opening, it became a longer-term issue which underpins most of her novels and essays, namely *Orlando*,[4] written between the Autumn of 1927 and March 1928; the themes of symbiosis, ambiguity, metamorphosis, ambivalence, androgyny,

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transvestism and cross-dressing in the representation of female identity carried over into literary Modernism itself.

Most early admirers placed *Orlando* and its adventurous, unstable bisexual subject outside the main body of Woolf's work – notably psychological realism and her development of stream-of-consciousness narrative in such works as *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) –, a judgment with which numerous critics have since disagreed, viewing *Orlando* not only as a glimpse at her more politicized feminist essay *A Room of One's Own*, but also as its legitimate fictional complement, and seeing in *Orlando*'s themes, and in its rejection of literary conventions, similarities with Woolf's more prominent works, namely, the visibility of the difficulties pertaining to an exploration of femininity as difference: "We may take some advantage of this pause in the narrative to make certain statements. Orlando had become a woman – there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been" (*O* 87). The novel, which has been the subject of numerous scholarly essays, sold 8,104 copies in the first six months after its publication in October 1928 (cf. Briggs 212), a turning point in Woolf's career as a successful novelist, and an attempt to establish a living relationship with her near past.

Subtitled "A Biography", Woolf's parody shows her interest in the boundaries of gender (in spite of the ironic voice of the narrator, who states that: "let *other pens* treat of sex and sexuality; *we quit such odious subjects as soon as we can*" [*O* 87, my italics]), and describes Orlando's undamaged self and his adventurous life in time, as a means of detaching the subject from the distorting categories imposed by the dominant socio-economic groups. It stalks its aristocratic protagonist for more than three centuries, opening when the shy eponymous hero is only sixteen years old, and "the sixteenth century had still some years of its course to run" (*O* 11).

In the novel, time unaccountably and swiftly passes as Orlando pursues his literary aspirations concerning an old composition, "The Oak Tree: a Poem" (1586), is awarded a peerage, engages in a love affair with a Russian princess (the impossible and perfect love-object "Sasha, as he called her for short, and because it was the name of a white Russian fox he had had as a boy" [*O* 28]), is named British ambassador to Constantinople, earns a Dukedom, and, as a young woman of rank, goes beyond the constructs of Victorian chastity, modesty and purity.

Now, if a woman is an undefined organism, it calls the plot of her life into question. If Woolf did not approve of final conclusions, "that great problem of woman" positioned her as a visible spokesperson for her gender; hence, many readers throughout the world appropriated her, departing from the feminist theory of the post-Second World War period and through later feminist theorists during the 1970s and 1980s, who, departing from *Orlando*, exposed sophisticated methodologies and interpretations concerning the complex nature of gender and women's experience, somehow leaving apart from Virginia's multiple personalities and her complex ideas of subjectivity the real person who wrote the novels, criticism, letters and famous Diary. In fact, Woolf was an 'intellectual aristocrat', fascinated by the aristocracy as embodied in the careless magnificence of her friend Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), socially privileged by her upper-middle-class and family backgrounds, a pretentiously frivolous 'Bloomsbury' hobbling through gender.

Drawing a portrait of Vita and of her wildfire romanticism through a combination of chronology, fact and imagination, *Orlando* parodies the preconceptions which readers had got into the habit of taking for granted in Victorian biography, particularly in *Orlando*'s mockery of the choices a biographer must make when stitching the pieces of a life into one coherent whole, showing the multiplicity of possibilities when she/he wants to create an

accurate likeness of a specific private life from the references and articles that linger after death.

In this paper I want to suggest how in 1980 Angela Carter (1940-1992), a learned and prolific postmodernist writer belonging to British dissident feminist counterculture, produced a draft of an opera libretto, *Orlando: or, The Enigma of the Sexes*, where, through 'speculative fiction'[5] and intertextuality, she was able to expose these unsolved states of being: tradition, cross-dressing and masquerade are used to criticize the constructed nature of gender, and to undermine conventional notions of love and sexual hierarchy. Both an imaginative literary space for creativity, new changes and possibilities, and an estranging homage to Woolf's 1928 *Orlando*, Angela Carter's *Orlando: or, The Enigma of the Sexes* remained unfinished at the time of her death, twenty years ago, only appearing in her collected dramatic works, in 1996,[6] at a time when her early loss to cancer raised applause for her demythologizing of the mother figure (a construct that she herself experienced at forty three) and for her discussion of the social construction of woman.

Also, since the second draft was left incomplete, Angela Carter gives us a text as a construct in progress, assuming Woolf's belief in the necessity of a literature in the making in a changing world, in a non-authoritarian relationship between an author's intellectual strategies and literary techniques and a reader, both theses explained in Woolf's controversial essays "Hours in a Library" (1916) and "How Should One Read a Book?" (1926) – both serious apologies for the open nature of the literary work, and for the freedom and imagination of the reader.[7] Carter was a writer who knew the ropes, and a "good reader" in the sense Woolf defined in "How Should One Read a Book?":

> Clearly, no answer that will do for everyone; but perhaps a few suggestions. In the first place, a good reader will give the writer the benefit of every doubt; the help of all his

> imagination; will follow as closely, interpret as intelligently as he can. (…) [He] will judge with the utmost severity. ("HRB" 398)

2. 'I have done with men'[8]

Woolf noted in her Diary in the Autumn of 1927 that writing about the kaleidoscopic Orlando, an English nobleman from the Elizabethan era who, as seen, survives numerous uncommon adventures (and whose "fathers had been noble since they had been at all" [*O* 9]), provided her with a light-hearted "writer's holiday" after completing the difficult *To the Lighthouse*.[9] The long-needed *Orlando* impressed many early readers and critics as little more than an entertainment written primarily by the self-absorbed Woolf to amuse her family and many well-read friends, not only because of her several technical innovations, which do not violate the integrity of the novel as a coherent whole, but also due to the revival of the question of women in society (bound by cultural subordination and biological determinism, by laws and conventions), and in Science (with its physiologically and psychologically ruled differentiations). Woolf lives intermittently in the pages of her writings; so, in fact, many vital themes in *Orlando* reflect concerns that pervade all her previous works, including women's poorly recorded actions, marriage and the equality of the sexes, exclusion, the enigmas of human experience, individual personality, momentary vision, and imagination.

Woolf's unconventional presentation of time allows a portrayal of the developing character of Orlando in the context of nearly four centuries of English literary and social history, an expansiveness which also reflects the vast geography of the plot. In rendering each specific historical period, Woolf adopted a different, particular narrative style to reflect the most predominant literary and social conventions of the times, but in each one there is a lightness of touch for story-making. No wonder, then, if biographical conventions have shifted in this

novel, and we are faced with improbable stories, gaps and absences, and ambiguities surrounding the blurred boundaries of the main subjects. Furthermore, laughter is largely achieved through deep humour, exaggeration and ironic contrast: *Orlando* thus serves to examine how a transgender subject and his/her relationship to culture and to the art of narrative may involve the revision not only of the conventional discourse of biography, but also of the language of western romance.

After falling into a strange, seven-day trance in the seventeenth century, Orlando revives, transformed physically into a young woman, although otherwise unaltered. He is not what she seems, but what makes the female brain differ from the male brain? The androgynous character of Orlando, male and female in one single being (and particularly the fact that Orlando's essential character is not altered though he changes from male to female) is seen to demonstrate Woolf's belief that, although there are scientific, physiological and psychological differentiations, each individual has both male and female characteristics, and that intellectually men and women are indistinguishable, as they may employ diverse and even opposite ways of thinking in a normal state of affairs, in ordinary life, and in communication − scientific and religious, metaphorical and logical: "Orlando was strangely compounded of many humours − of melancholy, of indolence, of passion, of love of solitude, to say nothing of all those contortions and subtleties of temper which were indicated on the first page" (*O* 46).

Fleeing from seventeenth-century Constantinople to England, Orlando engages in a difficult legal battle to regain the property she had held as a man, the gigantic castle of Knole (the magnificent hall where Vita Sackville-West lived until she married), a quest that masculinises her: as in history and psychology, the attack on traditional, established categories led Woolf to a focus on the volcanic arena of existing political ideas and traditional laws concerning women:

> (…) she was a party for three major suits which had been preferred against her during her absence, as well as innumerable minor litigations, some arising out of, others depending on them. The chief charges against her were (1) that she was dead, and therefore could not hold any property whatsoever; (2) *that, she was a woman, which amounts to much the same thing*; (3) that she was an English Duke who had married one Rosina Pepita, a dancer; and had had by her three sons, which sons now declaring that their father was deceased, *claimed that all his property descended to them*. (*O* 105: my italics)

In the eighteenth century he, now a she, mingles in the society which fosters the Arts, and becomes acquainted with prominent literary figures as a rehearsal for her own career as a reader and a writer, a profession and domain not open to women. She takes a husband in England in the nineteenth century, and subsequently Orlando struggles to reconcile her desire to be a writer with the difficulties of a woman writer, the Victorian dynamics of dominance and the notions of feminine duty, discipline and restraint. In fact, this is a question Woolf pursued through the great works of her maturity, already a well-known plot since *Melymbrosia*, the original version of *The Voyage Out* (1915), where Woolf uses the self-reflexive nature of the narrative form to disrupt the long tradition of the 'novel of manners' with a strategic use of a journey as a symbol of the initiatory path for the heroine towards adulthood, knowledge and maturity. This first novel hence also disrupts the *Bildungsroman* matrix which had offered an imaginative construct that was almost entirely male-centred in spite of its masculine protagonist(s) being strongly marked by feminine traits.

Woolf's *Orlando* concludes at the time of its publication, 1928, as the hero edits the poem written in her own boyish hand, which she has been revising for more than three centuries, delivers a fine boy, puts on a ring, is reunited with her husband, and achieves a unifying vision of life.

3. 'Women no longer write novels solely'[10]

In spite of *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) and, specifically, *Nights at the Circus* (1984) being considered as heirs to *Orlando*,[11] Angela Carter belonged to dissident feminist counterculture and therefore had an ambivalent relationship to Virginia Woolf and towards her modernist legacy; "she partly dislikes her" (Lee 317).[12] A year before her death, Carter appeared on a Channel Four *J'accuse* programme and performed a satirical attack on *Orlando*,[13] hence a diatribe against Virginia Woolf's all-pervasive legacy. But Carter did not write on the basis of the criteria derived from the British realist novel; as a critic, she had read and worked on the novelist she had displaced, and was commissioned to write an opera libretto for *Orlando* in 1979, to be scored by the composer Michael Berkeley (1948-), as a kind of literary criticism on the constructed nature of gender and the notions of love and sexual hierarchy.

Virginia Woolf loved opera, a genre for which librettos have traditionally been written by *male* authors; but, discussing the novel and its central role in the female literary tradition, she stated in *A Room of One's Own* that "women no longer write novels solely". In "Modern Novels" (1919)[14] and in "Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown" (1923)[15] the modernist novelist asked them to find new modes for presenting characters and plots, to be free concerning new forms, and then claimed in *A Room of One's Own*: "Therefore I would ask you *to write all kinds of books, hesitating at no subject however trivial or however vast*" (*AROO* 109, my italics). Hence, women's alienation from patriarchal culture implied the possibility that women experience language differently from men, and write differently, too. The modernist woman writer imagined by Woolf (though she does not use this term) had to write a form whose sentences had "somehow to be adapted to the body" (*AROO* 78), a book both of realism and illusion, as in her *Orlando*.

Understanding the multiple literary possibilities relating to language and genre that Woolf's 1928 novel had prefigured, its theatrical atmosphere, the blurred boundaries of gender, and the irony on the certainties of Britishness, the renowned feminist Angela Carter gives us a playful, innovative and amusing text, of about 27 pages, not 'narrated' from the perspective of a female voice, but giving us multiple voices, departing from the traditional opera libretto structure, with its choruses and duets. In her appropriation, Carter departs from what was done before by Woolf, not as mimesis, but by opening *Orlando*'s loose form to different experimentation: internal relations are undermined, mocked and re-imagined.

We know the plot before the curtain rises, as *Orlando* is a fundamental intertext in Carter's libretto, when we watch not Great Britain and Knole as *locus* and a stable centricity of place, customs, and religious and national spirit, but the Great Bed, an ex-centricity, somehow a country historically and geopolitically foreign to the viewer. Androgyny belongs to the domain of the imaginary: in the "Prologue" of the libretto, abandoning dichotomy and starting from the philosophical roots of Plato and Aristophanes, the exploration of identity is set up: "But, before we speak of love, said Aristophanes, / we must speak of the great tragedy of our natures, / how once we were perfect and are no longer" (*EOS*, "Prologue", 155), a state which the young woman Sasha could have embodied some centuries before.[16]

In her unfinished text, Angela Carter tries to show these themes in a theatrical manner – she preferred a mode of writing closer to fantasy, which is not typical of English 'realist fiction': it enacts a four-act pageant beginning in 1928 in the great bedchamber at Knole, the hall prepared for "the weary, wary" Gloriana (*EOS*, I.i. 160), who will transform the young character Orlando into her Treasurer and Steward, and, above all, into "the child of [her] heart / who will sing [her] to sleep" (*EOS*, I.i. 161).

Orlando is just a boy from a country estate stepping out from a frame of the main bedchamber at Knole, displaying the relationship between the country house, the pastoral and the history of England, and also imposing the theme of the dissipation of identity and gender, since frames and mirrors are canonical representations of the feminine, and a social creation of femininity. While giving him a ring from her finger and placing it on Orlando's index finger, where it will remain for the rest of the action, the character Elizabeth I introduces this ring as the symbol of changing time, during which Orlando's essential character will not be altered, though he changes from male to female;[17] also, from the point of the narrative art, this ring reminds the viewer that time does not stand still, although the writer imitated a time, in which the plot unfolds, that seems to be in that state. Carter's text dialogues with Woolf's novels, notably with the dramatic act-structure of *Between the Acts* (1941), and also fuses with British theatrical tradition[18] in the use of the Early Modern context of Shakespearean plays, that is, the tradition of a boy actor in different female roles (disguised in the plot as a girl; recognized; and then disguised as a boy again).

Orlando returns to England as a woman in the reign of Queen Anne and has great trouble with her gender body language when an Archduchess (Harriet Griselda of Finster-Aarhorm and Scand-op-Boom in the Roumanian territory) proves to be an Archduke. But, in fact, the Archduke (just Harry) is a woman always in love with Orlando and stalking him through the centuries and sexes till finally finding him, in Georgian times, in her most perfect self, that is, as young *Lady* Orlando. The Archduchess then asks a woman to reveal herself simply as a man, to marry and love her forever, and solve the complex enigma and that strange pursuit (*EOS*, II.ii. 174). As a man, Orlando had pursued the beautiful Russian princess Sasha two centuries before. Then, as a lady of rank, she fled from fortune, the safety of marriage, and a title, as she refused to marry against her will, and to be kept in a big house with a nursery, in futile occupations.

3.1. Of gipsies lost and servants found

Her opposition to bourgeois individualism led Angela Carter to include in her opera libretto an 'impossible' Woolfian set of subjects, who swear and curse while working: two good and faithful servants connecting past and present and opening all doors towards the future, who are able to surprise their master's secrets. Closer to the audience, they never change through the centuries (in Woolf's novel, Mrs Grimsditch, the housekeeper, and Mr Dupper, the chaplain, are substituted by Widow Bartholomew and Louise) (*O* 188, 146). Two servant subjects are included in her libretto not as the poor, suffering the extremity of want and servility (whom Woolf's Orlando grew tired of because of "the primitive manner of the people" [*O* 20]), but as the opera chorus and *genii loci* of the Knole plot: its housekeeper (Mrs Grimsditch) and the butler (Dupper). An innovation that establishes a profound gap between Woolf's novel, as her elegy for the English aristocracy,[19] and the use of two characters close to stand-up comedians, who stress the new social meaning implied by formal experiment in the libretto's duets. Initially "standing at either end of the stage, down front, like a pair of pot dogs on either end of a mantelpiece" (*EOS*, I.i. 162), the two servants give good advice to Orlando in Jacobean times, when he is ruined and compromised by a tremendous woman, old enough to be his mother, after too much Madeira drinking, and thinks of going to a place where there shall be no temptation: Virginia, The Virgin Islands; or Turkey, where all the women are veiled. Constantinople, "where all women are locked up together" (*EOS*, II.ii. 167), seems a safe escape for a character faithful to respectable prejudices, an escape that will even earn him a Dukedom and the robes of the Garter.

The Embassy at Constantinople, an example of Britain's global control and colonial space, is then another new beginning: there, in amazement, Orlando rises as a woman from his profound sleep after a palace coup and the night

performance that had honoured him as a British emissary (*EOS*, II.iv. 170). Another night performance, presented in the novel's and in the libretto's plot as a fabulous dream, as Orlando is still asleep, is again (an)other transgressive masquerade, where his gender, constructed by law and society ('the British Ambassador at Constantinople'), is liberated by three allegorical figures: Modesty, Chastity and Purity.

In Woolf's *Orlando*, as Ambassador he used to mingle disguised with the crowd on the Galata Bridge, an exotic spectacle where the narrator, using false universals and western women's clothing as the signifier of cultural difference, says that "the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men" (*O* 96). On the night that saw the Turks rebel against the Sultan, a deed of his marriage to a dancer was found: "father unknown but reputed a gipsy, mother unknown but reputed a seller of old iron in the market-place over against the Galata Bridge" (*O* 82-83, 83-95), a piece of information ridiculing patriarchal, colonialist western myths and social and cultural processes – being an Ambassador was not a matter of aesthetics (male clothing and gaze), but of law and social class (an imperial gaze) (*O* 83).

Which seems to indicate that not only sex, but also localization, geography, law, class and race turned out to be great problems in this quest for "the true nature of woman".

And at this point Angela Carter's libretto omits one of the most important elements concerning the representation of women of the fabulous Constantinople in Woolf's *Orlando*: the strange one-day marriage of the Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, filled with his own fantasies concerning Constantinople, to an unknown gipsy, on the very same day of the Turks' rebellion against the Sultan, a rebellion that put "every foreigner they could find, either to the sword or to the bastinado" (*O* 83), a coup mirroring the collapse of empire and British colonial ambition. This constitutes an important omission,

then, in Angela Carter's rewriting, not only bearing in mind Carter's egalitarian ethics and her parody of the constructed nature of gender, but also because of her full awareness of the artificiality of cultures and of cultural differences, especially in relation to the fringes, and particularly noticeable following her stay in the USA,[20] in Japan,[21] and in Australia[22] – a series of important steps in her radicalized sense of the foreignness of her own culture, revealed in her novels.

