

Gender, Memory, and Emotion
in Exile Discourse: Stefan and Página |
Lotte Zweig's everyday life in the 115
tropics

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Abstract

Stefan and Lotte Zweig's last letters describe their everyday life as exiles in Brazil where, depressed by a pessimistic future after World War II, they take their lives in a suicide pact. This paper aims to discuss aspects of gender, memory and emotion that might have affected the couple's exile discourse. To this end the paper employs notions from discourse analysis, gender studies and the anthropology of emotion. The analysis is based on the letters from Stefan Zweig and Lotte Zweig written between 1940 and 1942, most of them addressed to members of Lotte's family who remained in London.

Keywords

Stefan Zweig. Lotte Zweig. Gender. Emotion. Exile..

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Introduction

Leaving Europe under the condition of exile in 1940, Austrian writer Stefan Zweig and his young wife Lotte Zweig were forced to give up constitutive elements of their social as well as subjective identities, namely, their country, families, friends, cultural background, and to a great extent even their language.

Initially the Zweigs went to the United States, where after a short stay, they decided to settle down in Brazil, more specifically in the mountain village of Petrópolis in Rio de Janeiro. Although Brazil seemed to them a welcoming society, the radical separation from everything they were familiar with provoked great emotional strain in the new process of social integration. They found it extremely difficult to contrast the memory of their cultural background with the hardships of everyday life in the tropics.

The last letters from Stefan and Lotte Zweig, written during exile, shed light on issues of gender, memory and emotion in exile discourse. These letters portray the extremely emotional context of an expanding war, persecution of Jews and other minorities, and widespread insecurity. But, above all, they describe the couple's everyday life and their increasing sense of isolation as exiles in Petrópolis where, depressed by the possibility of facing a gloomy future after World War II, they decide to take their lives in a suicide pact. Against such emotional background, some questions related to the Zweigs everyday life arise: how did Stefan and Lotte Zweig perceive the country, its people, culture and language?; How did the new society perceive the Zweigs?; And, finally, how does emotion, gender and memory affect this mutual perception?

This paper aims to discuss aspects of gender, memory and emotion that might have affected the couple's exile discourse. The paper employs some notions derived from French discourse analysis and Anglo-Saxon critical discourse analysis, gender studies and the anthropology of emotion. This interdisciplinary perspective helps perceive gender, memory, emotion and exile as historically situated discourses.

The interpretative analysis is based on the last letters from Stefan Zweig and his young wife Lotte Zweig written between 1940 and 1942, most of them addressed to members of Lotte's family who remained in London during the war. The collection contains 105 letters, 52 from Stefan Zweig and 53 from Lotte Zweig, originating from Rio de Janeiro, Petrópolis, Buenos Aires and New York. In order to prevent possible censorship against German speakers during the war, the Zweigs wrote them in English. As mentioned by Davis and Marshall (2010),

despite the fact that both of them were highly cultured multilingual speakers, the letters present some Standard English grammar mistakes.

Theoretical framework

Following a Foucauldian perspective (FOUCAULT, 1972) many linguists have adopted the concept of discourse as social practice, especially discourse analysts, whose main interest is to study the role of language for problems caused by social factors, gender included (Pêcheux 1969; Charaudeau 1969; Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2008; Fairclough 1995; Van Dijk 2006).

Acknowledging the importance of relating language use to its social communication context, the term discourse, in this paper, is used to refer to genuine, complete pieces of language (written in this case) produced within historically situated contexts, such as that of World War II.

As for gender, it is a theme that began to be more systematically discussed in the 1970's, when scholars explored different approaches in the attempt to better understand the interplay between language and gender in various communication contexts. Nevertheless, these approaches were mainly based on the sex/gender dichotomy (LAKOFF, 1975; SPENDER 1980; CAMERON 1985; HOLMES 1999). Later on, however, other perspectives emerged, adding to the existing studies the notion of gender performativity, for instance (BUTLER, 1999). And recently, current approaches have contributed with the concept of gender as socially constructed meanings assigned to bodies that carry stories, among them gender stories (DOMENICO; FOSS, 2013).

