

"PÁSCOA FELIZ": SOME CRITICAL AND THEMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

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Páscoa Feliz (1) was a landmark in its author's life as well as one of the first indications of new directions in Portuguese prose fiction at the time of its first appearance. Like João Gaspar Simões' *Eloi, ou Romance numa Cabeça* (2) and José Régio's *Jogo da Cabra Cega* (3), *Páscoa Feliz* treats of the depths of human personality, or, more specifically, of a personality which is so tragically warped by the pressures of its environment that it cannot endure normal society. In 1932, its subject matter alone was enough to cause a stir. By the time it had reached its third edition in 1965, the work had also acquired a sizeable body of reviews and criticism, mainly in the form of articles, some of which were later incorporated into works of book length.

Even so, it is lamentably clear that *Páscoa Feliz* and its author, José Rodrigues Miguéis, have been rather misunderstood. Therefore, I propose to make a general review of what the critics have said about the work and about Miguéis, followed by an examination of the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz* with respect to the social and psychological problems that appear therein, in an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the work and its author.

Leaving aside the simple announcements of publication, then, let us review the major outlines of the body of critical opinion that has accumulated on *Páscoa Feliz*, so as to see what others have said about this novelette, its author and their situation in contemporary Portuguese literature (4)

(1). — José Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz* (Lisbon: Edições Alfa, 1932)

(2). — João Gaspar Simões, *Elói, ou Romance numa Cabeça*, 3rd ed., rev., (Lisbon: Editora Arcádia Limitada, n.d.). It was originally published in 1932.

(3). — José Régio, *Jogo da Cabra Cega*, 2nd ed., (Lisbon: Portugália Editora, 1963), originally published in 1934.

(4). — This paper was adapted from a portion of my Ph. D. dissertation, *Aspects of Time, Place and Thematic Content in the Prose Fiction of*

Reviews and Criticism: an Overview

One of the first people to review *Páscoa Feliz* was Miguéis' friend of many years' standing, José Gomes Ferreira. (5) Refusing categorically to apply the more ordinary methods of scholarly or professional criticism to the novelette, this poet-critic dealt with the work in a highly subjective manner, basing his comments on the memory of his own reaction to the story as he was reading it. He then went on to praise Miguéis' clear style of writing and hailed his serious treatment of the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz* as a welcome return to sobriety in Portuguese letters. Thirty-three years later, an unsigned notice in *Seara Nova* classified the novelette as the "primeira tentativa do que actualmente se denomina *romance existencial*, mas expurgado de qualquer ganga metafísica (e filosofante)" (6)

These are extreme cases along the critical continuum, of course, since they represent the range from a completely subjective approach to an almost entirely faddish one. They also seem to be least popular viewpoints. A more common approach to an understanding of *Páscoa Feliz* and other works of Miguéis' has been to look at them in the light of the influence that certain writers — Dostoevski and other nineteenth-century Russian novelists in particular — have had on the psychological thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz*, as well as on the general body of Miguéis' prose fiction, either directly or indirectly through Raul Brandão and other Portuguese writers. This type of evaluation, that of tracing or at least attributing literary influences, is of course widespread and tends to become diffused into other critical viewpoints, losing much of its impact in the process, so it is often not worth one's while to pay it much attention. However, even though the establishment of the literary influences in Miguéis' prose fiction falls outside of the scope of this short study, in the case of *Páscoa Feliz* the author himself has pronounced his own judgement on the merits of the technique and has even mentioned some of the literary influences he considers to have been at work in this writings when he wrote the novelette. Therefore, various critics statements as to literary influences in the work will be registered below and ultimately compared with excerpts from Miguéis' own comments.

José Rodrigues Miguéis as Indications of the Artist's Weltansicht, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A., 1970. It was written under the direction of Professor Jorge de Sena, to whom I am greatly indebted for his kind advice and stimulation over a number of years. Any faults, of course, are entirely my own.

(5). — José Gomes Ferreira, "Comentários", *O Notícias Ilustrado*, April 17, 1932, p. 19.

(6) — "Noticiário," (anon.), *Seara Nova*, Nº 1437, July 1965, p. 211.

To begin with, there have been those who have dealt with the psychological thematic content in terms of Russian influences. A major exponent of this point of view has been Óscar Lopes, who published a fairly lengthy study of Miguéis' works in a collection of essays entitled *Cinco Personalidades Literárias*. (7) However, Óscar Lopes went far beyond the question of purely literary influences by bringing in the effects that Miguéis' personal life had had on his writings, particularly in connection with his tendency to allow a high degree of subjectivity to permeate them. After discussing many of Miguéis' works in some detail, the critic returned to his assessment of the Russian literary influences in *Páscoa Feliz*, particularly in connection with the psychological themes observable in the work, in the following summation:

Rodrigues Miguéis já, como vimos, em *Páscoa Feliz*, 1932, nos faz sentir bem os limites da concepção e da estética dostoi-evskiana, pois o "livre" acto moral, o crime, do seu protagonista vai desaguar por fim, não no remorso teológico de Raskolnikov, mas, através do remorso, numa outra pseudo-libertação pela irresponsabilidade psicopática. Quer dizer: Miguéis não apresenta, à maneira de Dostoievski, um crime como um acto "livre" de revolta, mas como uma forma de passividade moral, uma infracção desesperada que, no fundo, reconhece valores consagrados, deles dá testemunho pelo remorso e por eles se aniquila moralmente, — em vez de praticar aquela construção contínua da personalidade íntima e social a que se chama *vontade*, e que se manifesta, no fundo, pela afirmação de valores (bom e mau, útil e nocivo, etc.) cada vez superiormente humanos, a partir das contradições em que se vão encontrando os valores já aceites. (8)

(7). — Óscar Lopes, "O Pessoal e o Social na Obra de Miguéis," in *Cinco Personalidades Literárias*, 2nd ed., (Porto: Livraria Divulgação, 1961), p. 51-86. All but the last eight pages of this study had previously appeared as "Um Livro: *Léah e Outras Histórias* — José Rodrigues Miguéis: Uma Personalidade," *Lusíada*, May 1960, p. 419-426. For further commentary on *Cinco Personalidades Literárias*, see António Quadros' "Sociologia da Literatura Contemporânea: 'Cinco Personalidades Literárias' de Óscar Lopes," in *Crítica e Verdade: Introdução à Actual Literatura Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1964), p. 71-77. Among others who have taken view there may be cited the *presencista*, João Gaspar Simões, in *Novos Temas, Velhos Temas* (Lisbon: Portugália Editora, 1967), p. 84. In addition, it should be noted that Óscar Lopes has also expressed this view in his *História da Literatura Portuguesa*, 5th ed., rev. (Porto: Porto Editora, n.d.), p. 1057, which was written in collaboration with António José Saraiva.

(8) — Óscar Lopes, "O Pessoal e o Social na Obra de Miguéis," in *Cinco Personalidades Literárias* (Porto: Livraria Divulgação, 1961), p. 80-81.

Another critic, Mário Sacramento, also saw psychological factors at work in *Páscoa Feliz*, but he described the situation in a different way: “Renato, a personagem que assim se confia, é um doente mental. Mas um doente que perverte apenas, singularizando-os em *stress*, os fluxos e refluxos do homem normal. Assim, a vida interior, na *Páscoa*, cria o automatismo que se extoverterá no crime. ” (9) It was not Renato’s sick mind alone, though, that had created that “automatismo.” Rather, Renato’s mental illness was seen as being a result of the shock between societal pressures and Renato’s psychological make-up. As far as literary influences are concerned, Mário Sacramento mentioned Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Fernando Pessoa, as well as Raúl Brandão.

Others have observed and cited the effects of society on Renato Lima. Mário Sottomaio Cardia described them in the following manner:

A esquematização temática da obra é feita de maneira a realçar o fundo humano e psicológico da história. Começa por integrar o leitor no tipo de mentalidade dum pobre homem que a sociedade perverteu e que se vê julgado e condenado pela justiça oficial.

Em criança, foi um ser submisso e humilde, desprotegido pela sorte e escarnecido pelos que o rodeavam. Tendo-lhe o trabalho proporcionado uma situação aceitável, encontra-se perante dificuldades não já determinadas por factores externos, mas sim por algo inerente à sua personalidade. (10)

After describing the appearance of Renato’s need to embezzle in a grand manner, this critic discussed its effects on Renato’s personality: “este homem insociável, integrado no ambiente do capitalismo e sem alguém que fiscalize a sua acção, uma vez que cai no erro, vê-se atormentado pelo pavor. Busca evasão e esta proporciona-se-lhe em termos que produzem notável transformação na sua personalidade. ” (11)

(9). — Mário Sacramento, “A Problemática do Eu em José Rodrigues Miguéis,” in *Ensaio de Domingo* (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora Limitada, 1959), p. 284-285. This study was also published separately in *Vértice*, XIX, Nº 188 (May 1959), 245-252.

(19). — Mário Sottomaio Cardia, “José Rodrigues Miguéis: *Páscoa Feliz* — 190 páginas — Estúdios ‘Cor’, Lisboa, 1958,” *O Médico* (Oporto), January 1, 1959, p. 127.

(11). — *Ibid.*

This line of criticism, which noted the psychological effects of social conditions on the protagonist, was put in somewhat different terms by Hernâni Cidade when he said:

o seu caso clínico — caso de *dupla personalidade* — é exposto longe de todas as explicações de técnica psicopática, no que a novela só tem a ganhar em sabor de sinceridade — sinceridade de alma que se nos abre inteiramente, sob a crua lucidez duma observação que é, afinal, ainda uma manifestação do desdobramento psicológico que se estuda.

Que se estuda — disse eu. Melhor direi — *que se vai registrando*, em confissão ingénua. (12)

He went on to point out where the psychological imbalance which he observed in the novelette's protagonist has its origin: "Infância raziando pela miséria, a pobreza agravada pela inferioridade física e pela aparente mediocridade intelectual. A esta originária divergência, sobreponha-se a que lhe resultava da oposição entre a mediocridade da sua existência, fixa à banca de guarda-livros." (13) However, Hernâni Cidade, like Mário Sottomaior Cardia, did not discuss literary influences or origins.