We have to keep in mind that somehow this particular Constantinople episode of Woolf's did use historical and biographical evidence, as *Orlando* shows that her inspiration was the aristocrat and author to whom the work is dedicated,[23] and it also shows the real story of Woolf's romantic liaison, from 1922 onwards, with a real woman, whose husband was a diplomat at Constantinople: Victoria Sackville-West,[24] the model for her protagonist. And we cannot delete the evidence that the parodic *Orlando* was inspired in part by Woolf's desire to experiment on the novel. She wanted to experiment on the nature of fiction itself and 'revolutionize' biographical writing not only as a critic, but also as a writer who accommodates new ideas of human nature (cases of dual personality exist, in which feminine and masculine traits alternately preponderate) and the tension between fact and fiction (between the "granite" and the "rainbow" of life, as Woolf designates it in her review essay "The New Biography", from 1927),[25] a genre which Woolf discusses critically in the essay "The Art of Biography" (1939), and in *Orlando*: "the first duty of a biographer, which is to plod, without looking to right or left, in the indelible footprints of truth" (*O* 41).

These two real(istic) biographical elements did not serve Carter's opera libretto, and they are erased in her parody. Carter was mainly interested in the intersections between aesthetic and socio-cultural domains, in theatrical tradition and performativity, in the representation of self as a transitory spectacle and textual performance, and did not want to revisit Woolf's life, but

to sail out freely from her specific biography (although Vita's family home is kept). She also erased other possible biographical elements connected with Virginia Woolf's public self-projection (cross-gender, cross-racial masquerades), of which I only give two examples. In order to experience the disentanglement of role from body and destiny from anatomy (in the long and fierce debate as to whether people are themselves or the characters whose costumes they are wearing), Woolf had been involved in two cases of cross-racial masquerade. She dressed up as a (nearly naked) Gaugin girl with her sister Vanessa for the Post-Impressionist Exhibition Ball (1910). And she blacked up as the Emperor of Abyssinia for the Dreadnought Hoax (also in 1910), deceiving the British Navy with the help of her brother Adrian Stephen. At that time she mocked the 'darkest race of the Ethiopian empire',[26] this enlightening experience as a coloured, bearded male person showing that the real world of white subjectivity and culture – contaminated by politics and strategies of power – was, in fact, a place of deception and many masks. Therefore, from the point of view of power relations and Englishness, Constantinople and the gipsies' flight, with Orlando as a woman married to one of them, is an important topic either in Woolf's meagre list of references to social outsiders in all her novelistic work, where they occupy a 'down-stage' position, and in her life.

When Orlando flees with the gipsies, he is not in disguise: he had become a woman; and, in her femininity as difference, "She prefer[ed] a sunset to a flock of goats" which "cropped the sandy tufts at her feet" (*O* 93, 204). Different though the sexes and races are, they intermix in social and cultural processes, this intermixing breaking the gap in cultural hegemony: the 'illiterate' gipsies did not think as Orlando did. They had social functions which regulated their lives and could not understand fluid gender roles, nor materiality, and she was not at peace with only the sky above her. Otherness was the conditioning force: where she found difference as self-making, they found female difference as

transgression. She was prepared to make new relationships with the gipsies' reality, which she had seen as a free, ancestral, wandering people, opposite to the western world; but they were not. She was 'unnatural'– 'removed from nature'. She was the Other of the Other. As an outsider, she had to sail again: "It was happy for her that she did so. Already the young men had plotted her death. Honour, they said, demanded it, for she did not think as they did" (*O* 95).

In Carter's libretto, true to her instincts, Orlando flees to England, longing for happiness and love in London, after listening to the voice of the old housekeeper, Mrs Grimsditch, who, in Carter's text, foretells that life can be owned, that her knowledge of the world and her intellectual freedom are at her will: "You've got all your life in front of you. / Pretty girl like you, why shouldn't you have some fun! / Your whole life in front of you! / Your life as a woman!" (*EOS*, III.ii. 175). Instead of Constantinople, Angela Carter stresses the importance of the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment; times when the British Empire was forged, and gender constructs appeared as definite truths in the recent Encyclopaedia. As Lady Orlando, she forces herself to accommodate to normal femininity, and Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719) join her in a tea party at Knole. Unlike Woolf's Orlando, Carter's Orlando does not care for reading, writing, or for the immortal masterpieces they pour out, but for something that brings her nearer to us, the audience: self-making, self-love, pain, suffering, the pleasures of life, and her desire(s). While listening to what they think of women (an amalgam of the Christian virtues and the concept of civilized life; chaste, scented, obedient muse and goddess), to the profound and universal, rigorous conceptions of these forefathers and their literary definitions (in fact, worthless scientifically, as their Otherness was a poetic attribute, a question of making up Our-Selves), Lady Orlando began to recognize that she was anybody but herself, and, at the same time, understood herself as (some)one outside these univocal Georgian

definitions. The masculine had always had the power to build itself; the feminine had not. It was relegated to the fringes of experience:

> Orlando: (*Aside*.) What a wonderful piece of work is a woman!
> How well he puts it!
> Strange how I never think of myself
> in this way!
>
> Orlando: Yet, for all this brilliance, I feel such emptiness… (*EOS*, III.iii. 173)

These experienced and illuminated literary men must be right about that figure of speech, that Other with astonishing extremes of beauty whose vanities and peculiarities they poetically invoked, but *she* seems empty of self-confidence and needs action, trials and attempts to create a new kind of being, a new self, without constraints nor definitions, from discovery to discovery. Social gatherings and parties define her new identity then, till unfortunately the ballroom where she joins other women seducers to dance with Casanova, Rousseau and the Prince Regent is emptied when Lord Nelson kisses Lady Hamilton, and all the men go off in a rush to fight Boney in strange and foreign lands, leaving Orlando once more lost and alone. She will go off to the French Wars too, and be a boy again, who later goes home to Knole (a change, at this specific stage of the action, which does not exist in Woolf's plot, except for the disguise in Nell's lodging, in which (s)he could not, in fact, maintain the portrait of a seducer, although dressed as a man (*O* 135) – "Orlando was a man till the age of thirty, when he became a woman and has remained so ever since" [*O* 87]). At Knole, the wise housekeeper showed him how much easier life could be if he acted the parts of woman and put on red flannel petticoats and a crinoline cage such as Queen Victoria herself wore; so the butler finally married her (to

Marmaduke Benthrop Shelmerdine Esq.), when chance and a broken ankle finally settled her life:

> Towering dark against the yellow-slashed sky of dawn, with the plovers rising and falling about him, she saw a man on horseback. He started. The horse stopped.
> 'Madam,' the man cried, leaping to the ground, 'you're hurt!'
> 'I'm dead, sir!' she replied.
> A few minutes later, they became engaged. (*O* 156)

> GRIMSDITCH: Oh, ma'am, I never thought I'd live to see the day!
> (*Enter DUPPER, in clerical gear, carrying an ostentatious prayer book*).
> ORLANDO: Neither did I. (*EOS*, IV.i. 179-180)

4. 'Yet, for all this brilliance'[27]

Many years later, Carter's Orlando is seen as a woman in London in a bed-linen department of Marshall & Snelgrove's wearing a very elegant Chanel; again another social part in 1928, when shoes, hats and suits made a woman, and each woman was bent on her own affairs in a world of decorum and sophistication generated by media. Finally in England, a 'stable ground of reality', she buys new linen at a store for the Knole bed that was always her own, a domestic universe where she will finally die, as a boy and woman, as "milady" and "milord" (*EOS*, "Epilogue", 182); thus, she is not one genderless self, but many selves and experiences.

If Orlando always was a non-defined organism, the display of his/her life was called into question in both texts. Both forms implied the break from the old order; so, in this specific way, Angela Carter's re-reading and her experimental re-writing of Woolf's canonical text is a kind of continuity/continuum in the quest to express "that great problem of the true nature of woman". The two texts offer two different ways of looking at the same idea: gender identity is the

product of display and spectacle. Both in the hypertext (Genette) and in the hipotext, identity, sexuality and gender are not fixed and stable in the way that scientific post-Enlightenment thinking had led us to believe; "woman becomes much more various and complicated" (*AROO* 83), *woman* does not exist, a vision of things that arises with the increasing certainty that, if we discuss the presentation of time as experienced differently by different individuals, literary texts are non-static forms that can translate one's life and individuality not as fixed organisms or natures, but as very complex, erratic, unsystematic transformations.

Hence, we return to the first page of Woolf's novel and its provocatively ambiguous subtitle (a biography), stating that the life of any woman who vanishes will continue to be (re)invented when expressed, but not as the truth, because the past and the memories already selected are distorted by the mind; new elements are bound to be discovered, new moments full of splendour, of daily labours, or frustrations, are to be disputed, even after the oak-tree bed disappears.

And, because of that, the nature of *woman* is a plurality that cannot be owned, either in a radical modernist chapter or in a duet of dissident feminist counterculture.

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[1] We regret to have to inform readers of the decease of Professor Maria de Deus Duarte on 31st May 2014. Professor Maria de Deus Duarte was an integrated research member of CETAPS, having actively collaborated with the projects *Relational Forms* and *Anglo-Portuguese Studies*. She wrote extensively on Virginia Woolf, on the novels about the Peninsular War and on Portuguese, Canadian, English and American authors, as well as on Romanticism and Travel Writing in Translation (18th and 19th centuries). She will be greatly missed.

[2] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 80. Further references are parenthetically incorporated in the text and in the notes as *AROO*.

[3] *AROO* 80.

[4] Further references are included parenthetically and in the notes as *O*.

[5] Cf. Peach, *Angela Carter*, 7. Carter was commissioned to write the libretto for an opera based on Woolf's *Orlando* in 1979 for the Glyndebourne Opera House (the venue of the annual 'Glyndebourne Opera Festival' since 1934), and wrote two drafts; it was never presented on stage.

[6] Carter, "Orlando: or, The Enigma of the Sexes". Further references as *EOS*.

[7] Woolf, "Hours in a Library"; "How Should One Read a Book?". Further references are parenthetically incorporated in the text and in the notes as "HRB". See also Bowlby, *Feminist Destinations*; Peach, *Virginia Woolf*.

[8] *O* 60.

[9] Cf. Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, 154-9; Bowlby, *Virginia Woolf*, 121.

[10] *AROO* 79.

[11] Isobel Armstrong sees Virginia Woolf as a precursor in "Woolf by the Lake", 270.

[12] See also Munford and Tucker.

[13] Michael Berkeley's obituary notice for Carter in the *Independent* in January 1992 mentioned the "hilarious meetings" between the broadcaster John Cox, Angela Carter and himself, while working on *Orlando* for this Britain' Channel Four programme. Director: Jeff Morgan; Production Company: Fulmar Television and Film; Producer: Jeff Morgan; Series Editor: Jeremy Bugler; Presenter: Tom Paulin. Contributions: Angela Carter, A.S. Byatt, and the Marxist critics Terry Eagleton and John Lucas. Shown in the *Without Walls Series,* with Caroline Blakiston as Virginia Woolf.

[14] Essay in the *TLS*, 10 April 1919, substantially revised and included, under the title 'Modern Fiction', in *Common Reader*, 1st series, 1925.

[15] Essay in the *New York Evening Post* '*Literary Review*', 17 November 1923.

[16] Cf. Aristophanes's speech from Plato's *Symposium and the Death of Socrates*, 23: "When man's natural form was split in two, each half went round looking for its other half. They put their arms round one another, and embraced each other, in their desire to grow together again. They started dying of hunger, and also from lethargy, because they refused to do anything separately. And whenever one half died, and the other was left, the survivor began to look for another, and twined itself about it, either encountering half a complete woman (i.e. what we now call a woman) or half a complete man. In this way they kept on dying".

[17] See "the vast solitary emerald which Queen Elizabeth had given her" (*O* 150).

[18] In 1962-5 Carter read English at the University of Bristol, specializing in the medieval period, and knew the capacity of Early Modern drama to activate fantasy and reality, blurring the boundaries between the two.

[19] See "her extraordinary tribute to the English aristocracy". Sanders 517-518.

[20] 1980-81: Visiting Professor on the Writing Program at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Teaches in Austin, Texas, 1985. Teaches in Iowa City, Iowa, 1986. Teaches in Albany, New York State, 1988.

[21] She visited and then lived in Japan during 1969-72.

[22] Writer in residence, University of Adelaide, 1984.

[23] See Bell xii. Cf. also Nicolson; Glendinning, *Vita: The Life of Victoria Sackville-West*; Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf*.

[24] Sir Harold Nicolson (1886-1968), was Third Secretary at Constantinople from January 1912 to October 1914. Their marriage is drawn by Vita herself in an autobiography left behind at her death in 1962.

[25] Cf. Woolf, *Granite and Rainbow*.

[26] Because of their African slaves, the Abyssinian had Caucasian countenance but very dark skin; the Arabic word 'Habesh' meaning the melting of races and families in that specific part of the land.

[27] *EOS*, III.iii. 173.

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A Safe Haven for Elizabeth Bishop

Ensaio

Sílvia Maria Guerra Anastácio | Federal University of Bahia (Bahia, Brazil)

Invitation to an Encounter

A meeting of two:
Eye to eye, face to face.
And when you are near,
I will tear your eyes out
and place them instead of mine,
and you will tear my eyes out
and will place them instead of yours,
then I will look at you with your eyes
and you will look at me with mine.

Jacob Moreno

1. Brazil through Bishop's Eyes

Living in another country means seeing day-to-day experiences in a new light. One has to try to see the 'Other' from the point of view that the 'Other' sees himself. As stated in the poem by Jacob Moreno (1970), founder of psychodrama, one has to put oneself in the shoes of the other to understand the reasons for their behaviour, to immerse oneself in the culture, its values and customs.

The process of Elizabeth Bishop's immersion in Brazilian culture, fictionalized by Marta Goes in her monologue *A Port for Elizabeth Bishop*, played by Regina Braga and directed by José Possi Neto, is the subject of this paper. Bishop experienced a whole range of emotions as she came to know and love Brazil. She went through the cycle that expatriates generally experience when

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living in another culture. This journey is reflected in her letters, as well as her work. To illustrate her experience, we refer to a diagram about culture shock, on which we will comment below.

2. Cultural Shock and Brazil through the Eyes of Bishop

A diagram from a publication about expatriation and culture shock, distributed by ICAS, *Independent Counselling & Advisory Services* (2008), is a part of this analysis. ICAS is an English company providing advisory services to expatriates. It has been in the business of relocating families within the international job market for over ten years.

Patricia Tomei (4) defines an expatriate as someone with the ability to adapt to different cultures, someone who "[...] is constantly travelling and living for periods in other countries. A citizen of the world." Expatriates leave their comfort zone behind and venture into the unknown. The result of these bold adventures is an indisputable personal growth.

Bishop can be seen as an expatriate. Before coming to Brazil, she lived in Massachusetts, Nova Scotia, New York, Key West and Washington and several other places for shorter periods. She worked at the Library of Washington as a consultant on matters relating to poetry. On leaving New York, in 1951, on a ship that would bring her to the coast of Brazil, she wrote to her friend, the American poet Robert Lowell:

> A Robert Lowell
>
> *Navio mercante* Bowplate
>
> *Ao largo da costa do Brasil – 26 de novembro de 1951*
>
> . . . . Mandei-lhe um cartão-postal quando estava partindo de N.Y., . . . resolvi fazer esta viagem maluca . . . minha decisão de atravessar o estreito de Magalhães vai surpreender você. Pelo menos, é para lá que estou indo. No momento estamos chegando perto de Santos – vou passar uns dias no Rio . . . . Espero chegar à costa

pacífica – talvez escrever um artigo sobre Punta Arenas ou coisa parecida no caminho – e ficar no Peru e no Equador até abril ou maio (Bishop, *Uma arte*, 228-229).

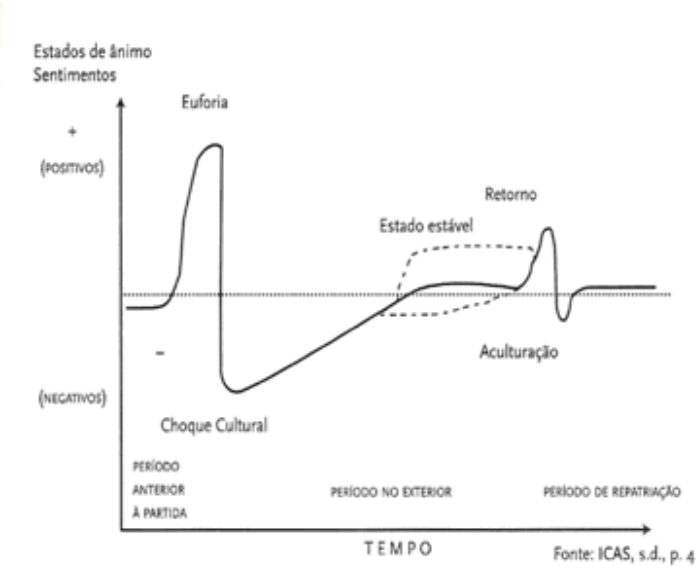
To Robert Lowell

Merchant Ship Bowplate

Somewhere off the coast of Brazil – November 26, 1951

I sent you a postcard just as I was leaving N. Y. . . . I had decided on this crazy trip . . . my decision to go through the Straits of Magellan will surprise you. At least that's where I'm bound for. At present we're approaching Santos . . . and first I'm going to visit in Rio for a while. . . . I hope to get around to the west coast – maybe write an article about Punta Arenas or something on the way – and stay in Peru and Ecuador until April or May, then come back (Bishop, *One Art*, 224).

It is clear that Brazil was not her main destination when she boarded the ship that would take her to that country. She only intended to spend some days there, as stated in her letter. Her mood was not exactly euphoric, as depicted in the following graph describing cultural shock and the feelings of the contemporary nomad.



The author, Oberg (1960), analyzes this cycle and starts by commenting on the period of initial euphoria that typically affects the traveller. At this stage, the traveller has idealized romantic expectations in relation to the new culture being visited. The new land is a promising place full of new discoveries and possibilities to explore.

Though excited about the trip, as might be expected, it was a somewhat dejected Bishop who arrived in Brazil. We need, therefore, to modify the graphic to fit the Bishop portrayed by Marta Goes. On boarding the ship she was depressed and had serious alcohol problems, which troubled her throughout her life; so, changing the adjective 'euphoric' to 'excited' about the trip, we observe some of Bishop's first impressions of Brazil, as fictionalized by Marta Goes:

> They are all so loveable but I'm not enjoying this place. It's all so dirty, so disorganized. I don't know how they can live here. It's like a combination of Mexico City and Miami. There are men in shorts kicking footballs everywhere. They are already playing on the beach at seven in the morning and they continue all day. It seems as if they even play in the office. Everything is sloppy, everything, everything corrupt. Alas, Rio de Janeiro depresses me. The last thing I needed at this moment in my life was to come to a city that depresses me. I'm sorry to say that Rio de Janeiro is the setting for a wonderful city, but it is not a wonderful city (Goes 24-25, translated by Daniel Hahn).

Bishop realizes, at once, that coming to a city which depresses her was not the best thing she could have done at that moment in her life. Reading between the lines, it is obvious that she has a tendency to depression. In this excerpt, the first signs of culture shock in Marta Goes' representation of Elizabeth Bishop are apparent. Culture shock can be defined as a feeling of disorientation that provokes a continuous state of stress in the newcomer, whose points of reference are generally very different from those of the new country.

