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1976

THE NARRATIVE OF RAUL POMPEIA: CONTENT AND FORM

by

JOSE LOPEZ-HEREDIA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Comparative Literature (Portuguese) in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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1976

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Abstract

THE NARRATIVE OF RAUL POMPEIA: CONTENT AND FORM

by

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A detailed study of O Ateneu reveals a variety of techniques used by Raul Pompéia in presenting and developing fictional characters and plot. Pompéia's caricatural portrayals lead to flat characterizations. The author has a tendency to first give a light physical description, and follow it with a moral description in which the character reveals himself through an action situation. Identification of character is further strengthened through zoomorphic imagery and a series of names and sobriquets which support character traits.

Characterization is based on penetrating observation. In Pompéia's case, however, it is modified by the accumulation of techniques which create humor and satire. Thus, through the use of caricature, exaggeration, chaotic enumeration and repetition a "comic truth" emerges from the novel rather than an "illusion of reality."

The different "voices" that tell the tale increase the interest of the novel. There are three "voices" that speak to the reader: Sérgio-child, Sérgio-narrator and the author himself whose "voice" intermittently is heard in the background. There is no distraction from the central point of view, however, since all who "speak" share a common viewpoint. Pompéia does not give

much latitude to the reader to use his interpretive faculty.

Probably the most striking feature of Pompéia's technique is his concept of contrast. Through the use of contrast the author throws different elements into opposition with one another for the sake of emphasis. The principle of contrast is visible in character personality as well as between different characters themselves. It is evident in the structure of the novel, in the presentation of scenes and situations and becomes an effective device that blends images and symbols.

The images and symbols used by Pompéia give greater dimension to the novel. Many of the images are worked into the fabric of the novel on hidden levels and add luster to the story. Throughout the novel, the author interweaves images of corruption, decay and death that create an atmosphere of hopelessness. Images of imprisonment appear in horizontal nature which symbolizes man's enslavement to life and convention. Vertical nature, on the other hand, offers man liberty and hope. Many symbols of corruption and decay permeate the novel as well as symbols of freedom and rebellion. There are many political and social symbols which are woven into the novel. A study of the political and social symbols that run throughout the book give the reader an idea of the state of Brazilian society during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Introduction

A work of literature, even from the pen of the most objective writer, contains his personal vision of life. His characters and situations, therefore, exemplify his philosophy of life and his concepts of human nature. As he composes his book, he includes in it specimens of the raw material that have caused him to form these concepts and philosophy. Disillusioned at an early age, Pompéia saw life as morbid, decadent and basically immoral. These negative attitudes shaped his cynical point of view. The theory of sinful man left to his own devices, without grace, and his inability to reach a higher plane indicates that Pompéia was, at heart, a moralist preoccupied with the problems of ethics and morality. The moral aspect of Pompéia's personality flashes into focus as he describes these vices as a source of man's anguish.

Purpose and Method of this Study

I have endeavored, in analyzing O Ateneu, to place Raul Pompéia in time and space in the Brazilian literary scene. It was a period of literary naturalism with its emphasis on the corruption and decay in society and its philosophy of pessimism. Conscious of the literary trends of the day, Pompéia formulated his own pessimistic view of man.

The effects of psychological time in the novel and how it affects tone and movement are also studied. Time complicates plot since it has different aspects which play an important role. The emphasis on psychological time gives an impression of hap-

hazard arrangement in the structure of the novel which is deceiving. The use of flashbacks also increases the interest of the story and heightens psychological effects.

Character drawing in the novel was new and innovative at the time that O Ateneu was published. I have studied the difference between flat and round characters and how Pompéia's caricatural portrayals lead to flat characterizations. These characters are the author's resounding chambers and through the use of repetition he strengthens his own point of view. One of the most striking features in Pompéia's technique is the single dimensional view of his characters. All his characters are flat. Following the romantic writers of the times, Pompéia was quite content to present a one-sided view of his characters. Only two characters can be considered multifaceted although they are basically flat. Though they are treated as single dimensional characters they are permitted to interpret events in the novel and give their own points of view. However, these always coincide with the narrator's own point of view. Essentially only one viewpoint is offered by the author.

Pompéia has a tendency to first give a light physical description, at times only a sentence long, and to follow it with a moral description, in which the character reveals himself through an action situation. Identification of the character is further strengthened through a series of names and sobriquets which describe basic personality. At times, however, the author will use names and sobriquets to support character traits. Duality and contrast are pivots on which the author draws his characters.

Every important character has at least two distinctive sides to his personality, contrastingly linked together like Siamese twins. Side by side the two different facets of personality gain a more intense quality from the other, from their proximity and interdependence. Minor characters, on the other hand, such as Melica can be described by just one word, "aloof," while Jorge is a "revolutionist," and Américo a "terrorist." All these techniques create characters that continually interrelate on unconscious levels and reveal similar or contradictory traits that reinforce each other. This continuous interplay of traits, both physical and moral, create hidden symbolism that adds appreciably to the enjoyment of the novel.

On investigating the nature of human personality, the author accentuates man's proclivity toward vice and uncovers man who blasphemes against religion and morality. The distorted character drawings achieved by the author, through his use of satirical techniques and zoomorphic imagery, serves to create a "comic" truth in the novel rather than an "illusion of reality." Pompéia bases his characters on penetrating observation which normally leads to mimesis on the strict sense of the word. In Pompéia's case, however, it is conditioned by those techniques which create satire and humor and by his obsession with the black and ugly aspects of life. Through the use of caricature, distortion, repetition and chaotic enumeration, the author reveals a world that is comic, and often tragic, rather than real.

I have also studied Pompéia's omniscient role as author as

well as the different "voices" that he uses to tell his tale. One of the most striking features are the three "voices" that speak to the reader: Sérgio-child, Sérgio-narrator and the author himself whose "voice" intermittently is heard in the background. There is no distraction to the central point of view, however, since all who "speak" share a common viewpoint. Pompéia does not give much latitude to the reader to use his interpretive faculties.

In order to understand Pompéia, the reader must accept the author's basic concept of contrast as an important feature of writing. Through the use of contrast the author throws different elements into opposition with one another for the sake of emphasis. The effect of the device makes both contrasted ideas clearer to the reader than either would be if described separately. The principle of contrast, however, is useful for another purpose other than to obtain clarity. Skillfully used by an author, contrast may become, like the colors on a canvas, a means of arousing deep emotional impressions on the part of the reader. Pompéia often uses contrast in the presentation of characters and in their development. Contrast is visible in character personality as well as between different characters themselves. It is further evident in the structure of the novel, in the presentation of scenes and situations and becomes an effective device that blends with images and symbols. Many images and symbols of death, decay and corruption create an atmosphere of hopeless expectation that lead the reader to the author's pessimistic philosophy of life.

There are different "styles" cultivated by the author, often

juxtaposed, that add to the element of contrast. Pompéia's interest in the unusual expression that often "shocks the eye" gives the impression that he was a follower of the Goncourt "écriture artiste." Actually Pompéia did not adhere so much to the "écriture artiste" as he did to his personal ideas of contrast in style and theme. It must be understood that these factors are all intimately related and blend with the thematic content to such a degree that frequently they are indistinguishable.

I study also many images and symbols which give greater dimension to the novel. Many of these images are worked into the novel on a hidden level and add interest to the story. Throughout the book, the author interweaves images of corruption, decay and death. To these we may add images of torture, physical pain, and boredom which reemphasize the author's pessimistic view of life. Images of the sacred next to the profane, which create contrast, are extensively used. In view of the singular role that images and symbols of nature play in the novel, I have studied their different aspects and have explained how they increase the pessimistic atmosphere. Many images of imprisonment appear in horizontal nature, which represent man's enslavement to life and convention, and are contrasted to vertical nature, which offers man liberty and hope. All images of earth, however, have an enslaving effect. Many symbols of corruption and decay permeate the novel as well as symbols of freedom and rebellion which appear not only in the characters but also in other aspects of the novel. There are many political and social symbols which are interwoven into the fabric

of the novel. Last but certainly not less important, it is hoped that the study of various social and political themes that run throughout the novel, closely tied in with the author's images and symbols, will give the reader an idea of the state of Brazilian society as Pompéia envisioned it.

The first publication of O Ateneu appeared in the Gazeta de Notícias in 1888 in feuilleton. That same year it was printed in book form. Taking advantage of the first publication, Pompéia made certain modifications in the text and prepared the way for a second definitive edition that appeared ten years after his death in 1905. The edition was published by Livraria Francisco Alves with Pompéia's personal illustrations and had a total of seven printings. Besides the seven editions published by Livraria Francisco Alves, three other editions have appeared in Brazil: one published by Edições Melhoramentos in 1967 with an introduction by Luis Gonzaga Fleury, that had four printings, a later edition published by the Instituto do Livro, in 1971, organized by Afrânio Coutinho which has had two printings to date and another edition published by Ática, Serie "Bom Livro," 1973, with a preface by Deomira Stefani which has had three printings to date. There has also been a Portuguese edition of O Ateneu, undated, published by Edições "Livros do Brasil" in Lisbon. The Portuguese edition, however, has undergone certain orthographical changes in order to conform with European Portuguese spelling. For my study I chose

the Edições Melhoramentos, fourth edition, because it was the only one available in the New York City bookstores at the time.

Although there are numerous books, magazine and newspaper articles that study Raul Pompéia's O Ateneu, I have found the following publications specially helpful in the preparation of this book.

Shortly after the publication of O Ateneu, in 1888, Tristão de Araripe Júnior, the noted Brazilian literary critic, wrote a series of twenty one articles that appeared in December 1888, January and February 1889 in Novidades. Later in 1960, his articles were published anew by the Casa de Rui Barbosa in Obra Completa de Araripe Júnior. Although not a literary historian and despite the fact that the articles lack a certain historical perspective, having been written shortly after the publication of the novel, Araripe Júnior, nevertheless, does subject the author and the novel to a highly critical analysis. Otto Maria Carpeaux in his Pequena Bibliografia Crítica da Literatura Brasileira, 1964, considered this series to be the best study of O Ateneu.

The renowned Brazilian literary historian, José Veríssimo in his História da Literatura Brasileira, published in 1916, studied Pompéia's novel and found it to be the best Brazilian naturalist novel of the times.

Nineteen years later, in 1935, Eloy Pontes published A Vida Inquieta de Raul Pompéia, in which he added significantly to the scant biographic material available on the author. Although the book lacks organization and structure, it does contain a wealth

of information, gathered mostly from Pompéia's personal papers placed at Pontes' disposal by the Pompéia family.

In 1943, Mário de Andrade published his Aspectos da Literatura Brasileira in which he underscored the naturalistic aspect of the novel and the artistic, original, personal and even artificial prose of the author. It is considered to be the next best study of Pompéia and his novel, second to Araripe Júnior's twenty one articles.

Maria Luiza Ramos' Psicologia e Estética de Raul Pompéia, 1953, studies Baudelaire's influence on Pompéia and considers that O Ateneu is the first lyric novel of Brazilian fiction. She develops the interesting theory that different characters in the novel are extensions of Pompéia's own personality, thus Sérgio represents Pompéia's ego, Dr. Cláudio is the author's ideal ego and Franco represents his baser instincts.

In 1963 Ledo Ivo published O Universo Poético de Raul Pompéia in which he found influences of Hugo and Baudelaire in Pompéia.

These, in essence, have been the most consulted works, although many texts and articles were read and studied.

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Chapter I

Raul Pompéia: The Man in His Literary Context

Raul Pompéia was born on April 12, 1863 in the small town of Jacuacanga, in the municipality of Angra dos Reis, Province of Rio de Janeiro, one of the most scenic and picturesque sites of Brazil, full of ships, lush green islets and rolling hills.¹ The son of Dr. Antônio d'Avila Pompéia, a wealthy and well established lawyer, and D. Rosa Teixeira Pompéia, Raul grew up in this quiet and remote agricultural community devoted to the extensive cultivation of sugar cane, which depended heavily on slave labor. Early contact with the slaves on his grandfather's estate made a deep and everlasting impression on the young boy and eventually turned him into an ardent and militant abolitionist.

Sparse information is available on Pompéia's early life, for his tight-knit family closed its doors to all outsiders except the nearest of kin. His childhood was evidently very lonely. He grew up without the intimate relationships that a young boy of his age would normally have² and this lack of comradeship left an indelible mark on his personality. His father's misanthropy and his mother's excessive affection further confused and isolated the lad. Rodrigo Otávio, a friend of young Raul, wrote that the

¹ Eloy Pontes, A Vida Inquieta de Raul Pompéia (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1935), p. 12.

² Rodrigo Otávio, Minhas Memórias dos Outros (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1934), p. 261.

author's father was "a man of wealth, who lived in his own house." He was an "introvert, stubborn and unsociable, who never visited anyone nor did he receive visitors in his home." According to Otávio the family lived as if in a cloistered monastery.³ Raul's childhood, therefore, seems to have been solitary and basically unhappy.

It remains curious that so little should be known about Raul Pompéia's childhood, but due to the hermetic life style of the Pompéia clan and the reluctance of Raul to discuss his personal problems, no one intruded upon the intimacy of family life. From the sparse evidence and the numerous conjectures that have been made, mostly from slight references or from obvious omissions in his autobiographical novel, O Ateneu, we must reconstruct his early life as best we can. What emerges is a basic dissatisfaction that prevailed during his life and even surrounded his childhood:

Eufemismo, os felizes tempos, eufemismo apenas, igual aos outros que nos alimentam, a saudade dos dias que correram como melhores. Bem considerando, a atualidade é a mesma em tôdas as datas. Feita a compensação dos desejos que variam, das aspirações que se transformam, alentadas perpétuamente do mesmo ardor, sôbre a mesma base fantástica de esperanças, a atualidade é uma. Sob a coloração cambiante das horas, um pouco de ouro mais pela manhã, um pouco mais de púrpura ao crepúsculo—a paisagem é a mesma de cada lado beirando a estrada da vida. ⁴

³Rodrigo Otávio, op. cit., pp. 261-262.

⁴Raul Pompéia, O Ateneu (São Paulo: Edições Melhoramentos, 1967) 4 ed., p. 11.

In essence what we note is a basic dissatisfaction which prevailed throughout his life. Happiness becomes a euphemism that never entered his everyday existence. The changing coloration of life with a little more glow in the morning and a little more purple in the twilight hours, does not alter the road of life. "Happy times" is used euphemistically for a childhood that never was happy. As the narrator, Sérgio, looks back at his early years, the reader senses an overpowering feeling of despair when he insinuates that the "rose-colored" morning was no more promising than shadowy dusk. Childhood is no happier than adult life.

With regard to Raul's early education, little is known before he entered the Colégio Abílio at the age of ten except that he must have had some early schooling in Jacuacanga:

[N]uma escola familiar do Caminho Novo, onde algumas senhoras inglesas, sob a direção do pai, distribuíam educação à infância como melhor lhes parecia. 5

It might not have been on the Caminho Novo and it might not have been from some English ladies, but the indifferent and unenthusiastic tone of the author is unmistakable and he recalls the episode as a rather colorless period of his early life.

In 1873 Raul entered the Colégio Abílio, one of the most influential schools of the times, which was to furnish the setting for his novel O Ateneu, fourteen years later.⁶ The institution

⁵Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 11.

⁶ Brito Broca, Raul Pompéia, Coleção Grandes Vultos das Letras (São Paulo: Edições Melhoramentos, No. 21, n.d.), p. 8.

had been founded by Dr. Abílio César Borges, the Barão de Macaúbas, considered one of the foremost authorities on Brazilian education.⁷ It was at the Colégio Abílio that the young student, after a solitary and protected early childhood, became acquainted with the hypocritical and even treacherous soul of his fellow man.

An intelligent and overly sensitive child, although never an over-achiever, young Raul took an active interest in writing and, under the name of Fabricius, edited a satirical school newspaper, O Archote, which he wrote by hand and circulated among the students. At the age of fifteen he wrote Uma Tragédia no Amazonas, under the pen name of Procopius.⁸ This novel was published two years later, in 1880, and caused a small ripple among the literary critics of the day, notably Capistrano de Abreu, who found the short story promising for such a young author.⁹

Pompéia's first novel, Uma Tragédia no Amazonas, is a short and extremely romantic story filled with exalted passion. It takes place in the exotic Amazon, which the author had never vi-

⁷Fernando de Azevedo, A Cultura Brasileira (São Paulo: Edições Melhoramentos, 1964), p. 592.

⁸It is interesting to note that Pompéia adopted the pen names of Fabricius and Procopius in his early writings. Obviously he had read these authors in his early classical studies and secretly identified with both of them. Procopius, a Greek historian, is known to have disclosed the scandals of the court of the day in his Anecdota. On account of his searing attacks, Anecdota was not published until after Procopius' death. Fabricius, on the other hand, was a Roman Consul known for his simple and straightforward nature in an age where pretention and hypocrisy were rampant. Mirroring Pompéia's view of himself, he was an honest and disinterested bystander who adhered to a strict code of ethics.

⁹Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 27.

sited,¹⁰ and tells the story of Eustáquio, a police deputy in a small town in the interior of Brazil. He seizes a group of runaway slaves who are believed to have committed murder. However, they manage to escape and return to attack Eustáquio and his family. After many complicated situations and skirmishes, filled with suspense, both Eustáquio, his family and the slaves are killed. Little emphasis is placed on interior characterization. All the characters are portrayed as essentially flat characters with little psychological perception, which makes the story difficult for adult readers to take seriously. However, the romantic formation of an impressionable and sensitive young man of the times can be seen.¹¹ Through partly nurtured in the romantic tenets of the Brazilian nativists, José de Alencar and Castro Alves, as well as of the French romantic writers, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Chateaubriand, the youthful author proved faithful to the literary currents of the day. In O Ateneu he recalls the romantic influence exerted by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in which nature displays a dispondency that is romantic in essence:

A pastoral de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre foi principalmente o nosso enlêvo. Parecia-nos ter o poema no coração. A Baía do Túmulo, de águas profundas e sombrias, festejada apenas algumas horas pelo Sol a prumo, em suave tristeza sempre; ao longe, por uma bocaina, a fachada, à vista, branca, da igreja rústica de Pamplémousses. ¹²

¹⁰Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 40.

¹¹Raul Pompéia, As Jóias da Coroa, with a Forward by Herculano Pires (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1962), n.p.

¹²Raul Pompéia, O Ateneu, p. 142.

The realism that was later to appear with such boldness in O Ateneu is not discernible in his first novel.

The singularities of Pompéia's early childhood were largely accountable for the difficulties he encountered at the Colégio Abílio. Endowed with a searching mind, inordinately active and restless, young Raul was unusually interested in literature and read widely.¹³ The humiliation suffered at the hands of his fellow students, the professors, and the attendants of the institution was gall and vitriol to the young author, and he uncharitably took revenge—as expressed by Mário de Andrade—nine years later in a satirical and biting portrait of a Brazilian educational private school.¹⁴

In 1879 the Pompéia clan liquidated their holdings in Angra dos Reis and moved to the Capital, Rio de Janeiro. Young Raul was enrolled in the Colégio Dom Pedro II, the prestigious school of the day, often visited by the Emperor of Brazil. It is not known whether his personal impressions at the Colégio Dom Pedro II also inspired the creation of the small world of O Ateneu, but it must be surmised that both learning experiences were amalgamated into one global life impression. It was there that young Raul took an interest in the literary society "Amor ao Progresso," which later

¹³Raul Pompéia, Uma Tragédia no Amazonas, with a Forward by Plínio Doyle (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1964), p. 7.

¹⁴Mário de Andrade, Aspectos da Literatura Brasileira (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editôra, 1967), p. 167.

he described satirically in his novel O Ateneu under the guise of "Grémio Amor ao Saber." While at this institution he also published stirring abolitionist articles for the school newspaper As Letras.

With the triumphal arrival of Carlos Gomes from Italy in 1880, Pompéia was chosen at the age of seventeen to give a speech honoring the composer of O Guarani.¹⁵ Before the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II, the Royal Court, Carlos Gomes, a distinguished audience, as well as the students of the school, the seventeen-year-old adolescent exalted music and Brazil in moving and glowing terms.

One year later Luís Gama, an ex-slave, self-educated pillar of the abolitionist movement in Brazil, and poet of note, entered the life of young Pompéia. This aggressive Negro exerted a tremendous influence on the young man. The deep and moving friendship was short lived, however, for Luís Gama died in 1882. His premature death inspired Pompéia to write some of his most touching and sincere prose.

Moving to São Paulo in 1881 to continue his university studies, Pompéia collaborated in Ca Ira, an anti-slavery organ of the Centro Abolicionista de São Paulo. As a consequence, he aroused the thorough dislike of the ruling class. This dislike was aggravated when, at the age of nineteen he wrote a "roman-à-clé," As Jóias da Coroa, an attack on the person of the Emperor and his immediate family. The novel, which appeared in the Gazeta de Notícias, was

¹⁵Raul Pompéia, As Jóias da Coroa, with an Introduction by Henrique I. Alves, p. 12.

based on a famous and much debated episode covering the disappearance of the royal jewels belonging to Empress Teresa Cristina and Princess Isabel. This scandal shook the austere foundations of the Court of D. Pedro II and exposed the Emperor's amorous escapades.¹⁶ Although outside the scope of the present work, a study of the two literary milestones Uma Tragédia no Amazonas and As Jóias da Coroa would permit a thorough comparison of these two early works of Pompéia. A study of this kind would allow the critic to measure and to determine the growth of ideas and style, and to gauge Pompéia's intellectual development in this decisive eight-year period.

In 1883 he started work on Canções Sem Metro, a collection of short prose poems, some of which appeared in the Jornal do Comércio de São Paulo. They show a marked Baudelairean influence and are very similar to the Microscópios, which had already appeared in 1881. Later on, the author tried to "express the inexpressible"¹⁷ in the prose poems.

Some of the prose poems were published in newspapers. For approximately ten years the author worked diligently on the collection, writing, polishing and editing them. On several occasions publication of the collection was announced in the press but the book never appeared.

¹⁶ Léo Ivo, O Universo Poético de Raul Pompéia (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1963), p. 69.

¹⁷ Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 124.

Busily attacking the establishment, which he considered reactionary and retrograde, Pompéia collaborated in the Gazeta da Tarde and in the Gazeta de Notícias, earning the enmity of the college professoriate. Because of his ultra-liberal stance, he was deliberately flunked by the professors of the University of São Paulo. Angered by this unfair ruling, Pompéia and a contingent of ninety other liberal-minded students left for Recife in order to pursue their studies in a less hostile atmosphere. A year later, in 1885, at the age of twenty-two, Pompéia returned to Rio with his degree in hand, thus satisfying the demands of his family and took up quarters with his widowed mother and his two unmarried sisters. Shortly thereafter he collaborated in the Gazeta de Notícias and in the Provinciano de São Paulo, writing under the name of Lauro.

Not content with his endeavors in the literary field, Pompéia devoted more and more time to politics. He attacked his enemies in a series of devastating political caricatures that relentlessly appeared in the numerous periodicals of the day and further infuriated the ruling oligarchy. The year 1888 found Pompéia diligently at work on his novel O Ateneu, which appeared in the same year in serialized form in the Gazeta de Notícias. It caused a literary stir among the critics of the day. O Ateneu is pompéia's best and most important novel. A novelized biography of the author's early years at school, it covers the years spent at the Colégio Abílio which, in the novel, becomes the Ateneu. The author altered some facts in order to create a certain amount

of anonymity but it cannot be denied that the subconscious and emotional impressions are faithfully recorded. These formative years left an indelible impression on the young student. Sérgio, the central character in the novel, is the author. Sheltered during early life he is totally unprepared for the hard life at the boarding school where he becomes acquainted with the true and often ambiguous nature of man. Being physically small he cannot compete with the older boys and immediately becomes prey to their taunts and abuses. Sanches, an authoritative school monitor, offers protection but at a price. Due to the immediate pressures, Sérgio accepts but feeling a physical repulsion for Sanches, he seeks independence only to be persecuted with greater persistence by Sanches and the other bullies at the school. Bento Alves, the strongest boy at the institution and the school's undisputed hero, takes Sérgio under his wing and offers the protection he sorely needs to survive. Bento, however, turns on Sérgio and leaves the school suddenly. Attracted to another student, Sérgio changes roles and becomes more assertive and masculine. The friendship with Egbert, however, is shortlived. During an illness, Sérgio becomes infatuated with Dona Ema, the headmaster's wife. He psychologically reverts to infantilism and seeks to assuage his desire for protection in her maternal instinct. It is during this strange relationship that a new student arrives at the Ateneu, Américo, who sets the school ablaze and destroys it. Dona Ema mysteriously disappears and Aristarco, the school director, distraught is surrounded by the rubble of a life's work. At the same time that Pom-

péia worked on O Ateneu he initiated the column Pândora, devoted to art criticism. The middle of 1889 found Pompéia collaborating in Pardal Mallet's short-lived newspaper A Rua, an extremely radical organ. Concomitantly he also wrote for the prestigious Jornal do Comércio and the Diário de Minas as well as for many other publications which became vehicles for his attacks on the government.

Becoming increasingly involved in Brazilian politics and the establishment of the Republic, Pompéia devoted less and less time to literary pursuits. In 1891 he was named professor of mythology at the Escola de Belas Artes. Entangled in a heated polemic with Olavo Bilac in 1892, he was forced to defend himself on the field of honor and fought a clandestine duel. Engulfed in the labyrinth of Brazilian politics, Pompéia unconditionally supported Floriano Peixoto for the Presidency of the Republic and feverishly wrote and drew distorted caricatures of his political rivals in the Brazilian newspapers. Named director of the Biblioteca Nacional, at the age of thirty-one, he was forced to resign a year later due to his intransigent attack on the President of the Republic, Prudente de Moraes.

Devastated by a stinging attack against him by Luís Murat, which appeared in the Comércio de São Paulo entitled "Um Louco no Cemitério," Pompéia immediately sought to answer the slur in an article which he forwarded to A Notícia. Sensing dishonor on not seeing his rebuttal published in the newspaper, Raul Pompéia committed suicide on Christmas Day, 1895, at the age of thirty-two.

The Three Literary Trends in 1888

There are three literary trends that occupied the literary scene in 1888 when O Ateneu appeared. Although already waning, the last traces of Romanticism could still be seen. The realist novel, mostly due to the efforts of Machado de Assis, was becoming more entrenched although his early novels had more of a romantic trend. Naturalism, however, was at its highest point through the combined efforts of Aluísio Azevedo, Inglês de Sousa and Júlio Ribeiro.

Romanticism reached Brazil by way of France, where it first appeared in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It advocated social, political, and artistic freedom, and its aims were the ideals of universal brotherhood. Well suited to the Brazilian temperament, it provided a literary vehicle appropriate for Brazil's nascent nationalism. The Romantic movement gave a much needed thrust to Brazilian spiritual emancipation and in time lent a revolutionary character to Brazilian letters.¹⁸ To the Brazilian romantic writers, man was innately good. Often viewed as poets of nature, they reveled in their love of earth and sky, although, at the same time, melancholy, doubt and sometimes despair were conspicuous among their many moods. To these traits the Brazilian romantic writer added a literary consciousness of emancipa-

¹⁸Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 7.

tion and thus freed national letters from the stranglehold of Portuguese influence.¹⁹

The novel began to flourish in Brazil during the Romantic period in the middle of the nineteenth century. Among its most notable writers were Joaquim Manuel de Macedo and José de Alencar. Macedo's A Moreninha, published in 1844, gives a romanticized glimpse of Brazilian life during the second quarter of the century. The talented José de Alencar, on the other hand, preferred to idealize the Indian while bestowing upon him virtues and qualities of the "new" race as apparent in the "noble savage" portrayed in his novels.

Both Joaquim de Manuel de Macedo and José de Alencar were unquestionably at the helm of Brazilian letters during the 1870's. It must be pointed out, however, that the rise of the bourgeoisie during the nineteenth century in Brazil soon began to erode the idealized surface that was prevalent in romantic fiction. With Realism, the wounds of society were uncovered and the hardships of intimate life exposed. The realistic writer began to take his characters seriously and used a more realistic palette to paint daily life.²⁰ He sought to imitate life by depicting the misfortunes of a troubled society while eliminating the gushing senti-

¹⁹ Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, História da Literatura Brasileira (São Paulo: Livraria José Olympio, 1950), XII, p. 28.

²⁰ Antônio Soares Amora, História da Literatura Brasileira (São Paulo: Edição Saraiva, 1967), p. 72.

mentality of the romantics. He makes an effort to get near objects and people. A thirst for objectivity is evident and answers the demand for precise scientific methods that became ever more urgent toward the close of the century with the emergence of the naturalistic novel. It might seem paradoxical but the coexistence of a liberal climate of ideas and an art that was essentially negative was not an error of focus on the part of the historian. The interest in Realism was due to the uncomfortable position that the intellectual found himself in. Both the realist and the naturalist writer became rebels and dissident protestors, as were Raul Pompéia, Aluísio Azevedo, and even Machado de Assis.²¹

Realism made its appearance in the Brazilian novel in 1854, when Manuel Antônio de Almeida published his novel Memórias dum Sargento de Milícias. Initiating the trend in Brazil even before it appeared in Europe, Almeida was "a realist before realism."²² In Memórias dum Sargento de Milícias he dealt with a by-gone era, the times of D. João VI, and painted a realistic picture of the turbulent life of the narrow streets of Rio de Janeiro. Besides dipping his pen into ironic caricature, Almeida portrayed a galaxy of popular types of the capital city during the beginning of the nineteenth century. The power of his novels resides in the fact that he captured the poor and dreary existence of the lower strata-

²¹ Alfredo Bosi, História Concisa da Literatura Brasileira (São Paulo: Editora Cultrix, 1975), p. 187.

²² Donald E. Worcester, Brazil: From Colony to World Power (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 128.

tas of society perpetually subjected to a life of misery and want:²³

Owing to his fine perceptiveness, his painter's eye, his musician's ear, his unflinching honesty combined with aesthetic 'aste, Manoel Antônio de Almeida is as readable today as he was ninety years ago, and a good deal more widely appreciated... Almeida is definitely looked upon as one of the precursors of the modern Brazilian novel, with critics such as Mário de Andrade, Marques Rebelo, and Astrojildo Pereira paying him high tribute.²⁴

The realism that appeared in Almeida, lay dormant for more than a quarter of a century until Joachim Maria Machado de Assis published Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas in 1881. Although Machado de Assis, foremost and most prolific of Brazilian novelists, published his first novel, Ressureição in 1872, he had already been on the literary scene approximately twenty years. As a novelist Machado de Assis dealt in ideas, not in the repellent abstract, but clothed in human form, transformed into characters.²⁵ He was primarily concerned with psychological analysis, with those nebulous thoughts that occur behind the consciousness of man. He often delved into the forbidden recesses of the soul and brought out the desperate and unfulfilled emotions of his characters, generally from the upper middle class. More than a pessimist, Macha-

²³ Alfredo Bosi, op. cit., p. 147.

²⁴ Samuel Putnam, Marvelous Journey: A Survey of Four Centuries of Brazilian Writing (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 177.

²⁵ José Lins do Rego, Conferencias no Prata (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editorial do Estudante do Brasil, 1946), p. 97.

do de Assis held nothing absolute. Nothing was worth either love or hate. He expressed, rather, the "morality of total indifference."²⁶ As he studied the inner emotions of man and saw the selfishness that lurked in man's heart, his negative attitude grew even stronger. He knew how to forge the smallest psychological quirk into the greatest human suffering. He did not try to correct the errors of society; he just recorded them. He saw man essentially as a helpless victim of a cruel and unjust fate, a lost being without redemption involved with the voluptuousness of nothing.²⁷

Despite the popular acclaim that Machado de Assis received during his life time, inwardly he was a tortured soul. The fact that he was of Negro ancestry, physically ugly, and subject to epileptic seizures, made him write with the "pen jesting and the ink of melancholy."²⁸ His troubled existence and his complete disillusionment with mankind are reflected in the manner in which he painted his characters. It is interesting to note that there are few characters in all his novels who can be called "good," and the most important of them is a lunatic.

Machado de Assis represents a literary exception in Brazilian letters, for he lacked the usual precursor to announce his psycho-

²⁶ Alfredo Bosi, op. cit., p. 203.

²⁷ Augusto Meyer, Machado de Assis (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1958), p. 13.

²⁸ Donald E. Worcester, op. cit., p. 129.

logical brand of realism and did not have any immediate followers to continue his ironic and pessimistic style.²⁹ Although his most important novels were published after 1861, nevertheless he had by then undergone the transition from a romantic novelist to a cynical philosopher who portrayed life without the usual sentimental trappings of the romantics. Machado de Assis dared to point out the defects of his heroes. He did not indulge in long bucolic descriptions of nature, part of the standard poetic scenario of all romantic novels of the times that accentuated local color³⁰ and something that even is found in the writings of the naturalists.

Contemporaneous with the realist trend in literature was the naturalist movement that had many followers in Brazil. Naturalism in literature was led by the followers of the "tranche de vie" school, what Edmond de Goncourt called "l'école du document humain" in the preface to la Faustin. Despite their repeated assertions that the novelist must not cut up life into aesthetic patterns and establish symmetry where there is none, the followers of Emile Zola in France, were themselves guilty of extreme selection by arrangement and balance.³¹ Zola and the Goncourts exa-

²⁹ Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, op. cit., p. 56.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

³¹ A. A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (London: Peter Neville Ltd., 1952), p. 79.

mined as scientific observers the chaos of life and tried to extract the logic they thought existed in it. Eça de Queirós, in Portugal, followed the same tenets, and adherents of the naturalist school in Brazil, notably Aluizio de Azevedo (1857-1913) and Júlio Ribeiro (1845-1890), continued in their footsteps.

If the realist writer represented the desire of the writer to draw an accurate picture of life, depicting the everyday situations, the naturalist writer, on the other hand, tended to emphasize biological determinism with heavy emphasis on the animal nature of man. He often stressed the factor of heredity and environment and portrayed man as a human beast engaged in the brutal struggle for survival. He also reasserted the laws of economic determinism and depicted man victimized by environmental forces. In the ultimate analysis, man became the wretched victim of social and economic factors which were beyond his control and understanding. Thus, through careful editing and organizing, the naturalist converted the novel into a "roman-à-thèse" with an endless torrent of sociological and scientific theorems.

Naturalism was at its zenith during the 1880's, when Aluizio de Azevedo was at the height of his career. By coincidence he appeared on the literary scene at the same time that Machado de Assis was attaining success with his realistic novels.³² Closely following the naturalistic trend set by Emile Zola in France and

³² Antônio Soares Amora, op. cit., p. 93.

Eça de Queirós in Portugal, Azevedo readily accepted the deterministic theories of the experimental novel. In O Mulato (1881) he probed Brazilian racial prejudices, the injustices perpetuated by a society as well as the hypocrisy fostered by a system of double standards. Casa de Pensão (1884) examines life in a small boardinghouse of Rio de Janeiro and studies the struggles of a student from the North of Brazil in the nation's capital. Only in O Cor-tiço (1890) does Aluizio de Azevedo follow the best tradition of his mentor Emile Zola. In this novel the author analyzes the different classes that make up Brazilian society. His study, however, focuses on the individual and his relationship to his social and economic environment. This is why Aluizio de Azevedo has been called one of the few Brazilian novelists to study the psychology of the group.³³

The faint echoes of the romantic novel were still to be heard in the background when O Ateneu appeared in 1888, but the movement had by then lost its most ardent exponent with the death of José de Alencar in 1877. Although on the wane, the romantic influence was to last long after Alencar's disappearance. The first truly psychological novel of Machado de Assis Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas appeared in 1881 and his realistic psychological novels were to continue into the beginning of the twentieth century. Besides the three better novels of Aluizio de Azevedo, which appeared

³³ Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, op. cit., p. 149.

between 1881 and 1890, three important milestones of Brazilian naturalism coincided with the publication of Raul Pompéia's O Ateneu in 1888: José Veríssimo's Cenas da Vida Amazônica, a series of realistic short stories; Inglês de Sousa's O Missionário narrating the debauched escapades of a wayward priest; and Júlio Ribeiro's A Carne, a sensuous account of the sexual experiences of an emancipated woman. Considering that prior to 1888 the only important realistic novels that had appeared were those pertaining to the "ciclo localista" of Manuel de Macedo, Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias (1852) of Manuel Antônio de Almeida,³⁴ and Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas (1881), the originality and the importance of O Ateneu is immediately apparent. With these exceptions most other works of prose fiction were a hackneyed mixture of European romantic, realistic, or naturalistic formulas molded around nascent Brazilian themes. Fiction fell into the category of either the exotic Indian living in a paradisiacal jungle, the heroic "sertanejo" roaming the primitive "sertão" while trying to eke out a paltry existence, or the superficial city dweller with its trite pseudopsychological study of urban society, often showing a definite lack of understanding of basic human desires and motivations. Against this literary backdrop appeared O Ateneu in 1888.

³⁴Lêdo Ivo, op. cit., p. 25.

Literary Trends in O Ateneu

Since Pompéia's novel contains romantic, realistic and naturalistic trends, from the beginning it became difficult for the literary critic to place it. Much has been written on O Ateneu as well as on Raul Pompéia, man, author, political caricaturist and journalist. All critics who have analyzed his literary production place him among the foremost writers of his time. Érico Veríssimo has called O Ateneu "one of the ten best Brazilian books of all time."³⁵ Literary critics of the stature of Afrânio Coutinho have also written extensively on the merits of this novel. Discussing Pompéia's O Ateneu, Coutinho finds that the autobiographical aspect is clearly visible in the novel and that the style is distinctive and new. He calls the style of O Ateneu outstanding among that of the Brazilian novel of the nineteenth century since José de Alencar:

Nessa narrativa em que o elemento autobiográfico transparece de maneira às vezes enérgicas, sobressai um estilo verdadeiramente peculiar e novo. É o estilo mais saliente do romance brasileiro, no século XIX desde José de Alencar. ³⁶

However, although the critics are unanimous in their praise, there is conspicuous disagreement as to the school of literature to which Pompéia belongs. Brazilian critics seem to be more or less

³⁵Samuel Putnam, op. cit., p. 190.

³⁶Afrânio Coutinho, A literatura no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Sul Americana, S. A., 1955), II, p. 111.

evenly divided as to whether or not Pompéia was a naturalist.

José Veríssimo, the great nineteenth century critic, finds that the new ideas expounded by Pompéia at the time bore a definite naturalist imprint:

Inexperiente na vida, com aquela 'vigorosa ignorância que faz a força da mocidade,' de que fala Brunetière, mais com a impressão forte, como seriam todas em a sua natureza excitável e vibrátil, das novas idéias, e pressentimentos que alvoroçavam a mocidade do tempo, Raul Pompéia deu no Ateneu a amostra mais distinta, se não a mais perfeita, do naturalismo no Brasil. 37

He goes on to place Raul Pompéia's name alongside that of Aluísio de Azevedo: "O seu romance é mais original e o mais distinto produto da escola (naturalista) aqui, sem ser tão bem composta como os melhores de Aluísio Azevedo."³⁸

Mário de Andrade, in 1943, also considered Raul Pompéia a naturalist although he recognized Pompéia's indebtedness to the Goncourt Brothers by calling him a follower of "écriture artiste" in Brazil:

Raul Pompéia, conhecedor dos Goncourt, inaugura entre nós a 'écriture artiste.' ... Mas conseguiu o que pretendia, a escritura artista, artificial, original, pessoal, tão sincera e legítima como qualquer simplicidade. 39

³⁷ José Veríssimo, História da Literatura Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editôra, 1954), pp. 297-298.

³⁸ Lêdo Ivo, op. cit., quoting José Veríssimo, História da Literatura Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Olympio Editôra, 1954), p. 20.

³⁹ Mário de Andrade, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

Further on he underscores the naturalist tendencies of Pompéia. He states that not only the esthetic-sociological principles are present in the novel but that the pessimistic concept of man, the human beast, dominated by evil and unable to rise above his baser instincts is also found:

Já se disse que O Ateneu é o menos naturalista dos nossos romances do Naturalismo. Não penso assim. Ele representa exatamente os princípios estético-sociológicos, os elementos e processos técnicos do Naturalismo. É sempre aquela concepção pessimista do homem-bêsta, dominado pelo mal, incapaz de vencer os seus instintos baixos—reflexo dentro da arte das doutrinas evolucionistas. É sempre aquêle exagerar inconsciente e ao sério das manifestações destrutivas do ser, baseado numa psicologia do terror, que concebe os homens como bêstas e ignora a 'parte do anjo.' ... O Ateneu representa um dos aspectos particulares mais altos do Naturalismo brasileiro.⁴⁰

Nelson Werneck Sodré believes that Raul Pompéia did not escape from being strongly influenced by the naturalist school of literature:

O aparecimento, em folhetim da Gazeta de Notícias, em 1888, do romance O Ateneu não poderia deixar de constituir uma surpresa. O naturalismo estava em pleno desenvolvimento e, embora tivesse uma vigência curta, exerceu influência poderosa, a que não fugiu o próprio Pompéia.⁴¹

Other Brazilian critics also viewed Pompéia as a naturalist writer. Temístocles Linhares classified O Ateneu as one of the

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 178.

⁴¹Nelson Werneck Sodré, História da Literatura Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964), p. 502.

best naturalist novels: "como produção naturalista das mais legítimas alcançadas pela literatura brasileira."⁴² Eugênio Gomes also views Pompéia as one of the "naturalist pioneers" of his time since he used the same themes as the naturalist prose writers. Pompéia's tendency to study pathological characters, to include violent death and sexual aberrations in his novel tempted the critics of the nineteenth century to classify him as a naturalist. Linhares, however, also considers him to be the first Brazilian impressionist,⁴³ stating that contrary to what occurred in Europe, in Brazil the impressionist writer preceded the impressionist painter:

Aqui, por conseqüência, inverteram-se as posições, e, ao contrário do que se passara na Europa, a literatura precedeu a pintura, nesse rumo, comprovadamente sob a influência dos irmãos Goncourt. ⁴⁴

Afrânio Coutinho, after commenting on the critics who do not subject a piece of fiction to rigorous critical analysis but rather just repeat what other critics have already said, finds that O Ate-neu falls under the impressionist stamp and is not naturalistic:

A deficiência da atualização quanto às teorias e conceitos críticos, e de informação a respeito da evolução das formas literárias modernas, o conformismo com o estabelecido, conduzem a incidir

⁴² Temístocles Linhares, Raul Pompéia: Trechos Escolhidos (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964), p. 502.

⁴³ Eugênio Gomes, Visões e Revisões (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1958), p. 270.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 257.

naquele erro de julgamento e classificação de O Ateneu, cuja natureza de ficção impressionista já não escapa à visão crítica mais arguta e mais bem informada. Sem embargo, ainda há quem tranquilamente insista na suposta pureza naturalista de Raul Pompéia. 45

Some critics believe Pompéia to be more of a realist than a naturalist. Continuing this train of thought, Eloy Pontes, in 1956, considered Pompéia to have followed the realist school of literature, although he believed him to exhibit strong pessimistic inclinations:

A exacerbação analítica, o primado do individual, a 'écriture artiste' (erigindo a linguagem à dignidade de uma contínua criação, em lugar de utilizá-la apenas como se fôsse o instrumento servil e desembaraçado de uma narração), o pessimismo fundado na própria natureza do homem e não apenas nas colisões decorrentes da convivência social—eis alguns dos elementos que enquadram o nosso Pompéia no realismo de Flaubert e no miniaturismo dos Goncourts. 46

Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, after rejecting the influence of the naturalist school in Raul Pompéia, finds him to be nearer to Machado de Assis. The similarity, according to this critic, is not so much in their personal beliefs but in that both saw something more in man than the logical animal discovered by the experimentalists:

Raul Pompéia, não estabelecendo premissas nem chegando a conclusões, não fazendo

⁴⁵Afrânio Coutinho, Crítica e Críticos (Rio de Janeiro: Organização Simões, Editôra, 1969), p. 64.

⁴⁶Lêdo Ivo, op. cit., p. 33.

do seu herói um fruto exclusivo do ambiente, deixando, ao contrário, perceber que a mudança de vida pouco lhe alterará o feitio pessoal, guardou a sua liberdade de criação. Se de alguém se aproximou, foi antes de Machado de Assis, que via no homem uma criatura muito menos lógica do que julgaram os experimentalistas... Na execução do Ateneu podem ter entrado alguns poucos elementos naturalistas, mas na sua concepção Raul Pompéia não se filiou a escola alguma. E por essa liberdade, assim como pela realidade total que procurou abranger, é que de algum modo se aproxima de Machado de Assis; não que se assemelhassem os seus espíritos ou as suas inclinações literárias; mas porque, únicos em seu tempo, souberam ver no homem outra coisa além do animal lógico descoberto pelos experimentalistas. 47

Continuing this line of argument, Massaud Moisés considers that although both Machado de Assis and Raul Pompéia tended to realism and naturalism, they nevertheless also exhibit Symbolist influences:

De fato, alguns ficcionistas do último quartel do século XIX e do primeiro decênio deste, apesar de orientados pelo idealismo realista ou naturalista, não escaparam ao contágio do Simbolismo. Suas obras, em especial aquelas carregadas de preocupações psicológicas e introspectivas, aderiram espontaneamente ao culto do mistério e do metafísico. É o que se verifica pela análise comedida e despreconceituosa dos romances e contos de Machado de Assis e Raul Pompéia. 48

Moisés further states that Raul Pompéia tended not to follow any

⁴⁷ Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

⁴⁸ Massaud Moisés, A Literatura Brasileira: O Simbolismo (São Paulo: Editôra Cultrix, 1966), p. 216.

one school or "ism" but rather blended different and often opposing ideologies. He brands Pompéia a "transitional prose writer":

Êstes todos, como vimos, pertencem a uma primeira fase ou maneira: prosadores de transição, buscam mesclar tendências antagônicas ou criar obras sem as restrições dos 'ismos' e das idiossincrasias ideológicas. Em mais de um caso, além de Machado de Assis e de Raul Pompéia, chegaram a tornar-se escritores de primeira linha. 49

The Brazilian critic, José Bezerra de Freitas, also considers Pompéia not to belong to any special literary school. However, he does find him to have resisted the temptation of naturalism:

Uma das maiores conquistas de Raul Pompéia foi a sua resistência às escabrosidades do zolaismo, que dominava na época em que surgiu o seu famoso romance. Há um misto de brandura e sarcasmo na sua obra literária. Na análise dos seus pensamentos, no exame dos seus conceitos filosóficos ou artísticos, deparou o seu melhor crítico, Eloy Pontes, a pertinácia das idéias, o influxo dos clássicos franceses, de Montaigne a Rousseau, o horror às coisas inanimadas, a tendência para a investigação dos fenômenos morais isolados e coletivos, tudo isso num temperamento agressivo e delicado, cheio de entusiasmos, a um tempo, com crises de misticismo, misturando-se a uma espécie de sensualidade recalcada. 50

More recently João Pacheco likewise rejected placing Pompéia in the naturalist movement and found him to be an independent writer not really adhering to any particular school:

⁴⁹ Passaud Moisés, op. cit., p. 217.

⁵⁰ José Bezerra de Freitas, Forma e Expressão no Romance Brasileiro (Rio de Janeiro: Irmãos Pongetti, 1947), p. 258.

No entanto, Raul Pompéia refoge à classificação naturalista, o que denota a sua personalidade e mostra a sua independência em face da influência daqueles autores, e o separa e o distingue deles, ao mesmo tempo que lhe confere singularidade em nossa literatura. 51

Andrade Muricy, too, believes that Pompéia did not follow the "écriture artiste" of the Goncourt Brothers. Instead, he sees in the novel "o grande grito da adolescência assenhoreando-se do mundo."⁵² He also considers Pompéia's nervous style to be a product of the author's own neurosis: "A sua já aludida 'nervosidade' trazia uma carga de iniludível neurose."⁵³ Still he does find traces of impressionism in Pompéia's writings.

Although there is a great deal of disagreement as to how to classify Raul Pompéia's O Ateneu, the novel is considered one of the best of its time. Not only did it stand out because of its style and manner of presentation as an extremely original piece of literature in Brazilian letters, but it also directed the novel in Brazil on a new and uncharted course. Its position is well indicated in the following paragraph:

A produção literária de Raul d'Ávila Pompéia é, nas nossas letras das mais reduzidas. No entanto, a irrefutável condição de obra-prima de seu romance

⁵¹ João Pacheco, A Literatura Brasileira: O Realismo (São Paulo: Editôra Cultrix, 1963), III, 144.

⁵² José Cândido de Andrade Muricy, Panorama do Movimento Simbolista Brasileiro (Brasília: Ministério de Educação e Cultura, 1973), I, 229.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 228.

O Ateneu, que a crítica não tem cessado de reafirmar, garante-lhe uma posição relevante na história da ficção brasileira, tanto maior quanto o livro se situa não apenas entre os melhores de seu tempo, mas entre os que apontam para o futuro, ultra-passando, pelas tendências inovadoras de que é portador, os quadros da novelística da época. 54

When the modern critic studies Raul Pompéia in depth, it is difficult if not impossible to pigeonhole him into any one particular school of literature. Actually, Pompéia defies classification. Acutely aware of all the literary currents of the day, he accepted certain theories, but, at the same time, felt completely free to reject their narrow doctrines. As seen by the critics, he created a highly original novel that still baffles those who seek to place it in any one classification.

There are, without a doubt, many romantic features in O Ateneu. The autobiographic form of the novel, for instance, can be considered a romantic device. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the autobiographical structure makes O Ateneu a romantic narrative. The fact that the author chose this expository form of presentation meant that it best suited his plan and purpose. Witness the interest in the romanticized autobiography that followed Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Confessions (1781). Shortly afterwards Alfred de Musset's La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle (1836) appeared,

⁵⁴ Célia Therezinha Oliveira, "O Ateneu de Raul Pompéia: Alguns Aspectos," Ocidente: Revista Portuguesa de Cultura (Lisbon), No. 406 (Fevereiro, 1972), p. 67.

and seventeen years later Gerard de Nerval's Sylvie (1853) was published, both written as autobiographical novels. Also following the tradition of the romantic narrative, O Ateneu is written in the first person, and all events are seen through the prism of extreme subjectivity. The central character, Sérgio, interprets the action that occurs in the novel and gives his personal view of every character, every scene, and every emotion.

The role that nature plays in O Ateneu also might give the impression that it is a romantic novel. However, O Ateneu is considered a solid manifestation of realism in Brazil, perhaps with a certain naturalistic flavor. Pompéia makes abundant use of nature as a setting for human emotion, which in itself is a romantic process. However, it is important to bear in mind that Pompéia does not rely on nature as a backdrop for the novel, nor does he use it solely to create atmosphere. Instead, nature is essentially used for the purpose of contrast and to attain symbolic effects. Thus, our author involves all three literary movements in the formation of his novel.

O Ateneu has been called a psychological novel by Afrânio Coutinho. However, it cannot be considered a psychological novel in the true sense of the word. The psychological novel places great importance on interior characterization and on internal action which develops and creates external action. However, in O Ateneu the reader is often at a loss to understand Sérgio as a character. His motives and actions are never fully developed or explained psychologically. The same can be said about Bento Alves and Dona Ema, who also are endowed with enigmatic persona-

lities. Instead, in O Ateneu the reader immediately feels the omniscient presence of the author, for it hovers over every character and every scene. Never is the reader permitted the liberty to draw his own conclusions regarding a character or an incident; every detail is minutely interpreted for him by the author:

Não é também um romance essencialmente psicológico, em que as personagens constituam, cada uma, seu mundo próprio, animado por emoções e reações que lhes sejam peculiares. Em O Ateneu, apesar da penetrante análise de caracteres, as personagens são uma espécie de títeres que o romancista domina e movimenta conforme os caprichos da sua onipotência, revivescência dos soldados de chumbo que, em criança, 'fazia formar a combate como uma ameaça tenebrosa ao equilíbrio do mundo.' Possuem vida interior, mas essa vida somente se manifesta em um sentido determinado—aquêle escolhido pelas exigências emocionais do escritor. 55

Pompéia on several occasions has also been referred to as a naturalist by such different critics as José Veríssimo and Nelson Werneck Sodré; however, for various reasons he cannot be classified in the naturalistic school, a follower of the tenets of Emile Zola or Aluísio Azevedo. For one thing, he does not believe in the scientific method or the influence of heredity, environment, and the moment of time. For another, he systematically avoids the lurid and the sensational, so dear to the naturalist writers. Pompéia himself felt that a writer should not dwell on the seamy side of life but should render a true picture of daily existence.

⁵⁵ Maria Luiza Ramos, Psicologia e Estética de Raul Pompéia (Belo Horizonte, n. p., 1957), p. 102.

He further believed that a writer had a duty to avoid shocking situations:

As armadilhas literárias com a intenção de impressionar, dão sempre em resultado verdadeiras porcarias literárias, em que a pena do escritor, degradada, parece deleitar-se a esgravatar os interstícios do horripilante, do nojento ou do torpe, o que nos causa náuseas, quando, inclinando-se para o extremo oposto, não aborrecem com fantasias impossíveis que, não tem por si o estilo, são verdadeiramente intoleráveis.... Poupar ao leitor tanto quanto possível o shocking das situações repugnantes, prescindíveis, é o dever daquele que, sem a pequenina intenção de extasiar com as tintilações irritantes de um descritivo sem rumo, nem utilidade de construção, tem em mira levar nervosamente, vigorosamente a efeito a pintura dos espíritos e dos temperamentos pelo enredo da vida. 56

Thus, the characters in O Ateneu are not marked by morbid pathological cases as are characters in novels by the Goncourt Brothers and Emile Zola, nor are they generally from the lower strata of society as are the characters in works of naturalistic authors, in order to prove the deterministic theories prevalent of the day. On the contrary, instead of delving into the vulgar and the unsavory, he casually insinuates what could be considered spicy and risqué. As a matter of fact, Pompéia has a tendency to suggest rather than to develop the fully erotic scene. He is in the habit of leaving things unsaid or merely implied. When, early in the novel, Sanches makes homosexual advances to young Sérgio, while

⁵⁶Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 222.

walking among the dark wooded areas of the school grounds, nothing is said explicitly. Everything is left to the reader's imagination, and still the author's intent and purpose is perfectly clear:

Uma vez, ao escurecer, passeando em calado, como Sanches igualmente vendo escapar o dia para além das montanhas, percebi que o meu companheiro balbuciava uma pergunta. Falou desatento, admirando o crepúsculo com a testa franzida, na meia abstração que era o meu ricto costumeiro.... Como não apreendi a pergunta, o Sanches repetiu. Escapou-me involuntário o riso... Abarbava-me a mais rara espécie pretendente! Eu ria com franqueza, mas abismado. Era de uma extravagância original aquê! Sanches! 57

The impressionistic label given by Afrânio Coutinho and Célia Therezinha Oliveira fits Pompéia's novel presentation of characters and scenes. Célia Therezinha Oliveira finds the structure of the novel to be orbital, not linear, which was not typical at the time Pompéia wrote *O Ateneu*. Scenes are spontaneous and unexpected and do not follow one another successively in time. Rather, they are juxtaposed in psychological time, not according to sequential time. They revolve solely around Sérgio, the central character, and from events that occur the author builds his pessimistic philosophy of life:

Também a técnica de composição de O Ateneu revela a tendência impressionista que o assinala. A estrutura narrativa do livro é orbital, e não linear, como o do romance típico de até então. Os episó-

⁵⁷Raul Pompéia, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

dios, sucedendo-se meio gratuito e inesperadamente do livro, não se subordinam, propriamente uns aos outros; melhor diríamos, justapoem-se segundo o ritmo de um tempo predominantemente psicológico, característico dos romances memorialistas, de proustiano sabor, e giram em torno de—o neste caso efectivamente personagem central—o menino Sérgio, ao vivê-los, reage a elas e vai, desde modo formando,—(ou deformando?)—, o seu carácter e a sua visão do mundo. 58

Célia Therezinha Oliveira finds that the impressionistic style attributed to Pompéia was determined by his psychological subjective attitude. The author, unable realistically to see what was happening, tended to perceive events through a personal and individual perspective. He captured impressions of people and events, and his personality was molded by the fleeting impressions that these events made on him:

Entendemo-lo, isso sim, como um estilo artístico determinado pela atitude psicológica subjectivista de perceber os fenómenos segundo uma perspectiva própria, despojando as coisas das correções lógicas que o homem comum introduz habitualmente nelas, e, por isso, enunciando-as de tal forma que, através da expressão, o que se capte seja exactamente a impressão que a realidade causou ao observador. Geralmente, na visão do tipo impressionista ou fenomenista, dá-se uma inversão dos elementos que compõem a realidade contemplada, um deles destacando-se e sendo tomado como o ponto básico para a formulação do fenómeno, gerando uma perspectiva inovadora de percepção do mesmo. 59

⁵⁸ Célia Therezinha Oliveira, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

The impressionistic technique is intimately linked to the author's individual temperament. The reader constantly senses that Pompéia is writing from a personal vantage point, trying to win the reader over and emphasizing his own particular likes and dislikes rather than describing characters and events as they are in actuality. Pompéia's subjectivity colors his characters and situations. The scenes in the novel seem to have been chosen exclusively in order to reinforce the author's position and to paint a devastating and uncompromising picture of his fellow classmates and the school authorities.

In the impressionistic style, coloration takes precedence over objects in the same way as it does in the impressionistic style of painting introduced by Monet, Manet, and their group.⁶⁰ Thus the coloration of characters and events takes on a very personal tone. Instead of the object itself, an impression is depicted, creating, as the novel rolls along, a heap of pictorial sensations. This is what Eugênio Gomes means when he finds that Pompéia's narrative abounds with many visual impressions in which the author registers differences of shades and coloring.⁶¹ The author's concern for visual impressions drives him not only to draw scenes with words but also to create a character out of a small picture as he did with Rosália:

⁶⁰ Stephen Ullmann, Style in the French Novel (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), p. 123.

⁶¹ Eugenio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro (Salvador: Livraria Progresso Editora, 1958), p. 144.

