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ABRAPUI
Caixa Postal 164
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BRASIL
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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE: EVALUATION IN A SAMPLE OF LEARNER GENRES

ANNA ELIZABETH BALOCCO
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

Abstract: Writing in academia, in the context of a specialized discourse in a foreign language, places an enormous burden on the learner. In what follows, some of the issues involved in writing about a foreign language literature are explored through an analysis of the writing produced by learners. Part of the argument in this paper is that information obtained from learners' textual production can be seen as an index to their understanding of the norms and conventions of the discipline (Halliday's context of culture, 1985), as well as of the social processes in which they are engaged when they write about a foreign literature (the context of situation). Textual analysis, however, needs to be complemented by information obtained from learners themselves in situations of talk about such conventions and about such social processes. In this paper, we introduce some of the findings from the textual analysis of the sample with a view to discussing the methodological procedures adopted in the elaboration of a structured interview with learners to elicit information on their representations of writing about literature in a foreign language.

Key Words: Academic discourse, literary research, learner genre, evaluation

1 - Introduction

Writing about literature is to do primarily with the appreciation or evaluation of texts. Intuitively then literary research[1] will be associated with a highly commentative or evaluative prose. When one evaluates a literary text, however, one is not only talking about its content, assessing its aesthetic worth, or even embedding it in a

given sociohistorical context. Rather, above and beyond evaluating the text, one is constructing a specific type of relationship with previous, present or potential readers of that text. At the same time, one is constructing a specific type of identity for himself or herself as a reader who adopts certain social values associated with certain reading traditions. And, finally, one is displaying how one orients to language use, or to ways of writing about literary texts.

The following textual segment, from a sample of articles organized for the study of evaluation in literary research, enables us to explore such dimensions. This is an article by I. F. Moulton, published in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* (full references in the Bibliography). In this article, the author argues that *Richard III* is an "ambivalent" celebration of the excessive masculinity of its protagonist. To the author, Shakespeare does not neglect the ways in which male values themselves (represented by Richard) threaten patriarchal society. In the stretch of text below, the author discusses *Richard III* in the larger context of the *Henry VI* plays:

Example 1: S 1 *Two parallel scenes in the* Henry VI *plays* <u>*provide an index to*</u> *the progressive decay of patriarchal order in the course of the tetralogy.* S 2 *In* Henry VI, *as Rackin suggests, the* <u>*crisis*</u> *of the patriarchy is* <u>*clearly evident*</u> *in the* <u>*heroic*</u> *deaths of Talbot and his only son, each of whom refuses to leave the line of battle while the other remains in danger.* S 3 *By making the slain young Talbot his father's only son (even though the historical Talbot had several children), Shakespeare rewrites history so that Talbot's line dies out, thus stressing the self-destructive tendencies within a patriarchal ethic that prizes the preservation of family honor above the lives of individual family members.* (Text 5, pragraph 16).

The systematic clustering of evaluative devices in the segment allows us to identify a positioning strategy through which the writer introduces an authoritative reading of the play. First, the argument for the "crisis of the patriarchy" is evaluated as "evident": the degree of certainty attached to the evaluative epithet discourages any negotiation of the proposition. The nominal group "the crisis of the patriarchy" itself also functions as an evaluative device: it expresses as given information the author's argument for the progressive decay of the patriarchal order in the tetralogy, and thereby makes it difficult for readers to challenge it. Further, in sentence 3, the verb *stresses* functions as an evaluative device, as it codifies Shakespeare's "attitude" towards the proposition expressed. The writer's claim is thus subordinated to a discourse frame in which Shakespeare himself is the source of information (Shakespeare stresses the self-destructive tendencies....). All such features would seem to contribute to constructing the writer as someone who is unwilling to engage in a dialogic interaction with different readings of the text.

Next, we notice that there is attribution of value (*heroic deaths*) to an element of discourse on the mimetic plane: the deaths of Talbot and son are elements in the discourse world of the literary text. Attribution of value to discourse elements is one of the most obvious dimensions of evaluation in the metaliterary text: textual segments, characters, previous criticism, the author, and the literary text itself may all be evaluated on different dimensions. A character, for example, may be evaluated

in terms of its behavior on the mimetic plane (*a gullible character*); in terms of its impact on the reader (*a vivid, memorable character*); or in terms of the role it plays in the text (*a minor character*). There is, however, still another possibility here, which is to evaluate one's own personal or emotional reaction to a character (*the character made me feel eerie and isolated*)[2]. In the segment we are concerned with, through an exclusive focus on evaluation on the mimetic plane, the writer seems to align himself with a reading tradition that favors "objective analysis", contrasting with other reading traditions which sanction a personal or emotional response to the text.

Finally, there is a further dimension of evaluation in this short extract: the discourse element "two (...) scenes in the *Henry VI* plays" is implicitly evaluated as relevant to the argument proposed by the writer. In informing the reader that the scenes are "indices to the progressive decay of the patriarchal order", the writer is addressing his readers in his role as someone who constructs a persuasive argument, and as someone who has a specific conception of what counts as a persuasive argument. In this particular case, the writer's conception of what counts as a persuasive argument is realized not only in an evidentiary practice which draws on textual evidence to support his arguments, but also in a convention which requires explicitly signalling to the reader how the textual evidence selected (the two scenes in the tetralogy, in this case) relates to the higher-order claim introduced in the article (the progressive decay of the patriarchal system).

The considerations above about different dimensions of evaluation in literary research seem to be in keeping with Hunston's (1989; 1994; 2000) argument that evaluation performs three distinct functions in text: 1) through evaluation of status, writers monitor the information that enters their text from the perspective of institutional attitudes towards information in a particular discourse community; 2) through evaluation of value, writers monitor information with respect to shared norms and values; 3) and, finally, through evaluation of relevance, writers monitor the information they bring to their text as to its relevance to the community they address and as to its pertinence to the argument being constructed.

From another perspective, the same considerations also seem to be in keeping with Martin's (2000:166) claim that evaluative resources have a double function: if, on the one hand, they serve to create empathy or affinity with our interlocutors or readers, on the other hand, they exclude or alienate others who do not share the same value-system as ours. Thus, when we use evaluative resources to write about literature, we not only bid entrance into an ongoing dialogue about a particular text, but we also explicitly name the subgroup of readers of that text whom we want to be conversant with.

In this article, we introduce a research project whose focus is on evaluation, but whose objectives are to integrate an analysis of the writing produced by students in academia with data about how they understand the conventions for writing in the discipline and the social processes in which they are involved. The next section introduces some methodological considerations, followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework adopted. Analyses of the data are introduced in sections organized around the analytical categories of evaluation of status, value and relevance.

2 - Methodology

The present research is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the collection and analysis of a sample of learner genres, more specifically of monographs produced by students enrolled in a postgraduate course at UERJ (Curso de Especialização em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa). The second part consists in the collection of ethnographic data through two case studies. In this article, we report on the first part of the research and discuss how the findings from the textual analysis of the sample contributed to the elaboration of the ethnographic data collection instruments.

The following theoretical-methodological procedures are adopted in this research. First, ours is an interpretative paradigm, whose focus is on discourse participants and how they understand or interpret norms or conventions and social processes. This accounts for the adoption of a case study technique, through which it is possible to obtain data on "real or concrete subjects", embedded in given social contexts.

Second, we believe, with Coulon (1995), that microethnographic research, with its focus on directly observed interaction, is not the only methodological procedure which allows investigation of how norms or social rules are intepreted. The microsociological perspective is characterized by being primarily concerned with discourse participants, irrespective of the method of data collection, be they characteristic of macrosociology (questionnaires, interviews), or of microsociology (focus on interaction, or on participant-observation). Our argument then is that the investigation of how rules or social norms are interpreted by discourse participants does not occur exclusively in interaction, but may also occur in situations in which discourse participants talk about interaction.

Further, we would like to believe that the data collected through textual analysis may also be seen as indices to the ways in which the learner interprets such conventions – the learner's text will thus be seen as an "iconic expression" of that interpretation or understanding. We find theoretical support here in Jodelet's recognition (*apud* Sá, 1998) of different types of "carriers" of social representations: individuals' or groups' discourses; their behaviors and social practices; documents which codify these discourses, practices or behaviors; and, finally, these documents' interpretation by different social actors.

This conception of the learners' text as an iconic expression of their understanding of social processes in academia has led us to adopt the following methodological procedure: the learners' textual production constitutes the primary source for the elaboration of the research questions which will orient the interviews with the students in the case study. An objection might be raised here about the adoption of a method of data collection with previously elaborated questions to elicit information of a paticular type. However, we take sides with Sá (1998:89), who, drawing on Jodelet, argues for "the need to pose good questions to informants, favoring an in-depth interview".

3 - The sample of monographs

The monographs collected are all on the same subject, *Nights at the Circus*, by Angela Carter. The number of monographs (four) represents the total number of students enrolled in the course in a particular semester.

In the analysis of monographs, we restricted our attention to the phenomenon of evaluation in text, adopting methodology developed by Hunston (1989) and applied, in our doctoral dissertation, to the analysis of a sample of a specialist genre: the academic article in the area of literary research published in scholarly journals. The analytical framework draws on categories by Hunston and Martin, who contribute different perspectives on the study of the phenomenon, within the tradition of systemic functional linguistics.

Both authors treat evaluation as a discourse category, and thus do not rely on formal criteria alone to identify evaluation in text. Second, the authors' conception of attitude is not restricted to speaker attitude, but takes account of institutional attitudes toward information and knowledge. Finally, the authors recognize different dimensions of evaluation in text: unlike other treatments of modal contexts, which restrict their scope to the study of modal expressions codified in the grammatical system, the authors' framework integrates the study of modal expressions inscribed in the grammatical system with that of modal expressions of a purely lexical nature.

The findings reported in the next section are organized around Hunston's categories of evaluation of status, value, and relevance.

4 - Evaluation of status

Through evaluation of status, writers monitor their text from the point of view of institutional attitudes towards informational categories. It is thus important to identify what informational categories (hypotheses, categorical propositions, facts or received knowledge, among other possibilities) are valued within particular discourse communities.

To identify institutional attitudes towards information, or *status* categories introduced by students in the monographs, Hunston's methodology, which will now be described, was adopted. First, an inventory of informational categories was made. Next, correlations among *rhetorical activity, source of information* and *status category* were noted. The rhetorical activities and the sources of information postulated are those described in Balocco (2000) as characteristic of the metaliterary text (see Appendices 1 and 2). The unit of analysis is the sentence, and not the proposition, which makes the analysis more complex, but allows one to give equal attention to the three variables (type of rhetorical activity, source of information, codification) that have a bearing on informational categories (cf. Hunston 1989).

Below, we discuss some fragments from the sample with a view to preparing the ground for a discussion of our findings. We start with an extract from a monograph in which the learner discusses the rhetorical strategies adopted by Angela Carter in the light of the socio-historical context in which the author's works are produced:

Example 2: *Nowadays, women's writing has come (?) to a balance. There is neither the submission to male standards as there was in the previous centuries nor the radicalisms of the sixties. Women writers, among whom Angela Carter, are aware of the fact that in our still patriarchal society changes have to be strategically operated.*(LCP, p.17)[3]

The segment features a categorical proposition in an utterance with a high "degree of externality" (cf. Hunston, 1994): the learner introduces a claim about the author's atttude or worldview without any evidence to support it. One might imagine that the learner is extending to the person of the author a paradigm observed in her work, which is a common rhetorical routine in literary research: the novel questions the role of women in patriarchal society, which would entitle the learner to infer that, with her work, Carter indirectly questions patriarchal values. However, at this point in her argument, the student has not gathered sufficient textual detail that enables her to introduce the categorical assertion.

Compare this with the following excerpt, from the same monograph:

Example 3: *Carter's use of magic realism in her portrayal of out-of-ordinary characters and situations allows her to explore in all its relevance (!) the theme of "sisterhood", (...)* (LCP, p. 18)

Here the proposition has appropriate status, given the low degree of externality in the interpretation: the claim is supported by textual evidence from the work (the author's portrayal of characters, the adoption of magic realism, among others).

Our findings suggest that learners might interpret the teacher's position on the author and class discussions of particular aspects of a text as providing support to their claims. Thus, in a course whose focus is on women writers and how they threaten patriarchal values, class discussion might be considered a discourse element which may not be disregarded in the writing process. This seems to indicate that the student's conception of audience is a narrow one, represented by the teacher alone, providing support to the distinction proposed by Bhatia (1993:96) between specialist genres and genres produced by non-specialists. The author argues that "(...) any major change in the communicative purpose(s) [of a genre] is likely to give us a different genre; however, minor changes or modifications can help us distinguish sub-genres."

No definitive answers can be given before learners themselves are heard on this matter. The analysis of the data was not meant to provide definitive answers or trigger generalizations about fixed characteristics of prose in this area, but rather to serve as a starting point for formulating the *problem* and the *hypotheses* that will orient the elaboration of specific questions on the evaluation of status in the monographs (cf. section 7 below).

5 - Evaluation of value

Through evaluation of value, writers monitor information with respect to shared norms and values of the discipline. Martin (2000:1480) argues that the study of evaluative lexis enables analysts to "better [understand] the interplay of interpersonal meaning and social relations" and the ways in which discourse participants show "empathy and affiliation".

Both Martin and Hunston draw a distinction between *inscribed* and *evoked* attitude, or *explicit* and *implicit* evaluation. In Martin's terms, for evaluation to be evoked, readers need to share a particular value-system. In this research, we are concerned exclusively with explicit or inscribed evaluation.

To Martin, evaluative resources inscribed in the lexical system allow discourse participants to express their feelings (*happiness, fear*, etc.), aesthetic assessments (*complexity, originality*, etc.), and judgements of behavior (*deviousness, honesty*, etc.). These correspond to three dimensions of evaluation, respectively: Affect, Appreciation and Judgement.

Analysis of the sample reveals that there is no occurrence of evaluation of previous criticism, one of the most conspicuous discourse elements in the specialist sample. This again seems to lend support to the characterization of the monograph as a learner genre, with its own distinct characteristics. As the student's monograph is a response to a research project proposed by the teacher, it does not feature the rhetorical moves that characterize specialists' prose: specialists, unlike students, need to "establish territory", or justify their choice of author or work and demonstrate the relevance of their study to the discourse community addressed.

Analysis of comparative data from the specialists' sample and from that of nonspecialists suggests that uses of evaluation in the former sample cover a wider scope of dimensions of evaluation. In evaluating textual segments, for example, specialists may scope over four dimensions of Appreciation (cf. Martin, 2000) within the same text: reaction/impact (*the puzzling final chapter*); composition/balance (*a pivotal moment*); and social valuation (*the apocalyptic/revelatory scene*).

Example 4: *(...) I turn to the end of the novel, to Beloved's exorcism and the novel's puzzling final chapter, and attempt again to evaluate* Beloved *in terms of American discourses on race. (...)* [Text 3, paragraph 26]

Example 5: (...) Beloved*'s narrative spirals around, is ordered by, a traumatic event whose model is historical. Morrison frame this event (...) in the language of apocalypse (...) The apocalyptic event constitutes a pivotal moment that separates what came before from what comes after. The apocalypse determines the form and direction of everything that follows, and it rewrites all previous history as premonitory . The apocalyptic event, then, generates new meanings and new historical narratives, (...) The apocalyptic scene, as Morrison presents it, is both catastrophic and revelatory.* [Text 3, paragraph 5]

The uses observed in the learners' sample, by contrast, can be categorized as reaction/impact only:

Example 6: *Another interesting scene in which the fantastic and the grotesque take place is when Mignon and Walser dance with the tigers. (...)* (ALS, p. 7)

Example 7: *(...) one of the most peculiar scenes described in the narrative takes place when a dwarf and his aggressor engage in a kind of battle in which the blade is represented by the phallus and even when being sheared, it comes out again. The event shows that the grotesque gives no place for any kind of repression, especially when it refers to sexual human impulses (...)* (ALS, p. 8)

In both segments, the learner evaluates the textual scene in terms of its impact on the reader: in the second example, the strange elements of the scene are foregrounded (*a peculiar scene*), highlighting the troubling or disquieting effects of Carter's prose on the reader. In the first example, the same type of disquieting characteristics of the author's prose captures the reader's interest (*an interesting scene*).

When it comes to the literary text itself, again uses in the specialists' sample scope over different dimensions of evaluation, within the same text: composition/balance (*a[narrative] in elliptical form; a bleak vignette*); composition/complexity (*richly textured stories*); social valuation (*a powerful evocation of Malamudian themes*); reaction/impact (*astounding in their economy*), quite unlike what happens in the learners' sample, in which the only dimension of evaluation is social valuation. The following example introduces evaluation of value in the specialist's sample:

Example 8: *Although reviewers of* Rembrandt's Hat *were almost uniformly attracted to the longer, more richly textured stories* — The Silver Crown, Man in the Drawer, Talking Horse — *this "vignette, rigorously bleak," as one reviewer described it, reveals a powerful evocation of Malamudian themes and motifs embodied in an elliptical form and style that are astounding in their economy. Prominent among many rich and complex Malamud stories that have attracted only minimal commentary,* The Letter *certainly "justif[ies] further investigation."* [Text 20, paragraph 1]

Below is a fragment from the learners' sample:

Example 9: *(...) combining realism with these strategies, Carter has rendered her social criticism subtler and in this way more acceptable in a patriarchal society. (...) Intelligently undertaken, this criticism is nonetheless powerful* (LGP, p. 3)

In the fragment, the text is evaluated not in terms of its formal characteristics (composition), or in terms of its emotional impact on the reader, as in the specialists' sample, but only in terms of its social value or social significance (*powerful/subtle criticism; intelligently undertaken*). Again, we might interpret this finding as reflecting the type of reading focus given in class discussions of the text.

In this respect, the absence of evaluation as Affect, that is, in terms of its emotional impact on the reader, might suggest that learners deliberately avoid this dimension

of evaluation on the basis of the representation they make of their teacher as "reader". If the teacher favors a "reading for coherence" in class (cf. Marshall *et alii* 1995), which focusses on the text and the patterns that shape it, and does not privilege "readings of configuration ", which encourage personal reactions or responses to texts, then it is only just natural that the learner should avoid a type of evaluation which is associated with this latter conception of reading.

In section 7, the problematics of the findings about evaluation of value will inform the formulation of *hypotheses* to orient discussion with students in the *case studies*.

6 - Evaluation of relevance

Through evaluation of relevance, writers monitor the information that enters their text as to its relevance to the community (*epistemic relevance*) and as to its pertinence to the argument being constructed (*topical relevance*). In the learner sample, as discussed in Section 5 above, epistemic relevance is not significant, given that learners do not have to justify their research, which is a response to a stimulus given by the teacher.

Topical relevance, on the other hand, is a significant dimension of evaluation in the learners' sample. However, analysis of the sample indicates that there is much prospective signalling in the learners' texts, but little retrospective signalling, or explicit closure of textual segments. Such features contribute to the lack of direction which is often noted in student writing:

Example 10: *We may notice that in Magic Realist novels, ordinary, everyday elements and concrete details are mingled with the miraculous, the unexpected, and, several times, with the supernatural in a sort of kaleidoscopic survey. Thus, in these novels there's a sort of combination of everyday events with mythological and magical elements (as fairy-tales allusions); and also the use of expressionistic and surrealistic descriptions. In these novels, some characters may even possess some attributes as flight, levitation or supernatural powers. Yet, above all, the tone used in the novel is, though fantastic, still reliable.*
o 7 *According to a reading of the work of Sigmund Freud entitled* Eros and civilization *written by Herbert Marcuse, Freud considered "fantasy" as a mental activity that demanded "freedom" from established patterns and rigid social values:*

> *Como tal, [a fantasia] continua falando a linguagem do princípio do prazer, de liberdade de expressão, do desejo e gratificação desinibida - mas a realidade procede de acordo com as leis da razão, não mais vinculada à linguagem do sonho.*

o 8 *Therefore, being Magic Realism a tendency among Latin American writers, it's even more relevant and transgressive to have such a remarkable British writer as Angela Carter making use of such Magic Realist values.* (KCC, p. 5/6)

The textual segment under discussion is from an introductory section in which the student is establishing a reading contract with the reader, making her conception of Magic Realism explicit before she proceeds to her analysis of the novel. In this part of the section, the student attempts to add a psychoanalytical or psychological dimension to her discussion of Magic Realism, which had been previously carried out in formal and thematic terms – the student suggests that there is a relationship between the pleasure principle, freedom of expression, and desire, on the one hand, and Magic Realism, on the other. However, she fails to articulate the relations between *fantasy* and *reality* from Marcuse's writings to her own proposition about Magic Realism, neglecting the explicit signalling of the relevance of the information in the quote with respect to her broader argument.

Paragraph 8 of the student's segment thematizes the conjunct *therefore*, which is characteristically used to introduce a relevance marker. However, the conjunct introduces New Infomation (Carter stands out among British writers, who do not characteristically adopt Magic Realist values), which hardly shares any propositional content with previous statements, apart from reference to Magic Realism. Thus, the paragraph cannot be understood as a relevance marker, seeing that a criterial feature for relevance markers is represented by their cohesive function.

Our findings about evaluation of relevance in the learners' sample allow us to formulate the following hypothesis: learners expect their teachers to be in a position to draw inferences about how the textual evidence introduced in their papers relates to their higher-order arguments. This could be accounted for in terms of the degree of shared knowledge between learners and teachers as a function of extensive class discussion of the text, or as a function of tutoring sessions about the learner's monograph.

7 - The instruments of ethnographic data collection

The following analytical procedures were adopted in the elaboration of the instruments of ethnographic data collection. First, for each question, the researcher's objective was explicitly indicated: namely, what type of information the researcher expected to obtain. Next, a hypothesis was explicitly formulated, on the basis of analysis of the learners' sample, followed by the "problem" which served as a starting point for formulation of the hypothesis.

Analysis of learners' talk will be structured around the following analytical procedures: identification of discourse markers that characterize the initial hypotheses; identification of markers that characterize hypotheses not predicted by this researcher; construction of a "descriptive vocabulary" adopted by the learners.

The following are the questions that were elaborated to structure the interview with the students after analysis of the sample:

Evaluation of status
Aim: To obtain data about learners' understanding of their social role in academia; about their understanding of their teachers' expectations in relation to their writing,

with respect to the types of claims introduced (modalized / unmodalized); about whether or not they are aware of the different intersubjective positionings available in writing about literature ("authoritative or definitive readings" (cf. Eco, 1993) and "provisional readings" or "reading positions").
Problem: There seems to be a lack of consistency in learners' prose with respect to the status of information attributed to different propositions. Propositions with a high degree of externality are often coded as categorical assertions.
Hypothesis: Learners seem to consider extensive class-discussions of particular aspects of a text as a discourse element which would sanction the introduction of propositions coded as categorical assertions.
Questions: What recommendations does the teacher give learners with respect to the modalization of propositions? How do you understand these recommendations? Do you relate this to recommendations by other teachers? By language teachers, for example?

Evaluation of value
Aim: To gather information about learners' perceptions of dimensions of evaluation in literary research; to gather information about learners' perceptions of reading traditions in literary research and how they relate to evaluation of value.
Problem: Learners' patterns of evaluation of value seem to be restricted to certain dimensions of evaluation.
Hypothesis: Evaluation of value in learners' prose is restricted to the dimensions of evaluation privileged by the teacher in class discussions of the text.
Questions: What sort of recommendations are you given by the teacher with respect to the evaluation of textual elements in literary research (characters, scenes, episodes, the author, the literary text itself)? How does your teacher react to evaluation in terms of a personal reaction or response to a text?

Evaluation of relevance
Aim: To explore how learners understand the patterns of argumentation in literary research and whether or not they relate such patterns to textual strategies of information monitoring.
Problem: Learners do not explicitly signal the relevance of the textual evidence introduced in their text.
Hypothesis: Extensive class-discussions of the literary text, apart from tutoring sessions about the monograph, seem to account for the learners' perception that their teachers are in a position to see the relationships between their textual evidence and their claims.
Questions: What needs to be done to introduce a persuasive argument in literary research? How do you monitor the information that you introduce in your text, from the perspective of its higher-order argument? What sort of recommendations are you given with respect to writing a persuasive argument in literary research? With respect to organization and support for your arguments?

The only question which is not based on analysis of the learners' sample is one which deals with the issue of the sociocultural conditions around the reading of a

foreign literature. The hypotheses then are based on this researcher's understanding of the aspects involved in writing about a foreign literature.

Learners as Brazilian readers of a foreign literature
Aim: To explore learners' understanding or social representation of what it means to be a Brazilian reader of a foreign literature.
Problem: Learners do not seem to value their contribution as Brazilian readers of a foreign literature. Learners do not seem to draw on their experience as readers of their mother tongue literature (Brazilian Literature and Portuguese Literature) when they write about a foreign literature.
Hypotheses: There are different social representations of the role of readers. Learners seem to be more inclined to align themselves with a conception of reading which favors the text and its formal properties (apart from the social, historical, cultural, or discourse conditions surrounding the text) rather than one which favors readers' personal contribution or response to the text.
Questions: Is there any discussion in your classes of the problems faced by learners when they read a foreign literature? Do you see any difference (or similarity) among reading practices in your Brazilian Literature, Portuguese Literature or foreign Literature classes? What sort of contribution do you think learners can give to the study of a foreign literature as Brazilian readers of that literature?

Conclusion

Evaluation plays an enormous role in literary research: it provides its content, which, by definition, in a text whose function it is to comment on another text, is evaluative. Second, it is through evaluation that text producers in the area of literary research participate in the dialogue about a text, constructing a relationship of a specific kind with previous, present or potential readers of that text[4]. Finally, it is evaluation that supports the argumentative architecture of the metaliterary text, signalling the relevance of its textual segments to the argument being constructed in that text[5]. To Eco (1993:171), this rhetorical routine is a defining feature of literary-critical discourse: "Drawing conclusions about how a text functions presupposes drawing conclusions about which of its various aspects is or may be relevant or pertinent to a coherent interpretation [of that text]"[6].

In this article, we have focussed on evaluation in literary research, and have introduced some of the findings from a textual analysis of a sample of learner genres, which enabled us to discuss the methodological procedures adopted in the elaboration of an interview with learners about their writing. The next step in this research is reporting on the findings of the ethnographic analysis, which will hopefully enable us to explore the complexities of writing about a foreign literature.

Our point of departure has been an argument that information about the context of culture alone (different forms of self-representation available, different reading traditions, different conceptions of knowledge-making rhetorical routines) is not enough to understand such complexities. If data obtained through interviews with

learners confirm our hypotheses, then the context of situation seems to have equal weight: analysis of the sample suggests that class discussions of literary texts, an element in the context of situation, are as important as the ways in which the broader context of culture impinges on learners' writing about literature.

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Appendix 1 - Rhetorical activities in literary research
Introducing Claim [an assertion which introduces theoretical speculation about how the literary text should be read]
Introducing Interpretation [an assertion which introduces an inference about the meaning or significance of a textual element from the literary text]
Introducing Historical Context [an assertion, or group of assertions, whose function is to introduce extratextual information to support the author's argument]
Introducing Terms or Concepts [an assertion which introduces a definition or the conditions of use of terms and concepts relevant to the author's argument]
Introducing Paraphrase [an assertion, or group of assertions, which introduce a summarized version of the literary text]
Introducing Quotes [a heteroglossic (cf. Martin, 1998) assertion whose function is to show or reproduce the voice of the writer of the literary text, through the speech of the characters or of the narrator]
Introducing Evaluation [an assertion, or group of assertions, whose function is to evaluate a textual element: previous criticism, a character, a textual segment, among other possibilities]

Appendix 2 - Sources of information in literary research
Textual data [reference to the primary and/or secondary sources on the basis of which the author develops his or her argument]
Writer as source [reference to the writer through pronouns or indirectly through mental processes]
Text as source [signalled by anaphoric items such as hence, therefore, thus, which refer the reader to the author's own argument]

NOTES

1 The term *literary research*, to my knowledge, was first used by Sally Jacoby (1987). In this paper, the term is often used interchangeably with *metaliterary text*. However, *literary research* has wider scope: it refers to the process of writing about literature, whereas the term *metaliterary text* refers to a specific textual manifestation of *literary research*. In this research, the textual manifestation we are concerned with is the genre *student monograph*.
2 This example is adapted from Martin (2000), who collected the following instance of evaluation in a learner sample: "I felt eerie and isolated after reading the ending [of the short story] (...) ".
3 The monographs are identified by the initial letters of the learner's name.
4 See Balocco 1999, on evaluation of *status* in literary research.
5 See Balocco 1999, on evaluation of *relevance* in literary research.
6 My translation of a version in Portuguese: "Concluir como um texto funciona significa concluir qual de seus vários aspectos é ou pode ser relevante ou pertinente para uma interpretação coerente".

"DEATH BY WATER" IN KATE CHOPIN AND T. S. ELIOT

GEORGE MONTEIRO
Brown University

I do not find / The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland"

Literary critics and historians seldom, if ever, link the names of T. S. Eliot and Kate Chopin, two natives of St. Louis, Missouri. After all, until the critical and feminist rediscovery of *The Awakening*, Chopin's novel was generally considered to be little more than a good example of American local color or regionalism by a minor woman writer; while T. S. Eliot's poetry and criticism were widely trumpeted as undoubtedly the work of one of the great Modernists of the first half of the twentieth century. But things have a way of changing, and now Chopin's stock has skyrocketed in cultural value, while the worth of Eliot's achievement has been scaled down somewhat. One of the happy results of such market "correction" is that one need no longer consider it far-fetched to entertain the possibility that the young poet might have been influenced by the work of the mature novelist.

The buzz surrounding the publication and reception of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* in 1899 could not have been missed by the literati of St. Louis. After all, the author of this bold novel about the raising of the consciousness of a young mother had been herself "a charter member of the Wednesday Club, the intellectually elite women's club of St. Louis."[1] Devoted to expressing high-minded thoughts on serious matters, such as jobs for unemployed women, cleaner streets, and saving "girls from ignominy," its members took up, at "bi-weekly meetings," subjects such as "The Lake Poets," "What is Culture," and "The Dignity of Labor." Chopin once read a paper to the membership, one entitled "Typical Forms of German Music."[2] The

Wednesday Club also numbered among its forty members Charlotte Champe Eliot, who had something of a literary reputation herself. She was also the mother of T. S. Eliot, the future poet and critic. It is speculated that Charlotte "very likely encouraged Kate Chopin to write on the 'social evil' of venereal disease and its tragic effects on innocent wives."[3]

It is more than likely, therefore, that Charlotte Champe Eliot knew about *The Awakening*, the latest novel by one of the city's leading literary figures and one that was getting so much public notice, and might even have read it. While it is unlikely, of course, that her eleven-year-old son knew much about this notorious novel centering on an unhappy married woman who "awakens" to life and to suicide as a way of transcending fear and escaping ennui.

Some seven years after the publication of *The Awakening*, young Thomas Stearns Eliot, now enrolled at Harvard University, was writing poetry and reading contemporary literature. It is that Chopin's novel might have appealed to him. It will be recalled that even in his maturity Eliot continued to direct his curious readers to the French symbolists as *the* formative influence in the poetry of his first phase, that is, up to the publication of "The Hollow Men" in 1925. He could even date that influence to the moment when he first read Arthur Symons' *Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1908. So successfully, in fact, did he purvey this information as to the reality of his literary lineage that other figures and works, undoubtedly at least equally influential, continue to go undetected.

Kate Chopin and *The Awakening* constitute a case in point. One of the striking characteristics of the novel is Chopin's reluctance, after brilliantly showing forth the ways in which Creole society constricts Edna Pontellier, an outsider from Kentucky, and bruises her very sense of being, to lay full blame for Edna's fate on that society, with its subtle but stultifying, even if openly defined, web of unwritten rules that firm up and structure that society. There is an incipient dis-ease, one that at the last is unmistakably full-blown, within Edna's very soul that even the encouraging dictates of Emerson on self-reliance and the fortuitous discovery of Whitman's poet-making experience with sea and shore and solitary singer cannot assuage or comfort or cure.

If the secret of the sea discovered by the poet-to-be in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" that was the child who walked along Paumanok's shore is the whispering of "the delicious word death," it is a secret that calls him to poetry (as he will discern only later), and not to an Emerson congenial to a sea that will naturally remand to death's kingdom those who swim out too far to turn back. It will be recalled that it was Robert, Edna's gentlemanly caller, who describes it "delicious," (56) the ocean "whose sonorous murmur reached her like a loving but imperative entreaty" (56).[4]

On Edna's last day she finds it "delicious" to stand where "the water of the Gulf stretched out before her gleaming with the million lights of the sun." For, as Chopin tells us, "the voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude." Edna undresses in the bathhouse and puts on her bathing suit, but when she finds herself "there beside the sea, absolutely alone, she cast[s] the unpleasant, pricking garments from her, and for the first time in her life she stood naked in the open air, at the mercy of the sun, the breeze that beat upon her, and the waves that invited her." Recalling the

Whitmanian image of "man in the open air,"[5] she feels like "some new-born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known" (175). Reversing the image of Venus at her birth—Edna has earlier been compared to "Venus rising from the foam" (173)—Edna faces not the shore and terrestrial life but the ocean and whatever there is beyond her mortal existence. Edna swims out to the exhaustion that presses upon her and overwhelms her. Edna plays out radically Chopin's feelings as she had recorded them in her diary on July 24, 1894: "I am losing my interest in human beings; in the significance of their lives and action . . . . I want neither books nor men. They make me suffer. Is there one of them can talk to me like the night—the summer night? . . . The night came slowly as I lay out there under the maple tree . . . . My whole being was abandoned to the soothing and penetrating charm of the Night. —The katydids began their slumber song . . . . How wise they are. They do not chatter like people. They only tell me: 'sleep, sleep, sleep.'"[6]

Here is the conclusion of *The Awakening* (it will be recalled that Chopin's working title was "A Solitary Soul"), a denouement in which Edna does not lie on the sand out under the stars and in the peace induced by their silent wisdom, but swims out to sea: "She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurts of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air" (176).

Now we turn to T. S. Eliot. Published in 1915 (though written in 1911-12), "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" presents in a seemingly self-directed monologue by a displaced and excruciatingly discomfited male. He seems not to have a meaningful or even comfortable place in the social world to which he putatively belongs or, for that matter, in Nature's world. He has neither the assurance that Emerson promises those who are self-reliant nor the poet's assurance attained by the solitary singer who discovers the sea's true message. He hears "the mermaids singing, each to each," and knows that they do not sing to him. Like Edna Pontellier, J. Alfred Prufrock (who shares a surname with Prufrock-Littaur, furniture wholesalers in St. Louis at the beginning of the twentieth century[7]) wanders sea-front streets and alleys until he finds himself before what he portentously calls "the chambers of the sea." His seemingly aimless walk has led to the sea and, as in Edna's case, to an opportunity to bring about one's death by drowning. In his case, however, the "drowning" turn out to be figurative, not actual. His ocean death is imagined and therefore potentially recurring. The last lines of Eliot's poem echo, in a strangely transformed way, the last paragraph of *The Awakening* quoted above: "We have lingered in the chambers of the sea/ By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown/ Till human voices wake us, and we drown." It is significant here that Eliot avoids the expected word "awake," preferring the more colloquial "wake." He does so partly, I think, for the sake of the metrics of the line. But he also wants "wake" to do double service. Besides the idea of becoming awake, he wishes to invoke the idea of participating in a "wake" for the dead.[8] This of course becomes the most explicit statement of the poem's theme of death-in-life, one the poem shares with *The Awakening*.

In their solitude and, at the last, silence, T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock and Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier are fictional kin. There is more of fin de siècle St. Louis in the makeup of the young Eliot's pseudonymous alter-ego than the successful but still ambitious poet-critic, who singled out the French poets Jules Laforgue and Tristan Corbière as his European precursors, dared to confide to his readers or, perhaps, to admit even to himself.

NOTES

1 Emily Toth, *Kate Chopin* (New York: William Morrow, 1990), p. 198.

2 Per Seyersted, *Kate Chopin: A Critical Biography* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget/ Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. 65.

3 Seyersted, *Kate Chopin*, p. 67.

4 Page numbers given parenthetically in the text refer to Kate Chopin, *The Awakening and Selected Stories*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert (New York: Penguin, 1984).

5 Chopin alludes to Whitman's famous call for a poetry that would give us "*man in the open air*, his attitude adjusted to the seasons and as one might describe it, adjusted to the sun by day and the stars by night." Its importance as a key to understanding American poetry and culture is argued by F. O. Matthiessen in "Man in the Open Air," chapter 14 of his *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 626-56.

6 Quoted in Seyersted, *Kate Chopin*, pp. 67-68.

7 Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959), p. 3.

8 James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* makes a similarly valenced use of the word.

AQUISIÇÃO DO PORTUGUÊS BRASILEIRO COMO SEGUNDA LÍNGUA[1]

GILDETE ROCHA XAVIER
UNICAMP

RESUMO: Este trabalho analisa os estágios iniciais de aquisição do português brasileiro como segunda língua, por um adulto falante do chinês que teve o inglês como segunda língua. O fenômeno sintático adotado foi o Parâmetro do Sujeito Nulo. Procurou-se responder as questões: *Há algum tipo de interferência do inglês para a aquisição do PB no que se refere ao parâmetro pro-drop? Existe transferência do chinês para o PB, ou a GU seria o estado inicial para a aquisição do PB?* Os dados mostram que Johnny não está tomando como base, para a aquisição do PB, o parâmetro do inglês. Quanto à segunda questão, concluiu-se que não se pode decidir se o aprendiz está utilizando a GU como opção "default", ou sua L1, o chinês, já que se assumiu que o *pro-drop* do chinês é o próprio "default".

ABSTRACT: This study analyses the initial stages of the acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese as a second language (BPL2) by a Chinese-speaking adult, who also speaks English. The syntactic phenomenon adopted was the Null Subject Parameter. There was an attempt to answer the following questions: Is there any type of interference of English on the acquisition of BP, as far as the pro-drop parameter is concerned? Is there any "transfer" from Chinese into BP, or would UG be the initial stage towards the acquisition of BP? The data analysis shows that Johnny is not considering English as the basis for the acquisition of BP. As for the second issue, we concluded that one can not decide whether the learner is utilizing the UG as a default option, or his L1 (Chinese) , since we have assumed that the Chinese pro-drop is the very default.

0. Introdução

A teoria gerativista, principalmente a partir da abordagem de princípios e parâmetros (Chomsky, 1981), tem sido instrumento de análise relevante para explicar o processo de aquisição da linguagem , e, assim, tem contribuído, de forma decisiva, para o desenvolvimento de pesquisas preocupadas em descrever esse processo. Trata-se de uma teoria inatista que pressupõe que a criança quando nasce já traz um "conhecimento prévio" geneticamente codificado. Esse conhecimento inato da linguagem é referido como Gramática Universal (GU).

De acordo com essa teoria, a GU compreende um conjunto de princípios inatos universais, invariáveis, aos quais estão associados princípios abertos, os parâmetros, que são fixados com base nos dados lingüísticos primários aos quais a criança está exposta. Neste modelo, a aquisição pela criança de sua língua materna (L1) se dá a partir da interação desses dois tipos de propriedades. Entretanto, quando se trata da aquisição de uma língua estrangeira (L2), não existe um consenso quanto à acessibilidade da GU por um indivíduo adulto.

Assim, vários estudos partem do pressuposto de que a aquisição de segunda língua é semelhante à aquisição de primeira língua, ou seja, que a GU é acessível ao adulto aprendiz de L2 (White 1985, Flynn, 1987, Cyrino, 1986). Outros estudos, por outro lado, argumentam que há diferenças na aquisição de L1 e L2, considerando, entre outras coisas, que a aquisição de L2 se dá através da transferência dos valores paramétricos da L1 para a L2 (Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996, Schwartz and Sprouse,1996, entre outros).

