

THE SYMBOLOGY OF THE SEA IN LYGIA BOJUNGA NUNES'S
WORK: A REFLECTION ON UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN FRAMING

A SIMBOLOXÍA DO MAR NA OBRA DE LYGIA BOJUNGA NUNES:
UNHA REFLEXIÓN SOBRE CONSTRUCIÓNS UTÓPICAS E DISTÓPICAS

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Alice Atsuko Matsuda

Federal University of Technology – Paraná –
UTFPR – Campus of Curitiba/PR, Brasil
aliceamatsuda@gmail.com

Eliane Aparecida Galvão Ribeiro Ferreira

São Paulo State University – UNESP, Campus of Assis/SP, Brasil
eagrif@femanet.com.br

Abstract: The ambivalent image of the sea is recurrent in Bojunga Nunes's work. It receives a lot of symbolic meanings in her production, being sometimes a positive and sometimes a negative element. Thus, the sea is used in a utopic way, as a place for pleasure and leisure, and in a dystopic way, as scenery of a rite of passage, which includes the pain and suffering, part of the rite of passage that characterizes the *bildungsromans*. So, if in some texts the sea assumes a utopic character, being a place of snuggle, security, the ideal to reach, in others it is represented as dystopic, a place of distress, asphyxia and death. In this text we will study the hypothesis that, even in its dark symbolic meaning, in the author's work the sea is an element of reflection and revelation. Thereby, it assumes metaphorically a sense of magnification of the reader's expectative, being an element of emancipation. The objective of this text is to present a reflection on the sea's symbolism on the mentioned texts and its importance for the reader's formation.

Keywords: Sea. Bojunga Nunes. Bildungsromans. Utopia. Dystopia.

Resumo: A imaxe ambivalente do mar é recorrente na obra de Bojunga Nunes. Conta con numerosas implicacións simbólicas na súa produción, na que pode ser un elemento positivo ou negativo. Deste modo, o mar aparece utilizado de maneira utópica, como un lugar de lecer e pracer, e de forma distópica, como o escenario dun rito de iniciación, que supón dolor e sufrimento, parte do rito que caracteriza os *bildungsromans*. Así, nalgúns textos o mar adquire un carácter utópico, un lugar de comodidade e seguridade, o ideal ao que aspirar, mentres que noutros se representa como distópico, un espazo de estrés, asfixia e morte. Neste traballo estudaremos a hipótese de que, mesmo no seu simbolismo máis escuro, o mar é un elemento de reflexión e revelación na obra desta autora. Deste modo, adquire unha magnificación metafórica nas expectativas do lector, convertíndose en elemento de emancipación. O obxectivo deste texto é presentar unha reflexión sobre o simbolismo do mar nos textos mencionados e a súa importancia para a formación do lector.

Palabras chave: Mar. Bojunga Nunes. Bildungsromans. Utopía. Distopía.

Resumen: La imagen ambivalente del mar es recurrente en la obra de Bojunga Nunes. Cuenta con numerosas implicaciones simbólicas en su producción, en la que puede ser un elemento positivo o negativo. De este modo, el mar aparece utilizado de manera utópica, como un lugar de ocio y placer, y de forma distópica, como el escenario de un rito de iniciación, que supone dolor y sufrimiento, parte del rito que caracteriza las *bildungsromans*. Así, en algunos textos el mar adquire un carácter utópico, un lugar de comodidad y seguridad, el ideal al que aspirar, mientras que en otros se representa como distópico, un espacio de estrés, asfixia y muerte. En este trabajo estudiaremos la hipótesis de que, incluso en su simbolismo más oscuro, el mar es un elemento de reflexión y revelación en la obra de esta autora. De este modo, adquire una magnificación metafórica en las expectativas del lector, convirtiéndose en elemento de emancipación. El objetivo de este texto es presentar una reflexión sobre el simbolismo del mar en los textos mencionados y su importancia para la formación del lector.

Palabras clave: Mar. Bojunga Nunes. Bildungsromans. Utopía. Distopía.

