

The Metamorphoses of a Myth and its Pragmatic Effects in *Uma Abelha na Chuva*, by Carlos de Oliveira

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ABSTRACT: Creation, transformation, and metamorphosis are processes that affect the entire Universe, as Lavoisier's Law highlights. These three processes and concepts happen in various areas, and they have particular relevance in the field of Arts and Literature. Their importance, perception and evaluation varied over time, cultures, and geographies, usually in line with some artistic periods. The work of writers and artists is always a process of transformation and metamorphosis of materials, codes, themes, and so on, but it also operates the transformation of the creators and recipients. Moreover, in these fields, transformation, and metamorphosis are also work's themes.

In this chapter, we intend to analyze the presence of these three concepts and processes in the novel *Uma Abelha na Chuva*, by Carlos de Oliveira. Firstly, we will analyze the role of transformation in the author's creative literary process and how it fits into the Neo-Realism movement. Secondly, we will see the presence of the theme of transformation in the novel. Finally, we will analyze the presence of the Hyacinthus Greek myth, the meanings, and the pragmatic effects it produces, in line with the fulfillment of the Marxist desideratum of transforming the world.

Keywords: Creation, transformation and metamorphosis, Neo-Realism, Carlos de Oliveira, *Uma Abelha na Chuva*, Hyacinthus myth

1 INTRODUCTION

Todo o Mundo é composto de mudança,

Tomando sempre novas qualidades (Camões)

Creation, transformation, and metamorphosis are processes that affect the entire Universe, involving the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms.

This idea has its corollary in the famous Lavoisier Law, whose summary corresponds to the sentence, "Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed." This follows an important idea from ancient Greek philosophy: "Nothing comes from nothing."

The human being, himself the result of a metamorphosis (an egg fertilized by a sperm), being endowed with consciousness and possessing intelligence and multiple skills that allow him to be intentionally an agent of creation and transformation, has the pride and satisfaction of being himself a creator and promoting and carrying out changes in several areas.

However, on the other hand, he does not escape suffering because he is powerless to control and prevent certain changes that are unfavorable or fatal for him

and his entire environment. In particular, the anguish in the face of aging, illness, and death stands out.

Moreover, from the 19th century on, the process of change reached a high acceleration and several transformations took place in society, as noticed and anticipated by Marx and Engels:

All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind (1848).

The three processes and concepts mentioned above happen and are treated in various areas, such as Religion, Science, Economics, History, Literature and Arts. However, their perception and evaluation varied over time, cultures and geographies. For example, the concept of Creation involves a crucial divergence between Religion and Science and has been the subject of some divergences in the world of Literature and the Arts.

In the second case, the artist's theory as genius is confronted with the author's theory as an artisan (see Silva, 2000, p. 233). This confrontation underlies the

concepts of Art as Creation, resulting from an epiphany, or as Construction/Production, resulting from work. The predominance of one of these conceptions occurs over time alternately, in line with the various artistic periods.

Taking into account the subject addressed in this text, we highlight Marxist theories, such as those of Marx, Benjamin, Macherey, and others. All of them challenge the concept of creation and argue that artistic work is the result of production (See Aguiar e Silva, p. 34, 208-220).

This one and other theories consider the author as a producer integrated into a certain situation that influences him. Therefore, he is considered as a “trans-individual subject” (Silva, 2000, p. 252).

However, the work of art differs from other things produced and manufactured by man. Heidegger argues that the work of art is more than a manufactured thing. It is allegory and symbol:

the artwork is something else over and above the thingly element. This something else in the work constitutes its artistic nature. [...] The work makes public something other than itself; [...] it is an allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made. [...] The work is a symbol (Heidegger, 1993, p. 145-6).

So, we verify that whatever the prevailing theory, the writer’s work is always a work of transformation. According to Aguiar e Silva, the author is an active principle, a true agent in relation to the codes that he transforms, that he infringes, that he destroys; in relation to the texts already produced by other authors and with which he dialogues, exalting them, renewing them, contesting them or parodying them; in relation to the empirical, historical and social world and, many times, in relation to a religious and meta-empirical universe (Silva, 2000, p. 252-3).