João Maia, too, has mentioned the relationship between social conditions and psychological effects. As he put it:

Precisamente o que fulgura nesta obra como timbre de mérito excepcional é a novela enredar-se nos abismáticos mundos do espírito, ainda quando o espírito se manifesta de um psicopata carregado de uma formação deficiente, carregado de hereditariedade mórbida...

O herói desta novela ganha uma vida própria extraordinária, justamente ao ser esmagado por uma existência para que não estava humanamente preparado. (14)

As for literary influences on Miguéis' writing, this critic cited Raúl Brandão and Dostoevski.

(12). — Hernâni Cidade, "Em Férias," *O Primeiro de Janeiro* (Oporto), June 28, 1932, p. 1.

(13) — *Ibid.*

(14). — João Maia, "Dois Livros de Ficção," *Brotéria*, LXVIII, (January-June 1959), 198-199

Last, even the anonymous author of “Com ‘Páscoa Feliz’ Reapareceu em 3.^a Edição José Rodrigues Miguéis,” brought up the question of the effects of the pressures of society upon the protagonist of *Páscoa Feliz*:

Renato Lima é um rapaz desventurado que cedo fica órfão de pai e de mãe. Recolhido na casa de um Conselheiro, amigo velho de seus progenitores, é educado desprezivelmente entre criadas. De degrau em degrau, desde caixeiro, vai arrastando a sua natureza complexada de solitário, até ao casamento e a estabilidade profissional como “pessoa de confiança” na firma do sr. Nogueira. Mas os recalamentos duma infância e duma adolescência malogradas desencadeiam o aparecimento do seu “duplo” (“o outro”), a sua metade sedenta de desforra. Projecta roubar o patrão: passa a levar uma vida de devasso, quase despreza a mulher e o filho. . (15)

Like several other critics, this reviewer was eclectic in his choice of possible literary influences: “Há aqui algo de Faulkner e de Becket [sic], tanto como poderá haver de Dostoiveski ou Raúl Brandão.” (16)

The line that can be drawn between the criticism of *Páscoa Feliz* which clearly accepted the influence of social pressures in the formation of Renato Lima’s disturbed consciousness, and that which discussed the novelette in more completely introspective or psychological terms is very blurred, as one can gather from the foregoing. However, the number of critics tending toward a psychological interpretation grows

(15). — “Com ‘Páscoa Feliz’ Reapareceu em 3.^a Edição José Rodrigues Miguéis,” (anon.) *Diário de Lisboa, Vida Literária e Artística*, June 3, 1965, p. 8. For other articles mentioning the social thematic content as part of the argumentation of *Páscoa Feliz*, see also: “Livros — ‘Páscoa Feliz’ de Rodrigues Miguéis,” (anon.), *O Raio* (Covilhã, Portugal), July 31, 1932, p. 3; Julião Quintinha, “‘Léah’ e ‘Páscoa Feliz’ (2.^a Edição) de José Rodrigues Miguéis,” *Seara Nova*, Nº 1359, January 1959, p. 20; “Páscoa Feliz’ por José Rodrigues Miguéis,” (anon.), *Diário de Coimbra*, April 4, 1959, p. 6; and Eduardo Prado Coelho’s article, “Rodrigues Miguéis, por Eduardo Coelho,” *Diário de Lisboa — Juvenil*, August 13, 1960, pp. 1 & 8.

(16). — “Com ‘Páscoa Feliz’ Reapareceu em 3.^a Edição José Rodrigues Miguéis” (anon.), *Diário de Lisboa, Vida Literária e Artística*, June 3, 1965, p. 8. The perils of unbridled name-dropping are amply illustrated by the reviewer’s choice of literary “influences,” for Faulkner’s popularity in Europe post-dated the publication of the first edition of *Páscoa Feliz* in 1932. Furthermore, Beckett’s major success came after World War II. Perhaps the kindest thing that one can say about this anonymous person’s comments is that he did not pay sufficiently close attention to the publishing information given in the usual place in the third edition of *Páscoa Feliz* — the edition he was reviewing.

more numerous when one expands category to include other psychological aspects besides those resulting from societal influences. Osório de Oliveira, for example, went so far as to deny the existence of Miguéis' social or economic ideas in *Páscoa Feliz*:

Numa época em que se fala tanto de literatura populista e literatura proletária. [Miguéis] não trouxe para o livro que acaba de aparecer nenhuma das suas preocupações sociais ou económicas. Rodrigues Miguéis não o fez expressamente, mas nem por isso o seu exemplo deixa de ter valor. Por mais justas e humanas que sejam as preocupações sociais ou económicas, ha uma coisa que está acima delas. Não é, certamente, a literatura, que é um meio e não um fim. É a vida, que a literatura, tem por função exprimir e descrever; a vida humana, com todas as suas dôres, emoções, desejos e pensamentos. ('17)

As we can see, this critic stressed the unimportance of social and economic factors so much that he was forced to allow an internal contradiction to appear in his argument for a more purely psychological basis to the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz*. (18) Surely social and economic problems are intimately related to the pleasures and pains of human existence. Furthermore, it so happens that social and economic considerations, including Miguéis' own ideas on those subjects, form an integral and very important part of the argumentation and even the structure of the novelette. Thus, Osório de Oliveira's views are highly debatable in this regard.

However, Osório de Oliveira went on to say in his generally appreciative review: "Novela dum individuo, a *Páscoa feliz* exprime a dôr de quantos foram vítimas da pior das catastrofes: a loucura. A anedocta da *Páscoa feliz* consiste, de facto, no caso dum homem que, invadido, a pouco e pouco, pela loucura, rouba e acaba por matar, sem razão alguma, o homem que o protegia. É o protagonista quem narra a vida e a marcha da crise, em que um *outro* se apodera da sua consciencia e da sua vontade e o leva a cometer o crime inexplicável. O aparecimento, no sub-consciente do protagonista, desse outro Eu criminal é dado duma maneira que revela o psicólogo" (19) After discussing other aspects of the novelette, he returned to underscore that last point: "As qualidades literarias são, porém, o que menos importa

(17). — José Osório de Oliveira, "A Afirmação dum Novelista," *Diário de Lisboa*, April 20, 1932, p. 2.

(18) — *Ibid.*

(19). — *Ibid.*

na *Páscoa feliz*. Este livro é, acima de tudo, uma obra humana e a revelação de dons, verdadeiramente notáveis, de analisador psicológico. Estamos convencidos de que o autor não ignora os modernos estudos sobre patologia mental.” (20) Here, then, was recognition of the importance that the author’s own training in psychology may have had in the evolution of *Páscoa Feliz*. Indeed, the *cognoscenti* knew that Miguéis was quite well aware of modern studies on psychopathology at the time: he had already spent two years studying this and related fields in Brussels. (21)

The critic “A. I.” (Artur Inez) also sensed the importance of psychological training when he wrote a most favorable review of Miguéis’ first book-length work of prose fiction. Speaking of how the novelette could be most properly interpreted, he said: “*Páscoa feliz* é um livro que merecia a critica dum literato que fôsse ao mesmo tempo um psiquiatra.” (22) He went on to mention Victor Hugo’s possible influence on Miguéis writing.

Julião Quintinha took a broader approach, although he too gave primacy to the psychological content: “Para assunto da sua novela — que poderia ser a tese dum psiquiatra — Rodrigues Miguéis toma, com mil cuidados de observação, uma dessas vidas torturadas e sombrias; descobre nela o dramático caso da dupla personalidade e, com rigores de um analista, mentalidade de sociólogo, emoção de verdadeiro artista, vai dissecando sentimentos, atitudes, inventariando casos íntimos ou aparentemente inexpressivos, sonhos de beleza e perfeição que sobem à altura das estrelas, mas que mergulham suas raízes no lôdo — a lama e o cristal de que é feito o Indivíduo que vive neste mundo (23) As for literary influences, this critic pointed up an affinity between Miguéis’ work and” certa literatura cerebral dos eslavos. ” (24) The only question remaining, therefore, was “which?”

A reviewer for the Leiria paper, *Linha Geral*, hewed somewhat closer to the introspection-madness vein of Miguéis’ psychological

(20). — *Ibid.*

(21). — For a brief biobibliographical treatment of the author see my paper, “A Thumbnail Sketch of the Life and Works of José Rodrigues Miguéis,” *Proceedings of the Pacific Northwest Council on Foreign Languages*, XXV (1) Literature and Linguistics 1974, 35-39.

(22). — A [rtur] I [nez], “‘Páscoa Feliz’ por José Rodrigues Miguéis,” *A República* (Lisbon), April 29, 1932, p. 3.

(23) — Julião Quintinha, “O Livro ‘Páscoa Feliz’ de Rodrigues Miguéis, Demonstra-nos que Portugal Conta, Hoje, com um Grande Novelista,” *Diário da Noite* (Lisbon), June 15, 1932, *página central*.

(24). — *Ibid.* This is a good example of the all-but-useless generalities which abound in the reviews dealing with Miguéis’ works.

approach: “ o que há, sim, é uma espécie de autoanálise introspectiva que o faz apresentar-se a si próprio num *outro*, subjugado por imagens, dominado por vozes que são até a sua própria voz — voz que é, ao mesmo tempo a voz dum *outro* — cometendo actos que só o *outro* cometeu; o *homem*, de facto, está doido, não há dúvida. ” (25) However, he avoided the question of literary influences entirely, thus removing himself from Miguéis’ later line of fire.

— Writing in *Seara Nova*’s rival literary magazine, *Presença*, Albano Nogueira hammered at Miguéis for not having done what he considered to be a sufficiently good job of presenting certain aspects of Renato Lima’s madness. He therefore considered that Miguéis had failed in his treatment of the psychological aspects of *Páscoa Feliz*, for in his opinion, it was not enough to assume a “ pedantesca pose literária” (26) Rather:

É preciso ir mais longe, mais alto, pelo caminho e aos cumes da exaltação, para se atingir um quâsi *estado de loucura* em que a palavra solta apresenta clarões de seiva fecunda da vida, embora da vida anormal, como o era a de Renato.

