



Mates and inmates: memory and education in Raul Pompéia and Vergílio Ferreira

Franco Baptista Sandanello

Curso de Graduação em Estudos Literários, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Rodovia Araraquara-Jaú, Km 1, 14800-901, Araraquara, São Paulo, Brazil. E-mail: fbsandanello@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. *O Ateneu* (1st ed. 1888), by Raul Pompéia, and *Manhã submersa* (1st ed. 1954), by Vergílio Ferreira, are two novels in which the imposing educational procedures of each historical period are rendered problematic, in spite of their apparently common and strong dislike for the social standardization their discourses tend to imply. In this regard, assuming a thematic-comparative point of view, the present work seeks to analyze how the reaction to these discourses are carried out by each of those novels in order to evaluate and propose afterwards a synthesis of both Raul Pompéia's and Vergílio Ferreira's individual views on the matter.

Keywords: comparative literature, brazilian literature, portuguese literature, memory, narrative.

Internos e internados: educação e memorialismo em Raul Pompéia e Vergílio Ferreira

RESUMO: *O Ateneu* (1^a ed. 1888), de Raul Pompéia, e *Manhã submersa* (1^a ed. 1954), de Vergílio Ferreira, são dois romances em que se problematizam, através da memória, os mecanismos de controle educacional de cada período histórico, havendo, não obstante, uma contraposição até certo ponto comum ante os discursos voltados para a uniformização dos indivíduos e para o mascaramento das divisões sociais. Nesse sentido, assumindo uma via de análise temático-comparativa, o presente trabalho busca avaliar, num primeiro momento, como se dá a reação a esses discursos em cada um dos romances, para, a seguir, buscar uma síntese das soluções propostas isoladamente por Raul Pompéia e Vergílio Ferreira.

Palavras-chave: literatura comparada, literatura brasileira, literatura portuguesa, memória, narrativa.

Introduction

Antonio Candido, in an “[...] article of circumstance [...]” of his *Brigada ligeira*, develops, apropos the memorialist writing of Fernando Sabino, one of his own childhood memories, in which he

[...] always heard that a turkey could be hypnotized through two processes. The first one consisted of putting the animal before a straight line and making it walk through it. In the second one, more thrilling, it had to walk around a circle from which it could not escape by any means (CANDIDO, 1992, p. 87)¹.

The case is that, in spite of not having witnessed any of those sessions of hypnosis, the critic ended up encountering in literature an inverse and curious phenomenon of the ‘turkey circle’ –

[...] the hypnosis by circumference, the writer or his heroes being locked inside a magnetic circle of

their own self, circling around it nonstop, looking with fascination at their feet, just as turkeys and peacocks (CANDIDO, 1992, p. 87)².

That is what happens, for instance, to all those who, due to a ‘line’ of conduct strongly imposed by their surroundings, find themselves recalling the stigmas of their painful adaptation to life inside the circle, fascinated – or already disillusioned – by the retrospective (con)formation of the Self.

O Ateneu (1st ed. 1888), by Raul Pompéia, and *Manhã submersa* (1st ed. 1954), by Vergílio Ferreira, despite the evident chronologic distance from the publishing of the former to that of the latter, are two examples of novels in which this ‘turkey circle’ is dramatized: whether in the conflict with a Brazilian boarding school during the reign of Peter II, whether in the confrontation with a Portuguese seminar of Salazar’s time, there is in both a similar reaction against totalitarian and imposing discourses,

¹ “[...] sempre ouvia falar que um peru podia ser hipnotizado mediante dois processos. O primeiro consistia em por o digno animal diante duma linha reta e fazê-lo andar por ela afora. O segundo, mais palpitante, em fazê-lo acompanhar uma circunferência da qual não conseguia se livrar nem à mão de Deus-Padre”.

² “[...] a hipnose pela circunferência, o escritor ou seus heróis ficando presos dentro do círculo magnético do próprio eu, rodando dentro dele sem parar, olhando fascinada mente os pés, à maneira dos perus e dos pavões”.

as well as its standardization of individuals and masking of social differences.

In this sense, taking a thematic-comparative orientation of analysis, this study intends to investigate how the reaction to these discourses takes place in each one of the novels, and attempts to summarize the solutions proposed individually by Raul Pompéia and by Vergílio Ferreira.

The finest of Brazilian society: the students and the boarding school

The first paragraphs of *O Ateneu* approach the 'fight' that will follow the first childhood of the protagonist, Sérgio, when he comes into contact with the Ateneu:

'Go find the world, my father told me, at the door of the Ateneu. Courage for the fight.' Later I experienced the truth of that warning, which stripped off, in a single gesture, the illusions of a child exotically educated within the affection greenhouse that the regime of domestic love is; different from what is found outside, so different, that the poem of maternal warmth seems a sentimental artifice with the only advantage of making more sensible the creature to the rude impression of the first lesson, rough temper of vitality under the influence of a new rough weather. We remember, however, with hypocritical nostalgia, the happy times, as if the very same uncertainty of today, under another aspect, had not chased us before, and the blow of deceptions that outraged us had not come from afar. Euphemism, the happy times, solely euphemism, just as the past ones considered the best. All things considered, the present is the same on all dates. Upon the compensation of desires that vary, of aspirations that change, perpetually enlivened with the same ardor, over the same fantastic basis of hopes, the present is one. Under the changing coloration of the hours, a bit of gold in the morning, a bit more of purple at twilight – the landscape is the same on every side, at the roadside of life (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 29-31)³.

According to the thesis of Sérgio's father, taken by him as 'truth' in face of the deceptions of home and of the world, life in society is a fight, and the

only way to get used to it is through school, rite of initiation and of passage to adult life. Thus, courage is necessary, for the patterns of perception are still oriented according to the 'illusions of a child exotically educated within the greenhouse of affection' of 'domestic love'. However, in the transition from this idealized environment to the boarding school (microcosm of the world that he will face later on) he is at risk of losing not only his innocence but also the very notions of altruism and kindness inherent to the 'poem of maternal care', for which the prose of everyday life figures as a consequence and as a bitter legitimization. In addition, being childhood

[...] different from what is found outside, so different, that [...] seems a sentimental artifice with the only advantage of making more sensible the creature to the rude impression of the first lesson (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 29-31),

the very evocation of the past faces the threat of becoming an 'euphemism' deprived of sense, when seen without the shield of domestic universe: 'the present is the same on all dates'. Thus, the starting point of life in society is the conflict, and everything leads to the belief that the battle will take place in all aspects, uneven, anticipating "[...] the falsehood that hides behind a pretty appearance, the traps that the boarding school – society – sets [...]" (ÁRTICO, 1983, p. 116)⁴.

In fact, as it is confirmed on the first pages of the novel, the Ateneu represents to its students – boys still attached to the warmth of home – a marvelous institution established in resemblance to the overt luxury of its clients – the rural and slavery-based oligarchy of the 1880s –, whose "[...] students [...]" meant the finest ['fina flor'] of the Brazilian youth" (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 35)⁵. Supported by an intense advertising system

[...] whose tentacles reached the whole country, [...] there was no well-to-do family, which have become rich with the northern rubber and with the southern jerky meat, that did not disregard a commitment of honor with the posterity (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 35)

by having a child enrolled in the Ateneu. Being, thus, one of those few privileged ones, "[...] for several reasons his [Sérgio's] reception must have been one of the best" (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 54)⁶.

