

The remains of *Ópera dos mortos*: principles of its genesis / *Vestígios de 'Ópera dos mortos': princípios da gênese*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the novel *Ópera dos mortos* (1967), by Autran Dourado, based on the methodological movement of genetic criticism, taking into account the methods incorporated in the production of a text. Thus, through documents found in Autran Dourado's personal archive – that is being organized in the Acervo dos Escritores Mineiros, located at the Federal University of Minas Gerais – as material for analysis and concepts based on genetic criticism – supported by Biasi's thoughts (2010), as well as Grésillon (2007), Hay (2007) e Salles (2006), the objective is to explore the genesis documents of *Ópera dos mortos*, in order to go through the process of construction of a work so relevant to Brazilian literature. Given the above, genetic criticism presents itself as a method to articulate these questions in research into the writer's archive,

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which serves as an instrument capable of revealing writing practices, indicating new ways of perceiving the author and his creation.

KEYWORDS: Genetic Criticism; Archive; Ópera Dos Mortos; Autran Dourado.

RESUMO

O presente artigo objetiva analisar o romance Ópera dos mortos (1967), de Autran Dourado, a partir do movimento metodológico da crítica genética, tendo em vista os métodos incorporados na fabricação de um texto. Assim, por meio de documentos encontrados no arquivo pessoal de Autran Dourado – em processo de organização no Acervo dos Escritores Mineiros, localizado na Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – como material de análise e de conceitos embasados na crítica genética – apoiados nos pensamentos de Biasi (2010), Grésillon (2007), Hay (2007) e Salles (2006) – pretende-se explorar os documentos de gênese de Ópera dos mortos, a fim de percorrer o processo de construção de uma obra tão relevante para a literatura brasileira. Diante do exposto, a crítica genética se apresenta como método para articular essas indagações na pesquisa no arquivo do escritor, que serve como instrumento capaz de revelar práticas de escrita, indicando novas maneiras de perceber o autor e a sua criação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: crítica genética; arquivo; Ópera dos mortos; Autran Dourado.

1 Introduction

Human beings' need to understand the principle and, consequently, the origin of things and events has led to several theories. When thinking about these concepts, however, a problem already discussed by Jacques Derrida (2001) arises, given that the origins are blurred and the beginnings are many and not always traceable, revealing the impossibility of reaching a definitive origin (Foucault, 1987). From this problem, thinking about genetic criticism makes sense as it raises the discussion about the movement of creating a literary work.

This movement must be recognized as a place in the realm of the author's imagination, exposed as a continuous discontinuity (Foucault, 1987), since writing a text is not always a systematic task, but it does bring into play the notion of the writing process, as it leaves traces.

Thus, genetic criticism arises as a critical method for understanding mechanisms and research involved in the production of a text. Therefore, exploring an author's personal file allows us to understand the process of literary creation, with the goal of comprehending how a writer writes the way they write, which is only possible through access to the documents of a text's genesis. This allows us to consider this critical discourse as an opportunity to learn about the traces left behind and, subsequently, chosen for survival, focusing on the expression of the movements involved in composing a literary text.

From this viewpoint, one of the main steps of genetic criticism establishes the difference between text and prototext, i.e. between a published work and the documents from its genesis. However, the published novel is more likely to be accessed by ordinary and specialized readers, the latter being researchers from the field of literary analysis and criticism, than the material from the genesis of the novel. Thus, focusing on the narrative first might be a more didactic approach to working with the text.

The novel *Ópera dos mortos*¹, by Autran Dourado, was published in 1967, and stands out for integrating the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, which indicates the relevance of the writer's work. The narrative portrays social changes in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais in the 19th and 20th centuries, by exploring the collapse of the Honório Cota family. In the peaceful town of Duas Pontas, fictional town in Minas Gerais, Rosalina lives in the family's two-story house, trying to maintain the conventions of her family's tradition. To this character, the only choice that is left is a sort of dual personality: acting like an ideal lady in the light of day and getting drunk at night; her loneliness as her only companion. The personality of her family members are crucial elements in Rosalina's nature, especially her father, Colonel João Capistrano Honório Cota, and her grandfather, Lucas Procópio Honório Cota. The plot reveals an opposition between the two, highlighting Rosalina's ambiguity as a consequence of the difference between them, which is also metaphorized in the construction of the family's two-story house. Moreover, when Juca Passarinho, a poor man seen as a "vagrant" for refusing to be explored on a fixed job, shows up at her gate, she lets him in. This decision seems unexpected due to Rosalina's position as a figure of the city's elite, revealing a discrepancy with her father's withdrawn attitude in the family house and a proximity with her grandfather's habits.

The elements that compose this scenario are easily comprehended by the readers of the novel, as they constitute the main plot. In this sense, it is relevant to reflect on how this idea was conceived in the writing process in order to understand the relationship between text and prototext, as well as its ramifications.

¹ In English, *The Voices of the Dead*.

In this scenario, the proposed analysis of *Ópera dos mortos*, by Autran Dourado, is a way of thinking about the writer's work to create the text whilst moving away from the idea of inspiration by examining the documents that testify the activity of writing. This deconstruction involves problematizing the term creation, which encloses the idea that writing a text is a self-sufficient endeavor, detached from reality, as Leyla Perrone-Moisés (1990) discusses, which compromises understanding the idea of producing a text. Therefore, this work consists of an introductory analysis of the documents from the genesis of this novel, so as to shed light on the process of creating the texts based on pre-writing documents (Biasi, 2010). All this considered, our goal is to explore the genesis of *Ópera dos mortos*, comparing documents from the writing process with the actual published work, as well as perceiving the relationships established by Dourado at the moment of writing.

