

# e-fabulations

*e-journal of children's literature*



## e-f@bulações

*Revista electrónica de literatura infantil*

Edited by Filomena Vasconcelos

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*e-f@bulations/ e-f@bulações* is a refereed international e-journal of scholarly research in the field of literature for childhood and youth. It is published in English and Portuguese twice a year (Spring-Summer and Autumn-Winter) as part of the Digital Library of the *Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto* (FLUP), Portugal, with ISSN number (NUMBER).

Hosted by the Department of Anglo-American Studies (DEAA) of FLUP, the journal aims at providing a space for the publication of studies on a wide spectrum of topics related to literary themes on childhood and youth, in a broad variety of genres, from the most traditional and conventional ones to memories, journals and comics. Comparative approaches between literature, cinema, cartoon animation and the visual arts (e.g. in book illustration or other) are also contemplated.

In its interdisciplinary design the journal therefore welcomes contributions on all subjects within the general literary and cultural field of childhood and youth, from any country, culture or civilization, any historical period, as well as from any individual or collective experience.

*e-f@bulations/ e-f@abulações* is a pluralist publication with no ideological affiliation and open to proposals and perspectives from all research methodologies.

Prior to publication, all contributions are to be submitted to the Editorial Committee of the journal for peer-reviewing, and are assumed to be unpaid. It is furthermore understood that authors submit only original articles which are not at the same time being submitted to other journals.

The Editorial Committee has also the right to invite distinguished scholars to contribute to the journal.

Each issue comprises two main sections (though exceptions may occur):

- 1- Critical essays on the thematic areas above described;
- 2- Creative writings for children or youths – e.g. short narratives, plays, poems, comics or others. These texts should be all original and not previously published, whether in printed or digital form.

Editor: Filomena Vasconcelos

Editorial Committee: Filomena Vasconcelos /Maria João Pires

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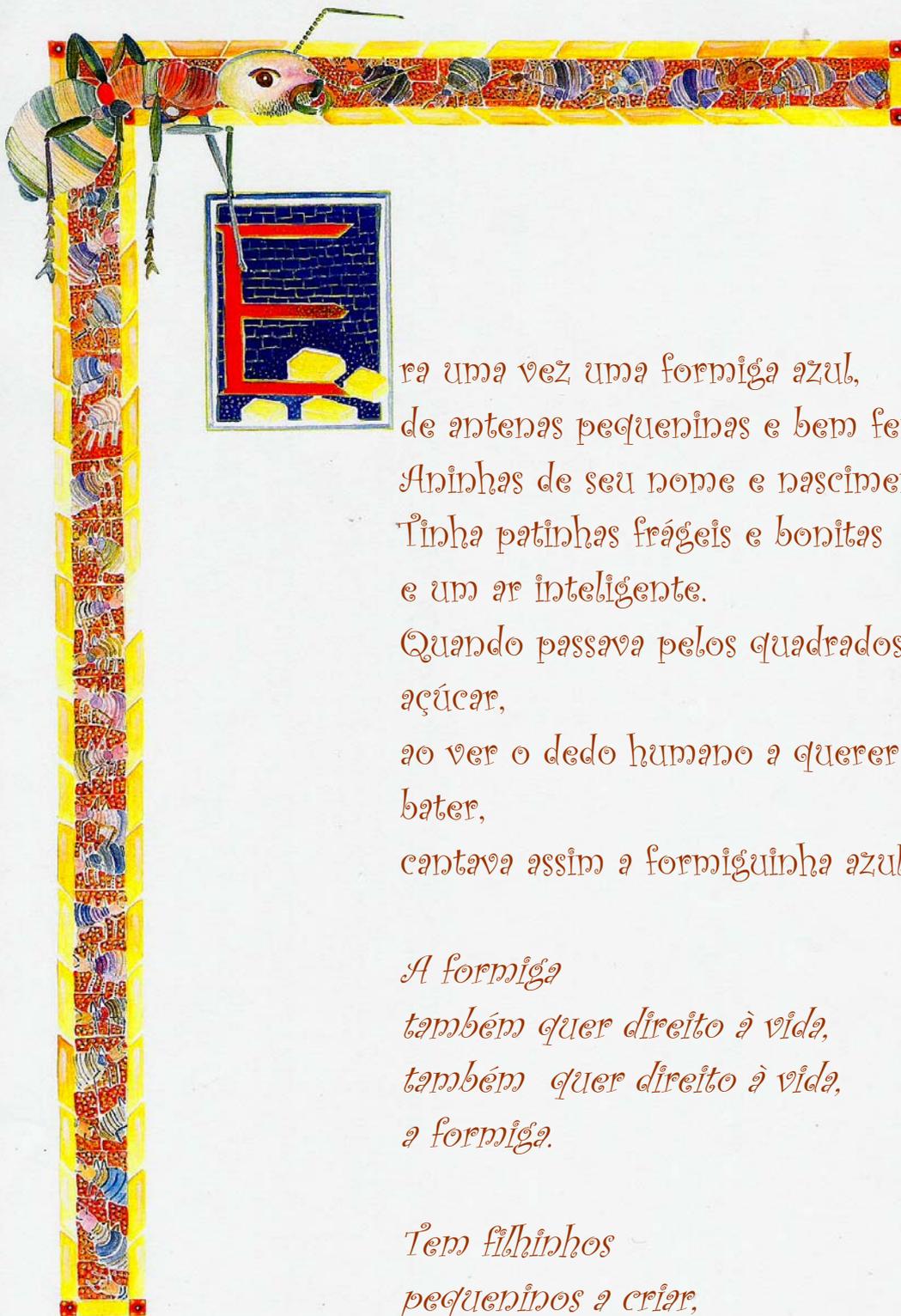
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## HISTÓRIA PEQUENINA DA FORMIGA AZUL



ra uma vez uma formiga azul,  
de antenas pequeninas e bem feitas,  
Aninhas de seu nome e nascimento.  
Tinha patinhas frágeis e bonitas  
e um ar inteligente.

Quando passava pelos quadrados de  
açúcar,  
ao ver o dedo humano a querer  
bater,  
cantava assim a formiguinha azul:

*A formiga  
também quer direito à vida,  
também quer direito à vida,  
a formiga.*

*Tem filhinhos  
pequenos a criar,  
barriguinha  
para encher com comidinha.*



*E lá por ela  
ser assim tão pequenina,  
tem amor pelos filhinhos,  
dá-lhes beijos e carinhos.*

*E com as suas patas pretas  
faz festinhas,  
a formiça,  
a formiça.*

*E foi assim que a formiguinha azul,  
de antenas pequeninas e bem feitas,  
Aninhas de seu nome e nascimento  
e um ar inteligente,  
ao ver-me um dia preparada na  
cozinha  
para a matar e mais os seus filhinhos,  
me disse assim, cantando em voz  
meiguinha:*

*A formiça  
também quer direito à vida,  
também quer direito à vida,  
a formiça.*



*Tem filhinhos  
pequenininhos a criar,  
barriguinha  
para encher com comidinha.  
E lá por ela  
ser assim tão pequenina,  
tem amor pelos filhinhos,  
dá-lhes beijos e carinhos.*

*Também tem,  
também tem direito à vida,  
a formiga,  
a formiga.*

*Ana Luísa Amaral*

*Ilustração de Alexandra Jordão*

## Dolls: the Realm of Make-Believe

Maria João Pires  
Universidade do Porto

Just like Gulliver in Lilliput, a child is a giant among his toys. When a little girl takes a doll in her hands she enters a world of make-believe where she commands and possesses. Above anything else, dolls are symbols of identity. The little girl holds the doll on her lap, cuddles her or throws her away: playing is a game of power that reflects the adult world. The presence of a particular doll may give comfort and security: she has a life and a history. There is a love relationship that sometimes outlasts childhood during which the doll may be forgotten, left on the bed, cuddled, rescued or even, in later times, restored.

To play is to imitate the ways of the real world or act out different roles. A time of play is also a representation in which a doll assumes several personalities: she sleeps or eats while the child also sleeps or eats. One cannot forget that the latin word for 'to play', *ludere*, retains two different meanings; to play as a child and to perform in the theatre. A collection of dolls is a theatre in constant performance where the child does not merely observe but also interacts with dolls, being both actor and audience, changing experiences. The real world is recreated and brought to life over and over again. (Manguel 2006)

As adults, we need not put this world away. For adults, as for children, the world of make believe does not replace the real world: they exist side by side, though we know, as adults, that to play is to enjoy the gift of unmeasured ideals. Dolls make us learn about the world and 19<sup>th</sup> century French dolls, especially, take us to the everyday world of that time. Loving them today, as works of art, is an attempt to grasp this world and find our place in it.



(Three Tete Jumeau Bebe size 8, original outfits and shoes,(1886-9) Maria João Pires collection)

The second Empire under Napoleon III brought deep changes in French society, especially the rise of a middle class with a completely new ideal of living. The bourgeoisie aspired to a noble behaviour, trying hard to learn moral and aesthetic values, particularly in the education of children. Based on the models of high society, literature and magazines for the young always made strong appeals to well-mannered and morally irreproachable children.

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, French children were not kept out of adult's sight on nurseries, cared by nannies. They were well dressed little creatures, who strolled in parks, boulevards and in every fashionable place, displaying their beautiful dolls. Prisoner of social and moral conventions, middle and upper class French children only enjoyed the freedom of meeting other children or dressing as they wished by the early years of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, the little girl was expected to behave as her parents commanded. During this historical period, the doll market developed very fast. Already considered by nobility as models for fashion, human beauty or morals, dolls filled the children imagination with models of behaviour. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the fascination with dolls gradually extended from the privileged few of the *ancien régime* to the children of the middle class. The mid nineteenth-century extravagant French dolls were dressed in imitation of elegantly dressed adults, thus providing the little girl a model of adult behaviour.

Madame la Comtesse de Ségur '*Les Petites Filles Modèles*' (1858) presents two little sisters, Camille and Madeleine who, like many other privileged children of that time, played all day long with their dolls, learning how to dress and behave. From then on, dolls would be adopted by each generation as models for children and we can easily think of some examples, extending

through late nineteenth century to twentieth century as Mignonette, Bleurette, or even Barbie. (Odin 2007: 20-5)

One of the first educational aims of a doll in the second half of the nineteenth century was to help little girls practice sewing. Presented as ideal learning tools, the early dolls had china heads and stuffed cloth bodies. Jean Jacques Rousseau had already shown the importance of role playing in education so, this type of doll went on till early twentieth century, always showing the importance of sewing in the education of the little girls.



*(Learning sewing box with the little model doll. SFBJ (1900) ( Société Française des Bebes et Jouets)  
Au Bon Marché  
Maria João Pires Collection*

Models or playthings, dolls completed the child/adult identity game reproducing everyday life situations. This is clearly shown in the first generation of bisque head dolls made by the Parisian firms such as Huret or Rhomer where dolls could wear both children's or adult's outfits. From the mid 1870s onwards, the Jumeau firm achieved high success producing luxurious dolls, thus getting the attention of every child of the bourgeoisie. Soon the Jumeau company was to be seen as Prince of Doll Makers. In 19<sup>th</sup> century France, the *Bebe Jumeau* acquired an important role in social status : the Bébés Jumeau displayed in exhibits in Paris from the 1880s to the late 1890s and, by means of far advanced distribution methods for the time, they became well known in Europe as well as in the USA. While the little dolls such as Mignonette had a specific role on educating children with several sewing techniques, the Bébés Jumeau had a target customer: the rich child who didn't sew for the doll, but bought expensive factory clothes to dress her.

With some exceptions, where the child also included some home made clothes in her Bébés Jumeau trousseau, most of the Bébés wore factory outfits. They evolved through decades in different models, each with an identity, all of them perfect works of art. They were meant to be luxury dolls for the upper class privileged children. The name Jumeau would become synonymous with

the doll, crossing national frontiers and magically reaching the heart of generations of children. These dolls are a unique and perfect expression of art and beauty and maybe I will come back some other time to speak a bit more about them. (Theimer 1994: 6-8)



*Emile Jumeau Déposé Bébé Jumeau in size 11 (1885-6) with original antique outfit.  
Maria João Pires Collection*



*Tete Jumeau size 10 with a factory original outfit, original marked Jumeau shoes  
and original box (1886-9)  
Maria João Pires Collection*



*Tete Jumeau size 7 and her wonderful trousseau full of all original clothes, including hats, shoes, undergarments and dolly's little books. (1886-9) Maria João Pires Collection.*

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## “Invent and subvert: Paula Rego’s illustrations for children’s books”

Filomena Vasconcelos  
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“... when the first baby laughed for the first time, its laugh broke into a thousand pieces, and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of fairies.” (*Peter Pan*, Ch.3)

1. After six months of hard work to produce the huge canvas of *The Dance* (1988),<sup>1</sup> Paula Rego felt the need of a significant change in her approach to painting, not only as far as her thematic and model references were concerned but also in all technical means involved. Since her days at Slade School in the late 50’s, Rego had become familiar with the technical use of ‘aqua-fortis’ and ‘aquatint’ in the exquisite art of engraving, which often offered her a liberating escape from more complex rituals of painting (Bradley 2002: 47).

In the process of engraving the artist draws directly on a copper sheet (previously prepared with wax), as the images seem to have a fluency of their own, flowing freely and abundantly from her imagination and not from models, as is the case of most of Rego’s paintings. Half-way between pure creation and mechanical ability, in a sort of unpredictable compromise of genius and skillfulness, Paula Rego’s engravings translate her absolute handling of drawing techniques and the need of a correct treatment of lines, forms, colour and shade, aware of the fact that the images printed from the copper sheet will be exactly the reverse from those previously drawn, as in a mirror-like symmetrical projection.<sup>2</sup>

In close collaboration with the artist and engraver Paul Coldwell, by 1988 Rego started her first series of ‘aqua-fortis’ engravings, fully dedicated to children’s English ‘nursery rhymes’, which she knew well since an early age at St Julian’s School in Carcavelos (Lisbon). Bringing back sleeping memories of childhood, in small melodious lines, typically in a regular rhyming cadence,

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<sup>1</sup> Acrylic on paper over canvas: 213.4x274.3cm.

<sup>2</sup> Paula Rego often uses a mirror to adjust her drawing on the copper to the effect she wants to produce in the printed work.

nursery rhymes were a particularly rich field of images and colours for the artist to capture and recreate out of all imagined characters, both human and animal, little boys and little girls, in their little joys and miseries, together with their most precious toys and pets, living and playing ever after in their endless fantasy worlds, so very much apart from the grey dull world where adults around them seemed to be living, or perhaps just dying...

However, Rego's work in general, from her major paintings – oils, acrylics and pastels – to her watercolours and engravings alike, is never to be taken easily in a straightforward uncompromising way, as it always demands a closer and deeper observation and reading. Rego is above all a story-teller and her paintings and drawings are therefore visual narratives on a chosen theme and the questionings around it, involving people and their particular circumstances: their problems, their woes or celebrations, their clear and ulterior motives, as we see them moving or simply staring upon the canvas or the sheet of paper or copper as *dramatis personae* on a stage. Places, normally closed interior spaces, are actually bi-dimensional sceneries where a single moment of the action occurs and needs to be emphasized, as in a sculpture where, despite its tri-dimensionality, time and motion are seized as if crystallized in a pure eternal moment. Moreover, objects in Rego's paintings or drawings are not merely decorative accessories to the whole scene but are thoroughly symbolic and should be interpreted in the same extension and depth as regards verbal poetic symbols in literature, preserving though their intrinsically iconic and visual quality. When it comes to represent people – as characters in a story or in a play or real actors on the theatre stage – Rego is an utmost perfectionist, not exactly because she portrays them in a strict photographic resemblance to the real model, but rather because she seems to capture as it were their inner physiognomy, which perhaps some may call one's soul. There is no intention whatsoever to show the conventional beauty of men, women, older or younger, and even of children or of all fantastic creatures that inhabit the most incredible realms of imagination. Faces usually show strong features, mostly dark, with dark shiny hair and big expressive eyes; bodies are often stout, even grotesque or repulsive at times, their gestures and movements though always craving intensely for life in full, even when they appear to be repressed or simply latent. Rego takes also great care in choosing and painting her characters' outfits as part of their individual self, paying attention to the slightest detail of materials, embroideries, laces and even jewellery or other accessories.

In fact, for a painter, as for any other plastic artist, everything turns out to be a visual effect, and all feelings or thoughts that literature is able to convey through verbal language, making use of its specific poetic and rhetoric means and devices, has to be rendered in images or shapes, lines, colours and textures in the visual arts. Being thus a painter and relying on the visual outcome of all her drawing and painting skills, Rego deals mainly with emotions, and her painted stories are all about the diversity of human expressions when it comes to convey emotion and the kind of complex feelings that invariably lie beneath. Ethical and aesthetical conventions are thus systematically overruled as a way to unsettle and disturb some of our most imbricate preconceptions or prejudices about human nature and human relationships, as they often put at

stake important social and moral values and threaten the stability of many of our unquestioned beliefs, in rather delicate fields, such as religion, sexuality and childhood. Paula Rego's work is therefore often considered to be complex and controversial, as it generally arouses mixed feelings of wonder, understanding and rejection in the viewer.

