



Notes on censorship under the Estado Novo regime in Portugal: the case of *História do Barba Azul* from Livraria Civilização

Notas sobre la censura bajo el régimen del Estado Novo en Portugal: el caso de História do Barba Azul de la Livraria Civilização

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Abstract

The action of the censorship apparatus was legally institutionalized in Portugal during the dictatorial regime. The goal of this concise study is to recognize two versions of the story of *Bluebeard* which were published in 1954 and 1956. These two versions, called *História do Barba Azul*, were part of “Coleção Carochinha”, a series of traditional short stories. We will therefore seek to show that “*a posteriori* censorship” (Machado, 2015) took place during a process of seizure by the political police, PIDE. To legitimize the seizure of the volume under analysis, it was stated that it had not been revised by the CLEM, according to the document on the disciplinary process 1/8, from April 25th, 1955. It was pointed out that the story of *Bluebeard* (*História do Barba Azul*), was the only one in the collection that would remain seized, and any future publication of this story would continue to be forbidden.

Keywords: Children’s Literature; Bluebeard; Censorship; Estado Novo; Livraria Civilização

Resumen

La acción del aparato de censura se institucionalizó legalmente en Portugal durante el régimen dictatorial. El objetivo de este breve estudio es reconocer dos versiones del cuento de Barba Azul publicadas en 1954 y 1956. Estas dos versiones, llamadas *História do Barba Azul*, formaban parte de la “Coleção Carochinha”, una serie de cuentos tradicionales. Por tanto, intentaremos demostrar que la “censura *a posteriori*” (Machado, 2015) tuvo lugar durante un proceso de incautación por parte de la policía política, la PIDE. Para legitimar la incautación del volumen en análisis, se afirmó que el mismo no había sido revisado por el CLEM, según el documento del proceso disciplinario 1/8, de 25 de abril de 1955. Se señaló que el cuento de Barba Azul (*História do Barba Azul*), era el único de la colección que permanecería incautado, y cualquier publicación futura de este cuento continuaría prohibida.

Palabras clave: Literatura Infantil; Barba Azul; Censura; Estado Novo; Livraria Civilização

NOTES ON CENSORSHIP AS IT APPLIED TO CHILDREN'S BOOKS DURING THE PORTUGUESE ESTADO NOVO REGIME

In the 1930s, Portugal was immersed in intense political uncertainty and marked economic fragility. This situation was shaped by two main spheres: on the one side, a current of conservative military republicanism aiming for “a minimally republican Republic, that is, liberal, orderly, based on an ‘English-style’ bipartisanship but preserving controlled party pluralism and fundamental freedoms” (Rosas, 2012, p. 71, original translation); on the other side, a faction “where Salazar’s discreet but indisputable leadership is asserted” (Rosas, 2012, p. 71, original translation). There was a progressive consolidation of a nationalist, conservative, authoritarian discourse, supported by a censorship and police system (Barros, 2022). António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) will therefore be attributed the role of saviour, partly due to “the virtuosity of Salazar’s rhetoric” (Rosas, 2012, p. 72, original translation), which gradually transformed the full professor at the University of Coimbra into a natural leader. In the words of Pena-Rodríguez (2012), he became “el líder natural de los portugueses: un hombre del pueblo que quería cambiar Portugal, que quería renovar el espíritu de los portugueses con un exacerbado sentido patriótico (nacional-católico) basado en la tríada ideológica ‘Deus, Pátria e Família’” (pp. 178-179).

Indeed, the regime’s ideological matrix was strongly deformed, since, shortly after the coup d’état of May 28, 1926, and the implementation of Military Dictatorship, there was a clear intention to manipulate the perception of reality of Portuguese citizens. As maintained by Pena-Rodríguez (2012), such deliberate manipulation was performed in the following terms: “a partir de las informaciones de los medios de comunicación para construir una percepción nueva y falsa sobre la estructura política y social del país” (pp. 188-189). The allegedly provisional and exceptional nature that led to the return of prior censorship, from this occasion until the Carnation Revolution, was fundamentally based on three diplomas: Decree 12 008, July 29, 1926; Decree 22 469, April 11, 1933 and Decree 26 589, May 14, 1936 (Rodrigues, 1980). Therefore, it is important to note that, as Júlia Leitão de Barros (2022) highlights, “censorship, as a propagandistic instrument of ideological framing, has been, since the Military Dictatorship, a conditioning factor in the perception of reality, working in construction of an idyllic profile of the Portuguese ‘nation’, appeased, humble and satisfied” (Barros, 2022, p. 195, original translation).

