Acta Scientiarum

http://www.uem.br/acta
ISSN printed: 1983-4675
ISSN on-line: 1983-4683
Doi: 10.4025/actascilangcult.v37i3.24997

The Discursive Representation of Dictatorship in Lygia Bojunga's *A casa da madrinha*

Alice Atsuko Matsuda[1*] and Eliane Aparecida Galvão Ribeiro Ferreira[2]

[1]Departamento Acadêmico de Linguagem e Comunicação, Programa de Pós-graduação em Estudos de Linguagens, Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná, Avenida Sete de Setembro, 3165, Rebouças, 80230-901, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. [2]Departamento de Linguística, Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Assis, Universidade Estadual Paulista 'Júlio de Mesquita Filho', Assis, São Paulo, Brazil. Author for correspondence. E-mail: alicem@utfpr.edu.br

ABSTRACT. The children's novel *A casa da madrinha* [The Godmother's House], by Lygia Bojunga (2002), published in 1978, incorporates libertarian ideals of the children's and youth production of that decade. Its plot breaks with the tradition of euphoric literary production around the 1940s and 1950s, intended to children and young people, talks about taboo subjects like abandonment of minors and child labor, bringing to the center an inhuman social reality in which children and youths are neither protected nor supported or respected, having their rights disregarded. This justify, thus, the objective of this text, which is to analyze how these ideals are configured in the discursive representation of said work, considering that it was published during a military dictatorship.

Keywords: military dictatorship, ideological discourse, libertarian ideals, youth literature, child labor.

A representação discursiva da Ditadura em *A casa da madrinha*, de Lygia Bojunga

RESUMO. A obra *A casa da madrinha*, de Lygia Bojunga (2002), publicada em 1978, incorpora ideais libertários próprios da produção infantil e juvenil dessa década. Seu enredo, rompendo com a tradição eufórica da produção literária das décadas de 1940 e 1950, destinada a crianças e jovens, trata de temas tabus, como abandono de incapaz e trabalho infantil, trazendo para o centro da trama uma realidade social desumana em que a criança e o jovem não são protegidos nem amparados ou respeitados, tendo seus direitos desconsiderados. Justifica-se, então, que se objetive, neste texto, analisar como esses ideais se configuram na representação discursiva da obra, tendo em vista que esta fora publicada em plena ditadura militar.

Palavras-chave: ditadura militar, discurso ideológico, ideais libertários, literatura juvenil, trabalho infantil.

Introduction

> […] memories of friends suffering persecutions during dictatorship (BOJUNGA, 2006, p. 97).

This text aims to present an analysis of *A casa da madrinha* [The Godmother's House] by Lygia Bojunga (2002), published amidst the military dictatorship in Brazil. To do so, it develops the hypothesis that the discursive representation of said work is emancipatory as it presents libertarian ideals as well as an argumentative discourse opposing the dictatorial political determinations of the historical period in which its narrative was constructed – the 1970s. In addition, the plot allows the reader to reflect on human rights, especially incompressible and compressible ones that, according to Antonio Candido, are divided, respectively, as those that cannot be denied to anybody, "[…] such as food, housing, clothing." (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 240), and non-essential ones. However, Candido highlights that there is a very fine line dividing them, because each time and culture defines the principles of compressibility. These principles, in turn, are associated

> […] to the division of society into classes, for even education can be an instrument to convince people that what is indispensable to a certain social class is not so to the other (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 240).

Thus, the belief is that, in this text, through the reading and mediation of emancipatory texts within the school sphere, the comprehension about the need for rights can be ensured, such as culture and information, which, though categorized as compressible – non-essential –, for leading one to a reflexive thinking guarantee the claim for quality of life, that is, for compressible and, above all, incompressible rights.

To Antonio Candido (1995), literature is an essential right, especially because it humanizes in a deeper sense, shapes our feelings and our worldview, besides organizing us, freeing us from

chaos. It corresponds to a universal need that has to be met "[…] under the penalty of mutilating personality" (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 256). Moreover, literature operates as a conscious instrument of unmasking, according to the author (1995), since it focuses situations of restriction of rights or of denial of them, as misery, servitude, spiritual mutilation. In synthesis, it directly relates to the fight for human rights. Precisely, due to this libertarian power, literary production was so restricted during the dictatorial period of the 1970s.

In our society, Candido states, it is possible to detect the seriousness of the maintenance of a "[…] stratification of possibilities, treating as compressible several material and spiritual goods that are incompressible" (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 257). In short, fruition occurs by classes. In this way, when the system is unfair, the ordinary man has his right to the fruition of erudite work denied. In consonance with this thought, the young student is oftentimes, within an oppressive school context, denied the access to a libertarian and reflexive work. So that the erudite and libertarian literature ceases to be the privilege of a minority and circulates freely, a fair division of goods is necessary, which can only happen in an egalitarian society.

Our Dream House

The work *A casa da madrinha* was published in 1978. Its plot highlights the argumentative trend close to Monteiro Lobato's tradition. In that decade, just as in the 1960s, the fiction for children and young people is based on an urban theme and focuses Brazil as it was in that time, with its stalemates and crises. According to Lajolo and Zilberman (1985), criticisms of the Brazilian society and of social injustices are gradually incorporated into works by authors like Odette de Barros Mott, Carlos de Marigny, Eliane Ganem, Sérgio Caparelli, Henry Correia de Araújo and Wander Piroli, among others. Lygia Bojunga is no exception; thus, grounded on social criticism, she publishes in the 1970s, more specifically in 1972, her first work, *Os colegas* [Friends]. Born in Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Bojunga moves with her family to Rio de Janeiro, still a child. In that state, she publishes *Angélica*, in 1975; *A bolsa Amarela* [The Yellow Bag] in 1976; *Tchau* [Bye] in 1984; *Nós três* [The Three of Us] in 1987; *Seis vezes Lucas* [Six Times Lucas] and *O abraço* [The Hug] in 1995; and *A cama* [The Bed] in 1999. In the 2000s, she opens her own publisher, publishing new works and aggregating the other ones in her own seal.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the literature for children and adolescents defines itself by the consolidation of a market of cultural goods (ORTIZ, 2001). In 1960, television takes its place as mass media; in 1970, the national cinema structures itself as an industry, just as the music, publishing and advertising industry.

