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## Lyricism in the Brazilian Novel

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# **Lyricism in the Brazilian Novel**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
PhD

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit  
has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

To

Ian Pakes

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this doctoral thesis is to certify the presence of prose lyricism in Brazilian novels as a tendency, explaining its operation in diverse manifestations. Besides the examination of a selection of prose fiction works and writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the thesis also inquires about the absence of the subject in Brazilian literary studies, exposing the origin of a prejudice against lyrical narratives and refuting this negative preconception. This work bridges this gap and brings to light some of the implications of this absence, regarding Brazilian literary studies. In doing so, it also aims to contribute to the lyrical novel theory, adding to its premises recent and flexible configurations in the theory of the genres.

Chapter 1 analyses the changing nature of the concepts of novel and lyricism, while it contributes to achieve an updated perception of the lyrical novel. These variations are compared in order to obtain a theoretical standpoint from which to assess Brazilian literary works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Chapter 2 examines the historical provenance of the merger between lyricism and sentimentalism/escapism, one consequence of which has been the disparagement undergone by prose lyricism in Brazil up to the present. Chapter 3 offers an overview of canonical and non-canonical authors who work with prose lyricism – its main objectives are to do justice to this historical inquiry and to open new perspectives for research into these writers. The concluding Chapter 4 focuses on contemporary writing in Brazil. This examination is made in contrast with the current status of realism in Brazilian literature, questioning recent literary representations. Three lyrical novelists are taken as case studies, expanding the parameters obtained throughout the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

*Lyricism in the Brazilian Novel* aims primarily to analyse the use of prose lyricism in a selection of representative texts from Brazil in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The focus is on the role of lyricism in the literary historiography of Brazil, a subject that hitherto has not been studied systematically inside Brazil. This lack of specific scholarship on the subject is also discussed in this thesis, which ultimately aims to contribute to a better understanding of prose lyricism in Brazil, particularly against the backdrop of the predominant style of social realism in the canonical literary historiography. Based on this analysis, I argue that in Brazil this neglected tendency – lyrical novel-writing – represents a significant counterpoint to the dominant narrative mode of social realism.

Unravelling the presence of prose lyricism in Brazilian novels has been a personal quest of mine since 2004. At that time, when studying Raduan Nassar's *Lavoura arcaica* (1974) for my master's degree, I struggled to find detailed research on lyrical novels in Brazil. Nassar's book, which forces the reader to face poetic prose within a novelistic narrative, was awarded two of the most prominent prizes in Brazil, and inspired an award-winning film. What intrigued me was *Lavoura arcaica*'s narrative construction and its unusual features, combining prose and poetry in a novel. This combination has been studied in other contexts by scholars from countries such as Spain, France, Portugal and the United States, but none of their investigations have focused on Brazilian works, with the exception of Earl E. Fitz (1977; 1979; 1985; 2005). The difficulty in finding the desired information prompted me to broaden my first enquiry regarding Nassar's work. Driven by this interesting hypothesis of verifying the presence of lyrical novels in Brazilian literature, I felt compelled to understand the reasons why the subject had, until now, received such scarce consideration.

### **The unfolding context**

Behind the scant consideration of the subject lies a theoretical debate regarding the conceptualization of the lyric. First and foremost, it is vital to acknowledge this debate, because this question impacts on the accepted understanding and analysis of lyricism.

Beginning with its most prominent definition, lyricism is the peculiarity of the lyric, the lyrical attribute, and the 'lyrical property' (The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms 2008: 192). This statement leads us to the definition of 'lyric' itself, which in the same dictionary incorporates the historical factor into its explanation: 'In the modern sense, any fairly short poem expressing the personal mood, feeling, or meditation of a single speaker (who may sometimes be an invented character, not the poet' (The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms 2008: 192). With regards to literature, the word 'lyrical', according to the Oxford Dictionary of English, means: 'adjective 1. (of literature, art, or music) expressing the writer's emotion in an imaginative and beautiful way: *he gained a devoted following for his lyrical cricket writing*; (of poetry or a poet) lyric: *Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads*. 2. relating to the words of a popular song: *the lyrical content of his songs*' (2005: 1049).

Even if today the concept of the lyric appears established, its meaning has changed repeatedly throughout history. From classical Antiquity, when the lyric was principally associated with musical expression, to the present, when it achieves the category of subjective expressions, the term's meaning has widened to encompass a broad array of definitions. As a very concise summary, the lyric is presently considered one of the three grand divisions of literature, together with the narrative (epic) and the dramatic. This current prevalent categorization of the foundation genres was registered for the first time in the sixteenth century (Fowler, 1982: 236). Nonetheless, the 'lyric' emerged in Ancient Greece, developed initially in Aristotle's *Poetics* (335 BCE). Aristotle, however, addressed the lyric in the form of *melopeia* (song) and as a secondary part in epic poetry or tragedy, almost as an interlude within a story. Its nature nonetheless was not based on interiority and self-expression, but rather was presented as an interactive mode. The lyric poetry was then understood as a poem to be sung, initially accompanied by a lyre. In the early sixteenth century, a gradual separation of lyric and song began, as did a reduction in the ritualistic, rhetorical and performative aspect of its presentation. Romanticism definitively fixed the modern and contemporary perception of the lyric as an isolated, intimate and self-reflexive expression, completing the long transition from sung/spoken to written communication. More recently however, the lyrical self, the 'I', has been perceived as an expression of the crisis of representation experienced by the individual, instead of the consistent lyrical self which appeared after Romanticism (Paul de Man, cited by Brewster, 2009: 73).

This discussion about the evolution of the concept of the lyric cannot be rehearsed here in its entirety. However, it seems appropriate to mention the emergence of the New Lyric Studies,<sup>1</sup> a recent theoretical strand which is squarely dedicated to this evolution. One of the main hypotheses of the New Lyric Studies is that a *lyricization* has been occurring in literature. This means that many works written in verse since at least the middle of the nineteenth century have been categorised as ‘lyric’. The overuse of this term is the reason behind a prevailing theoretical disorientation, so much so that it has become an umbrella term to describe this flexible and inclusive characteristic (Lindley 1985: 8; Brewster 2009: 4).

As such, the meanings of the ‘lyric’ and its modal forms ‘lyrical’ and ‘lyricism’ have broadened in critical terminology. In the present, to describe something as ‘lyrical’ has become ‘highly problematic’ (Brewster 2009: 7). Currently, the disorientation prevails: ‘A persistent confusion – among verse genres, between historical genres and natural “forms”, between adjective and noun, between cognitive and affective registers, between grammar and rhetoric, between privacy and publicity, and among various ideas about poetry – may be the best way to define our current sense of the lyric’ (*The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* 2012: 826). Thus, as David Lindley argues, ‘The ever increasing range of lyric subject-matter and variety of manner, together with the persistence of anachronistic Romantic criteria of lyric as universal, provide a vast semantic field from any corner of which a particular critic might glean the significance he attributes to the term’ (1985: 23). Therefore, Lindley promotes the need for clearer definitions for the use of the terms.

Amidst this overview, and with no prospect of achieving a universal (and fixed) conceptualization, a number of coherent studies about the ‘lyrical’ have stood out, achieved recognition and become references and models for subsequent works. Regarding prose lyricism and the lyrical novel Ralph Freedman’s theory has become the chief source for many scholars interested in the subject since the late twentieth century (Lindley 1985: 23; Fowler 1982: 60, 211). Regarding the utilization of ‘lyrical’ and the interpenetration of genre boundaries in modern times, one should consider the case of Emil Staiger. Staiger developed a strong argument for the adoption of lyrical *principles*, offering an alternative to the apparent rigidity that the current prevalent theory of genres

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<sup>1</sup> See “The New Lyric Studies,” special part of *PMLA* 123.1 (2008), which comprises essays about the subject. Stephen Burt discusses positive and negative points in “What is This Thing Called Lyric?,” in *Modern Philology* (2016). He lists several conceptualizations about the lyric and shows incongruences and convergences among theorists on the subject.

may offer. His efforts were a response to the tangled approach to genres in criticism, encompassing the lyric, as explained here.

Ralph Freedman's research project, culminating in *The Lyrical Novel* (1963), provides a theoretical framework focusing on the developments that enabled the emergence of the lyrical novel in the twentieth century as well as outlining the main characteristics of such novels. Emil Staiger's *Basic Concepts of Poetics* (1952) adds to the 'subjectivity of the lyric' in modern times, as David Lindley states (1985: 2). Ultimately, Freedman's and Staiger's studies have the perceptiveness that this subject matter requires. For these reasons, both scholars were chosen as the main theoretical supports for this thesis. By engaging in a critical dialogue with them and other relevant theorists, and exploring the main premises of their respective arguments, I will approach this sensitive subject.

In summary, the lyrical novel I will examine here is a hybrid creation which makes intense use of imagery<sup>2</sup> as its primary fundament. This is in contrast to, and to the detriment of, the causal logic of narrative in the novel. This distinctive use of imagery affects the display of the story, the characters, and the scenarios. The plot plays a secondary role in relation to imagery, which usually carries a high level of metaphorization. As I will explain in Chapter 1, these metaphors tend to multiply the range of meanings in this type of narrative, challenging sequential actions by opening the possibility of different interpretations.

There are also other features worthy of consideration in the texts of this distinctive tendency, such as the transmutation of reality accomplished by the protagonists, the confluence of the character's self and the outside world, the growing intensity created by the use of imagery, the fragmentary nature of the text, circular and rhythmic aspects in the writing and even the level of engagement required from the reader. However, as I shall explain later, all of these traits work fluidly and are often heavily influenced and altered by the idiosyncrasies of the authors. Finally, the whole character of the lyrical work is suggestive of a soulful disposition, an affective expression, represented by the concept of *Stimmung*, used by Emil Staiger, with whom I dialogue with. Meanwhile, the textual tone and form act together in the lyrical novel in order to display this soulfulness, showing the lyrical narrative to frequently convey more abstract subjects.

The few relevant studies about lyrical novels indicate the basic parameters for theorizing the hybrid creation, recognizing the diverse and pliable aspects of the lyric

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of imagery gathers the meaning of image and imagination, being fundamentally linked to a sensorial perception. The term is fully explained in Section 1.1.1.

with a view to establishing a reasoned approach. The works to which I refer here are of Jean-Yves Tadié (France, 1978), Ricardo Gullón (Spain, 1984), Darío Villanueva (Spain, 1983), Rosa Maria Goulart (Portugal, 1990) and Earl E. Fitz (United States, 1977, 1979). Some recent studies have been contributed from Brazil, by Luzia A. Berlofffa Tofalini (2013) and Mariângela Alonso (2013). The comparison and joint examination of all these studies are intended to be a significant addition to the study of the subject. Thus far, the main achievements in this field lie in the scholars' tenacity in investigating such a shifting area of study. This is because in exploring this area, it is also necessary to take into account specific singularities of the historical evolution of the novel, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 1.

One part of this thesis engages with contemporary theorists who have objectively studied prose lyricism, as well as the distinguished theorists who have dealt with concepts significant to this study, such as imagery, metaphor and genre. All these topics are notorious for undergoing major shifts in the way that they are approached by critics. Among these theorists are Paul Ricoeur and David Punter and their relevant clarifications about the possibilities of the metaphor, as well as Ralph Cohen and Thomas O'Beebe and their contributions regarding *generic instability*. The theoretical framework also engages with scholars who dealt with the mutability of the novel, such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Georg Lukács and Lucien Goldmann. More recent theorists in the subject matter are Tzvetan Todorov and Michael McKeon.

### **The Brazilian overview**

In Chapter 2, I focus on Brazilian theorists, and how prose lyricism has been overlooked in the literary historiography, particularly in major works of Antonio Candido (1987; 1992; 2007), Nelson Werneck Sodré (1969), Silvio Romero (1949), José Aderaldo Castello (1960, 1999), Alfredo Bosi (1994), José Verissimo (1954) and Lucia Miguel-Pereira (1950). In addition, as previously mentioned, I consider the more recent contributions of Luzia Aparecida Berlofffa Tofalini (2009) and Mariângela Alonso (2013) as they predominantly dedicate their investigations to the insertion of lyricism in literary narratives. Other important inputs come from Massaud Moisés (1978) and Sonia Brayner (1979), who broached the topic in the second half of the twentieth century. To a lesser extent, Benedito Nunes (2009) is another contributor, particularly considering his interpretation of the mythopoetic in Brazilian literature.

Luzia Aparecida Berloff Tofalini's *O romance lírico* (2009) is the first book in Brazil outspokenly dedicated to lyricism in the novel. The focus of her research is the oeuvre of the Portuguese writer Raul Brandão, but she has also analysed the works of Brazilian authors. Examining the lyrical novel specifically, however, one of Tofalini's achievements is her exploration of the differentiation between prose and poetry, between lyrical poetry and anti-lyrical poetry. She also seeks to scrutinize the several meanings attributed to Poetics, since Antiquity, adding philosophy to the analysis as well, when Hegel and his *Aesthetics* formed a strong basis to delimitate lyricism. Tofalini's analysis broaches one of the most problematic realms of the subject, as demonstrated by the fluctuation of the aforementioned concepts. However, her effort to cover the subject through many diverse sources results in a diversion from the main topic, the lyrical novel itself. The outcome must be praised, though, not only for the examples given in Raul Brandão's texts, but also for exposing the intricate tapestry of concepts that surround the theme. More recently, in 2013, Mariângela Alonso published her first title entirely dedicated to Clarice Lispector's lyrical strategies of writing. Earlier, as stated, Massaud Moisés researched poetic prose in general and its implications in Brazilian narratives, while Sonia Brayner addressed innovations in the novel in the last century, when she highlighted the work of Adelino Magalhães and its lyrical features, just before the advent of Modernism in Brazil. However, the scholars did not show much interest in discussing the existence of lyrical novels in Brazil at the time.

Regarding other methodological approaches in Brazil, they mainly reside in digressions about the blend of prose and poetry in theoretical and historical books. These digressions are found when analysing the works of the so-called experimental authors. Not only did these authors deal categorically with lyricism, but they also dealt with innovative techniques in narrative. Nonetheless, some of these authors inserted lyricism liberally into their work, creating lyrical novels, such as Clarice Lispector and Osman Lins, whom I discuss in Chapter 3, dedicated to an overview of the development of this tradition in the twentieth century. In this section, I briefly discuss lyrical traits in the works of canonical and non-canonical authors, adding Adelino Magalhães, João Guimarães Rosa, Lúcio Cardoso and Raduan Nassar as well. To a certain extent, this set of writers have been acknowledged for their lyrical proclivity, without ever being subjects of a specific study. These observations, present in their critical reviews, are incorporated in this part of the thesis, in light of my methodological approach. The idea,

however, is not to cover their oeuvres entirely, but to situate these authors within the subject.

The authors discussed in Chapter 4, namely the novelists Reni Adriano, Wesley Peres and João Anzanello Carrascoza, are striking examples of contemporary developments in the current of lyrical novel-writing in Brazil. This has been observed but not analysed fully by literary critics, as I will demonstrate later on. Adriano, for example, brings lyricism to the foreground to create a mythical and vivid narrative. Peres, on the other hand, displays lyricism as a major aspect of the psychological novel that he produces, challenging notions related to subjectivity; his type of lyricism works in line with philosophical quests prominent in contemporary times. As for Carrascoza, his sharp lyrical style focuses on exploring intimacy, but without sentimentalism. Adriano, Peres and Carrascoza present particular manifestations of three different contemporary approaches to the lyrical trend in Brazil; just as the authors addressed in Chapter 3 offer distinct manifestations of the tradition, in different periods.

The contemporary case studies in Chapter 4 have also been selected because these authors have received recognition in the literary field in Brazil, displaying potential for further critical studies on their works. Although other lyrical writers appear in this thesis, the inclusion of their works is meant only to support my argument and illustrate the presence of lyricism in Brazilian prose.

### **Controversial dialogue**

This thesis also covers the continuous dialogue between literature and society, through which literary works reflect social characteristics (Goldmann 1975: 7; Todorov 1990: 19; McKeon 2000: 15). As the twentieth century brought many social shifts that triggered political and artistic movements, it was understandable that novels and other types of writing changed in their structure and purpose accordingly (Lukács 1963: 72). For literary scholars who deal with the challenges of lyricism in the novel through the current traditional division of genres, this may have caused difficulties in understanding poetry and prose on account of their respective classical placements.

These new contingencies were anticipated by Octavio Paz in *El arco y la lira* (1956). In his essayistic style, Paz unfolds a complex theme: how the social revolutions were going to be reflected in literature, with the coming together of prose and poetry. In his view, it is image and rhythm in preponderance which produce lyricism in any form of

text. Paz's reflections on language, prose, and poetry focus on the profound link they have with rhythm and image, since, according to him, language is born from rhythm – and this is why words tend to return to poetry (1956: 71-101). In the mid twentieth century, he noticed an increasing number of works that fused prose and lyricism, and argued that: 'La vuelta a las formas libres, fundadas en el golpe ritmico de sus acentos, se dio al mismo tiempo que el retorno a la imagen' (1956: 88). He cites books such as Lautréamont's *Les chants de Maldoror* (1869) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) as examples of how this return had already begun in the previous century: 'son poemas. En ellas la prosa se niega a sí misma; las frases no se suceden obedeciendo al orden conceptual o al del relato, sino presididas por las leyes de la imagen y el ritmo' (1956: 71).

The theme of hybridism between prose and poetry, and of the return to image and rhythm, has been discussed in relation to the shifts undergone by the novel in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Brazilian critics' adaptation to and acceptance of the theme is still an ongoing process. This is largely due to attempts at categorizing so-called hybrid genres, and attempts at pinpointing their formation as consequences of grand literary movements such as Romanticism, for its lyrical features (Moisés 1978: 43), and Modernism, for the use of inventive writing techniques (Bosi 1994: 385; Nunes 2009: 143). One example of such attempt is in Charles Schug's *The Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel* (1979), which challenges Ralph Freedman's theory on the lyrical novel. Schug argues that the lyricism present in mid twentieth century novels is part of the legacy of Romanticism. I will, however, challenge this perspective in the second chapter.

In light of the factors introduced above, and the few relevant works that have studied prose lyricism in Brazil, the objective of this research is to analyse this type of narrative within modern Brazilian literature in order to identify the development of a tendency, while engaging with a selection of relevant theories on the lyrical novel. It must be stressed, however, that the purpose of this work is not to suggest a restricted approach to classifying lyricism in Brazilian novels, but to provide a new contribution to the scholarship on lyrical novels in Brazil. Although lyricism is certainly a major feature of lyrical novels, such novels are not restricted to this single characteristic, and usually share other characteristics with other tendencies as well, as it constitutes a hybrid conception, which uses basic narratives from other genres, styles or modes for the insertion of lyricism. Psychological, criminal, epistolary novels may therefore display



lyricism to a certain extent; however, when there is a prevalence of lyricism, then we are dealing with a lyrical novel, while at the same time the basic narrative remains as a support. This form of predominance is what this thesis will analyse, whilst on the other hand, it investigates this singular form of hybridization. This type of open configuration is already present in Freedman's original ideas, which anticipated the mutable character of the lyrical novel in the context of the permanent transformation of the novel genre. Accordingly, I prefer to consider this type of methodological approach as one that contemplates a multiple and flexible attitude towards the novel.

### **Committed prose**

Since this is one of the first in-depth explorations of this topic focusing on Brazilian novels, there is a need to understand the reasons behind the lack of detailed studies on the topic. This enquiry, already present in my work on *Lavoura arcaica* in 2006, grew exponentially as the study advanced in the face of evident neglect and lack of focus on this subject. This absence of scholarship is all the more profound in light of the fact that some contemporary novels in Brazil are notably lyrical, making the need for analysis all the more prominent.

Another parallel hypothesis also arises from this state of affairs. This is that Brazilian writers remain bound by the need to register and document people's reality. This demand has never been negotiated and, more specifically, it has been a contributing factor to the repression of the lyrical style and the analysis of lyricism. As Antonio Candido states in his essay "Literatura e subdesenvolvimento" (1987: 157-158), the social and economic problems of the country are subjects which Brazilian writers cannot avoid. This factor would have led to an emphasis on social realist literature. I sustain that this same social realist principle is responsible for the over dissemination of realism in many contemporary narratives in Brazil, in which there is an excessive focus on the urban life and violence, as well as the tragedies of the everyday life of common citizens – as suggested by Beatriz Resende (2007; 2008) while describing aesthetic tendencies in contemporary Brazilian literature. This argument is examined in Chapter 4.

However, it is important not to establish a dichotomy between socially-engaged literature and the presence of lyricism in prose. This present study does not imply that this type of over realistic approach in Brazilian prose cannot achieve lyrical moments.

Rather, I suggest that social realism and prose lyricism have not even been considered side by side by the critics until now, and that may be the reason for this absence of major studies about prose lyricism in Brazil. My hypothesis is that there is a certain prejudice against the lyrical narrative due to the disseminated understanding that prose lyricism is not an appropriate vehicle for social engagement. This preconception is not new; as Scott Brewster suggests, this happens according to the ‘habitual view of lyric as timeless and unworldly, remote from historical conflict’ (2009: 45). I will explore the origins of this attitude further in Chapter 2, besides discussing how lyricism provides counterpoints to this preconception. As I will explain, an idealization of the new-born nation occurred in literature during Romanticism, and after this phase had concluded, prose lyricism began to be treated with caution. As Doris Sommer states in *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991: 7; 29), there was a functional rhetoric for the intense political nature of earlier Latin American novels, which served the tangled relationship between politics and fiction.

However, the problematic attitude to lyricism can be observed by the non-development of more imaginative – that is to say, creative, fantastic and imagistic – narratives in Brazil, in contrast to the rest of Latin America, as Beatriz Jaguaribe (2007: 111) points out. This phenomenon may be one direct consequence of the negative appreciation lyricism has suffered, compounded in Brazil by the traditional emphasis put on social realism.

The preponderance of prose with social purposes to the detriment of imagination and lyricism offers a contrast to the notable investment in Brazilian lyrical expression through other media such as music (Fitz 2005: 23). Even when called upon to deny lyricism during the most oppressive times of dictatorship, musicians could never repress their vigorous lyricism which, in a broader sense, has come to represent certain aspects of a Brazilian public character. I deem this Brazilian musical lyricism (which has given the public so many valuable poetic works) to be one of the most genuine forms of expression of the cordial man, as portrayed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda in his work *Raízes do Brasil* (1936), one of the major books about the formation of Brazilian national identity, which remains relevant today. This well-known concept expresses the prevalent affective disposition of the Brazilian people and their tendency to overvalue private alliances to the detriment of collective, public pacts. The consequences of this attitude are specific forms of interaction within interpersonal relationships and forms of expression characterised by intimacy, individuality, and subjectivity: ‘expressões

legítimas de um fundo emotivo extremamente rico e transbordante' (1936: 215).<sup>3</sup> In terms of lyricism, the distance between musical and prose literary expression is so profound as to be almost a discrepancy. Although I will not analyse lyricism in the musical context, I intend to expose this discrepancy when demonstrating that lyricism is a characteristic that has been present in Brazil since early twentieth century.

### **Concepts, history, possibilities, presence: the chapters**

In Chapter 1, I will scrutinize the scholarship on lyricism in the novel. This approach streamlines the research among the diverse conceptualizations that surround prose lyricism with reference to poetry and prose, and to hybridizations involving both. The crucial roles of imagery and metaphor are outlined at the beginning of the explanation, followed by the argument that the relationship between imagery and metaphor is unique to prose lyricism. In order to explain this unique relationship, I will explore perspectives on metaphor and imagery, based mainly on the theoretical support of Paul Ricoeur (1978) and David Punter (2007). The concepts of Ralph Freedman and other scholars of the lyrical novel are then introduced alongside the shifting landscape of the novel tradition, with particular emphasis on the twentieth century and the advent of the psychological novel. Additionally, the novel's importance as a social interlocutor will be highlighted. My analysis in this regard is aided by the critics such as Georg Lukács and Lucien Goldmann. The other prominent scholars in the sphere of lyrical novels, as cited here previously, are broached too. Moreover, Virginia Woolf, one of the focuses of Freedman's analysis, appears in this chapter due to her meta-analytical approach as a writer and as a theorist. Woolf's concept of the *moment* is also analysed by Freedman.

The engagement of this thesis with Freedman's theory is critical. The main topics of Chapter 1 were chosen in order to include what I consider to be the most effective analyses of lyricism. My intention is to soften the preponderant theory of the genres, in the way that Emil Staiger suggests in his *Basic Concepts of Poetics* (1952).<sup>4</sup> As

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<sup>3</sup> Counterarguments to Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's analysis are found in Dante Moreira Leite's *O caráter nacional brasileiro* (1976), in which Holanda is considered to have a static perspective on the Brazilian character, that is, he does not consider properly social shifts evolving in Brazilian society (1976: 293). And Thales de Azevedo, in *Os brasileiros: estudos de 'caráter nacional'* (1981) emphasizes that the concept of national character 'é difícilimo de ser concretamente aplicado' (1981: 48). Nonetheless, Dante Moreira Leite attempts a general profile of the national character through a comparison of several other studies on the subject, by Silvio Romero (1888), Gilberto Freyre (1933), Cassiano Ricardo (1937), Fernando de Azevedo (1944), Viana Moog (1954). A common feature to all of them though is affectivity, sentimentality, emotionalism.

<sup>4</sup> The edition used in this thesis is from 1991. The above-mentioned year is when the book was written.

mentioned before, instead of categorizing modern literary works in classical theoretical niches, Staiger proposed shifts from Lyric to lyrical; from Epic to epic; and from Drama to dramatic, and that all these characteristics can be found mixed together in any work. Therefore, he challenges the vaunted (but disputed) impenetrability of the genres. His innovative approach is reflected today in the development of the debates around the validity of the genres. In this sense, I broach some of Thomas O’Beebe’s and Ralph Cohen’s considerations, by way of better contextualizing the theoretical impasse. This chapter then sets out my theoretical framework for the analysis of lyrical novelists in Brazil.

Turning the focus then to Brazil, Chapter 2 aims to disentangle the historical roots of the confusion surrounding prose lyricism in Brazil’s literary historiography. The basis for this enquiry is the use of what was considered lyrical prose during the period of Romanticism. This was the case for *Iracema* (1865), José de Alencar’s foundational novel analysed here as a case study. *Iracema* was the only novel regarded as lyrical in Brazil’s historiography until the appearance of *Lavoura arcaica* almost a century later, as I attest in this chapter. But rather than being lyrical to its core, the Romantic literary discourse has been frequently read as a way to engender the identity of the new nation, which was profoundly encased in grandiloquence, idealisation, exuberance, escapism and sentimentalism, all features that somehow remained associated with prose lyricism – and which went against the documentary character cited earlier on. Despite all of the complexity presented by Romanticism and Indianism, focusing on this work by Alencar helps to exemplify the entanglement more clearly. The purpose is to present this ideological misappropriation of lyricism in Romanticism which can cause misconceptions even today.

From that period in literature, we then move forward to the early twentieth century with Symbolism and its consequences, which last up to the present day. I will also seek to demonstrate how this confusion was blended with the critical appreciation of lyricism later experienced, as a feature of Brazilian identity related to sentimentalism. Ultimately, Chapter 2 reinforces the concept of the lyrical novel, by explaining – according to my theoretical framework – what the lyrical literary narrative does not entail. This strategy is applied due to the scarce studies in the field. In this way, I intend to aid the comprehension of the theoretical background presented in the first chapter. And, finally, the chapter ends rebutting the alleged evasiveness and alienation of

lyricism, through the contribution of Hugh H. Grady (1981) and Theodor Adorno (1991).

Chapter 3 applies the theoretical approach established in Chapter 1 to canonical Brazilian writers who have been frequently regarded as lyrical, namely Clarice Lispector and João Guimarães Rosa, as well as non-canonical writers such as Osman Lins and Lúcio Cardoso. The selection of works analysed is not supposed to be a fully comprehensive coverage or an in-depth analysis of what Brazilian literature offers, but rather aims to draw attention to the emphasises on lyricism and the new perspectives brought up by these writers.

Chapter 4 then analysis how the tradition of realism still has a major presence in Brazilian novels published in the present century, frequently engaging in narrations of urban, everyday lives in major cities. Studies such as those of Beatriz Resende (2007), Beatriz Jaguaribe (2007) and Erik Schøllhammer (2009) discuss this particular aspect of Brazilian novels, which is intimately related to the changes the country has undergone in the past few decades. The predominance of violence, as well as the fragmentary writing, produces novels that focus on what Beatriz Jaguaribe describes as ‘choque do real’ (2007): a strategy that resorts to brutality and fragmentation, being still of a documentary character. According to Jaguaribe, the main purpose of this frequently-used strategy is to seek empathy from the reader, without their engagement with reality itself. My goal is to draw on the growing presence of lyricism in novels written in this type of literary style, in order to demonstrate how lyricism can interpenetrate the current context of Brazilian literature.

I achieve this in Chapter 4 by discussing this aesthetic realism and the advance of lyricism, followed by a study of three major contemporary authors – Reni Adriano, Wesley Peres, and João Anzanello Carrascoza – who were selected for the predominance and systematic use of lyricism in their novels. As explained before, they all present different types of lyrical narratives, and a diversity in style and in themes. Each one brings a challenge to traditional patterns of representation. My analyses will focus on their narrative strategies to show how the subjects of the novels are enhanced by the use of lyricism. Chapter 4 then concludes by demonstrating how recent prose lyricism can provide a counterpoint to the current focus on urban everyday life and its fragmentary representation.

There are two main lines of enquiry developed throughout the thesis. The first, and most important, is to highlight the existence of a thread of lyrical novels in Brazilian

novelistic production since the nineteenth century, and the ways in which hybridization between lyricism and prose operates. The second is to discuss the resistance of Brazilian literary historiography to recognising lyricism in the certain novels that explicitly explore this narrative strategy. These two lines, one conceptual and the other historical, are interwoven throughout the chapters, with a view to building a sturdy line of reasoning in which one complements the other. Hence, this enquiry does not attempt to provide a sociological explanation for these hypotheses; rather it functions more as a redress to a historical shortage of studies of lyricism as a tendency in the historiography of the novel in Brazil. Through this analysis, this thesis offers new insights into Brazil's lyrical novelists and their works. My objective is to address the phenomenon of neglect of this subject that has led to an impoverished analysis or at the very least, a limited knowledge of the richness offered by Brazilian literature. As an eventual result, this study also contributes to the perception that prose lyricism can be socially engaged – in the light of the political role frequently demanded of Brazilian writers.

# 1 LYRICISM AND THE NOVEL, TWO SHIFTING CONCEPTS

This chapter presents and discusses concepts related to lyricism and the lyrical novel. Its purpose is not to categorically exhaust the subject, but to display what I understand to be the best theoretical approach to examine the lyrical novel, and to consider it pragmatically as a basic guideline for the analysis of representative Brazilian lyrical novels later on. Also it is fundamental to clearly comprehend the focus of this investigation, which is the Brazilian lyrical novel. Nonetheless, the aim of this chapter is to examine lyrical novel theory and the concept of lyricism itself. As I will show in this chapter, lyricism is not related to lyrical poetry alone; thus it is crucial to understand its probable key characteristics, beyond any format or genre.

Before moving on to deal with lyricism in the Brazilian novel specifically, it is necessary to explore the scholarship around lyrical prose, and the difficulty in analysing the subject.<sup>5</sup> Along with Ralph Freedman's proposal, in researching this thesis I have searched for the other most representative studies on the subject of prose lyricism, but they are scarce. Some of them present an overall analysis, like Jean-Yves Tadié, in *Le récit poétique* (1978), and Ricardo Gullón, with *La novela lírica* (1984); other studies focus on specific authors, such as Darío Villanueva, in *La novela lírica I and II* (1983), on the works of Azorín, Gabriel Miró, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Benjamín Jarnés, respectively; Rosa Maria Goulart, in *Romance lírico: o percurso de Vergílio Ferreira* (1990); and Luzia A. Berloff Tofalini, in *Romance lírico* (2013), about Raul Brandão. However, when studied together, their contributions help to establish guidelines for the analysis of the Brazilian lyrical novel I develop in the subsequent chapters.

To keep a balance between the focus and the extent of the subject matter in this first chapter, I introduce notions about the rise of the novel as a genre, and how it has been classified in literary studies. My intention is to highlight aspects useful to reach a satisfactory conclusion. To be more accurate about the methodology of the lyrical novel,

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<sup>5</sup> This difficulty is not only related to lyricism and its idiosyncrasies. It is important to note the impasse born out of the context in which lyrical prose appeared in the novelistic genre – the shifting historical, social, artistic, literary context of the twentieth century. Moving forward and using as a point of reference the most relevant theory regarding the lyrical novel to date – that of the hybrid genre as put forward by Ralph Freedman – it is evident that lyrical prose has aligned with the remarkable social and political shifts of the last century. Those changes in art prompted an ongoing crossing of boundaries in established genres. In literature, it was no coincidence that the twentieth century witnessed the establishment of what we today call the prose poem, and poetic prose.

it is important to explore its constitutive aspects. Nevertheless, this is a hybrid elaboration that reflects changes and innovations in novel writing, and I will ground the discussion with a selection of examples. For this reason, this study opens with an in-depth explanation of prose lyricism and, in Chapters 3 and 4, the parameters concluded in this chapter will be applied with numerous illustrations from Brazilian texts. European texts have been avoided intentionally, so as to avoid any confusion in interpretation. Also since there is such great diversification of terms within genre theory, it is necessary to make a preliminary point about nomenclature. The fundamental literary divisions of Lyric, Epic and Drama and their derivatives are all called genres in this study. It would be unproductive and confusing to begin to establish differentiations in terminology such as genres, subgenres, modes, kinds, categories and styles. Thus, I have opted to alternate these terms. My intention is to simplify my line of reasoning as much as possible in order to achieve a clear analysis despite the intricate nature of the subject matter.

I begin with lyrical novel theory.

### **1.1 Freedman and the need to understand the lyrical novel**

Diverse types of lyrical narrative have long existed in literary history, cutting across many cultures and times, especially in the form of allegories and idylls.<sup>6</sup> However, its increasing and specific intensification within (and in contrast with) the basic form of the novel, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, has become a point of interest for scholars.<sup>7</sup> Among them was Ralph Freedman, a German university professor, novelist and literary critic based in the USA, who developed a theory for lyricism in novels. One of Freedman's intentions was to go beyond the immediate identification of traditional lyrical textual features.<sup>8</sup>

Freedman's theory is an attempt to evaluate or find a method to specify the nature of this hybridization that, until he approached the topic, had not been fully explored (1963:

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<sup>6</sup> As Ralph Freedman states, since its former configuration, the genre novel has been lyrically subverted, as in 'prose allegories, poetic idylls and picaresques, the use of fairy tale, dream, distortion and fantasy, of mental association and dithyrambs in prose' (1963: 16-17).

<sup>7</sup> By 'basic form of the novel' I mean the narrative which relies upon consecutiveness, causes and effects for the development of the plot. It can also be called linear narrative, because it always presents sequentiality. 'Consecutiveness', which stresses the relationship between cause and effect, is a term special to Ralph Freedman. I explain this nomenclature further on, in this same chapter.

<sup>8</sup> Textual features are physical characteristics of the texts; textual resources.



Preface, 7).<sup>9</sup> His main line of reasoning is to attest how elements of linear narratives such as characters, situations and scenarios are transformed into patterns of imagery by lyrical novelists. The corpus of Freedman's theory also testifies to the extreme sensibility of the genre, its malleability with regard to details such as authors' nationalities and idiosyncrasies. Although now over fifty years old, Freedman's theoretical model still serves as a reference within the constant changes in the contemporary novel worldwide, especially concerning prose lyricism.

Before considering the analysis of the novel in its recent configuration, it is worth bearing in mind Freedman's statements about the lyrical novel's constitution. It seems to me that the very fundamentals of the modern and contemporary novel set the background for the genesis of the lyrical novel, from a dialectical perspective. Essentially, the two modes, the lyrical and the non-lyrical novel, exist in correlation, as I will discuss later in this chapter. However, it seems to be more methodologically useful to give predominance first to the lyrical treatment of the novel. Our object of study, the lyrical narrative, must be considered in contrast with the novelistic tradition as a whole. At the time Freedman's book was written, the lyrical novel was described as an 'immensely fertile corrective for the conventional novel', to be 'overcome as well as to be used' (Freedman 1963: 283).

Thus, I will focus first on Freedman's perspective in order to clarify which of the chief characteristics of prose lyricism are to be regarded in my further analyses of specific Brazilian novels. These main foundations were chosen in a critical analysis, which has determined the most important points to be integrated into my position in this study.

### **1.1.1 Imagery against novelistic causation and time: the main feature**

In terms of literary construction, the texture of imagery is what really defines the lyrical novel. The concept of imagery is of paramount importance to prose lyricism. Besides the inherent forms and figures that it displays, imagery carries both the meanings of imagination and image, being used in the semantics of painting as well.

Imagery's crucial presence in prose lyricism demands careful attention because its constitution explains the readers' different perceptions with regard to lyrical metaphors. Preponderantly, imagery is considered a technique. According to The Oxford Dictionary

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<sup>9</sup> In terms of nomenclature, Freedman's states the lyrical fiction is an ambiguous genre: 'Lyrical fiction, then, is a special instance of the novel of awareness. Yet the lyrical novel has also remained a distinct genre' (1963: 273).

of Literary Terms: ‘The imagery of a literary work thus comprises the set of images that it uses; these need not be mental “pictures”, but may appeal to senses other than sight. The term has often been applied particularly to the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes’, and stresses that imagery is able to ‘evoke sense-impressions’ (2008: 164-165). This appeal to the senses may determine the imagery as visual, olfactory, tactile, auditory, gustatory, as much as abstract and kinaesthetic as well (Cuddon 1992: 443). Imagery is also used in works related to Literary Impressionism, which, according to Adam Parkes (2011), as much as its equivalent in painting, serves to elevate the individual perceptual experience. Similar to the impressionist painting work, literary imagery would utilise a suggestive ambience to highlight the reader’s impressions, offering a ‘multiplication of subjective perspectives’ (2011: 5). In addition, for many critics such as John Peck and Martin Coyle, figurative imagery, as used in poetry, conveys its own logics (1993: 39).

For my study, what matters is the relationship between imagery and metaphor. The concept of imagery, offering many individual perspectives of apprehension, aligns with the recent conceptions of metaphor, within the contemporary studies on the subject. The alignment resides in the fact that the major idea of metaphor has undergone an opening process. From its almost adorning place in Aristotle’s *Poetics* as an addition to (or a transference of) a literal meaning, the metaphor is now understood to present an opportunity to create new meanings, and thus demands an imaginative reception. As David Punter suggests, with a new process of comprehension, the metaphor ‘may not be revealed by an “opening” or unpacking, but rather that it gives off its own meaning in a way that is difficult of apprehension but integral to communication and understanding’ (2007: 17).<sup>10</sup>

This new way of connection is defended by Paul Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor*, where the philosopher broaches the force of language through the potency of the metaphor. To Ricoeur, the metaphor communicates directly, leaving in the space of meaning (the literal reference) the possibility of new significances: ‘the suspension of literal reference is the condition for the release of a power of second-degree reference, which is properly poetic reference’ (1978: 6). This is possible through the metaphors

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<sup>10</sup> David Punter mainly addresses the development of Western notions of metaphors; however, he draws attention to its diverse evolution in Eastern critical theories as well. In China, for example, the advance of metaphor studies has grown without the support of formal logics, according to him (2007: 34). Punter’s work points out the contemporary need to approach the concept of metaphor in a more open way. As he states, ““metaphor” itself is not a static, ahistorical term”; this means it can be historicised, defined and used in different manners by diverse cultures. Nonetheless, even if restricted to the Western purview, the matter requires a comprehensive analysis, encompassing its recent theoretical re-evaluations.

within the images. Imagery, according to Ricoeur, can conjoin sense and senses: based on Marcus B. Hester's theory (1967), he digresses about the act of reading as a process of suspending reality and simultaneously being actively open to the text. In this process, imagery is crucial, as Ricoeur explains:

the deployment of images is something that "occurs" and towards which the sense opens indefinitely, giving unlimited scope to interpretation. One can say truly, in connection with the flux of imagery, that to read is to grant original right to all the data. In poetry, openness to the text is openness to the imagery as liberated by the sense. (1978: 210)

Basically, as much as imagery highlights the readers' sensorial impressions, the metaphor within imagery is able to convey new senses, new meanings and new understandings. This operation can be understood as a multiple action towards an imaginative understanding of the text. Furthermore, what is at stake, as we accompany Ricoeur's line of reasoning, is the dimension of reality with which the reader is dealing: 'Therefore, we must reserve the possibility that metaphor is not limited to suspending natural reality, but that in opening meaning up on the imaginative side it also opens it towards a dimension of reality that does not coincide with what ordinary language envisages under the name of natural reality' (1978: 211).<sup>11</sup> This capacity of imagery to challenge reality and expand its meaning, as mentioned in the Introduction, permeates my investigation. The relationship between lyrical perspective and reality (in the form of literary realism) deserves a wider examination, as will be demonstrated further on in this thesis.

To return to the chief point of this section, these sensorial and synaesthetic aspects of the images assume a fundamental role in the lyrical narrative. This profuse pattern of imagery is created from concrete elements of the narrative. The narrative becomes submerged in this imagery, linked much more to metaphorical suggestions than to the plot's mimetic data, based on reality. The world rendered by the narrative, including characters, scenarios and circumstances, is contracted into images. This claim does not mean that novels of any kind cannot usually present metaphors, or images. The difference is that imagery in the lyrical novel supersedes the plot, although it still has a plot: 'a lyrical novel assumes a unique form which transcends the causal and temporal movement of narrative within the framework of fiction. It is a hybrid genre that uses the

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Ricoeur's studies in *The Rule of Metaphor* span Philosophy, Linguistics and Literature, reaching even the concept of *metaphorical truth*. For the sake of fluency in this study, which is not a work in Theory of Literature, I will not develop his perspectives further. However, as stated before, the choice of his perspective is aligned to the specific theoretical framework elected for this investigation.

novel to approach the function of a poem' (Freedman 1963: 1). The prevalence of sensitive imagery defines the hybrid genre style, something that leads Freedman to point out a very important detail: 'Lyrical fiction, then, is not defined essentially by a poetic style or purple prose' (1963: 1). This statement represents a milestone in the hitherto indeterminate scenario of poetic approaches to prose narrative. It established more parameters with which prose lyricism could be analysed.

Freedman explored and explained his theory thorough analysis of the works of the novelists André Gide, Herman Hesse and Virginia Woolf. He presented their idiosyncrasies in order to demonstrate how diverse lyrical fiction can be in terms of approaches and techniques used. His studies delve beyond imagery and portraiture and, despite the diversity of individual lyrical writers, he successfully defines a series of features of the lyrical novel.

Some of these features are organised and listed below, as they form part of the parameters of my analysis. Freedman did not set them out in any order of importance, and I have selected those that will allow me to apply a pragmatic and concrete criteria to the analysis that follows. As noted above, these traits were chosen in a critical selection.

The features selected here, along with quotes from Freedman's works are for illustrative purposes. His statements will be analysed and commented on in greater depth in Chapters 3 and 4, which are devoted to literary analysis, as alongside excerpts from the novels selected they can be better comprehended.

#### **a) Lyrical progression**

A relevant characteristic is lyrical progression, based on lyrical objectivity, that is to say, when an increasing and objective intensity is generated through images. This objectivity, as Freedman explains, is similar to the progression that occurs within a poem, which depends on the intensity of the image: the strength of the images increases, and the images grow into the narrative. Thus, there is a progression in intensity. There is not a progression in consecutiveness<sup>12</sup> – one action generating another action or a consequence in the plot. Instead, the reader finds one image generating another (more

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<sup>12</sup> Consecutiveness is the theoretical term used by Ralph Freedman related to the logical sequentiality within the narrative, in which the scenes undergo a continuity based on cause and effect, consequence – a progression of actions. The lyrical progression may be understood as a different form of sequential structure within the narrative; however, unlike the sequentiality based in facts, there is a sequentiality based on intensity. In this thesis, I will be alternating between both terms, consecutiveness and sequentiality.

intense) image, which contributes towards intensifying the perception of the character, or the situation which is being narrated:

Yet as a lyrical poem moves from image to image, it also follows its own inimitable progression, acting through variations and expansions of themes, changes in rhythm, and elaborations of images to reach a point of greatest intensity at which the poet's vision is realized. (1963: 6-7)

Another distinctive facet of lyrical progression is its emphasis on communicating meaning through feeling (sensitivity) rather than facts: 'Consecutiveness is simulated by lyrical language; its emergence toward greater intensity reveals not new events but the significance of existing events. Actions are turned into scenes which embody recognitions' (1963: 8). Therefore, the attention is not on the facts contributed by the narrative, but on the poetic interpretation (as a sort of translation) of these facts.

Freedman calls this type of objectivism *aesthetic objectivism* (1963: 2) inspired by the American critic Kenneth Burke (1930), who also analysed André Gide and Thomas Mann, denominating it a *qualitative progression*, and by German scholar Wolfgang Kayser (1951), who in his turn called it *lyrical process* (both cited in Freedman, 1963: 7).

Nonetheless, in poetry this kind of progression happens freely, without interference. The difference is that in lyrical novels, it coexists with the prerogatives of the narrative, linked to causation and time, which can be limiting to the intensity of the images. Freedman calls attention to the conflict originating from the tension between the force of the images and the sequentiality of the plot (1963: 7). For the reader, the result is ambiguity and destabilisation.

### **b) Immediacy in portraiture**

Like a viewer observing a painting, when readers come across prose lyricism there is an immediate apprehension of images and senses. Instead of gaining a logical understanding through narrative sequentiality, what takes place is the poetic process of perceiving the metaphor with immediacy. In prose narrative, the apprehension of the metaphor usually comes at the end of the syntax construction.

Freedman names this characteristic *lyrical immediacy*: 'It is an immediacy of portraiture, an availability of themes and motifs to the reader's glance without the interposition of a narrative world' (1963: 9-10). Of this portraiture it is said that, more than a depiction, it is an important strategy in the rhythm of the narrative: 'The

characteristic differentiating lyrical from non-lyrical fiction is portraiture, the halting of the flow of time within constellations of images of figures' (1963: 273).

### **c) Use of a base narrative**

The lyrical process is applied to a narrative which is already provided – a drama, a thriller, a romantic novel, a novel of manners. In fact, as Freedman explains, it depends on the primary form of the novel, which is manipulated through poetic resources. Its singularity lies in the fact that it has no preordained form, but instead operates on a type of narrative established within the novel tradition:

Lyrical novels, then, possess widely ranging possibilities of objectification. Their repertoire of possible techniques includes many variations of narrative form which they use in the manner of lyrical poetry, extending from a pure stream of consciousness to a controlled pattern of figures and scenes manipulated by an omniscient author. Epistolary novels and confessions, picaresques and novels of education have contributed to corresponding forms of lyricism. The novel of manners may furnish a base for the lyrical novel as much as the novel of adventure. (1963: 16)

Objectification, in the quote above, is in the sense of manifestation – the possibility of embodiment, since there are many different types of novel that can be manipulated by being given a lyrical treatment. Therefore, the emphasis in this study is placed much more on the way that the base narrative is modified than in what constitutes the lyrical novel original form, precisely because there is no pure original form. Freedman goes so far as to call the lyrical novelist 'the perverse poet' who uses the narrative 'as the object of his deformations'. He says that the role of the critic is to identify in which ways lyrical qualities appear within traditional narratives, and how these lyrical attributes modify the way these novels are narrated (1963: 10).

### **d) A symbolic hero**

The protagonist, usually the character through whom the occurrences of the plot are turned into imagery, corresponds to the lyrical self of the poems. Normally, this figure is also the narrator. Freedman states that in lyrical novels the union of protagonist and narrator creates a special third persona, or a type of self who is allowed to transform every element of the narrative and his experiences into imagery.<sup>13</sup> To accomplish this,

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<sup>13</sup> As clarified at the beginning of item 1.1.1, imagery must be understood as the use of sensorial images, images provocative to the senses, rather than images based solely on their mental appropriation through form. The symbolic hero presented by Freedman, then, is the central character of the lyrical novel able to massively evoke and display this type of imagery from material elements of the narrative. This requires of him a sensitive and passive/receptive nature. Freedman's symbolic hero would derive from the *problematic hero* of Georg Lukács, in *The Theory of the Novel*, who faces the rupture between himself

the relevant character must be sensorially passive, receiving the impressions of the world. This self is called the symbolic hero:

The symbolic hero in the lyrical novel is analogous to the lyrical 'I' in verse poetry. He is the cause of novel's world, its landscapes and stylized textures of faces and events. In his point of view, perceptions, illusory or real, are transmuted into imagery. But he also plays the role of the protagonist: he unifies not only symbolic images but also the novel's scenes. The relationship between these two roles played by an identical figure constitutes an important dimension of lyrical fiction. (1963: 49)

According to the scholar, this figure is a constant presence in lyrical narratives: 'For Schelling or Novalis, the ideal was symbolised by the language of sense: the organic unity of self and world was centred in the poet, or his hero. Within him, the ideal was approached by a magical transformation of encounters into symbolic forms' (1963: 31). The Romantic novel of sensibility and poetic prose language of eighteenth-century Europe has already presented this sort of character. This figure was based on the predominance of inner sensibility against the external world; however, in a higher key of transcendence, which was gradually replaced with an individualistic stance in the following centuries. Freedman explains that the changing relationship between society and subjectivity from the nineteenth century onwards provoked the friction between the self and the outer world to be treated in a different way. Therefore, the decreasing separation between inner and outer worlds, and the interaction between self and non-self within the narrative – through the symbolic hero – are other important aspects of the lyrical novel.

#### **e) Self and world reunited**

The symbolic hero is the element that connects the inner and outer worlds. He is the central point where the internal (the self) and the external world meet in the narrative. This transforming meeting is essential when it comes to bringing lyricism to prose narrative:

In conventional narratives, the outer world is the thing. It is placed beyond both writer and reader, interposing between them and the theme. In the lyrical mode, such a world is conceived, not as a universe in which men display their actions, but as a poet's vision fashioned as a design. (1963: 8)

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and the world in the modern novel. The symbolic hero would be linked to the psychological type of novel classified by Lukács, where the inner lives of the characters are highlighted. The relationship of the problematic hero with symbols is not given by Lukács, who did not insert the issue of lyricism in his theory; however, it was developed by Freedman's lyrical novel theory. The symbolic hero thus differs from the hero of a non-lyrical narrative by this special ability to turn concrete elements of the narrative into synaesthetic and lyrical imagery, which is one of the basic operations of prose lyricism.

This characteristic is particularly worthy of attention because it contrasts with the way the self is approached in the modern novel, which has evolved to require a great degree of separation between the self and the world.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, it was also in the twentieth century that the inner experience (the self) was highlighted with more literary techniques. If the lyrical novel could be established after the twentieth century, it was due partly to the intimate confluence of sensitive characters with their surroundings as seen in the previous centuries.

#### **f) Diversity within**

The lyrical novel is considered the 'anti-novel' by Freedman (1963: 273) because it challenges the key points of time and causation in the narrative and varies to such an extent in its fundamental characteristics. An example of this is the influence on the lyrical novel of the author's nationality and the history of the novel in their own literary tradition. This has unsurprisingly contributed significantly to a great diversity in the formation and construction of images within the novel. As Freedman points out, it is this variation that has made it difficult for critics to accept this hybridization.

The theorist exemplifies the diversity with his very own study of Herman Hesse, Virginia Woolf and André Gide, because each of these authors present a different kind of lyrical novel, which depends on the literary tradition to which they belong. This susceptibility defines the 'nature of the form' and also 'the impulse behind it' (1963: 17). A diverse array of techniques is applied to create poetic effects (besides the textual features already mentioned) in the composition of the lyrical novel. Thus, in each case a unique and sensitive approach to lyricism is generated.

#### **g) Direct to the act of knowledge**

Another important characteristic of prose lyricism is its ability to capture the character's awareness in the moment it happens. Instead of centralising the reader's attention on facts, to the consecutiveness of the plot, the lyrical author usually focuses on the character's perception (the symbolic hero, narrator or protagonist, or both), and describes it. Freedman states that the lyrical novel 'subverts the conventionally accepted qualities of the novel which are focused on the intercourse between men and worlds'. The characters' actions are instead new experiences, 'instances of awareness' (1963: 8).

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Benjamin, in the essay "The storyteller" (1936), delivers a sharp perspective about the solitary character of the novel in modern society. Benjamin rails against the novel as an instance of narrative which does not allow the modern man to share experiences, unlike other types of narratives in the past.



This direct connection with awareness is a very singular feature of the lyrical narrative, as Freedman points out:

Few other forms allow the author, or his persona, to penetrate so directly into the very act of knowledge and to represent it in immediately accessible portraiture. The limitations of this approach are obvious enough: an underemphasis on character and an overemphasis on image, dream-like encounter, or allegory. The excitement created by the plot is largely absent and the excitement instilled by the expectations of the lyrical process does not usually make up for it. (1963: 283)

Thus, as much as a predominance of images, the prompt access and understanding of the act of knowledge – in the sense of awareness – is another important facet of prose lyricism. Freedman points out that, in comparison to the traditional novel, this is a ‘different approach of the writer’ to the subject (1963: 8). This process, as already seen here, is realised through imagery.

As previously stated, these characteristics are a compilation of Freedman’s main observations, which I consider important in the study of the works that I will examine in the following chapters. To summarise, an entirely different approach to reality is observed: the emphasis is on the inner world of the symbolic hero, who promotes the junction of internal and external worlds, and who is generally aware of his/her processes of awareness. The character’s reality is narrated through sensorial images, which grow in intensity and progress in sensitive meaning. Hence, the attention is displaced from the core of the plot to the sensitivity of the character. This reality reflects not only what is going on outside of the character’s mind, in his/her daily life – in a lyrical novel, the concept of reality is broadened with more possibilities of interpretation. As a result, the reader perceives this operation with immediate understanding, much as when he/she stands before a painting or a poem. The pattern of imagery speaks directly to the reader’s senses and contrasts with the development of the facts within the story.

Even now, Freedman is still regarded as the main theorist of the lyrical novel, as an obligatory reference when it comes to the analysis of prose lyricism. His work is regularly cited by the few scholars exploring this subject, and also in studies about authors who immerse themselves in experimentation around language. Despite Freedman’s prominence on this topic, in order to achieve a broader understanding it remains necessary to examine the contributions of other theorists.

## 1.2 Other investigations

In this section, I will present other contributions to the studies of lyricism in novelistic prose. My purpose here is to further establish suitable parameters with which to analyse case studies from Brazilian contemporary literature later on in this study. From item 1.6 onwards, my own position on these theoretical contributions will be synthesised.