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Introduction¹

A modernidade é a coexistência contraditória [...].
Ela é uma prisão, uma stahlhartes Gehäuse,
segundo a expressão de Weber, mas também uma
promessa de autonomia; ela é o reino da racionalidade
instrumental que submete o homem aos imperativos do
sistema, mas também a prefiguração de uma
humanidade mais livre. (Sérgio Paulo Rouanet)²

The objective of this text is to present in a synthetic form an analysis of the representation of the sea in the works *Os colegas*³, *Angélica* (1975), *Corda bamba*⁴ (1979), *Sofá estampado*⁵ (1980), and *Sapato de salto*⁶ (2006), and in the short-stories “Tchau”⁷, “Lá no mar”⁸, “A troca e a tarefa”⁹ and “O bife e a pipoca”¹⁰, by Lygia Bojunga Nunes, among others, totalizing 22 books. In those texts, the sea receives several symbolic meanings; it is sometimes a positive element, and sometimes a negative element. Thus, the sea is used in a utopic way, as a place for pleasure and leisure, and in a dystopic way, as a scenery to a rite of passage, which includes pain and suffering, part of the rite of passage that characterizes the *bildungsromans*.

In the books *Os colegas*, *Angélica* (1975), *Corda bamba* (1979), *Sofá estampado* (1980), e *Sapato de salto* (2006), and in the short-stories “Tchau”, “Lá no mar”, “A troca e a tarefa” and “O bife e a pipoca” from *Tchau* (1984), we can notice, by the characterization of the sea, that this element assumes an ambiguous symbolic value. So, if in some texts the sea assumes a utopic character, being a place of snuggle, security, the ideal to reach, in others it is represented as dystopic, a place of distress, asphyxia and death. In this text we will study the hypothesis that, even in its dark symbolic meaning, in the author’s work the sea is an element of reflection and revelation. So, it’s an element that is igniter of the emancipatory function of the libertarian literature. Thereby, it assumes metaphorically a sense of magnification of the reader’s expectative, being an element of emancipation.



¹ Translation by Guilherme Magri da Rocha (UNESP- campus of Assis/SP).

² Modernity is the contradictory coexistence [...]. It’s a prison, a stahlhartes Gehäuse, in the words of Weber, but also a promise of autonomy; it’s the realm of instrumental rationality that submits the man to the imperatives of the system, but also the foreshadowing of a freer humanity. (Rouanet, 2003: 64).

³ *The mates*.

⁴ *Tightrope*.

⁵ *Stamped couch*.

⁶ *High heeled shoe*.

⁷ “Bye”.

⁸ “In the sea”.

⁹ “The change and the task”.


¹⁰ “Steak and popcorn”.

The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

According to Hans Robert Jauss (1993: 45), Aesthetic Reception theorist, art has a revolutionary character, because it liberates “[...] the man of ingrained prejudices and representations in his historical situation and [...] [it opens] one new perception of the world”. Precisely, in this text, we assume that the works of Bojunga Nunes require an active reader, who is not accommodated during the reading, but fills the blanks that the plot contains, becoming a co-author. For Iser (1979: 130), “[...] the vacuum in fictional text leads and guides the reader's activity”, it is through it that the reader participates in the realization of the text. Its existence ensures the communicability with the reader, that once activated, during the reading and the interpretation of the text, gives him pleasure; elevates the self-esteem on the recognition that is considered in literary production.

The objective of this text, following the proposed reflection – the sea as an element of union/separation – is to present a reflection on the sea's symbolism on the mentioned texts and its importance for the reader's formation guided by the Reception Aesthetics.

1. The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work



The image of the sea is recurrent in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work. According to Vera Maria Tietzmann Silva, in the paper “A ambivalência do mar em Lygia Bojunga Nunes”¹¹ (1996), the sea receives several symbolic meanings – sometimes positive, sometimes negative, divided in two phases: luminous and gray. The author considers the works *Os colegas* (1972), *Angélica* (1975), *A bolsa amarela*¹² (1976) and *A casa da madrinha*¹³ (1978) as part of the luminous phase. *Corda bamba* (1979), *O sofá estampado* (1980) and *Tchau* (1984) would be part of a transition phase. *O meu amigo pintor*¹⁴ (1987) and *Nós três*¹⁵ (1987) represent the gray phase.

Tietzmann writes that, in the luminous phase of Lygia Bojunga Nunes, “[...] o mar é secundado por imagens relacionadas à gestação, ao nascimento, ao aconchego e à segurança –

¹¹ The ambivalence of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes.

