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THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HYBRID SELF IN SELECTED EXCERPTS BY QORPO-SANTO AND EDWARD LEAR

Fernanda Marques Granato

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Abstract: In this article, we propose an analytical reading of selected excerpts from the works of Qorpo-Santo, written in 1866, and from the works of Edward Lear, published in 1846, based on the theories of Max Horkheimer in *Eclipse of reason*. Stemming from the process of character buildup, from the identification of the self in the alter, from this mirroring of one's identity, from this inversion of being which structures the hybrid self by Lear and Qorpo-Santo and sets forth its literary hybridism, we shall investigate the matter of hybridism in the constitution of the self in Qorpo-Santo's works; there will also be the selection of key texts of Qorpo-Santo (plays and poems) which represent his dramatic poetics and his literary nonsense. With regard to Edward Lear, we will dwell on his works and his figurations of hybridism, of the self-alter, of his eccentric nature, of the self who is constantly being built, of the self which is himself and his opposite at the same time, basing our investigations in the theories of Emmanuel Lévinas in *Entre Nous* and of Gilles Deleuze in *Logic of sense*. We also consider the matter of mirroring, of mimesis and of the double posited by René Girard in his study about the works of Fiodor Dostoiévski in *Dostoiévski: do duplo à unidade*. Both works deal with the matters of formalization and organizing knowledge in encyclopedias and scientific manuals, which characterize the men from the nineteenth century both in England and in Brazil and the Zeitgeist that shaped their works. Qorpo-Santo (1829-1883), and his work, *Ensiqlopèdia ou seis meses de uma enfermidade*, of 9 tomes, only six of which were found, and Edward Lear (1812-1888) with his vast works as father of the English nonsense literature and his botany and zoology manuals which intermingle his literary creations.

Keywords: hybrid self, double, Edward Lear, Qorpo-Santo, the constitution of the self.

INTRODUCTION: THE POTENCY OF THE AFFECTS – ECOCRITICISM AND ABSOLUTE OTHERNESS

In this brief article, we bring an analytical reading of selected excerpts from the works of Qorpo-Santo, published in 1866, and from the works of Edward Lear, originally published in 1846, stemming from the theories about the constitution of the self in terms of its hybridism and its otherness.

Qorpo-Santo (1829-1883), with his works entitled “Ensiqlopèdia ou seis meses de uma enfermidade”, comprised of 9 tomes, only 6 of which were ever found, and Edward Lear (1812-1888) with his vast works as father of the English nonsense literature and his botany and zoology manuals which intermingle his literary creations. The selected texts are a few of Edward Lear's illustrations in his publication on self-portraits, some limericks, some nonsense trees, and plants of his nonsense botany, in addition to plays, poems, aphorisms and the curious potpourri of Qorpo-Santo.

The elements herein analyzed are the buildup of characters; the identification of the self in the alter; the mirroring of identities; the inversion of self which shapes the very structure of the hybrid self; the figurations of the hybridism, of the self-alter, of the eccentric, of the subject being constantly built and rebuilt, of the self which is himself and his opposite at the same time, in addition to the formalizing and organizing of knowledge in encyclopedias and scientific manuals, which shape the man of the nineteenth century in England and in Brazil and the Zeitgeist which informs their works.

This brief article fosters an intimate relationship with the theme of the affect, for, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1991), affect is an act by which something or someone doesn't stop becoming another while

remaining himself, destabilizing the horizon of perspectives and revealing a new possible way into the other.



In the abovementioned illustration by Edward Lear, we have a self-portrait representing Edward Lear in the decisive instant of a jump, in the very moment in which the body is suspended in mid-air while jumping. His legs don't reach the floor, placing themselves as stretched, one upward, another downward, on the tip of his toes, with both arms stretched and wide open, as if alluding to the flight of a bird. His tailcoat mimics a wing, and his body structure resembles that of a bird, with a rounded body and thin legs. In this instance, affect is made evident for, in the image, the character is distinguished for his identifying himself in the difference between himself and the other; the character is, simultaneously, himself and another, and does not let any definition inhabit him for long.

The man is a bird, and the bird is a man; the man flies and the bird wears formal clothes.

QUEMI?

Nasceu em um ninho;
Fez-se um anjinho;
Fez-se um santinho;
Fez-se um deusinho!

Ou, de um anão
Chamado – Balão,
Fez-se um santão;
Fez-se um Deusão!

WHO!?

It sprung in a nest;
It became a little angel;
It became a little saint;
It became a little god!

Or, of a dwarf
Called – Balloon,
It became an enormous saint;
It became an enormous God!

