

**JOURNEYS OF THE BILDUNGSROMAN: THE NOVEL OF SELF-FORMATION IN PORTUGAL**

Ana Ribeiro

Universidade do Minho – Portugal

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Karl von Morgenstern coined the term *Bildungsroman* to classify certain German novels of his time, he could not then anticipate how fortunate his creation would be. Not only did it succeed in Germany, but it was also later adopted by other foreign languages, where it is used as synonymous to apprenticeship novel or novel of (self-)formation. The diaspora of this compound reflects the vitality of this narrative subgenre, which, despite its claimed German exclusivity, knows no time or space boundaries. Beside the classical *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-1796), *David Copperfield* or *Illusions perdues*, more recent titles such as *Youth* (2002)<sup>1</sup>, by J.M.Coetzee, or *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres* (1969)<sup>2</sup>, by Clarice Lispector, account for the wandering nature that the *Bildungsroman* shares with the other literary subgenres.

Among the various studies devoted to this multiform category, it is perhaps the 19<sup>th</sup> century European *Bildungsroman* that has been most favored by specialists, either because they consider it as “its major historical period”<sup>3</sup> or because they found this subgenre essential to the evolution of the novel of that time<sup>4</sup>.

This choice usually entails another one, European literature is most often reduced to the canonical/canonized German-England-France axis. In recent years, however, the picture of this variant of the subgenre became richer with works like those of Gregory Castle on the 20<sup>th</sup> century English *Bildungsroman*<sup>5</sup> or Rodríguez Fontela’s (1996) study of the Spanish “written novel of self-formation”, as this author prefers to call it<sup>6</sup>. As we will

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<sup>1</sup> J. M. Coetzee, *Youth*, London, Vintage, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Clarisse Lispector, *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres*, 18<sup>a</sup> ed., Rio de Janeiro, Francisco Alves, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Marianne Hirsch, “The novel of formation between Great expectations and Lost illusions” in *Genre*, XII, 1979, p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Franco Moretti, *The way of the world. The Bildungsroman in European culture*, London, Verso, 1987, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gregory Castle, *Reading the modernist Bildungsroman*, Gainesville/Tallahassee, University Press of Florida, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. María de los Ángeles Rodríguez Fontela, *La novela de autoformación. Una aproximación teórica e histórica al “Bildungsroman” desde la narrativa hispánica*, Universidad de Oviedo, Kassel, Edition Reichenberg, 1996, and *Poética da novela de autoformación. O Bildungsroman galego no contexto narrativo hispánico*, Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Investigações Lingüísticas e Literarias Ramón Piñeiro, 1996.

see, we can extend the borders of this subgenre to Portugal, thus contributing to a complete European map of it.

It was in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably under the influence of the French realist novel, that the novel of self-formation began its journey in Portuguese literature. Helena Carvalhão Buescu detected its presence in Júlio Dinis's *A morgadinha dos canaviais* (1868) and *Os fidalgos da casa mourisca* (1871), in both novels the main characters are re-converted to lead country lives<sup>7</sup>. Their apprenticeship anticipates that that is represented in those *Bildungsromane* which “question the value and the utility of science, the materialistic culture and the possible space of happiness”<sup>8</sup>, as it is the case for *Transviado*<sup>9</sup> and later for Eça's *A cidade e as serras* (1901)<sup>10</sup> and *A grande quimera*, by Teixeira de Queirós<sup>11</sup>.

Maria Helena Santana also includes in this category those novels which represent the “initiation of a provincial *parvenu* in the paths of power, with the subsequent loss of moral values (or giving up, as in Lobo d'Ávila's text)”<sup>12</sup>, as happens in *O ministro ideal* (1907), by Artur Lobo d'Ávila, *O Salústio Nogueira* (1883), by Teixeira de Queirós, or *O homem indispensável* (1883), by Júlio Lourenço Pinto.

