

# Metalepsis in a Narrative Piece by M. S. Lourenço<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This article is focused on the role performed by metalepsis in a short narrative piece by the Portuguese writer and philosopher M. S. Lourenço (1936–2009). In the first section an explanation of the ways metalepsis and leitmotif interact is provided, whereas the second section turns to the metaleptic short circuit between fiction and reality. In the discussion of these issues the analysis of textual variation, which is carried out according to textual genetics, plays a fundamental part.

THE SUBORDINATE FUNCTION OF PHILOLOGY REMAINS EVIDENT IN titles such as *Philologia ancilla litteraturae*, the *Festschrift* dedicated to Professor Gilles Eckard (CORBELLARI *et al.* 2013), or “*Philologia ancilla historiae: An Emendation to lex Burgundionum, 42,2*” (McMANUS & DONAHUE 2014). According to this ancillary status of philology, the major aim of a textual critic would consist in establishing a text so that afterwards it would be interpreted by scholars of the field that text belongs to. Such a view has been explicitly supported in different quarters of the academy and is still an implicit foundation of text-centred disciplines. Accordingly, philology would be an activity operating in a field prior to the production

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of meaning, as is contended by Greg: “the study of textual transmission involves no knowledge of the sense of a document but only of its form” (1932, 122); or by De Man when he equates the return to philology to “an examination of the structure of language prior to the meaning it produces” (1986, 24). In contrast to the frontier thus drawn between pre-hermeneutic and hermeneutic activities, this article seeks to make use of descriptive sciences (this is how De Man labels philology and rhetoric) in order to approach meaning as derived from the observation of the transmission of literary documents (GREG 1932, 114). The article is focused on the role performed by metalepsis, as a trope and narratological device, in a narrative piece by the Portuguese writer and philosopher M. S. Lourenço. Its first section sheds light on the relation between metalepsis and leitmotif, whereas the second section mostly observes how the metaleptic disruption between “the fictional world and the ontological level occupied by the author” (McHALE 2004, 213) is played out. The analysis of textual variation, both pre- and post-publication, and intertextuality has a fundamental part in the following reasoning.

## I.

The text that the Portuguese writer M. S. Lourenço (1936–2009) published in his column in the newspaper *O Independente* on the 19th of May 1989 bore the title “Em paisagem tropical | missa branca alma preta” (“In a tropical landscape | white mass black soul”) and stood out as an example of autodiegetic narrative, quite different from most of his previous contributions, which would be easily labelled critical essays. Here is the gist of this narrative, according to the matter approached in each of its 11 paragraphs.

§1 – The narrator recalls that Father Luís Mendes regretted the usual way of referring to the capital city of Angola in 1961; §2 – After attending mass, celebrated by Father Mendes, the narrator’s routine took him to the Lello bookshop, where he first met the sculptor Paulo Espada; §3 – Both he and the sculptor used to go to the main avenue by the sea, and there the narrator observed Espada sketching drawings of half-naked native workers; §4 – The narrator was then called to join his company, which was based at the Uíge Mountains. He left Luanda, having taken with him two drawings by Espada. One of these drawings he offered to Major Capelo; §5 – Major Capelo was the supreme authority in Uíge, a small city with buildings on both sides of its main avenue, a school, a radio station and a church; §6 – Among those who attended Sunday mass after the narrator’s arrival in

Uíge were Major Capelo and the captain of the narrator's platoon. It was Major Capelo who read the daily epistle; §7 – Once mass was over, Major Capelo used to stay for some time in the churchyard talking to the other officers (on this occasion, the narrator and his captain). He spoke of the mountains in front of the yard as the area of the upcoming military operation and suggested to the captain the need to make a raid in the mountains because all the terrorist ringleaders were hiding there; §8 – After talking, the group used to go to a café where the narrator came to know his captain, Jorge Pais, better. In the main, Jorge Pais was not a supporter of Portuguese Angola, or of any other cause for that matter, and he feared the prospect of dying at the age of 35. His fear could be sensed when he told the narrator that the order to make a two-day patrol in the mountains had arrived. §9 – Then Major Capelo gave the narrator the details of the operation which had to be carried out because a coffee farm had been attacked the previous day; one of the workers had died and the others refused to work without military protection; §10 – The mission would consist of attacking where the terrorists had hidden and then setting it on fire. A lieutenant by the name of Teles had the perfect formula: after the attack he used to decapitate two of the dead men and place the heads on staves at the entry of the place which had been taken. When the fog fell and the survivors tried to get back to the “sanzala”, they would run away, never to return. If the military unit waited for the fog, the survivors could still be attacked; §11 – In the end, the night was approaching and the fog starting to settle.