The Foucaultian discursive perspective has also inspired emotion studies' researchers who view emotion as a language to communicate not only feelings but also social and gender issues (ABU-LUGHOD; LUTZ, 1990). In the same vein, some discourse analysts have adhered to the concepts of memory and emotion as constitutive parts of discourse. Particularly relevant is French linguist Michel Pêcheux (1984), for whom memory is one of the conditions of discourse production and at the same time a space for counter-discourses that allow the construction of the historian. We would add here the autobiographers, (who have lived in exiles, for instance), whose stories are told under the influence of the memory of their past lives against the heavy emotional strains involved in adjusting to everyday life of the present society. In such a context, memory helps both define and trigger emotions typically associated with the condition of exile. The feeling of nostalgia, for example, is constantly mentioned in

the Zweigs' letters to contrast their memory of home, family and friends left in Europe with the difficulties to fit in the new society.

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the various, complex concepts of exile (SAID, 2000; GURR, 1981; KNAPP, 1990).

The term is more specifically used here to refer to experiences associated with the extremely emotional context of the diaspora of people forced to search refuge away from home.

When the exile experience is shared by a couple, as it occurred with Stefan and Lotte Zweig, elements of gender, memory and emotion play a part worth investigating.

“The fair sex must have something to do with it”

The letters reveal that Lotte Zweig plays a crucial role in the couple's everyday life in exile. Being so, gender issues emerge from the starting point of the invisibility imposed upon her as an important person in Stefan Zweig's prolific literary production as well as in his private life, particularly in the last years of his life. In spite of being an efficient literary secretary, translator, reviewer, household administrator, and certainly a most devoted, adventurous travel companion, Lotte was either misjudged or completely ignored by both the critics and general society alike (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010).

The worldwide hegemonic male discourse of the time influenced the way the double suicide was perceived. In Brazil, an illustration of such dominant gender ideology can be seen in the form in which the encyclopedia entry about Stefan Zweig was written by his editor Abraão Koogan. Although Koogan was his editor and a close friend of both Zweigs', he does not register that young Lotte died beside her beloved husband.

ZWEIG, (Stefan) Austrian Jew writer (Vienna 1881, Petrópolis, RJ, 1942), author of novellas (*A casa à beira-mar*, 1911; *Jeremias*, 1917); novels (*Confissões dos sentimentos*, 1926; *Coração inquieto*, 1938), biographies (Maria Antonieta 1932; Maria Stuart 1935; Balzac, ed. post.), essays (*Brasil: país do futuro*, 1942), memoirs (*O mundo que eu vi*, 1943). Shocked with the World War II, committed suicide. (ABRAÃO KOOGAN, 1994,p. 110) [My translation for the text. Titles have been kept in Portuguese].

Also originating from the highly prestigious literary world, another comment worth mentioning is that by German writer Thomas Mann, who implicitly suggests that Lotte had been a negative influence in Stefan Zweig's tragic final act.

[...] as for Stefan Zweig? He can't have killed himself out of grief, let alone desperation. His suicide note is quite inadequate. What on earth does he mean with the

reconstruction of life that he found so difficult? The fair sex must have something to do with it, a scandal in the offing? (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.5)

However, the collection of letters, Stefan Zweig's well-known depression in real life, and the overwhelming space given to the topic of suicide in his fiction work long before he dreamt of meeting Lotte, indicate that these approaches need to be reviewed. In *Amok and other stories* (1922), for example, the protagonists of the four short stories are suicides. In addition to that, besides many of his novellas that contain suicide characters, his novel *Beware of Pity* (1939) has also a suicide protagonist. Therefore, one can speculate that Lotte might have died beside Stefan Zweig for many other reasons – which certainly deserves appropriate investigation –, except for weakness of character, or personal morbidity, as it was suggested at the time. In fact, the letters demonstrate that, on Lotte's part, there seems to have existed the necessary flexibility to fulfill various social roles in which it is possible to see that Lotte had a voice of her own, was open-minded and seemed very eager to survive exile.

