


WHEN THE ENVIRONMENT FLOWS INTO LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CROOKED NOVEL *ARADO*, BY ITAMAR VIEIRA JUNIOR

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ABSTRACT

According to an ecocritical approach, this work has as its main objective to have an analysis of the novel *Torto Arado*, by Itamar Vieira Junior (2019). In addition, it has the following specific objectives: to discuss the theoretical assumptions of ecocriticism; intertwine the natural elements of *Torto Arado* with the postures addressed by Garrard (2006), Gifford (2009), Hanazaki et al (2013), Capra (2008) and other critics, relating ecology and literature; deepen the discussion of the relationship between the figure of women and nature from the three strong female voices in the work: Bibiana, Belonísia and the entity of Santa Rita Pescadeira; and, finally, to contribute to a better critical perception of literary texts by contemporary authors that can promote the study of literature and its relationship with the environment. As for the methodology, the research is of a qualitative character and interpretative approach, with a basic nature and descriptive objective that will be developed from the reading of the central novel. The study, therefore, was designed on top of a literature that has been thinking about environmental impacts and what consequences will be perpetuated for the future, as well as provoking the reader to think about what kind of bond has been established with nature and the discussions for possible changes. Therefore, Itamar's poetic prose rescues ancestral practices that go back to a relationship of respect with nature and expands the discussions of possibility within the literary text with regard to the proximity to feminine, regional, historical, social, political, geographical and religious aspects.

Keywords: Literature, Crooked Plow, Women's Voices, Nature, Ecocriticism.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the work of Itamar Vieira Junior from Salvador is still a literary field to be explored. Here, the research on the novel *Torto Arado* (2019) is pioneering in relying on the theory of Ecocriticism, which has as one of its objectives the discussion about the relationship between man and the environment in literary discourse, according to Garrard

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(2006). The novel was originally published in Portugal (2018), where it won the Leya Award³, and later arrived in Brazil by Editora Todavia, with which it won the Jabuti⁴ (2020) and Oceanos⁵ (2020) awards.

The general objective of this research is to analyze the novel *Torto Arado* from the perspective of the theory of Ecocriticism. The specific objectives are: to discuss the theoretical assumptions of ecocriticism; intertwine the natural elements of *Torto Arado* with the postures addressed by Garrard (2006), Capra (2008) and other critics, relating ecology and literature; deepen the discussion of the relationship between the figure of women and nature from the three strong female voices in the work: Bibiana, Belonísia and the entity of Santa Rita Pescadeira; and, finally, to contribute to a better critical perception of literary texts by contemporary authors that can promote the study of literature and its relationship with the environment.

The research, of a bibliographic nature, qualitative approach, basic nature and with an explanatory objective was developed from the reading of the work *Torto Arado* (2019), by Itamar Vieira Junior, which constitutes the corpus for the development of the investigation. Then a complementary critical and theoretical bibliographic survey was carried out on the theory of Ecocriticism (GARRARD, 2006) and the literary work cited, and then we began the analysis of the ecocritical aspects present in the book.

The novel *Torto Arado* has allusions to the natural space of the Northeast, especially the hinterland, bringing a great contribution to studies from the perspective of Ecocriticism. It is noticeable that the common events of the environment in which he is inserted allow him constant inspiration, as we realize that the novelist, who is also a geographer, seeks in the natural space the representation of his feelings through a telluric narrative.

Based on this assumption, it is noticeable that Vieira Junior's work brings characteristics and descriptions of space in the sertanejo environment, highlighting elements such as local vegetation, streams, wind, trees, drought, land, sun, water, the link with man and everything that constitutes an ecocritical relationship. In addition, we also observed that the approach to religion and syncretism, representative of the region where the novel takes place, also contributes significantly to the questions that will be raised by the research.

³ Annual Lusitanian award of great prestige in literature that aims to stimulate the production of unpublished works by Portuguese-speaking authors.

⁴ An important literary award, granted by the Brazilian Book Chamber (CBL).