³ "Vais encontrar o mundo, disse-me meu pai, à porta do Ateneu. Coragem para a luta." Bastante experimentei depois a verdade deste aviso, que me despia, dum gesto, das ilusões de criança educada exoticamente na estufa de carinho que é o regime do amor doméstico; diferente do que se encontra fora, tão diferente, que parece o poema dos cuidados maternos um artifício sentimental, com a vantagem única de fazer mais sensível a criatura à impressão rude do primeiro ensinamento, tempera brusca da vitalidade na influência de um novo clima rigoroso. Lembramo-nos, entretanto, com saudade hipócrita, dos felizes tempos, como se a mesma incerteza de hoje, sob outro aspecto, não nos houvesse perseguido outrora, e não viesse de longe a enfiada das decepções que nos ultrajam. Eufemismo, os felizes tempos, eufemismo apenas, igual aos outros que correram como melhores. Bem considerando, a atualidade é a mesma em todas as datas. Feita a compensação dos desejos que variam, das aspirações que se transformam, alentadas perpetuamente do mesmo ardor, sobre a mesma base fantástica de esperanças, a atualidade é uma. Sob a coloração cambiante das horas, um pouco de ouro mais pela manhã, um pouco mais de púrpura ao crepúsculo – a paisagem é a mesma de cada lado, beirando a estrada da vida".

⁴ "[...] a falsidade que se esconde por detrás de uma bela aparência, as tramoias que o internato – a sociedade – obriga [...]"

⁵ "[...] educandos [...]" significavam a fina flor da mocidade brasileira".

⁶ "[...] alongava os tentáculos através do país, [...] não havia família de dinheiro, enriquecida pela setentrional borracha ou pela charqueada do sul, que não reputasse um compromisso de honra com a posteridade [...] por diversas causas a recepção [de Sérgio] devia ser das melhores".

However, all this social apparatus will soon prove to be a sign of oppression. After saying goodbye to his father, who fears for his son the excessive severity of principal Aristarco - “[...] justice is my terror and law is my will! Let your parents argue later!...” (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 56)⁷ - Sérgio feels diminished for receiving a numbered uniform and being introduced to the collective bedroom. The same happens when he meets his mates, who he finds ridiculous and scary, highlighting the grotesque figures of some of them: Gualtério,

[...] small, round back, messy hair, abrupt motility and simian face [Nascimento ...] resembling some type of pelican, with slender, curve and wide nose like a sickle [Batista Carlos ...] rough in manners, spoiled, evil face, itchy as if his clothes were annoying his body [Sanches ...] small lips, slobbering, viscous tenderness of an old rascal [etc.] (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 57-59)⁸.

The pressure of academic formalities is remarkable and causes the boy to faint in face of the constant interrogations of teacher Mânlio, on the first day of school:

The teacher interrogated me; I do not know if I answered. A strange dread took possession of my spirit. The supreme terror of that exposure made a coward of me, imagining over and over the evil irony of all those unfamiliar faces. I leaned on the black board so I would not fall; the floor vanished under my feet, with the notion of the moment; the darkness of fainting surrounded me, eternal shame! and the last energy was gone... by the best of the worst ways to let an energy go away (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 60)⁹.

School's coercions are also imposed by the guards,

[...] the principal's secrete police [...] These inferior officials of the house's militia were little tyrants delegated by the supreme dictatorship. Armed with wooden sabers [...], they took their roles seriously and usually showed an adorable ferocity (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 75-76)¹⁰.

⁷ “[...]a justiça é o meu terror e a lei o meu arbítrio! Briguem depois os senhores pais!...”

⁸ “[...] miúdo, redondo de costas, cabelos revoltos, motilidade brusca e caretas de símio”; Nascimento, “alongado por um modelo geral de pelicano, nariz esbelto, curvo e largo como uma fouce”; Batista Carlos, “raça de bugre, valido, de má cara, coçando-se muito, como se incomodasse a roupa no corpo”; Sanches, “lábios úmidos, porejando baba, meiguice viscosa de crápula antigo”.

⁹ “O professor interrogou-me; não sei se respondi. Apossou-se-me do espírito um pavor estranho. Acovardou-me o terror supremo das exibições, imaginando em roda a ironia má de todos aqueles rostos desconhecidos. Amparei-me à tábua negra, para não cair; fugia-me o solo aos pés, com a noção do momento; envolveu-me a escuridão dos desmaios, vergonha eterna! liquidando-se a última energia... pela melhor das maneiras piores de liquidar-se uma energia”.

¹⁰ “[...] polícia secreta do diretor [...] Estes oficiais inferiores da milícia da casa faziam-se tiranetes por delegação da suprema ditadura. Armados de sabres de

Under their custody, the other students are forced to remain in a perpetual state of alarm, which makes Sérgio confess, in a summary of the first days, that he “[...] became accustomed, but [...] accustomed with the discouragement, as a prisoner inside his prison” (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 77)¹¹.

In this atmosphere of general suspicion and dismay, friendship represents another artifice of control and power. Grouped in pairs, sex is the students' exchange currency, and “[...] sexuality [...] is seen as linked to a degenerative environment from which the main character tries to escape” (BALIEIRO, 2009, p. 47)¹². Sérgio points the homosexual intentions of Sanches:

Sanches was getting closer. Then leaned against me [...] and as the reading continued, he put his arms around my neck like a furious friend. I condescended, pretending to be insensitive, with a breaking plan in mind [...] (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 84)¹³.

Above all else,

[...] the most terrible of the institutions of the Ateneu was not the famous justice of the will, not even the den [‘cafua’], asylum of darkness and sobbing [where troublemakers were locked...]. It was the Grades book [‘Livro de notas’] (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 95)¹⁴.

It refers to the public reading of students' grades – followed by harsh verbal warnings – from a book that soon is part of the boys' nightmares. The reading of these grades is often accompanied by a disapproving silence of the principal and the classmates, a penalty that was even harder for delinquents to bear:

At the bottom of the common silence in the dining hall, a deeper silence was dug, as a well after a chasm. I felt like being eaten up by that hungry silence. The avenger congregation of my classmates turned to me, against me. My desk neighbors moved apart on both sides so I could be better seen [...]

pau [...], tomavam a sério a investidura do mando e eram em geral de uma ferocidade adorável”.

¹¹ “[...]Jestava aclimado, mas eu me acimara pelo desalento, como um encarcerado no seu cárcere”.

¹² “[...] a sexualidade [...] é vista vinculada a um meio degenerativo, do qual a personagem principal busca escapar”.

¹³ “Sanches foi se aproximando. Encostava-se, depois, muito a mim [...] e a leitura prosseguia, passando-me ele o braço ao pescoço como um furioso amigo. Eu deixava tudo, fingindo-me insensível, com um plano de rompimento em ideia [...]”. To Fernando Balieiro (2009), the reason of this hetero-normative conception of homosexuality as ‘degenerative’ is linked to Pompéia's political project of demoralization of monarchic institutions to the reading public of his time, thus drawing said institutions closer to ‘immorality’, as he had once stated on the feuilleton *As joias da coroa* [The Crown's Jewels], underscoring the satyriasis of Peter II. The critic also points some homoeroticism tragically hidden by the figure of the writer as a motive parallel to the political one.

¹⁴ “[...] a mais terrível das instituições do Ateneu não era a famosa justiça do arbítrio, não era ainda a cafua, asilo das trevas e do soluço [onde ficavam os desordeiros...]. Era o Livro das notas”.

Aristarco was forgiving. That was the first time, he forgave it (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 97)¹⁵.