The military coup of 1964, with the advent of the Military State, acquires a double meaning: a political dimension that produces repression, censorship, arrests and exiles; an economic one that deepens measures in the economy, reorganizes it, inserting it into the process of internationalization of the capital. Thus, in a parallel way to the growth of the industrial complex and of the internal market of material goods, there is a strengthening of the industrial complex of production of culture and of the market of material goods.

The post-1964 cultural movement produced by an authoritarian State that promoted an advanced capitalist development is characterized by two non-excluding dimensions: ideological and political repression; a moment in history when cultural goods are greatly produced and publicized.

In this context, censorship (1964-1980) has two faces: a repressive one – negative and castrator that dictates on plays, movies, books, but not on theater, cinema or the publishing industry; thus, "[…] the censorial act affects the specificity of the work, not the generality of its production […]" (ORTIZ, 2001, p. 114); and a disciplinary one – that affirms and encourages a certain type of orientation. When considering that the cultural industry operates according to a pattern of depoliticization of contents, it is possible to observe a coincidence of perspective, that is, publishing production is encouraged, but only that which adapts to governmental ideals, to military ideas.

To Ortiz (2001), the repressive State acts as an encourager of cultural activities, being conceived, based on the National Security Ideology, as a political entity that holds the monopoly of coercion; the neuralgic center of all social activities that are relevant in political terms; that which aims at 'national integration', for it perceives that culture involves a relation of power. It acknowledges the importance of mass communication means, as they convey ideas and enable the creation of collective emotional states. To the State, culture involves a relation of power that can be harmful when in the hands of dissidents, because it generates unconformity, but beneficial when ruled by the authoritarian power, for it allows the enhancement of the Political Expression. This justifies, thus, one's desire to act within cultural spheres, represented in the creation of new institutions, such as: "[…] the Federal Council of Culture, the National Institute

of Cinema, the EMBRAFILME, the FUNARTE, the 'Pró-Memória'", among others. (ORTIZ, 2001, p. 115-156, emphasis in original).

The interests in favor of the National Integration aggregate businesspeople of the book sector and servicemen. The former seek market integration; the latter, political unification of consciences. In this way, from the early 1960s and fundamentally in the 1970s the market heats up and goes through recycling thanks to the increased competitiveness with the creation of new publishers: Ática, Ibepe, Moderna, Atual, Nova FTD, Livro Técnico, Saraiva, Edart, Cortez & Moraes, and then Cortez. These publishers make the production of books of all genres grow rapidly – especially didactical and children's and youth books (BORELLI, 1996, p. 93).

Once there is a paradoxical absence of explicit conflict between economic development and censorship, the interests of Brazilian servicemen and businesspeople coadunate. The articulation between these interests result, in 1966, in incentive to paper manufacturing and facility to import new machinery for editing, generating improvement in the quality of copies and volume in production. In that year, an organ responsible for the implementation of a policy for the graphic industry is created, the *Grupo Executivo das Indústrias de Papel e Artes Gráficas* [Executive Group of Paper and Graphic Arts Industries]– Geipag –, favoring the importation of new machinery for printing. This Executive Group linked to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce was created with the specific goal of granting incentives to the expansion of the sector and to the creation of new companies. The result is the increase of millions of exemplars in the production of books (1966: 43,6; 1974: 191,7; 1976: 112,5; 1978: 170,8; 1980: 245,4). In 1967, the production of 91% of paper for books was carried out in Brazil. In 1960, the off-set Brazilian production accounted for 7% of the total; in 1978, it raises to 58% (ORTIZ, 2001, p. 122). To Ortiz (2001, p. 136), the idea of "[…] selling culture […]" explicitly prevails, which enables the planning of investment in terms of business rationality.

Despite the repression

In the children's and youth literature market, despite the repression, works appear in the end of the 1970s and beginning of 1980s approaching taboo themes such as marital separation, extermination of native people, sexual maturation, social repression, emancipation of the mother-woman, relations between childhood and old age, degradation of nature, family destructuration, racial prejudice and marginalization of the elderly. These works overcome the child versus adult model and present child and/or adult versus adverse social conditions. Outstanding authors of these works include, among others, Vivina de Assis Viana, Mirna Pinsky, Sérgio Caparelli, Teresinha Alvarenga, Ana Maria Machado. In that period, Lygia Bojunga, also addressing taboo themes, publishes the work *Tchau*, as well as *A casa da madrinha*.

Although this production is not linked to the commitment with authoritarian, conservative and Manicheaist values, there is also, in that period, works of utilitarian nature and/or marked by upside-down utilitarianism, according to Perrotti 1986). Several writers of the '1970 generation', like Ana Maria Machado, Ruth Rocha and Fernanda Lopes de Almeida, in some

> […] moments got stuck in this stalemate, in an attitude still common to this day, especially in well-intentioned works by beginners but little attentive to the peculiarity of the esthetic discourse (PERROTTI, 1986, p. 118).