2 Documents from the process

The idea of process is key for assimilating the tenets of genetic criticism, as it allows prototexts to be seen as structures in the state of emergence. Such documents compose the genesis dossier of a literary work (Biasi, 2010), which is formed by the following stages: pre-writing, writing, pre-editorial and editorial.

In the context of the documents obtained at the Acervo de Escritores Mineiros (AEM), located at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, the institution that preserves Autran Dourado's archive, the pre-writing stage of *Ópera dos mortos* will be the subject of in-depth study. This means that we will analyse the initial writing plans and ideas. The presence of these documents in the writer's personal archive is related to the methodology he adopted, marked by a scripted planning, in which there is "[...] a work of preliminary conception that precedes writing, in the form of plans, scripts, notes, sketches, documentary research, whose function is preparing and organizing a writing process that will be carried out step by step²" (Biasi, 2010, p. 44, our translation).

²In Portuguese, "[...] um trabalho de concepção preliminar que precede a escritura, sob a forma de planos, roteiros, anotações, esboços, pesquisas documentais, que tem como função preparar e organizar uma redação que poderá depois ser realizada parte por parte" (Biasi, 2010, p. 44).

This order is not consistent with the writer's work, since these documents are not always ordered during the writing process. Thus, structuring them allows us to comprehend "the chronology of the text's conception and writing operations³" (Biasi, 2010, p. 42, our translation). Moreover, it is important to consider that Autran Dourado's archive is still being organized at AEM. In this context, the arrangement of the documents in the institution connects to researchers' requirements for their analyses, but does not correspond necessarily to the arrangement that existed in the writer's home.

Furthermore, in the field of genetic criticism, these documents are presented according with the choices of the geneticist, who is responsible for building "[...] hypotheses about the paths taken in the writing process and about the possible meanings of this creation process⁴" (Grésillon, 2007, p. 160, our translation). Consequently, the ensemble features virtualities and unfinished items, demystifying the idea of the creation process as a straight line. This makes it possible to identify other paths and ruptures in writing beyond what concerns authors' idiosyncrasies in producing a text.

In the archive, there are systematic records of Autran's initial idea for *Ópera dos mortos*, indicating a project to be carried out, named by Dourado as the "1st idea", which will be presented in the following paragraph. The elaboration of this text makes it possible to notice the ideas for its narrative structure, as well as its organization, i.e. the principle that governs the story and the selection of types of narrators.

In the first idea for the text's conception (Fig. 1), it is possible to notice the elaboration of the plot discussed in the section Introduction, which allows us to suppose that the pre-writing stage in Dourado's writing process concerns the essential elements of a narrative.

Figure 1: Scheme of *Ópera dos mortos*' first idea

³In Portuguese, "a cronologia das operações de concepção e de redação da obra" (Biasi, 2010, p. 42).

⁴In Portuguese, "[...] hipóteses sobre os caminhos percorridos pela escrita e sobre as significações possíveis desse processo de criação" (Grésillon, 2007, p. 160).

la. idéia: 1945 = 7 5 10 a)

Uma história sobre uma solteirona de família decadente (fim de gente) do interior de Minas (Monte Santo- as Lavouras como lembrança). Órfã de pai, o cel (homem rico, dono de fazenda, armazém de café, máquina de beneficiar arroz, etc., que tenta se meter na política, de onde vem a sua desilusão), vivia sôzinha num casarão do Largo do Carmo, Solidão e traços de loucura. Vivía com ela uma velha empregada, muda, prêta, de nome Quiquina. Tirar partido expressivista do silêncio, do mistério, da incomunicabilidade. Quando conversava com Q., de noite, só ela falava - monólogo. Nome- Rosalina. Um dia ela põe para dentro de casa um estanho, para fazer serviços domésticos, como capinar horta, fazer compra, dar recados, porque Quiquina era muda. Rosalina tinha o inocente vício de tomar licor de jabuticaba e vinho de laranja, que ela mesma fazia (ou Q.) com as fruteiras da horta. Um dia de maior solidão, quando não resiste à solidão, à marca do pai (êle quis fazer dela uma segregada, por causa do seu ressentimento político), à sua "nobreza", e chama o homem para ~~xx~~ beber. Os dois tomam um piléque juntos. Não de licor, porque o homem lhe oferece pinga. A ternura, sexo. No dia seguinte êle procura restabelecer a intimidade anterior, mas aí ela é outra, a mesma "nobre", que o faz ~~xx~~ reconhecer o seu lugar. A duplicidade de Rosalina: o ser noturno e o diurno. O deliramento. A gravidez escondida. A criança nasce morta e o homem vai enterrá-la no cemitério. Terror e decadência.

Provável final: Ela, louca, vai cantando ao cemitério, de noite. A canção, a letra diz que vai batizar o filho. A cidade descobre as suas idas ao cemitério. Julgam-na louca, é prêsa e mandada para Barbacena.

Fim: A cidade ficou sabendo apenas uma parte da história, a aparente, a loucura. Pensam que é resultado de tara familiar. Há um certo remorso, por se julgarem culpados. Não sabem da relação Rosalina-homem. O homem foge, como apareceu. Quem podia contar tôda a história era Quiquina, que como foi dito, era muda.