In addition to the excessive pressure of these monitoring instruments there is the apathy of the routine, suffocating with the boredom of tiredness and lack of perspective: "Boredom is the great disease of the school, the corrupting boredom that can be generated from both the monotony of the job and from idleness" (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 167)¹⁶. Even nature,

[...] the fixed foliage, with the dead greenness of the church palms, whose premature senility dresses its suffering branches with a yellowish shade [seems incarcerated inside the Ateneu] as if the vegetation did not fit the boarding school; in one corner, a tall cypress raised up to the leak, trying to escape through the roofs (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 65)¹⁷.

Restricting, thus, freedom on every side,

[...] by applying the sentence [dispersed in so many ways and means, the Ateneu] has for its target not only the guilty individual, but all those who by chance may practice [some] deviation, that is, the punitive device is used as knowledge device (SILVA, 2007, p. 98)¹⁸.

The students' getaway, however, does not appear an alternative for them. Aware that the coercion in the school is ruled by vigilance rather than by bodily punishment (of moral rather than material order), in a mirrored and inverted effect, their reaction aims the physical structure of collective spaces. From Sérgio's distaste for the The Immaculate Conception's worship at the Ateneu chapel – materialized in the portrait of a 'Saint Rosalia' adorned with flowers and kept in the protagonist's drawer, and that depicts, actually, nothing but a little cousin of his, lifted as high as a saint – to Franco's revengeful projects – the school's outcast that once urinated on the water pump and planned, without success, to fill the swimming pool with glass shards –, the students' revenge is marked by a (naively) shortsighted feature. The pinnacle is the fire set by the teenager Américo, who disappears before and after the arson attack¹⁹.

¹⁵ "No fundo do silêncio comum do refeitório, cavou-se um silêncio mais fundo, como um poço depois de um abismo. Senti-me devorado por este silêncio hianite. A congregação justiceira dos colegas voltou-se para mim, contra mim. Os vizinhos de lugar à mesa afastaram-se dos dois lados, para que eu melhor fosse visto. [...] Aristarco foi clemente. Era a primeira vez, perdoou".

¹⁶ "O tédio é a grande enfermidade da escola, o tédio corruptor que tanto se pode gerar da monotonia do trabalho como da ociosidade".

¹⁷ "[...] a folhagem fixa, com o verdor morto das palmas de igreja, alourada a esmo da senilidade precoce dos ramos que sofrem" parece encarcerada dentro do Ateneu, "como se não coubesse a vegetação no internato; a um canto, esgalgado cipreste subia até as goteiras, tentando fugir pelos telhados".

¹⁸ "[...] ao aplicar a pena [dispersa em tantas formas e meios, o Ateneu] tem como alvo não só o culpado, mas todos aqueles que porventura possam praticar [algum] desvio, ou seja, o aparelho punitivo é usado como aparelho de saber".

¹⁹ Exploring two terms quoted in the first paragraphs of the novel ('world' and 'fight'), Zenir Campos Reis (1998, p. 7) makes a curious remark about the

Although consumed by apparently cathartic flames, the end of the novel does not suggest Sérgio's liberation from his negative experiences, but solely a time gap, that starts with experience (boy) and ends with narration (adult). Voluntarily confined in the infirmary in order to stay closer to Ema, Aristarco's enticing wife, Sérgio recognizes how meaningless the episode of the fire was for him:

And everything was over with the abrupt end of a bad novel. [...] The shock had so greatly astonished me that I had no awareness of the moment (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 265-266)²⁰.

Instead of the passivity inspired by the Ateneu, the posterior (and indirect) role of the narrator buries the past to the same extent as he evokes it through memory:

Here I suspend the chronicle of nostalgia. Of nostalgia, really? Pure remembrances, nostalgia perhaps, if we consider that time is the passing occasion of the facts, but especially – the everlasting funeral of the hours (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 272)²¹.

One can see that Sérgio resorts to nostalgia only as a destructive form of updating something that is no more, highlighting the temporal – and passing – hallmark of experience. In this sense (and agreeing with his version of the facts), the Ateneu does not survive, and the false education that it conveys does not form individuals, being reduced, as it is, to the maintenance and administration of the building itself, and losing all its reason to exist:

There it was; toasted geometric figures piled in a circle, broken cosmography devices [...]: dark spoils of life, of history, of the traditional belief [...]. He [Aristarco], an unfortunate and sad god, contemplating the universal disaster of his work (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 271-272)²².

It is worth stressing, however, that the narrator's 'compte rendu' is not exempt from criticisms, and shows here and there the partiality with which it (im)poses itself to the reader: Some examples: (1) if the boarding school environment is as repressive as he says, his life is not restricted to it, and, for many times, he is allowed to go back home, where he finds total and absolute support from his parents; in addition, (2) his privileged social status seems to

allegoric meaning of the names Franco and Américo: "Let us now pay attention to the names, allegory of the old and new world. France and America, respectively loser and winner in the fight against the Aristarcos".

²⁰ "E tudo acabou com um fim brusco de mau romance. [...] O susto de tal maneira me surpreendera, que eu não tinha exata consciência do momento".

²¹ Aqui suspendo a crônica de saudades. Saudades verdadeiramente? Puras recordações, saudades talvez, se ponderarmos que o tempo é a ocasião passageira dos fatos, mas sobretudo – o funeral para sempre das horas".

²² "Lá estava; em roda amontoavam-se figuras torradas de geometria, aparelhos de cosmografia partidos [...]: despojos negros da vida, da história, da crença tradicional [...]. Ele [Aristarco], um deus caipora, triste, sobre o desastre universal de sua obra".

guarantee, at least in his view, a treatment better than that of a regular student; and certainly (3)

[...] during the time he has been in the Ateneu, he's never had a bit of solidarity for the institute of which he was part; [where] he remained a foreign body that hurt the existence of his mates [...] (MIGUEL-PEREIRA, 1973, p. 112)²³.

As Sérgio himself recognizes,

I began to penetrate into the external reality as I had touched the truth of existence in school. Desperately I saw myself being doubly handcuffed to the contingency of being inevitably small and still a student. Student, almost like a slave ["calceta"]! Marked with a number, slave to the limits of the house and to the despotism of the administration (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 189-190)²⁴.

In this sense, the narrator's comparison of a student to a 'calceta' [meaning a person sentenced to the "[...] penalty of forced labor" (HOUAISS; VILLAR, 2001, p. 571)] highlights Sérgio's terror for the institutionalization of study, opposed perhaps to the idleness and individualism of the wealthy classes²⁵. These elements also arise, for instance, in other excerpts, like the one regarding the general dissatisfaction with the fake guava jam of the school cafeteria:

I thought as much. It was the guava jam revolution! An old complaint. The food in the Ateneu was not awful. Reasonable for some hundreds of fools. It had even the indispensable condiment of flees, a delight (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 206)²⁶.

Or also his remark when he becomes ill, right after Franco's death:

One morning, I find in my body a tingling of little red spots. Aristarco made me go to the infirmary, a prolongation of his residence near the swimming pool. The doctor came, the same that took care of Franco; he did not kill me (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 259).

Hence [some] ambiguity of the first singular person narration in the Ateneu [because ...] after the first

pages, the book is not anymore of memories, introspective, but begins to present itself as an aggressive novel in which the narrator forgets about himself to analyze imaginarily the feelings and emotions of the Other (SANTIAGO, 1972, p. 28)^{27, 28}.