Furthermore, in Literature and the Arts the transformation goes beyond the materials used and worked. In fact, the artistic process itself operates a transformation both of the author and of the receiver, the first during the creation and the second during the experience of the reception.

Heidegger argues that “The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist” (1993, p. 143). However, he adds that before the work and the artist, “in a still different way, art is the origin of both artist and work” (p. 143).

As for the transformation of the recipient, it goes beyond the individual and may even encompass an entire community or society. At times Literature and the Arts are intentionally used to operate social transformations, as is the case of movements inspired by Marxism, such as Neo-Realism. Symmetrically, we can see throughout history how the intervention of political or religious power worked to prevent this

transformation by prohibiting free access to certain books and works of art.

It is also important to highlight that in Literature and the Arts, Transformation and Metamorphosis are simultaneously the themes of these works. As a theme, Transformation and Metamorphosis occurred more frequently in certain periods, such as the Renaissance, Mannerism, and Baroque.

In these two fields, the theme of metamorphosis has two paradigmatic and inspiring works whose titles are only by themselves elucidative: *Metamorphoses*, by Ovid, and *Metamorphoses, The Golden Ass*, by Lucius Apuleio. In the first, metamorphoses are the work of the gods; in the second, they are the work of magical arts practiced by men. Both have exerted great influence on the Arts and Letters over time.

In this chapter, we intend to analyze how creation, transformation, and metamorphosis are present in the novel *Uma Abelha na Chuva*, by Carlos de Oliveira, both as themes and as processes

Globally, the theme of transforming society and the world would always have to be present in a neo-realist work like this one, so we will try to show the specificity of the treatment of this theme in this book. In particular, we will try to show how this novel establishes a connection with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, especially the connection to Hyacinthus’ Greek myth.

In the book, this connection is very subtle and almost implicit. Nevertheless, this relationship proves to be extremely important in producing meanings and pragmatic effects of the work. Moreover, it fulfills the Marxist desideratum of transforming the world, a principle that informs Neo-realism and the author’s work.

2 NEO-REALISM: TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

Neo-Realism is tightly connected to Marx’s thesis:

Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it (Marx, 1998, p. 571).

This movement emerged in Portugal in the 1940s during Salazar’s dictatorship. From an ideological point of view, the members of the Portuguese neo-realist group are strongly influenced by Marxism and Dialectical Materialism, which comes to them through readings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Plekhanov, Georges Friedman, and Henri Lefebvre.

Literary influences come from socialist realism in the Soviet Union, the American novel of the so-called “lost generation,” and the Northeastern Brazilian novel.

His project corresponds to Marx’s objective of “transforming the world” and society and, in this

sense, we are facing a conception of art and literature as engaged and committed, in which the writer and the artist must take sides and follow a certain path, “tendency” (Tendenzroman).

Accordingly, this movement elects as themes social conflict, alienation and class consciousness, land possession, oppression and exploitation, and the opposition between ruling and dominated classes.

Thus, its conception of the literary phenomenon values the ideological dimension of literary creation, and its capacity for political intervention, while devaluing its aesthetic dimension.

Due to these options, Neo-realism is the target of harsh criticism and the subject of many discussions. However, it should be highlighted that several Portuguese authors have always defended the preservation of aesthetic values, as is the case of Mário Dionísio, among others (See Torres, 1977, p. 20-24).

Incidentally, Engels himself is not enthusiastic about the “Tendenzroman” and considers that the “tendency” must be inferred from the situation and the action of the literary work and not be explicitly expressed by the author, an attitude that he criticizes to a novelist, whom he asks not to repeat it:

I think however that the purpose must become manifest from the situation and the action themselves without being expressly pointed out and that the author does not have to serve the reader on a platter the future historical resolution of the social conflicts which he describes (Engels, 1978, p. 88).

3 CARLOS DE OLIVEIRA: NEO-REALISM AND THE CHANGING UNIVERSE

Carlos de Oliveira (1921-1981) is rightly considered one of the great Portuguese writers of Neo-Realism, both in prose and poetry. His novel *Uma Abelha na Chuva* is considered the author’s masterpiece, and also of Portuguese Neo-Realism. Furthermore, it is considered as one of the great Portuguese novels of the 20th century.