Rodrigues Miguéis escreveu essa página [about Renato’s orgiastic adventure in a night club] com o frio marmóreo dum vulgar automatismo espiritual. Daí provém (e daí, de facto, surgiu êste) o desastre inevitável.” (27)

There was more of this sort of highly antagonistic commentary as the article wound its slanting way to its conclusion. However, it is possibly worth noting that, while the comments quoted above did not, in fact, point up a defect in the novelette, Nogueira’s article was not absolutely and entirely without merit. It did indeed mention a certain anomaly in the first edition of *Páscoa Feliz* (28) when it discussed Nogueira’s apparent sudden change of heart about his own compulsion to work. It was simply a question of the internal tempo of the novelette with reaction to its verisimilitude, and was one which Miguéis evidently recognized when he revised the novelette for later editions.

(25). — Sebastião Gonçalves Pereira, “Uma Joia Literária,” *Linha Geral* (Leiria), July 7, 1932, p. 8.

(26). — Albano Nogueira, “*Páscoa Feliz*, Novela de José Rodrigues Miguéis, Edições ‘Alfa’, Lisboa, 1932,” *Presença*, II, Nº 63 (November 1932) 11.

(27). — *Ibid.*

(28). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz* (Lisbon: Edições Alfa, 1932). The next two quotations in the text are from this edition. Page numbers are given in the text.

In the first edition Nogueira was presented on page 44 as an elderly man who had found that he had to keep working in order to keep from stagnating. On page 47, Renato Lima said that he had worked for Nogueira for “ dois, três anos, talvez mais, nem me importa saber ” Two pages later, the protagonist related that “O Nogueira, à medida que a sua confiança em mim se afirmara, ia aparecendo menos” Albano Nogueira, in reviewing the first edition, noted this and called it a “ *desvio da realidade em favor da acção.* ” (29) He considered it to be a fundamental defect in the work. This however, was much too heavy an emphasis to place on what was basically a very minor criticism of a temporal aspect of the development of the action, for after all the Nogueira of *Páscoa Feliz* was already an old man when he employed Renato Lima, and the passing of just a few years can work great changes in a person's outlook on life, especially if he thinks he has found a reliable person to run his business for him. Be that as it may, however, Miguéis rectified the matter in subsequent editions of *Páscoa Feliz*, increasing the work's verisimilitude by having Renato say: “Trabalhei assim cinco, seis anos, talvez mais, não sei quantos — nem me importa saber ” (30)

But to pass on to others who have noted the psychological aspect of *Páscoa Feliz*, we find that Mário Dionísio has said: “*Páscoa Feliz* exprime com eloquência um momento histórico, por linhas tortas que falam direito. É justamente um desses casos em que o indivíduo se escapa da negra realidade circundante pela larga porta do subjectivo-fantástico, seguindo a pista que António Machado oferece e Miguéis transcreve na portada do seu livro: ‘en mi soledad he visto cosas muy claras, que no son verdad.’” (31) The critic went on to mention the possible influences that Dostoevski, Mikhailovski (without further clarification), Eça de Queiroz, Camilo Castelo Branco and Fialho de Almeida may have had on Miguéis' work.

Dr. Taborda de Vasconcelos, who is a medical man as well as a critic, put his views on the psychological aspects of *Páscoa Feliz* into

(29) — Albano Nogueira, “*Páscoa Feliz*, Novela de José Rodrigues Miguéis,” *Presença*, II, Nº 36 (November 1932), 11.

(30). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, 2nd ed., *Páscoa Feliz* (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1958), p. 54 and 3rd ed., (1965), p. 52. Perhaps it might best be mentioned here that Miguéis has indicated to me that in deciding to modify this passage of *Páscoa Feliz* for succeeding editions he owed nothing at all to Albano Nogueira's comments in 1932. One must never forget Miguéis' independence of spirit!

(31). — Mário Dionísio, “Um Escritor Português,” *Vértice*, IV, Nº 47 (June 1947), 118.

a historical perspective covering many of Miguéis' works, when he cited:

a nova dimensão psicológica que Miguéis trouxe à literatura nacional; a de um complexo de culpa, antes dele só aflorado por Camilo e Raúl Brandão.

Vem de longe, desde *Páscoa Feliz*, a tendência à explicitação psicológica desse complexo, de vários matizes e gradações, umas vezes com carácter de frustração desesperada, outras, porém, de uma não menos desesperada mas dominadora superação temperamental.. (32)

In contrast, Massaud Moisés evidently did not see the need to posit a guilt complex to explain Renato Lima's agonized mental wreck, when he said: "O nosso herói foge para a alienação exatamente porque nela encontra a paz de espírito e a capacidade de sorrir superiormente de toda a grotesca especie humana." (33) The Brazilian critic went on to say: "noutros pontos, certamente aqueles que causaram loucura à personagem, esta aguça uma diabólica lucidez ganha com a insensibilidade, pois só a perda do juízo é que lhe permitiu 'enxergar' determinadas coisas, as quais agora avultam no seu modo de ver o mundo e os homens. Entre outras coisas, descobre-se um indignado passivo contra as injustiças sociais e os desmandos de autoridade e as fraquezas dos regimes políticos." (34)

Thus have the critics and reviewers evaluated the thematic content of this work, now from one point of view from another, with those mentioning the psychological aspects forming by far the largest block. As we have seen, the differences of opinion among the critics range from the very subtle to the diametrically opposed. (35) However, perhaps their ideas about Miguéis' *cosmovisão* would be more helpful: let us see.

(32). — Tabora de Vasconcelos, "Dimensões Nacionais de José Rodrigues Miguéis," *Mundo*, July 2, 1959, p. 40.

(33). — Massaud Moisés, "Introspecção e Loucura (I)," *O Estado de São Paulo, Suplemento Literário*, April 10, 1965, p. 3.

(34) — *Ibid.*

(35). — For further expressions of this general range of opinion, see also: João de Barros, "Livros: *Páscoa Feliz*, por José Rodrigues Miguéis; *Guerra Junqueiro et le problème des influences françaises dans ses oeuvres*, por Pierre Hourcade; *Terras de Sol e da Febre*, por Julião Quintinha; *Mornas*, por Eugênio Tavares," *Seara Nova*, Nº 301, June 2, 1932, pp. 204-205; Manuel Poppe, "A Escola do Paraíso de José Rodrigues Miguéis," *Rumo*, Nº 57, November 1961, p. 440-444; and Gerald M. Moser, "Portuguese Writers of this Century," *Hispania*, L, Nº 4 (December 1967), 947-954.

Unfortunately for those who would arrive at a consensus, when we turn to the reviewers' and critics' mention of Miguéis' view of the world, we again find their opinions to be enormously varied. As we have seen above, José Osório de Oliveira did not think that Miguéis expressed his own personal social and economic views in *Páscoa Feliz*. While this is certainly not true, it does mean that when, towards the end of the review, Osório de Oliveira spoke of Miguéis' view of the world, he must have been speaking of Miguéis in terms of his view of the world as an artist. Moreover, although Osório de Oliveira mentioned the influence that "the Russians" and Raúl Brandão had had on Miguéis' writings, he did not say what the *cosmovisão* of any of those authors actually was. He merely likened by implication Miguéis' view of the world to those of the authors whom he considered to have influenced his work. (36)

Julião Quintinha, however, saw a direct relationship between the social aspects of the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz* and certain views of, not only Miguéis the artist, but Miguéis the man. After describing the course of Renato Lima's tortured life, Julião Quintinha added: "tudo isto são paginas da mais impressionante literatura, que só pode escrever um homem com inteligência, com coração e com um serio e superior sentido social a orientar a sua vida." (37) He went on to add: "Rodrigues Miguéis veio juntar à literatura criminalista um dos mais belos documentos literários escritos em português. A sua novela é um aviso, dos mais emocionantes, à sociedade que persiste em abandonar *os criminosos* à sua desgraça, eternizando-lhes a desventura, pelo castigo, em vez de prever o caso ou, pelo menos, facilitar a regeneração." (38) Although this warning was given by means of the example of Renato Lima, rather than by the author's directly stating his point of view, it can nevertheless be taken as a reference to Miguéis' view of the world, because the proper legal and medical treatment of the mentally disturbed must have been a subject much on Miguéis' mind during this period: a little more than a month after Julião Quintinha's review appeared in June of 1932, Miguéis published an article on just this subject, decrying the way in which the mentally ill were treated as entirely rational human beings for the purposes of the law in Portugal. (39) Interestingly enough, in

(36). — J. Osório de Oliveira, "A Afirmação dum Novelista," *Diário de Lisboa*, April 20, 1932, p. 2.

(37). — Julião Quintinha, "O Livro 'Páscoa Feliz' de Rodrigues Miguéis," *Diário da Noite* (Lisbon), June 15, 1932, *página central*.

(38). — *Ibid.*

(39). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, "Reflexões Sôbre o Crime e o Castigo," *A República* (Lisbon), July 18, 1932, p. 5.

Páscoa Feliz the author combined his criticism of the effects of society on Renato Lima, including the implied warning about the general social ramifications of Renato's particular case, with an example of what the physical plant of a progressive institution devoted to mental rehabilitation should be like, for the novelette's protagonist is committed to an insane asylum which appears to offer an almost ideal environment in this respect. The psychiatrist attending Renato appears to be admirably trained as well.

But to return to the critics, Albano Nogueira also treated of Miguéis' point of view, as revealed in *Páscoa Feliz*. As we have noted above, his criticism of the novelette was unduly harsh. On the subject of Miguéis' *cosmovisão*, his comments were not a whit more favorable. As he said in the opening comments of his review:

Um romance (ou uma novela) quando perfeitamente integrado na verdadeira significação da palavra, aparece-nos não só como revelação dum quadro da vida mas também (e não o menos importante) como *um documento duma personalidade*.

