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Maria de Fátima Mamede de Albuquerque

A. STUDY OF CHARACTER IN THE PROSE FICTION OF LÚCIO CARDOSO

Ph. D. in Literature
Institute of Latin American Studies
University of Glasgow

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PREFACE

Although Lúcio Cardoso's Crônica da casa assassinada was published twenty years ago, no comprehensive critical work on the author has yet appeared. In the course of my research I came across many newspaper articles and biographical memorials which can be held responsible for many clichés and for perpetuating the absence of serious literary studies of Lúcio Cardoso. Unfortunately, the deliberate silence of the critics disconcerted by an unsettling writer, has been aided and abetted by Cardoso's friends and admirers who, "embora não fosse nossa intenção, queríamos manter Lúcio vivo e não glorificado dentro de um sarcófago" (as Maria Alice Barroso explains), in the process, also collaborated in the creation of a myth: the great - but forgotten - Lúcio Cardoso.

This approach has extended even to his major work Crônica da casa assassinada, despite the degree of popularity accorded it in intellectual circles - it is included in university and some high school literary courses and is considered by critics to be a masterpiece of Brazilian fiction. However, the meaning of its 'jigsaw' structure and its ambiguity have not previously been deciphered, making the interpretation which follows the first attempt. Not, I hope, the last, but rather the beginning of a body of research which will put an end to the silence of the critics and remove, once and for all, the grounds for Lúcio Cardoso's despondent complaint:

"/Se reiniciasse/ queria, como tenho feito, derramar meu sangue do mesmo modo - mas que ouvissem melhor a sua música".

I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging certain debts of gratitude. My thanks go to Maria Helena Cardoso, for helping me, by way of her lively accounts, to understand her brother better; to some of Lúcio Cardoso's particular friends in the literary world - Octávio de Faria, Marcos Konder Reis, Walmyr Ayala - for the interviews they gave me and their readiness to assist me in other ways. Finally, my thanks go to my supervisor Dr. J. Flint, who helped me in many ways, not the least of which being to encourage me to see my research in a wider context and to rethink certain definitions and literary concepts, especially where I had considered them to be characteristically, or even exclusively Brazilian.

SUMMARY

Lúcio Cardoso (1912-1968), a Brazilian novelist of the 'geração de 30', belongs more specifically to the school of psychological fiction which came into existence as a direct consequence of the religious revival ('Renovação Espiritualista') of fifteen years earlier. This group was not influenced by "Modernismo", but at the same time it did not accept the general trend of religious thought in Brazil, which in this period was neo-Thomist, in the Maritain mould. Instead, it may be classed as neo-Kantian, reactionary in religious matters, refusing to accept modernization in the Church or make concessions to the modern world generally. The mentors of this group include Christian radicals such as Pascal, Boehme and Kierkegaard. In the case of Lúcio Cardoso this collective approach is further strengthened by his mineirismo, for like other writers from Minas Gerais he has a sharp awareness of social decline and shows no sign of finding anything worth defending in the contemporary world. This no doubt contributed to his tendency to live and to write as a 'decadent', for if he sees life as no more than a slow death, there is no justification for preserving it. In his works the Decadent ethos is expressed in such customary forms as the creation of a Byronic hero and, particularly, of a type of femme fatale.

It is partly in terms of Decadence that a link can be established between Cardoso and Dostoevsky, although there are other parallels, both in matters of detail and in "world-view"; in particular the creation of characters who, as a result

of a sudden insight, are made to see life and their own inner world in a completely new light. Plunged into a grievous crisis, this kind of character reacts by striving to achieve self-knowledge: conscious of the power of his intelligence, he engages in a quest which relies excessively on reason, forgetful of the force represented by the emotions and the irrational, which, by themselves, have the power to destroy him, or at least, to make him err. In addition to this, because he goes over in his mind the experiences he has had, he tends to confer excessive importance on the past, which is dead time and contains more doubts and remorse than positive experience. At the same time, as a means of escaping the monotony of the quest, he constantly looks for stimulation and excitement, although these merely sap his physical and moral strength. But there are other obstacles to the effort of introspection undertaken by Cardoso's characters. One of these is the creation of inner phantoms which restrict their freedom and, worse, split the character's personality. He becomes a divided person, unable to control his 'double', who not only behaves unpredictably, but also brings him face to face with a painful reality which he has found difficult to accept. As a result, the character is swept up in a vicious circle of despair and anguish, which intensifies his solitude and brings to the surface his death instinct, which, though an integral part of his soul, had so far remained silent. This instinct shows itself particularly in the character's relations with others as a negative form of communication, symbolized directly by hatred and different manifestations of sadism.

While communication with others, even inside the family or with friends, proves a failure, as a direct consequence of the character's vulnerability, his relationship with the community is more difficult still. The community offers no attractions, being viewed solely as an instrument of social and moral control. The character rebels against this form of limitation on his freedom, but his revolt is doomed to failure, because although he considers himself a being apart, separate from the hated social structures, he has in him the marks of social class and ambition, and he even unconsciously justifies certain concessions to his group.

Due to the accumulation of failures in his attempts at self-knowledge and in his social relationships, the character becomes a prey to metaphysical doubt. Psychological problems cause certain concepts to become confused in his mind and, if he has a certain awareness that Evil can derive from social decline in its different forms, he is unconscious of the Evil within himself and, worse still, neither knows where Good is to be found nor even what Good is. For this reason, Satanism often seems to him the appropriate answer to a God who remains silent to man's pleas and who allows injustice and unnecessary suffering. Very few ever see the face of God. The majority stay in despair, and death, which has been within them from the beginning, comes as the logical, expected end to their odyssey. However, the character fights against it to the end with a conscious assertion of his human dignity. Although they know death to be inevitable and, as the tragic

heroes they are, acknowledge that life has nothing to offer them and that their mistakes were too serious to undo, they cannot tolerate the limitation of their freedom by a transcendental power and do not accept the end. 'A luta contra a morte' is therefore an appropriate synthesis to describe the odyssey of a character for whom life may be a gradual decline into annihilation, but is at the same time a defiant form of death.

ABBREVIATIONS

In order to avoid unnecessary footnotes and on other occasions where the complete title of Cardoso's works might be intrusive, I have adopted the following abbreviations:

(<u>M</u>)	<u>Maleita</u>
(<u>S</u>)	<u>Salgueiro</u>
(<u>LS</u>)	<u>A luz no subsolo</u>
(<u>MV</u>)	<u>Mãos vazias</u>
(<u>D</u>)	<u>O desconhecido</u>
(<u>DP</u>)	<u>Dias perdidos</u>
(<u>I</u>)	<u>Inácio</u>
(<u>PH</u>)	<u>A professora Hilda</u>
(<u>A</u>)	<u>O anfiteatro</u>
(<u>E</u>)	<u>O enfeitado</u>
(<u>CCA</u>)	<u>Crônica da casa assassinada</u>
(<u>DC</u>)	<u>Diário completo</u>
(<u>V</u>)	<u>O viajante</u>

The page references in all cases are taken from the editions listed in the bibliography.

INTRODUCTION

Novelist, poet, dramatist, painter, Lúcio Cardoso is associated with the Catholic ('espiritualista') revival launched in Brazil by the works of Farias Brito in the first decade of this century and given literary form in the Thirties and Forties. Jackson de Figueiredo, the movement's religious mentor, brought Pascal back into fashion with his essay Pascal e a Inquietação Moderna (1922); at the same time he headed a powerful anti-Thomist reaction with his defence of Christian radicals such as Boehme and Kierkegaard. This religious and philosophical basis is at the heart of the reactionary attitudes held by the group's creative writers, Cardoso among them, who spurned the materialism of the contemporary world which they considered responsible for the blatant defects of Brazilian liberalism: collective corruption, the mediocrity of the political leaders, political intrigue and the decline in social morality.¹ For Lúcio Cardoso, the encounter with this social decay is all the more distasteful because, coming from the provinces, he had looked for the promise of a better world in the capital city, only to discover gradually that it was contaminated. This may have strengthened his 'mineirismo', in as much as there exists a 'mineiro'² mind or temperament which has resulted from that gloomy tradition, "dessa alma barroca e torturada, do negrume arcádico e inconfidente das Minas".³ Such is the oppressive atmosphere

which Cardoso was to communicate in his works:

A tristeza peculiar e cheia de dolência que vi em tantos tipos diferentes da minha infância, que reencontrei mais tarde, que descubro em mim mesmo, e que é uma das qualidades da 'alma' dessa gente enfêrma e escravizada que é a nossa. Essas coisas me constituem ... (DC, 141)

To be more precise, one might say that the intense feeling of a glorious but tragic past, which is such a feature of the interior of Minas Gerais, was so rooted in Lúcio Cardoso, that he was unable to shake off its influence:

Minas, êsse espinho que não consigo arrancar do meu coração - fui menino em Minas, cursei Minas e os seus córregos, vi nascer gente e nome em Minas, na época em que essas coisas contam (sic). O que amo em Minas é a sua fôrça bruta, seu poder de legenda, de terras lavradas pela aventura que, sem me destruir, incessantemente me alimenta. O que amo em Minas são os pedaços que me faltam, e que não podendo ser recuperados, ardem no seu vazio, à espera que eu me faça inteiro - coisa que só a morte fará possível. (DC, 293)

The strength of this past, aided by the lack of interest he felt for the present, gradually led him to identify with fin de siècle literature, moving away from an initial venture into 1930s regionalism in favour of a less restricted world-view. By temperament, as well as in literary terms, Lúcio Cardoso had the hallmark of a décadent:⁴ as a person

he was always in search of new experiences on which he frittered away a life he saw as lacking any real value;⁵ in his literary works this propensity led him to create heroes in the Byronic mould.⁶ These are characters whose most marked feature is an intense restlessness, found even in adolescents like Rogério, in Inácio, since, irrespective of age, they all live "under a curse, doomed to a fate really fixed by themselves in their own minds, but which they seemed determined to fulfil".⁷ As well as restless, they are cruel: a direct consequence of the intensity with which they experience their own problems and the indifference with which they view the fate of others. In fact, for the most part, Cardoso's heroes use those around them with a coldness so calculating that the only precedent that comes to mind is to be found in Dostoevsky. We can find an explanation for this conduct in Byron's own words: "Passion is the element in which we live; without it we but vegetate".⁸ Or in the words of Cardoso himself: "O que me interessa não é o prazer, a ação, a glória, ou mesmo o amor. É, única e exclusivamente, essa força do absoluto que se chama paixão" (DC, 35). Passion confers absolute conviction on the actions of Cardoso's characters, so that some of them are endowed with "uma energia, uma força escondida" (DC, 144) which makes them overpowering. These will be referred to as 'personagens-fôrças' (A, 219): human maëlstroms who suck other characters into their power, although they frequently seem unaware of their own cruelty, as is the case with Pedro, in A luz no subsolo.

Features such as those mentioned above serve to point up another important element: for most of his life the hero-figure adopts an anti-social posture, challenging the community not only by going beyond the limits of social condemnation, committing murder and theft, but also in the striking peculiarity of his appearance in public. When Rogério, for instance, decides in favour of cruelty and makes the exploitation of his fellow human beings a matter of principle, he goes out and spends his savings in order to dress as a dandy (I, 62).⁹ It is Rogério, too, who, in his description of Inácio, draws our attention to "sua cara de boneca de loiça e o seu indefectível terno de xadrez" (I, 90). Inácio's clothes were not the only thing about him that caused people to notice him: "o seu comportamento era abjecto" (I, 75), his every action being aimed at offending those about him. However, the character whose image comes closest to the traditional idea of Mephistopheles is undoubtedly Miguel:

A sua roupa era de um preto luzidio, caprichosamente passada a ferro, suas botas lustrosas e o cabelo liso estava impregnado de um óleo que deixava à sua passagem uma nuvem de perfume adocicado, os seus dedos eram longos e afilados, dedos de uma curiosa expressão feminina. (...) A nuca, uma nuca branca inteiramente lisa onde os tendões pareciam denunciar a cada momento a magreza. Porque Miguel era magro, de uma dessas magrezas longas e pálidas, quase seráficas. (D, 143)

This outward show of revolt against society, whereby the character deliberately exhibits his difference from other people, is in line with the Byronic 'hero-outlaw'. ¹⁰

At the same time, most of these figures seem to retain some degree of apprehension at the thought of committing irreversible actions; they may have no fear of society, yet they appear to be afraid of some unknown sanction, because, instead of perpetrating the crimes and sins themselves, they force others to perform the acts in their name. This is what happens with Pedro in A luz no subsolo: he is never seen to kill or to steal, himself, because the psychological control he exercises over a weaker character - Bernardo - makes it possible for him to force the latter into performing the fateful, irremediable acts which he, Pedro, apparently lacks the courage to execute. ¹¹ Another of Cardoso's characters, Miguel (D, 191), admits that fear, cowardice, is the reason for his hesitation, but I suggest there may be an underlying motive, one which is more important in philosophical terms. The 'dérèglement de tous les sens' ¹² engaged in by Inácio (E) and Rogério (I) carries with it the danger that they will ruin themselves physically before they can achieve their purpose. Alcohol, sex and drugs, indulged in to excess, may impair the character's capacity for rational thought and undermine the very basis of his quest. It is preferable, therefor, to make plans in private, with a clear head, and use other men for one's experiments.

With respect to his heroines, Lúcio Cardoso worked gradually towards the femme fatale type he was finally to create with such skill. The restlessness, the cruelty, the passionate nature are present from the start, but other features were added after being tried out initially in secondary characters: in Diana, in Dias perdidos, he embodied the destructive power of beauty,¹³ while Stella, in Inácio, is made to carry cruelty to extremes of sadism, inflicting on her lovers the whole range of 'méchancetés de l'amour'.¹⁴ All these characteristics come together in the portrait of Nina, the central figure of Crônica da casa assassinada, a veritable 'belle dame sans merci'.¹⁵ This memorable character epitomizes the decadents' idéa! féminin: "Fatality, Evil and Death are incarnated in Fatal Beauty";¹⁶ she is even imbued with that enigmatic sadness which Baudelaire considered the distinctive mark of female beauty.¹⁷ To these personality traits, Cardoso added a singular physical appearance characterized by a delicacy and fragility which masked Nina's destructive nature, only the colour of her hair, which was red, hinting at the fire within her, ready to sear the souls of those who came into close contact with her.¹⁸

If features such as these induce one to label Cardoso as a decadent, the emphasis placed on certain aspects of the Byronic hero and more still the underlying reasons called upon to explain his actions prompt one to see him as a descendant of Dostoevsky, the only literary figure whose influence Cardoso openly admitted.¹⁹

There are certainly many points of contact between them, particularly as concerns their vision of Man, for both of them proclaim the sublimity of the human creature with a conviction that borders on the heretical. Lúcio Cardoso is perhaps aware of this, when he exclaims, in a passage of the Diário completo: "Perdoai, meu Deus, transformar os flácidos rostos de barro em máscaras de ferro" (DC, 8).

This sublime creature has to be sought where he lacks the frivolous palliatives which society offers him - such as physical well-being, social position - and which serve only to conceal man's essential nature. For both writers, in the words of Berdyaev:

The inmost part of being cannot express itself in the stable conditions of everyday life; it comes to the light of day only in some flare-up in which the fixed and dead forms of an effete society are destroyed. 20

For both of them, social man, "reified" man, made manifest his flawed nature when he created hideous cities like St. Petersburg or Rio de Janeiro in which human beings live only because they are condemned to do so. Unfortunately, the city is not only the consequence of human limitations but equally "the cause of contemporary trauma and spiritual loss". 21 This explains why the picture is deliberately distorted, the areas of low life being exaggerated at the expense of the beauty

to be found in some of the more congenial neighbourhoods; in this way they create an 'urban Gothic' as the ideal setting for the human tragedy. St. Petersburg, as described by Dostoevsky, is an eerie dreamworld, with its mists cloaking the criminal imaginings of a Raskolnikov, its dubious lodging houses, and its taverns where groups of young rationalists argued over their humanitarian ideals. Lúcio Cardoso's Rio de Janeiro is similarly represented by the haunts of prostitutes, the down-at-heel boarding houses and the junkie-infested doss-houses of its worst districts.²² And yet all is not lost, for man has a soul and a mind which can stay uncorrupted, regardless of the environment in which he lives and the experiences he goes through. This is the face of man that has to be rediscovered, primitive man, stripped of embellishments, as Lúcio Cardoso defines him at the close of the first volume of his Diário:

Através de todas as convulsões o que tentei erguer foi a imagem primitiva do Homem. E êle, como a divindade de Cristo naquele supremo instante de silêncio em que Pilatos o designou, sempre foi mais nítido, sempre foi mais puro, sob a marca candente do Ultraje. (DC, 170)

In order to understand him, then, it is necessary to show man as he really is and to this end Cardoso, like Dostoevsky, removes, one by one, the social props which sustain his characters, until they are left in isolation. They are then put through

a spiritual experience which drives them into limit situations where they are obliged to make a choice. In the unending search for a flicker of light on the dark side of the human soul, both of these writers release man from human and divine law, in order to follow him along the road he chooses, as a free agent, until it becomes clear how the adventure will end. This is really the core, the focal point of Cardoso's, and Dostoevsky's, study of man: what happens to man when he is given absolute freedom and whether, in fact, it is ever possible to be completely free.

Neither author delays the process: when their novels open the character has arrived at a crossroads, and from this point onwards will have to go through hours crucial to his, or her, destiny, because it is no longer possible to escape the memory of that moment of truth when they saw themselves as they really are. An example is Ana, in Crônica da casa assassinada: one day, while combing her hair in front of the mirror, as she did every morning, she suddenly becomes aware that she is the picture of mediocrity, with her hair pulled into a top-knot and that old severe black dress. ²⁴ Having received a partial answer to the question 'Who am I?', she will never be able to see herself in the same light again and will have to change her whole outlook on life.

The manner in which the characters are launched upon their itinerary has two important consequences. First of all, in this type of novel there is never an I and an other in the real sense; rather we have two Is face to face, one utterly committed to one view of life, the other representing a different outlook,

independent of the first and outside his comprehension. Normally, in fact, the character attempts neither to understand nor to accept his fellows; ²⁵ whether he is a central or secondary character, ²⁶ his whole endeavour is invested in the search for self and in the reexamination of his world and the world about him. And yet Cardoso, like Dostoevsky, does not turn to monologue, or soliloquy, as a means of character definition; both authors create extremely rational characters, given to dialectical reasoning, but the expression of their ideas and feelings develops within the framework of dialogue. Dialogue, however, not as a means of communication, for its purpose is to exhibit the two minds opposite one another: in the words of Adonias Filho "a personagem se processa numa espécie de monólogo ininterrupto que busca conhecer-se a si mesmo na guerra interior sem piedade e misericórdia". ²⁷ As in the following example from

A luz no subsolo:

(...) É aí Bernardo que ressoa a pergunta misteriosa:

Deus existe? E o eu que volta ao seu lugar responde tranquilamente 'não, não existe'. A noite é escura, e se te estenderes na linha férrea e a locomotiva despedaçar o teu corpo, Deus não te impedirá de morrer. Experimenta e verás que te podes destruir a ti mesmo.

- Mas quem te poderá criar? - perguntou Bernardo numa súbita inspiração.

- Eu não sei, meu amigo, qual é o poder de um homem que se enforca ou se despedaça sob um trem, mas têm acontecido estranhos casos. Por que não posso eu desvendar um mistério do qual tenho conhecimento? Se Deus existe ...

- Só ele é Senhor dos seus mistérios.

- Mas não existe. Nada me impede pois de me revoltar contra a 'idéia' de Deus.

- Bem vejo, meu caro, que você é uma arma do demônio levantada contra o poder divino.

Pedro curvou-se sobre êle e soprou lentamente:

- Somos.

- Não eu! - gritou Bernardo.

- Por quê?

- Nem isso sou. Já me disseram que eu não passo de uma pobre larva ... que tem o demônio a ver comigo? (LS, 109-110)

In this conversation between Pedro and his 'double' Bernardo we are shown the tortured expression of Pedro's satanism and, at the same time, via Bernardo, a flicker of hope: the satanist and the incarnation of mediocrity, face to face, upholding their respective philosophies.

The second consequence of the character's self-centredness is that he becomes a 'voice' not only with respect to himself, but also:

about his immediate environment, and also a word about the world - he has not only a consciousness, but an ideology too. ²⁸

This explains why dialogue is so important. As the idealist philosophers showed, an idea cannot live in a consciousness which is in isolation: if it is confined for long, it languishes and dies. ²⁹ An idea can only take form, develop, mature and engender other ideas when it runs counter to, or at least is confronted by,

other, different ideas.

As a result, an "idea-heroine" seems to hover over the hero, governing his life: the characters thus become "people of one idea" and dedicate the whole force of their will to it:

The idea has taken command of the deepest core of their personality (...). The important thing is not the ordinary classification of a person's character and actions but rather the indicator of the dedication of his whole personality to the idea. ³⁰

While the ideas vary from book to book, in each novel there is always one idea which the character pursues with undivided passion. ³¹ What Alyosha says of his brother Ivan can be applied equally to all the characters: "He is filled with a great and unresolved idea. He is one of those who don't need millions, they just need to get an idea straight". ³² When, therefore, we do not know which idea controls a particular character, he or she remains a mystery to us; this happens with Nina (CCA) who only makes her position clear when the novel is well under way. Once she explains that sin is a guideline for her, we begin to understand her.

The importance given to ideas is a consequence of their status as a product of the intelligence, they can never be a direct expression of the material human being whom Lúcio Cardoso, like Dostoevsky, claims to reject. It is also in accordance with the authors' intentions, since neither has a message to communicate, neither attempts to prove a preconceived view of life. All they do is devise possible courses of action, of which they, like their

readers, are spectators, since the final outcome of the protagonists' journey is unknown to them also. Lúcio Cardoso explains this in his Diário:

Tenho para mim, e isto há vários anos, que a misericórdia de Deus para comigo, e a total iluminação da minha alma, só se farão através do meu trabalho. Lidando com estas tristes almas obscuras que invento, que eu não escolhi, mas que me foram dadas na sua solidão e no seu espanto (...) aprendi o quanto de ternura e de infinita piedade vai numa vocação. Eu sei, talvez elas não sejam nem mesmo esteticamente acabadas, mas ainda assim, essas figuras desajeitadas é que me fariam ver, através de tão áridos caminhos, a verdade parcial ou total para que Deus me reserva. (DC, 137)

Notes

- 1 The strictures of the group are well summed up in Octávio de Faria's long political essay Maquiavel e o Brasil (Rio, 1931). Octávio de Faria was the group's theorist and had a powerful ideological influence on the others, partly through lending them books, but also by means of meetings at his house where discussions took place (cf. Cardoso's Diário completo, 126, 157, 192, 237, 254, 255).
- 2 The existence of a 'mineiro' mind, or mentality, observable in the works of a large number of writers from Minas Gerais - detected in certain common themes or moods, e.g. religious and mystic - has been strongly urged by Fausto Cunha (Biografia crítica das letras mineiras, Rio de Janeiro, MEC, 1956, p.100 et seq.) and M. Oliveira (História da literatura mineira, Belo Horizonte, Itatiaia, 1958, p.145 et seq.).
- 3 DOURADO, Autran. Uma poética de romance. Rio de Janeiro, Perspectiva, 1973, 53.
- 4 Lúcio Cardoso was not happy with the term 'decadent', preferring to be considered a romantic: "Sou totalmente um romântico, com más heranças próprias e sem responsabilidade de ninguém" (DC, 138).
- 5 PRAZ, Mario (The Romantic Agony. London, Oxford University Press, 1978, 73) and GAUNT, William (The Aesthetic Adventure, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957, p.57 et seq.) claim that Aestheticism, or 'decadentism', was a way of life and a state of mind. What they say fits in with statements made by friends of Lúcio Cardoso. Both Autran Dourado (Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 14 October 1978) and Walmyr Ayala

- 5 ('Depoimento sobre Lúcio Cardoso, Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 30 November 1968) refer to the intensity of his mode of life and the unusual experiences he put himself through in order to have first-hand knowledge of them. And Maria Alice Barroso ('A sombra de Lúcio Cardoso', Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 30 November 1968) writes of the "ar de desprezo" with which he viewed her good conduct, and complains "Lúcio Cardoso vivia a 40° de temperatura".

- 6 PRAZ (Op.cit., 87) states that the Fatal Man of the decadents is a literary survival of the hero of Byron's Childe Harold. The characteristics of this type of Byronic hero may be summarized as follows: "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection". JUMP, J.D. From Blake to Byron. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957, 240.

- 7 PRAZ, Op.cit., 75.

- 8 Ibid., 73.

- 9 To dress not just as a dandy but in an exaggerated and highly distinctive manner - like Baudelaire painting his hair green - was a constant feature of the decadents' 'style', whether it was Swinburne, Baudelaire or Flaubert (PRAZ, Op. cit., 439).

- 10 Ibid., 75 et seq.

- 11 The formula is not new, having been used to great effect by Dostoevsky in The Brothers Karamazov, where Ivan plans the crime and incites Smerdyakov to commit it.

- 12 This was Rimbaud's strategy to "se faire voyant". One had to experience "un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens. Tous les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il (l'homme) cherche en lui même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences" ("Lettre à Paul Dimeny", 15 May 1871).
- 13 Cardoso himself justifies this fascination with physical beauty:
- A beleza é o supremo espasmo, a angústia máxima, o sentimento maior de furor ante a fragilidade humana e a possibilidade de destruição de tudo. E é assim, sob o terror, que o homem se realiza integralmente. (DC, 27)
- 14 This phrase of Musset's, from Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle, was frequently used by the decadents to describe the painful nature of love, the 'voluptas dolendi' so much in accordance with the taste of the period (PRAZ, Op.cit., 140).
- 15 This expression - from the poem by Keats - was used by the decadents to epitomize their female characters.
- 16 The definition is Moreau's (See PRAZ, Op.cit., 309).
- 17 "J'ai trouvé la définition du Beau. C'est quelque chose d'ardent et de triste (...) Je ne conçois un type de Beauté où il n'y ait du Malheur". (Journaux Intimes, Paris, Grès, 1920, 18).
- 18 Nina might be likened to the female figures of several paintings by decadent artists, such as The Caress, by F. Khnopff.

The picture shows a young man being embraced by a hybrid creature with the head of a woman, pale of complexion and with red hair, and the body of a tiger, symbolic of her perverseness.

- 19 In 'Quase um Manifesto' (Letras e Artes, 1 June 1947, 3) Lúcio Cardoso says of the hero in his novels "esse homem subterrâneo e de alma nua foi inaugurado com Dostoievsky". Adonias Filho in 'Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso' (Cadernos da Hora Presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1938, 78) rejects the connection between Cardoso and Dostoevsky, which he considers "um erro pueril da crítica". With due respect, I feel that Adonias, in his attempt to prove Cardoso's originality, is guilty of a gross oversimplification, when he has the following to say of Dostoevsky:

Dostoievsky foi quase um ignorante da atividade pura da inteligência. Foram os nervos relaxados na neve, os olhos inquiridores dos anos de prisão, a pobreza, as doenças, foi tudo isso quem fez de Dostoievsky um romancista. (...) Dostoievsky era um corpo escrevendo, apanhou a vida em seu estado natural. Ela, a vida em toda a sua tragédia, saiu do mundo de Deus e penetrou nos seus livros. E, como consequência de tamanha fidelidade, a ausência de fundamentos religiosos ou filosóficos na sua obra.

- 20 BERDYAEV, N. Dostoevsky. New York, Meridian Books, 1957, 43.
- 21 JONGE, A. de. Dostoevsky and the Age of Intensity. London, Secker and Warburg, 1975, 41.

- 22 Rio de Janeiro is the setting for only three novellas - Inácio, O enfeitado and O anfiteatro - and it is in them that we find the eerie, fantastic atmosphere referred to.
- 23 Cf. what Mikhail Bakhtin (Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1973, 60) says in relation to Dostoevsky: "He would describe the crises and turning points in their [the characters'] lives, he would depict life on the brink".
- 24 There is a similar episode in Poor Folk, when Devushkin, a minor civil servant, catches sight of himself in a mirror:
- I was so thunderstruck that my lips trembled, and my legs too. And with good reason, my dear. First of all, I was ashamed; I glanced into the mirror, and what I saw there was simply enough to drive you mad ...
(Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1894, 159).
- 25 Even in Crônica da casa assassinada, where we are given the impression that the other characters are attempting to decipher Nina, this individual interest is still present. If we pay careful attention to their statements, we see that each of them describes his/her part in the story at the particular point where Nina erupted into their lives. This explains why Nina is as much of a mystery to us when we close the book as she was at the outset, and why on the other hand we know some of the "narrators" well.
- 26 Secondary characters in the sense that Forster meant when he spoke of 'flat characters' - wholly predictable, mere adjuncts to the main characters - are not to be found in

Cardoso's novels. As Forster said of Dostoevsky, all the characters are principal characters, at least potentially: those who develop their vision are the main characters, those whose vision is not unfolded are the ones I have referred to as secondary characters.

- 27 Adonias Filho, 'Múcio Cardoso', in Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 14 October 1978.
- 28 BAKHTIN, Op.cit., 63
- 29 This is precisely what happens to Ana in Crônica da casa assassinada who believes that Alberto's memory is one of the mainstays of her existence. Since, however, it is a secret which she cannot discuss with anyone, she suddenly discovers, some years later, that she has been preserving a ghost and that nothing is left of her former feeling (CCA, 277).
- 30 BAKHTIN, Op.cit., 71
- 31 As Dostoevsky says of his own characters: "Passion is the idea we can feel" (quoted in BAKHTIN, Op.cit., 13).
- 32 The Brothers Karamazov. Translated by Constance Garnett. London, Four Square Books, 1958, 169.

PART ONE: "CONHECE-TE A TI MESMO"

CHAPTER 1: IN SEARCH OF LIFE

The works of Lúcio Cardoso contain a great many definitions of life and his characters have a tendency to formulate theories about existence. For a small group of quiet, self-effacing characters who accept life fully, not passively, living is a mixture of patience and humility: "Paciência para suportar as ambições constantemente traídas e humildade para não desejar acima das nossas forças" (DP, 41).¹ But for the majority of the characters life has to be lived intensely - "quero viver" is a defiant outcry often to be heard,² because they cannot accept a life thrust upon them, they must choose their own life. Only thus can they feel that they are gaining experience of living and it is this experience that makes them feel that they exist. In addition, life is a pursuit of goals, a quest in which man chooses his destiny and searches for meanings; an experience which may come to him at any stage of life, regardless of age. The adolescents, like André, set out on their way with the conviction that "a vida é bela" (CCA, 224); midway through their quest, like Ida in Mãos vazias, they feel that "a vida é vazia e difícil" (MV, 120); at the end of the road, when they are elderly, like the Coronel in Crônica da casa assassinada, they are aware that life "é uma coisa estranha" (CCA, 332).

In general terms, one may say that for the majority of Cardoso's characters life is an adventure and a discovery. This may take a precise form, as it does in the case of Cira who plans to

"partir por essas estradas" (LS, 286), or it may be something of a psychological experiment: for Pedro life "é um desafio constante" (LS, 181), while Nina finds it a wonderful source of new experiences (CCA, 248). Then there are those, like Sálvio in Dias perdidos, for whom to live "é não tentar reter as coisas" (DP, 169), to forsake before one can be forsaken, which will cause them to live in solitude in the attempt to defend themselves against life's sufferings. Yet another group is formed by those who prefer to be ignorant of the truth, or rather to lie to themselves and whose life has become a farce. For these, reality is, in the words of Ana Meneses "as trevas do desespero" (CCA, 137).