Fifteen years after Ralph Freedman, Jean-Yves Tadié wrote *Le récit poétique*, trying to contribute to the subject with his observations from French literature. For this French critic and a specialist in Marcel Proust – who Tadié regarded as a lyrical novelist –, ‘le récit poétique est un phénomène de transition entre le roman et le poème’ (1978: 8):

L’hypothèse de départ sera que le récit poétique conserve la fiction d’un roman: des personnages auxquels il arrive une histoire en un ou plusieurs lieux. Mais, en même temps, des procédés de narration renvoient au poème: il y a là un conflit constant entre la fonction référentielle, avec ses tâches d’évocation et de représentation, et la fonction poétique, qui attire l’attention sur la forme même du message. (1978: 7-8)

This conflict between the referential and poetic functions, as mentioned above, then occurs through an idiosyncratic construction, where textual elements plus constitutive elements of the narrative – such as space and time – create a tension, as pointed out earlier by Freedman. Tadié makes a precise analysis of the formal characteristics of prose lyricism: for him, assonances, alliterations, rhymes, musical phrases and the sonorities of lyrical language are represented in prose by parallelisms, echoes, repetitions and contrasts. According to Tadié, this type of narrative resembles music, the figure of a circle, a type of spiral structure:

L’image du cercle, de la structure circulaire serait imposée par nombre de ces textes depuis Proust si nous ne savions déjà par la musique que le thème revient toujours autre: le temps est soumis à une dialectique du même et de l’autre; phrase identique, moment identique sont toujours différents parce qu’ils sont placés en un autre lieu du texte et chargés de tout ce qui précède: le déroulement rythmique se fait sous la forme de la spirale. (1978: 10-11)

The French scholar also analysed in his studies the relationship between metonymy (typical of traditional narratives) and metaphors (typical of poems). He points out that the lyrical narrative is a narrative of metaphors (1978: 8). Other main points such as

characters, space and time are also analysed. Here is a summary of some of Tadié's considerations:

- characters are literally absorbed by the narrative, and overshadowed by the narrator/protagonist, resembling more images, or shades – they turn into 'language beings' (1978: 9);
- space almost becomes a character. Tadié argues that space has a different function, its own language and action:

L'espace du monde tel que le représente le livre s'accorde avec l'espace du langage qu'incarnent les figures, en même temps qu'il se délivre du rôle subordonné, du rôle de cadre ou de hors-d'oeuvre qu'il occupe dans le roman classique sous le nom décrié de description. (1978: 10)

- regarding time, the focus is on the impermanent; rather than recounting life, the attention is focused on privileged moments. Discontinuity, reverence and sudden illumination of the instant become precious rules throughout the narrative. Nevertheless, there is still an agreement between prose and lyricism, in that the timelessness of poetry is predominant.

Further contributions on the subject emerged in 1980s Spain from Darío Villanueva, a professor from the University of Santiago de Compostela. In 1983 and 1984 he launched respectively *La Novella Lírica I* and *La Novella Lírica II*, using as case studies the writers Azorín, Gabriel Miró, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Benjamín Jarnés. For Villanueva, the lyrical novel is a renovation of the preceding canons.

Like Tadié, Villanueva highlights the lyrical narrative's ability to draw more attention to the language than to the novel's plot. He shares with Tadié the emphasis on the lyrical narrative's circularity: 'La emoción poética es refractaria a la progresión, pues depende de un mecanismo lingüístico esencialmente circular y simultáneo, recreador de un instante de eternidad hacia el que sólo cabe una actitud contemplativa' (1983: 20).

Two of his most important observations are about the treatment given to space in lyrical narratives, primarily the demand lyricism makes upon the readers. According to Villanueva, there is a predominance of space to the detriment of time in such writings: 'Este predominio lírico del espacio impone una determinada actitud al lector; fija la atención sobre la textura estilística de lo escrito, donde prevalece lo sustantivo sobre lo verbal; y sustituye de este modo la característica acción de la novella por el estatismo contemplativo de la lírica' (1983: 20).

Villanueva also claims that the innovative configuration of the text appeals in a different way to the sensibility of the reader. Rather than the distancing relationship readers have with a more realistic plot – a subject/object relationship – lyricism brings the reader closer, through the strength of the lyrical-self discourse. The reader becomes ‘co-creador del universo narrativo’ (1983: 20). Villanueva refers to Virginia Woolf’s observations, when the English writer and critic digressed about the newborn style of the early twentieth century:

Brota, pues, lirismo en ella [the novel] cuando el yo del personaje, el narrador o ambos a la vez, domina al mundo, lo desdibuja y anula, y capta en sus redes la emoción del lector, a cuya sensibilidad apela constantemente para que no observe el cuadro a distancia, sino en identidad – en contemporaneidad, como dice la autora de *The waves* – con la voz y la visión, con la subjetividad que lo llena todo. (1983: 21)

In the literary construction, Villanueva emphasises fragmentation, related to the distribution of the text: smaller and lyrical units, as different approaches to conventional chapters. This feature is typical in a lyrical plot, born out of the dismantling of the story through the weakening of its sequentiality – in the traditional novel, the development of the plot usually requires a continuum in the text, which is overlooked in lyrical novels in general. He points out that fragmentation has been present in the hybrid genre since post-Naturalism and Symbolism.

The other great study of prose lyricism of the same period in Spain was carried out by Ricardo Gullón, a member of the Academy of the Spanish Language, who taught in the United States for more than 30 years. His unique work about the theme is remarkable for being, in itself, almost a lyrical expression in criticism. Gullón was an expert on Juan Ramón Jiménez, Benito Pérez Galdós, Antonio Machado and Miguel de Unamuno.

His analogies in *La novela lírica* are a sort of metacriticism, as when he exposes prose lyricism through metaphorical constructions:

Ese ‘yo’ no habita en una isla, sino en un cerebro (antes hubiéramos dicho un corazón), es decir, en un organismo vivo, comunicante y no sólo meditabundo; es una red y no una concha y tiende a captar los grandes peces de las profundidades, las esquivas mariposas de las Alturas. (1984: 29)

(...) el espacio textual en que la conciencia se exhibe ante el lector y le permite verla en el descuido de la intimidad, como a una mujer en su dormir desnuda. Sólo en esa desnudez cabrá visualizar la subconciencia y calcular qué parte de conciencia palpita en ella. Pues una lectura del subconsciente no es ni más ni menos que una percepción de los contenidos de la conciencia realizada con anterioridad a su ordenación, antes que la mujer despierte y reclame sus ropas. (1984: 37)

Gullón also compares the lyrical novel with a mountain range in a broad sense. The central part of this *cordillera* represents a predominance of sensation; moments of vision; intensification and transcendence of personal limitations; while surrounding the top, like lakes or rivers, would be the eternalisation of the moment; the fleeting instant of the vision; and the free association of sensations (1984: 44).

To a similar extent as Villanueva, Gullón highlights the unusual role of the reader when faced with lyricism in the narrative: ‘la norma es la discontinuidad, perceptible en los cambios de perspectiva y en los desplazamientos del centro de conciencia, e inductor de un tipo de lector a quien se impone una carga reestructuradora mas activa de la que solia requerir-se de el’ (1984: 45). For Gullón, the required approach of the reader is the same as that asked of the viewer of impressionist art.<sup>15</sup> Due to discontinuity and fragmentation in the writing, a willingness to engage is expected of the reader, together with skills of reconstruction (1984: 21). Gullón argues that the analysis of lyrical prose can resort to the terminology of visual arts or music, because despite the discontinuity in prose lyricism, the perception comes without disruption: the meaning of the images is captured as a whole, in a similar process of visual or musical apprehension. It is worth recalling here Gullón’s agreement with Freedman on the question of immediacy in portraiture.

As for time and space, Gullón emphasises the intimate relationship between the two spheres within the lyrical approach of the narrative. Lyrical novelists intend to eternalise the instant, and to eternalise it means to spatialise it, due to an operation similar to an immersion in the moment itself. This procedure aims to turn time into a place to explore: ‘El tiempo narrativo es siempre el presente, pero un presente intemporalizado, como corresponde a ese “fuera de tiempo” que es la eternidad’ (1984: 21). This strategy corresponds to an approximation to the timelessness of poetry.

In 1990, the Portuguese theorist Maria Rosa Goulart published *Romance lírico – o percurso de Vergílio Ferreira*. As Ralph Freedman explains, an author can be lyrical in some works, or some texts in prose can be lyrical in part. Goulart decided to work with one single author, Vergílio Ferreira, most of whose work is considered lyrical. She also took advantage of the fact that Ferreira was a contemporary, living author, who was able to voice his own ideas. In the author’s words:

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<sup>15</sup> The association between lyricism in prose and Impressionist and Post-Impressionist movements in painting is recurrent. Roger Fry, an artist, critic, academic and member of the Bloomsbury Group, developed this idea (in *Vision and Design*, 1981), which was followed by Virginia Woolf in her essays and other narrative prose.

Contar histórias é para as avozinhas. Intolerável. Um romance tem é de fixar o que excede a história, a atmosfera que a envolve, o espírito sutil que de tudo emana, o indício das coisas, aquilo que se toca a dedos breves como numa brasa, o que aponta ao subentendido, a fina inteligência que assim anima tudo por dentro. (1990: 296)

Vergílio Ferreira mentions the subtlety that needs to be present in a lyrical narrative. However, despite his assertiveness, Goulart points out the impossibility of delimiting the genre due to its very dialectical nature.

Goulart does not aim to classify lyrical prose, but rather to identify lines of force and how these lines operate among themselves (1990: 17). One of the main supporting points of her theoretical argument is the difference and the relationship between narrative (mode) and novel (genre). She inquires: ‘Em face destas e doutras questões, restariam finalmente as perguntas: romance sem narrativa? Ou sem história? Ou haverá, muito simplesmente, uma outra forma de estar na história, correlata de um outro modo de ser da narrativa?’ (1990: 22). Goulart’s chief conclusion is that there is, in Ferreira’s case, not a refusal of narrative per se, but a refusal of narrative based on chronology, and on developments of cause and effect. At the same time, she indicates Ferreira’s preference for presentification, rather than reporting – which facilitates the emergence of lyricism, due to the focus and intensification on the current moment. Ferreira therefore refuses to relate the story according to traditional narrative progression, preferring presentification, which for the Portuguese theorist is a treatment of the narrative that involves the reader more closely with the story.

Therefore, what Goulart highlights in her analysis is the lyrical writer’s attitude. Although Ferreira’s literary process is unique, this same stance is perceived in other authors as well. There is a wilfulness, a determination not to submit the narrative to the standardisation of any linear prose style:

O que o escritor defende é, pois, um modo diferente de esquematização da história no texto romanesco: neste [o lírico] ela está disseminada, mais implícita do que explícita, mais pressuposta no seu fragmentarismo do que estruturalmente organizada segundo uma sintaxe narrativa em que proposições e sequências deem linearmente a progressão dos eventos. (1990: 23)

Although Goulart demonstrates how problematic delimiting the genre is, she also points out that it is possible to identify parameters to aid its analysis. These parameters are found in the very presentification of the narrative or in the recalling of facts (memory) – that is to say, poetry can emerge in the undefined space between what is happening or what was happening in the text. According to Goulart, these are moments of the

illumination of the present – in Vergílio Ferreira, she calls it ‘presença iluminada de si’ (1990: 33):

É, afinal, quando os factos narrados se transformam em pretextos, ou melhor, em pré-textos que engendram outros textos (líricos), que a narrativa é secundarizada e a lírica se torna por algum tempo a dominante. E nessas circunstâncias o texto chega a distanciar-se de tal modo do episódio que o motivou que este quase se perde para ficarem apenas os “ecos longínquos” de uma vaga recordação ou a fulguração da escrita deslumbrada consigo mesma. (1990: 33)

Goulart resorts to the concepts of autodiegesis and heterodiegesis to analyse Ferreira’s novels, presenting ways of introducing the lyricism into the narrative. In short, Goulart believes that the lyrical accent can be inserted through digression, comments or any other intrusion in the text or by transforming a character’s vision into a lyrical mood; or it can be included through a narrator/protagonist, embedded with a lyrical view. Besides these techniques, the lyrical accent can also be found in the way the plot is presented, in separated lyrical units. However, her extended analysis leads to a conclusion similar to that of other scholars, although with a more *fluid* and flexible connotation:

De tudo isto se conclui que o romance lírico combina a linearidade e a sintagmática narrativa com discursos ‘verticais’ onde o estatismo ou uma espécie de simultaneidade temporal e a aparente imediatez na percepção de seres, coisas e espaços, são suficientemente fortes para originarem formas de linguagem, micro-estruturas textuais e figurações metafórico-simbólicas que se aparentam ao discurso (e à atitude) da poesia. (1990: 36)

Goulart actually proposes a diagram: the lyrical text crosses the linear pattern of the narrative (in a horizontal direction, she suggests) with the immersion into deeper styles of narration (verticality), consisting of strong perceptions. These are two different movements that can generate new forms in languages, which would lead into the narrative.

I particularly appreciate her conclusion, where she determines this lyricism as the emergence of diverse forms of language within the same texts. It is a multifaceted conclusion; Goulart offers perspectives on several factors behind the advent of novelistic lyricism, and outlines its various possible effects on the text.

Another important contribution to the lyrical novel is provided by Earl E. Fitz (1977; 1979; 1985). He has both contributed to Freedman’s theory, and reinterpreted it to a certain extent. Fitz concentrates on the following lyrical aspects of the narrative: the occurrence of an aesthetic form based on patterns of images, recurrent scenes and

symbols which replace the dramatic or the psychological movement in a plot; the presentation of the characters' inner selves, not determined by the world of cause and effect outside them, as in a conventional novel; and prompt poetic elaborations to express such an interiority. Fitz focuses on the use of distortion in the textual structures, new characterisations of people, places and times (1979: 19), and makes an interesting contextualisation of these features within Latin American prose literature. Fitz's contributions will be examined more fully in Chapter 3.

More recently, two Brazilian authors, Luzia A. Berloff Tofalini and Mariângela Alonso, have focused on this specific theme. Tofalini's merit has been to empirically introduce the subject matter of prose lyricism to Brazilian studies. After writing her doctoral thesis on Raul Brandão's *Húmus* in 2001, later published as *O romance lírico* (2013), the scholar dedicated herself to studying the works of João Guimarães Rosa and Clarice Lispector. Tofalini's approach considers the theorists mentioned here, without deeming this group of theories comprehensive enough to establish a definitive theory.

According to Tofalini, the main elements that need to be present in a lyrical novel are: a lyrical subject that reflects the human conditions; subjective temporality; fragmentary narrative; the use of rhythm in a way that opens up imagination, intuition and access to a mythical awareness; poetic imagery; an indissoluble confluence of poetic and prose voices (2013: 186). Nonetheless, she focuses on the philosophical and mystical character of this type of prose: 'O romance lírico pretende indicar ao homem o caminho de retorno ao seu próprio cenário intimista, onde brota o poético, para que o ser, revestido de uma armadura, cujo tecido é a poesia, possa superar os disfarces associados às convenções vazias de sentido e vencer a angústia existencial' (2013: 187).

Mariângela Alonso, who published *Instantes líricos de revelação* (2013) about Clarice Lispector's *A paixão segundo G.H.* (2013), shares a similar understanding to that of Tofalini: 'A narrativa poética surge oferecendo possibilidades de questionamento, numa busca incessante e eterna. Nessa espécie de narrativa, residem questões de ordem filosófica e mítica, acerca do próprio "eu"' (2013: 26). She does not devote much of her book to the conceptualisation of lyrical prose, preferring instead to concentrate on the analysis of Clarice's lyricism. Alonso, however, adopts the term 'narrativa poética' in her work, which I consider to be a valid term, since the lyrical treatment can be applied to any type of writing, not only in novels – it takes shape, magnifying and deepening the perspectives of the base texts.



Thus, according to Tofalini and Alonso, much lyrical fiction presents an internal quest. In this regard, Tofalini and Alonso have emphasised interiority, but to this I would add a pragmatic perspective: the necessary distinction between the psychological and the lyrical novel. The use of imagery in the lyrical novel is preponderant, and this is the key feature that distinguishes the lyrical approach from the purely mental and emotional content of the psychological novel. Again, the sensorial nature of the imagery and the unique quality of the images must be explored in order to fully appreciate this difference. In this sense, the novel's lyricism builds up in direct proportion to the imagery.

The main contribution of these scholars was to explore the lyrical effect on key points of the narrative. They have contributed to extending Ralph Freedman's analysis on time, space and the character in the lyrical narrative. All vectors change position – that is to say, the boundaries are mixed: time is explored as if it was space, while space takes an active role, no longer merely descriptive, and characters resemble figures based more on language than on acts. This exploitation of time is the ability to narrate the moments in-depth, such as when the description of space occurs in a narrative. Space, previously more concretely detailed as the backdrop for the action, becomes narrated in an active role, rather than a passive one – it can intervene in the narrative, as a character.

The structure of the lyrical novel is stressed as well. This manifests itself mainly in its nature as fragmentary and circular, as well as in similarities with the visual arts and music. I understand these characteristics as being indicative of a sensorial nature: lyrical prose can be appreciated plastically, visually, and sonorously, because the sentences are often presented with a certain tempo, driven by the author's poetical rhythm. The circularity refers to the return of the precise cadences in the text, as much as some of the images. However, as Jean-Yves Tadié warns, repetition does not signify stagnation – rather it conveys increasing intensity through the same elements.

All these contributions to prose lyricism, building on the foundation provided by Freedman, confirm and expand his perspective. It seems that due to the constant evolution of the novel and the fluctuations around the concept of lyricism, Freedman's premises would be left behind (1963: 283) or rather, they would need to be updated.

Nonetheless, there have been objections to Freedman's work. Charles Schug, in *The Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel* (1979), suggests that Romantic aesthetics exerted a continuous influence on literature, causing a major shift in the form of the novel at the end of the nineteenth century (1979: 10). According to Schug, this

influence is still very much present today. He then criticises Freedman's attempt to theorise about what might only be a continuation of Romanticism: 'The phenomenon Freedman notes is thus more widespread and much more central to the experience of modern fictional worlds than he allows for' (1979: 15). However, Schug's own point presents contradictory facets: this continuation he claims is linked to a new sense of experience in literature, which in its turn entails new techniques and new subject matters in novels. Yet, these broad aspects, still present in our own time, may not only be restricted to, or just be the result of, Romanticism, of which the boundaries were centred in individual and idealised experiences. Furthermore, he seems not to consider that lyricism – as I discuss in this same chapter – has intrinsic features that do not restrict it to any movement, or genre, including Romanticism. Freedman's main point was to elaborate a theory open to receive additions or even be superseded, as he himself declares.

Schug's contribution is to identify a relevant question, which is the relationship between Romanticism and lyricism. He interprets lyrical prose as a result of the emphasis placed on lyricism in that movement, partially a result of a reaction against Classicism. However, to perceive lyricism only as an integral part of Romantic aesthetics may indicate a restricted view of the relationship between literature and society. In the following sections of this chapter, I seek to set out the fluidity of the novel as a genre, according to social shifts, as well as the malleability of the concept of lyricism. By showing the variable factors that promote a lyrical treatment of the texts I will argue that lyrical prose is an independent element in literature, which is not solely restricted to the Romantic movement.

### **1.2.1 Woolf: a source of inspiration**

These scholars have all shown a vivid interest in this difficult theme, but beyond what they have in common and the difference taken in their approach, they all share a common interest: Virginia Woolf. The novelist and critic caught the spirit of lyricism in modern prose at its dawn, and her essays are often cited by critics, reflecting the evolution of the novel in that particular moment:

The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as times goes by, we

suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this? (1948: 23)

Woolf's claim in the essay "Modern Fiction", seen in an excerpt above, still echoes in contemporary literature. She remains an essential reference in the arts, and especially among the scholars of the lyrical novel. As well as her own fictional writings, all of which incorporate psychological journeys and lyrical prose, her essays on the advent of the new prose in Europe, in the early twentieth century, were fundamental in the study of contemporary narrative.

Woolf's critical texts from the volumes of *The Common Reader* (1927-1932) and from other publications are still being discussed today. This consists of a compilation of essays published in *The Nation*, *New Statesman*, *Vogue* and *Times Literary Supplement*. Woolf was a diarist and letter writer, a feminist theorist and a member of the Bloomsbury Group, the intellectual collective of British writers, philosophers and artists that influenced many areas of public life in the first decades of the twentieth century.

For Ralph Freedman, Woolf was one of the most complete lyrical novelists, and *The Waves* (1931) was a lyrical novel *par excellence*. In his view, she went further than anyone else: 'She used the imposition of poetic techniques on the novel as a method to redefine rather than to supplant traditional concepts of fiction' (1963: 185). Assessing her overall work, including the diaries, where she digresses about her writing processes, it is possible to follow the development of her open relationship with poetry.<sup>16</sup>

Among Freedman's technical analysis of Woolf's most important novels, such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931), he draws attention to her emphasis on the appropriation of the moment – taken as a literary concept, and a sort of tool (technique): 'The *moment* [emphasis of the author] emerges as Virginia Woolf's key to her theory of apprehension as well as to concepts of poetry and the novel' (1963: 192).<sup>17</sup> Thus, the concept of *moment* would represent a different type of awareness, an artistic awareness in which the writer is conscious of the co-occurrence of his/her own perception and the circumstances of the world. I understand the moment as the ability to grasp this artistic apprehension, the sensitive awareness of awareness as Freedman asserts: 'As a mental act, the moment is indeed internal, but it does not

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<sup>16</sup> The statement of E. M. Forster, writer and Woolf's friend, is famous: 'So that is her problem. She is a poet, who wants to write something as near to a novel as possible' (in *Virginia Woolf*, published by Cambridge University Press, 1942: 23).

<sup>17</sup> In *The Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel*, Charles Schug traces a slight association between Henry James's 'germ', James Joyce's 'epiphany' and Woolf's 'moment' (1979: 85).

reduce experience to private images alone. Rather, it consists of an analysis of the act of consciousness into its components, i.e., mental awareness and the objects of awareness' (1966: 192). Technically, as he shows, this is a solution for the writer to find the balance between poetry and prose:

The rendering of the 'moment' as an act of awareness, and its distillation in poetry or fiction, solve the dilemma of solipsism by compelling the self to come to terms with the objects of its world. At the same time, as we shall see, it liberates the novelist from photographic realism by allowing him to fashion novels of facts and manners, as well as of inner experience, in a *lyrical* form. [author's emphasis] (1963: 193)

He also explains that the *moment* is relevant by inverting positions of inner and outer worlds, through transfiguration of landscapes and objects into mental acts. As shown in the beginning of this chapter, the junction of self and world made possible through a symbolic hero is one of the main characteristics of prose lyricism in Freedman's theory. He points out that the *moment* introduces a 'relationship between sensibility and scene' (1963: 195). He localises the creation of the *moment* within the already mentioned pattern of imagery – Freedman states that the expressive conjunction of objects, mental activity and associations that occurs in awareness to create the *moment* is done through poetic imagery (1963: 198). To him, the *moment* becomes 'the work of art' (1963: 200).

In Woolf's own words, this is based more on an imaginary perspective, than a theoretical one:

I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes. Say that the moment is a combination of thought; sensation; the voice of the sea. Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that don't belong to the moment; this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional. (1965: 139)

Woolf also refers to these moments as 'moments of being'. Narratives of Realism, therefore, are built through moments of non-being (1990: 129). To demonstrate this, Freedman cites the construction of the essay "The Moment: Summer's Night", in which these instants of transference from things to awareness are vividly felt; from sense impressions in the centre of the consciousness 'to radiate again outward and encompass the universe as a whole' (1963: 198). I select in this specific text an excerpt that I regard as Woolf's turning point – when physical elements begin to be absorbed and transformed by the observer's mind:

But that is the wider circumference of the moment. Here in the centre is a knot of consciousness; a nucleus divided up into four heads, eight legs, eight arms, and four separate bodies. They are not subject to the law of the sun and the owl and the lamp. They assist it. For sometimes a hand rests on the table; sometimes a leg is thrown over a leg. Now the moment becomes shot with the extraordinary arrow which people let fly from their mouths – when they speak.

(...)

All this shoots through the moment; and the sense of watching and comparing; and the quiver meets the shore, when the owl flies out, and puts a stop to this judging, this overseeing, and with our wings spread, we too fly, take wing, with the owl, over the earth and survey the quietude of what sleeps, folded, slumbering, arm stretching in the vast dark and sucking its thumb too; the amorous and the innocent; and a sigh goes up. Could we not fly too, with broad wings and with softness; and be all one wing; all embracing, all gathering, and these boundaries, these prying over hedge into hidden compartments of different colours be all swept into one colour by the brush of the wing. (1947: 10-11)

So far, at this point in the narrative, the following situation has been presented: a meeting of a group of friends outside a house in the country, on a summer's night. The four are seated, including the narrator. They chat to each other. The sun, the owl, the lamps – all had been mentioned before. The physical components of the picture, measured by senses, had already been highlighted in their material aspects. Gradually, the perception of these components begins to expand through the narrator's imagination. The group, through the narrator (the symbolic hero), incorporates the owl, and begin to fly; and from the flight the consciousness is widened to merge with the sky and the earth, invoking the figure of something in deepest sleep. All together they become a single wing, with the power to gather everything else, mainly under a single colour. The wing, now one, becomes a powerful brush.

Virginia Woolf's concepts of the imagination were conceived under several influences – at that time society was experiencing the impact of Freud's discovery of the subconscious. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Marcel Proust and Henri Bergson were among these influences. Woolf is regarded by some scholars, such as Elizabeth Abel,<sup>18</sup> as a psychological novelist as well. However, others feel challenged specifically by her lyrical treatment of narrative. In England, Stella McNichol developed a meticulous study of her poetical approaches within the narratives of seven novels: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931) and *Between the Acts* (1941). By choosing, interpreting and dissecting the most representative scenes in each novel, McNichol reaches separate conclusions for each story:

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<sup>18</sup> Abel wrote *Virginia Woolf and Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, published by Chicago University Press (1989). In this book, the author goes beyond the general literary concept of the psychological novel.

The major fiction is approached in a more narrowly specific way: *Mrs Dalloway* through its poetic rhythms, *To the Lighthouse* as a multi-perspectival exploration of a reality embodied in a single image, and *The Waves* as a playpoem. A new kind of poetry is to be found in the last novel. (1990: 12)

Although McNichol's study is not based on Ralph Freedman's theory, she agrees with Freedman regarding the evolution in the lyrical character of each of Woolf's works. According to McNichol, Woolf's method was 'being dictated by different preoccupations' (1990: 12). In this way, she verifies the idiosyncrasies that the German scholar indicated can happen, varying from author to author and within different works by the same author.

McNichol's work is noteworthy for its very simple method of analysing the lyrical aspects of Woolf's narrative. She highlights in each book the main instants of imagination and lyricism, including the characters. As a result, her analyses have received a positive reception from readers. Her focus, again in synchronicity with Freedman, is not on the textual features, but on the imagery. This can be seen, for example, in her analysis of *The Waves*, in which Woolf presents thoughts and sensations through images (1990: 129). McNichol highlights the lyrical creativity over the images and the organization of Woolf's production: 'Taking the term poetry in a more general sense, it can be shown that the imagery and the structure of her novels arise from a creative imagination that is profoundly poetic in nature' (1990: xi). McNichol also draws attention to the fact that poetry was both Woolf's mode of perceiving the world and a way of expression, which is also present in her diary texts (1990: 92).

Woolf's three first novels – *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room* – are said to be the stepping stones for her later and best-known novels, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves* and *Between the Acts*. McNichol identifies in Woolf's books linking elements which permeate the narratives creating lyrical cohesion: 'There is, in other words, a unity at the level of the novel's verbal texture, and an inner or deeper structure of implication and meaning. But the different layers are also unified. This kind of "unity" is essentially poetic' (1990: 91).

Woolf and her legacy for contemporary narrative have been studied worldwide. Many of these studies are related to her unique way of writing, her contributions to essay writing, feminism, and her voice as a Modernist writer. Nonetheless, only a handful of them in England seem to be plainly dedicated to her relationship with poetry.

In this chapter, I briefly broach an overview of Woolf's methods, but I must emphasise her concept of *moment*. This concept embodies one of the principal techniques of Woolf's lyrical approach. This is especially true of her later works, considered by critics to be her masterpieces, in which a total balance between sequential narrative and poetic inquiry is achieved. Furthermore, in my opinion this concept, as stated by Woolf herself, combines essential characteristics of lyricism: timeless, spaceless, saturation (fullness) and concentration. I understand the concept of *moment*, as applied to prose narrative, as a sort of atom for the insertion of lyricism into the prose. This conception completes the theoretical contributions given by the scholars I have discussed here, Freedman, Tadié, Gullón, Villanueva, Goulart, Tofalini and Alonso, because in part it summarises the fluidity that occurs in a narrative under the effects of lyricism.

### **1.3 Interior monologue, stream of consciousness, psychological novel**

Thus far, this study has addressed common statements about lyrical prose in the novel. Besides the lyrical construction, made up of features of the poetical text, such as rhyme, alliteration, assonance and metaphor, other types of macro-characteristics are predominant. Along with the imagery, there are attributes such as lyrical progression, the symbolic hero, a conjunction of inner and outer worlds, absorption of characters by the narrative, the permanent conflict between referential and poetical functions and fragmentation in the compositions. These and other attributes will be recalled and presented again further on in the thesis.

However, in this complex construction there are also some modes of operation, and some techniques or devices that seem indispensable because they ease the insertion of lyricism into the prose narrative. These techniques are discussed to varying degrees in the work of scholars of prose lyricism. Here, I am principally making reference to the use of interior monologue and stream of consciousness.

These two devices are the most frequently cited among those literary resources that strongly emerged after serious interest in psychological content surfaced at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, they are fully incorporated into contemporary techniques in prose. Both methods contain the idea of exposing subjects of the mind, whether they are logical or not. Their emergence represents the discovery of the 'modern consciousness', as Charles Schug (and many other theorists) points out,

citing the influences of William James, Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud on the art of the twentieth century (1979: 11).<sup>19</sup>

However, this indistinct use of terminology caused great confusion in the theoretical approach to the novel on account of the period of intense change the novel was undergoing.<sup>20</sup> Interior monologue, also referred to as interior speech or internal voice, expresses the characters' logical thoughts. It can be direct or indirect, characterisations that differ only as to whether the author is present or not. Often regarded as a dominant characteristic of modern narratives, interior monologue is an ancient resource, which was used by the likes of Homer, Ovid and Xenophon of Ephesus – nevertheless, it found its apogee in modernity, along with stream of consciousness (considered below).

Robert Scholes and Robert Kelloggs claim that, in the past, interior monologue was used sparingly, and implied the notion of thought as unspoken speech or 'speech minus sound' and thus subject to the arts of rhetoric (1966: 180).<sup>21</sup> The major shift in this notion would only start after the seventeenth century in Europe. This shift would affect literature only after the eighteenth century, after the advent of Romanticism and the expansion of autobiographical narrative:

Thus, the development of novelistic methods of characterization, and the shift from rhetorical to psychological presentation of the inner life, is closely connected with the whole movement of mind we call Romanticism, and especially with the rise of the autobiographical spirit, which can trace its roots back to such Renaissance autobiographers as Montaigne and Cellini, and ultimately to such Christian figures as St. Theresa and St. Augustine. (1966: 193)

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<sup>19</sup> In the same period of intense theorizing about narrative perspective the term 'free indirect speech' was coined, by Swiss linguist Charles Bally, in 1912. Very important in the transition between Romanticism and Realism, the free indirect discourse in literature was a 'mode of narration where we can listen to a protagonist's thought. The respective passages seem to be worded in part by a protagonist of the ongoing story, in part by an external narrator' (Eckbert 2015: xx). This stylistic device would allow the narrator to enter into the feelings of the character, briefly adopting his perspectives when narrating the character's words or thoughts. It was one more way of presenting the characters' inner life in the novels. However, one of the main purposes of free indirect speech was to indicate a change in the narrative focus, 'automatic gear shifting between narration and characters' minds', according to Monika Fludernink (1993: 73). Nonetheless, the effective presence of the narrator in the procedure may have been the reason why free indirect speech has not been prioritized in prose lyricism studies. Roy Pascal, in *The Dual Voice*, directly relates the demise of the dominant narrator in modern literature to the 'growing' obsolescence of the device in the second part of twentieth century (1977: 140).

<sup>20</sup> On the emergence of the modern novel at the beginning of twentieth century see *The Novel and the Modern World*, by David Daiches (1960) and *The Turn of The Novel*, by Alan Friedman (1966).

<sup>21</sup> This is a notion derived from Plato's concept of thought, as Scholes and Kelloggs explain. In short, this concept of thought involves talking with the soul. Later 'psyche has replaced thymos as the internal speaker' (1966: 180, authors' emphasis), *psyche* corresponds to mind, and *thymos* corresponds to heart.



On the other hand, much newer than interior monologue is the stream of consciousness.<sup>22</sup> If interior monologue enjoyed increased usage after the nineteenth century, following the ascendance of the abovementioned modern consciousness, stream of consciousness really owes its existence to the awakening of the great interest in psychic disorders from the late 1890s to the early 1910s. Scholes and Kelloggs claim: ‘The un-proselike syntax of modern stream of consciousness seems to have established itself as a literary technique as a by-product of the interest of the nineteenth century in abnormal mental processes’ (1966: 193). It is characterised by associative patterns, and a lack of coherence and syntactical logics, according to the scholars.<sup>23</sup>

Scholes and Kelloggs claim that a ‘poetical verbal pattern’ can be inserted into prose through the stream of consciousness of more limited characters. Here, “limited” is meant in the sense of being coherently committed to the plot, unable to go beyond their basic characteristics given by the narrative. This is one of the authors’ ways of achieving patterns of expression that they would not otherwise achieve. This is specifically a way to enhance the subjectivity of their characters. The scholars state that the stream of consciousness appears in the writing of William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf (1966: 199-200).

Both devices, interior monologue and stream of consciousness, have been exhaustively used in modern and contemporary fiction – particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century, in what was called the psychological novel.<sup>24</sup> The excessive use of these two devices makes it harder to define these two terms without mixing them up; and we can even find the categorisation of ‘stream of consciousness novels’ as well.<sup>25</sup> Robert Humphrey confirms stream of consciousness as the pre-speech level of consciousness: ‘In short, the prespeech (sic) levels of consciousness are not censored, rationally controlled, or logically ordered’ (1962: 3). The very concept of consciousness is still a controversial one,<sup>26</sup> and, in the field of literary studies it can be related to intelligence

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<sup>22</sup> The term ‘stream of consciousness’ was coined by writer and psychologist William James, in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890, first edition).

<sup>23</sup> In the studies of this subject, we may also find comparisons between stream of consciousness and automatic writing, a technique born out of the Surrealist movement. One of the main differences is the objective: stream of consciousness aims to portray directly a character’s mind flow; automatic writing was a technique practiced by surrealists to inspire works of art – it was practiced as a game, as well. Stream of consciousness is considered an exclusive technique of literature.

<sup>24</sup> The major point of reference in the subject is *The Modern Psychological Novel*, by Leon Edel (1955).

<sup>25</sup> Robert Humphrey states that stream of consciousness literature is psychological literature (1962: 6).

<sup>26</sup> As is to be expected of such a diverse subject, there are many studies about representations of consciousness within society. Such as the recent *The Conceptual Representation of Consciousness* (2015), in which psychologist and scholar Thomas Natsoulas seeks to cope with the several conceptual angles the theme comprises up to the present. He investigates six meanings of consciousness: the

and memory. Humphrey, for example, considers interior monologue as an instance of stream of consciousness.

This confusion in terminology has not been investigated by any of the scholars of lyrical novels reported in this chapter, although most of them refer to interior monologue and stream of consciousness but applying different meanings to the terms. I believe the reason for this lack of investigation has to do with what ultimately turns interior monologue or stream of consciousness expressions into poetic tools, a process that remains unclear. My intention is therefore to broach this subject precisely because this confusion may be one of the factors that hampered the development of more investigations about prose lyricism.

These studies were limited at the beginning of the twentieth century. After its strong presence in novels during the Romantic period, until today lyrical prose has been considered as mainly linked to Modernist literary studies, to the historical perspective, as it was considered another innovation pertaining to the literary shift at that time. As Keith Leopold confirms, this discussion about techniques for the expression of the mind is stuck in the past: ‘The stream of consciousness novel as a separate and special novel-type belongs to the past, and the total volume of critical literature about it is small compared with that about some individual novelists and other aspects of the novel’ (1979: 152). As the technique was used increasingly, the study of the stream of consciousness novel fell into disuse; nonetheless it became widely used among novelists in the twentieth century.

However, to understand the function that lyricism performs in narrative today, it is necessary to take a broader view of the topic. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, lyrical prose (beyond contiguous studies of prose poems) has been examined mainly under the label of ‘psychological’ styles in literature. Instead, I suggest a different perspective, following the link connecting stream of consciousness, interior monologue and poetry. Such an investigation might provide a clearer understanding of lyrical narrative.

When comparing Leon Edel’s psychological novel and the lyrical novel, Ricardo Gullón points out the similarity between the two styles: both can present autobiographical characters, a predominance of lyrical language, imaginary journeys through awareness, interiorisation of experience, confinement into mental space, and the

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interpersonal, the personal, the awareness, the inter-awareness, the unitive, and the general-state. The scholar has dedicated much of his study to the variety of concepts of consciousness and perception.

dispersion of data on situations and characters, all of which demand a receptiveness from the reader (1984: 19). However, he does not go so far as to differentiate between both types of novels properly. Robert Humphrey, on the other hand, states that both the poet and the *stream of consciousness writer* [his term, but my emphasis] rely on comparisons to express what they mean, which are usually very precise or subjective things that must avoid denotative language (1962: 77). His explanation sends us back to the idiosyncratic utilisation of the image:

But the dilemma is not completely solved that easily. The stream of consciousness writer's problem is different from the poet's because the former has the task of verbal psychic processes. This confusion is marked by being fragmentary more than by anything else; that is, it lacks the rational aspect of normal syntax which is fundamentally achieved by a conventional subject-object relationship. In order to give the appearance of this lack of normal syntactical completeness and at the same time to express what is beyond the power of denotative meaning, stream of consciousness writers have employed images in two particular ways: they have used the image impressionistically, and they have used symbolism. (1962: 77)

Humphrey thus emphasises the different uses of the image in tandem with stream of consciousness. Besides naturally presenting fragmentary writing through the direct allusion to consciousness content, these authors resort to images as well.

Firstly, it is worth recalling the way that lyrical prose and painting have been associated by critics engaged in their study. That is, the connections between poetic aspects in narrative and Impressionist and post-Impressionist techniques in painting. The key point here is in the way the images are used. For every writer, images present raw material that can be put to use in different ways. In order to differentiate the psychological novel from the lyrical novel, Ralph Freedman stresses: 'By itself the direct depiction of the mind's content does not entail a lyrical form. (...) In a lyrical use of the stream of consciousness, by contrast, a design of images and motifs emerges from associations of the mind' (1963: 11). This point links to one of Freedman's key arguments about lyrical prose: the use of the pattern of imagery, formed in particular by building metaphorical associations. The lyrical novel emphasises the contents of the mind as much as psychological novels, but the way imagery is used is different: 'Lyrical fiction, then, is a special instance of the novel of awareness. Yet the lyrical novel has also remained a distinct genre' (1963: 273). Precisely, it is the innovative use of the metaphor and the quality of the image, including the building up of a pattern that differentiates lyrical and psychological novels. Using as an example Virginia Woolf's excerpt from "The Moment: Summer's Night", as shown in Section 1.2.1, the metaphorisation of the image

occurs in the association of the group of friends with the bird, and, with growing intensity, in the transmutation of their collective flight into a magical single wing.

Interior monologue and stream of consciousness, which were once deemed novelties, have come to be used routinely by contemporary writers. As Robert Humphrey attests:

The tremendous result is this: stream of consciousness methods are, now, conventional methods; the vagaries of prespeech (sic) mental life are established twentieth-century forms; the devices for conveying private consciousness are ones which writers use confidently and readers accept without a murmur. (1962: 113-114)

Nevertheless, the continuous use of these techniques in contemporary literature as tools for introducing awareness in the narrative, and their acceptance and their development up to the present, pose new questions.

Do these devices still serve to introduce prose lyricism into the plot in the way they once did? An investigation into the current discussions about these literary techniques reveals that, in fact, they are subjects of the past. However, if we are to progress further in the study of the theme, the other point which must be examined is lyricism itself. If the aforementioned techniques remain the same – but are now used across the majority of literary styles – then I wonder if the status of lyricism is the same and whether prose lyricism can still be conveyed to a narrative plot mainly by using these techniques. This inquiry also demands an attentive search through the core of the novel and genre theory, by investigating the meaning of lyricism today, and the current possible meaning of the novel as well. This approach is constructive, as it will bring the subject methodologically into a broader perspective.

#### **1.4 The novel**

Thus far, this chapter has focused on what has been written about lyricism in prose in critical studies on the subject. I have also discussed different modern writing techniques that have facilitated the use of lyricism, and the relationship between them. My intention has been to produce an account of lyricism as a literary phenomenon, in order to clearly understand its essence when focusing on the Brazilian novel. From here on, this chapter explores the novel itself in more detail.

### 1.4.1 Openness in movement

The genre of the novel itself has no conclusive definition. It is therefore more practical from the outset to accept the incongruity of the novel rather than becoming distracted by discussions of genre and what can be accurately described as a genre. As Georg Lukács states in *The Theory of the Novel*: ‘As form, the novel establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being; as the idea of becoming, it becomes a state. Thus the novel, by transforming itself into a normative being of becoming, surmounts itself’ (1978: 73). In other words, the novel is never a steady form. Here, Ian Watt wisely calls attention to the terminology of the genre. His line of reasoning in the end shows a common point with the other theorists dealing with the subject: a novel, as the name says, is a novelty: ‘The novel is the form of literature which most fully reflects this individualist and innovating reorientation. Previous literary forms had reflected the general tendency of their cultures to make conformity to traditional practice the major test of truth’ (2000: 13).

The characteristic of openness is pointed out by many theorists. This has been generated by the continuous changes the genre has experienced since its emergence in its modern form across all movements, especially during the twentieth century. Beyond its themes, with categories ranging from adventure to political novels, mystery to science fiction, erotic to cyberpunk plots, the novel also displays an ongoing mutation as regards the diversity of literary movements – from symbolist to existentialist novels, from magical realists to nouveau roman stories. The novel’s malleability is seen as an intrinsic condition of transformation as well, because its advent corresponds in time to the modern rupture of all major concepts that cemented the lives of ancient men. The reconfiguration of notions of space and time also appears within the modern narrative, which is constantly ready for change.

In his renowned essay “The Epic and the Novel” (1941), Mikhail Bakhtin expresses accurately the novel’s inherent potential for transformation, revealing the facts behind the revolution provoked by the genre when it appeared – the proximity with the present and the predominance of personal experience, in contrast with the distanced tradition and the distanced image of traditional epic narratives: ‘It is this: contemporary reality serves as their subject’ (1981: 22-23). This way, Bakhtin attests that the portrayal of subjects in literature began to be depicted through a more direct contact instead of the distant approach of the past. This direct approach to the present was the demolition of the sacred distance and sacred past: ‘The absolute past, tradition, hierarchical distance,

played no role in the formation of the novel' (1981: 38). He summarises the essential differences in perception brought by the novel:

For the first time in artistic-ideological consciousness, time and the world become historical: they unfold, albeit as first still unclearly and confusedly, as becoming, as an uninterrupted movement into a real future, as a unified, all-embracing and inconcluded (sic) process. Every event, every phenomenon, every thing, every object of artistic representation loses its completeness, its hopelessly finished quality and its immutability. (1981: 30)

Bakhtin elucidates that even the attempts to construct a theory for the novel were not successful. To him, the idealised homogeneity pursued by the critics with regard to genres could never apply to the novel (1981: 19). According to him, the general literary theory has not totally understood the real *novelty* at all:

The novel by contrast seeks to shape its form to languages; it has a completely different relationship to languages from other genres since it constantly experiments with new shapes in order to display the variety and immediacy of speech diversity. It is thus best conceived either as a supergenre, whose power consists in its ability to engulf and ingest all other genres (the different and separate languages peculiar to each), together with other stylized but non-literary forms of language; or not a genre in any strict, traditional sense at all. In either case it is obvious that the history of what might be called novels, when they are defined by their proclivity to display different languages interpenetrating each other, will be extremely complicated. (1981: xxix)

Thus, the novel's lack of constancy ironically becomes the focal point of its theoretical study. 'The novel tradition (...) becomes exactly its conflicting nature', as Michael McKeon observes. McKeon's search for a syncretic theory of the novel for the twentieth century resulted in his collection of diverse essays about it, approaching the subject both from a historical and dialectical approach. This has resulted in the *Theory of the Novel*, published in 2000. As McKeon points out, 'In the paradoxical "novel tradition", each stage in the novel's development purports to evince a radical novelty that simultaneously affirms and denies the coherence of the genre as a whole' (2000: 16). The volume then brings together disparate authors such as Claudio Guillén, Walter Benjamin, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Northrop Frye, Sigmund Freud, Georg Lukács, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Fredric Jameson, Franco Moretti, Henry James, André Bazin, Virginia Woolf, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Linda Hutcheon. The table of contents alone gives the reader an idea of the complex scope of the novel.

According to McKeon's interpretation, the novel is considered the quintessential modern genre, profoundly linked to the era of Modernity. However, referring back to

Bakhtin, we see the possibility of its appearance long before what we might conceive as Modernity. The Russian theorist opposes the idea of the birth of the novel in the seventeenth century, its rise in the eighteenth, its triumph in the nineteenth and finally its death in the twentieth: ‘They lack a field theory capable of encompassing not only the texts nominated by the others as novels, but two millennia of long prose fictions preceding the seventeenth century’ (1981: xxvii).<sup>27</sup> To Darío Villanueva, however, the current novel as it is known today appeared – perhaps prematurely – in late classical Greece, as a hybrid genre born out of the mix of historical prose and the erotic vein of comedy (1983: 9).

#### 1.4.2 Historical and social interlocutor

Apart from the many suppositions about the exact period of its dawn and development – and even of its alleged death –, it is undeniable that the novel in modern and contemporary times portrays, or rather discusses, the social and individual shifts of this era.

From a pact with likelihood, mimesis and probability, the perspective has changed to an immersion into human awareness. In this new approach, lyricism sounds like one more of the numerous possibilities of narrative, along with problematisation of the writing, philosophical and essayistic reflection, the focus on language within narratives, the complexity of a literary discourse that is no longer based mainly on description.<sup>28</sup> As Jean-Yves Tadié testifies:

Il a été, aussi, de démontrer l’existence et la nature d’un genre littéraire très vivant, très largement représenté dans un siècle qui a pu paraître, à première vue, dominé d’abord par les grands cycles réalistes, puis par le roman existencialiste, enfin par le ‘nouveau roman’: roman de la société, de l’existence, du texte. (1978: 197)

The French theorist contemplates the gradual path the novel has undertaken towards the deconstruction of reality, before moving to the subject of the text itself. The start of this deconstruction is commonly explained as a reaction to Naturalism and Realism, taking

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Holquist, in his Introduction to *The Dialogic Imagination*, interprets that the novel for Bakhtin is a type of strength: “‘Novel’ is the name Bakhtin gives to whatever force is at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, the artificial constraints of that system. Literary systems are comprised of canons, and ‘novelization’ is fundamentally anticanonical’ (1981: xxxi). Bakhtin even uses the term ‘novelization’ of the other genres, that is to say, the gradual movement which brings other genres towards reality (1981: 39). A great contribution to this debate is given by Hungarian Ferenc Fehér, in *O romance está morrendo?* – the title of the Brazilian edition (1979).

<sup>28</sup> *Literatura de linguagem*, an expression found in Portuguese.

advantage of the heritage of Romanticism in Europe, leading to the interiorisation of the narrative. Only in the late nineteenth century with the publication of *À rebours*, by Joris-Karl Huysman (1884), and *Les lauriers sont coupés*, by Edouard Dujardin (1887), in France, did the literary panorama undergo major changes.<sup>29</sup>

In this phase of literary textual shifts, France played an important role. The appearance of the prose poem happened in the same period, in the second half of the nineteenth century, and this advent is assigned to Charles Baudelaire, with his *Petits poèmes en prose* (1869). Baudelaire, in his turn, confessed to his editor that he was inspired by Aloysius Bertrand, author of *Gaspard de la nuit*, published in 1842, a compilation of different poems – already showing a tendency for prose poems.<sup>30</sup> The prose poem, as defined by Suzanne Bernard (1959) and Tzvetan Todorov (1987), constitutes an enclosed and organic poem made out of poetic prose. Brevity, ambivalence and gratuitousness are its main characteristics. It is distinct from lyrical prose, which is applied to novels, short stories and other types of texts without the same briefness.

Darío Villanueva, for instance, points out this moment as crucial to the new configuration of poetry inside the narrative:

La dimensión anímica del personaje novelesco, hasta entonces deliberadamente proscrita, accede a un primer plano con la llamada novela decadentista (pero también con los ‘reflectors’ de [William] James), y esto apunta ya hacia la aproximación de la novela a la poesía. (1983: 22)

Villanueva considers this a major factor for attracting Symbolist writers to the novel. According to him, there is an evident progression between these first reactions to Naturalism ‘desde la posición de un espiritualismo intimista y los grandes nombres de la renovación de la novela, Aldous Huxley, André Gide, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Herman Hesse, Valle-Inclán’, leading

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<sup>29</sup> Edouard Dujardin claimed for himself the creation of the interior monologue technique, and his novel was declared by James Joyce a major inspiration for his *Ulysses*, published in 1922.

<sup>30</sup> *Gaspard de La nuit* also inspired composer Maurice Ravel, who wrote three piano pieces about it in 1908. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the advent of the prose poem and its consequences for Western literature are recounted by Suzanne Bernard, in her work *Le poème en prose - De Baudelaire jusqu'a nos jours* (1959). I highlight here her last words in the book, concluding that what was taken as a formal revolution in literature was much deeper than imagined: ‘Et c’est par là que le poème en prose, genre de révolte et de liberté, est beaucoup plus qu’une simple tentative pour renouveler la forme poétique: une revendication de l’esprit, un aspect de la lutte toujours recommencée de l’homme contre son destin’ (1994: 773). According to her, both categories of poetical prose and prose poems were born as consequences of new forces in language at the time (1994: 19). The appearance of the poem in prose in Brazil was recently (2014) scrutinised by Gilberto Araujo de Vasconcelos Junior, in *O poema em prosa no Brasil (1883-1898)*, a PhD thesis.



to the development of a type of lyrical novel (1983: 22). However, it is meaningful that this moment is seen differently by some theorists, such as Ricardo Gullón. Gullón, for example, believes that it was not an attempt to overcome Realism or Naturalism, but the right and natural moment to use new methods to express something new in society (1984: 23).

In any case, the correspondence between literature and social shifts was there, something also reflected in the artform itself. Rosa Maria Goulart points out this mutual influence very concisely, which opens many paths to the approximation between prose and poetry:

Esta complexidade do romance contemporâneo, ao mesmo tempo que dificultava a demarcação de fronteiras modais ou genéricas, foi-nos destacando um aspecto que não era novo, mas que ia se moldando a novas configurações, acompanhando que foi a evolução do próprio gênero. Referimo-nos à lírica, que na ficção do Romantismo já adquirira notável representatividade, mas que agora é diversamente integrada. Isto leva-nos a perscrutar um novo tipo de relações entre modos e gêneros literários, atendendo à historicidade, e, por conseguinte, à contínua renovação, das formas literárias e respectivos conceitos – renovação que decorre fundamentalmente dos reajustamentos sucessivos às flutuações cognitivas e mundividenciais em cada tempo. (1990: 15-16)

Thus, the importance of the novel as an interpreter of its times is confirmed. Considering what has been seen thus far, as much as the psychological novel has portrayed the interest in mental processes, lyricism in novels may explore other questions about society. The philosopher and sociologist Lucien Goldmann emphasises this point in his book, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* (1975). Here, he addresses the relationship between the novel form and the structure of the social environment, bringing to light the discussion on how this relationship can contribute to a more social and collective awareness:

The novel form seems to me, in effect, to be the transposition on the literary plane of everyday life in the individualistic society created by market production. There is a rigorous homology between the literary form of the novel, as I have defined it with the help of Lukács and Girard, and the everyday relation between men and commodities in general, and by extension between men and other men, in a market society. (1975: 7)

One of the key points of Goldmann's reasoning is that the evolution of the fictional form conforms to the growing reification of the world. According to him, characters are gradually losing autonomy, to the detriment of objects, within modern and contemporary narratives:

the present period of capitalist organization can be defined on the structural plane by the gradual disappearance of the individual as an essential reality and, correlatively, by the increasing independence of objects, in the case of the first, and, in the case of the second, by the constitution of this world of objects. (1975: 136)

However, Goldmann addresses that this problematisation of the narrative is a search for the absence and the non-existence of the individual. His examples are found in drama, suggesting the theatre of absence of Beckett and Ionesco, and specifically in the narratives of authors such as Franz Kafka, Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Nathalie Sarraute and James Joyce. He identifies that the individual character gradually tends to dissolve and ultimately disappear.

Goldmann turns his attention to two important points elaborated by Georg Lukács in *The Theory of the Novel*: the figure of the problematic hero and the decayed search for authentic values in the modern novel, which he tries to apply to the contemporary configuration of the economic and social system. In doing so, he reinforces the historical and sociological correspondence between novel and the current state of society.

Lukács, in deciphering the novel, states that its hero is in search of self-recognition. His evaluations of the novel present a pessimistic panorama because, as he states, it reflects the incompleteness and fragility of the world (in opposition to the epic, whose world reflects wholeness). From this crucial aspect also comes the *permanent fluctuation* that characterises the genre, as an attempt to reflect the instability of existence:

The inner form of the novel has been understood as the process of the problematic individual's journeying towards himself, the road from dull captivity within a merely present reality – a reality that is heterogeneous in itself and meaningless to the individual – towards clear self-recognition. (1978: 80)

By providing a concise exposition of the many factors of variation within the novel's constitution, and most particularly the modern novel, my aim is to establish a theoretical receptiveness in preparation for the later focus on prose lyricism. All the theorists cited thus far have emphasised the need for open-mindedness when dealing with the novel. From the permanent novelty and transformation discussed by Lukács and Watt, to its individualistic spirit and focus on incompleteness in contrast to the epic, as remarked by Bakhtin, to the acceptance of its tradition of incongruence, stated by McKeon, the novel is a phenomenon that requires an observant and flexible approach.

The malleability of the novel facilitates its role as the interlocutor of social change. At the turn of the twentieth century, the novel underwent a major shift, which demonstrated its potential to concentrate and convey the social anxieties and expectations of the period. Lucien Goldmann sees this as a device which creates awareness of the human condition and highlights the unparalleled ability of the genre to reflect on humanity. This characteristic of interlocution is highly relevant to this research, since I also intend to highlight lyricism as a potential agent of transmutation in language, expression and thinking through prose.

In this sense, the considerations made by theorists of lyricism in novels, such as Ricardo Gullón, Darío Villanueva, Jean-Yves Tadié, Rosa Maria Goulart and Luzia Tofalini are applicable as they understand that lyricism is just one of the many possibilities included in the flexibility of the novel. The novel should be comprehended not as a determined and static genre (even if hybrid, as Freedman sees it, or still linked to movements of the past, such as Romanticism, according to Charles Schug), but rather as a fluent and open confluence of poetry and prose; a work of art that flows in ever-changing configurations, making the novel a conception with a permanently unknown future.

### **1.5 The role of lyricism**

Thus far, I have introduced the shifts and oscillations of the novel from modern narratives onwards. As I have demonstrated, the shift in the axis of fiction directed twentieth century writing to a more introspective narration. This reflects the enormous changes wrought in the last century, which witnessed two world wars, dozens of artistic and social, global and local movements, and the advent of technology, and of mass and social media. I have also discussed the fundamental nature of the novel, its openness and ability to change, encompassing the diversity and mobility of languages across the world. Given this permanent dialogue between the open genre of the novel and society, it is necessary to return to the main focus of this thesis – lyricism. I seek to find the role of lyricism within this pliable panorama of the novel, specifically within the twentieth century.