The author’s view of transformation, in nature and through art, is condensed in his poem “Lavoisier,” where he fuses nature and poetry. This poem says:

Lavoisier
Na poesia,
natureza variável
das palavras,
nada se perde
ou cria,
tudo se transforma:
cada poema,
no seu perfil
incerto

e caligráfico,
já sonha
outra forma (Oliveira, 1982, p. 99).

We can see in this poem that the title points to Lavoisier’s Law and the change in Nature, whose synthesis the poem presents, but applying it to poetry as a metaphor, then operating a fusion between Nature and Poetry.

This fusion occurs in several of the author’s poems, as in the poem “Árvore” and others.

By applying Lavoisier’s Law to the poetic work, the author points to the continuous aesthetic work that the artistic work constitutes and requests, showing that nature and poetic work are always in motion.

In this way, the poetic subject points to a concept of artistic creation as continuous transformation and dialogue. This idea reminds us that Manuel Gusmão considers the author’s poetic work as Poetry in motion (Gusmão, 1981, p. 23) and poetry of movement (p. 62). Let us highlight the idea that “cada poema/ [...] já sonha/outra forma”.

Several cases illustrate the movement from previous authors and eras to the author. We highlight the examples of “Que me quereis, perpétuas saudades?”, which appears in Oliveira’s poetry as I. Soneto de Camões; II. Imité de Camoëns (Aragon); III. Imitado de Aragon (1982, p. 62-3).

The same happens with “Sonetos de Shakespeare reescritos em português” (p. 64-67), or “Retrato do autor por Camilo Pessanha (colagem)” (p. 68) and many other cases.

In summary, as Manuel Gusmão states, that movement is, on the one hand, that of nature and history; on the other hand, it is the movement of the voice seeking to say itself in that, to say it, to participate in it (1981, p. 67).

It appears, therefore, that, for the author, poetry and the world are in constant motion, that is, in transformation. Plus, in his creative process, the author always establishes a relationship between the first and the second, as he wrote: ‘my starting point, as a novelist and poet, is the reality that surrounds me; I have to equate it in terms of the past, present and future’ (apud Gusmão, 1981, p. 78-79).

Thus, what the artist captures is always a changing reality. Furthermore, we also have to underline his idea that reality creates in itself the germs of its transformation; the process consists, above all, of capturing and developing them in an authentically modern sense (apud Gusmão, 1981, p. 78-79), a relevant idea to the interpretation of his texts.

So, in his conception, everything is in relation, interdependent, inter-conditioned (Gusmão, 1981, p. 79), the real, the process and the instruments to transpose it into the literary, etc., everything that is used and transformed into the author’s laboratory work.

Pinheiro Torres wrote that Carlos de Oliveira was the first neo-realist to realize the need to never go beyond the plane of reference to things, events and characters while in relation (1967, p. 254).

3.1 *Carlos De Oliveira: uma Abelha Na Chuva*

Published in 1953, the novel *Uma Abelha na Chuva* is the fourth of the author's set of novels whose action is located in the Gândara region. This novel represents an evolution in the author's literary journey, but also in the neo-realistic movement, due to the narrative techniques and symbolic codes used.

The novel develops neo-realistic themes and ideology, but treats them differently and innovatively. In line with Marxist thought, it depicts the various social classes in conflict, oppression, exploitation and alienation, but these aspects cross all classes, not just the dominated one. In fact, all the characters suffer of oppression.

On the other hand, this whole universe is presented in a dynamic process of social transformation, where past, present and future interact. According to Pinheiro Torres, in this book, Oliveira shows that there is a process before things, events, and characters that explains their mutual relations (1967, p. 262).

Francisco C. Fagundes synthesized the thesis defended in the novel, saying that what is shown is that there is no significant social change that does not produce suffering. However, the poor always end up being the true victim of the hatred and tragedies of the powerful, a scapegoat in the true sense of expression, just because of his subservient condition and the irony of the inescapable destiny. However, as this researcher also mentioned, the reason for the immolation of innocent victims runs throughout the novel and affects all social classes (1980, p. 21).