⁵ Traditional literary award of great relevance among Portuguese-speaking authors.

In order for the experience of literature – and of art in general – to reach its transformative and humanizing potential, it is necessary to promote the formation of a reader who not only understands the meanings of the texts, but also who is capable of enjoying them. A subject who develops criteria of choice and preferences (by authors, styles, genres) and who shares impressions and criticisms with other readers (BRASIL, 2018, p. 156).

Finally, as evidenced in the quote above, we hope that this study will be a bridge between literature and ecology, these being the main pillars to be intertwined, and that we can contribute to the possibilities of literary teaching, leading the reader to expand their interpretation skills, as well as expand their sociocultural repertoire and their critical sense in the face of the various themes present in the work.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

From an etymological point of view, Ecocriticism was born from the union of the words ecology and criticism and gives rise to the theory that discusses the relationship between literature and nature. It is an approach that ceases to be homocentric and becomes ecocentric, that is, it privileges the external place and the way in which it influences the reader's view of the text, that is, the mutuality between literature and the physical environment. Thus, the interdisciplinarity between the themes, the questioning between the dominant ideologies and the criticism of anthropocentrism are some of the foundations found in the light of this theory. According to Gifford (2009, p. 244):

Ecocriticism, as a relatively new movement in cultural studies, has been extraordinarily free of internal theoretical critique. There have been debates about emphases and gaps, but this does not directly challenge the positions of those who originated the movement. On the contrary, these debates point to new directions for research in various fields: ecofeminism, toxic texts, urban nature, Darwinism, ethnic literatures, environmental justice, and virtual environments, for example.

In addition, Ecocriticism emerged in the 90s, arising from the need for environmental awareness by drawing attention to the preservation and maintenance of natural space. Theorists such as Cherryll Glotfelty (1996), Jonathan Bate (1991) and Greg Garrad (2006), the latter being our main basis for the study, were some of the pioneers who had a great contribution to the development of this theory. Thus, it essentially discusses not only the relationship between nature and culture, but also its construction and reconstruction through human perception, as we can see in the novel *Torto Arado*, by Itamar Vieira Junior (2019). In this way, the narrative shows, in a poetic way, the development and parallelism

between two spheres intertwined by ecocriticism: the social and the natural, as can be seen from the perspective of the two main characters who live in a situation analogous to slavery in the Bahian hinterland. Respectively, we observe that while Bibiana is more inclined to cultural, political and social issues, her sister, Belonísia, is intrinsically linked to nature, agriculture, religion and its constituent elements.

According to Glotfelty (1996),

What is ecocriticism then? Put simply, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious point of view, and Marxist criticism brings to its interpretation of texts an awareness of modes of production and economic classes, ecocriticism adopts an approach to literary studies centered on the land. (GLOTFELTY, 1996, apud GARRARD, 2006, p. 14).

We note that ecocriticism focuses on analyzing the discourses of texts, in our case, literary, in which there is a direct or indirect relationship between man and the environment, implying dialogues that show how much nature is manipulated, polluted, preserved, referenced as a source of life or even as a character within the work.

Thus, according to Richard Kerridge (1998), who corroborates the view of Cheryll Glotfelty, the ecocritic

[...] It aims to trace environmentalist ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate that seems to be taking place, often partially hidden, in numerous cultural spaces. More than anything, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to the environmental crisis.

In addition, for other theorists such as Oliveira and Almeida (2012, p. 429):

Ecocriticism declares itself as a theoretical strand that shines on the possible encounter of man with the environment, through literary perception; emphasizing the behavior of man, giving a new prism on sustainability, the preservation of the ecosystem and above all of human attitudes in its space.

In other words, it is a literary analysis centered on the correlation of man with the natural environment and the subject's attitudes towards nature, evidencing his choices and inclement weather. Not only that, as can be seen in the next quote, this correlation can be extended by the presence of interdisciplinarity that is addressed by the theorists of ecocriticism, bringing an even broader perspective, as it is a subject that touches not only the literary, but also the political, social, economic, historical and geographical.