¹² *The yellow bag.*

¹³ *The godmother's house.*

¹⁴ *My friend painter.*

¹⁵ *Three of us.*

imagens uterinas”¹⁶ (1995: 35), assuming a positive connotation. The gray phase works conveys the idea of “[...] aprendido para o sofrimento e a morte”¹⁷ (1995: 40), so there’s a negative connotation.

So, according to this methodology, we present our analysis divided in those three phases.

1. 1. Luminous phase

The sea, in *Os colegas* (1972), has a positive connotation, utopic, being a place of pleasure and leisure: it’s in the beach that the dogs Latinha and Virinha play and have fun. According to Tietzmann, it represents the first function of representativeness of the sea: “[...] ‘locus amoenus’, local de brincadeiras, de lazer ou de mero prazer visual”¹⁸ (1994: 91). Besides that, according to the author, it also has a function of purification. Flor de Lis, while bathing in the sea to get rid of the smell of perfume, clothes and trinkets, tries to release itself from the domination of its owner, who tries to transform the puppy in another being, losing the dog’s identity.

In *Angélica* (1975), the sea is represent by Porco, who feels discrimination because its suggesting the idea of the sea, ships, cranes, shorebirds, immensity, color, smell and sound of the sea. The sea, in *A bolsa amarela* (1976) also has a positive and utopic representation. Terrível, the rooster, after running away from a fight, enters in the sea and is saved by the line of a hook. The fisherman, even after noticing that he didn’t caught a fish, puts the rooster in the boat, since he wanted some company. Then, they started traveling, sailing in several seas, knowing islands and ports. One day, the boat reaches a distant place and Terrível decides to live there: “Sossegado. Sem ter que ganhar de todo o mundo. Lá ele ia arranjar amigo e desenhar coração. E não ia mais ter dono nenhum costurando o pensamento dele”¹⁹ (Bojunga Nunes, 2002: 89). The idea of an idealized utopian vision of “would be” is representative in this excerpt from the book. This view is also repeated in the last chapter entitled “Na praia²⁰”, when Rachel breaks free of her desire to be a boy and to be an adult. They are carried by the wind-shaped kite, since the girl finds the pros and cons of being a boy or adult.

Rachel, the protagonist, divesting herself of her wills, goes through a process of initiation,



¹⁶ “[...] the sea is assisted by images related to pregnancy, birth, snuggle and security – uterine images”

¹⁷ “[...] learning to suffering and death”

¹⁸ “[...] ‘locus amoenus’, a place for fun, leisure or visual pleasure”

¹⁹ “Peaceful. Without having to overcome anyone. There he would find friends and draw a heart. And not going to have any master stitching his thinking.”

²⁰ At the beach.

The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

a rite of passage, in which she cuts the umbilical cord. Now it's like she has become more adult, stopped being a child and has become aware of her desires in a more mature form, discovering her goal: to be a writer, her only will that remained, metaphorically, on the bottom of the bag. Thus, this desire eventually gestates and generates, as Tietzmann (1994: 95) writes, to the writer's own texts, revealing a bit of her soul and concerns.

In *A casa da madrinha* (1978), the sea also has the connotation of a place of pleasure, a nice landscape to see, the “nice looking”, although it is the place where Alexandre and Augusto work selling biscuits, peanuts, ice cream trying to survive. The sea which is near their godmother's house starts to have an idealized connotation, because it is a piece of paradise with clear water, allowing plunge with the eyes open and to see fishes, stones, plants, shells, besides playing and dating. The sea also becomes the object of desire, a good to be achieved, making it an irresistible attraction for Pavão, the boy who travels with Alexandre, who wanted “[...] um dia pegar um navio e atravessar o mar todinho”²¹ (Bojunga Nunes, 1986: 23).

Tietzmann didn't mention *A cama*²² (1999), *O Rio e eu*²³ (1999) and *Retratos de Carolina*²⁴ (2002), but in those narratives we can notice an utopic approach to the sea.

In *A cama* (1999), the sea symbolizes union, pleasure. Jerome rents a warehouse with a bathroom to live in. It is after the twelfth floor and it's difficult to access. He rents this house because from the window you have a wonderful view of the sea. At first he thought about breaking the lease, but after he saw the sea through the window, the warehouse turned into a studio to compose and play his music and he did not resist.