Based on this longish paraphrase, some readers will probably say that the conclusion of the narrative brings no “finalization” (RIMMON-KENAN 2005, 122), while others will see a metonymy at work in the last paragraph: as there is a chronologic sequence between, first, the falling fog and, afterwards, the survivors facing the heads on the staves, the reference in the end to the fact that the fog was starting to settle suggests that the narrator is about to go through the horror of what is called Teles's formula. More importantly, I have omitted in the paraphrase the fact that along the narrative another metonymic technique, based on an image, is being developed. I would like to argue from a rhetorical point of view that this technique is metaleptic in nature, bearing on a specific form of intermediality and being particularly apt for a specific type of narrative. What matters here is the rhetorical background of metalepsis as the figure governing the structure of Lourenço's narrative. In this respect, Genette (2004, 7–16) notes that metalepsis shares with metaphor and metonymy the principle of displacement of sense, and he considers it a metonymy of the simple type, expanding it beyond the single word to include an entire proposition. Although

the text by Lourenço would be an expansion of a metonymy according to which the antecedent is understood as the consequent (PIER 2016), it does not illustrate a further expansion explored by Genette. Metalepsis of antecedent and consequent, Genette argues, is implicitly metalepsis of cause for effect or effect for cause and, based on such causal relations, he draws the concept of “author’s metalepsis” whereby an author “is represented or represents himself as producing what, in the final analysis, he only relates” (PIER 2016), as well as the transgression between narrative levels and diegetic and extradiegetic fields. In this respect I would like to argue that, generally speaking,<sup>2</sup> the absence of such a transgression in Lourenço’s narrative is as relevant to its understanding as the presence of the metaleptic structure based upon the manifestation of a recurrent image.

What is this recurrent image, and how does it work? In the first paragraph, when Father Luís Mendes regrets the abbreviated reference to the capital of Angola, “Luanda” instead of its full name “S. Paulo de Luanda”, he is said to have commented that it is as if the city were beheaded. In the second paragraph, the narrator goes to the Lello bookshop in order to collect a recording of Richard Strauss’s *Salome*, an opera based on a chain of episodes leading to the decapitation of Jochanaan. In the following paragraph, Paulo Espada’s drawings do not depict the human body as a whole, but rather the separate volumes of the head, neck, and torso. In paragraph 4, the drawing that the narrator offered the Major depicts a single torso. Then in paragraph 5, the church in Uíge is St. John the Baptist’s, identified according to the name by which Jochanaan is usually known in Christianity. It is in this church, as mentioned in the following paragraph, that Major Capelo made the reading of the daily epistle, taken from Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, namely the passage: “each man’s head is Christ and Christ’s head is God”. Paragraph 7 still refers to the religious building dedicated to St. John the Baptist, for it is in its churchyard that the officers have their conversation. Then, paragraphs 8 and 9 seem devoid of allusions like those I have highlighted. Approaching the end, paragraph 10 contains the description of Teles’s formula and the last paragraph again comprehends no allusion similar to those identified in paragraphs 1 to 7 and in paragraph 10.

Therefore, the image which is shaped in various ways consists of a fragmented human head emerging over the narrative in aural and visual rep-

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2. As I will try to show further on, there is a moment in the last edition of this narrative in which there might be room to acknowledge an instance, if discreet, of authorial metalepsis.

resentations of discursive, artistic, and religious kinds. Having identified this image, my following contention is that a musical technique lies at the basis of its occurrences in close articulation with the rhetorical dimension of metalepsis and providing the narrative with an intermedial atmosphere.<sup>3</sup>

That M. S. Lourenço resorted to a musical technique to organize his narrative comes as no surprise, for he frequently sought to demonstrate that language is a musical fact and accordingly argued that the most accomplished literary works are musical compositions. In an entry to a literary encyclopaedia, he presents and comments upon the main musical forms applied in literary works, namely the theme and variations form which was explored by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, the fugue form in Paul Celan's "Todesfugue", the sonata form in Álvaro de Campos's "A Tabacaria" ("The Tobacco Shop"), and the Wagnerian leitmotif as developed by Thomas Mann in several novels (LOURENÇO 2001, 260). It is precisely this form that structures the narrative piece under consideration.

It is known that Wagner did not coin the word 'Leitmotif'<sup>4</sup> and that the first self-aware exploration of the leitmotif principle can be heard in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, whose "representative and recurring themes" were given the name "idée fixe" (DAVISON 1928, 159).<sup>5</sup> However, although Wagner was not the first composer to use this form, it was due to him that the connection of a short musical idea with a given character, object, emotion, or concept used for purposes of cohesion became widely known. Moreover, he claimed that this structural device was founded on

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3. To clarify my intention by pairs of conceptual opposites, the point of view adopted in this section seeks to (i) highlight the rhetorical (not the narratological/narration level transgression) dimension of Lourenço's text; and (ii) to underscore the intermedial (not the transmedial) dimension of the structural device used in it. As to the contribution of music to the transgression of narrative levels, see HELDT 2013a, 197–98, 206–07; 56–7. On the alleged transmedial features of the leitmotif, because of the role it plays both in classical and film music, see ARVIDSON 2016, 88, n299. In turn, the rhetorical dimension of metalepsis is in this article grounded on traditional literary rhetoric (for an exploration of metalepsis in musical composition, cf. BUTLER 1977, 57–8).

4. Instead he refers to "thematisches Motiv", "Hauptmotiv", or "Grundthema" (MILLINGTON 1998, 127).

5. Davison also recalls that what underlies leitmotif can already be heard in Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, in which the recitatives featuring Christ's voice are accompanied by a string quartet, in opposition to the ordinary recitativo secco; later, in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* the trombones are used in association with the character of the Commendatore (DAVISON 1928, 159; PAULUS 2000, 156).

