

The Culture of Listening in Garrett's Fiction: *Travels in My Homeland*¹

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The *culture of hearing* or *listening*, which integrates into but also transcends the strictly musical sphere, has been gaining a particular philosophical relevance. Wolfgang Iser, for example, takes up the discussion in a brief essay in which he analyzes turning to a *culture of hearing* as an alternative to the *culture of seeing* predominant in European thought from Heraclitus or Plato and considered inseparable from a model of civilization that is based on relations of domination over the human being and nature. The process of reification or dehumanization connected to a culture based on image is also pointed out by Jameson. The idea that only a *culture of listening* could rehabilitate socio-communicative interaction, restore its critical and emancipatory potential, is equally present in an opera by Luigi Nono that excludes the visualization of the action or scenic representation—an opera entitled *Prometeo, tragedia dell'ascolto* (1985)—where listening (the tragedy of listening) is the essence of the myth of Prometheus and the question of liberation. It is the current debate around this topic that has led me to ask about the value that a *culture of listening* can have in literary creation.

In previous papers, I considered listening only in its musical expression.² However, in this study of the fiction of Garrett, reflecting specifically upon *Travels in My Homeland*, the musical references will be part of the set of sonorous references that are present in the narrative. The objective is to detect the presence of *listening* in the broadest sense, to analyze the situations in which

it emerges, to overcome the functions that it assumes in the construction of the narrative, and to question the relationships between *text* and *context* in the perspective of a hermeneutic criticism of the culture.

Listening and being listened to within the semantics of interaction

There is a character early on—Joaninha's grandmother—who, because of becoming blind, develops an auditory hyper-sensibility that allows her to "see" that which transcends the reach of her granddaughter's vision: "And God in heaven to take care of us. . . But what is that? Look, Joana; I hear footsteps on the road; see what it is.' / 'I can't see anyone.' / 'But I can hear. . . Wait, it is Friar Dinis; I recognize his footsteps'" (Garrett, *Travels* 77).³

Within the framework of fictional interaction, one would say that the old woman has learned to analyze the behaviors of the acoustic *medium* that surrounds her and to identify *symptoms of transformation* of that *medium*. First, she identifies the symptoms as being "footsteps on the road." Then, she goes even further and, from that information, infers who approaches: the question is not only about hearing "footsteps on the road" but also about knowing whose they are. The *part* leads her to the *whole*: through the footsteps she recognizes Friar Dinis, who approaches "leaning on a rough staff, dragging his yellow sandals." The *symptom of transformation* is *decoded* as an *expressive symptom*—that is, as an audible manifestation of Friar Dinis's personality.⁴

The confrontation of faculties of perception between the granddaughter and her grandmother, respectively, reappears further ahead:

In their usual places near the door of the house, Joaninha *straining her eyes*, the old woman *pricking up her ears*, the two women eagerly examined the space towards the east, hoping and fearing all the time, the one to see the well-known figure appear, the other to *hear the familiar sound* of the friar's footsteps. (101; emphasis mine)

The auditory perception of Friar Dinis's footsteps occurs again on yet another occasion: "the monk took a few quavering steps to where they [Carlos and Georgina] were, painfully dragging his loose sandals, which made a dull, defeated sound and caused—I know not why or how—those who heard them to shudder" (179).

Here the question is not about the particular auditory acuity of one character ("with her very acute hearing, the piercing sight of the blind" [105]), but about the omniscience of the narrator, who introduces certain sonorous

components into the composition of Friar Dinis's portrait. In that portrait, the sonorous manifestation of his dragged walk remains constant, but the place of action and the characters change. Instead of being earthy and in open air, the ground is now the flagstone floor (or the wooden floor?) of a cell in the Convent of Saint Francis in Santarém, which corresponds to an *alteration of the acoustic medium*. For that reason, the dragging of the friar's "loose sandals" produces a "dull, defeated sound." Furthermore, it is Carlos and Georgina who listen to him rather than the old woman and Joaninha. Because of this, they don't recognize a "familiar sound" in that dragged walk, although it frightens them. Symptoms of the *transformation of the medium* ("defeated" sound), the *iconic decoding* of those symptoms ("dull" sound, through an analogy with the visual experience—synaesthesia) and *expressive symptoms* (sound that scares, because, after all, through it, one knows that it is the friar's terrible personality) come together in this scene to disclose or insinuate, through *sonorous* elements, even before the dialogue begins, the semantics of interaction between the characters as well as the very context in which the interaction occurs.

The portrait of the friar has a strong sonorous dimension—a dimension that manifests itself not only in his way of walking but also in his voice or in the way he speaks. Therefore, in the tense conversation with Carlos, who had returned as a recent graduate from Coimbra, the friar speaks, at a certain moment, "with a hollow and cavernous voice, as if from the tomb" (99)—a voice that not rarely makes those who listen to it tremble. Two more examples include the following:

But one day Friar Dinis came to the door of the house in the valley and said: "God be in this house!" / The old woman shuddered, but soon recovered. (96)

He came right up to them without [them] hearing him and a familiar voice, hoarser and deeper yet than they had ever heard it, pronounced the customary greeting: "God be in this house!" / "Amen!" they both answered automatically, with an involuntary shudder [. . .]. (102)

Therefore, it is no surprise that the narrator uses those vocal characteristics to suggest the identity of one of the three mysterious men who, at a late hour, transport the chest containing the relics of Saint Friar Gil to the convent of the Claras:

The old Franciscan climbed the altar steps with uncertain feet, kissed the chest that lay on it and, turning towards the community that watched him in religious silence, said with a hollow voice, as if it came from the tomb, and yet was strong and emphatic: "Sisters, we have come to deliver to you this precious object." (209)

Here, however, the recipients of the friar's prayer don't tremble. Presupposing that it is not only about the narrator's point of view regarding that voice, but also about the effect that it causes in the auditorium, one would therefore say that the nuns confine themselves to two levels of decoding: one of *symptoms of transformation* (a "hollow" voice, characterizing the range; a "strong and emphatic" voice, characterizing the intensity) and one of *iconic decoding* (a voice "as if it came from the tomb," which suggests the idea of "profoundness," "darkness," "death"). Also, because they confine themselves to those two levels, it is not them, upon hearing the friar, who can infer that it is Friar Dinis, but rather the reader, by reading the narrative and knowing that such characteristics are *expressive symptoms* of that character. Only the reader is given the ability, with his "natural perspicacity," to recognize through the voice (such as it is described in the narrative) the character to which it belongs. The beginning of the next chapter reads: "Of course, dear reader, in the old Franciscan [. . .] your natural perspicacity has already recognized our Friar Dinis, monk *par excellence*, monk obdurate, monk intractable. It was he, without a doubt" (211).

