

THE WORLD WITHIN AND OUT THERE: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO LITERATURE, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND AUDIOVISUAL NARRATIVES

Anelise R. Corseuil[†]

Magali Sperling Beck^{†**}

Viviane Heberle^{†***}

[†]Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, SC, Brasil

The present volume opens *Ilha do Desterro*'s publications for 2021. This year, in many aspects, does not necessarily start anew as it still carries the profound effects of a world pandemic that has severely impacted humanity as a whole. Many people, all over the world, had to find alternative ways to work, to study, to relate to each other, or to simply be in a world that has demanded more distancing, less mobility, and reimaged communities. In the midst of all the changes which 2020 brought with it, the phrase “we are all in this together” has been widely used to describe this new reality. Indeed, the past year has shown, possibly more intensely than in other times, the imbrications, the deep interconnections, of life on Earth. However, the significance of the pronoun “we” in the phrase cited above should not be overlooked.

Caribbean-Canadian poet M. NourbeSe Philip, in a radio conversation with Nahlah Ayed, host of the program *Ideas*, in the CBC radio (Canada), has argued that, “[w]ere we truly ‘in this together,’ we would not be in ‘this’ together” (“The Common Good” 2020). In the program, NourbeSe Philip explores the possible meanings of “we,” or of “being together” in the various communities we are a part of, from the smallest one (as the family, for example), to larger ones, such

[†] Anelise R. Corseuil is a Professor of Literatures in English and Film Studies in the Graduate Program in English and at the English Language and Literature Department at UFSC. She holds a PhD in Literatures in English from Wayne State University and she is currently the Editor-in-Chief of journal *Ilha do Desterro*. Her e-mail address is hcorseuil@terra.com.br. ORCID: 0000-0002-1129-3852.

^{**} Faculty member at the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. She holds a PhD in Literatures in English from the University of Alberta. She is currently assistant editor of the journals *Ilha do Desterro*. Her e-mail address is magalisperling@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-2593-0031.

^{***} Viviane M. Heberle is a Professor in the Graduate Program in English at UFSC. She is a funded researcher of CNPq (the Brazilian National Research Council). She was a visiting scholar at Westhill College, Birmingham, UK also at The University of Sydney, Australia. Her publications and research interest include multimodality, gender, systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis. Her e-mail address is viviane.heberle@ufsc.br. ORCID: 0000-0002-0517-1613.



as the global, national or professional communities, which include writing or academic communities as well. Through her words, one is once more reminded of the unbalanced power relations that permeate the sense of “being together,” or the limits of the term community. In this regard, the past year has also been marked by a renewed urge for social activism, from anti-racist movements to international protests against climate change, decimation of indigenous communities, deforestation and for the implementation of new sustainable practices that range from the individual to the collective, from the local arena to the national and to the transnational. Needless to say, these new practices imply paradigmatic changes in the way we live and associate, and for the ways our consciousness of the world can be transformative and transformed.

By engaging with central aspects that permeate this challenging historical moment, the journal *Ilha do Desterro* reiterates its commitment to promoting important critical discussions on English language, literatures in English, and Cultural Studies. It is precisely such commitment that ties together the texts comprising volume 74.1, the third non-thematic issue of the journal focusing on literary and cultural studies as well as on audiovisual narratives. In it, national and international scholars explore a range of central themes that help the reader to better understand the meanings of the term community within one’s perception of one’s self, across nation(s) and globally as well. Critical reflections on issues such as ethnicity, gender, class, belonging, memory, as well as elaborations on significant literary and discursive modes such as intertextuality, parody, irony, self-reflexivity, intermediality, among others, permeate the texts in this present volume and demonstrate the many possibilities involved in re-imagining and re-presenting “being” in our contemporary world

This issue is divided in three sections which, despite their more specific focus, are complementary to each other in showing the plural nature of academic research being produced in English studies. The first section, *Literary contexts: Re-readings and intertexts*, organized by Anelise Reich Corseuil and Magali Sperling Beck, comprises fourteen articles which, to some extent, negotiate new critical readings to specific literary texts taking into consideration not only their contexts but also the possible dialogues they create with other texts, *milieus*, historical or theoretical approaches. Opening the section, the article “Christian and Modernist Utopia in Coetzee’s Novels *The Childhood of Jesus* and *Schooldays of Jesus*,” by Kathrin H. Rosenfield and Lawrence Flores Pereira, addresses Coetzee’s utopian worlds and offers a reading of these two novels in relation to specific esthetic and esoteric traditions in the history of art.