De acordo com Hanazaki et al (2013, p. 15):

A widely accepted definition is currently used by Charles J. Krebs, who defines Ecology as the scientific study of the interactions that determine the distribution and abundance of organisms.

An organism's environment is composed not only of the plants and animals with which it interacts directly or indirectly, but also of purely physical processes and inorganic substances. Daily temperature fluctuations and concentrations of oxygen and carbon dioxide are also part of the environment.

An important theme in Ecology is the complementarity between two views, the first influenced by Odum's definitions and with a Holistic or Systemic approach; and the second influenced by Charles Krebs' definition and with an Evolutionary approach, in which interactions are the driving force of the system.

Therefore, as we have seen above, discussions pertinent to nature, and therefore to the environment, are important and necessary in the global context, but complex and have been constant in recent decades, which point to the fact that many people and institutions of different natures have been increasingly concerned with the future of planet Earth and the living conditions for the beings that inhabit it. This concern about what can be discussed should be emphasized mainly in the school environment, as Fritjof Capra (2008, p. 25) warns us:

Teaching this ecological knowledge, which also corresponds to the wisdom of the ancients, will be the most important role of education in the 21st century. Ecological literacy should become an essential requirement for politicians, businessmen and professionals of all branches, and should be a central concern of education at all levels.

Art, in all its manifestations, is one of the ways to reveal traces of this concern (GARRARD, 2006). And from this point of view, Vieira Junior's work proves to be central in understanding the relationship between men, the feminine imaginary and nature, as well as religion and fantastic realism in a set of aspects that reflect Brazil from the twentieth century to the present day. Great literature, in turn, "can be a strong instrument for human awareness regarding the preservation of nature and consequently of the human species" (FEITOSA; SILVA, 2020, p. 19).

Therefore, in the present study, we will see how this complex connection between the human and natural sciences establishes a relationship full of nuances that are sometimes beneficial and sometimes harmful, fostering the destruction of one of the parts.

ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECOCRITICISM

According to Garrard (2006), we can define Ecocriticism as "the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (GARRARD, 2006, p. 14), in which an approach of

literary studies is adopted in contrast to the earth. This relationship can be established in different ways and found in different elements within the narrative. In the case of *Crooked Plow*, we observe this connection through the connection of the characters with the land, work, religion, family and even femininity.

A priori, the work is divided into 3 parts: *Fio de Corte*, *Torto Arado* and *Rio de Sangue*. In each room, we can perceive a nuance of ecocentrism and how it affects the life of each character. The story is integrated in a post-colonial context and set in the Chapada Diamantina region, in the state of Bahia, on a farm that still bears traces of slavery, around the 70s. Thus, we observe the lives of characters who establish a relationship of mutuality with the land due to the need for survival, and it is from this land that their sustenance, housing and also healing are extracted.

ECOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF EXPLOITATION

In the first part, entitled *Fio de Corte*, we are introduced to the family that gives rise to Vieira Junior's novel. Right from the start, we witness one of the most important events in the narrative: the accident that cuts off Belonísia's tongue, on an ordinary day, while she was playing with curiosity holding her grandmother Donana's sharpened knife. From this fact, we are introduced to the rural scenario and the connection that the family has not only with religion, but above all with the land, as shown in the following excerpt in the voice of Bibiana, the eldest sister:

My mother equipped herself with quilts and towels that covered the beds and the table, to try to stop the blood. She shouted to my father, who was picking herbs with trembling hands in the flowerbeds near the house, impatiently, conveying her despair in her voice, which became higher, in addition to the astonished look. The herbs were to be used on the way to the hospital, in prayers and charms. [...] The sheets were kept in the pockets of his pants, perhaps because he was ashamed to be pointed out with disdain as a sorcerer inside that place he did not know (hospital). It was the first place where I saw more white people than black people. And I saw how people looked at us curiously, but without getting closer. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 17).