Occasionally, Friar Dinis's voice varies in some of its distinctive traits—the fact of which, nevertheless, underscores the particular importance that its vocal expression always has in the production of meaning. That is what happens in the aforementioned scene with Georgina and Carlos:

He stopped a short distance from them and, forcing a thin, feeble, yet vibrant, solemn voice from the depths of his bosom, said to Carlos: "You cursed me, my boy, and I am here to forgive you." [. . .] These words were spoken in such a voice, they were pronounced from within the soul so vehemently, that it was not his lips that formed them: [. . .] it was [them] that burst through the lips and found their way out. The soldier appeared to be half conscious, bewildered and incomprehensible of what he heard. Georgina, so far impassive, harsh and unshakeable with her lover, felt moved now by the old man's anguish. Because the suffering that came through those sombre words and exuded from that cadaverous face would have made the stones weep. (179–80)

Once again, in describing his voice, the narrator does so with the expectation of the effect that it produces in certain characters or in the way that these, retroacting, decode what they hear. Georgina and Carlos identify *symptoms of transformation* (regarding intensity: "thin, feeble [. . .] voice") and *expressive symptoms*, these referring not so much to the character of the friar (or what would be the constants of that character), but more to the concrete emotional situation in which he finds himself at that moment ("vibrant, solemn" voice), words "spoken in such a voice," "pronounced from within the soul so vehemently"). To the friar's interlocutors, there is little or no literal meaning to the words as a result of the conventional or *digital* code called language. All the *pathos* of the dialogue comes from the *sound* of the words, from the semantics generated by the *analogy* between the sonorous gestures and the emotional agitation of those who speak them. The gesture of speaking, as an *expressive symptom*, is what evokes other analogies—through the *iconic decoding*: analogy with the idea of a tomb or grave, as a permanent trait of the personality of the friar ("sombre words"); an analogy with the idea of rupture, as an expressive temporary trait (words that "burst" through the lips). As a matter of fact, it is not by chance that the voice of the friar does not follow its usual characteristics whenever he co-acts with Carlos: on another occasion, "[t]he monk was choking and stammered, with a mixture of anger and amazement" and "his voice had a suppliant tone" (99).

In short: no other character in *Travels* is as *listened to* as Friar Dinis. Nevertheless, to listen to Friar Dinis is to listen to ideas or principles that are shared neither by the narrator, who does not hide his critical position, nor by Carlos, *alter ego* of the narrator and supporter of the liberal cause. The friar's strong sonorous presence works dialectically as an ideological deconstruction of his speech: "sombre words," "with a hollow and cavernous voice, as if from the tomb" are expressions that send the reader to the atavic obscurantism that continues to confront the spirit of lights. The terror of the Inquisition is *heard* in Friar Dinis' voice—all of the baggage of dehumanization that leads him, in the name of religion or the moral façade protected by it, to blind the woman he loved, to keep secret Carlos's paternity, to punish himself and those whom he loves. In the iconic decoding of the voice as "sepulchral," the narrator thus insinuates that the voice is *obscurantist* and *inquisitorial*. That is, he moves it to the sphere of *contextual symptoms*, which transcend the psychological or expressive traces of the concrete person, and transform it into a paradigm of *local color* (of the politico-ideological confrontation between liberals and absolutists). This also applies to Carlos:

The tables had been turned: Friar Dinis looked like the pupil, his voice had a suppliant tone and he no longer trembled with anger but with distress. Carlos, on the other hand, spoke with the severe earnest tone of a man who is sure that he is right and is noble in his resentment. The young man's words were sharp, it was obvious that he felt what he said and that he was trying to soften them by the inflexion of his voice. (99)

Thus, the inflections of Carlos' voice, as *expressive symptoms* of his character (austerity, gravity, generosity), come from someone who "is sure that he is right"—just as the narrator is right, in making observations of a political and moral nature—but, at the same time, not wanting to hurt or belittle the interlocutor. It is that "softening" of his voice (*iconic decoding* of the "inflexions" or the *melody of the voice*) that mitigates the roughness of the literal meaning of the words and evolves itself into a character trait. What one *hears* in Carlos—just as the narrator wants—is, therefore, also a *contextual symptom*, namely, the *greatness of heart* of the liberals, the bearers of that bourgeois illuminist culture ("sure that he is right") that was confronted with obscurantism and that, since Rousseau and Diderot, had theorized both about *virtue* and *compassion* and had contributed so much to secularize the *model of identification*—transferring it from religion to art.

In comparison to Friar Dinis, Joaninha's complete portrait (77)⁵ is essentially visual. Seldom are there references to the sound of her voice:

"Joaninha?"

A sweet, clear yet strong voice, one of those voices we seldom hear and that echo inside us, never more to be forgotten, answered from within: "Yes? I'm coming, Grandmother, I'm coming."

"Sweet child! . . . She heard me immediately! Never mind, come when you can. It is only the yarn that has got twisted." (72)

By declaring Joaninha's voice one of those "we seldom hear," the narrator identifies in it certain characteristics of tone and range that individualize it. However, those symptoms of transformation from the acoustic *medium* result in expressive traits, which make it the opposite of the equally peculiar voice of the friar: a "sweet, clear yet strong" voice. Besides being "sweet" and "clear" (*iconic decoding*, appealing to the *unity of the senses*: it makes one remember the sweetness of a flavor and the limpidity of a crystal-clear image), it is

also “strong.” Yet, contrary to the friar’s voice, which is only “strong”—only *human*—in that particular moment of emotional change when he asks Carlos for forgiveness, Joaquina’s voice is *always* “strong”; that is, it is an *expressive symptom* of her sensitive or even passionate nature. Besides this, the “sweetness” and the “purity” of the voice are, after all, also decodable as personal qualities: they are sounds that do not mislead, that go *from the heart to the heart* and leave in it their indelible mark (“that echo inside us, never more to be forgotten”). Emitting such sounds, which tell us so much about her inner life, Joaquina cannot help but be equally sensitive to the sounds she hears. When her grandmother calls her, Joaquina knows how to decode what is, as an *expressive symptom*, beyond the act of calling. The grandmother needs less of her help than her affection. It is that necessity of confirming that affection to which Joaquina *listens*. For that reason, “she heard [her grandmother] immediately.”