Sua preocupação com as estampas é por fim tão dominadora que o escritor constantemente recai no vício de desenhar com as palavras, quando não é levado a reanimar alguma gravura, como fez com a de Rosália, incorporando-a à narrativa como um personagem. 62

Afrânio Coutinho bases his belief in Pompéia's impressionistic style on the fact that he was a disciple of the Goncourt Brothers, proficient in "écriture artiste" and poetic prose and that he found a satisfactory form of expression within the canons of Impressionism:

No Brasil, a primeira grande repercussão do Impressionismo é em Raul Pompéia. Discípulo dos Goncourt, adepto da 'écriture artiste' e da prosa poética, depois de formar o espírito na doutrina do Naturalismo, recebeu a influência da estética simbolista e só encontrou plena e satisfatória expressão dentro dos cânones do Impressionismo. 63

According to Coutinho, this statement is a synthesis of Pompéia's indebtedness to the impressionistic style of the Goncourts. However, Pompéia did not consider himself a follower either of the Goncourt Brothers or of naturalistic trends in literature.

Andrade Muricy posits Pompéia as a pioneer of Brazilian Impressionism and recognizes the difficulty that his contemporaries had in placing him in any one school:

⁶² Eugênio Gomes, Aspectos do Romance Brasileiro, p. 144.

⁶³ Afrânio Coutinho, Introdução à Literatura no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1966), p. 228.

Era difícil, na época, julgar do estilo de Raul Pompéia. Algumas de suas páginas de mais decidida posição inovadora do que precursora, francamente pioneira do Impressionismo, passaram, senão despercebidas, pelo menos sem alcançarem definição, mesmo aproximada, de sua efetiva tendência estética. 64

Célia Therezinha Oliveira pointed out that O Ateneu does not have one uniform style;⁶⁵ instead, it has many styles, and each one identifies proportionally with the theme. Style, according to Pompéia, is representative of an idea and a sensation:

Gênero Goncourt, gênero Stendhal. Nem uma coisa nem outra. O estilo gradua-se proporcionalmente ao tema. Estilo representativo de uma idéia, estilo representativo de uma sensação. Desenho e tinta. Ou variando a metáfora: impossível fazer de um monocórdio uma orquestra. 66

Although Pompéia never sought to follow in the literary footsteps of the Goncourt Brothers, the fact that he constantly looked for the unusual phrase, the novel and original expression, placed him very near the "écriture artiste" of the Goncourt Brothers. Pompéia was always faithful to the idea that the eloquent expression was the highest form of art and he firmly believed that language itself should be "written eloquence."⁶⁷ He was forever trying to forge and explore new avenues of expression and often used strange and unorthodox metaphors and similes to catch the

⁶⁴Andrade Muricy, op. cit., p. 229.

⁶⁵Célia Therezinha Oliveira, op. cit., p. 76.

⁶⁶Lêdo Ivo, op. cit., p. 28.

⁶⁷Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 219.

the eye of the reader and shock the ear of the listener. He did not try consciously to imitate the style of the Goncourt Brothers, but in creating his own form of "written eloquence" he did elevate Brazilian prose to a higher form of poetic art.

O Ateneu as a Romantic Novel: Nature in O Ateneu

Pompéia made extensive use of nature in O Ateneu. All told, there are nineteen direct references to nature: nine of which are detailed accounts of the surrounding countryside and ten short references. There are, in addition, a considerable number of indirect references which are extremely interesting because they represent Pompéia's reporting of his characters' distorted vision of nature or their use of it for their own purposes. At first glance, his use of nature brings to mind the Romantic techniques of earlier Brazilian writers such as Macedo and Alencar. Upon further study, however, notable differences appear. In order to understand the use of nature in O Ateneu, let us go back in time and review how both Portuguese and Brazilian writers used nature in their novels.

The role that nature has played in literature is as old as the art of writing itself and has undergone changes and modifications as new literary movements evolved and were accepted or rejected. Often nature was the backdrop and set the scene for characters to play their roles. On a subjective plane, however, nature was used to reflect man's inner strivings, as can be witnessed in Bernardim Ribeiro's Menina e Moça, published in 1554 but probably written long before. Ultimately this subjective idea

of nature was taken up again by Romantic writers of the nineteenth century:

A natureza da Menina e Moça tem um duplo aspecto: ora é um espelho, em que as criaturas humanas se vêem ou vêem o seu contraste, um espelho que conta histórias de amor, felizes ou desastrosas; ora é uma força que impela as personagens para fora de si mesmas, numa inquietação sem objetivo definido. No primeiro caso há um paralelismo entre a personagem e o ambiente natural. No segundo a fronteira entre uma e outro dissolve-se: o apelo do longe, por exemplo, ecoa na personagem como que ampliando os limites do eu. É neste segundo aspecto que Bernardim pode considerar-se um precursor do gosto da distância e da bruma que caracterizará alguns românticos. 68

Although writing at the beginning of the Portuguese Renaissance, Bernardim Ribeiro reflects a lyricism which has its antecedents in the Italian Renaissance. The artistic use of nature as a mirror to the poet's inner feelings was an innovation borrowed from Petrarch. Italian influence at the time was direct and profound and helped to modify Portuguese lyricism during the fourteenth century.⁶⁹ In the Italian Renaissance literature the classical sentiment of the divine goodness of nature, healthy and useful, is one of the strongest characteristics. It appears in the early Brazilian narratives of the discovery. Thus, in Pêro Vaz de Caminha's Carta do Achamento do Brasil, we find a paradisiac description of the New World which, in part, was a reaction against

⁶⁸Antônio José Saraiva, História da Literatura Portuguesa (Porto: Alberto de Oliveira, Ltd., 1966), p. 230.

⁶⁹M. Rodrigues Lapa, Lições de Literatura Portuguesa: Época Medieval (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, Ltda., 1966), p. 423.

the intellectualism and emotional restraint of the classical period:

De ponta a ponta é tôda graia ... muito chã e muito fremosa ... Nela até agora não pudemos saber que haja ouro nem prata ... porém a terra em si é de muito bons ares assim frios e temperados como os de Entre-Doiro-e-Minho. Águas são muitas e infinitas. 70

The venerable Jesuit missionary Father José de Anchieta wrote about the deep impression the almost incredible loveliness of the landscape made on him:

Todo o Brasil é um jardim em frescura e bosques, e não se vê em todo o ano árvore sem erva seca. Os arvoredos se vão às nuvens de admirável altura e grossura e variedade de espécies. Muitos dão bons frutos, e o que lhes dá graça é que há nêles muitos passarinhos de grande formosura e variedade e em seu canto não dão vantagem aos rouxinóis, pintassilgos, colorinos e canários de Portugal, e fazem uma harmonia quando um homem vai por este caminho, que é para louvar ao Senhor, e os bosques são tão frescos, que os lindos e artificiais de Portugal ficam muito abaixo. 71

The beauty of the Brazilian countryside became a topic of discussion even by European writers who never had visited the New World. In 1562, Montaigne, in his famous essay "Les Cannibales," extolled the beauty of nature in Brazil as well as the virtues of the noble savage that was later to influence the Romantic writers of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁰ Alfredo Bosi, op. cit., p. 17.

⁷¹ Ronald de Carvalho, Pequena História da Literatura Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: F. Briguiet & Cia., 1964), p. 20.

During the Romantic period the literary expression of the Neo-classical pantheists was influenced by the doctrine of natural law, according to which the forest primeval became to a larger extent a forest of symbols in which the writer could project all sorts of symbolic meaning. Subjectively, we often find the author identifying with nature or giving it a sense of feeling as in the early Portuguese novelists.

Inasmuch as the first settlers of Brazil were Portuguese adventurers who had little inclination to populate and work the new found land, the natural wealth of the new lands was originally not taken seriously. The Portuguese brought with them the culture of the Old World and, for a time, the distinct novelty of the new and forbidding continent was simply its exuberant natural surroundings. However, in Música do Parnaso (1705) Botelho de Oliveira, recognized today as a precursor of nativistic Brazilian literature, reveals that the muses who formerly inspired the classical Greek and Latin poets also stimulated his poetical creation. The same can be said of Sebastião de Rocha Pita, who expresses a similar thought in his História da América Portuguesa, in which he finds that the natural beauty of the Brazilian countryside, which he compares to a terrestrial paradise, serves as his Pierian spring of inspiration.

Due to centuries of extensive cultivation in Europe, nature had become docile, readily cut and trimmed by man. As the arts began to flourish in the newly found lands, European traditions inevitably supplied most of the models. Despite the nativistic

touches in the writings of the Portuguese explorer Pêro Vaz de Caminha and in writers like Cláudio Manuel da Costa and Santa Rita Durão, these writers were American in the most superficial sense of the word.

Once the great enthusiasm about the exuberant tropical bays and inlets had died down, an uncomfortable feeling rather than a stimulation of the artistic imagination developed. In part because of the Indian menace, in part because of the uncertainties of life in the untamed New World, nature was considered more of a threat. Early Brazilian writers during the colonial period such as Manuel Botelho de Oliveira and Gregorio de Matos Guerra obeyed their hearts as well as convention in seeking and following European literary models, specially in form and style, vocabulary and language. Although there is an apparent interest in nature in Basilio da Gama's O Uruguay and in Santa Rita Durão's Caramuru, it was not till the advent of Romanticism that the native writers turned for nationalistic inspiration to the red virgin soil of the Brazilian landscape and to the primitive aborigines for roots of nationhood.

At the forefront of the Romantic movement, the French writer Bernardin de Saint-Pierre expressed in Paul et Virginie (1787) the point of view that happiness consists in living close to nature and in following one's sentiments. Nature, therefore, became the source of all good and beauty, much in the same tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau whom Bernardin de Saint-Pierre met in 1772. Chateaubriand, a few years later, inspired by the Indians of North

America wrote Atala (1801) and René (1802) and set in vogue a wave of exoticism, renewing the feeling for nature set forth by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and creating the perfect type of Romantic hero, somber and melancholy. Inspired by the wave of the noble savage, the European found a correspondance between man and nature:

With a somewhat impetuous zeal, they belauded the simplicity of these savages, declaring that they derive it from nature; they spoke of their kindliness, their generosity, virtues not invariably conspicuous among Europeans. 72

Following Brazilian political independence, in the Romantic novels of José de Alencar, nature becomes synonymous with national exaltation. The superiority of the New World is a repeated refrain.⁷³ The majestic Brazilian scenery of the virgin forest becomes the background for the great and heroic exploits of the Indian, the "sertanejo" and the "bandeirante." The pen of Alencar depicts the imposing Brazilian forest dwarfing man into an insignificant bit player:

Tudo era grande e pomposo no cenário que a natureza, sublime artista, tinha decorado para os dramas majestosos dos elementos, em que o homem é apenas um simples comparsa. 74

⁷²Paul Hazard, The European Mind (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1964), p. 13.

⁷³M. Cavalcante Proença, José de Alencar na Literatura Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Civilização Brasileira, S/A., 1966), p. 39.

⁷⁴José de Alencar, O Guarani (São Paulo: Edições Melhoramentos, 1962), p. 12.

Macedo's A Moreninha, on the other hand, bestowed an attitude of sentimental contemplation on nature. In this novel, nature becomes a decorative element and even a pretext for facile sentimentality specially when the protagonist suffered unrequited love.

The realist novel of Taunay, Inocência, demonstrated a basic understanding of nature, that gives his tale an authentic ring. This regional novel with its realistic view of the natural environment is dramatically opposed to the sentimental portrayal of nature in both Macedo and Alencar.

In O Ateneu, the bucolic view of nature as an intimate and subjective force reflects and often symbolizes Sérgio's emotional turmoil. In the following scene, Sérgio, lonely and dejected, approaches the world of religious mysticism. There are several causes that lead to his feeling of hopelessness although his father's illness seems to touch them off. The sad mist that descends from the mountains weighs heavily on him, like a friar's vow and a seminarian's cassock. He has the sensation of walking in a cloister, looking with downcast eyes at the white tombstones, completely annihilated before life and God:

A neblina de melancolia, baixada sôbre o colégio da altura da cordilheira, repercussão da tristeza verde das matas, pesava-me aos ombros como a lôba de um seminarista, como o voto de um frade; eu passeava na circunscrição do recreio como num claustro, olhando as paredes, brancas como túmulos, caiados, limitando as preocupações do espírito à minha humilhação diante de Deus, sem olhar para cima, na modéstia curvada dos brutos—anulando-me a mim mes-

mo na angústia o pensamento religioso, como no saco de pano bicudo, preto, do farri-coco.

O céu, que a imaginação buscara dantes, como os cânticos buscam os zimbórios, caía agora sôbre mim como um solidéu de bronze. 75

The vocabulary is saturated with religious references. Nature in all its solemn splendor seems to kindle Sérgio's religious experience. The human reflection in this scene, aroused by Sérgio's natural sad impulse, is replete with suggestive references to excruciating mental and emotional pain.

Much as the Romantic writers portrayed nature subjectively, giving it qualities and attributes far beyond its scope, Pompéia uses nature in a similar fashion, to create and to heighten a certain "état d'âme." The reader finds in O Ateneu that nature, often allied to religion, reflects Sérgio's suffering nature. It therefore, contributes to man's inner sentiment much as it does in the works of Bernardim Ribeiro. However, it is not the usual romantic or sentimental expression. Instead of only reflecting man's conflicts, nature kindles his unhappiness and causes him to turn his thoughts to religion and death. Often it is contrasted with the idea of the individual's loss of liberty and restrained action. It is always wild and tropical, often dark and mysterious. Nature is never calm and peaceful like the landscapes of the Arcadian poets. It is fettered and, therefore, unhappy in that it

⁷⁵Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 58.

is not free; it emphasizes man's slavery to convention, to his numerous onerous duties and responsibilities, and his inability to enjoy life fully.

At one point in the novel Pompéia personifies the sun and compares it to Sérgio. Sérgio's religious experience is contrasted to the sun's atheistic posture and is presented on an emotional level. The sun, on the other hand, does not dare to approach religion because it is essentially an unbeliever. Both, nature and Sérgio, although on different grounds, feel uncomfortable in the presence of organized religion. The morning sun timidly peers in through the stained-glass windows but feels rejected because it has not said its morning prayers. The jasmine branches, however, that dared enter the chapel lie withered on the stone floor. Religion has a stultifying effect on life. An analogous form of rejection is later experienced by Sérgio when he finds that religion does not satisfy his needs. In essence, religion as Sérgio sees it, is a pious fraud that leads the believer into a cold barren world of death:

O sol vinha também à capela e colava de fôra a fronte às vidraças, brando ainda do despertar recente, fresco da toilette da aurora, com medo de entrar, corado de vergonha de não rezar, pobre astro atéu. Pelas janelas abertas, esgalhavam-se para dentro frondosas ramas de jasmineiro, como uma invasão de floresta; e os jasmims da véspera, cansados, debulhavam-se em conchinhas de nácar pelo soalho, mortos, expirando no ambiente a alma livre do aroma. 76

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 57.

There is also contrast between the sun outside the windows and the jasmine branches that have dared enter the chapel. The flowers that penetrated have paid for their foolhardy act. The sun, bearer of light and dispeller of melancholy and ignorance, is not permitted to penetrate the dark and forbidding recesses of inner sanctum. Obviously tainted with positivistic thought, the sun, instead, timidly looks through the stained-glass windows and shamefacedly withdraws. Intolerant of modern scientific thought, religion thrives in its dark, cold, and moldy atmosphere. Although Pompéia does not openly attack religion, he does present it symbolically in a most unfavorable light. In spite of the lack of direct reference, the reader instinctively senses that the author places religion in the background. Sérgio, in seeking to escape his unhappy surroundings, does so first through his fanciful flights into nature, later through his religious experience, eventually through his homosexual relationships.

Often, nature's only "raison d'être" is to accentuate the melancholic atmosphere of Sérgio's surroundings. To a great extent, nature is envisioned as sad and nostalgic and serves the purpose of lending scenic atmosphere to a passage as in the following scene:

As eminências de sombria pedra e a vegetação selvática debruçavam sobre o edifício um crepúsculo de melancolia, resistente ao próprio sol a pino dos meios-dias de novembro. Esta melancolia era um plágio ao detestável pavor monacal de outra casa de educação, o negro Caraça de Minas. Aristarco dava-se palmas desta tristeza aérea—a atmosfera moral da meditação e do

estudo, definia, escolhida a dedo para maior luxo da casa, como um apêndice mínimo da arquitetura. 77

Even the brilliant summer sun is unable to dispel the melancholic atmosphere created by an encircling and menacing tropical vegetation. Aristarco enjoys the sad atmosphere which he believes is conducive to meditation and study.

Besides using nature as a backdrop, Pompéia often weaves two or three small scenes into one through the use of symbols. At one point in the novel, not being able to sleep because of his anxiety and his expectation of Dona Ema's impending morning visit, Sérgio lies in darkness in the infirmary awaiting the dawn. As he lies awake, his eyes are attracted to a colored lithograph of a wooded, snow-filled landscape with a blue waterfall. Slowly the evening darkness gives way to daybreak and the light, fearful at first, enters his sickroom and illuminates the picture. As the morning rays begin to appear, the chirping birds are heard. Heralded by the morning light, Dona Ema makes her entrance:

O meu futuro era o despertar precoce, a ansiada esperança da primeira visita. Saltava da cama, abria imprudentemente a vidraça, a veneziana. Ainda escuro. Uma luz em frente, longínqua, irradiava solitária, reforçando pelo contraste a obscuridade. Por toda a parte firmamento limpo. O mais completo silêncio. Dir-se-ia ouvir no silêncio azul das alturas a crepitação das estrelas ardendo.

Eu tornava ao leito. Esperava. Não dormia mais. Ao fim de muito tempo, entrava na enfermaria, vinha ter aos lençóis, de mansinho, como uma insinuação derramada de leite,

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 16-17.

a primeira manifestação da alvorada. O arvoredo movia-se fôra com um bulício progressivo de folhagem que acorda. A luz meiga, receosa, desenvolvia-se docemente pelo soalho, pelas paredes.

Havia no aposento um grande cromo de paisagem, montanhas de neve no fundo, mais à vista, uma vivenda desmantelada, uma cachoeira de anil e pinheiros espectrais, trabalhados, encanecidos, por um século de tormentas. A madrugada subia ao quadro, como se amanhecesse também na região dos pinheiros. Eu esperando. A madrugada progredia.

Toucava-se a vegetação de côres diurnas. Dialogava o primeiro trilar da passarada. Eu esperando ainda. E ela vinha ... com a aurora. 78

The entire scene is developed through symbols. The utter darkness that envelopes the heavens corresponds to Sérgio's feeling of frustration and insecurity. The wintry scene depicted in the painting on the wall also accentuates the child's feeling of cold and emptiness. In the ensuing silence only the "crackling" stars can be heard and, with the approaching morning light, the birds. Finally, Dona Ema appears to nurse young Sérgio. In this very effective scene which brings out Sérgio's anxieties, Dona Ema is compared to the morning aurora, which dispels the fears of the boy. The description of nature as seen by Sérgio is subjective and emotional. It reflects his "état d'âme" and exhibits the same nostalgia and melancholia that he feels.

As can be seen, the narrator often equates nature to religion and to death. The destructive force that is at the core of man's unhappiness is often symbolized by nature. The earth,

⁷⁸ibid., pp. 180-181.

according to Pompéia, is a place for man to suffer. He is forced to live in an inhospitable world and to bear onerous responsibilities that impinge on his liberty and happiness. Instead of being a free agent he is a slave to convention. Later, we shall see that the sky contrasted to the earth offers man liberty and unrestrained happiness. The unhealthy power of the earth, often symbolized by unruly nature, turns man's thoughts to religion and even death. Basically this is the way Sérgio views nature. Other characters, however, look at nature in other ways. Venâncio, for example, sees nature as essentially romantic. He exalts nature with the arcadic poetry of the eighteenth century. His famous speech at the Jardim Botânico, which is rained out by a tremendous downpour, is satirized by the narrator, who looks with contempt at this type of rhetorical exercise. The author summarizes Venâncio's thoughts:

Murmuraram as brisas; as fontes correram;
tomaram a palavra os sabiás; surgiram palmeiras em repuxo; houve revoadas de juritis, de beija-flôres; tôdas essas coisas, de que se alimentam versos comuns e de que morrem à fome os versejadores. 79

Aristarco, the headmaster, on the other hand, contrary to Sérgio and Venâncio, envisions nature in a very different manner. He is neither subjective nor emotional, nor is he sentimental; he is pragmatic, cold, and calculating. When called upon to speak

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 130.

during the exercises commemorating the unveiling of his own bust, Aristarco, carried away by his own eloquence compares planting the seeds of knowledge to planting a vegetable garden. In this colorful but ridiculous speech, he compares the efforts of an educator as if he were a gardener:

Com o Ateneu estava satisfeito: uma sementeira razoável; não fazia rogar para florescer. Co-rações de terra roxa, onde as lições do bem pegavam vivo. Era cair a semente e a virtude instantânea espipocava. Uma maravilha, aquela horta fecunda! Antes de maldizerem do hortelão caluniadores e invejosos julgassem-lhe os nabos, as tronchudas couves, crêspas, modestas, serviçais, as cândidas alfaces, sensíveis cebolas de lágrima tão fácil quanto sincera, as instruídas batatas, as delicadas abóboras, que todos vão plantar e ninguém planta; os alhos, tipos eternos, às vêzes porros, da vivacidade bem aproveitada; sem contar os arrepiados maxixes, nem as congestas berinjelas, nem os mastruços inomináveis, nem os agriões amargos, nem os espinagres insignificantes, nem o caruru, a bertalha, a trapoiraba dos banhos, que tem uma flor galante, mas que afinal é mato. Horta paradisíaca que ufanava-se de cultivar! A distribuição dos prêmios mostraria. 80

It is interesting to note that Aristarco uses a vegetable patch and not a flower garden as a comparison to drive his point across. As a result the reader cannot mistake the practical purpose of his educational pursuits, there is an ironic note of futility.

There are three different views of nature given in O Ateneu. Both the author and the central character share similar opinions, while Venâncio and Aristarco show opposite points of view. The author uses nature in order to create an atmosphere of foreboding

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 169-170.

expectation. Nature is pictured as uncontrollable and violent, binding man to an uncharitable world that increases his suffering and anxiety. Not only does nature enslave man to the earth but it is often contrasted to the sky in order to emphasize man's complete bondage to material needs as will be seen later on in the study. Sérgio finds that nature reflects and even symbolizes his emotional turmoil. It has the power to increase his frustration and unhappiness, tying him to a world that limits his personal liberty. Often allied to religion and to death, nature exerts a stultifying force over man. By accentuating his basic insecurity, nature opens the way for Sérgio's religious experience that proves to be of a very unhealthy nature. Venâncio de Lemos, on the other hand, known at the Ateneu for his poetic inclinations, sees nature romantically. Exalting nature in the most glowing terms, his speech at the Jardim Botânico becomes a rhetorical exercise of trivia. Evidently annoyed at him, Nature unleashes a downpour to show her displeasure. Aristarco, who represents the practical business oriented individual, uninterested in poetical considerations, shows a lack of emotion when he uses nature. In his speech before the assembled audience, during the unveiling of his bust, he unromantically compares O Ateneu to a vegetable plot and his students to prized vegetables.

Nature in O Ateneu reflects man's unhappiness on earth. It is not portrayed as calm or peaceful but rather as wild and unruly. Like man, nature is not free and it often represents man's enslavement to the earth. It is contrasted to the idea of man's loss of liberty and restrained action. Nature often kindles

unhappiness and causes him to turn to religion for hope. Although Pompéia equates nature to religion he also equates it to death. Both nature and man are prisoners of the earth and they continually seek to escape. Obviously, the earth is a place for man and nature to suffer.

Chapter II

O Ateneu as a Microcosm of Contemporary Society

In this chapter I will study the picture of nineteenth century Brazil that emerges from the novel. Also I will analyze the different devices used by Pompéia to create the picture which is, in essence, satirical and humorous.

The very first words of the opening chapter, uttered by Sérgio's father, when he leaves the child at the institution, are one of the keys to understanding the novel: "Vais encontrar o mundo, disse-me meu pai, à porta do Ateneu. Coragem para a luta."¹ The reader is immediately confronted with the fact that the Ateneu is a microcosm of life, and, by implication, of life in Brazil. What occurs within the thick, whitewashed walls of the school represents the general atmosphere of the nation. In essence, all the hope and despair contained therein also are to be found in the world without.

Since the Ateneu reflects the attitudes found in the Brazilian nation, the school mirrors the same moral, social, and political ills that beset the society as a whole. In the world of the Ateneu, then, humanity seems stripped of all its virtues and displays every conceivable major vice. As the novel progresses, the Ateneu becomes a microcosm of an absolutist government,

¹Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 11.

with Aristarco, the headmaster, as the titular head who rules much in the same vein as the Emperor of Brazil. Aristarco's nefarious police force, more intent on using power for personal gain than on dispensing justice, and his elaborate spy and censor systems contribute to spread fear among the students and thus permit an entrenched oligarchy to rule with an iron fist. The moral and ethical attitudes of the society are also reflected by the students as they face and solve the sundry problems that confront them at the institution. The picture of an institution of learning becoming a tool of big business and converting the student population into a money-crazed society where profit becomes the prime objective and education takes a secondary position, is also drawn. Even religion, although it never attains prime importance, appears as a subjugating influence that does not permit man to attain the truth of life.

Brazil During the Reign of Dom Pedro II

A brief panorama of the political and social problems besetting Brazil during the latter part of the nineteenth century, I believe would help the reader get a better idea of the situation that Pompéia was trying to depict in his novel.

Dom Pedro II, to whom Brazil's destiny was entrusted in 1841, viewed in retrospect, was in many ways a good and conscientious ruler. His contemporaries, however, had a different perspective. To end the constant bickering between the palace and the Parliament, Dom Pedro, at the age of fifteen, declared himself of age

and took over the reins of government. By 1850, most of the opposition to the continuation of the Empire had subsided and the country had gained an internal equilibrium which was to last for more than a generation. Brazil entered the decade with optimism and expectation.² Unlike his father, he was born and educated in Brazil and was completely accepted by the people. His tutors exposed him to the Enlightenment and hoped to mold him into the perfect Emperor.³

Dom Pedro was known to have a quiet, indeed, a placid temperament. Dignified, he was not given to pomp and ceremony. He was widely admired and respected abroad as an ideal and progressive monarch. Much concerned with improving education, he visited schools regularly, took part in examinations, and often attended meetings of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro and other learned societies.⁴ He not only encouraged letters and the arts, but he also encouraged European immigration and fostered industrialization. Although morally a religious man, Dom Pedro had more than his share of difficulties with the Catholic Church. He considered religion as a social phenomena with no real future. On his trips to Europe, he enjoyed visiting Protestant shrines and Jewish synagogues, which caused some of the devout in Brazil to

²Donald E. Worcester, op. cit., p. 103.

³Ibid., p. 97.

⁴Ibid., p. 128.

suspect his religious beliefs. Concerning his faith Dom Pedro summed up the matter by saying: "I am religious because morality, which is a quality of intelligence, is the foundation of the religious idea."⁵ With regard to his religious character Joaquim Nabuco has written:

The mind of Dom Pedro II was steeped in anticlerical prejudice. He was not exactly anticlerical—he saw no real danger in the existence of the clergy; he rather failed to find attractive the actual religious vocation. For him...the soldier and the priest were two social phenomena with no future, two contemporary necessities which he would have liked to put to better use. ⁶

He was a firm believer in a constitutional form of government and he tried to follow a liberal course by not taking sides in the two party system. Invested with broad powers known as "o poder moderador," which permitted him to bring about the fall of the government when he wished to, the Emperor tried to take a middle-of-the-way course which did not satisfy any political party. The ensuing dissatisfaction among the political parties eventually became a factor in the events leading to the crisis of 1889 which led to the overthrow of Dom Pedro II.⁷ Perhaps that was his failing for remaining neutral between the two opposing parties, he cultivated the support of neither party. When the army challenged the Monarchy in 1889, neither party rose up to its defense:

⁵Ibid., p. 116.

⁶Ibid., p. 116.

⁷Ibid., p. 109.

Dom Pedro's exercise of the moderating power may have been fair and honest, but on occasions it showed him lacking in political wisdom. Gradually he alienated his chief supporters, and the monarchy came to hang by a thread. During the last years of his reign diabetes seriously impaired his capacity for work: the monarchy's health declined simultaneously.⁸

Although progressive in his ideas, Dom Pedro was not overly energetic in developing new programs to fit the changing social needs of the times. As a result, his regime drifted slowly in the general direction of the future instead of adopting a dynamic, clearly charged course toward liberal republicanism. By the last decades of the century the patience of numerous ardent followers had waned and Dom Pedro although respected as a man, was no longer at the helm of his ship.

Repeatedly attacked in the press after 1868, as a despotic and "Machiavellian," Dom Pedro was charged with buying supporters and creating financial ruin through his personal acts. Anfriso Fialho, who wrote in 1885, considered him a Machiavellian figure who was only interested in becoming the only power in the nation so that everything and everyone, institutions and men, would depend on him. He also accused the Emperor of reducing the nation to a corpse, by impeding progress and prosperity:

In order to accomplish this plan, the Emperor, guided by the maxims and principles taught by Machiavelli and other authors, organized a truly ingenious but diabolical system of government. He

⁸Ibid., p. 114.

then put it into practice with an ability and perseverance that clearly demonstrate the immense ambition that drove him on . . . 9

he charged Dom Pedro with buying his supporters by conferring titles of nobility and honors to his friends:

In a country of poor people such as Brazil, he corrupts the few who have definite means of subsistence and who have acquired a certain independence by giving them titles and so-called honors. For all the others, no matter how elevated the position he has given them, he treats them with contempt . . . The ministers are his most docile instruments. 10

According to Anfriso Fialho, in order for a politician to get ahead in Brazil he must first secure the Emperor's patronage:

All politicians depend on him and want to be on good terms with him. He knows this and therefore continues using them as he sees fit. 11

He attributed Brazil's financial ruin to the personal acts of the Emperor:

Thus the agricultural interests, the first and almost only source of the country's income, are deeply in debt; . . . there is a constant governmental deficit, which is increasing by leaps and bounds; some of the provinces cannot pay the public employees; paper money, the only currency in circulation, has depreciated about 50 percent . . . the comptroller covers up for the lack of money saying that 'the books are not yet up to date'; the state seeks part of the resources that it needs for its expenses from

⁹Richard Graham, ed., A Century of Brazilian History Since 1865: Issues and Problems (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 35.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹Ibid., p. 38.

the lottery, that is, in the money of the poor and in gambling; beggars are organized throughout the Empire, with regular hours and definite days; . . . lawyers, doctors, and engineers are waiting for public employment in order to live and so long as they fail to obtain it they live miserably, usually from loans that are alms in disguise; large-scale public and private prostitution is another form of begging to which a part of the population is reduced. 12

Speaking on the social, the economic and the educational problems of the nation the author states:

In fact, the government of the Emperor not only never ordered the construction of highways—the first of all conditions for prosperity in a country that lives almost exclusively from agriculture—he never seriously attempted to resolve the problems of immigration and settlement, the solution of which would have brought us a great fund of intelligence, improvements, and industriousness. He never organized a plan of professional instruction or of national education. He did, however, conserve as long as he could the most destructive element of our backwardness, poverty, and moral putrefaction, that is, **SLAVERY**, making of this criminal institution the most active collaborator in his work of destruction in the interior. In the same way, he used yellow fever—through his Speeches from the Throne—as his principal means of propaganda against immigration. 13

Slowly the Emperor's use of the moderating power began to undermine the entire fabric of government. The Conservatives, opposed to electoral reform tried desperately to conduct elec-

¹²Ibid., pp. 38-39.

¹³Ibid., p. 40.

tions insuring that the liberals who favored abolition be eliminated from government. The liberals, on the other hand, were against the Emperor because he did not support their cause. They were resentful because he turned back instead of pushing on for the separation of church and state.¹⁴ In 1869, the liberals issued a manifesto, demanding "Either Reform or Revolution" while calling for sweeping changes in the government. They wanted the Emperor, the Council of State, the National Guard and, above all, slavery.¹⁵ The slave question was the thorn in Dom Pedro's side. In 1870, the Republican Party, organized by those disenchanted with the government, issued its manifesto demanding the end to the monarchy. Willing to gain their goal with bayonets, they began courting the military, stirring up trouble between the latter, the liberals and the politicians.¹⁶ Conflicts between the military and the police became so frequent and serious that the government was obliged to call in the police and to ask the army to patrol the streets.¹⁷ The military crises, both real and imaginary, continued to disturb the peace. Most of the older officers still respected the Emperor but the younger ones were

¹⁴Donald E. Worcester, op. cit., p. 118.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 123.

hostile and antimonarchical.¹⁸ After the Paraguayan War the army had been reorganized. Recruiting by force was abandoned and replaced by conscription. Flogging was done away with and the officers' pay was increased by one-third. Nevertheless, the army considered itself neglected and the idea that the "politicos are the enemy of the military" began to spread. At the same time army officers were becoming convinced that they were destined to save the nation from the politicians.¹⁹

Despite the good intentions of the Emperor, he was surrounded by a great deal of corruption in political circles which indirectly reflected on the Emperor himself. During his reign the streets of Rio de Janeiro were beset by gangs of robbers who terrorized the citizenry. On the downfall of the Monarchy, one of the first steps taken by the Provisional Government in 1889 was to implement a law and order program to make the streets safe. Deodoro da Fonseca, the first President of Brazil, decided to take the initiative, however, soon he became embroiled in a governmental crisis with Quintino Bocaiúva, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Campo Sales, Minister of Justice:

Among the issues causing bitter conflict was a campaign to drive robbers from the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Some of the robbers had liaisons with politicians who had protected them effectively in the past. Deodoro was determined that the robbers must go, and although warned that persons in high places would be involved, he promised full

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

support to the police. The robber chieftains were well-known figures and easily found, and soon many of them had been sent off to serve long sentences at hard labor. The expected repercussions also came quickly, for one of the robbers was the brother of the Conde de Martosinhos, owner of O País, the paper that Quintino Bocaiúva edited. Quintino promised his employer that he would secure his brother's release. Deodoro was adamant. Quintino threatened to resign. Campos Sales interjected that he would resign if the prisoner were released. 20

Not only was the government of Dom Pedro marred by similar quarrels but their corrupt legacy was passed on to the Republic. News of these unfortunate scandals that frequently rocked the nation could not be kept from the public, and government prestige subsequently suffered.

In Raul Pompéia's eyes, the Monarchy in Brazil was a vestige of Portuguese imperialism and not representative of a government native to America. The Emperor never had Pompéia's sympathy and he saw Dom Pedro as heir to a reactionary system that perpetuated the rule of a conservative landed aristocracy that prospered on slavery. Besides sanctioning a government riddled by corruption, Dom Pedro was weak because of his fainthearted attempts to free the slaves and to institute needed agrarian reform.

O Ateneu as Political Satire

In the following section I will study how Aristarco mirrors imperial corruption at the Ateneu. As the novel progresses, the

²⁰Ibid., p. 135.

author identifies the headmaster with Dom Pedro II and autocratic power.

Although Aristarco, the head of the Ateneu, the boarding school depicted in the novel symbolizes the Emperor, he seems to be more a symbol of Brazilian aristocracy. As his name clearly implies, he represents a privileged class well entrenched in the system. Behind his placid façade of a devoted pedagogue he conceals an unscrupulous and corrupt nature. He, like high government officials, knows how to cloak his deception with a mantle of probity.

As a pedagogue he is more interested in trying to outdo himself with flashy parades through the main thoroughfares of Rio de Janeiro, with noisy and colorful band concerts, lavish and outlandish ceremonies, whose only purpose is to increase the legend of the Ateneu and to appease his own boundless egoism than he is in true academic pursuits. While he fawns upon the most prestigious and wealthy families of the realm, his advertising techniques at the same time incessantly flood the country with the hope of attracting their sons to the school:

A irradiação do reclame alongava de tal modo os tentáculos através do país, que não havia família de dinheiro, enriquecida pela setentrional borracha ou pela charqueada do Sul, que não reputasse um compromisso de honra com a posteridade doméstica mandar dentre seus jovens, um, dois, três representantes abeberar-se à fonte espiritual do Ateneu. 21

²¹Raul Pompéia. op. cit., p. 14.

As Aristarco is dutifully worshipped as a monarch by his staff, deified in bronze for posterity by the students, sketched and painted from a thousand perspectives, his egoism is never satisfied. It is true that he does not personally resemble Dom Pedro, for the latter's Spartan traits are not shared by the pompous director, who constantly seeks adulation and whose gargantuan appetite for renown is never fully assuaged. Still, when we consider the coronation of his statue, the hand-kissing rituals, the many unrestrained eulogies, and the numerous ceremonies of which he is, to all intents and purposes, the sovereign object, as well as his sheer love for pomp and circumstance, it cannot be denied that he embodies the figure of the perfect monarch. Besides, much like the Emperor and those in high government places, he fails to see the ridiculous figure he cuts by his actions. Not only do the teachers and even the students play up to Aristarco as a divinity, but the author takes every opportunity to magnify the image:

Ninguém conseguiria tocar com o dedo
a misteriosa púrpura. Sentia-se, porém,
o influxo da realeza impalpável. 22

In the novel not only are the characters motivated by the sins of raging pride, fiery lust and drooling envy, with wrath, gluttony, avarice and sloth following closely, but all the moral ills to which mankind is heir silently lurk in the background. Adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, and even murder are not

²²Ibid. p. 60.

unknown in this elite institution of learning. Of course, whenever the cancerous growths appear in the open, they are immediately and unequivocally concealed in order to perpetuate a façade of ultimate tranquility.

Aristarco's private army, the monitors with their swords in hand, are constantly on the alert for any dissident with a mind of his own. Anyone caught defying authority is swiftly punished. Aristarco's officers of law and order strengthen the tyrannical dictatorship that systematically crushes all opposition:

Êstes inferiores da milícia da casa faziam-se tiranetes por delegação da suprema ditadura. Armados de sabres de pau com guardinas de couro, tomavam a sério a 'investidura do mando e eram em geral de uma ferocidade adorável. ²³

Franco, a rebel by nature, angry at society, becomes increasingly belligerent. Jailed because of his rebellious nature, he is confined in an unsanitary dungeon that undermines his health and ultimately causes his death. Franco is just another example of society's increasing indifference to the plight of the downtrodden. Both he and Sérgio are victims of a repressive and apathetic society, although they vent their frustration in different manners. To underscore an uncaring society, Pompéia has no one take any interest in Franco's death. Aristarco sheds just a single tear and appears to be more interested in the financial state of the school than in his student's death. The interest that is shown by Sérgio proves to be of a very unhealthy nature.

²³Ibid., p. 40.

When a "Goiabada" revolt grips the student body, clearly taking on the dimensions of a direct challenge to Aristarco's absolute power, it is quelled suddenly and unexpectedly by the remorseful director who acknowledges corruption among the kitchen staff but does nothing to remedy the situation.

Obviously, for Pompéia, O Ateneu mirrors, in miniature, every-day life in Brazil and he seems to reiterate the words of Antônio Ferreira Viana when he arraigned the Dantas' Ministry in 1874: "I am tired of being an actor in this political comedy."²⁴ When Pompéia attacks the school administration at the Ateneu, in a wider sense, he is taking the whole political and social structure of Brazil to task. For instance, at the Ateneu more attention seems to be spent on exterior matters than on educational considerations. The school is regularly painted during the summer holidays in order to always produce a favorable impression:

O edifício fôra caiado e pintado durante as férias, como os navios que aproveitavam o descanso nos portos para uma reforma de apresentação. ²⁵

Dr. Cláudio, who symbolizes Pompéia's "idealized ego," represents the intellectual facet of the author's personality just as Sérgio represents his psychological side.²⁶ When invited to speak before the learned literary society "Amor ao Saber," his lectures

²⁴ José Maria Bello, A History of Modern Brazil (Stanford: University Press, 1966), p. 24.

²⁵ Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁶ Maria Luiza Ramos, op. cit., p. 123.

become a discussion on the social, political and moral ills of the nation:

O orador representava a nação como um charco de vinte províncias estagnadas na modorra paludosa da mais desgraçada indiferença. Os permes da vida perdem-se na vasa profunda; à superfície de coágulos de putrefação, borculha, espacadamente, hálito mefítico do miasma, fermentado ao sol, subindo a denegrir o céu, com a vaporização da morte. Os pássaros calados fogem; as poucas árvores próximas no ar parado, debruçam-se uniformes sôbre si mesmas num desânimo vegetativo, que parece crescer, descendo,—prosperidade melancólica de salgueiros. O horizonte limpo, remoto, desfere golpes de luz, oblíqua, reptil, que resvulam, espelhando faixas paralelas, imóveis, sôbre o dormir da lama. 27

This is evidently an indictment of the whole social and political structure of Brazil as Pompéia saw it. Thoroughly disgusted with the atmosphere of putrification and disinterest that permeated the Empire, due to the corruptibility of his countrymen, Pompéia saw very little hope for amelioration because of the innate weakness and indifference of its leaders. With regard to the political situation the historian, José Maria Bello, has written the following:

The Empire, it has been said a thousand times, has run out of vital juices. Its patriarchal atmosphere, a kind of warm bath that lulled the nation, could not hold the interest of the younger generation, who were eagerly making contact with the great world currents of new ideas. Even its old civil servants had long since become disil-

²⁷Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 94.

lusioned and apathetic about its perilous situation. 28

In a subsequent speech, on discussing the boarding schools as a reflection of Brazilian society, Dr. Cláudio states:

Não é o internato que faz a sociedade; o internato a reflete. A corrupção que ali viceja, vai de fora. Os caracteres que ali triunfam, trazem ao entrar o passaporte do sucesso, como os que se perdem, a marca da condenação. 29

Dr. Cláudio believes that the school is a reflection of society and does not shape it. Although he lightly praises the boarding school system in a tongue in cheek attitude, he finds that the corruption that thrives within the school comes from without. Students who enter the Ateneu with an aura of wealth and prestige are assured of success in their academic endeavors. Those who lack important family connections and wealth bring their own failure with them. Success and failure therefore are not determined by intelligence or aptitude but by wealth and prestige. There is neither justice nor equality in Pompéia's materialistic world. Once the neophyte is initiated in the microcosm of life that the boarding school represents, there are little surprises left in the outside world. The negative and black tone assumed by Dr. Cláudio reflects Pompéia's utter hopelessness of creating a better society for mankind.

The merit system is never implemented at the school. Instead,

²⁸ José Maria Bello, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁹ Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 161.

position and power are showered upon those who are looked upon with favor by the administration. Some are heirs to prestige because of their personal wealth, as in the case of Rômulo; others attain it through their station and influential family name, like Bearco da Fonseca. No one is recognized because of his intrinsic values. Rômulo reaches the heights of the privileged few and even the distinction of being chosen Aristarco's future son-in-law because of his fortune:

Anafado de aparência, e ainda mais ancho de fortuna, significava bem o que se diz um bom partido. Aristarco tinha uma filha; saúde, fortuna: um genro ideal; ainda por cima bonachão e pacato. 30

Exempt from the daily drudgery of everyday school existence, Rômulo is often invited to dine at the headmaster's table, well-provisioned with gastronomical delicacies, and is even permitted to indulge in nocturnal capers of debauchery while impervious to any punishment. On one such occasion, Sérgio takes vengeance and ruins Rômulo's plans to reenter the school after a night on the town, only to find that Aristarco is quite willing to overlook Rômulo's excesses:

Passara a noite sob a janela pedindo misericórdia ao sarrafo impassível, toda a noite, inundado pelo aguaceiro, até que, ao romper do dia, Aristarco o foi achar no lastimoso estado.

A noiva não viu, que acordava tarde. O sogro atinou espertamente com a aventura. Fêz-se esquerdo.

³⁰Ibid., p. 116.

"Ora o rapaz! . . ." exclamou com uma
satisfação muito íntima.
E estranhou apenas que o bom do genro
se deixasse pegar como um lorpa. 31

The preoccupation that the author expresses with the political and moral issues is sincere and heartfelt. Even at a tender age, Pompéia had actively joined the struggle against injustice. In his first literary attempt, O Archiote, written by hand while at the Colégio Abílio, he bitterly complains about the age-old practice among the instructional staff of awarding prizes to their favorites rather than to objectively selected and deserving students:

Ninguém ignora o que são bancos de honra.
Prêmios da aplicação. Toda ia assim não
acontece. Segundo o alto entender de certos
professores, que podem ser qualificados
de tudo menos de justiceiros, os bancos
de honra são concedidos somente aos
seus íntimos ou não são concedidos a quem
os merece. 32

Sharpening his attack, he takes certain professors to task for their unorthodox manner of choosing candidates. Thus we see young Pompéia, as rebellious as Sérgio, committed to the idea of truth from a very early age. Strength of character is evidenced as well as a healthy dose of moral courage. Obviously, it took courage for an adolescent to tackle the establishment single-handed. In later years, while a student in São Paulo, Pompéia again showed his mettle, in a political cartoon where he once more attacked the

³¹Ibid., p. 156.

³²Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 26.

authorities. This time, however, he kindled the ire of the professors who retaliated by failing him in his exam:

Os republicanos de São Paulo, que por êsse tempo lançaram um manifesto contra o Império, silenciavam sobre o elemento servil. Pompéia se exaspera. Ataca os lentes, ataca as instituições, quer subverter tudo de alto a baixo. É dêste tempo a sua 'charge' num jornal de estudantes em que, sacrílegamente, imagina a paixão do Calvário com um burro crucificado entre dois porcos. Isto provoca a sua reprovação. 33

This bitter personal experience suffered by the author appears to have triggered a sad commentary on injustice in his novel, where an analogous situation of a student fighting the administration is pictured. When the school situation becomes intolerable, Sérgio is forced to appeal to his father for help, and with it he is able to assert himself at the school, before Aristarco, and before his peers. Suddenly, however, he realizes that through this act of liberation he has forfeited any hopes that he might have had for future advancement:

Daí por diante era fatal o conflito, entre a independência e a autoridade. Aristarco tinha de roer. Em compensação, adeus esperanças de ser um dia vigilante! adeus indolência feliz dos tempos beatos! 34

Prizes at the Ateneu are obviously only awarded to those who collaborate and flatter their superior's ego. In time Sérgio assumes a devil-may-care attitude to advancement and recognition. Besides,

³³ José Lins do Rêgo, op. cit., p. 55.

³⁴ Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 75.

it is not the deserving who obtain rewards but those who are looked upon with favor by the administration. It is a very unfair world!

Sexual Morality

Early in the novel the subject of morality becomes a crusading theme for Aristarco. From Venâncio's laudatory address, praising Aristarco's pedagogical endeavors, we are informed of the headmaster's incessant struggle against the forces of immorality.³⁵ Although promiscuity is never alluded to, Aristarco leaves little doubt that sex is at the core of immoral behavior at the Ateneu. The headmaster directs his vigilance to all unnatural acts. During his interview with Sérgio's father, Aristarco, in veiled terms, refers to the perversion of the innocent at the school. He underscores the fact that he controls excessively ardent desires, keeps a watchful eye on intimate friendships and on dark corners:

Moderar, animar, corrigir esta massa de caracteres. onde começa a ferver o fermento das inclinações; encontrar e encaminhar a natureza na época dos violentos ímpetos; amordaçar excessivos ardores; retemperar o ânimo dos que se dão por vencidos precocemente; espreitar, adivinhar os temperamentos; prevenir a corrupção desiludir as aparências sedutoras do mal; aproveitar os alvoroços do sangue para os nobres ensinamentos; prevenir a depravação dos inocentes; espiar os sítios obscuros; fiscalizar as amizades; . . . 35

Actually the most immoral character in the novel is none

³⁵Ibid., p. 27.

other than Aristarco himself. He applies a strict yardstick of behavior to measure others but fails to see his own shortcomings which, in many instances, dwarf those of others. Obsessed with his student's sexual expression, Aristarco overlooks all other moral behavior. Dishonesty, hypocrisy, gluttony, drunkenness and debauchery, just to name a few, go unchecked at the institution. The headmaster gives lip service to correcting these vices but takes no punitive action. In the Late Middle Ages, Satan was believed to have three different faces, and he often appears thus sculptured on stone. The same can be said of Aristarco, who shows several contradictory countenances that conveniently change with the circumstances. Aristarco assumes a moralizing stance but he never really tries to implement a code of moral conduct at the school. He violently attacks homosexuality but permits the Cândido Affair to quietly die out, fearing that exposure may lead to loss of prestige for the institution. He speaks out against corruption but fails to take conclusive action when he discovers that the kitchen staff has been pilfering food.

Instead of discarding hypocrisy and instituting sane and healthy reform at the school, Aristarco is bent on preserving a front. While bullies makes slaves out of the weak, while cheating runs rampant in the class rooms, while immorality abounds at all levels, and deceit and hypocrisy are accepted codes of behavior, Aristarco insists on maintaining false outward appearances.

The theme of sexual promiscuity among students in private schools has long been an issue in Brazilian education. Gilberto

Freyre mentions several sources during the mid-nineteenth century that already displayed signs of anxiety:

'A pederastia', escreveu Pinto da Silva no seu ensaio de 1864, 'parece ir com passo sorrateiro fazendo suas perniciosas conquistas no meio da mocidade dos colégios ...'. Mais graves eram porém os avanços da gonorréia e da sífilis—indício de grandes excessos sexuais entre os meninos do colégio. 37

Being physically unable to fend for themselves in the prison like atmosphere of the private schools, the younger students have no other recourse than either to become the victims of the older students or to seek protection under the aegis of a stronger and therefore respected member of the community. Later, in payment for services rendered, they had to submit passively to their protector's sexual whims.

The sexual promiscuity detailed in the novel is usually, though not always, homosexual. Upon close examination, homosexuality not only affects the relationships between students but seems to emanate from the institution itself, at least that is Pompéia's contention. The long dormitories with their endless rows of white metal beds, all identical, deprive the students of their individual personality. The close quarters that prevail at the school, the restricting hierarchical society, the stifling and boring surroundings, the various groups and cliques, as well as the cult of the strong seem to nurture an aura of homosexuality. When we analyze the three friends who affect Sérgio most

³⁷Gilberto Freyre, Casa Grande e Senzala (2 vols.; Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1966), II, 584.

at the school, we find that all three are involved homosexually with him, if not overtly then at least passively:

De repente, esfriava com os seus amigos mais chegados. Assim aconteceu com o Sanches, o mesmo se deu com o Bento Alves e finalmente com o Egbert. Amizade pura não há no livro, porque tudo se mescla com laivos de homossexualidade. 38

Although the reader senses the homosexual theme, at times he cannot put his finger on it since the mood is often created by suggestion rather than by act. However, on occasions Pompéia is definite and precise, as when he discusses the Cândido affair. It is also mentioned on several occasions when the author focuses on Malheiro's reaction to Sérgio's clandestine liaison. Malheiro, a school tough, anxious to antagonize Bento Alves who he considers his greatest rival at the Ateneu, takes delight in teasing Sérgio. The young thug bluntly asks Sérgio about his impending "marriage" to Bento Alves. When Bento is informed of Malheiro's remarks by Barbalho, who enjoys inciting one against the other, Bento loses no time in challenging Malheiro. Speaking of Bento Alves Sérgio writes:

Procurou o Malheiro e com a voz talvez alterada, mas sem ódio, fêz intimação: "amanhã é a sessão de encerramento; em meio da festa saímos ambos; preciso falar-lhe das bodas."

Malheiro percebeu: era o sonhado encontro! 39

³⁸Horácio de Almeida, "Raul Pompéia Diante da Crítica Psicoanalítica," Revista das Academias de Letras, No. 76 (Rio de Janeiro, 1970), p. 22.

³⁹Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 105.

Sérgio's feminine nature is flattered at the battle that is to take place between the two titans and, as in romances of courtly love, assumes the poetic air of a damsel awaiting her lover in a medieval castle:

Por minha parte, entreguei-me de coração ao desespero das damas romanceiras, montando guarda de suspiros à janela gradeada de um cárcere onde se deixava deter o gentil cavaleiro, para o fim único de propor assunto às trovas e aos trovadores medievos. 40

During the course of the novel, as was pointed out previously, Sérgio becomes sexually involved with three students at the Ateneu. First, he accepts his tutor's advances. Although Sérgio is physically repelled by Sanches, he is in desperate need of a protector at the school to ward off his many tormentors. Sérgio, therefore, meekly accepts Sanches' offer of friendship. When Bento Alves becomes the undisputed school hero, Sanches focuses his attentions on him until he wins Bento over. Later, when Bento physically attacks Sérgio and abandons the school, Sérgio quickly switches his allegiance to Egbert. Egbert's friendship is short-lived, however; it is easily won and just as easily forgotten.

It is interesting to note that on no occasion in the novel does Sérgio openly recognize his homosexual leanings. He is able to easily diagnose Cândido and Egbert, as well as the other homosexuals who appear in the novel, but not himself.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 106.

Religious Experience

Religion at the Ateneu, as in the world at large, is multifaceted. Some at the school are fanatically devout, others are superstitious, others are attracted by the sensual beauty of the church and ritual while others are totally indifferent. Sérgio himself is religious in a sentimental way, but soon loses his belief. Ribas, with his beautiful soprano voice "tratada a pastilhas, guardada a cachênê nos dias frios, furto sem dúvida ao tesouro de gorgeios de algum sabiá descuidado,"⁴¹ is completely engulfed in his religious experience. He is the only one at the Ateneu to demonstrate any deep religious feeling. However, it is never fully explained whether Ribas's experience stems from genuine feeling or whether it is an offshoot of his involvement in the school choir. One may argue that Ribas's personal ugliness could have contributed, in part, to his seeking refuge in music and the church. The fact that he possessed an unusually pleasant voice as well as the fact that Aristarco took undeniable pleasure in listening to him could also have made him more receptive to the power of Catholicism. Whatever the reason, he is without doubt the only character in the novel who can be called religious to any degree.

Barreto, on the other hand, represents the ascetic of the Ateneu, who predicts a just retribution of fire and brimstone

⁴¹Ibid., p. 59.

for anyone who sins. He is the Savonarola of the Ateneu, the religious fanatic, who sees only sin and pending doom:

... tinha momentos de meditação trevosa com esgares de terror e falava da morte, da outra vida, rezava muito, tinha fiças de pau, bentinhos, medalhazinhas em cordões, que saltavam fora do seio no brinquito.

Iniciara-me Sanches no Mal; Barreto instruiu-me na Punição. Abria a boca e mostrava uma caldeira do inferno; as palavras eram chamas; ao calor daquelas práticas, as culpas ardiam como sardinhas em freges.

Barreto andara num seminário rigoroso, regime de nitro para congelar as ardências da idade. 42

Sanches, on the other hand, uses religion to attain his own ends: he frightens little Sérgio with calculated intent. Interested in using Sérgio as a sexual partner Sanches tries to coerce him into submission with the fear of eternal Hell. Speaking of Sanches, Sérgio says:

O honrado diretor espiritual percebeu que havia agora um ascendente de domínio que me curvava. Olhava-me então de frente e tinha ousados risos de malícia. Depois dos dias de reserva, chegou-se de novo com uma segurança de possuidor forte ...

Contudo Sanches, como os mal-intencionados, fugia dos lugares concorridos. Gostava de vaguear comigo, à noite, antes da luz, circundo-me nervosamente, estreitamente até levantar-me do chão. Eu aturava, imaginando em resignado silêncio o sexo artificial da fraqueza que definira Rebêlo. 43

⁴²Ibid., p. 71

⁴³Ibid., p. 49.

Sérgio's religious experience can be chalked up to his sensitive nature. During his depressive and masochistic moods he finds solace in the sentimentalism of Catholicism, but that feeling is completely repressed when he awakens and finds independence. The vast majority of the students, however, including the faculty, show little religious penchant and mechanically and unenthusiastically perform the rites:

Durante o hino do Anjo da guarda, no recreio abrigado, ao meio-dia, os estudantes afoguetados e transpirando ainda dos folguedos, paletós empapuçados sobre a cinta de couro, cabelos revoltos, não tomavam o rito a sério, e era a dureza dos vigilantes que os constrangia ao respeito daqueles dez minutos de religião. 44

Upon entering the school he feels a certain sense of religion:

Só o Ribas e eu ... e se não diminuía as aflições da terra e os nossos apertos, não é que o não pedíssemos ao Anjo ... 45

It is only after being subjected to the duplicity and the insincerity of his fellow students that Sérgio seems to abandon religion. Albert Mordell says that when people throw off the influence of their fathers they often cast aside their belief in a universal father.⁴⁶ Aristarco did represent a father image. This agnostic philosophy, in part, explains Sérgio's rebellious

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 58.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Albert Mordell, The Erotic Motive in Literature (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 36.

behavior as well as his devil may care attitude. Not bound in by the limiting force of established religion, he felt that man had to forge ahead unmindful of the methods used.

Horácio de Almeida finds an interesting parallel between the religious and mystical experiences of Sérgio and Arthur Rimbaud, the French symbolist poet. Both have a tendency, after a love encounter, to feel deep remorse, to openly reject it by severing all ties and to become involved in a mystical religious experience in order to cleanse the soul of any wrongdoings:

passado o entusiasmo do bom querer, vinha de imediato o desprezo pelo amaro, seguido às vés de anseios místicos por uma religião meio intelectualizada e pouco sentida. Aqui o seu caso tem muito de parecido com o de Rimbaud. Espiritualmente os dois se assemelham, até mesmo nas atitudes místicas após a fraqueza sexual. 47

The celebrative atmosphere of piety at the Ateneu is as false as the picture of morality that Aristarco and his subordinates are forever trying to foster. The fine stucco chapel, decorated with gossamer cherubims floating among the white cumulus clouds, does not reflect the society. It is only hypocrisy that accompanies the religious act. The veneer is purely superficial and once again solely motivated by insincerity.

A Picture of Bourgeois Business Society

O Ateneu abounds in colorful references to the business world. One would venture to say that whenever Pompéia is not

⁴⁷Horácio de Almeida, op. cit., p. 22

comparing the headmaster to a deity hurling angry and insulting thunderbolts from the sky, he is allying him to the other powerful members of the modern world, the prosperous and often unscrupulous merchant. Such expressions as "soldavam-se nêle o educador e o empresário"⁴⁸ and "Aristarco todo era um anúncio,"⁴⁹ which are repeated on several occasions, show the commercial side of the director's personality. As a matter of fact, hard sales tactics and advertising become an integral component of the Ateneu, and the entire structure of education suffers because of it.

