Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
Centro de Educação e Humanidades
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Tarso do Amaral de Souza Cruz

Why brush up your Shakespeare and your theory?: an Angela Carter companion to myths

Rio de Janeiro
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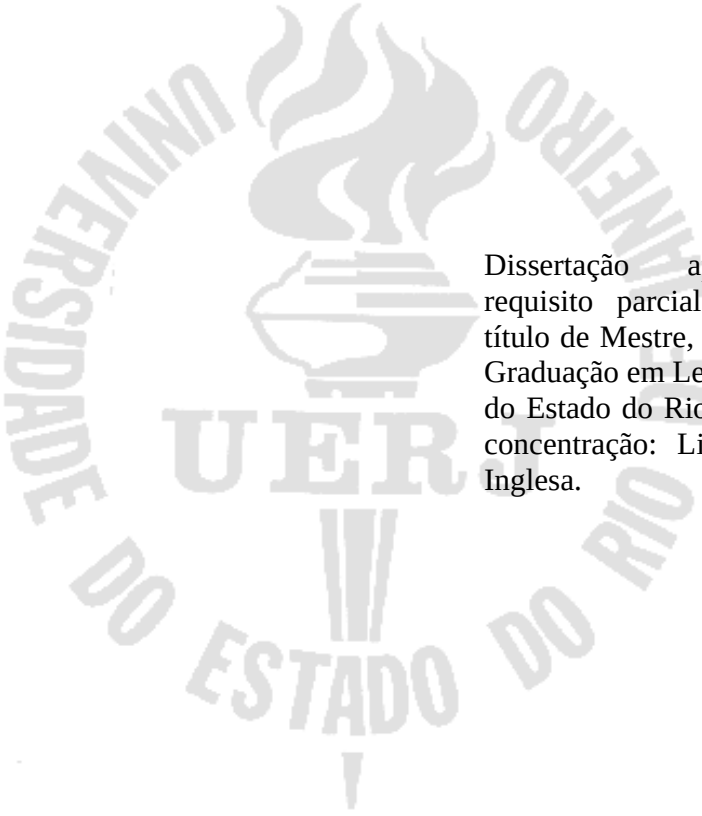

Dissertação apresentada, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Mestre, ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.

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Banca Examinadora :

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Rio de Janeiro

2011

DEDICATÓRIA

Esse trabalho é dedicado à minha orientadora, Peônia, com amizade e gratidão.

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A todos vocês, um sincero muito obrigado.

After God Shakespeare has created most

James Joyce

It is very easy to argue that knowledge about Shakespeare [...] is not political whereas knowledge about contemporary China or the Soviet Union is.

Edward Said

this disease of thinking in essences [...] is at the bottom of every bourgeois mythology

Roland Barthes

I'm in the demythologizing business

Angela Carter

A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher

Jean-François Lyotard

RESUMO

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Essa dissertação visa estudar a formação do que veio a ser conhecido como o mito Shakespeariano e sua relação com a produção literária contemporânea, exemplificada pelo romance *Wise Children*, da romancista inglesa Angela Carter. Tal objetivo pretende ser alcançado por meio uma revisão teórica de elementos relacionados à concepção de mito desenvolvida pelo filósofo francês Roland Barthes, tais quais a concepção tradicional de mito, o Estruturalismo, o Pós-estruturalismo, a crítica ideológica marxista e os Estudos Culturais. Um estudo dos processos históricos que deram origem ao e ajudaram a propagar o mito Shakespeariano também é levado a cabo nessa dissertação: a apropriação da figura e da obra de William Shakespeare feita pelos pré-românticos e pelos românticos em geral; a associação da figura de Shakespeare com a identidade nacional do Império Britânico; o advento da industria Shakespeariana e o papel das adaptações das peças de Shakespeare na propagação do mito Shakespeariano.

Palavras-chave: Mito Shakespeariano. Angela Carter. Intertextualidade paródica.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims at studying what came to be known as the Shakespeare myth and its relation to the contemporary literary production, exemplified by English novelist Angela Carter's novel *Wise Children*. Such objective intends to be achieved by a theoretical revision of elements related to French philosopher Rolan Barthes's concept of myth, such as the traditional concept of myth, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Marxist ideological critique, as well as Cultural Studies. A study of the historical processes which led to and helped propagate the Shakespeare myth is also carried out in this dissertation: the pre-Romantic and the Romantic' appropriation of the figure and works of William Shakespeare; the association of the figure of Shakespeare with the British Empire's national identity; the advent of the Shakespeare industry; and the role the adaptation of the Shakespearean play had in the propagation of the Shakespeare myth.

Key-words: Shakespeare myth. Angela Carter. Parodic intertextuality.

SUMÁRIO

INTRODUCTION

In an interview to Welsh critic Lorna Sage, English novelist Angela Carter made this point about her writing of *Wise Children*: “I wanted it to be very funny, and at the same time I wanted the complex ideas about paternity and the idea of Shakespeare as a cultural ideology” (interview with CARTER). In another interview, this time to scholar American Anna Katsavos, Carter also said that she was “trying to find out what certain configurations of imagery in our society, in our culture, really stand for, what they mean, underneath the kind of semireligious coating that makes people not particularly want to interfere with them” (interview with CARTER). In this same interview, Carter acknowledged that she would define myth in “a sort of conventional sense; also in the sense that Roland Barthes uses it in *Mythologies*—ideas, images, stories that we tend to take on trust without thinking what they really mean” (interview with CARTER).

Once you are familiar with the concept of myth developed by French philosopher Roland Barthes in his groundbreaking *Mythologies*, it becomes quite clear from the reading of Carter’s works that Barthes’s concept of myth was quite familiar to the English novelist. Moreover, it also becomes clear that Carter creatively built upon this same concept in her literary output. An illustration of such assertion may be found in Carter’s last novel *Wise Children*, in which, as she acknowledges in one of the abovementioned excerpts from interviews, she explores what came to be known as the Shakespeare myth. It is also clear from the reading of the excerpts from the interviews that once one decides to delve into the way Carter deals with myths in her writings, he or she will inevitably have to deal with the conventional meanings of myth, as well as with Barthes’s particular concept of myth.

This dissertation aims at exploring exactly the way Angela Carter installs and subverts the Shakespeare myth in *Wise Children*. In order to achieve such aim, I looked for a better understanding of Barthes’s thought, especially of Barthes’s concept of myth, which presented itself to me as a mandatory stage in the development of my research. However, as I would discover in the first stages of the development of the research, there were theoretical elements involved in the investigation of myth which would make such an enterprise a quite complex one.

Before exploring Barthes’s concept of myth itself, I felt the need to understand better the conventional or traditional way myths are understood and studied. The work of Mircea Eliade

presented itself as a very relevant source for my dissertation because through it I could understand how a myth is conceived in the conventional or traditional way. Different but in a sense complementary to Eliade's understanding of myth is Barthes's approach to it. As I found out, a quite intricate theory was developed by Barthes in order to expand the traditional sense of myth in his *Mythologies*.

Barthes is usually associated concomitantly both with the Structuralist and with the Post-Structuralist schools of thought. Though there are few points of convergence between the two schools, Barthes himself being one of those, there are outstanding differences between them, something that shows them to be fundamentally different schools of thought. The wish to possess a better understanding of the most relevant aspects of both schools led me to investigate in depth the origins and principal features of the two schools of thought Barthes is associated to.

In addition to this, Barthes himself sees his conceptualization of myth as an ideological critique. At that point, I felt that a better understanding of the fundamentals of the concept of ideology was also required for the development of my dissertation. The concept of ideology is commonly associated to the Marxist school of thought. I decided to investigate the Marxist ideological critique, a decision of remarkable importance for this dissertation. The ideas of Marx on ideology, as well as of some of the most prominent Marxist thinkers of the 20th century, such as Lukács, Gramsci, and Althusser, helped me to expand and complexify both my own understanding of the concept of ideology itself and also that of myth, basically the way Barthes sees it.

As I would find out, Barthes's work had profound impact on what came to be known as Cultural Studies. I also felt the need to have an in-depth understanding of this particular area of knowledge. The prominent theorist Stuart Hall's ideas on Cultural Studies, alongside with the very concepts and ideas of the scholars directly related to the origins of Cultural Studies were also encompassed in my research and provided me with relevant insights into the issues related to my dissertation.

After being quite aware of the theoretical associations of Barthes's work, I revisited his *Mythologies*, this time with fresh eyes. This new reading enhanced my understanding of the complex concept of myth. Such enhancement was of fundamental relevance for the following part of the dissertation: the exploration of the historical process which led to the advent of the Shakespeare myth.

Nevertheless, before moving further towards the study of the Shakespeare myth itself, I chose to explore William Shakespeare's biography and the most remarkable features of his work. It seemed important to understand Shakespeare, historically located, before discussing the myth built upon and around him. A better understanding of Shakespeare´s works also seemed of significant importance due to their importance for the study of Carter's *Wise Children.*

As my own previous researches had already shown, there were at least four clearly marked historical processes that could be associated with the advent and the propagation of the Shakespeare myth: the appropriation of the Pre-Romantic and Romantic movements of the figure and works of Shakespeare; the adaptations of Shakespeare's work that have been made since the 17th century; the advent of what came to be known as the Shakespeare industry; and the association of Shakespeare's figure and works with the ideology of the British Empire. I carried out research into each of these markedly historical processes and then associated them to the Shakespeare myth itself.

My research of the (pre-)Romantic appropriations of the figure of Shakespeare led me to a serious study of the wide scope related to the origins of the Romantic movement in different European and American countries, especially in England and in Germany. I examined English, German, French, American, and Brazilian prominent Romantic figures and their works in search of elements and examples which would be able to support the assumptions I had already formulated to myself, and which were related to the associations between the Romantic movement and the Shakespeare myth.

The study of the adaptations of Shakespearean plays, which can be traced back to the 17th century, also proved an inestimable source of information for a deeper understanding of the Shakespeare myth. I began to understand that these adaptations are intrinsically related to the origin of one of the most relevant aspects of the Shakespeare myth: the association between Shakespeare and Nature. I discovered that it was upon this very association that the Romantics and the ideologues of the British Empire alike built many of their fundamental ideas.

In order to explore in greater depth the way in which the ideology of the British Empire was merged with the figure of Shakespeare, I carried out an investigation of the origins and spreading of the British Empire itself. This study proved valuable indeed, for, as I would come to learn, the expansion of the Shakespeare myth around the world is very much connected to the expansion of the British Empire. An expansion that is also intrinsically associated with capitalist

values. These same capitalist values are at the origin of what came to be known as the Shakespeare industry, a thorough commercial exploitation of the Shakespeare myth that, as I try to demonstrate in this dissertation, had its origins in the first Shakespeare Jubilee, in 1769.

After having delved into the historical processes related to the advent and to the propagation of the Shakespeare myth I had identified so far, it was time for me to explore the work of Angela Carter. Carter is normally associated with feminism, with postmodernism, and with an extensive use of postmodern narrative strategies. I chose to explore each of these topics related to Carter before beginning the analysis of Carter's *Wise Children*.

My analysis of Carter's *Wise Children* is based upon all that I had previously studied and explored during my research: from Barthes's concept of myth to the postmodern feminist narrative strategies employed by Carter. I also based my analysis on issues related to the Shakespeare myth and on several works by Shakespeare, especially *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In addition, I chose to analyze one particular passage of the novel and explore it in greater depth before the dissertation reached its conclusion: the passage related to the Hollywood filmic production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The research work, which this dissertation is the result of, was an extremely vast one, but at the same time, an extremely instigating, pleasant and profitable one. All the themes related to this dissertation are directly related to my personal and academic interests and to have had the possibility to write about them has been nothing short of a privilege. I hope that this dissertation may help other people in search of knowledge and in search of a better way of understanding and interfering in the present state of affairs, literary or otherwise.

It's been a long ride. Hope you enjoy it.

1 ROLAND BARTHES: FROM STRUCTURE TO DIFFERENCE

All that is solid melts into air

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engel, *Manisfesto of the Communist Party*

French philosopher Roland Barthes was one of the first scholars to use ideas from the structuralist school of thought in the study of literature. Nonetheless, Barthes is also related to another major philosophical movement intrinsically related to Structuralism, although vastly different in its methods and aims: Post-structuralism. Leyla Perrone-Moisés, a prominent Brazilian literary critic and specialist in and translator of Barthes's works, states in her text "Lição de casa" (2004) that throughout his oeuvre Barthes obstinately pursued one particular goal: the search for - and the escape from - stereotypes. Both this pursuit and its inverse and yet inherent movement, the escape from, make it possible to infer why Barthes is commonly associated to what could be called two of the most emblematic philosophical movements of the 20th century, Structuralism and Post-structuralism.

According to Brazilian critic Eduardo Socha (2010), Post-structuralism corresponds to a set of theories which are essentially against the most influential theoretical conceptions of the 1960s, which were greatly influenced by Structuralism. It is possible to argue that the structuralist model was taken from linguistics due to the massive influence the work of Ferdinand de Saussure had on a generation of thinkers, many of them directly related to Structuralism. In his entry "Structuralism" to the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, Canadian critic Gregor Campbell writes that although "Structuralism generally refers to the French thought of the 1960s" (CAMPBELL, 1994, p. 199), "twentieth-century structuralism as such begins with a series of lectures delivered by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure at the University of Geneva" (p. 199). These lectures of Saussure's, which were posthumously published as the seminal work *Cours de linguistique générale*, were given in the very beginning of the 20th century. Combined with notes from some of the students who attended the lectures, edited, and ultimately released in 1916, these lectures are still highly influential. In them, Saussure made statements such as "everywhere and always there is the same complex equilibrium of terms that mutually condition each other" (SAUSSURE, 1989, p. 654). These statements, which were primarily related to linguistics, eventually began to be associated with other realms of human thought.

Socha (2010) argues that the articulation of Saussure's and other prominent thinkers' ideas, such as those of Marx and Freud, aimed at promoting an intrarelational constitution of the human sciences which would supposedly promote the establishment and development of an ideal, unassailable method for the understanding of human societies, that is, Structuralism. As Barthes argues in his 1967 "Science Versus Literature", "by virtue of its method structuralism gives special attention to classification, hierarchies and arrangements: its essential object is the taxonomy or distributive model which every human creation [...] inevitably establishes, since there is no culture without classification" (BARTHES, 1997, p. 95). Structuralists would rely on a set of binary oppositions which were believed to be inherent to various types of structures in order to support an over-encompassing understanding of numerous human social spheres, be them economic, historical, political, and even aesthetic ones.

One of the most emblematic examples of the binary oppositions Structuralism would rely on are the highly influential distinctions between *langue*, the system of language, and *parole*, the concrete use of language itself, made by Saussure. This distinction is encompassed in a wider notion developed by Saussure which says that the linguistic sign is arbitrary. Writing about the linguistic sign Saussure also stated that "in current usage the term generally designates only [...] a word, for example (*arbor*, etc.)" (SAUSSURE, 1989, p. 647). Saussure adds that he means "by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified" (p. 647). From the linguist's viewpoint the relationship between these two formatting elements of the sign is also arbitrary, that is, there is an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified. The 1993 *Semiotique, dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, written by French linguists Algidar Julius Greimas and Joseph Courtés (2008), defines the signifier as the acoustic image of something and the signified as its correspondent meaning and/or concept.

Although the influence of Saussure in the structuralist school of thought is massive and undeniable, critic Gregor Campbell argues that "Structuralism enters the French intellectual scene of the 1960s largely through the ethnography of Claude Lévi-Strauss" (CAMPBELL, 1994, p. 199), whose most emblematic analysis is that of the myth. Lévi-Strauss, in his text "The Structural Study of Myth", acknowledges that the study of myth should rely on what he calls 'the past experience of linguists', referring exactly to the studies developed by Saussure. According to Lévi-Strauss, "myth is language: to be known, myth has to be told, it is a part of human speech" (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1989, p. 811). The anthropologist goes even further and adds that "language

itself can be analyzed into things which are at the same time similar and different. This is precisely what is expressed in Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*." (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1989, p. 811).

Although Lévi-Strauss openly acknowledges the impact the ideas of Saussure had on his own study of myths, the anthropologist is also the one who claims that the study of myths exhibits "more complex features than those which are to be found in any kind of linguistic expression" (p. 811). Lévi-Strauss's ideas present in his 1964 work *The Raw and the Cooked* demonstrate that myths are created through "transition from nature to culture, through the continual reordering of image sets whose content is the opposition of sensory qualities: the raw and the cooked, noise and silence, rotten and burned" (FARADAY, 1994, p. 404), points out Canadian researcher Nancy Faraday. These ideas are not wholly based on Saussure's conceptions and distinctions; nonetheless, it is possible to notice how binary oppositions typical of the structuralist way of thinking are still significantly present. As Campbell puts it, "structuralism is concerned with the immanent relations constituting language and all symbolic or discursive systems" (CAMPBELL, 1994, p. 199).

Influential though Structuralism still was at the time, the late 1960's and the early 1970's brought about a series of changes in the perceptions of many of those involved with the structuralist method. Those who were against the structuralistic conceptions, amongst them French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, as well as the later Roland Barthes, would deny the stabilizing supremacy of the structuralist model, which had been taken from linguistics and then extended to other areas of knowledge. One of the most eminent post-structuralists, French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues that "the notion of centre used by linguistics and structuralists is incapable of organizing the complexity of discourse when the history of philosophical concepts is examined from a linguistic point of view" (p. 203), asserts Campbell. Derrida evidences that the primacy Structuralism gives to language bears dubious metaphysical presuppositions. In Derrida's own words, "In Western and notably French thought, the dominant discourse—let us call it 'structuralism'—remains caught, by an entire layer, sometimes the most fecund of its stratification, within the metaphysics" (DERRIDA, 1997, p. 99). French critic Christopher Johnson (2001) comments that Derrida, as other post-structuralists, would see Structuralism as a kind of metaphysical magnetic field that would encompass, mold and restrict our understanding and conceptualization of the world.

Post-structuralist thought moves its theoretical focus from the ‘structure’, the supposed foundation of the human sciences, to the ontological propulsion of ‘difference’. Brazilian philosopher and critic Evando Nascimento (2004) supports the idea that what is normally referred to as French Post-structuralism could also be and often is referred to as the Thought of Difference. According to Nascimento, the immediate consequence of such change of focus would be the renunciation of a set of knowledge previously founded upon and supported by the application of the structural method. Post-structuralists would consequently move towards the acknowledgement of a continuous and underlying openness inherent to theory. The Brazilian scholar adds that to post-structuralists, such openness was almost mandatory due to the vast amount of difference they would see as intrinsic to reality. Therefore, the constant need of ongoing critic reevaluations of discourses and methods of understanding reality was also seen as vital. Socha (2010) argues that, contrary to Structuralism, Post-structuralism aimed at destabilizing the meanings of structures. French post-structuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for instance, see philosophy not as a synthetic judgment, but as a “thought synthesizer functioning to make thought travel, make it mobile” (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1987, p. 379). Roberto Machado (2009), a Brazilian philosopher and a specialist in the work of Deleuze, argues that, for Deleuze, philosophy is a process of creation and the philosopher a creator.

Nevertheless, it is important to notice that, although the term Post-structuralism refers to the school of thought of those who theoretically oppose Structuralism, it is an extremely general term. As Canadian critic Zsuzsa Baross points out, “Poststructuralism is not a unified school of thought or even a movement; the term is most prominent in the external discourse of criticism” (BAROSS, 1994, p. 158). For instance, three philosophers commonly associated to the post-structuralist school of thought, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida, have distinct theoretical programs and “seldom characterize their work as such, and confess to no shared doctrine or commitment to a single method” (p. 158). Roughly outlining their individual lines of thoughts, Socha (2010) states that, for instance, Foucault works upon the genealogy and arqueology of knowledge; Deleuze focuses on an ontology of difference; and Derrida develops the project of ‘Deconstruction’. The case of Roland Barthes is also a very specific one.

One of Barthes’s most emblematic works, his groundbreaking *Mythologies* is heavily based on structuralist principles, more precisely on Saussure’s ideas. In the preface to a 1970

edition of *Mythologies*, 13 years after its first publication, it was Barthes himself who acknowledged that when he wrote this particular work of his he

> had just read Saussure and as a result acquired the conviction that by treating 'collective representations' as sign-systems, one might hope to go further than the pious show of unmasking them and account *in detail* for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature (BARTHES, 1991, p. 8).

In the same preface, Barthes argues that *Mythologies* has "a double theoretical framework: on the one hand, an ideological critique bearing on the language of so-called mass culture; on the other, a first attempt to analyze semiologically the mechanics of this language" (p. 8). Nonetheless, it is also Barthes who, in a clear change of perspective, states that "it is obvious that the two attitudes which determined the origin of the book could no longer today be maintained unchanged" (p. 8).

It is possible to associate Barthes's 'double theoretical framework' to the structuralist way of thinking if we take into consideration the acknowledgement made by Barthes himself of the influence Saussure's ideas had on him. However, it is also possible to place Barthes's later revision of his own work under the term Post-structuralism: the very movement of acknowledging that his own previous and structuralist understanding of what he saw as myths inherent to the petit bourgeois culture was not enough to encompass all the complexities involved in those phenomena exemplifies the post-structuralist vital need for constant reevaluations of methods and discourses.

The same aforementioned preface contains the passage in which Barthes states that from the first publication of *Mythologies* in 1957 to the 1970 edition, ideological criticism had become "more sophisticated" (p. 8) and semiological analysis had "developed, become more precise, complicated and differentiated: it has become the theoretical locus wherein a certain liberation of 'the significant' [...] may well be enacted" (p. 8). This 'liberation of the significant' Barthes writes about may also be easily associated to the post-structuralist aim of destabilizing the meanings of any given structure.

Probably no other text written by Barthes makes it clearer how his point of view changed in relation to his own previous perception of what he called 'contemporary myth' than the 1971 article "Change the Object Itself". In this particular article, Barthes claims the concepts present in his *Mythologies* became mythic themselves, that is, according to Barthes "a mythological *doxa*

has been created: denunciation, demystification (or demythification), has itself become discourse, stock of phrases, catechistic declaration" (BARTHES, 1977, p. 166). In a clear post-structuralist postulation, Barthes adds that

> it is no longer the myths which need to be unmasked (the doxa now takes care of that), it is the sign itself which must be shaken; the problem is not to reveal the (latent) meaning of an utterance, of a trait, of a narrative, but to fissure the very representation of meaning, is not to change or purify the symbols but to challenge the symbolic itself (p. 167).

It is paramount to notice, however, that although Barthes changed his mind about his own theory, *Mythologies* remains a groundbreaking work. Some of its premises are still extremely relevant, more than 50 years after its first publication. Barthes himself, even when later revising his positions present in *Mythologies*, wrote that he was doing so "not because what brought them about has now disappeared" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 8), quite on the contrary: what he called "the essential enemy (bourgeois norm)" (p. 8), still had then and continues having great influence over Western culture. In Barthes own words, "Has anything changed? Not French society, at any rate not at this level [...]. Nor the myths, nor even the analysis: in our society the mythical still abounds, just as anonymous and slippery, fragmented and garrulous, available both for ideological criticism and semiological dismantling" (BARTHES, 1977, p. 166).

In the preface to the first edition of *Mythologies*, Barthes argues that the starting point of the reflections present in this particular work of his was "a feeling of impatience at the sight of the 'naturalness' with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 10). Moreover, Barthes states that he felt indignant about the common and continuous confusion he noticed being made between the concepts of Nature and History. In his own words: "I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down [...] the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there" (p. 10). Barthes also writes that "right from the start, the notion of myth seemed to me to explain these examples of the falsely obvious. At that time, I still used the word 'myth' in its traditional sense" (p. 10).

It is possible to argue that two interwoven and intrinsic aspects of Barthes's *Mythologies* remain particularly pertinent to a better understanding of the philosopher's ideas present in this particular work: its relying on "the word 'myth' in its traditional sense" (p. 10) and the critique of what he understood as an 'ideological abuse', and, therefore, as ideology itself. Before continuing

with the investigation of the work of Barthes, it seems rather important to investigate what the idea of ‘myth in its traditional sense’ could be, as well as to take a deeper look into the concept(s) of ideology and the possible abuses related to it.

2 MYTH IN ITS TRADITIONAL SENSE

If you get little details like that right, people will believe anything.
Angela Carter, *Wise Children*

Brazilian philosopher Danilo Marcondes (2004) defines the mythic way of thinking as the means through which a given people explains fundamental aspects of reality: from the creation of the universe and the way nature works, to the origins of this very people. Marcondes remarks that it is relevant to note that myths explain such aspects in a particular way: through a specific form of discourse, the mythic discourse. As Marilena Chaui (2002), another prominent Brazilian philosopher, reminds us, the word myth derives from the Greek word *μυθος* (*mythos*). According to Chaui, the Greek word *μυθος* itself is a combination of two other verbs: *mytheyo*, which means to tell, to narrate; and *mytheo*, that means to talk, to announce, to designate. The volume *A Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, lets us know that *μυθος* can mean, amongst other possible meanings, "*tale, story, narrative,* [...] without distinction of true or false, [...] *professed work of fiction, children's story, fable*" (LIDDELL; SCOTT, 1996, p. 1151, author's italics). The etymology of the word myth tells a lot about the kind of discourse myths are made of.

A major name in the study of myths, Romanian mythologist and philosopher Mircea Eliade, writes in his *Images and Symbols – Studies in Religious Symbolism* that "a myth is an account of events which took place *in principio*, that is, 'in the beginning', in a primordial and non-temporal instant, a moment of sacred time" (ELIADE, 1991, p. 57). In a myth, the contact with this sacred time Eliade writes about would take men and women into 'the Great Time', a paradoxical moment impossible to be measured, for it has no duration: "the myth is supposed to happen [...] in a non-temporal time, in an instant without duration, as certain mystics and philosophers conceived of eternity" (p. 57). The Romanian mythologist adds that "this is as much as to say that the myth implies a breakaway from Time and the surrounding world" (p. 58). From Eliade's viewpoint, when a member of a given community listens to the narration of a myth, he or she "forgets, as it were, his particular situation and is projected into another world, into a Universe which is no longer his poor little universe of every day" (p. 59).

It is important to remark that the narration of a myth would necessarily be ritualized due to the necessity of somehow re-actualizing the Great Time. Myths should not be “narrated however or whenever one likes” (ELIADE, 1991, p. 57). According to the French anthropologist Jean-Pierre Vernant (2009), in Ancient Greece, for example, myths could be spread and maintained in two ways: via an essentially oral tradition and/or through the voice of the poets. The poets would be the ones responsible for presenting to humans the world of the gods. This presentation would be made through narratives in an accessible and familiar way. The poets’ work was seen as a kind of institution of social memory, an instrument of preservation and transmission of knowledge. Vernant adds that it would be through poetry that the fundamental elements of that particular culture would be expressed and established.

Quoting Eliade, French literary critic Pierre Brunel (1997) remarks that every mythology is an ontophany, i.e. it always reveals the deity, the being, and therefore is presented as a sacred narrative. The inherent quality of being an ontophany makes mythology likely to be closely associated to religion. Eliade’s words help to elucidate such point. From the Romanian mythologist’s viewpoint myths “are true because they are sacred, because they tell [...] about sacred beings and events. [...] in reciting or listening to a myth, one resumes contact with the sacred and with reality, and in doing so one transcends the profane condition, the ‘historical situation’” (ELIADE, 1991, p. 59). It seems relevant to note that in its etymological sense the word ‘religion’ brings this idea of a re-connection: from Old French *religion,* as well as from Latin *religione*, meaning “bond between man and the gods” (ONIONS, 2000, p. 754), according to *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. The same dictionary also lets us know that the word ‘religion’ has its origins in another Latin word, *relegere*, which means “gather together, [...] bind” (p. 754).

Marcondes (2004) argues that due to the fact that myths tell of the origins of a given community, a given people, they are intrinsically related to and are products of a cultural tradition, a tradition that builds these individuals’ world view. Exactly because the mythic way of thinking is interwoven with the world view of a community, it presupposes acceptance and adherence to it. The Brazilian philosopher adds that a myth should not be discussed, should not be questioned. Either an individual is part of a community and accepts and believes in its mythology and in its world view, or he or she does not belong to this particular community, and, therefore, its myths and beliefs do not make sense for him or her.

Being understood in the way Marcondes puts it, that is, as the essence of a particular community's world view, mythology may be associated with something rather similar to the Althusserian concept of ideology. Algerian philosopher Louis Althusser is commonly seen as a structuralist Marxist who, amongst many other topics, discussed ideology. From Althusser's point of view, "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (ALTHUSSER, 1971b, p. 162). Althusser also states that:

> it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that 'men' 'represent to themselves' in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there. It is this relation which is at the centre of every ideological, i.e. imaginary, representation of the real world (p. 164).

If, according to what is stated by Marcondes, either an individual believes in a given community's mythology, and therefore in its world view, and, because of this, may be considered a part of this community, or he/she does not believe in any of it and consequently may not be considered as a member of this community, an individual has to embrace 'the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' in order to belong to a community. He/she has to adhere to the 'representation of the real world' this community has as its own. As previously mentioned, Barthes also interweaves myth and ideology is his *Mythologies*, something that could be seen as a common trait of some of the theoreticians of the 20th century who discussed either of these two major themes.

In fact, the 20th century saw the term myth itself being scrutinized. Traditional conceptions were reevaluated, new ones created and some of them were diametrically opposed. Eliade (1972) comments in his *Myth and Reality* that in the first decades of the 20th century Western scholars began to study myth through a perspective which contrasts with that of the previous century. From the mythologist's viewpoint, differently from their predecessors, who would see a myth as a fable, a fiction, these twentieth-century scholars understood it as it used to be seen by what Eliade calls archaic societies, i.e. societies where myths would design a true story extremely valued due to its sacred characteristics. It is arguable whether this perspective of Eliade's could be refuted if we took into consideration the different studies on myths made by figures such as Roland Barthes and Lévi-Strauss. Through his approach on myths, Barthes, for instance, expanded and popularized the traditional concept of myth, bringing it to and seeing it being used and propagated in contemporary 'non-archaic' societies such as the French one.

Eliade (1972) adds that presently the term myth is used both in the sense of fiction, of illusion, and also in the sense of a sacred tradition, a primeval revelation and an exemplary model. Brunel's (1997) words seem to echo those of Eliade's when he states that nowadays many people tend to see the word myth as an irritating term. Brunel claims that myth has fluid meanings that may be applied to practically everything, especially by the mass media.

Nonetheless, the awareness of the common perception of myth being currently seen as an 'irritating' word did not prevent Brunel from taking part in the project of a dictionary of literary myths, the 1988 *Dictionnaire des Mythes Littéraires*. Brunel is the organizer of this thick volume whose pages are filled with entries about myths of the most varied origin. The very existence of such volume could be seem as enough evidence of how much interest the themes of myth and mythology still attract, despite the diverging points of view mentioned by Brunel and Eliade. Moreover, American mythologist Joseph Campbell's answer to the question 'Why should people care about myths?' is rather elucidative as well: "these bits of information from ancient times [...] built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia" (CAMPBELL, 1991, p. 2). Civilizations and religions which quite frequently still affect our present societies, societies such as the contemporary French one that, according to Barthes, continue to produce its own myths.

Even though Barthes was the one who affirmed that when writing his *Mythologies* he "used the word 'myth' in its traditional sense" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 10), it is also Barthes himself who claims he "attempted to define contemporary myth in methodical fashion" (p. 10). As previously mentioned, Barthes's approach to what he calls 'contemporary myth' is embedded in a wider ideological critique. Ideology presents itself as a relevant topic of discussion at this point.

3 IS THOUGHT REALLY FREE?

thought is free.
William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

ideology is not an aberration or a contingent excrescence of History: it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies.
Louis Althusser, *For Marx*

French post-structuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in their *What is Philosophy?,* state that “every concept has a history” (DELEUZE; GUATARRI, 1994, p. 17). However, there are some concepts which are notoriously intangible, even though their history is rather known. Ideology is one of them. From British critic David McLellan’s viewpoint “ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social science” (MCLELLAN, 1996, p. 1); Irish literary critic Terry Eagleton supports the idea that “nobody has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology” (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 1); American anthropologist Clifford Geertz believes that the social sciences were not able to develop a genuinely “nonevaluative conception of ideology” (GEERTZ, 2000, p. 194); Deleuze and Guattari come to the point of asserting that "there is no ideology and never has been" (DELEUZE; GUATARRI, 1987, p. 5); and Brazilian sociologist Michael Löwy (1994) seems to summarize the problem when he states that it is possible to notice the confusion and ambivalence not only among thinkers of different currents of thought but also within one and the same work, Karl Marx’s, for instance. Nonetheless, all these elusiveness has not prevented the term ideology from being massively used at least since the 19th century.

The coinage of the term, which dates back from the very end of the 18th century, is normally credited to the French Enlightenment philosopher Antoine de Tracy. De Tracy was a member of the Institute de France, an institute solely created with the aim of promoting the ideas of the Enlightenment. For a brief period of time, the institute even enjoyed the patronage of Napoleon himself, who became one of its honorary members for a while, before turning against those he called the ‘ideologists’.

A particular work of de Tracy's helped propagating the concept of ideology and the ideas related to it. His *Elements d'Ideologie* "proposed a new science of ideas, an idea-logy, which would be the ground of all other sciences. [...] A rational investigation of the origin of ideas, free from religious or metaphysical prejudice, would be the foundation of a just and happy society" (MCLELLAN, 1996, p. 5). In de Tracy's own words:

> it is necessary to analyze our sentiments themselves, submit them to a rigorous examination, distinguish those which being founded on just judgments always direct us well, and those which having their source in illusions, and rising from the obliquities of our minds, cannot fail to lead us astray and form within us a false and blind conscience, which always removes us further from the road of reason, the only one leading to happiness (DE TRACY, 2009, p. 213).

The French philosopher adds that "if we have well exposed the results of the actions of men, and the effects of their passions, it seems that it will be easy to indicate the rules which they ought to prescribe to themselves" (p. 213).

Terry Eagleton argues that the rationalist de Tracy saw ideas as the basis for social life: "Since all science rests upon ideas. Ideology would oust theology as the queen of them all, guaranteeing their unity. It would reconstruct politics, economics and ethics from the ground up, moving from the simplest processes of sensation to the loftiest regions of spirit" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 66). This point of view of the French philosopher came to make Napoleon feel extremely dissatisfied. Eagleton writes that the commitment of people like de Tracy to "a 'global' analysis of society is inseparable from their revolutionary politics" (p.68), and frontally opposed Bonaparte's "sentimental illusions and maundering religiosity with which he hoped to legitimate his dictatorial rule" (p. 68). Aims that became quite clear in statements such as the following one made by Napoleon himself: "Your ideologists destroy all illusions, and the age of illusions is, for nations, as for individuals, the age of happiness" (BONAPARTE apud BROGLIE, 2006, p. 339). Therefore, it is possible to argue, as Eagleton does, that the advent of the concept of ideology "has the most intimate relation to revolutionary struggle, and [...] arrives on the scene inseparable from the material practices of the ideological state apparatuses, and is itself as a notion a theatre of contending ideological interests" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 69).

It is also relevant to notice that since the term ideology was brought to light with the work of de Tracy, it has often been associated to some sort of false consciousness. When de Tracy writes about sentiments that have their source in illusions and that rise from what he calls 'the obliquities of our minds', the philosopher understands that these kind of feelings "cannot fail to

lead us astray and form within us a false and blind conscience" (DE TRACY, 2009, p. 213). This connection between ideology and false consciousness would be a recurrent one along the history of the concept, although that would not always be the case.

De Tracy coined and developed the term ideology in the end of the 18th century, but it was with the works of German philosopher Karl Marx and some of his followers that the term ideology really gained ground. As McLellan writes about Marx, "it was the influence of his writings that gave the concept of ideology the wide currency that it now enjoys" (MCLELLAN, 1996, p. 9). However, it is important to notice, as Terry Eagleton does, that, although the Marxist concept of ideology is highly relevant and influential, "Marx and Engels were not in fact the first thinkers to see consciousness as socially determined: in different ways. Rousseau, Montesquieu and Condorcet had arrived at this view before them" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 72)

Karl Marx is unarguably one of the most influential philosophers of at least the last 150 years. The influence of his work, a considerable part of it in collaboration with his countryman Friedrich Engels, led to the coinage of the term Marxism, a term that designates a wide body of ideas that goes from politics to philosophy. As American historian James A. Winders points out, Marxism "has been described as an economic theory, a revolutionary theory, a philosophy of history, and a sociology of capitalism" (WINDERS, 1994, p. 487). In addition, Eagleton states that "a lot of the cultural theory which emerged in the 1960s and 70s can be seen as a critique of classical Marxism" (EAGLETON, 2003, p. 34).

In accordance with the aforementioned statement made by Deleuze e Guattari, who say that all concepts have a history, Brazilian scholar Carlos Nelson Coutinho (1996) argues that the term Marxism also has a history. From Coutinho's arguable point of view Marxism was able to deeply renew its original concepts, at the same time that it remained truthful to the methodological presuppositions and to the basic notions of its founders. The works of figures such as Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci, for instance, could exemplify Coutinho's perspective.

The methodological presuppositions Coutinho writes about are related to the method developed by Marx throughout his work. This method may be called the Marxist Dialetics or Dialectical Materialism. The Dialectical Materialism is normally viewed as been highly influenced by the ideas of two other German philosophers who were contemporary with Marx: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach.

As critic Paulo Eduardo Arantes (1999) points out, Hegel, who was a leading exponent of German Idealism from the early 19th century, believed the world of the facts not to be rational, but to be a kind of world that needs to be brought to reason, that is, turned into a form in which it would actually correspond to the truth, i.e. abstract reason. From Hegel's viewpoint, such goal could only be accomplished through the dialectical method. This method would legitimize any philosophical system, for it includes the negative and the positive aspects of any given object, as well as reproduces the process through which the object becomes false and, subsequently, goes back to its true self. For Hegel, reason was the true reality: what is rational is real; what is real is rational. Moreover, Hegel believed that if the world of facts is not rational, one should bring it into reason, the ultimate legitimate and universalizing unity. In Hegel's own words "The knowledge of Mind is the highest and hardest, just because it is the most 'concrete' of sciences" (HEGEL, 2004, p. 2).

On the other hand, Feuerbach, who was one of Hegel's students for a while, may be seen as a philosopher who represents the bridge between the idealistic thought of Hegel and the Dialectical Materialism of Marx. Feuerbach researched the origins of religious illusions in the real condition of human living. Whereas Hegel argues that the mind is 'the most concrete of sciences', Feuerbach writes in one of his most emblematic works *The Essence of Christianity*, from 1841, that "the substance and object of religion is altogether human; we have shown that divine wisdom is human wisdom; that the secret of theology is anthropology; that the absolute mind is the so-called finite subjective mind" (FEUERBACH, 2008, p. 221). Moreover, Feuerbach adds that "there is no other essence which man can think, dream of, imagine, feel, believe in, wish for, love and adore as the *absolute,* than the essence of human nature itself" (p. 221).

Brazilian scholar Sílvio L. Sant'Anna (2005) states in "A cosmovisão dialético-materialista da história" that, just like many countrymen of their generation, the young Marx and Engels were influenced by the most available philosophical source of their time, the idealistic dialectics of Hegel, which were very influential in Germany in the 19th century. In addition, Sant'Anna writes that the reading of Feuerbach's anthropological materialism allowed both Marx and Engels to have a clarifying philosophical analysis of questions not really solved by the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian perspectives, such as religion. Besides, their contact with French and English socialists in the first half of the 1840s made it possible for them to get to know the class struggle in a deeper manner, argues Sant'Anna.

Through all this process, Sant'Anna (2005) remarks, Hegelianism, Neo-Hegelianism, anthropological materialism, Socialism and political economy would not be of any help had Marx and Engels not been in an ongoing dialectical debate, as well as taken the following and decisive step, i.e. to prove and reformulate their own hypotheses within history, in daily contact with workers in factories. Sant'Anna asserts that with the revelation that "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (MARX; ENGELS, 1969, p. 15), present in Marx and Engels's 1845 work *Theses on Feuerbach*, comes the awareness that it is in the history of real human beings that the mechanisms of oppression operate and also that it is in history that the instruments and agents of social liberation are.

The way to Dialectical Materialism had been paved: a method with the materialist objectivity regarded as source and ultimate goal, as well as with the scientificity similar to that of political economy. However, Dialectical Materialism was not developed in order to legitimize the *status quo*; quite on the contrary, it aimed at being an instrument in a revolutionary struggle towards the implementation of a classless society. Coutinho (1996) argues that Marx conceives Dialectical Materialism as a method of categorical articulation which operates by means of an ascending movement from the abstract to the concrete.

Marx explains his point of view in his text "Production, Consumption, Distribution, Exchange (Circulation)" with an emblematic statement: "the concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse" (MARX, 1973, p. 101). Marx adds that the concrete "appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation [...] and conception" (p. 101). Comparing his way of thinking to that of Hegel, Marx writes that:

> Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind (p. 101).

Coutinho (1996) argues that this rising from the abstract to the concrete consists of relating dialectally the abstract elements obtained in an analysis to the concrete determinations that result from the examination of the socio-economic formations which represent a more complex level of society as a whole. Not to put this process into practice, as Hegel did not use to

do, is to fall into a kind of illusion/self-delusion. As Sant'Anna (2005) writes, the first diagnosis made by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* is that human beings suffer from a self-delusion concerning what they think of themselves:

> Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p. 37).

The source of this self-delusion would be the Socratic-Platonic-Hegelian paradigm. A paradigm that, contrary to the Dialectical Materialist perspective, would conceive "the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself" (MARX, 1973, p. 101), and that, therefore, would misrepresent, misunderstand the 'concrete totality', the real: "these innocent and childlike fancies are the kernel of the modern Young-Hegelian philosophy" (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p. 37).

It is important to notice how close this concept of self-delusion is of the 'false conscience' de Tracy writes about. In addition, it is also rather relevant to point out that it was in Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology*, from 1846, that the Marxist concept of ideology was firstly developed. This concept would suffer changes throughout Marx's later work and culminate in the perspective expressed in Marx's most emblematic work, *Capital*.

In *The German Ideology*, the concept of ideology is related to the idea that consciousness is intrinsically related to and conditioned by social practices:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process (p. 47).

The materialist German philosophers go even further and argue that "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (p. 47). Moreover, Marx and Engels state that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (p. 64). From the German philosophers' point of view "the class which has the means of material production at

its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it" (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p. 64).

According to Marx and Engels, besides having control over the means of (mental) production, the ruling class of each and every epoch will always portray its own values as eternal, universal and/or natural ones: "each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled [...] to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society [...]: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (p. 65-66).

Terry Eagleton notes in his *Ideology – An Introduction* that in *The German Ideology* the term ideology is something essentially supernatural, "an imaginary resolution of real contradictions which blinds men and women to the harsh actuality of their social conditions" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 77). Eagleton also points out that the premises of that work of Marx and Engels's somehow perpetuate the term ideology as it was understood in the Enlightenment. According to Eagleton, Marx and Engels, in a totally opposite political perspective, share Napoleon's "brisk pragmatic contempt for 'ideology', in the sense of a fantastical idealism" (p. 78).

In the preface to his 1859 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx uses a rather different concept of ideology. In this preface, Marx writes that it is necessary to differentiate ideology from the transformation in the economic conditions of production: "one must always distinguish between the transformation of the economic conditions of production, to be established with the accuracy of physical science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophical – in short ideological forms" (MARX, 2002, p. 160). In this same preface, Marx equates the concept of ideology to that of superstructure or 'definite forms of social consciousness':

> In the social production of their lives men enter into relations that are specific, necessary and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a specific stage of development of their material productive forces. The totality of these relations of production forms the economic structure of society, the real basis from which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond specific forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process generally. It is not the consciousness of men that specifies their being, but on the contrary their social being that specifies their consciousness (p. 159-160).