In compensation, many works produced from the children's and youth literature boom are based on parody, on the review of the very traditional fantastic world of fables and allegories, on comicality, on the nonsense and on the irreverence in works like *Os colegas, Angélica* and *O sofa estampado* [The Patterned Couch], by Lygia Bojunga; *O que os olhos não veem* [What the Eyes Cannot See] and all the trilogy of Ruth Rocha's little kings; *A fada que tinha ideais* [The Fairy that Had Ideals] and *Soprinho* [Little Breeze], by Fernanda Lopes de Almeida; *História meio ao contrário* [The Half-Twisted Story] and *Bisa Bia, Bisa Bel*, by Ana Maria Machado; *Onde tem bruxa tem fada* [Where There Is a Witch There Is a Fairy], by Bartolomeu Campos Queirós, among others.

All these works characterize a text intended to be libertarian and that, through their magic universe, question the values that sustain the military policy, leading, according to Maria da Glória Bordini (1998, p. 38), the young reader to think for himself or herself and to be suspicious of ideas that kill. That period watches the emergence of works like *A bolsa amarela* and *Corda bamba* [Tightrope] by Lygia Bojunga, which internalize, in the young female character, the various crises of the social world, treating of the loss of identity caused by poverty and/or orphanage.

As Regina Zilberman (2005, p. 46) states, the children's and youth literature did not escape from repression, but suffered less. This production, for not being noticed, ceased to be remembered; it was

then able to present itself as an escape valve through which cultural producers – writers, illustrators, artists in general – found conditions to manifest libertarian ideas and to gain readers.

To Nelly Novaes Coelho (2000), the literary art, seen in the 1970s, pragmatically, as civilizing or emancipatory, acquires its own identity, renews styles and contents, penetrates into unknown regions and produces beneficial effects, such as that of attracting young people to literary reading. More liberalized, writers can use any subject for children's and youth fiction. The latter proves a space of pleasure and learning. This merge of pleasure and learning in the early 1970s is the basis to the children's and youth literature boom. According to the author (COELHO, 2000), a new literary and/or esthetic quality emerges, transforming children's and youth books into a 'new object'. This 'new object', a 'language being', is constituted by the convergence of multi-languages, like prose narratives or poetry that develop by means of the word, of drawing, of painting, of molding, of photography, of digital or virtual processes, etc. Summarily, the 'new object' installs a new way of seen, of building the real, which causes in the reader the 'discovery look' so demanded by the current world so that one can interact with it. This look is a direct descendent of that one expressed by Lobato's doll that, according to Lourenço Dantas Mota and Benjamin Abdala Júnior (2001, p. 137), for its performances, has always made the reader of Lobato's work to question: "[…] what if the world was different?".

In the 1970s and 1980s there is also a review and inversion of fairy tales, at times with humor, at times with irony, in works by Ziraldo, Eliane Ganem, Sylvia Orthof and Pedro Bandeira; of crime short stories, in works by Paulo Rangel; of the social literature, in works by Sérgio Caparelli and by Bartolomeu Campos Queirós. To Ferreira (2009), in this social literature verisimilitude prevails over veracity, the employment of fantasy with no hesitations, with a metaphorical and not only compensatory character, and the creation of strong children characters that face insurmountable social barriers. It is this exact last category that fits the fabled story of *A casa da madrinha* (2002).

Between dreams and reality

In *A casa da madrinha*, it is possible to notice that, through the central theme of the search for an ideal, there is a criticism of the consequences that the capitalist society promotes in the man. Alexandre, the novel's protagonist, goes on a journey looking for the godmother's house – "[…] beautiful metaphor of the great ideal that every man should pursue in his fight for life" (COELHO, 1984, p. 566). It represents the utopia that we all should have so we can overcome the obstacles we face in life.

Since the first time that the space that constitutes the 'godmother's house' is mentioned by Augusto, Alexandre's older brother, it acquires a positive connotation. In the beginning, Alexandre, after hearing his brother mentioning this house, thinks that it refers to his real godmother, Lady Zefa, who he found very annoying. However, Augusto speaks of another godmother, one that lives in the countryside, in a four-window white and small house, located at the top of the hill and surrounded with flowers. On one side the house has a view to the sea, and on the other one, to the forest, alluding to the place in an idealizing manner. It is thus a *locus amoenus*, a bucolic and idyllic atmosphere, just as that pictured in the song *Casa no campo* [Country House] by Zé Rodrix and Tavito (CIFRACLUB, 2013). In addition, in this description, it can be noticed that dream and reality merge. The door is blue because it chose so. It also has a yellow flower on its chest to adorn itself. Thus it is possible to observe in the description the use of personification to produce the effect of humanization of this door.

It is worth highlighting that the colors blue and yellow are recurrent in Bojunga's narratives. Blue, according to Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1999, p. 107-110),

> Is the deepest of the colors: into it the look dives and finds no obstacle, losing itself into the infinite, […]. Blue is the most immaterial of the colors: nature usually presents it as made only of transparence. […] Applied to an object, the color blue smoothen shapes, opening and undoing them. […] Immaterial in itself, blue dematerializes all that it impregnates. It is the way towards the infinite, where real turns into imaginary. […] Blue is the way of digression, and when it gets dark, by its natural tendency, becomes the way of the dream. The conscious thought, in this moment, little by little makes room to the unconscious, in the same way that the light of day gradually becomes insensibly the light of night, the blue of night.

While yellow, for both experts, evokes something

> Intense, violent, shrilly sharp, or wide and blinding like the flow of an amalgamating metal; yellow is the warmest, the most expansive, the most flaming of the colors, hard to attenuate, always crossing the limits into which the artist desired to encompass it. […] In the Yellow-Blue pair, yellow, the male color,

> of light and of life, cannot tend to fainting (CHEVALIER; GHEERBRANT, 1999, p. 40-42).