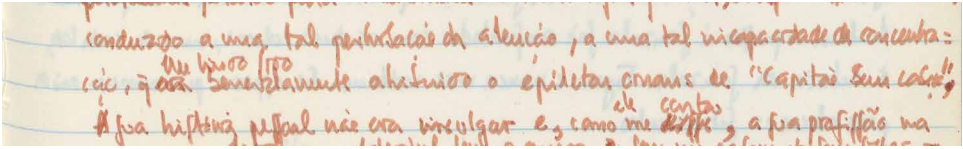
“impulses, either presentiments and reminiscences” (MILLINGTON 1998, 127), which is not without interest for the purpose of this article. To use Wagner’s vocabulary, one may say that Lourenço’s narrative is pervaded with retrospective presentiments, for, since the narrative under observation is a recollection, only by recollection are those narrative components seen as presentiments.

In Lourenço’s text the image is subject to variation without losing its recognizability, in accordance with Warrack’s definition of leitmotif, that is, a theme or a coherent musical idea which is defined in order to maintain its identity if changed on later occurrences (PAULUS 2000, 156). Changes may be of rhythm, intervallic structure, harmony, orchestration, or accompaniment. In the case of Wagner’s music, after emerging for the first time, the theme usually reappears with variation, which facilitates the perception of change “on a certain feature of a character, a different view of a situation or some other element of the drama” (PAULUS 2000, 156). Whereas variation in the leitmotivic technique thus contributes to revealing a modification in any element of Wagner’s compositions, it is my impression that in this narrative there is not a very large spectrum of meaning shades conveyed by leitmotivic variation. Indeed, the main feature shared by the motives is far more relevant than the contingent characteristics belonging to each of them. Apart from the cohesion they communicate to the text, there seems to be a common goal.

In fact, as in Thomas Mann’s work (BOLDUC 1983, 88), the leitmotif is here used to create suspense. This effect is produced via a balanced insistence on the motive followed by the interruption of its use in a pattern that can be explained through rhythmic design. In order to explain how this works, let us represent an occurrence of the motive in a paragraph as a beat and a paragraph without such a motive as a corresponding pause. Accordingly, the rhythmic design of the text is apparently based on a series of 7 beats, followed by a 2-beat silence, then a single beat, followed by a 1-beat silence. The impression made by such a design is similar to something that is closing in our direction, first at a distance, and then drawing near us, rapidly accelerating.

Interestingly, the draft of this narrative provides evidence supporting the argument in favor of this structural design. As we saw before, paragraph 8 was published in a version which bore no reference to the governing motive, but in the draft Lourenço started out by including yet another occurrence of the motive we have been examining. When the narrator describes Captain Jorge Pais as someone who feared the prospect of dying at the age of 35, he mentions the nickname the soldiers gave him. Suffering

from an acute attention deficit, he was kindly known among his company by the phrase “the Headless Captain” (see Fig. 1), which is an evident variation of the governing motive.



**Figure 1.** Draft of “Em paisagem tropical | alma branca missa preta”. Notebook titled *Notizbuch* (private collection), from now on *siglum N*, f. 54r. See the phrase “Capitão Sem Cabeça” at the end of the middle line.

The inclusion of such a reference would have the advantage of underscoring the “*idée fixe*” effect, but it would also entail a disadvantage. With it, the structure would have a 8-1 / 1-1 design, which is less persuasive as far as the closing in effect is concerned. True, this alternative design would evoke an even more intense acceleration than that conveyed by the first design, but since there is no change in the second element of the pair, the sense of progression and the impression of imminence would be lost, the undisclosed ending thus losing part of its impact.

It is useful to view this sense of imminence in the backdrop of Thomas Mann’s remarks on the composition of *The Magic Mountain* which were included in the 1939 Princeton edition preface to the English translation. Here Mann presents the leitmotif as “the magic formula that works both ways, and links the past with the future, the future with the past”, adding that it is “the technique employed to preserve the inward unity and abiding presentness of the whole at each moment” (MANN 2011, 720). Lourenço knew these remarks by Mann well, as can be seen in one of his essays (LOURENÇO 1991, 24), but ultimately he employs the leitmotif technique to link the past with, say, not so much the future as with the silenced future of the past. In the narrative piece the future of the past is that portion of time that seems inevitable and about which nothing is explicitly said. As a result, it is the sense, not the materialization, of inevitability which is heightened through leitmotif in Lourenço’s text. In terms of metalepsis, this suggests that the antecedent is the expression of an ultimate consequent which remains unknown within the borders of the diegetic universe. Accordingly, Lourenço’s narrative deliberately resembles an incomplete metalepsis.