In this way, we can perceive how the elements of nature – which are part of the sustenance and subsistence of those individuals – complement each other with religious practices, being presented as prayers and charms arising from the religion of Jarê⁶. From this point on, the considerations of the questions formulated by Kerridge (1998) when he

⁶ Religion of African origin from the Chapada Diamantina region, which encompasses various aspects of Candomblé and which is also added to references from Rural Catholicism, Umbanda and Kardecist Spiritism.

states that Ecocriticism can be developed in the context of interdisciplinary studies stand out, since it seeks to "[...] to trace environmentalist ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate that seems to be taking place, often partially hidden, in numerous cultural spaces" (KERRIDGE, 1998, p. 5). Therefore, a close link is formed between the environment and the cultural practices that surround the daily life of the family of the main characters from the beginning to the end of the work, manifesting nature through figures such as herbs, rivers, clay, earth, plants, flowers, entities and rituals, for example.

Furthermore, in the first chapters of the book, we recognize the symbiosis that flourishes between the sisters Bibiana and Belonísia, strengthened by the misfortune of the loss of the language of the younger sister:

That's how I became part of Belonísia, in the same way that she became part of me. That's how we grew up, learned to farm, observed our parents' prayers, took care of our younger siblings. That's how we saw the years go by and the almost conjoined feelings when sharing the same organ to produce sounds that manifested what we needed to be. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 24).

This relationship demarcates in the work two facets of the female figure that are portrayed by the author: while Bibiana spills over to the more activist side as she grows up and gains an awareness of herself and the world that surrounds her, Belonísia leans towards caring for the land, domestic life and the cultural and religious heritage of her people. Thus, through Bibiana's narrative, in addition to recognizing the movement among the members of her family, the cultural practices and the work dynamics, we were able to perceive the first signs of exploitation that demarcated the residents of the Água Negra farm, as quoted below:

The manager wanted to bring in people who "work hard" and "who are not afraid of work," in my father's words, "to give their sweat to the plantation." He could build a house of clay, no masonry, nothing that would demarcate the time of the families' presence on the land. He could put a small garden to have pumpkin, beans, okra, nothing that would divert from the need to work for the owner of the farm, after all, that was what the dwelling was allowed for. He could bring a wife and children, better that way, because when they grew up they would replace the older ones. They would be esteemed people, acquaintances, godchildren of the farmer. I didn't have money, but I had food on my plate. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 41).

In his book, *Ecocriticism*, Garrard (2006) discusses figures under which nature is represented, called tropes, one of them being the Pastoral. For him, there are some distinctions that can be made from the pastoral tradition. The first is the one that relates to a

specific literary tradition and that is in tune with the flight from the city to the refuge in the countryside; the second is that which is punctuated by the implicit or explicit contrast in descriptions of the countryside with the city by any literature; and, finally, a pejorative sense, in which this trope "implies an idealization of rural life that obscures the realities of work and the hardships of the countryside" (GARRARD, 2006, p. 54-5). However, contrary to what the last definition of the pastoral tradition says, Vieira Junior contradicts this reality by describing scenes and situations within his work in which the rural experience is placed before the reader with all its difficulties, impurities and degradations. Life in the countryside is visibly permeated with exploitation. We note, therefore, how the traditions originating from slavery continued to drag on over the centuries, as we can also see in the passage below:

Belonísia and I listened to the conversation of the daughters of Mrs. Carmeniúza and Mrs. Tonha. They spoke of the visit of the bosses to the plantations of the farm. They wanted to know if they had arrived here, if they had taken the potatoes from our backyard too. 'But the potatoes in our backyard are not theirs,' someone said, 'they grow rice and sugarcane. They take potatoes, beans and pumpkin. They even take tea leaves. And if the harvested potatoes are small, they make us dig the earth to take the larger ones'. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 45).