In the novel, one can notice well the presence of these symbologies of colors, since the blue of the door is intense, through which the look overcomes whatever obstacle and enters the oneiric universe. Moreover, the door is easy to open and has two keys: one to open it on the inside and another one on the outside. However, the key is inside the yellow flower, and it is necessary that Alexandre manages to have it. To do so, he needs to control his fear. It can be noticed that Alexandre walks the way of the hero, based on Campbell (2000), because for him to pass over the doorstep he needs to prove his character.

In this way, taming the fear, just as having the key, means maturing, overcoming the obstacles, being perseverant in his dreams, managing to open the door of his desires. This justifies the fear matter in works written during the repression, when it is possible to see, in the actions of servicemen, random arrests and tortures that lead even to death.

The space that constitutes the godmother's house has all the dreamt elements: reclining chair that meets the comfort desire of the one who seats on it; a wardrobe with a variety of clothes, depending on the whether; a shelf with shoes the color one likes; a cupboard with all kinds of food. In addition, it has a sea with warm water, and backyard with trees, cascades, rivers, grottos, caves, mysteries to unveil. This house is located in an ideal and comfortable place, ready to satisfy desires and to ensure the beginning of an adventure. This space opposes that of the city, of civilization, where discomfort and the harsh reality prevail, marked by the fight for the capital and by the everyday sameness. This urban scenario is cursed with deprivation from basic goods such as food, clothes and shoes, besides elements that are fundamental to the development of the individual like education, support and protection.

Alexandre, unhappy with the reality he lives and with the financial situation of his family, starts his journey as a hero. He leaves the 'favela' [slam] in Copacabana, where he lives with his mother, two brothers and two sisters, and goes after the idealized house. Underemployment prevails in the descriptions of his family, as his mother washes and irons clothes for a living, his sisters are maidservants, his oldest brother and Augusto sell ice cream at the beach. The lack of essential goods derives from the fact that his father is an alcoholic and does not work because he is always wandering drunkenly. Thus it is possible to observe the first denunciation by the author, for the adult that should provide for his family beside the mother neglect his duties, being guided by the alcohol. However, because they are underemployed, they only got socially frustrated by their efforts. This justify the search of the hero for improvement, which also emancipates the reader, leading him or her to think over family and labor relations in special, established in the relationship between youths and adults in contemporary society.

Difficulties increase with time; one of his sisters that helped with the household expenses marries, and his oldest brother is hospitalized due to a serious disease he contracted. So Alexandre begins to help as well, selling peanuts on Sundays and then on Saturdays. On vacation he works every day, except when it rains. There is a clear precariousness, instability and vulnerability present in Alexandre's family and in his own life. According to Bauman (2001, p. 184), these are the most widespread characteristics of "[…] contemporary life conditions (and those one feels more painfully)". His family lives in misery as a result of lack of income and because they are not able to have jobs that give them the conditions for them to live safely:

> In the world of structural unemployment nobody can feel truly secure. Secure jobs in secure companies seem to be part of our grandparents' nostalgia; also, there are not many skills and experiences that, once acquired, guarantee that the job will be offered and, once offered, will be durable (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 185).

This insecurity becomes even greater in activities that do not require much intellectual experience, since the demand is also greater and substitution is more frequent. Employees are easily discarded, like Alexandre and his family, since all members of the young protagonist's family performs activities that require from them physical rather than intellectual strength. They are part of the expendable workforce of the capitalist society.

As we read it is possible to observe how the precariousness matter is present in Bojunga's work, revealing a social reality that does not ensure even incompressible rights, so well pointed out by Candido (1995). This condition is defined by Bauman (2001, p. 184) as

> […] the mark of the preliminary condition of all the rest: survival and particularly the most common type of survival, that which is claimed in terms of labor and employment.

Because Alexandre's family does not have a decent job that ensures stability, all members live in a precarious way, miserably. Vera's family, in turn, for possessing a piece of land and cultivating flowers on

it, has a decent job that ensures to all members autonomy of production; for this reason, they do not go through the same difficulties as those that Alexandre's family does.

Classes start but Alexandre does not go back to school, because Augusto decides to get married and stops helping with the family's expenses. Alexandre then becomes one of the pillars of his house. So he begins to sell ice cream. Although this activity requires greater effort because the product is heavier to carry, it is more profitable. Until one day Augusto moves to São Paulo to work in a factory, leaving Alexandre disheartened. To make matters worse, winter starts in Rio and Alexandre cannot sell ice cream at the beach. The little protagonist then decides to go downtown and helps customers to take cabs. In this activity, he puts himself at risk on the busy streets, needs to escape from being run over, faces other boys, dribbles buses, pedestrians, and bicycles, and faces even rain and cold, being paid with mere coins. His initiative proves frustrating because, in the end of the day, Alexandre is exhausted and still has no purchase power. The plot reflects, then, the capitalist society, in which money has a leading role, generating social differences and revealing the lack of support and protection to minors.

Robert Reich, quoted by Bauman, when analyzing the involvement of people in economic activities fits individuals like Augusto in the fourth category. They are people who

> [...] for the last century and a half have formed the 'social substrate' of the working movement. They are, in the words of Reich, 'routine workers', stuck in the assembling line or (in more modern factories) in networks of computers and electronic equipment automatized as control points. Nowadays they tend to be the most expandable, available and replaceable ones of the economic system. […] they are the easiest ones to substitute, have just a few special qualities that could inspire their employers to want to keep them at all costs; they control, at most, only a residual and negligible part of the bargaining power (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 174-175, emphasis added).

