News and fiction: interwoven issues in O Recreo (Lisbon, 1836) / Notícia e ficção: rubricas entrelaçadas em O Recreo (Lisboa, 1836)

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ABSTRACT
The library Real Gabinete Português de Leitura (The Royal Portuguese Cabinet of Reading), in Rio de Janeiro, retains, in its printed version, the volume II of the monthly newspaper O Recreo, jornal das familias (1836), an illustrated journal that brings a wide variety of subjects to the readers, from news to short stories. The content includes a "Sentence" and a "Lawsuit", long legal texts comprised of language and elements of narrative fiction, which dialogue with each other and with other headlines of the newspaper, despite the spatial and temporal division of publications. From the reading of the periodical's photographs, taken on-site, and assisted by Tengarrinha (1989), Rodrigues (1998) and Thérenty (2007, 2015), we analyze the relationship between these texts, published in O Recreo, aiming to better understand narrative fiction techniques in nineteenth-century newspapers. The initial research that generated this text occurred during a post-doctoral period, at IBILCE/UNESP - Júlio de Mesquita Filho State University of São Paulo.


RESUMO

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Imprensa periódica portuguesa; Século XIX; Jornal “O Recreo”; Rubrica. Ficção.

1 Introduction

The library of the Real Gabinete Português de Leitura (The Royal Portuguese Cabinet of Reading) houses the 300 page, second volume of the monthly periodical, O Recreo. Jornal das...
famílias (Leisure – a family newspaper) printed in Lisbon by the Imprensa Nacional (National Press) – the official Portuguese news agency in 1836 (Fig.1) – as conferred on the front page of the periodical.

The periodical is also available on the internet, in a digital version of this second volume, on the website Googlebooks, providing the version allocated to the Indiana University Library (AP 65, R 312, V. 2).

Figure 1: front page of O Recreio, jornal das famílias (Leisure, a family newspaper)

Source: Real Gabinete Português de Leitura (The Royal Portuguese Cabinet of Letters) (photo personal archive)

At the end of the printed version, it is possible to consult the index, which numbers diversified content, from announcements of recently published books to informative articles, which are also very varied, contemplating longer, more reflexive texts. Respecting the orthography and punctuation of the consulted source, we have as an example: “The invention of the press” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 34-37), “Geography: kingdom of Belgium” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 105-107) and “Das Cruzadas” (“Of the Crusades”) (O Recreio, 1836, p. 115-119). Besides curiosities such as “How they make butter in Scotland” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 83), and “Public libraries in France” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 71).

Biographies have also been published, such as Suzana Herbez’s, on page 96 of the periodical.

The beauty of O Recreio is highlighted by the many full-page drawings, in black and white, printed throughout the periodical, illustrating the issues addressed, and providing the reader with a moment of appreciation, consolidation of the content or synthesis of ideas.

We know it is not an isolated case because, according to José Tengarinha (1989), there were illustrations in periodicals dating from the previous decade, with further development from 1834 on, and illustration in periodicals had already been established as a common practice in other European countries:

2 “Geographia: reino da Belgica”.
3 “Modo de fazer manteiga na Escócia”.
4 “Bibliothecas publicas em França”.

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Although, by Decree of September 11th, 1824, the Oficina Régia Litográfica was created, it was not until 1834 that private lithographs appeared and the process was truly popularized in our country, broadening its benefits to the periodic press. The appearance in Paris of illustrated publishing, like the *Magasin Pittoresque* (1833), soon reproduced in Belgium, encouraged the creation in our country of identical publishing, thus being found *O Panorama*, a highly elevated level of illustrated magazine, and then *O Arquivo Pitoresco* (Lisbon, 1857) which held an engraving school, *O Ocidente* (Lisbon, 1878), of long existence, among others. (TENGARRINHA, 1989. p. 198).

The illustrations of *O Recreio* also had a didactic aspect. For example, the monthly’s “Fashion” section, included topics related to the dress codes, clothes themselves and accessories, inserting figures along with explanations, which contained the outline of colors and materials utilized in the making of the pieces. An example can be found on page 97, in which we read, along with illustrations: “Adorned with roses hairstyle, flesh colored tulle dress, with a shorter skirt. Hairstyle adorned with small flowers, cotton or linen white dress. Pine colored jacket, with matching colored buttons, black pants” (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2: “Fashions”**

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It is interesting to notice that the full-page drawings, inserted in the body of the newspaper or at the end of the issue, both illustrate a previous article, and a future text to be published in the following issue, giving the reader an idea of the upcoming topics. In addition, other illustrations can be enjoyed throughout the reading, from traditional sketches to small figures, which adorn the articles, inserted among headings.