Bishop is struck most by the dirt, disorganization, corruption, and the work ethic of those who play soccer at all hours, even during office hours. She is somewhat shocked by certain aspects of Brazilian culture that she notices and these are the first impressions that the audience of the monologue has of the poet's relationship with Brazil. This caricature of the country is, however, Bishop's own caricature, for the source of this extract from the monologue is the poet's own correspondence. *One Art* reads:

> A Alfred Kazin
>
> . . . . *Samambaia*, Petrópolis – 10, 11 ou 12 de dezembro de 1951
>
> . . . . Acho que ela [Pearl] não gosta muito do Rio. Acho que também não estou gostando muito, mas é difícil dizer – é tanta bagunça – uma mistura de cidade do México com Miami, mais ou menos; tem homens de calção chutando bolas de futebol por toda parte. Começam na praia às sete da manhã – e pelo visto continuam o dia todo nos lugares de trabalho. É uma cidade debilitante, totalmente relaxada (apesar do café excepcional), corrupta – passei uns três dias numa depressão horrível, mas depois me recuperei (Bishop, *Uma arte*, 227).

> To Alfred Kazin
>
> . . . . *Samambaia*, Petrópolis – December 10th or 11th or 12th [1951]
>
> . . . . I don't think she {Pearl} likes Rio much. I don't think I do, either, but it's hard to say – it's such a mess – Mexico City and Miami combined is about the closest I can come to it; and men in bathing trunks kicking footballs all over the place. They begin on the beach at 7 every morning – and keep it up apparently at their places of business all over town, all day long. It is enervating, completely relaxed (in spite of the terrific coffee), corrupt – of about three days I felt depressed, but then recovered (Bishop, *One Art*, 226).

According to Marta Goes' manuscripts, kindly provided by her, and to interviews given by her, having access to Elizabeth Bishop's correspondence was a privilege that allowed her to explore the background to Bishop's work. Thus, the above

excerpt – and others mentioned throughout this work – appears as part of a mosaic in the monologue – each extract inserted expertly by Goes, often with a touch of humour and the necessary dramatic force required in each situation.

We find, however, that, with time, Bishop starts to be more positive about the new land she makes her "home". She finds a new love, Lota de Macedo Soares, who makes her rethink her relationship with Brazil. With reference to the graph on which this analysis is based, it appears from the following extracts of the monologue that Bishop begins to adapt to the host culture, which she later comes to admire. To illustrate this point, we refer to the idyllic setting of Sitio da Samambaia in Petropolis, where Bishop lived with Lota during her early years in Brazil during the 1950s.

> There is a vast number of waterfalls here . . . so many clouds on the mountain tops that they overflow, downhill, in slow motion, turning into waterfalls before our eyes (Goes 26, translated by Daniel Hahn).

> I have not done anything other than housework, walking, messing about in the garden. I have written very little, practically only letters . . . . But I confess that I am delighted to have a home after so many hotel rooms, I thought I would never again have a place of my own (Goes 35-36, translated by Daniel Hahn).

Later on, the monologue introduces an imaginary letter from Bishop to her doctor, Dr. Anny, in which the solidarity of the Brazilians is commented on and portrayed by Regina Braga with humour:

> Dear Dr. Anny,
> The Brazilians are so good. They took care of me so warmly. I was afraid they would laugh at my red face and deformed ears, but, on the contrary, they seemed worried and everyone was most interested in my case, each one prescribing a cure. They came into my room all the time – on tiptoe, shaking their heads and saying "poor thing". Oh,

> and when I was having an injection, they even groaned. My goodness! Dr. Anny, I do not know if you can understand this, but getting sick in Brazil is something else (Goes 28, translated by Daniel Hahn).

The passage refers to the time Bishop was hospitalised in Rio de Janeiro, due to a severe allergic reaction she had to cashew – a tropical fruit that she had never tried before. As can be seen, the warm and tender manner of Brazilian people won her over and was in contrast to her culture of origin, in which, generally speaking, human contact is more distant and people involve themselves less in the problems of others.

As this multicultural experience progresses, the protagonist comes to view the host culture in a more objective manner, recognising both positive and negative aspects and, by doing so, finding greater stability. Bishop begins to adapt to the new culture, feeling loved and with a home. This must have been marvellous for Bishop, who always felt that she did not belong anywhere. From an early age, she was constantly moving from one place to another. First, she lost her father and, later, her mother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. She went to live with her maternal grandparents in Nova Scotia, then to her paternal grandparents in Massachusetts, and later to the house of an aunt who lived nearby. She next lived at Vassar College, a woman's college in Poughkeepsie, New York, and so on throughout her life, with many periods spent in hotel rooms. So, for someone seemingly rootless, having a nest, a home, came as a surprise. In this way, Marta Goes portrays Bishop's adaptation to the new culture.

Acculturation is the adaptation and negotiation of differences between the culture of origin and the host culture. In order to function in the world, it is necessary to decode a vast number of signs. In the country of origin, these signs are familiar and often indicate how one should behave in different situations.

Conversely, in the host country, not having mastered the language and its meanings, it is not easy to assign meaning to everything, including routine things. Continuous negotiation is necessary to overcome cultural shock. One must learn to deal with verbal and non-verbal language, including gestures, facial expressions, customs, rituals and values. Ways to dress, eat, deal with others, schedule appointments and meetings, all vary from one culture to another and must be learned.

As the process of acculturation progresses, the feeling of not belonging diminishes and the individual gradually becomes accustomed to where he lives. The subject begins to adapt to the new culture with various degrees of integration. When the subject becomes more accustomed to the cultural differences and begins to develop routines in the new environment, it becomes important to understand the language better in order to assimilate norms and values. Acculturation is easier if the individual seeks to make contact with other people, either in social or work settings (Anastacio, Melo and Silva).

One of the resources Bishop used to learn about the new culture and language was *The Diary of Helena Morley*, which she translated into English. The diary was written by a girl called Alice Brandt, born in Minas Gerais. It describes the city of Diamantina in the 1890s. By the 1950s, Alice Brandt was a mature woman living in Rio de Janeiro. The diary reawakened Bishop's desire to write about her own childhood and inspired her to write *In the Village*, published in 1953. It took her five years to translate into English *The Diary of Helena Morley* (pseudonym of Alice Brandt), which was published in 1957 (Millier).

Bishop often commented on her difficulty in expressing herself in Portuguese, even though she could fully understand it. Whenever she found herself in situations where Portuguese was spoken, Bishop tended to be reclusive. She circulated in the social group of Lota Macedo Soares, who was a personal friend of the governor Carlos Lacerda, and one of the figures

responsible for the urbanization of Aterro do Flamengo. As a consequence, Bishop's social life centred on the elite of Rio and Brazilian artists and poets.

Running parallel to the processes of acculturation and assimilation of other cultures, there is a cycle of deterritorialization and reterritorialization which corresponds to Bishop's experience in Brazil. What often happens is that, as the subject uproots himself from his own culture, he feels the need to appropriate some space in the host culture:

> . . . even greater than the uprooting experience of deterritorialization, is the process of re-territorialization (Haesbaert, "O mito da desterritorialização", 214).
>
> . . . Territory . . . concerns power . . . just as much in the literal meaning of domination as in the symbolic sense of appropriation (Haesbaert, "Da desterritorialização à multiterritorialidade", 6774-6775).

Appropriation not only signifies domination in terms of owning property, but also conveys a symbolic sense of possession, which includes all the experiences lived in the property. At this point, we learn that in 1965 Elizabeth Bishop buys and restores an old colonial house in Ouro Preto, called Casa Mariana (Millier). On stage, Regina Braga talks about Elizabeth Bishop's acquisition of the house in Ouro Preto and then recites the beginning of the poem "Under the Window: Ouro Preto":

> An old house on Mariana Way. A seventeenth-century house with stone walls. I'll fix every tile, every stone out of place, I will live here. It will be my house. I need this tranquillity. (Guitar chords accompany the recitation of the poem, which follows). Sleeping in Ouro Preto.
>
> The conversations are simple: about food, or, "When my mother combs my hair it hurts". "Women." "Women!" Women in red dresses and plastic sandals, carrying their almost invisible babies – muffled to the eyes in all the heat – unwrap them, lower

> them, and give them drinks of water lovingly from dirty hands. (Goes 53-54, translated by Daniel Hahn)

The translation of the poem is by Paulo Henriques Britto and the book which Bishop refers to is *Questions of travel*, published in 1965, followed in the same year by the publication of *Poems* (Millier). With the money earned from the publication of *Questions of travel*, Bishop invested all the money she had in buying her own house in Brazil, despite Lota's disapproval of her buying the ruined house. In any case, the purchase of the house was more an expression of Bishop's immersion in Brazilian culture – having been seduced by the colonial style of the building.

But finally, as part of the cycle an expatriate usually goes through, the time comes to return to the country of origin, which in Bishop's case is in the northern hemisphere. As her relationship with Lota deteriorated, Bishop began to travel to feel less lonely, and in 1966 she accepted the post of Professor at the University of Seattle, Washington, for one semester (Bishop, *One art*). At this point, returning to her country of origin posed new challenges for Bishop, as she had assimilated, to varying degrees, customs and habits of Brazilian culture and she missed these new norms of behaviour in the United States. Strangely enough, she came to appreciate what she had once rejected, as can be seen in the monologue spoken by Regina Braga, and even missed Brazilian carnival, which she spent in Seattle:

> What am I doing here in Seattle? Today is carnival Sunday in Brazil. It is the day of samba school parade in Rio de Janeiro. At this time, I would be on my way to the Avenue… Oh, my God, it's Sunday carnival. (The sound of a tambourine is heard, representing the sound of the samba school) (Goes 57-58 translated by Daniel Hahn).

Bishop wrote to James Merrill from George Washington University:

A James Merrill

22 de fevereiro de 1966

. . . Ah, meu Deus, é Carnaval no Rio. Domingo foi a noite das "escolas de samba," a noite que eu sempre vou assistir, que eu passo toda em claro e depois subo de carro para Petrópolis ao amanhecer. Aqui em Seattle toquei uns *discos* [em português] de samba que trouxe comigo e fiquei sambando sozinha (Bishop, *Uma arte*, 488).

To James Merrill

February 22, 1966

. . . Oh dear, it is carnival now in Rio. Sunday night was the "samba schools", the night I always attend, staying up all night and driving back to Petrópolis at dawn. Here I played a few samba *discos* I brought with me and samba-ed about all by myself (Bishop, *One art*, 445).

The dramatic force of the text by Marta Goes intensifies the sense of loss felt by Bishop being away from Rio de Janeiro at carnival time. It begins with a rhetorical question: "What am I doing here in Seattle?" Then the sound of a tambourine played fast brings life to the stage, the beat associated with the samba schools during the Rio carnival.

The semester comes to an end in Seattle and Bishop is happy that she has not succumbed to alcohol. Goes' text alludes to this, ironically reproducing an excerpt from a letter Bishop wrote to Dr. Anny Baumann, in Rio de Janeiro, on September 1st 1966: "The secretary of the department, with whom I became very friendly, and who knew *everything*, said, 'You're the soberest poet we've ever had here'. I swear to God it's true" (Bishop, *One Art*, 493).

Marta Goes also highlights the process of acculturation in Bishop, when we hear the actress Regina Braga declaring:

> Six months have passed. [...] (Orchestrated music, 'Rio de Janeiro, open arms over Guanabara'...) I never thought I could look so tenderly upon the airport of the Galleon. I was so shocked at the mess the first time I came here and today I am elated with this hot breath on my skin (Goes 58, translated by Daniel Hahn).

Thus, in this fictional representation of Bishop, the cycle of the expatriate is completed and many things that the character initially found difficult to accept in Brazil now seem to be part of her everyday life. The assimilation of the other culture suddenly takes centre stage, provoking a sense of loss at the time of repatriation. In fact, one can suppose that in all these comings and goings, the subject in transit will be deconstructing and reconstructing, in constant transformation. Canclini writes:

> Imagine what it means to be subject not only to the culture in which we are born, but to a variety of symbolic repertoires and patterns of behaviour. . . . Living in transit, . . . with constant remodelling of the people and their social relations seems to lead to a deconstruction. (Canclini 30, my translation)

Thus, at the time of repatriation, new problems arise in adapting to the original culture, followed by another period of stability. Bishop's life and work was deeply influenced by Brazil. We hear actress Regina Braga thinking aloud about the pain that Bishop felt on the death of her companion Lota Macedo Soares:

> Ten years ago, the other day. Of course, after ten years, the pain you used to keep on the first shelf and which could be felt in your chest every morning is accommodated on a higher shelf, and then an even higher one and after that in a corner that you cannot reach every day, but you know it is there, kept forever. I am no longer afraid that someone will discover that I am not a writer. Writing for me was more natural than not to write. And most importantly, I can still love. Compared to how I was when I went to Brazil, I consider myself much more serene nowadays. I have to recognise that Brazil

> has something to do with it. The shock of so much loving, those huge doses of feeling that only exist there, helped me to survive. Why did that not save Lota? And Brazil, a country with all this feeling, is becoming increasingly harder, more truculent. Yes, sometimes I ask myself these questions, here, in front of my beautiful view of Boston Harbour, which cannot compare to the landscape of Rio de Janeiro (Goes 63-64, translated by Daniel Hahn).

At the end of the monologue, we hear the music of Joao Bosco, "This is my Brazil," which begins with: "Oh, our beaches are so clear..." A feeling of nostalgia takes the stage, showing that, on repatriation, Bishop suffered a reverse cultural shock perhaps as challenging as the shock she faced on arriving in Brazil and having a first contact with the other culture. Rio de Janeiro, initially perceived as "the stage for a wonderful city, but not . . . a wonderful city" seems to have gone up in the estimation of Bishop (Goes 63-64, translated by Daniel Hahn).

3. Final Considerations

Despite a somewhat caricatured and reductionist view of Brazil portrayed in Marta Goes' monologue (a view also perceptible in Bishop's correspondence) and a tendency to oversimplify Bishop's feelings and experiences of expatriation and repatriation, the monologue has dramatic power. There are moments when the audience is involved in the story. Regina Braga's performance displays a refined humour that invites the audience to laugh, especially at the social criticism present in the monologue. The criticisms made by Bishop on her arrival in Brazil show how difficult it is to see oneself from the point of view of the 'other' culture.

With reference to Jacob Moreno's poem "Invitation to an Encounter" and relating it to the experiences of Bishop, one can suppose that there was a meeting of cultures, at least in part. Little by little, over the fifteen years she spent in Brazil, Bishop managed to overcome the culture shock she faced as an

expatriate in our land. In order to overcome these obstacles, she tried to understand the values, behaviour, and finally, the everyday life of the culture that received and accepted her.

More than anything, Marta Goes' play is important because it increases awareness of the life and work of Elizabeth Bishop. It helps divulge the work of a writer for whom Brazil was a constant source of inspiration and the theme for a large part of her output. What one sees on stage, nevertheless, is a fictionalized account of the journey Bishop took through Brazil. As fiction, the playwright is not obliged to adhere to the facts or even be faithful to Bishop's own correspondence – although the playwright did use Bishop's letters as source for her monologue. In the end, the dramatic text needs only to be faithful to its own stage production.

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O Papel da Grandmother em "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Ensaio

Narayana de Deus Nogueira Bregagnoli | IFSULDEMINAS[1]

(Minas Gerais – Brazil)

1. Introdução

Flannery O'Connor representa, através de suas personagens, uma repulsa pelo mundo e pelo corpo físico, sugerindo a ideia de que não se pode evitar, mas sim polarizar as forças do bem e do mal nas mentes humanas. Essa ótica da autora sobre rejeição produz, em seus leitores, sentimento semelhante, que ao se envolverem na narrativa, identificam-se com as situações descritas.

De acordo com Paulson, as estórias de O'Connor dramatizam a batalha entre as forças do bem e do mal, descrevendo uma dualidade moral, dicotômica, que define não apenas a dor de ser dividido internamente entre mente e corpo, como também revela contradições penosas entre a sociedade e o mundo. Em suas estórias sobre os conflitos entre o bem e o mal, a autora conclui que o problema está na limitação das perspectivas do ser humano – na inabilidade de ver as coisas como Deus as criou, implicando na tendência de caracterizar o mundo físico como sendo mal. Superior em seus julgamentos, a artista reconcilia o imaginário com o real, o profano com as sagradas dimensões da realidade, concluindo com certa introspecção transcendente à limitação humana comum, que todavia não deixa de ser passageira, pois o homem é ser em constante evolução.

O'Connor enfatiza as falhas do julgamento humano e a visão obcecada do homem no "mal", responsabilizando-o pelos desastres do mundo. Os contos que compõem *A Good Man is Hard to Find* (1983) evidenciam o instinto destrutivo do ser humano e suas perspectivas limitadas a respeito da vida. Como maneira de

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melhor enfocar o assunto segue abaixo uma análise do primeiro conto do livro, intitulado "A Good Man is Hard to Find".

2. Síntese da estória

O primeiro conto da obra *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, de Flannery O'Connor, possui o mesmo título do livro, abordando a trágica estória da personagem *Grandmother* que presencia, anterior ao seu assassínio, a eliminação de toda a sua família.

A trama se inicia com os planos de viagem da família para a Geórgia, que a dominadora *Grandmother* tenta dissuadir a tomar outra direção, com a intenção de satisfazer seus caprichos. Argumenta que lera nos jornais sobre a fuga de um criminoso, o *Misfit,* que se encontra na região escolhida para o passeio. A avó sugere ao filho a mudança da rota para Tennessee, evitando-se, dessa forma, expor a família a esse tipo de perigo.

Após várias tentativas, a matriarca conta aos netos que perto do local que ela fora criada, existia uma casa que possuía uma passagem secreta que nunca fora encontrada, e que talvez eles pudessem passar por lá e desvendar esse mistério. Eufóricos com a novidade, as crianças convencem o pai a seguir os conselhos da avó. Mas no meio do percurso acontece um acidente, levando o carro a perder o controle e sair da estrada. Inocentemente, a família aguarda socorro. Ironicamente, a ajuda que surge é do temível *Misfit*, que, com seus capangas, elimina todos os membros da família. Na angústia dos acontecimentos de extermínio, a velha senhora dialoga com o bandido, na esperança de comovê-lo. Apela para o argumento cristão de que o *Misfit* é um de seus filhos, dizendo-lhe ser ele um bom homem. Sua tentativa é em vão pois recebe um tiro à queima-roupa.

3. A personagem *Grandmother*

Este conto, em especial, representa um dos mais trágicos eventos da obra de O'Connor: o extermínio de toda uma família. A narrativa inicia com a apresentação de uma família de classe média, com problemas de relacionamento, mas que planejam sair de férias em viagem de carro, fato que prende a atenção dos leitores. Os desejos dos familiares pelos locais de passeio divergem. Segundo Paulson, cativado pela personalidade dominante da avó, o leitor se delicia ao observar o esforço da matriarca em comandar a viagem de acordo com seus próprios caprichos e fantasias:

> The conniving grandmother threatens her family with the news that if they proceed with their plans they will be heading in the path of an escapee from federal prison, The Misfit. Her obstinacy about going to Tennessee is so great that she convinces herself and the family that the Tennessee plantation she recalls from her girlhood is nearby – when actually the family is driving through the Georgia countryside. (Paulson 87)

Como pode ser observado, a personagem, na tentativa de sair vitoriosa, convence a si própria e aos familiares a realizar suas vontades, apesar de saber que a casa misteriosa é fruto de sua imaginação, simples fantasia usada para convencê-los de que aquele caminho seria melhor.