[Upon reading *Páscoa Feliz*], chegamos à conclusão de que Rodrigues Miguéis, é, porventura, um artista, — um artista que ainda se não possui no total da sua personalidade, certamente porque ainda se não deu a êsse, por vezes, exaustivo trabalho. Entrevendo um vislumbre de si próprio como artista, dentro de si próprio, o autor de *Páscoa Feliz*, por uma lamentável precipitação, não quis concluir o trabalho necessário de completa auto-descoberta. (40)

These were strong words to apply to a craftsman who has often let years and even decades pass between his initial conception of an idea for a story and its appearance in first published form, let alone its definitive edition. To be fair, it should be noted that the *presencista* critic was not in a position to know this when he was reviewing *Páscoa Feliz* in 1932, nor did he have the advantage of the perspective given to us by the intervening decades. Still, Nogueira's attack on Miguéis was not a well-advised one, for the passing of the years has made him — and *Presença* — look less than perceptive.

Leaving questions of craftsmanship aside, however, one finds that Mário Dionísio affirmed that “ por detrás do entretido subjectivo doentio de *Páscoa Feliz* é que apontava o verdadeiro rosto de José Ro-

(40). — Albano Nogueira, “*Páscoa Feliz*, *Novela* de José Rodrigues Miguéis,” *Presença*, II, Nº 36 (November 1932), 10-11.

drigues Miguéis.” (41) Later, this critic spoke of Renato Lima’s relationship to Miguéis’ view of the world as follows: “ (trata-se sempre dum anormal da pequena-burguesia, um funcionário, um empregado de escritório, que no fundo é um intelectual e *para o qual o autor transporta muitas das suas observações pessoais*) ” (42)

Massaud Moisés has said much the same thing, too. In the second instalment of a two-part article on *Páscoa Feliz*, he said “ visto que o escritor e o narrador se confundem numa só entidade, temos o direito de acreditar que o primeiro fala pela boca do segundo. Na verdade, não se trata apenas do que pensaria ou diria uma personagem inventada a partir de dados reais. Ao contrário: há uma coerência íntima entre o “pensamento” dela e o do ficcionista ao longo da carreira deste.” (43) The eminent scholar-critic then went on to note some of the types of problems with which the novel dealt, as well as aspects of its emotional content. (44)

Moisés, however, also rendered another service to the critical reading public in this second instalment of “Introspecção e Loucura.” (45) He alone, of all the reviewers and critics who have been mentioned above, cited the author himself when it came to the question of literary influences. Of course, Moisés was writing in 1965, and was therefore able to quote from a source which was not available before 1958. (46) Nevertheless, Moisés’ citing of Miguéis on the literary influences in *Páscoa Feliz* was a recognition of the fact that the author himself had reacted to the plethora of suggestions which had been made by the various reviewers and critics. Unfortunately, Moisés did not mention other statements Miguéis had made in the above-mentioned “Nota do Autor” concerning his treatment of certain aspects of the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz*. As we shall see, some of them are most revealing of Miguéis’ view of the world and his role as an artist.

To sum up the critical opinion of this aspect of Miguéis life and works, then, it appears that the critics who have dealt with Miguéis’ *cosmovisão*, whether as a man or as a writer, have shown no more unity

(41) — Mário Dionísio, “Um Escritor Português,” *Vértice*, IV. Nº 47 (June 1947), 118.

(42). — *Ibid.*, p. 118-119. The italics are mine.

(43). — Massaud Moisés, “Introspecção e Loucura (II),” *O Estado de São Paulo, Suplemento Literário*, April 24, 1965, p. 4.

(44) — *Ibid.*

(45) — *Ibid.*

(46). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, “Nota do Autor,” in *Páscoa Feliz*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1958), p. 169-188.

of opinion than they did when they dealt with thematic considerations. Perhaps the most that one can say is that many critics have felt that *Páscoa Feliz* is an indication of certain aspects of Miguéis' view of the world, and that the distinction between his opinions as a man and his outlook as an artist is seldom made, if ever.

Returning, finally, to the question of literary influences, classification and artistic intention in the matter of thematic content, we have seen that critics have said that they have detected echoes of Faulkner, Victor Hugo, Beckett, Dostoevski, Mikhailovski and Russian and Slavs unspecified, as well as a large number of Portuguese writers, including Raúl Brandão, Mario de Sá-Carneiro, Eça de Queiroz, Camilo Castelo Branco and Fialho de Almeida. They have classified *Páscoa Feliz* as a psychological novel, as an existentialist novel, as a novel devoid of Miguéis' personal ideas concerning social problems, as a novel giving indications of the author's views on the subject, and so forth. Therefore, a few words from Miguéis on this matter would appear to be appropriate.

First, the matter of the novel's social and psychological aspects. As others have noted, Renato's creator has stated that " a *Páscoa* é a história dum esquizofrénico paranóide encerrado em si mesmo, isolado do mundo (mas não alheio a ele), vivendo na e da sua própria fantasia, como protesto, se o querem, contra a miséria, a humilhação, a hostilidade que, desde cedo, fizeram dele o 'Pata-Choca' " (47) Miguéis has also commented on certain effects of Renato's derangement, as well as his own favoring of action leading toward positive social solutions, adding that as far as Renato was concerned, " não podia ele dizê-lo sem prejudicar a trama e o fio da novela, sem a transformar num mero panfleto. " (48) Rather than do that, Miguéis preferred to show what the social conditions surrounding Renato did to his unstable psychological condition. Thus, the essential thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz* turned precisely on the various social and psychological aspects of real life that the author portrayed in fictional form.

Second, there is the question of the classification of Miguéis as an artist. To this subject he devoted several delightful pages, including this passage: "Com o nosso hábito das fáceis generalizações e das classificações comparativas (somos padres-mestres em tudo, mesmo quando virados do avesso), nunca hesitamos em situar um escritor

(47). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, "Nota do Autor (À Segunda Edição)," in *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1965), p. 163.

(48) — *Ibid.*, p. 164.

num quadro feito, em etiquetá-lo como a um bicho empalhado de museu de história natural. Eu teria de ser criptogâmico ou angiospérmico, celenterado ou coléoptero. De outro modo, não estaria dentro da lógica, seria absurdo, inesperado, inquietante. Não se admite que seja eu mesmo, tenho que ser — tenho até que escolher entre ser — russo ou queirosiano, romântico ou realista.” (4) Having said this, the author warmed to his argument. In quick succession, he criticized those snobs who preferred anything foreign to the national product, satirized those provincials who were afraid of everything foreign and ridiculed — again — those who insisted upon arbitrary literary classifications. (50) Leaving generalizations behind and passing on to his own outlook toward his writings, Miguéis said: “Até hoje só escrevi as histórias cujo tema, ambiente, situações e caracteres têm apelado para o meu temperamento: polémico e pedagógico, ou apiedado e solidário. Assim sou eu. Eu e a minha adesão orgânica a certas realidades, a minha consubstanciação com o Outro, o meu riso e as minhas lágrimas, a minha dialéctica Sujeito-Objecto. E assim continuarei a ser por todos os meios ao meu alcance.” (51)

Miguéis then returned to the subject of literary influences, registering strong doubts as to whether it was even feasible to trace them in a given author's writings. He put it this way: “De todas as experiências pessoais, da estruturação mesma dum carácter, da posição e reacções do escritor ao seu meio e à época, à mentalidade e aos costumes — de tudo isso, quem poderia exumar, destriçar e definir as influências que actuam numa obra?” (52) As for his own case, he noted that he had read a little Tolstoi, a few poor translations of Gorki, a great many popularly-available Portuguese works — in sum, “todo o lixo que entulha e nutre a insaciável curiosidade e sede de vida, aventuras e acção da infância e puberdade.” (53) On succeeding pages, he mentioned other authors whose works he had read somewhat later in life, among them Victor Hugo, Camilo, Herculano, Garret and Júlio Dinis. He told how he had become associated with, and therefore influenced by, the Seara Nova group. He related how he had come to know Raúl Brandão, whom he admired greatly and to

(49). — *Ibid.*, p. 164-165.

(50). — *Ibid.*, p. 165-166.

(51). — *Ibid.*, p. 168.

(52). — *Ibid.*, p. 169.

(53) — *Ibid.* But not Dostoevsky, whose “Notes from the Underground” could have been a model for many aspects of *Páscoa Feliz*. See Fyodor Dostoevsky “Notes from the Underground” in *Three Short Novels of Dostoevsky*, trans. Constance Garnett, rev. and ed. by Avrahm Yarmolinsky (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), p. 177-297

whom he felt flattered to be compared. (54) Lastly, in order to underscore his point concerning the enormous diversity of influences which may operate in an author's writings, Miguéis cited the influence that Marcello Gama, the Symbolist poet from Rio Grande do Sul, (55) had had on him and on *Páscoa Feliz*.

All of this points up the fact that the question of literary influences in a writer is an extremely complex one, and which is related not only to an author's own reading but also to the influences that the author's ambience may have on him. These last, of course, are extremely difficult to determine, even approximately.

As the foregoing has shown, the value of some portions of the body of criticism which exists on *Páscoa Feliz* is dubious. Therefore, it becomes necessary to dispense with such matters as literary influences and subjective analyses and proceed to an examination of the social and psychological problems observable in the work, so as to arrive at some understanding of the novelette and its essential thematic content.

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When we turn to the text, we immediately discover two things. First, we see that Miguéis' criticism of social and psychological problems is both extensive and devastating. Second, we observe that other aspects of the novelette, such as its tone or the author's use of a subliminal "infiltration technique", tends to make these problems hard to identify. Consequently, since it is necessary to organize the material in order to evaluate it, we shall look at the socio-psychological portions of the novelette's thematic content in the general order in which these human problems are first presented. Thereafter, similar items will be grouped together for case of study. Two exceptions will be made in this general scheme: first, a number of separate aspects cha-

(54). — And who treated of a similar range of problems in similar social classes. For example see Raúl Brandão's *A Farsa*, 3rd ed. (Paris & Lisbon: Livrarias Aillaud e Bertrand, 1925); *Humus*, 2nd ed. (Paris & Lisbon: Livrarias Aillaud & Bertrand, n.d.); *A Morte do Palhaço e o Mistério da Árvore* (Lisbon: Edição da "Seara Nova," 1926); *O Avejão* (Lisbon: Edição da "Seara Nova," 1929); *O Padre* (Lisbon: Livraria Central de Gomes de Carvalho, 1901); *As Ilhas Desconhecidas* (Paris & Lisbon: Livrarias Aillaud e Bertrand, n.d.); *Os Pescadores* (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1967).