In *O Rio e eu* (1999), an autobiographic work, Lygia Bojunga Nunes narrates her love relationship with Rio de Janeiro. The sea is represented in a pleasurable way, as a place of leisure and union. It is described to the protagonist for the first time by Maria da Anunciação, a *carioca* that came from Pelotas searching for a passion and worked in her house as a maid. Then, the writer starts living in Rio and, seeing the sea for the first time, falls in love with the city.

In *Retratos de Carolina* (2002), the sea also has a positive connotation, as an idyllic place of pleasure. There's a description of São Pedro d'Aldeia, a place with a huge lake, perfect to swim,

²¹ “[...] One day pick a ship and cross all the sea”.

²² *The bed*.

²³ *Rio and me*.

²⁴ *Pictures of Carolina*.



open to the sea, with a deserted beach, choppy sea, dunes and salt marshes. After knowing the place, the protagonist falls in love with it and built a house called Cata-vento, because of the wind. It is worth noticing that this same place was mentioned in the book *O abraço*, however with a negative connotation, because it is the space where Clarice was raped, assuming a dystopic approach.

1. 2. Transition phase

In *Corda bamba* (1979), the sea also has a connotation of object of desire. It can be noticed when Maria reconstitutes her past and affirms herself, making plans to, during her vacation at the end of the year, go to Bahia. There, she wants to visit her friends from the circus, Foguinho e Barbuda. She wants to stay there because there's a garden in the backyard, a sea in front of the house and a beach to play. So, the sea in this work has a connotation of a utopic place, where the desires can be realized. The work is classified as transition, because the protagonist doesn't know the place she wants to know – the sea –, which presents itself as a set of realization of her desires in future actions. It's the place marked by a latent desire.

In *O sofá estampado* (1980), the sea also has positive connotation, being conceived as a place of warmth, security, the ideal to be achieved. After his graduation, Victor wants to know the sea before deciding on which career to follow. This protagonist saw the sea for the first time in the cinema. So, he decides at that moment, that when he grows up, he will see it personally. Again, we note that the sea is the place of fulfillment of a wish that will come true through future actions. Chronologically analyzing the spaces in which Victor is coping, we notice that the first mentioned is the school. When the teacher asks him to recite the poem “Último andar”²⁵, Cecília Meireles:

No último andar é mais bonito
do último andar se vê o mar.
É lá que eu quero morar²⁶.
(Bojunga Nunes, 2000: 123)

The protagonist gets nervous, and he cannot do the requested performance and, therefore, he begins to dig, disappearing into the hole. The poem reveals a search for an ideal - the image of coming-into-being of Hegel, of hope in the future in a better world. Besides conveying the idea of the vision of the whole society that can be seeing from the “top floor”, we have the image of the sea as an idyllic space.

²⁵ Top floor.

²⁶ On the top floor it is more beautiful/from the top floor you see the sea./That's where I want to live.



The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

In this search for the ideal, Victor can be characterized as revolutionary romantic or utopian, as Löwy defines it, because the protagonist “[...] recusa, ao mesmo tempo, a ilusão de retorno às comunidades do passado e à reconciliação com o presente capitalista, procurando uma saída na esperança do futuro”²⁷ (1990: 16). This characterization is justified once Victor, in the narrative, demonstrates an aversion to capitalism and industrialization. Thus, he takes a stake against his father's plans, who wanted his son to continue the work that he developed in the carapace's industry. This is his father's intention since he was a kid, “[...] eu estou criando essa indústria de carapaças de plástico pro Vítor: quando ele se formar já tem um trabalho pronto esperando; é só continuar”²⁸ (Bojunga Nunes, 2001: 27). That's why when Victor graduates, his father gives him a professional briefcase with a plastic carapace. And when Victor decides to make his journey to see the sea, his father wants the young man to take the briefcase with him and start making contacts with clients. The work is characterized as transitional, because the sea is the site of the future realization.

In the short-story “Tchau”, from the homonymous book, the sea's symbology is distopic and the plot that it constitutes is seen as a place of suffering, tears, pain and lost. By the sea, Rebeca's mother will be gone. She reveals to her daughter that she will abandon her husband to live with another man, in another country, realizing her dream. The sea is a future element of separation, both geographic and affective. Her mother will leave, depriving her daughter and her husband of her presence. The action at the sea is not realized in the narrative. The sea takes on the role of the instrument in which the mother will hold the future action of leaving; thus, assumes the capability of an action that will happen.