O desenvolvimento da personagem da avó ocorre quando ela sente uma certa atração seguida de simpatia pelo *Misfit*. O fato de ela se recordar sempre da casa em que viveu sua infância sugere um tipo de compulsão repetitiva que caracteriza os sonhos. Essa manipulação psicológica da família define um senso especial de poder muitas vezes evocado em sonhos. O movimento deste conto segue a progressão do sonho que inicia com o senso de infinito poder e termina com um pesadelo, neste caso, a morte da personagem.

Seguindo novamente as afirmações de Paulson, podemos verificar que:

> Freud teaches us that dreams respond to biological needs and are motivated by wish fulfillment. Dreams strive to satisfy basic instincts – biological needs for nourishment and sexuality, demands for love, and wishes for a sense of security in the world. Dreams also enable us to achieve mastery over life's traumas and frustrations. Repetition in dreams of repressed experiences allows this sense of mastery. (Paulson 88)

Outro ponto interessante a ser observado refere-se à passagem em que a avó presencia o extermínio de seu filho, nora e netos. A velha senhora é guiada pelo instinto de sobrevivência. Tenta, assim, convencer o bandido de que ele poderia ser perdoado pelos crimes que cometera se a libertasse, afirmando ainda ter certeza de ser ele homem bom, de boa família. Esse comportamento indica que a avó vive irracionalmente a filosofia de seu assassino, sendo sua última "iluminação" a certeza de que o *Misfit* é um de seus filhos, caracterizando sua resposta à situação adversa como atitude grotesca, na confluência de confissão e de compreensão.

> Então a *Grandmother* negocia com o *Misfit* apelando para a sua gentileza de berço. Ela insiste que ele é um bom homem, de boa família: "Você não parece que tem sangue comum. Eu sei que você vem de boa família." (Ochshorn 115)

Através destas palavras pode ser constatada a tentativa de a avó garantir sua sobrevivência, fato comum ao ser humano e explicado pela psicologia. Através da situação de medo, onde a ameaça da destruição está fortemente presente, a reação mais esperada é a de fuga. O instinto de sobrevivência é fortemente evidenciado pela avó, que tenta de todas as maneiras a garantia de sua vida, uma vez ciente da impossibilidade de fuga. Sabe-se que para enfrentar as ameaças externas de sofrimento e destruição, o indivíduo apresenta reação de medo. Assoberbado com o excesso de estimulação, o ego sente-se tomado de

ansiedade e reage à situação, como é o caso da *Grandmother* que tenta controlar o ímpeto de escapar do perigo iminente, através da argumentação persuasiva. Acostumada a esse comportamento em ambiente familiar, escapa-lhe o discernimento de que não poderia sair vitoriosa. De acordo com Hall, a função da ansiedade é a de:

> . . . advertir a pessoa do perigo iminente; é um sinal dado ao ego para que adote medidas acauteladoras, sem o que, o próprio ego pode ser sacrificado. A ansiedade é um estado de tensão; é um impulso como o de fome e de desejo sexual, mas que não surge das condições internas e sim das causas externas. A ansiedade motiva as pessoas a fazer alguma coisa, isto é, a fugir à situação ameaçadora e inibir os impulsos perigosos, ou a obedecer à voz da consciência. (Hall 60)

Sendo assim, podemos compreender a conduta da personagem, uma vez que a mesma está respondendo aos estímulos de seu inconsciente e, dessa forma, reagindo à situação imposta. Em meio a sentimentos aterrorizantes, o instinto materno aflora na personagem, que se convence e tenta convencer o *Misfit* de que ele é um de seus filhos, dando alusão aos preceitos do cristianismo, onde se reafirma o amor ao próximo e a irmandade de todos, como filhos de um só Pai. A visão religiosa que perpassa a escritura, especificamente relacionada ao catolicismo, justifica-se em dados biográficos da autora, que confirmam a influência religiosa em sua obra.

Retornando às afirmações de Paulson, observa-se que a maioria das figuras maternas de O'Connor, assim como a *Grandmother*, possui valores materialistas adquiridos na cultura capitalista americana.

> O'Connor here obviously undercuts the woman's materialistic values and concern for physical "appearances". Immersed in the stream rather than contemplating the end

> of life, the grandmother judges a "good" man according to superficial first impressions and materialistic values. (Paulson 89)

Segundo a perspectiva de Paulson, a avó deixa transparecer preceitos do mundo materialista, em que julgamentos de valores são formados através da aparência física. Superficialmente, categoriza-se alguém como "boa" pelos traços físicos e vestimentas. O'Connor apresenta ao leitor um misto de sentimentos vividos pela avó. Suas emoções e atitudes sugerem reações moldadas por instintos naturais, preceitos sociais e traços próprios da personalidade individual. Sob essa ótica, várias análises críticas levam à duas opções quanto à interpretação da *Grandmother*: a de vítima ou de criminosa.

Seguindo esse pensamento, Charters afirma que existem duas maneiras de se interpretar o comportamento da avó. A primeira seria a de que ela pretendia salvar sua família, tentando persuadir o *Misfit* a não matá-los. A segunda seria a de que realmente ela teria causado a morte de todos eles ao reconhecer o criminoso. A ambivalência da escritura reflete a complexidade do ser humano e da vida, permitindo que várias leituras sejam depreendidas do texto. A simplicidade da avó leva a questionamentos sobre seu comportamento. Vítima ou criminosa, o papel do leitor crítico é similar ao de qualquer indivíduo que tem o hábito de automaticamente julgar tudo e todos ao seu redor, estabelecendo um parâmetro comparativo entre os seres.

> The heroine of this story, the Grandmother, is in the most significant position life offers the Christian. She is facing death. And to all appearances she, like the rest of us, is not too well prepared for it. She would like to see the event postponed indefinitely.
> I've talked to a number of teachers who use this story in class and who tell their students that the Grandmother is evil, that in fact, she's a witch, even down to the cat. (Charters 1323)

O crítico afirma que apesar de esses professores afirmarem que a avó é uma personagem má, seus alunos, principalmente os sulistas, relutam em aceitar essa hipótese, pois a maioria deles possui uma avó morando em suas casas e consideram-nas pessoas compreensivas e bondosas. Os sulistas são usualmente tolerantes com esse tipo de fraqueza derivada da inocência e aceitam, assim, que o instinto de auto-preservação seja combinado com o espírito missionário.

4. Conclusão

A partir das várias análises críticas apresentadas a respeito da personagem *Grandmother*, verifica-se que a escritura do conto oferece subsídios para uma dupla interpretação sobre a personalidade da avó: a de vítima ou de criminosa.

A condição de criminosa se fundamenta no fato de que alguns leitores acreditam que a avó, ao reconhecer o bandido, tem a intenção de provocar um conflito entre ele e sua família, culminando em seu extermínio. Ela sabe que o *Misfit* se trata de um perigoso assassino foragido e procurado pela polícia, e, mesmo assim, o reconhece fazendo inclusive questão de dizer-lhe isso, evidenciando sua intenção.

Um outro grupo de leitores, seguindo a linha de pensamento dos estudantes sulistas citados acima, acredita que a avó não passa de uma vítima das circunstâncias impostas repentinamente. A personagem, acostumada a viver isoladamente em seu microcosmos domiciliar, não pressupõe que um dia poderia viver uma situação de perigo, como demonstrado nos jornais, uma das suas únicas formas de contato com o mundo externo. Dessa forma, seu mundo distanciado da realidade faz com que se surpreenda ao ver o criminoso que reconhecera nos jornais, julgando-o importante por estar na mídia e, consequentemente, considerando-se gloriosa por ter a oportunidade de conhecer alguém "famoso".

Seguindo esse raciocínio, pode-se constatar que vários leitores consideram a figura da avó a de uma vítima e inocente, pois como os sulistas, a maioria das pessoas tem uma avó morando em seus lares e certamente a vê como pessoa caridosa, de bom coração e preceitos morais bem definidos. Sob essa ótica familiar, esses tipo de leitor considera o protótipo da velha senhora como incapaz de fazer mal à ninguém, muito menos a seus familiares. Observa-se, portanto, que a *Grandmother* não passa de vítima do acaso.

As leituras críticas apresentadas mostram uma visão antagônica sobre a *Grandmother*, ambas aceitas, uma vez que encontram justificativas no próprio texto, acrescidas daquelas relacionadas ao contexto. Assim, com a simples divergência de opiniões sobre o comportamento de uma personagem, verificam-se as possibilidades múltiplas de leituras do texto, em que as palavras constituem signos móveis que ganham vida em contato com o leitor. Interpretações contraditórias, como a verificada em "A Good Man Is Hard To Find", comprovam, em analogia, a complexidade do ser humano e do texto literário, do autor/leitor, do significado/significante, que O'Connor tão bem retrata em sua obra.

[1] Professora em dedicação exclusiva do IFSULDEMINAS, Licenciada em Letras (Português/Inglês) Mestre em Extensão Rural pela UFV. (narayana.nogueira@ifsuldeminas.edu.br) Avenida Alberto de Barros Cobra, 613 apto 302 – Centro - Pouso Alegre – MG cep: 37.550-000 / tel (35) 3449.6164 ou (35) 8875.7510.

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Science of Literature: The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, Volumes IV and V, and the Making of Irish Feminism

Zuzanna Sanches | ULICES/CEAUL - Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa (Lisboa, Portugal)

Irish feminism always grappled with a series of difficulties to do with the patriarchal culture and continuous shifts in the moods of Irish literature. With the Celtic Tiger a new reality and new challenges arrived, although that period of economic revival made possible the publication of many critical studies, as well as fiction itself. The clash between the old and the new was sizeable from the very beginning and the pressures from different political and intellectual circles were strong. Whereas the period between 1940 and 1959 was marked by the themes of isolation, claustrophobia and confinement, the 1960s and 1970s brought memory, time and imagination into Irish literature. The 1990s, the period when *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* was published, focused on intertextuality and instability of identity. Critics turned to continental philosophy to a certain extent, to work through the *aporias* of unstable and porous identity. During that time, various significant projects researching Irish feminism and contemporary Irish women's literature were granted official state funding because their existence was, for a long time, considered both timely and urgent since, as it was being postulated,

> Irish women's writing has too often subsumed, and thereby swallowed up, in an Irish [male] literary canon and (...) an Irish literary tradition (...), as the under representation

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> of female authors in the first three volumes of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature* attested (Ingman 2).

It was not only the period of the Celtic Tiger that saw much funding allocated to feminist research; the last thirty years of the 20th century saw a growing emergence of various scholarly programmes that were to rediscover the voices of Irish intellectual foremothers and grant them the space – a room of one's own – that they, as women, were for a long time denied in Irish culture. The Irish feminist genealogy was enriched by many publications, among them the LIP pamphlets by Eavan Boland, Edna Longley and Gerardine Meaney published mostly by the Attic Press. There, the three writers and academics were criticising what came to be known as depredatory ideologies in culture, literature and politics. In her *From Cathleen to Anorexia*, Longley was criticizing the long-standing binary dyad of femininity and Irish nationalism that converted ideas such as motherhood and womanhood into national institutions. She also defended the necessity that every scholar has to work within the social and cultural contexts of any country and the specificity of any subject. Feminism was supposed to be the most rooted and hardened philosophical trend of the 20th century that could now provide an insight into the intricate structures of a society.

Eavan Boland wrote in her *A Kind of Scar: the woman poet in a national tradition* about the inability of a woman poet to find herself space within a strictly male tradition. She was also accused of ignoring the divisions between Dublin and the North, a division which destabilized the idea of the Irish nation. *A Kind of Scar* failed to offer a new dialectics because it did not reflect the deeper identitarian division of the Irish nation between the North and the South. Gerardine Meaney saw in Boland's project of the repossession of the nation a new and deeply feminine subjectivity necessary to remake all the imagery of

women in Ireland. The publication of Boland's manifestos has generated many conflicts within Irish feminism, covering issues such as women and the nation, women from different generations, and women and different aesthetic forms.

The Irish feminist movement has been developing rapidly since the 1970s to embrace a myriad of social debates and political campaigns. The 1980s focused on the yet unconquered sexual and reproductive rights that were denied to the Irish population, and especially women in the issues of marriage, divorce and family planning. The 1990s responded to the deepening discussions on legal issues and social sciences, as well as political issues, racism, immigration and the growing Celtic tiger. Cultural boundaries were being discussed during that period, boundaries that the patriarchal state enforced for many years and that were now crumbling in the face of greater personal liberties and more capital. Likewise, the critical attention of Irish feminism has moved gradually from poetry to the novel in the 1990s and, later, to other artistic forms such as theatre and performance, following the critical trends in continental feminist criticism.

A further step was given with the publication of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (Irish women's writing and traditions), volumes IV and V, in 2002, edited by Gerardine Meaney and Angela Bourke. The work continued a somewhat controversial project of anthologizing Irish literature, of which the first three volumes omitted, with few exceptions, work done by women writers. Coming out after the first three volumes that inflamed the feminist circles, books IV and V were devoted only to narratives written by women, a fact to which many critics responded quickly: "But that's not Ireland, the Irish said, that's only women" (Conlon 1). Many have said that the Anthology, volumes IV and V, followed the new path announced and paved by Eavan Boland: the path of greater focus on female subjectivity and of concentration on the female self-image. In critical terms, this manifesto has been picked up by a contemporary and much acclaimed critic, Ann Fogarty.

We now seem to be living in a different post-Celtic Tiger era, one that has allowed Colm Toibin, an Irish writer and critic, to talk about post-feminism in Irish women's literature, referring, more specifically and in a humorous way, to the work of Anne Enright. If a great deal of work was done towards the publication of volumes four and five of the study (*Field Day Vols IV & V*, Cork, 2002), there still remains an obligation, if strategically essentialist, to continue writing about the female voice and female tradition in Irish literature, recovering the multiple and heterogeneous voices that have led Irish women writers to continental scholars such as Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Rosi Braidotti and Jacques Lacan. However, what post-feminism can we talk about if there is still a need to rediscover the meanderings of female affiliation, the foremothers and the trustworthy archetypes? Remembering the thesis of the female affiliation complex described by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1985) as encapsulating women's ambivalent and oscillating relationship to both female and male tradition, identity, performances and gendered behaviour, female topography has not yet been constituted in the face of the economic crisis, both in Ireland and Europe, as well as a growing interest in masculinities studies.

Furthermore, one may say that the project of mapping out an Irish female identity is more than an ongoing one. As was well argued by Judith Butler, identity is performative, dynamic and restless, based on the contradiction of autonomy and freedom against a continuous lack of the two. At all times, we are interpellated by the state apparatus, called names and given designations, and at the same time we have the power and conscience to make our own choices. Nation-wise, the above idea is inevitably bound with the broader private processes of identification and their public narrativization, an idea that the private and the public are often indistinguishable. Performativity of identity, and here femininity, is split into two different dimensions of agency and subordination. On the one hand, we are establishing our identity through agency

and free acts every day. On the other hand, norms are imposed on us through the interpellation of official discourses and institutions that call upon us on a daily basis. The struggle between internal and external forces is at the core of identificatory processes and undergoes even further analysis in the continental, post-structural circles of criticism in search of a free-floating feminine signifier, an idea that has made little impact in Ireland.

This is especially true of the nations that deliberately made private discourses part of their national rhetoric, which is distinctly true of Ireland and its appropriation of the narratives of femininity. In Ireland, performing femininity was not a matter of the private space of female subjects since "For women the measure of intimacy [was] the measure of oppression" (MacKinnon 191). The private sphere was never gender- and power- neutral, especially in a country that institutionalised its private discourses, creating the national institution of the family and the mother. "This is why feminism has had to explode the private. This is why feminism has seen the personal as the political" (MacKinnon 191). It is in the institution and the state's ideology that the masculinist dominant discourse disguises itself as the female voice – the mother's choice / the daughter's obligation (hyperfemininity maintaining the hegemony of hypermasculinity). This has an obvious dissolving effect on any female sense of unity, provoking strong feelings of distaste, rejection and ambivalence towards other women. From the European continental perspective such emotions were often re-signified to create new roles, opportunities and challenges for the female subject – their Irish counterparts can be found among the scholars working for University College Dublin, University College Cork, the Dublin Institute of Art, Design and Technology or National University of Ireland, Maynooth research centre. Post-feminism is starting to be widely advocated within academia and the field of Irish popular culture, among them by Professor Diane Negra.

The Irish female voice has been struggling with the redefinition of public and private spaces and, within this context, it is deeply marked by scepticism, anxiety and reluctance that very often take the form of self-inflicted discursive and performative violence in the quest for a motherless discovery of authenticity. For many years the Irish female subject faced silently the ghost of public oppression and its own hesitancy to perform identity that inevitably permeated the mother-daughter narrative, a narrative of which women were disowned by the state. Many writers and critics in the past failed to challenge the official discourse which was narrow and paternalistic and made an unrealistic and unreal woman the beacon of its power. However, when feminism spread across a spectrum of disciplines it became responsible for many major paradigm shifts that led, for instance, to social and cultural changes in the Irish society. In response to that, cultural sciences became university disciplines.

To highlight the Irish mother-daughter story, even though not all contemporary Irish writers choose to use it, filial narratives make an interesting link between the institution of motherhood and psychoanalytical approaches to women's identity. In psychoanalysis, do mothers fail too often to empower their daughters? As victims these find strength in confrontation with the abject and the violence that society commits on the female subject. However, in a carnivalesque way, the disempowering and violent imagery becomes a dictionary of symbols for women artists. Consequently, the sense of self can only be achieved through violence, externalised or self-inflicted: violent appropriation rather than a peaceful hermeneutics of translation. The daughters learn from the mothers' often negative attitudes to sexuality, embodiment, foreignness, fragility and responsibility as well as love and justice. It has already been noted that novels written between 1960 and 1990 depicted daughters trying to escape their mothers' destinies by fleeing the mother-country or deliberately avoiding the patterns of behaviour and conduct of their biological mothers. The daughters

attempt to abandon their mothers' narratives, but this removal only exacerbates the filial/maternal and thus identitarian conflicts and estrangement from the female discourse. All issues having to do with the narrativization of femininity are double-edged swords, only representable as ambiguously troubling. A real discourse representable of real women would have an equal potential for renewal and alienation both in heterosexual and Queer contexts. And yet, have we come such a long way only to find ourselves in the same melting pot of fears and fantasies about a woman that does not exist? The fear of the *vagina dentata*, of the vicious Undine and of a vengeful Lilith continues to have a strong hold on the official language. Will we ever be able to escape this discursive trap?