Exclusively analysing the last century is justifiable, as demonstrated by the example of Romanticism, the studies of which are focused on the nineteenth century. The strong presence of lyricism in the Romantic narrative corresponded to social thought and

behaviour at the time. It represented a reaction against Classicism in the arts and against the industrialisation of society, through praise of the individual imagination. Thus, it is fair to assume that the presence of lyricism today would be parallel to social change as well. It is therefore fair to assume that the notable usage of lyricism today is also a result of social change. My emphasis here is on lyricism as opposed to psychological interiorisation. Furthermore, I refer to the lyrical in the broad sense here, not merely as a feature of (lyrical) poetry.

Next, the core of the question should be addressed: the concept of lyricism. This necessitates another discussion about genres, now in relation to their very conceptualisation in *Poetics*. The field of genre theory is known for being a troubled one, as critic Northrop Frye attests: ‘This at any rate is what Aristotle assumed to be the obvious first step in criticism. We discover that the critical theory of genres is stuck precisely where Aristotle left’ (1957: 13). Indeed, today there is even a concept for these disparities which have been in existence since ancient times – “generic instability”. According to Thomas O. Beebee, this concept was created to mediate the many different theoretical tendencies: some defending the systematisation of the genres, others denying them and others resorting to them in a more relative or flexible way, as simple tools for interpretation of texts (1994: 28). The very history of genre theory is a permanent mutation: from Aristotle’s *Poetics* in 335 BCE to the establishment of today’s foundation genres, Lyric, Epic and Drama, in 1559, by Antonio Sebastiano Minturno’s *L’Arte Poetica*, several diverse meanings were attributed to theoretical labels in order to group texts with common traits. Ralph Cohen, who dedicates his studies to this mutability, points out the importance of understanding the historical changes regarding the subject: ‘Ancient genres were claimed to be essential; later genre critics found them to be combinatory, characterised by change and transformation’ (2003: v). Cohen stresses the combinatory and interrelational aspects of genres in the present, challenging the traditional essentialist view about the subject.

However, in the context of the shifting scenario of genre theory, the concept of lyricism still had to preserve basic principles. The role of the critic is to balance the mutable approach of genre theory with a fundamental sense of the lyrical. Therefore, in order to establish harmonised parameters for the analysis of lyricism in the Brazilian novel, I seek to find one, harmonised methodological approach to the Lyric. Having presented a broad overview of studies of the Lyric, and in light of the conclusions I have drawn up to this point, Emil Staiger’s perspective on genre provides the most appropriate theory

with which to address the complex question of genre. This can be found in *Basic Concepts of Poetics* (1952).<sup>31</sup> His theory does not attempt a closed and definitive delimitation of genre, and considers and reinterprets the traditional triadic conception.

In short, Emil Staiger states there is no purity in any literary work; that each one contains the three genres: Lyric, Epic and Drama. Instead of using the three classical categories to frame the literary pieces, he proposes analysing the works from multiple points of view, not through the traditional rigid filter. Therefore, he proposes a shift in the focus from Lyric to lyrical; from Epic to epic; and from Drama to dramatic. According to Staiger, these categorisations expressed as adjectives are the styles which lie at the base of human creativity, all mixed together:

I shall merely point out one thing, namely, that a poetic work that is nothing but lyric, epic, or dramatic is inconceivable; that every work partakes more or less of all genres; and that only a judgement of whether it does so to a greater or lesser degree determines whether we call it lyric, epic, or dramatic. (1991: 202)

Thus, lyric, epic, and dramatic are not names of categories under which literary works can be filed. The categories, the types, have increased tremendously in number since antiquity. The designations lyric poetry, epos, drama by no means suffice. In contrast, the adjectives remain constant as designations of simple qualities that a certain literary work can display or not. For that reason we can use them to designate a work from any category. We can speak of lyric ballads, dramatic novels, epic elegies and hymns. And in doing so we do not at all mean that this ballad is only lyric and this novel only dramatic. We only mean that the essence of the lyric or of the dramatic is more or less clear, is somehow expressed in these works. (1991: 199)

In other words, Staiger argues that there should be no model to classify works, but rather acceptance that they all contain in varying degrees of intensity the lyrical, epic and dramatic. He supports his argument by pointing to the stages in the development of human cognition. Language develops from emotional expression to logical expression sequentially, and each stage of this process is present in the literary styles. Accordingly, sentient/sensorial expression corresponds to the lyrical style, figurative/visible to the epic and conceptual/logical to the dramatic (1991: 180).

In order to fully appreciate Staiger's rationale, it is helpful to view the lyrical style from a wider perspective, taking into consideration the view of theorists who have advocated

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<sup>31</sup> See more perspectives on genre theory given by Roman Jakobson and Hans Robert Jauss, some of the main theorists on the subject. It has been evident, however, that this discussion demands flexibility, due to its controversial nature.

a restrictive approach to genre. The comparison will permit the reader a greater sense of Staiger's inventiveness.

### **1.5.1 The lyrical: key points to consider**

My main interests within this new perspective are the key characteristics of the lyrical. Staiger recommends orientating the critical analysis on the lyrical sense – i.e. to analyse the work not restricting it to the boundaries of the Lyric, but in terms of its affinity with the adjective lyrical, setting aside for subsequent consideration the other aspects of the work (1991: 202-203).

What Staiger understands as the core of the lyrical is composed not only by some specific characteristics – which I will address later – but also by what the reader understands as lyrical, based on his or her background:

Having grown up in modern times, with the German language, fleetingly and vaguely acquainted with the expression “lyric”, filled with the feeling that a simple word designated a simple essence, I begin to point to the essentially lyric wherever I encounter it, in sounds, rhymes, sentences, stanzas, motifs – wherever it might be. If I am always guided by a true feeling, always one and the same feeling, then everything I say must ultimately be in agreement; and a phenomenon that is clear and unequivocal must reveal itself to me. But if I am further confronted with the objection that I have merely described what a modern German-speaking person is in the habit of calling “lyric”, then I can only answer: “Of course!” Language usage may change. But the phenomenon itself remains the same, constituting an objective context that is fixed in its nature. The terminological question of how it will be designated in the future and among other peoples does not interest me. (1991: 203-204)

Staiger argues that there is a phenomenon of perception of the lyrical that is the same for every reader. However, he points out that any interpretation attempted of the lyrical phenomenon is laden with his or her own personal cultural background, and that this applies to every reader. Furthermore, as seen in Freedman's analysis of features of the lyrical novel, this extends to the individual backgrounds of the novelists themselves, which also inevitably impact on the lyrical aspects of their writing.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, there is an essence of perception that remains constant despite the different names that might be used to describe it, and regardless of differing cultural approaches. It is therefore possible to overcome the idiosyncrasies of language and culture to recognise these key features.

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<sup>32</sup> See in this same Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1(f), “Diversity within”.

Over and above the best known physical aspects of the lyrical, which are also linked to the most characteristic aspect of lyrical poetry,<sup>33</sup> Staiger asserts that we can explore further and discover what lies at the heart of the lyrical narrative. It is this core that makes perception of the lyrical possible. As previously stated, the purpose of this investigation is not to establish definitions, but to identify frequent aspects of the lyrical, even if they manifest themselves in varying ways. To have this lyrical feature in mind can be very useful when analysing literary works.

It is helpful to point out that what Staiger observes as making up this lyrical core are those aspects that are sensed by the common reader (and, as he describes, involuntarily appreciated):<sup>34</sup> unity between the meaning of the words and their sounds (form and content together); the indispensability of each word and of each syllable; occasional or spontaneous) general aspects of the work; repetition to keep the unity of the poetry; rhythm: evidence of a beat, the repetition of identical time units; *Stimmung*, or soul/affective disposition, often not translatable through language; coherence in the lyrical ambience; a dispensing with supports for logical clarity and connections, such as adverbs, conjunctions, subordinations; the independent and transient character of writing and imagining (the poet writes for himself); the redundancy of rhetoric or justification; the predominance of the present, of the moment (rupture with chronological time, and also the predominance of the present in the sense of presentification, that is to say always remaining face-to-face with any time, past, present or future); a mystical lyricism, which however is not necessarily peaceful; *Schmelz*, or fusion; the melting of individuality towards a state of inconsistency; the ability to be trespassed by the other (*um-no-outro* state); fleetingness; inexpressibility of and impotence in the face of what is most intimate to the author.

Although presented here as a list, in Staiger's plain discourse these characteristics are more naturally developed alongside the philosophical conjectures pertaining to his field. Here, they are summarised and highlighted for pragmatic purposes, and are displayed here as starting points for subsequent literary analysis. I must emphasise, however, that they will not be followed like a recipe, but only as a guide to the study of the lyrical novel, a subject that is beyond the traditional label of the Lyric.

Nonetheless, some features must be stressed with a view to establishing a better comprehension of the phenomenon. The most important of these in my interpretation is

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<sup>33</sup> Such as rhymes, alliterations, repetitions, assonances, all commented on in Chapter 1.

<sup>34</sup> These items are a summary of the characteristics presented in the chapter "Lyric Style: Remembrance".

the concept of *Stimmung*, the emotional disposition, the disposition of the soul, the total inspiration to which the author abandons himself. Its language appears as more spontaneous, and this is very noticeable in the text. In order to exist, *Stimmung* must be accepted by the reader, who must be in tacit contact with its atmosphere. Staiger claims it is an art of loneliness (1977: 23). *Stimmung* usually rules the pace of the writing, and the relationship between beat and rhythm within the text. Based on Hegel's theories, Staiger states that the rhythm must be concatenated with *Stimmung*, and this means, very concisely speaking, that the lyrical-self dictates the rhythm of the text, recognising itself in the work (1977: 12-13).

Inexpressibility is also linked to *Stimmung*, since the soul's disposition seems to complete the sense of what the language cannot say. There is a silent suggestion of meaning – which is comprehended by the reader. As Staiger points out: 'The creating of lyric poetry is a rendering of the soul in words – something that in absolute terms is impossible. In the lyric, language does not want to be taken literally; it shies away from its own all-too-concrete reality and wants to free itself from all logical and grammatical coercion' (1991: 93). Therefore, I would like to investigate whether this sort of inexpressibility of the lyrical is permissible in the novel. To do so, it is important to analyse the epic, the genre from which the novel is derived. When comparing both styles, it is clear that the novel has taken a diverse path from the epic. This is particularly clear when it is incorporated to different languages and formats, which encompass social shifts in narratives. As Bakhtin points out: 'The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality' (1981: 56).<sup>35</sup> From the nature of the presentation of the epic, it seems that the novel has theoretically only inherited clarity. This complicates the coexistence with the inexpressibility of the lyrical within the narrative.

Also, according to Freedman's theory, novelistic narrative is used as a basis for the insertion of lyricism. However, the tension between these two antagonistic orientations can arise when least expected. If 'Epic language presents. It points to something. It designates', as Staiger states (1991: 104), it is interesting to verify how lyricism operates in the novelistic narrative, since it is essentially non-descriptive. At this point,

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<sup>35</sup> In "The Epic and the Novel", Bakhtin develops a complete explanation about the detachment of the novel from the epic. In short, the novel has followed an opposite path, as it does not sustain the world of perfection and fullness presented by the epic narrative. On the contrary, 'the completeness of the novel's world, if seen objectively, is an imperfection, and if subjectively experienced, it amounts to resignation' (1981: 8).



the question of the existence of the hybrid genre must be addressed, as it raises controversy in the present. If, as seen here, genre is to be regarded as something fluid, and there is no pure genre, logically there can be no hybrid genre either – any subsequent mixture is a natural occurrence. Bakhtin addresses this in his observations about the natural mixing of poetry and prose: ‘It would be superficial – a matter of a mere artistic technicality – to look for the only and decisive genre-defining criterion in the question of whether a work is written in verse or prose’ (1981: 56).

Octavio Paz corroborates this point about the ambiguity of the novel in *El arco y la lira* (1956). Paz claims that, if rational novelistic prose is built upon language, which is born out of rhythm, hybridism should be considered a natural state of the genre – because words usually return to rhythm: ‘Ritmo y examen de conciencia, crítica y imagen, la novela es ambigua’ (1956: 222). According to Paz, the novel is a genre which requires the mastery of language through the act of thinking; therefore, there is a constant struggle with rhythm, from which uncertainty results. In the specific case of the lyrical novel, this conflict is more evident, ultimately turning this so-called hybridism into a natural tendency.

In conclusion, what I have set out to do here is to analyse the unlimited possibilities of the novel and lyricism together outside the more traditional constraints of theory. If we look for the texture of lyricism within a text, rather than for its theoretical delimitations, adding also the affective disposition of *Stimmung*, a fresh approach to critical analysis becomes possible.

## **1.6 A lyrical point of view**

In order to explore genre theory and lyricism for this part of my research, many other sources were found; however, I have presented only what could really be useful to complete my line of inquiry. Thus far, I have discussed some important points from which I have been able to make deductions enabling my analysis. The theme has not been exhausted yet, but after inquiring into the lyrical novel, genre theory and the theory of the novel, this path indicates a new and different approach to the subject. Due to the controversial nature of this topic and in order to obtain a satisfactory analysis, my conclusion is that it is of paramount importance to keep a sensitive view, taking into consideration the historical-essential personality of each work.

### 1.6.1 The receptive theorist

Ralph Freedman's theory is based on the concept of the hybridism of genres. His assertions seem to have as their basis a fixed confrontation between the vectors of prose and poetry. His theory considers the very rigidity of genre theory as well: the lyrical novel can be perceived chiefly in contrast with the traditional novel. Moreover, the lyricism he seeks to identify in novelistic prose is nearer to lyrical poetry, i.e. lyricism as applied to poetry (1963: 41). It is a perspective from which I understand he took advantage of solid theoretical grounds to observe and define his theory. However, for a more updated analysis it is necessary to enquire about the traditional novel today, since sequentiality seems to be on the wane in contemporary narrative. In addition, it is indispensable to situate lyricism today beyond poetry, precisely on account of another dislocation, this time at the core of the genres.

As discussed here, the openness of the novel, its mutable identity in correspondence to social shifts, and the revision of fundamental genres are all present today. Accordingly, I propose that the distinctions between genres should be approached more loosely, weakening the idea of hybridism.

Another important point is that the comparable genre theory proposed by Staiger – which corresponds to my approach in the sense of its flexibility – results from the natural dynamics of literature. This originates from the fact that the object of study is so alive that it cannot be idealised abstractly by the theorist. This means the novel can also have as a strong feature this possibility of *inverting the perspectives* in its studies, through the power of its mutable nature. Pragmatically, that is to say that instead of analysing the texts from rigid, immutable, previously determined criteria, the observer should work with the openness and flexibility demanded by the lyrical novel.

Therefore, if the single fixed point of my work lies in fully embracing the mobility of the object of study, a flexible analysis is required. Before all the aspects shown above about the nature of the lyrical novel and of lyricism, at the textual and compositional levels, there are no strict criteria in particular cases. This statement reinforces that it has been not the intention of this study to classify prose lyricism as a category. Rather, the purpose is to point out this as another possibility for the novel, through the insertion of lyricism. And, for this purpose, this investigation clarifies some of its most common (however not obligatory) aspects. The organic structure presented by lyricism is indicative of the fact that its constitutive elements lend themselves to combining in a natural manner. The lyrical features are integrated not as precise parts of a mechanism,

but as fluctuating organs – such as, for example, rhythm working along with cohesion; presentification with unicity; and fleetingness with fusion. Moreover, these combinations vary according to the personality of each literary piece (which, in turn, varies according to the author's cultural background).

The next step is to identify the lyrical novel itself, since these same constitutive elements can be present in any novel, at least in part. Recognition comes through the above-mentioned organicity: these elements must be predominant in the novel, in order to give it an undeniable resemblance to an extended lyrical piece. This does not however mean a chiefly physical, formal resemblance to a poem, because, by collating the constitutive elements of the lyrical novel and the characteristics expounded by Staiger about the lyrical, what is at the core of this literary creature is a strong lyrical keynote. If the novel is observed as a whole, this lyrical motif is there, but it cannot be entirely grasped in the text, other than by its indescribable, unsayable presence throughout the story.

This inexpressibility has as its most important significance the enunciation of something that language is insufficient to convey. Although accepting this inexpressibility may appear quite unscientific, it accords with the core of lyricism that I have investigated so far.

This conclusion should also emphasise the most relevant concepts approached in this chapter, among all the characteristics cited here: the *moment* and *Stimmung*. My understanding is that this inexpressibility is contained in these two concepts, being primordial to the constitution of a lyrical novel. Of all the elements I would consider dispensing with in achieving this aim of theoretical openness, these two are exceptions. The reason is that, while considering the psychological novel, or the novel which mainly consists of mind content, it is not possible to affirm that it might have some *Stimmung*, some soul – it either has it or it does not. Nor can it be said that, once lyricism is detected in the narrative, the depiction of the moment is not a singular one, made of impressionist and metaphorical images; that the images found in a lyrical fiction are given the same treatment as any other novel. This treatment of the image is fundamental in the lyrical novel.

To summarise what is indispensable in the lyrical novel: there must be a prevalent presence of affective disposition (*Stimmung*) regarding the development of the plot, and this soulfulness must affect the relationship of the writer with the reality of the novel. Furthermore, the *moment* is not merely a special moment of awareness; it displays the

awareness by means of its lyrical disposition, through imagery. Moreover, the patterns of imagery, as seen in Freedman's theory, lie at the core of these two characteristics.

## 2 LYRICISM IN THE BRAZILIAN NOVEL: AN ERRATIC HISTORY

The majority of Brazilian literary historiographers have not approached prose lyricism directly. As such prose lyricism has not received adequate attention and remains an understudied element of literature in Brazil. It is with this in mind that I intend to assess references and allusions to this subject in the studies of Brazilian historiographers. In examining what little analysis and comments prose lyricism has received, I will build upon my argument that the topic has been misinterpreted. I will also provide a general assessment of lyrical novels in Brazilian literature and explain how and why this topic has been so overlooked.

Thus, I will first focus on the terms “lyricism” and “lyrical” and concentrate specifically on how these terms have been understood in Brazilian novels. An initial survey about the critical treatment the subject has received reveals that it is mainly understood to be related to sentimentalism. This assessment corresponds to the historically uncertain situation of lyricism within Brazilian prose fiction. It is worthwhile, therefore, tracing the evolution of the terms themselves, because their absence from Brazilian literary studies to date poses some difficulty in the academic systematisation of this type of prose in Brazil. I contend that it is partially the confusion surrounding these concepts in Brazilian literature that has contributed to the way that lyrical prose has been discredited in the context of a strong tradition of socially committed literature in Brazil.

This analysis begins with the advent of Romanticism, when, for the dominant and most influential historiographers, the Brazilian novel was born.<sup>36</sup> Summarizing, I will show how the lyrical voice was applied to the Romantic novel, illustrating with José de Alencar’s *Iracema*, as the main case study. *Iracema* has been cited by many critics as a lyrical novel. I depart from this point to demonstrate how prose lyricism became associated with sentimentality, and how it was used to idealise the new nation through grandiloquence and exuberance in language. From its use in nationalism, I argue that

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<sup>36</sup> In *Aspectos do romance brasileiro*, for example, José Aderaldo Castello argues that: ‘As origens do romance brasileiro datam da autonomia, ou melhor, do início do Romantismo (sic) no Brasil, precisamente de 1839 a 1844 ou 45, com os nomes já referidos no início: Pereira da Silva, Justiniano José da Rocha, Joaquim Norberto, Martins Pena, Gonçalves de Magalhães, rigorosamente precursores, e Teixeira e Souza e Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, iniciadores’ (1960: 19).

prose lyricism came to be disparaged later on, identified with escapism and political disengagement. This escapism was counterposed to the socially committed prose which has come to be expected from Brazilian authors. Then I investigate the first great consequence of this misplacement in Symbolism. The criticism of Symbolist prose writers and the resistance to their works are explored as well, indicating consequences that spread out for future literary movements and that last up to novels of the present. In the last sections I explore theoretical approaches amidst this confusing context and arguments that challenge the idea of lack of social engagement within lyricism.

## 2.1 The sentimental and exuberant Romantic interpretation

Among influential historiographies of Brazilian literature, such as those of Antonio Candido, Nelson Werneck Sodré, Afrânio Coutinho, Silvio Romero and José Aderaldo Castello, occurrences of lyricism and the lyrical in the context of the novel are rare. The word lyrical – when not related to poetry – can often be found as a synonym for the sentimental, the affectionate, or the escapist, as I will highlight later in this chapter. As a result, some of the novels which are usually classified as being part of the Romantic period in Brazil were described as lyrical due to having these characteristics.<sup>37</sup>

In relation to the issue of sentimentalism, it is necessary to make a point regarding the use of subjectivism and sentimentalism. In discussing Brazilian Romanticism, it should be kept in mind that both subjectivism and sentimentalism were already among the main characteristics of the artistic movement. In fact, both were general features of the movement worldwide.<sup>38</sup> However, I want here to emphasise how both phenomena, subjectivism and sentimentalism, were confused when it came to lyricism, since the aim in this thesis is to deal with lyricism applied to the novel.<sup>39</sup> In this thesis, I must stress

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<sup>37</sup> The displacement of lyricism in prose probably had its roots in Brazilian literature even before literature itself was first named properly as a national art (according to scholar Antonio Candido, this happened from the eighteenth century onwards; 2007: 26), dating back to those literary movements before Romanticism, namely the Baroque and Arcadianism.

<sup>38</sup> That is to say, in traditional studies about the movement. Attention must be paid to the recent reconfiguration of Romanticism studies in the last 30 years, as Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright point out in *A Handbook of Romanticism Studies* (2012).

<sup>39</sup> A necessary and subtle contribution to follow these mislaid clues is to consider “Lede”, the preface to Gonçalves de Magalhães’s *Suspiros poéticos e saudades* (1836). This work is regarded as the first theoretical manifesto of Romanticism in Brazil, with Magalhães elaborating on the purpose, genre and form of the poems, and expressing his opinions about national poetry: ‘A Poesia, este aroma d’alma, deve de contínuo subir ao Senhor; som acorde da inteligência deve santificar as virtudes, e amaldiçoar os vícios. O poeta, empunhando a lira da Razão, cumpre-lhe vibrar as cordas eternas do Santo, do Justo, e do Belo’ (1836: 1). The text was a milestone in the movement, mainly because the religious and moralist character of his ideas is evident. In relation to the purpose of this chapter, identifying the meaning given

that the concepts of subjectivism and sentimentalism are used as the exacerbation of the human subjectivity. Human subjectivity is understood here as self-consciousness and personal identity.<sup>40</sup>

Returning to the significance of the lyrical, José Aderaldo Castello, for instance, in *Literatura brasileira, origens e unidades* (1999) makes reference to the lyrical novel without dealing with the subject explicitly, assuming common knowledge of its significance. The author insists on the existence of a connection between the lyrical and the idyllic, almost to the point of suggesting that they are synonyms. Furthermore, the lyrical feature seems to be related to intimate communication. A lack of definition therefore remains, as can be seen from the extract of Castello below:

Na narrativa romântica, a sentimentalidade ocupava um lugar preponderante. Deriva dela o subjetivismo, seja de conotação afetiva, seja moral, mas voltado precipuamente para o ideal amoroso, que prevalecia. Gera também a característica confidencial, às vezes, tão intensa que a forma de narrativa lírica ou idílica não bastava, fosse em terceira, fosse em primeira pessoa. (1999: 251)

The Romantic author José de Alencar, whose work constitutes a rich source of debate about lyricism in prose fiction, provides a good example in support of these assertions. His novel *Iracema* (1865) was the first to present a predominant form of lyricism, undeniable lyrical prose, marking the work a ‘lyrical novel’ in Brazilian literature, according to critical consensus (Antonio Soares Amora 1968: 56; José Guilherme Merquior 1977: 81; Massaud Moisés 1987: 41; Alfredo Bosi 1994: 139; José Aderaldo Castello 1999: 267-268; Carlos Nejar 2011: 104). *Iracema* therefore provides a useful case study in my investigation of the meaning assigned to novelistic lyricism in Brazilian literary historiography.

*Iracema* is part of José de Alencar’s Indianist phase, which comprises two more novels: *O Guarani* (1857) and *Ubirajara* (1874). In brief, the plot concerns a romance between a native Tabajara Indian called Iracema, and a Portuguese soldier Martim, a story

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to lyricism in the Brazilian novel it is worthwhile to bear in mind his conceptualisation, which considers poetic lyricism much the same as transcendence, an aspiration to the sacred, beyond sentimentalism, subjectivism, intimism, basic characteristics of Romanticism. Furthermore, Magalhães was one of the first Brazilian authors to attempt a drawing up of the national literary history, with “Ensaio sobre a história da literatura do Brasil”, published in *Niteroi – Revista Braziliense* (1836), of which he was one of the editors. Indeed, for Antonio Soares Amora, Magalhães’s critical ideas about the ascendant national literature were more valuable than his work as a writer (1968: 46).

<sup>40</sup> This conceptualization of human subjectivity follows Udo Thiel’s considerations in *The Early Modern Subject: Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume* (Oxford, 2011).

ending tragically with the woman's death. The novel can be perceived as a metaphor for the miscegenation of the races that formed the Brazilian people. *Iracema* has been categorised not only as a novel, but also as a great prose poem and as a lyrical novel. As Massaud Moisés states: 'É um romance lírico em qualquer dimensão que possa ser concebido. (...) As sentenças, os períodos e os parágrafos são construídos de maneira a sugerir, em sua brevidade e alinhamento musical, hemistícios, versos e estrofes' – and, according to Moisés, this was not only on account of its poetic stylistic resources, but also because of the lyrical atmosphere that surrounds the story as a whole (1978: 41).<sup>41</sup>

The very beginning of the narrative illustrates the author's figurative message, which goes beyond the depiction of the moment:

Verdes mares bravios da minha terra natal, onde canta a jandaia nas frondes da carnaúba;

Verdes mares que brilhais como líquida esmeralda aos raios do sol nascente, perlongando as alvas praias ensombradas de coqueiros;

Serenai, verdes mares, e alisai docemente a vaga impetuosa para que o barco aventureiro manso resvale à flor das águas (1965: 195-196).

(...)

Agora podia viver com Iracema e colher em seus lábios o beijo, que ali vicava entre sorrisos como o fruto na corola da flor. Podia amá-la e sugar desse amor o mel e o perfume, sem deixar veneno no seio da virgem.

O gozo era vida, pois o sentia mais forte e intenso; o mal era sonho e ilusão, que da virgem não possuía senão a imagem.

Iracema afastara-se opressa e suspirosa.

Abriram-se os braços do guerreiro adormecido e seus lábios; o nome da virgem ressoou docemente.

A juruti, que divaga pela floresta, ouve o terno arrullo do companheiro; bate as asas e voa a aconchegar-se ao tépido ninho. Assim a virgem do sertão aninhou-se dos braços do guerreiro. (1965: 218)

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<sup>41</sup> Since we have seen Gonçalves de Magalhães's concept of poetry, as an aspiration to the sublime and to God, it is worthwhile considering José de Alencar's association between Indianism and lyricism. In his criticisms of Gonçalves de Magalhães's *Confederação dos Tamoios*, in a series of five letters published in the newspaper "Diário do Rio de Janeiro" in 1856, Alencar accuses Magalhães of incoherence, since the latter, although founding a new literary movement in Brazilian literature (Romanticism), was still too attached to Classicism: 'Parece-me que o gênio de um poeta, em luta com a inspiração, devia arrancar do seio d'alma algum canto celeste, alguma harmonia original, nunca sonhada pela velha literatura de um velho mundo. Digo-o por mim: se algum dia fosse poeta, e quisesse cantar a minha terra e as suas belezas, se quisesse compor um poema nacional, pediria a Deus que me fizesse esquecer por um momento as minhas ideias de homem civilizado. (...) Brasil, minha pátria, por que com tantas riquezas que possuis em teu seio, não dás ao gênio de um dos teus filhos todo o reflexo de tua luz e de tua beleza? Por que não lhe dás as cores de tua paleta, a forma graciosa de tuas flores, a harmonia das auras da tarde? Por que não arrancas das asas de um dos teus pássaros mais garridos a pena do poeta que deve cantar-te?' (1980: 81). The critical essay precedes the beginning of his Indianist phase, which started with the novel *O Guarani*, in 1857, followed by *Iracema*.



*Iracema* has been tirelessly analysed for more than a century, taught in schools and debated in literary circles, as one of the masterpieces of Indianist fiction and of the Romantic movement. The novel's almost predominant poetic voice, expressed mainly through the excessive use of metaphors, is treated as a useful tool to convey a nationalist message.

Alencar's narrative approach, with its human protagonists and drama driven by the forces of nature was evidently squarely located in the Romantic tradition, as represented by classic European novelists such as Walter Scott and François-René de Chateaubriand, whom Alencar so admired. However, it is Alencar's nationalist message and its political effects, whether intentional or not, that are the main point of interest for the purpose of this thesis. In order to maintain a clear line of reasoning, my focus will be on the apparent appropriation of the lyrical voice, as this is vital to better understand the subsequent developments that lyricism underwent.

Therefore, keeping on this track, José Guilherme Merquior states: 'A mitologia indianista era uma resposta a nossa necessidade de Origem, ansiosamente sentida pelo país em formação nacional' (1977: 80).<sup>42</sup> The great importance of Alencar in the political scene bears direct relation to his importance in Brazilian literature. Indeed, as José Guilherme Merquior comments, Alencar is considered 'o pai da literatura nacional plenamente, isto é, linguisticamente, constituída. Em *Iracema* ou em *Lucíola* se consuma o aparecimento definitivo de uma língua literária inequivocamente brasileira' (1977: 85); Doris Sommer supports this viewpoint, describing Alencar as 'the father of Brazilian literature' (1991: 140). Even for those who did not entirely appreciate indianism, such as Silvio Romero, it appears difficult to deny Alencar's importance as a collective driving force: 'Mas esse velho, e por mim tão maltratado indianismo, teve um grandessíssimo alcance: foi uma palavra de guerra para unir-nos e fazer-nos trabalhar para nós mesmos nas letras' (1949: v3, 231). This respect is based on Alencar's prolific and heterogeneous output, with dozens of his novels and plays portraying both urban life and the interior of the country.

With all this focus on Alencar's artistic and political mission, and in the absence of studies about lyrical prose in Brazilian novels, it seems plausible that perceptions of prose lyricism may have been blurred. The attempt to find a truly national form of literary expression has taken overwhelming priority in critical analyses, in which the

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<sup>42</sup> Alencar's social representativeness as a builder of national identity was also highlighted by Gilberto Freyre in *José de Alencar* (1952) and *Reinterpretando José de Alencar* (1955).

poetic tone has been deemed the best vehicle to express the Brazilian character – enhancing the drawing of landscapes and both the rural and urban populations.

Beyond their political role, lyrical techniques were not analysed to a great extent. Their characteristics were only specified in reference to the political purpose of the novel. In addition, mindful that both nationalism and sentimentality played an equally strong role in Romanticism, it seems that the lyrical tended to be associated with the sentimental aspect of Brazil's emerging identity. It is worth remembering that for José de Alencar, poetry should correspond to the greatness of the nation.

Filho da natureza embrenhar-me-ia por essas matas seculares; contemplaria as maravilhas de Deus, veria o sol erguer-se no seu mar de ouro, a lua deslizar-se no azul do céu; ouviria o murmúrio das ondas e o eco profundo e solene das florestas. E se tudo isto não me inspirasse uma poesia nova, se não desse ao meu pensamento outros voos que não esses adejos de uma musa clássica ou romântica, quebraria a minha pena com desespero, mas não a mancharia numa poesia menos digna de meu belo e nobre país. (1980: v1, 81)

Regarding the narrative of *Iracema*, José Aderaldo Castello clearly demonstrates the confusion between lyricism and sentimentalism (again along with this 'idyllic' image). He also links this blend of lyricism and sentimentalism to the Romantic movement:

*Os elementos líricos desse tipo de romance residem na tentativa de realizar-se um ideal de vida harmoniosa, com o triunfo inevitável do bem, da tolerância e mútua compreensão, o que se verifica mais por força do destino do que por vontade deliberada e mesmo dirigida dos personagens. Assim, o romancista deforma a vida ou a realidade de tal maneira que se conduz o leitor para um mundo ideal, muitas vezes arbitrário e caprichoso. Realiza-se verdadeira fuga, quando tudo é produto da imaginação exaltada do romancista. Um simples incidente da vida cotidiana, ferindo-lhe a sensibilidade aguda, pode levá-lo a arrojados voos de imaginação, em virtude da qual ele arquiteta uma fabulação quase fantástica para seus romances. (...) De qualquer forma, o romantismo (sic) muitas vezes realiza o "romance poema", visão lírica, ideal, ou *deformação poética da vida apreciada principalmente nos seus aspectos sentimentais*. Cria-se nova forma de idílio, sobretudo quando a natureza é o espelho e a confidente das mais secretas emoções e aspirações amorosas dos personagens. [emphasis mine] (1960: 60-61)*

It is evident that by 'elementos líricos', Castello is referring to the author's objectives, which relate to providing an idealised version of Brazilian life. He indicates that lyricism is there to present this peaceful and perfect life, in a poetic deformation of reality, based on sentimentality. Hence, his analysis does not address the poetic construction within the text itself, i.e. how poetry operates inside the narrative, but focuses more on the author's ideological intentions (my first emphasis in the excerpt

above). The lyrical feature of the language in *Iracema* is not Alencar's main preoccupation, according to the critic's study. In Castello's view, the lyrical feature lies less in the way the text is structured and the narrative is elaborated than in its social purposes. Although there should be no suggestion that the lyrical construction and its social purposes operate completely separately, Castello's analysis places emphasis on the latter at the expense of the former.

As regards the excerpt above, it is also worth commenting on Aderaldo Castello's concept of the 'deformação poética da vida'. "Deformation" is not an ordinary word, unlike perhaps "alteration", for instance. Here "deformation" in its full sense conveys a negative tone, of disfiguration – which itself may denote an unfavourable stance from the critic. What is significant here is not the issue of 'deformation' or 'alteration' itself, but rather the recipient of this action. As I will show, with regard to lyricism in the novel, a lyrical transformation happens to the narrative, not to life. Moreover, when Castello refers to 'life', we are confronting one of the main points of discussion about the twentieth-century novel: in Alencar's time, there was no emphasis placed on the processes of the languages themselves within the narratives.<sup>43</sup>

In his commentary on *Iracema*, Antonio Soares Amora seems more attentive to the narrative itself, emphasising its rhetorical tone and declamatory dialogues. He does, however, acknowledge that the book is an 'obra-prima do romance lírico brasileiro' (1968: 56), without actually defining the term *romance lírico*, except for the following introductory words about the novel:

No que respeita à conquista do caráter brasileiro, obsessão de nosso espírito no Romantismo, o romance romântico, visto em conjunto, apresenta soluções acertadas, e soluções ilusórias: de modo geral, consoante ao gosto da época, reflete na expressão um tom aliterado e preocupação de 'artesanato' artístico, evidente nos diálogos um tanto declamatórios e teatrais. (1968: 53)

From this it appears that Amora did not consider the term 'romance lírico' as a possible categorisation beyond the sentimental poetry that the lyrical narrative was then expected to be.

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<sup>43</sup> Alain Robbe-Grillet, reflecting upon the modern novel and warning readers and critics about the unclassifiable advances of the genre, states: 'What constitutes the novelist's strength is precisely that he invents, that he invents quite freely, without a model. The remarkable thing about modern fiction is that it asserts this characteristic quite deliberately, to such a degree that invention and imagination become, at the limit, the very subject of the book' (2000: 816). David Daiches indicates three major factors behind the shifts in the construction of the modern novel: the new views about experience, about time and about the nature of consciousness (1960: 10-11); while Haroldo de Campos, arguing about Latin American literature, cites this reconfiguration as a metalinguistic dimension (1977: 292).

José Aderaldo Castello, on the other hand, repeats the binomial expression ‘sentimental e lírico’ as a sort of representation of the Romantic novel, especially in relation to José de Alencar’s writing. A definition of the lyrical is not given though, which might lead readers to misinterpret the lyrical in the several conceptions of its denotative meaning. In Portuguese, the term is generally understood as a synonym of sentimental: ‘[Do gr. *lyrikos*, pelo lat. *lyricu*.] Adj. 1. Relativo a lira (2). 2. Diz-se do gênero de poesia em que o poeta canta suas emoções e sentimentos íntimos. 3. Que tem ou revela lirismo: *prosador lírico*. 4. Fig. Sentimental; sonhador; apaixonado. 5. Em que se representam óperas [v. *opera* (1)]: *teatro lírico*. ~ V. *cena – a e drama* –. S.m. 6. Poeta cultor de poesia lírica. [Sin., bras.: *lirista*. Cf. *lírico*, do v. *liricar*’] (Novo Dicionário Aurélio 1986: 1038).

In Castello’s excerpt below there is an example of this type of association between sentimentality and lyricism:

O tipo de romance romântico, sentimental e lírico, em que se funde o amor ideal com a natureza que superiormente reflete este sentimento, quem melhor realizou entre nós foi José de Alencar, e com tal intensidade que se tornou uma das características mais importantes de toda a sua obra de ficção. Talvez com exceção de Macedo, com *A moreninha*, outros românticos que seguiram a mesma trilha, seguiram-na com passos por vezes trôpegos, quer dizer, com menos lirismo. [...] Acrescentou-se frequentemente a tendência indicada à atitude nacionalista, verdadeiramente regionalista não só quanto aos tipos, mas também quanto à paisagem, porque, em conformidade com o romance sentimental e lírico, houve o aproveitamento dos nossos temas e motivos reconhecidamente líricos e regionais. Exemplificamos com romances de Alencar, sertanistas e até indianistas e principalmente com romances regionalistas de Taunay e de Bernardo Guimarães. (1999: 61)

By ‘temas e motivos reconhecidamente líricos’ the reader may better understand the inspiring landscapes and the people typical of Brazil’s national reality. These themes are here associated with notions of nationalism and regionalism. Castello is emphatic about this link, citing as examples Alencar’s novels narrated in the backlands and/or through Indianist narratives. It is worth recalling here how José de Alencar defined his own writing, in ‘Como e porque sou romancista’ (1893): ‘a escola francesa, que eu então estudava nesses mestres da moderna literatura, achava-me preparado para ela; [...] o romance, como eu agora o admirava, *poema da vida real*, me aparecia na altura dessas criações sublimes’ (1893: 10) [Alencar’s emphasis].

However, Alencar did not classify *Iracema* as a novel; for him, as José Guilherme Merquior argues, *Iracema* was a ‘legend’. The critic calls this grandiloquence a stylisation: ‘halo simbólico do poema em prosa’, ‘múltiplos recursos da sua frase

poética’, ‘procedimento essencialmente lírico’ and ‘poetização da prosa’ (1977: 80-81). This describes what critics refer to as Alencar’s exuberant style – effusive and energetic. Indeed, Alencar’s notably vivid imagination compensated for his lack of knowledge of the country. Massaud Moisés, in an attempt to interpret Alencar’s imagination, relies on the folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo and his digression on the exuberant fantasies of popular European and Asiatic balladeers. Moisés suggests that the same logic might be applied to Romantic authors: ‘Sermonários, apologéticas, agiológicos, histórias fantásticas e mágicas, novelas sentimentais e cavaleirescas, tudo isso, num amálgama complexo, penetrou e difundiu-se largamente pelo Brasil’ (1989: 98):

Resta focalizar o estilo de Alencar, constituído por uma dicção basicamente poética. Poeta na essência de sua cosmovisão, Alencar vestia o homem e a paisagem de maravilhoso e concebia magicamente uma harmonia de paraíso para o mundo. Ao rotular *Iracema* de poema em prosa os críticos apenas vincam a expressão fundamental da mundividência alencariana: a poesia.

Poética é sua visão da natureza: pinta-a com a imaginação, numa subjetividade em que o “eu” mais se contempla projetado na paisagem do que observa, num *idealismo* de quem somente encontra no universo natural as forças mágicas que a infância lhe impregnou o subconsciente. *Ainda quando despido de recursos notoriamente poéticos, é ainda lírica sua visão do mundo*, como n’*As Minas de Prata*. A musicalidade é a característica fundamental de seu estilo: ideal romântico por excelência, Alencar concretiza-o notadamente pela utilização de ritmos poéticos e de metáforas polivalentes: [emphasis mine] (1990: 100-101).

Moisés highlights Alencar’s guileless attitude in interpreting the Brazilian reality and stresses that his use of poetic resources is suited to this type of view. According to him, Alencar’s style also borrowed formal techniques from music and the visual arts. Moisés views Alencar’s work as a poetic cosmovision, with a magical, childlike and edenic perspective, and this is revealing about how lyricism was viewed at the time. Lyricism’s association with idealisation, grandiloquence and exuberance becomes clear alongside the way that nature and landscape are imbued with sentiment, a kind of transposition to a mythical or transcendent level of significance, out of the ordinary.

For Antonio Candido, *Iracema* appears ‘no limite da poesia, como o exemplar mais perfeito da prosa poética na ficção romântica – realizando o ideal tão acariciado de integrar a expressão literária numa ordem mais plena de evocação plástica e musical. Música figurativa, ao gosto do tempo e do meio’ (2007: 536). Candido acknowledges the ‘lyrical density’ of the novel, but on the other hand points out clearly that Alencar was creating an atmosphere ‘para celebrar a poesia da vida americana’ (2007: 547).

According to Candido, Alencar's lyrical expression, made in his words through an exalted and impressionistic visual sense, had the purpose of depicting diverse Brazilian environments: 'A poesia e a verdade de sua linguagem permitiram-lhe adaptar-se a uma longa escala de assuntos e ambientes, do mato ao salão elegante, da Colônia aos seus dias, da desenfreada peripécia ao refinamento da análise' (2007: 547). This analysis can be likened to that of Moisés in that the lyrical appears as a device to be employed, rather than an end in itself. Silvio Romero, for his part, does not call it poetry, but nevertheless highlights Alencar's strong synaesthetic narrative: 'a riqueza das tintas, a variedade dos epítetos, o gracioso das imagens, a carícia dos sons, que lembram a música, velada e embriagante, das confabulações femininas' (1949: 447).

Doris Sommer (1991) offers a perspective on Alencar's lyrical expression that is similar to what has been argued by José Guilherme Merquior (1977). Both regard Alencar's writing as a genuine 'unheard of' Brazilian language, 'the language of a country that had finally broken with Portugal and Portuguese'. The scholar points out, amidst the poetic prose, the innovations in Portuguese grammar presented by the author, such as the use of Tupi terminology, a flexibility and a colloquialism never seen before in national literature, as though Alencar was writing to legitimate a newly-born Brazilian language (Sommer 1991: 148-149).

*Iracema* and *O Guarani* are the examples Sommer uses to demonstrate how Alencar can be considered alongside Latin American authors who contributed to the creation of national, foundational novels. She identifies a continental paradigm, based on the natural proximity of Latin American writers to politics, as opposed to writers from North America, who show more critical detachment. Latin American national novels, therefore, are regarded as landmarks in the historical dignity and self-image of the people: 'Sometimes anthologised in school readers, and dramatised in plays, films, television serials, national novels are often as plainly identifiable as national anthems' (1991: 4).

Sommer suggests a typical relationship between Romanticism and patriotism in the continent, calling attention to the fact that Romantic texts in those countries were bound to fill the historical gap of the past, helping 'to direct that history toward a future ideal' (1991: 7). Bereft of solid historical analyses, and with a perspective turned towards the future, the literary narrative was empowered to become historical, directing the collective imagination to the idealisation of nation-building.

Sommer's perspective meets my own line of reasoning concerning the strong ideological objective of this type of novel. These Romantic compositions used sentimentalism (as well as eroticism, as she points out) as a way to project to the reader the idea of the conciliation and the amalgamation between races and different cultures. Focusing on the question of lyricism, what matters here is that, in Alencar's case, this sentimentalism entangled and confused with lyricism was indeed considered an option not only to convey his patriotic message but also to establish – or to attempt to establish – a typical Brazilian language, a variation of the original Portuguese.

Alencar's elevated tone, however, could not serve this same purpose in his urban novels. On the contrary, it instead exposed the dislocation between cultures. For critic Roberto Schwarz, this could nevertheless be an advantage. He argues that what have been considered the weak aspects of Alencar's narrative are in fact his greatest contributions to the Brazilian novel. He constructs this argument based on analysis of the urban novel *Senhora* (1875) (1977: 29-53). In *Senhora*, Alencar was criticised for producing incoherent urban characters for portraying realistic European types that could never fit into Brazilian society. However, by doing this, he was exposing the fracture between the ideologies of the two continents, as Schwarz points out. Among other things, his style of grandiloquence remained, but, when applied to urban social situations in a Brazilian scenario, the result was an evident displacement, and disharmony between both cultures.

Applying Schwarz's logic to Alencar's other novels, such as *Iracema*, his grandiloquence, described by Massaud Moisés as the creative imagination of myths (1990: 101), played the same ideological function, whether intentionally or not. Besides the nationalist purpose of elevating Brazilian identity through literature, the lyrical features of Alencar's rhetoric also had a social purpose. Therefore, displacement, or disharmony, was present in both his urban novels as well as in his Indianist novel par excellence, *Iracema*. That is to say, *Iracema*'s so-called lyricism was useful not only for building national identity by glorifying landscapes and people, but also in presenting the contrast between cultures, expressed through this grandiloquence.

Returning to the main point in the first part of this chapter, namely the concept of lyricism in Romantic novels, two ideas must be underlined: lyricism as a strategic resource of the writer, aimed at identifying and stressing a definitive Brazilian national identity; and lyricism as a vehicle for nationalism. With this in mind and by way of a summary, it is valuable to recall the key points which have been identified so far in this

chapter. Essentially, the Romantic prerogatives of the narrative began to change, and with this, an increased lyrical approach grew in predominance at the expense of the epic influence. This progression can be perceived in the breadth of the lyrical itself during this early period of novelistic narratives in Brazil. That is, from the advent of Romanticism, with the sacred perception of poetry as the means to narrate the country, to the Indianist case, taking José de Alencar as an example, I note a greater investment in grandiloquence, idealisation and exuberance, involving the depiction of landscapes and people with sentimentality. Thereafter, this depiction evolves to a transcendent level, taking the subjects beyond reality.

*Iracema* provides an example of this. The novel's proximity to the epic would have been a natural path for Alencar's lyricism, yet the novel is not an epic composition. *Iracema* therefore may be influenced by the epic, but it presents many other novelties including the use of poetic prose, employed with the intention of filling a retrospective historical gap, as Sommer affirms. *Iracema's* confluence of styles was something rare for the period, and it was this very factor which allowed the narrative to present its innovative blend of Portuguese and Tupi languages.

Nevertheless, this type of evolution to transcendence in Brazilian literary historiography is accused by its critics of having occurred at the detriment of social commitment, bringing about a dubious or uncertain literary quality and the problem of a writer's political disengagement, as I will show in the subsequent sections. Through these often misunderstood narratives, my research begins to unveil the hidden pathways of lyricism in the Brazilian novel.

## **2.2 Brazil's unappreciated sentimentalism**

To the functional use of prose lyricism for the idealisation of the nation we can add another line of enquiry. This present topic will contend that, after Romanticism, lyricism associated with sentimentality came to be seen as a derogatory trait of the very Brazilian character. The lyrical aspect, from forming the national identity, turned into an undesirable feature of serious literature. The reason was the contrast with the more realist depiction demanded from the writers, before the new social context that Brazil was going to experience in the twentieth century, with industrialization and urbanization.



This assumption is sensed by the critic José Veríssimo in 1954, when he condemns the remaining presence of lyricism in Brazilian prose. To him, the lyrical could be a disguise for the poor quality of the Brazilian thought:

Sob o aspecto filosófico, o que é possível notar no pensamento brasileiro, quando é lícito deste falar, é, mais talvez do que a sua pobreza, a sua infirmitade. Esta é também a mais saliente feição da nossa literatura dos anos [18]70 para cá. Disfarças a ambas, ou as atenua, o íntimo sentimento comum do nosso lirismo, ainda em a nossa prosa manifesto, a sensibilidade fácil, a carência, não obstante o seu ar de melancolia, de profundidade e seriedade, a sensualidade levada até a lascívia, o gosto da retórica e do reluzente. Acrescentem-se, como características mentais, a petulância intelectual substituindo o estudo e a meditação pela improvisação e invencionice, a leviandade em aceitar inspirações descontraídas e a facilidade de entusiasmos irrefletidos por novidades estéticas filosóficas e literárias. (1954: 17)

Therefore, lyricism, once useful in the attempt to construct a sense of nationalism, became eventually an inadequate vehicle for the daily realities of Brazil's social problems. It fell, consequently, out of favour. The two main reasons were that its sentimentality would fail to deal with the problems Brazil was about to face socially and that it would disguise a lack of true and robust intellectual content.

In the excerpt above, Veríssimo addresses the absence of a distinctive character to Brazilian literature, a theme which was important to critics such as Silvio Romero and many others at that time. This issue was not only raised in the literary field, but was also regarded as a political and social feature. Nelson Werneck Sodré presents the theme in Chapter 13 of *História da literatura brasileira* (1969: 475), which he calls a 'transplantação cultural'. The lyrical character trait is interpreted by Veríssimo as a disguise for the poverty of Brazilian philosophical and literary thought. The pessimistic and sceptical Veríssimo, when he states that lyricism was 'ainda em nossa prosa manifesto' (1954: 17), leads one to think that the feature was considered backward, obsolete and undesirable.

Other critics, such as Lucia Miguel-Pereira, reiterate Brazil's excessively sentimental character, also making reference to Brazilian literatures susceptibility to external influences. Miguel-Pereira cites as an example how easily Romanticism from abroad was reconciled with Brazilian identity. The reason was that it coincided with 'the dominant state of mind' of the country, which she viewed as short on imagination but tremendously sensitive:

A julgar pela nossa literatura, somos um povo pouco imaginativo, e ainda menos dado a abstrações. A narrativa que assenta na realidade nos interessa mais do que a fabulação completa, e muito mais do que as ideias puras; não na realidade seca e fria, mas aquecida pelo calor humano e como que umedecida pela sensibilidade que, esta sim, não nos falta, e, ao contrário, parece envolver todas as coisas de uma doçura talvez um pouco mole, mas poderosa e autêntica. (1950: 20-21)

Similar opinions about the proximity between Romanticism and a ‘Brazilian identity’ can be found among other scholars such as Andrade Muricy and, again, José Aderaldo Castello. Muricy states:

Os mocinhos admiráveis do Romantismo tinham-se queimado num ardor de continuada adolescência, e não passaram em vão, porque a nossa boa gente brasileira os adotou e se lhes mantém fiel, o que é significativo, senão de fenômeno estético, pelo menos de íntima simbiose sentimental. (1952: 87)

Meanwhile, José Aderaldo Castello claims ‘a persistência do Romantismo reconhecível no temperamento e na sensibilidade brasileiros’, when broaching the advent of Realism (1999: 284).

Digressions about this ‘soft sweetness’ particular to Brazilian literature are found not only in studies about Romanticism, but also in texts concerning other artistic movements such as Parnassianism. The fierce rigour of Parnassianism’s formal literary construction, despite being a notably poetic movement, is used to draw comparisons between peoples and their subjectivities. Negative clues exist, for example, in the following comment by José Veríssimo:

A forma rigorosa, impessoal, impassível [...] em que se quis ver a marca da escola – desmentida aliás mesmo em França por alguns de seus mais distintos alunos, como Coppee – *não coadunava com o lirismo português e brasileiro*, ambos essencialmente feitos de sentimentalidade e de personalismo, ambos muito pessoais. Em Portugal, mais ainda que no Brasil, não houve nunca verdadeiros parnasianos, segundo o conceito comum do parnasianismo, se não o forem os seus árcades do século XVIII. [emphasis mine] (1954: 300)

José Veríssimo’s statement is quoted by Nelson Werneck Sodré (1969: 454), indicating the sentimental origin of Brazil’s lyrical facet and associating it with the Portuguese features, in a joint analysis of the characters of both nations. It is clear that this association is meant to highlight national sentimentality.

It seems that to authors such as Afrânio Coutinho, this form of ‘sentimental’ lyricism does not deserve to be examined, presumably reflecting its low status in literary

thought. In the more recent case of João Guimarães Rosa, Coutinho calls Rosa's lyrical aspects 'artistic writing', and proposes later, in the same study, *Literatura no Brasil* (1986), that if lyricism has ever existed in Brazilian literature, the only other example of "liricidade" worthy of the name in prose was that of Gilberto Freyre (1986: 503-505).<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, thus far through hints found in the studies of theorists such as Antonio Candido, Nelson Werneck Sodré, Afranio Coutinho, Silvio Romero, José Aderaldo Castello, Alfredo Bosi, José Veríssimo and Lucia Miguel-Pereira, a not particularly complimentary view of lyricism can be detected. Novelistic lyricism has been misunderstood, avoided or omitted as a singular feature, and lyricism itself has also been configured as having a somewhat disreputable characteristic within the context of literary criticism.

An approach to better understand this discredited view of lyricism is also found in Alfredo Bosi's comment on the flaws of Symbolist narratives. The following comment by Bosi reconfirms the close link between the novel and social and historical development, which has been established since the dawn of Brazilian literature:

O que não soa tão estranho em poesia, pela própria tradição sublimadora e distanciadora da lírica ocidental, choca no romance que, desde o século XVIII, se tem mostrado comprometido com as realidades sociohistóricas, mesmo na sua variante passional e romântica. (1994: 294)

From the very beginnings of its history, Brazilian literature has been strongly committed to a documentary function, as a contribution to the formation of a national identity.<sup>45</sup> Antonio Candido explains this precisely in *Formação da literatura brasileira*, mainly in the chapters 'Literatura empenhada' and 'O nacionalismo literário'. He points out that

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<sup>44</sup> The neologism 'liricidade' seems to match what has been observed in this investigation so far about how critics have considered lyricism in prose narratives. As a condition, 'liricidade' highlights certain aspects of the combination between poetry and prose narrative, while denying its real possibility of occurrence: 'liricidade' indicates the tendency of being lyrical, without nonetheless assuming that a text could truly be lyrical prose. In the same paragraph as the excerpt cited above (1986: 503-505), Coutinho actually praises artistic writing over poetic prose: 'Menores são os compromissos da prosa poética.'

<sup>45</sup> Not only national identity in a political sense; the history of customs benefited from the documentary records within the first Brazilian novels. Gilberto Freyre, for example, in *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, praises the national novels as precious sources of information, mentioning for instance Machado de Assis, Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, José de Alencar, Manuel Antonio de Almeida, Julio Ribeiro, among others, as writers 'que fixaram com maior ou menor realismo aspectos característicos da vida doméstica e sexual do brasileiro; das relações entre senhores e escravos; do trabalho nos engenhos; das festas e procissões' (2006: 49-50).

‘national literature’ was understood by society as anything that could express Brazilian identity:

Com efeito, a literatura foi considerada parcela dum esforço construtivo mais amplo, denotando o intuito de contribuir para a grandeza da nação. Manteve-se durante todo o Romantismo este senso de dever patriótico, que levava os escritores não apenas a cantar a sua terra, mas a considerar as suas obras como contribuição ao progresso. (2007: 328)

Candido’s statement about the position of Brazilian writers as delegates of reality within national literature, committed to helping the nation to recognise its own features, is well-known (2007: 29). He states: ‘O desenvolvimento do romance brasileiro, de Macedo a Jorge Amado, mostra quanto a nossa literatura tem sido consciente da sua aplicação social e responsabilidade na construção de uma cultura’ (2007: 434).