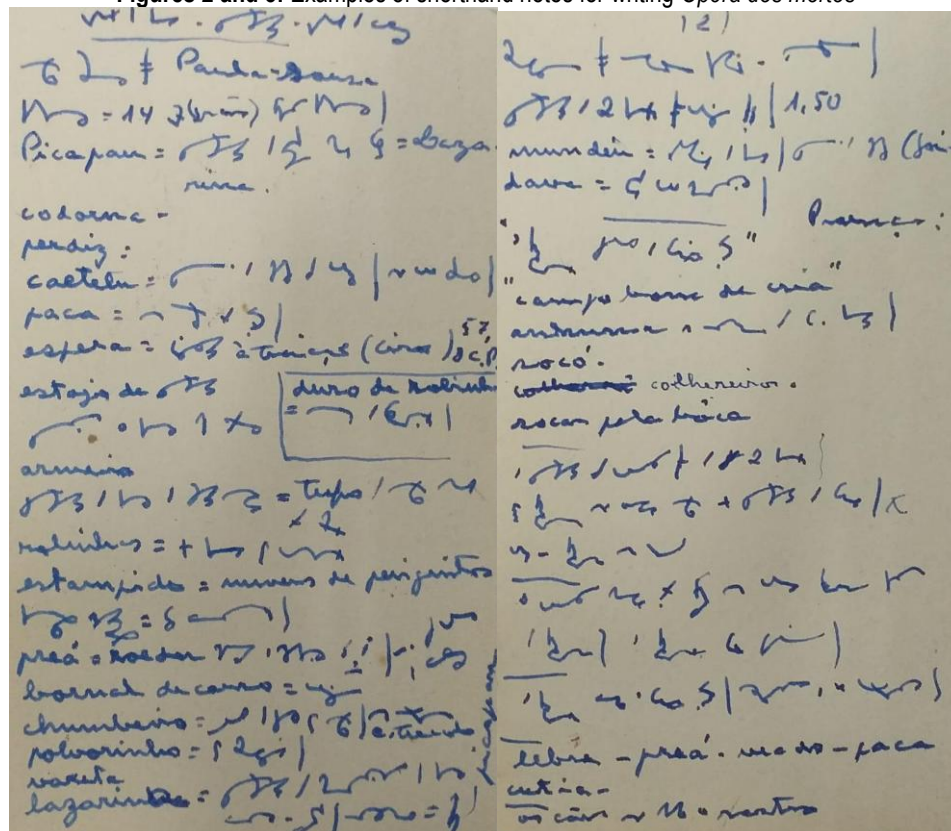
Obs: a impossibilidade de conhecer tôda a verdade, tôda uma história, tôda pessoa. Ôlho onisciente de Deus.

Usar inicialmente o narrador. Depois, aos poucos, onisciencia com ponto de vista segundo os vários personagens. No final, voltar ao narrador. Não fazer capítulos, mas pequenos blocos?

Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFMG)

A relevant feature of Autran Dourado's notes represents one of the most authentic objects of writing: the most distorted and enigmatic notes (Biase, 2010), whose meanings are dense and complex. Concerning the author, these records are represented by shorthand notes, as shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. Shorthand was a method adopted by the writer due to his occupation as stenographer in the civil service, in which he used it as a tool to write quickly, but also because of Dourado's appreciation for this technique (Mindlin, 2008).

Figures 2 and 3: Examples of shorthand notes for writing *Ópera dos mortos*



Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFGM)

In the examples above, the author mixes shorthand technique with the Brazilian Portuguese orthographic system, in order to articulate an appropriate vocabulary for the narrative, which would be able to portray the society of Minas Gerais in the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.

In addition, it is normal for the writer to make notes about the fictional location to be built, as well as about narrative aspects, in the pre-writing stage:

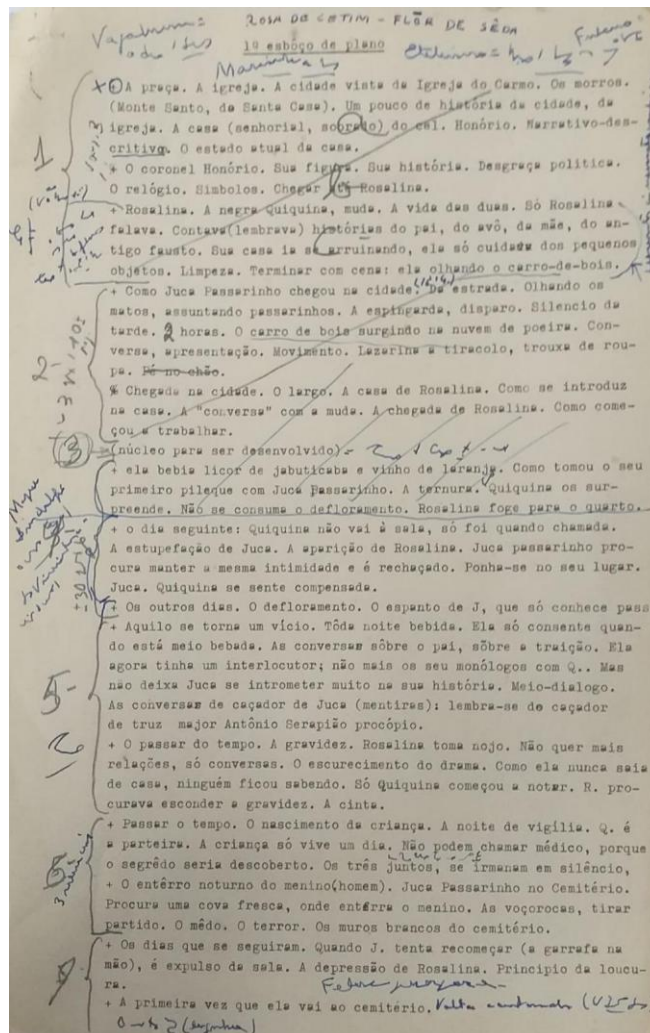
When the author writes their plan, especially if it is a novel or narrative, they may have made an initial dossier with notes about the period when the story is set, the narrative's locations, certain real characters who will serve as models, or about a scientific, historical or technical issue that will be addressed⁵ (Biasi, 2010, p. 53, our translation).