The institution assumes an exciting air of attractive exhibition. Crassly put on display, the Ateneu is painted to draw attention and public admiration:

O edifício fôra caiado e pintado durante as festas, como os navios que aproveitam o descanso nos portos para uma reforma de apresentação. 50

The Ateneu becomes the pawn of promotional gimmickry. Thus it is made presentable not as a place of learning but as an appealing ship, in an exhibitionist manner, to enhance Aristarco's power and fame.

On his initial appearance in the novel Aristarco is presented as a pedagogue. Slowly, however, he is transformed into an unscrupulous business man motivated not by his interest in educa-

⁴⁸Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 26.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 26.

tional pursuits but by the profit motive and his insatiable thirst for fame. On one occasion, when Sérgio describes Aristarco, he does so invoking his resemblance to an auctioneer,⁵¹ while a few lines later he recalls how dependent he was on the financial considerations annotated by his bookkeeper:

No âmago de cada sorriso morava-lhe um
segrêdo de frieza que se percebia bem.
E duramente se marcavam distinções po-
líticas, distinções financeiras, distin-
ções baseadas na crônica escolar do dis-
cípulo, baseadas na razão discreta das
notas do guarda-livros. 52

As these passages suggest, the figure of Aristarco, the entrepreneur, dominates and suppresses Aristarco the educator. The insistent references to his mercantile preoccupations stress his strong dependence on money, budgets, and margins of profit:

Aristarco replicava com a invenção cor-
data dos gêneros de terceira, elasticidade dos orçamentos. 53

As the novel progresses, however, both the director and the institution suffer a violent transformation: Aristarco becomes a merchant involved in the constant promotion of his business, while the Ateneu assumes the appearance of a clearing house, much more the home of barter and exchange than the academic world.

The students themselves, influenced by the dominant and per-

⁵¹Ibid., p. 24.

⁵²Ibid., p. 26.

⁵³Ibid., p. 73.

vasive atmosphere of big business, behave in like fashion. Good conduct slips are sold to the highest bidder, exchanged or bartered for coveted profits:

Reduzia-se assim a papel o valor pessoal, na clearing house da diretoria; ou, melhor, adaptava-se a teoria de Fox ao processo das recompensas, com todos os riscos de um câmbio incerto, sujeito aos pânicos de bancarrota, sem um critério de justiça a garantir, sob a ostentação do papel-moeda, a realidade de um numerário de bem aquilatada virtude.

Fôsse como fôsse, certo é que, com os bilhetes de boa nota, comprava-se uma saída, e isto era o importante, como nos países de más finanças: desde que o papel tem curso, de que vale o valor? 54

Within the confined circuit of the institution, the craze for wealth assumes insatiable proportions. Everyone and everything has a price. Stamps become the medium of exchange and are bartered and sold for position and privileges. Inflation, recession, and depression are constant threats to the stability of the community and lead the more enterprising students to exploit the less adventuresome:

No comércio do selo é que fervia a agitação de empório, contratos de cobiça, de agiotagem, de esperteza, de fraude. Acumulavam-se valores, circulavam, frutificavam; conspiravam os sindicatos, arfava o fluxo, o refluxo das altas e das depreciações. Os inexpertos arruinavam-se, e havia banqueiros atilados, espalhando binhas de prosperidade. 55

⁵⁴ibid., pp. 73-74.

⁵⁵ibid., pp. 100-109.

Through the climate created by those in power the Ateneu turns out to be more of a business establishment for those seeking position and wealth than an institution of learning. Pedagogical pursuits tend to disappear and become sideline activities, while crass materialism, its sole emphasis on profit margins, hard salesmanship techniques, and the desire to "corner" the educational market, becomes the dominating obsession of the administration. This pervasive atmosphere does not trickle down from the top; instead, through unconscious imitation, the student attitudes are shaped and molded until they attain the same driving force that motivates the administration.

Using Dr. Cláudio to voice his opinion that it is not the educational experience that molds society but rather society that reflects the educational institution, Pompéia says:

E não se diga que é um viveiro de maus germes, seminário nefasto de maus princípios, que não de arborecer depois. Não é o internato que faz a sociedade; o internato a reflete. A corrupção que ali viceja, vai de fora. Os caracteres que ali triunfam, trazem ao entrar o passaporte do sucesso, como os que se perdem, a marca da condenação. 56

Virtually all readers will agree that O Ateneu contains a harsh indictment of the society that composed Imperial Brazil for its class consciousness, its snobbery and its worship of money. It is at the Ateneu that the reader encounters a class-

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 161.

conscious headmaster who kowtows to the leading families of the nation. Although a few scholarships are extended to the economically deprived, as in the case of Clímaco, the aim of the school administrator is to attract influential families to the Ateneu. Nearco da Fonseca, Rômulo, and Malheiro have little to contribute as students except their wealth, prestige and social position. Nearco da Fonseca is the scion of an old and distinguished family from the North, Rômulo a representative of the "nouveau riche," and Malheiro son of an aggressive military man who has made his way up through the army ranks. The school to all intents and purposes becomes a "clearing house" of mediocre scholarship, the sole purpose of which is to cater to the rich and the influential.

Nearco da Fonseca, upon his arrival at the school, is immediately acclaimed as a great gymnast and an experienced orator, two talents in which he seems totally deficient. Not only does he prove to be a sorry spectacle on the trapeze, but the lecture he is invited to deliver before the literary society of the Ateneu, "Grémio Literário Amor ao Saber," ends as a dismal failure. All the distinction showered upon Nearco is due, of course, to Aristarco's desire to flatter him because he considers his presence financially beneficial to the school.

The affluent within the walls of the Ateneu, imitating life on the outside, are not subject to the laws of the land. Money and prestige talk on all levels as they do at the Ateneu. Those who have the financial means to buy patronage need not fear reprisals for any wrongdoings. In such an atmosphere, petty crime

flourishes and Sérgio can be slowly put on the rack by Sanches and Rômulo with clear impunity.

The profit incentive, carried to an extreme, becomes Aristarco's sole motivating force. He sits terrible and omnipotent in his office vainly trying to balance the books. Unflinching before a monotonous and tasteless diet, the headmaster has no qualms in serving adulterated food in order to increase his profit margin. This callous behavior leads to an open revolt among the student ranks.

Relentlessly Pompéia takes to task a moneyed society that makes a pretence at democratic ideals. It is, in fact, a highly structured society where the wealthy are the sole rulers.

In order to paint the shallow nature of a self-indulgent society, Pompéia included the bacchanal scene that takes place during the excursion to the Corcovado. The vulgarity of a pleasure seeking society steeped in wanton dissipation culminates in a drunken spree:

Aves inteiras saltavam das travessas; os leitões, à unha, hesitavam entre dois reclamos igualmente enérgicos, dos dois lados da mesa. Os criados fugiram. Aristarco, passando, sorria do espetáculo como um domador poderoso que relaxa. As garrafas, de fundo para cima, entornavam rios de embriaguez para os copos, excedendo-se pela toalha em sangueira. Moderação! moderação! clamavam os inspetores, afundando a boca em aterros de farofa dignos do Sr. Révy. Alguns rapazes declamavam saúdes, erguendo, em vez de taça, uma perna de porco. À extremidade da última das mesas um pequeno apanhara um trombone e aplicava-se, muito sério, a encher-lhe o tubo de carne

assada. Maurílio, descobriu um repêlo recheado e devorava-o às gargalhadas, afirmando que era munição para os dias de gala. Cerqueira, ratazana, curvado, redobrado sôbre o prato comia como um restaurante, comia, comia, comia como as sarnas, como um cancro. Sanches, maio embriagado, beijava os vizinhos, caindo, com os beijos em tromba. Rivas, dispéptico, era o único retraído; suspirava de longe, anjo que era, diante dos reprovados excessos da bacanal. 57

Only for a brief moment does the drunken orgy blur the social distinctions of a preordained society, when we see Rômulo toasting and exchanging drinks with the waiter:

Rômulo, já tonto, afastado das mesas, brindava o copeiro que lhe arranjava uma garrafa; depois brindou a noiva; o criado, bebendo também, tocou-lhe o copo. 58

Social Cruelty and Brutality Reflected in the Ateneu

Some students are strong while others are weak but all are motivated by the same inhumane behavior that exists on the outside. The only apparent difference is that within the close quarters of the school, tension, violence, and hate tend to fester and increase uncontrollably. Franco, a member of the poorer classes, is accepted into the Ateneu but is never treated as an equal. Despised and rejected by both students and administrators, he is psychologically warped by the mistreatment and becomes a marginal student. Clímaco, "moço de espírito prático,"⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 129-130.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 131-132.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 166

an aggressive climber, is taken in as a charity case but knows how to play the game to better advantage. Through adulation and by appealing to Aristarco's ego, he initiates a subscription to have a bronze bust made of the director. Clímaco is, therefore, on his way to success since he knows where his interest lie.

Aided by the gray school uniform, which has a tendency to erase a certain amount of class distinction, as well as the unifying feeling of friendship that ultimately develops among the students, which creates an equalizing influence, it is the fellow with the ready fist and the greatest amount of animal courage who, in the last analysis, is permitted to become the undisputed and often tyrannical leader of the pack:

Os fortes constituem realmente uma fidalguia de privilégios no internato. No tumulto da existência em comum, fundem-se as distinções de classe na democracia do coleguismo: as cambiantes de fortuna apagam-se no figurino geral das blusas pardas. Os títulos de superioridade prevalecem primitivamente no critério semi-bárbaro dos verdes anos; o punho válido chega a fazer vantagens sobre a própria vantagem do favoritismo. 60

A life of gray tedium is only relieved by moments of brutality, during which the young constantly fear for their safety. The swimming pool symbolically becomes the torture chamber of the younger students. It is there that the bigger and more experienced boys, with their barbarous and diabolical tricks, take advantage of the weak. The younger students, unable to defend themselves

⁶⁰ibid., p. 84.

because of their size and inability to swim, are destined for martyrdom:

Ao primeiro banho, amedrontou-me a desordem movimentada.

Procurei o recanto dos menores. Determinava a disciplina a divisão dos banhistas em três turmas, conforme as classes de idade. Mas, o descuido da fiscalização permitia que as turmas se confundissem e o inspetor de serviço, com a varinha destinada aos retardatários, viajava, afastado, de sorte que ficavam expostos os mais fracos aos abusos dos marmanjos que as espadas d'água acobertavam. 61

In such a brutalized society it is, of course, the hardier member of the species who, by abusing his privileged position, takes sadistic pleasure in tormenting the defenseless neophytes. When forced to live together, huddled in close quarters, without any other outlet, homosexual practices among boys are bound to occur. Sérgio attributes it to the school, which seems to foster and perpetuate it.

Some boys, compelled by their loneliness and by their inability to cope with the harsh realities of life are forced to change their sexual inclinations and take on lovers. Others, spurred on by their aggressive nature, seek out the weaker members of the group to prey upon. All shades of homosexuality are portrayed, from the most masculine type to the most unabashed effeminate type who ply their trade at the school pool:

Êles, os belos efebos! exemplos da graça
juvenil e da nobreza da linha. Às vezes

⁶¹Ibid., p. 39.

traziam pulseiras; ao banho triunfavam, nus, demorando atitudes de ninfa, à beira d'água, em meio da coleção mesquinha de esqueletos sem carnes nas tângas de meia e carnes sem forma. Havia os decididos, portadores miseráveis de desprezo honesto, culpados por todos os outros, gastos às vezes antes do consumo, atormentados pela propensão de um lado, pela repulsa de outro, mendicantes de compaixão sem esmola, reduzidos ao extremo de conformar-se deplo-
rávelmente com a solidão. 62

Eroticism is not an unknown element at the Ateneu. Indeed the voluptuous figure of Angela, the school maid, constantly excites the passions whenever she appears. Dona Ema, the director's wife, Angela's silent counterpart, does the same, unobtrusively, although she only has one admirer among the students: Sérgio. Not only is there a strong undercurrent of homosexual behavior present, but forbidden heterosexual love is insinuated between Dona Ema and Crisóstomo and between Angela and the two workers.

The interest in pornography is also present among the students and the staff. It is visible in the magazines and books that freely circulate in the school and is also found as graffiti on the whitewashed walls. Sérgio's first introduction to pornographic literature occurs early in the novel while he awaits in the dressing room. On the registry table he notices a pamphlet that shocks him with its sensual pictures of naked priests in diabolical postures:

Como tardava o criado, apanhei aborrecido um folheto que ali estava à mesa dos assentos, entradas de enxoval, registros

⁶² Ibid., pp. 154-155.

de lavanderia. Curioso folheto, versos e estampas . . . Fechei-o convulsamente com o arrependimento de uma curiosidade perversa. . . . Um entravamento obscuro de formas despidas, roupas abertas, um burbilhão de frades bêbados, deslocados ao capricho de tôdas as deformidades de um monstruoso desenho, tocando-se, saltando a sarabanda diabólica sem fim, no empastado negrume da tinta do prelo; aqui e ali, o raio branco de uma falha, fulminando o espetáculo e a gravura, como o estigma complementar do acaso. 63

Later references are made to the many letters, manuscripts and books that could be found on the school benches. All of these clandestine publications describe exalted passions that occur in the outside world:

Os romances, enredados de atribuições febricitantes, atraindo no descritivo, chocantes no desenlace, alguns temperados de grosseira sensualidade, animavam na imaginação panoramas ideados da vida exterior, quando não há mais compêndios, as lutas pelo dinheiro e pelo amor, o ingresso nos salões, o êxito da diplomacia entre duquesas, a festejada bravura dos duelos, o pundonor de espada à cinta; ou então, o drama das paixões ásperas, tormentos de um peito malsinado e sublime sôbre um cenário sujo de bodega, entre vômitos de mau vinho e palavradas de barregã sem preço. 64

On another occasion Sérgio finds obscene graffiti inscriptions on the school walls referring to the French teacher:

Acabava-se de descobrir na cal, coberta de epigramas e rabiscos, uma nova inscrição de muito espírito: versalhada satírica contra

⁶³Ibid., p. 31.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 111.

o Professor Courroux, da mesa de francês, rimando em u, sempre em u, de cima abaixo, com uma fertilidade pasmosa de epítetos. 65

Life in the great boarding schools of the day, whether Dr. Arnold's Rugby or Aristarco's Ateneu, bore an amazing resemblance to the prison society of our penitentiaries. Sérgio, on several occasions, comments on the prison-like atmosphere of the school. Bullies who misuse their position of animal strength and political power in order to torment their younger colleagues, seem to be guided by a basic human trait: cruelty. The stronger prey upon the weak, just as the jungle beast tracks down his victim and devours it. Obviously when people are forced to live within close confines, the worse elements of their nature comes to the fore. The fact remains that Aristarco is the first to set a bad example to the students, for he truly takes delight in tormenting the more unfortunate students. His behavior is identical to that of the wild beast in the jungle:

Sorria então no íntimo, do efeito pavoroso das armadilhas, e cofiava os majestosos bigodes brancos de marechal, pausadamente, como lambe o jaguar ao focinho a preguiça de um repasto de sangue. 66

Mean-tempered bullies, such as Malheiro and Barbalho, however, escape Aristarco's fulminating anathemas since he respects their animal strength and even secretly fears them.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 150.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 60.

The children in the novel are left to fend for themselves early in life without the love and protection of their parents. Franco is not quite fourteen when his father, out of despair, sends him to the Ateneu to be "straightened out."⁶⁷ Sérgio is only eleven when his parents decide to enroll him at the school, an act for which he does not easily forgive them.⁶⁸ Malheiro's age is not known, but he apparently has had no home life whatsoever. Having been brought up in the soldier's barracks, where he grew up rough and tough, he brings to the Ateneu all the bad habits acquired among the raw recruits.⁶⁹ Love is evidently totally absent from the lives of most of the boys who attend the school. The only two characters who demonstrate a feeling of closeness and tenderness for their families are Bento Alves, who speaks warmly of his sister who is about to be married, and Franco, who sheds some silent tears when he learns that his sister has run away with a married man only to be abandoned by him.

Although there is only one actual death at the Ateneu, the infanticide theme is applied symbolically as ethical stagnation and physical listlessness overpower the students. Helpless and delicate animals are tortured by the students, and these cruel acts are representative of a world in which the weak live in con-

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 12.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 32.

stant peril at the hands of the strong. Franco enjoys catching and dissecting flies, yanking their wings off, and watching them slowly die. Other students torture mice, by pulling their teeth out with scissors and attaching them to cardboard chariots. Others collect lizards and chameleons, which change color, while still others gather cocoons and watch the helpless victims develop into imprisoned butterflies. The theme of imprisonment, torture, and suffering is found throughout the novel and forms a strong subterranean leitmotiv. Thus suffering and childhood are firmly equated in Pompéia's chain of association. Another link in the chain is the prevalence of pain as an elementary condition of life. Pain seems to be inflicted as a matter of course, for beatings, fighting, slapping, scratching occur frequently.

Fistfights and heated arguments, at times, fostered by the dull school routine, become daily occurrences. During his first days at the Ateneu, Sérgio is nearly drowned at the swimming pool by Sanches who tries to attract his attention. Later, he is beaten in the corridor leading to the library, by fat Rômulo who avenges past insults. Fearful of being beaten during the recreation periods, Sérgio prefers to remain in the classroom reading rather than expose himself to Barbalho's insults in the school yard. Neither is Franco exempt from violence. He is systematically tormented by administrators and students. On one occasion, he is beaten by Silvino, the school guard, while some infuriated students rush to his defense. After Franco's misadventure with the school's drinking water, he is brought before

Aristarco to be judged and sentenced. While awaiting punishment he is pushed, pinched, slapped and insulted by the enraged students:

De joelhos neste ponto, Franco, ao pe-
lourinho: diante das chufas dos maus e da
alegria de todos. Como esta porta era ca-
minho dos rapazes até as bandejas onde se
elevavam as pilhas sedutoras da merenda,
ficava ainda o condenado com um refôrço-
zinho de pena. Passando por êle, os mais
enfurecidos deram empurrões, beliscaram-
lhe os braços, injuriaram-no. Franco res-
pondia a meia voz, por uma palavrinha por-
ca, repetida rapidamente, e cuspiam-lhes,
suçando a todos com o arremêso dos únicos
recursos da sua posição. 70

Besides fighting among themselves at the Ateneu, the students en-
gage in a street brawl at the Offices of the Secretary of Educa-
tion where they go to take their exams:

Quando subia, vi um movimento enorme de
rapazes na rua: um rôlo! Silvavam os api-
tos. Atacavam-se os estudantes com os car-
roceiros a sopapo da ida e volta, segundo o
belo costume do tempo. 71

Not only do the students' outbursts resort to fisticuffs but there
is a murder at the school that exposes them to additional violence.
Sérgio himself scraps with the headmaster and Dr. Zé Lôbo, a stu-
dent's father, sustains an angry debate with Senator Rubim, a po-
litical antagonist.

The children in O Ateneu are left to themselves without the
love and guidance that their parents could offer in order to make

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 62.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 151.

them into strong and productive members of society. Moreover, the corrupting force of the school hierarchy, on the one hand, and the animal baseness of man, on the other, tend to draw out the worse and most anarchic elements of the child. These forces often convert the boy into an unbridled animal and lead him into homosexual activity, foment dishonesty among the younger ones and force the older and more experienced boys to use abusive and despotic behavior. The indictment against boarding schools and society is strong and decisive and can be linked to the author's resentment against an uncaring family and an alienated society.

Use of Satire in *O Ateneu*

Both satire and humor are effectively exploited by Pompéia when he portrays Brazilian society in *O Ateneu*. Certainly they enliven and make palatable the pessimistic tone of the novel and, at the same time, permit the author to explore the comic and the ridiculous side of life. Had he not been able to do this, the narrator's skepticism and misanthropy would have been utterly devastating and perhaps even counterproductive to the success of the novel.

Without a doubt the satirist fulfills a socially and morally useful purpose for, conscious as he is of the follies and the vices of his fellowmen, he cannot refrain from unveiling hypocrisy as well as the ills that plague society.⁷² The hypocrite has a

⁷² Arthur Pollard, Satire (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 1.

skin more tender and susceptible than that of the openly vicious individual, who has nothing to fear, and he hides under a cloak of moral rectitude.⁷³ He is two-faced and, although he apparently subscribes to the ideals of society, he secretly ignores or even defies them. Integrating his satirical charges into the very core of the novel, Pompéia spares no one from his generous barbs. He appears to have followed Tobias Smollett's recommendations as to how satire should be incorporated into the novel:

Of all kinds of satire, there is none so entertaining and universally improving, as that which is introduced, as it were, occasionally, in the course of an interesting story, which brings every incident home to life, and, by representing familiar scenes in an uncommon and amusing point of view invests them with all the graces of novelty, while nature is appealed to in every particular. ⁷⁴

Satire may take many shapes and forms. It may be imbued with the gentle irony that is characteristic of Chaucer or it may be scornful and contemptuous like that of Jonathan Swift:

The content of satire is criticism, and criticism may be uttered as direct rebuke or as impersonal logic. Innumerable intermediate stages, by combining emotional and intellect in different proportions, lead from one pole of blind, human feeling to the opposite pole of divine, or inhuman, detachment. The spectrum-analysis of satire runs from the red of invective at one end to the violet of the most delicate irony at the other. Beyond either end of

⁷³Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁴The Works of Tobias Smollett (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1902), I, xxix.

the scale, literature runs off into forms that are not perceptible as satire. The ultra-violet is pure criticism; the infra-red is direct reproof or abuse, untransformed by art. 75

Raul Pompéia's satire is the product of deep resentment and personal frustration, accumulated during the course of his turbulent life. It is therefore contemptuous. Pompéia did not have the knack of being a detached observer of life, as was Marcel Aymé, but plunged into life head first becoming so emotionally involved that it is impossible, as in the case of O Ateneu, to separate author from character. On discussing Pompéia's anger, Samuel Putnam compares him to Dickens and comes to the following conclusion:

It is true that, reading The Athenaeum, one does think of the English writer and those tales in which he deals with educational institutions, but there is after all a wide difference between the two authors. Both are angry men, but the anger of Dickens is social in character where that of Pompéia is intensely personal. One has the feeling that it is not the educational system in general that the Brazilian is portraying and condemning, but a particular school, a particular teacher against whom he harbors an ineradicable grudge. 76

Invective satire always has a victim and must always destroy or mutilate. The satirist acquires a God-like attitude and assumes the role of benefactor of society. He is primarily concerned with man as a social animal, and when his subject gets

⁷⁵David Worchester, The Art of Satire (New York: W. W. Norton & Sons, 1940), p. 16.

⁷⁶Samuel Putnam, op. cit., p. 110.

out of hand, he feels compelled to reprimand him unequivocally. He restores the reader to sanity by provoking laughter, sometimes generously, sometimes grimly, and we can understand his anger as well as his deep sense of outrage. His correction usually involves distortion, and since satire does not exalt, but deflates, he must often descend to exaggeration in order to drive the message home.

The object of Pomplé's satire is manifold. Throughout the novel he exposes the corrupt organization of the boarding school. The hypocritical administrators, riddled by lack of principles, do not even attempt to solve the problems of the day. They prefer to spend most of their time in futile and vain pursuits, trying to attain positions of power and prestige. As the novel progresses, the difference between words and performance becomes steadily greater.

When we turn to the modes of satire we find that they are as various as its subjects. The intent of irony is to express in words the opposite meaning of the original statement. It is lighter than sarcasm. Less harsh in wording although probably, in effect, more biting because of its indirectness. Characteristically it speaks words of praise to imply blame and blame to imply praise. David Worchester believes that the ironist appeals to an aristocracy of brains.⁷⁷ The conscious exaggeration of the hyperbole may heighten or produce comic effects. Meiosis, or in-

⁷⁷David Worchester, op. cit., p. 78.

tentional understatement, is used for humorous or satiric effects and occasionally for emphasis. Pompéia's brand of humor usually is a blend of opposite and contrasting situations. One of the best examples is the speech given by Venâncio during the Corcovado excursion. Painted with all the poetic resources that Pompéia can muster, the author compares the idyllic scene where nature is in harmony with the inner aspirations of man to another scene in which he is duped by nature. Venâncio is pictured tearing wildly through the wooded path seeking nature's poetic inspiration. He appeals to the wind and to the birds in the forest to guide him. Inspiration quickly descends from above. It pounces upon Venâncio like a vulture tearing a carcass, or like a heavy barrage of birdpecks that awaken his imagination. Nature is brought to the fore as Venâncio begins to speak eloquently on the many splendid blessings of nature before the congregated school only to be suddenly drenched by a fierce tropical thunder squall:

Havia um quarto de hora que andava misteriosamente por uma aléia de bambus, esfiando as barbicas, a gaforina, palpando a testa arrancando inspiração ao couro cabeludo, passando, nervoso, repassando, espiando furtivamente pela nossa admiração.

Muxoxos adoráveis das brisas, que andais pela mata, gemedoras fontes, que desafiáis à toa as lágrimas de vossos penares, amáveis sabiás, cantores, que viveis de plantão na palmeira da literatura indígena, sem que vos galardoe uma verba de secretaria do império, vinde comigo repartir o segredo do vosso encanto! Sedutoras rolinhas, um pouco da vossa ternura! Vívidos colibris, a mim! que sois como os animados tropos no poema frondoso da floresta ... E as inspirações vieram. Primeiro, cerimoniosamente, à altura, volteando espirais de urubu sobre a carniça; depois, de chôfre, caindo-lhe às bicadas sobre

o estro. O estro entorpecido acordou. Fêz-se hipógrifo um asno morto. O poeta foi registrando as estrofes. ... Súbito, no melhor das quadras, exatamente quando o poeta apostrofava o dia sereno e o sol, comparando a alegria dos discípulos com o brilho dos prados, e a presença do Mestre com o astro supremo, mal dos improvisos prévios! desata-se das nuvens espessadas uma carga d'água diluvial, única, sôbre o banquete, sôbre o poeta, sôbre a miseranda apostrofe sem culpa.

Venâncio não se perturbou. Abriu um guarda-chuva para não ser inteiramente desmentido pelas goteiras e continuou, na guarita, a falar entusiasticamente ao sol, à limpidez do azul. 78

The blend of exalted poetic terms with the drenching rain terminates the ridiculous scene with Venâncio continuing his speech under a huge umbrella. Aristarco, desperately listening, tries to maintain his composure while the uninterested students devour their luncheon. The reader enjoys the comic situation in which both Venâncio and mightily Aristarco are made fools of by mother nature. His power may be absolute within the walls of the Ateneu, but once outside, despite Venâncio's eulogy, he is just another mortal. The juxtaposition of the bombastic and poetic oratory clash with the harsher realities of the storm, and the result is a hilariously comic scene.

Pompéia wrote with passion and pursued his characters relentlessly throughout the novel. He enjoyed furrowing below the surface in order to reveal their innermost traits, so to speak, and to show that there was much more behind the external façade and

⁷⁸Raul Pompéia, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

that it was rarely good. There are few characters who are not scorched by his biting satire. In O Ateneu there are only five characters spared his stinging barbs: Dr. Cláudio, who appears intermittently to give a series of lectures and cannot be considered a character in the true sense of the word since he does not actively participate in the novel; Bento Alves, Sérgio's first romantic interest at the school, who assaults him behind the staircase; Egbert, Sérgio's second romantic interest, who quickly fades away and is just as soon forgotten; and two lesser characters, João Numa, the school inspector, and the student Rebêlo, who is the first person to caution Sérgio about the evils to be found at the school. It is perhaps interesting to note that both João Numa and Rebêlo suffer from defective vision, Rebêlo having had to delay his schooling because of his poor eyesight. Pompéia himself was known to have had extremely poor vision.

Another scene, in which the author describes Nearco da Fonseca's display of talents on the trapeze, unmistakably bears Pompéia's own brand of humor. In this scene he contrasts Nearco's reputation as a gymnast with reality. The narrator telescopes the scene, leaving out all extraneous material. Only Nearco's histrionic performance with its absurd results is in focus. The piquancy of the portrayal of the ridiculous gymnast creates a scene loaded with humor. The narrator, however, carried away by his comic description and unable to contain himself, interposes himself between his character and the reader in an apostrophe in archaic Portuguese.

Depois do cumprimento, Nearco empurrou a barra do trapézio, polegar para baixo, segundo a pragmática das posições. E fez uma flexão. Ah! não sabeis, profanos que sois, quanto vale a flexão dos membros superiores! A fórmula no mundo ideal da mecânica é a alavanca de Arquimedes; da aplicação prática e contundente é o murro britânico. Consiste nisto: encolher as munhecas.

Nearco fez uma, duas, fez cinco! seguiu-se uma viravolta, e Nearco ao trapézio, de cócoras, pôde perambular sobre o pasmo circunstante o pausado beque ... Não era tudo, porém! Nearco arranhou mais umas fantasias de cambalhotas, capazes de transformar radicalmente os princípios firmados da arte dos trambolhões, beneficiou-nos, suando, com um sorriso triunfal.

Faltava a sorte do fim. Nearco espichou quanto pôde a lamentável ausência de músculos e deu-nos ... uma sereia! A sereia é tudo que há de mais elementar, de mais pulha, de mais tola ostentoso em matéria de aparelhos. O sujeito segura-se às cordas, levanta os pés da barra, mete os pés pelas mãos e de cabeça para a terra empurra o ventre. O pobre Nearco, desbarrigado, não tinha ventre para empurrar.

Não empurrou coisa nenhuma; quando muito uns ossinhos que lhe saíam à altura do umbigo como cabos de faca. Pulou ao chão.

Estava exibido o acrobata! Nós olhávamos uns para os outros, bestificados, em compostura abatida de caras-d'asnos. Aristarco percebeu e repreendeu-nos com o sobreceixo. Nós compreendemos delicadamente: estava ali o respeitável pai de um colega ...

Uma roda de palmas, claras, estrepitantes, inacabáveis, percorreu as fileiras com a electricidade comunicativa das aclamações.

Nearco, altivo, agradeceu com o nariz. 79

The ridicule of Aristarco is perhaps the strongest to be found in the novel. The school director is repeatedly criticized and taken to task by the narrator. As Sérgio is first led into the headmaster's study he notices a slight frown on the face of Aris-

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 85-86.

tarco, which sparks a series of conjectures on the part of the student. The humor stems from the thoughts that run through the boy's mind. His first thought is that Aristarco's annoyance is from financial reverses suffered through a loss of incoming student population or simply perhaps from debits outstripping credits:

Quando meu pai entrou comigo, havia no semblante de Aristarco uma pontinha de aborrecimento. Decepção talvez de estatística; o número dos estudantes novos não compensando o número dos perdidos, as novas entradas não contrabalançando as despesas do fim do ano. Mas a sombra de despeito apagou-se logo, como o resto de túnica que apenas tarda a sumir-se numa mutação à vista; e foi com uma explosão de contentamento que o diretor nos acolheu. 80

Sérgio notices that Aristarco treats people according to their social position. Behind the cold smile, the headmaster shows political and financial considerations based on a student's record and on the private annotations of the school bookkeeper. When dealing with a student who is in arrears in payment, Aristarco will often extend his hand to be kissed by the student and then seemingly inadvertently prick the hand of the unsuspecting student with a pin, avenged at last for delayed payments!

Sua diplomacia dividia-se por escarninhos numerados, segundo a categoria de recepção que queria dispensar. Ele tinha maneiras de todos os graus, segundo a condição social da pessoa. As simpatias verdadeiras eram raras. No ângulo de cada sorriso morava-lhe um segredo de frieza, que se percebia bem. E duramente se marcavam distinções políticas, distinções financeiras.

⁸⁰ ibid., p. 26.

ras, distinções baseadas na crônica escolar do discípulo, baseadas na razão discreta das notas do guarda-livros. Às vezes, uma criança sentia a alfinetada no jeito da mão a beijar. Saía indagando consigo o motivo daquilo, que não achava em suas contas escolares ... O pai estava dois trimestres atrasado. 81

This humorous episode extends Aristarco's personality a little bit further. Through the example offered the reader is able to judge the true mettle of the headmaster's personality.

Not only does the narrator attack personal characteristics he considers hypocritical, but he takes equal delight in criticizing the high-pressured advertising campaign used by the Brazilian pedagogue. Education somehow seems to have been sacrificed to big business. It is not the vehicle for the dissemination of learning but rather a road to power and fame. In the following extract the author describes Aristarco's unconventional methods in cornering the educational market. Employing high-pressure tactics that verge on the dishonorable, the headmaster uses every conceivable practice to extend his pedagogical power over the nation. The promotional gimmicks used belong more to the ruthless world of big business than to the realm of academic pursuits:

Eram boletins de propaganda pelas províncias, conferências em diversos pontos da cidade, a pedidos, a sustância, atochando a imprensa dos lugarejos, caixões, sobretudo, de livros elementares, fabricados às pressas com o ofegante e esbaforido concur-

⁸¹Ibid., p. 26.

so de professores prudentemente anônimos, caixões e mais caixões de volumes cartonados em Leipzig, inundando as escolas públicas de toda a parte com a sua invasão de capas azuis, róseas, amarelas, em que o nome de Aristarco, inteiro e sonoro, oferecia-se ao pasmo venerador dos enfaimados de alfabeto dos confins da pátria. Os lugares que os não procuravam eram um belo dia surpreendidos pela enchente, gratuita, espontânea, irresistível! E não havia senão aceitar a farinha daquela marca para o pão do espírito. E engordavam as letras, a fôrça, daquele pão. 82

Much of Pompéia's humor is obtained through the use of metaphor. They color his narrative and very often operate on the principle of surprise mingled with exaggeration. When the reader is struck by the novelty and the truth of a certain twist of the sentence, the new combination often startles and adds a note of the unexpected. The strikingly fresh metaphor is easily remembered and increases the reader's pleasure of reading fiction. It makes an everlasting impression on the mind of the reader.

At times Pompéia achieves interesting pictorial effects through the use of metaphors of gross exaggeration. Exaggeration is a very effective tool and Pompéia, with his sense of anger and righteous indignation, attains a high degree of satiric effect when he uses it. For example, when Aristarco first receives young Sérgio and his father in his study, the boy is taken aback by the director's unexpected oratorical display in which he delivers an hour long oration to an audience of two:

⁸²Ibid., p. 13.

Uma hora trovejou-lhe a bôca, em sanguínea eloquência, o gênio do anúncio. Miramo-lo na inteira expansão oral, como, por ocasião das festas, na plenitude da sua vivacidade prática. 83

In a short sentence Pompéia links Aristarco's thundering advertising genius to bloody and violent eloquence. Surprised by his prowess, both father and son listen passively while the headmaster loses himself in a rhetorical exercise. Most noteworthy in Pompéia's technique is the use of the startling metaphor with which he seems to be trying to achieve pictorial effects. The equation of "sanguínea eloquência" strikes a negative chord, and the reader immediately senses a pejorative comparison. The author again repeats Aristarco's "gênio do anúncio," which strengthens previous references made to his capacity for being more a business man than an educator.

In another illustration, the fantastic nature of the exaggeration immediately strikes the reader as comic. Pompéia pictures Aristarco presiding at the dinner table with such an air of detached aloofness that he ceases to be there at all:

Empossado no seu grande orgulho, que mesmo em casa fazia valer, Aristarco presidia; tão alto, porém, e tão longe, que dir-se-ia um ausente. 84

The humor that lies behind this scene is not only the director's

⁸³Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 147.

air of self-importance, which gives him a sense of remoteness, but the perception that a man's profession is often apt to overcome the individual himself. Arrogant Aristarco remains the headmaster not merely during the exercise of his professional duties, but even while enjoying the domesticity of the intimate family circle. When Aristarco is informed of the bust to be unveiled in his honor, the author, in order to extract the greatest amount of humor from the scene, employs absurd exaggeration. The overuse of exclamation points in this excerpt underscores the sense that the author is screaming at the reader:

Alguns discípulos tinham prevenido ao diretor, guardavam-lhe uma surpresa: a oferta de um busto de bronze! Um busto! era a remuneração que chegava dos imparáveis esforços, a sonhada estátua. Vinha-lhe aos pedaços. Começavam pela cabeça; mais tarde, oferecer-lhe-iam o abdome, bela gança metálica e magnífico umbigo de bonzo gordo, saliente como um burro; depois, o prolongamento do corpo, aos roletes, gradualmente ... Ah! quando lhe oferecessem as botas! ... Depois, não seria preciso mais: o pedestal, é ele mesmo oferecer-se-ia para adiantar. E para-fusaria, acumuladas, as peças do seu orgulho, a pilha dos seus anelos, a estátua surgida aos poucos da sinceridade vagarosa das obrigações, como dificilmente a glória, do escrutínio demorado dos tempos. 8

The passage, rendered as interior monologue, pictures Aristarco daydreaming on the much desired statue. The reader can well understand Aristarco's jubilation at being offered a bronze bust, but his fantasies on the statue verge on the ridiculous. Aris-

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 147.

tarco views the bust as a stepping stone to greater glory. He envisions the head, the abdomen with its protruding umbilical midsection, and then another addition ending at the joints. He even fantasizes how he himself will contribute additional sections in order to achieve a prompt completion of the entire statue. Finally, he envisions the boots, which ultimately would be screwed on to the pedestal in order to form the whole statue. What renders his fantasy absurd is the "ego trip" into the realm of immortality. He is willing to see himself assembled by bits and snatches in order to attain greatness in bronze. The fact that he thinks in anatomical terms—head, belly, navel midsection, and joints—rather than in sculptural terms gives the passage a comic ring. In Aristarco's eyes the statue acquires the prominence of an "additional body," often competing and even dwarfing the original, a dimension which adds piquancy to the satire.

Often by intensifying the exaggeration of contrast the narrator can achieve extremely effective nuances. For example, during the commencement exercises, at the end of the school year, Sérgio naively relates the ceremonial display which fills him with a sense of respect and reverence. On the very next line, however, Pompéia plays with the folly of man's self-importance. Flattered by his feeling of personal grandeur, Aristarco makes the Imperial Minister fade into nothingness through his imposing physical appearance:

Lá estava o diretor, o ministro do império, a comissão dos prêmios. Eu via e ouvia. Houve uma elocução comovente de Aristarco; houve discursos de alunos e mestres; houve cantos, poesias declamadas em diversas línguas. O espetáculo comunicava-me certo prazer respeitoso. O diretor, ao lado do ministro, de acanhado físico, fazia-o incivilmente desaparecer na brutalidade de um contraste escandaloso.⁸⁶

That the headmaster of a private school should reduce to indiscernibility the minister of the Empire, the representative of the sovereign himself, is a humorous touch in itself, but that he should do it "na brutalidade de um contraste escandaloso" is cynical and trenchant.

Satire is often directed against contemporary society which honors vice and corruption, provided it is powerful and, at the same time, hypocritical. The object of this aspect of satire in O Ateneu is Aristarco, who as the tyrannical ruler of the school, bears a remarkable resemblance to a dictator. On several occasions, as I have tried to point out, he symbolizes the Emperor, for whom Pompéia had a thorough and passionate dislike. The significance of the figure of Aristarco does not end here, for the headmaster also is a psychological extension of Pompéia's father.⁸⁷ It also is quite possible that other father images with whom our author may have come in conflict during his life may have influenced his characterization of Aristarco. Certainly he portrays

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁷ Artur de Almeida Tôrres, Raul Pompéia (Estudo Psicoestilístico) (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1972), p. 18.

Aristarco as a repelling individual.

Other Aspects of Humor

The unusual blending of the unexpected and the accidental is prevalent in O Ateneu. In fact, Pompéia uses every conceivable device of comic emphasis and exaggeration at his disposal to jolt the reader into alert consternation. In his effort to avoid the effects of repose, tranquility, and complacency, he startles by the use of the unusual and the unexpected which, by its very nature, leads to the grotesque and to distortion. This is specially evident during the coronation ceremony as Venâncio delivers a florid speech glorifying Aristarco before unveiling the bronze bust of the director. Carried away by the occasion, as well as by his own flamboyant wealth of oratory, Venâncio finds that he cannot stop. Meanwhile, Aristarco slowly feels himself metamorphosed into the metal statue. Although the director is the object of all the fanfare, his boundless craving for adulation even makes him jealous of the bust. He cannot permit the statue to steal a spotlight that is rightfully his:

Aristarco caiu em si. Referia-se ao busto toda a oração encomiástica de Venâncio. Nada para êle das belas apóstrofes! Teve ciúmes. O gôzo da metamorfose fôra uma alucinação. O aclamado, o endeusado era o busto: êle continuava a ser o pobre Aristarco, mortal, de carne e osso. O próprio Venâncio, o fiel Venâncio, abandonava-o. E por causa daquilo, daquela coisa mesquinha sôbre a peanha, aquêlê pedaço de Aristarco, que nem ao menos era gente. 88

⁸⁸Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 173.

His pen steeped in humor, Pompéia enters the perilous realm of the absurd by permitting Aristarco to become the metalized bust. The statue suddenly becomes the point of interest of both the orator and the multitude, and Aristarco finds himself relegated to a secondary role. Unable to control his envy of the bronze statue, which has usurped all the acclaim, Aristarco in a moment of pique, yanks the laurel crown from the bust's head. The multitude, misinterpreting his action takes it as a sign of humility and unanimously cheer its approval:

Mal acabou de falar o professor, viu-se Aristarco levantar-se, atravessar freneticamente o espaço atarefado, arrancar a coroa de louros ao busto. 89

The emphasis above all is on gross exaggeration. However, the image of Aristarco becoming solidified is bold and startling, even fantastic. The comparison is humorous because of its very ridiculous essence.

The transformation of Aristarco from a man of flesh and blood into a lifeless form occurs on another occasion, although there is a slightly different twist. Flattered by the fuss heaped upon him, he allows himself to be drawn, sketched, and painted by the students who attend the school. All the works of art, highly treasured by the headmaster, are aligned and studied for hours at end, whereupon they assume human characteristics and speak to him:

89. Ibid., p. 173.

E tôdas aquelas coisas mal feitas animavam-se e olhavam brilhantemente. 'Vê, Aristarco, diziam em côro, vê; nós aqui estamos!' E Aristarco, como ninguém na terra, gozava a delícia inaudita, êle incomparável, único capaz de bem se compreender e de bem se admirar--de ver-se aplaudido em chusma por alter-egos, florificado por uma multidão de si-mesmos. Primus inter pares.

Todos, êle próprio, todos aclamando-o. 90

Compêia's use of caricature, with emphasis on one feature, in order to create comic effects reveals a decided tendency not only to play with words and ideas but to pull the reader's leg. He does not hesitate to stray from the path of realistic portrayal into the realm of the absurd. Thus, when the renowned poet Dr. Ícaro de Nascimento is invited to the Ateneu to recite his latest poem, "Mestre," which is described as the "dernier cri" of Carioca society and which ostensibly honors the headmaster, the author focuses the scene on Ícaro's luxuriant beard to the detriment of everything else:

Durante meia hora houve uma coisa estranha: uma convulsão angustiosa de barbas no espaço. Crescente. Desapareceu o poeta, desapareceu o palanque, encheu-se o anfiteatro, foi-se o trono com a Alteza Regente, a longa mesa com Aristarco e o Ex.^{to} do império, enovelaram-se as arquibancadas, desapareceu tudo numa expansão incalculável de suíças, jubileu de queixos. Ninguém mais se via, nada mais, no caos tormentoso de pêlos, onde uma vez passava atroadora, carga tremenda de esquadrões pela noite espessa, calcando versos como patadas, esmagando, rompendo a-vante. 91

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 123.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 172.

Not only do Aristarco and the Emperor's envoy as well as the distinguished gathering melt away, but the tribunal, the throne and all physical objects also disappear from sight. Only the poet's beard remains, and the author focuses on the never-ending recitation of a ridiculous poem. Then the narrator quickly dismisses Ícaro's beard and directs attention to the speaker's nose, just as the poet ends his recitation:

Até que tornamos a ver o nariz. Acal-
maram pouco a pouco as barbas. Recolhe-
ram-se como uma inundação que se retira.
Estava acabada a poesia. Ninguém perce-
beu palavra do berreiro, porém a impres-
são foi formidável. 92

What may be called Pompéia's antipathy for the poetic flowers of uncontrolled rhetoric is evident in his criticism of Aristarco's and Venâncio's speeches. On occasions Pompéia enjoys tearing apart the Brazilians' natural enjoyment of rhetoric and bombastic phraseology. Pompéia is a master of both understatement and overstatement. Aristarco as a person is overly proud and greedy in his lust for fame and fortune. He has an unnatural desire to be admired, which makes him an egocentric character whose main concern is himself. Venâncio revolves around the headmaster as a fly around a candlelight and satisfies Aristarco's inner craving for self-aggrandizement. The reader, however, instinctively knows that much of the tribute heaped upon Aristarco is insincere and motivated by Venâncio's selfish aspirations. Although the

⁹²Ibid., p. 172.

author enjoys stressing Aristarco's great advances as a pedagogue, he subtly makes us aware that the director's main concern is not education per se but rather the power, the rank, the honor and the wealth that can be gained therein. This thought is never openly expressed by the narrator but it is always implied.

In the first few pages of the novel, the author, in a comic scene, has Venâncio deliver a laudatory oration that becomes a parody of rhetoric, eulogizing the multifarious efforts of Aristarco in the field of education. Aristarco, on the other hand, shyly retreats into the background, basking in the aura of praise. After mentioning the headmaster's great love for the students, the author in a satiric manner stresses not only Aristarco's paternal but his maternal affection as well, thus making his unusual brand of love doubly strong. He compares the director to Providence and ultimately to a Guardian angel. By separating motherly love from fatherly love, the author theoretically increases Aristarco's ability to love twofold while giving an ironic twist to the sentence. Through the use of a series of attributes, joined by the necessary connectives, Venâncio follows a logical line of reasoning, that describes Aristarco's many endeavors:

'O mestre, perorou Venâncio, é o prolongamento do amor paterno, é o complemento da ternura das mães, o guia zeloso dos primeiros passos, na senda escabrosa que vai às conquistas do saber e da moralidade. Experimentado no labutar cotidiano da sagrada profissão, o seu auxílio ampara-nos como a Providência na Terra; escolta-nos assíduo como um anjo da guarda; a sua lição prudente esclarece-nos a jornada inteira do futuro. Levemos ao pai a existência do corpo; o mestre cria-nos o espírito (sorites de

sensação), e o espírito é a fôrça que impele, o impulso que triunfa, o triunfo que nobilita, o enobrecimento que glorifica, é o ideal da vida, o louro do guerreiro, o carvalho do artista, a palma do crente! A família é o amor no lar, o estado é a segurança civil; o mestre, com o amor forte que ensina e corrige, prepara-nos para a segurança íntima inapreciável da vontade. Acima de Aristarco—Deus! Deus tão-sòmente; abaixo de Deus—Aristarco.' 93

This is an example of the oratorical hyperbole the Brazilian likes. Undoubtedly Pompéia's early training in rhetoric and logic influenced this passage. His wordplay evolves through association; thus "impele" leads to "impulso," "triunfa" to "triunfo," "nobilita" to "enobrecimento," "glorifica" to "glória," and so on. All of this leads to a rhetorical climax in which a number of prepositions are so arranged that each succeeding one rises above its predecessor in force. This unexpected reenactment of the logistical principle of argumentation adds a further comic touch. The enumeration of cause and effect dominates the paragraph. After the exhaustive accumulation of attributes, infused with inductive and deductive reasoning, the author returns to the theme of Aristarco preparing the youth of the nation. This time, however, the lengthy ascent towards the climax in the movement of the paragraph leads Pompéia to a comparison that under ordinary circumstances would strike the reader as sacrilegious, whereas here it is satiric. In Venâncio's reconstruction

⁹³Ibid., p. 16.

of hierarchical divinities he places Aristarco just below God himself. The entire speech has to be taken tongue in cheek since from the start Pompéia's satiric vein can easily be detected and he is actually stating the opposite of what he actually means.

As the reader can see through the examples given, the author blends contrasting and opposite situations, creating a biting humor that destroys not only the characters of the Ateneu but unveils the corruption of a diseased society. Through overstatement and understatement he makes the reader laugh. The unusual combination of the unexpected and the accidental causes surprise and even consternation. Pompéia is not adverse to enter the world of the fantastic, such as when he solidifies Aristarco into a bronze statue or has a series of paintings and sketches become his alter-egos and carry on a lively conversation with the headmaster. The narrator's use of exaggeration creates comic situations that place the novel in an outstanding position in Brazilian letters.

Chapter III

Mechanics of the Novel

In this chapter on the mechanics of the novel, I will discuss point of view, that is the "position from which the story is presented"¹ and how the first-person narrative affects the course of the novel. I will also discuss those elements that enter into the structure of the novel, such as presentation of scenes, flashbacks, and the use of time and space.

The position from which the novel is presented to the reader is extremely important since it establishes the point from which the author lets the reader see and follow the events of the novel.²

Percy Lubbock, in The Craft of Fiction, believes that the point of view an author takes is the most important factor in storytelling:

The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view—the question of relation in which the narrator stands to the story. He tells it as he sees it, in the first place; the reader faces the story-teller and listens, and the story may be told so vivaciously that the presence of the minstrel is forgotten, and the scene becomes visible, peopled with the characters of the tale. ³

¹Fred B. Millet, Reading Fiction (New York: Harper Brothers, 1950), p. 14.

²Bertil Romberg, Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), p. 12.

³Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 251.

This position is contested by E. M. Forster who believes that the main pivot of storytelling is not the point of view but the power that the author commands to make the narrative credible:

. . . and for me the 'whole intricate question of method' resolves itself not into formulae but into the power of the writer to bounce the reader into accepting what he says—a power which Mr. Lubbock admits and admires, but locates at the edge of the problem instead of at the centre.⁴

Despite the various theories, the vantage point chosen by the author in dealing with his characters and narrative is critically important to the novel. When the author decides to tell his story using a character as narrator, the author, so to speak, withdraws into the background. The most salient trait of this type of novel is that the author makes the novel narrate itself through the mouth of his main character. As the author speaks through a central character using the first-person narrative, the author interposes a narrator between himself and the reader and it is the narrator who is given the illusion of authority for the entire story.⁵

In this narrative technique, in which the central character himself surveys his eventful life, describing exciting episodes as he sees them and laying bare his soul to the reader, the illusion of reality and truth is strengthened. The fact that the

⁴E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966), pp. 78-79.

⁵Bertil M. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 9.

author limits and restricts his point of view to a single conscious mind—so that it becomes the point of view of the narrator—cleverly heightens the illusion of reality.⁶ Romberg believes that the authoritative "I" binds the reader more tightly to the fiction since there is a sort of two-way partnership between reader and narrator.⁷ The reader receives the impression that he is getting the story directly from an authentic source and accepts every word. The narrator has an abundance of events to narrate and despite the fixed point of view, which Romberg finds typical in the first-person narration,⁸ he can present the same full range of experiences as the omniscient author. For the benefit of the reader or to heighten tension, the author may even resort to leaps forward through time and narrate coming events outside the scope of the narrative.

When the author chooses to write his novel in the first-person, he may place his character in the center of the action. The character must relate all the impressions of people and events in the novel to the reader. This type of narrative technique is the most prevalent and the oldest.⁹ It is the fictional autobiographical first-person novel, in which the main character

⁶Ibid., p. 59.

⁷Ibid., p. 59.

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

⁹Ibid., p. 58.

narrates portions of his life. The author identifies himself with the narrator in the fiction, and since the narrator is the main character, attention is focused upon him, from a narrative as well as from a psychological angle. The author has firmly entrenched the narrator's point of view on the person of the main character.¹⁰ This method is usually very subjective since the character is intricately involved in the narrative, and results in a rather narrow and personal point of view. However, it does permit subtleties of reflection and self analysis¹¹ since the first-person narrative best translates the author's personal feelings. From the moment that we are in the subconscious of the character, we are totally submerged in the author's views.

The author may focus on several other angles, however. In order to avoid the limitations of first-person narrative, he may have a minor or an incidental character tell the story though still conserving the first-person narrative. This approach creates a greater "distance" between author and reader, and the contents of the story become more objective and less personal.

By using the third person the author insures a greater degree of freedom. It gives a more encompassing vision of the world than the "I" form. It has, as Massaud Moisés has said, the impersonality of the laboratory since it is there that the scien-

¹⁰Ibid., p. 58.

¹¹Ibid., p. 58.

tist is able to rid himself of his "I" and to transform himself into an anonymous being who seeks the truth. Later on, on telling his story as something that already exists, he has the difficult task to reveal truth and to pass it on to the reader:

... a impessoalidade do laboratório onde o cientista se despoja do seu 'eu' para se transformar no seu anônimo que procura a verdade e depois entra a divulgá-la como 'coisa' já existente fora d'ele; a êle coube o irrisório papel de revelá-la e comunicá-la. Assim o romance, assim o enredo da terceira pessoa. 12

When the writer takes the omniscient point of view he has greater freedom to comment upon the meaning of action. He can state the thematic intention of the story whenever and wherever he desires.

However, in all of these methods, he is always present in one form or another. He does in fact exist although both the reader and the author often pretend that he is not there:

Even the novel in which no narrator is dramatized creates an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as an indifferent God, silently paring his fingernails. This implied author is always distinct from the 'real man'—whatever we may take him to be—who creates a superior version of himself, a 'second self,' as he creates his work. 13

¹²Massaud Moisés, A Criação Literária (São Paulo: Edições Melhoramentos, 1967), p. 233.

¹³Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 151.

This idea is shared by W. J. Harvey, who formulates it in the following manner:

For the author is not to his characters as we are to other people; his relationship to them is not human but God-like. However invisible he may make himself, whatever narrative techniques he may use to conceal his exit from his fiction, the novelist is and must be both omnipotent and omniscient. The last word is, both literally and metaphorically, his alone. 14

The author can become an all-knowing creator who is capable of seeing and telling whatever he wishes in the story. To all intents and purposes he is God. One of the drawbacks of the omniscient viewpoint is that it often detracts from the innate pleasure that the reader may derive when listening to an interesting yarn since the reader is permitted no interpretive liberty:

The chief fault of the omniscient method is that it tells readers too much. The pleasure of fiction, or any dramatic art, is that it allows us to see and hear, and then to draw our own conclusions. A reader is a juror; he observes the witnesses and the protagonists, he listens carefully to all the evidence, he studies the exhibits, he reviews the circumstances, and he makes up his own mind—or at least he thinks he does. 15

When the novelist chooses a character as his spokesman, the character becomes the author's "second self," witnessing and in-

¹⁴W. J. Harvey, Character and the Novel (Ithaca: Cornell University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 32

¹⁵Gerald Warner Brace, The Stuff of Fiction (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 90.

terpreting the other characters in the novel. This according to E. K. Brown, is what essentially occurs in Le Père Goriot:

We see the Goriot daughters as we see everyone, through Eugène's eyes. Anastasie rejects him; Delphine is kind to him. He treasures every least indication that she may be softer than her sister, that her exploitation of her father has extenuations, if not a justification, in the special upliness of her husband's nature. If neither daughter comes to Goriot's deathbed until he has sunk into the final coma, it is Anastasie who comes before he dies, and what she says is merciless to herself, but Delphine does not come at all. Eugène's eyes are quite open now: the line he has insisted on drawing between Delphine and Anastasie was a lover's illusion. 16

In some instances rather than projecting himself in his character an author may disassociate himself from the narrator by creating an individual who is completely different in character and manner:

In some works the narrator becomes a major person of great physical, mental and moral vividness (Tristram Shandy, Remembrance of Things Past, and Dr. Faustus); in such works the narrator is often radically different from the implied author who creates him, and whose own character is built up in our minds partly by the way in which the narrator is made to differ from him. 17

¹⁶E. K. Brown, Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: University Press, 1957), p. 22.

¹⁷Wayne C. Booth, "Distance and Point-of-View" quoted in Philip Stevick, The Theory of the Novel (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 93.

The author may take a self-effacing attitude, showing great objectivity in the presentation, not intruding in the scenes and keeping in the background as much as possible. Flaubert is known to have carried his "impersonal" approach to great heights in *Madame Bovary*. Desirous of remaining unseen, he wanted the reader to be unaware of his presence and his personal views; therefore, he offered his narrative with the greatest objectivity, suppressing all comments of a personal nature.¹⁸

Wayne C. Booth believes that objectivity is a sign on the part of a writer to be fair:

Much of what Flaubert and Chekhov wrote about objectivity is really a plea to the artist not to load the dice, not to take sides unjustly against or for particular characters.¹⁹

Men like Flaubert, who believed in the impersonal theory of art and who strove deliberately to conceal their personalities, failed to do so. Wayne C. Booth believes that complete impartiality is impossible for the author to achieve:

In practice, no author ever manages to create a work which shows complete impartiality, whether impartial score, like Flaubert in *Bouvard et Pécuchet* attempting to 'attack everything,' or impartial forgiveness.²⁰

Percy Lubbock, on the other hand, holds the opinion that the method used by an author in the treatment of a novel betrays in

¹⁸ Percy Lubbock, op. cit., p. 67.

¹⁹ Wayne C. Booth, op. cit., p. 77.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

reality part of his personality. According to Lubbock, Flaubert's position is a psychological barometer of his subconscious feeling:

For though it is true that a man's method depends upon the particular story he is engaged in telling, yet the story that occurs to him, the subject he happens upon will be that which asks for the kind of treatment congenial to his hand; and so his method will be a part of himself, and will tell us about the quality of his imagination. ²¹

Pompéia's role is of the all-knowing author who presents the omniscient point of view. He moves unrestricted without regard to time, place and character and freely makes comments at will. But within this scheme Sérgio is the first-person narrator and all information is limited to what he sees and feels. By placing Sérgio as the principal character, in the center of the narrative, the author is able to delve into subjective and internal analysis by probing the lower levels of Sérgio's consciousness.

The author tells his story as though it were being retrospectively set down by its boy hero: Sérgio. This point of view has obvious advantages, as mentioned before, not the least of which is the sense of closeness, of "reality," which stems from the illusion that we are following an authentic document. Because Sérgio is the central figure and because he is intelligent and alert, he gives the impression that we could not have the

²¹Percy Lubbock, op. cit., p. 76.

facts from a better source. More important, since Sérgio's experiences during the course of the novel play such an important part in the plot, we are always sharing them, sharing the ignorance, the curiosity, the bewilderment which precedes them and the surprise, the fear, and the anger that they produce.