Therefore, it seems that the ‘missionary’ role of writers could not be denied, especially since the establishment of Romanticism, as Candido expresses in the following excerpt:

Aliás, o nacionalismo artístico não pode ser condenado ou louvado em abstrato, pois é fruto de condições históricas – quase imposição nos momentos em que o Estado se forma e adquire fisionomia nos povos antes desprovidos de autonomia ou unidade. Aparece no mundo contemporâneo como elemento de autoconsciência, nos povos velhos ou novos que adquirem ambas, ou nos que penetram de repente no ciclo da civilização ocidental, esposando as suas formas de organização política. [...] Se não decorreu daí realismo no alto sentido, decorreu certo imediatismo, que não raro confunde as letras com o padrão jornalístico; uma bateria de fogo rasante, cortando baixo as flores mais espigadas da imaginação. Não espanta que os autores brasileiros tenham pouco da gratuidade que dá asas à obra de arte; e, ao contrário, muito da fidelidade documentária ou sentimental, que vincula à experiência bruta. (2007: 29)

Candido is clearly critical of the limited imagination and strong sentimentality of Brazilian narratives, which were designed to build a national identity through literature. The documentary and sentimental depictions of reality, brought together with immediacy, were more appropriate to the committed role of the writers. These depictions could not be as realistic as they are in journalistic accounts (otherwise they would not be regarded as literature), but they could instead narrate the writers’ direct experiences of the country. Linking this social commitment of Brazilian authors to artistic nationalism and locating artistic nationalism as a literary procedure in history, Candido interprets its importance in the social evolution of both old and new-born states, without condemning or praising it.

This documentary aspect is also put forward by other scholars. Alfredo Bosi even uses the expression ‘amor ao documento’, when explaining Regionalism and Sertanism,

addressing the insufficient literary quality of these types of narratives, which he perceives as urban writers' inability to develop realistic narratives about environments that were not natural to them. According to Bosi, this negative outcome may be related to a sort of 'prosa híbrida' (1994: 141), an expression which the author leaves undefined.<sup>46</sup>

Nelson Werneck Sodré, in turn, also highlights the attempts by Sertanism and Indianism to portray the Brazilian character, especially through the expression of its natural features: landscapes and rural scenarios, 'pela exuberância da natureza, pelo grandioso dos cenários, pela pompa dos quadros rurais. Isto é o Brasil, pretendem dizer' (1969: 323). Exaggeration and exuberance were evident, in a great effort to create the national character, as we have already seen in the creation of *Iracema* by José de Alencar.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, excess and exaggeration, often deemed a lyrical feature, is also present to some degree within the documentary style of writing. This indicates conversely a direct correlation between the documentary function and the exuberance of language, during Romanticism at least. As Candido states in *Formação da literatura brasileira*, in the Romantic novel there was a conflict between reality and dreaming, which he calls the 'idealist tendency':

A cada momento, a tendência idealista rompe nas junturas das frases, na articulação dos episódios, na configuração dos personagens, abrindo frinchas na objetividade da observação e restabelecendo certas tendências profundas da escola para o fantástico, o desmesurado, o incoerente, na linguagem e na concepção. (2007: 434-435)

Most probably, this perception of evasion relates the most complicated attribute associated with lyricism in the canonical historiography of Brazilian literature: the lack of political and social commitment or, in other words, escapism.

In *Brigada Ligeira e outros escritos*, Candido defines as 'lyrical' the general literary view in Brazil, about Brazil, before greater social awareness in literature arose in the early twentieth century with industrialisation – and he adds, 'de certo modo pitoresca':

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<sup>46</sup> The tendency toward the documentary in Brazilian writers has shown a curious effect on criticism. For instance, Massaud Moisés points out that the literary work for him should be seen 'sempre que possível, como *documento* e como *testemunho*' (1990: 9) [author's emphasis]. Nonetheless, he argues that such historical-critical analysis ought to start from within the text, not from the outside.

<sup>47</sup> The impact of nationalism, comprising the association between the natural landscapes of Brazil, its original people and the formation of the national character and literature were so strong that the counterpart offered in the article by Machado de Assis, 'Notícia da atual literatura brasileira – Instinto de nacionalidade' (1873) became famous as well. Through this text, Machado absolves Brazilian authors of part of their supposed responsibility: 'Não há dúvida (sic) que uma literatura, sobretudo uma literatura nascente, deve principalmente alimentar-se dos assuntos que lhe oferece a sua região, mas não estabelecamos doutrinas tão absolutas que a empobrecam' (1873: 3).

Mas essa visão lírica e de certo modo pitoresca do homem do campo, tema sobre o qual variou largamente uma das mais abundantes e tenazes sublitteraturas da nossa história literária, não podia persistir com a marcha do problema social; com o trabalhador rural se integrando em massas dominadas pela usina e pela tulha, símbolos da poderosa engrenagem latifundiária, com o proletariado urbano se ampliando segundo o processo de industrialização. À medida que esta se dava, o equilíbrio do mundo burguês do escritor com o mundo do homem rural, objeto da sua literatura, ia se colocando em novos termos, as contradições sociais se evidenciando e se agudizando nas perspectivas de conflito e nas necessidades de reajustamento. (1992: 46)

This sort of lyrical vision could not yet be called a concept. Nonetheless, there is a clear implication that lyricism lacked political and social commitment in the context of the challenges Brazil would be facing as a nation in the twentieth century. As I have established, although sentimental depiction was once used to build the new born country's identity, this view of 'lyricism' eventually began to be seen as escapism from the country's problems.

### **2.3 Symbolist writing and the problem of commitment**

To widen the line of reasoning, I will now pursue an aspect of Brazil's literary historiography and novelistic lyricism that has until now rarely been the subject of scrutiny: Symbolism, and Symbolist prose in particular. This aspect of literary historiography will be examined not only with respect to what has been omitted or neglected, but the reasons for this neglect will be considered. The predominantly poetic movement should be included here due to its evident use of lyricism in prose.

It is worth recalling that lyricism in novels has always been considered a flexible term to be applied to sentimental narratives and their particular characteristics. José Aderaldo Castello, for example, creates and designates other different types of lyricism for authors of other literary movements, such as the 'sexual lyricism' of Graça Aranha's Modernist novel of 1929, *A viagem maravilhosa* (1960: 127). Castello also points out that Graça Aranha used to have a 'preocupação simbolista' when searching for sonorous and plastic effects in his writing. Nonetheless, interestingly, the scholar does not associate this particular characteristic with lyricism (1999: 127). In *Aspectos do romance brasileiro* (1960), he even mentions Symbolism as the movement responsible for innovations in the narrative of modern novels in Brazil. But curiously he does not include in his considerations the fact that Symbolism was, indeed, predominantly poetic, or the results of its influence on narrative novels concerning the appropriation of

poetic resources by novelists (1960: 123). This may be in part because Brazilian critics mainly consider the legacy of Symbolism as primarily impacting on poetry, and only rarely has it been linked with the prose narrative.

Despite this lack of acknowledgement, unlike Romanticism, Symbolism did contribute to Brazilian literature a conscious insertion of poetry into prose narrative. Moreover, the artistic movement was responsible for bringing forward many unprecedented literary techniques, such as interior monologue and stream of consciousness that were to emerge in modern and contemporary novels, and for establishing poetic prose once and for all within the novelistic narrative (Moisés 1966: 250, 253; Bosi 1994: 267).

The incomprehension Symbolism has faced, and the rejection it has suffered in Brazilian literature, especially at its outset, is widely known. Two of the principal works dedicated to the study of this movement in Brazil, Andrade Muricy's *Panorama do movimento simbolista brasileiro* (1952) and Massaud Moisés's *A literatura brasileira: O Simbolismo* (1966), discuss the issue, bearing witness to the delayed acceptance of its works and writers.<sup>48</sup>

Andrade Muricy recounts the belated receptiveness to the movement in the Academia Brasileira de Letras (ABL), one of the most influential literary institutions in Brazil at the time. He recalls that the ABL was 'inicialmente fechada, material e intelectualmente, ao Simbolismo e aos simbolistas'. According to him, what really opened the way to the symbolist movement were three speeches made by members of the academy in 1913 (Félix Pacheco and Souza Bandeira) and 1923 (Goulart de Andrade) (1952: 111).

However, even after that Symbolism was not particularly championed in the editorial market. Muricy himself, in the foreword to his book, mentions the difficulty faced in publishing the *Panorama do movimento simbolista brasileiro*, divided into two volumes. He points out a tendency to relegate Symbolism to the past in Brazilian literature, 'porém de influência não completamente extinta, tendência complexa e acentuadamente sinuosa', and its breadth, 'antes geralmente contestada', with the hope that from the publishing of his work onwards the movement might be recognised by the nation's literary historiography (1952: 19):

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<sup>48</sup> The movement was born in Brazil with the poet Cruz e Souza's first individual publication (*Broquéis*, 1893); however, Symbolism was officially recognised by the canon only in 1919, by critic Ronald de Carvalho, when included in his *Pequena história da literatura brasileira*.

Deu-me grande prazer, no entanto, que este ‘documentário’ tenha possibilitado a composição de outros repertórios da poesia simbolista, superado assim o período que se considerava estéril e sem ter deixado vestígios ponderáveis no acervo geral de nossas letras, a contribuição de tantos e tão denodados artistas do verbo. (1952: 21)

One of the great merits of the book is its examination of Symbolist prose. Admittedly, a predominantly poetic movement, Symbolism was accused of not having produced any good novelists, short-story writers, critics or essayists:

Considero, porém, que se tem subestimado a prosa simbolista, ou, pelo menos, aquilo que “prosa” se tem classificado. Sempre tive por descomedido e, em certos casos, francamente injusto esse juízo. Quando mais não seja pelo perigo de apreciar de falso ângulo a prosa poética e principalmente o poema em prosa. (1952: 24)

The scholar also argues that neglect has harmed the understanding of the influence Symbolism had on Modernism. To Muricy, Symbolism influenced those within the Modernist movement who expressed metaphysical tendencies, citing Henriqueta Lisboa, Jorge de Lima, Murilo Mendes, Augusto Frederico Schmidt, Manuel Bandeira, Guilherme de Almeida, Tasso da Silveira, Murilo Araujo, Cecília Meireles and himself.

It is interesting that a number of authors considered by Muricy as “impressionists”, such as Adelino Magalhães, Lúcio Cardoso and Cornélio Pena, all of whom were prose writers strongly linked to experimentalism by traditional literary studies, have been studied less until recently. These writers, who will be considered later in this thesis, were accused of producing hybrid narratives which were not obviously linked to the reality of the country. This supposed feature of escapism from extreme rationality intensified the suspicion about Symbolism that prevailed at that time, given the trend of Brazilian writers to adopt an attitude of political commitment and this in turn resulted in neglect of the subject. Even those Modernist writers who were descendants of the Symbolist movement were criticised for their supposed political disengagement. This perspective can be clearly seen in this excerpt from Massaud Moisés:

Tais poetas, não raro “passadistas”, ideologicamente reacionários, assumem posições poéticas um tanto desvinculadas da realidade histórica e literária nossa contemporânea, e preconizam uma arte de transparência ideal nem sempre isenta de pose ou de esnobismo, mas que muitas vezes se concretiza em peças de superior quilate, como se pode ver na obra de todos eles, especialmente na de Cecília Meireles. (1966: 67)



Symbolism was disparaged in comparison not only to Modernism, but also to Parnassianism. For Alfredo Bosi, who regards Symbolism as an ‘atitude de espírito’ (1994: 270), outside social reality, the movement never flourished in Brazil. Bosi suggests that the demise of Symbolism was the main reason behind the persistence of Parnassianism in Brazil, unlike in other countries. He points out that Symbolism enriched poetic prose,<sup>49</sup> but that the movement should have put down more roots in historical reality.

However, Muricy goes in the opposite direction, asserting that the Symbolists were political rather than evasive (1973: 56-57). Muricy states that the lack of understanding about their work resulted in their writings being judged as meaningless, when in fact they display an abundance of meaning and sense. Against the accusation of imported dilettantism from Europe, Muricy argues that it was in fact a phenomenon of communicating vessels:

A aplicação dos métodos comparatistas demonstra que houve um fenômeno de vasos comunicantes, e não importação forçada e diletantismo. Não um colonialismo primário, porém comunhão sentimental e estética no Ocidente todo e de que o Brasil participou. (1973: 54)<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, I suggest here that those ‘historical roots’ cited by Bosi as fundamentally lacking among the Symbolists could be understood as political and social commitment. Thus, the notion of evasion is again brought to the table, this time in relation to another movement, namely Parnassianism.

Despite being accused of lacking historical roots, Symbolism received a warmer welcome in Brazil than in Portugal. Indeed, the movement entered the country through *Gouaches* (1895), a book consisting entirely of poems in prose, by João Barreira.<sup>51</sup> However, the title was never popular in Portugal, whereas in Brazil, it was warmly received. The reasons for this muted reaction in Portugal were only clear after the

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<sup>49</sup> Aesthetically, while Bosi admits that Symbolists introduced avant-garde techniques into prose narrative, he cites another movement as being responsible for the ‘erosão da métrica acadêmica e de toda retórica renascentista’ (1994: 267): the Crepuscular group. To Bosi, this group represented the true innovators of free verse, complementing the Symbolists’ work, which was full of exaggerations: ‘quanto aos crepusculares, distantes de ambas [Symbolist and Parnasian aesthetics], preferiram esboçar breves quadros de sabor intimista; mas a sua contribuição ao verso brasileiro não foi pequena, pois abafaram o pedal das excessivas sonoridades a que se haviam acostumado os imitadores de Cruz e Souza’ (1994: 269).

<sup>50</sup> It is curious as well that Symbolism, among all other literary movements in Brazil inspired abroad, has borne the biggest brunt of such accusations.

<sup>51</sup> João Barreira was also Gustave Flaubert’s translator.

publication of *Panorama do movimento simbolista brasileiro*. From its inception via Barreira's collection, Massaud Moisés locates the movement within the diverse strands of literature at the turn of the twentieth century:

Antes, através duma recíproca e substancial influência, realistas e simbolistas obstinaram-se em seguir seu rumo até o fim, transformando-se aos poucos e vindo a dar lugar, na ordem dos fatos, ao Modernismo. Por isso, parece legítimo afirmar que o Realismo e o Simbolismo formam duas épocas, ou estéticas, literárias contemporâneas, interinfluente e paralelas. Resultado: tanto é válido asseverar que o Realismo percorre os anos de 1881 a 1922, como que o Simbolismo vem de 1893 a 1922. Entenda-se, porém, que a afirmação se torna lícita antes de tudo pela simples razão, que todos reconhecem, de serem contraditórias e arbitrárias as datas utilizadas em crítica e história literária. (1966: 16)

From this, we can deduce that Symbolism was clearly integrated and relevant throughout the flow of artistic movements that occurred in Brazil during that period. It therefore seems strange that such an important literary development was not more accepted, especially when one considers all the characteristics of Symbolism, as it emerged against the rationalist and objectivist spirit of the time in reaction to Positivism, Naturalism and Parnassianism. This is pointed out by Massaud Moisés (1966: 31). Taking into consideration the natural oscillation and alternation between currents of thought and aesthetics in the arts, the rejection becomes intriguing.<sup>52</sup>

The turn of the twentieth century was also a blurry period, in literary terms, in Brazil. Some critics refer to this time as “eclectic”. There are some titles from this period, such as *O ateneu* (1888) by Raul Pompeia, *Os sertões* (1902) by Euclides da Cunha and the works of Lima Barreto, which are difficult to classify. Indeed, if closely observed, a common feature of these authors was the search for a truly individual form of expression, beyond the specialised belletrism of the official literary milieu, which had been preponderant for most of the nineteenth century. With reference to *Os sertões*, for instance, Massaud Moisés draws attention to some of the characteristics pertaining to Symbolism in Euclides da Cunha's writings: ‘metaforização barroca, as sinestésias, o brilhantismo da adjetivação, o preciosismo do vocabulário, a nervosidade do boleio frásico...’ (1966: 17).

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<sup>52</sup> It also draws attention to why Symbolism, like any other literary movement, was not understood initially as an artistic correspondence to the moment Western society was experiencing, a historical moment of intense effervescence.

Digressing further regarding the relationship between Modernism and Symbolism, Massaud Moisés suggests, along with Oswald de Andrade and Otto Maria Carpeaux, that modern Brazilian poetry owes much to Symbolist poetry, and that, to a certain extent, Modernism was a type of ‘unconscious’ Symbolism, or its continuation (1966: 86-87) – at least as far as poetry was concerned – from the point of view of creative freedom. Concerning prose, Moisés argues that only those Modernist writers associated with introspective narratives were the heirs of Symbolism:

A poesia, não a prosa, salvo na vertente introspectiva (Clarice Lispector, Lúcio Cardoso, Cornélio Pena), ligada ao romance psicológico e proustiano, por sua vez relacionado com o clima cultural legatário do Simbolismo. Mesmo na prosa de um Oswald de Andrade, como, por exemplo, nas *Memórias sentimentais de João Miramar* (1924), se adivinham aspectos cinematográficos e algo surrealistas de possível extração simbolista. De qualquer forma, seja por vias subterrâneas, seja às escâncaras, o Modernismo manteve com o Simbolismo um benéfico comércio: o primeiro, continuando alguns aspectos do segundo, procurava por em prática certos ideais de arte que o outro, tendo-os apenas vislumbrado, se apressou em comunicar para a geração subsequente, na esperança de vê-los concretizados. (1966: 87)

Thus, despite belated acceptance, and being both misunderstood and accused of political disengagement, Symbolism still had an influence on other literary movements.

Up to this point, I have examined Symbolism’s importance and difficulties faced by the movement: its belated acceptance in the literary milieu; its place in the turn of the twentieth century; its influence towards other literary movements; and the resistance of its analysis up to the present. As could be seen, the intentions and aesthetics of Symbolist writers at the time were misunderstood for several reasons that I have discussed, especially those related to Brazilian writers’ social commitment. I will now move the focus to Symbolism in prose specifically in order to expose the relationship with prose lyricism.

#### **2.4 Symbolist prose writers: the first neglected lyrical novelists?**

As Symbolism was a predominantly poetic movement, the incomprehension that poets faced was notable. However, in addition, the Symbolist prose writers also encountered difficulties. This was because in terms of style the Symbolist narrative rarely seemed to reflect the required objectivity of those realist times, as explained by Andrade Muricy:

De todas as grandes tendências criadoras da Literatura moderna o Simbolismo terá sido possivelmente a que menos favoreceu o surto da prosa ficcionista; não direi da prosa viva, porquanto, tornadas indefinidas as fronteiras com o território poético, esta se tornou de validade e versatilidade inegáveis. Não propriamente a simbolização, mas o processo alusivo e de sugestão, considerado como elemento de sondagem e devassamento da interioridade, refletindo-se na representação e na expressão, interdizia aos criadores do romance e do conto qualquer critério descritivista. Repelia o apoio seguro e objetivo da narração direta. (1973: 68)

At this point, it is necessary to focus on Symbolist prose writers such as Nestor Vitor, Gonzaga Duque and Rocha Pombo. Until now, these authors have barely been studied or republished, while most of their books are out of print and modern editions are scarce. In Brazilian literary historiography, the scholars who have dedicated themselves the most to this investigation were the aforementioned Andrade Muricy and Massaud Moisés. So, here I consider their observations about the main literary features of these often neglected writers.

The view of Massaud Moisés about Symbolist prose seems somewhat sceptical. He states that an alliance between poetry and prose narrative was impossible, and clearly argues what a novel should be, stating that the ideal narrative would be balanced comprising both reality and the author's hypersubjective view: 'Raras vezes [...] conseguiram o meio-termo utópico, realizável por intermédio do equilíbrio harmônico entre a "história", a "gente" e a visão hipersubjetiva do mundo, da paisagem e dos homens, que defendiam por convicção ou afeiçoamento à estética simbolista' (1966: 214-215).

The result, according to Moisés, was an invasion of prose narrative by poetry (not only novels, but also short stories, stage plays and critical texts), which undermined all of these kinds of writing. He considers Symbolist prose difficult to analyse due its inherent contradictions: 'A prosa simbolista semelha, por conseguinte, uma impropriedade ou põe de manifesto uma antinomia. Somente evitaremos a dificuldade se nos lembrarmos do papel predominante representado pela poesia durante o Simbolismo' (1988: 131). The scholar emphasizes thus what he interprets as a collision, a conflict between the different natures of prose and poetry.

In addition, Moisés addresses the topic using aggressive vocabulary, in which prose narrative is the central subject under attack: poetry can 'invadir', 'apoderar', 'impõe-se' on the literary manifestations of the time.<sup>53</sup> The scholar also considers that the mix

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<sup>53</sup> In *A literatura brasileira: Simbolismo*, from 1966, the vocabulary was one of villainy, using the verbs 'desfigurar' and 'roubar', when the author also named this operation as 'totalizante absorção poética'

between poetry and prose can evoke bygone eras, as seen for instance in Artur Azevedo's anthology of short stories *Contos em verso* (1909), which he describes as a medieval novel, composed of 'poesia narrativa' (1988: 131). Moisés does not, therefore, consider the possibility of being before a work of real hybridism, or indeed before a literary piece which could convey something innovative.

Moisés classifies Symbolist prose into two strands, para-Symbolist and Symbolist proper. The first group included those who, at the turn of the twentieth century, displayed an inclination towards the semantics of Symbolism (1988: 131). Curiously, in this first group he includes authors who were known for having taken part in the period of transition in Brazilian literature, at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Machado de Assis and Raul Pompeia.<sup>54</sup> The classification is so weakly substantiated that even Moisés gives up analysing the first group, as these hybrid authors were also included in his studies on Realism and pre-Modernism.

Methodologically, to analyse lyricism it seems more appropriate to separate the semantics of Symbolism (mainly occultism and mystery) and decadentism from their form. This is due to the fact that, since a theory about lyricism in the novel was created in 1963 by Ralph Freedman, the study of this hybrid has not involved any restrictive semantics. While Massaud Moisés explains that to be a Symbolist undoubtedly meant being poetic because poetry was predominant in the movement, which was much more determined by content than form, it must be kept in mind that predominant semantics are not crucial to the lyrical novel.

For the second group of Symbolist prose writers, Moisés points out that the unavoidable use of poetry in prose narrative led writers to confusion: it became common to muddle the prose poem with the poetic *crônica* and the short story (1966: 224), or even isolated chapters or embryonic novels (1966: 234). This disorientation was such that the book *Confessor supremo* by Cesar Camara de Lima Campos (1904), considered a legitimate species of Symbolist prose, remained unclassifiable by the scholar: 'prosa poética expressa numa forma de contorno indeciso e vago como a poesia simbolista, destituída de ossatura episódica e de personagens' (1966: 227).

Moisés asserts that the mix of both genres causes uncertainty throughout Symbolist prose, due to an osmosis between poetry and narrative and descriptive forms of fiction

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(1966: 214-215). The softening updating of the terms may indicate adaptation to the concept of hybridism.

<sup>54</sup> Raul Pompeia was responsible for the introduction of prose poems in Brazilian literature, from 1883 onwards, in *Jornal do Commercio* of São Paulo, with *Canções sem metro*.

(1966: 228). This is with the exception of Gonzaga Duque, who, according to Moisés, was the only author who wrote well-defined short stories, such as the collection *Horto de mágoas* (1914). As stated by Moisés, the combination of Symbolist aesthetics and lyrical transfiguration was maintained without harming the plot's perception of reality (1966: 230).

The example of Duque's collection goes against what Moisés considers the general rule. However, in Nestor Vitor's *Signos* (1897), another book of short stories, Moisés argues there is a balance between poetry and prose, while including ideas pertaining to decadentist semantics in equal parts. I interpret this equilibrium that Moisés mentions, as a preservation of the prose linked to a linear and clear narrative. So much so that Moisés again uses a tone of complaint while addressing another prose narrative, a novel considered by him to be a minor contribution to Symbolism, Rodrigo Otavio's *Aristo* (1889): 'O autor dá-lhe o rótulo de novela, mas, como sempre, a classificação pode ser posta de quarentena [...]. A ação de Aristo está reduzida ao mínimo, e, ainda assim, transubstanciada por uma visão lírica do mundo' (1966: 240-241). As for the novels considered to be squarely within the movement, Moisés suggests classifying them as aesthetic novels, as he does with *Mocidade morta* (1899), the only novel by Gonzaga Duque. He terms this novel a 'romance de arte'. The more serious problem, he argues, lies in the structure of the novel itself: 'Falta-lhe, enquanto romance, um fio condutor suficientemente vigoroso para sustentar a demorada retratação do ambiente artístico carioca' (1966: 244-245). Nevertheless, Moisés draws attention to the fact that Duque was a pioneer in the technique of interior monologue, while Nestor Vitor is also praised for using that new technique, and for introducing the soliloquy in his novel *Amigos* (1900).

*No hospício* (1905) by Rocha Pombo, however, is considered by Moisés as an integral example of the Symbolist novel. In that work, the critic considers that the psychological and dramatic plot gains density, without being undermined by the tenuous and bland storyline. Named by Moisés as a precursor to the modern Brazilian novel, *No hospício*, whilst ignored by the critics of the time, represents a significant turning point for the beginning of the acceptance of new novelistic styles:

Trata-se, porém, duma obra surpreendente, que muda a visão convencional que se tem da prosa de ficção entre 1890 e 1922, e cuja complexidade merecia um exame detido, minucioso e à parte deste panorama. (...) Vimos que a crítica silenciou por ocasião de seu aparecimento, decerto porque não possuía escalas de valor ou tábuas

de referência para julgá-lo devidamente, tão estranho era num meio como o nosso, ainda preso aos esquemas da ficção realista. (1966: 51; 253)

In this novel, Moisés accepts the complexity of this narrative because he sees a plot structure in the text, which corresponds with his conceptualisation of the novel. However, it is curious that the critic could not apply the same level of enquiry to his own analysis of the other Symbolist novels. If, as he attests, there was a conventional vision of prose fiction, why could it not be applied as a comparative tool in his own analysis, in a field not yet comprehensively studied?

This confusion can be linked, as he himself claims, to the great influence of Realist fiction. As a brief example, in his short analysis of *No hospício*, despite considering it a perfect Symbolist novel, Moisés seems to ignore its poetry. He highlights that the novelist intends to create an abstract and “mental” novel as much as possible:

numa palavra, simbolista cem por cento. Romance na primeira pessoa, sofre das limitações naturais a esse enfoque narrativo, mas o romancista consegue superar as dificuldades e o perigo da monotonia. (...) Desse modo, graças a um invulgar equilíbrio interno (invulgar dentro das balizas simbolistas, bem entendido), o romance mantém viva a atenção do leitor ao longo de suas 273 páginas. (1966: 252)

It is worth remembering that the keynote of Symbolism is poetry, as Moisés himself states in *A literatura brasileira: O Simbolismo*. Hence, his explanation of a perfect Symbolist novel as a chiefly mental construction should be questioned. It would therefore appear that not only authors had difficulty in classifying their narratives at that time, but so too did the critics.

Whilst Moisés's analysis of *No hospício* is very well elaborated, taking into consideration how characters, dialogues, and all literary resources, including those considered vanguard, contributed to enrich the novel (1966: 252), the poetic tone, the lyricism, and main characteristics of Symbolism are forgotten. Again, Moisés calls it an aesthetic novel, adding the denomination of an intellectual novel, recalling that Andrade Muricy had classified the novel as a ‘romance-ensaio’ (1966: 253). In Moisés's arguments, the emphasis is still on the prose narrative, because in his studies it seems that prose is considered the most relevant part within poetic prose. Although poetry was the chief characteristic of the Symbolism movement, the quality of these novels was always dictated by the preservation of the prose.

Unlike Moisés, Andrade Muricy does devote attention to the poetry of Rocha Pombo within the novel. He observes that it may well have been this aspect of the novel which brought about the non-acceptance of his work: ‘(...) Rocha Pombo escreveu (1896) o romance *No hospício*, na linhagem Novalis, passando por Edgar Poe, imerso numa atmosfera de poesia e transcendência, que lhe acarretou, quando de sua publicação em 1905, a mais completa incompreensão e indiferença’. Muricy identifies this resistance among critics as being representative of prejudices of the time against the blend between prose and poetry (1973: 69-70).

It is worth noting that Muricy does not consider these works as the most relevant examples of consummate works of Symbolist prose. In the following excerpt, he describes them as ‘coherent’:

Com o Nestor Vitor, de “Sapo”, cuja densidade expressional e progressão psicológica alucinatória são de excepcional força impressiva, foi o Rocha Pombo de *No hospício* – cujas misticidade e transcendência pareceram na época um experimentalismo abtruso – que realizaram a ficção mais coerente dentro das imposições da estética simbolista. (1973: 70)

As will be seen later in this thesis, ‘abstruse experimentalism’ may be perceived as a pleonasm when applied to other neglected works in Brazilian literary historiography – and not only to those works related to lyricism.

## **2.5 Theoretical approaches**

This chapter has thus far explored the lack of clarity in studies prose lyricism to date, as well as the general neglect of the subject. I have also attempted to explain why it has been misunderstood in the context of literary movements in Brazil such as Romanticism and Symbolism. Finally, I have broached the way it has been associated with escapism and sentimentalism, and how this has resulted in a negative perception of lyricism in times where documentary-style realism has been the favoured approach in Brazil.

In this section I will add other theoretical elements to this line of enquiry about prose lyricism. Ralph Freedman’s theory about lyrical novels (1963) offered new theoretical guidelines for the subject, as discussed in detail in Chapter 1. However, his premises have scarcely helped the imprecise overview about prose lyricism within Brazilian



literature. This section intends to show how the study on prose lyricism has continued hesitantly in the face of the scarce studies about the subject to the present.

Poetic prose, having resulted from the evolution of a historical blend between prose and poetry, has usually been considered the principal characteristic denoting prose lyricism. However, lyrical narratives consist of more than poetic prose; they are also identifiable by the very specific way imagery is employed, as addressed in Chapter 1. Identifying this particular use of imagery in lyrical prose was one of the main contributions made by Freedman.

Massaud Moisés provides an example of this by choosing to focus on poetic prose rather than examining lyricism in novels. Although he was aware of Freedman's theory, he seemed not to take his ideas into consideration, opting not to focus on the new premises for the subject that state the relevance of work containing images in lyrical narratives. Although Moisés considers the existence of lyrical novels, he mainly stresses the use of poetic prose throughout the evolution of the literary narrative. As a matter of theoretical choice, in this way he shows similarities with Charles Schug, author of *The Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel* (1979), who claimed that the stronger presence of lyricism in twentieth-century novels was due to the influence of Romanticism. Schug's theory differs from Freedman's in that he seems not to accept new fundamentals for an exclusive theory about lyrical novels, as a result of social changes as well – a topic addressed in Section 1.2, Chapter 1.

Therefore, Moisés gives an account of the development of poetic prose from ancient times to the blossoming of prose poems in the nineteenth century, in Europe. These two vectors, he contends, then materialised in Brazil with the insertion of lyricism into prose, firstly with the Romantic authors. He gives special attention to this evolution of poetic prose in Portugal. With the primary focus on poetic prose, the concept of the lyrical novel itself as a new literary possibility seems undermined in Moisés's analysis. Nonetheless, his attempts to locate poetic prose in Brazilian novelists, albeit brief, are useful to understand how lyrical works in prose were mostly classified until then:

Entre nós, a prosa poética lança os primeiros sinais com os românticos, Gonçalves Dias, Álvares de Azevedo, Fagundes Varela e, sobretudo, José de Alencar, inspirado no exemplo de Chateaubriand. Nos fins do século XIX, a prosa narrativa impregna-se de poesia, na esteira do programa estético perfilhado pelo Simbolismo: Nestor Vitor, Rocha Pombo, Gonzaga Duque, Graça Aranha e outros, cada um à sua maneira, deixam-se seduzir pela miscigenação dos gêneros. Modernamente, essa tendência invadiu a ficção introspectiva e intimista dos anos 30, com Lúcio Cardoso

e Cornélio Penna, mas é com Clarice Lispector, Guimarães Rosa e Osman Lins, dentre outros, na década de 50, que atinge seu ponto mais alto. (1978: 24-25)

Moisés's decision to concentrate on poetic prose can be understood if we consider the time in which his studies were conducted, when genre theories were starting to become less rigid. However, he admits a shift in the use of poetic prose in the novel after the twentieth century: 'A crescente presença do "eu" do narrador, realizada entre o romantismo e o simbolismo, encontraria na modernidade sua feição mais avançada' (1978: 47). Moisés describes this change as significant for the presence of lyricism within prose: 'De Proust aos nossos dias, observa-se que o mergulho no tempo progresso e nos labirintos interiores constitui o grande apelo e desafio' (1978: 47).

From this, we can discern Moisés's reasons for considering Alencar's *Iracema* to be a lyrical novel. However, the above dimensions are linked only to an old conception of lyricism – a conception that this research intends to broaden when considering lyricism's contemporary characteristics of the subject. These characteristics are related to the changes undertaken by concepts of lyricism and novel themselves, as seen in Chapter 1.

Another important contribution comes from Sonia Brayner, who was interested in the specific combination between prose and poetry. Especially concerned with its early appearances in Brazilian works, she points out that the modern characteristic of mixing genres was already evident in Raul Pompeia's short stories, in the writer's crafted approach to representation and suggestion (1979: 233). Brayner shows how Pompeia was influenced by Charles Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose* (1869). Pompeia's *Canções sem metro* (1900) divided critics on its pioneering aspects, and whether it really was the first prose-poetry title in Brazil, as Lopes e Silva argues (2002: 14).

However, as Brayner attests, Pompeia's writing in the new style might have been contaminated by a type of social meditation, linked to his social ideals. Pompeia was a *fin-de-siècle* activist, fighting for abolitionism and republicanism: 'O caráter generalizante e amplificador das imagens visa muito mais à comparação final com a "ordem social" do que a criar uma unidade verdadeiramente poética' (1979: 136). In this sense, my analysis is similar to Brayner's when it comes to reflecting on the use of poetic prose by José de Alencar in *Iracema*, which is clearly imbued with an ideological purpose.

Brayner also includes in her references Ralph Freedman's concept of the lyrical novel, and she seems to agree with many of his ideas. In the following excerpt she broaches the importance of the image in the lyrical narrative and the use of a base narrative:

O poema lírico objetiva não os tempos e os homens mas a experiência desses homens. A luta entre a imagem e o conceito que a prosa sustenta em contínua tensão é resolvida na poesia pela sobrevivência dos contrários no triunfo da imagem. Sempre que a plasticidade da imagem invade a prosa, o próprio discurso vacila e se poetiza. A ficção lírica não possui nenhuma rígida definição de forma, ora aparecendo em tipos de narrativa como o diário, cartas, ou mesmo no romance tradicional, observadas determinadas condições que o identificam. (1979: 241)

After recognising the importance of the advent of the prose poem and the legacy of Romantic writing, Brayner draws the reader's attention to the Symbolist prose-writers, specifically the works of Gonzaga Duque and Rocha Pombo. She states that the merit of the Symbolists and the advent of the prose poem reflected the general acceptance of a new way to express intuitiveness about reality: 'Os caminhos abertos pela poética da sugestão simbolista vão dar no mundo novo da sensibilidade moderna' (1979: 247).

The lyrical narrative has received more attention recently in the studies of Luzia Tofalini. Firstly, she focused her studies on Portuguese writer Raul Brandão, however since the 2000s Tofalini has been developing new views on lyrical fiction in Brazil, including some titles by Clarice Lispector and João Guimarães Rosa – without, however, considering the category across the entire context of Brazilian literature. For Tofalini, there remains no solid theorisation on the issue, and each work must be examined from an individual perspective (2013: 93). Tofalini nevertheless draws on the contributions of the main theorists of the lyrical novel in her analysis of Brandão's book *Húmus* (1917). However, the wide breadth of her proposal is potentially flawed, as argued in Chapter 1. Essentially, by bringing together her broad introduction to the conceptual basis of prose, poetry and the hybrid genres, plus her analyses of the lyrical novel itself through Brandão's work, the subject matter gains an overly complex definition. Nonetheless, Tofalini's examination of Raul Brandão's *Húmus* does exemplify some of the main features of the lyrical novel.

Tofalini emphasises an existentialist anguish in lyrical prose (2013: 93). Basically, for Tofalini the insertion not only of lyricism, but also of philosophy and mysticism, is able to revolutionise the traditional novel narrative. The lyrical novel, from this perspective, resorts to poetry to express an anguished disposition of the character that regular narrative discourse would not be able to express:

A exteriorização dos conteúdos da alma torturada tende para a expressão do grotesco, da desesperança e da angústia. Essa espécie de manifestação exige a presença da poesia. O poético é, de fato, inerente a qualquer expressão artística que tem como prioridade a exploração da subjetividade. A prosa lírico-filosófica constitui um lugar especialíssimo onde é possível, por meio de uma linguagem liricizada, externar emoções, experiências e reflexões. (2013: 184)

Luzia Tofalini's work observes the theories developed before the early twenty-first century, while following her own individual style of analysis. In this sense, her contribution is coherent with all the lyrical novel theories, because she elaborates a sensitive critical reception to the titles and authors she examines. Although it is not her aim to create a new theory, her empirical work on isolated texts in Brazilian literature is a very important contribution.

## **2.6 A flimsy prejudice**

We have just seen how prose lyricism has been displaced within Brazilian literary historiography, producing an entire thread of consequences whose impact is still evident today. The social and political role of lyricism is not a major hypothesis in this thesis; however, a lack of proper attention to this question lies at the heart of the whole misinterpretation regarding the existence and value of lyrical prose in Brazil. Therefore, it is worth addressing the counterarguments against the accusations of escapism and evasiveness that lyrical writing has faced.

As addressed in the Introduction, the most recent notion of the lyrical involves subjective expression and interiority, with the lyrical writer concerned with self-expression. This self-engagement, so to speak, may lead to a general and tendentious perception of isolation and alienation of the author. However, it is exactly in this individual pact, in the freedom of expressing their authentic and unaffected self, that the lyrical writer can achieve a universal expression, and pose the most committed positions regarding society. These ideas are defended by Hugh H. Grady (1981) and Theodor Adorno (1991), and I will expose them in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the political potential of the lyric, it is worth recalling the renowned essay by Theodor Adorno about the social characteristic of the lyric poetry, "On Lyric Poetry and Society", from 1957. Although it is a leap to apply Adorno's conclusions to the lyrical narrative, I consider his comments to be just as relevant on this topic. The scholar

argues that the lyrical work, despite being subjective, always expresses a social antagonism (1991: 45). He points out that the lyrical writer embodies the community and that, paradoxically, is able to express social content better when it follows the rhythm of their own language. As this writer achieves a unique way of using the language, he forces the conflict within the limited and confining context of a shared language – where language is predominantly a factor of social order.

Therefore, the philosopher objects to the common view of the lyric as something in opposition to society, something absolutely private, individual, and aloof. On the contrary, Adorno emphasises that the distant tone of the lyric – as usually seen – is itself a social demand: ‘it implies a protest against a social situation that every individual experiences as hostile, alien, cold, oppressive, and this situation is imprinted in reverse on the poetic work’ (1991: 39). Thus, he affirms that common sense requires from the lyrical piece this freedom from material existence and social life restrictions: ‘The work’s distance from mere existence becomes the measure of what is false and bad in the latter’ (1991: 40). Fundamentally, he defends the intrinsic liaison between the lyric and social reality. He stresses the importance of this political role especially in the modern era, before the reification of individuals, arguing that lyricism may contribute to resisting the oppression of mankind:

The lyric spirit’s idiosyncratic opposition to the superior power of material things is a form of reaction to the reification of the world, to the domination of human beings by commodities that has developed since the beginning of the modern era, since the industrial revolution became the dominant force in life. (1991: 40)

Adorno sees this action of the writer inserted into a ‘collective undercurrent’ (1991: 45), in which they are somewhat privileged to express themselves with more freedom than other people, all yearning to find their own expression within an oppressive society. Hence, he understands the poetical works of lyrical writers as socially necessary.

Hugh H. Grady, in “Notes on Marxism and The Lyric” (1981), is specific when analysing the link between the political role of the lyric and its condition as a non-realist creation. Grady points out that it is exactly this challenging characteristic regarding realism which yields to the lyric the possibility of confronting ‘the substratum of human needs and yearnings, unfulfilled and unrealized within historical society’ (1981: 551). He states that the lyric opposes reality in order to express the human desire for social harmony, which he calls Utopia:

The lyric has become the specialized literary genre for Utopian vision, for the construction of realms of imaginative freedom that would escape the very conditions which have given rise to the necessity of their expression (only) as poetry. We could say that the lyric is a reflection of social conditions, but only as a photographic negative is a reflection. (1981: 551)

To Grady, this action of the lyric is important in contrast to the predominance of technical and instrumental reason brought by capitalism, a reason which believes truth can only be achieved ‘through the suppression of subjectivity, value, and emotion’ (1981: 552). He mentions Horkheimer and Adorno and aligns with them in the interpretation of the relevance of the modern concept of the lyric to the realisation of this political attitude. The modern notion of the lyric being the one which insulates the individual in self-reflexion – as it was briefly presented in the Introduction here –, this same self-reflexive lyric is the one which contrasts more with society. Grady interweaves this isolation of the modern lyric with the very historical condition in which this notion is born: ‘The self-reflecting or metalinguistic quality of modern poetic language, I would argue, is not the essence of poetry, but rather a historical feature of the poetry of technical societies’ (1981: 554). The embrace of individuation would provide contact with, and expression of, not yet distorted human content at its most raw. In this modern notion of the lyric, as Adorno also expresses: ‘The lyric work hopes to attain universality through unrestrained individuation’ (1991: 38). This sharp individuation would then work in favour of expressing still unhampered human desires in the face of an excessively rational society.

Even though Adorno’s observations are from the early 1960s, and Grady’s are from the 1980s, they are relevant here to reinforce this research in that they argue what lyricism in all its forms may have to do with a major social shift against reification and oppression. Once again the novel must be regarded as a social interlocutor, reflecting social shifts, as stated by Lucien Goldmann (1975) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) as pointed out in Chapter 1.

Therefore, with this overall assessment of the origins of the confusion about prose lyricism in Brazil and its detraction, it is relevant to emphasise the diverse theoretical approaches that the subject propitiates. This initial approximation is useful as it clarifies the core of the misplacement of prose lyricism, through grandiloquence, idealisation, exuberance, escapism and sentimentalism. In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate and argue how this misplacement has occurred, and tried still to offer a counterargument

to these general mislead notions about lyricism evasiveness and lack of social engagement.

In conclusion, through the example of José de Alencar's work *Iracema*, considered as the first Brazilian lyrical novel, it was possible to identify mistaken and unfavourable ideas around prose lyricism. In his foundational novel, Alencar depicts the nature and landscape of the new-born country with sentiment, and with patriotic intentions. The result was an understanding of lyricism as exuberance, idealisation, grandiloquence, providing transcendence to a goal which was ultimately ideological. In addition, it was possible to suggest the birth of a new Portuguese language, through the malleability of metaphorisation.

These aspects were profoundly linked to the necessity of building Brazilian nationalism. However, later on, especially after the establishment of the Republic (1889), all of this mythical elevation was accused of poor literary quality and a lack of political engagement – and this served to emphasise lyricism as a simple tool for ideological purposes. These characteristics, as discussed in Chapter 1, were misconceived, averted and overlooked, resulting in a prejudice towards lyrical prose. Lyricism became a synonym for sentimental and evasive writing.

The neglect suffered by the Symbolist movement – in which a systematic rise of lyrical prose could be seen – reflects this issue. Realist literary approaches were more appropriate for the political sphere at that time, according to the scholars that have been discussed thus far. Lyricism in novels was deemed to be misplaced, because the realist treatment of the text was the predominant pattern. What was once useful due to the lack of a history of autonomous politics, became undesirable and a symbol of political disengagement. We should also bear in mind the context of turn-of-the-century literary history, with the rise of the prose poem, the poetic *crônica* and the short story. Confusion emanated from the uncertainty that these types of writing were offering, in times when mimesis was preponderant.

After the era of foundational novels, the documentary commitment of Brazilian writers seems to have continued up to the present day, and prose lyricism has continued to be an undervalued feature, as I will try to demonstrate in subsequent chapters. Unlike the case of Spanish America, where the writers of the Latin American Literary Boom blatantly rejected the foundational novels of their countries, as Doris Sommer points out (1991: 2), in Brazil this rejection has not been expressed openly, but has remained latent.

Despite the traditional neglect of lyricism in Brazilian narratives, poetic prose has been studied to some extent amid the recent notable growth of lyricism in novels. While not yet studied as a new tendency, as the lyrical novel has been, theorists such as Massaud Moisés have paid it some attention, focusing mainly on the historical fusion between prose and poetry to observe prose lyricism. Nonetheless, there are still some points yet to be brought to light and discussed – including here the potential social commitment that prose lyricism may present, discussion which I have introduced through Theodor Adorno's and Hugu H. Grady's assumptions. All these points offer new possibilities for the subject in Brazilian literary historiography.



### 3 NEW PERSPECTIVES THROUGH LYRICISM

The first two chapters of this thesis were dedicated to exploring critical perspectives on the lyrical narrative that have resulted in confusion in its interpretation, and neglect in its study. In Chapter 1, I explored the ever-changing concepts of lyricism, the novel and the so-called lyrical novel. By setting out and comparing critical viewpoints with regards to these topics, I established a theoretical basis on which to analyse contemporary Brazilian literary works, whilst also recognising that the subject required a flexible approach. Chapter 2 proceeded to further elucidate on studies of lyricism to date, and the reasons for its comparative absence in Brazil's literary historiography.

This chapter will address literary works in the light the theoretical standpoint in Chapter 1, revisiting major Brazilian novelists whose prose lyricism was neglected, and offering an initial analysis from the perspective of the argument of this thesis. Before approaching lyricism in Chapter 4 as an element of contemporary narratives, I shall undertake an overview of Brazilian novelists in the twentieth century canon, the lyrical aspects of whose works has been overlooked. The aim is not to engage in an in-depth analysis of these authors, but rather to provide a glimpse into their work through the filter of the lyrical framework discussed in this research. I thus emphasise that Chapter 3 is designed to be a referential chapter.

The particular theoretical basis established in Chapter 1 is not intended to be restricted to genre theory. As shown earlier, that strand encapsulates features presented in Ralph Freedman's and Emil Staiger's theories, maintaining a 'sensitive horizon of expectations',<sup>55</sup> and taking into consideration the idiosyncrasies of each literary work respectively. My intention is to focus on the development of the *moment* and the presence of *Stimmung* throughout each narrative. To clarify both concepts again, the *moment* identifies the awareness of the writer about their own sensibility, and *Stimmung* adds an undeniable atmosphere to the text, indicating an inspirational and an emotional nature. Usually, this 'tuning of the soul' is also responsible for the more spontaneous aspect of the writing, and suggests the use of senses to fill in for anything the language

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<sup>55</sup> A 'horizon of expectations' in the sense used by Tzvetan Todorov, in *Genres in Discourse* (1990). The term presents the idea of a freer approach to the narratives within its genres, and not enclosing them in rigid definitions. See especially item 2 of Part One, called "The origin of genres". Haroldo de Campos uses the same idea in *A ruptura dos gêneros na literatura latino-americana* (1977).

itself is unable to express. Moreover, I will be looking within the texts for features seen in Chapter 1, namely patterns of imagery, immediacy of portraiture, construction on a base narrative, symbolic heroes, the junction of self and world, and descriptions of the acts of knowledge.

Regarding the selection of writers, a search for these lyrical features noted above guided my reading. Besides the search for these characteristics, another strong criterion was the critical reception the authors received in specific titles, or in their oeuvre. All these authors, at one stage, have been regarded by critics as difficult, innovative, or eccentric – such as Raduan Nassar and his undeniable lyricism, for example. Experimentation is a common trait in their work. According to traditional literary historiography, this innovative aspect can also be expressed as a sense of strangeness, which permeates these works. I believe this unfamiliarity relates to the challenges these texts present, particularly with regard to the hybridisation. Many literary techniques have been innovated in the novel since Modernism. However, throughout much of the twentieth century the chief characteristics of poetry – such as timelessness, circularity and rhythm – were still only seen as confined to the restricted realm of the poems themselves. This seems to particularly be the case in Brazil, for the majority of critics discussed here.

Another factor in author selection is their critical reputation, mainly established in the last century. Only one, Raduan Nassar, is still alive and he is no longer writing. Again, my intention is to offer a concise view of lyricism within a canonical frame of reference. Clarice Lispector and João Guimarães Rosa are undoubtedly recognised as major authors – in this case, the passages dedicated to them confirm how lyricism can present a new angle from which to interpret their narratives. Moreover, while already well-known, their writing will never fail to make its impact on account of its innate strength.

Although it would be a stretch to label these writers as lyrical, I will argue that in some of their works lyricism is a major feature, and that this feature contributes to a nuanced understanding of the lyrical novel in Brazil in the mid twentieth century. Also, as this chapter's investigation consists of a brief historical review, these analyses will not have the same precision and depth as those which will be presented in Chapter 4. For the sake of fluency, my investigation will focus on works that have been recognised by critics as having lyrical traits, and as resembling poetry in many aspects. I am therefore also incorporating conventional aspects of the lyrical already given by critics as an addition to my own, further analysis. These lyrical traits already pointed out are cited in my analysis, as they refer to important characteristics of these authors' work. Moreover,

these aspects have never been studied within the scope of a lyrical narrative theory, and therefore deserve to be mentioned in this context.

Hence, I will now revisit these twentieth-century Brazilian writers in order to better grasp the concepts about lyricism already discussed in this thesis within a concise historical review. I will focus on the new parameters outlined in Chapter 1, namely patterns of imagery, lyrical progression, immediacy of portraiture, construction upon a base narrative, the symbolic hero and junction of self and world, besides being attentive to the *moment* and the *Stimmung*.

### **3.1 Lyrical, eccentric and misunderstood**

Some of the writers seen here, such as Raduan Nassar and Clarice Lispector, have already been studied to a certain limited degree from the perspective of lyricism.<sup>56</sup> For this reason, both serve as good introductory examples. The authors of the other works presented in this thesis have only been studied to a limited extent from a lyrical perspective, in part because their works have simply not received the same degree of analysis as Nassar and Lispector, with exception of João Guimarães Rosa. They are therefore explored in overview, through analysis of specific titles that contain these characteristics, as reference to the entirety of their works will not be relevant to this study. Finally, some authors present contradictory examples, such as Lúcio Cardoso. Writers like Cardoso are analysed, however, because whilst the presence of lyricism can be noticed in some aspects, in a general assessment it is not possible to consider their pieces lyrical in their entirety. Nonetheless, they will still have an important role to play in reinforcing the outline of this research.

I will present the authors in chronological order.

#### **3.1.1 Lyrical anxiety in Adelino Magalhães**

*Casos e impressões*, a book of short stories published in 1916, attracted the attention of some critics for what seemed a histrionic treatment of words, employing a sarcastic and

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<sup>56</sup> One peculiar trait shared by the writers seen here, an idiosyncrasy that deserves to be mentioned, is that of their individual isolation as public figures. Reading about their personal lives, it is possible to recognise this same pattern in their personalities, as people usually known to be odd, with tendencies toward mysterious forms of behaviour and eccentricity. The extent to which these characteristics are something to be considered as relevant to lyricism, is something that must be investigated further.

at the same time grandiloquent tone. The short narratives were excessively punctuated and abundant in digressions about new-born modernity and mankind. This was Adelino Magalhães's (1887–1969) debut book and it has been incorporated in this research not only because many of its stories are in fact lyrical, but also because until today Magalhães has not been properly understood in Brazilian literature.

Magalhães is more of a short story writer than a novelist, whose lyricism, mixed with other literary influences, only partly represents the lyrical features I am dealing with here. However, consideration should be given to the lyrical aspects of his short stories. Since their publication were at the beginning of the twentieth century – making him a precursor of Modernism – his work should have been given special attention.

Indeed, Magalhães portrayed the anguish of the early twentieth century. Sonia Brayner states that he belongs to a group of turn-of-the-century writers who were impressed with the possibilities that the prose poem had been bringing to literature in terms of introspection:

Adelino alia-se às conquistas da subjetividade feitas no terreno da prosa, pretendendo também conquistar um estatuto poético para a ficção, com todas as características de concentração rítmico-imagísticas. Não há diferença na gênese dessas narrativas e na da poesia tal como se apresentava desde Baudelaire e era defendida pelos simbolistas. (...) A narração pouco se sobrepõe ao nível lírico e a presença do artista, sempre voltado para si mesmo, controla com dificuldade o centro emocional, cedendo à magia das palavras e ao poder da imagem. (1979: 187-188)

According to Eugênio Gomes, the author of a critical review of his *Obras completas*, Magalhães is responsible for initiating use of the interior monologue in Brazilian literature (1963: 59). Despite this accolade, like a number of Brazilian pre-Modernist authors, Magalhães's work has not received the due and proper recognition it deserved in Brazilian literary studies. Similar reception was given to great writers who emerged between 1900 and 1920, just before the Modern Art Week, deemed to belong to the era of *Pré-Modernismo*. These writers include Raul Pompeia, Euclides da Cunha, Lima Barreto, and Graça Aranha. All of them presented very strong and well-defined literary personalities, and the heterogeneity they displayed was not suited to standardisation under the label of a movement, causing difficulty to the critics. The solution to this was to classify this group as being “prior” to another movement, Modernism.

Magalhães's writing blends the Symbolist style with a Baudelairian freedom. He uses the freshness of the prose poem to express the sense of transformation Western society had been experiencing at that time. As shown in Chapter 2, there was a strong presence

of mixed forms in literature at that period. Already, modernity and new technologies brought certain repercussions for people's lives in the large Brazilian cities and especially Rio de Janeiro, which was the capital city in that period. According to Flora Süssekind, 'all of these technical innovations were accompanied by changes in worldview and in perception' (1997: 12). Modernism, though, from 1922 onwards, would be the artistic movement that definitively incorporated techniques linked to photography or cinematography into literature.

Nonetheless, most of Magalhães's titles still indicate his search for the realm of sensations, displaying a lack of definition: *Casos e impressões* (1916); *Visões, cenas e perfis* (1918); *Tumulto da vida* (1920); *A hora veloz* (1926); *Os momentos* (1931); *Os marcos da emoção* (1933); *Íris* (1937); *Plenitude* (1939); *Quebra-luz* (1946). His work has also been classified as impressionist, on account of its abundance of syntactic juxtapositions – an example of the association that is often drawn between lyrical fiction and impressionism in painting.

In his debut there are a number of real gems of lyricism, although still impregnated with Symbolist traits, in their predominant evanescence and even in the punctuation and the many capital letters scattered throughout his texts. Take, for example, an excerpt from the story "Pássaro morto", where a man kills a swallow in his room and is filled with remorse. The first-person narrator turns his daily life into patterns of nature:

E eu que sacrifico a gostosa normalidade da vida em burguês rebanho, pelas agruras das visões belas; que sou triste, da tristeza universal, secular – esguia tristeza contudo de esteta, que se debruça num gesto de inconsciente almejo, vão; eu, arcanjo negro que desencantei o anonimato de todas as dores – oceânica voz, apavorada, da humanidade que à humanidade procura e ao destino – Arcanjo e oceânica voz de Legenda; eu, cuja culta melancolia, com ânsias messiânicas, gozosa de decadência e de ressurreição se alça, bela e esgalga como a andorinha, indefinível como a graça da andorinha – a andorinha exatamente é que... oh! Para que relembrar? (1963: 163)

This is a moment of epiphany; the end of a lyrical progression when the character begins to compare his life with the freedom of the bird. The story narrates his running after the bird with a towel with savage ferocity, a passage full of Magalhães's usual satire; then, when the bird dies of exhaustion, his tone changes to a lyrical vision of its death, and this lyricism dominates the story until the end.