On Fig. 4, for instance, one can find the locations idealized for the fictional space, as well as elements that connect plot and characters. The author's handwritten notes also reveal changes in opinion and ideas that were added to what was initially conceived. This demonstrates that “the process of reading the manuscript is necessarily interrupted by interlinear and marginal interventions, by do-overs and all types of graphic signs⁶” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 161, our translation).

Figure 4: Outline of the narrative elements in *Ópera dos mortos*

⁵ In Portuguese: “Quando o autor escreve seu plano, sobretudo se for um romance ou uma obra narrativa, pode ter constituído um primeiro dossiê de anotações sobre a época em que se situa a história, as locações da narrativa, certas personagens reais que servirão de modelo, ou sobre tal questão científica, histórica ou técnica que a narração deverá abordar” (Biasi, 2010, p. 53).

⁶ In Portuguese: “a leitura do manuscrito é necessariamente quebrada pelas intervenções interlineares e marginais, pelos retornos e todos os tipos de outros sinais gráficos” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 161).



Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFMG)

In this context, the way in which characters are built is also expressive due to the psychologic density presented in *Ópera dos mortos*. Autran Dourado (1976) comments that the symbolologies in his text were planned and manipulated to support the envisaged architecture. Because of that, “[...] the main character in my novel *Ópera dos mortos*, who symbolically made cloth or paper flowers, could only be called Rosalina, from the word rose⁷” (Dourado, 2009, p. 28, our translation).

⁷In Portuguese: “[...] a personagem principal de meu romance *Ópera dos mortos*, que simbolicamente fabricava flores de pano ou papel, só podia se chamar Rosalina, de rosa” (Dourado, 2009, p. 28).

PERSONAGENS

O pai: João Capistrano Honório Cota. Já morto quando começa a história. Cel. Lucas, Cel. Paulino, Seu Bernardino, como modelos. As roupas, o relógio da Independência. Mistro de tradição e progressismo, idealista, é ludibriado pelos companheiros de partido, que o traem. Dono da Fazenda da Pedra Menina, depois da traição, encerra-se em casa com a filha, não a deixa sair, incutê-lhe o mesmo ódio contra a cidade, contra o gênero humano. Começar a história (de gente, porque a história deve começar pela praça, pela casa, para chegar a êle, depois a Rosalina) pela história do cel. Honório. Os seus parentes (primos, irmãos, etc. moram longe, no sertão). Casado com dona Genú (Genú Freira Honório Cota). Quando acontece a traição política, dona Genú ainda estava viva. Ela não queria que êle se metesse na política. Quando a mulher morreu, foi a última vez que êle recebeu alguém em casa. Mas cerimoniosamente, como um dever: obrigado pela despesa. Quando a cidade pensou que estavam reconciliados, esquecidos, êle voltou ao mesmo silêncio ao mesmo isolamento. Ninguém mais voltou à sua casa, nem para negócios, que eram tratados no escritório do armazém. Era agora de uma dureza implacável nos negócios. Seu único amigo: Quincas Ciriaco, seu sócio no armazém. É Quincas quem cuida dos negócios de Rosalina quando morre o cel. Honório. Mas só vai à casa de R. de raro em raro, para prestar contas, perguntar se quer alguma coisa. Quincas A preta, empregada: de nome quiquina, nasceu na casa do Cel. Honório, ou melhor na casa do pai do cel Honório Lucas. Muda, mas não surda. Falava por sinais, convençionados com ela e a família. Não alfabetico, mas simbólico. Filha de escravos, ficou morando com a família. Ficou sendo a única empregada de Rosalina. Idade presumível: 60 anos (1980). Ela "assiste" a toda a história. De noite, quando os "dois" se embedam, pressente-se a sua presença. No dia seguinte (na parte diurna), mantem-se reservada. Não muito. Se Ros. olhasse no fundo de seus olhos, encontraria a reprovação, o ôlho do cel. Honório. Mas Q. vivia agora de olhos baixos.

ROSALINA: Tôda "nobreza", orgulho. Não esquece o "crime" da cidade contra o pai. As mulheres orgulhosas de Minas. O sexo soterrado. Que explode, com a bebida. Dar alguns traços da futura loucura. Estranheza. Nascida em 1940. Tem 36 anos, mas parece mais.

Fig. 5 above consists of a document that portrays how the characters were built, featuring important characteristics and events they experienced. The information written on the sides of the sheet shows the calculation of birth dates, as well as relationships with other characters and historical

moments. This indicates planning and research, showing — beyond symbolism — a study performed by the author and a concern for the accuracy of ideas, which exemplifies a calculated writing process (Grésillon, 2007).