Children's books, or books whose potential audience are children, have been and remain the target of an inquisitive look from religious, educational, and political systems, across different geographies and historical periods, and have been the subject of opinions or decisions which can be more or less conscientious, both in democratic systems and in dictatorships (Bermúdez, 2023). These forms of control or manipulation are generally legitimized by criteria like “la moral, las buenas costumbres o la sensibilidad del lector. Lo que supone de entrada concebir al niño como un ser en formación, y que tener contacto con ciertos contenidos puede contaminar su natural estado de inocencia” (Díaz, 2020, p. 12). There are several methods for restriction and conditioning, guided by judgements which are totalizing and often subjective in nature, supposed to be unquestionable, even though, in actuality, they mirror the personal and ideological sympathies and preferences of the censors themselves (Balça et al., 2017; Bárbara, 2014; Tena Fernández et al., 2020; Machado, 2015; Ramos, 2021; Silva, 2023).

Despite the difficulties in accessing the original/official documents and data, within the Spanish context, the research on Francoist censorship has seen significant developments, with some of them focusing on the analysis of similarities between the two countries. These studies suggest that writing for children in Spain aimed to reflect an edifying vision, faithful to the official doctrine and Catholicism, of a propagandistic nature and patriotic expression (Martens, 2021; Soto Vázquez & Tena Fernández, 2021; Tena Fernández, 2023; Tena Fernández et al., 2023). Thus, in 1955, official decrees and ministerial orders began to emerge in this country, regulating publications aimed at children and adolescents concerning authorized content, control methods, and the prizes awarded to them (Martens, 2021). “Prior restraint”, “self-censorship” and “censorship *a posteriori*” correspond to the different typologies of censorship that have been listed by Ana Maria Machado (2015), and the first of these was enforced in Portugal during the dictatorial regime, between May 20th 1933 and April 24th 1974. The activity of the censorship apparatus, institutionalized in law on April 11th, 1933 (Decree-Law 22.469), included cuts, disfigurements, fines, seizure (with the shutdown of establishments), and several kinds of substitutions made to the verbal, illustrative and graphic content of not only national publications, but also books of foreign authorship. This repressive or intimidatory practice also resulted in self-censorship in literary and editorial activities (Azevedo, 1997; Ramos, 2021; Rodrigues, 1980; Silva, 2023).

When it comes to censorship of literature geared towards children and young adults in particular, Ricardo Pinto (2019) notes that it began in 1950, through the publication of the *Instruções sobre Literatura Infantil*. This document

records the intention to create a Special Commission for Children's and Young Adult Literature (Comissão Especial para a Literatura Infantil e Juvenil, or CELIJ). According to Pinto (2019) and the documents in the *Espólio de Curvelo* (n.d.), Coronel Armando Larcher, as head of Censorship Services since 1944, conceived the following idea: “a ideia de consagrar um sistema que pudesse fiscalizar as publicações periódicas infanto-juvenis e em geral toda a literatura e espectáculos infanto-juvenis” (Pinto, 2019, p. 282). As a consequence of this, on December 15th, 1950, the CELIJ came into office in Palácio de São Bento, in the presence of the Minister for the Presidency. The commission was headed by Doutor João Serras e Silva (1868-1956, former Full Professor of the Faculty of Medicine and head of School Health), with Doutor Edmundo Curvelo (1913-1954, Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Letters and from the Institute of Professional Guidance), and Dr. Américo Cortês Pinto (1896-1979, writer and member of Parliament, and a Medicine graduate from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Coimbra) as vice-presidents. The board members also included D. Noémia Cruz (teacher at Escola D. Maria I school and the wife of Edmundo Curvelo), Dr. Eduardo Antonino Pestana (lawyer and teacher at Liceu Pedro Nunes), José de Oliveira Cosme (director of the newspaper *Mundo de Aventuras*), Adolfo Simões Muller (director of *Diabrete*) and Luís Moita (advertiser and graphic technician). In 1952, this commission would become the Comissão para a Literatura e Espectáculos para Menores (CLEM).

One cannot ignore the serious repercussions that this politically and socially environment had on the level of literary production (both for adults, and literature directed at children). Therefore, the goals of this study are to bring to light two versions, published in 1954 and 1956¹, of the *História do Barba Azul*, included in the collection “Coleção Carochinha”².

The criteria that guided our selection of this *corpus* derive from the fact that the rewritten second edition was the only one that was analysed by Maria Elisabete Bárbara (2014), in a total of eleven works published between 1925 and 1975. These works centred on the tale originally authored by Perrault, which included an epilogue noting that Blue Beard and his wife had returned to a state of marital

¹ The 1956 publication includes the short story *Dona Gralha-Maçadora*, by Salomé de Almeida. It is also relevant to remember that, in 1975 (Anonymous, 1975), a new edition with the same title would appear, similar in all aspects to the 1956 version, which is why we did not consider it relevant to include it for analysis in this *corpus*; however, it should be noted that the version selected for re-edition was the one which is farther from the French hypotext.