Exclamation marks, ellipses, *leitmotifs* and sonorous catchphrases are his trademarks. Besides those markers commonly used in Symbolist writing, Adelino Magalhães's stories are mostly about modern man, modern existence, facts and ordinary people and

their everyday lives. This curious mix of irony, satire and lyricism made the author abstruse for many readers, not to mention the sexual references present in a number of his stories, which drew censorship and disapproval in literary circles.

The lyrical character of Magalhães's stories may have been forgotten because his many innovations were ahead of his time. Indeed, lyricism represents just one of his singular characteristics, to an extent overshadowed by the angst present in his juxtaposed syntactic prose. Nonetheless, the *Stimmung* and the transmutation of reality present in several of his writings are also notable characteristics, and both are examples of lyrical techniques. In the short story "Francisco", for instance, the protagonist talks about a beggar who used to live in his street. The author expresses his contradictory feelings about the man, who never accepted any contact with him. His feelings are told in associations of images concerning the difficulties of ordinary life, especially topics such as the rain and rubbish. He creates a sonorous phrase to synaesthetically communicate his distress to the reader: '– Goteja! Goteja! Pam! Pam! Pam!', and a repetition of the word 'Ei-lo!' that recalls the discursive structure of prose poetry:

– Ei-lo! Ei-lo em suas muletas, desengonçado, à beira da calçada! Ei-lo com sua cartolinha tombada para a direita, sem cor, em estilhaços; incrível cartolinha, espectral, acentuando em circunflexo o hiato da furiosa cabeleira, achatada, pedindo os horizontes, nos seus enfarruscados anéis abertos, cor de ouro velho!

E debaixo dela, no rosto longo, a barba em ponta – ei-lo! – e a barba exige a direita numa atitude gritadora de libertação! E os olhos verdes são de um brilho triste, como dois destroços de consciência, naufragando da oceânica miséria, apática, do resto...

Ei-lo, e o resto é um monturo de lixo que tem dois olhos verdes, de um brilho triste!...

Como é extensa a dolorosa confusão desses trapos, em agonia extrema!... Essa muleta, a se despencar, é lama até lá, em cima!... E ele nunca se lavou, por certo; os pés estão encapsulados numa reforçada crosta de terra seca, rija...

A cara, essa é de um amorenado à madeira envernizada, lustroso, escorregadiço e alheios olhos que diante dessa miséria se escancaram, enquanto o curioso faroleiro deles tem o estômago revoltado...

Ei-lo!

Pedaço de lixo, em carne, que foi abraçado por Mãe, por noiva talvez; pedaço de lixo que foi talvez um mundo de honrarias, mais ainda... um mundo de Sonhos, quem sabe?!

A pensar na diferença dele para mim, invade-me um calafrio; e na diferença dessa minha cama para a cama dele, a pensar...

Vendo uma nebulosa de maior negror no negror das sombras, dela sinto o eco emotivo da desigualdade entre os que ficam, como ele, no limiar dos tempos e no limiar da vida e os que, como eu, alcançaram a meta dos Civilizados e dos Venturosos! (1963: 166-167)

Indeed, there is a sense that a lyrical prose is taking shape here. This lyrical objectivity is marked by the increasing speed of the comparisons, which can, for instance, turn the

beggar's green eyes into wreckages of consciousness.<sup>57</sup> First, he depicts the character's appearance – crutches, top hat, rings – then he moves quickly to a tragic metaphor, in which the character is seen as a piece of rubbish. Magalhães begins each phrase describing the homeless man's appearance and ends in abstractions.

As an author pertaining to a transitional period in terms of social changes and at the same time a precursor for lyrical techniques, Adelino Magalhães is an interesting case to be observed. His ironic and satirical works convey a different type of lyrical prose, which is worthy of attention for the diversity it illustrates.

### 3.1.2 Lúcio Cardoso and the tormented poet's prose

Lúcio Cardoso (1912–1968) published his works between 1934 and 1961, and two further titles were released in 1970, two years after his death. Cardoso was a playwright and journalist, but notably a poet too. Cardoso and Clarice Lispector developed an intense correspondence, as contemporary writers both interested in subjective accounts. Both were also admirers of the American-French novelist Julien Green,<sup>58</sup> as well as other writers. Cardoso was regarded as a member of the group of Modernist novelists linked to Catholicism. Furthermore, as attested by Alfredo Bosi (1994), around 1930 there was a strong strand of neo-Realism among Brazilian writers. Cardoso's first books, *Maleita* (1934) and *Salgueiro* (1935), are good examples of this neo-Realist style, but soon afterwards he started writing in a more psychological style, just like Clarice Lispector, Cornélio Penna, Adonias Filho and Octavio de Faria, to name a few.

In Brazilian literary historiography, Lúcio Cardoso is not usually associated with lyrical narrative, but rather with dense introspective narrative. However, his critics make abundant allusions to his ontological writing, his metaphorical intensity, and his almost expressionist style. Nevertheless, the strong presence of the lyrical aspect of his writing is recognised by Mario Carelli, a specialist in Cardoso's work:

Progressivamente os fragmentos poéticos cardosianos abandonam a estrutura discursiva da prosa e se despojam de uma adjetivação exuberante. Ele toma a língua a contrapelo para moldá-la segundo suas emoções e a incoerência aparente do seu mundo interior. Porém a inspiração imagística e a dicção musical se realizam com mais eficácia na prosa poemática do romancista. (1991: 630-631)

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<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1(a), "Lyrical progression".

<sup>58</sup> Julien Green is considered an introspective author. Mario Carelli points out other strong influences on Cardoso's work: Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, Stendhal, Alan Fournier, Daniel Rops and, especially, Dostoyevsky (1991: 627).

Critic André Seffrin also argues that Cardoso's flair for poetry is present in his narratives. According to Seffrin, Cardoso's work as a novelist overshadows his production as a poet, but Cardoso's prose often contains this latent 'poesia subterrânea' (1991: 789). Among other important commentaries, it is worth highlighting one work of José Lins do Rego, a writer who is not linked to the psychological school but to Regionalism. In the following passage, Rego stresses the true distinctiveness of Cardoso's writing:

O grande poeta que é Lúcio Cardoso não tem medo das palavras e se deixa dominar pelo ritmo de uma música que se derrama pelas suas alucinações como o gemer de uma fonte que chora no fundo da terra. (...) A poesia da desagregação nos invade o conhecimento. Ficamos entre o sonho e a vida, arrebatados pela magia de uma prosa que não tem ossatura, e que é só uma carne incendiada de pecados. (Rego, edited by Carelli, 1991: 767)

The concept of magical prose, a prose devoid of structure, as Rego suggests, is commonly applied to Cardoso's work – in total, 26 titles, including plays, novellas, diaries and three collections of poetry. The novel *Crônica da casa assassinada* (1959) is considered to be Cardoso's supreme masterpiece. However, in this excerpt Rego is talking about the book *O enfeitiçado* (1954). One of the main differences between the two works is in their narrative construction: while *Crônica* is built polyphonically, out of a fragmentary account of events told by several narrators, *O enfeitiçado* is narrated in the first person. However, the recourse to imagery is present throughout this author's oeuvre, generating an atmosphere that has been called *cardosiana*, marked by a tragic aspect, delirium and synaesthetic effects.<sup>59</sup>

*Crônica da casa assassinada* is entirely constructed from confessional writings, letters, diaries, testimonies, and accounts by the characters who narrate the downfall of an aristocratic family from the conservative state of Minas Gerais.<sup>60</sup> Different points of view are used to tell stories of madness, perversions and obsessions within the Meneses residence, an old farm house. To this end, there is a pattern of imagery in this novel – which refers to the ruins of this derelict house, as well as the recurrence and circularity of images of violets, perfumes and cancer. Essayist Maria Madalena Loredo Neta refers to this characteristic in her text:

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<sup>59</sup> It is worth highlighting that after suffering a stroke, Lúcio Cardoso became fully dedicated to painting.

<sup>60</sup> 'Meu inimigo é Minas Gerais', the author declares in one interview (1991: 643). Cardoso was born in Curvelo, a city in the centre of Minas.



Pode-se dizer que, na *Crônica*, a casa é um mundo construído e formulado poeticamente. Às avessas, mas poeticamente. Os termos relacionados à casa – *desabamento*, *queda*, *vácuo*, *desastre*, *desintegração* – pertencem ao campo semântico de ruína e destruição. Por seu turno, o leitor é colocado diante de imagens que ostentam uma grande riqueza poética. (2008: 3-4) [author's emphasis]

Despite the poetical richness and presence of images, it is, however, arguable whether this novel can be regarded as lyrical fiction. Most of the chapters are confessions, like characters' testimonies, many are told through dialogues; and although some excerpts display a significant number of imagery patterns as cited before, the few transmutations of reality that take place through the characters' awareness do not interfere with the sequentiality of the plot. The fragmentary collection of accounts is in fact cinematographic, like the abrupt cuts between camera shots that seem to offer no stability to the reader but, in the end, there is cause and effect in the story. The scattered accounts form a whole; not a traditional entirety of a story, but the reader grasps its sense, its beginning and its end.

As Mario Carelli states: 'Raramente na literatura brasileira a estética presidindo a uma obra ficcional foi tão visivelmente modelada por uma visão interior subvertendo a percepção convencional da realidade' (1991: 728). Nonetheless, from my lyrical perspective, if a fragmentary narrative like *Crônica* is usually a characteristic of prose lyricism, then Cardoso's inner vision does not metaphorise the images to the extent that the patterns of imagery overwhelm the plot.

When analysing the other work by Cardoso considered to be poetic, *O enfeitado*, the same qualities can be observed. The strength and veracity of his psychological portraits are so well constructed that the reader intensely feels this atmosphere. Nevertheless, the consecutiveness of the plot remains. Time and space in the plot are localised, interrupted by deep interpretations of the unconscious mind of the protagonist, Inácio.

*O enfeitado* is a novella, which is part of a trilogy, along with *Inácio* and *Baltazar*. Narrated in the first person, it tells the story of a solitary old man, Inácio, in search of his son Rogerio, who is the narrator of *Inácio*, the first book in the trilogy. The protagonist Inácio is involved in a supernatural intrigue made by a fortune teller who, besides promising to find Inácio's son, offers him her teenage daughter Adelia. Cardoso describes with mastery the dark ambience of Lapa's brothels, cheap hostels, drug spots, the dens of sin through which Inácio roams looking for Rogerio. At some point it dawns on Inácio how tormented his mind is and he expresses it, but not as an epiphany of one lyrical *moment*:

Dois ou três cafês adiante, encontramos o “Bar da Europa”. Seria difícil imaginar lugar mais imundo: o ar engordurado e nauseabundo como que transmite às faces e aos objetos um cansaço extremo, mortal. De novo sinto-me impressionado com o silêncio que reina – é um silêncio voluntário e intraduzível, como se todos os frequentadores do lugar já transitassem numa zona morta, condenada. Há gente por todos os cantos, mas são pessoas que não falam, que se compreendem pela mímica ou pelo olhar. Vê-se claramente que tudo é possível aqui – e este silêncio sinistro é de um pacto, de uma conspiração entre seres expulsos da vida pela fraqueza ou pelo desespero. O inferno, se existisse, devia ser de gelo como nestes bares: há muito as almas deixaram de se interessar pelo que acontece lá fora – mudas, assistem à própria agonia. (2002: 224)

Inácio, as he declares, feels himself impressed with the ambience. However, his insight is not enough for him to delve into his own feelings and sensibility regarding the scene. He transmutes reality within patterns of imagery within his perception, but does not decode these sensitive proceedings, and he does not expand the narrative inwards.

Lúcio Cardoso’s vigour as a novelist has brought a different potency to psychological narratives. His narratives can indeed be said to contain lyricism and to present soulfulness, the basis for *Stimmung*. However, they constitute a good example of whether to draw a line depending upon the presence of lyrical aspects in a text. A further investigation is yet to be carried out and this could perhaps also involve other writers with very strong psychological tendencies, such as Cornélio Penna. The authors who belong to the psychological and intimate school of the 1940s and 1950s have not yet been properly analysed within Brazil’s national literary historiography. While further detail falls outside the scope of this thesis, Ralph Freedman’s statement about the intimate relationships between the psychological and lyrical novel (1963: 11) is worthy of further study.

### 3.1.3 Guimarães Rosa’s unclassifiable lyricism

– Ei Lucifer! Satanaz!...

Voz minha se estragasse, em mim tudo era cordas e cobras. E foi aí. Foi. Ele não existe, e não apareceu nem respondeu – que é um falso imaginado. Mas eu supri que ele tinha me ouvido. Me ouviu, a conforme a ciência da noite e o envir de espaços, que medeia. Como que adquirisse minhas palavras todas; fechou o arrocho do assunto. Ao que eu recebi de volta um adejo, um gozo do agarro, daí umas tranquilidades – de pancada. Lembrei dum rio que viesse adentro a casa de meu pai. Vi as asas. Arquei o puxo do poder meu, naquele átimo. Aí podia ser mais? A peta, eu querer saldar: que isso não é falável. As coisas assim a gente mesmo não pega nem abarca. Cabem é no brilho da noite. Aragem do sagrado. Absolutas estrelas! (1963: 398)

Riobaldo, soldier, knight or horseman of the backlands, meets the Devil. This is one of the crucial moments in *Grande sertão: veredas* (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*), João Guimarães Rosa's (1908–1967) masterpiece. The scene marks a climax in the plot, with the whole story portraying a type of preparation for the Faustian bargain with the entity. Riobaldo goes to Veredas-Mortas to acquire the power to defeat Hermógenes, avenging the death of his leader Joca Ramiro.

Besides the creative atmosphere of the text, which recounts the probable meeting more through Riobaldo's sensations than through description, the reader is invited to understand the words through their sound – 'cordas/cobras', 'fechou o arrocho', 'gozo do agarro'. Practically untranslatable (like poetry), full of stylistic resourcefulness, Rosa's dialect presents metaphysical elements, because it involves the mystery of existence and explores subtleties of the language. This sort of dialect is written as a backlands idiom, providing a transcendent atmosphere of poetry and defying any conventional criteria of literary interpretation.

This exuberance has been studied for decades within Brazilian literary criticism and Rosa's oeuvre specifically has been explored from many angles, such as regional, universal, ontological, magical, and mythical. The last two categories are particularly relevant to the lyrical domain. Although hundreds of theses and analyses have been devoted to Rosa's novels and short stories, few were completely dedicated to the lyrical aspect of his writing.

Whether or not Rosa can be deemed a lyrical author, he certainly does demonstrate a masterful command of prose lyricism at points in his work. One of the most cited references to lyricism in Rosa is attributable to the critic Oswaldino Marques, who created the term 'prosoema' to refer to Rosa's work. The *mineiro* author's prose work is so remarkable that many forget to mention that his debut book, in 1936, was a poetry collection entitled *Magma*, which was awarded a prize by the Academia Brasileira de Letras later, in 1997. Never again did he publish a collection of poetry.

Rosa's oeuvre entails an extraordinary fusion of poetical resources, such as musicality, circularity and timelessness, besides displaying powerful metaphorisation of images. Patterns of imagery, lyrical progression, symbolic heroes and junction of self and world are also noticeable. Although many of the lyrical characteristics this thesis has identified as pertaining to lyrical fiction are present in his narratives, they cannot easily be accommodated, as I will proceed to demonstrate. From his extensive output, for instance, examples of prose poetry can be verified in his short story collection

*Primeiras estórias*, from 1962, especially “As margens da alegria” and “Os cimos”, as already cited by Claudio Willer (2008: 12).

In *Grande sertão: veredas*, for instance, Riobaldo, the protagonist and narrator can be understood as a symbolic hero in many of the passages of the text. However, the transmutation of reality that his consciousness undergoes is of a kind that incorporates the mythical atmosphere of his environment. As, for example, when he discovers that Diadorim is a woman, after her death: ‘Diadorim era mulher como o sol não acende a água do rio Urucuia, como eu solucei meu desespero’ (1963: 563). By way of clarification, the Urucuia (*águas vermelhas*, in Portuguese) is a kind of sacred river in Minas Gerais, which is part of the river basin of the São Francisco, one of the biggest rivers in Brazil. The river is named after the region’s indigenous people, and, despite being located in the backlands, it is broad and fertile. The Urucuia’s water is red – so according to the local inhabitants, the river has no need of the sun: it is alive and it does not need to be illuminated by the stars, as suggested by its red colour. In the *sertanejo*’s imagination, this fact testifies that the river is as powerful as the sun, which surrounds everything. Thus, this sacredness, which comes from the backlands’s mythical acknowledgement of the sun and its relation with everything that is alive in the region, is incorporated into the metaphorical textual construction. The transmutation of reality – a lyrical operation which occurs through mediation of the symbolic hero – happens under the strong influence of an external factor, which is the mythical awareness given by a cultural background.

There is a sense of lyrical progression in the novel. However, these impressions follow the sonorous flow of the words – not as a stream of consciousness, or even a normal interior monologue – since this progression is overlapped by the strength of the words, interrupting the concentration of thought. And even though the narrative is built upon metaphorical images, it allows the sequentiality of the plot, time and space to be defined:

Mas eles vinham, se avinham, num pé-de-vento, no desadorno, bramavam, se investiram... Ao que – fechou o fim e se fizeram. E eu arrevessei, na ânsia por um livramento... quando quis rezar – e só um pensamento, como raio e raio, que em mim. Que o senhor sabe? Qual: ... *o Diabo na rua, no meio do redemunho*... O senhor soubesse... Diadorim – eu queria ver – segurar com os olhos... Escutei o medo claro nos meus dentes... (...) Solução mar que não pude, mar que eu queria um socorro de rezar uma palavra que fosse, em bradada ou muda; secou: e só orvalhou em mim, por prestígios do arrebatado no momento, foi poder imaginar a minha Nossa-Senhora assentada no meio da igreja... . (1963: 559-560)

In the excerpt above, Riobaldo sees the final confrontation between his group and their enemies. He wants to take part, but he is injured. His sensations overwhelm the scene, and he transmutes the instant as a sort of whirlwind, with the presence of the devil. The passage begins more concretely with the collision of the *jagunços*, and it grows in intensity, with the sonority disturbing even the metaphors at the end of the text. He declares he wants to pray, in a lyrical way, but the sounds exceed the instant, and what remains is the intensity of his thoughts, carried by the sounds that seem disconnected from the narrative.

According to Luzia Tofalini, it is the rhythm in Guimarães Rosa's writing, the judicious combination of sound and silence, that denotes his lyrical tone: 'em toda a sua produção artístico-literária, pode ser percebido na extrema habilidade com que o artista dispõe as palavras, congregando sons e silêncios harmoniosamente' (2009: 624). The musicality, found in alliterations, assonances, anaphoras and rhymes, seems to be interwoven with the intensity of the images.

Rosa's use of poetical devices is very much linked to his ontological purposes. This can be assigned to the presence of the *Stimmung*, which runs throughout the plot and is evident in the lavishness of language used and in the presence of lyrical traits. The best methodological approach to such a rich and cosmogonic work would be to devote an entire study to it, and to attempt to cross-check its universal features and lyrical features in depth. As the author himself once declared:

Observo, também, que quase sempre as dúvidas decorrem do "vício" sintático, da servidão à sintaxe vulgar e rígida, doença de que todos sofremos. Duas coisas convém ter sempre presente: tudo vai para a poesia, o lugar-comum deve ter proibida a entrada, estamos é descobrindo novos territórios de sentir, do pensar, e da expressividade; as palavras valem "sozinhas". Cada uma por si, com sua carga própria, independentes, e às combinações delas permitem-se todas as variantes e variedades. (Rosa, cited by Willer, 2008: 10)

Rosa's statement seems to be about pure poetry; nevertheless, his books show how he deals with the core of linguistic codes. The writer's suggestion might open up a new line of research, doubtless linked to the metaphysical properties of narratives and words, in the mode of Giambattista Vico in *La Scienza Nuova*.<sup>61</sup> As Luzia Tofalini states

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<sup>61</sup> The Italian philosopher studied the property of poetry to express the primeval and the primordial to mankind. For him, humanity in its first phase of language, named the pre-verbal phase of existence, resorted to words linked more to the energy of things than to their denominations. This magical (metaphorical) characteristic of the words is almost lost in present times, being recognised in the rhetoric

(2010: 1-2) chiefly in relation to the short story “A terceira margem do rio”, Rosa’s linguistic composition is foundational, and of no other Brazilian author has this been said so assertively.

### 3.1.4 Lispector and the voice of strangeness

Clarice Lispector (1920–1977) came to critical attention with her debut novel, *Perto do coração selvagem*, in 1943. The uproar surrounding this publication can be exemplified by this controversial essay by the renowned critic Álvaro Lins:

Coube-lhe, vamos repetir, o papel de escrever o nosso primeiro romance dentro do espírito e da técnica de Joyce e Virginia Woolf. E, pela novidade, este livro provoca desde logo uma surpresa perturbadora. A surpresa das coisas que são realmente novas e originais. [...] Li o romance duas vezes, e ao terminar só havia uma impressão: a de que ele não estava realizado, a de que estava incompleta e inacabada a sua estrutura como obra de ficção. (1967: 105-106)

Lispector wrote eight novels, as well as six collections of short stories, five children’s books, two books of chronicles and a novella, some of which were published after her death. Although classified as a writer of the intimate (or psychological) school, her work is regarded as ‘experimental’ by some traditional literary historiographers. Alfredo Bosi evokes the radical character of her writing, comparing her to other authors whose works present a *strange subjectivity*: ‘Enfim, a passagem do puro psicológico ao experimental é notória em Clarice Lispector e, menos radicalmente, em contistas e romancistas cuja obra ainda está em progresso: Autran Dourado, Osman Lins, Maria Alice Barroso...’ (1994: 392). For Afrânio Coutinho, for instance, her style could be linked to a type of magical realism because of the strength of her emotional content and metaphors (1986: 277). Lispector’s metaphorical writing is a point of agreement for many scholars, and the usual point at which her experimentalism is invoked to explain the exaggeration of her language.<sup>62</sup>

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of witchcraft, with its incantations and spells, and in some literature itself (Vico, cited by Bosi, 2004: 240).

<sup>62</sup> Clarice Lispector is the single female writer most extensively cited in this thesis, besides further references to authors Hilda Hilst, Adriana Lisboa and Cintia Moscovich in Chapter 4. At this point it is important to specify that gender was not considered a criterion for selection in this investigation due to the nature of prose lyricism, which presents idiosyncratic features regardless of gender. Some conceptual similarities to prose lyricism may be found in the feminist theory of *écriture féminine*, coined by Hélène Cixous in the 1970s. Clarice Lispector is analysed by Cixous from this perspective in the book *Vivre l’orange* (1979).

It should also be observed that the scarce presence of female writers in comparison to male writers in Brazilian literature can be found in any literary strand in the country. This restriction is due to issues of a lack of gender equality in the literary field.

However, for researchers of lyricism in the novel, such as Earl E. Fitz, Lispector is one of the most important lyrical novelists in Latin America. Fitz analyses her fourth novel, *A maçã no escuro* (1961), as a key example to test his hypothesis:

In an authentic lyrical novel, such as *A maçã no escuro*, the structural design composes the nucleus of the work and relegates the traditional roles of action, plot, dialogue, and characterization to lower levels of importance. In this regard, both the technique employed by the author and the final effect wrought upon the reader are redolent of what occurs in the reading of lyric poetry. As a lyrical novel, then, *A maçã no escuro* presents a structure composed basically of images (appearing singly and in patterns), recurring scenes, and symbols. And through this “atmospheric” world there moves Martim, a self-reflective, passive wanderer who is constantly acted upon by the bewildering maze of objects and presences which envelop him. (1977: 154)

Fitz concisely mentions the patterns of images seen in the novel. He also refers to the ‘atmospheric’ ambience of the narrative. According to him, in this atmosphere the reader becomes attuned to the spirit and movement of poetry, in a type of emotional experiment which implies a disposition of the soul. This propensity, shared by author and reader, is driven by *Stimmung*.

The novel tells the story of Martim, without explaining his background – the action mostly takes place within the perception of the character. The man has fled from his town, thinking he has killed his wife. The reader accompanies him on his journey, first to a hotel and afterwards to a small farm, where he begins to work for food and shelter. Although Martim’s appearance is depicted and highlighted, the reader learns more about the character’s thoughts and feelings. That is to say, Martim’s body is used by Lispector almost as the pattern of imagery. Fitz also draws attention to the circularity present in the plot, as though in a poem.

The book is divided into three parts, called “Como se faz um homem”, “Nascimento de um herói” and “A maçã no escuro”, and the latter is the densest segment in the novel. Not only does the reader have access to the protagonist’s insights, but he/she also has some access to the perceptions of the two other main characters, Vitória and Ermelinda. There are dialogues, however the interior monologues and streams of consciousness are interwoven, giving the impression that the characters are part of a kind of universal awareness. This characteristic of intertwining characters’ synaesthesia recalls the structure of Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*, as Fitz points out.

Nevertheless, this interweaving becomes stronger as the story progresses. Martim is the main symbolic hero, and his awareness is deeper than that of the female characters.

Undoubtedly, this is because he embodies the main conflict of the plot, the killing of his wife. The lyrical progression can be noticed in his intensity, principally through his reactions and feelings rather than his actions, and this intensity grows as the facts unfold. This is an inversion: in the lyrical novel, as we have seen theoretically, the movement prevails in the awareness and senses of the characters – mediated by recurrent symbolic images – and not in the sequence of the story. As, for example, in Martim’s flight to the woods, in Chapter 3, when he realises that he is being investigated by Vitória and the Professor:

O absurdo envolveu o homem, lógico, magnífico, horrível, perfeito – o escuro o envolveu. No entanto, por pouco que entendesse, ele pareceu sentir a perfeição que houvera no seu caminho obscuro até chegar ao bosque: havia nos seus passos uma perfeição impessoal, e era como se o tempo de uma vida tivesse sido o tempo rigorosamente calculado para a maturação de um fruto, nem um minuto mais, nem um minuto menos – se o fruto amadurecesse! (1981: 211)

In this excerpt, after feeling a real and growing fear of being discovered, as well as guilt, Martim understands the meaning of the word *salvation*. The intensity, passing through the images of the woods (darkness, trees, storms, stones, and leaves), partially culminates with the image of the fruit as he perceives real fear, the biggest fear, of being unmasked. Only then does he comprehend the importance of salvation. The metaphor of the fruit, linked to salvation, is clearly a religious one. On the other hand, and in a broader sense, this fruit also recalls the apple of the title which, in the end, refers to the semantics of logic and science too: the image of the fruit is linked to Newton’s theory of gravity. *A maçã no escuro* is thus closely connected with man’s beliefs, rational or not, in the dead centre of his own ignorance and fear. The imagetic pattern of nature is the principal characteristic of the book. This can be noted even with other characters, such as Vitória:

Quando começou enfim a chover, a senhora chegara a um ponto de silêncio em que a chuva lhe parecia a palavra. Surpreendida com o doce e inesperado encontro, ela se entregou sem resistência à água, sentindo no corpo que as plantas bebiam, que os sapos bebiam, que os bichos do sítio ouviam o barulho da água no telhado – o aviso se espalhara nebuloso e ensopava a fazenda toda: chovia, chovia, chovia. Que chova, disse ela. Pois também desse modo eu te amo, pensou antes de adormecer, a escuridão também era bondade, nós também éramos bondade. (1981: 226)

Clarice’s following book, *A paixão segundo G.H.*, from 1964, is also regarded by some scholars as a strong example of lyrical narrative. Mariângela Alonso published *Instantes líricos de revelação – a narrativa poética em Clarice Lispector* (2013), in which she



indicates several lyrical characteristics that can be found in this novel, based particularly on the works by the theorists covered in Chapter 1, mainly Ralph Freedman and Jean-Yves Tadié. Alonso emphasises that lyricism occurs in the narrative through the author's 'open awareness', and she highlights Lispector's symbolic and polysemic language (2013: 44), the circularity of her writing through repetition (2013: 47), the rhythmic strength of her images (2013: 77), and the transfiguration of objects through the protagonist's awareness: 'G.H. insufla seu espírito no "caos dos objetos", refazendo-os, recriando-os de acordo com sua própria imagem' (2013: 80-81). Alonso compares the character's trajectory with disaggregation and asceticism, and draws attention to the strong disintegration of the self: 'Dessa forma, as personagens das narrativas poéticas não se desenham, ou seja, não têm sua aparência fixada, uma vez que o texto está a serviço da reconstrução de um ser, de uma metafísica' (2013: 93). Here, she highlights the metaphysical aspect of Lispector's writing.

*A paixão segundo G.H.* is Clarice's first book to be written in the first person, a fact that facilitates the presence of lyricism in the narrative, as the stream of consciousness is rarely disturbed by external events in the plot. Therefore, the junction between character and world is much more evident. The book tells the (existentialist) story of an independent and successful sculptor who suddenly discovers the possibility of reconstructing her identity.

From the outset, it is possible to see the lyrical triggers: the protagonist enters an unpredictable room and comes across a cockroach, which provokes an entire reconsideration of her life, which she realises is, among other things, 'a construção sentimentária e utilitária' (1964: 69). She – the mysterious character known only by her initials G.H.<sup>63</sup> – intends to clean the penthouse apartment where she lives, and decides to begin with her maid's room. Her contact with the unexpected light of the room and the presence of the insect are enough to trigger an inner journey, often marked by the insufficiency of language, as G.H. expresses: 'Afinal consegui pelo menos articular um pensamento: "estou pedindo socorro"' (1964: 74).

A couple of scenes out of an entire book comprising 183 pages can tell us much about its different dynamics. The way the plot progresses without many facts exemplifies the *lyrical objectivity*, the *lyrical progression* discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>64</sup> The lyrical experience resides in this: if there are so few scenes, where does the action take place?

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<sup>63</sup> G.H. is a perfect example of the lyrical protagonist, in Moisés's words (1978: 50).

<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1(a), "Lyrical progression".

Where does the character's experience reside? We are led to expect an uneventful plot, with no thrills or climaxes in the narrative. Nonetheless they do happen – within G.H.'s perceptions. In *A paixão segundo G.H.* Clarice goes deeper into her scrutiny of language, turning the moment into a rich resource of feelings, intensity and images. In her work, the *moment* grows exponentially, because, besides the sensitivity towards her concrete surroundings, the author constantly turns the language to the decryption of her own awareness.

The recurrent image displayed as a pattern is that of a desert: the solitude of rocks; the figure of the room as a minaret; the oppressive sun; dryness; shadows; canyons; dust; sand. The maid's room turns into an infinite, arid and empty space, an ideal scenario for the character's development of her questionings. At a certain moment, the protagonist assumes the metaphor: 'E na minha grande dilatação, eu estava no deserto. Como te explicar? Eu estava no deserto como nunca estive. Era um deserto que me chamava como um cântico monótono e remoto chama. (...) Aquele quarto que estava deserto e por isso primariamente vivo. Eu chegara ao nada, e o nada era vivo e úmido' (1964: 60-61). The poetic antithesis is found in the *liveliness* of the maid's room, which G.H. expects at the beginning of the narrative to be a dark and suffocating area – instead, the protagonist finds it 'um quadrilátero de branca luz' (1964: 37), extremely alive in its aridity.

The novel presents an omniscient symbolic hero, a narrator for whom the process of fusion with the outer world occurs rapidly. G.H. shows the elimination of boundaries according to a pattern as well, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

Eu, corpo neutro de barata, eu com uma vida que finalmente não me escapa pois enfim a vejo fora de mim – eu sou a barata, sou minha perna, sou meus cabelos, sou o trecho de luz mais branca no reboco da parede – sou cada pedaço infernal de mim – a vida em mim é tão insistente que se me partirem, como a uma lagartixa, os pedaços continuarão estremecendo e se mexendo. Sou o silêncio gravado numa parede, e a borboleta mais antiga esvoaça e me defronta: a mesma de sempre. De nascer até morrer é o que eu me chamo de humana, e nunca propriamente morrerei. (1964: 65)

Through the metaphorisation of the images of the desert, the reader senses and is also able to engage with G.H.'s perception: the cockroach signifies her deepest personality; and not only her personality as an individual, but her age-old and ontological existence, buried and hidden in the figure of this upper-class artist. To convey this significance

through a denotative or even an exclusively psychological approach would be an almost impossible task.

Lispector attempts to give circularity to her work, too. Many critics have drawn attention to the fact that she starts and ends chapters using the same words. In chapter eleven, for instance, she finishes with ‘Também isso, pois o que eu estava vendo era ainda anterior ao humano’ (1964: 84), followed by the beginning of chapter twelve: ‘Pois o que eu estava vendo ainda era anterior ao humano’ (1964: 85). Despite being an extensive non-linear narrative, this technique brings each part together, as if to suggest that all the character’s thoughts and perceptions are connected, forming a whole, made out of the discovery of G.H.’s essence. Lispector’s intention might be to highlight the completeness of her character’s cogitations throughout the story.

The author also highlights the novel’s circularity by repeating phrases within chapters, or words within paragraphs, thus intensifying G.H.’s states of mind. In the following excerpt, for instance, she works with the words ‘medo’, ‘ritual’, ‘incenso’ and ‘ouve’:

Mas tens *medo*, sei que sempre tiveste *medo* do *ritual*. Mas quando se foi torturada até se chegar a ser um núcleo, então se passa demoniacamente a querer servir ao *ritual*, mesmo que o *ritual* seja o ato de consumição própria – assim como para se ter o *incenso* o único meio é o de queimar o *incenso*. *Ouve*, porque estou tão séria como uma barata que tem cílios. *Ouve*. (1964: 115) [emphasis mine]

In *A paixão segundo G.H.* the sensation of delusion or delirium is often provoked by all these interconnected repetitions. The base narrative is doubtless that of an intimate or psychological novel, which makes the critic’s task in identifying the lyrical aspects even more delicate. Characteristics pertaining to the psychological novel are undeniably present in abundance: interiorisation of experience, mental confinement, and autobiographical narrative. This is evident through the way the author continually shows the protagonist’s inner reactions, and the scenes are focused on G.H.’s thoughts. However, recalling Freedman’s ideas about lyricism referred to in Chapter 1, the pattern of imagery is present, and the number of metaphors throughout the story gives the reader an instantaneous apprehension of the plot – the immediacy of portraiture – and gives to the whole story a soulfulness, the tuning of the soul through *Stimmung*.

Throughout her books, Lispector demonstrates a lyrical tendency, and this is even more evident in her works following *A maçã no escuro*. Her enquiry into language was present not only in *A paixão segundo G.H.* but also in *A aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres*, (1969), in *Água-viva* (1973), and in *Um sopro de vida* (1978).

*Água viva* is considered as even more radical in terms of lyricisation, and it has been defined by some critics as a type of long prose poem. In this book, a painter writes to an interlocutor,<sup>65</sup> in a format similar to *A paixão segundo G.H.* As the reader enters the flow, he/she gradually understands that the other character could be a lover. However, the main character in *Água viva* does not have an act as a starting point, or an intention to pursue one; if G.H. is meant to surpass her inner self through the insect, the protagonist of *Água viva* seems to be trying to paint life with words as a simple exercise of feelings and reflection. Moreover, the character's awareness of the writing is also more explicit than that of G.H., as some of her comments demonstrate: 'Não sei sobre o que estou escrevendo' (1979: 24); 'então escrever é o modo de quem tem a palavra como isca: a palavra pescando o que não é palavra' (1979: 21). Stream of consciousness is dominant in this work.

*Água viva* is without doubt a lyrical book, whose protagonist is a symbolic hero, transfiguring reality in her awareness and providing an immediate depiction of her feelings, uniting self and world. The circularity of the plot is different from her other works in that it is more intense. For Diego Luiz Miller Fascina and Luzia Aparecida Berloffá Tofalini, 'essa narrativa passa a ser mais vertiginosa. Há um desejo incansável de tocar no "âmago do é" (Lispector 1994: 32)' (2013: 14). The author's giddy surrender to her internal rhythm displays an involuntary aspect to the writing. Such an aspect is interwoven with affective perceptions and does not follow a logical pace, revealing the presence of *Stimmung*.

Another aspect which adds to this sensation of vertigo in the reader is the multiple patterns of imagery – the impression is one of a painting, with recurrent symbols, such as paints, colours, brushes, and strokes. According to Earl E. Fitz, water is a recurrent image in this book (1985: 86); however, the impression of freedom within those images is so strong that Lispector seems to create a pattern for the imagination which is based on *space*. The unusual narrative leads the reader through several significant *silences*. A pattern of imagery made of empty spaces, or silences, as in music. Lispector tries to illustrate these silences with the terms 'now-instant' (*instante-já*) and 'it', which are constitutive for her of the core of existence: 'It é elemento puro. É material do instante do tempo.' (1979: 35); 'por enquanto o que me sustenta é o aquilo que é um "it"' (1979: 46); 'Basta-me o impossível vivo do it' (1979: 68); 'Só para os iniciados a vida então se

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<sup>65</sup> Clarice Lispector pursued painting as an amateur during the 1970s. For more information, see Carlos Mendes de Sousa, *Clarice Lispector – Pinturas* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2013).

torna fragilmente verdadeira. E está-se no instante-já: come-se a fruta na sua vigência' (1979: 71):

Neste instante-já estou envolvida por um vagueante desejo difuso de maravilhamento e milhares de reflexos do sol na água que corre da bica na relva de um jardim todo maduro de perfumes, jardim e sombras que invento já e agora e que são o meio concreto de falar neste meu instante de vida. (1979: 17)

In Lispector's final works her use of imagery is even more identifiable, and the same can be said of the presence of the *moment* and *Stimmung*. This variation across her novels demonstrates Ralph Freedman's claims about the instability and idiosyncrasies of lyrical authors across their works. It is important to note the impossibility of identifying lyrical authors by their entire oeuvre. Their lyricism may be present only in some of their books, manifesting itself in differing ways.

Furthermore, each lyrical author has his or her own distinctive features, as demonstrated by this analysis of Raduan Nassar and Clarice Lispector, who offer two differing styles of lyrical narrative. One point of difference between these two, for example, is in their approach to textual construction: while Nassar makes use of a formal poetic treatment of language, full of rhymes and attentive to the melody of the phrases, Lispector seems to work at the frontier region of the impossibility of language, creating images out of impasses – or *aporias*.

### **3.1.5 The cosmogony of Osman Lins**

Several characteristics contributed to Osman Lins's (1924–1978) classification as an experimental writer. Among them were the geometrical/mathematical incorporation of cosmic and sacred elements in the narratives, under the strong influence of medieval art, as well as continual questioning into existence and an artisan-like attention to use of words, exploring their natural vigour and richness.

This experimentalism, exemplified by his sophisticated plot constructions, devoid of 'traditional processes of composition', as he himself commented (cited in 2012: 220), did not prevent him from earning awards and being admired by a number of refined readers and academics. For the general public, however, his oeuvre seems to lack the impact it deserves – his most popular work is *Lisbela e o prisioneiro*, a stage-play written in 1964, which has been recently broadcast as a television programme and as a

film, awarding him belated popular recognition. The novel *O fiel e a pedra* (1961) was also adapted for television in 1981, by TV Cultura, but it was not successful.

A prolific author, the Pernambucan Osman Lins wrote four novels and dozens of novellas, plays and essays. Besides his innovative contribution to post-1970s narrative, his writing's proximity to poetry has been noted and commented upon but mainly in isolated academic essays.<sup>66</sup> Lins's efforts to reflect mankind's destiny have been remarked upon, exposing ontological and philosophical questions that demand of literary writing much more than a merely denotative treatment. He was an innovative writer who sought to incorporate this ontology into an explosion of resources including lyricism, which had a very significant impact on some of his stories.

An overview of Lins's work and critical reputation reveals his recourse to innovations in literary construction. These include, by way of example, bricolage, metalanguage, the use of several anonymous narrative focuses, and the timelessness of his narratives. These features have earned comparisons to the French *nouveau roman*. And, indeed, Lins's lyrical features have been scarcely observed to date, perhaps due to the focus being concentrated on the creativity of the magical aspects of his writing. The author's political intentions have been overshadowed by the enormity of his inventiveness, as Sandra Nitrini points out (2001: 48).

Nevertheless, aiming to provide a more comprehensive analysis of Lins's work (and the recognition he deserves), I would like to discuss, albeit briefly, two of his most preponderant lyrical titles: *Nove, novena*, from 1966, and *Avalovara*, from 1973. It is no coincidence that these two books are regarded as the two most metaphysical of his works. Alongside Lins's unique techniques, lyrical resources provide all his works with a disposition to soulfulness, or *Stimmung*. As already explained, *Stimmung* indicates a meaning which language cannot express in denotative ways alone.

The author does not name *Nove, novena* a novel, or novella, or even a collection of short stories, but gives it the subtitle 'narrativas'. The intention seems to be to broaden the sense of his writing: a narrative can also be a non-literary piece of work; that is to say it is a kind of open work, not restricted by genre delimitations. Among the nine stories that comprise this book, the most representative of a lyrical narrative (and for some critics, the central narrative among them all) is: "Retábulo de Santa Joana

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<sup>66</sup> See "'Nove, novena' e o engajamento poético de Osman Lins", by Antonio Maximo von Sohsten Gomes Ferraz and Andrea Jamilly Rodrigues Leitão (2012); "Retalhos da poesia e do silêncio: 'Gestos', de Osman Lins", by Mariângela Alonso (2012); "O engajamento poético e as conquistas literárias no 'Retábulo de Santa Joana Carolina', de Osman Lins", de Andrea Jamilly Rodrigues Leitão (2012).

Carolina”. This story, the eighth in the book, is the climax of a sequence of stories where the reader is called upon to participate attentively in Lins’s plots, through constant fragmentary and juxtaposed presentations.

“Retábulo de Santa Joana Carolina” tells the fate of an impoverished teacher in a small town in the interior of northeast Brazil. The reader follows her childhood, her growing up and her life as a selfless mother of five children. The character Joana Carolina is marked by her kindness, an incommensurable capacity for charity based on her Christian principles, and her messianic inclinations. In short – if it is possible to demarcate this story – her life story is told in twelve *Mysteries*, short texts which are allusions to medieval forms of story-telling associated with altarpieces or retable saints. However, each one of these *Mysteries* also represents a sign of the Zodiac.

Retables are carvings made of wood or stone located in church altars, which tell Catholic stories in images. The author often stated that he was an admirer of medieval art, particularly those church pieces that are related to mysticism, religion and cosmogenesis of the Middle Ages. In a sense, Lins echoes such sentiments in the exploration of the origins of mankind and its relationship with the cosmos within his writing. At the same time, the author’s intentions are also political – in *Nove, Novena*, for example, he aims to discuss the condition of the poorest people in Brazil, blending politics and mysticism in his work.

The *Mysteries* open with textual ornaments (Lins calls them *ornatos*). Most of these ornaments, actually microparts, or long epigraphs, possess lyrical features. The following ornaments are present in the fifth and the seventh *Mysteries* (they are maintained here in full form for the sake of the organicity of their lyricism):

A lenta rotação da água, em torno de sua vária natureza. Sua oscilação entre a paz dos copos e as inundações. Talvez seja um mineral; ou um ser mitológico; ou uma planta, um liame, enredando continentes, ilhas. Pode ser um bicho, peixe imenso, que tragou escuridões e abismos, com todas as conchas, anêmonas, delfins, baleias e tesouros naufragados. Desejaria ter, talvez, a definição das pedras; e nunca se define. Invisível. Visível. Trespessável. Dura. Inimiga. Amiga. Existem os ciclones, as trombas marinhas. Golpes de barbatanas? Também as nuvens, frutos que, maduros, tombam em chuvas. O peixe as absorve e cresce. Então este peixe, verde e ramal, de prata e sal, dele próprio se nutre? Bebe a sua própria sede? Come sua fome? Nada em si mesmo? Não saberemos jamais sobre este ente fugidivo, lustral, obscuro, claro e avassalador. Tenho-o nos meus olhos, dentro das pupilas. Não sei portanto se o vejo; se é ele que se vê. (1966: 95-96)

Os que fiam-se unem e ordenam materiais dispersos que, de outro modo seriam vãos ou quase. Pertencem à mesma FIANDEIRA CARNEIRO FUSO LÃ linhagem dos geométricas, estabelecem leis e pontos de união para o desuno. Antes do fuso, da roca,

do tear, das LÃ LINHO CASULO ALGODÃO LÃ invenções destinadas a estender os fios e cruzá-los, o algodão, TECEDORA URDIDURA TEAR LÃ a seda, era como se ainda estivesse sem imersos no limbo, nas trevas do informe. É o apelo à ordem que os traz à claridade, transforma-os em obras, portanto em objetos LÃ TRAMA CROCHÊ DESENHO LÃ humanos, iluminados pelo espírito do homem. Não é por ser-nos úteis que o burel ou o linho representam uma vitória TAPEÇARIA BASTIDOR ROCA LÃ do nosso engenho; sim por serem tecidos, por cantar neles uma ordem, o sereno, o firme e rigoroso enlace da LÃ COSER AGULHA CARPUCHO LÃ urdidura, das linhas, enredadas. Assim é que suas expressões FIANDEIRA CARNEIRO FUSO LÃ mais nobres são aquelas em que, com ainda maior disciplina, floresce o ornamento: no crochê, no tapete, no brocado. LÃ TRAMA CASULO CAPUCHO LÃ Então, é como se por uma espécie de alquimia, de álgebra, de mágica, algodais e carneiros, casulos, campos do linho, novamente surgissem, com lã uma vida menos rebelde, porém mais perdurável. (1966: 106)

These ornaments introduce a universal meaning to each of the *Mysteries* in Joana's life. These micro-narratives, or prose poems, aim to highlight Joana's sensations and to transmute her reality into a broader perspective, drawing links with the rest of the texts.

Besides the ornaments, the text presents further lyrical traits. One can also note the proximity of the hagiological narrative as a base narrative. In each part, there are patterns of imagery and the lyrical progression culminates in the twelfth *Mystery*, when the ornament is textually incorporated into the *Mystery*, and some of the characters accomplish the junction of self and world.

The two excerpts above question the same themes: creation and evolution. In the first excerpt the author introduces these two topics located in aquatic life; in the second excerpt, they are symbolised in the images of the weaving looms' activities. If, in the first text, water is the central thread, containing the multiple forms of life, in the second excerpt the interwoven is the pattern, equating textures and humanity as subjects in need of being engendered: 'É o apelo à ordem que os traz à claridade, transforma-os em obras, portanto em objetos LÃ TRAMA CROCHÊ DESENHO LÃ humanos, iluminados pelo espírito do homem.'

Another very important and curious feature in Lins's narratives is the depersonalisation of the characters. Not only in *Nove, novena*, but also in other works, such as *Avalovara*, characters are designated as graphic symbols, similar to astrological symbols. The *Mysteries* may have single narrators, or characters in dialogue identified by symbols, such as: √, ∞, ○, ♂, □, ⊙, Δ, just to cite a few. The reader may or may not recognise the characters' relationship with Joana Carolina (as a relative, child, or friend) through their words. There are also *Mysteries* made out of dialogues between the symbols. Nonetheless, some of these characters remain anonymous.

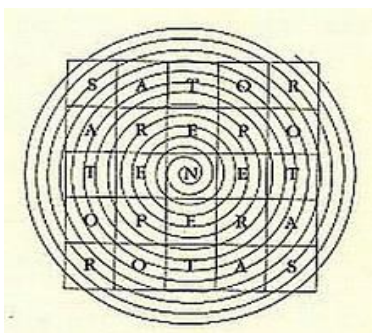


From a lyrical perspective, this constitutes a totally unique feature of this author. This depersonalisation assumes the configuration of a voice either of no-one, or even a collective voice, as already noted, or rather, a universal voice. In the presence of the lyrical treatment, all this polyphony means that the lyrical self is amplified. If poetry tends to depersonalise the self towards the universe, Lins's analogous movement in his characters reinforces this depersonalisation. This is shown in the following short example: 'Δ O brilho existente em certas obras humanas é duradouro, permanecendo como um halo, ainda quando já ninguém no mundo é capaz de reconstituí-las' (1966: 124). The philosophical assumption gains in breadth, devoid of a distinct, individual personality.

One of the main characters in *Avalovara* is also represented by a symbol. This book tells of the pilgrimage of a writer, Abel, through three cities and three lovers, intersected by several narratives that represent a quest for the human essence. In his foreword to this book, Antonio Candido suggests that the genre itself is something to be forgotten in the magnitude of Lins's work:

Romance? Poesia? Tratado da narrativa? Visão do mundo? No universo sem gêneros literários da literatura contemporânea, o livro de Osman Lins se situa numa ambigüidade ilimitada. A começar pela linguagem, que varia também com o movimento da espiral, indo da simplicidade das expressões correntes até a paráfrase do Cântico dos Cânticos, do tom de arrolamento metódico aos voos largos da poesia. (1973: 10-11)

I take the view, however, that the blurring of genres denotes a hybridity, inserted into the innovative structure. Put concisely, *Avalovara* comprises eight narrative threads (small stories) that are superimposed, guided by the peculiar movement present in this palindrome, where a spiral overlaps a square:



There are eight letters, each of which corresponds to a narrative thread. In the book, these small narratives are all presented together following the direction of the spiral (moving clockwise) in the palindrome, which itself means 'O lavrador mantém

cuidadosamente a charrua nos sulcos’, or ‘O Lavrador sustém cuidadosamente o mundo em sua órbita’, and which can be read in whichever way the reader wishes.

The title *Avalovara* is taken from an oriental and cosmic entity, Avaokiteçvara (1986: 19), which has the shape of a bird, made up of other smaller birds, and which engenders air, wind, water and earth. The author thus metaphorically gives birth to a creature – the novel – made of other small creatures (the small plots), and in all of them this relation of creator/creature is evident. The exposition of the square (the structure of the novel) gives the reader the precise notion of this sacred relation between writer and work (the writer is like a god, and the book is the universe he created). Therefore, in a macro-structure, *Avalovara* is a grand metaphor for writing, and in a minor sense metaphors are spread through the patterns of imagery, through the presence of symbols and symbolic heroes, turning the metamorphosis of reality into the awareness of the characters.

Abel is the main symbolic hero: ‘Ama-se o que em quem se ama? O que, em quem amamos, faz com que o amor se manifeste? O ser (visível) ou sua história, que ouvimos?’ (1973: 222). However, Roos, Cecilia and  $\text{O}$ , the women he loves at different times (although the reader is unable to distinguish between these times as past and present are displayed together) also reflect on their experience within patterns of imagery. Even when simply describing facts, Abel’s tendency is always to translate his own awareness about the moments, such as:

Calados, vamos pelo parque. O rosto pontilhado de sol, ela sorri por nada, sob o chapéu. Porta Dourada. Nós, dois animais terrestres, macho e fêmea, lado a lado entre árvores e aves, sob o céu que pende como um grande seio, um seio azul e branco, onde bebemos nossa razão de júbilo. (1973: 209)

This excerpt above is part of the narrative thread “Roos e as cidades”. Each single story presents a personality. In “História de  $\text{O}$ , nascida e nascida”, for example, which corresponds to the letter O, there are a significant number of lyrical features.  $\text{O}$  is the woman with whom Abel seems to be more mature as a man and writer, and in this narrative she assumes the place of the symbolic hero, and proceeds straight into visual representation, transforming the external world into metaphorical images:

Ingratidão é o prêmio do mundo – dizem em alguma parte os cantores. Mas eu sou grata, eu sou grata, não na boca, e sim em toda a minha carne, a tudo que purgo para chegar a este minuto, à intensidade com que responde meu corpo à aproximação do corpo deste homem, à força com que meus quadris os arrastam para mim, ao modo

como nos povoam os bosques e a fauna ligeira do tapete, à cega ânsia com que nos abraçamos, à temperatura desta hora, que me permite ostentar minha nudez e embeber-me na sua como se os meus olhos fossem bocas e eu morresse de sede, e vê-lo desnudo me dessedentasse e intensificasse minha sede. (1973: 242)

As the reader advances through the narrative threads, they begin to fall into place, like a cosmic mechanism. And in this sense *Avalovara*, despite being fragmentary, is also revealed as circular. Even though at the beginning of the book the reader has to deal with the idea of *no plot* – or of several plots, mixing referential or metaphorical discourses –, he/she eventually grasps the whole idea of the story, which is finally disclosed as a quest for human principles.

### 3.1.6 ‘Lavoura arcaica’: Raduan Nassar’s testimony

*Lavoura arcaica*, by Raduan Nassar (1935– ), a Brazilian author of Lebanese descent, was published in 1975. Brazil was in the middle of the 1964-85 dictatorship, when novels related to testimonial narratives were dominant. It was also a time for committed fiction such as *Zero* (1976), by Ignácio de Loyola Brandão, or accounts such as *O que é isso companheiro* (1979), by Fernando Gabeira. Going against this trend, *Lavoura arcaica* was perceived in good part as a personal drama. It won three of the greatest prizes in Brazil, from the Academia Brasileira de Letras, the Câmara Brasileira do Livro and the Associação Paulista de Críticos de Arte. The book was considered a different type of narrative from the trends of the time, as it was mostly written in prose poetry. Unusually, the poetic aspects received attention from reviewers. This evidently goes against the tendency for lyrical fiction to be neglected, as explored in Chapter 2. I would argue that this is because the presence of poetry was too strong to be overlooked. It simply demanded to be acknowledged.

In brief, the story is an inverse version of the biblical parable of the prodigal son. After a period away, the protagonist André is persuaded to return home by his older brother, Pedro, who has been sent by their parents to fetch him. However, instead of following the same development as the Old Testament story, Nassar’s novel exposes a tragedy. And in doing so, it broaches controversial themes. André’s incest with his sister Ana is the main example of the theme of transgression, the subject on which the entire novel is based: the transgression of tradition, within the family and religion, questioning André’s own identity and subjectivity.

There is a high level of intensity throughout the plot, which ultimately gives the reader a sensation of primordiality and pre-categorical perception, amplifying the transgression intended by the author. The conclusion of my Masters dissertation in 2006 was that the main themes of the plot, namely eroticism, memory, subjectivity and religion, were expressed and sensed through the ambivalence and intensity of the poetic prose (2006: 117).

After analysing this story, my overwhelming impression is that an ontological aura is achieved by the transcendental level of the narrative, provided to a large extent by *Stimmung*. Such a special narrative level allows the emotional violence contained in André's story to be experienced fully by the reader, and also reveals the beauty of the language. As a simple example, see below the mention of zoophilia practiced by the protagonist. André loses his virginity with the goat Schuda, making her his lover:

saí da minha vadiagem e, sacrílego, me nomeei seu pastor lírico: aprimorei suas formas, dei brilho ao pêlo, dei-lhe colares de flores, enrolei no seu pescoço longos metros de cipó-de-são-caetano, com seus frutos berrantes e pendentes como se fossem sinos; Schuda, paciente, mais generosa, quando uma haste mais tímida, misteriosa e lúbrica, buscava no intercurso o concurso do seu corpo. (1989: 21)

The plot is divided into two parts: “The departure” and “The return”. Returning is one of the main ideas of the story, constantly bringing to mind the idea of circularity – which is one of the principal features of poetry, according to Octavio Paz in *Los signos en rotación* (1956). The epitome of this concept is evoked in Nassar's constant allusion to the German Romantic poet Novalis, in several parts of the narrative, but particularly in Chapters 6 and 30. The famous sentence from Novalis' *Hymns to the Night* (1797), ‘Where are we really going? Always home’, appears at random, when the cattle return to the well, and in the final sentence of the book (1989: 196).