In fact, there is a previous work of Marx in which the concept of ideology had already been equated to that of superstructure: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, from 1852. According to the Brazilian sociologist Michael Löwy (1994), Marx's most precise, concrete and fertile definition of ideology as the expression of the world view of a given social class is present in this particular work. In it Marx analyzes the revolutionary events that took place in France from 1848 to 1851, when a *coup d'état* made Napoleon III emperor.

From Löwy's viewpoint, there are at least three main ideas that may be traced in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and that compose the book's particular concept of ideology. Firstly, the idea that it is a determined class which generates and forms the social visions of the world or the superstructures/ideology, visions that are systematized and developed by its political and literary representatives, i.e. its ideologists. In Marx's own words,

> Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought, and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations (MARX, 2008, p. 47).

Secondly, the ideologists, the intellectuals are relatively autonomous in relation to class. What makes them representatives of a class is the ideology that they (re)produce. Finally, Löwy argues that what defines an ideology is not a particular idea or a particular doctrinaire content in itself, but a given way of thinking, a specific set of problems, a determined intellectual horizon. On the other hand, argues Löwy, ideology is not necessarily a deliberate lie. It may encompass an important share of illusions and self-delusions. The following passage seems to summarize the last two ideas outlined by the Brazilian sociologist:

> Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven and earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent (p. 50).

It is still possible to trace pieces of evidence of the 'false consciousness' the concept of ideology is often related to in the ideas present in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* As Eagleton points out, in this particular work of Marx 'false consciousness' is "a kind of thought

which fads itself barned and thwarted by certain barriers in society rather than in the mind" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 105). Löwy's (1994) words reinforce Eagleton's viewpoint when he argues that, according to Marx, there is a kind of maximum possible knowledge beyond which its ideology of class does not allow bourgeois society to reach. Therefore, argues Eagleton, "only by transforming society itself could" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 105) these barriers be dissolved.

Marx's latest conception of ideology is the one present in his most emblematic work, *Capital*, whose first volume was published in 1867. Although it is possible to trace some similarities between the concept of ideology in *Capital* and those present in Marx's earlier works, in *Capital* there is a new perspective of the term. It is in the section in which Marx writes about the 'Fetishism of Commodities' that this new concept of ideology may be inferred. In a famous passage from *Capital*, Marx writes that, in a capitalist society:

> A commodity is [...] a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses (MARX, 1952, p. 31).

In addition, Marx states that due to the form the relation between men and the 'sum total of their own labour' assumes in a capitalist society the very social relation between men "assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (p. 31), something analogous to what Marx calls "the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world" (p. 31). A world in which, according to the German philosopher, "the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race" (p. 31).

As McLellan argues, from Marx's viewpoint, the social character of labour is "concealed by the interchange of individual objects in a market which appeared thereby to be natural and unalterable" (MCLELLAN, 1996, p. 13). Therefore, ideology is seen "as deriving from the (real) surface relations of capitalist society which served to conceal the fundamental relations of production" (p. 13). Moreover, Eagleton argues that in *Capital* ideology is no longer a matter of consciousness, but something that is "anchored in the day-to-day economic operations of the capitalist system (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 85), whose structures are understood as having within themselves a sort of dissimulation or duplicity. Mystification, in this sense, argues Eagleton, is an

objective fact encrusted in the very character of the system. Eagleton adds that "there is an unavoidable structural contradiction between that system's real contents, and the phenomenal forms in which those contents proffer themselves spontaneously to the mind" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 86). Whereas in *The German Ideology* 'false consciousness' was a matter of not seeing things as they really are, in *Capital* it is a matter of the very reality of reality itself "being duplicitous and deceitful" (p. 87), Eagleton points out .

Eagleton goes even further and adds that in Marx's *Capital* ideology is no longer entirely reducible to 'false consciousness': "the idea of falsity lingers on in the notion of deceptive appearances, but these are less fictions of the mind than structural effects of capitalism" (p. 87). Eagleton believes that the theory of the fetishism of commodity "forges a dramatically immediate link between capitalist productive activity and human consciousness, between the economic and the experiential" (p. 88)

Prominent Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers of the 20th and 21st centuries tried to refine, critique, question, and even go against the original premises developed by the author of *Capital*, including those related to ideology. Figures such as Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci are two of the major Marxist thinkers of the 20th century who developed their own theories and concepts of ideology having as (one of the) starting point(s) the ideas of Marx.

In his 1996 *Ideology*, critic David Hawkes describes the Marxist thinker Georg Lukács as "the first theorist to make a significant advance on Marx's theory of ideology while remaining true to the dialectical approach of Marx himself" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 109). Canadian scholar Mirela Saim's entry about Lukács in the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory* defines the Hungarian philosopher as a "leading figure in the constitution of Western Marxism, which proposes a renewal of Marxism by critically reappropriating its 'traditional' categories in terms of democratic rationality" (SAIM, 1994, p. 411). Moreover, Saim adds that "Lukács opposed more dogmatic forms of Marxism, developed mainly by the Stalinist 'ideological' apparatus and the Comintern[1]" (p. 411).

Although Lukács is normally associated with the Marxist tradition of thought, there are those who, like Brazilian scholar José Marcos Mariani de Macedo, see in what could be called the pre-Marxist phase of Lukács's work the Hungarian philosopher's most valuable writing.

[1] Comintern: The Communist International also known as The Third International, an international communist organization founded in Moscow in 1919 which aimed at "by all available means, including armed force, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet republic as a transition stage to the complete abolition of the State". Online source: https://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/the-communist-threat.html , accessed on 14/10/2010.

Roughly speaking, the pre-Marxist phase of Lukács's work is usually understood to encompass those works written before 1917. The 1916 *Theory of the Novel*, for instance, is seen by Macedo (2007) as the epitome of Lukács's work. This book, which is one of Lukács's most remarkable works, is described by Macedo as not having been distorted and contaminated by Marxism.

Nevertheless, it is Lukács himself who, in a 1962 preface to *The Theory of the Novel*, argues that the method present in the work, a method highly influenced by the Hegelian school of thought, is:

> extremely abstract in many respects, [...] cut off from concrete socio-historical realities. For that reason [...] it leads only too often to arbitrary intellectual constructs. It was not until a decade and a half later (by that time, of course, on Marxist ground) that I succeeded in finding a way towards a solution (LUKÁCS, 1974, p. 17).

It is paramount to remark, however, that, despite its author's ultimate denial, *The Theory of the Novel* is still nowadays, almost a hundred years after its first publication, a groundbreaking piece of work that contains insights and concepts still extremely relevant to the study and discussion of the novel as a literary genre. As Lukács himself points out in the 1962 preface, the reservations he had about his own work do not prevent him from acknowledging that the author of *The Theory of the Novel* was not "precluded in principle from uncovering any interesting correlations" (p. 14).

In terms of the discussion of ideology, Lukács's 1922 *History and Class-consciousness* is the philosopher's most important work. It is a work which dialogues mainly with the first chapter of Marx's *Capital*, "The Commodity". From critic Hawkes's viewpoint, *History and Class-consciousness* succeeds in "convincingly demonstrating that commodity fetishism is the central, definite characteristic of capitalist society" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 110). Hawkes argues that Lukács's greatest achievement is to demonstrate how the commodity fetishism, as well as its ultimate result, the reified consciousness, permeates each and every aspect of capitalist society. In Lukács's own words, "the proletariat shares with the bourgeoisie the reification of every aspect of its life" (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. 149). The Hungarian philosopher also argues that "reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange" (p. 91). From this point of view, it is possible to infer that in capitalist societies the relation between men assume the form of market, i.e. the relations between people are turn into the relations between what they produce, the products of their labour.

Hawkes writes that “this ubiquitous and evil tendency freezes relations and processes, so that they appear as immutable, self-identical ‘things’. It erases mediation and history, making the actually fluid phenomena of society appear as ‘supra-historical essences’” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 111). Lukács argues that due to this tendency “bourgeois thought must come up against an insuperable obstacle, for its starting-point and its goal are always, if not always consciously, an apologia for the existing order of things or at least the proof of their immutability” (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. 48). Moreover, Lukács asserts that “bourgeois thought is indeed able to conceive of history as a problem, it remains an *intractable* problem” (p. 48). The erasing of history which takes place in capitalist societies, or at least its problematic dealing with history, makes the advent of ‘supra-historical essences’ a inherent feature of capitalist societies, which, according to Lukács’s conceptions, generates a thoroughgoing false consciousness. The Aristotelian concept of ‘second nature’, though with a materialism twist, is used by Lukács to comment on this absolute false consciousness.

Aristotle’s concept of ‘second nature’ is related to habit: from the Greek philosopher’s point of view, when one individual does given things a certain way for a long time, he/she assumes this way of doing things to be the ‘natural’ one: “it is easier to change a habit than to change one's nature; even habit is hard to change just because it is like nature” (ARISTOTLE, 1952, p. 403). Lukács’s words about what happens in capitalist societies are rather elucidative if we want to understand his particular use of the Aristotelian concept of ‘second nature’. From the Marxist philosopher’s viewpoint, members of capitalist societies “erect around themselves in the reality they have created and ‘made’, a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature (more exactly: the social relations which appear in this form)” (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. 128). The social relations in capitalist society are then seen as natural, as inexorable, even though they are products of the work of men in a particular moment of the historical process. This inexorability and naturalness is intrinsically related to a kind of false consciousness that exerts what Hawkes calls “a fetishistic dominance” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 112) over people’s lives. As American critic Eve Tavor Bannet writes in her entry about Lukács for *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*,

> Lukács argued that the objectification of all aspects of production, its alienation from producers, the reification of social relations, the quantification and despersonalization of culture, and the

> rational calculation practiced by bureaucracy subject individuals in capitalist society to system of relations that seem to operate according to their own laws, independently of anyone's will or control (BANNET, 1994, p. 477).

In *History and Class-consciousness*, Lukács sees as another result from the complete reification that takes place in capitalist societies the philosophical predisposition to establish a separation between the material and the ideal. As Hawkes writes, "because the workers must sell their labour-power as a commodity (they must objectify their own activity), the duality between subject and object enters into the subject itself" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 112). Lukács makes use of German neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert's conception of materialism as an 'inverted Platonism' to point out that it is a sort of mythology produced by the capitalist reification of what is in fact a relation between two distinct things, e.g. "the duality of thought and existence, consciousness and reality" (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. 200), things that "*should be shown to be aspects of processes*" (p. 179, author's italics) and not opposites. As Lukács himself states,

> As long as thought and existence persist in their old, rigid opposition, as long as their own structure and the structure of their interconnections remain unchanged, then the view that thought is a product of the brain and hence must correspond to the objects of the empirical world is just such a mythology as those of recollection and the world of Platonic ideas (p. 202).

Eagleton points out that, from Lukács's point of view, reification "fragments and dislocates our social experience, so that under its influence we forget that society is a collective process and come see it instead merely as this or that isolated object or institution" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 95). Eagleton adds that, in this sense, reification clouds our understanding of society as a totality. From Lukács's viewpoint it is precisely in its point of view of totality that Marxism presents its most important difference in relation to bourgeois thought: "it is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality" (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. xx). In addition, Lukács asserts that "the category of totality, the all-pervasive supremacy of the whole over the parts is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and brilliantly transformed into the foundations of a wholly new science" (p. 27).

If it is possible to argue that the category of totality had already been reached earlier, Lukács claims that concepts such as God, or the soul are "nothing but mythological expressions to denote the unified subject or, alternatively, the unified object of the totality of the objects of knowledge considered as perfect (and wholly known)" (p. 115); that is, forms of totality doomed

to be kept in the philosophical realm of abstraction, for it would be impossible to realize them in the real world. On the other hand, Marx's perspective opened new forms of perception due to its standpoint, i.e. the standpoint of the working classes, the standing point of the proletariat. The working classes were the only ones capable of achieving a complete consciousness of the process of reification, the 'class-consciousness', because "by selling their labour-power, its members objectified themselves, turning themselves into commodities" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 114). As Eagleton puts it, "Since the proletariat is the prototypical commodity, [...] it can be seen as the 'essence' of a social order based on commodity fetishism; and the self-consciousness of the proletariat is therefore, as it were, the commodity form coming to an awareness of itself, and in that act transcending itself" (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 95)

According to Lukács, the philosopher's role would be that of showing the working classes that the fragmented, reified world in which they live is merely the product of their own objectified doings: "to deduce the unity – which is not given – of this disintegrating creation and to prove that it is the product of a creating subject. In the final analysis then: to create the subject of the 'creator'" (LUKÁCS, 1971, p. 140). As Hawkes puts it, "the task of philosophy from this point on is the 'negation' – the criticism – of this virtually universal false consciousness" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 114). Much of what was written by Lukács would influence and be part of another major Marxist philosopher's writings, Antonio Gramsci's.

The Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci has been called the greatest Marxist writer of the 20th century. Gramsci was sent to prison by Mussolini's fascist government in 1928 and spent the next 9 years in jail. As critic Richard Cavell writes about Gramsci, "while in prison he maintained a voluminous correspondence [...] and filled 32 notebooks with 2848 pages of writings" (CAVELL, 1994, p. 344).

One of the most important concepts developed by Gramsci was that of hegemony, which, as Cavell claims, "represents the set of values and beliefs through which the ruling class exercises its power over the masses, including religion, education and the media" (p. 344). As Gramsci himself puts it, "the hegemony will be exercised by a part of the social group over the entire group" (GRAMSCI, 1992, p. 106). Cavell adds that "hegemonic ideas are the 'common sense' or 'myths' (in Roland Barthes' sense of the term) that govern a society and to which the masses freely consent" (CAVELL, 1994, p. 344). In Gramsci's own words:

> The ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production (GRAMSCI, 1992, p. 12).

In a passage from his seminal work *Orientalism*, Palestinian-American theorist Edward W. Said summarizes Gramsci’s ideas on hegemony. This passage is worth being quoted:

> Gramsci has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary (or at least national and noncoercive) affiliations like schools, families, and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracy) whose role in politics is direct domination. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony* (SAID, 1979, p. 7).

Still according to Said, this concept elaborated by Gramsci is an indispensable one “for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West” (p. 7). On the other hand, Eagleton argues that the Gramscian concept of hegemony not only expands and enriches that of ideology but also gives to ideology “material body and political cutting edge” (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 115).

Although a leading Marxist philosopher, it is Gramsci himself who supports the idea that what he calls ‘negative value judgment’ attached to the term ideology by the Marxist tradition is not the one he defends: “the meaning which the term ‘ideology’ has assumed in Marxist philosophy implicitly contains a negative value judgment” (GRAMSCI, 1992, p. 376). For Gramsci, “‘Ideology’ itself must be analyzed historically, in the terms of the philosophy of praxis, as a superstructure” (p. 376). Eagleton writes that Gramsci’s theory of ideology is produced in the “‘historicist’ mould” (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 117), and that, from Gramsci’s viewpoint, an ideology is not merely false consciousness, but a consciousness “adequate to a specific stage of historical development and a particular political moment” (p. 117)

From Cavell’s point of view, Gramsci’s central insight was “that power was exercised not only economically and physically but also through ideas and those ideas were not purely products of economic forces” (CAVELL, 1994, p. 345). Gramsci argues that:

> Man does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further: these relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious. They correspond to the greater or lesser degree of understanding that each man has of them. So one could say that each one of us changes himself, modifies

> himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub (GRAMSCI, 1992, p. 352).

Gramsci adds that some of these complex relations are necessary, while other are voluntary and also that “to be conscious of them, to whatever degree of profundity (that is, to know, in varying degrees, how to modify them) already modifies them” (p. 353). From the Italian philosopher’s point of view, to possess this kind of knowledge means to have power: “In this sense, knowledge is power” (p. 353). It is relevant to notice that from Gramsci’s point of view, which in this particular case is rather similar to Lukács’s, the philosophical activity is a “cultural battle to transform the popular ‘mentality’ and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be ‘historically true’ to the extent that they become concretely - i.e. historically and socially-universal” (p. 348).

Nonetheless, Quintin Horae and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, , translators and editors of Gramsci’s most emblematic work, *Prison Notebooks*, define one specific type of intellectual who Gramsci also writes about that has an extremely important role, the organic intellectual: “the thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class” (HORAE; SMITH, 1992, p. 3). Eagleton writes that the organic intellectual is supposed to “to construct out of the common consciousness a ‘cultural-social’ unity in which otherwise heterogeneous individual wills are welded together on the basis of a common conception of the world” (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 119). In Gramsci’s words, “to construct an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups” (GRAMSCI, 1992, p. 333).

Gramsci’s perspective on the organic intellectual in a sense corroborates what Hawkes believes the task of philosophy should be after the works of Lukács were brought to light, i.e. to make the masses, the working classes aware of their condition and, by doing so, initiate a revolution of the capitalist societies from within their very own foundations. Besides, Gramsci’s view on ideology, which is very much akin to those of Marx and Lukács, would be a traceable inspiration behind the Algerian philosopher Louis Althusser’s writings on ideology.

Althusser is a philosopher that could be and usually is referred to as a post-Marxist or as a structuralist Marxist and whose work turned into one of the most relevant influences on post-war discussions about ideology. In his entry about Louis Althusser in the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, John Thurston points out that Althusser’s work “has been

influential in anthropology, sociology, political economy, philosophy, history, and literary theory" (THURSTON, 1994, p. 230). Thurston describes Althusser's work as being "amalgamated with the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan and with semiotics" (p. 230). Moreover, Hawkes points out that "Althusser's ideas, often filtered through the works of his pupil Michel Foucault, have become the decisive influence on postmodern critiques of ideology" (HAWKES, 1996, p. 121).

Althusser's major works began to come to light in the first half of the 1960s, especially via a volume in which were collected his most relevant essays to date, *For Marx*, from 1965. The title of this collection of essays leaves little room for questioning the importance the thought of Karl Marx had in the Algerian philosopher's writings. It is common to see this particular work of Althusser as closely connected to the inauguration of what came to be known as structural Marxism, a kind of Marxism which would reject the Hegelian influence, which was seen by Althusser as being too present in Western Marxism. Another characteristic of structural Marxism, as previously mentioned, would be its relation with the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, as well as with semiotics.

Although Althusser's work is clearly associated with the Marxist school of thought, Althusser is seen by Eagleton both as a Marxist who "felt the need to dismantle many received Marxist ideas" (EAGLETON, 2003, p. 34) and also as someone who "rewrote Marxism from the inside" (p. 37), as Eagleton puts it, and led many to discard Marxism once and for all. Considering many of the ideas supported and developed by Althusser it is possible to infer that Eagleton has a valid point. For instance, Althusser's 1971 *Lenin and Philosophy*, more specifically one of its parts, the highly influential text "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" contains many passages that allow us to understand Althusser's thought in a greater depth.

First of all, it is rather important to point out the difference established by Althusser between Marx's early and late works. The early works of Marx are seen by Althusser as essentially not Marxist. As Thurston writes, "Althusser considers the young Marx to have been bound by the ideological problematic of German idealism" (THURSTON, 1994, p. 230), more specifically by the Hegelian school of thought. From Althusser's point of view, this connection to the Hegelian thought would be broken by Marx later on. As Althusser writes in his 1963 essay "On the Young Marx":

> we must admit that *Capital* (and 'mature Marxism' in general) is *either an expression of the Young Marx's philosophy, or its betrayal* [...].This is the *location* of the discussion: the Young Marx. Really *at stake* in it: Marxism. The *terms of the discussion:* whether the Young Marx was already and wholly Marx" (ALTHUSSER, 1969d, p. 52, author's italics).

Althusser goes even further and states that Marxists have a choice between two opposite options, "if they want to rescue Marx from the perils of his youth with which his opponents threaten them, they can *either agree that the young Marx is not Marx; or that the young Marx is Marx*" (p. 53).

According to Althusser, in Marx's late works such as *Capital* it is possible to notice the advent of "a new scientific discipline" (p. 85), a new theoretical practice. As Thurston points out, from Althusser's viewpoint, "(a practice is any process through which raw material is transformed by human labour into a product.) A scientific theoretical practice is born when it makes an 'epistemological break' [...] with its ideological prehistory" (THURSTON, 1994, p. 231). In Marx's case the 'epistemological break' with the 'ideological prehistory' of his scientific theoretical practice is exactly the rupture with the Hegelian thought. A rupture that Althusser sees in Marx's late works.

Althusser argues that for the emergence of a new scientific discipline to take place, the one who promotes it must have:

> prepared his intelligence *in the old forms* themselves, he must have learnt and practiced them, and by criticizing them formed a taste for and learnt the art of manipulating abstract forms in general without which familiarity he could never have conceived *new ones with which to think the new object* (ALTHUSSER, 1969d, p. 85, author's italics)

Althusser was deeply interested in proving that the view he had of materialism was the same as Marx's. According to Althusser, Marx's break with the Hegelian school of thought only exemplified that an authentic scientific theoretical practice elaborates "*its own scientific facts* through a critique of the *ideological* '*facts*' elaborated by an earlier ideological theoretical practice" (ALTHUSSER, 1969c, p. 184, author's italics). In Marx's case, the 'earlier ideological theoretical practice' is that of Hegel. Here the term ideological appears with a specific meaning, and, therefore, ideology may be understood as having a specific meaning as well.

As Hawkes points out, for Althusser, "'ideology' is the imaginary way in which people experience their real lives, the ideal representation of a material process" (HAWKES, 1996, p.

126). Hawkes adds that Althusser, in a sense, equates the terms ideology and idealism, “by which he means the tendency to attribute a real existence to purely ideal phenomena, and to the subject in particular” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 126). Science, materialism and ‘the knowledge of ideology’ are terms used by Althusser as approximate ones. The role of science/materialism would be that of unveiling and explaining the source of the ideas which compose ideology and, by doing so, reveal their parts in sustaining the power of the ruling capitalist class, or bourgeoisie. Althusser would strongly emphasize the opposition between science/materialism and ideology/idealism in order to keep the former away from “the threats and taints of idealism, that is, of *ideologies* which besiege it” (ALTHUSSER, 1969c, p. 170, author’s italics). The Algerian philosopher would see this opposition as the site in which science/materialism would be in “a continuous struggle against ideology itself, that is, against idealism” (p. 170). Taking these definitions into account, it is possible to infer why Althusser would consider Hegel to be an ideological thinker. Through this lens, the early Marx would be seen as ideological as Hegel by the structuralist Marxist.

For example, the fundamental contradiction between labour and capital established by Marx is understood by Althusser as Hegelian and abstract. As Hawkes point out, “Althusser’s determination to read Marx as a materialist thus leads him to reject the notion that Marx founds his theory on a single, original contradiction. [...] the neo-Hegelian concept of alienated labour cannot be the basis of Marxism for Althusser” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 127). From Althusser’s viewpoint, if Marx had based his theories on such contradiction he would have partaken of “the ideological myth of a philosophy of origins” (ALTHUSSER, 1969c, p. 198), as the Algerian philosopher states in his essay “On the Materialist Dialectic”.

This disbelief in the possibility of Marx having based his writings in an original contradiction leads Althusser in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” to develop the concept of overdetermination, which supposedly accounts for the intricacy of social contradictions in Marx’s writings. Basically speaking, overdetermination means that situations are determined by more than one single factor, in other words, “the ideas we have about the world [...] are not only produced by our material lives, but also attain a certain degree of independence, and can come to play a partially determining role in history” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 128). It is possible to infer that from Althusser’s viewpoint the economic aspects of a given

society are fundamental, but they do not prevent the intellectual and political superstructures from retaining a relative autonomy.

The concept of overdetermination, originally a Freudian one, also surpasses that of dialectics, and, therefore, the Hegelian influence. As Althusser writes in his 1962 essay "Contradiction and Overdetermination",

> to take over the dialectic in *rigorous* Hegelian form could only expose us to dangerous ambiguities, for it is *impossible* given the principles of a Marxist interpretation of *any* ideological phenomenon, *it is unthinkable that the place of the dialectic in Hegel's system could be conceived as that of a kernel in a nut*. By which I meant that it is inconceivable that the essence of the dialectic in Hegel's work should not be contaminated by Hegelian ideology, or, since such a 'contamination' presupposes the fiction of a pure pre-'contamination' dialectic, *that the Hegelian dialectic could cease to be Hegelian and become Marxist by a simple, miraculous 'extraction'* (ALTHUSSER, 1969a, p. 91, author's italics).

Althusser believed in what he called 'Marx's theoretical anti-humanism', as he writes in his 1964 essay "Marxism and Humanism". In Althusser's own words, "one can and must speak openly of *Marx's theoretical anti-humanism*, and see in this *theoretical anti-humanism* the absolute (negative) precondition of the (positive) knowledge of the human world itself, and of its practical transformation" (ALTHUSSER, 1969b, p. 229, author's italics). For Althusser, it is not possible "to *know* anything about men except on the absolute precondition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth of man is reduced to ashes. So any thought that appeals to Marx for any kind of restoration of a theoretical anthropology or humanism is no more than ashes" (p. 229-230, author's italics).

Nevertheless, it is important to remark that no science, including Althusser's concept of Marxism, is capable of disintegrate its own ideological prehistory. Taking into consideration the impossibility of eliminating the ideological history of any science, it is possible to infer that, from Althusser's perspective, ideology has an important role to play in the advent and development of new scientific theoretical practices. As Althusser states in his "Marxism and Humanism", ideology "is distinguished from science in that in it the practico-social function is more important than the theoretical function" (p. 232). In fact, Althusser sees ideology as something indispensable to all kinds of society, for it is only through it that men "*are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence*" (p. 235, author's italics). Althusser believed ideology to be "a matter of the *lived* relation between men and their world" (p. 233, author's italics).

In his 1971 “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Althusser develops his concept of ideology and that of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). In this particular and highly influential chapter of *Lenin and Philosophy* Althusser defends the idea that ideology is ahistorical. In the author’s own words:

> the peculiarity of ideology is that it is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an *omni-historical* reality, in the sense in which that structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we can call history, in the sense in which the *Communist Manifesto* defines history as the history of class struggles, i.e. the history of class societies (ALTHUSSER, 1971b, p. 161, author’s italics).

Using the Lacanian concept of the imaginary, Althusser expands his own concept of ideology. According to the prominent French psychoanalyst and scholar Marie-Christine Laznik, “Lacan emphasized the notion of the image by highlighting its function: reflecting the subject's discrete behaviors in unified images. In the mirror stage, the subject identifies with these images and develops an ego concept in relation to another” (LAZNIK). In addition, Laznik argues that Lacan “considered this identification to be essential to the structure of the imaginary order and to the development of the human ego” (LAZNIK). In Lacan’s own words, “the function of the mirror stage [...] is to establish a relationship between an organism and its reality” (LACAN, 2006a, p. 78). Lacan argues that it is in the imaginary “the norm of reality” (LACAN, 2006b, p. 388) and also that “the imaginary is not an illusion and it gives food for thought” (p. 388). As British critic and scholar Antony Easthope puts it, “looking in a mirror, though it is never more than my likeness, I see the image reflected there as myself and misrecognize my identity in it [...]. Similarly, since I must be somewhere, I live out constituted social roles and identities as though I had freely chosen them” (EASTHOPE, 1994, p. 177).

Althusser, on the other hand, saw ideology as the “imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (ALTHUSSER, 1971b, p. 162). Moreover, the Algerian philosopher states that “ideology has the function [...] of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects” (p. 171). The philosopher adds that ideology “‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hail” (p. 174, author’s italics); “the interpellation of individuals as subjects presupposes the

‘existence’ of a Unique and central Other Subject” (p. 178) that only exists due to our/its subjects acceptance of subjection, in a specular, mirror-like structure.

It is relevant to remark, however, that both the subjects and the ‘Unique and central Other Subject’ are imaginary, and it is precisely the misrecognition implied in their relationship that veils the real conditions of existence. Eagleton comments in his *Literary Theory – An Introduction* that, for Althusser, ideology “far more subtle, pervasive and unconscious than a set of explicit doctrines: it is the very medium in which I 'live out' my relation to society, the realm of signs and social practices which binds me to the social structure and lends me a sense of coherent purpose and identity” (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 149).

The Ideological State Apparatuses or ISAs are those institutions that work within, for, and by a given ideology embodied in some particular and influential institutions: schools, churches, the family, the media, trade-unions, sports, arts, etc. Althusser points out that “if the ISAs ‘function’ massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning [...], despite its diversity and its contradictions, *beneath the ruling ideology*, which is the ideology of ‘the ruling class’” (ALTHUSSER, 1971b, p. 146, author’s italics). Using Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, Althusser states that “*no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*” (p. 146, author’s italics).

Although in his “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, from 1971, Althusser includes arts and literature under the umbrella term ISAs, he had already granted what he calls real or authentic art a distinct position rather similar to that of science. Althusser writes in his 1966 “A Letter on Art in Reply to André Daspre” that he does not “rank real art among ideologies, although art does have a quite particular and specific relationship with ideology” (ALTHUSSER, 1971a, p. 221) and that art gives us the same object as science, however, “art gives to us in the form of ‘*seeing’* , ‘*perceiving’* and ‘*feeling”*’ (p. 223, author’s italics) what science gives us in the form of “knowing” (p. 223).

Critics Hawkes, Eagleton, and Thurston all agree that Althusser’s influence has been massive and relevant. Nonetheless, all the critics also agree that Althusser’s writings are permeated by serious flaws. Hawkes, who sees Althusser’s influence on contemporaneity as profound and at the same time malign, points out that “as a result of Althusser’s emphasis on the constitutive role of ideology, significant doubt has been cast on the concept of ‘false

consciousness’” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 129). Hawkes believes Althusser’s statement that “ideology is not an aberration or a contingent excrescence of History: it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies” (ALTHUSSER, 1969b, p. 232) to “stretch the term ‘ideology’ until it is emptied of significant content” (HAWKES, 1996, p. 129).

Thurston comments that what he calls Althusser’s ‘all-encompassing nature of ideology’ has already been criticized for “on the one hand, vitiating any oppositional critique and on the other, requiring an idealism of science” (THURSTON, 1994, p. 232). Eagleton points out that although Althusser may be right when he argues that ideology is above all a matter of ‘lived relations’, “there are no such relations which do not tacitly involve a set of beliefs and assumptions, and these beliefs and assumptions may themselves be open to judgments of truth and falsehood” (EAGLETON, 1991, p. 21).

After having briefly outlined the Marxist concept of ideology, as well as three relevant and influential Marxist scholars whose discussions on ideology cast fresh light upon the term, it seems rather important to take a deeper look into a kind of study that has been highly influenced by the ideas of Marx and of all the three of his followers previously discussed: Cultural Studies.

4 DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF MATERIALISM

Give every man thy ear
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Jamaican cultural theorist Stuart Hall is a major name in Cultural Studies. In fact, it is Hall himself who, in his article "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies", states: "where cultural studies is concerned, I sometimes feel like a *tableau vivant*, a spirit of the past resurrected, laying claim to the authority of an origin" (HALL, 1992, p. 277, author's italics). Hall even asks, "after all, didn't cultural studies emerge somewhere at that moment when I first met Raymond Williams, or in the glance I exchanged with Richard Hoggart?" (p. 277). Hall acknowledges that when he met Williams and Hoggart, "in that moment, cultural studies was born" (p. 277).

Even though Hall is still nowadays one of the most well-known and respected figures in Cultural Studies, he is also one of those who place British scholars Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart in the earliest stages of development of this particular type of studies. New Zealander scholar Simon During, in his introduction to *The Cultural Studies Reader*, whose editor is During himself, argues that Cultural Studies is a product of Hoggart's and Williams's readings of what came to be known as Leavisism. During defines Leavisism as "a form of literary studies named after F. R. Leavis, its most prominent member" (DURING, 1994, p. 2).

Frank Raymond Leavis was a British literary critic of considerable importance and influence in the first half of the 20th century. Leavis's greatest cultural preoccupation was related to the overwhelming advent of technological developments in Western civilization, "the unprecedented character of the machine age and [...] its corollary leveling-down effects in areas such as the press, film, and literature" (JARVIS, 1994, p. 460), as English scholar Robin Jarvin puts it.

For almost 20 years, from 1932 to 1953, Leavis was the chief editor of *Scrutiny*, a journal that, in Jarvin's words, "combined an intense concern with literature and morality with [...] practical criticism [...] and aimed to discredit what it perceived as the amateur belletrism

characterizing English studies at the turn of the century" (p. 459). Leavis himself describes *Scrutiny* in the following manner: "It was a vanishing Cambridge that *Scrutiny* stood for, and the twenty-years battle for survival was a battle against a new and triumphant academic institutionalism [...] and the whole massive move of civilization" (LEAVIS, 1998, p. 22). Terry Eagleton's words elucidate the point:

> *Scrutiny* was not just a journal, but the focus of a moral and cultural crusade: its adherents would go out to the schools and universities to do battle there, nurturing through the study of literature the kind of rich, complex, mature, discriminating, morally serious responses (all key *Scrutiny* terms) which would equip individuals to survive in a mechanized society of trashy romances, alienated labour, banal advertisements and vulgarizing mass media (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 29, author's italics).

Leavis and those who shared his ideas aimed at using the educational system in order to widely produce and spread knowledge and appreciation of literature. However, the supporters of Leavisism believed in a very restricted canon, without the inclusion of authors such as James Joyce and/or Virginia Woolf due to the experimental/modern characteristics of their works. The content of one of Leavis's most emblematic works is rather clarifying: his 1948 *The Great Tradition*, encompasses only the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad. During points out that, according to Leavisism, reading this 'great tradition' was "a meaning of forming mature individuals with a concrete and balanced sense of 'life'" (DURING, 1994, p. 2). During also remarks that "the main threat to this sense of life came from the pleasure offered by so-called 'mass culture'" (p. 2).

In addition to this, Leavis believed the so-called 'mass culture' to 'level down' two other important aspects of English culture: "an authentic common culture of the people and a minority educated elite" (BARKER, 2009, p. 41), as Barker puts it. Both this 'common culture of the people' and the 'educated elite' are thought by Leavis to have had their 'authentic' unspoiled existences before the advent of the Industrial Revolution, as well as of industrialized mass culture. From Leavis's view point, the maintenance of a 'minority educated elite' should represent a means through which the nurturing and dissemination of the 'great tradition' could take place

Leavis's 'great tradition' is very much akin to what came to be known as 'high culture', a concept which may be seen to have had its origins in the thought of the nineteenth-century English writer Matthew Arnold. In fact, Australian scholar Chris Barker argues that Leavisism

"shares with Arnold the notion that culture is the high point of civilization and the concern of an educated minority" (p. 41).

Arnold believed the ordinary man, 'the mass of mankind' to be incapable of seeing things the way those who are in contact with what he calls 'the highest culture' can see them. In the introduction of his 1865 *Essays in Criticism*, Arnold writes that the "mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world" (ARNOLD, 1986a, p. 1420-1421). In addition, the English writer argues that "the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account" (p. 1421). For Arnold, 'the highest culture' meant "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (ARNOLD, 1986c, p. 1458).

As Barker remarks, "it is not difficult to criticize the arbitrary and elitist character of Arnold and Leavis's work" (BARKER, 2009, p. 41). Nonetheless, both Leavis and Arnold may be understood as initiators of a process which allows analyses of popular culture to take place. In Barker's words, "they can also be said to have opened up the terrain of popular culture for study by bringing the tools and concepts of 'art and literature' to bear on it" (p. 41).

Despite the massive influence of Arnold's ideas, as well as of Leavisism, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart developed a starkly different concept of culture with their works. In fact, During affirms that "Cultural studies develops out of Leavisism through Hoggart and Williams" (DURING, 1994, p. 3).

Both Hoggart and Williams came from working-class families and "indeed were among the first working-class students to gain access to the elite institutions of British higher education" (NELSON et al., 1992, p. 12), as American scholar Cary Nelson points out. It is possible to say that both Hoggart and Williams were able to experience Leavisism ambivalently: if they acknowledged that the canonical texts propagated by Leavisism were more significant than the so-called 'mass culture', they were also able to realize how utterly had Leavisism ignored the expression and experiences of the cultural environment from which they had come, i.e. the working class. Nelson argues that Hoggart and Williams's very need "to make their own cultural heritage part of the culture universities study [...] helped motivate some of their early publications" (p. 12). The contradictions which were brought about by such ambivalent

perception of Leavisism and, consequently, of culture itself are symptomatically present in Hoggart's seminal 1957 work *The Uses of Literacy*.

Hoggart divides his book in two parts, "An 'Older' Order" and "Yielding Place to New". The first part, "An 'Older' Order", contains an emotional evocation of the traditional working-class culture of Hoggart's childhood in the 1930s; whereas the second part, "Yielding Place to New", describes the threats Hoggart believed this very traditional working-class culture was under due to the advent of the modern commercial mass culture/entertainment of the 1950s.

In *The Uses of Literacy*, Hoggart outlines a paramount difference between the working-class aesthetics and the mass culture of the 1950s. British scholar John Storey argues that, from Hoggart's point of view, the working-class has a primary interest in the "close 'detail' of the everyday; a profound interest in the already known; a taste for culture that 'shows' rather than 'explores'. It therefore seeks not 'an escape from ordinary life' but its intensification, in the assumption 'that ordinary life is intrinsically interesting" (STOREY, 1998, p. 47). Hoggart believes that the 1950s were "moving towards the creation of a mass culture" (HOGGART, 1990, p. 24). In Hoggart's own words: "the remnants of what was at least in parts an urban culture 'of the people' are being destroyed; and that the new mass culture is in some important ways less healthy than the often crude culture it is replacing" (p. 24). In his text, Hoggart seems to mourn the imminent loss of what he saw as the authentic working-class culture.

It is important to notice, nonetheless, how Hoggart shares the scorn for the so called 'mass culture' with Leavisism. If it is true that early Cultural Studies developed out of Leavisism, as Simon During affirms, the point of convergence of these two distinct approaches to and understandings of culture is their common conception of 'mass culture' as something inherently negative. As During points out, "Hoggart was able to believe that the celebration of old high culture could fit alongside an evocation of the culture of his youth because both stood apart from contemporary commercial popular culture and so were under threat" (DURING, 1994, p. 3).

During also remarks that the tension expressed in *The Uses of Literacy* would be also present when the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was founded in 1964. The CCCS was a postgraduate and research institute founded by Hoggart in England aiming at the development of scholarly studies. The CCCS became known as the center of British Cultural Studies until its closure in 2002. Hoggart was its first director. Another prominent figure within Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall was also the director of the CCCS from 1969 to 1979, a

period considered to encompass the summit of the Centre's activities. As American scholar Vincent Leitch remarks, "at the peak of this pioneering period in the 1970s, the Centre had 5 faculty members and 40 graduate students" (LEITCH, 1994, p. 180).

In the 1980s the CCCS would be marked by divisions within its members who would either be influenced by the works of Hoggart himself, and by those of Raymond Williams, or by the works of Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. The two distinct groups would become known as the culturalists and the (post)structuralists respectively. Leitch argues that

> while the members of the former group preferred to research, for instance, oral histories, realistic fictions, and working-class texts, seeking to pinpoint and portray private social 'experience', the latter group analyzed avant-garde or literary texts and practices, attempting to uncover underlying constitutive communal codes and conventions of representation (p. 180-181).

Alongside with Hoggart and Williams, another relevant 'culturalist' name and work worth mentioning when discussing the early stages of development of Cultural Studies is that of English historian Edward Thompson and his 1963 *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson discusses in this work the very working-class values and culture Hoggart seems to mourn in his The *Uses of Literacy.* In Barker's words, "Thompson stresses the active and creative role of the English working class in bringing themselves into being [...]. He seeks to secure the working-class experience in historical understanding" (BARKER, 2009, p. 43-44). In fact, Thompson defines class in a clear Marxist fashion in *The Making of the English Working Class*. In reality, this definition of Thompson's became a quite famous one: "Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs" (THOMPSON, 1963, p. 8-9). As During points out, Thompson's definition of class raises awareness to the substantiation that the supposed "identity of the working class *as* working class had always had a strongly political and conflictual component – that identity was not just a matter of particular cultural interests and values" (DURING, 1994, p. 4).

It is possible to say that altogether the two aforementioned works of both Hoggart and Thompson helped establishing one of the most important axes of Cultural Studies, i.e. the acknowledgement of the authenticity of the English working-class culture, history and political

agenda. Nelson's words illustrate this assumption: "Cultural studies was thus forged in the face of a sense of the margins versus the center" (NELSON et al., 1992, p. 12). Nevertheless, as Hoggart was able to notice and discuss in his *The Uses of Literacy*, there was a gradual fragmentation of the traditional English working-class values, culture and identity in process during the 1950s. Consequently, to think of politics based on clear, strong working-class identity became more and more unlikely to happen. During remarks that, from that period on, "people decreasingly identified themselves as workers" (DURING, 1994, p. 4). Taking the fragmentation of the working-class identity into consideration, the work of Raymond Williams would take Hoggart's and Thompson's ideas even further and would also inaugurate what came to be known as Cultural Materialism.

In his work, Williams portrays culture as 'a whole way of life'. In his seminal 1958 work *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Williams defines culture in the following way: "the idea of culture is a general reaction to a general and major change in the condition of our common life. Its basic element is its effort at total qualitative assessment" (WILLIAMS, 1958, p. 295). That is, Williams, like Hoggart, realized the changes through which English society was going in the 1950s and associated the very concept of culture to this particular historical moment. Therefore, the very notion of culture is related to specific historical conditions which made it possible for the very concept to be brought to light. Williams's insight made it possible for an affirmation such as the following by Nelson to be seriously taken into account: "the attempts to define culture thus each grew out of necessity, out of responses to historical changes" (NELSON et al., 1992, p. 4). That is, more than having shown that culture, like all other concepts, has a history, Williams made the very notion of culture dependent on the historical conditions in which it is inserted.

Williams also came to the conclusion that culture invokes both the material and the symbolic domains, making, therefore, those involved in the study of culture aware of the need of questioning and/or giving privilege not to one particular domain or the other, but to the relation between the two. In Williams's own words:

> A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested. [...] we see through them the nature of culture: that it is always both traditional and creative. [...] We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life – common meanings; to mean the arts and learning – the special processes of discovery and creative effort (WILLIAMS, 1989, p. 4).

It is then possible to agree with Barker when he states that “Williams’s concept of culture is ‘anthropological’ since it centers on everyday meanings: values (abstract ideals), norms (definite principles or rules) and material/symbolic goods” (BARKER, 2009, p. 42). The understanding of culture as a ‘whole way of life’ brought about its separation from the ‘arts’, from the “the high point of civilization” (p. 41), as well as from “the concern of an educated minority” (p. 41), as Matthew Arnold would have it. This understanding of culture also helped the legitimacy of popular culture to take place. By legitimizing it, Williams made popular culture susceptible of critical analysis. As Canadian scholar John Fekete remarks, Williams’s “analyses of the institutions of culture [...] provided evidence that the changes and conflicts of a way of life are deeply implicated in its systems of learning and communications” (FEKETE, 1994, p. 487). In addition, Fekete argues that Williams’s analyses also “supported his contention that relationships of power, property and production are no more fundamental to a society than the relationship in describing, learning, modifying, exchanging, and preserving experiences” (p. 487).