Intertextuality is one of the main elements linking the following five articles in the volume. In “Intermediality, intertextuality and parody: resonances of Jane Austen in John Fowles’s *The French lieutenant’s woman*,” Genilda Azerêdo discusses the reverberations of Austen’s *Persuasion* in Fowles’s novel specifically in relation to the poetical and political implications enabled by this approximation. Dora Nunes Gago, in “Quem pode comer na mesa do capitão? Intertextualidade e alteridade nas obras de Katherine Anne Porter e Ana Margarida de Carvalho,”

presents a comparative reading of Porter's and Carvalho's works as a way to approach how the American and the Portuguese writers negotiate questions of identity and alterity in their novels. Another comparative analysis is presented in "On the edge of sense: nonsense and paradox in Edward Lear's and Qorpo Santo's selected works," by Fernanda Marques Granato and Vera Bastazin. In this article, the scholars outline and explore the interconnections between Lear's and Santo's writing through a re-reading of the relations between nonsense, opposition, and paradox as literary tropes. Luis Henrique Garcia Ferreira and Renato Fabbri, in "*Finnegans Wake*, de James Joyce, é musiscritura," establish an intertextual dialogue between Joyce's poetical language and the language of music, demonstrating this writer's accomplishments at the vanguard of music. A reading of J.G. Ballard's war narratives is presented in "Death games and the persistence of memory: J. G. Ballard's World War II fictions," by Pedro Groppo. In this article, Groppo discusses the interrelations between fiction and autobiography in the context of Ballard's representations of traumatic events.

William Blake's poetry is the focus of the articles "Now the sneaking serpent walks: diabolic as a creation force in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, by William Blake," by Marcele Aires Franceschini, and "The contraries' progression: Romantic irony in the introductory poems of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*," by William Weber Wanderlinde. While Franceschini presents a re-reading of the image of the serpent as an imaginative and creative source in Blake's work, Wanderlinde analyses irony in some of Blake's poetical works based on the concept of Romantic irony as developed by Friedrich Schlegel. Aline Candido Trigo and Luciana Brito, in "No bosque ficcional de *Tristram Shandy*: leitor e narrador nas entrelinhas," reconsider the interplay between the reader and the narrator in Laurence Sterne's novel, demonstrating the importance of looking at classical elements of narratology to better understand how this literary text reimagines the act of reading.

Monica Chagas da Costa, in "A marvelous sight, a mighty revelation": Vashti, o gênio em *Villette*," discusses Charlotte Brontë's representation of the woman artist in relation to the concept of the genius in her novel *Villette*. For Costa, Brontë presents a re-reading of this concept based on her understanding of the woman artist. Focusing on the work of another woman writer, the article "Unveiling the contemporary in Virginia Woolf," by Patrícia Marouvo, discusses Woolf's critical approach to the concept of "contemporariness." By presenting a re-reading of Woolf's essays in the context of her publication of *The Common Reader*, Marouvo approximates Woolf's philosophical thoughts to Giorgio Agamben's "What is the contemporary," creating the opportunity for a fertile dialogue between their works.

The articles "O *Mundo de Oz* de L. Frank Baum: conto de fadas modernizado, utopia norte-americana ou alta fantasia *avant la lettre*," by Bruno Anselmi Matangrano, and "A subversão pela tradição de Isak Dinesen: animismo, bruxas e storytelling em '*The Deluge at Norderney*,'" by Sofia Osthoff Bediaga and Suzi Frankl Sperber, raise questions about the connections between fantasy and reality, albeit in very particular ways. While Matangrano presents a compelling

discussion regarding Frank Baum's Oz narratives as being part of the fantasy canon in American literature, Bediaga and Sperber demonstrate how the author Isak Dinesen recuperates traces of ancient oral traditions in the creation of her modernist worlds as a way to subvert the tropes of classical literary composition.