Figure 6: Description of events and characters Rosalina and Juca Passarinho

-2

Ros.: Pelas roupas austeras. Gente de Casta. O orgulho ferido do pai. Se o pai influia com o seu ressentimento e frustração, ela aceitou-o. Solteirona, nunca pensou em casar-se. Ela também cortara relações com a cidade. Isolamento, solidão desesperada. Ela detrás das cortinas. Às vezes uma criança joga uma pedra. Sombra e decadência, não nas roupas. A anti-Bielu. Se não fôsse o "crime" da cidade, poderia ter uma outra vida, casar-se, ser feliz. Filha única. Era mais agarrada com o pai, que ela admirava, nas camadas superiores de sua consciência. Na "explosão".alcoólica ver no fundo de sua alma a revolta?/Orgulho-loucura. Por que ela botou o homem para dentro de casa? Só porque era de fora, viandante. Desprêzo, nojo, orgulho ferido pela cidade. Viviu na janela olhando o largo, vendo os enterros. Quando via que alguém a observava, deixava cair a cortina, afastava-se. Era o mistério da cidade.

O homem, adventício, viandante: Nome - José Feliciano, ou Juca Passarinho. Também Zé-da-Banda-de-Lá. Quando é apresentado, se apresenta dizendo os nomes em "versos". Passarinheiro, anejo. Veio até à cidade rasgando os sertões. Dizia-se de Paracatu. Caçador. Lazerina a tiracolo. Espingarda picapau. Lembrava-se do major Antonio Serapião ~~Picapau~~, caçador, com espingarda nobre, caçador de muitas pecas. Tipo meio ridículo, passarinho, fuçador, se relacionava facilmente. Mas sobre o casarão guardava segredo. Engraçado. Sua surpresa com o drama. Contraste: o drama, o fato surpreende quando menos se espera, com quem menos se espera. Duplo. Não entende Rosalina. A mulher que ama quando bêbada, os carinhos. Só conhece mulher passiva, fazendo as coisas apressadas, mais por necessidade. Vulgar, mas no fundo uma alma perplexa, dramática. Não era muito de trabalho. Quando vê Rosalina louca, foge da cidade. Tem medo de ser descoberto. Chega à cidade num carro de bois, quando começa a conversar com o menino, depois com o homem. Cafezais cheirosos com a viração. Passa pelo cemitério. No Largo se separa, quando encontra o casarão. Mais ou menos 40 anos. *de biela - 7 10 11*

A PRAÇA- Largo do Carmo
o g: Lucas Procopio Humana Cota (1880) e L + f
✓ 1/11 1/11 1/11 1/11
Ass: 1/11 1/11 1/11 1/11
1/11 1/11 1/11 1/11

Enquanto - 1/11 1/11 1/11 1/11
1/11 1/11 1/11 1/11

Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFMG)

The description in Fig. 6, dedicated mostly to introducing characters, also details elements related to physical spaces in the narrative. Furthermore, analysing the work with a focus on the effect of meanings described in documents from the planning of the actual text is compelling, considering that the author seeks to highlight elements such as “drama”, the “double”, the “explosion” and the “crime”. These ideas are portrayed in the published work, although their presence is not explicit for the ordinary reader.

Another characteristic from the writing process concerns the different materials that may help the writer to create their texts, such as: drawings, sketches and outlines. Developing ideas based on visual diagrams (Salles, 2006) is common, as it allows for an expansion of the word, which leads to a visual reflection of what is being idealized. For *Ópera dos mortos*, visibility provides an opportunity to describe the space, a key element for understanding the construction and significance of the family’s two-store house for the narrative.

Figure 7: Floor plan of the Honório Cota family’s two-store house in *Ópera dos mortos*



Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFMG)

The floor plan highlights the symbolism that structures the duality of both the two-store house and Rosalina — represented by each floor and their differences. Beyond this metaphor, it shows Dourado's knowledge in different fields, as he comments in:

The two-store house was studied a lot, as I used all my knowledge of Minas Gerais' colonial baroque architecture (I studied it a lot) [...] The house is Lucas Procópio on the first floor, João Capistrano on the second floor; the combination of both parts in a person is Rosalina⁸ (Dourado, 1976, p. 119, our translation).

The pre-writing documents show how the narrative was formed through sketches and ideas related to the narrative's basic aspects. It is possible to notice an attempt to make even the most abstract thoughts concrete, which causes them to be perceived as great metaphors. The documents show the production process, shedding light on the calculations involved in producing information, thus dispelling the idea of inspiration.

3 Between genesis and the published work

From the first contact with the published work and the analysis of the manuscripts, it is interesting to know how this initial project was, in fact, materialized in the final writing of *Ópera dos mortos*. This is the moment, thus, to observe the “[...] transformation of an empirical set of documents into a dossier formed by ordered and significant pieces⁹” (Biasi, 2010, p. 41, our translation), i.e. what becomes the draft(s) and, later, the actual work

The discussion regarding the two-store house, whose project was visually materialized by Dourado, represents an important starting point. The narrator states that the construction of the second floor was ordered by João Capistrano, since in the “time of Lucas Procópio the house had only one

⁸ In Portuguese: “O sobrado foi muito estudado, recorri a todo o meu conhecimento de arquitetura colonial barroca mineira (estudei muito) [...]. O sobrado é Lucas Procópio na parte de baixo, João Capistrano na parte de cima; a fusão das duas partes numa única pessoa é Rosalina” (Dourado, 1976, p. 119).

⁹ In Portuguese, “[...] transformação de um conjunto empírico de documentos em um dossiê de peças ordenadas e significativas” (Biasi, 2010, p. 41).

floor, in his style; heavy, tied to the ground, with four windows, in the middle the tall, rustic, thick door¹⁰ (Dourado, 1980, p. 3, our translation). In contrast to his father's characteristics, the son is described as a "man without his father's rudeness, more civilized, [...] who took great care of his appearance, his lordly bearing, his pride¹¹" (Dourado, 1980, p. 4, our translation).