Ten pages of the periodical proved valuable to the research, focusing on the study of fictional narratives, by publishing the “Verdict and execution of Fieschi and his accomplices” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 57-67). Initially, the title suggests a piece of news, but the reading allows for other impressions, attesting for the difficulty in identifying the genre of some of O Recreio’s publications. A reading of the story in which José Fieschi figures as the protagonist reveals that it was a report of the truthful events prior to the execution of a group led by José Fieschi, who promoted an attack on the King Louis Philippe, on July 25th, 1835. Despite the plan’s failure, although the king survived, the attack had serious consequences: 18 killed and 41 injured, among those present (Cf. ONCKEN, 1894, p. 142).

Moreover, it cannot be considered a translation, given that it is not announced as such, unlike the article “Educação Moral” (Moral Education) (O Recreio, 1836, p. 246), which ends with “Translated from Journal des Connaissances utiles”.

2 A sentence to the reader

The report about Fieschi’s conviction, however, presents countless characteristics that could confuse the reader concerning the truthfulness or fictional character of the story. This occurs through the dedication given to character descriptions, dialogues, location where different events take place and the chronological control of the narrative time, causing the reader to go through a mix of emotions that almost makes he or she believe it is not an actual retelling of something that happened, but rather a short story. The omniscient construction of the narrator’s point of view certainly contributes to this sensation of reading fiction, but the narrator is not neutral when telling the facts. The narrator leads us to the tragic outcome with tumultuously, and on the side of the defendan
ts, provoking the reader to wonder whether the court’s decision was indeed fair.

The verdict announced, in the title, is informed on page 58, where we read about the conviction that led to the decapitation of the man involved. Nonetheless, on the next page, the

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7 “Sentença de execução de Fieschi, e de seus cúmplices.”
8 “Traduzido do Journal des Connaissances utiles”.

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narrator interrupts the facts to elaborate a long digression in which two letters are transcribed and commented on by the protagonist on the night prior to his death: one to his lawyer, and another one to a religious person in his circle of friends. Again, we are left wondering about the genre of the text, because the transcriptions of the letters lead the reader to link the “Verdict” to the fictional narrative texts, similar to a novel, whose hybrid contents allow for an insertion of other textual genres.

There are also parts that could serve as examples of physical and psychological descriptions of characters, such as the following, which contains two:

It was admirable the contrast there was between Morey’s silence and immobility and Fieschi’s petulance and restlessness, who could not be silent. - Very well, he said, alright. – But where is my overcoat? Can we find it or not? I cannot go without my overcoat. – They will answer that it was on your shoulder and that the key was lost. – How was it lost! Search the pockets of my pants, perhaps it is there… or in my vest, we can only assume it is in the vest, the vest I gave one of these gentlemen this morning. – they finally brought his black overcoat, and put it on him. – It is very good! This overcoat is mine? Can I get rid of it? …" (O Recreio, 1836, p. 63).

In this passage, two of the defendants are compared with relation to their behavior during the preparation for the reading of their death sentences. The peculiarity lies in the restlessness of the group’s leader, who, even in such a tense moment, is not only unable to be quiet, but is also vehemently claiming a piece of clothing. The dialogue, besides demonstrating the protagonist’s disturbed character, allows for the perception of his satirical vein. The defendant, consciously ignoring his own near annihilation, mocks the soldiers by making them come and go, checking pockets and chests, asking each other, looking for an overcoat he was not interested in, since when he gets it, he asks them if he can get rid of it, leaving it to someone. He was only interested in making the soldiers move around at his command.

The conclusion that the fictional stories published in the periodicals in the 19th century were often based on information spurred by the surrounding topic headings on the page, and that the narratives took advantage of daily facts, was raised by nineteenth century newspaper and French feuilleton (serial stories – similar to Anglo-Irish broadside ballads and chapbooks) scholars, such as Marie-Ève Thérenty (2015), for whom “the boundary that separates fiction from referential text in the newspaper – boundary materialized by the line that separates the footer from the superior part of the

9 “Era para admirar o contraste que fazia o silencio e a imobilidade de Morey com a petulancia e a inquietação de Fieschi que não estava callado um momento. - Muito bem, disse elle, está bem. - Porém por onde anda a minha sobrecasaca? Então, acha-se ou não se acha? Eu, sem a sobrecasaca não posso ir. - Responderão-lhe que estava no seu bahu e que se tinha perdido a chave. - Como se perdeo! Busquem na nos bolsos das minhas calças, talvez que alli a tenha... ou então no meu colete, mas é de suppór que esteja no colete, no colete que dei esta manhã a um desses Senhores. - trouxerão-lhe finalmente a sua sobrecasaca preta, e puserão-lh’a. - Está muito bem! Com que esta sobrecasaca é minha? Então posso ainda dispôr della? ..." (O Recreio, 1836, p. 63).

