

ANGLO SAXONICA

REVISTA **ANGLO SAXONICA** SER. III N. 13 2017

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

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**SPECIAL SECTION ON / SECÇÃO TEMÁTICA SOBRE
RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-1936)**

Editors / Organizadores J. CARLOS VIANA FERREIRA (ULICES)
and CARLA LAROUCO GOMES (ULICES)

Are you as Anglo as I am Indian?

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Are you as Anglo as I am Indian?

1. Two contemporaries who never met

There is no record of Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) and Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954) ever having met each other. The latter though was acquainted with the writer's father, John Lockwood (JL) Kipling (1837-1911), who she knew well, as the curator of the Lahore Museum, a government institution. A material proof of this is the autographed photo of JL Kipling in Sorabji's legacy. Both authors did however coincide in a number of features, the most important of which and a major issue in their literary and essay works, their mixed identities. Colonial and postcolonial identities have long been subject to scrutiny and academic approach under Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies, since they provide an outline of complexity which allows the understanding of a unique set of circumstances, based on four main keywords: race, class, gender and nationality.

Born in India, in a prominent family in local cultural life, thus moving in the British community, Kipling witnessed the Indian society of his days, namely as a journalist in several newspapers, which led him to different locations and made him familiar with everyday life and different social classes. As for Sorabji, the first woman barrister in India, she moved in the political, social and literary circles, both in India and in Great Britain, since her childhood and youth, first as a promising student and, later, in adult life, as an influential and committed reformer in her country. Therefore, the two lived between both countries and cultures (among other places, since they were also world travelers), and interpreted in their own way this split condition.

They were also controversial, which makes them all the more interesting. Kipling as a face of jingoism, among a complex ideological positioning which has been traced in his writings, and Sorabji as a defender

of the British imperial effort and opponent of the Home Rule movement, political statements that are considered whenever their contributes are approached. This is not all: writing had a major role for both — Kipling made it his main activity, as a journalist, novelist and poet, thus it may also define him. His creative insight as a Westerner into the East provided literary material, which, at the time, made him the youngest author to be awarded the Nobel Prize, as the following passage of his autobiography, in a reference to *Kim*, one of his major works, states: “Now even in the Bliss Cottage I had a vague notion of an Irish boy, born in India and mixed up with native life (...) and christened him ‘Kim’” (Kipling 133). As for Sorabji, though her writings are only a part of her legacy, since she was mostly a hands-on social reformer and activist, they have, nevertheless, although not being the result of exclusive devotion, made the difference from other women writers of her time. Most of these writers, drawn by the exoticism of the country, approached India in a superficial manner. Denying this approach, and profiting from a deep knowledge of past and contemporary India, Cornelia Sorabji took advantage of this background in her books. This condition enabled her to productively debate die-hard traditions and practices in her country such as the *suttee*, women seclusion and child marriage. She permanently updated this knowledge by interacting with the population, namely those deprived of voice and visibility, thus with no access to institutions or representation of their interests.

Striking about both is that neither lived in a shell. This feature is all the more evident when their books are approached many years after their first publication date, in an era that values democracy and individual civic involvement. On the one hand, Kipling as a journalist by definition got acquainted with all sorts of people from all social classes, professions and activities, moved between both communities, the British and the Indian, was familiar with people of different creeds, and found in India the inspiration and the material for his literary work; this, notwithstanding the fact that he lived in a space — one that could be considered a limbo — reserved for British subjects in the *Raj*, due to social status. His experience granted him a holistic knowledge of the society he lived in, as he states: “I have told what my early surroundings were, and how richly they furnished me with material” (Kipling 197). On the other hand, Cornelia Sorabji inherited a modern frame of mind from British culture, which inspired her social work.

Thus, both produced an output in writing which was the consequence of first-hand experience and resulted from a personal approach to the issues that interested them. One example is an incident, recalled by Charles Allen in his Kipling biography. When returning to Allahabad from Simla through the Gugger River, Kipling was stopped by a flood, which allowed him to pass the time talking to the crossing keeper. The account of this experience was put in writing in the *Pioneer* and later in a short story *In Flood-Time* (Allen xviii). A similar situation can be recalled about Cornelia Sorabji who, following the launching of the *Khaddar* campaign and as a member of the Bengal Home Industries Committee, voiced the opposition to the banning of the western cloth in India, promoted by Gandhi and represented by the moto "Spin! Spin! Wear nothing but home spun" (Sorabji, *India Calling* 262). Sorabji argues that the outcome of this initiative, with a major influence in the life of millions "was a war by Indians upon, for the most part, the poorest of Indians" (262) and built her argument after talking to the town traders. These traders faced reprisals and intimidation from Gandhi's followers and, consequently, feared death, as the following passage testifies:

Trams were stopped, and men and women were dragged out of them, their clothes torn off their backs. Pedestrians were stopped, and equally maltreated. The shops of the little traders were raided, and such goods as were not hand-woven were burnt. When Lancashire-made goods were not burnt, school-boys lay in wait for customers, armed with iron bound sticks (*lathis*), and threatened the utmost penalties, beating those who defied them. (262)

This passage is an example that, as far as her political statements are concerned, Cornelia Sorabji did not write or make judgments from hear say. In this matter, and particularly on the occasion cited, she also relied on the testimony of her clerk, S. N. Bannerjee, threatened by those school-boys: "Don't you know Mahatma Gandhi's order? Buy home-spun *dhotis*. We will beat you to death if you disobey" (262). Furthermore, she did not form an opinion based on a single source alone. As a Committee member, she visited the mills across the river in Calcutta, "to ascertain the relative cost of hand-made and machine-made goods" (262) and reached the conclusion that a mill's production was unbeatable. Her point was that

this campaign drove to unemployment and poverty, as hand-woven production of *saris* and *dhotis*, men's and women's daily wear, respectively, were time consuming and, consequently, costlier to produce.

2. Something of themselves in writing

2.1. Mixed identities

For the benefit of cultural analysis, the interesting approach to these two individual and inspiring paths is to pinpoint the extent to which their mixed identities influenced their writing and were taken into account at all times by both authors. This essay will approach the autobiographies of each writer and also their most relevant and recent biographies written by others. This essay's attempt to compare the autobiographies of both writers, however, becomes a risky endeavor, since Kipling, an extremely private person, destroyed a great number of personal papers and letters during his lifetime, a destruction that was later carried out after his death by his wife. Even *Something of Myself*, as an autobiographical account, is not entirely reliable, as it was also edited. Fortunately, despite such destruction, the irony which pervaded the whole book was still evident.

One can acknowledge, though, that Kipling's and Sorabji's mixed identities contributed to a double allegiance, both to Great Britain and to India, territories through which they wandered in different periods of their lives and that are represented in their writings. Had they had the chance to make each other's acquaintance, and being Kipling a Bombay born British white male writer, and Sorabji a *Parsi* Indian anglicized woman barrister born in Bombay as well, the identity issue would probably have been a matter of conversation between the two contemporaries. Both did profit from an intercultural basis that shaped their formative years and influenced them throughout life. And, once debating this issue, it would not have been inappropriate for Kipling to challenge Sorabji on the subject: "Are you as Anglo as I am Indian?". Kipling owed inspiration to India for his major literary works, on the basis of which the Nobel Prize was awarded to him. Sorabji, in her turn, owed to Great Britain the open doors of the Somerville College, at the University of Oxford, part of the formal education that enabled her to become the first Indian woman barrister and a pioneer in her country.

Place is not less meaningful. Having Bombay as origin — both refer the Bombay Presidency — was not the same as being born elsewhere, since, in the mid-nineteenth century, the city was described as a multicultural space, condition fuelled by a booming economy. These circumstances lead to inquire, first of all, what home/Home meant for both of them. In the case of Kipling and Sorabji this results in a revelation of what belonging to two different civilizations meant. Let us hear about Cornelia Sorabji's feelings and what the concept (in fact two concepts) meant, in a passage that enlightens a duality or, at least, a preference:

I have been privileged to know two hearthstones, to be homed in two countries, England and India. But though it is difficult to say which "home" I love best, there has never, at any time, been the remotest doubt as to which called to me with most insistence. (...) Always, early or late, throughout the years, it has been "India Calling" (...). (*India Calling* ix)

As for Kipling, the word(s) Home/home also stand for different meanings, as his biographer writes. On the one hand, "[i]n October 1867, Alice discovered she was pregnant again. Unwilling to face the prospect of another painful delivery in difficult conditions, she went Home in February 1868" (Allen 41), which meant moving from India to the country of origin of the family, England. On the other hand, in the very same page, the same author uses the word home (with no capital letter) to present another meaning associated to it, in the sense of a main and original place of residence: "Perhaps he had good cause, having been first uprooted from his home and his beloved ayah and then abandoned by his mother among strangers in a cold, bleak land" (42). Even if Charles Allen, a relatively recent Kipling biographer, does not identify where *Home* and *home* are, after reading about the writer's childhood, one immediately knows what he is writing about.

2.2. Ethnicities

Taking into account both birthplace and family background, Kipling and Sorabji fit the frame of the concept of Anglo-Indian in their time, a term used in the nineteenth century, though not exclusively, for people of British origin living in India. This definition is nowadays obsolete. Then, according

to this concept, not only the place these individuals were born in mattered, but also their mixed ancestry, and the time they had lived in both territories. This concept is also used by Allen, who defines it as an attempt “to describe the British in India”, but also refers to it as applied to people of mixed ancestry, Asian and British, in his book presented as “a biography of Kipling in India and India in Kipling” (Allen xiii). Kipling is, furthermore, referred to as “the embodiment of the spirit of the British Empire” (xvi). Allen’s biography stands out among a great number of books by other biographers to the extent that it covers the period of childhood, one that Kipling himself underlined as crucial to his identity, and which was undervalued by other biographers, according to Allen, and also the years spent in India and devoted to journalism.

Allen explains his choice of emphasising those years due to a need of scrutiny, not only because those were the formation and identity building years, where Kipling’s writing is rooted, as the following sentence shows: “India was where Rudyard Kipling was happiest, where he learned his craft, where he rediscovered himself through his writing and came of age as a writer” (xvi). More than a century and a half later, a contemporary and new definition is attributed to the concept of Anglo-Indian, nowadays referring to a minority of mixed Eurasian ancestry, which makes the English their mother language.

As for gender issues, by the time Kipling started his career in journalism, this activity was a male-only ground. The same could be said about other professions, such as the ones related to Law. In the year Kipling started his career in the *Civil and Military Gazette* (1883-1889), Sorabji entered Deccan College, in Pune (1883), and by 1889 she moved to England and started her training at Somerville College, University of Oxford, where she was the first woman to read Law. Three years later, she returned to India to face a long and hard battle that revealed gender rooted discrimination, but that eventually led her to her post as a legal representative on *Purdahnashin* women.

3. Innovative approaches

These mixed identities made them both innovators in their time, Kipling as a short story writer, as well as journalist, poet and novelist, and Sorabji as the first woman barrister in India, writer and *cultor* of several literary genres, from biographical to the anthropological account, witnessing her experience of social intervention in India. Their production ranged from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries and, while Kipling was one of the most popular and widely read writers of his time and beyond, Sorabji's circumstances overshadowed her writings and social work, almost to the point of oblivion. In 2004, a new edition of *India Calling* by Trent Editions stressing her pioneering profile as a *Purdahnashin* woman legal advisor, followed by a revealing biography by her nephew Richard Sorabji, *Opening Doors. The untold story of Cornelia Sorabji, Reformer, Lawyer and Champion of Women's Rights in India*, shed a new light into her life and work.

These editions profit from trends and approaches encouraged by Postcolonial Studies, under the more comprehensive umbrella of Cultural Studies, which value and develop themes previously considered unworthy of academic attention. Among the most prolific critical productions under such approaches are precisely the complex identities resulting either from being a British subject due to a set of circumstances working in India, like Kipling, or an Indian with a British upbringing and education, like Cornelia Sorabji. Considering that personal experience shaped both authors' writing, it is undeniable that ancestry, origins and travels, as well as their lifelong debates and causes, influenced their conducts and choices.

Kipling's bond to India, and namely to Bombay, defined as "Mother of cities to me/ for I was born at her gate" ("Dedication to the city of Bombay"), are clear in his writing, and the two lines quoted above stress the importance of the birth place to the writer and poet. Another cornerstone in his identity is the English language, which he uses to write his works. Readers might find this a natural choice, being the writer of English ancestry, and a statement of his Englishness. Sorabji also wrote in English, a language she mastered. English was not the only language Kipling was familiar with, though. Due to his intimacy with the *ayah* (nanny) and the *meeta* (male servant) as a child, the author leads us to believe that he was introduced to their vernacular languages "that one thought and dreamed

in” (Kipling 4), thus making part of his imagery. For Cornelia Sorabji, the situation was fairly the same: she was brought up English, but was also encouraged by her family to master the vernacular languages.

A great number of other Indian authors wrote in English then and nowadays, since it is a *lingua franca*, which opens immensely the scope of their audiences. However, some of these Indian writers nourish a complex relationship with the language of the former Empire, until today. Raja Rao (1908-2006) is an example of that. In the Author’s Foreword to *Kanthapura*, the latter admits the difficult process of writing in English: “The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own” (Rao vii).

3.1. Empire and a frame of mind

The aim of this essay, as said before, is to approach the way the complex identity issues in both authors and in their respective biographies, *Something of Myself* and *India Calling* and *India Recalled*, shaped their lives experience and writing, in the sense that their legacies are revealing of the way the British Empire conditioned and influenced the lives of its subjects. In the case of Kipling, India shaped the writer’s world vision, enriched by an experience acquired mostly in India and during his travels around the world, as a powerful trigger for literary imagination. Kipling’s writing results not only as a reworking of a life experience, but also as artistic creation, absorbing what it had to offer; knowing that he moved from India to Great Britain as a child, then back to India in his teens and that he later traveled as an adult to the United States, Africa and the Far East, his first memories are clearly stated in the beginning of his biography, when subject to a close reading:

My first impression is of daybreak, light and colour and golden and purple fruits at the level of my shoulder. This would be the memory of early morning walks to the Bombay fruit market with my ayah and later with my sister in her perambulator, and of our returns with our purchases piled high on the bows of it. Our ayah was a Portuguese Roman Catholic who would pray — I beside her — at a wayside Cross. Meeta, my Hindu bearer, would sometimes go into little Hindu temples where, being below the age of caste,

I held his hand and looked at the dimly-seen, friendly Gods.
(Kipling 3)

Kipling's writings are thus inextricably connected to India. So much so, as Allen believes, that his contribution to literature ended when his India-inspired stories exhausted themselves:

India was where Rudyard Kipling was happiest, where he learned his craft, where he rediscovered himself through his writing and came of age as a Writer. India made him, charged his imagination, and after he left India in March 1889 at the age of twenty-three he was most completely himself as an artist when re-inhabiting the two Indian worlds he had left behind. He lived thereafter on borrowed time, a state of higher creativity he was unable to maintain once he had exhausted his Indian memories with the writing of his masterwork *Kim*.
(Allen xvi)

Cornelia Sorabji is, to a certain extent, a similar case as a world traveler, in whose imagery and values Great Britain played a major role, as a beacon of civilization, some of the characteristics of which she wished to see replicated in India. The recalling of proceedings in Parliament, namely through sessions that she attended while studying at Oxford or during her tenures in London ("Life in England was not all work") (*India Calling* 28), in her biographical writings, are an example of her reverence towards British culture and the achievements of the British (namely the English people) as a collective entity and as a community. As for the influence of the British in her mother country, she states: "India, under the Crown, was in the throes of reconstruction: the English machinery of administration, of education, of development, had not only been set up, but was in working order" (9).

Aware of the gap between the European civilization and India, as far as social and economic conditions were concerned, Cornelia Sorabji committed her life to working as a barrister and as a legal advisor to help *Purdanashin* women, in several cases not only clients but friends, access institutions and manage their lives in safety and dignity. The condition of these women when she took this position is described in the following passage: "I had found (...) instances where although the most efficient of men lawyers were indeed available, *Purdanashins* had no possible means

of access to or contact with them, the result being needless hardship and injustice” (102). Her social commitment was thus a consequence and an acknowledgement of the need for intervention.

As was the case with Rudyard Kipling, Cornelia Sorabji recalls a happy childhood and adolescence, the latter shaped by hard school and academic study and, in the last period of that phase in India, as a teacher; in the subsequent period in Oxford as a sponsored student, a condition that, some exceptions apart, had little or no similarity whatsoever with other contemporary women in Indian.

Curiously enough, if Rudyard Kipling recalls daybreaks as unique, in *India Calling* one spots a similar nostalgia about Cornelia Sorabji’s impressions of India, in the case of sunsets: “Sunsets — flaming gold and red-gold: or bruised or blue: or pale mauve and primrose: the deep shadows on the hills, folds in the broidered mantle of God: gold mohur trees trailing bloom: the green paroquets at Budh Gaya: the blue wood smoke in an Indian village” (5).

Be it day breaks or sunsets, the attitude is similar: the recalling of local landscape that impressed the two writers in an enduring way. Furthermore, the attachment to the city of Bombay is clear in both authors’ writing. Let us hear Kipling:

Mother of cities to me
As I was born at her gate,
Between the palms and the sea
Where the world-end steamers wait. (“Dedication to the city
of Bombay”)

Cornelia Sorabji, in her turn, also stresses an emotional bond with the same city: “I was born into a post-Mutiny world in the Bombay Presidency, at Nasik a town of pilgrimage of the orthodox Hindu” (*India Calling* 9). She nevertheless nourishes feelings for the capital of the British Empire: “London, and the way it caught one’s heart, first seen... the feeling of standing at the core of the traffic, one morning at the Exchange, and knowing one’s self utterly insignificant and alone, yet alive and perfectly companioned” (6).

The reader spots the moving of both between two worlds: the British social circle and the Indian one. The remotest origins of the Sorabji family are traced in the migration from Persia by the Parsees, following persecution

by the Muslims and, in order to protect the Zoroastrian religion, to India, in the seventh century. While keeping their identity traces, the family in Cornelia's generation and of her eight siblings was anglicised, her mother having been raised in an English household, by an English couple, Sir Francis Ford and his wife, Lady Ford: "We were therefore 'brought up English' — i.e. on English nursery tales with English discipline; on the English language, used with our Father and Mother, in a home furnished like an English home" (7). This notwithstanding the fact that the children of this family were 'compelled' to learn the languages of the Peoples among whom they dwelt (7).

As holders of such mixed identities, both embody an intercultural statement. None is strictly British or Indian, and profit from both cultures, heritages they rework in their own way. Their attention to detail is striking, since both biographies deal with memories of a whole lifetime, but never fall into what would be understandable generalisation. Dialogues are recalled for the record, allowing intense experiences to be conveyed to the reader. They describe impressions about food, the cold and the heat, characters among people they met along the way, episodes, both professional and personal, places and landscapes. In sum, they make their writing engaging to the reader.

4. Between East and West, and making the most of both

These standpoints came out in their writing. Both lived between East and West, and their respective identities were constructed based on those sources, albeit from two different starting points. For Kipling, the British ancestry, family environment and the English language, the allegiance to the British Empire, although of Indian birth; for Cornelia Sorabji the *Parsee* refugee and subsequent minority ancestry in India, of Indian birth and the allegiance to the British Empire by choice, tempered by family circumstances. Another common trait is that none met consensus in the reception of their writings and are till today controversial, nuanced, in the origin of lively debate and deserving of a non-biased approach. Believing that identity construction, however, does not thrive on ancestry alone, the phrase *true sahib* used by E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India* (1924) fits Kipling, to the point that Charles Allen uses it in the title of his 2007 book

about the author. Cornelia Sorabji herself was by some addressed as “*miss Sahiba*”, the recognition that they made themselves stand out from the crowd and deserve respect from others, due to their achievements.

The writing style of both, taking into account only the two autobiographies — it is consensual that Kipling’s poetry needs annotations to be fully understood — is clear, swift, engaging. It is made up of short sentences, assertive utterances, at the reach of the most learned readers, but also of lesser educated ones. No wonder for, as a journalist, Kipling had a hands-on approach, this resulting from being fifty per cent of the workforce at a given point — a huge task as he acknowledges — at the newspaper; as a social worker, a similar statement can be made about Cornelia Sorabji. None of them were office people, and both were aware of the world around them.

Reading Kipling’s biography *Something of Myself* is to wander through suggestions about the shaping of his identity: “Give me the first six years of a child’s life and you can have the rest” (Kipling 3). The first line of the autobiography is clearly a statement of his belonging to the place he was born in, Bombay, and of the influence of his first years of life from then on. The importance of India in the building of Kipling’s character can be compared to the relevance of the university years in Oxford for Sorabji. The first recalls his returning to India in 1882: “There were yet three or four days’ rail to Lahore, where my people lived. After these, my English years fell away, nor ever, I think, came back in full strength” (39). When expressing these feelings, he was not alone, as he was familiar with similar confessions by other contemporaries. Those express deeply rooted in-betweenness towards England, the country he had left behind, and the joy of returning to a place where he had been happy in the past and felt a bond with. When in England, Kipling’s mindset was still that of an Anglo-Indian, as is clear in the following passage of *Something of Myself*, for, although being in England, he values his earnings in rupees: “I was making money — much more than four hundred rupees a month — and when my Bank-book told I had one thousand whole pounds saved, the Strand was hardly wide enough for my triumph” (86).

If Kipling acknowledges that the first years of childhood were foundational for his identity, in his late teens he went through another life changing experience: his initiation in journalism. The head start years in

the profession revealed a committed and talented newcomer in local newspapers: the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore and later *The Pioneer* in Allahabad. This was the period when he got acquainted with the hard work and predicaments of newspaper editing:

My legitimate office-work was sub-editing, which meant eternal cuttings-down of unwieldy contributions — such as discourses on abstruse questions of Revenue and Assessment from a great and wise Civilian who wrote the vilest hand that even our compositors ever saw; literary articles about Milton. (And how was I to know that the writer was a relative of one of our proprietors, who thought our paper existed to air his theories?) (47)

The years between 1882 and 1889 were extremely productive for Kipling, namely in the publishing of short stories. At the end of the decade he puts an end to his journalism years in India, and travels with the intention of returning to London.

Cornelia Sorabji herself makes a similar statement about her beginnings. Also born in the Bombay Presidency, in Bombay, she takes her time to trace her *Parsee* ancestry moving from Persia to India, going back centuries before her birth. More than merely recalling facts, the writer underlines the unique circumstances of her existence: an in-betweenness caused by the fact that her mother, Francina Santya, born in India and raised by a British family, acquired “British ‘manners’ and attitudes”. Francina’s marriage to Sorabji Karsedji Langrana, member of the *Parsee* community, at a given moment converted to Christianity, underlined even more the anglicised profile of the future family.

During her childhood and adolescence, Cornelia Sorabji moved close to British social and political circles to the moment when, having been refused a scholarship to study in England, she became a sponsored student by a British private fund. Along with a British upbringing, Cornelia nourished respect and admiration for “the British effort”, about which she writes in *India Calling*, first focusing on the general aspects of the Raj administration in the country, namely those concerning education; as the narrator progresses through the years spent in the University of Oxford, during which she got acquainted with a great number of personalities of the political and literary circles, she underlines her respect for the institutions

and the ways of the British people, praising the best the British had to offer. She wished to see most of these institutions and political drive replicated in her country, an effort that she endured in her practice for decades as a barrister, representing the *Purdanashin* women, be it in Court, in case of conflict, or in the management of daily life.

It is crucial in both cases that both Kipling and Sorabji are intellectuals of their time. The first enunciates his beliefs in his poem *The White Man's Burden*, an exhortation of the enterprise of Empire, which was received as a justification of Imperialism. The poem verbalizes not only this overall belief about the responsibility of Western civilization towards world regions and their populations in states of development not comparable to the West, and the imperative of intervention, whether desired or not by those populations, but also the different aspects of the enterprise. Although not having been written on the subject of the British Raj, the poem is understood as a statement regarding colonial enterprises of the time in general. Reading beyond the first lines, the two lines, "Take up the White Man's burden, The savage wars of peace — Fill full the mouth of Famine And bid the sickness cease" (*The White Man's Burden*) are clear in conveying the notion of altruism from the colonising entity: to put an end to ignorance and disease among the populations, represented as "sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child" (*The White Man's Burden*).

5. A relation with power

It is interesting to note, in the writings of both authors, that none of their convictions meant a conflict with the belief and love of India. Indian culture is present in their legacies, in clear statements of how local heritage, traditions and identity can be nourished even under a foreign rule. Cornelia Sorabji lets her beliefs devoid of ambiguity in her books, as a defender of the British effort in India. In a country of such a diverse and extremely rich heritage, this utterance cannot be taken literally, and Cornelia Sorabji's approach to the controversial tradition of *suttee* is an example of the complexity of this issue.

Born in the mid-Victorian period, when the British Rule in India was at its height, both authors experienced the split identity that was common

to a great number of their contemporaries and would be a challenge to a significant number of the population that witnessed the rise of the Home Rule movement and the fall of the British Empire and beyond.

Migration movements between continents, or within the same continent and between different countries and cultures, involving large contingents of people, namely during the second half of the twentieth century had to deal with the anxieties related to the process of identity construction between continents — the ones they were born in, and the ones they moved to — be it for safety reasons, or for economic survival.

Both writers used empowerment granted by expressing their experiences and imagination in their works. Knowledge of two worlds, the East and the West, provided them with an advantage that overcame prejudice and even ignorance about the British Raj and Home, as far as moral values and progress are concerned. This rendered them wiser than most of their contemporaries, namely Cornelia Sorabji, quoted as a Victorian *sage*. It resulted into recognition, as people ahead of their time, Kipling with an innovative input, and Sorabji, if you can sum up the contribution of both, a conveyor of the syncretism of cultures, the British and the Indian, that was her major aim and that turns her into the interpreter of culture as defined by T. B. Macaulay, in his “Minute on Education”.

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ABSTRACT

This essay approaches the common features of two contemporaries, Rudyard Kipling, journalist, poet and novel writer awarded with the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1907, and Cornelia Sorabji, first woman barrister in India, writer and essayist, both British subjects born in India during the Victorian Era, based on their autobiographies, *Something of Myself*, *India Calling* and *India Recalled*. Those common traces between both authors, who never met, although they were born in the same city with one year of difference, are approached from the perspective of their identities, of their relation with their home city, Bombay, and with Great Britain, exploring the *nuances* of the concepts of *home* and *Home* during the Empire, and the way Indian and British cultures influenced their writing. We propose an insight about the similarities between both, about the way writing played a major role for them and how it was revealing of their commitment to the causes of their time. We also underline the modernity of these authors' writing, the method and the way they related to their sources, be them of inspiration, in the case of Kipling, or of a journalistic character, in the case of Sorabji.

KEYWORDS

Kipling; Sorabji; mixed identities; Empire; Home and home; writing

RESUMO

Este ensaio analisa os pontos de contacto entre dois contemporâneos, Rudyard Kipling, jornalista, poeta e romancista galardoado com o Prémio Nobel da Literatura em 1907, e Cornelia Sorabji, primeira mulher a exercer advocacia na Índia, escritora e ensaísta, ambos súbditos britânicos nascidos na Índia na Era Vitoriana, a partir das respetivas autobiografias, *Something of Myself*, *India Calling* e *India Recalled*. As semelhanças entre dois autores, que nunca se conheceram apesar de terem nascido na mesma cidade com um ano de diferença, são abordadas na perspectiva das características identitárias mais marcantes, da relação de cada um com o local de origem, Bombaim, e com a Grã-Bretanha, e da forma como as duas

culturas influenciaram as suas obras literárias. Neste texto propomo-nos refletir sobre os pontos de contacto entre os dois, sobre como a escrita desempenhou um papel fundamental para ambos e foi reveladora do compromisso com as causas do seu tempo. Sublinha-se a modernidade da escrita destes autores, o método e a ligação com as suas fontes, sejam de inspiração literária, no caso de Kipling ou da origem da informação que veicula, no caso de Sorabji.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Kipling; Sorabji; identidades mistas; Império; casa e Pátria; escrita

Imperialismo e representações do Império em *Kim*, de Rudyard Kipling

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Imperialismo e representações do Império em *Kim*, de Rudyard Kipling

1. Sob o signo do “demónio”: Kim e a celebração do Império

Data de 1901 a primeira edição de *Kim*, o romance que Rudyard Kipling refere, na respectiva autobiografia, ter sido escrito sob influência do seu “daemon” e que classifica como uma obra “nakedly picaresque and plotless” (277), em claro contraste com a leitura que Munro (1964) faz da mesma:

Actually, a close reading of the novel reveals that KIM is not, as one might imagine, simply a teeming, panoramic view of nineteenth-century India with some intrigue and excitement thrown in for good measure, but is, in fact, a strikingly well-organized piece of writing which effectively sums up Kipling’s views on the administration of India and at the same time demonstrates his concept of the ideal man. (222)

Said considerou o romance de Kipling como “a master work of imperialism” (*Kim* 349) e Wegner descreveu-o assim:

(...) Rudyard Kipling’s celebrated portrait of India at the high watermark of British “formal” imperial domination, [which] has long occupied a special place in the complex field of imperialist literature. (129)

A dimensão analítica de *Kim* não se esgota, torna-se evidente, no que Munro (222) descreve como uma simples “visão pessoal de Kipling sobre a administração da Índia” e como um exercício de “demonstração do seu conceito do homem ideal”. Essa dimensão analítica deve, pois, alargar-se,

como sugerem as afirmações de Said e Wegner, às suas representações¹ do *Império*², enquanto manifestações do *Imperialismo*³ britânico, e da Índia, enquanto espaço de realização das mesmas, ou ainda, como sugere Munro, aos conceitos operacionais de *cultura*⁴ e *raça*⁵ enquanto elementos constitutivos da *identidade*⁶ do “homem ideal”. Deste modo, *Império*, *Imperialismo*, *cultura*, *raça* e *identidade* constituem-se como categorias conceptuais de análise, claramente expressas ou subjacentes no texto de *Kim*, a partir das quais construiremos a nossa abordagem à obra, implicando, necessariamente, em consequência da multiplicidade de afiliações que as mesmas encerram, uma contextualização histórica dos acontecimentos ou factos que determinam ou influenciam a leitura do seu significado respectivo.

¹ Na perspectiva de Pitkin “Except in its earliest use, however, this has always meant more than a literal bringing into presence, as one might bring a book into the room. Rather, representation, taken generally, means the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact” (Pitkin 8-9).

² De acordo com Howe “A kind of basic, consensus definition would be that an empire is a large political body which rules over territories outside its original borders. It has a central power or core territory — whose inhabitants usually continue to form the dominant ethnic or national group in the entire system — and an extensive periphery of dominated areas” (14).

³ Segundo Said, “Imperialism means the practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (8).

⁴ Para Jenks “In its most general and pervasive sense it directs us to a consideration of all that which is symbolic; the learned, ideational aspects of human society. In an early sense culture was precisely the collective noun used to define that realm of human being which marked its ontology off from the sphere of the merely natural. To speak of the cultural was to reaffirm a philosophical commitment to the difference, particularity and supposed plasticity that is ‘humankind’” (8)

⁵ Giddens refere-se-lhe como “[the] differences in human physical stock regarded as categorizing large numbers of individuals together” (760).

⁶ Para Woodward “Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live. Identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not. Often, identity is most clearly defined by differences, that is, by what it is not” (2).