Voice and the construction of gender

It is obvious that the narrator’s opinions or preconceived notions towards gender are couched in the attributes of Joaquina’s and Carlos’s voices, respectively. Therefore, the description of such sonorous qualities is also—on another level, the construction of the characters in function of their gender—a *contextual symptom* of the period when the author wrote, a trait of the ideology he bears. Thus, on the one hand, Carlos has a “full, strong voice” (121) and, on an occasion that tests his character, he speaks with the “severe, earnest tone” suitable “of a man who is sure that he is right” (my emphasis). If his voice “soften[s],” it is still as a symptom of a *patriarchal* virtue: being noble “in his resentment,” as a result of critical self-consciousness or of self-control, more or less *rationalized*, of his own emotions (his words “were sharp, it was obvious that he felt what he said and that he was trying to soften them”). On the other hand, what stands out in the vocal attributes of the women he loves or has loved are the paradigmatic qualities of the narrator’s (and Carlos’s) feminine ideal itself: “purity,” “sweetness,” “grace,” “vibration,” “spirituality.” Therefore, the vocal attributes emerge as *sonorous icons* of those ideal qualities and all of them become *expressive symptoms*, that is, character attributes. It is not only her voice, but also Joaquina herself—her “ideal, highly spiritual figure” (77)—that is “pure,” “sweet,” and “strong.”⁶ In Georgina it is also the whole that reveals itself in each one of her qualities, including the sweetness of her voice: she “shone with all her brilliance, in attractiveness and intelligence, as a result of her simple, honest nature, an exquisite gentleness of manner, of voice, of facial expression, *of everything*” (241; my emphasis).

An identical recourse to metonymy transforms “hilarity” into the opposite of that feminine ideal. From the portrait of a “beauty” (which the homodiegetic narrator says he knows and describes) little or nothing remains “because of something modish about her, a brazen look in her eyes, a boldness about her face and a lack of composure in her manners.” With that, she lost “all the charm and almost [. . .] the very beauty with which nature had endowed her”: “Just look at those ruby lips. Does flowing May ever produce a rose button so lovely at break of day? . . . And now look how a coarse laugh strips it so hideously with its ill-timed hilarity” (37).

The “ill-timed hilarity” stands for the *expressive symptom* of “malice”—the clear opposite of the “pureness” and “charm” that one senses in Joaninha’s and Georgina’s voices.⁷ If modesty in a woman was “always a virtue,” but in a man could be “entirely a failing” (36), “malice,” on the other hand, was forbidden for a woman but allowed for a man. In a woman, “malice” transforms an “angel” (“such an angel is the modest maid on whose countenance is ever etched a paradise of virtues” [37]) into a devil. Before the

ill-timed hilarity [. . .] [t]here was not a man, young or old, worldly or erudite, who would not have given half of his pleasures, his books, his life, for just one kiss from that mouth. Now perhaps not even constant *avances* can gain her the favours of a professional lover. . . . And she will have to pay him in advance, and at a price! (37)

All in all, if it is a man to notice, without a doubt *maliciously*, “from what one could see,” of Joaninha’s “shapely leg”—something “admirable”—then such malice looks good on him. Moreover, it is the homodiegetic narrator himself who reveals and demonstrates that such a touch of eroticism is after all sufficiently refined or intellectualized so that it does not attenuate what he is looking for: a “highly spiritual figure” (77). That is: in a woman, the ill-timed hilarity makes her carnal—it demonizes her—whereas in a man, his erotic, malicious look could, properly speaking, *spiritualize* the feminine body.

The narrator’s feminine ideal had already appeared within well-defined parameters in his “meditations” on the effect of passion, which is different in a man “who is not a poet” and in a woman. When the former is in love his “certain amount of common human prose” is always included. However, the latter is sublime, “she” is “all poetry.” Not even “sensual enjoyment [could bring] her down to the reality of prosaic existence” (65). Such an ideal could

not but have nature as its setting—or find in nature its model. The singing of the nightingales belongs to that setting or model:

While I was lost in these meditations, a nightingale started the loveliest, most exquisite song I can remember hearing for a long time.

It was over by that window!

Another answered immediately from the other side, and the two of them joined in a contest that was so balanced, in alternate verses that were so measured, so modulated, so perfect, that I lost myself in my romance oblivious to everything else. [. . .]

The trees, the window, the nightingale. . . the hour of day, late afternoon . . . what more was needed to complete the romance?

A female figure to come and sit at that balcony, in a white dress—oh, it must be white! (65–66)

What applies to art applies to a woman. The latter holds nature as a model—an unreachable model, since there was no “loveliest song” as the nightingales’ song, with its stanzas “so measured, so modulated, so perfect.” As for the former, it is the very contemplation of nature that demands her presence: only “a female figure” *was missing*. The white, which she wears “by force,” and her voice, as well as that link to nature that makes her the *girl of the nightingales*, all belong to the image of “pureness” of the idealized woman. The nightingales’ song appears as a *contextual symptom* of Joaninha, a sonorous element of *local color* that the homodiegetic narrator uses to present her to us as a woman *en état de nature* (to use Rousseau’s expression)—in contrast to those who, although beautiful, became mundane (“modish”) and malicious.⁸

Stage music

Nevertheless, if on the one hand the singing of the nightingales is a *contextual symptom* of Joaninha (namely for the soldiers in opposing fields, “[t]hat [. . .] gave her the name ‘maiden of the nightingales’”) on the other hand the “reville and the evening roll call” are unequivocal *contextual symptoms* of military activity, of the state of civil war that extended to the valley of Santarém. When both exist at the same time, they are a *contextual symptom* of peace or a truce: “Everything adapted to the situation, even the nightingales had returned to the bay trees by the house and, as if they had been trained, obeyed the reveille and the evening roll call, which they accompanied with their lively, vibrant song” (112). The normality of the state of truce, suggested by this *concert* of

nightingales singing and trumpet blows at specific times, would nevertheless be perturbed if the sonorous symptom did not have a visual correspondence in Joaninha's actual presence. This contrast between the two situations (presence and absence) becomes a structural factor of the narrative:

