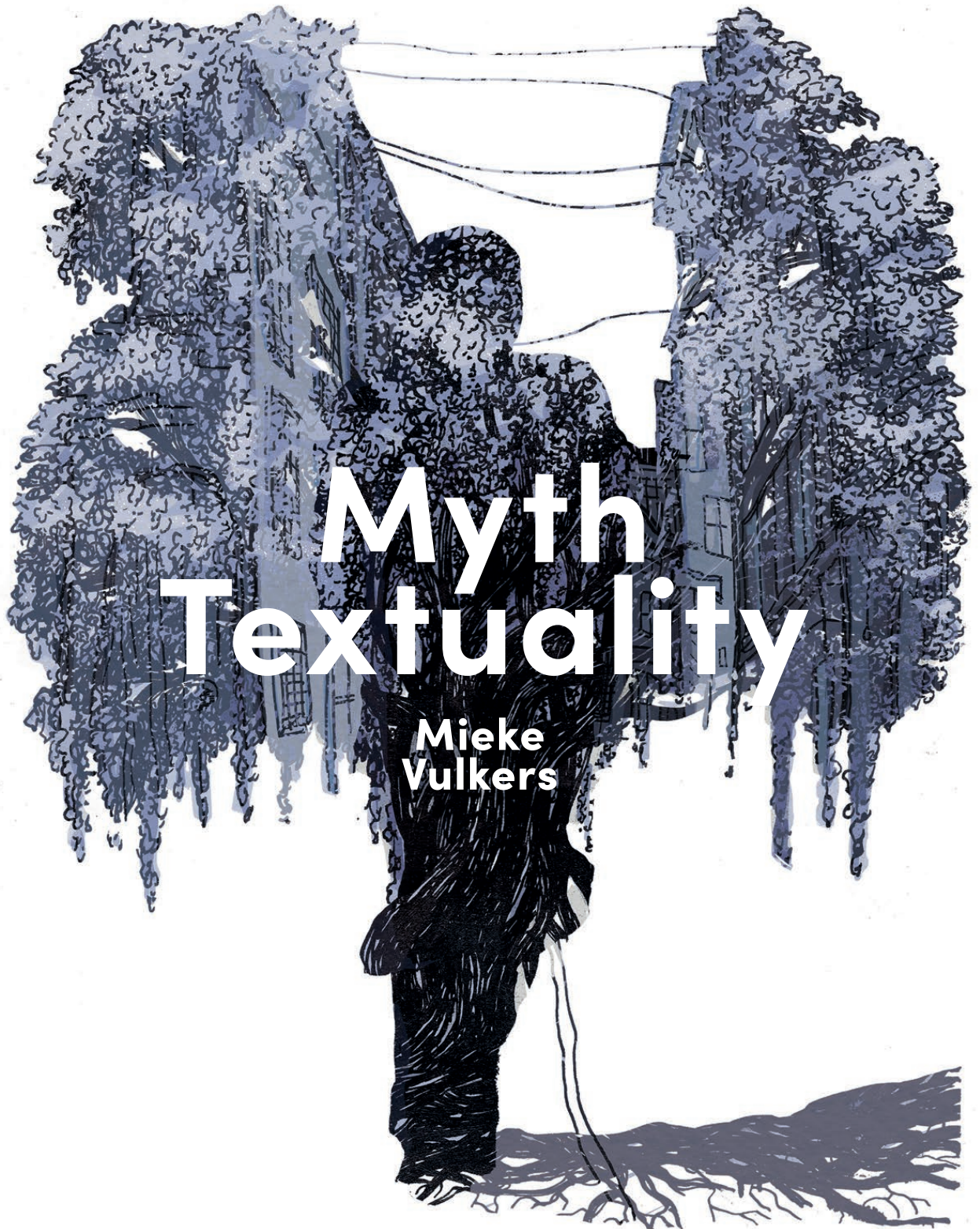


Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality  
and Durand's Myth Criticism



# Myth Textuality

Mieke  
Vulkers

Case Study | the Flâneur and the Tree Motif in Spanish and Latin American Literature



# **Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism**

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and Latin American Literature

Mieke Vulkers

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# **Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism**

Case Study: the Flâneur and the Tree Motif in Spanish  
and Latin American Literature

**Mythotekstualiteit: Julia Kristeva's intertekstualiteit in  
combinatie met Gilbert Durands mythokritiek**

Case study: de motieven van de flâneur en de boom in Spaanse  
en Latijns-Amerikaanse literatuur

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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# CONTENTS