In spite of not falling under any of these types of plot, Helena Carvalhão Buescu identifies in *Os Maias* (1888), by Eça de Queirós<sup>13</sup>, “the inheritance of the *Bildungsroman*”<sup>14</sup>, modulated “by the introduction of the themes of failure, even when not completely carried out, and of disillusionment, even when not entirely fulfilled”<sup>15</sup>. Álvaro Manuel Machado, to whom Lisbon, in this novel, constitutes a “space of initiation”<sup>16</sup> where Carlos da Maia, the protagonist, develops an “initiatory search”<sup>17</sup>, shares Buescu's opinion.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Helena Carvalhão Buescu, “George Sand e Júlio Dinis: questões de espaço no romance rústico francês e português” in *A lua, a literatura e o mundo*, Lisboa, Cosmos, 1995, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Helena Jacinto Santana, *Literatura e ciência na segunda metade do século XIX. A narrativa naturalista e pós-naturalista portuguesa*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 2000, p. 320. We are responsible for all translation from Portuguese or Spanish to English.

<sup>9</sup> Jaime Magalhães Lima, *Transviado*, Lisboa, Empresa Editora, 1899.

<sup>10</sup> Eça de Queirós, *A cidade e as serras*, Lisboa, Livros do Brasil, s/d.

<sup>11</sup> Teixeira de Queirós, *A grande quimera*, Lisboa, Parceria António Maria Pereira, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> Maria Helena Jacinto Santana, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> Eça de Queirós, *Os Maias. Episódios da vida romântica*, Lisboa, Livros do Brasil, s/d.

<sup>14</sup> Helena Carvalhão Buescu, “A importância dos Actos V: *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, *L'éducation sentimentale* e *Os Maias*” in *A lua, a literatura e o mundo*, Lisboa, Cosmos, 1995, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> Álvaro Manuel Machado, “Eça e a «geografia sentimental» finissecular” in *Congresso de estudos queirosianos. IV Encontro Internacional de Queirosianos. Actas*, Vol. I, Coimbra, Almedina, s/d, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*, p. 9.

Although the *Bildungsroman* was not, as this broad list shows, a minor narrative subgenre in the Portuguese fiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we believe that it conquered a more outstanding position in the Portuguese novel of the next century, both for the quantity of its manifestations and for the diversity of paths it followed.

During its lifespan, this subgenre, as it is the case for all others, even when adapted to new conditions and used to express new realities, kept its basic traits. Indeed, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several Portuguese novels display elements of what can be called the prototype of the *Bildungsroman*, a set of traits in free combination.

As a character novel, the *Bildungsroman* has in the protagonist its key element. The character crisis inherited from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not put this trait at risk. The different names of the hero of Almeida Faria's *Rumor branco* (1962)<sup>18</sup>, the anonymous protagonist of Nuno Bragança's *A noite e o riso* (1969)<sup>19</sup>, and H., the main character of Saramago's *Manual de pintura e caligrafia* (1977)<sup>20</sup>, certainly reflect the above mentioned crisis<sup>21</sup>. However, doing away with the traditional name is perhaps the best way of dealing with a *Bildungsheld*, since he/she is someone whose identity is not given at first, but constructed throughout the story of his life experiences, for what makes a hero a *Bildungsheld* is his/her evolutionary capacity. Through the different ways used to designate their heroes these *Bildungsromane* really question the traditional conception of a unitary self, problematic in the modern changing world.

As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which made male youth its symbol<sup>22</sup>, some Portuguese novels of self-formation continued to attach this process to a young male hero, as is the case of *Jogo da cabra cega* (1938), by José Régio<sup>23</sup>, *Jerónimo e Eulália* (1969), written by Graça Pina de Morais<sup>24</sup>, and Jorge de Sena's *Sinais de fogo* (1979)<sup>25</sup>. Despite having restricted ourselves to *Bildungsromane* with male protagonists, in *Maria da Lua* (1945), for instance, Fernanda de Castro<sup>26</sup> shows us how this very process is also experienced by women. Furthermore, in Portugal and elsewhere, the 20<sup>th</sup> century novel of self-formation also has adolescents, children or even adults as main characters. The apprenticeship process is not

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<sup>18</sup> Almeida Faria, *Rumor branco*, 4<sup>a</sup> ed, revista, Lisboa, Caminho, 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Nuno Bragança, *A noite e o riso*, 4<sup>a</sup> ed. Lisboa, D. Quixote, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> José Saramago, *Manual de pintura e caligrafia*, 3<sup>a</sup> edição, Lisboa, Caminho, 1985

<sup>21</sup> Prior to these novels, *Nome de guerra*, a novel whose originality is stressed by several literary critics, was not alien to this crisis. First of all, that strategic place that is the beginning of a text is devoted to reflections about the importance of the name someone carries. Moreover, most of its secondary characters have no name.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Franco Moretti, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>23</sup> José Régio, *Jogo da cabra cega*, Lisboa, Brasília Editora, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> Graça Pina de Morais, *A origem*, 2<sup>a</sup> ed., Lisboa, Antígona, 1991.