Eagleton points out that it was also Williams who coined the phrase ‘cultural materialism’. According to Eagleton, Williams did so in order to “describe a form of analysis which examined culture less as a set of isolated artistic monuments than as a material formation, complete with its own modes of production, power-effects, social relations, identifiable audiences, historically conditioned thought-forms” (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 198). Eagleton adds that, by coining the phrase, Williams aimed at examining “culture as always already social and material to its roots” (p. 199). In addition, Eagleton discusses a topic which is of paramount importance to cultural materialism, as well as to Cultural Studies: the relation to the Marxist tradition of thought.

In his article “Problems of Materialism”, Williams considers to be materialist that which is “complementing or compatible with Marxism” (WILLIAMS, 2005, p. 118). In the same article, Williams states that “it is a fact about classical Marxism that it neglected, to its great cost, not only the basic human physical conditions [...], but also the emotional conditions and situations which make up so large a part of all direct human relationship and practice” (p. 118). These ‘human physical conditions’ and ‘emotional conditions and situations’ Williams writes about might be associated to the range of topics “to which Marxist criticism had traditionally given short shrift” (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 199), as Eagleton puts it; feminism, sexuality, post-

colonial and ethnic questions may be seen as examples of topics to which Marxist criticism had not properly, if at all, dealt with. From Eagleton's point of view, Williams's perspective could be seen as "either as an enrichment or a dilution of classical Marxism" (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 199). Enrichment in the sense that "it carried materialism boldly through to the 'spiritual' itself" (p. 199); dilution, because "it blurred the distinctions, vital to orthodox Marxism, between the economic and the cultural" (p. 199). This ambivalent relation between Cultural Studies and Marxism, mainly in its earliest stages of development, is also discussed by another major name in the area: Stuart Hall.

Hall is described by Barker as "perhaps the most significant figure in the development of British cultural studies" (BARKER, 2009, p. 5). Hall is a pioneer in being able to cope with and make productive use of the thought of both the culturalist and (post)structuralist wings that marked, in the 1980s, the division among the members of the CCCS, of which Hall was one of the directors, as previously mentioned. Hall also makes significant use of the thought of Gramsci and the concepts of hegemony and ideology. Nevertheless, Hall's relation with Marxism, which, in a sense, expresses the relation of Cultural Studies itself with Marxism, is not as clear-cut as one may think at first. In fact, in his article "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies", Hall affirms that "there never was a prior moment when cultural studies and Marxism represented a perfect theoretical fit" (HALL, 1992, p. 279). Hall goes even further and argues that "the notion that Marxism and cultural studies slipped into place, recognized an immediate affinity, joined hands in some teleological or Hegelian moment of synthesis, and there was the founding moment of cultural studies, is entirely mistaken" (p. 280).

Similarly to Williams's point of view concerning Marxism, Hall's words confirm that "from the beginning [...] there was always-already the question of the great inadequacies, theoretically and politically, the resounding silences, the great evasions of Marxism" (p. 279). These 'great evasions of Marx' are described by Hall as "the things that Marx did not talk about or seem to understand which were our privileged object of study: culture, ideology, language, the symbolic" (p. 279). From my point of view, Hall's critique to Marxism is understandable and primarily based upon a supposed reductionism and economism inherent to Marxism, but to affirm that Marx did not 'talk about or seem to understand' a subject such as ideology seems to be a bit of an exaggeration.

Nevertheless, for Hall, there is at least one Marxist thinker whose thought seems to be very much in tune with Cultural Studies and with Hall's ideas: the Italian Antonio Gramsci. In Hall's own words, "I tried to learn from and work with the theoretical gains of Gramsci [...] because certain strategies of evasion had forced Gramsci's work [...] to respond to what I can only call [...] the conundrums of theory, the things which Marxist theory couldn't answer" (HALL, 1992, p. 280). Hall argues that, if Gramsci was not able to answer a series of questions with which Cultural Studies deals, the Italian Marxist thinker at least addressed a lot of them. This, according to Hall, allowed those involved in British Cultural Studies to learn a great deal. In "Cultural Theory and its Theoretical Legacies", Hall lists some of the things he believes have been learned from the readings of Gramsci: "immense amount about the nature of culture itself, about the discipline of the conjunctural, about the importance of historical specificity, about the enormously productive metaphor of hegemony, about the way in which one can think questions of class relations" (p. 280). Hall adds that, even though Gramsci belonged to the Marxist tradition, the most important aspect of Gramsci's thought to British Cultural Studies "is precisely the degree to which he radically *displaced* some of the inheritances of Marxism" (p. 281).

From Hall's point of view, there is one particular Gramscian concept that seems to come closest to represent what it is the Jamaican cultural theorist thinks those involved in Cultural Studies are trying to do: "the production of organic intellectuals" (p. 281). In Hall's words: "there is no doubt in my mind that we were trying to find an institutional practice in cultural studies that might produce an organic intellectual" (p. 281). In fact, Hall states that Gramsci's definition of intellectual work "has always been lodged somewhere close to the notion of cultural studies as a project" (p. 281).

Gramsci's two-front requirement of how an organic intellectual is supposed to work is paramount from Hall's point of view:

> On the one hand, we had to be at the very forefront of intellectual theoretical work because, as Gramsci says, it is the job of the organic intellectual to know more than the traditional intellectuals do [...]. But the second aspect is just as crucial: that the organic intellectual cannot absolve himself or herself from the responsibility of transmitting those ideas, that knowledge, through the intellectual function, to those who do not belong, professionally, in the intellectual class (p. 281).

The conception of Cultural Studies as a political practice is reinforced by Hall when he comments on how the Gramscian notion of organic intellectual fits the project Hall himself is

insert in: “it does have something to do with the conditions and problems of developing intellectual and theoretical work as a political practice” (HALL, 1992, p. 281). As American scholar Cary Nelson remarks, “Cultural studies, then, is always partly driven by the political demands of its context and the exigencies of its institutional situation” (NELSON et al., 1992, p. 6)

There is yet another extremely relevant aspect of Hall’s “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies” that should be taken into account when discussing both the figure and work of the Jamaican cultural theorist, as well as Cultural Studies as a whole: the notion of “theoretical work as interruption” (HALL, 1992, p. 282). This particular notion is developed by Hall in order to try and explain how crucial ‘interruptions’ took place in the unfolding of Cultural Studies history. Hall mentions three significant ‘interruptions’ that helped molding the features of what is nowadays known as Cultural Studies: feminism, race issues and ‘the linguistic turn’.

Canadian scholar Victoria Walker points out that although there is not one single, comprehensive definition of feminism, “at best, we may speak of feminisms” (WALKER, 1994, p. 39), and that “feminism knows neither ‘founding mothers’ [...] nor a distinctive methodology” (p. 39), it is possible to say that all of the most varied trends of feminism are engaged in a fundamentally political advocacy of “exposing the mechanisms upon which patriarchal society rests and by which it is maintained, with the ultimate aim of transforming social relations” (p. 39). According to Walker, feminists “believe patriarchal society operates to the advantage of men and serves men’s interests above all others. A corollary of this belief is the idea that patriarchal society oppresses women” (p. 39). Walker also argues that there were two major feminist surges in the 20th century: the first one is connected to the fight for universal suffrage and the second one during the rampant political movements of the 1960’s. It is possible to argue that one of the main reasons why the latter surge broke out was the inability of the so-called New Left to fulfill women’s urges.

This ‘inability of the New Left’ is very much connected to the ‘great evasions of Marx’ described by Hall, which made the intervention or ‘interruption’ of feminism something “specific and decisive” (HALL, 1992, p. 282) for Cultural Studies. As Hall puts it, “it was ruptural. It reorganized the field in quite concrete ways” (p. 282). Hall list 5 ‘concrete ways’ in which the intervention of feminism affected Cultural Studies:

> the opening of the question of the persona as political [...], the radical expansion of the notion of power [...], the centrality of questions of gender and sexuality to the understanding of power itself [...], the opening of many of the questions that we thought we had abolished around the dangerous area of the subjective and the subject [...], the 're-opening' of the closed frontier between social theory and the theory of the unconscious – psychoanalysis (HALL, 1992, p. 282)

In his essay "Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism", English scholar Paul Gilroy, who was a doctoral student that worked with and was advised by Hall himself in the CCCS, states that the "institutionalization of cultural studies is easier to talk about than its problem with racism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism" (GILROY, 1992, p. 187). Hall's words reinforce Gilroy's point of view: "getting cultural studies to put on its agenda the critical questions of race, the politics of race, the resistance to racism, the critical questions of cultural politics, was itself a profound theoretical struggle" (HALL, 1992, p. 283). From Hall's point of view, this 'interruption', a result of 1960s and 1970s movements such as Black Power and Black is Beautiful, amongst numerous other factors, meant a decisive turn in his and that of the CCCS's intellectual and theoretical works. Hall refers to the seminal 1982 book *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 1970s Britain*, edited and partly written by Gilroy and released by the CCCS, as the locus in and through which what he calls the 'bitter internal struggles' went on.

The struggles Hall writes about were those heated discussions related to questions of race that took place among the CCCS members until the release of *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 1970s Britain* in the beginning of the 1980s. These struggles had a lot to do with Gilroy's conception of how important it was not to adopt "nationalist or ethnically absolute approaches" (GILROY, 1992, p. 192) when dealing with the questions of race. Instead, Gilroy proposed the "idea that cultural historians should take the Atlantic [...] as a unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world to produce an explicitly transnational perspective" (p. 192). Gilroy goes even further and argues that:

> The fractal patterns of cultural and political exchange and transformation that we try to specify through manifestly inadequate theoretical terms like creolization and syncretism indicate how both ethnicities and political cultures have been made anew in ways that are significant not simply for Caribbean peoples but for Europe, for Africa [...], and of course, for Afro-America (p. 192).

Alongside these two crucial 'interruptions' in the history of Cultural Studies, Hall places 'the linguistic turn' as something that "decentered and dislocated the settled path of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies certainly, and British cultural studies to some extent in

general" (HALL, 1992, p. 283). Hall is clearly referring to the advent of the ideas of Saussure and, consequently, to (Post)Structuralism, as well as to Semiotics; as Hall puts it, "the discovery of discursivity, of textuality" (p. 283).

As with the 'concrete ways' in which the intervention of feminism affected Cultural Studies, Hall lists some 'theoretical advances' that were made with the advent of 'the linguistic turn':

> The crucial importance of language and of the linguistic metaphor to *any* study of culture; the expansion of the notion of text and textuality, both as source of meaning, and as that which escapes and postpones meaning; the recognition of the heterogeneity, of the multiplicity, of meanings, of the struggle to close arbitrarily the infinite semiosis beyond meaning; the acknowledgment of textuality and cultural power, of representation itself, as a site of power and regulation; of the symbolic as a source of identity (p. 283).

Hall's point of view is reinforced when Barker states that both the works of Saussure and the early Roland Barthes are among those which could be considered as the founding texts of contemporary Cultural Studies. According to Barker, their works "represent the move away from culturalism towards structuralism. Both were influential within cultural studies in helping critics break with notions of text as a transparent bearer of meaning. They illuminated the argument that all cultural texts are constructed with signs" (BARKER, 2009, p. 80-81). Before delving deeper into Roland Barthes's work, it seems rather important to briefly discuss the status of Cultural Studies outside Britain.

After Britain, the most relevant locus where Cultural Studies was diffused was The USA. According to Vincent Leitch, this diffusion took place mainly in the 1980s and continued throughout the following decade "primarily among university intellectuals and critics on the left" (LEITCH, 1994, p. 181). Leitch also points out that even though Cultural Studies aspired to become a discipline, what in fact happened was that it "served as an unstable meeting point for various interdisciplinary feminists, Marxists, literary and media critics, postmodern theorists, social semioticians, rhetoricians, fine arts specialists, and sociologists and historians of culture" (p. 181). Nonetheless, the name and figure of Robert Scholes managed to stand out as one of the most enthusiastic proponents of Cultural Studies in America. Scholes, however, similarly to "other American university intellectuals advocating cultural studies in the 1980s, [...] had little knowledge of the pioneering work done by the British school in the 1970s" (p. 181), argues Leitch.

The last years of the 1980's also marked the launching of a journal with an international editorial collective with the clear aim of spreading Cultural Studies throughout the world. This journal was simply called *Cultural Studies*. The launching of the journal may be seen as a landmark event which just reinforces the rampant internationalization and the increasing global interest in the kind of work which had started in Britain years earlier. As Leitch remarks, "at the same time, cultural studies scholars stepped up work on postcolonial cultures, focusing on deracinated subaltern subjects, heterodox traditions, and hybrid regimes scattered across the globe" (LEITCH, 1994, p. 182).

Hall asserts in "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies" that Cultural Studies "has multiple discourses; it has a number of different histories. It is a whole set of formations; it has its own different conjunctures and moments in the past. It included many different kinds of work" (HALL, 1992, p. 278). The Jamaican cultural theorist adds that Cultural Studies "was constructed by a number of different methodologies and theoretical positions, all of them in contention" (p. 278). However, as Hall argues, "there is something *at stake* in cultural studies" (p. 278); and this something is the fact that all the different positionalities which compose Cultural Studies "are never final, they're never absolute" (p. 279). The very relations of these 'different positionalities' within Cultural Studies do not and could not allow things to be any other way.

At this point, it seems proper to delve a little further in one of the founding figures and works of contemporary Cultural Studies: Roland Barthes and his *Mythologies*. In this particular work of his, Barthes managed to interweave myth, ideological critique, and linguistics. In fact, with *Mythologies* Barthes inaugurates what Saussure called Semiology. Moreover, *Mythologies* may be seen as a trigger to a whole new approach to Cultural Studies.

5 FIGHTING THE DISEASE OF THINKING IN ESSENCES

The art of our necessities is strange,
And can make vile thing precious.
William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Although it has been frequently used interchangeably with the term Semiotics, Semiology presents particular features which allow it to be a very specific form of sign-system study. In fact, it was Saussure himself who expressed his wish to have Semiology established as the general study of sign-systems. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure states that it is "possible to conceive of a science *which studies the role of signs as part of social life* [...]. We shall call it *semiology* (from the Greek *semeîon*, 'sign')" (SAUSSURE, 2006, p. 15, author's italics). The Swiss linguistics adds that Semiology "would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance" (p. 15-16). Saussure believed Linguistics to be "only one branch of this general science" (p. 16), because the "laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge" (p. 16).

Saussure did not predict, however, the advent of a science akin to Semiology that would even be seen as its synonym: Semiotics. According to the Greimas and Courtés's (2008) *Semiotique, dictionaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, the two terms were actually used as synonyms at least from the advent of Structuralism in France until the 1970's, when, according to the French linguists, the methodological contents of Semiology and Semiotics became progressively diverse. Whereas it is possible to argue that Semiology derives directly from the works of Saussure, Semiotics may be said to come from American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce's works.

Peirce is described by American scholar Leroy F. Searle as "the founder of pragmatism and a pioneering theorist of semiotics, [...] one of America's most important and most original philosophers" (SEARLE, 1994, p. 558). Searle adds that Peirce "made fundamental contributions to probability theory, symbolic logic, the philosophy of science, mathematics, and semiotics,

while publishing numerous papers on astronomy, physics, chemistry, and scientific method" (SEARLE, 1994, p. 558).

Searle argues that, although it is possible to see Pierce's Semiotics as something very similar to "Saussure's proposed discipline of 'semiology'" (p. 560), there are fundamental differences between the American philosopher's and the Swiss linguist's theories. As Searle points out, "the first of many fundamental differences is that Peirce's semiotics is not based on the *word* as a 'sign' but on the *proposition* as that which unifies consciousness and creates intelligibility or comprehension" (p. 560, author's italics). In this sense, remarks Searle, "Peirce's semiotics is not a theory of language but a theory of the production of meaning" (p. 560). It is Peirce himself who defines Semiotics as the "formal science of the conditions of the truth of representations" (PEIRCE, 2001, p. 99) in his "Logic as Semiotics: The Theory of Signs".

Differently from Saussure, whose theories are primarily and basically linguistic ones, Peirce would always interconnect the three major areas of his work: pragmatics, philosophical method, and semiotics. Therefore, argues Searle, "Peirce's logical, metaphysical, and semiotic doctrines are three aspects of an evolving, comprehensive philosophical outlook" (SEARLE, 1994, p. 560). A way of dealing with theory that, differently from Saussure's, would not became "systematically entangled in linguistic issues that are always indeterminate when considered apart from pragmatics" (p. 560). In fact, Italian Semiotician Umberto Eco defines, in his *A Theory of Semiotics*, Semiology as being linguistic-Saussurean, and Semiotics as philosophic-Peircian.

Eco also argues that the main difference between Saussure's and Peirce's ideas comes from the way each of them understands the sign. According to the Italian semiotician, Saussure understands the sign as a "communicative device" (ECO, 1979, p. 15), i.e. something which expresses ideas generated in a human mind, or, as Eco puts it, "mental events that concern a human mind" (p. 15). Moreover, Eco points out that it "is not by chance that all the examples of semiological systems given by Saussure are without any shade of doubt strictly conventionalized systems of artificial signs, such as military signals, rules of etiquette and visual alphabets" (p. 15). Peirce, on the other hand, does not require the sign to be intentionally emitted and/or artificially produced, argues Eco. Peirce believes that anything may be a sign, as long as it is interpreted as such by someone. Eco remarks that, according to Peirce, "the presence of a human sender is not the guarantee of the sign-nature of a supposed sign" (p. 16).

Another relevant difference between Peirce's and Saussure's theories is the one related to the moments they were first developed. Whereas Saussure's series of lectures which would be later edited into the seminal *Course in General Linguistics* took place in the very beginning of the 20th century, Peirce's theories were first developed in the 19th century, as Brazilian scholar Lúcia Santaella (2008) remarks. Reinforcing the differences highlighted by Searle, Santaella argues that, differently from Peirce, Saussure's main concern was founding a science of verbal language; Santaella affirms that it was never Saussure's aim to formulate more general concepts which could be used in any science with a wider scope than linguistics. On the contrary, Saussure predicted the need of the advent of only one such science, Semiology. Theoreticians like Roland Barthes were the ones who undertook the enterprise of expanding on Saussure's concepts and ideas on Semiology.

Barthes's work is commonly understood as being divided into distinct phases. Some critics, such as Canadian scholar Stephen Bonnycastle in his entry on Barthes for the *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, divide Barthes's work into three phases; some others, such as Franco-American literary critic Jean-Michel Rabaté, in the entry on Barthes found in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*, divides the French philosopher's oeuvre into four distinct phases. Other critics, such as Brazilian scholar Leyla Perrone-Moisés and Terry Eagleton, prefer to define Barthes's *oeuvre* according to what they see as constant throughout Barthes's production. Perrone-Moisés, for instance, understands Barthes's endless struggle against what he saw as bourgeois ideology or common sense as the most recurrent feature of Barthes's work; whereas Eagleton believes language itself to be "Barthes's theme from beginning to end" (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 117). Nonetheless, it seems possible to affirm that most critics would agree that there is a clearly semilogical phase within Barthes's work. This phase is primarily marked by works such as *Mythologies*, from 1957, and *Elements of Semiology*, from 1964.

Mythologies is divided into two complementing parts: the first one also called "Mythologies", and the second one named "Myth Today". The first part is made of a series of texts through and in which Barthes examines how distinct phenomena such as a wrestling match, a tourist guide-book, and the poems of a child prodigy, for instance, share the same predominant, ruling rhetoric. In addition, Barthes also examines how these phenomena are turned into myths.

In his own words, Barthes's aim is to "account *in detail* for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 8).

As British cultural theorist Dick Hebdige points out, in the first part of *Mythologies*, Barthes sets out to "examine the normally hidden set of rules, codes and conventions through which meanings particular to specific social groups (i.e. those in power) are rendered universal and 'given' for the whole society" (HEBDIGE, 1994, p. 361). Hebdige argues that Barthes found "the same artificial nature, the same ideological core [...] the same prevailing rhetoric (the rhetoric of common sense)" (p. 361) in each and every phenomenon he examined. As Barthes himself points out, in the very same first part of *Mythologies*, this 'set of rules, codes and conventions' which composes this 'rhetoric of the common sense' fundaments a particular 'nature' whose fundamentals lead to the advent of a supposed 'universality'.

The universality Barthes writes about is made of essences, or, as Barthes puts it, "this disease of thinking in essences, which is at the bottom of every bourgeois mythology" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 75). Barthes argues that, in the bourgeois society, or in what he calls a 'world of essences', there is an essencialistic separation of social cells, which he understands as the ideological principle of the bourgeois Revolution and as the constitutive feature of the reactionary mentality. Such mentality, in Barthes's point of view, aims at dispersing collectivity into individuals and the individual into essences. This 'reactionary mentality' is most clearly expressed through what Barthes calls the 'common sense': a mixture of logics and moral which is the philosophical fundamentals of bourgeois society.

These fundamentals, Barthes argues, promote a kind of a connection between moral and nature, offering to one the guarantee of the other, i.e. fearing the naturalization of moral, they moralize nature. These fundamentals and the 'reactionary mentality' also pretend to confuse political and natural orders, decreeing, therefore, amoral everything that goes against the structural laws of the very society the fundamentals support and protect. Nonetheless, Barthes argues that however universal these fundamentals and/or essences are (considered to be), "they are the signs of a historical writing" (p. 102).

The last aforementioned passage of the first part of *Mythologies* leaves room for a critic such as Terry Eagleton to argue that there is a political impulse behind Barthes's intellectual drive, i.e. it is "one of the functions of ideology to 'naturalize' social reality, to make it seem as innocent and unchangeable as Nature itself. Ideology seeks to convert culture into Nature, and the

‘natural’ sign is one of its weapons” (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 117). The sign itself becomes a key element in the second part of Barthes’s *Mythologies*: “Myth Today”.

In the very beginning of “Myth Today”, Barthes makes an assertion that reinforces his acknowledgements that, when writing *Mythologies*, he had relied on what he understood as the traditional sense of myth, as well as on the ideas of Saussure on the sign: “*myth is a type of speech*” (BARTHES, 1991, p. 107). It is possible to understand how this assertion connects itself to the ideas of Saussure when Barthes adds that “myth is a system of communication, that it is a message [...]: a mode of signification” (p. 107). Moreover, when Barthes remarks that myth is not any type of speech, that “language needs special conditions in order to become myth” (p. 107), he seems to echo Eliade, who argues that myths should not be “narrated however or whenever one likes” (ELIADE, 1991, p. 57).

Barthes also states that “everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. [...] Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things” (BARTHES, 1991, p. 107). With this assumption, Barthes makes his semiological approach to myth rather distant from Peirce’s semiotic understanding of the sign. Barthes sees as necessary the ‘filtering’ of a discourse before anything can be turned into a sign and/or myth, whereas Peirce, as previously mentioned, does not.

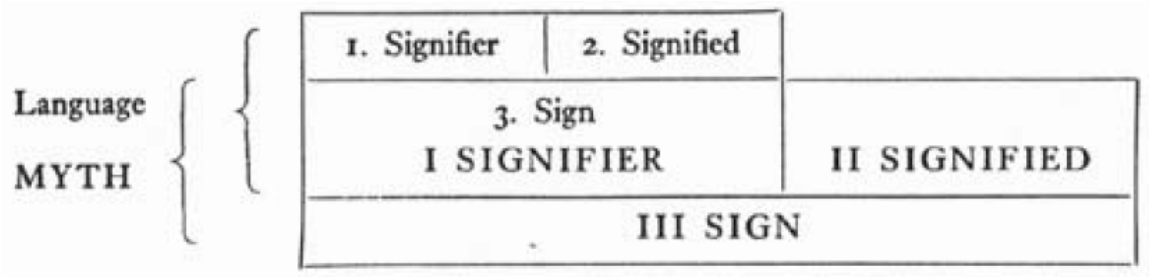
Although Barthes believes ‘everything can be a myth’, he also argues, in a rather clear Marxist fashion, that there are no eternal myths, “for it is human history which converts reality into speech, and it alone rules the life and the death of mythical language” (p. 108). Barthes adds that “mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the ‘nature’ of things” (p. 108).

This ‘speech chosen by history’ is defined by Barthes as being a message that may be oral, written or represented: “not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech” (p. 108). In fact, Barthes is very careful to make sure that the readers of “Myth Today” have no doubt that he takes “*language, discourse, speech*, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual” (p. 109). He also ensures that readers do not “treat mythical speech like a language” (p. 109). Barthes claims myth to belong to the realm of one particular science, which is not that of language per se, but, in his words, is “coextensive with linguistics” (p. 109): Semiology.

In his 1971 preface to a Brazilian edition of *Elements of Semiology*, Barthes states that, because it is the language that continuously questions language, Semiology eliminates old ideologies and theorizes a new knowledge and new social relations. Barthes explains his statement: whatever the scientific demands are on semiological research, this research has a humane, historical, philosophical and political responsibility. Moreover, in the conclusion of *Elements of Semiology*, Barthes also claims the essential aim of Semiology to be to "discover the systems' own particular time, the history of forms" (BARTHES, 1986, p. 98).

It seems rather important for Barthes to stress how political, and even revolutionary, he considers Semiology to be. Barthes's ultimate aim seems to be unmasking any sort of 'false consciousness' there may be in a specific moment in history. Barthes's concept of Semiology is very much akin, as he acknowledges in the previously mentioned prefaces to *Mythologies*, to an (Marxist) ideological critique, therefore, it is, in fact, ultimately political. As Eagleton points out, "the impulse behind this belief [...] is a political one: signs which pass themselves off as natural, which offer themselves as the only conceivable way of viewing the world, are by that token authoritarian and ideological" (EAGLETON, 1996, p. 117). Barthes's words on his particular view of mythology present in the section "Myth as a Semiological System" corroborate Eagleton's viewpoint: "it is a part both of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is an historical science" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 111). At this point, it is possible to infer that Barthes's Semiology/mythology is a form of mixture of Marxist ideological critique and Saussurean linguistics. Still, it is important to note that other ingredients are also part of this mixture, as the development of this study will hopefully be able to show.

After making sure his readers understand how political he considers Semiology to be, Barthes moves on to pass comment on the structure of myths. It is never too much to remind that Barthes's early works, such as *Mythologies*, are still nowadays associated to the structuralist school of thought. In fact, it is on an emblematic structuralist model that Barthes will base his own explanatory diagram showing information on the structure of myths: Saussure's innovative scheme for explaining the sign, or, as Barthes puts it, "a particular but methodologically exemplary semiological system" (p. 112):



In Barthes's chart, numbers 1, 2, and 3 are related to the Saussurean-linguistic sign: number 1, the signifier, being a given mental acoustic image; number 2, the signified, being a concept; and number 3, the sign, "the relation between concept and image is the sign (the word, for instance), which is a concrete entity" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 112). On the other hand, the Roman numerals I, II, and III are related to myth. An intricate explanation is provided by Barthes in order to make clear what he means by this "*second-order semiological system*" (p. 113, author's italics)

Barthes calls his myth-system a 'second-order semiological system' precisely because it is based on a previous semiological system, Saussure's. As Barthes's chart shows, myth is virtually composed of the same elements of Saussure's sign. Nonetheless, however similar these two schemes may seem at first, there is a crucial difference between them: whereas Saussure's sign-system is not based on any other previous system, Barthes's myth-system is: precisely on Saussure's sign-system. In Barthes's own words: "myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it" (p. 113). Barthes adds that "that which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second" (p. 113). The following passage is quite clarifying:

> It can be seen that in myth there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which I shall call the *language-object*, because it is the language which myth gets hold of in order to build its own system; and myth itself, which I shall call *metalanguage*, because it is a second language, *in which* one speaks about the first. [...] This is why the semiologist is entitled to treat in the same way writing and pictures: what he retains from them is the fact that they are both *signs*, that they both reach the threshold of myth endowed with the same signifying function, that they constitute, one just as much as the other, a language-object (p. 113-114, author's italics).

The ultimate element in Saussure's sign-system, the sign itself, is turned into the signifier in Barthes's myth-system. It is relevant to mention at this point that Barthes also calls form the

signifier of the myth-system. This turning of Saussure's sign into Barthes's signifier or form gives this element a rather ambiguous characteristic: on the one hand, it is fully meaningful, for it is a sign, or because, as Barthes puts it, in the sign, the "meaning is *already* complete, it postulates a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 116, author's italics); on the other hand, the very same element which is the sign in Saussure's first-order semiological system, in the myth-system, is turned into a signifier, a form, i.e. "the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains" (p. 116).

Barthes gives as an example of what may happen to a given proposition when it is appropriated by the myth-system: a secondary school student who opens his grammar book and reads the Latin clause *quia ego nominor leo*. The student stops and thinks that there is a latent ambiguity in such clause. On the one hand, the words which the clause is made of have a rather simple meaning, 'because my name is lion'; on the other hand, it is clear to the student that, in the context it is used, the clause is undoubtedly a grammatical example aimed at illustrating a given grammatical rule. According to Barthes, the student ultimately realizes that the clause does not "*signifies* its meaning" (p. 114, author's italics) to him. What it effectively does is to impose itself to the student as a grammatical example.

The essential idea Barthes would like to convey with this particular example is that the signifier or form of myth does not suppress the original meaning of the proposition, "it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal" (p. 117). However, argues Barthes, "the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment" (p. 117). Barthes adds that the original meaning of a given sign, in the case of the example, the meaning of the Latin proposition, will be for the signifier or form of myth like an immediate "reserve of history, a tamed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation: the form must constantly be able to be rooted again in the meaning and to get there what nature it needs for its nutriment; above all, it must be able to hide there" (p. 117). Barthes goes through all this intricate explanation because he believes that it "is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth" (p. 117). That is, it is in this ambiguous characteristic of the signifier or form of myth, which is also the fully meaningful sign of a previous semiological system, where the most important feature of myth lies. One may ask: why would such feature be the most important one related to myth?

According to Barthes, because the function of myth "is to distort, not to make disappear" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 120). Barthes adds that, due to such function, "*myth hides nothing*" (p. 120, author's italics). These fundamental characteristics of myth stem "from the nature of the mythical signifier, which is already linguistic" (p. 120), i.e. "since it is constituted by a meaning which is already outlined, it can appear only through a given substance (whereas in language, the signifier remains mental)" (p. 120).

All of these features related to myth will have implications in its final signification. However, before delving any deeper into Barthes's ideas concerning the signification of myth, it is important to stop and clarify some side issues related to the terminology Barthes makes use of to classify the elements of his myth-system.

As previously shown in the diagram created to explain the myth-system, it is from Saussure's sign-system that Barthes develops his myth-system. Nevertheless, if, at first, Barthes uses the same terms to refer to the components of both systems, as we read "Myth Today", we notice that there are some other terms he uses to refer to elements in both systems. As also previously mentioned, Barthes refers to the signifier of myth as form as well. There are other examples of interchangeable terms Barthes makes use of throughout the second part of his *Mythologies*. We shall take a deeper look into all of them before further exploring Barthes's myth-system.

From Saussure's original terms, there is only one which may be very confusing for those who venture into Barthes's dense semiological mythology: the sign. For Saussure, the sign represents the result of the relation between the signifier and the signified. Barthes uses different terms to refer to the Saussurean sign: sing itself, meaning, signifier, and form. Sing and meaning refer to the "the final term of the first system" (p. 115); whereas, as the signifier of the myth-system, it is also called form. Therefore, the term Barthes uses to refer to this particular element will depend on which specific part of both systems he is referring to: to the final term of the linguistic-Saussurean system, or to the initial term of the myth-system.

Moreover, what would be the signified of myth, Barthes names concept. In addition, signification is the term Barthes uses in order to name that which would correspond to the sign in the myth-system, i.e. the relation between the signifier/form of myth and the signified/concept of myth: "the signification is the myth itself, just as the Saussurean sign is the word" (p. 120).

Therefore, the myth-system, which was, at first, terminologically similar to Saussure's sing-system, is effectively renamed by Barthes.

This terminological detour presents itself as rather important because it is by using two of these 'new' terms that Barthes will add a small dose of Freudian psychology into his Marxist semiological mixture. Barthes argues that the "relation which unites the concept of the myth to its meaning is essentially a relation of *deformation*" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 121, author's italics). In order to clarify what he would like to convey with this assertion, Barthes refers to Freud: "Just as for Freud the manifest meaning of behaviour is distorted by its latent meaning, in myth the meaning is distorted by the concept" (p. 121). In the same way that signifier/form of myth does not eliminates the original sign/meaning, the mythic signified/concept also does not. In fact, it deforms the meaning. According to Barthes, "this is because myth is speech *stolen and restored*. Only, speech which is restored is no longer quite that which was stolen: when it was brought back, it was not put exactly in its place" (p. 124, author's italics). This "brief act of larceny" (p. 124) Barthes writes about is intrinsically related to a paramount constitutive feature of myth: motivation.

Barthes argues that, whereas the meaning of a linguistic sign is always arbitrary, the signification of a myth is at least partially motivated. Barthes adds that "motivation is necessary to the very duplicity of myth: myth plays on the analogy between meaning and form, there is no myth without motivated form" (p. 125). For Barthes, this motivated form/signifier of myth is ethically incommodious, disturbing and even sickening. The reason why Barthes feels this way is the very motivation behind the mythic form and consequently behind the mythic signification, that brings along with it what Barthes calls a 'false nature'. In Barthes's own words: "what is sickening in myth is its resort to a false nature, its superabundance of significant forms [...]. The will to weigh the signification with the full guarantee of nature causes a kind of nausea: myth is too rich, and what is in excess is precisely its motivation" (p. 160).

By commenting on the motivation behind the myth, Barthes reaches what he considers to be "the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature" (p. 128). Barthes sees this transformation representative of the principle of myth as something inherent to the bourgeois society. His aim with *Mythologies* seems to be to raise awareness to the conclusion he comes to: although myth is understood by many as a factual system based on 'natural' premises, in fact "it is but a semiological system" (p. 130). Since "any semiological system is a system of values"

(BARTHES, 1991, p. 130), the myth-system also carries along a set of values. In the case of the society Barthes analyzes, bourgeois values.

For Barthes, French society is "the privileged field of mythical significations" (p. 137). Barthes explains that, although French society has been through a series of different bourgeois ruling powers, "the same status - a certain regime of ownership, a certain order, a certain ideology - remains at a deeper level" (p. 137). According to Barthes, one of the most emblematic characteristics of the bourgeois society is its success in having obliterated its very name. Barthes's following words seem to reinforce the ideas expressed by Williams, Thompson and Hoggart when these three pivotal figures in the early development of Cultural Studies thought about the changes the British working class was going through in the first half of the 20th century:

> the bourgeoisie has obliterated its name in passing from reality to representation, from economic man to mental man. [...] it makes its status undergo a real *exnominating* operation: the bourgeoisie is defined as *the social class which does not want to be named*. 'Bourgeois', 'petit-bourgeois', 'capitalism', 'proletariat' are the locus of an unceasing haemorrhage: meaning flows out of them until their very name becomes unnecessary (p. 137, author's italics).

Like the British working class which lost its identity and the proletariat which understands their relations as commodity exchanges, the member of the bourgeois society is unable to name the very fundamentals of the society he/she is inserted in due to the very structural features of this same society: a society which bases its premises in myths. As Barthes points out, "bourgeois norms are experienced as the evident laws of a natural order - the further the bourgeois class propagates its representations, the more naturalized they become" (p. 139). Barthes adds that "the bourgeoisie becomes absorbed into an amorphous universe, whose sole inhabitant is Eternal Man, who is neither proletarian nor bourgeois" (p. 139-140).

Barthes's words also seem to echo those of Marx when the German philosopher argues that in a capitalist society all its members' consciences and lives are reified just like the reified relations which are the fundamentals of that very society. In order to expand his explanation on the bourgeois fundamentals, Barthes refers to Marxist concept of ideology. Barthes argues that "it is the bourgeois ideology itself, the process through which the bourgeoisie transforms the reality of the world into an image of the world, History into Nature" (p. 140). This image of the world is remarkable because it is upside down, argues Barthes:

> The status of the bourgeoisie is particular, historical: man as represented by it is universal, eternal. The bourgeois class has precisely built its power on technical, scientific progress, on an unlimited transformation of nature: bourgeois ideology yields in return an unchangeable nature. The first bourgeois philosophers [...] subjected all things to an idea of the rational, and decreed that they were meant for man: bourgeois ideology [...] refuses explanations; [...] Finally, the basic idea of a perfectible mobile world, produces the inverted image of an unchanging humanity, characterized by an indefinite repetition of its identity (BARTHES, 1991, p. 140-141)

Finally, Barthes argues that the last relevant characteristic of the bourgeois myth is that it is a 'depoliticized speech'. It is relevant to remark that Barthes understands the concept of political as "describing the whole of human relations in their real, social structure, in their power of making the world" (p. 142). From Barthes's point of view, myth passes from history to nature, and, through this movement, "it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth" (p. 143).

It is possible to infer in the last aforementioned passage from *Mythologies* Barthes's movement towards a deeper and greater critique of the essences. A form of thought characteristic not of the structuralist school, but of the post-structuralist one. As mentioned before, Barthes is commonly associated to both schools of thought, and his oeuvre clearly expresses his moving from one to the other.

After having outlined the main characteristics of (bourgeois) myth, Barthes writes about how myth is present on the Left, as well as on the Right. According to Barthes, myth exists on the Left, but it is a 'inessential' myth, therefore, fundamentally different from the bourgeois myth: "it is an incidental myth, its use is not part of a strategy, as is the case with bourgeois myth, but only of a tactics, or, at the worst, of a deviation; if it occurs, it is as a myth suited to a convenience, not to a necessity" (p. 148). Still commenting on how myth is present on the Left, Barthes states that the Left has always been defined in relation to the oppressed, to the proletariat, to the colonized. Therefore, argues Barthes, its speech "can only be poor, monotonous, immediate: his destitution is the very yardstick of his language: he has only one, always the same, that of his actions; metalanguage is a luxury, he cannot yet have access to it" (p. 148).

At this point, it is relevant to mention the name of the British novelist Angela Carter. Carter, a confessed leftist and a supposedly oppressed individual for being a woman, has a speech which, just like Barthes's itself, is not 'poor, monotonous, immediate' at all. Quite on the

contrary. The development of this text will hopefully try and demonstrate how Carter is, in fact, an example of an individual who propagates what Barthes calls a “revolutionary language” (BARTHES, 1991, p. 146), i.e. a language that is not mythical, a language that aims at transforming reality and “no longer to preserve it as an image” (p. 146).

When writing about myth on the Right, Barthes argues that this is where, statistically, myth is. Because, according to Barthes, whereas the language of the oppressed aims at transforming the world, the language of the oppressor, of the Right, of the bourgeoisie aims at conserving it the way it is, at making it eternal. Thus, myth is essential to the Right, argues Barthes, for myth postulates “the immobility of Nature” (p. 150); moreover, adds Barthes, “the very end of myths is to immobilize the world” (p. 156); finally, “Myths are nothing but this ceaseless, untiring solicitation, this insidious and inflexible demand that all men recognize themselves in this image, eternal yet bearing a date, which was built of them one day as if for all time” (p. 156).

Even though Barthes’s words on (bourgeois) myth first came to light more than 50 years ago, they remain a remarkable example of an ideological critique of contemporary society. It is true that Barthes writes about the French society of the middle of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it is also true that it is possible to apply much of what is discussed by Barthes to contemporary Western societies in a world in which capitalism and the bourgeois values seem to be practically everywhere. It is also relevant to notice how Barthes’s *Mythologies*, in fact, connects Marxist ideological critique, traditional concepts of myth, and some Freudian psychological elements. Moreover, it is also remarkable to notice how clear it is now to realize the way in which the movement from Structuralism to Post-structuralism seemed almost as a logical and predictable consequence of the deepening of the theoretical enquiries developed by some of those related to Structuralism in the first place: Barthes and the way he gradually manages to resist the “disease of thinking in essences” (p. 75) is a great example of such movement. More than this, it is also rather understandable the impact a work such as *Mythologies* had in Cultural Studies. Its innovative, impressive and intricate blending of distinct and yet extremely relevant theoretical backgrounds really made it possible to look at cultural phenomena in an entirely new way, as Stuart Hall has pointed out in his “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies”.

In order to explore even further the implications of myth in contemporary society, this study reaches a point in which the investigation of a particular, yet prominent myth makes itself present: the Shakespeare myth.

6 23RD APRIL, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

> D'you know, I sometimes wonder if we haven't been making him up all along,' she said. 'If he isn't just a collection of our hopes and dreams and wishful thinking in the afternoons. Something to set our lives by, like the old clock in the hall, which is real enough, in itself, but which we've got to wind up to make it go.
>
> Angela Carter, *Wise Children*

The general editors of *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, scholars Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller, who are English and American, respectively, argue that "we know more about Shakespeare's life than we do about almost any other English writer's of his era" (ORGEL; BRAUNMULLER, 2002a, p. xlvi). The two scholars also write that "more information has survived over the past four hundred years about William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon [...] than is likely to survive in the next four hundred years about any reader of these words" (p. xlvi). Nevertheless, American literary critic, theorist and scholar Stephen Greenblatt points out in *Will in the World,* his acclaimed biography of English poet and playwright William Shakespeare, that any biographical study of Shakespeare is "an exercise in speculation" (GREENBLAT, 2004, p. 18).

As a matter of fact, there is significant consensus on certain aspects of Shakespeare's life based on remaining documents and pieces of evidence from his lifetime. For instance, Shakespeare's date of birth is commonly held to be 23rd April, 1564. This assumption is based on the fact that it is known that William Shakespeare was baptized on 26th April, 1564 in Holy Trinity church, Stratford-upon-Avon. Since, according to English Shakespeare scholar and co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* Stanley Wells, "no more than a few days are likely to have elapsed between birth and baptism" (WELLS, 2008b, p. 419), a three-day spam has been accepted as reasonable enough time between Shakespeare's birth and baptism. However, the fact that 23rd April is the day when the English celebrate both St George, England's patron saint, and Shakespeare, who is "normatively constitutive of British national identity as the drinking of afternoon tea" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 7), as American scholar Michael Dobson remarks, does not seem to be due to chance.

Shakespeare's parents' names are also well known: John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. John was a glover, a whittawer, i.e. someone "who treats animal skins with alum or lime" (WELLS, 2008a, p. 418), and, finally, an alderman in Stratford-upon-Avon. There is not enough evidence which allows us to say much about Shakespeare's mother besides that she was the mother of eight children, having two of those died still in infancy. Although Shakespeare's parents' third child has become one of the world's greatest writers of all time, evidence shows that John and Mary seem to "have had only partial literacy" (GREENBLATT, 2004, p. 24), according to Greenblatt.

Greenblatt adds that it seems that Shakespeare's "father and mother wanted their son to have a proper classic education" (p. 24), which at the time Shakespeare was still a child meant the study of grammar, rhetoric, logic, as well as Latin. Wells claims that Shakespeare's education could also have been furthered by "compulsory attendance [...] at church, where he would become familiar with the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Homilies" (WELLS, 2008b, p. 420).

Another general consensus on Shakespeare's biography is the one related to the time when Shakespeare left school, probably around the age of 15. What he did after leaving school until he got married to Anne Hathaway in 1582, on the other hand, has been the subject of great speculation. At the time they got married, Shakespeare was still 18 years old, legally a minor; Anne, on the other hand, was 26. In Greenblatt's words, Anne was "an orphan in her midtwenties, with some resources left to her by her father's will and more due to her upon her marriage [...]. She was independent" (GREENBLATT, 2004, p. 119). Nevertheless, an eighteen-year-old young man needed his parents' legal approval to get married during Shakespeare's lifetime. In Shakespeare's case, this was not a problem. However unusual this union might have seen at the time, it was not unusual enough to make Shakespeare's father and mother prevent their son's marriage to take place. Anne and William Shakespeare ended up being the parents of three children: Susanna, and the twins Hannet, who died young, and Judith.