Neste trabalho, para delimitar o objeto de estudo dentre os vários níveis de análise que poderiam ser abordados para explicar o processo de aquisição de L2, optei pelo fenômeno sintático, referido na literatura como Parâmetro do Sujeito Nulo (PSN). O estudo está inserido no modelo conhecido como teoria dos princípios e parâmetros da gramática gerativa (Chomsky, 1981).

Pretendo verificar como se dá a realização do sujeito nulo na aquisição do português brasileiro (doravante PB) como segunda língua por um adulto estrangeiro – falante bilíngüe – que tem o chinês como língua nativa, mas que também é falante de inglês. Entre outras, tento responder as seguintes questões: Qual o papel da L2 (o inglês) de Johnny, (sujeito da minha pesquisa), no processo de aquisição do PB? Há algum tipo de interferência do inglês para a aquisição do PB no que se refere ao parâmetro *pro-drop*? Qual o papel da L1 (o chinês) na aquisição do PB com L2? Existe transferência do chinês para o PB? Para tanto levanto a seguinte hipótese: o *pro-drop* chinês, L1 de johnny, é o valor "default" da GU e, portanto, no caso dele, GU e L1 se confundem.

1. Aquisição de Primeira e Segunda Língua

1.1 Aquisição de Primeira Língua (L1)

A aquisição no modelo de princípios e parâmetros trabalha com a hipótese de que a criança detém um estado de conhecimento anterior a qualquer experiência

lingüís ica. Essa hipótese justifica-se com base no fato de que o conhecimento da gramá ica envolve o domínio de um sistema altamente complexo que emerge sem *input* negativo[2] (num curto período de tempo, uma criança aprende a falar sua língua nativa e é capaz e compreender um número infinito de sentenças) e se desenvolve com grande facilidade, rapidez e uniformidade num ambiente de dados considerados deficientes.

Uma vez que um adulto falante nativo de uma língua sabe certas coisas sobre sua língua que não pode ter aprendido a partir da experiência a que esteve exposto durante toda sua vida, tem sido proposto que deve haver algo de inato na mente humana que permita que a aquisição de uma língua seja possível, apesar das "deficiências" verificadas no ambiente lingüístico.

Considera-se que o conhecimento adquirido assume a forma de princípios gerais válidos para as línguas humanas possíveis e que os parâmetros são um conjunto de opções para uma língua específica, interagindo com princípios universais para formar gramáticas de línguas específicas. A experiência lingüística funciona como a base a partir da qual o aprendiz fixa os valores paramétricos no processo de aquisição de uma língua particular.

Dentro da proposta do modelo de princípios e parâmetros, há duas hipóteses que tratam da fixação de parâmetros pela criança de modos distintos: de um lado, a maturacional, e de outro, a hipótese da continuidade.

A pressuposição básica da hipótese maturacional, na formulação de Borer & Wexler (1987), é de que certos princípios maturam, ou seja, os princípios não estão disponíveis em certos estágios de desenvolvimento da criança, só se tornando disponíveis em um estágio posterior.

Uma vez que a criança não dispõe de todos os princípios da GU, como advoga esta hipótese, entende-se que a produção infantil inicial não seja restringida pelos mecanismos da GU, o que faz emergir estruturas não autorizadas pela GU, dando origem a um tipo de gramática ilegal ou "wild", como normalmente referida. Já que esta hipótese está vinculada à maturação biológica, não cabe considerá-la no caso de aquisição de L2 por adulto.

A hipótese da continuidade postula que a criança apresenta, desde o início, uma estrutura que se conforma com os princípios que regem a gramática do adulto (Hyams, 1986; Clahzen, 1989, entre outros). Em virtude da hipótese de que toda produção da criança deriva de possibilidades autorizadas pela GU, a hipótese da continuidade trabalha com a idéia de que, no início da aquisição, os parâmetros estão marcados na GU com uma opção "default" (cf. Hyams,1986). Essa idéia é fundamental para esta hipótese, a fim de garantir que a criança seja capaz de atuação lingüística exclusivamente dentro das opções da GU, mesmo antes de identificar qual escolha é adequada como parâmetro na sua língua. A opção "default" é necessariamente anterior a qualquer experiência lingüística, e é programada já no mecanismo de aquisição para garantir um comportamento que não viole as regras da GU.

No caso do parâmetro *pro-drop*, o sujeito nulo foi considerado a opção "default" (Hyams,1986)[3]. Dessa forma, uma criança que está aprendendo uma língua como o inglês, posteriormente, terá que remarcar o parâmetro para a variante marcada. Mas se uma criança está aprendendo uma língua como o espanhol ou italiano, línguas

pro-drop, ela não terá que remarcar o parâmetro, já que a língua apresenta a variante não marcada do parâmetro.

1.2 Aquisição de Segunda Língua (L2)

A partir dos anos 80, o modelo conhecido como Teoria dos Princípios e Parâmetros (Chomsky, 1981,1982,1986) passou a fornecer subsídios a muitos estudiosos interessados em pesquisas sobre primeira e segunda línguas. Com base nessa teoria, vários trabalhos sobre a aquisição de L2 foram desenvolvidos com o intuito de estabelecer se um adulto adquirindo uma L2 teria acesso à GU ou se haveria "transferência" de valores paramétricos de L1 a L2[4]. Vários autores assumem que a aquisição de L2 é semelhante à aquisição de L1 (White 1985a,b, Flynn, 1987, Cyrino 1986).

A partir da afirmação de que a aquisição de L2 é semelhante à aquisição de L1, as perguntas que têm sido colocadas são as seguintes: se a criança, quando adquire uma língua, fixa os parâmetros para essa língua, como seria a fixação de parâmetros para o adulto aprendiz de L2? Essa fixação seria mediada por GU? Ou seja, GU ainda seria acessível ao adulto aprendiz de L2?

As respostas a essas duas perguntas têm sido abordadas em muitos trabalhos que assumem a acessibilidade de GU e pesquisam como os parâmetros são (re)fixados (White 1985, Flynn 1987, Cyrino 1986, Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1996, Schwartz & Sprouse 1996, Cyrino 1994, entre outros). Outros trabalhos, no entanto, não aceitam essa possibilidade e argumentam que GU não é acessível ao aprendiz de L2 após o Período Crítico para a aquisição de língua, ou seja, o aprendiz só teria acesso à GU que está aparente em sua língua nativa, mas não teria acesso aos princípios universais (por exemplo, Schachter, 1989, Bley-Vroman, 1989).

Dada a hipótese de que os princípios universais desempenham algum papel na aquisição de L2, como se dá essa aquisição? Uma hipótese é que se aprende uma segunda língua exatamente da mesma maneira que se aprende a língua nativa, ou seja, começando com um parâmetro no valor não marcado e (re)fixando parâmetros apenas quando confrontado com os dados da L2 que exigem um valor marcado. Outra hipótese é que o aprendiz chega a L2 com os valores do parâmetro de L1 e é forçado a remarcar os parâmetros que diferem nas duas línguas.

Procurarei fornecer evidências que demonstrem que no processo de aquisição de L2 os "erros" cometidos pelo aprendiz de L2 podem ser comparados aos "erros" cometidos por crianças quando da aquisição de L1, devido à adoção do valor "default" do parâmetro, que, no caso, é o da L1 do aprendiz. Aquilo que à primeira vista parece ser transferência, pode ser analisado como sendo características desse valor "default" que gera uma gramática que apresenta estruturas autorizadas pela GU. Não posso determinar, com certeza, se é o valor "default"(=chinês) ou a L1 do sujeito que está em jogo, mas a teoria dos Princípios e Parâmetros fornece esta possível análise, através da GU, para aquilo que antes só podia ser analisado como transferência de L1. Manterei essa posição até poder refutá-la através da aquisição do PB por falantes de outras línguas, como o inglês, uma língua não *pro-drop*, ou o

italiano, uma língua de sujeito nulo que o licencia através da flexão. Se esses sujeitos percorrerem caminhos diferentes ao de Johnny, poderei dizer que minha hipótese foi desconfirmada.

Isso não significa que a L1 de Johnny, como sistema adquirido, não tenha um papel na aquisição de L2 em nível de desempenho. Os fenômenos de "code-switching" observados na fala do meu sujeito são estratégias de produção a que ele recorre em momentos de dificuldade. Mas este fenômeno está fora dos objetivos desta dissertação.

2. O sujeito nulo do chinês e do PB.

Para Jaeggli & Safir (1989), apenas línguas que apresentam paradigmas verbais morfologicamente uniformes, isto é, paradigmas verbais constituídos só de formas derivadas ou só de formas primitivas podem exibir sujeitos nulos.

O chinês é uma língua cujo paradigma verbal é constituído apenas de formas verbais primitivas (o radical). Não existe nessa língua um sistema visível de concordância com traços de número e pessoa. O sujeito nulo do chinês, ao contrário do sujeito nulo de línguas como o espanhol e o italiano que contam com um sistema flexional "rico", não pode ser licenciado e identificado por *Agr*. Kato (no prelo) propõe, para línguas do tipo do chinês e japonês, um *Agr* nulo do mesmo tipo encontrado na terceira pessoa do singular de línguas românicas, com a diferença de que enquanto no chinês o *Agr* nulo pode ter como antecedente qualquer pessoa do discurso, o *Agr* nulo do espanhol tem como antecedente apenas a terceira pessoa do singular e, o do PB , a segunda e terceira pessoas do singular.

Contando apenas com uma forma verbal, a de terceira pessoa não-marcada, o chinês identifica o sujeito nulo através da correferência deste com um elemento nominal na posição A ou A' que o comanda. Assim, o sujeito nulo de uma oração encaixada pode encontrar o seu antecedente no sujeito da frase matriz, ou, ainda, fora da sentença.

No português brasileiro, embora o sistema de sujeitos nulos seja defectivo em conseqüência do empobrecimento do paradigma flexional, *"a categoria vazia que ainda temos em PB é um pro, licenciado e identificado segundo os mesmos mecanismos utilizados nas línguas pro-drop românicas"* (Duarte, 1995.:33). Se assumirmos com Kato (no prelo) que a única pessoa que é ainda pronominal é a terceira, a referência do sujeito nulo poderá ser dada por um SN em posição A ou A', como no chinês, ao ainda por um PRO em posição A', no caso do sujeito nulo ser controlado, ou ter leitura arbitrária. No caso da flexão marcada de primeira pessoa como ela está deixando de ser pronominal, a tendência será a co-ocorrência com o pronome fraco.

Do exposto, assumo que Johnny vai adquirir o sujeito nulo do PB, a partir do momento que ele passar a usar formas verbais distintas para a primeira e terceira pessoas do discurso. O que se espera é que Johnny passará rapidamente de sujeito nulo para sujeito não nulo para a primeira e segunda pessoa, permanecendo com a terceira pessoa nula.

3. Análise e discussão dos dados

Nesta seção, analisarei como a produção de Johnny evolui no que diz respeito ao parâmetro do sujeito nulo.

Do total de sujeitos pronominais, 27,1% são de sujeito nulo. Os sujeitos nulos encontrados podem ser referenciais ou não-referenciais.

3.1 *Construções com sujeitos pronominais lexicais e nulos*

3.1.1 Sujeitos referenciais

a) De expressões "formulares"

De um total de cento e dez frases com expressões formulares, vinte e cinco (22,7%) apresentam sujeito nulo, e oitenta e cinco (77,3%) apresentam sujeito pleno. A partir da quarta gravação, percebe-se um aumento no percentual de sujeitos preenchidos, com exceção da quinta gravação, em que o percentual cai de 94,7% para 75%. Veja a tabela a seguir:

Tabela 1

Sujeitos de expressões "formulares"				
Gravação	Nulos		Plenos	
	Ocorrência	%	Ocorrência	%
1ª	4	28,6	10	71,4
2ª	5	41,7	7	58,3
3ª	5	31,2	11	68,8
4ª	1	5,3	18	94,7
5ª	2	25	6	75
6ª	4	19	17	81
7ª	4	20	16	80

b) Sujeito de verbo não-marcado, com referência de 2ª ou 3ª pessoa do discurso

(1)**a.** Meu pai é chato porque ele não fala muito de mim, **cv** não *falou* muito.
b. Meu amigo segurou menina e **cv** *dança* forró.

Para esse tipo de sujeito foram encontradas nove ocorrências de sujeito nulo (8,1%), contra cento e duas ocorrências de sujeito pleno, como mostrado na tabela abaixo. Não foi encontrado um único caso de nulo para a segunda pessoa. Quanto às ocorrências de sujeitos plenos, oitenta aparecem com o pronome de terceira pessoa e vinte e duas, com o pronome de segunda pessoa.

Tabela 2

Suj. de verbo não-marcado/ referência de 2ª ou 3ª pes. do discurso		
Gravação	Nulos	Plenos
	ocorrência	Ocorrência
1ª	0	7
2ª	3	17
3ª	0	10
4ª	2	13
5ª	0	12
6ª	3	18
7ª	1	25

c) Sujeitos de verbo não-marcado, com referência de primeira pessoa do discurso.

(2) **a.** A: E televisão? O que você assiste na televisão?
J: Eh... **cv** *assiste* televisão eh... Domingo.
b. Eu vim Brasil primeira vez dia cinco. Primeira vez **cv** *saiu* da minha família, **cv** *vai* a país ninguém conhece de mim.

Quanto aos sujeitos nulos de verbo não marcado com referência de primeira pessoa do discurso, verifiquei nos dados, como mostro na tabela 3, trinta ocorrências de sujeito nulo (22%), contra cento e seis casos de sujeito preenchido. Na primeira gravação não houve nenhum caso de sujeito nulo.

Tabela 3

Suj. de verbo não-marcado/ referência de 1ª pes. do discurso		
Gravação	Nulos	Plenos
	Ocorrência	Ocorrência
1ª	0	15
2ª	2	26
3ª	3	6
4ª	5	12
5ª	6	23
6ª	7	8
7ª	7	16

c) Sujeitos de verbos marcados em pessoa (primeira pessoa do discurso):

(3) **a.** A: Que filme você assistiu?
J: Ah...**cv** *esqueci*...nome...nome **cv** *esqueci* de nome de filme
b. A: Lá em Recife você foi ver algum grupo de rock?
J: Também tem, mas eu não fui. **cv** Não *fui*

Os sujeitos nulos de verbo marcado em pessoa somam um total de vinte e nove (12,9%), contra cento e noventa e seis casos de sujeitos plenos (87,1%). Veja na tabela abaixo a distribuição desses sujeitos em cada gravação:

Tabela 4

Suj. de verbo marcado em pessoa/referência de 1ª pessoa do discurso		
Gravação	Nulos	Plenos
	Ocorrência	Ocorrência
1ª	0	5
2ª	2	12
3ª	3	27
4ª	0	17
5ª	10	32
6ª	7	23
7ª	7	80

Do total de trezentos e sessenta e um verbos usados para se referir à primeira pessoa do discurso, duzentos e vinte e cinco (62,3%) aparecem com pessoa marcada. Destes, vinte e nove (12,9%) aparecem com sujeito nulo e cento e noventa e seis (87,1%) aparecem com sujeito preenchido.

Observando a tabela 5, fica evidente o fato de que, à medida que aumenta o tempo de exposição de Johnny ao PB, ele vai se aproximando cada vez mais do sistema gramatical dessa língua. Isso pode ser verificado a partir dos índices percentuais encontrados em cada gravação. Assim, vemos que o percentual de verbos com pessoa marcada, que na primeira gravação corresponde a 25%, salta para 79,1% na sétima.

Tabela 5

Verbos com referência de primeira pessoa				
Gravação	Pessoa não-marcada		Pessoa marcada	
	Ocorrência	%	Ocorrência	%
1ª	15	75	05	25
2ª	28	66,7	14	33,3
3ª	09	23,1	30	76,9
4ª	17	50	17	50
5ª	29	40,8	42	59,2
6ª	15	33,3	30	66,7
7ª	23	20,9	87	79,1

3.1.2 Sujeitos não referenciais

Os sujeitos não referenciais compreendem sujeitos de referência arbitrária e sujeitos expletivos de construção impessoal

Com relação a sujeitos de referência arbitrária foram encontrados, nos dados, apenas seis casos de sujeito nulo. Encontrei nove casos de sujeito arbitrário preenchido com o pronome *você*, mas nenhum caso de sujeito arbitrário com a expressão *a gente.*

No que se refere ao sujeito nulo expletivo de construção impessoal, este se apresenta de forma categórica. Prova disso é que não houve diferença entre as gravações. No *corpus* total, foram observados oitenta e um casos, que correspondem a 100%.

3.2 *Padrões de respostas sim/não*

(4) **a.** A: Mas se você falar chinês em qualquer lugar da China, as pessoas vão entender?
J: Entender
b. A: Eu quero voltar a conversar com você dentro de dez, quinze dias. Tá certo?
J: Ah... eu quero

(5) **a.** A: O que você gostaria de fazer nas suas férias? Você gostaria de passear, viajar, conhecer outras cidades do Brasil?
J: Gosto, eu gosto.

b. A: Tem alguma história interessante lá do colégio que você queira me contar?
J: Eu quero

(6) **a.** A: Ele corre?
J: Ele corre
b. A: Você não vai muito ao cinema?
J: Eh... Eu , eu vai muito

(7) **a.** A: Você não lembra de nenhum filme pra me contar?
J: Eh... não lembro muito
b. A: Você gostou da festa?
J: Eu gostei

Nos dois exemplos em (4), Johnny repete o verbo da pergunta. As ocorrências em (5) são exemplos de casos em que não há concordância temporal entre pergunta e resposta, o que pode indicar que o uso é formular como *não sei, acho*, etc. Em (6), temos exemplos de extração do verbo finito na mesma forma em que aparece na pergunta. Os exemplos em (7) mostram mudança de pessoa, ou seja, Johnny responde com a primeira pessoa as perguntas feitas em terceira.

(8) **a.** A: Você gostou da praia?
J: Eu gostei
b. A: Você vai pra universidade no ano que vem?
J: Eh... eu vou
c. A: Você foi pro Serra Folia?
J: Fui.
d. A: Essa é Luciana. Você lembra dela?
J: Lembro. Conheço

(9) **a.** A: E você pulou carnaval?
J: Ah... eu vai, eu vou
b. A: E você achou bom?
J: Dança muito
c. A: Você pegou o telefone dela?
J: Tem. Endereço também
d. A: E tinha alguma banda tocando? Algum trio elétrico?
J: Hum... não conhece

(10) A: Ele sabe, né?
J: Sabe. Ele sei

Os exemplos em (8) mostram que Johnny usa a primeira pessoa para responder a perguntas feitas na terceira, sendo que em (a) e (b) ele preenche a posição de sujeito e nos demais exemplos, ele deixa essa posição vazia. As ocorrências em (9) podem indicar falta de concordância temporal entre verbo da pergunta e verbo da resposta, mas alguns como (b) e (c) podem ocultar uso do nulo como sujeito de referência arbitrária (= se dança muito). O exemplo (10), por outro lado evidencia que Johnny, primeiro, extrai da pergunta a forma verbal (sabe) para a sua resposta. Logo em seguida, corrige para a forma de primeira pessoa, embora ainda usando o pronome de terceira pessoa.

Em resumo, temos o seguinte quadro do desenvolvimento de Johnny em respostas:

Tabela 7

SUJEITO NULO E PREENCHIDO NO CONTEXTO DE RESPOSTA SIM/NÃO					
Gravação	Resposta Formular	Extração simples		Alternância de pessoa	
		-suj. nulo	+suj nulo	-suj nulo	+suj nulo
1ª	---	01	01	----	-----
2ª	03	04	05	-----	01
3ª	05	----	01	03	03
4ª	01	----	01	04	----
5ª	01	01	----	05	02
6ª	01	----	02	02	01

Observando o quadro acima percebemos que na 1ª gravação, Johnny apresenta apenas duas respostas curtas com verbo. Estas respostas se constróem com a mesma forma verbal da pergunta. Nas demais respostas, aparece ou a partícula *sim* ou o demonstrativo *isso*.

A 2ª gravação evidencia a presença de treze respostas curtas com verbo, entre as quais três se referem a ocorrências que não demonstram concordância temporal entre pergunta e resposta. Das nove ocorrências em que a forma verbal da resposta é a mesma da pergunta, quatro apresentam sujeito preenchido e cinco apresentam sujeito nulo. Há apenas uma ocorrência que evidencia a mudança de pessoa entre pergunta e resposta.

Foram encontrados doze casos de respostas curtas com verbo na terceira gravação. Desta vez, o número de ocorrências com alternância de pessoa supera o número dos casos de extração simples (uso, na resposta, da mesma forma verbal da pergunta). Foram encontrados seis casos de respostas em que Johnny responde com a primeira pessoa verbal as perguntas feitas em terceira. Destas, três apresentam sujeito realizado e três aparecem com sujeito vazio. Houve apenas um caso de extração. Os casos restantes compreendem aqueles que não mostram concordância entre pergunta e resposta e que, portanto, foram considerados como formulares.

Os resultados encontrados até aqui parecem indicar que Johnny passa a apresentar o sujeito nulo do PB a partir da terceira gravação (6;8 de exposição ao PB). Com quatro meses e quinze dias (data da 2ª gravação), ele apresentou cinco casos de sujeito nulo com extração, contra apenas um caso em que houve alternância de pessoa entre pergunta e resposta. Esse resultado indica, ao meu ver, que Johnny, nessa fase, ainda usa o nulo "default" do chinês, só passando ao nulo do PB a partir do momento em que ele é capaz de usar a forma verbal de primeira pessoa para responder a perguntas feitas na terceira.

Na quarta gravação, ou seja quinze dias apenas depois da terceira, Johnny parece já estar utilizando a gramática do PB. Foi encontrado apenas um caso de extração, contra quatro casos em que ele apresenta alternância de pessoa gramatical. Considerando que o chinês não apresenta tempo sintético, presumo que a alternância de pessoa significa aquisição da concordância no PB, o que levaria a preenchimento do pronome se PB está deixando de ter sujeito nulo referencial, isto é, concordância pronominal. Todos os quatro casos apresentam sujeito pronominal pleno, o que leva a crer que ele já está na gramática do PB.

A quinta gravação, que apresenta nove casos de respostas curtas, vem confirmar que Johnny já está usando a gramática do PB. A mudança de pessoa gramatical foi verificada em sete de nove respostas curtas, sendo que cinco delas aparecem com pronome preenchido e apenas duas apresentam sujeito nulo. Foi encontrado apenas um caso de extração, e um de resposta formular.

Finalmente, a sexta gravação apresenta seis ocorrências de respostas curtas. Uma é do tipo formular, duas de extração e três apresentam alternância de pessoa. Destas, duas exibem sujeito foneticamente realizado e apenas uma, o sujeito nulo.

Se excluirmos as respostas curtas do tipo formular dos dados analisados, teremos o seguinte: Johnny usou, em suas respostas, a mesma forma verbal da pergunta em dezesseis ocorrências. Destas, dez apresentaram sujeito nulo e seis, sujeito preenchido. Ele mostrou alternância de pessoa em vinte e uma respostas, sendo que catorze exibiam sujeito preenchido e apenas sete apresentaram sujeito vazio.

3.3 *O papel do inglês na aquisição do PB*

A partir da análise das respostas curtas encontradas nos dados de Johnny, fica evidente que a presença de sujeito pronominal nulo nos dados aqui analisados constitui contra evidência para a hipótese da transferência de categorias funcionais de L2 para L3. Os dados de Johnny mostram evidências de que na gramática do PB em aquisição encontram-se tanto sujeitos nulos quanto sujeitos pronominais plenos, no contexto de respostas a perguntas *sim/não*. Foi comum na sua fala, numa mesma sessão de gravação, e até mesmo numa mesma fala, a presença do sujeito nulo e do sujeito pleno, como pode ser observado nos exemplos abaixo.

(11) A: O que você gostaria de fazer nas suas férias? Você gostaria de passear, viajar?
J: **cv** Gosto. **Eu** gosto. (2ª gravação)

(12) A: Você foi pro Serra Folia?
J: **cv** Fui. (3ªgravação)

(13) A: Tem alguma história interessante lá do colégio que você queira me contar?
J: **Eu** quero.(2ª gravação)

O fato de o inglês não ter movimento V-para-I, impede o verbo principal de aparecer em respostas curtas. Somente auxiliares e modais têm esse movimento, donde só eles poderem aparecer. Se o inglês estivesse na base da aquisição do PB, poderíamos esperar que apenas auxiliares aparecessem nas respostas. Mas não é o que acontece, como se vê nos exemplos acima. Além disso, quando aparece o auxiliar na pergunta, nem sempre ele é usado na resposta como se vê no exemplo (14):

(14) A: Ela tá gostando da família?
J: **cv** Gosta. Ela falou **cv** gosta. (6ªgravação)

Logo, em pelo menos dois parâmetros, o do sujeito nulo e o do movimento do verbo, Johnny não apresenta sinais de estar usando a gramática do inglês, sua segunda língua.

3.4 *O papel da GU e da L1 na aquisição do PB*

Para tentar responder à segunda pergunta, estou assumindo, seguindo Kato (no prelo), a hipótese de que o *pro-drop* chinês, L1 de Johnny é o valor "default" da GU. Portanto, no caso dele, GU e L1 se confundem.

O resultado da análise dos dados mostra que Johnny começa a adquirir o PB a partir da marcação "default" do chinês. O uso do nulo com a forma indistinta de terceira pessoa não-marcada usada para a primeira pessoa do discurso, repetido, aqui, em (15) mostra não só que Johnny começa com uma gramática unipessoal, como também que a ela ele recorre quando não dispõe da morfologia de algum verbo novo.

(15) **a.** A: E televisão? O que você assiste na televisão?
J: Eh... **cv** assiste televisão eh... Domingo. (2ª gravação)
b. Quando eu viajar, quando eu fui viajar, todo dia **cv** sai festa e aí, muito cansado, na Ano Novo eu fui dormir. (3ª gravação)

Supondo que o nulo do chinês seja o próprio "default", não posso responder se o sujeito nulo apresentado por Johnny é o nulo do chinês, sua língua nativa, ou se Johnny está utilizando a GU da mesma forma que uma criança quando da aquisição de sua língua nativa, ou seja, começando com o parâmetro *pro-drop* no valor não-marcado.

Segundo Kato (no prelo), a criança, em fase inicial de aquisição de língua materna usa nomes próprios para as três pessoas do discurso, em vez de usar pronomes pessoais. Como os nomes próprios são todos terceira pessoa do singular, se a criança usa a mesma forma gramatical de terceira pessoa não-marcada para todos os referentes do discurso, ela tem uma gramática "default" com apenas a terceira pessoa.

Considerando o fato de que, ao contrário de uma criança em fase inicial de aquisição, Johnny não utiliza nomes próprios para se referir às pessoas do discurso, mas os pronomes pessoais, poderíamos presumir que, no processo de aquisição do PB, ele está partindo da sua L1. Por outro lado, observando o seu comportamento com relação às respostas curtas, talvez pudéssemos sugerir que ele estaria utilizando a GU, já que segue uma caminho semelhante ao de uma criança adquirindo o PB como língua materna. Johnny começa respondendo às perguntas *sim/não* através da extração de um segmento contido na pergunta como em (16), em seguida, ele passa a usar a forma de terceira pessoa não-marcada em suas respostas como mostrado em (17), e, finalmente ele passa a mostrar alternância de pessoa como em (18), o que mostra que ele já está chegando à concordância do PB.

(16) A: Mas se você falar chinês em qualquer lugar da China eles vão entender você?

J: **cv** Entender. (1ª gravação)
(17) A: Ele corre? (referindo-me ao pai)
J: **Ele** corre. (2ªgravação)
(18) A: Você gostou da praia?
J: Eu gostei. (3ª gravação)

4. Considerações finais

Esse trabalho teve como objetivo responder às questões sobre a aquisição de PB como segunda língua, por um adulto falante do chinês. As questões que procurei responder dizem respeito ao processo utilizado pelo sujeito dessa pesquisa, para chegar ao PB. Assim para saber se Johnny estaria utilizando a sua experiência do chinês (sua língua nativa), do inglês (sua segunda língua), ou se ele estaria se comportando como um aprendiz de L1, a fala de Johnny foi analisada à luz do Parâmetro do Sujeito Nulo.

Há, nos dados, uma primeira fase cuja característica principal é a presença da forma verbal de terceira pessoa., o que indica que Johnny ao adquirir o PB como L2 está seguindo um caminho semelhante àquele percorrido pela criança quando da aquisição de uma língua materna, ou seja, vai usar, inicialmente, o nulo "default", isto é, com a forma gramatical de terceira pessoa para referir-se a si próprio, à segunda pessoa e à terceira pessoa, exceto com verbos de alta recorrência formular.

A segunda fase da aquisição da concordância é aquela em que Johnny começa a apresentar um sistema flexional de concordância, em que estando o NP-sujeito na primeira pessoa, o verbo também é flexionado na primeira pessoa. A partir de então podem ser observadas formas gramaticais diferentes para a primeira e terceira pessoas do discurso na fala de Johnny, o que sugere que ele está adquirindo a concordância do PB, já que o chinês, sua língua nativa, apresenta concordância apenas para uma pessoa gramatical.

Com base nos resultados da nossa análise, posso dizer que o nulo sem pessoa marcada é o do chinês, e o nulo com pessoa marcada é do PB. Há, porém, momentos em que Johnny parece fazer uso tanto do chinês quanto do PB. Contudo, não se pode dizer que ele tem uma língua-I mista. O que ele faz é um "code-switching" gramatical de uma língua para outra, um fenômeno de uso. Enquanto Johnny não sabe a morfologia própria daquela pessoa para aquele verbo, ele vai usando a velha gramática. Mas ele mostra saber que é preciso modificar a flexão. Enfim, embora Johnny use a velha estratégia, sua gramática do PB já tem os traços formais deste.

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NOTAS

1 Este trabalho foi realizado como dissertação de mestrado em lingüística (Xavier,1999), sob a orientação da Profa. Dra. Mary Kato.

2 Informação negativa, isto é, informações à criança sobre expressões inaceitáveis da língua desempenham um papel nulo no processo de aquisição, pois as crianças não recebem instrução gramatical, quer sob a forma de correção de erros quer sob a forma de explicações explícitas. A partir de informações unicamente positivas a criança desenvolve uma série de conhecimentos negativos sobre a língua. Dessa forma, o sistema lingüístico final incluirá o conhecimento de que determinadas expressões são inaceitáveis (Raposo, 1992:40).

3 Não há uma necessidade lógica de que assim seja.

4 Ver Cyrino,1994.

HISTORY AND RELIGION IN DON DELILLO'S NOVELS*

GISÉLE MANGANELLI FERNANDES
UNESP/ S. J. Rio Preto

There is a world inside the world.
Don DeLillo, Libra

This paper discusses some aspects of history and religion that are approached in Don DeLillo's novels. These topics are recurrent in his work and through some of his various allusions to history and religion, it is shown how his writings deal with and question these matters.

In his historical novel *Libra* (1988), the main character is the alleged killer of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald, whose life is fictionalized. The author's clear option to focus history through a different standpoint, that is, not the one of the winners, shows his project of trying to debate official history. He opens new perspectives for the reader to conceive that historical period. He questions the version of the assassination, "the seven seconds that broke the back of the American century" (1988, p.181), as being the act of a lone gunman and presents a conspiracy theory:

> *A Conspiracy is everything that ordinary life is not. It's the inside game, cold, sure, undistracted, forever closed off to us. We are the flawed ones, the innocents, trying to make some rough sense of the daily jostle. Conspirators have a logic and a daring beyond our reach. All conspiracies are the same taut story of men who find coherence in some criminal act. (1988, p.440)*

In the novel, Nicholas Branch, "a retired senior analyst of the Central Intelligence Agency" is trying to put the pieces together after twenty-five years, as he has a contract to "write the secret history of the assassination of President Kennedy" (1988,

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p.15). It is possible to see Branch as the writer DeLillo himself, with the objective of giving the reader new paths to track this event.

DeLillo's proposal is connected to the postmodern project of revisiting history in an attempt to rethink facts, to challenge their "truth" and to show multiple interpretations. The word interpretation can be used here since what is left from historical occurrences is their narratives and both novelists and readers can review history and clarify blanks left by historical accounts. As far as the postmodern project of reexamining history is concerned, Linda Hutcheon states that

> *What postmodernism does, as its very name suggests, is confront and contest any modernist discarding or recuperating of the past in the name of the future. It suggests no search for transcendent timeless meaning, but rather a re-evaluation of and a dialogue with the past in the light of the present. ... It does not deny the existence of the past; it does question whether we can ever know that past other than through its textualized remains. (1988, p.19-20)*

Thus, to a certain extent, the work of the historian can be connected to the work of the writer, as Gossman states: "By means of the 'discourse' with which he is free to accompany his narrative of events, however, the historian and the novelist alike can comment on the action being related and orient the reader's attitude toward it" (1990, p.243). Now the reader has an active participation in the process of reconstructing and constructing the history of his own country and literature is a valuable instrument in the course of his trying to understand the past.

DeLillo is worried about the history that never gets told and one of the ways he finds to show it is in *Great Jones Street* (1973), through a professor of Latent History, a professorship that

> *deals with events that almost took place, events that definitely took place but remained unseen and unmarked on, like the action of bacteria or the rising and falling of mountain ranges, and events that probably took place but were definitely not chronicled. ... One of major thrusts of latent history is to avoid a narrow purview. (1983, p.75)*

This idea of "latent history" brings the concept that not everything is revealed to the general public, there are secrets that only the people who have the power know. And power is in the underground, as it is stated by Watney to Bucky Wunderlick, the first-person narrator and rock'n'roll idol:

> *"The true underground is the place where power flows. ... The presidents and prime ministers are the ones who make the underground deals and speak the true underground idiom. The corporations. The military. The banks. This is the underground network. This is where it happens. Power flows under the surface, far beneath the level you and I live on. This is where the laws are broken, way down under, far beneath the speed freaks and cutters of smack." (1983, p.231-32)*

Since history is produced by the powerful ones, the whole truth is far from the public. At this point, it is meaningful to ask: what is *truth*?

In *Ratner's Star* (1976), his sci-fi novel, DeLillo addresses the subject of truth in the following passage:

> *Edna Lown spoke for a time on the possible form an interstellar vocabulary might take. ... As we formulated our cosmetic discourse, basing it on principles of neo-logistic thought, we could make our transmissions increasingly abstract and difficult, assuming, we hope safely, that those on the other end had correctly interpreted previous transmissions. In this way, we could progress from "a plus b equals c" all the way to a definition of "truth," if indeed this word is subject to definition. (1989, p.287)*

In this technological era, several kinds of "discourses" go into the cyberspace and the "cosmetic discourse" mentioned here may not be very far away. If it does happen, it will change everything, including the concept of world history. The intergalactic future will mean new challenges to humanity. Nevertheless, there will never be only one truth. Nothing is unquestionable and people should be prepared to examine the various options they have in order to rethink the past. *Ratner's Star* focuses Nobel Prize winners and, interestingly enough, there are no awards for the Nobel Prize in Economics and Peace. DeLillo manifests here his criticism towards the failures of the economic system that controls our world as it is today. He also denounces all the failures to reach complete peace on earth. World history has shown so far that those problems will not be solved very soon because of the greedy of men.

DeLillo is also concerned about the way Americans deal with history, since people confuse dates, facts, wars, leaders, presidents, etc. This piece of criticism appears in his novel *Americana* (1971), when David, the first-person narrator and main character, asserts that "Merry went to London for an extended visit. ... She loved London rain or shine; she loved the parks, the theater, the pubs, the policemen's hats. Her letters were brisk and full of detail (names, numbers and historical dates. *Americans cannot keep track of the centuries*. Those were the days when I used to wonder who the Pre-Raphaelites were, when did Galileo live, was it Keats or Shelley who drowned. (1989, p. 31-32) [my italics]

This idea of not "keeping track of the centuries" is shown on American TV, when people are asked on the streets about historical facts and they get confused. One of the disastrous consequences of this kind of situation is the flattening of history, that is, all figures can have the same importance as DeLillo does in *White Noise* (1985) with Hitler and Elvis, as it is going to be discussed now.

In this novel, the main character, Jack Gladney, is a professor of Hitler studies at the College-on-the Hill and one of his colleagues, Murray Jay Siskind, who teaches popular culture, praises Jack's initiative:

> *"You've established a wonderful thing here with Hitler. You created it, you nurtured it, you made it your own. Nobody on the faculty of any college or university in this part of the country can so much as utter the word Hitler*

without a nod in your direction, literally or metaphorically. This is the center, the unquestioned source. He is now your Hitler, Gladney's Hitler. It must be deeply satisfying for you. The college is internationally known as a result of Hitler studies. It has an identity, a sense of achievement. You've evolved an entire system around this figure, a structure with countless substructures and interrelated fields of study, a history within history. I marvel at the effort. It was masterful, shrewd and stunningly preemptive." (1986, p.11-12)

And Suskind adds "It's what I want to do with Elvis." (1986, p.12)

In this parody of American academy, DeLillo shows a course like "Hitler Studies" being placed as any other subject with credits, etc. Moreover, it is taught by Gladney, a professor who does not know German. If postmodern world has brought, according to Jameson, "the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture" (1998, p.112), "Hitler studies" and a certain "Elvis studies" would not raise too much commotion in university curricula. In this example, it is possible to verify that Hitler and Elvis are put in the same level of importance as far as the destinies of many people are concerned.

Another sign of the flattening of history in *White Noise*, is that, in a dialogue, Alfonse asks: "Where were you when James Dean died?"(1986, p.68), recalling the recurrent question in America "Where were you when Kennedy was shot?," putting, therefore, a pop artist as James Dean equivalent to a leader as President John Kennedy.

In this regard, insofar as history is made of leaders who know how to make use of their images in order to persuade their peoples, DeLillo offers examples of it in his novels, through the figures of John Kennedy, Adolph Hitler, and Fidel Castro.

In *Libra*, the image of Castro is presented by two Cubans, Frank and Raymo, who had been to Sierra Maestra:

Fidel was some kind of magical figure then. There was no doubt he carried a force, a myth. Tall, strong, long-haired, dripping filth, mixing theory and raw talk, appearing everywhere, explaining everything, asking questions of soldiers, peasants, even children. He made the revolution something people felt on their bodies. The ideas, the whistling words, they throbbed in all the senses. He was like Jesus in boots, preaching everywhere he went, withholding his identity from the campesinos until the time was dramatically right. ... From the first minute, Castro was inventing a convenient history of the revolution to advance his grab for power, to become the Maximum Leader. ... He talked about one revolution and gave us another. (1988, p.184-86)

If there is a leader that up to the present moment causes fierce controversy is Castro. Fredric Jameson describes the "Cuban experience" as "an original one, as a new revolutionary model" (1989, p.201). Those Cubans who could not and cannot accept this revolution and Castro's kind of leadership left and still leave the country.

Thus, DeLillo wants to show how these leaders convey their ideas and ideals for their peoples. Banister, a "former special agent of the FBI" (1988, p.183), says that Kennedy

thinks he can make us a different kind of society. He's trying to engineer a shift. We're not smart enough for him. We're not mature, energetic, Harvard, world traveler, rich, handsome, lucky, witty. Perfect white teeth. ... Do you know what charisma means to me? It means he hold the secrets. The dangerous secrets of revolution, secrets of the end of the social order. ... All the danger is in the White House, from nuclear weapons on down. What's he plotting with Castro? What kind of back channel does he have working with the Soviets? He touches a phone and worlds shake. (1988, p.68)

It is possible to notice a certain similitude between Castro and Kennedy insofar as they appear as leading their own kinds of revolution in their societies. Kennedy fought for Civil Rights and Castro wanted to make the situation of every Cuban citizen even. They had their "fights" too, as in the Bay of Pigs invasion, and in the missile crisis of 1962, with Soviet missiles put in Cuba, which could have meant the end of the world, the end of human history forever.