Kim foi escrito e publicado num contexto historicamente marcado pelo *New Imperialism*, que Hobson designa por “aggressive imperialism” (9), caracterizando-o, politicamente, como “an expansion of autocracy” (25) e que McBratney define assim:

(...) that phase of British imperial history, from 1882 to 1906, during which Britain, prompted by the rise of European imperial rivals and by the outbreak of nationalist uprisings throughout the Empire, came to adopt a more self-conscious imperial policy. (23)

Rudyard Kipling emerge neste mesmo contexto, segundo McBratney, como:

(...) the unofficial laureate of empire, the writer who most clearly articulated the spirit of imperial consolidation and who most deeply inspired proponents of a more deliberately conceived and energetically prosecuted imperial project. (23)

Atente-se, porém, no facto de *Kim* surgir numa fase marcada pela popularidade descendente desta corrente, em consequência da vitória indecisa da Grã-Bretanha na Segunda Guerra Sul-Africana (McBratney 23), um acontecimento que não desmotivou Kipling de continuar a advogar um imperialismo enérgico:

(...) an assertive imperialism, but with increasing pessimism — less as a tonic for British expansionism than as an antidote to the national degeneration that he and others saw in Britain’s inept performance in the war against the Boers. (McBratney 23)

O crescente pessimismo de Kipling, associado ao sentimento de “decadência nacional” e à advocacia de um “imperialismo assertivo”, aos quais alude McBratney (23), imediatamente nos fazem recordar e remeter para o texto de *Recessional*, o poema que o autor de *Kim* compôs em 1897, por ocasião da celebração do jubileu de diamante da Rainha Vitória, um acontecimento que acabaria por constituir-se, por extensão, como um momento de glorificação do Império Britânico (Judd 37). O poema surge como uma espécie de anticlímax num contexto marcado por manifestações de patriotismo exacerbado em cerimónias e celebrações públicas de cariz político, militar, religioso e cultural, carregadas de profundo simbolismo (Judd 37).

Através de *Recessional*, Kipling critica o jingoísmo vigente e convida à introspecção, factos que, em nenhuma circunstância, devem ser interpretados como esmorecimento do sentimento patriótico do autor ou do seu apoio ao Império e, conseqüentemente, à política e vocação imperial da Grã-Bretanha e à sua *missão civilizadora*. A mensagem de *Recessional* deve ser entendida, pelo contrário, como uma manifestação profunda desses sentimentos, alicerçada numa concepção de Império moldada por um permanente e persistente espírito de missão e de serviço à pátria em prol da elevação civilizacional e do desenvolvimento do *Outro*, no contexto do qual o essencial não deve ser subordinado, preterido ou confundido com o supérfluo, leia-se, com o que Judd designa por “Jubilee extravaganza” (40). Kipling emitia, sob a forma de hino-poema, um apelo à humildade e um aviso sobre o carácter efémero de que pode revestir-se o mais orgulhoso — e poderoso — dos impérios, dedicando-o simultaneamente a todos quantos, estrangeiros e cidadãos britânicos, sem distinção de origem ou etnia, eram incapazes de, ou não desejavam, ver os perigos ocultados pelo patriotismo e imperialismo exacerbados, colocando em causa o interesse nacional (Judd 41).

O inequívoco comprometimento de Kipling com o Imperialismo e com o Império, sustentado num forte espírito de missão e na noção de serviço, ficam claramente expressos em *The White Man’s Burden*, também um poema, publicado em 1899, por ocasião da guerra americano-filipina (1899-1902), no qual o autor apela ao povo americano por ele considerado não apenas a outra grande metade da — grande — raça de falantes de inglês, mas igualmente os verdadeiros homens brancos com os quais a Grã-Bretanha partilharia a sua missão civilizadora global (Judd 42). Nele, Kipling não se limita apenas a exaltar a superioridade dos “verdadeiros homens brancos” sobre as restantes raças, sublinhando o respectivo dever — moral — de as governar e de elevar o seu patamar civilizacional, um dever que não deixa, porém, de classificar como um “fardo”, numa clara alusão aos custos, leia-se sacrifícios — humanos e materiais — inerentes (porém necessários) ao processo de construção imperial, ao mesmo tempo que, implicitamente, defende e sublinha a superioridade da matriz cultural e civilizacional anglo-saxónica. Uma superioridade que nos recorda e remete para o texto de *Minute on Education*, de Macaulay, quando este afirma:

What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India. The literature of England is now more valuable than that of classical antiquity. (94)

Considerados em conjunto, *Recessional* e *The White Man's Burden*, revelam entre si uma clara complementaridade que Judd tão bem sintetiza:

If 'Recessional' had urged sober restraint, introspection and a sensible set of national priorities, 'The White Man's Burden' pointed the way to a resolution of British difficulties through a process of detente and co-operation with the United States — manifestation of the Special Relationship well before the phrase had been invented. (42)

Pode concluir-se, assim, que a chegada de *Kim* aos leitores ocorre num contexto de transição, não apenas de século, mas igualmente do próprio sistema de relações internacionais, no qual os Estados Unidos emergem, progressivamente (a guerra americano-filipina de 1898-1902 marca o início desse processo), como potência mundial, leia-se imperial, em contraponto com o progressivo declínio do Império Britânico que perde, definitivamente, em meados do século XX, no seu ocaso, o estatuto de principal potência mundial.

2. Da modernidade e do progresso: representações do Império na Índia de *Kim*

Constituindo a Índia o elemento central na arquitectura imperial britânica, não será, pois, surpreendente que Rudyard Kipling, cidadão britânico nascido em Bombaim, em 1865, a tenha escolhido como cenário para o desenrolar da acção de *Kim*. São dois os elementos, no texto de *Kim*, que nos remetem para o contexto histórico e geográfico da produção da narrativa, o primeiro dos quais, inferido a partir da referência feita à revolta, permite situar os factos e acontecimentos narrados na Índia das décadas de 1880 ou 1890: “at the apex of the British Indian Empire” (Kling 297). O segundo, leia-se, a referência ao *Great Game*, remete-nos para a disputa entre a Grã-Bretanha e a Rússia pela respectiva hegemonia sobre o Médio Oriente e a Ásia Central (Kling 302), facto que assume centralidade na

construção da narrativa, leia-se aventura, na qual Kimball “Kim” O’Hara é protagonista e herói.

A celebração e defesa do Império e, simultaneamente, da Índia, não se esgotam, porém, nesses elementos. São múltiplos os exemplos que o texto nos fornece, surgindo, por vezes, subtis ao longo da narrativa, tendo o autor recorrido, não raras vezes, ao uso de metáforas e analogias, para representar categorias conceituais intrínsecas à sua concepção de *Império*, que espelham, também elas, naturalmente, a sua educação, formação acadêmica, vivências, experiências e relações sociais e familiar⁷, evidentemente marcadas pelo contexto histórico, social, cultural e geográfico em que se movimentou. Através desses exemplos é possível estabelecermos um conjunto de relações que nos remete, numa primeira instância, para a representação⁸ do *Império* associada à ideia de *modernidade*, simbolizada pelo *progresso tecnológico*, materializado na referência ao sistema viário e de transportes, com destaque para o caminho-de-ferro, ícone da revolução industrial operada na Grã-Bretanha, e na referência à rede telegráfica:

And how wilt thou go? It is a far cry to Delhi, and farther to Benares.

‘By road and the trains. From Pathankot, having left the Hills, I came hither in a te-rain. It goes swiftly. At first I was amazed to see those tall poles by the side of the road snatching up and snatching up their threads,’ — he illustrated the stoop and whirl of a telegraph-pole flashing past the train. ‘But later, I was cramped and desired to walk, as I am used’. (Kipling 13)

Uma modernidade que se afirma e constrói por oposição a um “mundo velho”, personificado pelo tibetano Teshoo Lama que, não obstante inicial-

⁷ Refira-se, como exemplo paradigmático, a remissão do texto para o universo familiar de Kipling por via da personificação da figura paterna no curador do Museu de Lahore, do qual o pai, John Lockwood Kipling, descrito na narrativa como um *scholar* e “visualmente” representado como “a white-bearded Englishman”, sabemos ter sido o arquitecto e primeiro curador do museu (Kipling 9).

⁸ Cf. Pitkin e nota 1 deste ensaio.

mente fascinado pelo progresso tecnológico, opta por manter-se fiel à tradição e retoma os “velhos-hábitos”:

‘(...) And thou art sure of thy road?’ said the Curator.
 ‘Oh, for that one but asks a question and pays money, and
 the appointed persons despatch all to the appointed place.
 That much I knew in my lamassery from sure report,’ said
 the lama proudly. (13)

Curador e velho lama personificam uma Índia em transição, dual, na qual a tradição de matriz oriental convive, justaposta, com a modernidade importada — e imposta — do ocidente, uma dicotomia bem expressa na reacção — de cariz paternalista, refira-se — do curador à resposta do velho lama à questão por si colocada: “[t]he Curator smiled at the mixture of old-world piety and modern progress that is the note of India today” (13).

Numa segunda instância, a relação entre Império e *modernidade*, pode ser simbolizada pelo *conhecimento científico*, representado, nomeadamente, através do museu e do respectivo curador. O Museu de Lahore, ao qual os nativos chamavam “the Wonder House” (3) e o velho lama se refere como “the Fountain of Wisdom” (217), é-nos descrito como um espaço onde, por analogia e oposição ao templo, não existe idolatria (Kipling 8), um espaço no qual não cabe o conhecimento sustentado em crenças ou superstições, alusão, simbólica, às culturas nativas da Índia e do Oriente, mas tão somente o conhecimento fundamentado na razão, na investigação e no progresso da ciência:

In the entrance-hall stood the larger figures of the Greco-Buddhist sculptures done, savants know how long since...
 There were hundreds of pieces, (...) now, dug up and labelled,
 made the pride of the Museum. (Kipling 8)

O museu surge-nos descrito como o espaço no qual o passado se projecta no presente, como um repositório da memória e da história, não apenas da Índia, mas de toda a Ásia (Plotz 63), aberto a todos quantos busquem a sabedoria (Kipling 7). Ellis interpreta-o, por sua vez, como um instrumento ao serviço do processo de colonização e legitimação do projecto imperial britânico: “In *Kim*, cultural cartographies that contribute to colonial knowledge and power include the Lahore Museum, which creates an archive of various Indian forms of art and culture” (316).

Na personagem do curador e guardião do museu, Kipling personifica o *savant*, retratado como “[a] white-bearded Englishman” (9), a figura paternal a quem devia dirigir-se “anybody who sought wisdom” (6) e que Plotz retrata como aquele que, por via do estudo e da interpretação das fontes documentais, nomeadamente das imagens fotográficas, adquire a capacidade de ler e de compreender toda a Ásia (63). É através dele que o velho lama toma conhecimento, pela primeira vez, dos trabalhos dos eruditos europeus, os quais, com recurso a essas e a muitas outras fontes documentais, procederam, nomeadamente, à identificação dos locais sagrados do Budismo (10). Através do museu e da acção do curador, Kipling demonstra, simultaneamente, o labor civilizacional da Grã-Bretanha na Índia e a superioridade do conhecimento — racionalmente fundamentado — de matriz europeia e ocidental, como o único conducente ao progresso. De novo somos recordados das palavras de Macaulay:

But, when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. (92)

As representações do *Império* na Índia não se esgotam, porém, nessas duas instâncias. O *Império* é igualmente representado através de referências às instituições de governo ou de justiça, como a que é feita ao “Punjab High Court” (5), que nos remetem, por analogia, para os princípios da “rule of law” ou ainda, por via do exercício autocrático, leia-se autoritário, do poder, por parte dos agentes e governantes britânicos, face às estruturas de governo nativas, leia-se estados e principados aliados, sempre que o superior interesse da Grã-Bretanha, leia-se do Império, assim o determinasse:

‘(...) Look, here is the letter from Hilas!’ (...) ‘Mister Rajah Sahib has just about put his foot in the holes. He will have to explain offecially how the deuce-an’-all he is writing love-letters to the Czar. (...) and there is three or four Prime Ministers of these parts implicated by the correspondence. By Gad, sar! The British Government will change the succession in Hilas and Bunar, and nominate new heirs to the throne. (231-232)

Como exemplo derradeiro da representação do imperialismo britânico em *Kim*, referimo-nos ao universo da diplomacia, “autorizada” e “não autorizada”, representada pelos agentes secretos, leia-se espíões, Kimball “Kim” O’Hara e Mahbub Ali, sem a qual, a par da acção militar, não teria sido possível à Grã-Bretanha construir e defender o seu Império da Índia:

(...) [Kim] sat, in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zam Zammah on her brick platform (...). Who hold Zam-Zammah, that ‘fire-breathing dragon’, hold the Punjab, for the great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror’s loot. (3)

‘All Mussalmans fell off Zam-Zammah long ago!’ (...)
‘The Hindus fell off Zam-Zammah too. The Mussalmans pushed them off’. (6)

Kim, montado sobre o “Zam Zammah”, representa, simbolicamente, a supremacia militar britânica e o triunfo do *Império* sobre os povos nativos da *Índia* — hindus e muçulmanos —, também ela simbolizada pelo Punjab.

3. O “homem ideal”: *Cultura, Raça e Identidade em Kim*

Cultura, raça e identidade constituem uma tríade invariavelmente presente na análise do discurso imperialista, não constituindo a nossa abordagem a *Kim* uma excepção, justificada, não por qualquer modismo, mas antes porque a riqueza e complexidade da narrativa a esses universos de análise nos conduzem, constituindo a personagem de Kimball “Kim” O’Hara aquela que melhor os representa:

(...) Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white—a poor white of the very poorest. (Kipling 3)

A complexa e rica personagem de Kim, que Kipling apresenta ao leitor no início da narrativa, transporta-nos para a diversidade — cultural, racial, social e económica — e para as contradições — e muitas desigualdades —

que caracterizam o espaço no qual se movimenta e interage, leia-se da Índia. Kim é, também, o resultado desse contexto que vai ajudando a moldar e a construir a sua identidade, ou melhor, a suas múltiplas identidades, “[s]o flexible are the boundaries of Kim’s identity” (Plotz 61): “What am I? Mussalman, Hindu, Jain, or Buddhist? That is a hard knot” (Kipling 121).

Kim não era inglês, mas sim filho de irlandeses (Kipling 3), o que o torna efectivamente descendente de europeus e, conseqüentemente, branco, porém, Kim, tinha a pele queimada pelo sol, o que o tornava, aos olhos de todos, negro, leia-se oriental. Em suma, Kim era simultaneamente europeu, negro e pobre (não pertencia à elite branca que dominava e governava). Falava, por opção, o vernáculo, leia-se as línguas dos nativos, em detrimento da sua língua materna, leia-se o inglês, vestindo-se e comportando-se como eles. Kim não era um *Englishman*, mas poderia ser, se o desejasse. Ao questionar-se sobre a sua religião, Kim refere apenas as religiões nativas, pagãs, sem nunca referir o cristianismo, representado na narrativa pelo capelão anglicano Arthur Bennett e pelo católico padre Victor. Kim não professava qualquer religião.

O protagonista de *Kim* é retratado pelo autor como uma personagem híbrida cujo carácter — universalista, fraternal e aclassista — pode reflectir e evidenciar, na perspectiva de Rahim, a identidade maçónica de Kipling (36). O carácter híbrido de Kim explica o conhecimento que possuía das culturas ocidental e oriental, e, conseqüentemente, a facilidade de entender e estabelecer a comunicação entre dois mundos que, tradicionalmente, coexistem mas não se mesclam. Esse atributo, a que se soma a idoneidade de carácter, em consequência do qual acabaria por ser recrutado como espião ao serviço de Sua Majestade Britânica, conduzem-nos ao estabelecimento de uma analogia com a figura do *intérprete* a que se referia Macaulay:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, — a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. (102)

Importa, no entanto, relevar, não obstante a multiplicidade de interpretações e leituras possíveis suscitadas pela complexidade e hibridez desta personagem, que a sua identidade, moldada pelos contextos culturais, educativos e sociais nos quais se movimenta, mas também por escolhas

personais, contrariam o estereótipo de que a raça, a casta, a religião ou a etnia determinam, por si só, a construção da identidade. “Kim was English” (Kipling 3).

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ABSTRACT

Kim, the novel by Rudyard Kipling originally published in 1901, is a fundamental object and starting point for the study of both the conceptions and representations of the *Empire* as manifestations of *British Imperialism* and of India as the elected space for its materialization, at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the demonstration of the Kiplingian concept of “ideal man”. Consequently, *empire*, *imperialism*, *culture*, *race* and *identity* constitute conceptual categories of analysis, from which the approach to the object of study is built, necessarily implying, as a consequence of the multiplicity of affiliations, the historical contextualization of the events or facts that determine or influence the reading of their respective meaning. Emphasis is put on Kipling’s unequivocal commitment to Imperialism and to the Empire, based on a strong missionary spirit and on the notion of service in favor of modernity and progress, *i.e.*, the elevation of the civilizational pattern of humanity, questioning, at the same time, the determinism of culture, race, caste, religion or ethnicity in the construction of the identity of the individual.

KEYWORDS

Kim; Empire; British Imperialism; culture; race; identity

RESUMO

Kim, o romance de Rudyard Kipling publicado originalmente em 1901, constitui-se como objecto fundamental e ponto de partida para o estudo, simultaneamente, das concepções e representações do *Império*, enquanto manifestações do *Imperialismo* britânico, e da Índia, enquanto espaço eleito para a realização das mesmas, nos finais do século XIX, bem como ainda da demonstração do conceito kiplingiano de “homem ideal”. *Império*, *Imperialismo*, *cultura*, *raça* e *identidade* constituem-se, conseqüentemente, como categorias conceptuais de análise, a partir das quais se constrói a abordagem ao objecto de estudo, implicando, necessariamente, em consequência da multiplicidade de afiliações que as mesmas encerram, uma contextualização histórica dos acontecimentos ou factos que determinam

ou influenciam a leitura do seu significado respectivo. Evidencia-se o inequívoco comprometimento de Kipling com o Imperialismo e com o Império, sustentado num forte espírito de missão e na noção de serviço em prol da modernidade e do progresso, leia-se da elevação do patamar civilizacional, da humanidade, ao mesmo tempo que se questiona o determinismo da cultura, da raça, da casta, da religião ou da etnia na construção, por si só, da identidade do indivíduo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Kim; Império; Imperialismo Britânico; cultura; raça; identidade

Travelling between Journalism and Literature: Kipling's Art in Crossing Fixed Textual Borders

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Travelling between Journalism and Literature: Kipling's Art in Crossing Fixed Textual Borders

When Kipling died, in 1936, although the urn containing his ashes was buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, few "men of letters" attended the service. High-imperialism days were over. The world was rapidly heading towards a new ideological and geostrategic order. After having taken the English literary scene by storm at the end of the 1890s and being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (1907), many voices would turn against him, because his reputation as a writer was considered to be inevitably linked to a repulsive ideology — an ideology that was jingoistic, ethnocentrist and racist.

His main *sin* as Michel Foucault (1971) would probably have put it, if he had written on Kipling's career — which he didn't —, was very much related to his inability to wake up outside the dominant order of discourse that helped maintain the British empire.

Even though the time-scale enslavement of the self produced by mainstream discursive formations is a decisive force in steering people to interpret the world in which they live in a specific direction, to categorize Kipling's prose as the epitome of imperialistic orthodoxy would be a grotesque oversimplification. Kipling's legacy as a writer is far more complex than we may think of at first sight. So what drives me, eighty years after his death, to evoke Kipling's legacy as a man of letters is his undeniable craftsmanship in journalistic reportage and literary storytelling.

Born in Bombay (30 December 1865), he returned to India at the age of 16, in 1882, to join his parents and started to work for the *Civil & Military Gazette* in Lahore as Assistant Editor. Later, in 1887, he was transferred to *The Pioneer* at Allahabad — "India's greatest and most important paper" (Kipling, *Something of Myself* 77).

Judging by his own words, his job as a journalist was extremely hard:

I never worked less than ten hours and seldom more than fifteen per diem; and as our paper came out in the evening did not see the midday sun except on Sundays. I had fever too, regular and persistent (...). Yet I discovered that a man can work with a temperature of 104, even though next day he has to ask the office who wrote the article. (57)

Covering “visits of Viceroys to neighbouring Princes on the edge of the great Indian Desert (...) reviews of Armies expecting to move against Russia”, food supply to the European community of Lahore, outbreaks of cholera and small-pox, floods on railways, village festivals, race-meetings, murder and divorce trials, amongst various other events or occurrences, was part of his daily routine as a young journalist (59).

Despite his work hardships, being a journalist gave him the opportunity of broadening his views on Anglo-Indian life and the subcontinent as a whole. His night wanderings at the back streets of Lahore, namely his visits to “all manner of odd places — liquor-shops, gambling and opium-dens” (64) — and his travels to the Native states near the Afghanistan border in the North-western frontier made him spend a lot of time outside the newswriting office and develop a keen interest towards India. He was not therefore unfamiliar with the bustling and the intrigues of the Great Game on the Grand Trunk Road, masterfully described in *Kim* (1901).

The writer’s inspiration, or his *Daemon* as he likes to call it, draws therefore a great deal of force and creativity from his experience as a journalist, in other words, “from the possibilities of common things seen” (71), after all the very stuff of journalism.

Henry Boyton, a contemporary of Kipling, in an essay entitled *Journalism and Literature*, published in 1904, in the United States, raises the question of the specific characteristics of literature as opposed to those of journalism:

Is ‘literature’ broadly ‘the printed word’, the whole body of recorded speech? Or is it the product of a conscious and regulated, but not inspired, art? Or is it, with other products of art, due to that expression of personality through craftsmanship we call genius? To the final question I should say yes; (...) The real business of journalism is to record or to comment, not to create or to interpret. In its exercise of the

recording function it is a useful trade, (...) a profession (...) never an art (...) it cannot embody principles of universal truth and beauty. (...) It records fact. (3-6)

In order to state the superiority of literature over journalism, Boynton calls our attention to “the plane of simple registry” *versus* “the plane of interpretation” (13).

Though much of Boynton’s discussion is inspiring and relevant for the present analysis, it goes without saying that from a post-modernist point of view there is no such thing as “simple registry”, or, its likely correlates, such as objectivity. The discursive constructedness of the real (interpretation, selectivity, framing and the use of rhetorical devices to convey specific meanings) is, theoretically speaking, firmly established. For instance, Itzhak Roeh, in an article entitled “Journalism as Storytelling, Coverage as Narrative” (1989), problematizes the issue of interpretation in a remarkable way: “do facts constitute stories?” — he asks. His paper’s main argument is that “stories constitute what we perceive as facts” (168). In other words, news items are never free of interpretation, free from a “discourse of desire” and from the old conventions of storytelling, aiming sometimes at “a meaningful closure of moral significance” (165).

As Roy Peter Clark observes, referring to post-modernist thinking:

(...) there are no facts, only points of view, only ‘takes’ on reality, influenced by our personal histories, our cultures, our race and gender, our social class. The best journalists can do in such a world is to offer multiple frames through which events and issues can be seen. *Report the truth? they ask. Whose truth?*” (165)

Speaking about truth or about the job of reporting truth, let us now pay attention to Kipling’s words on Fiction in a speech delivered at the Royal Society of Literature’s Centenary banquet (7 July 1926):

(...) the art I follow is not an unworthy one. For Fiction is Truth’s elder sister. Obviously. No one in the world knew what truth was till some one had told a story. So it is the oldest of the arts, the mother of history, biography, philosophy dogmatic (...) and, of course, of politics.

Fiction began when some man invented a story about another

man. It developed when another man told tales about a woman. (...) Most of the Arts admit the truth that is not expedient to tell everyone everything. Fiction recognises no such bar. There is no human emotion or mood which it is forbidden to assault (...). Why should there be? The man, after all, is not telling the truth. He is only writing fiction. While he writes it, his world will extract from it just so much of truth or pleasure as it requires for the moment. (*Writings on Writing* 80-81)

Caught up in this complex web of epistemological boundaries and concepts, whose dividing line becomes sometimes so blurred — on the one hand, literature, art and fiction, on the other, journalism, truth and facts —, I would like to analyse the way Kipling's artistry expresses itself in three of his writings. I am referring specifically to: i) "The Sutlej Bridge", a news article published in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, 2 March 1887; ii) the tale "The Bridge Builders", published in *The Day's Work* (1898), whose inspiration stems from his visit as a journalist to the Sutlej Bridge construction site at Ferozepore in the Punjab; iii) and finally "The Man Who Would Be King", published in *Wee Willie Winkie* (1888), one of his earlier stories, where the journalist/narrator is safely distanced from the embedded story of two unscrupulous adventurers, Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, he meets firstly in a railway carriage and later on in his newswriting office. A story of ambition, empire-building and brutal violence whose narrative structure — portraying the relationship between the journalist and his sources — echoes Kipling's experience as a *Pioneer* newspaperman in search for material worth publishing in one of the Native states (Rajputana).

So, let us proceed with his craftsmanship in reporting facts, namely his news report on the Sutlej bridge, "by one" — he says — "who knows nothing whatever about engineering" :

The Sutlej Bridge (...) is something over four thousand four hundred feet long, and is made of seven and twenty brick piers which will carry first a railway line fifteen feet broad; and above this line, a cart-road eighteen feet broad with a foot-path, four feet six broad, on each side (...). Rivetters (...) work like devils; and the very look of their toil, even in the

bright sunshine, is devilish. Pale flames from the fires for the red hot rivets, spurt out from all parts of the black iron-work where men hang and cluster like bees, while in the darker corners the fires throw up luridly the half nude figures of the rivetters, each man a study for a painter as he bends above the fire-pot, or, crouching on the slung-supports, sends the rivet home with a jet of red sparks from under the hammer-head. (*Kipling's India* 207)

Brilliantly descriptive, as we can see, his journalism weaves a sense of laborious work and sacrifice. British engineers and hundreds of coolies, working hard “in the blinding sun glare, and in the choking hot night under the light of flare-lamps” (211) to build the bridge piers between Ferozapore and Kazur that would withstand Indian Spring floods and cyclonic winds. At the end, his journalistic account resorts to a hypothetical modality — “Perhaps, a Viceroy or a Lieutenant-Governor will come and open that Bridge” (214) — to praise, though in an indirect way, the men of action (engineers and workers at large) *versus* the higher ranks of the imperial hierarchy responsible for bridges’ official openings, used to live most of their time in the cool climate and social exclusiveness of Simla situated in the Himalayas.

By and large, this journalistic account can’t be dissociated from the pride in the sense of duty and efficiency of the British engineering and engineers who painfully strove to change the face of the Indian sub-continent in the name of progress, commerce and the superiority of Western civilization in a vein that could remind us of the spokesmen of the energizing myth of the British empire from Thomas Carlyle to late nineteenth-century protagonists of the public school ethos. News reporting, in this case, is therefore inseparable, to paraphrase Itzak Roeh, from a “discourse of desire”, in this case the unfaltering faith in a heroic, selfless code of conduct that helped sustain the empire.

By comparison, this unwavering “discourse of desire” and subsequent monologic closure get incredibly far more complex when we read the story “The Bridge Builders”. Even though the action leading to the construction of the Kashi Bridge, a massive structure of stone and iron erected over the Ganges, supervised by Findlayson, the Chief engineer and his assistants, is a major achievement, it gets encapsulated by the text’s intertextuality,

plotting and multivoicing, which contribute to downplay the certainties of the British imperial dream. As Kipling recognises, telling the truth using fiction as a mode of narration requires infinitely much more labour.

In the desperate struggle against India's impending floods and destructive forces that threatened to pull the bridge apart, Findlayson, refusing to leave the place even if that would mean his death, swallows the opium pellets against fever handed over by his native foreman — Peroo, who speaks half Portuguese and half Malay.

At this point the text's dialogical dimension resorts to Hindu religious sacred texts, the ancient *Vedas* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, in order to question the idea of an imperishable empire, an empire that seemingly defies Mother Gunga, the goddess of the river Ganges, and puts it "in irons" (11), a metaphor for the colonized peoples' captivity.

As the story proceeds, Findlayson's opium-led dreamlike experience, which cast him out to a small deserted island, gives rise to the Hindu pantheon's debate over the work of the English in the subcontinent. All the Indian gods that occupy the river get assembled in a conclave. Their arguments, either for or against the maintenance of the scaffolding of the Kashi bridge, even though in the end they agree on its further construction, inevitably boil down to an ultimate Truth — the transient nature of Brahm's dream, or *maya*, denoting, according to Hindu philosophy, magic or illusion.

Gunga has prayed for a vengeance on the bridge-builders, and Kali is with her. (...) 'Are they Gods, then?' Krishna returned with a laugh looking into the dull eyes of the River. 'Be certain that it is only for a little. (...) 'Let Indra judge. Father of all, speak thou! (...) 'Ye know the Riddle of the Gods. When Brahm ceases to dream the Heavens and the hells and Earth disappear. Be content. Brahm dreams still. The dreams come and go (...). The Gods change, beloved — all save One!' (29-30, 33)

Seen in this light, only Brahm, the creative energy, is the immutable, everlasting Absolute — from which Nature and all individual forms stem in a temporary and ceaseless cycle.

Kipling's craftsmanship presents us with a multi-tiered narrative (night *versus* day, East *versus* West, technology *versus* superstition/Hindu

religiosity) in a juxtaposition of dualities and divisions that call for a sort of unachievable Hegelian synthesis. By transferring our attention from a historical, colonialist, real-time scale to a lengthier philosophical and supernatural one, the insightful narrator subtly questions the illusion of permanence of the British *Raj*, thus letting the story's philosophical dimension downplay the likely energizing effects of imperialist ideology.

Quite interestingly, bridge-building, an allegory for British hegemony and empire-building, is also one of the leitmotifs of *The Man Who Would Be King*, a story of two vagabonds, Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan, who concocted a scheme of building an empire in Kafiristan, far beyond the geographical limits of the direct rule imposed by the British *Raj*. As they confess to the journalist-narrator — who gradually grasps the newsworthiness of their seriocomic adventure — “we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us (...). We are not little men, (...) and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-whack” (217).

Sar-a-whack is an allusion to Rajah Brooke, an Englishman, as Benita Parry explains, “who in 1841 was rewarded with the principality of Sarawak as his own kingdom for aiding the Sultan of Brunei in suppressing a Dyak rebellion” (216). That is to say, mercenary assistance in exchange for large material profits.

Thus free from the officialdom of Anglo-India and from a stoic vision of empire-building, their professed heroism unravels, as Paul Fussell argues, the ironic and paradoxical mismatch between genuine kingliness or honour, on the one hand, *versus* kingship or wordly power, on the other. Their self-avowed idealism and ambition of making “Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us” (232) do not correspond to their greedy behaviour, oppressive and exploitative methods as colonizers.

Given the circumstances, Kipling's *Daemon* and artistry manage to merge the burlesque unfolding of the events (Dravot's self-proclaimed appointment as king of Kafiristan and Grand-Master of all Freemasonry) with references that mimic real historical occurrences that are part of the history the British empire in India, such as the politics of dividing and rule practised by Great Britain to dethrone Indian rulers, the colonized uprising known as the Indian Mutiny (1857) — “‘This business is our Fifty-Seven’

[says Peachey]. Maybe we'll make something out of it yet" (241) — or, white men's weapon supremacy over native warfare. Even the British honours system that consists of rewarding individuals' bravery and service to her Majesty's Crown is invoked.