In the short-story “A troca e a tarefa”, of the same book, *Tchau* (1984), the sea also has a negative connotation, dystopian. It tells a story of a girl who, since she was 9, feels jealous of her older sister. In her 15 years-old birthday and her sister engagement, it reaches its highest point, once she finds out that her sister will be engaged with the boy who she had a platonic love on – Omar - as we can notice, it's a suggestive name, because of the paronomasia “o mar” (the sea).

²⁷ “[...] refuses, at the same time, the illusion of returning to communities of the past and the reconciliation with the capitalist present, looking for an exit in the hopes of the future”.

²⁸ “[...] I am creating this plastic carapaces industry for Victor: when he graduates, he already will have job waiting for him”.



Suffering, she jumps off the window of her bedroom and goes to the beach, at night, with the sea. There, she sleeps and dreams. In this dream, she's at the beach, it's night and between her and the sea there's a wall with two closed windows. In one it's written "the change", in the other, "the task". The first window makes a deal with the girl: "– Escreve a história dessa dor e eu te livro dela. É uma troca: eu te prometo."²⁹ (Bojunga Nunes, 1991: 56). Thus, the girl follows the advice by turning her feelings into a history. She became a writer. However, when she was finishing her twenty-seventh book, she had the same dream that she had at 15. The other window reveals that she's at the end of her mission: "Cada um tem uma tarefa na vida. A tua é escrever 27 livros. Na hora que você botar o ponto final no vigésimo sétimo livro a tua tarefa vai estar acabada e a tua vida vai terminar."³⁰ (Bojunga Nunes, 1991: 62). Having no way to escape the fate, she finishes her book and dies. To Tietzmann (1994: 101), the sea which was formerly quiet and inviting, is now aggressive. The beach, once the place of recreation and socializing, assumes the role of a space of solitude. The brightness and heat of the sun are replaced by darkness and coldness of the night. The house, once symbol of warmth and coziness, is banished. Only one wall with windows closed is what is left of it.

The sea in this short-story symbolizes the opposite of the images of her other works. In this tale, the protagonist goes through two stages of an initiation ritual: the first dream allows her to mature and live with her needs, finding ways to overcome them and start to live, the second dream costs her to know her own limits, accept and prepare for death. According to Tietzmann (1994: 101), these "[...] duas faces do conhecimento, opostas e complementares, marcam [...] a sintaxe simbólica da obra de Lygia Bojunga Nunes, dividindo-a na fase luminosa, ou de aprendizado para a vida e o amor; e na fase cinzenta, ou de aprendizado para o sofrimento e a morte"³¹. In *Tchau* (1984), part of the works of transition, we can notice both situations occurring successively, in "A troca e a tarefa" and in "Lá no mar".

In "Lá no mar", there are two situations: first, the sea is a symbol of death, where the grandfather, the father and the fisherman died – a negative connotation, of suffering, pain and separation. Then, the sea starts to have a connotation of snuggle, leisure, union. After a long time, the fisherman's boat is found by a boy, and he starts to have a life as he used to have.

If in "Tchau", "A troca e a tarefa" and "Lá no mar" the sea has a negative connotation, in "O bife e a pipoca", it's positive. Rodrigo, character of this short-story, invites his friend Guilherme,

²⁹ "Write the story of your pain, and you're free of it. And a change: I promise you".

³⁰ "Each one has a task in life. Your is writing 27 books. The moment you put the full stop at the end of your twenty-seventh book your task will be finished and your life will end."

³¹ "[...] two sides of knowledge, opposite and complementary, mark [...] the symbolic syntax of the work of Lygia Bojunga Nunes, dividing it in the light phase, or learning for life and love, and the gray phase, or learning for the suffering and death".



The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

who lives in Pelotas, to go to Rio in his vacations, to go to the beach as they used to do. It's a place of leisure and pleasure. It's also the place where Rodrigo and Tuca go fishing, reinforcing the same symbology. It justifies Tietzmann's classification of *Tchau* (1984) as transitional, because sometimes the sea is presented as an ambiguous element, positive or negative, sometimes as potentiality.