Of those characters who are sure of what they want and how to obtain it, only Clara eventually gives in and accepts life. ³ But even her change of attitude is not the result of a weakening of her will, so much as of the greater tolerance that comes with age, making her less self-centred:

Como viver sem atentar contra os que nos rodeiam? (DP, 208)

Não é viver que é difícil, é viver com os nossos semelhantes. Tudo se resume em não levantar a mão contra eles, não feri-los, não trucidá-los em nosso desejo cego de subsistir. (DP, 243)

With the exception of Clara, subdued by age, the other characters are too obsessed with the object of their quest to stop, let alone concern themselves with others. The first consequence of this quest, for all of them, is to be overcome by "a dôr de viver" ⁴ -

which, however, it does not occur to them to avoid, since suffering is the surest source of knowledge. ⁵ Some, like Sílvia in Dias perdidos, begin to suffer in their childhood (DP, 117), whilst others, like Cláudio in O anfiteatro, are not affected until adolescence (A, 225). But all of them are caught eventually and their suffering is decisive for their future: "Suffering if accepted may pacify; if it is dodged, it will return; if it is used, the spirit triumphs; and certainly, if it is resented, the devil gets to work". ⁶

The type of suffering to be faced by each character is directly linked to the particular view of life he or she professes; but it is always present, because it is an essential attribute of human nature. Neither fear of suffering, nor even fear of self-annihilation detain the characters in their unceasing quest, because it is better to "descer sempre em nossas descobertas como no fundo dum poço", in the words of the Coronel (CCA, 332), than to "se transformar em fantasma", as Cláudio says (A, 215). The underlying stimulus for this perpetual search, this discourse on existence and this insistence on the will to live, is the threat of death.

From the beginning of his work, Cardoso's characters are obsessed by the idea of the struggle against death. In Maleita, the combat is a physical one, ⁷ but starting with A luz no subsolo it acquires that form of psychological revolt, that total refusal, which is to pervade all his subsequent works and which justifies the characters' need - since they know that death is inevitable - to be sure that they have really lived. This is why Ana, in

Meneses, one of Cardoso's most tormented creations, in her final confession, seeks not "essa Graça que ela tanto renegara" but "a certeza de que vivera" (CCA, 468).

To live, then, is to "divertere", in the sense Pascal gave to the word:

Rien n'est si insupportable à l'homme que d'être dans un plein repos, sans passions, sans affaire, sans divertissement. Il sent alors son néant, son abandon, son insuffisance, sa dépendance, son impuissance, son vide. Incontinent il sortira du fond de son âme l'ennui, la noiceur, la tristesse, le chagrin, le désespoir.⁸

And the basis of this "divertissement" is that: "Les hommes n'ayant pu guérir la mort, la misère, l'ignorance, ils se sont avisés, pour se rendre heureux, de n'y plus penser".⁹

In this way, one of man's apparent consolations, divertissement, proves to be the worst of his misfortunes, since it prevents him thinking about his personal reality and forces him along the road to perdition. Without this diversion, man would sink into boredom and ennui; to escape from this apathy he would be obliged to seek solutions. But he is surrounded by pleasures - gaming, drink, sex, social success - which carry him gradually, without his being aware, towards death:

Nous courons sans souci dans le précipice, après que nous avons mis quelque chose devant nous pour nous empêcher de voir.¹⁰

For Pascal, then DIVERTERE is to be understood in its Latin sense of deviate (from): in this case, to deviate from the path of truth, disperse, or dissipate one's soul in trivial, unimportant matters which can never be man's reason for existence.

At the same time, the human spirit is always changing and although some characters actually make 'divertere' their aim in life,¹¹ for others, such as Sílvio (Dias perdidos) and Cláudio (O anfiteatro), it is only a phase through which they pass, then restlessly move on to other parts, or to another stage. In the words of Kierkegaard: "the self is always in movement and it passes through three stages or spheres of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious".¹² Pascal's 'divertere' corresponds to the first or second of these: starting points for man's journey, but not its final goal.

If we apply Kierkegaard's categories to Cardoso's characters, the 'aesthetic' phase will be seen, normally, to be quite short. It can take three forms, depending on the type of experience involved. The first is symbolized by Kierkegaard in the figure of Don Juan¹³ and represents an unsophisticated form of hedonism such as is experienced by the adolescent Sílvio in Dias perdidos. In this period of his life, Sílvio makes no real choices or decisions, allowing himself to drift along in the thrall of physical pleasure. For a number of years Sílvio's whole life is directed towards these moments of satisfaction. But when the moment is past, the feeling of wellbeing and peace of mind vanishes

too. He tries desperately to prevent this happening, stimulating his imagination at the expense of his will and at the same time seeking his individual being, which he believes does not exist outside of pleasure. This situation continues until the onset of the crisis which results in ennui, followed by his contempt for Lina and for the shoddy world she symbolizes. Now that he has at last seen the truth, Sílvio returns to his childhood sweetheart Diana (who has returned to Vila Velha) and to family life, in an attempt to raise his life style to the level of his aspirations.

A second form of the 'aesthetic' phase is symbolized by Faust; such is the sad story of Inácio in O enfeitado. He 'wakes up' when his faith in life abandons him, leaving in its place a threatening shadow, of which he is aware, but which he cannot understand and tries to escape. This is the assault of doubt, of a doubt more basic than intellectual doubt, that part of the individual make-up which causes Inácio to hesitate when he is about to kill Lucas, with the result that he loses Rogério's confidence. Living, as he does, among prostitutes, sexual and other sensual pleasures no longer give him satisfaction. What excites him still is the actual process of seduction; the more difficult this is, the more exciting. Hence his fascination with Adélia, who is almost a child still and whom he besieges in a drawn-out seduction to which he devotes all his energy. Yet when he has eventually accomplished his intention, he feels as sated as before.

Inácio is also fascinated by power, the source of all success. He attempts to understand it and to learn how to use it; to this end he abandons himself consciously to 'satanism in the hope that the devil will illuminate him. Paradoxically, in the opinion of Kierkegaard, Inácio-Fausto is not evil; he is simply experimenting with the Devil, in whom he believes as much as he believes in God. He is using Evil because he wants to know the "whole immense range of possibilities".¹⁴ Good and Evil are categories beyond his understanding and Inácio is as incapable of grasping the vital implications of yielding to Satan, as of perceiving what it means to surrender oneself to God. Good, as he knew it when he was a respected businessman and father, living with Stella in an attractive house, had no attraction for him and merely bored him. Inácio neither hates God nor loves the Devil, the two concepts have no real relevance for him: "He is just bored and doubtful - doubtful with a growing disillusion about himself and about things in general".¹⁵ So he keeps experimenting, always seeking, frittering away his self bit by bit, gradually becoming more exhausted and fragmented. Kierkegaard completes his portrait of this type of 'aesthetic' man with these words: "There is nothing more terrible to contemplate than a self resolved into a legion, a multiplicity of selves, losing the most holy and precious thing in man, the integrating power of personality".¹⁶ Finally, the total crisis of values, which he has been fending off for so long, drives him to the extreme form of doubt, absolute despair.

The third form of Kierkegaard's 'aesthetic' man is Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who appears in the guise of Cardoso's Zé Roberto in O desconhecido. Constantly on the move, in search of a place worth living in, a new emotion or a new identity, he tries everything: new jobs, different names, fresh goals. Even so, he feels no vibration within him and traverses the world without hope, without joy and without pain, as if "through a dreary, disconsolate desert";¹⁷ his indifference corresponds to the final stage of despair, annihilation. Unlike the two previous types, he feels neither desire nor curiosity, ambition nor pride; none of these holds any interest for him. Like Inácio, however, Zé Roberto is not evil. He feels no hatred towards God, nor even disbelief. His situation is worse than this, because he is conscious that God, like Evil, simply does not interest him. Yet indifference does not bring peace. Rather, it is a sort of sickness with which Zé Roberto aims to destroy his self, but the self survives within him, ready to manifest itself, as happens when his friendship with Paulo at last gives his life a meaning.

In all of these cases, the 'aesthetic' life can be used positively for the further development of the character's destiny. Since no decisive choice was made in this first phase, it need have no permanent effect and should be viewed as a stage in the process of accumulating personal experiences. The logical sequel should, therefore, be to progress from this phase as soon as ennui or despair threatens, because those who attempt to mark

time are in risk of going mad - as happens with Rogério in Inácio - or, worse still, of experiencing a living death. ¹⁸

Despair brings with it anguish and doubt, but more important it involves the close examination of beliefs and attitudes to life. This is the moment for the character to seek more permanent convictions, to make more decisive choices: this is Kierkegaard's 'ethical' phase. Again he proposes a triple framework for man's individual choice. The first is through marriage, which is the path followed by Sílvia when he discovers that the 'aesthetic' stage holds no further interest. ¹⁹ As Kierkegaard explains, while marriage retains certain 'aesthetic' elements in the sensual aspects of the relationship, there exists a more permanent, more important bond over and above the erotic moments, which does not disappear when they are past, but rather gives them a much deeper meaning. This is perhaps why Lúcio Cardoso allows relatively little weight to the physical relationship of Sílvia and Diana, stressing instead the vows of eternal love which the couple promise to perpetuate. Marriage is not imposed from outside, it is an act of choice, a proof of freedom and, consequently, a positive form of self-affirmation.

Friendship can have similar characteristics to marriage. It is based on affection and on self-imposed obligations that last for more than a day. Cláudio and Gil, in O anfitrião, respect their mutual pledge for life, helping one another in moments of solitude and revolt.

The third and final choice made by the self is vocation. Unlike employment, vocation is a vital choice, involving total dedication to a way of life, as in the case of Pedro in A luz no subsolo. He is so utterly involved in his mission as a teacher, that he reaches the point of being unable to dissociate his vocation and his personal identity. Kierkegaard draws to our attention the fact that 'ethical' should not be confused with 'moral'; the ethical comes from the very depths of personality and life on the ethical level is no mere fulfilment of duties - or rather, duty, in the ethical sense, is not just a series of annoying precepts or obligations which have to be respected throughout one's life. If this were the case, one could hardly claim that this stage is more truly meaningful than the aesthetic phase: "the ethical is an existential attitude grounded in the structure of the self", ²⁰ it is an obligation born of deep-seated need, not imposed by any external code.

Most of Cardoso's characters reach this stage of their journey without great difficulty. Many of them, with the 'aesthetic' phase long behind them, begin to feel restless and unhappy in the 'ethical' stage and attempt the leap to the 'spiritual' phase. On occasions the transfer is made after the character has committed an act condemned by public feeling.²¹ Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, incites his pupils to commit crimes in the name of freedom; Sílvia, in Dias perdidos, divorces Diana; Nina, in Crônica da casa assassinada, commits incest. This is the jumping-off point for the leap into the unknown,

for the character to test the strength of his passion, to overcome despair and behold the face of God. But this step is fraught with danger; danger in the choice itself, but particularly the danger of not attaining the next stage and thus of staying put in a limbo somewhere in between. This is what happens to Nina (CCA) who, instead of using incest as a stepping-stone, accepts it as an end in itself; similarly, Ida, in Mãos vazias, can no longer endure the monotony of her social life and commits suicide, failing to realize that she has not completed her life cycle. In the case of Valdo and Demétrio, the Meneses brothers in Crônica da casa assassinada, the 'house' becomes so important, a sort of idol, that they can see nothing else. Finally, there are Hilda in A professora Hilda, and Margarida and Laura, in O Anfiteatro, who devote their lives to hating another human being. Such characters, then, put themselves in the dangerous position of rejecting social morality, only to replace it with a false god, an ideal or an emotion which they see as life's goal.

If there exists an inner necessity which drives human beings from phase to phase, as Kierkegaard believed, this, in Cardoso's characters, must be the 'idea': the key idea which pursues them and drives them to self-definition. However, while behind the emotions and thoughts directing them there is the ever-present question "who am I?", this search for individual identity ramifies into many lesser ideas, which are, nevertheless, the guidelines of the characters' actions. In general terms we can divide these controlling ideas into two

groups. The first may be summarized as the flight from mediocrity and from the routine of "doldrum days": an example is Ida, in Mãos vazias, who tries so hard to be different. The second group involves insistence on the primacy of the self, even though this may necessitate direct conflict with God: it includes characters like Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, with his fixation on overcoming death. The particular idea which a character follows is important for his quest and essential for his personal survival, because the demise of an idea implies the inner disintegration of the person. Nina, in Crônica da casa assassinada, is absorbed in erotic satisfaction; after several love affairs and her marriage, she discovers total physical union with Alberto, the gardener. This she fails to realize and goes off to Rio in the belief that he constituted just another affair, soon to be forgotten. This fails to happen, however. Returning to the estate, still in pursuit of her 'idea', she attempts to recreate Alberto in her own son, making him the idol, the symbol of the love to which she had devoted her whole life. Gradually, the truth dawns on her: André is just André, not Alberto, who is dead and has taken with him to the grave Nina's chance of fulfilment in love. Once her guiding idea withers, Nina sinks into a limitless sorrow which expresses the slow process of her inner death. This explains why, when she is actually dying physically, months later, the other characters are discomfited by the evil smell which comes from her, as if she were already decomposing.

The characters are concerned not only with 'living', during their short sojourn on earth, but also with surviving. Since none of them appears to believe in a life after death or the immortality of the soul, they may hope to survive through their children. Inácio, for example, in O enfeitado, suffers the premonition that he is gradually dying inside and searches the streets of Rio for his son Rogério, in order to pass on his philosophy of life. He engages Lina de Val-Flor, a fortune-teller with underworld contacts, to help him find Rogério and goes as far as pledging his own life, which he realizes is of little real value at a time when he is trying to make the most of what little inner life he still has. Of all Eúcio Cardoso's characters only Timóteo, in Crônica da casa assassinada, attains the idea of God and with it a belief in the immortality of the soul. Both of these are achieved as sudden Revelations. None of the other characters succeed in attaining "the spiritual sphere", either because they opt for Satanism or because the novel ends without their having made a choice on the path they will follow.

Notes

1 Few of Lúcio Cardoso's characters fall into this category. The most complete of them is Áurea, in Dias perdidos, who becomes an important secondary character. Otherwise, there are Felipe (MV), Elisa (D) and Maria (LS), who are little more than names and important only as a starting point for the main characters' reflections.

2 Spoken by Ida (MV), at the beginning of the book; by Clara, when she reflects on the lonely life to which her husband has condemned her (DP, 22); by Rogério, convalescing after a long illness (I, 29); by André, when he meets his mother for the first time (CCA, 225); by Zé Roberto, when he meets Paulo (D, 144).

3 Clara never lost the trace of her inner revolt. One might say of her, most fittingly, what Lúcio Cardoso wrote about himself: "A verdade é que nunca me domei; sentenciei-me à calma" (DC, 312).

4 The narrator of Dias perdidos defines this 'dôr de viver':

Não existem fatos isolados. Todas as coisas se correspondem, como as notas de uma imensa e dolorosa sinfonia. Não existem sentimentos esparsos, mas um só sentimento a que podemos chamar a dôr de viver, e onde se mistura tudo o que em nós arde e se corrompe, tudo o que é humano, fenece e é devorado pela obscuridade. (DP, 119)

- 5 Dostoevsky expresses it in much the same way through one of his best-known characters, his 'underground man':

As well as loving his own wellbeing man is fond of suffering, even passionately fond of it.

I am convinced that man will never give up true suffering that comes of ruin and chaos. Why?

Suffering is the sole root of consciousness.

(Notes from Underground. New York, Bantam Books, 1974, 39).

- 6 The comment is Boyce Gibson's (The Religion of Dostoevsky, London, SCM Press, 1973, 100) writing of the persistence of suffering as one of Dostoevsky's main themes.
- 7 Cf. ADONIAS FILHO, 'Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso', Cadernos da Hora Presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1939, 73). Adonias has consistently held the view that the general title given by Cardoso to his fiction, starting with A luz no subsolo - "A luta contra a Morte" - could be extended to take in his first two novels.
- 8 "Discours sur la Condition des Grands", Œuvres Complètes (Vol. 9), Paris, Hachette, 1914. For Morot-Sir (La Métaphysique de Pascal. Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1975, 94). Pascal believed that this constant desire for movement was "la poussée d'une inquiétude jamais satisfaite, que est l'image convulsée de la Gloire et du repos en Dieu".
- 9 PASCAL. Op. cit., 359.

- 10 Ibid., 359

- 11 One thinks of Rogério, in Inácio. In his case divertere is a philosophical position. Since he views man as a worm, refusing to believe that he is made in the image of God, he also rejects the idea of immortality and conducts a desperate search for a meaning to life. One could apply to him Oscar Wilde's famous phrase: "I do not seek happiness, but Pleasure, which is much more tragic" (quoted by GAUNT, Op.cit., 181)

- 12 See GRIMSLEY, R. Existentialist Thought. Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1955, 20.

- 13 KIERKEGAARD, S. Either/Or. London, Oxford University Press, 1946, Vol. I, 65.

- 14 Ibid., 74

- 15 PRICE, G. The Narrow Pass. London, Hutchinson, 1963, 167.

- 16 Ibid., Vol. 2, 135.

- 17 KIERKEGAARD, S. The Journals. London, Oxford University Press, 1938, entry 26.

- 18 As happens to Inácio, to whom Lina de Val-Flor says:
 "Parece que lhe falta um elemento vital, um calor para esse sangue que lhe corre nas veias (...). O senhor não está vivo, o senhor não passa de um espectro" (E, 288).

- 19 Except for Sílvio and Clara (DP) the other characters merely recollect this social phase and are already attempting the transfer to the spiritual phase, or have decided to return to the first stage, at the beginning of the respective work.
20. KIERKEGAARD, Op. cit., Vol. 2, 213.
- 21 In Fear and Trembling (New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955, 67), Kierkegaard refers to this point as "the teleological suspension of the ethical".

CHAPTER 2: THE OBSTACLES TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

a) Emotion as an obstacle to Reason

Our lives are dominated by the goddess Reason, who is our greatest and most tragic illusion.

(Jung)

The personal ideologies of Cardoso's characters may be summed up in terms of a quest for the self and a close analysis of their own human qualities and of the wellsprings of their actions. The best means of assessing the validity of their acquired experience seems to be through the intensive application of reason. But "Life is movement and change" ¹ or, in the words of Boehme, "human Nature is always contradictory". ² Boehme goes on to explain, in the course of expounding his Regeneration theory, that the contradiction is caused by the existence of two opposing forces in man's essence. One is tranquil and graceful like a lily: it is the force which favours the building of a new man. The other, which is restless and noxious, like a thistle, embodies the old Adam, and the two are locked in an endless struggle:

We have a lily-child and a thistle-child within us, and the storms of this life sweep often so tempestuously over the lily, that it might seem at times as though the lily must utterly perish. ³

If the destructive force so often gains the upper hand, it is because the ego, in its arrogance, believes itself to be omnipotent and fails to appeal to the grace of God. It is the ego that promotes in us excessive individualism and blinds us to the dual nature of human beings. In order to conceal his own natural limitation, man exaggerates the importance of his reason and professes to believe that his intelligence has the power to solve all of life's mysteries. Such is the wellspring of the actions of Lúcio Cardoso's characters.⁴ If life has for them the appearance of a huge puzzle, which they eventually define as "estranha e difícil", it is because they refuse to accept one side of their nature, thinking of themselves only as intelligent, rational beings.

One result of this attitude is the tendency to devote time and effort to activities intended for spiritual and cultural development. Starting from A luz no subsolo, Lúcio Cardoso introduces characters who read a great deal in an attempt to acquire experience from books before being involved in real life situations. As well as reading, writing (in the form of *mémoires*) is a frequent pursuit of Cardoso's central characters, several of whom narrate their past lives in a supposedly objective manner so as to make the truth stand out more obviously. At the same time, there is, in either of these so-called intellectual pursuits, a high degree of unacknowledged emotion. Whilst the company of books is a source of culture, it can also be a form of escapism. Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, failing to find happiness in his marriage, shuns Madalena's company and shuts

himself away in his books. Ida, in Mãos vazias, sick of the mediocrity of her life in S. João das Almas, relives wonderful romantic adventures through books. Zé Roberto, in O desconhecido, takes refuge from life and from his own soul in his reading.⁵ As for writing, despite what Inácio tells us - "vou restringir-me ao mais absoluto senso de objetividade" (E, 239) - the *mémoires* are set down as a form of confession, to allay doubts and feelings of guilt: in Rogério's case because he had dedicated his youth to admiring an unworthy creature; in Cláudio's because he had only understood his mother after her death; in Inácio's because he finds that he is dying and only then realizes that he has wasted his entire life.

This, then, is the most striking error in the way these characters conduct their lives: they try to live logically and rationally, ignoring the overriding importance of the emotions in human behaviour and that the intense experience of highly emotional states can easily overcome reason.⁶ Obsession, for example, is one such state; the person in the grip of an obsession throws away the chance to make something of the other experiences life has to offer. In this way, Hilda, in A professora Hilda, is so obsessed by her hatred for Eugênia that she is responsible for the death of Sofia, whom she loved, simply because she has to use her in the stratagem she invents to damage her rival's reputation; she takes no notice of the maid who had served her faithfully for thirty years or more and even scorns the affection shown towards her by the schoolchildren, her pupils. Zé Roberto, in O desconhecido, is similarly blinded by his obsession with

Raulo, so that he ignores the threat posed by Miguel, fails to understand the danger contained in Aurélia's promises and, worst of all, appears not to hear the appeals for help addressed to him by Elisa. His obsession causes him, in fact, to betray her trust in handing him her savings to take care of. ⁷

Obsessions not only deprive the characters of their critical faculty, dulling their intelligence and restricting the breadth of their experiences; they also cause them to lie to themselves. Madalena (LS) cannot admit to herself that Pedro does not love her and expounds, in monologue, the theory that he is a solitary being and has difficulty in communicating with others. Ana (CCA), instead of accepting that the hatred she felt for Nina, from the outset, was straightforward jealousy, contends that it came from their being rivals, because they had fallen in love with the same man. What she wants, really, is to escape the pettiness of her own feelings, because she will not acknowledge that she can envy the extraordinary physical beauty of the other woman. Here we have a case of mauvaise foi in the Sartrean sense: ⁸ the individual tries to believe in and live according to a lie, without realizing that he thereby falls into a trap, since insincerity always results in a distortion of one's behaviour, a defensive process which can lead to a splitting of the ego. ⁹ While it represents a form of rejection of reality, it is also an instinctive form of "recognition of the danger of reality". ¹⁰ In fact, the characters are aware that if they face the truth they are trying to evade, this will force decisive actions on them: so Madalena ends by poisoning Pedro (LS), while Ana (CCA), lacking the courage to kill Nina, ¹¹ sinks into a morass of insoluble doubts.

The great threat to reason does not stem only from the attempt to rationalize the emotions. It can come particularly from an irrational source outside the character's control, but which may influence his actions. It is an underground world revealed, first and foremost, through feelings which have no logical explanation, moments of intuition which the victim seems always to experience in the presence of his/her destroyer. Emanuela, for instance, in A luz no subsolo, is from the start possessed by an uncontrollable fear of Pedro; ¹² Zé Roberto, in O desconhecido, is overcome by a mixture of terror and loathing when he is forced into contact with Miguel (cf. D, 143). Even more interesting is the case of André, in Crônica da casa assassinada, when he meets his mother for the first time: ¹³ he is filled with a feeling of excitement, as if he could sense the experiences he would share with her as a woman.

The form taken by these explosions of the unconscious varies according to the character's personal habits and life experience. In Pedro's case, for instance, they occur in dreams: ¹⁴ on two occasions he meets the Devil in the shape of a "mendigo resignado" who alludes to his fears and the lack of coherence in his behaviour (LS, 140 and 174). But Pedro refuses to discuss his personal weaknesses and is indignant at the suggestion that he is afraid of his quest, or rather of what he might find at the end of it.

Sometimes, however, these revelations - or in some cases encouragement - come not from the individual's own depths, but from the outside world. There are cases of something similar

to 'mystical participation', ¹⁵ as in Salgueiro, when Geraldo is lying on the ground and feels that the strength and peace of mind he needs are flowing into him from the earth (S, 193). A still clearer case is that of Madalena, who, in a moment of total confusion, goes out at night into the garden and lies down naked among the sunflowers (LS, 218). The flowers seem to transmit to her the idea of leaving Pedro and, as had happened in a previous passage (212), it is as if they identified in some way with Madalena, as if they had some sort of bond with her and acted as confidants or counsellors.

So far we have seen only temporary interferences of the irrational, but it can take far more serious forms: it can be an unconscious that grows so powerful that it splits the ego, ¹⁶ or the irrational may finally overcome reason and drive the character to insanity. Madness is shown from different angles in Cardoso's works. In the case of Rogério, for example, it is the result of a moment of such despair that the character's reason could not sustain the shock. ¹⁷ It becomes a way of escape from a dreadful reality with which the character is faced and which he cannot assimilate without being destroyed. The other way of viewing madness is as a form of protection against "a corrupção do mundo e contra a impureza da vida" (LS, 200), as happens in the case of Emmanuela. She is visited by the Devil, whose aim is to make her accept the fact that she has grown up for good and can no longer hear the voice of childhood. At first she tries to fight back with logic, but when she finds that she

is losing ground, and because she knows that in order to find her way to God she must preserve her childhood, she shuts herself off from the present and retreats into the earlier time. ¹⁸ The result of leaving childhood behind altogether is "um longo esfacelamento da criatura subtraída de um mundo em que não pode mais penetrar" (LS, 117). ¹⁹ Lúcio Cardoso does not show the child necessarily as the blueprint of the man and as such to be observed with caution, since it is often the case that childish purity makes him a model to be followed and only those who are able to keep alive the spirit of childhood achieve saintliness. From what has been said it may be concluded that insanity is a desperate attempt to delay the passage of time, a way of immobilizing a period of life one should never have left, or even a method of retreading the road already covered, where one made so many serious mistakes. It can certainly be a path to the truth, ²⁰ which is why Timóteo, in Crônica da casa assassinada, seeks protection in insanity. It is his madness ²¹ that isolates him from the rest of the family, which had in any case ousted him, and even more so from the rest of the community. Timóteo himself intensifies his isolation by locking himself in his room, in virtual darkness, so as not to be distracted by the outside world and to be able to "permanecer debruçado sobre a sua alma. Literalmente debruçado, como alguém que do alto procura no fundo de um poço um objeto perdido", as Nina says of him (CCA, 126). To make sure that his solitude is respected, Timóteo is offensive to the family and dresses always in his mother's ball gowns, using

make-up and covering himself in jewels. To the Meneses family this is sufficient proof of his insanity and they never make any effort to understand their brother's bizarre behaviour. They never even question him about it, which is no doubt why Timóteo's own explanation was addressed to Nina, who did not belong to the family: ²²

Foi consciente que eu me degradei, porque sentindo-me menor que os outros, era pelo caminho do martírio que conseguiria elevar-me acima deles e tornar-me maior do que todos. (CCA, 443)

And so, with a remarkable show of willpower, he isolates himself within an artificial eternity, in a time which stands still and in an unchanging space, so that he may conduct a calculated self-examination. In his insanity, therefore, Timóteo is Cardoso's most lucid character: not only does he give full reign to his emotions and to his irrational impulses, so as to prevent them constituting obstacles in his quest; he also makes use of the family's fears ²³ as a form of protection for his self. He is the only character who appears to realize how dangerous it is to live only according to cold reason.

It is also this tendency to seek logical explanations for everything that happens in life that causes the characters to miscalculate when they try to control other characters. As we have said earlier, certain characters force others into performing

acts which they lack the courage to carry out themselves, and to this end they manipulate passions which they perceive in these weaker characters and which can be made to erupt by all manner of inducements. Yet they frequently miscalculate in their anticipation of the mental process at work in the other characters, forgetting that a person with a fixed idea is a split being and therefore inconsistent. The first case is in A luz no subsolo, where Pedro gradually incites Bernardo to murder Madalena.²⁴ He repeats to him the story of a crime committed by a man blinded by passion for a woman who spurned him: one day, he waits for her on the road and when he realizes that she will never love him, yet his love for her cannot be destroyed, he strangles her with her own shawl.²⁵ Pedro keeps telling his brother-in-law that overwhelming passions of this type are without solution: the only possibility is to get rid of the feeling by destroying its source. What Pedro fails to foresee is that because Bernardo was unable to rid himself of Angélica, with whom he had a long-standing affair, though he despised her, and because his feelings for Madalena had always verged on adoration, when he does act it is against his mistress, instead of against Madalena.

The same sort of misdirected influence is exerted by Miguel over Zé Roberto, in O desconhecido. When the latter arrives at the estate, Miguel is surprised to find how uninvolved he is, emotionally, and how easy therefore it should be to manipulate his passions. Miguel had long been planning the murder of Aurélia

but did not wish to be directly involved; now he sees a unique opportunity of achieving his aim. He begins to create a restless atmosphere about the estate and talks to Zé Roberto at some length about the beauty and value of Aurélia's jewelry. During this period of indoctrination, however, Zé Roberto develops a friendship with Paulo, his room-mate, whom he starts teaching to read. Because of the strength of his feeling for Paulo, when the latter confides to him his plans to run away with a girlfriend, Zé Roberto, who has been in an increasingly tense emotional state, loses control of his feelings and kills Paulo. In this way he frustrates Miguel's carefully contrived plot.

Even more straightforward is the third example, from Crônica da casa assassinada, which takes place in the Meneses household. Demétrio senses that Nina's presence threatens the peace of a family which he has ruled over with fanatical prejudice. He decides that she must die, but since he does not want to soil his own hands, he sets the stage for a crime of passion. He purchases a pistol, which he leaves in full view; then he invents a story of adultery between Nina and the gardener, Alberto.²⁶ But Valdo is so much in love with his wife, that when matters come to a head, instead of shooting Nina, in his despair he tries to kill himself.

In all these cases, we are faced by the same inference: when an individual makes the mistake of listening exclusively to his own logic, he extends this mistake to his contact with other individuals.

b) Chronological time as an obstacle to discovery of the self

Il y a des moments de l'existence
où le temps et l'étendue sont plus
profonds, et le sentiment de
l'existence immensément augmenté.

(Baudelaire)

Time, with its unceasing flow, is one of the factors that contributes most to the torment of Cardoso's characters. Obsessed with their pursuit of essential truths, they see the expression 'time flies' as more than a commonplace, since it may prove a serious impediment to the accomplishment of their quest. In addition to the distress they feel, the characters' individual experience of the passing of time depends on their personal approach to life itself. For the mediocre, for instance, time is imbued with ennui; the past is viewed as a long line unbroken by events, a succession of "dias perdidos", as the author so well defined it. The present is still-born; only the future appears to offer some hope of fulfilment. Since their lives have been so uninteresting, their sole aspiration is converted into the desire for "one privileged moment", ²⁷ an embodiment of all the experiences others have had over a long period and which the character has never known. This pursuit of the moment of intensity may become a disease, which makes the character restless, driving him on in an unrelenting search. Some of them die without achieving the coveted moment, but they all make the

attempt: Ida believes she has attained it when she seduces the doctor (MV) ²⁸ and Clara experiences it when she is present at the death of Jacques and feels all her resentment against him and all her frustration finally slipping away.

For the other type of character, those in search of essential truths, time represents a desire for eternity and they therefore opt for instants of extreme pleasure which will earn them eternal damnation. Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, invests his life in training Bernardo to kill Madalena, while Nina in Crônica da casa assassinada, turns to incest to attempt the resurrection of the man she had loved, and in the process initiates another into to the sufferings of this world. The characters of this group are not concerned simply with the moment of intensity, but rather with the supreme moment on which they can gamble their whole life. Curiously, in none of these cases do we have the form of aesthetic or cerebral intensity in which the character seeks sublimation in beauty or yields to a lucid, calculating form of pleasure. ²⁹ Instead, we have emotional intensity in which the character seeks to drain to the limit his dormant feelings.

While both groups seek intensity, there is a clear difference of degree between them. The privileged moment sought by the first group is a way of substituting mere sensations for higher values. Thus desire for eternity is replaced by the desire for sensual fulfilment, which is why these characters may lie, scheme and betray, but never commit

violent crimes. They are not prepared to risk everything in their actions. The second group, on the other hand, in seeking the supreme moment aims for a moment "so super-saturated with experience that the subject loses his self-consciousness in a surge of vertigo".³⁰ This would explain the thrill of pleasure with which some characters engage in crime or succumb to death. One thinks, for example, of the coldblooded pleasure experienced by Madalena, when she watches Pedro drink the poisoned wine and then calmly collects her belongings ready for departure (LS, 325). Pedro himself savours every moment of his dying, looking forward to the revelation of the mystery of human life which he has been striving for so long to uncover (LS, 337). Zé Roberto, "dominado por aquela onda vermelha que lhe afogava a alma" (D, 235), kills Paulo with a garden hoe and goes on mutilating the already shapeless body until he has assuaged "o seu furor de sangue".³¹ The counterpart is to be found in Sinhá, in O viajante, who is killed by Juca do Vale; just as Zé Roberto had experienced pleasure in striking Paulo, so Sinhá is excited by the feeling of the axe cutting into her flesh and the blood "a abater-se sobre o seu rosto e escorrendo até seus lábios com um gosto adocicado" (V, 171).