Capitalism, a socio-economic regime based on profitability and on the private ownership of production goods, creates a society in which human relations cease to exist to be mediated through money. The regime is characterized by

> [...] industrialization, fast development coupled with science and technology […], market hegemony, private ownership of production means, wide production of capital, 'free' labor, intensified division of labor. And, around it, 'civilization' phenomena wholly linked to it develop: rationalization, bureaucratization, predominance of 'secondary relations' […] in the social life, urbanization, secularization, and 'reification'. It is this entirety that constitutes 'modernity'; now, its unifying and generating principle, though rich in ramifications, is capitalism as a production mode and relations (LÖWY; SAYRE, 1995, p. 36, emphases added).

Metaphorically, Alexandre represents, symbolizes the underprivileged social class, fruit of the advanced capitalism that does not ensure an even distribution of income or of rights. However, he has the potential of a hero, seeking the change of his condition. So he goes after the godmother's house located in the countryside. His decisions reflect the writer's longing for social change.

What moves Alexandre is also the fact that his brother has not returned from São Paulo State as he had promised. During his trip, the boy finds a peacock and, with its help, makes spectacles, thus obtaining sustenance during the journey. In order to survive the protagonist explores his individual talent and manages to overcome the obstacles. That animal had serious reasoning issues because, since it was rare and generated money by being exposed to the public, it was trained by its owners with psychological tortures and the incrustation of a filter in its brain. With that device the peacock could barely think and did exactly what its owners allowed it to do. Thus, it proves alienated and incapable of changing the submission under which it lives. However, the filter has a manufacturing defect and from time to time it malfunctions and its valve locks. In these moments the animal can think properly, analyze its situation critically and run away. During one of its escapes it meets Alexandre.

The plot brings denunciations by the author, because Alexandre is still a child; even so, he goes all by himself on a journey to search for his ideal: the godmother's house. The peacock, in turn, is a fragile animal incapable of protecting itself from ambitious men. It is also a metaphor to children and to arrested politicians of the 1970s subjected to tortures, including brain washing.

The boy, though abandoned, resorts to his imagination to overcome the obstacles along the way. His goal is to have the key to the godmother's house, because his brother Augusto had told him, metaphorically, that fear goes away when one has 'the key of the house' in his or her pocket. As it can be noticed, the work has a more utopic bias. The protagonist meets good people that help him in his trip. In one of those wanderings through a small town he meets Vera. This girl represents the better

structured social class, since she lives with her family – mother and father –, that has a farm that provides sustenance for all. She studies and has duties and schedules to follow, and is not needy as Alexandre is. She shows a more realistic view on life, while Alexandre is a dreamer. It seems that, as a way to face his sad reality, he needs to live in an oneiric dimension, which is proper of romantics.

Vera's doubt on whether Alexandre really had a godmother or not is an example of this. Vera's parents do not accept their friendship, because they discriminate the boy – poor, with no family, "[…] a boy wandering down the road" (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 73). Thus, they ask Vera to tell Alexandre to go away from the farm with his peacock, because "[…] they had already given them food, had already let them stay one day and one night in the farm […]" (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 71), in addition to having given him money for food for three days. Alexandre gets really mad for he had already told Vera the whole story about the godmother's house:

> - How come am I wandering down the road if I'm heading to the godmother's house?!
> Vera did not like people yelling at her, so she got angry as well:
> - But it is obvious that you have no godmother! That's just a story Augusto came up with for you to sleep! (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 74).

However, when Vera argues that that was her parents' opinion, Alexandre understands, because, for him, adults do not have this sensibility. According to Alexandre, adults are envious of children's godmothers. Thus, the hero, instead of saying goodbye and facing the harsh reality, imagines a horse, diving once again into the day-dreaming world. Its name is Ah; it is yellow, has an orange tail that drags on the floor. This magic animal represents, for its color, renewal (FARINA; PEREZ; BASTOS, 2006). With its help, Alexandre and Vera jump the fence surrounding the farm, representation of the barrier that impedes freedom. When crossing that which is prohibited all they find is darkness, fear and the punishment for their disobedience. Thus, to overcome fear, they draw in the darkness, 'deconstructing' this feeling and (re)constructing hope. This is an archetypal gesture, because since ancient times the man already used to draw, representing his desires by means of images, in a ritualistic action.

Finally, through this creative gesture, Alexandre and Vera cross geographic and psychic boundaries, becoming capable of making their dreams come true. Alexandre, by drawing a door with a handle, a lock, a key and everything makes the door open in the exact moment he turns the key. So Vera and he find the godmother's house, where all dreams come true.

In that scene, we can observe that it is the second time in the narrative that Bojunga points individual creation as an action capable of changing the *status quo* and, thus, of favoring the materialization of desires and freedom.

The peacock, symbol of the repression period, is healed from the suffered tortures. In the idyllic space it meets with her darling again, a street female cat called Gata da Capa [Raincoat Cat], because she wears a raincoat as a means to hide her breed, since the latter causes disgust in people, who expel her from every place. This marks another denunciation by the author concerning social prejudices. That cat had disappeared when the sumptuous house where the peacock lived was demolished. That house had a basement that served as a shelter to the cat. The feline had not managed to leave that place after the destruction.

In the godmother's house a lost object appears as well: the suitcase of Alexandre's dear former teacher. This educator had been repressed by the school's direction where she worked, having her suitcase taken away. Inside it, since she had libertarian ideals and taught kids to think about reality with fun, the teacher carried packages of games and ludic activities that delighted her students.