In this scenario, the house's structure "sought to merge into a single whole [...] those two figures — the cloudy Lucas Procópio and that one, colonel João Capistrano Honório Cota¹²" (Dourado, 1980, p. 5, our translation) and, therefore, "[...] the lower windows' lintels were straight and heavy, perhaps denouncing old Lucas Procópio's hard, harsh, gloomy character [...]"¹³ (Dourado, 1980, p. 4, our translation), whereas "[...] the upstairs windows were sweetened by a slight curve, crowned and enriched with delicate cornices that matched the swell of the lintels¹⁴" (Dourado, 1980, p. 4, our translation). This opposition was thought by Autran, especially by interpreting Fig. 7, the house's floor plan.

Other than this, the materialization of ideas for the narrator, in Fig. 1, is also an interesting issue in the text, since it initially seeks to represent the view of the city's residents, as exemplified by the underline excerpts in:

We wanted Rosalina to be like Lucas Procópio, to throw all insults in **our** faces and at least talk to **us**. Instead, Rosalina really had taken after that colonel João Capistrano Honório Cota, whose greatness, pride and silence soured **us** on the remorse we had suffered¹⁵ (Dourado, 1980, p. 82, our emphasis and translation).

¹⁰ In Portuguese: "*tempo de Lucas Procópio a casa era de um só pavimento, ao jeito dele; pesada, amarrada ao chão, com as suas quatro janelas, no meio a porta grossa, rústica, alta*" (Dourado, 1980, p. 3, our translation).

¹¹ In Portuguese: "*homem sem a rudeza do pai, mais civilizado, [...] cuidando muito da sua aparência, do seu porte de senhor, do seu orgulho*" (Dourado, 1980, p. 4).

¹² In Portuguese: "*procurava fundir num só todo [...] aquelas duas figuras - o brumoso Lucas Procópio e aquele ali, o coronel João Capistrano Honório Cota*" (Dourado, 1980, p. 5).

¹³ In Portuguese, "[...] *as vergas das janelas de baixo eram retas e pesadas, denunciando talvez o caráter duro, agreste, soturno, do velho Lucas Procópio [...]*" (Dourado, 1980, p. 4).

¹⁴ In Portuguese: "*as das janelas de cima [...] eram adoçadas por uma leve curva, coroadas e enriquecidas de cornijas delicadas que acompanhavam a ondulação das vergas*" (Dourado, 1980, p. 4).

¹⁵ In Portuguese: "**Queríamos** que Rosalina fosse feito Lucas Procópio, **nos** lançasse na cara todos os desaforos, ao menos falasse **com a gente**. Mas não, Rosalina tinha puxado mesmo era àquele coronel João Capistrano Honório Cota, cuja grandeza, orgulho e silêncio muito **nos** amarguravam o remorso pisado" (Dourado, 1980, p. 82).

We instinctively moved away, making way for them. She would look at **us**, bow her head slightly, timidly acknowledging **our** greetings, which **we** barely said, silent, afraid. Those gestures, that look, were not for **us**¹⁶ (Dourado, 1980, p. 211, our emphasis and translation).

Another determinant feature of the text concerns the characters, especially how Rosalina was built: characterized by more than one psychological dimension — as it was recorded in early sketches. In the novel, it is possible to find excerpts that highlight this issue metalinguistically: “Lady Rosalina was [...] like a maned wolf¹⁷” (Dourado, 1980, p. 147), referring to the idea of being a “changer”, which is present in the text. This feature can be interpreted as a way of expressing ideas that are present in the script — “Rosalina’s duplicity: the nocturnal being and the diurnal being”, as shown in Fig. 1.

Studying grammatical choices is also relevant in the composition of a text. In the novel, verb tenses are expressed in the present or the past, especially the past imperfect, but never in the future, since “[...] there is no future for Rosalina. [...] To say the future is to assert oneself, to come out of the past, out of the world of the dead, to be¹⁸” (Dourado, 1976, p. 117). Building the text in such manner makes it possible to see the past as unfinished, a mold for the reality experienced by the main character. Besides, using the imperfect tense establishes the opposition between reality and idealization: Rosalina cannot free herself from the opposition between father and grandfather, nor can she stop hating the city by the “crime” committed, as the initial project suggests. This “crime” consists in colonel João Capistrano losing the election, resulting in the seclusion of father and daughter in the house, and Rosalina’s seclusion in the end.

These examples show that studying the plans drafted for the text, the materialization of ideas — especially the most abstract ones — assists in building symbolic elements in *Ópera dos mortos*.

¹⁶ In Portuguese: “**A gente** instintivamente se afastava, ia abrindo caminho para eles. Ela **nos** olhava, abaixava ligeiramente a cabeça, feito agradecendo tímida os **nostros** cumprimentos, que mal **dávamos**, calados, medrosos. Não eram para **nós** aqueles gestos, aquele olhar” (Dourado, 1980, p. 211).

¹⁷ In Portuguese: “Dona Rosalina era [...] Que nem um guará” (Dourado, 1980, p. 147).

¹⁸ In Portuguese: “[...] não há futuro para Rosalina. [...] Dizer o futuro é afirmar-se, é sair do passado, do mundo dos mortos, é ser” (Dourado, 1976, p. 117).

Therefore, the genesis “[...] also clarifies how the initial project of the work survives, how it is present in the text’s writing¹⁹” (Hay, 2007, p. 69, our translation).