2. Looking at her exquisite engravings illustrating children's books the sense of surprise that accompanies our perception of novelty is always present leaving no one indifferent to its shocking quality. Rego is indeed magnificent in her drawings, as engravings so expressively show, but what strikes the viewer in all those works is beyond any technical skills the artist may possess, as it awakes hidden ways and spaces in our thoughts, judgements, sensibilities and fantasies, in a sort of ironic grinning smile that leaves them uneasy, somehow perplexed with no fit answers.

I shall now pick a few drawings and paintings illustrating children's books, in a brief selection of engravings from *Nursery Rhymes* (1988), *Peter Pan* (1992)<sup>3</sup> and a pastel work from the *Pinocchio* series (1996)<sup>4</sup>.



Little Miss Muffet III (Etching and aquatint)

“Little Miss Muffet”, a well known traditional nursery rhyme, has a most curious illustration, at once a direct memory of the artist's childhood and an imaginative interpretation of these autobiographical references as they appear fused with metacultural and aesthetic symbols and values. In the engraving, created on a light and sombre basis that plays with all shades between black and white and explores the wide varieties of greys to produce volumes,

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<sup>3</sup> Engravings first published by The Folio Society, London, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Paintings were first presented in the series *Pinocchio* at the *Spellbound: Art and Film* exposition, Hayward Gallery, London, 1996. *Island of Light from Pinocchio* was present at the *Paula Rego* exposition, Marlborough Gallery, New York, December 1996.

shadows and illuminated surfaces, a little girl – Miss Muffet – appears in what seems to be a school uniform, or the like, knee high socks, sitting on a cut tree trunk as she is approached by a huge and threatening spider with a human face. Supposedly, the spider's face was modelled upon the artist's mother, but, obviously, any strict biographical reading of this fact has to be dismissed as utterly inadequate as well as inaccurate. Emerging out of a blank greyish background, and meeting together upon the same foreground reference – a cut tree trunk still deeply rooted on the ground – are the only two characters in the engraving, as actors on a play or film scene performing their different roles. The little girl is holding some kind of object in her hand, trying her best to hide it from her sinister companion, a hairy human faced spider that strives hard to grasp her with her thin arachnoidal legs. Despite her threatening gestures and somehow hideous appearance, the woman-faced spider does not show a frightening or angry expression in her almost smiling physiognomy. The girl, however, appears to be terrified and static, unable to make any move to run way apart from opening wide her eyes in a silent gaze to the approaching spider, as if hypnotized by its dark power.

As in many stories for children, animals or other creatures, usually associated to fantastic or even gothic frames of reference, have their origins in deep mythological structures that throughout the history of different peoples and cultures have been mingled with fragments of real facts often transfigured into legend. From ogres, bad giants, mischievous gnomes and witches, to huge monsters as dragons, serpents, flying pre-historic dinosaurs, or even to smaller arachnids, reptiles or batrachians, like spiders, scorpions, roaches, vipers, toads and frogs, animals and other frightful creatures of a hostile universe are to be taken as symbolic representations, not only of children's fears when facing danger or the unknown darkness of their nightmares, but of human's universal terror before death as the ultimate edge of all our life hopes and expectations. Beyond death is a void of everything and any experience of fear or terror before this ultimate end is above all an experience of deprivation at the nothingness of a nowhere place in a timeless time, as life ceases to be. There is no sense of any sort of typical heroism in the girl's expression or in her passive attitude towards the spider's menacing moves, but simply the quiet expectation of a child who is well aware of her powerlessness, her helpless fragility, and nevertheless keeps her silent confidence that everything will turn out right for a 'happy ending', like in all tales or in all nightmares, as soon as the sun rises and the morning greets at the window for a new day. Beyond the symbolic value of the humanized spider, one third human and two thirds animal, the engraving presents though a sombre nightmarish world, somehow resembling Kafka's claustrophobic metaphor of the insect – a huge roach – in *Metamorphosis*, where the child – or the human figure in general – is confronted with those fears and traumas that threaten even his or her most trivial aims and doings in everyday life, coming specially from those around and closest to him or her: they can be family members (such as parents, brothers and sisters, or other relatives) as well as friends, mates, mere acquaintances and so on. The motherly figure projected into the spider's face, though smiling as it were in all her grasping gestures, adds therefore a questioning remark to "Miss Muffet's" engraving, as it casts a shade of doubt and deception into any possible mother/daughter relationship. No relationship, even in childhood, can be taken

for granted and there are always complex feelings of mixed emotions that undermine even its most solid foundations and values.

Power and weakness or inferiority, domination and submission or bondage, contemptuousness and tolerance, love and affection, misunderstanding and even hatred are feelings that always find a quite distinguished expression in Paula Rego's work, reaching a peculiar neatness in her engravings for children's books, as is the case now of her aqua-fortis and aquatint illustrations for the Portuguese version of Barrie's *Peter Pan* (2005).

3. Looking at the *Peter Pan* series of coloured aqua-fortis and aquatint engravings, so rich in detail and insight, the same controversial analysis of childhood and adulthood is well represented in the way traditional stereotypes are dismissed and a new approach to human relationships is proposed.



*The Neverland (Peter Pan Series)*

*The Neverland* (coloured aquafortis and aquatint, 1992) is a thorough example of the enigmatic nature of human's fantasy, as it usually comes forth in a more enhanced imaginative manner in children's dreams, rêveries, or even in their lively conversations, invented stories and make-believe games. Peter Pan's Neverland could be nothing less than an island, a far away island, lost in distant seas and being either a deserted spot where no one lives except fierce beasts surrounded by a luxurious vegetation, or a dangerous mysterious place,

inhabited by all sorts of natives, even cannibals or mean pirates that will not hesitate to kill anyone who happens to show up in their way, disturbing their wrongful activities! This is the kind of 'Neverland' island we find, for example, in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and moreover in Stevenson's *The Treasure Island*. Barrie's Neverland in *Peter Pan* is a more enigmatic dream island, existing in a strange timelessness with a course of events of its own, not free, however, from dangers and threats whilst allowing the Lost Boys with their utmost freedom and pleasure. Endowed with the ultimate bliss of flying, because they simply have "happy thoughts" and eventually a tiny sprinkling of sparkling star dust over their heads, these lost children are friends with Fairies, Mermaids, Red Indians, who help them in their eternal fight with Captain Hook and his crew of pirates.

Paula Rego's engraving of Neverland shows precisely this amazing quality of children's imagination, that is able to intertwine and fuse the most incredible extremes of good and evil, cruelty and bounty, cunningness and innocence, peace and fight, danger and safety. "Children have the strangest adventures without being troubled by them" as Barrie puts it right at start of *Peter Pan* (Ch.1). Rego's Neverland island is an overcrowded tiny piece of land surrounded by rocks and sea waters. Wendy's graceful figure appears flying over the waters on the right, whereas a small shaded Peter Pan shows up also flying on the left background of the engraving over a dreadful giant that emerges from the waters. The foreground presents Captain Hook on the left, dressed in a light pink cloak and wearing his famous Charles II's whig and plumed hat. Strangely enough, his face is a skull, like the skull-symbol on Jolly Roger's pirate flag, and he is sitting on a wooden wheel-chair, pushed by small sized pirates, as he holds up his silver hook in a threatening gesture. A number of disturbing beasts are scattered around the scene, which is also crammed with red indians rowing their small boats. Almost as if intending to bite or somehow to grasp the flying Wendy by her floating dress, a very strange cow-like creature is represented with a cow's skull and a yellow costume, rising up one-legged from the waters, like a nightmarish flamingo; a distant flying bird (perhaps the Never bird of the story) parallels Wendy's flight as it fades away in the horizon line; a long haired black yak is drinking from the sea, while a cartoon-like hippopotamus opens wide its mouth showing all its teeth so as to threaten, or eat alive, two little naked lost boys who swim away to escape; a black enormous bull with an unfriendly expression in its dark eyes and open nostrils is swimming ashore, perhaps to chase the pirates and take some kind of revenge from them; finally, the famous crocodile, that had swallowed a clock in Barrie's *Peter Pan*, appears coloured in a light shade of yellow as it sets feet inland, eventually to kill Hook, being accompanied, as it were, by a large also yellowish hedgehog.

The picture, like the story, lives on the fantasy it creates out of what Barrie describes as the "map" inside a person's mind, which is more intense and vivid in a child's mind, for it runs not in straight logical lines but in "zigzag" daring ones:

"I don't know whether you have ever seen a map of a person's mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting, but catch them trying to draw a map of a child's

mind, which is not only confused, but keeps going round all the time. There are zigzag lines on it, just like your temperature on a card, and these are probably roads in the island; for the Neverland is always more or less an island, with astonishing splashes of colour here and there, and coral reefs and rakish-looking craft in the offing, and savages and lonely lairs, and gnomes who are mostly tailors, and caves through which a river runs, and princes with six elder brothers, and a hut fast going to decay, and one very old lady with a hooked nose." (*Peter Pan*: ch. 1).

Fantasy in children's books is actually the magic keyword for all that vacant space in the mind of a child who is eager to know more about the world and about the place he or she has in it. Children's books, with their enticing illustrations, are therefore lovely and priceless treasures that some day, a long time ago, a fierce pirate, like Captain Flint, Long John Silver or Hook, hid away in a desert island, only to be found by those who would read and follow the secret messages on the secret map. In them childhood turns out to be a state of mind and no longer a moment in time or a brief passage like the flight of a bird, but an ever lasting ability to fly if we just have a "happy thought" and remember something we really love and care for.

4. Paula Rego's *Pinocchio* series of illustrations are mainly constituted by pastel paintings on wood (170x150 cm), while *Island of Light from Pinocchio* is a huge panel (1500x1800cm) on a mixed technique over paper glued on canvas. I will only select one of the pastels illustrating the Cavalo de Ferro Portuguese edition of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*<sup>5</sup> (*As Aventuras de Pinóquio. História de um Boneco*, Lisboa, 2004): *The Blue Fairy Whispering to Pinocchio*.

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<sup>5</sup> Collodi's *Pinocchio* appeared first in episodes in 1888, in a children's literature Italian journal, having ever since been adapted both to the theatre and cinema, particularly in productions by Walt Disney and Roberto Benigni.



(*As Aventuras de Pinóquio. História de um Boneco, Lisboa, 2004*): *The Blue Fairy Whispering to Pinocchio*.

Like most of the artist's illustrations of children's books, those pictures do not depend exclusively on the written text but appear side by side to it as its complementary or even extensive reading, telling their own version of the story and, eventually, often subverting its most obvious or established meanings. Appealing to feelings and emotions that lie beyond our conceptual understanding of any given verbal message, Rego never gives up a single chance to undermine, to twist and ironise what has long seemed to be doubtless and unquestionable, as she makes the viewer approach the world and everything we know directly through the eyes and not through idealized or 'kitsch-like' notions of what should or should not be right or wrong. Other than concepts, images are exactly images and should be perceived, understood and judged as such: they are shapes, volumes, lines, textures, colours and shades. Ultimately they represent some chosen referent, which is the artist's task to manipulate, to organize, dismember in fragments and assemble again to enter a fictional composition which only virtually and as fiction resembles the pragmatic reality of our common experience.

*The Blue Fairy Whispering to Pinocchio* is a large pastel on wood, as already mentioned, where the whole scene is painted in a very dark shade of blue, representing a wide and almost empty interior, simply decorated with a small dark red armchair and a dark blue and red patterned rug on the floor. The two only figures on the painting, the Blue Fairy and Pinocchio, are placed in its central the foreground, being deliberately illuminated by an dim external spotlight, which supposedly focuses directly on them, as if to emphasise their

stage performance within a play. Pinocchio appears as a naked little boy, turning his back to the viewer – the audience, so to say – as he places his hands and closed fists behind his back, while he listens carefully to what the blue fairy has to tell him in a whisper to his ear. However, contrary to all conventional expectations, the Blue Fairy is an elderly woman, bare footed and hardly seated on her small armchair, as she bends over the little boy in a secret murmur. Instead of a vaporous fairy dress, this strange, wrinkled fairy with thinning hair wears a quite commonplace blue dress, even though she still keeps a shiny strass tiara on her head to go with the magic wand with a star she holds in her right hand.

The Blue Fairy who is about to embrace the little helpless boy in her tenderness as well as in her mysterious whisper is no longer the angelical maiden we grew accustomed to meeting in fairy tales. Even though she has her magic wand and her strass tiara like a princess' crown, Pinocchio's fairy is perhaps a fairy grandmother, who possesses all wisdom and love that is only due to grandmothers, when they ask their grandchildren in great solemnity if they will keep a very big secret. After the children's promise of silence the fairy grandmother gives them a priceless gift, as great as their most cherished wishes: Pinocchio, the wooden toy, is transformed into a flesh and blood little boy and thus becomes human.

In Rego's painting, however, there is no thrill and enthusiasm to be seen in the boy's encounter with the elderly fairy, but rather a certain constraint or reserve as he stands still in front of her and listens to her whispering. Perhaps she is not a fairy but just a witch... disguised as a fairy with her magic wand and her strass tiara...! But, anyway, she kept her promise making him a real boy, with a fleshly body and maybe even a soul, like humans have, taking forever away from him the heavy burden of his wooden condition.

Rego insists again in the ambiguous quality of her message, as a duplicity that emerges naturally from the utter strangeness and deceptive nature of all we take for granted. As a common feature in the whole variety of her work, independently of which public it is intended to, Rego's paintings, drawings and engravings are as much assertive in their critical points of view and attitudes as they are critical questionings on the ambivalence of human's relationships, so frequently paradoxical in their feelings and choices. Men and women alike are lazy to interrogate and deconstruct the world and its infinite complexity because they think it is hopeless and needless. They remain deeply inert and sceptical before its nonsensical quality, the absurdity of its tragedies, the broken dialogue of people's conversations. Perhaps children are still able to break the heavy chain of indifference and scepticism around them in the adults' world, and perhaps that is what poets, story-tellers, and painters who illustrate children's books best realize when they dare to enter the immense imaginary world of childlike fantasy and start to play joyfully with all its amazing and endless possibilities.

At the very end of *Peter Pan*, Barrie wisely comments that time will ever go on for generations and generations but Neverland will never cease to be nor

children will forget the way – “second to the right, and straight on till morning” (Ch. 4) – as long as they “are gay and innocent and heartless”.

We can't help wondering at the meaning of 'heartlessness'...

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# STUDENTS TEXTS

## **The origins of Fairy Tales**

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Handed down endlessly throughout time from generations to generations, from parents or grandparents to their children, fairy tales belong thus to oral traditions within a certain culture or civilization. Therefore, one of the most important identifying features of fairy tales is their cultural background, where old traditions, myths and folklore are embedded, mingling together in the history of peoples and countries both fantasy and reality. Fairy tales are imaginative insights into the most genuine realms of human experience.

Universal as they normally tend to be, the typical characters of a fairy tale are as a rule one-dimensional as they stand out as exemplary stereotypes of ordinary people (e.g., the evil man or the wise man, the poor boy who strives to succeed and the rich idle boy who loses everything, 'Cinderella' and the

jealous stepsisters or the hideous stepmother, etc.), although many of them are an exquisite combination of reality and fantasy, as in the case of fairies and witches, wizards, goblins, gnomes, dwarfs and elves, talking animals, monsters, princes and princesses from distant neverlands, among thousands of others. As in the epic narrative model the hero or heroine have to go through an extremely hard period of their lives where they have to face and overtake innumerable obstacles and dangers before they finally triumph over evil. These obstacles, all death-risking perils these heroic characters have to surpass, have always an allegorical meaning as they usually reflect, in figurative language, the kind of necessary initiation life demands from us, as a “journey” the hero has to undertake in order to grow up (as is evident in *The Hobbit* or in *The Treasure Island*). Themes in fairy tales are therefore universal and timeless, as the classical beginning of “Once upon a time...” clearly shows, identifying a universal appeal and resonance in listeners of all ages, all times and places. A fairy tale is certainly “a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvellous”- which is an idea clearly illustrated in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (Thompson 1977: PG).

The fairy tale, originally orally transmitted, as part of ancient mythical and folk traditions, emerges in its written form with no definite fixed form. Furthermore, regardless of literary influences, storytellers constantly altered traditional texts for their own purposes. The history of fairy tales, however, is difficult to characterize and can only rely on the evidence of those literary works which survived through the ages and centuries, although not always recognized as a genre. The genre itself was first determined by writers of the Renaissance and became stabilized through the work of many writers, most particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, like for example in the works of the Grimm Brothers.

According to Jack Zipes in his study on *The Origins of the Fairy Tale for Children* (Zippes Data: 119), many authors contributed to the creation of the literary fairy tale as “a social institution”, for it was directly connected to the social practice of aristocratic women in the middle of the eighteenth century, who had the habit of telling fairy tales to a select audience in their cultural salons, as a type of game. Being themselves a source of amusement, these games aimed mostly at representing the aristocratic world within the frame structure of fantasy and allegory.