Among other features, this undisclosed ultimate consequent leads to the overall impression of a link between the matter of the narrative and trauma. When, in 1920, Freud realized that soldiers who had gone through combat experiences had dreams which were incompatible with the fulfilment of wishes (thus conflicting with the so-called pleasure principle), he posited a new instinctual theory, the compulsion to repetition (LEWIS 2012, 308). In respect of war experiences, the compulsion to repetition, or what would be now known as post-traumatic syndrome disorder, is manifested through repeated recollections and/or dreams focused on reliving battle-field episodes. According to Greg Forster, the repetition compulsion consists of “those reenactments in the present of psychic events that have not been safely consigned to the past . . . and that disrupt the unruffled present with flashbacks and terrifying nightmares, intrusive fragments of an unknown past that exceed the self’s (relatively) coherent and integrated story about itself” (cf. KAPLAN 2014, 5). Why do dreams such as these emerge? Or what is the purpose of their insistent manifestation? Freud argued that traumatic dreams make the dreamer return to the scene of trauma so that he or she will be belatedly protected from an experience which he/she was not prepared to deal with (ROTTENBERG 2014, 7). The core notion here seems to be preparation, in the sense that the reaction to trauma involves an effort to act imagining oneself preparing for the distressing event. That is also why once diagnosed with post-traumatic syndrome disorder, the patient is expected to solve his problem in analysis by repeating the scene which triggered his anxious state (cf. LEWIS 2012, 306; KAPLAN 2014, 47; ROTTENBERG 2014, 2).<sup>6</sup> Hence, the text hosts an impressive number of milestones preparing the narrator (and the reader) for a closure which is not put into words (KAPLAN 2014, 5).

In this reading of narrative structure, the absence of a diegetic closure deserves special attention. How is one to understand the undisclosed end of the narrative? Two definitions of metalepsis considered by Henri Morier in his dictionary of poetics and rhetoric might be helpful in this regard: the first definition refers to a focalization metonymy in the chain of action through the suggestion of a consequence via its cause (MORIER 1998, 687). Morier thus highlights the metaleptic dimension of verbs such as “to go” when they mean sexual intercourse. The example of this is drawn from the

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6. What lies “beyond the pleasure principle”, Freud claims, is the “innenwohnender Drang zur Wiederherstellung eines früheren Zustandes” (*qtd.* KAPLAN 2014, 47).



book of Genesis: Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children, but she had an Egyptian slave by the name of Hagar who could be instrumental to that end. That is why she instructed Abram: "go in unto my maid", and the husband "went in unto Hagar" (MORIER 1998, 688; <https://www.bible-gateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+16&version=KJV>). In this case, as is stated by Morier, metalepsis plays the role of diverting the readers' eyes from a situation that is offensive to decency. Also associated with the preservation of decency is Morier's fourth definition of metalepsis, a presentation of facts based on allusion. Through allusion a textual unit is somehow linked to what is being thought of sequentially or consequentially, with one implying the other. For this definition the example is Racine's Phèdre, who fell passionately and incestuously in love with Hippolyte. In order to mask her feelings, she speaks of her admiration for his father's (Thésée's) courage while not mentioning his vices, which allows for the identification of the person whom she loves (MORIER 1988, 690). Euphemism is implied in both these definitions, in so far as a general or indirect expression takes the place of another expression deemed too blunt in its reference to something embarrassing or unpleasant. In the case of Lourenço's narrative, one may acknowledge the role of euphemism, for in the text there is no direct expression of war horrors. However, although the diegetic closure one can imagine is ghastly, rather than plainly embarrassing or unpleasant, there is no verbal substitution for the explicit reference to any horrid episode. Thus, one cannot speak of euphemism in the paradigmatic axis of this story, but strictly in its syntagmatic axis. The reason for repetition of the antecedent and the omission of the consequent seems to lie in the fact that, despite the effort for preparation, one is ultimately always unprepared, an unspeakable form of memory offering resistance to being voiced (KAPLAN 2014, 5).

Apart from repetition and silence, other usual features of trauma narratives include the indirect interior monologue and a dispersed or fragmented narrative voice (VAN LAETHAM 2018, 19, 28–29). This is in line with after-effects of trauma such as fuzzy boundaries between the aesthetic and the real, the psychic and the physical, the inner and the outer, the self and the world (KAPLAN 2014, 87), in other words, metaleptic ingredients. In narratological terms, John Pier presents a well-known form of metalepsis as being an intentional intrusion crossing over "the world of the telling and the world of the told" (PIER 2016). This two-way street is based on Genette's reference to an extradiegetic narrator or extradiegetic narratee transgressing into the diegesis or else to the invasion of the metadiegetic field by diegetic characters (GENETTE [1972] 1980, 234–35; PIER 2016). In

Lourenço's narrative there is no trace of a fragmented narrative voice, let alone a transgression between diegetic and metadiegetic fields. There is, however, a noteworthy, if single, example of free indirect speech.

The tenth paragraph, with its description of Teles's formula, is the only one in which a sliding between narration levels may be observed, and a rather discreet sliding it is. In order to become fully aware of it, one should compare the 1st and 2nd book editions of this narrative.

1st ed., p. 73

2nd ed., pp. 171–72

voltou ao tema [. . .] para me dizer que era preciso [. . .] “O já conhecido alferes Teles tem uma fórmula que nunca falha. Quando ataca uma sanzala [. . .]”

he resumed the subject of our conversation to tell me that it was necessary to [. . .] “The already known lieutenant Teles has a formula that never fails. When he attacks a ‘sanzala’ [village] [. . .]”

voltou ao tema [. . .] para sublinhar que era preciso [. . .] E acrescentou a seguir que o já conhecido alferes Teles tem uma fórmula que nunca falha. “Quando ataca uma sanzala [. . .]”

he resumed the subject of our conversation to stress that it was necessary to [. . .] And then he added that the already known lieutenant Teles has a formula that never fails. “When he attacks a ‘sanzala’ [village] [. . .]”