² According to António Barreto (2002), most of the volumes included illustrations by Irene Mariarees, even though the volumes under analysis do not include any indication of authorship for the visual discourse.

harmony, in the place of the well-known ending that told the story of the death of the protagonist. According to Nuno Cravo (2009, p. 65), cited by Bárbara, the emphatic changes that were made were due to the intervention of the censorship board with the following aim in mind: “manter o título disponível e a coleção completa, a tradução foi aligeirada para uma edição *ad usum delphini* que não amedrontasse os filhos, melindrasse os pais e contrariasse as leis (Nuno Cravo, 2009 as cited in Bárbara, 2014, p. 174). In a footnote, Maria Elisabete Bárbara (2014) suggests a possible intervention by Salomé de Almeida, who was responsible for the adaptation and “cuja experiência lhe permite jogar com uma série de ingredientes do maravilhoso” (Bárbara, 2014, p. 174).

As happens with several other stories from oral tradition containing violent episodes, which are nourished by a wide symbolic repertoire (Michelli, 2020), if we focus on the content of the story that has been chosen for analysis, it too undeniably collides with the vision that is put forth in Article 4 of the *Instruções sobre Literatura Infantil* (Direção dos Serviços de Censura, 1950, p. 6). In the light of this, it is not surprising that there was a significant number of changes made to the 1956 edition in relation to the universally known French hypotext. The thorough alterations that were made attest, according to Maria Bárbara (2014), to a clear approximation to the ideological values of the Estado Novo, namely: “os benefícios da ruralidade, a frugalidade, o amor ao próximo e a atenção dispensada aos mais velhos, a capacidade de arrependimento e regeneração do ser humano, de perdão, mas, sobretudo, a exaltação da família e do amor entre esposos” (p. 175). Indeed, this is a narrative which, during the dictatorial period, could easily be made to match moralizing and pedagogical precepts, lending itself to a clear differentiation of behavior between women and men, as noted by Bárbara (2014). In this regard, it is perhaps important to remember that the responsibility of União de Resistentes Antifascistas Portuguesas due to the constitutional inequality between men and women was clear at the time in Portugal, as highlighted in the book entitled *Elas estiveram nas prisões do fascismo*: “criando e propagandeando, como se de um valor superior se tratasse, a imagem de ‘Fada do Lar’ – a esposa, a mãe, a cuidadora doce e delicada” (União dos Resistentes Antifascistas Portugueses [URAP], 2021, p. 11).

Besides, it is important to bring to the fore the late receptivity of Perrault’s tales in the Portuguese context, only registered in 1819 according to Maria Teresa Cortez (2001, p. 51). Focusing specifically on the short story *La Barbe Bleue*, one realizes that, during the Estado Novo period, out of the four short stories that have been chosen for analysis in the previously cited study (Bárbara, 2014) (the others

being *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, *Cendrillon ou la Petite Pantoufle de Verre*, and *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*), the one that centers on a man with a peculiar coloured beard is the one with the lowest number of translations. Bárbara (2014) speculates on the reasons behind such scarcity of translations: “talvez por ser bastante violento e, por essa razão, visto como menos próprio para a educação e o entretenimento infantil” (p. 143). Thus, in the study we have just mentioned (Bárbara, 2014), there are no explanations about the real reasons triggered and guided this significant change in the book that was published two years later, and it is unknown whether it was a mere editorial strategy, for example, or whether there had been some type of censorship intervention. This, therefore, was the main concern that led us to move forward with this research.

Methodologically, this study entails certain obstacles and limitations due to the scarcity of and difficult access to sources and, above all, their rigorous and clarifying interpretation. Nevertheless, the documents in the *Espólio de Curvelo* and the *Disciplinary Process* from 1955, found in the *Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo* (*National Archives at Torre do Tombo*), are among the bibliographic references that have been taken into consideration. The methodology followed in this study mainly embraces qualitative techniques, critical analysis and interpretation of content, based on an inductive approach (Neves & Guerra, 2015).

A PROPOSED READING OF *A HISTÓRIA DO BARBA AZUL* (1954 AND 1956), PUBLISHED BY LIVRARIA CIVILIZAÇÃO

Charles Perrault (1628-1703), French academic and relevant figure in the court of the Louis XIV, published, in 1697, the collection *Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye* (*Mother Goose Tales*), with the subtitle *Stories or Tales from Times Past, with Morals*, made up of short stories, in prose, and their moralities, in verse. These stories were put together from traditional plots and an oral repertoire that was heard by children and adults (Bravo-Villasante, 1977). The (re)compilation, adaptation, rewriting and visual revisiting (both in the printed format and also in photographic, cinematographic, theatrical and other types of productions) of some of these narratives, which have been constantly (re)read and (re)watched until contemporary times, speaks to the universality and persistence of certain stories that have become true classics.