Even though we currently associate literary fairy tales to men authors like the Grimm Brothers or Charles Perrault, the fact is that throughout history they have been dominantly stories told and/or written by women, transmitted orally by mothers, grandmothers and children’s nurses. So that when the tales began to constitute a literary form, the number of female authors vastly surpassed that of males, and names like the Countess d’Aulnoy (who invented the term “*contes de fée*” or fairy tale), the Countess de Murat, amongst many others, had a wide-spread reputation. Nevertheless, there are general distinctive features to take into account in fairy tales told either by male or female authors. Men authors, like for example the Grimm Brothers, tend to compose their works upon a more realistic basis as most suited to appeal to their audiences, as they related the common experiences of peasant lives with their fantasies and dreams. Perrault’s work reveals that same endeavour to reach the public taste and consent as it consists basically of a retelling of old tales. Female authors,

on the contrary, without excluding familiar elements from people's routines and habits, tend to invest more on the fantastic surreal side of their plots, leaving a freer space to their listener's or reader's imaginations while creating an aura of mystery and charm in the worlds and characters they represented. Moreover, in times of political and social censorship, when the role of women in society as well as within the family was largely put at stake, with hardly any rights, fairy tales were somehow like masks – in the sense old masquerades used to be regarded – and appeared to be an effective way to let their own views and opinions known. These tales also illustrate the authors' ideas about what is right and wrong, about justice and injustice, about love, friendship, treason and hate, addressing a wide audience of adults and children alike, because it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that fairy tales or similar texts were actually meant for children or youths. The institutionalisation of the literary tale in the eighteenth century took place, therefore, within the context of all existing literature for adults, emerging as a result of women's need to impose themselves and their values in a society dominated mainly by men's rules. The fairy tale was normally written in a sophisticated style and soon became a literary mode well accepted within aristocratic and bourgeois circles. Furthermore, as it developed as a type of literature for children, the fairy tale was intended to address children from the upper and more cultivated classes, who usually received their education at home with a private tutor, thus excluding those who could not read and remained dependent on an oral transmission for much longer.

Emerging out of a complex cross-cultural transmission, fairy tales are to be found all over the world throughout the centuries, referring to their own specific cultural roots and often showing similar plots, characters, and motifs: "What storytelling reminds us of is that there is no dissociation between innerness and outside world, between life and meaning: that is precisely the *moral of the story*." (Savater 1982: 15). Many researchers think this phenomenon occurs because people repeat tales they have heard in foreign lands, although the oral nature of the text makes it impossible to define the origin of the text. Fairy tales or similar works are still written today and will be endlessly written in the future, like a never-ending story, as eternal memories of our innermost realms of fantasy and imagination.

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## ***Treasure Island: historical background and literary analysis***

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An amazing adventure, one that everyone dreams of since childhood, is the quest for a secret treasure in a distant island. A brave boy, among good and bad pirates, within the exotic setting of a mysterious island, is the protagonist of one of the most famous stories for the young: Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Treasure Island* (1881)

We shall start with a general outlook at the historical background of the Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure, which goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at the end of the Georgian era, leading the way to 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian England. It was a time of piracy and big ships as well, felt by Stevenson and his contemporaries as a lost time, a lost way of living and above all a time where individual freedom was much more at hand, or at least seemed easier to attain than in those years under Victoria's rule.

Earlier in the 18th century, Queen Anne had left no direct heir to the English throne, who passed therefore to her nearest of kin, the Protestant George of Hanover, who became George I of England (1714 – 27). He spoke not a word of English, and showed no actual interest in ruling England, so that he proved to be rather unsuited to be the real sovereign his new kingdom. He tried to solve the problem by handing over all ruling responsibilities to his Prime Minister and his office, so that in the end the task of ruling the nation, all major authority, was actually in the hands of politicians and not of the king. In a rather different way from the former, George II (1727 – 60), continued the Hanoverian rule. The Seven Year's war took place against France (1755-63), while England was gaining territories and expanding its power all over the world (Canada, Florida, America east of the Mississippi, etc). Overseas, the East India Company had established trading posts at Calcutta and Madras, and England, after fighting against French and Indian troops became the owner of the East India Company monopoly. It was though during the third and last of the Hanoverian Georges, George III and the Regency (1760 – 1820), that England

suffered the loss of the American colonies and saw the end of its victories overseas and on land, in the war against Napoleon (1793-1815).

As far as piracy is concerned, a quick look at the word's etymology would help to clarify some ideas. The Latin term "pirata", from which the English "pirate" stems, derives from Greek "peira", that means "attack", "attempt". Piracy is an act of robbery committed at sea, and the one who commits piracy is obviously a pirate.

The earliest documented act of piracy dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC, referring to the exploits of the Sea Peoples who threatened the Aegean. The Sea Peoples is the term used for a mysterious confederacy of seafaring raiders who sailed into the eastern shores of the [Mediterranean](#), invaded several locations and attempted to enter [Egyptian](#) territory. As far as England is concerned, piracy began to be popular and fully acknowledged as an actual danger in seafaring, in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by 1713, when peace was signed at the Treaty of Utrecht, thus ending the war of the Spanish Succession (also called Queen Anne's War). With the end of this conflict, thousands of seamen, including Britain's paramilitary privateers, were relieved of military duty. The result was a large number of trained sailors at a time when the cross-Atlantic colonial shipping trade was beginning to boom. However, the great or classic era of piracy in the Caribbean extends from around 1560 until 1766. Traffic on shipping lines between Africa, Caribbean and Europe began to soar in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a model that was known as a triangular trade, and was a rich target for piracy. Trade goods between these three places were sugar, rum and slaves. Blackbeard (1680-1713), the nickname of Edward Teach, is perhaps the most well known real pirate of that time, and lived in Bristol, the city where the treasure hunting campaign of the *Treasure Island* started. Blackbeard began his career as a seaman on English privateers, sailing out for Jamaica during the War of Spanish Succession (1701 – 1713) and his famous ship was the 'Queen Anne's Revenge', as a sort of response to the end of Queen Anne's war.

Later on in 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian England, more precisely in 1876, Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India and the British Empire saw a further expansion and consolidation. The prevailing attitude in Britain was that expansion of British control around the globe was good for everyone. At home, the Industrial Revolution was also a demographic revolution with consequences in urbanization as it accelerated the emigration of the population from country to city and the result was the development of horrifying slums and cramped row housing in the overcrowded cities. It was in this century that literature saw its importance growing rapidly. A simple though important reason for this is that reading aloud to a small audience, mostly at home within the family and a limited circle of friends was definitely the most common entertainment at the time. The advent of a universal compulsory educational policy after 1870 meant that illiteracy was being fought and a new larger audience for literature was actually growing. The great social changes that happened in [Britain](#) during Victoria's reign as a result of the later part of the [Industrial Revolution](#) led also to important changes in the way literature was conceived and was supposed to act upon society, particularly in the case of the social or psychological novel or other narrative genres in general. Throughout its long history the very act of reading literature had been the preserve and privilege of the aristocratic or the learned classes in society, those who had the time and money to indulge in a

kind of non-profitable, [hobby](#)-like activity as reading. Many factors contributed to make reading both more accessible and desirable, all these including, for example, the development of a highly ambitious and revolutionary educational policy by which all children were compelled to attend school, a new sense of well being and comfort in everyday life among wider sectors of Victorian society, mainly within the bourgeoisie, which meant the building and decorating of more appealing houses, served with [gas light](#) and pleasantly heated. The Victorians are therefore often credited with the invention of childhood, as they took a real effort to stop child labour in as much as they cared for their education and sought to look at them as different from adults. The child had its own identity and had to be respected as such and no longer as an “adult in miniature”. Literature for young people became a growing industry with, not only, adult novelists producing works for children but also authors that only worked for them.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were two popular types of novels: on the one hand, those novels dealing with the theme of the navy yarn, which places a capable officer in an adventurous situation within a realistic setting and historical events; on the other hand, there are those that deal thematically with the desert island romance. This last type of ‘romantic’ novel was the one that had more influence in Stevenson’s work, since it features shipwrecked or marooned characters, confronted by all sorts of perils in their treasure-seeking adventure, such as pirates and angry natives,. The desert island romance was very important in Great Britain, around 1815, perhaps because of the philosophical interest in Rousseau and Chateaubriand’s “noble savagery”. In *The Treasure Island* we see clear influences from these authors as well as from some of Stevenson’s contemporaries, like Edgar Allen Poe, in his fantastic tales like *The Gold- Bug*, where he took the idea of the captain Flint’s skeleton. From Washington Irving, Stevenson constructed Billy Bones’ history, and, in reality, he based himself in people to model the *Treasure Island* pirates: Long John Silver was inspired by the pirate Henry, Ben Gunn was inspired by Benjamin Gunn of Rio Pun Go, etc.

The novel presents two different narrators: Jim, who narrates in first person almost all the story, and Dr. Livesey, who assumes it from chapter XI to XVII. Jim is therefore an autodiegetic narrator because he is the protagonist and his narrative technique allows the reader to gain much more insight into what the character feels as a young teenager, what his emotions are and the way he sees everything else around him. The other narrator, Dr. Livesey, is a homodiegetic narrator, because he is not the protagonist even though he plays a part in the story, and not a lesser one as a matter of fact. His account is very factual and contains plenty of details, and unlike Jim, he keeps a more detached attitude towards expressing his own feelings and emotions, thus not allowing the reader to get into what he thinks or feels. The reason why the author changes the narrator in chapter XI is, firstly, because Jim does not know what is happening to his friends while he decides to escape from the ship and have his adventure inland; secondly, as the story is all narrated in the first person, narrators, either Jim or Livesey, can only tell what they witness in the exact places where they happen to be, each one at a time, as narrative time, unlike the story time, cannot be overlapped.

Through the whole book the author uses different narrative techniques. One of them is the use of perspective in a continuous shifting of focus in

presenting the most relevant characters (e.g., Jim or Silver), so as to produce in the reader a certain blurring of identity, which often comes along with one's acknowledgement of the complex duality of human nature: no one is ever altogether good or evil. Ethics as well as social morals are put at stake and largely though subtly questioned. Also, the shift of narrators is a good example of this technique, because it enables the reader to observe the same sequence of events from two different perspectives. Another technique is the use of retrospective: when the author begins and ends the novel with a retrospective into a presumably distant past, that is, the story begins and ends as a recollection of past events taken from the comfort of the present life, bearing the wide opposition between a past youthful experience amidst adventures and dangers and a present experience where more mature years brought about material as well as psychological ease and comfort. Once back again from his quest trip to the Treasure Island, Jim promises to himself that he won't venture into such an adventure anymore in his lifetime. This technique makes *Treasure Island* a good model of story telling, because from the outset it creates interest and suspense, so that the story never flags while it always succeeds in bringing the meaning of adventure into a new light. The use of suspense as a technical narrative device characterizes thus the whole novel, being particularly conspicuous at the end of each chapter so that the reader is inevitably forced to turn the page to know what will happen next. This technique of ending suspense may be related to the fact that *Treasure Island* was originally published as a series in a periodical – (1881) – so it was important to end each episode in a way that would make readers eager to look for the next one in new issue. For example, Chapter XIX is a very clear instance of this, when Jim resumes the narration again, leaving us intensely curious about what is happening back in the pirates' ship. Even to increase suspense, quite often the author uses the technique of foreshadowing, by which he makes his narrator(s) predict what will happen. This device can be seen, for instance, at the end of chapter XI, when Dr. Livesey predicts what will be the downfall of the trio setting out, and also in chapter XXVII, when as soon as Jim sets foot on the island he is struck with two signs that his comrades are not to well. Finally, there's the coincidence technique. It is another narrative device that makes the character appears in "the right place at the right time". Some good examples of the coincidence technique are in chapter II, when the doctor arrives after the fight, before though the captain comes to consciousness, and in chapter VI, when Livesey is conveniently having dinner with the squire at the precise moment Jim is arriving, so there is no need for any of them to waste time trying to locate each other. Many critics point out that the use of coincidence is the weakest element of Stevenson's novel, as it can be rather unrealistic notwithstanding with the general tone of the story. After all, as a story addressed to teenagers and youths *Treasure Island* bears throughout all its pages a fantastic and imaginative dimension that can very well afford to include unrealistic details or facts that help to project ourselves into far away dreamlike realms.

The use of language in *Treasure Island* is always appropriated to each speaker. For instance, Long John Silver speaks his own language, has a 'pirate' popular style of his own (he uses idiosyncratic phrases such as "you may lay to that") and the language becomes his identity (Stevenson, *Treasure Island*: Chapter XXIX). Ben Gunn uses incorrect spelling to illustrate perhaps his illiteracy (idem: Chapter XV). Stevenson's use of figurative language, on the

other hand, makes the reader see and feel with greater intensity what he/she is reading. A good example of figurative language is on chapter XXIII when we can almost see and feel the forces that control Jim, namely the ocean, and also see the pirates that he can watch on the shore and in the ship. Together with these particular aspects of language comes the use of symbols as they broaden immensely the meaning of the novel. Here are some of the most important symbols of *Treasure Island*: knives, that represent danger and killing, especially for Jim, for example, in Chapter XXVI, when Israel Hands threatens the boy with a knife; money, that is a symbol of corruption and death and also of power, in such an extent that it makes people run for it. In Chapter XXIV, we can see money as a symbol when Jim packs the money into the bags while he reflects not only upon the wealth it will bring him but also upon the costs that this money has had: seventeen men have died for it. Last but not the least, the ship, the *Hispaniola*, is a crucial symbol in the novel, not only as the actual vessel that enables the quest trip to the Treasure Island, with all associated meanings of adventure, self-knowledge and self-formation (as a real life education), but also as the ship that lies behind all possible connections and complex mechanisms between savagery and civilization within the Western world of the time, namely, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian age. To go back a hundred years as in the story, to the seventeen hundreds, may be considered symbolic as well.

The *Treasure Island* presents to us, finally, a number of themes to which we would now draw your attention, though in a brief selection of topics as the following:

- It represents the classical adventure, whereby its protagonist becomes totally involved in the action, playing the traditional role of the hero.
- Good vs Evil, is presented here as a theme of moral ambiguity which does not impose a definite choice to the reader to choose. However, didactically enough, as a narrative for younger ones, the good triumphs over the evil, and everyone gets he deserves. The pirates meet a bad end, and the good ones are rewarded with the treasure. The only exception is Silver because of the ambiguity of character and behaviour associated to him: although he is a pirate he likes Jim and plays to the growing orphaned boy as a male model role. In Chapter XI, there is a good example of the conflict opposing good and evil in the dialogue accompanying the mutiny of the pirates.
- Death in this novel is quick, clean and efficient following the rapid advancement of the plot, while it eventually serves to cast potential obstacles to the adventure still ahead. There are lots of good examples of this theme throughout the novel but it is on chapter XXVII that we can see death as utterly representative. Quite ruthlessly, though in self-defense, Jim kills Israel Hands and shows no regret but relief about it, because the only thing he wants is to save his own life and to continue his treasure hunt in the island.
- Hero's growing up from boyhood to manhood. At the beginning of the novel Jim is a young boy living with his parents at a quite country inn, knowing very little about the outside world. But at the end he has matured to be a young though experienced man who has faced death, sailed across the high seas, met with all sorts of

dangers, killed a man in self-defense and finally has been rewarded with his due share of a treasure that anyone of his time and place would envy. So Jim develops from a purely passive character into an experienced and resourceful campaigner. This development is particularly evident in Chapter V (when he is a young boy but exhibits several typical features of the hero in an adventure book), as well as in Chapters XIV, XXII, XXVIII and XXX (Jim achieves his full moral stature as a proper man within the core of the action).

- Jim interpreting the hero. This young boy who turns into a wiser young man is presented as a kind of wish-to-be model for Stevenson's youthful audiences. In his dreams and aspirations, Jim appeals to all young boys from all times who, like him, feel they have to impose themselves in a hostile world, breaking up some rules while respecting others, giving up parental protection for the sake of finding out who they really are and what they are supposed to do in the world they live in. Like all these boys, Jim is but an ordinary one who manages to surpass himself in a surprising way. A good example of this, with symbolic resonances, is presented in chapter XXIII, when Jim cuts the ship away, as the only possible solution because he isn't able to steer the small ship himself.
- The 'father' as a male-model theme. After his father's death, Jim meets a number of older men who may represent to him possible male-model roles. One of these men is Israel Hands (Stevenson, *Treasure Island*: Chapter XXVI), who teaches Jim to sail and land the Hispaniola; another one, the most important, is Long John Silver (idem: Chapter XXXI), who, in his rough, unconventional manner, cares for and protects Jim almost like a father, because he sees himself as that young boy when he himself was his age; lastly, Dr. Livesey can also be considered a father figure to Jim because Jim respects him for his professional qualifications and his moral uprightness.
- Quest theme, which in Stevenson's novel appears in the shape of a treasure hunt. Critics often refer to its close association to the 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic endless quest for perfection, no matter what difficulties and perils lie ahead.
- Ignorance vs Knowledge theme. A subsidiary though prevailing theme in the novel, as it does not stand immediately forward as all other themes seem to do. Stevenson uses it to enhance the possibilities of suspense, and it becomes evident as the crew get to know of the pirates' planned mutiny (Stevenson, *Treasure Island*: Chapter XII).
- Savagery vs Civilized world theme. We are made to realize the bitter truth that nature, and not men, is a ruthless, dominant power ruling the world of all creatures and things, an idea that becomes quite clear in chapter XXII, where we are well aware, Jim included, that we cannot control our own destiny. Jim must rely on nature's whims, or on a wiser destiny, to carry them all wherever it may.