This reflection is productive once we understand the reasons why the approach provided by genetic criticism presents such a wealth of research opportunities. By accessing this material, it is possible to distinguish what is said and what is meant, the writing, the process and the (un)finished text, revealing intention, but also the phenomenon of text production. For the researcher, that is something new, which is always inciting for the research.

The genesis dossier points to the plurality of structures, related both to the genesis itself and to the text, as there are many ways to approach a literary work. This critical discourse makes it possible to emphasize that the idea of text closure is not attractive, a thought that the structuralist method of criticism, for example, would not allow.

It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between the published work and the genesis dossier, as they serve different functions, showing a productivity of different meanings, thus building a deeper reality (Hay, 2007). Hence, there must be a difference in exploring the prototext and the text. One movement should not be prioritized over the other. Writing and text are distinct in a way that the final product is only one of the possibilities of what might have come, as Dourado argues:

That is why, when you [...] show the bones of your work, [...] no one believes that this is how you wrote *Ópera dos Mortos*. **Because this bone structure and its risks are your own, only you know them**, and they merged into the composition mass, **whose skeleton you revealed later, something that does not change Rosalina’s story, which is there, done and finished**²⁰ (Dourado, 1982, p. 122, our emphasis and translation).

This investigation established the accessibility of autograph documents (Grésillon, 2007) which contributed to the creation of a text and testify the creative movement. Understanding the suggested

¹⁹ In Portuguese: “[...] esclarece também a sobrevivência do projeto inicial da obra, a presença da escritura no texto” (Hay, 2007, p. 69, our translation).

²⁰ In Portuguese: “Daí por que, quando você [...] dá a ossatura da sua obra, [...] ninguém acredita que tenha sido assim que compôs *Ópera dos Mortos*. **Porque essa ossatura e risco são seus, só você os conhece**, e que se fundiram nas massas de composição, **cujo esqueleto você divulgou posteriormente, coisa que em nada modifica a história de Rosalina, que ali está completa e acabada**” (Dourado, 1982, p. 122).

paths is, therefore, a way of justifying genetic criticism, which provides space for thinking about genesis and work.

4 Creating an opera

Looking at the text in process establishes a new perspective on literature (Grésillon, 2007), since working with genetic criticism means attempting to describe how writing components are developed as the text is built. This signs attest the establishment of relationships throughout the creative movement. However, it is not always that studying the genesis or the published work allows the researcher to translate the author's first thought. At this moment, it is considered that only the author can attest their work (Dourado, 1991).

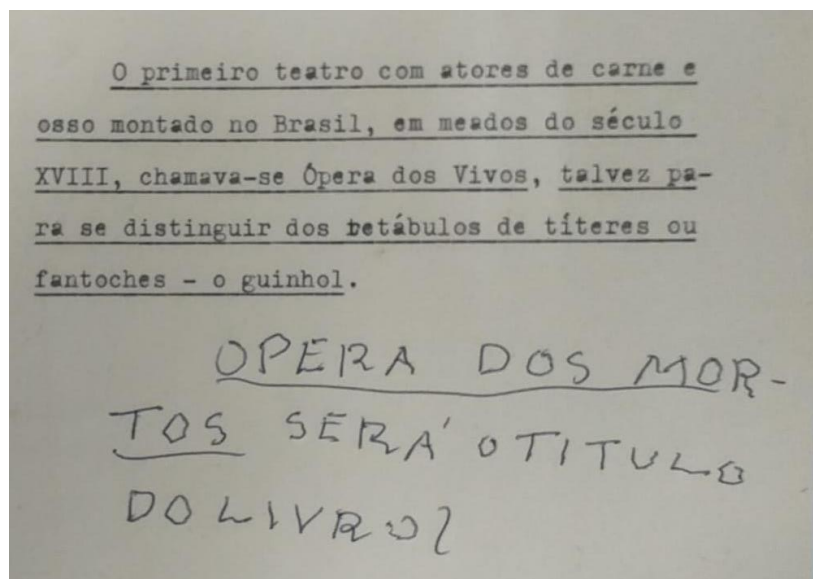
From this point of view, it is difficult to know how the idea of creating *Ópera dos mortos* arises. However, there are clues in the author's critical and essayistic texts:

The first idea comes from a sentence that suddenly came to my spirit: "it is necessary to bury our dead". I checked [...] later that it was reminiscent of Sophocles' Antigone. [...] The dead of Rosalina and the dead of Antigone. The living-dead²¹ (Dourado, 1976, p. 119, our translation).

The author's comment reveals that the first thought in the making of a text may be one of the work's potential meanings, i.e. it is not restricted to its final form. This association justifies different relationships that have been established throughout critical reception studies about *Ópera dos mortos* which connect Antigone and Rosalina.

Figure 8: Document indicating the motivation the title *Ópera dos mortos*

²¹ In Portuguese: "A primeira ideia nasceu de uma frase que de repente brotou no meu espírito: 'É preciso enterrar os nossos mortos'. Verifiquei [...] posteriormente que era uma reminiscência de Antigona, de Sófocles. [...] Os mortos de Rosalina e os mortos de Antigona. Os mortos-vivos" (Dourado, 1976, p. 119).



Source: Autran Dourado Archive (AEM/UFMG)

Furthermore, despite the presence of several indications in the novel related to its title, it might be hard to determine the final choice. This may not even be an interesting process for analysis. Nevertheless, for *Ópera*, Fig. 8 indicates this process.