Stefan and Lotte's everyday life in the “land of the future”

Both Stefan and Lotte Zweig truly loved Brazil. The letters prove that they admired the people's sense of conciliation and ability to live peacefully despite the country's immense cultural and religious diversity. For Stefan, it was “the inborn civilization and humanity I admire so much here in this country” (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.45)

In addition to admiring the country's “inborn civilization and humanity”, the Zweigs were also overwhelmed by its beautiful landscape. In the letter of 15 September 1940, Stefan feels guilty about having a comfortable kind of life in Rio, while their family and friends had to endure the hardships of war.

[...] we feel ashamed to have here such a perfect life. To look out of our windows is simply a dream, the temperature is superb — a winter which is more June than May — the people spoil us in every possible way, we live quietly, cheaply and the most interesting life — really happy would it not be for you and all the friends and the great misery of mankind.(DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.40)

A year later, in Petrópolis, Stefan's appreciation for Brazil's people and nature had not changed. He continues to feel touched by the local people's humble character as well as the view of the mountains they could enjoy from their little bungalow's veranda.

I can really confirm that we have here in our little bungalow absolutely the life I wanted after the strenuous times in New York etc. I have as my real workroom a large covered terrace in front of the beautiful mountains, the neighborhood is very primitive and therefore picturesque, the poor people are so nice here as you cannot imagine; our black

housemaid is silent (she begins to sing now), diligent, clean and grateful to us as she learns to see things she never has seen in her life — for them potatoes are already a luxury and fish is an unknown animal. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.142)

Lotte's impressions about both Rio and the people coincides with those of Stefan's.

[...] Rio is just as beautiful as Stefan promised, the people just as nice as he said and the winter not hard, one feels just right in a light summer dress and I need not have brought my winter things for this Brazilian winter. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.53)

She reaffirms these positive feelings towards Rio as soon as she has the opportunity to compare it with other great South American cities. In a letter from Buenos Aires, where Stefan was received with great honours, Lotte openly confesses to her family the couple's preference for the Brazilians and for Rio de Janeiro.

[...] Here we have had a hectic time and did not like it too much in spite of the wonderful reception Stefan has had. [...] But we prefer the Brazilians and the beautiful landscape of Rio, and maybe for that reasons our impressions were somewhat biased and prejudiced. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.79)

However, despite that general feeling of appreciation for the country's people and landscape, the Zweigs' relationship with the Brazilian exile implies gender experiences that raise important questions associated with how the couple really viewed and felt about the new society and how the new society viewed the couple.

Stefan and Lotte Zweig's unequal social roles

The new society perceived Stefan and Lotte Zweig according to their unequal social status. Obviously Stefan Zweig occupies the place of one of the greatest German language writers, translated into numerous languages around the world at the time. He also plays the political role of the humanist engaged in disseminating an antiwar discourse, and in actually helping numerous Jews and friends to flee Europe during the war. He is therefore the centre of attention in the public sphere. Lotte, on the other hand, plays the role of the wife and is kept socially invisible, almost isolated. Thus, she experiences a type of double exile: one related to her past life, another related to the difficulties in being noticed by the present society, which has eyes only for the celebrated writer.

The new society only remembers Lotte only when she seems useful to the composition of the celebrity persona created for Stefan Zweig. In this context she becomes visible and attracts the attention in a sphere where she is seen as object of social approval, mostly represented by the numerous photographers who courted her in exchange for one more picture for newspapers and magazines.

In a letter of 15 September 1940, Stefan Zweig feels guilty for having a good life in the tropics while their family and friends have to endure the attacks on England. But at the same time he gives signs of the burden that Lotte has to carry to keep up with all that comes with it.

[...] we read in the newspapers about the furious attacks on England [...] and we feel ashamed to have here such a perfect life. [...] Next week we are going to the old towns in the interior of Brazil as guests of the Government, poor Lotte will be photographed abundantly and here you could see her in all the cinemas. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.58)

In between their emotional ups and downs, when Stefan is in a good mood he even jokes about Lotte being the centre of attention “I am afraid that Lotte will lose her modesty here since she is always with ambassadors, ministers and photographed in all newspaper”(DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.52). However both of them resisted the celebrity status given to them in South America.