From this, Bibiana's character will be shaped as she grows up and is faced with the exploited situation in which she lives. When he meets and falls in love with Severo, his cousin, who also rebels against his reality, begins to see other possibilities of living beyond the fences of the Água Negra farm. The two characters then run away and stay apart for a while, in an attempt to make a living and study. At this point, we highlight the words of Carvalho (2012) who brings a study on the formation of subjects capable of understanding and acting on the world. Before leaving, the character still wonders if that would really be the best decision to be made, but the repetition of the abuses of power pushed her to leave the life she had always known and enter the unexplored, as we see below:

When I left the house through the backyard door in the quiet of the night, I couldn't help looking back a few times as I walked down the road to meet Severus. I listed the things I took with me and everything I left behind. I almost gave up at that very moment, I would let Severo leave alone, but the image of Sutérius carrying our little supply, and the hunger and improvisation that followed to make the meal later, gave me the necessary firmness to continue. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 87).

Bibiana, then, dissatisfied and being taken by a spirit of hope, begins to act so that her family can have a dignified life, free from exploitation in her land, leaving far from the property of Água Negra and taking with her some belongings, one of them being her greatest treasure: her tongue. When she left home, she faced different difficulties, this time

in the city, but she managed to overcome them by taking the supplementary course, graduating in teaching and later joining the union together with her husband Severo, as Belonísia reports:

Bibiana was more active alongside her husband. In the midst of the mobilization, I was good with the children so that she could write, work, ride with Severo looking for help on the back of the motorcycle he had acquired. They went to unions, to meetings. They came back, had more meetings, many went home. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 198)

For Garrard, the movement of cultural inflection that Bibiana goes through is essential for ecocriticism, since:

This will entail interdisciplinary studies that draw on literary and cultural theories, philosophy, sociology, psychology and environmental history, as well as ecology. The study of rhetoric provides us with the model of a practice of cultural reading linked to moral and political interests, as well as a practice attentive to real or literal interpretations and to figurative or constructed interpretations of "nature" and "the environment". [...] Confronting the vast, complex, and multifaceted agglomeration of ecological crises with the seemingly fragile instruments of cultural analysis should be seen by ecocritics as a moral and political necessity, even though the problems seem to perpetually dwarf the solutions. (GARRARD, 2006, p. 29)

In this case, the cultural, social and political contact that Bibiana had beyond the fences of the farm catapulted her awareness of land issues and the people who were part of this scenario.

ECOFEMINISM

At the same time, in the second part of the book, still in childhood, the character Belonísia grows up going deep into the forests, running in the middle of the caatinga and becoming fond of the environment that surrounded her, learning to care for and respect each element that was around her, as we can highlight in the excerpt:

With Zeca Chapéu Grande I went into the forest on the way to and from the forest, and learned about herbs and roots. He learned about the clouds, when there would be rain or not, about the secret changes that heaven and earth were experiencing. She learned that everything was in motion - very different from the lifeless things that the teacher showed in her classes. My father would look at me and say, "The wind doesn't blow, it's the turning itself," and it all made sense. "If the air doesn't move, there's no wind, if we don't move, there's no life," he tried to teach me. Attentive to the sound of animals, insects, plants, it illuminated my horizon when it made me feel in my body the lessons that nature had given it. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 99).

We can see that the text is an intimate relationship established with nature and with traditions that permeate any knowledge that may exist in books. The management of the soil is passed from father to daughter, just as it was once passed from Donana – grandmother of Bibiana and Belonísia – to Zeca Chapéu Grande, in a sinuous and respectful proximity to the land, placing it in the central axis of all forms of life that manifest themselves in that environment:

My father had no letters, no mathematics, but he knew the phases of the moon. Did you know that on the full moon you plant almost anything; that cassava, bananas and fruits like to be planted in the new moon; that in the waning moon nothing is planted, only weeding and slashing. He knew that for a foot to grow strong it had to be cleaned every day, so that the plague did not appear. He needed to refine around the stem of any plant, making mounds of earth. I needed to water in the same way, so that it would grow strong. My father, when he encountered a problem in the countryside, would lie down on the earth with his ear turned inward to decide what to use, what to do, where to advance, where to retreat. Like a doctor looking for the heart. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 99-100).