After these moments of transport, the characters desire to go on living at the same degree of intensity which they experienced for a fraction of time. They thus become "intensity-addicts",³²

since they can live only in pursuit of it and the day-to-day happenings of life become even more ordinary. Even when the experience is one which can be repeated, the characters discover to their distress that the intensity of the moment that has been enjoyed and is past cannot return. Nina, in the Crônica, makes love again with her son but the charm and the stimulus of the first time will never be repeated. André himself, having accepted the enormity of his sin and become committed to it as a symbol of his freedom, finds that the repeated act of love with his mother not only gradually dissolves her glamour but even makes their first encounter seem banal. 33

The characters seem, in fact, to miss the importance of these privileged moments, since it tends to be at such times that the truth finally strikes them and they discover the self. The discovery is always a revelation, never the consequence of a slow logical process. It comes suddenly, often by association, as when Inácio, preparing to enjoy his last adventure - his death -, looks in the mirror and sees behind his reflexion the face of the devil. His sudden awareness of the evil presence that has always been close to him makes him realize that his life has been a meaningless sham. This discovery leads him to the eternity he was seeking, but not one of peace, rather of anguish and torment. Symbolically, in the mirror, Inácio watches his timeless youth disappear as he ages in a few moments. Inácio was already dead before he hanged himself: 34

Sabia bem qual era o significado do silêncio que me cercava: Inácio Palma não existia mais. Nada mais me ligava à vida, nada me prendia aos fatos que vivera (...). Eu ia de uma ponta a outra, batendo na frente com as mãos fechadas, impotente para controlar aquela vaga de tristeza e de dor. E nem eu próprio me reconheceria nesse despôjo humano, caso acompanhasse no espelho os movimentos em círculo que fazia. Ah, agora compreendia bem: um espectro, um homem morto, um ser destituído de existência e de razão. A cartomante estava certa, vivera toda a minha vida como se existisse: nenhum afeto, nenhum laço, nenhum sentimento, bom ou mau, que me defendesse ou me justificasse. Ou melhor, que me tornasse uma criatura autêntica (E, 342).

Another case of the supreme moment being the moment of truth is when Timóteo bends over the dead Nina, looking for the message he was sure she would send from where she was, and is dazzled by the revelation. It is not Nina, however, who transmits it, but André whom Timóteo sees as he raises his head. There, resurrected, was the young man with the violets whom he had loved so much - and suddenly Timóteo finds God.

The privileged moment, then, can serve as an instrument to achieve eternity, in an absolute sense, since we are dealing with discovery of the self and the revelation of the mysteries of life.

In addition to the pursuit of intensity, the characters are obsessed by the destructive force of time, particularly by the rapidity with which it can destroy beauty. Hence the mixture of fear and fascination with which Cardoso's characters approach youth and beauty in other human beings as the source of heightened feelings and of sensual pleasure. As long as it lasts beauty is to be adored, though with a tinge of anguish because the beholder is always mindful that time can destroy the magic. ³⁵ Special attention is accorded to female beauty by the other characters, as can be seen from Betty's description of Nina after their first meeting:

Não havia apenas graça, sutileza em sua aparição. Havia majestade. Não havia apenas beleza, mas toda uma atmosfera concentrada e violenta de sedução. Ela surgia como se não permitisse a existência do mundo senão sob a aura do seu fascínio - não era uma força de encanto, mas de magia. (CCA, 45)

But beauty occasions yet another feeling in the observer. Its strength and mystery force him to acknowledge it as an embodiment of seduction, wherever it comes from, whether its origin is satanic or divine; ³⁶ in neither case is this an obstacle to the pleasure given by beauty. Beauty represents an unsought form of intensity, moments of intensity which befall the character and which can therefore badly upset his composure. If, as we have seen, a single supreme moment can push a character to a "surge of vertigo", then the Meneses, who live in daily

contact with Nina, are in great danger. For all of them, her presence means life lived at a high temperature, constant physical dilapidation, so that the few months Nina spends among them are sufficient to age the Meneses prematurely, to 'assassinate' them.

While the characters may exist on moments saturated with intensity,³⁷ this does not mean that they necessarily live in the present. Especially because, although it is true that Cardoso's characters need these intense moments, we should not forget that, underlying sensual experiences, there is a purpose which guides the characters and that it involves no mere enjoyment of life but rather the discovery of self and the unravelling of life's mysteries. The importance of these privileged moments is therefore to give the character strength to persevere with his struggle, as well as to increase his lucidity. Clarity of thought is essential to allow the character to assess his progress and correct his mistakes. And for this, he will need to make use of his memory, in order to recall situations he has experienced before. The past is thus the essential time for Cardoso's characters: "A vida se resume toda em coisas passadas: o futuro não é senão a presença de um passado mais distante e doloroso" (LS, 135), as Pedro says in a confessional moment. Since the situations are important, not so much when they are experienced, but when they are examined in retrospect, the present has little weight for these characters. The future, too, except in the case of adolescents,³⁸ is irreparably discredited because of the accumulation of mistakes carried into it from the past; therefore

future time is rarely accorded the usual degree of anticipation in the works of Lúcio Cardoso. 39

The past ⁴⁰ will therefore have the power of provoking nostalgia or suffering in the character. First and foremost, the past has a happy aspect when the character thinks back to childhood, and even in cases like that of Madalena (LS), who was a lonely child, there is a certain magic, not to mention Sílvia (DP) whose childhood was a world of tenderness and mystery. Generally speaking, since the characters look back to this period of their lives with great nostalgia, childhood becomes a form of eternity, without days or months, whose only markers are the events imagined by the child. With the exception of childhood, memory of the past is, in the main, the memory of only partial happiness, since the characters remember not only the good things, but also the resentment and frustration. Even in cases like André, in Crônica da casa assassinada, recalling the time spent with Nina - now that she is no more -, the moments of completeness are marred by a trace of jealousy, because he realizes that he was loved as a reflection (CCA, 228). Something similar happens to Rogério, when he recalls his meetings with his father, whom he always suspected of hiding something from him (I, 93). Clara, remembering the early days of her marriage, has the impression that Jacques had meant to leave from the very beginning (DP, 84). More tragic are those characters who, in retrospect, discover that they had failed to live to the full the only happy moments of their lives;

when they make this discovery, there can be no way of rectifying it. Such is the case of Nina, who does not discover that Alberto was more than just another of the men in her life, until it is too late to go back - when she has left him and hears that he has killed himself because of her, she suddenly realizes that he had been her one great love. So with Ana too (CCA), who falls in love with Alberto and becomes so uncertain of herself that she prefers to be free of him; she is unmoved by his suicide, until she realizes that life for her too had ended at the same moment.

The past also has the power of revelation. As she looks back Clara discovers that Jaques had always been a man of strong, but short-lived feelings. It is when Madalena delves into the past, remembering all the plans she and Pedro had made together (LS, 316) and which had failed to materialize, that she recognizes that the fascination she had always felt for Pedro and had called love was in fact its opposite:

... continuava contemplando o homem adormecido e compreendia, como se um véu viesse se rompendo sôbre o mistério dos seus atos passados, a razão porque, dias antes percebera com tanta nitidez a transformação que sofrera aquele rôsto. Não mais a beleza de linhas puras, a palidez que lhe dava um tom qualquer de imaterialidade - pelo contrário, uma expressão tormentosa e vulgar, uma claridade de face macerada pela doença, como êsses velhos santos de cêra que amarelam nas sacristias abandonadas: odiava-o, odiava-o, tinha-o sempre odiado desde o primeiro dia em que o conhecera! (LS, 317)

When Zé Roberto remembers his past, he discovers that he had always been uncommitted, never having opted for Good or Evil. This explains why he is so easily manipulated by Miguel (D, 237)

It is not only the individual's past that exerts influence upon him. There is also the family past, particularly in the case of those important Minas families, in decline and gradually dying out, which appear in Lúcio Cardoso's novels. The decline, caused by some scandal, by lack of money or by alcoholism, has a profound effect on the lives of the last offshoots of the family who often recall stories of both past grandeur and scandals. The latter are particularly fascinating. Valdo, for instance, remembers the predictions of his mother, Dona Malvina, relating to the misfortunes which would descend on the estate after her death (CCA, 265). More obvious still is the case of Timóteo thinking about the story of Maria Sinhá, of whom he considers himself the last incarnation:

- Sou dominado pelo espírito de Maria Sinhá. Você nunca ouviu falar em Maria Sinhá, Betty?
- Nunca, Sr. Timóteo. Não se esqueça de que estou nesta casa há poucos anos. Além do mais, falar não é o forte da família.
- Tem razão, Betty, você tem sempre razão. É a vantagem das pessoas simples.
- Quem foi então Maria Sinhá?
- Oh - começou ele - foi a mais nobre, a mais pura, a mais incompreendida de nossas antepassadas. Era tia de minha mãe e foi o assombro de sua época.

(...) Maria Sinhá vestia-se de homem, fazia longos estirões a cavalo, ia de Fundão a Queimados em menos tempo do que o melhor dos cavaleiros da fazenda. Dizem que usava um chicote com cabo de ouro, e com êle vergastava todos os escravos que encontrava em seu caminho. Ninguém da família jamais a entendeu, e ela acabou morrendo abandonada num quarto escuro da velha fazenda Santa Eulália, na serra do Baú. (CCA, 40)

The past thus represents the main timescale in the novels of Lúcio Cardoso and generally speaking it also has the function of pointing to mistakes previously made. Although the characters may try to deceive themselves as to the motives which led them to this or that action, the pieces gradually fall into place and they begin to see certain truths. Not major discoveries or the essential discovery, which comes only in a sudden revelation, but the little truths that are necessary for the character to know himself. The recollection of Maria Sinhá and her story does not make Timóteo discover the essential truth, but it does cause him to discover the extent of his solitude and it gives him some comfort to feel his solitude shared by someone from the past. Remembering her former home life does not help Madalena to find a solution for her relationship with Pedro, but it does help her to see that she had never had her mother's support and that her battle with her husband is to be just between the two of them:

Que tolice! Como pudera pensar em se valer da mãe? Era preciso ter esquecido quem era aquela alma egoísta e fria, pregando eternamente teorias que a salvaguardavam de aborrecimentos causados pelos outros, num temor constante de que viessem destruir a sua paz, amando a mentira como o mais forte meio da defesa própria. Devia, pois, lutar por si mesma. (LS, 31)

While these lesser factors do not lead directly to the discovery of the whole truth, they do help the character to get closer to it, since he, or she, has from the outset been hovering around it and there is the possibility that by going over situations in the mind, each time trying to view them from a different angle, his vision will become more lucid.

c) Death and other obstacles to Freedom

There is truth about
freedom, as well as
freedom in truth.

(Berdyaev)

A third element which restricts knowledge of self for Cardoso's characters is the difficulty of achieving and maintaining freedom.

The problem of freedom has always tormented writers and thinkers.⁴¹ It was the basic problem in St. Augustine's struggle against Pelagianism, in the Jansenists' disputes

over the relationship between freedom and Grace; it was involved in Luther's rejection of Catholicism and was the basis of Calvin's joyless doctrine of predestination. The spectre of a freedom which is evil and a constraint which is good has been an obstacle to Catholic' thinkers, and freedom has suffered at times because of the evil seen in the concept itself, at other times because of the way in which people are forced to accept Good. However, while Christian thought has always been bothered by the notion of freedom, the question of its limits has been even more disturbing. This concern has been reinforced in more recent times by the determination with which Existentialism has proclaimed that man must be free in order to make moral decisions. Freedom in Sartre's definition, for example, is no longer a quality conferred upon the human being, but a part of man's essential being, without which he does not exist.⁴² The concept of freedom is given a special role in the fiction of Lúcio Cardoso, so much so that one could say that the problem of freedom is at the heart of his world-view and that his novels are an experiment in human freedom. Moreover, in Cardoso's world we are dealing with a specially dynamic form of freedom, which goes through phases and changes in accordance with events in life, so that "static spirits"⁴³ are unable to understand it, because they are either too humble to aspire to it or too mediocre to attain it. More particularly, they are afraid of the anguish caused by the act of choice,⁴⁴ and since to be free involves the need to act, not merely to be, freedom remains no more than an aspiration for this group.

The majority of Cardoso's characters, however, revolt in the name of freedom and are prepared to commit any act of madness or sordidness in order to feel free. Their quest is for total freedom. There are two types within the wider concept of freedom: 'libertas minor', which refers to the pursuit of freedom in earthly matters and in social concepts,⁴⁵ and 'libertas maior', which involves metaphysical concepts and the desire for freedom from God and from the notion of sin.⁴⁶ Only thus can the characters feel that they are giving concrete expression to the formula that man is free and responsible for each of his actions, since only the individual person can attach significance to each situation in which he finds himself. We should not forget that ultimately the real significance of any situation depends on one's attitude towards it. For instance, if a man suffers because of certain obstacles he finds in his path, it is only because his freedom has made them into obstacles, thus causing the aim in view to appear unattainable.⁴⁷ This is precisely what Pedro tries to explain to Bernardo when he realizes how uncertain he is with regard to the attack against Madalena: the important thing for him (Bernardo) should have been that he desired her above all things, and all the moral obstacles that he was raising were of his own making, they had no objective reality:

- Não é a carne que é má. É a impossibilidade da carne.

(...)

- ... É a impossibilidade ... quer dizer, tudo é possível ainda? - perguntou /Bernardo/ apaixonado-

nadamente.

- Sim, tudo é possível.

(...)

- Tudo isto é estranho, absurdo mesmo - disse Bernardo. - Eu sei que realmente o seu desejo não é o de me salvar ... mas você sabe exatamente onde se esconde a minha chaga ...

Pedro pôs-se a rir francamente:

- Absurda é a sua atitude diante dos fatos. É que somente eu creio ser a carne, em certas criaturas, o caminho das aspirações mais altas. É nos tímidos e nos infelizes, nos pobres e nos solitários, que ela se contrai para estalar nas melhores aspirações da criação e da liberdade. E para mim não é só a carne, mas tudo aquilo que traz para o indivíduo opressão e aviltamento ...
(LS, 206-7)

Similarly, it is the individual who confers special importance on his own past. No-one can alter the facts of what took place, but their significance can be selected at any given moment. That is to say, the past is not something that can be determined once and for all, because its significance can always be modified in the light of present experiences. As long as a man lives, his past can be reinterpreted and can never be irrevocably fixed. In Cardoso's case, we can go a step further: only those characters who are allowed the ability to amend the past, adding new facets to it in order to interpret it more accurately, can hope to find the truth they are seeking. So it happens with Madalena when she reviews her meetings with Pedro and how quickly she had fallen in love with him; suddenly

the truth hits her and she realizes that the fascination she had always felt for Pedro was hatred, not love (IS, 317). Timóteo remembers his hopeless passion for the gardener and when, in stupefaction, he beholds him resurrected in his nephew André, he finally understands that it was a symbolical episode the significance of which was to make him understand the resurrection and regeneration of God:

E foi então, Nina, que abrindo os olhos que cerrara, no esforço do meu pedido, eu o vi - a ELE, Nina, ao môço das violetas. Ali estava entre os outros, um pouco à frente, louro como nos dias antigos, e môço ainda, a cabeça erguida como se afrontasse o ímpeto da minha surpresa. Como um anjo erguia-se êle acima da destruição do suicídio, e pairava, imortal, diante dos meus olhos. Nina, então eu compreendi tudo: ah, como tínhamos pecado, que engano fôra o nosso. A resposta não estava oculta na cavidade escura da sua boca, nem no seu pobre corpo destinado aos vermes. Estava ali, Nina, no milagre daquela ressurreição, nêle, eternamente môço, como também você o fôra.

Deus, Nina, é como um canteiro de violetas cuja estação não passa nunca.

(CCA, 446-7)

The same happens in relation to the past of a family, which should equally serve not as an obstacle to the fulfilment of the descendants, but rather as an aid to their freedom. So this past needs to be reviewed in the light of

experience in progress. The past is considered by Sartre to be one of the major obstacles to man's use of freedom, in view of the guilt and doubt he carries with him. For example, when Timóteo justifies in part his being ostracised by the family as due to his reincarnating Maria Sinhá, he fails to see that it is this isolation that prevents him personally from destroying the Meneses, so that he has to entrust this mission to Nina. A more glaring case still is that of Donana de Lara, in O viajante, who detests her abnormal child, but believes him to be a form of punishment for crimes committed in the family in days gone by. She thus accepts a limitation on her freedom in the name of a family history for which she can feel herself entirely responsible.

In addition to these two elements, the objects that surround us can also be a threat to our freedom, since we may confer on them special powers, filling them with significance and a sense of hostility. In the world created by Lúcio Cardoso, objects assume special importance, because they can be a means of controlling a character. This happens to Bernardo, in A luz no subsolo, when Pedro gives him Madalena's jewels in an attempt to intensify his obsession with her by bringing her more tangibly into his life. A more blatant case occurs in Crônica da casa assassinada when Demétrio buys a revolver which he leaves in full view of everyone, forcing several people to make decisions: Valdo attempts suicide, Alberto actually does shoot himself with the same weapon and Ana will later try to kill Nina with it.

There are also cases where a character's freedom seems to be limited by some force in the physical environment, which becomes so powerful that it controls him. There are environments so saturated with menace that the character finds it virtually impossible to assume an attitude and make his choice with a clear head. The most obvious example occurs in O desconhecido: Zé Roberto arrives at the estate on a stormy night and hears the dogs howling and sees strange figures spying on him from dark corners.⁴⁸ The other characters have already been caught up in the atmosphere and from the demonic coachman to the cook, who is mixed up in some earlier crime, all of them appear to be waiting for a tragedy to occur. A powerful mood is thus created in which the "collective unconscious" will act upon the most sensitive and least involved. The one affected is Zé Roberto, who never understands why he has killed Paulo, when he was always a person given to modest deeds:⁴⁹

Sim, que acontecera, que fizera realmente? Na verdade, conservava a estranha impressão de que cumprira apenas um gesto que em torno dele todos estavam aguardando. No momento em que levantara a enxada, sentira que o fazia como se cumprisse uma obscura ordem. Não era possível ignorar que aquela atmosfera pesada, repleta de pressentimento aguardava a morte de alguém. Essa morte, êle a tinha realizado. Mas, desde quando, de que minuto exato, datava a sua submissão a essa força maléfica? (D, 239)

Much the same happens to Donana de Lara, when she pushes her child over the cliffs down onto a river bed where there are vultures; she afterwards feels that had it not been for the macabre surroundings, she would never have had the courage to kill Zeca (V, 14).

A greater restriction on man's freedom, however, is his neighbour. The existence of the other's subjectivity is a constant threat to a person's freedom, because he knows that the other can intervene at any moment to transform the situation. The mere presence of the neighbour, the awareness of another being also bent on self-affirmation, whose behaviour is generally unpredictable, is sufficient to deprive the individual of his assurance and to restrict him. This limitation stemming from others is what sometimes causes Cardoso's characters to react so violently towards other human beings and to behave with such intolerance and cruelty. Nor do they have to be enemies for this to be the case: sometimes, the mere presence of another individual produces a loss of attention which upsets the character, because for anyone wholly absorbed in the quest for truths, the sudden appearance of another individual who has to be examined is extremely disturbing. For example, Nina always accuses the Meneses of having been hostile to her from the beginning. Yet there had been no more than an obvious and natural clash of interests. After all, with the passage of time, the members of the household had established their habits and each had learned to live their own life,

without disturbing their neighbour. Suddenly Nina appears: she is beautiful, affected and eager for social life and represents the temptation of the outside world, thereby constituting a threat to the lifeless routine of the house. The Meneses form an alliance against the disturbing element that has suddenly descended amongst them. Nina, in turn, finds them a serious limitation to her freedom, since from the beginning they impose all sorts of restrictions on her: she cannot go to soirées, is not allowed to make friends in Vila Velha and is forbidden to dress in the ostentatious manner she likes. Her reaction is violent: first she commits adultery, then drags incest into the heart of a family for whom scandal means death. All the tragedy of freedom confined, represented by both sides, is expressed by Nina when she tries to justify herself to Betty: "Somos sempre cruéis quando queremos ser nós mesmos (...). Mas os outros, os que nos impedem, os que nos tohem o caminho ... que dizer dêles?" (CCA, 287; my underlining).

In addition to this limitation which the other always imposes, Cardoso's characters sometimes fall under the sway of other characters embodying forces, which are like a maëlstrom, having the power to engulf those who come within their range. In Cardoso's world such forces are never positive, never offer peace or happiness; ⁵⁰ they are forces of darkness and death which spread only hatred and destruction, after unleashing violent passions. Among them are Prof. Alves, in O anfiteatro, who destroys Margarida and Laura and comes close

to doing the same to Cláudio and Gil; ⁵¹ Nina, who destroys the Meneses; and Rafael, in O viajante, who sparks off a chain of crimes in the peaceful town of Vila Velha. ⁵²

There are other restraints on freedom, as well as those which derive from the situations in which the individual becomes involved; restraints which grow in the human spirit, for "freedom is also my choice of myself". ⁵³ In this way a powerful limitation appears within those characters who are emotionally split and this occurs with all those who suffer from obsessions, or who develop doubts or feelings of guilt. Any of these conditions can act as a compulsion which prevents the character discovering the truth and behaving as a free, responsible being. An outstanding example of this is the way Valdo, in Crônica da casa assassinada, reacts to the return of Nina. When he receives a letter from her, fifteen years after her departure from the estate, he has still not forgotten the disastrous effect she had had on the household during the few months of her stay. He knows that he should refuse to let her come back and initially does so. But when Nina writes again, begging to be allowed to return, the compulsive passion Valdo had always felt for her, together with a sense of guilt for his part in her expulsion and doubts as to the reliability of the grounds given for it, prove too strong and Nina will return to complete her mission of destruction. It might be argued that Valdo had the option of refusing, that he freely accepted the responsibility for Nina's return, but because of the psychological circumstances which governed his decision he was only partly free.

A more serious restraint is undoubtedly that of arrogance and excessive self-confidence,⁵⁴ which allows certain characters to feel that they can do whatever they please.⁵⁵ As happens with certain of Dostoevsky's creations - for example, Kirillov in The Devils - there are Cardoso characters who, like Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, wish to be God: "Eu fui feito para descobrir o mistério que me envolve" (LS, 127). He goes on to explain that, while he does not believe in God, nothing prevents him piercing the confines of knowledge. This powerful urge to be God⁵⁶ - since God is the ultimate limit to moral freedom - can express itself on three levels, in the view of Jean-Paul Sartre.⁵⁷ There is an 'empirical level', exemplified by Nina, whose anti-God project is made through the accumulation of sins. She never seems to bother herself with metaphysical justifications for her actions. Then the character may express his negation of God on a 'personal level', like Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, who questions his beliefs and determines to start his life's journey again. He is never induced to utter general reflections on the destiny of man; his concern is only with himself, with his individual endeavour to better himself and achieve greater power. But there are also characters in Cardoso's works who express the desire to be God on a third level, the 'human or abstract' level. Such a one is Inácio, in O enfeitado, wholly concerned with the liberation of humanity from any constraints whatsoever. This is why he becomes aware of cases of social

slavery, why he rebels more against certain restrictions imposed by the community and why he has more to say about human truth. Perhaps because he is the least self-centred of all the types, he is the only one who receives an answer during his lifetime, even if, instead of justifying his behaviour, it proves to be a condemnation. Nevertheless, he dies released from the anguish of not even having discovered where his quest went astray: before dying, he confesses "Tudo é invisível. Se somos fantasmas é que procuramos estabelecer uma realidade proibida. A realidade é o segredo" (E, 350). The desire to be God is the craving to find absolute freedom and so eliminate the concept of essence which is such a limitation to man's quest.

Another limitation which can present itself as an obstacle to the use of freedom is the sudden appearance of death. Since it is irreversible and comes without forewarning, it is not only its advent which constitutes a limitation, but also its power as a latent threat. The presence of death makes itself felt early in life, when the character is still a child or an adolescent, through the death of a loved one.⁵⁸ The event acquires the significance of a symbolic episode, which forces on the character the sense of the nearness of death, since, as Freud tells us,⁵⁹ all human beings are convinced of their immortality. From this point on, death becomes an obstacle to the character's real freedom. Now that he is convinced of the presence of death, he may, as often happens, go through a dangerous phase of 'divertere', which serves only to separate him further from the truth. Otherwise, he may be fascinated

by the notion of death, even to the point of obsession, and want to conduct experiments with death, play with the lives of others, incite weaker individuals to kill so that he may witness the process. The character's great fear is not so much of death as a physical entity; for this he prepares himself. What he fears most is inner death; he fears that despair, apathy, lovelessness and solitude will grow to such an extent that he can no longer resist them and will drag himself through life as a living corpse. Despite this fear, often expressed by Cardoso's characters, generally speaking when they find themselves in an emotional impasse, they do not lack courage and make a calm choice, committing suicide. In this fictional world, suicide is rarely an act of mad despair; it is usually shown as a means of leaving life with dignity, when the character has either discovered his total failure and knows that there can be no new beginning (Inácio) or has found that the love of which he has been deprived was absolute and unforgettable (Alberto), or that the mediocrity of life is no longer bearable (Ida). In this harsh world, death is not only a punishment desired for others; it is a sentence imposed on the self by accumulated failures and the character is never allowed a second chance. The outstanding example of death being received by choice, not passively, is the case of Sinhá, in O viajante. She has promised Tio Juca that she would resist the advances of Rafael, but weakens and yields to him. Afterwards, she calmly makes her way to the

bridge where she knows her uncle will be waiting for her and goes to receive her punishment. When she sees him, axe in hand, she walks up to him and offers herself to the sacrifice:

Sinhá avançou e disse com simplicidade:

- Sou eu, mestre Juca.

Evidentemente ele não ousava dizer coisa alguma, mas seu esforço se revelou por um som inarticulado, pastoso, que lhe saiu da garganta. Pela terceira vez, enquanto o rio espumava lá e a noite se desdobrava, cheia de uma paz imensa, ela disse: - e desta vez a sua voz não soou mais como um aviso ou uma informação, mas como uma ordem, calma e sem remissão:

- Sou eu.

Só aí ele avançou (...). E em Sinhá não houve nenhum estremecimento no ser, e o que ofertou à mão erguida, foi o seu corpo consciente e certo. (V, 172).

It can be seen, then, that Lúcio Cardoso's characters are free, in that they are not affected by the idea of destiny or fate. This was not one of the phantoms they fostered: others they certainly nurtured within themselves and such concepts are the only restraint on their freedom.

Notes

- 1 BERDYAEV, N. Dostoevsky. New York, Meridian Books, 1957, 71.
- 2 Quoted in MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE, S. Jacob Boehme. London, Rockliff, 1946, 169.
- 3 Ibid., 169
- 4 See ADONIAS FILHO. 'Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso', Cadernos da hora presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1939, 65.
- 5 Any one of these characters could echo the words of Dostoevsky's 'underground man':

My chief occupation was reading. I sought to drown all that was continually seething within me in external sensations. And the only external sensations available to me were in reading ... Aside from reading, I had nothing to turn to, nothing I could then respect in my surroundings, nothing that could attract me.

(Notes from Underground, ed.cit., 55)

- 6 It is worth remembering that this approach results in the destruction of various of Dostoevsky's characters, such as Stavrogin in The Devils and Ivan Karamazov in The Brothers Karamazov. Stavrogin may be able to go on discussing his ideas indefinitely, but he is finally destroyed by shame, doubt and lack of purpose. Ivan may assure himself that "everything is permitted", but a profound sense of guilt overwhelms his rational endeavour.

- 7 Zé Roberto callously plans to escape with the money, together with Paulo, and start a new life in a different place.
- 8 SARTRE, J-P. L'Etre et le Néant., Paris, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1943, 84.
- 9 FREUD, S. Collected Papers, Vol. 5. London, Hogarth Press, 1950: 'Paper XXXII' - 'Splitting of the Ego on the Defensive Process'.
- 10 Ibid., 373
- 11 Ana actually goes looking for Nina in order to kill her, but hasn't the courage to pull the trigger and disturb the peace of the Meneses household. (CCA, 270)
- 12 Cf. their first meeting:

Pedro aproximou-se lentamente e segurou-lhe as mãos (...) Emanuela sofria. Os seus olhos escuros exprimiam uma angústia informe, respirava sem ritmo, não ousando fitar o homem face a face. (LS, 79)

- 13 The effect of André's first meeting with Nina is expressed as follows:

Ruíram os muros que aprisionavam meu antigo modo de ser. Como um homem adormecido no fundo de um poço, acordei, e agora posso contemplar face a face a luz do sol. Não é amadurecimento, como supus antes, a sensação que me invade - é de plenitude. (CCA, 224)

- 14 I prefer to call them dreams rather than hallucinations, since it is never clear to the reader whether the character is awake. The scene is undoubtedly very similar to a passage in The Brothers Karamazov where Ivan is visited by the Devil (see, London, Four Square Books, 1951, 572).

- 15 The expression is used by the ethnologist Lévi-Brühl (in JUNG, K. Man and his Symbols. London, Picador, 1961, 7) when referring to the phenomenon of human beings who also have a "bush soul" incarnated in a tree, stone, etc.

- 16 The next chapter is devoted wholly to a study of the Double.

- 17 Rogério had always adored his father, considering him his model; the day on which they were leaving together for São Paulo, the truth suddenly dawns on him, that Inácio was an absolute fraud and that his pronouncements were all lies.

- 18 Cardoso's characters are aware of the dangers of leaving childhood behind. They regard growing up with bitterness and feel restless or even symbolically experience physical pain, as if a part of them had died. Sílvio, in his "ânsia de viver", finally puts an end to his childhood and feels that "um vazio se apoderava dele e se alargava ainda mais na sua alma, e que nela uma nova chaga se abria, como no escuro da noite uma rosa de sangue" (DP, 120).

- 19 This is a point of contact between Cardoso and the French Catholic writers, especially Bernanos who stresses this experience in Sous le Soleil de Satan and in Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune.
- 20 It is common knowledge that in remoter areas of Brazil, and particularly of Minas Gerais, the insane are popularly considered as beings to be respected. They are viewed not so much as abnormal, but as beings touched by the hand of God. Autran Dourado is another mineiro writer who has made use of this idea in his novels. (See 'Entrevista de Cornélio Penna a Lêdo Ivo', O Jornal, Rio de Janeiro, 23 May 1948).
- 21 Insanity, in Timóteo's case, is the description given him by the family, because they do not understand his mode of behaviour. Demétrio had even considered having him interned (CCA, 91) and even Betty, the housekeeper, who appears to be so fond of him, fails to understand him. She it is who says of him:

De que seria capaz aquele que diziam não regular muito bem e que procedia como se, na verdade, sofresse das faculdades mentais? Podia não ser louco perigoso, mas tudo era lícito esperar da sua fantasia. (CCA, 102).

Even Nina, despite their 'pact', accuses him of being " - Louco". (CCA, 125).

- 22 In fact Nina doesn't hear this explanation in person: it occurs in Timóteo's 'livro de memórias', where he meditates on her death.
- 23 I am referring to the Meneses' fear that he will show himself to be homosexual and shame the family name (CCA, 90).
- 24 Pedro himself obviously hasn't the courage to kill his wife, whom he hates, and tries to make use of his brother-in-law's morbid, long-standing passion for her as a means of getting rid of her.
- 25 Note the parallel between this story and the plot of Julien Green's Léviathan, with the difference that in Green's novel the crime is performed with a blow on the head. It is probably this type of similarity that has led some Brazilian critics to speak of the influence of Julien Green on Cardoso's early works, to the extent that it is something of a common-place to call Cardoso "o Julien Green Brasileiro" (for example Otto Maria Carpeaux in Pequena bibliografia da literatura brasileira. Rio de Janeiro, Letras e Artes, 1964, 327). In my view the similarities to be found in these two authors are parallels rather than influences, because both of them are inheritors of Dostoevsky.
- 26 As we learn later, there had actually been adultery. But when the accusation was made with the intention of disgracing Nina, Demétrio was by no means sure that it was true.