In the novel, all the social classes are present, as well as the sectors of Religion and Science, represented by Priest Abel and Doctor Neto.

The novel has a main, open action, and a secondary intrigue, embedded. The first has as protagonists the couple Maria dos Prazeres and Álvaro Silvestre and shows the degradation of the marital relationship and the non-continuity of the family, by infertility. It points to the past. The second stars Jacinto and Clara, employees of the former, and has as secondary characters António Santeiro, Clara's father, and his helper Marcelo. The couple Jacinto and Clara points to the future, for their loving relationship, their son and projects. The character Álvaro Silvestre establishes the link between the two levels of action

The theme of transformation is present throughout the novel, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, this theme is mainly linked to the character Dr. Neto, a flower, bees and honey grower, whose thoughts are

frequently presented. The route from pollen to honey is one of the raised themes and has a symbolic value.

In fact, all characters are symbolically associated with bees; some of them are honey producers, and others are bile producers.

3.2 *Jacinto (Hyacinthus): The Recreation Of Myth And Its Pragmatic Effects*

In the novel, Jacinto plays a secondary role in the main action. However, his ideological and symbolic relief is very high and, in our view, has not yet been completely exploited by critics. This relevance stems from the novel's events: Jacinto is murdered. However, it largely comes from the association with the myth of the same name, which immediately gives him certain interpretative potentialities and activates certain projections in the reader's mind.

The myth stands out the forecast of character's death, but also his metamorphosis into anything benign, for Jacinto is a myth of death and rebirth.

In addition to the name, the physical attributes of the character and his job, link him unequivocally to Hyacinthus' myth.

As Fagundes pointed out, the name Jacinto is associated with an ornamental flower plant and a precious stone of orange color, attributes highlighted in the characterization of the character (1980, p. 22); however, this researcher did not mention the fact that one and the other are associated with Hyacinthus Greek myth.

In fact, as a flower or as a precious stone, the name Jacinto is intricately involved in a web of symbolic meanings that come from this myth, whose presence in the literary, artistic, musical and cultural heritage of Western society spans several epochs, from Greek and Roman antiquity to the present day.

This myth is present in Greek and Latin authors and artists. Indeed, it is represented in the Literature of various eras and geographies, but also in ceramics, painting, sculpture, and numismatics. We remember Merry-Joseph Blondel and many others. We also remember the opera *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (1767) by Mozart.

As expected, it undergoes transformations and adaptations over time and across geographies.

In Greek mythology, Hyacinthus was a beautiful young man loved by the god Apollo, although he also had the affection of Zephyr, the god of the west wind. During a game, Apollo threw the discus that struck Hyacinthus on the head, and he died. According to a different myth, it was Zephyrus that caused this death by jealousy, blowing the discus to Hyacinthus's head and killing him. After Hyacinthus's death, Apollo forbade Hades to claim his soul and from his blood he made the hyacinth flower spring up.

The flower hyacinth that rose from Hyacinth's blood is said to have had a deep blue or purple hue

and a sign resembling the inscription “AI” on its petals, a symbol of sorrow.

Besides the flower, ancient Greeks also associated with Apollo, a deep blue or violet precious stone called hyacinth, whose name comes from the resemblance to the color of the hyacinth flowers. This gem was held sacred to Apollo due to its mythological connection.

As a flower or a precious stone, hyacinth enjoys a prestige that is transferred to everything with which it is directly or indirectly associated. That prestige comes exactly from the myth.

For example, in *the Bible*, the hyacinth appears as a precious stone in *Exodus 28.19* and *Revelation 9.17* and *21.20*. In the second case, in *21.20*, it appears in the decoration of the New Jerusalem’s foundations. The hyacinth also appears in the first section of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* [vv. 35-42], during a conversation between the narrator and the “hyacinth girl” that takes place in the spring.