The character Augusto appears in the enchanted house too, finally fulfilling the promise made to his brother and surprising everyone. He represents the great story teller that makes Alexandre travel around the world of imagination. In this way, besides those most intimate desires, vital ones like housing, food and clothing are also met.

According to Löwy and Sayre (1995, p. 40),

> […] the romantic view is characterized by the painful and melancholic conviction that the present lacks certain essential human values that have been alienated.

In the work, there is a feeling of absence, of need for the rescue of certain values and rights that are essential to the human being. Therefore, the search for the godmother's house by Alexandre has this entire connotation – representing a journey to seek a more fraternal and perfect society, more human and egalitarian.

When analyzing the title of the book we notice two words employed symbolically: 'house' and 'godmother'. The former connotes warmth, protection; the latter relates to the fairy, reinforcing the idea of protection. It also suggests the idea of desires met, in addition to having a maternal sense

because, after parents, the godmother is the person in charge of taking care of the child.

Although the characters find the idyllic, this ideal and utopic society does not perpetuate as reality. Vera awakes from the fantasy world and remembers about the time. As a girl that has always been pressured by her parents to comply with her duties and never forget the time, the tasks, she cannot disconnect entirely from the real world. Thus, she decides to go home alone because Alexandre would be quite fine in the godmother's house with his brother Augusto and all his desires fulfilled. He would no longer feel "[…] a big hole in his belly" (BOJUNG, 2002, p. 46). However, as she is leaving, the window that had always been jammed resolves to open just to annoy, waking up everybody.

Everybody decides to return with Vera and rides the horse Ah. However, when they reach the other side, Alexandre and Vera notices that Augusto and Gata da Capa did not cross with them, although they were together during all the way back. The Peacock can barely think, just as before. The horse Ah fades little by little and needs to be invented again. Therefore, Alexandre would need to go again after the oneiric world, the 'godmother's house', that is, to (re)create.

No room for freedom of speech

From the coup of March 31, 1964 to March 15, 1985, Brazil lived the Military Dictatorship period, an authoritarian regime led by the military. The Dictatorship started with the coup of 1964, when the Brazilian Armed Forces supplanted the government of the constitutional president João Goulart and ended only when José Sarney took office as president of the country, after the death of Tancredo Neves.

Said period was marked by authoritarianism, suppression of constitutional rights, great police and military persecution, arrests and torture of anti-government individuals, and by the previous censorship of means of communication.

Freedom was restricted; one had to watch his or her words both orally and in written, in formal or informal situations, because everything that was said could be used against him or herself.

> The severe vigilance by servicemen is made present in a more significant way in writing, in music, in the arts, which were once spaces of freedom and creation (MORAIS, 2011, p. 13).

Due to this governmental retaliation, writers, poets and composers had to use their creativity and artistic-literary resources to deceive censorship. Although there was a moment of stagnation in the artistic field, many people did not let themselves be intimidated, and reported the evils of the military dictatorship by using music or literature. However, these types of art were monitored, for being a form of artistic and cultural expression.

In that period, the children's and youth literature went unnoticed by censorship, as it was not regarded as art by neither literary critics nor censors, due to the pedagogical orientation present in its texts. According to Bordini, exactly because, in this type of production, "[…] the resistance against the military regime went unnoticed […]", it could plant "[…] seeds of freedom" (BORDINI, 1998, p. 38). In this way, several writers took advantage of the opportunity and produced highly artistic texts, handling words masterfully, creating surprising metaphors, abusing of symbology and denouncing the totalitarian regime. These writers include Lygia Bojunga with the work *A casa da madrinha*, object of study of this article, published during the dictatorial period, when fear and prohibition were more intensely affirmed. However, that was also a period of great artistic and cultural effervescence, especially for the children's and youth literature.

In the episodes referring to the character Peacock it is possible to observe more clearly the discursive representation of militarism. The Peacock, when presented by means of the narrative about how Alexandre and it met each other, proves somebody that suffers from some mental issue, since it cannot link its ideas coherently. This can be verified when Alexandre tries to dialogue with the Peacock but the latter does not answer the questions made and only repeats the boy's words:

> - And you, where are you going?
> - Going?
> - Yeah.
> Silence. Alexandre got a bit upset: that peacock was a weird animal. He asked again. The Peacock sighed, mourned, walked, stumbled, sighed again, mourned a little more, and finally answered:
> - I'm going. But I don't know where I'm going to. (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 18-19).

Moreover, their encounter is marked by a frightening heavy fog that symbolizes dictatorship itself, which disseminates fear and dominates everybody, as it hinders, with its subterfuges and concealments, the full view of reality. However, Alexandre is not shaken, for he recalls a fog that occurred in Copacabana beach. He remembers that it would fade as soon as the sun shone again. It can be inferred that, amidst this fog that blinds there is the hope that the sun returns, that is, that there will be an end to torture, to fear, to prohibitions, meaning the return of freedom.

According to Alexandre, due to the fact that the peacock was very beautiful and called the attention of many people from the whole world, there are many people wanting to explore its beauty; it has a total of five owners. The number five is meaningful, since it can relate to the five Institutional Acts issued by the Brazilian military regime in the years following the coup of 1964. In addition, the Institutional Act nº 5 or AI-5 was the instrument that gave the regime absolute power, closing the National Congress for nearly a year, deemed the hardest strike of the military regime. The act granted exception power to rulers for them to punish arbitrarily those who were enemies of the regime or regarded as so. According to Chiavenato (2004, p. 77),

> The AI-5 gave so many powers to the president, increasing repression and press censorship, that any real opposition became impossible. From then on, just a way remained: clandestine fight.