- 27 The expression is used by Alex de Jonge (Dostoevsky and the Age of Intensity. London, Secker and Warburg, 1975, 142).
- 28 Soon afterwards Ida discovers that the dissatisfaction still persists and that her seduction of the doctor was no more than a childish incident without important consequences.
- 29 It is not a Proustian form of intensity. Like Dostoevsky, Proust was a writer who strove for states of intensity, but in his case there is always a pursuit of aesthetic and rational values which never concerned Dostoevsky.
- 30 JONGE, A. Op.cit., 142 Of these characters we could say with Baudelaire: "Qu'importe l'éternité de la damnation a qui a trouvé dans une seconde l'infini de la jouissance". (Ibid., 143)
- 31 This scene is one of the most morbidly 'decadent' created by Lúcio Cardoso. In three pages (234-6) he narrates in minute detail the crime which is being committed, from the first blow with the hoe which sends Paulo senseless to the floor and continuing with the blood spreading over the floor and the walls, until the moment when Zé Roberto stops exhausted and sees his companion "reduzido a uma pasta sangrenta, uma forma negra". Another, earlier example occurs in Maleita, when the author describes the population dying of smallpox with particular attention to horrible details (M, 180-200).

- 32 The expression is that used by Jonge (Op.cit., 137).
- 33 André is the main victim of this whole situation. Always expecting excessively intense situations and feelings, he will finally detest everyone around him, accusing them all of being petty, and will turn to banditry (cf. O viajante, xvii).
- 34 As with Wilde's Dorian Gray, Inácio's youth was spent in artificial and fantastic pleasures.
- 35 It is to this inevitability that the other characters refer when they speak about Nina (cf. CCA, 60: the doctor; and CCA, 78: Valdo).
- 36 Again, the feeling of intensity linked to beauty is very much in the decadent taste. Baudelaire, in his 'Hymne à la Beauté', says:

Que tu viennes du Ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'importe,
 O Beauté, monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu!
 Si ton oeil, ton souris, ton pied m'ouvrent la porte
 D'un Infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu?

Dostoevsky, too, has something to say on the topic, through the words he puts in the mouth of Dimitri Karamazov, who says to his brother Alyosha: "Beauty is a terrible and awful thing! It is terrible because it has not been fathomed and never can be fathomed, for God sets us nothing but riddles" (The Brothers Karamazov, ed. cit., 96).

- 37 In certain of his works the author intensifies this impression in the reader. A novel like the Crônica and some of the novellas (A professora Hilda, O desconhecido, for example) are highly concentrated with respect to time, being constructed as a series of moments of intensity.
- 38 I am thinking of Geraldo (S), Rogério (I), Cláudio (A), Paulo (D) and André (CCA): All of them make enthusiastic plans for the future, before they undergo the experiences which turn them into adults.
- 39 Which explains why Adonias Filho described Cardoso's novels as "uma parada no tempo. Permanecer sobre o passado e ficar no presente sem saber do futuro" ('Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso', Cadernos da hora presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1939, 86).
- 40 There seems to be no case here for using the well-known perspective of St. Augustine, who reduced the three dimensions to the present "in which the past survives in memory and the future pre-exists in some way in the form of anticipation" (apud PATRIDES, A. Aspects of Time. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1976, 31).
- 41 See BERDYAEV, Dostoevsky (ed.cit.), 70.
- 42 GRIMSLEY, Op.cit., 129

- 43 The classification followed here is that used by Berdyaev in a number of his works, e.g. Dostoevsky (ed.cit.); The Destiny of Man (London, G. Bles, 1954) and The Divine and the Human (London, G.Bles, 1949).
- 44 This is what Kierkegaard refers to as "fear of dread" (see Concept of Dread. London, Oxford University Press, 1944, 38).
- 45 BERDYAEV, Dostoevsky (ed.cit.), 68. The terminology is St. Augustine's and has been followed by most Christian thinkers since. The dichotomy has been extensively developed by Berdyaev in various of his works, e.g. Dostoevsky (ed.cit.), Slavery and Freedom (New York, Scribner, 1944) and Freedom and the Spirit (London, G. Bles, 1944).
- 46 The first group includes Hilda (A professora Hilda), who is obsessed with the fear of losing her post; Clara (Dias perdidos), struggling to find an immediate aim in life; and Ida (Mãos vazias), battling against small-town gossip. The second group has Pedro (LS), Inácio (E) and Nina (CCA), who are all capable of the worst crimes to prove their total independence of moral concepts.
- 47 Sartre's classification will be used to examine some aspects of freedom, which will be divided into 'position', 'past', 'environment' (or 'surroundings'), 'neighbour' and 'death' (cf. L'Etre et le Néant, ed.cit., 570-638).

- 48 The atmosphere is clearly that of the Gothic novel. To this Lúcio Cardoso adds the change from adventure novel to novel of character, and one in which the characters all live in great emotional stress. I cannot agree with Maria Alice Barroso when, in her introduction to Três histórias da província ('Lúcio Cardoso e o Mito'), she remarks: "Os acontecimentos mais estranhos vão-se desenrolar na ambiência mais rotineira, a ação situando-se no dia a dia modorrento do interior brasileiro".
- 49 My intention is not to suggest that the crime was due entirely to outside forces. Zé Roberto had in himself strong enough feelings of fury and jealousy. But there can be no doubt that the atmosphere was instrumental.
- 50 Unlike Dostoevsky who, as Berdyaev reminds us, has a whole group of angelic characters, the "light-bearers", who are forces of Good (See Dostoevsky, ed.cit., 44).
- 51 Laura says of professor Alves:

Que sabemos nós dêsses seres opacos, bizarros,
dêsses seres sem luz que tantas vezes encontramos
em nosso caminho?

- Quer dizer ... dessas forças ...

Ela fitou-me agudamente:

- Isso mesmo. São forças sem explicação. (A, 219)

- 52 Other examples might be added: Miguel (D), Pedro (LS) and Inácio (E), who destroy those who have the misfortune to cross their paths. These characters are conscious forces of evil, whereas those mentioned in the text are unaware of their destructive powers.
- 53 The words are Jaspers', quoted by Grimsley, op.cit., 178.
- 54 "Self-will" is considered the greatest threat to human freedom by Berdyaev (Dostoevsky, 75).
- 55 "Ousemos tudo" is a frequently repeated formula which summarizes the exhilaration generated by excessive freedom.
- 56 It is worth remembering that this was one of the most controversial points of Boehme's theosophy. The importance Boehme gave to the sublimity of man, stressing the fact that man carries within him a spark of God, since he is made in God's image, comes close to heresy.
- 57 Op.cit., 653.
- 58 This happens to Sílvia, in Dias perdidos, with the death of his friend Camilo; also to Cláudio (O anfiteatro), whose father dies; and to Rogério, in Inácio, who loses his mother, Stella.

59 As is the case with Pedro (LS), Rogério (I), Inácio (E) and the Meneses (CCA): In the world created by Lúcio Cardoso, killings occur easily, materializing the mental process which Freud considered a characteristic of modern man:

Our unconscious is murderously minded towards the stranger. Like the ancient law of Draco it knows no other punishment for crime than death; and this has a certain consistency, for every injury to our almighty and autocratic ego is at bottom a crime of 'lèse-majesté'. (Collected Papers, Vol. IV, Paper XVII, 'Thoughts of the Times on War and Death', 314).

In a fictional world in which the 'other' is a potential enemy, he is always in risk of death.

CHAPTER III: PSYCHOLOGICAL DISINTEGRATION: THE DOUBLE

I am split in two mentally, and I'm horribly afraid of it. It's just as though one's double were standing beside one.

(Dostoevsky, A Raw Youth)

The worst thing that can happen to the character, when he has begun to doubt the power of his intelligence, to recognize the serious obstacles to his freedom and to battle with the debilitating passage of time, is to lose the unity of his ego and be split in two. The theme of the double is one of the oldest in literature; ¹ viewed superficially it is a simple literary device. Basically it is linked to the dualist concept of the soul, which maintains that all men have an inner division between their good side and their bad side, and that in the course of life these two sides frequently come into conflict with one another. ²

The theme of the double is one of the central features of Cardoso's works. It appears from his earliest books and thereafter takes various forms, adding new facets and different versions, but is always present. To such an extent that when he came to write Crônica da casa assassinada he created doubles for each of the main characters involved in the tragedy. As is the case with Dostoevsky,³ the use of the double by Cardoso is, first and foremost, a means of expressing the many-sidedness of man's psychological existence. It is, especially, a device for revealing man's underlying truth, for exposing him in his attempt to escape those realities which most vex him. In literary terms, we might say that the double allows the author to make his characters less hermetic, since they are often carried away by their own dialectic capacity and utter long introspective speeches, sheer abstractions which do not flow naturally from their own inner reality. Other literary motives can be adduced: for example, the author's aim of transforming a novel in which time stands still into a novel with some spatial differentiation, which meant that he could have the double on stage simultaneously with the main character but in a different environment. Most important, though, for the use of the double is the type of narrative devised by Cardoso, the basis of which is a constant interpenetration of 'naturalistic' and 'unrealistic' elements. As Chizhevsky puts it, in relation to the same theme in Dostoevsky:

The ordinariness of everyday life is strangely shot through with the fantastic, naturalistic portrayal alternates with the pathos of an abstract idea, the sober striving for reality with ecstatic visions of the world beyond the confines of reality.⁴

The realistically psychological analysis is thus at the same time transcendently psychological and all the events which are narrated have as their counterpart an ideological construct. These two planes of meaning of the plot can be developed parallel to one another by means of the literary device of the double.

There is also a philosophical reason for the use of the double. With Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Hegel appears the problem of man's real existence: to 'exist', simply to 'be', is not sufficient for the existence of the human being as an ethical individual. Abstract thought, aesthetic experiences or the rationalization of social life engaged in by the majority of Cardoso's characters do not offer them proof of their moral personality: for this they need to perform actions. Rationalism expresses only part of man and is otherwise arid, unconstructive, the more so because it exacerbates his narcissism and this, in turn, intensifies the tendency to introversion in some of the characters. Furthermore, ethical rationalism always results in a split in man's spiritual existence, setting abstract duty against concrete inclination, since it maintains that the individual's ethical purpose is to sacrifice the concrete to the abstract. This dualism and the tension it provokes can destroy

the existence of the concrete and the strength of the abstract. In Lúcio Cardoso's works it is precisely those beings who possess to a high degree the faculty of abstract thought and who rely heavily on their intellectual capacity, that reject the ordinary, mediocre side of their personality. They therefore live in a world of intellectual meditation and after a time see before them a double who represents the ordinariness which they do not want to accept and which they view with shame. And shame is, after all, such a being's reaction to the comparison between his actual performance and the scale of ideal ethical values: "Man is an ape and a torturing shame of the superman".⁵

This type of double appears already in A luz no subsolo, where Pedro finds himself face to face with Bernardo. The two are opposites in everything, even in physical appearance: Pedro is thin, with sallow complexion, dark-haired and dark-eyed, while Bernardo is fat, fair, with pink skin and blue eyes. Pedro claims to despise Bernardo because he represents the humdrum and mediocre side of life which is such a restraint on his quest; Bernardo hates Pedro, because with his irony and his capacity for intellectual thought he makes him, Bernardo, feel trivial, "uma larva", as he puts it (LS, 156). And yet, as his sense of loneliness increases, Pedro feels the need to acknowledge the existence of his other self, so the two are always close together, either following or spying on each other. The reason for the split in Pedro's personality

is clear: his narcissism and his rejection of his neighbour have meant his losing his place in the ordinary world. Living alone among his books, he quickly reaches his crisis point and needs to contemplate his unconscious fear of being punished by God (in the figure of Bernardo), as well as to see in action his repressed passions, which are very powerful and may even have a certain beauty:

Do âmago da sua miséria descobria de repente a grandeza dessa mesma miséria. Ele se ergueria sobre a lama e os odôres pútridos, porque adquirira subitamente uma consciência do seu destino - essa consciência o fazia crescer na treva. Seus pensamentos ganhavam uma sinistra lucidez; como que o longo calor daquela experiência arrefecera por fim a sua alma: sentia-se uma tempestade em movimento.

As paixões renovam - marcado, dilacerado, vil até ao fundo das suas entranhas, Bernardo ergueu-se no coração da noite e se sentiu um Deus. (LS, 270)

Cases of the double, like this one based on the rejection of the concrete in the name of an abstract principle constitute a situation of real danger to the ego, because the impossibility of concrete action has the same function as death, in bringing about a loss of individual existence. This is the danger to which Tillich refers ⁶ when he explains that, in order to find himself, man must participate, get involved in reality, because

man "affirms himself as receiving and transforming reality".⁷ Pure abstract thought leads to nothingness. At the same time, we must not forget that if man lives only from concrete action, then "meaning of life is saved, but the self is sacrificed".⁸ Therefore the only possibility of reconstruction in cases of the Pedro-Bernardo type would be to find a meaning above the separate external or inner realities, "a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings",⁹ since only God can, according to Tillich, reunite the two divided halves.

This type of double, which takes the form of a rebel acting opposite a mediocrity, appears in several of Cardoso's works and always with the same characteristics.¹⁰ A slightly different emphasis is given to the same theme in the Crônica da casa assassinada, in the Nina-Ana version of the double. Ana is always dressed in black, the traditional dress of the 'shadow' in literature.¹¹ She is also smaller than Nina, expressing the fact that the heroine's capacity for abstract thought has never developed very far.¹² Pedro despised Bernardo, whereas Nina hates Ana, whom she sees as an obstacle to her freedom, a representative of the Meneses. In fact, of the whole family she is the one who intrudes most into Nina's life, following her everywhere, so that in her 'confissões' she is in a position to discuss intimate aspects of Nina's life of which the rest of the family appears to have only a vague suspicion. However, unlike Bernardo, who was no more than a pale extension of Pedro, Ana is a personality in her own right. In this respect Cardoso's

outlook seems to have become that described by Jung, who states:

The shadow is not only the converse of the ego. Just as the ego contains unfavourable and destructive attitudes, so that shadow has good qualities, normal instincts and creative impulses. ¹³

One of Nina's problems is her apparent failure to realize that for the ego to triumph it must overcome and absorb its shadow, otherwise it will be destroyed by it. It is in this novel, through the characters of Nina and Ana, that we can see more clearly how important a device the double is for defining character. As the book develops and the story unfolds, we become steadily more aware that Ana embodies Nina's real nature, the side of herself that she has tried to conceal, knowing it to be very strong. All the rest is false, a mere mask. It is she, after all, who defines herself in her own words as "um ser fantástico e sem sentido, mas cujos gritos fingidos, às vezes, se confundem com os gemidos da verdade" (CCA, 294). The figure of Ana, therefore, grows in importance as she provides the proof of Nina's inadequacies. Thus, Ana claims that Nina knew André was not her son and that she had allowed him to believe in their incest out of sheer cruelty (CCA, 466). This assertion certainly corresponds to what we know about Nina: despite her attempts to show the opposite, she is weak, ¹⁴

and would never have the courage to commit incest, which is why she only became involved with André knowing that he was not her own child. After all, she had not even had the strength to go away with the gardener, so that if social disapproval was sufficient to intimidate her, she would certainly never dare to confront a religious taboo. No doubt she was really thinking of herself when, during one of her rare, short conversations with Ana, she tells her:

O que mais agora a aprisiona à imagem que ele [Alberto] foi, não é o amor, mas o remorso. Não o remorso de ter sido dele (...). Mas de ter sido tão pouco, de não ter sabido ser mais. Não era êle o que mais a interessava (...), mas a sua liberdade. (CCA, 272)

The cruelty of which Ana accuses Nina, and of which there are many examples, is really a form of the egoism which is a feature of all the characters.¹⁵ In the same way that, during her 'incestuous' relation with her 'son', Nina never gives a thought to André, so she had gone through life unthinkingly, in the pursuit of physical pleasure.

Ana, then, is the strong side of Nina's personality, but this does not mean that she is not influenced by her weaker half. In fact, quite the reverse. Unconsciously she not only goes so far as to copy Nina's behaviour, including her involvement with the gardener, but also allows her to be influenced in her approach to life. Nina is such a memorable

personality that she continues to act upon Ana, who, as a result, progresses from a view of life as unconcerned, preserving a false peace to one of 'sinning', in which she eventually identifies with Nina. When she makes her deathbed confession, she asks Padre Justino "não pequei (...) não existi?" (CCA, 467): the two divided halves have thus been joined again for the being to present itself before God.

This type of double, embodying the evil and the mediocre sides of man, is also used in O desconhecido, but the narrative point of view in this case is that of the mediocrity as he struggles to achieve self-definition. The situation is also further complicated by the appearance of a good element, so that Zé Roberto's conflict is between Miguel, the 'devil', and Paulo, the 'angel'. One of these will eventually win the battle for his soul. This novella explores a symbolic situation in which an uncommitted ego finds itself face to face with the super-ego, which exerts a severe moral control over it, and the id, with its appeal to the unleashing of violent passions.¹⁶ Zé Roberto is split between the two figures, or rather the two ideas, and for a time it does seem that Good, because it brings him peace of mind, might triumph. But one night, when he is outside, he suddenly becomes aware that the evil presence which hovered over the estate has finally taken possession of him:

Teve então a impressão de que uma sombra se destacava das moitas escuras, avançava devagar em sua direção, confundia-se com ele, penetrava no seu próprio corpo, absorvia o seu sangue com a silenciosa voracidade de um vampiro. (D, 199)

The scene has an intensely symbolic purpose as the moment when Zé Roberto decides to escape with the cook's savings, and what follows will be the result of this evil decision: the murder of Paulo is a logical development, since Zé Roberto's choice implies the rejection of goodness. But as with Cain, who was branded by God Himself, so here the criminal's face will be marked;¹⁷ except that in this case, it will be done by his personal Devil, because as he leaves the estate Miguel opens a gash in his face with a horsewhip, as a constant reminder of the choice he has made: his submission to Lucifer.

Lúcio Cardoso also uses the more traditional type of double, the Good-Evil dichotomy prized by the Romantics,¹⁸ in the mother and daughter (Lina and Adélia) who become so important in the life of Inácio, in O enfeitado. Lina de Val-Flor is a one-time prostitute, turned fortune-teller; she will do anything for money and appears to lack a single noble feeling. Her daughter Adélia, on the other hand, is an angelic figure, oddly untouched by the environment in which she lives. Lina sells her to Inácio, but without her knowing that the price has to be paid in a week or Inácio's life forfeited in lieu. While Adélia represents Good, seen as always trampled on and destroyed in this world, Lina symbolizes Evil purchasing man's body and soul in exchange for physical pleasure.

This second type of double is found only in this one work. More important are those cases in which there is identification of two souls. Again the device is one cultivated by the Romantics, based on the suggestion of Mesmer when he put forward his theory of twin souls. According to Mesmer, such beings possess an identical type of animal magnetism which causes them to overcome their physical separateness, coming together and eventually, at a given state of their life cycle, identifying with one another.¹⁹ Mesmer concluded that they were not really two separate souls, but one divided one. This is what happens with Clara and Sílvia in Dias perdidos. To begin with, they are unaware of one another, but suddenly come together and Sílvia has the uncomfortable feeling that his mother recognizes the experiences he is going through (DP, 169), while Clara sees, with apprehension, that her son is repeating her own past, to the point of making the same mistakes in personal relations that she herself had made (DP, 308). And so it is: Sílvia sees Diana again at a dance, just as Clara had met Jaques, and falls madly in love with her. Just like his mother, he suffocates Diana with an overbearing love, always expecting more from her than she is capable of giving. Clara and Sílvia form one soul, in the way the occultists had viewed it and in accordance with Jung's subsequent studies. They are animus and anima, with the result that they do not merely complement one another, for each exists partly within the other.²⁰

This explains why Clara is at times aware of the delicate, almost feminine, appearance of her son, while she herself, in her harsh, unforgiving attitudes, reveals a certain masculinity. It is the animus in her that makes her unable to forgive Jaques for leaving her twenty-five years before; it is the anima in Sílvia that accounts for the sensitive nature of his love for Diana.

The same type of identification occurs in Crônica da casa assassinada between Alberto and André. In this case we have an example of continuation across time, since when the child is born, Alberto has already committed suicide. André does seem to represent the rebirth of his father. Not only is he the physical reproduction of Alberto,²¹ but so alike in temperament that Nina, in loving André, is able to resuscitate the man she loved, sixteen years later. In earlier periods of literature, the appearance of a "replica double" always led to terrible complications followed by the resultant crisis point. Although the intended effect was mostly comic, a number of works in the Romantic period²² succeeded in exploiting the tragic potential of the situation in which a character mistaken for another is respected and loved as by reflection. André causes quite a storm in the Meneses household by resuscitating the conflict between Ana and Nina, just as it had been in the past. But his drama stems mainly from the feeling that he is loved by mistake, and since he does not know the facts of his own life, this is a source both of bewilderment and of severe torment.

One of the commonest forms of double used by Lúcio Cardoso is the traditional ego versus id, where the id interferes in the ego's behaviour in the manner suggested by Freud:

The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id which contains the passions ...

The ego is especially under the influence of perception and that perception may be said to have the same significance for the ego as instincts. ²³

These two definitions make it clear that the ego represents man's social being, while the id refers to those unknown forces which exist within us and can erupt at any moment. Generally speaking, when they do erupt they are dangerous, since they are governed only by pleasure. This is the danger referred to by Miguel:

Tudo isto é uma imposição do desconhecido que dorme dentro do nós. Quanto mais lhe obedecemos, mais êle se esforça por romper os limites da sua prisão, exteriorizar-se, até nos dominar como a um escravo. (D, 189)

Similarly, Ana blurts out: "Um monstro existe dentro de mim, um ser fremente, apressado que acabará por me engolir um dia" (CCA, 138). In the earlier work, A luz no subsolo,

the existence of the id was recognized by Pedro and he, unlike the other two characters mentioned above, appears to realize the positive power that is also part of his instinctive world. Talking to Bernardo, he explains to him by means of a metaphor the 'luz no subsolo', what is meant by this force exploding within us, driving us to rebel, but also capable of helping us to see our way more clearly. (IS, 296) They seem to be aware that the id is an extremely powerful force, which can take control of them at any moment, and that when it does so they will never regain control. Hence the menace we feel in the dark figure which follows Inácio about the streets of Rio de Janeiro, for it was: "esse outro ser que recolhe e sepulta esses terrores e essas imagens reflexas dos nossos atos" (E, 270) and its appearance at this point in the book is particularly threatening, since the divided Inácio is engaged in an anguished search for his double.

On certain occasions the id takes on a more concrete appearance. Instead of looming into the picture as a formless monster, a sheer menace, the id appears as the devil. In this form it symbolizes the inescapable truth, a caricature²⁴ of the human double which certain characters have. For instance, the devil which appears before Pedro (IS, 140, 174) is a reinforcement of Bernardo, embodying in his image of mediocrity precisely what Pedro is trying to avoid confronting. The same role as man's hounding, persecuting conscience is awarded to the devil that Inácio (on the point of killing himself) sees in the

mirror superimposed on his own image. Here, the notion that man creates the devil in his own image²⁵ is linked to the belief that mirrors have the power of revealing what is hidden in man's soul. Otto Rank records that this belief in the magic power of mirrors is rooted in antiquity and is based on the idea that the mirror separates the two faces of the soul,²⁶ detaching the social mask which we ourselves put on from our true face which we try to avoid seeing - thus Inácio suddenly sees his real face.

In addition to these individual forms of the id, there is, in Crônica da casa assassinada, what we may call a collective id, in the shape of Timóteo. With his faults and his qualities, Timóteo is a symbol of the id of the Meneses family, of everything they do their best not to think about. Thus, everything he utters assumes the appearance of an irrefutable prophecy and he is permitted a keener perception of reality than is given to the rest of the family. He therefore understands straightaway Nina's significance for the household and he is the only one of them capable of discovering the ultimate truth: as Kierkegaard put it, only the world of passions can lead to faith. Because of what he stands for, Timóteo suffers all manner of repression: he is discredited, confined to a dark room, ignored. As always happens with the id, he is shown as a bisexual creature.²⁷ When he finally breaks free and makes his unexpected entrance in the reception-hall on the day of Nina's funeral, his presence

makes clear the absolute degree of conflict which that decisive event had produced among the members of the family. For a short while he has overcome the callous power of social prejudice and moves freely around the house. In keeping with his symbolic function, Timóteo is also given a physical development which parallels the growth of the passions within the bosom of the Meneses family. When Nina returns to the house after fifteen years away, she visits Timóteo and notices how fat he has become, or rather how he has grown in size:

Não era mais aquele que eu conhecera (...), mas uma caricatura. Monstruosa talvez, não havia nenhuma dúvida, mas extraordinariamente patética. Os olhos sempre vivos, haviam desaparecido sob uma massa flácida, de côr amarela, que lhe tombava sobre o rosto em duas dilatadas vagas. Os lábios, pequenos, estreitos, mal deixavam extravasar as palavras, num sôpro, ou melhor num assovio idêntico ao do ar que irrompe dum fole. Naturalmente ainda conservava o seu aspecto feminino, mas de há muito deixara de ser a grande dama, magnífica e soberana. Era um rebotalho humano, decrépito e enxundioso, que mal conseguia se mover e que já atingira êsse grau extremo em que as semelhanças animais se sobre- põem às humanas. (CCA, 181)

A final type of double appears in Cardoso's novels. In this case, we are not concerned with a human being divided into two separate creatures, but with certain characters who, in the course of their sufferings, undergo multiple personality splits. This occurs with Diana, in Dias perdidos, and Stella in Inácio; both of them characters who seem to lack that consistent foundation which Pedro believed to be essential to every individual.²⁸ Diana, for instance, goes through a whole series of phases, one after another, without settling to any of them: passionate wife, doting (would-be) mother, society lady, romantic heroine, all at amazing speed in less than the first year of her marriage. And all as a way of evading the truth: that she didn't love Sílvio and that their marriage had been a terrible mistake. The story of Stella, however, is an even more striking case of personality split. When her son Rogério sets out to find out what his mother had been like, he receives two completely opposed visions of her: from Lucas, the picture of someone pure, good and undeservedly unhappy; from Violeta, an image of intentional cruelty, of outright evil. Stella seems to have suffered a complete split between her good and bad sides, which showed themselves separately and quite unaware of each other's existence.²⁹ Such cases not only reveal the instability and vulnerability of the ego but are also proof of the ambiguity

of truth. The conclusion reached by Rogério is thus limited to the following:

Cada um de nós não é, na verdade, um ser diferente para os outros, não somos tantos quantos os olhos exteriores nos julgam? Se procurasse ouvir uma terceira testemunha obteria, daquela que morrera, uma nova imagem, completamente diferente. (I, 67)

Notes

- 1 According to Tymms (Doubles in Literary Psychology. Cambridge, Bowes & Bowes, 1949, 15) the origins of the theme are to be found in primitive beliefs subsequently carried over into stories of witches and fairies. It has this quality of fantasy when it enters Greek literature, from where its influence spread to later literature.
- 2 RANK, Otto. Une Étude sur le Double. Paris, Denoel et Steele, 1932. See pp. 80-104 for a discussion of this aspect of the psychological origins of the concept of the double, first as it appears in the literature of antiquity and subsequently through occultism and mesmerism.
- 3 Dostoevsky was the writer who conferred greater complexity on the device and who, from the time he first used it in his novella The Double, spoke of it in the most enthusiastic terms. An entry for November 1877 in his Diary of a Writer includes the words "the idea of the 'double' was a very clever one and I have never propounded anything more serious in literature" (London, Cassell, 1949, Nov. 1877).
- 4 CHIZHEVSKY, D. 'The Theme of the Double in Dostoevsky', in WELLEK (ed.). Dostoevsky. New York, Prentice Hall, 1962, 114.
- 5 Ibid., 128

- 6 TILLICH, P. The Courage to Be. London, William Clowes, 1952, 81.
- 7 Ibid., 43
- 8 Ibid., 46
- 9 Ibid., 44
- 10 The evil versus mediocre form of the double occurs in A professora Hilda (Hilda and Eugênia), in Inácio (Inácio and Lucas, in O anfiteatro (Laura and Margarida), and in O enfeitado (Inácio and Rogério). In this last work, Inácio has lost track of Rogério and is desperately trying to locate him. He goes to the point of staking his whole life on this search and as we accompany him, it becomes clearer all the time that he is struggling against the disintegration of his own ego, which will inevitably occur if he does not succeed in discovering his other half.
- 11 See JUNG, K. Man and his Symbols. London, Picador, 1961, 110 et seq.
- 12 The idea came from the Mesmerites and was used by Stevenson in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Cf. TYMMS, Op.cit., 93.
- 13 JUNG, K. Op.cit., 110

- 14 Not inner weakness, so much as a form of social cowardice, the fear of open conflict with the Establishment, which Nina recognizes as one of her characteristics. As she puts it to Betty:
 "Não, nunca fui má. De tudo o que me lembro é que talvez tenha sido um pouco fraca" (CCA, 287).

- 15 Cf. ADONIAS FILHO, 'Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso', Cadernos da hora presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1939, 74.
 "A bondade não existe, Lúcio Cardoso eliminou-a definitivamente dos seus romances".

- 16 FREUD, S. The Ego and the Id. London, The Hogarth Press, 1974, 18.

- 17 In O enfeitado, when Inácio is looking for Rogério in the streets of ill fame and the junkie hotels, he sees, coming out of one of these dens, a priest who has a long razor scar on his face. The same symbolism is being used, showing that degradation reveals itself in physical terms, giving people a suitable mask.

- 18 This type of double was much used by Hoffmann and all the first generation of German Romantics, who were interested in separating the two hostile elements of the human personality (See TYMMS, Op.cit., 28-72).

- 19 Ibid., 26

- 20 JUNG, K. Op.cit., 193 et seq.
- 21 This is the only case of a replica double in Cardoso's work. Both Nina and Timóteo are astounded by the degree of physical likeness. When Timóteo sees André for the first time, he exclaims, quite simply: "Eu o vi a êle, Nina, ao moço das violetas /Alberto/" (CCA, 446).
- 22 It is the theme of several stories by Hoffmann and by Goethe.
- 23 FREUD, S. Op.cit., 15, 30.
- 24 Miguel puts it the other way round to Zé Roberto: "Você bem sabe que nada sou senão uma caricatura do seu demônio" (D, 136). Nevertheless, the reinforcement function continues to exist.
- 25 In The Brothers Karamazov, Ivan states that man always creates the devil in his own image, attributing to him everything he himself wants to reject. (Ed. cit. 574). The same appearance of mediocrity is given to the devil-double by Stavrogin, in The Devils; speaking to Dasha, he says: "Now begins a series of his visitations. Yesterday he was stupid and impudent ... I got angry that my own demon could appear in such a miserable mask" (Apud CHIZHEVSKY, D. Op.cit., 117).

26 RANK, O. Op.cit., 108.

27 FREUD, S. Op.cit., 24.

28 When he talks of 'o mistério dos seres', which he seeks to uncover in every human being who crosses his path.

29 This is the true Romantic double, the Jekyll and Hyde type. However, Cardoso does not go into much detail concerning the split suffered by this character, whose sole importance is as the cause of the hatred of Lucas and Inácio.

CHAPTER IV: THE CAUSES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISINTEGRATION

In the works of Lúcio Cardoso the division or disintegration of personality occurs only as the consequence of a major psychological crisis; the character is seen in an unremitting struggle on the threshold of self-discovery or, at least, striving for its achievement. The states of crisis derive from feelings experienced by the character which affect not only his own being but also his outside situation, thus imparting a particular flavour to his relations with other characters.