Closing this first section of the volume, the article "Da ficção interativa à hiperficção: um comentário sobre a gênese da literatura eletrônica estadunidense," by Cláudio Augusto Carvalho de Moura, recuperates the literary historiography of electronic literature in the United States, tracing its origins to the 1970s "interactive fiction." The article also analyses the impact, in the literary world, of the 1980s technological revolutions and discusses the relations between "interactive fiction" and "hyperfiction."

The second section, *Literary contexts: Gender, identity, and resistance*, also organized by Anelise Reich Corseuil and Magali Sperling Beck, consists of 15 articles which present discussions on the themes of ethnicity, decolonization, diaspora, gender and racial identities, the re-writing of history, ecocriticism, among others. Opening this section, the articles "(Dis)Empowerment of Native Americans in Orson Scott Card's *The Tales of Alvin Maker*," by Weronika Łaskiewicz, and "Native Voices of the Americas: Of Literature, decolonization and self-determination," by Roland Walter, focus on the representation of Indigenous identities, even though their discussions depart from different perspectives. While Łaskiewicz's article analyses the portrayal of Native Americans by the non-Indigenous writer Orson Scott Card, who presents what could be called an "alternative history" of the United States, Walter's critical discussion presents a comparative reading of a variety of narratives and poetical works produced by Indigenous writers in the Americas, in which they problematize questions of identity.

Diverse aspects of ethnicity and culture connected to Black identities are explored in four of the articles in this section. Gabriela Bruschini Grecca's article "A racist challenge might force us apart: divergence, reliance and empathy in *Parable of the Sower*, by Octavia Butler" and Luciana Mesquita's "*Heads of the Colored People*, de Nafissa Thompson-Spires: subjetividades femininas negras em diálogo" present critical analysis of particular works of two African-American writers. Grecca's reading of Butler's fictional community "Acorn" demonstrates how race and social class play a significant role in the understanding of resistance in this community. Mesquita's discussion of Thompson-Spire's short-story collection focuses on the diversity of Black experiences in the United States, paying special attention to how Black women's identities are represented and constructed in the narratives.

The article "A representação do sujeito diaspórico em *O livro dos negros*, de Lawrence Hill," by Shirley de Souza Gomes Carreira, focuses on the transnational character of neo-slave narratives and analyses the representation of diasporic subjects in the work of Canadian writer Lawrence Hill. Rodolfo Moraes Farias and Vanessa Rimbau Pinheiro, in "A progenitora obstinada: apontamentos sobre a representação da maternidade igbo na prosa de Buchi Emecheta e Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie," demonstrate how both writers negotiate maternity, ethnicity, and

identity in their narratives, specifically in what concerns issues of community and individual identities.

Gender and representation are at the core of Daniela Silva de Freitas's article "A *Odisseia* segundo Penélope, por Margaret Atwood." In it, Freitas examines Atwood's re-writing of Homer's *Odyssey* from the perspective of Penelope and of the twelve maids who were killed upon Odysseus's return to Ithaca. For Freitas, Atwood's re-writing of this powerful myth not only creates space for gender reconfigurations, but also problematizes the Western literary canon and its traditions.

Resisting forgetfulness in the re-writing of Irish history is one of the central aspects discussed in the articles "Mourning the Troubles: Anna Burns's *Milkman* as a gendered response to the Belfast Agreement," by Marcela Santos Brigida and Davi Pinho, "Describing pain in Mary Raftery's documentary play *No Escape*," by Natália Elisa Lorensetti Pastore, Alinne Balduino Pires Fernandes, and Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos, and "Writing from exile as a discourse of absence in Sebastian Barry's *On Canaan's Side*," by Elisa Lima Abrantes. While Brigida and Pinho read Burns's *Milkman* as a gendered act of resistance against the enforced forgetfulness of grief embedded in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement's proposal of a "fresh start" after the period known as "the Troubles" in Ireland, Pastore, Fernandes and Bastos analyse how pain is presented in the documentary play *No Escape* as a way to further examine the need to reflect upon this subject in Irish history. Absence and exile are discussed in Abrante's article. In it, the scholar focuses on how the diasporic subject remembers and re-writes history, intertwining personal and traumatic events in the history(ies) of both Ireland and the United States.