Invading the petty and philistine mind of the principal, as well as the perversions of his mates etc., Sérgio seems to abuse, thus, of the centrality of his memories, taking the place of other past characters in a hierarchical attitude, as 'owner' of the narration – similarly to its privileged social position. As well pointed out by Roberto Schwarz (1981, p. 29-30), apropos of Aristarco,

[...] the Principal, it can be said, sets the tone of the book, which is, in turn, the tone of Sérgio's inner life [as it is evidenced in his ...] rhetorical sayings [...] which are no different from the sayings that will describe his exterior. The personal style of Aristarco and the style of the book, which is a representation of his inner person, are one and the same thing²⁹.

This is illustrated with his speech at the end-of-year party in the school –

The educator is like the music of the future, which one learns one day, and comprehends on the other [...]. As for the past, say no more! He did not look behind out of modesty, so he would not turn into a monument, just as Lot's wife (POMPÉIA, 1981, p. 246)³⁰.

where there is 'evidently an interpolation' by Sérgio from the third clause on, letting "[...] his own judgment emerge; Aristarco would not express himself in these terms" (PACHECO, 1971, p. 148)³¹.

This narrative social nuance is reinforced by the second speech of the narrator's father, who, in a letter sent from Paris right before the fire in the Ateneu, encourages his son to face the world via the 'rescue' of present time:

[...] Save the present moment. The moral law is the same as that of the activity. Nothing for tomorrow, if it can be done today; save the present. Do not

²³ [...] nunca, enquanto esteve no Ateneu, a menor solidariedade o uniu ao instituto de que fazia parte; [onde] permaneceu como um corpo estranho, que feria a só existência dos outros [...].

²⁴ "Comecei a penetrar a realidade exterior como palpara a verdade da existência no colégio. Desesperava-me então ver-me duplamente algemado à contingência de ser irremissivelmente pequeno e ainda colegial. Colegial, quase calceta! marcado com um número, escravo dos limites da casa e do despotismo da administração".

²⁵ This possibility is systematically ignored by part of *O Ateneu's* criticism, which prefers to observe the novel as a literary creation strongly disconnected from its time. That is the case, for instance, of Jorge Coli and Luis Dantas (1980, p. III), who, in spite of Pompéia's Jacobinism, state: "Son engagement républicain et anti-esclavagiste ne montre aucun lien direct avec l'Athénée, à tel point que le lecteur peut parfaitement ignorer la situation politico-sociale du Brésil d'alors." (COLI; DANTAS, 1980, p. III) Curiously, the very same authors categorize *O Ateneu* as "roman de la haine du monde", terms that will be enunciated by the narrator of *Manhã submersa* in its foreword as theme and definition of the novel.

²⁶ "Adivinha. Era a revolução da goiabada! Uma velha queixa. A comida do Ateneu não era péssima. O razoável para algumas centenas de tolinhos. Possuía mesmo o condimento indispensado das moscas, um regalo".

²⁷ "Certa manhã, descubro no corpo um formigueiro de pintinhas rubras. Aristarco fez-me recolher na enfermaria, um prolongamento de sua residência para os lados da natação. Veio médico, o mesmo do Franco; não me matou".

²⁸ "Daí [certa] ambiguidade do emprego do eu como pessoa de narração no Ateneu [...] pois] passadas as primeiras páginas, o livro deixa de ser de memórias, introspectivo, para apresentar-se como um agressivo romance em que o narrador se esquece de si para analisar imaginariamente os sentimentos e as emoções do Outro".

²⁹ [...] o Diretor, pode-se dizer, é a visualização do tom do livro, que é, por sua vez, o tom da vida interior de Sérgio", como fica evidente em suas "tiradas retóricas", "que em nada se distinguem das tiradas que devem descrever-lo enquanto exterioridade".

³⁰ "O educador é como a música do futuro, que se conhece em um dia para se compreender no outro [...] . Quanto ao seu passado, nem falemos! Não olhava para trás por modéstia, para não virar monumento, como a mulher de Lot".

³¹ [...] escapar o próprio juízo; Aristarco não poderia expressar-se nestes termos".

worry about anything else. The future is corrupt, the past is dissolvent, the present alone is strong. Nostalgia, cowardice, apprehension, more cowardice. Tomorrow compromises; the past saddens and sadness loosens. Nostalgia, apprehension, hope, vain ghosts, hollow projections of mirage; live only for the current and transitory moment. Save it! Save the shipwrecked time. [...] Think about it. For lying to prevail there must be a complete system of harmonious lies. Not lying is simple. ... I am in a big, interesting, busy city. The houses are taller than there; on the other hand, the roofs, lower. One would say that the upper floor crushes us. And since everyone has over their heads a poorer neighbor, it seems that oppression here is the weight of misery on the rich. The excitement is not good to me [...] such a show for someone who is ill. It seems life is running away. I give you my blessing... (POMPEIA, 1981, p. 263)³².

Clarifying the function of the reconstruction of the past inside the novel and the thesis that guides it, the advice of Sérgio's father is enunciated from an illness that is not only physical but also aggravated by the agitated atmosphere of Paris and the unevenness of social relations in Brazilian and European contexts, which, considering the initial privileged position of both Sérgio and his father, suggests a possible sense of maintenance of those very same relations of domination within Brazil as a way to solve the problems of both father and son³³. Thus, prior to a conflict between the boy and the school, it is possible to observe a conflict between the Brazilian rural aristocrat class and the imminent spectrum of the loss of social prestige, resulting from an increasingly evident and necessary

comparison between the slavery periphery of capitalism and its liberal center.

In this sense, it is valid to point also in the narrator of *O Ateneu* the categorization used by João Cezar de Castro Rocha (1998, p. 203-204) of 'patriarch-narrator', which, by reproducing his father's thesis in a tone that is "[...] ambitious, straightforward [...], guides the course of the reading, at the same time he imposes himself as the protagonist"³⁴, defending his class interests.

The original flower of a dead joy: the students and the seminar

Opposed to the independence and social pride of Sérgio, the narrator and protagonist of *Manhã submersa*, Antônio Santos Lopes, or simply Antônio Borralho, questions, from the novel's foreword on, the collective (and classist) validity of his story, already told by somebody else:

For the purpose of a certain book of yours, says Vergílio Ferreira that perhaps I, Antônio Borralho (A. Santos Lopes, by law) would write our story one day. Ours – of my people. And for some time, indeed, this idea tempted me. But I ended up giving up: at the end of the day the story would be told by other people and certainly I would not be the one who would tell it best. [...] I had one story though, which I lived in my own skin, but it was mine only. But in this case, if it was not about the future, if it was more about an 'individual' than a 'person', a 'man', if it was only, above all, a 'children's little story', why should I tell it? So a hundred times I decided to write it, a hundred times I gave up. Until one day in December, beaten by the winter, I felt, in a hallucination, that my story, after all, was right with all that today has a voice to be heard. Right about what, I did not know well. But I knew that it echoed the answer to the night of my wrath and the night and fury of the world (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 11-12, author's emphasis)³⁵.