In O Ateneu there are, in fact, two vantage points envisioned by the author. At times the narrator speaks and reacts like a child, while at the same time he sees events with the mature eye of an adult. These two "visions," so diametrically opposed, tend to confuse the reader. The truth of the matter is that Rompêla wants the reader to see Sérgio as a young boy. However, since the novel was written fourteen years after the events occurred, as adult recollections of childhood experiences, at times the two points of view collide:

Dois tempos e duas visões se misturam na evocação do narrador, ora a fazer predominar a compreensão infantil, ora a adulta, numa alternativa constante. 22

Since Sérgio is the central character who interprets the action of the novel and gives his opinions, the reader takes it for granted that the main character is Sérgio. However, as the novel progresses further, it soon becomes apparent that there is more than one person involved in reporting Sérgio's impressions. To all intents and purposes it is the youthful Sérgio, the eleven-year-old child, who undergoes the hardships at the school.

²² João Pacheco, A Literatura Brasileira: O Realismo (VI vols.; São Paulo, Editora Cultrix, 1963), III, 146.

Nevertheless, the reader must take into account that the novel was conceived many years after the events narrated took place, when the narrator, more worldly, more mature and in a better position to cope with his own psychological problems, was able to look in retrospect at the troublesome past and write his impressions.

The author's voice mingles with that of the narrator in the novel, breaking the single point of view. At times the author breaks the "time barrier" by leaping into the future and telling the reader what has occurred to a character years after the "crônica de saudades" was put together. The author's philosophic and moralizing discourse, when put into the mouth of Dr. Cláudio, permits him to voice his philosophy which would sound improbable from the mouth of a child. Romberg sees in the first-person novel a sort of double layer that arises from the narrative, when the main character relates the experiences of his youth from a position in later life. Here the split means that the story itself, the action, is seen partly in retrospect, as a summing-up, and partly as active experience.²³ There is a natural dualism in the figure of the narrator; he narrates and experiences and he is both young and old. It is certainly a case of identical persons, and yet they are not the same person.

Although Pompéia envisioned two vantage points in O Ateneu,

²³Bertil M. Romberg, op. cit., p. 62.

three different "voices" actually speak in the novel: the author, who interrupts the narrative and leaps into the future bringing the story to the time of writing while, at times, he uses a character who is very much like himself to expound his philosophy; the child Sérgio, who sees and interprets the events that unfold through the eyes of an inexperienced adolescent; and the adult Sérgio, who looks back in anger at the injustices perpetrated against him during his boyhood days. It is, of course, impossible to separate the three since essentially they are different aspects of one personality. The author uses the child Sérgio to interpret the facts and inform the reader.

As the passage of time has a tendency to alter one's point of view, adding new dimensions and understanding, it can be assumed that the narrator's reactions to what happened were bound to suffer modification after a protracted period of time. As a general rule, the omniscient author usually seeks a certain amount of anonymity by preferring to remain discreetly in the background. In Pompéia's case, however, this is not entirely true: though his opinions often appear concealed between the lines, at other times, they are openly aired.

Most writers unconsciously draw upon their own past experiences for the themes that they discuss in their novels. It is widely accepted that Raul Pompéia based O Ateneu on personal experience encountered as a child, while attending the Colégio Abílio.¹⁵ Thus, many scenes can be traced to life episodes. I

²⁴ Nestor Vitor, A Crítica de Ontem (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Leite Ribeiro & Maurílio, 1919), p. 36.

would venture to say that most scenes dealing with his general impressions of the students and the institution, episodes depicting dormitory life in a private institution, chapel and classroom scenes as well as celebrations and activities, can be attributed to personal experience. It is also necessary to consider that O Ateneu was written when the author was barely twenty-five years old and that he had not matured emotionally as an individual. Pompéia, the man, was known for his lack of understanding and sensitivity to others. In the novel, the murder scene, Dona Ema's escape, and the devastating fire that consumes the structure are fanciful flights of the author's imagination, an imagination tortured by secret inner conflicts. At the same time, these are romantic techniques and they illustrate, perhaps, certain romantic traits of the author's personality. Pompéia's life is full of the paradoxes of his personality: his quest for natural truth and at the same time his own self-deception, his democratic ideals and his despotic and intransigent actions, his constant struggle to help the downtrodden and his antagonism toward his fellow men in general.

The presentation of Sérgio, the central character who narrates the story, is entirely unique in the novel. It does not follow the general pattern set up for the other character. Not only does Sérgio speak for the author, giving his point of view, but he also interprets all the scenes. The appearance of the other characters, what they say and do, the setting, the mood and the tone, all the story materials in fact, are transmitted to the

reader through Sérgio. It is true that occasionally the point of view shifts from Sérgio, and someone else is permitted to voice his opinions (as when Rebêlo introduces Sérgio to the Ateneu and to its heterogeneous assortment of individuals), giving a brief glimpse of what a second party sees and feels. However, this second party voices the author's philosophy; his ideas coincide perfectly with those of the central character, who, in reality, is the author himself. The only concession by the narrator is to permit a wider range of characters to voice their opinions. Since the narrator and these other "narrators," such as Rebêlo and later Franco, share similar points of view, the reader is only given a one-sided picture. In fact, he is never offered any other point of view than that sanctioned by Pompéia.

As noted by Maria Luiza Ramos, the author also spoke through Dr. Cláudio, who becomes, in effect, the ideal ego of Pompéia.²⁵ The philosophy of the origins of art and life expounded by this character in reality represents Pompéia's personal theories. Eugênio Gomes points out that Sérgio represents the psychological facet of the author while Dr. Cláudio represents his intellectual side.²⁶ Although the same may be said of other characters who become spokesmen for the narrator, Dr. Cláudio is an intellectual extension of the author in its purest form.

There is a conscious effort on the part of Pompéia to create

²⁵ Maria Luiza Ramos, op. cit., p. 124.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 124 quoting Eugênio Gomes, A Sátira da Oratória n'O Ateneu, n.p., n.d.

the illusion that the child Sérgio is the narrator. To achieve this end, Sérgio interprets all the episodes that occur and, in the beginning of the novel, often has typical childish reactions to them. Thus, early in the novel, when Aristarco gives his lectures on cosmology and points to the stars, Sérgio naïvely is taken aback because as a child he knows that pointing to the stars causes warts:

Quanto a mim, o que sobretudo me maravilhava era a coragem com que Aristarco fingava os astros, quando todos sabem que apontar estrêlas faz criar verrugas. 27

Once the illusion of the child writing his impressions is obtained, however, the author drops the pretense. Although the novel can hardly be considered a child's recollection of his early school experience, Pompéia attempts to foster the impression although he never fully exploits it. On one occasion, for instance, the depressing atmosphere of the school forces Sérgio to seek solace in religion and the author tries to capture a typical reaction of a small boy to the mystery of life. This occurs when he realizes that he will not be able to sing, as Ribas does, when he dies and enters heaven:

Durante este período de depressão contemplativa uma coisa apenas magoava-me; não tinha o ar angélico do Ribas, não cantava tão bem como êle. que faria se morresse, entre os anjos, sem saber cantar. 28

²⁷Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 50

²⁸Ibid., p. 55.

Raul Pompéia painfully attempts to maintain the illusion that the "raconteur" is none other than young Sérgio; however, the author's adult pessimism shows through the veneer of Sérgio's childhood innocence, which at times appears to be more of a façade than a sincere belief. It thus serves to hide the "facts." In the following passage, for example, Sérgio remembers having read a book describing the agony suffered by little children for having taken holy communion before going through confession:

Recordo-me de um assunto: a comunhão sacrílega! A propósito, Barreto me deu um livro a ler, um livro cruel, que descrevia coisas dignas de Hóloc: crianças diretamente justificadas pela celeste cólera, uma delas que, por haver comungado sem confissão prévia, iludindo ao sacerdote, fôra apanhada pela roupa entre dois cilindros de aço duma máquina e reduzida a pasta, acabando impenitente, maldita, sem tempo para um ai Jesus ... Era-me incrível que de uma simples hóstia pudesse a taumaturgia de credence obter tantos efeitos de terror. 29

The child's reaction is one of dismay and disbelief at the "ignorance" of the adult. The punishment is much too severe for such an insignificant crime. In the eyes of Sérgio the wheels of justice turn at a ridiculously rapid pace. The bone-breaking cylinders, as a vehicle of torture, reflect punishment as seen by a ten-year-old child. The author's attack is twofold: he takes a stab at the absurdity of religious dogma, and then he shows that the child's view of life, as felt by the inexperienced Sérgio, is much more enlightened than what man has created on Earth.

²⁹ibid., pp. 71-72.

The author often abandons young Sérgio's point of view and permits Sérgio-narrator to break the time sequence and project into the future in order to give a clue to the destiny or whereabouts of a particular character. This occurs on several occasions in the novel. At times the "projection" serves to reinforce Sérgio's opinion of a certain character, as in the case of Barreto. At other times, Pompéia uses this technique in order to obtain a humorous effect.

In order to illustrate this point, I have chosen a scene which shows how the different "voices" appear. Sérgio, early in the novel, awed by the prospects of being admitted into one of the most prestigious schools of the realm, views the entrance of the institution and psychologically identifies with a frieze depicting a group of playful cherubs:

Flanqueando a majestosa porta desta escada, havia dois quadros de alto relêvo: à direita, uma alegoria das artes e do estudo, à esquerda, as indústrias humanas, meninos nus como nos frisos de Kaulbach, risinhos, com a ferramenta simbólica—psicologia pura do trabalho, modelada idealmente na candura do gesso e da inocência. Eram meus irmãos! Eu estava a esperar que um dêies, convidativo, me estendesse a mão para o bailado feliz que os levava. Oh! que não seria o colégio, tradução concreta da alegoria, ronda angélica de corações à porta de um templo, dulia permanente das almas jovens no ritual austero da virtude. 30

The omniscient narrator has created a scene in order to present and to establish a point he wants to bring out: in this case,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

Sérgio's basic purity of soul and innocence of character. Although the author selected this scene, it is the character Sérgio who identifies with the prancing angels painted on the stuccoed walls. The narrator, hidden halfway in the background, symbolically emphasizes the "goodness" of the sculpture and, in the mind of the young boy, projects this sentiment onto the school and the students.

At best, Sérgio and Sérgio-narrator view life in terms of black and white. People are either good or bad; personality shadings are never visible. When thrust upon the world, Sérgio sees himself as a pure and innocent child unaware of evil. At least, that is the impression Pompéia steadfastly fosters. As a result, during the course of the novel, the reader tends to forgive Sérgio's trespasses and to blame the other characters in the novel. In this way Sérgio is always seen as the underdog and systematically awakens our sympathy.

The reader is psychologically conditioned to make allowances for Sérgio's illogical behavior. Whenever possible, Pompéia underscores Sérgio's naïveté; therefore it comes as no surprise when the reader is informed that Sérgio, enraptured by his pure state of absolute innocence, identifies with the dancing angels painted on the stuccoed walls.

I cannot accept the premise that Sérgio as a child could have had such a negative and pessimistic view of man and life, however. Had Sérgio been truly pure in thought and deed, he would never have had such a bleak picture of humanity from the first pages of the novel; for youth is the citadel of optimism and un-

fulfilled hopes, and dreams thrive in it. The angry and rebellious child that appears in the very first chapter is a mere extension of the embittered adult. Unsuccessfully, then, the narrator tries to give the impression that young Sérgio is telling the story. To that end he attempts to deceive the reader by assuming a naïve posture that is not consistently followed throughout the novel.

Sérgio-narrator becomes an external character who views Sérgio the child as an innocent bystander, a helpless pawn victimized by a vile and heartless society. As young Sérgio faces an unconcerned and antagonistic society he retreats into a religious sanctuary or, at least, tries to create one. Transported by his religious fervor he sees himself as a suffering martyr. His astronomical studies at the Ateneu that continually force him to search the heavens foster his idea of sainthood. Once again we find Sérgio trying to escape a cruel world by seeking freedom and ultimate happiness in the sky. With his eyes focused on the heavens his soul is uplifted. It is in this beatific state that he childishly identifies with Saint Ignatius of Loyola:

A incredulidade primeira acabou em meu espírito, reconhecendo o descalabro deste val de lágrimas em que vivemos. Ao tempo que devia consagrar à minha reabilitação nos estudos, pus-me estudar, como Inácio de Loyola, talvez na mesma idade, a reabilitação do mundo. 31

³¹Ibid., p. 52.

This exalted air of virtue leads young Sérgio to seek sainthood through man's reformation and the eradication of the evils of the world:

Nutria talvez no íntimo o ambicioso interesse de um dia reformar os homens com o meu exemplo pontifical de virtudes no sólido de Roma; mas a verdade é que me dediquei conscienciosamente ao santo empenho de merecer essa exaltação, preparando-me com tempo. 32

Once he has convinced himself of his unique position in life, Sérgio takes masochistic pleasure in his daily sufferings and his untold humiliation:

Aquê!e sofrimento eu o desejava, na humildade devota da minha disposição atual. Chorava à noite, em segredo, no dormitório; mas colhia as lágrimas numa taça como fazem os mártires das estampas bentas, e oferecia ao céu, em remissão dos meus pobres pecados, com as notas más boiando. 33

As an external character Sérgio-narrator never appears physically in the novel; nevertheless, he makes his presence felt by his continuous indirect intervention. On the first day of school, when young Sérgio makes Sanches' acquaintance, he reaches a conclusion even before he gets to know him:

Fui também recomendado ao Sanches. Achei-o supinamente antipático: cara extensa, olhos rasos, mortos, de um pardo transparente, lábios úmidos, porejando baba, meiguice viscosa de crápula antigo. Era o primeiro que fôsse do côro dos anjos, no meu conceito era a derradeira das criaturas. 34

³² Ibid., p. 52.

³³ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 30.

In the process of viewing himself as he was fourteen years previously, Sérgio-narrator makes a conscious effort to recapture his lost boyhood, to recreate his past. At the same time, as pointed out by Silviano Santiago, he attempts to create and to maintain a certain distance between himself and the character Sérgio.³⁵ For instance, as Sérgio sits together with Franco preparing the written exercises, punishment exacted by Aristarco for their misbehavior, Sérgio-narrator looks back and cannot fully understand why he took part in the broken bottle escapade:

Conseguira no lusco-fusco escapar à sala onde o haviam encerrado para a tarefa das páginas. E juntos eu e êle, porque eu lhe aceitara o convite com uma facilidade que ainda hoje não compreendo, galgamos um canto de muro que havia no pátio e saltamos para o jardim florestal. 36

This is what Silviano Santiago calls Sérgio's "flight from responsibility," the fact that he always exonerates himself from any wrongdoing. Sérgio-narrator substantiates Sérgio's statement by having Franco single out Sérgio and clear him from any actual participation in the broken bottle episode.³⁷

Sérgio's view of life and man, seen through dark-colored glasses, is not really a child's view of life but that of Sérgio-narrator giving his adult opinion. The hero is not Sérgio-narrator since the real hero is his former self, the student at the

³⁵Silviano Santiago, "O Ateneu: Contradições e Perquirições," Luzo-Brazilian Review, Vol. IV, No. 11 (Dec., 1967), p. 55.

³⁶Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 63.

³⁷Silviano Santiago, op. cit., p. 62.

Ateneu. However, this complication between young Sérgio, Sérgio-narrator, and Raul Pompéia, the author, increases the interest of the novel while adding a measure of psychological ambiguity. Any opinions expressed by any one of these three personages can also be ascribed to the other two, although they may express different and contradictory opinions.

Sérgio-narrator appears and reappears on many different levels offering his opinion on sundry matters. After struggling first with Bento Alves and later with Aristarco himself, Sérgio ponders why the headmaster did not take any punitive action against him. He comes to the conclusion that there was a financial reason:

Hoje penso diversamente: não valia a pena perder de uma vez dois pagadores prontos, só pela futilidade de uma ocorrência, desagradável, não se duvida, mas sem testemunhas. 38

On another occasion, considering Cerqueira's comic antics in the dormitory, Sérgio-narrator again brings the action to the time of writing by reporting an incident that occurred years after his internment at the Ateneu:

Este rapaz escapou de morrer, em um dos últimos naufrágios da nossa costa; um ex-colega escreveu-lhe: quem os semeia, colhe tempestades. 39

By his frequent intervention in the form of projections into the future, Sérgio-narrator helps create a different dimension in

³⁸Raul Pompéia, op. cit., pp. 139-136.

³⁹Ibid., p. 115.

the novel. The problem of his appearing in the novel is further complicated, however, by Pompéia's intimate involvement with both Sérgio-narrator and young Sérgio. All three are one and the same person, different time facets, so to speak, of one personality. The reader cannot, in good conscience, separate one from the other since cleavage would entail a truncation of the author from his other "selves."

Sérgio-narrator who identifies with Sérgio-child has a tendency to confuse present and past as he views his early childhood years at the Ateneu. Although he tries to write as young Sérgio, Sérgio-narrator cannot refrain from making himself felt between the lines, and the reader cannot but feel his presence. João Pacheco has underscored the two visions of time:

Dois tempos e duas visões se misturam na evocação do narrador, ora a fazer predominar a compreensão infantil, ora a adulta, numa alternativa constante. 40

Obviously, objectivity is not one of Sérgio's strong points. On several other occasions Sérgio deliberately distorts the truth or even tells an outright falsehood in order to gain the reader's sympathy or to ingratiate himself with the reader:

... Sérgio tem também interesse em mostrar os outros sob refletor que mais lhe convém e agrada no presente, em outras palavras, em defender a si mesmo, isentar-se da idéia de que o Mal na sua vida seja culpa única e exclusiva sua. O Mal consciente e lúcido impossibilitaria a construção de uma vida reta no presente. 41

⁴⁰ João Pacheco, op. cit., p. 146.

⁴¹ Liviano Santiago, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

Not only does Sérgio-narrator alter the view of the other characters so that Sérgio will appear to advantage but at one point, Sérgio-narrator defends his position with regard to truth. He implies that there is a higher law that determines what is truth and what is fiction. It is at the physical athletic competition that Sérgio notices that the decorative banners waving among the trees give a false impression. Even nature seems willing to fool the populace. Nature modifies her wild appearance, assumes a happy air and plays a deceitful role for one day:

... não percebi a sensação de êrmo tão acentuada em sítios montanhosos, que havia de notar depois. As folhas do momento faziam sorrir a paisagem. O arvoredo do imenso jardim, entretecido a cores por mil bandeiras, brilhava ao sol vivo com o esplendor de estranha alegria; os vistosos panos, em meio da ramagem, fingiam flôres colossais, numa caricatura extravagante de primavera ... 42

Just as nature fools innocent Sérgio so does mankind. First impressions may well be false. In the eyes of Sérgio, shades between truth and fiction are not well defined. Truth depends more on the moment and on the beholder's "état d'âme." Very early in the novel Sérgio-narrator undermines the reader's concept of truth and tells him that exterior impressions are deceiving. The narrator's ambivalent views regarding truth make the novel all the more difficult to interpret.

Point of view in O Ateneu is essentially unilateral: it is

⁴²Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 17.

heavily tilted in favor of the main character. Only Sérgio's impressions, which are identical to those of the narrator, are recorded. He is continually placed in a favorable light by a sympathetic narrator and he stoutly has his protagonist defend himself when he commits a transgression. Point of view is given by Sérgio and by other characters in the novel who basically share similar views. The reader is never introduced to Aristarco's or Bento Alves' viewpoint, for example, since it might clash with Sérgio's or the narrator's views. Point of view, therefore, is only given by Sérgio and by the adult narrator who hides in the background.

Sérgio at times finds himself at odds with the author's views. Manifestly Sérgio refuses to believe the rumors that circulate at the Ateneu regarding Dona Ema's and Crisóstomo's clandestine romance and he brands them as malicious gossip. At the same time, however, the author reinforces the rumors several times by associating and linking their names whenever possible. The author seems to want to stress Sérgio's inability to see evil in the world.

The main problem in O Ateneu is that the narrator says too much and does not permit the reader to exercise his powers of analysis. The pleasure of reading fiction, as Gerald Warner Brace pointed out, is that it permits the reader to judge all the characters and to come to his own conclusions after he has weighed the evidence. The reader, essentially a juror, observes, sifts both pro and con and after deliberation makes up his own mind.

Never during the course of the novel, does the narrator follow the impersonal theory of art advocated by Flaubert. Although complete anonymity, as suggested by Wayne C. Booth, is impossible in presenting characters and situations, the narrator might have sought a more impartial presentation. The unilateral view held by the author holds a clue to the true personality of Pompéia as suggested by Percy Lubbock.

The relationship between point of view and the structure that a novel takes is usually intimately bound. The unilateral point of view forces the author, so to speak, to construct his scenes around the central character.

Every effective piece of fiction has a structure that gives it body and substance. When we discuss structure, we actually speak of an interrelationship between form and function. It is a combination of formal elements which reveal their logical coherence within given elements of analysis.⁴³ In effect, structure is the planned framework of a novel, and the piece of literature itself can be regarded as a structure. It is the vital and dynamic interrelationship of plot, character, tone, style, and all other components:

Although this idea has been interpreted in several rather special senses, it means, fundamentally, that each work is a highly complex organization and that

⁴³Jacques Ehrmann, "Introduction," Yale French Studies, Nos. 36-37 (New Haven: Eastern Press, 1966), p. 7.

its many components or facets are inter-related in such a way that the whole is greater than its parts. Used in this sense, the term does not refer only to the formal aspects—the parallels or contrasts of scenes, the climactic or anticlimactic ordering of the plot—but includes the whole of a literary work. In other words, each work not only has a structure but is a structure. ⁴⁴

The idea that a literary work has a unifying structure, a complex unity, is an important principle to understand. Once we accept it, we will not be satisfied with interpretations which are based solely on isolated parts of a work rather than on the work as a whole.

In order to explain the essence of structure, André Martinet draws a symbolic parallel between a building and a piece of literature. The analogy emphasizes the similarities as well as the differences and gives an overall idea of what structure really is about. He says the following about a building:

Structure, according to the Oxford Concise Dictionary is the 'manner in which a building or organism or other complete whole is constructed.' It is not a matter of the building itself nor the materials of which it is composed, from foundation to roof timbers, from façade ornamentation to the refinements of interior installations. Neither is it a matter of certain of these materials considered as more essential: supporting walls and roofing trusses in old-fashioned edifices, concrete or steel skeleton in modern buildings. It is a question of the way in which these materials are assembled and combined to obtain an object

⁴⁴ Marlies K. Danziger & Wendell Stacy Johnson, An Introduction to Literary Criticism (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1961), p. 14.

created for specific purposes and capable of satisfying well-defined functions. It would of course be inexact to say that the physical properties of the materials do not enter into structure since the latter—the way in which the building is constructed—is closely dependent on the former. Traditional materials, valued for their weight and resistance to the elements, imply outside carrying walls, whereas reinforced concrete allows a central pillar from which is hung a light, insulating outer envelope. But these properties concern structure only insofar as they condition it. The use, in a façade, of a heavier or lighter material naturally has repercussions on the structure of the building, but the texture of this material, its outward appearance and its esthetic qualities, as long as they do not call for a change in weight, are irrelevant from the point of view of structure. ⁴⁵

Although Cateneu gives the impression of being haphazardly constructed, due to its psychological structure, this is not the case. It is true that scenes are juxtaposed according to the rhythm of psychological time and not according to sequential time, as was the custom at the time.⁴⁶ However, the novel was built following a very deliberate plan by a writer who was acutely aware of the technical possibilities of the novel and was experimenting with new principles and concepts. *Pompéia* added an entirely new dimension to the Brazilian novel: the complete and arbitrary disregard for linear plot. The spontaneous and unex-

⁴⁵ André Martinet, "Structure and Language," Yale French Studies, Nos. 36-37 (New Haven: Eastern Press, 1966), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁶ Célia Therezinha Oliveira, op. cit., p. 70.

pected concatenation of scenes that psychologically lie in the narrator's mind, unmindful of chronological time, makes the narrative innovative and daring. In order to strengthen the unilateral point of view, the author placed Sérgio as his all-seeing, all-knowing eye, in the center of the novel.

O Ateneu has an orbital structure;⁴⁷ that is to say, the plot and the characters gravitate around the central figure. The structure of the novel can be compared to a huge wheel with Sérgio at the core. The different characters can be likened to the spokes of a wheel that rotate around him. It is Sérgio who translates their actions and reactions according to his physical and psychological needs. Since he lives in a fantasy world far from reality, all interpretations depend on his subjective state of mind.

The structure of O Ateneu seems, at first, to be simple in nature but eventually proves to be quite complex. The novel does not begin at a point in time later than that which initiates the action. On the contrary, after a brief flashback into Sérgio's preschool experiences, Pompéia starts the narrative at its chronological beginning. However, through the intricate web of digressions, flashbacks, and even bold leaps into future time, it soon becomes apparent that scenes follow a psychological pattern. Each scene appears to be quite independent of the previous

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 70.

one and gives the general impression of being unrelated. This is due to the fact that the novel is psychological in structure, and events in Sérgio's mind do not trigger others that follow it chronologically. The ordering of plot episodes, then, is anti-climactic. The novel approximates the form of a diary in which Sérgio subjectively recounts his experiences at school and gives his impressions of his physical surroundings as well as of the other students and teachers, without tying events together chronologically. However, below the level of awareness, scenes do build up and lead the reader into related scenes. The author does prepare for future scenes, often through a complicated network of images and symbols. Sérgio appears completely independent in each scene and his experiences gathered through the length and breadth of the novel do not give the impression of becoming part and parcel of his accumulated knowledge.

O Ateneu represents a carefully constructed edifice of scenes superimposed one upon another and forming a pyramidal structure. Rarely does the narrator introduce a scene without deliberately preparing the reader psychologically for it. This subtle transition in the structure secures a viable flow of episodes and avoids jagged edges.

At times the action of a scene may foreshadow the action of a subsequent scene although on a different level, conditioning the reader as to what is about to take place. When related scenes occur, the reader can at times anticipate future action without being consciously aware of what is happening. Through this sym-

bolic relationship, the narrator is able to prepare the reader psychologically for the following scene though the latter may not be consciously aware of his hidden intention. Only upon careful investigation is Pompéia's predisposition to superimpose one scene upon another obvious. The subtle transition brought about by related scenes creates a harmonious blending of symbols that adds to the smooth texture of the plot while concurrently increasing the interest of the novel.

For example, the murder scene in the novel follows the idea implanted in Sérgio's mind by Barreto that women are essentially evil. It is only after discussing Barreto's belief that women are the originators of evil that the murder is committed:

A teologia do Barreto me calara fundo,
e eu resolvera piedoso enxotar quanta ima-
gem de sorriso viesse pousar-me à idéia.
Virando a página dos fervores, a teoria
ficou-me de resto, do Satanás feminino. Com
a pureza a mais, natural da idade, ia zom-
bando de Ângela e pompas adjacentes. Fe-
chado o peito como a paz de Jano, e exte-
riormente a vaidade me amparava. 48

The technique of subtle suggestion rather than overt inference is characteristic of Pompéia's style. This passing commentary by Barreto, ultimately accepted by Sérgio, leads the reader into the murder scene and eventually to Sérgio's realization that Angela is the direct cause of the cruel act. At that very moment Angela passes by and Sérgio, for the first time, equates the contrasting effect of beauty and evil:

⁴⁸Raul Pompéia, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

Após a rêde, pela escada da cozinha,
saíram todos; eu fiquei. Examinava ainda
o chão alagado de sangue quando alguém
passando, afagou-me os cabelos: era Ângela.

—Morió (sic), disse, indicando o sangue,
arregalando as sobancelhas, e desajareceu
com o andar de bamboleio.

Primeira vez que reparei que era bonita
a canarina. Sim senhor! 49

These two scenes are interrelated and are structured one upon the other much like a deck of cards that is used to form a pyramidical edifice. Parreto's belief in the baseness of woman quietly carries the reader to the murder and eventually to Sérgio's acceptance of woman's inner cruelty when confronted with Angela's apparent callous indifference. Transfixed before the pool of blood and startled by Angela's attitude, Sérgio quickly recognizes the link between the two and agrees that women are evil. On three occasions in these two related scenes the author reverts to the contrasting idea of Angela's beauty and the cruel and ugly act of murder. Thus by constantly hammering the idea of beauty and ugliness Pompéia bombards the reader with these opposing facets of man's personality.

Another example of artistic complication in the sequence of scenes can be seen in the way Pompéia capitalizes on Bento Alves' heroic act of capturing the murderer single-handed to introduce a new scene and an obviously distasteful character, Nearco da Fonseca. From a scene filled with heroic action, Pompéia moves to one which is ridiculous in nature. This contrast can be compared to the

⁴⁹Id., p. 82.

juxtaposition of the beautiful and the ugly, a favorite device of Rompêia's. As the scene climbs to a crescendo the reader is attracted to Bento Alves' honesty and repelled by Nearco da Fonseca's vanity as a gymnast and, later, as an orator. His vanity, of course, is ill-founded, and both scenes degenerate into a ridiculous exercise of trivia, for Nearco is not only a most ridiculous gymnast but also a most shoddy orator. The procedure is used in order to destroy Nearco as a character even before he enters the scene. Any character would automatically have to be built up after Bento Alves' heroic display of courage and strength, and certainly Nearco, in order to hold his own, would have to be built to a greater extent. What happens is precisely the opposite. Nearco da Fonseca is completely annihilated as a character within two chapters and is only mentioned once casually during the picnic scene.

The narrator not only contrasts Nearco and Bento on the physical level, but also morally and in the world of deeds and actions. Bento is a powerhouse of physical strength and has the courage to go with it, while Nearco is a grotesque specimen of an athlete. Bento is virtuously shy, withdrawn and unassuming; Nearco, on the other hand, is forward and vain. Although Nearco's courage is never tested, the reader senses that he would not distinguish himself any better than he did at the trapeze or before the literary society "Amor ao Saber."

Another example of how scenes interrelate can be seen in the Jardim Botânico episode. It begins innocently and ends in a cloud

of debauchery with shrouded sexual connotations. This episode subconsciously prepared the reader for the Cândido affair and its obvious homosexual complications as well as the attack on Sérgio by Bento Alves.

The picnic ruined out by the torrential downpour ends up as a hilarious farce with Venâncio trying to give his speech under cover of a huge umbrella. Unable to withstand the heavy rain, the children disband in a tumultuous uproar and the worst elements of anarchy are released. Through the power of subtle suggestion, the narrator skims the homosexual atmosphere that prevails in the tree groves and in the seclusion of the wooded areas. Romão does not stress the situation; instead he alludes to it ever so lightly and leaves the rest to the reader's imagination:

Os de espírito calmo buscavam sítios de solidade, iam passear o cinema alienado; os sentimentais, com o instinto dos fotógrafos paisanistas, enfiavam, comparavam, aplaudiam os melhores pontos de vista, ou, simplesmente dois, íntimos seguiam para longe, braços pela cintura, balbuciando diálogos lentos. Os menores corriam, arrastando animadíssimos brincos, atiravam-se às borboletas, iam pelos cursos d'água canalizada através do parque, perseguindo a fuga de um graveto, trêpido, inalcançável na evacuação rápida da linfa. Nos enrelamentos obscuros do bosque, exatamente onde o artista grego incluiria um sátiro, podia-se surpreender sob uma blusa o confiado abandono bucólico de outros colegas. 50

The drinking and eating orgy that results from the excursion to the Jardim Botânico and the homosexual overtones that become evident as the students disperse among the trees and shrub-

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 128.

bery, lead to the unsavory Cândido affair which epitomizes the prevalent sexual practices of many of the students. It is after the ill-fated picnic that Aristarco reads Cândido's love letter to Tourinho and decides to take punitive action against the rampant sexual abuses at the school. The judgement scene, with its direct inquiry conducted by Aristarco, though shocking, does not come entirely as a surprise. What does surprise, however, is that from a humorous episode in which there is a glimmer of erotic behavior, the author moves to a highly serious and controversial scene in which twelve defendants stand before Aristarco, the judge, accused of having broken the most sacred code of the institution: the code of morality. If controversial today this scene certainly was more so in the straitlaced court of Dom Pedro in 1836! This episode must have caused a stir among the aristocracy who had studied at the best private schools of the times, and who must have been able to discern situations that brought to mind intimate friends, acquaintances or even their own actions.

Heavily tied in with the reading of the Cândido letter, to which Aristarco promises swift and just retribution to all those involved in the affair, is Sérgio's subsequent attack by Bento Alves while on his way to the library. Pompéia never makes the slightest allusion to any sexual overtones in the attack. On the contrary, Sérgio is at a loss to comprehend the reason for the aggression. However, Bento Alves' unusual and strange behavior, his abnormal countenance as well as the timing of the attack (after Aristarco's probe of Cândido's letter), strengthens the

premise of the sexual intent of the struggle. The scene is predicated on the previous Cândido episode and on the scattered references to the veiled homosexual movement. The allusions, obvious and hidden, are interrelated and strengthen the tone; they lead to the ultimate assault. These scenes, each one intimately linked with the previous one, contribute to the dénouement of Lento's assault. Without stating the design of the aggression, the author cleverly leads the reader through a maze of events that clearly points out the sexual intent of the attack.

An identical interrelationship of scenes occurs when the author first introduces Egbert. Symbolically Egbert is introduced to the reader immediately after Aristarco brings the undercover movement to the open. It is also after amnesty is granted by the headmaster to all the revolutionaries and, by extension, to all those involved in the Cândido scandal that Sérgio's courtship of Egbert becomes serious. Although Egbert is not personally involved in the troubles that plague the institution the reader feels that there is a connection. At first, no direct reference is made by the author. It is not till much later in the chapter that Sérgio implicates Egbert in the affair when he casually mentions that he regrets not having been able to share his comrade's dishonor in order to prove the mettle of his friendship.

A final example of interrelating scenes occurs by the positioning of the political argument that erupts during Dr. Cláudio's discourse on the nature of art, between Lenator Kubim, who represents the republican faction of the political spectrum, and Dr.

Lé Lôbo, the monarchical and conservative lawyer. This scene precedes the physical encounter between Bento Alves, defender of the weak at the Ateneu, and Mulheiro, the school bully. The impassioned and high-spirited discussion that ends as a war of charges and counter-charges, much to the consternation of Aristarco and all the gathered guests, foreshadows the two opposing forces in the nation. From a political name-calling episode the reader is immediately introduced to a physical encounter between the two students who represent the forces of good and evil just as Senator Rubin and Lé Lôbo in Pompéia's mind symbolize the opposing forces of progress and regression. Thus symbolically the author carries the heated argument to a common brawl. It is interesting to note that in both cases the forces of good (according to Pompéia's standards) triumph over the power of evil.

As can be seen, contrary to general opinion, many scenes that give the outward appearance of being loosely connected, in reality constitute a tightly knit structure. Working below the threshold of awareness, the author, through the hidden and often subtle forms of association, builds one scene upon another. Scenes that do not give the impression of being related suddenly under analytical study show definite common points. In O Ateneu scenes have a tendency to lead one into another in order to prepare the reader psychologically for oncoming events.

On a symbolic level the author also uses images and symbols to create a transition between scenes. Thus a heated political discussion carries the reader to a student fist fight. A similar

situation occurs at the Jardim Botânico in which the homosexual climate created by the narrator plants the seeds for the trial and banishment of the guilty students and eventually for the attack on Sérgio. The subtle transition between scenes achieves a greater degree of coherence in the structure of the novel.

Pompéia's use of the flashback as a stylistic device in the structure of the novel is more extensive than that found in other Brazilian writers of the day. The flashback may be defined as a device in which the narrator, through an associative process, breaks up chronological sequence in order to introduce a new scene. The temporal sequence of narration is abruptly suspended, and the author moves back in time to events which occurred previously. In the flashback, the narrator recounts a character's background or previous experience which sheds light upon the action of the narration in the form of remembrances, interior monologue, or dialogue. The flashback need not be a scene, it can take the form of a thought or a recollection flashing through the mind of the character, or even a daydream that momentarily projects the reader into the past. This technique is employed by the narrator largely for expository reasons, either to increase the reader's information or his psychological penetration into a character, or to shape the reader's attitude towards certain events. However, when the order of plot does not coincide with the order of narration, the author usually has good reason for altering the sequence.

Pompéia's most noted contemporaries, Machado de Assis, José

de Alencar, and Aluizio Azevedo, generally avoided time changes in their works. Prior to the appearance of O Ateneu, Machado and published Ressureição (1872), A Mão e a Luva (1874), Helena (1876), Iaiá Garcia (1876), and Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas (1881), with the possible exception of the last mentioned novel, all are considered early works that do not reflect the pessimistic philosophy nor the complicated novelistic technique that the author was later to reveal in his novels and short stories. Essentially the structure of these novels follows a linear pattern with little alteration of time sequence. Alencar's Senhora (1875), published thirteen years before, also follows a linear pattern without significant time changes to complicate the style. Aluizio Azevedo's Casa de Pensão (1883), which appeared five years before O Ateneu, on the other hand, does have two notable breaks in time. On the whole, however, prior to the publication of O Ateneu, Brazilian writers had a tendency to follow a sequential plot without major time changes.

Pompéia was more innovative than his contemporaries in the use of the flashback. Events in the novel take place in Sérgio's mind and are not recorded in chronological order, but psychologically. This plan allows Pompéia greater liberty in the use of the flashback. The novel begins and ends with a break in time. By shifting from present to future and to the past in the first paragraph of the novel, three changes in time, Pompéia projects the reader into a psychological shift in time, that exposes the unhappy world of fear and anger felt by the young adolescent.

The opening lines usher young Sérgio into the new world of the Ateneu, with his father's admonition that the road is bound to be steep and rocky. No longer is he to be sheltered and protected by his home environment; he is to take his rightful place in society. Not only does the narrator recount the bitter deception experienced during his early school years but he takes the reader acutely aware of a basic unhappiness that transcends all other feelings, an unhappiness that is later coupled with a strong sentiment of having been wronged. Thus, even before getting involved in the plot, the narrator has conditioned the reader to Sérgio's pessimistic philosophy of life:

Bastante experimentei depois a verdade
dê-te aviso, que me deu, já num gesto,
das ilusões de criança, e do exótico
mente no estufo de S. João, que é o re-
gime do Amor do Ártico, diferente do que
se encontra fora, tão diferente, que a-
parece o pó da lua, e os cuidados maternos de
fazer a criança feliz, e a vida a res-
são rude do primeiro ensinamento, têmpera
brusca d'vitória de um influêncio de um
nôvo clima rigoroso. Lembramo-nos, entre-
tanto, com saudade hipócrita, dos felizes
tempos; com a mesma incerteza de hoje,
sob outro aspecto, não nos houvesse perse-
guido outrora e não viesse de longe a en-
fada das decepções que nos atraijam. 51

In the second line of the novel, the narrator projects the scene to the moment of writing, fifteen years later, when he refers to the illusion of "happy days" of early childhood. He has since learned that "happy times" is an euphemism. Happiness is

⁵¹Idem., p. 11.

a sentiment dependent upon the "état d'âme" of the moment:

Eufemismo, os felizes tempos, eufemismo apenas, igual aos outros que nos alimentam, a saudade dos dias que correram como melhores. Bem considerando, a atualidade é a mesma em tôdas as datas. Feita a compensação dos desejos que variam, das aspirações que se transformam, alentadas perpétuamente do mesmo ardor, sôbre a mesma base fantástica de esperanças, a atualidade é uma. Sob a coloração cambiante das horas, um pouco de ouro mais pela manhã, um pouco mais de púrpura ao crepúsculo—a paisagem é a mesma de cada lado beirando a estrada da vida. 52

After this prolonged parenthesis on the ephemeral nature of happiness, the narrator reverts to Sérgio's preschool years and recapitulates his early childhood. It is then that the narrator places Sérgio at the doors of the Ateneu for a second time. The fourth flashback is caused by a small religious picture of Saint Rosália that makes Sérgio recall a dead cousin:

Era boa a priminha. Mais velha do que eu três anos, carinhosa, maternal comigo. Brincava pouco, velava pelos irmãos, pela ordem da casa, como uma senhora. Tinha os olhos grandes, que pareciam crescer ainda quando fitavam, negros, animados de um movimento suave de nuvem sôbre céu macio; o semblante claro, branco, puro, de marmórea pureza, coando uma transparência de sangue a cada face. Raro falava; desconhecia a agitação, ignorava a impaciência. Sabia talvez que ia morrer. Ao vê-la passar, sem rumor, como os espectros femininos do sonhador americano—leve na terra como o roçar da veste de um anjo, sentia-se com aperto de coração que não pertencia ao mundo aquela criança:

⁵² Ibid., p. 11.

buscava errante na vida, buscava apenas o repouso da forma, sob a campã, em sítio calmo, de muito sol, onde chorassem as rosas pela manhã—e a liberdade etérea do sentimento. 53

Later in the novel the author uses the murder of the kitchen helper to cause Sérgio to remember a dear dead friend. This increases his desire to stare at death in the face:

Lembrava-me de ter visto um anjinho, entre velas no caixão agalado, simples carinha amarelenta, sombreada de azul em nódoas, em mãos crispadas numa fita, cobrindo-se de flôres a imobilidade do último sono. Vira ainda uma velha, na essa elevada, uma opulenta velha que morrera sem herdeiros. Ao redor, choravam muito as tochas pranto de cêra de mel, inconsoláveis, espichando compridas chamas, que pareciam subir ao teto como um filê de fumo. Distinguiam-se bem os dois pés para dentro, em botinas de pano; e o nariz pronunciando-se sob o lenço de rendas. 54

The last flashback involves Américo, who, in reality, is an extension of Sérgio, representing another facet of his rebellious personality. As the author describes the Ateneu in flames, he breaks the time sequence with a flashback on Américo's background:

As chamas elevavam-se por cima do chalé, na direção do edifício principal. Imenso globo de fumo convulsionava-se nos ares, tenebroso da parte de cima, que parecia chegar ao céu, iluminado inferiormente por um clarão côr de cobre ...

Entre os reclusos das férias, contava-se um rapaz, matriculado de pouco, o Américo. Vinha da roça. Mostrou-se contrariado des-

⁵³Ibid., p. 56.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 81.

de o primeiro dia. Aristarco tentou a-brandá-lo; impossível: cada vez mais enfezado. Não falava a ninguém. Era já crescido e parecia de robustez não comum. Olhavam todos para êle como para uma fera respeitável. De repente desapareceu. Passado algum tempo vieram três pessoas reconduzindo-o: o pai, o correspondente e um criado. O rapaz, amarelo, com manchas vermelhas, movediças, no rosto, mordida os beiços até ferir. O pai pediu contra êle toda a severidade. Aristarco, que tinha veleidades de amansador gloriando-se de saber combinar irresistivelmente a energia com o modo amoroso, tranquilizou o fazendeiro: 'Tenho visto piores'. 55

Pompéia initiates the action of the novel using an artful and a rather complicated pattern of time changes. The narrative begins as Sérgio and his father arrive at the doors of the Ateneu. The narrator quickly breaks the time sequence and projects into the future, to the moment of writing, and gives his impressions on those "wonderful childhood times," that prove to be a figure of speech. He then retreats into the past to recapture Sérgio's early childhood experiences before placing him at the door of the Ateneu again. Sérgio's arrival at the school gates is cut in two with all the breaks in time sandwiched between. The other flashbacks that occur in the novel are rather simple in nature and are usually triggered by a related event. These leaps in time, however, make the novel interesting since they supply the reader with events that have occurred outside the scope of the story.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 183.

Since life is fixed in time and space, the novelist is forced to consider the temporal as well as the spatial aspects of his novel. He must place the action in a specific place and create an illusion of time. It is he who controls the passage of time, its direction and its fragmentation.

Time sense is an important factor of daily life. Since events occur one after another, man has a tendency to view life in terms of time. However, as indicated by E. M. Forster, besides time there is another "value" which is equally, if not, more important, and that is intensity.⁵⁶ Therefore, man does not view his daily life as a series of chronological events but rather as a group of events clustered around a given experience:

So daily life, whatever it may be really, is practically composed of two lives--the life in time and the life by values--and our conduct reveals a double allegiance. ⁵⁷

Chronological time is only the record of events. Recorded by the clock or the calendar, it is commonly contrasted to psychological time--the time relation between object and subject.⁵⁸ Psychological time has little to do with records. It is psychic in character and unmeasurable. In effect, it can only be measured by the personal importance of events and emotions.

The passage of psychological time has always intrigued the writer. In different ways, certain writers have tried to present

⁵⁶E. M. Forster, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁵⁸A. A. Mendilow, op. cit., p. 64.

the illusion of unbroken completeness by giving the impression of eliminating the arbitrary selection by the author from the totality of the responses of consciousness:⁵⁹

Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson and the Surrealists . . . wanted to convey without arrangement the full impression of the undivided flow, the durée of living as it passes through the mind of a single character, on the principle 'that the daily life is a daily life, if at any moment of the daily life that daily life is all there is of life.' 60

Not only does psychological time move at a leisurely pace, as in a biographical narrative, but the psychological aspect of the novel also has a tendency to make it move even more slowly. Since O Ateneu is both biographical and psychological, it moves at a leisurely gait. It may be well described in a paragraph about the European novel:

Nos grandes romances psicológicos a Proust, a Joyce, a Meredith, e de certa maneira a Dostoiewski e a Gide, a ação a vemos sempre lenta, difusa, fria, e algo dormente como uma luz indireta, uma luz de reflexos. A ação não vale por si, como representação de vontade, mas pelo que exprime em substância de vida; em idéia. 61

Time in the novel is hardly ever uniform. The skillful author varies his scenes in order to attain diversity. Some scenes

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 84.

⁶¹Olívio Montenegro, O Romance Brasileiro (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1938), p. 82.

are lively and full of action, while others tend to be slow. The alternation of the time element of a novel increases the interest of the reader. There are a few scenes in O Ateneu in which the movement is heightened in order to create a sense of excitement. The scene celebrating the commencement exercises, the murder scene, and the Jardim Botânico scene, are all quick and lively. The fire scene, in which the Ateneu goes up in flames, is also fast moving. On the whole, however, the movement of O Ateneu is slow.

Since one of the underlying themes in O Ateneu is the boredom felt by the students and the tedium of school life, which by necessity leads to evil mischief, the listless nature of time is emphasized. The hot sun, the sultry afternoons, the quiet and often deserted library, all stationary scenes, tend to support and intensify the slow passage of time.

The novelized biography also gives the impression of being viewed in retrospect, and the distance between the fictional time of writing and the narrator setting his story on paper is apparent and, on occasions, unconvincing. The identification that necessarily must be made between reader and hero, therefore, is often missing:

Contrary to what might be expected, a novel in the first person rarely succeeds in conveying the illusion of presentness and immediacy. Far from facilitating the hero-reader identification, it tends to appear remote in time. The essence of such a novel is that it is retrospective, and that there is an avowed temporal distance between

the fictional time—that of the events as they happen—and the narrator's actual time—his time of recording the events. 62

The narrator has to fix historical time. He has to worry about the time of year, the season, the month, day and hour. He may if he wishes, be vague and let the reader draw his own conclusions; nevertheless, he must adhere to authentic chronology in order to give his work a certain amount of credibility.

Pompéia never makes his setting specific; instead, he only refers vaguely to it. Despite the fact that he does not posit the novel in time or give an actual date as to the narrator's actual time, on occasions he does project the reader into the time of writing. The reader receives the impression that the author is looking in retrospect at events that occurred years ago.

Quite early in the novel the author, on referring to Venâncio, who is about to give one of his many speeches (this time to laud Aristarco as an individual and as an educator) the narrator places himself "in medias res:"

... o Venâncio, professor do colégio, a quarenta mil réis por matéria, mas importante, sabendo falar grosso, o timbre de independência, mestiço de bronze, pequenino e tenaz, que havia de varar carreira mais tarde. 63

In this manner the reader becomes aware of Venâncio's fate after the fictional time of the novel. Identical techniques are used

⁶²A. A. Mendilow, op. cit., p. 106.

⁶³Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 15.

on seven other occasions in which the author projects into the future and informs the reader of the whereabouts of a certain character after the time of events. These changes of time substantiate Sérgio's first impressions of some of his teachers and classmates and, at the same time, attest to his sense of psychological perception. A similar time change occurs when Sérgio is led through the school grounds by Rebêlo and is pushed by Barbalho. On making inquiries, Rebêlo identifies the culprit and adds that Barbalho, in later life, was jailed as a burglar:

... aquele desagradável rapaz era o Barbalho, que havia de ser um dia prêso como gatuno de jóias, nosso companheiro de aula primária, do número dos esquecidos nos bancos do fundo. 64

This leap into future time indicates that the narrator is not a child writing down his recent recollections but an adult looking back in retrospect at his early formative years.

As Sérgio reflects on the broken bottle episode, while preparing his extra pages of punishment, along with Franco, the reader again receives a clue that the novel was written years after the events took place:

Conseguira no lusco-fusco escapar à sala onde o haviam encerrado para a tarefa das páginas. E juntos eu e Ele, porque eu lhe aceitara o convite com uma facilidade que ainda hoje não compreendo, galgamos um canto do muro que havia no pátio e saltamos para o jardim florestal. 65

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 63.

On another occasion, as Sérgio reconsiders his attack upon Aristarco and the fact that he never was punished, he states:

Acreditei algum tempo que a minha impunidade era um caso especial do afamado sistema das punições morais e que Aristarco delegara ao abutre da minha consciência o encargo da sua justiça e desafronta. Hoje penso diversamente: não valia a pena perder de uma vez dois pagadores prontos, só pela futilidade de uma ocorrência, desagradável, não se duvida, mas sem testemunhas. 66

All of these references, of course, strengthen the thesis that several years have elapsed between the events as they occurred and the time of recording them.

Although the historical moment of *O Ateneu* is never definitely set, the reader knows, for instance, that the novel takes place during the latter part of the reign of Dom Pedro partly because of Professor Cláudio's veiled attacks on the monarchy:

É a obra moralizadora de um reinado longo, e o transvasamento de um caráter, alagando a perder de vista a superfície moral de um império—o desmancho nauseabundo, esplanado, na tirania mole de um tirano de sebo! ...67

Another clue that helps the reader situate the novel in time is Pompéia's casual reference to Louis Moreau Gottschalk, the American musician from New Orleans who visited Brazil in 1869 and who died in Rio de Janeiro that same year. Through a series of images, the Kaulbach frieze, the renowned restaurateur Révy, the "accoucheuse" Mme Duroche, the American professor of geology from

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 135-136.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

Cornell University, Charles Frederic Hartt (leader of the Hartt Geological Commission), who remained in Brazil for a time,⁶⁸ and the well-known Brazilian botanist and ethnologist Ladislau Netto (1838-1894), the narrator evokes the people of the day and creates an illusion of the period. Thus, by bits and snatches, the reader is able to reconstruct the action of the novel in regard to time.

Since fictional time in the novel is obscure, all circumstantial and incidental references offered by the narrator become increasingly important in order to determine when the author situated the novel. The philosophical interest in the evolution of man, in the origin of language, as well as in the role of art in man's cultural development, as interpreted by Dr. Cláudio, give a clue to the ideas that were in vogue at the time. In addition, Pompéia's casual references to the telegraph,⁶⁹ the electrification of Rio de Janeiro,⁷⁰ which took place in 1883, and the cog railroad of the Corcovado,⁷¹ which was built in 1885, give the reader an idea of the period. All these references, insignificant as they may seem when considered separately, help guide the reader in identifying the period.

⁶⁸Donald E. Worchester, op. cit., p. 130.

⁶⁹Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 110.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 125.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 125.

In the second chapter the reader is told that Sérgio entered the Ateneu on the 15th of February; therefore, we surmise that the action detailed in the first chapter must have occurred slightly before in time, that is to say, in late November or, at most, early December. The year, however, is cloaked in mystery unless we bear in mind the autobiographical nature of the novel. The first reference to the passage of time appears in the beginning of chapter V, when the narrator informs the reader that flowers were difficult for Sérgio to obtain at the end of May.⁷² The next reference appears toward the end of chapter VII, when we are told that Sérgio has been at the Ateneu for only a few months:

Que longa viagem de desenganos! Alguns meses apenas, desde que vira, a primeira vez, as ideais crianças vivificadas no estuque pelo contágio do entusiasmo ingênuo, ronda feliz do trabalho ...⁷³

However, a few pages later, in the first line of chapter VIII, the author leaps into the following year although we are never apprised of the month.⁷⁴ Toward the end of chapter IX, when Sérgio is invited to dine with the headmaster and his wife, Dona Ema finds Sérgio to have grown physically and the reader is told that two years have elapsed since she first met him:

⁷²Ibid., p. 73.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 120-121.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 124.

Estava desenvolvido! Que diferença do
que era há dois anos! 75

In the last chapter of the novel Sérgio psychologically reverts
to infancy while being nursed by Dona Ema during his illness:

Eu me sentia pequeno deliciosamente
naquele círculo de conchego como em um
ninho. 76

This regression into his infancy is stressed on several occasions, for example, "achava-me pequenino, pequenino."⁷⁷

In order to situate the fictional time of the novel correctly and precisely, the critic is forced to delve into the author's past. We know, through available historical data, that Raul Pompéia entered the Colégio Abílio in 1873 at the age of ten.⁷⁸ We also know that he remained there for approximately five years and, therefore, must have left when he was fifteen years old. Since the novel covers only two years of his activities at the school, we must conclude that all five years of his experiences have been compressed into the two-year period mentioned in the novel.

As analyzed by Therezinha Bartholo, Pompéia was indecisive as to Sérgio's age and changed his mind several times.⁷⁹ In the

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 146.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 179.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 182.

⁷⁸Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 16.

⁷⁹Therezinha Bartholo, "Raul Pompéia e as Variantes d'O Ateneu," O Estado de São Paulo, No. 742 (Outubro, 17, 1971).

first chapter, the child is said to be eleven years old, while a page later he is ten. To complicate matters further, he is so undersized that Dona Ema takes him to be merely six years old. Thus, from the very beginning we are perplexed as to his correct age. In a way, he seems unwilling to age, since by so doing he would have to assume a more adult and responsible posture in the novel. On the other hand, if the reader accepts Sérgio as a very young child, he is apt to overlook his peccadillos and above all to sympathize with him.

Psychological time lies hidden in the deep crevices of the human mind. Valueless are mechanical inventions for measuring durée or concentration. It is intimate and personal, not chronological. Length varies according to mood and temperament and is captured and extended by the emotion of a given moment. When least expected the recollection floats to the surface as a person lets his guards down. Remembrances of things past can be pleasurable or unpleasant and return to delight or to haunt a person many times. A past episode may linger surreptitiously in the mind, triggering other associations, gathering momentum, and then die as quickly as it first appeared.

Sérgio often relives past events long after they have occurred and been buried in the dark recesses of his memory. One of his earliest and gratifying recollections, when he first attended school, was that he received a slice of buttered bread every day. He also recalls two fellow students as well as the initial shock at his first obscene expression:

Ao meio-dia, davam-nos pão com manteiga. Esta recordação gulosa é o que mais pronunciadamente me ficou dos meses de externato; com a lembrança de alguns companheiros—um que gostava de fazer rir à aula, espécie interessante de mono louro, arrepiado, vivendo a morder, nas costas da mão esquerda, uma protuberância calosa que tinha; outro adamado, elegante, sempre retirado, que vinha à escola de branco, engomadinho e radioso, fechada a blusa em diagonal do ombro à cinta por botões de madre-pérula. Mais ainda: a primeira vez que ouvi certa injúria crêspa, um palavrão cercado de terror no esbecimento, que os partistas denunciavam às mestras por duas iniciais como em monograma. 80

Psychological time yields to reminiscences as Sérgio tries to relax, during an arduous exam, and finds a few pleasurable moments to let his thoughts wander through time and space:

Depois do ditado, como um relaxamento de cansaço do espírito, esqueci o inventário natural dos conhecimentos que a prova reclamava. Pus-me a pensar nas primeiras leituras de Camões, no Sanches, nos banhos da natação, na Maneira de rir de Ângela, no criado assassinado, no processo do assassino, que fôra julgado havia pouco ... Três pancadinhas que senti no calcanhar, chamaram-me das distrações. 81

Unable to continue the recollection of his past, in the final paragraph of the novel, Sérgio emphasizes the ephemeral passage of time that contains the seed of death in its innermost recesses:

⁸⁰Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 12.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 149.

Aqui suspendo a crônica das saudades. Saudades verdadeiramente? Puras recordações, saudades talvez se ponderamos que o tempo é a ocasião passageira dos fatos, mas sobretudo—o funeral para sempre das horas. 82

As can be seen from the above, chronological time—that is, time measured in conventional methods such as hours, days, months and years—is not visible in the novel. As a matter of fact there is question as to Pompéia's conception of time. While ill, Sérgio receives a strange communication from his father who is travelling abroad. His father instructs him to believe only in the present to the detriment of the past and the future:

'... Salvar o momento presente. A regra moral é a mesma da atividade. Nada para amanhã, do que pode ser hoje: salvar o presente. Nada mais preocupe. O futuro é corruptor, o passado é dissolvente, só a atualidade é forte. Saudade, uma covardia, apreensão outra covardia. O dia de amanhã transige; o passado entristece e a tristeza afrouxa.

Saudade, apreensão, esperança, vaões fantasmas, projeções inanes de miragem; vive apenas o instante atual e transitório. É salvá-lo! salvar o naufrago do tempo. ...'83

Time in O Ateneu is essentially psychological. It is presented in a haphazard manner and lies completely within the realm of Sérgio's experiences. Events are presented as they are emotionally seen and felt by the central character and interrelate psychologically. They are not built in chronological order but

⁸²Ibid., p. 188.

⁸³Ibid., p. 181.

follow an emotional course. Time does not flow in a steady direction; it zigzags along, at times moving imperceptively, and even retreats into the past.

Space, intimately tied in with time, closely affects the development of a novel. The omniscient narrator, as mentioned before, enjoys full liberty to choose the theme of his novel as well as its geographical location. However, although unlimited in his selection of theme, he must adhere to a measure of verisimilitude. If the author reduces space to a minimum, with few geographical displacements, the stationary aspect of the novel increases and this automatically decreases the animation and the dynamic punch which generally engender new adventure. By reducing the geographical horizons, the narrator tends to tighten the plot and force the action to revolve around a central location. This, of course, is very constraining and helps to create a slow momentum, which can, in turn, create a feeling of ennui, restlessness, and imprisonment.