(55). — For further information on Marcello (or Marcelo) Gama, see the appropriate entry in the *Pequeno Dicionário de Literatura Brasileira*, eds. José Paulo Paes and Massaud Moisés (São Paulo: Editôra Cultrix, 1967), p. 109.

racterizing lower, middle and upperclass life will be grouped together in order to assess Miguéis' portrayal of them: second, the discussion of psychological effects will follow an examination of social problems, since they are dependent on them to a great extent.

Social Problems

The first human problem to come under fire, as it turns out, is a social one: the undignified and unattractive nature of the Portuguese judicial procedure of the time. On the very first page, the author indicts judge, jury and prosecutor, in that order. Speaking of the judge, Renato Lima says:

O juiz mandou-me finalmente erguer e, sem tirar os olhos dum maço de processos que tinha sobre a mesa, perguntou-me: "Tem mais alguma coisa a alegar em sua defesa?" Era um homem de olhos pequeninos, penetrantes, entrincheirados nuns óculos de míope, e tinha os cabelos raros e revoltos sobre a testa vasta e luzidia. Acompanhara todo o julgamento com a mesma automática indiferença com que certos padres oficiam. Digo mesmo: como se não acreditasse na eficácia da Justiça (p. 11).
(56)

It is hardly a reassuring picture that one gets of the court's presiding official: he is physically unattractive and he gives every indication of being almost completely indifferent to the defendant and his own profession. In the very same breath, too, Miguéis infiltrates a criticism of a similar attitude in some members of the Church. The latter institution will come in for further comment, but for now the author concentrates his attack on the legal system and its components. He continues his description of the judge's indifferent and careless attitude with a bit of dialogue after Renato has been asked if he has any further statements to make to the Court. When he answers in the negative, the judge assents in an uninterested manner: "Está bem' disse o juiz, sem olhar para mim. 'Sente-se além e espere'" (p. 12). Then, after several intervening pages, the judge is portrayed as listening impatiently to the jury's verdict and passing quick sentence on Renato: "O juiz interrompia às vezes a leitura [of the jury foreman's statement], impaciente, para dar esclarecimentos, e eu mordida a boca para não rir nem gritar. O juiz sentou-se por fim, e, folheando um velho código

(56). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1965), p. 11. Inasmuch as the following references will all be to this edition of this work, page numbers will be given in the text between parentheses.

de folhas amareladas e cobertas de notas, redigiu rapidamente a sentença” (p. 17) Thus, by means of the added details of the judge’s impatience and use of a work of legal reference so old that its pages are yellowed and scribbled-over, Miguéis has given us a picture of a judicial figure which is very far from reassuring.

That, however, is only the beginning of the author’s description of this court. He next brings the gallery under fire for its morbid curiosity: “.a galeria, que seguiu com ávido interesse o julgamento, não decerto por amor da Justiça, nem porque eu lhe inspirasse comiseração: mas para ouvir relatos dramáticos e torpes” (p. 11) Then it is the ineffectual prosecutor’s turn, with: “Que disse ele na sua acusação? Não me posso lembrar precisamente: coisas confusas, palavras ocas, gestos. ” (p. 11) Immediately following that, the jury comes in for its share of criticism: “Quanto aos senhores jurados, bocejavam, quando não dormiam” (p. 12) Miguéis does not let them off that lightly, however, for on the next page we find this description: “Houve em seguida um burburinho; os senhores jurados ergueram-se, batendo as solas no estrado, esticando as pernas que a imobilidade entorpecera, e foram saindo em fila por um [sic] porta baixa, ao fundo, conversando e rindo, com muitas vénias e teimas. ” (p. 13) A few pages later, the author has a parting shot at the jury as Renato’s sentence is being read: “Atrás dele, hirtos e inexpressivos como acólitos de padre num enterro, os jurados esperavam a sua própria libertação” (p. 17) And again we notice that Miguéis slips in a criticism of the Church as well.

To add to the general callousness of the atmosphere of this far-from-majestic court of law, the bailiff is brutally curt in his treatment of the defendant. As he accompanies Renato to his seat, he says: “‘Aí não, daquele lado” explicou o beleguim, atalhando-me a passagem” (p. 12) Other lawyers in attendance add to the general impression through their actions. As Renato describes them for us: “No vão duma janela, dois advogados de longas cabeleiras discutiam como dois fariseus sobre pontos da Lei, com afectada e quase cómica solenidade, e segredavam rindo” (p. 13)

Renato’s defense attorney, however, is not indifferent, impatient or visibly callous. He is merely frighteningly stupid: “Na bancada da defesa, absorvido em admiração e estupidez, um estudante seboso e cabeludo procurava fixar-lhes a atitude e o gesto [of the pompous lawyers mentioned immediately above]. Era o meu defensor!” (p. 13) And, as he is but a callow imitator, one is led to wonder whether a great portion of the legal machinery being portrayed in the novelette is not

also based on shallow, imitative formalism: surely a dangerous thing for Miguéis to have insinuated in 1932, just as Salazar's Fascist regime was consolidating its power, and in an era in which rigid totalitarian states were being founded on the basis of brute force and legal formalism.

The court recorder adds the next unsettling dimension to the human element of Renato's trial. He seems as dry and ancient as the legal code-book used by Renato's judge: "O escrivão não se mexeu do seu lugar: amarelo e distraído, tinha o ar dum processo arquivado e esquecido sob o pó. Conservou as mãos descoloridas e magras cruzadas sobre o pano vermelho da mesa, todo esburacado, e não se atrevia fitar-me nos olhos. " (p. 13-14)

With the tiniest detail — that of the worn-out cloth covering the court recorder's table — Miguéis again uses a subliminal infiltration technique in order to prepare us for his criticism of the physical aspect of this ghastly courtroom:

O tempo corria devagar, naquela sala que mais parecia um longo esquite, de paredes empoeiradas com painéis antigos de azulejos pintados a flores convencionais. De quando em quando ouvia-se o tilintar das armas dos soldados. Uma aranha, indiferente às misérias e pompas da Justiça, tecia a sua teia num velho bico de gás, sobre as nossas cabeças.

Cheirava mal: a suor, a aguardente e a pó. O ar espesso e envenenado entorpecia. Os guardas dormitavam de pé. O rumor das conversas subia num crescendo, até que o beleguim lhes punha termo com um berro. Podia-se então ouvir o zumbido de duas moscas que turbilhonavam sobre a calva do escrivão como dois acrobatas numa pista (p. 14).

Everything about the courtroom is antiquated and ill-kept. It is enough to make one lose all confidence in the legal procedure, but Miguéis continues to add fresh details to his description of it. A famous barrister visits the courtroom in order to talk to the court recorder: "um sujeitinho gordo e corado [que] veio cochichar-lhe qualquer coisa ao ouvido, deu-lhe uma palmada amigável e eloqüente nas costas atrofiadas, e desapareceu, sorrindo para a turba com ar de alegre suficiênciã e fazendo adeusinhos com a mão papuda para todos os lados" (p. 15) He is at once fat and fawning.

All this occurs in the space of just a few pages. The author has constructed his case against this sort of judicial procedure with great

care and considerable detail. He is now ready to come to his conclusion. Through Renato, he calls the legal procedure “Este aparato sem dignidade nem grandeza. ” (p. 15) and describes the point of the court: “Mas na verdade, que importavam àqueles homens indiferentes as razões do meu crime. ?” (p. 16) And, ending his argumentation, Miguéis gives us the reasons for the court’s indifference to Renato’s singular, psychopathic and therefore difficult case, in the following statement: “A [Verdade] que interessa aos tribunais é uma verdade formal, relativa, decalcada nos figurinos da Lei. No fundo, os jurados eram necessariamente estúpidos: a ordem psíquica e moral estava-lhes vedada. Factos! Factos! Eu seria para eles, apenas, *o homem que matou para roubar*” (p. 16) In this way, the dead formality of the court has resulted in its getting the facts it so earnestly admires completely out of perspective. The conclusion reached is, as the reader is to become aware as he continues along the trail of Renato’s adventures, erroneous. It is only through sheer good fortune, then, that it does the best possible thing from a social point of view and commits Renato to an insane asylum.

Turning to other considerations implicit in the above, it can be assumed that Miguéis’ happening to treat of this particular social problem was far from fortuitous, for the author was himself a product of the Portuguese legal institutions of the 1920’s. He was therefore thoroughly acquainted with the legal system he castigated in *Páscoa Feliz*. However, it should not be assumed that the order in which social problems are treated is indicative of a ranking as to their relative importance. Rather it was the plot structure — an artistic consideration — which determined that Miguéis lead off his social commentary with a critique of the legal system.

It is also quite obvious that Miguéis’ technique in presenting social and other problems relies on the accumulation of small details, most of which are not particularly telling, in order to end up by making his point in a most vigorous manner. Having observed this technique in detail, therefore, we may proceed to a briefer analysis of other social problems in *Páscoa Feliz*.

Aside from the matter of Renato’s mental illness, which we will not examine until later for reasons already stated, the next aspect of life which Miguéis criticizes is also a social one, namely some of the more generalized ways in which society ill-treats its members. First, it may simply be totally indifferent to the existence of some of them, thereby earning their resentment (p. 27) In the case at hand, we notice that Renato is resentful of the way in which society has treated

him, but that he is not rebellious in the usual way. He is no ordinary hoodlum or criminal. Rather, he expresses his rebellion through blind reaction, or “obedience”, to social pressures (p. 27) This forms the crux of Miguéis’ criticism of the deleterious effects that social pressures can have on the individual, although the reader is not likely to recognize this at first. It is only later that we come to see that the disaster which strikes Renato precisely for having “obeyed” societal stimuli is an indictment of the evils inherent in society, and not in Renato. It is for this reason that Miguéis says, through him: “Não me considerem pois um criminoso” (p. 27)

The theme of social injustice reappears a few pages later, but this time it is explicitly criticized, for Renato says: “Cedo me convenci de que a lei da vida é a injustiça” (p. 36). It is also an early indication of Renato Lima’s persecution complex resulting from his suffering from schizophrenic paranoia. However, the principal tone that Miguéis adopts is merely that of an ironic bitterness. Somewhat later in the story Renato satirizes the way in which society ill-treats the downtrodden (p. 97-98), and reflects bitterly on the probable fate of his son, now that it is certain that his father will be unmasked as an embezzler (p. 114-115) This bitter tone resulting from the injustices of society reaches its peak with the acid comment: “Se ao menos tivesse ganho no azar da existência.” (p. 134) Again we notice the care with which the author has built his case.