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page – is very permeable.10 (p. 124). The author refers to Gabriel Thoveron’s (1996) work, who considers that the handout:

“[…] will extract its themes from other headings in the newspaper: it will borrow beautiful crimes and great misdoings of fait divers; the aspects of the chronicle, vulgarizing geography through traveling, the technique for their heroes inventions. It will all converge in its lines: it will seem to offer at the same time an escape from reality, evasion the entertaining and reality itself, becoming itself a small encyclopedia in which there is always something to learn.”11 (THOVERON, 1996, p. 165 apud THERENTY, 2015, p. 124).

Even though we are aware that Fieschi’s story, published in O Recreio, was not a short story, but a factual news item reported with characteristics, peculiarities and figures of speech of fiction, we believe that the finding of this text was relevant for the purposes of our work, including regarding reflections about the headings previously presented.

In addition, whether doubtful, we believe it is possible to analyze “Fieschi’s death sentence and his accomplices” as a fictional text and that many of its episodes contribute to this purpose. For example, regarding the detailing of curiosity in light of the foretelling of the defendants demise, not only by authority, but also by the city’s residents, the following quote is illustrative:

The government had ordered the installation, from place to place, of a considerable force of cavalry and infantry. There were six thousand and two hundred armed men, besides a certain number of police agents, who would not allow curious people to cross the streets where the defendants were to pass. The trees of the immediate gardens were full of people, just like the walls that surround the Boulevards. Without exaggeration, it is possible to count twenty-five thousand people in the audience for the execution.12 (O Recreio, 1836, p. 65).

From the excerpt, the reader can visualize the movement of onlookers passing by the hanging location of the defendants, the frenzied, rowdy, movements of citizens crowding on tops of trees, controlled in vain by the thousands of police, equipped for combat. In addition to the visual


12 “O Governo tinha mandado colocar, de distancia em distancia, uma força respeitavel de Cavallaria e Infantaria. Estavão em armas seis mil e duzentos homens, além de um sem numero de Agentes de Policia, que não permitiâo aos curiosos que atravessassem as ruas por onde de vão passar os Réos. As arvores dos jardins immediatos estavão cheias de gente, assim como os muros que cercão os Boulevards. Sem exageração, pôde calcular-se em vinte e cinco mil o numero dos espectadores que assistiâo ao supplicio”

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image, the narrator adds kinesthetic aspects to the scene by almost making the reader hear the noise from the crowds, the screams of curious passersby and the authorities, the sound of horse trotting, and the slanderous comments of those who cheer the execution.

Regarding the importance given to the narrating time of facts, there is a concern to relate it in detail in order to understand the chronological sequence of events, as the following excerpts illustrate: “The preparation will be concluded at seven and a quarter” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 64); “The funeral company left at seven thirty” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 64-5); and “At 7 hours and 53 minutes the funeral company arrived at the foot of the gallows, and 5 minutes later the triple penalty had been executed” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 67). This causes the reader to follow the sequence of facts with suspense and sentimentalism.

In cases of articles such as these, we rely on studies by Marie-Ève Therenty (2007, p. 26), who, in the 19th century, moved for the development of a poetics of the newspaper, for a new type of daily journalism writing:

The newspaper served as a catalyst for a daily poetics which was inspired in the modalities as much as in the rhythms of journalistic writing, its predilection themes (the street, the crime) and its narrative protocols. It created a real poetic laboratory where literature was converted from history to politics, from eternal to contingent, from macrosome to microsome, from universe to nation, or even to province. (THÉRENTY, 2007, p. 26).

Thus, analyzing this article as a fictional narrative is, in our view, a coherent maneuver, even though we know that it concerns a real event. The reader who is bound to the certitude of some definition of the textual genre “Sentence”, accusing us of being confused and wrong, may cast the first stone.