It has been argued that Tolstoy's War and Peace is really two novels in one. The author gives a detailed description of the two opposing armies and the ensuing battles, the army formation as well as a minute discussion of the strategy of the two armed camps. At the same time, he also paints a vivid picture of Russian society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the personal problems of the characters and how they meet the onslaught of the French invasion. Although it may be argued that having two themes in War and Peace detracts from the novel, and that the

lengthy descriptions of the battle front could be omitted without losing the thread of the novel, still the two corresponding themes that run concomitantly create a sense of suspense and a tremendous illusion of space:

After one has read War and Peace for a bit, great chords begin to sound, and we cannot say exactly what struck them. They do not arise from the story, though Tolstoy is quite as interested in what comes next as Scott, and quite as sincere as Bennett. They do not come from the episodes nor yet from the characters. They come from the immense area of Russia, over which episodes and characters have been scattered, from the sum-total of bridges and frozen rivers, forests, roads, gardens, fields, which accumulate grandeur and sonority after we have passed them. Many novelists have the feeling for place—Five Towns, Auld Reekie, and so on. Very few have the sense of space, and the possession of it ranks high in Tolstoy's divine equipment. Space is the lord of War and Peace, not time. 84

Space in Tolstoy's novel, intimately involved with time, is realistically portrayed. The great geographical extensions, over-run by opposing armies, creates a sense of movement and freedom that is overpowering:

Then why is War and Peace not depressing? Probably because it has extended over space as well as over time, and the sense of space until it terrifies us is exhuberating, and leaves behind it an effect like music. 85

⁸⁴E. M. Forster, op. cit., p. 39.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 39.

Pompéia's novel takes place in the enclosure of an educational institution. The students find themselves confined to an area surrounded by the walls of the school grounds. Space is therefore held to a minimum. The students' world is small and compact. The relatively few excursions outside the walls of the Ateneu intensify the feeling of cloistered souls searching for freedom. Friction or the clash between characters is not a product of action as much as of the lack of vital space and the stifling feeling of imprisonment. The older students, suffering from the inability to vent their pent up emotions, bully their younger comrades and turn to sadistic behavior that causes strife.

The enclosed school reminds the reader of a modern-day prison. The school headmaster is the warden and the huge array of monitors are his standing army that enforce and maintain iron discipline. This, of course, is increased by the stationary aspect of the novel. The restricted environment, the closed quarters, and the prison-like atmosphere created by the institution, the staff, and the students themselves, promote anger and despair. The few active scenes, such as the gymnastic tournament and specially the hike to the Corcovado and the outing to the Jardim Botânico, although full of movement and excitement, are in reality stationary episodes since their importance does not hinge on the act of displacement but on what actually occurs. The hermetically closed school society, the physical lack of space, the cramped quarters, and the meager exposure to the outside world increase the feeling of ennui and irascibility on the part of the

students who seek an outlet.

Time as well as space are relatively stationary in Pompéia's narrative. They do not move; they remain fixed. Characters do not evolve, change, or develop. They, too, remain fixed. Sérgio and the other characters in the novel are essentially the same persons from the beginning of the novel to the end. There is no aging. On the contrary, one may say that the opposite takes place, since, psychologically, Sérgio becomes more and more a child as the narrative progresses. This lack of the passage of time, joined to the limited space, creates the stationary atmosphere that is noticeable in the novel.

Articulation of space seems, at times, arbitrary and even accidental. We know that the action takes place in Rio de Janeiro only through casual references early in the novel. In the first chapter the author mentions that the institution is located in Rio Comprido, which the reader imagines to be a section of the city:

O Ateneu estava situado no Rio Comprido, extremo ao chegar aos morros. 86

It is not till Chapter XI, however, that the author actually mentions Rio de Janeiro when Franco's family visits the institution. The fact that Pompéia situated the action of the novel in Rio Comprido instead of in Laranjeiras and at the Ateneu instead of at the Colégio Abílio, shows a conscious effort to alter the historical facts in order to obscure the autobiographical nature of

⁸⁶Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 16.

the novel. Earlier in the novel, the narrator mentions that Sérgio had formerly studied at Caminho Novo. No other reference is made until midway in the novel when the students of the Ateneu take an excursion to the Corcovado and later to the Jardim Botânico and the reader is given an additional clue to the location of the novel. Also, the author, on one occasion, mentions that the mountains of Tijuca could be seen from the school.

The narrator is just as hesitant to tell the characters' place of origin as he is to tell the geographical setting of the novel. Bento Alves is said to be from Rio Grande do Sul, Nearco from Pernambuco, and Franco from Cuiabá, while Aristarco is from the "north," which could be anywhere north of Rio de Janeiro. However, if the reader identifies Aristarco with the Barão de Ma-caúbas, then he would be from Bahia. Angela is from the Canary Islands while Américo is from "a roça." This meager geographic information increases and obscures the uncertain climate of the novel.

The author could have situated the novel in a variety of exotic locales and included many scene shifts. Instead, most of the scenes take place within the walls of the institution. This organization tends to isolate the characters and their problems. Cloistered within the school walls, Sérgio has his own world, a world that magnifies and aggravates all the emotions and tensions experienced on the outside. It becomes, at best, a microcosm of the world and its problems.

Chapter IV

Characterization in O Ateneu

Characters are literary personages who people the fictionalized world of the novel. The modern reader understands characters to be people who live within the confines of a play, a story or a novel. They may represent real people taken from life, but since these people reside in the narrator's fantasy, they are called characters. As a general rule only people are regarded as characters. In the development of the novel, however, some animals can become extensions of a character as in Machado de Assis' Quincas Borba or Eça de Queirós' Os Maias. In the latter, Bonifácio, the cat, acquires many of the characteristics of his aging master, Afonso da Maia, and Niniche, the French Poodle, becomes the "alter ego" of her mistress, Maria Eduarda. Both Bonifácio and Niniche, however, only portray one aspect of their master's personality and thus are considered flat characters. Animals can be used symbolically to complement and extend a character, enriching the author's characterization by giving it an extra dimension. In fables, on the other hand, the process is carried one step further; animals act like people and react with the impact of human emotions, although they may still conserve some of their basic primitive qualities.

An author may people his narrative with only a few characters as occurs in José de Alencar's A Viúvinha, or he may insert a vast array of personages as in O Tempo e o Vento, in which Érico Veris-

simo paints a panoramic picture of Brazilian society from colonial days to the twentieth century.

Character Presentation in Fiction

Characters may be divided into two basic groups: flat and round. Flat characters were called "humorous" in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called types and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form they are constructed around a single idea or quality: when they have more than one facet, they begin to curve toward the round. According to E. M. Forster, the personality of the really flat character can be expressed in a single sentence, such as the statement, in Dickens' David Copperfield, "I never will desert Mr. Micawber." There is the essence of Mrs. Micawber—she says she won't desert Mr. Micawber and she doesn't.¹

Molded by the outside world and reacting to his physical environment the flat character seems to lack inner motivation and psychology.² He is more at home in the chronological novel, in which time takes a conventional form and the story progresses in a sequential pattern.³ He is described from without; that is to say, his physical characteristics are studied, even his surroundings may be intimately described, in order to penetrate more fully

¹E. M. Forster, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

²Massaud Moisés, A Criação Literária, p. 196.

³Ibid., p. 197.

his inner personality as occurs in the Balzac novels. A flat character depends on environment in order to acquire individuality.⁴

An advantage of the flat character is that he is easily recognized by the reader's emotional eye (the visual eye, which merely notes the recurrence of a proper name).⁵ Frequently he is used as a symbol by the author and not only possesses the characteristics of one person but may encompass all humanity. In Le Père Goriot, for example, Balzac portrays Goriot as the suffering Christ of fatherhood and thus as the representative of all self-sacrificing fathers.

In the same manner Eça de Queirós' Dâmaso, who appears in Os Maias, is a type character who represents social hypocrisy in an extreme form. Drawn in exaggerated tones, he is known for his airs, his pompous speech and his false poses. Alencar, in the same novel, is the stereotype of the ultra-romantic poet, arch-enemy of Realism and any form of change. Both examples are characters that portray individual personalities but at the same time illustrate social vices or weaknesses prevalent at the times.

It is possible for an author to give only a few salient traits about a character and still arrive at a description that is credible and vigorous. In Fogo Morto, for example, José Lins

⁴Ibid., p. 196.

⁵E. M. Forster, op. cit., p. 68.

do Rêgo, only summarily describes the character Mestre José Amaro, but by choosing the essential elements of his being he is able to place his finger on his entire personality:

Assim, em Fogo Morto, José Lins do Rêgo nos mostrará o admirável Mestre José Amaro por meio da côr amarela da pele, do olhar raivoso, da brutalidade impaciente, do martelo e da faca de trabalho, do remoer incessante do sentimento de inferioridade. Não temos mais que êsses elementos essenciais. No entanto, a sua combinação, a sua repetição, a sua evocação nos mais variados contextos nos permite formar uma idéia completa, suficiente e convincente daquela forte criação fictícia. 6

Thus, in presenting a character an author may concentrate on a dominant trait of his personality to the exclusion of other aspects, or he may choose to present a round personality. When a single dominant trait is carried to an extreme and to the detriment of other characteristics, we have the basis for a caricature. When this method is handled with skill it can produce a double-faceted character that may be interesting although lacking basic depth. A caricature is nothing more than an exaggeration or a distortion of certain individual qualities of a person's character which produces a ridiculous effect.

When a character exemplifies or symbolizes only vices or virtues we have the type that was popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in narrative as well as in drama (La

⁶ Antônio Cândido, et al., A Personagem de Ficção (São Paulo: Editôra Perspectiva, 1970), p. 58.

Bruyère's Les Caractères and Molière's Tartuffe and Le Misan-trope).⁷

Part of the genius of Dickens is his ability to create flat characters, people easily remembered by the reader long afterwards. They remain unaltered in the reader's mind because they were not changed by circumstances; they simply moved through the circumstances. In retrospect, the reader derives a comforting quality from such characters which preserves them when the book that produced them may decay.⁸ Thus, they may achieve effects that are neither mechanical nor shallow. When effectively used by an author, a flat character may be just as impressive as a round one and may convincingly express human depth. Flat characters, therefore, are in no way to be considered inferior to round ones.

Essentially, then, the flat personage is a static character who changes little if at all in the progress of a narrative. Things happen to him rather than within him. The pattern of action reveals the character rather than showing the character changing in response to the actions.⁹

A round character, on the other hand, is one that is modified by the actions through which he passes. Thus, one of the

⁷Massaud Moisés, A Criação Literária, p. 196.

⁸E. M. Forster, op. cit., p. 69.

⁹William Flint Thrall, Addison Hibbard, and C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York: The Odyssey Press Inc., 1960), p. 81.

objectives of the work in which he appears is to reveal the consequences of these actions upon him. Most great dramas and novels have round characters as protagonists. Short stories are more likely to reveal flat characters than to show changes in characters as protagonists. Short stories are more likely to reveal flat characters than to show changes in characters resulting from actions. They are usually narrated in the third person.¹⁰ Essentially the round character is formed from within.¹¹ His psychological make-up is studied in greater depth. He is, to all intents and purposes, more lifelike and moves with a greater breadth of independence and a greater degree of assurance in fictional narrative. Possessing strong individual drives as well as a deep-set ego, he is more at ease in the psychological novel.¹² The test of a round character is whether he is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If he never surprises, he is flat. If he does not convince, he is a flat pretending to be round.¹³ In like manner, an author may present a reader with a character who has a series of traits that immediately brand him as complex or round rather than flat. Leading characters in a novel as a general rule are handled as complex or round characters, while minor ones are made simple or flat.

¹⁰Massaud Moisés, Criação Literária, p. 103.

¹¹Ibid., p. 196.

¹²Ibid., p. 196.

¹³E. M. Forster, op. cit., p. 78.

When we read that a certain author has attained a high degree of realism in a novel and that it is a "tranche de vie," we must realize that the written word can never really duplicate life in all its complexities. Man by his very nature is an extremely complicated animal and the author is often forced to simplify in order to render him credible. He is, therefore, forced to choose among his most salient personality traits, often to the detriment of the less important ones, and thus unconsciously he "rounds" out his characters. All of this is often done for the sake of logic and expediency. This does not necessarily mean that he has to end up with black or white tones, since the shades of gray may be subtle and quite variegated:

No romance, o escritor estabelece algo mais coeso, menos variável, que é a lógica de personagem. A nossa interpretação dos seres vivos é mais fluida, variando de acordo com o tempo ou as condições da conduta. No romance, podemos variar relativamente a nossa interpretação da personagem; mas o escritor lhe deu, desde logo, uma linha de coerência fixada para sempre, delimitando a curva da sua existência e a natureza do seu modo-de-ser. Daí ser ela relativamente mais lógica, mais fixa do que nós. 14

On certain occasions characters are given descriptive names which prepare the reader psychologically for future events or give him a clue to the character's personality. This technique was successfully used by Dickens, who frequently used strangely suggestive appellatives for his characters. For instance, in

¹⁴ Antônio Cândido, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

Nicholas Nickleby, Mr. Wackford Squeers appears as a vulgar, conceited, and ignorant schoolmaster. Uriah Heep, the unctuous character in David Copperfield, also bears a descriptive name that permits the reader instantly to associate character with hypocrisy and deception. David's stepfather has the unlikely surname of Mr. Murdstone, which strongly suggests his cruel and sadistic nature.

In O Ateneu, characters are essentially flat, though a few, such as Sérgio and Aristarco, make a feeble attempt at being round. The reader finds greater difficulty in classifying Sérgio as a particular type than classifying Angela, Franco, Barreto and Malheiro, to name a few, where the author limits himself to a completely flat personality. These characters can be described in a few words, just as E. M. Forster reduced Mrs. Macawber's basic personality into one short sentence. Angela represents the immoral woman, Franco the victimized scapegoat of the lower classes, Barreto the religious fanatic, Malheiro the school bully. These are their roles in the novel and they never deviate from the narrow path the novelist has allotted them. In O Ateneu the characters are not described as individualized personalities. Instead, they become symbols of a vice or a virtue.

Pompéia's flat characters are also static characters who react to exterior circumstances and lack inner motivation and psychology. Things happen to them rather than within them. Pompéia has a tendency to concentrate on a dominant trait, often to the exclusion of other aspects of the personality. When single domi-

nant trait is carried to an extreme we have a caricature. This produces flat characters that may be interesting but that often lack depth.

Somewhat differently portrayed is Aristarco. He is much more complicated since he appears with greater frequency and is discussed in greater length. However, this does not mean that he is a round character, only that the author has divulged more aspects of his personality. We know him to be vain, greedy, power hungry and tyrannical, although we are not acquainted with the underlying causes. Aristarco is much broader as a character and blends two personalities: the unscrupulous pedagogue and the unbridled businessman. Aristarco's name leaves no doubt as to his regal aristocratic lineage.

Like Dickens, Pompéia will cloak his characters with a descriptive name that gives a clue to the character's identity. Bataillard, the physical education instructor at the Ateneu, brings to mind the imposing physical specimen that his name implies in French. He first appears during the celebration of Physical Exercise Day and he is described in the following glowing terms:

Diante das fileiras, Bataillard, o professor de ginástica, exultava envergando a altivez do seu sucesso na extremada elegância do talhe, multiplicando por milagroso desdobramento o compêndio inteiro da capacidade profissional, exibida em galeria por uma série infinita de atitudes. A admiração hesitava a decidir-se pela formosura masculina e rija da plástica de músculos a estalar o brim do uniforme, que ele trajava branco como os alunos, ou pela nervosa

celeridade dos movimentos, efeito elétrico de lanternas mágicas, respeitando-se na variedade prodigiosa a unidade de correção suprema. 15

Professor Courroux, the state examiner of French, also bears a French name that is more than mildly suggestive of his irate temperament. When he first appears to interrogate Sérgio, the frightened student only sees a ferocious inquisitor:

Vi-o magro, anguloso, feio, olhando com ferocidade contínua, não se sabia felizmente para quem, porque era estrábico. 16

Tourinho, the homosexual lover of Cândido, has a name that identifies him as the masculine sexual partner. Angela, on the other hand, bears a name that is suggestive of the trait that she lacks most. Her temperament is the very antithesis of her name: Angela. It is interesting to note that in both Portuguese and Brazilian literature, the Spanish woman is often portrayed as a sensual and untrammelled individual who lives on the sidelines of respectable society. If the reader associates Malheiro with the word "malhado," then he bears the stain of a marked criminal. Extending the appellation motive further, Barbalho reminds the reader of a barbarian, which he is in word and deed.

Pompéia was also fond of using fanciful sobriquets for some of his characters that magnify special physical or personality traits. Cerqueira is called "ratazana," on several occasions,

¹⁵Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 150.

which underscores his clownish antics; Rômulo is nicknamed "Mestre Cook," because of his immoderate love of rich food and Nascimento is referred to as "bicanca" because of his long protruding nose.

We see, then, that Pompéia, much in the literary tradition of past masters, portrays his characters as flat often molding them into a caricature. Frequently they represent a vice or a virtue or even symbolize a social class, as in the case of Aristarco and Franco. Contrast and duality of personality are highlighted and become the cornerstone on which he builds his characterizations. Both descriptive appellations and sobriquets are used to synthesize the character's personality which usually creates an indelible impression on the mind of the reader.

Pompéia's characters are based on penetrating observation. Although this process usually leads to mimesis, in Pompéia's case, however, it is modified by an accumulation of techniques that create a "comic reality" rather than an "illusion of reality."

The essence of a character is rendered in strong brushstrokes that lightly sketch the physical traits. At the same time, zoomorphic imagery is used to help spotlight the main characteristics of the individual. The moral personality, on the other hand, is exposed by the character revealing himself in an outward situation. Identification of the character is further strengthened through a series of appellatives and sobriquets that reveal certain characteristics of the personality. Frequently, dual and often opposing facets of the personality unveil the duality of man. The author

will also juxtapose dual characteristics of different characters that reveal the "other side of the personality coin" so to speak.

Pompéia's manner of introducing characters in O Ateneu was a revolutionary innovation in Brazilian letters of the time. No writer had been so creative in his presentation. The author produced a veritable gallery of portraits that still linger in the reader's mind after the novel has been read.

No one can deny that the great writers of the past did deal with the dual nature of man, as we can readily see in the works of Shakespeare and Cervantes, but the fact remains that it was not till Diderot appeared on the literary scene that a keen awareness arose with regard to man's duality:

It was Diderot who represented a first real awareness (as Freud represents a final one) that man is double to the final depths of his soul, the prey of conflicting psyches both equally himself. The conflict had, of course, always been felt, but had traditionally been described as occurring between man and devil, or flesh and spirit; that the parties to the dispute are both man and spirit was a revolutionary suggestion. In his demi-novel, Rameau's Nephew, Diderot projected the conflicting divisions within man's mind as the philosopher and the parasite, the rationalist and the underground man, debating endlessly the cause of the head versus that of the gut. ¹⁷

Raul Pompéia seems to have been tremendously impressed by the dual aspect of man, and he used it as a cornerstone to ex-

¹⁷ Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. xxviii.

plain the personality of his characters. He sees an individual as essentially a Janus figure, harboring two totally different and contrasting sides to his personality. Thus when he introduces a character in O Ateneu, he juxtaposes two opposing facets of personality.

Aristarco is the most flagrant example of this duality. He has a split personality, two opposing sides, which he can bring to the fore or conceal according to the needs of the moment, a characteristic which is apparent very early in the novel. First, Pompéia introduces us to Aristarco the educator, who is wholeheartedly devoted to his students, his school and to pedagogical pursuits. Immediately after, however, he confronts us with the totally different picture of a niggardly soul interested in material wealth. The image of the pedagogue solely interested in the welfare of his students is shattered, and the headmaster whose only concern is fame and fortune emerges. It must be explained that duality of personality does not make a flat character round. It just gives an additional dimension to the personality of the character.

Not only does Pompéia use contrast in the psychological composition of his characters, but he liberally uses it to underscore their physical descriptions. Thus Ribas, whose voice entrances Aristarco because of its melodic purity, is a horribly deformed creature to behold. By the same token, Angela's beauty becomes a trademark for evil: a beautiful exterior harboring a cruel and hard interior. She is, to all intents and purposes, Ribas' antithesis. Franco is portrayed in a much more complicated manner.

Despite his repulsive façade, he is one of the few characters to express any degree of true love. He manifests affection for his family and silently suffers the cruelties of his fellow men.

Introduction of Characters in O Ateneu

On introducing a character Pompéia's descriptions are never overextended. Instead they have a tendency to be rapid, nervous and, most often, devastating and stinging. He generally mingles statement of fact with description or behavior, and on many an occasion he adds to these a personal comment of ironic praise.

On introducing professor Venâncio, for instance, he cannot refrain from adding that his wages are forty thousand reis per subject taught. He paints Venâncio as an aggressive mestizo who knows how to speak in a deep voice and who eventually will forge a lucrative career for himself:

... o Venâncio, o professor do colégio, a quarenta mil réis por matéria, mas importante, sabendo falar grosso, o timbre de independência, mestiço de bronze, pequenino e tenaz, que havia de varar carreira mais tarde. 18

On introducing Aristarco, the narrator, a satirist at play, gives a resumé of the headmaster's many accomplishments in the field of education, while ironically toying with the idea that Aristarco's brand of knowledge will ultimately become the flour that creates bread for the spirit:

¹⁸ Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 15.

O Dr. Aristarco Argolo de Ramos da conhecida família do Visconde de Ramos, do Norte, enchia o império com o seu renome de pedagogo. Eram boletins de propaganda pelas províncias, conferências em diversos pontos da cidade, a pedidos, a sustância, atochando a imprensa dos lugares, caixões, sobretudo, de livros elementares, fabricados às pressas com o ofegante e esbaforido concurso de professores prudentemente anônimos, caixões e mais caixões de volumes cartonados em Leipzig, inundando as escolas públicas de toda a parte com a sua invasão de capas azuis, róseas, amarelas, em que o nome de Aristarco, inteiro e sonoro, oferecia-se ao pasmo venerador dos enfaimados de alfabeto dos confins da pátria. Os lugares que os não procuravam eram um belo dia surpreendidos pela enchente, gratuita, espontânea, irresistível! E não havia senão aceitar a farinha daquela marca para o pão do espírito. E engordavam as letras, à força, daquele pão. 19

Use of Animal Imagery in Character Presentation

The characters created by Raul Pompéia, although lifelike, also represent the author's flight into fantasy. Although he does not use animals as extensions of his characters in the manner of Eça de Queirós, he does, nevertheless, make many zoomorphic comparisons. Animal imagery abounds in O Ateneu on all levels, and there is hardly a character who at some point or other escapes being associated with an animal. One might even say that Pompéia, at times, seems to compare the school to a menagerie and represent the students as wild beasts of the jungle. Pompéia was

¹⁹Ibid., p. 13.

obsessed, as many troubled minds have been, with man looking like an animal or men behaving like animals.

Another tendency of Pompéia when introducing a new character is to identify him by name, then to follow the name by a nickname or sobriquet. Quite often he will pejoratively compare the character to an animal or give him zoomorphic qualities and, in quick successive strokes, he will describe some caricatural trait that brands him as different from his fellow man. Thus João Numa, the school monitor, who is portrayed as short and stocky, moves about with the quick movements of a young pig:

João Numa, inspetor ou bedel, baixote,
barrigudo, de óculos escuros, movendo-
se com vivacidade de báculo alegre ...20

Generally speaking, the comparisons usually describe a physical appearance or an innate trait and give, in disguised form, a clue to the author's opinion of a particular character. For example, Bento Alves, who is admired by the author, is compared to a wild boar. On becoming impatient he will cut the conversation with an impatient monosyllable, curling up like a wild boar.²¹ Nearco da Fonseca, on the other hand, is said to have the ridiculous gait of a Brazilian ostrich,²² as he approached the trapeze, while Egbert, who proves to be an excellent swimmer, is likened

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

²¹Ibid., p. 84.

²²Ibid., p. 85.

to a porpoise.²³ Angela, who is disliked by the author, although her portrait is drawn in very subtle terms, is linked to several animals during the course of the narration, according to the impression desired by the author. When he speaks of her sexuality he states that she possesses "a submissão da cadela."²⁴ Later she is said to have the vivacity of a cat²⁵ as well as the haughtiness of a lioness.²⁶ Professor Venâncio, who is hated by Sérgio, is described as a beast with claws,²⁷ while Sérgio compares himself with a treaded scorpion²⁸ as he struggles with the director of the school.

Thus Pompéia's use of animal imagery, as can be seen by the examples given, is symbolic. His numerous zoomorphic references tend to describe a particular trait of a person's character likening it to an animal quality.

When describing students at the institution, the narrator quickly identifies the character by name and gives a series of short successive and often unrelated attributes that outline the personality. Cruz is portrayed as shy and sulking, listening at-

²³Ibid., p. 141.

²⁴Ibid., p. 83

²⁵Ibid., p. 155.

²⁶Ibid., p. 155.

²⁷Ibid., p. 145.

²⁸Ibid., p. 135.

tentively to all that goes around him. He has the cowardly look of one who has been brought up showered by blows. Devoted to his books, he is strong in Christian doctrine, prompt to recite his lessons by heart, and stubborn in making his ideas known. The author immediately turns his attention to Sanches and describes him in essentially the same sweeping terms. He is said to be big, slightly younger than Rebêlo, the first in his class, intelligent, second to Maurílio in his mathematical tables, careful in his exercises, rivaling Cruz in doctrine without having any competitors in analysis, drafting and cosmography:

Dignos de nota havia ainda o Cruz, tímido, enfiado, sempre de orelha em pé, olhar covarde de quem foi criado a pancadas, aferrado aos livros, forte em doutrina cristã, fácil como um despertador para desfechar as lições de cor, perro como uma cravelha para ceder uma idéia por conta própria; o Sanches, finalmente, grande, um pouco mais mûço que o venerado Rebêlo, primeiro da classe, muito inteligente, vencido apenas por Maurílio na especialidade dos nove fora vêzes tanto, cuidadoso dos exercícios, êmulo do Cruz na doutrina, sem competidor na análise, no desenho linear, na cosmografia. 29

Thus through a series of disparate traits we are offered the essence of a character.

In quick and rapid strokes Raul Pompéia summarizes the main traits of the students in Sérgio's class, going from one to another in a haphazard fashion that gives the impression of chaotic enumeration. From Gualtério, who is described as small, round

²⁹Ibid., p. 30.

shouldered, with dishevelled hair, quick movements and simian grimaces—the clown of the class as the teacher would say—the author directs his attention to Nascimento. Nascimento is given the slang nickname of "bicanca" and is described as following the general model of a pelican, elegant nose, long and curved as a scythe. Then the narrator turns to the other students, Alvares, Almeida, and Maurílio, who are subsequently described:

Os companheiros de classe eram cerca de vinte; uma variedade de tipos que me divertia. O Gualtério, miúdo, redondo de costas, cabelos revoltos, motilidade brusca e caretas de símio—palhaço dos outros, como dizia o professor; o Nascimento, o bicanca, alongado por um modelo geral de pelicano, nariz esbelto, curvo e largo como uma foice; o Alvares, moreno, cenho carregado, cabeleira espessa e intonsa de vate de taverna, violento e estúpido, que Mânlio atormentava, designando-o para o mister das plataformas de bonde, com a chapa numerada dos recebedores, mais leve de carregar que a responsabilidade dos estudos; o Almeida, claro, translúcido, rosto de menina, faces de um rosa doentio, que se levantava para ir à pedra com um vagar lânguido de convalescente; o Maurílio, nervoso, insofrido, fortíssimo em tabuada: cinco vezes três, vezes dois, nove fora, vezes sete? ... lá estava Maurílio, trêmulo, sacudindo no ar o dedinho esperto ... olhos fúlgidos no rosto moreno, marcado por uma pinta na testa ... 30

Other caricatural descriptions, recurrent through the novel, are identical to the ones above. Once the character has been named, the animal identification is made, and several adjectives,

³⁰Ibid., p. 29.

short and concise, are listed to characterize the individual. At times the word may be altered, but the final result is always the same. One student, Cerqueira, is characterized as a clown and is described in a scene where he is running on all fours through the dormitories:

O Cerquerira, ratazana, sujeito cômico, cara feita de beijos, rachada em bôca como as romãs maduras, de mãos enormes como um disfarce de pés, galopava a quatro pelos salões, zurrando em fraldas de camisa, escoucinhando uma alegria sincera de mu. 31

Presentation Through Action

Raul Pompéia never gives the reader a description in toto; at most, he prefers to sketch his character lightly and follow it with a scene in which the character reveals his own personality traits while in action. An example of this is the character Negrão, who is described as having the face of a goat, clumsy and angular, unable to sit quietly for three minutes, always at the teacher's desk and always scared. He is described courting the teacher's favor by fawning on him:

O Negrão, de ventas acesas, lábios inquietos, fisionomia agreste de cabra, canhoto e anguloso, incapaz de ficar sentado três minutos, sempre à mesa do professor e sempre enxotado, debulhando um risinho de pouca vergonha, fazendo agrados ao mestre chamando-lhe bonzinho, aventurando a todo ensejo uma tentativa de abraço que Mânlio repelia, precavido de confiança. 32

³¹Ibid., p. 115.

³²Ibid., p. 29.

The author not only gives a superficial picture of the character but by showing how he behaves under given circumstances he gives a clue to his character. It would have been easier for Pompéia to call Negrão a fawner and a hypocrite; he preferred instead to include his actions in a short but effective scene. This practice is again used in the portrayal of another minor character, Batista Carlos, who appears only intermittently in the novel and is quickly disposed of when the author has no further need of him. After a brief description of Batista Carlos, in which the author likens him to a robust Indian, evil faced, forever scratching himself as if his clothing bothered him, the narrator has him reveal his own personality in a short scene. Waiting for a moment of distraction on the part of the teacher, Batista Carlos would immediately hit an unsuspecting student with a folded paper projectile. At times the projectile would land on the teacher's desk and a rigorous investigation would ensue. Feared by other students, the shrewd and sly Batista Carlos would easily get out of it:

Batista Carlos, raça de bugre, válido, de má cara, coçando-se muito, como se o incomodasse a roupa no corpo, alheio às coisas da aula, como se não tivesse nada com aquilo, espreitando apenas o professor para aproveitar as distrações e ferir a orelha aos vizinhos com uma seta de papel dobrado. Às vezes a seta do bugre ricochetava até à mesa de Mânlio. Sensação: suspendiam-se os trabalhos; rigoroso inquérito. Em vão, que os partistas temiam-no e ele era matreiro e sonso para disfarçar. 33

³³Ibid., pp. 29-30.

The physical description of the character is merely a few words long; the remainder of the paragraph portrays a situation in which the character is morally described. The deceitful actions of Batista Carlos speak for his personality.

Use of Contrast

Pompéia is often prone to set forth the defects of an individual and to stress the grotesque and the ridiculous. Ribas, the main voice of the Orfeão, the school choir, is described as an ugly fifteen-year-old, thin and lymphatic. The author likens his mouth without lips to that of an old professional mourner and later calls it a "supplication made into a mouth":

Ribas, quinze anos, era feio, magro, linfático. Bôca sem lábrios, de velha carpideira, desenhada em angústia—a súplica feita bôca, a prece perene rasgada em beijos sôbre dentes; o queixo fugia-lhe pelo rosto, infinitamente, como uma gota de cêra pelo fuste de um círio. ³⁴

The author's use of character contrast often heightens the duality of the character and increases the interest of the reader. This use of contrast is specially noticeable in the murder scene. The realistic description of the bloody corpse, its flaccid arms, rolling head, projected chin, protruding Adam's apple and the blood gushing from the dead man's mouth as if "vomiting his last remains of life," make this scene one of the most shocking in Brazilian literature.³⁵ Although Angela is responsible for the ser-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁵ Maria Luíza Ramos, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

vant's death, she feels no pangs of conscience. As she passes by she quietly remarks that he is dead and prances out of the kitchen, swaying her hips as if nothing had happened. It is at this point that Sérgio for the first time pauses to admire Angela's beauty:

Impressionou-me para sempre o desfalecimento flácido dos membros, quando levantaram o cadáver, a moleza da cabeça, rodando nos ombros, com um movimento próprio dos que padecem intolerável angústia, e um choque súbito para trás que me gelou o sangue, empinando-se o queixo e o nó da garganta, rasgando-se a boca, brusco, como se o ferido vomitasse um resto tenaz da vida.

Após a réde, pela escada da cozinha, saíram todos; eu fiquei. Examinava ainda o chão alagado de sangue quando alguém, passando, afagou-me os cabelos: era Ângela!

—Morió disse, indicando o sangue, arregalando as sobrancelhas, e desapareceu com o andar de bamboleio.

Primeira vez que reparei que era bonita a canarina. Sim senhor! E para o demônio culpado de tão horrível incidente fui de uma benevolência tal de opinião que me nasceram remorsos. 36

The author joins two diametrically opposed ideas: the ugliness of the deed with the beauty of Angela. Not only is there contrast between these two diverse ideas, but the affinity that exists between lovely Angela and death is accentuated anew.

A similar use of contrast occurs when Bento Alves first appears in the novel. It is in a motion-packed scene in which he single-handedly apprehends the murderer brandishing a knife.

³⁶Ibid., p. 82.

After capturing the culprit, Bento Alves quietly but gallantly withdraws from the scene of the crime and refuses to discuss the episode further:

Depois da valerosa façanha a que o tinha levado a casualidade, teve de ver-se herói à fôrça. Um desespero. Se algum companheiro caía na tolice de dizer-lhe alguma coisa relativamente ao crime do jardineiro, Bento Alves rasgava a conversa com um monossílabo de impaciência, encrespando-se como um javali. Apesar de tudo foi o pobre modesto percutido, laminado sôbre a bigorna da notoriedade.

Felizmente o barulho da entrada para o Ateneu de um mção célebre veio modificar a odiosa voga.

Acabava de matricular-se Nearca da Fonseca, pernambucano de ilustre estirpe. 37

Nearco proves to be the exact opposite of Bento Alves. If Bento is a strong and sturdy lad who impresses everyone with his physical appearance, Nearco is an ugly weaking who looks more lie a Brazilian ostrich than a renowned gymnast. Just as Pompéia subtly contrasts two dissimilar qualities in Angela, her physical beauty and her ugly moral character, by introducing Nearco da Fonseca immediately after Bento Alves' intrepid feat, he again juxtaposes two different qualities, this time, impotence and strength.

The author will often play character against character, each possessing a contrasting trait, in order to emphasize the difference. The same method that is used to introduce Nearco immediately after Bento Alves' scene is used with Aristarco and Dona Ema.

³⁷ibid., p. 84.

When young Sérgio is introduced to the headmaster the unfeeling character of Aristarco shows through the thin veneer of congeniality:

'Como se chama o amiguinho?' perguntou-me o diretor.

—Sérgio ... dei o nome todo, baixando os olhos e sem esquecer o 'seu criado' da estrita cortesia.

—Pois, meu caro Sr. Sérgio, o amigo há de ter a bondade de ir ao cabeleireiro deixar fora êstes cachinhos ...

Eu tinha ainda os cabelos compridos, por um capricho amoroso de minha mãe. O conselho era visivelmente salgado de censura. O diretor, explicando a meu pai, acrescentou com o risinho nasal que sabia fazer: 'Sim, senhor, os meninos bonitos não provam bem no meu colégio ...' 38

It is at this point that Dona Ema interrupts the conversation and is first noticed by Sérgio:

—Peço licença para defender os meninos bonitos ... objetou alguém entrando. 39

This statement defending young Sérgio is followed by an extremely sympathetic description of Dona Ema as a character.

Aristarco's aloof pomposity is instantly felt when Sérgio first meets him. The first emotion to be discerned on the part of Sérgio is fear. At the same time that the author has Sérgio give his personal impression of the director in this cold and austere scene, he juxtaposes it with Dona Ema's appearance, in a scene filled with the opposite emotions: warmth and affection. The cold and distant nature of the school headmaster is contrasted to the warm proximity of Dona Ema. This scene is exposed to the

³⁸Ibid., pp. 22-23.

³⁹Ibid., p. 23.

bare essentials and both characters are contrastingly opposed. All extraneous material has purposely been omitted. However, the difference between the two characters is immediately set down. The reader identifies with Dona Ema and rejects the headmaster, just as Sérgio has done.

Another example is Pompéia's discussion of Ribas in order to develop Sérgio's religious masochism. By discussing Ribas' religious beliefs the author introduces Sérgio's religious experience which seems to stem from a diametrical need in life. Contrast again is uppermost in the presentation of their ideas. While evidently admiring Ribas for his beautiful voice, the narrator describes his horrible and grotesque physique in order to contrast the beautiful with the ugly. On the obvious level, the reader quickly recognizes the unhealthy character of Sérgio's religious manifestation. At the same time, but on a hidden level, he instinctly senses that Sérgio, by assuming a religious pose, places himself in a favorable light before the reader, not only to bring out his innocence and purity of soul but also to underscore the innate baseness of his fellow man. Once again, although in an obvious jocose tone, Pompéia juxtaposes beauty and ugliness, this time the beauty of the musical experience with Ribas' repulsive exterior.

In the comic allusion to Ribas' ridiculous physical appearance, Pompéia mentions his skinny shoulder blades, which remind Sérgio of two sprouting but still undeveloped wings. This is a strange way to manifest his obvious admiration for Ribas' deep religious convictions! The truth of the matter is that Pompéia,

who is not religiously oriented, has a tendency to consider religion an anti-progressive element. When Sérgio exhibits his religious nature it does not represent, by any stretch of the imagination, an intellectual interest in Catholicism, but rather an emotional reaction brought about by his sense of being a social outcast. Thus Pompéia secretly scorns the religious nature that he overtly admires in Ribas.

A completely different kind of contrast is used, however, when Pompéia juxtaposes Dona Ema to Angela. In this third example, Pompéia tries through association to bring out similar characteristics, this time, by subtly contrasting the two characters. Toward the end of the novel, while ill in the infirmary with a case of the measles, Sérgio sees Angela hanging up the wash and exhibiting her shapely body. Blown by the wind, the clothing on the line swells out, forming puffed out contours that subconsciously remind the reader of Angela's fullness of body:

Quando o vento era mais forte, enfundava as roupas estendidas, inflando ventres de mulher nas saias, Ângela aparecia. Sempre no seu raio de sol, como as fadas no raio de lua. Saudava-me à janela com uma das exclamações vivas de menino surpreso. Sem paletó, às mãos, empilhados, dois montes de roupa enxaguada. Ajudava a lavadeira para distrair-se. Falava olhando para cima, afrontando o dia sem cobrir os olhos. 40

This scene shifts immediately and Dona Ema appears, enveloped in an aura of charm and elegance, ready to nurse the young student

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 176.

back to health. All the sensual images awakened by Angela, however, are quickly transferred to Dona Ema. The juxtaposition of both scenes again reemphasizes the erotic link that the author wishes to create between Dona Ema and Angela:

A porta da enfermaria descerrava-se devagarinho e na matinée de muselina elegante e frouxa aparecia a amável senhora. Vinha verificar se eu dormia, saber como passava agora.

Bastava a sua presença, para reanimar-me no leito. Tão boa, tão boa no seu carinho de enfermeira, de mãe.

Junto da cama, um velador modesto e uma cadeira. Ema sentava-se. Pousava os cotovelos à beira do colchão, o olhar nos meus olhos—aquêle olhar inolvidável, negro, profundo como um abismo, bordado pelas seduções tôdas da vertigem. Eu não podia resistir, fechava as pálpebras; sentia ainda na pálpebra com o hálito de veludo a carícia daquela atenção.

Ao fim de algum tempo, a senhora, a ver se eu tinha febre, demorava-me a pequenina mão sôbre a testa, finíssima, fresca, deliciosa como um diadema de felicidade.

Eu me perdia numa sonolência sem nome que jamais lograram produzir os mais suaves vapores do narcotismo oriental.

Com o regime fortificante desta terapêutica, voltavam-me rapidamente a saúde. ⁴¹

The same aura of sensuality that is so characteristic when Angela enters a scene can also be found when Dona Ema appears. Sérgio seems to have a lover rather than a nurse at his bedside. Perhaps the tone is not as blatant or as vulgar as when Angela is around, but the aggressive glances, the numerous caresses, the soft and gentle touches that were so motherly before now lend a strong lascivious feeling to their relationship.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 177.

A distorted corpse, bathed in blood, lying on the kitchen floor is contrasted to Angela's graceful beauty. Bento Alves' athletic prowess is compared to Nearco da Fonseca's ridiculous performance at the trapeze and Angela's sensuality is subtly transferred to Dona Ema. These are only three of many very different examples of contrast that appear in the novel.

Certain characters cannot be really understood in O Ateneu unless they are coupled with other characters. Angela, a chambermaid, and Dona Ema, Aristarco's wife, seem to be dual aspects of the same personality, representing, in fact, two sides of the same personality coin. At first glance, the free libidinous character of Angela appears to be diametrically opposed to that of the restrained and motherly Dona Ema. However, upon closer examination, both characters become steadily more and more alike as the novel progresses. The difference becomes a matter of degree.

Franco also appears as Sérgio's other "self" and represents the "defiant" side of his personality. As if looking into a mirror, Franco appears as a dimensional reflection of Sérgio. "Good" Sérgio works within the framework of society; he obeys and conforms to its rules. He has a different personality from Franco and he makes an effort to cooperate with society. "Bad" Franco, on the other hand, does not care to. He is antisocial and does not worry if society condemns him. Franco is abused for his evil deeds, Sérgio is usually forgiven.

The Characters of *O Ateneu*

I have tried to analyze how Pompéia presents his characters. We have found that the author first gives a light physical description of the character and follows it by morally describing him through an action situation. Identification is strengthened through a series of appellatives and sobriquets that reveal character traits. Also, Pompéia will often juxtapose dual and opposite traits to bring out personality. Now, I would like to analyze the main characters individually. I believe that by studying how they behave, how they react to their environment and interact among themselves, we will be able to gain greater insight into Pompéia's art of storytelling.

Angela

Angela first appears in *O Ateneu* as the students at the institution take their afternoon swim. Standing on the wall, half hidden in a thicket of bamboo trees, she watches the boys plunging into the pool, while teasingly throwing pebbles at them:

Trepada no muro e meio escondida por uma moita de bambus e ramos de hera, vinha Ângela, a canarina, ver os banhos da tarde. Lançava pedrinhas aos rapazes; os rapazes mandavam lhe beijos e mergulhavam buscando o seixo. Ângela, torcendo os pulsos, reclinando-se para trás, ria perdidamente em grande riso, desabrochando em corola de flor através dos dentes alvos. 42

There is no physical description but a short episode in which

⁴²Ibid., p. 39.

Angela exhibits herself erotically. No commentary is offered by the author. The character is placed in a scene in which she will "act out" her personality traits.

The same device is repeatedly used by Pompéia throughout the novel in order to underscore Angela's character. As the school term rolls on, a life of gray tedium takes hold of the students until they have difficulty in concentrating. The perverse influence of Angela is felt and heard throughout the institution. When she sings near the school library, her songs have the ring of a mating call:

No salão do estudo poucos abriam livro. Os rapazes alargavam os cotovelos sobre a carteira, fincavam o queixo nas costas da mão e abstraíam-se com o olhar imóvel, idiotismo de espera, como se tentassem perceber o curso das horas no espaço. Por trás da casa, no quintal do diretor, ouvia-se cantando Ângela, cantilenas espanholas, sinuosas de moleza; mais longe, muito mais, em zumbido indistinto, como um horizonte sonoro, as cigarras trilavam, agitando o ar quente como uma vibração de fervura. 43

Again, on returning to the Ateneu after an exhausting outing to the Corcovado mountain, the students find Angela in the role of "femme fatale" standing before the school portals in a provocative position, welcoming both the men and the boys:

No portão do Ateneu, mãos às cadeiras, dentinhos brancos à vista, esperava-nos Ângela, fresca e forte, e recebia com uma vaia de risadas aquela entrada de vencidos, homens e moços. 44

⁴³ Ibid., p. 112.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 127.

Thus, it is through a series of short scenes that the reader is introduced and reintroduced to Angela and learns of her pernicious influence at the school, distracting and even sexually teasing the adolescent students. She is a wild, lascivious animal, who runs through the woods and the school grounds, continually exciting the students. Sexuality is her stock in trade and she emanates it until it becomes an overpowering intoxicant that ultimately destroys. In the following scene the narrator describes her running across the fields with her skirt lifted, jumping over the puddles of stagnant rain water, exhibiting her shapely legs:

Falavam assim à imaginação, impressões de relance, um olhar banhado de lascívia, a tempestade galopante das roupas, em desordem de fuga, calculada para efeitos de irritação, um descuido de alças afrouxadas ao corpinho, um propósito de poças d'água em líos de chuva, obrigando a saias curtas e canelas nuas; ora a uma porta em rápida passagem, ora através do parque frondoso; ou ao escritório, por motivo de recados de D. Ema cuja freqüência desesperava o diretor; ou sobre o muro da natação, ou a qualquer canto com os copeiros, em dueto de idílio que se espiava; ou em graçola aventurada aos inspetores que se babavam. ⁴⁵

It is not till Angela becomes involved in the murder of one of the male servants in Aristarco's household that she is physically described. Heretofore, the reader has been dependent on a series of quick episodes to visualize this character; now we receive a description but it is only a few words long:

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 76.

Ângela tinha cêrca de vinte anos; parecia mais velha pelo desenvolvimento das proporções. Grande, carnuda, sanguínea e fogosa, era um dêsses exemplares excessivos do sexo que parecem conformados expressamente para espôsas da multidão—protestos revolucionários contra o monopólio do tálamo.

Atirada de modos, como o ditirambo do amor efêmero; vazia como as estátuas ôcas; sem sentimentos, material e estúpida, possuía, entretanto, um sêgrêdo satânico de graduar os largos olhos de sépia e ouro, animar expressões no rosto que dir-se-ia viver-lhe na face uma alma de superfície, possante, capaz dos altos martírios da ternura e de interpretar os poemas trágicos da dedicação.

Gostava de arregaçar as mangas para mostrar os braços, luxo de alvura, braços perfeitos de princesa, que davam que pensar ao espanador humilde no serviço da manhã. Exposta às soalheiras, revestia-se a côr branca do rosto de moreno cálido, tom fugitivo de magnólias fanadas, invulnerável aos rigores de ar livre, como deve ter sido outrora a epiderme de Ceres. Ferissem-lhe a tez os dardos corrosivos da insolação, vinha-lhe apenas ao rosto um rubor mais belo, e não lhe tirava mais a sol à mocidade da carne do que à própria terra, sob a calcinação dos ardores: uma primavera de rosas. 46

In this lengthy passage there is only one sentence that physically describes Angela. She is said to be twenty years old, big and plump, with a ruddy fiery complexion. Most of the passage again explains Angela in moral terms. She is portrayed as a rather empty, insensitive individual with satanic charm who enjoys being every man's wife. A pure sex symbol, Angela easily leads unsuspecting man to his doom. This she does to two workers at the school: the gardener and the male servant, both of whom

⁴⁶ ibid., pp. 82-83.

remain nameless in the novel. In this passage, Pompéia reveals Angela's satanic personality, however, at the same time that he expresses strong censure he goes on to describe her beauty, comparing her to Ceres a Roman goddess. Thus with one stroke of the pen Pompéia nullifies her negative moral traits by juxtaposing a description of her radiant beauty. The reader finds himself at a loss as to how to judge Angela.

On discussing the power that Angela exerts on the students, Raul Pompéia paints her as a healthy animal continuously exuding sex. Intrinsically she is a child of nature, an untamed daughter of the tropics, indifferent to the spell she casts on others and to the libidinous feelings she arouses. Thus Angela frolics among the glades without a care in the world. She is freedom incarnate, enticing the caged male animal of the Ateneu. The unattached love object that refuses to bow and be domesticated is again contrasted to the captive students who yearn for liberty. Symbolically the author strives to promote the two contrasting ideas without stating them directly.

In another scene, the author describes her dashing about, gathering flowers, and throwing them at everyone. When few people are around she appears in a close fitted blouse and white skirt. Loosening the neck cord, she shows her naked arms from the back. Always happy and always in the sun, she is a true wild daughter of light, an untamed fawn of the hot regions defying the hot temperature like a lioness:

Angela fazia-se menina para brincar e
correr com vivacidades de gata. Rolava no

chão, envolvendo a cara nos cabelos, secos, soltos. Saltava agitando o ar com as roupas; colhia flôres e jogava, distribuindo por igual a todos, que ela a todos queria bem. Quando não havia muitos, às grades do salão, descuidava-se, aparecia em corpinho e saia branca, afrouxando o cordão sôbre o seio, mostrando o braço desde a espádua, espreguiçando-se com as mãos ambas a nuca e os cotovelos para cima, contando para a janela histórias que não acabavam mais, enquanto às axilas, em fofos de camisa, ia escapando a indiscrição dos fios fulvos. Sempre o sol! sempre alegre! filha selvagem da luz, fauna indomável das regiões quentes, afrontando a temperatura como as leas, insensível e sobranceira. 47

The narrator explains in great detail the many sensual guiles used by Angela, who is conscious of her attractiveness, to bait a victim and impose her will. Using her body as a lure she is able to melt all resistance and in an orgy of appetite and passion consume her prey in the sexual act. She is described in the glade, laughingly showing a tear of desire and panting nostrils, quivering at intervals with the spasmodic love of the birds. Her lips, animated in satanic convulsion, utter a defiance, while promising a bitch's submission and the sweetness of oriental dreams:

Os olhos riam, destilando uma lágrima de desejo; as narinas ofegavam, adejavam trêmulas por intervalos, com a vivacidade espasmodica do amor das aves; os lábios, animados de convulsões tetânicas, balbuciavam desafios, prometendo submissão de cadela e a doçura dos sonhos orientais. Dominava então pela oferta abusiva, de repente; abatia-se à derradeira humilhação,

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 155.

para atrair de baixo, como as vertigens. Ali estava, por terra, a prostituição da vestal, o himeneu da donzela, a deturpação da inocente, três servilismos reclamando um dono; apetite, apetite para esta orgia rara sem convivas!

Não escolhia amôres. Era de todos como os elementos; como os elementos, sem remorso das desordens e depredações. Franqueava-se à concorrência. Havia lugares para todos à sombra dos cabelos castanhos, que ela sacudia a correr como uma poeira de feno. 48

Angela is, to all effects and purposes, the prostitute of the institution. The voluptuousness that she exhibits whenever she can attract the attention of the male population becomes routine in the novel. Not only is she constantly involved in the most sensual form of exhibitionism, but she takes advantage of the students imprisoned within the thick gray walls of the Ateneu to create a libidinous atmosphere that haunts the entire institution. Contrary to her namesake, Angela is anything but angelic, and the academy slowly takes on the unmistakable traits of a brothel:

E com a grosseria, com a chacota, com o estribilho sentimental, com os descuidos do corpinho, com as flôres, com as tribulências de criança sem modos, Angela era a rainha da atenção e da curiosidade; inflamava-se o chalé em conflagrações de entusiasmo. Se passava algum tempo sem aparecer, colavam-se às grades, perscrutando a sombra das árvores do quintal, carinhas sem conta, chupadas de saudade.

E divertia-se a apreciar os ardores engaiolados dos seus meninos, entretendo-se a desesperá-los como quem atíça o braseiro para ver a erupção das fagulhas, o rodopiar dos rubis candentes, com um prazer graduado

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

entre o orgulho da castelã requestada
de cem paladinos e a expectativa pal-
pitante do carneame em postas de um fes-
tim de jaula. 49

Angela's delight in teasing the caged passions of the students to the point of desperation, as one pokes the hot coals of a fire in order to watch the embers glow, sparks the nightly escapades of the older students looking for sex.

The tragic events that lead to the gruesome murder are succinctly narrated by Pompéia without any attempt to whitewash Angela's role in the affair. The murderer, Angela's compatriot, had arrived in the same immigrant ship from the Canary Islands and he therefore felt an indissoluble bond between the two. Aristarco's servant, on the other hand, felt "married" to Angela through their daily contact and by the intimacy of washing earthen pots and beating dirty rugs together:

O homem da faca era um dos jardineiros do Ateneu. Durante o jantar enfrentara-se de razões com um criado de casa de Aristarco e o matara. Havia algum tempo que disputavam os dois a primazia no coração de Ângela; uma terrível pendência. O criado de Aristarco julgava-se na legítima posse desse escrínio de afetos, pela convivência ao lado da bela, consorciados maritalmente na intimidade dos alguidares, onde as mãos se confundiam como as louças ou na sociedade afetuosa do serviço dos aposentos do diretor e da senhora, permutando entre si dichotes açucarados, à flagelação dos tapêtes. 50

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Without stating it directly Raul Pompéia equates woman with evil, the two go hand in hand. It is true that the symbolism is strongest in Angela; however, it also is carried over to Dona Ema. As a matter of fact, every female character in O Ateneu harbors her own kind of evil: Angela is portrayed as a hard insensitive woman whose only pleasure is animal sex; Dona Ema conceals her true nature until the reader suddenly learns that she has abandoned home and family to run away with Crisóstomo, a teacher at the Ateneu; Melica, Aristarco's vain daughter, seems to follow in her father's footsteps, tolerating Rômulo, whom she loathes, only because he is wealthy and has the most to offer as a marriage partner. Melica gives every indication of some day deviating from the path of righteous behavior.

Dona Ema

Pompéia presents Dona Ema differently from Angela. She is immediately described, which gives the reader instantly a visual picture. Like Angela, however, she also appears in a scene in which she acts out her quality, motherly care. Even before her initial appearance in the novel, Dona Ema is heard defending young Sérgio with strong maternal fervor from Aristarco's criticism. This is followed by a brief physical account of Dona Ema. Although meager, the description offered is much more extensive than that given to other characters in the novel:

—Peço licença para defender os meninos
bonitos ... objetou alguém entrando.
Surpreendendo-nos com esta frase, untuo-

samente esboada por um sorriso, chegou a senhora do diretor, D. Ema. Bela mulher em plena prosperidade dos trinta anos de Balzac, formas alongadas por graciosa magreza, erigindo, porém, o tronco sôbre quadris amplos, fortes como a maternidade. 51

This portrayal places Dona Ema in a very favorable light. In fact, she is the first character to be sympathetically described. Her beauty is continually accentuated. She is presented not as a young and inexperienced girl but as a fully matured thirty-year-old woman. Great stress is placed on her maternal bearing and on the fact that she has all the attributes of an excellent mother. Consequently she is sturdy, firm, and holds the seed of future generations. She is described as beautiful, tall, thin, and gracious with a body set on sturdy hips "strong as maternity itself." The picture offered by the author is broad and general, but her role in the novel has already been given through description and action:

... olhos negros, pupilas retintas, de uma côr só, que pareciam encher o talho folgado das pálpebras; de um moreno rosa que algumas formosuras possuem, e que seria também a côr do jambo, (se jambo fôsse) rigorosamente o fruto proibido. Adiantava-se por movimentos oscilados, cadência de minueto harmonioso e mole que o corpo alternava. Vestia cetim prêto justo sôbre as formas, reluzente como pano molhado; e o cetim vivia com ousada transparência a vida oculta da carne. Esta aparição maravilhou-me. 52

⁵¹Ibid., p. 23.

⁵²Ibid., p. 23.

Conversely, there is a hidden and concealed side to Dona Ema, for while the author stresses her maternal qualities, he casually mentions her seductiveness. In veiled yet undeniable terms, the color of her complexion brings to mind the forbidden fruit. Lodged between the lines of positive praise, there is a strong voluptuous tone that increases as the reader becomes better acquainted with Dona Ema. As the scene continues we glimpse Dona Ema's pulsating movements "as if moving to a cadenced minuet." Her tightly fitted black satin garment seems to "live with daring transparency the occult life of the flesh." The reader begins to suspect that there must be another facet to Dona Ema's personality, other than the maternal wife that the narrator first gives the reader.

Dona Ema's seductive nature becomes more and more pronounced as the novel progresses, until the relationship between her and Sérgio finally begins to blossom into a love affair. When Egbert is invited to dine with the headmaster and his family, Sérgio is also requested to attend. Recognized by Dona Ema from their first meeting two years before, a secret and long-standing bond between the two emerges:

Miragem sedutora de branco, fartos cabelos negros colhidos para o alto com infinita graça, uma rosa nos cabelos, vermelha como são vermelhos os lábios e os corações, vermelha como um grito de triunfo. Nada mais. Ramalhetes à mesa, um caldo ardente, e sempre a obsessão adorável do branco e a rosa vermelha. 53

⁵³Ibid., p. 147.

In order to further Dona Ema's dual nature, that of mother and lover, the narrator symbolically contrasts white, the color of purity, with the red of fiery passion.

Dona Ema's thick dark hair and dark obsessive eyes continually pursue Sérgio and invite him to further excesses of intimacy:

Estava a meu lado, pertinho, deslumbrante, o vestuário de neve. Servia-me alguns pratos, muitas carícias; eu devorava as carícias. Não ousava erguer a vista. Uma vez ensaiei. Havia sobre mim dois olhos perturbadores, vertendo a noite. 54

The obsession with Dona Ema becomes so overwhelming that Sérgio has an erotic Freudian dream in which the two appear as lovers, Dona Ema assuming the role of temptress. In the dream sequence she behaves much as Angela does, first enticing her prey and then retrieving the lure. Kneeling before her in a supplicating gesture, Sérgio tries vainly to kiss the hand of Dona Ema, who is seated on his bed. His attention is then drawn to the contours of her legs as he tries to put her slippers on only to be distracted by her knees, calves, ankles, and finally her tiny feet. The dream ends with Sérgio ardently kissing her legs, "exhaling his soul in flames:"

Sonhei: ela sentada na cama, eu no verniz do chão, de joelhos. Mostrava-me a mão, recortada em puro jaspe, unhas de rosa, como pétalas incrustadas. Eu fazia esforços para

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 147.

colher a mão e beijar, a mão fugia; chegava-se um pouco, escapava para mais alto; baixava de novo, fugia mais longe ainda, para o teto, para o céu, e eu a via inatingível na altura, clara, aberta como um astro.