According to Wells, the "earliest positive evidence of Shakespeare's affiliation with a particular theatre company comes on 15 March 1595, when he is joint payee of the Lord Chamberlain's Men" (WELLS, 2008b, p. 421). It is also Wells who claims that the first allusion in print to suggest that Shakespeare was well known on the English theatrical scene is dated from

1592. Wells believes that by then Shakespeare would have already written his earliest history plays and comedies.

It was inevitable for Shakespeare, a man of theatre, not to move to London, and, as Wells points out, “a number of legal records witness to his presence there” (WELLS, 2008b, p. 421). As an example of such legal records, Wells cites a 1599 manuscript document in which “the newly built Globe theatre is mentioned as being in the possession of William Shakespeare and others” (p. 421). Greenblatt’s depiction of London in the end of the 16th century is quite striking: “a city of newcomers [...] drawn by the promise of work, the spectacle of wealth and power, the dream of some extraordinary destiny” (GREENBLATT, 2004, p. 163). Moreover, London is portrayed by Greenblatt as “rat-infested, overcrowded, polluted, prone to fire and on occasion to riot, [...] a startling unsafe and unhealthy place” (p. 163). Greenblatt calls London a “seemingly irresistible lure” (p. 163) because even though the city had so many problems it kept a nonstop growth rate.

For Londoners, argues British historian and scholar Victor Kiernan, “the theatres were a collective Stock Exchange of ideas of all sorts, a running commentary on life” (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 25). Kiernan adds that the theatres were inevitably “held in doubtful steem, all the more because so popular” (p. 25). Those who would like to attend a performance would have to go to the ‘suburbs’ or ‘Liberties’, a place on the outskirts of London, “a kind of threshold place, not technically part of the city of London” (GARBER, 2004, p. 23), as American scholar Marjorie Garber remarks.

Not only Shakespeare’s presence in London in the 1590s is witnessed by documents but also his growing reputation as both man of theatre and poet. Shakespeare’s name begins to appear on the title pages of his plays, his narrative poems are praised and, in the very first years of the 17th century, he is named one of the most important ‘tragedians’ and comedians by his contemporary countryman, fellow poet and dramatist Ben Johnson, argues Wells.

In 1609, when Shakespeare was 45, he ‘retired’ to Stratford. There, his output of plays decreased and it is believed that he withdrew more and more from his activities in London. By 1616 he died on his birthday and was buried in Holy Trinity church in a “prominent position” (WELLS, 2008b, p. 422), remarks Wells.

Shakespeare lived in troubled times: “Life was growing more complex, mankind more unfamiliar, motives and actions less predictable” (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 28), as Kiernan argues. In addition to this, Greenblatt remarks that:

> within living memory, England had gone from a highly conservative Roman Catholicism [...] to Catholicism under the supreme headship of the king; to a wary, tentative Protestantism; to a more radical Protestantism; to a renewed and militant Roman Catholicism; and them, with Elizabeth, to Protestantism once again (GREENBLATT, 2004, p. 94)

Before dying, Shakespeare had written more than 150 sonnets, 2 long narrative poems, other shorter poems, and 37 plays. Alongside with his sonnets, Shakespeare's plays are one of the best well-known parts of his work. Plays such as *Hamlet*, for example, are extremely famous and are recurrently quoted and/or referred to in many different parts of the world for the most varied reasons by people from different walks of life.

Traditionally, Shakespeare's plays have been divided into three categories: comedies, tragedies, and histories or historical plays. Nonetheless, some scholars may also refer to a fourth type of play, the 'problem plays'. This is a term coined by the British scholar Frederick Samuel Boas to plays that, according to his point of view, would deal with "social and sexual issues" (MATHESON, 2008, p. 50), as British scholar Tom Matheson points out in his entry on Boas for *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. According to Boas, plays such as *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Measure for Measure* would be the examples of problem plays in Shakespeare theatrical output. Still, Michael Dobson let us know that the term coined by Boas "has fallen into comparative disfavour in more recent criticism" (DOBSON, 2008b, p. 357).

Shakespeare wrote 10 histories/historical plays: *King John*, *Henry VIII*, and two tetralogies, which, as English scholar Sonia Massai points out, "cover the War of the Roses from the deposition of King Richard II in 1398 to the accession of Henry VII in 1485" (MASSAI, 2008b, p. 203). Massai also remarks that this type of play based on English history was a popular genre from the second half of the 16th century, when they first flourished, to the death of Elizabeth I in 1603. Moreover, Massai argues that these particular type of play "was the product of high demand for new plays for the public stage and the rise of strong nationalist feelings following the Protest Reformation and the commercial wars with European countries" (p. 203).

In the 18th century, in one of the most emblematic and classic texts on Shakespeare, the preface to *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, British poet and essayist Samuel Johnson claimed Shakespeare's plays not to be "in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind" (JOHNSON, 2009, p. 358). Johnson's point of view is relevant

until nowadays, once the tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare do not follow the classical patterns defined primarily by the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

Aristotle, in *On Poetics*, defines tragedy as "an imitation of an action of stature and complete, with magnitude" (ARISTOTLE, 2002, p. 18). On the other hand, comedy is defined by the Greek philosopher as "an imitation of what is inferior" (p. 14), the laughable being considered "a proper part of the shameful and ugly" (p. 14). However, Kiernan points out that the tragedy produced by Shakespeare presents a 'dramatic fusion', "an interchange of feelings between higher and lower, when individuals are found in unaccustomed places" (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 29). For the sake of example, Kiernan cites the following passages present in some of the tragedies written by Shakespeare: "a Danish prince in a graveyard, a British king out on the moors, an Egyptian rustic in a palace" (p. 29). Sonia Massai points out that, in fact, "Shakespeare notoriously disregarded the Aristotelian doctrine" (MASSAI, 2008c, p. 481).

Kiernan adds that although during Shakespeare's lifetime the term tragedy "was more impressive than precise" (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 30), it was still recognized as "the highest pinnacle of drama" (p. 30). Within Shakespeare tragedies, the 'highest pinnacle' is traditionally considered to be *King Lear*, as Massai remarks. According to the English scholar, in *King Lear* "the radical quality of Shakespeare's tragic imagination is particularly evident" (MASSAI, 2008c, p. 481). *King Lear* will be further discussed later on in this very study.

Massai also argues that although Shakespeare relied on several previous sources for the elaboration of his own comedies, Greek Old and New Comedies and the Italian novelistic tradition, for instance, "Shakespearian comedy represents a distinctive dramatic category" (MASSAI, 2008a, p. 83). From Massai's viewpoint there are some conventions which characterize the comedy of Shakespeare:

> exotic locations [...]; cases of mistaken identity in connection with bed-tricks, identical sets of twins, disguise, and cross-dressing; the Clown [...], similarly associated with caustic wit, ironic detachment, and a subversive penchant for puns and wordplay; a sustained attempt to test the limits of representation and theatrical illusion; and the 'green world' [...], where the law, parental control, and social conventions are temporarily suspended (p. 83).

Later on, this dissertation will also explore Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a clear and emblematic example of a Shakespearen comedy.

All the different types of play produced by Shakespeare during his lifetime suffered the effect of a certain ‘something’ which happened after the English playwright died, according to Dobson. The American scholar points out that after Shakespeare died something happened, something which “had the effect of ‘authorizing’ Shakespeare – both in the sense of promoting [...] his plays to the status of canonical texts, and, concurrently, of canonizing Shakespeare himself as the paradigmatic figure of literary authority” (DOBSON, 2001, p. 1). In fact, Greenblatt defines Shakespeare as “the greatest playwright not of his age alone but of all time” (GREENBLAT, 2004, p. 11).

Despite Greenblat’s aguable and quite universalist assertion, it is important o notice that Greenblatt does not make such an assertion without questioning its very foundations, i.e. the scholar proposes and tries to answer the following question in and with his book *Will in the World*: “How did Shakespeare become Shakespeare?” (p. 11). Taking into consideration what Barthes writes on myth in his *Mythologies*, it is possible to argue that a myth was created around and with Shakespeare’s figure and work, a phenomenon that came to be known as ‘the Shakespeare myth’.

Similarly to Greenblatt’s book, this research also aims at, amongst other things, investigating how ‘Shakespeare became Shakespeare’. More precisely, this research delves into the process of the formation of the Shakespeare myth, concentrating in specific historical processes which led to the creation, propagation and maintenance of such myth. So far, four main interwoven processes have been identified: the appropriation the pre-Romantics and the Romantics in general made of the figure and works of William Shakespeare; the role the adaptations of Shakespeare’s works have had in the advent of the myth related to the English poet and playwright since the 17th century; ‘the making of the national poet’, i.e. the use of Shakespeare and his works as a political strategy employed by the British empire; and the emergence of the ‘Shakespeare Industry’, the commercial exploitation of anything that may be associated to Shakespeare’s name and oeuvre.

7 AN ENLIGHTENED TACIT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

> Was genius something utterly unconnected with wanting, or learning how, or knowing about, or being able to? Something which, at the appointed hour, would float down around my shoulders like an immaculate, delicately worked pashmina shawl?
>
> Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

British literary critic Graham Holderness is the editor of a 1988 volume entitled *The Shakespeare Myth*, which has a set of articles that discuss this particular modern myth. In one of these articles, "Theatre, ideology, and institution: Shakespeare and the roadsweepers", Welsh scholar John Drakakis states that the "tacit acknowledgement of Shakespeare as universal, transcendent, and eternal confers upon a quintessentially English writer [...] a divine status" (DRAKAKIS, 1988, p. 25). Drakakis argues that "Shakespeare, removed [...] from human history, becomes for us the 'Absolute Subject' whose all-embracing 'Word' takes its place alongside the Bible as our guarantee of civilization and humanity" (p. 25). In a statement very much in tune with Roland Barthes's concept of myth, as well as with the Cultural Studies perspective on culture, Drakakis adds that "the deification of the man Shakespeare proceeds hand-in-hand with the valorization of 'culture', thus masking the ideological practice of production and re-production of Shakespearean texts as agencies of authority and subjection" (p. 25). It seems relevant to inquire what 'tacit acknowledgement' is this mentioned by Drakakis in his article. It also seems relevant to question how this myth related to the figure of Shakespeare came to take place.

It is possible to relate the 'tacit acknowledgement' Drakakis writes about to an assertion such as the aforementioned one by Greenblatt that defines Shakespeare as "the greatest playwright not of his age alone but of all time" (GREENBLAT, 2004, p. 11). Another assertion that may be related to this 'tacit acknowledgement' is the one found in American literary critic Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon*: "Shakespeare is the Western Canon", claims Bloom (BLOOM, 1994, p. 75). Bloom's viewpoint echoes the words of American poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote that he was "always happy to meet persons who perceive the transcendent superiority of Shakspeare over all other writers" (EMERSON, 1950, p. 723). It is

also possible to relate Drakakis's words to a statement such as the one made by French romantic novelist and poet Victor Hugo:

> Shakespeare is fertility, force, exuberance, the overflowing breast, the foaming cup, the brimful tub, the overrunning sap, the overflooding lava, the whirlwind scattering germs, the universal rain of life, everything by thousands, everything by milions, no reticence, no binding, no economy, the inordinate and tranquil prodigality of the creator (HUGO, 2007, p. 150).

Hugo's countryman, the novelist Alexandre Dumas coined a sentence that is very often credited to Hugo himself: Dumas understands Shakespeare as *"l'homme qui avait le plus créé, après Dieu*" (DUMAS, 1867, p. 17), or, as Irish novelist James Joyce translates and quotes this very statement by Dumas in his *Ulysses*, "After God Shakespeare has created most" (JOYCE, 2000, p. 273).

The very fact that Joyce focuses on Shakespeare – on his biography, on his works – as well as on Dumas's aforementioned statement throughout at least an entire chapter, the ninth one, of his most emblematic novel is also quite relevant. It is also noteworthy the fact that a contemporary author such as Angela Carter has written an entire novel, her 1991 *Wise Children*, establishing multiple levels of dialogues with the figure of Shakespeare the man, with his works, and with the Shakespeare myth, as well. Even those who openly criticize that 'tacit acknowledgement' Drakakis writes about, like the author of the 1985 article "Shakespeare in Ideology", American scholar James H. Kavanagh, are likely to produce sentences such as "to discuss Shakespeare is to discuss the study of English itself" (KAVANAGH, 1985, p. 144).

The bardolatry, the worship of Shakespeare and his work, is the most common expression of the Shakespeare myth, a myth that, just like any other, can only have its foundation in history, as Barthes would put it. In fact, Michael Dobson lets us know that "many of the conceptions of Shakespeare we inherit date [...] from the Enlightenment. It was this period, after all, which initiated many of the practices which modern spectators and readers of Shakespeare would generally regard as normal or even natural" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 3).

As scholar Peter Hamilton reminds us, the term Enlightenment is generally accepted as referring to "a period in European intellectual history which spans the time from roughly the first quarter to the last quarter of the eighteenth century" (HAMILTON, 2007, p. 25). Still according to Hamilton, the Enlightenment "was the creation of a new framework of ideas about man, society, and nature, which challenged existing conceptions rooted in a traditional world-view,

dominated by Christianity" (HAMILTON, 2007, p. 24). Hamilton also points out that these new ideas "were accompanied by and influenced in their turn many cultural innovations in writing, printing, music, sculpture, architecture, and gardening, as well as the other arts" (p. 24-25). German art historian Arnold Hauser describes the Enlightenment as "the political elementary school of the modern middle class" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 92) and/or of modern bourgeoisie. Hauser also argues that without the Enlightment the part played by bourgeoisie in the cultural history of the 18th and 19th would be "inconceivable" (p. 92). That is, Hauser sees a strict relationship between the values of the Enlightenment and those of modern bourgeoisie. In addition to this, Hauser claims that "In the whole of the West, in France and England as well as in Germany, the eighteenth century was the age which saw the beginnings of modern scientific thinking and of the criteria of education to some extent still regarded as valid today" (p. 104). Taking Hauser's assumption into consideration, it is possible to infer that even 'modern scientific thinking' and 'the criteria of education' are also heavily influenced by the bourgeois mode of thinking.

In addition, German literary critic Martini (1960) argues that all the great lines of thought of the 18th century, though noticeably different from one another, were led by the same set of guidelines: in all of them there is a manifest tendency towards the creation of a new concept of individuality, of intimate evolution, of proximity to nature, of cheerful commitment to the world. This tendency, argues Martini, gradually transformed itself into an awareness that man, culture, and history merge with nature.

Within the period Hamilton prescribes as being the one correspondent to the advent and consolidation of the Enlightenment, England had already been transformed into Great Britain. The Act of Union of 1707 had promoted the consolidation of Britain, the last step to such consolidation being the political union with Scotland. Besides being politically united, Britain also had another crucial element which can be seen as essential to the imperial expansion which was already taking place in the beginning of the XVIIIth century: the establishment of the English Protestant national church. As British scholar Nigel Dalziel remarks, "religion reinforced English nationalism and sharpened differences with Catholic European rivals" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 15). This rivalry would also motivate imperial expansion.

At this point, the words of British scholar Benedict Anderson in his seminal work *Imagined Communities* are rather clarifying. Anderson argues that it is possible to talk about sovereign nations, like the British Empire, because the concept of a sovereign nation:

> was born in an age which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living *pluralism* of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state (ANDERSON, 2006, p. 7).

In fact, Anderson argues that the "century of Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear" (p. 11). Anderson adds that, in order to replace the vacuum left by the 'ebbing of religious belief', something was needed, a secular replacement, "a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning" (p. 11). Anderson believes that "few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation" (p. 11).

Anderson states that the concept of nation could only be brought to light after three fundamental cultural conceptions "lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds" (p. 36): the first one being that related to the belief that "a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth" (p. 36); second "was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres" (p. 36), i.e. supposedly divine monarchs who would be seen as being apart from the ordinary human life; third was the idea that of "temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable" (p. 36), being the origins of humanity and of the world basically and essentially the same.

Moreover, Anderson believes that the element which allowed these fundamental cultural conceptions to have their influence weakened was the advent of capitalism, more precisely the advent of what Anderson calls 'print-capitalism'. In Anderson's own words, print-capitalism "made it possible for rapidly growing numbers people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profound new ways" (p. 36). The advent of print-capitalism allowed Protestantism, for instance, to explore cheap editions which "quickly created large new reading publics [...] and simultaneously mobilized them for politico-religious purposes" (p. 40).

Capitalism or print-capitalism, argues Anderson, was also responsible for 'assembling' related vernaculars. Anderson remarks that capitalism "within the limits imposed by grammars

and syntaxes, created mechanically reproduced print-languages capable of dissemination through the market" (ANDERSON, 2006, p. 44). Therefore, the bases for an even more solid national consciousness were established. According to Anderson for three main reasons: the 'print-languages' "created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars" (p. 44) i.e., "these fellow-readers [...] formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community" (p. 44); "print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation" (p. 44); and, finally, "print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars" (p. 45). In fact, Anderson comes to the point of stating that "Print-language is what invents nationalism" (p. 134).

Print-language and/or print-capitalism is also very much related to the advent of two 'forms of imagining', as Anderson puts it: the novel and the newspaper. These specific 'forms of imagining', which first appeared in the 18th century in Europe, "provided the technical means for 'representing' the kind of imagined community that is the nation" (p. 25). That is, the conception of a "sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time" (p. 26), such organism would correspond to the novel, in Anderson's viewpoint, and this organism is believed by Anderson to be a "precise analogue of the idea of nation, which is also conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (p. 26).

It is quite relevant to notice that, as Anderson points out, "in world-historical terms bourgeoisies were the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis" (p. 77). Moreover, Anderson states that "an illiterate bourgeoisie is scarcely imaginable" (p. 77). That is, Anderson's words allow us to infer that the advent of capitalism, of the print-capitalism, and, consequently, of the novel are intrinsically related. In the case of England/Britain, this relation includes the advent of the Empire, which, in more than one sense, is closely connected to the expansion of capitalism.

Barthes's words come in handy at this point if we remember that Barthes himself claims that the bourgeois society, or the 'world of essences', is "the privileged field of mythical significations" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 137). Bourgeois society follows "the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature" (p. 128). With the advent of the concept of sovereign nations and nationalism it does not seem to be any different. As Anderson words make clear the semiological system through which the concepts of nation and nationalism were created are, just

like any other myth, “a system of values” (BARTHES, 1991, p. 130) created in, with and by specific historical process. A ‘system of values’ in which “the same status - a certain regime of ownership, a certain order, a certain ideology - remains at a deeper level” (p. 137).

The Norton Anthology on English Literature corroborates the close connection established by the rise of the novel and the advent of bourgeoisie, or middle-class in England. The anthology depicts Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson as creators of the modern novel, and claims that “both Defoe and Richardson belonged to the middle class and expressed in their works middle-class interests and attitudes” (ABRAMS, M. H. et al., 1986, p. 1784). This clear association of Defoe, Richardson and their readership, clearly exemplify what Anderson means by the bourgeoisies being “the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis” (ANDERSON, 2006, p. 77).

When British poet, essayist and critic Matthew Arnold, with his peculiar idea of ‘high culture’, wrote that the 18th century was the “age of prose and reason” (ARNOLD, 1986, p. 1452), he referred to how much the century lacked those men considered great poets, “men with an adequate poetic criticism of life, [...] whose criticism of life has a high seriousness, [...] has poetic largeness, freedom, insight, benignity” (p. 1452). Nevertheless, it is also possible to associate Arnold’s statement to the overwhelming advent of the novel. In fact, the ‘age of prose and reason’ had many features which make of this particular moment of European history quite important, especially if we think of the historical processes that set the foundations for the Shakespeare myth.

Martini (1960) argues that by the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century an alteration in the spiritual, social and religious lives of many Europeans was quite patent. Martini also argues that the cultural matrixes of the Enlightenment were prepared still in the 16th century. As examples of such matrixes Martini cites some European philosophers and their thoughts: Descartes’s rationalism; the empirical philosophy of Locke; Leibniz’s world-view.

According to English historian of philosophy Frederick Coplestone, French philosopher Descartes “employed methodic doubt with a view to discovering whether there was any indubitable truth” (COPLESTONE, 1994, p. 90). Descartes famous statement “I think, therefore I am” (DESCARTES, 2005, p. 16) is taken from his most emblematic work, his 1637 *Discourse on the Method*, in which a new rational way of perceiving reality is presented: “in the very act of doubting my existence is revealed” (COPLESTONE, 1994, p. 90). As Coplestone points out,

with Descartes's statement, "we have a privileged truth which is immune from the corroding influence not only of the natural doubt which I may feel concerning judgments about material things but also of the [...] fictitious hypothesis of the *malin genie*" (COPLESTONE, 1994, p. 90, author's italics). The hypothesis of the *malin genie* was also developed by Descartes himself and it supports the idea that the reality one perceives and lives in could be the creation of an 'evil genius'.

The empirical philosophy of Locke was also very influential in Europe in the 18th century. English philosopher John Locke is, in fact, described by American scholar David Perkins as the "most influential philosopher throughout the eighteenth century" (PERKINS, 1967, p. 12). Perkins argues that, according to Locke's philosophy, only concrete things exist, i.e. "general terms such as 'man', 'freedom', and so forth name ideas that we have abstracted from experience, and such ideas have no counterpart in reality" (p. 12). Locke believed one's mind to be a *tabula rasa* at birth. From Locke's perspective, impressions, always sensory ones, would be engraved on one's mind as he or she grows up. Therefore, sensations would be the source of all our ideas. Writing about this particular topic in one of his most emblematic works, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, published in 1689, Locke uses newborns as examples and states that "one may perceive how, by degrees, afterwards, ideas come into their minds; and that they get no more, nor no other, than what experience, and the observation of things [...] furnish them with" (LOCKE, 1796, p. 55).

German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz's thoughts are, on the other hand, very much connected to the idea of an existing 'universal harmony'. As Coplestone remarks, "the idea of the universe as a harmonious system in which there is at the same time unity and multiplicity, coordination and differentiation of parts, seems to have become a leading idea, probably the leading idea, of Leibniz at a very early age" (COPLESTONE, 1994, p. 266). Leibniz also developed what he called the monadology, the theory of monads. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, for Leibniz, monads "are the true unities and hence the only true substances" (BLACKBURN, 1996, p. 248). The same dictionary points out that Leibniz understands the monads to be "extensionless, mental entities, capable of perceptions and appetitive states, but each of them self-sufficient and developing without relation to any other" (p. 248). As Leibniz himself states, "there is no part of matter that does not contain monads" (LEIBNIZ, 2007, p. 35). Leibniz uses the human body or the body of any other animal as

examples of beings “whose solid and fluid parts contain in themselves in turn other animals and plants” (LEIBNIZ, 2007, p. 35) and this assumption, he states, “must be said again of any part of these living things, and so on to infinity” (p. 35). Coplestone summarizes Leibniz’s point of view by writing that, for the German philosopher:

> The world is a dynamic harmony, expressing the divine intelligence and will. In the case of man, for example, there is a dynamic or operational unity between the monads of which he is composed. And so it is with the universe. There is a universal harmony of monads conspiring together, as it were, for the attainment of a common end. And the principle of this harmony is God [...] each monad reflects the whole universe: the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm. An infinite mind, therefore, could read off, as it were, the whole universe by contemplating one single monad (COPLESTONE, 1994, p. 22).

Although the relevance of Descartes and Locke is practically undeniable, Martini (1960) remarks that the thought of Leibniz may be seen as one of the touchstones of 18th century. Descartes’s rationalism is considered as the starting point of modern philosophy at the same time that it states the individual as the center of a process in which this very same individual is seen as the most reliable source of thought and knowledge. The British rationalism also gave to individual sensorial acquirement of knowledge an unprecedented importance. Nonetheless, Martini claims that it is on the philosophy of Leibniz that the paramount directive of the century is.

Martini argues that Leibniz’s concept of pre-established harmony presupposes that each monad, which are “mental entities, capable of perceptions and appetitive states” (BLACKBURN, 1996, p. 248), lives by itself and simultaneously is part of an order and hierarchy with specific ends. Martini argues that Leibniz sees the monad as a symbol of the creative individuality of the artist. From Leibniz’s world view stems the belief in reason, in the sense of the ultimate rational order of nature, in progress. Happiness is associated with progress of knowledge and of action. Martini points out that in Leibniz’s works nature becomes sacred because it is now understood not only as God’s creation but also as God’s sublime image. Such notions, argues Martini, encapsulate much of the thought of the 18th century and of Enlightenment itself: the progressive ascension to clarity of knowledge and to perfection of individuality.

Nonetheless, there is yet another thinker who is described by Brazilian literary critic Otto Maria Carpeaux (1961) as the one responsible for setting the tone of 18th-century rationalism, and, at the same time, for paving the way to Romanticism: Englishman Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury. According to American scholar Douglas J. Den Uyl, Shaftesbury “wrote one

of the most important and influential books of the eighteenth century. [...] Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* first published in 1711, was the most reprinted book in English in that century" (UYL: 2001, p. 5). Still according to Uyl, Shaftesbury's most emblematic work, the 'Characteristicks', as Uyl refers to it, "was influential not only in England but throughout Europe" (p. 5). Prominent names, such as Rousseau and Schiller, are mentioned by Carpeaux as having been influenced by Shaftesbury ideas.

Uyl remarks that Shaftesbury, who was closely connected to and advised by John Locke, is generally credited with initiating what came to be known as 'the moral sense school of British ethical theory': "a way of moral theorizing that emphasized sentiment in moral experience" (p. 5). Moreover, as Carpeaux (1961) points out, Shaftesbury also believed in innate ideas, a belief that dominates his aesthetic and ethical thoughts. The Brazilian critic adds that the belief in innate ethical ideas led Shaftesbury to think of an ethics of feelings without divine sanctions. The innate aesthetic ideas explain the activities of what Shaftesbury called artists' "natural good genius" (SHAFTESBURY, 2001, p. 58). Carpeaux argues that such aesthetic ideas broke free from the classicist rules still in vogue during the 18th century. In fact, Carpeaux states that in these ideas of Shaftesbury are the spiritual germs of the bourgeois revolution and of the pre-Romantic aesthetic.

Carpeaux claims that the *zeitgeist* of the 18th century is rationalism. However, Carpeaux calls it a contradictory rationalism. It is worth understanding why. Against the rationalism from the Enlightenment comes into play the claim for the rights of feelings, argues the Brazilian critic. Carpeaux adds that this claim itself, nevertheless, is made through, with and by reason, which is anti-sentimental per se. The consequence, argues Carpeaux, is a dialectical contradiction that leads to a melancholic and ultimately pessimistic mentality of which Shaftesbury's own ideas are examples. In Shaftesbury's own words: "There is *a Melancholy* which accompanys all Enthusiasm. Be it *Love* or *Religion* (for there are Enthusiasms in both) nothing can put a stop to the growing mischief of either" (p. 17).

Despite Matthew Arnold's despise for the poetry produced in England in the 18th century, two other Englishmen would also express melancholy in a way that would influence the *zeitgeist* of the century in definite and relevant ways: the poets Edward Young and James Thomson. Young and Thomson would also exemplify through their works one of the most remarkable characteristics of the period, the cult of the genius, of the 'natural good genius', particularly that of William Shakespeare. Moreover, the cult of the nation is also patent in their individual works.

Edward Young is defined by Carpeaux (1961) as the incarnation of the English spleen and as one of the poets whose influence is among the deepest ones in world literature. Besides writing poems, Young also wrote plays and prose. As a playwright, he was never very successful, and his classicist plays are rarely staged nowadays. His most emblematic works are *The Complaint: or, Night Thoughts*, a blank-verse poem on death of nearly 10,000 lines, and *Conjectures on Original Composition*, a prose work addressed to English novelist Samuel Richardson, who was Young's friend.

Night Thoughts, which was immensely popular in the 18th century, was published in 1745 and was inspired by the successive deaths of Young's close family members: Young's stepdaughter died in 1936; her husband, in 1940; and, finally, Young's wife, in 1941. Carpeaux points out that, in *Night Thoughts*, Young evokes images of death, graves, cemeteries, and putrefaction. Carpeaux also identifies a moral anarchism in Young's poem. This moral anarchism is, in fact, represented by a questioning of the values of Enlightenment: "Are passions then the Pagans of the soul? / Reason alone baptized? Alone ordained / To touch things sacred?" (YOUNG, 1824, p. 75).

Such questioning would lead Young to develop a new poetic theory in his 1759 prose work *Conjectures on Original Composition*. With this work Young would condemn the erudite imitation of the ancient and celebrate what he saw as the instinctive genius of figures such as Homer and Shakespeare, following the previous ideas of Shaftesbury. As English Scholar Edith J. Morley lets us know, in his *Conjectures*, Young does not "add anything strikingly new to the various statements made by his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. It is his merit, rather, to sum up and emphasize their scattered remarks in an essay, brief, brilliantly pointed, enthusiastic, and readable" (MORLEY, 1918, p. xv-xvi).

Morley also points out that, for Young, Shakespeare ranks "with the greatest of the Ancients" (p. xvii). In Young's own words: "*Shakespeare* mingled no water with his wine, lower'd his genius by no vapid imitation. *Shakespeare* gave us a *Shakespeare*, nor could the first in antient fame have given us more! *Shakespeare* is not their son, but brother; their equal; and that, in spite of all his faults" (YOUNG, 1918, p. 34, author's italics). Morley also argues that Young believes that Shakespeare's methods should be studied and followed for "*Shakespeare* is an original" (p. 35, author's italics).

Young is also quite emphatic about associating what he calls the British ‘Originals’ with Britain’s national identity and with British worldwide expansion:

> May our genius shine, and proclaim us in that nobler view! [...] we have great *Originals* already — Bacon, Boyle, Newton, Shakespeare, Milton, have showed us, that all the winds cannot blow the British flag farther, than an original spirit can convey the British fame ; their names go round the world ; and what foreign genius strikes not as they pass? Why should not their posterity embark in the same bold bottom of new enterprize, and hope the same success? (YOUNG, 1918, p. 33-34, author’s italics).

Carpeaux (1961) believes Young’s theories, present in his *Conjectures*, to have operated a revolution in literary values. In fact, both Carpeaux and Morley argue that Young’s influence was way greater outside than inside Britain. As Morley states, “In France and in Germany [...], it has been more influential and better treated than in England” (MORLEY, 1918, p. xviii). Carpeaux argues that all of Europe actually imitated Young. Hauser corroborates Carpeaux and Morley’s point of view when he argues that it is in Young’s *Conjectures* that “the ideal of the creative personality arises, of the artistic genius with his originality and subjectivism” (HAUSER, 2005, p. 47) first appears. This ideal would be particularly influential in Germany.

Carpeaux argues that Young’s ideas on literary originality had such an overwhelming influence in Germany that it is possible to argue that pre-Romantic German literature, as well as the literature from Weimar would not have the characteristics they actually have without the influence of Young’s writings. Before delving any deeper in the characteristics of German literature, it is relevant to take a brief look at another important British poet whose work also had great reception in Germany and who shares some of the main features of Young’s most emblematic works: Scottish James Thomson.

Thomson is described by *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* as “the first and most popular nature poet of the century” (ABRAMS, M. H. et al., 1986, 2470), i.e. of the 18th century. Carpeaux believes Thomson to have operated a complete revolution in English and in universal poetries. Thomson is the author of *The Seasons*, a long, blank verse poem in four parts, each of which corresponding to one of the four seasons. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* also describes *The Season*, which was published in its complete form in 1730, as having “set the fashion for the poetry of natural description. Generations of readers learned to look at the external world through Thomson’s eyes and with the emotions which he had taught them to feel” (ABRAMS, M. H. et al., 1986, 2470).

Thomson is also the author of one of the most traditional odes to Great Britain: “Rule, Britannia”, from 1740. In this ode, argues Carpeaux (1961), the claims for freedom are interwoven with those for imperialism: “The nations, not so blest as thee, / Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall: / While thou shalt flourish great and free, / The dread and envy of them all. / Rule, *Britannia*, rule the waves; / *Britons* never will be slaves” (THOMSON, 1986, p. 2474, author’s italics).

Carpeaux (1961) sees Thomson´s poems as a remarkable example of the pre-Romantic poetry for several reasons. First of all, for the relation between Thomson’s literary output and the Industrial Revolution. As Carpeaux himself points out, ‘Industrial Revolution’ is an improper term, for the modifications that took place during the period in which England was turned from an agricultural society into an industrialized country were not sudden ones. Carpeaux argues that industry and industrialization in England are phenomena that precede the second half of the 18th, the period commonly associated to the Industrial Revolution. As Carpeaux remarks, by 1760, the English Industry was already using machines, and the alliance between capitalism and technique had already been effectively put into practice. Carpeaux states that what he calls the ‘poetic revolution’ follows mathematically the Industrial one.

As examples of these almost simultaneous revolutions, Carpeaux mentions the inventions of the flying shuttle, in 1733, and of the Spinning-Jenny, in 1764. Both devices greatly enhance the speed in the textile industry. Carpeaux associated the publication of Thomson’s *Seasons*, from 1730, with the 1733 invention, and Young’s *Night Thoughts*, from 1754, with the advent of the Spinning-Jenny.

The melancholy which is an inherent feature of Shaftesbury’s and Young’s works is also present in Thomson’s writing. In fact, Carpeaux argues that such feature of this new way of dealing with poetry could not be any other way, for poets could not take part in the bourgeois optimism of prosperity. The preference of the poets for rural aspects of England should not surprise, according to Carpeaux. In fact, the Brazilian critic argues that the new industry is also rural: the industrialization moves the economic centres to the midlands. One of the reasons of such move would be the extreme poverty of the rural communities, which allowed them to be seen as very cheap labour force and, therefore salaries could be way lower than those paid in the city. In addition to this, Carpeaux remarks that the Industrial Revolution is followed by an agrarian revolution: the textile industry needed wool, therefore, lots of fields were transformed

into pasture for lambs. All of these changes had direct influence in the new poetry being then produced.

This new poetry is basically rural, similar to those associated with the Arcadia, argues Carpeaux (1961). However, there are important differences: the ruling presence of melancholy and a new way of understanding nature. Nature is now seen as a living universe, full of cheerful and demoniac creatures alike, according to the Brazilian critic. Thomson is one of the exponents of such new poetry. Thomson, argues Carpeaux, revolutionized English poetry at the same time that awoke the enthusiasm for English poetry, especially the poetry of nature, throughout Europe. Germany, once more, was very much receptive to the work of another British poet.

Another important reason why Carpeaux sees Thomson as a remarkable example of the pre-Romantic British poetry lies on the poet's patent nationalism. As the author of *Rule, Britannia*, Thomson represents those poets who would no longer write only about their own personal feelings, but also of the imagined community of the nations, in Thomson's case of the imagined community of the British Empire.

As previously mentioned, the works of both Young and Thomson were very well received outside Britain. Characteristics such as the cult of Shakespeare, the cult of nation, melancholy, and a new approach to nature would have enormous influence in continental Europe. The influence exercised by Young and Thomson would play a decisive role in the advent of the Shakespeare myth.

8 THE MASTER OF THE HUMAN HEART

Shakespeare taught and moved and educated northern men!
Johann Gottfried Herder, *Shakespeare*

The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy describes the French philosopher Voltaire as having been hailed in France as "the greatest French champion of the Enlightenment, and his generation's most courageous spokesman for freedom and toleration" (BLACKBURN, 1996, p. 396). Carpeaux, on the other hand, credits Voltaire with being the pioneer in acclaiming Shakespeare in continental Europe. It was during his exile in England, from 1726-1729, that Voltaire got to know the works of Shakespeare. French-American scholar Alice Clark argues that Voltaire, in fact, "epitomizes the academic attitude of the great majority of French playwrights and translators who hoped to make Shakespeare accessible to the French public by adapting his works to classical taste" (CLARK, 2008, p. 513). Although, positively impressed with Shakespeare at first, Voltaire's opinion on the English playwright would gradually change. Clark adds that, in his later writings, Voltaire sees Shakespeare as "barbaric" (p. 514) and, ultimately, Voltaire "came to personify a hostile French classicism to generations of patriotic English bardolaters" (p. 514). Understandably, it was not the France of Voltaire that promoted one of the most important stages of the advent of the Shakespeare myth. The pre-Romantic Germany would be that place.

In his *The Social History of Art*, German art historian Arnold Hauser argues that whilst the bourgeoisie in "France and England remained fully conscious of its own position in society and never entirely abandoned the achievements of the enlightenment" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 91), in Germany, these very same 'achievements of the enlightenment' "had never completely penetrated public life, the social and political thinking of the broad masses or the attitude to life of the middle classes" (p. 91). As a result, Hauser argues that Germany "came under the sway of romantic irrationalism before it had passed through the school of rationalism" (p. 91). Moreover, a very peculiar political scenario isolated Germany even more from the other European nations already under the influence of the enlightened ideas.

Having international trade moved from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean during the 16th century, the German middle classes considerably lost their economic and, consequently, cultural influence. Hauser argues that whereas other Western monarchies, such as England and France, had received support from the bourgeoisie in their fight against the feudal nobility, Germany was still ruled by territorial princes. These princes, as Hauser lets us know, "were great landowners with predominantly feudal interests and no particular concern for the prosperity of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 93). In fact, the rule of these territorial princes over Germany would last for a long time and decidedly affect the cultural life in that country. As Hauser puts it, "just as the development of mercantilism into free trade took place only very slowly in Germany and was hardly complete before 1850, centralized political control over the territorial princes came to full fruition only in the second half of the nineteenth century" (p. 94).

Another significantly relevant characteristic of these territorial German princes is the way they were related to Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation. The princes not only sponsored the Reformation but also were given what Hauser calls "the instruments of spiritual power" (p. 94) by Luther. Hauser adds that the princes "seized the ecclesiastical properties, made the official ecclesiastical appointments, took over the control of religious education, and it is, therefore, not surprising that the established Churches developed into the most reliable supports of the power of the princes" (p. 94). As a consequence, "the bourgeois spirit typical of the 15th and 16th century disappeared from German art and culture" (p. 95), Hauser points out. Nevertheless, in the long run it was impossible to prevent the industrial and trade progresses.

Eventually, the middle classes started enriching once more, especially one specific upper middle class, the one "which could afford to pay for the patronage of court officials and follow the French fashions of the court" (p. 99). In the 18th century, under the influence of this particular class, "French taste and a contempt for all native traditions spread amongst the whole intelligentsia" (p. 99). The literature produced in France became the most appreciated one amongst the universities in Germany as well as among German *intelligentsia*. German literary critic, poet and dramatist Johann Christoph Gottsched was the most ardent supporter of the artistic values promoted by this emerging upper middle class.

Hauser defines Gottsched as "the protagonist of the bourgeoisie, which still had no artistic ideals of its own, however, and neither a distinct national character nor a clearly defined class-

consciousness" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 99). On the other hand, Hauser's countryman and scholar Fritz Martini (1960) describes Gottsched as a dictatorial spirit. Martini states that, for Gottsched, poetry is an art that must be learned. In order to promote the learning of poetry, Gottsched published, in 1729, his *Versuch Einer Critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deustchen*, or *Essay on a German Critical Poetic Theory*, the first piece of work written in Germany dedicated to apply French classicist poet and literary critic Nicolas Boileau's rational standards on the art of poetry. Boileau's most important work, on which Gottsched himself based his ideas, is his 1674 *Ars Poetica* or *The Art of Poetry*, "widely regarded as the most important critical work of the time" (PREST, 2007, p. xvii), as American scholar Julia Prest lets us know.

Prest also remarks that Boileau's work "offers an excellent means to understanding the precepts of French Classicism, a movement of which he is often thought to be France's most important representative" (p. ix). Moreover, Prest points out that Boileau's classicism should not be understood as a mere rediscovery of the Greek and/or Roman classics, but as a product of the society Boileau lived in. In Prest's own words,

> French Classicism as Boileau embraced it has less to do with any rediscovery of ancient texts [...] than with the rise of an absolutist, centralized regime in seventeenth-century France. Under Louis XIII and his prime minister, Cardinal Richelieu, the Académie Française was established in 1635 as the official arbiter of national linguistic and literary affairs. Under its influence, French writers and critics were encouraged to be dogmatic, for it was widely believed that the rules of good writing could and should be defined for posterity and that this was somehow a matter of state (p. xiii).

Boileau's *The Art of Poetry* is primarily based on two ancient works: Aristotle's *On Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Boileau repeats some of the rules prescribed by both Aristotle and Horace. For instance, Aristotle's prescription concerning simplicity and/or brevity, "what is more concentrated is more pleasant than what is diluted in a long period of time" (ARISTOTLE, 2002, p. 71), seems to be echoed in a passage such as the following one present in Boileau's *The Art of Poetry*: "Start off in simple style, as things begin. /Don't mount on high, on magic steeds, or fins, /Shouting verse like thunder, fiercely hurled, /[...] Oh how I love it, when they write like men, /Ignore Parnassian pomp, their simple pens/ [...] No fires burn, no rockets fill the air, /He makes no claims, but treats the reader fair" (BOILEAU, 2007, p. 46).

Nonetheless, as Brazilian scholar Pedro Süssekind (2008) points out, Boileau's *The Art of Poetry* seems to be based more on Horace's *Ars Poetica* than on Aristotle's *On Poetics*. Süssekind supports his point of view making reference to a feature common to both Horace's and

Boileau's works: the advisory tone. In both Horace's and Boileau's works many imperative sentences as well as direct recommendation to those who intend to become poets may be found. At the very beginning of Boileau's work it is possible to find a passage such as the following one, in which five verbs are used in the imperative form: "Don't waste your lives on worthless poems, don't think / Your taste for rhyming earns you nectared drink— / Fear empty pleasure like a mousetrap bait, /Weigh what you can and can't, don't fight with Fate" (BOILEAU, 2007, p. 20). Prest's remark sounds quite appropriate when she writes that *The Art of Poetry* aimed "less at scholars than at educated amateurs" (PREST, 2007, p. xvii)

In fact, Prest states that Boileau's work "was intended to define a universal doctrine of poetry" (p. xvii). Boileau not only defined and classified the literary genres but also dictated how poetry should be made. According to Boileau's conceptions, a poet's inspiration and talent should be governed by the demands prescribed by a definite set of rules, by reason, as the following passage clearly exemplifies: "rack your brain, arrange the proper weight, /And sooner, later, rhyme accepts its fate, /Yoked by Reason, shooting at the mark, /And bringing Light, instead of dreary Dark./[...] So cherish Reason: all your work should show/ That glory, shine that light; the world will know" (BOILEAU, 2007, p. 21).

According to Boileau's prescriptions, a poet should also be a model of virtue: "A decent, modest writer won't corrupt /If virtue's real, no matter what's stirred up. /His heat won't kindle sordid-burning flames: /No evil fires flare when goodness reigns" (p. 56). French playwright Jean Racine was considered as one of the artists who would follow and propagate the kind of art prescribed by Boileau. According to this classicist conception of art, a genius would be someone not only talented but also who strictly followed the prescribed rules.

Similarly to and heavily influenced by Boileau, Gottsched also tried to implement classicist rules to the art produced in Germany with his *Essay on a German Critical Poetic Theory*. With this particular work, Gottsched established a set of poetical rules that rejected the marvelous and the imaginary. Gottsched aimed at the production of an enlightened poetry with moralistic ends. Martini (1960) corroborates that Gottsched went to Boileau's *The Art of Poetry* for inspiration, but adds that whereas the work of the French critic may be characterized as classic/classicist, Gottsched's was a pedantic banality. Martini also points out that it was from France once more that Gottsched imported his ideas concerning the reformulation he believed the

German theatre needed. The works of playwrights such as Corneille, Racine, and Molière, served as models for the plays which started being produced in Germany.