The first sentence produced by Major Capelo changes status in the second edition, having been included in the narrator's discourse. The change of status is facilitated because this first sentence refers to a third person, which can be and indeed is referred to in the same terms by Major Capelo and by the narrator: “the already known Lieutenant Teles”.<sup>7</sup> Something is then said about this third person through a verb, which again can be and is equally conveyed by Major Capelo and the narrator in the conjugation of third person singular. But in indirect speech, which has been used up until this point by the narrator when he reports what other characters have said,

7. In the first edition “already known” is not anaphoric, meaning that previously in the narrative there is no reference to “alferes Teles”. As a consequence, the phrase points to the fact that he was known in the military *milieu* at the time of the events being told. In contrast to this, the same phrase in the second edition suggests that he is known in the field of the telling, i.e., the narrator and the implied reader know Teles *already*. Since there is no previous reference to this character in the piece, the reader would only have the possibility of knowing Teles *already* by being aware of his existence before having started to read the narrative. If this interpretation is viable, it has to be articulated with ways in which the piece by Lourenço feeds on real events, namely perhaps on the person who in certain quarters became known in association with Teles's formula.

one would expect an adaptation of tense since Major Capelo spoke in the diegetic present, whereas the narrator is recollecting an episode that happened sometime in the past. The crux here is that there is no change in the tense: Lieutenant Teles *has* a formula in direct speech and to the narrator's mind he still *has* a formula, thus emerging through free indirect speech the only passage in which the first person and the third person discourse meet.

Commenting on free indirect speech, Eric Rundquist points out that it is often viewed as an instance of “dual voice”, that is, “the dual reference of linguistic markers in the style — tense and person on the one hand, deictic adverbs and other subjectivity markers on the other”, thus corresponding to two individuals, or *voices* (RUNDQUIST 2017, 46). It is debatable whether the non-speaking voice of the character in the narrative should be classified as “voice” because, while holding a subjectivity feature, it does not produce discourse. That is why Rundquist rather sees free indirect speech as the expression of a character's subjectivity in a language that is not his or her own (RUNDQUIST 2017, 47). Be that as it may, whether one interprets free indirect speech as dual voice or as the verbal embodiment of a character's subjectivity, the point is: it is only in this passage that the impermeability of narrative levels is clearly under menace. Therefore, in the second edition, the status of this passage as an instance of the running leitmotif is underscored, strengthening that whatever is going to happen involves the narrator in a way beyond reporting at a distance. Not by accident, this is the last occurrence of the motive in the narrative and the reason why it should stand out in the rhythmic analogy I mentioned above. Therefore, the first seven beats can be seen as unstressed (meaning they do not highlight any referential experience, only representational allusions), whereas the single beat which occurs later (pointing to a referential experience and directly implying the narrator, that is, the reference to Teles's formula) has to be played *forte*.

## II.

In the second section of this article I would like to briefly address a less visible case of the type of metalepsis which, as McHale phrases it, consists of the disruption between the “fictional world and the ontological level occupied by the author” (2004, 213). Only through access to the notebook in which Lourenço drafted his text could the reader discern the existence of such a short circuit, one of those transgressions seemingly absent from the published text. It was during the genesis of the narrative that Lourenço





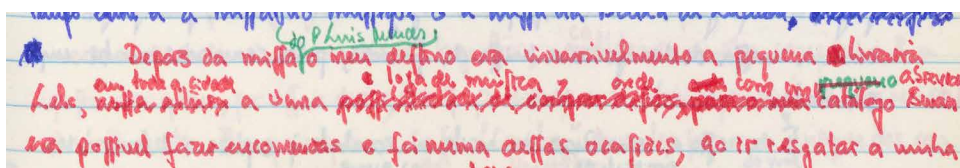
**Figure 4.** Right to left: M. S. Lourenço, José Rodrigues, and Manuela Lourenço, Luanda. Photo taken at the beginning of 1963. Frederico Lourenço, private collection.

What seems to be at play by repressing the intrusion of extradiegetic into the diegetic data is the author's effort to keep a safe distance vis-à-vis the matter of the narrative, namely its silenced closure.

There are other instances of metalepsis in Lourenço's narrative in McHale's sense that merit a closer look. The manifestations of the image of a severed body in paragraphs 1 to 7 bear some resemblance to dreams and play an indexical function in the narrative. Displacement of accent is viewed by Freud as one of the four aspects of the dream work, since it consists of the substitution of an important latent element by a somewhat trivial allusion to it (FREUD 1933, 33–4). In turn, there are some similarities in the way the dream works to the definition Roland Barthes proposed of the index. In his introduction to the structural analysis of narrative, Barthes presents the index as a class of narrative units which signify implicitly and call for a "deciphering activeness and consequence" (BARTHES 1975, 249). In Freud's terms, the first seven occurrences of the image under analysis point to the substitution of an important latent element in the narrative,

the experience of decapitation, and allude to it in a trivial way. All seven occurrences of the image are wrapped up in uneventful daily life: what the priest said once, collecting a record in a shop, observing someone drawing, going to church, attending mass, giving someone a drawing. It is this banal wrapping that calls for unwrapping, in the formulation by Barthes, a “deciphering activeness and consequence” (BARTHES 1975, 249).