Many contemporary narratives constructed by Irish writers are those of escape, travel, displacedness, and change; nomadism being one of the key concepts embraced by Irish feminism. Hence they (re/de)construct female subjectivity – a means for celebrating care for the other, compassion, and the necessity of translation between selfhood and otherness. As I have already mentioned, many of the same travel or escape narratives have gained the denomination *nomadic,* where the image of a female nomad is used to challenge a notion of a unified identity.

However, the more the female voice manages to come to the fore, allowing us to learn about its history, characteristics, dynamics and timing, the more obscure does Irish women's literary tradition become. And this is so if we take as our goal classification and compartmentalization, whereas fluid femininity requires dynamic skills. One should learn how to navigate through the intricacies of the female subject rather than try to put a finger on the definitions. Learning to move and work through feelings of power and powerlessness is essential to the well-being of any subject. Traditions are inter-subjective and relative, and authors have ambivalent feelings towards their predecessors, this

being especially true for daughters and their mothers, as could be the case of Irish women writers and their foremothers.

In Ireland this relation was maintained as artificial for a long time, and relied on personifications of Ireland as Woman and Mother: "The mother was the fulcrum of the Irish family which in turn, in 1937, was placed at the heart of the Irish Constitution as devised by the then Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera" (McCourt 150). She was deliberately maintained to be pure at all levels. Fixed concepts of gender became institutionalised in the juridical structure in Ireland and the position of women after 1922 saw a gradual erosion of their political rights. Sexuality became bound up with nationality, and so did childbirth and maternity. As John McCourt writes

> Too often in the past when mothers have appeared in Irish literature it has been in clichéd roles, sometimes as the politicised embodiments of the wished-for nation, such as Kathleen ní Houlihan or the Sean Bhean Bhocht – the mother of fine strong sons whom she calls to self-sacrifice so that a new Ireland can be created. (McCourt 149)

For many psychoanalysts the natural dynamics of motherly love and not the normative utopia of it resulted in friction between a mother and her child, producing ambivalence, rage, shame, fascination and rejection. These negative feelings have naturally been abjected by the state's ideology of mothering to sustain the myth of a benevolent mother. And if negative and contradictory feelings are what the mother experiences, the child is not free from ambivalence and rage. After all, guilt, reparation, envy and gratitude walk hand in hand from the very beginning of our psycho-sexual development. Therefore, the child too, here a contemporary writer or publisher, is wracked by a want of recognition and a drive to out-speak her predecessors. This fantasy of recognition and power is a result of the relationship between the mother and the daughter. It has its origins

in the confrontation with the other, a crisis that ensues from an overwhelming feeling of helplessness. Such *approchement* is a cry from the ego whose power has not been recognised, somewhat similar to authorial anxiety. However, the tension between asserting the self and recognising the other is also the founding moment for our identity construction. There is also a sense of vulnerability involved: death and struggle. As Colm Toibin writes in his *Love in a Dark Time*, writing that

> has a tendency to deal in the tragic and the unfulfilled (…) seems most content when there is a dead father or a dead child. (…) The strongest images in Irish fiction, drama and poetry are of brokenness, death, destruction. The plays are full of shouting, the poetry is full of elegy, the novels are full of funerals (in McCourt 149).

Furthermore, dissent and conflict are inevitable, followed by transformation through which we experience our own sense of self, Boland's self-image. Transformation belongs to the sphere of dynamic memory, in which futile mourning has no place. Such mourning is nothing more than a nostalgic sentimentalization of the past, where memories are static and sentimental as opposed to dynamic and generative memory, the forgiving but not forgetting. Memory cannot cloud that which is contemporary; rather it should serve as reference and generative power. Words and memories should propel the new generation to grow. As Toibin writes:

> Hemingway's discovery was that in between words there's something which can give you emotion (…) that in a number of simple statements you can hit the reader's nervous system in a way that the reader doesn't know where that energy is coming from. (in McCourt 153)

Anthologies should naturally make this possible as reservoirs of words and memories, narrative dynamite. What are anthologies if not our celebration of memory? They are not only monuments but points of departure for transformation: their aim is not only celebration but production as well.

Celebratory identification in the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Vols IV and V*, according to Margaret Kelleher, was

> the idiom in which much of the early retrieval work of Irish women writers was presented, and understandably so, however that these writings fell from view in spite of earlier conscious attempts at (their) preservation. In more recent retrievals, the vocabulary has moved to an emphasis on women's writings as 'a distinct oppositional practice' in which 'subversions', 'ruptures' and 'transgressions' have looked like becoming a new orthodoxy in critical writings. (87)

I would argue that anthologies are our doors to self-assertion and achievement. It is in linguistic theories of discursive meta-functions that the ideas of transitionality and transference are found: we make sense of our own identity, our own life, through the representations of the world we construct, and hence anthologies can often speak more about ourselves than about our ancestors. The reason for their publication is twofold: to pay homage to those who have passed away and to celebrate our own voices, to make maps of the past but also to forge new paths into the future. The fundamental crux of the critical space has been the search and recuperation of the female voice as the concoction of various producers within public and private space. New meaning has been given to symbols of the abject, using the Kristevan theory of the abject, delineating identity and its instable borders from the outside and the inside. In contemporary Irish women's literature exclusion of the publicly or privately shamed has provoked a dynamic which has acquired an urgent significance in the context of contemporary revelations of past widespread institutional and state

abuse. The *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Vols IV and V* were published in an attempt at transcending the humiliation of invisibility and violence. In chapters devoted to contemporary writing, it was stated that a great deal of Irish women's writing from all parts of the 20th century implicitly or explicitly represents women trying to find a place for themselves within the narrative of the Irish nation. These women have become a driving force, the third Irish identity. It could be remembered that, just few years before the publication of volumes four and five, John Wilson Foster put forward the suggestion that feminist theory with its stress on difference might provide a third force, a third Irish identity.

Irish feminism has often been criticized for making a weak critique of paternalistic, masculinist discourse while post-colonial criticism, to some extent represented by the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Vols IV and V*, contains a stronger intellectual critique:

> Rehearsing problematic genderings of feminine weakness and masculine strength, there is a call here for a modern subject who can distance themselves from the conditions of modernity and perhaps (actively) develop their own dreamworld rather than (passively) accommodate themselves to the new order. (Bracken 199)

The strength of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Vols IV and V* lies in its encyclopaedic and kaleidoscopic nature. As it has been noted by the critics, historicized expressions of variable womanhood are present in abundance, in an unprecedented combination of subjects among which are literature in Irish, literature in English, criticism, theology, sexuality, politics, history and oral tradition. For this very reason, for its scale, ambition and structure, the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Vols IV and V* was from the start a new kind of

anthology. A crucial aspect of this state of the art character and of the significance and weight it had for the future was a new way of editing:

> the editors' self-conscious questioning of' received versions' of literary history, of cultural influence, and of the Irish writing tradition(s). In the context of literary studies, the material invited a radical rethinking of issues of authorship, production, genre and canon-formation and to state the blatantly obvious not just for women's writing. (Kelleher 89)

If variable womanhood was the key concept, it corresponded to what Deleuze called kaleidoscopic identity: an approach that not only represents identitarian abundance but inspires other visions too. Likewise it inspired an anthology of a polyphonic character, one that influenced a new way of doing criticism in Irish studies.

A detailed inclusion of Irish-language writing also played a vital role in affirming the existence of what was called "a writing in a reinvigorated Irish which has been brought into dialogue with other modern literatures" (Kelleher). Consequently, contemporary women authors could find new ways of confronting the dilemma of local allegiance and universalist impulse, of particularism and cosmopolitanism' and some of the disabling distinctions drawn on language lines between 'ancient custom and a dynamic modernity' were broken down. As some of the critics quickly stated the selections in *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing vols IV and V* did not serve as a missing piece in a jigsaw puzzle but "rather sought to put existing maps into question." (Kelleher 92) To testify to its richness. the final section of volume five of *The Field Day Anthology*, "Ethnicities", highlighted the increasing immigration into Ireland. The danger of the publication was that the Anthology would be seen as the final chapter in a decade-long struggle and research, but the volumes skilfully forged new questions: the critical factor was recognition, institutional support and

readership. The ongoing work of many research centres and other independent projects, such as the HEA-funded Munster Women Writers Project at University College Cork, pointed the way in this regard. As Margaret Kelleher concludes, "a historical perspective shows how swiftly women's writings may disappear from view" (Kelleher 92); anthologies are crucial to the endurance both of the past and the future.

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The Translation of Silence: The Interdisciplinary Nature of *A Book of Silence* and its Implications for Translation

Ensaio

Jorge Manuel Costa Almeida e Pinho | ISAG / ESE / CETAPS/ InEd (Porto, Portugal)

Introduction

When taking for the first time *The Book of Silence,* by Sara Maitland, after looking at the sober cover, and reading the first sentence, the feeling is that it is a novel: "It is early morning. It is a morning of extraordinary radiance…" (Maitland, *A Book of Silence* 1). This first impression is further reinforced by the several initial references, namely to: "small birds (…) chirping occasionally"; by the "pair of crows [that] flapped past making their raucous cough noises"; and by the overall mental picture glimpsed after the description of "the seashore", which seems to transport the reader into a wonderful world, full of beauty and tranquillity.

The following lines in the book (*A Book of Silence* 1) still preserve that picture with some magnificence, especially when the author minutely describes: "the two-carriage Glasgow to Stranraer train"; or the local Neil, who would "rumble past on his quad bike after seeing to his sheep on the hill above the house". It is almost a painting, with some moving characters and rather few slightly distracting noises, which do not disturb the author / narrator view, who simply says she wants to reach what Virginia Woolf taught her: "every woman writer needs a room of her own. She didn't know the half of it, in my opinion. I need a moor of my own". And this wishful sentence is especially reflected on the second and more commercial cover used for this same book, which had a very sober first cover.

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This feeling is, however, suddenly replaced by a wave of facts reported by the author and connected to the surrounding everyday reality, when she starts referring to the "completion certificate" and to the "building regulations and standards" (*A Book of Silence* 2) she had to obtain to make the changes and improvements she needed in her new house. This "reality check", with such an earthly, factual and colloquial perspective, is, in fact, a clear symptom of what the reader will have to face for the rest of the book.

Nevertheless, the next few lines show Maitland's reason for the writing of this book, when, according once again to the author's words, she writes, "I have lived a very noisy life" (*A Book of Silence* 3), and further states she needed to seek silence, and to escape from crowds and noisy places and situations. Still, at the same time and somehow paradoxically, she refers to the fear and danger caused by silence in her own, or anyone else's, mental health or social life. Thus, she contrasts the romanticism associated to silence to the more factual threat it normally raises, and which, in fact, most people are so keen to avoid. That is, silence actually looks like a threat that normally reminds us of isolation and loneliness, of moments when we have to confront our inner fears and ensure they are kept inside, very quiet and secure.

Technical, scientific, literary and other crossroads

But firstly, let's go a little back and start with a few words about the writer, so as to explain her background and probably some of the reasons why she specifically wrote this book in 2008.

Sara Maitland is the author of numerous works of fiction, including the Somerset Maugham Award-winning *Daughter of Jerusalem*, and several other non-fiction books, mainly about religion. Born in 1950, Maitland studied at Oxford University and presently lives in Galloway, and is a tutor on the Distance Learning MA in Creative Writing for Lancaster University.

The work referred to in the above comments is *A Book of Silence*, which was shortlisted for the Bristol Festival of Ideas Book Prize and the Orwell Prize, and long-listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize and the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Book Award for Scottish non-fiction book of the year. In this book, Sara Maitland cleverly tries to weave her personal experiences with many literary texts of all sorts and also with carefully chosen historical episodes, highlighting the fascination she nurtures for silence as a theme and a special motto in her life.

In this ride through poetic, literary and scientific paths, she argues for the importance of silence in a world increasingly taken up by noise, showing her deep knowledge of this subject to readers, by providing them either with complex explanations, in very simple words, or with some easy notions, but using an intricate wording. And it is this special intertwining that certainly made it more difficult to translate and convey both the content and the many special literary forms used by the author.

The truth is that, in some of the more real and factual passages in the book, Sara Maitland provides information in such a specialized or minute detail that readers have to pay close attention to what is being presented, as can be seen for instance in the sentence, "the most exquisite New England four-poster bed made of bird's eye maple with golden candy-twist posts" (*A Book of Silence* 11). Such a description shows a notorious and frequent tendency to present facts and real things in Maitland's peculiar and very detailed way.

In some other sentences, she inserts her own, more personal, feelings and ideas, which seem to be part of a strategy that aims at granting her, among readers, a special status of being able to establish a factual connection to reality, because she tries to speak of things they must recognize in their own everyday lives.

Another example of this common connection to reality and to factual truth in the book is Maitland's use of scientific information, while sometimes concerning her own and very personal subjects, such as in the case of the following sentence: "I had always enjoyed a textbook twenty-eight-day menstrual cycle" (*A Book of Silence* 18). After this information, she reflects for some pages on the almost complete absence of references to the theme of menopause in literature in general. This literary silence about the theme is, for Maitland, an unanswered question and an area she extensively tried to explore in her own literary career, trying to deepen some thoughts and ideas upon this somehow unexplored and unknown topic in previous books. Still, the main purpose of such scientific references seems to be a permanent link to sustainable and verifiable facts, preferably those supported by scientific research.

Within this same theme, and somewhere in the middle of similar insights, Maitland presents other scientific references to "birds' bones" and refers the correlation and similitude of such bones with "mammals' bones" (*A Book of Silence* 19-20), namely to "menopause women's bones" (20). After this, Maitland goes on describing several instances of physical forces which are *silent*, surround us every day and on which we depend, namely "gravity, electricity, light, tides, the unseen and unheard spinning of the whole cosmos" (20). She even complements this information with the silent Earth's spinning speed, the silent organic growth rhythm and so many other cases of nature's endeavours to which humans are normally unaware. Once again, this discourse serves practical purposes, of course, but is more or less related to a pattern of thought based on Maitland's world view and philosophical stance, which mingles scientific concepts with some lay knowledge to captivate readers and keep their attention.

The next example may be even more enlightening concerning this type of behaviour… Maitland departs on a large tour, once again to one of her own personal experiences – "gardening" – which in the past served to connect her to

nature's silent growth, and, once more, to her need to work in silence. The techniques she explored, the several different types of gardens she saw and made her wonder, the book she co-authored about this subject and, finally, the landscapes she discovered have made her actually change her life, in more than one way. In fact, all of this meant that the author eventually discovered a vast array of pleasures and benefits in prayer, contemplation and living her inner silence. The mixture of complex notions and simple language plays in this case a decisive role in every reader's mind, attracting people to the indispensable changes one must make in one's life so as to achieve higher purposes.

Nevertheless, after having reached this stage, Maitland still finds it difficult to define the word "silence" and uses the resources of the Oxford English Dictionary to try to figure out a more real meaning for that word/concept: "According to the OED, 'silence' means *both* an absence of all noises *and* an absence of speech" (*A Book of Silence* 25). But this account is not yet complete without a further research on some of her personal uses of that word and the interference of natural phenomena into the qualities of peace and silence.

Additionally – and profusely in all the book – Maitland quotes several authors, from many varied areas, both scientific and non-scientific. From John Cage, "the radical composer", she uses the following lines to assert that "there is no such thing as really physical silence":

> There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot… Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music. (*A Book of Silence* 26)

From Henry Thoreau, "the Transcendentalist radical philosopher" (30), Maitland uses an excerpt to explain his motivation to live alone by the Walden Pond, thus also trying to justify her own decision to move to an isolated place:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what I had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. (*A Book of Silence* 30)

And Maitland even says she is with Angela Carter, the English novelist and journalist, known for her feminist, magical realism, and picaresque works, when she describes her youth and student time:

> There is a tendency to underplay, even to devalue completely, the experience of the 1960s, especially for women, but towards the end of that decade there was a brief period of public philosophical awareness that occurs only very occasionally in human history; when, truly, it felt like Year One, when all that was holy was in the process of being profaned, and we were attempting to grapple with the real relations between human beings… At a very unpretentious level, we were truly asking ourselves questions about the nature of reality. Most of us may not have come up with very startling answers and some of us scared ourselves good and proper and retreated into cul-de-sacs of infantile mysticism… but even so I can date to that time and to that sense of heightened awareness of the society around me in the summer of 1968 my own questioning of the nature of my reality as a woman. (*A Book of Silence* 8)

Simultaneously, Maitland resorts very often to passages of stories related to real experiences, like the following from Richard Byrd, a US admiral and polar explorer, who decided to spend a winter alone in the Antarctic:

> I wanted to go for experience sake: one man's desire to know that kind of experience to the full, to be by himself for a while and to taste the peace and quiet and solitude long enough to find out how good they really are… (*A Book of Silence* 31)

This use by Sara Maitland of different authors and books intends to cover a very wide range of styles, registers and resources. In all instances, the purpose in using such quotes seems to be the corroboration or justification of Maitland's ideas by people who have lived in some way situations where silence was prominent, or who wanted to share their ideas on this subject, shedding some light on the way silence really affected them or modified their lives.

Still, some of the quotes also serve to show support for Maitland's quest and a genuine wish to be helpful to the author, such as in the case of Janet Batsleer, a friend of Sara Maitland, who, in a "provocative letter", says: "Silence is the place of death, of nothingness" (*A Book of Silence* 28). After being teased by this friend, Sara Maitland feels an even greater need to follow her pursuit and to make a serious effort attempting to reach a sense of discovery and achievement to prove that Janet was wrong when she said: "All silence is waiting to be broken" (28).

All these examples and situations only serve to show how diverse and interdisciplinary is Maitland's style in *A Book of Silence*, since the previous examples, situations or quotes are taken only from the first chapter of her book! The almost four hundred pages in the book replicate this strategy that combines personal opinions, scientific insights, quotations of all sorts, and various other devices and strategies making it a varied and multifaceted work, and

undoubtedly an excellent source of inspiration concerning the theme of silence for any reader, channelling so many different voices and figurative sounds on this subject that one may even wonder how really silent the book is!

Translation as a channel for many voices

For translation, as the long list with such a wealth of resources has already shown, the whole project became a highly complex task, since it meant untangling and deciphering this very complex mixture of scientific concepts, research data, quotes from very different books, personal opinions, cross-references, literary pieces, and so on…

While in most cases Sara Maitland tried to convey the more difficult notions with a simple and common language, basically aiming at the explanation of ideas both to educated and non-educated readers – who otherwise might not understand them – in other cases she used the most exquisite vocabulary, probably to be more accurate and not to miss her main points or ideas, or even to provide a better channel for the readers' attention to her aims. The difficulty for translation is then to assess her intentions, and try as much as possible to replicate the author's stance, adopting the attitude of a chameleon in each case and situation, very much like the picture depicting every translators' work on the cover of *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice* (1991), by Roger T. Bell.