## I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### MYTH TEXTUALITY: COMBINING JULIA KRISTEVA'S INTERTEXTUALITY WITH GILBERT DURAND'S MYTH CRITICISM

<b>1 TOWARDS THE ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIF</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Objectives	15
1.2 State of the art in motif analysis	16
1.3 Problem statement, hypothesis and research questions	22
1.4 Method	26
1.5 Conclusion: scientific positioning	27
<b>2 KRISTEVA'S INTERTEXTUALITY AND DURAND'S MYTH CRITICISM</b>	<b>29</b>
2.0 Identifying the motif	33
2.1 Creating a network of texts: Julia Kristeva's intertextuality	37
2.1.1 State of the art	38
2.1.2 The amplitude of intertextuality	45
The origins of intertextuality	45
The extent of theories on intertextuality	48
2.1.3 The divided subject in the text: the key concepts	51
The initial phase of the chora	52
The traces of the genotext	57
2.1.4 Intertextuality according to Kristeva: terminological discussion	62
2.1.5 Conclusion on intertextuality	67
2.2 Reading the text as if it were a myth: Gilbert Durand's myth criticism	71
2.2.1 State of the art	72
2.2.2 Historical overview of myth criticism	76
The origins of figurative structuralism	77
Gilbert Durand's postulate	82
2.2.3 Myth criticism according to Durand: the key concepts	86
The diurnal regime: heroic or schizomorphic	88
The nocturnal regime: the mystic and synthetic tendencies	94
Myth criticism: identifying textual structures	99
2.2.4 Reflections on the ambivalence of the system	101
2.2.5 Conclusion on myth criticism	107

<b>3 MYTH TEXTUALITY: A COMBINED MODEL FOR MOTIF ANALYSIS</b>	<b>111</b>
3.1 Exposition of the components of myth textuality	113
3.1.1 Definition of the genotextual instrument according to Kristeva	114
3.1.2 Reformulation of Durand's myth critical method	116
3.2 Combining the components: myth textuality	126
Defining the steps of the procedure	131
3.3 Parallelism and complementarity: the cohesion of the model	133
3.3.1 Similarities in the approaches of Durand and Kristeva	133
3.3.2 The complementarity of myth criticism and intertextuality	137
3.4 Conclusion	143

## II CASE STUDY

### **THE PRACTICE OF MYTH TEXTUALITY: ESTABLISHING THE KEY RELATION BETWEEN MOTIF AND SYMBOL**

#### **4 THE FLÂNEUR MOTIF**

CARMEN LAFORET'S *NADA* AND ANTONIO MUÑOZ MOLINA'S *UN ANDAR SOLITARIO ENTRE LA GENTE*, IN DIALOGUE WITH "THE MAN OF THE CROWD" BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

4.0 Presentation	157
Historical background	158
The interaction with the crowd	160
Composition of the corpus	165
State of the art	168
Hypothesis, research question and chapter organisation	173
4.1 Repetition and variation through intertextuality	176
4.1.1 The flâneur motif in <i>Nada</i> and <i>Un andar solitario entre la gente</i>	176
4.1.2 The flâneur motif in the pretext	180
4.1.3 Transpositions according to Genette	182
The pretext and <i>Nada</i>	183
The pretext and <i>Un andar solitario entre la gente</i>	185
4.1.4 Conclusion of the first phase	186
4.2 The symbolic nature of the flâneur motif	187
4.2.1 The pretext: "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe	188
Genotextual analysis	188
Myth critical analysis: ambiguity	191
4.2.2 Carmen Laforet's <i>Nada</i>	197
Genotextual analysis	198
Myth critical analysis: water and night	204
4.2.3 <i>Un andar solitario entre la gente</i> by Antonio Muñoz Molina	211
Genotextual analysis	212
Myth critical analysis: multiplication	219
4.3 Integration: myth textual interpretation	228
4.3.1 The flâneur motif in the pretext	228
4.3.2 Comparative integration	231
The flâneur in <i>Nada</i>	231
The flâneur in <i>Un andar solitario entre la gente</i>	235
4.3.3 Conclusion: repetitions and variation of the flâneur motif	241



## **5 THE TREE MOTIF**

### **GABRIELA MISTRAL'S *DESOLACIÓN* AND OCTAVIO PAZ'S "ÁRBOL ADENTRO" IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LYRICAL TEXTS BY TERESA DE ÁVILA**