The novel to which the narrator alludes right in the beginning of this foreword is *Vagão J* (1946), where Vergílio Ferreira is determined to

[...] show the unfortunate story of the Borralhos, [to] write the miserable saga of that 'family', one of

³² " [...] Salvar o momento presente. A regra moral é a mesma da atividade. Nada para amanhã, do que pode ser hoje; salvar o presente. Nada mais preocupe. O futuro é corruptor, o passado é dissolvente, só a atualidade é forte. Saudade, uma cobardia, apreensão outra cobardia. O dia de amanhã transige; o passado entristece e a tristeza afrouxa. Saudade, apreensão, esperança, vãos fantasmas, projeções inanes de miragem; vive apenas o instante atual e transitório. É salvá-lo! Salvar o naufrágio do tempo. [...] Pensa nisto. Para que a mentira prevaleça é mister um sistema completo de mentiras harmônicas. Não mentir é simples. [...] Estou numa grande cidade, interessante, movimentada. As casas são mais altas que lá; em compensação, os tetos, mais baixos. Dir-se-ia que o andar de cima esmaga-nos. E como cada um tem sobre a cabeça um vizinho mais pobre, parece que a opressão, aqui, pesa da miséria sobre os ricos. A agitação não me faz bem [...]. Que espetáculo para um doente! Parece que é a vida que foge. Dou-te a minha bênção..."

³³ The central importance of the paternal figure in the work finds another fundamental support, in addition to his two exemplified speeches. In an introduction to the novel, suppressed by Raul Pompéia and only discovered by Eugênio Gomes more than half a century after the publishing of the work, Sérgio clarifies the reason for his evocation of the past, explicitly indicating as its cause the death of his father, key point, therefore, not only to the ideological but also to the temporal signification of *O Ateneu*: "When he died they made the clock stop at the cruel time – six in the morning [...] The motionless clock seemed equally touched by death and the stiffness of its hands increased the pain in our soul, with the merciless permanence of the remembrance, bleeding, rioting against the time that heals; as if we who loved him should be left with the existence of nothing but the endless extension of that hour, immortal echo of those six quavering bangs of the old clock, sacred and painful cult of a memory. In those exceptional days, I was visited by images of the past, remembrances of my youth – all vivacious like never before –, when I felt the most the loving eagerness of his efforts [...], consolidating within me the character of a child through the strong-willed support of the experience of his seasoned years" (POMPEIA apud GOMES, 1952, p. 113-116). For an account of its impact on the final version of the novel, as well as a thorough analysis of its narrative process, see Sandanello (2014).

³⁴ "[...] ambicioso, objetivador do relato [...], orienta o rumo da leitura, ao mesmo tempo em que se impõe como protagonista".

³⁵ "Para o fim de certo livro seu, diz Vergílio Ferreira que talvez eu, Antônio Borralho (A. Santos Lopes, de lei) viesse um dia a escrever a nossa história. Nossa – da minha gente. E algum tempo, de fato, essa ideia tentou-me. Mas acabei por desistir: no fim de contas, a história estava contada por outros e não seria eu decerto quem a iria contar melhor. [...] História nova, porém, e vivida no sangue, eu tinha uma, sim, mas era somente minha. Mas nesse caso, se não era do futuro, se era mais de um "indivíduo" do que de uma "pessoa", de um "homem", se era apenas, sobretudo, uma "historiazinha infantil", de que servia conta-la? Cem vezes por isso resolvi escrevê-la, cem vezes desisti. Até que, em certo dia de Dezembro, vergastado a Inverno, eu senti, numa alucinação, que a minha história, afinal, estava certa com tudo o que hoje tem voz de se ouvir. Certa em que, não o sabia bem. Mas sabia que se respondiam nela a noite da minha ira e a noite e fúria do mundo".

the many chronic cases of the great [social] disease that Neo-Realism addressed to (PAIVA, 1984, p. 42, author's emphasis)³⁶.

António, playing a supporting role, is represented in the misfortune of a failed young seminarian, victim of an accident that makes him lose two fingers of his right hand. However, his personal tragedy is not pointless, as it serves as a variation of the misery that rules his family – his handicapped father, his furious mother, his murderer brother, his thief sister etc. Over the entire family – and that is what provokes the determinist and neorealist tone pointed out by Paiva (1984) – hover social inequality and human misery, resulting from capitalist exploitation, which can only be perceived through an 'intellectualized' view. In the end of *Vagão J*, the heterodiegetic narrator clarifies the nature of this requisite:

Who will put an end to the story of the Borrachos? [...] Perhaps, António Borrachinho, you will write it one day. You have at least found out that you had intelligence, you know what you are, what you have always been (FERREIRA, 1974, p. 226-227)³⁷.

With the change of narrative perspective, the social element begins to be seen through the apparently insignificant life of António, as he points in the foreword of the novel himself – “[...] if it was only, above all, a ‘children’s little story’, why should I tell it?” (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 11, author's emphasis) – while the decision of narrating is motivated by the perpetuity of the suffering at the seminar, which follows all those who have to go through similar experiences without desiring to do so – “[...] knew that it echoed the answer to the night of my wrath and the night and fury of the world” (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 12). The social meaning of the novel is thus added to the narrator's existential crisis, defining, in this

[...] movement inside the narrative focus, a light that makes visible the inextricable knot that ties the subject to his existential and historical content (BOSI, 2002, p. 134)³⁸.

Let us underscore, in this specific case, a particularity of the ‘fury of the world’ about which Borrachinho speaks, that is, the 1940s and 1950s

[...] in Portugal, marked by the Salazarist dictatorial regime, [in which] the Church operated as a repressive force against the liberation ideology of the urban environment and of social justice of the fields [in this atmosphere of political and religious oppression, in the countryside of the nation, for ...] village boys, the only alternative for them to escape the misery and the work in the fields was the Seminar (PAPOULA, 2009, p. 518)³⁹.

The setting of this oppressive environment in the novel is somehow the exterior expression and confirmation of the sad burden carried by these boys, and witnessed by young António:

The slender chestnuts, wandering through the hills, vague, discouraged, divesting themselves of the yellow leaves, as one that gives up on everything. In the wet and densely blue sky, a taciturn sun awaited with no concern the end of the day as a handicapped old man on an armchair, who no longer has plans for tomorrow. And to the bottom of the valley, as if to the grave, a thick fog descended, shrouding for good the memory of everything (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 34)⁴⁰.

Letting himself be carried away by the flow of the tide, against his will, and shroud the expectations about the future, under the shade of “[...] a day just like others, sluggish and profoundly sad, like the afternoons of a condemned ill person” (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 47)⁴¹, is the rule of the general apathy of the seminar with which young António comes across, in a space where time runs with the slowness of ‘a handicapped old man on an armchair’. And coercion is not limited to its four walls, but also invades the church near Lady Estefânia's house, the boss and benefactor of António and his family:

When we finally entered the church, a cave-like coldness involved me as a water blanket. A deadly silence was rotting along the walls or ascending widely, with long open arms, through the darkness of the domes (FERREIRA, 19-- , p. 77)⁴².

The wet cold that assails António sets the distance between people and covers the lack of communication between individuals, given that, in

³⁶ “[...] mostrar a desgraçada história dos Borrachos, [a] escrever a saga miserável dessa ‘família’, um dos muitos casos crônicos da grande doença [social] de que o Neo-Realismo se ocupou”.

³⁷ “Quem vem pôr um fim à história dos Borrachos? [...] Talvez, António Borrachinho, tu a escrevas um dia. Tu ao menos descobriste que tinhas inteligência, tu sabes o que sois, o que sempre tendes sido.” See the interesting comparison between the narrative focus employed in the fireworks episodes of *Vagão J* and *Manhã submersa* made by José Rodrigues de Paiva (1984, p. 44-47; 140-141) as a mark of the stylistic evolution of the writer. This said evolution, in the sense that the critic uses it, points clearly to a Presentist influence to overcome the Neo-realism in *Vagão J*. For an opposite view, see the discussion by Maria Lúcia Dal Farra (1978, p. 58-59), to whom both novels are entirely independent, and the dialogue preset in the foreword, the employment of an “[...] editorial resource”.