## CONCLUSION:

The themes presented in the novel call the attention of the kids, not only because of the main character (Jim) is a young boy, like them, but also because of the marvellous, fantastic and enigmatic novel background, that appeals to their imagination and adventurous side of life.

The origins of the fairy tale come from the eighteenth century, in salons, where mainly aristocratic women could get together to *demonstrate their intelligence and education through different types of conversational games* (Jack Zipes, *The Origins of the Fairy Tale for Children or, How Script Was Used to Tame the Best in Us*: p.121). The tales that soon men and women started to write served to introduce moral values, the honour codes and instruct children in an amusing way, and Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is a good example of this kind of writing.

The main message of the novel is: the ethics and morality, the values of good and evil are intrinsically ambiguous, so that in the end all choices are to be taken individually as personal acts of assuming one's responsibility in life, towards all others who surround us.

So, this novel has everything to be successful between the young and teenagers for the next generations, as it is an up to date novel, that will always serve as an escape from these children's reality.

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# Walt Disney's Peter Pan

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## ***Production of the film***

*Peter Pan* was first imagined as a film by Walt Disney after he saw, in 1913, J. M. Barrie's play. He tried to buy the rights of the adaptation in 1935 and finally purchased them four years later from the Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, to which they had been legated by the Scottish novelist and playwright.

The project made its appearance in 1953, after the golden period of the Walt Disney studios: the 40s. In fact, the end of the 30s and the beginning of the 40s had seen a succession of masterpieces, amongst which *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941) and *Bambi*, directed in 1942. After the baby-elephant blockbuster, the Walt Disney Studios began to suffer from World War II consequences, and entered a barren period for feature films. These years were characterised by the massive production of short works and the company only started to regain its prestige after the end of the conflict. Its main post-war projects were 1950's *Cinderella* and the next year's adaptation of Lewis Carroll's masterpiece *Alice in Wonderland*. Catastrophic commercial results of the latter showed that it was necessary to respect the original text and, at the same time, create a proper identity. *Peter Pan* was the next project: it was directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson and Hamilton Luske and it was the last Disney film to be distributed by RKO Pictures<sup>6</sup>.

Despite fear of a new disaster, *Peter Pan* was released on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1953. It was an immediate commercial and critical success because it condensed a magical universe with Sammy Fain's wonderful and award-winning songs. Today it is considered one of the best Walt Disney pictures in terms of scenario (notably the depiction of 1904 London) and 2-D animation.

## ***Fantastic Elements***

*Peter Pan*'s success was mostly due to its notorious capacity of corresponding to children's fantasy. In fact, at Walt Disney's, considering the public was a fundamental task for the producers and this study consisted (and still does) in one of the most arduous and enthralling jobs for its artists.

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6. After 1953, Walt Disney created his own distribution company: Buena Vista. The first feature film it distributed was *The Living Desert*, a 69-minute documentary about the flora and fauna in a desert in the US. It was directed by James Algar and narrated by Winston Hibler.

For a brief analysis of how the *Peter Pan* production team explored several aspects that met the expectations of a young public, we chose to examine a brief scene of the movie, which includes three of the most important elements: humour, the fantastic and the songs.

In this sequence<sup>7</sup>, Peter Pan presents Tinker Bell to Wendy and her brothers, teaches them how to fly and then takes them over the skies of London to Neverland.

### **Slapstick**

These six minutes are full of comical moments that correspond to the naïf sense of humour of children. In fact, these situations are characterised by a linear construction and avoid deep and referential wit. In truth, the most far-fetched situations offered by this scene are Tinker Bell's insult to Wendy, telling her that she is "a big ugly girl", or Michael's tossing of pixie dust on Nana, the dog. Other humorous situations that replenish the movie in other moments are the gags between Captain Hook and Smee, which are openly influenced by Laurel and Hardy sketches<sup>8</sup>.

### **Fantastic**

*Peter Pan* counts with two types of fantastic elements: those that correspond to a situation that could occur, but are so improbable that they become unreal, and those that present actions and descriptions that are impossible as being totally normal.

In the first category fall, for example, the scenes between the pirates and the Londoners. The children *could*, in fact, fight against pirates, but that is so implausible that the whole scene completely belongs to the realm of fantasy. However, it is precisely this unlikelihood that assumes itself as the attractive element of their adventures. Therefore, it is totally understandable that John cries out: "I should like very much to cross swords with some real buccaneers" and Michael adds: "Yes, and fight pirates!". Besides, when John has to think about "a wonderful thought" in order to be able to fly, he says "I'll think I'm in a pirate's cave!".

For the second group, the most obvious example is that of the children's flight to Neverland. The fact that this has been, for many centuries, a long-wished but completely vain human endeavour, flying remains one of children's foremost dreams. Thus, the pixie dust presented by Peter Pan points to the existence of a substance that, although not generally known (and that is why no one that the young spectator actually knows can fly), permits its few possessors to challenge the laws of gravity. In this respect, Disney filmmakers had a most notable work, because flying is one of the most difficult illusions to create in two-

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7. Minutes 15 to 21.

8. Their physical contrast, one being extremely tall and slim and the other fat and short, is one of the most evident proofs of this.

dimensional animation without the aid of computers. Most notable is also the work on shadows, with are today easily made in 3D animation, but were particularly difficult to depict in the 1950s.

### Songs

Finally, the songs included in *Peter Pan* have a very important role in children's acceptance and appraisal of the movie. As in many other youth-directed films, they were written in a melodic fashion and their lyrics were created so that they could easily be learnt by heart. The award-winning score, conceived by Sammy Fain, includes: "The Second Star to the Right", "You can fly!", "A Pirate's Life", "Follow the Leader" and "The Elegant Captain Hook".

### Case Study: Tinker Bell



Out of the fantastic universe created by the authors of *Peter Pan*, stands out Tinker Bell, the Disney version of the Barrie self-confident and egotist fairy. In comparison to the previous representations of the pixie, Walt Disney's is by far the most revolutionary. Previously, in all stage productions, Tinker Bell had never been interpreted by an actor. She was normally depicted as no more



than a light, and so drawers from the Disney team had almost complete freedom in the act of giving a face, body and expressions for the new character. Dancer and choreographer Margaret Kerry was used as its live-action reference model and her constitution had obvious traces of the World War II American Pin Ups. She hence reflected the female beauty canon of late 40s and 50s.

For the young eye, her magnetism is essentially due to her ability to fly and to make others fly by the use of her pixie dust<sup>9</sup>, her small size that permitted her to hide everywhere and her beauty as a mini-sized diva.

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9. The yellowish hue of the pixie dust demonstrates how children are oft times attracted to brilliant objects, mainly gold. A curious parallel can be established here with J. R. R. Tolkien's bestseller *The Hobbit*, where Bilbo Baggins sets out for a perilous quest after a reward in gold.

### ***Similarities and differences between the book and the film***

The Barrie book and the Disney film present a big number of elements that match and of facets that are completely distinct. Firstly, the 1953 movie respects the narrative lines and the main personal characteristics. Peter Pan, for example, is as cocky, courageous and forgetful as he is in the book, just as Tinker Bell is as jealous, but possibly in a slightly less sexual way. The most important moral values followed by the book are also maintained by the Disney feature, such as the pricelessness of youth and the importance of family.

In terms of the elements that separate the two art forms in their treatment of the story, two main kinds can be distinguished: those that are totally irrelevant for the narrative (and that only suit technical and prosaic impositions), and those that alter significantly the general purpose and aspect of the work.

In the first group can be included changes in names or re-definitions of lesser physical and psychological features of some characteristics. The Disney producers, for example, changed the name of Neverland in NeverNeverland and, although in Barrie's text Hook lost his right hand, the Disney artists relocated his hook to the left hand, because otherwise it would limit his actions too much.

The bigger differences are more related to other kind of constrictions. In fact, two main reasons are behind the most significant variations between the film and the book. First, the Disney Studios had to deal with budget and time limitations, which were naturally absent from the creation of the novel. This impeded the adaptation of many elements that remain, to this day, exclusive to Barrie's work.

Secondly, the film producers had to ensure that the film could be seen by younger audiences, which evidently implied a reshaping of content of the text. Consequently, the most violent parts of the book are softened in the movie. For example, whereas in the play and the novel Tinker Bell gets knocked out by a poison, in the animated film she gets hurt by a bomb.

Besides, the picture rejects a certain humour developed by Barrie that was intended for adults. The most well-known case is that of a brilliant conversation between the Darling couple, discussing whether it would be possible to have Wendy or not:

*"I have one pound seventeen here, and two and six at the office; I can cut off my coffee at the office, say ten shillings, making two nine and six, with your eighteen and three makes three nine seven, with five naught naught in my cheque-book makes eight nine seven – who is that moving? – eight nine seven, dot and carry seven – don't speak, my own – and the pound you lent to that man who*

*came to the door – quiet, child – dot and carry child – there, you’ve done it! – did I say nine nine seven? Yes, I said nine nine seven; the question is, can we try it for a year on nine nine seven?”*

*“Of course we can, George,” she cried. But she was prejudiced in Wendy’s favour, and he was really the grander character of the two.*

*“Remember mumps,” he warned her almost threateningly, and off he went again. “Mumps one pound that is what I have put down, but I daresay it will be more like thirty shillings – don’t speak – measles one five, German measles half a guinea, makes two fifteen six – don’t waggle your finger – whooping cough, say fifteen shillings” – and so on it went, and it added up differently each time; but at last Wendy just got through, with mumps reduced to twelve six, and the two kinds of measles treated as one.” (Peter Pan: I).*

On the other hand, some characters lost psychological profoundness in the film adaptation. Captain Hook and even Peter Pan are more schematic than in novel. This linearity is also reflected in broader terms: the second layer of analysis is somewhat lost in the adaptation. While James Barrie created a work that would have one meaning for youths and another for adults, the Disney picture merely focuses on the adventurous side of the story and gives only slight hints about the importance of family.

Moreover, the film finishes, in narrative terms, earlier than the book, not only because of time limitations, but because the Disney studios did not want to give Barrie’s more complex ending to their young viewers<sup>10</sup>. In fact, the author of *Peter Pan* ends his novel in a much less hermetic way than the movie. He writes a chapter that incorporates Nietzsche’s “eternal return” concept and that attributes an allegoric status to the novella: generation after generation, children will dream of overcoming their physical and social limitations to live adventures in their minds. This is not only impossible to avoid but is essential for a harmonious and healthy growth:

*“As you look at Wendy you may see her hair becoming white, and her figure little again, for all this happened long ago. Jane is now a common grown-up, with a daughter called Margaret; and every spring-cleaning time, except when he forgets, Peter comes for Margaret and takes her to the Neverland, where she tells him stories about himself, to which he listens eagerly. When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter’s mother in turn; and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless.” (Peter Pan: XVII).*

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10. Barrie’s epilogue refers to old age, and the theme of ageing always makes children ill at ease, for it scares them.

## **Conclusion**

Walt Disney's *Peter Pan* is an extremely interesting case of a well-succeeded adaptation of an excellent novel. Not only is it enthralling to analyse how the transcoding was made by the Disney studios (contemplating, of course the similarities and the differences between both mediums) but also to appreciate the artistic manoeuvres, totally handmade, that were used to create the illusion of reality in such a magical world. But most interesting of all, I believe, is to study how the movie was able to search for and find the correct tone to meet the high expectations of children all over the world and still does, today, 54 years later.

## ***Peter Pan: Child/Adult Relationship and the Narrative Strategies of Time(s) and Spaces(s)***

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This essay will focus on the adult/child as well as on the time/ space relationships in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.<sup>1</sup> Some parallels will be traced between two distinct worlds presented in the book: the real world, on the one hand, as reflected by the Victorian social background underlying the whole narrative; the imaginary world of Neverland, on the other.

It is however extremely significant to point out briefly some relevant aspects regarding Victorian society. Generally speaking, it was a very strict society, though highly industrialized and hard working, ruled by narrow moral values and almost entirely submitted to a patriarchal social order. Children and childhood were beginning then to be sensed as particular problems of the time, with their own needs and demands to which there were no definite answers. Specially children from the lower, working classes were forced to work hard in extremely bad conditions, both human and sanitary, living short and dreadful lives with hardly any possibilities of finding a way out from their families' long established misery. They worked usually eight to twelve hours per day, six days a week, had no access to education, and even playing with other children was scarcely allowed to them by parents or any other kind of adult tutor or teacher. Apart from their natural liveliness and willingness to live life in full, often assailed by illnesses that cut short their hopes and future prospects, these were unhappy children, often treated very much as slaves, earning little more than nothing to help with the household daily expenses.

Nevertheless, it was in Victorian times that education and the welfare of children began to be a theme of concern to many physicians, psychologists, pedagogues and educators in general. Books for children seem to have first appeared as a consequence of children's unhappiness, as they tried to give them back their lost hope, opening up their dream capabilities through the creation of imaginary worlds, full of fantasy and beauty. In these utopian realms, children could eventually be happy, having to obey to no rules, as they could simply be children and nothing else, utterly free to play as much as they wished, without all restraints of the adult world they knew so well and abhorred so much. This kind of utopia is quite recurrent within Victorian children's frame of mind because it represents an escape from real life. Barrie's Neverland in *Peter Pan* was actually a utopian world, immersed in one of the most elaborate fantasies of children's imagination, where everything is made possible, including endless fights with pirates, sea waters inhabited by mermaids, woods and clears filled up with the magic of fairies, and above all the non-existence of rules and parents (specially mothers). *Peter Pan's* Neverland was a place where things appeared just by "make-believe".

However, both in Victorian society and in Neverland there are adults and children, and we will therefore proceed by establishing some comparisons and contrasts between these two worlds. In the real world we have the Darlings family: Mr. and Mrs. Darling, representing the adults, Wendy, Michael and John, representing the children. On the one hand, Mr Darling is presented as a very

severe figure, and being the father he was considered the most important member of the family. On the other hand, his wife, Mrs Darling, appears as a very sweet person as well as a dedicated mother, like all mothers in Barrie's works: "Mrs. Darling had bathed them and sung to them till one by one they had let go her hand and slid away into the land of sleep." (Ch, 1: 10). As for the children, Wendy, Michael, and John, they were being raised in a Victorian society (when Wendy was born the Darlings considered to give her to adoption) and as a consequence of this, these children dreamed about Neverland and Peter Pan, who represented to them the possibility of flying, in other words, of being free. In Neverland there are mainly children, because even the pirates (Hook, Smee), who apparently are the adults, behave like children, specially Captain Hook who is the most childish of all, as his attitudes in general show: he is envious of Peter's youth and of his "cockiness", as the game-like dialogue with the boy at the mermaids' lagoon so clearly illustrates: "In his dark nature there was a touch of the feminine, as in all the great pirates, and it sometimes gave him intuitions. Suddenly he tried the guessing game." (Ch. VIII: 94, 95). The Neverland children, named "The Lost Boys", differ in many aspects from the Darling children, for they got literally lost from their parents and home as they fell from their perambulators and had then been caught by fairies: "They are the children who fall out of their perambulators when the nurse is looking the other way. If they are not claimed in seven days they are sent far away to the Neverland to defray expenses." (Cap. II, p. 31). These lost boys refused to be educated, refused any responsibilities, but mostly they refused to grow up.

The action of the story starts when Wendy, Michael and John fly away with Peter to Neverland. In order to understand more clearly why they were so eager to go away from home, from the window of their nursery upstairs, without even caring to leave their parents behind, we have to consider some of their motivations. For Michael and John, Neverland was a dream, the extraordinary land they dreamed about when they were asleep and the place where they desired to live in real:

"Of course the Neverland vary a good deal. John's, for instance, had a lagoon with flamingos flying over it at which John was shooting, while Michael, who was very small, had a flamingo with lagoons flying over it. John lived in a boat turned upside down on the sands, Michael in a wigwam, Wendy in a house of leaves deftly sewn together. John had no friends, Michael had friends at night, Wendy had a pet wolf forsaken by its parents; but on the whole the Neverlands have a family resemblance, and if they stood in a row you could say of them that they have each other's nose, and so forth. On these magic shores children at play are for ever beaching their coracles." (Ch. I: 7).

As for Wendy, her motivations were quite different, as she chose to go simply because she wished so much to become a mother, as a consequence of the kind of education given to Victorian girls, who were taught from an early age how to become good wives and good mothers as well: " 'Let me go!' she ordered him" (Ch. III: 33. In short, Wendy sees in Neverland the opportunity of making her motherhood dream come true.

As far as the Lost Boys are concerned we can easily notice that even though they respect Peter as a 'father' figure, or perhaps more as a 'leader' in their adventures, they feel that they need a mother, what leaves the reader with the feeling that Neverland is a perfect world but not a complete one. Peter Pan is rather a complex and somehow strange boy who is the actual leader of the

Lost Boys, as it he who sets the law in Neverland. A clear example of this is, for instance, the fact that although Peter forbade the Lost Boys to talk about mothers, he flies back to the real world in order to find a mother for all of them lost in the 'never' island, and also to find out the end of Cinderella's story: "Peter was bringing her to us [...] A lady to take care of us at last [...]" (Ch. VI: 65) –

"O Wendy, your mother was telling you such a lovely story."