The sea has a negative connotation in *Aula de inglês*³² (2006), but also assumes the competence to unleash a comedic performance, that's why the book is in the transition phase. This performance appears on the report of Professor stating that, as a boy, because of his first heartbreak experience, he went to the beach with his camera to get distracted and thus relieve his pain. However, when he decided to photograph a crab, a giant wave whipped him, throwing him upside down. The camera went one way and his belongings went another. Besides loving sorrow, he became sadder without his camera, his great companion. Thus, the sea relativizes its negative role when it also assumes the role of the agent who reveals the comic side of the character, performing a pain management.

1. 3. The gray phase



In *Meu amigo pintor* (1987), the sea appears with a negative connotation again, as a set of sadness, suffering and death in the album which the painter gave to Cláudio, so that he understands the meaning of the colors and the shapes in plastic arts. Claudio mentions the album, telling that the boat is sinking in a sea in which the color is longing. This boat doesn't represent a safe place; it's not a crib, but a funerary urn, of death. The turbid beige water is not a purifying water, but stygian (Tietzmann, 1994: 102).

The sea, in *Nós três* (1987), at first looks like a representation of a setting of leisure, fruition, union, since it is where Rafaela and the sailor Davi met, where she spends her vacations, next to the sea, at Mariana's place, who is an sculptress and friend of her mother. However the sea starts symbolizing death, since it is where Mariana, in an instant of madness, kills Davi with a knife, because she doesn't want him to leave.

Tietzmann (1994: 107) considers that, in *Nós três* (1987), there's an expiation on guilt, once Maria is punished – she loses her creativity and is no more capable of producing sculptures.

³² English class.

In the same boat that took Davi's body away, she leaves. The ending suggests she committed suicide, for she had a lonely travel, without coming back.

Although Tietzmann doesn't mention the books *O abraço*³³ (1995) and *Sapato de salto* (2006), that were published after her text, in those books the sea symbolizes death, suffering, pain and violence.

In *O abraço* (1995), the sea represents the space where the worst violence to be committed against a child occurs: rape. The first fact mentioned in the book is the report of a crime that happened to Clarice, 7 years old girl, when her family spent their vacation in San Pedro d'Aldeia, near a beach. Then it mentions the case occurred with Cristina, 8, when their family spent a long weekend on a farm of his father's friend in Minas. Although the sea is not present in this event, the river that presents in the report has a private beach on its margin. The girl named the rapist as the Water Man, because she sees him for the first time when she was on the river bank watching the fishes, and the picture of this man emerges from the water. The sea, the river and the water do not symbolize purification and renewal, but the opposite, distress, asphyxia and death. It's dystopian symbology.

In *Sapato de salto* (2006), sea's symbology is even more negative, although it also has an idea of pleasure, an idyllic place with a wonderful view. However, it is understood that it is the space where Inês prostitutes herself, so there's a negative idea of suffering and suffocation. In addition, there is the symbolism of the river, where Maristela's mother Sabrina hangs a stone in the neck and throws herself, committing suicide.



1. 4. The sea in other Bojunga Nunes's works

In the trilogy *Livro: um encontro com Lygia Bojunga*³⁴ (1988), *Fazendo Ana Paz*³⁵ (1991) and *Paisagem*³⁶ (1992), books that show the relation between the writer and her books, the literary writing, the writer's role, there's no mention on the sea. Just in the last one there's a mention, in the beginning there's an illustration of the sea and at the end, an illustration of a boat coming from the sea to the beach. This is an illustration of the landscape that Lourenço, Bojunga Nunes's reader, dreamed. The same landscape that was in the short story she was writing in a notebook in London. In the work, the relation between author and reader is discussed, as well as their complicity. The

³³ *The hug.*

³⁴ *Book: an encounter with Lygia Bojunga.*

³⁵ *Doing Ana Paz.*

³⁶ *The Landscape.*

The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

sea gains a positive symbology, of union, meeting.

The sea doesn't have a strong symbology in *Seis vezes Lucas*³⁷ (1995), there's only a mention of the sea that can be seen from the terrace in which Luca's father brings his family and his lover to dinner, and then dancing. Thus, it assumes the shape of a charming setting, that provides seduction, acting as a background as a performance of the protagonist's father with the women he wants to keep by his side.