In the poem “Who”, by Qorpo-Santo, the matter of the self and its constitution is revisited in a poem which brings the very issue of identity in terms of diminutive opposites (initially with the word nest, then with the diminutives little angel, little saint, and little god) and augmentative opposites (initially with the word big dwarf and big balloon, then with big saint and big god), with the title being an unanswered question, *Who?*, revealing the imprecision, the uncertainty, the imbalance and the quagmire of certainties built within the poem by describing everything that characterizes a person who is unknown to everyone.

Não acho a cabeça

Não acho a cabeça
Ora pelos olhos,
Ora pelas vestes,
Ora pela testa,
Ora pelos folhos!
Ora pela língua,
Ora pelos lábios,
Ora pelas faces,
Ora pelos raios!

Ora pelo corpo,
Ora pelas pernas,
Ora pelas ternas
Palavras suas!
Ora pelo queixo,
Ora pelo peito,
Ora pelos braços,
Ora pelo jeito
Das finas mãos,
Das verdes veias,
Das negras teias,
De seus cabelos!

I can't find the head

I can't find the head

Sometimes by the eyes,

Sometimes by the clothing

Sometimes by the forehead,

Sometimes by the frills!

Sometimes by the tongue,

Sometimes by the lips,

Sometimes by the face,

Sometimes by lightning!

Sometimes by the body,

Sometimes by the legs,

Sometimes by the loving

Words you utter!

Sometimes by the chin,

Sometimes by the chest,

Sometimes by the arms,

Sometimes by the way that

Your hands are thin,

Your veins are green,

Your dark web

Of hair is

In the selected poem printed above, entitled “I can't find the head”, by Qorpo-Santo, this matter of the quagmire of certainties becomes even more patent when we realize that the eyes, the tongue, the face, the chin and the hair, all of which are present in the head, suggest the head, but, at the same time, it is claimed that the head cannot be found, maybe because

¹ Translations by Fernanda Marques Granato.

the observer is too close to it. Barthes ponders that, (*apud* Azevedo and Felipe, 2018), in literary ecocriticism, we have an expansion of the literary practice towards the alter-sphere, an aesthetic that does not separate itself from an ethical perspective.



In the previous illustration by Edward Lear, in which Lear walks with a bird, and the steps of Lear mimic symmetrically the steps of the bird, as if one were the mirror image of the other and even the continuation and expansion of the other, we can notice the constitution of one in another, the creation of the self by the alter, for man and bird walk alike, symmetrically, harmonically and in mirrored form, hugging each other, with both raising the right leg to take the next step together; the chest, the wings and the coattails refer to each other; the eyes of the bird are mirrored in the man's glasses, which places the matter of creation and criticism about the creation in a field unlike the current definition of human, leaving this limitation and amplifying the definition of human to encompass hybridism and bestiality.

With regard to ecocriticism, that aims to consider whatever is beyond the human, outside the author and the place of origin of the work to understand how this outside mentality informs the text, in the same way as

context and place of origin inform their result. As an example, we have in the following illustration by Edward Lear, which has come to characterize a stamp in England's mail, a rounded-bodied man with wings brings us a self-portrait of Lear.



CHARADA

Entre em toda a parte 1
Domino entre as árvores 3

CHARADE

I'm everywhere 1
I rule among the trees 3

In the poem above, entitled Charade, by Qorpo-Santo, we have the joining together of two aspects noticed in ecocriticism, the man, who proposes riddles, is everywhere, and rules amongst the trees, and nature, represented by the trees.

BICOS

Os bicos de aço
Com que traço
Estas letrinhas;
De umas pombinhas
Que ora crescem,
Bicos parecem!

NOZZLES

The steel nozzles
With which I trace
This small letters.
Of some little doves
Which now grow,
Nozzles they seem!

In the poem "Nozzles", by Qorpo-Santo, which may refer not only to a bird's beak but also to a pen's nozzle, we have letters that characterize in the written text little doves which sometimes grow to resemble beaks, inhabiting ambiguity. In this new paradigm of literary studies proposed by the ecocriticism, we have the relation between the man and the environment, which may even bring with it

ecological issues.



In this illustration by Edward Lear, we have a self-portrait that pictures Lear painting a work of art while balancing himself on a chair placed diagonally, and shows himself on the tip of his toes, mirroring the bird in front of him. With regard to absolute otherness, to Levinas, when it comes to the matter of the meaning behind being in general and the relational aspect of otherness as a fundamental dimension, according to Gallina (2008), the matter of otherness is positioned into the ethical relationship with the other as absolute otherness. In absolute otherness, according to Gallina (2008),

Radically Speaking, it would be necessary for it to be unconditionally acknowledged the possibility of establishing a relationship with the other in its lack of understanding, so that the responsibility reaches its ethical range, freeing up possibilities of meeting absolute otherness.

In the following illustration by Lear as a bird perched on a tree we can see an absolute otherness.



SERVIÇO DE UM CÃO

Certo cão prestou-me
Um grande serviço:
Estava precisando;
Consoante dando,
A certo verso meu;
Quando ele lambeu
Carne de banco!