In the first place, Cardoso's characters seem capable of expressing only 'negative' emotions ¹ such as fear, hatred, anger or disgust. These feelings refer to situations in which the characters are already involved but in which they have never acquiesced and from which they wish to free themselves or, at least, to modify radically. This arises from the fact

that, inside themselves, they are governed by ennui, despair and anxiety: - "the primary 'ontological' feelings (...).

/which/ 'light up' the human condition in its grimmer aspects". ²

Most of Cardoso's characters do, in fact, start with a phase of ennui when the 'aesthetic' or 'social' stage of life ceases to satisfy them. ³ This is the moment when they become aware of the mediocrity of the routine in which they find themselves, as happens with Ida, in Mãos vazias, when she looks around herself and views with disgust the objects amongst which she has lived for the previous ten years:

Oh Deus, aquela vida, aquela casa pequena,
aquelas rosas do lado de fora, o ar abafado
da sala quando fumegava sobre a mesa a terrina
da sopa ... tudo era ignóbil, ignóbil. (MV, 57)

Yet this "névoa de vulgaridade" (MV, 31) that now rises from the objects around her was not always there. Ida had even been responsible for putting it all together and for several years she had been happy, remembering with fondness the early days of her marriage (MV, 49). Ennui can attack the character from other quarters too. Sometimes it comes as a reaction to the community, to a tedious life which the character views with excessive severity. This is the situation of Clara, in Dias perdidos, after her husband has left her and she finds herself, for financial reasons, reduced to embroidering to order:

E já agora não podia mais levar a vida tranqüila de antigamente, maldizendo-se a cada minuto, suspirando, inventando razões imaginárias para os seus males. Na realidade, ainda não conseguira ferir a causa exata daquele desconforto que aumentava dia a dia. Ainda não percebera que alguma coisa latejava impiedosamente no fundo da sua carne, clamando contra aquela solidão com a crescente violência de uma tormenta. Em vão ela procurava enumerar todos os motivos, investigando aflitamente tudo o que a rodeava, o silêncio da sua casa, a passividade dos objetos que a acompanhavam há tantos anos, culpando a esse vazio, a essas formas inanimadas com a obstinada cegueira dos que não ousam realizar no íntimo a confissão que temem. (DP, 41)

Ennui can also overtake the character through a lack of a choice, the refusal to take part in life, staying on the bylines as a mere spectator as happens with Zé Roberto, who, until he meets Paulo, seems totally indifferent to events around him. From childhood he has never established links with anyone, not even his own family: "sempre transitara livremente entre os outros, como se fosse outra raça a que pertencesse, mais amarga e mais pura" (D, 55). This is undoubtedly the most dangerous form of ennui, since it is not weakness moved to revolt but a kind of uninvolved or 'availability'.

While ennui is a prison to the weak, it belongs only to an initial phase in the life of the strong, rebellious characters. This is the stage when, having concluded that life around them is mediocre, they discover the mediocrity of other human beings, who appear to be satisfied with the life they lead. This accounts for the obvious feeling of scorn which certain characters show towards humanity.⁴ Rogério, for instance, expresses this attitude very clearly when he remarks that he "adoecera de mediocridade" and that mankind is composed of such petty creatures "que não é possível que Deus tenha inventado seres tão sórdidos para testemunhar a Sua grandeza" (I, 93).

Because of its many ramifications, ennui begins to take hold of the characters' inner world and develops into despair: "é como se lhes faltasse o ar ... como se num túnel estreito procurassem uma pequena fresta por onde olhassem o céu" (E, 213). While ennui can be a temporary condition, the same is not true of despair which takes different forms and expresses itself in different ways.⁵ First of all, it may be caused by an event: the case of Ida after the death of Luisinho. This event arouses within Ida "esse grande vazio de não saber como empregar a sua força" (MV, 104). But despair relating to a situation is purely momentary and very quickly develops into despair centred on the self, when the character feels trapped and sees his possibility fail to materialize. On occasions this

undefined stage stems from "not being the self one chose to be" ⁶ or, at any rate, occurs when the character enters into serious doubts with regard to his strength of purpose. As in the case of Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, who spends a part of his life suffering because he is struggling to reassert his possibility of action:

Por que não consigo encontrar nenhuma tranqüilidade? O pior é a questão de não ignorar nunca o meu desejo. E não posso fugir! Se fugisse, no silêncio do meu quarto teria vergonha do que se passara (LS, 108).

Although despair may only destroy the ego in extreme situations, it always undermines it severely. Lúcio Cardoso's fiction offers an extensive examination of the effect that despair has on individuals, including those who are secure in the material sense and those who are unaware of their spiritual reality and live just for the day. Madalena, for instance, leads a comfortable life, without financial problems but she is tormented by a vague feeling which Pedro regards as jealousy, as well as by frequent intrusions of a past whose significance she cannot grasp. The same is true of Bernardo, who is so base, concerned only with money, drink and sex and yet destroys himself slowly in an undefined despair.

While despair attacks all the characters, even the least likely ones, the feeling assumes different forms. In the first place, there is the human being's reaction to the finitude-infinity dualism, expressed in the behaviour of certain characters who seek through imagination the flights of fancy which they believe will preserve them from having to face a reality they cannot accept. From early on in her life, Diana, for example, in Dias perdidos, is in danger of not returning to the world of reality or to her own self because she creates such confusion between what she imagines to be real and reality itself that even she finds it difficult to disentangle the two and to know when she is telling the truth. Kierkegaard puts it in the following terms: "when feeling becomes fantastic the self is simply volatilized more and more, at last becoming a sort of abstract sentimentality which is so inhuman that it does not apply to any person".⁷

Another form of despair is that which results from the need for balance between the world of possibilities that opens up all around man and his real necessity, since either of these in excess will unbalance the ego and plunge it into the depths of despair. For Kierkegaard it is a serious error to transform everything around us into necessity, forgetting that "Necessity is like a sequence of consonants only, but in order to utter them there must in addition be possibility".⁸ Otherwise we merely develop worthless material needs and thereby

block the road to any possibility and therefore the way to God. This is the problem of the Meneses family, in Crônica da casa assassinada. Everything connected with the 'house' must be respected and revered, so that each individual member of the family has not only to cope alone with his personal problems, but also to keep to the narrow confines he has mapped out for himself. At the other extreme is Nina, for whom all of this is trivial: nothing to do with the house has any meaning or importance for her and she cannot even find any compensating factor in the good side of strong family traditions, such as the way the family unites against the outside world.

While the majority of the characters actually suffer despair, there are some who somehow fail to take notice of their emotional condition and live, for a time, at least, in the illusion that they are happy. Cases of this sort are all the more tragic because the illusion is a sign of mauvaise foi and alienation from the self's true feeling. Such is André, in the Crônica, who is involved in an incestuous relationship, but to start with simply refuses to accept the fact that he is in love with his own mother. He talks about his love with all the passion and enthusiasm of an adolescent talking about his first love affair, until the truth suddenly comes home to him, plunging him into dread and ~~and~~ despair.⁹ This same illusion of happiness is felt

by Zé Roberto when he finds a friend in Paulo. Unfortunately this temporary elation prevents him realizing that he is yielding to strong passions and this will make him an easy prey to Miguel's strategies.

There are, then, a few characters who live for a time unaware of their despair, but the majority know that they are in despair. Some are in despair because they are weak, including all those who appear to have been submerged in ephemeral things. Dependent on worldly pleasures, the character simply lacks the courage to abandon them, although he knows full well that his mode of life does not satisfy him. Rogério, in Inácio, is an example: he persists in a life of dissipation, knowing all the time that he is restless and unhappy. In some of these cases the condition becomes more acute and the character's despair stems directly from his own weakness in being unable to get out of the situation in which he has become involved. Such cases form a group of perfectly lucid characters, of whom Ana Meneses is the most obvious example. They are conscious of their weakness, but have been so overcome by despair that they no longer have the spiritual strength to make their own choice. While they are aware that despair is a weakness, they are in the situation referred to by Kierkegaard: "but instead of veering sharply away from despair to faith, humbling himself before God for his weakness, he is more deeply absorbed in despair and despairs over his weakness". 10

However, it is not only weakness that results in despair; defiance can lead to the same feeling, and because it is dialectical, the feeling it provokes is more intense. The despairing self, in this case, is constantly building castles in the air and, instead of using his strength positively, fights only in the abstract. So with Nina and Ana Meneses, whose main pleasure seems to be, in the first case, to have the feeling of being a sinner, and in the latter to go into lengthy divagations on her demonism. This is despair which takes pleasure in feeling itself develop and take control of one's life, despair almost as an end in itself. The sufferer in this group, therefore, does not want to be aided. The obvious case is Ana Meneses who writes long letters and confessions to Padre Justino in which she chronicles her sufferings, yet clearly avoids meeting the priest. When he eventually confronts her with her own words, Ana appears simply to revel in hearing the restatement of her despair and refuses to heed the possibility of viewing the same events in a more positive light. Cases like these, as Kierkegaard has shown, are hopeless:

Even if at this point God in heaven and all his angels were to offer to help him out of it - no, now he doesn't want it, now it is too late, he once would have given everything to be rid of this torment but was made to wait, now that's all past, now he would rather rage against everything, he, the one man in the whole of existence who is the

most unjustly treated, to whom it is especially important to have his torment at hand, important that no-one should take it from him - for thus he can convince himself that he is in the right. ¹¹

In these cases the character is suffering from "dread of good", a form of sickness of the self which revolts against the idea of therapy. When the sickness becomes a way of life, when the supposed benefits of the sickness are greater than the pain it causes, the individual refuses to be helped. He even seems to be afraid of possible assistance, preferring to live in a world of guilt and doubt.

Freud also referred to this condition frequently in his therapeutical works. He commented: "There is something in these people that sets itself against their recovery and dreads its approach as though it were a danger". ¹² In this attitude there is a moral factor, a feeling of guilt which apparently finds a means of expiation in the sickness itself. This is what Kierkegaard gives the name "demonical". He also uses the concept of Spirit as the principle of assessment. "Dread of the good" is a spiritual phenomenon: in this demoniacal condition the individual not only appears to fear freedom, but flees from it constantly. The continuity of his self is inextricably bound to a state of non-liberty and the loss of this union would mean the destruction of the self which is, in any case, already disintegrating. In order to protect himself, the individual shuts himself inside himself

and cuts himself off from reality. However, freedom cannot be totally annihilated and is still present even in conditions of non-freedom, showing itself in the demoniac's terror and flight when he is offered the possibility of liberation. Situations of this type occur on two occasions in the life of Ana Meneses. The first time she is offered freedom and refuses to accept it is when she discovers that she has become pregnant by Alberto. Instead of facing up to her error, she immediately begins to work out a way of having her child mistaken for that of Nina (who is also pregnant) (CCA, 461). The second occasion occurs after Nina's return, when Ana plans to kill her and have done with her suffering. But, in the course of the scene which takes place between them, we become perfectly aware that Ana had brought about the situation solely to hear certain truths from the mouth of Nina - namely, that Alberto had loved only Nina and that what had taken place between him and Ana was a misunderstanding, and furthermore that Ana is too much a Meneses to dare to disrupt the calm of the 'house' by committing a crime. Ana had thus created a situation of self-torture:

Ah, ela /Nina/ estava com a razão, não havia dúvida - e de que modo humilhante para mim! Ali, com o revólver ainda nas mãos, só poderia reconhecer que me vencera - a mim, a todos nós escravos de um hábito, de uma verdade, de um ensinamento que não ousamos destruir nem ultrapassar. (CCA, 271)

Despair is a complex feeling which does not develop by itself. Other emotions take shape parallel to it, the most important being anguish. In general terms, anguish is "flight from oneself", ¹³ a negative response to the call to find one's authentic self, because despair drives one so far away from true knowledge of the self that the return to the search is always painful and difficult. Even so, almost all men will attempt to free themselves of despair and therefore, as Kierkegaard explains, anguish is often just the consequence of the restlessness which is so characteristic of the human spirit. ¹⁴ At the same time, anguish is always linked to sin ¹⁵ and often to a premonition of sin which may appear even in states of innocence. This is explained by Kierkegaard when he studies the Adamic myth, Adam being for him a symbol of each man's life story. According to the Danish philosopher, the first man's state of innocence is identical with ignorance only at the very beginning - ignorance, that is, of good and evil. However, because the power of the Spirit already exists within him, it will change ignorance to knowledge and innocence to guilt. Following the description given in Genesis, Kierkegaard asserts that it was the introduction of the word 'prohibition' that made Adam discover his freedom: "The prohibition alarms Adam because the prohibition awakens in him the possibility of freedom ... the alarming possibility of being able". ¹⁶ The possibility of a

life in freedom always arouses in man an ambiguous response. He is fascinated by the possibility, but he is also afraid of its consequences. The biblical narrative itself spells out the dangerous nature of freedom in the words of the sentence following on from the prohibition: "Thou shalt surely die". Which explains why the possibility of freedom is accompanied by the possibility of despair, "the sickness unto death", and eventually by the idea of death and its limitations. This type of anguish, which is a presupposition of the fall, is felt by Cardoso's child characters, as they gradually unfold to life outside them, as a vague impression of restlessness, as if they sensed that the world will start corrupting them forthwith. Most of the child characters experience this form of anguish. For instance, Emanuela, in A luz no subsolo, feels it strongly when she first sets eyes on Pedro, because of the force of evil he exudes, and suspects that she will not be able to stand against him. In O enfeitado, Adélia is slow to place any trust in Inácio and we sense an anguished doubt, as though she knew of the pact between Inácio and her mother.

Anguish is also related to the idea of freedom as the struggle which each man undergoes in choosing from among the possibilities before him. He knows that he must make the choice and this besets him with "dread of choice",¹⁷ since man is a weak and fallible creature and always has doubts regarding his options.¹⁸ It is the impossibility of being sure that causes Pedro such anguish and gives him nightmares to such a point that he finds himself face to face with the devil. His suffering becomes unbearable:

Pedro sabia-se doente. Irremediavelmente doente. Muitas vezes, quando a luz se apagava sobre a sua insônia, perguntava com a alma angustiada: de onde me vem esta desconfiança, este mal-estar que não me permite estar tranqüilo em lugar nenhum? Em certas noites, costumava acordar no meio de um sono, respondendo a uma pergunta: 'ainda não chegou o tempo'. Tempo de quê? Porque sentia ele que êsse momento ainda não era chegado? (...)

Sim, tinha pavor da escuridão noturna. Tinha pavor da escuridão onde o sofrimento se erguia triunfante sobre a sua própria miséria. Quando tudo dormia em tôrno dele a aflição rompia no seu peito: que estou eu fazendo neste mundo? Quem sou eu? Porque nasci da carne para sofrer sem culpa nenhuma? (LS, 134)

In man's dualism, too, in the division between body and soul, there is a foundation for severe tensions. Torn between two different powers, man suffers anguish and sin, and, in its turn, the consequence of sin is a greater degree of anguish. So with Ana Meneses who wishes to prove her existence by sinning. Her anguish is so great that, even on her deathbed, many years after all the events in question have long past, she cannot find peace, not even in confession with Padre Justino, who in all simplicity confirms her private suffering when he closes her eyes and notices that "no seu semblante não havia nenhum sinal dessa paz que é tão peculiar aos mortos" (CCA, 468).

Anguish is thus both a consequence and a forewarning of sin; or, in Marcel's explanation, it symbolizes the 'non-availability' of certain individuals to God's message,¹⁹ for there are those who know that hope exists, yet refuse to accept salvation. They thus develop a chronic anxiety and attempt to protect the self against annihilation by conferring great importance on all material possessions, which are formed into a barrier against insecurity and disintegration. Nina is an example of this type of anguish, to such a degree that she transmits an aura of agitation around her. Several characters in the house mention this disturbing effect she has, or rather which she exudes.²⁰ She also protects herself with her hats and dresses, with all manner of adornments to her beauty, refusing to look further for the underlying causes of her anguish.²¹ When the character sinks into chronic anxiety, seeing everything around him in a state of stagnation and having allowed his self to fall into a condition of total inertia, he is unable to discover that anguish can have a propaedeutic function:

To endure anxiety is to have one's eyes opened to the reality of the human condition and so to see the need for Grace.²²

In the case of Cardoso's characters, at least, none of them seem to have discovered the potential beneficial effect of any of these feelings. Throughout his works we watch them fall deeper and deeper into despair and anguish, in a hopeless

struggle against time, blindly refusing to accept the limitation of their own intelligence, trying to prove that they are completely free. Their concern with these human concepts prevents them drawing spiritual conclusions from their own failures and they therefore become more and more neurotic and psychotic. In Freud's classification, these are the commonest forms of loss of identity, the duplication and even multiplication of psychological facets mentioned in the previous chapter being extreme and irreversible. The situation is even more serious if, as happens to many of Cardoso's characters, they suffer a splitting of the ego together with several neuroses. Anxiety is the basis of neurosis and it is the ego's response to a dangerous situation:

[this] is circumvented by the ego's doing something to avoid the situation or to retreat from it. One might say then that symptoms are created in order to avoid the development of anxiety. ²³

Faced by the situation which causes anxiety, the neurotic responds by doing everything he can to avoid braving that situation, putting himself in other situations in which he feels secure. In A luz no subsolo, for instance, as Pedro's hatred for Madalena intensifies and he struggles with his growing desire to kill her, so he shuts himself away more and more so as not to run into her and increasingly takes

refuge in his books. In cases like this, of "obsessional neurosis", the character sometimes goes so far as to look for a compensating mechanism, avoiding the act he fears by perpetrating a second action which relieves his feeling of stress. This might explain those cases of misdirected command in which one character has been prepared by another to carry out a particular mission, but suddenly performs an apparently unpredictable act. As when Bernardo, in the same novel, having been lengthily prepared by Pedro to kill Madalena, tries to murder Angélica, his mistress, who tyrannized him and whom he despises.

At times these obsessive neuroses change into anxiety neuroses, which is much more serious because the individual experiences such a degree of anxiety that he completely suspends all activity. When this happens the ego is so terrified by the thought that threatens it that it begins to withdraw into an existence in which nothing is allowed to take place, nothing is remembered, there is no sign of thought. Life seems to have flowed only as far as what Freud called "fixation point", ²⁴ as in the case of Ana Meneses, for whom everything comes to a halt with the death of Nina. When, many years later, she herself is close to death, she calls Padre Justino to hear her confession, she does so in order to recall her life in the vicinity of Nina, as if she too had been destroyed when her rival died and since then she had ceased to live.

Psychosis, however, is more serious and more threatening still for the identity of the ego: "Neurosis is the result of a conflict between the ego and its id, whereas psychosis is the analogous outcome of a similar disturbance in the relation between the ego and its environment".²⁵ Both of them are the outcome of frustrating the impulse of the id, but if the ego joins forces with reality and suppresses the commands of the id, the individual develops neuroses; if the ego joins forces with the id and suppresses reality, the result is psychoses. In the latter case, the individual has to invent his own private reality, which may result in hallucinations, as when Pedro is confronted by the devil (LS), or, worse still, lead to insanity, as happens with Rogério (I) who adapts reality to his own psychological needs. Freud rounds off his study of these conditions of loss of identity with the observation:

The destructive component has entrenched itself in the super-ego and turned against the ego. What is not holding sway in the super-ego is, as it were, a pure culture of the death-instinct and in fact it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death, if the latter does not protect itself from the tyrant in time by a revulsion into mania.²⁶

While all human beings possess a balance between the instincts of life and death, there are times when the latter take control. The proportions of these two forms of energy which control the psyche vary from person to person, but each individual carries within himself the life principles -

Eros - and the death wish, the destructive impulses which ensure that the natural balance is not lost. According to Freud, these two sets of principles are not opposed and irreconcilable; ²⁷ on the contrary, they spread outwards and interpenetrate in such a way that man may yield to each alternately or both at the same time. While 'eros' is the stronger in most human beings, which accounts for the power of the libido, ²⁸ there are those - and they include Cardoso's characters - who have strongly developed death instincts, which can be seen both in their inner life and in their relations with other people. In their inner existence this takes the form of phobias and fears, often fears of nothing specific or of the unknown, as in the case of Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, who knows that if he were able to give a name to the source of his fear, he would cease to be afraid. At other times, it is a fear of certain objects, to which the character attributes particular significance, as when Inácio asserts "aqueles objetos recusavam-me" (E, 330). Then there is fear of castration, since sex always appears in terms of violence and self-assertion. This can be seen in two of the scenes of sexual intercourse, both of them cases of rape: in A luz no subsolo, where Pedro forces Emanuela (LS, 264) and in O enfeitado, when Inácio ravishes Adélia (E, 324). ²⁹ Inácio describes quite straightforwardly the moment when, contemplating the body of the young girl whom he has made drunk, "não um corpo de mulher, mas de menina", he decides to have sex with her, even though she is unconscious:

Inclinei-me sobre Adélia adormecida e, tomando-a nos braços, coleí à sua boca meus lábios ávidos. Aquêlê beijo não tinha gosto de coisa alguma, mas eu sentia palpitar junto à minha carne aquela vida cheia de calor e de intensidade, o que me dava momentâneamente uma sensação idêntica à da embriaguez. E confesso que não tive nenhum pudor, nenhum remorso em profanar aquêlê corpo de criança. (E, 325)

Several of the male characters are regularly seen in the company of prostitutes, too. Finally, there is the fear which, according to Stekel, exerts most control over man, the fear of death, ³⁰ a neurosis which is seen not only in the tendency for characters to seek to define the concept, ³¹ but also in small phobias which reveal the evasive mechanisms seized on to protect the ego. ³² A very obvious one is looking in the mirror ³³ to reassure themselves of their physical presence. Another is their curiosity and precision in describing the dead, as if they were looking for some message. ³⁴ Or they develop persecution complexes like Hilda (A professora Hilda), or Inácio who feels he is being followed in the streets by his own shadow and goes so far as to describe his pursuer - Liná de Val-Flor's "executioner" - as a portrait of death, because he looked like "um pequeno animal rastejante e úmido" (E, 334), wore grey clothes and his features were ill-defined, his eyes a pale grey, almost white.

In addition to such phobias, Cardoso's characters have a neurotic constitution which would account for their pursuit of extreme situations.³⁵ As Tillich explains, every human being is potentially neurotic, the difference between a 'healthy' personality and a neurotic one being a matter of degree, since all men experience anxiety and their self-affirmation is limited. But the neurotic, because of his greater sensitivity to non-being, accepts a limited, unrealistic self-affirmation. Furthermore:

The average person keeps himself away from the extreme situations by dealing courageously with concrete objects of fear. He is adjusted to reality in many more directions than the neurotic. He is superior in extensivity, but he is lacking in the intensity which can make the neurotic creative.³⁶

Creative, but intensely tormented, with a tendency to complexes of guilt and self-punishment, which together with the partial, restricted view he has of reality and his obsession with one single idea, have a profound effect on the relations of Cardoso's characters with other individuals.

Notes

- 1 The term is used by McQuarrie to distinguish these emotions from a more constructive type. See his Existentialism. Harmondsworth, Pelican Books, 1972, 163.
- 2 Ibid., 164
- 3 Cf. Ch. 1, note 9.
- 4 Examples are Pedro (LS), Rogério (I), Inácio (E), Ana and Nina (CCA), who consider themselves so superior to the rest of humanity that it never occurs to them for one moment that any of the creatures around might suffer as they do.
- 5 The discussion of despair is based partly on Kierkegaard's important study contained in The Sickness unto Death. (New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), from which I have retained some of the terminology (e.g. the dualism finitude/infinity and necessity/possibility).
- 6 KIERKEGAARD. Op.cit., 160
- 7 Ibid., 164
- 8 Ibid., 171
- 9 We shall see later how he develops a defense mechanism in order to justify in part his responsibility in their relationship.
- 10 KIERKEGAARD. Op.cit., 195

- 11 Ibid., 205
- 12 FREUD, S. The Ego and the Id. London, Hogarth Press, 1957, 70.
- 13 The definition is Heidegger's quoted by McQuarrie, Op.cit., 168.
- 14 This discussion of anguish is based on Kierkegaard's The Concept of Dread (London, Oxford University Press, 1944), which is one of the most detailed analyses of the concept.
- 15 In view of the controversial nature of the concept of sin, I have chosen to follow the theory put forward by Kierkegaard in The Sickness unto Death (208-260). He begins by explaining that "Sin is potentiated weakness or potentiated defiance: sin is the potentiation of despair" (206), and goes on to assert "sin is against God, but it is especially before God", since sin is not merely a negation of God, but above all a position in which man has placed himself. For this reason "every state or condition in sin is new sin. Everything which is not of faith is new sin" (236). Thus sin keeps on growing if man does not abandon it immediately. It is not necessary for another sin to be committed for the sinner's guilt to be increased, since to remain in error is sufficient to deepen the sin. The greatest sin of all is the despair in sin: "Sin itself is a detachment of Good, but despair over sin is a second detachment" (240), because

- 15 man thus transfers his own limitations to God:
forgetting that God is omnipotent and merciful, that
he allows man to stumble and fall in order to lead
him to humility and strengthen him in Good, man, who
cannot himself forgive his sin, says that God will
never forgive him. This sin of despairing of God's
forgiveness assumes three forms: being indifferent
towards God, doubting His existence or asserting
that God is false and a total lie (260).
- 16 KIERKEGAARD, S. The Concept of Dread. Princeton,
Princeton University Press, 1957, 40.
- 17 Ibid., 38
- 18 Sartre too holds this to be the foundation of all man's
angoisse. Hence his famous phrase that man is "condemned
to freedom" (L'Etre et le Néant, 641).
- 19 MARCEL, G. Positions et Approches Concrètes du Mystère
Ontologique. Vrin, Paris, 1949, 87.
- 20 For example, Betty, who remarks that "Desde que ela chegou,
não temos mais um minuto de sossego" (CCA, 97); or Valdo's
exclamation, which expresses the agitation that has
descended on the house - "Ela está aqui - é terrível"
(CCA, 209).

- 21 This happens to all the characters who adopt a conscious form of demonism, e.g. Pedro (LS), Rogério (I), Inácio (E), Miguel (D), Professor Alves (A).
- 22 MCQUARRIE. Op.cit., 168. He is discussing the usefulness of anguish in human experience, as viewed by Kierkegaard.
- 23 FREUD, S. The Problem of Anxiety. New York, Norton, 1933, 65.
- 24 FREUD, S. Collected Papers (II). London, Hogarth Press, 1957, 123.
- 25 Ibid., 251
- 26 FREUD. The Ego and the Id. ed.cit., 77.
- 27 This dualism of the human soul, divided between Good and Evil, life and death, was earlier discussed by Boehme. It goes back to Greek philosophy, more specifically to the pre-Socratic philosophers, like Herakleitos, who laid stress on the idea that man's stability depended on the balance of opposing forces.
- 28 Libido was only identified purely with the sexual instinct in the very early works of Freud. As J.P. Cole explains: "Libido was a basic energy or power (...) While at first this power of being was given an exclusively sexual interpretation, Freud increasingly came to see that it was

- 28 but one aspect of a more fundamental life instinct which he designated Eros". (COLE, J.P. The Problematic Self in Kierkegaard and Freud. London, Yale University Press, 1971, 102). In the last phase of his works, when the 'ego-instincts' begin to interest him more than the sexual instincts, he eventually fused the two concepts of Eros and Libido.
- 29 The reference is to Emanuela's description of what took place. We are never shown the incident otherwise. The other two scenes describing sexual intercourse occur in the Crônica, as part of the 'incestuous' relationship between Nina and André. They are highly symbolic scenes and their significance will be examined later.
- 30 This famous assertion of Stekel's (in his Angoisse des Maladies Nerveuses) became a commonplace in psychology, but was rejected by Freud as a pretty phrase with little real meaning. At any rate, as he explains in The Ego and the Id (47), it appears incapable of scientific justification.
- 31 André, for instance, ends his Diary with the question "Meu Deus, o que é a morte?" (CCA, 7). The concept is discussed by Lina de Val-Flor and Inácio (E, 252). It also occurs in the last conversation between Pedro and Bernardo (LS, 338).

- 32 As Freud explains in Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety.
London, Standard Edition, 1926.
- 33 On occasions, the characters have such a need to look at themselves in a mirror, in a moment of despair, that they go to absurd lengths to do so. Bernardo goes to the maid's room in the middle of the night just to rob a mirror (LS, 272). Many of the characters try to make sure, at moments of crisis, that they have not disintegrated: Madalena and Pedro (LS), Inácio (E), Ana (CCA), Clara (DP) and Gil (A).
- 34 Bernardo accompanies the death of Pedro and keeps asking him what it feels like (LS, 336); Sílvia and Clara watch Jacques struggling to hang on to life (DP, 231); Cláudio (A, 224) and André (CCA, 452) contemplate their dead mothers.
- 35 Rank, in his study of the double (Op.cit., 57 et seq.) states that writers such as Dostoevsky create characters who are neurotic because they are capable of all manner of obsessions and manias, and because of the way they divide psychologically.
- 36 TILLICH. Op.cit., 64.

PART TWO: "AMA O TEU PRÓXIMO COMO A TI MESMO"

CHAPTER V: THE SELF AND THE OTHER

a) Destructive passion: Sadism, Hatred and Love

Não há senão uma forma de pecado:
a de não saber amar.

(Dias perdidos, 216)

The condition of chronic anguish into which the ego sinks is not only self-destructive, since it must, of necessity, affect the relationship of the self with the other. In the first place, since acute anxiety produces defence mechanisms in the individual, these are revealed in terms of aggression against the other, taking the particular form of sadism and hatred. Sadism implies the control of the 'eros' by the destructive instincts and in many instances, since the libido is so powerful, sadism manifests itself through the character's sexual life.¹ In certain cases, as occurs in

O enfeitado, when Inácio seduces Adélia, it embodies the decadent's sybaritic pursuit of pleasure which Good has been incapable of offering him. There are other examples, however, as happens with André in the Crônica, where sadism can be the discharge of tension in an ego which has been deeply grieved and which turns on the person nearest to it in its thirst for vengeance. André has intercourse with Nina, when she is close to death, knowing full well that he is causing her physical pain, since she has an open wound. The incident, which is a desperate moment for the adolescent André represents a form of revenge on his part, an attempt at retribution, since he is aware that he will very soon be left alone to struggle with the moral responsibility of committing incest.

However, since sadism is a means of controlling the other or even of eliminating him,² it exists in a psychological form which is more terrible than its physical manifestation. This may be expressed as a refusal to act in situations in which others need help, as happens with Ana in the Crônica who witnesses her husband's ordeal caused by the return of Nina, observing the anguish of his suffering at close quarters, but without the slightest intention of helping him. Perhaps worse is the pleasure with which she observes the slow death of Nina, virtually decomposing while still alive. The more frequent form of

this sadism is to be found in a large number of characters who experience pleasure in inflicting psychological torture on other characters. The best example is Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, who does not display a single positive feeling throughout the novel. Even those creatures who succeed in stirring his interest merely arouse in him a morbid hatred and we never, at any moment, see him touched by a glow of tenderness nor even the vaguest hint of friendliness. This accounts for the way he torments those in his vicinity. Sadism is also an essential feature of the femme fatale,³ as exemplified by Nina who uses her beauty to dominate and torment the men who love her. Indeed, she is an extreme case of sadism and herself explains the pleasure she feels in inflicting suffering,⁴ when she writes to the Coronel asking forgiveness for the pain she had caused him: "Não ferimos aqueles que nos são indiferentes, mas exatamente os que por um motivo ou outro, sacodem as fibras mais íntimas do nosso coração" (CCA, 294). On another occasion, talking to Ana, she hotly defends her treatment of Alberto as having been a way of intensifying their desire.

Sadism, however, is an emotion with a reflex action: it involves not only violent aggression against others, but also aggression against the self. This is mainly because, since the other continues to preserve his freedom, not having been totally possessed, let alone annihilated, the sadistic self simply feels its own alienation more acutely and is particularly aware of its total solitude.⁵ In the case of Nina and Alberto, referred to above, she clearly wants Alberto to kill Valdo and go away with her; but he chooses

freedom through suicide and leaves Nina to face the Meneses alone.