There she was seen by the look-outs of both armies: they got used to seeing her there at sunrise and sunset and there, silent and motionless, she would listen for hours on end to the meandering warbles of her nightingales, perhaps rapt in still more meandering thoughts . . . (112)

And:

One day, almost at sunset, on a peaceful, hot afternoon, either because she fell asleep or because she was lost in thought, the fact is that the nightingales had been warbling for a long time in the bay trees near her window and Joaninha had not returned. (113)

If the singing of the nightingales is a *contextual symptom* of Joaninha but she is absent, a situation of tension or *dissonance*, which precedes her reunion with Carlos, is created. Nevertheless, not all of the nightingales wait for her in the "bay trees by the house." There is one which does not leave her alone and which, by himself, is equivalent to the soundtrack of a movie or the orchestra of a play. The singing of the nightingales is not only an element of *local color* indispensable to the *staging* of nature in Joaninha and Joaninha in nature. It is also a sonorous speech that generates expectation, *pathos*, emotional agitation—music identical to that which, in theater, is intended to rouse the empathy of the spectator, to involve him in the dramatic action. This music does not lack the changes in tempo, the *accelerandi*, the variations of register, the cadenzas and the pauses, which obey a plan of expressive colors similar in everything to one that would be used by an opera or stage music composer in his score:

Joaninha was not without her tender-hearted companion. From the densest part of the branches which formed a canopy over that couch of greenery came a torrent of melodies, wavering and undulating like a forest in the wind, strong, wild and beautifully irregular and inventive, like the crude verses of a wild mountain poet. It was a nightingale, one of her beloved nightingales from the valley, which had stayed to watch over and attend on its protector, the maiden who bore its name.

At the approach of the soldiers [. . .] the short, whispered dialogue reported in the previous chapter, the sweet bird's lovely song had stopped for a few moments. But when the officer, after posing his sentries some way off, came back on tiptoe and cautiously made his way under the trees, the nightingale had already taken up its song again and this time did not interrupt it, but rather intensified its trills and warbles, then lowered its high-pitched tune to such sorrowful, heartfelt sighs that you could only suppose they were the prelude to the tenderest, most touching love scene ever witnessed in this valley. (114–15)

The narrator—now heterodiegetic—indeed composes the scene *musically*. In the *culture of listening*, which he reveals in that way, his own experience of listening to the birds, the wind, nature, and the surrounding environment merges with his experience as an opera and theater spectator. Therefore, the singing of the nightingale is not the only one of those *contextual symptoms* that the narrator, either homodiegetic or heterodiegetic, utilizes nearly always as indications of *local color*, and which also have their musical equivalent on opera stages (especially since the end of the eighteenth century). For example: “St. Paul’s is striking 6 a.m.”; “the heavy, urgent rumble of an *ancien régime* carriage”; the bell rings “for the last time” (22); “the sound of tremendous applause” that accompanies the “athletes from Alhandra” who “rush to grapple” (24); “rifle-butts [. . .] heard clattering on the ground” (120); “detonations [. . .] the whistle of the bullets” (121); “the galley salutes,” announcing the arrival of the navy minister (147); the “insistent clanging of the bells of Alcáçova” (154); the “low, faint chanting of female voices” that “processed” (208); and “the sound of the whip, which the coachman used more to restrain than to incite the horses” (233).⁹ Neither is it only a *contextual symptom* of Joaninha herself, as paradigm of the “pure,” idealized woman. It is also *musical action*, where the following come together: the description of the bucolic and idyllic scenery; the intensification of the dramatic effect of certain events (the presence and whispering of the soldiers, the entrance of the young officer), its expression of sentiment or *presentiment*, the suggestion or anticipation—directed at the reader/spectator—that it cannot be anyone else but Carlos (the nightingale “did not interrupt” its song again, “but rather intensified its trills and warbles”).

All of that, together in this same way, is found in the universe of nineteenth-century opera. Garrett sets the stage for Carlos and Joaninha’s reunion as Wagner will set the stage for Tristan and Isolde’s: in the middle of the tree grove, in nature—as an alternative (inspired by Rousseau) to society and its

norms. Only there could love burst sensorially in freedom, according to the *natural* impulse, condemned by the existing social and moral order. Only there could Carlos and Joaninha fall into each other's arms "in a long, long embrace, with a long, unending kiss . . . long, long and unending like the first kiss of a pair of lovers." For a moment, the social prejudices, which soon after trouble Joaninha, do not matter: "How did I come to be here with you? . . . And alone, the two of us alone here, at this late hour! This oughtn't to be . . . Heavens! What will people say?" (118).

Just as in Wagner, in introducing the meeting, Garrett's *orchestra*, the night-ingle, suggests both the *external action* and the setting in which it occurs, as well as the psychological *inner action* of which Carlos is a protagonist. This revealing of Carlos's identity causes the reader to relate to the character and the situation. Furthermore, the analogy with Wagner is particularly relevant in terms of the narrator's position. In both cases, there are two perspectives of narration—one that we could call *intra-fictional*, taken up by different characters and/or (in the case of fiction) by the so-called homodiegetic narrator as well, and the other one, called *extra-fictional*, which corresponds to the so-called heterodiegetic narrator—and the oscillation between them does not have the function of causing a distant attitude towards the receiver, transforming him into an *observer*. Instead, they are used for the creation of the identification model, aiming for *Gefühlsverständnis* (*understanding through feeling*, in Wagner's expression). Furthermore, if we were to continue looking for connections with the universe of romantic opera, it would still be in the same scene of the meeting between Tristan and Isolde, where we would find the best analogy with the structure of the dialogue between Carlos and Joaninha: interrupted speech, interjections and exclamations, whose intonation the narrator does not need to modify. Contrary to what happens in Friar Dinis's meeting with Carlos and Georgina, it is the reader himself who now *hears* in their words what is beyond the words' literal meaning. It is the reader who interprets them—in the sonorous gestures they suggest—as *expressive symptoms* of a psychological moment.