³⁸ “[...] movimento interno ao foco narrativo, uma luz que ilumina o nó inextricável que ata o sujeito ao seu conteúdo existencial e histórico”.

³⁹ “[...] em Portugal, marcadas pelo regime ditatorial salazarista, [em que] a Igreja atuava como força repressora à ideologia de libertação do meio urbano e da justiça social do campo”: neste ambiente de opressão política e religiosa, no interior do país, aos “meninos das aldeias, a única alternativa para fugir da miséria e do trabalho no campo era o Seminário”.

⁴⁰ “Os castanheiros esguios, errantes pela colina, vagos, desencorajados, desfaziavam-se lentamente das folhas amarelas, como quem desiste de tudo. No céu húmido e densamente azul, um sol taciturno aguardava, sem interesse, o fim do dia, como um velho inválido numa cadeira de braços, que já não tem projetos para amanhã. E para o fundo do vale, como para uma sepultura, descia uma neblina espessa que amortilhava para sempre a memória de tudo”.

⁴¹ “[...] um dia igual aos outros, arrastado e profundamente triste, como as tardes de um doente condenado”.

⁴² “Quando enfim penetramos na igreja, desceu sobre mim, como um lençol d’água, uma brusca frialdade de grutas. Um silêncio mortuário apodrecia ao longo dos muros ou subia largamente, de grandes braços abertos, pelo escuro das abóbodas”.

his social place, subaltern to the family of the Capitan and of Lady Estefânia, there is nothing to change or to say but to accept, to swallow the torrent of silence that permeates everything:

As the prior had not come yet, after announcing my life to God, I sat on a bench, distressed with that vast silence, a wet and submerge silence like the rise of origins (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 77)⁴³.

And Antônio's intuition on these similarities does not fool him, because even in this environment of false social ascension provided by the seminar, during the choice of the leaders of each of the two groups of the class – called, on purpose, 'generals' and 'armies', just like a microcosmic replica of Salazar's dictatorship –, the cruel weight of appearances prevail over intelligence and merit. In Gaudêncio and Lourenço, wretched boys of the class, knowledge weighs as an odd element; the same does not apply to "[...] Amílcar, who was son of a military uniform of the Republic Guard, nor to Adolfo, son of a retail store owner" (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 52)⁴⁴, the former carrying the prestige of the Army with him, and the latter that of money.

In them the rules and exceptions of Latin had an exceptional light, were more true, were even excusable if they were wrong. The science of the others was massive and brutal. But the one of these two was light, thin [...] (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 52)⁴⁵.

This moral straightjacket does not even depend on the democratic varnish of the votes, to which boys are unconsciously compelled to reinforce the naturalness of differences:

But then again the voice of our submission has spoken. And crushed by this old need, surrendered and amazed, we all promptly voted for Amílcar and Adolfo (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 53)⁴⁶.

The boys' democratic spirit succumbs to their critical spirit, being the latter discouraged by the teachers as an inadequacy to good conduct standards:

[...] Father Tomás mocked at my Portuguese composition because, to describe a Spring morning I had introduced it simply as follows: 'Before the sunrise, men go to work.' While the ideal composition, as Amílcar's, was rich in elegance and

details: 'Just as a sacred host ascending from the pyx of the mountain, the Sun has risen, sprinkling its golden rays, while little birds leaped from branch to branch with sweet twitters.' (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 142)⁴⁷.

The moral coercion of writing classes is equally accompanied by physical punishments, as it occurs with the grotesque use of paddles:

There was absolute silence. Somebody passed by the window whistling. The Sun was saying goodbye, slowly, from the top of the sky. Everything was ready. Father Lino put his mantelletta over his shoulders to uncover his arm and gain momentum. With a linear conviction, he lifted the paddle high and twisting his trunk a little, with strength, he hit me with the first blow. I felt my hand being suddenly destroyed with a burning that consumed my palm and fingers. But soon a pain began to run across my arm. Yet before I felt it all, once again the paddle burn my hand. [...] All of a sudden, in my left hand, a dry explosion and total destruction. The resounding blows deepened the silence. There was no one around me; it was just me before my pain. [...] 'You can hit me as much as you want, Father. I can stand it. Hit me more. Again.' He hit me. He ran out of strength (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 181-182)⁴⁸.

However, the coercion against Antônio does not take place only by means of those two expedients: there is also, in everyday life, the rivalry of the Mayors (students in charge of keeping the order and the monastic silence); the holes that are strategically arranged on the walls and doors of the great hall; the terrifying stories that Lady Estefânia tells about those doomed to hell; the erasure of seminarians' sexuality by the general society; the repudiation and derision of some of his old friends and relatives towards the cassock and the black garments etc.

Two means of resistance (as material and straightforward as those of the Ateneu) opens up to Antônio and his mates: the immediate revenge against the religious abuses, just as young Gama does by trying to set the seminar on fire for successive times:

⁴⁷ [...] o Pe. Tomás escarneceu da minha redação em Português, porque, numa descrição de uma manhã de Primavera, eu abria assim apenas: "Antes de nascer o Sol, os homens vão para o trabalho." Enquanto a redação ideal, como a do Amílcar, era assim perluxuosa: "Qual hóstia sagrada levantando-se da paxíde da montanha, o Sol nasceu espargindo os seus raios doirados, e as avezinhas saltitaram de ramo em ramo, em doces gorjeios".

⁴⁸ "Havia um silêncio absoluto. Alguém passou junto às janelas, assobiando. O Sol dizia adeus, devagar, desde o cimo do céu. Estava tudo a postos. Pe. Lino atirou para o ombro a aba da romeira para ter o braço livre e tomar balanço. Com uma certeza linear, ergueu alto a palmatória e torcendo um pouco o tronco, no esforço, descarregou o primeiro golpe. Senti a mão subitamente destruída com um ardor vivo na concha e nos dedos. Mas logo uma dor começou a inchar-me até ao ombro. Antes porém que eu a sentisse toda, outra vez a palmatória me queimou a mão. [...] Súbito, na mão esquerda, uma explosão seca e a destruição total. O ressoar das pancadas aprofundava o silêncio. Não havia ninguém à minha volta, só eu em frente da minha dor. [...] "Podes bater-me quanto quiseres, Padre. Aguento tudo. Bate mais. Outra vez." Ele bateu. Ficou extenuado".

⁴³ "Como o prior ainda não chegara, depois de anunciar a Deus a minha vida, sentei-me num banco, angustiado daquele vasto silêncio, um silêncio úmido e submerso como um levedar de origens".

⁴⁴ "[...] no Amílcar, que era filho de uma farda da Guarda Republicana, nem do Adolfo, que era filho de uma loja de comércio".

⁴⁵ "Neles as regras e as exceções do latim tinham um brilho excepcional, eram mais verdadeiras, eram até desculpáveis, se estivessem erradas. A ciência dos outros era maciça e brutal. Mas a destes era leve, fina [...]".

⁴⁶ "Mas de novo falou a voz da nossa submissão. E esmagados por essa necessidade antiga, rendidos e maravilhados, votamos à uma no Amílcar e no Adolfo".

Gama. It was him. In the darkness of a clandestine night they covered him with curses and expelled him from the Seminar. [...] But nobody knew anything. Gama had acted by himself, without the help of anybody, confined only within his vengeful hatred (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 122)⁴⁹.