In the article "Glue, the *Trainspotting* novels and transition from working-class solidarity to neoliberal entrepreneurship," Amaury Garcia dos Santos Neto presents a critical discussion of some of Irvine Welsh's novels, paying special attention to how these works represent the period of transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society in Scotland. In the article, Neto focuses on an analysis of characters who originate from the working class as a way to elaborate on Welsh's depiction of neoliberal working practices. Kaveh Khodambashi Emami, Hossein Pirnajmuddin, and Pyeaam Abbasi, in "Re-politicizing mental illness: Reflections on boredom and depression in American post-postmodern fiction," shed light on how works such as *Infinite Jest*, by David Foster Wallace, and *The Pale King*, by Jonathan Franzen, resist easy categorizations of mental illness in the contemporary scene. For the authors, Wallace's and Franzen's works are representative of what could be called "post-postmodern" fiction in its concern with specific representations of socio-economic and cultural modes. A re-reading of post-modernism is also present in "Posthumanity in DeLillo's *Zero K*: the rising connections between identity and technology," by Alan Medeiros Castelulber and Gisèle Manganelli Fernandes. In this article, the scholars demonstrate DeLillo's interest in recreating the interconnections between identity and technology through the perspective of immortality, adding yet another layer to a complex set of relations in what could be seen as a posthuman future.

The two articles that close the volume's second group of texts raise issues connected to ecocriticism and the Anthropocene. In "Looking to Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* to find ways to respond to the dilemmas of the Anthropocene," Melina Pereira Savi demonstrates how Le Guin's novel anticipates the dilemmas of the Anthropocene and presents alternative practices of "being in the world" which are grounded on nondualist and dream-based worldviews that resist the destructive logic of the Anthropocene. In "Uma visão filosófica do ser: A vida dos animais e o conto 'The glass abattoir', de JM Coetzee," Marília Fátima de Oliveira analyses some of Coetzee's works in order to better understand this writer's questioning of moral codes that justify meat consumption while ultimately challenging human superiority over the rights of animals.

The third section, *Contemporary audiovisual narratives*, organized by Anelise R. Corseuil, Magali Sperling Beck, and Viviane M. Heberle, focuses on sociocultural and discursive aspects of a variety of audiovisual texts, from film to television series, to the interplay between theatrical and cinematic productions. The articles, which are representative of the debates about the various transformational aspects of cultural studies, highlight the discussion about the transformations and interactions in audiovisual narratives, including TV series and adaptations of canonic literary texts. The critical perspectives here presented range from an emphasis on cultural materialism, dialogism, reception theory, deconstructionism, narrative studies, film aesthetics or film genre, and can be grouped in two major interrelated areas of cultural studies: representation and aesthetics *vis a vis* audiovisual narratives. All of them enable a critical perspective of the fluidity of the boundaries separating audiovisual narratives and their importance in our contemporary moment.

Opening the section, the article "Female negotiations of affect in domestic and public space in the television series *The Handmaid's Tale*," by Nadia Der-Ohannessian, examines the screen adaptation of the 1984 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood, and demonstrates how the main themes explored in the T.V. series converge with the current global turn to the right. The article also explores the gendered gaze as a practice of resistance in the series.

Three other articles focusing on sociocultural and discursive aspects of television series are also part of this last section of the volume: "One day at a time: The political limits of the domestic sitcom," by André Carvalho, Marília Leite, and Paola Nichele, "From the theater to the horror museum: self-reflexivity strategies in the TV series *Penny Dreadful*," by Auricélio Soares Fernandes, and "Antecipação, complexidade narrativa e o melodrama paternal em *This is Us*," by Mariana Baltar and Carolina Amaral. While Carvalho, Leite, and Nichele review the history of the sitcom formula in order to ground their analysis of the first season of the series *One Day at a Time*, arguing that the political content of the show is compromised by the genre's need for stability, Fernandes presents a critical discussion about the metafictional aspects of the T.V. series *Penny Dreadful*, emphasizing the concept of narrative complexity in American television. Narrative complexity is also discussed in Baltar and Amaral's article. However,

in it, the scholars review the elements of the so-called maternal melodrama in order to discuss how they are actually recast in the series *This is Us*, creating a paternal melodrama which reconstructs family values through the image of caring masculinity.