This idea of returning can also be noticed in the repetition of whole passages from the book, although using different verb tenses, such as the description of the family parties in the woods. First, the gathering in the forest clearing appears as André's remembrance of his childhood, in Chapter 5, which is entirely narrated in the imperfect tense; and second, in Chapter 29, in the preterite tense, in which André relates the murder of his sister and lover, Ana, by their enraged father Yohana because of their incest.

All these references contain the suggestion of *time*, which is, in the end, almost a character in the story. This treatment of time can also be considered a questioning of the theme, since time appears in unconventional perspectives. In any case, it indicates a

displacement, such as in these passages: ‘O tempo, o tempo é versátil, o tempo faz diabruras, o tempo brincava comigo, o tempo se espreguiçava provocadoramente’ (1989: 95) or ‘O tempo, o tempo, o tempo e suas águas inflamáveis, esse rio largo que não cansa de correr, lento e sinuoso, ele próprio conhecendo seus caminhos, recolhendo e filtrando de vária direção o caldo turvo dos afluentes e o sangue ruivo de outros canais para com eles construir a razão mística da história’ (1989: 184). It is worth recalling again that timelessness is one of the main features of lyricism, in the form of *presentification*,<sup>67</sup> and that in prose lyricism this characteristic usually allows the lyrical author to explore time as space, creating the *moment*. And the *moment*, together with *Stimmung*, delivers the main aspects of prose lyricism – as seen here, largely through the metaphorisation of imagery displayed by both characteristics.

The base narrative of *Lavoura arcaica* is the parable, as previously mentioned. However, the usual aim of the parable, which is to convey a type of truth, or moral, is here distorted. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there is no moral in the end. Instead, it is another *sort* of moral, a controversial one related to the force of the instincts, to the force of human nature when repressed by tradition or ideological systems. In my analysis, what gives the greatest strength to this narrative is Raduan Nassar’s appropriation of prose poetry in biblical and koranic parables in order to ultimately present his own moral.

Therefore, the lyrical novel distorts a base narrative by applying poetic resources to it; in Nassar’s case, he utilises prose poetry on top of a narrative – the religious one – which is already lyrical, thus magnifying its effects. Many of the biblical books are composed of prose poetry, such as *The Song of Solomon* and *The Book of Job*; the Koran is considered by Muslims to be an entire poem, despite presenting criminal, civil, constitutional and military codes, as well as rules of behaviour and historical accounts.<sup>68</sup>

It is likely that Raduan Nassar did not use poetry with the explicit purpose of conveying a message. Indeed, as the author has declared in interviews, he has never considered himself a poet. However, one clear fact that *Lavoura arcaica* evinces is the intimate connection between lyricism and self-revelation – a field which is explored by religious narratives. According to Northrop Frye in *The Great Code*, many sacred books use poetry and lyrical textual constructions (1982: 4). This is supported by the analogy Octavio Paz draws between poetry and religion, seeing both as forms of *revelation*: ‘La

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<sup>67</sup> See the table in Section 1.5.1, Chapter 1.

<sup>68</sup> Northrop Frye examines this aspect of the sacred writings in *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (1983). In Chapter 3 of my Masters dissertation I argue about this strategy of Raduan Nassar.

experiencia poética, como la religiosa, es un salto mortal: un cambiar de naturaleza que es también un regresar a nuestra naturaleza original' (1956: 132). Paz states that the quality of this revelation is diverse: whereas religious revelation usually originates from something external to men, poetic revelation is an internal act, happening within man himself. The strength of the lyricism in Nassar's writing is such that the final result sounds like a mystical or transcendental apprehension. Self-revelation, indeed, but the theme of transgression against group traditions provides, in the end, the sensation that we are witnessing a pagan account.

As for the imagery, the pattern is the natural setting of the Middle East and its Mediterranean telluric figures, which are present in so many allegorical religious narratives in that region. Therefore, images of trees, lands, leaves, flocks of sheep, cattle and fruits (mainly grapes, dates and figs) are recurrent throughout the book, altogether creating an idyllic atmosphere: the ambience of a pastoral life. Objects are also imbued with this rustic spirit, including oil lamps, pitchers, hampers, mills, flutes, goblets and cutlasses.

These figures are seldom used metaphorically, instead they help to build the setting which supports the intensity of the protagonist, such as 'me traga logo, Pedro, me traga logo a bacia dos nossos banhos de meninos, a água morna, o sabão de cinza, a bucha crespa, a toalha branca e felpuda, me enrole nela, me enrole nos teus braços, enxugue meus cabelos transtornados, corra depois com tua mão grave a minha nuca, componha depressa este ritual de ternura' (1989: 110). The outcome is often the contamination of the narrative, even when it is more descriptive, by an additional tone of emotion. When not enveloped in this impassioned denotative language, the images are entirely metaphorised to complete their lyrical complexion:

“eu sou um epilético” fui explodindo, convulsionado mais do que nunca pelo fluxo violento que me corria o sangue “um epilético” eu berrava e soluçava dentro de mim, sabendo que atirava numa suprema ventura ao chão, descarnando as palmas, o jarro da minha velha identidade elaborado com o barro das minhas próprias mãos, e me lançando nesse chão de cacos, caído de boca num acesso louco eu fui gritando. (1989: 41)

In this case, the semantic field is sculpture, with a tone of the *divine*, present in the words 'jarro', 'barro', and 'mãos' – clay is the biblical element from which mankind was made by God, as in a sculpture. The protagonist says his personality has been shaped like a jar, to be shattered on the floor. The words 'cacos' and 'chão' are metaphorised as well. André takes upon himself his own creation, becoming

autonomous from God: however, even as a creator, he keeps his human fragility when he strips the skin from the palms of his hands in an act of rebellion. The lyrical antithesis is strong. Yet this explanation is almost redundant, given the immediacy of the visual depiction. This immediacy is present in every chapter; synaesthetic imagery and metaphorisation are present in differing levels of intensity, since some chapters are more lyrical than others; and, even in the presence of few direct dialogues, the language is lyrical. The most lyrical chapters can be read as prose poems, and the lyrical progression is also most evident in those parts.

Once again, I should point out here that this special type of objectivism, made up of lyricism, does not imply a progression of actions (consecutiveness), but a progression of intensity. The *action* is the growing tension perceived in the interpretation of facts by the narrator. His perception changes from one state of sensibility to a higher one. *Lavoura arcaica* offers numerous examples, such as:

entenda Ana, que a mãe não gerou só os filhos quando povoou a casa, fomos embebidos no mais fino caldo dos nossos pomares, enrolados em mel transparente de abelhas verdadeiras, e, entre tantos aromas esfregados em nossas peles, fomos entorpecidos pelo mazar suave das laranjeiras; que culpa temos nós dessa planta da infância, de sua sedução, de seu viço e constância? que culpa temos nós se fomos duramente atingidos pelo vírus fatal dos afagos desmedidos? que culpa temos nós se tantas folhas tenras escondiam a haste mórbida desta rama? que culpa temos nós se fomos acertados para cair na trama desta armadilha? temos os dedos, os nós dos joelhos, as mãos e os pés, e os nós dos cotovelos enroscados na malha deste visgo; entenda que, além de nossas unhas e nossas penas, teríamos com a separação nossos corpos mutilados. (1989: 130-131)

One can observe the intensity taking shape in André's speeches as exuberant images of the idyllic, usually followed by despair, in the form of physical violence through and against nature: 'já carrego no vento do temporal uma raiva perpétua, tenho o fôlego obstinado, tenho requintes de alquimista, sei como alterar o enxofre com a virtude das serpentes, e, na caldeira, sei como dar à fumaça que sobe da borbulha a frieza da cerração nas madrugadas' (1989: 138).

Also worthy of comment is the exceptional level of amalgamation between the character and the outside world. André is the perfect symbolic hero, since the sensitive filter of his consciousness turns everything into a display for imagery. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that André does not reveal moments, by not describing his own knowledge, his own awareness. In his intensity and despair, the protagonist does not rationalise his mental and metaphorical processes – which is, in the end, coherent with the pagan and telluric aspect of the character's makeup.

Raduan Nassar published only two more books, *Um copo de cólera* (1978) and *Menina a caminho* (short stories and a chronicle, 1997), the latter including stories written before *Lavoura arcaica*. A high degree of metaphorisation can be perceived in all of his books; however, *Lavoura arcaica* remains the most significant as a piece of lyrical fiction.

### 3.2 Beyond canonical perceptions

A variety of authors and styles are presented in this chapter, which are not limited to a specific period or literary movement. Examining these trans-historical and trans-localised writers and some of their specific titles from the lyrical perspective demonstrates that Brazilian literary historiography is a field still open to new analytical possibilities. The quest for prose lyricism made it possible for me to compile a number of rather diverse writers, from different periods in time, and from different literary schools or groups.

Most of these authors, such as Lúcio Cardoso and Clarice Lispector, present innovative techniques and themes in their work, and share a common psychological thread. Other authors not mentioned in this thesis, such as Cornélio Penna and Autran Dourado, also demonstrate these characteristics. However, classifying them as experimental is a rather vague approach, as they do not belong to one single strand. It is almost as if agreeing with the literary complexity allowed in the twentieth century – with the transformation of the modern novel – and its ramifications would create one more literary label.

Alfredo Bosi, for example, believes that some modern authors, such as Lispector and Rosa, go beyond the category of the novel, assessing the way they use language and words. Bosi denominates this type of writing “mythopoetic invention”. In this sort of novel, the hero’s existential conflict is often encountered by the transmutation of reality, at a mythical or metaphysical level. This predisposition would lead the writers to create ‘objetos de linguagem’. Bosi, however, claims that this practice can limit writers within codes and signals present in their writing, to the detriment of finding reasons or ideological sense in their messages (1994: 392-394):

Essa direção, que tende a compor o fenômeno literário a partir dos materiais da linguagem, e apenas da linguagem, tem o mesmo significado histórico do abstracionismo, que constrói o quadro com entes geométricos, ou da música



concreta, que trabalha a partir dos ruídos e dos sons tais como a Física os reconhece.  
(1994: 394)

While not aiming here to summarise Bosi's ideas, what can be inferred from these statements is the critic's need for sequentiality and, most importantly, a declared ideological rationale behind the writing. The materiality of the word, or the poetic function of the language, is not highly regarded in his analysis.

Sequentiality within the plot and an explicit ideological line on the part of the author could be vectors to group the writers and their works in literary movements. However, my transversal examination provides an opportunity to understand some authors through their idiosyncrasies, namely Clarice Lispector and Guimarães Rosa, whose works have been regarded as tours de force, but have been little studied from a lyrical perspective. In other words, it is possible, through this type of study, to allow more flexibility when it comes to analysing their novels.

In addition, not only should this flexibility be celebrated, but so too should the opportunities it offers for Brazilian writing to be integrated into other literatures and into a continental culture. Earl E. Fitz, in suggesting that Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* was the first lyrical (or magical, in Borges's sense)<sup>69</sup> work in the whole of the Americas (1979: 20), opens the door to a new comprehension of what the lyrical vein really means within Latin American literature.<sup>70</sup> Regardless of the differences between languages and cultures, and concurrently including the differences between languages and cultures, lyricism is the feature which can approximate and combine the diversity of voices in the continent. I leave this line of inquiry open to future research in the comparative field.

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<sup>69</sup> Fitz cites the essay "Narrative Art and Magic", by Jorge Luis Borges (1957), in which the writer anticipates the necessity and gradual abandonment of Realism in Latin America.

<sup>70</sup> Regarding Modernist works, it is worth opening a parenthesis to argue that either *Macunaíma* or the two other foundational novels of Brazilian Modernism, *Memórias sentimentais de João Miramar* and *Serafim Ponte Grande*, by Oswald de Andrade, in fact were pointing to new narrative approaches. The concomitant use of genres also inserted the lyrical into the linear and denotative writing at times when the norm was much more conservative – reminding us that poetry was also revolutionised by the movement then. However, this insertion of lyricism, having as its main goal the rupture with the tradition of naturalist Realism, was overshadowed by the presentation of fragmentary writing, parody and satire. To judge whether the works could be considered predominantly lyrical would warrant a close evaluation of each one, bearing in mind the criteria seen here. The chief aim of Modernism, as Benedito Nunes observes well (2009: 143), was to consolidate both its aesthetic and ideological premises, updating the country regarding the new artistic tendencies in Europe and at the same time the acknowledgment of Brazil's own culture. However, I regard the use of the lyrical during this break with tradition promoted by Modernism as one factor that halted the study of lyricism in prose in Brazil. Prose lyricism, as we saw in Chapter 2, is even today considered in literary studies as a subject pertaining to the Modernist literary field.

In any case, through the displaced voices seen here – and there are certainly more in the literary archives that lie beyond the canon – my aim has been not only to examine some of these voices from a lyrical angle, but also to realise how their themes could be understood from an alternative and richer viewpoint. Often, the main issues have been masked by critical reviews dedicated to these authors’ “experimental” writing. Thus, just to cite some instances in the Brazilian case, the analogy with authoritarianism proposed by Raduan Nassar in *Lavoura arcaica* has never been properly scrutinised, when this book was published at the start of Brazil’s political *abertura*; the anguish of modern urban man was poorly perceived in Adelino Magalhães’s writing, to the detriment of his ‘weird’ techniques; and the engaged political work against oppression and inequality suggested by Osman Lins has scarcely received an adequate study.

The contradiction of these assumptions is that lyrical writing has been accompanied by very committed positions on the part of the writers. This fact is at odds with the accusation of escapism or mere sentimentalism seen in this investigation previously, in Chapter 2. All these writers are concerned with profound enquiries about human lives in general, and with exploring their chosen themes through the ontological suggestion of lyricism. However, the extent to which these enquiries present the same ideological tone as other Latin American writers is something that would need to be investigated in a microanalysis of each work.

Therefore, following these observations, my principal query is whether it is possible to accept and interpret the authors’ lyrical performance with a more open mind and a different gaze on Brazilian literature. In Chapter 4, I confront the theoretical view built up to this point with the current horizon of Brazilian literature in contemporaneity. I also propose to analyse at great length three of the most evident lyrical novelists of the present, with a view to fully applying the theoretical filter suggested in this investigation. As a final examination, I suggest attempting to extract from these authors’ lyrical works a multitude of new perspectives for Brazilian literature.

## 4 PROSE LYRICISM TODAY: THE ROAD AHEAD

Up to this point, my investigation has highlighted the phenomenon of lyricism in Brazilian prose, particularly the novel, from a historical and conceptual viewpoint. From Chapter 4 onwards, my study dedicates its filters and enquiries to contemporary writing. The current chapter, therefore, brings to the discussion three of the more ostensibly lyrical Brazilian contemporary authors. Mainly, it seeks to identify how prose lyricism operates in these writers' works, in order to deepen the understanding of the subject in three different particular manifestations of this trend. This focus will be in contrast with the recent strong emphasis in literature on urbanity and its consequences for the Brazilian people: violence, solitude, and fragmentary narratives reflecting fragmentary lives.

Thus, the core purpose of this chapter is to discuss the development of the lyrical approach in the texts of three selected writers. However, my purpose is also to identify to what extent the lyricism of these writers interacts with the literary depiction of Brazilian daily life, the themes they present, and whether and how their lyrical features contribute to a different interlocution with the readers. To this end, I start with a brief overview of contemporary Brazilian prose, the most recurrent and recent statements in criticism, mainly about Realism and its present-day versions.<sup>71</sup> It is important to point out that some relevant Brazilian writers are cited here, but this first concise part of the chapter could never cover the wide diversity of authors active today. The authors present in this overview were chosen because their underlying lyrical features are discernible at some point in their careers.

As for the three case studies, namely Reni Adriano, Wesley Peres and João Anzanello Carrascoza, they were selected for their works' broader possibilities from a lyrical perspective analysis. This study has been enriched by the opportunity to interview the authors about this topic and to learn about their own working processes.

These three writers bring very diverse themes to their works, and they all corroborate Ralph Freedman's statement regarding the idiosyncratic and diverse character of lyrical authors and titles. I have methodologically chosen to examine the works of these three

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<sup>71</sup> Editorial note: in this thesis the present-day versions of realism are non-capitalised, whilst nineteenth century Realism is capitalised.

authors more closely here than the referential approach presented in Chapter 3. However, as well as these authors, I will refer to other authors with lyrical tendencies in less depth.

#### **4.1 The real issue**

In the past few decades, Brazil has been regarded as an urban nation and this should be remembered when analysing the country's literature. This urbanisation has affected not only Brazilians' life rhythm, personal beliefs and ever growing interaction with technology, but it has also affected the way this reality has been interpreted in different art forms. This representation mainly consists of a persistent emphasis on realism. An updated and complex realism – not merely based on the simplistic idea of mimesis, as is the tendency in Brazilian studies, but rather an incremental construction of a new reality. This new factuality demands more intensity in order to attract the readers' attention among the many stimuli offered by a society in which information is overwhelming. How literature reacts within this specific context is important to examine as this can help in comprehending the place of lyricism in Brazilian literature at present.

To begin with, in the last decades of the twentieth century Brazilian literature was mainly identified by its heterogeneity. Therefore, after the periodisation of movements such as Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism and Regionalism, guided by the idea of progressive, generational time, fragmentary styles could be observed. These patterns should be classified more as trends rather than schools or movements.

In the field of the novel in particular, strong tendencies have been recognised, such as the journalistic, crime, memorial, intimist, regionalist-historical, satirical, and those linked to mass media style, as Flora Süssekind (1993) and Malcolm Silverman (2000) point out. Süssekind even remarks on the proximity between prose narrative and essays during the 1980s, a trend that Karl Erik Schøllhammer calls *romance-ensaio* – as present in Silviano Santiago's novel *Em liberdade* (1981).

However, as far as the titles published after 2000 are concerned, criticism began to emphasise the growing burden of urban reality. Engagement with reality has always been an important feature in Brazilian literature, as we have already seen in Chapter 2. The writers' commitment to national life, as stated by Antonio Candido in *Formação da*

*literatura brasileira* (2007: 434), has always been prioritised. Brazilian novelists, short story writers and poets have long been trying to discuss political and social occurrences in the country, particularly during periods of dictatorship when authors searched for different ways of recording daily life under repression. This political leaning, with strong tendencies toward realism – in the sense of transposition of reality, which is sometimes labelled as social or historical realism – may be regarded as a major characteristic in Brazilian literature. Moreover, it is also a component in its differentiation from the other Latin American countries, where fantastic and magical realism have occupied an important place especially in the last decades of the twentieth century, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Some critics see this emphasis on urbanity as just another way of dealing with this diversified scene in Brazilian literature. In 2005, scholar and writer Flávio Carneiro described the period as a transitional one, when there were no longer political struggles: ‘Vivemos, hoje, algo diferente daquilo que foi preconizado tanto pelo Modernismo de 22 quanto pela euforia dos anos 50, passando pelo duro recado ideológico da geração de 30, e, mais tarde, pela ficção engajada na luta contra os militares, nos anos 70’ (2005: 18). To him, ideological rigidity and monitoring – in Portuguese, a well-known expression, *patrulha ideológica* – relaxed somewhat. This vigilance was a legacy from the counterculture periods, but around this time it finally softened its grip. The writers could also finally have a clearer dialogue with new technologies and with the market, while turning their attention to daily life, instead of large collective projects. Calling these writers ‘libertos’, Beatriz Resende draws attention to the decentralisation of the publishing industry as well: these authors would no longer be located only in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but in other big cities too (2008: 25).

Nevertheless, such a microscopic focus on daily life in urban centres can also be understood as a new way to engage politically, because this tendency towards urbanity in the narratives certainly tries to embrace the new social conditions experienced by citizens in the last five decades. According to the Brazilian Census, the population living in cities increased from 45% in the decade of 1960 to 84% in the decade of 2000. Moreover, it seems natural for writers to keep up with the major shift in the Brazilian economy, which has turned the country into an urban nation within 50 years. The main impact on literature was visible in the 2000s with the following disruptive themes: the fast pace of life in the metropolis; physical violence; unsatisfactory life conditions; the

struggle to make ends meet; and stress and lack of time as consequences under the bombardment of mass media narratives.

In addition, feelings such as anxiety and loneliness started to appear in Brazilian narratives and in various formats too. Among the literary techniques, references from everyday life began to invade the compositions, in the form of newspaper articles, texts from diaries, screenplays, and narratives marked by the stoppage of linearity or rational sequences. The fragmentary construction became one of the main features in Brazilian prose. Of course, there are also the new textual formats brought by the proximity with mass media, as a direct influence of the predominance of images and hypertexts (Carneiro, 2005; Resende 2007; Schøllhammer 2009).

This movement in the narratives has been widely discussed by scholars, principally calling attention to the plurality in the works. Titles such as *Cidade de Deus*, by Paulo Lins (1997), and *Eles eram muito cavalos*, by Luiz Ruffato (2001), are milestones in this style, and brought more opportunities to many other titles in the same strand of diversity and physical and psychological violence. Moreover, *Cidade de Deus* became a landmark for the emergence of a literary movement known already as the New Marginal Literature, which has recently started to be studied in the literary field.<sup>72</sup> *Capão Pecado*, by Ferréz (2000), was another important title in this same strand.

In the theoretical sphere, expressions such as ‘choque do real’ and ‘retorno do trágico’ became common. The terms were coined by Beatriz Jaguaribe (2007) and Beatriz Resende (2008) respectively in their relevant studies regarding this issue in Brazilian culture. While analysing the path authors explored in the 2000s, Resende stressed the concepts of presentification and the tragic as permanent components of contemporary narratives, both linked to an urgency of interpreting the present, and to an impossibility of hope: ‘No cenário, a cidade, o paradoxo trágico, se constrói entre a busca por alguma forma de esperança e a inexorabilidade trágica da vida cotidiana que segue em convívio tão próximo com a morte’ (2007: 111).

Beatriz Jaguaribe explores the impact of this aesthetic realism on a society dominated by audiovisual media, as is the case in Brazilian culture. She works with diversity within the contemporary modes of realism, and emphasises that aesthetic realism does not have an empirical application. Therefore, the procedure does not mobilise the reader (or spectator), despite depicting Brazilian urban lives with the aim of causing emotion

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<sup>72</sup> For a full reference, please see *Literatura marginal: os escritores da periferia entram em cena*, by Érica Peçanha do Nascimento’s thesis in Social Anthropology, University of São Paulo, 2006.

and empathy through violence and disturbance. According to her, it is a strategy which does not intend to transform reality, or to bring about real reactions and behaviours. The ‘choque do real’, therefore, is created in the narratives to frighten, to denounce or to awaken the readers’ critical senses; however, without proposing or expecting any practical reaction: ‘o choque do real quer desestabilizar a neutralidade do espectador/leitor sem que isto acarrete, necessariamente, um agenciamento político’ (2007: 101). In times of intense production of images and information, these new codes of realism, as she calls them, are also engaged in creating a reality more intense than the real, ratified especially by characters’ experiences. What emerges, then, is the necessity of establishing a new reality out of new realisms (2007: 31).

In a later study, Karl Erik Schøllhammer (2009) interprets the situation as a new approach to realism, that he names ‘uma reinvenção do realismo’ (2009: 15). To him, throughout the twentieth century all movements in Brazilian literature were types of reaction to the historical Realism practised in the nineteenth century. Schøllhammer states that this new approach to reality continues to be a Realist one, although with different ways of expressing, that go beyond being exclusively representative or exclusively engaged:

Estamos falando de um tipo de realismo que conjuga as ambições de ser “referencial”, sem necessariamente ser “representativo”, e ser, simultaneamente, “engajado”, sem necessariamente subscrever nenhum programa político ou pretender transmitir de forma coercitiva conteúdos ideológicos prévios. (2009: 54)

Schøllhammer believes there is an attempt to conjugate the two more traditional strands in Brazilian literature today, engaged authorship and the intimate aspect, with tendencies toward experimentalism in language. He refers to a similar analysis conducted by Flora Süssekind, in *Literatura e vida literária* (1985), comparing two propensities she found in Brazilian writings at that time, the ‘literatura-verdade’ and the ‘literatura do eu’. However, beyond polarisations, he advocates a more harmonious coexistence in the present: ‘A literatura que hoje trata dos problemas sociais não exclui a dimensão pessoal e íntima, privilegiando apenas a realidade exterior; o escritor que opta por ressaltar a experiência subjetiva não ignora a turbulência do contexto social e histórico’ (2009: 15).

More recently, Tania Pellegrini (2012) states that these latter presentations of Realism are nevertheless devoid of the incisive and radical spirit of the movement, particularly at the end of the nineteenth century. Linked to the rise of the bourgeoisie, it presented as

main themes the objectivity of experience and the struggles of men in daily life, and later it developed a complex dialectical relationship with its own patterns of representation of mankind within society. According to her, the complexity of realism cannot be perceived in a simplistic way, as a symbol of conservatism, but it should be understood in the present as an aesthetic stratagem to disguise the tensions between the private and social spheres in Brazilian lives. In this sense, she states that there is not a return to tragedy – to again use Resende’s expression – but rather its assimilation:

Desse modo, tal realismo, contundente na aparência, registra, a sua maneira, um traço importante da produção cultural e literária de hoje: o *barateamento do trágico*, que não é de modo algum seu simples retorno, mas o preço do ingresso para o espetáculo da indústria cultural, do qual a violência direta ou simbólica é um dos seus atores mais bem pagos. (2012: 47-48)

The physical and symbolic violence experienced by Brazilians daily has almost become a permanent element in cultural narratives. According to Pellegrini, this violence was to become indispensable when trying to understand and represent Brazilian society (2012: 38). To intensely depict this violence through realism has then helped in the normalisation of the day-to-day cruelty, while, at the same time, this intensification occurs as an aesthetic procedure.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, this aestheticisation of violence as a realist strategy implies turning the impact of violence into that of an accepted, expected routine, depriving the readers of the ability to react to its impact. This aesthetisation is also present in the abrupt fragmentary form of the literary narrative. Regina Dalcastagnè, in a more recent assessment, sees contemporary literature as an unstable sphere, where the reader is no longer regarded as naive (2012: 105-106). According to her, fiction of today can be so treacherous as reality, undermining the power of the mimesis: ‘Não há a intenção de consolar ninguém, tampouco, de estabelecer verdades definitivas ou lições de vida. Reafirmam-se, no texto, a imprevisibilidade do mundo e as armadilhas do discurso’ (2012: 93).

All this overuse of realism and its new manifestation in recent narratives has been regarded with some suspicion by readers and literary critics alike. This suspicion concerns the quality of the works, since realism, or at least these recent displays of realism, could often seem excessive, favouring the autobiographical and documentary instead of the craft of fiction. Furthermore, the possibility of inserting voices that had

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<sup>73</sup> The literary representation of violence in Brazilian urban environments is well explored by Flora Süssekind in “Desterritorialização e a forma literária. Literatura brasileira contemporânea e a experiência urbana” (2005).



previously been excluded from the literary sphere, such as those from the outskirts of cities or the favelas, is a strong point of contention. This possibility constitutes, as Dalcastagnè points out (2012), another reason for debating about quality and exclusion in contemporary Brazilian literature.

A positive perspective, though, comes from the fact that all these shifts result from extensive heterogeneity in literary fields.<sup>74</sup> This type of fluidity introduces instability and in the long term a certain indifference, as in the case of the dissemination/massification of violence. But, on the other hand, it also presents an opportunity for national literature to deal with contingencies: new subjectivities, narratives, sources and creative processes have gained space in the literary panorama. This movement opens up new prospects that can enrich the presence of art in Brazilian society. Although current surveys still highlight the limitations of literary representation with a predominantly social atmosphere in the literary market in Brazil, it is evident that Brazilian literature has been undergoing a profound transition in this respect in recent decades.

#### **4.2 Lyricism in between**

Such a transitional period in contemporary Brazilian literature may result in new guidelines for criticism in the future; shifts in critical paradigms are still developing. As far as national literature is concerned, the present moment offers new perspectives for writers and scholars. As for the novel, this critical moment brings ongoing changes to narratives, causing what scholar Benedito Nunes called an actual validity 'do pensamento que trabalha o material verbal' (2009: 157), besides the greater aesthetic autonomy of the pieces.

In this complex context, it is possible to find remarks about lyricism in the works of some authors. And, although the theoretical approach to prose lyricism today remains nearly as obscure as what was described in Chapter 2, now the scenario seems more

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<sup>74</sup> Beatriz Resende, in an optimistic evaluation in 2008, associated this fertility and multiplicity (in her own words) with the political moment Brazil was living then: a moment of solidification of democratic systems, under Luiz Inácio da Silva's presidency. Eight years later, in the face of the vulnerability the same processes are presenting today, with the return of recession and the resurgence of conservative sectors of society, this correspondence is no longer relevant. That is why Tania Pellegrini (2012: 41) makes a statement about the collapse of Brazilian society, seeing the violence narrated as a symptom of the capitalist exclusion perpetrated in the country. Nevertheless, Brazilian literature still seems to be undergoing a process of transformation.

open to different analyses. This is due to new propositions in relation to realism, which consider realistic vectors such as time and space, for example, from these new perspectives, as well as introducing more critical elements in the depictions.

The question is whether, in the midst of this intricate context, lyrical treatment can be found with yet more frequency, even in writers linked to ‘realismo de choque’. This does seem to be the case, as shown in this excerpt from *Cidade de Deus* by Paulo Lins:

Poesia, minha tia, ilumine as certezas dos homens e os tons de minhas palavras. É que arrisco a prosa mesmo com balas atravessando os fonemas. É o verbo, aquele que é maior que o seu tamanho, que diz, faz e acontece. Aqui ele cambaleia baleado. Dito por bocas sem dentes e olhares cariados, nos conchavos de becos, nas decisões de morte. A areia move-se no fundo dos mares. A ausência de sol escurece mesmo as matas. O líquido-morango do sorvete mela as mãos. A palavra nasce no pensamento, desprende-se dos lábios adquirindo alma nos ouvidos, e às vezes essa magia sonora não salta à boca porque é engolida a seco. Massacrada no estômago com arroz e feijão a quase palavra é defecada ao invés de falada. Falha a fala. Fala a bala. (1997: 23)

In this passage, Lins treats words (‘o verbo’) as physical things to depict the angst of the narrator. That is why the phonemes and the verb are shot by bullets – like the inhabitants of the neighbourhood – and that is why they can be ferociously eaten in daily life (for which the symbol is the meal of rice-and-beans). Thus, Lins’s aim is to draw the reader’s attention to the extremely realistic tone of the narrative, highlighted by the contrast with a lyrical moment.

It is interesting to note the ways in which these authors are dealing with lyricism by using new approaches to realism. If time and space, for example, are represented in the fragmentation of contemporary narratives, and the proximity of the image has become a preponderant influence, this seems to make room for a natural insertion of the lyrical – as another possibility of expression. However, there is still a certain degree of confusion about genres, as shown in the work of Luiz Ruffato: on the cover blurb of *Eles eram muito cavalos*, the reviewer claims ‘não sei se li poesia, se prosa, se prosa poética... Deparei com todas, o tempo todo. Sempre, só a inventiva ousadia e a ruptura da linguagem’ (2001).

Novelist Adriana Lisboa, for instance, is constantly associated with characteristics of prose lyricism. Her book *Sinfonia em branco* (2001) attracted attention because of this aspect, as critic and professor Wilberth Claython F. Salgueiro attests. He compares Lisboa with Clarice Lispector and Virginia Woolf: ‘na criação de uma ambiência que faz dialogar a trama ficcional e o gosto pela reflexão, num tom, já referido, poético,

denso e especulativo’ (2001). Lisboa’s accurate and delicate narrative offers many poetic moments and metaphorical images, although she does not lose the sequentiality of the plots. Her textual construction is also full of metaliterary references.

Karl Erik Schøllhammer condemns what he understands as Lisboa’s excess: ‘o mesmo ocorre com o uso exagerado de imagens metafóricas e de arroubos líricos, que acabam por se converter em preciosismo’ (2009: 138). The scholar’s criticism refers to the problems that an excess of stylization may cause, according to him implying a sort of artificialisation of the writing. This artificialisation, along with the excessive metaliterary resources, would lead to a sacralisation of literature. Schøllhammer believes that in this style of writing the author becomes invulnerable to reality. To him, the minutiae brought by lyricism undermines a realistic approach – considered then the ideal –, due to the risks it presents: ‘A atenção descritiva da autora nunca se abre a uma verdadeira vulnerabilidade, não se descontrola e nunca se rende à intensidade perturbadora da loucura que um contato visceral com o real implica’ (2009: 138). His criteria seem to be based on the advantages realism offers over lyricism.

However, Lisboa is not totally immersed in prose lyricism. She surrenders to lyricism in some texts, such as in “Verità”, from *Caligrafias* (2004), a book of mini short stories:

Cai um floco de neve sobre o Monte Verità. Apenas um. É, como já foi dito, uma breve carta enviada pelo céu. E sussurra, com sua voz translúcida: cair sobre o mundo é um risco. Flutuar sobre o mundo é um risco. / Delicadamente os aceito, o mundo, o risco, o sonho com o Monte Verità debruçado sobre o lago, o amor necessário e precioso da minha vida inteira, que há de ficar incompleto, como incompleta sempre será esta mesma vida, a flutuar tão breve até que eu me liquefaça e me esqueça no corpo da terra.  
O beijo do ar é uma dádiva. Valeu a pena correr o risco. Enquanto caio, fecho meus olhos de neve e estremeço. (2004: 19)

This recent format of mini short stories has been regarded as similar to poems in prose. This style saw a boom in Brazil, especially after the publication of *Ah é?* (1994), by Dalton Trevisan. The writer, also well known for his haikus, associates the enlightenment of this style of Japanese poetry with short stories. This technique caused confusion but influenced a series of followers in the same trend, until *Os cem menores contos brasileiros* was published in 2004. This latter book was edited by writer Marcelino Freire – who was noted for his lyrical tone in *Contos negreiros* (2005), which won the Jabuti Award in 2006. Strongly based on orality and influenced by *cordel* literature, the miniature stories in *Contos negreiros* present a pronounced rhythm:

Meu homem é uma outra pessoa. Não quer mais saber de samba. Nem de futebol. Não gosta de feijoada. Meu homem não quer voltar para casa. Foge de lá porque tem medo de levar bala à toa.  
Meu homem é a coisa mais bonita. Os dentes perfeitos, o peito. Meu homem leva jeito para ser modelo. Mas eu não deixo. Coloco, assim, um cabresto. Para ele não me deixar tão cedo.  
Meu homem me obedece e me respeita. Por incrível que pareça mesmo quando me põe de quatro, me machuca, me prende à vara da cama. Quando me chicoteia.  
Meu homem diz que eu serei seu escravo a vida inteira. (in “Meu negro de estimação”, 2005: 101-102)

This merging of genres and styles has become popular with the publishing industry and the mass media. A writer, a visual artist and a musician, Nuno Ramos, has been labelled as a ‘hybrid’ artist for more than a decade. His book *O pão do corvo* (2001), for instance, after being described as part poetry by the author, was published as ‘Brazilian fiction’ by the publisher, but was categorised by the reviewer on the dust jacket under short stories. Critic and writer Pádua Fernandes observed: ‘Os jornais aceitaram esse rótulo. Comentei o acontecimento taxonômico em um texto publicado em 2004, conjecturando como seriam classificados na imprensa brasileira os *Pequenos poemas em prosa* de Baudelaire, se tivessem sido lançados nos dias atuais’ (2013: 17).

Another curious example is found in the work of the São Paulo poet, playwright and scriptwriter José Geraldo Neres, who published in 2012 *Olhos de Barro*, a collection of texts which received special mention at the Minas Gerais’s Third Literary Award in the same year. Neres possesses a very singular poetic voice, which is not easily classified in terms of genre. Even though Neres’s publisher promoted *Olhos de Barro* as a compilation of poems in prose, the book was awarded the Special Mention in 2012 as a collection of short stories. The author himself explains: ‘Classifico como prosa poética, mas existe uma preocupação que o livro tenha uma união, e nisso já foi chamado de romance. Mas me sinto mais confortável como prosa poética’ (2015, interview with the researcher). Scholar Moacir Amâncio perceives this uncertainty as an advantage, and believes that Neres’s *Olhos de Barro* could be regarded as a dense and lyrical novella, as he states while introducing the book:

Não é difícil encontrar versos nas prosas de José Geraldo Neres, qualquer leitor com certo traquejo percebe isso na leitura que se torna mais interessante, mais matizada e coloca a música das palavras num fluxo parecido com o da vida. Certa vez chamaram “Os Cantos de Maldoror” de romance. E não pode ser? Este livro também poderá ser lido como uma novela densa e lírica, com seus prismas dançantes diante dos olhos alumbrados dessa fantasmagoria chamada infância. Mas não será esse um modo de recuperar a poesia dos desgastes? De fazê-la novamente livre como foi num passado inatingível, em que os poetas, com a devoção mística do começo do mundo, caçavam o discurso no vento? (2010: cover text)

With the appearance of well-meant suppositions about genre issues at this point, certain theoretical guidelines for the lyrical narrative may begin to be appreciated in the near future. This is not only to facilitate the literary categorization of books as products by the publishing industry and the media, but it also provides a clearer understanding of the growing use of metaphorical images in Brazilian literature. From a philosophical viewpoint, it is reasonable to affirm that readers may regard this type of image not as an imposed image but one that has been created to free their minds in times of an overwhelming presence of images in society.

If José Geraldo Neres's book *Olhos de Barro* is taken as a practical example, these theoretical guidelines for understanding lyrical narrative can clarify the matter. Indeed, poetic prose is present throughout the book, and the semantics carry a pattern of imagery related to dreams, or enigmas. Neres's narrative figures, particularly children, mirrors, walls, rain, clay, empty houses and ghosts, present a constant rhythm that obeys a dreamlike fluidity. These figures are randomly scattered throughout the book and only some passages could be classified as lyrical progressions. Although there are many repeated figures, there are no permanent characters. Indeed, in the case of 'Outro' or 'Ela', who appear throughout the text, they can vary as the piece unfolds. There are a few dialogues spoken by unidentified characters, which makes it impossible to determine a symbolic hero.

The plot is divided into stories, small parts, or in fact poems in prose. The atmosphere is that of a search, as if someone is pursuing an identity, or a body: 'Os retratos tomam as cores de nossa memória. Reconhecem as feridas. Nos negam a origem. O silêncio é a porta da qual não temos a chave. A parede por cair. A olhar o tempo. Não encontro o seu rosto entre suas raízes. Sombras saltam comigo' (2012: 26). Firstly, the reader recognises this search; nonetheless the amount of metaphors and the stream of consciousness are so intense that it is impossible to find a narrative thread. The minimisation of consecutiveness, which is a key feature of a lyrical novel, gives the reader's perception of this dreamlike atmosphere a sense of Surrealism: 'Ordens são ordens, mantenha distância: o mistério leva vantagem. O espelho é o deserto, só ele não sabe disso, é a fronteira e o abismo que abrimos dentro de nós, é o sono faminto das horas' (2012: 34). The Surrealistic atmosphere ends up dominating the narrative to the point that ultimately a base narrative cannot be found. Therefore, Neres's book should be regarded as a collection of poems in prose with a Surrealistic accent, united by the themes of ancestry, childhood, death and nature.

Among the vast panorama of contemporary Brazilian literature, many other novelists and short story writers are randomly invoked by their varied and latent lyricism, such as veteran João Gilberto Noll. His narratives are marked by solitude: '[as narrativas] de Noll, sempre impregnadas de certa poesia, carregada, esta, de um lirismo cru, escatológico às vezes, retirando beleza de vísceras', as Flávio Carneiro remarks (2005: 105). Noll is also recognised for his rhythmic work, which appears in some of his books, such as *A fúria do corpo* (1981), in which the author states that: 'está repleto desses cantos como se fosse um poema' (2000).<sup>75</sup> Hilda Hilst, another veteran writer, poet, novelist, playwright and chronicler, exercised the admixture of styles with mastery, and some of her titles, as *A obscena senhora D* (1982), can be regarded as lyrical too. The considered construction of rhythm and image can be detected in recent authors as well, such as Paloma Vidal, Marcelo Moutinho and Cintia Moscovich, all of whom were published after the 2000s. It is impossible to mention their works without noting the underlying lyrical tone in many of their pieces.

This lyrical tone may be inserted in narratives to various degrees, even if the works cannot be regarded as typical examples of lyrical oeuvres. The modern and innovative perspectives undertaken by constitutional elements of the plot, mainly time and space, help in this task. Recalling the theorists discussed in Chapter 1, the reconfiguration of space and time benefits from the use of a lyrical tone, and Brazilian authors have certainly taken advantage of these new novelistic constructions. While Mikhail Bakhtin asserts the movement towards the present and the personal experience in the modern novel (1981: 22-23), scholars such as Darío Villanueva (1983), Ricardo Gullón (1984) and Jean-Yves Tadié (1978) suggest new approaches for dealing with time and space, particularly when related to lyricism. Time gains in inexactness, whilst space is explored from a sensitive perspective. As previously mentioned by Ralph Freedman regarding lyrical prose: 'Worlds in time and space are not precisely reproduced but are rearranged in aesthetic designs which become universal and symbolic' (1963: 188).

In this context, the use of lyricism may be viewed as a natural path to follow. Twentieth-century Brazilian writers who began to experiment with time, space, image and rhythm in their work, such as Adelino Magalhães, Lúcio Cardoso, Clarice Lispector, João Guimarães Rosa, Osman Lins, Raduan Nassar and others beyond the

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<sup>75</sup> The statement was given in an interview to a literary website, and cited by Aquiles Alencar Brayner (2009). However, in the same text the emphasis of the author can be verified in the musical rhythm, mainly classical compositions. The result seems to be the repetition and the alliteration as chief resources in his work.

canon, led the way to the lyrical note perceived in novelists of the present. According to Bosi (1994: 392), those ground-breaking authors (the majority linked to the intimate or introspective school) were at their time considered experimental, as has been observed here already. Others, such as Autran Dourado, Ciro dos Anjos, Otávio de Farias and Maria Alice Barroso, were noted for their diverse relationship with the previously steady parameters of narrative as time, space, characters and sequentiality.

The works of intimate writers – whether lyrical or not – have therefore been given scant attention and have been insufficiently considered. This may be one more reason for the existence of continuing criticism of the excess of subjectivity in contemporary narratives in Brazil, and to an even greater extent, criticism of lyricism. Articles and essays published after 2010 have been even debating more self-centeredness in recent Brazilian fiction, in the midst of aesthetic realism.<sup>76</sup> A critical reproach comes along with the observation – ‘a tendência autorreferente, para alguns deles [critics], ameaça a relevância do que se produz hoje ao afastar debates de relevância nacional’, in the opinion of Marco Rodrigo Almeida (2014). Behind the general disapproval lies the same accusation already seen in this investigation, in Chapter 2: subjectivity, confounded with sentimentalism, is interpreted as escapism, as an undesirable alienating excess of individuality. Pauliane Amaral and Rauer Ribeiro Rodrigues (2014) give an overview of this issue in contemporaneity, in the essay “As memórias de si: a subjetividade na literatura brasileira contemporânea”:

Trata-se, pois, de ficção realista, urbana, com personagens calcados na objetividade mimética de homens brancos da classe média, encenando dramas existenciais do “real concreto” – uma concretude que, na maioria dos casos, é distante do universo social díspar e multifacetado da sociedade brasileira dos nossos dias –, assim como da denúncia que contesta a memória social, política e econômica do país. Nesse quadro, a memória de si predomina sobre a memória histórica, compartilhada, coletiva, social. (2014: 88)

This debate has also brought to light the use of the term “autofiction” (in Portuguese *autoficção*), which has become theoretically controversial. Scholar Luciana Hidalgo, whose studies focus on autofiction in Brazilian literature, clarifies the phenomenon: ‘O autor apela à autoficção para dar conta do teor *ficcional* da situação *real*’ (2013, writer’s

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<sup>76</sup> See articles “Instinto de subjetividade”, by Marco Rodrigo Almeida, and “Nova geração da literatura nacional leva cotidiano e angústia às obras”, by Flavio Lúcio, in *Folha de S. Paulo*; and “Gênero da autoficção vira tendência na literatura contemporânea”, by Vanessa Aquino, in *Correio Braziliense*. *Folha de S. Paulo* published a special supplement about the theme in February 2014.

emphasis). In the end, it is understood that in autofiction the author allows herself or himself to make explicit his or her identity in a plot that can openly blend personal history and fiction, mainly when he or she lives in a ‘situação-limite’.

Amongst the contemporary authors who could be considered engaged in, or who present features of, this tendency, the theorist cites Miguel Sanches Neto, with *Chove sobre minha infância* (2000); Clarah Averbuck, with *Máquina de pinball* (2002); Tatiana Salem Levy, with *A chave da casa* (2007); and Evando Nascimento, with *Retrato desnatural* (2008). According to Hidalgo, however, Silviano Santiago is the only writer to have plainly adopted this neologism, as seen in *Histórias mal contadas* (2005).

Concerning lyricism, my point here is just the evidence brought by this sort of debate: new configurations of Brazilian narratives are clear, and they include an increasing presence of subjectivity – and the rejection the theme still suffers, due to misconceptions. The display of memories and the narration of sensations that may occur in autofiction are factors that ease the approach to a lyrical tone. However, as seen in Chapter 1, in lyrical narratives the *Schmelz* – or fusion of the character with the world – is preponderant, while in autofiction it is occasional.

In this case, the refusal to accept autofiction shows again the persistent resistance to the subjective treatment of the text in Brazilian literature. Autofiction may or may not be lyrical, like any other kind of narrative. However, the confusion and dissent that it attracts, reflects the neglect and the rebuttal that subjective writing continues to face in Brazilian literature and criticism. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the subjective contents are devalued due to the confusion with sentimentality and subjectivism, characteristics which would lead to escapism, and a lack of political engagement. Moreover, when writing moves towards metaphorisation and away from sequentiality, disapproval can surely be expected – as happened with regard to Adriana Lisboa’s ‘arroubos líricos’, according to Erik Karl Schøllhammer.

In fact, what seems to be absolutely at stake is the relationship with reality: realism, taken as the mimetic data of the plot. In addition, in Brazilian literature this realism is linked to the commitment the writers must have with the social reality of the country, a line of reasoning developed in Chapter 2 and seen in this chapter in item 4.1. Whether presenting recent codes of realism, aesthetic realism, new configurations for the narratives or even a growing subjectivity, reality constantly emerges as the main parameter for the analysis of Brazilian novels. At this point, it is useful to recall Ralph



Freedman's clarifications on prose lyricism in the novel, in which the concept of reality is broadened to many other interpretations, since reality also becomes what occurs within the perception of the characters.

After this brief assessment of a current view of Brazilian literature, the relationship with reality continues to be relevant in our analysis, but now from a different perspective. Reality is still an issue, however in the next section the subject will be analysed in the light of the contrast posed by the lyrical novelists chosen for this thesis: Reni Adriano, Wesley Peres and João Anzanello Carrascoza. It is important to bear in mind the variation these case studies offer, in the face of the general prominence of a super-reality and heterogeneity in contemporary narratives. Furthermore, even when compared to the underlying lyrical tone of some other authors, Adriano, Peres and Carrascoza's movement towards the rupture with representation is to be scrutinised, due to their boldness. Beyond this aspect, in times when reality is turned into a spectacle, this contrast may encourage more creativity and liberty in people's minds.

### **4.3 Adriano, Peres and Carrascoza**

When this investigation began, there was some doubt as to whether contemporary lyrical authors could be so readily detectable. This was due to the complex scene outlined above, where lyricism has been acknowledged as being perceptible but its presence has been regarded as muted. Bearing in mind the parameters concluded in Chapter 1, however, I made the choice to analyse authors whose works demonstrated lyricism more overtly.<sup>77</sup> In short, my quest was for a natural, systematic lyricism – one that is observed in an integrated manner, throughout these authors' works, and not only occurring randomly. Of course, I also focused on the *moments* (awareness of sensitive knowledge) and the *Stimmung* (soul/affective disposition) found in the compositions, as well as the coordinates posed by Freedman's theory, mainly patterns of imagery, lyrical progression, immediacy of portraiture, construction upon a base narrative, symbolic heroes and the junction of self and world.

My intention has been to allow my object of study to speak for itself. Therefore, my parameters are not rigid moulds designed to fit the narratives. Instead, my overall

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<sup>77</sup> To recall better those parameters, see Section 1.6.1.1 of Chapter 1, called "Pragmatic solutions".

approach to the stories has been to evaluate if lyricism can be perceived predominantly, considering the most important vectors seen in Chapter 1.

Thus, I have chosen to highlight some of these recent authors' specific characteristics. Both Reni Adriano and Wesley Peres began to publish after 2007, and since then they have written only a handful of books. Meanwhile, João Anzanello Carrascoza's career has already spanned 22 years. They have all been awarded prizes and they have rekindled discussion about the controversy of lyricism in Brazilian literary studies – in the same way that Raduan Nassar caused some discomfort among critics due to his difficult poetic prose. In the past, Clarice Lispector's unusual literary voice caused a similar reaction. The difference is that now there is a diversified and more fluid outlook, in which authors ought not necessarily to be framed in a literary movement, or school.

Reni Adriano offers an excellent opportunity to understand the relationship lyricism establishes with base narratives. His single book, *Lugar* (2010), raised some discussion regarding its regionalist element; nevertheless, Adriano refuses to label his work as such. Wesley Peres brings to the foreground questions about the tension between inner and outer world, and the depth of the symbolic hero, since in his two books, *Casa entre vértebras* (2007) and *As pequenas mortes* (2013), he writes against the contemporary notion of subject, against subjectivity as a social construction.

João Anzanello Carrascoza offers a very interesting debate about the boundaries of lyricism. Carrascoza's works present the type of lyricism which is closest to the exacerbation of feelings, which deals with the anguish of excess. However, on the other hand, the author has exercised his lyrical tone within a textual construction which also has concrete features – such as time and places, and factual description. The excess of metaphorisation, the lyrical progression and the immediate portraiture are therefore the aspects which should be given more attention in this section of this chapter. I also intend to focus on the development of his lyrical facets throughout his career, firstly as a short storyteller and a children's writer and secondly as a novelist.

#### **4.3.1 Reni Adriano: not regionalism, but rhythm**

To state that *Lugar* (2010), Reni Adriano's first novel, is basically a regionalist work seems natural, but problematic. Perhaps due to the difficulty in finding a *label* for the narrative, this mentioned analytical approach is found (Alves, 2013), following hints in the plot about rural ambience. Even more emphatically, assertions were made about the

work's awkwardness: *Lugar* requires from the reader a total preparedness to engage and enter the story. In no way does it offer the reader an immediate understanding – the reader has to work in order to achieve this.

The unusual and inverted syntaxes, the constant creation of words, including both sound and physical senses, the lyrical associations, the references to folk tales from the interior of Brazil, and the craftwork with sound and silence in this writing make *Lugar* a very challenging book: 'Não é uma leitura fácil. É um tipo de livro que exige atenção e que, invariavelmente, leva o leitor a uma viagem densa, e muito proveitosa', as Marta Barbosa attests (2010).

Nonetheless, despite these unusual characteristics, Reni Adriano's debut book won the Prêmio Governo Minas Gerais de Literatura 2009 for fiction. Almost immediately, it secured him a contract from a publishing house in São Paulo. Adriano had never imagined his novel would one day be published as he himself regarded his writing as unusual. Until then, Adriano had only published short stories in literary magazines.

In short, *Lugar* tells the history of four generations of a family. The main characters are Inácio and his 'Pai Avô' (father and grandfather), called Gaio. Peripheral characters are presented through Inácio and Gaio's reactions to violent external situations. The reader gradually begins to understand the setting, which could be a small town, or a village. The place is entitled 'Lugar', as a proper noun.

It becomes apparent that there is a dark secret in the community, a curse, something that Inácio feels compelled to expose and overcome to begin a new way of living for the generations ahead. Inácio and Gaio are sensitive men, fighting to understand and overcome the strange peculiarities of their hometown, and the story mainly focuses on their childhoods, going backwards and forwards in time. Therefore, the plot has two symbolic heroes, but the main one is Inácio, whose mission is: 'Fazer algo pelo menino que sou eu lá onde eu o fui e que no entanto não sou mais porque aqui estou eu não o sendo' (2010: 26).

In this story, however, among the allusions to its regionalist tone and the strangeness that it causes to the readers, he excels in the lyrical treatment of the narrative, which was scarcely explored in the book's few reviews. This might be due to the level of difficulty in analysing this work. Writer Luiz Ruffato raves about the author's boldness in the book blurb: 'Reni Adriano consegue construir uma literatura inteira com um só livro: linguagem, universo, visão de mundo'; and scholar Wanderlan da Silva Alves highlights

Adriano's investment 'num exercício escritural que toma forma à medida que se cria' (2013: 119), indicating the novelty of the writer's style. Journalist and critic Elias Fajardo, however, highlights the lyricism of *Lugar*:

O romance de estreia de Reni Adriano – vencedor do Prêmio Governo Minas Gerais de Literatura 2009 – resgata o falar regional do interior mineiro e o transforma e reelabora de modo contemporâneo, com radicais experimentos de linguagem. O resultado é um texto de alta voltagem poética e grande complexidade, difícil de ler. (2010)

Adriano's style in this book has been praised and compared to João Guimarães Rosa, and its content has been compared with Euclides da Cunha and Graciliano Ramos, in an attempt to find secure parameters for its analysis. The language used in *Lugar* is indeed similar to that of Guimarães Rosa. This has to do with the creational aspect of its features as well as the inversion of the syntax. Many new words are created, displaying sounds that express feelings and sensations, such as 'miasmesmo' (p. 12), 'dentremoso' (p. 12), 'desmemória' (p. 23), 'bobica' (p. 40), 'destamanho' (p. 42), 'poucorpo' (p. 48), 'contentavento' (p. 48), 'esgremiar' (p. 88), 'problematas' (p. 71), 'enormeformas' (p. 102), 'pranterror' (p. 103), 'impronúncias' (p. 107).

Indeed, Adriano stresses rhythm as a touchstone and a guide for this work. According to the author, *Lugar* was born out of a preponderant inner rhythm that forced him to write it and he recognises this inner rhythm as its true structure:

o ritmo preexiste à minha escrita, eu o sinto (às vezes, insuportavelmente) no meu corpo. A ideia de que as palavras dispostas dessa ou daquela maneira é que resultaram no ritmo é a ilusão do leitor. Mas, na verdade, é uma forma de se fazer, lendo, o caminho inverso para as origens: a palavra é só um chamado para uma experiência originária, onde o que menos importa é o sentido. (2015, interview with researcher)

Here, it is worth recalling the point made by Octavio Paz about rhythm as a primary condition for language. According to Paz, language is born out of rhythm, and it is rhythm that differentiates prose from poetry: 'el ritmo se da espontáneamente en toda forma verbal, pero sólo en el poema se manifiesta plenamente. Sin ritmo, no hay poema; sólo con él, no hay prosa' (1956: 68). Bearing in mind this prevalent rhythm and adding these characteristics to the mythical treatment of the narrative, resorting to popular legends in Brazil, the result is a fertile text, true to metaphorisation and an abundance of rich lyrical images.

Aiming to contribute to the analysis of the material, it is worth examining this from the lyrical prose perspective. *Lugar* undoubtedly consists of a lyrical narrative: it is built on intense images and exposes a plot which is not centred on sequentiality. In addition, following the prerogatives presented by the lyrical novel study I am raising, this novel takes great liberties with the genre, particularly regarding narrative voice, as I shall demonstrate later.