<sup>25</sup> Jorge de Sena, *Sinais de fogo*, 9<sup>a</sup> ed., Porto, Asa, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Fernanda de Castro, *Maria da Lua*, 3<sup>a</sup> ed., Porto, Livraria Tavares Martins, 1960.

thus linked to a specific life period. This shows new conceptions about life, such as the one reflected in the rise of the idea of adolescence. Conceived as an especially troublesome phase, it was “only acknowledged both socially and literarily in the last century”<sup>27</sup>. *A via sinuosa*, published in 1918 by Aquilino Ribeiro<sup>28</sup>, is perhaps the first Portuguese novel whose protagonist is an adolescent. This *Bildungsroman* represents Libório Barradas, the main character, living the “deaf and painful transition between what he was and what he was going to become”<sup>29</sup>. It began a tendency followed not only by this same author in *Uma luz ao longe* (1948)<sup>30</sup>, but also by Nemésio’s *Varanda de Pilatos* (1927)<sup>31</sup>, by Vergílio Ferreira in *Manhã submersa* (1954)<sup>32</sup> and by Soeiro Pereira Gomes<sup>33</sup>.

Some *Bildungsromane*, reminding the (auto)biography, represent a life cycle that begins with the birth of the protagonist and sometimes finish with his adolescence. The death of a man, at the end of *A escola do paraíso* (1960)<sup>34</sup>, is the last blow in the childhood of Gabriel, the protagonist. This episode marks the ending of innocence and the beginning of suffering. On the other hand, the end of *A origem* (1958), for instance, corresponds to the terminus of adolescence, a rich period during which João meets his father, finds his literary vocation, suffers with aunt Clara’s death or discovers his mystic nature.

Going beyond adolescence, *A noite e o riso* devotes what is called its “First panel” to the early ages of man, showing them as a time of rebellion against deforming agents as family, school and church.

At the same time younger ages were making their way into literature<sup>35</sup>, Almada Negreiros, in *Nome de guerra* (1935)<sup>36</sup>, represents the apprenticeship process of protagonist in his thirties. The main characters of both *Manual de pintura e caligrafia* and *Os cus de judas* (1983)<sup>37</sup> are also adults. If the hero of *Nome de guerra*, a novel originally written in 1925, may still be considered as influenced by 19<sup>th</sup> century narrative patterns, the most recent ones seem to question the traditional limits of youth. With this new kind of

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<sup>27</sup> Carina Infante do Carmo, *Adolescer em clausura. Olhares de Aquilino, Régio e Vergílio Ferreira sobre o romance de internato*, Faro-Viseu, Universidade do Algarve-Centro de Estudos Aquilino Ribeiro, 1998, p. 38

<sup>28</sup> Aquilino Ribeiro, *A via sinuosa*, Lisboa, Bertand, 1983.

<sup>29</sup> Aquilino Ribeiro, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Aquilino Ribeiro, *Uma luz ao longe*, Lisboa, Bertrand, 1969.

<sup>31</sup> Vitorino Nemésio, *Varanda de Pilatos*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1992.

<sup>32</sup> Vergílio Ferreira (1954), *Manhã submersa*, 16<sup>a</sup> ed., Lisboa, Bertrand, 1993.

<sup>33</sup> Soeiro Pereira Gomes, *Esteiros*, 2<sup>a</sup> ed, Lisboa, Sirius, 1942.

<sup>34</sup> José Rodrigues Miguéis, *A escola do paraíso*, 9<sup>a</sup> ed., Lisboa, Estampa, 1993.

<sup>35</sup> The vogue of childhood and adolescence in the Portuguese literature of the first half of the last century was noticeable enough to justify Óscar Lopes’s study on “A infância e a adolescência na ficção portuguesa” (1963).

<sup>36</sup> José de Almada Negreiros, *Nome de guerra*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1986.

<sup>37</sup> António Lobo Antunes, *Os cus de Judas*, 19<sup>a</sup> ed., Lisboa, D. Quixote, 1997.

*Bildungsheld* the process of self-formation becomes more important than the age of the hero.