[...] All is perfect here, we see the best and nicest people and would love only to have a day without our photos in the newspapers and the stories where we have being and what we have done.(DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 61)

Although Stefan admired Brazil and the Brazilian people, he confesses to Hannah and Manfred that “all the receptions in all these little countries, the noisy publicity are against my conception of life”. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.63)

The letters show that, in reality, the necessity to fulfill different social roles affects both the Zweigs. Lotte, who played the role as literary secretary, translator, reviewer, wife of the public figure, household administrator, among others. And Stefan, who would have loved to dedicate himself exclusively to his writing, but was constantly subjected to enormous public exposure, and spent a significant part of his time and energy undertaking political actions, delivering lectures, and attending endless social events for charity purposes.

However, Lotte seems more open and flexible to fulfill the roles ascribed to her. She not only is responsible for the management of the couple’s everyday life but she is also committed to accompanying Stefan Zweig in all his travels and social engagements. These gendered social roles have concrete implications for the couple’s everyday life in exile.

A particularly relevant aspect of Lotte’s flexibility to fulfill social roles assigned to women at the time is related to the fact that she has to administer all these processes in midst of a subjective crisis emotionally marked by the feeling of nostalgia and pessimism about the future of Europe after the war. It is in the midst of such emotional turbulence that she still manages to be a competent secretary, translator, reviewer, household administrator, among other activities. During the couple’s trips to various South American countries where Stefan

Zweig was expected to give talks, Lotte's excitement about seeing new things is overshadowed by mixed feelings.

We are now already a day in B-A. — a new town, plenty of new people, plenty of telephone calls, plenty of delegations who insist on some more gratis-lectures, heaps of flowers, plenty of new things to eat, plenty of photos and interviews; a funny sort of life for me, and at the same time twenty times a day the thought: what is it like now in England, what are they doing in this moment? [...] (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.73)

Already on October 23, before their departure to Argentina, Lotte was completely overwhelmed by the great amount of work she had to do. Besides having to organize Stefan Zweig's agenda, she had to carry out numerous household activities, and even solve some financial matters for those who remained in Europe.

[...] I write immediately although we are again feeling like in a madhouse — leaving Saturday for Buenos Aires, to-day Stefan's conference in French "Vienne d'hier", since two hours a phone call from Buenos Aires announced without name and not yet come through, urgently some books to sign for people who are leaving Rio to-day, to-morrow a Jewish charity affair where Stefan has to speak an introduction, a men's luncheon to-morrow and the last rehearsal of the Spanish lecture on Friday. In between Stefan dictates a lecture in English, that is to say I shall translate it and he will revise it, another lecture for the refugees in Buenos Aires and revises his other lectures in French which he might have to give, and sometime I shall have to pack — and pack carefully because we fly and I have to select what to take. I sign the form of the Westm. Bk [...] (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.76)

Part of Lotte's everyday activities in exile included even direct political measures, which were usually taken by Stefan Zweig. She was thus also very busy trying to get visas and affidavits for Jews and friends who needed to escape Second World War Europe.

Only a short letter to day, for although I did not accompany Stefan to his lectures in Cordoba, Santa Fé and Rosario — from where he will return to-morrow — I have been rather busy, getting visas, tickets etc. of all kinds, answering the letters and the telephone [...] (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 65)

Always attentive to their travel experiences, and capable of expressing her own opinions about South American culture and landscape, Lotte keeps herself so busy that she even blesses the Uruguayan sexism for excluding women from some social events which, in reality, serves to spare her from attending so great a number of activities.

[...] About our journey to Argentine I shall write more later on when my impressions have settled down. For the moment I only remember that the meat portions were enormous, the weather continually changing from hot to cold, the telephone continually ringing, Stefan giving one lecture after the other and little speeches in between, myself continually dead-tired and our time taken by all sorts of things from early morning to late at night. From Uruguay my principal impressions were the first flight by hydro-avion and the fact that we did not speak anything but Spanish and that fortunately ladies were excluded from the banquet after the lecture. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.45)

Quietness in Petrópolis or inner isolation?