Thus, the myth of Hyacinth is a myth of metamorphosis told in several ancient texts, perhaps the best known being the account given by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, book 10, recalled in book 13, and *Fasti*, 5. In his narrative, Ovid begins by emphasizing that Hyacinthus is immortal, despite having died. In fact, as he is reborn every spring, this myth is a myth of death and resurrection, rebirth:

You also, Hyacinthus, would have been
set in the sky! if Phoebus had been given
time which the cruel fates denied for you.
But in a way you are immortal too.
Though you have died. Always when warm
spring
[...] you rise and blossom on the green turf
(Ovid).

The poet then recounts in detail the relationship between Apollo and Hyacinthus, the episode of Hyacinthus’s death, Apollo’s pain, his homage, the metamorphosis of his blood into flower, and the celebrations that are annually dedicated to him in Sparta (Hyakinthia and Hyakinthos festival).

However, in his account, Ovid does not mention some relevant aspects of the myth, which are present in other sources and various iconographic and literary representations. For example, we are speaking of Zephyr’s intervention in Hyacinthus’s death and his motivations, referred to by Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 1. 24 in the description of a painting.

In this text, there is another relevant aspect described, the shape and the color of Hyacinthus’s hair, ‘hyacinthine,’ which gives shape and color to the flower and to the precious stone with the same name. In another text, also describing a painting, the author refers to how Hyacinthus, in the company of Apollo, riding in the chariot drawn by swans, should visit all the lands dear to Apollo (Philostratus the

Younger, *Imagines* 14), as some works of art represent. This aspect is very important, because it can be related to the Oliveira’s character.

Among the various recreations and reformulations of the Ovid *Metamorphoses* are the *Metamorphoses* of the Portuguese poet António Dinis Cruz e Silva (1731-1799). This book presents twelve poems that report metamorphoses of divine or human characters in other beings, from the animal, plant, and mineral kingdom.

The presence of Ovid in these *Metamorphoses* is visible since the epigraph, taken from the beginning of the Latin author’s book. This presence is confirmed throughout the book through the recreation of myths present in Ovid. However, while respecting the classical form, these poems by Cruz e Silva bring some innovation. The characters’ names, the places, the fauna, and the flora are Brazilian, a territory where the author lived for many years.

However, despite their Brazilian names, the female characters are nymphs who live in nature and are linked to the goddess Diana. Their great beauty awakens great passions in young men, which they either succumb to or resist. Misfortune derives from these passions, usually caused by the intervention of Olympus’ gods. As for human beings, they are transformed into precious stones, rivers, waterfalls, hills, trees, flowers, birds, tigers, and butterflies (Toipa, 2004, p. 128).

The seventh Metamorphosis, titled “O Diamante e o Jacinto” (Silva, 1814, pp. 121-127), tells the tragic story between the nymph Arapira and her young lover Itaúbi. The nymph is indifferent to the feelings and pleas of the young man who chases her through the forest. One day, tragically, when he pursued her, he was killed by an arrow she stuck in his chest. Only then, Arapira, grief-stricken, falls in love with him and kills herself. Cupid then turns them into precious stones: she into a diamond and he into a hyacinth (Silva, 1814, pp. 126-7).

Thus, in this version, Cruz e Silva, in addition to changing the characters, introduces new elements, such as: the non-correspondence of the nymph until the moment of agony and death of the male element; the passion that arose at the last moment and the self-inflicted death of the female figure; the transformation of the two into precious stones. In the latter case, Silva explores the tradition that associates the hyacinth stone with the myth since, as already said, according to the legend, the name of this stone derives from the similarity of its color with that of the hyacinth flowers, which, for in turn are associated with the color of Hyacinthus’s blood and hair.

Gathered all these elements of the myth, its versions, and some recreations, it is up to us to verify if and how the character Jacinto of *Uma Abelha na Chuva* fits into this myth and to what extent it represents or not a new reformulation/metamorphosis of the myth. Another point to analyze is the pragmatic

effects produced by the collage of this character to this myth.

We see right away that Jacinto dies both in the novel and in the various versions of the myth, and the cause of this death is love and/or jealousy. In the case of the novel, the social ambition of the character Antônio is added to these causes.

The Greek Hyacinthus is involved in a love triangle with Apollo and Zephyrus, his death being accidentally caused by the discus thrown by Apollo or attributed to a deviation of that discus intentionally caused by Zephyrus.

