

The concepts of "type" and "figure" in "Two brothers", by Milton Hatoum

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Abstract

Milton Hatoum, Brazilian contemporary writer, resumes in his novel "Two brothers" typically Brazilian characters present in 19th-century literature, as the Indian and the aggregate. This study is continuing the author's monograph, whose research focused on comparison of the construction of the hatoumianas characters with some 19th-century novels. The research has shown the presence of similar types in the novels studied, but allowed to realize, at the same time, major differences in the way they are constructed and developed over the course of the novels. This paper proposed deepening the theme, focusing on discussion of the concepts of type from the essay "Dialética da malandragem" by Antonio Candido, and figure, from the theories of Erich Auerbach (in his writings entitled "Mimesis" and "Figure"). The objective was to propose a new reading of the novel of the Brazilian author, undertaking a figural reading from the relationship of this author's writings with those of the 19th century.

Key words:

Milton Hatoum, Auerbach, figure.

Introduction

In the 19th century, Brazilian literature featured in several of its narrative social types like the Indian and the aggregate. Currently, these characters are still present, but are represented in other ways, as in the *Two Brothers*, by Milton Hatoum, as shown in the text: "O índio, o malandro e o agregado: leituras do Brasil em *Dois irmãos*, de Milton Hatoum"¹. The possible relationship between these narratives allows giving them new meanings. So, from the concept of "figure", by Erich Auerbach², according to which two distant events, though unrelated, may give another mean to each other, the present work had as objective to propose a figural interpretation of contemporary literature in dialogue with that of the 19th century, showing that the same social types are not represented as types only, but also can be read as the filling of a figure and give new meanings to narratives of the period known as Romanticism in Brazilian literature.

Results and Discussion

Were analyzed primarily Indian and aggregate types. In the case of the Indian, in 19th-century novels written by José de Alencar, like "Iracema" and "O Guarani", the Indians are not presented as a group that depends on the whites people. On the contrary, the abandonment of the tribes is seen as an option and, in both cases, for love. However, comparing their "choices" and the consequences with the life of Domingas, Indian character of "Two brothers", it is possible to notice that at that time the Indians have already incorporated this group as the only option of life. They had their cultures subjugated and Peri, who chose to leave their tribe and live as white, survived; While Iracema, which chose to remain with their group, had no chance of life. However, figural reading shows that neither the relationship with white enables the Indian: when choose the white living, they are paradoxically, dead. Dead to the indigenous way of life. They have no choice, because if they decide to stay in the tribes, probably someone will take from there, as occurred with Domingas. So, what seemed a choice for Peri, was actually the only way to survive. Iracema haven't changed their habits as Peri and had no chance of life. Peri had, but only if the white habits joined. Therefore, the full meaning that the contemporary

narrative analyzed gives the narratives of the 19th century in reading figural proposal, is that the tribes and the indigenous culture do not have space in a country civilized. Is not an option, as such novels showed. If they want to live, will not be as Indian.

In the case of Nael, narrator of "Two Brothers", he is the first Brazilian aggregate character who gaining voice and, despite being possible to read the novel of Hatoum alone and realize that a dependent has voice, it wins more importance when associated with the lack of autonomy of other aggregates. José Dias, aggregate character of "Dom Casmurro", by Machado de Assis, needed to build his speech in order to please the owners of the house in which he lived; D. Plácida, other dependent character from the "Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas", by the same author, abdicated from principles to please their "bosses" and thus keep his livelihood. Already Nael, wins voice, and can speak freely what he think and even criticize the owners of the house. Thus, the absence of autonomous voice in novels by Machado de Assis allows to understand the relevance of the voice of a narrator-dependent: it gets voice, being this the first sign of a freedom that is being conquered.

Conclusions

The figural interpretation of Auerbach lists two real historical events and temporally far apart. And, just like in his reading, in the relationship established between the novels in the present research, the first event is not considered as a cause of the second, and the second is not update the first. Only the current narratives give one more possibility of reading to those of the 19th century, because the representation are autonomous, but there is a specific meaning that only becomes possible when both are related.

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¹ PEREIRA, Gianne R. *O índio, o malandro e o agregado: Leituras do Brasil em Dois irmãos, de Milton Hatoum*. [Monografia – IEL/UNICAMP] 2013.

² AUERBACH, Erich. *Figura*. São Paulo: Ática, 1997; *Mimesis: a representação da realidade na literatura ocidental*. São Paulo, SP: Perspectiva, 2004.