Renato Lima, of course, is a member of the lower socioeconomic class who rises to what one might consider the middle class during the course of his career. Thus, early on in *Páscoa Feliz* we can observe the beginnings of a description of lower-class life which is slowly built up over the course of the novelette. First, Renato tells us of his mother’s romantic semi-literacy (p. 30) and of his family’s humble origins in the province of Beira, a situation which made for a lack of family influence and protection, for “me habituei desde cedo a não contar com os parentes” (p. 31) Next, another aspect of the life of the poor is presented: his father’s working conditions in a Lisbon brewery, which were so bad that he could hardly support his family and was so exhausted by the demands of his job that he could pay little or no attention to his son (p. 31) This facet of his family’s living conditions reaches a climax a few pages later, when Renato notes the ridiculous, ignoble way in which his father dies: “foram encontrá-lo no fundo dum tanque de cerveja, com o crânio fendido” (p. 35)

Renato’s mother must now support both of them, and the picture of her efforts to do so is not comforting. She takes in laundry,

working to the point of exhaustion, often crying out her despair on a kitchen stool (p. 32) She still manages to find time to spend with her son, however, and one day when they are out walking he is asked by a kindly cart-driver if she doesn't want to sell him her little boy (p. 32). She is horrified and refuses, but the tragic necessity of child-selling has nevertheless appeared in the thematic content of the story.

Superstition forms a part of many people's lives, particularly in the least-educated classes, and it, too, appears in *Páscoa Feliz*. Towards the beginning of the story, a friend of Renato's mother states that his big ears are a sign of future good fortune (p. 33) The subject is then dropped, but at the very end of the novelette it crops up again, when Renato is urged to buy a lottery ticket whose number contains the unlucky cypher, 13. Renato is terrified, a reaction which is only reinforced when he notices that the old woman is a hunchback or a dwarf (p. 145-147). He not only has a superstitious horror of such a number, but he is instinctively repelled by old woman's physical deformity This, in spite of his having mentioned the effects of this type of superstitious prejudice in his own life, when he commented early in the course of the novelette upon his own slight physical deformities and concluded: "É bem certo que os homens olham com desprezo e rancor os seres defeituosos" (p. 33) He is thus unable to combat in himself this sort of superstition.

Disease forms a part of most people's lives, so it is hardly typical of any particular social class, except perhaps in terms of frequency However, it is hardly mentioned in *Páscoa Feliz*, and so we shall only note its type and further effects. Renato's mother dies in an epidemic (p. 36) It is a cataclysmic situation which makes no implications as to the inner nature of the sufferer something which is not the case when Miguéis touches on the subject of disease in his presentation of the life of the upper classes, as we shall see.

His mother's death through disease does, however, have immediate implications for Renato. The first of these is hunger, as measured by the ravenousness with which he tackles his first few plates of food at the Conselheiro's house (p. 37) The second of these is an immediate reinforcement of his perception of social difference for, as he explained his immediate obsequiousness at his new abode: "Eu bem sabia, que sem o tempero amargo da humilhação, não há sopas para os pobres deste mundo" (p. 37) The Conselheiro thoughtlessly, unconsciously reflects this truism, too, when he off-handedly tells young Renato to assuage his hunger pangs in the kitchen among the servants.

This high-handedness of the upper class in dealing with the lower is also shown by the fact that Renato is soon placed with a shopkeeper in order to learn a trade. He evidently has nothing to say about it, for he only relates that “um belo dia empregaram-me numa loja da rua, sob a condição de o patrão me deixar freqüentar uma escola nocturna” (p. 41) Whatever good intentions there may have been on the councilor’s part were nullified by the manner in which the action was taken.

The poor conditions under which such young, twelve-or fourteen-year-old apprentices lived and worked are brought out by the author, as well: “Em atenção à qualidade do freguês, e como eu não recebia ordenado, só a cama e o prato, o merceeiro deu-me uma vela de estearina para que eu pudesse ler na cama (p. 41) ” Renato, as we have seen, had the advantage of being under the protection of an important personage, at least in the *merceeiro’s* terms. Nevertheless, his living and working conditions were far from being good. He shared his pallet in the store’s attic with the rats, whom he eventually befriended (p. 41) He was taught to cheat the customer and even to think that there was a sort of social justice in the merchant’s dishonesty with regard to the Conselheiro’s bills (p. 41-42) He was given object lessons in hypocrisy, for the merchant, who hated the Monarchy and its *conselheiros*, “dobrava-se em vénias e desfazia-se em sorrisos. ” (p. 42) when he saw the Senhor Conselheiro approaching. It was all a part of the life the lower classes. That life was bitter, as Renato pointed out:

“Revoltava-me a vida, mais custosa e violenta para os fracos. O meu pão era amargo. Desejei alguma coisa que vagamente suspeitava na existência. Ao contrário do que hoje penso, dizia comigo: “Os outros é que têm culpa do que eu sofro. . ”

Desejaria amar sinceramente alguém, ser alegre, tornar alguém feliz: mas a amargura da vida comunicava-se a todos os meus pensamentos [sic] e aos meus actos. “A alegria e a bondade são privilégio dos fortes,” pensava. E, no entanto, reconheço agora que não era, sob certos aspectos menos feliz que muitos por quem sentira inveja (p. 45)

We get another indication of the quality of life for the lower class when he describes the plight of the elderly poor in the guise of the lottery-ticket vendor at the end of the novelette (p. 144-145) It is curious to note in this connection that the working class is depicted elsewhere in the novelette as having a certain nobility, as long as its individual members are physically impressive. Renato is, of course, jealous — a

sign that social classes are not the monolithic structures that some people and some literary movements would have them be. As Renato says: “Quando passava junto das forjas, parava, olhando com infantil curiosidade: eram cavernas infernais, cheias de sombras e clarões, onde os homens, negros e vermelhos, semelhantes a monstros, fabricavam estrelas, malhando nas bigornas. Força e violência. A actividade brutal daquela gente inspirava-me a concepção dum grande poema do trabalho — que nunca tentei, sequer, esboçar — e tornava mais humilde e mais pequeno o meu vulto pequeno e humilde. Invejei os homens que, com os seus músculos possantes, criam as formas e o movimento” (p. 67)

Turning now to the next social aspect to be introduced in *Páscoa Feliz*, we find the same multi-directional approach in the author's description of the upper class. We have already gotten glimpses of it while Renato was the Conselheiro's protégé. Unlike Miguéis' description of the lower classes, however, his illustrative details of the life of the rich occur mainly in the short stretch of ten pages. Obviously, this is due to the structure of the novelette, since the Conselheiro is of only fleeting importance in Renato's life. Nevertheless, this descriptive condensation has at least two advantages; it makes for greater impact with fewer references, and it provides a change in the novelette's internal rhythm.

Also unlike the description of lower-class life which we have just examined, in *Páscoa Feliz* the life of the upper class is depicted as being almost totally worthless, from the point of view of social utility. First, the social function of the monarchial *conselheiros* is described as being utterly useless (p. 33). The upper class is then observed to feel a snobbish *noblesse oblige* attitude towards the unfortunate (p. 36-37). The prime example of his class, the Senhor Conselheiro, soon shows himself to have retained the authoritarian habits he developed while being a *governador civil* (p. 37). On the very next page, suspicion of this eminence's moral integrity enters into the picture, when the Conselheiro's son scrutinizes Renato. He: “parecia procurar na minha cara alguma semelhança com o seu papá.” (p. 38). The Conselheiro's son is himself no paragon of moral virtue, for the servants of the big house like to gossip about the “amigas que ele tinha, dos seus bródios, das doenças que apanhara lá por onde andava com outras.” (p. 38). Even to the diseases which afflict it, then, the upper class compares unfavorably to the lower, at least in *Páscoa Feliz*.

This is far from being the entire list of its defects, however. As we go along, we discover that it may be poorly educated (or stupid)

in spite of its financial advantages. Ironically, the august Senhor Conselheiro, who will later become the King's Finance Minister, does not even know arithmetic (p. 40-41) Then again the Conselheiro, who apparently means to be kindly toward Renato, cannot seem to do so without being an arrogant example of those who have lived for years off the fat of the land (p. 42) Even the Conselheiro's perquisites of office are socially deficient. His government-furnished carriage, for example, sits idly at his doorstep for hours on end (p. 42-43) Last, the author brings up a facet of upper-class life which underscores the message of social injustice which he gives us in the novelette: whatever their faults may be, the rich can always escape catastrophe by going into exile. The Conselheiro does just that, we note, when the Monarchy is overthrown and the Republic proclaimed (p. 43)

Miguéis' criticism of the inequities of social class differentiation and other problems inherent in that differentiation is not, as we might suspect by now, presented in massive blocks. Not only have the foregoing criticism and descriptions been spread over a goodly number of pages, but they are also interlarded with criticism of a more general sort. One of these is education. As we have noted with regard to the intellectual deficiencies of the Conselheiro, even the upper class suffers in this respect. In Renato's case, the education structure itself is oppressive. His ill-treatment by the other children (p. 33-35) is exacerbated by the indifference of the school's staff (p. 34) Finally, his mother's reaction to his social failure in school among his peers (p. 35) and his having to resort attending night school during adolescence are hardly conducive to a education.

Organized religion, too, is castigated by the author in this novelette. We have already noticed several tangential blows given one or two unfortunate aspects of this institution. There are more. Viewed as a purely social institution, religion is also seen to be differentiated as to class structure, for "por ordem do Senhor Conselheiro, eu ia à missa com as criadas." (p. 38) Worse, the interior decorations and even the music in churches smack of artificiality, as do the religious images (p. 39) However, the young Renato is genuinely attracted by the coolness of church interiors on hot summer days, and attending church does, after all, have a certain survival value while he lives at the Conselheiro's house (p. 38-39) Renato's first employer, on the other hand, talks openly of his dislike for the Church: "Não me venham para cá com padres nem com missas! Cambada! Isso é bom lá para vocês, que gostam de homens com saias!" (p. 42) With this upbringing and these experiences, Renato is himself an example of religious hypocrisy. When he finally turns his own life into a sham-

bles, he notes in himself “ uma tendência religiosa, o apelo para o ‘mais alto!’” (p. 99) All told, it is a rather discouraging picture we are given of organized religion.