Ela ria do meu desespero, mostrava-me o pé descalço, que a calçasse; não permitia mais. Calçar-lhe apenas o arminho que ali estava, o pequeno sapato, branco, exânime, voltando a sola, sem o conforto cálido do pé que o pisava, que o vivificava. Eu me inclinava, invejoso do arminho, sobre o crivo de sêda da meia, milagre de indústria para o qual concorrera cada dia do século industrial com um esforço, tecido impalpável, de fibras vivas, filtrando a transparência branda do sangue, invólucro sutil de um mi-mo de joelho, de perna, de tornozelo irremediavelmente desfalcado do espólio glorioso da estatuária pagã. Calça-lá apenas! Mas eu a fazia torcer-se, calçando-a, de dores numa tortura ardente de beijos, exalando eu próprio a alma tóda em chama. 55

It is not long before the reader fathoms the double intent of the author. The first description of Dona Ema was one of symbolic maternity, complete devotion, and outward serenity. Imperceptibly, however, the picture is altered, and Dona Ema acquires a beguiling and provocative nature that approximates Angela's behavior. She is no longer the mother image, created in the first chapters, but a sex symbol.

The negative side of Dona Ema is further suggested by the subtle link with Crisóstomo. At the same time that Sérgio has his fantasized affair with Dona Ema, the narrator suggests, through the rumors that circulate in the corridors of the Ateneu,

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 152.

a budding clandestine romance between her and Crisóstomo. The relationship is further hinted at when the teacher escorts Dona Ema to the much publicized excursion to the Corcovado. By simply linking both names the author is able to establish an affinity:

Quando chegamos ao portão, já nos esperavam os bondes especiais. Do outro lado da rua, à entrada do conhecido restaurante, apareceu a família de Aristarco com alguns professores, que lá tinham jantado. D. Ema, pelo braço do Crisóstomo, a Melica altivamente só e distanciada. 56

This is later reinforced when rumors begin to fly that Crisóstomo and Dona Ema are having an affair:

Repetiam as murmurações do Professor Crisóstomo, frioleiras de maldade. Pelas janelas gradeadas indicavam junto do muro da nação as venezianas da enfermaria e faziam a apologia da enfermeira, enfermeirazinha cuidadora, com um jeito incomparável para o tratamento dos casos graves do coração. E vi-nham com histórias de estudantes muito mal de imaginárias molestias ...57

During the meal that Sérgio has with Aristarco and his family, Sérgio seems to be the object of Dona Ema's seductive glances, although Crisóstomo's threatening figure is never far away:

Parece que me olhava também, não tenho certeza, do outro lado, por entre as flôres, o Professor Crisóstomo. 58

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 157

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 147.

This scene creates a doubt in the mind of the reader as to whether the linking of Crisóstomo's name to Dona Ema's is idle gossip. It also becomes obvious that the teacher is aware of Sérgio's interest in Dona Ema because of the belligerent attitude that he takes toward Sérgio at the table.

It is not till the last chapter of the novel that the reader learns that Dona Ema has mysteriously disappeared. No explanation is offered by the author. However, the random words uttered by one of the older students prove to be prophetic:

Tenho para mim que o negócio ainda acaba mal e porcamente, kakós kai ruparós, com uma estralada. 59

While Dona Ema seems to sustain two romantic interests concomitantly, one with Sérgio, in which she assumes the active role of temptress, and another with Crisóstomo, which is gathered from the whispered conversations of the students, Pompéia further connects her name with Angela's whenever possible:

Representavam-se as influências dissolventes por duas espécies de encarnação, fundidas em hibridismo de disparate—a da forma feminina personificada em Ângela, a canarina, ou antes a camareira de D. Ema, e a de um encontro de tábuas humildes, conjuntadas às pressas por força do prosaísmo incivil de um episódio da economia orgânica. 60

Although the juxtaposition of both names is innocently made, the reader subconsciously associates both characters and condemns them

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 113.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 76.

by association. When Angela is found running through the school grounds, sexually exciting the older students, the author again casually mentions that she was delivering messages for Dona Ema:

... por motivo de recados de Dona Ema
cuja frequência desesperava o diretor ...⁶¹

by coupling both names, as Pompéia does with Dona Ema and Professor Crisóstomo, he once again creates a climate of guilt through association.

Sérgio's erotic dream becomes a reality when he falls ill with the measles. Dona Ema his devoted nurse is at his side constantly during the difficult period of his illness:

D. Ema foi para mim o verdadeiro socorro. Sabia tanto zelar, animar, acariciar, que a própria agonia aos cuidados do seu trato fôra uma ressurreição ... A senhora não deixava a enfermaria. Vigia-me o sono, as crises de delírio, como uma irmã da caridade. ⁶²

As Sérgio slowly recovers, Dona Ema, who has been totally devoted to her young charge, also seems to regain added strength from the ordeal. She lives again as Sérgio recuperates and sings, smiles, and laughs anew as she did before he fell sick:

Junto da cama, D. Ema comovia-se, mirando a prostração pálida, ao reabrir os olhos de um desses períodos de sono dos enfermos, que tão bem fingem de morte. Tirava-me a mão, prendia nas dela tempo esquecido, luzia-lhe no olhar um brilho de pranto. A alimentação da dieta era ela quem trazia, quem servia. As vezes por gracejo carinhoso queria levar-me ela mesma o alimento à boca, a colherinha de sagu, que primeiro provava com

⁶¹Ibid., p. 76.

⁶²Ibid., p. 178.

um adorável amuo de beijo. Se precisava andar no aposento para mudar um frasco, entreabrir a janela, caminhava como uma senhora por um chão de paina. 63

At the same time, their relationship of patient and nurse changes and becomes one of lovers. As she assumes the dual role of mother and lover, Sérgio passively sinks to a new low of infantilism. During one of their daily meetings, as Sérgio reads his father's letter, Dona Ema quietly confides her life and we learn how lonely she really feels:

'Ah! tem ainda um pai, disse Ema, uma querida mãe, irmãos que o amam ... Eu nada tenho; todos mortos ... Aparecem-me às vêzes à noite ... sombras. Ninguém por mim. Nesta casa sou demais ... Deixemos essas coisas.

Não sabe o que é um coração isolado como eu ... Todos mentem. Os que se aproximam são os mais traidores ...' 64

Thus the reader learns that Dona Ema who has given every indication of being happily married does not feel any close ties to her husband or daughter. As a matter of fact when she speaks about her family she excludes them and only mentions her mother and brothers. It is not till the final scene in the novel, however, that we learn that Dona Ema has abandoned Aristarco:

Desaparecera igualmente durante o incêndio a senhora do diretor. 65

No explanation is given. We only know that, taking advantage of

⁶³Ibid., pp. 178-179.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 182.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 187.

the fire, she fled in the middle of the night. We are not even informed whether she left with Crisóstomo, although it is to be assumed that she did.

Some critics feel that Pompéia drew Dona Ema's characterization with greater charity and tolerance, omitting the abusive tones he used with the other characters:

Só há, sem rebuços, uma figura carinhosamente tratada no romance, Ema, já em pleno esplendor da mulher a que terá com Sérgio enfermo um idílio bastante dúbio de carícias. 66

However, although she seems to be the only character spared the overt vituperative abuse that Pompéia piles upon all the other characters in O Ateneu except Bento Alves, in reality the narrator had no more respect for her than he had for Angela. The image of Dona Ema is so subtly drawn that the reader never fully realizes the irony of the characterization. When it comes to a final analysis, Dona Ema is no better than Angela! All three female characters in the novel are distorted, which reveals Pompéia's misogynous attitude.

If Angela, exciting the passions of men, moves about like a devastating hurricane, Dona Ema, on the other hand, full of warmth and grace, exhibits an airy quality throughout the novel. However, this quality is deceiving, for in the long run Dona Ema is a subdued version of Angela.

⁶⁶Mário de Andrade, op. cit., p. 169.

In this novel no love seems quite real. The essence of it, as portrayed by Pompéia is deception, the object always unworthy, the result ludicrous or flat. No one suffers because of it. When Dona Ema abandons Aristarco and the Ateneu, no one really misses her. In a casual manner the narrator informs the reader that Aristarco mourns not Dona Ema but the kindergarten teacher who will no longer be there.

Bento Alves

Bento Alves first appears in O Ateneu during the much discussed murder scene. Pompéia uses the same method to introduce Bento as he does to introduce Angela. That is, even before Bento is named or physically described, we see him in action. When the murderer attempts to make his escape, brandishing a knife before the terrified students, Bento fearlessly confronts him and with his great physical strength, quickly reduces him to a whimpering heap of immobilized flesh:

Alguém se precipitara inesperadamente
ao seu encontro e, escorando-o com o joelho
e empolgando-o pelo gasnete, com o punho
o fizera rodar por terra. 67

It is then that the author identifies Bento Alves by name at the same time describing how, with only one arm, the student held the murderer face down on the floor, completely incapacitating him:

Era o Bento Alves! ... com uma das mãos
o bravo colega oprimia a cara ao sujeito
contra o solo, ralando-a na areia, com a

⁶⁷Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 79.

outra, por um prodígio de vigor, imobilizava-lhe o braço armado. Com o esquerdo livre, o criminoso firmava, tentando erguer-se. Esmagava-o a pressão de um monólito.

Quando foram em auxílio, já o Bento Alves desarmara o adversário, coagindo por meio da tenaz dos dedos com que lhe ferava o congote. 68

Faithful to his manner of presentation, Pompéia affirms his character through deeds and circumstances. Placed in a situational setting, Bento reacts to his surroundings. There is no physical description of the character other than that he was exceedingly strong and with one hand he was able to unarm his adversary. Once again Pompéia has concentrated upon a single dominant trait, namely his great courage and physical strength, to the exclusion of the rest of the personality. He is presented as essentially a flat character.

Bento Alves' initial appearance in O Ateneu occurs in a scene richly steeped in editorial comment. The unsurpassed admiration that Pompéia has for him is immediately sensed. Bento is, in effect, one of the few characters spared the sarcastic and vindictive epithets so characteristic of his style. He immediately is acclaimed a hero by students and teachers alike. Even Aristarco, from afar, forgets himself and frantically waves his arms, unable to voice his emotions:

De toda parte, aclamavam-no herói. À janela, de longe, Aristarco, entusiasmado,

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 79.

esquecia o divino aprumo e bracejava
como um moinho de vento, sem conse-
guir dar voz à emoção. 69

In order to have the character reveal his personality the author has Bento retrieve the knife as a souvenir, and casually walk away after the struggle:

Bento Alves retirou-se com a faca em
troféu, deixando o criminoso sob uma pi-
lha de valentes da última hora e criados
que o sufocavam. 70

Not only is Bento Alves described as strong and courageous, but he also is a modest, unassuming, and soft-spoken individual who shies away from the spotlight of notoriety. He does not have to compete for prestige; it is legitimately his by sheer dint of brute force. It is only when trying to maintain an aura of anonymity that Bento Alves loses his patience and flares up like a wild boar:

Depois da valorosa façanha a que o tinha
levado a casualidade, teve de ver-se herói
à força. Um desespero. Se algum companheiro
caía na tolice de dizer-lhe alguma coisa re-
lativamente ao crime do jardineiro, Bento
Alves rasgava a conversa com um monossílabo
de impaciência, encrespando-se como um java-
li. Apenas de tudo foi o pobre modesto per-
cutido, laminado sôbre a bigorna da notori-
dade. 71

Despite the fact that Bento is undisputedly the strongest student at the Ateneu, he has a gentleness that is only found in

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 79.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 79.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 84.

the mighty animals of the jungle. Although quick and agile in racing, he dislikes competing. He enjoys everybody's respect, and no one dares speak ill of him; they fear him in silence.

His great physical strength and his dauntless courage place Bento in the forefront of the elite of the institution and make him a much desired friend and a much respected foe. These manly virtues, however, tempered by kindness and humility, are noble traits utterly lacking in the other students of the Ateneu. In contrast, the others are cruelly sadistic individuals who take pleasure in tormenting the smaller and indefensive students.

Bento Alves does not boast about his physical exploits. He prefers to avoid confrontation. He is not an exhibitionist; he does not arm wrestle in public but prefers to do his gymnastic exercises privately. However, at times, in a playful mood, he will grab the arm of a colleague, squeeze it with such strength that he will tatoo the arm through pressure. He therefore enjoys the absolute respect of all his colleagues and teachers.

Although Bento becomes the undisputed hero of the school and wins the acclaim of students and faculty alike, his reputation earns him the deep hatred and envy of those who, when compared to him, lose their shine and luster of being the strongmen and the bullies of the institution. That is why Malheiro, the second strongest student at the school and the first bully, can never forgive him.

Despite all the praise heaped upon Bento Alves, his charac-

ter is not exempt from duality. As the end of the long hot summer approaches, Sérgio and Bento find themselves alone at the school, waiting for classes to resume. Sérgio notices certain "changes" that have taken place in Bento's attitude toward him. There is an unexpected nervousness, an excitability, a hoarseness, and an inability to speak at times. Although they cannot be explained by Sérgio, these traits attest to Bento Alves' repressed sexual desires:

Por ocasião da abertura das aulas, notei-lhe um calor nôvo de amizade, sem efusões como dantes, mas evidentemente testemunhado por temores da mão ao apertar a minha, embaraços na voz de amoroso errado, bisonho desviar dos olhos, denunciando a relutância de movimentos secretos e impetuosos. As vezes mesmo, um reflexo assustador de loucura acentuava-se-lhe nos traços.

Interessava-me aquela agonia comprimida. Estranha coisa, a amizade que, em vez da aproximação franca dos amigos, podia assim produzir a incerteza do mal-estar, uma situação prolongada de vexame, como se a convivência fôsse um sacrifício e o sacrifício uma necessidade. 72

As his dual nature surfaces, Bento catches up with Sérgio in a solitary corner of the Ateneu and sexually attacks him under the stairs. The scene is depicted in total editorial silence, although the intent is more than obvious. Although smaller and weaker, Sérgio surprisingly is able stoutly to defend himself:

Não sei que diabo de expressão notei-lhe no semblante, de ordinário tão bom. Desvai-

⁷²Ibid., pp. 133-134.

ramento completo. Apenas me reconheceu, atirou-se como fizera Rômulo e igualmente brutal. Rolamos ao fundo escuro do vão da escada. Derribado, contundido, espancado, não descurei da defesa. Entrevi na meia obscuridade do recanto um grande sapato embolorado. Lutando na poeira, sob o joelho esmagador do assaltante, ataquei-lhe a cabeça, a cara, a boca, a formidáveis golpes de tacão, apurando a energia de sola ferrada com a onipotência dos extremos. Bento Alves deixou-me bruscamente. 73

It is difficult to believe that the same Bento Alves who succeeded in crushing all his opponents at the Ateneu, who captured the murderer single-handed, who worked so diligently on the trapeze, and who was feared by all for his strength and courage could be so decisively defeated by Sérgio:

Tínhamos lutado em silêncio, sem que nada mais se ouvisse do que os encontrões pelo soalho. No corredor, entretanto, vimos Aristarco que chegava como em socorro. Bento Alves passou; imobilizou-o com o olhar sem vista, esgazeado, medonho, de quem acaba de perpetrar um homicídio e desapareceu, trôpego, manchado de pó, lábios inflamados, desordem nos cabelos. 74

As Aristarco appears, Bento dazed, staggering with hair disheveled, with a fearful glazed look, as if having committed a murder, disappears.

It is paradoxical that Bento Alves is portrayed as the aggressor while Sérgio assumes the air of the wounded party, paradoxical because it is evident that Sérgio had Bento in view from

⁷³Ibid., p. 134.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 134-135.

the moment he became the hero of the school. One may even say that it is Sérgio who instigated and promoted the clandestine affair and on no occasion does he try to forestall it. Therefore, it does not come as a total surprise when Bento assaults Sérgio in one of the dark and solitary corridors of the Ateneu.

What makes Bento Alves a unique character is his novel presentation and the admiration that the author has for him. Like Dona Ema he is favorably described until midway in the novel, then the developing opposing facet of his personality destroys the image. From the beginning, Bento Alves is placed in the limelight without the customary diatribes of pejorative epithets so common in Pompéia. Even after Sérgio is assaulted, he harbors no ill feeling against Bento. On the contrary, there is a rather nostalgic remembrance of the athlete from the moment he abandons the institution. Pages later, in a paragraph that has little to do with Bento Alves, Sérgio nostalgically remarks how at the school his name was often linked to that of mighty Bento Alves: "Chamavam-me a mim o Sérgio do Alves."⁷⁵

Sérgio

In accordance with the general technique of characterization used in the novel Sérgio is only lightly physically described. The reader is offered only the slimmest details. We are informed that he is eleven-years-old at the beginning of the novel. Later,

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 154.

upon meeting Aristarco and Dona Ema, we are given a few additional particulars:

Houve as apresentações de cerimônia, e a senhora com um nadinha de excessivo des-
embaraço sentou-se no divã perto de mim.

—Quantos anos tem? perguntou-me.

—Onze anos ...

—Parece ter seis, com êstes lindos cabelos.

Eu não era realmente desenvolvido. A senhora colhia-me o cabelo nos dedos:

—Corte e ofereça a mamãe, aconselhou com uma carícia; é a infância que ali fica, nos cabelos louros ... Depois, os filhos nada mais têm para as mães. 76

In this scene the fact that Dona Ema finds Sérgio small for his age can be readily understood by the reader, but that he appears to be only six years old is difficult to accept. The author seems to want to stress that Sérgio is small and evidently still a helpless infant. All this is alluded to between the lines, and the reader sympathizes all the more with the child among the unscrupulous toughs at the institution.

Outside of this short scene no further description is given. Since this is a novel written in the first person, Pompéia does not adopt that devastating and stinging tone that he uses so often when describing the other characters. He does not make any animal identification, nor does he caricature him. Sérgio, unlike the other characters in the novel, is portrayed in sympathetic tones.

⁷⁶ibid., p. 23.

Sérgio's duality does not appear as an opposing facet of his personality as in the other characters in the novel. Instead, Pompéia subtly juxtaposes Sérgio to Franco as his "alter ego." Though Sérgio is initially repelled by Franco, he slowly discovers that they both share very similar attitudes and traits. This idea culminates in Sérgio's dream in which he becomes Franco. Sérgio's dream—actually more of a nightmare than a dream—is made up of a series of disparate scenes. The feeling of being at the mercy of one's enemies gives Sérgio a sensation of being completely crushed. In essence this is the sensation that unites him to Franco:

Pela noite a dentro, comparsas de pesadelo, perseguiram-me as imagens várias do atribulado dia; a pegajosa ternura do Sanches, a cara amarela do Barbalho, a expressão de tortura do Franco, os frades descompostos do roupeiro. Sonhei mesmo em regra. Eu era o Franco. A minha aula, o colégio inteiro, mil colegios, arrebatados, num pé-de-vento, voavam léguas a fora por um planície sem termo. Gritavam todos, urravam a sabatina de tabuadas com um entusiasmo de turbilhão. O pó crescia em nuvens do solo; a massa confusa ouriçava-se de gestos, gestos de galho sem fôlhas em tormenta agoniada de inverno; sôbre a floresta dos braços, gesto mais alto, gesto vencedor, a mão magra do Maurílio, crescida, enorme, preta, torcendo, destorcendo os dedos sôfregos, convulsionados da histeria do quinau ... E eu caía, único vencido! E o tropel, de volta, vinha sôbre mim! sopeavam-me, calcavam-me, pesado, carregando prêmios, prêmios aos cestos! 77

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 37.

Sérgio and Franco are both unjustly treated by society. They are both rebels, although their rebellion takes on different forms. Both are strongly individualistic and lead a lonely existence without intimate friends. It might be argued that, unlike Franco, Sérgio is capable of making friends, as he does with Bento Alves and Egbert, but these friendships are short lived and seem to leave no lasting impression.

As a character Sérgio is not aggressive. He does not create situations; at most he reacts to the situations created by others. He is essentially passive, and the reader feels that he is at the mercy of the others at the institution.

After giving a brief bitter-sweet account of his early home-life, Sérgio enumerates his unhappy childhood school experiences and explains how he arrived at the door of the Ateneu. Although he tries to hide all visible rancor against his parents for having forced him to undergo the torment of a private school, at times his resentment rises to the surface. A Rousseauian character, Sérgio is presented as a pure and innocent child thrust upon a wicked and corrupt world:

Apesar dêste ensaio da vida escolar a que me sujeitou a família, antes da verdadeira provação eu estava perfeitamente virgem para as sensações novas da nova fase. 78

His first encounter with duplicity, which momentarily confuses him because he never has come in contact with hypocrisy, occurs

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 12.

when he meets Aristarco and notices his double nature.

The bitter-sweet tone that Sérgio assumes when conveying his past becomes clouded and pessimistic as time wears on. There is a certain evasiveness and insincerity in the manner in which he presents facts; he seems to be playing a game of hide-and-seek, engaging in calculated obfuscations, trying to win the reader over by placing himself in a favorable light and painting others as cruel and vicious individuals. In fact, throughout the novel he has his persona in mind and gives the impression of looking at his reflection in a mirror. Persecuted by others, he always has the reader on his side. Immediately after idyllically remembering all the illusions nurtured during his childhood, when he was brought up in a "hothouse" of love and affection, he states that his childhood recollections are, in effect, euphemistic in nature and really do not represent the blissful period of youthful years:

Eufemismo, os felizes tempos, eufemismo apenas, igual aos outros que nos alimentam, a saudade dos dias que correram como melhores. Bem considerando, a atualidade é a mesma em tôdas as datas. Feita a compensação dos desejos que variam, das aspirações que se transformam, alentadas, perpétuamente do mesmo ardor, sôbre a mesma base fantástica de esperanças, a atualidade é uma. Sob a coloração cambiante das horas, um pouco de ouro mais pela manhã, um pouco mais de púrpura ao crepúsculo—a paisagem é a mesma de cada lado beirando a estrada da vida. 79

Evidently Sérgio has a marked tendency to paint an unrealistic picture of the circumstances surrounding him. In this case there

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 11.

is a pessimistic and illogical contradiction. In other situations he does not even try to arrive at a facsimile of the truth. His efforts to adulterate the circumstances of the novel in order to place his best foot forward is constantly manifest.

Despite the fact that Sérgio is well portrayed as a character and the reader quickly identifies with him, the fact remains that there is a definite lack of psychological progression in his personality. While essentially understandable, there is nevertheless a credibility gap between reader and character that becomes ever more difficult to breach, for Sérgio often does not react to situations logically.

His extremely realistic appraisal of the perverse atmosphere prevalent at the school and his keen penetration of the psychological make up of Sanches, Franco and Egbert are in direct conflict with his own intensely puerile and unreal flights of fantasy. Sérgio has no trouble in understanding Aristarco from the first day. When faced with his own problems he is quite at a loss to analyze himself with any sense of discernment.

The dread that Sérgio has of the future, of his fellow students, and of the cold and impersonal institution, intensifies his innate feelings of frustration and fomenta his pessimistic view of life:

Onde meter a máquina dos meus ideais
naquele mundo de brutalidade, que me in-
timidava com os obscuros detalhes e as
perspectivas informes, escapando à inves-
tigação da minha inexperiência? Qual o
meu destino, naquela sociedade que o Re-
bêlo descrevera horrorizado, com as meias

frases de mistério, suscitando temores indefinidos, recomendando energia, como coleguismo fôsse hostilidade? De que modo alinhar a norma generosa e sobranceira de proceder com a obsessão pertinaz do Barbalho? Inútilmente buscara reconhecer no rosto dos rapazes o nobre aspecto da solendidade dos prêmios, dando-me idéia da legião dos soldados do trabalho, que fraternizavam no empenho comum, unidos pelo coração e pela vantagem do coletivo esforço. 80

One reason for his reversion to anger and sarcasm, and eventually to infantilism, is this indomitable fear. A great deal of anger in Sérgio against his parents, his instructors, the students, and the institution is due, in part, to the fear he has in facing the situations that life places before him.

Although forewarned by Rebêlo upon his arrival at the Ateneu not to seek a protector among the older boys, young Sérgio unable to bear his dread of the future, feels a definite need for protection. However, it is not till the harshness of life makes its mark on Sérgio that he decides to enlist the services of Sanches as a protector. Rebêlo's warning is quickly forgotten due to the demands of the moment. His decision is made only after it is evident to him that life at the school is to be an uninterrupted "valley of tears." Sanches has already demonstrated his sexual interest in him. He has "saved" Sérgio while bathing at the pool, where the small and the weak are constantly at the mercy of the stronger and more aggressive student. The fact that Sanches is

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 36.

a school monitor, that he has authority and respect, as well as the fact that he is at the head of the class makes him a most attractive companion. When Sanches appears and makes his unorthodox proposition, Sérgio, although initially physically repelled by him, on second thought does see it as an answer to his immediate needs. Therefore, though wary, Sérgio does not reject Sanches' advances in toto:

Ah! que se ainda me viesse no ânimo a bravura audaz que trouxera de casa, sem dúvida nenhuma há muito tempo que eu tinha despachado o Sanches com a cartilha pelas ventas. Mas eu era outro, e a vontade vegetava tenra e dúctil como um renôvo, depois do aniquilamento da primeira decepção. Fui transferindo o conflito. 81

The bravery that Sérgio musters before facing the world at the Ateneu dissipates into nothingness. When apprised by Aristarco of the by-laws that govern the school and that immorality is unknown at the institution, the young student trembles with fear:

Eu, encolhido, fazia em superlativo a metáfora sabida das varas verdes. Notando a minha perturbação, o diretor desvaneceu-se em afagos. 'Mas para os rapazes dignos eu sou um pai! ... os maus eu conheço: não são as crianças, principalmente como você, o prazer da família, e que há de ser, estou certo, uma das glórias do Ateneu. Deixem estar ...' Eu tomei a sério a profecia e fiquei mais calmo. 82

⁸¹Ibid., p. 47.

⁸²Ibid., p. 28.

Sérgio's basic fear of life becomes manifest in a persecution complex. Later when chosen to perform at the blackboard before the class, on his first day at school, Sérgio sees all the other students as his potential enemies, rivals who plot against and ridicule him:

Adivinhei sôbre o olhar visguento do Sanches, o olhar odioso e timorato do Cruz, os óculos azuis do Rebêlo, o nariz do Nascimento, virando devagar como um leme; esperei a seta de Carlos, o quinau do Maurílio, ameaçador, fazendo cócegas ao teto, com o dedo feroz; respirei no ambiente adverso da maldita hora, perfumado pela emanção acre das resinas do arvoredado próximo, uma conspiração contra mim da aula inteira, desde as bajulações de Negrão até à maldade violenta do Álvares. Cambaleei até à pedra. O professor interrogou-me; não sei se respondi. Apossou-se-me do espírito um pavor estranho. Acovardou-me o terror supremo das exhibições, imaginando em roda a ironia má de todos aqueles rostos desconhecidos. Amparei-me à tábua negra, para não cair; fugia-me o solo aos pés, com a noção do momento; envolveu-me a escuridão dos demaios, vergonha eterna! liquidando-se a última energia ... pela melhor das maneiras piores de liquidar-se uma energia. 83

Unable to withstand criticism on being reprimanded by Aristarco for his poor scholastic performance before the presence of the entire school, Sérgio permits his fears of persecution again to come to the fore:

No fundo do silêncio comum do refeitório cavou-se um silêncio mais fundo, como um poço depois de um abismo. Senti-me devorado por êste hiante. A congregação justiceira dos colegas voltou-se para mim, contra mim. Os vizinhos de lugar à mesa

⁸³Ibid., pp. 30-31.

afastaram-se dos dois lados, para que eu melhor fôsse visto. De longe, da copa, chegava um ruído argentino, horrível, de colheres à lavagem! os tamarineiros no parque ciciavam ao vento. 84

As Sérgio feels steadily oppressed by his surroundings as well as by the attitude of his comrades, which he considers to be totally unjust, his persecution complex becomes increasingly evident. However, his fear nourishes his tendency to satirize and to ridicule his fellow students which seems to be as strong as the feeling he believes they harbor against him. Hatred is paired off against hatred. He points an accusing finger at them for enjoying themselves at his expense, but he, in turn, is motivated by the same intolerant attitude. Inwardly he finds satisfaction when he sees others squirm before the awesome and authoritarian glare of Aristarco.

This basic fear is at the core of Sérgio's homosexuality. Pompéia shows aspects and phases of Sérgio's homosexuality through his relations with different boys and with Dona Ema. His homosexual inclinations increase as he becomes ever more passive in his relationship to Bento Alves and as he faces the pitfalls that life constantly places before him. It is true that passivity is not a constant factor in Sérgio's personality, for there are feeble evidences of activity when he grasps the reins of fate and tries to wield his own future; however, the narrator characterizes

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 54.

Sérgio's rebelliousness as meek and cautious. Actually Sérgio's assertive moments are of short duration. His fear and his lack of confidence continually get in the way and prevent him from taking any determinative action.

During his flights of homosexual euphoria, Sérgio has a tendency to entertain wild romantic fantasies about himself. Bento Alves, in a fit of pique, challenges Malheiro, the school bully, to a fight to the finish for tormenting Sérgio with insinuations to his impending "marriage." The ensuing encounter takes on an aura of a miniature battle of the Titans at the school. The entire school is on the alert and anxiously awaits the outcome. Sérgio, after receiving a note from Bento advising him of the approaching encounter, sees himself in a revealing and romantic scene, as a lovelorn damsel awaiting the arrival of her victorious cavalier:

Por minha parte, entreguei-me de coração ao desespero das damas romanceiras, montando guarda de suspiros à janela gradeada de um cárcere onde se deixava deter o gentil cavalheiro, para o fim único de propor assunto às trovas e aos trovadores medievos. 85

This scene not only reveals Sérgio's passive nature but it also gives added insight into his psychogender, that is to say, his subconscious view of himself. As Daniel Cappon mentions, the psychogender is essential in order to understand the psycholo-

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 106.

gical functioning of an individual.⁸⁶ Obviously, Sérgio views himself as a woman.

Sérgio's passivity, his unconscious desire to depend on others and to have them take care of him, makes him cultivate Bento's friendship. At first glance it is difficult to ascertain whether Bento's attentions are abetted by young Sérgio or whether they are initiated by Bento himself. Throughout the relationship, however, Sérgio is the surreptitious and undercover "provocateur," although he sees himself in a more innocent light. However, in his quiet manner he silently manipulates Bento. The love scenes are replete with innocuous sex-play that eventually leads to the assault scene that culminates and terminates the affair. The entire episode is told by Sérgio with feigned innocence:

Durante os primeiros dias do ano, poucos alunos chegados, ficávamos horas inteiras em companhia. Trouxera-me um presente de livros, com dedicatória a côres, de bela caligrafia, inscrita em rosas entrelaçadas de cromo. Recordo-me também de um dulcíssimo cofre dourado de pastilhas e outras ridicularias de amabilidade que me oferecia, passando de vergonha pela insignificância do obséquio. Confusamente ocorria-me a lembrança do meu papelzinho de namorada faz-de-conta, e eu levava a seriedade cônica a ponto de galanteá-lo, ocupando-me com o laço da gravata dêle, com a mecha de cabelo que lhe fazia cócegas aos olhos; soprava-lhe ao ouvido segredos indistintos para vê-lo rir, desesperado de não perceber. ⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Daniel Cappon, Towards an Understanding of Homosexuality (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 90.

⁸⁷ Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 134.

This love duet, without a doubt, has an erotic and homosexual undertone, although nothing is directly said. Flattered by having the hero of the school shower attentions on him, Sérgio longs to be loved by Bento:

A amizade do Bento Alves por mim, e a que nutri por êle, me faz pensar que, mesmo sem o caráter de abatimento que tanto indignava ao Rebêlo, certa efeminação pode existir como um período de constituição moral. Estimei-o femininamente, porque era grande, forte, bravo; porque me podia valer; porque me respeitava, quasi tímido, como se não tivesse ânimo de ser amigo. 88

The homosexual atmosphere that constantly hovers over the educational institution suddenly becomes a driving force, not only leading to Sérgio's attachment to Bento Alves and later to the effeminate Egbert, but eventually culminating in the "Cândido" affair, the scandal that rocks the school. Sérgio assumes a feminine delight at being the object of Bento Alves' protective attention. The same sense of infantilism that Sérgio displayed later in his sensual relationship with Dona Ema is again present in the passive role he takes on with Bento. As Bento places Sérgio under his protective wing, Sérgio replaces the family he seems constantly to need with Bento. The relationship takes on a clandestine aspect. No words are ever uttered, but every movement denounces hidden feelings. While reading in the school library Sérgio often feels Bento Alves' silent and protective glaze. It

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 91-92.

is Bento's fear of ridicule that prevents him from demonstrating greater affection:

As vêzes na biblioteca, enquanto eu lia, Alves olhava-me do outro lado da mesa central de pano verde, com a mão à frente e os dedos mergulhados nos cabelos. Olhava-me e eu o sentia sem levantar a vista, compreendendo no mais fino refôlho de minada vaidade que aquela contemplação traduzia o horror do ridículo, proverbial em Bento Alves, manietando-lhe rijamente uma demonstração efusiva. 89

It is slightly before the Cândido incident that Bento Alves leaves the Ateneu never to be heard of again and is just as quickly forgotten by Sérgio. Egbert, on the other hand, appears right after amnesty is declared and the relationship seems to bask in the limelight of homosexuality without any restraint:

Conheci pela primeira vez a amizade. A insignificância cotidiana da vida escolar em que a gente se aborrece, é favorável ao desenvolvimento de inclinações mais sérias que as de simples conveniência menineira. O aborrecimento é um feitio da ociosidade, e da mãe proverbial dos vícios gera-se também o vício de sentir. 90

If Sérgio's friendship for Bento Alves was restrained, his friendship for Egbert, on the other hand, blossoms into an intimate love affair partly because Aristarco's reprisals against homosexual behavior never take place. In this relaxed atmosphere we find Sérgio and Egbert, lost in idyllic reverie, enjoying the beauty of their natural setting:

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 139.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 140.

Nós dois sós! Sentávamo-nos à relva. Eu descansando a cabeça aos joelhos d'ele, ou ele nos meus. Calados, arrancávamos espiguihas à grama. O prado era imenso, os extremos escapavam já na primeira solução de crepúsculo. Olhávamos para cima, para o céu. Que céus de transparência e de luz! Ao alto, ao alto, demorava-se ainda, em cauda de ouro, uma lembrança de sol. A cúpula funda descortinava-se para as montanhas, diluição vasta, tenuíssima de arco-íris. Brados reflexos de chama; depois, o belo azul de pano, depois a degeneração dos matizes para a melancolia noturna, prenunciada pela última zona de roxo doloroso. Quem nos dera ser aquelas aves, duas, que avistávamos na altura, amigas, declinando feliz a luz, em pleno dia ainda, quando na terra iam por tudo às sombras! 91

The romantic readings of Paul et Virginie and Robinson Crusoe also create a bucolic atmosphere that fosters the boys' intimate relationship. Sérgio, however, soon tires of Egbert and, on being invited to dine with Aristarco and his family, transfers his attentions to the headmaster's wife.

While hospitalized at the Ateneu Sérgio shows a new facet of his personality. Thrilled at the sight of Dona Ema, who assumes the dual role of mother and mistress, Sérgio becomes a babe-in-arms under the tender care of Aristarco's wife:

D. Ema foi para mim o verdadeiro socorro. Sabia tanto zelar, animar, acariciar, que a própria agonia aos cuidados do seu trato fôra uma ressurreição ... A senhora não deixava a enfermaria. Vigia-me o sono, as crises de delírio, como uma irmã de caridade. 92

⁹¹Ibid., p. 142.

⁹²Ibid., p. 178.

Dona Ema is transformed from a devoted nurse into an alluring lover. She actively takes the initiative, makes advances and becomes the love maker, while Sérgio progressively becomes more passive and infantile as the relationship becomes stronger:

Junto da cama, D. Ema comovia-se, mirando a prostração pálida, ao reabrir os olhos de um dêesses períodos de sono dos enfermos, que tão bem fingem de morte. Tirava-me a mão, prendia nas dela tempo esquecido, luzia-lhe no olhar um brilho de pranto. A alimentação da dieta era ela quem servia. As vezes por gracejo carinhoso queria levar-me ela mesma o alimento à boca, a colherinha de sagu, que primeiro provava com um adorável amuo de beijo. Se precisava andar no aposento para mudar um frasco, entreabria a janela, caminhava como uma senhora por um chão de paina. 93

All worldly cares are quickly put aside as the child feels safe under the protective care of Dona Ema. By passively curling up in his bed and permitting her to take over all worries, Sérgio has returned to the womb. Symbolically he has renounced the world and has entered a period in which he no longer has a care in the world.

Unable to face up to the many problems that arise when one has to cope with life, Sérgio takes refuge in a fantasy world of his own making, free from the worry of everyday living. Always seeking an influential "protector," who will make his life bearable, Sérgio goes from one "friend" to another.

After first becoming the ward of Sanches, and then liberat-

⁹³Ibid., pp. 178-179.

ing himself because of his basic antipathy, Sérgio falls under the aegis of mighty Bento Alves. Under the spell of Bento, Sérgio's effeminate nature is exposed and he retreats into a passive love role; with Egbert, on the other hand, he is masculine in character; with Dona Ema he plunges into infantilism, while with Aristarco he is rebellious and even aggressive. Thus, we have some of the different and often opposing facets of Sérgio's personality. On rationalizing his friendship for Sanches, Sérgio compares it to an intolerable and sticky mustard plaster. For Bento he claims a debt of gratitude stemming from an effeminate feeling of vanity. For Egbert, Sérgio alleges having pure and disinterested friendship.⁹⁴

Franco

In more ways than one, both Sérgio and Franco symbolize misunderstood and persecuted personalities. Franco first appears early in the novel as Sérgio is being taken around the institution by Rebêlo. Sérgio remarks that there is a student kneeling and Rebêlo, without even looking, immediately knows him to be Franco. Initially the narrator prefers to describe Franco's character through his behavior rather than physical description. Pompéia's picture is that of the school's scapegoat, the down-trodden individual who is mistreated by society. Kneeling in a penitent position, on the first day of school, Franco is already expiating his sinful role in life:

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 141.

—Ali está um de joelhos ...

—De joelhos ... Não há perguntar; é o Franco. Uma alma penada. Hoje é o primeiro dia, ali está de joelhos o Franco. Assim atravessa as semanas, os meses, assim o conheço, nesta casa desde que entrei. De joelhos como um penitente espiando a culpa de uma raça. O diretor chama-lhe cão, diz que tem calos na cara. Se não tivesse calos no joelho, não haveria canto do Ateneu que êle não marcasse com o sangue de uma penitência. 95

It is only after this first behavioral description of the character that the author speaks of his background. Thus we learn that Franco is from the interior of Brazil and that his father having found him incorrigible sent him to the school requesting punitive discipline. We also learn that he is irregularly visited by a bookkeeper who makes the necessary payments and who, at best, leaves an occasional word of encouragement:

O pai é de Mato Grosso; mandou-o para aqui com uma carta em que o recomendava como incorrigível, pedindo severidade. O correspondente envia de tempo a tempos um caixeiro que faz os pagamentos e deixa lembranças. Não são nunca ...96

Later on in the novel, Sérgio agains sees him in the same lamentable position but, for the first time, notices his antisocial behavior. Face to the wall, Franco occupies himself with catching flies, tearing their wings off and watching them die in the palm of his hand. There is a hateful and a resentful expression

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 33.

on his face, which mirrors his inner anger. Once again the author brings out Franco's sadistic nature by explaining how ecstatic he becomes when witnessing a violent fist fight between the boys and how dejected he feels if the struggle is interrupted before it ends:

Perto de mim vi o Franco. Sempre de penitência; em pé, cara contra a parede. Como Silvino dava-lhe as costas, divertia-se a pegar môscas para arrancar a cabeça e ver morrer o bichinho na palma da mão. Perguntei-lhe por que estava de castigo. Sem olhar, de mau modo: 'Lá sei! disse êle. Porque me mandaram'. E continuou a pegar as môscas ... Franco não ria nunca. Sorria apenas, assistindo a uma briga séria, interessando-se pelo desenlace como um apostador de rinha, enfurecendo-se quando apartavam. Uma queda alegrava-o, principalmente perigosa. 97

Only after morally describing Franco does the author venture to give a short physical description. Franco is pictured as fourteen years old, underdeveloped, suffering from rickets, and with a pale face and forelorn eyes. His forehead, with the vague expression of the eyes and the sorrowful slant of the brows, gives him the afflicted look that is found in the saints that appear in the Flos Sanctorum:

Franco era um rapazola de quatorze anos, raquítico, de olhos pasmados, face lívida, pálpebras pisadas. A fronte, com a expressão vaga dos olhos e obliquidade dolorida dos supercílios, pousava-lhe uma névoa de aflição e paciente, como se vê no Flos Sanctorum. 98

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

The teachers at the Ateneu often humiliate Franco by taking him to task publicly, an event that is always enjoyed by all. Expulsion is not the answer when he is the undisputed example to be viewed by all with scorn and righteous indignation:

Os professores já sabiam. À nota do Franco, sempre má, devia seguir-se especial comentário deprimente, que a opinião esperava e ouvia com delícia, fartando-se de desprezar. Nenhum de nós como êle! E o zêlo do mestre cada dia retemperava o velho anátema. Não convinha expulsar. Uma coisa destas aproveita-se como um bibelô do ensino intuitivo, explora-se como a miséria do ilota, para a lição fecunda do asco. A própria indiferença repugnante da vítima é útil. 99

The entire school population experiences sadistic pleasure at having Franco at the Ateneu, not because they are fond of him, but because he is the convenient scapegoat that every society must have to torment. He is eternally on exhibit for his fellow students to shun, to persecute, and to deride. At the school Franco becomes the epitome of everything that is evil and he is to be avoided at all costs:

Três anos havia que o infeliz, num suplício de pequeninas humilhações cruéis, agachado, abatido, esmagado, sob o pêso das virtudes alheias mais que das próprias culpas, ali estava,—cariátide forçada no edifício de moralização do Ateneu, exemplar perfeito de depravação oferecido ao horror santo dos puros. 100

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 35.

If there is a word that describes Franco's role in life it is "penitent," for he is the personification of the unhappy underdog who suffers in silence. He lacks the virtue of turning the other cheek, however, and showers hate and unmitigated scorn on his enemies. When hit and pinched by the students, he answers with the only means at his disposal, hurling insults and spitting at his tormentors.¹⁰¹

Franco's antisocial behavior is best described in a scene in which he acts out his anger. Unable to suppress his frustration any longer Franco decides to take matters into his own hands and his act of mischief directly leads him into confrontation with Aristarco. Taking advantage of a moment's lack of vigilance, he goes to the school's well and urinates into the suction pump that supplies the drinking water. Caught by one of the workmen, he is brought before the assembled school.

Aristarco sits in judgment before the unfortunate Franco, in a scene that is reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's trial before the Comte de la Roque, in Les Confessions, when he is found guilty by his superior. The picture of the sacrificial lamb thrown to the wolves is heightened by the comic nature of the episode. Against a backdrop of a chorus of infuriated students who audibly clean their mouths and express their disgust, Franco is condemned. Passively standing before the congregated students, he undergoes a barrage of stares that resemble a firing squad:

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 62

Com a insensibilidade pétrea que o encoraçava para as humilhações, saiu Franco do lugar e de cabeça baixa, como um cão, foi parar no centro da sala. Ali esteve por alguns segundos, exposto, no meio do enorme quadrado de alunos. Os olhares caíam-lhe em cima, como os projéteis de um fuzilamento. 102

Pompéia uses this scene to underscore the injustice that is perpetrated against the unfortunate victim. Not only does Aristarco lack compassion, but the entire institution, by its ferocious desire for vengeance, is guilty of inhumanity toward man. Sérgio is the only student who does not participate in the collective condemnation. Instead, he gives a very impartial account of the proceedings, pointing out the injustice of the entire affair as well as the sympathy that he feels for Franco. Pompéia ends this episode in an ironic tone. In painting the scene, he skillfully moves from the world of reality to the world of irrationality indiscriminately. Franco is not only on trial for a crime against his fellow man but also for one against morality. On describing the scene, the narrator depicts Aristarco as a real judge, a latter-day Pontius Pilate who can, if he wills it, impose the death sentence. Instead, he symbolically kills with a barrage of stares and gives a few additional pages of homework:

'O porco! bramia Aristarco. O grandíssimo porco!' repetia como um deus fora de si. Em redor todos apoiavam a energia da

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 61.

corrigenda. Resolveu-se, porém, deixar com vida o criminoso.

Aristarco marcou apenas dez páginas de castigo escrito à noite, e passar de joelhos as horas de recreio, a começar da presente. 103

The episode in which Franco invites Sérgio to witness the throwing of broken bottles into the school's swimming pool is of special interest because it points out how Sérgio views himself. Franco initiates the nocturnal prank. Not only does Sérgio passively follow, taking no active part and behaving more as a robot in a dream than an accomplice, but during the entire affair, Sérgio repeatedly emphasizes his role of innocent bystander. This is one of the techniques used by the narrator to place Sérgio beyond criticism. In this case, it places the full blame for the deed squarely on Franco's shoulders. It is true that Franco takes the initiative and carries out the wicked act, but it is Sérgio, just as much as Franco, who harbors a grudge against the headmaster, the students, and the institution. He enjoys Franco's act of vengeance and receives vicarious satisfaction. To all intents and purposes, then, Franco's vindictive feelings just mirror Sérgio's very own feelings:

Embaixo das árvores era já noite espessa. Demos uma volta no escuro acompanhando a curva de uma alamêda. O Franco ia adiante calado, andando leve e rápido como uma sombra no ar. Eu o seguia irresistivelmente como sonhando, num sonho de curiosidade e de espanto. Que ia fazer o Franco? Aonde ia ele? Chegamos ao capinzal, a um de cujos lados extremos ficava a

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 62.

natação. Logo ao portão de ingresso nesse terreno, havia um depósito de lixo, onde os jardineiros acumulavam as varreduras da chácara, negreando putrefatas, virando estrume ao tempo.

Franco deteve-se junto ao monturo. Sempre em silêncio e ativamente, para não perder aquele raro estímulo de vontade que o impelia, foi examinando o lixo com o pé.

A um canto, entre tocos de bambu, tinham garrafas. Franco abaixou-se e como em ação mecânica, sem se voltar, apanhou uma garrafa, outra e outra; foi-me dando, sobrançou ainda outras e prosseguimos, o Franco adiante, leve e rápido, sempre no seu andar de sombra, como suspenso e difuso na névoa quase lúcida do campo aberto.

Atravessamos o capinzal quase sumidos entre as altas bandas de capim-d'angola, cuja escura vastidão se constelava de vaga-lumes e vibrava da grita dos grilhos e do clamor dos sapos. Diante da natação o Franco parou e me fez parar. 'A minha vingança!' disse entre dentes, e me indicou a toalha d'água do grande tanque. A massa líquida, imóvel, na calma da noite, tinha o aspecto de lustrosa calçada de azeviche; algumas estrelas repetiam-se na superfície negra com uma nitidez perfeita.

Com o mesmo modo atarefado de todo aquele singular empreendimento, o Franco acercou-se de mim, tirou-me as garrafas que me dera e desapareceu da minha vista.

Eu ouvi que ele quebrava as garrafas uma por uma. Daí a pouco reaparecia, trazendo as abas da blusa em regaço. E começou a lançar então com o maior sossêgo ao tanque, para todos os lados, ali, dispersamente, como semeando, as lascas do vidro que partira. Um breve rumor de mergulho borbulhava à flor d'água, abrindo-se em círculos concêntricos os reflexos do céu. Eu vi muitas vezes contra o albor mais claro do muro fronteiro, passando, repassando, a sombra do sinistro semeador. 104

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 64.

Within the monstrous exterior that Pompéia gives Franco there is a character capable of loving, only one of two so capable. Despite his propensity for mischief, Franco basically is a warmhearted individual who loves his family. This facet of his personality, revealing his dual nature, becomes apparent late in the novel when Franco receives a letter from home advising him of his sister's disgrace. Franco's father, a poor judge in the remote interior of Mato Grosso, loaded down with eight children, writes a forelorn letter of personal tragedy. His eldest daughter, having run away with a married piano teacher, is later abandoned and found in a state of shock. Silent, refusing to speak, ashamed, with downcast eyes, she withdraws into a state of total mutism. The letter also speaks of the father's impending visit to Rio de Janeiro, where he hopes to find a judicious and hardworking son taking advantage of his studies. Franco's agony upon reading the letter not only reflects his sister's plight but also the fact that he had not lived up to his father's expectations:

Uma vez recebeu carta da província, uma das poucas que lhe chegavam por ano. Depois da leitura percebi que tinha lágrimas nos olhos. O pranto era-lhe um acontecimento na fisionomia, invariavelmente de uma pasmaceira de máscara de arame. Interessei-me por aquêlê sofrimento; êle deu-me a carta a ler. O pai de Franco era um pobre desembargador desterrado nos confins de Mato Grosso, com oito filhos. Uma carta dolorosa. Fôra entregue diretamente pelo caixeiro correspondente, escapando à curiosidade do diretor, que gostava de espiar a correspondência dos alunos. Falava em vir à Corte no fim do ano, com todos os sacrifícios, fa-

lava em encontrar o filho bom menino, educado, estudioso. Contava depois, entre exclamações consternadas, que uma filha, a mais velha, desaparecera do colégio onde estava, em companhia de um professor de piano, homem casado, sendo encontrada três ou quatro dias depois ao abandono. Em vão tinham feito perguntas à infeliz no interesse da punição do culpado; sepultara-se a mocinha num mutismo desolador, como se houvesse perdido a voz, recusando alimento, não tirando do chão os olhos desvairados, escravos da contemplação demente da vergonha. 105

Thus the author draws the pathetic picture of the unhappy student who silently suffers because of the calamities at home. Young in years, Franco cannot take it upon himself to defend his sister's honor. His immediate answer to the family plight are tears.

It is worth noting that Franco's side of the Franco-Sérgio coin bears the stronger humanistic imprint. Sérgio's pride, rigidity, and unflinching attitude contrast greatly with Franco's humility, flexibility, and feeling. This difference in personality comes out during the "sapoti" episode, in which Franco stoically undergoes his punishment before the assembled students while Sérgio adamantly refuses to be publicly humiliated.

All the mischief that Sérgio would enjoy getting into, but does not dare, is done by Franco. It is Franco, in a moment of anger, who throws the broken bottles into the school pool while Sérgio quietly looks on. It is Franco who gets caught micturating into the school's water supply. It is also Franco who gets

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 63.

vicarious pleasure seeing the boys engaged in a violent fist fight, although the reader feels that Sérgio also receives the same pleasure.

It is during Dr. Cláudio's lecture that Sérgio feels sorry for Franco and decides to visit him. Dr. Cláudio's statement that evil is brought into the school by a corrupt society and that the school does not create the standards or the mores of a nation causes Sérgio's mind to turn to Franco's suffering. Thus Franco becomes the reinforcement of the symbol represented by Sérgio: innocence destroyed by an uncaring society:

Um dia não pôde levantar-se.

Dorzinha de cabeça, explicava. Vinham-lhe náuseas, êle corria à janela. Embaixo havia um pé de magnólias, copado como um bosque; êle no intervalo dos arrancos entretinha-se em aprumar o fio visguento do vômito contra as amplas flôres alvas.

Encontrei-o mal.

Com a cabeça afundada no travesseiro, sumido sob a porção de cobertores que os vizinhos haviam cedido, afetava o descuido infantil, na fisionomia, a indiferença horripilante, suprema dos que não vão longe. Fiquei surpreendido e aterrado.

O médico, o chamado de Aristarco, viera duas vezes. Condenou a idéia de remover-se o doente; recomendou cuidado com as vidraças; diagnosticou uma febre qualquer, redigindo o récipe, partindo ambas as vezes com a discrição hermética que faz a importância da classe.

Perguntei ao Franco como passava. Êle agitou devagar as pálpebras e sorriu-se. Nunca lhe conheci tão belo sorriso, sorriso de criança à morte. Oito horas da noite. O gás atenuado produzia eflúvios contristadores de claridade. Retirei-me sem aprofundar a vista pelos outros dormitórios, em cujas vidraças espelhantes devia passar sucessivamente a minha sombra. Procurei o diretor e comu-

niquei-lhe os meus terrores.
No dia seguinte, um domingo alegre,
Franco estava morto. 106

Franco is in the punishment room, the "cafua" or dungeon. Located in a damp cellar, it is dark and unhealthy. Although ill, he is never transferred to the school's infirmary. Franco's death at the Ateneu is Pompéia's silent protest against man's insensitivity to man's suffering. With the same vehement anger that Franco blames society for his ills, so does Sérgio blame society for Franco's death.

Aristarco

Next to Sérgio, Pompéia studies Aristarco more thoroughly than any other character in O Ateneu. Much like Sérgio, he is frequently on stage displaying different facets of his personality. As he does with his other characters, Pompéia introduces Aristarco by placing him in a situation and morally describing him through his interaction with others. He appears early in the first chapter, where the author identifies him and in a lengthy paragraph goes on to describe his many pedagogical pursuits:

O Dr. Aristarco Argolo de Ramos, da conhecida família do Visconde de Ramos, do Norte, enchia o império com o seu renome de pedagogo. 107

No physical description is given. We do get a physical impression of Aristarco, however, when Pompéia places him next to the personal envoy of the Emperor. Through his imposing physical

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 13.

presence, his regal bearing, and his many medals, Aristarco completely obscures the minister and to all intents and purposes makes him disappear:

O diretor, ao lado do ministro, de aca-
nhado físico, fazia-o incivilmente des-
aparecer na brutalidade de um contraste
escandaloso. 108

The reader is instantly aware of Aristarco's importance not only as a pedagogue, as an author of many educational manuals, but also as an imposing individual who can successfully compete with the greatest personalities of the realm.

During the athletic events, the narrator offers different aspects of Aristarco's personality. He is amiable, smiling and laughing while witnessing the tournaments; stern as a lion, reproaching the gymnastic instructor; frowning he reprimands a student who shirked his duties during the exercises, and scolds another who soiled his knees while wrestling on the humid earth:

Aristarco arrebatava de júbilo. Pu-
sera de parte o comedimento soberano que
eu lhe admirara na primeira festa. De
ponto em branco, como a rapaziada, e cha-
péu-do-chile, distribuía-se numa ubiqüi-
dade impossível de meio ambiente. Viam-
no ao mesmo tempo a festejar os príncipes
com o risinho nasal, cabritante, entre
lisonjeiro e irônico, desfeito em etiquê-
tas de reverente súbito e cortesão: viam-
no bradando ao professor de ginástica, a
gesticular com o chapéu seguro pela copa;
viam-no formidável, com o perfil leonino
rugir sobre um discípulo que fugiera aos
trabalhos, sobre outro que tinha limo nos
joelhos, de haver lutado em lugar úmido,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

gastando tal veemência no ralho, que
chegava a ser carinhoso. 109

The father image is thus established and is reinforced as the novel progresses. Aristarco is likened to the king of the jungle as he previously had been compared to a monarch. The zoomorphic reference is short, but it is repeated on many occasions. However, the main function of the passage is to show how Aristarco is deft in assuming several distinct poses when dealing with a variety of people. His basically changeable character is never the same from one moment to the next. He can laugh one minute, become angry the next and run the entire spectrum of human emotions within a few short moments.

Aristarco is quick and alert as a politician and has perfected the art of appealing to the masses. His agility permits him to be everywhere at the same time. His mobility is enough to tire the onlooker. He knows how to greet influential guests and to express a kind word to others. His intense activity seems to lessen the impact of the ceremony. In fact, constantly seeking attention, forever on stage, Aristarco with his chameleonic personality has become an enviable actor. He is the soul behind the celebrations at the institution:

Sentia as pernas leves e percorria celerípede a frente dos estrados, cheio de cumprimentos para os convidados especiais e de interjetivos anáveis para todos. Perpassava como uma visão de brim claro, súbido

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 20.

extinta para reaparecer mais viva noutro ponto. Aquela expansão vencia-nos; êle irradiava de si, sôbre os alunos, sôbre os espectadores, o magnetismo dominador dos estandartes de batalha. Roubava-nos dois terços da atenção que os exercícios pediam; indenizava-nos com o equivalente em surpresas de vivacidade, que desprendia de si, profusamente, por erupções de jôrro em roda, por ascensões cobrejantes de girândola, que iam às nuvens, que baixavam depois serenamente, diluídas na viração da tarde, que os pulmões bebiam. Ator profundo, realizava ao pé da letra, a valer, o papel diáfano, sutil, metafísico, de alma da festa e alma do seu instituto. 110

This mutability fascinates young Sérgio to the point where at first he is confused by the sudden changes that take place. However, despite the varied personality of the headmaster there remains one picture that does not change and that is Aristarco as a God-like father figure:

Guardei, na imaginação infantil, a gravura desta apoteose com o atordoamento ofuscado, mais ou menos de um sujeito partindo à meia-noite de qualquer teatro onde, em mágica beata, Deus Padre pessoalmente se houvesse prestado a concorrer para a grandeza do último quadro. —Conheci-o solene na primeira festa, jovial na segunda; conheci-o mais tarde em mil situações, de mil modos; mas o retrato que me ficou para sempre do meu grande diretor, foi aquêlê—o belo bigode branco, o queixo barbeado, o olhar perdido nas trevas, fotografia estática, na aventura de um raio elétrico. 111

On their first encounter Sérgio sees Aristarco in a serious mood, jovial on their second meeting, and later on, in a thousand dif-

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 21.

ferent attitudes. But what stands out most in his childish mind, is Aristarco's beautiful white moustache, his bearded chin, and his eyes lost in the dark night. This static impression of the headmaster is described with a flash of lightning in the background. Unknown to little Sérgio the image of Aristarco resembles the laminated holy pictures of God the Father given in Sunday school, and the reader subconsciously gets this impression.