[...]

"Peter," said Wendy excitedly, "that was Cinderella, and he found her, and they lived happy ever after." (Ch. II: 32, 33).

Peter chose Wendy to be the mother of all lost boys because he had already seen her taking care of her brothers; he believed she might be their ideal mother because she knew a lot of stories – "Oh the stories I could tell to the boys!" (Ch. III: 33) – she could put them to sleep "And you could darn or clothes, and make pockets for us. None of us has any pockets" (Ch. III: 34) – feed them, take care of them when they were sick and all sort of things mothers usually do; but most important of all was that she was also a child. Barrie's Wendy is a kind of small adult and she goes to Neverland to satisfy her brothers' wishes as well as her own: being the elder and the most responsible of the three she believes she is in charge of them and must protect them. That is one of the reasons she agrees to go; the other, and not a lesser reason, is that she feels sorry that Peter and the lost boys have no mother.

On their fantastic fly to Neverland, again we sense the invisible clash between the real and the imaginary world, in fact, between two distinct spaces with their respective geographic locations: London and Neverland. While London is well described in the Darlings household, the architectural outline of a common Victorian house, its typical interiors showing the children's nursery upstairs in the attic, and an imaginary island, located somewhere in an imaginary map if one just follows its simple instructions: "SECOND TO THE RIGHT, and straight on till morning". (Ch. IV: 39). But we have to bear in mind that we only realize the different spaces within the book when the imaginary world is transported to the real world (by way of dreams or by Peter himself), or else when the real world is transported to the imaginary world (when the Darling children go to Neverland). Space in *Peter Pan's* story is somewhere between reality and imagination, a place where only the children can go, because they are innocent, and that is why they are still allowed to dream and eventually to fly.

As it was referred above, children find in this utopian world the possibility to live without rules, to live great adventures, to live as children. Yet, it is also important to focus on the gaps existing in Neverland, because what should be a perfect world to live in was, after all, incomplete: so much for their unacknowledged distress, these lost boys don't have a mother, and ultimately they also need some rules. It is also important to see that there are two parallel adventures experienced while the Darlings children, Peter and the lost Boys are in Neverland. While on the one hand, we find the Darlings children flying, living without rules, playing and experiencing big adventures as they somehow get involved with the fight against the pirates, on the other hand we find both Peter and the Lost Boys experiencing how it is to have a mother. This turns out to be very significant, because after having a 'mum' all except Peter want to come back to reality, for different reasons: Wendy misses home and her parents' love. It is also a cause of serious apprehension to her that her brothers are losing

their memory (forgetting their home and parents) because, being their elder sister, she knows she has the responsibility, not only to take care of them, but also to bring them back home safely; the Lost Boys and Wendy's brothers realize that the most important thing in the real world is to have a mother, because mothers don't let their children ever fear anything. Peter, on the contrary, refuses to go back to the real world, because it represents too him to grow up, eventually to be a father, and to assume responsibilities. Meanwhile, ironically or not, his decision to continue in Neverland can be seen as a very responsible one, because he knows that there will always be Lost Boys for him to take care of. This attitude may lead us to see Peter as some kind of father to the children in Neverland, although it highly contradicts his general attitude of carelessness, being thoughtless and childish all along. His deliberate refusal of generational time, his static perspective on life as a complex evolution and transformation makes him also deny emotional growth as something that comes only from the experience of time and family bonds.

At the same time *Peter Pan* also reminds us that we can never be wholly satisfied in either of those worlds, because both reality and imagination have indeed positive and negative aspects alike: childhood is not entirely an earthly paradise, but neither is adult life.

However, to analyse this partial 'victory' of the real world expressed by the Darling children's and the Lost Boys' wish to come back home, we have to consider the symbolic meaning of the 'window' in Barrie's book. It was through the window that the dream of living in Neverland came true, as the fulfilment of an incredible adventure, and it was again through that same window that all adventure came to an end and children came back home. We can therefore establish a parallel and, at the same time, a contrast between the window and Neverland. Whereas Neverland is a place that does not exist, except in the imagination, we can also find there a particular instance of 'never' that "becomes real and final, permitting neither escape nor return" (Hollindale 2005: 200). The window represents a duality as well: the closed window "prevents the children from getting out (to the world of imagination)" (Ibid.), while the open window allows the children to get in, to come back home. Wendy had always believed that the window would be open, because she trusts her parents' love. The window opens to the little girl not only the possibility to dream, but also to come back to reality; The Lost Boys also believed that the window would be open, because they believed in Wendy, as she represented a real mother to them. The window, in this case, gives them the possibility of a real life, with a real mother; Peter Pan, in contrast, believed that the window would be closed, because his own window was once closed, and that became the only memory he kept from the world he once escaped from. In his case, the closed window is definitely a lock which will forever cast him away in the land of dreams and timelessness. That is why he remains an eternal child and can appear in dreams to other children. This will take us to analyse the importance of time in the book.

As distinct places, both Victorian London and Neverland have distinct time measures. Time does not exist in Neverland, while in Victorian London, time is thoroughly measured and is constantly changing. In Neverland there is no evidence of time, and the only character that seems to be aware of what time is, is Captain Hook, who is always running and trying to escape from the sinister crocodile that had swallowed a clock, being presented as, in fact, a live symbol

of time. Hook tries to flee from the crocodile because he fears time more than anything, once he is an adult in a children's world. There is also a parallel between Hook, as a childish adult and Mr. Darling, when he closes himself into Nana's nursery, because both are denying the responsibilities that Time brings. The only difference between them and the children in the book is that the children are allowed to dream because they are children, and they can use the window as an open way to their dreams.

At the end of Barrie's narrative, we can see Peter constantly going to the real world, despite his unbelievable losses of memory, to pick Wendy at spring-cleaning time back to Neverland, until she got too grown up to accompany him. Once again, the window is the connector between the two opposing time categories in two words irrevocably apart, as Peter continues to visit Wendy and all generations of little girls after Wendy through that same window. As the story comes to its end, Peter Pan is still a child of around seven years old, as he was in the beginning, what proves that while in the real world time is moving, in Neverland time has stopped and ceased to be, somehow resembling Peter's lost memory. That is the reason why Peter's only memories are from the real world. However, the eternally little boy will never return from Neverland, but in fact he will never be alone:

"As you look at Wendy you may see her hair becoming white, and her figure little again, for all this happened long ago. Jane is now a common grown-up, with a daughter called Margaret; and every springcleaning time, except when he forgets, Peter comes for Margaret and takes her to the Neverland, where she tells him stories about himself, to which he listens eagerly. When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter's mother in turn; and thus will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless".

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## Bilbo Baggins: An (Un)expected Hero

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Bravery, loyalty, strength, eloquence and shrewdness. These are some of the main characteristics we hope to find in a hero of an epic narrative. This idea of epic, originally introduced by the Homeric works, presents us to a hero who has superior virtues than the common man, to someone who is a natural leader, and is respected by his group not only for being so, but also because the group feels as well he is the one who deserves to lead them; the Homeric hero is someone that despite not being very humble among the ones of his race, knows that all he achieves is a gift of the Gods, so he must always serve them. *The Hobbit of There and Back Again*, a novella by J.R.R. Tolkien, can be certainly considered as an epic, but Bilbo Baggins is certainly not the classic hero...

Bilbo Baggins is, in fact, sometimes considered as an anti-hero, so many are the differences between his nature and the classic hero's. Throughout the story, Bilbo goes through many changes, being at the end of the narrative closer to the epic hero than he was on the beginning. This way, the biggest opposition that can be made between Bilbo and characters as Homer's Ulysses or Achilles happens on the first chapters of *The Hobbit*. On these first chapters we can easily realize that this Hobbit is not as "heroic" as we might originally think: right away we notice that though curious, he's not willing to embark on an adventure that might be dangerous. In fact, his origins are also a factor that influences him not to go – we are told that his Baggins side (his father's family) is made of quiet and domestic people. Eventually, Bilbo "decides" to join the quest and though this journey will reveal itself as an initiating travel to Bilbo, soon we realize how this Hobbit is different from the classic hero. Since very soon, Bilbo longs for his home, happening this not only when he is in danger, tired and afraid, but also in moments when he is physically fit, as in Beorn's house. Bilbo's not especially strong or courageous; in fact, when the first problems emerge, Bilbo needs to be saved by the other members of the group, as happens in the confrontation with the Trolls, when is Gandalf that saves them. Moreover, the biggest signs of bravery Bilbo gives the reader happen when he finds the ring can make him invisible – Bilbo Baggins need to disappear in order to be daring enough to overcome the boundaries that eventually come out in his way. Like so, as he does not have superior qualities than the others, Bilbo's certainly not in a leadership position among this group (Thorin is the one closest to being the leader).

But Bilbo knows that that is not his natural territory, and even when he starts becoming useful for the group, he always has a defensive posture, what can be seen, for instance, in the fact that he is humble; Bilbo doesn't mock on those he defeats, as the classic hero tended to do (remember Ulysses mocking Polyphemus in *Odyssey*). As opposed to the classic epic hero, Bilbo does not also fight great wars; he tends to be protected by chance and luck, what can be confirmed in the biggest brawl in *The Hobbit*, The Battle of the Five Armies, where Bilbo doesn't take a direct part in because he was knocked out.

This also happens for the reason that Bilbo doesn't have heroic intrinsic qualities, he grows as a hero as he overcomes the dangers, and even when his "heroic qualities" are in the highest level, he always seems very unsure about it, what gets to be proved in the very ending of the story, when Bilbo returns to be a domestic Hobbit – his character proved to be "round": originally he is domestic, then adventurous, then domestic again, what confirms that, even in a now different way, Bilbo's more comfortable in being a quiet Hobbit, than a risky one.

Another issue that clearly separates Bilbo Baggins from the classic hero's concept is the fact that he "betrays" his group. By giving the Arkenstone to Bard, knowing that was one of the items the Dwarves wanted the most, Bilbo is accused of treason, something that was unthinkable for the classic hero. But this "treason" is directly connected with other difference between Bilbo and the classic hero – the fact that he is fair, rather than greedy. In the classic epics, the most the characters had, the better, bigger and powerful they were; this way, they didn't think on fairness, because to them fair was to the best, to have the most, they weren't as much concerned with issues regarding with fairness or justice as they were with power or status. But Bilbo is not like this, and he gives the Arkenstone to Bard, because he believed that that was the right thing to do.

But not only of differences is the connection between Bilbo Baggins and the classic hero made; in order to be considered a hero, the Hobbit certainly shares some features of the epic hero, characteristics those who become quite clearer after the moment in which Bilbo kills the Spider all by himself. If the Baggins side of Bilbo's family made him fear the adventure, his Took side (his mother's) impelled him to go into the quest, what can be seen in the temptation he feels to say "yes" to the quest, temptation that that he had to fight back, when he remembered the possibility of a dangerous journey. But is after killing the spider that the hero in Bilbo reveals himself; from this point on, Bilbo's bravery gradually increases.

Another feature that Bilbo shares with the classic hero is the fact that he is very astute. Both Bilbo and the classic hero are not especially intelligent, erudite, but they think fast enough to get out of the situations they are in; Bilbo is clever enough to survive to Gollum's game and to wait for the right moment to escape from the Elves, when they imprison the Dwarves (in a quite similar way to the *Odyssey* moment in which Ulysses escapes from the Polyphemus' cave). Also to take into account is the fact that even though Bilbo didn't want to have responsibilities in that group, he always performs his duties, and he is always able to get out of the situations he is involved in, no matter how hard they are, being this factor connected with the fact that Bilbo (just like the classic hero) is protected by his heroic fate, that is to say, Bilbo is destined to perform great duties, so luck and chance are always protecting him.

As in the classic epic narrative, in *The Hobbit or There and Back Again* all the secondary characters are placed in a position of helping or disturbing Bilbo's quest. It's quite clear that despite the existence of some fluctuations, there are no in between characters, every one is either good or bad. This division becomes quite clear in the Battle of the Five Armies, where we can easily see who is on each side; but on a deeper analysis of the main characters of the book, we can see that on the helpers side (those who will assist Bilbo in his quest) are Bard, Beorn, the Dwarves, the Eagles, the Elves, Elrond, Gandalf, Men and Roac. On the other hand, we have characters who will try to

avoid the goals Bilbo has to achieve - the opponents (the Goblins, Gollum, Smaug, the Spiders, the Trolls and the Wargs). In a more extensive view, we could also consider Bilbo's mother and father as, respectively, helper and opponent, once that according to the origins of each side of the family, his Took side made him feel the urge to go to the adventure, and his Baggins side made him not want to leave his home.

Since very early it becomes clear that every character is either good or bad, and that the fluctuations that there are, are usually provoked by some kind of external interference: Thorin's evil attitude is due to his thirst for gold; Gollum's positive one is (though unintentionally) providing the ring, which will help Bilbo throughout the story. The fact that Gandalf puts Bilbo in a quest he didn't want to be in, can also be considered as a fluctuation from helper to opponent, especially when Gandalf leaves the group, leaving them in a position of almost no knowledge of what's to come. The same happens with the Elves, when afraid of what the Dwarves might be up to, imprison them, making their quest harder and longer. Thorin's obsession with gold, also puts Bilbo's group in a rough situation, and shows the Dwarves' selfish, mean and unfair side. By defeating the Trolls, the Bilbo's fellowship also obtains weapons and the key to enter in Smaug's cavern, so in an indirect way, the Trolls also help Bilbo's quest. The same logic can be applied to the Spider, which, by dying, marks a changing point on Bilbo's personality, converting him in a quite more courageous and decided character from that point on (in other words, the fact that Bilbo kills this spider, makes him quite closer to the classic hero's conventions). This ambiguity of some characters can also be applied to Gollum, who, despite wanting to eat Bilbo, does not effectively harm the Hobbit's quest and even provides him the (so useful in the rest of the story) ring.

These fluctuations, however, should not make us doubt about the character's classification as "helpers" or "opponents", once that their natural intentions are quite obvious and revealing of in which side they are. The characters who fluctuate from one side to another show very clearly what they were up to: Thorin has a similar goal in this quest as Bilbo, and fights by his side; Gollum only unintentionally helps the Hobbit, and his main purpose was to eat him; Gandalf is the one who puts Bilbo in the quest, and often assists the group (he even saves their life in the Trolls episode); the Elves only imprison the group because they feared them; and obviously, neither the Trolls or the Spider wanted to be killed in order to help Bilbo and his group.

All these parallelisms of *The Hobbit of There and Back Again* and the classic epic are sustained by a quite unique narration. *The Hobbit* is a story which is close not only to the classic epic, but also to the tale and subsequently to the oral tradition. These narrative strategies can be proved by both linguistic and aesthetical strategies. On the linguistic side, we have, for instance, the words written in accordance to the way the characters speak; by doing this, Tolkien emphasises the language and consequently the character of he who is speaking. As examples of this, we should take into account the Trolls' accent, emphasising their arrogance and foolishness, or the Gollum's sibilants, stressing his gloomy character (the fact that the words spoken for these characters are written in the way they pronounced them is another oral marker). Another narrative resource of *The Hobbit* is the fact that many places' names are given after its physical characteristics, or to identify the peoples that live in

that same place. This happens with (for instance) Hobbiton, Long Lake and Lonely Mountain.

Also important are the aesthetical strategies introduced by J.R.R. Tolkien in this narrative. Throughout the story we find oral markers and typical elements of the tale and children's literature, such as songs (that the Dwarves are constantly performing), riddles (as in Gollum's cave), many repetitions (as the sentence "It was not the last time he wished that"), enumerations (as the constant references to the Dwarves name, and usually for a certain order "Thorin, Dori, Nori, Ori, Balin, Dwalin, Fili, Kili, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur") or the listing of actions (as happens in the conversation with Smaug, when the things Bilbo made are listed in an attempt to show that Bilbo was not as inoffensive as Smaug might think, and, at the same time, remind the reader of the heroic attitudes the Hobbit had already performed). Another examples of aesthetic strategies are the use of "interrogatio" (a sequence of rethorical questions), as happens in the first time Bilbo sees Gandalf, and the use of epithets, such as "Thorin Oakenshield", "son of Thrain, son of Thror" and "King under the Mountain" all applied to Thorin and that are another feature that approximates *The Hobbit of There and Back Again* to the classic epic, once that it was extremely usual in works such as Homer's *Iliad* (think on the phrases "Son of Peleus", "Swif-footed" or "God-like" applied to Achilles).

Another central issue to take into account is the narrator itself. This narrator is an omniscient one, which means, that despite the fact that he is not a direct participant in the story, he knows both everything what happened, and what's to come. In fact, he uses his knowledge of the future of the story to give hints on its development (remember the so many times repeated sentence "It was not the last time he wished that"). This hints the narrator gives are an element of comparison with Gandalf – the wizard shows himself as being the character with more knowledge of the future ("You will thank me before all is over"), and knowing so, he presents himself as being the wiser element of the group – as the same happens with the narrator, his words win credibility and the reader becomes eager to rely on what he relates. By knowing the whole story, the narrator has the freedom to control the times of the narration. He seems to give the more importance to the quest itself and to the defeating of Smaug (chapter 14), moment when the narration pace increases and the action speeds up, as if the main boundary was left behind. The returning home is only mentioned in telegraphic terms, despite the (more than probable) problems the group had to overcome, especially if we consider that they took a very similar way to the (so hard) route they took when they made the trip the other way round.