#### **4.3.1.1 Dialects and folkloric legends: a regional plot?**

My explanation for the confusion regarding the regionalist style is that the base narrative of *Lugar* is the regionalist novel. By base narrative I mean an initial literary style in which the lyrical novelist builds his work.<sup>78</sup> However, most probably aiming to deny this proximity with regionalism, Reni Adriano begins by establishing an immediate contrast with his book title. Despite the signs of rural life in the story, including rustic homes and habits, the title intentionally indicates an unspecified localisation – the name of the place is, indeed, *Lugar*. Therefore: does *Lugar* really exist? This is the first question that comes to mind, and the reader is not sure whether the title is related to a very specific site (place), even without defining it. The title leaves some doubt.

The writer refuses this regionalism: ‘*Lugar* não é Minas Gerais revisitada, é a tensão fundadora de um universo mítico. Por isso a palavra é tão densa: ela é a possibilidade da criação de um mundo’ (2010). Adriano understands that his experiments with rhythm and sense have caused strangeness and confusion, leading to interpretations based on regionalist formats, as he exposes:

é preciso que o romance seja esse desmoronamento, com todo o risco inclusive de nem ser mais romance e quem sabe gerar confusões literárias as mais estapafúrdias, como se eu quisesse sobrepor, sei lá, um universo rural ao urbano. Não. A palavra é corpo e é geografia no livro. (2015, interview with researcher)

It is worthwhile, however, verifying the features in the writing which lead to the hypothesis of a regionalist style, and see how the lyricism operates in this context. There are two main features: one is the way in which the language unfolds upon itself, highlighting words which are typical from the interior of Brazil, particularly from Minas Gerais state, such as ‘bobado’ (p. 40), ‘estumar’ (p. 49), ‘cumarim’ (p. 75), ‘clangor’ (p.

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<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1(c), “Use of a base narrative”.

76), ‘voejo’ (p. 79), ‘regueira’ (p. 88). Some of these words recall the accent spoken in Minas from their terminations, as, for instance, ‘diabrim’ and ‘muncadim’ (p. 58) – replacing the diminutive ‘inho’ with the ending ‘im’, thus shortening the words. Reni Adriano lives in São Paulo, but he is originally from Minas Gerais, and he seems to be trying to replicate the local accent. One important point is that the accent pertains to the oral tradition of the state, i.e. the writer spells words in the way they are spoken in that region. Orality, then, is one of the cruxes of the novel.

Crucially, there is a second aspect, the presence of popular Brazilian legends, mainly folk tales from the interior, which appear throughout the narrative. One of them, the curse of the snakes, becomes a key point in the plot. The Desgraça Pelada (a terrible beggar woman who shows up to live with unhappy and complaining people) is another important legend in the plot, besides the Headless Mule (Mula sem Cabeça).

In short, this curse of the snakes, which is mentioned at the beginning but only revealed at the end of the story, means that the city and its inhabitants’ lives are dominated by the animals’ magical powers. In folklore, this curse is related to a famous tale from the interior of the Brazilian backlands (the Northeast as well as Minas Gerais). This folk tale tells that, in ancient times, black snakes would creep into people’s houses at night, to be breastfed by nursing mothers. The reptile would insert its tail into the baby’s mouth to take its place and suck the mother’s milk, instead of the child. According to the legend, this was the reason for high numbers of undernourished children in these poor areas in the interior of Brazil. The story ends with a serpent being discovered and killed by the woman’s husband – and, when the intruder is beaten, the floor of the house is flooded with milk that was in the creature’s belly.

Some people call this ‘The Caninana legend’: ‘caninana’ is the popular name of the black snake *Spilotes pullatus*, which originates in Latin America. The serpent is also a well-known biblical animal, which is present in the myth of the creation of humanity in some Middle East narrations, including Christianity, as well as in several other mythological stories. This curse in *Lugar* is indicated as the cause behind many of the odd behaviours and occurrences that take place in the community:

E no Lugar todos se lembravam, em seus silêncios mais duros, de histórias que, com o tempo, se esqueciam, dóceis, de contar. Por mais que resistissem, entretanto, em trazer à tona os relatos de serpentes encalacradas, não raro se atiravam das camas, à noite, aos pinotes do sono, estrebuchando de sufoco nas línguas vivas dando-se nós dentro das bocas. Ou crianças que morriam ressequidas, por nas noites as serpentes

subirem às camas, mamando nas mulheres, que com isso sentiam mais sono, as cobras sugando-lhes os seios, as caudas enfiadas na boca das crianças. (2010: 75)

In *Lugar*, the curse of the snakes plays such an important role that, in fact, the serpents' sinuosity is one of the patterns of imagery. One of the most shocking scenes in the book is when Gaio commits suicide. He hangs himself and is discovered by his grandson, Inácio. This opening part is not explicit as the author does not describe the suicide in a mimetic way. Instead, he uses the sinuousness of the language, mixing the images of the rope and the tongue, which also refer to the image of the snake.

Before committing suicide, the grandfather tells Inácio about the secret curse of the snakes which has been cast upon Lugar. Nonetheless, Inácio's family forbids him from talking about the curse, and the other members of the community do not dare to talk about it either. Therefore, the entire population of Lugar lives without being able to express their past and their origin. Metaphorically, this forbidden tongue (to speak) can be compared to the forbidden snake (to be spoken):

1  
É escuro, Pai, na minha fonte. Lateja a fronte a escuridade premente. Uma inocência infinita toda lodo de escuridade absoluta. Que não responde pela própria escuridão.  
É muito triste, Pai, ser inocente. Tão tudo nulo e fundo. Tão duro.  
Torcido.  
Taludo.  
Pasma.  
Excessivo. Ralo. É barrentoso, lamuriendo. Gemido esguicho todo fôlego. Solfejo pantanoso. E a segura de uma insônia, Pai!  
A língua que arrancada língua minha fosse, presa em mim, essa dor de arrancamento. E tê-la presa ainda, intacta, em que parte o meu do corpo. A língua, Pai, com que lambo: o chão, o sal, as farpas. O vidroso pico da palavra. A nódoa. Batalhas. A língua um esticão da boca aos pés, enrodilhada ao redor do meu pescoço.  
Piso a ponta e ergo a boca, ereto o corpo, a língua sob o piso dos meus pés.  
O sangue, o sumo, morrer de vivo, tudo. O mais que é meu corpouco. Essa querência de ficar até que entenda enquanto passo, irremissível, Pai, eu passo, clamando amor ou outro sopro. Ou outro Outro, desde que isso de em mim haver lugar.  
É escuroso, Pai. É denteção do javali contra mim presa entre os dentes.  
É dentremoso, Pai, é miasmento. O gengivar do todo duro e denteado que luta e perde na velhice emoliente.  
Da carne, Pai, eu já não digo. Essa cordura de ser escuro quando grito. Esse cordame que me arrasta pelo umbigo. Esse cardume dentro do sangue. Esse fígado. O ronronar de dentro.  
O aturdimento pré-silábico de tempo. O vergastado miasmesmo do idêntico. (2010: 11-12)

This text is part one of the first chapter, which comprises another 12 small parts. As the author himself expresses, it is one of the most difficult parts in the book – the opening

scene should be a crucial point in the narrative, when the plot is introduced, but instead it consists only of sensations. There is an immediacy of portraiture, which does not allow for a picture of the narrated fact. Instead, there is an instantaneous perception of a sensation, as an experience.

In an interview, Adriano emphasized that his intention was to offer *writing experiences* to the readers: ‘O primeiro capítulo do livro, por exemplo, ninguém entende nada! E não tem o que entender mesmo. Não há representação ali. Há uma proposta de uma experiência, que o leitor pode aceitar ou não’ (2011). And, as was seen in Chapter 1, the role of the reader, which is usually more receptive when presented with a lyrical narrative, can promote a new sensibility. This is a real challenge, as expressed by Darío Villanueva, among other theorists: ‘Porque, finalmente, la novella lírica no puede alzarse con el estandarte de la renovación del genero sin modificar en profundidad el papel del lector como co-creador del universo narrativo’ (1983: 20).

The option of introducing the plot through a preponderantly lyrical text in *Lugar* immediately exposes the difference in the novel. The lyrical introduction relates the event of Gaio’s suicide; however, by beginning so lyrically, the author makes it clear that *Lugar* is not what one can expect from a traditional novel. Besides giving the references of the suicide, the author intends to convey different perceptions of the event itself. The expression of these perceptions is carried out through language. Beyond what seems to be lacking in coherence, there is a new experience for the reader. An analysis of this part reveals many subtle strategies used by the author to engage the reader.

Firstly, at a textual level, the poetic prose is impressive. The rich rhythm of the narrative is felt through its internal rhymes. For example, the assonances such as ‘*fonte*’, ‘*fronte*’, ‘*infinita*’, or ‘*escuro*’, ‘*escureza*’, ‘*escuridão*’, ‘*tão*’, ‘*torcido*’ and ‘*taludo*’; the rhymes ‘*lateja*’ and ‘*escureza*’, ‘*tudo*’, ‘*nulo*’, ‘*fundo*’, and ‘*duro*’; the presence of a sequence of open and close vowels in tonic syllables, as ‘*barrentoso*’ and ‘*lamuriento*’, alternating with atonic syllables such as ‘*gemido*’, ‘*esguicho*’, and ‘*fôlego*’, which contribute towards softening the narrative, creating a twisting atmosphere. The terminations ‘*oso*’, ‘*ento*’ and ‘*eza*’ are also denotative of the dialect of Brazilian rural areas, and are profusely found in the book as well. In Adriano’s narrative they are generally used to create new words, such as ‘*burroso*’ (p. 55), ‘*galanteza*’ (p. 57), and ‘*calafriosos*’ (p. 70).

This characteristic of engendering neologisms, whether inspired by the sound of regional dialect or not, gives to the narrative of *Lugar* a meandering feature.



Metaphorically, the text conveys a type of sinuosity, as seen with the serpents. As creatures in endless metamorphosis, the words are able to morph into unexpected forms, making the reader experience uncertainty at a textual level. This uncertainty is so preponderant that it ends up interfering with the understanding of the reader, as also occurs with the patterns of imagery. Therefore, the creation of these rhythms reinforces the pattern of the imagery proposed – in this case, the recurrent images of the snakes. The poetic prose on a textual plane helps then to strengthen the imagery, consequently bolstering the lyricism. As previously analysed here, cause and consequence are less perceived in the lyrical plot, to the detriment of imagery.

Such plasticity in Reni Adriano's words reflects a very idiosyncratic characteristic aspect of his work. Adriano's work as a poet (despite his denial) could make him part of a group of Brazilian artists, such as the Brazilians Manoel de Barros or his contemporary Lois Lancaster, for instance – poets with an originative, even demiurgic, way of treating words. In terms of prose, Adriano's work seems to have been influenced by Guimarães Rosa (even though the author disagrees) and Raduan Nassar, particularly with regard to rhythm, and the resorting to the musicality of poetic prose in the narrative – to melopeia. As for poetry, Adriano is a great admirer of João Cabral de Melo Neto (2015, interview with researcher).

#### **4.3.1.2 Lyricism in oral narratives**

The regional aspect of the novel concerns the presence of the regional dialect, intertwined with the appropriation of country tales, which can be legends or myths. Nonetheless, it is perceptible that this appropriation does not evoke the regional atmosphere, but rather transcends these local stories by unveiling a mythical and oral literary scenario. The author affirms that he wrote his narrative while obeying a different impulse. Adriano's intention is not to retell these popular stories, but to apply them as experiences:

Não tive a pretensão de resgatar esses mitos, mas de pensar esses mitos encarnados, constitutivos de sujeitos e de corpos tal como eles se expressam numa cultura. (...) O que me importa é tomá-los como uma experiência de escrita, para além do que representam. Então, conto uma história onde a representação não é o mais importante, mas a experiência dessa história enquanto escrita. (2011)

This rupture with representation is a crucial point in Reni Adriano's work. As the author himself expresses, the rhythm is also imperative: he believes his way of presenting

rhythm in *Lugar* can provide readers with a mythical experience (what he calls *vivência*, in Portuguese). Specifically, he is aware that his style, based on this necessity of rhythm – and, from the perspective of this thesis, on lyricism –, helps his purposes in conveying a vivid knowledge of these myths. According to Adriano, it is necessary to use the form as a way of rupturing with the representation in the narrative: ‘Aliás, para mim, a luta de Inácio não é outra senão minar com um universo cinicamente representado. E isso é impossível de se fazer em um romance sem alterar – às vezes mais, outras vezes menos radicalmente – a forma’ (2015, interview with researcher). As shown above here, insofar as the author’s rhythm of writing conveys sensations, *Lugar* provides intense perceptions about those myths, as a sort of *conviviality*. Basically, the rhythm is used to approximate the readers to the essence of the myths, to the core of their main message within culture, as the primordial collective and popular creation they are, according to folklorist Câmara Cascudo.

The popular and oral narratives included by Reni Adriano in his work are not merely regional. As Câmara Cascudo points out, many of the popular stories regarded as national ones in several countries are in truth known by many other nationalities: ‘Assim, as histórias mais populares do Brasil não são as mais regionais ou julgadamente nascidas no país, mas aquelas de caráter universal, antigas, seculares, espalhadas por quase toda a superfície da terra’ (1952: 31).<sup>79</sup> Thus, what Adriano offers in his lyrical writing is a broader experience of universal stories.

The curse of the serpents, for instance, which is the chief legend in *Lugar*, is also found in two intercontinental myths involving the animal. According to Cascudo, the story of snakes taking the place of babies to breastfeed is part of Portugal’s folklore and it is also well known throughout the Brazilian interior (1962: 222). The legends of Cobra de Óbidos and Cobra Norato originate in northern Brazil, and also appear in the final chapter of *Lugar* – when the serpents creep out from the under the ground:

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<sup>79</sup> The folklorist differentiates legend from myth, pointing to a confused scenario in the definitions of these two concepts. According to him, time is the factor which distinguishes both: the legend might have happened in the past, while the myth did not. The myth is mainly symbolic: ‘Tive de olhar o mito por outro ângulo, interpretando-o numa chave diversa. Caracterizo-o como uma constante em movimento. A lenda é um ponto imóvel de referência. O mito é uma explicação imediata. Pertence ao passado o dia em que São Tomé, Sumé, pisou as pedras brasileiras deixando as pegadas indeléveis. É uma lenda. O Lobisomem trota pelas estradas do Brasil como o Licantropo na Grécia e o Versipélio em Roma. É um mito. Há uma noite em que um padre morto diz uma missa assistida pelos fiéis defuntos. Há depoimento em Minas Gerais de alguém que assistiu a ela. Não há país europeu que não tenha essa visão. É uma lenda porque possui outra característica, o elemento coletivo. O mito, em sua essência, é ação nitidamente personalizadora, Hercules, Teseu, Perseu, Belerofonte, os grandes deuses do Olimpo’ (1952: 105).

Dorme debaixo da terra uma grande cobra; a cauda está dentro do Rio Amazonas e a cabeça debaixo do altar-mor da matriz da cidade. No dia em que a cobra despertar, derrubará a cidade inteira. Na lenda da Cobra Norato vê-se que Maria Caninana, irmã do Encantado, mordeu a Cobra de Óbidos, para que ela destruísse Óbidos. A cobra não acordou mas estremeceu, causando uma depressão na praça principal de Óbidos. (1962: 223)

Cascudo points out that snakes ‘of fire’ have been found in all of the Americas since the time of the Aztecs. While in Brazil they appear to punish those who ruin the soil, in Mexico they are known for appearing against those who are prevaricating (1952: 119-120). Indeed, the Boi-Tatá, one of the most famous Brazilian myths, can turn itself into a snake of fire. The Boi-Tatá can also be identified in other countries, for instance with the will-ó-the-wisp (England), *feux follets* (France), or *brujas* (Mexico).

The Headless Mule (*Mula Sem Cabeça*) is another myth which is present in the novel, as Mário’s cursed godmother. In the plot, Mário, the community healer, is accustomed to strolling around with the creature, without knowing that her true identity is his old godmother: ‘A mula exuberante de formosas ancas, uma saúde mística alisando-lhe as costas, os costados lustrosos, o bafejo tremido molengo dos beiços e o relincho a cada noite anunciando a chegada’ (2010: 79).

The story of the Headless Mule is present in the Americas and in Europe too: ‘No México a dizem *Malora*, e se espalha pelo continente até a Argentina, sob os nomes de MULA ANIMA, ALMA MULA, MULA SIN CABEZA, MUJER MULA, MALA MULA, (sic) etc’ (1962: 495). It is popular as a story of transgression: every woman who becomes the concubine of a priest should turn into a Headless Mule. Cascudo explains that in the Middle Ages the mule was the animal allocated for serving the clergy, while horses were destined for battles and wars.

Desgraça Pelada is the other legend which appears in the story. In rural parts of Brazil, as mentioned before, the horrible, dirty and fetid woman comes to live with whining people. And, mainly after Easter, she is supposed to haunt children who swear. Like a bogeyman, the legend is used to teach children to behave properly, and to teach adults to take care of what they say at home. In the south of Minas Gerais, there is a similar legend called *Maria engomada* that is seen only by children. In *Lugar*, Desgraça Pelada moves in with the character Izé, after his wife and children leave because of his constant complaints. Desgraça knows about the curse of the snakes, and tells Gaio’s brother, Fago, who decides to go away from the community. Amidst the myths, only Desgraça Pelada acts as an ordinary character in *Lugar*, in direct relation to the other characters in

the plot. However, the other legends interact as well, sometimes in disguise, and they are present throughout the novel. These are well-known figures in Brazilian folklore, originating from oral literature.<sup>80</sup>

As mentioned previously, bearing in mind Reni Adriano's purpose in *Lugar*, of making vivid experiences of those popular myths and legends, the lyrical treatment of the narrative seems quite appropriate for the author's goals. Taking into consideration the junction of self and world that happens within the lyrical prose – when a character transmutes the perception of reality they live in associations made by their imagination and awareness –, they are posed with the impossibility of narrating these legends and myths using the traditional distance of the narrator. The distance between the storyteller and the story itself is typical of oral literature, which is based on the 'once upon a time' style, in other words, the traditional representation of reality in orality. The junction of internal and external worlds in this case gains in depth, since the configuration of these stories is linked, as Cascudo stresses, to communal imagination. This means Adriano is adding to the mythical universe of folklore lyrical subjectivity and rhythm as a genuine way of presenting these narratives.

As for the orality, the author explains that, due to the fact that he is so musical in his work, the oral aspect is essential in relation to myths, to the intention of giving them continuity:

Minha matéria é mítica. Aliás, penso que é assim que a oralidade importa para o universo mítico; a continuidade dos mitos depende da oralidade mais por esta razão do que pela ideia de ser essa a forma como o mito é transmitido à posteridade, sem a mediação da escrita. É uma palavra que quer ser voz, quer ser corpo. (2015, interview with researcher)

Nonetheless, concerning the display of these lyrical subjectivities through narration, the writer is also original. The narration varies within a single chapter, differing from one small part to another. Thus, taking as an example an excerpt mentioned before, the first part of Chapter 1 begins with Gaio's voice, narrating the sensations of his own death, the following part the story is told mainly from a distant narrator in the third person with Inácio's voice appearing from time to time. Most of *Lugar* presents a third-person

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<sup>80</sup> Câmara Cascudo argues that oral literature is a type of mysterious canon, derived from secular knowledge about collective culture. It exists, although it looks like it has never existed: 'Ao lado daquele mundo de clássicos, românticos, naturalistas, independentes, digladiando-se, discutindo, cientes da atenção fixa do auditório, outra literatura, sem nome em sua antiguidade, viva e sonora, alimentada pelas fontes perpétuas da imaginação, colaboradora da criação primitiva, com seus gêneros, espécies, finalidades, vibração e movimento, continua, rumorosa e eterna, ignorada e teimosa, como rio na solidão e cachoeira no meio do mato' (1952: 22-23).

omniscient narrator,<sup>81</sup> causing no surprises or contrasts when Inácio or Gaio act as symbolic heroes, expressing their images as internal visions.

However, with this innovative treatment of the narration – i.e., within the prerogatives of lyrical novels as shown so far – the awareness of the act of knowledge, the description of the *moment* is a narrative strategy which is not perceived in Adriano's craft. This fact can be understood as representing the singularity of his work.

#### 4.3.1.3 Brutal facts, violent lyricism

Therefore, Lugar's original story begins with a terrible curse – a myth that in the book is turned into an intense event by the strength of the lyrical text. As this version of the story cannot be told by its inhabitants, because it is forbidden, the narration is interrupted throughout the book: the narrators and the characters only suggest that there is a secret. When Inácio, the main hero, tries to express his suspicion and to question the secret as a child, he is severely punished: in the first chapter, when he attempts to tell the secret he is punched by his Tio Maríó.

The suppressed memories and the secret restrict the narrative through the characters' actions, and the linguistic obstructions imposed by the author. There is even an expression for this strategy in the narrative: 'palavra calada' (2010: 67) – 'Direi-te, pois, filho, do domínio da palavra calada. Porque, Inácio, a gente morre é por não poder mais falar a língua das grutas, das águas, das plantas. E por isso se sentir sozinho nessas solidões' (2010: 67); 'Que se cumpra o mito, Malda, desse langoroso nosso Lugar. Que se levantem contra o meu próprio povo as conjuras da palavra calada!' (2010: 107); or:

Lugar era o proibido. Uma doença que se dobra sobre si mesma e multiplica, redobrando-se quantas vezes mais se pronuncia aquele próprio nome. Que por isso também não havia, o não havido acontecendo no silêncio que dizia a palavra calada. A palavra numa desordem de bocas se costurando de dentes pelas caudas. (2010: 102)

The silence imposed on the inhabitants of Lugar represents violence: a hushed speech that carries an extreme tension, and nevertheless appears in a type of encrypted narrative. Taking advantage from this tense textual construction, Adriano resorts to poetry – when images give hints of what lies underneath the surface of the story. In

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<sup>81</sup> A narrator who can present thoughts and sensations of the characters.

other words, when images offer widened perspectives of sensitive apprehension to the readers.

However, despite the violence against memory, the refusal to talk about the past, *Lugar* has a storyteller, a character called Maldavina, who plays a crucial role in the plot. Maldavina is the only character who has an ever-changing name, like the sinuous words outlined before: she is also called Malda, Maldava, Mulher, Mulhermaldava, and Mulhervina. She has the key to the curse of the snakes, as discovered in the last chapter.

Therefore, angst is predominant throughout the narrative in *Lugar*, as there is something to be said but it is not permitted to speak of it. This angst is related to something that cannot be revealed, only experienced, and could never be properly expressed by the representation of literal facts only, in denotative language. In this sense, several parts of the plot are conveyed through expressions which emphasise sensations. This creates the ideal conditions for the junction of self and world, a prerogative of lyrical narrative, as well as the transmission of these transfigurations (*moments*) by their immediate depiction:

Espécie de dor que não soubesse sentir – pelo o que passou Inácio, rememorando aquela história. Quantas almas teriam gritado até chegar ao ponto em que aquilo contassem! (...) Como houvesse uma voz imorredoura infinita que o dissesse, e dizendo mesmo fosse a história. E houvesse dentro uma bola de pelo perpetuamente em movimento para ser vomitada. Sensação de ter engolido um novelo peludo cuja ponta ficasse para fora, e ele puxa, o fio de cabelo se enovela ao contrário, e nunca acaba, por mais que desenrole. (2010: 35)

At a factual level, this constantly troubled textual construction is accompanied by some characters' violent behaviour, mainly Brechó, Gaio's father, and Isga, Inácio's aunt. The mercilessness shown against the weak, especially animals, is exposed by the author as a sort of mental illness, with a graphic description of animals being murdered. At the beginning of the story, Inácio is appointed by the community to learn to kill small animals, to be a 'mata-gato'.

Some of these animals are killed because they are ill and must be put down. However, the narrative suggests that several of them are killed as an everyday activity – some of these descriptions are full of graphic details and are rather Naturalist texts, such as this one (here in part), when Brechó kills a puppy: 'Outra bordoadá e o arreganhado dos dentes se desconjuntavam na quebratura do instrumento. O estufo da barriga d'água, outra bordoadá, e as tripas saltando volumosas pelo estreito do traseiro.' However, as a

symbolic hero, Gaio transmutes the experience in his mind: ‘Quanto mais o corpo do cachorro era uma desordem macerada, mais aquilo se afeiçoava ao pai’ (2010: 52).

As for the description of the characters, there is, besides the unpleasant and anguished atmosphere, also a type of violent and haunting climate. For instance, consider this one about aunt Isga (a proper name that seems to be a reduced anagram of “lambisgoia”, which means a nosy woman, and also a species of giant slug in Portuguese):

O único prazer de Isga era alimentar-se de rãs. Comeu certa vez, por engano, um tipo de sapo, e passou a ser esta a sua preferência. Às vezes alimentava-se também de frutas, e nunca deixava a semente – por ser uma possibilidade... Triturava-a com um ódio agudo de dentes, transtornada pela possibilidade contida nos caroços. Mas fossem rãs fossem sapos ou frutas, mesmo o gosto na boca de Isga era sempre um fermento. (2010: 65)

This type of violence depicted in *Lugar* illustrates Ralph Freedman’s statement about the real nature of the lyrical fiction, which is never made of ‘purple prose’ (1963: 1). The novel conveys brutality through imagetic transfiguration and lyrical treatment of the text. Furthermore, there is lyrical progression in the most violent scenes, in an increasing apprehension by the reader of the harsh atmosphere of the novel through imagery. As Ricardo Gullón also states, the strength of lyricism ‘es una fuerza delicada que puede impregnar de su oscura fragancia escenas de genuino horror’ (1984: 12).

To the author, however, the most violent characteristic of the novel’s text is the rupture with representation itself. That is to say, the outstanding violence perceived in the story is not equivalent to the violent innovation of the discourse, through rhythm and imagery:

Porque, no universo do representável, tudo o que dizemos tem que fazer sentido segundo a estrutura de linguagem proposta – portanto, todo discurso deve se fazer *razoável*, mesmo quando em franca oposição com um outro. Aliás, principalmente nesse caso, pois é o que assegura que estão tratando de uma mesma coisa, dentro de uma mesma inteligibilidade. Quer dizer: falamos nos mesmos termos, dentro de uma estrutura fechada de discurso. (Claro que a essa altura me ocorre *A ordem do discurso*, do Foucault...) Mas, o que aconteceria, se eu fosse convocado a discursar numa ordem, mas conseguisse atingir uma modalidade “discursiva” que, muito mais que vencer o adversário na mesma inteligibilidade, minasse com a própria estrutura que assegura a razoabilidade do discurso e com isso desnudasse radicalmente a ficção ou representação em que até ali se tomava parte? Acho que não tem sido outra a função da poesia e da loucura nos textos literários. (2015, interview with researcher)

Thus, Reni Adriano’s unique style is evident in the way in which his lyricism operates in this mythical and violent narrative. Even more so in his contribution to new

possibilities in contemporary narratives. In order to create an ontological atmosphere for *Lugar*, Adriano was first guided by his inner rhythm and then the need to immerse himself in language and experiment with it, a practice which is quite rare in Brazilian literature.

#### **4.3.2 Wesley Peres: the deconstruction of the self**

After publishing three collections of poetry, Wesley Peres embarked on a new career as a novelist. In 2007, the psychoanalyst from Goiás published *Casa entre vértebras*, which received the Prêmio Sesc de Literatura, a national competition that attracts hundreds of new and unpublished novelists every year.

Despite winning this prestigious award, Peres's novel received few critical reviews. Clearly written in a poetic prose style, *Casa entre vértebras* is not easy to describe. The plot is about a man who wants to write letters to his beloved. The unnamed character talks about himself to a woman called Ana, and in his digressions he ends up discussing some philosophical questions related to being human.

The cover text of the book shows Bernardo Ajzenberg's (the reviewer) hesitation in referring to the realistic part of the plot and the overwhelming inner life of the protagonist: 'Preso em sua habitação, um homem com a mente em redemoinho rumina cartas nunca escritas, esboça angustiado um labirinto de ideias e assombrações. Seus temas: solidão, infância, amor, memórias, morte, loucura, religião.' The reference to the house, however, reveals an attempt to frame literally the symbolic meaning of the house, present in the title. Nonetheless, later on the reviewer admits that poetic prose takes over the narrative, turning it into a 'prosa poética vigorosa' (2007, back cover).

It is not possible to determine places or times within *Casa entre vértebras*. Even though some parts of the book may be regarded as a tribute to Clarice Lispector's *A paixão segundo G.H.*, Peres goes further into non-referential identification – there is no initial action to trigger the protagonist's inner journey. From the beginning, the reference is the protagonist's inner world.

The initial occurrence – if there is one in the sense of factuality – is the will and the need to write to Ana, and fulfil an abstract desire. The man leaves it undefined as to whether he is writing in response to the woman's requests or in response to his own needs. One way or another, what remains is the strangeness of trying to describe himself through those letters:



Sabe, é estranho me fazer palavras e me enviar e ser abrangido por seus olhos e me tornar matéria que alimente os continentes mais insólitos do seu pensamento. Mas nada disso ocorrerá, minhas palavras se organizam em torno da sua ausência definitiva. Não tenho para onde enviar a carta, e, na verdade, não quero mais ver você, nem mesmo por intermédio de papel e palavra. (2007: 14)

It is not possible to identify the letters within the chapters of the book; they have no header. In fact each division does not even appear to signify a chapter, rather they act as demarcation lines between segments of text that could be considered mainly poems in prose. In total, there are 163 of these segments. The protagonist himself declares the impossibility or the unlikelihood of this communication:

A carta que você tanto me pediu, uma carta em que finalmente eu fale de mim e só de mim, sem o meu escorregadio jeito de lidar com as palavras e com a vida, conforme você mesma disse. (...) Essa é uma carta impossível em si mesma, porque a coisa que menos sei dizer sou eu, coisa sempre agora, coisa olhada ao mesmo tempo que olha. É uma carta impossível em si mesma porque sem destino e sem destinatário. (2007: 30)

As the man declares, this letter has no destination or sender, nor does it have a beginning or an end: his writing is timeless. This strangeness and the impossibility of describing and defining himself is referred to by the protagonist throughout the story. Ultimately, the book's main concern is the questioning of subjectivity. Peres pursues, through the metaphorisation of whatever is solid in the story, to dismantle everything that could have value in a contemporary construction of the self: identity, home, family, and work. To achieve this goal, he operates in the narrative mainly with the deconstruction of time and space. The absence of time, a basic feature of poetry, is extended to space as well. Although there are some references to the character's room and home, it is not possible to identify from where he is writing. A sensitive reader can see that he could be anywhere. Place, always a steady perspective, turns into a moveable concept.

To begin with, the house in the title already says a lot about its own constitution: a fixed construction that is in the title among vertebrae, which are moveable and fragmentary bone structures. The title indicates a conflict. Thus, it becomes clear that this ambiguous, ambivalent and plural house mentioned in the plot is indeed one of the most important symbols of this deconstruction of identity as well as of mimesis that the author operates in the narrative.

Therefore, taking the house as an example, it can be made of diverse elements or contents; it can be broken down into a multitude of spaces; it can even be denied, when called an outdoor space ('A casa não tem lado de fora; tudo porque a casa é o lado de fora', 2007: 87). The word 'house' here presents complex and diversified semantics, aimed at providing a permanent transit of senses and perceptions. Finally, it is metaphorised poetically: 'O nome habita a coisa, e minha casa é um lugar entre isso' (2007: 62). The house can be, for instance, a way of talking, or something made up of sinuous elements, such as water:

E, no fundo, águas me precedem e preveem. Minha casa é só um modo de falar das águas. Minha casa também me precede. [...] Penso, até e às vezes, que a casa precede as águas. Penso, ao contrário de Míleto, que a casa é a matéria dessas águas que instalam em meus ouvidos um barulho tão intenso quanto o que há entre uma e outra palavra – esse deusinho morto que me sonha. (2007: 58)

In the end, the purpose is to deconstruct the 'house' in its solid aspect and to highlight sensations in an impressionist way. This represents a new way of understanding the word, providing it with senses, as shown in this passage:

Fui eu mesmo que inventei essa casa vazia, com suas vértebras, com seus cômodos ociosos onde há sempre lugar para os meus suicidinhos. Admito sim, essa obsessão por espaços dentro de espaços, daí, talvez, o meu fascínio por estar no entre um e outro espelho, o meu gosto por vinhos, a minha paixão por ler a textura do corpo sem buscar síntese. (2007: 68)

In addition, this displacement occurs not only to the figure of the house, but also in every single cyclical figure that constitutes this lyrical narrative: the spider's web, the rain, the stone, the drawer, and the wind. These figures are displaceable, according to the sensorial filter of the protagonist/narrator. As he suggests, to everything there is no inner or outer world, but rather an in-between world. It is clearly a displacement of sensitivities, as the character evokes.

This ambiguity, a typical poetical feature, is predominant in the book. In fact, there is no minimum circumstantial thread to follow, as was the case in Lispector's *Água Viva*. Places and actions are described in some scenes, but the author's main goal is to depict the transmutation of concrete things within the character's awareness. Freedman reminds us that 'moments congeal into scenes that portray states of mind. They introduce a relationship between sensibility and scene that inverts the positions inner

and outer worlds usually occupy in the novel, because they transmute landscapes and objects into mental acts' (1963: 195).

Indeed, these concrete and factual scenes, in contrast to the richness of the protagonist's thoughts and sensations, show the banality of his life. These scenes comprise the character engaged in bar conversations (2007: 39), cutting his nails (2007: 63), gazing at a leak (2007: 109), waiting at a bus stop (2007: 150), or making little balls of bread crumbs (2007: 211), as if there is nothing interesting left outside of the character's lyrical transmutation.

The whole narrative is contaminated by this strategy, starting with the house which is constantly being dislocated and moving on to all the artifices used by the narrator to deconstruct the meaning of words. Nothing seems to be what it really is – until the reader discovers that perhaps the letters are not to be written, or that the narrator's beloved Ana does not exist: 'Seja Ana quem for, ela, sempre a mesma e sempre outra' (2007: 136). Furthermore, language is linked within the parts of the book, despite their apparent autonomy, which suggests the author's intention of establishing a tacit game with the reader, an agreement in which the plot and the progression of the actions are totally secondary.<sup>82</sup> Whether Ana, the letters, the protagonist himself, his actions and the places are real or not is of little relevance to the reader. The unravelling of language is what is really brought to the fore.

#### **4.3.2.1 Another kind of space**

The perfect scenario for this unravelling of language in *Casa entre vértebras* is a narrative in which space rather than places gain attention. To clarify the conflict between these two concepts, I cite French philosopher Michel de Certeau. According to him, place is an order, or: 'an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies one indication of stability'. At the same time, he states that space, considering variations in direction, velocity and time, 'is comprised by the intersection of moving elements' (2011: 117). As can be noticed in Wesley's work, the lyrical narrative is where this differentiation pointed out by de Certeau can be most felt, due to the destabilisation of the concept of place.

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<sup>82</sup> To link parts of the book with the same words is a mode of giving continuity to thoughts and sensations and became a known literary resource used by Clarice Lispector, in *A paixão segundo G.H.*, as shown in Chapter 3.

It is relevant to draw attention to how space is used in this type of writing – and for this task I resort to a neologism in Portuguese, spatialisation (*espacialização*), which refers to the act of deepening the object of narration in literature. In a lyrical novel, the sequentiality fades giving way to patterns of images, and time is spatialised, as well as the other elements in the story: people, occurrences and places.<sup>83</sup> This type of spatialisation appears throughout the plot. Bringing together de Certeau's assertions and the theories about lyrical narratives, the spatialisation of the text is regarded as a sort of unlimited extension or the expansion of the instant that is narrated. The author turns time into a space to be explored, as if he were diving into the portrayed instant. I recall here once again Virginia Woolf's concept of *moment* – a lyrical writer's immersion into his/her own awareness, when the sense of continuity is totally lost, bringing a sense of timelessness and meandering to the plot.<sup>84</sup>

This unusual literary idea of space engenders new syntactic constructions. For instance, the verb 'estar' undergoes a disarticulation, since places do not consist of established territories in the narrative. In more than one part, the author suddenly suppresses the verb so evidently in the syntax that it seems he is aiming to surprise the reader, forcing his/her localisation in the narrative. The strategy reinforces the verb 'to be' as a state of existence, over the use of the verb in the sense of placing. This can be seen in the following excerpts, where the verb 'to be' is suppressed: 'Mas a coisa é ainda menos. Há tempos não sei *onde* você, *onde* essa carta para mim sempre algo tão impossível' (2007: 30, emphasis mine), or:

Sei que minha história pode ser contada – se é que se trata mesmo da minha história –, contada por mim com mais eficácia falando de objetos, neles está registrado o impacto da dinâmica circunavegante do espaço – história ou ensaio. Portanto, tem algo em mim que me fala com total desconhecimento de tudo *o que enredado* em meu nome. (2007: 168, emphasis mine)

Peres also attempts to create attrition between the two verbs 'ser' and 'estar', applying them in such a way as to cause unfamiliarity. He alternates the verbs in both senses – existence and localisation – as 'sou o isso que tanto irrita você, matéria fria sangrando significações, tantas e nenhuma, sou o à beira disso, o à beira de todas as coisas, *sou*

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<sup>83</sup> Although spatialisation is used not only in lyrical narratives, its preponderance in them is striking. This is due to the immersion in the *moment*. When there is no spatialisation, the narrative takes on more sequentiality: time, characters and things are not so detailed in sensitivity, and the objective progression takes up more space.

<sup>84</sup> See parts 1.2 ("Other investigations") and 1.2.1 ("Virginia Woolf: a source of inspiration"), in Chapter 1.

tanto em casa, tanto no quarto, tanto na gaveta' (2007: 198, emphasis mine), or: 'Em casa, sou mais só. Em carta sou outro, e também nela estou só. Em casa sou mais estrangeiro' (2007: 13). The reason for the repetition and the inappropriateness of the verb 'to be' is not to show the character's state of mind or localisation to the reader, but rather to call attention to the language itself. The unusual writing displays the protagonist's fundamental questions: as the title indicates, he is divided between being physically and emotionally in his own story; his house is made up of many states and sensations.

#### **4.3.2.2 Silence, the strongest image**

Peres's emphasis on narrative spatialisation, like an immersion in the text, is spread around the most present images of the story. This means that this feature hovers over the recurrent figures, among them the spider's web, the rain, the stone, the drawer, the wind and the eye, bringing to those images a common characteristic that unifies them into a pattern of imagery. This common feature resulting from the spatialisation is silence. Through the spatialisation of the images, the reader becomes aware of a certain silent rhythm in the writing – like a musical pause.

Moreover, throughout the story the author explicitly mentions the impossible task of expressing himself using only words – the sort of inexpressibility that is a usual prerogative of lyricism. As Peres mentions: 'montar a presença do que não está' (2007: 55); '*Sol entalado no coração* – que coisa mais bela o indizível – empalavrado, permanecendo indizível' (2007: 123, author's emphasis). Thus, he tries to say something that is beyond words, and this seeking for expression through images is supported by the insertion of silence in the text; and silence through spatialisation. The recurring images become silent but very expressive.

I will look at some of these images as examples. Regarding the drawer: 'Esta gaveta redemoinha. A estrutura do redemoinho é o seu movimento' (2007: 22), or 'E a gaveta permanece lá, com seu escuro incompleto e indestrutível, continente de tudo, menos da coisa que procuro neste presente contínuo' (2007: 52). Concerning the eye: 'Cartografar o olho, escrever o seu funcionamento eólico e, com esse mesmo olho, olhar um caracol e, a partir dele, entender' (2007: 55). Or, on the subject of the spider's web:

Por falar em coisa nenhuma, coisa que não pode haver em minha casa é teia. Se houver, não durmo. Escuto os vazios emoldurados em movimento. Me dá gastura

pensar em minha casa com vazios emoldurados. É que, mesmo não havendo teia, meu verso se redige nos meus olhos sem para onde olhar. Teia é coisa que só serve pra sublinhar o silêncio. É uma dessas vozes que não combinam com o corpo. (2007: 16)

There is a continuous attempt to attribute silence in images of things that are, in the end, symbols of fixity. Metaphorising concrete things is certainly a poetic characteristic; in Peres's writing this operation establishes an alternative view of what is narrated through silence, as if he were inserting silence in movement. In these examples above, such as the drawer, a whirlwind is made up of wind and dust – and it is silent. The same can be said about the *aeolian functioning* of the eye, that suggests something that works silently, like a windmill; or, in the case of the spider's web, in which the narrator exposes his angst because to him the web (and the spider's act of building it) already contains an unbearable silent movement itself. It is as if the spider could build silence itself.

This very particular way of metaphorising images can be detected in two of Peres's books, using deconstruction through spatialisation and silence as his main strategy. To deconstruct the 'I' is in fact his main objective. As he writes, 'E então eu me sustento nisso: eu; finjo acreditar nesse mero caco de som que me permite mirar o estranho corpo no espelho e dizer: eu. Ah, minha inaptidão para a palavra que me comunique, que comunique qualquer coisa! Minhas palavras não são para dizer' (2007: 129), or 'penso, agora pelo menos, que isto aqui, este cardume de palavras e instantes, tende quase para escrever a escritura do que não se pode escrever – mesmo sabendo que metalinguagem mesmo não é coisa deste mundo' (2007: 138). The author cannot communicate as a constituted self. His attempts to communicate are ways of dealing with his fragmentary nature, in the form of words, like schools of fish or instants, to which he refers.<sup>85</sup>

It is important to stress the vivid junction of inner and outer worlds, and that his lyrical self is very intense in pursuing depersonalisation, something typical of lyricism. In this sense, Wesley Peres is very similar to Clarice Lispector, mainly with regard to *Água viva*, where the sequential plot is practically non-existent.<sup>86</sup> All of his resources are used

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<sup>85</sup> Narrative struggles with language are not always necessarily lyrical. The immersion into human consciousness in the last century brought about the problematisation of the language as one of the consequences, to the novel writing. Lyricism configures then just one of the prospects in this shifting panorama. See Chapter 1, from item 1.4 ('The novel on its own') onwards. In the case of Wesley Peres, the author presents other characteristics of a lyrical novelist, as the current item 4.3.2 seeks to expose.

<sup>86</sup> Besides Clarice, cited in the protagonist's gesture of making balls of bread and in the analogy 'A angústia é uma coisa branca' (2007: 161), there are references to Raduan Nassar, Fernando Pessoa, Orides Fontela and Gertrude Stein as well.

to demolish subjectivity, a procedure that, in the end, reaches the external world in its representation as well: the wind, the rain, the drawer, the room and everything else lose their concreteness. For this extreme depersonalisation, the base narrative is ideal – *Casa entre vértebras* takes as a backdrop to the epistolary novel. However, this happens in a contemporary way, since the character's letters to Ana are mere attempts at communication. The protagonist's effort to frame himself in a written description is perfect for the deconstruction of the 'I' mentioned above.

#### 4.3.2.3 The foundational body

In Peres's second book, *As pequenas mortes* (2014), silence is replaced with a very rational and talkative mind – which, nonetheless, has similar intent to the character in *Casa entre vértebras*: the deconstruction of the self. The main difference is that the focus this time centres on the body.

There is also a greater differentiation between self and world. The external plot relates to the radioactive contamination accident which occurred in Goiânia, in September 1987, when hundreds of people were contaminated by Caesium-137 (radiocaesium), with fatal consequences. On this occasion, an abandoned source of radiotherapy in a closed hospital was stolen and handled by many innocent people, causing death and injuries.

Felipe Werle is a musician and university lecturer from Goiânia, who is obsessed with death. This radioactive accident which occurred in Goiânia is an excuse for a certainty he repeats to himself: he has cancer. His thoughts are concerned with this problem, which is never confirmed by the several tests he has undergone. Felipe has a girlfriend, Ana, who objects to his paranoia. The protagonist is a tormented and neurotic person, whose second obsession is sex.<sup>87</sup>

The book is divided into three parts: “As pequenas mortes”, “O livro de W.” and “Anotações para o discurso da cerimônia de premiação do Ars Eletronica”. Each one of

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<sup>87</sup> One of Felipe's explicit references is Georges Bataille, with *Story of the Eye*, cited several times. Bataille's book is usually considered as a pornographic story; nonetheless, according to Roland Barthes, in the essay “The Metaphor of the Eye”, the plot should be considered not only as a novel, but as a poem, for its metaphorical composition, when the Eye itself is represented by several global objects and viscous liquids throughout the narrative, in distinct positions and situations. With this association, Peres may also indicate the semantic richness of sex in *As pequenas mortes* – the title itself refers to the French expression which means orgasm, *la petite mort*. The philosopher Emil Cioran, the psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan, the writer James Joyce and the rock band Joy Division are among other references of *As pequenas mortes*.

these parts is also subdivided into minuscule chapters. It is mostly narrated in the first person, favouring the lyrical approach to the narrative. Nonetheless, sometimes another narrator erratically appears in the story. This other narrator says that he is writing about Felipe Werle, and when he does that it is mainly as an interior monologue – however, in the third part, Felipe declares he is this other person, and establishes this uncertainty in the narrator’s voice.

Peres utilises other resources to shift the narrative voice: he quotes directly from God, when the entity casts a curse on Goiânia, condemning the inhabitants to suffer (2013: 48; 99). Moreover, there are footnotes in the book which are not used as bibliographical references or elucidative comments, but with the purpose of providing ironic observations, such as, for instance, footnote 10: ‘Fetichista é o caralho!’ (2013: 30).

As in *Casa entre vértebras*, angst is almost a character, and it is brought to the foreground through the narrator’s voice. Nonetheless, such a level of agony is deeper in Felipe Werle than in the protagonist of the first novel. This angst could never be so well expressed in a denotative language only, which would be insufficient for the task. Therefore, the narration is abundant in metaphorical images as well. However, a bigger weight is given to the psychological aspect of the character’s voice in the second novel, as Felipe becomes aware of his own psychological illness (although he mistakes it for a physical disease). The character believes that, through writing, he will be able to overcome his obsessions. The difference between this protagonist and the other is that the former is not committed to being a writer, and he even seems to enjoy playing with words. Felipe Werle believes his only salvation, more than music, is literature.

Having a psychological novel as a base narrative, and a protagonist obsessed with death, *As pequenas mortes* presents as a pattern of imagery the metastasis, the canker – which is the apparent (visible) aspect of the cancer. Decomposition, wounds, tumours, and sickness are around the omnipresent image of the body compose the recurrent imagetic panorama of the novel. Sex and death, anchored in the strong and preponderant image of the body, are exhaustively repeated, reflecting Werle’s neurosis.

The colour blue, present in bodily putrefaction, is also constantly mentioned. Blue is the colour associated with Caesium-137 as well, because the radioactive element, originally a white powder, glows with a blue light when it is seen in the darkness. Peres takes advantage of this transformation to metaphorically explore the relationship between blue, death and mystery. As he points out, ‘o azul da morte’ (2013: 20), or ‘Morrerei a morte cromática que a cidade oferece aos seus rebentos’ (2013: 54):



Em Goiânia, 1984 é 1987, e Orwell nenhum não anteviu a exata sonata de vísceras azuis da cidade. Quando fora de Goiânia, o espectro azul da cidade fica mais nítido. Tenho conversado com pessoas de Goiânia sobre o Acidente do Césio e, em meio às rasuras mnemônicas, ressoa, pontiagudo, o medo de que o ruído azul *caesium* esteja ainda mordiscando as vísceras da cidade, isto é, das pessoas. (2013: 35-36)

Felipe Werle is the symbolic hero, and transfigures the reality around him even when the second narrator is dominating the scene, between pages 68 and 80 – the narrator’s discourse is taken over by Werle’s voice, through an interior monologue. Most of Felipe’s thoughts are based on bodily and sensual sensations, in images that sometimes, through lyrical progression, reach a high poetical level, such as this one:

O não email de Ana fez-lhe pensar no cheiro da boceta de Ana e, agora, se lembrou: a causa, o ideal que o movera em sonho a destroçar um monte de gente era isso, só podia ser isso: a boceta de Ana — ou o cheiro dela, que seja. Os muitos lábios, música sanguínea de lábeis sons vermelhos quentes molhados, lisura áspera da língua lambendo os muitos lábios em ritmo dodecafônico, ele, ela, acéfalos — elelacéfalos — o corpo no corpo, e sem o quê. Ela, escorregadios os gemidos para dentro, gemidos de quem engoliu um mundo com seus muitos lábios de calar-se em gemidos. (2013: 70)

In this example, the most corporeal and animalistic features of the body are used as a starting point. The vulva, like the mouth, is a physical organ linked to sensual pleasures and the satisfaction of instincts. However, from its smells, colours, textures and formats, the character transmutes its physicality, also employing sonority in his description of his lover’s genitals. One of the book’s recurrent images is of Felipe’s soul coming out of his body through ejaculation. This preeminent body works as a channel for transcendence through pleasure, but it is also the shortest path to Felipe’s obsession: ‘Sons de trepadas, gemidos descompassados e, de dentro para dentro, a carne molhada que se mistura a pensamentos cancerígenos’ (2013: 23).

Many of these associations have a psychoanalytical background, since the body is the point of junction through which individuals can live their life or their death instincts. With a kind of rational lyricism, however, *As pequenas mortes* does not offer continuous situations for lyrical transmutations; despite being a lyrical novel, the immediacy of portraiture does not happen as often as in *Casa entre vértebras*. It seems that Peres’s strategy was to work on Werle’s neurosis from the point of view of his mental assertions. The musician, besides discussing the contamination accident and his life in Goiânia, is often making moral judgements, claiming to be a sceptical and cynical person; and even though the use of repetition can be regarded as a lyrical

resource, it also acts as evidence of Felipe's neurotic symptoms. There is, for example, the repetition of the phrase 'Goiânia ou Bombaim, pouco importa', which appears on pages 16 and 50, and of this excerpt, found on pages 9 and 47:

Quase vinte anos depois, custa às pessoas admitirem que o que não acontece, acontece. Pensa-se sempre que a peste é coisa estrangeira, que foices não podem ser azuis. Àquele que lhe é agradável, Deus dá sabedoria, garante o livro que garante, entanto o mesmo livro garante: Deus dá sabedoria, e a máquina de morrer permanece em seus giros e em sua arte repetitiva de pulverizar o que está sob e, porventura, o que esteja sobre o sol. Os habitantes de Goiânia eram perversos e grandes pecadores diante do Senhor? O certo é que houve um cancro nessa cidade cu do mundo, cancro azul, ainda por cima. Azul – durante aqueles dias, espessas trevas cobriram toda a cidade. Não se via um ao outro, só se viam os mortos, e o desejo de todos era matar os mortos. Um pequeno imenso holocausto, um sacrifício consumado pelo fogo, um odor agradável ao Senhor. Somos todos parte de um sacrifício a Ele, ao inominável risco no vidro de nossos olhos. Fomos ungidos, nós, os dessa cidade, ungidos com o doce odor da voz áspera do Deus. (2013: 9; 47)

These repetitions of expressions, or of whole passages, create circularity in the narrative that contributes to the story's lyrical atmosphere. Unlike the circularity of the poem, this circularity of prose lyricism may be linked to rhythm, but is mainly related to repetition. Throughout the entirety of the novel, *As pequenas mortes* benefits from the recurrence of strong images and metaphors which help to establish the atmosphere of lyricism within its main motif, the cancer and its characteristics.

Although diverse in their approaches to poetic prose, *Casa entre vértebras* and *As pequenas mortes* share the need for expressing what is impossible to express without lyricism – in other words, the presence of *Stimmung*, or the soul/affective disposition that seems to complete what language is unable to say.<sup>88</sup> Both novels show a need for voicing the characters' angst and anxiety. In this sense, Peres's lyrical prose illustrates Luzia Tofalini's claims that this feeling forms the basis for lyrical narratives. According to Tofalini, the lyrical novel is generally a means for mankind to recover from existential angst (2013: 187). In fact, in *Casa entre vértebras* the narrator already declares his state of mind, not so openly as Felipe Werle, but the malaise is already there: 'Habito a anestesia, uma anestesia que amortece e instaura a angústia, ao mesmo tempo: habito a linguagem que inventou um eu pra morrer' (2007: 208).

I understand this angst as a permanent backdrop, as a clue given by the author through the persistent influence of Clarice Lispector. References to Lispector's work are present

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 1, Section 1.5.1, "The lyrical: key points to consider".

not only in Peres's writing style,<sup>89</sup> but in explicit references to *A paixão segundo G.H.*'s cockroach. The metaphor of the insect's white pus as human angst is cited and discussed by Peres in both of his works:

É justamente esse troço que, quase duas semanas depois, insufla essas quase duas mil pessoas, inflamando-lhes até os cabelos de sentimentos sem nome, angústia branca como o miolo de uma barata. Uma barata não, com esse troço morre não, as baratas resistem a isso daí, se tiver uma guerra com bomba disso, se uma guerra mundial disso, as baratas sobram, os homens somem, as baratas sobram, as baratas resistem a isso que os homens não resistem, elas aquela massa branca dentro delas, da cor da angústia que infecciona até os cabelos das pessoas pedra na mão, cruz na mão, e mãos fazendo o pelo-sinal, enquanto a boca vitupera, quando chegou aquela mulher, quem é aquela mulher, a mesma pergunta aqui e ali, é a mãe, a mãe da filha, a filha da mãe, a filha da mãe que ainda tem a marca daquele troço — que eu te falei, filha, pra não colocar na boca. (2013: 41)

In the scene above, the narrator is talking about the funeral of one of the victims of Caesium-137, a 6-year-old child called Leide das Neves. At this girl's funeral, there is a popular demonstration against the government and against the child's family for contaminating the city by burying her there. Werle transmutes the white colour of the caesium as a powder into the white inner material of the cockroaches, the only creatures on the planet able to survive any catastrophes. This association between the caesium and the cockroaches' pus shows that the caesium, the white/blue mortal substance, has contaminated everyone not only physically, but that it has also brought to light their main fear: death. The white powder, like the cockroaches' inner pus, is invincible – and it is like death, like angst, turned blue:

Essa angústia branca como o branco do de dentro das baratas, o branco do de dentro das baratas branco como esse negócio, engraçado, se a luz acesa parece um salzinho, né, e aí, se você apaga, azul. Essa angústia branca, a mãe sentia sabe-se lá por que razão, mas de um certo jeito eu sentia, coração de mãe é desse jeito, aquele negócio bonito, aquele negócio azul, era de um azul que parecia coisa de Deus, mas eu senti sabia que era do diabo aquilo, todo mundo pensando em ficar rico com aquilo, Deus não manda riqueza assim caindo do céu, aquele azul não era azul do céu, era como se fosse um azul-vermelho, um vermelho-celeste, que seja o diabo, que seja, nós vamos ficar ricos, dizia o pai sob a luz amarelecendo ele, olhando para a menina que, de pé, agora, ia lavar a mão, a menina olhada pelo sexto sentido da mãe que tinha certeza de que Deus não manda nenhum azul, nada, nenhum pó nenhuma riqueza assim de mão beijada, isso daí pode até valer dinheiro, mas vocês não sabem o que é isso não, esse salzinho aí, cocaína, eu já vi na TV é um salzinho assim desse jeito, e desde quando cocaína brilha assim, mulher. (2013: 42)

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<sup>89</sup> References analogous to the philosophical influences Lispector showed in her work, especially from Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre, according to Benedito Nunes (1966).

The white that bursts out the cockroach's body in *A paixão segundo G.H.* is sensed by Lispector's character as a metaphor for the angst of living. In *As pequenas mortes*, Peres directly refers to this existential torment, applying it to a collective existence in the face of a life-threatening situation. As the reading progresses, it is understood that the white/blue menace is everywhere and it is a threat to everybody, not only to Felipe Werle, as the junction of the protagonist's inner and outer world shows.