Martini (1960) argues that it is true that Gottsched was able to establish a new dignified repertoire to the German theatre. Gottsched was also able to bring close together the bourgeoisie and the theatrical/artistic scene which started to emerge. Martini also points out that, although the reformulation of the German theatre promoted by Gottsched put this particular form of art under the spotlight like no other, there was no effective German theatre for a long time. Besides, Gottsched's ideas were not easily accepted by everyone related to the arts in German. For instance, German literary critic Johann Elias Schlegel was a great opponent of Gottsched's classicist approach to art.

Martini asserts that Schlegel was the first one in Germany to oppose to the classicist precepts the work of William Shakespeare. Martini adds that, in fact, Schlegel was the first one in his own country to discover the psychological depth and the dramatic strategies of the English playwright. In his 1741 *Vergleichung Shakespears und Andreas Gryphus* or *Comparison of Shakespeare and Andreas Gryphus* Schlegel praises Shakespeare's "irregularities of construction, his tendency to bombast, and his mingling of the farcical with the sublime" (FURST, 1994, p. 4), German-American scholar Lilian R. Furst remarks. Furst also points out that Schlegel also expresses admiration for Shakespeare's ability to "draw characters and to portray emotion" (p. 4). More importantly, Furst adds that "even more significant in the long run is Schlegel's insistence on the affinity between "Shakespeare and the German mentality" (p. 4). Furst also argues that another extremely relevant German author also discussed what the German-American scholar calls "the natural rapport between Shakespeare and the German mentality" (p. 4): the dramatist and literary critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who is described by Hauser as "the greatest of them all and perhaps the most genuine and the most attractive personality" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 92) in the Enlightenment.

Süssekind (2008) remarks that Lessing was one of the first to see the figure of Shakespeare as that of a kind of genius whose works could be used as a source of inspiration for those who would like to go against the classicist art wide-spread in the Germany of the second half of the 18th century. Lessing believed that translations of the works of Shakespeare into German would be much more profitable for the art in his country that those of classicist artists such as Racine or Corneille.

Lessing also believed that what classicist such as Boileau had done to the theories of Aristotle was in fact a corruption of the Greek philosopher's ideas. According to Lessing, more than the strict following of the rules, Aristotle was preoccupied with the effect caused in the audience by a given play. Süssekind argues that Lessing did not intend to contest Aristotle and the importance of the study of the classics, but rather to destroy the conception which regarded the French Classicism as the only model to be followed.

Lessing saw Shakespeare as a counterpoint to this sort of classicism, as a different and new kind of genius who did not follow preestablished rules, but who could achieve the cathartic effect expected to take place in theatre like none of the representatives of classicist theatre. Lessing, using Shakespeare and his works, proposed new conceptions of art and of genius, conceptions rather different from those related to the French Classicism. These ideas of Lessing's had a great impact in the German pre-Romantic movement *Sturm und Drang* or Storm and Stress.

The passage in Lessing's *Laocoon* in which the topic of how suitable a subject deformity is for poetry is an example of the way Lessing thought the works of Shakespeare could be seen as a source for new approaches to theatre. Lessing uses two Shakespearean characters to exemplify how deformity can effectively be fit to poetry, despite the classicist precepts. In fact, Lessing states that he does not know "how to illustrate this better than by a reference to two admirable passages in Shakspeare" (LESSING, 1836, p. 242). The two characters are Edmund from *King Lear*, and Richard from *Richard III*. The passages are the following: from *King Lear*, Lessing refers to the passage in act 1, scene 2, in which Edmund, in a soliloquy, addresses Nature and questions his own bastardy:

> Thou, Nature, art my goddess. To thy law
> My services are bound. Wherefore should I
> Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
> The curiosity of nations to deprive me
> For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
> Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base,
> When my dimensions are as well compact,
> My mind as generous, and my shape as true
> As honest madam's issue?
> (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1495).

Lessing sees this as a passage that makes him hear Edmund as possessing "the voice of a demon" (LESSING, 1836, p. 242), but "under the form of an angel of light" (p. 242). That is to say, Lessing understands that, through Edmund, Shakespeare managed to "excite ludicrous ideas"

(LESSING, 1836, p. 242) without exciting “horror and disgust” (p. 242), for Edmund is not physically deformed. On the other hand, when Richard, from *Richard III*, in act 1, scene 1, also in a soliloquy, states

> But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
> Nor made to court an amorous looking glass
> I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
> To strut before a wanton ambling nymph,
> I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
> Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world scarce half made up,
> And that so lamely and unfashionable
> That dogs bark at me as I halt by them –
> Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
> Have no delight to pass away the time,
> Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
> And descant on mine own deformity.
> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain
> (SHAKESPEARE, 2002d, p. 910-911).

Lessing claims not only to hear a demon but also to see one: “I see him under a form which the devil alone could wear” (LESSING, 1836, p. 243). For Lessing, this character and this passage from Shakespeare’s play exemplify “deformity which delights in mischief” (p. 242) and that, therefore, is “an object of horror” (p. 242). Referring to the two aforementioned passages from Shakespeare’s plays, Lessing questions: “How then does it happen that the former does not by any means excite the same horror and disgust as the latter?” (p. 242). It is Lessing himself who provides the answer to his own question.

From Lessing’s viewpoint, in the case of Edmund, whose deformity is not physical, but spiritual, “it is precisely because deformity [...] presents a less adverse appearance of corporeal imperfection” (p. 237), and, therefore, “ceases, as it were, to be deformity, that it is available to the poet” (p. 237). Lessing believes this paradoxical use of deformity allows the poet to employ it “with advantage as an ingredient in producing and strengthening certain mixed sensations [...] in default of those which are more exclusively agreeable” (p. 237).

It is possible to argue that what Lessing is trying to convey is the idea that Shakespeare’s “compositions of a distinct kind” (JOHNSON, 2009, p. 358), as Samuel Johnson would put it, allow us to experience ‘certain mixed sensations’ not prescribed by the classicist rules of the likes of Boileau and Gottsched. Whereas the classicist prescription expected models of virtue,

simplicity and an extremely rational approach to subjects, Shakespeare was able to promote the cathartic effect Lessing expected from a theatrical play. This cathartic effect Lessing believes is what Aristotle really prescribes, differently from what the classicists professed.

German scholar Werner Habicht argues that Lessing understood Shakespeare as being "compatible with the true spirit of Aristotelian rules" (HABICHT, 2008a, p. 161). Habicht also claims that Lessing "recommended Shakespeare, and English drama in general, as a model better suited for Germany than what the tyranny of French classicism had imposed upon it" (p. 161). Habicht adds that Lessing's views on Shakespeare in fact "did spark off an enthusiasm for Shakespeare that resulted in a cult" (p. 161).

This cult could be identified in the translations of 22 Shakespearean plays done by German poet and man of letters Christoph Martin Wieland from 1762 to 1766. Although Wieland insisted that there were faults to be corrected in Shakespeare's plays, his translations made a substantial body of Shakespearian plays available to those interested in the works of the English playwright in Germany. As Habicht points out, the literary quality of this body of work "came to be debated with increasing intensity. While classicist objections never quite subsided, avant-garde writers extolled Shakespeare passionately, insisting that the work of an original genius should not be judged by normative (not even Aristotelian) rules" (p. 161). German philosopher and critic Johann Gottfried von Herder was one of the most ardent supporters of this avant-garde point of view.

Herder is described by Carpeaux as the greatest literary critic of pre-Romanticism; German philosopher Rüdiger Safranski (2010) defines Herder as 'The German Rousseau'; and Hauser defines Herder as "perhaps the most characteristic figure in eighteenth century German literature. He combines within himself the most important currents of the age" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 112). Carpeaux (1961) also argues that Herder's thoughts gave a new nationalist twist to the concept of original genius, for Herder identified the concept of genius with that of national identity. The original genius was in fact, for Herder, a national genius, whose ideas reflect those of the very nation where this genius was born in.

Although Carpeaux sees Herder as being a pioneer in associating the figure of the genius with the idea of national identity, it is worth remarking that British poet Edward Young had made the same association before Herder. A fact that only reinforces how strong the influence of British thinkers and/or poets was in the 18th-century Germany.

Nonetheless, Herder's association ultimately also greatly helped the Shakespeare myth to be spread. Herder was an ardent admirer of the English playwright. Herder wrote an important essay entitled "Shakespeare" and published it in 1773. In this essay, Herder highly praises the Englishman whose name is used in the title of the essay. Herder's text raises several questions of paramount importance to the advent and promotion of the Shakespeare myth.

First of all, like Young and Shaftesbury before him, Herder also believes in the original genius. In fact, Herder's belief in the original genius may be understood as a belief shared by the pre-Romantics in general, i.e. those who were against the classicist rules, would normally believe in this idea as a valid counterpoint to the constraining precepts of Boileau and Gottsched, for example. Quoting the English poet Mark Akenside, Herder defines Shakespeare as possessing "that tremendous image of one 'seated high on the craggy hilltop, storm, tempest, and the roaring sea at his feet, but with the radiance of the heavens about his head'" (HERDER, 1997, p. 39).

In addition to this, Herder, as previously mentioned, associates the image of Shakespeare with Great Britain's national identity. Herder refers to Britain and Shakespeare in following manner: "the *toto divisis ab orbe Britannis* and their great Shakespeare" (p. 40). It is quite interesting the way in which Herder makes its first reference to Britain in his "Shakespeare": he only refers to Britain after having previously mentioned Shakespeare, Germany and Greece. Moreover, he does so by using a Latin phrase, '*toto divisis ab orbe Britannis*', i.e. the "Britons, divided from the rest of the earth" (BATE, 1997, p. 564). This is not by chance. Herder gives the national identity attached to the figure of Shakespeare a significant twist: Herder associates Shakespeare not only to British identity, but to a supposed northern identity. Herder writes that Shakespeare was the greatest producer of a certain 'northern drama'. In fact, Herder defines Shakespeare as "the greatest northern dramatist" (HERDER, 1997, p. 40). According to Herder, "Shakespeare taught and moved and educated northern men!" (p. 41).

As a matter of fact, Herder will associate Shakespeare's genius to Nature itself, and, therefore, make statements such as the following one: "Shakespeare speaks the language of all ages, of all sorts and conditions of men; he is the interpreter of Nature in all her tongues" (p. 41). A statement such as this may be associated to the idea of myth developed by Barthes in his *Mythologies*. By portraying Shakespeare as 'the interpreter of Nature in all her tongues', Herder not only dehistoricizes Shakespeare but also deterritorializes the English playwright. Herder deterritorializes Shakespeare in the sense of removing a given cultural subject, Shakespeare, from

a particular locus in time and space. As previously mentioned, this removal from history is what Barthes sees as being the very principle of myth: “it transforms history into nature” (BARTHES, 1991, p. 128). More than this, Herder’s viewpoint on Shakespeare would lead the way for the cult of Shakespeare to transcend Great Britain’s national limits and reach other parts of the world.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it was also Herder who developed an idea of history that would be highly influential in modern conceptions of the historical processes and that may be traced in the essay “Shakespeare”. As Safranski (2010) points out, Herder believed everything to be history, including Nature, and, as a consequence, Shakespeare. In his essay on the English playwright Herder states about Shakespeare: “This is not a poet, but a creator! Here is the history of the world!” (HERDER, 1997, p. 44). Such assertion only makes sense if one understands Herder’s conception of history.

Safranski argues that, before Herder, there had never been a more dynamic and emphatic way of understanding history. From the presupposition that everything is history, Herder includes the history of Nature in history itself. Nature, within the historical process, is the very creative power previously believed to belong in a locus outside nature, i.e. in an inaccessible metaphysical space. Herder believes the evolution of Nature to give birth to varied forms of life, including man. Humanity is understood by Herder as a distinct creation of Nature because man can and must take as his own the creative power which acts in Nature itself. Man is able to do it due to mankind’s intelligence and language; on the other hand, man must do it because mankind lacks instincts and is, therefore, defenseless. In this conception of history, argues Safranski, there is no paradisiacal prehistory, to which it would be better to go back to. Each epoch has its own challenges. According to Safranski, Herder’s conception of history caused a great rupture in the spirit of Europe. It relitivized everything.

Besides this new conception of history, Herder, highly influenced by the thought of Leibniz, develops the idea of individualism and of plurality. Similarly to what happens in Liebniz’s monadology, Herder believes there is humanity as an abstract entity and there is also a humanity to which each person has to be attentive to in himself/herself and bring it an individual form. That is, if Leibniz believed everything to be composed of smaller parts, the monads, Herder believes humanity to be composed of small individual parts, human beings and each of their individual humanities.

It is also important to stress how Drakakis's also previously mentioned statement reinforces the idea that Herder's viewpoint "confers upon a quintessentially English writer [...] a divine status" (DRAKAKIS, 1988, p. 25). The very aforementioned definitions of Shakespeare provided by Herder exemplify this assumption. Moreover, Herder argues that Shakespeare is "a mortal man, endowed with divine power" (HERDER, 1997, p. 40-41) and also that "Shakespeare discovered the godlike art of conceiving an entire world" (p. 44). In addition to this, Herder claims the entire world to be "but the body to this great spirit. All the scenes of Nature are the limbs of this body, even as all the characters and styles of thought are the features of this spirit" (p. 47). Safranski argues that a passage like this exemplifies a type of language Herder tried to use in order to adapt his own discourse to what Herder himself saw as the mysterious movement of life. Instead of write using concepts, like the rationalists he was against, Herder writes using metaphors. Nonetheless, it is also possible to argue that Herder's words clearly exemplify what Habicht mentions about Lessing's views on Shakespeare having sparked off "an enthusiasm for Shakespeare that resulted in a cult" (HABICHT, 2008a, p. 161).

Another remarkable characteristic of the thought of Herder that would influence subsequent movements, especially romanticism, was his great enthusiasm for the folk songs and other documents related to popular culture not only from Germany, but from other 'northern' nations, such as England. Safranski (2010) argues that the contact Herder established with popular culture was actually the trigger for Herder's awareness of his own cultural roots. An awareness that led Herder to try and find an identity to the German way of producing art. Shakespeare was clearly related to this attempt. The very essay "Shakespeare" is part of the attempt. Referring to Shakespeare, Herder writes that with the essay he tries and ask his countrymen to "explain him, feel him as he is, use him, and – if possible – make him alive for us in Germany" (HERDER, 1997, p. 39).

The fact that Herder was, alongside the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a leading figure of the *Sturm und Drang* movement should not surprise, for Herder's ideas about Shakespeare and about culture in general are the same as of those who took part in the movement. In fact, Safranski argues that Herder's philosophy incited the cult of genius of the *Sturm und Drang*. In addition, Hauser claims that "perhaps nothing reflects so acutely and comprehensively the motives from which the 'Storm and Stress' develops its world-view as the

concept of the artistic genius, which it places at the summit of human values" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 108).

Hauser's following passage on the artistic genius, though quite long, is worth quoting, for it is quite elucidative:

> The concept contains, first of all, the criteria of the irrational and the subjective, which pre-romanticism emphasizes in opposition to the generalizing and dogmatic enlightenment, the conversion of external compulsion into inward freedom, which is rebellious and despotic at one and the same time, and, finally, the principle of originality, which, in this natal hour of the free man of letters and of an hourly increasing competitiveness, becomes the most important weapon in the intelligentsia's struggle for existence. Artistic creation, which was a clearly definable intellectual activity, based on explicable and learnable rules of taste, for both courtly classicism and the enlightenment, now appears as a mysterious process derived from such unfathomable sources as divine inspiration (HAUSER, 2005, p. 108).

In fact, by the end of the 18th century there were a considerable number of artists dissatisfied with the strong influence of the French Classicism still felt on the German arts, especially on theatre. The members of the *Sturm und Drang* movement were very much in tune with such ideas. According to Süssekind (2008), the *Sturm und Drang* movement was related to a project of emancipation of the German bourgeoisie, which was quite overdue in relation to other countries. Hauser, who uses the terms 'bourgeoisie' and 'middle-class' interchangeably in his *The Social History of Art*, argues that "With the 'Storm and Stress' movement, German literature becomes entirely middle-class" (HAUSER, 2005, p. 101). The German art historian adds that "the intellectual leaders of the age think and feel in accordance with middle-class attitudes and the public to which they turn consists mainly of middle-class elements" (p. 101). Although supposedly against the enlightened ideas, the movement was clearly associated to political aspirations related to the Enlightenment: critiques to aristocratic social conventions and the defense of individual freedom, could be mentioned as two examples of such aspirations.

Although most of the artistic output related to movement were dramatic productions, Süssekind argues that Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* may be seen as a symbol of the movement for several reasons: it unveils an original genius in the figure of Goethe, someone who manages to transform his own subjective world into an acclaimed masterpiece which deals with the questions of his time; Werther would represent an expression of the bourgeoisie, which was fighting for the individual freedom and against the established

conventions; Werther is a character whose imaginative genius feeds from the creative power of nature in his conflict with the status quo.

Nonetheless, Süssekind states that although *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* may be seen as the symbol of the *Sturm und Drang*, it was through the readings of Shakespearean plays that the members of the movement would fight the preestablished rules and privilege natural, irrational elements and impulses of the artistic creation. Süssekind corroborates Habicht's words when he states that there was a kind of religious devotion to the reading of Shakespeareans plays, which were believed to lead the way to freedom from traditional conventions and to brand new poetical experiences.

In 1789, between the first stages of development of the *Sturm und Drang* and the advent of Romanticism, a crucial event took place: The French Revolution. According to Safranski (2010), immediately after the events of the French Revolution were brought to light, it was crystal clear for the German intellectuals and writers that a new era had begun. The German intelligentsia understood the revolution as the first scene of a plot based on the actions of society, argues Safranski: those who had been partisans of the philosophical ideas of freedom and equality could see in the revolution the triumph of philosophy; they believed that the proof that thinking and writing not only interpret the word but also transform it.

Safranski argues that the French Revolution had such a powerful spread because people, including European intelligentsia, expected from it the extinction not of an unfair governing system, but of all forms of government. The changes of the political institutions would hopefully bring the free man to light. First in France, then throughout Europe, a new political view emerged: questions previously answered by religion were directed to politics; history starts recruiting the ordinary man for its battles. The way to Romanticism had been paved.

At this point, it seems relevant to review some of the characteristics the Shakespeare myth inherited from the pre-Romantic movements, especially in Britain and in Germany. From Britain, Shaftesbury's and Young's ideas helped the association between the original genius and Shakespeare to be reinforced. It is also from Britain, that a melancholy which would become typical of the Romantic movement also has its origins: the works of Shaftesbury, Young and Thompson are examples of literary outputs which have this particular quality. Young and Thompson also helped the association between poetry and the nationalist discourse to get stronger. Thompson's *Rule, Britannia* and Young's *Conjectures* contain remarkable examples of

such association. Young's *Conjectures* not only promoted this association but also established an inherent connection between the nationalist discourse and praises to the figure of Shakespeare, that is, Young merged Britain's national identity with Shakespeare's. Moreover, Young's *Conjectures* promoted throughout Europe a new way of conceiving literature. It is also important to remark that Empiricism of philosophers such as John Locke were crucial in the development of a new individualist perception of reality. All of these prominent Britain pre-Romantic figures were also influenced by and became representatives of the bourgeois way of thinking. All of them also had great influence in 18th-century German intelligentsia.

The first prominent German figure which should be mentioned is Leibniz, for his philosophical insights were very influential inside and outside Germany. It is rather surprising that a country without an influential bourgeoisie and under the rule of feudal territorial princes could have amongst its countrymen a philosopher whose work was so much in tune with the thought of the bourgeoisie of other European countries, such as France and Britain. Men such as Lessing and Herder greatly helped promoting the cult of Shakespeare at the same time that let it clear the influence of the British pre-Romantics had highly influenced them. Shaftesbury and Young's ideas, for instance, were received and developed in German in a impressive way: the cult of the original genius of Shakespeare, for instance, found in Herder an ardent supporter that would effectively change the way Shakespeare was understood at the same time that altered the way history itself was conceived. Herder also promoted popular culture as no other before him, also changing the very way in which the intellectuals saw it.

For this dissertation, what is of paramount importance is to point out how all the developments associated to the Shakespeare myth reinforce the words of Barthes on myth. The most important aspect is the one which concerns the concurrent naturalization and deification of Shakespeare as a result of a bourgeois ideology. An ideology that, as Barthes claims, has in its very fundamentals the need of creating myths in order to naturalize itself.

Another important aspect for this dissertation is the demystification a myth associated to the very Shakespeare myth: the one which claims that it was the valorization of Shakespeare in pre-Romantic and Romantic Germany that made Shakespeare the model of artistic originality par excellence. It is true that the pre-Romantic and Romantic movements in Germany greatly contributed to this valorization. However it is also true that figures such as Shaftesbury and

Young were not only pioneers in relation to the German (pre-)Romantics, but also they greatly influenced the ones responsible for the cult of Shakespeare in Germany.

Safranski (2010) corroborates this assumption when he argues that due to the very peculiar socio-political situation in Germany at the time, it was through the substitute provided by literature that, before the advent of Romanticism in German, people would experience all the extraordinary achievements of other countries. Martini (1960) gives the examples of the English mariners, of the American pioneers, and of the killers of the French Revolution. However, it is also possible to argue that the ideas of poets and philosophers such as Young and Shaftesbury would follow the same path.

8.1 Romanticism

Although Scholars David Perkins and Aidan Day, who are American and British respectively, have vastly different approaches to Romanticism, they agree that the very terms ‘Romanticism’ and ‘Romantic’ are inadequate to convey all the possible meanings that may be attached to them. Perkins, for instance, argues that “as a qualitative or descriptive term, the word ‘Romantic’ – in its traditional and popular sense – is strictly applied to only some aspects of the intellectual and cultural character” (PERKINS, 1967, p. 1) of the artistic output produced during the years supposedly correspondent to the time when Romanticism was in vogue. Day, on the other hand, claims that any attempts “to summarize Romanticism inevitably end up over-systematizing and simplifying the phenomenon” (DAY, 1996, p. 5).

This dissertation does not aim at delving too deep into the concepts and artistic productions related to Romanticism. In fact, Romanticism will be dealt with here as a mere theoretical term which supposedly will be able to encompass aesthetically and historically the productions of some of those who, one way or another, promoted and/or contributed to the spread of the Shakespeare myth in a specific span. Taking into consideration what has been previously discussed in this dissertation, Romantics will be considered those whose artistic and/or philosophical outputs continued to promote the values inaugurated in what has been so far referred to as pre-Romanticism, especially in relation to the Shakespeare myth.

The span during which Romanticism was in vogue has also been a matter for discussion. Nonetheless, Carpeaux’s (1961) quite comprehensive span of 59 years, from 1789 to 1848, may be taken as a valid one. The aim here is to exemplify how spread and encrusted in the minds of

poets, philosophers and prominent writers the idea of Shakespeare as original genius was from the end of the 18th century until the end of the first half of the 19th century.

Although Day argues that "Romanticism was a European phenomenon" (DAY, 1996, p. xi), it is also possible to argue that Romanticism was not only a European phenomenon, but, at least, an American one too. Countries such as The United States and Brazil have in their literary canons authors, artists and works labeled until nowadays as Romantic ones.

Nonetheless, it seems relevant to take a brief look firstly at the some English Romantics who promoted and helped to propagate the Shakespeare myth. Although listed as one of the prominent figures of the English Romantic Period by *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Charles Lamb is defined by the same anthology as lacking "almost all the traits and convictions we think of as characteristically 'Romantic'" (ABRAMS et al., 1986, p. 412). According to the same anthology, the only attribute Lamb shared with his prominent contemporaries was "the display of one's own personality" (p. 413), especially in the form of essays, a literary genre developed mainly by the French Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne. Lamb is the author of the 1811 essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for stage representation". In this essay, Lamb examines whether or not Shakespearean plays are, as the title says, 'fit for representation'. Without going further in this discussion at this point, it is relevant to notice that the association made by the pre-Romantics between the original genius of Shakespeare and Nature is referred to in Lamb's essay. In Lamb's own words, "It is common for people to talk of Shakespeare's plays being *so natural*; [...] They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of reach of most of us" (LAMB, 1997, p. 117). Although making a quite ironic remark, Lamb makes use of what seems to be a commonsensical assumption in the beginning of the 19th century: Shakespeare's plays are natural. In fact, a characteristic feature of the Shakespeare myth, as of any myth: naturalization.

Another prominent English Romantic is Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge is defined by Perkins as "a major poet and one of the foremost English critics" (PERKINS, 1967, p. 385). Perkins adds that Coleridge's writings "contain further speculation and insight on every conceivable subject" (p. 385). Shakespeare is no exception. As a matter of fact, between 1808 and 1819, Coleridge delivered public lectures on Shakespeare and other poets. According to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Coleridge "published none of this material, leaving only

fragmentary remains of his lectures in notebooks scraps of manuscripts, and notes written in the margin of books" (ABRAMS et al., 1986, p. 406). Nevertheless, these very 'fragmentary remains' alongside contemporary reports served as sources for the collected extracts which ultimately became available. The notes from a 1813 lecture that, after being collected and edited, received the title "The Character of Hamlet" once more provide an example of the association of the a Shakespearean play and Nature. Coleridge writes about Hamlet: "That this character must have some common connection with the laws of nature, was assumed by the lecturer from the fact that Hamlet was the darling of every country where literature was fostered" (COLERIDGE, 1967b, p. 497). Coleridge also refers to the commonsensical assumption which associates Shakespeare to Nature in "Stage Illusion": "We are all in the habit of praising Shakespeare or of hearing him extolled for his fidelity to nature" (COLERIDGE, 1967a, p. 498). Moreover, Coleridge is another one of those who believed it was Shakespeare's the "right to the supremacy of dramatic excellence in general" (COLERIDGE, 1986, p. 406).

As these fragments make clear, Coleridge, one of the greatest names of English Romanticism and of Romanticism in general, also promoted aspects of the Shakespearean myth just like many others did. Coleridge, following what seems more and more as a commonsensical assumption from the early 19th century, naturalizes Shakespeare. Coleridge also sees Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist of all time, in a sense contributing to the dehistoricization of the figure of Shakespeare, placing him in an unparalleled position.

If Perkins described Coleridge as "one of the foremost English critics" (PERKINS, 1967, p. 385), alongside Coleridge Perkins places William Hazlitt, "the most representative critic of English Romanticism and (together with Coleridge, or not far below him) one of the two most distinguished" (p. 607). Still according to Perkins, Hazlitt's 1817 *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* is "particularly notable" (p. 607) amongst other productions of Hazlitt. Like Coleridge, Hazlitt also delivered lectures on poets. Perkins also points out that the "ability of the poet to get outside himself" (p. 609) was what Hazlitt most valued in terms of art. Perkins adds that, for Hazlitt, "Shakespeare especially is held up as an example of this capacity of mind" (p. 609).

In his 1818 lecture "On Shakespeare and Milton", Hazlitt states that the "striking peculiarity of Shakspeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds – so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more than another" (HAZLITT, 1967, p. 621). Hazlitt's

words seem to echo those of Herder when the latter writes that “Shakespeare speaks the language of all ages, of all sorts and conditions of men; he is the interpreter of Nature in all her tongues” (HERDER, 1997, p. 41). Hazlitt’s statement is, just like Herder’s, susceptible of being easily associated to the dehistoricization and deterritorialization of Shakespeare also promoted by Herder and characteristic of the Shakespeare myth.

Hazlitt also places Shakespeare in an unattainable, godlike position. From the same “On Shakespeare and Milton”, the following illustrative extract was taken. Though long, it is only a part of an elucidative definition of Shakespeare made by Hazlitt:

> He was nothing in himself; ne he was all that others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict of passion, or turn of thought. He had ‘a mind reflecting ages past,’ and present: - all the people that ever lived are there. [...] His genius shone equally on the evil and on the good, on the wise and the foolish, the monarch and the beggar [...] He was like the genius of humanity, changing places with all of us at pleasure (HAZLITT, 1967, p. 622).

Although there are other prominent English men of letters that also praise Shakespeare’s figure and works, such as Hartley Coleridge, John Keats, and William Wordsworth, the examples provided by the three aforementioned English Romantics and their works seem to suffice. Hopefully, the examples made it clearer how the cult of Shakespeare, which may be said to have its origins in the Enlightenment, continued to have its ardent supporters throughout the advent of the Romantic movement in England. In Germany it was not different. Prominent names such as Schlegel, Hegel, and Goethe, who is also referred to as ‘The German Shakespeare’, continued the cult initiated with the Pre-Romantic and the *Sturm und Drang* movements.

Goethe, who took part in the *Sturm und Drang*, in the Classicism of Weimar and in the Romantic movement itself, has opinions of Shakespeare that are a clear way through which one can understand and follow the changes his thought went through. Süssekind even argues that through Goethe’s reflections on Shakespeare present in some of his essays as well as in his 1796 novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* it is possible to follow the fundamental changes the German theory of art when through during Goethe’s lifetime.

Although other early writings by Goethe also deal with Shakespeare, his 1771 speech “For Shakespeare’s Day”, for instance, the novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* has enough passages which could be taken as examples that illustrate Goethe’s viewpoint on Shakespeare

while the German poet could still be considered a member of the *Sturm und Drang*. It is important to bear in mind that Goethe tried to exemplify with his novel what Süssekind sees as the semi-autobiographical protagonist's long journey from passionate youth to a productive and harmonious familiarity with other free and well-bred individuals. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is, in fact, considered the first *bildungsroman.* Wilhelm's passionate opinions from his youth are the ones which may be associated to the *Sturm und Drang*.

After having got in contact with the works of Shakespeare for the first time, Wilhelm says: "I cannot recollect that any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such important effects on me, as the precious works, to which [...] I have been directed" (GOETHE, 1997b, p. 67). Wilhelm adds that Shakespearean works "seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius, descending among men, to make them [...] acquainted with themselves. They are no fictions! You would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed book of Fate" (p. 67). These viewpoints on Shakespeare seem once more to echo those of pre-Romantic Herder, and, consequently, of those involved in the *Sturm und Drang*.

Moreover, Herder's conception of Shakespeare as "the greatest northern dramatist" (HERDER, 1997, p. 40) who "taught and moved and educated northern men!" (p. 41) is in a sense reproduced in Goethe's novel precisely in the part of the narrative in which Wilhelm still demonstrates his enthusiasm after getting in contact with the works of Shakespeare for the first time: "Shakspeare's world incite me, more than anything beside, to quicken my footsteps forward into the actual world [...], to draw a few cups from the great ocean of true nature, and to distribute them from off the stage among the thirsting people of my native land" (GOETHE, 1997b, p. 68). Goethe not only portrays Shakespearean plays as 'the great ocean of true nature', as commonsensically as so many others would go on doing throughout the first half of the 19th century, but also corroborates Herder's aim to make Shakespeare "alive for us in Germany" (HERDER, 1997, p. 39).

Moreover, it is relevant to remark that in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* "the semi-autobiographical protagonist is involved in a production of *Hamlet*" (HABICHT, 2008b, p. 167) as German scholar Habicht points out. Süssekind adds that the main question amongst the characters involved in the production of the play is adaptation, i.e. what could be cut from the play without mutilating it. The theme of adaptation, which will be later dealt with in this dissertation, is a paramount one in the discussion of the Shakespeare myth and is also

encompassed in Goethe's novel in a sense that enriches the very discussion on Shakespeare as well as on the Shakespeare myth. It would also affect the way in which Goethe himself would conceive Shakespeare in his late career. The ardent youthful enthusiasm for Shakespeare would actually be gradually relitivized throughout Goethe's career.

In his 1815 essay "Shakespeare and No End!", for example, Goethe "continued to value Shakespeare's place in the history of poetry rather than of theatre" (HABICHT, 2008b, p. 167), as Habicht remarks. In Goethe's own words, "Shakespeare belongs by necessity in the annals of poetry; in the annals of the theatre he appears only by accident" (GOETHE, 1967a, p. 76). Goethe goes even further and states that "Shakespeare's whole method finds in the stage itself something unwieldy and hostile" (p. 77). Finally, Goethe adds that "it would be only falsehood [...] were we to say that the stage was a worthy field for his genius" (GOETHE, 1967a, p. 77). From willing "to draw a few cups from the great ocean of true nature" (p. 68) of the Shakespearean stage to considering the very same stage an unworthy field for the genius of the English playwright a vast difference in points of view is clearly noticeable.

According to Süssekind, at the core of Goethe's change of perspective is once more the question of adaptation, the question of whether or not should the staging of Shakespearean plays in Germany be faithful to the original texts. If Shakespeare had already been seen as "the greatest northern dramatist" (HERDER, 1997, p. 40), it seems that the time was right for the theatre in Germany finally to assume its own nationalist role, i.e. the time was right for German theatre finally manage to take its own decisions without resorting to foreign models, even if these models were Shakespearean ones.

German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is another one that may be listed alongside those who contributed to the Shakespeare myth during the span Carpeaux sees as correspondent to the time Romanticism was in vogue. From 1820 to 1829 Hegel delivered a series of lectures in Germany. These lectures were later on collected, edited and posthumously published in a 1835 volume entitle *Aesthetic: Lectures on Fine Art*. In one of these lectures, Hegel compares the ancient drama to the modern one. As the primary example of modern drama Hegel sees Shakespeare. Hegel argues that in modern plays, i.e. in Shakespearean plays "it is the individual character [...] who makes his decisions, either following his personal desires and needs or responding to purely external influence" (HEGEL, 1967, p. 239-240). Hegel confers to Shakespearean characters a feature characteristic of Hegel's own contemporaneity, or, as Martini

puts it, a manifest tendency towards the creation of a new concept of individuality. Hegel, like so many others after and before him, deterritorializes Shakespeare in order to make him suitable for specific contemporary needs and assumptions.

In addition to this, Hegel corroborates many of the admirers of Shakespeare who place him in an unattainable position. Hegel claims the English dramatist to be exceptionally distinguished "in their mastery of exposition of fully developed human characters and personality" (HEGEL, 1967, p. 241). According to Hegel, amongst the English dramatist Shakespeare is "soaring above the rest at an almost unapproachable height" (p. 241). Shakespeare soars at an incredible height. Shakespeare is depicted as a godlike creature once more by Hegel too.

According to Habicht, German Romantic author August Wilhelm Schlegel is "best know for his sensitive metrical translation of sixteen plays [...], which, when completed [...] became standard" (HABICHT, 2008c, p. 410). The sixteen plays referred to in the extract from Habicht entry on August Wilhelm Schlegel for *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* are Shakespearean ones. Habicht adds that, in his critical writings, Schlegel "emphasized the autonomous organism of Shakespeare's poetry, defining it as 'Romantic'" (p. 410). Besides translating and writing critical texts, Schlegel, like some of his contemporary countrymen aforementioned, also delivered lectures. In a volume of collected lectures published in 1815 under the title *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* it is possible to find some of the opinions Schlegel had on Shakespeare.

Schlegel shares the general opinion that "the whole of Shakspeare productions bear the certain stamp of his original genius" (SCHLEGEL, 1997, p. 109). Similarly to Hegel, to Herder and to the early Goethe, Schlegel also sees Shakespeare in a godlike position: "He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of their anterior states" (p. 100). Still placing Shakespeare in a godlike position, Schlegel also makes references to the 'proverbial' characteristics associated to the English playwright: "Shakspeare's knowledge of mankind has become proverbial: in this his superiority is so great, that he has just been called the master of the human heart" (p. 97). Schlegel also points out that it is Shakespeare's "capacity of transporting himself so completely into every situation, even the most unusual, that he is enabled, as plenipotentiary of the whole human race [...] to act and speak in the name of every individual" (p. 97).

The assumption that Shakespeare has the power to ‘act and speak in the name of every individual’ allows Shakespeare to be deterritorialized from England and be placed in an unattainable position from which every individual, not only English individuals, may be accessed by his plenipotentiary power. Moreover, the Shakespeare and Shakespeare’s contemporaries Schlegel depicts have yet other interesting qualities.

Schlegel argues that Shakespeare “was the idol of his contemporaries” (SCHLEGEL, 1997, p. 88), who “knew well the treasure they possessed in him; and that they felt and understood him better than most of those who succeeded him” (p. 89). Clearly idealizing the Elizabethan era, Schlegel states that “had no other monument of the age of Elizabeth come down to us than the works of Shakspeare, I should, from them alone, have formed the most favorable idea of its state of social culture and enlightenment” (p. 93). Perhaps, without realizing, that is exactly what he actually does when he describes Shakespeare as ‘the idol of his contemporaries’. Schlegel deterritorializes Shakespeare in order to support his idealized view of the English playwright’s talent as well as of the way this supposed divine talent was perceived by those who lived during Shakespeare’s lifetime.

All of this idealization has a reason. Schlegel defends the idea that Shakespeare’s contemporaries understood Shakespeare better than Schlegel’s own contemporaries. Schlegel does not agree with the way many European men of letters and theatre treat the works of Shakespeare. In his own words, “I consider, generally speaking, all that has been said on the subject a mere fable, a blind and extravagant error” (p. 93-94). That those in the South of Europe did not properly understand Shakespeare Schlegel could perfectly understand, for Shakespeare’s “language, and the great difficult of translating him with fidelity, will be, perhaps, an invincible obstacle to his general diffusion” (p. 88) in that part of Europe.

Schlegel patronizing tone is explicable as well. Schlegel believes that due to the enthusiasm with which Shakespeare was naturalized in Germany, he, Schlegel, a German has the right to speak from a privileged position. An assumption quite similar to the that firstly developed by Herder: Shakespeare as “the greatest northern dramatist” (HERDER, 1997, p. 40) who “taught and moved and educated northern men!” (p. 41), especially English and German men. In fact, quite prophetically, Schlegel believes the enthusiasm with which Shakespeare was naturalized in Germany to be ‘a significant asset’ “of the future extension of his fame” (SCHLEGEL, 1997, p. 88).

Schlegel believes his European contemporaries to “speak in general of Shakspeare’s plays as monstrous productions, which could only have been given to the world by a disordered imagination in a barbarous age” (SCHLEGEL, 1997, p. 90). Schlegel refers particularly to the French, who, from his point of view, “speak the most strange language of antiquity and the middle ages, as if cannibalism had only been put an end to in Europe by Louis XIV” (p. 90). Schlegel indignantly mentions Voltaire’s observation that *Hamlet* “seems the work of a drunken savage” (p. 90).

Besides the French, the other people from whom Schlegel does not accept critical remarks on the works of Shakespeare and on the time Shakespeare lived are the English: “that Englishmen should join in calumniating that glorious epoch of their history, which laid the foundation of their national greatness, is incomprehensible” (p. 90). Schlegel mentions English satirist and poet Alexander Pope’s remark which says that Shakespeare “wrote both better and worse than any other man” (p. 90) as one of the examples of the way Shakespeare had been treated in England.

Both Voltaire and Pope’s criticism may be associated to the difficulties many Romantic and or Classicists saw in adapting Shakespearean plays to their immediate reality, encompassing their values and beliefs. But Schlegel does not seem to understand things this particular way.

Schlegel’s point seems to be the following: Schlegel’s European contemporaries were not able to really understand the works of Shakespeare; except in Germany, where the enthusiastic naturalization of Shakespeare could mean no other thing but that it would certainly contribute to Shakespeare’s future fame. Not even the English were capable of realizing how glorious their own past had been. The German, more precisely, Schlegel was. Therefore, it was in his hand, consequently in the hands of Germany, Shakespeare’s future fame.

Although Schlegel severely criticized the French due to some of their understandings of Shakespeare, there were those prominent Romantic French who highly praised the works of the English playwright. Victor Hugo would be one of them, Stendhal another. Brazilian scholar Gilberto Pinheiro Passos (2008) describes Stendhal as one of the most important figures of Romanticism. Passos also claims that Stendhal resorts to the Italy of the Renaissance and to the Enlightenment in order to find elements that would fit his conceptions. Great passions, the equality amongst men, and a critical perspective to religious ignorance are listed by Passos as themes present in the works of Stendhal.

Stendhal's most emblematic work is the 1830 novel *The Red and the Black*. However, it is Stendhal's *Racine and Shakespeare* that is, still nowadays, considered one of the first Romantic manifestoes in France. In *Racine and Shakespeare* it is possible to read a theoretical conversation on drama. The two characters who exchange opinions are 'The Academician' and 'The Romantic'. Needles to say that the Romantic uses Shakespearean plays to support his points of view.

Once more the question of adaptation is brought up. As Stendhal himself writes: "The whole dispute between Racine and Shakespeare amounts to knowing whether, in observing the two unities of *place* and *time*, one can create plays which would deeply interest spectators of the nineteenth century" (STENDHAL, 1997, p. 218). These questions are brought up by Stendhal because, according to him, "the observation of the two unities of place and time is a French habit, a deeply rooted habit, a habit of which we can rid ourselves with difficulty" (p. 218). In order to start the discussion, the Romantic/Stendhal asks the Academician: "Why [...] do you demand that the action represented in a tragedy shall last no longer than twenty-four or thirty-six hours, and that the place of the scene shall not change" (p. 218). Stendhal is clearly making references to the classicist precepts supported by figures such as Boileau and Gottsched.

Presumably, Stendhal uses Shakespeare's play as examples of how possible it is to indefinitely extend the span and change the setting of a play. The following passage in which the Romantic talks about *Macbeth* is rather clarifying: the play "begins with the assassination of the King and the flight of his sons, and ends with the return of these same princes at the head of an army which they have mustered in England, in order to dethrone the bloodthirsty Macbeth" (p. 220). Finally, Stendhal adds that "This series of actions necessarily requires several months" (p. 220). Moreover, in order to convince the Academician that it was not only a French Romantic who appreciates this type of play, the Romantic remarks that *Macbeth* "each year is applauded an infinite number of times in England and America" (p. 220).

Differently from other Romantics, Stendhal does not resort to placing Shakespeare in a godlike position in order to defend the point that English playwright's dramatic theatrical choices and strategies could effectively be understood as another, new way of conceiving theatre. The crucial and fundamental difference between the ways Shakespeare and Racine, for instance, dealt with place and time left little room for doubt that these were two essentially different ways of understanding theatre. Since the Romantics aimed at going against the Classicist principles,

Shakespeare became, in fact, a useful counterpoint for the plays of Racine, Corneille, and/or Voltaire. The fact that people in England and in The United States had appreciated this new type of theatre only reinforced the Romantic's viewpoint.

It is interesting that Stendhal mentions The United States in order to support his defense of the theatre of Shakespeare. In America, Shakespeare and the Shakespeare myth also had great Influence. Before delving any deeper into the implications of the relationship established between The United States and Shakespeare, it seems relevant to take a brief look at another example of the influence of Shakespeare over the Romantics of the Americas. More specifically, an example from Latin American Romanticism: Brazilian Romanticism.

As Brazilian scholar Margarida Gandara Rauen lets us know, "Shakespearean plays were first produced in Brazil early in the 19th century [...]. They were performed, however, in versions derived from French adaptations" (RAUEN, 2008, p. 54). According to Rauen, the "French influence is unsurprising: French theatrical aesthetics also shaped Brazilian comedy and the vaudeville throughout the century" (p. 54). Although French influence over Brazilian theatre and over Brazilian society as a whole was really strong in the 19th century, there were those who would try and break free from this influence, that, as the German pre-Romantic experience let clear, could be very restraining.