Or, inversely, the immediate revenge of the individual, in an attack against himself, as António does by mutilating himself on purpose in face of the abuses perpetrated by Lady Estefânia:

I wanted to proof to that hag that I despised her, that I despised death, the ordeal of my flesh. My whole body was then abruptly taken by a second of madness. And I grabbed a bomb, and lit the fuse, and waited (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 218)⁵⁰.

There is, however (and still one more time) a third route of resistance against the submersion into this world, which is made visible indirectly by the gesture of António's hand, already mutilated – the fictional recreation of the past and, through it, the reckoning with the old agents and devices of oppression, by the adult António. With the aid of memory, contrasting today and yesterday, the web of lies inside which he had once been locked becomes visible:

Lies, oh God, everything, and everything. There is no decency in long skirts, with long eyelids. There is only the excruciating distress of one last pleasure, of one last vortex, as the bottom of a whirlpool (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 159)⁵¹.

The narrative thus begins to turn itself into a weapon against the illusions of the religious discourse employed at that time, unmasking the collusions of priests and believers with the tyrannical regime of the Salazarist Portugal; it reflects, in this sense, an "[...] effort of integrity [...]" in the terms of Maria Lúcia Dal Farra (1978, p. 57)⁵², which resorts to the passage of time and to the distance between object and subject in order to analyze, from a less biased viewpoint, the origins of the suffering experienced.

In spite of deepening the clearness of understanding, remembrance cannot, though, overcome once and for all the continuity of all the pain expressed in António's speech, and takes on a

dual character that goes from the evocation of the adult to the remembrance of the boy:

Remembrance has this strange power: all that has offended me still offends me, all that has smiled to me still smiles to me; but amidst the helplessness cry, amidst a real oblivion, the haze of distance rises up against me, the poignancy that is not glad nor sad but poignant alone waives at me... That which I have suffered and recall hurts in me, not what I have suffered and evoke (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 88)⁵³.

Evoking and remembering are split between a greater or lesser proximity to the seminar in order to remove the upholstery of appearances that is so celebrated by characters as Lady Estefânia and Joaquina Borralho, and that overshadow the freedom of a seminarian without a religious calling. The dimension of this criticism makes *Manhã submersa*

[...] a criticism against the misconceived religious orientation, that which opposes freedom and, therefore, opposes the right of option (DÉCIO, 1977, p. 59)⁵⁴.

of every person, which anticipates, in the whole of Vergílio Ferreira's work,

[...] a starting process of that type of essay-novel, of interpretation, of criticism of ideality [...] that would happen later in] 'Aparição' and 'Estrela polar' [...] (DÉCIO, 1977, p. 59, author's emphasis)⁵⁵.

The book ends after the evocation (remembrance) of a serious epidemic that occurred in the seminar, and of the self-mutilation episode, already mentioned. Abandoned by everything and everyone in Lisbon, the narrator discloses a recent passion for an unknown girl, and warns, more to himself than to his reader:

I do not know what will happen to our life tomorrow, not even, oh pain, whether I will have the courage to tell her. But I recognize, in my agitated blood, that a sign of triumph is advancing with her towards me [...]. For this reason, in this plain hour in which I write, lost in the distant rumor

⁴⁹“O Gama. Fora ele. Pelo escuro de uma madrugada clandestina cobriram-no de maldição e expulsaram-no do Seminário. [...] Mas ninguém sabia de nada. Gama atuara sozinho, sem ajuda de ninguém, cerrado apenas no seu ódio justiceiro”.

⁵⁰“Quis provar àquela bruxa que a desprezava, que desprezava a morte, o suplício da minha carne. Estalou-me então abruptamente, de alto a baixo, um raio de loucura. E tomei uma bomba, e cheguei fogo ao rasilho, e esperei”.

⁵¹“Mentira, ó Deus, tudo, tudo. Não há decência de saias compridas, de pálpebras compridas. Há só a angústia dilacerante de um prazer final, de um vértice final, como o fundo de um redemoinho de águas”.

⁵²“[...] esforço de integridade”.

⁵³“Estranho poder este da lembrança: tudo o que me ofendeu me ofende, tudo o que me sorriu sorri: mas, a um apelo de abandono, a um esquecimento real, a bruma da distância levanta-se-me sobre tudo, acena-me a comoção que não é alegre nem triste mas apenas comovente... Dói-me o que sofri e recorde, não o que sofri e evoco”.

⁵⁴“[...] um libelo contra a orientação religiosa mal concebida, aquela que vai contra a liberdade e contra, portanto, o direito de opção”.

⁵⁵“[...] um início de processo daquele tipo de romance-ensaio, de interpretação da crítica da idealidade [...] que se daria mais tarde em] *Aparição* e *Estrela polar*”. This is also the stand took by Carina Infante do Carmo (1998, p. 174) in her excellent study on *Manhã submersa*: “By the time that the novel was edited, both orientations of the character – the social and the existential ones – were still conciliable to Vergílio Ferreira, as he accepted the metaphysical element as an extension of social and historical processes. Now, the teenager (and the narrator writing in his ‘naked room’) makes the seminarian a representative and singular entity, as well as a center of ideological irradiation over the human being bound to an extreme situation, not only (and less and less) seen via economic determinism”.

of the city, it comforts me to think of whatever invincible appeal of life and of harmony that has not died from the roots of the night that has covered me (FERREIRA, 19--., p. 221)⁵⁶.

Thus, returns to the narrator the suggestive power of the novel's title, and, after the night of his failure as a seminarian, as a son, as a protégé etc., there is the rise of a promise of free communion between two bodies and two souls, 'invincible appeal of life and of harmony'.

Conclusion

As we could follow each particular case, there is some confluence of thematic elements between both novels that comes along with some nuances, which would be best arranged on a Table just as below:

<i>O Ateneu</i>	<i>Manhã submersa</i>
Hostile education environment (boarding school for rich boys)	Hostile education environment (seminar for poor children)
Sérgio's failure to adapt	Antônio's lack of religious calling
Memory: 'nostalgia' and destruction	Memory: remembrance and evocation
Domestic X institutional spaces	Domestic + institutional spaces
Absence of gratuitous friendships	Absence of lasting friendships
Recurrence of sex (mechanism of power)	Recurrence of sex (sin / celibacy)
Distinctive experience: boredom	Distinctive experience: silence
Fire: final means of destruction	Fire: failed means of destruction
(De)formation of Sérgio in the Ateneu	(De)formation of Antônio in the seminar
(personal / social crisis)	(social / existential crisis)
Writing: reckoning with others	Writing: reckoning with himself

Underlying the above-mentioned elements, it is possible to see the oppressing discourses of the boarding school and of the seminar, which, for restricting the freedom of the protagonists / narrators, stand out as common points to both works. In this sense, perhaps it is not too hasty to consider that both *O Ateneu* and *Manhã submersa* can be seen, using a term commonly employed by the current critique, as 'inter-discursive parodies', taking for parody the etymology of the term ('odos' – song; 'para' – counter, along), i.e., a 'counter-melody' that makes implicit "[...] a critical distance between the text [or discourse] to be parodied and the new work that incorporates [it] [...]" (HUTCHEON, 1985, p. 48)⁵⁷. After all, as Márcia Gobbi (2011, p. 50) highlights, "[...] any coded form, and not even necessarily in the same medium or genre – as long as treated in terms of repetition with critical

distance"⁵⁸, can be used to begin a 'counter-melody', which, in the novels of Pompéia and Ferreira, highlights the the fake moralist and religious views of education made by Sérgio (as a student and a rich boy, socially diminished) and Antônio (as a student and a poor boy, with a high status only in appearance)⁵⁹.