Taking Aristarco's dual personality one step further, the narrator compares the educator as he originally seemed to him in his childish world of fantasy with the real Aristarco that he came to know when he first enrolled at the Ateneu. In the mind of the child, Aristarco and God fuse into one awe-inspiring deity. Later, mythical gods, notably Jupiter, are added to form a divine and omnipotent trinity:

Verdade é que não era fácil reconhecer ali, tangível e em carne, uma entidade outrora da mitologia das minhas primeiras concepções antropomórficas; logo após Nosso Senhor, o qual eu imaginara velho, feíssimo, barbudo, impertinente, corcunda, ralhando por trovões, carbonizando meninos com o corisco. Eu aprendera a ler pelos livros elementares de Aristarco, e o supunha velho como o primeiro, porém, rapado, de cara chupada, pedagógica, óculos apocalípticos, carapuça negra de borla, fanhoso, onipotente e mau, com uma das mãos para trás escondendo a palmatória e doutrinando à humanidade o b-a-bá.

As impressões recentes derrogavam o meu Aristarco; mas a hipérbole essencial do primitivo transmitia-se ao sucessor por um mistério de hereditariedade renitente. Dava-me gosto então a peleja renhida das duas imagens e aquela complicação imediata do paletó de sêda e do sapato raso, fazendo aliança com Aristarco II contra Aristarco I, no reino da fantasia. 112

¹¹² Ibid., p. 22.

Sérgio's vision of a wrathful God, hurling bolts of lightning and seeking out little children to burn to a crisp, blends with his impression of Aristarco the teacher.

Pompéia is direct and obvious in his references to Aristarco as God; however, on occasions, he can make the analogy in a subtle and more disguised manner. When Aristarco is called upon severely to reprimand Franco before the assembled students for having urinated into the school's drinking water, he immediately assumes his awesome quality of supreme judge. The author places the headmaster near the central portal of the recreation room, while the noonday prayers are chorally echoed in the background. From this position he commands Franco to come forth:

'Aí não! aqui, tratante!' gritou o diretor, indicando a porta do salão. Cantava-se a oração do meio-dia, como sabe, na casa das recreações em dia de chuva, que alargava três boas portas para o pátio central. Aristarco estava perto da do meio. 113

By placing Aristarco near the central portal, the author cleverly brings to mind the mystery plays which were staged in front of medieval cathedrals during the Middle Ages. Since the central archway was reserved for the appearance of Christ, Pompéia symbolically dramatizes the headmaster's spiritual role in the novel. In this manner Aristarco-judge is blended with Aristarco-God.

Aristarco's duality is continually stressed throughout the novel. He is portrayed as a teacher and a well-known author of

¹¹³Ibid., p. 62.

educational material. He is also a father who is often compared to a judge and to God. His personality changes from wrathful parent to benevolent pedagogue when he feels that it is to his advantage.

On entering his office, Aristarco is in the habit of extending a hairy hand, with episcopalian grace, for the students to kiss. His name is coupled by Venâncio, in his commencement speech, to that of God. Aristarco, demonstrating great powers, is able to carbonize a rebellious student with an electrifying glare. All of these short vignettes make the headmaster into a divine figure who is subconsciously linked to God by his supernatural powers or by his awesome dignity. Concomitant with the portrayal of Aristarco as a pedagogue, however, is the portrayal of Aristarco the businessman whose sole interest is profit. The Ateneu is run mainly as a business venture, and special attention is given to it as a profit making organization. In these passages Pompéia makes abundant use of commercial terms in order to describe the school director. At times he is likened to an auctioneer, to a man who deals with invoices and one whose prime interest is budgets. Not only is Aristarco portrayed as a merchant, but the entire institution takes on the semblance of an emporium dedicated to big business, where buying and selling, usury and fraud are commonplace.

Jérgio sees Aristarco's duality taking the form of a sandwich man bearing two huge signs, one in front and one in back. The back sign bears Aristarco's many past accomplishments, and

the front sign his future projects:

Contemplávamos (eu com aterrado espanto)
distendido em grandeza épica—o homem sand-
uíche da educação nacional, lardeado entre
dois monstruosos cartazes. Às costas, o
seu passado incalculável de trabalhos; sô-
bre o ventre, para a frente, o seu futuro:
o reclame dos mortais projetos. 114

The author strengthens the premise of Aristarco being a speculator as well as a priest. This dual interest in Aristarco as priest and speculator occurs on several occasions, but it is best described when the narrator portrays both character traits walking arm in arm in intimate comradeship:

A êste vaivém de atitudes, feição dupla de uma mesma individualidade e contingência comum dos sacerdócios, estava tão habituado o nosso diretor, que nenhum esforço lhe custava a manobra. O especulador e o levita ficavam-lhe dentro em camaradagem íntima, bras dessus, bras dessous. Sabiam, sem prejuízo da oportunidade, aparecer por alternativa ou simultaneamente; eram como duas almas inconhas num só corpo. 115

Intimately related to the idea of Aristarco the businessman is Aristarco the diplomat, who knows how to be kind and considerate when it is to his advantage. His good manners are commensurate to the social position of the person entertained. He has perfected the art of being gracious with influential people; with those of lesser means he is hard and even cruel. Sincerity is an unknown virtue. His behavior is often regulated by political and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

financial considerations or by side annotations made by the head bookkeeper regarding a student's indebtedness:

Sua diplomacia dividia-se por escar-
ninhos numerados, segundo a categoria de
recepção que queria dispensar. Ele tinha
maneiras de todos os graus, segundo a con-
dição social da pessoa. As simpatias ver-
dadeiras eram raras. No âmago de cada sor-
riso morava-lhe um sêgrêdo de frieza, que
se percebia bem. E duramente se marcavam
distinções políticas, distinções financeie-
ras, distinções baseadas na crônica esco-
lar do discípulo, baseadas na razão discre-
ta das notas do guarda-livros. Às vezes,
uma criança sentia a alfinetada no jeito da
mão a beijar. Saía indagando consigo o mo-
tivo daquilo, que não achava em suas contas
escolares ... O pai estava dois trimestres
atrasado. 116

Although the narrator refers many times to Aristarco's ego-
centricity he shows it best in a scene in which we see him in ac-
tion. When the art teacher has his students draw a picture of
the director, all the students in the school immediately become
involved in the same project. Despite the many poor attempts,
Aristarco feels flattered by every portrait. The author presents
Aristarco as feeling the crayon travelling through his face,
tickling his many wrinkles, playing around his crow's feet, his
ears, lips, and throat each time he is drawn:

Não obstante, Aristarco sentia-se li-
sonjeado pela intenção. Parecia-lhe ter
na face a côcegazinha sutil do creiom
passando, brincando na ruga mole da pál-
pebra, dos pés-de-galinha, contornando
dos lábios, entrevista na franja dos fios
brancos, definindo a severa mandíbula bar-

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 26.

beada, subindo pelas dobras oblíquas da pele ao nariz, varejando a pituitária, extorquindo um espirro agradável e desopilante. 117

The next scene shows Aristarco during his moments of depression spreading out all the drawings about the room. Looking at himself he feels the ecstasy of vanity. How many generations of students have travelled through his face? Each drawing is an ovation to his sense of vanity:

Os retratos todos, bons ou maus, eram alojados indistintamente nas molduras de recomendação. Passada a festa, Aristarco tomava ao quadro o desenho e levava para casa. Tinha-os já às resmas. Às vezes, em momentos de esplim, profundo esplim de grandes homens, desarrumava a pilha; forrava de retratos, mesas, cadeiras, pavimento. E vinha-lhe um êxtase de vaidade. Quantas gerações de discípulos lhe haviam passado pela cara! Quantos afagos de bajulação à efígie de um homem eminente! Cada papel daqueles era um pedaço de ovação, um naco de apoteose. 118

In this scene the narrator has all the bad drawings come to life and speak directly to the headmaster and applaud him publicly. Aristarco becomes wild with joy on seeing his alter egos all join in and acclaim him:

E tôdas aquelas coisas mal feitas animavam-se e olhavam brilhantemente. 'Vê, Aristarco, diziam em cântico, vê; nós aqui estamos, nós somos tu, nós te aplaudimos!' E Aristarco, como ninguém na terra, gozava a delícia inaudita, êle incomparável, único capaz de bem se compreender e de bem se admirar—de ver-se aplaudido

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 123.

em chusma por alter-egos, glorificado
por uma multidão de si-mesmos. Primus
inter pares. 119

Here Aristarco's fantasy runs wild. He is cheered and acclaimed by his other selves, who continually seek to build him up. The scene is a product of Aristarco's unstable imagination, and provides a clue to his sick personality.

These are just several different facets of Aristarco's ever-changing personality. The reader immediately senses the great dislike that the narrator has for the headmaster. He has every disagreeable character trait that the narrator can think of. He is an intensely vain man, self-centered, and egoistic. He is devoid of any sense of justice. He is a hypocrite who has double standards of conduct and treats his students according to their wealth and social position. Still he is a highly respected man, a successful pedagogue who is considered to be one of the most influential in the nation.

Pompéia was very innovative in character portrayal. Both duality and contrast are pivots on which he draws his characters. He has a tendency either to juxtapose an opposite facet to the personality of a character in order to create duality or to contrast another character with similar or contradictory traits. This is not only done to contrast moral traits but also physical characteristics. Pompéia relies on a minimum of physical description on drawing characters and never fully describes them.

¹¹⁹ibid., p. 123.

Instead, bits of character portrayal are offered as the novel progresses. Moral description is given through situational scenes in which the character reveals himself through action. All these techniques create characters that constantly interact and, on the unconscious level, reveal similar or contradictory traits that reinforce each other. The continuous interplay of traits, both physical and moral, creates a hidden symbolism that adds appreciably to the enjoyment of the novel.

Chapter V

Images and Symbols in O Ateneu

Images

In view of the fact that a writer puts much of his inner self on display through the modes of expression that he chooses when he creates a narrative of fiction, a study of some of the images and symbols used by Pompéia should reveal the author's personality. In the case of Pompéia, it is mainly through his degree of visualization that he unwittingly exhibits his own personal likes and dislikes, his associations as well as his mental attitudes and beliefs. It is through symbols and images that he creates a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the education, political and social problems of the day.

Imagery belongs both to psychology and to literary study. In psychology, the word "image" means a mental reproduction, a memory of a past sensational or perceptual experience, not necessarily visual.¹ In literature an image seeks to convey to the mind, through the art of language, the sensory aspects of an object or experience, in other words, to create within us, by appealing to our memories and imagination, an impression of how things look, or feel, or sound, or smell or taste.²

¹René Wellek, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), pp. 186-187.

²Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr., What Happens in Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 44.

Upon close study, quite apart from style and the method of forming images, each writer reveals a certain range of images that are characteristic of him. In Pompéia's case the images of corruption and decay and death appear and reappear with great frequency. They appear not only in words but also as symbols both literal and figurative. These images mirror the author's pessimistic view of life as well as his misanthropic ideas on man.

When Dr. Cláudio gives his lecture on the state of the arts on the national scene, his speech is filled with veiled allusions to the moral and spiritual decay of the nation:

O orador representava a nação como um charco de vinte províncias estagnadas na modorra paludosa da mais desgraçada indiferença. Os germes da vida perdem-se na vasa profunda; à superfície de coágulos de putrefação, borbulha, espaçadamente, hálito mefítico do miasma, fermentado ao sol, subindo a denegrir o céu, com a vaporização da morte. ³

Dr. Cláudio portrays the nation as a country comprised of twenty provinces living in a stagnant swamp of complete indifference. All life-giving substances sink into the slimy bottom. Putrefaction floats on the surface exhaling noxious fumes that ferment with the heat of the sun. The stench rises to pollute the sky with its vapors of death. The hopeless picture painted by Dr. Cláudio is mere rhetoric and probably does not reflect any sincere belief on the part of the narrator. However, taken in conjunction with other passages in the novel, it reflects Pompéia's

³Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 94.

own despondent belief that man's inherent evil nature can never alleviate the situation nor can he rise above the quagmire of his own misery.

In another scene, after only a few months' residence at the school, Sérgio observes anew the walls of the "green room" with its high relief pictures. Due to Sérgio's naive enthusiasm on his arrival at the school, the faces of the cherubs on the stucco walls had exhibited innocence and happiness. However, after just a few months at the Ateneu, Sérgio sees a mask of hypocrisy. Man's most base sentiments are reflected in each countenance: corruption, unbridled ambition, intrigue, false praise, cowardice and envy lurk behind every smile. It again is a picture of society in decay:

Não me enganavam mais os pequeninos patifos. Eram infantis, alegres, francos, bons, imaculados, saudade inefável dos primeiros anos, tempos da escola que não voltam mais!... E mentiam todos! ... Cada rosto amável daquela infância era a máscara de uma falsidade, o prospecto de uma traição. Vestia-se ali de pureza a malícia corruptora, a ambição grosseira, a intriga, a bajulação, a covardia, a inveja, a sensualidade brejeira das caricaturas eróticas, a desconfiança selvagem da incapacidade, a emulação deprimida do despeito, a impotência, o colégio, barbaria de humanidade incipiente, sob o fetichismo de Mestre, confederação de instintos em evidência, paixões, fraquezas, vergonhas, que a sociedade exagera e complica em proporção de escala, respeitando o tipo embrionário, caracterizando a hora presente, tão desagradável para nós, que só vemos azul o passado, porque é ilusão e distância. ⁴

⁴ Ibid., p. 121.

The author's gloomy concept of man embraces the whole history of humanity. His pessimistic attitudes are evident. In this passage Pompéia deliberately piles horror upon horror, in a style that manifests his hatred of the other students at the school.

Another strange image, allied to the theme of corruption and decay, is used by the author when he refers to Sanches' manner of dealing with a grammatical sentence. He dissects it with a scalpel and reveals it to be full of decay:

Tomava cada período, cada oração, altamente, com o ademã sisudo do anatomista: sujeito, verbo, complementos, orações subordinadas; depois o significado, zás! um corte de escalpêlo, e a frase rolava morta, repugnante, desentranhando-se em podridões infectas. 5

The rapid movement of the image, the anatomist cutting and slicing, is a modern reference of taste and form. The structure of a grammatical sentence is likened to an anatomical study and, although basically unlike a surgeon, the grammarian acts like one and dissects his sentence with the precision and spontaneity of a modern scientist. The acute psychological observation in this image again reveals the narrator's concern with the decay of society.

Pompéia also creates extreme original and varied medical images that can be considered images of decay. As an aftermath to his participation in the broken bottle episode, Sérgio has difficulty in falling asleep. He compares his worries to an attack of meningitis on the brain:

⁵Ibid., p. 48.

A controvérsia avultava-me no crânio como
uma inchação de meninges. 6

Intimately tied in with the author's images of decay and corruption are his recurrent images involving death. Pompéia's inexhaustible need to be occupied with the macabre, his desire to terrify and to shock the reader, as can be witnessed in the murder scene and in Franco's death, are all traceable to his anger and his basic sense of having been wronged somewhere in life. Thus, as Sérgio studies the students, asleep in their cots, he cannot escape the morbid pleasure of seeing the face of death lurking behind every sleeping student:

Os colegas, tranquilos, na linha dos
leitos, afundavam a face nas almofadas,
palejante da anemia de um repouso sem
sonhos. Alguns afetavam um esboço como-
vedor de sorriso ao lábio; alguns, a ex-
pressão desanimada dos falecidos, boca
entreaberta, pálpebras entrecerradas,
mostrando dentro a ternura embaciada da
morte. De espaço a espaço, os lençóis
alvos ondeavam do hausto mais forte do
peito, aliviando-se por um dêsses longos
suspiros da adolescência, gerados, no
dormir da vigília inconsciente do cora-
ção. 7

The recurrent image of death appears in another scene. The author's observant and quick eye for oddity shows a marked pleasure in dwelling on the macabre. Sérgio, lost in thought, joyfully remembers having once attended a wake. He remembers a dead child, yellow in death and stained with blue blemishes, lying in a

⁶Ibid., p. 65.

⁷Ibid., p. 66.

coffin. An elderly lady who has lost her heir sits close by. The candles in the room mournfully let loose honey-colored tears, and a flame that seems to reach the ceiling trails a long spiral of smoke:

Lembrava-me de ter visto um anjinho, entre velas no caixão agalado, simples carinha amarelenta, sombreada de azul em nódoas, em mãos crispadas numa fita, cobrindo-se de flôres a imobilidade do último sono. Vira ainda uma velha, na essa elevada, uma opulenta velha que morrera sem herdeiros. Ao redor, choravam muito as tochas pranto de cêra côr de mel, inconsoláveis, espichando compridas chamas, que pareciam subir ao teto com um filête de fumo. Distinguiam-se bem os dois pés para dentro, em botinas de pano; e o nariz pronunciando-se sob o lenço de rendas. ⁸

Probably this "little angel" represents Sérgio's version of himself in his coffin. He seems to relish his own death and enjoys conjuring up this mental picture. Subconsciously he is saying: "You will be sorry the day I die. You will regret having treated me so badly!" There is an almost blind and mechanical compulsion to experiment with the death sensation which gives us a certain amount of insight as to how the author found it possible to extinguish his life seven years later.

Another example of the death image appears when he speaks about his young cousin. Even the young girl makes him think of the grave. In a curious and highly sensitive scene, Sérgio describes her, strangely identifying her with a small, colored holy

⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

print of Saint Rosália. Suddenly she takes on an ethereal quality while unconsciously searching and yearning for death:

Era boa a priminha. mais velha do que eu três anos, carinhosa, maternal comigo. Brincava pouco, velava pelos irmãos, pela ordem da casa, como uma senhora. Tinha os olhos grandes, que pareciam crescer ainda quando fitavam, negros, animados de um movimento suave de nuvem sôbre céu macio; o semblante claro, branco, puro, de marmórea pureza, coando uma transparência de sangue a cada face. Raro falava; desconhecia a agitação, ignorava a impaciência. Sabia talvez que ia morrer. Ao vê-la passar, sem rumor, como os espectros femininos do sonhador americano—leve na terra como o roçar da veste de um anjo, sentia-se com apêto de coração que não pertencia ao mundo daquela criança: buscava, errante na vida, buscava apenas o repouso da forma, sob a campã, em sítio calmo, de muito sol, onde chorassem as rosas pela manhã—e a liberdade etérea do sentimento. ⁹

She experiences an intense wish to find death and even seeks her ultimate resting place: a quiet sunny spot, where roses cry in the morning and the ethereal liberty of sentiment is ever present. The passage is strange on several counts. The small cousin, although Sérgio's peer, becomes a full-fledged mother image, despite her tender years. Also, she seems to belong more to the "other" world than to this one.

Once again the reader senses the unwholesome quality of the author's strange preoccupation with the liberating death urge. As in the episode of the "little angel" lying in his coffin, the death wish expressed by Sérgio's cousin, is Pompéia's very own unconscious desire. Overburdened by the inequities and the un-

⁹Ibid., p. 56.

happiness of the world, he seeks to escape all his cares in the hereafter. This idea was to prove a facile avenue of escape in later life.

According to Sérgio's frame of mind any experience can undergo a radical change and become an image of decay and corruption. On first introducing the Ateneu, the narrator interweaves a concrete and an abstract image concomitantly. On the concrete level, it is noticeable when the author presents the school beautifully decorated for a festive occasion. At first sight, the Ateneu's attractiveness appears as a hopeful sign for Sérgio's mature development. However, by degrees the evils of the institution emerge, and the resplendent school decays into a withering mass of corruption before the eyes of the spectator. Greed, hypocrisy, falsehood—in fact, all the cardinal sins inherent in man—parade before the reader. By the novel's end, the author's indignation and anger are aroused to such a fevered pitch that the only way he can mitigate them is by totally destroying the institution as well as those who created it. Thus, in the same manner as he destroys Dona Ema and converts her from a paragon of respectability to a fickle woman, he destroys Angela and Bento Alves and proceeds to destroy Aristarco and the Ateneu itself. On the abstract level, beauty is linked to evil and corruption. Angela's beauty, celebrated by the author from the earliest chapters, is only skin deep. Buried within is a corrupt soul whose only interest in life is wanton lust. Much the same can be said for Dona Ema, who fools the unsuspecting reader with her gentle

and loving manner, only to reveal her true nature at the end of the novel. The secret nature of Bento Alves is never fully brought out until he attacks Sérgio. The picture of corruption and decay in people appears and reappears on different levels and in different guises, strengthening the corruptive force of the institution itself. By asserting and reasserting these images of corruption on totally different levels the author fortifies his thesis.

The evil and often fatal conception of woman, the homosexual lust that permeates the novel, the squirming mass of bacteria living off the fermenting and coagulated masses of putrefaction, all tend to augment the stifling and repulsive picture of a corrupt society. Beauty often imperiled and contaminated, as in the case of Dona Ema and Angela, gives new dimension to the agony of Raul Pompéia. It is as if Pompéia were expressing the thoughts of the Marquis de Sade: "Everything is evil, everything is the work of Satan."¹⁰

Baudelaire, who exercised a strong influence on Pompéia,¹¹ expressed the same idea in his poem "Hymne à la Beauté," which appeared in Les Fleurs du Mal, where beauty and contamination are one and the same:

Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l'abîme,
O Beauté? Ton regard, infernal et divin,

¹⁰Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 104.

¹¹Maria Luiza Ramos, op. cit., p. 74.

Verse confusément le bienfait et le crime,
Et l'on peut pour cela te comparer au vin. 12

In this inversion of values, which is at the very core of sadism, vice represents the positive active element, virtue the negative and passive. Virtue exists only as a restraint to be broken.¹³ Sérgio's extreme masochism is evident in his innate desire to suffer. The body, the vessel of sacrifice, is to be offered at the altar of purification. Sérgio finds masochistic pleasure in praying while kneeling on small pebbles in order to punish the flesh:

Eu gozava o prazer da mortificação, sustentando-me fervoroso durante a reza noturna.

Para isso, levava no bolso um punhado de pedrinhas, com que formava no soalho um genuflexório despertador, fitando arregaladamente os olhos, ardidos de sono na lingueta tiritante do fogo das velas ...¹⁴

There are numerous images of torture and physical pain in the novel. The detailed images of the contortions of death in the eyes of the murdered victim, the religious flagellations employed by Sérgio that eventually turn into a strong pleasure in inflicting pain, the minute descriptions of Sérgio converted into a sadistic voyeur watching the slow ebb of life in the pallid face of Franco, all attest to the genuine pleasure in spectacles of cruelty that appear in the novel. Albert Mordell finds a

¹³Mario Praz, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁴Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁵Albert Mordell, op. cit., p. 109.

relationship between these sadistic thoughts and literature:

The sadistic trait is the source of the glee with which people watch someone in a moving picture being beaten or hurt. It is the cause of the pleasure and interest we find in reading of executions, battles and physical suffering. There is nothing strange in tracing all this to the delight we had as children in torturing animals. This is a partial sexual impulse and is sublimated in most of us in later life and finds expression in our literature. 15

Profanation is the inevitable companion of cruelty, and just as there are strong indications of sadism in O Ateneu, so there are strange and often shocking images of the sacred and the profane next to each other. The juxtaposition of these two opposing ideas, the sacred and the profane, so important in Romanticism, with its roots steeped in the mystic Middle Ages, is recurrently used by the author. Placing these two contradictory images side by side startles the reader from complacency and heightens the effects of a scene. At times, it is true, the shock is no more than a mere uncomfortable feeling experienced by the reader; however, the intent of surprise is inevitable.

When Sérgio, lost in reveries of Catholic mysticism, wants to offer some flowers to his patron saint, Santa Rosália, on his makeshift altar, he only is able to obtain a few small and withered jasmine blossoms. Without any pangs of conscience he abruptly relegates his patron saint to a secondary place next to his combs

¹⁵Albert Mordell, op. cit., p. 109.

and toothbrushes. The image of Santa Rosália, so revered by Sérgio, is quickly disposed of among his toilet accessories. Thus, at the first sign of difficulty Sérgio relegates his patron saint to oblivion, never to be remembered again:

O projeto caiu pela dificuldade das flôres. Pagando a um criado, mal conseguia um bogari, um botão qualquer por dia. Tive de acomodar a gravura [na gaveta] do móvel que possuímos no dormitório, perto da cama, para as escôvas e os pentes. 16

Another image of the sacred next to the profane appears during a scene that takes place in church. During the course of Sunday mass, Pompéia cannot refrain from injecting a comic and irreligious note at the most sacred moment of the liturgy when he has a stray dog enter the church and escape with the cap of one of the boys. The coughing and laughing students create an atmosphere that is hardly propitious to a religious service:

Havia acessos comunicativos de tosse que lavraram nas fileiras. Eu não tossia. Havia convulsões de riso, mal contidas no lenço, mal dominadas por um olhar de Aristarco, de joelhos à frente do colégio e mãos cruzadas sobre o castão do unicórnio; como certa vez que um cão brejeiro e sem princípios, mesmo ao elevar-se a santa Partícula, entrou e escapou-se com o casquete de um fiel contrito. 17

Images of boredom often strengthen the decaying forces at the school and are interwoven with images of corruption. Boredom, generated by monotony and idleness, is a force constantly

¹⁶Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 70.

underscored by the narrator:

O tédio é o grande enfermidade da escola, o tédio corruptor que tanto se pode gerar da monotonia do trabalho como da ociosidade. 18

Not only does Sérgio attribute the homosexual activities practiced at the school to the sense of utter boredom, but love and sympathy are also aroused by it. The "vice of feeling" is thus attributed to idleness:

Conheci pela primeira vez a amizade. A insignificância cotidiana da vida escolar em que a gente se aborrece, é favorável ao desenvolvimento de inclinações mais sérias que as de simples conveniência menineira. O aborrecimento é um feitio da ociosidade, e da mãe proverbial dos vícios gera-se também o vício de sentir. 19

Contrary to popular notion, Pompéia appears not to consider love a healthy life force, but rather a sick manifestation of man's constant feeling of ennui. All sex, heterosexual as well as homosexual, is obscene and evil. It is this idea that prompts Sérgio, when he studies the scriptures, to call Eve's womb the obscenity of women:

Ouvi suspirar a Cença, o idílio do Éden, o amor primitivo do Gênesis, invejado dos anjos sob o olhar magnânimo dos leões; ouvi a queixa terna do primeiro par banido para a dor, para o trabalho; Adão vergonhoso, vestindo as parras da primeira pruderie, Eva a envolver a nudez jovem de lí-

¹⁸Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 140.

rios na túnica de ouro das madeixas, cobrindo com as mãos o ventre, obscenidade das mãos, estigmatizada pela maldição de Deus. 20

By rejecting love, the author expresses revolt against the tyranny of the flesh and the vanity of becoming attached to what will never endure. Despite the adverse criticism that this idea engenders, it could be used for an orthodox sermon on the theme that everything on earth is vanity and will inevitably return to dust and ashes. The total rejection of love in O Ateneu is evident when we consider that there are only two characters who show any sign of it: not sexual love but love for the family.

Additional references to the ennui suffered by the students when the school is closed are many and varied. During the vacation, a few students do not return home but remain at the institution. They wander aimlessly about the school as tortured souls overpowered by their stifling feeling of boredom:

Meia dúzia de rapazes eram meus companheiros. Que terrível soledade o Ateneu deserto. No pátio, o silêncio dormia ao sol, como um lagarto. Vagávamos, bocejando pelas salas desmontadas, despidas; as carteiras amontoadas num canto, na calça os pregos somente das cartas com alguns quadros restantes de máximas, por maior insipidez, os mais teimosos conselhos mortais. 21

Upon occasions, the noxious force of boredom leads to strife and

²⁰Ibid., p. 44.

²¹Ibid., p. 178.

conflict among the students. Open irritation causes open clashes in the school yard:

As provocações no recreio eram frequentes, oriundas do enfado; irritadiços todos como feridas; os inspetores a cada passo precisavam intervir em conflitos; as importunações andavam em busca das suscetibilidades a procurar a sarna das importunações. 22

The phenomenon of boredom described in these images—the sudden feeling that life has come to an abrupt standstill—is not uncommon but Pompéia gives it a personal interpretation. It not only leads to undesirable forms of behavior, fostering dishonesty, homosexuality, as well as sadistic conduct, but it creates a jungle society where animal instincts predominate. In this manner the sensation of ennui is translated into something tangible which strikes at the roots of life and hope and reduces everything to the same drab level of monotony.

All the images discussed, corruption and decay, death, boredom, the sacred and the profane, are, in effect, closely interrelated and create an atmosphere of despair that parallels the spleen found in the works of Baudelaire. It seems as if the vital spark had dimmed and Pompéia had no strength or desire to continue the struggle of life.

I have previously discussed how nature appears in O Ateneu, now I would like to study how Pompéia uses the image of nature to heighten the effect of contrast in order to shock or startle the

²²Ibid., p. 115.

reader.

The beauty of the natural scenery around the Ateneu will be used, at times, to contrast the prison-like buildings of the school. In the following passage, the green countryside, spacious and airy, clashes with the dank and oppressive institution:

Reconheci o belo campo das manobras quando lá fui pela primeira vez, depois da matrícula; tive saudade das flâmulas sobre o gramal verde. Mesmo, porém, desmontada a alegria de encomenda das festas, era um sítio ameníssimo o campo. Descoberto a todo o céu, parecia mais abundante de ar; eu lá vingava os pulmões da compressão cerrada do regime interno.²³

In this scene nature overwhelms Sérgio with its beauty. This scene exists in order to contrast the terrible feeling of imprisonment created by the school with the great sense of liberty that the sky and the countryside exert.

In the following passage, the author uses nature to highlight the difference between human experience and nature's indifference. Focusing on the assassin and the murder that occurs in the Ateneu's kitchen, Pompéia abruptly follows the paragraph with as bucolic a description of nature as he is capable of rendering. The stylistic effect of contrast, to say the least, is shattering and attains an element of surprise that verges on the grotesque:

O assassino era muito mau, exigia coisas dela como se fôsse uma escrava; era bru-

²³Ibid., p. 47.

to. Mas era de Espanha, companheiros de viagem, e um homem bonito! sacudido, eu bem tinha conhecido; mas judiava, dela; batia, empurrava: olhe ainda tinha sinais, e levantava cãdidamente o vestido para mostrar, no joelho, na coxa, cicatrizes, manchas antigas que eu não via absolutamente, nem ela.

Cessava a música ...

As venezianas abertas davam entrada à claridade do tempo. Entrava simultaneamente um burburinho imperceptível de árvores, falando longe, gorjeios ciciados de pássaros, gritos humanos indistintamente, atenuados pela imensa distância, marteladas miúdas de canteiro, tremor de carros nas ruas, miniaturas extrema de trovão, parcelas ínfimas da vida pulverizadas na luz ...²⁴

If we look for artistic implications, we notice that the second paragraph has very little to do with the first. Pompéia begins with a candid appraisal of Angela's marital difficulties with her common-law husband; in the second paragraph, however, there is a switch in tone, and he gives the reader a bucolic picture of the rustle of the leaves and the song of birds. Closely related to the murder are the violence and the bruises, either moral or physical, that Angela has suffered at the hands of her lover. Suddenly the scene shifts, and through the open window we perceive nature in all its splendor. The scene is spritely, lively, and happy. The change in tone is devastating and once again brings to the fore Pompéia's fondness for the juxtaposition of two opposing and often unrelated ideas. In this case the violent death of the kitchen worker and the bucolic vision of nature.

²⁴Ibid., p. 177.

In O Ateneu, Pompéia through a series of repetitive images, presents horizontal space as sad and oppressive. The earth exerts an unhappy effect on man. It enslaves him, extracts his energy, and reduces him to a docile and slave-like creature. He constantly yearns for freedom but is unable to liberate himself. At the same time, horizontal space is equated to corruption, decay, and death. Its disintegrating and festering elements can often be found in dark and hidden crevasses in which rot germinates until it spreads and takes over.

When the author describes the school grounds, his images, suggestive of unpleasant elements, slowly build an aura of fear that conveys his feeling about the Ateneu. Sérgio's initial impression of the foreboding school buildings encircled by suffocating images of unrestrained undergrowth, sets the tone for future episodes:

As eminências de sombria pedra e a vegetação selvática debruçavam sobre o edifício um crepúsculo de melancolia, resistente ao próprio Sol a pino dos meios-dias de novembro. 25

Both the somber stone of the school and the wild, unruly vegetation create a sad atmosphere, which the sun is unable to dissipate.

In like manner, when describing the physical education exercises that take place in the opening chapter, the author makes a quick reference to the wild nature of the surrounding countryside.

²⁵Ibid., p. 16.

In this case, the description of the building and the vegetation foreshadows the physical violence that is later to appear in the novel. Due to his great hopes at witnessing the celebration, and overpowered by the splendor and novelty of the colorful pageantry, Sérgio is unable to see the menacing vegetation that lurks beneath. In this passage, Pompéia, though working with conventional material, achieves an intense effect through remarkable symbolic images.

Human conditions are therefore linked, quite casually, to the savage landscape. It is not surprising to find the same element of savagery later exhibited by the students of the school. Once again, another substantial effect is produced by Sérgio's visual impressions:

No dia da festa da educação física ... não percebi a sensação de êrmo tão acentuada em sítios montanhosos, que havia de notar depois. As galas do momento faziam sorrir a paisagem. O arvoredo do imenso jardim, entretecido a côres por mil bandeiras, brilhava ao sol vivo como o esplendor de estranha alegria; os vistosos panos, em meio da ramagem, fingiam flôres colossais, numa caricatura extravagante de primavera; os galhos frutificavam em lanternas venezianas, de papel enormes, de uma uberdade carnavalesca. 26

Perhaps the strongest indictment of the corruption and decay of the land is made by Dr. Cláudio when he gives his first lecture at the Ateneu. Although he speaks about Brazil, mankind, and politics in general, all his images have to do with nature,

²⁶Ibid., p. 17.

and his picture of life is devastating:

O orador representava a nação como um charco de vinte províncias estagnadas na modorra paludosa da mais desgraçada indiferença. Os germes da vida perdem-se na vasa profunda; à superfície de coágulos de putrefação, borbulha, espaçadamente, hálito mefítico do miasma, fermentado ao sol, subindo a denegrir o céu. 27

The depressing view of horizontal nature that Pompéia describes is filled with many images of death and decay. Man enslaved by the earth can never attain happiness. He is held in bondage and feels lost, depressed and embittered. His only means of escape is to flee the earth, to look upward to the blue sky, the sun, light and freedom.

When Sérgio is first conducted to Professor Mânlio's class, which is held in a small separate ground floor pavillion, he notices the sterile and insipid sandy stretches of earth:

No fundo desta caixa desmedida de paredes, dilatava-se um areal claro, estéril, insípido como a alegria obrigatória, algumas árvores de cambucá mostravam, em roda, a folhagem fixa, com o verdor morto das palmas da igreja, alourada a êsmo de senilidade precoce dos ramos que sofrem, como se não coubesse a vegetação no internato; a um canto, esgalgado cipreste subia até as goteiras tentando fugir pelos telhados. 28

With this description of the earth the author has unconsciously

²⁷Ibid., p. 94.

²⁸Ibid., p. 34.

set the tone of despair. Words charged with emotion, like "death" and "senility," evoke associations that immediately arouse the feeling of the reader against the land that imprisons man. Due to nature's senility, the surrounding pale-green, dead vegetation reminds Sérgio of Easter palms distributed in churches. Not only does Sérgio seek an escape route from the Ateneu by looking upwards toward the blue sky, but nature follows suit as a lean and hungry-looking cypress seeks freedom from the bleak environment.

Upward vertical space—that is, looking toward the heavens—has a liberating effect on Sérgio. There are numerous instances in the novel when Sérgio looks up for a badly needed dosage of hope. During the commencement exercises at the Ateneu, Sérgio is forced to look toward the heavens in order to escape the hustle and bustle of the crowd, the accompanying sense of physical oppression and to catch his breath:

Mergulhado na onda, eu tinha que olhar
para cima, para respirar. 29

A few lines later, while elbowing through the madding crowd, he again looks toward the sky, trying to escape his feeling of being held down:

Um último apêto mais rijo, estalando-me
as costelas, espremeu-me, por um estreito
corte de muro, para o espaço livre. 30

In another scene, Sérgio and Egbert wander romantically, hand

²⁹Ibid., p. 17.

³⁰Ibid., p. 17.

in hand, through the school grounds, dreaming of idyllic adventures described in the latest novels they have read, Paul et Virginie and Robinson Crusoe. Darkened by the sunless sky, the extensive fields of the school are enveloped by the murky atmosphere of night which hopelessly gives a foreboding feeling of gloom. Both boys look up to the sky for a feeling of hope. Only two birds, free agents in a caged world, can still find their festive rays of hope high in the sky and far from earthy entanglements:

Olhavámos para cima, para o céu. Que céus de transparência e de luz! Ao alto, demorava-se ainda, em cauda de ouro, uma lembrança de sol. A cúpula funda descortinava-se para as montanhas, diluição vasta, tenuíssima de arco-íris. Brandos reflexos de chama: depois, o belo azul de pano, depois a degeneração dos matizes para a melancolia noturna, prenunciada pela última zona de roxo doloroso. Quem nos dera ser aquelas aves, duas, que avistávamos na altura, amigas, declinando feliz a luz, em pleno dia ainda, quando na terra iam por tudo às sombras. 31

The subtle image of the soaring heights, the sun and life-giving light slowly obscured by darkness is felt by Sérgio in this passage. Night, the unknown element, is to be feared. Thus, from the liberating flight to the airy heavens, where Sérgio feels free and uninhibited, darkness overpowers him. The reader senses the longing for love, friendship, and comprehension of a frightfully lonely individual, who constantly searches for fulfillment but never attains it.

³¹Ibid., p. 142.

The view of the heavens, the vertical open spaces, unfettered by any restraining force, produces a liberating sensation. Perhaps the best example of the sense of joy and freedom felt by Sérgio occurs when the boys at the school are taken on their annual jaunt, an excursion to the Corcovado. As they march upwards on the mountainside, the sky becomes more and more visible. Incited by its liberating force, Sérgio experiences a greater sense of hope:

Ao passo que nos elevávamos, elevava-se igualmente o dia nos ares. Apostava-se a ver quem primeiro cansava. Cada avanço da lua no espaço era como um excitante nôvo para a jornada, suavizando a doçura do alvorecer todo o esforço da ascensão. ³²

Related to this is Sérgio's description of the countryside while looking down from a high vantage point. From this vantage point he feels closer to the freedom that exists in the sky. Although still physically weak from his recent illness he feels cheery. From the window of his infirmary he feels free from the shackles of the prison that the Ateneu represents. More of a spectator than a participant, he suddenly notices, for the first time, with a note of hopeful optimism, the subtle and pleasing gradations of color of the vegetation:

A primeira vez que me levantei, trêmulo da fraqueza, Ema amparou-me até à janela. Dez horas. Havia ainda a frescura matinal na terra. Diante de nós, o jardim

³²Ibid., p. 126.

virente, constelado de margaridas; depois, um muro de hera, bambus à direita; uma zona do capinzal fronteiro; depois, casas, tórres, mais casas adiante, telhados ainda à distância, a cidade. Tudo me parecia desconhecido, renovado. Curioso esplendor revestia aquêle espetáculo. Era a primeira vez que me encantavam assim aquelas gradações de verde, o verde negro, de faiança, luzente de hera, o verde flutuante mais claro dos bambus, o verde claríssimo do campo ao longe sôbre o muro, em todo o fulgor da manhã. Tetos de casas, que novidade! que novidade o perfil de uma chaminé riscando o espaço. 33

Only when he finds himself in his sickroom, far from the cares that plagued him at the Ateneu, does Sérgio feel happy. It is only then, inflamed by Dona Ema's attention, that he loses himself in rêverie:

No pequeno aposento da enfermaria, encerrava-se o mundo para mim. O meu passado eram as lembranças do dia anterior, um especial afago de Ema. 34

Sérgio's feeling of contentment is not only due to Dona Ema's affectionate care but also to being separated from the outside world. It is only when space is confined that Sérgio feels secure.

As the reader will note, Pompéia's images of space can be divided into two main categories: those that deal with horizontal space, invoking a somber and foreboding tone, and those that deal with vertical upward space, offering hope and happiness. The

³³Ibid., p. 179.

³⁴Ibid., p. 180.

flight from the earth probably also holds a death wish. There is a subdivision of vertical space in which Sérgio looks downward from a higher elevation and feels uplifted at not belonging to the ugly world below. These images, as previously mentioned, follow closely the author's pessimistic philosophy of life and underscore Pompéia's dislike for the world and for man who inhabits it.

The power of an abstract image becomes much stronger when placed next to a concrete image. The abstract image describes unspecific ideas. It is vague and general and usually is interpreted in a number of ways and brings several possibilities to mind. The concrete image, on the other hand, refers to a specific or particular object. It describes something that has actual existence and can be palpably known and experienced. Often it will emphasize the sensory and the tangible.

In O Ateneu, Pompéia shows a marked disposition to have concrete images introduce abstract images. Placed next to each other they interrelate and give added strength and animation to the sentence. In this manner, when the students are enjoying their "snack time" at the Ateneu, Pompéia has Aristarco take advantage of the occasion to offer his students "snacks" of advice. By cleverly juxtaposing these two unrelated ideas, the actual slice of buttered bread with the headmaster's judicious recommendations, the author creates a relationship which is comical in effect and purpose.

This process does not follow a logical pattern. As he com-

pares or juxtaposes the two improbables, Pompéia will often elicit a smile on the part of the reader:

A hora solene do meio-dia Aristarco aproveitava para distribuir uma merenda de conselhos, depois do canto e antes de outra de fatias, incomparavelmente mais bem recebida. Muitas vezes não eram só conselhos. Também reprimendas em massa por culpas coletivas ...³⁵

The variation of the image combination from the concrete to the abstract is extensively used by both Eça de Queirós in Portugal and Machado de Assis in Brazil. Pompéia uses it very effectively and to great advantage by subtly and, at times, ironically juxtaposing two dissociate ideas.

On another occasion while Venâncio is again entertaining the audience with one of his "spontaneous" discourses during the picnic at the Jardim Botânico, Pompéia repeats the same device. This time, however, the author achieves an interesting analogy by comparing the protection from the rain offered by the copious trees to the protective shield of the instructor's bombastic speech. The author ends by coupling two dissociate ideas, the downpour to the sauce:

A abóbada de folhagem que nos cobria, em vez de atenuar a violência das águas, concorria para fazer mais grossos os pingos. Pouco importava. A filosofia impermeável do diretor servia-nos também de capa. Que chovesse! Era o molho dos manjares que nos faltava. ³⁶

³⁵Ibid., p. 51.

³⁶Ibid., p. 131.

On occasions Pompéia will also connect a central thought to another idea, uniting the disparate ideas with a play on words that usually proves both attractive and amusing. This occurs when the author discusses Aristarco's unique skills in advertising, as he distributes his textbooks free of charge to the most isolated areas of the nation. Pompéia cannot refrain from associating two disparate ideas, the "thirst for knowledge" and the desire for food in the two key words in the passage, "flour" and "bread:"

Os lugares que os não procuravam eram um belo dia surpreendidos pela enchente, gratuita, espontânea, irresistível! E não havia senão aceitar a farinha daquela marca para o pão do espírito. E engordavam as letras, à força, daquele pão. 37

The author frequently uses Franco's presence at the Ateneu to demonstrate man's inner need to have an underdog, someone to look down at, to mistreat, and upon whom to take out his frustrations. In the following scene, as Pompéia describes Franco's miserable existence at the institution, he compares him to a cariatid, a figure used as a supporting column, holding the edifice of morality, represented by Aristarco's Ateneu:

Três anos havia que o infeliz, num suplício de pequeninas humilhações cruéis, agachado, abatido, esmagado, sob o peso das virtudes alheias mais que das próprias culpas, ali estava,—cariátide forçada no edifício de moralização do Ateneu, exemplar perfeito de depravação oferecido ao horror santo dos puros. 38

³⁷Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸Ibid., p. 35.

Franco is depicted as "crouched, broken hearted" and "utterly crushed" by his humiliating experience. The basic premise of Franco as a scapegoat, expiating the sins of mankind at the Ateneu, is figuratively contrasted to his supportive role of sustaining a decaying and immoral structure, which the reader already knows the Ateneu to be.

An analogy between the weakness of the flesh to a chunk of raw beef that leads to the destruction of the soul, opens Sérgio's eyes to a new and incomprehensible theological problem. Sérgio pretends not to understand the problem, although the reader instinctively feels that he is quite aware of the analogy:

E quando êle punha-se a contar histórias de castidade, sem atenção à parvidade da matéria do preceito teológico, mulher do próximo, Conceição da Virgem, terceiro-luxúria, brados ao céu pela sensualidade contra a natureza, vantagens morais do matrimônio, e porque a carne, a inocente carne, que eu só conhecia condenada pela quaresma e pelos monopolistas do bacalhau, a pobre carne do beef, era inimigo da alma; quando retificava o meu engano, que era outra a carne e guisada de modo especial e muito especialmente trinchada, eu mordida um pedacinho de indignação contra as calúnias à santa cartilha do meu devoto credo. 39

The child Sérgio is placed in the position of equating some basic precepts of Christianity. The novel idea that the flesh can be the archenemy of the soul intrigues him. As Sanches tutors Sérgio in religious dogma, he tries to inculcate a sense of fear and

³⁹Ibid., p. 45.

portrays man's innocent flesh at the mercy of Lent and the codfish monopolists. The stylistic device of placing two unrelated ideas next to each other so that one will enhance the value of the other, easily seduces the mind of the reader by its persuasive force as much as by the accuracy of the observation. Sérgio cannot understand why "innocent" beef can be the moral enemy of the soul. The author quickly follows the passage with a play on words on eating, "eu mordia um pedacinho de indignação," which gives added strength to the statement.

Another form of imagery that Pompéia uses to advantage in the novel is animal imagery. We have already discussed his use of zoomorphic images to identify his characters but he also uses animal images to describe other aspects of the novel. During the jaunt to the Corcovado, the single file of students climbing the mountainside, is compared to an immense gray reptile slowly edging its way up the side of a sleeping giant:

Passeio noturno de alegria sem nome. As árvores beiravam a estrada de muros de sombra num e noutro ponto rendada de frestas para o céu límpido. No caminho, trevas de túnel e agitação confusa das roupas, malhada a êsmo de placas de luar brando—reptil imenso de cinza e leite em vagarosa subida. Que sonho de cócegas experimentaria o colosso, na dormência de pedra que o prostrava ainda, espezinhado pela invasão! Subiamos abismos; ao fundo, a iluminação pública por enfiadas, como rosários de ouro sôbre veludo negro. 40

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 125.

The passage is interesting on several counts. It is highly impressionistic filled with hues of color, mostly contrasts of black and white in the early hours of the morning. The moonbeams beat down on the black and white reptile slowly advancing on the Corcovado's side describes the ascending line of mountain climbing students. Much in the same way as the tiny inhabitants of Lilliput had awakened the sleeping giant, Gulliver, when he happened to stray upon their sandy shore in Swift's novel, the students awaken the Corcovado.

Pompéia also uses many animal images when the Ateneu goes up in flames. The tremendous fire that ensues seems to become more intense with the presence of the firemen, and the school is compared to a dying animal exhaling its last breath:

No sinistro do Ateneu a coisa foi evidente. Depois das bombas, a violência das chamas chegou ao auge. Do interior do prédio, como das entranhas de um animal que morre, exalava-se um rugido surdo e vasto. 41

Even the rubber hose, used to quell the flames, becomes alive and assumes animal shapes during this episode:

Na rua, ouvia-se arquejar pressurosamente uma bomba a vapor; as mangueiras, como intermináveis serpentes, insinuavam-se pelo chão, colavam-se às paredes, desapareciam por uma janela. Nas cimalthas, destacando-se em silhueta, sôbre as côres terríveis do incêndio, moviam-se os bombeiros. 42

⁴¹Ibid., p. 185.

⁴²Ibid., p. 184.

The fire itself, while consuming the institution, reveals fantastic and destructive animal forms:

O susto de tal maneira me surpreendera, que eu não tinha exata consciencia do momento. Esquecia-me a ver os dragões dourados revoando sôbre o Ateneu, as salamandras imensas de fumaça arrancando para a altura, desdobrando contorções monstruosas, mergulhando na sombra cem metros acima. 43

Symbols

While the image stands for nothing more than what it actually says, a symbol may be roughly defined as a sign representing something beyond the factual and the literal. Man, unlike all other animals, uses "signs" not only to indicate things but also to represent them. In this regard Susanne K. Langer has written:

They serve, rather to let us develop a characteristic attitude toward objects in absentia which is called 'thinking of' or 'referring to' what is not here. 'Signs' used in this capacity are not symptoms of things, but symbols. 44

In her discussion of symbols, Langer also states that they are representative of the very core of understanding:

Symbolization is pre-rationative, but not pre-rational. It is the starting point of all intellection in the human sense, and is more general than thinking, fancying, or taking action. For the brain is not merely a great transmitter, a super-switch-board; it is better likened to a great transformer.

⁴³Ibid., p. 184.

⁴⁴Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (New York: The New American Library, 1951), p. 37.

The current of experience that passes through it undergoes a change of character, not through the agency of the sense by which the perception entered, but by virtue of a primary use which is made of it immediately: it is sucked in to the stream of symbols which constitutes a human mind. ⁴⁵

quite often an image and a symbol shade imperceptively into each other, and they are, at times, difficult to distinguish. Roughly defined, a symbol is something that means more than what the word or expression represents. Meanings ray out from a symbol like the corona around the sun, or like connotations around a richly suggestive word. An image, on the other hand, means only what it says.

When viewed from this perspective, O Ateneu gives the impression of being one immense tapestry of symbols. Numerous minor images are integrated into a complex so intricate that, at times, it is difficult to distinguish the textures and the fibers involved and how they interrelate. The symbolic structure of the novel, with its incessant repetitive images, can be likened to a medieval cathedral, buttressed by the supporting images that make the novel into a highly sensitized composition of interrelated symbols.

It is through the extensive use of symbolic elements, therefore, that an author can make bold and pure abstractions that create an immediate impression and help give a work of fiction

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 46.

greater significance. In fact, it is this ingredient that joins many seemingly loose ends and makes them pregnant with meaning. A narrator strives to present his symbols in such a way as to create a pattern in the narrative in order to draw the reader's attention to what he wishes to convey.

Since a symbol gives a vivid picture of what otherwise could remain obscure or unexpressed, it is an effective device in the hands of a capable writer. It can be used psychologically to strengthen an already stated idea on another level by reinforcing an original premise. Among the numerous examples of this technique, one of the most forceful appears in the Old Testament in the encounter of David with Goliath.⁴⁶ Young David, ready to engage mighty Goliath in combat, armed with a simple slingshot, becomes a symbol of the Israelites threatened by the Philistines. David, the weaker of the two, demonstrates courage and cunning, and wins the reader's sympathies. Since the reader instinctively sympathizes with the underdog, while concomitantly disliking the aggressor, on a subconscious level David easily wins the reader over. The struggle of the Israelites in the Bible is thus presented on a double plane: through the events on the battlefield and through the courageous person of David. With this symbolic suggestion the writer silently undermines the reader's emotions.

Since the beginnings of literature, symbols have been em-

⁴⁶Buckner B. Trawick, The Bible as Literature (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), p. 99.

ployed and have made a powerful impression on the reader or the listener. Symbols are not mere images or simple figurative devices that color a text. Rather, they are images that, through association, have the power to evoke ideas, concepts or feelings greater than the terms themselves. Tindall finds imagery to be part of symbolism:

As tight and reflexive as poems, symbolist novels insinuate their meanings by a concert of elements. Images, allusions, hints, changes of rhythm, and tone—in short, all the devices of suggestion—support and sometimes carry the principal burden. 'Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there—that, one might say,' says Willa Cather, 'is created.' Presenting themselves such creations offer a vision of reality. 47

The occurrence of equivalent parallel forms of symbols as are used with David and Goliath appear on different levels in O Ateneu. These symbols are often superimposed one upon another. Identical situations appear and reappear at different times, and on many occasions, suggest the fuguelike form of a baroque cantata. The repetition of the leitmotiv tends to solidify the structure. The novel becomes a scenic sequence wherein the same relationships between constituents are repeated on different levels.

Frequently symbols operate on the principle of surprise. Their novelty and often obvious truth strike the reader, who does not, at first, expect to find such a connection. Besides, there

⁴⁷William York Tindall, The Literary Symbol (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 68.

is a tendency to remember easily a fresh and vigorous image. The new combination, startling and unexpected, infuses life into the passage and overwhelms the reader far more than pages of drab explanation, since dwelling on the obvious tires rather than intrigues. The striking is not only a memorable but an agreeable ingredient in the pleasure of reading fiction.

The reader will quickly discover in O Ateneu similar uses of symbols. The narrator employs a limited number of symbols that he incorporates repeatedly into the novel in order to develop specific ideas or themes. The first symbol that the reader encounters in the novel is the Ateneu itself. It is clear from the first line that the private school symbolizes the rocky road of life. The school contains the first disappointments that man must suffer in life. Thus, each episode of the novel brings out a new deception, erases a hope or destroys an illusion.

The symbol of freedom is expressed in many forms in the novel. The most obvious form is the several characters who portray the rebel caught in the web of rigid discipline within the walls of the institution. The reactions felt by each character are manifested differently but all oppose loss of liberty. The idea of a lush vegetation that creeps and crawls and insidiously surrounds the school building is a symbol of imprisonment. In fact, in O Ateneu man appears at the mercy of tropical nature. The symbol of imprisonment appears many times. At the same time, Pompeia's fondness for opposing and contrasting effects and ideas drive him to juxtapose several symbols of liberty. Intimately

tied in with the two abstractions are images of boredom and ennui. To this we can add images of air and space which are used symbolically to reinforce the themes of freedom and imprisonment. These symbols intensify the central idea of decay and corruption, slavery and boredom which are at the core of the novel. These symbols take on many different forms and guises.

A cursory study of O Ateneu reveals that several characters reflect aspects of Sérgio's personality; in fact, one may state that they are projections of Sérgio himself. Sérgio, the rebel, confronts the reader in many guises. Sérgio reappears in the person of Franco⁴⁸ and other minor characters as well, such as Jorge, Aristarco's rebellious son, and Américo, another rebel who ultimately destroys the school. These characters are basically alter egos of young Sérgio and are symbolic representations of the same idea of freedom. They are variants of the same principle. Sérgio is determined to demonstrate how a cruel system can destroy an individual. He depicts himself as suffering at the hands of a callous society while subconsciously deriving pleasure from his feeling of frustration. Franco, a destructive outlaw, is utterly crushed by the feeling of open hostility and dies as a consequence. Then we have Jorge who is banished for daring to show his opposition to authority and Américo, another destructive outlaw, who brazenly takes vengeance for all four. The leitmotive of rebel-

⁴⁸ Maria Luiza Ramos, op. cit., p. 121.

lion in order to achieve freedom is repeated over and over again in the person of the different characters and strengthens that symbol.

The last character to be presented in the novel, Américo, the fiery rebel, responsible for the destruction of the Ateneu, immediately brings to mind the symbol of the new republican nationalistic spirit of the emerging nation fired with democratic ideals. He arrives at the Ateneu from the hinterland and flees a short time later only to be brought back badly bruised by his father and two other men. Apparently subjugated, he agrees to remain. A recalcitrant and uncommunicative student, much like Sérgio himself, he commands instant respect by his serious countenance and embodies the new mood of the nation:

Entre os reclusos das férias, contava-se um rapaz, matriculado de pouco, o Américo. Vinha da roça. Mostrou-se contrariado desde o primeiro dia. Aristarco tentou abrandá-lo; impossível: cada vez mais enfezado. Não falava a ninguém. Era já crescido e parecia de robustez não comum. Olhavam todos para êle como para uma fera respeitável. 49

Américo, when forced to remain at the Ateneu, unhesitatingly answers "eu fico," recalling the historic words of Dom Pedro I, and the birth of a new independent nation. The strong and sturdy Américo, (as his name implies) represents everything that is autochthonous to the New World. He plans his revenge and destroys

⁴⁹Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 187.

the institution that represents the old régime of imperial power. Symbolically he destroys by fire a stifling and corrupt government of an aged and autocratic ruler who represents European traditions rather than American.

It is at this point, however, that the analogies seem to end and the differences emerge. Although it can be argued that Dom Pedro I was constructing a nation, not destroying one, it nevertheless must be recognized that Pompéia, who was a republican, considered his son, Dom Pedro II, a foreign vestige of Portuguese power, not native to the New World and therefore an unAmerican influence. Américo works for the dismemberment of the Old Régime and the beginning of a republican era. As a matter of fact, the last scene of a totally defeated Aristarco, sitting dazed amidst the rubble of his crumbling Ateneu, recalls the Emperor himself during the last days of the Empire:

Lá estava, a uma cadeira em que passara a noite, imóvel, absorto, sujo de cinza como um penitente, o pé direito sôbre um monte de carvões, o cotovêlo espetando na perna, a grande mão felpuda envolvendo o queixo, dedos perdidos no bigode branco, sobrolho carregado.

Palavam do incêndio. Imóvel! Contavam que não se achava a senhora. Imóvel! A própria senhora com quem êle contava para o jardim de crianças! Dor veneranda! Majestade inerte do cedro fulminado! Ele pertencia ao monopólio da mágoa. O Ateneu devastado! O seu trabalho perdido, a conquista inapreciável dos seus esforços! ... Em paz! Não era um homem aquilo; era um de profundis. 50

⁵⁰ ibid., p. 187.

Pompéia's picture of a broken Aristarco recalls José Maria Bello's comments on the last days of the Emperor of Brazil:

The Emperor, tired, sick, and abulic, was a mere shadow of his former self. Neither by force nor by persuasion was the growing military insubordination to be halted. 51

Aristarco as headmaster of the Ateneu, regal and autocratic, is a symbol of the Emperor of Brazil. With one stroke of the pen Pompéia destroys not only the director who has all the personal characteristics that he despises but the Emperor of Brazil who he deeply resents!