However, Lucas goes through a rite of passage, while he is lost in a forest near a farm in Friburgo, where he and his mother go after her divorce. Through the night, Lucas' maturation happens when he is alone in the forest. He loses the terrorizing fear he used to feel and starts having a more mature view than adults have regarding a love relationship. The young protagonist notices how unfaithful his dad is, he doesn't have a good character and how his mother and his Art's teacher, one of his father's lovers are ingenuous believing in this man.

In *Querida*³⁸ (2009), the writer's last work, the sea also appears in a second plan, as a beautiful landscape, enchanting. It doesn't have a utopian or dystopian meaning.

*Feito à mão*³⁹ (1996) first edition was handmade, with only 120 copies. Published by Agir in 1999, it had one more chapter, "Pra você que me lê"⁴⁰, in which the author explains to the reader how the idea of editing a handmade book appeared. In the book, she relates her doubts, difficulties and joys that permeated its production, making the reader feel how stimulating is the challenge of giving birth to a project. The handmade book had two reasons: the idea of writing on doing it with your own hands and the compulsion of not letting the technology impose itself. In this work, there's no mention to the sea, but artisan stories.

In *Dos Vinte I*⁴¹ (2007) the author has the intention to enable her readers from past, present and future to get closer to her imagination. She chooses a chapter or excerpt of her (then)

³⁷ *Six times Lucas*.

³⁸ *Darling*.

³⁹ *Handmade*.

⁴⁰ "For you who reads me".

⁴¹ *Of twenty I*.

twenty books, creating an opportunity of encounter between them.

Conclusion

In the light of the above, we can notice that Bojunga Nunes incorporates the sea in her literary work, sometimes as a positive, sometimes as a negative element. Studying the sea as an element of union/separation, we noticed that it rouses, reflections on its symbology for the implied reader, assuming utopian, dysphoric or latent role. It is worth mentioning that this potentiality is also ambiguous, because sometimes it suggests that future actions will be positive, allowing the realization of a utopia - a dream; sometimes negative, once it allows the achievement of separation or pain, at its extreme, of death – dystopia.

The involvement of the author with this element is justified once she is a *gaucha*, born far away from the beach, that doesn't hide her enchantment for the sea when she met it, neither her experiences living in Rio. By the critic character of her production, she conceives the sea as a double object, capable of transform itself in a space of suffering and pain, mostly in the childhood of her characters, who are not protected, sheltered, don't have food, home and comfort provided by adults.

The sea in her books performs in way that classifies it as a character, being sometimes igniter of a revelation and awareness, sometimes of knowledge of the human limitations.

The analyses made possible to notice that the hypothesis that even in its darkest sense, the sea is configured as an element of reflection and revelation, assuming metaphorically the meaning of expanding the horizons of the reader and revealing its emancipator power in the author's works is valid.

Thus, using the concept of emancipation through the communicative and liberating nature of the artistic creation, according to Jauss, Zilberman (1989: 54) explains why it is possible to characterize the aesthetic experience as a enabling of the emancipation of the subject:

[...] em primeiro lugar, liberta o ser humano dos constrangimentos e da rotina cotidiana; estabelece uma distância entre ele e a realidade convertida em espetáculo; pode preceder a experiência, implicando então a incorporação de novas normas, fundamentais para a atuação na e compreensão da vida prática; e, enfim é concomitantemente antecipação utópica, quando projeta vivências futuras, e reconhecimento retrospectivo, ao preservar o passado e permitir a redescoberta de acontecimentos enterrados.⁴²

⁴² [...] first, frees the human being and the constraints of everyday routine; establishes a distance between him and reality converted into spectacle; may precede experience then implying the incorporation of new standards, fundamental to



The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

According to Jauss (1979), this liberating character of art is elucidated by the aesthetic experience from three basic categories that complement each other and are achieved at the same time: *poiesis*, *aisthesis* and *katharsis*. However, the author points out that the three activities depend on the reader's response in relation to the aesthetic experience: the identification to be realized.