Brazilian prominent Romantic figure Gonçalves Dias was one of those who went against this influence. Although Dias is most known for his poetry, his poem "Canção do Exílio", for example, is of paramount and overwhelming relevance for Brazilian literature, Dias also wrote theatrical plays. One of them in particular is thought by critics to have been directly influenced by Shakespeare: *Leonor de Mendonça*. According to prominent Brazilian scholar Alfredo Bosi (1994), in Dias's 1847 *Leonor de Mendonça*, the influence of Shakespeare may be noticed primarily in the praise of the Shakespearean tragedy form in which, according to Bosi, prose and verse take turns according to the tone and to the rhythm of the feelings that move characters. Dias follows this form in *Leonor de Mendonça*. Although Bosi points this and others aspects in which Dias was clearly influenced by Shakespeare, Dias himself, in the prologue of the play, acknowledges that he had deliberately imitated Shakespeare, as Brazilian literary critic Eugênio Gomes (1961) lets us know. Shakespeare is understood by Dias, as by Stendhal and many others, as a counterpoint to the limiting rules of the French Classicist way of conceiving theatre. Even

though the French Classicist influence was still overwhelmingly present in Brazilian life in the first half of the 19th century.

Although there is at least one more Brazilian Romantic poet, Álvares de Azevedo, whose work is unquestionably influenced by the works of Shakespeare, his work and figure will not be dealt with in this dissertation. Up to this point this dissertation has followed the span Carpeaux restricted the Romantic movement to. Since Azevedo's most emblematic work, the 1853 collection of poems *Lira dos vinte anos*, was published beyond Carpeaux's span Carpeaux it will not be dealt with.

It is important to notice that the influence of Shakespeare and of the Shakespeare myth had already been spread way beyond the English borders in the first half of the 19th century. The influence of Shakespeare in continental Europe was vast and great. In America, its presence is also undeniable as the Brazilian example illustrates. Nonetheless, there is one particular North American country in each the presence of the Shakespeare myth would be particularly peculiar: The United States of America.

However, before going any further, there is a norteworthy passage from Hauser's *The Social History of Art* that, though long, ellucidates how important Romanticism was for contemporary Western culture:

> Without the historical consciousness of romanticism, without the constant questioning of the meaning of the present, by which the thinking of the romantics was dominated, the whole historicism of the nineteenth century and one of the deepest revolutions in the history of the human mind would have been inconceivable. [...] the worldview of the West had been essentially static [...] and unhistorical until the advent of romanticism. The most important factors in human culture [...] had been regarded as fundamentally unequivocal and immutable in their significance, as timeless entelechies or as innate ideas. In relation to the constancy of these principles, all change, all development and differentiation had appeared irrelevant and ephemeral; everything that occurred in the medium of historical time seemed to touch merely the surface of things. Only from the time of the Revolution and the romantic movement did the nature of man and society begin to appear as essentially evolutionistic and dynamic. The idea that we and our culture are involved in eternal flux and endless struggle, the notion that our intellectual life is a process with a merely transitory character, is a discovery of romanticism and represents its most important contribution to the philosophy of the present age (HAUSER, 2005, p. 155-156).

It is of paramount relevance that the figure of Shakespeare or the Shakespeare myth played such an important role in the development of this effectively revolutionary moment of Western history. Moreover, the Shakespeare myth is not only present at the very fundamentals of the Romantic movement but it also goes beyond the movement itself. Like the Romantic movement, the influence of the Shakespeare myth reaches and affects contemporaneity is a

variety of ways. A work such as English writer Angela Carter's 1991 novel *Wise Children* clearly exemplifies and deepens this assumption.

Carter's novel deals with a vast number of topics related to the Shakespeare myth, uncluding the ones connected to the rise and fall of the British Empire, as well as its multifaceted relations to The United States. At this point it seems rather relevant to explore in greater depth some of these topics.

9 BRITANNIA RULES

> The nations, not so blest as thee,
> Must in their turn, to tyrants fall
> James Thonson, *Rule, Britannia*

> knowledge – no matter how special – is regulated first by the local concerns of a specialist, later by the general concerns of a social system of authority
>
> Edward Said, *Orientalism*

In his *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, American scholar Niall Ferguson states that the "British Empire was the biggest empire ever, bar none" (FERGUSON, 2002, p. ix). According the Ferguson, it was an empire that "governed roughly a quarter of the world's population, covered about the same portion of the earth's land surface and dominated nearly all its oceans" (p. ix). British scholar Nigel Dalziel adds that the "emergence of the British Empire was one of the greatest historical phenomena of modern times. It remained in existence until very recently, and its implications and legacies remain with us today" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 5). Another British scholar, John M. MacKenzie points out that "some see the British Empire as an early exercise in globalization" (MACKENZIE, 2006, p. 9); Ferguson even writes about "Anglobalization" (FERGUSON, 2002, p. xxiii) to describe what MacKenzie sees as the spread of "a single language and common cultural elements, political, legal and educational systems as well as commercial patterns, transport infrastructures and currency flows" (MACKENZIE, 2006, p. 9). Ferguson adds that the "British Empire was the nearest thing there has ever been to a world government" (FERGUSON, 2002, p. xxiv).

It is important to remark, however, that there were countless markedly negative aspects related to the rise and fall of the British Empire which still affect contemporary life as well. Mentioning the two most notoriously dreadful ones, MacKenzie remarks that the "slave trade and plantation slavery remain the major crimes of the imperial era, a black Holocaust of frightening

proportions" (MACKENZIE, 2006, p. 9). Despite these appalling drawbacks, for better or for worse, "the world we know today is in large measure the product of Britain's age of Empire", correctly argues Ferguson (FERGUSON, 2002, p. xxvi).

The expansion of the British Empire is also intrinsically connected to the spread of the Shakespeare myth. As American scholar Michel Dobson points out, "That Shakespeare was declared to rule world literature at the same time that Britannia was declared to rule the waves may, indeed, be more than a coincidence" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 7). Dobson adds that:

> the transformation of Shakespeare's status from the comparative neglect of the Restoration to the national, indeed global, pre-eminence [...] constitutes one of the central cultural expressions of England's own transition from the aristocratic regime of the Stuarts to the commercial empire presided over by the Hanoverians (p. 8).

The origins of the British Empire are still nowadays open to discussion. Whereas some, like Ferguson, see in the institutionalized English piracy of the 16th century under the rule of Queen Elizabeth I the germs of the future empire, some others, like Dalziel, believe John Cabot's voyage to Newfoundland in 1497 "to mark the start of England's empire overseas" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 14). There are even those, like British historian David Armitage, who defend the idea that, since the second half of the 20th century, "English (and, later, British) imperial ideology can be found in English policy towards Ireland under the Tudors" (ARMITAGE, 2004, p. 24).

Whatever the case may be, Dalziel, who is the author of *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the British Empire*, has a point when he states that in "the British Isles the essential prelude to imperial expansion was the political union and consolidation of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 14). In addition to this, argues Dalziel, the "dynastic politics of Henry VIII [...] and the establishment of an English Protestant national church were crucial in this process" (p. 15).

What seems relevant to remark is, in Armitage's words, the fact that already "by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the British Empire comprehended the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Ireland, the islands of the Caribbean and the British mainland colonies of North America" (ARMITAGE, 2004, p.1). More than this, "The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by a common religion and by the Royal Navy. The gentle, but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces" (p. 1). Britain had also increasingly dealt in the slave trade throughout the 17th century. As Dalziel remarks, by the

beginning of the 18th century Britain had already "become the chief transatlantic slaver" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 30).

Dalziel also argues that until the end of the 18th century, "the Pacific was the last great unknown and largely unexplored region of the world" (p. 40). After Captain James Cook's three-year voyage to the Pacific, which lasted from 1768 to 1771, Britain acquired the Australian continent. At first a penal colony where British criminal where sent to, "the steady influx of British settlers transformed a thinly populated apparently primitive and barely inhospitable land into a thriving colonial asset" (p. 40). Dalziel adds: "From Sydney the new population not only conquered the continent but also did much to open the Pacific to British commercial enterprise" (p. 41).

Another extremely relevant aspect of Britain's imperial expansion is related to India. In Dalziel's words: "history of British India effectively began with the royal charter awarded to the East India Company in 1600" (p. 17). At first a mere trading organization, the Company turned into a "considerable Indian territorial power, poised to bring the whole of the sub-continent under British rule" (p. 17) after Britain's victory over France in the Seven Years' War. This war resulted from the two countries' conflicting trading and colonial interests. Britain's victory would bring along with it considerable consequences, including grave ones in North America.

The following words about the settlement in North America by Dalziel are quite elucidating: "After a number of years of trial and error, an English presence in the continent was assured with the permanent settlement of Virginia from 1607, and New England shortly afterwards" (p. 16). Dalziel remarks that, although the North American settlers "were little regarded in England at first, these colonies developed rapidly. In the 1630s as many as 21,000 settlers arrived in Massachusetts alone, and by 1700 the population of New England stood at more than 90,000" (p. 16).

Dalziel also writes that from the start the North American colonists were "committed to self-government" (p. 26). After Britain's victory in the Seven Years' War in 1763, this commitment to self-government became even stronger due to a gradually fiercer relation to the imperial government:

> Britain was left with a national debt of £150 million [...] partly accrued in defense of the colonists who were now expected to contribute more in taxation. At the same time the British government [...] attempted to limit aggressive westward expansion by land-hungry colonists to prevent further conflict with Indian populations (p. 52).

American scholar Emory Elliott remarks that as a result of the degrading relations between the thirteen colonies and the imperial government, “many settlements tended to develop a sense of autonomy and independence from the control of the English government” (ELLIOTT, 2010, p. 15). Elliott adds that these marked features of these settlements would eventually “support ideas of independence, states rights, and a federation of distinctive states and regional cultures” (p. 15-16). The way to the American Revolution and Independence was paved.

Despite losing its grip on The United States, it was during the reign of Queen Victoria that the British Empire had its heyday. Britain had the world naval supremacy and “British overseas trade and investment grew rapidly” (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 60), argues Dalziel. The scholar adds that the “Victorian mind ineluctably linked trade and prosperity with the encouragement of modernization and civilization” (p. 60), therefore, the agricultural and trade profits “financed the Industrial Revolution that began in Britain, and by the mid-19th century the country was producing 40 per cent of world manufactured goods” (p. 64). This era of undisputed supremacy would not last long.

By the 1880s, the beginning of a great power rivalry that would eventually lead the world to its first war of global proportions could already be noticed: “Germany was overtaking Britain as the world’s main industrial power” (p. 65); “in 1902 the Anglo-Japanese alliance helped Britain confront Russia in the East” (p. 65); “European imperial rivalry reached fever pitch in the ‘Scramble for Africa’ (p. 72). Nevertheless, at the very beginning of the 20th century the British Empire still held the unquestionable position of the world’s greatest potency.

The 1929 economic Depression as well as the two World Wars that would mark the first half of the 20th century left the British Empire in a worrying financial situation. Moreover, the first half of the 20th century witnessed the growing independence of the states of the empire. By the end of the century, the British Empire was no longer a reality. Besides all the positive and negative legacies left by the empire, the “greatest empire ever” (FERGUSON, 2002, p. ix), as Ferguson would put it, can nowadays only be traced at The Commonwealth of Nations, former British Commonwealth of Nations: an association of Great Britain and former British dominions, also brought to light in the first half of the 20th century.

In current times, Ferguson states that there is “only one power capable of playing an imperial role in the modern world, and that is the United States. Indeed, to some degree it is

already playing that role" (FERGUSON, 2002, p. 314). In fact, as it was mentioned by Elliott, the "sense of autonomy and independence from the control of the English government" (ELLIOTT, 2010, p. 15) has at a given point of American history developed into an "assumption of superiority" (KIERNAN, 2005, p. xvi). Such assumption, as a matter of fact, may be traced back to the American Romanticism, more precisely, back to the words of an American Romantic, Herman Melville: "God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great thing we feel in our souls" (MELVILLE, 2000, p. 151). It seems relevant to take a brief look at the American Romanticism, more specifically at its relations with the Shakespeare myth.

American scholar John Carlos Rowe argues that, although "profoundly indebted to Enlightenment philosophy" (ROWE, 2010, p. 31), "the prevailing romantic idealist tenor of much nineteenth-century American literature contributed to its particular reliance on sentimentalism, sensibility, and other extrarational modes of understanding" (p. 31). Especially referring to the Transcendentalists, Rowe mentions "Poets and their 'genius'" (p. 32) as needed individuals who are able to apprehend a certain "spiritual ecology" (p. 32). Rowe cites the following passage by Emerson as an example of the point he is trying to make: "Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God" (EMERSON, 1950, p. 6). It is no surprise that Emerson, who American critic Brooks Atkinson calls "the first philosopher of the American spirit" (ATKINSON, 1950, p. xi), like many of the European and even Brazilian Romantics did, sees Shakespeare as the godlike supreme poet.

In the same work from which the passage above was taken, *Nature*, from 1836, the following passage may be found: "Shakspeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets [...]. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtile spiritual connection" (EMERSON, 1950, p. 29). In this passage, once more Shakespeare is associated to nature and is depicted as a superior being with extraordinary godlike powers. The following passage from the 1841 essay "Compensation", makes the association of Shakespeare and deity, in this particular case, Christian deity, explicit as no other aforementioned: "Jesus and Shakspeare are fragments of the soul, and by love I conquer and incorporate them in my own conscious domain" (p. 187).

Michel Dobson calls attention to an interesting aspect of the relation of Shakespeare and The United States of America that dates back to the end of the 18th century, i.e. before Emerson's work came to light, but after the American independence. Dobson sees as perhaps inevitable that the young nation of America "should have taken such early steps towards appropriating the Bard in the interests of its own national and imperial project" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 229). Making reference The United States' first ambassadors' visit to England, Dobson argues that John Adams, who was the second American president and went as an ambassador alongside Thomas Jefferson, suggested that "the English are no longer worthy to be custodians of Shakespeare's fame [...] and that the timeless truth to nature of the Bard's genius renders his original native context irrelevant anyway" (p. 229).

Like the pre-Romantic German before him, Adams suggests that the dehistoricization and deterritorialization of Shakespeare are inevitable due to Shakespeare's intrinsical relation to nature, which is ahistorical and effectively belongs nowhere. Nature/Shakespeare or the Shakespeare myth transformed into a metaphysical entity also by the Americans is once again used in order to promote specific historical aims.

Paradoxical as it may seem at first, the very dehistoricization/naturalization of Shakespeare also in America is not only a clear sign of the advent of a clearly historically identifiable ideology whose fundamentals, as Barthes pointed out, need to mythologize every aspect of its reality: the bourgeois ideology, undoubtedly. The figures of Adams and Emerson, the latter taken as the example of the Transcendentalists' way of thinking as well as of an American Romantic, exemplify that this new nation, this American non-European nation, this nation that Ferguson and Kiernan see as the "only one power capable of playing an imperial role in the modern world" (FERGUSON, 2002, p. ix) and take 'Anglobalization' further, this very nation shares basically the same values towards the Shakespeare myth, and therefore, it is possible to argue, the same bourgeois ideology. The country has promoted this myth at least since the 18th century, and, as the analysis of Angela Carter's *Wise Children* will hopefully make clear, continues to do it through various different media, especially via Hollywood.

The discussion of cinematic adaptations of Shakespearean plays is one of the innumerable topics that may be dealt with in Carter's *Wise Children*. Therefore, adaptation itself, and more precisely, the role the adaptations of Shakespearean plays had/have in the propagation of the Shakespeare myth seems a valid topic to explore at this point.

10 ADAPTING

There is the playhouse now, there must you sit:
And thence to France shall we convey you safe,
And bring you back, charming the narrow seas
To give you gentle pass; for, if we may,
We'll not offend one stomach with our play.
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

British scholar Julie Sanders, in her *Adaptation and Appropriation*, argues that she sees as inherent to adaptation a "sense of play, produced in part by the activation of our informed sense of similarity and difference between the texts being invoked, and the connected interplay of expectation and surprise" (SANDERS, 2008, p. 25). Sanders also defends the idea that the process of adaptation is "in many respects a sub-section of the over-reaching practice of intertextuality", which is a concept primarily developed by Bulgarian-French theorist Julia Kristeva.

Kristeva is described by Canadian scholar Dawne McCance as "one of France's major contemporary theorists" (MCCANCE, 1994, p. 395). McCance adds that Kristeva's work "has achieved international recognition across a number of academic disciplines and has stimulated significant theoretical activity within literary criticism and feminism" (p. 395). In addition to this, American scholars Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle remark that "Kristeva's interests have expanded to include virtually all of the traditional subjects of the human sciences" (ADAMS; SEARLE, 1989, p. 469). The American scholars go further and add that at "the heart the center of those interests, ranging from literary history and linguistics to social theory and psychoanalysis, is the 'speaking subject' and 'poetic language'" (p. 469). Ideas that, according to Adams and Searle, "Kristeva does not relinquish as casualties of the critique of signification but emphasizes as essential postulates of any theory of language or society" (p. 469).

Kristeva developed the concept of intertextuality from her reading of the work of Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. As a matter of fact, "Kristeva introduces the work of the Russian literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin to the French-speaking world" (ALLEN, 2000, p. 19), as British scholar Grahan Allen points out. According to Allen, Bakhtin's work, differently from Saussure's, support the idea that "all utterances are *dialogic,* their meaning and logic

dependent upon what has previously been said and on how they will be received by others" (ALLEN, 2000, p. 19, author's italics). In Bakhtin's own words, quoted by Allen:

> *word is a two-sided act.* It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee.* Each and every word expresses 'one' in relation to the 'other'. I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another (BAKHTIN apud ALLEN, 2000, p. 20, author's italics).

Kristeva refers to Bakhtin's dialogic nature of utterances as "an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin" (KRISTEVA, 1980, p. 66). From this Bakhtinian insight Kristeva deduces her concept of intertextuality: "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 66), or as McCance puts it, "every text as the product of the intersection of several texts" (MCCANCE, 1994, p. 395). It is precisely to this conception of intertextuality that Julie Sanders refers in her discussion of adaptation: "all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (SANDERS, 2008, p. 17).

Nonetheless, it seems quite important to remark that there are other aspects of the thought of Bakhtin that should be taken into consideration. According to literary critic Michael Holquist, author of the introduction to and editor of *The Dialogic Imagination – Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, Mikhail Bakhtin "is gradually emerging as one of the leading thinkers of the twentieth century" (HOLQUIST, 1988, p. xiv). Although Bakhtin has written about a great variety of themes, Holquist argues that there is one central theme in the Russian thinker's works: language. Moreover, the critic argues that "at the heart of everything Bakhtin ever did [...] is a highly distinctive concept of language" (p. xviii). This concept of language is defined by Holquist as a "ceaseless battle between centrifugal forces that seek to keep things apart, and centripetal forces that strive to make things cohere" (p. xviii). Still according to Holquist, for Bakhtin, "the most complete and complex reflection of these forces is found in human language, and the best transcription of language so understood is the novel" (p. xviii).

From Holquist's viewpoint, the novel is the literary genre which Bakhtin was obsessed with throughout his life. The critic also argues that Bakhtin is the only theorist who has ever proposed an adequate history of the novel as a genre that is able to deal with the inherent complexities of this particular kind of literature. Nevertheless, the gathering of Russian

intellectuals that came to be known as the ‘Bakhtin Circle’ did not focus their attention only in the novel, or in literature as whole for that matter.

The ‘Bakhtin Circle’ was a kind of association, a kind of society of intellectuals who used to gather in Russia for nearly 10 years, from 1919 to 1929. This particular circle used to discuss topics related to religion, politics, literature, but mostly German philosophy. Holquist states that at the time of this circle, “Bakhtin thought of himself essentially as a philosopher and not as a literary scholar” (HOLQUIST, 1988, p. xxiii). However, it is rather remarkable that in the same year that the circle is believed to have ended their activities, 1929, Bakhtin published his first major work, *Problems of Dostoesvsky’s Poetics*, a book not about philosophy per se, but a volume on a greatly prominent Russian novelist and his works.

Twenty years later, in 1949, Bakhtin released another emblematic work, *Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, a doctorate dissertation which, according to Holquist, “split the Moscow scholarly world into two camps” (p. xxv): those who supported it and those who were against it. At the time of its release, Bakhtin’s dissertation caused such a commotion that even the Russian government interfered and not only did not allow its publication but also denied Bakhtin his doctorate. The book wouldn’t be published until 1965.

Both *Problems of Dostoesvsky’s Poetics* and *Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, also known as *Rabelais and His World*, contain ideas which are related to the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque. Scottish scholar Hellen Stoddart summarizes and explains this particular concept of Bakhtin’s in her *Angela Carter’s Nights at the Circus*, in which, amongst other topics, Stoddart discusses Angela Carter’s appropriation and criticism of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas on the carnivalesque.

In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* Bakhtin associates the concept of carnival with that of polyphony in Dostoevsky’s novels. Bakhtin believes that in the Russian novelist's works each personage is clearly defined, which allows the reader to witness how each one of them critically influences the other, i.e. each personage hears the voices of the others, and inevitably one influences the other; whereas during carnival, all the ordinary conventions might be subverted allowing individuals to express themselves genuinely and, therefore, to make authentic dialog take place.

In *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin depicts carnival as a collective process which challenges both the political and the socioeconomic organizations: the Russian critic believes that

all the participants of carnival are equal as long as it lasts, since during carnival there are neither social classes nor hierarchical positions. These concepts of Bakhtin's were developed via a study of the French Renaissance novelist François Rabelais's most famous works: *The Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, a series of novels which served as sources of information for Bakhtin to study and discuss the social system of the Renaissance, a system of which carnival was an intrinsic part. It was through this particular study that he also explored the concept of grotesque, a term Bakhtin uses to describe the changes the body might go through due to sexual intercourse, evacuation, as well as to ingestion of food, all of which are recurrently present in Rabelais's works.

Stoddart argues that Bakhtin believed literature to be "'carnivalized' when it takes the characteristics of these festivals in narrative form" (STODDART, 2007, p. 27), novels can "present what he terms 'a carnival sense of the world'" (p. 27). Stoddart writes that there are four interlinked textual features that might help this carnivalesque sense to take place: "the suspension of distance between individuals [...] especially between people who might normally be separated by social hierarchies and class divisions" (p. 27); the establishment of a "'new model of interrelationship between individuals' through physical and 'concretely sensual' and eccentric forms that are 'half-real and half-play-acted'" (p. 27-28); the free association of people, values, things, phenomena and thoughts, "which would otherwise be 'self-enclosed, disunified, distanced from one another'" (p. 28), in "carnivalistic mésalliances" (p. 28); the installation of a system of "'carnivalistic debasings, and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and the body' and 'carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts'" (p. 28).

It is possible to aasociate this carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts' Stoddart writes about with what Sanders adds to the characteristics of adaptation: "adaptation signals a relationship with an informing source text or original" (SANDERS, 2008, p. 26). This relationship produces "a specific version, albeit achieved in alternative temporal and generic modes of that seminal cultural text" (p. 17). It is possible to add to Sanders's understanding of adaptation Canadian theorist Linda Hutcheon's definition.

According to Hutcheon, adaptation is at the time "An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works; A creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging; An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 8).

Hutcheon adds that “an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing” (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 9).

In terms of theatre, Michael Dobson defines adaptation as “the practice of rewriting plays to fit them for conditions of performance different from those for which they were originally composed, in ways which go beyond cutting and the transposition of occasional scenes” (DOBSON, 2008a, p. 3). Dobson argues that the “adaptation of Shakespeare was at its most widespread [...] between the Restoration in 1660 and the middle of the 18th century” (p. 3). As a matter of fact, Dobson is the author of a volume called *The Making of the National Poet – Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1660-1769* in which the question of the adaptation of Shakespearean plays is thoroughly tackled. It is an indispensable for the development of this dissertation. A deeper look in this work of Dobson will be carried out next.

Referring exactly to the span prescribed above, Dobson supports the idea that “precisely the same period which at some time saw the revival of every single play in the Shakespeare canon [...] saw the substantial rewriting of every single play in the Shakespeare canon” (p. 4). Dobson adds that, as paradoxical as it may seem, “many of the plays upon which Shakespeare’s reputation as the supreme dramatist of world literature is most squarely based [...] were in practice only tolerated in the theatre in heavily revised versions, even while that very reputation was being established” (p. 4). Dobson, in fact argues that these two process, adaptation and canonization, in the case of the construction of the Shakespeare myth, “were often mutually reinforcing ones: [...] the claiming of Shakespeare as an Enlightenment culture hero both profited from, and occasionally demanded, the substantial rewriting of his plays” (p. 5).

In his book, Dobson also comments on how the cult of the figure of Shakespeare has functioned as ‘a kind of religion’, as he puts it. A religion in which “Shakespeare had often been recognized as occupying a position in British life directly analogous to that of God the Father” (p. 7). As it has been previously discussed in this dissertation, this ‘kind of religion’ spread its realm of action way beyond the British borders.

Dobson, also points out to the connection between the expansion of the British Empire and the spread in the cult of Shakespeare. In a passage from a text written by Edward Capell, editor of a 1768 edition of the complete plays of Shakespeare, it is possible to read that: “The works of such great authors as this [...] are part of the kingdom’s riches” (CAPELL apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 8). Capell goes on writing that works such as Shakespeare’s “are talk’d of

wherever the name of Britain is talk'd of, that is [...] wherever there are men" (CAPELL apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 8). Capell's words are a perfect example of, in Dobson's words, "how Shakespeare's works were, by and large, successfully appropriated to fit what became the dominant, nationalist ideology of mid-eighteenth century England" (p. 12).

According to Dobson, it was during the early Restoration in England that critical perceptions of the work of Shakespeare, which would subsequently become seemingly everlasting ones, first came to light. Dobson argues that, no matter how admiring these critical perceptions of the Shakespearean plays could be, they often colluded with "the pragmatic recognition [...] that his plays might profitably be rewritten" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 28-29).

It was in this period, more precisely in 1623, that the introductory pages of the Shakespeare folio were "concerned above all to constitute Shakespeare as the literary exemplar [...] of 'Nature'" (p. 29). Ben Jonson's "magnificent tribute occupying a full two pages of the prefatory material" (ORGEL; BRAUNMULLER, 2002a, p. xiii), as *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare* editors Orgel and Braunmuller put, is a remarkable example of the attempt of establishing Shakespeare as being intrinsically connected to 'Nature'. In the prefatory commendatory verses to the 1623 folio "To the Memory of my Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare: and What He Has Left Us", Jonson writes: "The merry Greek [...] now not please; /But antiquated, and deserted lye /As they were not of Natures family. /Yet must I not give Nature all: Thy Art, /My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part. /For though the Poets matter, Nature be, /His art doth give the fashion" (JONSON, 2002, p. xxi).

As Dobson points out, the 1623 folio editors, John Heminges and Henry Condell, in their prefatory dedicatory letters, also reinforce this connection of Shakespeare and Nature. Heminges and Condell write about Shakespeare in their prefatory "To the Great Variety of Readers": "Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it." (HEMINGES; CONDELL, 2002, p. xviii). Dobson adds that such understanding of Shakespeare would be reinforced by the 1647 folio collection of John Fletcher's plays. In this folio collection, Shakespeare would not only be once more associated with Nature but also be placed in opposition to Ben Jonson, who, according to Dobson, had already been "presented as the master of Art" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 29) in the 1616 folio collection of Jonson's own plays.

On the other hand, Humphrey Moseley, the editor of the 1647 folio collection of Fletcher's plays, characterizes Fletcher as being a combination of both Shakespeare/Nature and

Jonson/Art, resulting in a new category of playwright associated to ‘Wit’. Dobson quotes American scholar Margreta de Grazia, who states that by “casting the 1647 collection in relation to its 1616 and 1623 predecessors, [...] Moseley territorialized the native dramatic domain into Art, Nature and Art plus Nature (sometimes termed ‘Wit’)” (DE GRAZIA apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 29).

Dobson points out that this characterization of the “pre-war years as a mutually defining trio – Jonson standing for art, Shakespeare representing Nature, and the university-educated Fletcher refining the one by the other to embody Wit – proved remarkably durable” (DOBSON, 2001, p. 30). As a matter of fact, this characterization may be argued to be the original association of Nature and Shakespeare that would subsequently be even more spread by the (pre-)Romantics. If Shaftesbury and Young had already been characterized in this dissertation as predecessors of a point of view such as Herder’s, based on Dobson’s arguments, it is now possible to infer that, actually, at least Young was actually reproducing an assumption about Shakespeare that dates back from 1623.

The association which would eventually allow people from different nationalities, such as the German Schlegel and the American Adams, to claim that Shakespeare transcends national borders, during the 17th century gave playwrights the green light to adapt Shakespearean plays at will. As Dobson puts it, “Shakespeare’s plays as virtually unmediated expressions of Nature [...] could not only mandate their rewriting but license wholesale repossession” (p. 32). Shakespeare started being seen as a mere “source of natural raw material, a larder of ingredients” (p. 32). Nonetheless, the use of this ‘larder of ingredients’ in late 1670s and early 1680s is amidst a recipe for political turmoil.

Dobson words are elucidative at this point: “Between 1678 and 1682, both the state and the stage were suffering the consequences of [...] terrifying allegations that an imminent ‘Popish Plot’ was about to decimate the Anglican establishment and force Britain to return to the Catholic fold” (p. 63). It was in this environment that a new wave of adaptations of Shakespearean plays came about. The “unpolished Shakespeare” (p. 64) would come in handy for political purposes.

Building upon two supposed basic ‘advantages’ of the Shakespeare plays, i.e. “his mastery of pathos, and his creation of a body of plays specifically concerned with British history” (p. 64), the playwrights who adapted Shakespearean works began to “promote a simultaneously domestic and national Shakespeare, susceptible of being praised for his timeless ability to move

the heart even as his plays are being rewritten for immediate polemical ends" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 64). Dobson adds that the works of Shakespeare "are here once again represented as expressions of Nature, a trope which during the Plot years not only implies the appropriatiateness of adapting them but (misleadingly) claims a status of political neutrality for the adapted texts themselves" (p. 73).

It is important to remark that, taking into consideration the words of Dobson, the origins of the use of Shakespeare for political aims coincides with what Dalziel sees as a crucial aspect of the possibilities which led to the advent of the British Empire: "the establishment of an English Protestant national church" (DALZIEL, 2006, p. 15). The use of Shakespearean plays as propaganda against the 'Popish Plot' may be said to be, as Anderson would put it, "a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning" (ANDERSON, 2006, p. 11), i.e. Shakespeare's plays, especially the historical ones, started being used as representative of a certain natural Anglican British identity. The 'fatality' of the 'Popish Plot' allowed the 'continuity' of this supposed British identity to be traced back in Shakespearean plays; the 'contingency' of the moment was turned into politically meaningful adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare and his works. Shakespeare's association with Nature is perhaps for the first time, way before the (pre-)Romantics, used as a pretext for justifying appropriations seemingly fit for whatever purposes, in this case political/nationalist/religious ones.

As Dobson points out:

> After the adaptations of the Popish Plot years, [...] it would be possible to treat the royalty of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists as mere stage conventions, and to treat the plays themselves as discussions of 'universal' human suffering rather than as contributions to specific Renaissance debates about political legitimacy (DOBSON, 2001, p. 93).

In other words, with the adaptations of the Popish Plot years, Shakespeare was effectively turned into a myth in the sense Barthes sees it. That is to say, "the signs of a historical writing" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 102), the specific and historically located use of Shakespeare during the Popish Plot years, followed what Barthes sees as "the very principle of myth" (p. 128): it transformed "history into nature" (p. 128).

This politically biased use of Shakespearean plays contributed enormously to "Shakespeare's canonization as a stable figure of authority" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 96). Nevertheless, once Shakespeare achieved such status, "Shakespeare's plays too must be purged

of their fleshly, earthly lapses" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 101). A new form of dealing with Shakespeare and his plays was on its way: Shakespeare was about to be "redefined as a classic author" (p. 106).

As a classic author, Shakespeare began to be associated with a sort of literary culture, something similar to Matthew Arnold's understanding of high culture. As a result, Shakespeare began to be set apart from what started being considered low and/or popular culture. Despite these differentiations, Dobson argues that both 'low' and 'literary' cultures would go on adapting Shakespearean plays at will, though in different ways: the division was "between 'low' adaptations largely uninterested in Shakespeare's authorship and 'literary' ones concerned above all to portray him as a great exemplar" (p. 112). This kind of division had such an impact that, "by the early eighteenth century, clearly, to revive Shakespeare's works is not merely to reuse some old scripts but to call up the spirit of their author, newly promoted to the status of an 'Antient'" (p. 117), argues Dobson. The American critic adds that Shakespeare was "converted from vulgar showman to otherworldly philosopher, his texts at their most exalted moments representing his own unmediated thoughts" (p. 119). Adapting Shakespeare started going hand in hand with canonizing the English playwright. In Dobson's words: "Adaptation and canonization are [...] plainly revealed as completely mutual activities" (p. 130).

By the 1740s, argues Dobson, Shakespeare is already being portrayed as "an honorary epic poet, the British Worthy who immortalized his nation's heroic golden age" (p. 143), i.e. the Elizabethan era, the era in which British's imperial and capitalist aims really began to gain ground. This spread enthusiasm for the Elizabethan era, including the cult of Shakespeare, reflects the propagation of way of seeing Shakespeare actually as "a middle-class version of Shakespeare" (p. 155). More than this, this very understanding of Shakespeare mirrored "the same general demand for a closer alignment of both the national culture and the state with interests of the trading classes" (p. 155). Dobson even writes about a "bourgeois Shakespeare" (p. 158).

There could not be a better example of how much into a myth had Shakespeare been turned than the very idea of a 'bourgeois Shakespeare'. According to Barthes, "it is the bourgeois ideology itself, the process through which the bourgeoisie transforms the reality of the world into an image of the world, History into Nature" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 140). Probably there is no

better example of how much canonizing Shakespeare had in fact been turn into a business, than what English actor David Garrick did with the figure of Shakespeare.

However, before going any further, it seems relevant to consider how much these years of adaptation Dobson writes about were crucial to advent of the Shakespeare myth. The characterization of Shakespeare as being associated to Nature present in the 17th-century folio collections aforementioned were the perfect pretext for Shakespeare to be appropriated in any sort of manner, be them political, artistic, nationalistic, aesthetic, or even religious ones. The Popish Plot adaptations not only pioneered the politically biased branch of adaptations, but also enormously contributed to the effective association of Shakespeare and British (imperial) national identity. Ultimately, Shakespeare was co-opted by the bourgeois ideology and turned, once more, into a means through which not only political but also economical wishes where expressed. Although Dobson does not use the term, it is possible to argue that, by the second half of the 18th century, Shakespeare had already been effectively turned into a myth. It was precisely upon this very myth that pre-Romantics and, consequently, the Romantics themselves build much of their philosophy.

David Garrick, “Shakespeare’s most celebrated idolater” (DOBSON, 2001, p. 164), as Dobson puts it, would take the Shakespeare myth a step further by promoting, still in the second half of the 18th century, in a unprecendent way, the cult of Shakespeare in a way that would, in fact, boost what came to be known as the Shakespeare Industry.

11 SELLING AN IDEA

> the proletariat shares with the bourgeoisie the reification of every aspect of its life
>
> Georg Lukács, *History and Class-consciousness*

Although the Shakespeare industry is believed to have started in 1769 in Stratford-upon-Avon with the first Shakespeare Jubilee, promoted by English actor David Garrick, literary critic Graham Holderness lets us know with his article "Bardolatry: or, the Cultural Materialist's Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon" that there was actually an incipient bardolatry taking place in the streets of Shakespeare's hometown before the first Jubilee.

According to Holderness, "by the mid eighteenth century Stratford was certainly the centre for some kind of tourist industry, run by some pretty unscrupulous local entrepreneurs" (HOLDERNESS, 1988, p. 3). These local entrepreneurs were people who would try and make profit by exploiting forger events, dates and places and fabricating souvenirs all of which somehow related to Shakespeare and his works. Nonetheless, it was the first Shakespeare Jubilee which in fact really triggered the Shakespeare industry.

David Garrick was a well-known Shakespearean English actor in the second half of the 18th century. As Dobson points out, that "Garrick was regarded by his contemporaries as, above all, the definitive Hamlet is extensively demonstrated by the extant account of his performance in this part" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 166). Garrick was also known for his passion for the works of William Shakespeare, as well as for his adaptations of some of the Shakespearean plays. In fact, Garrick's association with the figure of Shakespeare was such an extreme one that it allows Dobson to make the following point: the association effectively began to blur "the separation between Shakespeare's identity and Garrick's" (p. 167). Dobson adds that "Garrick has successfully established himself as an actor who does not just play Shakespeare's role but plays Shakespeare, not so much a faithful interpreter as a legitimate reincarnation" (p. 168).

Dobson argues that this interchange of identities in fact reflects something way more profound: "The king of English literature is replaced [...] by the pre-eminent middle-class impostor" (p. 180). After having co-opted the figure and the works of Shakespeare, bourgeois ideology managed to merge Shakespeare's won identity with that of a prominent figure in

bourgeois English society. An embodied manifesto of how much this class aimed at appropriating such an important "part of the kingdom's riches" (CAPELL apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 8), as Edward Capell would put it. Dobson remarks that "the interrelations between Shakespeare's art, Garrick's art, and the new strain of Protestant nationalism [...] thrived on one another" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 179).

Under Garrick's influence and control, Shakespeare definitely became an icon of the bourgeois Protestant British society, a society that was being spread throughout the world with the expansion of the British Empire. Dobson adds that, the "promotion of Shakespeare as both symbol and exemplar of British national identity, which [...] reached its climax at Garrick's Jubilee in 1769, had some profound and paradoxical consequences for contemporary treatments" (p. 185) of Shakespearean texts.

According to Dobson, after Shakespeare had been "monumentalized as one of Britain's heroic forefathers, amending Shakespeare's plays became part of the vital nationalist project of rewriting the national past in order to validate the aspirations of the present" (p. 187). The associations of Shakespeare and the expansionist characteristic of the British Empire got even more explicit. In Dobson's words:

> It is no accident that between the 1740s and the 1760s – a period of rapid mercantile and imperial expansion – the new alterations of Shakespeare which prosper such as Garrick's [...], present a domestic Shakespeare who is at the same time eminently patriotic, identified at once with virtuous family life, vigorous trade, and British glory (p. 187).

Britain society at that time found itself so engulfed in bourgeois ideology, "this disease of thinking in essences" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 75), as Barthes puts it, that Francis Gentleman, author of an introductory text to a 1774 acting edition of the works of Shakespeare, writes that "it has been our peculiar endeavour to render what we call the essence of SHAKESPEARE, more instructive and intelligible; especially to the ladies and to youth" (GENTLEMAN apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 209). The belief in an 'essence of Shakespeare', the thinking of essences itself is, as Barthes states, "at the bottom of every bourgeois mythology" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 75).

Bourgeois ideology, argues Barthes, "abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, [...] it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 143). It is this same

ideology that, according to Dobson promotes a paradox in its praise of Shakespeare: “The more exalted Shakespeare’s authority becomes, the more thoroughly it is diffused, and the less visibly it is connected with his actual achievements as a playwright” (DOBSON, 2001, p. 214). This paradox, argues Dobson, “is made nowhere more visible than at the culmination of Shakespeare’s canonization, the Stratford Jubilee of 1769, at which, [...] not a single Shakespeare play was performed, or even directly quoted” (p. 214).

In 1769, after having helped rebuild Stratford town hall, the honorary key of the town was offered Garrick by the major, who wished to express his gratitude. Garrick saw this as an opportunity to celebrate Shakespeare and, concomitantly, to promote himself. Various souvenirs were created and sold at the celebration. This was the beginning of a whole new and profitable way of using Shakespeare’s image and works: the Stratford Jubilee of 1769.

On the occasion, argues Dobson, Shakespeare was “summoned to serve [...] to the grateful enchanted island of Britain, his Nature-given ‘absolute command’ [...] sanctioned [...] by that quintessentially mid-century cement of enlightened society, sympathy” (p. 217). Dobson adds that “the generalized hymning of Shakespeare as a transcendent national spirit (hailing him as the certificate of Britain’s privileged access to Nature) [...] guaranteed the Bard’s qualifications to embody the national ideal” (p. 217).

It is precisely at the point in which Shakespeare in most praised almost as a deity, that the paradox related to his figure becomes most evident, Dobson argues. Shakespeare “being praised as the ‘man of all men’, directly inspired by Nature to voice the universal truths of humanity, [...] as self-evidently the supreme writer in world literature, the timeless and transcendent Bard must none the less be claimed as specifically and uniquely English” (p. 219). It is upon this very same paradox that Adams and Schlegel built their conceptions of Shakespeare.

According to Holderness, by 1800 Stratford-upon-Avon had already become a place of dispute amongst those who would like to profit on Shakespeare’s name. Holderness sees these confrontations over profit in Stratford as an appropriate symbol of the Shakespeare myth: “an atmosphere of unscrupulous opportunism, commercial exploitation and gross imposture; the *laissez-faire* environment of a cultural industry in which the free play of market forces determines all values” (HOLDERNESS, 1988, p. 5).

The critic continues his argument by commenting on some of the existing entities which have helped maintain the Shakespeare industry: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Royal

Shakespeare Theatre, the Shakespeare Centre, all of which represent “the authentic clerisy of the Shakespeare religion: Stratford itself its church” (HOLDERNESS, 1988, p. 5). Alongside with these institutions, Holderness sees the growing tourism as another form of propagating the Shakespeare myth. In the critics words, “Tourism is regarded by some serious [...] scholars and theatrical practitioners as the bread-and-butter trade on which the more elevated superstructure of culture can be erected” (p. 5).

Another remarkable feature of Holderness’s article is that he explicitly associates the Shakespeare industry to the Shakespearean myth. In addition, he relates the ‘Shakespearean myth industry’ to a quasi-religious tourism. From the critic’s viewpoint, “tourists are still lured to Stratford by the deployment of an overtly religious language of pilgrimage and worship” (p. 6). For Holderness, ‘the bread-and-butter trade’ is intrinsically connected to the medieval pilgrimage, for “both are engaged in a ritualized passage to a sacred site; both are in search of the icons of their culture” (p. 7).

It is this very quasi-religious feature that Holderness believes to be the “spiritual heart of the Shakespeare myth” (p. 10). The critic also believes that what he calls the institutions of bardolatry (the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon) and the quasi-religious worship to Shakespeare to be “the structures holding that myth in place” (p. 11).

Although Holderness assumption is a valid one, it is also possible that other factors, such as the ones discussed throughout this dissertation also hold the Shakespeare myth in place. Nonetheless, the role the Shakespeare industry plays in this process is practically undeniable. The fact that Holderness writes about ‘spiritual heart’ of the industry reinforce the idea that the Shakespeare myth is, from its origins, related to the concept of Shakespeare as a deity, which still nowadays is a pretext for both semi-religious ‘pilgrimage and worship’ and extraordinary profits.

English novelist Angela Carter builds her last novel Wise Children upon these and many other characteristics of the Shakespeare myth. It is time to take a deeper look into Carter’s biography and literary career.