Surrounding these two teenage boys, personal and individual expressions of absolutely massifying environments, we see that, whether in Raul Pompéia's Brazil, whether in Vergílio Ferreira's Portugal, and whether

[...] in times like ours, the excessively personalist line of the novel appears, not rarely, as a defense of the already worn out positions of intelligence and of society. Lastly – and using reverberative words, for which I apologize – it opposes the dialectical development of the personality and of society, seeking to stop that which could come into existence through the indefinite prolongation of the oppositions of existing and not existing (CANDIDO, 1992, p. 92)⁶⁰.

Since every circumference has a radius or a central point, we finally see the 'turkey circle' of these two, maybe four, real adolescents, engaging in the endless turn of man around institutions, always demanding, increasingly, a greater interpersonal and discursive contact, beyond the bureaucratic devices and class distinctions...

Acknowledgements

To Wilton J. Marques, on this side, and to Paulo A. Pereira, on the other side of the ocean.

References

ÁRTICO, D. *L'enfant de Jules Vallès e O Ateneu, de Raul Pompéia*: do foco narrativo à crítica social. 1983. 219f. Tese (Doutorado em Letras)-Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1983.

⁵⁶"[...] qualquer forma codificada, e nem sequer necessariamente no mesmo medium ou gênero – desde que tratados em termos de repetição com distância crítica".

⁵⁹One could argue, with theorists like Gérard Genette (1982, p. 28), that this definition of parody would be too vague, and that within the limits of the text it would be reduced to the vulgarization of a classical work: "La forme la plus rigoureuse de la parodie, ou parodie minimale, consiste donc à reprendre littéralement un texte connu pour lui donner une signification nouvelle, en jouant au besoin et si possible sur les mots, comme Racine fait ici sur le mot exploits, parfait exemple de calembour intertextuel. La parodie la plus élégante, parce que la plus économique, n'est donc rien d'autre qu'une citation détournée de son sens, ou simplement de son contexte et de son niveau de dignité [...]". It seems to us, however, that the Genettean definition – regardless of the Cartesian (non-parodic) value of *Palimpsestes* – is limited and "[...] built uniquely in terms of textual relations" (HUTCHEON, 1982, p. 33), without entering more comprehensive – and discursive – functions of parody.

⁶⁰"[...] num tempo como o nosso, a linha excessivamente personalista do romance aparece, não raro, como defesa das posições já gastas da inteligência e da sociedade. Numa última palavra, – e usando termos rebarbativos, pelos quais me desculpo, – se opõe ao desenvolvimento dialético da personalidade e da sociedade, procurando brecar o vir-a-ser por meio do prolongamento indefinido das oposições do ser e do não ser".

⁵⁶"Não sei o que será a nossa vida amanhã, nem sequer, ó dor, se terei coragem de lhe falar. Mas reconheço, no meu sangue em alvoroço, que um sinal de triunfo vem avançando com ela para mim [...]. Por isso, nessa hora nua em que escrevo, perdido no rumor distante da cidade, conforta-me pensar não sei em que apelo invencível de vida e de harmonia que não morreu desde as raízes da noite que me cobriu".

⁵⁷"[...] uma distanciação crítica entre o texto [ou discurso] em fundo a ser parodiado e a nova obra que [o] incorpora".

- BALIEIRO, F. **A pedagogia do sexo em O Ateneu**: o dispositivo de sexualidade no internato da 'fina flor da mocidade brasileira'. 2009. 124f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia)-Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, 2009.
- BOSI, A. Narrativa e resistência. In: BOSI, A. (Ed.). **Literatura e resistência**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002. p. 118-135.
- CANDIDO, Antonio. Roda de peru. In: CANDIDO, A. (Ed.). **Brigada ligeira e outros escritos**. São Paulo: Edusp, 1992. p. 87-92.
- CARMO, C. I. **Adolescer em clausura**: olhares de Aquilino, Régio e Vergílio Ferreira sobre o romance de internato. Faro/Visu: Universidade do Algarve/Centro de Estudos Aquilino Ribeiro, 1998.
- COLI, J.; DANTAS, L. Préface. In: POMPÉIA, R. (Ed.). **L'Athenée**: chronique d'une nostalgie. Aix-en-Provence: Pandora, 1980. p. I-VIII.
- DÉCIO, João. **Vergílio Ferreira**: a ficção e o ensaio. São Paulo: Século XXI, 1977.
- FARRA, M. L. D. **O narrador ensimesmado**: o foco narrativo em Vergílio Ferreira. São Paulo: Ática, 1978.
- FERREIRA, V. **Manhã submersa**. 2. ed. Lisboa: Portugália, 19--.
- FERREIRA, V. **Vagão J**. 2 ed. Lisboa: Arcádia, 1974.
- GENETTE, G. **Palimpsestes**: la littérature au second degré. Paris: Seuil, 1982.
- GOBBI, M. V. Z. **A ficcionalização da história**: mito e paródia na narrativa portuguesa contemporânea. São Paulo: Unesp, 2012.
- GOMES, E. **Prata da casa**. Rio de Janeiro: A Noite, 1952.
- HOUAISS, A.; VILLAR, M. S. **Grande dicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa**. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2001.
- HUTCHEON, L. **Uma teoria da paródia**. Tradução Teresa Louro Perez. Lisboa: Edições 70, 1985.
- MIGUEL-PEREIRA, L. **História da literatura brasileira**: prosa de ficção (de 1870 a 1920). 3. ed. Rio de Janeiro; Brasília: José Olympio; INL, 1973.
- PACHECO, J. **A literatura brasileira**: o realismo (1870-1900). 4. ed. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1971.
- PAIVA, J. R. **O espaço limite no romance de Vergílio Ferreira**. Recife: Encontro/ Gabinete Português de Leitura, 1984.
- PAPOULA, T. *Manhã submersa* ou as vozes do silêncio. A propósito de um romance de Vergílio Ferreira. **Eutomia**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 517-530, 2009.
- POMPÉIA, R. **Obras**: O Ateneu. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira/ MEC/ Fename/ Olac, 1981.
- REIS, Z. C. Introdução: opostos, mas justapostos. In: POMPÉIA, R. (Ed.). **O Ateneu**. 18. ed. São Paulo: Ática, 1998. p. 3-8.
- ROCHA, J. C. C. **Literatura e cordialidade**: o público e o privado na cultura brasileira. Rio de Janeiro: UERJ, 1998.
- SANDANELLO, F. B. **O escorpião e o jaguar**: o memorialismo prospectivo d'O Ateneu, de Raul Pompéia. 2014. 262f. Tese (Doutorado em Estudos Literários)- Universidade Estadual Paulista, Araraquara, 2014.
- SANTIAGO, S. **O Ateneu**: contradições e perquirições. **Cadernos da PUC**, v. 1, n. 11, p. 19-49, 1972.
- SCHWARZ, R. **O Ateneu**. In: SCHWARZ, R. (Ed.). **A sereia e o desconfiado**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1981. p. 25-30.
- SILVA, V. M. **Exercício do poder**: conflitos, discursos e representações culturais em O Ateneu. 2007. 131f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras)-Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Londrina, 2007.

Received on July 15, 2014.

Accepted on June 8, 2015.

License information: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.