The first priority in the translation's checklist of "Things to do" became then almost an obligation to keep the original structures of complex and/or simple vocabulary, that described complex and/or simple events and episodes, and the development of a common strategy that would enable the most straightforward transposition of such structures into Portuguese, trying to follow exactly the same patterns. Although this may seem quite easy, some quite simple

truths need to be remembered, and the example is simply shown in the "bitter little limerick", in page 5 of the original book:

> There was a young girl called Christine
> Who shattered the Party machine.
> It isn't too rude
> To lie in the nude
> But to lie in the House is obscene. (*A Book of Silence* 5)

Which became, in the published Portuguese translation:

> Havia uma jovem chamada Christine
> Que destruiu a máquina do Partido.
> Não é demasiado rude
> Mentir quando nu
> Mas mentir na Câmara é obsceno. (*O Livro do Silêncio* 387)

The simple and basic truths concerning the problems the translation of this limerick into Portuguese had to face, and that probably needed to be addressed, are:

- The syntactic structures of both languages – English and Portuguese – are somewhat different, which makes it impossible to keep the same sequence of words, e.g. "the Party machine" / "a máquina do Partido";
- The rhythm and rhyme of the above limerick is also obviously impossible to keep, especially if one wants to keep the same semantics, which resulted in e.g. "It isn't too rude / To lie in the nude" / "Não é demasiado rude / Mentir quando nu";
- The semantics of some words would need a much more complex explanation, which is not always possible in a published translation, where footnotes were not welcome (as usual, according to any

publisher's point of view) and bearing in mind that the editor converted those to final notes, as it happened with e.g. "To lie in the nude / Mentir quando nu".

- And finally, not all specific vocabulary has simpler or equal versions in Portuguese, which disrupts the pattern used by the author in the original text, as can be seen in another case, e.g. "A simple sprout of couch grass" (*A Book of Silence* 21) / "Um simples rebento de relva" (*O Livro do Silêncio* 37).

Next, as it was already mentioned, it also became important to keep a very close attention to literary and religious pieces profusely used and quoted by the author, especially those where poetic discourse was present and played a prevailing and prominent role, creating an especially engaging and healing sensation – according to Maitland's own words. But this was not always possible, namely when tradition (and some already established/canonical translated text) has already engendered a new form of expression. This is particularly the case of Bible passages, like the following:

> I have set my soul in silence and in peace,
> As the weaned child on his mother's breast
> so even is my soul. (*A Book of Silence* 11)

Which is, in the published version of this passage in the recognized Portuguese Bible, by the *Capuchinhos* (and which has also been used in the translation):

> Aquieto e sossego a minha alma,
> Como uma criança saciada no colo de sua mãe;
> Como uma criança saciada,
> Assim está a minha alma dentro de mim. (*O Livro do Silêncio* 24)

In general terms, the main objective for the translation was to scrupulously follow Maitland's style and intentions, while it had to be taken into consideration that such a concept – "alleged intentions" – might be highly questionable. After all, is it possible to assess the intentions of any author, let alone to really know them? When the author was not consulted to offer her own interpretation and demonstrate her peculiar focus (as it happened in this case), it is only natural that one wonders whether the author's intention could be assumed.

Nevertheless, in most translations the original text has to be considered according to its own merits (that is, without any practical help from the author), and the translator has to work from his/her own interpretation of the author's intentions. And the actual truth is that any translation needs to reconstruct the author, and his/her ideas mostly from the evidence shown in the text, and then try to differentiate between textual implication (the logical things implied by a text) and textual implicature (the aspects that are taken to be intentionally implied by the author).

The idea was, after all, to follow Douglas Robinson's words:

> The author as sovereign subject intends the original text, and leaves that intention lying immanent in the text; the translator occupies that intention and "writes" the target text – and is a "writer" only in this sense. (*Who Translates?* 4)

Therefore, putting aside the issue of the so-called "alleged intentions", and acting on his attributed role, the translator worked on the huge amount of available material – words/lexical items – relying mostly on the interpretations he made of the original text and on the repeated statements by the author showing her willingness to "live" in silence, and "flourish in this new atmosphere" (*A Book of Silence* 283) to convey this voice from within.

But the value attributed to Maitland's discursive forms had to vary according to one fundamental factor unforeseen by translation at the beginning of the whole project. And that was the target readership, which naturally (at least considering the publisher's opinion…) imposed some major functional restrictions, and that were clearly stated by the editor in charge after the first consultations. Thus, the main consideration concerning this subject was that this book would be mostly read by people following New Age trends and self-help books!

According to such specificity in the order, this type of readership, unlike scientists or highly educated readers, for whom enlightened or techno-scientific codes originating from the dominant English language/cultures would be paramount, meant that translation needed to adopt a "lighter" translation strategy, essentially dominated by a clearer syntax and not so specific terminology, especially in cases where such solutions might hinder immediate comprehension.

Therefore, any advantages linked to mastering scientific terminology and lexicons needed sometimes to be left aside, in favour of the unavoidable stances of more fluency and better readability, which were once again adopted, as it happens in so many books and translation works, and as already has been publicly stated by Lawrence Venuti (153-4) and Jorge Pinho (282).

In this very specific case, the factor controlling translation and rewriting work was a professional inside the literary system: the editor. And it is a well-known fact that both these basic processes of rewriting – editing and translating, as identified by André Lefevere (9) – are very influential and can manipulate ideas and cultures, because they project the image of authors or of their books into other cultures, making them overcome the traditional barriers of the source cultures. Furthermore, the motivation that lay behind this "translation order" came from the editor's particular choice of the book – because of her very own

emotional and private reasons – and its fulfilment in terms of the translation strategy that was followed was once again mainly dictated by her peculiar rules.

Short conclusions

Maitland's academic investigation is filled with many personal accounts, including her own, and it is so rich because of the sound of so many different voices. Although linguistic unification has taken place in the last fifty years in most branches of science, Maitland tried to diversify her discourse as much as possible, especially in those cases that were so peculiar to her own special likings and endeavours.

It is a fact that English is nowadays the language of science worldwide, and that academic advancement is everywhere dependent on publication in English. In fact, the widespread idea stated by David Bellos in his book *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?*, that "English is simpler than other languages" (17), is probably wrong, but has made its way into today's societies, which promote a kind of language unification based on the use of English. Besides the advances made by Linnaeus in the description and classification of botanical species, as well as Berzelius' research in chemistry, with the addition of some more common names and explanations, the fact is that English made it easier for most readers to understand and follow some more complex ideas, through its alleged simplicity.

Despite all this, the voice of translation from English into any other language still tries to provide books with a new language in which to dwell, and still tries to provide the same feelings of comfort, disquiet, and so on, created by any English author's explorations. "The Invisible Hand" of any sensible translator, recognized as such by Douglas Robinson in his much undervalued book *Who Translates?* (180-6), actually tries to "spirit-channel" (180) authors' visions and to allow readers to establish some kind of contact with worlds created elsewhere, realities otherwise unseen, unheard, unknown.

Still, the widespread notion that translation is a mere mechanical channel that serves to transmit knowledge actually reduces translation work to a highly undervalued cliché that prevents us from understanding its various dimensions and critically analysing its concrete practice. Bearing in mind that it mediates between languages and cultures, translation depends critically on human intervention and on socio-historical circumstances, especially linked to the actual conditions under which it is practiced (Lefevere 1-16).

Therefore, translation may be profoundly intertwined with the history of science and ideas, and may inescapably contribute to the scientific establishment and to scientific knowledge among peoples. But in a particularly notorious case, like this one, even a book that endeavours to adopt in its original version an educated, referential and scientific view is subject to the need to popularise complicated ideas and to facilitate the understanding of ideas and/or words by less-educated readers in another language.

Under the rules of the manipulative hands of translating and editing, *A Book of Silence*, by Sara Maitland, has thus become, in the Portuguese translation, the voice of a spirit who lived so many wonderful experiences and has the ability to tell those in a powerful and marvellous way to her readers. But it is also a voice that was changed by translation, or rather that was subject to some adaptations to suit the anticipated expectations of some, very specific, Portuguese readers.

To quote the author, and to provide a conclusion to her quest, it should perhaps be stated: "And the rest, I hope, is silence" (*A Book of Silence* 287).

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Internet

http://www.saramaitland.com/Home.html

Visual Popular Culture and Political Power

José Carlos del Ama and Ismael López Medel | Central Connecticut State University (USA)

1. Introduction

The use of vehicles of popular culture to convey political messages is no monopoly of the U.S. political discourse. Neither is it a novelty of the 21st century. The national-socialist regime dedicated a ministry to this endeavor. They explored the use of audiovisual narrative to cement the simple ideas of their doctrine and exploit it in a systematic way. Cinema became one of the most effective aids of the regime. Stars and dramas provided a great tool of mass persuasion. In the communist Russia, cinema also became only means of ideological propaganda. In Russia, the identification of Cinema and propaganda led to a dead end that threatened to exterminate popular culture. It became too obvious, and when the regime lost the power that flows from opinion, the ideological content of the audiovisual products became the opposite of popular culture. In democratic America, a country that guarantees individual rights and idolizes freedom of speech, ideological propaganda needed to become much more subtle. On the long run, subtlety proved to be much more effective as well.

That power flows from public opinion is a truth that we know since Plato. In his controversy with the sophist Gorgias, Plato (302) stated that those who strive after political power would end up becoming slaves of public opinion. This truth, that seems obvious in democratic systems, also applies, according to David Hume (29), to despotic regimes and tyrannies. In the U.S., popular culture flourished during the 20th century, becoming probably the world reference in music and audiovisual products. And as this field grew, political actors became

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aware of the potential to use them as a vehicle for ideological and political messages.

2. F. D. Roosevelt

World War I served as laboratory to start studying the instrumental use of communication as a means of mass persuasion. President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee for Public Information with the objective of molding and mobilizing public opinion. This committee had to persuade an extremely heterogeneous population of the importance of making the world safe for democracy. Not without reason, some of the members of that committee became later relevant figures in the professional field of public relations, such as Edward L. Bernays and Carl R. Byoir, or prominent scholars in communication sciences, like Harold Laswell.

When F. D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, there had been an intensive research in behavioral, psychological, and social sciences to understand how persuasion works and to improve communicative strategies with this goal. Still, Roosevelt's presidency established a milestone in the history of strategic communication. He was ahead of predecessors and rivals. President Roosevelt, who actually came from a rather aristocratic family, developed a charismatic personality that allowed him to connect with the plain people of the street. He developed the talent to appear to be "one of them" (Ewen, 249). His personal magnetism was, in an important part, a media construction. The demolishing work of the muckraking press had showed very clear to the political and economic elites the importance of the support of public opinion – if it was not clear enough yet.[1]

But besides *the people*, the president identified a second target audience that needed to be addressed in a different way: the press. The White House stopped treating journalists as "muckrakers". Aware of the importance of

gatekeepers in the communication flow and of the potential impact of the press on the dynamics of public opinion, President Roosevelt's administration contributed to lift the status of the members of the press. Winfield describes the revolutionary protocol created for this professional group. For the first time, journalists were treated with a respect normally reserved to other professions. Roosevelt interacted with them during amiable press conferences, a public relations practice never seen before in the White House. Journalists were also invited to official reception and dinners (Winfield, 59). It is significant that in the first issue of the legendary journal *Public Opinion Quarterly*, one of the articles is about the way President Roosevelt dealt with the press: *President Roosevelt and the Washington Correspondents* (Rosten, 37-48).

2.1 The Great Depression and the New Deal

The Great Depression was not the rosiest historical scenario for a successful presidency. Economic crises make difficult for political actors to gain the favor of a suffering public. After several year of steady and increasing economic prosperity, the American public discovered and suffered weaknesses in the system. Since the fatidic Monday in October 1929, the country was in a situation of dramatic decline. The unemployment rose to 23% and millions of American lost their jobs and even their homes. President Roosevelt faced this devastating landscape and fought the depression with his legendary policy: the New Deal.

New Deal theorists blamed the abusive practices of industry, businesses and banks for the economic catastrophe. Thus, the strongest urge of the administration was to regulate all areas of economic activity. Such economic philosophy explains the Trade Agreement Act of 1934, the Social Security Act of 1935, the Banking Act of 1935, as well as the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance in 1933, the same year the United States abandoned the Gold Standard. The New Deal regulated labor, instituting a minimum wage and

limiting the workweek to 40 hours. The increased weight on regulation, something that was in clear contradiction with the original spirit of the American nation, also reflected on the growth in employment for the government.[2]

While there is no agreement among economists when it comes to assess the actual contribution of the New Deal to restore the U.S. economy, no one questions the effectiveness of the communication strategies to sell the New Deal to the American public opinion.

2.2 Selling the New Deal

Roosevelt was the first president to introduce the figure of the Press Secretary in the presidential staff, and Stephen Early became the President's public relations man, working closely with two communication experts: Louis Howe and Marvin McIntyre. Howe was in charge of scrutinizing the daily press and keeping informed the president of the issues that dominate the press coverage and the position of the different editorials and opinion leaders. The so-called Howe's Daily Bugle was an essential part of the president's breakfast (Steele, 9). McIntyre who had worked for many years as the city editor for *The Washington Times,* was one of the pioneers who served during World War I in the Committee for Public Information. Stephen Early, Roosevelt's press secretary, used his deep knowledge of the hidden mechanisms of the editorial world to establish solid relationships with the press. Thus, McIntyre became one of the columns of the PR team of the president (Steele, 9f).

The public relations staff of president Roosevelt was aware of the power and public impact of the traditional press, but they did not limit their efforts to this channel. They were constantly scanning new ways to reach the public. Radio was in the rise during the 1930s. Its power and spreading speed made it comparable to what Internet is now. The new channel became soon one of the most effective and influential channels to reach mass audiences. The president

was aware from the very beginning of the potential of the new mainstream channel and used his personal contacts to have access to the most important radio networks. His friend Henry Bellow, a former fellow student at Harvard, was the head of CBS's Washington Bureau. Roosevelt's PR staff had also excellent contacts to the second main network in the U.S., the NBC. The chief correspondent of this network in Washington was George Holmes, brother in law of the press secretary of the U. S. government (Ewen, 251).

Stuart Ewen also points at the vulnerability of radio to governmental control. The First Amendment had been protecting print journalism from this control since the very birth of the nation. Appealing to the "public interest", the government started a series of educational programs in order to enlighten the population about the benefits of the New Deal (Ewen, 252). The legendary "Fireside Chats" were the highlight of this governmental intervention. The most important networks in the country delivered 31 presidential speeches. The power of the new channel made possible that, for the first time, a president of the U.S. was talking directly to the people. And he addressed the whole nation in a language that was accessible to everyone. The Fireside Chats became an immediate success. The American public loved to be addressed in that particular way. Listening to those speeches on the radio created a paradoxical sense of intimacy, since the messages were delivered to millions of citizens at the same time.[3]

The Fireside Chats were more than public education or enlightenment. Their goal was not only to inform the public about the New Deal policy. On the contrary, they carried a strong ideological load. Roosevelt blamed the economic elites of the country for the crisis, heartless corporations that did not hesitate to sacrifice the well being of the broad population to maximize their benefits. In many regards, the content of the speeches reminds us of the aggressive discourse of the muckrakers. Roosevelt also stressed the priority of the "greater

good", or the "greater number", over particular interests. The "benefit of the American people" was at the heart of all the governmental endeavors to defeat the crisis. Ewen points at the ability of the president's communication team to escape from the shadow of socialism. To avoid this public perception, the President referred in his chats constantly to the traditional (although vaguely defined) American values "that had gotten lost amid an inferno of commercialism" (Ewen, 259). Obviously, presenting the New Deal – and himself – as the savor of American values and people, as the messiah of the greater number, the champion of the common good.

2.3 Faces for the Crisis

The ideological strategy of the New Deal was meticulously designed and inspired the content of the presidential messages. Radio proved to be an effective and manageable channel to reach mass audiences. Still, the communication endeavors lacked the aid of the most powerful tool in popular culture: the image.

The PR team of president Roosevelt found a venue to provide the New Deal guiding message with a series of impacting images that cemented the ideological building. In 1937, the Farm Security Administration was created with the explicit goal of improving the life conditions of the American farmers in the most depressed regions of the United States. It replaced the Resettlement Administration that was lead by Rexford G. Tugwell, professor of Economics and one of the ideologues behind the New Deal concept. Still, the actual goal of the celebrated FSA was not so much to aid farmers in distress as to support the propaganda efforts of the New Deal. Michael Carlebach sees clear that the agency was "conceived as a means of illustrating the necessity and effectiveness of New Deal agricultural programs" (Carlebach, 10).

The main contribution of the FSA to the ideological cause of the New Deal

was the famous series of photographs that were published with the slogan created by Roy Stryker, chief of the information division of the FSA: "introducing America to the Americans". The FSA assembled a team of excellent photographers that went all through the country gathering visual testimonies of the misery that had been growing in the deepest America. Actually, Roosevelt's administration was following the lead of Lewis Hine, who was a forerunner using photography to denounce social injustice. Most of the photographers working for the FSA became legends in the field. The names of Dorothea Lange, Walter Evans, or Arthur Rothstein are regarded now as pioneers in a new art form: documentary photography. Even if the photographers of the FSA "were warned repeatedly not to manipulate their subjects in order to get more dramatic images", as Carlebach recalls, they did in fact try some effects when they saw the opportunity to make the documents more dramatic (20). To this end, increasing the dramatic power of the images, the use of a sober black-and-white, had also advantages over the color.

The Depression got no one, but multiple faces that gave testimony of the misery of a significant part of the American population, on the one hand. On the other hand, the documentary photographers were able to portray such misery with the deepest dignity, which made the documents perfect tools for spreading the New Deal message.

Still, the pictures did not remain in the archives of the FSA buildings. They needed the strongest exposure to be effective. James Curtis reports the first time that the FSA pictures reached a broad public. It happened during the First International Exposition of Photography that was organized in the Grand Central Place in New York. The highlight of the program was the FSA theme "How American People Live". The show, according to Curtis, was an extraordinary success and the origin of a strong opinion stream. The pictures of suffering Americans appeared everywhere: in Post offices, public libraries, schools,

museums, universities, etc. (Curtis, 5). They were also used by mainstream media and originated stories in magazines that were very popular among the middle class, the target audience for most of Roosevelt's communication efforts.[4]

A moment in the film *Sullivan's Travel*, directed by Preston Sturges and released in 1941, gives testimony of the presence of the FSA photographers in the middle of America's agony. When the wealthy Sullivan is wandering through the desolation of one the numerous homeless camps that appear in the movie, the camera shows a camouflaged photographer collecting visual testimonies of the everyday life of those who most suffered the depression.

Sullivan is a successful filmmaker who decides that movies should also become a channel to denounce the miserable life condition of his fellow Americans. Several real film directors, feeling the same way, decided to follow Sullivan's example. They decided to support the plan of Roosevelt's administration, and consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, backed the ideological agenda of the president with their movies. The machinery of manufacturing popular culture was working full speed at the service of the cause. Preston Sturges's masterpiece is, in a light comedy tone, a good example of this trend in Hollywood. Frank Capra, another comedian, used his pet actor Jimmy Stewart to portray the simple minded, and not especially bright American, who embodied the whole corpus of traditional values of the nation, the same values that were behind the New Deal. *Mr. Deed Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *Meet John Doe* (1941, this time starring Gary Cooper) are the essentials in Capra's New Deal package.