By all these reasons, the approximation between *The Hobbit of There and Back Again* and the classic epic is inevitable, and subsequently the comparison between Bilbo Baggins and the classic hero becomes unavoidable. This way, the main, and only character with his story closed at the end of the book, can be seen as a kind of "self-made-hero", once that despite not being intrinsically heroic, Bilbo Baggins overcomes all the troubles that he has to fight, and works his way as a hero throughout the story. Bilbo Baggins is then the most heroic character and the only possible hero in an epic where are no... heroes...

# Contos para crianças

# A doçura

Manuel Jorge Marmelo

Anita vende a doçura em frascos. Enche-os de compota de fruta, tapos e cola-lhes uma etiqueta, mas, em vez de escrever compota disto ou compota daquilo, de mirtilos ou de pêsego, de marmelo ou de morango, arredonda a letra e escreve apenas *Doçura*. Senta-se no passeio com os frascos defronte, expostos no asfalto, junto aos pés, e não lhe faltam clientes. A compota vende-se muito bem e ninguém regressa para reclamar: quem compra julga que a doçura está toda nos olhos de Anita.



Ilustração: Tita Costa 2007 – Art's Department – Oporto British School

Anita vende, pois, a doçura que tem no olhar e a doçura que embala nos frascos de vidro. É isso o que faz, sentada no passeio defronte do Mercado Sucupira, pelo menos desde que desistiu de escrever poemas.

Na escola, a professora de Anita não se cansava de lhe gabar a delicadeza das composições que escrevia. A mestra ordenava às crianças que escrevessem uma composição sobre isto ou aquilo, sobre a Primavera ou

sobre o ilhéu defronte da baía da Gamboa, e o que Anita fazia era sempre igual: escrevia no topo da folha pautada a palavra *Composição* com essa mesma letra indecisa e pequena que hoje lhe serve para escrever *Doçura* nas etiquetas dos frascos de doce – e depois deixava que a cabeça a levasse para longe, para o mundo impalpável das coisas que estão escritas nas páginas dos livros. Escrevia sobre bosques impenetráveis e montanhas verdejantes, sobre belos guerreiros medievais e cidades de prédios muito altos, ainda que não houvesse na ilha nenhuma das coisas que descrevia e, por isso, ela nunca tivesse visto bosque algum, nenhuma paisagem alpina ou um príncipe que fosse. E um dia, mais do que gabar-lhe a composição e afagar-lhe a carapinha, a professora disse

- Um dia ainda vais ser poeta, Anita.

E Anita conseguiu imaginar que era poeta, que escrevia livros iguais aos que gostava de ler à noite, quando a luz faltava na Praia e a cidade voltava a ser um sítio apenas iluminado por candeias e velas. Cresceu, por isso, julgando que, um dia, escreveria poemas e frases bonitas sobre a sua ilha e que as crianças das outras partes do mundo leriam o que escrevesse e sonhariam com a baía morna onde, às vezes, a lua cheia vem namorar o mar – do mesmo modo que eu, estando longe, vejo Anita sem sequer a ver. Estou num sítio ao Norte do mundo, no Inverno, longe do mar, num prédio alto e cinzento, igual aos que Anita imagina quando tem que escrever uma composição sobre *A Cidade*. Não vejo, de onde estou, o Mercado Sucupira, nem essa Avenida de Lisboa em cujo passeio Anita se senta para vender a *Doçura*. Nesta janela, tendo defronte apenas as janelas gémeas de um prédio igual, encosto a face ao vidro da varanda e adivinho o frio que faz lá fora (todo o frio me parece muito desde o dia perverso em que o Verão termina). Invento o frio e encolho ainda mais dentro do corpo. É aqui, porém, que, encostado ao vidro que me separa do Inverno, espero que venha o raio morno que o sol derrama quando se eleva acima da massa sombria dos prédios da cidade. Então, e por um instante, fecho os olhos, esqueço o Inverno e imagino que ainda é Verão, que a cidade lá fora é a Praia e que Anita está sentada no passeio a vender *Doçura* desde o dia em que soube que não seria poeta.

Eu sei bem o que sente Anita quando se lembra que não será poeta. Sei-o porque houve um tempo em que tentaram convencer-me, entre outras falsidades, que alguns dos textos que escrevia possuíam qualidades que os aproximavam da poesia. Estavam escritos em prosa, como as composições de Anita, e tinham sido pensados para serem prosa e não mais do que vagos sonhos sobre a possibilidade dos mundos imaginários. Diziam-me, porém, que havia nesses textos algo que os remetia para a delicada e paciente relojoaria do verso. Talvez por isso, certa tarde, à falta de outros afazeres que me mantivessem ocupado, dediquei-me a fragmentar as frases desses textos e a tentar construir versos a partir delas. Mostrei o resultado a amigos, os quais se mostraram condescendentes, ora considerando que sim, aquilo era poesia, ora notando a existência de alguns “bonitos textos” naquele emaranhado confuso de versos, e de um ou outro poema razoável.

Respeitando o trabalho dos poetas e aceitando como plausível que esse é um domínio ao qual só se acede por uma espécie de epifania (algo como uma invisível picada de abelha, à qual eu fosse miseravelmente imune), fui mantendo os “versos” na gaveta, talvez à espera que o tempo passando lhes conferisse algum interesse, nem que fosse no sentido arqueológico do

termo. Hoje, porém, estou convencido de que o esquecimento é o melhor destino que lhes posso dar, aos meus tristes e trôpegos poemas. Um último leitor, pessoa especialmente íntima do fenómeno poético, forneceu-me o argumento definitivo. Disse-me: “Se não te conhecesse e lesse estes poemas, aconselhava-te a escrever prosa”. É o que faço – mas preferia vender, como Anita, a doçura que ainda me reste nos olhos.

Escrevo prosa, portanto, e faço-o talvez porque isto me permite ser um pouco poeta; algo como um poeta sem talento para escrever versos. Sei apenas, quanto muito, imaginar e sonhar. E escrever composições que imagino semelhantes às que Anita redigia na escola, que falam de mundos que eu não conheço, mas que invento a partir das paisagens que existem nas imagens e nos livros. Esta tarde estou escrevendo sobre Anita. Ontem escrevi sobre uma negra bonita e nua que segurava uma lança e estava parada perscrutando o horizonte:

*Se na estepe, ao longe, não me vês ainda – estou a chegar. Sigo diante dos leões e das impalas, das palancas e dos bisontes, das zebras e dos leopardos; vou à cabeça da caravana dos animais que hão-de ir ajoelhar-se à tua volta, senhora nossa, deusa deste chão. Levamos uma nuvem de pó no nosso encalço – hás-de avistá-la ao longe, é a flâmula que por ti erguemos com o vigor dos nossos pés. Levo as pinturas de guerra no corpo nu, a lança de caçar os pequenos roedores do deserto e o colar de contas que não me deste ainda. Espera. Sou teu.*

Isto é o que posso imaginar (e escrever) com os olhos de alguém que não sabe ser poeta e cuja doçura coalhou. À casa da minha poesia, tal como à doçura que um dia tive, imagino-as como uma quinta desleixada e rodeada por uma cerca de arame farpado, encerrada e silenciosa. Talvez a canalha venha e salte a vedação para roubar a fruta das árvores. É possível que apareça algum gado tresmalhado e confuso pela força do hábito e aí fique marrando contra as porteiças fechadas, tentando abrir caminho para os pastos verdes que já não há. Se se escutar o latido dos cães, está tudo bem — eles sempre ladram sem ser por nada. O caseiro da quinta da minha poesia não foi de férias ainda, mas andou esta manhã a pôr ordem nas coisas. Certificou-se de que a cerca está inteira e de que amanhã virá um novo dia e depois outro e mais outro. Fechou-se e mandou recado à venda a avisar que não vai a lado nenhum. Está lá dentro, em pousio, fugindo do ruído do mundo e lembrando-se do cheiro que tem a erva acabada de cortar. Ou seja: sou um prisioneiro solitário da poesia que não faço.

Prefiro, a verdade é essa, o modo que Anita tem de não ser poeta. Ora a invejo, ora me enteneço com a doçura que guarda e com o modo que tem de a entregar ao mundo, ali sentada no passeio escalavrado da Avenida de Lisboa: agita uma revista velha diante do peito para se refrescar e põe a mão em pala diante dos olhos (para que o sol não derreta o açúcar que neles há). As outras pessoas passam e vêem Anita vendendo a *Doçura* em frascos. Muitas param para comprar: uns levam apenas a compota, outros vêm pela imensa doçura que há nos olhos da menina-moça, pelo sorriso imenso que o rosto dela desenha.

Eu, que não vejo Anita, vejo claramente o riso dela, o lenço branco que Anita tem enrolado na cabeça, a camisa cor-de-rosa, as argolas douradas que tem nas orelhas, a saia de chita, o chinelo de plástico que abriga os pés dela. Imagino até que, às vezes, Anita lance no ar um pregão tímido

- Nha leba doçura pa casa

que o barulho do trânsito o abafa. Que, quando regressar a casa depois de ter vendido todos os frascos, Anita levará o dinheiro apertado na mão, firmemente, feliz por ter vendido toda a compota – e triste por não ter podido ser poeta. Vai caminhando de cabeça erguida, devagar, como se o seu andar fosse uma pausa entre a ida veloz dos passos de uns e a vinda apressada dos passos dos outros. Não escuta os piropos dos rapazes, não ouve o barulho da cidade: vai inventando poemas que não escreverá jamais, pois cedo a mãe lhe explicou que

- Não é poeta quem quer, é poeta quem a vida deixa. Poesia de pobre é comida na mesa para encher barriga.

Quando a noite vem e não há luz na Praia, quando o zumbido das coisas eléctricas cessa e se pode escutar o murmúrio da terra e os sussurros da vizinhança, Anita debruça-se na janela da casa e fica a contemplar o corisco breve das estrelas. Imagina poemas que não escreve e inventa paisagens nevadas, belos príncipes crioulos montados em alazões, cidades de altíssimos prédios onde todos se conhecem pelo nome próprio e se cumprimentam à tardinha quando regressam a casa – tudo pode ser visto nas estrelas diante da janela do quarto de Anita.

Quando aí está, esperando que os pontos luminosos da noite se ordenem e inventem mundos, Anita pensa que ainda é poeta, que são poemas as frases com que imagina príncipes crioulos e cidades imensas de vidro e aço. Sonha os livros que escreveria se não fosse menina pobre e a vida tivesse permitido que o vaticínio da velha mestra se concretizasse.

(- Um dia ainda vais ser poeta, Anita)

Às vezes, pensando nisto, Anita ainda se entristece. Olhando-a a partir da minha janela do país onde é quase sempre Inverno, vejo que as estrelas se lhe reflectem no orvalho dos olhos. Vejo isto e entorneço-me. Daqui longe fecho os meus olhos e sussurro bem baixinho a única verdade que existe – para que ela a oiça: que não há no mundo todo maior poema do que vê-la, sentada no passeio, a vender a *Doçura* que tem nos frascos. E nos olhos.

# Canela-maçã

Mariana Marques



Ilustração: Marta Cardoso 2007 – 6º ano – Oporto British School

I

Tamino era o mais velho de cinco irmãos. O mais velho porque nasceu primeiro. Não que a cegonha não gostasse do seu terno cheirinho a maçãs, mas porque uma mulher desejava ser mãe a tempo inteiro. Ser mãe dá muito trabalho. Exige mesmo o tempo do tempo inteiro! Há que amamentar, acordar, adormecer, aconchegar, mimar, educar, tantos verbos afeiçoados ao amar! A mãe gostou tanto de amar o Tamino que decidiu ter mais quatro filhos para amar. Pensou no nome deles em voz alta a cada nove meses de barriga, pois não segurava a boca de tanta agitação. Pensou muito nos nomes, como qualquer mãe, pois o nome das coisas dá vida às coisas sem vida. Da boca ao ouvido, andam de boca em boca sem nunca se diluírem no espaço e no tempo. Nessas noites quentinhas, tão quentinhas como o zelo das mães, a mãe dizia na quintarola florida ao céu dos paraís: “ João da Carochinha, Pedro do lobo, Ariana das fadas e Brancaflor”. Olhava-se ao espelho admirando o ventre

ressuscitado. De cada vez que engravidava, a infância corria-lhe a memória às voltas e cada história lembrada provocava um espasmo de sabor azulado. As águas amnióticas desta mãe eram azuis, o seu sangue, vermelho, como qualquer sangue.

## II



Ilustração: Marta Cardoso 2007 – 6º ano – Oporto British School

Entre pétalas mensageiras, nasceram as crianças. Cada uma das pétalas impregnava na criança um sentimento inaudito. O cordão umbilical desta mãe foi eficaz. Regenerou todas as mágoas do mundo através de toda uma luz de significações – num campo agreste, um trilho de estrelas. A mãe passeava as crianças que corriam com as cabeças viradas para o chão e os calcanhares travessos volteados no assobio das esferas. Todas as crianças caem redondas sem parar. Giram os ponteiros do relógio ao som de um metalofone velado que as afasta do medo das horas. A contar pelos dedos perguntam à mãe, *Vais amar-me até eu morrer?* O universo sucumbe aos sons guturais. Quer juntar-se a eles numa das tardes outrora vividas. As crianças respondem com palmas, *Que venha toda a gente! Toda a gente e mais ninguém!* E dançam tão miúdas as gargalhadas do sonho! Caíram os lenços dos olhos aos que se envolviam na roda-viva perpétua. Os velhos cajados são agora chupa-chupas de soprar. Um suspiro ingénuo celebra vidas, como se todos os dias contemplássemos o mar pela primeira vez.

### III

Uma pequena mãozinha à janela observa fragmentos de vida. O cotovelo é beijado pela mãe que se agasalha ao som da concertina boreal. Está na hora de começar mais um dia com torradas e mel na citadina percussão diária. Novamente, o metalofone gigante embala a urbe agora apaziguada. Tal como o uivo da loba no frio das montanhas, o riso das crianças aquece o dia. O vento conduz os pequenos acenos infantis aos atentos transeuntes anônimos. A dança das crianças é aplaudida pelo som encantatório dos sinos da igreja aos Domingos de manhã. Só elas detêm o segredo dos deuses correndo nas suas veias canela-maçã. As mães a tempo a inteiro conseguem fazer das suas crianças seres a tempo inteiro. As crianças que tiveram direito a ser crianças guardam o azul maternal nas suas línguas, e os seus cabelos, sementes caídas, fazem germinar novos chapéus de palha em velhas cabeças, um amanhecer áureo em cada cenário, um grito de criança a cada nascimento, o sol agradecido a cada alvorecer.

## FIZ OU NÃO FIZ?



*Ilustração de Fedra Santos*

José Viale Moutinho

Esta história tradicional portuguesa, que tanto se conta no Algarve como na Beira Alta, e, decerto, também em algum outro ponto deste pequeno Portugal contador, tem produzido barrigadas de riso a gente de todas as idades. Porém, na verdade, o Manuel Vaz, que é o personagem central, parece não ter idade! As tolices que ele aqui faz, minha gente, quem é que não as fez assim - ou quase?

Bem ou mal, eis a história, acrescentando-lhe eu os pontos a que tenho direito, tal como vocês poderão acrescentar outro à vossa conta, se bem lhes apetecer e tiverem imaginação e coragem para tal!

Ah, mas desde já aviso: uma vez, numa escola, uma senhora professora, quando acabei de contar esta história, chegou junto de mim e perguntou-me:

- Então, vem cá contar isso aos meus alunos? Essa história não é um bocadinho...

E eu, logo muito depressa, respondi-lhe:

- Atenção! Atenção! A história é do Povo Português, foi ele que a inventou há muitos anos e a tem contado sempre. Eu aqui sou apenas mais um contador, está a perceber? Para que não se perca o jeito de rir em qualquer idade!

J. V. M.

## A MINHA TIA ELEUTÉRIA

Era uma vez um rapaz meio atolambado chamado Manuel Vaz.

Quem me contou esta história foi uma minha tia-avó, que vivia no Algarve, casada com um pequeno industrial de conservas. Olhem, ele até era o fabricante daquele célebre Atum Cansado, porque o meu tio-avô se chamava Artur Cansado. Quando ele morreu, acabou a fábrica e a minha tia voltou para Marialva, no Douro, donde dizia que nunca deveria ter saído. É que ela embirrava que lhe chamassem D. Eleutéria Cansada - pois se o marido era Cansado, não podia chamar-se de outra maneira!

Em Marialva, a minha tia-avó convidava-me a passar as férias da Páscoa com ela e contava-me muitas histórias. E a tia Eleutéria dizia que a história do Manuel Vaz a tinha guardado numa malinha que trouxera do Algarve.

- E não me mostra a malinha, minha tia?

E respondia-me:

- Ora, se tu visses a malinha, perdia a graça toda!