'I won't make a Nation, says he [Dravot]. 'I'll make an Empire!' (...) 'we shall be Emperors — Emperors of the Earth! [...] I'd hand over the crown — this crown I'm wearing now — to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say: 'Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot.' Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you!' (...) 'An Emperor am I' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be knight of the Queen'. (234-35, 241)

Their delusion and grotesque fantasy to enlarge the empire's dominions culminate in Dravot's beheading by the tribesmen he set off to colonize, since his marriage to a native woman — frequently seen as a site of otherness and darkness throughout much of the literature of the British *Raj* — revealed his frailty (bleeding like a man) and abject ordinariness.

Despite having respected the second clause of their *Contract* and thus having resisted the body of the native woman — Peachey doesn't avoid being crucified and losing his mental sanity for his whimsical "fidelity to the idea of king in man" (Fussell 224), brilliantly denounced by Kipling at the level of plotting, characterization and language. Dravot's "bellowing like a bull" or starring up and down as "a stuck pig" (240) stands after all for the squalid expression of the fake self-proclaimed kingliness of the empire-builder.

This is, in short, the price Dravot and Peachey have to pay for their political cynicism; for resorting to an imperial rhetoric based on biblical allusions to frame the Western civilizing mission and also for playing with Masonic symbols and ethical principles of universal brotherhood and self-mastery. The tale's allegorical dimension and its masterful conciseness reveals Kipling's art of storytelling and his ideological ambivalence — that is, being able to talk the politics of *loaferdom* as the journalist-narrator and freemason alludes to after the first encounter with Daniel Dravot in a railway carriage: "We talked politics — the politics of Loaferdom, that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off" (210).

Switching from the domain of fiction to the realm of news reporting, these allegorical liberties and stories would certainly have been inconceivable for the young journalist working for the *Military Gazette* and the *Pioneer*. As he acknowledges, his job was very much limited by the behaviour and ideological constraints of Anglo-Indian society, unless he would like to jeopardise Kay Robinson's possibilities — his editor-in-chief — of receiving a knighthood. In other words, Kipling's freedom as a journalist — even though Edmund Burke, according to Thomas Carlyle (1841), admitted the emergence of a *Fourth Estate* or fourth power when referring to the *Reporters' Gallery*¹ —, was very much curtailed by his bosses' corporate interests and the narrow-mindedness of the Anglo-Indian establishment.

As a conclusion, we could say that when it comes to reveal the Truth, fiction can, as Kipling mentioned at the English Royal Society of Literature (5 May 1906), supersede in scope and depthness factual accounts of reality, thus aiming to reach higher levels of truthfulness.

The magic of Literature lies in the words, and not in any man. (...) the man with the Words shall wait upon the man of achievement, and (...) try to tell the story of the Tribe. All it demands is that the magic of every word shall be tried out to the uttermost by every means, fair and foul, that the mind of man can suggest. There is no room (...) for pity, for mercy, for respect, for fear, or even for loyalty between man and his fellow-man, when the record of the Tribe comes to be written.

¹ Carlyle, describing the newly found power of the "Man of Letters" and, by extension, that of the newspaper reporter, highlights the emergence a new fourth *Estate* to be added to the three existing estates (priesthood, aristocracy and commons). The press's watchdog role was therefore seen as instrumental to the growth of democracy: "Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important than they all. It is not a figure of speech or a witty saying, it is a literal fact, — very momentous to us in these times. (...) Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings (...) universal everyday extempore Printing (...). Whoever can speak, (...) becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is, that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite" (164).

That record must satisfy, at all costs to the word and to the man behind the word. It must satisfy alike the keenest vanity and the deepest self-knowledge of the present; it must satisfy also the most shameless curiosity of the future. When it has done this is literature of which it will be said, in due time, that it fitly represents its age. (*Writings on Writing* 50-01)

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores Kipling's art and craftsmanship as a storyteller, whether one is talking about real/factual news reporting or imaginary stories. The main focus falls on Kipling's experience both as a journalist and a writer in order to problematize the blurring line that sometimes divides these two genres of narrative regarding their commitment to telling the truth. Three texts were chosen for this purpose: "The Sutlej Bridge", a news article published by the *Civil and Military Gazette* (1887); and two tales "The Man Who Would Be King" (*Wee Willie Winkie*, 1888) and "The Bridge Builders" (*The Day's Work*, 1898). From a thematic perspective, these narratives are linked, on the one hand, by the act of construction — the construction of bridges or empire-building — and, on the other hand, by the role of the journalist in reporting what he sees and/or listens to. The analysis demonstrates that fiction/literature can often supersede in scope and depthness factual accounts of reality, thus aiming to reach higher levels of truthfulness.

KEYWORDS

Journalism; literature; constructivism; truth; British Empire

RESUMO

O artigo explora a arte e mestria de Kipling como contador de "histórias", sejam elas reais/factuais ou imaginárias. A sua experiência como jornalista e escritor é o nosso objeto de análise no sentido de problematizar a ténue linha divisória que, por vezes, separa os dois géneros de narrativa no que respeita o seu compromisso com o contar a verdade. Escolhemos para o efeito três textos: "The Sutlej Bridge", um artigo publicado pelo jornal *Civil and Military Gazette* (1887); e os contos "The Man Who Would Be King" (*Wee Willie Winkie*, 1888) e "The Bridge Builders" (*The Day's Work*, 1898). A unir estas narrativas, do ponto de vista temático, temos, por um lado, o ato da construção — a construção de pontes ou a construção de impérios — e, por outro, o papel do jornalista em relatar o que

vê e/ou o que ouve. A análise demonstra que a ficção/literatura pode muitas das vezes ultrapassar em dimensão e profundidade as narrativas do real, alcançando assim níveis superiores de veracidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Jornalismo; literatura; construtivismo; verdade; Império Britânico

Orwell on Kipling: an imperialist, a gentleman and a great artist

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Orwell on Kipling: an imperialist, a gentleman and a great artist

Five days after Rudyard Kipling's death on 18 January 1936, George Orwell published a short essay in the *New English Weekly* as an obituary or as a sort of tribute to the "household god" with whom he had grown up:

For my own part I worshipped Kipling at thirteen, loathed him at seventeen, enjoyed him at twenty-five and now again rather admire him. The one thing that was never possible, if one had read him at all, was to forget him. (CW X 409)

For a better appreciation of this passage we should remember that Eric Arthur Blair, later known by his pen name George Orwell, was born in 1903 in India, attended Eton College from 1917 to 1921, and served the Indian Imperial Police in Burma for five years until he resigned in 1928, due to a feeling of overwhelming revulsion and an intense loathing of the imperialism of which he had been a part (*Road* 126). Thus, it was Orwell, the anti-imperialist and radical socialist who, despite strongly disapproving of both Kipling's alleged jingo imperialism and his moral insensitiveness, acknowledged that Kipling behaved like a gentleman throughout his life and, by creating memorable catch-phrases of general use, had a streak of genius (CW 410). It is this complex picture of Kipling's work and personality, as sketched by Orwell, which I intend to explore.

In 1882, "at sixteen and nine months" (*Something* 29), Kipling returned to India to take up the post of assistant editor on the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore, a city he later described as "The City of Dreadful Night". In the next seven years Kipling would publish collections of verse (*Departmental Ditties*, 1886) and of short stories (*Plain Tales from the Hills*, 1888), which would prove but the first stage of the amazing literary success he achieved between the last decade of the nineteenth

century and the outbreak of the Great War, a success which reached its zenith when Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907.

The popularity Kipling enjoyed was so widespread that he was acclaimed the “Laureate of the Empire” (Gilmour, *Long Recessional* 123) and Orwell called him “the prophet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase” (CW XII 152). At the peak of his fame Kipling was sounded out for the Poet Laureateship and for a knighthood, but he consistently declined state-sponsored honours and never accepted payment for the usual publication of his anthems in the *Times*, such as “Hymn before Action” and “Recessional”, because they were of a “national character” (Gilmour 118). As Orwell declared with approval, there could be no doubt of Kipling’s *personal* decency “as no one so consistently refrained from making a vulgar show of his personality” (CW X 410).

Therefore, the heart of the matter was not Kipling’s personal decency but rather his political opinions, namely “the imperialism to which he chose to lend his genius” (*idem*). And Orwell showed his strong disapproval in the longer essay published in February 1942: “It is no use pretending that Kipling’s view of life, as a whole, can be accepted or even forgiven by any civilised person. (...) Kipling *is* a jingo imperialist; he *is* morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting” (CW XIII 151).

Notwithstanding these words of condemnation, Orwell admitted that the imperialism of the last two decades of the nineteenth century was “sentimental, ignorant and dangerous, but it was not entirely despicable” (CW X 410) as it would become in the 1920s, which Orwell dubbed “Pox Britannica” through the words of Flory, the protagonist in his novel *Burmese Days* (40). Orwell concluded his notice with this unexpected statement (CW X 410): “It was still possible to be an imperialist and a gentleman ...”

In fact, the late nineteenth century witnessed both the Scramble for Africa and the emergence of New Imperialism, and Kipling has often been identified with this complex phenomenon composed of a blend of aggressive expansionism, jingoism, racial pride and economic exploitation. However, although the terms “empire” and “imperialism” were used since the beginning of the twentieth century with a strongly negative connotation to describe an arrogant form of English nationalism, the imperial idea also entailed a sense of duty, of moral responsibility, of a paternal mission to be

fulfilled for the benefit of subject peoples since Edmund Burke's doctrine of trusteeship in the Speech on Fox's East India Bill in 1783 (Burke, *Speeches* 291). In the early and mid-Victorian periods, the emphasis shifted to the British colonies of settlement, and the idea of a great imperial destiny to establish British people and institutions overseas based on emigration and investment soon met with popular approval (Eldridge 1996 31). Kipling would write in "The Song of the Dead" (1893):

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the manstified town;
 We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go
 down.
 Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with
 the Need,
 Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.
 (*Collected* 179)

This powerful sentiment that Providence had blessed the Anglo-Saxon race and the English civilization was further encouraged by Sir Charles Dilke's racial nationalism in his work *Greater Britain* (1869). Assuming the Darwinian principle of natural selection and the competition for survival, he believed in the gradual extinction of the lesser races (Dilke, *Greater* 100) and in the civilising mission of the Anglo-Saxons, because Nature seemed to intend the English to direct and guide the Eastern peoples (194), educating the Indian races for freedom and planting free institutions among them (Eldridge, *Mission* 49). "In this view", as A. P. Thornton (*Idea* 39) remarked, "England's mission was a charge and a responsibility: and it agrees with Kipling thirty years ahead".

In fact, the widely-known poem "The White Man's Burden" (*Collected* 334-35) encapsulates Kipling's vision of the British Empire as a moral trusteeship for the welfare of "the silent, sullen peoples". The white man sacrifices his sons in their youth ("the best ye breed"), and paradoxically sends them to exile to "serve your captives" need", namely to wage "The savage wars of peace-/ Fill full the mouth of Famine / And bid the sickness cease", and to build bridges, ports and roads out of the deep sense of duty and commitment to the progress of subject races. An admirer of Carlyle's gospel of work (Rutherford vii), Kipling took the opportunity to vindicate the self-abnegation of the English in a response to his cousin's Margaret Burne-Jones question:

(...) ‘do the English as a rule feel the welfare of the natives much at heart.’ (...) What else are we working in the country for. For what else do the best men of the Commission die from overwork, and disease, if not to keep the people alive in the first place and healthy in the second. We spend our best men on the country like water and if ever a foreign country was made better through ‘the blood of the martyrs’ India is that country. (...) you can read for yourself how Englishmen have laboured and died for the peoples of the country. (Kipling, “Letter” 266-67)

A wide gulf separated Kipling’s lofty ideal from reality, as he was not aware of the disguised political and economic exploitation, but those qualities of hard work, honesty and selfless devotion to duty — as aspects of the code of conduct Kipling dubbed “The Law” — did redeem imperialism and its servants in India and elsewhere (Brantlinger 135). And it was Joseph Conrad himself who acknowledged in *Heart of Darkness* the power of that imperial idea at the end of the nineteenth century:

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it, not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea — something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to (...). (7)

Now we can understand why Orwell found this imperialism “sentimental and not entirely despicable”, expressed as it was in high-flown language extolling the spirit of service. However, alongside this idealistic frame of mind, and as the outcome of Disraeli’s policy of “occupy, fortify, grab and brag”, jingoistic outbursts, and the ensuing annexations in the 1870s and 1880s, together with the hardening of racial prejudice following the spread of Social Darwinism, the use of force against “lesser breeds” became a legitimate weapon in the struggle of civilisation against so-called superstition (Eldridge, *Imperial* 60). As Joseph Chamberlain declared: “You cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition (...) without the use of force” (*Foreign* 245). But Chamberlain should have explained why the fulfilling of such

noble mission on behalf of civilisation did entail dispossessing the natives from their own lands. Chamberlain, Kipling and most of their supporters were fully convinced they were aiming at “the happiness and prosperity of the people”, bringing them the rule of Law, security and peace, but downplaying the economic exploitation of those subject peoples. By describing the natives as wild, sullen, slothful, heathen, childish and diabolical the poem “The White Man’s Burden” conveys a clearly racist message and embodies the imperial frame of mind of the late 1890s, but it would be misleading for a better understanding of Kipling to concentrate our analysis on that poem and not to mention “Recessional” (1897), a *nuzzur-wattu* or averter of the evil eye as Kipling explained in his autobiography (*Something* 100). Published at the end of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, “Recessional” was a reaction against the overflow of imperial pride of the jingoistic sort and a call to humility. Kipling, the imperial Prophet, unexpectedly drew attention to the transience of empires (“The tumult and the shouting die; / The Captains and the Kings depart”), and warned his people against overlooking the fulfilment of the imperial mission.

Coming from the living symbol of imperialism, Kipling’s misgivings generated widespread surprise because they showed him concerned with the devotion to duty rather than with the extension of the Empire. In fact, as the rich variety of his works testifies, he cannot be reduced to the role of a bellicose, boastful and coarse imperialist, although Orwell’s charge of “moral insensitiveness” was fair, but incomplete. And I suspect that Orwell would also agree that Kipling’s works provide us with telling examples of his concern and sensitiveness to the sufferings of colonised men and women. As David Gilmour suggested, Kipling was a two-sided man who kept both sides of his character quite separate and opposite:

One side stayed with him in the office and the Club, mocking Indians for their political pretensions (...). And the other, intensely receptive to sights, smells and sounds, roamed the bazaars and the native states, absorbing the experience without feeling the need to censure. (*Long* 54)

A few examples will illustrate Kipling’s complexity and ambivalence. “Lispeth” in the collection *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) presents us with a sympathetic portrayal of a beautiful and independent-minded hill-

girl, Lispeth, who was deceived by an Englishman and a couple of Christian missionaries, a description interspersed with patronising comments such as “It takes a great deal of Christianity to wipe out uncivilised Eastern instincts, such as falling in love at first sight” (9) and “Being a savage by birth, she took no trouble to hide her feelings and the Englishman was amused” (9). Apparently Lispeth had assimilated to Western Christian ways. She had been baptised as an infant, lived with the Chaplain and his wife, never abandoned Christianity, and her own people hated her because she had become a white woman and washed herself daily (7-8). Tall and so beautiful like the Roman goddess Diana, she attended Sunday school and read all the books available in the house, so that we may rightly infer she was intellectually alive and no longer “a savage”. However, Lispeth intended to marry an Englishman whom she had found hurt on the hills and carried to the Chaplain’s house. During his period of recovery, the Englishman, “a traveller in the East”, flirted with Lispeth and assured her that he would come back and marry her, a statement also confirmed by the Chaplain’s wife. When Lispeth became aware some months later that she had been deliberately deceived by the representatives of Christian morality, she felt she had been betrayed and returned to her own people. And although the narrator describes this event in a patronising manner — “She took to her own unclean people savagely” — the fact is that the Chaplain and his wife were accused of being liars and, therefore, proved unable to retain the moral high ground.

Secondly, “Beyond the Pale” is another story of a man, Trejago, who stepped beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour and became involved with a 15-year old Hindu widow, Bisesa, in a doomed interracial relationship. The narrator starts with the ominous sentence “A Man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race, and breed” (127) but not only does the epigraph contradict it (“Love heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself”) but the love relationship is presented in a positive light as well, in spite of the tragic outcome. Trejago, an English civil servant who usually took up night wanderings and was criticised by the narrator for his excessive interest in native life — a feature he shared with Strickland, a famous Kipling’s character distinguished by the “gift of invisibility”(24) and by the “outlandish custom of prying into native life” (25) — managed to decipher an object-letter he

had received and started a dreamlike love relationship with Bisesa, thus crossing the racial divide and disregarding the narrator's advice that a man should keep to his own caste, race, and breed. This wild double life was grounded on true mutual affection and, although different cultural values proved unsurmountable and led to a tragic outcome, Trejago's behaviour was devoid of any derogatory or supercilious sign betraying superiority.

Lastly, "Without Benefit of Clergy", first appeared in a volume entitled *The Courting of Dinah Shadd* in 1890 and then published in *Life's Handicap* (1891), portrays another case of doomed interracial love between John Holden, a civil servant, and Ameera, a 16-year old Muslim girl whom he purchased from his mother. Their mixed-marriage defied convention and they experienced perfect happiness for some time: Ameera was "all but all the world in his eyes" and John her king (*Life's* 116). The birth of their son made him feel "full of riotous exultation" and further strengthened their passionate relationship, which both attempted to protect by resorting to rituals. Ameera prayed to the Prophet and to Beebee Miriam [the Virgin Mary], and John performed the birth-sacrifice by cutting the heads of two goats with a sabre (120). Then, suddenly, "the seasonal autumn fever" took away their son's life and "months of absolute happiness" came to an end (127). Soon afterwards, Ameera died of black cholera, their house was torn down and John felt devastated.

One of Kipling's best tales of interracial love, "Without Benefit of Clergy" has been regarded as displaying the failure of ritual (Gilbert 54), as well as John's and Ameera's incapacity to "transcend the racial differences and successfully fuse both cultures" (Meyers 59). According to Jeffrey Meyer, the marriage was doomed to destruction to sanction Kipling's "colour prejudice" and "superiority complex of his age" (62). On the contrary, I suggest that Kipling displays a deep understanding, tenderness and a highly sensitive empathy for the sufferings of the couple, and particularly for Ameera's overwhelming grief, together with a pervading feeling of respect for her behaviour and culture, which contradict charges of unfeeling racism and Said's orientalist stereotype.

All the stories mentioned above testify to the complexity of Kipling's portrayal of native Indian peoples, and undermine any attempt to reduce Kipling to a mere racist imperialist. As Orwell remarked, Kipling was the only English writer of his time to have added phrases to the language, such

as “East is East, and West is West”, “The white man’s burden”, “What do they know of England who only England know?” and “He travels the faster who travels alone”. Orwell deeply regretted that Kipling had chosen to lend his genius to imperialism, thus becoming “a kind of enemy, a man of alien and perverted genius” (CW X 410). A great artist, even though an imperialist. But Orwell should not have overlooked *Kim*, a novel in colonial India which almost redeemed Kipling from the charges of callous insensitiveness and racism.

In fact, *Kim* is a celebration of life in all its variety of colours, shapes, people, customs, religions and cultures. And it becomes all the more significant that the boy-hero Kim, whose father had been a Mason, is aptly nicknamed “Friend of All the World”, as he loved the game of life for its own sake (5). The wonderful spectacle of the Grand Trunk Road, all those castes and kinds of men going and coming — “brahmins, bankers and tinkers, barbers, pilgrims and potters” (51) — depict the “smiling river of life”, coming across “new people and new sights at every stride” (55). Kim is pure concentrated joy or, as Brantlinger remarked, “happiness personified” (136).

Edward Said (30) classified *Kim* as a master work of imperialism, but he took pains to emphasize its great aesthetic merit which could not be dismissed as the product of a disturbed racist imagination. But Gilmour (68) and other critics regard its imperialist framework a minor defect beside the book’s overall achievement, surely the most acclaimed of Kipling’s works which played an important role in the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature, 1907. However, as Orwell acutely observed, Kipling could not understand what was at stake, “because he had never had any grasp of the economic forces underlying imperial expansion (CW XIII 152). And to make matters worse, particularly after the First World War, Kipling abandoned the broadmindedness of his Indian years and, to quote Brantlinger (138), “lost much of his appreciation for the Diversity of Creatures that populated God’s creation” and became increasingly “an intolerant chauvinist”.

And yet, this chauvinist and jingo imperialist could write the following stanza, celebrating *Otherness* and taken from the poem entitled “We and They”:

All good people agree,
 And all good people say,
 All nice people, like Us, are We
 And everyone else is They:
 But if you cross over the sea,
 Instead of over the way,
 You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
 As only a sort of They. (*Collected* 790)

Kipling's many-sided creativity defies taxonomic straitjackets imposed by ideology or a particular literary taste. And that was why Orwell felt compelled to acknowledge, no matter how repulsive Kipling's imperialistic views were, then and now, that Kipling's artistry endures and continuously surprise us.

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ABSTRACT

Eric Arthur Blair, later known by his pen name George Orwell, was born in 1903 in India, attended Eton College from 1917 to 1921, and served the Indian Imperial Police in Burma for five years until he resigned in 1928, due to a feeling of overwhelming revulsion and an intense loathing of the imperialism of which he had been a part. Thus, it was Orwell, the anti-imperialist and radical socialist who, despite strongly disapproving of both Kipling's alleged jingo imperialism and his moral insensitiveness, acknowledged that Kipling behaved like a gentleman throughout his life and, by creating memorable catch-phrases of general use, had a streak of genius (CW 410). It is this complex picture of Kipling's work and personality, as sketched by Orwell, which this essay will explore.

KEYWORDS

Orwell; Kipling; Imperialism; creativity; empathy

RESUMO

Eric Arthur Blair, posteriormente conhecido pelo pseudônimo George Orwell, nasceu em 1903 na Índia, frequentou a escola de Eton entre 1917 e 1921, e cumpriu cinco anos como agente da Indian Imperial Police até que apresentou a demissão em 1928, devido um sentimento de profunda repulsa e repugnância pelo imperialismo de que tinha sido uma peça. Por isso, foi irônico que tenha sido Orwell, anti-imperialista e socialista radical que, apesar da forte censura que lhe mereceu o imperialismo jingoísta de Kipling e respectiva insensibilidade moral, tenha reconhecido que Kipling sempre se portara como um cavalheiro e tinha um toque de gênio, traduzido em expressões memoráveis de uso cotidiano. É este quadro complexo da obra e da personalidade de Kipling, esboçado por Orwell, que este ensaio visa explorar.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Orwell; Kipling; Imperialismo; criatividade; empatia

A Man of his Time: the Scientific and Political Grounds for Kipling's Imperialism

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A Man of his Time: the Scientific and Political Grounds for Kipling's Imperialism

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Empire expansion and imperial policies seemed to offer the ideal solution for Britain's recent loss of leadership in the world market and for its subsequent crisis of confidence. Such a reality contrasted with the former period of British prosperity, which had surfaced in the fabulous fifties and pervaded the country for two decades. Now poverty and anxiety escalated and the precarious situation of the lower class called for intervention by the State, whose activity progressively increased after the 1880s and was accompanied by the emergence of collectivism, which was politically and ideologically opposed to individualism.

It was also in the context of the Industrial Revolution that new theories on evolution emerged. Mainly due to Darwin's contribution, these theories played an extremely important part in the intellectual debate of the age, also having a profound impact on liberalism and the vindication of imperial expansion at the turn of the twentieth century. The response to such theories was not linear, though, as they gave rise to contradictory reactions. On the one hand, since they revealed that humankind was subjected to natural selection in the process of struggle for existence, social Darwinists and eugenicists defended that rivalry and competition were necessary for the improvement of the human race and for the elimination of the "unfit", whose fate should not be interfered with. This idea contrasted sharply with the liberal defence of social reform and State intervention as a way of promoting access to equal opportunities and providing the most vulnerable with the necessary assistance to engage in fair social dynamics. On the other hand, since the new theories on evolution underlined the interdependence of different organisms in the natural world, other groups, namely the new liberals, resorted to them in order to promote ideas of cooperation and mutuality.

Therefore, while, on the one hand, the Industrial Revolution exposed human fragility in a context of rapid social and economic change, thus making the need for social reform pressing, on the other hand, the new theories on evolution promoted the idea that only the fittest could survive in a context of social evolution and progress. Such theories gained an increased popularity in the last decades of the nineteenth century after the publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871). Thirty years after Darwin expressed his theories on the evolution of men, Wallace, while acknowledging that the large majority of naturalists had been converted to believe in the existence of natural selection due to "indirect proof", he would nevertheless state that it was "late in the day to deny its [natural selection's] existence without adducing some adequate and proved substitute" (306). Hence, the application of the "survival of the fittest" thesis to society was opposed to the needs of those who had been left in a more fragile situation by the process of industrialisation. Such a thesis held that the weakest should not be provided with assistance since, if they were unable to survive in the context of strife, then they should be left to their fate, as helping them would not only be useless, but would also contribute to the deterioration of the human race and represent an impediment to progress.

With the need to regain economic prosperity, then, imperialism entered upon a new phase and, initially, the ties established with South Africa seemed to provide a solution for Britain's loss of international leadership. Moreover, such ties were, in general, apparently accepted and morally sanctioned, since it was believed that Britain had a civilising duty towards the populations of the tropics. Back in the 1870s, Benjamin Disraeli's foreign policy had been recurrently criticised by liberals and commonly compared to the regime of Napoleon III and, consequently, to authoritarian practices, Empire expansion and military aggrandisement. Imperialism was, therefore, not widely welcomed (Koebner and Schmidt 147-148). Yet, a decade later, notwithstanding the international economic situation and the colonial rivalry, the new imperialism was characterised by a racial and nationalist element, which made it widely appealing and praised due to its liberal, nationalistic and democratic discourse.

In fact, the expansion of the Empire and the wars which accompanied it, especially the second Boer War, as well as a number of imperial campaigns, seemed to attract widespread public interest and, despite the fact that the

various views and debates on the Empire were controversial and differed enormously, the general feeling was that imperial expansion might achieve the objective of working towards the spread of civilisation. Besides the promotion of the “imperial sentiment” in schools, there were several initiatives which either celebrated imperialism or supported the instigation of an imperial sentiment, promoted, to a large extent, by imperial propagandist agencies, whose influence was relevant, comprehensive and undeniably present in different areas of society, rather than by the government (James 184, 202-203; Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* 2, 11; *Imperialism and Popular Culture* 10). Mackenzie, for example, regretted the fact that popular imperialism tended to be associated with jingoism and therefore with aggressive, offensive and xenophobic attitudes, but he nevertheless stated that the former was widespread and should not be so narrowly defined.

In fact, Koebner and Schmidt (196, 204-205, 216-220, 243) had already stressed the broad popular appeal of imperialism in the late 1880s and 1890s. They noted that the economic reasons behind the incorporation of South Africa into the imperial idea and the conflict between the European powers over the acquisition of the tropical Empire were generally overlooked and the spirit of the civilising mission proclaimed instead. This new conception of imperialism and the respectability of its mission were to reach its peak in 1898. The British Empire and the new kind of expansionism associated with it was then regarded as a just and beneficent one, with a very clear moral obligation to fulfil.

Bernard Porter (*Critics of Empire* 36-40, 326, 330-332), too, acknowledged the “rise of Empire sentiment” in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. A “more shouting” tone characterised this new phase of imperialism, which now included the tropics besides the white dominions. However, jingoism, intrinsically associated with the new imperialism, notwithstanding its “noisy features”, its arrogance and its disregard for the rights of Africans, somehow seemed to become more popular due to the resistance of those who feared it as an anticipation of greater evils, such as chauvinism, the worship of war and social Darwinism. For Porter, left-wing speculation about, resistance to, and condemnation of, imperialism actually transformed it into a much more serious movement than it actually was. According to this perspective, anti-imperialist reactions were therefore stimulated by the fear of what jingoism might be hiding,

rather than by its practical implications, which were not as serious as many were predicting. Nevertheless, even though movements on the left might not have been directly responsible for the eventual emancipation of the British Empire, they certainly had some influence on nationalist movements.

The imperial enthusiasm was soon to be shattered in the wake of the controversies over the Boer War, which shook the nation's confidence in the moral character of the new imperialism, split the British in their attitude towards the Empire and earned the country a general condemnation by Europeans, who associated imperialism with an inflated and arrogant form of English nationalism.

It was precisely during the Second Boer War that Rudyard Kipling, who was not only taken over by the imperial sentiment but also substantially contributed for its promotion, played a particularly relevant role as a publicist of Empire and imperial expansion. After having given a number of pro-Boer speeches, Kipling travelled to South Africa in 1900 and was in charge of the production of a newspaper for the British troops, entitled *The Friend*, whose intention was that of promoting a sense of national identity and lift the spirits of the British soldiers (Hamer). However, a year before that he had already published his famous "A White Man's Burden" and also "Absent Minded Beggar". "A White Man's Burden", which Kipling sent to Theodore Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, in the context of the Spanish-American War, clearly expressed the apparent duality of imperialism. On the one hand, the expression of its moral duty and philanthropic nature and objectives towards the colonies, which the following verses express:

Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives need;
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease.

On the other, the assumption that the natives, referred to as "captives" and "half devil and half child" were in a backward state of development and therefore needed the guidance of a superior race, "the best ye breed", to emancipate them from darkness. However, the success of imperialism would not necessarily be guaranteed, as we can infer from these verses:

And when the goal is nearest
 (the end for others sought)
 Watch sloth and heathen folly
 Bring all your hopes to nought.

Anyway, “The White Man’s Burden” was and still is generally interpreted as a vindication of imperialism, its civilising mission and the “burden” that it represented to the ones undertaking it.

“An Absent-Minded Beggar” was meant to be used for fundraising to help the families of the soldiers fighting in the Boer War. It was first published in the imperialist *Daily Mail* and therefore aimed at instilling people’s sympathy towards both the British mission in South Africa and the bravery of the British soldiers, who, in most cases, had left their comfortable lives to fight for their country. In fact, during the war, Kipling wrote about the fragile financial situation these were left in and about the difficulties the soldiers had to go through upon returning to civilian life, since many of them had to leave their lives, families and permanent employment, which resulted in a considerable cut in their income, with no guarantee that they would have their positions assured when they returned (Hamer). The “Absent Minded Beggar” was recited in theatres and Music Halls before the shows and embodied a whole “imperial feeling”. It was an immediate success. The intention was clear. That of appealing to people’s sense of duty towards those who had sacrificed their lives for the greater good of the country:

When you’ve shouted “Rule Britannia”: when you’ve sung
 “God Save the Queen”
 When you’ve finished killing Kruger with your mouth:
 Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
 For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?
 He’s an absent-minded beggar and his weaknesses are great:
 (...)
 Pass the hat for your credit’s sake, and pay — pay — pay!

(...)
 There are families by the thousands, far too proud to beg or
 speak:
 (...)

‘Cause the man that earned the wage is ordered out.
 He’s an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country’s call,
 And his reg’ment didn’t need to send to find him;
 He chucked his job and joined it — so the task before us all
 Is to help the home that Tommy’s left behind him!
 (...)

 Pass the hat for your credit’s sake, and pay — pay — pay!