Taking into consideration the 11-paragraph structure presented above, I would now like to focus on paragraph 2, in order to (i) highlight two episodes of textual variation that can be interpreted as contributing to the dream-like, and, say, indexical atmosphere, as well as to (ii) say a few words on Salome as a core motif. The first episode of textual variation that will be approached is genetic in kind: the deletion of “short” and its substitution by “abbreviated” in the characterization of the record catalogue the narrator uses to order a recording of *Salome*. It is convenient to examine how the draft evolved in this zone (see Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Draft of “Em paisagem tropical | alma branca missa preta”. Notebook N, f. 53r. Beginning of paragraph 2.

Here is a tentative reconstruction. Lourenço first drafted and revised in red, then used a green marker before concluding the passage with another revision in red:<sup>8</sup>

1. “After mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, at that time the only possibility of buying records,

8. The Portuguese text reads: “Depois da missa do P. Luis Mendes o meu destino era invariavelmente a pequena e livraria Lelo, loja de música, ~~nessa altura~~ em toda a cidade a única ~~possibilidade de comprar discos~~ onde ~~para o meu onde~~ com um ~~pequeno~~ abreviado catálogo Swan era possível fazer encomendas”. For a global description of the way the color markers are used by Lourenço while drafting these essays, see DIONÍSIO 2020.

2. “After mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, ~~at that time~~ <sup>in the whole city</sup> the only possibility of buying records, for my Swan catalogue

3. “After mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, ~~at that time~~ <sup>in the whole city</sup> ~~the only possibility of buying records,~~ <sup>the only music store</sup> for my Swan catalogue<sup>9</sup>

4. “After mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, ~~at that time~~ <sup>in the whole city</sup> ~~the only possibility of buying records,~~ <sup>the only music store</sup> for my <sup>where with a</sup> Swan catalogue it was possible to order [records]

5. “After <sup>Father Luis Mendes’s</sup> mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, ~~at that time~~ <sup>in the whole city</sup> ~~the only possibility of buying records,~~ <sup>the only music store, where</sup> for my <sup>where</sup> <sup>with a small</sup> Swan catalogue it was possible to order [records]

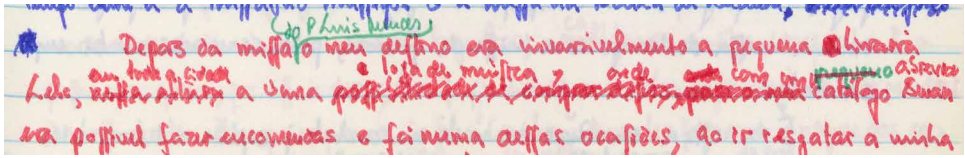
6. “After <sup>Father Luis Mendes’s</sup> mass I always headed to the small ~~and~~ Lello bookshop, ~~at that time~~ <sup>in the whole city</sup> ~~the only possibility of buying records,~~ <sup>the only music store, where</sup> for my <sup>where</sup> <sup>with a</sup> ~~small~~ <sup>abbreviated</sup> Swan catalogue it was possible to order [records]

Although this succession of stages does not depict with absolute certainty the process of writing, it is possible that six acts of writing were carried out here, the first four corresponding to immediate writing actions, the fifth pertaining to a later revision, and the sixth to an even later revision when the draft had already reached its first complete version. The status of the fifth action is clear because a different pen — a green marker — was used, possibly after the red sequence was fully written and before the following sequence (below), in green, was noted down. As to the status of the sixth action, in spite of the fact that it was penned by the same red marker responsible for actions 1 to 4, its later revisional status can be inferred from the deletion of the previous action 5 and the placement ahead of its correction.

A number of corrections in actions 1 to 6 have to do with cohesion, grammar, and the avoidance of repetition. Avoidance of repetition seems indeed to be the issue when he substitutes “abridged” for “small”. The latter had already been used to describe the Lello bookshop and its reappearance on the following line could be viewed as stylistically inadequate (see Fig. 6).

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9. Note that the interlinear addition “music store” is meant to substitute “Lello bookshop”, even if the reference to the bookshop has never been deleted. There is a dot (deleting the word “and”) before “livraria Lelo” and another similar dot before “loja de música” that support this interpretation.



**Figure 6.** Draft of “Em paisagem tropical | alma branca missa preta”. Notebook N, f. 53r. Beginning of paragraph 2: see occurrences of “small” (“pequena” and, partially crossed out, “pequeno”) at the end of the first and second lines.

This could then be interpreted as a trivial synonymic substitution, an instance of free variation, free, that is, to the extent that it is not determined by grammatical constraints. However, as Daniel Ferrer has argued, no variant is truly free, for any change inscribes itself in one or several systems which constrain it in more than one way. In the game of chess, Ferrer says, it is easy to describe the movements which a piece is allowed to make according to the rules of the game; it is much more difficult to analyze all the connections that, in a given position, associate that piece with all the others constraining its action. These connections are dynamic, changing with every move and evolving according to what the players have in mind. It is the same thing, Ferrer concludes, with textual genesis (FERRER 2011, 169–70). Taking this draft as a game of chess, the substitution of “abridged” for “small” has to be observed against the general backdrop of the *idée fixe* underlying the narrative. The sense of the change is clearly chronological, narrative, if you will: unlike “small”, a word that does not point to a previous condition, “abridged” recalls a former condition of fullness or integrity no longer available in its present state. The substitution is therefore in tune with a text deliberately saturated with allusions to decapitation, abbreviated bodies, as it were, and thus strengthens the impression of post-traumatic syndrome disorder.