Much more in consonance with the visual style of the FSA pictures, John Ford filmed in 1940 John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. The drama of the *okies*, farmers from the south and central states most affected by the depression that needed to leave their homes and migrated to other areas of the country in a

desperate search for work, was also a frequent motive of the FSA pictures.

2.4 Visual Communication in Time of War

The experience with the New Deal strategies prepared Roosevelt very well for his new communication challenge: Making the American population ready for War World II. One of the most effective communication strategies during World War II was the so-called Four Freedoms campaign. It is also the ideal example to understand how the Roosevelt's administration used visual popular culture to support political and ideological agendas.

The first time Roosevelt referred to the *freedom of speech*, the *freedom from want*, the *freedom of worship* and the *freedom from fear*, the four chapters of the legendary series, was in June 1941, on occasion of the 77th presidential address to the congress of the United States. In 1942, the Office of War Information released a booklet entitled *The United Nations' Fight for the Four Freedoms: The Roots of All Men Everywhere*. The document was written in a clean, dynamic and passionate style. The contents were carefully thought through and ordered to appeal to the deepest feelings of the citizenship and incite reflection.

However, the Four Freedoms booklet was hardly effective because few people actually read it. The ideological content needed the aid of powerful images. No one was better suited for the job than Norman Rockwell, the most effective manufacturer of popular icons at the time. Rockwell's series of the Four Freedoms first appeared published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Ben Hibbs, the chief editor of the Post, had been working with Rockwell for several years and knew his talent perfectly. He immediately recognized the potential of the idea. The *Saturday Evening Post* finally ran the pictures, which appeared in four consecutive editions of the magazine on February and March 1943. Hibbs pointed out how perfect the timing was: "they appeared right a time when the

war was going against us on the battle fronts, and the American people needed the inspirational message which they conveyed so forcefully and so beautiful" (Rockwell, 336).

For almost a year (April 28th, 1943, to March 8th, 1944), Rockwell's pictures circulated through 16 major cities across the country in an intensive War Loan Drive. Always around the pictures and the idea of the Four Freedoms, the cities organized rallies, parades, workshops, raffles, performances and exhibits. Show business celebrities and community leaders usually hosted the events. Popular war heroes were invited, as well. The outcomes of the drive were spectacular.[5]

3. Barack H. Obama

With the turn of the century, the figure of Franklin D. Roosevelt's figure has risen to colossal proportions, a larger than life figure, and the embodiment of the American spirit. The economic difficulties that America, and the rest of the world, face today resemble those faced by FDR and his administration. And perhaps that explains why no other President in recent US history has come so close in terms of image as the 44rd President, Barack Hussein Obama. His recent victory in the 2012 elections, and the distance from his direct rival, Mitt Romney were clear indicators that his popularity as President was still intact.

This comparison can be based upon examination of three elements paralleled by both presidents: the historical circumstances, with a financial crisis, political and social turmoil, the savvy use of avant-garde communication techniques (Social Media was for Obama what radio was for FDR), and finally, a superb use of visual imagery and popular culture.

The first element in common is the financial, political and social situation. Previous to the arrival of FDR to the White house, America had experience an unprecedented growth for two decades. The now called roaring twenties had brought industrial growth, employment, a war that was successfully won, and

more importantly, an spectacular increase in cultural production (essential to the field of communication), with the birth of the movie industry, the explosion of radio and the constant growth of magazines. We have reviewed FDR's policies and strategies, but it is important to remember his main legacy: the idea of sense, hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

Similarly, when Obama became the 44th President in 2008, the country was waking up from the growth and technological revolution of the 1990s with the growth of Internet and Social Media, and was facing a collapsed house market that would soon double the relatively low un unemployment rate of 2008 (5,6%) to a 9,6% in 2010. Following Roosevelt's example, Obama ran his campaign not only on specific measures, but also on larger-than-life concepts. On his final rally in Virginia, November 3rd 2008, the night before the election, he declared: "I come away with an unyielding belief that if we only had a government as responsible as all of you, as compassionate as the American people, that there is no obstacle that we can't overcome. There is no destiny that we cannot fulfill".[6] As FDR, Obama used his personal magnetism and his ability to speak to the average American and connect on the level of struggle, hard work and overcoming difficulties.

The second parallelism and most crucial to our field of interest, is the use of mass media and communication tools to deliver the messages. We have explored how Roosevelt became a pioneering figure in political communication by exploiting the potential of radio, visual image with photography and visual narrative with the film industry. Similarly, Barack Obama had a clear strategy focused on Social Media. His explosive rise to the national scene is now explained in part because his intelligent use of new technologies and Social Media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Obama clearly understood that the demographics of 2008 demanded a different approach to traditional political campaigns. He decided to spend more

effort in reaching the younger generations through Social Media than the traditional crowds using more conventional methods (fundraising events and similar options – precisely what McCain did). His website, created by Chris Hughes, one of the founders of Facebook, played a crucial role in the campaign. As Hughes himself declared: "Online technology is at a place now that is pretty significantly different from where it was in 2004. I felt that if it was used well, and keyed to campaign goals of fundraising, and bringing people into the campaign, and bringing people to the polls to the vote, that it could make a significant difference" (qtd in Levin).[7] Internet became an essential element in the campaign, not just to send the messages out, but to organize his supporters in a way that would have been much more costly and time-consuming on the ground. As Arianna Huffington, editor in chief of The Huffington Post clearly stated: "Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee".[8]

If Facebook[9] was the most important tool in the 2008 campaign, Twitter became his strategic weapon in 2012. Reaching over 27 million followers,[10] Obama had clearly understood the importance of Social Media for a specific demographic. According to a Pew Research study, Obama was clearly more active than Romney on the 2012 election, sending more messages across platforms, posting more often on Facebook, tweeting sometimes thirty times more frequently than Romney, and dedicating less time on issues centered around economy. The research also shows that Social Media was the conduct for the main outlet, the website barackobama.com, where Obama again mastered the crowds and effectively reached out to his audience.

The last element in our comparison is the use of visual culture. As we have seen, Franklin D. Roosevelt embraced the power of images and relied on them. Obama also immediately understood the underlying mechanisms of popular culture. He knew that more Americans rely on television shows than political

ones. He conquered the sympathy of key figures in television (Winfrey, Stewart, Cooper) that proved to be essential in creating his public image. His appearances have been multiple and consciously designed to present him as a simple, easy going, and down to earth person. Therefore, he makes sure he is present where his demographic target is watching.[11]

One of the more relevant cases that proves Obama's capacity to permeate media with his message was Chrysler's "It's Half time in America" Super Bowl 2012 Advertisement.[12] Created by ad agency Weiden + Kennedy and directed by David Gordon, it narrates the sunset of a new day in the country and relies on a discourse heavily related to Obama's (and FDR) social rhetoric: It's halftime and it's time to think how can we "win this game in the second half". From there the story takes the viewers to cities, country roads, small town America, rivers, porches, schools, and factories, while the narrator takes time to explain the dire economic situation of the country.

Republicans immediately up roared in anger, drawing the parallel of the half time of the game and the upcoming elections in November. Perhaps the most important reaction was Karl Rove's interview on Fox news when he declared to be disgusted by the ad and drew a direct relation between Obama's bailout of the automobile industry and this ad, famously quoting a rather Democrat argument: "This is a sign of what happens when you have the government getting in bed with big business like the bailout of the auto companies".[13]

However, we must note that one of the main elements of the narration is the narrator himself, Clint Eastwood. The director brings his presence, persona and aura to provide the backbone of the discourse of the speech. Eastwood is a well-respected figure in American popular culture. From the Western movies of the sixties to the Dirty Harry detective series of the seventies, Eastwood carved a reputation of a tough, resistant and decided hero. Never politically correct,

sometimes on the edge between good and bad, controversial in his views. His more recent filmography has explored deeply social issues, from euthanasia (*Million Dollar Baby*), to racism (*Grand Torino*). But he is also a well-known conservative, involved in politics (he was mayor of his adopted hometown of Carmel, California, from 1986 to 1988) although he has often placed himself somewhere between partisan lines: a conservative supporting choice in abortion, gun control and same sex-marriage, while voting and endorsing Republican candidates since 1952.

The two-minute spot features a powerful narrative style, with a smart use of color, a somber use of music, and a powerful text. Color is used to separate the three elements of the narrative. Eastwood is portrayed in a very dark environment, with blue lights on the background. The images during the commercial appear to have a rather colorful tone. Darkness marks the beginning and the end of the narrative, as we see Eastwood bathed in a stadium-blue light, but the sun is the central element of lightning in the commercial. All the urban scenes are bathed by a striking sunlight.

The soundtrack of the commercial is designed to turn the viewer to the images. The theme was composed, played, produced and recorded by The University of Oregon's School of Music and Dance,[14] plays a discrete yet interesting role in the commercial. There is a background theme playing all throughout the scenes, a beautiful slow tune played by horns and organ. Its quietness evolves into a crescendo as the narrative of the story reaches its climax.

The real keystone element of the advertisement is the text, written by 36-year-old poet from Portland, Oregon, Matthew Dickman and then reviewed by the Director at the agency and by Eastwood himself.[15] The first half of the commercial deals with the uncertainties and insecurities of the situation: We are all hurting, scared, wondering what to do next.

Then on 28" the narrative focuses on one particular place: Detroit, Michigan. The State flag waves, we see a bit of the abandoned city, its workers inside the factories, while the voice-off sets Detroit as the example to follow in a three-step sequence: we almost lost everything, but we pulled together, and now we are ready to fight.

Next we come back to Eastwood's concerned face. This part of the narrative takes us to a more personal level. Eastwood has seen difficult times, we are told. The images turn to protests, angry television commentators and empty industrial areas.

Then we see a series of black and white portraits of individuals and families staring straight to the camera: a young couple, a white family, a mother holding a daughter, two firemen. The screen fades to black between this set of pictures, and the narrator tells us that after the trouble, people got together and "rallied back".

Then life gets back to normal. We see a black suburban father dropping off his kid to school. There are workers on a construction site, people driving to work, cars being made, and a bright sun shinning again on a new day. The voice-off asks us how is this possible? How do we get together? Detroit is the example. "What is true about them is true about the rest of us". The camera fades to black and on the last portion of the screen, we see an extreme close-up of Eastwood rallying the troops: "It's halftime in America. And our second half is about to begin".

A thorough analysis of the two-minute commercial offers light on the variety of characters populating the commercial. We could argue that we have two categories of characters: explicit and symbolic. By explicit we mean human beings portrayed in different situations, mostly quiet, portrayed in their everyday lives, as they wake up, go to school and drive thoughtfully around empty cities. By symbolic we understand items such as cars, cities, American flags and even

the sun. The narrative of the commercial mixes these two all throughout the duration. We meet a total of forty-eight characters, one almost one every two seconds. There are some elements that connect them: the sun, the road, and the silhouettes. As for the physical presence of those characters, there are a few common characteristics across the narrative. First, there is the silence. Apart from Eastwood himself, we don't hear anything from the characters. They remain, reflective, serious, concentrated. A man buries his head in his hands when he wakes up, young mother and daughter stare cold at the camera, a girl looks out of a window of the car as the wind blows her blond hair. Most of the time they don't interact with the viewer. They just stare at you.

4. Conclusion

Popular culture is the most effective tool to achieve and maintain political power. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a pioneer in the understanding and use of popular culture. He was able to build a positive image in the most adverse circumstances: an unprecedented economic crisis and a world war. FDR was a precursor in the use of the *Avant-garde* communication channels, and realized the potential of visual communication. Following his example, Barack Obama also used popular culture paraphernalia to spread his message, using a witty strategy to promote his persona and political agenda through the newest technology.

[1] The legendary expression of the magnate of the Railroad Cornelius Vandervilt, "the public be damned", belonged to the past. The public was, as Stuart Ewen put it, "in the saddle". In spite of that, the presidents of the U.S. had been reluctant to lower themselves to the level of the people. Roosevelt change that dynamic for good (Kunczik, 89).

[2] The number of people working for the federal administration practically doubled in the first 5 years of Roosevelt's presidency.

[3] According to Winfield, Roosevelt's chats were so remarkable because of their carefully constructed spontaneity. A team of PR experts drafted the speeches, which were later revised and refined by Robert Sherwood, one of the most popular playwrights at the time. In spite of such sophisticated manufacturing process, or perhaps because of it, the messages flew smoothly and unaffectedly. The chats conveyed the image of an unpretentious and genuine president (Winfield, 106)

[4] Regularly, and, as Ewen states, often without credits the pictures of the FSA appeared in *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Survey Graphic*, *Colliers*, *McCall's*, *Fortune*, *Nation's Business*, *Today*, *Literary Digest*, and *Current History*. Of course, all the newspapers around the country published the photos (Ewen, 285).

[5] More than 1,220,000 people bought war bonds. The final collection added up to $132, 882, 593 (Murray and McCabe, 87).

[6] <http://obamaspeeches.com/E-Barack-Obama-Speech-Manassas-Virgina-Last-Rally-2008-Election.htm>

[7] <http://www.podcastingnews.com/content/2008/06/is-social-media-behind-barack-obamas-success/>

[8] <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-internet-campaign-changed-politics/>

[9] Obama is also doing well on Facebook. As of February 2013, he has over 35 million followers, mostly 18-24 urbanites, according to Facebook statistics. <https://www.facebook.com/barackobama/likes>

[10] Obama grows at an astonishing 27,000 followers per day. He now ranks number 5 in number of followers, only behind Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga, Kate Perry and Rihanna. Romney has 1,6 million followers. Statistics according to <http://twittercounter.com/BarackObama>.

[11] From singing to Al Green on stage after a fundraising event in Harlem, or joining B.B. King and Mick Jagger on the White House, to discussing his weight with late-night superstar Dave Letterman or slow jamming the news with Jimmy Fallon. There are plenty of examples of Obama's savvy media presence.

[12] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PE5V4Uzobc>

[13] <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/its-halftime-in-america/>

[14] The music was, by a group of musicians including professor of horn Lydia Van Dreel. And was mixed and produced by UO School of Music and Dance alumnus Collin Hegna.

[15] See full script of the commercial and a close examination of the language used on the following site: <http://mannerofspeaking.org/2012/02/07/its-halftime-in-america-an-analysis/>

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"As Principais Correntes do Pensamento Americano", Irwin Shaw

Tradução

Tradução de **Carla Morais Pires**

FLACKER: Muito bem, miúdo, agora é melhor falares, ditava Andrew. Didascália: Barulho de uma porta a fechar, o lento rodar da chave na fechadura. BUDDY: Nunca conseguirás pôr-me a falar, *Flacker*. Didascália: Som de uma bofetada. FLACKER: Talvez isto te faça pensar de forma diferente, miúdo. Onde está *Jerry Carmichael?* BUDDY: (rindo) Não gostarias de saber, *Flacker*? FLACKER: *Gostaria* (arrastadamente, com um tom de voz ameaçador)… e vou descobrir. De uma maneira ou de outra, percebes? Didascália: sinal sonoro, aumenta de volume, desaparece. Locutor: Irá *Buddy* falar? Conseguirá *Flacker* obrigá-lo a revelar o paradeiro do filho resgatado do rei dos caminhos-de-ferro? Conseguirá *Dusty Blades* alcançá-lo ainda a tempo? Estejam atentos na segunda-feira, à mesma hora, etc, etc…

Andrew deixou-se cair no sofá e pôs os pés ao alto. Espreguiçou-se e suspirou enquanto olhava para Lenore, que acabava de rabiscar o seu ditado no bloco de notas.

— Trinta dólares — disse ele. — Mais trinta dólares. Tem o tamanho certo?

— Hum… — fez Lenore. — Onze páginas e meia. Esta é das boas, Andy.

— Pois — retorquiu Andrew, fechando os olhos. — Põe-na ao lado do *Moby Dick* na tua estante.

— É uma história muito empolgante — continuou Lenore, levantando-se. — Não percebo de que se queixam.

— És uma rapariga amorosa — Andrew pôs as mãos nos olhos e esfregou, esfregou. — Tenho dobradiças de madeira nas pálpebras. Consegues dormir à noite?

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— Não faças isso aos olhos — advertiu Lenore, começando a vestir o casaco. — Só os irritas.

— Tens razão. — Andrew levou então os punhos aos olhos e rodou-os lentamente. — Nem calculas como tens razão.

— Amanhã às dez? — perguntou Lenore.

— Às dez. Arranca-me dos braços do sono. Vamos deixar *Dusty Blades* entregue à sua sorte, durante esta semana, e continuar com as aventuras de *Ronnie Cook e os Seus Amigos*, a quarenta dólares a história. Sempre gostei mais de escrever sobre *Ronnie Cook* do que sobre *Dusty Blades*. Estás a ver o que dez dólares fazem a um homem? — Abriu os olhos e viu Lenore a pôr o chapéu em frente ao espelho. Afinal, não era assim tão feia. Sentia muita pena dela, simples como areia, com a tez do rosto uniforme e o cabelo caído como corda, e sem nunca ter tido um homem. Punha um chapéu encarnado, colocando-o de forma a parecer que ia cair, inclinado para um dos lados. Dava-lhe um ar engraçado e triste. Andrew percebeu que era novo. — É um chapéu mesmo muito bonito — disse ele.

— Pensei muito antes de o comprar — respondeu Lenore, corando por ele ter reparado.

— Har-*riet*!— gritou a governanta da porta ao lado para a viela, chamando a filha ainda de tenra idade dos vizinhos. — Harriet, sai já daí!

Andrew virou-se de barriga para baixo no sofá e pôs a almofada sobre a cabeça.

— Tens alguma ideia para amanhã quanto a *Ronnie Cook e os Seus Amigos*? — perguntou a Lenore.

— Não. Tu tens?

— Não. — Aconchegou melhor a almofada à cabeça.

— Vais tê-las amanhã — tranquilizou-o ela. — Tens sempre.

— Pois… — disse Andrew.

— Precisas de férias.

— Vai-te lá embora.

— Adeus — disse Lenore, preparando-se para sair. — Vê se tens uma boa noite de sono.

— O que quer que digas.

Andrew observava-a, com um olho aberto, vendo-a a deixar o alpendre onde ele trabalhava e a atravessar a sala de estar e a de jantar, em direcção às escadas. Tinha umas belas pernas. Ficamos sempre surpreendidos quando uma rapariga com uma cara daquelas tem umas belas pernas. Mas eram peludas. Não tinha mesmo sorte.

— Oh, não — lamentou Andrew assim que a porta se fechou atrás dela —, não és uma rapariga de sorte.

Fechou os olhos e tentou dormir. O sol entrava pelas janelas abertas, as cortinas agitavam-se suavemente sobre a sua cabeça e a luminosidade batia-lhe, cálida e reconfortante, nos olhos fechados. Do outro lado da rua, no campo de jogos, quatro rapazes lançavam bolas. Ouvia-se a agradável batida do taco e, algum tempo depois, o estalido da bola na luva do defesa. As árvores altas do exterior, tão antigas como Brooklyn, rumorejavam um tudo-nada de quando em quando, sempre que pequenas lufadas de vento varriam o campo de basebol.