- Perdia?

- E digo-te mais, Zeca. O ano passado, passou por aí uma mulher do rancho que andou à azeitona, nos olivais que tenho ali para a Quinta da Calcaterra, e até me contou uma história parecida com esta. A diferença era mais no nome. O rapazinho da tal mulher chamava-se Gonçalves! Mas o que te posso dizer é que não faço a mínima ideia donde é que essa mulher arranjou aquilo tudo para me contar, que a mim, quem me encheu a malinha das histórias no Algarve foi uma vizinha, ainda prima do meu falecido Artur. E dizia-me sempre que tudo se passara com uma irmã dela e que o tal Manuel Vaz também era sobrinho dela. Ela chamava-se Zulmira Cansado Vaz. No entanto, a tal mulher aqui em Marialva também dizia que o tal moço Gonçalves era sobrinho dela, um tal Alvarinho Gonçalves, que ela era Clemência Gonçalves de Jesus. Parece uma trapalhada dos diabos, mas se pensarmos bem nisto, até nem é complicado!

- Ó minha tia, para mim tanto faz que seja verdade ou não! E contado por si, já sei que vai ser uma história engraçada!

A tia Eleutéria deu uma grande gargalhada, abrindo muito a boca, mostrando que já tinha poucos dentes, daí a sua predilecção por papas e sopas de toda a qualidade, creme queimado e aletria acabada de fazer.

- Pois vamos lá à história do sobrinho da prima do meu falecido Artur, o Manuel Vaz, aquele menino tão atolambadinho que até metia impressão!

- Ó tia Eleutéria, faz favor, o que quer dizer atolambadinho?

- Ora! Atolambadinho quer dizer: maluquinho.

- Já percebo – disse-lhe eu. – Quer dizer que não fechava bem a mala...

Foi a vez da minha tia ficar a olhar para mim com cara de quem não estava a perceber mesmo nada. Mas, como ela sempre foi uma mulher esperta, lá fez as suas deduções e viu que estávamos a falar da mesma coisa. Ou seja, do mesmo Manuel Vaz. E adiante.

## 2. CADA RECADO, SUA TOLICE...

A tia Eleutéria contou-me que o Manuel Vaz vivia com a mãe numa quinta. O pai tinha morrido havia alguns anos e ele não tinha irmãos com quem se pudesse entreter. Na escola, como era assim tão distraído, não aprendera mais do que o suficiente para escrever o nome e a mal fazer umas contas simples:  $1 + 1$  ou  $2 + 2$ : Porém, se passasse dessas contas pequeninas, só asneira é que aparecia.

Certo dia, aconteceu que a professora do Manel estava a dar uma aula sobre adivinhas e, às tantas, o nosso amigo levantou um braço e disse:

- Eu quero dizer uma adivinha que estes burros não são capazes de adivinhar!

A professora ficou muito admirada e disse:

- Ó Manel, isso são maneiras de falar dos teus colegas e amigos?

- Desculpe lá, se faz favor.

- Então, anda lá...

- A adivinha é esta: Quando é que  $1 + 1$  são 5?

Ficaram todos calados. E, passados instantes, a própria professora comentou:

- Ninguém sabe, nem eu. Podes dizer tu, Manel?

- Claro!  $1 + 1$  são 5... quando sou eu a fazer a conta! Não dizem para aí que nunca acerto?

Todos se riram muito e o Manel acrescentou:

- Mas eu sei que são só uns 2 ou 3... 5 é muito, não é, senhora professora?

Bem, mas uma noite, quando estavam a jantar, a mãe disse ao Manuel:

- Olha que eu estou a ir para velha. Daqui a uns anos, lá vou eu para o outro mundo e ficas tu sozinho a tratar desta quinta e das outras terras todas que temos aqui á volta.

O Manuel Vaz levantou-se e foi ao pé da mãe, abraçou-a, deu-lhe um beijo:

- A mãe está aí para durar muitos e muitos anos! E eu hei-de estar sempre aqui ao pé de si!

A D. Agostinha dos Perus, que era assim que se chamava a mãe do rapaz, acrescentou:

- Ó meu filho, os anos giram que giram e é a coisa mais natural que eu morra primeiro do que tu. Como és assim tão atolambado, como é que vai ser a tua vida, sem ninguém para tomar conta de ti?

O Manuel Vaz fez cara de zangado.

- Minha mãe, ó minha mãe! Fique a saber que eu estou aqui pronto para fazer qualquer trabalho! Cabeça como a minha não há, ouviu? Mande-me aonde quiser tratar de um recado, que eu...

- Vamos lá ver, Manelzinho, vamos lá a ver!

A senhora Agostinha dos Perus abriu uma gaveta e tirou de lá dinheiro.

- Olha lá, rapaz! Amanhã é dia de feira na vila. Sempre quero ver se és capaz de lá ir comprar um porco.

- Comprar um porco!? Só isso, minha mãe!?

- Só isso! Tens aqui o dinheiro. Vais e vens a pé, como aqui os vizinhos...

- Vai ver! Vai ver!

E o Manuel correu a enfiar-se na cama, a pensar na compra do porco e a dormir a sua soneca.

O Manel até sonhou com a feira dos porcos. Os porcos, asporcas e os leitões todos rosados, grunhindo, chamando-o.

E, no dia seguinte de manhã, bem cedo, lá foi o Manuel Vaz com os vizinhos estrada fora.

Pelo caminho, toda a gente se ria dele, não só pelo ar muito sério que levava, como também pela mão fechada com o dinheiro bem apertado, para não perder. Mas, principalmente, os outros riam-se pela maneira como ele ia vestido.

A tia Eleutéria explicou:

- Ele até ia vestido como o costume. Quer dizer, o Manuel Vaz nunca usou ceroulas nem cuecas. Vestia um macacão de cotim, com uma abertura atrás, presa com botões, para fazer as necessidades. Era só agachar-se a um canto e ficava á vontade, desde que desapertasse os botões. Sapatos, nem vê-los, pois gostava de andar descalço. E andava assim, nuns passos saltitantes.

E lá ia.

Perguntava-lhe, a rir, o vizinho Casimiro:

- Ó Manel, sabes comprar porcos?

O rapaz olhou para ele e deitou-lhe a língua de fora. Não estava para gozos. E logo que viu as casas da vila, adiantou o passo e lá se encaminhou para a feira dos porcos, sendo o primeiro a chegar.

E não tardou a comprar um porco bem gordo com o dinheiro que levava.

Porém, logo que entregou as moedas, pediu ao porqueiro que o ajudasse a carregar com o porco e lá conseguiu, muito a custo, levá-lo ao colo e às costas até casa.

Chegou a suar, mas o porco é que não tocou no pó do caminho! O Manuel I Vaz não queria entregar à mãe um porco cansado ou que tivesse emagrecido pelo caminho!

A mãe quando o viu chegar naqueles preparos começou logo a ralar:

- Ó meu Manelzinho, que tonto és! Ó meu querido Manelzinho, que atolambadinho andas! Então trazes o porco ao colo e às costas? Ai como tu vens suado e cansado!

Sem perceber o que tinha feito errado, o rapaz perguntou à mãe:

- Bem, minha mãe, a compra foi bem ou mal feita?

- Foi bem feita, meu filhinho querido.

- E então...

- Mas não é assim que se traz um porco da feira.

- Oh, então o que é que deveria ter feito?

- Olha, arranjavas uma cordinha, que punhas do pescoço do porco, e com uma varinha ias dando nele, encaminhando-o aqui para casa! Assim, estafaste-te até mais não! E escusadamente!

O Manelzinho achou que a mãe tinha razão. Ficou triste. Depois entrou a correr na cozinha, agarrou num copo e foi direito ao cântaro da água para acalmar a sede. Porém, com tão pouco jeito, tropeçou e arrastou consigo cântaro, que caiu e partiu-se.

- Ai o que fizeste, rapaz!

- Foi sem querer...  
- Eu sei que foi sem querer. Mas o trabalho vai ser teu outra vez. Amanhã de manhã, vais á vila, ao senhor João dos Potes, e compras um cântaro para substituir este que partiste, está bem?

O Manel, sentindo-se importante em ter mais um recado para fazer, respondeu logo:

- Deixe comigo, minha mãe! À hora do almoço tem aí o cântaro novo!

E à hora do almoço, a Senhora Agostinha dos Perus chega-se à janela mal ouviu o filho assobiar aquela modinha de que ele tanto gostava. Bem, e logo viu...

- O que é que viu?

- Vocês é que haviam de ver!

- O Manuel Vaz, todo contente, segurando uma cordinha, na qual vinha amarrado o gargalo do cântaro, cântaro este, que era de barro, aliás como todos os cântaros, e que se fora quebrando nas pedras do caminho. E na mão esquerda, lá trazia o rapaz uma varinha com que, de quando em vez, batia no que restava do cântaro...

- Ó mafarrico! Partiste o cântaro!

O Manuel Vaz olhou bem para o cântaro e disse:

- Ó minha mãe, então não é que eu fiz como a senhora me mandou, mas o cântaro chegou cá todo feito em fanicos?! De quem é a culpa, de quem é?

A Senhora Agostinha dos Perus respirou fundo e lamentou-se:

- Ai este rapaz! Tu devias ter feito assim ao porco! Já o cântaro bem o podias ter posto no carro da palha que o Ti Agostinho traz sempre da feira e passa mesmo aqui ao pé de casa!

Muito triste por ter feito tolice outra vez, o Manuel respondeu:

- Tem razão, minha mãe. Desculpe, que eu já lhe arranjo outro cântaro. O raio é que me saltou aqui um botão da tampinha de traz do meu fato-macaco...

- Não seja por isso que andas com o rabo à mostra como senhor Costa! – riu-se a mãe. E foi ao cestinho da costura, apanhou as linhas, um botão e não conseguiu dar com uma agulha.

- Que procura, minha mãe?

- Uma agulha! Ia jurar que tinha aqui uma!

- Não se incomode que eu vou à feira na próxima segunda feira e trago-lhe um papelinho de agulhas. Por enquanto, cá me remedeio.

E na segunda-feira seguinte, com umas moedas na mão, o Manuel Vaz lá foi a correr à feira, comprar um papelinho de agulhas.

Foi ir voltar. E voltou com o Ti Agostinho, conversando com ele todo o caminho.

A mãe saiu-lhe ao caminho:

- Compraste as agulhas?

- Claro.

- Deixa-as cá ver.

- Não me disse para as pôr aqui no carro da palha, para não se partirem? Pois foi o que fiz.

Pois, pois, vá lá o leitor a ver se as descobre no meio da palha que enchia o carro! Aquele tolo! Não fazia uma direita!

### 3. COMO A SENHORA AGOSTINHA DOS PERUS ARRANJOU QUEM SE CASASSE COM O SEU FILHO MANUEL VAZ

A Senhora Agostinha dos Perus andava muito infeliz, pelo que sempre dizia: .

- Estou a ficar velha, muito velha! Ai do meu coitado Manelzinho, o que será dele sem mim! Se eu fecho os olhos...

Lá na dela, aquilo de fechar os olhos queria dizer se ela morresse. E toda a gente percebia que se o filho ficasse sozinho naquela casa grande e rica em que vivia com a mãe, depressa deitaria tudo a perder, pois não fazia coisa com coisa. Vocês já viram no capítulo anterior as malucadas de que ele era capaz!.

Mas a verdade, eu bem vos digo, é que ele até era capaz de fazer malucadas ainda maiores, muito maiores!

Não acreditam?

Pois esperem lá.

Ah, mas já está aqui, outra vez, a passar a Senhora Agostinha dos Perus. E, como sempre, a lamentar-se:

- Meu querido filho! Ai meu querido Manelzinho, que será de ti sozinho nesta vida!?

A Joaquina das Couves, que era a criada para todo o serviço da Senhora Agostinha, ao ouvir isto, enquanto varria a cozinha, riu-se baixinho e pôs-se a imitar a patroa:

- Ai coitadinhos é de nós, que bem teremos de o aturar se não quisermos perder o emprego! Sem a mãezinha a tomar conta dele, já é disparate que te parta! Ainda é capaz de pôr os leitõezinhos a comer com ele à mesa e ir tomar banho para a charca dos patos-marrecos! Ou fazer sala de estar dentro do forno de cozer o pão! A este rapaz ninguém o atura!

A Senhora Agostinha percebeu que a criada estava a dizer qualquer coisa e perguntou:

- E tu que raio é que estás para aí a murmurar, ó rapariga?

A Joaquina das Couves, com os seus cinquenta e tal anos de muito trabalho, é que não era rapariga nenhuma e ficou zangada. Por isso respondeu torto á patroa:

- Estava a dizer que o case!

A Senhora Agostinha dos Perus deu um salto na cadeira em que estava sentada. Aquilo mesmo dito assim com tanta ronha, até parecia solução para o caso.

- Dizes tu que case o Manelzinho?

Respirando fundo, abanando a cabeça como se fosse dizer exactamente o contrário, a Joaquina das Couves tossiu e comentou:

- Alguma vez lá terá de ser, o Dona Agostinha!

- Ora, não é mal pensado, Joaquina, não é mal pensado...

Bebendo um copo de água, a mãe do Manuel pôs-se a dizer:

- O Júlio Caçador tem uma filha...

E a Joaquina:

- Já está prometida ao filho do empregado dos Correios.

- A Albertina não tem uma filha na França? Mandava-se vir...

- Pois, mas a rapariga há-de vir para se casar com um rapaz da vila, que trabalha na Câmara. Faz por lá contas ou assim e ela também é letrada.

- Não faltam raparigas, Joaquina.

E a criada em voz baixa:  
- Para o seu filho maluco?  
E a Senhora Agostinha:  
- Disseste alguma coisa?  
- Disse que é capaz de aparecer alguma, é só puxar pela cabeça ou falar aí com as vizinhas...  
Levantando-se de repente, a Dona Agostinha exclamou:  
- Já sei! A da prima Rosália dos Cogumelos.  
E a criada pôs a cabeça de lado:  
- Bem, a rapariga não deve nada á beleza, mas também o Manelzinho não pode exigir muito, não é?  
- Não sejas parva, mulher! Vai lá à Quinta dos Cogumelos com este recado. Aqui a Agostinha do Casal de Perus precisa de falar com ela e que diga quando é que lá posso ir. Mas não adiantes conversa, ouviste? Não digas nada do que eu lhe quero, hem?  
- Está certo, Dona Agostinha, não direi nada! Mas sempre gostaria de ser eu a dar a noticia. A rapariga está lá enalhada, mas também a Rosália parece que a estava a guardar para algum doutor, nem que fosse desses das farmácias! Que cara ela irá fazer quando a senhora lhe falar no Manelzinho...  
- O meu Manelzinho tem de tudo, ouviste? Não lhe falta nada!  
- Fora o juízo! – resmungou a Joaquina das Couves.  
- O quê?! – berrou a patroa.  
- Nada, nada. Não lhe falta mesmo nada! Esteja descansada...  
- E não abras o bico! Nem sabes o que te faço se quando lá for me aperceber que ela já sabe do que eu quero!  
E a Joaquina meteu-se a caminho, que a Quinta dos Cogumelos ainda ficava a um quarto de hora de caminho, se o encurtasse metendo pelo olival do João Brandão.

#### 4. ARRANJA-SE NAMORADA PARA O MANEL!

A Senhora Agostinha dos Perus chegou à Quinta dos Cogumelos sentada na albarda da sua burra. Ia com a roupa dos domingos, arrecadas e os seus fios de ouro muito vistosos sobre o volumoso peito. Abrigava-se do sol com uma sombrinha azul, enfeitada a desenhos de leões africanos.

Creio que a Rosália de Cogumelos ainda era prima da Agostinha, prima afastada. A lavradeira estava á porta de casa e junto dela, muito curiosa, encontrava-se a Margarida, a filha, de sorriso aberto, mostrando os dentinhos tortos e espaçados. Nunca recebiam visitas e aquela da Senhora Agostinha, ainda por cima marcada na véspera pela criada Joaquina, enchera-as de curiosidade. Que lhes queria a parente?

- Bons dias, Rosália!  
- Bons dias para ti também, Agostinha!  
A visita deixou-se escorregar da burra e foi beijar a vizinha e a filha.  
Entraram em casa e sentaram-se na salinha.  
Na mesa havia frescos de limão e uns bolinhos de cenoura.  
- Serve-te, Agostinha, deves vir cansada!  
- Ó mulher, nem que viesse da vila! Mas venho ali de minha casa, quase naquela curva.

Vendo que a rapariga se sentava junto delas, a Senhora Agostinha logo disse a prima Rosália, piscando-lhe o olho:

- Importas-te de dizer aí à tua rapariga para ir até lá fora dar água à burrinha?

Percebendo que era segredo o que trazia a parente, Dona Rosália despachou a Margarida e ficaram as duas frente a frente.

- Então...

- Então, Rosália, dá-se o caso de teres uma filha e eu ter um filho, tu seres viúva e eu também...

- Para já, nenhuma novidade me disseste, Agostinha...

- Bem, é altura de casarmos os nossos filhos, para os deixarmos arrumados...

- Continuassem as novidades!

- Bem, pensei que podíamos casar os nossos filhos...