In the era of mass media, TV has the power to influence people's opinion and it seemed that Kennedy and his wife were born for the media. They knew how to manipulate the vision that people had of them and turned themselves into the "royal family" the U.S. had never had. Jack and Jackie created an atmosphere of "simulation", in Baudrillardian terms, to such an extent that in *Libra*, when they were in the tragic scene in Dallas, DeLillo describes the excitement of the crowd: "*They're here. It's them. They're real* (1988, p.394). However, nothing there was real, the president was involved in problems with the Mafia, with the Soviets, with anti-Castro movements, and all the "aura" of a happy and perfect couple had a tragic end. According to Jameson, Kennedy's assassination "was a unique event, not least because it was a unique collective (and media, communicational) experience, which trained people to read such events in a new way" (1997, p.355). Through the Zapruder film, people "consumed" the images all over the world, followed closely the scenes and were shocked to watch that violence, a matter which has not had a definite solution up to the present days, even though the Warren Commission has established that it was the act of a lone gunman. Kennedy's assassination is, undoubtedly, part of the American consciousness and DeLillo cannot escape it, since the case appears at the end of very his first novel, *Americana*: after David's journey through America, he drives "past the School Book Depository" (1989, p.377).

In *Players* (1977), the Oswald case is mentioned again. Lyle, who finds interesting to get involved with the terrorists responsible for George's death at the Stock Exchange building, and Kinnear were talking about the secret police that know Kinnear's background. At this moment, Lyle says that Burks suggested that Kinnear "knew Oswald before Dallas," to what Kinnear replies: "Lyle, chrissake, everybody knew Oswald before Dallas" (1989, p.161). Therefore, Oswald could be a person who was only used in the whole system of the conspiracy without even being aware of had been planned for him. This is one of the secrets that has never been solved in American history and whether he was alone or not, he finally reached his objective that was to be part of history and his name is going to be connected to President Kennedy forever.

The case of Adolph Hitler brings the horrors of World War II and DeLillo discusses the influence Hitler had on people. Hitler wanted to change history with his totalitarian attitudes, to exterminate the Jews from the world and, therefore, their history.

In *Running Dog* (1978), the characters Moll Robbins, an investigative reporter who works at *Running Dog* magazine, a tabloid-like newspaper, Lightborne, who deals with erotic memorabilia, Senator Percival and Selvy, who works for the Senator and helps him buying pornographic art, want to get a film of Hitler, presumably erotic, made in the last days of the war. In one dialogue between Lightborne and Moll, she talks about the image Hitler had with women:

> *"He had a remarkable impact on women. They sent him love letters, sex poems, underwear. His motorcades, women hurled their bodies at his car. Like a pop hero. Some modern rock 'n' roller. Women threw themselves beneath the wheels. ... Girls were constantly offering to yield their virginity to him. We see his speeches, where women fell into states of hysteria. We see collective frenzy. He had hypnotic powers over women. I think this is clear." (1989, p.147)*

Hitler is presented as someone who led people to hysteria and could conduct his plans making people believe he was going to conquer the world. This image is corroborated by Zizek, who states that "In his [Hitler's] public appearances, people specifically identified themselves with what were hysterical outbursts of impotent rage ¾ that is, they 'recognized' themselves in this hysterical *acting out* (1989, p.106) and also by Deleuze and Guatarri "Hitler got the fascists sexually aroused" (1998, p.293). Hitler had a powerful image and led the world to a war by moving people into a fanatic patriotism taking into its most exceeding terms. The image that is left of Hitler to humanity is one of radicalism, an extremist who wanted to be the most powerful man in the world.

Women also felt attracted by Kennedy's good-looking appearance and DeLillo mentions this episode through the thoughts of Marina, Oswald's wife: "She wondered how many women had visions and dreams of the President. ... She thought of the President sometimes, in pictures taken near the sea, while Lee was making love to her." (1988, p.324)

Leaders like Castro, Kennedy and Hitler have set their marks in history and it is interesting to rethink their images and, therefore, their role in several different ways, as DeLillo does in his novels for the reader to get historical consciousness.

It has already been mentioned DeLillo's approach to Hitler in *White Noise*, but here he is shown in a different way. Moll and Lightborne finally screen the film, but it is not erotic. In it, Hitler is apparently imitating Chaplin imitating Hitler, an opposition to Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*: "He produces an expression, finally¾a sweet, epicene, guilty little smile. Charlie's smile. An accurate reproduction" (1989, p.236). After they see the movie, Lightborne says that it is of "historical value" (1989, p.237). He also questions if it would be possible to sell the film "to the Whitney Museum or the Canadian Film Board. ... What else could he do? Could he tell them people like to dress up? Could he tell them history is true?" (1989, p.244)

In one line, there is the assertion: "*History is true*" (1989, p.189).

The representation that Hitler does of Chaplin is the way for DeLillo to show that history is constructed through narratives and that it is possible to believe that history is not completely true. "History is no more accurate than prophecy" (1986, p.77), says the football player Bloomberg in the novel *End Zone* (1972). The truth is that several possibilities have to be taken into account, and there is the role of literature. As Hayden White argues

> *The older distinction between fiction and history, in which fiction is conceived as the representation of the imaginable and history as the representation of the actual, must give place to the recognition that we can only know the actual by contrasting it or likening it to the imaginable. (1985, p.98)*

Therefore, the relationship that is established with the past should be questioned, it has to be subject of discussion, and postmodern fiction wants to help the reader in this process. Linda Hutcheon asserts that postmodern narrative representation poses epistemological questions such as:

> *How can the present know the past it tells? We constantly narrate the past, but what are the conditions of the knowledge implied by that totalizing act of narration?... Do we know the past only through the present? Or is it a matter of only being able to understand the present through the past? (1993, p. 72)*

DeLillo, in his project of looking into the past, questioning and reviewing it, starts the novel *Underworld* (1997) on October 3, 1951, when there is the famous baseball game between the Giants and the Dodgers and people like Frank Sinatra and J.Edgar Hoover are in the stadium. Then, the Special Agent Rafferty reaches Mr. Hoover and tells him something and they go to an isolated place so that Rafferty could report details: "It seems that the Soviet Union has conducted an atomic test at a secret location somewhere inside its own borders. They have exploded a bomb in plain unpretending language." (1997, p.23)

Since DeLillo is an author who is worried about the history that lies underground, he also shows it in *Libra*, when Ferrie says that "This is what history consists of. It's the sum total of all the things they aren't telling us" (1988, p.321). As secrets were crucial during the Cold War, DeLillo reveals Hoover's great concern about the atomic test that was conducted by the Soviets:

> *and he thinks of a lonely tower standing on the Kazakh Test Site, the tower armed with the bomb, and he can almost hear the wind blowing across the Central Asian steppes, out where the enemy lives in long coasts and fur caps, speaking that old weighted language of theirs, liturgical and grave. What secret history are they writing? (1997, p.50)*

In that period, secrets kept the Cold War going. The Soviets played their game to scare the U.S. and vice-versa. By having the bomb, the Soviets could change the history of the world, which became very likely to happen during the missile crisis in

1962, case that DeLillo approaches again in *Underworld*. About six hours after President Kennedy had addressed the nation as far as this dangerous matter was concerned, described by him as "Nuclear strike capability" (1997, p.504), DeLillo shows the comic Lenny Bruce making jokes about this situation to his audience: "One missed digit you're fucked for life," (1997, p.505); "Dig it, JFK's got this Russian man-bull staring him down, they're pizzle to pizzle, and this is a guy Jack doesn't know how to deal with. What's he supposed to say? I shtupped more debutants than you?" (1997, p.506-07)

DeLillo denounces the problem that if Kennedy was not capable of handling that critical situation, it would mean a nuclear war and, consequently, the end of the world. The audience kept in mind the line that Lenny constantly repeats "*We're all gonna die*!" and they leave the club thinking about the probable catastrophe:

> *where else would they go to rehearse the end of history, or actually see it ... And so they drove half the night, at first morose and then angry and then fatalistic and then plain shaking scared, chests tight with the knowledge of how little it would take to make the thing happen (1997, p.508).*

Five days later, on October 27, in Miami, Lenny still continues his jokes on the missile crisis and talks about a ship that was boarded by the Navy not carrying missiles, but toilet paper and truck parts. It was "The secret history that never appears in the written accounts of the time or in the public statements of the men in power. Those beautiful bombs and missiles. Those planes and submarines. Ever see anything so gorgeous?" (p.594) Through an example of an ordinary occurrence, DeLillo reminds the reader about the power that is in the underground and that, therefore, history is made beyond the grasp of the majority of the population.

DeLillo also mentions Sputnik and this certainly caused great fear in the U.S., since the Russians could be ahead in the technology for space exploration and, to make things worse, the satellite passed over America. The family of the character Erica was interested in the object and when Rick talks to Eric about going to spot it, Erica realizes that it was about the Sputnik:

> *Yes, that satellite they put into orbit a few days ago. ... Erica felt a twisted sort of disappointment. It was theirs, not ours. It flew at an amazing rate of speed over the North Pole, beep beep beep, passing just above us, evidently, at certain times. She could not understand how this could happen. Were there other surprises coming, things we haven't been told about them? Did they have crispers and breezeways? It was not a simple matter, adjusting to the news. (1997, p.518).*

It meant a huge threat to America. As Eric says "thickly" it was "Russian moon in U.S. sky" (1997, p.519). The former U.S.S.R. could not be that powerful and the Cold War was sustained this way, that is, one side wanted to be stronger and show off more than the other in all aspects, until the Reagan era, when the Soviets tried to reach the U.S. in space exploration, in a kind of "Star Wars", and these circumstances, among other factors, led the communist block to bankruptcy.

Ar armed conflict that caused great turmoil in American history was the Vietnam War. I was a time of protests, and several films and series have been made focusing on this war. It seems that the U.S. will never be able to forget that period and it is reflected in the representations of the war, with "a shift in focus from ends to means" (1989, p.5), according to Susan Jeffords.

In *The Names* (1982), DeLillo mentions this period and expresses what the war meant to Americans, through a dialogue between James and his son Tap:

> *"Was I born during the Vietnam war?"*
> *"Don't sound so depressed. You're not scarred for life, I don't think.*
> *"But was I?"*
> *"Yes. It was our favorite war, your mother's and mine. We were both against it but she insisted on being more against it than I was. It got to be a contest, a running battle. We used to have terrific arguments." (1989, p.184)*

Norman Mailer, in his *The Armies of the Night* (1968), a novel about an enormous demonstration against the war, in which Mailer represents not only his, but also the mass voice, he states in a speech that

> *The war in Vietnam was an obscene war, the worst war the nation had ever been in ... And, out of hardly more than a sense of old habit and old anger, he scolded the press for their lies, and their misrepresentation, for their guilt in creating a psychology over the last twenty years in average American which made wars like Vietnam possible. (1994, p.79)*

The victory in World War II and the prosperity it brought to the U.S. made the nation believe in its destiny of winners and the Vietnam War shook this structure. So many lives were lost and Americans could not put an end to communism in that region. And while in the U.S. people were worried about the Vietnam War, in Brazil there was the military dictatorship, which imposed censorship to the means of communication, tortured and killed people who were considered "dangerous" to the system. In that period, Brazilians had their "war" to fight too and those were hard times. People would not ever know the truth and several facts still are not totally clear in both cases. As DeLillo indicates in his novels, there are secrets that will never be disclosed. Thus, literature can exploit the secrets of history.

Hence, in postmodern fiction, there is not only new positions towards subjects, as it has been discussed so far in relation to history in Don DeLillo's novels, but there is also a new way to produce fiction, as McHale argues:

> *The postmodernist historical novel is revisionist in two senses. First, it revises the content of the historical record, reinterpreting the historical record, often demystifying or debunking the orthodox version of the past. Secondly, it revises, indeed transforms, the conventions and norms of historical fiction itself. (1994, p.90)*

This is exactly what DeLillo does. His narratives are not linear, they have a cinematographic style, scenes are very fast, which reflects this era of the power of images. Time and space are volatile in a world in which everything is disposable and fragmentary. Besides pastiche and parody, DeLillo inserts parts of historical documents to give a sense of veracity to his history and plays with different graphic experiences. It is a new way of writing, however, without leaving aside the concern with sentences, rhythm, since he does care about language as he states in his text, "The Power of History":

> *Language is the sensuous breath on which the fiction writer carries his generosity of feeling. Language exposes the past to painterly textures. There is pleasure to be found, the writer's, the reader's, in a version of the past that escapes the coils of established history and biography and that finds a language, scented, dripping, detailed, for such routine realities as sex, weather and food, for the ravel of a red thread on a woman's velvet sleeve. (1997, p.60)*

This is DeLillo's invitation for the reader: to find pleasure and recuperate his own historical consciousness, that is, to have the history of his own country in his hands in order to recreate it, rethink it, to review it with a critical mind, and then to be able to build the future. DeLillo's novels offer this opportunity since, in his concept, history is a process and, therefore, is not over; much on the contrary, it is there to be debated.

God is alive and well in Texas.
Don DeLillo, Libra

Don DeLillo has a Catholic background and "has described his years at Fordham University as a time when 'the Jesuits taught me to be a failed ascetic'" (Keesey, 1993, p.2). In his novels, there are references to faith, religion, death. This part of the paper approaches some of the ideas that the reading of DeLillo's novels provide for discussion and link them to the reality of the contemporary world.

People ask themselves how the role of religion has changed in our postmodern world.

One of the biggest transformations came with the help of the media, mainly TV and, at present, different religions have their own programs and promise that they can operate "miracles" in people's lives.

Preachers study techniques of rhetoric for their impressive performances on TV, in squares and at university campuses. They call people's attention talking about the Savior and the way those who do not believe will burn in hell.

It seems that the present situation of our world full of technology, the mass media with decisive power, drugs, competition, fear of new wars, etc. make people think about their values and try to find some security in religion. However, in *White Noise*,

the nun to whom Jack talks closer to the end of the book destroys all the traditional image Catholics had of those religious women and their faith:

> *I said to my nun, "What does the Church say about heaven today? Is it still the old heaven, like that, in the sky?" ...*
> *"Do you think we are stupid?" she said.*
> *I was surprised by the force of her reply.*
> *"Then what is heaven, according to the Church, if it isn't the abode of God and the angels and the souls of those who are saved?"*
> *"Saved? What is saved? This is a dumb head, who would come in here to talk about angels. Show me an angel. Please. I want to see."*
> *"But you're a nun. Nuns believe these things. When we see a nun, it cheers us up, it's cute and amusing, being reminded that someone still believes in angels, in saints, all the traditional things."*
> *"You would have a head so dumb to believe this?"*
> *"It's not what I believe that counts. It's what you believe."*
> *"This is true," she said. "The nonbelievers need the believers. They are desperate to have someone believe. But show me a saint. Give me one hair from the body of a saint."*
> ...
> *"All the old muddles and quirks," I said. "Faith, religion, life everlasting. The great old human gullibilities. Are you saying you don't take them seriously? Your dedication is a pretense?"*
> *"Our pretense is a dedication. Someone must appear to believe. ... Those who have abandoned belief must still believe in us. ... There is no truth without fools. We are your fools, your madwomen, rising at dawn to pray, lighting candles, asking statues for good health, long life." (1986, p.317-19)*

So, with profound irony, DeLillo shows how faith and all the teachings that people have at churches may be transformed into mere fake. The author questions the matters of faith and beliefs, the values people have, whether their faith is true or only appearance. Furthermore, there are those who go to church, listen to the teachings and in everyday life do not apply the lessons, the ideas that were considered advisable for a Christian. It is not only a matter of stating it, but it is a matter of practicing the teachings and those who do it will then prove that they have faith, that is, through practice, they show that they truly believe in what they say. DeLillo criticizes the faith made of only appearance.

Another subject that is related to faith is death. Humanity has always been concerned about what happens after death. People look for answers preferably in religion. They may believe in eternal life after death, they may believe in reincarnation, and there are atheists who think that death is the end of everything.

DeLillo addresses the subject of death in his novels. In *Players*, Pammy writes a brochure on sorrow and death and Ethan had stated that "Death is a religious experience," ... "It is also nuts-and-boltsy. Something fails to work, you die. A demonstrable consequence." (1989, p.63)

This "religious experience" can be related to faith taken to its most extreme consequences. There are those who fear death so much, like Babette, in *White Noise*, who even exchange sexual favors with a man who had promised her a pill that would eliminate this feeling she had. Notwithstanding, there are those who do not fear death at all and are capable of dying for a determined reason, as the fanatic attitude that is shown in *Players*, when the terrorist Vilar "will give his life for the cause ... Taking as many people with him as can be accommodated in a given area. ... Half the Exchange goes with him" (1989, p.120).

Thus, terrorists can put dynamite in their bodies and explode them near cars, buildings, ships, and DeLillo states that "'I'm interested in religion as a discipline and a spectacle, as something that drives people to extreme behavior. Noble, violent, depressing, beautiful' (ACH, 85)" (Keesey, 1993, p.2). Those terrorists know that they are going to die, but it is "for the cause".

DeLillo also connects religion to capital, as he does in *The Names*, when David tells James and Lindsay that

> *"It's about two kinds of discipline, two kinds of fundamentalism. You have Western banks on the one hand trying to demand austerity from a country like Turkey, like Zaire. Then you have OPEC at the other end preaching to the West about fuel consumption, our piggish habits, our self-indulgence and waste. The Calvinist banks, the Islamic oil producers. We're talking across each other to the deaf and the blind." (1989, p.193)*

Fanaticism can also lead to practices as shown in *Mao II* (1991) through the collective marriage promoted by the Reverend Moon:

> *The bridegrooms in identical blue suits, the brides in lace-and-satin gowns. ... Six thousand five hundred couples and their daughter is down there somewhere about to marry a man she met two days ago. He's either Japanese or Korean. Rodge didn't get it straight. And he knows about eight words of English. He and Karen spoke through an interpreter, who taught them how to say Hello, it is Tuesday, here is my passport. Fifteen minutes in a bare room and they're chain-linked for life. ...*
> *The future belongs to crowds. (1991, p.4-5; 16)*

This kind of marriage reflects the loss of individuality in postmodern world. The Reverend makes the matches by photographs. The immediate result is that they are all repetitions, "an undifferentiated mass" (1991, p.3).

As it has been already mentioned, DeLillo, in his process of questioning religion, gives a totally diverse character to the nun in *White Noise* and, in *Underworld*, the Jesuits come to focus, through Nick's narration:

> *My firm was involved in waste. We were waste handlers, waste traders, cosmologists of waste. ...*

> *The Jesuits taught me to examine things for second meanings and deeper connections. Were they thinking about waste? We were waste managers, waste giants, we processed universal waste. Waste has a solemn aura now, an aspect of untouchability. White containers of plutonium waste with yellow caution tags. Handle carefully. (1997, p.88)*

DeLillo is demystifying the Jesuits too, since they also worry about "second meanings and deeper connections," that is, they are also linked to world problems and looking for other meanings in everything.

Nick is also concerned about God. He read a book called *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which was given to him by a priest and the book made him "think of God as a force that witholds himself from us because this is the root of his power" (1997, p.295). And he adds,

> *Maybe we can know God through love or prayer or through visions or through LSD but we can't know him through the intellect. The Cloud tells us this. And so I learned to respect the power of secrets. We approach God through his unmadeness. We are made, created. God is unmade. How can we attempt to know such a being? ... And we try to develop a naked intent that fixes us the idea of God. (1997, p.295)*

This is an interesting moment in the book in which questions about God flourish. People often search for explanation and healing for their sufferings and have their beliefs, their own idea of God with "the power of secrets."

In *Ratner's Star*, the Jesuits appear to oppose matters that are different from their training. Soma Tobias, a woman architect, says that she had "abandoned" herself "to the rhythms of the cycloid. Most gorgeous curve in nature. A figure of magical properties. ... The Jesuits oppose the cycloid form. ... The Jesuits oppose anything that can be turned upside down and still give pleasure. ...Marvelous pendulum properties. This priest Verbene has been at me hammer and tongs" (1989, p.78-79).

Politics and religious matters are not always separated. When President Kennedy was elected, too much importance was given to the fact that he was a Catholic. DeLillo mentions it in his works, such as in *White Noise*, when Jack Gladney is in hospital he had, from his chair,

> *a clear view of the picture of Kennedy and the Pope in heaven. I had a sneaking admiration for the picture. It made me feel good, sentimentally refreshed. The President still vigorous after death. The Pope's homeliness a kind of radiance. Why shouldn't it be true? Why shouldn't they meet somewhere, advanced in time, against a layer of fluffy cumulus, to clasp hands? Why shouldn't we all meet, as in some epic of protean gods and ordinary people, aloft, well-formed, shining?" (1986, p.317)*

A Catholic believes in eternal life after death. The President is "still vigorous," in heaven as a Catholic with the Pope. People believed that Kennedy had close connections with the Pope and, in *Underworld*, DeLillo refers to these rumors. On

October 29, 1962, Lenny Bruce talks to his audience in New York about the missile crisis:

> *"Lemme tell you the untold story of the week. The President called the Pope. ... Yeah, they were in secret communication all week long. Never mind all the separation of church and state crap. They stick together, these crossbacks. ... The Pope's got submarines, you know. Justa say the word, Johnny, I sent. We nihilate them sonna ma bitches. Your Holiness, I'm astonished, man. You have your own fleet of subs?" (1997, p.626)*

It is interesting to see in America the importance that a candidate's religious beliefs have and it can influence on the performance of a certain ticket.

In *Underworld*, the nun Sister Edgar feels that the situation of the world, "displaces religious faith with paranoia" (1997, p.241). The contemporary world is so contaminated by all kinds of paranoia, mainly the ones brought by technology, that when Sister Edgar dies, she reincarnates in cyberspace: "But she is in cyberspace, not heaven, and she feels the grip of systems" (1997, p.825). The cyberspace is like heaven, after all, people think that technology is going to solve all of their problems, but this may not be true.

DeLillo creates a totally new vision of the "after-death" happenings in which the nun experiences reincarnation in "the paranoia of the web, the net. There's the perennial threat of virus, of course" (1997, p.825). Technology has turned into another kind of "religion," another paranoia that may be with us even after we leave this world. The "world without end" (1997, p.825) is our world connected with cyberspace and this is endless.

Sister Edgar visits the "H-bomb home page" and "sees the shock waves and hears the high winds and feels the power of false faith, the faith of paranoia, and then the mushroom cloud spreads around her, the pulverized mass of radioactive debris, eight miles high, ten miles, twenty, with skirted stem and smoking platinum cap" (1997, p.825). The paranoia of nuclear warfare has made Sister Edgar feel the power of that accident virtually in cyberspace and when she "sees God", it was not Him, but "a Soviet bomb ... a device exploded above the Arctic Ocean in 1961, preserved in the computer" (1997, p.826). And she "joins the other Edgar", J. Edgar Hoover, one of the persons who appear in the beginning of the book, when the Soviets have their first nuclear bomb test in 1951. The narrator states that "Everything is connected in the end" (1997, p. 826).

Over the years, social transformations have occurred and people are more depended on the electronic media. Lives are now dominated by the screens of the computer and the TV. More disorder will come with more knowledge. The situation of the contemporary world is seen this way by Lyotard: "Now there is not, and never again will there be, a loss or diminution of knowledge and expertise, even if it means destroying humanity. This is an original situation in history" (1993, p.83).

The media has controlled the way people look at events and faith has changed so much that DeLillo puts Sister Edgar to reincarnate in cyberspace. This reincarnation of hers means that a totally new phase in history will start.

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THE MADRAS HOUSE: A SCINTILLATING CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION OF WOMEN

GLORIA SYDENSTRICKER
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

ABSTRACT: This paper briefly analyses several of Harley Granville Barker´s views about the women question presented in his play *The Madras House*. It discusses the author´s concern in regard to the place of women in society and the relationship between the sexes. Several phases of the women question are presented mainly the ones dealing with sexual matters and women´s economic condition. The details of the play portray life in the early twentieth century, but it becomes evident that broader aspects of the question of the position of women in society are still quite relevant nowadays. With delicacy and careful workmanship, Barker suggests at the end of the play that women will eventually fulfil her total humanity and a richer and more gratifying association of the sexes will be possible if men and women work together in that direction.

KEY WORDS: social convention, force of sex, feminism, women folk.

During his life (1877-1946), Harley Granville Barker, more than any other single figure, was responsible for the re-establisment of drama as the principal artistic form of the age and for the restoration of civic authority to the theatre. He partook in the twenty years from 1890 to 1910 of what was viewed as a time of theatrical renaissance in England. Like Shaw, Galsworthy, Pinero, Wilde and many other New Dramatists, Barker turned away from old conventions believing in socialist ideas and in John Ruskin´s gospel that art and social responsibility are indivisible.

Since his early productions, Harley Granville Barker revealed great interest in the women question by exalting the feminine figure and pointing out women´s courage, intelligence and determination in life´s crucial circumstances. This insight

into the feminine forces at work in society led him to choose several ideas presented in *The Madras House* , a play written in 1909 and presented in 1910.

Granville Barker calls *The Madras House* a comedy as it arouses thoughtful laughter, but it is nevertheless, a serious play where the author expresses one of his main concern which constitutes his vision of things – the mysteriousness of the force of sex on the patterns of civilized living. He translates into comedy the view of the tyranny of sex and reveals the contradictions and torments of sexuality in modern civilization as well as his concern for the place of women in society. The playwright presents a brilliant interplay of contrasts and ideas in four acts which show four different points of view in the various phases of the Women Question. The episodes are unified through the appearance of Philip Madras, the main character, in each one of the acts, the concern of characters associated with the dress designing establishment, the Madras House, and the companion drapery firm of Robert and Huxtable; they all deal with some aspect of the theme of the play.

Act I presents one aspect of the Women Question in the form of satire in a Sunday morning in the home of an elderly prosperous tradesman, Mr. Huxtable, who has six unmarried daughters aged twenty-six to thirty-nine. He is the surviving partner in the firm of Roberts and Huxtable and a docile and well-meaning man. Mrs. Huxtable is dignified and domineering, and the six daughters are described by the playwright in his usually detailed stage directions:

The difference between one Miss Huxtable and another is to a casual eye the difference between one lead pencil and another, as these lie upon one´s table after some weeks use; a matter of length, of sharpening, of wear.

Philip Madras, a subtle and sophisticated intellectual, is introduced as soon as the play begins. He is essentially an observer character, and is accompanied by Major Thomas, his friend and agent of the American financier who is going to buy the business. Major Thomas is a stranger to the Huxtable ladies and the simpler personality of the two men. They come in a bright Sunday morning for a visit but the Huxtables haven´t yet returned from church. The first moments of the act announces Philip´s intention of retiring from commerce and standing for the London County Council. He is an idealist and in many instances resounds as the author´s mouth-piece:

Philip. Well, my dear Tommy, what are the two most important things in a man´s character? His attitude towards money and his attitude towards women.

Thomas. (ponderously slowing him up). Yes, you´re full up with moral precepts. Why behave about money as if it didn´t exist? I never said don´t join the County Council.

Phillip. (Deliberately, but in a breath). It is quite impossible for any decent man to walk with his eyes open from Waterloo to Denmark Hill on a Sunday morning without wishing me to stand for the County Council.

Thomas entrenches himself on a sofa.

Thomas. You´ve got what I call the Reformer´s mind. I shouldn´t cultivate it, Phil. It makes a man unhappy and discontented, not with himself, but with other people, mark you... so it makes him conceited and puts him out of condition both ways. Don´t you get to imagine you can make this country better by tidying it up.

Philip. (Whimsically). But I´m very interested in England, Tommy. (p. 6).

In the meanwhile, the family return from church "... Sunday frocks, Sunday hats, best gloves, umbrellas and prayer books." *(p. 8). Conversation starts with the first arrivals, Julia and Emma, revealing the frustrating environment and lack of perspective in the polite conversation; a realistic picture of the flatness and mental void of a middle-class family in Edwardian times:*

Philip. Are you happy now, then?

Emma. Oh, deep down, I think we are. It would be so ungrateful not to be. When one has a good home and...! But of course living together and going away together and being together all the time, one does get a little irritable now and then. ...

Later on Philip asks: "But what occupations have you girls?

Emma. We´re always busy. I mean there´s lots to be done about the house and there´s calling and classes and things. ...

Philip´s comment is the question, half serious.

Philip. Why don´t you go away, all six of you, or say five of you?

Emma (Wide eyed). Go away!

Philip (Comprehensively). Out of it.

Emma. Where to? *(p. 26-7).*

The "happy" home of the Huxtables is really more of a prison where the family is ridden by convention rather than by affection; parental authority prevails by denying these girls a fulfillment of their personalities. The irony and humour of this first scene also introduces Philip´s mother, Mr. Huxtable´s sister, and we learn that his father, Constantine Madras has abandoned his country, wife, son and religion some thirty years ago and is now returning to take part in the sale of the Madras House, and possibly of Roberts and Huxtable, to an American financier, Mr. Eustace Perrin State.

Constantine Madras is a fascinating character, he is virile and handsome; a male chauvinist who relegates sex to the place in life he believes it should have and has renegaded his background for a harem, Mesopotamia, and Mohammedanism. He believes that women´s purpose is the perpetuation of the race and condemns English men because they are distracted by women who parade their attractions everywhere. He is shocked at the sex-obsession in England which permits women to indulge in shameless provocation. As a polygamist he warns that Europe is going to the devil because of the exaggerated importance it attaches to women.

On the other hand, Mrs. Madras, in spite of Constantine´s rejection of his family, nationality, and Christian values, expresses a blind devotion to convention that reaches an absurd limit:

> *I am his wife still, I should hope. He went away from me when he was young. But I have never forgotten my duty. And now that he is an old man and past such sin and I am an old woman, I am still ready to be a comfort to his declining years and it´s right that I should be allowed to tell him so... (p. 25).*

The first act introduces us also to the chief figure in act two... a Miss Yates, an employee of the firm who is pregnant and who, to the scandal of the respectable, declines to have a husband. Act II also provides a severe criticism of the industrial living-in system (a social evil of the day) and its drawbacks. These conditions are attacked in a subtle analogy suggested in act I as both, the Huxtable girls, and the inmates of the drapery establishment live in prison houses where they are repressed and feel the danger of losing their human dignity. The shop assistants lead a life of unrelieved depression and frustration in the living-in system which is governed by economic factors. Mr. Brigstock, for example, is a trustworthy employee who has not dared to reveal that he has been married for four years and has continued living in at the establishment seeing his wife surreptitiously for an hour or two at a time.

The playwright gives special attention to Miss Yates, an advanced feminist for the epoch who refuses to reveal the father of her child or to demand any financial assistance from him. She admits frankly that she knew what she was doing and that she enjoyed it: " ...I took the risk. I knew what I was about. I wanted to have my fling. And it was fun for a bit..." *(p. 55). She will reaffirm her position some time after:* "... I found out that I really was pleased and proud... And I am really proud and happy about it now, sir... I am not pretending..." *(p. 57) Philip sympathizes with Miss Yates, as Barker himself appears to, for she has vitality and courage and an appreciation of the value of life.*

The gallery of female portraits is completed in the second half of Act II when Jessica Madras, Philip´s wife appears. She is a paragon of refinement and grace, "an epitome of aesthetic culture" *(p. 60). However, Barker caricatures her fastidiousness and what lies behind it :*

> *...More: She is the result – not of thirty-three years – but of three or four generations of cumulative refinement. She might be a race horse! Come to think of it, it is a very wonderful thing to have raised this crop of ladyhood. Creatures, dainty in mind and body, gentle in thought and word, charming, delicate, sensitive, graceful, chaste, credulous of all good, shaming the world´s ugliness and strife by the very ease and delightsomeness of their existence; fastidious – fastidious – fastidious; ... Is not the perfect lady perhaps the most wonderful achievement of civilization, and worth the cost of her breeding, worth the toil and the helotage of – all the others?*

Although Jessica is zealous of her social advantages, there is some evidence that she is rather bored by a futile existence and consequently, amuses herself by flirting with Major Thomas who accuse the intellectual Philip of behaving towards women as if they were men.

Act III transports us to the Madras House itself where Huxtable, Philip, Thomas and State are negotiating the sale of the establishment. Prior to the business conference, the party is entertained by a fashion show ushered by Windlesham, the manager of the Madras House who is described by Barker as a "tailor-made man" *– a mediocre creature who speaks French in an artificial way. This is a most interesting scene as the playwright separates dialogue sharply from the visual because there is no communication between the male and female figures; the mannequins are French, and they don´t understand or speak English. Of course, the fashion display suggests the subservience of women who, under economical oppression must amuse their "masters" before beginning serious business. It also furthers the discussion of the place of women in western civilization and mocks the slavish imitation of the French fashions by the English.*

After the fashion show, Constantine Madras joins the participants of the conference; Barker uses him as a man of a different civilization to comment on western values. The act proceeds to present a splendid exhibition of a wide range of the male attitudes to the vital problem of women´s position in modern society, and the relationship between the sexes. Firstly, State expresses his feelings on the romance of business, and then his philosophy of the fair sex: "... I felt the need of getting in touch with what Goethe refers to as the women-spirit... drawing us ever upward and on" That opportunity occurred and it seemed a businesslike way of doing the trick *(p. 85) . He is proud to describe an experiment of the Burrows establishment in Nottingham store in which the ladies´ wear department is served by handsome gentlemen, and the men´s wear by attractive women,* "... Always of course within the bounds of delicacy." *(p. 87). As a caricature of the successful American capitalist, he considers the problem from the economic point of view which up to nowadays still explore the world of female sex attraction to push up the sales of goods in western civilization.* "... And remember, gentlemen, that the Middle Class Women of England... think of them in bulk... they form one of the greatest Money Spending Machines the world has ever seen"*(p. 91). Noteworthy in this scene is a tragi-comic note in a minor incident when Major Thomas gallantly jumps up to hand his chair to a mannequin and arouses Windlesham´s quick response:* Thank you... but she can´t.. Not in that corset" (p. 92)..

Constantine preserves an "oriental silence" through the first part of the discussion but after listening to States's argument explodes into a sweeping indictment of the religious and political condition of a society whose " attitude towards women is mad" *(p. 96). He is resentful of the insurgent feminism and being naturally promiscuous is partly a caricature of the despotic male who tries to justify his "...* scandalous conduct"(p. 96*) by adopting a religion that lends sanction to his innermost nature. Nevertheless, he is quite coherent in his polygamist point of view which acquires a valid penetration in his criticism of western civilization regarding the treatment of young women. Referring to the Huxtable girls, he speaks to his brother-in- law:* "Even if you have liked bringing up six daughters and not getting them married... how have they liked it? You should have drowned them, at birth, Harry..." *Mr. Huxtable is appalled, of course! But Constantine continues his merciless accusation:* "Therefore how much pleasanter for you... how much better for them... if you'd only to find one man ready for a small consideration to marry the lot."*(p. 104).*

But Constantine is not through yet; paradoxically, his accusations make sense...

Constantine. You keep an industrial seraglio.

Mr. Huxtable. A what!

Constantine. What else is your Roberts and Huxtable but a harem of industry. Do you know that it would sicken with horror a good Mahommedan? You buy these girls in the open market... you keep them under lock and key..... But you coin your profits out of them by putting on exhibition for ten hours a day... their good looks, their good manners, their womanhood. Hired out it is to any stranger to hold as cheap for a few minutes as common decency allows. And when you've worn them out you turn them out... forget their very names... wouldn't know their faces if you met them selling matches at your door. For such treatment of potential motherhood, my Prophet condemns a man to Hell. *(p. 105-6)*

Undoubtedly, some fundamental points of view regarding the Women Question are debated in this fantastic scene! The characters present contrasting and surprising points of view regarding women; even the absurd is somewhat presented as being sensible and the sensible being absurd! Mr. State is sentimental and yet almost indecently practical; Constantine is exotic and a challenger of social evils; Mr. Huxtable is conventional in his attitude toward sex, he is somewhat disturbed by the advanced notions about the political, social and economic status of women. Major Thomas is the "Mean Sensual Man," *according to Mr. State's description . He is seduced by prettily dressed women:* "I think a crowd of well-dressed women is one of the most beautiful things in the world" *(p. 93). Philip is emotionally detached and his father calls him* "a cold blooded egoist" (p. 99*). But the discussions are amusing and illuminating and the quality of the characters' minds are fully exposed.*

Act IV opens with an unpleasant scene between Constantine and his wife at Philip's house. Barker captures all the unhappiness of their past married lives, the lack of mutual respect and absence of love. We also discover that the father of Miss Yates'child is none other than Constantine himself!

Philip. (calling on the gods to witness this occasion); "Well... I might have guessed oh... you incorrigible old man!" (p. 128).

Constantine. She insulted me... said she'd done with me... denied me the right to my own child. I'd even have taken her away. But you're helpless. I never felt so degraded in my life....

Philip. Serve you right!

Constantine.... But the girl's mad! Think of my feelings. What does it make of me? Did she know what she was saying?

Philip. (Framing his thoughts at last). Possibly not... but I'm thankful some women's been found at last to put you in your place. *(p. 129)*

It is quite ironical to observe that Constantine feels lowered in his pride by Miss Yates' refusing him any right to his own child. Unquestionably, Philip speaks for Barker when expressing displeasure for his father's attitude regarding the women question; "Father, don't you realise that... in decadent England, at least, this manliness of yours is getting a little out of date... that you and your kind begin to look foolish at last? *(p. 127) . No wonder Constantine is out of place in England, so he plans to leave once more for his home in Mesopotamia.*

The latter part of Act IV highlights the relationship between Philip and Jessica. Philip is not satisfied with the world as it is; he wants to find a purpose in life – he wants to do dull, hard work at the County Council "to save his soul" *(p. 134). He hates the* "farm-yard world of sex" *(p. 142) and believes that companionship is what should exist between a man and a women. It seems there is a lot of Barker himself and of Fabian reflection when the playwright has the central character explain to his wife that giving up beautiful things is not easy for him:*

Beautiful sounds and sights and thoughts are all of the world's heritage I care about. Giving them up is like giving my carefully created soul out of my keeping before I die. *(p. 136).*

The play ends in this extended discussion between the couple where the central idea of the play is focused, the position of women in society; a challenge that must be conquered by both sexes:

... Then there's a price to be paid for free womanhood, I think... and how many of you ladies are willing to pay it? Come out and be common women among us common men? *(p. 136)*

The outworn bourgeois culture as represented by Jessica worries Philip because she is healthy and refined at the expense of the misery and hardship of the work-people of the drapery store. Her free womanhood was attained at a high cost and

Philip wonders whether " we good and clever people are costing the world too much" *(p. 137). He conveys the idea concerning responsibility which the privileged ones ought to have in relation to the underprivileged; it is a moral and ethical duty to share their gifts with those that lack these conditions. Without this* sharing " ... there´s precious little hope for the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth...."*(p. 137).*

Philip is sincere in his desire to improve society and he solicits Jessica´s cooperation She is willing because their love exists on equal conditions. However, it is not easy for her: "Where is my share of the job?" *(p. 143). Philip reassures her that there´s enough to choose from. But...*" the burden of her sex´s present fate falls upon her and both of them know it" *(p. 143*).

In the last stage direction, Barker ponders that there really is no end to this discussion.

Philip. Male and female created He them... and left us to do the rest. Men and women are a long time in the making... aren´t they?...

Jessica. ...But I tell you, Phil, it isn´t easy for us. You don´t always let us have the fairest of chances, do you?

Philip. No, I grant it´s not easy. But it´s got to be done.