Only a romanticist and a composer profoundly connected to the tradition of verisimilitude, such as *tranche de vie*, cultivated in theatrical theory and practice since Diderot, could *listen* so much to the characters before giving them a voice, one in the pages of a book, the other in those of a score.¹⁰ It is true that Donizetti or Bellini, Auber or Meyerbeer and, from the beginning of the forties, Verdi were familiar to Garrett (obviously Wagner could not have been) and influenced (in the most specific musical or musical-theatrical sense)

his *culture of listening*.¹¹ Nevertheless, aside from the attention given to the sonorous elements of *local color* that abound in the opera of the nineteenth century, it wasn't so much in the opera but in the spoken theater itself that the author of *Travels* obtained his models of *sonorous staging* for his romantic plot. The way a sonorous event affects what in theater is called *blocking*, is very clear in the following passage (my emphasis): "God be in this house!' / 'Amen!' they both answered automatically, with an involuntary shudder, *immediately turning in the direction from which the voice had come*" (102). In this case, the sonorous event determines the movement of the characters. The identification of the spatial origin of the event (*symptom of transformation*) is prefigured by the narrator in imitation of a scenic event. The reader visualizes the reaction of the characters to the sonorous stimulus just as it would occur if it were performed on stage. One more example (italics mine): "Father! It is clear that we cannot speak further about this matter. I leave for Lisbon tomorrow. Grandmother!' added Carlos, *changing his tone and calling into the house*, 'Grandmother.' The old woman came out" (99).

There is another theatrical artifice used in *Travels*, which is to suggest, through a sonorous event, that something is happening outside of the space where the characters co-act. Following this theatrical staging pattern, the "noise" of the rabble, in the streets of Santarém, *is merely listened to*. The reader, placed in a position similar to that of a spectator in front of the stage, can only *listen to*—but not *see*—what is presented to him as a *contextual symptom* of the crowd celebrating the triumph of the liberal cause:

At the same time, a dull noise, a vague, muffled tumult of a thousand sounds, which seemed to recede, coming together, returning, approaching and disappearing, then scattering only to come together again, finally dispersing yet again, resounded distantly around the town, swelling in the squares, compressed in the streets and sending muted echoes to that remote and lonely convent cell, like the sea heard in the distance receding from the shore with that melancholy murmur which comes before an equinoctial storm.

"Do you hear that babble of noise, Carlos? It is your cause that has triumphed [. . .]" (180)

Similar situations were also frequent in opera, which seems to gain, once more, priority in the conception of the sequence where Carlos and Joaninha abruptly awake from their idyll. The essence of the narrative, which clearly

shows the opposition between *nature* and *society*, continues to be arranged around sonorous elements:

In the [. . .] vast silence of the valley the gentle murmur of Joaninha's sweet voice could be distinctly heard [. . .]. They were walking between the look-outs of the two encampments without seeing them or thinking where they must be . . . and simultaneously, from both sides, the curt, strident voice of the sentries called out: "Who goes there?"

They both shuddered instinctively at the sudden sound of war and alarm [. . .]. (119)

Soon after, the resources of the sonorous staging are used to increase to a maximum point of tension that conflict between the idyllic identification of both Carlos and Joaninha with *nature* ("what an image they were of the truest, most sacred natural feelings") and the "false principles in which what men called *society* writhe unceasingly." Contrary to the initial situation of a "gentle murmur," a disturbing *crescendo* of sentries' screams, louder and louder, trigger sounds, and lastly, the whistling of bullets develops—as if the narrator were thinking about the Rossinian *crescendi* (those of *William Tell*, in this case), where the orchestra keeps rising, not only in intensity, but also in volume, until running out of its arsenal of strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion:

Joaninha clung to her cousin, he stopped suddenly and his hand went for his sword-handle.

"Who goes there?" the sentries bawled a second time.

"Do you hear, Joana?" said Carlos, in a low, sorrowful voice. "Do you hear those shouts? It is the cry of war that is ordering us to part. It is the jealous, watchful clamour of the parties, which will not tolerate our being together, which separates brother from sister, father from son! . . ."

"Who goes there?" shouted the sentries louder still, and they heard that dull, short click which is so faint yet makes such a powerful impression on the bravest souls . . . It was the sound of the rifles being cocked.

It was a supreme moment, danger was imminent and by now inevitable . . . (120)

And: "Suddenly there were one, two, three flashes, like lightning . . . and the detonations that followed and the whistle of the bullets coming after" (121). The parallel with the opera universe obviously still extends to the relationship

between the characters and the vocal types that would fit them on the musical stage. Not in the sense of an influence consciously received by Garrett, but in the sense of the types of opera themselves, just like those from fiction, supported by the same cultural tradition that conventionally *iconizes* tones and ranges as well as attributes of so many other categories of characters. In opera, Joanhinha would be a soprano of the lyric type (a *soubrette*). Carlos, obviously, a tenor (more lyric than dramatic), and Friar Dinis, a bass who could rigorously equal the Commendatore from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* or the Grand Inquisitor from Verdi's *Don Carlos*. The fact that certain traits of Friar Dinis's sonorous presence—the voice and the dragged walk—irresistibly recall the way Verdi musically characterizes the latter's entrance onstage is certainly due to that process of conventionalization of sonorous icons. In Schiller's play the character of the Great Inquisitor had to be interpreted exactly in the very same register: voice of a bass and a dragged walk.

Culture of listening and musical experience

Whatever the case may be, it is plausible that Garrett, a playgoer of the São Carlos, chronicler in *Entre-acto*, a critic attentive to the function of stage music in spoken theater, assimilated—and transposed to fiction—many of the musical suggestions that he gathered at the opera. If it is not likely that the “boring” *soirées*, “with obligatory piano, sisters’ duet, cousins’ polka and elderly aunts playing cassino” (199) contributed to familiarize him with other musical genres, beyond a certain ballroom music, one still cannot exclude some contact with the lied or concert song, at least during the years of exile and other periods of time abroad. Indeed, there is a moment in *Travels* that can very well be read as a product of the intertextuality with Schubert's famous lied, *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (“Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel”)—for it is in the lied, and not in Goethe's original, that the interruption of the motion has the meaning of a manifestation of great inner disturbance. In *Travels* the reel substitutes for the distaff, and it is the grandmother, not Joanhinha, who plays the lead role in this passage:

The perfectly visible motion of the reel was regular and corresponded to the almost imperceptible movement of the old woman's hands. The movement was regular, but it lasted a minute, then stopped, then went on for another two or three minutes and stopped again; it carried on with intermittent regularity like the pulse of someone trembling with the ague.