Having disposed of these rather more general social problems, Miguéis then introduces the third social class with which he deals: the middle class, in the persons of first Nogueira and then Renato. Nogueira, when we meet him, is a fairly rich man. He has worked hard and managed to better himself economically, but from the outset there is suspicion that he has done so through dark deeds (p. 49) Somewhat later we are informed that Brasil, “ para ele, era sempre a mesma terra afastada, quase primitiva, país de febres, de ouro e de pretos,” (p. 56), which would seem to be the point of view of an exploiter of others. Still later, Renato is still musing as to his employer's past: “Que fizera por lá? Como alcançara a fortuna? As mãos, tinham grossas, mãos plebéias de trabalhador, onde os diamantes produziam um contraste impressionante” (p. 61). He does have, however, either a social conscience or a guilty one, for he helps Renato immensely in his rise from the lower class to the middle class. Then, too, he is very kind to Renato's family, down to refraining from having Renato arrested for embezzlement out of consideration for what would happen to the Lima family as a result (p. 136) In sum, Nogueira is an example of the paradoxical nature of the rising middle class which aspires to a higher social status, which exploits its inferiors, and yet which has not risen high enough for long enough to sever its social ties with the lower class.

Interestingly, it would appear that middle-class occupations are not thought of as being especially noteworthy by the author, to judge from the fact that we are never told exactly what it is that Nogueira and Renato trade in. There is a vagueness about their business affairs which places the middle class on a different plane or in a different focus from the upper and lower classes, inasmuch as we are given much description of the vocations of both of the latter groups. It is as if Miguéis intended to make no special criticism of this aspect of middle-class life, but merely wished to use Nogueira's business as a vehicle to allow for both Renato's transition to the middle class and his embezzlement operations.

Nogueira's place of business, however, does give an indication as to what his occupation might be. It is located down by the hustle and bustle of the Lisbon dock area (p. 50) The streets are noisy and the alleys filthy (p. 137) Moreover, the work involved is clerical and the office itself often provides Renato with much peace and quiet

(p. 51-52) Thus, it would seem most logical to assume that the firm's business is connected with the shipping industry, which would account for the existence of restful periods of relative inactivity between vessels, as well as its location. (57)

Other aspects of middle-class life which come out in the course of the novelette are Renato's successful adaptation to upward social mobility (58), and his wife's relatively unsuccessful transition to the middle class (p. 59-60). Luísa's maladaptation to the stress of moving from one social class to another may, however, have been due to her upbringing. A worthy person herself, she does not enjoy even the scant comfort of Renato's humble family background, for she is a "filha de pais incógnitos" (p. 82) Besides, her life with Renato revolves about their home. She is relatively secluded and is never kept informed of the family's financial position (p. 60, 86 and 96) Indeed, Luísa shows a great lack of curiosity about such matters (p. 123) Thus, given her insulation from life outside of the home, one can imagine what terrors are in store for her when Renato is committed to the insane asylum and she is forced to return to earning a living, as she doubtless did earlier in life.

Basically, these are all of the problems of middle-class life as such that are apparent in *Páscoa Feliz*. Other problems and aspects of life do impinge on the middle class, but only as a function of society as a whole — some of the social problems immediately below furnish examples of this. Generally speaking, the pictures we have of the social hierarchy are much clearer than that of the middle range. It is an interesting aspect of the novelette, and one which may be related either to Miguéis' critical intentions (a greater interest in conflicts between social extremes) or to his artistic criteria (contrasting treatment of similar phenomena, in this case social classes and their problems) This, however, is mere speculation.

Still other social problems of a miscellaneous nature are injected at intervals amongst the major hardships and inequities of life. None of them is treated very extensively, but their total effect is one of support for the main lines of the author's social criticism. The first of these is financial instability — and we find evidence to corroborate

(57). — For an earlier description of this area, in Lisbon's commercial sector, see Eça de Queiroz' *Alves & Ca*, 8th ed. (Oporto: Lello & Irmão, Editores, 1952), p. 15-19.

(58). — José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1965), p. 59. Inasmuch as all the following references will be to this edition of this work, page numbers given between parentheses.

the reader's intuitive placement of the action in terms of time. Renato, as it happens, is sheltered from the effects of national economic insecurity, for as far as Nogueira's firm is concerned "faziam-se negócios seguros, de qualidade, segundo normas que os tempos de crise tornaram desusadas" (p. 49). Notice, however, the use of the preterite tense instead of the imperfect with reference to the crisis: it is a choice which easily indicates a time-period occurring after the onset of the effects of the Great Depression of 1929 to 1932.

Last, we note that prostitution also occurs among the social problems appearing in the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz*. Interestingly enough, the users of the prostitutes' services are from the upper and middle classes, not the lower. First, it will be remembered that the Senhor Conselheiro's son was a client of an indeterminate number of harlots (p. 38). Then we have seen that Renato himself was a patronizer of "gay ladies" during his series of flings (p. 75-76, 81, 85-86). The lower class is not represented among the lechers, however, although it probably was the origin of the prostitutes themselves. This omission, it would seem, is indicative of the author's possibly seeing a higher morality in the lower class as contrasted to the middle and upper classes. And this, in turn, agrees with a certain nobility of the poor, as they are presented in *Páscoa Feliz* and elsewhere in Miguéis writings.

Psychological Problems

Coming finally to the question of the psychological problems with which *Páscoa Feliz* deals, we have already seen that the majority of the critics think that this is the fundamental aspect of the work, although many of these also consider its social thematic content to be important. We have seen that the author has himself stated that the psychological and social aspects are related. All of this has led to the preliminary conclusion that the development of Renato's insanity is the result of an unfortunate occurrence of emotional weakness which is exacerbated by social pressures.

Further support for this causal interpretation can be had quite simply by observing the structure of *Páscoa Feliz*. If we note carefully the appearance of social problems in the work, we find that they occur largely in the first sixty pages or so. Therefore, it seems most logical to assume that Miguéis has placed the greater portion of the social problems he presents in *Páscoa Feliz* toward the beginning of the work precisely to give an indication of a cause-and-effect relationship between social problems and psychological ones.

This is not to say that the psychological effects of societal pressures on Renato Lima are only introduced in the last hundred pages or so. Indeed, after having examined other aspects of the thematic content of *Páscoa Feliz* and observed the author's technique in presenting them, it would be extremely surprising to find that he did. However, the pattern does not in fact change, for we find the following passage on the second page of text: "Ai de mim, no meu passado alguma coisa há-de ficar inexplicável. Durante o julgamento caí provàvelmente numa destas letargias que me alheiam por completo do ambiente. Desde muito novinho que certos estados de abstracção, ou de torpor, me perturbaram ou inibiram a atenção: durante eles o espírito como que me abandonava. " (p. 12) We are not yet aware of the full implications of this passage during a first reading of the work. However, the way has been opened for the development of Renato's progressive alienation from society and the growth of his split personality: in other words, the appearance of the "double" that so many reviewers and critics have mentioned. Immediately thereafter, we see that Renato is happy to plead guilty even though he has prepared a written statement in his defense (p. 12) On the next page, we see that he is proud and rebellious toward the court and his wife (p. 13) These details are only the barest beginnings of Miguéis' presentation of Renato's paranoid schizophrenia, however, so they are heavily veiled. For all the reader knows, Renato could merely be an unsuccessful revolutionary or other unfortunate. His lucidity of observation of the court does not immediately lead one to guess that he is insane, but rather to search for a more prosaic reason for his peculiar intransigence concerning his own future.

As we progress in our search for a solution to this enigma, we note that other details continue to appear in quick succession, although still in a very unobtrusive manner. While he is still in the courtroom, we are informed that Renato is very anxious to "me ver dali para fora, condenado, arrumado para sempre, livre do mundo" (p. 15) He is a martyr, perhaps, certainly not a revolutionary. Just a few words later, however, we see that this is also not the case, because he says: "A dor humana perdera para mim todo o sentido" (p. 15)

This tantalizing uncertainty is kept up by the author to the very end of the courtroom scene, and it is only until Renato is comfortably ensconced in his prison cell that we realize that he has a very strange outlook on life. He is too pleased with the situation, the prison cell's description doesn't warrant the institution's being called a *cadeia*, and so forth (p. 19-21) Next, we see that he is engaged in reconstructing: ".o 'Eu', que a presença dos outros dissipa e confunde" (p. 21)

It is hard work, for: “Muitas vezes, subitamente, parece que deixo de ser *eu*, e a própria ideia do meu crime se obscurece, o meu passado é outro, como se uma força poderosa me arrastasse para um novo plano da existência. Então fujo e luto comigo, a sós, desesperado” (p. 21-22) On the next page, he tells us that all of the other inmates are mad (p. 23) and that he finds visitors disturbing to his peace and quiet (p. 23-25) These are all hints, of course, of the true nature of Renato’s state of mind, which prepare the way for the author’s ever-more-explicit indications of the cause of Renato’s anguished attempts at ego-identification: the fact that his schizophrenia has been manifested by his intermittent “possession” by his twisted psychic double — “*o outro*”

Then, as a definite indication that Renato is mad and has been committed to an insane asylum, the *director* appears on-scene. He wears a white coat, begs Renato to remember everything about his past, visits the protagonist at very odd hours(and is happy when Renato manages to extract another item of information from his clouded memory (p. 25-26) Lastly, in case we have still managed to miss the point, Miguéis gives us the reason for Renato’s madness: “O que houve em mim foi um simples conflito dos meios e dos fins” (p. 26), has Renato address the “prison director” as “Doutor”, and makes him plead that we do not consider him a criminal (p. 27). In this manner, the fact of Renato’s madness is established through the author’s technique of carefully accumulating individually unobtrusive details and building toward a climax, after which the reader is left with no doubts as to the meaning of the action. As for the type of insanity suffered by Renato, which is characterized in the novelette by the manifestations of “*o outro*” we are not likely to begin to become aware of its nature until the appearance of Renato’s disastrous “plan” or “dream” about one-third of the way through the work. Thus, on pages 52-53, Renato says:

Com o andar do tempo, porém. . . ia-se formando por si mesma, num mundo à parte, dentro de mim, idéia de qualquer coisa de novo e extraordinário: um golpe.