Symbolically (yet a little euphemistically) portraying universal concerns through expressive and captivating storytelling, the *Bluebeard* fairy tale has reached this same status of timelessness and widespread fame among stories that

centre on serial killers, which have been widely popularized across different times in human history. Even though this study does not seek to trace the historical (or otherwise) roots of this tale, it is important to remember that, as one realizes through a generic read-through of the story under analysis, it fits into the group of stories whose plot focuses on the hegemony of male power, in concurrence with a portrayal of feminine fallibility and subjugation. In this way, the triad that is structured around prohibition, transgression and punishment sustains this intrigue. Effectively, it is about a male character who distinguishes himself by abusive and terrifying behaviour, of which the raw and descriptive portrayal of the tragic space of the forbidden room (where refined opulence and decorative exoticism are quickly replaced by the horrendous) is the strongest indication (Michelli, 2020; Simonsen, 1992; Zipes, 2014). It is also relevant to point out that, in this story, death takes a central place: a literary strategy motivated by the strong connection with the popular universe and the undeniable state of deprivation in which the French commoners were living at the time of writing (Segabinazi & Barbosa, 2020).

The story under analysis stands out for the strangeness in both the protagonist's features and the secrecy around what had happened to his previous wives, elements which deepen the aura of mystery and suspicion (Michelli, 2020). Nevertheless, the peculiar colour of the beard is quickly disregarded by the young lady, in the face of his riches and deliberately deceptive good manners he flaunts, and this can be seen in a passage from the text that accentuates the naïveté of the feminine character faced with a wealthy suitor (Segabinazi & Barbosa, 2020; Simonsen, 1992).

In a shift from the traditional sequence in most fantasy fairy tales (which usually end with a marriage), the challenge that is set by the male character shortly after the wedding is brought to centre stage in the plot, manifested in the topic of the forbidden room and the theme of the monstrous husband³ (Michelli, 2020; Simonsen, 1992). This is a cautionary tale where, according to Simonsen (1992), the young woman must face and overcome “the imminent threat of death by her husband's hand” (Michelli, 2020, p. 113, original translation). The token of non-compliance with this test takes the metaphorical shape of a key. For Simonsen, the key is a magical object which highlights its dubious character and can be

³ It's important to highlight that in this short story the ruthless protagonist does not have a mystical or animalistic appearance from an anatomical point of view, even though this common in European fairy tale ATT 311. In this specific case, his inhuman character is artificially disguised, but Elisabete Bárbara (2014) nevertheless highlights some of the traits that bring him closer to the figure of the ogre.

understood as “la seule marque de son appartenance éventuelle à un univers surnaturel” (1992, p. 71).

The young woman’s giving in to her curiosity in the face of the unknown that lies beyond the veiled door brings the reader into direct confrontation with a violent and somewhat morbid reality. The fear of befalling the same fateful destiny results in the definitive stain upon the magical key, and it is only through the woman’s intelligent play to make some time (allegedly to pray before her death) and call her sister Anne that the death of the villain takes place, at the hands of her brothers.

Yet, the French writer, aside from finishing with the indication that the inherited assets had been distributed among the brothers and also used by the young lady to find a new husband (of acknowledged reliability), does not leave out the recurrent moral aspects. The first of these (framed with a pedagogical intentionality) is remarked by Segabinazi & Barbosa (2020): “o narrador menciona a curiosidade da esposa como algo perigoso [e até, por vezes, fatal e] (...) considerou [também] a curiosidade como um prazer repleto de deslumbramento” (p. 99). In the second morality, he seeks to carry the reader to a faraway time, in an environment which is dated and separated from what is lived by the extratextual recipient. As Segabinazi & Barbosa (2020) go on to assert, the tale “acaba comparando os dois quando afirma que a cor da barba, nessa circunstância independe quando ambos são senhores do lar” (p. 99). This last morality has a particularly ironic tone, by putting into question the dominant role of the male figure in the domestic environment. Even though Perrault highlights the fictional nature of this tale, it is important to bear in mind the subversive nature of the ending, as highlighted by Bárbara (2014):

O final do conto concretiza uma subversão das regras instituídas no quadro social do casamento, dado que a curiosidade feminina não é castigada, mas antes premiada. (...) a jovem consegue fugir ao castigo anunciado, em virtude da sua astúcia, e recupera a liberdade de que dispunha enquanto solteira. (p. 141)

The volume that was published by Livraria Civilização in 1954 generally matched the French collection from the XVII century, starting with the careful description of the life of an extremely wealthy man, and all his materially captivating diligences to convince one of the neighbour’s daughters to marry him. However, in this case, it is the eldest daughter who is the least reluctant to the suitor’s unusual anatomy and, progressively, “a achá-lo até quase bonito e, sobretudo, um esplêndido anfitrião” (Anonymous, 1954, p. 8). When it comes to the turning over of the key, there is a clear reinforcement of the moral value of matrimonial trust, as well

as the cynical character of the villain (Bárbara, 2014). This can be seen in the following excerpt: “eu sei que podia não te entregar a chave, mas isso implicava demonstrar que tinha pouca confiança em ti, e não estava certo. Entre esposos deve haver confiança mútua” (Anonymous, 1954, pp. 11-12).