3 Other cases, other sentences

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13 “Concluíram-se os preparativos ás sete horas e um quarto.”
14 “O acompanhamento funebre partiu ás sete horas e meia.”
15 “A's 7 horas e 53 minutos tinha chegado ao pé do patibulo o funebre companhamento, e 5 minutos depois, estava executada a triplice sentença.”
16 Original text in French: “Le journal a servi de catalyseur à une poétique du quotidien qui s’inspirait à la fois des modalités et des rythmes d’écriture du journalisme, de ses thèmes de prédilection (la rue, le crime) et de ses protocoles de narration. Il a formé un véritable laboratoire poétique où la littérature s’est convertie de l’historique à la politique, de l’éternel au contingent, du macrosome au microcosme, de l’univers à la nation, voire à la province”. (THÉRENTY, 2007, p. 26) [translated to Portuguese by Simone Cristina Mendonça and, then, to English by Nicole Medeiros Rocha].

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Resuming our examination of the monthly, between pages 152 and 154 (O Recreio, 1836) we found the short story (or fait divers?) “What can miserable do?”, whose sad plot anticipated in the title presents the story of a long-time, unemployed father. The little house where the family lives is described containing few objects, and the domestic environment becomes even sadder by the severe winter in the city of London: “The cold grew bigger with the hunger, and this poor mother, to warm her daughter, would not get out of bed” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 153).

The temporal structure of the narrative, which unfolds slowly, is chronologically marked, and informs us that the protagonist, Arnold, had not eaten in six days. The time period is enough to urge him to beg for money, but after he is mistreated, he decides to rob a pedestrian following him. The sudden change in character, even if it is justified by hunger and recent humiliation, surprises the reader who realizes that there is soon regret. The outcome portrays a sad scene: on the following day a man who was robbed and felt sorry for Arnold knocks on his door and gives his wife a bag full of money. She calls for her husband in vain. He, fearing that this man may be seeking revenge, had taken his own life.

Tragic outcomes were common ground in fictional narratives of this periodical, and do not seem to disturb the feelings of the consumers of the newspapers and magazines, as they were used to strong emotions, accustomed to ordinary news of life sentences, ultimately bystanders to the death scenes described. Among the truth and fiction, told with many tears, tremors, anguish, battles, blood and hangings, we were surprised to come across the long case of “Attack of July 25th, 1836. ALIBAUD’S PROCESS.” (O Recreio, jornal das famílias, 1836, p. 179).

Once more, there is a fact, a death penalty decreed to an accused of attempting an attack on King Louis Philippe. It was published in detail, in 14 pages, with text subdivisions, according to the steps in the legal proceedings: “Audience of July 8th 20” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 179), “Audience of July 9th 21” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 188), and “Alibaud’s execution 22” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 191).

Time in this “Lawsuit” was also thoroughly marked in a chronological manner, as in the following: “The doors to the ordinary room of assembly sessions of pairs open at 10 o’clock 23” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 179) and “The penalty of the parricides, where Alibaud was condemned, on

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17 “O que pode ser a miseria”.
18 “O frio augmentava com a fome, e esta pobre mãe, para aquecer sua filha, não se tirava da cama.”
19 “Atentado de 25 de julho de 1836. PROCESSO DE ALIBAUD.”
20 “Audiência do dia 8 de Julho.”
21 “Audiência do dia 9 de Julho.”
22 “Execução de Alibaud.”
23 “As portas da Sala ordinária das Sessões da Camara dos Pares abrem-se às 10 horas em ponto.”

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Saturday July 9th, was executed on Monday 11th of the same month around 5 in the morning.24° (O Recreio, 1836, p. 191). Similarly, there is a narrator who rigorously describes the facts, allowing the reader to follow along without getting lost in the sequence, from the accusation to the outcome, without giving the reader a chance to maintain neutrality about what has occurred. The unprecedented maneuver in this sentence is in the insertion of direct speech, with a great number of lines dedicated to the reproduction of the dialogue that occurred during the defendant’s trial:

So the president says: Stand up, Alibaud, - What is your name?
The accused: Luiz Alibaud,
P. How old are you?
D. 26 years old.
P. Where are you from?
D. From Nimes.
P. What is your profession?
D. Ex-military.
P. Where do you live?
D. In Paris, on Marais street, n.° 3.25° (O Recreio, 1836, p. 180).