In the novel, the situation is more complex. Regarding the main action, we have the couple Maria dos Prazeres/Álvaro Silvestre from the upper class (ruined aristocracy and wealthy rural bourgeoisie), who live in a frustrating marital relationship on an affective, sexual, and social level. Maria manifests for Jacinto, the coachman, a sexual desire lived intimately but visible externally through her behaviors and assumed in private before and after the victim's death (p. 19, 20, 152-3).

In summary, we have: Maria dos Prazeres desires Jacinto, who loves Clara, who loves Jacinto. Clara and Jacinto's love is an obstacle to Antônio's desire for social ascension, because he wanted to marry her to a rich man.

As a result, Maria dos Prazeres's passion will be the cause of Jacinto's death (and also Clara's), which occurs due to the instigation of Álvaro, who, moved by jealousy, acts on Antônio, Clara's father, who, in turn, moved by his social ambition (p. 115), orders and participates in the crime. Thus, Álvaro plays the same role as Zephyr in Greek myth.

Regarding secondary action, we have the pair Jacinto/Clara, from the lower class, young people united by love, projects of life in common, which include the birth of a child, which would have occurred in the near future if the tragedy had not happened. Jacinto's manslaughter and Clara's suicide are motivated by love, jealousy, and social ambition, based on issues related to social classes.

However, Maria dos Prazeres and Álvaro were also victims of the ongoing social mutations. She was sacrificed and forced to marry Álvaro due to the family's economic ruin, in a marriage that carried out the business of "sangue por dinheiro" (p. 23) [blood for money]. Antônio's motivation for the crime is identical and symmetrical to that of their parents, the dream of marrying his daughter to a farmer and getting out of poverty by the girl's hand (p. 115), that is, sacrificing his daughter to his desire for social ascension. Antônio used Marcelo's love for Clara to execute the crime.

As in the multiple versions of the Greek myth, Jacinto's death is also caused by a blow to the victim's head (p. 121, 134), the most highlighted body's part in the novel.

In contrast, in the metamorphosis of Cruz e Silva, the victim is hit in the chest by an arrow intentionally thrown by the nymph, who, affected by a sudden passion for the boy, removes the arrow from the beloved's chest and buries it in his own chest, eventually also dying.

Oliveira's novel has with this version the coincidence of the death of the two lovers in the end, and also the fact that the female commits suicide (p. 178-9).

As said above, the novel highlights the head of Jacinto, pointing in particular to the shape and color of the hair, which associate him with the flower and the precious stone with his name, both relevant in the various versions of the Greek myth. This prominence is manifested, for example, in the designation "redhead," often used instead of the character's name.

The attribution of these physical characteristics follows a literary tradition that uses the expression 'Hyacinthine hair,' which refers to the curly hair of Hyacinthus that resembles the curled petals of hyacinth flowers. The same expression also describes his hair's color.

It is the case in Homer's *Odyssey*, where Athena gives Odysseus hyacinthine hair to make him look more beautiful (*Odyssey*, 6.231), and it is also the case of Edgar A. Poe, in the poem "To Helen," who uses the same term to beautify Helen's hair: "Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face" (Stanza 2).

In the novel, these attributes give the character beauty, prestige, material value and are interpreted differently by Maria dos Prazeres and Clara. The first associates Jacinto's head and red hair with a golden coin (p. 19, 82, 170), a golden man (p. 19, 20, 152-3), whom she "looked at" and "stared at" with evident sexual desire during the journey home that we will see later.

For instance, this desire erupts when she remembers the carriage scene, during a crisis of loneliness and frustration, in her cold room. The memory of Jacinto's contemplation and the events of the trip lead her to see him as overcoming her erotic frustrations: "Um homem assim poderia quebrar o gelo do meu quarto" (p. 82) [A man like that could break the ice in my room].