Like sadism, hatred is a negative form of relationship, expressing a desire to destroy the other, who is seen as a powerful obstacle to the freedom of the self. As Sartre explains, ⁶ for the self that is unable to objectify itself or accept the other's subjectivity, the only possibility is to annihilate the other and thus remove the disturbing effect he has on the self. Furthermore, hatred for one other human being normally entails hatred for all others, as long as they retain their status as others.

In the works of Lúcio Cardoso, hatred is the commonest feeling among the characters, taking the place not just of love but of each and every positive emotion. After reading Cardoso's fiction, we might echo the view of Inácio that "sempre o sentimos em torno de nós" (E, 255), but in a variety of forms:

Não falo de um ódio ativo, um ódio vicejante como uma hera de chama - e sim de um sentimento antigo e sem grandeza, um estado, por assim dizer, larvar a que nos submetemos, uma falta de graça, uma estilização do nada. Mas não pensem que há somente êsse ódio, apesar de tudo, imenso, e que é comum e fundamental: há muitos ódios diferentes, uns pequenos e insinuantes, outros rápidos como faúlhas, que de um nada podem incendiar e destruir para sempre, outros solitários e altivos, ódios de

heróis e de gigantes, que ardem a vida inteira como um fogo no deserto. O que me interessa, no entanto, é diferente de todos êsses, bastante eloqüente no seu silêncio e na sua falta de gestos, um ódio vindo através dos tempos, um sinal da natureza, uma tonalidade particular do espírito - e, em última instância, numa visão final onde o julgamento se completa, a própria alma (E, 256).

An "Ódio ativo" will give a purpose to the life of Hilda, in A professora Hilda, offering her a motivation she had long sought unsuccessfully. She was a teacher, but had never been capable of loving the children she taught; she had sought love with one person by taking Sofia from the orphanage, but had only managed to make the child terribly unhappy. She finds it impossible to make friends with her neighbours, although she still lives in the small town where she had grown up. She does not really love her profession, yet when she is forcibly retired and as a result is replaced by Eugênia, she throws herself wholeheartedly into planning her revenge. If we think that the cause of her scheming and plotting is merely hurt pride, the whole story seems scarcely justifiable. But if we look for the underlying cause and observe how Hilda is rejuvenated by her machinations, we are led to the conclusion that hatred may also be a force for personal renewal.

"Um ódio fermentando" over the years is what separates Laura and Margarida, in O anfiteatro, as the result of an old love affair. While Cláudio's father prevented the outbreak of hostilities while he was still alive, he also had the effect of forcing them to intensify their feelings, so that when they eventually come into conflict, verbally and actively, it is a fight to the death. The two women become involved in a war of nerves, witnessed with bewilderment by Cláudio, which ends in the destruction of the weaker of the two, Margarida, who cannot endure the pressure and kills herself.

The "ódios(...) pequenos e insinuantes", such as Ana feels towards Nina, in the Crônica, or Bernardo towards Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, are nevertheless powerful and deep-seated. This type of hatred becomes an obsession in which the stronger figure (Nina, Pedro) serves as a disturbing yet necessary element in the life of the weaker character. Reluctantly, the latter (Ana, Bernardo) take the others as examples, as epitomizing success in life, and therefore follow them and spy on them, as if they expect to learn from them. Hatred of this sort is essentially silent, which is why Ana has only three short conversations with Nina, while Bernardo normally just listens to Pedro.

Nina's feeling towards the Meneses belongs to a different variety of hatred, that of the "ódios (...) solitários e altivos". This type of hatred manifests itself in unceasing defiance and Nina does everything to

upset the Meneses family. She makes a show of her beauty, a permanent source of disturbance; she squanders money on clothes and jewellery, although she knows the family is ruined; she joins forces with Timóteo, aware that he is a source of shame to the family; she falls in love with and becomes pregnant by the lowliest employee on the estate; ⁷ and to round off her mission of hatred, she jeopardizes not just the present but also the future of the Meneses, by corrupting the heir to the estate in an incestuous relationship.

There is still another form of hatred, an absolute hatred, a form of personified hatred, which is so ingrained in the personality of the character that it supplants any other trait of temperament. Such is the hatred felt by Aurélia for the child Nina, in O desconhecido; as a result not only does she send the girl away from her house, but when she discovers that she is being sheltered by the priest, she even goes to ask him to throw her out. When Zé Roberto asks her the reason for the obsessive nature of her feelings, she tells him that the thought of Nina tortures her night and day, because the young girl is everything she herself had wanted to be and had not achieved. Lina de Val-Flor, in O enfeitado, has the same feeling towards her daughter Adélia and for this reason sells her to Inácio, in the hope of seeing her prostituted and, in consequence, destroyed.

There is still a further passion which motivates Cardoso's characters: love, which occurs as a Dionysian force, a consuming flame which is highly erosive and can turn into ice. Nothing positive is achieved through love in Cardoso's fiction: it acts merely as an emotional hurricane which sweeps man to destruction. We find pleasure neither in family life,⁸ nor even in sexual gratification; all that is to be seen is a stumbling-block in human destiny, but with the risk of such emotional attrition that the sequel of such episodes is often a vast inner emptiness. In the case of André (CCA), for instance, there can be no doubt of his love for Nina, but his passion is so all-consuming that it devours all his vital energy. Nina and André are the only example of mutual passion. Normally "o amor é um monólogo travado na sombra" (DP, 216), which grows and takes root within the characters, but shows itself only in extreme situations, at times in desperate acts: murder (Zé Roberto kills Paulo for love); suicide (Inácio kills himself for love of Adélia) or sadism, as when the intensity of Nina's passion drives her to torture Alberto. Finally, we have to remember - following Boehme⁹ - that human nature is androgynous, so that the aspects mentioned above apply both to the love of man for woman, or of woman for man, and to homosexual love (as in the case of Zé Roberto and Paulo).

In the works of Lúcio Cardoso the foundations of love are to be found in two attitudes. There can be a blend of commiseration with a protective urge resulting in a rare type of love,¹⁰ as in the case of Valdo who, from his first meeting with Nina, seems to wish to protect a woman he believes to be fated to unhappiness:

Sua [Nina's] figura impressionou-me desde êsse instante, ou melhor, sua palidez, seu tom nervoso e patético. Não usava nenhuma pintura e vestia-se mais que modestamente. Meu primeiro pensamento foi: "Tão bela e nunca será feliz" (...). Aquilo me deu uma pena instantânea, lancinante. (CCA, 78)

More commonly, the force which brings two creatures together is sensuality. Such is the basis of Nina's love for Alberto, which is why she is not concerned about the young man's lack of culture - he is not even a good gardener, as long as he has a beautiful young body. The sensuality of some characters - Pedro, in A luz no subsolo, and Rafael, in O viajante, - has such a power for evil that not only do the lovers themselves become insane, but everyone else in their vicinity is caught up in the frenzy. When Rafael, newly arrived in Vila Velha, decides to entertain himself with some easy, inconsequential "affairs", he stirs up such an atmosphere that Juca do Valle ends up killing Sinhã and

Don'Ana de Lara her moronic child, Zeca. The same heightening of tension drives Valdo to write in alarm to Padre Justino:

"Há em minha mulher qualquer coisa dúbia e perigosa (...)
O ambiente passional que atravessámos há quinze anos atrás
foi um exclusivo produto dessa sua irradiação pessoal"
(CCA, 201).

In some of the characters this sensuality takes the form of depravity. This is more dangerous still, because it reveals, as in the case of Inácio, utter solitude, a total impossibility to participate, even briefly, with another person. Furthermore, it reveals an inability to choose among life's many attractions, which are viewed as equally important.¹¹ So the tendency to place on the same level all the members of the female sex with whom he comes into contact, leads Inácio to treat Adélia in the same way as he treats prostitutes, although she is a pure, innocent creature whom he claims to love passionately. Sensuality is the invariable factor in the love affairs portrayed by Lúcio Cardoso because love as he represents it is an overweening passion:

Existem amores que queimam, destroem, deixam
marca semelhante a doença terrível que tivesse
cicatrizado e há os amores que não passam, que
latejam sempre no fundo da carne, que transformam
um ser em satélite do outro. (DP, 54)

The author further defines these "amores que queimam" in his Diário completo:

Ah, o amor que não sabe ter calma e não conhece nenhuma espécie de repouso' - antes é uma espécie de febre constante e lúcida. Com o correr do tempo transforma-se numa obsessão sem fundo, um estado agudo, delirante - e que é próprio daqueles que conhecem o nada em que se esfumam todos os sentimentos. (DC, 9)

Love of this nature, which can drive a person to all manner of follies, is what Clara recognizes on the occasion when she spots the Farmacêutico spying on her and "sente-se mal perante aquela fisionomia humilde e torturada" (DP, 78). It is also an upheaval of the same type that goads Zé Roberto into killing Paulo. A stranger case is that of Demétrio and Nina, in the Crônica. Demétrio is a man of great self-control, whose sole interest appears to be the preservation of the good name of the Meneses. Unbending and bigoted, he loves neither of his brothers, let alone his wife, whom he considers as merely a suitable partner for a man in his position. Everything changes, however, with the appearance of Nina. Demétrio becomes passionately obsessed with his sister-in-law and thus considers her a danger to his peace of mind. He immediately begins to think of ways of getting rid of her; hence the whole plausible farce of her possible adultery and the incitement to commit a crime, which he practises on his brother Valdo. When this fails, it is

perfectly understandable that he, as head of the family should insist on the departure of the woman who had entered the family through marriage and proceeded to blot its good name.

As well as this tempestuous kind of passion, we find also a quieter form, though no less devastating for that: "os amores que latejam no fundo da carne". This type of passion is represented especially in *Silvio* and *Clara*. It is a love which is outside reality, a pursuit of ideal love, which explains why neither of these characters really knows the person they claim to love. What is particularly tragic about this love is that it amounts to a renunciation of happiness, because the character who loves in this way is constantly being hurt:

Silvio perdera de vista o objeto amado e o seu sentimento se convertera, não no segredo dos dias felizes, mas numa chaga sempre disposta a sangrar. (DP, 341)

The incestuous relationship between *André* and *Nina*¹² has to be given a special place, because it is a passion with important symbolic and metaphysical implications, undoubtedly "um último e desassombrado desafio às leis do homem, da natureza e de Deus".¹³ Firstly, because *Nina* represents l'éternel féminin,¹⁴ a synthesis of all types of woman, which is why *André* discovers:

.... nesta o aveludado de um beijo - 'era assim que ela beijava' - naquela um modo de sorrir, nesta outra o tombar de uma mecha rebelde de cabelos - tôdas, tôdas essas inumeráveis mulheres que cada um encontra ao longo da vida e que me auxiliarão a recompôr, na dôr e na saudade, essa imagem única. (CCA, 7)

Secondly, what André seeks in Nina is something more than just physical pleasure. He wants also to discover his own limits: his beginning, where he was conceived - "Amá-la é reintegrar-me no que fui, sem susto e sem dificuldade. É a volta ao país de origem" (CCA, 299) -; but also his own death, which she should be able to reveal to him: "Era o meu único encontro com a morte, com o seu subterrâneo trabalho de desagregar e confundir a harmonia interna de que se compõe cada ser vivo" (CCA, 369). But between beginning and end, Nina teaches André many more things. She teaches him about life, so that between the naïve adolescent he is at first and the young man she makes him, there has been all the experience of cruelty, of loneliness, of suffering and of self-knowledge. One might summarize the odyssey of this couple in terms of D'Annunzio's characters, as epitomized in the words of Isabella Inghirami in Forse che sì forse che no:

I have neither sought nor given pleasure;
 but in my trembling hand I have taken another
 trembling hand, to descend in search of the
 bottom of the abyss, perhaps of the sub-
 terranean temple. I have accomplished
 not an act of the flesh, but an act of sad
 initiation (...). I do not represent
 happiness or misfortune, but stern knowledge ... 15

As their relationship follows its course, André gradually understands the meaning of incest and the choice of evil he has made, and his remorse shows in his self-justification. First he accuses Nina of being immodest and suggests that he was seduced; eventually he claims that it was very difficult to resist her, because she was not a normal woman, but rather a personification of Evil:.

A atmosfera do Mal. E a esta atmosfera, era impossível deixar de reconhecer pertencia o ser que eu amava (...) Era preciso reconhecer que aquela criatura frágil encarnava o mal, o mal humano, de modo simples e sem artifício. (CCA, 305)

Nina seem, at first sight, to substantiate André's charge by her silence, since although she knows that André is not her son she allows him to continue to suffer the remorse for a non-existent incest. Again, however, Nina is trying to offer

André more than a fleeting experience of love: her intention is to communicate an important message, namely that in order to remain alive he must commit himself to his sin (CCA, 274), make it his purpose in life and display it to others with pride. Nothing could be better, then, than to create a situation of pseudo-incest in order to test André's conviction.

The metaphysical experience of these two characters remains incomplete, because the death of Nina prevents it attaining its objective. As it is, it remains a tragic attempt to revolt against the absurdity of life and a mistaken pursuit of love. Cardoso apparently does not doubt love's existence, to judge from the words he puts in Sílvia's mouth: "Só a sua consciência nos poderá salvar do desespero e da mútua destruição" (DP, 219). But where is this love to be found? Again one of the characters (on this occasion a fairly contemptible one, Bernardo) gives us the answer:

O amor é êsse desejo divino de unidade, é o desespero da carne que procura a sua parte perdida (...). Mas a agregação não se fará senão no dia do Juízo Final, quando o Apocalipse soar e o Deus visível reinar sobre a morte, transformando a fisionomia das coisas criadas. (LS, 340)

Love, therefore, exists only in the bosom of God, since Christianity is the religion of love ¹⁶ and, according to Cardoso, not even the social form of love can exist outside Christianity. For example, Inácio's love for humanity is a mere intellectual abstraction, since he can only view with affection those beings whom he sees from afar, while, like Ivan Karamazov, he crushes those who cross his path. His conduct is justified by the author, who exclaims in his Diário:

Como é difícil amar os nossos semelhantes
como a nós mesmos - como é impossível.
No máximo conseguimos tolerá-los. (DC, 233) ¹⁷

It is not only true love that is missing in Cardoso's fiction: even simple affection or friendship are virtually absent. For instance, there do not appear to be any family ties to unite the characters; in fact, the family is portrayed as a group of egoisms living under the same roof; they have to put up with one another and, while they usually take little notice of each other, sometimes there is mutual hatred. On some occasions, this lack of contact between members of the same family seems quite incredible, as in Inácio, where Rogério not only appears not to know his father, but when Lucas shows him his mother lying dead, he does not know who she is. Even if we except this extreme example, it is still the case in all the books that the family is a group in which certain persons are fortuitously related by kinship.

The mixture of indifference and tension which ensues is particularly obvious between parents and children and between the parents themselves. Children are never the fruit of love between parents but merely the need to continue the family name or the consequence of a moment of lust. Small wonder that Nina, and the rest of the family, are upset when she discovers she is pregnant. This is the cause of the almost constant neglect of the children - André (CCA), Rogério (I) and Cláudio (A), are obvious examples. Similarly, it is not love that keeps couples together, as happens with Pedro and Madalena in A luz no subsolo, but rather habit and the fear of making a fresh start. On various occasions each of them thinks of leaving and only inertia persuades them to continue. As with all the other couples Cardoso portrays, all we know about Pedro and Madalena is their quarrels, their petty hatred and their acts of vengeance and we are forced to wonder how they ever came to be married. Nina, too, who returns to Vila Velha, according to her, because of her love for her husband and her son: we soon learn the real reason. During her years away in Rio, she had discovered that Alberto was the only man she had ever really loved and when she learns that she is suffering from cancer, she wants to die in the one place where she was ever happy.

Then there are the pacts made by certain characters, which are really a form of defence against common enemies, rather than a proof of any affection between them. It is the instinct of self-preservation that causes Nina to form an alliance with a man so different from herself as Timóteo, or Bernardo - in A luz no subsolo - to look for momentary support in Angélica against the unceasing onslaughts of Pedro.

In some stories we witness the development of a fake friendship, when certain characters become attached to the image they build of another character. This occurs in Inácio, when Rogério makes a vehement declaration of respect and even love for the father he does not know; but the feeling soon disappears when he comes into contact with the real Inácio. With the exception of cases of this kind, friendship remains the sentiment which is most respected in a world peopled by negative emotions. In O anfitrião, for instance, Cláudio does seem to feel real friendship for Gil, to the point of leaving his family in order to live with his friend. Yet even friendship has its dangers and like love, it can become a passion which impels the character concerned to one extreme after another. As in the case of Zé Roberto and Paulo, whose friendship promises so much only to end in a violent crime.

b) Age and the emotions

If love and affection seem to be difficult, if not impossible, in the world created by Lúcio Cardoso, it is because the individual, with age, becomes bitter and egotistical. In fact, the children he portrays are shown as creatures who submit to love unreservedly and are normally symbols of purity. Even those who come from unfavourable environments, like Adélia, appear to be blind to the corruption and depravity that surround them; they are like "anjos, papoulas brancas nascidas do pântano e da miséria" (E, 258). Children can still love one another completely and whether it is a case of fraternal love, like that of Emanuela towards her younger brothers and sisters (LS, 184), or of friendship, as with Sílvio and Camilo (DP, 63), their feelings are not yet restricted by personal interest. Yet even here, there are some rotten apples, precocious adults who get pleasure from tormenting their playmates. Since children are usually defenceless, those who fall into the clutches of these aberrations are destined to suffer. One example is Isabel, in A luz no subsolo, who was Pedro's playmate. He hated her, yet could not free himself of her, so that while he sought her company, he would always be hitting her and humiliating her as a way of demeaning her. When he has finally reduced her to his slave, she 'falls' into a pond and dies, soon afterwards,

of pneumonia. A similar fate hangs over Camilo, in Dias perdidos, to materialize only after a lengthy period of suffering at the hands of Chico:

No início Chico arranjara para Camilo os apelidos mais grotescos. Mas cansado desta brincadeira inofensiva, passara a dar rasteiras ao amigo, tombos, chegava e pregar-lhe sustos que o deixavam pálido e o coração nos lábios. Algumas vezes Camilo tentava reagir mas Chico redobrava as suas proezas, construía armadilhas para o incauto companheiro, desafiava-o para violentas lutas corporais, amarrava-lhe rabos de papel. Muitas vezes Camilo se recolhia sozinho, jurando que nunca mais voltaria. (...) Chico conhecia bem os meios de obrigar Camilo a voltar ao seu domínio. Quando afinal obtinha o seu intento, Chico vingava-se redobrando os gritos, as rasteiras, as brincadeiras que deixavam Camilo exausto. Não raro voltava chorando para casa e esperava no jardim que suas lágrimas cessassem. (DP, 96)

While there are such occasional examples of children who suffer at the hands of another child, this is nothing compared with the misery inflicted on them by adults.¹⁸ In the first place, through insufficient love, so that the child is treated as if it did not exist. In O desconhecido Elisa yields to Aurélia's pressure and sends her daughter Nina away, thinking only of the problems the child will cause her if she is allowed to stay on the estate. Stranger than this, however,

is the attitude of Clara, in Dias perdidos, a lonely sensitive woman who does not feel the slightest interest in her son throughout his early childhood. Thus it is adults who have built a hostile world where children are out of place, so that they may suffer want, even hunger (as Madalena notices when she is out walking (LS, 67)), or they are forced to live in dangerous, inhuman cities (E, 279). The adult may go much further than this, however, even to the point of deliberately torturing children. On some occasions this may take the form of destroying something they love, as happens to Nina, in O desconhecido, when Zé Roberto kills Paulo. They are made to suffer physically and psychologically. The examples of child rape.¹⁹ are the strongest proof of this gratuitous cruelty, undeniable cases of the pursuit of sadistic compassion on the part of some of Cardoso's characters. Because the child is virtually defenceless and at the same time so spontaneous, it makes an ideal receptacle for feelings of this type, since its pain shows so openly, but it allows itself to be consoled so naturally afterwards.²⁰ In an inhuman world, the child's unreserved trust makes it the major victim. At the same time, their presence in the world and particularly their freedom from all forms of social contamination, makes them symbols of an alternative, of the promise of a better world.²¹

The child can love and be loved. The same is true of the adolescent, except that, since he is at a more complex stage of his emotional development, he does not experience any feeling in a normal way: whether it is love, affection or friendship, they must be felt with enthusiasm and fervour. This is also the age of intellectual discovery and the adolescent may get excited about ideas and admire people who represent them. In Inácio, for instance, Rogério gets carried away by his interest in satanism and is fascinated by the figure of his father, Inácio, who embodies the satanic ideal for him. Cardoso includes a third characteristic in his portrayal of adolescents, and it is the one which makes them so vulnerable to the influence and the onslaughts of adults: ingenuousness. Adolescence is a period in which the world is still divided into heroes and villains and when it is still possible to believe whole-heartedly in the former and spurn the latter, because they cannot be right about anything. Adolescents are not normally studied in isolation in the works of Cardoso; he prefers to record their reactions to a triangular situation in which they become active participants.²² Such situations arise when two adults are locked in mortal combat and the adolescent, from being a mere spectator, becomes an interested party by siding with one of the two. His choice is not always dictated by his admiration for one of the sides, as happens with Rogério when he sides with Inácio against Lucas. On occasions it can be love, which is what causes André to take Nina's part against the Meneses. The reason for his choice may even be quite childish. In

O anfiteatro Cláudio joins forces with his aunt because he is unnerved by his mother's hysterical outbursts, so unlike the quiet dignity of his aunt. Of all the adolescent characters, Cláudio is the one whose reactions are least logical; nevertheless the outcome of the situation in which he becomes involved is just the same as in other cases.

The problem arises with the death of Cláudio's father, at which point his mother and his aunt engage in a savage struggle centring on an episode from the past, wholly unknown to Cláudio. His curiosity is stirred and when he questions his mother, she tells him about a love affair involving his aunt Laura and Professor Alves. The affair had not been a happy one, owing to the persistent jealousy of Laura. She had gone away with Professor Alves, but returned before long, looking older, and had accused her sister-in-law (Cláudio's mother) of having a liaison with Alves and of therefore being responsible for the failure of her relationship with him. Alves is Cláudio's professor of anatomy and their frequent contact allows the young man to seek his company in order to find out the rest of the story. He has, however, already formed his own opinion, in view of the good impression given him by his aunt's dignified behaviour in contrast to the irritating frivolity of his mother. Although Professor Alves encourages Cláudio's friendship towards him, it is only much later that he offers his own version of the events, which reveals that there was reason for Laura's morbid jealousy, though he believed that his love for Margarida had not been

reciprocated. Now that he knows the truth, Cláudio's irritation with his mother swings to the other extreme and he races back home, only to find that she, the weaker of the two adversaries, has been morally crushed by her rival and poisoned herself. Cláudio is saved from a complete breakdown by the friendship of his fellow student, Gil.

The situation here is that of an adolescent torn between agonizing alternatives: either his aunt was crazed or his mother had been unfaithful to his father. For Cláudio there can be no half way, one of the two has to be true and this means condemning the other side. In any case, as always happens in these triangular situations, his intervention changes nothing: Margarida kills herself because she is the weaker party and not because she feels forsaken by her son, whom she has always disliked. But while the sequence of events continues unaltered by the adolescent's interference, the effect on him is decisive. Cláudio is saved by his friendship with Gil, but the same does not happen to Rogério or André, both of whom pay very dearly for their error: the first with his sanity, the second with his peace of mind. In both cases, however, at the end of the experience they have entered maturity, with all the bitterness and disillusionment that Cardoso clearly considers to be characteristic of the adult.

Following the course taken by these children and adolescent characters, it is not surprising that both phases once they have been passed through, are allowed to die, since they are little more than an accumulation of

unpleasant experiences. This may explain, too, why the characters do not retain pleasant memories of these early stages in life, even in cases such as *Silvio's*, when another character (*Áurea*) recalls with fondness childhood scenes which he himself has apparently forgotten (*DP*, 180). The accumulation of traumas from the past causes Cardoso's adults to become neurotics, in Freud's definition: "neurosis comes from frustration, fixation and tendency to conflict".²³ The frustration they experienced throughout the early phase of life, the feeling of being persistently used and exploited; a fixation on certain incidents in the past or on certain ideas, so that they "repeat(s) instead of remembering"; and a tendency to internal conflict stemming from the attempt to justify their mistakes, as well as conflict with others, because the neurotic suffers "an extensive alienation from the external world".

Notes

- 1 FREUD, S. The Ego and the Id. ed.cit., 43.
- 2 SARTRE, J-P. L'Être et le Néant. ed.cit., 465.
- 3 PRAZ, M. The Romantic Agony. ed.cit., 210.
- 4 Dostoevsky, too, introduces a host of characters who take pleasure in inflicting pain on those they love. For example, Raskolnikov, in The Devils, who enjoys driving Sonya Marmeladova to despair. Or Natasha Lkhmeneva, in The Insulted and Injured, whose reflections on her love for the man who had seduced her include the following:

She tasted, in advance, the joys of loving boundlessly and torturing the one she loved to the point of pain, precisely because she loved him and because she had been in such a hurry to abandon herself to him.

(London, W. Heinemann, 1912, 52).

Gide refers to the same aspect when he talks of "religion de la souffrance" in his Dostoïevsky (Oeuvres complètes, Paris, NRF, 1936, Vol. XI, 247 et seq.).

- 5 SARTRE, J-P. Op.cit., 470.
- 6 Ibid., 483
- 7 I refer to the gardener. Other characters note that, until the beginning of the scandal involving him with Nina, they had been unaware of his presence (cf. CCA, 140).

- 8 From A luz no subsolo on, all the families portrayed are in a state of obvious disintegration, e.g. Pedro-Madalena-Adélia (LS), Clara-Jaques-Silvio (DP), etc.
- 9 Apud MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE. Jacob Boehme. ed.cit., 153.
- 10 This mixture of pity and love is much more common in Dostoevsky, e.g. Myshkin's feelings for Nastasia Philippovna in The Idiot or those of Versilov for Sonya in A Raw Youth.
- 11 For Berdyaev depravity indicates total confusion between Good and Evil, which are pursued without apparent distinction. Depravity should, therefore, be viewed from an ontological, rather than moral, point of view (see Dostoevsky. ed.cit., 126).
- 12 Incest was a major theme in Decadent literature. Hinted at in Chateaubriand's René and given importance by Byron, through their direct influence it is to be found in a number of fin de siècle writers, e.g. Flaubert's Tentation de Saint Antoine, the poetry of Swinburne, and more particularly in the novels of D'Annunzio.
- 13 COELHO, Nelly N. 'Lúcio Cardoso e o romance da danação', Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 16 November 1968.
- 14 The essence of l'éternel féminin was often stated by Decadent writers. In Flaubert's Tentation de Saint Antoine, for instance, the Queen of Sheba tells the saint:

- 14 "Je ne suis pas une femme, je suis un monde. Mes vêtements n'ont qu'à tomber et tu découvriras sur ma personne une succession de mystères" (Apud PRAZ, Op.cit., 222). Similarly, in Gautier's La Morte Amoureuse, the narrator remarks: "Avoir Clarimonde, c'était avoir vingt maîtresses, c'était avoir toutes les femmes, tant elle était mobile, changeante et dissemblable d'elle-même" (Apud PRAZ, Op.cit., 288).
- 15 Apud PRAZ, Op.cit., 275.
- 16 As the author insists on various occasions in his Diário completo, e.g. 36, 94, 97.
- 17 He is repeating what Freud tells us (in Civilization and its Discontents. London, Hogarth Press, 1957, 143): "Love one's neighbour as thyself had a perennial appeal just because nothing else runs so directly counter to the natural tendencies of man". We can go further back and find the same attitude in Dostoevsky's characters. Versilov (A Raw Youth) asserts: "To love one's neighbour and not to despise him is impossible. I believe that man has been created physically incapable of loving his neighbour" (London, Heinemann Ltd., 1916, 210). Ivan Karamazov says the same: "I could never understand how one can love one's neighbours. It's just one's neighbours, to my mind, that one can't love, though one might love those at a distance" (The Brothers Karamazov, 210).

- 18 Dostoevsky comes to mind yet again, particularly The Brothers Karamazov. Ivan uses the fact that those who inflicted such suffering on children were not punished as a proof that God did not exist. Speaking to Alyosha, he mentions a number of cases of Russian children, belonging to respectable families, who are systematically tortured by their parents: "I maintain that many members of the human race have a strange characteristic - they love torturing children, only children" (ed.cit., 214).
- 19 Sexual assaults on children, while being considered the most heinous of sexual crimes, are much favoured by Dostoevsky's libertines. There is the case of Nellie, the orphan child in The Insulted and Injured; and in The Devils, Stavrogin tells, in his confessions, how he had raped a child who, realizing what had happened, killed herself. Svidrigailov, in the same book, has on his conscience a similar crime: a fourteen-year old girl who had drowned herself after being the target of his attentions. Svidrigailov ends his story declaring that he is very fond of children.
- 20 Sadism always has this ingredient of pity. The Marquis de Sade, in his introduction to Justine, describes the great pleasure of a libertine as torturing a blindfold child and afterwards taking off the blind and consoling the child. (See JONGE Op.cit., 196-7).

- 21 It is in A luz no subsolo that one of Cardoso's bitterest characters (João Epifânio) explains the importance of the presence of children in this world: as long as their purity exists we have not reached the final stage of humanity, when "todos se convertêrem em lônôbos furiosos (...). Haverá um tempo em que os homens até perderão a fisionomia humana ..." (LS, 302).
- 22 He follows the process used by Dostoevsky in A Raw Youth, in which the young protagonist tries to follow and understand his father, who is in love with two women.
- 23 FREUD, S. Introductory Lectures. ed.cit., 238.

CHAPTER VI: THE SELF AND THE COMMUNITY

It is possible to perceive oneself at the centre of a set of concentric circles, each representing a system of social control.

(P.L. Berger, Invitation to Sociology)¹

a) Man in society

For Freud the basis of a community is a group of individuals who identify with one another:

Groups consist in a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego.²

This may explain why Cardoso's characters always feel themselves to be outsiders. Since they are not capable of any real identification with others, they are equally incapable of fitting into the institutions created by others. Furthermore, as a consequence of their own insecurity, the characters tend to look upon any form of participation with suspicion. Since they have failed to discover their 'self' and thereby achieve personal resilience, they fear that collaboration with society may be yet another assault on their already enfeebled ego. And while social activity might be a form of response to the meaning of existence,³ they find it preferable to forego this possibility rather than sacrifice their inner identity. Moreover since the society in question is portrayed by Cardoso as so devoid of attractions that alienation seems to be the natural response of any human being. However, the character has only to dare to cut himself off from the group to discover how society, up to that point a passive entity, has the power to control and repress. "Society confronts us especially in the form of coercion", Berger tells us,⁴ and generally speaking, even if Cardoso's characters have the strength to resist certain pressures, eventually they succumb.

In the first place, they have to begin by defying the small group to which they belong and which responds by trying to reintegrate them, at times by means of persuasion.

When Ida, in Mãos vazias, decides to leave her husband, her friend Ana, who tries to persuade her that her duty is to stay, serves as a symbolic representative of their community. More often the weapons used by society are more powerful and suggest a form of rejection: ridicule and gossip.

In the Crônica da casa assassinada the group response to Timóteo's disorderly behaviour is ridicule, despite the fact that his conduct is directed only against the family. However, the family is a microcosm of the Establishment and is therefore identified with society and protected by it. Gossip is the commonest form of social response, particularly to the conduct of certain female characters who behave differently from the norm. This weapon may be used in situations where there is nothing concrete to warrant censure, as happens to Nina in Vila Velha,⁵ when the most incredible rumours begin to circulate:

De rainha, passaram a julgá-la uma cantora de cabaré perseguida pelo insucesso - e houve até alguém que se lembrasse de ter visto um retrato em revistas especializadas. Alguns, mais românticos, teimavam em considerá-la misteriosa herdeira de sangue azul. Mas a maioria, obstinada, opunha-se: "uma cantora, e em pose não muito recomendável" ... a verdade é que ninguém sabia nada de positivo a seu respeito.