Let us manage so as later we can look him in the face,
 And tell him what he’d very much prefer:
 That, while he saved the Empire his employer saved his place,
 And his mates (that’s you and me) looked out for her.
 He’s an absent-minded beggar, and he may forget it all,
 But we do not want his kiddies to remind him
 That we sent ‘em to the workhouse while their daddy
 hammered Paul,
 So we’ll help the homes that Tommy’s left behind him!
 (...)

 Pass the hat for your credit’s sake, and pay — pay — pay!

At the beginning of the twentieth century, then, and in Ivan Hannaford’s words: “The principles of political philosophy that had once guided human affairs were now replaced by the principles of natural selection and the processes of social evolution set in an ideological frame of reference” (325). The ideological frame of reference was related to the needs, results and ambitions of imperialism, whereas the interpretation of the principles of natural selection and the processes of social evolution dictated that the world was composed of a hierarchy of races with Europeans at the top and all others below (Horowitz, 1996).

Even though there had always been critical voices both of Empire and imperial expansion, at the beginning of the twentieth century the Empire’s pride suffered a definite setback and there was a growing belief that imperial expansion was morally wrong and had to be reversed, which made imperialists change their attitudes and consequently develop new approaches to imperialism and colonial government. Therefore, the apologists of imperial expansion justified the “Scramble for Africa” with the argument of necessity and also with the statement of a sense of duty and responsibility towards the natives. In fact, Joseph Chamberlain stated that:

Here [in possessions other than self-governed colonies] also the sense of possession has given place to a different sentiment — the sense of obligation. We now feel that our rule over these territories can only be justified if we can show that it adds to the happiness and prosperity of the people, and I maintain that our rule does, and has, brought security and peace and comparative prosperity to countries that never knew these blessings before. (213)

However, despite the apparent philanthropic concerns of the new imperialism, influential imperialists such as Joseph Chamberlain believed that the survival of the British Empire implied national efficiency, as the objective was that of transforming Britain into a proper imperial nation, and the British into an undisputed governing race (Porter, *The Lion's Share* 133-139; *Critics of Empire* 2-3). The connection established between efficiency and Empire by the liberal imperialists, whose leader was Rosebery, was in part due to their belief in the superiority of certain models of conduct, namely those of Japan and Germany. Owing to the decline in the birth-rate and the increasingly evident physical unfitnes, Germany proposed new measures of military reorganisation, social welfare and education, based on the need for eugenic improvement. A growing interest in German historical thought actually contributed to the discarding of the utilitarian doctrines of the early nineteenth century, which maintained that men and women were basically alike at all times (Hoppen 473). Nevertheless, a belief in the superiority of the British race was undoubtedly also fostered by the theories propounded by social Darwinism, which seemed to scientifically sanction the belief in the existence of superior races. These same races then believed that their imagined superiority justified their authority over those who found themselves at a less developed stage of civilisation.

Despite their attempts to keep the imperial sentiment alive, the democratic, civilising and respectable tone that accompanied the discourse of the new imperialists was discredited by the Boer War, which shook people's confidence in the moral character of the new imperialism. In fact, with the advent of the new imperialism, the notion of the struggle for existence between individuals came to be applied to the relationship between nations and races, and, at the turn of the century, the coincidence of the popularity of evolutionary theories with the scramble for Africa gave rise to so-called scientific racism.

The Liberal Party led by Campbell-Bannerman was the main opposition group to the imperialist Unionist government of the late 1890s. Yet, Liberals tended either to ignore important problems or to deal with them inefficiently, there was no agreement within the party, and, despite the fact that they attacked imperial policies, they did so without any conviction or coherence. However, Campbell-Bannerman was a strong opponent of the Boer War and actually referred to the practices of the British soldiers in South Africa such as the burning of farms and crops and the creation of concentration camps for Boer women and children as “methods of barbarism”, an expression which further generated turbulence and fierce discussion between imperialists and liberals.

In fact, if it is true that Britain emerged from the “Scramble for Africa” with the most substantial gains, as Goodlad (29-30) suggested, it is also evident that its victory in the Second Boer War owed little to military expertise and was made possible as a result of hotly contested practices. As a consequence, the enthusiastic jingoism that had previously characterised the popular attitude towards imperialism soon waned and anti-imperialism grew (Porter, *The Lion’s Share* 177-178). However, Kipling’s imperial sentiment did not wane. In 1906 Campbell-Bannerman established a Liberal government of which “the prophet of British imperialism in its expansionist phase” to use Orwell’s words, was highly critical. In fact, he had always been suspicious of Democracy and a vigorous critic of the Liberals who opposed imperialism.

I have argued that the Industrial Revolution eventually revealed its devastating impact on society; that the decline of laissez-faire and individualism represented a blow for liberal ideology; that collectivism and the apology of increased State action to mitigate the negative consequences of the prevailing system seemed to represent a viable alternative. In this context, the new theories on evolution, in all their complexity, were used by both individualists and collectivists, among others, who strove for the scientific sanctioning of their proposals. Such theories, though, also seemed to contradict the need for social reform, especially as far as providing the weakest with assistance was concerned, as that would represent an impediment to progress.

Externally, the “survival of the fittest” thesis would be applied to the relationship between races and communities, so as to prove that some were

superior and others inferior. This belief came to characterise the new imperialism which initially seemed to be of a philanthropic nature. In fact, Kipling himself seemed to defend a philanthropic kind of imperialism, as David Cody notes:

(...) its purpose (of the British Empire) was to maintain stability, order, and peace amongst the heathen, to relieve famine, provide medical assistance, to abolish slavery, to construct the physical and the psychological groundwork for "civilization", and to protect the mother country. It was an island of security in a chaotic world.

Nevertheless, assumptions about the value of the different races and the role of the most civilised ones in the process of evolution and progress definitely characterized imperialism, or imperialism(s). Even that of an eminently philanthropic nature.

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Abstract

Rudyard Kipling was, as George Orwell noted, “the prophet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase”. In fact, and as can be anticipated from the title, rather than analysing Kipling’s theories and proposals, it is my intention in this article to address some of the most relevant discussions in the field of science and politics at the time, namely as far as imperialism and the biological theory of society are concerned. These often intersected and offer us an enlightening backdrop for understanding Kipling’s own visions of Empire and imperialism.

KEYWORDS

Kipling; politics; science; Imperialism; biological theory of society

RESUMO

Rudyard Kipling foi, segundo George Orwell, “the prophet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase”. Na verdade, e como pode deduzir-se pelo título, não é objectivo deste artigo não analisar as teorias e propostas de Kipling, mas antes abordar alguns dos debates mais relevantes no domínio da ciência e da política no período em questão, nomeadamente em relação ao imperialismo e à teoria biológica da sociedade. A intersecção entre estes dois domínios era frequente e oferece uma contextualização pertinente e esclarecedora para um melhor entendimento das visões de Kipling sobre o Império e imperialismo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Kipling; política; ciência; Imperialismo; teoria biológica da sociedade

Could they have been “Masonic friends”? Rudyard Kipling and Annie Besant

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Could they have been “Masonic friends”? Rudyard Kipling and Annie Besant

Using *The Victorian Web* as a digital archive for my students¹ some years ago my internet wandering led me to read on-line a very interesting article by Andrew Prescott entitled “The Study of Freemasonry as a new academic discipline” (2003).² Actually, the relation established between gender issues, masculinity and empire not only stimulated at the time specific articulations with the British Empire but also with my other field of research. For some time I have been intertwining two outputs, that is, the British Empire and Digital Humanities, as the research team on Digital Humanities (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies) has also been working on a platform gathering the World Cultures in English(es) which started by studying the School of Arts and Humanities Library Collections in English.³ Therefore, for the sake of this

¹ “The *Victorian Web*, which originated in hypermedia environments (...) that existed long before the World Wide Web, is one of the oldest academic and scholarly websites. It takes an approach that differs markedly from many Internet projects. Today the Internet offers many excellent resources — and we use them often! (...) These sites take the form of archives that quite properly preserve their information in the form of separate images or entire books accessible via search tools. The *Victorian Web*, in contrast, presents its images and documents, including entire books, as nodes in a network of complex connections. In other words, it emphasizes the *link* rather than the *search tool* (though it has one) and presents information linked to other information rather than atomized and isolated”. <http://www.victorianweb.org/misc/vwintro.html>

² See Andrew Prescott. “The Study of Freemasonry as a new academic discipline”. (<http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/prescott03.html>). This article was first published in *Vrijmetselarij in the Nederland*. Ed. A. Kroon Leiden: OVN, 2003.

³ As a matter of fact our model implies a multidisciplinary team — librarians, academics, IT staff. It also implies the articulation among primary and critical sources, visual

paper and having in mind the possibility of considering Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) as “Masonic friends”, first of all I decided to consult the *Victorian Web* which, as a digital platform, gives access to digitized cultural heritage materials. In the case of Annie Besant I had the opportunity to contribute to the archive considering her shifting identities while in relation to Kipling I had the opportunity of using the data with my graduate students but only in peripheral ways, mainly when considering Besant’s and Kipling’s diverse modes of reading the empire as “in particular colonial discourse analysis is not merely a marginal adjunct to more mainstream studies, a specialized activity only for minorities or for historians of imperialism and colonialism, but itself forms the point of questioning of Western knowledge’s categories and assumptions” (Young 11). Truly, in the last decades, the western appropriation of British India was mainly done in accordance with postcolonial perspectives; these ways of perceiving and studying this cultural reality began also to be applied to visual representations which became essential to a complete understanding of cultural issues. As a matter of fact, “in many respects, Britain’s Empire, like much in the Victorian age, had the atmosphere and aesthetic charge of ‘a grand spectacle’ as Queen Victoria’s iconic place at the hub of Empire” so expressively shows (Ryan 15, 14). Following up on this, and according to Stuart Hall, the construction of the colonised, i.e., the other, was essential to the definition of colonial identities (Hall 136). This implied difference was set up (constructed) not only through the narratives of the specific communities but also through typical British discourses on the “others”, both in written and visual forms.⁴ The contrasting ways of representing Indian cultures — exemplified by Besant and Kipling — clearly contributed to manipulate today’s perceptions of India, a situation which can be at the present modified by the *corpora*

representations, marginalia and annotated essays which can be expanded into the overall life of many of the subjects taught at the Faculty. It also includes book specificities such as the type of paper used, the binding, etc., and also allows teachers to create research materials, namely for other levels of education.

⁴ As Edward Said points out the Occident constructed the Orient as a counterpart, a fiction of the “other” who continuously justifies the relations of power and their various discourses and creates conceptual dilemmas (Said 1-2).

selected to some digital archives (*The Victorian Web*, *South Asia Archive*, etc.). This expanding interest in different cultures which we recognize when consulting the above mentioned archives is, as a matter of fact, for us an on-going process in our research as it also helps to bring to the academia not only women prose writers, such as Annie Besant, Mary Carpenter, Flora Annie Steel, Maud Diver, Cornelia Sorabji, among others, but also diverse ways of representing visual otherness. And, I would like to give only one example from Queen Victoria, the Empress who never visited India (Ryan 14) and who is sometimes portrayed in an Orientalist scenario.⁵ In a male-dominated society some women critics were impelled to activity by means of their participation in periodicals, a situation confirmed by Josephine Butler who said that the conspiracy of silence of the press had forced women to create a literature of their own (Butler 402). However, Besant's attitude, undoubtedly far from the mainstream Victorian sage discourse, gained a stronger expression when she decided to become not only an active member of the National Secular Society but also an outstanding orator in the Hall of Science. There she had the opportunity to meet Charles Bradlaugh, and for both of them, it was the beginning of a fruitful and challenging companionship as she states in her *Autobiographical Sketches*:

As friends, not as strangers, we met — swift recognition, as it were, leaping from eye to eye; and I know now that the instinctive friendliness was in very truth an outgrowth of strong friendship in other lives, and that on that August day we took up again an ancient tie, we did not begin a new one. (116-117)

This episode represented her entrance in a masculine world in which she was able to fight for a stronger social participation. Effectively, during all her quest for identity, she judges her own ideological conduct as a very independent one (114-115). To a certain extent her written work shows many cultural and political expressions of the Victorian times with its challenging polarities. When studying these manifestations, we become aware that one of her achievements was undoubtedly "The Legalisation of

⁵ When dealing with Victorian visual representation, I would add that in Annie Besant's case the National Portrait Gallery has a very rich collection. See <http://www.npg.org.uk/>.

Female Slavery in England” (1876). Originally published in the *National Reformer* (4 June 1876), this pamphlet was issued in January 1885 as a contribution to the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, which was passed on April 1885. The pamphlet showed a form of resistance and questioned the myth of feminine chastity as well as the duality of Victorian sexual values which forgot “the nobility of sexual morality on man and woman alike” (Saville, Section II, no 9, 4-8). In this domain, Besant is also unique, as she dared to fight for sexual rights for women, with modern arguments, perhaps sometimes too autobiographical, as when she mentioned physical and mental incompatibilities which had justified her own divorce and subsequent emotional and social violence against her as she points out in *An Autobiography*:

And, in truth, I ought never to have married, for under the soft, loving, pliable girl there lay hidden (...) a woman of strong dominant will, strength that panted for expression and rebelled against restraint, fiery and passionate emotions that were seething under compression — a most undesirable partner to sit in the lady’s armchair on the domestic rug before the fire. *Que le diable faisait-elle dans cette galère*, I have often thought (...). (65)

Thus, she considered that people should pay attention to a society, which had generated all sorts of preconceptions against all processes that create and express desire. Aware of social and political discrimination, frequently originated by masculine insecurity, which feared women’s emancipation, she decided to include contraceptive information in the new editions of *The Law Of Population: Its Consequences, And Its Bearing Upon Human Conduct And Morals* (1877) that had not appeared earlier in the *National Reformer*.⁶ Nevertheless, the Obscene Publication Act (1857) which had aimed at the elimination of pornographic publications kept on being frequently used to forbid the circulation of information on contraception and physiology among working classes.

The same happened to Knowlton’s *Fruits of Philosophy*, with a preface from Besant and Bradlaugh, a prohibition that led to the famous

⁶ See Saville, Section II, no 10.

trial in 1877. The trial, whose proceedings can be consulted in Roger Manwell, *The Trial of Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh*, was essential to her quest. It is the best-studied moment of her life, though critics' several assertions have not yet been confronted. From the start, Besant and Bradlaugh had been fighting for the right of free publication and had explained how contemporary ideology, defending family and imperialism, was a social danger, namely due to male control over women's sexuality. Yet, their friendship still belongs to the non-canonical side of Victorian society, as he represented republicanism and atheism, and Besant symbolized women's transgression which were attitudes incompatible with the dominant feelings of Victorian society,⁷ strongly defended by men such as Rudyard Kipling.

Despite the fact that Besant called 1889 a "never to-be-forgotten year", we cannot but consider her own life as a slow process of maturation similar to the century endings in which we easily feel the flowing and interfaces of several experiences. As a matter of fact, during all her life, Besant was able to break from social and cultural norms, a reason why she was always very receptive to otherness. This was for her a way of innovating and not conform to the majority. Concerning Indian culture, she was worried not only about the expropriation of the practices of colonised people but also about the way the British made the appropriation of India's cultural features. In the 1890s, Besant abandoned all her social work and became immersed in theosophy, for many people a bizarre ecumenical and esoteric movement founded in America in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky, a Russian-born clairvoyant, Colonel Henry S. Olcott and William Q. Judge. Blavatsky's vision of theosophy incorporated aspects of Western

⁷ Thus, at the time it was decided to establish classes for popular education in the Hall of Science and "the prosecution of Mrs Besant's own studies at the University of London and her tutoring by young Aveling formed a vital contribution to the ultimate success of her work" (Nethercot 24). In spite of having been given honours on her botany examination, namely by Thomas Huxley, she was forbidden by the curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens to make use of them in order to improve her knowledge. His rejection was simply based "on the ground that his daughters often used the gardens and he did not dare let them be exposed to Mrs Besant's presence" (Nethercot 189) though after having protested she could use the gardens for scientific purposes before the public visiting time.

spiritualism and esotericism, Hindu mysticism, especially the belief in reincarnation, karma and spiritual evolution with speculations about the nature of God. Besant converted enthusiastically from socialism to theosophy after reading and reviewing for the *Pall Mall* the controversial work of Madame Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). She soon met her in person and the two women found an immediate spiritual kinship similar to the one Besant felt for Bradlaugh as she emphasizes in *An Autobiography*: “and looking for the first time in this life straight into the eyes of ‘H.P.B.’ I was conscious of a sudden leaping forth of my heart — was it recognition?” (310).

Blavatsky claimed to be receiving messages from mythical Mahatmas who lived in the Himalayas and communicated to her “ancient wisdom” that could improve the lot of mankind. In 1889, Besant joined the Theosophical Society and began to edit together with Blavatsky the monthly theosophical journal *Lucifer*, which was later renamed *The Theosophical Review*. After Blavatsky’s death, Besant became the unquestioned leader of the original Theosophical Society. She settled permanently in India in 1898 and in 1907 was elected President of the Theosophical Society, remaining in office until her death in 1933. Besant spread vigorously theosophical beliefs around the world, notably in England and India, in spite of considering the two countries different cultural and social entities as we can see in “India, Bond or Free?”:

The two [England and India] have no common past. Their roots are stuck in different soils; they look at everything from different angles; and the best intentions are constantly misunderstood. Wrong motives are supplied; distorted vision deludes. (2)

In contrast, in Kipling’s work, as in his life, the British Empire assumed a complex mythical function, which he passes on to his readers. Therefore, his intention was to maintain order and peace and give assistance, to abolish slavery, to construct the grounds for “civilization”. And, obviously, to protect the mother country. Therefore, “The White Man’s Burden” was for him a genuine burden as he believed in British superiority. Truly, Besant became also interested in freemasonry during her first visit to India. Her friends, Francesca and George Arundale, theosophists and freemasons, took her to Paris where she was initiated to the free-masonic order *Le Droit*

Humain, a branch of masonry which admitted women to its ranks, an unthinkable situation for Kipling. Annie Besant joined the Co-Freemasonry movement in France and in 1902 she founded the British Federation of Co-Masonic Grand Lodge in London called "Human Duty, No. 6". Besant was elected the first Master of the Lodge and later the first Grand Commander of the British Federation.

The early supporters of the English Co-Freemasonry were mostly members of the Theosophical Society.⁸ After settling in India she worked for religious, social, educational and political reforms in the subcontinent. In 1898, she opened the Central Hindu College in Benares, where students could gain experience in democratic methods by participating in students parliament. In the subsequent years she was instrumental in establishing a network of schools and colleges for Indian young people of both sexes. She also contributed to the formation of the All India Women's Association. She campaigned against child marriage and the caste system and her beliefs on the equality of sexes led her to fight for education and Co-Masonry.

Indeed, Annie Besant, who condemned British rule in India established in 1916 the Indian Home Rule League, of which she became president and became a leading member of the Indian National Congress. In June 1917, she was arrested under the Defence of India Act. Her arrest provoked a series of protests in India and abroad, namely from Mahatma Gandhi.⁹ However, Besant did not support Gandhi's idea of civil disobedience. Instead, she proposed that India should be a member of the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, as it is stated in "India: Bond or Free? A World Problem", she strongly contributed to the improvement of Hindu self-esteem, which had been severely damaged by British imperialism and Christian missionaries, not to speak of the Anglicist ideology:

⁸ For Besant theosophy and Co-Masonry were linked together. As both a theosophist and freemason, Annie Besant defended the rituals of the Order, the belief in a Supreme Divine Intelligence and the principles of Universal Brotherhood and Truth. Outside Britain, she contributed to the establishment of Co-Masonry in India, Australia and New Zealand, being Freemasonry at the present time a growing field of study.

⁹ Under international pressure, Annie Besant and two other co-internees, also members of the Theosophical Society, George Arundale and Bahman Pestonji Wadia, were released after a three-month internment.

My own life in India, since I came to it in 1893 to make it my home, has been devoted to one purpose, to give back to India her ancient Freedom. I had joined the Theosophical Society in 1889, and knew that one of the purposes for which it was intended by the ever living Rishis (...) was the rescue of India from the materialism which was strangling her true life by the revival of ancient philosophical and scientific religions, and, by the placing of India as an equal partner in a great Indo-British Commonwealth would avert a war of colour and bind East and West together in a Brotherhood which would usher in an Era of Co-operation and Peace. (26-27)

Being always strongly committed, always fighting any forms of exclusion and trying to find alternative models for societies, Annie Besant devoted herself to free India where she died. According to Heidle and Snoek, her funeral ceremony took place at Adyar:

On the bier was placed the green and red flag which she had designed for India and on her breast was the seal of the Theosophical Society. After prayers of the great world religions were repeated, her body was carried into the masonic temple, where a Co-Masonic funeral ceremony was performed. The body was then carried back to the sandalwood pyre, which was lit by Leadbeater. (370)

Could Besant and Kipling have been “Masonic friends”? In spite of one common ideal of Masonry, their imperial conceptions, mixed-gender lodges and gender issues really separated them. Actually, they could not have been “Masonic friends”.

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian Web as a searchable source of research gives us a valuable access to Annie Besant and Rudyard Kipling. It helps us to become aware of the specific features of Besant and Kipling and the diverse ways of looking at India. This implied difference was set up (constructed) not only through their narratives of the specific communities but also through typical British discourses on the “others”, both in written and visual forms. In spite of being both freemasons and fighting for improving the status of Indian education, facing successes and failures, their conceptions on the British Empire as well as on gender and citizenship prevented them of being “Masonic friends”.

KEYWORDS

Annie Besant; Rudyard Kipling; British Empire; education; citizenship; Freemasonry

RESUMO

The Victorian Web como arquivo digital permite um acesso rigoroso a autores como Annie Besant e Rudyard Kipling. Contribui para se compreender as características específicas de Besant e de Kipling bem como as diversas maneiras de olharem para a Índia. Esta diferença implícita foi criada (construída) não apenas através das suas narrativas sobre comunidades específicas, mas também através de discursos britânicos sobre os “outros”, tanto em formas escritas como visuais. Apesar de serem ambos maçons, lutando para melhorar o estado da educação indiana, enfrentando sucessos e fracassos, as respectivas concepções sobre o Império Britânico, bem como sobre gênero e cidadania impediram que fossem “amigos maçônicos”.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Annie Besant; Rudyard Kipling; Império Britânico; educação; cidadania; Maçonaria

Board(ing) Schools: Rudyard Kipling's young heroes

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Board(ing) Schools: Rudyard Kipling's young heroes

In 1900, Theodore Roosevelt considered Rudyard Kipling's novels *Stalky & Co.* (1899) and *Captains Courageous* (1897) side by side:

Captains Courageous describes in the liveliest way just what a boy should be and do. The hero is painted in the beginning as the spoiled, over-indulged child of wealthy parents, [yet because of an accident he is] forced to work hard among boys and men who are real boys and real men doing real work. The effect is invaluable. On the other hand, if one wishes to find types of boys to be avoided with utter dislike, one will find them in another story by Kipling, called *Stalky & Co.*, a story which ought never to have been written, for there is hardly a single form of meanness which it does not seem to extol, or of school mismanagement which it does not seem to applaud. (Roosevelt n.pg.)

Given the characteristics of Kipling's protagonists Stalky, Beetle, and M'Turk in *Stalky & Co.*, and Harvey Cheyne Junior and his sidekick friend Dan Troop in *Captain Courageous*, Roosevelt's comparison seems rather controversial — candid, even. What if one put together all the young men on stage in the two novels and examined them as embodiments of different aspects of maleness-to-be?

We will begin with Dan Troop, a secondary character in every way — and in fact by the end of the story this becomes his official identity: "I'm so's to be that kind o' animal called second mate this trip" (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 156). Dan is the archetype of the Christian youth, and he behaves in a stereotypical way. Among all the boys under consideration here, he is the only who has a crush, albeit an unrequited one, on a girl. Furthermore, the qualities he reveals are more practical than

analytical, further reinforcing the secondary nature of his character. His social advancement occurs only because of his chance meeting with Harvey (see Ormond 2003). He is not the protagonist; instead, for most of the book, the reader is led to think that he is nothing more than the shadow of his father, Disko Troop, of whom we are told, “As has been said, when Disko thought of cod he thought as a cod; and by some long-tested mixture of instinct and experience” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 68). In this sense, Dan resembles an “Animal Boy” — the stereotype to which Mr. Brownell, a presumptuous teacher at *Stalky and Co.*’s school, assigns all students (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 142). Yet, unlike his father, Dan is rational enough to understand that his father’s lifestyle is outdated, doomed:

In Dan’s rational perspective his father dwindles to a figure of pastoral, and it is no wonder that both Cheynes, father and son, end up by appropriating him. To add insult to injury, this does not take the form of Harvey Cheyne senior giving Dan his heart’s desire by setting him up in a new-fangled “haddock”, but of taking him out of the fishing industry altogether and transplanting him from the east to the west coast of America. (Karlin 21)

Dan longs to continue his ancestors’ activities while putting a new spin on them, having his own, more modern, fishing vessel. However, in the end it would seem that his life is determined by fate — yet, as every reader knows, in fiction fate translates as authorial intent. Kipling, in this way, covers up class issues and economical power differences. In fact, as Daniel Karlin observes, “Cheyne [Senior, Harvey’s millionaire father] places Dan in the shipping line he owns, and gives the line itself to Harvey as his graduation present. By doing so he determines their destiny (and, emblematically, that of America) in his, not Disko’s, image” (Karlin 21). By legitimising Dan’s submission to Harvey, Kipling disguises an act that is culturally binding. That submission will be instead seen as the fulfilment of a prophecy, the sign of a divine command:

“But one day he will be your master, Danny.”
 “That all?” said Dan, placidly. “He won’t — not by a jugful”
 “Master!” said the cook, pointing to Harvey. “Man!” and he pointed to Dan.

“That’s news. Haow soon?” said Dan, with a laugh.
 “In some years, and I shall see it. Master and man — man
 and master.” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 58)

The black cook’s prophecy spurs Dan to foresee that he will only be able to escape his father’s fate at the price of giving up the freedom of being his own master, becoming instead an employee of a big company, a link in an industrial chain.¹ Even if interconnectivity is present in his new lifestyle, the characteristic anonymity of a large company will be dominant, and the only personal connection available to him will be the one-to-one relationship with his master Harvey. Dan, in becoming Harvey’s man, will be devoid, at least partially, of free will.²

There are, however, some similarities between the two boys of *Captain Courageous*, particularly in what concerns the role women will be allowed to play in their lives: a minor one. In Dan’s case, as Ormond puts it, Kipling’s conception of his mother’s character “is strictly stereotyped” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* xxii). Dan’s mother remains in the background and seldom interferes with a man-to-be upbringing. In fact, Mrs. Troop is so emotionally restrained that Dan feels jealous of Constance Cheyne, Harvey’s mother, when his own mother “babies” (comforts) her, because “he had not been babied since he was six” (155).

¹ Leonee Ormond rightly points out that his father’s family name further connects Harvey with the oppressive traits of the capitalistic world, since “Cheyne (chain) is the ‘kinless’ self-made man of the mechanical future” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* xvii). In addition, father and son are often physically compared to Native Indians: “Father and son were very much alike (...); With a touch of brown paint [Harvey] would have made up very picturesquely as a Red Indian of the story-books” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 140). “Cheyne” can also be read as “Cheyenne”. The capitalistic empire that Cheyne Senior rules is by all accounts a wild, fierce and ruthless one. As Sher Khan rules over the Jungle’s creatures before Mowgli’s coming of age, Cheyne too exercises dominating authority over the capitalistic Jungle.

² A “troop” is a military subordinate, and Dan lives up to his family name. He will be Harvey’s “man”. Therefore, he will possess a higher rank than the black cook. To be Harvey’s servant for his entire life will be the fate of the black cook, again by supernatural means. The “divine command” to serve Harvey will be transmitted by a dream. Kipling legitimises race hierarchies (hence, the “natural” Black submission to the White man) again using the supernatural as literary device.

In Harvey's case, it will be up to his father to exclude a family life that would include the mother: "You know as well as I do that I can't make anything of you if you don't act straight by me. I can handle you alone if you'll stay alone, but I don't pretend to manage both you and Mama. Life's too short, anyway" (139).

Harvey Senior forces him to choose between him and his mother. Kipling will write that father and son both feel to have discussed "business". Being the more experienced at bargaining, Harvey Cheyne Senior does not give Junior the possibility to compromise. He scares him by affirming that outside the male sphere life will be devoid of meaning and full of his mother's neurosis and panic: "It rests with you, Harve. You can take cover behind your mama, of course, and put her on to fussing about your nerves and your high-strungness and all that kind of poppycock" (139).

He further threatens to abandon him again, retreating to the role of distant breadwinner:

"Now you can go on from here," said Cheyne, slowly, "costing me between six or eight thousand a year till you're a voter. Well, we'll call you a man then. You can go right on from that, living on me to the tune of forty or fifty thousand, besides what your mother will give you, with a valet and a yacht or a fancy-ranch where you can pretend to raise trotting-stock and play cards with your own crowd." (*Captains Courageous* 141)

Harvey's sums it up: he either has an "Yacht and ranch and live on the old man, and — get behind Mama where there's trouble" (141) or, as his father says: "you come right in with me, my son" (41).

Yet, he will be forced to go to college. His reaction when knowing it is telling: "There's no sugar in my end of the deal", said Harvey. "Four years at college! Wish I'd chosen the valet and the yacht!" (144) He does not even mention his mother's company as part of "the deal". As to reinforce the idea that male complicity can only be done "at women's expenses", Kipling lets his readers know that both Harveys Cheynes "naturally" exclude Constance Cheyne from knowing anything about the conversation, thus avoiding conflict. In fact, Senior proved his ability to communicate, persuade and lead Junior, whilst at the same time demonstrated that his Mother did not deserve to receive honest, direct

adult feedback. Instead, his father notion of heterosexual relationship management is that his mother acquiescence can be bought:

As this was a business talk, there was no need for Harvey to tell his mother about it; and Cheyne naturally took the same point of view. But Mrs. Cheyne saw and feared, and was a little jealous. Her boy, who rode rough-shod over her, was gone, and in his stead reigned a keen-faced youth, abnormally silent, who addressed most of his conversation to his father. She understood it was business, and therefore a matter beyond her premises. If she had any doubts, they were resolved when Cheyne went to Boston and brought back a new diamond marquise ring. (144)

Harvey's metamorphosis, first through immersion in a male-only atmosphere then by mirroring his father behaviour, suggests that Kipling views masculinity as performance. *Captains Courageous* clearly states this idea, as seen in the following episode when the captain and members of the crew discuss Harvey's behaviour:

I'll lay my wage an' share't is more 'n half play-actin' to him, an' he consates himself he's a bowld mariner. Watch his little bit av a back now!"