But the old woman did not tremble, in fact she held herself very straight and erect. The interruptions to her work occurred because the labour within her spirit doubled in intensity from time to time and suspended all outside movement. But the interruption was short and limited; her will reacted and the reel started moving again. (71)

A “short and limited” interruption is exactly what happens in the culminating point of Schubert’s lied. Here, not only the voice but also the *iconization* of the distaff’s movement, which is made by the piano accompaniment, are quiet, as a result of that same dialectic that makes the climax of the inner inquietude correspond to the suspension of “all outside movement.” On the other hand, it will seem rather risky—at least upon a first approximation—to interpret the passage in which the narrator compares Joaninha’s green eyes to a “dissonance” resulting from the assimilation of the concept of *absolute music* that arose in romantic literature, especially in Germany, since the turn of the century. This concept presupposed the development and reception of instrumental music as an autonomous language and its inherent tendency for the *psychologization* of the musical composition and execution, intensified with the evolution of the *forms of sonata*.¹²

Besides Bomtempo’s attempts, the Portuguese context was far from sufficing for the conditions that had favored, in other European circles (as well as, for example, Paris and London), such socio-communicative changes, associated with the expansion of the *bourgeois public sphere* and the emergence of the concert hall as a place where *autonomous music* was performed. However, one must, once again, leave open the possibility that Garrett had some contact with that type of *culture of listening* during his stays abroad, or even, occasionally, in concerts or late nights that took place in Lisbon, since the way the narrator of *Travels* approaches the question strongly points to the autonomous instrumental music field (not towards the opera field) and towards decoding strategies that conceive this music field as a *language* one could call self-sufficient:

Her eyes, however . . . strange whim of nature, which chose to cast a note of admirable discord in the midst of all this harmony! Like a bold and forceful maestro who, in the midst of the most classical and logical phrases of his composition, suddenly throws in a sharp, strident note, which no one expects and which seems to throw the musical rhythm into anarchy . . . the dilettanti shudder, the profes-

sors cross themselves, but those whose ears take music to the heart and not to the head quiver with admiration and enthusiasm. . . . Joaninha's eyes were green. (76)

The idea of music underlying this passage in fact includes the following elements: a) the structural role of harmony, where "discord" or *dissonance* appears as a dramatic contrast; and b) the heart, and not the intellect, as the receiver of musical communication. Both elements play a central role in the aesthetic and ideological changes experienced by European music and related to the transition from a court culture to a bourgeois culture. The role of the harmonious processes in the development of a more and more flexible musical language stands out clearly since the middle of the eighteenth century, culminating (with the *forms of sonata*) in the transposition of *drama* to autonomous instrumental music (Rosen). Bomtempo himself represented, in Portugal, the *drama without words*, which instrumental music had become—therefore surprising the public, since they were merely looking for entertainment: "since we have more delicate ears, we Constitutional women refuse to listen [to Bomtempo's music]; and we protest for all the evil that harmony, of which we have always been and will always be fans, will do" (Carvalho, "Pensar").

Contrary to the public's attitude, the narrator of *Travels* seems to value the "evil" that a composer could do to "harmony"—that is, the dramatic gesture of the "discord" also found in Joaninha's green eyes. On the other hand, the debate between the priority of the *spirit* and the *heart* in musical communication also plays a center role in the aesthetic and ideological confrontations that take place in the eighteenth century. The theorization around music directed to the heart—from *the heart to the heart*—is an integral part of that process of structural and functional transformation of instrumental music, contrary to an aristocratic culture that was looking for either mere entertainment or reason for the exercise of the spirit. In such debate, it is common that those who defend the idea of music as a *language of the heart*, from Du Bos and Batteux to Rousseau, from Marpurg to Heinse, distinguish their position through a comparison with music directed only to the *ear*. Garrett seems to resume their position, which is contrary to the one of the supposed "constitutional women" who, *aristocratically*, close their "more delicate ears" to the music that incorporates those new ideals and do not allow it to reach their hearts.

Another musical metaphor, similar to the previous one, is even closer to an *empfindsam* or *sensitive* culture:

What I wrote was felt, in fact I felt much more than I wrote. There might be some inaccuracy in the choice of words, because I really cannot explain what I feel seeing a ruin in that state [referring to the degradation of Santarém's architectural patrimony]. My nerves start jangling, they throb in unbearable discord and dissonance. (214)

Feeling what one writes, feeling what one interprets, making the one with whom we communicate feel what one feels. This is how, since around 1750, a growing bourgeois *consciousness of the self* revealed itself, in contrast to the strongly conventionalized or semiotized communication strategies of the court's society. Spokespersons of this program are, amongst others, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, in his treatise on keyboard playing of 1753, or Rousseau, when, in 1752, in the heat of the *querelle des bouffons*, he proclaims that the *art of feeling* is much more precious than the *art of thinking*. The Cartesian heritage of the classified, typified, rationalized, controlled affections or passions was substituted by what we can call the chaotic experience of emotions, susceptible to unexpected and unpredictable contrasts, inapprehensible by the *conventional language* of words. Thus, in thinking self-reflexively about the act of writing, Garrett seems to point to the idea of music as a *language of the inexpressible*, since he is not able to explain himself through words, and, in order to get around this difficulty, he compares his state of nervousness to the musical category of "discord and dissonance."

In the two examples where this metaphor is used, a clear proximity seems to exist, if not to the idea of *absolute music*, at least to the aesthetic and ideological position that would lead to it. Such a thing is not surprising in a doctrinaire, as Garrett himself, of the *natural* in art (and especially in theater), whose reforms of 1836 had in mind, as an example of what was already happening in other countries, the transfer to theater of religion's *model of identification* and the legal consecration of its *educational function*, under the tutelage of the State.¹³

In *Travels* we equally find truly musical situations where that *model of identification* is, as a matter of fact, *demonstrated* by the narrator:

I know of one beauty with eyes [. . .] [that] in our day would inspire myriads of nonsensical, vaporous songs, intoned tearfully to the accompaniment of the harp or sobbed to the lute. Except for the lyre, which is classical, all instruments, including the bandore, are equal before romantic law. (37)

And:

This is what the poor nuns were singing. They were singing in Latin, which they scarcely understood, but their hearts' instinct told them and their excitable feminine imagination warned them that the time had come when the terrible prophecy of the psalm they were intoning would be carried out before their eyes and would fall on them also.