Foi tal e tanto,
Barulho que fez,
Que mais de três,
Em vez de duas,
Palavras suas,
Eu logo achei;
Com elas rime!

A DOG'S SERVICE

A certain dog has provided me
A huge service:
It needed it;
As giving,
To a certain verse of mine.
When he licked
The bench's meat!

It was such and so much
Noise it made,
That over three,
Instead of two,
Words of his,
I soon found.
With those I made rhymes.

In the poem "A dog's service", reproduced above, by Qorpo-Santo, a poet is able to rhyme and create verses and poetry with the words a dog licks in a bench made of meat.



In this self-portrait of Lear as both a man and a snail, we have a fusion between animal and human, who can no longer be separated from the animal, who, in the case of the snail, has in its shell written text recorded. Levinas's ethics on otherness

Contests, therefore, the primacy of

metaphysics, of ontology, of Husserl and Heidegger to defend the ethics of otherness and its radicality. With that, intersubjectivity is conditioned to context not only by being thrown into the flow of events, but also because predetermines the subject in its very structure. The other is signification without context neither cultural background. The other is meaning by itself. The other is what cannot be contained, which leads to beyond any context and any sort of being. It is in otherness that breaks through a heteronomous invitation which being and knowing cannot circumscribe. The self sees the criticism and invested by unyielding otherness; it is possible to create a humanism of the other.

The ethical event is found in the possibility of one positioning himself to the other. In Lear's nonsense botany, we have plants that are compounded with everyday objects, as silver wear, and hairbrushes. In this meeting, the "relationship with the other, therefore, is not ontological. [...] it consists of the very fact that despite my extension, my dominance, and his submission, I do not possess him".

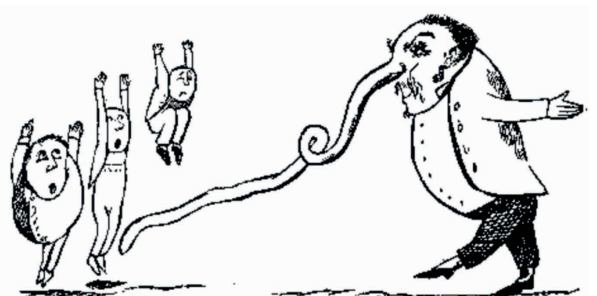
In the limerick "There was an Old Man with a nose", by Edward Lear, the other is "apprehended as an opening of being in general, as element of the world I inhabit [...] Being in a relationship with the other face to face is not being able to kill. It is also the discourse dynamics" (LEVINAS, p. 30).



There was a Young Lady whose bonnet,
Came untied when the birds sate upon it;
But she said: 'I don't care!
All the birds in the air
Are welcome to sit on my bonnet!'

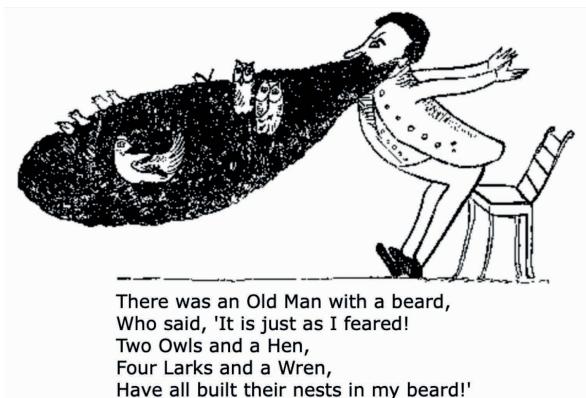
In the limerick "There was a Young Lady whose bonnet", by Edward Lear, the lady balances herself on the tip of her toe while positioning herself as if she were flying amidst the birds which alight in her bonnet.

Levinas's ethics on otherness places the "entre nous" as the "rationality of human psyche considered in the intersubjective relation, or, in other words, in the relationship of one with another, and in the pure transcendence which establishes the ethical self". Here, we consider the term to be as a verb, while process of becoming, event of being, adventure of becoming, reminding ourselves of the concept of paradox of pure becoming and becoming unlimited of Deleuze in his *Logic of sense*.



There was an Old Man with a nose,
Who said, 'If you choose to suppose,
That my nose is too long,
You are certainly wrong!
That remarkable Man with a nose.

Deleuze, in his *Logic of sense*, posits that the paradoxical element, the perpetuum mobile, has as its job to traverse the heterogenous series and coordinate them, making them not only resonate and converge, but also branch off, introducing in each of them multiples disjunctions, as in the case of the limerick "There was an old man with a beard", reproduced below; here, we have a man standing on his heels, pointing his hip upwards, his arms upwards and backwards, and his beard being used as a nest by a series of birds; the boundary of the human is overstepped and reconfigured by animals and by the new self that is created.



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