Jauss explains that *poiesis* means “[...] o prazer ante a obra que nós mesmos realizamos”⁴³ (1979: 79), the pleasure that the reader feels participating in the production process. *Aisthesis* is the “[...] prazer estético da percepção reconhecadora e do conhecimento perceptivo”⁴⁴ (1979: 80), the pleasure experienced by the observer when he recognizes the reality represented in the work by increasing the knowledge he has of the world. *Katharsis* means the “[...] prazer dos afetos provocados pelo discurso ou pela poesia, capaz de conduzir o ouvinte e o expectador tanto à transformação de suas convicções, quanto à liberação de sua psique”⁴⁵ (1979: 80). The *catharsis*, besides being a mean of releasing emotions, is seen as an activity that is motivated by action, since it takes the reader to reflect on his ideas and perceptions of reality, establishing relations with what is projected in the work of art, occurring the identification process that affects the existential possibilities of the reader.

Jauss writes that the three constitutive functions of aesthetic experience mustn't be viewed in a “hierarchy of layers”, but as a relationship of independent functions that can establish connections between each other, made in different ways, not subordinate. These links can be seen, for example, when the creator, in front of his own work, assumes the role of observer or reader, from *poiesis* to *aisthesis*, and feels unable of producing and receiving at the same time. However, the functions of *poiesis* and *katharsis* can be related when the creator thematizes “[...] expressamente o ‘poetar do poeta’, como se a liberação de sua psique fosse um efeito da *poiesis*”⁴⁶ (1979: 81). Jauss, when examining the three functions of aesthetic experience, says that the communicative function of art is not necessarily mediated by *katharsis*. According to him, this communicative character also makes itself the *aisthesis*. So, it is clear that the activity of *aisthesis*

performance in and understanding of practical life; and finally is simultaneously utopian anticipation when designing future experiences, and retrospective recognition, to preserve the past and allow the rediscovery of events buried.

⁴³ “[...] the pleasure besides the book that we conducted ourselves”.

⁴⁴ “[...] the aesthetic pleasure of a recognizer perception and of the perceptible knowledge”.

⁴⁵ “[...] pleasure of the affections caused by the discourse or by the poetry, capable of conducting the listener and the viewer to the transformation of their convictions and to the release of their psyche”.

⁴⁶ “[...] expressly the ‘poetizing of the poet’, as if the release of his own psyche was an effect of *poiesis*”.

can convert into poiesis, since “[...] o observador pode considerar o objeto estético como incompleto, sair de sua atitude contemplativa e converter-se em co-criador da obra, à medida que conclui a concretização de sua forma e de seu significado”⁴⁷ (1979: 82). The author states that the activity of aisthesis may be included in a process of aesthetic identity formation, when the reader makes his aesthetic experience accompanied by the reflection on its own becoming.

Thus, it can be observed that in the interaction process between text and reader, this reader becomes co-producer of the literary creation, realizing and fulfilling the gaps in the book. Through those gaps, the text exerts its productivity, achieving pleasure and raising the reader’s self-esteem, once he recognizes himself as an active and dynamic subject in the center of the communication process.

The desire to establish a dialogue with the reader results of the communicative function of Bojunga Nunes’s texts. Because of this function, there are points of indeterminacy that, present both in the narrator and in the characters’ discourse, confer mystery and suspense to the narrative and ask the implied reader for an interaction, an act of projection (*Vorstellungsakte*) resulting of a combination that seeks to rescue the “good continuation”. These blanks cannot be filled by the system itself; they are an important device because they articulate the interaction between text and reader (Iser, 1999:107).

When the connectability of a text is broken by the presence of blanks, the process of communication is effected by the omission of the relationship between the perspectives of the text. Thereby, the reader is incorporated into the text, and he coordinates perspectives, acts within the text, and its activity and is, at the same time, controlled by the text itself.

The empty seats fit the interactive process. Thus, the reader must update and modify the object all the time, shifting the point of view from a perspective of presentation to another, developing new expectations. The most desirable process in the formation process of the reader occurs: the break of preconceptions and the expansion of the horizon of expectations.

So for Children's literature, which is defined by the readership that it is intended and that is historically read by children, it's necessary an approach through reception, as important as the production or structure of the book. Through it, we can contribute to the advancement of the scientific debate about the reader’s formation.



⁴⁷ “[...] the observer may consider the aesthetic object as incomplete, leaving his contemplative attitude and becoming co-creator of the work, as he concludes the achievement of its form and its meaning”.

The symbology of the sea in Lygia Bojunga Nunes's work:
a reflection on utopian and dystopian framing

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