The information in this genesis document demonstrates the ability of manuscripts to act “[...] as testimonies that allow us to control the literality of the text and sometimes complete it (attached) with new elements²²” (Hay, 2007, p. 115, our translation). It would be, then, hard to determine what would indicate this element in the text by studying the published work alone. However, the pre-writing document might be able to fill this gap.

It is also important to discuss the impossibility of completely finishing the prototext, considering that not all ideas are represented in the final product, and that it is impossible to perform a complete interpretation the published work, as there is always something more to be said. Dourado, for example, indicates that the work’s title provides a metalinguistic hint of its structure, but it is not easy to apprehend all meanings intended for the selection.

The book’s title reveals its structure, metalanguage.

1 — House of the Opera theater.

²² In Portuguese: “[...] como testemunhos que permitem controlar a literalidade do texto e completá-lo às vezes (em anexo) por elementos inéditos” (Hay, 2007, p. 115).

2 — *Ópera dos Vivos* — Opera of the living — theater with flash and bone actors (Colonial Brazil). Before that, the puppets: opera of the puppets. By opposition, *Ópera dos Mortos* — Opera of the dead.

3 — Opera — a genre typical of the Baroque period.

4 — Opera — singing, dancing, orchestra. Choir, solos, duets.

5 — Opera dramatic lyrical discourse (music), from to many voices. Several narrators, their transformation into characters. Perhaps only the first one, the one who moves forward and says “The lord wants to know, etc.”, is a pure narrator. The actual choir, “the people”, purging a guilt, wanting to enter the two-store house, is a character. Choir: stanza (speech and song), antistrophe (song, dance), epode (maxim, final morality).

6 — Opera, meaning work, labor etymologically. Labor of the dead²³ (Dourado, 1976, p. 116, our translation).

This analysis encourages the researcher to “[...] shake up [...] knowledge and [...] certainties about the text, the work and aesthetics in general²⁴” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 148), highlighting how genetic notes and definitive text embody meanings, as well as showing that not all secrets of the writer’s work can be unraveled.

Based on the analysed phenomena, we understand the space where the initial trace — the drive phenomenon — reaches the invented textuality — moment of calculation (Grésillon, 2007). This allows us to comprehend the work of writing a text as a progressive construction, reinforcing the dimension of analysing writing.

The creation of *Ópera dos mortos* demonstrates how it is possible to analyze a literary work “in the movement that engendered it, comprehend it through its becoming, conceive of it in the totality

²³ In Portuguese: O título do livro já revela a sua estrutura, metalinguagem.

1 — Casa da Ópera teatro.

2 — *Ópera dos Vivos teatro com atores de carne e osso (Brasil Colônia)*. Antes, os títeres: ópera dos títeres. Por oposição, a *Ópera dos Mortos*.

3 — Ópera — gênero característico do barroco.

4 — Ópera — canto, dança, orquestra. Coro, solos, duetos.

5 — Ópera discurso lírico dramático (música), de 1 muitas vozes. Os vários narradores, a sua transformação em personagens. Talvez só o primeiro, o que avança e diz “O senhor querendo saber, etc.”, seja um puro narrador. O coro mesmo, “a gente”, purga uma culpa, quer entrar no sobrado, é personagem. Coro: estrofe (fala e canto), antístrofe (canto, dança), epodo (máxima, moralidade final).

6 — Opera, etimologicamente obra, trabalho. Trabalho dos mortos (Dourado, 1976, p. 116).

²⁴ In Portuguese: “[...] sacudir [...] saberes e [...] certezas sobre o texto, sobre a obra e sobre a estética em geral” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 148).

of its possible meanings²⁵” (Hay, 2007, p. 85, our translation). This proves a fundamental proposal of genetic criticism, that is, “[...] replacing myths and mysteries about creation with a subtle and logical knowledge of writing²⁶” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 170, our translation), building plausible paths for literary inventiveness. This is a rich approach, as it presents the material from which the text was created, providing — to those interested — understanding on the game of writing.

Investigating the work, as well as probing the critical-genetic notes published by Dourado, when compared with the genesis documents, makes it possible to conceive the genetic operations that are associated with notes from the writing documents, which are responsible for the content that structured the novel. Therefore, genetic criticism is a gateway to thinking about how writers write what they write.

Final remarks

Working with concepts from genetic criticism provides a new perspective on creators and the reflections of critics, since it is a method for articulating findings about literary creation in the writer’s archive through the display of writing practices. Considering this, it is possible to understand the importance of accessing the genesis of literary works, which is only possible through research on the writer’s archive, highlighting the importance of this process and new ways of perceiving an author and their creation.

Based on the above discussions, we recognize that the genesis documents are not able to express the magnitude of *Ópera dos mortos*, but neither does the published work fully manifest all paths of what it could have been, since working with the symbolic makes it difficult to perfectly match the initial ideas and the effects produced by the work’s reception.

²⁵ In Portuguese: “no movimento que a engendrou, compreendê-la através de seu devir, concebê-la na plenitude de suas significações possíveis” (Hay, 2007, p. 85).

²⁶ In Portuguese: “[...] substituir os mitos e mistérios da criação por um saber sutil e lógico da escrita” (Grésillon, 2007, p. 170).

The documents presented bear witness to the genetic operations for the creation of a work, describing the movement of a text's production. This analysis results in the study of literature as an action beyond the inner constitution of the work.

To conclude, it should be noted that the production and publication do not exhaust the meanings derived from a text. Therefore, the critical discourses that can be used for exploring a literary archive, and also the study of a single work, are important tools for expanding reading, that is, for literary becoming, continuous writing.

CRediT

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