Jessica. Yes... *(p. 144).*

When the curtain falls, Jessica and Philip are happy together as they stand looking into the fire and to the long way ahead of them.

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VIRGINIA WOOLF AND HER RELATIONSHIP WITH HER PARENTS AND LEONARD WOOLF

MÁRCIA ROCHA
UNIDERP – Campo Grande, MS

Virginia and Leonard's sexual relationship was one that would have unnerved many a less resolute character. What had been a passive attitude by Virginia shortly developed into a complete affirmative rejection to the sexual act. They lived 'chastely'. It is possible that Virginia, from a personal point of view, did not regret her frigidity. Her view might have been expressed by Mrs Dalloway, who though a wife and a mother, 'could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet'. Mrs Dalloway 'resented it' — the thing she called 'this cold spirit' — and the explanation is that it was 'a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, 'sent by Nature (who is invariably wise)'. In contrast to Clarissa's fierce resistance to emotional possession, 'love and religion', which attempt to force the soul and own the people, is her desire to bring people together. She respects 'the privacy of the soul' (140), which is signified by her idea that 'here was one room; there another' (141). On the other hand, the party expresses Clarissa's love of participation, as she felt it in her emotions for Sally and Peter. She retains strong, passionate feelings, which may be emotional experiences described as a sexual orgasm, or strong passions of hatred. But in contrast with such involvement is her withdrawal. Clarissa going indoors like 'a nun who has left the world' (33), going upstairs to her narrow bed like 'a child exploring a tower' (35), virginal, unable to abandon herself, fails Richard sexually the same way Virginia Woolf failed Leonard.

Virginia's frigidity makes it especially difficult to define their marriage as a happy one, at least for Leonard. It must not be forgotten that we are not talking about the average man, but Leonard, who loved Virginia and saw her as a formidable person. Were Leonard and Virginia happily married? As to Virginia, the answer to this question seems quite clear. At the end of her diary for 1919 she wrote, 'I daresay we are the happiest couple in England'. From early childhood Virginia was a lonely person, and Leonard came to 'destroy her loneliness'. Leonard was her best friend,

her nurse, sometimes acting much more like a 'mother' than a husband. 'He provided the conditions under which she was able to write, and this was Virginia's overwhelming interest in life. There was no one else who had both the intelligence that could be respected by Virginia and the strength and forbearance to support and protect her for the twenty-eight years they lived together' (176).[1]

In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf pays careful attention to the institution of marriage. Mr and Mrs Ramsay are not just this particular couple strolling in the garden, but a symbol of the general idea of marriage, which is seen as a constraining, disingenuous institution specially by Lily Briscoe, who looks for regeneration and renewal elsewhere than within this often uncomfortable union of domestic harmony.

Virginia Woolf managed to evoke the character of both her mother and father so closely that it caused Vanessa Bell to express her surprise at the similarities she could find. Vanessa naturally read the novel with their parents in mind. Not much is known of Virginia Woolf's relations with her mother, but by the reading of *To the Lighthouse* we can perceive that between mother and daughter there were certain deep affinities which became fixed and idealized at the same time through Mrs Stephen's premature, shocking death. Mrs Julia Stephen is presented in *To the Lighthouse* as a wholly and unreservedly loved being. She represents the human qualities considered supreme by Virginia Woolf: the unfailing intuition, the sensibility and the gift of sympathy which give a person that radiant power that illuminates the difficult paths of our lives like a lighthouse beam.[2]

There are many connections between the novel and Virginia Woolf's own life, mainly from her growing up period. When Virginia Woolf sets the novel in a fictional world so similar to the real St. Ives where the family used to spend summer, she is not simply trying to transcribe details but making use of the double isolation (in time and space) that she needed to 'explore the attitudes towards herself and her family' (9). [3] It was in Cornwall that they could be seen more clearly as a family, where they were separated from their competing interests and identities.

Virginia Woolf as a child was the owner of an enquiring, extremely impressionable mind, as can be noted in 'Sketches of the Past'. It is clear that her parent's marriage left strong impressions on the child's mind forming images which were carried through all her life. Those images played an important part in her adult life, having a great influence on her career, her relationship with her father after her mother's death and even her completely unconventional asexual marriage to Leonard Woolf. Even though the Stephen family has undoubtedly crept into Virginia's work it is when we try to go from the details to the characters themselves, and to the larger sense in which Virginia was basing the novel on herself and her family, that we run into problems. In order to not miss the whole level of creative exploration of the novel we must realize that the novel is the opportunity for Virginia to work through and discover for herself who her parents were and how she felt about them. It was much more than an act of exorcizing the ghost of her parents, by a way of understanding, and, by means of understanding, forgiving.

The writing of *To the Lighthouse* was a way of structuring her memories so that she could live with them. As always with Virginia, the story of her literary career and the story of her identity, its formation, realignment, disintegration and

restabilisation, are intimately connected. In writing To the Lighthouse she had let go parts of herself that she had clung onto for a very long time: her obsession with her own mother and her own desire to be a mother (114). [4]

In the intensity of the moment when Lily completes her painting, realizing her vision of ten years ago, she triumphs over Mrs Ramsay's ghost which has been haunting her for such a long time.' Virginia was thirteen when her mother died. She was haunted by her dead mother until she was in her forties. She would talk to her every day, would feel her presence with her constantly'.[5] 'The presence of my mother obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four' (80).[6] Virginia is successful in her attempts to interpret her mother's feelings and attitudes, and the force of this obsession was reduced by Virginia writing 'To the Lighthouse'.

The diary reveals how much Virginia felt threatened by her father's negative feeling about 'creative writing', which must have been difficult for her to live with, creating much the same uneasiness Lily feels about Mr Ramsay looking at her painting.

> *'I used to think of him [my father] and mother daily; but writing The Lighthouse laid them in my mind. And now he comes back sometimes, but differently. (I believe this to be true — that I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; and writing of them was a necessary act.) He comes back now more as contemporary. I must read him some day.'*
>
> (Nov. 28, 1928, p.138)

As Thomas Vogler states in his approach to the novel, "To 'know' the character of Leslie Stephen and to know Virginia's attitude towards him are two different things, and the novel (together with the Diary) is our only way to discover the latter" (9). [7] Mr Ramsay is the father figure which had to be exorcised and the only way Virginia could possibly do it was by means of overthrowing his despotism in all its forms, over mind and heart (90). [8]

If Virginia Woolf's own marriage was considered to be an unusual one, that of her parents followed the conventional standards of a typical Victorian marriage in which gender roles are reproduced between the sexes. In this typical Victorian marriage, Mrs Ramsay's role is to nurture and protect while Mr Ramsay's is to face reality, to exercise power and reestablish his position of superiority. Their masculine and feminine identities are consolidated when Mr Ramsay does not seem to feel ashamed of his sometimes intolerable behaviour to his wife and son as well as when Mrs Ramsay represses anger and allows herself to be defined in stereotyped fashion as typically irrational. She is comfortable with a definition of the relationship between men and women which is a compound of Victorian stereotypes of worship and reverence.

Virginia portrays her parent's marriage as one of opposites. Mr Ramsay is a hypocrite in the way he affects a public indifference to praise or fame while keeping his sense of failure to himself (and his wife), and an egotist. Unlike her husband,

Mrs Ramsay is self-sacrificing and expands her energy in serving others, her family, her guests and the poor. While Mr Ramsay is unsure of the value of his life's work — he fears that his book will not last, the same way Leslie Stephen did — Mrs Ramsay is absolutely sure that her life's work as a mother and wife has been entirely successful. This certainly gives her the necessary strength to encourage emotional dependence not only in her husband, who needs constant mothering, but in 'young men in particular': 'an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity ...' (15). She admires men and overestimates their wisdom and their capacity, being pleased to contemplate their public power. She knows that the men in her family trust and worship her and she enjoys it.

Here lies the main connection between Sir Leslie Stephen and Mr Ramsay: their dependence upon women. They do always need a woman to sympathize, to flatter, to console. Why? Because they are both conscious of their 'failure' as philosophers, as writers. They are both renowned but privately disappointed men. 'Sir Leslie Stephen had wanted to make a significant contribution to philosophy and thereby (for philosophy was then still thought to have such powers) to the cultural and moral life of his age. This he never achieved and he had by his late middle age, when Virginia knew him, settled for an intellectual role that was managerial rather than creative' (7). [9] "His private feelings of failure can be easily understood once his life combined a public image of 'intellectual power under perfect control', with a private reality of serious mental breakdown, an immature, almost vampirish relationship with his wife after her death and a more or less total incomprehension of the needs of his rebellious daughters" (8). [10] But their beliefs and principles make them ashamed to confess this need of sympathy to men. The attitude that their intellect makes them adopt with men, make them the most modest, the most reasonable of men.

Their son James is for sure the young male whose dependent love for Mrs Ramsay is most intense. Even though one may suspect that the jealousy and resentment against the father do go pretty far in his case, this love is not in any case considered to be 'abnormal' by Mrs Ramsay or any other member of the family. The competition between James and his father for Mrs Ramsay's attention and tenderness is a key feature of the emotional dramas described in the book. James hates his father for taking his mother's attentions away from him.

Mr Ramsay is clearly a difficult person to live with — he is famous for his outbursts of rage in which he behaves without consideration for other people's feelings, slams doors, bullies his children, is rude to his guests. In short, he is a tyrant. Just like Sir Leslie Stephen. He is a typically Victorian amalgam of bluster and panic. Nevertheless, Mrs Ramsay knows how to become the dominant influence in her husband's life: all it needs is a little love, a little listening, a little patience, a little persistence and the game is won by this extremely feminine woman. She has learned not to contradict her husband too frequently, and above all not in public. She knows that her husband can be so outraged by his wife's 'irrationality' that he can even angrily curse her, as in the last scene of 'The Window'. Her disregard of factual

truth — as when she remarks that the wind often changes and that it may not be wet the next day enrages him. After all he knows he is right. He is always right. He is the one who thinks. He uses his brain and considers all possibilities before making a statement, unlike his wife, and all the other components of the 'inferior' sex: 'the folly of women's minds enraged him' (37).

Even though Mrs Ramsay is confined to domestic concerns and is completely isolated from her husband's work, she does judge things for herself and is actively involved in other than household concerns. She may superficially seem to be like the heroines of men's Victorian novels, 'endlessly patient and attentive but mindless, nevertheless, she is in fact far more complex and plausible than that' (63). [11] She is very much involved with charity work, which she goes about with seriousness and intelligence, and is deeply concerned with hospitals and drains, but, being a Victorian wife, she does not have the space in her life to do with charitable work. When she agreed to marry Sir Leslie Stephen she insisted that she should carry on the charitable work to which she had devoted so much of her life as a widow. She visited the poor and the sick, often staying away from home to tend to them, and ended by writing a short booklet on the management of the sick room. Just like Julia Stephen, Mrs Ramsay is more than anything else, busy. Apart from the huge demands that she places on herself nursing the sick, she has the house full of children, servants and guests and spends most of her time seeing that everybody has been attended to, giving special attention to her ill-humoured husband.

Holding opposite personalities it is not expected of them to get along well, but they do achieve a kind of easy intimacy whenever they chat together and do not suffer any kind of 'external' influences. They share that rare sort o intimacy well-known to a few lucky couples. Their six-year-old son James, an ultra-sensitive child, is painfully aware of the strong bond between his parents and of his total incapacity to interfere in such a strong relationship. They have achieved that exclusive stage in a relationship in which words can be dismissed as unimportant. Mrs Ramsay feels in greater communication with her husband sitting there in silence than if they spoke. She knows exactly what he wants her to tell him, even though she will not say it directly, for 'she never could say what she felt'. Instead she smiles and triumphs for 'she had not said it: yet he knew.' 'Their relationship is one which connects and mingles human beings beneath the words and gestures whose value as communication is so inadequate' (22). When they are left by themselves to share moments of real isolation from the outside world of dinner-parties, guests, children, society, when they are left sitting quietly together reading, Mr Ramsay loses his anxieties, Mrs Ramsay feels free to reassure him of all her love by simply looking at him and smiling. Messages are sent from her mind to his without the ordinary use of the senses, almost telepathically. This is Virginia Woolf's attempt to show us that 'words often fail to express with exactness the complexity of human feelings, and, in any case, the words people use represent only a fraction of what they actually think and may give quite a misleading impression' (48-9). [12] Even though Mrs Ramsay does not have to keep a conversation flowing with her husband to make their relationship a rewarding one, even though they feel comfortable enough to enjoy each other's company without having to talk, she does try to establish communication between

other people. In her attitude to Paul and Minta and to Lily and Bankes, for example, and at the dinner party where she makes the effort to get people together. The characters tend to withdraw each into his haunted solitude, even though their physical closeness creates a multiplicity of contacts. This is Virginia Woolf seeing human beings as isolated and communication between them partial, often unsatisfactory, sometimes mistaken.

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CORPOS DES(AUTORIZADOS): A PRECEPTORA NA FICÇÃO INGLESA E NA BRASILEIRA[1]

MARIA CONCEIÇÃO MONTEIRO
Universidade Federal Fluminense

1

Já presente na vida da aristocracia britânica desde o período medieval, a preceptora ingressa, nos fins do século XVIII, no seio das famílias de uma crescente e abastada classe média, reflexo da virulência e da força econômica de um emergente capitalismo industrial, alavancado pela energia farta do carvão e pela brutal exploração da classe operária.

Por imitação da aristocracia, a alta classe média encontrou na professora particular a solução para educar os filhos no espaço reservado do lar. Desse modo, a preceptora se agrega à vida doméstica da burguesia, tornando-se a mais notável categoria de mulher inglesa com trabalho remunerado. Apesar de ser protagonista de uma situação anômala, ela se faz indispensável como mantenedora do *status* da família, como símbolo representativo de uma classe. Torna-se, assim, presença obrigatória onde quer que habitem filhas de pais nobres ou burgueses que querem para elas pretendentes promissores.

Sabe-se que a preceptora era empregada numa família de classe média com o propósito de reforçar e perpetuar os valores vitorianos. Entretanto, ao exercer por dinheiro funções da mulher doméstica, ela obscurece a distinção de que depende a noção de gênero. Vê-se, assim, que sua presença gera conflitos entre as dimensões sexual e moral da mulher. No entanto, ela, paradoxalmente, representava uma ameaça a estes mesmos valores, dentre outros motivos, por sua própria posição social indefinida.

Com efeito, seu trabalho tinha um valor indeterminado numa sociedade mais interessada na exploração sexual da mulher. A preceptora, desse modo, se torna mercadoria valiosa e apreciada, sem, contudo, ter adequada avaliação e justo preço.

Trata-se de mercadoria que apresenta cotação incerta, que flutua de acordo com inconfessáveis desejos e confessados interesses do comprador. Na verdade, o trabalho da preceptora como artigo de comércio é algo de valor indefinido sobretudo por tratar-se de uma *commodity* intelectual que, por sua própria natureza, escapa a qualquer fixação de preço.

A preceptora, que foi empregada pela elite vitoriana para "governar" (como *governess*, portanto, significante que aqui espelha o significado de comandar o curso dos eventos dentro de um ambiente doméstico limitado), tem, todavia, que aprender o governar-se a si própria, governar no espaço público o seu desejo privado. Devido ao fato de que a capacidade de falar o que deseja é um sinal de poder real sobre sua própria vida, a preceptora tem que negar a sua vontade de falar. Tem que exercitar o silêncio para fingir que não tem vontade em qualquer esfera que habite. Sufoca, assim, a sua identidade como indivíduo e, conseqüentemente, a sua alteridade dentro do sistema social.

A preceptora combina características da nobreza, pela educação, com as da classe operária, pela independência, questionando, assim, a distância rígida entre dever doméstico e trabalho. Essa distinção era tão marcada no imaginário vitoriano que se tornou freqüente associar a preceptora com as figuras da prostituta e da louca.

Essa imagem de loucura construída é uma forma de negar à preceptora uma possível inserção no espaço da feminilidade, único reservado à mulher na Inglaterra vitoriana. Ser, então, louca ou prostituta significa, nesta conjuntura, categorizar a mulher como o "excluído". Significa deslocá-la da sua habitual posição no espaço da cultura e, conseqüentemente, anulá-la enquanto o Outro que não se deixa "encaixar", já que lhe era negado ocupar espaço no universo masculino em virtude da divisão polar dos sexos. Dessa forma, a mulher é "louca" ou "prostituta" porque é diferente. O que a economia narcísica do universo cultural (sempre declinado no masculino) procura eliminar, sob o rótulo da "loucura" ou da "prostituição", é, portanto, nada mais, nada menos, que a diferença.

Poovey observa que a sexualidade do louco podia ser retoricamente escondida sob o diagnóstico médico de histeria, mas a agressão sexual da prostituta era indisfarçável. De qualquer modo, a manifestação da sexualidade no lar vitoriano de classe média seria o mesmo que jogar um fósforo aceso dentro de uma jarra de álcool, especialmente num período em que as mulheres decididas e insatisfeitas começavam a exigir reformas (Poovey, 1989, p. 236).

Como a natureza contraditória dessas várias associações sugere, a sexualidade da preceptora constitui matéria de intensa investigação, idealização e tentativa de controle na primeira metade do século XIX. Conseqüentemente, tornou-se algumas vezes difícil descobrir um caminho para observar o conceito que a preceptora tinha dela própria como um ser sexual. É importante lembrar que a preceptora, como a maioria das vitorianas, era reservada ao falar da sua sexualidade nas páginas dos seus diários, cartas e memórias. Ela falava com desembaraço da solidão e alegria, mas não registrava emoção em termos de desejos físicos ou afetivos. O que fica não é o sentido da experiência da sua sexualidade, mas a fantasia e os temores que provocava nos contemporâneos. Além disso, ela se torna um objeto de fascinação erótica, por ser figura social e economicamente ambígua.

Talvez a preceptora tenha recebido tais rótulos por ter reinventado e invertido uma linguagem, reaprendendo a falar e a manifestar os seus mais profundos desejos, deixando de se reconhecer no Outro, mas se conhecendo como Outro. E é exatamente essa capacidade incontrolável que faz da preceptora tanto na história quanto na literatura uma figura tão perigosa. Ela foi capaz de apreender não só as contradições ideológicas, mas também a condição sócio-política; conseqüentemente, representa um corpo que resiste a qualquer tipo de apropriação.

O medo acarretado pela presença da preceptora está fortemente ligado à sexualidade. Ela não estava presa ao "instinto maternal", podia sentir a paixão, direito negado à mulher "normal". Sua liberdade sexual desperta assim na outra desejos "não-naturais". A mulher da qual a "mãe" tinha que diferir não era somente a prostituta, mas também a preceptora de classe média, que, portanto, representava o que a outra, ou seja, a mãe, não deveria tornar-se.

O discurso vitoriano sugere que o problema ligado à preceptora reside na sua condição feminina: mulher solteira e suscetível aos apelos do sexo. Ora, como a preceptora era uma mulher solteira contratada para substituir a mãe nas tarefas relativas à educação formal, e, de acordo com as normas vitorianas de conduta materna, esperava-se que as mães agissem de forma "assexuada" e "respeitável", a preceptora, como substituta da mãe, deveria ser uma mulher "pura". Entretanto, por ser "livre" e "solteira" representava constante ameaça à estrutura do lar.

A imagem de que a mulher era sexualmente passiva encontrou, na época, respaldo no mundo da medicina. Em 1857, William Acton (1813-1875), em *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs*, corroborava a ideologia predominante, ao assegurar a seus leitores que as únicas paixões sentidas pelas mulheres eram pelo lar, filhos e deveres domésticos. Segundo o referido autor, a mulher submetia-se ao marido só para satisfazê-lo e, se não fosse pelo prazer da maternidade, preferiria não ter atenção sexual (Acton, 1995, p. 260).

Observa-se que a preceptora tinha que ser controlada para não se tornar nociva. Além disso, era figura incontrolável que não se encaixava dentro da concepção ideológica da mulher do seu tempo. Paradoxalmente, era utilizada para manter um *status quo*, embora não fosse utilitária. Na medida em que todo um conflito era criado pela sua condição, esta figura descentralizada fugia de qualquer amarra que tentasse prendê-la a um papel convencional ou a uma imposição social. A ela era dado o rótulo de louca, e, como tal, era preciso confiná-la. Essa imagem, ao mesmo tempo em que se constitui em violenta negação da diferença que a preceptora viera claramente marcar, pode ser interpretada, pelo avesso, como eloqüente sinal de eficácia potencial dessa mesma diferença. Como diz Foucault,

> *O asilo reduz as diferenças, reprime o vício e elimina as irregularidades. Denuncia tudo aquilo que se opõe às virtudes essenciais da sociedade [...]. O asilo propõe-se a tarefa de homogeneizar a regra da moralidade e a sua extensão rigorosa a todos aqueles que tentaram dela fugir [...]. Conseqüentemente, a loucura essencial e a realmente perigosa era aquela que se erguia das camadas mais baixas da sociedade (Foucault, 1990, p. 149-150).*

Como a natureza dessas várias associações sugere, a sexualidade da preceptora constituiu matéria de intensa investigação, idealização e tentativa de controle. O que fica não é o sentido da experiência da sua sexualidade, mas a fantasia e os temores que provocava nos contemporâneos. Além disso, ela se torna um objeto de fascinação erótica, por ser figura social e economicamente ambígua. Em *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*, Steven Marcus descreve o fascínio que a preceptora exercia sobre os meninos, atitude percebida nos livros pornográficos da época (Marcus, 1970, p. 259-265).

A rigor, a preocupação maior dos vitorianos era de que a atividade da preceptora pudesse exercer perniciosa influência sobre muitas mulheres da classe média, já que a própria flutuação da economia industrial do país ameaçava toda a estrutura familiar. O capitalismo industrial trazia no seu bojo uma contradição básica: "o trabalhador trabalha somente para ganhar o pão e não para enriquecer; o trabalhador trabalha para sustentar o ócio do patrão, em vez de cuidar do seu próprio bem-estar" (Ross, 1991, p. 49). A preceptora é símbolo dessa contradição, pois o que ela faz, a troco de quase nada, é formar adolescentes, jovens que são educadas para assumir o papel de mantenedoras de regras patriarcais que perpetuam a improdutividade dentro da sociedade. Por outro lado, ao contribuir para a ociosidade do outro, ela contribui também para a entrada da mulher no mercado. Assim, a anômala posição ocupada pela preceptora na estrutura social vitoriana serviu de motivação para que a mulher ocupasse outros espaços, conquistasse novos direitos e experimentasse crescente independência ao longo do século XIX.

Para complementar o levantamento histórico sobre a preceptora, faz-se necessário examinar alguns romances do período. O romance abre espaço para o encontro entre a ficção e a história, e também para o enfrentamento, a denúncia e a transformação de uma ideologia.

As escritora usam as preceptoras para mostrar não somente os conflitos que elas na realidade viviam, mas também para enfrentá-los, desamordaçando, por meio da ficção, o ser que grita dentro de cada mulher. Ora, se uma ideologia sufoca esse ser, a escritura mostra que o sufocado não é necessariamente apagado. O escritor transforma a pena em espada que faz do texto lugar apropriado para duelar contra os privilégios garantidos pelo sistema social vigente.

Expondo a condição da miséria humana, Harriet Martineau, em *Deerbrook* (1839), mostra uma preceptora bem diferente da cintilante Clara Mordaunt, protagonista de *The Governess*, também de 1839, de Lady Blessington.

Sem dúvida constantemente nos deparamos com figuras femininas solitárias e conformadas como pano de fundo dos romances do período. Ainda que abram espaço para a representação do drama da preceptora, tais romances pouco sensibilizaram os leitores da época. Todos já estavam familiarizados com as características que à preceptora eram convencionalmente atribuídas: filha de pároco, empobrecida, desprotegida, razoavelmente inteligente e submissa; enfim, também capaz de se transformar numa *lady* pela dádiva do casamento.

Entretanto, Maria Young, personagem-preceptora de *Deerbrook*, já estava à frente do seu tempo. Ela era não somente uma mulher determinada, mas também

um ser superior, filosófico, sensível e erudito. Através dela, a voz autoral é ouvida na narrativa, apontando as diferenças sociais entre os que podiam usufruir das horas de lazer a todo momento e aqueles, como a preceptora, que esperavam com ansiedade uma tarde, tardia, quando poderiam entregar-se aos "prazeres de mãos e pensamentos livres"[2] (Martineau, 1839, p. 33). Para Maria, isso era liberdade. Pensando sobre o que fazer com a liberdade, ela devaneia por entre as flores, pássaros e rios. O narrador externo abandona o seu papel e delega a Maria a focalização, e ela passa a ser focalizadora da sua própria introspecção. Através do lugar que observa da sua janela, revela ao leitor, pelo uso do diálogo interior, a percepção que tem de si e do mundo. Aquele espaço lhe propicia um encontro com ela mesma, que não divide com o outro, somente com o leitor:

> *É um luxo, para quem não pode mover-se, sentar aqui e ver o exterior. [...] Mas como recordo bem o que é o prazer! [...] sentir a grama sob os pés, correr atrás de cada flor [...]. Creio que o prazer esteja mais na recordação do gozo natural do que no momento. Esta paisagem é mais bonita para mim no escuro da noite, quando não consigo dormir, do que agora [...]. A imaginação é melhor mediador do que os olhos (Martineau, 1839, p. 33-34).*

O espaço exterior, que observa da sua janela, é o espaço que a leva à liberdade, não à liberdade física, mas à liberdade do pensamento. E é só assim que Maria Young consegue liberar aquilo que tem que sufocar perante o outro. Por ser preceptora, aleijada e só, busca viver na imaginação o que não pode viver no real: o *prazer*, o *gozo*. O lugar aqui é fonte para vida, tornando-se um *acting place* em vez de um *place of action* (Bal, 1985, p. 95). Observa-se o uso de expressões eróticas como *prazeres de mãos*, *gozo*, e o próprio espaço como exteriorização da sexualidade. Aqui, a necessidade da prática sexual não se expressa publicamente, mas através da imaginação.

Apesar de Maria não ser a heroína do romance, é através dela que o autor implícito manifesta a ideologia da época, como na belíssima discussão sobre casamento:

> *Todas as mulheres são criadas para pensar no casamento como único evento na vida. Suas mentes são recheadas com esse pensamento antes mesmo que tenham tempo de adquirir outras idéias. [...] Não é o casamento como algo maravilhoso, sagrado, misterioso que enche as suas mentes, mas o casamento como conexão com alguém que lhes dará dinheiro, facilidade, posição e independência dos pais. Isso não tem nada a ver com amor. Falava de amor — a grande influência na vida da mulher, cujo nome é meramente um som vazio para ela até que se torna, de repente, secretamente, uma voz que sacode o ser para o centro — mais terrível, mais horrendo do que o estrondo da morte [...]. Existe uma multidão de esposas que experimentaram o gostar, o afeto e os confundiram com amor, e que chegaram ao final da vida sem ter*

consciência de que nunca amaram. [...] Para falar de amor tem que haver suspiro [...] Nenhuma de nós teve a chance de to be or not to be (Martineau, 1939, p. 159-160).

Do começo do século XIX até o início da década de 40 daquele século, o confronto de narrativas mostra a preceptora como objeto de desejo do outro, mas o outro não sabe sobre o desejo dela, pois não lhe abre espaço de manifestação. Trata-se de narrativas que ainda carregam certo ranço estratégico do passado: o desejo sexual domesticado. Mesmo assim, o leitor atento vê o desejo deslizando sob o bico da pena. Manifestá-lo não seria o mais grave dos perigos, a raiz de todas as ameaças para a sociedade?

Desafiando as convenções sociais e literárias, entra em cena Charlotte Brontë com a sua personagem transgressora Jane Eyre. Numa narrativa matizada pelas cores simbólicas, a personagem repele qualquer forma de representação ideológica da mulher, desafiando a tudo e a todos para buscar a sua própria realização pessoal.

Jane Eyre é órfã e dependente de parentes que a hostilizam. Entretanto, *Jane Eyre* é um paradigma da narrativa do desejo por aproximação do outro, por reconhecimento, ou seja, pela percepção de que a vida humana possui um "caráter dialógico" (Taylor, 1992, p. 32). Assim, a primeira parte da narrativa é marcada por fantasias do desejo e pelo erotismo, de que é símbolo o *red-room*, onde Jane é duramente castigada para sufocar a sexualidade: "Se não sentares quieta, terás que ser amarrada" (Brontë, 1966, p.44).

Ao invés de render-se ao mundo hostil da família, Jane rebela-se, e, por isso, é mandada para Lowood, uma instituição de caridade cuja tirania, pretensão e hipocrisia são retratadas com um realismo que vai além do mundo ficcional, ficando evidente que a autora objetiva um ataque às instituições em vigor.

Em sua incessante busca de liberdade, Jane, ao sair de Lowood, já adulta, vai trabalhar como preceptora em Thornfield. Lá se torna preceptora de Adèle Varen, tutelada de Rochester. Apesar de levar uma vida tranqüila, Jane sente-se sozinha, e "tudo é difícil para uma mulher sozinha, tudo é impasse ou precipício" Essa vida lamentável, como diz J. Michelet, é a vida que levam "as sombras errantes" (Michelet, 1995, p. 24).

A figuração de Thornfield, o novo espaço para onde a personagem se transfere, é extremamente detalhada e poética. Jane chega lá ao entardecer. Escuridão e fogo marcam a narrativa. São elementos que mais somam e menos contrastam, ao mesmo tempo em que servem de prenúncio para o que está por vir:

> *A luz da vela brilhava por trás de uma janela cortinada; tudo o mais era escuridão. [...] Mrs. Fairfax me conduziu para dentro de uma sala onde a iluminação dupla da lareira e da vela me ofuscava, contrastando com a escuridão (Brontë, 1966, p. 127).*

Através dos olhos de Jane, a casa é vista como um espaço misterioso, como um ter e um ter-se. Uma vez mais, ela mergulha no mundo da imaginação, dando substância e qualidades aos seus medos, aspirações e conflitos. Quando Rochester

aparece, torna-se parte desse mundo interior, um objeto de desejo, uma causa de ansiedade.

Os longos diálogos entre os dois são uma mistura de eloqüência e sedução. Rochester, apesar de toda sua paixão, é astuto; Jane, apesar de reservada, é singularmente provocante. Os dois amantes conhecem todas as manobras, todos os truques do perigoso jogo com o qual estão comprometidos.

Jane mostra desde cedo uma percepção interior que a faz distinguir entre sentimentos intensos que podem levar a uma realização maior e aqueles que podem levar à autodestruição. O tempo que Jane passou em Thornfield é de capital importância. É aí que ela se torna mulher adulta e é confrontada com escolhas definitivas sobre o que significa, para ela, ser mulher:

> *Quem pode me acusar? Muitos, sem dúvida [...]. A inquietação estava na minha natureza [...]. Espera-se que as mulheres sejam calmas. Entretanto, sentem da mesma forma que os homens. Precisam exercitar suas faculdades, assim como precisam de um campo para os seus esforços tanto quanto seus irmãos. Sofrem de limitações, abnegações, da mesma forma que os homens sofreriam. É uma limitação, por parte das suas companheiras, achar que devem confinar suas vidas a fazer pudins, coser, tocar piano e bordar. Seria irresponsável condenar aquelas mulheres que procuram fazer mais ou querem aprender mais do que o costume declara necessário ao sexo (Brontë, 1966, p. 141).*

Nesse famoso discurso feminista, a narradora vai de uma defesa individual a um argumento moral sobre o direito que tem a mulher de "procurar fazer mais ou querer aprender mais que o costume declara necessário ao sexo". A noção que Jane tem de si como mulher — igual ao homem e com as mesmas necessidades como ser humano — está próxima do que era considerado um caso de insanidade na Inglaterra dos anos 40 do século XIX. E, como exemplo disso, vive na mesma casa, trancafiada, a "louca" Bertha, mulher de Rochester. Assim, em nome de todas as mulheres, Jane refuta o ideal de mulher vitoriana e a condição de anjo sem identidade, ao afirmar que "as mulheres sentem da mesma forma que os homens".

Em *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë assim aponta problemas de ordem econômica e social das mulheres, problemas que ela decide minimizar, velando-os com um final feliz: o casamento feito de amor-paixão. Tal decisão, a rigor, pode ser considerada uma limitação na obra da escritora, pois não é só através de uma paixão avassaladora que a mulher se faz plenamente no mundo como ser livre, como pessoa que pensa, sente e quer. Mas vale acentuar o paradoxo que se constrói com os próprios fios do texto: a heroína de Brontë só é inteiramente livre porque é inteiramente presa da paixão. O grande mérito da escritora está exatamente em saber e em ter a coragem de revelá-lo. A autora sabia que a linguagem tinha poder de revelar o que era, e que esse poder estava disponível para as mulheres.

Segundo Armstrong, se acreditarmos na noção de uma história da subjetividade e da prioridade da escrita para constituir subjetividade como objeto de conhecimento, torna-se relativamente simples ver Charlotte Brontë como agente da

história (Armstrong, 1989, p.191). Em outras palavras, a autora de *Jane Eyre* não se sujeita à história, mas se faz sujeito da história, ao romper com certo determinismo histórico.

Jane Eyre transpassa todas as barreiras ideológicas, volatilizando todos os valores impostos pelo patriarcado. A personagem de Brontë, a figura mais centrífuga de todas as preceptoras ficcionalmente representadas, rejeita uma posição estática, movendo-se de um espaço para outro, buscando-se. Do vermelho que marca a sua sexualidade precisa fugir, não para negar-se como ser sexual, mas para evitar a vitimização. As preceptoras que sucederam Jane Eyre — Becky Sharp, de Thackeray; Lucy Morris, de Trollope; Isabel Vane, de Mrs Henry Wood; Helen Maldon, de Mary Elizabeth Braddon; Lydia Gwilt, de Wilkie Collins; e a preceptora sem nome de Henry James — são quase todas traçadas num constelado narrativo permeado pela loucura, o crime e o adultério. A questão moral aparece ligada a diversas instâncias: familiares, sócio-econômicas e, mais profundamente, existenciais. Existe assim nessas narrativas uma dimensão metafísica como substrato, bem como a questão tensional burguesia/aristocracia.

O principal conflito de *The Turn of the Screw* reside exatamente na representação que é feita da preceptora, ou seja, na forma como ela é caracterizada na narrativa. Apesar de ser um relato em primeira pessoa, a autoridade do texto é uma autoridade masculina. O escritor escreve na voz feminina, acrescentando à narrativa feminina um prólogo masculino. Como diz Priscilla Walton, James utiliza o desequilíbrio do poder de gênero ao se fazer representar o feminino (Walton, 1995, p. 254).

Observa-se que o "eu" que fala é deslocado. É um "eu" que opera como uma sombra do "eu" masculino. Luce Irigaray também questiona essa posição ao argumentar que a máscara deve ser compreendida como aquilo que as mulheres fazem para recuperar algum elemento de desejo, para participar do desejo do homem, mas a preço de renunciar ao seu próprio. Com essa postura, elas se submetem à economia dominante do desejo numa tentativa de permanecer "no mercado". Mas estão lá como objetos para o prazer sexual e não como aquelas que têm o prazer (Irigaray, 1985, p. 133-134). Esse processo reflete a posição das mulheres numa sociedade patriarcal, onde são coisificadas, transformadas em objetos para escorar o sujeito masculino.

Os dois narradores que antecedem a preceptora contextualizam e explicam a narrativa dela, ou seja, dão legitimidade a sua história. Para que se entenda a necessidade dessa legitimidade resta observar as significações contraditórias da posição da preceptora no lar vitoriano. Como já foi visto, as preceptoras eram mulheres solteiras empregadas para agir como substitutas da mãe. Na cultura vitoriana, a mulher era situada básica e simbolicamente em três diferentes espaços: o da mãe, o da prostituta e o da louca. Como figuras maternas, as mulheres não eram seres sexuais, pois a mulher "respeitável" tinha que ser pura e assexuada. Sendo a sexualidade feminina descartada, qualquer mulher que a manifestasse faria parte dos dois outros espaços.

Com efeito, hoje, mais do que simplesmente admitir que a sexualidade da mulher é reprimida pelas exigências de uma sociedade capitalista patriarcal — o

que já seria considerável arejamento em relação às concepções hegemônicas no período vitoriano —, entende-se que a sexualidade é socialmente construída, mediante processos de aprendizado que a harmonizam com as instituições, a ideologia e a moralidade vigentes.

Vê-se que Charlotte Brontë tenta uma conciliação entre as mensagens de auto-renúncia pelas mulheres e gratificação existencial e sexual, que requer rompimento real com as condições de supressão ou opressão da diferença. A autora de *Jane Eyre*, assim, reinventa a linguagem do desejo, transformando-a em modo de ser e estar no universo, apontando para a possibilidade de a mulher agir com paixão e desejo na vida privada. Com isso, o próprio espaço público acabaria por alterar o seu *status*: de instância inapta ao reconhecimento da mulher como sujeito, este se converteria em correlato político exterior da libertação interior propiciada, no nível privado, pelo ímpeto de desejo e paixão.

2

Mudando o cenário geográfico e cultural, passemos agora para a sociedade brasileira oitocentista onde a elite dominante exibe um estilo de vida que reflete influências do imaginário da aristocracia portuguesa, do cotidiano de fazendeiros e das diferenças e interações sociais definidas pelo sistema escravista.

Com a ascensão da família burguesa reforça-se no imaginário a importância do amor familiar e do cuidado com o marido e com os filhos, redefinindo-se, assim, o papel feminino no interior do espaço doméstico. Respeitando os conselhos médicos no combate ao ócio, a mulher brasileira burguesa ocupa-se dos deveres domésticos, entre os quais figuram manter sexo casto com o marido e vigiar a castidade dos filhos.

O amadurecimento da família burguesa é bem retratado em *Amar, Verbo Intransitivo* (1927), de Mário de Andrade. À mulher são dadas as incumbências domésticas, e ao patriarca burguês é dado tomar todas as decisões. Para que a esposa mantenha o império da castidade inviolado, uma outra mulher entra em cena, ocupando o lugar no ensinamento sexual dos adolescentes: é a preceptora-prostituta, essa "peça fundamental da lógica social" brasileira (Chaui, 1984, p. 80).

O pai administra de forma prática e objetiva o emprego da preceptora, enquanto a mãe é totalmente ignorante do papel da nova mulher que habita no seu espaço. Ela ignora que a tarefa da preceptora alemã é introduzir o filho primogênito do casal no aprendizado sexual, para que ele se aprimore na distinção entre sexo e amor. Vê-se a emoção ser controlada, tornada intransitiva, em nome da sensibilidade burguesa.

Assim, no Brasil patriarcal oitocentista – bem como nas primeiras décadas do século XX –, a prostituta tem uma posição utilitária para a construção e manutenção do anjo do lar, ao mesmo tempo que salvaguarda a instituição do casamento. Como bem observa Marilena Chauí, essa atitude ambígua face à prostituição é bem característica de sociedades que dão ao sexo a função genital procriadora e o vinculam à estrutura da família (Chaui, 1984, p. 79).

A prostituição marca também a transição de uma sociedade agrária e escravista para uma sociedade urbana e moderna. Assim, a escrava que era encarregada da iniciação sexual dos meninos é substituída pela preceptora-prostituta imigrante.

Na narrativa de Mário de Andrade, a questão de gênero, no que concerne ao desejo dos protagonistas, é inteiramente harmonizada. Eles o sentem e participam do jogo, ao mesmo tempo que o desejo tem que ser reprimido, devido ao acordo entre o patriarca e a preceptora. Entretanto, o desejo transgride o acordo, e é vivido mais intensamente por ser fadado ao silêncio. É a inviabilização da possibilidade, o silêncio vulcânico que os move. Assim, saem de cena, na dor da paixão, tendo no corpo o ardor daqueles que sabem que poderão se abrir para o império infinito do desejo e da paixão que se deflagra à sua frente. Muito embora a idéia expressa no título do romance aparentemente se relacione com a concepção renascentista do amor como um absoluto abstrato — amar, verbo intransitivo —, a preceptora e o seu pupilo aprendem que amar só é verbo — dinamismo, ação, transformação, integração — se concretizado como transitividade.