When it comes to the confrontation of the young woman with the reality behind the forbidden door, the adaptation under study does not stray from the original Perraultian hardness:

A princípio não viu nada, pois as janelas estavam fechadas. Depois de alguns instantes, começou a notar que o sobrado tinha manchas de sangue coagulado. Horrorizada, viu que da parede pendiam corpos de mulheres mortas. Eram as mulheres que Barba Azul havia assassinado. (Anonymous, 1954, p. 17)

Still, this episode would be specifically polished in the following version. The bodies of the dead women would be replaced, in 1956, by the attack of a crow, a helping/accomplice figure, who scratches the young woman’s face and deliberately signals the infraction that has been committed. This salient “incident”, which seeks to show the thoughtless or frivolous nature of the curious attitude by a young lady who is here called “Branca” (meaning “white,” a name clearly allied to a vision of feminine candour and innocence), is what leads the villain to impose his wife’s departure, legitimized as a correction. This distancing, the punishment imposed by the male figure in the 1956 version in the face of her “flaw” (which is how the adaptation refers to feminine curiosity), can only be broken when his beard changes colour, which is not anticipated at first to be possible. This second edition also stands out because, right after this episode of transgression, the young woman’s state of profound regret is immediately described, a verbal strategy which clearly reveals a subservient, ungrateful and resigned vision of the wife before the perks granted by her husband:

Para que fui tão curiosa? Não me tinha o meu marido dito que não abrisse aquela maldada porta? Não me deixou ele tantas chaves, inclusive esta que me tentou? E não foi isto uma prova de confiança? Tendo eu tantas coisas belas para ver, porque me deixei tentar pelo meu maior defeito. (Anonymous, 1956, pp. 18-19)

In another modification of the hypotext, still in the 1956 version, there follows a description of the life of regeneration, humility and devotion to one’s neighbour that Branca would live, in a hut, with an old lady “as if she were her mother” (Anonymous, 1956, p. 22, original translation) who, in the meantime, had taken her in. Disregarding any mention of any fearful experiences she had when she lived with Blue Beard, instead the loss of her previous perks is given more relevance: “onde estavam os ricos trajes de seda e pedrarias? onde [sic] os criados que

acorririam ao seu chamamento? onde [*sic*] a tagarelice com as suas irmãs e amigas” (Anonymous, 1956, pp. 22-23). Her reunion with her husband is portrayed as though it were a miracle, and the change in her husband’s character is noted in the form of regret. This purposeful erasure of the original version accentuates, as Bárbara points out, the “ato imprudente e desobediente da figura feminina” (2014, p. 176), which could only be purified after years of dedication to the old lady who had since passed away, while it simultaneously values the “um Barba Azul arrependido e terno (...) Na verdade, este Barba Azul não tem nada de ogro, é um homem mau que se regenera” (Bárbara, 2014, p. 176). Yet, aside from these years of distance and loneliness, Branca must still face a perilous journey back to the palace.

In the 1954 version, up until the death of the villain, the story remains faithful to the hypotext, and the fateful end of the protagonist is understood as an act of justice and the second marriage of the widow takes place after a few years, a distancing in time which should not be disregarded given catholic principles for mourning. By contrast, the later version has a completely different resolution. The ending of this second rewriting involves Branca’s return to the palace, once her husband’s regret about the punishment he had thrust upon her has been proven and made visible by the change in the colour of his beard.⁴ This epilogue, in complete opposition to the French original, records the regaining of balance that comes from the return to marital harmony. However, it is important to note that the former state of misery is never attributed to a violent behaviour from the male character against previous wives, or even any attempts to murder Branca. This allows one to deduce that all the acts of misfortune that followed her entrance in the forbidden room were due to the wife’s own reckless conduct. This would lead us to agree with Bárbara, for whom this censored version is “a única versão em que Barba Azul e a mulher ficam juntos, no elogio do casal ideal. Trata-se de um texto profundamente moralizador, apelando ao perdão e aos valores da ruralidade e da bondade” (2014, p. 178). The educational and modelling slant of the 1956 version presents, as we have sought to demonstrate, a version which is deliberately less enigmatic, disconcerting and multi-significant than before, and above all recriminatory of the woman’s behaviour in the familial environment. As for the original moralities, both in the 1954 adaptation and in the more well-known version that

⁴ “— Come, darling, and forgive your cruel husband for all you have suffered. But notice and see in the whiteness of my beard, which has gone grey before its time, how remorseful I am for everything I put you through” (Anonymous, 1956, p. 25, original translation).

came out two years later, they were omitted, contributing to the weakening, once more, of the ambiguous nature of the tale and of a multiform interpretation.