The excerpt above then goes back to a distance from the exploitative colonialist thinking under which Brazil was built, in which the land was an object of exploitation always available to man, since all possible natural resources were and are taken from it: minerals, trees, plants and animals in predatory hunting in favor of man's greed to dominate and demarcate everything that is tangible.

Furthermore, Belonísia is constituted in a different way from Bibiana due to the absence of her language that made it impossible for her to communicate verbally with the world. On the other hand, the character never assumed a place of real victim, on the contrary: she manifested her desires and desires, just like any child and young person in development. Unlike her sister, she was not interested in things that could be found in books or taught at school, since her commitment was in the life that presented itself before her eyes and in everything that she could touch, water, learn and cultivate. As we note below:

Unlike Bibiana, who talked about being a teacher, what I really liked was the countryside, the kitchen, making olive oil to pulp the buriti. I was not attracted to mathematics, much less to the letters of Mrs. Lourdes. I was not interested in his classes in which he told the history of Brazil, in which he spoke of the mixture of Indians, blacks and whites, of how happy we were, of how blessed our country was. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 97).

In this way, Belonísia soon dropped out of school, her disinterest increased as she missed her sister by her side soon after her departure, since she was no longer there to help her with her studies and translate for the world. And so, her introspection brought her

closer to the earth, as if over the years they had become close friends. For this reason, the second part of Vieira Junior's work is the one that expresses a more poetic and intimate narrative. We follow, as readers, a different view of the facts, now told from the perspective of the girl who suffered an accident, until she became a strong woman, of ancestral wisdom and sensitive to things that involve nature:

Living among the young women of the farm, it was as if her fate of being a mother was also being traced. But, like the rain, this desire left her body without apparent explanation. And, after this experience, every time he gave himself to sowing, he could feel nature vibrating, as in the past. When she was alone and knew that she would not be observed with strangeness for her act, she lay on the floor, as she saw her father do countless times. He tried to listen to the most intimate sounds, from the most remote places in the interior of the earth, to rid the plantation of the plague, to repair the difficulties and help in the harvest. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 254).

The earth was for her like a kind of mirror, with no higher or lower degree of value. And for this reason, she did not take away what she could not replace, she healed the earth of diseases as if she also healed herself and shared the deep feeling of respect for every flower, stone, tree and seed that was within her reach.

Then, when she leaves her parents' house and joins Tobias, a farm worker, Belonísia experiences a life that was unknown until then. Now, assuming a new role as mistress of the house, she had to shoulder the responsibilities that were required of her and little by little she took away her freedom to be.

Tangent to this, we introduce the notion of ecofeminist posture cited by Garrard (2006), which is a representative approach in the field of ecocritical literary studies. When we think about the human-centric dualism of humanity/nature, we also have to think about the male/female dualism and look at how these tropes meet. In her considerations about ecofeminism, Garrard (2006, p. 42 apud Davion, 1994) states that "women have been associated with nature, the material, the emotional and the particular, while men are associated with culture, the immaterial, the rational and the abstract". In this way, we could think of a conjecture in which woman and nature are placed in a hierarchical position inferior to man to the detriment of reason. This reason, imposed by male supremacy, would be the cause of the logic of domination and discrimination that we can see through the eyes of literature, given that at a certain moment in the narrative, Belonísia finds herself in a situation of objectification and domestic violence by the character Tobias:

I feared for a moment that I would complain about having moved her things, for having tried to clean up the mess, even though I had not been able to do everything in those hours that I remained alone. But the difference was clear. He looked at the

corners, the made bed, the tear in the corn husk mattress sewn – with thread and needle that I brought in my bundle – the clean table, the flies that flew farther away, the food that smoked on the stove. He didn't thank him, he was a man, why he should thank him was what went through my mind, but I could see in his eyes the satisfaction of someone who had made an excellent deal by bringing a woman to his tapera. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 113).