The letters suggest that Lotte makes great effort to integrate. She seems strong and willing to adapt to the precarious conditions of everyday life in the then primitive Petrópolis, trying to balance the hard present day-to-day reality against the memory of her upper middle-class European background. She thus tries to administer routine difficulties open-mindedly, experiencing domestic problems and the local culture as an opportunity to learn new things. In a letter to her mother, Lotte mentions the limitations of her maid, but emphasizes the importance of adapting to the Brazilian palate and diversifying her professional activities in a way as to also include domestic tasks.

[...] contrary to what I was told about dark maids she is not especially gifted for cooking and I have to show her again and again so that she does things right. In a way this is excellent practise for me, for I get used to doing and showing things, also to experimenting new dishes, but it does not induce me to invite people because every new or a little unusual dish means that I keep my thoughts during the morning more on the kitchen and table than on my work. But I am quite satisfied that I have something to do besides my typing [...] (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 121)

Although Lotte is open to the various social roles that were naturally assigned to her at the time, she could not occupy multiple social spaces. Instead, she is kept socially isolated, experiencing the increasing condition of double exile: as a person, emotionally affected by being separated from family, friends and cultural background; and as a woman, not entirely accepted by other women in the new society. Her descriptions of the couple's everyday life in the small bungalow in Petrópolis is a good illustration of such a frame of mind. In a letter of 15 November 1941, she complains to her brother and sister-in-law, in a gentle and yet ironical tone, about the absence of female interlocutors with whom she could share domestic issues. Apparently local middle class women despised household experiences, leaving Lotte in complete isolation.

[...] It is good that you are interested in my reports about the house-hold. I am afraid that in the beginning when it was really not quite easy for me, poor Stefan had to listen to all my problems as I had to communicate them to someone and so far have not found a woman friend to talk things over. I know a few women in Petrop. but they are either enraged housewives or too little interested [...] DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.165)

The absence of female interlocutors seems to have lasted the whole period of exile. About four months later, in a letter of February 1942, she keeps complaining to Hanna and Manfred about being ignored by local women, who had eyes only for the great writer.

[...] I have not yet found the right woman for all this as most of our European friends have no household of their own, and mostly the acquaintance is so new that they prefer to talk or to listen to Stefan instead of small talk. So I unload part of these problems on Stefan, who listens with great patience and as the conditions here are so totally different,

even with some interest. Therefore you need not pity me too much. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.183)

Lotte is also critical of other cultural aspects of the new society, such as the Brazilian's lack of appreciation for walks, an aspect that prevented them from visiting her little bungalow.

[...] We have had, after an unusual amount of rain, some very fine days, and those days of sunshine are really delightful, and I always regret that you cannot go with us on all those summer resorts, as Brazilians do not walk and already tell us that the fifty steps which lead up to our house from the street, are almost too much for their hearts! (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.160)

At this point Lotte as well as Stefan Zweig were becoming more and more isolated. While she complains about not having female friends with whom to talk, she seems to envy some Jew country fellows who had easily adapted to Brazilian culture and society.

[...] We had one or two visitors from Rio in spite of the weather, the first were Paul and Maritza, and — as I wrote before — they appear quite different from what I know them to be — nice, normal, modest and friendly, Maritza well-groomed, even with red finger nails and I do not know if it is their immense ability of adapting themselves to their surroundings or a policy of becoming respectable or anything else. [...] And as she speaks already fluent Portuguese and does really beautiful needlework, I envied her with all my house-wifely instincts which develop in an alarming way — if I see a woman, I am anxious to talk about household, prices and recipees, and one my favourite books is the Portuguese cookery book where I am discovering the most fascinating recipees. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.145)

In describing their little bungalow, Lotte displays curiosity and interest for the local culture and the way domestic chores were carried out in the primitive mountain village of Petrópolis. Again she seems open-minded, and accepts with appreciation the new methods and hardships of everyday life in Petrópolis. Showing off the luxury of having home made products in their everyday menu, the only thing she could not consider was killing chicken at home.