(CCA, 77; the speaker here is the Pharmacist)

In Dias perdidos, Clara is looked at askance, because she is proud and aloof, belonging to none of the many groups of women which meet regularly.

If the character does not respond with humility to any of these forms of pressure, he will be ostracized: "One of the most devastating means of punishment at the disposal of a human community is to subject one of its members to systematic opprobrium and ostracism".⁶ Nina is aware of this, and despite her moral fibre, when her son innocently asks her if she had not been invited to a reception with the remainder of the family, he is shocked by her confession:

Vi então que um soluço a sacudia, único e prolongado, enquanto ela ocultava o rosto entre as mãos. Assustou-me a emoção que aquela simples pergunta lhe causara (...). Foi ela própria que finalmente descobriu o rosto (...) e voltou a colocar sobre as minhas as mãos molhadas de lágrimas:

- Meu pobre filho ... se soubesse de tudo o que me acontece ... as injustiças que me têm sido feitas! (CCA, 169)

When we look for the causes of this kind of social repression, we discover that, generally speaking, the characters have merely ignored customs or infringed the moral code. But these are both considered essential bulwarks of the Establishment and must be respected. Timóteo was penalized for his eccentricity, that spark of extravagance which caused him to dress as a woman and adorn himself with his mother's jewels. In the case of Clara and Nina their offence was their

refusal to conform, to accept the role allocated to them in a small town: visiting other women, going to mass, taking part in charity fêtes, having several children.

Morality is a more serious matter, seen as fundamental in the life of the community. Freud tells us that there have been three stages in society's attitude to sex. In the first, the sexual instinct was allowed unrestricted satisfaction; in the second, sexual satisfaction was allowed for reproductive ends; in the third, the satisfaction of the sexual instinct was permitted only for legitimized reproduction, that is, within marriage. For Freud, contemporary society is in the third stage and, having devised a very rigid moral code, has been obliged to behave hypocritically.⁷ This collective hypocrisy, which was a means of circumventing frustrations and repressions, also serves as a form of defence against the arbitrary nature of the demands made on the individual, which differ according to both class and sex. In the world created by Lúcio Cardoso, tradition is followed in that the moral constraints imposed on women are much harsher than those placed on men. Thus the inhabitants of Vila Velha can be shocked at the idea that Nina might have been a cabaret artiste, yet they are amused by Valdo's affairs with prostitutes (cf. CCA, 76).

Woman is thus allocated a traditional role, which restricts her to home and children, and throughout Cardoso's work we find only one professional woman, the teacher, Hilda, of A professora Hilda. It seems unlikely that her lack of

femininity is fortuitous, as if success in a man's world must, of necessity, make her mannish. Otherwise, woman is portrayed as a complement of man and, at first sight, we are given the image of woman as the victim. It is not surprising, then, that in order to be independent of this subordinate position and assert her individuality, a female character will take refuge in hypocrisy, and indulge in brief affairs behind a façade of respectability. Like Donana de Lara who has a liaison with the travelling salesman in O viajante. Within the traditional social structure portrayed by Cardoso, we also encounter the paradox of woman as both subordinate and yet dominant, in the sense that her constant presence in the house and her control over the upbringing of the children allow her to wield an unquestioned household dictatorship. In Dias perdidos, for example, Clara complains bitterly of the freedom allowed to men, which makes it possible for Jaques to leave her with her infant son in order to go exploring the backlands. But when he returns, sick and aged, she not only controls his every move, but also passes her own hostility on to her son, who treats his father as an intruder. This quiet power invested in the woman, expressed in the organization of the family as a small private realm, is further stressed by the novelist when he depicts a male character in conflict with the woman and being overcome by her. The most striking case is in A luz no subsolo, where Pedro wishes to be free of Madalena and plans the means of disposing of her step by step, whereas when she decides she has had enough of him she calmly poisons him: 8

[Pedro] segurou a garrafa onde momentos antes Madalena tinha derramado o veneno. O cálice de Raquel estava vazio. Encheu-o e ia levá-lo aos lábios quando sucedeu um fato extraordinário: qualquer coisa que nunca Madalena pôde saber se era um simples pressentimento fê-lo estacar por um instante, como se estivesse tentando distinguir o odor da bebida (...) Imóvel, comprimindo no coração todo o seu rancor (...) Madalena esperava. Sem hesitar mais, de um só gole ingeriu a bebida. Destapou de novo a garrafa e encheu o copo. Agora era ela quem o fitava. Nenhum ruído se ouvia (...). Sem uma palavra, sem um gesto para o desconhecido que estava na sua frente, Madalena voltou as costas e saiu para sempre levando Raquel pela mão. (LS, 333)

While woman is allowed this superiority in her own little world, the subordinate role allocated to her by society is to blame for the number of female characters in Cardoso's novels who rebel. And if some, like Clara, go on living in muted despair, the majority display their defiance by open attack on social structures. Their rejection of social norms usually begins in sexual terms, since this is the most obvious difference in the way men and women are treated by society. In Mãos vazias, Ida feels that the death of her child has broken her last link with the world in which she has been living and expresses her feeling by seducing the doctor, he being the man who had been in contact with her. The reaction of her husband, Filipe, is typical of the conventional male. When Ida tells him

what has happened, rather than feel hurt, he is concerned for his honour and, slapping her face, hurls a social insult at her - "Sua ordinária!" (MV, 104).

While the control exercised by the group is always visible, the power of the state is much less in evidence, since characters commit all manner of crimes without suffering punishment at the hands of the police or the courts.⁹ There is only one case of police interference, which is when Donana (O viajante) kills Zeca; but this is shown as a mere formality, since she is considered one of the pillars of the community and no one doubts that the boy's death was an accident. Donana actually seems to take pleasure in deceiving the community and acts the part of the loving mother robbed of her child by fate. The arbitrary nature of the social code becomes very clear when we compare this case to the situation of Nina. The latter is ostracized in Vila Velha on suspicion of misbehaviour, yet this is the same community which later on assists Donana to bury Zeca without delay and thus collaborates in the concealment of any trace of crime. Donana, the Meneses and the Barão may be seen as the authority, for although they hold no public office they enjoy a moral prerogative which places them above the law.

b) Society in the individual

"Most of the time the game has been fixed long before we arrive on the scene. All that is left for us to do is to

play it with more or with less enthusiasm", Berger tells us,¹⁰ though subsequently he remarks: "Generally we want the parts that society assigned to us".¹¹ With the exception of Timóteo, who stands apart, Cardoso's characters do, in fact, react against society only to a certain degree. The reason for this is that, even when they do not conform to the rules, they cannot free themselves completely because of the influences imprinted on them by society. The presence of social characteristics in the individual personality is recognized even by characters we look upon as totally at odds with the system, such as Nina, who accepts all the economic advantages offered her by her position in the Meneses household - the luxury, the life of leisure, the entertainment, the company - , rejecting merely those aspects which she finds disagreeable and which she considers restrict her freedom. In addition, a character may wish to defy the weight of authority when he, or she, is at the receiving end, but they are sufficiently aware of its importance to be prepared to use it to their own advantage: Hilda does precisely this, when she plots the undoing of her replacement, Eugênia.

The first expression of society in the individual is through the small indications of class, external signs which symbolize a person's social origin - the way they speak and dress, the circles in which they move, their aspirations. In the Crônica we have the examples of Demétrio, whose dream is to be visited by the Barão, the only aristocrat in the environs, and of the Farmacêutico, a small trader, who yearns to own a watchdog. If we look at manner of dress and related traits, there is the example of Inácio, in O enfeitado

who, despite his existential revolt, is a 'carioca' dandy, probably a gigolo, and dresses flashily, knows all the city's red-light areas and is generally to be seen in the company of prostitutes. Filipe, in Mãos vazias, is a minor civil servant and leads the ordered life of a petty bourgeois, with his own house, a garden with roses, his meals at set times, a stroll after dinner and his wife waiting on the doorstep when he comes home from work. Ida, despite her anguish and resentment, accepts this routine as if it were the only possible way of life:

Fôra Ida que imaginara abrir uma porteira no fundo do jardim, a fim de pisar, ao amanhecer, a areia grossa da praia. E assim tinham feito. Aberta a porteira, tinham plantado roseiras no fundo do jardim, gerânios nas janelas e parasitas nos troncos pesados das árvores (...) Quando Felipe vinha do serviço, encontrava Ida sentada nos degraus do jardim e o menino que brincava correndo em torno dos canteiros (...) Depois do jantar, Luizinho adormecido, saíam para uma volta, até à esquina da Baixa, evitando a atmosfera pútrida do pântano. (MV, 36)

However, if it is true that "the novel sets out to express an order established by a group", ¹² in Cardoso's case that group is the aristocracy. An aristocracy which is decadent, weakened by vice, discord and financial difficulties, but which nevertheless retains power. The author shows its members struggling desperately to keep

up the appearances which class them together with the high standards demanded by the system. Camila, though an alcoholic, continues taking her daughters to church festivals (LS, 97); Donana de Lara, with two crimes on her conscience, still organizes the fêtes (V, 79); Clara, despite her own bitterness and resentment, allows her son to attend catequism classes (DP, 66); and Demétrio, in the grip of his passion for Nina, does what he can to stifle the rumours about the family (CCA, 389). This is the class which marked its members most extensively, because its elevated position conferred along with power a false sense of freedom. However rebellious they may be, these characters accept certain roles without thinking - André, absorbed in an incestuous relationship, continues his morning ride and goes hunting, as befits a young man of good family. The situation becomes more tragic, however, when the character knows that he, or she, was eventually broken by society. Nina finally confesses to Ana that she knew what had destroyed her relationship with Alberto:

Lembrava-me então que estava ligada aos Meneses, que pertencia a esta casa, que existia uma realidade. Foi isto que me perdeu, que nos perdeu ... (CCA, 248)

The small concessions she had found herself making - to money and position - had eventually undermined her ability to resist the social structure.

The individual's manner and bearing can reveal more than just the class of society to which he belongs. Some of the characters are also assigned to other groups, namely their professional group. Cardoso introduces a fair range of professions which have conferred certain characteristics on their members. The sacristan, for instance, is cynical and mercenary; the coffin-maker is simple and fatalistic; the travelling salesman is a frivolous opportunist; the doctor, good and discreet; the priest, the voice of wisdom. In addition to these professions, whose influence he summarizes in labels, there is one which particularly interests Cardoso and which he portrays in various of his works: teaching. Those characters who are teachers have not entered the profession because it is a 'job', like any other. Their choice is guided by a sense of vocation, as defined by Kierkegaard.¹³ A vocation is different from an employment, because it demands more than a momentary enthusiasm. A person's whole life is involved, because a vocation implies the choice of a particular direction in one's mode of life, one's system of thought and one's plans for the future. Furthermore, according to Kierkegaard, once one has entered on a vocation, it cannot be abandoned in favour of another career, because of the inner preparation required to make it succeed and which also makes it irreversible. Perhaps Hilda feels this and, therefore, although she thinks she does not love the children she teaches, she nevertheless fights tooth and nail to keep her position. She sums up the impossibility

of making a new start by her reaction to her letter of retirement: for quite a time she is incapable of believing what she has read "pois o absurdo daquilo tudo saltava à vista" (PH, 273). She has lost what Kierkegaard calls "the sense of personal meaningfulness", ¹⁴ that permanent feeling of purpose which can afford moments when the experience of freedom is so strong that another teacher, Pedro in A luz no subsolo, feels he is God. There is such a direct link between the career and this intensity of feeling that when Pedro is dismissed for immoral behaviour, he becomes completely confused and seems quite incapable of untangling the terrible doubts which beset him (LS, 83). Perhaps the most striking case of teaching as a vocation is to be found in O anfiteatro, in the character of Professor Alves, whose classroom charisma makes him memorable:

Sortilégio era bem a palavra, pois não há outra que signifique ou transporte êsse sentimento de magia e enleamento, essa curiosa impressão de terror e fascínio ao mesmo tempo que, para tantos conhecedores, é a porta por onde se penetra no êxtase. (A, 149)

It is precisely because of his vocation that Alves has such a dangerous influence on his students, since his voice rings with authenticity and is thus extremely persuasive. Here again Lúcio Cardoso agrees with Kierkegaard's line of thought,

that vocation is more than the choice of a mode of social participation, in that social life is only a search for new situations and the individual's "movement is from himself, through the world, back to himself".¹⁵ This explains why teachers may be subversive, encouraging pupils to commit crimes, like Pedro, or playing the role of Mephistopheles, like Alves, and helping adolescents find their reality.

Yet even the members of this group, who have accepted participation, have compromised their ego through excessive dedication to their social role and will be destroyed if society prevents them performing this role. Although they are richer in human terms, this small group of characters is as vulnerable as those referred to earlier, who may simply wish to withdraw from the system.

c) The symbolism of names

"Os nomes nada significam. Eles apenas designam a parte exterior que conhecemos nas pessoas e que nos é familiar" (V, 235). These words of Donana de Lara include a fundamental idea, which is that while names are external labels, they are one of the first things we know about the other. It is therefore natural that writers should use names as carriers of messages to their readers, as aids to decoding their symbology. This would explain why some of the names chosen by Lúcio Cardoso are so unusual or old-fashioned.

Generally speaking, there are to be found hints relating to the development of the narrative in the names of characters. Thus Hilda is the name of one of the Valkyries, a warrior maiden,¹⁶ and this side of the school-teacher's character is borne out by the violent way in which she hurls herself against others and against the world in general. Filipe, whose name indicates a lover of horses, has a wholly material approach to life and both his interests and his intelligence are rather limited. Bernardo means a 'powerful warrior' and, although he is portrayed as a weak character, nevertheless he is the only character in the book who comes through intact, having even made some progress. Demétrio's name means 'protector of the fruits of the earth', and as patriarch of the Meneses family he fights to the end to keep the family together. Paulo is 'small', but changes Zé Roberto's whole life. Names may also be used with the intention of conveying social impressions. Since family names are extremely rare in Cardoso's works, those which do occur acquire more than usual importance. When they are referred to by one of the characters who bear them it is with great pride: such are the famous Oliveiras, forebears of Clara, or the Meneses Silva "cujo nome enchia todas as bocas" (A, 140), or the Meneses of the Crônica, "esse velho tronco cujas raízes se aprofundam nos primórdios de Minas Gerais" (CCA, 26). Some characters are referred to simply by the name of their profession, such as the Farmacêutico and the Doctor in the Crônica, so that their social position is made to take

precedence over their individual personality and thereby emphasize their symbolic function in the narrative as representatives of the community. The names chosen by the aristocratic families, names like Demétrio, Aurélia, Timóteo and Camila, are immediately suggestive of strong links with the past.

There are a number of characters whose name means 'in honour of God': Emanuela, Timóteo and Ana, of which there are several. However, in the case of this last name, it is interesting to note that the 'God' they all serve is, in fact, the Devil, since all of them are demonic characters. This type of paradox is used by Cardoso for others of his evil characters, who are given the names of great saints of the Church: Miguel, Rafael, ¹⁷ Pedro, Inácio. If the contrast brings out the nature of their options, the author is also pointing to the fact that there is no salvation without serious sin, as he stresses in his Diário completo: "Acho que Deus não se interessa, em definitivo, senão por aqueles que, uma vez pelo menos, têm coragem para perder o céu" (DC, 182).

Occasionally we find names which contain psychological or literary suggestions. There are cases where, for example, the two characters forming the two halves of a double are given variant forms of the same name. Nina is a diminutive form of Ana, the name of Nina's double in the Crônica. Adélia and Lina, in O enfeitado, reveal an ingenious twist, since Lina was originally an abbreviation of Adelina, although

it subsequently became a name in its own right and its source is not generally remembered. Cardoso also uses names for the purpose of defining philosophical or psychological nuances. In O desconhecido, for example, when a new employee arrives at the estate he is given the name of the worker he is replacing and who had died in an accident. This is how the owner of the estate confers the name:

- Ainda não perguntei seu nome. Como se chama?

Ele ia responder, quando ela deixou escapar uma risada:

- Não, não fale. Na minha casa as pessoas têm o nome que eu quero. A minha memória é má, guardo dificilmente os nomes.

Hesitou um minuto e concluiu:

- O último que estêve na minha casa se chamava Zé Roberto. Dagora em diante, será este o seu nome. (D, 118)

In this short scene - this one-sided dialogue - the two characters reveal their respective temperaments. Zé Roberto's apathy and his lack of interest in life are such that he makes no effort to be known by his own name. Aurélia is so peremptory and authoritarian that she must try to mould her workers to her will, to the point of allocating them the names by which she wants them to be known. These two

temperaments come face to face on a number of occasions in the story and Zé Roberto continues to meet Aurélia's attempts to dominate him with complete indifference.

At the same time the absence of a real name for this character broadens the meaning of the title of the story: not only is Zé Roberto's 'id', which seethes inside him and suddenly erupts, 'desconhecido', but really the whole individual, who avoids defining himself to such an extent that he hides behind another's name and employment. This lack of definition - aided by the general nature of the details about him supplied by the author - is what transforms him from a particular case to universal man. ¹⁸

The Crônica, too, has characters with highly symbolic names, particularly those of the couple who engage in a metaphysical odyssey through incest, Nina and André. The choice of Nina, for the female partner was surely not fortuitous. Such a common name in Minas Gerais, even in the present day, and found at all social levels: Nina is really all women, because she is Woman. And the one she loves beyond all social restraints is André, 'andros', the Man. This symbolic value of André's name is stressed by the Farmacêutico, who comments on the strangeness of the name which had been given to the child and which was not one of the traditional family names: "Mais tarde soube que a criança fora um menino, batizado não com o nome de Antônio (como o pai dos Meneses), mas com o de André" (CCA, 118).

Notes

- 1 BERGER, P.L. Invitation to Sociology, Harmondsworth, Pelican Books, 1966, 89.
- 2 FREUD, S. Civilization and its Discontents. ed.cit., 116.
- 3 As Tillich asserts (op.cit., 44).
- 4 BERGER, Op.cit., 108
- 5 Vila Velha, the name Cardoso gave to his 'literary' town, appears in both Dias perdidos and Crônica da casa assassinada, but with rather different characteristics, except that they are both small upcountry towns, with a well-defined class system. Cardoso had set A luz no subsolo in Curvelo, his own birthplace, "para prestar homenagem à sua terra", but "os seus conterrâneos não gostaram de ser identificados com aquele drama e lhe enviaram um protesto" (see 'Entrevista de Lúcio Cardoso a Luís Gracindo' in Vamos Ler, Rio de Janeiro, 20 June 1940). Since he did not have the realists' concern to register actual external environments, he thereafter located the stories set in Minas in the imaginary Vila Velha, an archetypal representation of small provincial towns.
- 6 BERGER, Op.cit., 88.
- 7 FREUD, S. 'Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness', in Collected Papers (Vol. 2). London, Hogarth Press, 1950, 83.

- 8 This could not happen in Dostoevsky's novels, since for him woman is no more than a temporary event in a man's life and is therefore never portrayed in depth. "Woman is a stumbling-block in the way of male destiny, and it is a waste of time to look for any cult of the eternal feminine in the work of Dostoevsky" (BERDYAEV, Dostoevsky. ed.cit., 114). Among mineiro writers there seems to be a certain tendency to confer a fundamental role on women characters. Other novelists from this State, such as Cornélio Penna and Autran Dourado, use female characters as protagonists and give them a high degree of sensibility and intelligence.
- 9 Lúcio Cardoso took no interest in the workings of law courts, nor generally in the power of the state. Unlike Dostoevsky, who uses such episodes as the trial of Dmitri Karamazov to point up the fallibility of the laws, Cardoso is concerned only with small communities, or groups, whose direct pressure affects every single person.
- 10 BERGER, Op.cit., 103.
- 11 Ibid., 110
- 12 ZERAFFA, Michel. Fictions. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976, 12.
- 13 KIERKEGAARD, S. Either/Or. ed.cit., Vol. 2, 267 et seq. Vocation is one of man's forms of fulfilment in the second, or 'ethical', stage of personal development.

14 Ibid., 268

15 Ibid., 270

16 For the definitions of names proposed in this section, see KLEIN, E. A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language.

17 In the first versions of O viajante the salesman's name was not Rafael, but Quelene, the word for a drug used by young people in Brazil (cf. DC, 194). The subsequent change of name may suggest that Cardoso found its symbolism too direct:

Não é a tã que a profissão de vendedor ambulante deu-se o título de 'cometa'; como tudo o que passa sem pousar deslumbra e cintila, arrastando a sua passagem essa aura poética que muitas vezes é mortal para quem fica. (DC, 290)

18 A similar interpretation is given of the character Joseph K. in Kafka's The Trial, by the critic Sánchez Vásquez (in his Art and Society. London, Merlin Press, 1973, 141).

PART THREE: "AMA O TEU DEUS SÔBRE TODAS AS COISAS"

CHAPTER VII: EVIL, THE EVER-PRESENT REALITY

Il y a le problème du Mal qu'on est amené à décrire, car avec quoi un roman est-il fait, sinon avec du Mal? Oté le Mal, que reste-t-il? Du Bien, c'est à dire du blanc.

(Julien Green, Journal)

O ye children of men, this is earnest and serious! Hell is quite near, indeed, it is within you!

(Jacob Boehme)

Tillich declares that if "self-affirmation precedes all different sorts of metaphysical or religious definition of the self", ¹ the self cannot avoid experiencing metaphysical anguish, since all human beings have a religious foundation, for:

... religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being itself. In some cases the religious root is carefully covered, in others it is passionately denied, in some it is deeply hidden and in others superficially, but it is never completely absent.²

Tillich is referring to certain moments when human beings are inexorably driven to query the existence of a superior being, by the perception of the transience of human life, by fear of death and by anguish concerning man's final destiny.

The question "Deus existe?" is uttered by several of Cardoso's characters from as early as A luz no subsolo, but they receive no affirmative and the inquiry tends to hang in the air throughout the novel along with various other unanswerable doubts. On the other hand, the characters all appear to be convinced of the existence of the Devil and Valdo expresses a collective conviction when he tells Padre Justino:

- Eu não acredito em Deus (...)
- E no demônio o senhor acredita?
- Acredito. (CCA, 252)

The Devil, or the power of Evil, is one of the central problems of the predicament faced by the characters, and the way it is approached by Cardoso suggests that, like Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard before him,⁴ he was well

acquainted with the theory of the 'ungrund' held by Boehme. His belief was that in the origin of God, that is in the abyss from which emerged the Divine Being, a negative principle was also generated, a dark, irrational force to which we may give the name of Evil. Thus "the source of Evil is not in God (...), but in the forces concealed within the dark void which precedes all positive determination of Being".⁵ Whereas "in God the dark will is always controlled by Light", as Boehme has it "in Nature a false combination of forces makes the dark forces spring up".⁶ These are the moments when God's creation, instead of submitting to Light, rises up like a deity and stands opposed to Light, and this attitude of revolt extends to man: "the intelligent creature possesses in itself the centre in which Good and Evil originates. Every Being arouses Heaven and Hell within himself".⁷ The perception of this proposition appears in the words of one of Cardoso's characters, Rafael, in O viajante: "Cada um de nós caminha beirando o abismo que traz dentro de si próprio. Somos o nosso Céu e o nosso Inferno" (V, 238). This explains why Evil can only be discovered introspectively, because, to quote Martin Buber, "a man only knows factually what Evil is when he knows about himself",⁸ that is when he is in the process of making a choice and seeks within himself the path he should take.

To be more explicit, Evil, as Buber sees it in Images of Good and Evil, is the direct consequence of the tension caused by what he calls 'omnipossibility'.⁹ By this he means the huge range of human possibilities which the imagination displays to man as being necessary to his fulfilment, but which are always contradictory. It is the imagination, too, which leads man to overestimate himself and to view life as a contest in which he strives through rebellion to throw off the yoke of God. Man is thus frequently ill-advised by his imaginative power and only realizes that he has made the wrong choice when he finds himself faced by an irremediable situation. This is what happens, for instance, with crimes of murder, which occur with frequency in Cardoso's works as examples of the extreme expression of a wrongly used freedom.¹⁰ Evil, therefore, has its origin deep down and it is difficult to derive it from a social environment. Cardoso never examines it from the legal angle, preferring to identify the causes leading to this type of action and its consequences for man's destiny. Nor should it be forgotten that the enormous difficulty which the characters have in enduring the anguish caused by certain concepts is brought about by what we have termed their neurotic nature. Because they constantly force themselves into extreme situations, they tend to shoot from depressive conditions to high elation, or switch rapidly between other intense emotional states, so that they lose

control of their own emotions. In addition, since they are extremely harsh with themselves, they are incapable of forgiving serious mistakes in others or any sort of threat to their already precarious identity. Finally, if we accept Freud's assertion that modern man suffers from collective neurosis,¹¹ then the crimes committed by Cardoso's characters could be committed by any human being. The most striking example of this can be seen in O desconhecido. Zé Roberto is an ordinary creature with no special qualities, if only because he has so far never been obliged to make any decisive choice, never having allowed himself to become sufficiently involved in life to have to consider his options. Yet when he is involved because of his friendship with Paulo, he reacts as violently to being abandoned as Inácio, the satanist, Bernardo, the worm, or Juca, the fatalist. At the same time, Cardoso's characters have not only a penchant for crime; they also tend to commit crimes which involve the spilling of blood. In this they are recreating the old "blood thirst", as Fromm calls it,¹² which is basically another search for a response to life, since man thereby attempts to return to a primitive form of existence by behaving like an animal. It is a means of freeing himself from the excessive pressure of reason: blood becomes a symbol of spontaneous life and by spilling it man tries to feel alive, strong and superior to those around him.

More important still for Cardoso is to foresee what will happen after the crime. He does not accept that the law has the right answer for cases of this type and believes that man receives the punishment for his crime as an inescapable destiny in which he is given a glimpse of the dark side of his nature. This is why Evil, even indirectly, is often responsible for putting a man on a tragic path which leads to inner enrichment and personal elevation. After his crime, Zé Roberto finds a priest and with sincere repentance confesses that he has killed a man (D, 262). This could be the beginning of his regeneration and of the way to God. Zé Roberto is one of the characters who have cut through to their own essence and dared to enter forbidden territory. They forget that man is made in God's image ¹³ and that every man therefore has an absolute value, personally and as the image of God; and that the spiritual nature of man forbids him killing the most insignificant of human beings, because this implies a direct and final act of aggression against the same deity of which he himself possesses a fragment. No idea, therefore, however beautiful it might appear, would justify such an act, because one's neighbour is always more precious than any abstract theory and a single human life is worth more than any utopian improvement of society in the future.

Cardoso accompanies these characters to their eventual destiny from the moment of their crime and the remorse which follows. Thereafter come the insanity and total disintegration of Rogério,¹⁴ the suicide of Inácio or the possible encounter with God of Bernardo, since he is the only one of the criminal characters to preserve faith and hope. In each of these cases, the author stays with his characters up to the moment when the descent into the abyss of the soul has taken them to the discovery of the roots of the self in Evil.

Murder is not the only crime that represents an inner search. There is sadism too, since the desire to inflict pain on others is not its only essential aspect.¹⁵ The various different forms of sadism, physical or psychological, derive from the basic impulse to achieve complete control over another person, making him, or her, the object of our will, and ourselves becoming their god. Humiliating or enslaving the other are means of achieving this goal, and to inflict suffering is the most radical expression of this power, since there exists no greater control over another human being than to force him to suffer pain without being able to defend himself. The pleasure obtained from having complete power over another person is the essence of the sadistic instinct. Another way of putting it is to say that the aim of sadism is to transform our fellowman into a thing, since when he is totally dominated the human being loses the essential life quality: freedom. In Fromm's view, murder and sadism are both

components of the 'love of death' that appears in certain minds which have been infiltrated by Evil.

Another tendency which the evil being may develop is the penchant for 'incestuous ties'.¹⁶ In such cases, incest is not a pursuit of sexual pleasure, but a desperate form of the search for origins. Unfortunately, as André discovers in the Crônica, this search is accompanied by a desire to merge and to dissolve. To put it bluntly, what André wants is to throw off the burden of his own personality by returning to his mother's womb. Since this is an impossibility, André discloses, by means of sadistic moments in their love-making, that incest for him is also a symbolic form of matricide, since the absence of the divine element drives man inexorably to destroy all his filial sentiment.¹⁷ This process of discovering essentials through Evil is caricatured by some characters, like Rogério (Inácio), who define and justify it, consciously pledging themselves to evil, but not daring to go through with it in practice. They stay comfortably in the sphere of intellectual debate and thereby make it clear that they have never had the courage to participate, to be themselves, nor yet to seek transcendence¹⁸ - they are examples of life reduced to utter emptiness.

Yet evil can have positive consequences in Cardoso's fiction, because, in the first instance, it is an obvious source of suffering, which is necessary because it gives the measure of human capacity. This accounts for a degree of

outward paradox in the works of Cardoso, where we find side by side an implicit compassion for man and an apologia for pain in all its forms. For instance, the most satanical characters seem to have been struck by the suffering of children and all of them express their abhorrence of a world which could only function at the expense of innocent tears. Yet some of these same characters are themselves instruments of suffering to others, as well as themselves suffering as a consequence of the improper use of freedom. In this sense, suffering is a direct result of freedom, of the agony of choice, of despair and of anguish, and, of course, of the possibility of Evil. As well as being a source of suffering, if man has courage and is able to trust in God in misfortune, Evil can be a stage on the path of Good.

Evil is not only a force within man, since it can also be found outside him:

O mal existe como o ar que se respira, e
 é existente no mundo, como uma poeira tênue,
 uma poeira de ouro que nos apressa as batidas
 do coração e nos faz arder as faces. Absorvemos
 o mal, como acontece o crepúsculo. (DC, 237)

Evil may come from Nature which, as we have seen, is capable of generating noxious forces, or it may come from the towns and cities, human constructs, reflections of man's material side and of his lack of spirituality, and therefore inherent sources of Evil. In Nature, sometimes, satanical ambience

is created, as happens on the Quinta dos Cataventos, in O desconhecido, where the stormy atmosphere influences a man's feelings and drives him to commit murder, reinforcing the evil he carries within him. In cases of this sort, Nature is an intensifying element, causing the tensions between those involved to grow until the passions break loose. But Nature does not have to be tempestuous in order to provide a suitable atmosphere for Evil to flourish. Quite the reverse: since, as Boehme explained, God is contrast and movement,¹⁹ Evil finds an ideal environment in stagnant Nature. The Meneses estate, in the Crônica, is therefore a microcosm in which every variety of Evil can thrive and which also accumulates the evil of generation after generation of sin and crime. This is the true face of the 'house', the house of which the Meneses were so proud and which, according to D. Malvina, the aged matriarch, was moribund, poisoned by its own evil deeds (CCA, 252). Or as Padre Justino explains, speaking to Ana Meneses:

Não é de hoje que o diabo tomou conta desta chácara. Que é que você imagina como uma casa dominada pelo poder do Mal? (...) É uma construção assim firme nos seus alicerces, segura nas suas tradições, consciente da responsabilidade do seu nome. Não é a tradição que se arraiga nela, mas a tradição transformada no único escudo da verdade. (CCA, 261)

It is in the environments of this type, where there is no place for doubt, that Evil settles and the climate becomes one of sheer hell, "um espaço branco sem fronteiras no tempo", as Ana puts it (CCA, 242). In this state of affairs there appears to be no chance of tolerance, so that accusation and counter-accusation and uncharitable attitudes grow apace. Throughout the Crônica da casa assassinada the Meneses aim to prove that Nina represents Evil and that it was she, and she alone, who destroyed the house by means of the noxious influence she spread around. The accusations start, at the bottom end of the scale, with Betty's remark that Nina was unconscious of her destructive power: "limitava-se a existir com a exuberância e o capricho de certas plantas venenosas" (CCA, 213).