Another hidden symbol that appears in the novel is the school's swimming pool. The reader immediately senses when Pompéia introduces the pool, that there is something more involved than just a pool:

Natação chamava-se o banheiro, construído num terreno das dependências do Ateneu, vasta toalha d'água ao rés da terra, trinta metros sôbre cinco, com escoamento para o Rio Comprido, e alimentada por grandes torneiras de chave livre. O fundo, invisível, de ladrilho, oferecia uma inclinação, baixando gradualmente de um extremo para outro. Acusava-se ainda mais esta diferença de profundidade por dois degraus convenientemente dispostos para que tomassem pé as crianças como os rapazes desenvolvidos. Em certo ponto a água cobria um homem. 52

The description of the pool is carefully realistic. The nar-

⁵¹José Maria Bello, op. cit., p. 48.

⁵²Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 38.

rator gives a clear and detailed physical description of it. We are informed that the bottom cannot be seen because of the depth of the waters. However, when the narrator reveals that the waters are murky, a symbol is beginning to be developed. Surely we can agree that the pool is symbolic. But of what?

Por ocasião dos intensos calores de fevereiro e março e do fim do ano, havia aí dois banhos por dia. E cada banho era uma festa, naquela água gorda, salobra de transpiração lavada das turmas precedentes, que as dimensões do tanque impediam a devida renovação ...⁵³

We might answer that the pool symbolizes life at the Ateneu which inevitably contains hidden aspects of contamination. However, upon further investigation, we find that the analogy is deepened and enlarged when Franco litters the bottom of the pool with broken bottles:

Eu ouvi que êle quebrava as garrafas uma por uma. Daí a pouco reaparecia, trazendo as abas da blusa em regaço. E começou a lançar então com o maior sossêgo ao tanque, para todos os lados, ali, dispersamente, como semeando, as lascas do vidro que partira. Um breve rumor de mergulho borboalhava à flor d'água, abrindo-se em círculos concêntricos os reflexos do céu. Eu vi muitas vèzes contra o albor mais claro do muro fronteiro, passando, repassando, a sombra do sinistro semeador. ⁵⁴

The symbolic pool takes an added significance. Just as the smooth waters hide the broken bottles and the danger that lies underneath, so the placid and sparkling façade of the Ateneu

⁵³Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 64.

hides the evil and the corruption that lurk behind the whitewashed school walls. First impressions, as Sérgio ruefully learns, tend to be deceiving. Thus, at night the black waters of the pool assume a foreboding air:

A massa líquida, imóvel, na calma da noite, tinha o aspecto de lustrosa calçada de azeviche; algumas estrelas repetiam-se na superfície negra com uma nitidez perfeita. 55

The symbol is never connected directly to the Ateneu; it is there, however, for the reader to make the analogy. Pompéia's symbolic technique, the continuity of which in this work has not been sufficiently studied, is obvious.

Another related example of Pompéia's symbolism can be found in Dr. Cláudio's speech on the state of Brazilian literature which can be read on a symbolic level as Pompéia's position regarding the social and the political state of the nation. Dr. Cláudio paints a dismal picture. His symbols of stagnant and germ infested waters that pollute the atmosphere, although much stronger than the symbol of clouded water of the pool, continue the idea. The narrator offers a connecting link; again it is up to the reader to make the association:

O orador representava a nação como um charco de vinte províncias estagnadas na modorra paludosa da mais desgraçada indiferença. Os germes da vida perdem-se na vasa profunda; à superfície de coágulos de putrefação, borbulha, espaçadamente, hálito mefítico do miasma, fermentado ao sol, subindo a denegrir o céu, com a vaporização

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 64.

da morte. Os pássaros calados fogem; as poucas árvores próximas no ar parado, debruçam-se uniformes sôbre si mesmas num desânimo vegetativo, que parece crescer, descendo,—prosperidade melancólica de salgueiros. O horizonte limpo, remoto, desfere golpes de luz, oblíqua, reptil, que resvalam, espelhando faixas paralelas, imóveis, sôbre o dormir da lama. 56

Although Dr. Cláudio's speech is cloaked in images of nature, the lecture is more symptomatic of the social and political situation than the arts. Later references to autocratic political power lead the reader to a symbolic comparison between the Emperor's and Aristarco's dictatorial power. The lecture provokes an argument between Senator Rubim, who represents the republican faction of the nation and Dr. Zé Lôbo, the monarchic advocate. This in turn symbolically carries the reader to the struggle between good and evil symbolized by Bento Alves and Malheiro.

Nature, closely akin to man, is used as a symbol of the spirit. Just as the prison walls of the school prove deadly to those students unable to escape, natural forms of life also find the institution inhospitable. As mentioned before, nature in a frantic gesture, in the form of an entrapped cypress, attempts to flee from the oppressive atmosphere of the Ateneu. Thus the wild soaring of a kite flying high in the sky becomes a symbol of liberty. Enclosed within the confining school grounds, Sérgio hears a small band of street urchins, free as the morning breeze,

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 94.

playing with their kite, and he feels the painful gnawings of envy. Although the kite is also in captivity, as much a slave as he is, and is lonely flying in the cloudless sky, the evocation of its freedom and its lack of confinement is clear:

Eu, solitário, ia e vinha como os outros, percorrendo o pátio, marcando a bocejos os prazos alternados de impaciência e resignação, vendo pairar por cima do recreio um papagaio que soltavam meninos da rua para as bandas do Ateneu. Invejava-lhe a sorte, ao papagaio cabeceando alegre, ondeando a balouçar, estatelando-se no vento, pássaro caprichoso, dominando vermelho e vasto retângulo azul que as paredes cortavam no firmamento, solitário como eu, cativo também—mas ao alto e lá fora. 57

Once again the reader senses the desperate desire for freedom felt by Sérgio, in this case freedom compounded by his feeling of loneliness.

The symbol of fire, in the last chapter of the novel when the Ateneu is ablaze, is also related to the theme of freedom. In this case it represents a liberating force that destroys Sérgio's ties to his unhappy existence. The fire, therefore, is not only a technique to end the novel but a device to suggest that Sérgio is going to live as a new person, a phoenix arisen from the ashes of his past. We are to imagine that all the problems of adolescence, his doubts about sexuality, his fears of authority, and his dependence on older women (in this case the symbol is reinforced by Dona Ema's flight), have been resolved.

⁵⁷ibid., p. 112.

He will become a strong self-reliant young man and will develop into a competent purposeful adult.

As can be seen from the above, the intertwining symbols of freedom and rebellion appear under many guises in the novel. Freedom does not only take the form of trees, birds and kites, but it is symbolized by the different characters as well. Sérgio, Franco, Jorge and Américo, are symbols of liberty and rebellion and they react negatively to the constraints of society.

Astutely tied in with the idea of freedom and rebellion are the symbols of decay and corruption which appear in the school pool and in Dr. Cláudio's speech on the state of the arts in Brazil. The fall of Aristarco and the destruction of the Ateneu, although a cathartic manifestation, bring to mind the end of the old political system and the beginning of a new republican era as well as the two autocratic symbols, the Emperor and Aristarco. The fire, through purification and regeneration, will permit Sérgio to redirect his life anew. All these symbols insinuate their meaning through a concert of elements. Symbols and images are devices cleverly used by the narrator to create atmosphere.

Chapter VI

Stylistic Techniques

Buffon's maxime "... le style, est l'homme même" has been expressed by the poet Robert Frost as "Style is the way a man takes himself."¹ Style, therefore, becomes the link between a writer's ideas and the language he uses to express them.

Ernesto Guerra da Cal believes that for a narrator to develop a sense of style, first he must have a vision of the world and must be able to express that interior view:

O estilo literário vai muito mais além do meramente verbal. Ter estilo não é possuir uma técnica de linguagem, mas ter uma visão própria do mundo, e ter conseguido uma forma adequada para a expressão dessa paisagem interior. 2

A similar thought has been expressed by Fidelino de Figueiredo, who saw style as intimately linked to a narrator's life style and his vision of life:

Um estilo é isto: uma visão simplificada e deformadora do mundo e da vida. Um estilo literário é a expressão dum estilo de vida ou de uma visão interpretativa. 3

Marcel Proust had his own theory. In his view, whatever a great artist writes has his own unmistakable hallmark because he

¹Ernesto Guerra da Cal, Linguagem e Estilo de Eça de Queirós (Lisboa: Editorial Aster, 1967), p. 25.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Ibid., quoting Fidelino de Figueiredo, "A Arte é Estilo," Últimas Aventuras, Rio de Janeiro, A Noite, 1941, p. 86 et seq.

extracts from each subject those elements which are congenial to him and have an affinity to his own mind. In this sense, style is individual and inimitable.⁴ Edmund Wilson also finds that a work of fiction contains the elements of an author's personality:

The real elements, of course, of any work of fiction, are the elements of the author's personality: his imagination embodies in the images of characters, situations, and scenes the fundamental conflicts of his nature or the cycle of phases through which it habitually passes. His personages are personifications of the author's various impulses and emotions: and the relations between them in his stories are really the relation between these. ⁵

From Freud's early studies on the subject of literature, we know that a writer unconsciously reflects and projects himself into his literary creation. Spitzer, an obvious disciple of Freud, developed a theory that is sometimes described as "psychological stylistics," because of its strong emphasis on the connection between an author's mental make-up and the language he uses:

Spitzer's conception of style has been moulded by two major influences. Like Croce and Vossler, he regards language as creative and artistic self-expression which finds its purest form in literary style. At the same time, he is inclined to interpret this process of self-express-

⁴Stephen Ullmann, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) quoting Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (Charles Scribners' & Sons, New York, 1936), p. 228.

sion on Freudian lines. In his early writings, the psycho-analytical element was very prominent, and he was mainly interested in abnormal idio-syncrasies of style. 6

In contrast to the other schools of thought in which emphasis was mainly literary and individual, in the view of the most forceful exponent of psychological stylistic, language acquires, and still retains, a strong psychological bias.⁷

Each writer, as Valéry once wrote, has his own language within a language.⁸ As a writer develops as a person, his manner of expression changes accordingly and he creates a mode of expression which, in time, becomes his own.

Baudelaire believed that character, genius, and style were formed by everyday circumstances during a writer's formative years. He wrote the following on Edgar Allan Poe:

Le caractère, le génie, le style d'un homme est formé par les circonstances en apparence vulgaires de sa première jeunesse. Si tous les hommes qui ont occupé la scène du monde avaient noté leurs impressions d'enfance, quel excellent dictionnaire psychologique nous posséderions! 9

As explained by Spitzer, a writer's vision of the world colors his prose. His choice of expression reveals his attitudes about life

⁶Stephen Ullman, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁸Stephen Ullmann, op. cit., p. 4.

⁹Mario Praz, op. cit., p. 192, quoting Charles Baudelaire, Oeuvres Postumes, p. 195.

and his concept of reality. Stephen Ullmann regards concept of choice as - pivot of the entire theory of expressiveness¹⁰ since the conscious and unconscious selection of expression creates the style that prevails in a piece of literature.

It cannot be denied that Pompéia's formative years left a lasting impression on his view of life and his style. His anger and his ironic style stem from his pessimistic vision of the world. Pompéia's view of reality often is distorted and he is in the habit of extracting those things in life that substantiate his pessimistic philosophy.

Pompéia felt that prose should be eloquent in order for it to be artistic and that this eloquence was poetry:

A prosa tem de ser eloquente, para ser artística, tal qual os versos. E não se va crer que eloquência é só o ardor turbulento dos meridionais, a expressão abundante e violenta, é também e mais dificilmente o que se denomina particularmente poesia. 11

By eloquence, it should be noted, Pompéia did not mean rhetoric but rather the poetic quality that one finds in artistic prose. This does not mean what is commonly called prose poetry. Poetic prose was not to be steeped in bombastic rhetoric, explosive and violent, but was to be poetic. Pompéia considered eloquence the highest form of art.¹² Ledo Ivo believes that Pompéia's poetic

¹⁰Stephen Ullmann, op. cit., p. 6.

¹¹Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 219.

¹²Eugenio Gomes, Visões e Revisões, p. 244.

prose was modeled on the work of Aloysius Bertrand and Baudelaire.¹³ In his column Pandora, which appeared in the Gazeta de Notícias in 1888, Pompéia defines what he called the writer's eloquence, which he associated to the power of music to express human emotion:

Para que a obra de arte seja completa, é preciso que, na enumeração literária das notas de análise, existam os parentesis da personalidade do escritor, manifestados pelo modo especial de sentir e pelo processo original de dizer—a eloquencia própria. São os parêntesis da personalidade, nos momentos dramáticos da narração, ou nos trechos de pitoresco descritivo, que constituem a vida das páginas de estilo. ... Profundos psicólogos que sejam os escritores de idéias e observadores felizes, se não souberam oportunamente adaptar a maneira musical da expressão proporcionada pelo sentimento, devem ser considerados como compiladores de subsidios aproveitáveis. 14

It was the artistic desire of Pompéia to raise language to its highest form of poetical expression instead of using it simply as an everyday instrument of communication. The images that are enunciated in the rhythm of a literary work become an important component to the impressionist writer who wishes to create a picturesque sentence that will "catch the ear" of the reader. In order to obtain the desired effect, the sentence has to emit vibrations since Pompéia believed that to vibrate was to live:

Uma dessas teorias, que estudava, por último, com extremado entusiasmo, era a das vibrações, contando encontrar nesse rumo

¹³Ledo Ivo, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁴Eloy Pontes, op. cit., pp. 219-220.

tôda a estética e a própria vida, sob o argumento de que 'a arte reproduz vibrações, e vibrar é viver'. Está visto que nisso o que encontrava de fato era um estímulo à eloquência, tão providencial às solicitações do temperamento apaixonado e inestável. 15

Mário de Andrade finds that the author of O Ateneu was also influenced by the "écriture artiste" of the French naturalists and of Eça de Queirós, who sought to develop a new mode of literary expression in the Portuguese language:

E quanto à expressão, ecoa no Brasil, e de maneira singularmente brilhante e eficaz a 'écriture artiste' aparecida no naturalismo francês. E português também, pois carece não esquecer que Eça já aparecera, e nos tempos da publicação do Ateneu, dava nos folhetins cariocas da Gazeta de Notícias A Reliquia. 16

Lúcia Miguel-Pereira finds Pompéia to be an accomplished artist who possessed a subtle and demanding style that borders on mannerism. She considers "écriture artiste" to be a polished style with independent harmony of subject matter that foreshadowed symbolism:

Artista éle o era, tão sutil e exigente que comunicou ao seu texto uma finura por vêzes excessiva, tocando ao maneirismo. A 'escritura artística', o estilo trabalhado como um desenho, tendo em vista uma harmonia independente do assunto, que prenunciava o simbolismo, foi O Ateneu que o inaugurou entre nós. Daí provem a qualquer coisa de frágil, de requintado, que nêle existe. 17

¹⁵Eugênio Gomes, Visões e Revisões, p. 241.

¹⁶Mário de Andrade, op. cit., p. 178.

¹⁷Lúcia Miguel-Pereira, op. cit., p. 112.

In Pompéia, Mário de Andrade saw the last of what he called the Brazilian baroque writers:

Raul Pompéia inconscientemente foi a última e derradeiramente legítima expressão do barroco entre nós; e por muitas vezes, no seu grande livro, atingiu com a palavra a beleza estridente dos ouros da Santo Antônio carioca ou da São Francisco baiana. 18

Andrade considered Pompéia "baroque" because of his fondness for verbal sonority and the brilliance of his images. I may add the use of polyphony over monophony, as well as his interest in the element of surprise and shock. Pompéia used every conceivable device to obtain exaggeration and avoided the effects of repose and tranquility in his prose. Often he sought to startle by the unusual and the unexpected, whether through the use of images, rhythm or subject material. For this reason there is a decadent quality in Pompéia's prose that some critics have called a baroque attribute.

As can be seen, Pompéia had definite ideas on the rhythm and the musicality of a sentence related to the impressionistic attempt "to write for the eyes" then widely circulated by the Goncourt Brothers. Pompéia felt that rhythmic images in verse as well as in prose was the most important factor in acquiring a picturesque style. Pompéia's interest in the unusual expression that often "shocks the eye" gives the impression that he was a follower of the Goncourt's "écriture artiste." Actually Pompéia

¹⁸Mário de Andrade, op. cit., p. 177

did not adhere so much to the Goncourt "écriture artiste" as he did to his personal ideas of poetic prose and contrast in style and theme.

Pompéia himself wrote favorably on the "écriture artiste" of the Goncourt Brothers:

Os irmãos Goncourt tiveram razão em emprêgá-lo, porque era para eles o instrumento de anotação, necessário. O grande fator do pitoresco, da prosa, como do verso, são imagens no ritmo. Agradam como determinação da espontaneidade, facilitando de parte a parte a expressão, como se observa mesmo nos hábitos populares da linguagem, e a compreensão, pela economia do esforço mental, que os imbolos trazem com a brevidade sintética. A imagem pode ser a tautologia reincidente e demorada e pode mesmo desta sorte representar o genio, como em Hugo frequentemente: o seu papel no estilo é avigorar o enunciado, esclarecer como a vinheta esclarece o texto. A imagem é um exemplo, um argumento, a analogia, a comparação, o puro pensamento, antes de ser idéia é a eloquência primitiva, comovedora e forte, rebelde perpetuamente ao contrato social dos pedantismos de escola. 19

In their variety, Pompéia's sentences run from the simple to the complex, progress not necessarily reflected by length, since a long sentence may be extremely simple in its construction. As a matter of fact, it should be if it is to convey the impression of rapidity and nervous tension suited to action narrative. Simple sentence structure thus runs smooth and direct.

Pompéia's sentence structure falls into a wide variety of

¹⁹Eloy Pontes, op. cit., p. 220.

categories. Frequently he uses the short sentence, simple and straightforward, that closely follows linear action. The direct sequence of subject, verb, object is not uncommon. It probably reflects his journalistic training. For instance, as Sérgio slowly learns about the ugly side of life, through his association with Sanches, he becomes bewildered at the existence of evil; he is surprised and terrified at his tutor's interpretation of the ninth canto of Os Lusíadas:

Eu me sentia amesquinhado sob o pêso
das revelações. Causava terror aquela
sabedoria de coisas nunca sonhadas. O
honrado diretor espiritual percebeu que
havia agora um ascendente de domínio que
me curvava. Olhava-me então de frente e
tinha ousados risos de malícia. Depois
dos dias de reserva, chegou-se de nôvo
com uma segurança de possuidor forte. Eu
andava num deplorável desmantêlo de ener-
gia. Rebêlo, de vez em quando, acabrunha-
va-me, através dos óculos azuis, com um
olhar de desprezo ou condolência ainda
mais aviltante. 20

The sentences are short and decisive and follow a sequential order of events. First, the narrator records Sanches's actions, then Sérgio's reactions. There are no digressions; all information pertains to the scene being described. The interest of the passage registers the progressive destruction of Sérgio's moral and ethical values. The narrator recalls Sérgio's fear under the weight of his tutor's revelations. Sensing that he has greater ascendancy over his pupil, Sanches becomes more daring and demand-

²⁰Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 49.

ing of his young ward. Sérgio, on the other hand, feels completely overpowered by the helpless feeling of inertia as he sees Rebêlo glaring contemptuously at him from afar.

The following scene also follows a strong linear progression. Once again every word that does not add to the sequential action is left out. After the broken bottle episode, Sérgio returns to his room. Unable to rest because of his participation, he takes the holy picture of Saint Rosália, kisses it tearfully, and asks for divine guidance. Still unable to sleep, he slowly walks through the dormitories trying to avoid any noise. He can hear Margal, the school guard, coughing behind the screen that surrounds him, he stops awhile and then continues on his way:

Voltei ao meu salão. Tirei da gaveta a imagem de Santa Rosália; beijei-a com lágrimas, pedi conselho como um filho. A inquietação não passava. Atravessei ainda os dormitórios, devagarinho, que me não ouvisse o Margal, acomodado num biombo a um dos ângulos do salão azul. Uma cripitação dos ossos do tornozelo esteve a ponto de me comprometer. Dentro do biombo, tossiram; parei um momento; curou-se a tosse; prossegui. 21

Every sentence is related to the previous one and carries the reader forward in the narrative. There is a sparsity of vocabulary that again reminds the reader of newspaper reporting. Punctuation is logical; it serves to indicate and help the sense of what is being said. It marks off the process of thought and outlines the steps of the action; in fact, it orders and controls expression in the interest of meaning.

²¹Ibid., p. 66.

There is another short sentence which Pompéia cultivates throughout the novel and that is the summarizing one-sentence paragraph. Pompéia is frequently fond of ending a paragraph with a short and simple sentence which serves as a final rivet to the passage and often briefly condenses its general idea. This stylistic device occurs over forty-five times in O Ateneu. After painting Franco's dismal living conditions, the worst that the institution can offer a middle class student at the bottom of the social ladder, the author ends with a short and conclusive three word sentence that hammers the final rivet of Franco's illness in the dingy and filthy school basement:

Engaiolava-se o condenado na amável companhia dos remorsos e da execração; ainda em cima, uma tarefa de páginas, para a qual o mais difícil era arranjar luz bastante. De espaço a espaço, galopava um rato no invisível; às vèzes vinham subir às pernas do condenado os animalzinhos repugnantes dos lugares lôbregos. À soltura surgia o prêso, pálido como um redivivi, espantando do ar claro como de uma coisa incrível. Alguns achavam meio de voltar verdadeiramente abatidos.

Franco saiu doente. 22

The same technique is used in a paragraph in which Pompéia describes the dejected feeling that overwhelms Sérgio at the Ateneu and seems to emanate from the tall and sad mountains that surround the school. As the narrator describes the canticles that reverberate throughout the arched domes of a cathedral and eventually strike Sérgio "as a bronze skullcap" of sadness, the author ends

²²ibid., p. 162.

the paragraph with the words "triste e feliz," thus summarizing, in three words, the essence of the passage, which represents Sérgio's masochistic suffering:

O céu, que a imaginação buscara dantes
como os cânticos buscam os zimbórios, caía
agora sôbre mim como um solidéu de bronze.
Triste e feliz. 23

In developing the short sentence, Pompéia tries to liberate himself from being a slave to the melodious rhythm of the traditional Romantic sentence. On the whole, it can be said that action narrative is made up of short and concise sentences that follow sequential thought.

Although the simple sentence is more direct and vivid than the complex sentence, Pompéia also uses the long serpentine sentence. His descriptive narrative, composed of the long serpentine sentence, tends to create an air of solemnity and deliberation in writing. Many such sentences seem to be agglomerations of clauses and could easily be split up into several shorter sentences. As the sentences evolve with their connected clauses, the arrangement of words and thoughts reveal a mutual relationship of ideas and purpose repeated on several different levels. The following extract describes the sad presence of nature through several religious images that weight heavily upon Sérgio:

A neblina de melancolia, baixada sôbre
o colégio da altura da cordilheira, reper-
cussão de tristeza verde das matas, pesava-
me aos ombros como a lôba de um seminarista,

²³Ibid., p. 58.

como o voto de um frade; eu passeava na circunscrição do recreio como num claustro, olhando as paredes, brancas como túmulos caiados, limitando as preocupações do espírito à minha humilhação diante de Deus, sem olhar para cima, na modéstia curvada dos brutos—anulando-me a mim mesmo na angústia o pensamento religioso, como no saco de pano bicudo, preto, do farri-coco.

O céu, que a imaginação buscara dantes, como os cânticos buscam os zimbórios, caía agora sobre mim como um solidéu de bronze. Triste e feliz. ²⁴

The serpentine sentence, divided by commas and semicolons, is composed of a series of separate images, each of which emerges to take on a peculiar brilliance. The whole, however, is unified in theme by Sérgio's religious feeling that relate to nature and man's basic unhappiness.

Enumeration refers to the juxtaposition of different elements in a sentence that give the impression of a series. Often it is also called serialization. The essential difference between serialization and enumeration is that in the former the different elements are related, whereas in the latter they are juxtaposed without the narrator seeking to relate them in any way.²⁵ When each reference maintains its complete independence, it is enumeration. However, when the list of ideas contains diverse and unrelated elements then it is chaotic enumeration. Chaotic enumeration, a term created by Leo Spitzer, creates an

²⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

²⁵ Wolfgang Kayser, Análise e Interpretação da Obra Literária, (Coimbra: Arménio Amado, Editor, 1963), p. 178.

intensification, such as is found in the verse of Guerra Junqueiro,²⁶ often resulting in a linguistic whirlwind that drags the sentence forward.

Pompéia also uses enumerations that sometimes possess little visible organization. Lists define by proximity, often by implicitly comparing similarities and contrasting differences. The natural sequence of objects as they are found in the unconscious associative processes of the mind of the narrator determine the order in which the items appear. In the following extract, Sérgio discusses the different interest of the students at the Ateneu. He goes into a long and, at times, disorderly discussion on stamp collections. It is worth noting that international postal service was inaugurated during the third quarter of the nineteenth century and it led, specially among the young, to an awareness and an interest in foreign stamps:

Jóias dêste preço imobilizavam-se nas coleções, inalienáveis por natureza como certos diamantes. Nem por isso era menos ardente a mercancia na massa febril da pequena circulação; da quantidade infinita dos outros selos, retangulares, octogonais, redondos, elipsoidais, alongados verticalmente, transversalmente, quadrados, lisos, dentados, antiqúíssimos ou recentes, ingleses, suecos, da Noruega, dinamarqueses, de cetro e espada, suntuosos Hanover, como retalhos de tapeçaria, cabeças de Águia de Lubeck, tórres de Hamburgo, Águia branca da Prússia, Águia em relêvo da moderna Alemanha, austríacos, suíços da cruz branca, da França, imperiais e republicanos, de tôda a Europa,

²⁶Ibid., p. 178.

de todos os continentes, com a estampa de um pombo, de navios, de um braço armado; gregos com a efígie de Mercúrio, o deus único que ficou de Homero, sobrevivente do Olimpo depois de Pã; selos da China com um dragão esgalhando garras; do Cabo, triangulares; da república de Orange com uma laranjeira e três trompas; do Egito com a esfinge e as pirâmides; da Pérsia de Nasserred-Din com um penacho; do Japão, bordados, rendilhados como panos de biombo e de ventarolas; da Austrália, com um cisne; do reino de Havai, do Rei Kamehameha III; da Terra Nova com uma foca em campo de neve; dos Estados Unidos, de todos os presidentes; da república de São Salvador com uma auréola de estrelas sobre um vulcão; do Brasil, desde os enormes malfeitos de 1843; do Peru com um casal de lhamas; tôdas as côres, as correspondências sentimentais ou mercantis, explorando indistintamente um desconto mínimo nas especulações gigantescas e o impôsto de sangue sobre as saudades dos emigrantes da fome. 27

The narrator gives an extended list of the different sizes and shapes of stamps, and a series of appositives are interspersed with some of their physical characteristics. Modifiers such as "rectangular," "octogonal," "round," "ellipsoidal," "square" are to be found next to an adjective such as "smooth" and "indented." There is also a succession of nationalities, at times, with mixed appositives that describe pictorial contents. Those with Classical Greek, Roman, and Egyptian motifs are singled out, while a line later the narrator turns his attention to Oriental and African stamps. All in all, one may say that the rambling enumerations has a somewhat chaotic tone with its never-ending series of

²⁷ibid., pp. 109-110.

anarchical references. The extensive list is divided by comas and semicolons; that it is a paragraph can be recognized only by its rhythm. The narrator wants to give a schematic picture of every stamp that made an impression on him, and he has a comment to make on every foreign country. There is little suspense from beginning to end, only an inorganic aggregation of loosely connected clauses.

In lists of this type where verbs are muted, the stamps are displayed in themselves. They do nothing; they are merely available for inspection as objects. Such static display also increases the importance of the individual word.

In Pompéia's quest for elegant style he demonstrates a preference for the agglomeration of clauses. The association conjured up by the author may reveal a pictorial or semantic connection as well as a visual or aural one. The level at which such associations are created may often be below what we deem conscious; so, in fact, may be their reception. But the point is, that all of these various repetitions and associations, establish the unity of form of a passage. In the following extract, Pompéia discusses the Atentú's band and the various musical instruments preferred by Aristarco. The passage, composed of three sentences, the first and the third, extremely long, are divided and subdivided into several independent clauses and joined together by an exclamation: "Prediletos porque gritavam mais!" which gives the reader a clue to Aristarco's psychological need to attract attention:

Predileto era o flautim, florete feito som, t  nue, penetrante, perfura  o de agulhas; predileta era a requinta, esp  cie de flautim rachado, agressiva como a vibra  o do dardo das serpentes; o fagote, aumentativo de requinta,   nico aparelho capaz de produzir artificialmente a fanhosidade col  rica das sogras; o claro obo  , laringe met  lica de um cantor de epop  ias, her  ico e belo; o pist  o fren  tico e vivo, estandarte    mostra s  bre a celeuma, harmonizante, centralizando a instrumenta  o como um regimento de cavaleiros. Prediletos porque gritavam mais! Predileto principalmente o tambor e o bombo tonante, primazia do estrondo, a trovada das peles t  sas, que a tormenta sobran  a nos arroubos de carnaval canalha dos seus dias e que sobran  ava, no Ateneu R  mulo, o graxo R  mulo, o n  dio, o opulento, o car  ssimo g  nro das esperan  as caras. 28

The compound sentences are basically lists, in this case enumerations of instruments. The narrator offers these musical objects in an unsubordinated series. He focuses attention on the individual instruments isolated between commas and semicolons. The reader can observe the increased mechanical proficiency with which he descends from wind to percussion instrument, that is to say, from the musical sound of the flute to the percussion noise of the drum. Each instrument elicits an uncomplimentary comment on the part of the narrator. At the same time that the associations are made, two sets of repetitions are also used: "prediletos" creates a rhythmic pattern that betrays the excitement of the author who seems to receive pleasurable sensations from the list of instruments and three final references to R  mulo being fat.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

The repetitive use of a word or an expression is often found in Pompéia's style. It gives greater strength to his prose and surprises the reader by its forcefulness. The repetition here of the word "predileto" as a stylistic device, used on three different occasions, not only serves to strengthen Aristarco's preferences but also to create a comic effect that promotes acceptance of the idea. The denotation that Rômulo is fat is expressed in several ways in the final clauses: "o graxo Rômulo, o nédio Rômulo, o opulento, o caríssimo genro das esperanças caras." Connotatively the third adjective leads to the idea that he is wealthy and an enviable prospective son-in-law. This idea again gives the reader a clue to Aristarco's true nature.

Chaotic enumeration, contrariwise, is not a modern technique by any means. It was extensively cultivated by such writers as Rabelais (1494-1553) as early as the sixteenth century, by Padre Antônio Vieira (1608-1697), and the Portuguese satirical writer Guerra Junqueiro (1850-1923).²⁹

In O Ateneu Pompéia frequently uses chaotic enumeration. For instance, when discussing the different courses that Sérgio is taking at the institution, the narrator enumerates one course of study after another: geography somehow leads to a discussion of grammar, and Brazilian history brings a course of biblical studies to mind. As he mentions the different subjects, the narrator enumerates a series of events that have no logical order but

²⁹Wolfgang Kayser, op. cit., vol 1, p. 178.

seem to have made a strong impression on him:

A história santa revelou-me êste épi-
co, quem o diria?—o cônego Roquette! E
eu bebi a embriaguez musical dos capítu-
los como o canto profundo das catedrais.
Ouvi suspirar a Crença, o idílio do Éden,
o amor primitivo do Gênesis, invejado dos
anjos, sob o olhar magnânimo los leões;
ouvi a queixa terna do primeiro par bani-
do para a dor, para o trabalho; Adão ver-
gonhoso, vestindo as parras da primeira
pruderie, Eva a envolver a nudez jovem de
lírios na túnica de ouro das madeixas,
cobrindo com as mãos o ventre, obscenida-
de das mãos, estigmatizada pela maldição
de Deus. 30

After naming his religious mentor, cônego Roquette, who opened his eyes to a new world of knowledge, the narrator proceeds to give a series of biblical references that are basically unrelated and, therefore, chaotic. His first reference is a comparison of the musicality of the chapters in the Bible to the echoes of religious chant in a cathedral. This comparison immediately leads to a juxtaposition of a prayer heard in muffled tones, the idyllic life in the Garden of Eden, primitive love in the book of Genesis, the first complaints of the banished couple to a humdrum existence of pain and work, and finally a description of Adam dressed in vine leaves and Eve covering her nudity with her golden locks while hiding her abdomen with her hands. This enumeration, although related by subject matter, does not reveal a logical line of thought. Facts do not flow in chronological order,

³⁰Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 44.

nor do they seem related by cause and effect; instead, the author seems to align a disconnected record of events.

The narrator's propensity for this type of enumeration is again evident in the following passage when he discusses the headmaster's aptness for high-pressured salesmanship. Pompéia's figurative language affords the reader imaginative enjoyment. The mind takes pleasure in sudden leaps in seeing likenesses between disparate ideas. When the author describes Aristarco's constant quest to increase his renown as well as that of the Ateneu, he places his figures of speech in a seemingly never-ending pattern:

Eram boletins de propaganda pelas províncias, conferências em diversos pontos da cidade, a pedidos, à sustância, atochando a imprensa dos lugarejos, caixões sobretudo, de livros elementares, fabricados às pressas com o ofegante e esbafo-rido concurso de professores prudentemente anônimos, caixões e mais caixões de volumes cartonados em Leipzig, inundando as escolas públicas de tôda a parte com a sua invasão de capas azuis, róseas, amarelas, em que o nome de Aristarco inteiro e sonoro, oferecia-se ao passo venerador dos enfaimados de alfabeto dos confins da pátria. Os lugares que os não procuravam eram um belo dia surpreendidos pela enchente, gratuita, espontânea, irresistível! 31

The nervous juxtaposition of image clusters from different areas of thought and existence, including different levels of memory and awareness, gives the impression of free association and ex-

³¹Ibid., p. 13.

cites the reader. The fast moving list of situations, both those of prime importance as well as those of secondary interest, end in a clever observation uniting the alphabet-hungry inhabitants of the interior to Aristarco's pedagogical books. The use of such word play is a manifestation of Pompéia's fondness for the "calembour," which again gives a clue to the general intellectual side of his nature.

An interesting ramification of the enumeration process is the use of repetition. Repetition is a basic principle in art. It is found in music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, in fact, in every artistic expression known to man. Its importance is bound to the recurrence of rhythmic flow and pattern of sound. It might be said as one reads O Ateneu, that the diverse forms of repetition used by Pompéia become a hallmark of his decorative and imaginative prose. According to Northrop Frye, the principle of repetition is the basis of humor,³² and Pompéia's sentences frequently echo the repetition of verbs, adjectives, nouns, and similes introduced by the comparative "como," which often inject both a serious and a comic note to the narrative.

Since repetition can be used for serious and comic purposes, the immediate repetition of a word or of an expression for emphasis has an incremental emotional effect. It often arouses expectation, on the part of the reader, and reinforces and supplements

³²Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 168.

a certain idea. It also causes surprise, because it is so unexpected, and this in turn creates humor. It might even produce a design and carry a thought through a series of progressions.

In the following example, on discussing Cerqueira's eating habits, the author repeats the verb in the imperfect tense four times. Twice it is used independently, and in the other cases it is attached to two unusual images that immediately strike the reader:

Cerqueira, ratazana, curvado, redobrado,
sôbre o prato, comia como um restaurante,
comia, comia, comia como as sarnas, como
um cancro Sanches, meio embriagado, beija-
java os vizinhos, caindo, com os beiços
em tromba. 33

The device becomes ever more effective as the author compares the student's appetite with a voracious skin disease. The casual suggestion of a spreading itch adds permanence to the image. The repetition of the verb "comia" adds emphasis and the similes "como um restaurante," "como as sarnas," "como um cancro" seem to mount to a crescendo that fills the sentence with a sense of strong expectation.

Another example of verb repetition occurs when Sérgio delves into his past and tries to recall the impression that Aristarco made upon the assembled populace during the commencement exercises. Through the repetition of the verb and direct object pronoun "viam-no" the author produces a design of insistence and reinforcement that stresses the public's impression:

³³Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 130.

Viam-no ao mesmo tempo a festejar os príncipes com o risinho nasal, cabritante, entre lisonjeiro e irônico, desfeito em etiquetas de reverente súdito e cortesia; viam-no bradando ao professor de ginástica, a gesticular com o chapéu seguro pela copa; viam-no formidável, com o perfil leonino rugir sobre um discípulo que fugira aos trabalhos, sobre outro que tinha limo nos joelhos, de haver lutado em lugar úmido, gastando tal veemência no ralho, que chegava a ser carinhoso. ³⁴

The repetition of the verb and the direct object pronoun "viam-no" is followed, a few paragraphs later, by a similar repetition; this time, however, the author uses the verb and the object pronoun "conheci-o." Thus, from the general impression of Aristarco received by the crowd, the narrator turns to Sérgio's personal observations:

Conheci-o solene na primeira festa, jovial na segunda; conheci-o mais tarde em mil situações, de mil modos; mas o retrato que me ficou para sempre do meu grande diretor, foi aquele—o belo bigode branco, o queixo barbeado, o olhar perdido nas trevas, fotografia estática, na aventura de um raio elétrico. ³⁵

In order to get an appropriate image for a tediously hot and bright afternoon that saps the students of all their strength, the narrator draws a comparison between the verdant mountains surrounding the whitewashed school walls. To obtain emphasis Pompéia plays with the adjective "claro" and repeats it several times:

³⁴Ibid., p. 20.

³⁵Ibid., p. 21.

Tínhamos em tórno da vida o ajardina-
mento em floresta do parque e a toalha
esmeraldina do campo e do diorama aci-
dentado das montanhas da Tijuca, osten-
tosas em curvatura torácica e frentes
felpudas de colosso; espetáculos de exce-
ção, por momentos, que não modificavam a
secura branca dos dias, enquadrados em
pacote nos limites do pátio central,
quente, insuportável de luz ao fundo da-
quelas altíssimas paredes do Ateneu, cla-
ras da caiação, do tédio, claras, cada
vez mais claras. 36

An identical technique of repetition is used by the author towards the end of the novel when he again speaks about the murdered victim's ill-treatment of Angela. This time, instead of repeating the adjective three times, he repeats it twice:

O assassino era muito mau, exigia coisas
dela como se fôsse uma escrava; era bruto,
bruto. 37

Similar repetitive adjectives appear throughout the novel. Another example occurs when Sérgio reverts to feelings of infancy while in the care of Dona Ema:

Achava-me pequenino, pequenino. 38

Besides the repetition of adjectives and verbs, Pompéia often juxtaposes a series of verbs in the infinitive form next to each other in order to describe a personality or to stress certain qualities of an individual. When Sérgio finds himself in the school infirmary he speaks of Dona Ema's devotion by juxtaposing

³⁶Ibid., p. 107.

³⁷Ibid., p. 177.

³⁸Ibid., p. 182.

three infinitive verbs:

Dona Ema foi para mim o verdadeiro socorro. Sabia tanto zelar, animar, acariciar, que a própria agonia aos cuidados do seu trato fôra uma ressurreição. 39

Another example of the juxtaposition of infinitive verbs occurs when Aristarco, carried away by his rhetoric, discusses his many struggles to educate and lead his students in the path of moral responsibility:

'Um trabalho insano! Moderar, animar, corrigir esta massa de caracteres, onde começa a ferver o fermento das inclinações; encontrar e encaminhar a natureza na época dos violentos ímpetos; a morder excessivos ardores; retemperar o ânimo dos que se dão por vencidos precocemente; espreitar, adivinhar os temperamentos; prevenir a corrupção; desiludir as aparências sedutoras do mal; aproveitar os alvoroços do sangue para os nobres ensinamentos; prevenir a depravação dos inocentes; espiar os sítios obscuros; fiscalizar as amizades; desconfiar das hipocrisias; ser amoroso, ser violento, ser firme; triunfar dos sentimentos de compaixão para ser correto; proceder com segurança, para depois duvidar; punir para pedir perdão depois ... Um labor ingrato, titânico, que extenua a alma, que nos deixa acabrunhados ao anoitecer de hoje, para recomeçar com o dia de amanhã'...40

The change of rhythm from the previous paragraph is as noticeable as the unusual repetition of infinitive verbs. The verbs are separated with unusual regularity by punctuation so that the reader is forced to move in stages along the paragraph. Instead of flowing through the reader's consciousness the passage moves in

³⁹Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 27.

bursts of energy as each verb adds to the strength of the previous one. The atomizing effect of such a list is instantly felt by the reader. The verb enumeration reinforces Aristarco's superhuman effort to inculcate the virtues that lead to physical and spiritual growth. Reading such a list resembles watching a long freight train pass by. The verbs being the cars, the conjunctions the couplings. Each verb is independent and, strangely enough, joined to the whole. The conjunctions are also unifiers in their unobtrusive and monotonous way. As the separate cars roll by, an underlying rhythmic beat is felt. The variety of the repetition of verbs is notable, yet there is a basic regularity to it which is instantly felt. As Aristarco moves into a crescendo of rhetoric, the reader tends to smile inwardly at the headmaster's dedication since he already has had several clues to Aristarco's insincerity.

Another stylistic device extensively used by Pompéia is to describe characters through the use of related imagery. In order to heighten Rômulo's love for rich food, as pointed out earlier, the narrator juxtaposes four different repetitive expressions. Besides this repetitive device, Pompéia also accentuates Rômulo's obesity by describing him in culinary terms. By cramming the descriptive paragraph with food-related imagery he reinforces Rômulo's outstanding fat frame. The narrator's consummate skill in interweaving motifs, sensations, and memories is never so great as when he describes this character, the wealthy and privileged stu-

dent who answers to the sobriquet of "mestre cook" because of his tremendous appetite and equally tremendous size. Pompéia ironically recalls how the students, on seeing Rômulo, call him by his suggestive nickname:

Esta provocação era, além de tudo, inverdade. Cozinheiro, Rômulo! só porque lembrava a culinária, com a carnosidade bamba, fofada dos pastelões, ou porque era gordo das enxúndias enganadoras dos fregistas, dissolução mórbida de sardinha e azeite, sob os aspectos de mais volumosa saúde? Rômulo era simplesmente e completamente o confeitiro das esperanças doces de Aristarco. 41

These pejorative and humorous descriptions seem to be mostly enumerations of images, some organized, others less so, but all pertaining to food. In such a passage the author's intense description of the character abounds with culinary vocabulary directly related to the leading word "cozinheiro." The irony introduced by the opening sentence, "esta provocação era, além de tudo, inverdade," is proven false by the subsequent paragraph. The long list of gastronomic delicacies support Rômulo's excessive love for rich food. Not only is Rômulo addicted to highly rich food but he becomes the chief pastry chef of Aristarco's "sweet hopes and aspirations." This is an obvious reference to his wealth and the fact that the director hopes to make him his son-in-law.

A similar device, again steeped in irony, is used by the author when he describes Aristarco. In order to emphasize the head-

⁴¹Ibid., p. 116.

master's divinity, he readily gives him the halo of a deity to be admired and feared by all:

Aristarco mostrava-se. Na expressão olímpica do semblante transpirava a beatitude de um gozo superior. Gozava a sensação prévia, no banho luminoso, da imortalidade a que se jolgava consagrado. Devia ser assim:--luz benigna e fria, sôbre bustos eternos, o ambiente glorioso do Panteão. A contemplação da posteridade em baixo. 42

Once again all the images relate to Aristarco's god-like qualities and strengthen the author's premise. The entire spectrum of religious motifs is alluded to. Words like "olímpico," "beatitude," "banho luminoso," "imortalidade," "consagrado," "luz luminosa," "glorioso" and "posteridade," all pertain directly or indirectly to hagiographical nomenclature.

In these last two passages, the enumeration of related images is so strong that the illusion desired by the author is definitely established. In the first example, Rômulo's obesity is substantiated by the author's insistent references to food; in the second, Aristarco's divine being is reinforced by images loaded with religious connotation. Through indirect association the narrator has created an impression which will forever linger in the mind of the reader.

There are many instances in Pompéia's novel where he uses expressions beginning with the comparative "como" which usually belong to the vernacular language, for the popular language

⁴²Ibid., p. 21.

abounds with many of these "ready-made" expressions. Pompéia's similes, however, are of a different nature. They are bold and strikingly original. Clauses introduced with "como" often occur in clusters. Groups of two, three, or even more add a measure of repetitive expectancy. Pompéia does not care for the hackneyed expression worn down through extensive usage, but prefers the recondite, the novel, or the far-fetched comparison that strikes the reader by its novelty and boldness. An ordinary image would not be elegant, and elegance of style is one of Pompéia's main concerns. For example, in the following description of Nearco da Fonseca, he uses three very original similes introduced with "como:"

Apresentou-se com o pai, vulto político em galarim no tempo. Era um mancebo de desessete anos, rosto cavado, cabelos abundantes, de talento não comum, olhar vivo, moroso de importância, nariz adunco, avançado, sêco, quase translúcido com um nariz de vidro. Franzino como a infância desvalida, magro como uma preleção de osteologia, surpreendeu-nos, entre outras, uma recomendação a seu respeito, pelo diretor às barbas do pai:--Nearco da Fonseca era um grande ginasta. ⁴³

The use of the comparative conjunction "como" frequently occurs in the novel and its extensive use has led some critics to criticize his style;⁴⁴ however, it agrees with the author's general use of repetition for stylistic effects. In the three compari-

⁴³ Arthur de Almeida Tôrres, "Novos Aspectos Estilísticos de Raul Pompéia," Ocidente (Lisboa: Maio, 1971, No. 397), pp. 362-372.

sons introduced by "como" none are taken from the popular language. His expressions may be considered labored. Anxious to strike the reader with novel and unusual comparisons Pompéia searches for similes that are highly original:

Another example that further illustrates his use of the simile with "como" can be seen when the narrator uses nature as a scenic backdrop:

A neblina de melancolia, baixada sobre o colégio da altura da cordilheira, repercussão da tristeza verde das matas, pesava-me, como o voto de um frade; eu passeava na circunscrição do recreio como num claustro, olhando as paredes, brancas como túmulos caídos, limitando as preocupações do espírito à minha humilhação diante de Deus, sem olhar para cima, na modéstia curvada dos brutos--anulando-me a mim mesmo na angústia o pensamento religioso, como no saco de pano bicudo, preto, do farricoco.

O céu, que a imaginação buscara dantes, como os cânticos buscam os zimbórios, caía agora sobre mim como um solidéu de bronze. 44

All told there are seven clauses introduced with "como" in the paragraph. Since the passage reveals young Sérgio's tormented state of mind, all the comparisons have a strong religious connotation. The narrator hammers away, on a subconscious level, at the religious crisis undergone by the hero.

Pompéia repeats a technique similar to the one he formerly used when he described Aristarco and Rômulo. As the reader will recall, when Pompéia described Aristarco he chose religious ima-

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 58.

ges to draw his description of the headmaster. Later, on describing Rômulo, all the imagery was related to cooking and food. In the above passage all the similes have to do with religious imagery; thus the narrator relates Sérgio's basic unhappiness to images of nature and religious similes.

As explained by Stephen Ullmann, on discussing "écriture artiste," the extreme limits of what has been called the "nominal syntax" of the Goncourts was reached perhaps with the so-called verbless sentence, where the verb is not only weakened but, at times, totally suppressed.⁴⁵ If we exclude interjections as well as other forms of inarticulate utterances, verbless sentences can be said to belong to two categories: exclamatory and descriptive.⁴⁶ Of the two, Ullmann finds the latter by far the more interesting. Verbless exclamations are relatively common in the everyday spoken language, where the stress of emotion frequently dislocates the sentence.

At certain points in O Ateneu there are descriptive sentences which fall into the verbless or near verbless category. In the following example there are a string of clauses with only one verb in the past tense heading the short paragraph and one in the imperfect tense ending it; the narrator has completely eliminated the use of the finite verb in the middle clause. He

⁴⁵Stephen Ullmann, op. cit., p. 131.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 131.

has also tended to avoid it through the use of punctuation:

O alarido creceu; uma altercação violenta; depois fragor de luta, o estrondo de uma mesa tombando. Depois gritos de socorro; mais gritos; a voz de Aristarco aguda, dando ordens como em combate. Estávamos atônitos. 47

The struggle that precedes the murder scene in the school refectory is rendered in a spurting style reminiscent of the old-fashioned movieola-machine. The verbless clauses, for the most part, create the impression of a series of flickers that move by fits and starts before the eyes of the reader. In view of the novel visual sensation one cannot help but be struck by the clots of verbless clauses and take an interest in their relationship. The result is a series of rhythmic jerks that reflect the violent action of the narrative in stationary and actionless pictures.

A similar technique but with a totally different intent is used by Pompéia when he describes Dona Ema at the dinner table:

Miragem sedutora de branco, fartos cabelos negros colhidos para o alto com infinita graça, uma rosa nos cabelos, vermelha como são vermelhos os lábios e os corações, vermelha como um grito de triunfo. Nada mais. Ramalhetes à mesa, um caldo ardente, e sempre a obsessão adorável do branco e a rosa vermelha. 48

Short of suppressing the verb altogether, the narrator chooses to use a weak verb in a comparative expression. The prose moves

⁴⁷Raul Pompeia, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 147.

along in bursts of energy that gives the impression of a series of isolated pictures that create a staggered form of action. The technique can be varied in a number of ways. The juxtaposition of a sequence of appositional elements, in this case, the black hair contrasted to the red rose, which in turn is contrasted to the lips, to the heart, and even to a "triumphant cry" also creates a staccato pattern that focuses attention upon the single unit of action.

When Franco is unanimously condemned for his participation in contaminating the school's water supply, the author reverts to the use of the verbless sentence. This time, however, in order to heighten its effect and to create contrast, he juxtaposes the verbless sentence to sentences which are literally loaded with verbs:

De joelhos neste ponto, Franco ao pelourinho: diante das chufas dos maus e da alegria de todos. Como esta porta era caminho dos rapazes até as bandejas onde se elevavam as pilhas sedutoras da merenda, ficava ainda o condenado com um reforço-zinho de pena. Passando por ele, os mais enfurecidos deram empurrões, beliscaram-lhe os braços, injuriaram-no. Franco respondia a meia voz, por uma palavrinha porca, repetida rapidamente, e cuspiam-lhes, sujando a todos com o arremêso dos únicos recursos da sua posição. 49

Once again the author obtains a style reminiscent of the most primitive form of motion pictures in which the visual images spurt

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 62.

by in isolated episodes. Immediately following, however, the narrator contrasts the verbless sentence with two sentences that are loaded with verbs. In spite of this new and bold trend in sentence structure, Pompéia uses it sparingly, and there are only a few isolated cases to be found in the novel.

Another stylistic device of omission used by Pompéia although totally unrelated to the verbless sentence, is his use of suspension points. Anyone who has read a page of Pompéia's prose is immediately impressed by his use of suspension points. Suspension points are used, most commonly in dialogue, to indicate a decided but not emphatic hesitation, or to indicate that an uncompleted sentence trailed away into silence. Pompéia's sentences are cut off with unusual regularity by this form of punctuation. The reader, aware that the sentence has trailed away into silence, knows that there is something hidden or unexpressed. He, therefore, feels subconsciously free to enter the narrative and to complete the unfinished thought. When the students at the Ateneu rise up in anger at the lack of variety of the menu as well as at the poor quality of the food after the Cândido affair, Aristarco faced with a moral and disciplinary problem, decides to squeeze out of the difficulty situation by resorting to half truths:

Quando informaram qual o motivo das
assuadas, saiu-lhe um pêso do coração!
'Ah! Tinham motivo ... Mas aquilo era
patota do despenseiro ... Pedras que lhe
atirassem seria pouco ... Mas não tinha

culpa ... Era indústria secreta a goiabada de bananas! ...⁵⁰

Instinctively the reader feels that Aristarco does not want to become involved or rectify the situation. His apologetic tone indicates a willingness to slide over the entire affair. He absolves himself from any guilt and implicates the pantry worker but offers no solution. The reader, however, senses that there is much that has not been said . . .

Many critics have found an affinity between Pompéia's impressionistic style with that of the Goncourt Brothers.⁵¹ Although Célia Therezinha Oliveira does not subscribe too much to the impressionistic school of painting, she does, however, recognize Pompéia's impressionistic style:

Entendemo-lo, isso sim, como um estilo artístico determinado pela atitude psicológica subjectivista de perceber os fenómenos segundo uma perspectiva própria, despojando as coisas das correções lógicas que o homem comum introduz habitualmente nelas, e, por isto, enunciando-as de tal forma que, através da expressão, o que se capte seja exactamente a impressão que a realidade causou ao observador. Geralmente, na visão do tipo impressionista ou fenomenista, dá-se uma inversão dos elementos que compõem a realidade contemplada, um deles destacando-se e sendo tomado como o ponto básico para a formulação do fenómeno, gerando uma perspectiva inovadora de percepção do mesmo. ⁵²

Pompéia himself wrote on his impressionistic style and found

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 139.

⁵¹Andrade Muricy, op. cit., p. 229.

⁵²Célia Therezinha Oliveira, op. cit., p. 68.

that sentences whether they describe material or emotional aspects derive from the impression and produce motor images in the movement of language:

As frases dos estilos, quer no descritivo propriamente dito, quer no descritivo das paixões, são arrancadas pela impressão do espectáculo material ou do espectáculo moral, produzindo fisiologicamente verdadeiras imagens motoras no movimento da linguagem, agindo pelo entusiasmo. 53

The term "impressionism" is borrowed from painting. The French Impressionist painters, Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, among others, revolted from the conventional and academic conception of painting, and inspired a new artistic movement. They considered it more important to retain the immediate impressions an object makes on the artist than meticulously to present the object by precise detail and realistic finish. Their special concern was the use of light and shadow. They were interested more in atmosphere than in perspective and outline. The movement affected certain writers who had the same convictions and believed that the personal attitudes and moods were legitimate elements in depicting character, setting and action. The literary impressionist holds that the expression of such elements is more significant artistically than a photographic presentation. The writer's object is to present characters, scenes, and moods as he perceives and feels them in a

⁵³Ibid., quoting Raul Pompéia, p. 69.

single passing moment and not as they actually are.

In the following extract Pompéia adopts the perspective of a spectator viewing the city and the surrounding countryside from the mountains around Rio de Janeiro. The reader follows the sentence in the same way the eye follows the green outline of the forest, the glowing red sunset, and the houses enveloped in gray mist:

Os passeios eram depois do jantar. À
noitinha voltávamos, dando balanço às no-
tas de sensações, um deslumbramento verde
de floresta, um retalho de afogueado cre-
púsculo, um canto da cidade ao longe di-
luido em fumaça côm de pérola ...⁵⁴

The word order closely follows the order of impressions as they reach the viewer's eye. Just as color takes precedence over objects in impressionistic painting, since the eye distinguishes color long before it sees form and object, in impressionistic writing the author attempts to reproduce this sequence in the reader's mind. Thus, first Sérgio sees the green of the forest, contrasted against the fiery red of the sky, and then the foggy gray mist of the city. The observer is struck by the contrast of color: the patch of dark green forest on the fringes of the horizon lead Sérgio's eye to the houses huddled together forming a residential area. This construction is impressionistic in the sense that the word order conforms to the order of perception: first the author sees color and shape; then, on closer scrutiny,

⁵⁴Raul Pompéia, op. cit., p. 125.

the definite object.⁵⁵ The construction is effective and psychologically true: the naked eye merely sees some patches of color in the distance and other objects which complement it.

In the impressionistic style, word order often appears distorted in order to produce a direct correspondence with the writer's sensation. This projection of sensation or emotion is known as "empathy," and impressionism facilitates this process. An impressionistic painting permits the spectator to "enter" into it and to "feel" all the color and light, the sensations and the emotions that accompany the actual scene depicted. Impressionistic prose style often gives the illusion that the reader is participating in the events described.

The use of these stylistic effects give Pompéia's style a new dimension that was unusual and unknown in Brazilian prose when O Ateneu appeared. No other Brazilian novelist of the nineteenth century acquired such a variety of distinctive styles or used them so cleverly to obtain different effects. The short sentence, on the whole, is simple and straightforward and closely follows a sequence of linear action. It also is used as a one-sentence summarizing paragraph. The long sentence, frequently contrasted to the short, has a tendency to be descriptive and attains a solemn loftiness through its agglomerations of clauses and image clusters. The different types of sentences add to the different styles in the novel. Both serialization, a list of

⁵⁵ Stephen Ullmann, op. cit., p. 157.

related elements, and enumeration, which tends to be chaotic in character, are frequently used by the author. There are many lists of objects, verbs, adjectives as well as related imagery that heighten the harmonizing effect of the prose. These lists often blend with the repetitive use of words or expressions that give greater strength to Pompéia's prose. The effect on the reader is usually one of surprise coupled with a sense of humor. The comparative use of "como," as stated by many critics, is unusual in character and frequently strikes the reader by its originality. Often the pace of Pompéia's prose is frequently altered by the use of a weakened verb or by its total omission. The verbless sentence can be juxtaposed to the sentence loaded with verbs in order to obtain contrast and to heighten the style. The colorful impressionistic sentence that distinguishes color masses before object masses, also gives extra dimension to the prose. All of these techniques, blended and juxtaposed, create a series of styles that fit the particular mood sought by Pompéia.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken in order to analyze and explain certain aspects of Pompéia's novel. I have tried to penetrate the subjective "world" created by the author in which he lived and ultimately committed suicide.

Through my study of Raul Pompéia's O Ateneu, I have found many more innovative techniques used by the author than I first suspected the novel to have. Without a doubt, 1888 marks a new chapter in Brazilian letters. Pompéia's personalized novel must have taken many Brazilian critics by surprise. New and daring modes of plot and character presentation, as well as an invigorating style, complicated by the effects of psychological time, opened new roads in writing. The author's poetic prose or "écriture artiste," steeped in the concept of contrast in style, broke new ground, so to speak, in the Brazilian literary scene. The many hidden images and symbols, worked into the core of the novel, add éclat to the story.

This study was undertaken also in the hope that perhaps, as a result, it might lead the modern-day reader into a deeper intimacy with the personality of a strange and rarely understood novelist. In an age in which the reader seeks pleasant enjoyment, an avenue of escape from the pressures of the times, he dislikes entering the pessimistic world of Raul Pompéia. The tendency of the modern-day reader to ignore novelists of the past and to con-

concentrate on contemporary fiction, especially when dealing with a narrator who was obsessed with the ugly aspects of man's personality, has decreased Pompéia's popularity.

I hope that this study will further a fuller understanding of Pompéia and help the reader to appreciate the only mature novel from the pen of this most moral writer.

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