— That's the way we all begin," said Tom Platt "The boys they make believe all the time till they've cheated 'emselves into bein men, an so till they die — pretendin an pretendin. I done it on the old Ohio, I know. Stood my first watch — harbour-watch — feelin' finer n Farragut. Dan's full o' the same kind o' notions. See 'em now, actin' to be genewine moss-backs every hair a rope-yarn an' blood Stockholm tar". (99)

If masculinity is, at least at first, the imitation of a role model, then the choice of role models becomes an important issue. Lionel Trilling, in his consideration of *Kim* (1901) and *Jungle Book* (1894), notably pointed out that both books "[are] full of wonderful fathers, all dedicated men in different ways, each representing a different possibility of existence; and the charm of each other is greater because the boy need not commit himself to one alone" (Trilling 122). In *Captains Courageous*, Dan is only his

father's son, but Harvey enjoys the privilege of having two fatherly figures: Dan's father, Disko, and his own. Disko, the captain of the ship that rescued Harvey, epitomises the muscular Christian of Victorian times: "The basic premise of Victorian Muscular Christianity was that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality, physical fitness, and 'manly' character" (Watson et al 1). Instead of team sports, all the tasks entailed by harsh life on board are supposed to turn the "barbarous energy" of Harvey's young body into some useful purpose, since "for Kipling, the barbarous energies of boyhood are valuable and ineradicable aspects of manliness; better to make use of them, as contemporary pedagogical theory suggested, than to condemn them" (Deane 139). Evidence that Harvey is still influenced by the muscular Christian ethos that Disko instilled in him is seen at the end of the *Captains Courageous*, when Dan and Harvey meet and the latter is riding a horse. Kipling shows him being physically active, as every muscular Christian should be — he is riding a horse. As Davies highlights, Christian muscularity was associated with the promotion of team sports aimed at "fostering religious observances alongside team sports and thus to provide a new form of social discipline for young working-class males" (Davies 70). Donald E. Hall corroborates this class-directed vision, observing that "a telling component of muscular Christianity [is the] calming and educating of the lower classes with the promise of rendering them "fit" for freedom" (Hall 47).

However, as Davies highlights, the promotion of team sports associated with Christian muscularity aimed at "fostering religious observances alongside team sports and thus to provide a new form of social discipline for young working-class males" (Davies 70). Donald E. Hall corroborates this class-directed vision, observing that "a telling component of muscular Christianity [is the] calming and educating of] the lower classes with the promise of rendering them "fit" for freedom" (Hall 47).

Yet, far from being a working-class male, Harvey is a millionaire's heir, so it comes as no surprise that Disko's teachings are appropriated by Harvey and transformed into a demonstration of class supremacy and association with American traditions. Horseback riding is a sport for the elite. Muscular Christianity is now a given for Harvey, Disko's permanent legacy; but Disko only acts *in loco parentis*. As noted before, Harvey is different from Dan in that he has two father figures and so does not have

to fully commit to only one. And, since far from being a working-class male, Harvey is a millionaire's heir, it comes as no surprise that Disko's teachings are transformed by Harvey into a demonstration of class supremacy and association with American traditions. Horseback riding is a sport for the elite. Besides a practical lesson on how to handle his mother, Harvey Cheyne Senior's contribution to his son's psychological formation is resourcefulness, or "stalkyness", if you will. In fact, the "twinkle" in Harvey's eyes is reminiscent of his father's own "twinkle": "Cheyne [Senior] slapped his leg and chuckled. This was going to be a boy after his own hungry heart. He had never seen precisely that twinkle in Harvey's eye before" (126).

What Harvey has in common with his father is resilience, the capacity to adjust. This translates into the urge to play pranks in revenge for adult abuse, as well as the intelligence to distinguish between those adults he can disobey (or take revenge against) and those he must be civil with. Indeed, the first thing Harvey does when he acquires sailing skills is to avenge, through a prank, his compromised self-respect:

Salters was not an amiable person (he esteemed it his business to keep the boys in order); and the first time Harvey, in fear and trembling, on a still day, managed to shin up to the main-truck (Dan was behind him ready to help), he esteemed it his duty to hang Salters's big sea-boots up there — a sight of shame and derision to the nearest schooner. With Disko, Harvey took no liberties; not even when the old man dropped direct orders, and treated him, like the rest of the crew, to "Don't you want to do so and so?" and "Guess you'd better," and so forth. There was something about the clean-shaven lips and the puckered corners of the eyes that was mightily sobering to young blood. (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 72)

Harvey's response to Salters' keeping him in line is to bestow upon him the humiliating task of fetching his boots from the top of the main truck and to be mocked until he does so. Kipling's italicised "*duty*" highlights the fact that Harvey's prank is not motivated by a wish to inflict random suffering but intends to warn Salter of disagreeable consequences should he continue to pick on Harvey.

What the reader notices is Harvey's application of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"³ or, as the more erudite protagonists of *Stalky & Co.* would call it, the *Lex Talliones*: in fact, not only Harvey and the trio of *Stalky & Co.* but most of Kipling's major characters — such as Mowgli and Kim — share this view of retaliation as a code of justice. The relationships of *Stalky & Co.*'s trio with their colleagues and adults underline yet another parallel with the boys in *Captains Courageous*: as the quote above illustrates, Dan supports Harvey in the same way that Beetle and M'Turk support Stalky. In both works, the boys ally themselves against those who, from their point of view, deserve some sort of punishment; in *Stalky & Co.*, as in *Captains Courageous*, the boys' every ruse is intended to establish limits against oppression, a warning to peers and adults to not harm their interests.

Harvey also inherited from his father a sense of dignity and self-respect. If he is not treated according to his perceived vision of himself or if there is a chance of him losing a fight, Harvey lets his mischievous side — a malignant twinkle, so to speak — take over. When he first comes onto the fishermen's boat, he displays the same calculating behaviour he has shown since the beginning of the book. He first tries to manipulate the crew by appealing to their pity — a strategy he used with his mother — through exaggerating his shipwrecked condition; then by promising the captain financial rewards; and finally, by resorting to threats. He only calls an end to his power plays when all of these tactics have failed and he comes to the conclusion that "honesty is the best policy"⁴ and that he will perform as an "honest boy" until he has become one. However, Harvey's preference for such "honest behaviour" is portrayed as a rational choice, not as a duty. Indeed, part of Harvey's "training" from Disko is to restrain himself to fight "honestly" when his adversary is someone he respects, such as his new mate Dan: "Harvey was no match for Dan physically, but it says a great

³ According to the OED, this phrase is "[u]sed to refer to the belief that retaliation in kind is the appropriate way to deal with an offence or crime" (116).

⁴ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, this saying means "honesty is to be recommended, even though in some people it is not an innate virtue but merely adopted as a practical way to behave" (154).

deal for his new training that he took his defeat and did not try to get even with his conqueror by underhand methods” (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 94). The reason Harvey puts aside underhanded methods and embraces fair fighting, displaying muscular Christianity values, is a direct consequence of the training he received from Disko.

The training from his father, on the other hand, would most likely result in an opposite tactic, as shown in this episode which illustrates his father’s agenda and methods:

There was a war of rates among four Western railroads in which he was supposed to be interested; a devastating strike had developed in his lumber camps in Oregon, and the legislature of the State of California, which has no love for its makers, was preparing open war against him. Ordinarily he would have accepted battle ere it was offered, and have waged a pleasant and unscrupulous campaign. (117)

Kipling insists that vigilant fatherhood is needed to turn boys into citizens. Doom awaits emotionally lazy, workaholic fathers who prefer business to parental involvement, except in cases of a miracle, such as Harvey’s father experienced when he thought Harvey had died:

There had always lain a pleasant notion at the back of his head that, some day, when he had rounded off everything and the boy had left college, he would take his son to his heart and lead him into his possessions. Then that boy, he argued, as busy fathers do, would instantly become his companion, partner, and ally, and there would follow splendid years of great works carried out together — the old head backing the young fire. Now his boy was dead (...); he himself (...) hopeless, with no heart to meet his many enemies. (116)

As one of the passengers from the liner on which Harvey and his mother are travelling puts it: “Old man’s piling up the rocks. Don’t want to be disturbed, I guess. He’ll find out his error a few years from now” (3). Harvey’s father is aware his son’s character flaws are in part due to this neglect: “I guess it was my fault a good deal” (139). However, while accepting fathers can be partially at fault, Kipling underlines that a mother’s neuroticism is more to blame: “Constance Cheyne (...) is held to be largely

responsible for her son's failings (although it could be claimed that her husband's neglect is the real cause of both her neurasthenia and Harvey's brattishness)" (xxii).

Captains Courageous is a sort of a condensed *bildungsroman*: Harvey learns to execute orders, to submit himself, to give in. To put it simply, in the same way that Stalky, Beetle, and M^rTurk only yield to the Head of Coll., Harvey only yields to Disko, the captain, whom he respects; and to Harvey Cheyne Senior, whom he has learned to respect as well.

Captains Courageous is a book about a male world:

Following a pattern familiar in other works by Kipling (...), the boy Harvey reaches maturity through contact with other males, presented as contrasting father figures or teachers. (...)

Captains Courageous is not a novel for feminists. (xxi-ii)

Until his unwilling sea journey, Harvey had lived all his life with his mother. After his high-seas male-bonding experience, the practical learning that he gained will be followed by academic instruction at Stanford, coupled with a close connection with his father. Both learning environments share the characteristic of being male only.

In *Stalky & Co.*, as in *Captains Courageous*, the trope of the orphaned/abandoned/ lost child justifies the young heroes' lack of judgement, mischief-making and, most of all, transgressive behaviour in the sense of breaking the adult law. In a way, the near-total absence of biological fathers excuses these heroes on the grounds of lack of proper guidance and of "not knowing any better". As Jenny Holt points out, "although adolescence is, in many ways, a prelude to mature citizenship, adolescents are still often understood as being somehow essentially anti-social" (Holt 253). The tales that constitute *Stalky & Co.* are set in "one of the lesser public school designed for children of the colonial service" (Said 161). Such designation ("children of the colonial service") is a dubious one, suggesting some degree of social inequality connected with public service. Moreover, Said adds that other schools were "reserved for the upper echelons of the colonial elite" (*Ibid.*).

The "anti-social" behaviour of Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* boys can be seen as a way of protecting them from overwhelming adult responsibilities as family heads and colonial leaders: one cannot avoid remembering

Kipling's "white man's burden" (1899). But ultimately this behaviour cannot save them. Furthermore, "[a]lthough the boys may be willing to trade adult privileges in order to avoid the hypocrisy and banality of maturity; however, their bodies cannot cope" (Holt 205). Indeed, the data provided in the last chapter of *Stalky & Co.* is mostly a war casualties' list. Stalky's own exceptionality is highlighted by the fact that he, unlike all his fellowmen in the colonies, seems to thrive on distress. The title of Carole Scott's article, "Kipling's Combat Zones: Training Grounds in the Mowgli Stories, *Captains Courageous*, and *Stalky & Co.*," is self-explaining: Kipling aims to foster survival skills in his readers, and he regards courage and resourcefulness (*stalkiness*) as essential in the jungle, in boarding schools, on the wide sea, or in the arena of big business.⁵

No young hero in Kipling goes alone in the world. As observed before, all of them have symbolical fathers or brothers to support them. The trio of *Stalky & Co.* (Beetle, Stalky, and M'Turk) is one of several we find in Kipling's *oeuvre*: in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) we encounter the trios of the Norman stories (De Aquilla, Hugh, and Richard) and of the Roman stories (Parnesius, Maximus, and Pertinax), and in *The Jungle Books* (1894, 1895) we find another important trio (Bagheera, Baloo, and Kaa); in the properly named *Soldiers Three* and in *Plain Tales from the Hills* the privates Learoyd, Mulvaney and Ortheris.

Juliet McMaster observes that Kipling's Indian upbringing acquainted him with not only the Christian but also the Hindu divine trinity⁶, as "the archetype appears in the Hindu world picture too, in which Siva as Power, Vishnu as Love, and Brahma as Knowledge provide a parallel with the Christian Trinity" (McMaster 93). According to McMaster, the Holy Spirit is the most unpredictable of the three symbolic embodiments. The fact

⁵ The suicide of the unnamed Boy protagonist of the cautionary tale "Thrown Away", *Plain Tales from the Hill* (1888), is an example of what, according to Kipling, will happen if males start adult life unprepared.

⁶ Any reader of "*Baa Baa, Black Sheep*" will recall that the first "grievous sin" of little Punch is to draw on Hindu mythological narratives to explain to Judy the story of the Creation.

that a snake — considered the architect of Evil in Christian tradition — represents it in Mowgli tales warns us about the complexity of such parallels: “Kaa opposes the monkeys, the forces of ignorance, not by strength, like Baloo, nor by passionate, ineffective devotion, like Bagheera, but by a hypnotic dance that establishes mastery over the minds of his victims. Like the Holy Spirit to humanity, Kaa moves in mysterious ways” (97). Keeping such reservations in mind, and following McMaster’s line of thought, we will attempt to attribute the trinity characteristics to the elements of the *Stalky & Co.*’s trio.

At a first glance, Stalky embodies power, leadership, or perhaps wisdom. As Kipling explains at the beginning of the book, Corkran (Stalky) does not just possess stalkiness, he embodies stalkiness itself: “‘Stalky’, in their school vocabulary, meant clever, well-considered and wily, as applied to plans of action; and ‘stalkiness’ was the one virtue Corkran toiled after” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 13). The pranks carried out by the trio are, therefore, intended as show cases to explain to the reader what “stalkiness” in action is. The first chapter of the book is thus appropriately entitled “Stalky”. Along with his two sidekicks, and without ever being seen, Stalky frees some colleagues who had been locked up in a barn by justly offended peasants. Then the trio imprisons the peasants themselves. After being reminded that they are late, Stalky introduces himself to the peasants and pretends the three of them had been passing by when they heard the peasants’ cries. As a condition to free them, he requires them to write a note justifying their tardiness to school. Facing the suspicion of the peasants, Stalky reacts with insults, and succeeds in convincing those he has harmed that they owe him a favour.

In such a simple *vignette*, Kipling hints that Stalky is prepared for his role in a world arena ruled by “the messy imprecisions of history, the embattled negotiations and strategies of the disempowered, the militarisation of masculinity, the elision of women from political and economic power, the decisive foreclosures of ethnic violence and so on” (McClintock 66). Stalky uses the boarding school as a training ground to survive in such arena (Scott). He rehearses disguising himself, adjusting to each particular circumstance. Despite the fact that he boasts he is the most cunning of the trio, standing above the others as the undisputed leader, he also knows to play second when it will lead to a better outcome. We see this, for example,

when Dickson Quartus, the favourite of a difficult headmaster, leads a prank: "This is the first time to my knowledge that Stalky has ever played second-fiddle to any one" (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 158). Stalky also rehearses his own impassibility, as the chapter "The Flag of Their Country" shows. His powerful need to control his body language is evident in the chapter "An Unsavoury Interlude" when he harshly reproaches Beetle's spontaneity, translating it into the inability to restrain himself in the face of provocation. The self-awareness of his superiority never abandons him:

'Well, that's awfully good of you,' said Stalky, 'but we happen to have a few rights of our own, too. You can't, just because you happen to be made prefects, haul up seniors and jaw'em on spec, like a house-master. *We* aren't fags, Carson. This kind of thing may do for Davies tertius, but it won't do for us'.
(270)

Fuelled by his experience in the practice of disguise at Coll. and by the European imperial certainty that he is always right and that revenge is possible after overcoming obstacles, Stalky's stalkiness unfolds in rather different ways. As Isabel Quigley notes, "[r]esourcefulness and ruthlessness are his two main qualities. A loner, in that he can be self-sufficient, he is very much a leader nonetheless, demanding obedience, knowing just what he wants and getting it" (Quigley 117). He displays hypocrisy, artfulness, perseverance, timing, sense of opportunity, intelligence, self-confidence and, last but not least, a lack of scruples. In the chapter "Slaves of the Lamp I" for example, Stalky provokes the local carrier, causing the man to throw stones at the window of the teacher responsible for temporarily banning the trio from their study room. There is no reference to any compensation for the carrier, who certainly suffered the consequences of his attack. Stalky's college years will foreseeably equip him to handle any obstacles put in his way in his future colonial assignments.

Some scholars have argued that Stalky "has never grown up" (Deane 139). Eternal youth being a God-like attribute, this brings to mind other fictional beings like Peter Pan and Kipling's Puck. The verse from *The White Man's Burden* — "half-devil and half-child" — which Kipling uses to describe "new-caught, sullen peoples" applies to Stalky as well. In a sense, then, he can be identified as one who despite being "European, imperial", displays "non-European, colonial" characteristics. The same

contradictory representations act upon this trajectory. The fact is that Stalky would be sent to India as “a lamb to the slaughter”,⁷ but instead earns himself a position of leadership next to the natives.

It follows that Stalky seems invulnerable and unique. As one of the characters says: “There is nobody like Stalky” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 296). Nevertheless, one may question the nature of Stalky’s power and that power itself. D. Randall asserts that:

Kipling’s imperial boys represent sites of contingency, subject positions in between opposed categories, in between formations of the subject encoded as ‘European, imperial’ and ‘non European, colonial’. Kipling’s boy-protagonists mediate and stage the relationship between ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’. (Randall 3)

As an adolescent, Stalky is a subaltern; yet as a white European he belongs to the ruler’s class. If he is as convinced of his superiority as Kipling has him claim to be, this superiority only affirms itself when Stalky deals with Indian natives. Before that, in the chapter “The Flag of Their Country”, he shows us that his more pressing concerns are his anticipated sufferings at the hands of the Army Officers as a recruit. That is to say, he fears, most of all, “friendly fire”, even if symbolic. His future proves him right, as the reader learns that the biggest problems Stalky will face in India are the colonial bureaucratic system and the government’s lack of vision. He clashes with hierarchies and, most of all, seems to wish to be left alone with the natives to become a sort of pastoral king.⁸ If the idea of being an *Arcadian* ruler is only a possibility to Stalky, to M’Turk it has the reality of an ethnic identity.

Being Anglo-Irish makes M’Turk a true cultural hybrid; yet an intersectional approach warns us about the weight of tradition in him. He proudly defines himself, quoting Ruskin, as part of the “children of noble races trained by surrounding art” (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 60). Passion

⁷ An idiom which means “a helpless victim” (*Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* 201).

⁸ Thus, succeeding where Dravot, the protagonist of “The Man Who Would be King” (1888), has failed.

is his main characteristic; in the trinity, he would obviously represent love. We see his passion for the past, seen, for example, in his fondness for Latin, a dead language. This can be associated with his passion for his ancestral estate:

[he] was treading again the barren purple mountains of the rainy West coast, where in his holidays he was viceroy of four thousand naked acres, only son of a three-hundred-year-old house, lord of a crazy fishing-boat, and the idol of his father's shiftless tenantry. It was the landed man speaking to his equal — deep calling to deep. (35)

He also reveals a passion for Ireland, the motherland. When emotional, for example, he remembers Irish nationalist songs such as “The Wearin’ o’ The Green” (37). His passion for art, artists and art criticism is also clear. For M’Turk, a person’s worth is judged through their aesthetic education — as revealed through their choices when it comes to their “surrounding art”. He passionately claims that one of the housemasters is:

(...) a Philistine, a basket-hanger. He wears a tartan tie. Ruskin says that any man who wears a tartan tie will, without doubt, be damned everlastingly.

(...) He has a china basket with blue ribbons and a pink kitten on it, hung up in his window to grow musk in. You know when I got all that old oak carvin’ out of Bideford Church, when they were restoring it (Ruskin says that any man who’ll restore a church is an unmitigated sweep), and stuck it up here with glue? Well, King came in and wanted to know whether we’d done it with a fret-saw! (62)

In the chapter “In Ambush”, we watch M’Turk’s reaction when faced with the undeserved slaughter of a vixen; much to his friend’s amazement, a “haughty, angular, nose-lifted” (34). M’Turk confronts an elderly respected colonel, treating him as an equal and thus playing the class card. His disdain and quick fury, with no concern for consequences, as well as the distance between discourse and the actual capacity for influence, are part of the straightforward gentlemanlike personality attributed to M’Turk. Assuming these same class traits are associated with the Irish stereotype, M’Turk, whenever anger takes hold of him, forgets the pre-teen condition of being bound to respect his elders, and adopts an adult aristocrat de-

meanour. He poses this way even with his colleagues, feigning indignation whenever it suits his purposes: “‘Are you surprised we don’t wish to associate with the House?’ said M’Turk with dignity. ‘We’ve kept ourselves to ourselves in our study till we were turned out, and now we find ourselves let in for — for this sort of thing. It’s simply disgraceful’” (106). In short, M’Turk uses “surrounding art”, decoration, and beautiful memories of the past as a protective bubble in which he and his two friends can live together. That bubble is Studio number 5.

As M’Turk loves Latin, so does Beetle love living languages, namely French and English. Beetle’s contribution to the bubble of Studio number 5 is a set of living authors, intellectual projects like such as college journal, and, ultimately, a sense of adventure connected to his prospective career as man of Letters. Like Stalky, Beetle shares the uncertainty of his own position in the trinity. Does he represent power or wisdom? As an alter-ego of Kipling, Beetle holds the ultimate power, as his final claim testifies: “‘Ain’t I responsible for the whole thing?’” (296). *Stalky & Co.* itself is presented as a proof of Beetle’s skills as a fictional world-builder. Using Randall’s wording, Beetle encapsulates a rather contradictory identity, since he is simultaneously European and Colonial. Therefore, Beetle is supposed to have learned from childhood to suppress, for his own advantage, the signs of two cultures that neutralise each other. Teachers proved to be the perfect guinea pigs for exercising, as Stalky did, his talents of deception. Kipling tells us that Beetle is better than the other two at feigning innocence: “Beetle promptly went to his House-master and wished to know what right Harrison and Crane had reopened a matter already settled between him and his House-master. In injured innocence no boy excelled Beetle” (107).

The role that Beetle seems to play within the trio is to legitimise Stalky’s actions and M’Turk’s deep emotions: “‘Won’t there, just!’ said Beetle. ‘Look here. If he kissed her — which is our tack — he is a cynically immoral hog, and his conduct is blatant indecency. *Confer orationes Regis furiosissimi* when he collared me readin’ ‘Don Juan’” (266). He is also the one who furnishes the *rationale* for everything regarding College rules and duties with a sober and pragmatic eye: “Beetle inquired if he ‘need take this exam., sir, as I’m not goin’ up for anything’” (238).

If elsewhere in the book Stalky blames Beetle for not being able to keep his composure when provoked, near the end of it the reader realises Beetle is able to keep his wits under control when dreams protect him:

King (...) never passed without witticisms. But brigades of Kings could not have ruffled Beetle that day.

'Aha! Enjoying the study of light literature, my friends,' said he, rubbing his hands. 'Common mathematics are not for such soaring minds as yours, are they?'

("One hundred a year," thought Beetle, smiling into vacancy.)

"Our open incompetence takes refuge in the flowery paths of inaccurate fiction. But a day of reckoning approaches, Beetle mine. (...) We shall see! We shall see!"

Still no sign from Beetle. He was on a steamer, his passage paid into the wide and wonderful world — a thousand leagues beyond Lundy Island.

King dropped him with a snarl. (261-262)

The trinity of power, wisdom, and love is inter-related with another trinity in the temporal axis of the Empire: past, present and future. Stalky lives the present to the fullest; Beetle dreams of the future; and M'Turk is obviously the one attracted to the pre-colonial past. It is no wonder that M'Turk longs for the past in the time the story is set: as "'White' colonies such as Ireland and Australia (...) were considered made up of inferior humans" (Said 162).

Another trinity emerges with regard to the spatial axis. First is Devon county, where the boys' *alma mater*, the Coll., is located and which they joyfully abandon after graduation: "Shove up and make room, you Collegers. You've all got to be back next term, with your 'Yes, Sir' and 'Oh, Sir,' and 'Please Sir'" (Kipling *Complete Stalky* 278). Second is M'Turk's Ireland, which we only know from his reminiscences: "M'Turk shivered and came out of dreams. The glory of his holiday estate had left him. He was a Colleger of the College, speaking English once more" (37). And third is Beetle's (and later, Stalky's) India: an India "full of Stalkies — Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps" (236).

Christian theology is not only about Holy Trinity, it is also about Father and Son mirroring each other "as actors in a cosmic drama that

simultaneously displaces and reinvigorates the myth of child-sacrifice” (Ulreich 427).⁹ Harvey Cheyne Junior must annihilate his former non-muscular Christian self in order to become Harvey Cheyne Senior ideal alter ego. But what is the nature of father son bonding in *Stalky & Co.*? How does a narrative structured around father and son bonding (*Captains Courageous*) connects with one structured around with a trio of near-equals?

“Education” is the key word. If *Captains Courageous* is about a boy being educated on fair play, the main intention of *Stalky & Co* is to educate thousands of English boys on *stalkiness*, i.e. unfair play. As Kipling wrote: “[t]here came to me an idea of beginning some tracts or parables on the education of the young. These, or reasons honestly beyond my control, turned themselves into a series of tales called *Stalky & Co*” (Kipling, *Something of Myself* 79). The trio’s daily life is fuelled and shaped by “adversial curriculum” learnings:

The environment of the school of *Stalky & Co.* developed many necessary skills, and some of them not through the formal curriculum (...), or indeed through the informal curriculum (...), nor even through the hidden curriculum (...). The school promoted skills through what the boys were required to do in order successfully to defy the school authorities, what we call the adversial curriculum. An essential feature of it is that students learn skills to achieve what they want to do anyway — in Kipling’s case, to smoke and read in the gorse and avoid school punishment. (Mackenzie 616)

Such learnings, as well as increasingly elaborated-pranking skills, enhance Beetle and M’Turk’s aesthetic education, which in turn enables them to

⁹ The connection between an ocean and the father sacrificing his son trope will be obvious to those familiar both with *Captains Courageous* and with Kipling’s poem “My boy Jack”. Even if the poem is responding to the death of 16-year-old sailor Jack Cornwell during the First World War, we must remember that Rudyard’s Kipling’s 17-year-old son, John, had initially wanted to join the Royal Navy too. Rejected by the armed forces because of his poor eyesight, nevertheless his father’s connections got him a commission in the infantry, only to be killed six weeks later, in an ironic twist of fate. Has Kipling’s son been sacrificed to his patriotism?

question their teachers' taste whether in regard to decoration (M'Turk) or to literature (Beetle). We are not given much information about Stalky's readings, as he seems to be the least intellectual of the three while simultaneously showing great aptitude for Mathematics.

For the three heroes of *Stalky & Co*, their colleagues are part of a majority to which they feel superior. They despise these fellow students because they are focused on the present and never contemplate life outside of the Coll.'s borders or beyond leaving school. Furthermore, this majority does not value the adversarial curriculum and chooses for role models teachers who, in the trio's eyes, turn the students into their own puppets. However, while they consider themselves as an elite in opposition to the masses, the trinity, as revealed by the book's very title, is not composed of equals. Beetle (considered Kipling's alter-ego) regards Stalky as a hero throughout, not only when Stalky was a 12-year old, but also as an adult. Thus, Kipling as an adult and the adult Beetle he describes envision themselves as a leader's entourage.

When it comes to the connection between reserved stoicism, leadership and *stalkiness*, there are some noticeable similarities between the two protagonists of the books under analysis. While speculative, it would be tempting to consider that Kipling only maintained Harvey's consistency as a character by bestowing upon him an awareness of the difference between, on the one hand, himself and Dan and, on the other hand, himself and the typical Stanford student. Such awareness may cause Harvey to appear, despite appearing extroverted, as mostly reserved during his education at Stanford. It is not important to speculate whether Harvey would be as reserved as Stalky, who rarely shares his thoughts and, even on those occasions when he does, only a select few. We can only consider that in Harvey's case, the friends he made at Stanford, his leadership skills, his intelligence, and his physical strength (earned during his time on the boat) will make his friends admire him in same way that Beetle and M'Turk admired Stalky.

Harvey's experience living in two completely distinct environments has made him somewhat of an "odd bird". His personality is the result of the synthesis of these two experiences, which makes finding someone with a similar character highly unlikely. Given that Kipling has bestowed on Harvey a brilliant mind, it follows that Harvey is aware of any likely

incomprehension that might arise. This awareness could, in turn, result in secretive behaviour, a hypothesis that seems likely when we remember that the fear of being misunderstood is a recurring theme in Kipling's protagonists.

The main difference between Dan, on the one hand, and Harvey, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle on the other, is that the former has a present biological father. It is significant that Disko, Dan's father, is the captain of the boat, exerting *pater familias* rights even within the boat itself. Are Harvey and the *Stalky & Co.* boys lost children, then? If one adopts a male-only perspective, this seems an undoubted conclusion. Until Harvey fell from the liner and was saved by the schooner, he lived with his mother, and Kipling is explicit about Harvey's effeminacy. When describing Harvey's previous rowing experience, Kipling writes that he rowed "in a lady-like fashion, on the Adirondack ponds" (Kipling, *Captains Courageous* 33). But, after training with Disko in the fishing boat and at Stanford, along with the renewed closeness with his father, Harvey becomes a master of men.

The issue with *Captains Courageous* is that what is suitable for an American might not be so for an Englishman. The American hero for Kipling is the businessman, who does not appear to be a hero in the English case. The American jungle is the prairie jungle crossed by the railways, or the ocean crossed by the merchant vessels. But what is required of all heroes, English or American, is the same: courage and artfulness.

Lionel Trilling's statement that multiple father figures expand the diversity of existential paths also applies to *Stalky & Co.* Like Disko functioned as Harvey's *in loco parentis*, so did the Head, the teachers King, Prout, and Gillette to the *Stalky & Co.*'s trio. Unlike Disko however, the teachers, if they had legal obligations and rights, had definitely, in turn, a responsibility. Their role was limited by the time each teacher could allot the students. Therefore, in a way, each teacher offers a specific (and "diluted") variety of the emotional investment of a parent. The House Masters are, of course, more intense; yet, even they are entitled by law to enjoy holidays and some free time. Hence the boys' repulse for the thought that the scarce time available to each would be reduced because of a teacher's marriage duties:

"(...) Huh!" said Beetle with a grunt. "They came here, an' they went away to get married. Jolly good riddance, too!"

"Doesn't our Beetle hold with matrimony?"

"No, Padre; don't make fun of me. I've met chaps in the holidays who've got married house-masters. It's perfectly awful! They have babies and teething and measles and all that sort of thing right bung in the school; and the masters' wives give tea-parties—tea-parties, Padre! —and ask the chaps to breakfast".

(Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 120)

Beetle dislike is two folded: on the one hand, babies are an eye-catcher, fragile, noisy, attention-seekers, and impossible to hurt without serious consequences; on the other hand, to be used to breakfasts and tea-parties in India is a survival's disadvantage. The master's wives are a corrupting influence:

"(...) That don't matter so much," said Stalky. "But the house-masters let their houses alone, and they leave everything to the prefects. Why, in one school, a chap told me, there were big baize doors and a passage about a mile long between the house and the master's house. They could do just what they pleased. (Kipling, *Complete Stalky* 120).