[...] We have a plain wooden floor, and lately the gardener came to wax it. For their purpose they took out all the furniture, placed the poor little carpets somewhere outside and beat them with a stick; my laundry is carefully treated with Waschblau, the Mayonnaise is again made by hand instead coming out of a bottle, and the chicken you buy alive on the market and kill them at home — but so far I have not had the courage to go and buy one and carry it home in a piece of paper, tucked under my arm. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.140)

While food seems to be an important emotional reference to cultivate good memories from home, Lotte also appreciates the fact that she can cook some European dishes in her Petrópolis primitive kitchen. She relaxes to the extent of planning to make things completely unknown in the area.

[...] Soon, I suppose, I shall take to making my own cream cheese (it is not known here) and pickling my meat. Also the memory of our old lemon cream is sometimes trying to come back, and I wish I could buy custard powder or know how to produce it from natural ingredients. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.145)

But it was not easy for Lotte to reconcile all these household difficulties and new cultural habits with her role as secretary, translator, and reviewer of her husband's work.

But please believe me — I am not an ardent and possessed housewife and would not have the time for it if I wanted it for I have been working hard as secretary again and suppose that it will continue (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.160).

Despite Lotte's sincere attempts to be open-minded and flexible, the Zweigs' letters demonstrate that they both had specific difficulties integrating into Brazilian society. Lotte, for instance, preferred struggling to teach her maid to prepare European dishes rather than making an adventure of preparing the average Brazilian homemade food. Another, and definitely the most relevant, cultural barrier that the couple could not overcome was learning the country's language. Both Stefan and Lotte Zweig could speak, read and write in various languages. As educated Central Europeans, one can imagine that multilingualism was an essential part of their cultural background. Besides their native German, they mastered French, English, Spanish and, perhaps with a little less liveliness, Italian and Yiddish. In Lotte's case, that list would have to include Esperanto. Nevertheless, neither Stefan nor Lotte mastered Portuguese, exactly the language of the country they had chosen as refuge. As they advance in their attempt to learn the idiom, some emotional blockages and extralinguistic difficulties emerge. All seemed perfect and picturesque in the tropical Paradise, except its language. For them, an ugly language that sounded rough and difficult to reproduce was essential to their everyday survival.

[...] We have Portuguese lessons every day and can speak although with many mistakes almost all that is necessary and even carry on a conversation in Portuguese if there is no other way out. But it is rather an ugly language and a great pity that just this country does not belong to the Spanish group. Spanish is so much easier for us and so much more beautiful as language. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 162)

Studies on the interplay between emotion and multilingualism have pointed out that speakers have two different types of motivation to learn a target language: an integrative, in which the learner feels motivated by the desire to identify with the new society's language; and an instrumental, in which the learner feels motivated to learn the language only to meet sheer practical, utilitarian purposes. (Gardner, Wallace, 1972; Pavlenko, 2005).

Although the Zweigs loved the country and seemed willing to live in Brazil, having rejected the possibility of settling down in other countries such as the United States, it is rather

intriguing, to say the least, that they did not have any real interest in learning Portuguese. In midst of so many everyday tasks, Lotte neglects exactly the most fundamental aspect of integration in the new society.

[...] Besides this I am playing chess and reading a few classics, while the study of Portuguese has come somehow to be neglected, although of course the newspapers are only in Portuguese now and our radio does not pick up other than Brazilian stations. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.160)

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As Lotte seems open and willing to integrate in exile, it sounds contradictory that she does not give priority to the learning of Portuguese. Instead of dedicating herself to the study of the countries' language she prefers to cultivate solitude, enjoying the beautiful landscape of Petrópolis' surroundings.