It is worth noting how, in both publications that are under analysis, the characterisation of the villain and his lavish way of life includes the resort to repetition, comparison, antithesis and the frequent use of diminutives (such as “gabinetezinho,” little office, “chavezinha,” little key, or “pobrezinha,” little poor [thing]), among others. These resources aim to draw attention to the naïveté and girliness of the feminine figures, as opposed to the scheming attitude of Blue Beard. Adding to this forced act of verbal sanitation, we cannot ignore the fact that the illustrations themselves were changed. Even though the two adaptations contain a total of eight pictures each, apparently conceived by the same illustrator, the 1956 version replaces certain episodes which had previously been illustrated. As a matter of fact, the portrait of the young girl on her knees next to Blue Beard wielding a dagger, begging for mercy, is replaced by the representation of the incident with the crow, showing no evidence of a wound or of blood (side by side with the portrayal of the woman opening the door, which is on the preceding page). The 1954 illustration, which shows the dialogue between the two sisters as they try to gain some time while the brothers arrive, is replaced in the second revisualization by a scene that shows generosity and zeal, namely the picture of the young woman with the old lady she helped. As for the attempted murder by the villain, grabbing the young lady’s hair, which is the last picture in the 1954 edition, it gives way in the version authorized by the CLEM to a portrayal of the two protagonists next to the staircase of the palace, as though it were the idyllic scenery of the ending of *Cinderella*.

“COLEÇÃO CAROCHINHA:” PRELIMINARY NOTIONS ON THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

As shown in the document on the disciplinary process 1/8, from April 25th, 1955 (Anonymous, 1955b), Américo Fraga Lames, of Livraria Civilização (headquartered in Rua do Almada, n.107, Porto), was punished with a fine in the value of 300 escudos because of the infraction of Article 19 of Decree 38.964, from October 27th, 1952. Before anything else, it becomes important to examine the reasons that led to this arrest and the following prohibition of the sale and reedition of the 1954 version of *História do Barba Azul*.

On March 30th, 1955, Américo Fraga Lames writes directly to the President of the Council to follow up on his appeal and present his allegations, after the

confiscation of the collection that included the volumes in this study. After a brief explanation of how he acquired the rights to publish these copies, which initially had been published by the Empresa Literária Universal, based in Lisbon, the editor clarifies that, given the notoriety of this collection, he believed it to be unnecessary to analyse its content in detail. He reinforces this perspective by stating that he had never been notified or reprimanded by the National Guild of Editors and Booksellers about these volumes, which he believes are similar to many others that were freely circulating in the market.

He also takes the occasion to clarify that it had in fact been through the Guild that he had become aware of the following: “the book that had been deemed inconvenient was *História de Barba Azul* – by Perrault” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation). Therefore, even if he would accept some of the responsibility for putting illegitimate works out for sale, he does not believe himself to be directly responsible: “rather responsible on the level of legal solidarity, and this distinction makes the undersigned believe that the enormous financial loss [he had taken] would be softened if he were allowed to exclude from the collection whichever volumes the Censorship [Authorities] considered inappropriate, and have the remaining ones returned” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation).

In an attempt to highlight their relevance to the nation, aside from the significant financial investment that had been made, Américo Lamesos also recalls that several of these works had been selected by official entities for gifts of national significance, and that part of the “Coleção Carochinha” had been acquired, not very long before, by the Ministry for National Education, with the intention of distributing it among Primary School Libraries.

On April 4th, 1955, the Grémio Nacional dos Editores e Livreiros, headed by António Maria Pereira, writes a letter to the President of the Council to speak in the defence of the editor in the case of this seizure, “which had an overall value, at the price of 300 escudos per volume, of over 200 contos” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation). In support of this statement, he would have forwarded along, according to his writing, some pages from the catalogue of Livraria Civilização, with special attention paid to the reedition of their *Atlas* (by Fernão Vaz Dourado), the thirty three volumes of the collection “Biblioteca Histórica de Portugal e Brasil”, the eight volumes in the collection “Peregrina”, as well as the five books authored by Elaine Sanceau (whose title *Caminho da Índia* would have been recognized with the Prémio Camões 1944). This attempt to defend a professional track record which, at the time, was comprised of 34 years of dedication to

divulging historical and instructive works, was complemented by the following indication “this honest and active editor never ventured into editions of lower literature, never published any political books whose nature was opposed to the interests of the State; (...) All his initiatives are vested with cultural or national character” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation).

This is followed by a reference to activities of book dissemination by national authors and of Portuguese values which took place in September 1928, during the First Week of the Portuguese Book in Brazil, and the following organization of the First Week of the Brazilian Book, in Porto, in December of the same year. He does not neglect to mention Américo Lamares’s participation as one of the founders of the Livros de Portugal, Lda. company, which is considered to be one of the first bookstores in Rio de Janeiro. As a counterweight to this depiction of his editorial practices, deemed patriotic and politically beneficial, his fragile economic situation is highlighted, in the face of “such heavy punishment” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation).