The Peacock is a metaphor of the Brazilian citizen that had his decision voice taken from him after the promulgation of the Institutional Acts in the dictatorial period. Just as the Brazilian population, the peacock had no right to choose what he wanted to do. Its owners wanted it to exhibit himself in a tiny garden to charge people for a chance to see it, but because the peacock rebelled, it was locked up in all ways. However, the peacock always managed to escape. In this way, they lost their patience and took it to "[…] a school intended to delay the students' thinking" (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 23). The institution is called *Escola Osarta do Pensamento*, being Osarta an anagram for Atraso [delay]:

> They came up with the name of the school to disguise it. But those interested in the matter soon realized: you just had to read Osarta backwards (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 24).

They enrolled it in three courses to delay its thinking: *Curso papo* [Crop course], *Curso linha* [Thread course], and *Curso filtro* [Filter course].

The *Curso papo* aimed to frighten students, to make them afraid of thinking:

> The Curso Papo was exactly for this: for the student to become afraid of everything. Osarta's staff knew that the more scared the student became, the more his or her thinking delayed. So they kept saying the same thing in the Peacock's ears over and over again (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 24).

The Peacock got to the point of not being able to say a word, so scared it was; but one day it dreamed that it had become deaf and could not hear anybody of the *Curso papo* anymore. It then decided to put wax inside its ears, and its fear did not increase. So they decided to take it to the *Curso linha*. In this course, they tried to sew its thoughts; leaving only what its owners wanted the Peacock to think. However, the Peacock spent all night long doing a strange exercise, training to pull its thought until the surgery time. When they came to sew its thoughts, the Peacock pulled them and the thread tore. They changed the thread, the color, until they gave up and the Peacock stayed with a bunch of pieces of thread hanging inside its thought that sometimes entangled with the lint and it could not think properly.

The narrator references the book *A bolsa amarela*, also by Bojunga (2000), when commenting on the *Curso linha* in *A casa da madrinha*:

> Osarta's staff had heard of a surgery that they had done in a fighting cock: they sewed its thought, leaving only that piece that thought what its owners judged fine, all the rest disappeared through the stitches. The surgery went well, many people talked about that, and then Osarta's staff called the cock's owners for them to teach a course at the school. The course was called Curso Linha (Thread Course) (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 26).

The mentioned fighting cock is that very same one called *Terrível* [Terrible] in *A bolsa amarela* (2000). Said work, through this character – the fighting cock *Terrível*, which has its thought sewed so it can only fight –, references dictatorship. The same reference appears in *A casa da madrinha*:

> They even said, I do not know if that is true, maybe it is just a lie, that they sewed its thought with a very strong thread that would not tear. Thus the animal could only think: 'I have to defeat all of them', and nothing else (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 53, grifo do autor).

This shows a criticism of the forms of torture of the dictatorial period in which Brazilian citizens were forced to comply with the norms imposed by the government, without questioning, losing all their freedom of speech.

Because the mentors of Osarta School did not achieve their intent to make the Peacock intelligent they opened its head and put an filter right at the entrance of its thought:

> They pulled here and there, adjusting well so no idea entered the Peacock's head without passing through the filter before anything else, and then they left the valve just a bit open. Really pointless, nearly useless (BOJUNGA, 2002, p. 28-29),

the Peacock's thought dropped very slowly and became increasingly delayed. Fortunately, the valve

they put in the peacock had a manufacturing defect and sometimes it opened and the animal could think normally.

Conclusion

> Because thinking on human rights bring an assumption: recognizing that that which we deem indispensable to us is also indispensable to our neighbor (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 239).

Throughout Bojunga's plot one can notice a clear representation of dictatorship, which also resulted in the torture of those arrested for questioning the system, its social and political representations. There is in the work a remission of the restricted freedom of speech, configured as impossibility of critical reflection and analysis by the oppressed character. The Peacock's behavior is the symbolic representation of the Brazilian citizen of that period, who, longing to put into action his or her free thought, went through situations that deprived him or her from rights, including that of coming and going, having been oftentimes incarcerated and tortured with cruelty.

The repressive system caused in Brazil a delay of more than 20 years, leading the Brazilian people to a passive accommodation, deprived from their voice and made submissive. For having been denied the dialogue, the access to culture and to critical thinking, many of those individuals were unaware of their rights and duties, becoming incapable of verbalizing claims of social, economic and political order. The protagonist Alexandre symbolizes the Brazilian people of not only that period but also of contemporaneity, because social conditions prevent him from studying, from obtaining access to culture.

While the peacock is a victim of the physical aggressions that metaphorize the torture carried out by servicemen, Alexandre represents the individual that is oppressed by the social system, unable to claim his rights as he does not even know he possesses them. In this way, he does not demand access to studying and to protection and does not rebel against the fact that he needs to work and help to provide for his family. His needs are met only through imagination, through dreams, through the search for an ideal to be achieved – utopic.

There is also a clear criticism of the educational system that serves the maintenance of the governmental ideology. When there is an attempt to broaden horizons, to leave the state of alienation, of blindness, the person is stopped, like the teacher Suitcase. This character represents the creative professional that manages to captivate her students with several different activities, teaching them contents in an innovative, ludic manner, moving apart from the traditional teaching and allowing them to question and reflect. However, because she subverts the instituted system she is not accepted by parents and the school's direction, which want to keep their *status quo*. Her practice is censored, prohibited, just as happened to some Brazilian teachers and intellectuals after the coup of 1964.