Despite its age, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese *Bildungsroman* also diversifies the social origin of its heroes. Most of them belong, as it was common in the so called classical *Bildungsroman*, to the middle class. With neo-realism it is the children of the lower classes who seek a place for their dreams in the world, as in *Esteiros* or *A barca dos sete lemes* (1958)<sup>38</sup>. The upper class is only represented by the protagonist of *A noite e o riso*. Although we can say that social climbing is not at stake in any of them, at least in these three *Bildungsromane* the social ground becomes an antagonist to the protagonist. Only the hero of *A noite e o riso*, who, despite having been “Raised among pheasant’s breath”<sup>39</sup>, felt himself closer to the less fortunate in life, succeeds in his fight against this force. By the presence of all social strata, the process of “self-growing” ceases to be an elitist process, extending to all mankind.

Regardless of their age or social *milieu*, the *Bildungshelden* all progress towards self-formation through the conflict with the surrounding world. As it is pointed out by Rodríguez Fontela<sup>40</sup>, they can with due justice be called “modelled characters”, since the experiences they live during their journey influence who they become. In this sense, the protagonist is the centralizing point of the narrative, around which those people, places or events which contribute to mould him gravitate. They all act, according to Rodríguez Fontela<sup>41</sup>, as helpers in the protagonist’s quest, even those who seem to oppose to it, since their hostility is as much important to their discoveries as it is the support of others.

A traditional helper is the master. In the Portuguese *Bildungsroman* of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, what comes closest to this character is priest Ambrósio, from *A via sinuosa*. He is a father figure who strives to transform Libório into his double. Despite the cleric’s efforts, his beloved disciple ends up following his own way, contradicting his master’s projects. In *Nome de guerra*, also Antunes frustrates his uncle’s plan of making him an expert in women. Both cases make us think of the romantic inheritance of the supremacy of the self, but it also becomes clear that the self is not an *a priori* and that it suffers the influence of subliminal forces which surpass the authority of a master. That is what the priest of *A via*

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<sup>38</sup> Alves Redol, *A barca dos sete lemes*, Lisboa, Europa-América, 1958.

<sup>39</sup> Nuno Bragança, *A noite e o riso*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Lisboa, D. Quixote, 1995, p. 47.

<sup>40</sup> María de los Ángeles Rodríguez Fontela, *La novela de autoformación. Una aproximación teórica e histórica al “Bildungsroman” desde la narrativa hispánica*, Universidad de Oviedo, Kassel, Edition Reichenberg, 1996, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> María de los Ángeles Rodríguez Fontela, *Poética da novela de autoformación. O Bildungsroman galego no contexto narrativo hispánico, Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Investigações Lingüísticas e Literarias Ramón Piñeiro*, 1996, p. 173.

*sinuosa* lucidly recognizes, at the end of the novel, when he justifies his failure by invoking the action of the adversaries of his task: Libório's nature, his family, his departure for the city, the attendance of a public school and the revolutionary ideology of his time<sup>42</sup>.

Most of the agents identified by father Ambrósio are common to other Portuguese *Bildungsromane* of the last century. As far as family is concerned, the protagonists are almost always the only child of a couple in which the mother has the leading role, as it happens, for instance, in Aquilino's novel. In *Varanda de Pilatos, A origem, Jerónimo e Eulália* (1969)<sup>43</sup> and *A noite e o riso*, old aunts work as an extension of the parents. In those *Bildungsromane* like *A escola do paraíso*, whose main character is a child, the family is mainly a source of love and protection. Its role changes when we deal with adolescent and young protagonists, whose family, reminiscent of the traditional master for its usual conservatism, is one of the obstacles to eliminate in the search for oneself. In spite of the priest's accusation, the dissent from the mother is particularly clear in *A via sinuosa*. In his quarrels with his mother, Libório refuses his family's plan for him, as he finds out that priesthood is not suited for him. The protagonist of *A noite e o riso* also rejects his family, since he sees in it the opposite values he cherishes, such as freedom and truthfulness.

Even when there are no conflicts between the *Bildungsheld* and his parents, he is many times forced to leave his family. This opens a particularly important moment in his self-growing, because he must face alone the unknown. The protagonists of *Uma gota de sangue* (1945)<sup>44</sup>, *Uma luz ao longe e Manhã submersa* abandon their native place to enter a seminary. As a traditional master, it is a repressive force that threatens the protagonists' identity. In *A via sinuosa* and *Varanda de Pilatos*, Libório and Venâncio come to the city also to study, but they extend their knowledge far beyond school subjects. Free from the master and/or the parents, they contact with new people and new ideas, what becomes essential to self-discovery<sup>45</sup>. As an arena of challenge and fighting, the city usually keeps the negative aura it already had in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction. In these novels, as well as in

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Aquilino Ribeiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-345.