There were, therefore, tears in the voices that sang those words; those sounds that came from the soul vibrated there too, with a deep, solemn melancholy. (208–9)

In the first passage, in a situation of profane (or mundane) love, the homodiegetic narrator speaks of songs “*intoned tearfully* to the accompaniment of the harp or *sobbed* to the lute,” in agreement with what he calls the “romantic law.” In the second passage, in a situation of religious *devotio*, the heterodiegetic narrator emphasizes the “hearts’ instinct,” which reveals itself through music. The nuns *identify themselves* emotionally with the psalm, they *express themselves* through it and stir up the same feelings in those who listen to them, the same “deep, solemn melancholy.” Nevertheless, it is not the psalm’s Latin words that provoke “tears in the voices.” It is the music as such, and only the music: as if it were *absolute music*.

Nonetheless, it would be worthy of discussion to know to what extent Garrett’s approximation to music (an approximation based on the decoding of *expressive symptoms* of the sonorous discourse, not considering the words transmitted by him) derived more from literature than from direct experience with musical situations—somewhat similar to what occurs later with Eça de Queirós (Carvalho, “Música”; *Eça de Queirós e Offenbach*). The fact that the musical universe *truly experienced* by Garrett far from corresponded to the *paradigm of the sentimental-romantic reception of instrumental music* is what seems precisely to result from the two preceding examples: one refers to the tradition of the *modinha*, where expressiveness results from the vocal and instrumental interpretation style and not from the dramatic density of the harmonious language (the one that is characteristic of *absolute music*); the other refers to the liturgical context and namely to a psalm that, whether sung in unison or polyphonously, also has nothing in common with the *forms of sonata*.

The conjecture that the aforementioned paradigm was acquired by literary means is also emphasized by the fact that the center of Portuguese musical

life was, at the time, the São Carlos Theater, whose colloquial model of communication favored *exhibition strategies of the self* in a context of prestige and *divertissement* (that is, as an exacerbation of the “semiotic factor in behavior”), and therefore more favorable to *gallantry* than *Empfindsamkeit* (or sentimentality).¹⁴ No one went to the São Carlos to take dramatic action seriously, to understand it as a whole or identify emotionally with the characters and situations. Instead, spectators sustained a distanced attitude, paying more attention to feedback which transferred to them the protagonism of the theatrical representation.¹⁵ In this model of communication, the criterion of the ear—the “delicate ear”—was worth more than the criterion of the *heart*. The homodiegetic narrator of *Travels* mentions the São Carlos in order to place himself on a similar level as the “constitutional women” mentioned above (my italics): “one has but to remember, when in the provinces, the suffering his *ear* went through with the prima donna’s bawlings, the tenor’s cacophonies or the infuriating snores of that sleepy São Carlos orchestra!” (199).

This reference is mentioned because Garrett misses Lisbon, misses the “true pleasure of society,” misses that conviviality that the São Carlos provided and which was well worth the price of the “prima donna’s bawlings,” the “tenor’s cacophonies,” or the “infuriating snores of that sleepy [. . .] orchestra.” He misses the gallant life, not the great emotional experience, the enthusiasm, the excitement that the opera shows would have provided to the narrator. Is it possible that if Garrett had been affected by an opera experience comparable to, for example, one by E. T. A. Hoffmann or other German Romantic writers, he would not mention it in this context?¹⁶ This seems to confirm that, in the São Carlos, the listening of music stopped in the *ear*. It did not reach the *heart*. By using several metaphors to sarcastically describe the prima donna, the tenor, and the orchestra, the homodiegetic narrator of *Travels* places himself at the level of the decoding of the *symptoms of transformation* and of the *capacities and skills* which demand an educated or *expert* lover of music. Those same decoding strategies of the music processes are used in another situation, but now as a point of departure for a third level, the *decoding of expressive symptoms*, in order to make fun of the British:

How can a loyal British throat, roughened by the anarchist acids of those French *vins* very *ordinaires*, give proper voice to *God Save the King* in a national *toast*?! How, without Oporto or Madeira, Lisbon or Cartaxo, can a British subject raise his voice in that harmonious, insular cacophony that is peculiar to him and part

of his respectable national character? Yes, it is; do not laugh: an Englishman sings only when he drinks . . . or rather when he has “*had a drop*.” *Nisi potus ad arma ruisse*. Alter to: *Nisi potus in cantum prorumpisse* . . . And how, when he has “had a drop” of *that*, can he raise his voice in that sublime and tremendous popular hymn, *Rule, Britannia!* (53)

Nonetheless, Garrett does not use irony when he utilizes identical decoding strategies to characterize the “ballad in *endechas*” sung by the Portuguese. Here it refers, we could say, to a scientific listening similar to that of an ethnomusicologist—which today is still evidence of high importance to the study of the oral tradition of the *romanceiro*: “When they sing it, the people do not divide the lines into hemistiches, as is done by those who write them down, whereas in ballads in the more usual metre the popular sung form distinctly divides each eight-syllable member in two” (164–65).