12 SHE'S A SOCIALIST, DAMN IT!

> The powers of the imagination enable an escape from mind-forged manacles, and comedy, horro's flipside, undercuts, revealing the creaking fabrication upon which terror and oppression depend.
> Gina Wisker, *Re-Visiting Angela Carter*

In his text "Angela Carter, 1940-92: A Very Good Wizard, a Very Dear Friend", British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie, the 1981-winner of the Booker Prize, refers to English novelist Angela Carter as "the most brilliant writer in England" (RUSHDIE, 1992). Making a retrospective evaluation of Carter's personality and literary career, Rushdie states that Carter belongs "at the center of the literature of her time" (RUSHDIE, 1992). Years later, British literary critic Gina Wisker defines Angela Carter as "a radical contemporary writer whose work could be described as both feminist and postmodernist" (WISKER, 2003, p. 1). Wisker also argues that Carter is "the most widely read contemporary woman writer in the UK today, and one of the most widely read in the USA, Australia, Europe and the Far East" (p. 1). It is of paramount relevance to this dissertation to concisely investigate this widely acknowledged writer's biography, as well as to delve deeper into her multifaceted work.

Angela Carter was born Angela Olive Stalker in 1940, in Eastbourne, Sussex, England. In that same year, Carter's maternal grandmother would take her alongside her brother to, in the words of Welsh literary critic and Carter's personal friend and biographer Lorna Sage, "the gritty coal-mining village of Wath-upon-Dearne", in Yorkshire, (SAGE, 2007, p. 5) in order to protect them from the perils of World War II. This was the very place where Carter's grandmother herself had spent her childhood, and it was also in this bleary northern area that Carter would end up being raised during the war. According to Sage, this upbringing provided by Carter´s grandmother was one that "took Angela back to 'Votes for Women', working-class radicalism, outside lavatories, and coal-dust coughs" (p. 5), a kind of social reality very similar to that of her grandmother's childhood. In Carter's own words, a "somehow time-locked, still almost a half-rural society as it must have been in the early days of the Industrial Revolution" (CARTER, 1998c, p. 4). Carter helself also comments on the upbringing provided by her grandmother in her 1976 text "The Mother Lode": "because she, an old woman, took me back to her childhood, I think I became the child she had been, in a sense, for the first five years of my life. [...] a tough, arrogant and pragmatic Yorkshire child" (p. 2). Moreover, in this very same text Carter

comments on another relevant aspect of the maternal grandmother's influence on her: "She came from a community where women rule the roost and she effortlessly imparted a sense of my sex's ascendancy in the scheme of things, every word and gesture of hers displayed a natural dominance, a native savagery, and I am very grateful for all that" (CARTER, 1998c, p. 6).

After the war was over, Carter's family moved to South London and there she received her education in Balham, "a lower middle-class area into which more affluent people have moved latterly" (WISKER, 2003, p. 16), as Wisker points out. Carter compares the two first parts of her early life in the following way: "A social-realist family life for those seminal five years [...]; but the next ten years have a far more elusive flavour, it was as though we were stranded, somehow. [...] It was all very strange" (CARTER, 1998c, p. 12). In the ten years mentioned in the previous passage, Carter would no longer live with her maternal grandmother, but with her biological parents, i.e. a Scotsman and an English woman with a "passion for respectability" (p. 12). Although a very loving one, Carter's family was, in her own words, "a self-contained family unity with a curious, self-crafted life-style" (p. 12), a family that "did not quite fit in" (p. 12).

It seems that, just like her family, Carter herself did not fit in easily during her adolescence, a period the novelist describes as "my transition from little girl to ravaged anoxeric" (CARTER, 1998b, p. 22). According to Sage, since her early years Carter had problems fitting the 1950's traditional images of youthful femininity, "being young was traumatic; she had been anorexic, her tall, big-boned body and her intransigent spirit had been at odds with the way women were expected to be, inside and outside" (SAGE, 2007, p. 24). Carter acknowledges this phase in her life to have been a hard one. A phase which ended only with her getting married to Paul Carter in 1960: "It was a difficult time, terminated, inevitably, by my early marriage as soon as I finally bumped into somebody who would go to Godard movies with me and on [...] marches and even have sexual intercourse with me" (CARTER, 1998b, p. 22). The Carters' troubled union would last for 12 years. According to Sage, "Angela Carter portrayed her own first marriage as a more or less desperate measure, with her making the running" (p. 24).

From 1959 to 1969, a series of relevant events took place in Angela Carter' s life. Before getting married she had already started working as a junior newspaper reporter in 1959. In addition, from 1962 to 1965, Carter attended the University of Bristol and there she read English, specializing in the medieval period.

The year of 1966 marks the publication of Carter´s first novel, *Shadow Dance*. From Sweden scholar Anna Watz Fruchart's viewpoint, "the idea of a break with the past runs through Carter's début novel [...], in line with the avant-grades of the time" (FRUCHART, 2006, p. 21). Still according to Fruchart, *Shadow Dance* "wages war against the static conventional values and accepted truths of Western patriarchy" (p. 21). The literary critic also argues that in Carter's first novel, "the rigid structures of old are made to crumble and fluidity and mutability rule the wreckage" (p. 21). *Shadow Dance* narrates how two of the main characters, Honeybuzzard and Morris, scour the streets and abandoned buildings of London during the night and molest those around them during the day. Fruchart also states that Carter's first novel "is one of her most shocking and violent books, in which female characters become passive objects of male (often misogynistic) desires" (p. 22).

By the end of the 1960's, Carter had published two other novels and had won literary awards for both of them: her second novel, *The Magic Toyshop*, received the John Llewellyn Rhys prize in 1967; for her third novel, *Several Perceptions*, Carter received the Somerset Maugham Award, in 1968.

Critic Lorna Sage describes *The Magic Toyshop* as a "classic rite-of-passage book" (SAGE, 2007, p. 15). Carter's second novel narrates Melaine's growing awareness of her milieu, her sexuality, and ultimately her own self. From Sage's viewpoint, if Carter's first novel delves into the past, *The Magic Toyshop* "goes further towards explaining the past's meaning for Carter: [...] Melaine has to walk in the opposite direction if she wants to go ahead. Despite appearances, the past is the nearest route to the future" (p. 16). *The Magic Toyshop*, which is still nowadays one of Carter's most popular early novels, would be adapted for the screen by its author in 1987.

Carter's third novel *Several Perceptions* focuses on Joseph Harker, a 22-year old man, desolate and obsessed by violence, who attempts suicide right at the beginning of the narrative and who also looks for some kind of meaning in life after his beloved girlfriend leaves him. Lorna Sage states that *Several Perceptions* mimics Joseph's conditon "with its picture of a desultory shiftless world in which hippies and vagrants, tramps and whores [...] form a drifting counter-culture" (p. 16-17).

British scholar and literary critic Aidan Day, author of *Angela Carter – The Rational Glass*, argues that as a whole:

> Carter's first three novels show her establishing, in embryonic form, many of the themes and orientations that were to recur throughout her writing career. Above all, the novels display her early preocupation with the destructive effect of patriarchal culture on both women and men. The novels invoke [...] claustrophobia (DAY, 2006, p.14).

In 1969, Carter publishes her fourth novel, *Heroes and Villains*, a disturbing and highly intertextual dystopian narrative, which deals with a post-nuclear catastrophe which decimated the world' s population and forced the re-organization of the survivals in three warring groups: the Professors, the Barbarians, and the Out People. The major protagonists of the novel, Marianne – the daughter of a Professor – and Jewel – the leader of the Barbarians – lead a conflicting relationship, with overtones of abuse and reversal of gender-role expectations. Many critics see in *Heroes and Villains* Carter´s first attempts at dealing with myth making in the Barthesian sense of culturally constructed collective fictions. We might, then, consider this novel as Carter´s first explicit attempt at the demythologizing of cultural myths.

Besides being the decade in which Carter debuted as a novelist, the Sixties were of enormous importance for the author for other reasons. In her 1983 text "Notes from the Front Line", Carter states that the end of the Sixties was a period of "public philosophical awareness that occurs only very occasionally in human history; when, truly, it felt like Year One, that all that was holy was in the process of being profaned and we were attempting to grapple with the real relations between human beigns" (CARTER, 1998a, p. 37). Sage states that, for Carter, "the Sixties were the period when the illusions broke, dissolved, came out in their true colours" (SAGE, 2007, p. 25). It was in the last year of that decade when Carter embarked on an experience that would change her life: Carter separated from her husband after almost ten years of marriage and using the money obtained by her book awards, she moved to Japan and lived there with a lover from 1969 to 1972.

Sage describes Carter's living in Japan as a 'rite of passage': "this was the place where she lost and found herself" (p. 24). In that country, in that totally foreign society, Carter felt like an Other, and as Sage puts it, "she compounded her oddity when she stepped into the looking-glass world of a culture that reflected her back to herself as an alien" (p. 26). Sage also argues that "Tokyo is a cruel, delightful mirror to the occidental" (p. 27). It was this 'mirror' which allowed Carter to develop a new look of looking at herself and at the society she came from. From Sage's viewpoint, in Japan, Carter "discovered and retained a way of looking at herself,

and other people, as unnatural" (SAGE, 2007, p. 28). In Carter's own words: "In Japan, I learnt what it was to be a woman and became radicalized" (CARTER, 1993, p. 28).

One of the outcomes of such an experience was that the same year Carter got back from Japan she got divorced from Paul Carter. Nevertheless, Carter´s coming back to England brought about serious problems she had to deal with. Most importantly, she had to rebuild her literary career. During her stay in Japan, Carter regularly sent articles to *New Society* and it was journalism that once more played a prominent role in her life throughout the Seventies. According to Sage, it was by working for newspapers such as the *New Society* but also for *The Guardian* that, little by little, Carter started regaining ground. Carter was granted the Arts Council Fellowship in Sheffield from 1976, and in 1977, she settled in London with her new partner, Mark Pearce.

In the 1970´s Carter wrote three other instigating novels – *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffman* (1972), *Love* (1977) and *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) – and a short-story collection – *Fireworks* (1974) – works which deal with most of Carter´s main themes: the cultural construction of gender and, specifically, of femininity; the oppressive character of male power under patriarchy and the myths and institutions which serve to maintain it; the need to revise and re-organize personal life, human relationships, and social formation; the challenging of culturally accepted views of sexuality and of gender identities and roles; the exploration of the implications of androgyny; the relationship between aggressiveness and erotic object choice, sexual fantasy and pornography, and the consequent gendering of sadistic and masochistic positions.

The last year of the decade marked the publication of Carter´s two important works: the controversial *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1979), a study on the portrayal of women in the writings of the notorious Marquis de Sade, and *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, a very peculiar and influential rewriting of fairy tales that would lead to a film release five years later: the 1984-motion picture *Company of Wolves.* Carter's literary career was back on track.

During the Eighties, Carter juggled her literary career and two new demanding positions: professor and mother. Her son, Alexander Pearce, was born in 1983. Three years earlier, she had started working as visiting professor, an activity that she would lead on until 1987. She was a Visiting Professor in the Writing Programme at Brown University in the USA; Writer-in-

Residence at the University of Adelaide in Australia, and she also taught writing at the University of East Anglia in England.

In 1984, Carter published her penultimate novel: *Nights at the Circus*, which narrates the picaresque and carnivalesque outcomes of the relationship between the giant winged woman Fevvers and the incredulous journalist Walser. In 1985, Carter also published a skillfully intertextual rendering of well-known stories, *Black Venus and Other Stories* (1986). In the same year, Carter received the prestigious James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Nights at the Circus*.

The Nineties saw the publication of Carter's highly acclaimed last novel, *Wise Children*, a brilliantly parodic and highly intertextual pseudo-autobigraphy which, relying heavily on Shakespeare and his works, scrutinizes the concept of Englishness. This decade also saw the announcement of Carter's rather early death due to lung cancer in 1992.

In spite of her early death, with the passing of years Angela Carter has been more and more widely recognized as a brilliant writer whose works give a new depth and dimension to British, postmodern and female/feminist literature. For instance, in *Angela Carter's Nights at the Circus*, Scottish scholar Helen Stoddart states that "from the 1970's onwards, feminist practice, in literature as well as other fields, began to be distinguished by its close engagement with critical theory and philosophy" (STODDART, 2007, p. 21). According to Stoddart, Angela Carter's 1984-novel *Nights at the Circus* is a remarkable example of such practice, for in its structure and development it "extends and complicates our understanding of the issues involved" (p. 21). Still according to the critic, in Carter's novel it is possible to find, explore and discuss theories and concepts related to renowned figures such as Walter Benjamin and Michel Foucault, as well as to postmodernism and magical realism. Nonetheless, if we take into consideration Angela Carter's career as a whole, it is conceivable to assume that Stoddart's arguments can be amplified and problematized.

Carter's penultimate novel *Nights at the Circus* does not stand alone as the only sample of her prolific literary production which "extends and complicates our understanding of the issues involved" (p. 21). According to the British scholar and critic Linden Peach, "all her novels, including the early works, blur boundaries between fiction and philosophy" (PEACH, 1998, p. 8). It is Peach who also states that "Carter's fiction encourages us to perceive for ourselves the processes that produce social structures, sociohistorical concepts and cultural artefacts" (p. 9).

It is undeniable that, with her works, Carter has provided much food for thought for both the ordinary reader and the literary critic. The impressive quantity of critical material which has been written on topics related to Angela Carter and her writings is beyond dispute. Although there were a few negative critical pieces written on Carter's work until the middle of the 1980s, from the beginning of the following decade on the amount has become vastly greater. The words of British scholar Sarah Gamble, author of *The Fiction of Angela Carter,* reinforce this idea: "a few pioneering pieces were published in the early-to-mid 1980s [...], but that trickle became a steady flow by the beginning of the next decade, and a flood following Carter's death" (GAMBLE, 2001, p. 8) in 1992. According to Gamble, much of the source of the still ongoing growth in the number of critical works related to Angela Carter is in the amazing wide-ranging characteristic of the author' s literary output: "Angela Carter is popular with critics because she gives them so much to work with" (p. 8).

The sheer number of Angela Carter´s publications is impressive. Throughout her career, Carter wrote four volumes of short stories, three volumes of non-fictional writing, as well as nine novels. Moreover, she wrote two collections of poems, four radio plays, and five books of fiction for children. Carter also contributed in the writing of two screenplays based on her works, edited four books, wrote journalistic texts, and translated Charles Perrault's fairy tales from the French. The wide range of critical material related to her works goes from literary production and philosophy, to gender studies, as well as to film and cultural theories.

Although Carter's production is impressively vast and varied it is possible to argue that there are some themes which are recurrent in her literary output. One of the most remarkable traits of Angela Carter's oeuvre is the pieces of evidence which confirm what Gamble calls "her self-proclaimed role as a demythologiser" (p. 11). That is, throughout her career, Angela Carter tried to play with and deconstruct social, cultural, theoretical, as well as any other sort of myth with the texts she wrote.

There is a whole myriad of examples of how wary Angela Carter was of promoting new approaches to beliefs which are regularly seen as consensual: from the English novelist's very particular view on fairy tales present in her 1979 collection of short stories *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* to the appropriation she makes of the ideas of Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin on the carnivalesque in a novel such as *Nights at the Circus*, it is possible to say that almost everything to which the issues in Angela Carter's texts are related undergoes a process of

demythologization. Carter herself more than once tried to explain her own conception of myths: “I believe that myths are products of the human mind and reflect only aspects of material human practice. I’m in the demythologizing business” (CARTER, 1998a, p. 38).

The ‘demythologizing business’ present in the Angela Carter’s works does not exclude myths related to the female figure, quite on the contrary. In the introduction to the volume *Flesh and the Mirror – Essays on the Art of Angela Carter*, its organizer, Lorna Sage, discusses, amongst several other topics, Carter’s position on conceptions which idealize women. According to Sage, from Angela Carter’s point of view, any idealization of women is “a piece of mystification, a myth, a nonsense – and a nonsense that is compounded by the sanctification of motherhood [...]. There is no world but the world, in short. And that means that any strategy that valorizes women as outsiders is suspect” (SAGE, 1995, p. 13).

Due to Carter’s intention of deconstructing idealized conceptions, her works are often critical of common essentializing perceptions associated to women, as those related to the maternal figure, be it as a destructive entity or as a benevolent one. Other commonly essentializing notions, such as those associated to the virgin, the whore, as well as with the eternal feminine, are all put to question by Angela Carter. Peach, quoting American scholar Sally Robinson, asserts that these questionings of Carter’s try to cast light upon “a socially conditioned female subjectivity and sexuality under a blanket of myth” (PEACH, 1998, p. 10).

Although Stoddart includes Carter’s practices among the bulk of those associated to feminism since the 1970’s, the novelists portrayals of female figures in her writings have been raising dispute among critics. In Peach’s words: “The representation of women in Carter’s works certainly seems to have been a bone of contention among critics” (p. 5). In the introduction to his book on Angela Carter, Peach comments on this topic and cites several critics with different viewpoints on it.

English scholar Paulina Palmer is mentioned by Peach as one critic who considers some of the female characters created by Carter to be “composed of attributes which are predominantly ‘masculine’” (PALMER apud PEACH, 1998, p. 5) and, therefore, who move from attributes related to femininity towards a mistaken identity. Besides, British scholar Elaine Jordan states that Carter “started out writing as a male impersonator, with a strong streak of misogyny” (JORDAN apud PEACH, 1998, p. 5). Nonetheless, critic Gamble (2001) states that those who support Carter believe that some of the traits associated with Carter, such as the ones mentioned

by Palmer and Jordan, are not misoginist at all. They believe these traits are used to debase the structures of power that depict the female figure as something susceptible to male exploitation.

Another remarkable source of interest to both critics and readers in general is the unique use Angela Carter does of intertextuality. Peache, who discusses the role of this narrative strategy in Carter's texts in his 1998 study *Angela Carter*, believes that "Carter's voice as a novelist is located [...] in the intertextuality of her work" (PEACH, 1998, p. 18). From Peach's point of view, the intertextuality characteristic of Angela Carter's writings is "a boldly thematised part of her work [...] in which traditions, mythologies and conventions are subjected to scrutiny" (p. 4). Peach also argues that the "intertexts are exploited in Carter's writing as part of a general skepticism about frameworks" (p. 18) and that they are "an indication of the subversive nature of Carter's work" (p. 18).

From Gamble's viewpoint, the critics' attempt at tracing the intertextuality present in Angela Carter's works is in fact "an exercise which inevitably leads to a consideration of how generic classifications apply to her work" (GAMBLE, 2001, p. 11). Magical Realism, science fiction, postmodernism, philosophical writing, fairy tales: many have been the labels used to try and encapsulate Carter's oeuvre under a sole supposedly encompassing term.

Even though many have been the sources of debate among those who intend to carry out a deeper investigation of Carter's works, those who also find pleasure in the reading of her writings are certainly not few. Throughout her career Angela Carter was concerned with more than only providing food for thought to her readers. In fact, from one of Carter's first novels *The Magic Toyshop*, published in 1967, to her highly acclaimed last novel *Wise Children* Gamble claims that one of Carter's main aims with her fiction was to make her readers think, but, at the same time, to have fun: "Carter always remained dedicated to the idea that the role of literature was to instruct as well as to divert" (p. 8). Quoting Carter, Gamble lets us know that the novelist herself reinforced this idea when she stated that "From *The Magical Toyshop* onwards I've tried to keep an entertaining surface to the novels, so that you don't have to read them as a system of signification if you don't want to" (p. 138).

This unique compound of a 'system of signification' with an 'entertaining surface' clearly represents another recurrent characteristic of Angela Carter's writings: the defiance of the divisions between what is commonly considered 'high' and 'low' cultures. Carter herself once stated that she tended "to regard all aspects of culture as coming in on the same level" (p. 9).

According to Sarah Gamble, the very defiance promoted by Carter defined the novelist's texts, for "her writing is unconventional, full of tense couplings between the old and the new, the 'high' and the 'low', all conveyed in a highly mannered and stylized prose" (GAMBLE, 2001, p. 9). Still according to Gamble, Carter's aphorism "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode" (CARTER, 1998a, p. 37) summarizes the novelist's authorial intentions, especially in terms of challenging the "very division of taste which deemed some genres or forms superior to others" (GAMBLE, 2001, p. 9)

To Sage, Angela Carter's approach to writing, which include the challenging of the 'division of taste', intertextuality, as well as other narrative techniques, ultimately lead the allusions present in Carter's texts to represent what Sage considers to be a "classless society" (SAGE, 1995, p. 4). That is, if Carter regards "all aspects of culture as coming in on the same level" (CARTER apud GAMBLE, 2001, p. 9), and if all these aspect are present in her works via an overwhelming use of intertextuality that promotes a general debasing of any sort of preconceived concepts, it is, in fact, difficult to consider Carter's literary output as one in which a particular class of individuals have more privileges than other. It is possible to infer that Carter's claim on being a socialist – "I'm a socialist, damn it!" (p. 10) - may also be represented in and by her works.

This dissertation will focus on one particular work of Carter: her last novel *Wise Children*. The time seems right to explore this work of Carter's in greater depth.

13 POSTMODERN THEORY

> Postmodern is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good
>
> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

Aidan Day, British scholar and author of *Angela Carter – The Rational Glass.* argues that Carter's last novel, the 1991 *Wise Children*, "is about English culture. And it is about a Shakespeare who has been constructed as one of the originating myths of English culture" (DAY, 2006, p. 195). Day adds that the novel "is about the way in which English imperialism and patriarchy appropriated Shakespeare and cast him as a founding myth in their own image" (p. 195). Day asserts that *Wise Children* is also about "the ways in which aspects of Shakespeare can be re-read and used as an alternative model for English identity; one which stands outside the inheritance of patriarchy and imperialism" (p. 195). It is of paramount importance for the development of this dissertation to explore how Angela Carter manages to give *Wise Children* the characteristics Aidan Day lists. Carter does so by making extensive and highly creative use of what could be called postmodern narrative strategies. It seems relevant to explore some of the characteristics of postmodernism before going any further.

American theorist Fredric Jameson, one of the theorists who are extremely critical of the very concept of postmodernism, argues that postmodernism may "amount to not much more than theorizing its own condition of possibility, which consists primarily in the sheer enumeration of changes and modifications" (JAMESON, 2008, p. ix). However, it is possible to retort that there is significant theoretical material to support postmodernism. Canadian theorist Linda Hutcheon's work should certainly be included amongst this material.

According to Linda Hutcheon, one of the most important features of postmodernism is the one which claims it is "a contradictory phenomenon that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 243), and also that "it always works within conventions in order to subvert them" (p. 246). Still according to Hutcheon, postmodernism is "fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical and inescapably political" (p. 244).

Hutcheon reminds us that “postmodernism cannot simply be used as a synonym for the contemporary” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 244). She also states that it is mainly a “European and American (North and South)” (p. 244) phenomenon. That is to say that although postmodernism may be defined as “a cultural activity that can be discerned in most art forms and many currents of thought today” (p. 244), a precise historical and geographical characteristic needs to be attached to it.

From Hutcheon’s viewpoint, another remarkable trait of postmodernism is what she calls ‘the presence of the past’, “a critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society” (p. 244). The Canadian theorist argues that this past, “its aesthetic forms and its social formations are problematized by critical reflection” (p. 245) in postmodernism. This critical reflection is often made through what Hutcheon calls ‘the perfect postmodernist form’: parodic intertextuality. Nonetheless, this juxtaposition of terms does not imply that the two techniques are merely put together in postmodernism. In fact, there is a change in the perspective of how parody, intertextuality, and parodic intertextuality are used.

Hutcheon, in her text “Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism”, cites American poet T. S. Eliot and his most emblematic work *The Waste Land* as an example of how different is the modernist use of intertextuality from the use postmodernist authors make of it. Hutcheon argues that “When Eliot recalled Dante or Virgil in *The Waste Land*, one sensed a kind of wishful call to continuity beneath the fragmented echoing. It is precisely this that is contested in postmodernist parody, where it is often discontinuity that is revealed at the heart of continuity” (p. 251). Postmodern works then challenge the very texts they parody. It is through parody as well that another prominent feature of postmodernism may be noticed: an “inquiry into the nature of subjectivity (or of self)” (p. 252).

Hutcheon argues that once artists rely on parody in order to produce their works, the ideas of authenticity and originality are undermined. Hutcheon quotes American critic Douglas Crimp: “The fiction of the creating subject gives way to the frank confiscation, quotation, excerptation, accumulation and repetition of already existing images” (p. 251). Hutcheon states that the concept of subjectivity that is questioned by postmodernism brings along with it “an entire set of ideas that have been dominant in our culture until now [...], linked to this contesting of the unified and coherent self is a more general questioning of any totalizing or homogenizing system”

(HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 252). Postmodernism, states Hutcheon, “argues that such systems are indeed attractive, perhaps even necessary; but this does not make them any less illusory” (p. 247).

In Hutcheon’s opinion, there were two particular groups of individuals who helped shape what she calls “the heart of the postmodernist enterprise” (p. 257): women and black artists. From Hutcheon’s viewpoint, both groups:

> linked racial and/or gender differences to questions of discourse and of authority and power [...] to challenge the male white tradition from within [...]. Both black and feminist thought have shown how it is possible to move theory out of the ivory tower and into the larger world of social praxis (p. 257).

The ‘ivory tower’ which Linda Hutcheon refers to may be understood as a reference to the elitism normally associated to modernist works such as James Joyce’s and T. S. Eliot’s. Nonetheless, it is important to remark that Hutcheon’s conceptions of postmodernism are not the only ones.

For instance, French philosopher and literary critic Jean-François Lyotard states in his seminal work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* that a “postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher” (LYOTARD, 1984, p. 81). Lyotard supports his idea with the argument that the works produced by such kind of artist and/or writer “are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work” (p. 81). Still according to the literary critic, “those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for” (p. 81).

American scholar and literary critic Ann Brooks points out that in “Lyotard’s work – and in the work of Derrida [...] and in Barthes – meaning was shown to be indeterminate, all texts implicated in an endless intertextuality” (BROOKS, 1998, p. 93). Writing more specifically about Lyotard, Brooks states that “central to Lyotard’s ‘postmodern condition’ is a recognition and an account of the way in which the ‘grand narratives’ of Western history [...] have broken down” (BROOKS, 1998, p. 92-93). From Brooks’ viewpoint, Lyotard believes that “postmodernism tends to claim the abandonment of all metanarratives which could provide legitimate foundations for truth” (p. 93).

When Brooks associates Lyotard’s work with the works of figures such as Derrida and Barthes and when Hutcheon claims that in postmodernism there is a “more general questioning of any totalizing or homogenizing system” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 252) it is quite clear that there

are similar conceptions shared by postmodernism and post-structuralism. Carter's work, *Wise Children* included, is an example that such an assumption is a valid one. Nonetheless, it is relevant to remember that besides being characterized as a postmodern novelist, Carter is also very much associated with the feminist movement. British literary critic Gina Wisker's definition of Angela Carter is an important one to be mentioned at this point. Wisker claims that Carter is "a radical contemporary writer whose work could be described as both feminist and postmodernist" (WISKER, 2003, p. 1).

American scholar and poet Rachel Blau DuPlessis's words reinforce Wisker's statement on Carter. According to DuPlessis, in the 20th century, many women writers "turn again and again to rewrite, reinterpret, or reenvision classical myths and other culturally resonant materials, such as biblical stories or folk tales [...] reformulating a special kind of persistent narrative that is the repository of many dimensions of representation" (DUPLESSIS, 1985, p. 105).

From DuPlessis' viewpoint, to do such things means "to stand at the impact point of a strong system of interpretation masked as representation, and to rehearse one's one colonization or 'iconization' through the materials one's culture considers powerful and primary" (p. 106). It is Duplessis who also argues that when a female author deconstructs the traditional perspectives through which people, things and ideas are understood, she alters the concepts which support these very perspectives: "A change in point of view reveals the implicit politics of narrative: the choice of the teller or the perspective will alter its core assumptions and one's sense of the tale" (p. 109).

This 'change in point of view' is very relevant, for, as Brooks states, "women are among those whose representations are denied legitimacy" (BROOKS, 1998, p. 96). In addition, according to what Trinidad-born scholar and theorist Carole Boyce Davies states in her *Black Women, Writing and Identity – Migrations of the Subject*, in a patriarchal society, like the English one still is, a woman "already positioned, represented, spoken for or constructed as absent or silent or not listened to in a variety of discourses. Her speech is already represented as non-speech" (DAVIES, 1994, p. 21).

Quoting Australian scholar Anna Yeatman, Anne Brooks also points out that what she calls a 'postmodern feminism', something that could be associated to Carter's literary output, is:

> a feminism committed to a specific epistemological politics a critique of modernism and theoretical traditions emerging around modernism based on a model of deconstruction; an

> articulation of marginalized or 'minority' voices to resist the universalizing aspects of theorizing based on a model of the commonality of oppression; a rejection of fixity of 'binary constructions of difference' and a simultaneous emphasis on the fluidity and indeterminacy of such constructions (BROOKS, 1998, p. 104).

In *Wise Children*, Carter managed to address many of the questions aforementioned and which are related to both postmodernism and feminism. The narrative strategies Carter uses in order to accomplish the subversion of previous literary conventions and norms are another very relevant aspect of Carter's last novel. Besides an overwhelming use of intertextuality or parodic intertextuality, Carter also deploys other narrative strategies in *Wise Children*. The use of magical realism is one of them.

British scholar Maggie Ann Bowers argues that one of the most remarkable features of magical realism in narratives is "its reliance upon the reader to follow the example of the narrator in accepting both realistic and magical perspectives of reality on the same level" (BOWERS: 2005, p. 4). Bowers adds that magic realism "relies upon the full acceptance of the veracity of the fiction during the reading experience, no matter how different this perspective may be to the reader's non-reading opinions and judgments" (BOWERS, 2005, p. 4). Bowers asserts that the term magical realism may be used to "refer to all narrative fiction that includes magical happenings in a realist matter-of-fact narrative" (BOWERS, 2005, p. 2).

American scholars and editors of the volume *Magical Realism – Theory, History, Community* Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris argue that, in tune with postmodernism, "in magical realist texts, ontological disruption serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring readers to scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of casualty, materiality, motivation" (ZAMORA; FARIS, 2005, p. 3). In addition to this, the scholars defend the idea that "magical realism's assault on these basic structures of rationalism and realism has inevitable ideological impact" (p. 6). According to Zamora and Faris, "magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweennes, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women" (p. 6).

It is possible to argue that Carter's work is filled with magical realist passages. In fact, John Haffenden, a British scholar, establishes an explicit connection between Angela Carter's work and magical realism. According to Haffenden, the "term 'magical realist' might well have been invented to describe Angela Carter" (HAFFENDEN, 1985, p. 76).

Another relevant narrative strategy much employed by postmodernist artists, including Angela Carter, is what came to be known as blurring of the genres. As Hutcheon argues, the "borders between literary genres have become fluid: who can tell anymore what the limits are between the novel and the short story collection [...] the novel and the long poem [...] the novel and autobiography [...] the novel and history [...] the novel and biography?" (HUTCHEON, 1990, p. 9).

Such form of questioning led American scholar Ralph Cohen to entitle one of his articles as "Do Postmodern Genres Exist?" (COHEN, 1989, p. 11). In the introduction to his book, *The Fiction of Rushdie, Barnes, Winterson and Carter: Breaking Cultural and Literary Boundaries in the Woks of Four Postmodernists*, American scholar and literary critic Gregory J. Rubison claims that the "answer is of course they do; we simply need to move away from the idea that genre boundaries have ever been discrete" (RUBISON, 2005, p. 21). Rubison adds that in fact the "self-conscious or metafictional aspect of the genre mixing and manipulation in postmodern literature plays a strong role in creating" (p. 20), something that Rubinson sees as one of the most emblematic characteristics inherent to postmodern literature, i.e. its being "critical of status quo political, social, and cultural values" (RUBINSON, 2005, p. 20).

There is still at least one more recurrent postmodern narrative strategy that is vastly employed and explored by Carter throughout her literary career: the presence of what British theorist and critic Mary Russo calls the female grotesque. Going beyond and being more specific than Bakhtin had previously been when discussing the grotesque, Russo acknowledges that her conceptualization of the female grotesque "departs from previous studies of the grotesque in various ways" (RUSSO, 1995, p. viii). However, Russo also acknowledges that, different from previous conceptions of the grotesque, hers inverts "the usual vertical scheme which associates the grotesque with the 'low' to revisit the 'high' registers of modernism, the sublime, and discourses of liberation" (p. viii). Bakhtin's ideas on the grotesque could be related to the 'usual vertical scheme' Russo writes about. On the other hand, it is Russo herself who associates Carter with the 'revisit' of the 'high'registers she writes about. Russo calls Carter's fiction "a theoretical fable" (p. viii).

The differentiation Russo establishes between the 'low' and the 'high' when dealing with the grotesque echoes another remarkable feature of postmodern art, and, consequently, of Carter's works: the contempt for differentiations between 'high' and 'low' forms of culture.

Bearing in mind that Matthew Arnold's concept of culture would be the one characterized as 'high culture', 'low' culture would refer to popular or mass culture. The very fact that Russo defines Carter's fiction as 'a theoretical fable' hints to the way the work of Carter is in terms of merging the ordinary fable, the story-telling narratives to theory, a field of knowledge traditionally related to alledgedly more advanced forms of knowledge.

Bearing all of these characteristics related to postmodernism as well as to feminist writting in mind, the next stage of this dissertation will delve into Carter's *Wise Children* in order to explore its main features.

14 THE DEMYTHOLOGIZING BUSINESS

forget the past: a feature beyond my power
James Joyce, *Selected Letters*

As Day states, Carter's *Wise Children* "is about a Shakespeare who has been constructed as one of the originating myths of English culture" (DAY, 2006, p. 195). The connections with Shakespeare and the English culture, or the parodic intertextuality to both the Shakespeare myth and English culture is established from the very title of the novel. The title may be associated with an old saw which is used by Carter as one of the three epigraphs of the novel: 'It's a wise child that knows its own father'. The very title of the book hints at one of the central themes of the novel: father-and-daughter relationships. The connection to Shakespeare is not as explicit as with the old saw.

In act two, scene two of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the clown Lancelot says: "it is a wise father that knows his own child" (SHAKESPEARE, 2002c, p. 300). It is remarkable that not only the character who says the line is a clown, a figure associated to 'low culture', but also that, as with the old saying, Carter does not simply rephrases it. As a matter of fact she does not even mention the 'wise father', but the children, in the plural form. In Carter's title, the children are the wise ones. They are the focus. From the very title, the figure of the (wise) father, as well as that of the Shakespearean text, is intertextuality parodied in Carter's last novel. This intertextual parody is extended as the novel develops. In fact, in a certain passage we may read: "'It's a wise child that knows its own father' [...] 'But wiser yet the father who knows his own child'" (CARTER, 1993, p. 73).

Another emblematic intertextual parody may be found among the three epigraphs of the novel: the sentence 'Brush up your Shakespeare'. This sentence was taken from a song written by the American composer and song writer Cole Porter for the musical *Kiss Me, Kate*, which premiered on Broadway in 1948. The very musical was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. In addition, the lyrics to "Brush up Your Shakespeare", make obvious references to the English playwright and are filled with humorous intertexts to many of his works. Moreover, it is interesting to remark that Shakespeare's figure and works, or the Shakespeare myth indeed is alluded to in the song in a clear sexual connotation, or at least as a

way to impress women: “Brush up your Shakespeare, /Start quoting him now. /Brush up your Shakespeare /And the women you will wow” (Cole Porter).

It is interesting to notice that in these lyrics from the first half of the 20th century the idea that quoting Shakespeare is still somehow a way of calling attention, especially from the opposite sex. It is possible to argue that Carter builds upon this very epigraph a palimpsestic set of parodic intertextual references that, in fact, sets the tone of the novel: Carter’s epigraph to her novel about a constructed Shakespeare was taken from a Cole Porter’s song about Shakespeare, which is part of a musical, that is, for its turn, based on a Shakespearean play. All of these references are, in turns, one way or another, related to the so-called ‘war of sexes’, to man-and-woman relationships, and to patriarchal values. The very fact that a writer such as Carter, who can be considered a postmodern feminist one, uses and writes about this palimpsestic set of references to the Shakespeare myth is quite remarkable. Nevertheless, there is much more to discuss in the novel than its title and epigraphs. Perhaps its intricate plot is a reasonable starting point.

As in the high modernist novel by James Joyce, the 1922 *Ulysses*, the main plot of *Wise Children* unfolds itself on a single day in late-1980s England. The day is symptomatically 23rd April, the day Shakespeare was supposedly born and died; it is also the day when England’s patron saint, St George, is celebrated. As Dora Chance, the novel’s narrator, puts it, “Don’t you know it’s Shakespeare’s birthday? Cry God for England, Harry and St George and drink a health to bastards” (CARTER, 1993, p. 197). On this very same day Dora and her twin sister Nora were born. On the particular 23rd April, the day when the central action of the novel develops, Dora and Nora are celebrating their seventy-fifth birthday and their illegitimate father’s birthday is about to be celebrated with a huge party as well. Melchior Hazard, Dora and Nora’s illegitimate father, is turning 100 on that same day. Melchior is the identical twin of Peregrine, who is, obviously, also turning a 100 on that same day. Although Melchior is Dora and Nora’s biological father, Melchior does not acknowledge them, and the twins have Peregrine as their legal guardian. Dora and Nora’s mother was known as Pretty Kitty, in Day’s words, “a foundling who died very shortly after they were born [...] during the First World War” (DAY, 2006, p. 196). Dora and Nora were adopted by the woman in whose house Pretty Kitty lived. This woman called herself Mrs Chance. The girls not only adopted Mrs Chance’s surname but also refer to her as Grandma. Dora and Nora have no children of their own and live in the house Grandma left them.

Another close relation of theirs is Tiffany, a black girl whose mother, Brenda, is Dora and Nora's neighbor in Brixton.

Melchior and Peregrine are, or at least they believe to be, the sons of the marriage of Estella and Ranulph Hazard. Ranulph was at least thirty years older than Estella, his first wife and the mother of his sons. It is not really clear whether Melchior and Peregrine are Ranulph's or Cassius Booth's (Estella´s boyfriend) biological sons. Illegitimacy is one of the most recurrent features in this confusing family tree. Besides being at least thirty years older them the supposed mother of his sons, Ranulph was also a major Shakespearean actor of the late Victorian age. The couple met in 1888 when they were playing Shakespeare's *King Lear*: he was playing Lear and she was playing Lear's daughter, Cordelia. The incest innuendo is not fortuitous. The father-and-daughter relationship present in the play and somehow echoed in Ranulph and Estella's relationship becomes an incestuous *fait accompli* when 100-year-old Peregrine has sex with one of his 75-year-old nieces, Dora.

Until his 100th birthday, Melchior had already had three wives: the first one, as Day writes, was "Lady Atalanta Hazard (née Lynde; also referred to, in her old age, by Dora and Nora as 'Wheelchair')" (p. 196). Lady Atalanta/Lynde/Wheelchair gave birth to two twin daughters, Imogen and Saskia, who are legally Melchior's children, but who are actually Peregrine's biological children. Melchior's second wife was actress Delia Delaney, also known as Daisy Duck. Daisy Duck, who was also a former Peregrine's lover, gave birth to no child. My Lady Margarine is Melchior's third wife. This young woman, who is known as My Lady Margarine due to a margarine TV commercial she stared in, played Cordelia in a staging of *King Lear* in which Melchior played Lear himself. Just like Ranulph and Estella, this was how Melchior and My Lady Margarine met and became lovers. From this marriage two twin sons were born, Tristam and Gareth.

The illegitimacy which seems to run in the family has another side to it. Like his father before him, Melchior is also known as the greatest Shakespearean actor of his day. His fortune, fame and prestige contrast with Dora and Nora's life. Melchior's biological daughters are no Shakespearean actresses; they are 'song and dance girls', who on the day of their 75th birthday receive an invitation to their father's 100th-birthday party. It is with this complex family background that the novel begins. The narrative is described by Dora, the narrator, as her

working on her “memoirs and researching family history” (CARTER, 1993, p. 3). Dora also refers to the narrative as her “own autobiography” (p. 11).

Taking into consideration what Hutcheon asserts about postmodernism, that it is “a contradictory phenomenon that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 243), as well as Hutcheon’s claim that Postmodernism “always works within conventions in order to subvert them” (p. 246), it seems reasonable to take a brief look at examples of what Carter actually installs and subverts in *Wise Children*.

The first thing that may be said to be installed and subverted by Carter in *Wise Children* is the work of Shakespeare itself. The plays *King Lear*, as an example of a Shakespearean tragedy, and *A Midsummer Night Dream*, as an example of a Shakespearean comedy, will be explored at this point as texts which Carter works within conventions in order to subvert them.

According to Massai, it is in *King Lear* that the “radical quality of Shakespeare’s tragic imagination is particularly evident” (MASSAI, 2008, p. 481). Roughly speaking, *King Lear* narrates the story of a king, Lear, on the brink of madness who abdicates his throne and decides to divide his kingdom between his three daughters: Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. Lear, as Kiernan points out, is a typical Shakespearean tragic figure, i.e. someone who, “by rash actions of his own” (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 33), lets “loose consequences he is unable to control” (p. 33).

King Lear also has a remarkable subplot: Edmund, illegitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester, plans to supplant Edgar, Gloucester’s legitimate son. As a matter of fact, from the very first scene of the play, the theme of bastardy is present. When answering the question about Edmund, “Is not this your son, my Lord?” (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1487), Gloucester says: “His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often blushed to acknowledge him that now I am brazed to it” (p. 1486). British scholar Stephen Orgel argues that “illegitimacy was a commonplace fact of Shakespeare’s England, as it must be of any society without reliable methods of birth control” (ORGEL, 2002, p. 1482). This connection between a Shakespearean tragedy and the England in which Shakespeare actually lived highlights what Kiernan sees as the “most prominent common feature” (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 32) of Shakespearean tragedies: the “interweaving of public and private themes” (p. 32)

This interweaving sometimes has deep connections, even with Nature, as in the case of Edmund. As Orgel points out, Edmund “is a genuinely subversive figure. [...] The Nature Edmund invokes is anarchic, full of competing claims, not ordered and hierarchical” (ORGEL,

2002, p. 1482). The invocation Orgel refers to is the one made by Edmund in the second scene of the first act. Edmund says: “Thou, Nature, art my goddess. To thy law my services are bound” (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1495). According to Edmund, it is also natural phenomena, more precisely eclipses, that will promote “unnaturalness between the child and the parent, death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities, divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles, needless diffidences, banishment of friends, and I know not what” (p. 1498).

It is possible to infer that this Nature that paradoxically promotes ‘unnaturalness between the child and the parent’ is exemplified when a father, Lear, asks his daughters “Which of you shall we say doth love us most” (p. 1488). As Orgel points out, *King Lear* “has a strong erotic element” (ORGEL, 2002, p. 1483), a subversive erotic element, one may say. In Orgel words, “‘tell me how much you love me’ is what fathers say to children in this play, not what lovers say to each other” (p. 1483). It is also remarkable that, as Orgel points out, “the play includes no love scenes” (p. 1483).

Following one of the most emblematic characteristics of the Shakespearean plays, this tragedy may be considerer one of Shakespeare’s “compositions of a distinct kind” (JOHNSON, 2009, p. 358), as Samuel Johnson would put it. These ‘compositions of a distinct kind’ are referred to by Kiernan as presenting “a social interweaving, an interchange of feelings between higher and lower, when individuals are found in unaccustomed places” (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 29). In *King Lear*, this assumption may be considered as a valid one because of the recurrent presence of a quite wise fool next to and constantly having profound conversations with the king. A fool who says to a king the following words: “thou art an O without a figure, I am better than thou art now, I am a fool, thou art nothing” (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1503). A complete inversion of values takes place in the relation of the fool and the king: ‘low’ and ‘high’ are not only mixed but merged and confused. It is also this same fool who says to the King a sentence of particular relevance for the study of Carter’s *Wise Children*: “Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise” (p. 1508). The ‘high’ and ‘low’ confusing merging has even greater resonance when taking the parodic intertextuality present in the title and in the development of Carter’s novel.