Regarding the charge that the collection had not been revised by censors prior to publication, it is pointed out that these copies had already been selected by another entity, and were part of a collection which had already been published and was quite well-known and widely disseminated. So, the following is said about Livraria Civilização:

(They) had simply, through commercial convenience related to the liquidation of bills that were overdue and hard to make up, acquired from another well-known publishing company the rights to publish a series of volumes in Coleção “CAROCHINHA”, made up of translations from universal tales, largely divulged in every country. (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation)

The wide popularity of Perrault’s tales in general and of the *Bluebeard* story in particular was the main argument that was presented in the defence of the sole volume that had been prohibited, but naming it as a “*historiazinha*” (“little story”) should not be understood, in our view, as meaningless in this defence:

So this tale of Blue Beard is one of the famed tales by Perrault that children all over the world know; if, indeed, the story may impress more sensitive children, the truth is that this little traditional story has travelled the world, just like the tales of Andersen, Grimm, etc., and has never warranted any warning neither from educators nor from police authorities; it seems to us, therefore, quite forgivable to have edited this little story without submitting it, as the law demands, to prior restraint; and police intervention was therefore, in our view, overly strict. (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation)

On May 2nd, 1955, the Director of the Censorship Services published the response to the appeal that had been made to the Presidency of the Ministry by the editor, against PIDE's seizure. The document begins with the indication that a copy of *História do Barba Azul* had been received and that it had been evaluated, coming to the following conclusion:

That its content was far from satisfying the conditions imposed to children's literature, through the objective narration of horrifying facts perpetrated by "Barba Azul", main character of this story [with the use of the condescending diminutive 'eta'], which greatly affects the nervous sensibilities of the littlest readers. (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation)

Legitimizing the seizure of the volume under analysis in this study (as well as the rest of the collection), an argument is made that it would not have been checked prior to publication⁵ by the CLEM, as is legally demanded by Article 19 of Decree-Law n.38.964, from October 27th, 1952, with the additional allegation that Livraria Civilização, couldn't present as an excuse the fact that

Not by ignorance of the law, because that is not admissible for a publishing company, and so we are led to believe that the reoccurring could only have happened by negligence or, more specifically, won over by the interests of a seductive commercialism, stopped organizing, as was imposed by law, the prior verification by Censorship of the publications it edited and put up for sale. (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation)

It is also noted that the decision to seize the 65,873 copies is of a provisional nature, dependant on the arrival of an opinion from the CLEM, and that it might be replaced by a financial punishment, according to the terms of Article 9 in Decree-Law n.26.589. They equally explain that, unlike what was usual practice,

One had not even removed the seized copies to an appropriate location trusted by the Direction that had been appealed to, nor had one ordered the destruction of these copies as can, in fact, be decided to do, in cases of transgressions of this nature. (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation)

Aside from this, there is emphasis on the fact that the *História do Barba Azul* was the only story in the collection that would remain confiscated: "and it must be destroyed and forbidden from further publishing" (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation).

In the face of the argument that this publishing house could be distinguished for editing several historic and erudite works, in the attempt to attest to the loyalty

⁵ "With the view of the nature and young age of the readers these are destined to" (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation).

of the publisher to the values of the regime and his dedication to the national cause, as previously stated, the Director of the Censorship Services appeared indifferent, stating that “we will not be the ones to bargain for our acknowledgement” (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation). When it comes to the explanation that the Empresa Literária Universal (from Lisbon) was the entity that should truly be held accountable after their rights had ended on the part of Civilização, the censorship authorities declared that the date for the end of those rights should have been adequately divulged. In this way, regardless of whether publication rights had been passed to a new editor, the Director of the Censorship Services did not miss the opportunity to recall the content of Decree-Law 38.964, from 1952, imposing the obligation to send every publication, national or international, periodical or otherwise, to the Censorship Commission so that an opinion could be emitted.

Finally, part of the conclusion of this document recalls that, in the light of Article 9 in Decree-Law 26.589, “any transgressions made by the accountable parties in any publications that are subject to censorship should be punished with progressive fines up to 5,000 escudos, a suspension of up to 180 days, and the suppression of the publications” (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation).

Dated May 12th, 1955, the deputy director pens a new response to Américo Lames, relating both to the exposition he had signed, and to the one sent in by the Guild. Here, it is clarified that, according to an order from the Director, the seizure of *História do Barba Azul* will remain, given that it had been negatively evaluated by the CLEM, which considered it “inconvenient for childhood and adolescence” (Anonymous, 1955a, Cx. 58, original translation). It is also added that, once a fine has been paid for the transgression in the amount of 300 escudos, it would be possible to have the remaining volumes of “Coleção Carochinha”, which were in Porto, returned to the publishing house (Anonymous, 1955b).

In this file one can also find a duplicate of the receipt for a deposit in the Tesouraria da Fazenda Pública, dated May 13th, 1955, for the amount of 375 escudos, with respect to the fine that had been imposed by the Censorship Services (Anonymous, 1955c), in the terms of Article 19 of Decree-Law 38.964, from October 27th 1952, with an added 25%, in the terms of Article 5 of Decree-Law 31.173, from March 14th 1941.