Lastly, there are moments in *Travels* where the musical metaphors are used, ironically, for social and political criticism:

The pine forest of Azambuja has moved. Which of the many Orpheuses that one hears and sees around was the one who worked the miracle is more difficult to say. There are so many of them and they sing so well! Who knows? Maybe they got together, formed a joint-stock company and negotiated a harmonic loan, and that way the miracle would be worked more easily. That is how everything is done nowadays. (40–41)

And:

What poet sings loud enough to be heard by the brute stones and hard oaks of this materialist forest to which the utilitarians have reduced us? If we exclude the feeble cries of the liberal press, and that partly throttled by the police, the only voice to be heard in the immense silence of this desert is that of the barons shouting their guineas and sovereigns. (82)

Even the university does not escape the abuse of the sonorous images:

where are our universities, and what else does the one we do have do, other than award its third-rate degree of bachelor in law and medicine? What does it write, what does it debate, what are its principles, what doctrines does it profess, who

knows anything about it or hears anything from it except the occasional timid, fearful echo of what is said and done elsewhere? (82)

Conclusion

There are several levels and roles through which Garrett's culture of listening is represented in *Travels in My Homeland*. These vary from the sonorous staging of fictional action to the depiction of characters, the intimate confession to the objective analysis, the *local color* to the metaphor, the romantic lyricism to the political protest, and the semantics of sound in the narrative to the homologies between the narrative itself and musical processes. And, many times—either directly through an explicit interpellation, or implicitly, by resorting to the use of appropriate decoding strategies by the reader—Garrett's culture of listening seems to become a *hermeneutic criticism of the culture*. At the same time, that *culture of listening* allows us to foresee the limits of Garrett's musical references themselves as well as the socio-structural limiting factors that establish them. In Garrett, the criticism of ideology and society, which reveals the author's own ideological position, helps us to understand the deficits or omissions of the musical experience in his *lived world*, by exposing *the false relationship* that is displayed in his work between two levels of acceptance of romantic ideology: the literary and the musical.

Notes

¹ Study done at the Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical (CESEM) of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, as an integral part of the project "Investigação, Edição e Estudos Críticos de Música Portuguesa dos Séculos XVIII a XX," supported by the PRAXIS XXI Program of the Foundation for Science and Technology. [Translators' Note: The original text in Portuguese was first published in *Leituras: Revista da Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa* 3.4 (April–October 1999): 125–32.]

² Consult Carvalho's "Música e literatura romântica" and "Ópera e literatura romântica" regarding the reception of music and opera in the Portuguese literature of the romantic period.

³ All of the quotations in the Portuguese text come from the edition in two volumes of *Obras de Almeida Garrett*. [Translators' Note: Quotations in English are from *Travels in My Homeland* by John M. Parker.]

⁴ See Christian Kaden for the categories of the theory of communication used throughout this study.

⁵ [Translators' note.] In the Portuguese version of this article, "complete portrait" is a direct quote from *Viagens*. However, because the translation reads, "the portrait is complete," the translators adapted the phrase in order to make sense within the context of this article.

⁶ [Translators' note.] Because of the applied meaning of the word in this essay, the translation of "pura" is not done according to *Travels*, which reads "clear." "Clear" would not be a

correct adjective to describe Joaquina as a person, although it is an accurate description of her voice. Instead, "pure" is used in order to capture the author's meaning.

⁷ [Translators' note.] The Portuguese text reads "malícia." However, *Travels* reads "coarse laugh," which does not reflect the best meaning for this context. Therefore, "malícia" has been translated literally.

⁸ The bibliography on the question of gender in literature and in the arts in general is quite vast. In a recent paper I tried to present a critical analysis of the debate in its musical scope (Carvalho, "Mémoire"). As far as the woman-nature relationship and its ideological contexts, see Kate Rigby's "Women and Nature Revised."

⁹ Regarding the category of *local color* and its emergence in the opera of the nineteenth century, consult Heinz Becker.

¹⁰ The point here is not to consider the Garrettian universe and the Wagnerian universe as similar, nor to compare the characters of Tristan and Isolde to those of Carlos and Joaquina. Rather, it is about showing how the aesthetic-ideological filiations of both in the *Aufklärung* reveal themselves in some motives and strategies of common *composition*, although with different environments and contents. However, António Arroyo compared Garrett's theatrical reform project with the Wagnerian project, criticizing Garrett for not having been as consequential in continuing it as was Wagner (Carvalho, "Pensar"). As far as the bourgeois enlightenment sources of the Wagner theater (especially Rousseau), see Carvalho's "Auf der Spur von Rousseau in der Wagnerschen Dramaturgie."

¹¹ Consult Carvalho's "Pensar é morrer" about the reception of opera in Portugal in the nineteenth century.

¹² See Carl Dahlhaus, Christian Kaden (140–70) and Rita Iriarte about the idea of *absolute music*.

¹³ Following the program of bourgeois enlightenment (Rousseau, Diderot, Lessing), Garrett's theater reform had legal expression, but fell short of becoming a socio-communicative praxis in the romantic period (Carvalho, "Pensar"). Incidentally, it must be noted that one needs to distinguish between two models of enlightenment: the model of court society (of the eminent despotism), which is based on the principle of the rational self-control of emotions, cold reason, inherent in the domination of people and nature, and the model of bourgeois culture (bourgeois enlightenment), represented by authors such as Rousseau, who connect emotional identification with the virtue of compassion, considering it inherent to human nature. It is understanding through feeling or emotional reason that the latter values, even within the structural and functional dimensions of artistic communication. To situate such a question in a more profound discussion around this change of communicational paradigm, see: Carvalho, "Belcanto-Kultur"; "From Opera to Soap Opera"; and "Nature et Naturel."

¹⁴ For the distinction between *gallantry* and *Empfindsamkeit* as strategies of communication or interaction, consult Magdalena Havlová.

¹⁵ In this sense, the *illusion* did not come from the stage but from the empirical interaction between spectators, or between the personas of the actors (not the characters) and the audience. At the São Carlos, the stage and the room formed a whole; the *fourth wall* had not been constituted yet, a condition of the *perfect illusion* and the *model of identification*. It is that *sentimental* education, which does not pass through the assimilation of the bourgeois illuminist paradigm, that Eça de Queirós observes in his *criticism of culture* and in his fiction (Carvalho, "Pensar"; "Música e crítica").

¹⁶ It is futile to look in Garrett's work, and not only in *Travels*, for a memory of an experience in the São Carlos similar to the one that, for example, the musical critic Adolph Bernhard Marx describes in his own memoirs published in 1865, referring to Paer's opera, *Camilla*, acted out in Weimar, at the beginning of the century (an experience shared with his high school

classmates): "When the moment of liberation finally approached, one would look in which of the underground passages the unhappy girl surrendered to death through hunger, and the choir [. . .] in harmonious chords that intoned for a long time, called her by her name Camilla!—for a while without an answer, at last driven by a faint noise, then it could be seen very well in our faces, pale white, the same fear that threatened to make everyone who was on stage surrender" (Marx 1: 64s).

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