<sup>43</sup> Graça Pina de Moraes, *Jerónimo e Eulália*, Lisboa, Antígona, 2000.

<sup>44</sup> José Régio, *Uma gota de sangue*, Lisboa, Inquérito, 1945.

<sup>45</sup> The suggestive image of the "new house" (196, 198) silently built in Libório's interior while he is studying at Lamego and that of the "deaf existence of a spinning spider" (68), referring to Venâncio's life at Cidade, convey the personal growth stimulated by their permanence in town.

*Nome de guerra*, the classical opposition between the countryside and the city<sup>46</sup> serves to contrast the innocence of past childhood with the awareness of a new age.

*Os cus de Judas* deals with a married man who is forced to leave his home to take part in the colonial war in Angola, where he lives “the painful apprenticeship of agony”<sup>47</sup>. The bliss of a heavenly past gives place to a hellish suffering.

In *Aventuras de João Sem Medo* (1963)<sup>48</sup> or *Jerónimo e Eulália* it is the hero himself who decides to go to another place. He moves at will, without paying attention to his mother’s weeping or without fearing his parents’ reaction, thus showing self-reliance and a desire for self-formation. Contrary to other *Bildungshelden*, Jerónimo leaves Lisbon, the city by excellence, for a northern village. His aunts, their employees, the exquisite Eulália and the strange Augusta are some of the members of this new community in which he seeks a refuge from his meaningless life.

Jorge, from Sena’s *Sinais de fogo*, moves in a somewhat similar way when he goes, as usual, from Lisbon to his uncle’s house in Figueira da Foz to spend his summer holidays. More than Lisbon, a province town, as in *A via sinuosa*, proves to be essential for the political awakening of these heroes who witness a critical historical moment as that of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, in Sena’s novel, or the end of monarchy, in Aquilino’s text. These two *Bildungsromane* remind us of Bakhtin’s conception of the realist novel of self-formation in which the hero finds himself “au point de passage d’une époque à une autre époque”<sup>49</sup> and where “L’image de l’homme en devenir perd son caractère privé (...) et débouche sur une sphère toute différente, sur la sphère spatieuse de l’existence historique”<sup>50</sup>. For its affiliation into the fantastic, *As aventuras de João sem Medo*, whose hero also abandons Chora-que-Logo-Bebes to enter the Floresta Encantada, does not partake the realist inheritance of some Portuguese novels of self-formation, though this does not exclude reality from its horizon.

Of course there are *Bildungsromane* whose main characters remain in their birthplace during their self-formation, as in *A origem* or *A escola do paraíso*, but, although more limited in their movements, they still make the discoveries essential to their personal evolution.

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<sup>46</sup> This opposition is particularly evident in *Varanda de Pilatos*, whose hero moves from a place called Vilório [small town] to another one called Cidade [town].

<sup>47</sup> António Lobo Antunes, *Os cus de Judas*, 19<sup>th</sup> ed., Lisboa, D. Quixote, 1997, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> José Gomes Ferreira, *Aventuras de João Sem Medo. Panfleto mágico em forma de romance*, Lisboa, Dom Quixote, 1991.

<sup>49</sup> Mikhaïl Bakhtin, “Le roman d’apprentissage dans l’histoire du réalisme” in *Esthétique de la création verbale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, p. 230.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

In their direct contact with the surrounding world the Portuguese *Bildungshelden* frequently meet women. In *A via sinuosa* it is particularly visible how a woman, the adulterous D. Estefânia, undermines priest Ambrósio's plan. In a certain way she also acts as a master, but of a different sort, since she helps to reveal Libório to himself. The same can be said about the main female characters in *Nome de guerra*, *A noite e o riso* and *Jerónimo e Eulália*.