3

Na Inglaterra vitoriana, diferentemente do que se passa no contexto brasileiro referido, não existe acordo de iniciação sexual entre pais e preceptoras. Mas existe, como foi mencionado, o desejo no imaginário masculino incitado pela figura feminina, essa Outra que habita a morada alheia, sacudindo e provocando desejos recônditos numa sociedade em que a mulher só poderia ser concebida enquanto mãe, esposa e filha. A personagem preceptora assimila tanto as contradições ideológicas quanto a condição sócio-política do agente social que lhe serve de modelo. Conseqüentemente, representa um corpo que resiste a qualquer tipo de apropriação.

Não obstante as diferenças demonstradas entre o caso inglês e o brasileiro, há um ponto de convergência entre eles: a preceptora, tanto na ficção inglesa quanto na brasileira, não se mostra como instrumento de negação, mas constitui uma reivindicação de pluralismo, sinalizando desse modo a posição da diferença.

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NOTAS

1 Neste ensaio, com pequenas alterações, figuram trechos do meu livro *Sombra errante*, indicado nas referências bibliográficas.

2 Estas e as demais traduções de trechos de romances são de minha autoria.

DECONSTRUCTING THE GREAT GATSBY: A READING OF FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY*

MARIA CRISTINA PIMENTEL CAMPOS
Universidade Federal de Viçosa, MG

The text mimics the production of Penelope's tapestry, weaving a series of passages only to unstitch them later. (Leitch)

Gatsby's personality is puzzling and intriguing, as a question about the hero's simplicity, innocence, greatness, or responsibility is maintained in the air throughout the narrative. To what extent is Gatsby responsible for his own destruction as he does whatever is necessary to attain his unattainable dream? His dichotomous referential Grail might represent his blindness and inability to perceive and distinguish between dream and reality, between abstraction and its concretization, between spiritualism and materialism. Gatsby's eyes are directed only towards the fulfillment of his dream which is his sole construct. They are closed to the social surroundings as he chooses them to be. His introspective view of life distances him from reality. Gatsby weaves his own tapestry ignoring, yet, that the individual tapestry needs to be interrelated with the large tapestry, which is society's. In this perspective, the objective of this paper is to analyze Gatsby's behavior, focusing on his characterization, mainly on the adjective, great, which is given to him, deconstructing and/or reconstructing its complex meaning.

Gatsbty is certainly a puzzling character. Although he seems at first sight to be a simple character, he is, nevertheless intriguing as his attitudes are surprisingly naïve for a mature man. The readers tend to sympathize with him, especially because Fitzgerald's narrator induces them to see Gatsby as an innocent, good-willed person, a victim of society. Perhaps he really is. Yet, by being so, is he responsible or not for his own life? Does he not choose his own actions? Is not Gatsby endowed with free will and as such free to choose and free to fall?

Gatsby's social ascension is due to his self-desire to become rich in order to have Daisy. Since he knows that money is the means to get Daisy's attention, to be closer to her, he is aware of social hierarchy. Nevertheless, money to him seems to be simply the instrument he needs to attain Daisy. He seems not to care about money itself, not to be ambitious about having wealth. Probably this is the reason why Nick Carraway, the friendly narrator, believes in his innocence. Hoffman (1962:117) argues that Gatsby's "relationship with money is pure and disinterested, unselfish; he wants it only to use as a means of transcending time, reinstating the past, but most of all redirecting the 'Platonic conception of himself,' of which Nick Carraway speaks." The fact is that Nick is sorry for Gatsby's fate as the readers are too. There are no doubts about how human beings feel towards death. Death itself is the ironic reality humans have to deal with but nobody feels comfortable about it. In this way, it is touching, it is appealing to emotions, and to one's heart. Gatsby's tragic death is not different. It raises indignation as he is so stupidly killed. However, is he less responsible for it because of the circumstances in which it occurs?

Aware of social hierarchy, and yet blind to the social rights and duties a citizen must observe, the hero seems to be concerned with only one side of the coin. He chooses to ignore the facts that are not directly related with his primary interest. He knows the ways to get what he wants, and does everything he can to attain it. He becomes rich in an illegal manner, keeps his origin hidden, lies about his formal education, as he says he is an Oxford aluminus, and even ignores his family ties. He becomes a megalomaniac, one whose only drive is to achieve greatness.

This innocent man chooses his own life. He decides to exchange the spiritual values for the material ones. He confuses the notion between means values and end values, giving priority to the former in detriment of the latter. The means values, that is, the material acquisitions that one needs to guarantee his subsistence, gain for Gatsby a characteristic of a fixed idea, concentrated on one single object: money. On the other hand, the end values those which are more prized by men, are violated when the hero has Daisy as the object of his achievement. It is worth mentioning that, according to Hoffman (1962:116), the people from the 1920's had no "genuine or moral conventions to assist in the control of the wealth or of the social privileges it conveys. Daisy is the culmination of the *lovely, expensive, nineteen type of heroine.*" However, Gatsby is not able to see the real Daisy and prefers to keep his fantasy of her. His need for money transcends reality and he is totally blind to whatever can interfere with the attainment of his dream. Gatsby's way of conceiving money comes close to fantasy. It is the unreality of reality that he conforms to. Gatsby does not notice that he is, because of the loss of his dream, like George Wilson, one of the living dead of the Valley of Ashes. Nick, the narrator-character, the observer-participant, whose comment represents reality intruding in the narrative, reinforces the dramatic significance of Gatsby's dream world:

> *He must have looked upon an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being*

> *real, where ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about... like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.*
> (Fitzgerald, p. 162)

In order to perform the role he believes he can be successful, Gatsby invents a completely new person, loses his heritage and a historical connection with life, creates and embraces a world of illusion and wealth. He becomes the archetypal American who voluntarily breaks down with his moral and cultural antecedents and dedicates himself to the American Dream of accumulating personal wealth, without taking into account the consequences that this kind of rupture could originate. Bewly (1962: 282) remarks that Gatsby's mistake and guilt, "insofar as it exists, is radical failure _ a failure of the critical faculty that seems to be an inherent part of the American dream _ to understand that Daisy is as fully immersed in the destructive element of the American world as Tom himself." The image of the hero with his arms outstretched is suggestive of the settlers of the New England Colonies, who left everything behind and went to America with the dream of building the city on the hill. Gatsby's gesture juxtaposes the aesthetic contemplation of the New Continent, as Nick describes him as he observes the hero from his garden:

> *For he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone _ he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward _ and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and faraway, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.*
> (Fitzgerald, p. 21-22)

The Great Gatsby, although not presenting a panoramic view of the American society, chronicles the futility and spare time of the rich and well-born of that society in the 20's. The novel depicts a failed civilization, a resembling version of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, as Fitzgerald's Valley of Ashes, in the opening of chapter two, illustrates it with images of waste, desolation, futility, aridity, and lifelessness:

> *About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes _ a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally, a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and come to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight.*
> (Fitzgerald, p. 23)

The Valley of Ashes suggests despair, corruption, an indictment of a materialistic culture. Fitzgerald is lamenting the loss in a cynical way. In this valley, the landscape and the human beings are indistinguishable. The simile "ashes grow like wheat" and the imagery of the "ash-gray men with leaden spades stirring up an impenetrable cloud" give a dramatic touch to the amorphous scenery that Fitzgerald creates. There is a complete disintegration and deterioration of life. The author shows it to be more aesthetic than spiritual.

Gatsby's is a universe without God. Faith is lost as the spectacles in the advertisement suggest. As the people lose their roots, as they move from the West to the East, they become faceless, anonymous, and blind as Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's glasses suggest. Their sights are blurred, they are dimmed and in need for correction. Nobody cares for anything and Gatsby fits well in this category because he has a single objective, a sole truth which he pursues without measuring and minding the consequences his pursuit can bring.

According to Culler (1982:72), a reader who creates everything learns nothing, but one who is continually encountering the unexpected can make momentous, unsettling findings. The first part of Culler's statement well defines Gatsby's behavior. His failures with interpretation of the signs around him are fatal. Since a sign is related to textual interpretation, one cannot ignore it and its context as well. Gatsby is a bad reader, one who reads and interprets as he wishes to, who has his own objective as the drivers of his target. However, paradoxically as it seems to be, the hero has an enormous capacity for spiritual devotion, which is, notwithstanding, no transcendental divinity, but a woman made of flesh and blood, whose life is driven by her own egocentric motives. Ironically, Daisy is the spiritual vessel he goes after, and as such he misdirects the meaning it should have. His grail is money, it is material, a very modern grail which has lost its essence. Gatsby's dichotomous referential grail might represent his blindness and inability to perceive and distinguish between dream and reality, between abstraction and its concretization, between spiritualism and materialism. In his inability to read the signs, he waits, after the accident, for a call from Daisy which never happens. Nick's feelings are revealed in his words when he says that:

I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream.

(Fitzgerald, p. 162)

Gatsby's eyes are directed only towards the fulfillment of his dream which is his sole construct. They are closed to the social surroundings as he chooses them to be. His introspective view of life distances him from reality. Gatsby weaves his own tapestry ignoring, yet, that the individual tapestry needs to be interrelated and intertwined with the larger tapestry, which is society's.

Each human soul has to conquer his own space in the world. And this begins by one being aware of the things that surround him, to be able to visualize the whole picture which is society, to observe its norms, to adapt to its rules, to know about duties and rights, and to be able to understand and respect them. This might sound like a moralizing stance but, in fact, it is the crude reality that humans have to follow in order to be successful. Freedom is relative and to avoid to observe this fact is to be blind to reality. The hero's inability to adapt to the environment he lives in turns him into a marginal figure, one who has not observed the rules, has not conquered a place, has not read the signs properly but done it independently from historical contextualization.

From a psychological perspective, *The Great Gatsby* explores the junction between illusion and reality. Gatsby pictures the world in an idealized way. In spite of all the corruption that he allows him to take part in, his blurred vision, his deformed reading of the signs which surround him makes him believe that his is an incorruptible dream, which, yet, ironically, leads to his death. The symbolic movement of the structure of the novel from West to East suggests a change from provincial to cosmopolitan milieu. Gatsby and the other characters as well have gone through this experience, but it is Gatsby who fails to divorce from provincialism as he arrives in the new environment. He wants to participate in that cosmopolitan society but he does not fit in it as his attention is totally directed to his dream, which becomes his truth, his fate, and his destruction. Gatsby becomes a grotesque and as such could easily fit in Anderson's characterization of one, when the old man, in *The Book of the Grotesque*, says that:

The grotesques are not all horrible. Some were amusing, some almost beautiful. It was the truths that made the people grotesques. It was (the old man's) notion that the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood.

(Anderson, p. 23, 25)

Gatsby's grasp of one single truth might be his mistake. He is not able to realize that his dream has become a falsehood. His persistence on reading the signs as he creates them, ignoring their context, their interrelationships, and interactions with other signs which take part in the writing / reading of the life-text, hinders him from perceiving reality and turning himself, thus, into a grotesque. Because Gatsby is so uninspired yet so emotional, so unfriended yet so generous, so unfeeling yet so sentient, so uninhibited yet so gracious, so uneasy yet so determined, so unfeigned yet so simulated, so unfathomable but so simple-minded, he is unquestionably a complex unilinear hero. These paradoxical features which characrerize Gatsby's personality make of him a great-little hero. His greatness lies on his capacity to be simple, to keep a resemblance of innocence in spite of all his misled attitudes. However, he is also little since he is unable to pursue his ideal by following the

codes prescribed in the laws of justice. He is the little-great hero who arises sympathy and even compassion. Perhaps, as Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Miniver Cheevy," Gatsby has been born "too late" in the wrong place and time, and as a consequence, unfit for the society of the 20's. He is a great-minuscule creature who lives for a nostalgic past. His lack of perception of the real world is due to his tendency to romanticize it, to picture society in his own way, to create his own microcosmic shell in which he chooses to be encapsulated: defeated, abandoned, forgotten, dead but Great. To love and not to be loved is one of Gatsby's fault. Nevertheless, he himself is the writer of his own story. He weaves the tapestry, traces the markers, reads the signs and chooses to be destroyed. Is he responsible or not?

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A ESPERANÇA EM CLARICE LISPECTOR E EM EMILY DICKINSON: O ENCONTRO COM A ALTERIDADE

MARIA DAS GRAÇAS GOMES VILLA DA SILVA
UNESP Araraquara

ABSTRACT: In this study, using the lacanian notion of other as our fellow man and Other as a place related to the order of the signifier elements which articulate the unconscious and mark the symbolic determination of the subject, we compare the short story Esperança, by Clarice Lispector, and the poem Hope, by Emily Dickinson, trying to identify what is common in the treatment given to the theme and to examine its unfoldings.

KEYWORDS: hope, alterity, other, Other, subjectivity.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
that perches in the soul..."
Emily Dickinson

"...esperança é coisa secreta e costuma pousar
diretamente em mim, sem ninguém saber..."
Clarice Lispector

Este trabalho visa realizar um estudo comparativo do conto *Uma Esperança*, de Clarice Lispector, e do poema *Hope*, de Emily Dickinson. Busca-se identificar o que há de comum no tratamento dado ao tema Esperança, procurando ressaltar seus desdobramentos e o encontro com a alteridade. Para tanto, será empregado o conceito

proposto por Lacan (1978) referente à noção de outro como nosso semelhante e a de Outro como um lugar, relacionado à ordem de elementos significantes que "articulam o inconsciente e marcam a determinação simbólica do sujeito", Vallejo (1981).

Clarice Lispector e Emily Dickinson apesar de terem vivido em espaço e tempo diferentes, debruçaram-se sobre o mesmo tema, buscando conceituar o que vai na alma humana.

Um diálogo à distância

Emily Dickinson nasceu em 10 de dezembro de 1830, início do século XIX, em Amherst (Massachusetts-USA) e morreu em 15 de maio de 1886. Seu pai, o advogado Edward Dickinson, foi tesoureiro do Amherst College, fundado pelo avô de Emily, Samuel Fowler Dickinson, que se opunha às tendências liberalizantes de Havard.

Muitas são as histórias relacionadas ao modo de vida da poeta. Diz uma delas que Emily só vestia branco. Preferindo a solidão, recusava-se, muitas vezes, a encontrar-se com os que iam visitá-la, oferecendo-lhes, ao invés de sua companhia, um copo de vinho ou algumas flores, às vezes, acompanhados de um poema.

Apesar desse afastamento voluntário, mantinha constantes contatos com o mundo exterior. Amherst, de onde Emily, raramente, se afastou, era uma pequena comunidade de fazendeiros da Nova Inglaterra (New England), fiéis ao calvinismo ortodoxo que, aos poucos, cedeu lugar ao transcendentalismo liberal de Emerson.

John B. Pickard (1967) descreve a influência da religião sobre a escritora:

> *...So Emily Dickinson was born into a community where evangelical devoutness permeated every action. Though she was repelled by Calvinism's dogmas and spent her life rebelling against them, she never escaped its eschatological emphasis. She was continually preoccupied with death, resurrection, immortality, and judgement and never ceased examining the undeniable reality of God(...). Though the Calvinistic influence upon her life was fundamental, her New England heritage was of equal importance...*[1] *(p.8).*

Sobre seus poemas muitos pesquisadores têm se debruçado. Segundo William Dean Howells (1968)[2]:

> *The companionship of human nature with inanimate nature is close in certain of the poems; and we have never known the invisible and intangible ties binding all creation in one, so nearly touched as in them*[3] *(p.23).*

E Stanley T. Williams[4] ressalta:

> *She writes of the bee, the bobolink, the spider, the bat, the storm, noon, the sunset, or the preacher with this preposterous sermon on "breadth". In this role of commentator on things visible and invisible she aphorizes on God, human love, death, and also on mermaids and angleworms*[5] *(p.256).*

Com exceção de sete poemas publicados em vida, os demais só foram impressos postumamente (1890). Emily Dickinson foi reconhecida como a poeta mais importante da América, muitos anos após a sua morte, e grande parte da crítica concorda em que exerceu grande influência sobre os poetas americanos. Em *The American Tradition in Literature*[6] (1974) lemos que Emily Dickinson:

> *...discovered, as twentieth-century poets later did, the utility of the ellipsis of thought and the verbal ambiguity (...). She possessed the most acute awareness or sensory experience and psychological actualities, and she expressed radical discoveries in these areas with frankness and force...*[7] *(p.1021).*

Quanto a Clarice Lispector, seu aparecimento na literatura causou sobressalto à crítica que não sabia como definir seu trabalho. Eduardo Portella (1960) comenta:

> *O primeiro aparecimento de Clarice Lispector com Perto do Coração Selvagem* (1944) *criou um verdadeiro impasse para a crítica então dominante, toda ela completamente desaparelhada para penetrar aquele estranho e complexo universo romanesco (...). Clarice Lispector criou uma estilística das sensações. É uma romancista do gosto apenas esboçado que do movimento ostensivamente consumado... .*

Lúcio Cardoso (1944) apresenta a escritora como ficcionista, mas acrescenta: *Aliás, a sra. Clarice Lispector é poetisa, e alguns de seus poemas que já passaram pelas minhas mãos possuem as mesmas sonoras qualidades de muitas das melhores páginas de Perto do Coração Selvagem.*

Antonio Candido (1970) destaca o trabalho de Clarice Lispector com a narrativa, denominando-a de *romance de aproximação*, afirmando, mais adiante, que ela *soube criar o estilo conveniente para o que tinha a dizer.*

Clarice Lispector nasceu na União Soviética, a 10 de dezembro de 1925 (mesmo dia e mês de Emily Dickinson) e morreu em 1977 no Rio de Janeiro, em um hospital do SUS, assistida por amigos e parentes. Com apenas um ano de idade foi naturalizada brasileira pelos pais que escolheram o Brasil como pátria. Morou na Praça Maciel Pinheiro, em Recife, até a adolescência.

O filho de Clarice Lispector, Paulo, em entrevista à revista *Manchete* de 13 de fevereiro de 1982, confidencia:

> *Mamãe nasceu a caminho do Brasil. Ela gostava muito de conversar sobre a Ucrânia. Curtia a idéia de seus antepassados. Tinha muito respeito e grande afinidade com a cultura russa e a judaica. Ensinou-nos sempre isso ao longo de sua vida. Mas era aqui que ela se sentia bem. Ninguém jamais duvidou da sua brasilidade. Ela amou demais o Brasil.*

O modo de viver de Emily Dickinson apresenta mistérios semelhantes ao de Clarice Lispector. Ao ser indagado se havia a existência de uma falsa imagem de sua mãe, Paulo ressalta:

De certa forma, sim. Todos pensavam que mamãe era introspectiva, fechadona, sempre preocupada com as tramas profundas de suas criações literárias (...). Mamãe não era o bicho-papão que muitos pensam. Quase ninguém chegou a conhecê-la verdadeiramente (...). Era bem diferente da mulher descrita escrevendo "trancada num quarto, com um cachimbo aceso na boca.

Sobre a obra de Clarice Lispector, marcada pelo espanto da crítica diante de sua primeira publicação aos 17 anos, Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna (1985) comenta: *A obra de Clarice não é um produto intelectual, mas a resultante de uma consciência estranha e aberta para as regiões mais íntimas do ser. (...) Mais do que as aventuras, interessa-se por descrever a solidão dos homens diante dos animais e objetos (p.4).*

Ao referir-se aos bichos, ou seja, *toda sorte de insetos, aves e animais que infestam sua simbologia*, Sant'Anna (1985) cita a própria Clarice: *Parece-me que sinto os bichos uma das coisas ainda mais próximas de Deus, material que não inventou a si mesmo, coisa ainda quente do próprio nascimento (p.170).*

Nesta breve exposição sobre as escritoras, nota-se que ambas tinham preocupações comuns:

- a descoberta do trabalho com a palavra e suas ambigüidades, que a própria Clarice (1964) definiu: *Então escrever é o modo de quem tem a palavra como isca: a palavra pescando o que não é palavra. Quando essa não palavra morde a isca, alguma coisa se escreveu. Uma vez que se pescou a entrelinha, podia-se com alívio jogar a palavra fora. Mas aí cessa a analogia: a não palavra, ao morder a isca, incorporou-a. O que salva então é ler "distraidamente" (p.143).*

Ou ainda, como indicam os versos de Emily Dickinson:

A word is dead
when it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day[8].

– a preocupação em comentar as coisas visíveis e invisíveis e
– a presença dos bichos como os seres mais próximos de Deus.

Nesse diálogo travado à distância e realizado por meio da superposição de textos, tentamos uma aproximação da obra e do tema Esperança, trabalhado pelas autoras. Parece que as preocupações mencionadas acima poderão ajudar na exposição das nuances de cada trabalho e revelar distanciamentos e aproximações. O jeito de ser e de encarar o mundo de cada uma delas parecem advir do pioneirismo, do olhar à frente, da sincronização com um mundo, aparentemente invisível, mas tão presente e pulsante no íntimo dos seres humanos que só os artistas de gênio, como Clarice Lispector e Emily Dickinson, conseguem, mais que muitos visualizar.

Uma tentativa de aproximação por meio do tema

No poema "Hope", de Emily Dickinson, a esperança é definida como coisa de penas que pousa na alma, acalentando-a, sem nada exigir:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all -

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of Me[9].

Apesar das grandes tormentas, essa "coisa de penas" permanece pousada, aquecendo o coração de muitos. As aspas na palavra *hope* destacam seu valor conotativo para além do ato de se ter esperança e lhe dão "status" de conceito, ao defini-la como "coisa de penas" (*the thing with feathers*). Dessa forma, o eu lírico parece revelar a sensação do homem em seu íntimo, quando essa "coisa de penas" aquece-lhe o coração. Mas sabiamente faz uma ressalva; esse pássaro, habitante da alma, do que é mais íntimo e secreto nos seres humanos, canta incessantemente uma canção sem palavras, revelando que as palavras jamais oferecem o significado preciso, jamais atingem o âmago do enigma.

Tal fato parece demonstrar que o emprego de palavras ou qualquer outra linguagem não é adequado para exprimir com exatidão as sensações. As palavras ou gestos não esgotam o sentido das coisas. Não podem exprimir o verdadeiro sobre o verdadeiro, como aponta Lacan (1978). Uma citação retirada de *A hora da estrela* (1999), de Clarice Lispector, serve para ilustrar essa inadequação: *A minha vida a mais verdadeira é irreconhecível, extremamente interior e não tem uma só palavra que a signifique (p.11).*

Esse pássaro, cujo canto soa docemente por sobre a fúria do vento (*in the Gale*), só poderá ser atemorizado em caso de grande tormenta. Mas o eu lírico, em tom quase de advertência, acrescenta que tem ouvido a ave nos momentos mais frígidos e mares estranhos, e, mesmo nessas situações tão adversas, o pássaro nada lhe exigiu.

O eu lírico demonstra que o ser humano precisa desse eterno cantor interior para enfrentar sua trajetória neste mundo, marcada por vendavais e mares infindos. O canto incessante e indefinível do pássaro é que o impele sempre para diante, para diante e o acalenta.

No conto *Uma Esperança*, de Clarice Lispector (1975), a narradora descreve o aparecimento do inseto Esperança em sua casa. Diante de seus olhos e de um de seus filhos, a esperança surge de forma extremamente delicada, ora como inseto que se firma sobre pernas-fiapo, ora como Esperança que pousa no coração do ser humano.

Já na abertura do conto, uma ressalva com respeito à esperança: *Não a clássica que tantas vezes verifica-se ser ilusória,* ***embora mesmo assim nos sustente sempre*** (p.90). Ressalva que confirma a imagem criada no poema de Emily Dickinson (*That kept so many warm*), e que deságua em um paradoxo: a esperança clássica é ilusória, mas sustenta sempre.

A partir da ressalva, instala-se um jogo de alternância do significado da palavra Esperança, prevalecendo o deslizar do significante, marcado pelo desejo de quem examina a esperança: *Mas a outra, bem concreta e verde: o inseto* (p.90). E logo, algumas linhas à frente: — *Uma esperança: e na parede bem em cima de sua cadeira: Emoção dele também que unia em uma só as duas esperanças, já tem idade para isso (p.90).* Seguindo quase que um ritual, marcado por diferentes pontos de vista, a narradora, chocada, desvenda a complexa relação inseto verde-esperança e a esperança, coisa secreta, aproximando-se de *the thing with feathers perched in the soul*, definida por Emily Dickinson.

Esse desvendamento gradual se dá por meio do diálogo entre a mãe e o filho que parece ir lhe fornecendo as pistas que a levam ao desvendamento da aparição súbita da verde esperança, apanhada no jogo contínuo do dentro e do fora, transitando entre o visível-invisível, entre o conflitante externo-interno e vice-versa. O significante esperança vai deslizando de um campo a outro sem ligar-se a um significado único.

Assim, define: *...esperança é coisa secreta e costuma pousar diretamente em mim, sem ninguém saber, e não acima de minha cabeça numa parede (p.90)* e pousa, como o pássaro, no poema de Emily Dickinson.

O jogo de significantes prossegue: *Pequeno rebuliço: mas era indubitável, lá estava ela, e mais magra e verde não podia ser (p.90).* Os versos de Emily Dickinson destacam também a fragilidade, empregando o diminutivo: *That could abash the* ***little Bird***.

O diálogo entre mãe e filho dá ritmo ao dessecamento do inseto e ao desvendamento da esperança, espécie de inseto secreto, habitante do mundo invisível: — *Ela só tem alma, explicou meu filho e, como filhos são uma surpresa para nós, descobri com surpresa que ele falava das duas esperanças (p.90).* A contemplação do outro se estabelece, enlaçando o filho e a esperança. E a dessecação-desvendamento vai se acirrando: — *Ela é burrinha, comentou o menino.* — *Sei disso, respondi, um pouco trágica (p.91).*

O filho fala da esperança-inseto, a mãe, da esperança secreta, o que torna o diálogo trágico, reforçado pelo emprego do diminutivo, *burrinha*, limite da cegueira de ambos, compartilhada com a esperança-inseto. — *Está agora procurando outro caminho, olhe, coitada, como ela hesita.* — *Sei, é assim mesmo.* — *Parece que esperança não tem olhos, mamãe, é guiada pelas antenas.* — *Sei, continuei, mais infeliz ainda (p.92).* Os olhares desfocados, da mãe e do filho, provocam a cegueira, confundem o dentro e o fora, rompem com a hierarquia dos termos, equalizando-os, ampliando a idéia do trágico, rompendo os limites da palavra esperança, extravasando seu significado para além daquilo que é visível.

Paradoxalmente, ao mesmo tempo em que a cegueira, deslocadora dos pólos, se manifesta, surge o espaço para o exercício de visibilidade em que a mãe vai revelando, o contraponto sublinhado pelo emprego do verbo saber (*sei*) que parece implicitamente incluir o verbo experimentar.

Críticos como Benedito Nunes (1969) e Affonso de Sant'Anna (1985), entre outros, ressaltam a importância da geografia interior dos personagens criados por Clarice e a ocorrência da epifania que ocorre com eles. Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna comenta que o que mais interessa não são as aventuras, mas a descrição da solidão dos seres humanos diante dos animais e objetos. Aponta, ainda, que em todos ocorre o fenômeno da epifania, a súbita revelação da verdade, relato de uma inusitada revelação que, a princípio, se mostra simples e rotineira. Ressalta, no entanto:

> *...epifania, em literatura, pode ser ainda não apenas o relato de uma experiência, mas pode ser uma obra ou parte de uma obra onde a consciência se abre para o mundo em momentos luminosos. Nesse sentido, os contos de Clarice seriam momentos epifânicos...(pp.3-7).*

Aí está um desses momentos luminosos. A descoberta da fragilidade das duas esperanças, ressaltadas por meio do relato do filho (o outro), torna a narradora mais infeliz. É essa uma das estratégias que Clarice Lispector aplica em seus contos, segundo Sant'Anna (1985), ao afirmar que estes são sempre construídos com um número mínimo de personagens, colocados como duplas opositivas, que revelam uma outra: Eu x Outro: *Dessa tensão é que surge a epifania, a revelação de uma certa verdade...(p.7).*

Regina Pontieri (1994) ressalta:

> *Diversamente do que tem afirmado o imaginário ideológico ocidental, em Clarice* ***eu*** *e* ***outro*** *não se excluem nem estão rigidamente hierarquizados. Ambos estão integrados, numa convivência tensa de contrários. Entre eles, há cruzamento e reversibilidade. O eu só se define como tal porque há o outro para quem eu é um* ***outro****. E assim sendo, são também o* ***mesmo****, já que, em sua diferença, os dois se enraízam num solo comum (p.28).*

Nesse sentido, o filho não revela independência em relação à mãe, mas o outro lado, travessia que se dá de forma angustiante à medida que a mãe acompanha o narrar do filho e o vai completando com o *sei*.

O inseto é dessecado, desvendado e a verdade é espelhada por meio da contemplação da esperança. Espaço de revelação da alteridade que leva a narradora a identificar-se com o inseto: *estaria por acaso ferida? Ah não, senão de um modo ou de outro escorreria sangue, tem sido sempre assim comigo (p.91).*

Mas a descoberta se aprofunda. O inseto busca uma saída por entre os quadros da parede, parece o ser humano em sua passagem pelo mundo. Os quadros, cenas do lado visível, em que o homem está inserido, ali estavam e a esperança vagava cegamente por entre eles, usando não os olhos, mas as antenas.

O percurso do inseto vai se ampliando através da descrição da vigília doméstica na Grécia e em Roma para evitar que a chama recém-descoberta do fogo se apagasse. Analogicamente, a vigília parece repetir-se com ela e o filho, que lutam pela preservação das esperanças.O ser humano, como a esperança-inseto, no conto, busca uma saída e há milênios, sustentado pela chama dessa outra esperança, porto seguro, acalanto e manutenção da vida. Mãe e filho contemplam a busca do inseto.

À semelhança da negação de Pedro na Bíblia, ou talvez, de um ritual mágico dos contos de fada, o inseto *três vezes tentou renitente uma saída entre dois quadros, três vezes teve que retroceder caminho (p.90).* A palavra quadros permite a relação com a via crucis, reforçadora da menção à negação de Pedro, citada anteriormente, dada à presença do número três. Através dessa via-crucis, o ser humano segue, deslocando-se doloridamente sobre o fiapo das pernas como fazem a esperança, no conto, e a avezinha, no poema (*And sore must be the storm).* Atravessa os tempos, às vezes, sangrando, às vezes, caminhando lentamente, às vezes enfrentando grandes perigos.

A esperança-inseto na busca indecisa se vê diante de um grande risco: "a" aranha, andando pela sua teia invisível, que surge por trás de um quadro para devorá-la, farejando o mundo que é comível.

Ao tratar da poética clariciana, Regina Pontieri (1999) destaca que a relação de alteridade no trabalho da escritora está marcada pelo *dinamismo de reversibilidade e promiscuidade entre dicotomias várias*. Nesse sentido, na polarização entre espírito e corpo, neste último, a dicotomia se revela através de *imagens que confrontam, opõem e identificam olhos e boca e seus avatares*. No caso da boca, a percepção gustativa relacionada a seu objeto favorece *a realidade corporal em sua situação máxima de assimilação do mundo (p.31).*

Nessa tentativa de assimilação, a angústia instala-se como uma aranha que come esperanças. O leitor também parece ficar retido na teia invisível dessa trama de risco, reveladora da transferência e da ocupação do espaço, nesse jogo de alteridade. O emaranhado retém a atenção do leitor diante da possível devoração da verde-esperança por essa aranha, habitante do mundo invisível, desse mundo por trás dos quadros. "A" aranha vai comer as duas esperanças: o inseto e o habitante da alma do homem.

A transposição é quase inevitável e a troca de lugar se estende ao ser humano que, em sua via-crucis, busca uma saída entre os "quadros", entre as cenas vividas, retidas em seu corpo, que dá abrigo, em sua parte oculta, a uma aranha ameaçadora que devora esperanças.

Benedito Nunes (1969), ao referir-se à existência de um jogo de linguagem na obra de Clarice Lispector, esclarece: *Isto é o que sucede nos romances de Clarice Lispector. Já no primeiro deles se observa uma relação essencial entre a ação narrada e o jogo da linguagem, como situação problemática dos personagens que andam à busca de comunicação e expressão... (130).*

No conto, a trajetória da esperança deve ser assegurada assim como a do homem, que não pode abrir mão da esperança. Voltamos aos versos de Emily Dickinson:

I've heard it **in the chillest land** -
And **on the strangest Sea** –
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of Me

Os versos parecem os ecos vindos de Roma ou Grécia do conto, pois descrevem a cega trajetória humana e o esforço para manter acesa a velha chama. O lume também não se extingue na casa da narradora que, ao sentir o risco pelo qual passa a esperança, vem em seu socorro: *Ela queria a esperança. Mas nós também queríamos e, oh! Deus, queríamos menos que comê-la. Meu filho foi buscar a vassoura (p.91).*

O desejo de preservar a esperança, a qualquer custo, se fortifica. A aspiração da narradora por uma fusão com o mundo fica exposta nessa cena em que a individualidade *abrindo-se em travessia agônica em direção ao mundo, transmuta-se em mundo ela também, momentaneamente anulando-se enquanto indivíduo* (Pontieri, 1999:151). Porém, mais adiante, entre hesitação e aturdimento, afirma: *Eu disse fracamente, confusa, sem saber se chegara infelizmente* ***a hora certa de perder a esperança*** *(p.91).*

Os versos de Emily Dickinson apontam para o fato de que a esperança só se sentirá atemorizada diante de uma terrível tormenta. Seria a aranha devoradora a última e terrível tormenta, seria esta **a hora certa de perder a esperança**?

And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm

"A" aranha presa no jogo de ambigüidades parece cair prisioneira da trama:

— *Preciso falar com a empregada para limpar atrás dos quadros – falei,* ***sentindo a frase deslocada*** *e ouvindo* ***o certo cansaço que havia na minha voz*** (p.91).As expressões grifadas atuam como uma mensagem cifrada, em que a aranha e a angústia se equiparam.

A angústia consome o homem por dentro e por fora, emaranhando-o em sua teia invisível, vindo à luz do dia apenas para devorá-lo. Talvez, seja esta revelação que leva a narradora ao cansaço, que é superado pelo tom cômico e transgressor: *Você faz o favor de facilitar o caminho da esperança (p.92).* Frase que poderíamos ler como: Deixe que o homem passe com o coração cheio de esperança (mesmo vã) sem ter de enfrentar a angústia devoradora.

A tensão chega ao seu ponto máximo quando a mãe assume um tom mais brando e o sofrimento, o cansaço e a angústia são atenuados pela transgressão do riso, trazendo tudo de volta ao normal; o filho mata a aranha, o outro filho, que está vendo televisão, ri do trocadilho que o irmão faz com as duas esperanças e a narradora, como nas morais extraídas das fábulas, conclui: *Não havia dúvida: a esperança pousara em casa, alma e corpo (92).*

Recorda que uma minúscula esperança, certa vez, pousou e ficou em seu braço como uma flor que lá nascera. Diante de sua leveza nada sentiu, só a percebeu

visualmente. E encerra o conto: *Depois não me lembro mais o que aconteceu. E acho que não aconteceu nada (p.92).*

Sant'Anna (1990) ressalta que o jogo/rito que envolve as personagens de Clarice Lispector surge como uma tentativa involuntária, que constitui o que a escritora chama de *processo*: *Esse jogo em Clarice não vem revestido de fanfarras e formas exteriores dinâmicas. Às vezes, o jogo paira sobre o "nada" e é o "nada" que se atinge no paroxismo do rito. O nada como a outra face do "tudo" completando a epifania e a visão das coisas (p.172).*

Através do rito de metamorfose dos significantes, o leitor é levado a tocar o visível e o invisível e a fixar o olhar do outro e confrontar-se com o Outro, enxergando a si e ao homem diante de sua existência dramática, dominada pela pulsão de morte, situada nos pólos mantenedores dessa economia da morte, conforme ressalta Derrida (1995).

Nessa busca de caminhos, a trajetória de Clarice Lispector e a de Emily Dickinson se cruzam, expondo as sensações e angústias diante do encontro com a natureza, com a morte, com o que é humano e com o outro, este estranho revelador da alteridade. Imaginamo-las como atores declamando estes versos de Emily Dickinson:

Men die – externally –
It is a truth – of Blood –
But we – are dying in Drama –
And Drama – is never dead[10] -

Nesse sentido, as escritoras superam a angústia da morte, garantindo para si a imortalidade por meio da escritura. Mas, por outro lado, reconhecendo a morte como desígnio certo e o drama de viver como pulsão contínua, escolhem a esperança como tema reconfortante e, ao fazê-lo, revelam que *a subjetividade(...), paradoxalmente se assenta na necessidade de romper os limites de um certo tipo de experiência da subjetividade para recriá-la numa forma diversa, em que o outro não é entidade independente, justaposta a um eu, mas o outro lado de um eu em devir*[11] *(p.151).*

Sucintamente, o diálogo à distância demonstra que Emily Dickinson trata o tema Esperança de forma condensada, mas precisa. Não deixa de retratar a esperança como o Outro intrinsecamente tocando as angústias do encontro, demonstrando que não perde de vista o drama da alma humana. Clarice Lispector o expande, buscando seus ecos ancestrais e, transpondo-o para a luz do dia, o transfere para a sala de uma dona-de-casa do século XX, mantendo o ciclo vital e os laços da subjetividade, implicada na interseção entre o sujeito e o Outro.

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NOTAS

1 [Assim, Emily Dickinson nasceu em uma comunidade em que a devoção evangélica permeava cada ação. Embora sentisse repulsa pelos dogmas do calvinismo e tenha levado a vida rebelando-se contra eles, jamais escapou à sua ênfase escatológica. Preocupada continuamente com a morte, a ressurreição, a imortalidade, e o julgamento final, nunca cessou de examinar a realidade inegável de Deus (...). Embora a influência calvinista sobre sua vida tenha sido fundamental, a herança e a tradição cultural da Nova Inglaterra exerceram a mesma importância].

2 Apud Lubbers Claus, 1968.

3 [A união da natureza humana com a natureza inanimada é bem próxima em certos poemas; e jamais vimos os laços que unem o invisível e o intangível tão proximamente tocados como neles].

4 Apud Blake, Caesar R., 1968.

5 [Ela escreve sobre a abelha, o triste-pia, a aranha, o morcego, a tempestade, a lua, o pôr do sol e sobre o pregador com seu despropositado sermão sobre "tolerância". Neste papel de comentarista das coisas visíveis e invisíveis, ela expressa conceitos a respeito de Deus, do amor humano, da morte e também a respeito das sereias e das minhocas].

6 Cf. Bradley, Sculley et al, 1974.

7 [...descobriu, como fizeram mais tarde os poetas do século XX, a utilidade da elipse e da ambigüidade verbal (...). Ela tinha uma consciência penetrante ou experiência sensorial e conhecimentos profundos da realidade psicológica, expresssando, nessas áreas, com toda força e franqueza, as descobertas mais radicais].

8 In *Emily Dickinson. A collection of critical essays p.54.*[A palavra morre/ quando é dita,/ Dizem alguns./Eu digo que ela só/ começa a viver nesse dia].