The second episode of textual variation I would like to consider is less clearly genetic. It has to do with the name of the record catalogue (an allusion to the famous record catalogue named Schwann?):<sup>10</sup> “Swan”, in the rough draft, whereas in the newspaper column the name was spelled “Swann”, with a double n, likewise in the typographic proofs of the first edition, and also in the first edition and second editions.

10. I acknowledge this possibility to the anonymous collaborator of the Elsevier Language Editing Service who revised this article.



Is the change of Swan into Swann one of those typos the author never became aware of?<sup>11</sup> Or can we infer that he decided to change the name of the catalogue when he was preparing a fair copy of the text for the paper? In the absence of the fair copy, one can only guess. In any event, it is not without interest to read what looks like a prequel of sorts of this narrative, published 24 years earlier in a special issue of the magazine *O Tempo e o Modo* dedicated to the topic “Europe between the two wars”, meaning the 1st and 2nd world wars of the 20th century. The editors sought to include a section with articles about the movements that developed between 1919 and 1939 in the fine arts, theatre, literature, film, and dance. Lourenço was commissioned to write the article on literature, but eventually delivered a strange piece of prose on war experience, describing, among other things, the sea travel to Africa of a soldier about to take part in military operations, besides his readings while travelling and afterwards at the theatre of operations. One of the books he took with him was Proust’s *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, which he started to re-read in the last days of his journey, a work frequently mentioned in this prose piece (LOURENÇO 1964, 180–82):

I read part of the first volume, only now and then interrupting the reading to participate in the preparation for war. [“Fui lendo parte do primeiro volume interrompendo apenas, de vez em quando, para participar na organização da guerra”]

The ship swung and I started to feel seasick, sitting in the lounge, lying in my cabin, checking the night breeze. By that time I was getting well acquainted with Combray, the first form of Swann, les aubépines. I was increasingly admiring the traditional construction, the word integrity, the punctuation [“O barco balouçava e eu comeci a enjoar, sentado na sala, deitado no camarote, verificando a brisa da noite. Estava a conhecer bastante bem Combray, a primeira forma de Swann, as aubépines. Estava

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11. Incidentally, M. S. Lourenço was in touch with members of the Chicago Surrealist group (e.g. Franklin Rosemont) whose imprint was the Black Swan Press. That, at least in certain quarters, this is a word prone to typographical error can be observed in the outstanding biography that António Cândido Franco wrote of the Portuguese poet Mário Cesariny: “The Rosemonts, having returned to the United States, became much more active, founding [ . . . ] a publishing house, The Black Swann [ . . . ]” (FRANCO 2019, 205). There was also a record label named Black Swan, focused on jazz and blues, and later a Swan label, famous for the release of the Beatles hit “She Loves You” onto the American record market.

cada vez mais admirado com a construção tradicional, a integridade da palavra, a pontuação”]

One day we were landed (in the passive voice, as is convenient). I then packed Proust, Claudel’s translations, the New Testament, and prepared myself for a time of outer and inner darkness. And I had it. [“Um dia fomos desembarcados (na voz passiva, como convém). Eu arrumei então o Proust, as traduções de Claudel, o Novo Testamento e preparei-me para um período de trevas exteriores e interiores. E tive-o.”]<sup>12</sup>

I remember that occasionally I tried to read, to no avail. By that time I recalled Combray, the warm afternoons when young Marcel read under or next to a hedgerow, the gate of Swann’s house. [“lembro-me que uma vez por outra tentei ler sem conseguir. Lembrava-me nessa altura de Combray, das tardes quentes em que o pequeno Marcel lia debaixo ou junto a uma sebe, do portão da casa dos Swann.”]

Furthermore, the narrator recalled Swann himself when he was writing his essay about Vermeer, the painting before his eyes; this Swann, he adds, had been inspired by a man by the name of Charles Haas, whom Proust had known and whose photograph was convincing. Lourenço portrays him as having “thin curly hair, a Greek nose and a light on his face that Proust never mentions but which we admit existed” (LOURENÇO 1964, 182).

In this 1964 prose piece there are other references to Proust’s work, but these suffice to consider the possibility that the change of title of the record catalogue from *Swan* (one *n*) to *Swann* (double *n*) may be the result of deliberation. The effect is similar to the metaleptical intrusion of a new dimension into an otherwise realistic narrative: Luanda exists, the Lello bookshop exists, the opera *Salome* exists, but there is no such thing as a Swann catalogue.

In the last part of this section, the key element in paragraph 2 of Lourenço’s narrative, the reference to *Salome*, is briefly addressed. In order to understand the central role *Salome* plays as a narrative index in this text, it is useful to quote a passage of another of Lourenço’s essays for the series *Os Degraus do Parnaso*. It had come out roughly two months before the one I have focused on up until now. In this other essay he writes about the ways that the biblical story of Salome was explored by Flaubert, Wilde, and

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12. One cannot fail to notice here an anticipation of the closure of the 1989 narrative, when reference is made to the approaching night, besides the settling fog.