It is possible to argue that Carter installs and subverts *King Lear* in the sense that, just like Shakespeare’s ‘compositions of a distinct kind’, *Wise Children* also promotes “a social interweaving, an interchange of feelings between higher and lower, when individuals are found in

unaccustomed places" (KIERNAN, 1996, p. 29). Melchior's 100th birthday, for instance, is a remarkable carnivalesque example of such 'social interweaving': the 'song and dance girls, the Chance sisters, mingle with 'the House of Hazard', Britain's "theatrical royalty" (CARTER, 1993, p. 76). The fool's line from *King Lear*, "Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise" (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1508), reinforces the idea of mixing 'high' and 'low'. Carter also builds upon this same idea when she depicts the fetish Melchior, "Mr British Theatre" (CARTER, 1993, p. 41), has for his "pasteboard crown" (p. 22), his "toy crown with the gold paint peeling off" (p. 23), his "shabby crown" (p. 24), or as Melchior himself puts it: "'My crown, my foolish crown, my paper crown of a king of shreds and patches [...]. 'The crown my father wore as Lear [...]. Do you know [...] how much it means to me? More than wealth, or fame, or women, or children" (p. 105). Melchior worships his father's crown more than anything. However, Dora describes it as a "flimsy bit of make-believe. A nothing" (p. 105). Melchior, like Lear, seems like someone who should listen to the fool's sentence: "Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise" (SHAKESPEARE, 2002b, p. 1508).

The theme of illegitimacy, present in *King Lear* from the very first scene, is a central one in Carter's last novel as well. As a matter of fact, in the first page of *Wise Children* Dora welcomes the reader to "the *bastard* side of Old Father Thames" (CARTER, 1993, p. 1). London, represented by the River Thames, is depicted as a paternal figure who differentiates the legitimate children, "the affluent" (p. 1), from the bastards, the not so affluent, the illegitimate Chance sisters, for example. The intricate family tree of the Hazards also makes quite clear how present illegitimacy is in the novel.

The incestuous erotic element Orgel sees present in *King Lear* is extensively present in *Wise Children* as well. In fact, it was in two different staging of *King Lear* that two of the most important couples of the Hazard family met. In addition to this, Dora not only admits she and her sister "*had a crush* on Melchior Hazard" (p. 57, author's italics), their father, but Dora also has sex with Peregrine, her uncle.

Besides *King Lear*, Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is explicitly present in *Wise Children*. The action in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begins in an imaginary Athens associated with reason, with law, with daylight. The action, nonetheless, moves to the woods outside Athens. Contrary to Athens, the woods stand for the place for magic, for liberty, for lovers, for sexuality, for dreams, for night. Theseus and Hippolyta rule Athens, whereas

Oberon and Titania rule the fairy kingdom. According to American scholar Russ McDonald, one couple mirrors the other: “one decorous and reasonable, the other passionate and volatile” (MCDONALD, 2002, p. 250). As McDonald puts it, if “Theseus’s court is the domain of reason, the nocturnal forest is the home of the imagination” (p. 253). The American scholar adds that, in fact, “Shakespearean comedy often depends upon an opposition between the familiar, well-lighted world of the city or the court and the exotic freedom of the green world” (p. 253) as a structural contrast.

Besides the two aforementioned couples, there are the Athenians young lovers: the young women Hermia and Helena and the young men Demetrius and Lysander. According to McDonald, “Helena and Hermia are physical opposites, the one tall and fair [...] the other short and dark” (p. 250). On the other hand, McDonald also argues that “Lysander and Demetrius seem indistinguishable” (p. 250). The relations amongst these younger characters are quite intricate: Lysander and Hermia are in love with each other. However, Egeus, Hermia’s father, wants her to marry Demetrius, who loves Hermia as well, but is loved by Helena. It is relevant to mention Terry Eagleton’s words when he states that “Shakespearian comedy is acutely aware that characters in love are simultaneously at their most ‘real’ and ‘unreal’, most true and most feigning” (EAGLETON, 1986, p. 18).

In addition to the aforementioned characters, there are some others: Oberon’s servant Puck, also known as Robin Goodfellow; Titania’s fairy servants Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed; and the acting troupe, a group of workers who intend to stage a play: the carpenter Peter Quince, the weaver Nick Bottom, the bellows-mender Francis Flute, the tailor Robin Starveling, the tinker Tom Snout, and the joiner Snug.

As the play develops, what the audience/reader witnesses is the lovers “exchanging roles with dizzying speed” (EAGLETON, 1986, p. 22), as Eagleton puts it. Eagleton adds: “Each role, when lived, appears as absolute, only a moment later to be exposed as fortuitous [...]: anything can be exchanged with anything else” (p. 22-23). Finally, Eagleton asks, “if everyone is defined by what they are not [...], does this not suggest an empty circularity of identities, ungrounded in any absolute?” (p. 23). This questioning of Eagleton’s leaves plenty of room for exploring Carter’s postmodern appropriation of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

As Linda Hutcheon states, postmodernism contests the very concept of subjectivity, “of the unified and coherent self” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 252), therefore, of identity itself. As

Eagleton points out, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* it is possible to talk about "an empty circularity of identities, ungrounded in any absolute" (EAGLETON, 1986, p. 23). In *Wise Children* such thing is possible as well. The very presence of so many twins in the novel echoes the dizzying confusion of lovers in the Shakespearean comedy. In addition to this, Carter's fictional characters are also "defined by what they are not" (p. 23). Dora and Nora Chance are 'the song and dance girls', for they are not effectively part of Britain's "theatrical royalty" (CARTER, 1993, p. 76).

As a matter of fact, questionings of identity are present throughout *Wise Children*. Dora characterizes herself and her sister as "All the same, identical, we may be, but symmetrical – never" (p. 5). Because they are so physically similar there are many passages in the novel in which Carter could work on the "empty circularity of identities, ungrounded in any absolute" (EAGLETON, 1986, p. 23) Eagleton writes about. For instance, Dora, talking about herself and her twin sister Nora, states that "By ourselves, neither of us was nothing much but put us together, people blinked. Which is Dora? Which is Nora?" (CARTER, 1993, p. 60-61). Dora or Nora alone was 'nothing much', i.e. only together that they called attention, and the attention they called is immediately related to the confusion their similarity generates. Dora reinforces this assumption when she asserts that "neither of us anything special [...] but together, we turned heads" (CARTER, 1993, p. 63), or "On our own, you wouldn't look at us twice. But, put us together..." (p. 77). Their identities are depicted as being almost merged. Nora's remark "We were a pretty girl!" (p. 110) reinforces such assumption.

This merging of indentities is also noticeable when we read what Dora writes about her first sexual experience. She refers to herself and "Nora/Dora" (p. 84), for she was pretending to be her sister in order to have sex with Nora's boyfriend. When writing about the experience she states: "I wasn't Dora, any more, was I? Now I was Nora" (p. 85). Just like the way Eagleton describes the lovers relationships in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, i.e. lovers "exchanging roles with dizzying speed" (EAGLETON, 1986, p. 22), Nora/Dora exchange of identities may be characterized in the same way.

Moreover, when Dora realized she could not find her sister after the fire that took place in the Hazard's house she describes her looking for her sister as her "searching for my lost limb" (CARTER, 1993, p. 104), and calls Nora "the best part of me" (p. 104). Ultimately she acknowledges that "without Nora, life wasn't worth living" (p. 104). That is to say, Dora's and

Nora's lives and identities were so merged that the absence of one would mean the lack of a reason to live for the other.

It seems important, at this point to start exploring in greater depth the relations between Carter's *Wise Children* and the postmodern and feminist theories. This will allow the associations established between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Wise Children* to be complexified and enhanced.

15 POSTMODERN CHILDREN DO BRUSH UP THEIR THEORY

Let us wage a war on totality
Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

Taking into consideration what Linda Hutcheon sees as one of the most important features of postmodernism, i.e. that it "uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 243), and that "it always works within conventions in order to subvert them" (p. 246) as well, it is possible to argue that this is a characteristic explicitly and extensively present in Carter's *Wise Children*. The aforementioned examples of the parodic intertextuality present in the title, in the epigraphs, and in the structure of the novel itself which is directly related to, at least, the two Shakespearean plays most often commented on this dissertation so far, *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are conclusive enough to demonstrate that parodic intertextuality is a major postmodern characteristic of Carter's last novel.

Hutcheon also argues that postmodernism is "fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical and inescapably political" (p. 244). Taking *Wise Children* as an example, it is possible to argue that the novel is contradictory because at the same time that it bases lots of its constitutive elements on Shakespearean plays, it also subverts the very characteristics of these very same plays. Some examples may elucidate this topic: Lear is a king on the brink of madness, but he is the source of Ranulph's and Melchior's fetishes for the toy crown; Edmund is a bastard villain, but the Chance sisters are bastard female protagonists of a novel about a constructed Shakespeare; the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are confused in the woods due to magic, but the lovers and characters of *Wise Children* in general may be confused not necessarily because of the magic carried out in the woods, but because of their own lusty sexual appetites.

Wise Children is 'resolutely historical'. It is set in the late 1980s, in England, and past historical events such as World War II produce grave consequences for the plot: Grandma Chance's death in the War is an example. Carter's novel is undoubtedly 'inescapably political' for several reasons: it is written by a writer considered to be a feminist one; the narrator of the novel is not only a woman but a 75-year-old woman who has sex with her 100-year-old uncle and

is attracted to her biological father; the theme of the connection between the British Empire and the Shakespeare myth is vastly built upon in passages such as the ones related to Ranulph's trips around the world to spread the Shakespearean Word, as well as in the ones in which Gorgeous George takes part.

Hutcheon also asserts that postmodernism is primarily a "European and American (North and South)" (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 244) phenomenon. The fact that Angela Carter was an English writer writing about English culture reinforces Hutcheon's assertion. More than this, in the novel, when the action is not taking place in England, it takes place in The United States, a probable allegory for the woods in Shakespearean comedies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The 'presence of the past' Hutcheon writes about is noticeable in *Wise Children* in many passages and also in several layers. A possible understanding of the presence of the past in Carter's novel is the one related to the very intertextual presence of Shakespeare, the Shakespeare myth, and the works of Shakespeare parodied in *Wise Children*. On this line of thought, the past is represented by everything related to Shakespeare, a figure that historically belongs to the past. Another layer of associations with the 'presence of the past' is related to the past of the characters in the novel. In her pseudo-autobiography, Dora writes about her past and about the past of many other characters. The "critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society" (p. 244) Hutcheon refers to, is exemplified once more by, in the case of Dora, the narrator's subjective inflections on her own memories and, in the case of Carter herself, for her also subjective, creative inflections on Britain's and Western's past and present through a combative postmodern feminist point of view. That is, by intertextually parodizing both official history on one level and the fictional memories of her character on another, Carter not only exemplifies with her novel the 'presence of the past' but takes it to its very representational limits.

According to Hutcheon, postmodern parody does not promote continuity the same way modernist parody would do. In fact, postmodernism reveals an underlying sense of discontinuity. The way Carter deals with the Shakespearean myth in *Wise Children* clearly reinforces Hutcheon's assumption. Carter does not aim at promoting and/or associating Shakespeare with any form of legitimization of patriarchal hegemonic culture and/or discourse. Quite the contrary, especially when we realize that bastardy and illegitimacy are such an important part of her novel. When Dora says "Don't you know it's Shakespeare's birthday? Cry God for England, Harry and

St. George, and drink a health to bastards" (CARTER, 1993, p. 197) she associates Shakespeare, England and St. George with bastards. The novel itself is supposedly based upon the memories of a bastard child who lives on "the *bastard* side of Old Father Thames" (p. 1, author's italics). Carter's novel about English culture is also a novel about bastardy. The legitimacy of the patriarchal hegemonic discourse is put aside in favor of a new form of discourse: that of the bastards'. The Shakespeare myth is put to work in favor of discontinuity in *Wise Children*.

The "inquiry into the nature of subjectivity (or of self)" (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 252), characteristic of postmodernism is also extensively present in *Wise Children*. As aforementioned, the dizzying exchange of identities of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is effectively parodized in Carter's novel. Just in order to add to all the previous examples about this fluidity of identities in *Wise Children* already mentioned, the following passage with Melchior is quite elucidative as well. One day on the subway, someone grasps Melchior by the hand and asks: "Good God, weren't you Melchior Hazard once?" (CARTER, 1993, p. 203). This was enough to make Melchior feel he was too old to wear his "precious old cardboard crown" (p. 203). Melchior's identity was so fragile that a simple question from someone on the street would make him give up his most valuable fantasy. His very identity, the nature of his subjectivity, was shaken, was put into question due to a comment on his age. More than this, if he really were 'Mr. British theatre', as he seems to think of himself, the identity of this very institution, the British Theatre, would be under serious questioning. It is possible to argue that through the character of Melchior Carter is also questioning the very foundations of the Shakespeare myth. What necessarily is it? Does a cardboard crown represent it? If it does, is it such a valuable thing? Does contemporaneity, represented in the passage with Melchior on the subway by the anonymous person who asks him the dreadful question, still care about and value the institutions of the past?

The words of Hutcheon remind us that this postmodern questioning of subjectivity brings along with it "an entire set of ideas that have been dominant in our culture until now [...], linked to this contesting of the unified and coherent self is a more general questioning of any totalizing or homogenizing system" (p. 252): the Shakespeare myth, British national identity, and patriarchal hegemonic discourse are certainly amongst this set of ideas Hutcheon writes about. These homogenizing systems may also be associated with Lyotard's conception of the grand narratives that are no longer taken for granted in Postmodernism.

Still according to Hutcheon, Carter is, in fact, “at the heart of the postmodernist enterprise” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 257) for Carter’s *Wise Children*, for instance, clearly links “gender differences to questions of discourse and of authority and power [...] to challenge the male white tradition from within” (p. 257). More than this, when Mary Russo states that Carter’s fiction is “a theoretical fable” (RUSSO, 1995, p. viii), she acknowledges that Carter’s fiction shows “how it is possible to move theory out of the ivory tower and into the larger world of social praxis” (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 257).

Russo’s viewpoint allows Carter to be described, as Lyotard does, as a postmodern artist “in the position of a philosopher” (LYOTARD, 1984, p. 81). An assumption supported by Helen Stoddart when she asserts that “from the 1970’s onwards, feminist practice, in literature as well as other fields, began to be distinguished by its close engagement with critical theory and philosophy” (STODDART, 2007, p. 21) and includes Carter within this particular feminist practice. Linden Peach reinforces this idea when he writes that all of Carter’s novels, including *Wise Children*, “blur boundaries between fiction and philosophy” (PEACH, 1998, p. 8).

When DuPlessis argues that many female writers from the 20th century “turn again and again to rewrite, reinterpret, or reenvision classical myths and other culturally resonant materials [...] reformulating a special kind of persistent narrative that is the repository of many dimensions of representation” (DUPLESSIS, 1985, p. 105), she seems to be talking exactly about what Carter does with the Shakespeare myth in *Wise Children*. The following words by DuPlessis also seem to describe what both Angela Carter and Dora Chance do with their writings, i.e. a particular historically located narrative that changes the traditional hegemonic point of view and “reveals the implicit politics of narrative: the choice of the teller or the perspective will alter its core assumptions and one’s sense of the tale” (p. 109).

The core assumptions of the implicit politics of narrative are exposed by individuals, women actually, “whose representations are denied legitimacy” (BROOKS, 1998, p. 96), “already positioned, represented, spoken for or constructed as absent or silent or not listened to in a variety of discourses” (DAVIES, 1994, p. 21). These assumptions are reinforced when Carter gives voice to an illegitimate 75-year-old ‘song and dance girl’ who is very much aware of her position in society. When Dora states that both she and Nora “decided to tolerate the invisibility of old ladies – note that, even dressed up like fourpenny ham-bones, our age and gender still

rendered us invisible" (CARTER, 1993, p. 199), we learn that not only Dora and Nora are aware of their situation, but Carter is conscious of it as well.

Carter can be understood as a representative of the postmodern feminism Yeatman and Brooks write about. *Wise Children* and the subjects which it encompasses, including Carter's questioning of the Shakespeare myth, allow us to see that Carter is "committed to a specific epistemological politics, a critique of modernism and theoretical traditions emerging around modernism based on a model of deconstruction" (BROOKS, 1998, p. 104). By giving voice and agency to a character such as Dora, Carter effectively articulates a marginalized voice "to resist the universalizing aspects of theorizing based on a model of the commonality of oppression" (p. 104). In addition, by questioning the very core of the idea of subjectivity Carter also rejects the "fixity of 'binary constructions of difference'" (p. 104) and promotes "emphasis on the fluidity and indeterminacy of such constructions" (p. 104).

The postmodern narrative strategies are also markedly present in Carter's *Wise Children*. Magic realism, for instance, may be noticed in several passages of the novel, especially in those related to Peregrine. Peregrine is described as being "the size of a polar bear" (CARTER, 1993, p. 62), and as being "as big as the burning house, or bigger" (p. 105). Dora also writes that Peregrine "seemed to grow before our eyes" (p. 117). In addition to this, in one particular passage Dora describes Peregrine as being the "size of a warehouse, bigger, the size of a tower block" (p. 206). In this same passage, as Peregrine walks through the door, Dora says "In on the wind that came with Perry blew dozens and dozens of butterflies, red ones, yellow ones, brown and amber ones, some most mysteriously violet and black, tiny little green ones, huge flapping marbled blue and khaki ones, swirling around the room" (p. 207) . It is possible to argue that Carter employs magic realism in these passages in order to portrayed Peregrine as a character who seems not to fit in reality, to be bigger than reality, to be larger than life.

In this same passage that Dora describes Peregrine as being "the size of a tower block" (p. 206), as Peregrine walks through the door, Dora says "In on the wind that came with Perry blew dozens and dozens of butterflies, red ones, yellow ones, brown and amber ones, some most mysteriously violet and black, tiny little green ones, huge flapping marbled blue and khaki ones, swirling around the room" (p. 207) . Peregrine hed been to Brazil, a country decpited in the novel as an exotic place where the mysterious Amazon forest is located. It is exactly from this exotic

Brazil where Peregrine is coming back from with his magic multicolored “dozens and dozens of butterflies” (CARTER, 1993, p. 207).

Another remarkable passage in which Carter makes use of magic realism is the one in which Peregrine pulls out of his pockets a new set of twins, Gareth’s children. Peregrine says to the Chance sisters: “‘Look in my pocket, Nora.’ [...] ‘Look in the other one, Dora’” (p. 226). And Dora adds, “One each. They were twins, of course, three months old, by the look of them” (p. 226). But this time, for the first time in the Hazard family, actually, the twins were not same sex ones, they were a boy and a girl. With this particular passage, Carter portrays Peregrine in a simulacrum or parody of the act of giving birth. Peregrine, in fact, ressignifies the traditional gender role.

Wise Children is in itself an example of the blurring of the genres, another postmodern narrative strategy. Is the narrative a novel, an autobiography, both, or none? The fact that *Wise Children* is normally characterized as a novel does not take into consideration the text’s narrator’s point of view. Dora says she is going to tell the events as her “own autobiography” (p. 11). The lapses in Dora’s memory, such as when she asserts “I have a memory, though I know it cannot be a true one” (p. 72) are studied by theorists and critics of autobiographical narratives. As American author and critic bell hooks claims, an “autobiography is a personal narrative, a unique retelling of events not as much as they happened but as we remember or invent them” (hooks: 2001, p. 430). Dora could be considered an unreliable narrator by many critics because, on several occasions, she fails to recollect the next part of the story, as she is quite old and is telling events of her youth from memory (“I have a memory though I know it cannot be a true one …”; “I misremember. It was sixty-odd years ago, you know”). According to recents studies of the autobiographical genres, however, Dora is like any other person or narrator who tries to remember or narrate the past. Carter, blatantly, challenges the idea of veracity that is a conventional issue in the investigation of autobiographical narratives. By blurring the borders between fiction and autobiography, Carter´s *Wise Children* not only illustrates one of the most emblematic postmodern narrative strategies but also questions the very validity of the genres as a whole at the same time that calls the reader’s attention to the very nature of the different genres.

Another relevant postmodern narrative strategy used in *Wise Children* is the one related to the female grotesque, a feature Mary Russo writes about. It may be exemplified by Dora and Nora themselves in the sense that, although they are 75 years old, they still manage to sing and

dance, to have wild sex, and to plan the upbringing of a pair of twins. In addition, Carter's postmodern narrative may be associated with what Russo calls the "'high' registers of modernism" (RUSSO, 1995, p. viii) and, exactly because it is narrated by a character such as Dora, in the "discourses of liberation" Russo writes about (p. viii).

Another relevant aspect of *Wise Children* is its installment and subversion of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque. Following the four interlinked textual features that, according to Stoddart, make the carnivalesque to take place in novels, it is possible to say that Carter installs all of them in *Wise Children* and subsequently subverts them. "The suspension of distance between individuals [...] especially between people who might normally be separated by social hierarchies and class divisions" (STODDART, 2005, p. 27) as well as the free association of people, values, things, phenomena and thoughts, "which would otherwise be 'self-enclosed, disunified, distanced from one another'" (p. 28), in "carnivalistic mésalliances" (p. 28) are present in various passages from *Wise Children*: in Melchior's party, and at the Hollywood set of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example.

The establishment of a "'new model of interrelationship between individuals' through physical and 'concretely sensual' and eccentric forms that are 'half-real and half-play-acted'" (p. 27-28) is exemplified in *Wise Children*, for instance, with Dora and Peregrine's bouts of sexual intercourse. Dora's words reinforce such assumptions when she says that, while she was having sex with Peregrine "he wasn't only the one dear man, tonight, but a kaleidoscope of faces, gestures, caresses. He was not the love of my life but all the loves of my life at once" (CARTER, 1993, p. 221). Not only this incestuous intercourse may be seen as a "'new model of interrelationship between individuals' through physical and 'concretely sensual' and eccentric forms" (STODDART, 2005, p. 27-28) but also Dora's subjective perception of having sex with many different individuals while, in fact, being only with Perry may be understood as the 'half-real and half-play-acted' interrelationship Stoddard comments on.

Finally, the installation of a system of "'carnivalistic debasings, and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and the body' and 'carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts'" (p. 28) is directly connected to the figure of Shakespeare in the novel. The passage in which Dora conjectures about how might her mother have had sex with Melchior is an example of a 'carnivalistic debasing' that is associated with the name of Shakespeare in *Wise Children*. Dora says that she likes to think that it went the following way:

> She closed the door behind her, locked it. There he was on the bed, brushing up his Shakespeare. He looked up, hastily laying aside his well-thumbed copy of the *Collected Works*. She started pulling off her chemise. 'Now I've got you where I want you!' she said. What else could a gentleman do but succumb? (CARTER, 1993, p. 24).

In this passage Shakespeare's *Collected Works* is a sacred but also a parodized text. As Drakakis points out, this volume, which supposedly represents Shakespeare's 'Word', "takes its place alongside the Bible as our guarantee of civilization and humanity" (DRAKAKIS, 1988, p. 25). Moreover, the sexual contexts in which this supposedly sacred text is referred to is a clear example of the "carnivalistic debasings, and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and the body" (STODDART, 2005, p. 28) Stoddart writes about.

Peregrine is described by Dora as "a travelling carnival" (CARTER, 1993, p. 169). However, it is to Peregrine himself that Dora says "The carnival's got to stop, some time, Perry" (p. 222). Dora acknowledges that "There are limits to the power of laughter" (p. 220). According to Stoddart, this passage in Carter's novel strongly contrasts with Bakhtin's ideas in relation to carnival's end. As Stoddart put it, "According to Bakhtin's account of the carnival, it is a social, communal and highly ritualistic festival that provides a temporary liberation from social regulation and hierarchy through the physical acting out of violently subversive desires" (p. 118). Dora's word support Stoddart's claim: "While we were doing it, everything seemed possible" (p. 222). However, "in Carter's novel these are usually accompanied by humiliation or defeat" (STODDART, 2005, p. 119). It is while having sex with Peregrine that Dora remembers "the first, worst disappointment of her life" (CARTER, 1993, p. 221): she had sex with Peregrine when she was 13 years old.

The next step on this dissertation will be the exploration of what seems to be one of the most important passages of *Wise Children*: the 'ritual' before the start of the shooting of the Hollywood filmic adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

16 THE SHOOTING

my nation! What ish my nation?
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

One night, on her way out of the cinema, Nora picks a leaflet that says: "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, dir. Melchior Hazard, Hollywood, USA" (CARTER, 1993, p. 111). The leaflet also calls it a "masterpiece of kitsch" (p. 111). This filmic adaptation of the Shakespearean comedy may be understood as a subverted version of what is normally referred to in Shakespearean studies as 'a play within a play', i.e. a theatrical production that takes place within the narrative of a given play. For example, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the workers stage a play for Theseus's wedding.

The film was part of Melchior's plan to continue his father's work: to spread Shakespeare's Word throughout the world. As Dora lets us know, "Shakespeare was a kind of a god" (p. 14) for Ranulph Hazard. "It was as good as idolatry. He thought the whole of human life was there" (p. 14) asserts Dora about her grandfather, who the novel's narrator calls a "rattling old nineteenth-century romantic" (p. 16). The connection between Ranulph's idolatry and the Romantics praise of Shakespeare is certainly not fortuitous.

At a certain point of the narrative, we learn that Ranulph even played Shakespearean roles for Queen Victoria: "during his Macbeth Queen Victoria gripped the curtains of the royal box until her knuckles whitened" (p. 14). It is relevant to remark that it was during the reign of Queen Victoria that the British Empire had its heyday. Ranulph, in fact, may be a representation of all the nationalistic enthusiasm with which the figure of Shakespeare was surrounded by during the Victorian era, i.e. most of the 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century. As Dobson points out, "That Shakespeare was declared to rule world literature at the same time that Britannia was declared to rule the waves may, indeed, be more than a coincidence" (DOBSON, 2001, p. 7).

Dora also lets us know that Ranulph "was agog to give America the tongue that Shakespeare spake" (CARTER, 1993, p. 16). That Ranulph, a "rattling old nineteenth-century romantic" (p. 16), believed he could reproduce the 'the tongue that Shakespeare spake' is no surprise. Many other Romantics felt the same way. It is interesting, nevertheless, that Ranulph

seems to believe that America does not know Shakespeare, or at least, does not know his tongue properly. Ranulph sees as his duty to teach them the language of the god of his idolatry. In fact, Dora points out that Ranulph "was half mad and thought he had a Call" (CARTER, 1993, p. 17). She adds that "he saw the entire world as his mission field" (p. 17). Dora goes on and states that "the old man was seized with the most imperative desire, to spread and go on spreading the Word overseas [...] to take Shakespeare where Shakespeare had never been before" (p. 17). This emphasis on Ranulph having 'a Call' as well as to the imperative desire to spread 'the Word' has also obvious religious connotations. It is with something akin to a missionary zeal that Ranulph takes Shakespeare to the most remotes corners of the British Empire.

Establishing an even clearer connection between Ranulph's desire and the vastness of the British Empire, Dora argues that "In those days, there was so much pink on the map of the world that English was spoken everywhere. No language problem. Off to the ends of the Empire they went" (p. 17). The 'pink on the map' represents areas under the British empireal rule and the 'they' Dora refers to is Ranulph's family, who had to follow him anywhere he chose to go, in an almost missionary dedication. Like the Shakespeare myth itself, which is described by Capell as part of Britain's treasure, "talk'd of wherever the name of Britain is talk'd of" (CAPELL apud DOBSON, 2001, p. 8), "the Hazards belonged to everyone. They were a national treasure" (CARTER, 1993, p. 38). According to Dora's narrative, the Hazards went to many different countries and continents: Europe, America, Australia, Africa and Asia were on their agenda.

Everywhere they went to, they somehow affected local culture. In Australia, for instance, people named a sundae after Ranulph's wife, Estella: "ice-cream Estella" (p. 18). The list is a long one: "an entire dried-out township in New South Wales was renamed Hazard, after she and Ranulph put on al fresco *Coriolanus*. A street in Hobart, Tasmania. [...] A theatre [...] named the Hazard, in Shanghai. Then in Hong Kong. Then Singapore" (p. 19). The Hazards, in more than one sense, represent the British expansion world-wide and how the British presence, in fact, influenced local cultures and costumes. If the Word was being spread it was certainly because the Empire was spread as well.

A figure that, just like Ranulph Hazard, is closely related to the British Empire in *Wise Children* is the character Gorgeous George, an English comedian who the Chance sisters get to know on a day out with Peregrine when they were still teenagers. However, as the narrative itself lets us know, "George was not a comic at all but an enormous statement" (p. 66). Dora describes

Gorgeous George, whose surname is a clear reference to England patron saint, as an enormous statement because “displayed across his torso there was, if you took the top of his head as the North Pole and the soles of his feet as the South, a complete map of the entire world” (CARTER, 1993, p. 66). As Gorgeous George undresses to fully display his global tattoo, he sings several songs that praise Great Britain, including English pre-Romantic Thomson’s “Rule, Britannia”: “‘Rule, Britannia’ accompanied his final turn, which revealed how most of his global tattoo was filled in a brilliant pink” (p. 67). George was in fact ‘an enormous statement’, a statement which made it clear that the British Empire, at the time, ruled an also enormous portion of the world. This very same character, Gorgeous George would also take part in Melchior’s filmic adaptation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. As Dora puts it, “Melchior had personally imported the rudest man in England to play Bottom. Yes! Gorgeous George” (p. 150).

Once the pre-production of the film began, the Chance sisters, who were part of the cast, had a ‘sacred mission’: to bear earth from Stratford-upon-Avon, “to bear the precious dust to the New World so that Melchior could sprinkle it on the set of *The Dream* on the first day of the shoot” (p. 113). They were supposed to fulfill this, according to Melchior, sacred mission by carrying “a pot, a sort of jar, about the size of the ones they use for ashes in the crematoria, and it was hollow inside and in the shape of a bust of, that’s right, William Shakespeare” (p. 113). The conception of Shakespeare as a god-like figure whose home town supposedly is a sacred place is inherent to the Shakespeare myth. The ‘sacred mission’ the Chance sisters were on does nothing less than promote the myth in its most extreme ways. The carrying of a clod of “home” earth into the new lands or new homes, is part of many colonization and immigration narratives, and carries with it a connection between the colonizer-colonized enterprises, a relevant issue in Melchior´s bringing Shakespeare to the United States.

Dora comments on the wood near Athens that was artificially created in the set claiming that it was “scaled to the size of fairy folk, so all was twice as large as life” (p. 124) that it was “too, too solid” (p. 125) for her. According to her, the “wood, this entire dream, in fact, was custom-made and hand-built, it felt nothing to the imagination” (p. 125). She adds: “It was all too literal for me” (p. 125). The place that, in the Shakespearean comedy, stands for magic, for imagination, in the custom-made and hand-built version of the American filmic adaptation is a place without a place for imagination itself. The wood near Athens is maybe inadvertently

installed and subverted by the very same people who intend to praise the work of Shakespeare in Carter's postmodern narrative.

After getting to Hollywood, Dora and Nora simply lose 'the Shakespeare casket', as Dora calls the jar containing Stratford´s soil. As Dora says, "I couldn't think who had it last. I wondered if we'd left it on the train" (CARTER, 1993, p. 128). However, they found it "in a little cubbyhole off the master-bedroom" (p. 128), where they had never been before. As Dora narrates it: "*there* was the Shakespeare casket, safe and sound sitting on the minuscule dresser as if in a little shrine, because somebody had set it up and flanked the pot with candles and lit them. [...] what a sense of ritual, of occasion, in that room" (p. 128). Dora and Nora, astonished by this peculiar setting, ask themselves who could have done such a thing: "Who'd gone to all that bother? We found out later it was the Mexican cleaning lady. Catholic. Ever so Catholic. She thought there must be a holy relic in the casket, because it was packed with such care, and she treated it accordingly" (p. 128).

This remarkably funny passage contains several aspects which should be taken into consideration. The first one is the complete disdain with which Dora and Nora treat the Shakespeare casket. Differently from Melchior Hazard, "Mr British Theatre", who asked them to bring earth from the sacred home town of Shakespeare, the Chance sisters, the bastards, the illegitimate, could not care less for their supposedly 'sacred mission'. A relevant aspect of such different understandings of the 'sacred mission' may, in fact, expose a characteristic of English culture, of any culture indeed, which sometimes is overlooked: any given culture is not a monolithic entity in which all its members share the same values, beliefs, and ideology. As the Marxist theorists previously discussed point out, the dominant ideology is not the only existing ideology. In fact, what is called English culture may be actually understood as a body of various sub-cultures. If Melchior Hazard is a bardolater, his daughters are not, but, in spite of their different outlooks, they are all English. So any assumption that the Shakespeare myth is, in any sense, representative of the English culture as a whole fails to realize that there is no such thing as "English culture" as a whole. It is, effectively, an imagined community, as Anderson would put it.

Nevertheless, it is the hegemonic discourse that, in the passage in which the Chance sisters find the Shakespeare casket, makes the Mexican cleaning lady take the casket as something indeed sacred. Repeating the passage for emphasis, "She thought there must be a holy

relic in the casket, because it was packed with such care, and she treated it accordingly" (CARTER, 1993, p. 128). It is also remarkable to consider the Mexican cleaning lady attitude towards the casket: it seemed sacred, so she treated accordingly. She could have acted in a different way, but she chooses not to do so. What does it say about the way she, a Mexican cleaning lady in the United States, understands the hegemonic culture, values, and beliefs? According to Carter's narrative, she, at least, respect them.

After finding the Shakespeare casket, the sisters feel that "a rank aroma wafted from the pot and filled the little improvised chapel with an unmistakable smell" (p. 129): Daisy Duck's cat had urinated on the 'sacred earth'! The Chance sisters had a very practical idea about how to make things right for Melchior and also for them: "We filled the casket up again with soil from the Forest of Arden, from facsimile Elizabethan knot garden itself [...]. So there was the sacred earth, as good as new" (p. 129). Once more, Dora´s and Nora's (and why not Carter's?) healthy disdain for the maintenance of the Shakespeare myth is explicitly and comically demonstrated.

Melchior took everything related to the production of the film very seriously because at stake, as Dora narrates, was Melchior's "Hollywood future – that is, his chance to take North America back for England, Shakespeare and St George. That is, to make his father's old dream everybody's dream. It was his chance to make an awful lot of money, too" (p. 133). Once more, Carter associates empireal aspirations with the Shakespeare myth. Melchior's wish to fulfill his romantic father's dream is portrayed in *Wise Children* as one of England's old empireal aspirations: to take North America back. More than this, Melchior aims at spreading the empireal ideology as far as possible, or at making "his father's old dream everybody's dream" (p. 133), i.e. at making the hegemonic ideology the only possible ideology.

Melchior 'sacred duty' is clearly expressed in the passage in which he ritualistically 'blesses' the set. In Melchior's own words: "Friends, we are gathered here together in remembrance of a sacred name – the name of Shakespeare. [...] I bear here, in this quaintly shaped casket – a casket in the image of, for me, the greatest of all our English heroes – only a bit of earth" (p. 134). Melchior continues, in Biblical overtones, "it is especially precious to me because it is English earth, perhaps some of the most English earth of all, precious above rubies, above the love of women" (p. 134). Melchior goes on to welcome everyone involved in the filmic production to:

> ransack all the treasuries of this great industry of yours to create a glorious, an everlasting monument to the genius of that poet whose name will be reverenced as long as English is spoken, the man who knew the truth about us all and spoke those universal truths in every phrase...who left the English language just a little bit more glorious than he found it, and let some of that glory rub off on us old Englishmen too, as they set sail around the globe bearing with them on that mission the tongue that Shakespeare spoke! (CARTER, 1993, p. 135).

Melchior's mentality is still an imperial one. Shakespeare represents the imperial ideology, and to spread Shakespeare's Word means to spread the British imperial ideology. An ideology that sees a handful of earth as "the most English earth of all" (p. 134). An ideology based on ransacking, on believing in everlasting monuments, and on languages that may become gradually more glorious. An ideology based on what Barthes sees as the "disease of thinking in essences, which is at the bottom of every bourgeois mythology" (BARTHES, 1991, p. 75). An ideology that contrasts with the materialist conception expressed by Dora when she says that "What you see is what you get. Only the here and now" (CARTER, 1993, p. 144).

The imperial ideology propagated by Melchior had 'an enormous statement' in the figure of Gorgeous George. However, as Dora's narrative lets us know, "Clown Number One to the British Empire" (p. 150-151) was not funny at all in the United States: "The moment he stepped off his native soil, he stopped being funny" (p. 151). As Dora puts it, "Gorgeous George's stab at global fame was dying on its feet" (p. 151). Just like the failure Melchior's filmic adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* came to be, the imperial ambitions represented by the figure of Gorgeous George were also frustrated in the United States. The British Empire was effectively defeated by its former colony. George´s global tattoo is not funny at all and actually pointless in and for the Hollywood industry. As Kiernan and Ferguson point out, the United States have indeed taken Britain's place as the world's hegemonic power, and figures such as Melchior and George simply seem out of place in such new imperial context.

Ultimately, Gorgeous George is depicted as a decrepit beggar to whom Dora gives a twenty-pound bill. Dora notices that the "harsh light of the yellow streetlamps took all the pink out of his continents" (p. 196). The bill Dora gives George has the face of Shakespeare on it. Dora asserts that she pressed Shakespeare's "literary culture into the hand of the one who once personated Bottom the Weaver" (p. 196-197). Dora says to George that he can have the twenty-pound bill under one condition: "that you spend it all on drink" (p. 197). And then she tells asks him: "Don't you know it's Shakespeare's birthday? Cry God for England, Harry and St George.

Go off and drink a health to bastards" (CARTER, 1993, p. 197). Gorgeous George and all the 'enormous statement' he once stood for toddle off.

As Dora puts it, "I am not sure if this is a happy ending. I cross my fingers" (p. 228).

CONCLUSION

After having investigated the concept of myth as developed by Roland Barthes in his *Mythology*, and after having come to the conclusion that Barthes's concept of myth was intrinsically related to an ideological critique, to the traditional conceptions of myth, to the Structuralist and to the Post-structuralist schools of thought, as well as to the development of what came to be known as Cultural Studies, it was possible for me to infer that the very concept of the Shakespeare myth itself had intricate theoretical resonances, implications and associations.

Throughout my research for the writing of this dissertation, I became aware that the historical figure of the English poet and playwright William Shakespeare presented itself as a prolific locus for the most varied appropriations and speculations. After being associated to Nature up to the end of the 17th century, Shakespeare started to be gradually dehistoricized as well as deterritorialized, something which came in handy for the emerging British imperial bourgeois ideology.

From the European pre-Romantics' appropriation of the still quite incipient Shakespeare myth on, Shakespeare was turned into a godlike figure that was gradually more and more attached to the British national/imperial identity. The advent and growth of the Shakespeare industry, which has its origins associated with the first Shakespeare Jubilee idealized by David Garrick in 1769, has also played an extremely relevant role in the propagation of the Shakespeare myth.

It is possible to argue that, as an adept of the postmodern distrust of and challenge to universalisms, essentialisms, and grand narratives, Angela Carter saw in the Shakespeare myth a remarkable opportunity to discuss, problematize, and represent in her works several topics at once: the myth itself; the English/British (imperial/patriarchal) ideology; the traditional literary genres; the female condition; the postmodern narrative strategies, and so many other themes which are traceable in a most outstanding way in her last novel *Wise Children*.

By making a subversive use of the Shakespeare myth, Carter effectively instates marginalized figures, such as her 75-year-old female narrator, as well as her own figure in the face of the oppressive misogynist dominant culture. Taking into consideration the words of British scholar Craig Owens, the use Carter makes of the Shakespeare myth is indeed a political

and epistemological one, “political in that it challenges the order of patriarchal society, epistemological in that it questions the structure of its representations” (OWENS apud BROOKS, 1998, p. 96). Carter’s use of the postmodern narrative strategies challenges ‘the order of patriarchal society’ in the sense that they turn the oppressive use made of the Shakespeare myth into a source, a possibility for the emancipation of her protagonist and other marginal characters in *Wise Children*.

Carter’s use of the postmodern narrative strategies I mentioned in this dissertation, also have an important role to play in the challenging of the structures of representation of British/Western/imperial/capitalist/bourgeois/patriarchal ideology, for they subvert a myth in which a markedly historical figure like “Shakespeare, removed thus from human history, becomes for us the ‘Absolute Subject’, whose powerful and all-embracing ‘Word’ takes its place alongside the Bible as our guarantee of civilization and humanity, breeding reverence ‘in foreigners, and home-born subjects too’” (DRAKAKIS, 1991, p. 25), as Drakakis argues very convincingly.

By building upon the fact that Western hegemonic discourse is, one way or another, as this dissertation tried to demonstrate, intrinsically connected to the Shakespeare myth, and by ultimately installing and subverting this very same myth in one of her novels, Carter incorporates to her own literary production and concomitantly is incorporated by the very same tradition which had previously served, and continues to serve British/Western/bourgeois ideological purposes. As Indo-British theorist and scholar Homi Bhabha states, “The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification” (BHABHA, 1994, p. 2). However, this ‘partial form of identification’ Bhabha writes about, is carried about by Carter in a very subversive manner. In Bhabha’s words, “In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of a tradition” (p. 2). That is to say, a novel such as Carter’s *Wise Children* is a statement about the fact that Western/bourgeois patriarchal hegemonic ideology is a fundamental part of Carter’s own very literary output. The novel restages the past via the Shakespeare myth, for it brings, connected to its possible meanings, a whole set of practices associated to past experiences of hegemonic oppression.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that Carter’s use of the Shakespeare myth is an uncritical one, quite on the contrary. The way Carter makes use of this myth is an extremely subversive one: she uses it as another form of achieving emancipation, as well as of problematizing and

(re)creating her own literary production. In this process, she alters the role and the very structures of representation related to this myth. In a sense, Carter becomes part of that same tradition she subverts, she "introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities" (BHABHA, 1994, p. 2), her own, into the very tradition which now she is also part of, the very tradition she also (re)invents when she becomes part of it.

As a consequence, "This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received' tradition" (p. 2). That is, in this process of becoming part of and at the same time reinventing a tradition, Carter alters the existing essence of this very tradition. By being part of a tradition which was supposed to dominate her, Carter makes it no longer a received tradition, on the contrary, she, in fact, contests it "from within its own assumptions" (HUTCHEON, 1993, p. 247). Concomitantly, Carter "estranges any immediate access to an originary identity" (BHABHA, 1994, p. 2) of her own literary production and of anything else related to all this process.

Angela Carter puts into evidence the idea that any identity, any supposed essence, be it a person's, like Shakespeare's himself, a character's, like her own fictional characters', as well as that of the imagined community of the British Empire, and even the identity, the supposed essence of a tradition itself, are productions, creations which are never complete, but "always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (HALL, 2003, p. 234). By doing so, Carter exposes the manner in which one may not only understand the forces which oppress him or her, but also how this process of understanding is related to a critique of the "disease of thinking in essences, which is at the bottom of every bourgeois mythology", as Barthes claims (BARTHES, 1991, p. 75).

This process may ultimately lead to a more profound and effective interference in the (re)invention of both traditions and identities. A process in which the subversive postmodern parodic intertextuality plays a significant role. A process that may ultimately prove to be as instigating and enjoyable as the writing or/and the reading of a novel such as Angela Carter´s *Wise Children*.

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