In the representation of the school there is a criticism of education, especially in the contraposition of two types of school – the traditional one (Osarta), that leads to delay, and the innovative one (teacher Suitcase), the leads to the student's emancipation. In addition, it is possible to observe in the narrative the configuration of a prejudiced society, unfair regarding the distribution of income, inhuman, oppressive, in which there is no place for criticism, for free expression and culture; above all, there is no protection to childhood and adolescence. For this exact reason there is the prevalence, within this space, of the political unification of consciences, which is, in turn, aimed at the valuation of the capital, to the detriment of humanity.

Bojunga's work is libertarian since, for its magic universe, leads the reader to desire a reality different from that he or she knows, that is, more human and egalitarian, even though it is only possible within the oneiric space. Its plot questions the values that support the policy of servicemen, leading the young reader to reflect on the society in which he or she lives in. Through reading and image projection, youths can put themselves in the protagonist's shoes and experience, by means of his emotions and performance, the various crises of the social world, noticing also the loss of identity caused by poverty and abandonment.

A casa da madrinha, published in the 1970s, actually worked as an escape valve, through which Bojunga could manifest libertarian ideas and captivate her readers. Like the teacher Suitcase, she seeks the comprehensive formation of the critical subject. In short, by revealing in her work the absence of rights, Bojunga problematizes and leads her reader to a reflection on human rights, both compressible and incompressible, in the terms of Candido (1995), and what the absence of both produces.

Through the analysis of the work it is possible to see that its plot approaches deep needs of the human being that cannot be left unmet, which, according to Candido (1995), refers to the respect to fundamental human rights, to fruition of arts and literature in all their modalities and at all levels. By means of this

fruition the right concerning fabled stories is ensured as well, which, once manifested, requires the organization of chaos and of thinking, based on reflection. In this way, Bojunga's text configures an incompressible good as it is essential to the development of the critical thinking that derives from humanization.

Metaphorically, *A casa da madrinha* is very effective, because it operates as a 'key' resulting from the creation, from the recreation of dreams and desires that, portrayed in children's and youth production, manage to deceive censorship of the time of its publishing and to convey libertarian ideals, current and deeply universal to this day. With this 'key', the young reader becomes able to overcome obstacles and reflecting, opening doors to the changes, even if they are, initially, internal ones.

References

BAUMAN, Z. **Modernidade líquida**. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2001.

BOJUNGA, L. **A bolsa amarela**. 32. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Agir, 2000.

BOJUNGA, L. **A casa da madrinha**. 18. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Agir, 2002.

BOJUNGA, L. **O meu amigo pintor**. Rio de Janeiro: Casa Lygia Bojunga, 2006.

BORDINI, M. G. A literatura infantil dos anos 80. In: SERRA, E. D'A. (Org.). **30 anos de literatura para crianças e jovens – algumas leituras**. Campinas: Mercado de Letras/ Associação de Leitura do Brasil, 1998. p. 33-45.

BORELLI, S. H. S. **Ação, suspense, emoção**: literatura e cultura de massa no Brasil. São Paulo: Educ - Estação Liberdade, 1996.

CAMPBELL, J. **O herói de mil faces**. Tradução Adail U. Sobral. 6. ed. São Paulo: Cultrix, 2000.

CANDIDO, A. O direito à literatura. In: CANDIDO, A. **Vários escritos**. 3. ed. rev. ampl. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1995. p. 235-263.

CHEVALIER, J.; GHEERBRANT, A. **Dicionário de símbolos**: mitos, sonhos, costumes, gestos, formas, figuras, cores, números. 13. ed. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1999.

CHIAVENATO, J. J. **O golpe de 64 e a ditadura militar**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Moderna, 2004.

CIFRACLUB. **Casa no campo**. Autoria de Sá, Rodrix e Guarabyra. Available from: <http://www.cifraclub.com.br/sa-rodrix-guarabyra/casa-no-campo/>. Access on: 10 jul. 2013.

COELHO, N. N. **Dicionário crítico da literatura infantil e juvenil brasileira (1882 – 1982)**. 2. ed. São Paulo/ Brasília: Quíron/ INL, 1984. p. 551-573.

COELHO, N. N. **Literatura**: arte, conhecimento e vida. São Paulo: Petrópolis, 2000.

FARINA, M.; PEREZ, C.; BASTOS, D. **Psicodinâmica das cores em comunicação**. 5. ed. São Paulo: Edgard Blücher, 2006.

FERREIRA, E. A. G. R. **Construindo histórias de leitura**: a leitura dialógica enquanto elemento de articulação no interior de uma "biblioteca vivida". 2009. 456f. Tese (Doutorada em Letras)-Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho", Assis, 2009.

LAJOLO, M.; ZILBERMAN, R. **Literatura infantil brasileira**: histórias e histórias. 2. ed. São Paulo: Ática, 1985.

LÖWY, M.; SAYRE, R. **Revolta e melancolia**: o romantismo na contramão da modernidade. Tradução Guilherme João de Freitas Teixeira. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1995.

MORAIS, J. O. **A literatura infantil como instrumento de denúncia da Ditadura Militar**. 2011. 110f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Literatura e Estudos Interculturais)-Universidade Estadual da Paraíba, Campina Grande, 2011.

MOTA, L. D.; ABDALA JÚNIOR, B. **Personae**: grandes personagens da literatura brasileira. São Paulo: Senac, 2001.

ORTIZ, R. **A moderna tradição Brasileira**: cultura brasileira e indústria cultural. 5. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2001.

PERROTTI, E. **O texto sedutor na literatura infantil**. São Paulo: Ícone, 1986.

ZILBERMAN, R. **Como e por que ler a literatura infantil brasileira**. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2005.

Received on 19, September 2014.
Accepted on 26, May 2015.