9 ["Esp'rança", cousa de penas,/Que nos vem pousar na alma,/Canta canção sem palavras/E não pára, nem se acalma;/ Soa doce, em vendaval, E há de ser árdua a tormenta/ Que perturbe essa avezita/ Que tão cálido acalenta./ Já a ouvi em gélidas plagas/ E nos mares mais sem fim; Mas nunca, em horas extrema, Exigiu-me um grão, de mim]. In *Emily Dickinson – Uma centena de Poemas*. Tradução, introdução e notas de Aíla de Oliveira Gomes. São Paulo: T.A: Queiroz, Edusp, 1984, pp.54-55.

10 In. *Emily Dickinson. Looking to Canaan*, p.68. [Os homens morrem – externamente –/ É uma verdade – e sangüínea -/ Mas nós – estamos morrendo em drama -/ E o drama – jamais morre./]

11 [como afirma Pontieri (1999), analisando o trabalho de Clarice Lispector].

REQUESTING AND PROVIDING INFORMATION THROUGH E-MAIL IN BUSINESS SETTINGS

MAXIMINA M. FREIRE
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo

Abstract: In investigating the electronic correspondence enacted by and conveyed in English between three different companies in Brazil and their related offices abroad, *requests* and *responses* emerged as prevailing genres. According to the e-mail messages collected, *requests* usually conformed to an expression of need which, grounded on their requestive nature, engendered resulting answers. *Responses*, in their turn, in spite of involving the core communicative purpose of providing the receiver(s) with a reply, were undertaken through distinct levels of involvement in the situation, and distinct ways of expressing the target information. The initially apparent convergence of purposes was, in fact, significantly modified by different realizations at the formal and content levels. The evidence of these distinctive features put forward the recognition of *responses* and of *for-your-information-reports* (henceforth *FYI-reports*) as unique genres.
The characterization of the three genres mentioned above and their intriguing relationship constitutes, therefore, the ultimate purpose of this article. More objectively, it aims at (1) reporting and discussing the criteria that allowed me to identify *requests*, *responses*, and *FYI-reports* as distinct genres; (2) asserting that, by taking their embedded communicative goals and their linguistic realization into account, *requests* and *responses*, as well as *requests* and *FYI-reports* represent pairs of interconnected genres, which follow upon another and interact with each other in specific ways; and (3) claiming that, by paraphrasing Schegloff & Sacks (1973), but by emphasizing the communication tool used, these genres constitute *electronic adjacency pairs* which resemble conversational question-answer sequences.

Key words: written genres, e-mail, electronic adjacency pairs, business correspondence, CMC, requests.

Introduction

In investigating the electronic correspondence enacted by and conveyed in English between three different companies in Brazil and their related offices abroad, *requests* and *responses* emerged as prevailing genres. According to the e-mail messages collected, *requests* usually conformed to an expression of need which, grounded on their requestive nature, engendered resulting answers. *Responses*, in their turn, in spite of involving the core communicative purpose of providing the receiver(s) with a reply, were undertaken through distinct levels of involvement in the situation, and distinct ways of expressing the target information. The initially apparent convergence of purposes was, in fact, significantly modified by different realizations at the formal and content levels. The evidence of these distinctive features put forward the recognition of *responses* and of *for-your-information-reports* (henceforth *FYI-reports*) as unique genres.

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Understanding e-mail correspondence in business settings

The study focused on in this article is part of a more comprehensive research (Freire,1998) which involved the description and interpretation of 152 e-mail messages, selected by five Brazilian professionals from three distinct corporations in São Paulo (Brazil), and brought to discussion as typical samples of the electronic correspondence written in English manipulated between their companies and their related offices abroad. By using these messages both as object of inquiry and as input for reflection, the participants addressed the types of texts and communicative purposes usually conveyed through the electronic medium, and reflected upon the social actions that recurrently associated professionals together in online interactions.

I started my investigation into the contents of those e-mail messages by attempting to distinguish the nature of the professional activities from which they had emerged, and by conceiving of their situated goals and linguistic realization. This orientation led me to carefully review the electronic correspondence collected, as well as the transcripts of the reflective conversations I had with each professional involved in this study.

Throughout our meetings, I detected a mixture of difficulty and hesitation when the issue of text identification was addressed. The participants' immediate

reaction to my inquiries on this subject was the one of providing me with a thorough contextual description of each message, including the specifics of each particular negotiation, the goal(s) of the correspondence exchanged through e-mail, and its results. The misinterpretation of my questions on *genre*[1] categorization indicates that this topic is not definitely included among the professionals' concerns about electronic communication, as one of them promptly summarizes at one point of our conversation:

> *No! No...no! It's a... it's just a message! You really want the information to reach the other person. If you labeled it "form", "message", or... no! The relevant point is: that person needs that piece of information!*

In reflecting upon this response, I assume that, from the practitioners' viewpoint, the failure to recognize genres explicitly is not a matter of resistance to the concept; it is much more likely a matter of relevance. Considering the nature, scope and demands of their job activities, their attention tends to be primarily focused on the information itself and on the urgency to convey it. In this regard, simpler denominations such as "*e-mail*" or "*message*" tend to fulfill their text identification needs entirely. Under such circumstances, genre manipulation seems to be undertaken on an intuitive, tacit basis which is acquired through practice. Nevertheless, even without manifesting an articulate perception of genres, these practitioners could distinguish circulars, and especially reports, from the variety of genres included in the e-mail samples discussed throughout our conversations[2]. To them, therefore, those messages could be grouped into reports, circulars, and a set of other genres that they could neither identify nor label promptly.

Interestingly enough, this broad and vague classification was pretty similar to the one I came up with when I first reviewed the samples collected some time after interviewing the participants. My attempt to interpret this intriguing difficulty in identifying certain genres made me observe that the messages classified as reports and circulars presented self-contained texts generated in very specific work-related situations. In this case, the connection between the underlying purpose and its linguistic realization was perhaps more evident and, due to that, texts of these kinds could be more easily recognized. Conversely, the remaining set of (temporarily nameless) genres regarded routinized electronic exchanges and *computerized interactive sequences*[3] (Freire,1995:2), that conformed to a more dynamic interactive process through which information was shared, queries were discussed, and negotiations were implemented and/or developed. By displaying process-like features, these genres, therefore, seemed to be somehow subtler and more difficult to distinguish.

These considerations led me back to message contents and compelled me to investigate them with a more precise genre-oriented reading predisposition. This perception was in fact stimulated by a comment presented by Bruner & Weisser (1991) through which they state that "*genres exist not only as modes of writing or speaking but as modes of reading and listening*" (p.131). Their statement suggested

to me that understanding any genre meant being primarily attuned to it. Furthermore, their claim reinforced the idea that capturing the meaning of a genre required being focused on the goal that had generated it, on the text through which it was conveyed and, simultaneously, on the situational and socio-cultural context from where it emerged. At least, it seemed to be the case of my investigation for, as Paré & Smart (1994) state, workplace genres are extremely complex interactions which even though presenting similarities with one another, "*no two occurences of the genre are ever identical, and genres are in a constant state of evolution*" (p.153). For this reason, in order to read a certain genre and to envision "*its tactics, its strategies, and its ceremonial place*" (Freadman,1994:63), I realized that I needed to conduct my efforts to two directions: firstly, to counteract my lack of *background knowledge* (Berkenkotter & Huckin,1995:14) of the business community, by relying on and learning from the participants' descriptions, comments and reflections; secondly, to integrate text and context more accurately, and keep myself attuned to the relationship that might emerge from such an association.

Based on these reflections, I reviewed the messages collected and perceived that, by regarding the flow of correspondence conveyed within each corporation, they might be identified as *genres of internal written communication*[4]. However, this preliminary general characterization was quite comprehensive and clearly included a number of genres which needed to be differentiated from one another. To recognize them and sense their specifics, I reexamined each e-mail sample from the perspective of its possible *structural patterns* (Paré & Smart,1994:147), its potential *rhetorical moves* (Swales,1990:137-166; Bhatia,1993:45-75), and its probable *contextual configuration* (Halliday & Hasan,1985/89:55-65). Instead of counting on a pre-established framework of analysis or on a specific checklist of categories, I performed, therefore, a routine of analysis which allowed me to consider the samples collected in a systematic way but, at the same time, from a preliminary perspective which entitle them to reveal their own inherent qualities. By seeking for patterns rather than imposing them on data, and by considering that purpose and/or form constitute the basis on which genre recognition is built up (Orlikowski & Yates,1994:544), I approached the electronic correspondence provided by the participants by speculating on potential resemblances of purpose and on possible regularities of form. This procedure led me to group the messages in accordance with an emerging correlation between text and context, and not simply in terms of their structural organization. In order to accomplish this intent, the professionals' voices and their insights were taken into account for, as Swales (1992) remarks, "*we need more socio-cognitive input than the text itself provides*" (p.8). Hence, their experiences and perceptions constituted relevant sources of insight which, associated with the analytic procedure adopted, enabled me to recognize the genres I was dealing with, perceive their specific features, and explore how the community achieves its rhetorical needs through the genres enacted.

An investigation towards this direction not only helped me reflect upon the general components of the message contents and their sequence, but also induced me to unpack the relations between goal, text and context and, then, refine the tentative categorization initially undertaken. As a result, I realized that, considering the samples

collected, the preliminary designation *circular* was a generalization for *corporate circular* and *bulletin*. Similarly, *report* was an abstraction from *periodic report*, *occasional report* and *FYI-report*. Furthermore, I could also recognize that, except for the few samples which abridged characteristics of more than one genre, the remaining set of messages comprised six distinct genre types: *request*, *response*, *cover message*, *memo*, *acknowledgement* and *discussion*.

Genres may unveil themselves, their inter-relationships, and the corporate community

According to the professionals involved in this research, the electronic messages they have been exposed to at work constituted a form of internal correspondence focused on the content to be delivered either to the whole community or to specific recipients. This being the case, e-mail messages could describe various communicative movements within the company. Firstly, they could be directed downward and constituted a channel for updating procedures, bringing about personnel changes, conveying general instructions and information, reinforcing internal rules and policies, and (on a more restricted scale) distributing departmental announcements. In describing such a downward movement of communication, e-mail messages could be identified as *corporate circulars* and *bulletins*. Secondly, e-mail messages could be directed upward and become an instrument to report individual or departmental regular activities, and descriptions of sporadic events or unexpected situations. Such messages could be identified as *periodic* and *occasional reports*. Finally, electronic correspondence could circulate across the company hierarchy, conveying all sorts of information, requests and/or advice. In this case, the e-mail text constituted a tool through which professional meaning was negotiated and specialized knowledge was shared or developed. Correspondence directed upward included various sorts of documents that, for instance, could be identified as *requests*, *responses*, FYI-*reports*, *cover messages*, *memos*, *discussions*, *acknowledgements*, and an exclusive type of message, depicted by the overlap of various communicative purposes.

The communicative movements presented above illustrate the various kinds of *social actions* (Miller,1994) and *communicative purposes* (Swales,1990) that associated co-workers together through e-mail and that gave rise to the *genres of internal written communication* enacted and tacitly manipulated through the electronic medium by their corporate communities.

In drawing special attention to the genres conveyed through computers within the companies focused on in this study, I realized that they not only performed single roles, but also interact with one another in specific ways. Firstly, some genres (i.e., corporate circular, bulletin, periodic report, occasional report, acknowledgement, discussion, cover message, and memo) displayed independent features that, by conveying only one side of a multiple person interaction, characterized them as parts of a *set* (Devit,1991:340), or *repertoire* (Orlikowski & Yates,1994:544) established

by a community. Secondly, other genres (i.e., request and responses, or requests and FYI-reports) established a unique interdependence among themselves that associated them together in a *system* (Bazerman,1994:97-99) which seemed to include the participation of both sides of an interactive chain, and unveiled a recurrent pattern of initiation and response. Thirdly, I also found messages which performed overlapping, blurred functions and that, by combining different genres in a single message, served various purposes at the same time. These roles performed by genres indicated, therefore, what they could show about themselves and about their relationships.

In addition to that, I perceived that genres could also reveal aspects of the community that enacted and manipulated them. In this regard, the predominance of *discussions* and *requests* in the first corporation involved in this study indicated its focus on an intensive interactive process that characterized its teamwork style. By contrast, the second company based its CMC[5] practices on a systematic relationship established by *requests* and *responses*, and by *requests* and *FYI-reports* that characterized the mutual consultation network from which co-workers could get technical support and/or information to assist their customers. The third corporation displayed a variety of genres which did not unveil any particular organizational pattern. However, the relative importance given to *bulletins* and *corporate circulars* could put forward a unique interest in disseminating instructions, procedures and policy statements, which regarded its intention to reinforce aspects of the company internal culture.

Considering the scope of this article and the goals it aims at reaching, I will not characterize or expand considerations about all genre types used as forms of written communication within the corporations studied. My discussion will be now focused on the three target genres — requests, FYI-reports, and responses — and on their intriguing relationships.

Requests: the prevailing genre of internal written communication

Considering the quantity of e-mail messages collected, as well as the variety of genres to which they correspond, requests emerge as the predominant written form of electronic communication conveyed within the companies investigated[6]. Broadly speaking, a request constitutes "*an expression of need*" (Yli-Jokipii,1994:60) which requires its respondent(s) to provide information about typical work-related procedures; about project implementation, development and/or support; and about delays in performing certain activities or responding to previous requests. By comprising a requestive meaning and suggesting a reply expectation, this genre establishes, therefore, an interactive relationship with FYI-reports and responses, whose essence conforms to an "*asking and giving information*" movement or to "*action-reaction*" — as explained by one of the participants in this research.

According to Yli-Jokipii (1994) — who investigated samples of real-life and textbook requests collected in the United States, Britain, and Finland — each request has a "*core*" which may be conveyed alone or, where appropriate, preceded or followed by pre- or post-request "*expansions*" (p.32,78). As she explains (op.cit., 1994:78), these expansions may comprise "*discoursal types*" such as "*grounding*" (which gives reasons for the request), "*conditioning*" (which attaches restrictions to the proposition expressed), and "*temporal*" (which contains time references).

Broadly speaking, the descriptive components or labels[7] presented by Yli-Jokipii — core and expansions — also occurred in the requests I collected. By reviewing my sample in the light of her findings, I noticed that the request content was based on a core segment which embodied the essential meaning of the message. In my opinion, the recurrence of this element and of its illocutionary force establishes a regularity that, by making the purpose of the communication explicit and by revealing the nature of the social action that connects the interactants, distinguishes requests as a genre.

Nevertheless, if the utilization of the core constituted a compulsory attribute of requests as a genre of internal written communication, its presentation was to some extent flexible to comply with the specifics of the situations addressed, as well as with the sender's writing style. By reflecting upon the samples collected, I detected that the core element could uncover three potential configurations. Firstly, it was displayed as the only component of the message content, optionally followed by an expansion that expressed gratitude. The five excerpts[8] below illustrate such a presentation:

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATIONS
Please let me know if you need anything more.
What is the situation?
Has anyone contacted this user? Please let me know asap.
Any news about my message below?? Thanks for any help.

Secondly, the core was combined with one of its possible expansions which either contextualized or reinforced the reason for solicitation. This configuration is demonstrated by the excerpts below whose requestive meaning I have intentionally highlighted:

> Regarding previous messages sent to you (with some PC-files attached) **I'd like to know if our historical data structure served to your expectation in [country]. Did you have any difficulty in receiving the files? Was it easy to understand the formulas in the spreadsheets? Is there any other thing I can do for you to help?**
> As agreed **pls give that money in real to [name]** and I deduct that from the expense payments that I have here waiting for him when he gets here.

Thirdly, the core was clearly identified as a distinctive structural element that, if compared to the second configuration indicated above, appeared to be relatively independent from the expansions possibly attached to it. In both cases however, such expansions, by surrounding the requestive segment, helped it reinforce its meaning. The extracts below present the core element of some e-mail requests, and illustrate this third kind of configuration which corresponds to the format most commonly adopted by the companies focused on in this study:

Would you please let me know what travel agency/agencies you are currently using in [*country*]? And, if there is any information that your organization would find helpful, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Could you please reserve some time to talk about our debts as well as to review the payments.
Please tell me if is it OK for you?

Don't they have to wait for their payment or letter of credit before we give the system to their forwarder?

Can someone PLEASE respond to this request.

It would be very useful if you could send us some information about the [*company*] solution sold to [*customer*] and, if possible, the [*company*] experience in this market.

In addition to the core structural component presented above and its possible configurations, I also noticed that, as suggested by Yli-Jokipii (1994), other elements could be included in the message content as pre- or post-request expansions, thus serving the purpose of explicitly introducing or concluding the meaning expressed by the target request.

As for pre-request expansions, I found that the core requestive meaning of the messages collected could be basically prefaced by three structural components which I defined as introduction, grounding, and contextualization. In my opinion, the purpose of including such elements is primarily one of preparing the receiver for the request to be conveyed, by mentioning or acknowledging previous communication regarding the same topic, or by providing introductory details about who is performing the request, as well as about the reasons that motivate and the context that situates the purpose of a specific solicitation. Such a perception is illustrated by the excerpts below:

INTRODUCTION
Firstly, thank you very much for your help in the BT installation for [*customer*].
Let me introduce myself: My name is [name] and I am Account Manager in [*company*] - [*company*] distributor in Brasil.

GROUNDING
We have in [*country*] 14.8 and 15.8 meetings concerning [*company*] operations in South-America. Please send me the market report, sales estimation and budget for 1996 by 12.8.
As you know I am leaving [*company*] and I still do not have a positioning about credit of this commission to FI account.
Before we fly all the way to [*city*] to find out we have a modem problem we should have the following information...

CONTEXTUALIZATION
One of our e-mail clients in [*country*] have an agent in [*city*] called [*agent's name*] and they are facing some difficulties in connecting [*company*] using AS400 Mailbox package.
[*name*] of [*company-city*] called me this morning and told me that a person in [*company-country*] (*name*) tried to cantact you in order to get your assistance in configure the AS400 Mailbox to access [*company*].

This user is using N*Connect v3.4. Apparently, they haven't had any luck connecting to the [*company*] network dialing the [*city*] #s, they are now dialing long distance to [*company-city*], which costs a lot of money.

On the other hand, my search for post-request expansions, led me to contrast the samples collected and to perceive that, through the inclusion of some complementary elements, the sender could provide additional information (displayed either in the message content area or in a postscript), emphasize the receiver's participation in solving the situation addressed, motivate further communication, inform the attachment of files related to the topic, or express his/her expectation for a reply[9]. The excerpts below present instances of such post-request expansions:

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Please consider also that [*customer*] will inform us their decision during this week.
PS.: [*name*] told me that you will call [*name*] to explain our intention with [*customer*]. Please, inform him that first we want to give all information to [*customer*] and only after everything is OK we intend to contact him to provide the contract and installation.

EMPHASIZING THE RECEIVER'S PARTICIPATION
Your kindly assistance will be welcome.
All information you can get with [*name*] will be significant help.

MOTIVATING FURTHER COMMUNICATION
If you need any further information please contact me.
Please let me know if you need any additional information.

INFORMING ATTACHMENTS
Attached is the MCATS concerning this implementation.

EXPRESSING REPLY EXPECTATION
Looking forward to getting an answer asap.
We would appreciate if you could send us a [*message*] as soon as you get news about [*customer*].

Considering the identification of expansions, I perceived that, apart from the ones described above, two others were also possibly conveyed in requestive messages: grounding and expressing gratitude. These structural components, however, had relative freedom of movement in that they were able to either precede the core (as illustrated previously) or to follow it. Regardless of its collocation, grounding always referred to reasons that supported the target request. Nevertheless, when performing a post-request position, it could also address time constraints. My perception of grounding as a post-request expansion is illustrated by the extracts that follow:

> We need to get a proof of payment to [*country*] before we can ship the system. We will be ready to ship on Thursday of this week.
>
> I am travelling on Sunday to [*country*] and would like to have the original with me. I would show that in the head office meeting next week.
>
> [*name*], as you already know, we need to do our best in order to have it done ASAP, once statement has not been consolidated for several months.

On the other hand, expressions of gratitude could be emphatically displayed at the beginning, or at the end, or in both positions in the same message, as shown by the five excerpts that follow:

> Many thanks in advance for your help.
> Thanks a lot for your assistance.
> THANKS ALOT!!
> Thanks for your message. (...) Thanks for your help!
> Thanks for your [*e-mail*]. (...) Many thanks. Thanks again and kind regards.

By reflecting upon the inclusion of expressions of gratitude, I realized that, although used by other professionals included in the sample, such a component was particularly evident in one of the participant's requestive writings, especially in her "*old messages*"; that is, in the ones she had composed one year before our conversations. In her specific case, gratitude was not only conveyed as a request introduction but, simultaneously, it could also be a post-request element, incorporated in the content, in the closing salutation or in the postscript. The excerpts below illustrate this feature of the participant's writing style:

> (*introduction*) Thanks for your [*e-mail*].
> (*content*) Many thanks.
> (*closing salutation*) Thanks again and kind regards.
>
> (*introduction*) Thanks for your [e-mail].
> (*content*) Thanks again for your help.
> (*postscript*) Thanks for your understanding and help.

> (*introduction*) Firstly, thank you very much for your help in the BT installation for [*customer*]
> (*content*) Thanks a lot for your attention in this matter.
>
> (*content*) Thanks beforehand for your help. (...) Thanks!!!

From the participant's perspective, this characteristic of hers expressed a conscious intention of not being "*imperative*", and of acknowledging, even in advance, any effort done by the recipient(s) in order to help her solve a specific work-related doubt or difficulty. Nevertheless, I understand it as a token of "*mitigation*"[10] through which, by recognizing the relevance of the respondents' participation and assistance, she attenuated the requestive force embedded in the core of her message content.

Such a perception led me to re-examine the other samples collected and to speculate on possible ways of stressing and/or diminishing their requestive force. The investigation revealed that requests were realized by imperative, declarative, interrogative and modal-initial clauses (Yli-Jokipii,1994:151-187), and that these possible realizations might or might not include features of modality (Halliday,1985; Hodge & Kress,1988; Fairclough,1992).

Considering the samples collected, I noticed that solicitations realized through the imperative form were always modalized by the utilization of the courtesy subjunct *please* which mitigated the requestive force expressed by the core element. The extracts that follow illustrate my interpretation:

> ... please do not hesitate to let us know.
>
> Please give them the opportunity and the attention that the subject deserves.
>
> Please share your findings with [*name*], [*function*] for the South America region.
>
> Please tell me if is it OK for you?
>
> Please, if it is possible for you, send us this material via DHL next Monday in order to us having enough time to include the information in our presentation.

Regarding the declarative clause realization, I perceived that the requestive force was predominantly attenuated by the utilization of the following modal patterns: "*I/we would like*", "*I/we would like to know if*", and "*I/we would appreciate if you could*", as shown by the extracts below:

> ... we would like to ask you for your feedback.
>
> I'd like to know if our historical data structure served to your expectations in [*country*].

... we would appreciate if you could help them with the installation and learning how to use the software.

In my opinion, the declarative realization illustrated above indicates that the senders politely express their solicitations by positioning themselves at the lower level of an asymmetric relationship which makes it explicit that the receivers have some information they need, or can do something to help them in a specific work-related situation. My interpretation of this strategy is supported by two particular instances presented below, and by their senders' reflections upon them:

(1) It would be very useful if you could send us some information about the [*company*] solution sold to [*customer*] and, if possible, the [*company*] experience in this market.

(2) I'm would like to ask your kindly assistance in helping [*name*] to configure the software.

In the first excerpt above (*1*), the sender intensifies her request by stressing the impact of obtaining the information solicited ("It would be *very useful*"), by applealing to the receiver's ability to provide it ("you *could* send us some information"), and by asserting the possibility of having her request accepted or denied ("*if* you could send... *if possible*"). In this case, the sender explains her attitude by referring to the contextual features of that particular interaction through which she asked a co-worker for details regarding one of his customers. With regard to the delicacy of this professional situation and the process of message composition, she comments:

Sender: In this context, I attempted to put myself in the receiver's shoes... as if "I" were receiving the message. Besides that, in most cases, account managers are extremely jealous of their customers! Right? They [*the customers*] belong to them [*the managers*]; they are their life! I mean...
Researcher: They [*the customers*] are not anyone else's business!
Sender: ... anyone else's business. So, you receive a message like that: "*I want information about that customer.*" Right? "*You're responsible for him... you're responsible for that customer and I want information about him!*" Ah, OK! I mean, I don't know who that person is and why s/he is asking me! And... even in the sense of selecting which piece of information I can offer about that customer... if, in fact, I don't know why this co-worker wants these data. Therefore, it's an inversion, right? I wrote the message as if I were receiving it.

Considering the second extract presented (*2*), the sender also refers to contextual features to explain the reason why he incorporates the courtesy subjunct *kindly* in his request. Regardless of the grammar mistakes he made, the idea that underlies the message production and that guides his lexical choice is worth mentioning:

Sender: So, you can see that I used... you see... "*kindly assistance*". I've reinforced it [*the meaning*]. I attempted to convey the intention of not... not directly asking him to help me, but I... the intention was the one of saying that he was doing a "big favor" in helping me with that customer. (...) I remember that I was worried about finding a word that could synthesize such a feeling. (...) And it had to be this way... because the customer knew that they were not allowed to use this product, right? And, at the same time, I wanted them to start working soon, right? I mean, I have my own interests involved. But he [*the co-worker*] could perfectly say: "*No, I'm not going to do that for you!*" Right? So, this was the situation.

The comments made by the senders above reveal that, at least in these two situations upon which they reflected, there was a conscious intention of theirs to diminish the requestive force of their messages in order to adjust themselves to the contextual conditions that motivated those specific interactions. Apart from these occurrences, neither one of the participants mentioned any explicit intent of this kind. For this reason, I assume that modalization devices tend to be spontaneously acquired through continuous involvement in e-mail practices, and tacitly reproduced in similar requestive activities.

Regarding the declarative realization, I noticed that, as opposed to the possibilities described so far, the requestive force of a message could be conveyed as a consequence of the contextualization that preceded the solicitation itself, indicated by the discourse marker *so* (Fraser,1990:394) — without including, in this case, any features of modalization. Such a format, although less frequently adopted, can be illustrated by the two occurrences that follow:

So I'm asking your assistance to give me the way to do it.

So, we need your help to contact [*name*] (phone # 000 000-0000) and give her the necessary information.

My investigation into the realizations of requests also indicated that, in addition to being conveyed through imperative and declarative clauses, they could be performed through the utilization of two basic varieties of interrogative forms. Firstly, the interrogative request was expressed by *yes/no questions* which, due to the nature of the response demanded, constituted a "*closed category*", identified as "*polar interrogative*" (Yli-Jokipii,1994:160). The excerpts below illustrate such a possibility:

Did you have any difficulty in receiving the files? Was it easy to understand the formulas in the spreadsheets? Is there any other thing I can do for you to help?
Do you think a blade with teflon will avoid it or even so we are going to have a problem.

Have you received the originals?

Are they still using U#/address? (...) Will it be necessary to perform the installation again?

Secondly, interrogative requests were conveyed by *wh-questions* which, as opposed to the preceding variety, constituted an "*open-ended category*", identified as "*open interrogative*" (Yli-Jokipii, 1994:160), as shown by the extracts that follow:

What is the name of the company that represents [*company*] products in [*country*]?

If the access will be done thru PPDN what are the costs involved?

How is the documentation?

What was discussed between Posnet and [*company-country*] about this installation?

By reflecting upon these interrogative requests, I perceived that, regardless of their category, they did not suggest any kind of asymmetric relationship between interactants — as evidenced, for instance, by some requests performed through the declarative mode. In my opinion, conveying requests through questions characterizes a conversational movement which is recurrently used among co-workers in electronic business communication, and through which mutual co-operation and partnership may be established and/or maintained.

Nevertheless, I also realized that interrogative requests portrayed three distinct rhetorical functions, as suggested by Yli-Jokipii (1994:162). Firstly, they played an "*information seeking*" function which might be illustrated by the polar and open interrogative instances previously discussed. Secondly, they performed a "*persuasive*" role through which the sender, by inquiring about a specific procedure, induced the receiver to reflect upon adopting an alternative approach. This function may be illustrated by the questions that follow:

Also, why is $00,000 credit on returned old system reduce only the import part? Why does it not effect the domestic part at all, same way than 5% discount?

Don't we have to wait for their payment or letter of credit before we give the system to their forwarded?

Thirdly, the interrogative request realized a "*critical*" rhetorical function through which the sender expressed his/her criticism concerning the delay in performing a specific work-related activity, as shown by the excerpts below:

Has anyone contacted this user?

[*Is there*] Any news about my [*e-mail*] below??

Can someone PLEASE respond to the request.

The last excerpt mentioned above leads me to discuss another variety of request realization which, broadly speaking, conforms to the interrogative format and, for this reason, shares similarities with the ones described so far. Nevertheless, its distinctive feature is primarily located in the thematic modal which, by conveying a unique type of emphasis, introduces another possibility of requestive expression: the modal-initial clause.

Considering the samples collected, the modal-initial realization constituted an effective approach to request presentation. In this case, the core meaning of the solicitation was modalized by "*would you please*" and "*can/could you please*", as illustrated by the instances that follow:

Would you please let me know what travel agency/agencies you are currently using in Brazil?
Would you please advise [*name*], who is going to replace me, about it ASAP?

Could you please reserve some time to talk about our debits as well as to review the payments.
Could you please help me with the question below.
Could you please inform the status of this implementation?
Can any of you help me?
Can you contact XxXxXx??

By reflecting upon the extracts above, my attention was immediately directed to the way senders expressed the requestive meaning of their messages. For instance, by conveying "*Would you please let me know...?*", "*Could you please reserve some time...*", or "*Can any of you help me?*", the core requestive meaning was in fact located in "*let me know*", "*reserve some time*", and "*help me*", respectively. The utilization of modals in an initial position, therefore, reduced the force of the solicitation which was then displayed indirectly, and in a polite way. On the one hand, the indirect presentation of questions was also corroborated by the inconsistency of punctuation, reflected by the arbitrary inclusion or omission of the interrogation mark. On the other hand, the predominance of past-tense modals — consistently followed by *please* as a "*requestive sticker*", used to assure that the utterance should be "*taken as a request*" (Yli-Jokipii, 1994:166-167) — also reinforced the intention of mitigating "*face threatening acts*" (Brown & Levinson, 1987:60) and, simultaneously, of stressing politeness (Palmer, 1987:119-120).

Furthermore, by using modal-initial requests, the senders revealed that they were focused on the receivers' *possibility* or *ability* (Coates, 1983:23-30) to attend to their solicitations. Similar emphasis on the receiver(s) could be attested by the substantial utilization of the second-person pronoun *you*. In my opinion, such a preference reveals that, by requesting information and/or guidance from receivers, as well as by manifesting their possibility and/or ability to help, senders explicitly attempt to "*involve*" (Chafe, 1982; Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987) them in the situation addressed.

Among the modal-initial instances that I found, only one sample displayed a sort of deviation from this pattern: "*Can we offer them any solution?*" Even in this case, the sender excluded neither the receiver nor him/herself from participating. Conversely, by using *we* (i.e, *you* and *I*), the sender suggested an association with the recipient in order to solve together the target situation. Considering such characteristics, I assume that requests are forms of receiver-oriented communication.

The examples discussed so far suggest that requests, due to the nature of their communicative purpose and of the social action that connects their participants, not only constitute a major genre of internal written communication, but may be the leading e-mail genre conveyed within the companies investigated. By utilizing them, senders may address various kinds of solicitations to different hierarchical levels within the organization and, then, involve receivers in the situations to be solved. By soliciting their co-workers' intervention as well as by expressing their reply expectation, senders establish an interactive chain with their interlocutors which gives requests a receiver-oriented characterization. In addition to that, the development of such an interactive chain also gives requests and their possible answers — FYI-reports and responses — a conversational quality that, in my opinion, reproduces the notion of "*adjacency pairs*" suggested by Schegloff & Sacks (1973). Nevertheless, before exploring this perception and arguing for the bases on which I have grounded this assumption, it is necessary to explore the remaining parts of the interactive sequence — *responses* and *FYI-reports* — and venture into these request-oriented genres.

For-your-information reports: on the other side of an interactive chain

My approach to reports was initially grounded on the ontological study undertaken by Yates (1989:77-89). From her perspective, a report is an upward form of communication through which information from lower levels within the corporation hierarchy is transmitted to the opposite upper level. Under such a characterization, a report constitutes a systematic management tool and, therefore, a mechanism on the basis of which decisions and future plans can be made. In her investigation, Yates distinguishes two types of reports: (a) *routine* or *periodic reports* which, by providing information on normal operations at regular intervals, can be used for monitoring efficiency, and (b) *special reports* which address more specific themes in response to particular requests.

Yates's comments had certainly enlightened my understanding of reports as genres of internal written communication which may describe an upward movement of information within the company. However, I detected that her categorization, although focused on the purpose and frequency of communication, was too generalized to account for the nuances of the documents I found in the corporations involved in my research. The samples collected indicated that objectivity in presenting facts, as well as manipulation of narrative and/or descriptive modes could be also associated with purpose and frequency and, together with them, impact on report production. Furthermore, I noted that the combination of such aspects would not only generate

more detailed differences between the two types presented, but also lead to the recognition of another report variety which Yates does not include in her description.

The e-mail messages provided by my participants suggested to me three types of grouping. Firstly, I recognized a quite objective kind of document that, by describing an upward communication movement, summarized the performance and achievements of a particular segment within the company at pre-established and regular periods of time. Considering such attributes, these documents could fit into the denomination *periodic reports*, in Yates's terms. Secondly, I identified another type of e-mail message which was not necessarily generated in response to a previous request, but was primarily motivated by the need to report sporadic events or unexpected situations. Samples of this kind could be faced as *occasional reports*. Thirdly, I found an informal and predominantly narrative variety of messages that, issued as a request response, could describe an upward communication movement, as well as being used to spread information out across the hierarchy. In this specific case, the main purpose was the one of providing the receiver with an informative reply, conveyed through the narration or description of facts, events and/or situated procedures. In my opinion, documents of this kind could be better identified as *for-your-information reports*.

In my opinion, the classification suggested above (periodic, occasional, and FYI-report) may more adequately represent the specifics of the e-mail samples collected from the workplaces focused on in my research. Nevertheless, although they all share the same report denomination, I can't perceive them as parts or subdivisions of the same genre due to their descriptive-narrative qualities. To me, the nature and purpose of the social action that generate these three particular kinds of messages, as well as their textual realization, place them in different planes and, consequently, allow me to depict them as distinct genres types.

From this perspective, I conceive of FYI-reports as a genre whose primary purpose is to provide the receiver(s) with an informative reply, generated as a reaction to a previous request. Such a reply, however, may be conveyed through the report of situated procedures and/or through the presentation of comments/suggestions regarding a particular work-related situation. Their informative quality and their inherent narrative or descriptive attributes constitute essential features that, in my opinion, justify the identification of FYI-reports as a particular genre of online communication.

Considering message contents, I perceived that even without presenting a strict sequence of recurrent components, some level of structural regularity could be identified in the FYI-report organization. Such a regularity was primarily established through the presentation of a fundamental element — the request reply — which summarized the communicative purpose of providing the receiver with an informative response to his/her inquiry. The extracts that follow illustrate this main structural component:

> For your request, I think it is a little difficult to inform you the details of "XxXx-ITECS" by e-mail[11]. So, I will send you some FAX which can let you and XxXxXx Brazil know "XxXx-ITECS".

[name] told me that you have a question about the installation charge to XxXxXx in [*city*].
I have just sent a message to [*name*] (He is [*country*] during this week) asking him to inform us how he want us to proceed with that.

[name], I tried to get in touch with the responsible person at [*company*]. However, we can only follow up on this tomorrow morning. There are open questions left.

By comparing the samples collected, I noticed that the request reply, as the core constituent of FYI-reports, was sometimes introduced by two specific structural elements. In this case, their primary function was the one of situating the receiver either through mentioning and acknowledging a previous communication, or through providing him/her with a brief contextualization of the issue to be addressed. Such components may be identified in the following examples:

ACKNOWLEDGING A PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION
[*name*], thanks for the note.
[*name*], this responds to your request...
As per your request, I'm preparing a report...
Thanks for your fax message!
For your request, I think...

CONTEXTUALIZING
Please take a look at the e-mail sent by [*name*]. We share the issues pointed by her and we are worry about this application.

We have been contacted [*name*] of [*company*] and Client Services in [*country*] identified a MODEM configuration problem.

In addition to these two introductory elements, I detected that sometimes the request reply was followed by some structural components whose function was more likely the one of concluding the e-mail message. In these cases, the message generator might emphasize specific issues, explain additional procedures, request or provide support, confirm continuous delivery of updated information, motivate further communication, solicit the recipient's reaction, express gratitude (which could introduce or conclude the message, as well as being used at the beginning and repeated at the end of the same text), or express some other particular wish (e.g., seasons' greetings). These optional components are illustrated by the extracts that I transcribe below:

EMPHASIZING SPECIFIC ISSUES
We need to assure that this application will have the necessary support in the future to keep the client. On the other hand, Brazilian Customs application needs to be conducted on a completely different way as from my point of view

it's a pure CARGO*LINK Air Application without any customization so I would like to emphasize that we need to decide how we will support this application in the future.

EXPLAINING ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES
By copying [*NAME*] and [*NAME*], I'm asking both to give you any missed info.

REQUESTING OR PROVIDING SUPPORT
I think we will need to discuss about [*customer*] and I'm sure you will help us to have a good solution in this case.
I will give you whatever support that I can in this matter.
Please, let me know if you have any suggestion.

ASSERTING THE CONTINUOUS DELIVERY OF UPDATED INFORMATION
I will keep you informed asap.
We will let you know as soon as possible.
So I will let you know when the details are decided.
As soon as I receive any information about this matter I will let you know.

MOTIVATING FURTHER COMMUNICATION
If you have any questions or further doubts about the internal control aspects of this issue, please let me know.

SOLICITING THE RECIPIENT'S REACTION
Please advise.
Looking forward to getting an answer asap.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE
Thanks for explaning the legal process of approving a borrowing within [*company*]. (...) Thanks for your help [*name*]...

EXPRESSING SOME SPECIFIC WISH
Thanks and a happy new year.

By reflecting upon the structural organization described so far, I assume that FYI-reports as a genre of internal written communication have two essential attributes. Firstly, they constitute working tools through which senders may identify work-related procedures (the ones of their own or those of their co-workers'), and/or comment on typical professional situations and their implications. From this perspective, FYI-reports emphasize *ideational* meanings (Halliday, 1978/92) which are predominantly focused on the information to be disseminated and on its situated content or processing. Such a perception may be illustrated by the following excerpts:

They told me last week it will be possible very soon, but is not clear how soon. This week I will be there to try to start the process without the official finance from FINEP and later on we only adjust the account.

[*customer*] had informed me that he is not going to [*country*] only because his taking his wife with him and he would not leave her by herself in [*country*] once she does not speak any English or German. He said (not very clearly) that if his wife could go with him, he would be able to make August 16 or 17 ([*our company*] paying tickets).

As per your request I'm preparing a report with the current status of Brazilian Customs opportunity in Brazil but I would like to advise that [*customer*]'s application is customized specifically for [*customer*] requirements and needs.

I think you could call XXXXXX until now. I also know you are not in [*country*]. While we do not get any info from XXXXXX, I am trying to know about Control Data Corporation. So, I've sent an e-mail to EDIHELP and I've also copied you. I hope it is OK.

Secondly, I understand that FYI-reports may also constitute a tool for the senders to convey their positioning regarding the situations addressed, and to reveal, through their discursive choices, who they are, what they think, how they feel and/or react. Under such a characterization, in addition to their inherent informative feature, the messages composed also disclose the senders' identities as writers. By mentioning "*writer identities*", I refer to the idea presented by Ivanïc (1994)[12], to whom writing not only involves transmission of information, but it can also potentially illustrate the writer's social identities. According to her, these identities — which may be constructed and captured through the texts produced — are partly attributes of the writer, of the reader, and of the socio-cultural context which support the emerging discourses. From this perspective therefore, FYI-reports also express *interpersonal* meanings (Halliday,1978/92) which are focused on the social relations that connect the participants in a specific work-related situation.