— Har*riet*! — gritou novamente a governanta. — Pára com isso ou ponho-te de castigo durante toda a tarde! Har*riet*! Já te disse para parares! — A governanta era francesa. Tinha o único sotaque francês desagradável que Andrew algum dia ouvira.

A garota começou a chorar.

— Mamã! Mamã! Mamã, ela vai bater-me! — Detestava a governanta e a governanta detestava-a, como tal faziam continuamente queixas uma da outra à mãe da garota. — Mamã!

— És uma mentirosinha! — gritava a governanta. — Vais crescer e ser mentirosa durante toda a vida. Não tens remédio!

— Mamã! — lamentava-se a garota.

Entraram em casa e fez-se novamente silêncio.

— Charlie! — gritou um dos rapazes no campo de jogos. — Atira-a para mim, Charlie!

O telefone tocou quatro vezes e Andrew ouviu a mãe a atender. Surgiu então no alpendre.

— É um homem do banco — disse. — Quer falar contigo.

— Não devia ter-lhe dito que eu estava em casa — respondeu Andrew.

— Mas estás em casa — replicou a mãe. — Como é que eu podia adivinhar que…

— Tem razão. — Andrew rodou as pernas e sentou-se. Tem toda a razão.

Encaminhou-se para a sala de jantar, para o telefone, e falou com o funcionário do banco.

— O senhor está com um saldo negativo de cento e onze dólares — anunciou.

Andrew olhou de relance para a mãe, sentada do outro lado da sala numa cadeira de costas direitas, com os braços cruzados sobre o colo, a cabeça ligeiramente inclinada, para não perder pitada.

— Julgava que tinha cerca de quatrocentos dólares na conta — dizia Andrew ao telefone.

— Está com um saldo negativo de cento e onze dólares — repetiu o funcionário.

Andrew suspirou.

— Vou ver o que se passa. — Pousou o auscultador.

— O que aconteceu? — perguntou a mãe.

— Estou com um saldo negativo de cento e onze dólares — respondeu.

— Que vergonha — disse a mãe. — Tens de ser mais metódico.

— Pois tenho. — Andrew dirigiu-se novamente para o alpendre.

— És demasiado descuidado. — A mãe seguia-o. — Devias tomar realmente conta do teu dinheiro.

— Pois devia. — Andrew sentou-se no sofá.

— Dá-me um beijo — pediu a mãe.

— Porquê?

— Por nada em especial — riu-se ela.

— Está bem. — Beijou-a e a mãe abraçou-o por instantes. Andrew estirou-se no sofá. Ela passou-lhe o dedo por baixo dos olhos.

— Estás com olheiras — notou.

— É verdade.

Ela beijou-o novamente e encaminhou-se para a parte de trás da casa. Andrew fechou os olhos. Das traseiras, chegou-lhe o barulho do aspirador. Sentiu os músculos a contraírem-se como forma de protesto contra o aparelho. Levantou-se e foi ao quarto da mãe onde ela passava o aspirador de um lado para o outro debaixo da cama. Tinha um joelho no chão e, inclinada, espreitava para baixo do móvel.

Ei! — gritou Andrew. — Ei, mãe!

Ela desligou o aspirador e ergueu o olhar para o filho.

— O que se passa?

— Estou a tentar dormir — queixou-se.

— Então porque não dormes?

— O aspirador está a fazer estremecer a casa.

A mãe levantou-se, com o rosto a revelar uma expressão carrancuda.

— Tenho de limpar a casa, não tenho?

— Por que razão tem de o fazer enquanto tento dormir?

A mãe voltou a ajoelhar-se.

— Não posso usar o aspirador quando estás a trabalhar. Não o passo usar quando estás a ler. Não o posso usar até às dez da manhã porque estás a dormir. — Ligou o aparelho. — Afinal, em que altura é que posso limpar a casa? — gritou, de modo a fazer-se ouvir com o aspirador ligado. — Porque não dormes à noite como toda a gente? — E voltou a baixar a cabeça, passando energicamente o aparelho de um lado para o outro.

Andrew deteve-se por momentos a olhar para a mãe. Não lhe ocorria argumento algum. Aquele barulho tão próximo de si deixava-o com os nervos em franja. Saiu do quarto, fechando a porta atrás de si.

O telefone estava novamente a tocar e ele atendeu:

— Estou?

— *Ahn*drew? — perguntou a voz do seu agente. Também era de Brooklyn, mas pronunciava o A de forma muito arrastada, com o que impressionava actores e patrocinadores.

— Sim, daqui *Ahn*drew. — Sem se rir, fazia sempre esta brincadeira com o agente, o que ele nunca parecia perceber. — Não precisavas de ligar. Os guiões do *Dusty Blades* estão terminados. Vais recebê-los amanhã.

— Estou a telefonar por causa de outra coisa, *Ahn*drew — continuou o agente, com um tom de voz muito suave e influente. — As queixas acumulam-se nas histórias do *Blades*. São mais lentas do que um caracol. Nunca acontece nada. *Ahn*drew, não estás a escrever para o *Atlantic Monthly*.

— Eu sei que não estou a escrever para o *Atlantic Monthly*.

— Acho que esgotaste o assunto — disse o agente de modo delicado, cortês. — Acho que devias tirar umas férias das histórias do *Blades*.

— Vai para o diabo, Herman — retorquiu Andrew, sabendo que o agente havia encontrado alguém que lhe escrevesse os guiões mais baratos.

— Isso é lá maneira de falar, *Ahn*drew! — queixou-se Herman, com o tom de voz ainda calmo mas um tanto ofendido. — Afinal, sou eu quem tem de ficar no estúdio a ouvir as queixas.

— Que coisa triste, Herman — disse Andrew. — É uma imagem digna de pena. — E desligou.

Coçou reflectidamente a nuca, voltando a sentir o pequeno caroço por trás da orelha.

Encaminhou-se para o quarto e sentou-se à secretária, olhando de forma inexpressiva para os apontamentos destinados à sua peça, que jaziam, impecavelmente empilhados, a amarelecer de um dos lados. Tirou o livro de cheques e as facturas do mês, espalhando-as à sua frente.

— Cento e onze dólares — murmurou, enquanto voltava a conferir, e adicionava e subtraía, com os olhos a arder do esforço, as mãos a tremer ligeiramente porque o aspirador continuava ligado no quarto da mãe. Lá fora, no campo de jogos, mais rapazes haviam chegado e formado um campo interior, e lançavam a bola à volta das bases, gritando uns com os outros.

Dr. Chalmers, setenta e cinco dólares. Isso foi para a mãe e para o seu estômago.

Oitenta dólares para a renda da casa. O tecto por cima da sua cabeça equivalia a dois *Ronnie Cook e os Seus Amigos*. Cinco mil palavras para a renda.

Buddy estava nas mãos de *Flacker*. *Flacker* poderia torturá-lo durante seis páginas. Depois, poderíamos ter *Dusty Blades* a apressar-se para o socorrer, com *Sam*, de barco, e o barco poderia estar a meter água uma vez que o condutor se encontrava às ordens de *Flacker*, e poderia surgir uma luta durante as seis páginas seguintes. O condutor poderia ter uma pistola. Poderia até ser usada, mas certamente não seria apreciado porque a mesma cena já havia ocorrido, pelo menos, quatro vezes.

Mobiliário, cento e trinta e sete dólares. A mãe sempre ambicionara uma boa mesa de sala de jantar. Não tinha empregada, dizia, portanto ele tinha obrigação de comprar-lhe uma. Quantas palavras para uma mesa de sala de jantar?

«Vá lá, *baby*, passa pelas duas bases!», gritava o rapaz na segunda base lá fora no campo. «Vamos!»

Andrew sentiu vontade de ir buscar a sua velha luva e de se juntar a eles. Quando ainda andava na faculdade, costumava sair aos sábados logo às dez da manhã. Ia para o campo lançar bolas e saltar de base em base. Corria, corria o dia inteiro, entrando em jogos de rua até ser demasiado tarde para se conseguir ver alguma coisa. Agora estava sempre cansado e mesmo quando jogava ténis não mexia bem os pés por se sentir exausto, batendo a bola de forma desajeitada e ao acaso.

Espanha, cem dólares. Valha-me Deus!

Cento e cinquenta para o pai, para honrar a sua folha de pagamentos. O pai tinha a seu cargo nove pessoas a quem dava a fazer pequenas engenhocas de metal que depois tentava pôr à venda em lojas de quinquilharias. No final de cada mês, Andrew tinha assim de honrar a folha de pagamentos. O pai fazia questão de passar sempre um recibo.

Flacker está prestes a matar *Buddy* de raiva e desespero. Em lágrimas, *Dusty* encontra-se sozinho. Sam está ferido. A caminho do hospital. *Buddy* desaparece como por magia instantes antes de *Dusty* chegar. *Flacker*, muito prazenteiro e melífluo. Confronto. «Onde está *Buddy*, *Flacker*?», «Referes-te ao rapazola?», «Refiro-me ao rapazola, *Flacker*!»

Cinquenta dólares para o professor de piano de Dorothy. A sua irmã. Mais uma rapariga feia. Talvez acabasse por aprender a tocar piano. Então, um dia, iriam ter com ele e dizer: «Dorothy está pronta para a sua estreia. Estamos apenas a pedir-te que alugues a Câmara Municipal por uma quarta-feira à noite.

Adianta lá o dinheiro.» Nunca iria casar. Era demasiado inteligente para os homens que a queriam, e demasiado feia para os homens que ela queria. Comprava os vestidos no Saks. Ele teria de sustentar durante a vida inteira uma irmã que só se vestia do Saks, e pagar ao professor de piano cinquenta dólares por mês, todos os meses. Dorothy tinha apenas vinte e quatro anos, uma esperança de vida normal de, pelo menos, quarenta anos, doze vezes quarenta, mais vestidos do Saks e a Câmara Municipal de tempos a tempos…

Os dentes do pai — noventa dólares. O custo de manter um homem moralizado na sua luta perdida contra a idade.

O automóvel. Novecentos dólares. Um cheque de novecentos dólares parecia muito austero e impressivo, como uma colónia penal. Ele partiria de automóvel, encontraria um lugar nas montanhas, escreveria uma peça. Todavia, nunca conseguiria ir muito longe com *Dusty Blades* e *Ronnie Cook e os Seus Amigos*. Vinte mil palavras por semana, todas as semanas, repetindo-se tal como os domingos no calendário. Quantas palavras tem *Hamlet*? Trinta, trinta e cinco mil?

Trinta e três dólares para o Best's. Foi da camisola para o aniversário de Martha. «Ou dizes que sim ou que não», declarou Martha no sábado à noite. «Quero casar-me e já esperei tempo suficiente». Se casamos, pagamos renda de duas casas, eletricidade, gás, telefone duas vezes, e compramos meias, vestidos, pasta dentífrica e cuidados médicos à mulher.

Flacker remexia alguma coisa no bolso. A mão de *Dusty* surge abruptamente, agarra-lhe no pulso, tira-lhe a mão para fora. O pequeno canivete de *Buddy*, que *Dusty* lhe dera de presente de aniversário, está agora na mão de *Flacker*. «Flacker, diz-me onde está *Buddy Jones* ou mato-te com as minhas próprias mãos.» Soa um gongo. Flacker pisou num alarme. As portas abrem-se e o compartimento enche-se com os seus guarda-costas.

Vinte dólares para o Macy's, gastos em livros. Parrington,[1] *As Principais Correntes do Pensamento Americano*. Como é que *Blades* se encaixa n' *As Principais Correntes do Pensamento Americano*?

Dez dólares para o Dr. Farber.

«Não consigo dormir à noite. Pode ajudar-me?»

«Costuma tomar café?»

«Tomo uma chávena de manhã. É só.»

Comprimidos, para serem tomados antes de dormir. Dez dólares. Resgatamos as nossas vidas das mãos dos médicos.

Se casarmos, alugamos um apartamento no centro da cidade porque é disparatado viver deste modo em Brooklyn; e compramos mobiliário, quatro compartimentos repletos de mobiliário, camas, cadeiras, panos da louça, parentes. A família de Martha é pobre e não está a caminhar para nova, portanto, seriam três famílias, com rendas e roupas e médicos e funerais. Andrew levantou-se e abriu a porta do roupeiro. No interior, empilhados, viam-se os guiões que ele escrevera nos últimos quatro anos. Iam de um lado ao outro do enorme armário, uma ponte de milhões de palavras de uma parede à outra. Quatro anos de trabalho.

Próximo guião. Os guarda-costas aproximam-se de *Dusty*. Ele ouve *Buddy* a gritar no quarto ao lado.

Quantos mais anos?

O aspirador roncava.

Martha era judia. Isso significaria esgueirarmo-nos para alguns hotéis, se é que o faríamos, e não conseguirmos nunca escapar a uma certa tacanhez de espírito do mundo que nos rodeava; e quando os maus momentos chegassem ali estaríamos, à deriva naquele mar perigoso.

[1] Vernon Louis Parrington (1871-1929), historiador americano e autor de uma importante obra que lhe granjeou o Prémio Pulitzer na categoria História em 1928: *Main Currents of American Thought*. (*N. da T.*)

Sentou-se à secretaria. Mais cem dólares para Espanha. Barcelona caíra e as longas trincheiras empoeiradas batiam agora em retirada para a fronteira da França, com os aviões a sobrevoarem-nas. Sentindo-nos culpados por não estarmos, também nós, numa estrada coberta de poeira, ensanguentados e transidos de medo da morte, doamos cem dólares, achando ser demasiado e, ao mesmo tempo, nada que alguma vez possa ser suficiente. Três terços de *As Aventuras de Dusty Blades* para os mortos e moribundos de Espanha.

O mundo sobrecarrega-nos, dia após dia, com novos fardos que vão aumentando o peso sobre os nossos ombros. Levantemos uma grama e descobriremos estar a transportar uma tonelada. «Casa comigo», insiste ela, «casa comigo». Então o que faz *Dusty*? Que diabo pode ele fazer que ainda não tenha feito? Durante cinco tardes por semana, durante um ano, *Dusty* esteve nas mãos de *Flacker*, ou nas mãos de outra pessoa qualquer que é *Flacker* mas tem outro nome, e de todas as vezes escapou. E agora?

O aspirador roncava agora no corredor, do lado de fora do meu quarto.

— Mãe! — gritou. — Por favor desliga essa coisa!

— O que disseste?

— Nada.

Andrew somava os extractos bancários. Os números mostravam que a conta estava quatrocentos e doze dólares negativa, e não cento e onze, como o empregado do banco dissera. Não lhe apeteceu voltar a somar. Guardou as facturas e os extractos num envelope para a sua declaração de rendimentos.

— Força, Charlie! — gritou um rapaz no campo de jogos. — Lança uma rápida!

Apetecia-lhe ir jogar com eles. Mudou de roupa e calçou um par de sapatilhas antigas que estavam no fundo do roupeiro. As calças velhas ficavam-lhe apertadas. Gordo. Se algum dia se desleixasse, se acontecesse alguma coisa e ele não pudesse fazer exercício, implodiria como uma casa; se adoecesse e

tivesse de ficar acamado e a convalescer… Talvez *Dusty* tivesse uma faca numa bainha, debaixo da manga… Mas como? A renda, a comida, o professor de piano, as empregadas do Saks que vendiam os vestidos à irmã, as raparigas desenvoltas que pintavam as engenhocas de metal na loja do pai, os dentes na boca do pai, os médicos, todos a viverem das palavras que tinham de sair da sua cabeça. Repara, *Flacker*, sei o que estás a tramar. Didascália: Som de um disparo. Um gemido. Rápido, antes que o comboio chegue à passagem de nível! Vejam! Está a ganhar-nos terreno! Rápido! Será que vai conseguir? Irá *Dusty Blades* interceptar o bando desesperado de falsificadores e assassinos na corrida para o iate? Serei eu capaz de aguentar? Os anos, os anos que temos pela frente… Engordamos e as rugas por baixo dos olhos tornam-se permanentes, e bebemos em demasia e pagamos cada vez mais aos médicos porque a morte está mais próxima e não há uma pausa, não há férias da vida, em ano algum podemos dizer: «Não quero tomar parte neste, queiram desculpar.»

A mãe abriu a porta:

— Martha está ao telefone.

Andrew seguiu-a ruidosamente com as suas sapatilhas com pitons, segurando a luva velha e rasgada. Fechou a porta que dava para a sala de jantar para mostrar à mãe que se tratava de uma conversa privada.

— Olá — disse ele. — Sim. — Ouvia com expressão séria. — Não — respondeu. — Julgo que não. Adeus. Boa sorte, Martha.

Deteve-se a olhar para o telefone. A mãe entrou e ele ergueu a cabeça e encaminhou-se para as escadas.

— Andrew! — chamou-o. — Quero perguntar-te uma coisa.

— O quê?

— Podes dispensar-me cinquenta dólares, Andrew?

— Oh, meu Deus!

— É importante. Sabes que não te pediria se não o fosse - É para Dorothy.

— Para que precisa ela deles?

— Vai a uma festa, a uma festa muito importante, com a presença de imensa gente influente e ela tem a certeza de que lhe pedirão para tocar…

— Os convites são a cinquenta dólares por cabeça? — Andrew deu um pontapé no primeiro degrau e um pequeno pedaço de lama seca soltou-se das sapatilhas.

— Não, Andrew — A mãe empregava o seu tom de voz preciso-de-dinheiro. — É para um vestido. Não pode ir sem um vestido novo, é o que diz. Vai lá estar um homem de quem ela anda atrás.

— Ela não vai engatá-lo, com ou sem vestido — respondeu Andrew. — A sua filha é uma rapariga muito feia.

— Eu sei. — As mãos da mãe inquietaram-se ligeiramente, de impotência e tristeza. — Mas sempre é melhor se, pelo menos, fizer o que estiver ao seu alcance. Sinto tanta pena dela, Andrew…

— Toda a gente vem ter comigo! — gritou Andrew, com o tom de voz subitamente a elevar-se. — Ninguém me deixa em paz! Nem por um minuto!

Ele chorava agora e voltou-se para o esconder da mãe. Ela olhou para o filho, surpreendida, abanando a cabeça. Abraçou-o.

— Faz apenas o que quiseres fazer, Andrew, tão-somente isso. Não faças nada que não queiras.

— Pois… — respondeu Andrew. — Pois… Desculpe. Eu dou-lhe o dinheiro. Desculpe ter gritado consigo.

— Não mo dês se não quiseres, Andrew. — A mãe dizia isto com toda a sinceridade, acreditando nas suas palavras.

Ele riu-se.

— Eu quero, mãe, eu quero.

Andrew afagou-lhe o ombro e desceu os degraus, seguindo em direcção ao campo de basebol, deixando-a perplexa no cimo das escadas.

O sol e a brisa deixavam o campo aprazível e durante uma hora esqueceu-se de tudo o resto, porém, movimentava-se com dificuldade. O braço doía-lhe na zona do ombro sempre que lançava a bola, e o rapaz que jogava na segunda base tratou-o por Senhor, o que não teria feito no ano anterior, quando Andrew tinha vinte e quatro anos.

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