Fagundes sees in this association with gold the value of exchange and unconsummated sexual exploitation attributed to Jacinto by this female character. Clara, on the contrary, has a materially disinterested view; affective value is superimposed on material value, for example, when she repudiates her father's desire to marry her to a rich farmer, saying, "Como se eu te não quisesse mais que a todo o ouro deste mundo" (p. 87) [As if I didn't want you more than to all the gold in this world]. The last time she saw him, "Pareceu-lhe um relâmpago a cabeça ruiva dele" (p. 95) [His red head seemed like lightning]. It will also be a bolt of lightning that illuminates the

character's "red head" when the final blow is dealt (p. 134).

Another coincidence is the fact that in the novel, Jacinto is the family's charioteer, just as Hyacinthus in the Greek myth drives Apollo's chariot pulled by swans, in which they travel all over Greece together.

In this respect, the couple's journey home, which takes place in chapters IV to VI, is extremely significant, both for the characterization of the main characters and the state of their marital relationship and for the identification of the causes of the present situation.

Also, from a symbolic point of view, the trip's incidents are important for understanding the past, present and personal and social future. The journey runs over mud, caves, ravines, but also over the past of the Alvas and Silvestres, through Maria dos Prazeres's memory and stream of consciousness. So, it is a trip in space but also in time.

One of the most significant moments occurs when, Maria, moved by the "fire" that devours her, "arrancou o chicote das mãos do ruivo" (p. 35) [snatched the whip out of the redhead's hands] and whipped the mare mercilessly.

However, if on that trip Maria takes the whip to lash the mare, taking command of the carriage to Jacinto, the winds of History will hand over the command of the journey in History to Jacinto's class, as will be suggested at the end of the novel.

In this particular, Jacinto and the incidents of this trip also resemble the myth of Phaeton (the Shining), whose father was the Sun. This myth is also included in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Books 1 and 2).

Phaeton is the child of the Sun (Helio), who asked his father for the car and made the very bumpy journey around the Heavens. On this trip, due to the damage and dangers it caused and the imminent disasters, Zeus rushed him into the river Eridanus (Po), causing his death. In this case, associating it with the novel, this myth would foreshadow the throwing of Jacinto's corpse into the Ocean (p. 135).

As we know, Phaeton is considered a symbol of human ambition, challenging and overcoming obstacles, which advances progress and civilization. It is in this sense that he is mentioned in *Os Lusíadas*, Book IV.

However, despite his sacrifice, this myth does not end in this disgrace because Phaeton's boldness ends up being rewarded. In fact, the myth includes Phaeton's sisters, the Heliades, who mourn their brother's death by the river and are transformed into black poplars. In addition, their tears are transformed into amber that enriches the rivers, so giving wealth to the community.

This end of the myth points to a reward for courage and daring. From this perspective, Jacinto driving the chariot functions as a symbol of a journey through history that will change the destiny of his

class. Therefore, his individual sacrifice will bring benefits to humanity.

As already mentioned, Jacinto's body is thrown into the ocean (p. 135), an ending that does not coincide with Hyacinthus' Greek myth, but which corresponds to the Hellenic rite of throwing the body of a young man into the sea made annually, as the community's scapegoat (Fagundes, 1980, p. 23).

In the novel, the identification of Jacinto as a scapegoat is launched by Silvestre even before the murder: "O ruivo, que encarnava, por uma necessidade premente de fixar a angústia, o bode expiatório, o inimigo, a própria angústia" (p. 111) [The redhead, who embodied, by a pressing need to fix anguish, the scapegoat, the enemy, anguish itself].

Thus, as some authors pointed out (Reis, 1983, p. 626, Fagundes, p. 22), Jacinto's death can be interpreted as a sacrifice on behalf of the community, as it happened in Ancient Greece and even in the *Bible* (Isaac). Also, at this point, there is an association with the Greek myth since some authors associate Hyacinthus death with the archaic practice of human sacrifices.

On this subject, Reis considers that by being thrown into the waters of the sea, the character ends up penetrating the element that suits his usual behavior: in the sea, a symbol of the dynamics of life, its movement and constant mutations, exactly in the line of Jacinto's thought, as a character guided by the desire to transform the world by the measure of his projects (Reis, 1980, p. 100).

In the novel, Jacinto's death leads to Clara's suicide, who throws herself into a well. Symbolically, her death is associated with the death of the bee in the rain, which forms the final image of the book and refers back to the novel's title.