Whatever different the life experiences shaping the hero may in the end be they are retrospectively organized in a coherent plot, "For it is the story which binds together contingencies into a weighty sequence of a human destiny"<sup>51</sup>. Mostly in the *Bildungsromane* of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they are usually presented in a chronological order, disguising their discontinuous nature. On the contrary, fragmentary novels like *A escola do paraíso*, often accused of not having plot<sup>52</sup>, or *A noite e o riso*, that binds together distant moments in the protagonist's life<sup>53</sup>, emphasize the erratic course of human life. The same goes for *Rumor branco* or *Manual de pintura e caligrafia*. Like Nuno Bragança's novel, they are metafictional texts in which writing and self-knowledge are linked. The *Bildungsroman*, in its variant of the *Künstlerbildungsroman*<sup>54</sup>, is then particularly fit to stage the self-discovery of the protagonist as a writer. In Bragança's and Saramago's novels the reconstruction of the heroes' search for their vocation turns out to be the materialization of it.

Traditionally, the hero, enriched and transformed by his life experiences, would find his place in the world and recover the lost happiness. Not so in the Portuguese *Bildungsroman* of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From our corpus, H., the hero of Saramago's *Manual*, is the only one who comes near to this ideal: he discovers himself through writing, he finds the right woman; at the same time a tyrannical political system falls. Instead of a closed and happy end, which, according to Moretti<sup>55</sup>, can be found in *Wilhelm Meister* or *Pride and prejudice*, the Portuguese novel of self-formation prefers a tendency whose beginning Moretti<sup>56</sup> places in Flaubert, Stendhal and Balzac. It privileges an open end, in which the

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<sup>51</sup> Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*, Princeton/New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Ana Ribeiro, *A escola do paraíso, de José Rodrigues Miguéis: um romance de aprendizagem*, Coleção Hespérides/Literatura, Braga, Universidade do Minho/Centro de Estudos Humanísticos, 1998, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Nuno Bragança, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>54</sup> This neologism is used by Aude Locatelli in her *La lyre, la plume et le temps. Figures de musiciens dans le «Bildungsroman»*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1998. It designates those novels which represent the self-formation of an artist. We prefer it to the traditional *Künstlerroman* for it stresses the formative ingredient of this variant, thus emphasizing its membership to the *Bildungsroman*.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Franco Moretti, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.



hero, far from accommodating to life, remains free to proceed with his self-formation. If, as Bakhtin<sup>57</sup> says when referring to the realist *Bildungsroman*, “Le temps s’introduit à l’intérieur de l’homme”, self-formation becomes a lifetime process<sup>58</sup>. In a complex and changing world, maturity is hard to reach, as well as a coherent and unitary picture of the self.

If we exclude Jerónimo, who returns home to live a drab life, marriage, a traditional symbol of the end of self-formation, is not usually the destination of Portuguese *Bildungshelden*. Instead of it or of any other forms of commitment, many of them run away to pursue their search for themselves, as it happens in *A origem*, *A via sinuosa* or *Uma luz ao longe*. Sometimes the hero’s crusade becomes the subject of a set of novels, which try to give an end to something that only death stops. Curiously, both Aquilino, whose *Lápides partidas* (1945)<sup>59</sup> is a sequence of *A via sinuosa*, and Miguéis, who published in 1975 *O milagre segundo Salomé*<sup>60</sup>, the last volume of the trilogy that began with *A escola do paraíso*, left their projects unfinished.

This necessarily brief outline of the Portuguese *Bildungsroman* illustrates its vitality and the relevance it achieved during the last century. The trilogy Frederico Lourenço began in 2002 with *Pode um desejo imenso*<sup>61</sup> makes the *Bildungsroman* also a subgenre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Resisting the alleged novel crisis and the blurring of literary genres, it has been cultivated by different literary movements. The elements of its prototype are supple enough to adapt and to express new conditions without losing its physiognomy. This and the special connection it holds with being a human warrants the *Bildungsroman* a long life whose paths, like those of the *Bildungsheld*, remain unpredictable.

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Mikhaïl Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>58</sup> That is what the hero of *Sinais de fogo* discovers when he reasons: “It was as if, in life, we, from time to time, after a new experience, found out that we were still growing up, that we had not still stopped being children. And that there were inside us infinite possibilities of plenitude” (179).

<sup>59</sup> Aquilino Ribeiro, *Lápides partidas*, Lisboa, Bertrand, 1985.

<sup>60</sup> José Rodrigues Miguéis, *O milagre segundo Salomé*, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores, 1995.

<sup>61</sup> Frederico Lourenço, *Pode um desejo imenso*, Lisboa, Cotovia, 2002.