Aubrey Beardsley, among others. He argues that Wilde was successful in the development of the idea according to which an oath cannot be broken and, consequently, against his better judgment, Herod has to comply with Salome's ghastly wish: having Jokanaan beheaded. In contrast, in a passage of the draft version of this essay that did not make it into the published text, Lourenço includes a critical remark about the way Wilde depicts the Tetrarch (see Fig. 7).

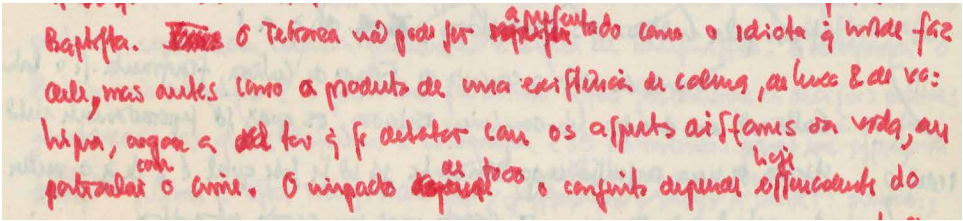


Figure 7. Draft of “Salomé”. Notebook titled *Harmonielehre* (private collection), f. 78r.

The Tetrarch cannot be presented as the idiot portrayed by Wilde, rather as the product of an existence of calm, luxury, and sensuousness, now having to confront himself with the unshapely aspects of life, particularly with crime.<sup>13</sup>

My contention is that Lourenço is projecting himself into this character and that he is similarly haunted by an injunction to transgress a moral frontier because of an oath. The crucial passage in Wilde's *Salome* might be the one in which Herod reacts at Salome's insistence on her request:

Peace! you are always crying out. You cry out like a beast of prey. You must not cry in such fashion. Your voice wearies me. Peace, I tell you! . . . Salome, think on what thou art doing. It may be that this man comes from God. He is a holy man. The finger of God has touched him. God has put terrible words into his mouth. In the palace, as in the desert, God is ever with him . . . . It may be that He is, at least. One cannot

13. Here is the Portuguese text in diplomatic transcription: “O Tetrarca não pode ser ~~representado~~ representado como o idiota q Wilde faz | dele, mas antes como o produto de uma existência de calma, de luxo & de vo=<sup>lú</sup>pia, agora a ~~deb~~ a ter q se debater com os aspectos disformes da vida, em | particular com o crime”.

tell, but it is possible that God is with him and for him. If he die also, peradventure some evil may befall me.

(WILDE 2000, 325)

However, such an argument does not overcome the constraining power of Salome's line: "You have sworn an oath, Herod" (WILDE 2000, 323).

In the 1960s when they took the military oath, the Portuguese soldiers said out loud: "As a Portuguese and a soldier, I swear to serve the Motherland and its institutions, respecting hierarchy and obedience to my commanders, consecrating myself to the fulfilment of my military duty, even if it means the sacrifice of my own life. I swear" ["Como Português e como militar, juro servir a Pátria e as suas instituições, no respeito da hierarquia e da obediência aos chefes, consagrando-me ao cumprimento do dever militar, mesmo com sacrifício da própria vida. Juro"].

As mentioned at the outset of this second section of the article, displacement is taken by Freud as one of the four aspects of dream work. Here displacement seems to be at play via a shared morphology of actions: the oath sworn by Herod, the oath sworn by a soldier; the decapitation of St. John the Baptist, the beheading of the enemy.

## Conclusion

More than pinpointing instances of metalepsis in this text, I sought to interpret Lourenço's narrative through metalepsis as a hermeneutic instrument. I have argued that this text is structured via an incomplete form of metalepsis, the antecedent preparing for a silenced consequent. This technique bears on a specific form of intermediality (leitmotif) and is particularly apt for the representation of trauma. Additionally, it has been suggested that, by suspending diegesis, Lourenço leads the reader to the situation in which the narrator found himself, on the verge of something that is going to happen, falling prey to his or her own ghosts and thereby contributing to extradiegetic imagination. Further, the repression of extradiegetic data during the genesis of the narrative has been underscored. Taking this into consideration, the overall impression given by the text is that it is being told at a safe distance. The style seems to be typical of a detached, if never aloof, and poised narrator who is in control, at least until the moment when, of course, there is something that cannot be told without losing composure, something that can no longer be subject to a displacement strategy or to merely play an indexical role. It has been also observed that

this piece is illuminated by a war narrative that Lourenço published in a Portuguese journal in 1964, in which the experience of war and reading are intertwined, as well as by another text of the *Degraus do Parnaso* series focusing on Salome. Both texts shed light on the displacement and indexical techniques used by the author to structure “Em paisagem tropical | alma branca missa preta”. All things considered, unlike baroque, romantic, and postmodern authors, who feel attracted by metaleptic contamination, Lourenço bears the traces of a classical or realist author who knows his bit of rhetoric and manages to observe his narrator from afar (cf. PIER & SCHAEFFER 2005, 10–11, *qtd.* PIER 2016).

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