- Claro, casaremos os nossos filhos...

- ... um com o outro...

- O tolo do teu Manuel com a minha Margarida!?

- Deixa lá, que a tua Margarida...

- Tu vê lá o que me vais dizer da rapariga!

- E tu começaste por chamar tolo ao meu Manuel!

- Toda a gente sabe que ele é...

- ... meu herdeiro! Casando-se ele com a Margarida, terá a Quinta dos Coelhos Brancos, as leiras do Ortozêlo, o olival que fica atrás da igreja e a casa de lavoura em que vivo será a casa deles, que, ainda por cima, é bem perto de tua casa...

- Sabes, Agostinha, tolo é uma maneira de dizer! Não é para ofender o moço! Tolo é até carinhoso, mas não sei se a rapariga gosta dele...

- Há ainda aquele rebanho que o Ti Herodes me traz na serra, também seria para eles... Bem, e indo eu para a terra da verdade, vê lá tudo com que mais ficam...

A prima Rosália foi à porta e chamou pela filha, que logo apareceu.

- Estiveste a escutar atrás da porta, rapariga?

- Não, minha mãe, não estive. Mas eu não quero casar com o tolo do Manel!

- O quê?! Quem te disse..

- ... mas se a mãezinha acha que é para meu bem, não a contrario...

- O rapaz até é bem parecido, minha filha! Aquela cabecinha é que...

A Senhora Agostinha abraçou a Margarida e disse-lhe:

- Não te vais arrepender, minha linda! Amanhã mando-o cá para vocês se conhecerem melhor, está bem? E vão namorando...

Rosália dos Cogumelos concordou e a prima afastada lá regressou a casa, montada na sua burrinha.

## 6. O NAMORO DO MANUEL E DA MARGARIDA

Quando entrou em casa, Senhora Agostinha dos Perus achou muita graça ao seu Manelzinho, que estava a correr atrás de uns patos-marrecos, que se tinham escapado do galinheiro.

- Está tudo arranjado, Manelzinho!

- E está arranjado o quê, minha mãe?

- Já te arranjei casamento.
- Ai que bom! E com quem será?
- Com a prima Margarida!
- Uma que tem os pés tortos e os dentes apartadinhos?
- Olha que ideia! Claro que não!
- Tem lunetas à padre?
- Tu regulas da cabeça?
- Deixe lá!

E o Manelzinho agarrou num papel e num lápis e sentou-se numa ponta da mesa, muito calado, a escrever uma coisa qualquer com umas letras muito grandes.

- Tu que estás a fazer, Manelzinho?
- Estou a escrever uns versos à Margarida!
- Começas bem...
- Não faça bulha, minha mãe, senão isto não sai direito...
- Anda lá.

E enquanto a senhora Agostinha dos Perus fazia o jantar, o Manelzinho escrevia, rasgava papéis, rasgava papéis, escrevia, partia o bico ao lápis, aguçava o lápis, suava. Por fim, quando a mãe pôs a sopa na mesa, ele gritou:

- Já está! Já fiz!
- Então diz lá.
- Vou ler:

*A Margarida fez chichi  
 Numa panelinha  
 E foi dizer á vizinha  
 À Senhora Agostinha  
 Que era caldo de galinha.*

*A Margaridazinha é  
 A minha namorada  
 Queridinha.*

- Gosta, minha mãe?

A rir-se, a Senhora Agostinha mandou-o comer a sopa, enquanto lhe dizia:

- Amanhã vais à Quinta dos Cogumelos e namoras um bocadinho com a Margarida, ouviste? Não faças por lá nenhum disparate!
- Esteja descansadinha, minha mãe, que eu sei comportar-me.

E no dia seguinte, a casa da Quinta dos Cogumelos mostrava-se toda alegre para receber o namorado da menina Margarida, o menino Manelzinho.

A mesa estava posta para o lanche. Tinha presunto, pão-de-ló, amêndoas, figos, rebuçados, leite com chocolate, bolinhos de coco, natas do céu e rodelinhas de chouriça. Mãe e filha olhavam para o rapaz, que se apresentou descalço e com o fato-macaco do costume, todo sujo, até as mãos por lavar.

Mal viu o que havia para o lanche, com as suas mãos bem sujinhas, o Manel lançou-se a comer tudo e tudo comeu e lambeu com uma sofreguidão, como se tivesse fome de quinze dias! E o barulho que ele fazia a mastigar, que barulheira!

De repente, sentindo-se muito cheio, parou, arrotou e saiu porta fora, regressando a casa.

Mãe e filha ficaram a olhar para a porta, sem saberem o que pensar daquele rapaz tão alarve!

Rosália dos Cogumelos é que não se ficou por ali, pois saiu no encalço do Manuel e queixou-se amargamente à prima da maneira abrutalhada como ele se comportara.

Nessa noite, enquanto o Manel Vaz e a mãe jantavam, ela ralhou-lhe por ele se ter comportado tão mal.

- Não voltes fazer disparates daqueles, meu filho! As primas mandaram-me recados sobre a maneira como tu te comportaste! Aquilo não é namorar, meu filho!

- Então o que é namorar?

- Ora, namorar é seres mais delicado. Farás assim. Chegas e, quando te levarem para a mesa, tens de saber comportar-te...

- E como é que me comporto?

- Comportas-te bem.

- E como é bem?

A Senhora Agostinha dos Perus explicou ao filho que quando lhe pusessem alguma coisa para comer, por muito vontade que tivesse, deveria dizer: Não,, muito obrigado. E não tocar em nada. Assim, mostrava ser um rapaz bem-educado e não o glutão que se apresentara no dia anterior.

- Depois disto, tens de dizer umas palavras doces à Margarida...

- Palavras doces...

- Sim, Manel, palavrinhas doces...

O Manuel Vaz começou-se a rir e repetiu:

- Palavrinhas doces... palavrinhas doces...

- A seguir, deita-lhes uns olhinhos...

E ele continuava a repetir, como se quisesse meter tudo aquilo na cabeça:

- Deito-lhe uns olhinhos... uns olhinhos... ih! Ih! Ih!

E saiu a correr de ao pé da mãe, directo ao galinheiro.

A Senhora Agostinha achou que era a hora de começar a fazer o jantar e lá começou a mexer nas panelas.

De repente, ouviu muito barulho no galinheiro. As galinhas, agitadas, cacarejavam muito. Depois o barulho passou para os currais, onde as ovelhas e os vitelos começaram aos berros, zangados. Mas a Senhora Agostinha encolheu os ombros e comentou:

- Devem ser umas maluquices do rapaz!

E no dia seguinte, pela tarde, o Manuel Vaz lá se pôs a caminho da quinta da prima Margarida, sua namorada. Levava um saquinho na mão e foi sempre aos saltinhos.

Ao chegar, com alegria sua, viu a mesa do lanche já posta e servida com o que havia de melhor na casa. Mas ele bem sabia como deveria comportar-se: bem. E portou-se muito bem.

As primas Rosália dos Cogumelos e Margarida preparavam-lhe sandes e fatias de bolo, sumos, leite chocolatado e ele sempre dizia, muito contrafeito:

- Não quero muito obrigado! Não desejo provar nada, muito agradecido! Estou bem assim.

Depois pensou que chegara o momento das palavrinhas doces Assim, olhando para a cara da moça, começou a dizê-las:

- Tarte de chocolate... Amêndoas com açúcar... pão de ló... formigos... rabanadas... bolinhos de coco... mousse de chocolate... ovos moles... bolo de ananaz...

E quando viu que acabara, acabou! No entanto, faltava ainda a terceira parte do que a mãe lhe ensinara: deitar os olhinhos...

Pensado e feito. O Manel pegou no saco que levava consigo, abriu-o e lançou o que ele continha para cima da Margarida!

A pobre rapariga ficou toda suja de sangue e de olhos de muitos animais! Pois não é que o rapaz tinha tirado os olhos às galinhas, às ovelhas e aos vitelos e levava-os ali para atirar com aquilo tudo à namorada! Como a mãe lhe dissera para atirar uns olhinhos... nunca lhe passou pela cabeça de que ele é que tinha de fazer trejeitos namoradores com os seus olhares e... já se viu a tolice!?

A prima Rosália e a filha puseram-no na rua e ele foi para casa chorar!

Escusado será dizer que o casamento chegou a estar desmarcado!

As primas não estavam para aturar um maluco daquela marca! A Margarida, que até é assim meia zuca, disse à mãe:

- Ai, ele é tão toliceirinho, não é?

E a Senhora Agostinha dos Perus reforçou o dote com mais uns olivais, algumas hortas e gado para que o casamento ficasse no papel.

No domingo seguinte ficaria marcado.

## 6. O MANUEL A CAMINHO DO CASAMENTO

- O QUE ACONTECEU PELO CAMINHO

E O QUE ESTRAGOU A BODA PROPRIAMENTE DITA!

Os padrinhos do Manuel Vaz foram buscá-lo a casa no dia do casamento. Foi o padrinho que o vestiu. A primeira prenda que recebeu foi algo que ele nunca usara: umas ceroulas!

Depois as peúgas, um fato azul, com uma risquinha, gravata, sapatos como ele nunca tivera! Ia ali um rapaz e peras! Os padrinhos levavam-no entre os dois, de mão dada.

Bem, o Manuel ia de mão dada porque, como nunca tinha usado sapatos, custava-lhe muito andar sem ser descalço!

De repente, o rapaz queixou-se:

- Ai! Ai!

Os padrinhos julgaram que era dos sapatos, mas ele logo explicou:

- Ai, a minha barriga!

- Que é que sentes?

- Parece que está aqui quieta, não parece? – perguntou o Manel – Mas anda às voltas, preciso de ir ali atrás daquela pedra fazer...

Os padrinhos perceberam que ele, com os nervos, ficara com diarreia. E esperaram ali, enquanto ele, a desapertar o cinto das calças, lá foi aos saltinhos, doendo-lhe os pés, até ficar abrigado dos olhares de quem passasse no caminho.

O Manel lá desceu as calças novas e agachou-se para se aliviar.

Aliviou-se.

Espreitou para trás e para baixo, mas não viu nada. Estranhou. Na verdade, isto aqui para nós que ninguém nos ouve, ele baixou as calças, mas não se lembrou das ceroulas! Assim, o que fez foi dentro das ceroulas e não no chão, atrás da pedra!

Como os padrinhos lhe gritassem que já era tarde, muito rápido, o Manel puxou as calças acima, apertou o cinto e foi aos saltinhos para junto deles e lá foram.

Perguntou-lhe a madrinha:

- Fizeste, Manel?

E ele respondeu a medo:

- Bem... fiz e não fiz...

Os padrinhos, que já sabiam que ele não era muito certo da cabeça, encolheram os ombros e, daí a pouco, estavam na igreja da aldeia.

Foi um casamento muito bonito. Flores e mais flores, a Margarida até estava muito contente, pelo que deu dois repenicados beijos nas bochechas do Manel, que ficou mais corado que o costume!

Acabada a cerimónia na igreja, foram todos, na companhia do senhor padre Gordinho para casa da Senhora Rosália, onde era servido o banquete. Ali chegados, sentaram-se à mesa. E o último foi o Manuel Vaz que, ao fazê-lo, se sentou na cadeira ao lado da noiva e do senhor padre Gordinho, da mãe e da sogra!

Sentou-se e sentou-se em cima do que tinha feito atrás da pedra, que aquilo lá tudo estava dentro das ceroulas! Sentiu tudo! E ficou muito contente, porque já podia responder aos padrinhos.

Vai daí, o Manel meteu a mão dentro das ceroulas e voltou a tirá-la, toda borrada e mal cheirosa! Olhou para ela, sorriu de orelha a orelha e começou a passá-la pela cara da noiva, do padre, da mãe, da sogra e dos padrinhos e dos convidados todos, enquanto gritava de alegria:

- Então, fiz ou não fiz? Fiz ou não fiz?

Vitória! Vitória!

Está contada a história!

**ATENÇÃO:**

é melhor levarmos já ao nariz

um perfuminho de rosa

que a história... acabou mal cheirosa!

## **Abstracts**

### **“Dolls: The Realm of Make-Believe”**

Maria João Pires

Belonging to the specific context of the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century France, antique dolls are unique and valuable works of art and reveal a lot about children of that time. This essay is an introduction to this world and an attempt to tell these dolls history and identity.

Pertencendo ao contexto específico da França da segunda metade do século XIX, as bonecas antigas são valiosas obras de arte, revelando também muito sobre as crianças desse tempo. Este ensaio pretende ser uma introdução a esse mundo e contar um pouco da história e identidade de algumas destas bonecas.

### **“Invent and subvert: Paula Rego’s illustrations for Children’s Books”**

Filomena Vasconcelos

Paula Rego’s illustrations of children’s books, whatever drawing and painting techniques she may use, from engravings to large pastels, are never to be taken in an easy, uncompromising way, as they deliberately disturb our commonsensical conventions and prejudices of human relationships. They are, however, exquisite expressions of an attentive imagination to a child’s insight into both fantasy and reality.

As ilustrações de Paula Rego para os livros de crianças, seja qual for a técnica de desenho ou pintura empregue, desde as gravuras até às grandes telas a pastel, nunca se prestam a uma leitura fácil e descomprometida, já que deliberadamente elas perturbam o nosso modo convencional ou preconceituoso de olhar as relações humanas. São, no entanto, expressões muito especiais de uma imaginação atenta voltada para o universo misto de fantasia e realidade das crianças.

## **Textos de alunos**

### **“The origins of Fairy Tales”**

Cláudia Morais

Fairy Tales, seen as universal and cultural traditions, have their own roots. Therefore the aim of this work it is to demonstrate the origins of those texts, which continue to attract different generations.

Os Contos de fadas, como tradições universais e culturais, apresentam raízes próprias. Nesse sentido o objectivo deste trabalho é apresentar as origens desses textos, que continuam a atrair inúmeras gerações.

### **“Treasure Island: historical background and literary analysis”**

Marta Vilar

Andreia Ferreira

The article starts with a historical “looking back”, to know the reality of the Stevenson’s work. We go back to the eighteenth century, a transition time from a Georgian to a Victorian England, a time of piracy and big ships.

In a second part of the article, there is an intertextual and literary analysis of the novel.

O artigo começa com um “olhar para trás” no tempo, para conhecermos a realidade da obra de Stevenson. Regressamos ao século XVIII, a um tempo de transição de uma Inglaterra Georgiana para uma Vitoriana, época de pirataria e grandes navios.

Na segunda parte do artigo encontra-se uma análise intertextual e literária da obra.

### **“Walt Disney’s Peter Pan”**

David Barros

The essay deals with the Disney’s animation adaptation of Barrie’s Peter Pan, which presents some of the most recurrent conventions and clichés of 20th century America in the 50’s.

O ensaio trata da adaptação de Disney ao cinema de animação da célebre obra de J.M.Barrie Peter Pan, denunciando algumas das convenções e clichés mais recorrentes na América dos anos 50, no século XX.

## **“Peter Pan: Child/Adult Relationship and the Narrative Strategies of Time(s) and Spaces(s)”**

Ana Teresa Magalhães

Vera Patrícia Leal

Barrie's *Peter Pan* is known by its creation of a fantasy world apart from the world of adults, as for the denying of growing up. But it is also important to demonstrate the close relations within the book, establishing comparisons and contrasts between the characters and also between the book and the Victorian Society. Having decided to be a boy who will never grow up, Peter has closed himself in an undefined Time and an undetermined Space that will constantly be in contrast with the real world, and gives the book the possibility to enter in our lives, no matter which our Time or our Space is.

*Peter Pan*, de Barrie é conhecido pela criação de um mundo de fantasia, aparte do mundo dos adultos, bem como pela negação da entrada na adolescência, do crescer. É no entanto, importante perceber as relações existentes na obra, estabelecendo linhas de comparação e de contraste entre as personagens, e também entre a própria obra e a Sociedade Vitoriana. Ao ter decidido nunca crescer, Peter Fechou-se num Tempo indefinido e num Espaço indeterminado que vai, ao longo da obra, entrar em permanente contraste com a realidade e, ao mesmo tempo, dar à obra a possibilidade de entrar nas nossas vidas, independentemente do Tempo ou do Espaço em que nos encontremos.

## **“Bilbo Baggins – An (Un) expected Hero”**

Diogo Gonçalves

Sharing obvious features with the classic epic, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* mainly differs from the Homeric works in the intrinsic qualities of the main character, where instead of the typical over confident, strong, arrogant hero, we have what have been at times considered as an anti-hero.

Embora seja óbvio que partilha muitas das características com as obras épicas clássicas, a maior diferença entre estas e *The Hobbit* de J.R.R. Tolkien reside nas qualidades intrínsecas do protagonista, que em vez do típico herói seguro de si mesmo, forte e arrogante, é aquilo que tem por vezes sido de intitulado de “anti-herói”.

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Besides, he has developed several cinematographic projects, he writes for the cultural blog o Bunker and he organizes and promotes FLUP's Italian Film Club. At this moment, he's attending the 4th grade of Modern Languages and Literature (French and English Studies) at the Faculty of Letters – University of Porto and has recently participated in an Erasmus exchange programme, in the field of film studies, at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris.

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