Assisti, de começo sem grande susto, à formação do “plano” Era um companheiro, um hóspede que se instalava em mim. . . Despertava-me interesse a estranha operação que o meu subconsciente começava a realizar. . . Dotado por assim dizer de visão dupla, eu acompanhava interiormente o desenvolvimento do projecto. ”

It is still only a nefarious, if irresistible, swindle which has presented itself to Renato. Thirteen pages later, however, comes the first clear

mention of Renato's psychic double. "Era a lógica do *outro*" (p. 66) And eleven pages after that, we have a definitive statement as to the part "*o outro*" plays in Renato's actions: "*O outro, que me inspirou e me guiou, comanda-me o resto; falsifico o balanço, as notas de depósito nos bancos*" (p. 87) It is only at this point that we may deduce with any assurance what the nature of Renato's illness really is. Typically, however, Miguéis has long since prepared us for the appearance of Renato's *alter ego* by means of this subliminal technique: at the end of the courtroom scene, Renato says that his recollections of his trial are a bit vague because to him it is "como se outro, e não eu, as houvesse vivido" (p. 18) (59) By now, we are familiar with this technique. Hence, there would seem to be no need to substantiate it further in terms of the author's treatment of Renato's schizophrenia. Therefore, we shall pass on to a consideration of some of the other psychological aberrations that social pressures and his individual weakness cause in Renato, as well as some of the interrelationships which exist among his manifestations of mental turmoil.

The first of these is the momentary transference of Renato's affection for his father to a friendly cart-driver after his father has died. It is caused not only by the fact of his father's death, but also by the lack of affection expressed during life, for Renato says of the incident: "foi essa a única vez que beijei meu pai — naquele desconhecido" (p. 32) The emotional need that Renato feels is due to his almost total deprivation in this respect, for we learn a few pages later that: "Nunca me olharam com carinho — exceção feita de minha mãe, que tinha sempre os olhos rasos de água. Desde cedo, por isso, armazenei desejos de uma ternura nunca experimentada e sonhos de vingança" (p. 34) In this manner, Miguéis not only gives us further proof of Renato's emotional starvation, but some of its effects as well.

As we have seen, Renato is persecuted at school and is ashamed of causing his mother's unhappiness over the fact. He therefore escapes into a dream-world (p. 35-36, 38, and especially 43-45, in which he describes his adolescent daydreams) Later, his latent desire for vengeance comes to the surface in the form of an erratic rebelliousness. It leads him to quit many jobs in succession (p. 46-47) Always, however, a rebellious impulse is followed by an obedient state; a

(59) — For observations on Miguéis' treatment of alienation and other social and psychological problems in a much shorter work, see my article, "Thematic Consistency in a New Manner in José Rodrigues Miguéis' 'Lodo'," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 11, Nº 2, Winter 1974, 231-236.

situation which is later developed to its fullest extent in terms of Renato's schizophrenia.

Renato's life steadies for a time after his marriage to Luísa and employment by Nogueira, but his existence eventually becomes too humdrum for him and leads to a state of apathy: "A vida mecanizara-me a tal ponto que não me baixaria para apanhar uma carteira e entregá-la a quem a tivesse perdido, nem para salvar-lhe a honra. Mas também me sentia incapaz de a erguer do chão para a guardar" (60) Not only does his work become monotonous, but he gets terribly bored with his home life. Thus, nearly twenty pages later, Renato protests: "O quê?, levar os sertões a bocejar, ou a trabalhar, até ao fim de tudo, ao pé desta mulher modesta, sempre amendrontada? A existência filtra-me um sabor a definitivo que me aterra." (61)

Renato's earlier history has, of course, been characterized by a series of emotional ups and downs, with an obedient phase followed by a rebellious one as his "double" takes "possession" of him intermittently. We are thus prepared for the appearance of the major state of inner insurrection in Renato, a stage which appears definitively only after he has realized that his life has become almost totally uninteresting, as if that were the determining factor. It is not due to boredom, as we have seen above, but is caused by his mental illness, which is in turn a result of social problems. In this way, the spurious cause of Renato's anti-social actions — boredom — links his normal and his irrational selves, becoming so magnified by his schizophrenia as to become a psychological aberration in itself.

The immediate result of the appearance of the "dream" or "plan" is that Renato feels reinvigorated (p. 54-55). However, just as the author has given us a paradoxical view of the bad and the good in other respects — the bad court of justice arrives at a good sentence, for example — so it is with Renato's aberrant behavior, for shortly after discovering his new "purpose" in life, Renato feels the stirrings of doubt as to the rightness of his plan to ruin Nogueira. It

(60) — José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd. ed. (Lisbon: Estudos Cor, 1965), p. 52. This image of the lost wallet is a link between the second and third editions of *Páscoa Feliz* and the detective novel, *Uma Aventura Inquietante*. Interestingly enough, however, it does not appear in the first edition of *Páscoa Feliz* and is therefore another example of how Miguéis revised the second, or definitive, edition. Also, as the author has pointed out to me, the two "wallet episodes" contrast a pathological case with normalcy.

(61) — José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Estudos Cor, 1965), p. 71. Inasmuch as all the following references will be to this edition of this work, page numbers will be given in the text between parentheses.

marks the appearance of a rebellion against his rebellion. Thus trapped between two fires almost immediately, Renato explains that “ .como certos toxicómanos, eu tinha simultâneamente o horror e o orgulho do meu vício” (p. 57) It is still part and parcel of Renato’s schizophrenia, of course, but it shows how the author has developed it in depth as well as linearly: Renato finds enjoyment as well as suffering in both his normal and his aberrant states. This in turn shows us how far-reaching are the frustrations of life for the protagonist, and prepares us for what is one of the most violent of means used in a person’s attempts to alleviate his emotional pressures — murder.

Having reached this point, there is not much more that we do not already know, for we are by now convinced of the basic relationship between Renato’s schizophrenia and his other psychological aberrations. As we have noted on preceding pages, his obsession grows in intensity (p. 62-69), although it occasionally gives way to a counter-impulse (p. 63) Its growth results in an increasing alienation from his family (p. 72), while his growing emotional conflicts result in an escape into dissolute living (p. 72-86) He has no feelings of consideration for anyone but his son (p. 83-84, 85, 89) who, ironically enough, contracts a mysterious and finally fatal illness (p. 91 ff.) Renato re-enters an “obedience” cycle (p. 86), feels renewed affection for his wife (p. 95, 101) and suffers a horrendous series of nightmares (p. 102-104, 106-108, 111-114), coupled with insomnia (p. 105)

The process of Renato’s final downfall is all but over now, as we know. Nogueira comes to suspect his general manager’s ruinous machinations (p. 117) and Renato rapidly becomes certain that Nogueira has discovered him (p. 125) Pressures mount, and Nogueira confronts Renato at long last (p. 128-137) When he does so, Renato is possessed: by his psychic double (p. 128), kills his benefactor (p. 138-140), and wanders about Lisbon (p. 141-154) Finally, he returns home with the packet of almonds for this little boy, learns of his son’s death and wanders off into the night (p. 155-157) Days later, he is peaceably apprehended on the road to Mafra, completely out of his mind (p. 157) It is the end, for we have arrived at the culmination of the psychological effects that a hostile social environment has had on Renato Lima: effects which show a great degree of “ .unidade na diversidade ” (62) as well.

(62) — José Rodrigues Miguéis, “Nota do Autor (À Segunda Edição),” in *Páscoa Feliz*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Estúdios Cor, 1965), p. 166.

Some Conclusions

It would seem, therefore, that a few conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing:

A. In certain respects, a number of the critics who have commented on *Páscoa Feliz* have been unreliable, misleading or even untruthful about the novelette and the author's view of the world.

B. Also, many critics persist in attempting to trace literary influences in this portion of Miguéis' writings, thus adding to the confusion about the work and laying themselves open to criticism from the author and others.

C. The text itself reveals that *Páscoa Feliz* deals with a very great many social problems, including aberrations in the Portuguese judicial procedure of the time; generalized social injustice; semi-literacy; poor working conditions; child-selling; superstition; disease; hunger; commercial dishonesty; hypocrisy; the social uselessness of the upper class; upper-class snobbishness; loose sexual mores of the upper class; poor education of members of the upper class; other deficiencies in the educational system; artificiality in organized religion; religious hypocrisy; bastardy; the seclusion and ignorance of women; financial instability; prostitution and murder.

D. These social conditions exacerbate psychological problems, which otherwise might have remained latent in certain individuals. For example, Miguéis presents the reader with a number of the effects of schizophrenia; lack of affection; escape into fantasy; erratic rebelliousness against employers and employment; extreme apathy; ambivalence toward an illegal and immoral act; alienation from family; nightmares; insomnia; amnesia and utter insanity.

E. Miguéis is extremely deft at using a small number of fleeting references to create the effect he desires in his reader. This characteristic, this "subliminal" or "infiltration" technique, is one small indication of the very high quality of his literary craftsmanship.

F. Therefore, it would appear that Miguéis is an artist and a humanist who, having absorbed a great number of life's experiences, including literary ones of all sorts and qualities, skillfully, painstakingly and courageously portrays a *milieu* in which social conditions and the condition of the individual need to be ameliorated. The individual portrayed may typify society on one level, while serving on another as an example of the individual caught within the larger matrix of society.

G. In short, it seems obvious that Miguéis is amenable to no simplistic classification, literary or otherwise, for in *Páscoa Feliz* he published a work of important psychological thematic content, which was nevertheless grounded on a broad and deep base of social criticism, at a time when it was growing dangerous to criticize conditions in Fascist Portugal, while at the same time antedating by several years the populist machinery of the Neo-Realists.

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