My perception of the sender's positioning was particularly evidenced by the samples collected from the second and third companies. In these workplaces — as opposed to the first one, in which FYI-reports were mainly situated at the ideational level — the message generator expressed him/herself by explicitly conveying his/her opinions, concerns, suggestions or advice, through the utilization of the first person singular. By identifying him/herself directly with the positioning expressed in the message, the sender clearly indicated "*involvement*" (Chafe,1982:45-49, Chafe & Danielewicz,1987:105-110) with him/herself and with the receiver(s), as well as with the specifics of the situation addressed. The extracts below (which I have intentionally highlighted) illustrate my interpretation:

For me, there is little internal control exposure relative to this since the 2 director limit is required here in South America and in fact, the borrowing function involves very few people unique to the Treasury area. **I see** no internal

control need to set a $$ limit for various levels within Treasury to authorize a borrowing for subsequent approval by 2 [*company*] directors.

I would like to remind you that I will be leaving [*company*] on September 30th, someone will be taking over the support of C*L/AIR in [*city*], however, **as far as I know** this person will only provide support on the generic C*L/AIR product and **I feel** that you should ensure that somehow you provide yourselves with the technical knowledge to support the C*L/AIR - OSI system within your own organization, this is a difficult time for the Value Added Applications group, their priority is to transition the generic applications from [*city*] to [*city*], it is incumbent on you to ensure that the progress which we have made so far on the development of this opportunity is not damaged. **I will give you whatever support that I can in this matter**.

[*name*], **I'm sorry** if this incident caused any problem to you. **Personally I suggest** you to contact the [*department*] responsible for Gulfstream and ask him if we can cross charge his CC. **I also need to advise** you that our Administrative staff did not receive any information about Gulfstream users in [*country*] from MCATS.

Nevertheless, in addition to individualizing his/her positioning and expressing his/her own voice through the choice of the first person singular pronoun, I perceived that the sender sometimes attenuated the personal tone by converting it into the first person plural pronoun, thus speaking through the institutional or corporate voice. To me, such a writing strategy implies a sense of "*inclusiveness*" (Muhlhausler & Harré,1990) which not only incorporates the receivers as parts of the same group, but also tends to widen the scope of any individual positioning to give it a departmental connotation and support. Such an interpretation may be evidenced by the excerpts transcribed below in which I have emphasized the contrast "*I-we*":

First, let me say **I am always careful** when someone identifies "[*branch*]" as the reason for conducting business in a particular manner. **I do not know the specifics**, but **if you would let me know** who in [*branch*] specifically is granting the sales people this authority, then **we can follow up** directly with that person. As a general rule, **my own belief** is that [*name*] can redelegate any authority that she has to her staff. We have taken the initiative to give [*name*] a specific level of authority and if it is her wish to redelegate that to her people then she is free to do so. **I do not know** specifically if this is consistent with others in the region, but **I believe** it is consistent with how we deal with authority limits in the states.
I agree with you that the authority limits are the basis of a good internal control procedure, **so we need to make sure** we do not have unlimited authority but as long as we are confident the limits are within the limits we set for [*name*], then **I am ok with this**.

Please take a look at the e-mail sent by [*name*]. **we share the same issues pointed out by her** and **we are worry about this application**. (...) **We need to assure** that this application will have the necessary support in the future to keep the client. On the other hand, Brazilian Customs application needs to be conducted on a completely different way as from my point of view it's a pure CARGO*LINK Air application without any customization **so I would like to emphasize** that **we need to decide** how we will support this application in the future.

The descriptions and considerations presented so far lead me to conceive of FYI-reports as a genre of internal written communication which, by describing a unique interactive trajectory across the company hierarchy, conveys a combination of ideational and interpersonal meanings. This genre, even without presenting a regular sequence of recurrent structural components, is primarily identified by the core purpose of providing the receiver(s) with an informative reply related to a particular request. When addressing the issue inquired, the sender may then keep him/herself exclusively attuned to the ideational quality of its response, or commit him/herself to its content, by expressing personal viewpoints or merging his/her own voice with the one of the corporation.

Under such a characterization, FYI-reports formed a pivotal interactive chain with the requests that generate them, establishing a relationship which is, in my opinion, similar to the one represented by conversational "*adjacency pairs*" (Schegloff & Sacks,1973). Nevertheless, in order to better understand such an interactive association and the whole communicative dimension that emerges from it, it is essential, at this point in my discussion, to venture into the other possibility of fulfilling requestive expectations — responses — and then start to explore the connections that interrelate requests, FYI-reports, and responses as three specific genres which share a systematic relationship.

Responses: objective replies to requests

Considering the research procedure previously adopted, my approach to responses also led me to investigate the message content area in order to search for potential features of structural standardization. By contrasting the samples collected, I could distinguish that, even without presenting a strict sequence of recurrent components, all messages of this kind were focused on a compulsory element — the target response — which expressed the intention of providing the receiver(s) with an informative reply, as requested. Such an element, by embodying the core purpose of communication and by uncovering the nature of the social action that involved the participants, constituted, therefore, the fundamental feature for genre identification. The excerpts below illustrate such a component:

Let's fix the meeting time when you are here.

OK with me.

I' you talking about the UFTU*PC system Multiple Copy Software Licence, it is available in [*application*].

Regarding the "demo" software, I don't have software available to send to clients unless someone is being billed for it. I can order it and have it billed to your office (cost center), or I can have it billed to the US client or you can send them a demo copy if you have an extra one available.

Throughout my investigation on the target response, I also observed that, in addition to the illustration above, such an element could be displayed under distinct configurations which, although evidenced in only two response samples, are worth mentioning. Firstly, it was explicitly and objectively stated as the only constituent of the message content, as shown by the following example:

[*co-worker's name*], [*company*] Paper Machinery representative in [*country*] is:
[*NAME*]
[*address*]
[*city - state - ZIP code*]
[*telephone number*]
[*fax number*]
Contact person: [*name*]
Best Regards
[*sender's name*]

Secondly, the target response element was inserted into the original request, as illustrated by the example below in which the reply (in upper-case letters) was intentionally highlighted by me. In this instance, it is also interesting to notice that the insertion affected not only the fundamental response component but also the closing salutation:

Dear [*professional 1*],
As you know I am leaving [*company*] and I still do not have a positioning about credit of this commission to FI account.
- THIS COMMISSION PAYMENT IS NOW OK.
Would you please advise [*name*], who is going to replace me, about it ASAP?
Thanks
BR
[*PROFESSIONAL 1*'s NAME]
[*professional 2's name*]

By reflecting upon such a procedure from a practical perspective, I understand that insertion may save time to response processing, as well as avoid the need to refer to or rephrase issues addressed in the original request. One of the participants in this study expands this perception of mine by pointing out that the context plays a

determinant role in the configuration choice, as illustrated by the following excerpt of our conversation:

> In fact, here, you... when you do it this way, when you insert the response, you insert it immediately after each subject. When you use the "reply" [command], you have to give references somehow... or you write just one text, mentioning many subjects. In this case, the reader has to... maybe... keep an eye to the message below to know what you're talking about. So, it depends on the subject, on the quantity of subjects, maybe. Then, you may choose one method or the other one.

From a communicative perspective, I hypothesize that insertion procedures constitute a way of simulating a dialogic interaction, by reproducing (in the written mode) the classic conversational turn-taking movement (Schegloff & Sacks,1973:293; Sacks & associates, 1974:700-701). The reading of inserted messages encourages me to regard them as a real piece of conversation, and to pursue the interlocutors' alternate and organized flow of *giving/taking the floor* (Gumperz,1982). Through such a procedure, I assume that the respondent may not only provide the receiver with the content of his/her reply, but also insert it in the original message exactly at the moment s/he would react or *take the floor* in an interaction conducted orally. Nevertheless, although inserted messages do seem to reproduce instances of conversation quite realistically, I agree with Wilkins (1991:61) when she states that the electronic turn-taking movement does not account for interruptions, negotiations or paralinguistic features that typically characterize face-to-face interactions. Regardless of these constraints, I believe that insertion presupposes an easier way of either conveying or capturing the meaning of consecutive electronic exchanges, by directly and immediately associating a response with its respective request.

Considering the qualities mentioned above, I was intrigued by the fact that insertion did not seem to be customarily adopted by professionals in business settings. In fact, according to the samples collected, this procedure was restricted to the electronic correspondence conveyed within the first company and, even in this work-related context, it was not performed on a regular basis. In discussing format selection issues with one of the professionals involved in this research, and in commenting on the fact that insertion procedures seemed to be avoided in her corporation, she provided me with a revealing insight:

> We do it this way [*without insertions*] for two reasons. Firstly, I believe that it is... because it's typical. And then, we end up... let's say... we end up doing it this way [*using the message to illustrate her comment*]: I end up sending the reply and the previous message together. I mean, I type my answer and keep the previous message just below it. Secondly, it's a feature of the software we use: when you select the reply command, the message received is automatically reproduced on the screen. Right? Then, you may delete it or insert your answer, your text in the original message.

According to her, therefore, the incorporation of previous messages constitutes a natural feature of the software adopted, resulting from the utilization of the *reply* command. By using such a device and having the preceding communication displayed on the screen, the professional often tends to immediately compose his/her text, placing it in an initial position. I understand that, on the one hand, inserting responses into the original e-mail message impacts positively on the receiver's reading and comprehension process, for the relationship between requestive and responsive topics is identified on the spot. Considering the response elaboration, on the other hand, I believe that insertions require the sender to spend extra time in reading the original text again in order to position his/her response(s). Under such circumstances, producing the reply message as a separate text may perhaps be a way of speeding up the response processing. Anyhow, all participants attested that they utilized the insertion format and this led me to believe that, as confirmed by the professional mentioned above, the context is really the pivotal determinant for choices regarding format.

Proceeding with my investigation into the message text area, I realized that, in addition to the compulsory target element described so far, other complementary components could be included in a responsive e-mail, performing the function of either introducing or concluding the message. According to the samples collected, the introductory segments could be presented as contextual references, comments, or as a response marker which preceded the target response element. The excerpts below illustrate such components:

> *CONTEXTUAL REFERENCES*
> I have had exactly same problem than you ("file XD10QAP.XLL does not exist" etc) with the files I have got from you. Files that I have created seem to work ok.
>
> The customer in [*country*] was unable to communicate with the [*company*] node in [*city*] but he can communicate with [*city*].
> *INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS*
> I'm looking forward to meet you during your stay in [*country*].
>
> This isn't going to be another [*customer*] pilot scenario is it? Anyway, I will be glad to assist your effort in any way that I am able.
>
> *RESPONSE MARKER*
> Here is the information you've requested:...

The concluding segment, on the other hand, provided the target response component with additional information, with notification of further procedures, with guidance related to their procedures, or with reply solicitation (sometimes followed by an expression of gratitude). These components are illustrated by the extracts that follow:

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Also I have learned that some salesmen in [*country*] have had similar problem when they have by accident entered data (quantities) in wrong collumns.

NOTIFYING FURTHER PROCEDURES
[*name*] will fax it.

GUIDING FURTHER PROCEDURES
I am not sure if [*customer*] is a client, but you can send a [*e-mail*] to FAST and find out. (...) Send the Acct Reps a [*e-mail*] asking for information.

SOLICITING REPLY/FURTHER CONTACT
Please keep me informed of any progress. Thank You.
Let me know how you would like to handle the software issue.

By observing the meanings conveyed by the above messages, as well as the number of instances of the various patterns that occurred in my data, I perceived that responses – except for their target element – did not display a strict sequence of recurrent components. Furthermore, by reflecting upon the target response and its illocutionary force, I realized that responses conformed to a quite objective form of communication which was grounded on the purpose of directly providing an informative reply, as requested. As opposed to FYI-reports – which also represented an alternative answer to requests – responses were primarily focused on an explicit transmission of information, without including details and/or descriptions of situated procedures, or expressions of personal opinions and suggestions. For this reason, it appears that responses deal predominantly with ideational content.

Under such a characterization, however, two responsive e-mail messages deserve particular attention for, to some extent and for different reasons, they diverge from the ones portrayed so far. The first one was composed by one of the participants and represented the electronic response generated by a telephone request in the third company investigated:

(1) Juanito, **(2)** ententei hablar con vos, pero era um poquito despues de las 4:30 hs, entonces decidi enviarte la mensaje y transcrivir el comentario de el, **(3)** que es el seguinte:
(4) [*name*].
Comentarios generales[13]:
«We still have a poor system to approve travel expenses in [*country*]»
Para los itens de gastos de viaje, respondio A51=#; A52=#; A53=#; A54=#[14]
(5) And that is all my friend...
(6) If you want, I can fax you his questionnaire including the answers and comments.
(7) [*participant's* name].

Regarding the structural organization of the message text area, the response above consists of **(1)** opening salutation, **(2)** explanation of the communication tool selected, **(3)** response marker, **(4)** target response, **(5)** concluding comment, **(6)** statement of availability for providing more detailed information, and **(7)** closing salutation.

Among these elements, **(1)** and **(5)** explicitly reveal the friendship that connects both professionals who, due to their work-related activities, interact with each other on a daily basis, through the various communication media available (e.g., computer, telephone, fax). The participant in my research refers to his international co-worker as a friend and, in spite of interacting with a much older colleague, he uses the diminutive form of his name (Juanito), reproducing through e-mail, the same informal approach adopted by him in telephone conversations. This behavior uncovers the participant's "*involvement*" (Chafe,1982; Chafe & Danielewicz,1987) with the receiver, and clearly indicates that, in addition to the core ideational content conveyed, his message also embodies interpersonal attributes.

The bilingual aspect of this response certainly constitutes another reason to draw attention to it. In this specific context, the participant's intention was to provide his South American co-worker with the information requested, by reproducing it in English **(4)**, exactly the way it was displayed in the original questionnaire received. According to this participant's explanations, the linguistic code switch that followed this transcription — **(5)** and **(6)** — represented a conscious decision he made when, at that point of the message composition, he remembered our conversations and the reflective process he was jointly developing with me throughout the data collection phase of my research. Nevertheless, if in this situation the inclusion of different languages in the same message was a deliberate decision, manifested by a specific professional in a particular context, it does not necessarily indicate that other instances of electronic messages, produced either by this participant or by any one of his colleagues, are characterized by a similar level of awareness and/or determination. Considering the comments above, although English constitutes the "*official*" language of his company, it is possible, and natural, to produce and/or receive messages that also incorporate Spanish and/or Portuguese. Hence, linguistic code switch constitutes a quality that distinguishes the electronic correspondence conveyed within the third organization included in this investigation, and not a feature of a particular genre of internal written communication.

The second electronic message that deserves special attention was conveyed within the second company investigated in response to the participant's request for assistance in a specific software installation:

(1) Hello [*participant's* name],
(2) This isn't going to be another [*customer*] pilot scenario is it!? Anyway, I will be glad to assist your effort in any way that I am able.
(3) Regarding the "demo" software, I don't have software available to send to clients unless someone is being billed for it. I can order it and have it billed to your office (cost center), or I can have it billed to the US client or you can send them a demo copy if you have an extra one available.
(4) Let me know how you would like to handle the software issue.

(5) Best Regards,
[*sender's full name*]
[*department*]

Considering its structural organization, the responsive message above includes **(1)** opening salutation, **(2)** introductory comment, **(3)** target response, **(4)** soliciting further contact, and **(5)** closing salutation. Among these components, the second one called my attention immediately. This element not only presented a preliminary remark through which the message content was introduced, but also conveyed a manifestation of *flaming*[15], which has been defined as "*the exchange of emotionally charged, hostile, or insulting messages on computer-mediated communication networks*" (Thompsen, 1994:51).

In this particular situation, the sender's impetuous feeling was expressed by the initial negative clause ("This *isn't* going to be..."), followed by an affirmative tag question ("...*is* it"), and emphasized by the punctuation which simultaneously indicated surprise (exclamation mark) and doubt (question mark). However, the impact of this sentence was immediately cushioned by the writer's offer to somehow provide help ("*Anyway, I will be glad to assist your effort in any way that I am able*"). Such an impulsive reaction to her request was promptly taken up by the participant, who commented on the situation and its impact by saying:

> He is "fight..., "kid..."[16] — well, quotation — he is "telling" me... I'm asking him a new 'case' for the customer, and he is saying: "*Ah, it's not going to happen the same thing that happened with the other pilot — the one which the customer had problems with!*" So, he's kind of complaining... or... it's an alert for me not to repeat it, right?
>
> Ah... exclamation and interrogation together, right? [*reading the message*]: "Anyway, I'll be glad to assist you". It means, he kicks me first and, then, he tries to please me. [*simulating the sender's voice*] "*That's all right... all right... I will...*", right? "*But in this case... for instance... regarding the software... I don't have it available to help the customer, unless I charge for that!*" He means... he was not too open to help me, right?
>
> It's a... simple situation, right? But his way of speaking... let's say... kind of angry!

The participant's comments revealed that she understood the sender's complaint, as well as the admonition conveyed through his "*angry way of speaking*". The perception that, in fact, "*he was not too open to help*" led her to react through an ensuing message in which — although intentionally including various expressions of gratitude ("*Thanks for your e-mail*"... "*Thanks again for your help*"... "*Thanks for your understanding and help!*") — she reinforced her previous request ("*Anyway, we would appreciate if you could help them with the installation and learning how to use the software*"), presented the specifics of that situation ("*The [customer] pilot is not the same case of [customer]. They are not having any problems to delay the tests*"), and provided a cultural explanation to emphasize that the Brazilian context demands a distinct approach to customers ("*Many times it is really necessary to have pilot tests to sell our service here in Brazil*").

This electronic episode evidenced the interesting way in which the participant manipulated the sender's flaming manifestation and elaborated on her intended request: by deliberately pretending mitigation through the emphatic use of expressions of gratitude, she not only subtly reinforced her previous request, but also gave cultural reasons to support it and to emphasize the necessity of processing it in a specific way. According to her, by composing her message in an intentionally polite way, she aimed at keeping her connection with that particular professional "*in a nice way*" without "*allowing*" him, however, to "*fight*" with her. In my opinion, the participant's reaction is rooted in her personal determination of not being "*imperative*", and of invariably acknowledging her co-workers' assistance.

In reflecting upon this flaming episode, I figure out that outcomes of this kind emerge when the sender is primarily caught up in an impassioned personal "*involvement*" (Chafe,1982; Chafe & Danielewicz,1987) and, then, impulsively reacts by attacking the closest target: the author of the original message. In this case, the message generator, who is "*detached*" (*ibid*) neither from the context nor from the audience, promptly reacts to the former by colliding with the latter. By using this particular episode to understand the phenomenon of flaming in general terms, I consider that such an impulsive reaction corresponds to a peculiar way of using language to express "*ideational*" and "*interpersonal*" contents (Halliday,1978/92), regardless of the genre being used.

The comments presented so far indicate that a response, as a genre, is predominantly focused on the communicative purpose of providing the receiver(s) with an objective informative reply, generated by a previous request. From this perspective therefore, requests and responses unveil an interactive relationship which is similar to the one shared by requests and FYI-reports. In my opinion, the interconnection between these genres — which display a question/solicitation and its ensuing reply — reproduces, through the electronic medium, the one that connects conversational *question-answer* utterance sequences, as discussed in the concluding part of this article.

Requests & responses and *requests & FYI-reports* as electronic adjacency pairs

Considering the conversational movement that depicts face-to-face interactions, Schegloff & Sacks (1973) classify questions and answers as "*adjacency pairs*" (p.295-296). By analogy, and by aiming at emphasizing the communication tool used at the same time, I assume that the three genres described and discussed so far may be understood as *electronic adjacency pairs* in which the "*first pair part*" (questions or solicitations) is always represented by *requests*, whereas the realization of the "*second pair part*" (answers) may be portrayed through either *FYI-reports* or *responses*.

Apart from the fact that they are both elicited by a previous request, FYI-reports and responses do not have a great deal in common. On the one hand, FYI-reports respond to a request through the narration/description of situated procedures, and/or through the presentation of comments or suggestions regarding a particular context. For this reason, the FYI-report genre may frequently associate ideational and interpersonal meanings within the same electronic message. On the other hand, responses are focused on transmitting the requested information as concisely and objectively as possible, without including the writer's personal views on the subject or situation addressed. For this reason, it is possible to claim that the response genre encompasses ideational meanings, predominantly.

Hence, if to some extent both genres involve the core communicative purpose of providing the receiver(s) with a reply, the achievement of such a goal is undertaken through distinct levels of involvement in the situation, as well as through distinct ways of expressing the target information. It appears that the convergence of purposes is essentially induced by the nature of the requestive genre that originates either FYI-reports or responses, and that establishes with them a relationship of adjacency pairs or, by regarding the communication medium through which they are conveyed, *electronic adjacenc pairs*. Nevertheless, this apparent convergence is significantly modified by different realizations at the formal and content levels which, therefore, allow us to recognize them as distinct genres.

According to this interpretation, requests such as questions/solicitations engender resulting answers which are articulated either through responses or FYI-reports. Considering their embedded communicative goals, my perception is that requests and responses, as well as requests and FYI-reports represent pairs of interconnected genres — or "*systems of genre*" (Bazerman,1992/94; Swales, 1992) — which follow upon another, and interact with each other in specific ways. By representing a system that entails question-answer sequences, these electronic adjacency pairs, as related genres, "*instantiate participation of all the parties*" (Bazerman,1992/94:99) and, therefore, account for the thorough interactive chain that they represent.

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NOTES

1 Based on some theoretical sources (such as Martin,1984; Halliday & Hasan,1985/89; Bakhtin,1986; Bazerman,1988; Swales,1990; Bruner & Weisser,1991; Cope & Kalantziz,1993; Bhatia, 1993; Callaghan & associates,1993; Smart,1993; Schryer,1993,1994; Miller,1994; Freedman & Medway,1994; Orlikowski & Yates,1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin,1995; Lemke,1995), I conceive of *genres* as linguistically oriented social actions which emerge from the needs of situations, convey culturally recognizable communicative purposes, and tend to display regularities at the formal and structural levels. Moreover, as contextualized responses to situations, *genres* are part of a continuously evolving system whose changes are determined by the communicative and/or sociocognitive needs of the community that enacts and customarily manipulated them (Freire, 1998:50).

2 Although the participants have also mentioned spreadsheets, forms, questionnaires, contracts, and minutes, my discussion is restricted to the genres that we could jointly reflect upon through the samples provided.

3 A *computerized interactive sequence* conforms to the flow of correspondence exchanged from the presentation to the conclusion of a work-related situation. It summarizes, therefore, the interactive chain established through the participants' asynchronous dialogue. Regarding format, a sequence of this kind may be represented by various messages, or it can be abridged in only one exchange which reproduces previous interactions (Freire,1995:2).

4 My denomination is based on Yates (1989:65-100) who has coined the expression *genres of internal communication* to refer to spoken and written forms of organizational communication, such as circular letters, manuals, forms, in-house magazine, reports, memos, and committee meetings. Considering the specifics of my research, and its characteristics, I understand that, by designating them "*genres of internal written communication*", it is possible to provide a more precise definition of the nature and scope of the professional interactions focused.

5 *CMC* stands for *computer-mediated communication,* expression coined by Kiesler, Siegel & McGuire in 1984.

6 To provide the reader(s) with a more precise idea of the genres collected and of the ones more frequently used, I present an overview of the 152 messages analyzed: 54 requests, 33 discussions, 17 FYI-reports, 11 responses, 9 corporate circulars, 8 bulletins, 7 cover messages, 6 memos, 2 acknowledgements, 2 occasional reports, and 2 samples of blurred genres or genre overlap (cover message/request and cover message/memo).

7 Yli-Jokipii (1994) cautiously suggests that the descriptive components she presents should be taken as labels, and not as categories or units. She justifies her assumption by stating that the concepts which underlie those components are not "*clear-cut*", and by asserting that "*labelling takes place on the reader's cognitive level rather than on the basis of structural criteria*" (p.78).

8 To reproduce the original e-mail texts, possible typos or mistakes of any sort were deliberately preserved.

9 In my opinion, by expressing reply expectation, the sender is, in fact, indirectly requesting the receiver(s) to respond. This kind of solicitation, however, does not embody the core meaning of a requestive message and, for this reason, I perceive it as a simple structural component, recurrently included in the electronic correspondence regardless of its main communicative purpose.

10 As summarized by Yli-Jokipii (1994:157), the concept of "*mitigation*" is suggested by Fraser (1980:342), and reinforced by Held (1994:134), as an attribute of spoken discourse. In general terms, it refers to "*weakening*" (Brown & Levinson,1987:147), "*downgrading*" (House & Kasper,1981:166), or "*minimizing*" (Held,1989:168) the content to be conveyed, by reducing its force and making it more appealing to the recipient.

11 The code "XxXx" is used henceforth to indicate pieces of confidential information which were deleted by the participants during the interviews.

12 Grounded on Halliday (1985) and Fairclough (1992), Ivanïc (1994) presents the notion of "*writer identities*", intentionally expressed in the plural form to emphasize the idea of simultaneous identification with a variety of social groups, and to account for "*the plurality and complexity of the resulting identity*" (p.5). According to Ivanïc, writers are, consciously or unconsciously, "*positioned by the discourse(s) they draw as they write*". (p.4)

13 "(1) Johnnie, (2) I've tried to talk to you but it was a little after 4:30 pm; therefore I've decided to send you a message and transcribe his comment, (3) which is the one that follows: (4) [*name*] general comments:..."

14 "As for the travel expense issue, he answered: A51=#; A52=#; A53=#; A54=#".

15 According to Sproull & Kiesler (1991/92), "*the phenomenon of flaming suggests that through electronic mail, actions and decisions, not just talk, might become more extreme and impulsive. Because reminders of settings and kinds of people are weak or nonexistent, decision makers might feel less bound by convention and less concerned with consequences*" (p.49).

16 The participant expressed her ideas by mumbling "*brig... brinc...*", which indicated her initial hesitation in assuming that the sender was "***brig**ando*" (*fighting*) or "***brinc**ando*" (*kidding*). In the transcription, by using "*fight...*" (instead of *fighting*) and "*kid...*" (instead of *kidding*), I attempted to translate into English, the same connotation conveyed by her original speech in which the words in Portuguese were induced but not fully verbalized.

THE QUARTO AND FOLIO KING LEAR AND THE CHANGES IN CHARACTERIZATION OF GONERIL AND REGAN: FROM MEDIEVAL TO MODERN DRAMATURGY

STEPHAN BAUMGÄRTEL
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

1. The plays – shifting historical constructions or stable timeless creations

When G.B. Shaw coined the term "bardolatry", he poured his ironic contempt on more than 150 years of Shakespeare reception. The romantic movement, with its nostalgia for the writer as a natural genius, had constructed the image of Shakespeare as an artist who created timeless manifestations of truth through an almost transcendental inspiration. Indeed, the urgent belief in Jonson's phrase that Shakespeare had never blotted a line was nothing more than wishful thinking. But as such, it was the result of a socio-psychological need to perceive (and create) art as a secure spiritual refuge amidst the bewildering injustice and poverty of an increasingly mechanized and industrialized society.

The 20th century radically questioned the supposedly free status of art and it became more and more difficult to uphold the strict separation of art and life, of artistic and political discourse, which forms the necessary basis of the belief in a timeless genius whose inspiration is essentially transcendental truth. Recent deconstructionist as well as production orientated scholarship[1] has pointed to an inherent ambiguity in word meaning, character building and reception control in Shakespeare's plays. In addition to that, the fact that we have sometimes more than one printed version of a play, with considerable differences between them, has further undermined the assumption of (and search for) a timeless, authentic, unique and stable, i.e. authoritative, text. Textual materialist scholarship further destabilized the notion of authenticity as unique originality by foregrounding the impossibility to establish a "pure", i.e., unedited and unrevised textual original[2] for Shakespeare's plays.

This predicament is clear when we look at the play *King Lear*. *King Lear* was first printed in a Quarto version in 1608, which differs considerably from the Folio version in 1623. Furthermore, no text can claim a proven authenticity.

How can the existence of two very different versions of the play be explained? Stanley Wells resumes the traditional position:

> *"Until recently, the general opinion has been that Shakespeare wrote one play about King Lear; that this play is imperfectly represented in both the Quarto and the Folio texts; that each of these texts contains genuinely Shakespearian passages which are missing from and should have been present in the other; that comparison of the variant readings of the two texts must form the most important basis for the correction of errors of transmission; and that conflation of the two texts, along with such correction, will bring us as close as we can hope to get to the lost archetype which each is supposed imperfectly to represent." (Taylor/Warren, 8)*

This assumption is sharply criticised by Michael Warren, whose opinion is also quoted by Wells:

> *"In a situation where statements about textual status are never more than hypotheses based upon the current models of thought about textual recension, it is not demonstrably erroneous to work with the possibility a) that there may be no single "ideal play" of King Lear (all of "what Shakespeare wrote"), that there may never have been one, and that what we create by conflating both texts is merely an invention of editors and scholars; b) that for all its problems Q is an authoritative version of the play of King Lear; and c) that F may indeed be a revised version of the play, that its additions and omissions may constitute Shakespeare's considered modification of the earlier text, and that we certainly cannot know that they are not". (1976: 96-97; in Taylor/ Warren,14))*

Stanley Wells cites a few of Warren's examples to show how a comparison of the *King Lear* Quarto and Folio can motivate the conclusion that the differences can not be conclusively explained by a hypothetical but lost original. Of course, the whole dispute on the relation of Q and F is a more or less well-argued speculation. The main advantage in Warren's position is the fact that, being at least as logical as the traditional one, it encourages the critic to read the revision of the Quarto as embedded in a socio-historical process, whereas traditional scholarship presents us with a textual riddle organized around a longing for unisonous authenticity. In other words: Warren empowers the reader/spectator to think that Shakespeare's (and the King's Men's) muse might have been aroused, among others, by rather profane historical and theatrical circumstances; that it might have demanded changes, the blotting of a line, according to new experiences and contexts; that it might not have wanted to bring down eternal truth from spiritual spheres but constructed a text as a set of theatrically and politically strategic statements.

2. The problem of adequate influence

If we accept that Shakespeare did not conceive his plays in a socio-cultural vacuum, we must ask which identifiable contexts influenced the specific assemblage of material and how they might be related to one another. Therefore, to analyse the changes in the characterization of Goneril and Regan from Quarto to Folio *King Lear*, this paper considers three cultural contexts - the socio-political, ideological[3] and theatrical one - that can be detected in the process of revising (and maintaining) the textual material.

Why these three categories?

> In 1597 James Stuart, the future King James I., published his treatise "Deamonologie" on the presence and danger of witchcraft. Evil women were part of James's individual imagery of horror, but we know that with his regency, witch trials and the public burning of witches became common. This allows the interpretation that during his reign the fear of women as dangerously powerful beings turned into a collective obsession. Interestingly enough, it is after James' ascendance to power in 1603 that Shakespeare begins to write his tragedies where evil women play a decisive role in the male protagonists' predicament[4]. This accounts for the importance of the socio-political context.
> As far as history of ideas and mentalities are concerned, it is common knowledge that Elizabethan and Jacobean England was a time when medieval modes of production - and their discourses on society and the individual - were being replaced by early modern ones. This change accounts for the simultaneity of medieval and modern features in Shakespeares personages[5].
> As far as theatricality is concerned, there is certainly a similarity between King Lear and the figure of Everyman in the morality plays. Both are being stripped of all social characteristics and must evaluate their lives in existential terms. Shakespeare's black-and-white blocking of oppositional characters – the good daughter versus the bad daughters, the faithful son versus the treacherous son, the loyal servant versus the opportunist servant, points back to this genre. Medieval morality plays, however, are less interested in playing out dramatic conflicts with uncertain twists but to illustrate well known patterns of behaviour, especially moral conflicts. Morality plays, based on a primarily static worldview, give much more importance to choric comments and allegorically stereotyped conflicts. This factor contributes to the so-called psychomachia.
> Yet, within Renaissance Elizabethan drama, dynamic conflicts and ego-centred individuals demand speeches with greater illocutionary impacts, that are full of moral dilemmas. It applies a course of action, where uncertainty and machination (the intrigue instead of the psychomachia) becomes important. It thus seems reasonable to assume that revision for theatrical reasons should be intertwined with the shift from a more medieval to a more modern characterization of theatrical figures. To corroborate this thesis I will look at the revision which underwent the characterization of Goneril and Regan from Quarto to Folio.

3. The changes in characterization of Goneril and Regan

Let us look at Scene 1 in the Quarto and its counterpart I.1 in the Folio. In the Quarto, Goneril states that the observation the sisters could make of Lear's untemperedness "hath not been little" (1:280), whereas in the Folio she interprets this experience with the judgement that it "hath been little" (I.1.288), implying (for the audience) that there is more to come. It is also Goneril who mitigates a "Let´s hit together" (1:293) into a "Let us sit together" (I.1.302)[6]. Having in mind that Goneril is presented as the morally more corrupted sister of the two – she constantly derides her husband (this in itself a proof of her moral and metaphysical wickedness in times where husband meant Lord and ultimately God-given authority) and poisons her own sister - we might ask, whether these changes mean an attempt to justify or explain her attitude towards Lear. The Folio version certainly produces an opening up of the action as well as it creates the possibility of explaining Goneril's course of action by Lear's dictatorial untemperedness. But does this dramaturgical change imply a moral re-evaluation of the figure?

We might think so, since Goneril's honest but contemptuous comment in the Quarto, Scene 3, on the conflict between the two elder sisters and Lear gets cut in the Folio: "[we (i.e., the sisters – St.B.) are one] not to be overruled. Idle old man, that still would manage those authorities/ That he hath given away! Now, by my life,/ Old fools are babes again, and must be used/ With checks and flatteries, when they are seen abused" (3:16-20). Yet, from a dramaturgical point of view, this statement provides little more than general explanations and justifications. It might have got cut because it reveals the truth about the logical impossibility and tension in Lear's behaviour and in a too general way. Interestingly enough, what Goneril's (Q, 3:16-20) cut lines express on a denotative level is the same contradiction the Fool is allowed to point out in both versions, when he says that Lear is now a king who has made his daughters his mother(Q 4:153-171; F I.4.153- 161). According to the Fool, Lear has put himself into a logically impossible position, a kind of "power double-bind". It seems that in the course of revision it is not the information, which had to be suppressed, but the way it was presented had to be substituted. This could explain why both Quarto and Folio maintain Goneril's personal complaint about Lear's self-righteous and arbitrary behaviour ("By day and night he wrongs me..." Q 4:4-10; F I.4.4-10)

From a dramatic point of view, the cut material in this scene represents a general justification, a somewhat choric comment, whereas the Fool's statement expresses a personal judgement. I would argue that the main reason for cutting this material is to speed up the action dramatically and sharpen the conflict by personalizing it, rather than to make Goneril less scheming or to mitigate her wickedness. Both versions retain the decisive "I'd have it come in (Folio: to) question"(Q 4:13;F I.4.13), yet the Folio prefers to focus on the dramatic conflict between Lear and Goneril as a personal clash, a question of who rules whom, instead of rationalising or explaining it with general attitudes. This supposed intention to show the dramatic conflict between Lear and Goneril instead of explaining it and commenting on it may account for a cut otherwise difficult to understand, i.e., her lines in the same scene "I would

breed from hence occasions, and I shall/ That I may speak" (Q 4:24f). Since both the Quarto and the Folio maintain Goneril's disposition to confront Lear as expressed one line earlier ("What grows of it, no matter." Q 4:23; F I.4.18), it is difficult to assert a clear change in character presentation. However, one might argue that cutting Q 4:24f makes Goneril a more impenetrable figure and the action less predictable. The secret of a modern character is attributed to her, instead of maintaining the transparency of the allegorical discourse in the morality plays, where traditionally, the habit to explain oneself on the stage is associated with the vice-figure[7]. Cutting these lines, therefore, also distances the Folio's Goneril from this genre and its allegorical personages and turns her into more of an individual. If it seems to motivate her better, it does so by resorting to a (modern) psychological discourse. Thus, again, personalizing the conflict means also formulating it from a somewhat modern and psychological point of view, instead of a traditional moral and religious one.

But does this grown psychological complexity make her less wicked? For parts of the Elizabethan audience, those who were still very much embedded in traditional moral discourses, this change might have made her more opaque, more scheming, less understandable, more dangerously uncontrollable. Maybe for a modern audience willing to construct a modern character for Shakespeare's personages and to apply on them its own psychological strategies, she becomes less monstrous, because she becomes less "foreign", and therefore easier to relate to.

We can note this tendency towards dramaturgical openness in other minor changes in Goneril's speeches throughout the first act: the Quarto audience hears "necessity must call discreet proceeding"(4:207f) whereas the Folio gives "necessity will call discreet proceeding"(I.4.195f). In the Quarto she responds to Albany's "wherof comes this?" with a "Never afflict yourself to know the cause" (4:285). The Folio turns this answer into "Never afflict yourself to know more of it"(I.4.271). Both changes are dramatically effective, since they deepen the impression of uncertainty, yet definitely threatening future events. At this point, it seems useful to compare the revisions in Goneril's speeches with other changes in the first act, most notably the prophetic warnings uttered by Kent. In the Quarto Kent uses the word "doom" to describe the consequences of Lear's action, drawing on notions of an imminent and necessary downfall. Necessary, because it evokes medieval notions of punishment for sinful action. The audience's expectation is orientated towards the form of the downfall as punishment, but not towards the dramatic development of the relationship between Lear and his elder daughters, simply because "doom" no longer allows for a dramatic conflict. Now the Folio gives "Reserve thy state"(I.1.149) and "Revoke thy gift"(I.1.163) which implies a dramaturgical opening up. Arguably, the Folio audience gets the impression that, for Kent, Lear's action is certainly evil and dangerous, but it does not necessarily imply at this point an unavoidable downfall. So, interestingly enough, with this personage as well, this opening of dramatic conflict implies a shift from a more "medieval" dramaturgy working with allegorical, stereotyped figures to a more "modern" one, working with more individualized figures.

Goneril's sister Regan appears prominently only in the scenes 6 and 7 in the Quarto, respectively act 2, scene 1 and 2 in the Folio. These scenes underwent few alterations as far as Regan is concerned. The most significant change concerns the

Quarto scene 7, line 143, where it is Regan who orders Kent's legs to be put in the stocks and asks (or orders) Cornwall to leave the scene with her: "Come, my good lord, away!"(II.2.143). The Folio has Cornwall say this last sentence, which makes no sense, since immediately afterwards we find the stage direction "Exeunt all but Gloucester and Kent." Which Lord could be meant? It should read 'Lady'. In both texts, it is Cornwall, who asks for the stocks.

The revision of Regan's lines 144 and 145 in the Quarto, however, certainly assures the power relation between her and Cornwall as established earlier in the act. He is the leader, and she is the faithful and eager follower. The cut ensures that Regan never appears bossy or in a position to command. In a way, it renders her more consistent, more stable in her identity. In my opinion, rather than presenting Regan in a better light, the cut intends to stress her complicity with Cornwall and her opposition to her sister Goneril, who is constantly criticizing and bullying Albany.