[...] But if you leave the main streets and follow a lane or smaller older looking path, you almost always get after a very few minutes into the most picturesque tropical wilderness, jungle, primitive huts, wild flowers, little streams, and in between surprising views on the mountains. For Petrópolis is not situated in a large valley but in many different valleys so that from everywhere you get a different view on different mountains and in entirely different valleys. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.160)

We can say that only after moving to Petrópolis did Lotte free herself from the social framework of being the public man's wife to enjoy certain secret freedoms to 'play house' and, as Stefan suggests, play "half the day with the little dog" (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p.174). But life in Petrópolis also reflects the couple's increasing sense of isolation. In a letter written just ten days before the double suicide, Stefan Zweig mentions their excessive attachment to the little dog as a hint of their deteriorated mental state.

[...] We prefer to think that one has to enjoy these quiet, peaceful and beautiful days in a country which has no restrictions as something we will later remember with envy and regret, so we are not as eager as we should be and play more with the little sweet dog than reasonable people would do in a normal time. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 160)

Lotte's letter of January 1942 also indicates that "we continue our quiet life, having company by our dog and going for walks whenever the rain stops for a few hours" (DAVIS AND MARSHALL, 2010, p. 163)

An important aspect of the Zweig's isolated everyday life in exile, particularly in Petrópolis, involves their difficulty in handling the feeling of nostalgia and homesickness. Unable to integrate in the new society, Lotte and Stefan developed a great level of anxiety associated with their expectations of receiving letters from home, which led them to spent

significant part of their time waiting for the postman.

[...] As again a fortnight has passed without bringing a letter from you, we are again expecting it impatiently and are carefully watching the postman's round every day, just as carefully trying to explain to each other when he has passed without entering, why your letter may have been delayed. (DAVIS; MARSHALL, 2010, p. 120)

Final remarks

To conclude, I would like to reaffirm that gender, memory and emotion play a relevant part in exile discourse. In Stefan and Lotte Zweig's case, the couple's epistolary discourse indicate that, while they truly loved Brazil, its people, culture and landscape, they also had great emotional difficulties integrating in the new society. Both of them suffered intense emotional strain in their integration process, but Lotte seems to have acquired a wider view of the exile. For example, despite their intriguing dislike of the countries' language, she makes greater effort to actually speak Portuguese, not only with the servants but also with the local society as a whole. Reconciling household administration tasks with her secretary, translator and reviewer work, she creates the necessary work conditions for herself and for Stefan Zweig. Stefan is viewed by the new society as the great writer, humanist, and a man that calls the attention in the public sphere, Lotte is viewed as merely the wife, a lady who attracts attention only to compose the public persona created for the writer at the time.

Nevertheless, while this gendered exile perspective is clear, there is also a question that affects Stefan and Lotte Zweig alike. On a deeper level, they both experience exile with similar degree of emotional strain. The couple's epistolary discourse reflects their sincere gratitude and enchantment with the "land of the future" (Zweig, 1942) but it also indicates that Brazil represented a tropical paradise as much as a heavy burden to carry. A burden that included many problems, among them the couple's rejection to learn the language. Overwhelmed by the fragmentation of their social and subjective identities, pessimistic about the future after war, they decide to take their lives in the "land of the future".

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GÊNERO, MEMÓRIA E EMOÇÃO NO EXÍLIO: A VIDA DE STEFAN E LOTTE ZWEIG NOS TRÓPICOS

Resumo

As últimas cartas de Stefan e Lotte Zweig descrevem a vida cotidiana do casal como exilados no Brasil, onde, deprimidos com a perspectiva do futuro após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, fizeram um pacto e cometeram suicídio juntos. Este trabalho tem como objetivo discutir aspectos de gênero, memória e emoção que podem ter afetado o discurso do casal sobre o exílio. Para tanto, são empregados alguns conceitos advindos da análise do discurso, dos estudos de gênero e da antropologia das emoções. A análise toma como base as cartas de Stefan Zweig e de Lotte Zweig escritas entre 1940 e 1942, a maioria delas endereçadas a membros da família de Lotte que haviam permanecido em Londres.

Palavras-chave

Stefan Zweig. Lotte Zweig. Gênero. Memória. Emoção.

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