Moving up the scale, we encounter André's discovery that the woman he loved was Evil in human guise: "aquela criatura frágil encarnava o Mal, o Mal humano, de modo simples e sem artifícios" (CCA, 305). Finally, we come to Ana who, in her agonic satanism, accuses Nina of casting her into Hell by teaching her "como despojar a realidade de qualquer ficção, instalando-a na sua impotência e na sua angústia, nua no centro dos seres" (CCA, 96). Excepting Betty, whose words betray her utter loyalty towards the family, the others are simply trying to justify their own positions by blaming Nina, avoiding their responsibility in matters which were of decisive importance for the family's destiny: André accusing

Nina of exclusive guilt in their incestuous relationship and Ana blaming her for her own satanism, when it derived from her personal despair which she made no attempt to shake off. At the same time, Ana is thereby crediting hell's Evil with an attribute which makes for a positive step along the road to salvation: the ability to separate the essential from the incidental in the situations in which we find ourselves.

In this frenzy of accusations hurled at Nina, the Meneses quite forget that their own moral decadence and their wickedness had been embodied before, in the past, in the figure of Maria Sinhá. Although her portrait had been tossed into the lumber room, she lived on in the memory of those who could not forget her gratuitous cruelty and her tormented restlessness. However, even if it was possible to feign ignorance of this Evil from the past, there can be no escape from present Evil, in the shape of Timóteo, who despite being hidden away in an upstairs room does not thereby cease to be a Meneses - and for that matter the purest of them all, the only one still intact. He embodies the true face of the family, the degeneration which Nina simply carries on with her adultery and incest. The 'house' seems unaware that Evil is frequently a collective attribute: as Fromm explains,²⁰ narcissism is the third source of spiritual evil and while it is dangerous in individuals, it assumes catastrophic proportions when it appears in a group. The Meneses possess the necessary conditions for the

development of this collective force: they have a past in which they take pride, a leader (Demétrio) who is a sort of common denominator, upholder of order and morality, and they display an idolatrous attitude towards what they call 'a casa' and which is really themselves, since they are projecting onto this edifice the noble qualities they claim for themselves.

Narcissism is a form of Evil which aims to eradicate everything that is 'the other', that embodies an interference in the self-adoration of the group, and it generates situations of collective responsibility as a result of indifference. This is precisely what happens with the sin which finally destroys the 'house', since the incestuous relationship of Nina and André was known to exist by three people at least: Ana, Valdo and Betty. Yet each of these proceeded individually and as one of a group, contributing by their silence to the destruction of André. This adds to their responsibility - by isolating Nina within the family and making her understand that she stands condemned of her earlier adultery - for reinforcing her satanism and driving her to seek through André, the only one who knew nothing, the love that was refused her. In The Destiny of Man, Berdyaev declares:

The 'good' will have to answer for having created Hell, for having been satisfied with their own righteousness, for having ascribed a lofty character to their instincts, for having prevented the wicked from rising towards Heaven and for speeding them on the way to perdition by condemning them. ²¹

Thus the compound of the accumulated Evil of the others - the destructive egoism of Nina, the narcissism and divided nature of the Meneses - together with the unleashing of his own evil side, generated in André the epitome of psychological Evil. This is what Fromm calls the "syndrome of decay":

"This syndrome is the quintessence of Evil because it is the root of the most vicious destructiveness and inhumanity"; ²² it manifests itself as a mixture of love of death, incestuous symbiosis and deep-rooted narcissism. This would be the justification for André's cruelty as well as for the fact that, after the death of Nina, he was to abandon the family and join a group of bandits known throughout the region for their violence. ²³

Evil, then, is a decisive credo and is expressed through sin, which may take the ontological form of incest or of sadism and murder, or it may display itself in less momentous, more everyday modes, such as we find readily in life in the city, that human construct which is a caricature of man's own limitations. Here Evil appears in the shape of minor misdemeanours, such as lying, petty theft, gaming, prostitution, alcoholism, all of them part of the life of Inácio in O enfeitado. What is important about them is that these lesser transgressions are growing embodiments of the Evil which Inácio has chosen, and as Kierkegaard observed "every state or condition in sin is new sin". ²⁴ All these aspects of his conduct are thus preparing him to cross into forbidden

territory, so that when he eventually kills Lucas Trindade, his old enemy (I, 112), we accept his crime as a natural step upwards on the ascending scale of evil deeds which he has been performing one by one. It is Kierkegaard, too, who tells us that the greatest sin is to despair in sin, because only for man, who deals with finite concepts and whose life is bounded by space and time, is there a great difference between venial and mortal sin. For God, in his infinite compassion, the power of forgiveness and the proof of love are one and the same thing. There is thus no reason for man, like André, crying in despair that God is a lie, to feel that he cannot be forgiven. Similarly, the attitude of his father, Valdo, is hardly logical: why should he, who had always looked on God with indifference, be so shocked by his son's words and find them blasphemous?

This does not mean that Evil is an integral part of Good, or that no one can attain the latter without passing through the former. Evil is Evil, and Cardoso never views it as anything different; but since men are sinners and cannot live without sinning, the important thing is eventual repentance and trust in God - put another way, to preserve "the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable".²⁵ In this way one can keep alive the essence of faith, which is hope, and take the first step on the way back to the bosom of God:

Deus está presente desde a primeira fissura
 que sofre o Mal ou a natureza queimada do
 pecador, está desde o menor início, desde o
 balbucio que pôs a Graça em movimento, e
 que fez dêste homen aparentemente empedernido,
 o último talvez dos seus semelhantes, um
 caminhante progressivo no caminho do Bem.
 (DC, 155)

For Cardoso, man cannot live without gods and when he rejects the presence of God, he has to engage in one of a number of forms of idolatry: seeing himself as God, like Rogério; making idols, like Nina who adores the lost image of Alberto which she recreates in André; or, like the Meneses, devoting a whole life to protecting a house, transformed into a symbol of truth. This gradual adulteration of the idea of God brings about a deep metaphysical confusion in man, making it difficult for him to see what is right, or even, very often, to identify Evil. Part of this is seen as the fault of the modern world and the absence of collective spirituality which causes man to believe he is omnipotent and to reject God or any other absolute which is not of human origin. Cardoso's characters suffer from an "eclipse of the light of Heaven, eclipse of God",²⁶ which is not only portrayed in their subjective world, but revealed particularly through the divine Being Himself. This is the human side of the 'silence of God', of Pascal's 'Deus absconditus'. Most of the characters refuse to submit to the reality of transcendence, thus both contributing to

their own isolation and being partly responsible for this "eclipse". However, since man cannot kill God, He will remain a distant aspiration, for even if human beings do not recognize 'the God of Man', He continues to exist intact in His Eternity, leaving men plunged in the abyss, condemned to death without hope. This is why for Buber, Nietzsche's assertion that 'God is dead' means only that "man has become incapable of apprehending a reality absolutely independent of himself and of having a relationship with it".²⁷

Nevertheless, man has always had the opportunity to keep within his heart the image of the Absolute, "partly pallid, partly crude, altogether false and yet true",²⁸ and if he seeks with care he will surely find it there. But in this confused modern world the search has become more difficult, because the most tragic consequence of the "eclipse of God" has been the loss of a sense of His nearness. He is there, but at a distance, perhaps in the very heart of man's Being, which man has lost sight of in the tumult of life's less important matters. This is why God can only be found in the return to essentials, in solitude, as we know from Timóteo, in the Crônica, who spends a lifetime in the seclusion of his room waiting, with unshakeable faith, for the coming of the moment of truth. We should not therefore be surprised that he is the only character to find God. Timóteo is undoubtedly the only image of Faith that Cardoso has created; his hope is so great that he will be able to see God, even after he sinned greatly, because

despair never destroys him. Timóteo's is the real responsibility for the destruction of the 'house'. He believes it to be decadent, a symbol of sin and Evil, and pledges himself to annihilating it by his own efforts, by means of a succession of scandals. But the Meneses were still strong and threatened to have him put away, but eventually settled for confining him to his own room, where he lives in wait for his hour of revenge. This appears, unexpectedly, with the arrival of Nina, whose intensely disturbing beauty saps the will and clouds the minds even of hardened characters like Demétrio. Timóteo is quick to notice this ingredient and sets to work to embroil Nina in his plot and to such effect that he confides triumphantly to Betty:

Se uma minúscula parcela de pecado - um nada, um sonho, um desejo mau - pode destruir a alma, que não fará uma dose maciça de veneno, uma culpa instilada gota a gota (...)? (CCA, 104)

Nina will thus rise up as an avenging angel: her very presence carries a threat and she will wage an open war which will hasten the family's slow descent towards annihilation.

If Timóteo sinned, "Deus assume, muitas vezes, o aspecto do Mal" (CCA, 468) so that not even the lowest of men has the right to despair. Cardoso is still more explicit in his diary, where he explains that:

O ensinamento de Cristo, na sua totalidade, é quase impossível de praticar. Mas aí é que está o mistério da infinita paciência de Deus, pois foi Ele quem afirmou que viera para salvar o que estava perdido, viera para pregar entre os publicanos e os pecadores. (DC, 155).

In this sense one can agree with Adonias Filho when he observes that "Deus sempre atravessa os livros como uma sombra", ²⁹ and when he remarks that the characters never altogether lose "um vago pressentimento de salvação". ³⁰ Cardoso's characters direct their search to the negative side, to the absent, since Evil constitutes for him "uma furiosa nostalgia de Deus" (DC, 270). The important thing is for man to be capable of assuming Evil, since, to quote Nelly Novaes Coelho, "se o mal foi o elemento que afastou o homem de Deus e da verdadeira vida, o Mal deveria ser o elemento que novamente os reaproximaria". ³¹

If, despite all these vicissitudes, man can find a way of preserving his hope in God, he is ready to enter into the 'religious sphere' of Kierkegaard's categories. What he will have to do next is throw off his materialism and look at life through the eyes of the spirit. Without this separation of what is fundamental from what is merely incidental, man will not be able to uncover the image of God which he carries impressed on his heart. This is Timóteo's particular natural gift. Nina returns to the estate after sixteen years away from

it and, since she had never seen André nor watched him grow up, she is struck by the physical likeness between him and Alberto. She concludes that he is the gardener's son and uses the physical resemblance to recreate her past sin. Timóteo only sees André on the day of Nina's funeral. Never having set eyes on him before, he too is struck by the physical similarity between the adolescent and 'o moço das violetas'. But in his case, instead of being shocked by the concrete proof of his sister-in-law's adultery, he looks with the eyes of the spirit and reads a quite different message: here was the symbol of man's immortality, of the possibility of perpetuation which God alone can confer as a gift. Nina had come so close to discovering the Truth, but the distorted view of life we find in most of the characters and from which Nina also suffered, had led her into a blind alley and to the discovery, in idolatry, of a caricature of the Deity.

While Timóteo is the only character who, at the end of a text, receives the Revelation, some of the characters reach that point with their fate undecided. Those who succumb to hatred, like Hilda, or other forms of passion, such as Madalena, still have a chance, since, as is maintained by Buber, man only loses the way to Heaven when he reaches a state of total indifference or despair.³² This is the case of the majority of Cardoso's characters who, absorbed in their commitment to Evil and in their self-deification, have no time to think about God.

The most serious consequence of this absence of dialogue with God is to plunge man into absolute solitude, a form of cosmic solitude. If the isolation of Cardoso's characters is without solution, it is because it derives from an accumulation of solitary créatures, lacking any possibility of establishing contacts with others, further intensified by the total absence of God.

The portrayal of this inborn solitude fascinated Cardoso and his descriptions of it start in A luz no subsolo when he introduces Madalena:

Alma solitária, ela sentia pesar sôbre a sua vida o tormento dessas criaturas que se sentem perdidas no abandono de si mesmas. Quantas vezes indagando o que lhe faltava, qual o meio de preencher aquela lacuna que sentia dia a dia se alargar pela sua vida, chegara à conclusão de que não queria viver só (...). (LS, 42)

This inherent solitude is very important in generating fixations in certain characters with regard to a past which they view as happy, so that they sometimes place excessive stress on childhood incidents which for a normal person would be simple occurrences. Taking the case of Madalena, again, we find that as a child she had been particularly fond of a red cushion and when as a grown-up she discovers that her mother has recently thrown it out, she feels robbed of something essential. She herself confesses that from then

onwards she had never been able to make contact with any other object or person. This tendency to solitude in the characters, which "as distancia das demais criaturas, seres destinados a permanecer à parte, dentro de uma grandeza ou uma miséria pouco habitual ao homem" (LS, 44), is at the bottom of their inability to relate to others, since they are too conscious of their own individuality and never succeed in accepting the others for what they are. This brings about the impossibility of any real dialogue, for there is an I always face to face with another I who wants neither to be understood nor even contacted.

In this sense Cardoso's characters cannot be included in Buber's proposition "all real living is meeting", since they do not attain the 'I-thou' relationship, never finding their way out of the 'I-it' situation. I-it is the initial attitude of contact and use. It takes place within man, not between him and the outside, and is therefore wholly subjective, lacking mutuality. It is the typical subject-object relationship, indirect, comprehensible and significant only as a connection. The It can be a human, an animal, an object or even God, as is the case with the Thou; what is different is the relationship we have with it. The Thou of an I-thou relationship can be transformed momentarily into an It so as to be apprehended by the senses again, but then returns to being Thou in order to remain within man's inner experience. Man can go on living securely in the world of It, although he will then never be completely a man, since there will be no dialogue, which is essential.³³ Cardoso's

characters insist on keeping the world in the situation of an It, not allowing themselves to develop ties with their environment or even with others. Even in circumstances where this identification would be natural: for example, the meeting of Inácio and Rogério, father and son, after years of absence is a silent void or a purely narcissistic conversation. Although there are moments when the atmosphere seems to invite friendship and the exchange of confidences, nothing happens, as on the occasion when Rogério confides his plans and waits for his father's warm approval. Inácio's answer is not merely a long silence, he also looks away, leaving Rogério confused and disconcerted (I, 94). At the same time, Rogério's communication of his secret is not really intended as a means of gaining Inácio's understanding, it is no more than talking aloud to hear his own voice. Similarly, in the relationship of Nina and André, if we exclude the moments of violence as extreme examples of reification of the other, the 'dialogues' never have depth, and André constantly remarks on the way in which Nina's eyes would be lost in space ³⁴ as if she were pursuing private thoughts which she never expresses. In personal relationships we usually find this master-subordinate game, as with Nina and Alberto, or the situation of two dominant wills, like Sílvio and Diana, since isolation and solitude reduce human relations to a struggle for superiority. As Lukács remarks of Dostoevsky's characters "these men live so deeply and intensely in themselves that the soul of others remains to them forever an unknown country". ³⁵

The meeting with man's Thou is particularly important because it precedes the encounter with God, since only when he has found his self by recognizing the presence of the other and accepting him as he is, is the human being prepared "to address the eternal Thou".³⁶ As with other human beings, this 'eternal Thou' can only be discovered with a conscious effort, but since God is still near to man, silent but watchful, He will answer man's call. For Cardoso's characters this is not possible. 'Deus absconditus' not only hides His face, but has withdrawn so far from man, cutting Himself off so completely from man's suffering that He can no longer be found. Thus the solitude of the individual among other men does not necessarily lead the character to God, as Kierkegaard claimed.³⁷ On the contrary solitude rarely leads to God in these cases, probably because it is not solitude sought through renunciation of material things, but the inability to form relationships and as such the symbol of lack of love. If man, incapable of living without higher ideas, puts the idea in place of God, he soon discovers that it does not eliminate isolation nor bring the peace of mind conferred by the traditional perception of the Deity. In this "alvorogo da alma contra Deus",³⁸ the character takes the final step into an absolute and irrevocable solitude which Cardoso describes so despondently at the end of his diary:

Solidão. Tanto falei de solidão ao longo da solidão (...) e não dessa solidão a que as coisas exteriores nos obrigam, essa que vem de fora para dentro e que é apenas uma forma de desamparo no espaço cheio do mundo. Falo dessa solidão formada no interior dessa imposição íntima do homem destinado a caminhar sozinho porque a soma do seu conhecimento (...) bloqueia-o no seu exílio. (...) Falo dessa condição última do homem, tão erguido, tão monstruoso, tão esquemático no seu pedestal onde já se amontoam as primeiras sombras da noite.

(DC, 303)

Notes

- 1 TILLICH, P. The Courage to Be. London, James Nisbet, 1952, 82.
- 2 Ibid., 148
- 3 It is no rhetorical question, since it is always asked in moments of anguish. The absence of any answer can be accounted for by the fact that the author himself did not seem to know what reply to give:

Tudo gira em torno de Deus - acredito ou não na sua existência? Porque deixei em suspenso a pergunta formulada em A luz no subsolo? Calo-me. Ele próprio [Octávio de Faria] me afirma que não é necessário que lhe responda. Pergunto: e se disser que eu não sei? (DC, 238)
- 4 According to Berdyaev, himself fascinated by Boehme, Dostoevsky was strongly influenced by the ideas of the German mystic (see Dostoevsky, 115). With respect to Kierkegaard it is known that, until his disagreement with bishop Martensen, his professor, one of the factors in their friendship was their common admiration for Boehme (see MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE. op.cit., xix).
- 5 BERDYAEV, N. Freedom and the Spirit. London, G.Bles, 1944, 102.
- 6 MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE. Op.cit., 56.
- 7 Ibid., 134

- 8 BUBER, Martin. Images of Good and Evil. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, 21.

- 9 Buber exemplifies the dangers of 'omnipossibility' with the story of Cain and Abel, since Cain did not have the original intention of killing his brother. He did not even know what killing is. Yet, in his fury and in order to settle his own indecision, Cain raises his hand and strikes his brother dead. (Images of Good and Evil, 60).

- 10 Lúcio Cardoso was personally fascinated by crime reports and followed them attentively in the daily newspapers, as we can see from his diary (see DC, 36). In addition to this, he himself contributed a column to various Rio dailies and used it to recount detective stories. Furthermore, there is his contribution to the novel O mistério dos MMM, a detective novel composed in conjunction with fellow novelists.

- 11 FREUD, S. Civilization and its Discontents, ed.cit., 104.

- 12 FROMM, E. The Heart of Man - Its Genius for Good and Evil. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, 33.

- 13 On various occasions Cardoso stressed the difficulty experienced by the normal human being in respecting this image. In Dias perdidos, for instance, the narrator comments, in one of his generalizations: "O que nos falta é a coragem de não levantar a mão contra nós mesmos, contra a sagrada imagem que representamos neste mundo" (DP, 244).

- 14 We find in Dostoevsky, too, this tendency to follow the characters in their gradual emotional disintegration. This is what happens with Raskolnikov, in Crime and Punishment, who has not just killed a stupid old woman, but has struck deep into himself and is slowly crushed by his sense of guilt. He discovers that it is easy to kill a man, but that the strength that goes into the action is spiritual rather than physical; further, than nothing great or marvellous has happened in the world after the crime, but instead nothingness has become more blatant and eventually destroys him.
- 15 Cf. FROMM, E. Escape from Freedom. New York, Rinehart and Winston, 1941. The discussion of sadism is largely based on Fromm's interpretation.
- 16 FROMM. The Heart of Man. ed.cit., 95.
- 17 Dostoevsky gives the same symbolic importance to parricide in The Brothers Karamazov.
- 18 This ascending scale is proposed by Tillich (Op.cit., 81 et seq.) as embodying essential values which man must accomplish in order to achieve self-fulfilment.
- 19 Apud MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE, Op.cit., 28.
- 20 FROMM. Op.cit., 63.
- 21 BERDYAEV, N. The Destiny of Man. ed.cit., 134.
- 22 FROMM. Op.cit., 37.

- 23 This sequel to the Crônica is mentioned by Octávio de Faria in his introduction to O viajante (xvii). He also explains that the Crônica was intended as the first of a trilogy, of which O viajante was to be the second, while the third, entitled Glael, would include the meeting of André with Nina's real child, Glael.
- 24 KIERKEGAARD. The Sickness unto Death. ed.cit., 236.
- 25 TILLICH. Op.cit., 153.
- 26 BUBER, M. Eclipses of God. New York, Harper & Bros., 1952, 34.
- 27 Ibid., 84
- 28 Ibid., 85
- 29 ADONIAS FILHO. 'Os romances de Lúcio Cardoso', Cadernos da Hora Presente, Rio de Janeiro, 1939, 67.
- 30 ADONIAS FILHO. O romance brasileiro de 30. Rio de Janeiro, Bloch, 1969, 130.
- 31 GOELHO, Nelly N. 'Lúcio Cardoso e o romance da danação', Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 16 November 1968.
- 32 This was the gift - of separating the essential from the incidental - that Boehme received in his mystical experience (see MARTENSEN and HOBHOUSE, Op.cit., 5). The story goes that Boehme was working in his shop, when he saw the setting sun reflected in a copper plate

32 with such brilliance that he was flooded with a great inner peace. On going outside to dispel the trance that had taken hold of him, he was astonished to find that he could see inside things and that plants and animals possessed a density previously unknown to him, which he could now measure.

33 BUBER, M. I and Thou. Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1937, 14.

34 For Sartre (L'Être et le Néant, 310) the look is the first form of contact between two beings: it is by means of the look that the other makes his presence felt and similarly attempts to alienate the subject's universe. When Cardoso's character avoids this contact through the eyes, his intention is to show his lack of interest in the other's universe and at the same time to close his own universe to the other's indiscretion.

35 LUKÁCS, G. 'Dostoevsky', in WELLEK et al. Dostoevsky. New York, Prentice Hall, 1962, 150.

36 BUBER. I and Thou. ed.cit., 13.

37 KIERKEGAARD, S. Fear and Trembling. New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955, 55.

38 FARIA, Octávio de. 'O desespero trágico dos heróis de Lúcio Cardoso', Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 30 November 1968.

CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSIONS

Pedro, Inácio, Nina and the various other, perhaps less memorable, protagonists go to make up a large 'painel', or tableau each of them a piece in the "todo harmonioso", ¹ the complex mosaic which is a human being. What they have in common, above and beyond their individual personalities, is their embodiment of the tragic hero. ² Appearing for the first time in Maleita, this figure occurs throughout Cardoso's work as a common denominator. It is he who, in the words of Adonias Filho, "sustenta toda uma temática em torno do homem e por isso mesmo uma temática existencial". ³ Against backgrounds which are usually sparse in detail, the novels and stories establish their framework around human destinies which come alive to experience violent passions, but at the same time subject their vision of the world and of others to the

power of reason. The priority given to the intelligence results in the characters being free from illusions and from any inclination or opportunity to embellish life, so that they contemplate reality without any sentimentality.⁴

It is this reality, which cannot be ignored or changed, which produces in them a persistent melancholy in which there is no place for irony or cheerfulness.

The hero is undeniably superior to the normal run of human beings and this sets him aside from the group to which he belongs, but with which he, in any case, ceases to identify early in life. He is conscious of his own superiority and, even in adolescence, like Rogério, becomes consumed with 'hubris' and dazzled by his own potentialities, believes himself to be a demi-god. This attitude leads the characters along a more daring course, since, having thought a good deal about God from early in the narrative, they now feel strong enough to defy Him, if they accept His existence. They do not, at this point, recognize the danger of finding themselves in absolute solitude, for although the character has asserted the superiority which prevents him being part of his social group, there is another, higher reality, in the face of which he is small and insignificant and from which he needs support. However, solitude is a price which man is prepared to pay for his freedom, because the world of God attracts him less and less. In some cases - for instance, that of Clara in Dias perdidos - life never offers real opportunity for sinning, but this does not mean that her rejection of God's world is any less

rebellious. She rebels with the same violence which we see in Nina or Inácio. In the final analysis, after all, tragedy can be defined as a struggle against the Deity, since this concept is the great obstacle to the deification of man. In her endeavour to understand herself, Ana Meneses asks Padre Justino: "Que Deus é este que exige a renúncia à própria personalidade em troca de um mirífico reino que não podemos ver nem vislumbrar através da névoa?" (CCA, 256). From an early stage the character views with displeasure any evangelical display of humility and if the choice is between "un ser castrado que poderá ver a face de Deus ou a realização integral e a perda nos caminhos do Demônio",⁵ his reply can only be to embrace damnation and assert the greatness of his human condition. From this reply stems the rapid ascent of the hero; at the same time, he has from an early stage begun to struggle with the crisis which is to bring about his fall.

In fact, the tragic conflict reaches its crucial point when certain basic concepts begin to crumble. Freedom proves to be deeply disappointing, since man is forced to accept that it is limited not only by the idea of God, but that within himself, too, a variety of inescapable limitations is taking shape. Then there is the fact that love, in which the human creature seeks support, is experienced with such violence that it is converted into unrestrained passion and becomes a source of spiritual exhaustion. Suffering begins to be looked upon as a road which leads nowhere, but at the same time is intensified by an undefined sense of guilt. Even the

intelligence, in its power and strength, is shaken by the onslaught of emotions and begins to crumble in the face of doubt concerning the choices that have been made:

Life must be without purpose and without any direction. The universe is so ordered that no final answer to any question is vouchsafed to any man. Human beings in this kind of world confront situations which have no solution.⁶

It is this gradual disintegration that immerses the character in despair and anguish, liberating his 'death instincts' and driving him to commit one of the three capital sins of tragedy: incest, murder or idolatry. Incest occurs only in the Crônica da casa assassinada, but murder is the most frequent crime in the works of Lúcio Cardoso and appears in various forms, displaying certain complexities. It may be a bloody crime, a human sacrifice in which the hero offers another human being as a means of pacifying the turbulence of his own inner demons. On other occasions, it is performed indirectly, or by proxy, when a character who lacks the courage to carry out the deed himself incites his 'double' to commit the crime. Yet again, it may be a "sin of omission", when the character hastens the death of a sick person by means of silent warfare. Idolatry is a frequent practice, which may take specific forms, such as the Meneses' veneration of their 'house' or Zé Roberto's glorification of his friendship for Paulo; but it also appears in a general context, since from the outset there exists among the characters a tendency to self-deification.

These three major sins, assaults on moral law and on the natural order, set in motion the tragic process by exposing the hero to God's wrath. This reveals itself, as happens in classical tragedy, in the condemnation of man to die in accordance with the deity's will: he is thereby deprived not only of the freedom to live, but of the right to choose freely his own death, making it clear that there is a superior Being above man, who controls birth and death, and that the mystery of this essential concept will never be revealed to man. Physical death is therefore never an easy matter in Cardoso's works. It is excruciatingly painful if the character dies a natural death, as happens with Zé Roberto. If the character dies at the hands of another, acting as the instrument of destiny, the process chosen will be a painful one such as poisoning, stabbing or hanging. There is only one case of a quick death by shooting, ⁷ all the other examples involving difficult, long drawn-out agonies. And yet this kind of death is still relatively easy when compared to the instances of inner death. In these cases, the hero suffers the slow death of his obsessive idea and thereafter has to drag around a body without a soul. There are characters who realize that this guiding force - the assertion of man and his individual identity - has reached a critical point, since they are still without answers after their prolonged search, and they fight to preserve what is left. Such is the intention of Inácio, in O enfeitado, when he desperately tries to find his son,

that he has little time left and that he must pass on his ideas to youth in order to survive. Other characters in this group, such as Nina, feel the approach of inner death with enormous sadness, but in their bewilderment can do little to oppose it. Even so, when it arrives, they never sink into total apathy. Some, like Ida in Mãos vazias, gather their last strength and kill themselves; others, of whom Nina is one, look to the past for a way of living life over again - they do not, in any case, give way completely.

This attitude is all the more heroic because their inner death was, as is always the case in tragedy, accompanied by anagnorisis. This reveals to the character not only the immediate cause of his punishment, but also "the recognition of the determined shape of the life he has created for himself, in an implicit comparison with the uncreated potential life he has forsaken".⁸ Therefore, while we understand that Cardoso's intention is to demonstrate to us the omnipotence of God and the limitation of man's power when he isolates himself from the Deity,⁹ at the same time he conveys to us his enormous admiration for this hero¹⁰ who struggles on stubbornly to the end trying to preserve his dignity and, retreating further and further into an abstract world, seeks to retain a belief in the value of humanity as a whole. This desperate struggle with death leads him, to the end, to fight for the preservation of his heroic stature: like Prometheus Bound, he does not want the others to see his suffering, because suffering is altogether too human a limitation.¹¹

Whether Cardoso's hero retains the hope of 'reborn', as in the classical tradition of tragedy, is not clear. With the exception of Timóteo, who eventually sees God and thus implicitly accepts the concept of eternal life, the other characters will only be reborn if, as Hallman suggests,¹² there is a place in legend for all the anonymous heroes who gave their lives for the improvement of Humanity. In any case, their odyssey was undoubtedly a courageous "luta contra a morte"¹³ and Cardoso's hero uses every possible and imaginable means of preserving his dignity and the independence of his intelligence. Even in death, even when vanquished by death, he can preserve his pride and his defiance. It is perhaps fitting to end by quoting the author's own confession, in his diary, which aptly sums up his fictional creations:

Em primeiro lugar eu queria dizer - não ter medo da morte. Não traduzir em segredo os seus signos, não inventar-lhe veste de bruma ou de falso luxo - pois só ela existe e tudo o que tocamos é uma representação da morte. Eu espero morrer, não da morte que me foi dada, pois eu a conheci longa e intimamente ao longo dos meus dias, mas da minha vida, que me foi dada como uma máscara contra tudo o que me revelava a nupcial presença da morte.

Morrer da minha vida, como quem esculpe um destino. (DC, 180)

Notes

- 1 The expression and the reference to the 'painel' occur in Cardoso's Diário completo (108).
- 2 Some of the texts actually have the formal structure of a tragedy, as is the case with the Crônica da casa assassinada, where we find a group living in contravention of natural law - on this occasion in the depths of Evil - and being confronted by an avenger in the shape of Nina. Aware that this is her mission, they expel her from among them, but she returns later to fulfil her rôle. Similarly, as happens normally in tragedy, not only the guilty are injured, but the innocent too, for André will be the main victim of the cataclysm.
- 3 ADONIAS FILHO. O romance brasileiro de 30. ed.cit., 131.
- 4 Cardoso believed that this obsession with reality was one of the factors which hastens man towards death:

Nós morremos do excesso de realidade - nós morremos dos limites que criamos para a vida. Se pudéssemos estabelecer, como tentamos sempre, fronteiras para o livre poder de Deus, talvez sobrevivêssemos nesse mesquinho terreno arrebatado ao mistério - mas ao contrário, já que não ousamos ser tão loucos que aceitemos de olhos fechados a loucura de Deus, é a impossibilidade de compreender que nos mata, é o mistério que nos torna trágicos, é essa luta entre o que vemos e o que se manifesta enigmático em nossa natureza, o que se debate e rugue nessa extrema solidão onde só ousamos penetrar em circunstâncias supremas. (DC, 272)

- 5 COELHO, Nelly N. 'Lúcio Cardoso e o romance da danação',
Suplemento Literário de Minas Gerais, 16 November 1968.
- 6 HALLMAN, R.J. Psychology of Literature. New York,
Philosophical Library, 1969, 144.
- 7 When Inácio shoots Lucas Trindade in Inácio.
- 8 FRYE, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton,
Princeton University Press, 1971, 212.
- 9 As the author explains in his introduction to A professora Hilda:

O que nêles [the characters] me interessa,
o que quis mostrar nos seus destinos atormentados,
foi a força selvagem com que foram arrastados
para longe da vida comum, sem apoio na esperança,
sem fé numa outra vida, cegos e obstinados contra
a presença do Mistério. Pois o Mistério é a
única realidade deste mundo. (PH, 269)

- 10 Perhaps the best confirmation of the author's admiration
for this heroic side of man, even in decline, occurs in
an interview with him published in the Correio da Manhã,
Rio de Janeiro, 20 October 1962. In answer to the
question "Quando morrer o que dirá a Deus?", Cardoso
replied: "Gostaria de tomar um whisky com Deus e sugerir-
lhe que a Sua criação está errada nos pontos exatos pelos
quais me interessa - o erro mesmo".

- 11 Nina, for instance, refuses to allow people into her room so that they shall not see her decomposing while still alive (CCA, 377).
- 12 HALLMAN. Op.cit., 68. The expression 'reborn' is used by this author to describe the second phase of tragedy.
- 13 'A luta contra a morte' was the collective title given by Lúcio Cardoso to his fiction and it was his intention that it should precede the individual titles of each book. It appears first in A luz no subsolo. (cf. O viajante, xiii).

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