From this report, Belonísia began to experience situations of aggressiveness on the part of her partner, whom she tried to serve impeccably so that she would not be attacked, as shown in the following excerpt:

It got so bad that I anticipated it, I didn't even wait for him to ask, I already gave everything in his hands: belt, shoe, hat, doublet, machete, just so I wouldn't hear him calling him 'woman'. I felt like something bought, what the hell this man has to call me a woman, my agitated head screamed. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 116, emphasis added).

Among several parts of the narrative, we notice that Belonísia becomes increasingly apprehensive as the episodes of domestic violence increase. Symbolically and strategically, the author leads us to reflect on the roles of subservience that are interconnected in the woman-nature entity, since the two figures are simultaneously explored in the work, sometimes by the man who wants to extract all possible resources from the earth, sometimes by the man who only wants to satisfy his desires and be served by the woman, as pointed out by the criticisms made by the ecofeminist worldview.

He continued with the insults, but I let my heart settle down. Working the land had these good feelings of taming my chest, of calming the bad thoughts that surrounded me. He thought of everything that was far away, except for Tobias out of control a few meters away, in the tapera he called home. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, 121).

We point out, then, the consideration of Glotflety (1996) when he states that Ecocriticism examines the symbolic construction between species, mapping the dichotomy of Western thought that separates women from men and humanity from the environment. Nature, then, was the instrument of catharsis and escapism for Belonísia.

DEEP ECOLOGY AND DWELLING ON EARTH

Finally, the third part of the work, *Rio de Sangue*, is woven by a narrator who transcends the physical space in which the other characters are inserted, as it is the figure of an enchanted woman, an entity from Jarê who now shares her vision of the events that occurred.

His first appearance, however, happens at the beginning of the work, and is narrated by Bibiana. Santa Rita Pescadeira appears at a time of fragility for the residents of the Água Negra farm, when drought and hunger devastated the region and the workers interceded with the enchanted to bring fertility back to the land. The entity is received by the body of Miúda, a widow who attended Jarê's games at the house of Zeca Chapéu Grande and his family and, a priori, its veracity is questioned by the people around her. Santa Rita Pescadeira, then, begins to sing fishing songs: "[...] Where is my hook? Where's my hook? That I went fishing in the sea?" (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019, p. 80), in addition to declaring prophecies about Bibiana's future.

It is interesting to analyze, in this way, the representation that this new narrator has within the work, as well as her connection with the natural aspects present, especially because it is a figure that is not made of flesh and blood, like the others, but as an ancestral spirit that wanders through nature and is therefore in many places at the same time, possessing a sharper perception of reality. Santa Rita Pescadeira, is, therefore, a fundamental piece inserted by Vieira Júnior to submerge the reader in time and space that could not be discovered by the human eye. The character denounces the practices of exploitation not only of the workers, but also of the land, mainly from the extraction of the precious mineral that was characteristic of the region where the narrative takes place, as we see in the excerpt pointed out:

The diamond has become a huge spell, cursed, because everything that is beautiful carries a curse within it. I have seen men make blood deals, cutting their flesh with sharp daggers, marking their hands, their foreheads, their houses, their objects of work, their sieves of gravel and pans. I saw men go mad without sleep, sweeping night and day in the Serrano River, in the mountains, in the mines, buried in the darkness of the night to see the brightness change place. [...] The owners could no longer have slaves, because of the law, but they needed them. So, that's how they started to call slaves workers and residents. (VIEIRA JUNIOR, 2019. p. 203).

Concomitantly, for Garrard, in his postmodern approach, Ecocriticism is closely associated with environmental justice, interconnected with the awareness of environmental problems through artistic, cultural and scientific ecological insights. In this way, we highlight another position expressed by Garrard (2006) in his studies: deep ecology. The author defines posture as: the well-being and prosperity of human and non-human life as having value in themselves, these same values are independent of each other. In other words, nature, in this case, does not have a use instrumented by human action, existing to be at its disposal:

Deep ecology is interested in encouraging an egalitarian attitude on the part of human beings not only toward all members of the ecosphere, but even toward all identifiable entities or forms in the ecosphere. Thus, this posture intends to extend, for example, to entities (or forms) such as rivers, landscapes and even species and social systems, considered by themselves. (SESSIONS, 1995, apud GARRARD, 2006, p. 39).