Stalky's indignant tone conceals some hidden jealousy which underlines the boys' fragile relationship with the Faculty and perhaps with their own families. Their attitude towards some teachers of Coll., — who are targets of the trio's pranks carried out under Stalky's leadership — illustrates defiance of the hierarchy through manipulation and deceit. However, unlike the expectations of a book starring teens and intended for teen readers, the trio invariably gets away with it, proving that crime pays.¹⁰ As *Stalky & Co.* comes to an end, we observe Stalky, Beetle, and M'Turk set off to their adult life and we learn that their experience at Coll. has prepared them for life as adults more than they would have ever imagined. Similarly, Harvey's learnings on the boat and at Stanford have prepared him to lead

¹⁰ But, in fact, that might not be the case. One interpretation of the book, in fact, could see the Head as being in control from start to finish.

the life he would have hoped for. *Captains Courageous* concludes with a meeting between Harvey and Dan. Harvey is near to graduating from Stanford—a prestigious university for the children of the wealthier echelons—and Dan will be second on a ship. The strong bond between the two after many years is intended to make the reader aware that Harvey’s experience on the boat not only made him athletic but also gave him an interior depth that sets him apart from his privileged college peers. This is shown through the noticeable distance between Harvey’s interests and his colleagues’. In fact, the interests and aims of Harvey’s peers are likely typical of any school boy’s: to perform well in sports and/or in classes and earn the esteem of teachers and/or colleagues. As such, these aims are similar to those that the “[d]irty little schoolboys” — the trio of *Stalky & Co.* — mock and take revenge on: “young but brilliantly clever boys, pets of the house-masters, too anxious for their dignity to care to come to open odds with the resourceful three” (Kipling *Complete Stalky* 260, 261). Harvey and Stalky are part of the happy few who have a Beetle to tell their stories.

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ABSTRACT

Rudyard Kipling's young male characters, namely Stalky (*Stalky & Co.*) and Harvey Cheyne Junior (*Captains Courageous*), whom he portrays with noticeable admiration, exhibit, on the one hand, circumspection, stoicism, leadership, and *stalkiness*, on the other hand, the absence of scruples in manipulating those acting *in loco parentis* to achieve their desired ends. This article aims to examine how these characters can shed light on one another, allowing for a better comprehension of them both. Furthermore, it will explore how the religious archetype of the trinity permeates *Stalky & Co.*'s composition of characters, and how muscular Christianity shapes *Captains Courageous*. Stalky and Harvey thrive in a masculine world, access to which requires leaving women behind, substituting them with brotherhoods or identification with the father. The perfect man, Kipling postulates, is the resourceful and courageous rule-bending Christian who is able to keep women and natives in a state of obedience.

KEYWORDS

Rudyard Kipling; *Stalky & Co.*; *Captains Courageous*; gender; muscular Christianity

RESUMO

As jovens personagens masculinas de Rudyard Kipling, nomeadamente Stalky (*Stalky & Co.*) e Harvey Cheyne Junior (*Captains Courageous*) que retrata com admiração perceptível, exibem, por um lado, circunspeção, estoicismo, liderança e astúcia (*stalkiness*) e, por outro, a ausência de escrúpulos em manipular aqueles que atuam *in loco parentis* para alcançar seus fins pretendidos. Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar como essas personagens se iluminam mutuamente, permitindo uma melhor compreensão dos dois. Além disso, o artigo pretende explorar como o arquétipo religiosos da trindade permeia a composição das personagens de *Stalky & Co.*, e como o cristianismo muscular influencia *Captains Courageous*.

Stalky e Harvey prosperam num mundo masculino, ao qual só têm acesso se deixarem as mulheres para trás, substituindo-as por irmandades ou por identificação com o pai. O homem perfeito que Kipling postula é o cristão engenhoso e corajoso que contorna as regras, e é capaz de manter as mulheres e os nativos em estado de obediência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Rudyard Kipling; *Stalky & Co.*; *Captains Courageous*; gênero; Cristianismo musculoso

ESSAYS
ESTUDOS

Emerson among the Paths of the Modern Self: Charles Taylor and the Concord Thinker

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Emerson among the Paths of the Modern Self: Charles Taylor and the Concord Thinker

Quite often we, American Studies' scholars, tend to confine our approach to Emerson's work to his obviously relevant contribution for the building of an American self. Without forgetting this aspect in the next minutes I would like however to come up with a brief and synthetic meditation about his place in the wider soil of Western modern thought. My main theoretical background is Charles Taylor's 1989 book *Sources of the Self— The Making of Modern Identity*, although I may summon three other essays also written by the Canadian philosopher: *A Secular Age*, "The Church Speaks — to Whom?", the chapter he wrote to *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, and *Multiculturalism* which he co-authored with the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben.

My choice of *Sources of the Self* is justified by Taylor's exhaustive analysis of the different textual traditions that emerged in Western cultures since the Reformation and, above all, by his meticulous identification of the porosity that characterizes each and every one of those discourses.

In his Introduction to this book Taylor outlines two major facets of modern identity that may be relevant to understand Emerson's value within Western culture: *modern inwardness*, a path that starts with Saint Augustine, and which acquires new dimensions with Descartes and Montaigne, and *the affirmation of ordinary life*, an intellectual attitude that emerges with the Reformation, gains a deeper secular dimension in the Enlightenment, as one may see in the pragmatic directives of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, and culminates in the "expressivist notion of nature as an inner moral source" (Taylor x).

George MacLean, Professor Emeritus at the School of Philosophy of The Catholic University of America, situates these facets within the frame of a wider intellectual movement of secularization:

The general phenomenon of progressive secularization over the last 400 years must be seen in the light of: first, the broad human processes of the Reformation reacting against hierarchy and the corresponding progressive affirmation of individual authenticity and equality; second, the Enlightenment's parallel emphasis upon the disjunction of human reason from the unitive influences of wisdom and faith; and third, democracy and human freedom over the evaluation and guidance of human action. (McLean 5)

Taylor's approach allows us to unveil the self's polyphonic essence, eventually its contradictions, in the context of a whole process of deep intellectual change. Walt Whitman testifies this when he asks in "Song of Myself", part 51: "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes".

When we outline Taylor's methodological approach, Emerson's thought immediately comes to mind, yet, surprisingly, he only mentions three times the Concord man. One actually wonders why.

Yet our perplexity may be temporary if we bring to mind a passing reference to Emerson in *A Secular Age*. Several pages before the Canadian philosopher had stated that a nuclear characteristic of the modern cosmic imaginary laid on the personal possibility of wondering among several intellectual options without needing to clench to a single one (Taylor 372). Although this possibility may be seen as sign of individual freedom, it also may enhance a sense of abandonment. In Taylor's view this sense of abandonment may beget three types of choice: one may explore the feeling of despair (Werther comes to mind); one may challenge it (Byron is a Romantic paradigm); one may concur to the building of a new era of faith, to a new positive form of religion, conceived by the self, we may add (Carlyle, Arnold and Emerson emerge in this vein) (407).

Since this is the only path that aims at the future, hopefully at a new step forward in the history of mankind, the reference to Emerson acquires a rather meaningful relevance.

The expression "conceived by the self" means a new beginning, the absence of a previous discourse, of a centre, framing the individual search. So it is up to each individual to define his or her path. Thus Emerson's question in the early lines of *Fate* (1860) emerges in a new light: "How

shall I live?” (Emerson 361) In the answer to this question lies a whole new agenda of living. Ironically Emerson had anticipated the answer to this question some twenty years before in the beginning of *Self-Reliance* (1841): “To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, — that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense” (175). Further, close to the end of his meditation, he demands: “Insist on yourself; never imitate” (199).

Authenticity lies at the core of his notion of self. This ideal comes in line with the historical American culture anchored in the individual, and receives the hospitality of relevant fields of contemporary Western culture(s) (Taylor 12). Since this ideal is not a given, something one dwells in, but something one has to search (McLean 6), to seek for, a whole process of personal intellectual examination is required. If authenticity stands at the end of the road, sincerity has to be present in every ethical step of the way. This is the reason why Emerson acknowledges Montaigne as paradigm of the quest for a textual self: “The sincerity and marrow of the man [Montaigne] reaches to his sentences. I know not anywhere the book that seems less written” (Emerson 325). Writing and seeking are thus both sides of the same quest for the self.

Though craved by Emerson for his own time, this feature — the ethic of authenticity — evolved to be an important part of the background of much contemporary seeking (Taylor 19). Thus individuals [the seekers] “see their present tenuous grasp on it as provisional. They are on a journey” (17). Journey meaning obviously an intellectual, textual, existential journey; one journey that could be synthesized in those George Harrison’s *The Inner Light* lines with its hospitality vis-a-vis the Taoist Tao Te Ching: “Without going out of my door / I can know all things on earth / without looking out of my window / I can know the ways of heaven. / The farther one travels/ the less one knows/the less one really knows”. Actually, Emerson’s loathing of physical journey is reiterated in *Self-Reliance* when he mentions “the superstition of Travelling” and when he declares that “[t]ravelling is a fool’s paradise” (Emerson 197-198).

In order to move forward in the knowledge of Emerson’s singularity within contemporary Western thought we must remind the way he views the dialogue between self and Nature. “Nature is not democratic, nor

limited-monarchical, but despotic”, as he disphorically proclaimed in *Politics*. Eventually to realize it means to understand ourselves agonistic dimension as we may confirm in Emerson’s recurrent references to this topic. Eventually “I suppose no man can violate his nature”, as he proclaims in *Self-Reliance* (183).

In this view the seeker is a wonderer, an ontological nomad, an attitude therefore endogenous to American experience and identity: “In America and Europe the nomadism is of trade and curiosity...” (161). In *Experience* he provides the diagnostic: “Ghostlike we glide through nature, and should not know our place again” (286). A qualitative change is thus required; a change that allows us to realize that “[i]n the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature” (139)

In *A Secular Age* Charles Taylor inserts that dialogue between self and otherness in a diachronic path that seems to dwell on our growing interest to nature, so to speak, in itself (Taylor 105). Emerson’s methodological question in *Nature*, “Let us inquire, to what end is nature?” (Emerson 36), may be conceived then as a new step in this dialogue, a step that would eventually lead to a new ontological dimension. In *Sources of the Self* Taylor identifies a specific topic that stems from this reality: “If our access to nature is through an inner voice or impulse, then we can only fully know this nature through articulating what we find within us. This connects to another crucial feature of this new philosophy of nature, the idea that its realization in each of us is also a form of expression. This is the view that I have called ... ‘expressivism’” (Taylor 374).

Thus expressivism, in its radical — in the etymological sense — dimension means authenticity; the authenticity that stands as our ultimate goal, since “[w]e but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents” (Emerson 176) The search for a full expression actually implies an inner search. This is the reason why we may conclude that “[o]ur modern notion of the self is related to ... a certain sense of inwardness. ... We are creatures of inner depths” (Taylor 111), as Freud would be able to claim.

How can we perceive this inward movement? Taylor provides an answer to this question when he synthesizes the historical evolution of the encounter between self and nature. This is an extensive quote but, in my

view, a relevant one in order to understand the subtleties of this diachronic process:

Where Aristotle speaks of nature of a thing tending towards its complete form, Herder sees growth as the manifestation of an inner power..., striving to realize itself externally. Nature is now within. In fact, the Aristotelian concepts have been interwoven with the modern notion of expression as an articulation which both manifests and defines. This is closely tied to the idea of a self, a subject. It is no longer some impersonal "Form" or "nature" which comes to actuality, but a being capable of self-articulation. Leibniz was an important source for expressivism. His notion of monad already effected the connection between the Aristotelian idea of nature and a subject-like particular. The monad was a proto-self.

Expressivism was the basis for a new and fuller individuation. This is the idea which grows in the late eighteenth century that each individual is different and original, and that this originality determines originality determines how he or she ought to live. Just the notion of individual difference is, of course, not new. ... What is new is the idea that this really makes a difference to how we're called on to live. The differences are not just unimportant variations within the same basic human nature; or else moral differences between good and bad individuals. Rather they entail that each of us has an original path which we ought to tread; they lay the obligation on each of us to live up to our originality. (375)

In *A Secular Age* Taylor highlights the fact that each and every one of us conceives of our lives within a moral frame (Taylor 17). And the way "we're called on to live" implies moral choices. As we in the American Studies arena know, Emerson's intellectual profile owes a lot to the country historical and cultural background; and this obviously means a Puritanical one. Again I summon Taylor's diachronic synthesis in order to identify the subtleties underlying the winding, porous and often contradictory historical path that eventually led to Emerson:

... a Platonic-derived notion of God ordering the world after the Ideas became implanted in the New England mind, partly under the influence of Ramus. But it is interesting to note

that this conception itself had undergone the transformation which made the instrumental central. ... the unity of God's order was seen not as a structure to be contemplated but as an interlocking set of things calling for actions which formed a harmonious whole. The harmony between its parts was captured in the term '*eupraxia*'; it was more a matter of coherence of the occasions for action than of mutual reflection of things in an order of signs. In Samuel Mather's statement:

"All the Arts are nothing else but the beams and rays of the Wisdom of the first Being in the Creatures, shining, and reflecting thence, upon the glass of man's understanding... Hence there is an affinity and kindred of Arts ... which is according to the... subordination of their particular ends... One makes use of another, one serves to another, till they reach and return to Him, as Rivers to the Sea, whence they flow". (Taylor 232-233)

As Miller says, one can see the origins not only of Transcendentalism but also of pragmatism in this outlook. It is the source both for Emerson and Henry Adams.

Although after having passed through several filters and through the abrasion of time, the Puritan theology of work and ordinary life somehow echoes in Emerson as he "hovered on the borders where theism, pantheism, and non-theism all meet" (408).

Still within the main topic of expressivism, one wonders where Emerson's legacy within contemporary thought may stand. Charles Taylor considers that "many of the ideas of 'human potential' movements in the United States also go back to the original expressivism, partly through the indigenous American line of descent, including Emerson and Whitman" (497) Besides "a certain subjectivist expressivism has won its way into contemporary culture, and its limitations seem obvious. In the human potential movement in the contemporary United States, and in other writings of similar tenor, there is a set of ideals which come from Romantic expressivism, in large part through indigenous American roots: Emerson and Transcendentalism, and Walt Whitman. The goals are self-expression, self-realization, self-fulfillment, discovering authenticity" (506-507).

Although this easily recognized in what the American scene is concerned, Emerson's aesthetic and ethic contributions surpass the countries'

intellectual confines. When he meditates on “The Otherness of Art’s Enigma”, William Desmond points out that “[l]ater aesthetic modernity will hold that the honor of being an original demands that the creative self imitate nothing other than itself: it images, indeed originates itself alone. Again to invoke Emerson’s pertinent saying: ‘Imitation is suicide’” (Desmond 90).

Besides, as my meditation tried to show, in his emphasis on the ordinary — “Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common...” (Emerson 101), on what lies near — “I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low” (102), and on the rediscovery of beauty — “Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote” (idem), hopefully on the self capacity to express and verbalize a moral presence in the cosmos lies Emerson’s vicinity to our own journeys as seekers. After all “[l]ife is our dictionary” (93).

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ABSTRACT

Despite the extensive summons and quotes of Western writers in *Sources of the Self — The Making of Modern Identity*, Charles Taylor's seminal work on the heterogeneity of contemporary thought, the Canadian philosopher only makes four elliptical references to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Yet these allow the reader to understand the specific context in which the American Transcendentalist conceives of a singular discourse. In this article I ponder on the presence of Taylor's conceptual instruments — modern inwardness, affirmation of ordinary life, art epiphanic status — in Emerson's thought in order to unveil his place in the polyphonic soil of Western intellectual traditions.

KEYWORDS

Expressivism; inwardness; ordinary; secular; self

RESUMO

Apesar das inúmeras e extensas convocações de escritores ocidentais em *Sources of the Self — The Making of Modern Identity*, a obra seminal de Charles Taylor sobre a heterogeneidade do pensamento contemporâneo, o filósofo canadiano faz apenas quatro referências elípticas a Ralph Waldo Emerson. No entanto, estas permitem ao leitor compreender o contexto específico no qual o transcendentalista americano concebe um discurso singular. Neste artigo, analiso a presença dos instrumentos conceptuais de Taylor — interioridade moderna, afirmação da banal vida quotidiana, estatuto epifânico da arte — no pensamento de Emerson, de modo a desvendar o seu lugar no solo polifónico das tradições intelectuais ocidentais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Expressividade; interioridade; quotidiano, secular; eu

Between hard covers and the “cloud”: Is a canon to be found?

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Between hard covers and the “cloud”: Is a canon to be found?

It is undeniable that libraries are crucial in the process of canon formation, in the sense that these are sites where choices are made, resulting from policies of book acquisition and donation acceptance, and where librarians face the pressure of space management. The research project that led to the present essay aimed at examining the University of Lisbon School of Humanities Library’s canon, concerning the collections in English, within the more restricted framework of British Victorian women writers. Was there a canon to be found? — was the query I started with.

Although the research expedition undertaken included both the Library’s online catalogue and the manual one, and also the “Ancient book” archive (a space where books no longer considered relevant to contemporary readers and students are stored), one must ask if, in a contemporary library, is print the sole content to be approached, when a vast digital content is available to the reader. With growing access to digital databases from the Library, one has necessarily to take into account e-books and academic journals, thus the former question turns into a rhetoric one (meaning “is print content the sole to be approached?”, the answer being *it is not*); the library’s inclusion in nets of knowledge created to connect similar institutions at a global level is also pertinent, once they expand enormously the scope of information the readers’ community has at their disposal, challenging a traditional concept of literary canon; furthermore, one has to be aware of the unsettled environment of contemporary libraries, as Andrew Stauffer defines it:

Because digital projects are more process than finished product (*i.e.*, they are never ‘done’ in the way a book is), they have tended to elude the reviewers. As a result of this unsettled

environment, digital scholarship still abides in the shadows of the printed monographs, articles, and editions by which we have long measured achievement in the field. (Stauffer 2011)

Thus, one cannot overlook the innumerable possibilities that the emerging field of Digital Humanities offers to the research in Humanities in general, as the researcher involved in such activities perceives when engaging in his own research and the others', as one acknowledges with the appearance of groups and platforms that unite them, such as The Digital Humanities Network, based at the University of Cambridge¹ or HASTAC,² just to name two. As Anne Burdick et al put it, "Digital Humanities is a compact, game-changing report on the state of contemporary knowledge production" (Burbick 2012), as a recognition of its influence. This emerging field of scholarship is making its way through the twenty-first century, challenging researchers and scholars to articulate their former fields of expertise into recently acquired methods, which may provide new insights to those areas of study. It also strengthens scholars boost towards interdisciplinarity, which is so valued in Cultural Studies.

The undertaken enquiry intersects with former research in the scope of Victorian Studies, focused on women writing, and Digital Humanities, once it provides new data to work with, and which will hopefully enlighten new angles or confirm acquired knowledge. Ultimately, the enquiry will consist of wondering if Digital Humanities may reveal to researchers dedicated to this area a different Victorian Era than the one we have known till now, the one in paper based research.

1. The research environment

Undertaken within the broader field of the Research Project *Libraries and Canon-Formation* of the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies (ULICES), later under the title World Cultures in English. Digital

¹ The Digital Humanities Network homepage. URL: <http://www.digitalhumanities.cam.ac.uk/> (Accessed 21.8.2016).

² Initials of Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory. URL: <http://www.hastac.org/> (Accessed 21.8.2016).

Humanities, Libraries, Schools, Social Development (*Culturas do Mundo em Inglês. Humanidades Digitais, Bibliotecas, Escolas, Compromisso Social*), this enquiry research matched the purpose of my own work as a researcher (a library user and not a librarian) in the preceding years, focusing on women authors, in different literary genres, as well as reform action, in the Victorian Era.

The next step will be during the course of this data expedition to find out if digital sources provide a new insight into the Victorian Women Writing, for instance by revealing unknown or lesser known authors or, on the contrary, if these sources replicate the canon found in the physical library. At the present stage, the vastness of documents available and the amount of information point out to a wider scope of the corpus. However, this vastness can be misleading because, instead of broadening the scope of authors represented, the digital environment points out to the existence of a canon, mostly a replication of the one found in the paper-based library.

2. Time frame

Before approaching the library's collections, the creation of a corpus of writers proved to be useful for this enquiry, using references such as The Victorian Web (VW) and the Victorian Women Writers Project (VWWP), just to name two, as well as anthologies of the same period, in order to create a starting point upon which to confront the library's catalogues. Curiously enough, one might add that researching ancient catalogues showed several difficulties, among which finding out the gender of lesser known authors (relevant information to this research), who have no Wikipedia³ page about them. However, the "social cataloging" site Goodreads⁴ provided a precious help, including information about the gender of the authors indexed.

Being the focus British Victorian women writers, it was fairly easy to gather a short list of names, in the sense that, be they fiction writers or other genres authors, they are outnumbered by male writers. George Eliot, the Brontë sisters and Jane Austen (although the latter definitely a pre-

³ The choice of Wikipedia as a reference to this matter is due to it being the most comprehensive site that is known.

⁴ Goodreads. URL: www.goodreads.com (Accessed 21.8.2016).

Victorian author, due to the 1837-1910 time frame established to the Victorian Era, acknowledged for the sake of researcher's comfort) hold a secure place, echoing choices made by their contemporaries, by critical theorists and by Victorian communities of readers and from then on. The very designation of the Victorian Era, as well as the dates that frame its boundaries, is a consequence of the belief that this period in History had unique features, granted by the Industrial Revolution, the Empire, legislative output, public reform and franchise, as well as social mobility, namely, in an intensely dynamic and innovative cultural framework.

The scope considered in this essay ranges from 1837 to 1901, as noted before, which guided the search for authors' production and dates of publishing. Nevertheless, publishing until 1914 was regarded, as it is generally accepted that the referred era extends to the outbreak of World War One. However, as Walter E. Houghton underlines, the time frame of the era is not a strict one, as he comments about the dates frame:

(...) the attitudes here under scrutiny are those which were conspicuous from about 1830 to 1870; which is to say that taken together and interrelated, they provide a definition of Victorianism. (...) I cannot doubt there was a common culture for which the term Victorianism, though in a wider sense that it usually bears, is appropriate. After 1870, while many of its characteristics persist through the century, (...) their dominance and their particular coherence were breaking down. Victorianism was dying, and a new frame of mind was emerging, a *late* Victorian frame of mind, which pointed forward to the postwar temper of the 1920's. (Houghton 1975: xv)

These dates, long established as boundaries of the Victorian Age, have been more recently challenged by Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam, in the Introduction of *The Victorian Studies Reader* (Boyd and McWilliam 2), namely by quoting Richard Price, an author included in this anthology, who argues that the so-called Victorian attitudes are, in fact, deeply rooted in the past. The discussion about the time frame of the Victorian Era would be, however, another debate. This discussion is one among the several that engage contemporary Victorian Studies, which witness intense academic production and critique.

3. Moving among catalogues within the library

A library, as an organized space, requires that the reader learns how to move inside it. Once you become familiar with its catalogue(s), and where they can be accessed, one realizes how this space has broad "avenues" and narrower "streets", due to the obvious dichotomy of the visible/invisible (or less visible) authors and books. The reader might even venture to state that the library has its visible contents, and the reserved ones, and even the latter distinguishable from the former due to different layers of exhibition and access permission.

Back to the library's contents, the online catalogue provided a quick access to the main collections; aside from that, one could not overlook the manual catalogue, a vast one and only accessible by special permission. Being organized according to the author's family names, it raised difficulties to the researcher, in the sense that often the author's initials are not enough to inform about their gender, requiring a more thorough enquiry, since the scope of this project only included women writers.

The possibility of existing translations in English of books of non-English authors poses a new problem, when both authors and translators are often referred to by their family name, preceded by the initials of first name. Again: were these women or men? And, above all, were they British or, for that matter, British Empire subjects? The research would not be completed, however, with the access of the manual catalogue. It still required further searches in the library's deposit funds, where a good number of volumes contemplate the scope of the years to verify (again between 1837-1901, the Victorian Era), mainly concerning travel writing, a much-cultivated genre in the referred period.

4. Discussing the canon. Choice, canon formation and power

Having established a corpus of names that stood for a Victorian canon, it was inevitable to approach the debate concerning the canon, the process of canon formation and the non-fixedness of the concept itself. This perspective is indebted to Paul Guillory, who points out that selections, namely considering which authors are representative of a certain period in History and in Literary Theory, are not innocent and unveil a discourse in

themselves, resulting in choices and exclusions: “Literary critics (...) detect beneath the supposed objectivity of value judgments a political agenda: the exclusion of many groups of people from representation in the literary canon” (Guillory 233).

Naturally, and mainly due to budget limitations and space constraints (not speaking of the focus of the area of studies itself), libraries are places where choices have to be made. Librarians have a crucial role in these choices, and their criteria derive in a process that pretends to ascertain what is relevant for the reader, thus contributing to the process of canon formation. This role is underlined by Julianne Buchsbaum, who stresses the importance to the local culture of the college or university and the broader society as a whole for librarians to become more aware of their part in this process and the social construction of knowledge. Consequently, the author underlines the difficulty of balancing the needs of present and future scholars (Buchsbaum 1). From the reader’s perspective, it would be fair to ask if a library with a strong canon is good for the reader. For, in the sense that it will mean exclusions, it will narrow his reading options. Therefore, would an embracing collection be more enlightening for the reader?

Before that, what contributes to inscribe women writers in and out of the canon? The answer to this question involves not only the circumstances surrounding the author, the themes approached in the books, some of them critical issues for the era, like divorce, suffrage, feminism and women roles, as well as book circulation. And namely different positions concerning the Woman Question in the Victorian Era, the ongoing Victorian discussion about women’s nature and societal role, as Thompson argues (Thompson 1). However, theme choice was not the main reason for an author getting included in the Victorian canon or excluded, an issue I have developed in my thesis, approaching the case of Harriet Taylor Mill, namely.⁵

In fact and as stated before, the assumption that the digital canon replicates the paper-based library’s canon is supported mainly on directions conveyed to volunteers for the digitalization process or general guide lines

⁵ Baptista, Cristina (2011). *Mulheres na sombra. Great Victorian women behind great Victorian men*. Doctoral thesis in English Studies. Lisbon: School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon.

of sites where e-books can be found, namely the Project Gutenberg, but also A Celebration of Women Writers, a comprehensive site, with links to titles and book contents, if digitalized.

5. The librarian's task

Once the librarian chooses the contents of donations, according to criteria of relevance, his options will lead to the narrowing of the choices available to the readers, the same being true to acquisitions policy. Furthermore, how does a librarian in a library as the one in question meet the needs of such a large scope of interests as the professors', the researchers' and the students' communities of the University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities? In his role of gatekeeper of culture, what will his attitude be concerning the extra canonical works of a period in which the choice is made? Facing the librarian and the power he holds in the decision-making process, and a strict policy of acceptance of donations, in what concerns ancient or second hand books, as well as purchase policy of contemporary items, within a concern to create a core collection, fringes, or extra-canon books are not likely to appear. In this regard, Charles A. Gardner adds another issue into the discussion, inquiring who should have control in the purchase policy: the faculty or the faculty librarian himself? (Gardner 1985).

In the case of the library in question, being both a heritage library and a contemporary one, in the sense that its collections range from institutional and private donations to acquisitions, a constantly evolving collection, the contents of this library result in a mixed component and result from different policies undertaken along its history by successive managements. Furthermore, the librarian's procedure must be framed in the broader policy of the University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities, knowing that most of the researchers needs are met by the research centres own libraries, and the Main Library meets mostly the undergraduates needs. Nevertheless, at this point, in a contemporary library, the process of digitisation of contents is likely to subvert this equation concerning policies of donation acceptance and acquisition.

With online access to databases, encyclopedias, e-books and journals, the library has expanded immensely the scope of its collections, opening a

wide range of possibilities for readers. The offer is overwhelming not only to read but also to listen to, with sites dedicated to audiobooks. So, what could be faced as a narrowing process can, with current digital resources, be transformed in a widening one in which the concept of canon is totally eroded. Also, different means of production go beyond the digitisation of print books and making them readable online, and have introduced video, television and the social nets in the creative process, resulting in the so-called transmedia, which includes different media in the creative process, with the book or without it.

In such circumstances, is it legitimate to invoke the canon? It is, once and despite the instability of the digital environment, the research points towards the prevalence of a replication of the paper-based canon.

6. Findings

It remains to reveal the findings for this essay in the School of Arts and Humanities' Library, both from the manual catalogue and the deposits: travel writings, mostly, and Empire writing, in what concerns information, mostly geographical, about the colonies, and also the novel, a most cultivated Victorian literary genre.

Being the canonical British Victorian women writers represented in the library shelves, searchable in the online catalogue, the appearance of other authors is framed under the category of curiosities, in the sense that their inclusion does not represent consistent criteria of relevance in the line of acceptance of donations/acquisitions policy. Furthermore, these books, included in the manual catalogue, are not available in the library shelves.

Going into detail, one could establish at first a range of authors. Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, Alice Meynell, Christina Rossetti, Dorothy Wordsworth and Maria Edgeworth are represented in primary and secondary literature, and names such as Anna Eliza Bray, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, W.H. Davies, Grace E. Hadow, Vernon Lee and Beatrice Web are represented in literature or essay.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Grey, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Gaskell, Felicia Hemans, Fanny Kemble, Harriet Martineau, Hannah More, Cornelia Sorabji, Olive Shreiner and Ann Radcliffe are represented in critical works.

Other (very) few names appear in the manual catalogue, such as Evelyn Ashley, Gertrude Atherton, Valentine Baker, Anne Blunt, Ouida and Alice Gardner, among others, who join the authors represented both in the digital catalogue and the manual catalogue, George Elliot, Jane Austen and Elizabeth Bowen. As a curiosity, a selection of Queen Victoria's letters can also be found.

If the first ones were obvious choices, others exposed a random or no intended choice of the library. How each of them arrived in the premises remains to be known, information that will desirably be provided in a further step, as the research will evolve.

Popular, prolific and successful Victorian writer Anna Eliza Bray (1790-1883), a name in the library's Main Catalogue, is a striking discovery. This author is the object of her autobiography, edited by John A. Kempe, the writer's nephew; however relevant, Bray is neither acknowledged by The Victorian Web (VW), nor by the Victorian Women Writers Project, nor by Harold Bloom, whose approach acknowledges only nine Victorian women writers (Bloom 1994). Yet, Bray published, in her long life, a great number of books, *The Borders of the Tamar and Tavy* (1836) considered her most notable one. This author published mainly novels, one of which *The Moor of Portugal*, about foreign life. Her major work being described in the novel and anthropological genre, among a great number of titles, so, in due justice there would be no argument for exclusion. As an argument more, this author's representation in the British Library in London is extensive, from primary sources to critical production about her work. Therefore, according to the indexing of the author's work by the British Library, and once it is clear that the autobiography is not her most important title, its presence in the Faculty of Humanities Library can only be explained by the work of chance and not of a consistent acceptance of donation/acquisition policy.

Cornelia Sorabji is another case, this time not of underrepresentation, as Bray, but of non-representation, with the exception of a master thesis, thus secondary literature.⁶ As an author with an extensive corpus, ranging

⁶ Baptista, Cristina (2007). *O encontro colonial nas memórias de Cornelia Sorabji*. Masters degree dissertation. Lisbon: School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon.

from the autobiographical genre to the anthropological accounts, a British Indian Victorian reformer, her knowledge of India in her time can only be matched by a few contemporaries. Furthermore, the extent of Sorabji's writing goes beyond other British women more common travel writing, due to her deep social reform commitment and political concerns for the development of the country, which shaped her writing. Not forgetting her tireless efforts towards Indian women social condition, while other writers limit their interests to a strict folklore record, attractive as it might have been to their contemporary readers.