There are also cases in which the narrator places him or herself inside the dialogue, briefly commenting the enunciation context, as in the examples: “P. But why did you leave Spain! The accused, raising his voice: To kill the King (Feeling.)26° (O Recreio, 1836, p. 183) and “The accused: I was quite convinced of what I was doing (the accused sits down e repeats in a low voice): I would do it again if I could (prolonged feeling)27° (O Recreio, 1836, p. 185). Thus, it is through the speech of the accused – this time without any accomplices, and in the slight indications of reactions that it provoked – that we become familiar with the protagonist of the attempted attack: revolutionary, republican, sure of his actions, unemployed for some time, son of poor parents and a friend to people who have supported him during the time he planned his actions, without knowing what his project was. From the witnesses’ speeches, we know that he is a respectable man, philanthropic from youth.

24° “A pena dos parricidas, em que foi condemnado Alibaud, no Sabbado 9 de Julho ultimo, foi executada Segunda feira 11 do mesmo mez pelas 5 horas da manhã”.
25° “O Presidente diz então: Levantai vos, Alibaud, — O vosso nome ?
O Accusado: Luiz Alibaud,
P. Que idade tendes ?
R. 26 annos.
P. Donde sois natural?
R. De Nimes.
P. Que profissão é a vossa !
R. Ex-Militar.
P. A vossa residencia ?
R. Em Paris, na rua des Marais, n.° 3”
26° “P. Mas porque motivo sahistes de Hespanha! O Accusado, levantando a voz: Para matar o Rei (Sensação.).”
27° “O Accusado: Eu estava bem convencido do que fazia (o Accusado senta-se e repete em voz baixa): Se podesse ainda o tornaria a fazer (sensação prolongada)”
In the few moments that the narrator exposes the facts without using dialogue, we realize that Alibaud does not demonstrate any regret for his actions, evidenced on the second court appearance, in which he keeps reading his newspaper while the accusations are being read.

Convinced that his failed attempt to kill the king of France should not disqualify his previous conduct, he declares: “I have been atrociously slandered; they are even comparing me to Fieschi: What do I have in common with that man?” (O Recreio, 1836, p. 190). Given this character’s speech, we cannot fail to remember the intimate relationship between fiction and reality that has been established in the pages of the newspapers and magazines, heightened by the dialogue within news published in the same newspaper, in different time periods, reiterated in the following:

In this day, like in Fieschi’s execution, there were authorities there in anticipation, an out of habit military apparatus was dispatched, because since 3 in the morning all the outposts were armed with intention of watching the sad scene. The gallows had been assembled between midnight and 3 in the morning; and since 4 the Service Troops, made up of 5 Infantry Battalions, 5 Cavalry Squads, many City Guard Companies on foot and on horses, and a great number of Justice Officials were already in the intended posts; we can say that all of Saint-Jacques District was in state of siege.

The excerpt causes the impression that the reader is facing a sequel of Fieschi’s sentence, published months before, instead of reading a real report of a legal proceeding. There is not only a mix of historical facts and fiction, History and Literature, of what happened and what could have happened, as defined by Aristotle (2005), but we can see that even the events, when described in the periodicals, can be confused, given how they were written.

Conclusion

In the case of the periodical examined in this study, it was possible to verify that events can in fact be merged: an old case can mention another one, recalling a publishing from previous months, updating the reader on new facts that are similar to past ones, inviting him or her to admire an enlarged frame of the real situation of their world over the year and reflect on their time.

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28 “Tenho sido atrozmente calumniado; até me compararão a Fieschi: Que haverá de commum entre mim e esse homem?”

29 “Neste dia, como no da execução de Fieschi, tinhão as Authoridades, com muita antecipação, despregado um apparato militar fora do costume, pois desde as 3 horas da madruga estavão em armas todos os destacamentos destinados para assistir aquella tão triste scena. O Patibulo tinha-se armado da meia noite às 3 horas da madrugada; e desde as 4 as Tropas de Serviço, compostas de 5 Batalhões de Infantaria, 5 Esquadros de Cavalaria, muitas Companhias de Guardas Municipaes a pé e a cavalo, e um grande numero de Oficiaes de Justiça ocupavão já os pontos que se lhes havia destinado; estando, para assim dizer, em estado de sitio todo o Districto de Saint-Jacques.”
Thus, in the editorial play prepared for the reader, fiction uses historical facts, historical facts can be narrated according to fictional conventions, and finally, news (true or fictional) can establish a communication or continuity over subsequent issues of periodicals.

References