Pursuing this investigation we also came across a statement, dated December 10th, 1955, and sent by Américo Fraga Lames, to declare his aim to publish 3,000 copies of the work *História do Barba Azul*, identified as an adaptation of the text by Charles Perrault, which received, three days later, an affirmative stamp from the

heads of the Censorship Services, thus authorizing publication (Anonymous, 1955c). It is unknown, however, what the content of this December 1955 adaptation was, because one cannot find, in this archive or in others that we also analysed, any handwritten or typed copy (as we found for other works for other publishers). Still, it is to be assumed, by the proximity in time, that it is the strongly sanitized and filed down version that would be published in 1956.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our document analysis and our reading of the *corpus* for this study appear to corroborate the thesis by Ana M. Machado that “la censura está asociada a fundamentalismos religiosos o políticos que insisten en leer todo al pie de la letra e intentan imponer una interpretación única para las lecturas ajenas” (2015, p. 9). By force of the seizure and prohibition that were decreed by the Censorship Services, “Coleção Carochinha” and, in particular, the *História do Barba Azul* (1954), the more faithful edition to the French hypotext, were prevented from circulating freely. This *a posteriori* censorship practice, which was complementary to prior restraint, often revealed itself as a ruthless and threatening action, as underscored by (Machado, 2015).

It has also been reminded that Américo Lamares, faced with the disciplinary process 1/8 from 1955 (Anonymous, 1955b), quickly made himself available to withdraw the volumes that the authorities considered inappropriate, in order to compensate for his large financial losses. Fear was, therefore, the worst enemy to literary, aesthetic and editorial creativity, both for children and for adults, evidently, as is noted by Ferreira de Castro, in an interview with *Diário de Lisboa* on November 17th, 1945, as recovered by Graça Rodrigues:

Escrever assim é uma verdadeira tortura. Porque o mal não está apenas no que a censura proíbe mas também no receio do que ela pode proibir. Cada um de nós coloca, ao escrever, um censor imaginário sobre a mesa de trabalho – e essa invisível, incorpórea presença tira-nos toda a espontaneidade, corta-nos todo o élan, obriga-nos a mascarar o nosso pensamento, quando não a abandoná-lo, sempre com aquela obsessão: “Eles deixarão passar isto” (as cited in Rodrigues, 1980, p. 79).

This air of intimidation brought along with it, as we have seen, the adaptation of the short story of *Bluebeard* to the precepts of the unequivocal vision of the censors, that is, an ability for sacrifice and resignation, the presentation of exemplary conduct, family values and the perfect marriage, patriarchy, safeguarding the ‘pure innocence’ of the child, among others (Bárbara, 2014; Bermúdez, 2023; Silva,

2023). Yet, such mechanisms eventually fully distort the subtlety and irony of the original version and the courage of the feminine figure, close to the ending.

Despite our effort to consult a wide variety of original documentation, across different Estates and archives, we acknowledge that we lack more files that could help define more concretely what the action and understanding of different entities and censors were when they intervened in these repressive actions. In the same way, it remains strange that a publishing company which had been the target of a disciplinary process would, in the same year, be exempted from presenting a financial guarantee (which had previously been ordered by the Censorship Authority) after it was officially recognized that Livraria Civilização, throughout its activity, had “served national culture with impartiality and intelligence” (Anonymous, 1955b, Cx. 739, original translation). Therefore, the criteria which regulated the censors’ decisions remain unknown, and it is still unconfirmed whether this change in their decision was made in awareness of the prior process of seizure which had centred around the same company’s owner.

The attribution of a social aspect, namely as an instrument to keep public opinion in check, inscribed from the start in the 1933 Constitution, would have led, in practice, to a dissimulated or masked authoritarian action which became legally official in 1944, when the Direcção-Geral dos Serviços da Censura was created, attached to the Secretariado Nacional de Informação (SNI) and in the direct dependency of the President of the Council. However, as Graça Rodrigues (1980) notes, unlike what had happened in previous periods of the imposition of censorship in the Portuguese context, now Article 33 of the Regulamento dos Serviços de Censura (the Charter for the Censorship Services, which was never published in the official *Diário da República*), makes it clear: “não são permitidos espaços em branco, escariações ou esmagamentos, intercalação de desenhos ou anúncios, ou qualquer indicação de que possa deduzir-se, mesmo sem fundamento, a acção da censura” (as cited in Rodrigues, 1980, p. 72). The filtering of the illustrations applied in the 1956 version, as previously stated, keeping the same total of eight pictures and with the same visual language (some of which were even repeated), helped camouflage the forced rewriting and visualization, which could only be detected by attentively comparing the two copies, edited two years apart.

It is important, in summary, to bring to light cases such as these where the circulation of classic works for children was partially limited or definitively forbidden, and not forget the telling and the often questionable and disquietingly formulated decisions (Balça et al., 2017; Bárbara, 2014; Bermúdez, 2023; Tena

Fernández et al., 2020; Silva, 2023) and, most of all, the losses that were determined by the many organs of Censorship on the level of literary production during the Estado Novo regime in Portugal.

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