### 4.3.3 Carrascoza: the contemporary lyrical veteran

Among the contemporary authors I have examined most closely in this research, João Anzanello Carrascoza (1962) is the most prolific. He has published 40 titles, including short stories, children's and YA's books, non-fiction books (for Publicity and Advertising), adaptations, and, more recently – in 2013 and 2014 – two novels. Along with Clarice Lispector and Raduan Nassar, who can be considered landmarks of lyrical narrative in Brazilian literature, Carrascoza is becoming another very important point of reference in this field. His texts demonstrate remarkable lyricism. The author, who works as an advertising editor and an academic, made his debut as a writer in 1994. His writing is mainly dedicated to children and adolescents, with 19 titles in that area. To date, he has also published 10 short story collections.<sup>90</sup>

Lyricism is frequently associated with Carrascoza's oeuvre – although this lyricism is not observed in a more analytical way, as is my intention in this investigation. Regarding the writer's style, it is usually said that he employs an elevated tone, and produces deeply moving narratives. According to critic Miguel Conde, Carrascoza's highly sensitive narratives can be considered as ostensible by many critics. Conde also stresses that Carrascoza's narrators are often intransigent and cling to their exalted moods, almost as if they wanted to force the reader to accept this intense sensibility (2009: 228). The critic and scholar wrote the cover text of Carrascoza's first novel, *Aos 7 e aos 40*, and emphasises the writer's rapture as a sort of trance: 'em que se misturam encanto e consciência trágica' (2013).

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<sup>90</sup> The author has been awarded for both styles, although most of his prizes are for his short story collections. His most prized book is *Aquela água toda* (a collection of short stories), published in 2012, which won important prizes in Brazil, from National Foundation for Literature for Children and Young Adults (FNLIJ), the Brazilian Chamber for Books (CBL), and the São Paulo Association of Art Critics (APCA). This book was awarded internationally with the White Ravens Catalogue prize, from the Bologna Children's Book Fair. In 2015, his second novel, *Caderno de um ausente*, won second place in the Jabuti award, one of Brazil's most prestigious literary prizes. Besides working as a resident writer abroad, Carrascoza's books have been translated into Spanish, French, Italian and Swedish.

Indeed, for some critics, such as João Silvério Trevisan, who wrote the cover text for *Amores mínimos* (2011), this sensitivity is an intense feature of poetry: ‘O uso da linguagem chega a uma tal exuberância que a prosa pode se esgarçar em tecido poético e atingir sua forma essencial, criando narrativas em versos’ or ‘É como se a Grande Epifania estivesse em toda parte, o tempo todo, nestes relatos de epifanias mínimas que maximizam explosões de poesia’ (2011: cover text). Or, rather than referring to poetry explicitly, there are direct allusions to lyricism in Cintia Moscovich’s analysis of *Espinhas e Alfinetes*, also contained in the cover text: ‘é admirável a precisão que alcança, virtude que só faz salienta a enorme carga de lirismo de sua ficção’ (2010).

These quotations from cover texts, forewords and afterwords reveal that, in a 22-year career, which includes many critically acclaimed titles, the author has been scarcely studied. This happens, I assume, not only because of his contemporaneity – as it is common in the Brazilian canon to consider the amount of time having passed as a factor indicating quality – but rather on account of the strangeness his style provokes, as again Miguel Conde defines:

Ao pensarmos em como nossa ficção contemporânea tem enfatizado vivências de cisão, crueldade e isolamento – pela reflexão sobre os limites da linguagem, pela representação de momentos de violência cuja brutalidade parece desautorizar as tentativas de processamento simbólico, e mesmo ainda pela exposição de uma certa anomia social –, podemos demarcar ainda mais um traço do perfil singular deste autor.

Essa contraposição talvez explique por que até hoje Carrascoza recebeu relativamente pouca atenção de nossa crítica literária. (2009: 224)

As mentioned before, in the last three decades the Brazilian literary scene has been marked by a kind of writing of rupture. In this context, Carrascoza’s work goes against the grain. Positioned on the precise threshold of drama, his soulful stories go in the opposite direction to the current prevalent narratives about urban life and violence.

The inner world is evidenced in Carrascoza’s work, punctuated by a silent rhythm in the narrative. This silent rhythm is like a musical rest, and indicates inexpressible feelings and sensations; it is suggested by the use of the metaphors combined with the imagery, surpassing the denotative expression of the text. This inexpressibility is related to *Stimmung*, which concludes the sense that cannot be displayed by language.<sup>91</sup> Within this Carrascoza’s quiet and lyrical pace, the reader finds a multitude of associations and images, turning the reading process into a slow-paced fruition. The title that best

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<sup>91</sup> See table at item 1.5.1, “The lyrical: key points to consider”.

expresses this author's singularity is *O volume do silêncio*, a book of short stories which was awarded the 2007 Jabuti Award (third place). In the afterword, the writer Nelson de Oliveira interprets this characteristic as an ability to give significance to silence:

O que diferencia a prosa de Carrascoza de boa parte da literatura contemporânea – falo da parcela mais ruidosa, sintonizada com a ansiedade e o frenesi contemporâneos – é a presença desse silêncio neutro. Não se trata do silêncio mudo, da ausência de som típica da depressão ou do vácuo. Trata-se do silêncio eloquente que reveste o mistério de que somos feitos. Os contos de Carrascoza entram na quietude, agitam qualquer coisa sonora que há lá no fundo e fazem o silêncio falar. (2007: cover text)

The main setting for this expressive silence is the family environment. His principal material is the relationship within families: the heroes in the stories are in general sons, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, godmothers, godfathers, uncles, aunts and cousins, expressing feelings related to their daily lives. The scenes are mainly set in these characters' homes and there is minimal variation from one to the next, as most of them are situated in the interior of Brazil.

Carrascoza, who comes from a rural part of São Paulo state, sees this recurrent theme as his obsession as a writer, as he states in an interview: 'Interessam-me as relações íntimas entre as pessoas, o pequeno grande mundo que as une, o oceano que há entre duas criaturas, frente a frente. E, para mim, essas relações se dão, invariavelmente, no âmbito das famílias, locus de todas as dores e de todos os amores' (2010). The author believes that the lyrical treatment of the text helps him to deal with more transcendental themes, which is his goal. Furthermore, this lyricism happens organically when dealing with abstract and philosophical subjects:

o tratamento poético está quase sempre presente quando o texto, seja prosa ou seja poesia, carrega posições filosóficas; quando o assunto é fortemente abstrato, o que pede concretude por meio de construções líricas. O estilo elegíaco é apropriado para definições de inesperada beleza, e para propor comparações entre o plano do intelecto e o mundo do sensível. (2015: interview with researcher)

He declares that he has always invested in the metaphorisation of the texts, as well as in his short stories. However, he regards his second novel, *Caderno de um ausente* (2014), as his most lyrical writing, which is entirely metaphorised, along with a high concentration of metaphors in the volume of short stories *Amores mínimos* (2011).

#### 4.3.3.1 A conflicting development

In this type of creative process, Carrascoza has a unique style of building many prose metaphors within a logical form of writing. Although the author is highly lyrical, sequentiality is conversely quite present in his stories. In general, the reader can distinctly discern times and places, as well as an objective progression, with characters living concrete situations in a logical sequence. There is a vivid perception of the outer world as well. This interaction between metaphorisation and consecutiveness can be observed in his previous works – however, when compared to other contemporary authors, João Anzanello Carrascoza’s level of lyricism is more exacerbated. In his work, the lyrical element competes with the limits of sequentiality, with the incidents portrayed by mimesis, in a fierce dispute.

Time is a key point in Carrascoza’s oeuvre. His work mainly deals with personal memories: the past is commonly used as a lesson for the present. This strategy forces the author to situate the stories in time, with past, present and future, causing difficulty from a lyrical perspective, as lyricism is usually timeless. Due to this very imagetic and metaphorical narrative situated within a sequential plot, the aim of my investigation has been to identify passages in Carrascoza’s stories where lyricism disrupts this consecutiveness – or, to suspend it in time and space. In other words, to find *moments* within the author’s plots.

In a concise analysis, these *moments* increasingly appear in Carrascoza’s adult fiction, beginning with his short stories. Within the author’s vast and rich collection, those dedicated to short narratives offer a basis from which to understand Carrascoza’s lyricism. Some are quite lyrical, offering emerging characteristics that could be seen established in his recent works as a novelist.

Although my focus is on his prose in the novel format, I must briefly highlight some passages from his short narratives, with a view to introducing some of these above-mentioned characteristics. My supposition is that, as a lyrical narrative in the process of becoming even and mature, the writer’s oscillation in previous stories might have created a strangeness for the reader, a sensation that something was yet to be achieved. The contrast between linear writing and metaphorical instants might have increased the impression of a dislocated sentimentalism as well.

To begin with, from *Espinhas and alfinetes* (2010), for instance, we can highlight “Mar”. The story is narrated in the first person, through interior monologues in a

continuous textual flow, as if language is designed to disrupt the sequences within the plot. The writer tries to create in the text the movement (rhythm) of the sea. Father and son are initially on the beach, and the moment described is of their back-and-forth movement into the water. While there is a pure description of the present, the emotional tone can be felt in the narration:

Violenta a água estala e a alva espuma avança rumo à areia e os olhos ardidos pelo sal, os lábios se abrem e ele ri, o meu menino, e já outra onda avulta, cresce e se arma e *pega essa, pai*, e vamos, lado a lado, o impacto líquido nos corpos, e ele ri novamente, a prancha amarela, pequena, o meu menino, e o sol se esparrama pelos espaços. (2010: 37)

The text goes on like this without interruption. This quote is the first line of the text, which begins with a recessed indentation, as when a wave is withdrawing, after having pounded the sand. Short sequences of words between commas suggest a choppy cadence, like a troubled sea. Through the expression ‘meu menino’, which is repeated many times, the narrator introduces a sentimental mood. Suddenly, Carrascoza begins to insert metaphors in his descriptions: ‘mais uma vez, a volumosa onda, e ele acerta o tempo e a alcança na ascendente e nela desliza, peixe aéreo voluteando’ (2010: 37); ‘o rosto como a proa de um veleiro’ (2010: 37). Simultaneously, the metaphors become more profound in this rather descriptive narration: ‘o rumorejar, e nós, nós dois, banhados pelo mesmo instante’ (2010: 38); ‘o meu menino, e aquele vai-vem e vem-vai, a maré dos minutos que não percebemos passar para sempre, os minutos tão plenos e já desfeitos como a espuma’ (2010: 38); ‘e eis que, de repente, seu rosto raia, e eu me reconheço nele, na água que ele é de mim’ (2010: 39).

The pattern of imagery is the movement of the waves. In the same oceanic rhythm, the story witnesses the passing of time:

as areias da ampulheta caem, grão a grão, fazendo o grande, fluindo na quietude, e as reviravoltas, as bem e as mal sentidas, os rochedos, as chuvas inesperadas, as noites vazantes, as manhãs de recuo, e eu, sem me dar conta, já uns cabelos brancos, no chuá dos anos renovados, *Nossa, como cresceu*, o meu menino. (2010: 40)

The imagery is maintained while a lyrical progression can be simultaneously perceived. The progression culminates with the narration of a *caixote* (slang in Portuguese for the action of a swimmer being overthrown by the wave): the father experiences the violence of the sea. This corresponds in the plot to the moment when the adult son drowns: ‘e



posso imaginar como tudo aconteceu, a água, violenta a água estala, violenta a água estala, violenta, e a alva espuma avança, a alva espuma avança' (2010: 41). The final image reinforces the greatest metaphor of all: life is as unpredictable as the sea.

Advancing through his books, it becomes easier to follow how the author grows into prose lyricism. *Amores mínimos* (2011) opens with "Cerâmica", a short story which can be described as almost plainly lyrical. Instead of capturing the lyrical eruptions in the text, as before, sharing the narrative with description and sequentiality, the reader moves immediately to the vertigo of the characters' emotions. The story has two protagonists, both narrators, and thus the plot (a single scene) is divided into two: a couple decides to get together, after a long time in which their interest in each other has been platonic, however full of expectations and silent recognition.

With only two paragraphs, entitled "She" and "He", Carrascoza contrasts the viewpoints of male and female at the moment they meet. They do not exchange a single word, and, in real time, everything might happen in a few minutes. Every day, the man comes back from work and sees his neighbour watering the grass. One day, he simply walks into her garden. They look at each other and they enter her house. Through the images of the interior monologue, the reader understands the intensity of their feelings towards each other, which they had concealed for a long time.

Moreover, both protagonists are symbolic heroes, and there is a transfiguration of the external world within the characters' perceptions. Therefore, the intensity of that instant develops into an evident lyrical progression, which presents two simultaneous moments of culmination to both protagonists: 'Deitei na cama e a esperei, e, se ela entrou logo em seguida, pela primeira e única vez sei que nela me entrei para sempre' (2011: 10) and 'E quando me deitei sobre ele, saí de mim, totalmente, como quem sai de dentro da pele, e atirei-me de lado feito uma roupa, para nunca mais deixar de ser a outra em que me transformei' (2011: 11). The short instant is amplified through lyricism, and turned into an emotional experience.

In this book, *Amores mínimos*, Carrascoza begins to lose his characteristic support of a detailed description, combined with the intense insertions of lyricism. Another example is in "A terceira margem de mim", in which the only real frame of reference for the scene seems to be a woman getting up from her bed: 'Então você saiu da cama como de um rio, as pernas afastando as águas até chegar ao raso, e se enfiou quarto afora, molhando-me os olhos com as sombras do escuro' (2011: 117).

This short story is even shorter than “Cerâmica”, and the writer exercises his concision even more, showing a direct relationship between the size of the plot and the lyricism present in the lines. The bed is the only indication of place – apart from this, there is no indication of time or factual relationship between the two characters. Again, there is a couple, but the only narrator is the man; however, he does not give any clues to the facts and there is no sequentiality. From the intensity of his feelings, it can be felt that he remembers the love they have had. Metaphorical images are predominant, and Carrascoza almost reaches a point where the narrative turns into a prose poem, losing referentiality within the story:

Logo me lembrei, com o gosto de fome, dos tempos em que minha lenha acendia a sua fala, enquanto o linho de sua língua em meu falo me apagava os gritos de desejo – e refiz na memória a correnteza que eu era, me fluindo em sua boca, e a sede que você jorrava, me bebendo gota a gota, me sugando como o tempo suga um lenho ao relento, como a flor sorve o néctar da abelha, sem nenhum zumbido. (2011: 118)

It is noticeable that Carrascoza is not very prone to ellipsis, another figure of speech of poetry. The metaphors are more fluid, in the sense that they occur within an expected sequence: in the excerpt above, for example, while he uses alliteration to give melody to the phrases, with “lenha”, “fala”, “linho”, “língua”, “falo”, the associations follow a logical continuity – if the character is a watercourse, he is able to flow, and can also be drunk in drop by drop (‘gota a gota’). The antithesis is made through the reference to wood (“lenha”, also used to light fires), contrasting the liquid against the solid.

#### **4.3.3.2 The greatest challenge in the novel**

This increasing lyricism perceived in his most recent collections of short stories extends into Carrascoza’s first novels. The author wrote them in consecutive years, 2013 and 2014. The first, *Aos 7 e aos 40*, tells the story of a man at those two moments of his personal life. The chapters alternate between the two ages, he as a 7-year-old child in his hometown, in a rural area, and as a 40-year-old man, living in a big city. From his childhood, we have his impressions of the family; as a grown up man, he is facing the consequences of a divorce, and his relationship with his ex-wife and their son thereafter. Graphically, the design of each part is different: in the 7-year-old narrative the text is justified and located in the top half of the page; in the 40-year-old part, it is right-justified only, and located at the bottom of the page. This format was partially inspired by William Faulkner’s *Wild Palms*, as the author revealed in an interview (2014).

As a boy, the protagonist speaks in the first person; as an adult, there is a third person narrator, a very intimate one, who expresses his feelings and sensations. The main character's childhood and adolescence is about discovering life, in typical Carrascoza style, showing the beauties and losses of everyday life: first love, being disappointed with his father, his academic achievements, and his involvement in sports. The maturity segment is all about enduring reality, obligations and duties. Both life periods involve choices. As mentioned before, time is a theme that is very close to the writer, who always seems to be trying to compare present and past, and attempting to learn a lesson from them. The author's characterisation of children – usually boys – is commonly presented in a *Bildungsroman* style.<sup>92</sup> In other words, it exposes the confrontation between inner and external worlds.

In *Aos 7 e aos 40* the antithesis is greater when, at the end, the unhappy adult decides to revisit his past, and go back to his hometown. He is in search of hope in his life, but time once again shows a cruel reality. Although it is not possible to say this novel is completely lyrical, because time, places and sequentiality are prominent, it is interesting to notice how Carrascoza builds his emotional atmosphere. Some metaphors, as illustrated below, are inserted in the story and can illuminate a whole scene:

Ele não reparou no que ela fazia, mas imaginou que  
punha ordem na casa, ajeitava umas coisas aqui e  
ali, esquecida dele;  
e, ele, com o livro aberto, agia do mesmo modo, fingindo que não a notava.  
Mas,  
de repente,  
como se encontrasse a chave capaz de igualar a sua  
percepção à voltagem do universo  
– e, assim, atingir um ponto acima daquele que a  
realidade lhe permitia –, ele se pôs a escutar  
atentamente os passos dela, vagarosos,  
de lá para cá.  
E, então, sentiu que aquele era o momento,  
e ali, junto a ela e ao menino,  
o único lugar no mundo onde desejava estar.  
(2013: 21)

In Carrascoza's permanent struggle between lyricism and description, *Aos 7 e aos 40* achieves the lyrical tone in the same way as in his previous short stories: from the microscopic view of details of daily life and daily relations, the author raises high

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<sup>92</sup> This sort of novel is known as a specific type of psychological novel that can engender the use of lyrical resources, due to the necessity of showing the characters' growth through conflicts with the world. Two renowned novels commonly associated with a blend of poetry and prose in the studies of prose lyricism are novels of formation: *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, by Goethe (1795), and *Tristram Shandy*, by Laurence Sterne (1759). The latter is cited by Ralph Freedman, who gives special attention in twentieth-century literature to *Demian*, by Herman Hesse (1919), which is a plain lyrical novel.

emotions. This may explain why there is no contrast when the metaphorical images are inserted. In the excerpt above, for instance, he describes the most homely situation, when the couple are at home, both occupied with their chores; however the lyrical perception appears, re-signifying the instant.

Nonetheless it is his second novel, *Caderno de um ausente* (2014), which can most definitively be described as lyrical prose. The plot is a diary/testament written by a father, a middle-aged man, to his new-born daughter named Beatriz. In this notebook, which he intends to leave to the girl for emotional support and guidance for her future, he talks about family, ancestors, relationships, and the delights and delusions of life:

e, já que tu entrastes num certo ponto do mundo, trecho talvez final da minha jornada, vais ouvir falar de gente que te antecedeu, e com que nunca poderás conviver, uns nomes bonitos e sonoros, Mateus, André, João, Sara, Luiza, Tiago, Marisa, e, então, eu vou te apresentar a eles, porque haverá, certamente, algo de um e de outro na cor de teus cabelos, no teu jeito de sentir a pele das horas, na constituição de tuas glândulas e no enredo de teus sonhos. (2014: 37)

The father narrates in the first person. The pattern of imagery seems to be the family or the baby album – however, the aim is not to register the evolution of a new life, but rather the challenges undergone by an experienced person. There is even a chapter in which the man indicates that he uses the family albums to talk about his ancestors, and the atmosphere of remembrance is present throughout the novel. The father sheds torrents of metaphorical images, using as a panorama the family history and his own history. He traces portraits of people and life situations: conflicts within the family, recovering from these conflicts, times of intimate peace and war.

The difference between this text and the author's previous one is marked by the inversion of occurrence between his usual emotional description and the *moments*. Points of support to the plot, which are localised in time and space, are no longer present. Instead, a symbolic hero – the father – permanently transfigures reality in his memories or predictions to protect his young daughter from life's unforeseen circumstances.

Carrascoza also includes novelties in his style, such as the use of anaphoras, a textual resource of repetition much used in religious compositions and in poetry. This strategy brings to mind Raduan Nassar's *Lavoura arcaica* (1975). This figure of speech helps to bring out the musicality in the text, whilst evoking a sacred tone. It is important to mention that Nassar is one of the major influences on Carrascoza's work, and they also

have a personal relationship. Nassar has revised some of Carrascoza's texts. Some examples of anaphoras can be seen below (the excerpts are kept here integrally for the sake of the organicity of their lyricism):

*não sei, Bia, embora saiba tantas coisas, eu não sei se o cisco em teu olhar vai te impedir de ver a arquitetura do destino, se o tempo vai se abrir, como uma gaveta, pra te mostrar o que existe na fenda entre o dia e a noite, se as membranas do passado se desfolharão pra que te reencontres comigo nos eventos que vamos viver, não sei se o tempo que se deposita nas coisas feito pó permitirá que o recuperes na campa funda de tuas experiências, não sei, Bia, quase nada de ti, mas sei que somente o silêncio pode cortar a língua das palavras; sei que muito se fala da morte das estrelas, já apagadas quando sua luz chega até nós, mas ninguém nos lembra que há outras estrelas em gestação. (2014: 27, emphasis mine)*

*eu não ia te dar copos pra recolher rios e mares, nem consentir que pegasses o meu atalho pois a tua senda está na planta de teus pés, mas eu ia te ensinar a sentir, pelo toque, a temperatura da argila, pra que conhecesses a matéria volátil com que é feita a nossa existência, eu ia te ensinar que certas ramas se entortam porque seguem o prumo das nuvens, eu ia degustar contigo o sumo dos imprevistos, eu ia, filha, revelar por inteiro o meu molde bruto, de granito lírico, e eu ia, nos dias rústicos, deitar o ouvido à terra de teu peito pra localizar os teus sismos (porque o coração é sempre a carne da vertigem). (2014: 33-34, emphasis mine)*

The anaphoras, inserted in interrupted phrases, give cadence to the narrative and show how much Carrascoza has been influenced by Nassar's *Lavoura arcaica*. Moreover, in these two excerpts, apart from the anaphoras, the author also refines his imagery. The images result in an immediacy of depiction, which does not reflect the reality of the external world but is, nevertheless, related to the sensations of this theme. In the first part of the first passage, the father's concept of time is conveyed through associations that portray time as a surprising and unstable element ('arquitetura do destino'; 'membranas do passado', 'fendas entre o dia e a noite'); in the second passage, nature is the basis for advising the child about the fragility of existence ('matéria volátil'; 'prumo das nuvens'; 'sumo dos imprevistos', 'terra do teu peito'). As in a typical lyrical novel, the protagonist achieves the junction of self and world to express his thoughts about reality.

Another detail to be stressed in this book is the importance of the textual layout because it also supports the author's work on the concept of silence. Silence is one of Carrascoza's obsessions – as he declares, 'Para escrever, é preciso primeiro ligar o silêncio dentro de nós' (2010). The graphic design of *Caderno de um ausente*, like the title, tries to emphasise this characteristic. The empty spaces seen in the middle of the texts, which are present throughout the entire book, are an attempt to capture again the

design of the writer's intensity. They represent the distance between father and daughter, and the man's hesitations about the magnitude of life.

Life lessons and the impermanence of things, the main themes in the writer's oeuvre, find their best expressions in *Caderno de um ausente*, Carrascoza's first entirely lyrical novel. This is no coincidence, since lyricism has a natural propensity for dealing with transcendental and ontological subjects, as the writer himself agrees. The novel's theme conveys this sort of abstract construction, based on remembrances and projections, with a broad incursion into the narrator's feelings and thoughts. Carrascoza works hard to create a lyrical plot, disseminating the maximum amount of lyricism throughout the book, like a 'diapásão mais forte de metaforização' (2015, interview with researcher). According to the author, these images play a prominent role in his craft because his protagonist deals intensely with the sensations of past emotions.

By surrendering fully to lyricism, Carrascoza's depth and strength of feelings, often considered overly sentimental, have found a more appropriate form of expression. Despite having received many awards, Carrascoza's oeuvre has frequently been regarded as excessively emotional, and that might be the reason why his work is not often reviewed by the critics. Miguel Conde once even used the term *kitsch* to describe Carrascoza's work. He used the term in the sense of popular (pop), as part of mass media culture, dealing with ordinary and easy emotions to engage his readers in the form of 'convenções sentimentais' (2009: 225). The critic also pointed out the importance of the ultrasensitive narrators, who are always there to reinforce the drama of the plots.

Conde's statements were made in 2009, before the writer's first novels, and before the author had achieved the right proportion between what was understood as sentimentalism and lyricism. It seems likely critic's assertions were based on the impression a reader may have had from reading Carrascoza's early work for the first time – when the division between detailed description and metaphorisation was more evident. However, when analysing his late works, as I do here, it is possible to find a point of balance.

Furthermore, the distinctive themes of the author, as mentioned above, support this impression. If lyrical narratives are not necessarily 'purple prose', as Ralph Freedman states (1963: 1), this does not mean that they cannot deal with more sentimental expressions. In this sense, of all lyrical authors' oeuvres, João Anzanello Carrascoza's work is the hardest to grasp, because his lyrical subjectivity negotiates with the

characteristics of sentimentalism that have always disturbed the examination (and acceptance) of lyrical prose writing.

#### **4.4 Concluding revelations**

Adriano, Peres and Carrascoza were chosen for the explicitness of their lyricism. This characteristic is usually perceived as intensity in these authors' works because they delve into lyrical experiments as well, forcing the reader to engage in and share this intense experience. The intensity is usually caused by lyrical progression, through images and rhythms, as has already been shown. My idea was to examine these lyrical constructions and see which different approaches they could offer to the main themes that these writers explore.

In Reni Adriano's work, it is possible to observe a unique treatment of popular culture. As the author himself declares, the folkloric and regionalist themes have never been his main goal, but rather the experience of the mythical within culture. Following an internal rhythm that pre-existed the narrative, linked to his own imaginary roots from Minas Gerais, the writer gives a voice to a transcendental view of myths and legends that are ultimately universal. At the same time, his style is closely linked to his own writing process of experiencing something unknown: 'Você não imagina o quanto me sinto aliviado em poder teorizar, assim, com tão aparente facilidade, sobre essa experiência' (2015, interview with researcher).

In Adriano's case, following his own experiences led to an innovative approach to expressing the collective imaginary and primordial sensations. The author believes that this could never have been done without lyricism. The usual treatment of representation in *Lugar* is challenged to give way to a non-representational universe, an expression of the ontological and primordial within men, commonly ignored in rational discourse and not shared in society. By using the regionalist narrative as a base narrative, Adriano is providing a discussion on the parameters of representation in Regionalism as well, thus enriching the subject. Although this has never been the author's intention, his first title constitutes an interesting mode of transforming this regionalist discourse into lyrical narrative and broadening its perspectives.

Peres's works favour the study of a novelistic style linked to the genesis of lyricism in modern novels: psychological narrative. As analysed in Chapter 1, the lyrical novel is

considered an instance of the psychological novel, which depicts the characters' mental states in different ways.<sup>93</sup> Peres is concerned with psychological and humanistic issues and in his book *Casa entre vértebras* he uses the epistolary novel, a confessional form of writing, as his base narrative.

The junction of his characters' selves and the world and the appropriations of facts to transmute reality according to the internal struggles are good examples for this study. Peres's characters differ in terms of metaphorisation: while the unnamed protagonist of *Casa entre vértebras* is prone to build upon metaphors in the images, providing a poetical view to his subjective questions; Felipe Werle is trapped under the weight of awareness. Therefore, while in the first novel the lyrical tone flows completely, in the second there is a struggle with the character's neurosis. And, again, as denotative language could limit the expression and block the intensity of the narrative, Peres resorts to lyricism to better convey this internal battle.

Moreover, it is curious to note in Peres's writing that despite his aim to discuss subjectivity, through the depersonalisation typical of lyricism, he achieves a collective scope. In *Casa entre vértebras*, by attempting to abandon the established self, who is recognised and accepted by society, the author can express the human anguish of accepting a social role, which is a very contemporary issue. In *As pequenas mortes* the dialogue with finitude happens through the body, growing up and turning into a shared experience because of the radioactive accident with the Caesium-37. In fact, in *As pequenas mortes* the intimate fear/desire of losing control in death (or in sex) is introduced at a social level as well. Peres shows that by uniting the personal and the collective fears in his lyrical narrative. The association between anguish, caesium and the cockroach pus/fat is skilfully built on his narrative – through lyricism.

Finally, going against the grain by using a rather intimate and intensified realism in Brazilian literature, João Anzanello Carrascoza presents feelings from different angles. The author resorts to lyricism as a borderline case, delving into the feelings of the lyrical self in prose as a way of deepening the narratives without, however, surrendering to the melodramatic. His main theme, human ties and relationships, is a good background in this regard. In times of such a demand for the real, Carrascoza's task seems to arouse suspicion and concern in the literary critic.

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<sup>93</sup> See the item 1.3, "Interior monologue, stream of consciousness, psychological novel", in Chapter 1.



The writer's textual constructions also represent a theoretical challenge. Throughout his career, Carrascoza has been working with lyricism in a broader descriptive scope, thus constantly including referential points in his narrative. The author's descriptions extract sensitivity from the prosaic. His immediate portraits are made up of minute details, many captured like photographic negatives, when the silence that surrounds the characters and their settings speaks volumes, far more than the usual logic of representation. On the other hand, the loss of more referential guides allowed Carrascoza to dive into the core of the lyrical narrative. His latest novel, *Caderno de um ausente*, testifies to the author's engagement with lyrical prose through the establishment of this balance point.

Regarding the natural rise of lyricism from more abstract and deeper contents, seen here, there is some differentiation between the authors and their writing processes. When comparing the three authors, while Peres and Carrascoza seek a lyrical treatment for their texts, Adriano (involuntarily) follows his inner rhythm. Nonetheless, all of them manage to achieve a predominantly metaphorical prose as a result.

Whether deliberately intended by the authors or not, this metaphorical prose is, however, recognised by the writers as a powerful way of conveying a unique type of representation. This treatment of the text transmutes reality through lyrical constructions and makes the readers experience these stories differently.

I see this artistic procedure as a writing of rupture as well. Just as the writing of rupture that is based on fragmentary style and exacerbation of the real in contemporary Brazilian literature is a source of intense discussion, the same should be the case when it comes to debating lyricism in recent narratives. The acute rupture with conventional representation, as these authors show, questions literary procedure – and even literary criticism.

When I asked these three authors about how they perceive the current trend in contemporary Brazilian literature which focuses on urban themes, they expressed some discomfort about it and saw this as limiting. Carrascoza believes that explicitly emotional prose ('prosa emocionada', as he says, referring to his own style) finds little appreciation in Brazil, in contrast to the documentary narrative, based as it is on factual data. Adriano questions the literal representation of this environment, which conceals challenges: 'O que me incomoda é quando a tentativa de reproduzir o real – se é disso que se trata – não tensiona o real com nenhuma outra coisa' (2015, interview with researcher).

This question introduced by Reni Adriano about the potential of current representations touches again on the concept of realism. To depict reality with intensity is a contemporary mission of Brazilian narratives, as a result of the collective saturation by imagetic and written narratives in the era of mass media. To replace the old way of narrating reality, based mainly on observation and mimesis, many authors have been resorting to a voice which is based on life experiences, as if a more vivid experience could improve the narration. In this sense, recalling Beatriz Jaguaribe (2007), realism today is more critical, introducing new questions, sensitizing the audience, yet without posing to a major challenge in relation to the reader.

It must also be highlighted that this lack of tension with reality is not only aesthetic, in the present scene of Brazilian literature; it can also be registered sociologically, in terms of the inequalities and lack of diversity characterising the social profile of this art-form and its practitioners. Within this overview, it is possible to find representational implications. That is, around 72% of Brazilian writers today are white, male, middle or upper class, heterosexual and they live in the richest regions of the country.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the focus on reproducing the status quo without going far beyond the depiction of daily life gives a strange sensation of a pale, complacent literature – despite all the empathetic impacts that this aesthetic realism has been causing in its readers. On this issue, Regina Dalcastagnè points out: ‘O problema que se aponta não é o de uma imitação imperfeita do mundo, mas a invisibilização de grupos sociais inteiros e o silenciamento de inúmeras perspectivas sociais’ (2012: 149).

When applied to the current research this line of reasoning means that, if the hegemony of Brazilian novelists could be framed within the class profile described above, and if the majority of successful books displayed a tendency towards urban realism, other types of literary styles would favour a greater democratisation in this field, for both writers and readers. Lyrical novels and various other types of narrative can work in favour of a greater diversity in Brazilian literature, serving the need for heterogeneity in themes and authors. The imbalances and inequalities of Brazilian society regarding gender, ethnicity and economic issues are reflected in the literary field, in its lack of

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<sup>94</sup> Results from a survey carried out by the University of Brasília, with the analysis of novels published between 1990 and 2004. The results were published in *Literatura brasileira contemporânea: um território contestado* (2012), by Regina Dalcastagnè.

diversity. A more diversified approach to these aspects in the narratives and among the writers would be beneficial in the current perspective.<sup>95</sup>

Concerning the diversity that prose lyricism can present, a positive aspect is the chance to broach the most important themes of Brazilian society today – such as increasing urbanisation – with a more sensitive type of writing. In this sense, the major depth given to any subject matter through the lyrical resources helps to provide for a more engaged reading. Reni Adriano's problematisation of the *regional* in his lyrical writing is a good example of this. Far from a mere depiction of the environment, the writer brings to the foreground in a sensitive manner the themes of community bonds, national/universal myths and the relationship between feelings and silence. *Lugar*, therefore, draws our attention to the theme of freedom.

The critical reading required by prose lyricism is another important aspect. Lyrical narrative requires an attitude of co-participation, as pointed out by Darío Villanueva (1983: 20) and Ricardo Gullón (1984: 45). It entails much more than mere passive reading without any creative engagement. As mentioned before, the conventional perspective of subject/object as experienced by the reader is more disrupted than ever in the lyrical novel. Such a reconfigured engagement with the literary piece brings the possibility of a more critical understanding as well. Taking the metaphor as a device for the expansion of meanings, as Robert Humphrey states (1962: 79), chances are given for a Brazilian reader to adopt a unique and freer posture.

To conclude, the following elements can be found in contemporary Brazilian narratives: the anguish faced by urban citizens, the anxiety suffered by most of the population in Brazilian cities, their experience of loneliness, the frenetic pace of life, and the struggle to survive, with both individualistic and collective aspects. Fragmentary and mixed techniques and styles – as well as the revaluation of the personal account – can also reflect the new rhythm of life. Nonetheless, it is important to enquire as to whether other types of expression could occur in current Brazilian society, rather than simply sympathetically mirroring these experiences.

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<sup>95</sup> According to research *Retratos da leitura no Brasil 2016*, the factors that most influence the choice of a book for adult readership in Brazil are theme or subject (30%) and author (12%) (2016: 26).

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study has been to identify a significant current of prose lyricism within the history of the Brazilian novel, to examine how it operates across a range of distinct manifestations, and to account for the absence of research on the issue until recently. By exploring the reasons for the lack of study on this subject in Brazil's literary historiography, and by ascertaining the presence of prose lyricism in a selection of prose fiction works by different authors, I have aimed to redress this neglect. In doing so, I have also aimed to contribute to lyrical novel theory, by analysing the works from a flexible perspective in terms of genre theory.

Acknowledging the contentious overview of the lyrical concept was necessary before beginning the investigation. The intention has been to set out the valuable contribution of those critics who have previously theorised about the lyrical novel. Current genre theory has made headway in regard to its traditional divisions, namely the categorization of Lyric, Epic and Dramatic. However, the contributions of these commentators are of great importance in the context of an ever-changing field of unstable concepts. These theorists, as seen in Chapter 1, are Ralph Freedman, Jean-Yves Tadié, Ricardo Gullón, Darío Villanueva, Rosa Maria Goulart, Earl E. Fitz, Luzia A. Berlofffa Tofalini, Massaud Moisés, Sonia Brayner and Mariângela Alonso. Analysing their works together has supported the argument in favour of a flexible and accommodating theory of the lyrical novel. The field of prose lyricism has not yet been fully explored and an updated assessment of the theoretical criteria was necessary.

In this context of evolution, incorporating contemporary ideas about genre and metaphor was also necessary, as we could see in the introduction to the works of Paul Ricoeur and David Punter. In this sense, the theoretical approaches to genres as posed by Thomas O'Beebe and Ralph Cohen have also been relevant to this study. Altogether, these conceptual frameworks are crucial to understanding how prose lyricism and its singular imagery influence literary pieces. Ultimately, a new way of approaching these narratives is proposed.

Briefly reflecting on the results of each chapter, Chapter 1 provided a presentation and a cross-checking of the theoretical perspectives mentioned above, and produced a conceptual strand to be followed in the textual analyses in Chapters 3 and 4. This

conceptual strand has proved the importance of appreciating the fluidity of the dynamics of hybridism, allowing an analysis which observes the object of study without pre-applying a rigid categorization to it. Rather than just an examination of metaphors, the combination of the constitutive lyrical elements within prose shows a structure in which the lyrical parts emerge as a major feature.

Prior to the analyses of texts in Chapters 3 and 4, Chapter 2 investigated the absence of prose lyricism in Brazilian literary historiography. The second chapter examined the origin of the confusion surrounding lyricism, which was deemed sentimentalist and escapist. This scrutiny in Chapter 2 was significant with a view to discussing the contrast that prose lyricism may suffer by comparison to social realism in Brazilian literature, a topic extended in Chapter 4. Also, introducing solid arguments against the supposed evasiveness of lyricism, the chapter challenged this approach of counterposing lyricism and social realism. Thus, the second chapter, by gathering historiographical clues about prose lyricism, prepared the study for its chief assessment in the final part of the thesis.

In Chapter 3, the theoretical line of reasoning achieved was briefly introduced in canonical and non-canonical authors from the twentieth century. The application of this filter has added to the sparse and disperse features of lyricism that Brazilian critics have noted without ever having focused on them integrally. This is particularly true of those writers who have otherwise received significant critical attention, such as Clarice Lispector and João Guimarães Rosa. This is the achievement of this part of the thesis – a larger and more integral perspective of the lyrical aspect of these authors' oeuvres. I have described Adelino Magalhães, Lúcio Cardoso, Clarice Lispector, João Guimarães Rosa, Osman Lins and Raduan Nassar as lyrical writers in some of their works. The aim here is to partially redress a historical neglect of the study of their works from a lyrical perspective. The overall objective, however, has been to advocate one more analytical perspective from which to view their oeuvres.

Chapter 4 focused on examining the presence of prose lyricism in more recent works. It also introduced one inquiry proposed by this thesis, concerning the predominance of social realism in Brazilian literature. Cross-checking social realism in the form of aesthetic realism against the presence of the lyrical tendency in Brazilian literature ensured a broader overview of the use of lyrical resources in Brazilian contemporary literature and the challenges this usage poses in the current critical landscape. In addition, the textual analyses of contemporary case studies were deepened in the works

of Reni Adriano, Wesley Peres and João Anzanello Carrascoza. In these writers' works we could discern the features considered in the theory presented in Chapter 1. The main result was a better understanding of the characteristics of prose lyricism, as originally expected. Finally, Chapter 4 also discussed literary modes of representation, a questioning that complemented the chapter. Overall, this chapter introduced the possibility that prose lyricism does have a role to play in the social and political demands experienced by Brazilian writers, a hypothesis considered in the Introduction of this study.

### **Relevant findings**

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, only very recently has prose lyricism been given due attention in literary studies in Brazil, mostly through the analysis of some isolated authors. Studies by scholars Luzia Tofalini, on João Guimarães Rosa, and Mariângela Alonso, on Clarice Lispector, both written in the 2000s, are good examples of close examinations of lyrical works. Outside Brazilian academia, Lispector's lyricism has already been examined by Earl E. Fitz, as noted in Chapter 3. Although these works make important contributions to the study of lyrical novels within the Brazilian literature framework, they focus on individual writers rather than providing a more complete approach. This thesis therefore complements these studies, focusing on a broader perspective that also addresses representative examples of the lyrical novel in Brazil from the early twenty-first century. This procedure provides the possibility of connecting lyrical authors and works across time, introducing the lyrical novel-writing as a tendency in Brazil that can still be investigated more thoroughly.

Curiously, the works of Clarice Lispector, João Guimarães Rosa and Raduan Nassar have recently been translated and published in English. This fact has resulted in these authors' oeuvres being increasingly discussed abroad and being recognised for the richness of their narratives, as well as being the recipients of international awards.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, in Brazil, lyrical authors have been recognised through their nominations for relevant literary awards as well.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> While the translation of Clarice Lispector's *The Complete Stories*, by Katrina Dodson was awarded the 2016 PEN Translation Prize, Raduan Nassar was published in English for the first time by Penguin Modern Classics, and he was nominated for the 2016 International Man Booker International Prize with Stefan Tobler's translation of *Um copo de cólera* (A Cup of Rage).

<sup>97</sup> Such as João Anzanello Carrascoza, who was awarded the Jabuti prize in 2016 for *Caderno de um ausente* (second place), his first wholly lyrical novel. Wesley Peres and Reni Adriano, the other two case

However, in parallel to these achievements, as examined in Chapter 4, Brazilian contemporary literature has become increasingly renowned for its continued emphasis on realism through depicting life in recently urbanised Brazilian society. Subjectivity, in this context, when considered prominent, it is still a topic of debate and suspicion. For the purposes of my work, subjectivity has been understood in this thesis as an individual unity, based on self-awareness. This is all the more the case for prose lyricism, which can be mistaken as an inflation or caricature of subjectivity. This misconception, as we saw in Chapter 2, devalues subjective contents as a result of confusing them with sentimentality and subjectivism – disparaged as deviations of subjectivity.

Throughout the thesis, and especially in the second chapter, my aim has been to demonstrate how lyrical fiction has been misunderstood and neglected, leading to the consistently low estimation of this kind of writing in Brazilian literature, a devaluation which has persisted until now. The low level of critical esteem in which subjective works in Brazilian literature are held is notable – even if subjectivity is presented as a trend like autofiction, which is alluded to in the last chapter.<sup>98</sup> Political awareness is always expected of writers, as Marco Rodrigo Almeida states in his article “Instinto de subjetividade”: ‘Decorrência natural da subjetivação, segundo os críticos, seria a ausência de um sentido político em parte significativa da prosa brasileira’ (2014). This political sense, as this study has shown, is usually understood as an explicit representation of the social conflicts experienced in the country – a direct reference, with a documentary character. In this sense, an interesting counterargument comes from philosopher Theodor Adorno, whom I include in this discussion in the second chapter. Adorno states that, regarding the sociological interpretation of lyrical pieces, this interpretation should work with a view to understanding how the social contents manifest naturally within the work, rather than looking for how they are inserted into it (1991: 38-39).

My line of reasoning demonstrates that the permanence of this misconception about prose lyricism is linked to the commitment of Brazilian writers to document the nation. In this sense, the undeniable social problems, according to Antonio Candido in “Literatura e subdesenvolvimento” (1987), are a lasting factor which contributes to the

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studies in this thesis, were awarded prizes in 2007 and 2009 respectively, as previously mentioned in Chapter 4.

<sup>98</sup> See the special supplement of *Folha de S. Paulo* about the theme, published on February 2014.

hegemony of the realist pattern of literary construction – and to its critical judgement.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, the presence of social realism in Brazilian literature is not a result of social issues only, and has to do essentially with a certain attitude from the literary milieu which sees the social documentary approach as an elementary and natural responsibility. Just as Romanticism appropriated lyrical discourse in order to shape national identity, as I exemplified with José de Alencar's *Iracema* (1865), the enduring disregard for lyrical prose in current times seems to still endorse the need for the political engagement of writers through realism. In political terms, however, this facet of realism (among the many other facets of this artistic representation) has often been used as a tool to assimilate the inequality and social difficulties faced by the Brazilian population – incorporating the discussion proposed by Jaguaribe (2007) and Pellegrini (2012),<sup>100</sup> as examined in Chapter 4. The author may depict loneliness, violence, ruptures and the struggles of daily life in large Brazilian cities; however, the predominant aestheticization of psychological and physical violence acts more as a device for acceptance and resignation than real political engagement on the part of the author, who does not provoke engaged reactions and awareness in the reader. Aesthetic realism is not the only technique in Brazilian literature; however, it is interesting to observe the impact that it has had. Even though this aesthetic may not be hegemonic in the present, it has already generated its own nomenclature and debates within literary studies.

If the obligation of political commitment that is expected of Brazilian writers can be expanded to include prose lyricism, it will acquire a broader and enriched repertoire, as I argued in Chapter 3. Besides establishing the use of lyricism in the writings of canonical and non-canonical authors, I also set out other interpretations regarding these authors' works. The ontological depth that lyrical resources will add to any novelistic theme can be understood as a diverse way of bringing political awareness to the debate. In this sense, we can make a case for the social concerns of authors such as João Guimarães Rosa, Osman Lins, Adelino Magalhães and Raduan Nassar, who expressed in some of their works an awareness of the Brazilian people and their difficulties metaphorically, through aspects of the lyrical and an intense literary construction.

Another relevant point to consider is that, with this neglect, the perception of the lyrical novel as an independent body of art has been equally lost. Due to its singularity, the

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<sup>99</sup> This feature of Brazilian literature is known abroad. Earl E. Fitz calls it 'a weapon in the fight for social justice' (2005: 179).

<sup>100</sup> Please see "De bois e outros bichos: nuances do novo Realismo brasileiro", by Tania Pellegrini (2012), on which this discussion is started.



lyrical novel does not belong to a solitary literary movement, and it is adaptable to any kind of base narrative (Freedman 1963: 10), as a hybrid mode of writing. This means that prose lyricism, when preponderant in a piece, makes the work unusual and difficult to categorise. As the novel in the twentieth century has a number of new arrangements, one of my concerns at the beginning of this research was that my hypothesis was vulnerable to the evidence that no theory (whatever its comprehensiveness) has been able to survive the ever-changing character of the contemporary novel to date. However, lyrical fiction resists the constraints of classification, due to the abiding principles of lyricism as presented so flexibly by Emil Staiger. According to Staiger, the lyrical presents a fundamental nature that can be recognised regardless of the reader's background (1977: 101-102). Thus, despite the label of experimentalism seen in the authors examined here, their boldness with language and the strength of their images are characteristics that tend to remain. These writers achieve true originality, whether they are accepted by the canon or not.

It is also relevant to emphasise the theoretical challenge to realism in this study. As well as showing a fresh analysis of some Brazilian authors, my aim has been to provide new approaches to literary realism in the present day. Through the appreciation of lyrical prose when in contact with realistic denotative language, the idea of realism itself is transformed and amplified. As mentioned before, realism and lyricism might begin to be brought together, and this may have to do with the ways these two trends have evolved. As I concluded in Chapter 4, the lyrical perspective can shed a new light on realism. If realism in Brazil has been redeveloping in new modes (Jaguaribe, 2007; Resende, 2008, Schøllhammer, 2009; Pellegrini, 2012), I venture to collate the two conceptions (realism and lyricism), and even to suggest that lyricism could be perceived as something that is not so foreign from realism. Instead, it just approaches reality differently, in its own way.

Benedito Nunes illustrates this when he classifies Guimarães Rosa's *Grande sertão: veredas* as a kind of poetic realism: 'um realismo em que a trama da ação e das situações nasce a cada momento da originária trama da linguagem, o *epos* inseparável do discurso que o constitui' (2009: 149). With this statement, the scholar reaffirms the singular world of lyricism, comprising poetic language which can be the setting in which the stories unfold. Realism could perfectly accept this new significance, despite its broad and rich versions, including the traditional one about mimesis. The discourse in a lyrical novel is itself action; it is not used as a path or a vehicle for plots. In this

different reality – the one that I set out in the lyrical authors and titles studied in this thesis – a type of translation of facts and materiality occurs. Time and space engender a creative reality within the narratives. In its basic concept, realism considers reality to be external to men, rather than considering men as integrated into reality with all its sensibility and imagination. The latter is what prose lyricism achieves.

Nevertheless, we are ultimately still faced with the issue of the imagination in Brazilian literature. Realism in its presuppositions denied Romanticism's excess of imagination and subjectivity, a sort of denial which persists into contemporary Brazil. This idea helped to label the imagination as contrary to the useful register of reality. Hence, there is a permanent suspicion of imagery and subjectivity, reinforcing the intention of transforming reality into a 'documento social que deve ser revelado para denunciar a condição humana', in the words of Beatriz Jaguaribe (2007: 24).

### **The social and political role of lyricism**

Brazil's lyrical prose has been considered an expression of escapism or mere experimentalism, despite asking deep and crucial questions about human nature. The critical and political potential found in lyricism is of a different order, diverging from the realist model, in its traditional sense. It is not a directly political discourse; rather it takes the form of an emancipatory operation concentrating metaphor and imagery in the service of a more imaginative understanding of the text, as seen in Chapter 1. This offers an insight into mankind's experience, bringing together language, image and subjectivity.

The potential of the lyric as a social tool through self-awareness was examined in Chapter 2, with the contributions of Theodor Adorno and Hugh H. Grady. In these two theorists' lines of reasoning we find a counterargument to the view that alienation is inherent in lyrical writing. The particular way in which the lyrical writer accesses the deepest human desires and aspirations, expressing them in language that seeks to be unrestrained by rationality, is an important challenge to the general notion of lyricism as evasiveness. In an era when life has been undergoing mass reification, Adorno and Grady present lyricism as a relevant way of resisting this kind of oppression.

Thus the lyric could be understood not as opposed to society, but rather as one space of resistance to material and social constraints, through the imagination. Contrary to the idea of lyrical disengagement, this creates a very necessary role for lyricism within

society. This role, following Grady's arguments, can be understood in the context of the more modern understanding of the lyric, in which individuation is a key principle. It is as if the self-reflexiveness and the individualistic condition of the lyric in the present has been engendered within a society which is in need of another sphere for the individual, 'for the construction of realms of imaginative freedom that would escape the very conditions which have given rise to the necessity of their expression' (1981: 551). This resistance would come as a response to the prevalence of technical and instrumental reason in contemporary times.

Returning to the Brazilian context, what I conclude from the findings in the chapters is that the shift in the way reality is represented in lyrical novels reflects the diverse political attitudes of the writers. I interpret this opportunity of more imaginative freedom within a conventional and structured language of representation as a resistive stance. As suggested by Reni Adriano, one of my main case studies in Chapter 4, this attitude challenges the status quo of a predominant and therefore expected language structure – which in a certain sense reproduces the status quo of a predominant social context. All this reasonableness, so to speak, does not challenge a reality which, in Brazil, may need to be challenged. As we also saw in Chapter 4, the social configuration of Brazilian literature, with an elitist structure favouring privileged groups, demands new perspectives. As Reni Adriano has stressed, to offer new forms of representation would help to expose and redress this situation.

Another important aspect to be mentioned regarding the political awareness brought through lyricism is the power of imagery. As seen in Chapter 1, one of the key lyrical narrative points is the use of the image with multi-semantic senses. Prose lyricism relies on this peculiar treatment and arrangement of images. This compelling use of image thus represents another challenge for future scholars, since the act of scrutinising the role of the lyrical image in Brazilian literature is not among the principal aims of this research. The role of the typical imagery displayed by lyricism in fiction could be investigated further, especially in an era overburdened with images, in which there are even theories related to the authoritarianism of the imagetic society. At the time Ralph Freedman and other theorists such as Villanueva, Tadié, Gullón and Goulart were elaborating their arguments, the use of the image was relevant from a different perspective: the mass media were still growing, and social media was not yet a reality.

Once again, I resort to Octavio Paz's essayistic arguments. Paz claims that the language of poetic images can be expressed without the need for logic, resorting instead to the

imagination – in this sense, lyrical speech, an attempt to say what cannot be said through denotative words, is the first step to this immediate perception: ‘Hay que volver al lenguaje para ver cómo la imagen puede decir lo que, por naturaleza, el lenguaje parece incapaz de decir’ (1956: 101). This inexpressibility was addressed in Chapter 1 and in the textual analysis in Chapters 3 and 4. Lyrical silence, filled with images, is full of meanings. This fact was exemplified in my analysis of the works of Wesley Peres in *Casa entre vértebras* and João Anzanello Carrascoza, in *Caderno de um ausente*. It was also presented in the critical resume of Emil Staiger’s theory about lyricism – as a reminder, *Stimmung*, or soul/affective disposition, is often not translatable through language, and muteness and impotency in the face of its own sensations lead the author to extrapolate language towards the image. By reconciling the insufficiency of language and the totality of what it presents, this enriched image provides a powerful alternative means of expression, which is independent of the mimetic.

For the writer, this means entering into the creative field where words and images can develop into unexpected forms, which depend on his or her own private repertoire of experiences – a very contemporary type of appropriation; for the reader, who has their own private repertoire, it means being free to interpret the reality presented by the lyrical narrative from their own individual perspective and in light of their own experiences and idiosyncrasies.

### **Final remarks**

This thesis has addressed a hitherto under-explored area of Brazilian literary studies. In doing so, it has been essential to point out the preconceptions about lyrical prose that have held back understanding of this diverse kind of expression in Brazil. Looking at the diverse authors and works presented here, as seen in Chapters 3 and 4, it is clear that the presence of lyricism in texts can give readers new insights into the literary contents, and produce new interpretations. In fact, the required level of understanding demands more of the individual reader, and a willingness to be open to a different approach to reality.

Moreover, to conclude, I emphasise again that prose lyricism is not only a question of aesthetic expression: in a stratified society such as Brazil’s, where its literature also reflects exclusion, such a narrowness means a cultural loss. Regina Dalcastagnè, discussing the struggle for legitimation among writers, publishers and canons within

Brazilian literature, considers it a disputed territory: ‘Afinal, a definição dominante de literatura circunscreve um espaço privilegiado de expressão, que corresponde aos modos de manifestação de alguns grupos, não de outros, o que significa que determinadas produções estão excluídas de antemão’ (2012: 12). Therefore, besides those usually excluded – those coming from disadvantaged groups –, there has always been a prejudice against authors who have sought to express Brazilian reality in a lyrical way.

This situation can be considered one of many that help to maintain Brazilians’ lack of social awareness. That dearth of heterogeneous cultural expression in fields such as literature blinds people’s perception of the gaps in Brazilian society – causing what Darcy Ribeiro called a type of ‘miopia social’ (1995: 24). This may still present an obstacle to a mature understanding of a national identity and on a collective level can undermine the cultural expression of a people. For this reason, it is important that this situation is brought to light and discussed openly. In this sense, the issue of realistic but complacent representation and the debate regarding lyrical prose can provide more resources for a more representative expression of Brazilian society – a good starting point for a healthier future for novel writing in Brazil.

### **Future research**

Relevant issues have sprung from this thesis as possible areas for future work. One theme which could be explored by future scholars is related to the possible similarities between prose lyricism and other literary styles in Spanish America writing, namely magical realism and the neo-Baroque. This investigation could provide a broader sense of a lyrical tendency in Latin American literature, broadening the perspective on prose lyricism and the study of the subject from yet another angle. Exploring the connections between magical realism, neo-Baroque and prose lyricism would better integrate Brazil into the wider field of Latin American literature. While in the context of this research the analysis has aimed to provide an overview for future investigation, this opens up a path to discuss continental literature in a broader context – as world literature, since it brings together the diverse Latin American literatures in a more harmonized manner. From a researcher’s perspective, it is interesting to consider whether Brazil’s differentiated linguistic and political history in the continent as the only country to be colonized by the Portuguese Empire, and its internal censorship of the free use of imagination and lyricism in prose, are in some way linked. In future comparative

investigations, it would be interesting to consider to what extent this might have influenced the emphasis on documentary narrative in the country.

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