It is noted that from this perspective, the environment and its constituent elements have their intrinsic value beyond the needs of man, distancing themselves from the colonialist legacies that usurp natural resources more and more. In this case, there is a relationship between man and nature established in a sustainable way, approaching the egalitarian precepts of deep ecology. On the other hand, in several excerpts of the work, such as the quotation from the point of view of Santa Rita Pescadeira above, we can observe the problems arising from the exploitative practices unbridled by the diamond rush in the lives of the workers and the owners of the farms themselves.

Therefore, we observe that the third part of the narrative is responsible for denouncing the degrading action of man and developing exactly this environmental justice thought by Garrard (2006) when we have a panoramic view of the tragedies that affect not only human beings, but the entire surrounding ecosystem, causing a crisis in the history of the species. Thus, walking towards the end of the narrative, taken by a feeling of indignation, the enchanted woman outlines a plan to finally give her people and her land a new lease of life.

For Rodrigues (2009), literature expands countless possibilities of learning, understanding and improving the formation of the subject, in view of the interaction and contact with the book. In this way, we assume that the author concludes his work leaving the reader a literary heritage that encompasses several aspects to be studied and analyzed, especially in the teaching of literature. This is because, when faced with the numerous themes, approaches and experiences in the novel, we expand our knowledge of the world and manage to have the dimension of a post-colonial reality that permeates to this day. For the National Common Curricular Base, this acquired competence is essential:

In High School, works from the Brazilian and Portuguese-language literary tradition should be introduced for enjoyment and knowledge, alongside African, Afro-Brazilian, indigenous and contemporary literature, in a more systematized way, in which the relations with historical, artistic and cultural periods are deepened (BRASIL, 2018, p. 523).

In addition, *Torto Arado* allows nature to be highlighted and therefore, if we can reflect on different types of exploitation that the land suffers, we can also think about the

possibilities of preservation, reduction of damage and especially in the formation of individuals who create bonds of more respect and responsibility with the environment that surrounds them. This thinking correlates with one of the tropes of ecocriticism, called the Habitation of the Earth, which is defined by this state of constant duty and perpetual commitment, i.e., "it is not a transitory state; on the contrary, it implies the long-term imbrication of human beings in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work" (GARRARD, 2006, p.154).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the results of this research, we consider to contribute effectively to the category of literary analysis, more specifically with regard to the analysis of the relationship between literature and ecology, from the perspective of Garrard (2006), applied to the novel *Crooked Plow*, by Itamar Vieira Junior (2019). Thus, we proved the link between theory and work, since the relationship between the environment and the characters of the mentioned narrative presented pertinent characteristics for the development of the study. In this way, we seek to analyze the ecocritical aspects within Vieira Junior's work and observe how nature is worked in his novel and how the contextualization of the tropes of ecocriticism, such as pastoral, ecofeminism and Housing on Earth are present in the analyzed novel. According to Garrard (2006, p. 9), "Nature is only valued in terms of utility for us", with this, invasion, exploitation, pollution and consequently the destruction of the natural space become frequent in the context of the work.

Finally, we broaden a discussion about a literature that has thought about environmental impacts and that provokes the reader to think about the type of bond he has established with nature and the discussions for possible changes, as well as covering literary works by contemporary authors, contributing to the broader training of the professional of Letters. Along these lines, according to Barthes (1980, p. 16), if all disciplines were expelled from teaching, one should continue, "[...] it is the literary discipline that should be saved, because all the sciences are present in the literary monument". Given the humanizing character made possible by literature, which, according to Candido (2011, p. 182), "[...] it develops in us the quota of humanity to the extent that it makes us more understanding and open to nature, society, our fellow human beings".

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