Act 3 presents Goneril and Regan together on stage in the scene where Gloucester is to be blinded. Quarto and Folio show almost no differences as far as the two sisters are concerned. Regan's accusation of Gloucester as a traitor (14:35) is turned into a rhetorical question (III.7.35). That this change does not really apply a revision of her aggressiveness can be inferred from Regan's first reaction to Cornwall calling Gloucester a traitor. Both the Quarto and the Folio read: "Hang him instantly!" So, her question "So white, and such a traitor?" reveals a sadistic pleasure in humiliating Gloucester – a pleasure she has already betrayed before in relation to Kent in the stocks. Above all, the revision seems to highlight the presence of horror concerning Gloucester's imminent fate. It certainly does not present Regan's "character" in a better light. On the contrary, in the Quarto and the Folio, Regan is equally eager to have Goneril's advice performed: "Pluck out his eyes!"(Q 14:3; F III.7:3).

One of the most considerable revisions in the construction of Goneril is presented in Folio IV.2. Edmund's sexual attraction to her is explicitly stressed by adding "O, the difference of man and man!" and by correcting the meaningless "My foot usurps my body" (Q16:28) into the polyseminal "My fool usurps my body" (IV.2.29), which is linked to her husband Albany by her exclamation "O vain fool" (IV.2.38). Although the language is allegorical, to emphasize her sexual desire implies a shift in the presentation of Goneril. The personage now becomes more psychologically motivated and less an example of filial ingratitude. The allegorical figure provides what modern readers would call character traits. The considerable revision of her conversation with Albany in the same scene can be understood from this point of view. Albany's condemnation of her character as unnatural and degenerate belongs to a contemporary moral evaluation of filial ingratitude. It is omitted, as well as his somewhat preaching prophecies on "humanity (which) must perforce prey on itself like monsters of the deep" (16:48f), which also draws on the traditional notion, that a violation of the natural order leads to destruction. The question again is whether these cuts in the Folio work (and are meant) to mitigate Goneril's vile disposition, or if their purpose is to give the conflict between the couple a more theatrically dramatic touch. The latter seems to be more plausible, since Albany's conclusion (Q 16:57-59; F IV.4.

35-37) that Goneril represents an example of the notion that not even the devil can be as morally deformed as a woman, is maintained in the scene. Furthermore, from a dramatic point of view, Albany's condemnation adds little to the audience's already acquired knowledge of Goneril's behaviour. It rather reveals his inclination to over-generalized statements[8]. Its dramatic function in the Quarto seems to be more that of a (dispensable) self-expression as a conservative previdentialist (however, what he predicts actually does take place, but it is felt much more intensely at the end of the play by having taken place in front of the audience's eyes and ears).

This explanation on dramaturgical grounds of the revision of this scene can be complemented by a socio-political one. The Quarto highlights the fact that Cordelia is leading a French army, which turns her rescue mission into an invasion – despite its justification that the pitiful daughter comes to reinstate the father as the rightful king. Dramaturgically, the political subplot makes little sense, since it adds almost nothing to Cordelia's role as faithful daughter and certainly nothing to Lear's suffering. However, at the beginning of James I's reign, the fear of a French invasion was more alive. This is especially understandable for the year 1603, in which Elizabeth I died and Shakespeare was probably writing *King Lear*. Later on, this fear might have lost its foundation. And the decision to cut the political allusions in the subplot makes a revision of scene 16 in the Quarto necessary.

Goneril's argument against Albany's rage aims to question Albany's whole personality and perception. The Folio cuts the political motives of her critique, which results in a conflation of personal frustration and an objective critique of Albany's general passivity. Therefore, cutting the political lines creates a dramatically effective ambiguity.

Changes in scene 22 – 24 of the Quarto, which form act V of the Folio, concern mainly the relationship of the two sisters in relation to Edmund. The Folio opts generally for formulations with a broader associative scope, as with Regan's suspicion that Edmund might be having an affair with Goneril (Q 22:10-14; F V.1.10-12), as well as in Goneril's aside concerning Regan's sickness (Q 24:94 F V.3.90). Another change concerns Goneril and her presentation similar to a vice-figure. In the Quarto, Goneril's last line is "Ask me not what I know" (Q 24:166), which happens to be also Iago's last line in *Othello*. This line is attributed in the Folio to Edmund (V.3.151), and one wonders why. This change is in unison with a vice-figure and it also makes dramaturgical sense, since Edmund knows that Lear and Cordelia are just about to be hanged. But these considerations are also valid for Goneril. Is it dramaturgically more effective to have Goneril kill herself without former warning? Should the line in Edmund's mouth be read as a first sign of regret? Maybe. One might go on to argue that the Folio wants to distance Goneril from the traits of the vice-figure, from associating her role with Iago's. However, this connotation is too subtle for members in the audience who are not connoiseurs of Shakespeare works.

The Folio also applies the line "Let the drum strike and prove my title good" (Q 24:79) to Regan, instead of Edmund in the Quarto, and changes it into "Let the drum strike and prove my title thine", which foregrounds again the struggle between the sisters to win this man and foregrounds the tragedy of King Lear as a family

drama – a change which once again strengthens the importance of individual motivation and scheming instead of transcendental or pre-ordained forces for the course of action.

4. Conclusion

On a dramaturgical level, the analysis revealed that choric elements were cut from various figures in the play[9]. Such cuts increased the illocutionary impact of speeches, which therefore became integral parts of the action. The cuts in the first scene worked to open up dramatic possibilities, which means that foreshadowing becomes more vague and more dramatically effective in terms of suspense. Since choric elements are associated with the presence of an omniscient or objective narrative point of view, cutting them also means to reduce the possibility of an objective reading. It allows for an enhanced possibility of oppositional perspectives. As far as the presentation of dramatis personae is concerned, the cutting of choric elements personalizes the conflict and turns the personages into something very close to individual characters[10].

What do these considerations mean for the often alleged impression that Goneril and Regan are "better" motivated figures in the Folio and that the Folio is a "better", because dramatically more effective play?

What might explain this thesis is the possibility to understand the revision as embedded in a shift from medieval to modern dramaturgy and psychology: instead of the 'type', we find the 'individual', instead of choric representations of an allegorical, stable worldview, we find the subjective presentation of a personal and dynamic worldview. This point of view also allows to read all analysed changes as being dramaturgically motivated. Yes, the Folio *King Lear* can be judged as the "better" play, but the problem with this unqualified "better" is that it implies its own (modern aesthetical) categories as the naturally central ones. It is definitely a better play, if the critic takes a psychological play of Chekov or Strindberg as his measuring rod[11].

A similar objection has to be raised against the opinion that the Folio provides better motivation for Goneril and Regan. How is greater motivation to be understood? As a giving of inner motives, a psychologizing of the relations, or as relating the personage more clearly with eternal spiritual forces?

The Folio certainly chooses to put more emphasis on the modern, psychological point of view. This allows the modern audience to relate to Regan and Goneril more easily, even to apologize for some of their actions – in short, to think of them in terms of more understandable and less evil characters. The fact that their motivation still remains unclear only corroborates the (modern) theory that psychologizing in itself creates the impression of better, i.e. more realistic, character motivation.

However, for an Elizabethan audience, psychological discourse in itself may have had something terrible and unnatural. It allowed the human being with his egotistic desires to be at the centre of discourse, where God's will should be. The very same procedure to motivate Goneril psychologically may have presented her less understandable and more horrendous.

The Folio makes primarily a dramatic use of this mentality shift from an allegorical to a p ychological conception of human existence, from a static to a dynamic understanding of subjectivity that was taking place during Shakespeare's life-time. If the revision of Goneril and Regan were really meant to present them as less evil in moral terms, it would be quite strange that Edmund gets the chance to extricate himself from part of his guilt by revealing Cordelia's and Lear's condemnation to death, whereas the two sisters have to die as relentless sinners whose death is explained by Albany as Heaven's just punishment. Modern audiences and critics seem to confuse a psychological motivation with what they feel is a better motivation. Nobody is exempt from the flaw of taking the more familiar as the natural, but critics should know better and be more specific.

As far as the socio-cultural context is concerned, we can assert that the Folio is more distant from James I's treatise on witchcraft than is the Quarto. James I's *Daemonology* is based on superstition, i.e., the belief in forces outside the control of human rationality. This non-psychological point of view is closer to the Quarto than to the Folio. Cutting choric elements of speech also cuts references to the traditional value system, based on nature and a religion conceived as natural. In the Folio *King Lear*, the evil does not come from the outside as something inexplicably unnatural to human beings and society, but it is a result of human interaction or an omnipresent emotional possibility.

In both Quarto and Folio, however, the ambiguous presentation of the end does not allow a mechanical triumph of any kind of master discourse. The discourses of religious eschatological hopes, of inferno or of previdentialist humbleness, are juxtaposed and thereby questioned. "Is this the promised end? Or image of that horror? Fall and cease" (Q 24:258-260; F V.3.238f) – neither of the three can claim the right interpretation of the action.

Of course, ambiguity is also a question of effective dramaturgy. And that's where the Folio strikes stronger. Lear's last words are: "Look her lips! Look there! Look there!" (F V.3.286) Did Lear see them move because Cordelia was still breathing? Or because, in his insanity, he wanted and believed her to breathe? Or did her lips actually move, but in her last breath, and what Lear saw was her soul leaving the body?[12]

By adding these lines, the Folio linguistically makes sure that we never know, and that anybody may interpret this moment the way he wants to. Ambiguity allows a rest of unmotivatedness. It allows the riddle of being human to remain unsolved and uncontrolled. But aesthetically, the need to play with and foreground ambiguity is a modern discourse: the revolt against the grip of scientific knowledge of life and human beings.

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NOTES

1 See, for example, Drakakis (1987), Bulman (1996), and Worthen (1997).

2 See Berger and Lander (1999) and Urkowitz (1988).

3 I apply this term "ideological" not in a Marxist sense, but in a more formalist one as concerning the "history of ideas".

4 I would like to thank Dr. Arthur Marotti from Wayne State University for pointing this out to me.

5 This is one of the possibilities to read Maurice Charney's comment that "Shakespeare's characters sometimes speak not for themselves but for the play" (Styan, 59).

6 Print has to fix what performance can maintain: the ambiguous homophonic quality of the spoken sentence.

7 Edmund fits this tradition as well as Richard III. or Iago, see Schabert,49f.

8 See also the cut at the end of Q sc. 14 – the conversation between the servants with their general fear of women as potential "monsters". The scene itself has no dramatic function.

9 I am aware that many choric speeches remained, especially when we think of Edgar's speeches. A comparative study on the treatment of choric commentaries in Quarto and Folio seems imperative. My argument concerns a shift of emphasis from choric to personalised speeches, and not an abandoning of choric elements.

10 Although allegorical elements will continue to describe a personage, for example Kent's "Duty (he himself) shall dread to speak when power (Lear) to flattery (the two elder daughters) bows?" (F I.1.147f)

11 I find it therefore difficult to follow Roger Warren, when he asserts that "the whole trend of the Folio revisions is towards streamlining and simplification" (R. Warren, 53). Does this mean that the Folio's action and its characters are less complex? It seems an unlucky linguistic choice, to say the least.

12 Traditionally Christians believed the soul to leave the body through the mouth.

THREE BIG WOMEN: THE RE-NARRATION OF "WOMAN" AS A GROTESQUE BODY*

SUSANA BORNÉO FUNCK
Universidade Católica de Pelotas, RS

ABSTRACT: Through an examination of Susan Swan's *The Biggest Modern Woman of the World* (1983), Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), this paper explores how concepts of gender, especially femininity, are being deconstructed by the creation of larger-than-life, grotesque, (un)feminine characters. As feminist theory begins to confront issues of essentialism and identity politics in the context of postmodernism, fiction by women progressively abandons a concern with the representation of experience to undertake a flight into eccentricity and spectacle, stressing the performative status of gender.

The somewhat delayed theoretical encounter between feminism and postmodernism has been in many ways conflictual. If, on the one hand, theories of the demise of the subject have allowed for a deconstruction of the master narratives which inform patriarchal western culture, on the other they have rendered the category "woman" vulnerable to the charges of essentialism and thus threatened the very possibility of political agency.

Many have been the studies in the late 80s and early 90s attempting to grapple with the conflicting interests of feminism and postmodernism. Whereas many feminist theorists still mourn the death of the subject of feminism as an agent of change, and some struggle to reconcile constructionism and essentialism, others attempt to devise alternative theoretical models from which to launch a new feminist consciousness.

In her influential work of 1990, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler argues for a radical critique of the categories of identity which support patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. Stressing the need to subvert from within the terms of the existing social arrangements, she posits gender

* A slightly different version of this article, entitled "The Reconfiguration of Woman as a Grotesque Body", was presented as a paper at the Women's Studies Network Conference, Universidade de Warwick (Coventry, UK) in July 1999.

not as a preconceived category but as a "stylized repetition of acts" (140). Gendered identity is seen as provisional, arbitrary and performative; the possibility of change lies precisely "in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmatic effect of identity as a politically tenuous construction" (141). The power of agency, therefore, resides not in a pre-discursive gendered essence, but in the performative denaturalization and displacement of signifying practices. In the chapter "Subversive Bodily Acts," she asserts: "the culturally constructed body will then be liberated, neither to its 'natural' past, nor to its original pleasures, but to an open future of cultural possibilities" (93).

A similar focus on the openness of future conceptualizations informs the study of Donna Haraway published in 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* proposes irony as both "a rhetorical strategy" and "a political method" (149). Clustering her ideas around the figure of the cyborg, "a condensed image of both imagination and material reality" (150), Haraway calls for an identification with this post-gender non-innocent hybrid creature as a means to achieve historical transformation. Defining her cyborg myth as being "about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work" (154), she proceeds to argue for the need to engage in "cyborg writing", which she thus defines:

> *Cyborg writing must not be about the Fall, the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man. Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other. The tools are often stories, retold stories, versions that reverse and displace the hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities. (175)*

Similarly to Butler, Haraway emphasizes the importance of discourse in the contestation of ideological practices, a form of critique which underlies as well much of the argument of Rosemary Hennessy's *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (1993).

Drawing on the work of the major theorists of postmodernism, and criticizing much of the contemporary eclecticism arising from an uncritical appropriation of contesting discourses, Hennessy proposes "ideology critique" as a fundamental political stance for feminists. In her chapter "Feminist Standpoint, Discourse, and Authority: From Woman's Lives to Ideology Critique," she argues for "symptomatic reading", which consists in making visible

> *that which hegemonic ideology does not mention, those things which must not be spoken, discursive contestations which are naturalized in the interdiscourse but which still shape the text's diseased relation to itself. To read symptomatically is to reveal this historicity in the texts of culture and in so doing put on display the exploitative social arrangements that they so often manage. (94)*

According to Hennessy, furthermore, "Nowhere is the question of who feminism speaks for more crucial than in the histories we tell" (100). Of critical importance in the feminist project, the processes of disarticulation and rearticulation made possible by the counterhegemonic view of the subject-in-language allow women "to renarrate their cultures, particularly the social construction of woman as multiply differentiated and historically-specific subject position" (137).

Indeed, as feminist theory begins to confront and demystify issues of gender identity and lived experience as political grounds, fiction by women progressively abandons the concern with the representation of experience to undertake a flight into eccentricity and spectacle, stressing the performative status of gender and the provisionality of our notions of femininity and masculinity. If during the 60s and 70s many women attempt to write their personal experience into fiction (Sylvia Plath and Marge Piercy, for example) or to give narrative force to their utopian dreams of a gender-free society (Ursula LeGuin, Joanna Russ) by "changing the story" or "writing beyond the ending", in the 80s this effort at conceptual change through narration, at de-stabilizing social arrangements through fiction, begins to take a turn toward the grotesque and the unnatural. Such is the case of Susan Swan, Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson, who in their novels *The Biggest Modern Woman of the World* (1983), *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) manage to create boisterous, larger-than-life female characters, eccentric selves in overgrown bodies who de-re-construct all past notions of what a heroine should be. An analysis of such characters — Anna Swan, Sophie Fevvers, and the Dog Woman — may help us understand the evolution of feminist literary narrative as a cultural and political project.

The three novels fall loosely into what Canadian critic Linda Hutcheon terms "historiographic metafiction" with its interrogation of the nature of representation (*Politics* 50). Unlike much feminist fantasy, which self-proclaimedly takes place in an imaginary, and therefore markedly utopian, space and time, the works of Swan, Carter and Winterson reclaim a historical past and an autobiographical voice, which are nevertheless constantly challenged or erased. In their re-presentation of the past, historical and geographical "reality" is problematized by a slippage between truth and lies.

The Biggest Modern Woman of the World tells the story of the Nova Scotian giantess Anna Swan, who "may or may not be related" to the author of the novel, Susan Swan, as the blurb on the back cover of the Ecco edition informs us. A feminist perspective is established already in the Preface, as we learn that "Anna Swan is, *curiously*, not as well known as the other Nova Scotian giant, her friend Angus McAskill" (emphasis added). Thus the ironic mode asserts itself even before the narrative proper begins.

The story is to be told retrospectively by the giantess herself:

> *Now I am in full voice... blowing my own horn... spieling the way I used to for P.T. Barnum, Queen Victoria, and all the normals who came to my performances after I grew up into an eight-foot giantess who toured North America and the continent. This is my final appearance and I promise to tell*

all. What really happened to the BIGGEST WOMAN OF THE WORLD in a never-before-revealed autobiography which contains testimonials and documents by friends and associates (from their perspective) of a Victorian lady who refused to be inconsequential. (2)

Announced as a true story, an "authentic account", Anna's narrative is nevertheless also intended to "entertain": "A good performer has many spiels," she tells us, "and I have three up my long sleeve to delight and astound" (2).

We are indeed both delighted and astounded as we follow the adventures and misadventures of Anna Swan from her humble birth in Eastern Canada in 1846, through stardom in New York and Europe, to her final days on an Ohio farming town called Seville in 1888. The story, Anna's swan song, registers the inscription of an extraordinary woman into history. But rather than a mere sequence of events, the story is in itself a performance: a public rather than a private affair. "To me," she writes shortly before her death, "life is a performance and all moments are dramatic" (332).

Following the early tradition of fictional narrative, the novel is carefully dated through letters and diary entries. There are references to real life characters, but the veracity of facts is always contested. The reader is never sure, for example, in spite of Anna's constantly being measured, exactly just how tall she really is or how long is her birth canal. "Born to be measured," Anna cannot help being reified by the men in her life. As critic Teresa Heffernan remarks,

> *Ana is cast as a marketable commodity in Apollo and Barnum's story, as the fecund, fertile female by her father, as domestic mate by Angus, as an interesting scientific experiment by the numerous Victorian doctors, and as a Cinderella figure who married for love in the fairy tale narrated by the curator of the Sunrise Trail Museum in Tatamagouche. (29)*

Rejecting all such social roles and physically unable to procreate, Anna concludes that she does not fit anywhere (332).

Although the first person narrative is interspersed with fragments from other documents, such as The Route Book of Judge Hirian Percival Ingalls, testimonials and medical reports, letters from her mother and from her giant friend Angus, Anna's voice does predominate. But it is a theatrical, public voice which presupposes an audience and which self-consciously fictionalizes the facts and figures surrounding her.

A similar ambiguity informs Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. The novel opens with the six-foot-two birdwoman Fevvers being interviewed by the American journalist Jack Walser, who is bent on discovering the "truth" about her — whether she is fact or fiction.

From the very first lines, fact and fantasy appear inextricably mixed:

> 'Lor' love you sir!' Fevvers sang out in a voice that clanged like dustbin lids. 'As to my place of birth, why, I first saw the light of day right here in smoky old London, didn't I! Not billed the "Cockney Venus" for nothing, sir, though they could just as well 'ave called me "Helen of the High Wire", due to the unusual circumstances in which I come ashore — for I never docked via what you might call the *normal channels*, sir, oh dear me, no; but, just like Helen of Troy, was *hatched*. (7)

As the most famous aerealiste of the turn of the nineteenth century, Sophie Fevvers, also known in France as "the English Angel", embodies such contrasting attributes that one can hardly decide whether the wings which grow on her back are those of an animal or of an angel.

When the long interview ends, after a magical night during which Big Ben repeatedly strikes twelve and time seems to have stood still, Walser remarks as he looks over his notes: "What a performance!" (90). Moved by the fascinating atmosphere of mystery surrounding Fevvers, Walser, our anchor in reality, decides to join the spectacle himself and embarks on a tour of Russia with captain Kearney's Circus. And Fevvers.

After a fantastic journey through Siberia and the dissolution of the circus in the wilderness, an amnesiac Walser turned shaman reencounters a much changed Fevvers, who has doubts about what to make of her hybrid, conflicting nature. As she debates whether or not to marry Walser, one of her wings broken and her plumage discolored, she wonders: "'Am I fact? or Am I fiction? Am I what I know I am? or Am I what he thinks I am?'" (290).

Of course she is both. And so is Walser now, a reconstructed self with a history of his own, and a rather fantastic one at that. As they prepare to make love, in the 'woman on top' position, the only position nature had equipped her for, they feel an incipient anxiety, "and anxiety," the narrating voice adds, "is the beginning of conscience, which is the parent of the soul but is not compatible with innocence" (293).

Thus, as hybrids of reality and dream, male and female, spectacle and spectators, Fevvers and Walser, together, announce and celebrate the coming of a new century with all of its possibilities through the union of a transformed male and a transformed female. Unlike Anna Swan, this swan-woman succeeds, though in a provisional way, at creating a new symbol of femininity, one that unites being happy with being free, as her spiraling laughter contaminates the entire world on the eve of the twentieth century.

Free, though not so happy, the heroine of Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* narrates half the book, her sections alternating with those of her adoptive son, Jordan. Living on the banks of the filthy Thames in seventeenth-century London and supporting herself by entering dogs in races and fighting, she thus introduces herself: "I had a name but I have forgotten it. They call me the Dog-Woman and it will do" (11). Hideous and enormous, she has committed several murders, the first of which was that of her father. As to exactly how large she is, suffice it to say that she has outweighed an elephant by jumping on the end of a board and throwing him up into the sky, which is quite "a responsibility for a woman," as she remarks (25).

The narrative contains numerous references to historical events, such as the English Civil War and the trial and execution of King Charles. Historically and

geographically marked, it is nevertheless broken by fantastic tall tales, revisionist fairy tales and classical myth.

More obviously than either Swan or Carter, Winterson plays with the concepts of time and matter, truth and reality, memory and imagination. In the epigraph to the novel, the absence of distinction between past, present and future is stressed by reference to Hopi culture, a confusion which is later elaborated by Jordan as he thinks of his beloved Fortunata:

> *Memory* 1: The scene I have just described to you may lie in the future or the past. Either I have found Fortunata or I will find her. I cannot be sure. Either I am remembering her or I am still imagining her. But she is somewhere in the grid of time, a co-ordinate, as I am. (93)

Just as ambivalent as time, matter is merely "empty space and points of light" (144), rendering the reality of the world questionable and relative. Self-described as fantasists and liars, both the Dog Woman and Jordan weave for us a narrative that turns on itself and reelaborates events over and over again. Yet, the story (stories?) needs to be told almost compulsively.

The section of the novel entitled "Some Years Later" introduces us to a twentieth-century Nicholas Jordan in the process of "falling" or "rising" into a seventeenth-century time frame. More important for our present discussion is the female character who emerges as the Dog Woman's contemporary version: "I am a woman going mad. I am a woman hallucinating. I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant" (121). A feminist and an ecologist, utterly disgusted with patriarchy and capitalist exploitation, she has launched "a one-woman campaign", "checking mercury levels in rivers and lakes and streams" (123). The Dog-woman is the *alter ego* lurking inside her, the powerful woman onto whom she can escape, "a woman whose only morality was her own and whose loyalties were fierce and few" (125). Is the Dog Woman what she has been or what she will become? we ask ourselves. Again we are caught between illusion and reality, as her narrative continues: "She was my patron saint .... Whenever I called on her I felt my muscles swell and laughter fill up my throat. Of course it was only a fantasy, at least at the beginning..." (125).

This incursion into the contemporary scene is followed by the story of the hunting goddess Artemis, as told by Fortunata to Jordan, who now relates it to his adoptive mother. A story of rebellion against the law of the father, of multiple identities, rape and revenge, it reinscribes the fable within the fable. "All she [Artemis?] knew was that she had arrived at the frontiers of common sense and crossed over. She was safe now. No safety without risk, and what you risk reveals what you value" (134).

Ultimately, all three novels are about risk, about transgressive behavior, about narrating and (re)presenting the multiply constructed self. Like much historiographic metafiction, as Linda Hutcheon defines it, they require that we "question the processes by which we represent ourselves and our world to ourselves.... We cannot avoid representation. We *can* try to avoid fixing our notion of it and assuming it to be transhistorical and transcultural" (*Politics* 54).

Parodic and ironic to the core, the stories of these three big women rely heavily on intertextuality and ambiguity to destabilize fixed notions of feminine identity.

The very deployment of mixed genres such as the gothic, the epistolary, the documentary and the autobiographical, to mention only a few, forecloses the possibility of any conventional notions of femininity. But nowhere is this break with traditional representations so evident as in the use of the picaresque structure and the establishment of a carnivalesque atmosphere with its emphasis on change, renewal and disorder.

As Linda Hutcheon points out in her study of contemporary English-Canadian fiction, the picaro is traditionally a paradoxical character, a mixture of solitude and solidarity, independence and parasitism, faith and ironic skepticism (129). All this is important for the ambivalent nature of the three heroines. But it is the public, episodic nature of the picaresque plot that most contributes to the re-narration of the feminine by Swan, Carter and Winterson. Transgressing the domestic space, shunning for the most part the patriarchal marriage contract, the protagonists explore the world through travel and performance, though a life of action and conflict. It is not by chance that Anna Swan develops laryngitis on the occasion of her marriage to Martin Bates, a marriage which she refers to in her diary as "a disastrous act" (203). After her affair with Apollo is discovered by the dwarfs Thumb and Lavinia, whom she accuses of being "the moral guardians of Middle America" (305), Anna recognizes her life has become "a cliché — a farce acted out on an Ohio plain where the marvelous was diminished by the perception of those who dwell within material reality." As "a prisoner in the their dimension of ordinary life", she longs for a way out of her three containers: the house, the self, and the body (306). After all, she is a performer, her life is the theater, she needs an audience to give her back her construction of herself.

Fevvers as well, extraordinary as she is, must at one point fight her way out of the temptation of domesticity, of acting out the traditional love plot and changing from fiction into fact. It is ultimately her anarchist foster mother Lizzie who dissuades her from "turning from a freak into a woman" (283).

And the protagonist of *Sexing the Cherry*, though acknowledging she "would enjoy the consolation of a lover's face" (40), ends up roaming free the English landscape and concluding that "there is something to be said for this childless quiet life" (135). As the twentieth-century activist, she is a hero, a lonely but public figure fighting for the survival of the race against the interests of a powerful elite.

The three protagonist can therefore be seen as freaks in the sense that they defy socially enforced norms and beliefs. But they are un-natural in other ways as well. In their vitality and comic irreverence, they assume a carnivalesque posture very much in the sense of the grotesque as defined and described by Baklitin in *Rabelais and His World:*

> *As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. (10)*

With their whorehouses, freak museums, circuses and public executions, the three novels discussed can be said to stress the carnivalesque and the communal.

In Susan Swan's novel, for example, differences of class, race, gender and nationality are rendered relative by the multiplication of difference itself. Thus we have, as Teresa Heffernan points out, a subversion of the dichotomy between privilege and marginalization. Because everyone is marked as other — "the Canadian giantess, the impotent Yankee, the lonely lesbian queen, the Québécois strongman, Apollo the normal, the right-wing dwarfs" — a defamiliarization of normalcy is achieved (33) and the hybrid and impure take center stage.

But nowhere is the transgression of norms as evident as in their depiction and celebration of the female body as grotesque. It is here that the intertext with Rabelais and Bakhtin appears as a potent form of disruption. For the novels can be said to mimic Rabelais' fusion/confusion of self with other through the use of the open, protruding and secreting body, which "with its food drink, defecation and sexual life" (Bakhtin 18), emphasizes the ambivalence of life's transformations.

Fevvers eats and drinks voraciously during the interview to Walser, belching and farting in a Rabelaisian fashion (11,22). Everything about her smells — a stale composite smell that appears to Walser a "highly personal aroma" (9). This "essence of Fevvers" ends up enveloping and saturating him to the point of dizziness. It is only when he relieves himself by urinating in a white chamber pot behind a screen that he is brought down to earth again, for, as the narrator tells us, "there is no element of the metaphysical about pissing ... As he buttoned his fly, earthiness reasserted itself all around him" (52). The fiction and the fact, illusion and reality that Fevvers' hybrid angel/swan body represents contaminates the entire universe of the novel in a clear manifestation of the Bakhtinian "material bodily principle": "The object transgresses its own confines, ceases to be itself. The limits between the body and the world are erased, leading to the fusion of the one with the other and with surrounding objects" (310).

Anna Swan's gigantic body is also narratively explored in its fluid boundaries and excreting openings. When she menstruates, all the women of the small town of Seville, Ohio, get their menses (272). When her waters break, Londoners experience a spring shower on a perfectly cloudless day (241). But most of the curiosity she arouses has to do with her sexual response, for, as a big woman, she must be either the epitome of female pleasure or perhaps, as Apollo wonders, "she is a freak and does not have sexual desire" (220). Both false, of course.

Constantly measured and examined as an anatomical wonder, she is nevertheless repeatedly misconstrued and misunderstood, not to say misled. After losing her virginity to the midget Hubert, who under the pretense of measuring her birth canal ruptures her maidenhead with an icicle, Anna makes love to three other men: the Canadian giant Angus McAskill, who does not know how to give her pleasure; the American giant Martin Bates, her husband, who is impotent; and the Australian Apollo who, although not a giant, succeeds in both arousing and impregnating her. To add irony to irony, Anna's giant body cannot bring forth life: her daughter was still born and her "son", a baby of uncertain sex who "possessed an unformed male organ on his outer body and might have had female organs inside" (327), died shortly

after birth. She does not fulfill the role of fertile female imagined for her by her father. Nor can she help Bates in the breeding of a giant race for the American nation. Refusing to follow the cultural scripts of femininity devised by patriarchal culture, she inscribes herself in history as the multiple-selved "genuine show-biz celebrity" (2). The final irony about Anna's life is to be found in the juxtaposition of her epitaph — "I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness" (340) — to the narrative of non-conformity to righteousness she has just involved us in (Hefferman 32).

The Dog Woman's grotesque characteristics are harder to assess. As the liberated *alter ego* of her twentieth-century version, she embodies all the excesses and "negative" aspects that are checked in woman by the norms of society. She is a huge, larger-than-life picaro like both Anna and Fevvers. But, unlike them, she is also hideous and aggressive to the extent that the regenerative aspects of her grotesque existence are overshadowed by the gothic effects of her behavior. Her murderous and destructive impulses, however, can be said to arise from a genuine inability to understand the hypocrisy in the social relations surrounding her. The subtexts of the most violent incidents of her life are some of the major texts of our culture.

The commodification of women's bodies under the law of the father, for example, is fully exposed in her account of her relationship to her father:

> *When I was born I was tiny enough to sleep in my father's shoe; it was only later that I began to grow to such proportions that my father had the idea of exhibiting me. My mother refused him, saying no member of the family should be the subject of an exhibition. . . . One night my father tried to steal me and sell me to a man with one leg. . . . I came flying out at my father's throat. This was my first murder. (107)*

On another occasion, urged by the law of god to follow the Old Testament injunction 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth', and overcome with religious and political zeal, she fills a sack with eyeballs and teeth and brings them to church (85). But it is in her sexual exploits that the gothic farce appears at its best, this time as a parodic rendering of the psychoanalytic narrative of the "castrating bitch". Accosted by a stranger and asked to take him in the mouth "as you would a delicious thing to eat", she submissively complies: "I like to broaden my mind when I can and I did as he suggested, swallowing it up entirely and biting it off with a snap" (41).

In spite of the highly comical verbal composition, the regenerative and communal aspects of the Bakhtinian grotesque do not seem to inform the attention given to the Dog Woman. Nevertheless, if we contemplate her from a different perspective, as one of the manifestations of that multiple female self described in Fortunata's story of the goddess Artemis, we have a glimpse of the positive force that lies in an oppositional rendering of femininity — "as a child, a woman, a hunter, a queen" (131). It is to the monstrous self of the woman hunter that our attention is directed at the end of the narrative, when the Dog Woman and the activist conflate onto a single female who sets fire to London and to the contemporary factory in an effort to eradicate the plague and the contamination of the city by mercury, respectively. The process of

containment/excess of the self is thus rendered ambiguous by the very repetition of the subversive act.

By investing their female characters with such Rabelaisian dimension and vitality, Susan Swan, Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson play with the contradictions which inform the relationship between women, their bodies and the gendered identity attributed to them. As objects of the male gaze, women are to be contained and fixed. As the nonsensical, multiple, uncontained figures in the process of forging their own stories, Anna, Fevvers and the Dog Woman expose and contest literary and historical representations of gendered subjectivities.

Furthermore, they problematize the facile association of women with nature, as opposed to culture, by stressing the discursive and performative character of their lives. As Mary Russo points out in her study of the female grotesque as "a space of risk and abjection" (12), such selves prefigure "artifactual postmodernist bodily modalities" (14), very much in the fashion of Donna Haraway's "odd boundary creatures." The "reconfiguration, replication, monstrous metamorphoses" (14) recognized by Russo can be read as signs of future possibilities for women. The political implications of the transgressive female figure as public spectacle may reside exactly in the blurring of the boundaries between creators and creatures, process and product, performance and spectatorship, experience and innocence.

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IX. "O ensino de Shakespeare", São Paulo, 18-22 julho 1977. [Conselho Britânico]

X. "O Teatro Inglês Moderno", PUC-RS, Porto Alegre, RS, 10-14 julho 1978. [Conselho Britânico]

XI. "O Teatro Inglês Moderno", Universidade Católica de Petrópolis, Petrópolis, RJ, 17-21 julho 1978. [Conselho Britânico]

XII. "*Commonwealth Literature*", Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 4-8 fevereiro 1980. [Conselho Britânico]

XIII. "O ensino da Literatura de Língua Inglesa em nível universitário", UFES, Vitória, ES, 26-30 janeiro 1981. [Conselho Britânico]

XIV. "*Anglo-Irish Literature with Emphasis on Joyce*", Nova Friburgo, RJ, 21-26 janeiro 1982. [Conselho Britânico]

XV. "O Romance Comtemporâneo Inglês desde 1960", Embu, SP, 20-26 janeiro 1983. [Conselho Britânico]

XVI. "Teatro Comtemporâneo", PUC-MG, Belo Horizonte, MG, 26 janeiro a 1° fevereiro 1984. [Conselho Britânico e USIS]

XVII. "Poesia e Ficção Contemporâneas", PUCCAMP, , Campinas, SP, 28-31 janeiro 1985. [Conselho Britânico e USIS]

XVIII. "Tendências da Crítica Contemporânea", CIES "Farias Brito", Guarulhos, SP, 27-30 janeiro 1986. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq e USIS]

XIX. " O Conto Moderno", Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, 26-30 janeiro 1987. [Conselho Britânico, USIS, CNPq]

XX. "A Sátira na Literatura", Ibirá, SP, , 1-5 fevereiro 1988. [Conselho Britânico, Embaixada da Irlanda, USIS]

XXI.. "*Trends in Recent Literature*", Universidade Estadual de Maringá, 23 a 27 janeiro 1989. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico, CNPq, CONCITEC].

XXII. "Literatura Comparada: Teoria e Prática", Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Poços de Caldas, 22-26 janeiro 1990. [Prefeitura Municipal de Poços de Caldas, Conselho Britânico, CNPq]

XXIII. "Literatura, História e Mito", UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 28 janeiro a 1° fevereiro 1991. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FAPEMIG]

XXIV. "A Literatura dos Descobrimentos", UFPB, João Pessoa, 27-31 janeiro 1992. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, USIS]

XXV. "Interdisciplinaridade", UNESP S.J. Rio Preto, 25-28 janeiro 1993. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FAPESP, USIS]

XXVI. "Humor e Ironia na Literatura", PUCCAMP, Campinas, 25-29 janeiro 1994. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, USIS]

XXVII. "Redemarcando as Fronteiras: Literaturas de Língua Inglesa Hoje", Águas de Lindóia, SP, 30 janeiro - 3 fevereiro 1995. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FAPESP, USIS]

XXVIII. "Literatura e Cinema" (XXVIII SENAPULLI), Ouro Preto, MG, 29 jan. - 2 fev. 1996. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, CAPES, FAPEMIG, UFOP, USIS]

XXIX. "Literatura e Estudos Culturais", Atibaia, SP, 27-31 janeiro 1997. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, CAPES0, FAPESP, USIS]

XXX. "Ensaio e Biografia", Atibaia, SP, 27-31 julho 1998. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, CAPES, FAPESP, USIS]

XXXI "Neo-Realismo: Página, Palco e Tela", CES Juiz de Fora, MG, 17-21 julho 2000 [ABECAN, *The British Council*, Embaixada Americana, CAPES, CNPq, FAPESP]

ENPULI

Encontro Nacional de Professores Universitários de Língua Inglesa

I. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", UFRN, Natal, RN, 29 janeiro a 2 fevereiro 1979. [Conselho Britânico]

II. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", UFMG, Belo Horizonte, MG, 30 junho a 4 julho 1980. [Conselho Britânico]

III. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", UFBA, Salvador, BA, 16-21 julho 1981. [Conselho Britânico]

IV. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", UFSC, Florianópolis, SC, 14-20 julho 1982. [Conselho Britânico e Comissão Fulbright]

V. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", PUC-SP, São Paulo, SP, 17-22 julho 1983. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FINEP / FNDCT]

VI.. "Ensino e Aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa", UFPE, Recife, 22-27 julho 1984. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico, CNPq]

VII. "*Communicative Language Teaching*.", UFC, 28 julho a 2 agosto 1985, Fortaleza, CE. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico]

VIII. "Ensino e Aprendizagem de Língua Inglesa",Universidade de Brasília, 25-29 julho 1988. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq]

IX. "Desafios na formação do professor / profissional de língua estrangeira no Brasil", UFRN, Natal, 21-25 agosto 1989. [Conselho Britânico, FNDE/ MEC, INEP/MEC, FUNPEC, USIS]

X. "Avaliação curricular: repensando objetivos, métodos e testagem no ensino de inglês", PUC/RJ, 30 julho 3 agosto 1990. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico]

XI. "Ensino e Aprendizagem de Língua Inglesa", Faculdade São Marcos, São Paulo, SP, 29 julho a 2 agosto 1991. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, Embaixada do Canadá, USIS]

XII. "A autonomia na aprendizagem (*Towards learner autonomy*)", UFRGS, Porto Alegre, 19-23 julho 1993. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FAPERS, USIS]

XIII. "Interdisciplinaridade e Trocas de Experiências Inter-Universitárias: Compartilhando Recursos Humanos e Acadêmicos", PUC / RIO, 24-28 julho 1995. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, FAPERJ, USIS]

XIV. "*Social Implications [in Pedagogy and in Discourse] of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*", UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 21-24 julho 1997. [Conselho Britânico, CNPq, CAPES, FAPEMIG]

XV. "*The Teaching / Learning of English: Focus on Identity, Texts and Practices*", FFLCH / USP, 19-22 julho 1999. [Conselho Britânico, CAPES, Yázigi, Alpha Idiomas, CEL-LEP, CNPq, CAPES, FAPESP]

XVI. "Formação de Professores em Tempos de Mudança", UEL, Londrina, PR, 2-6 setembro 2001. [CAPES, CNPq, Conselho Britânico, Embaixada Americana, Fundação Araucária]

Outros

Mesa-redonda sobre "Pós-Graduação em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa no Brasil", Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 11-13 outubro 1982. [UFRJ e Conselho Britânico]

I Encontro Regional de Professores Universitários de Língua Inglesa (Região Centro-Leste), PUC / RIO, julho 1986. [Comissão Fulbright, Conselho Britânico]

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