

論文の英文要旨

論文題目

A Study of Cultural Representation on the Literature of Machado de Assis

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This dissertation focuses on *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* (*Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*), one of the most important classic novels of Brazilian literature. The novel, written by Machado de Assis (1839 – 1908), a great writer of Brazil, is considered a monumental work not only among his own literature but also among Brazilian literature as a whole. The appeal of the novel is, above all, his skillful handling in revealing the real nature of human beings and its society that is so foolishly indecent. The technique he used to show it is so innovative that the piece published not less than 130 years ago is still valid and still continues to fascinate the reader. The most representative characteristic of its singularity is that it has a dead narrator. The protagonist, Bras Cubas, becomes a writer after he died and writes a reminiscence of his life. But the originalities do not end there. The romance is well known for the various extravagant methods that Machado made free use of, such as the frequent visual texts, the presence of an annoyed reader, an aggressive attitude of narrator toward the reader, etc. Owing to these ingenious devices, the story leaves the reader totally puzzled after reading.

The dissertation has two aims. One is to analyze this singular novel and to try to show the full picture of the text-world of *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*, and this will be treated in Chapters I to V. The other is to study the cultural characteristics of Brazil represented by this novel. Brazil is a country that remains, at the same time, occident and non-occident. This theme will be examined in Chapter VI and in the Epilogue.

The analysis begins in Chapter I with the challenge to obtain a key to clarify

the complex structure of *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*. Here it will be shown that the binominal values, like "good" and "evil", "beauty" and "ugliness" or "sanity" and "insanity", do not confront, but they take turns instead all the time in accordance with necessity and convenience of the characters. It means that the values usually considered positive in our society are not always positive in this text, and it can be reversed at the next instant. In this novel of Machado, all values are relative. This movement can be described as " $\langle X \rangle \Leftrightarrow \langle \text{non-}X \rangle$ ", wherein $\langle X \rangle$ stands for "positive values" and this formula rules the entire text.

In Chapter II, the writer draws attention to several affinities that lie between *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* and the revue, a popular stage entertainment that was emerging in that period. In the revue, there is always a character called "compadre" that controls the story and characters, whose function is very similar to that of Bras Cubas. And the revue, just like the Brazilian novel, is composed of a large number of short scenes, intercalated with various fantastic visual sights. So, the presumption that the writer presents in this chapter is that Machado, in order to win the hearts and minds of the people, took the clue from the revue to elaborate his life review.

In Chapter III, the theatrical aspect continues to be focused on, because it serves to elucidate many of the eccentric characteristics of *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* at the same time. The annoyed reader that appears everywhere can be considered a tool set by Machado in order to create an active communication between the narrator(actor) and the real reader(spectator). Furthermore, the famous visual text may be a desperate measure that Machado resorts to to express and transmit as much as possible the physical elements of the characters(actors) and scenes on the text. Machado was supposed to compose his life review, using two metaphors as a base, namely, "Life is a stage" and "Life is a book".

In Chapter IV, the annoyed reader is treated once again and the writer shows that the novel is also equipped with an instructive function. Machado tried to teach to the Brazilian reader the correct manner of reading a book. In those days, the novels that could succeed were almost all melodramatic. However, for Machado the good book was not that which attracts the reader only emotionally. He considered that reading might be a good opportunity to encourage the reader to think and to judge. And through *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*, Machado, by his non-novelistic method, he gives lessons to orient the reader to good reading.

Chapter V is about the allegorical interpretation that the writer made, taking as a clue, some excessively precise dates. It is revealed that Bras Cubas' autobiography

can also be read as a history of a struggle made by various countries around the world through the 19th century to establish an empire.

Throughout the analyses made in the first five chapters, we can grasp an image of Brazil, who, after its independence in 1822, used to follow after the Europe, aiming to become like its civilized countries, and trying to follow the <X> of the occidental moral, norm, institution, religion, thought, etc. yet never succeeded in internalizing them, and finally achieved stability when he found the value of <non-X>. In Chapter VI, the writer shows that it is this movement "<X> ⇔ <non-X>" that Machado, who was seriously eager to realize "a literary style suitable for the spirit of the people", tried to incorporate in *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*. Machado was conscious of the zig-zag style and named it "a drunken style".

Curiously enough, this rhythm seems to be able to be applied to the social phenomena of Brazil, just like the Brazilian typical behavior pattern, so-called "malandragem" and "jeitinho". Moreover, at the bottom of its cultural phenomena, such as the carnival, soccer and samba, that style "suitable for the spirit of the people" can be detected. The theme is discussed in the Epilogue.

As a summary of what is stated above, there is a representation of Brazil which is simultaneously occidental and non-occidental in *The posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*, and that is reflected in the formula "<X> ⇔ <non-X>," extracted from the text in Chapter I. Regarding the particular characteristics of this novel, it can be said that they were ingenious devices made by Machado to make the text somewhat close to a popular play so that the people would be able to involve themselves in the novel, to question the imposed idea and to think by themselves to create their own values.