In mythological terms, this fact points to the version of Cruz e Silva, whose heroine commits suicide after the death of his beloved.

Thus, we can say that this second death is an extension of Jacinto's death. In this sense, we underwrite Fiamma H. Brandão's idea, saying that the final vision combines the death of the bee with the death of the drone, foreshadowed by Silvestre, and draws a symbiotic image in which Clara dies with Jacinto's path (1975, p. 64).

The effects caused by Jacinto's death happen immediately. His murder generates a popular revolt against the wealthy couple and the ruling class (p. 148-9), blaming Silvestre and his family for the crime.

The popular "Irromperam pelo pátio. Como demónios irritados. [...] as vozes desmedidas embatiam nas paredes, as paredes pareciam oscilar (p. 149) [They burst through the courtyard. Like angry demons, [...] the unmeasured voices hit the walls, the walls seemed to oscillate]. The protest was stopped when the imposing figure of Maria dos Prazeres appeared at the top of the stairs and expelled

the people, with her arm outstretched and shouting “Rua” (p. 158) [Out].

In this scene, Maria is captured in *contre-plongée*, when “o silêncio, a água, aparição imóvel ao cimo da escadaria, tinham transfigurado tudo” (p. 158) [the silence, the water, a motionless apparition at the top of the stairs, had transfigured everything].

With her gesture and her scream, “Rua, rua, rua...” (p. 158) [Out, out, out...], Maria pushes back the crowd who invaded her house. Shortly afterward, when recounting the scene, she confesses: “Corri-os e a minha vontade era corrê-los a chicote” (p. 165) [I threw them out and I wanted to run them with a whip], which remembers the trip scene.

The crowd, looking at her in *contre-plongée*, slavishly obeys her commanding voice, in an automatic, almost instinctive gesture. However, her gesture is also automatic and instinctive, convinced that she still maintains the status that she has already lost.

In fact, at that moment, the revolt was stopped; however, during the retreat, “Alguém apedrejou a casa: vidros estilhaçados retiniram” (p. 159) [Someone stoned the house: shattered glass clanged].

That is why the future is in motion because the death of Jacinto and Clara is just individual.

By the power of the myth, Jacinto will be reborn every spring, guaranteeing the continuation of his individual and collective future project.

On the other hand, if Clara’s death with Jacinto’s child in her womb could mean the end of the project, the novel points to another interpretation by identifying her with the death of the bee in the final scene. The bee that left the Cidade Verde (Green City) hive was caught by the rain and died. However, other bees stayed in the hive and will continue to live and work.

The cause/effect relationship between Jacinto’s death and the continuation of his project is explained by the character Dr. Neto: “estou quase a admitir que a morte de Jacinto é tão importante como as janelas estilhaçadas” (p. 170) [I am about to admit that Jacinto’s death is as important as the shattered windows]. However, this is redundant information as it is already implied in the novel.

4 CONCLUSION

In short, in our view, in this novel, we are dealing with a recreation of the myth of Jacinto, which combines the Greek myth with Cruz e Silva’s version.

The character’s characterization, his profession, his participation in the plot, his death, and the outcome seem to link him unequivocally to this myth.

The intended ideological message is immediately guaranteed by this association, since the Greek myth is a myth of death, metamorphosis, and resurrection.

In our view, also the myth of Phaeton can be considered here, given Jacinto’s profession as a coachman, his characterization, and the novel’s

events. This myth also points towards the progress of Humanity.

Moreover, Jacinto and Clara’s project represents an alternative to the decadent and sterile ruling class, because of its optimism and transformative dynamics. Their death will not prevent this project from happening, on the contrary, it mobilizes for popular revolt.

As a result, we consider Jacinto a key character in the interpretation of the novel, at the level of ideological message.

However, among other factors, the fact that he and Clara are not the main characters and do not have the same psychological dimension as Álvaro and Maria dos Prazeres also contributes to the idea that this book is much more than a neo-realist novel.

It is, in fact, a great novel of Portuguese Literature of the 20th century, which fulfills the artistic aim of transforming the data of cultural and literary heritage, using all the mechanisms required by an aesthetic dimension.

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