This anglicised Indian born author is also depicted as a witness of a changing world, as well as of an in-betweenness experienced by subjects with a double allegiance (Great Britain and India), as this was the case. So, much can be said about her relevance as a source of a counter-discourse in her times, diverging from main-stream and Home Rule prevailing defenders, such as Gandhi. An example is *India Calling* (Sorabji 1934), her *memoirs*, only recently brought to renewed attention by different editors, a biographer and researchers. Not represented in the Library, her unique perspective of the Empire during the Victorian Era will not be available for readers, certainly a loss in the opinion making process about the subject. As for this writer's relevance in a contemporary perspective this enquiry would be answered by the importance she attributed to themes such as domestic violence or gender discrimination in the professional ranks and in society, two major issues that have not yet been overcome in contemporary Europe, namely from the site we stand in, Portugal, much less in India.

Grace Eleanor Hadow is another name overlooked in the British origins lists, namely the VW, and present in the Faculty's Library, as an anthology organizer and editor. Another curious case is Beatrice Webb, although underrepresented in the School of Arts and Humanities Library and only in secondary literature. A well-known case of collaborative production, involving Beatrice and Sidney Webb as political essayists, this author of unquestionable relevance is also not singled out in the VW list of women authors, although quoted in a great number of articles within this site.

7. Conclusion

The bottom line, at this stage of the research, is that a wide Victorian literary canon is fairly represented in the University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities Library. This means that a contemporary assessment of what is relevant to be read not just *from* but also *of* Victorian women writers is available to the average student reader and researcher in the Library.

A major conclusion, so far, is that the digital sources, data bases, platforms and sites available replicate the canon of the paper-based library. This is on the one hand disappointing, in the sense that one might legitimately expect to find a wider range of contents. If to certain extents that is true, on the other hand, names considered significant (like Cornelia Sorabji), unrepresented at the Library, are also underrepresented in the digital environment. This statement has to consider, however, its instability.

A few more ancient books, published during the Victorian Era, which have not survived the test of time, thus were relegated to oblivion, can be found in the content of the manual catalogue or/and the deposits, not available to every reader and accessible only under special requirement. There, a randomized number of books can be found, not only precious ones, but also under the epitome of curiosities, namely coming from donations, thus corresponding to previous individual owners and revealing their own particular choices.

As stated before, the library's collections within the scope of this research match the more relevant, thus canonical, woman authors, if one compares these collections with names included in a number of sources, ranging from the considerably comprehensive VW to the selected Harold Bloom's choice, but including for the sake of suggestions other sources, such as the VWWP, dedicated to less known authors, the Virginia Blain's *Victorian Women Poets. An Annotated Anthology*, and Harriet Jump's *Women's Writing in the Victorian Period 1837-1901: An Anthology*.

As is the case with Sorabji, whose appearance in the School of Arts and Humanities was due to a seminar devoted to women writing in the British Empire, undertaken in the mid 2000's, other less known and non-canonical writers came to the front of the current research, be they theme of masters dissertations, or doctoral thesis. This circumstance can be explained

by the acknowledged effort concerning innovative themes underwent by post-graduate studies programs, as a widespread faculty policy.

This policy has had obvious consequences for the library's collections, broadening their scope, and including names and themes that otherwise would not be represented in the catalogues, in the sense that they do not represent necessarily a consensus of the Department of English Studies, or the library's acquisition policy, rather a more individual attitude, be it the researcher's choice, and considering also the tutor's advice.

As stated before, the School of Arts and Humanities Library, founded in 1859, prides itself of a content ranging from rare ancient books to a vast contemporary collection, either originated in donations or acquisitions, in several fields of knowledge within the scope of the Humanities.

In conclusion, the library contents, as far as contemporary acquisitions and donations, depict the relevance of Victorian Era as it is perceived today. This relevance, however, is not consensual. As an example of the lack of consensus and of the fact that the authors' relevance is reassessed by different and successive reader communities let us recall the statement by Salman Rushdie, in his allusion to Jane Austen, an all times novelist (since her appearance in the publishing market), also revived in contemporary cinema and television. In the recent *Joseph Anton. A Memoir*, Rushdie criticizes Austen's attitude towards the Napoleonic wars, to the extent that this author ignores the conflict and the participation of the British Army, an attitude impossible for a writer to uphold today when, states Rushdie, it is impossible to separate the political from the personal (Rushdie 54). One might conclude, therefore adding to the argument of the canon not being a fixed category that Austen is not included in Rushdie's personal canon as a novelist. This, according to his perspective, because of her production not resisting a contemporary reading and the requirements of writing today, namely in a post-colonial era, when geographical frontiers have fallen and human experience has broadened immensely.

According to the scope of our research, one might state that the library responds to its function, providing relevant reading about the Victorian Era, with a fair bulk of relevant authors; the representation of non-canonical authors, with a short number of names, as the ones referred to before, may be attributed to random choices or donations, and not to a coherent acquisition policy, undertaken and consolidated with time.

Nonetheless, this is a fact in itself, a challenge for researchers and an issue deserving future attention. Books found outside the main canon represent fringes of the publishing at the time, although pointing out to the consistent stream of novels, travel writing, anthologies, geography and anthropological genres, cultivated by women writers at the time. This, nevertheless, does not indicate that the library has made a choice to specialise in these or other themes. Resorting mainly from donations, these few titles reveal the choices of the previous owners of the private libraries they come from, rather than a choice of library policy.

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ABSTRACT

The essay sums up the results also of a query, once it refers to a work in progress, developed over two years, in the scope of the World Cultures in English. Digital Humanities, Libraries, Schools, Social Development research project, of ULICES. Although the emerging field of Digital Humanities seems to be mostly dedicated to the possibilities of analysing big data located in the “cloud”, for producing knowledge from that standing point and the analysis of those data, I have wondered in a different direction, even though still taking advantage from the growing field that is offered to Victorianists by digital access and databases. My starting point was the University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities Library and the critical issue the process of canon formation. It is unquestionable that this process is closely connected with libraries, in the sense that these are sites where choices are made resulting from policies of books acquisition and donation acceptance, and where librarians feel the pressure of space management. The current research project I am involved in aims at inquiring if one can define a University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities Library’s canon, concerning the collections in English, within the framework of British Victorian women writers. The research process included the access to the online and manual catalogues, and the Library’s deposit fund, the so-called “Ancient Book”.

At this stage, the Digital Humanities research tools proved to be useful. It was fair to ask if, in a contemporary library, print is the sole content to be approached, when a vast digital content is available to the reader. Growing access to digital databases, e-books, audio-books and academic journals from the Library, or, for that matter, accessed at a distance, has to be taken into account, as well as its inclusion in nets of knowledge created to connect similar institutions, once they expand the scope of the information at reader’s community disposal, challenging the traditional concept of literary canon.

On a second level, my essay aims at inquiring if Digital Humanities will reveal researchers a different Victorian Era women writing than the one we have known till now. Although an unstable environment, the essay stresses the fact that digital

sources replicate the paper-based canon, frustrating expectations of researchers that they might broaden it.

KEYWORDS

Libraries; Digital Humanities; literary canon; Victorian women writers; Victorian Era

RESUMO

O ensaio apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa ainda não encerrada, desenvolvida ao longo de dois anos, no âmbito do projecto de investigação *Culturas do Mundo em Inglês. Humanidades Digitais, Bibliotecas, Escolas, Compromisso Social*, do CEAUL. E, se bem que o campo emergente das Humanidades Digitais se tem dedicado às possibilidades de análise de grandes volumes de dados, localizados na “nuvem” e produzido conhecimento a partir daí, a minha pesquisa evoluiu numa direção diferente, ainda que tirando partido das crescentes possibilidades proporcionadas aos Vitorianistas graças ao acesso digital e às bases de dados disponíveis. O ponto de partida deu-se na Biblioteca Central da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, uma vez que é inquestionável que o processo de formação do cânone está intimamente relacionado com as bibliotecas, no sentido em que constituem locais onde são feitas escolhas, decorrentes de políticas de aquisição de livros e de aceitação de doações, e onde os bibliotecários enfrentam a pressão da gestão do espaço disponível. O projecto de investigação em que me envolvi propõe-se indagar se existe um cânone específico na Biblioteca da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, no que respeita às coleções em Inglês, no âmbito mais restrito das autoras Vitorianas britânicas. Depois de ter acedido aos catálogos manual e *online*, a pesquisa abrangeu ainda o depósito da Biblioteca, designado “Livro Antigo”.

Nesta fase da investigação, as ferramentas usadas pelas Humanidades Digitais revelaram-se extremamente úteis. Assim, é pertinente questionar se, numa biblioteca contemporânea, o material impresso será o único acervo a considerar, numa altura em que um vasto acervo digital está disponível ao leitor. O crescente acesso a bases de dados digitais, livros digitais e audiolivros, e a revistas académicas a partir da Biblioteca, ou até à distância, tem de ser tido em conta, assim como a inclusão desta instituição em redes de conhecimento criadas para ligar instituições semelhantes, uma vez que expandem imensamente o âmbito da informação disponível para o leitor, desafiando um conceito mais tradicional de cânone.

Num segundo plano, este ensaio propõe-se indagar se as Humanidades Digitais poderão revelar uma produção literária ou ensaística das autoras Vitorianas britânicas diferente daquela que conhecemos anteriormente. Considerando embora a dinâmica das plataformas digitais e das bases de dados, este ensaio aponta para o

facto de estas fontes replicarem o cânone que conhecemos até agora, o que redundava numa frustração para os investigadores que legitimamente esperavam que o ambiente digital redundasse numa maior abrangência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Bibliotecas; Humanidades Digitais; cânone literário; autoras Vitorianas; Era Vitoriana

Narrative Medicine: what Discourse adds to Listening

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Narrative Medicine: what Discourse adds to Listening¹

The singularity of the clinical encounter is made not only of words but also of the eloquence of an equally revealing silence.

(Antunes, *Owvir* 43)²

By its very nature the medical consultation is a subjective event. The ailment presented in every clinical encounter is unique, felt singularly by each patient transmitting his/her particular experience through individual verbal and body language. The medical practitioner receiving this information is also singular, arriving at the event with his/her own individual story. Unfortunately, today the contemporary model for medical consultations does not encourage the physician to communicate actively with the patient. Sitting behind a desk and/or a computer, in the ten to fifteen minutes afforded to it (European average), the consultation will be led by pre-defined questions focused on obtaining data, and the prescription of medical examinations and tests. Moreover, as neurologist João Lobo Antunes observed, the image has practically obliterated the narrating of illness in today's medical consultation (Antunes, *Nova Medi-*

¹ We thank Isabel Fernandes for having revised our essay and offered some pertinent suggestions. This essay was the result of collaborative interdisciplinary work carried out by researchers of the FCT project *Narrative & Medicine* (CEAUL / ULICES – University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies). It is an expanded and revised version of the presentation “Caring for the Future” delivered at *Conférences d’Hippocrate* (Université Paris/Descartes), December 2015.

² “O encontro singular da clínica é feito de palavras mas (...) também da eloquência de um silêncio igualmente revelador”.

cina 29). This occurs for two main reasons. First, shortened consultations have reduced the time the physician has to listen to the patient; a recent study demonstrates that, on average, the patient is interrupted twenty-three seconds after the consultation begins (Révah-Lévy et al 2016). Second, patients have natural difficulties explaining their situation. This is reinforced with patients' present-day belief that the images derived from their medical examinations will reveal their ailments more clearly than words (Antunes, *Nova Medicina* 29-30). However, despite these notions, language continues to play an essential role in mediation. Thus, if the medical consultation does not encourage engagement through language, patients will not be listened to.

The short extracts presented below from the beginning and end of Nicole Malinconi's *Hôpital silence* (1985) — inspired by the author's experience as a social worker — illustrate the type of instrumentalised approach which is not uncommon in hospitals today:

A woman came in for surgery. Ovarian cyst. The doctor showed it to her on the screen (...). The word was never uttered, nor written. But in her mind, she thinks about it — the cancer that took her mother five years earlier — and she knows full well that this little thing inside her could upset the balance, collapsing her world into disease.

But still, no-one says a word.

[bodies] each one different; suffering the same symptoms, yet unique even though, with their own unique story to tell, in their own words.

(...)

... recognize the same pent-up question that goes through every speaking body, screaming out, yet which, at the hospital, will just burst into consciousness without heed or caution. (11, 112)³

³ For an extended analysis of this novel, see Maria de Jesus Cabral 2015.

1. The Progressions and Challenges of Medical Practice in Modern Society

Of all the branches of science, medical science is the one where the strongest historical connections with the humanities and the social sciences can be found (Canguilhem 1994). From time immemorial being a doctor has been synonymous with being faced with a myriad of varied challenges and the same happens today. One of the founding figures of modern medical training, the Canadian William Osler — responsible for the medical residency program at Johns Hopkins Hospital and Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University from 1905 to his death, in 1919 — encouraged his students to read medical biographies and the classics because he felt this reading could help medical students understand the nature of their patients' illnesses:

Whilst science could provide the knowledge required to diagnose and treat diseases, it offered no tuition (or intuition) on matters of vital interest to medical students, concerning how they were to understand doctor patient relationships and how they should manage interactions in and between the profession and the public. (Hurwitz, *Origins* 15)

Truly, the development of medicine has been inscribed in a history of knowledge, enhanced by attending and listening to the stories of patients. As Osler's argues the notion that contact with the humanities could facilitate this process is not new. The first chair in history of medicine was established at Johns Hopkins in 1929 with the explicit intention of broadening the experience of medical students and countering the fragmentation of medical knowledge, already apparent at that time (Hurwitz, *Origins* 18).

However, in spite of such attempts, the capacity to listen to the patient has been disappearing from modern medicine. Medicine may have started out as an art, but over the ages it has assumed the form of an exact science informed by a growing number of interdependent disciplines. Regardless of whether the patients want to tell the story of their illness and symptoms, the doctor's job is now to conduct a formal interview, using pre-defined questions, to proceed to clinical examination and tests, with a view to identifying clinical or subclinical signs to obtain evidence of the

symptoms of a disease. This scenario is repeated independent of whether the clinical event occurs in a hospital with a patient in a state of extreme suffering requiring immediate treatment or in a doctor's private practice where the patient is merely attending a routine appointment or scheduling a screening test. This happens because modern medical training methods and practices leave no room for voicing subjective perceptions or integrating personal expectations.

However, the problem stems not only from medical training. Modern society expects and demands scientific evidence-based medicine and transparent rationalized treatment programs that progressively eliminate enigmas and uncertainties. At the same time it demands that all illnesses are containable and, if possible, curable independent of where they occur. Also while people may worry about their health, their expectations about access to effective medical care are high. The dissemination of medical advances and the availability of institutes of care have become central concerns in this world advocating access to health as a fundamental right to which all human beings are entitled, as proclaimed by Article 25 of the *Declaration of Human Rights* (1948).

The current situation in medical practice makes advanced technological mediation compulsory and the attendant tendency to deny the historic connection with the humanities and the social sciences. This situation is a consequence of scientific advances arising from the increase in bio- and other technologies, and the segmentation of medicine performed by medical practitioners who must also divide their responsibility between care delivery and patient management. In the wake of evidence-based medicine and its big clinical trials, genetics and bioinformatics, a new medical model dubbed P4 — Predictive, Preventive, Personalized and Participatory — has been fuelled and we now live in the world of *Precision Medicine*. In this new predictive analytics paradigm, information exchange and data sharing have become core concepts, and the secular relational dimension tends to be neglected. The traditional “doctor-patient relationship” is diluted in a flood of procedures, progressively stripped back to the strict minimum necessary for the doctor to collect and compile the relevant medical history. In a parallel process, these new practices — which incite people who might otherwise feel well to request screening tests to identify risk factors for future disease — tend to recast doctors as vulnerability-

mongers and prescribers of “preventive” measures (Hood and Friend).

This movement is changing the very concept of medical practice which for centuries was conceived of as reactive — the provision of relief to patients in suffering — but which is now turning into a proactive discipline aimed at prevention. This new model is concerned with determining individual predisposing factors, warning people at risk and proposing early tailored interventions, with the expectation that, in return, people will engage with these prognostics and take measures accordingly. It aspires to unravel the mysteries of the individual by sequencing and analysing their genome, and to decrypt the effects of individual person-local environment interactions. This strategy anchored in a systemic vision has produced a new form of research: data mining. Information exchange and data sharing have become core concepts, and the secular relational dimension tends to get crowded out. The volume and complexity of the data generated, the hunt for results, the drive for accuracy and increasingly advanced technical input have relegated the practice of medicine and the result of the doctor-patient relationship to a total objective rationale of data, the physician being relegated to the position of offering an expert opinion. Thus medical decision-making is losing all *phronesis* (cf. Aristóteles 7).

Thus, today’s medical practice bears the symptoms of a process of dehumanization that is incompatible with the fundamental listening and accompanying mission expected of it. These issues are further increased by changes in the nature of illness itself. Increasingly serious diseases are being transformed into chronic illnesses. The awareness that scientific progress is not only allowing greater longevity but also generating new ethical questions is another concern. Moreover, the sensation of “health” is progressively moving from a feeling of “non-disease” to a state of concern about “wellbeing”. An increasing awareness of risk factors — whether medical, social or environmental, can also be noted. In a parallel process, these new practices incite people, who might otherwise feel well, to request screening tests to identify risk factors for future diseases. The upshot is the birth of the myth of the autonomous patient, idealized by the bioethics movement as being sufficiently informed to be able to make necessarily rational decisions, but actually lacking relevant information and the necessary support to be able to do this. The patient is now being asked to choose from solutions presented as a rationalized schema from automated

analytics now informing core medical expertise derived from case-based reasoning (Mamzer et al 2013).

The movement towards a technological approach in medical practice is part of a wider epistemological shift affecting today's tech-enabled society. The philosopher Giorgio Agamben sees the concept of "action" as increasingly associated with the notion of "use". He also suggests that, associated with modern gadgets, the notion of "apparatus" is overtaking the reality of the "subject". These shifts engender "processes of de-subjectification without acknowledging any real subjectification" (Agamben 44). By way of Foucault, Agamben defines apparatus as "anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions or discourses of living beings" (Agamben 31). A sum of the supports used in modern medical decision-making could fit into Agamben's definition suggesting that medicine, like other sectors of society, finds itself confined to a set of procedures associated with forms of *biopower*. Thus, it is forced to run against its living praxis and its organic fabric of tightly-interwoven subjective, cultural and narrative components.

Today's medical practice bears the symptoms of dehumanization that is incompatible with the fundamental listening and accompanying mission expected of it. The emergence of a hard and technology-based paradigm within which "a culture of profit, consumerism, and mythical adulation of "science" has invaded and complicated the mission of real medicine" (Newman 211). The ethic dimension and an integrative approach combining humanities and medicine skills remains a major challenge today in order to continue on reasoning and questioning notions closely related to categories as subjectivity, where where medical ethics resonates strongest (Bouretz 1993).⁴

⁴ As we discussed in a previous article concerning the notion of secret. See Maria de Jesus Cabral and Marie-France Mamzer 2016.

2. A *Listening Ear* through Narrative Medicine

As groups like “Speak Up” or “Patient Voices”⁵ make manifest, there has been a counter movement against the strong objectification of medical practices. This can also be seen in the increasing interest in humanities-based interdisciplinary areas in medical training such as the Medical Humanities. This field has expanded significantly since it was first introduced in the U.S. in the 1970s (Hurwitz, *Origins* 21-24). Rita Charon’s Narrative Medicine program, begun in the early 1990s in the U.S., can be viewed in this context. Charon defined Narrative Medicine as “medicine practiced with the narrative competency to recognize, interpret, and be moved to action by the predicament of others” (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 83). It presupposes that when a person enters a medical consultation, s/he does not enter as a de-contextualised body with isolated problems. The body that enters the room to be treated is part of a whole person; these people have their own lives, families, social contexts, beliefs, values, stories, hopes for the future, just as the physician who meets them in the space of exchange of the medical consultation. Narrative Medicine is not divorced from evidence-based medicine but strongly recommends that space should be given to the individual and to the social context of disease.

While Narrative Medicine looks at all the narratives occurring in medicine — those of the carers and patients, those expressed verbally and non-verbally, arising, as they do, from backgrounds, cultures, education, belief — it also recognizes that healthcare professionals are often ill equipped to truly hear patients’ stories of illness. They rarely acquire the *listening ear* necessary to register patients’ complete stories through their formal medical training. Narrative Medicine considers the endeavour to develop this *listening ear* as an indispensable one and as the source of relevant information in the clinical encounter:

Clinical telling ordinarily at least touches on important life relationships in the course of the telling. Now, the listening ear in medicine is often deaf to story, and so the narrativity

⁵ See http://www.jointcommission.org/facts_about_speak_up/ and <http://www.patientvoices.org.uk/>

of the patient's account may not be appreciated. However, when told freely and heard expertly, the self-telling that occurs in medical settings can reflect a rich and earthy unity of body, mind, and life and can give voice to body, relation, and narratively achieved identity. (Charon, *Narrative Medicine* 78)

Charon proposes the introduction of literary studies in medical training and practice because an appropriate *listening ear* may not always be developed through conventional health care training. The three literary-based skills developed in Narrative Medicine are *close reading*, *creative/reflective writing*, written "in the shadow" of the text read, and *close reading of that creative/reflective writing*. Such practices encourage the development of *attention* and *representation* skills leading to *affiliation* (Charon et al, *Close Reading* 345-350). The *listening ear* thus developed will be able to hear all aspects of the patients' communication more effectively, whether transmitted verbally or nonverbally, as clinicians' perceptive attention is enhanced. *Representation* skills acquired through *creative/reflective writing* enhance physicians' capacity to better appreciate their patients' dilemmas because "writing, as one form of representation, allows an individual to achieve his or her perception (346). Charon et al propose that the medical field is coming to realise that training carers in narrative skills contributes to development of more reflective medical practises and better care both for the patient and the carer.

3. How *Discourse* supports Narratives

Traditionally, the telling of stories has been connected with the transmission of a linear, structured narrative in spoken language. Jonathan Gottschall feeds into this notion in *The Storytelling Animal* (2013) where he writes that storytelling is consubstantial to man as a being-with-history. It gives a frame to the otherwise random inputs streaming into our brains, and so allows us to experience our lives as coherent, orderly and meaningful. While Narrative Medicine aligns with this idea, the social dynamic of the clinical encounter may also consider body language, gestures, facial expressions, pauses and silences as relevant to meaning making. Thus, the physician may be attentive both to *what* is said and the *way* it is transmitted.

Observation of clinical encounters reveals the constraints of narrative reports *per se*,⁶ claimed for an anthropologically-grounded approach and called attention to the importance of discursive events, subjective forms and ways of telling different from the conventional narratives as in narratology. Furthermore, recent works on Narrative Medicine enhance the intersubjectivity of clinical listening, extending the contact between teller and listener beyond textual parallels with close reading to include the lived experiences of reflexivity and reciprocity in the development of shared presence. (Charon et al, *The Principles and Practises of Narrative Medicine*). Such concepts as enactivism and embodiment from anti-representationist cognitive sciences add useful dimensions to Narrative Medicine frameworks of intersubjective clinical work (Charon, *The Shock of Attention*). And in the social justice work that proceeds from Narrative Medicine activism, *radical listening* has emerged as a method of intentionally putting aside one's assumptions in narrative humility and granting to the other conversant grounds of authority and credibility so as to not challenge or counter one opinion for another but to risk taking another's opinion as seriously as one takes one's own. This kind of radical listening is, in current Narrative Medicine practice, a starting point in the efforts to face the polarizations of a dangerously divided society. Undoubtedly these dimensions favour a progressive humanization of healthcare; considerations regarding the discursive inter/plays at work in spoken face-to-face *narration* add to Charon's approach to extend its critical and strategic reach.

In *An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative* (1966), Roland Barthes was moving beyond the "system of narrative" (Barthes, "An Introduction" 266) when he wrote: "What goes on in a narrative is, from the referential (real) point of view, strictly *nothing*. What does 'happen' is language *per se*, the adventure of language, whose advent never ceases to be celebrated" (271). Barthes invites us to go beyond the structural

⁶ Such as the fieldwork done by Maria de Jesus Cabral in the hematology service of IPO (Portuguese Oncology Institute) in Lisbon, inspired by NM methodologies. It consisted in observation and analysis of consultations based on discursive elements, as well as of the body/language interaction in its para- and non-verbal (kinetic, proxemic and prosodic) dimension. Interviews and inquiries were also conducted with doctors and patients.

description and chrono/logical organization inherent in the conventional concept of narrative, by observing pertinently that “temporality is no more than a structural class of narrative (understood as discourse), just as in ordinary language, time exists only in the form of a system” (252). Thus meaning making may not only be ascribed to classical narratological categories such as chronological progression, order and causal connexion — the rules Barthes calls the *grammar* of the text (251). In his renowned *Leçon*, at Collège de France (1978), where he defines his new literary semiology, he also proposes that one may need to go beyond well-established patterns of textual codes and framing structures. He suggests that since time immemorial, literature has been shaped, reinvented and transmitted not only by mankind’s language, but also through place and organic ties — man’s relationship with others and the world around them: “Literature doesn’t say it knows something, but that it knows *of* something; or better, that it knows *about* something — that it knows *all about* men” (Barthes, *Leçon* 18-19).

This purpose fits in well with an anthropological perspective of language as already shown by Émile Benveniste. According to this French linguist, it is language that enables subjectivity: “It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject because language alone establishes the concept of “ego” in reality” (259-260). Then, the focal point in every definition of subject is this ability to *say* I, and it’s only by adopting this attitude within language that the individual is able to construct his/her unique identity.

In order to operate a linguistic distinction within the category of person, Benveniste recalls that the Arab grammarians distinguish only the first and second person — “the one who speaks” and “the one who is addressed” (228). The third person is indeed a “non-person” considering the absence of anything specifically relating to discourse:

In the first two persons, there are both a person involved and a discourse concerning that person. I designate the one who speaks and at the same time imply an utterance about I; In saying “I”, I cannot *not* be speaking of myself. In the second person, “you” is necessarily designated by “I” and cannot be thought of outside a situation set up by starting with “I” and at the same time “I” states something as predicated by “you”.

But in the third person a predicate is really stated, only it is outside “I” and “you”; this form is thus an exception to the relationships by which “I” and “you” are specified. Consequently, the legitimacy of this form as a “person” is to be questioned. (*Ibid.*)

Benveniste’s provocative proposition stresses the idea that in speech situations the persons referred to by “I” and “You” are specific ones — though they can swap roles. They identify themselves principally through discursive interaction, building what Benveniste calls a “correlation of subjectivity” (232). The third person (“s/he”) is someone outside the speech situation, and is thus linguistically a “non person”, since s/he is outside of the one-to-one relationship. Fundamentally Benveniste is arguing that language as a self-contained structure does not exist. Language is never external to the subject, or even “objective”. It always includes an ensemble of signs that are “empty” until the speaker introduces them into a unique instance of speech. Then language becomes discourse and discourse is inseparable from the notion of presence. As an instance of language put in action between partners, discourse is not particularly concerned with the chronology of the events in real-time. It claims to “leave the domain of language as a system of signs and enter into another universe, that of language as an instrument of communication” (Benveniste 130).

For Benveniste language is the “life” of human speech in action. So in communication there is a never exhausted potential to co-create meaning, to reveal and to be revealed. Communication is not necessarily a sequential and oppositional exchange of messages on which dominant perspectives change or interfere with one another. According to Benveniste, discursive events are emergent phenomena interacting through creative language use. Thus they are both position and passage, both signs and meanings, both event and discourse, both code and practice. The use of events as resources in communication is organized by the order of discourse, because language users can change the order of discourse through their experience of the event. Thus language acquires a transformative power and can operate across narrative/textual boundaries. Revisiting the narrated discourse as the act of subject interacting with the social world is a move to transcend dichotomies such as me/you, individual/society, health/disease, care provider/patient. Seen in this way, *narrative* in medical

contexts may be think beyond the narratological perspective and perceive as a more dynamic and embodied self-experience. It requires and exploding of the classical narrative categories such as linearity, coherence and continuity. Principles derived from discourse as *language put into action* can undoubtedly widen the scope of the concept of narrative going beyond its textual dimension by bringing together body and language, sound and silence, gestures and words.

If “discourse is the event of language” as also Paul Ricoeur admitted (Ricoeur 25), discourse may indeed find a new relevance and application in the medical consultation. Here the account given is often accompanied by multiple dimensions of communication: oral, bodily, and kinaesthetic, as well as being conditioned by the *loco* in which it is transmitted, which requires immediate and present communication. These conditioning factors create discursive events, modes of organization of subjectivity and processes of telling which may be very different from what happens in textual narratives.

This discursive approach, which has reconnected literary studies with its personal-contextual-social dimension, after a period of neglect under immanent criticism, is now taking on a decisive role in the humanities, and especially in the academic study of literature (Maingueneau and Abram). By promoting the study of the spoken word and looking at its functionality in and through language, the discursive approach offers a new register for subjectivity, which is a major challenge. As the title of the last essay of João Lobo Antunes claims, the clinical encounter involves “listening with other eyes” (2015). When writing of the importance of the “elevation of the dialogue” (Antunes, *Ouvir* 39), he argues that one must pay attention “to the most perfect echo of the voice by which the disease exposes its feeling” (*Ibid.*). Note that it is the disease that may be revealed by the dialogue, accentuating the operative value of the latter, and enabling the listening of the patient’s story. Thus, Antunes also returns to Osler’s earlier teaching “Listen to the patient, he will tell you his diagnosis” (Antunes *Ouvir* 28). In other words, given the power and influence of techno science on medicine and healthcare, it is time to become attentive to the patient’s *discourse* as a *process of subjectivation*, and thus help turn the passiveness denounced by Agamben back into activeness, and mere functionality into a true relational exchange.

Discourse is much more than simply recounting the facts. It is the realization of the spoken word, imbedded in a specific context and situation, by a subject who thereby posits and identifies him/herself in relation to the non-speaker. It is always a dynamic process, according to Émile Benveniste's view of communication. As a speech-act exercise, it prompts a move *from text to action* (to borrow from Paul Ricœur) that plays out in the 'live' realization of language by a speaker-subject, in a process of exchange between an *I* and a *You*.

This reaches into an anthropology of language that is rooted in Henri Meschonnic's conception of individuation or *subjectivation*, protesting since his first works (cf. Meschonnic, *Le Signe*) against the *formalism of sign*, and all literary approaches which tended to classify and describe texts rather than interrogate the primacy of meaning: language, which is "made of the practices of language, speeches of subjects in a situation" as it is recalled in his last posthumous book *Language and History: An Overarching of the Word Theory* (Meschonnic, *Langage* 31). He also argued here that the subject and the social are always in language and in history (27), that all discourses are transformational, perpetually reinvented within in a dynamic relationship with history: "Language, like history, shares an empirical place, an empirical primacy. (...) We are working with a material [made of] practices of language, discourses of subjects in situation" (31). Henri Meschonnic also asks us to consider the role of body language in speech, stressing how the subject is bodily engaged in the *rhythm*, which he defines as neither the meter nor the tempo but the "organization of the word's movement in writing" (*Langage* 113), which is why orality must not be confused with spoken language nor defined in counterpoint to a written text. As orality anchors the subject circumscribed in his/her historical and anthropological setting, orality is *what a body does with language*: "The act of creating a form of life by a form of language [and] also inextricably the act of creating a form of language by a form of life" (661).

We believe that notions such as discourse and *individualization* are fully implicated when the challenge is to read the individual subject in his/her time and with his/her worldview. By the way in which s/he reveals him/herself (bearing in mind that silence is a specific form of language) man reveals his human existence and experience in a particular historicity.