Caroline Façanha Mathias, Maria Conceição Monteiro, and Paula Pope Ramos, in “Monster as can be: contemporary gothic in *I am Mother*,” investigate how this particular movie negotiates the interrelations between identity and maternity in a post-human future through a re-reading of the contemporary gothic. Identity is also one of the themes discussed in the article “À luz de uma revolta: a festa e o *after* de *The Boys in the Band*,” by Markus Volker Lasch and Renato Barreto Pereira. However, in this article, the authors investigate issues of reception regarding Mart Crowley’s play and its filmic version in the context of historical events that took place between 1968 and 1970.

“*Sin Nombre, Babel*, and the conflicts in contact zones,” by George Alexandre Ayres de Menezes Mousinho, and “Fetishized writing in *The English Patient* and *Atonement* film adaptations,” by Cynthia Beatrice Costa, close the current volume’s section on audiovisual narratives. In Mousinho’s article, Mary Louise Pratt’s conceptualization of the contact zone is revisited in two filmic narratives that present issues of coloniality and asymmetries of power in their representations of contemporary geographical dislocation. Costa’s article, on the other hand, demonstrates how the acts of reading and writing are central elements in the film adaptations *The English Patient* and *Atonement*. In her discussion, Costa illustrates how the written word or writing-related objects are fetishized in both productions, establishing a close connection with their source novels.

Two interviews and a book review are also part of volume 74.1. In “*Language, body and transpoetics: An Interview with Joy Ladin*,” Natália Salomé Poubel interviews the American transgender poet Joy Ladin focusing specifically on what the poet calls *transpoetics*, or “a [poetical] voice seeking to express identities that do not conform to socially recognized categories.” Érica Rodrigues Fontes, in “Performing Anglophone literature worldwide: Interview with Jonah Salz,” presents her discussions with theater director Jonah Salz, professor of Theatre Studies in Japan, addressing his experience in what could be defined as “intercultural theater.” Closing the volume, Desiree Bueno Tibúrcio and Sebastião Bonifácio Júnior, in the book review “Um olhar sobre *Beren e Lúthien*, de J. R. R. Tolkien,” present the significance of the new edition of Tolkien’s *Beren e Lúthien* (2017) in the context of the publication of its translation in Brazil.

One final word about communities of readers and scholars and its relation to *Ilha do Desterro* as a venue for publication that has consolidated its reputation along these forty years of creative and diligent work: *Ilha* is an open-access journal which has, since its conception, recognized “the value of transnational partnership among scholars in a connected world” (Wasserman et al. 2018, 9). In a digitalized world that demands globalized and interdisciplinary practices, we firmly believe that knowledge should be available to all readers. Moreover, by approaching editorial practices as possible steps towards community building (Klein 2020),

Ilha's editorial team has maintained its commitment to bridge academic relations and to promote critical reflections on English language, literatures in English, and Cultural Studies. Such commitment and the consolidation of *Ilha do Desterro* in bridging worldwide communities of scholars are definitely reflected by the large number of articles we received from scholars in Brazil and elsewhere – close to a hundred articles were submitted for this volume. We want to thank everyone who considered *Ilha do Desterro* for their publication and we want to invite you all to read and enjoy the articles that were here published as a way to rethink our ways of understanding, formulating, and renewing our visions of literature, audiovisual production and cultural and critical theory in an Anglophonic context *vis a vis* our own local, national, and global ties/connection.

References

- Klein, Lauren F. "Dimensions of Scale: Invisible Labor, Editorial Work, and the Future of Quantitative Literary Studies." *PMLA*, Vol. 135, No. 1, January 2020, pp. 23–39.
- "The common good: the limits of us." *Ideas*. M. NourbeSe Philip and Nahlah Ayed, 9 Sep. 2020, *CBC Radio*, <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1786490435681>.
- Wasserman, Renata; Corseuil, Anelise R., Beck, Magali Sperling, Mota, Mailce, Silveira, Rosane. "A journal's journey across time and space: the importance of *Ilha do Desterro* within local, national, and transnational contexts". *Ilha do Desterro* Vol. 71, No. 1, 2018, pp. 9-20.