We may even compare the human body to an oil painting — both are full of language, both call for creative observers in search of meaning, a meaning which is unpredictable and non-programmable, defying the paradigm of the precision medicine (Cabral et al, *Person/alised Medicine*).

Thus we suggest that the uses of *Narrative (in) Medicine* as proposed by Hurwitz (*Narrative (in) Medicine*) can be developed and deepened by exploring the medium of discourse as an adequate interface through which literary studies may be applied to medical practice.

This requires considering not only the content of the narrative but *how* the “text” (the message) is told, the use of *language, voice, and rhythm* and also the gestures: how the “teller” uses his/her body language. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal ways of expression. The way in which patients talk or stay silent enables the doctor to re-contextualize the illness in his/her singular lived experience and can reveal key information for a differential therapeutic approach of *this* patient.

Being a “good listener” and observer implies being capable of receiving and decoding information made available in multiple ways. For example, asking personalised questions outside the guidelines is crucial to identify what is really disturbing the patient — is it the disease? The relatives’ attitudes? The social stigma? Imminent death?

When facing a patient, we have to focus the person rather than the disease, especially considering the vulnerability of his/her physical and psychological situation. In fact, it is in such circumstances that empathy is more needed, when the *close listening* on the doctor’s part may change the way the patient will cope with the disease. Building on new links between literary and scientific knowledge is a necessary step in the evolution of the word “share” as “a common ground of humanity” (Kübler-Ross 15).

This suggestion returns us to Barthes’ proposal that literature “works in the gaps in science (...) because it actively stages language rather than just using it” (Barthes, *Leçon* 18-19). There is no pre-defined structure able to contain language, which, like Roland Barthes suggested is “like life itself (...) transhistorical and transcultural” (Barthes, “An Introduction” 237). The creative force of narrative, supported by discourse, is evidenced in its role as a mediator of language, here understood in terms of its root: *medi-* the *right measure*. Language is the foundation stone of society, especially if

one accepts Benveniste's proposal that "it is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject" (Benveniste 259). In fact, as we have seen language is not confined to verbal communication; its discursive dimension allows us to consider that language may be verbal and non-verbal. Therefore silences and gestures, looks, mood, tone, voice, pacing, rhythm — allied to verbal communication — become more and more important in the medical consultation, since they can convey the (in)capacity to transmit what is felt by the patient. Awareness of "lapses" in what is heard by the physician may alert the latter to underlying issues that might not otherwise come to light. The silences and discursive gaps in the consultation may thus be recast as a space that enables the utterance of what is subjective, experienced, felt. This type of positioning can transcend the traditional dichotomies between object and subject, surface and depth, inner and outer self and co-build a real (interpersonal) healthcare relationship.

In the clinical encounter, a meeting of human bodies and a dialogical interchange occur in an inter-relational sphere through the medium of discourse; it is indeed the site of living discourses with open meanings. The deciphering of these discourses requires subtle communication skills, since they involve complex prosodic and kinetic cues entailing an alert eye and a listening capacity for attentive interaction. Without denying the indispensable attention to symptoms as very real signals observable and verifiable from the outside, medical practice remains an art that also draws on a set of signs — some verbal, some non-verbal, some paraverbal. If discourse is considered, in a relational, intersubjective mode, it may ensure the means of transmitting the patient's whole narrative, favouring the individuation and emergence of a narrative of self, the historicized representation of a *voice*, from which the patient may acquire subjectivity: an existence and a presence. Attaining the human individual as a plural and dynamic being requires creative and integrated approaches across disciplines. Re/considered from the vantage point of medical care, the traditional opposition between conceptual and experienced language, appears in all its contingency; at the same time the boundaries between narrative and discourse fade away or give way to a dynamic and multi-dimensional language. The fundamental point is that narrative always replaces the "story" in an embodied encounter of an "I" and a "You", in an inalienable intersubjective meeting.

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ABSTRACT

The staggering evolution of medicine as a science increasingly subject to technology has confronted medicine itself with the need to renew its connections to the human experience and the humanities; valorising the experience and expression of the disease as well as clinical evidences, imaging and applied bioinformatics. Therefore the notions of the context of illness, of dialogue and attentive listening, have gained relevance in Medical Humanities, namely through Narrative Medicine, bringing differentiated resources to medical practice and training. In relation to the clinical encounter, the report or narrative is characterized by multiple dimensions of orality, corporality and kinesthesia; the loco, immediacy and co-presence of the communication create discursive events, modes of organization of subjectivity and processes of relating which are very different to those appearing in textual narratives.

Thus, based on theorists of language such as Barthes, Benveniste and Meschonnic, this essay will ask if clinical communication and attentive listening might not be explored as a function of discourse, as a language enacting the subjectivation of the speaker, culturally and historically inscribed in the act of speaking. Such notions suggest a revision of a conventional understanding of narrativity — firmly grounded on formal and causal logic — through a discursive approach, encompassing the way in which narrative is transmitted as body-language reciprocity, and enhancing issues of voice, rhythm and also silence.

KEYWORDS

Narrative Medicine; attention; discourse; subjectivity

RESUMO

A evolução impressionante da medicina como ciência cada vez mais sujeita à tecnologia tem interpelado, dentro do próprio corpo médico, a necessidade de re/aproximação do humano e das humanidades, valorizando a experiência e a expressão da doença, para lá da evidência clínica, da imagiologia e da bioinfor-

mática aplicada. Deste modo, as noções de contexto da doença, de diálogo e de escuta atenta, têm ganho relevância no âmbito das Humanidades Médicas, designadamente por via da Medicina Narrativa, configurando recursos diferenciais para a prática e a formação médicas. No que toca ao encontro clínico, o relato ou narrativa caracteriza-se por múltiplas dimensões da oralidade, da corporalidade e da cinestesia, atinentes ao ambiente dialógico de comunicação imediata e em co-presença, criando acontecimentos discursivos, modos de organização da subjectividade e processos de contar, muito diferentes do que sucede nas narrativas textuais.

Assim, com base em teorizadores da linguagem como Barthes, Benveniste e Meschonnic, este ensaio equaciona a questão da comunicação clínica e da escuta atenta explorando a noção de discurso enquanto linguagem posta em acção pelo sujeito falante, portadora da subjectivação de quem a profere, cultural e historicamente inscrito no acto da fala. Estas noções permitem rever a ideia convencional de narratividade, assente numa lógica formal e causal, pela de discursividade, atenta à realização da narrativa enquanto reciprocidade corpo-linguagem, conferindo espessura às questões de voz, de ritmo e também de silêncio.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Medicina Narrativa; atenção; discurso; subjectividade

“The myth in which the gods themselves
were all destroyed”: reading A. S. Byatt’s
Ragnarök: The End of the Gods and Klas
Östergren’s *The Hurricane Party*

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“The myth in which the gods themselves were all destroyed”: reading A. S. Byatt’s *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods* and Klas Östergren’s *The Hurricane Party*

Retelling myths: the Canongate Myth Series

“Today mythical thinking”, Karen Armstrong writes in her essay on the subject which serves as an introduction to the Canongate Myth Series, “has fallen into disrepute; we often dismiss it as irrational and self-indulgent”. However, she also adds in *A Short History of Myth*, “mythology and science both extended the scope of human beings. Like science and technology, mythology... is not about opting out of this world, but about enabling us to live more intensely within it” (Armstrong 2-3).

Armstrong’s essay, published in 2005 as the first title in the Canongate Myth Series, sets the tone for the entire series, which comprises a group of short novels in which ancient myths from several cultures are reimagined and rewritten by contemporary authors at the invitation of the editor of the series, Jamie Byng. Intended to have an international focus, contributing authors in the series have included both established English-writing authors such as Margaret Atwood, Jeannette Winterson, Alexander McCall Smith, Ali Smith, Sally Vickers, Michel Faber, Philip Pullman and A. S. Byatt, and non-English-writing authors whose work is well known in their country, some of it having been translated into English. Russian writer Victor Pelevin, Israeli author David Grossman, Polish author Olga Tokarczuk (whose contribution to the series is the only one not to have been translated into English so far), Chinese author Su Tong, Croatian writer Dubravka Ugrešić, Japanese novelist Natsuo Kirino, Brazilian writer Milton Hatoum and Swedish novelist Klas Östergren belong to this second group. Published from 2005 to the present day, as of 2016 eighteen titles have been published in the series, the last but one of which so far is precisely A. S. Byatt’s *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods*, which came out in 2011.

The fact that such different authors have chosen to rewrite a myriad of mythological characters and events — Penelope and Odysseus, Atlas and Heracles, Theseus and the Minotaur, Samson, Iphis, Oedipus and Tiresias, Prometheus, the Norse Gods and Ragnarök among them — in such unique ways attests both to the validity of the project and to the enduring vitality of myth. That is why, despite some mixed reviews on several short novels — Byatt’s and Östergren’s included (see Brown 2009) —, the series has been heralded as an “ambitious, risky project” in which, in the words of a reviewer, “all mythology is a work-in-progress. New myths are being born right now, and old ones reinvented, in decaying buildings, on laptop computers, in hushed rooms around the globe. Canongate is to be applauded for serving as midwife to some of them” (Hand 2005).

For Karen Armstrong, myths “give us new insight into the deeper meaning of life” and “force us to change our hearts and minds, give us new hope, and compel us to live more fully” (Armstrong 10). This essay will thus discuss the way in which A. S. Byatt and Klas Östergren have done just this through their quite distinctive reimagining of the Norse myth of Ragnarök. The only authors in the series so far to have chosen to rewrite the same myth, Byatt roots her retelling in the past whereas Östergren reaches out to the future. In fact, Byatt chooses to merge a quite rare autobiographical account of her reading experience of the Norse myth as a child during World War II with its retelling in a new context, whereas Östergren combines a futuristic dystopian tale and a modern retelling of the *Lokasenna*, one of the poems of the *Poetic Edda* which presents an exchange of insults between the Norse gods and Loki.

2. The thin child in wartime and the Norse gods: A. S. Byatt’s *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods*

Byatt’s lifelong fascination with Norse mythology in particular spans both her critical work and her fiction, and can be traced as far back as her childhood. As she acknowledges in the essay “Fairy Stories: The Djinn in the Nightingale’s Eye”, her favourite book as a child was the nineteenth-century scholarly *Asgard and the Gods* which her mother had given her (see FS) — just like “the thin child”, *Ragnarök*’s narrator. In fact, I argue that *Ragnarök* merges Byatt’s quite rare autobiographical account of her

reading experience of Norse mythology as a child with its retelling in a new context. “The myth in which all the gods themselves were all destroyed” is framed by the realistic story of the “thin child in wartime” — World War II England, in itself a cataclysmic end of an era. Furthermore, the fact that the narrator is Byatt’s childish self — Byatt was born in 1936 and left for a country town “of no interest to enemy bombers” (*R* 3) — brings the reader close to the text by means of both the microscopic lens of the thin child’s memory and the telescopic lens of the adult Byatt’s imagination. This proves that, for Byatt, Italo Calvino’s words on the permanence of myth in one’s memory ring true:

With myths, one should not be in a hurry. It is better to let them settle in the memory, to stop and dwell on every detail, to reflect on them without losing touch with their language of images. The lesson we can learn from a myth lies in the literal narrative, not in what we add to it from the outside. (Calvino 4)

Byatt terms this creative process “a way old and new” (*OHS* 131) of looking at the ways “old tales and forms have had a continued, metamorphic life” (*OHS* 124). In this case, the frame tale is both clarification of, and counterpoint to, the social and cultural context the thin girl is enclosed in, as A. S. Byatt reveals in the essay “Thoughts on Myths” which comes as an afterword to *Ragnarök*:

I tried once or twice to find a way of telling the myth that preserved its distance and difference, and finally realised that I was writing for my childhood self, and the way I had found the myths and thought about the world when I first read *Asgard and the Gods*. So I introduced the figure of ‘the thin girl in wartime... [S]he is thin partly because she was thin, but also because what is described of her world is thin and bright, the inside of her reading and thinking head, and the ways in which she related the world of Asgard...to the world and life she inhabited. (*TM* 166)

Before she was five years old, Byatt was evacuated to “the ordinary paradise of the English countryside” (*R* 3) and, having started to read very early, she discovered *Asgard and the Gods*, an academic book “full of immensely

detailed, mysterious steel engravings of wolves and wild waters, apparitions and floating women”. The book’s cover “rushing image ... of Odin’s Wild Hunt on horseback tearing through a clouded sky amid jagged bolts of lightning” (R 7-8) intrigued the thin girl, especially when she learnt in the introduction that the book was “about the retrieval of ‘the old Germanic world, with its secrets and wonders...’” (R 8). She did not know then, however, just like her adult self does now, that the picture of Odin and the Wild Hunt was a favourite of Adolf Hitler’s. In fact, the *Führer* was an admirer of Richard Wagner’s particular rendition of the Norse myths in his operas which, for Hitler, symbolically corporealized his own vision of the German nation. The child Byatt knew enough of the ongoing war, though, to be puzzled by the idea of this particular group of Germans she heard about in her daily life, who caused her to have nightmares in which “there were Germans under her bed, who, having cast her parents into a green pit in a dark wood, were sawing down the legs of her bed to reach her and destroy her” (R 8). She was unable to reconcile the old Germans in the book with “the ones overhead, now dealing death out of the night sky” (R 8), because those old Germans made her feel most alive in the midst of the deathly scenario created by their descendants. For her, “they filled the world with alarming energy and power” when she conjured their “unformed faces, peering at herself from behind the snout of her gas-mask, during air-raid drill” (R 10-11) — and made her want to write.

The fact that the thin girl is described throughout with none of the rosy tints of self-complacence usually allowed by the distance between one’s childish and grown-up *personae* enhances both her reliability as the narrator in the frame story and her ability to select significant episodes from the myth which is going to be retold in the embedded story. The first myth the thin child chooses to recount is that of the mythical tree Yggdrasil, the World-Ash which “held the world together, in the air, in the earth, in the light, in the dark, in the mind” (R 13). She starts with the Genesis-like statement “In the beginning was the tree” (R 13), which accurately situates the mythical tree at the centre of the creation myth of the world through ice from the north and fire from the south, whose fusion engendered life in the wide chasm of Ginnungagap. By considering Yggdrasil important enough to be described in detail for three pages, the thin child proves a worthy selector within the wider landscape of the Norse

myths. In fact, according to Norse cosmology, the universe was construed as a tricentric structure, which in turn enclosed nine worlds, held together by Yggdrasil, the mighty ash tree whose branches spread out over the whole world and reached up to heaven while its three roots were sunk in each of the three different levels (see Holland xx-xxiii). The symbiotic relationship between Yggdrasil and the universe it sustained did not escape the thin girl either: "The tree ate and was eaten, fed and was fed on" (*R* 14).

The recounting of this first myth sets the tone for all the chosen ones to be retold with regard to some particulars, namely the fact that the thin child intersperses inner reflections on her reading experience as symbolic interpretation of the real war she finds herself involved in. That is how, for instance, she equates Odin's Wild Hunt, in which "they rode out through the skies, horses and hounds, hunters and spectral armed men [who] never tired and never halted" (*R* 40), with the destruction brought about by real air raids:

She had seen and heard the crash and conflagration when the airfield near her grandparents' home was bombed. She had cowered in an understairs cupboard as men were taught to cower, flat on the ground, when the Hunt passed by. Odin was the god of death and battle (...) Airmen were the Wild Hunt. They were dangerous. (*R* 40-41)

The thin child also enacts a running commentary on the nature of narrative itself, linking once more the frame story and the embedded retelling of Ragnarök. She believes that "the people [in the tales] were not 'characters' into whose doings she could insert her own imagination", so she "neither loved nor hated... them" (*R* 44) and her adult counterpart corroborates this in "Thoughts on Myths" by stating that:

gods, demons and other actors in myths do not have personalities or characters in the way people in novels do. They do not have psychology (...) They have attributes — Hera and Frigg are essentially jealous, Thor is violent, Mars is warlike, Baldur is beautiful and gentle... (*TM* 158-159)

The adult Byatt once again endorses this view by declaring that "When Canongate invited me to write a myth I knew immediately which myth I wanted to write. It should be Ragnarök, the myth to end all myths, the

myth in which the gods themselves were all destroyed” (R 163). In fact, in Norse mythology, Ragnarök is a sequence of future developments which comprehends the heralding of a great battle whose aftermath is the death of several gods and goddesses such as Odin, Thor, Tyr, Freyer, Frigg and Loki, the materialization of numerous natural catastrophes and the subsequent plunge of the world underwater (see Holland 173-176).

In “Thoughts on Myths”, Byatt signals nonetheless a new context for the myth in the twenty-first century, namely the extinction of the natural world at the hands of ambitious, greedy and irresponsible human beings who are ultimately bringing about their own demise. However much she wanted to write the end of our Midgard without sermonizing or resorting to allegory, in the end Byatt realised

the Norse Gods are peculiarly human... because they are limited and stupid. They are greedy and enjoy fighting and playing games. They are cruel and enjoy hunting and jokes. They know Ragnarök is coming but are incapable of imagining any way to fend it off, or change the story. They know how to die gallantly but not how to make a better world. (TM 169)

3. A new rendition of the *Lokasenna*: Klas Östergren’s *The Hurricane Party*

Klas Östergren had reached this precise same conclusion in 2009, two years prior to Byatt’s rendition of Norse mythology. Östergren sets his retelling in a futuristic Stockholm maimed by the environmental and economic collapse foretold by Byatt in her afterword to *Ragnarök*. The city is run by a mysterious family known as the Clan, who are in fact the Norse gods. By placing Norse myth in the context of a dystopian crime story in which a father will investigate the strange death of his son while working for the Clan, Östergren gives a new perspective on the Norse gods and the stories about them, at the same time enhancing the Norse gods’ peculiarly (in)human traces.

Östergren’s novel is divided into three parts. The first part details the protagonist’s life up until the moment he receives the news his son is dead; the second records his voyage to the distant archipelago where the Clan is housed in order to seek an explanation, and revenge, for his son’s

death; the last part chronicles his encounters with two of the Norse gods, Odin and Loki, and the outcome of his purpose of vengeance. The novel seamlessly emphasises the degradation of physical, as well as moral, living conditions in a city in which “the old-fashioned umlauts over the ö and ä [in a shop sign] bore witness to the fact that the shop had been at that site for several generations” (*HP* 14); and where “the market square was filled with rubbish that had been left after the latest clean-up [and] looked like a battlefield after a conflict waged under the worst possible conditions” (*HP* 12). In this city, a whole generation “had died in gang fights or other disputes [and] the other half had been wiped out by a virus that had swept over this part of the world like a wave” (*HP* 20) and there were people who worked outside the city, “out there”, in order to control the access to the city:

“Out there” referred to the entire world outside the city. The border was closed to ordinary citizens. With a certain amount of effort you could get out, but it was much harder to get in. Along the border lay a ring of quarantine areas where most people had to spend a long and vexing waiting period, only to be designated almost without exception as ill and then be turned away. (*HP* 21)

Hanck Orn, the protagonist, is a seller and repairer of ancient typewriters bequeathed to him by a dying man in a world where paper is an extremely valued commodity. In fact, his usual buyer, a shopkeeper who takes pride in being an “obsolete” (*HP* 18) — a word that, for him, meant living off and living for this inheritance from a distant past — takes it as a compliment to sacrifice a sheet of paper whenever Hanck takes him machines to sell. When Hanck leaves home, it is not an unnatural occurrence to pass and partly climb “over six bodies in the stairwell [whom] he had poked ... with his shoe to check they were still alive” (*HP* 12). The social decline is also discernible in the fact that “unlike many of his peers, Hanck decided early on to learn to read and write” (*HP* 28) landing a job in an insurance company as an investigator when he was a young man. In a time of ever-growing social disintegration, the Clan operated like the Mafia, offering protection by first forcing people to resort to their services through violent intimidation, arson being their favourite *modus operandi*. Their control over people’s lives was wide and far-spreading:

The Clan ruled over everything, both big and small, and done so for such a long time that it had become an accepted fact that might even be described as “natural”. Schools and their teaching materials were precluded from presenting any alternatives to this system, since both the schools and their teaching materials were protected and financed by the Clan itself. (*HP* 32-33)

In the midst of the contaminated air, of the random violence that makes it dangerous to be out and of a life regulated and controlled by the dissolute Clan, there is still the possibility of unconditional love though, namely Hanck’s love for his son Toby. Begotten from a casual encounter with a “Sneezer” (a woman who belonged to a religious cult which claimed that when a person sneezed they came close to God), Toby was rescued as a new-born baby from his father when he was handed to a hospital with a business card with Hanck’s name and address and the information that the infant’s mother was dead. Hence, Toby has a very close relationship with his father. Enhanced by Hanck’s narrative power to embellish the past with regard to Toby’s mother, this relationship is not interrupted even when twenty-year-old Toby chooses to leave home and work as a chef in the distant archipelago which the Clan actually honours with their presence. When the Clan’s Communicators, officers whose duty it is to inform the families of the deceased that their loved ones are dead with the accompanying formula that “there is no further information” (*HP* 120) tell Hanck that his beloved son is dead he knows this death is not natural. Therefore, he travels to the distant archipelago where no one enters without an official permit to find the truth about his son’s death. It then transpires that his son had died at the hand of Loki during a banquet for the Clan because he sneezed. A happy occurrence for Toby because it reminded him of his dead mother, it was an unpardonable offense for a god who was already violently excited by the hurricane party which the feast turned out to be, with the attending gods and goddesses drunkenly prone to tale-telling and sexual excess.

If the Clan is physically absent in the first part of the novel and the reader only knows of their power through the narrator, they are very much present in this recounting of Toby’s death in all their magnified envy, cruelty, deceit and rudeness. There is nothing noble or grand about them,

since they are reduced to the size of petty mortals with an increased sense for evil though. This part is interspersed with the description of Loki's most cunning tricks so as the reader will not feel the same amusement with regard to this god as they feel with Byatt's choice of tricks to retell. In fact, Östergren's Loki is nothing more than a selfish, self-aggrandized, despicable crook as opposed to Byatt's lively trickster. A reviewer of Östergren's novel perceptively situates the opposition between the man and the god, both of them fathers, in the realm of Norse mythology itself in which they stand as antagonists in a different figuration:

When Hanck realises that his surname should really be Örn (Eagle), he can appreciate more clearly his own existential position. Here he is in a place where the contaminated air is death-dealing, violence makes it dangerous to be out, and living is regulated by the mysterious Clan. Is that not like being a bird-of-prey with clipped wings? Hanck knows the eagle's fabled history as the only creature who dared defy Loki, most sinister of the Norse gods, who have re-emerged and make up the Clan. (Binding 2009)

The fact that this particular story is told during the gods' party lends credence to the hypothesis that Loki, Toby's murderer, is in fact Orn as the eagle's old opponent. After having been tricked by Loki himself who, disguised as a prostitute, gave Hanck a letter for Odin, aka the Old Man, Hanck meets Odin and asks him to be allowed to see his son Toby so he can mourn him. That wish is granted after Odin asks Hanck to write a book about the love he bore his son, as the word "love" is prone to much confusion in this world. When father and son finally meet in Hel's domains, Toby exacts the promise that his father will comply with the Old Man's request. In addition, Toby reveals that he has met his mother, telling his father that he now knew nothing he had ever told him as a boy was true. His purpose of revenge against Loki appeased by seeing his son, Hanck is able to witness Loki's cruel punishment devised by the Old Man. Loki is bound and, above him, a snake perpetually spits venom over his defenceless naked body. In the meantime, Loki's wife Sigyn holds a bowl under the jaws of the snake to catch the corrosive acid and continually empties it when it is full, a few drops always landing on Loki. The most horrifying detail concerns his shackles though, since they are made of one of his son's

intestines, ripped out by his brother while he was still alive, as the brother was forced into stabbing him by the Old Man's commands. A son for a son — thus is the eagle vindicated. However, whereas Hanck was innocent of his son's death, Loki will perpetually feel guilty about his own son's death, as the boy was killed to punish his father.

4. Conclusion: the Norse gods in modern contexts

The warring gods who know Ragnarök is coming but cannot change the story are thus, for Byatt, the people who were unable to fend off the Second World War and, for Östergren, the twenty-first century human species destroying its own environment along with the ruthlessness and violence which robs them of their humanity. For that reason, A. S. Byatt's *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods* and Klas Östergren's *The Hurricane Party* are both a cautionary tale (as one of the characteristics of myth pinpointed by Byatt is its endless repeatability) and a thoughtful gaze through the looking glass at the tradition of storytelling against death.

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ABSTRACT

A. S. Byatt's *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods* and Klas Östergren's *The Hurricane Party*, both published by Canongate Myth Series, reimagine the Norse myth of Ragnarök in quite distinctive ways. Whereas Byatt chooses to merge a quite rare autobiographical account of her reading experience of the Norse myth as a child during World War II with its retelling in a new context, Östergren combines a futuristic dystopian tale and a modern retelling of the *Lokasenna*, one of the poems of the Poetic Edda which presents an exchange of insults between the Norse gods and Loki. Hence, this paper argues that Byatt's *Ragnarök* and Östergren's *The Hurricane Party* are both a cautionary tale and a thoughtful gaze through the looking glass at the tradition of storytelling against death in their modern reimagining of the Norse myth of Ragnarök.

KEYWORDS

A. S. Byatt; Canongate Myth Series; Klas Östergren; Norse mythology; Ragnarök

RESUMO

Ragnarök: The End of the Gods, de A. S. Byatt, e *The Hurricane Party*, de Klas Östergren (ambos publicados pela Canongate Myth Series), re-imaginam o mito nórdico de Ragnarök de modos particularmente distintos. Com efeito, Byatt escolhe ligar um raríssimo relato autobiográfico da sua experiência de leitura do mito nórdico, ocorrida enquanto criança e durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial, com o seu reconto num contexto novo. Por seu lado, Östergren combina um conto de distopia futurista com um reconto moderno do poema *Lokasenna*, um dos poemas da Edda Poética que apresenta uma troca de insultos entre os deuses nórdicos e Loki. Deste modo, neste ensaio apresenta-se o argumento de que os textos de Byatt e de Östergren devem ser lidos como lições cautelares, constituindo ainda um olhar ponderado sobre a tradição da narrativa contra a morte por meio de uma nova visão do mito nórdico de Ragnarök.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

A. S. Byatt; Canongate Myth Series; Klas Östergren; mitologia nórdica; Ragnarök

REVIEWS
RELEITURAS

Creative Dialogues: Narrative and Medicine. Eds. Isabel Fernandes, Cecilia Beecher Martins, Amândio Reis and Zuzanna Sanches. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

The “Zibaldone di pensieri”, a “hodgepodge of thoughts” were the 4,500 handwritten pages scribbled in Recanati, by Giacomo Leopardi, one of the most influential of Italian poets. In the Italian culture, we call “Zibaldone” whatever miscellanea of reflective notes that are written alongside another main activity of writing. A “hodgepodge” could be a sort of written patchwork. However, in this notebook, Leopardi writes that the philosopher and the poet are not as different as we think they are; both types of genius depend on the ability to see connections between unlike things. “All faculties of a great poet are contained in and derive from the ability to discover relations between things, even the most minimal, and distant, even between things that appear the least analogous”.

Creative Dialogues is indeed a Zibaldone written by many hands and brains and hearts and competences, such as literature and poetry, medicine, art, philosophy, psychology, anthropology: the Zibaldone looks to me a very good metaphor to describe these reflective notes by experts and scholars committed to studying and applying and teaching and talking of narrative medicine. This book mirrors in a consistent way the multidisciplinary and multi professional approach required to accomplish the aims of narrative medicine.

This book is honoured by hosting the main authors on narrative medicine: among them, the inventor of the name “narrative medicine” and of its definition, Rita Charon, as well as “*The Wounded Storyteller*”, Arthur W. Frank, who explains that narrative medicine helps to find a new life style to cope with a disease. However, beyond these giants, there are so many “little less known” names, who write chapters of extreme beauty, insight and utility.

The overcoming from a trauma after surviving the Holocaust. The mental illness of the Shakespearean women, Ophelia, the fragile victim of

an evil fate and family, and lady Macbeth, the cruel ambitious woman who bargained her fertility for power. The story of Mary Shelly, who, while writing Frankenstein, used the narrative to overcome a series of sad events of her infancy and youth in her true life: as far as the Monster, “only when her creature is denied affection — as she was — he become a monster and take on the species which gave him life”.

As Isabel Fernandes writes, there is not only the storyteller, but also ourselves, as story readers, the ones who can assign a meaning to what we read and assume an ethical role before these experiences. This holds true for narrative medicine, because, every story of disease, either fictional or true, is unique but at the same time it belongs to the universal human way of conceiving illness. However, there are people who refuse narrative: there is the case of a man, who lost his child and for this, he refuses any type of psychological support and chooses to live changing hotel and women every other day all over the USA. This nomad life style was satisfactory to ease his pain and to bring him peace.

Coming back to the analogy with Leopardi, the Zibaldone was a diary that the writer used for fighting his negative mood and thoughts on nature and society, and it was a tool he used to become aware of his thoughts. It was not only a therapeutic diary but also a deep and sophisticated use of reason to prove the fragility of human beings, except when they were children: “Children find everything in nothing, men find nothing in everything”.

In the final section of *Creative Dialogues*, pain, passivity, and suffering are the main topic. While Leopardi left to us the written verbalization, the narrative flow of human suffering, here, we can deduce from the lines by these authors that there are some types of suffering which do not have a grammar and words to describe them. The Greeks used the word “alexithymia” — which literally means “it is not possible to speak about it”. Alexithymia — nowadays generally used to label people who are not able to perceive their emotions — here goes back to its original root: it is related to people who suffer, who perceive it, but who cannot speak about their sorrow. Hence, which are the possible languages left available to describe the suffering? The body language. This return to basal bodily discourse entails abdicating of expectations of any conventional meaningful narrativity (which in this case becomes a synthesis of narrative and natality),

and silence. In relation to this, Zibaldone can be seen as anticipating Lacan's notes, another hodgepodge's maker: "Could silence really be what at the same time threatens and denounces the abuse of language? The paradox is that we commit this abuse of language to remedy its falterings, its internal void, its violent or sweet melancholy". This is included in the last chapter of a mother who describes her experience of communicating with her autistic child.

Creative Dialogues is a book on suffering, trauma and pain, but it does not tackle these themes as the chronicle of an outbreak, an onset of a disease, a protocol of evidence-based medicine. The respect for the Other who suffers, the fear of not being able to detect the hidden or unveiled suffering becomes an ethical value, assigning to the attitude of "listening", "observing", "talking", "being silent", that of a moral imperative. While reading these chapters, we find we should cherish the attitude of the writers to penetrate the human soul and the body when affected by an illness, an odd situation or a trauma. It is an anthology of narrated notes of "good willing people" who are dedicating their life as scholars to understanding how illness and suffering are envisioned in literature and in real life.

To conclude, I would like to go back to poetry, to find the Calm for facing the Storms: again Leopardi comes to help us, to find for himself and for us, peace, tranquillity and quiet:

The storm has gone:
I hear the joyful birds, the hen,
returning to the path,
renews her cackling. See the clear sky
opening from the west, over the mountain:
the landscape clarifies,
the river gleams bright in the valley.
Now every heart is happy, on every side
there's the noise of work
as they return to business.

"The Calm After The Storm" — from *I canti*, 1835

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS
NOTAS SOBRE OS COLABORADORES

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