5.0 Presentation	255
The tree motif in literary tradition	255
The tree and mysticism	258
Composition of the corpus	261
State of the art	263
Hypothesis, research questions and chapter organisation	268
5.1 Repetition and variation through intertextuality	271
5.1.1 The tree motif in <i>Desolación</i> and "Árbol adentro"	272
5.1.2 The tree motif in the pretexts	277
5.1.3 Transpositions according to Genette	280
The pretexts and <i>Desolación</i>	281
The pretexts and "Árbol adentro"	282
5.1.4 Conclusion of the first phase	283
5.2 The symbolic nature of the tree motif	286
5.2.1 The pretexts: Teresa de Ávila's lyrical texts	287
Genotextual analysis	287
Myth critical analysis: the tree and the cross	292
5.2.2 Gabriela Mistral's <i>Desolación</i>	297
Genotextual analysis	297
Myth critical analysis: the desire for resurrection	304
5.2.3 "Árbol adentro" by Octavio Paz	314
Genotextual analysis	314
Myth critical analysis: confluence of myths	320
5.3 Integration: myth textual interpretation	329
5.3.1 The tree motif in the pretext	329
5.3.2 Comparative integration	331
The tree in <i>Desolación</i>	332
The tree in "Árbol adentro"	337
5.3.3 Conclusion: repetitions and variation of the tree motif	342

## **III CONCLUSIVE PART**

<b>6. DISCUSSION OF MYTH TEXTUALITY</b>	<b>351</b>
6.1 Evaluation of the research process	357
Decisive moments	358
The classes on myth textuality	361
The scope of the theoretical framework	364
The case studies: towards a redefinition of the motif	369
6.2 Recommendations for future research	376
6.3 Final reflections	385

<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>391</b>
1 Terminology, in alphabetical order	393
2 Transpositions according to Genette	398
3 “Árbol adentro” by Octavio Paz	400
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>401</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>425</b>
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>443</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>445</b>

## I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### MYTH TEXTUALITY: COMBINING KRISTEVA'S INTERTEXTUALITY WITH DURAND'S MYTH CRITICISM

*O mito é o nada que é tudo*  
Fernando Pessoa

*La ficción narrativa, que procede del mito y de los cuentos infantiles, tiene como ellos, la tarea de explicar el orden del mundo y de ayudarnos a encontrar en él nuestra propia posición...*  
Antonio Muñoz Molina



## 1 TOWARDS THE ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIF

In literature, the realm where individuality and creativity are key qualities, time and again we see the emergence of certain recognisable characters, situations or clusters of references. The reader observes that typical characters such as the flâneur or the hero repeatedly appear, while emblematic objects and recurrent situations like the mirror or orphanhood reappear in a transformed way in all kinds of literary text. However, the repetitive nature of these textual elements does not preclude the combination with notions such as invention and originality. In this work, I will investigate how one can comprehend and interpret the paradoxical nature of literary texts, the simultaneity of repetition and variation. I posit that we do not need new theories, because procedures that engage in the variety of texts already exist. On the contrary, I suggest that we can reinterpret and combine these existing theories. To be precise, I propose to revisit myth criticism introduced by Durand in consonance with Kristeva's intertextual theory, by unifying them into the interpretative model of *myth textuality*. That is, the proposal of the present thesis lies in the innovative combination of Durand's and Kristeva's theories.

Both constituents of myth textuality already regard the relations between texts. On the one hand, myth criticism proposes to interpret the literary text as if it were a myth, thus connecting to a mythical narrative. As we will see, Kristeva's approach extends to the specific interaction, within the text, of the different textual levels that coincide with the individuation process. I propose that the theories of Kristeva and Durand are complementary, and their integration expands the comprehension of the complex nature of the literary text.

Various terms are used to refer to recurrence in literature, such as 'archetype', 'literary type', or poetic devices like anaphora or alliteration.<sup>1</sup> I will concentrate on the repetitive textual elements that are referred to as a *motif*. In other words, I will engage upon the manifestation of the motif, conceived as repetitive and flexible at the same time. The starting point of the analysis is the following definition of the motif: "a recurrent theme, character or verbal pattern, (...) a family or associational cluster of literal or figurative references to a given class of concepts or objects" (Freedman 127). While Freedman's conception lies in the recurrence of textual elements in a specific text, the synchronic axis, the aspect of repetition also is valid for the motif's appearance in literary tradition, where the reader discovers its ability to variation. This means that the analysis of the motif is also amenable to a diachronic line of approach, which considers the motif's manifestations over time (Morgan 3). Freedman adds that the motif is "generally symbolic" (128). I conceive the motif as the transfer of a mental idea, which operates on an abstract level, to the realm of the concrete image. I argue that the motif always is symbolic because it operates on the level of symbols, by representing the abstract idea that is the creative drive behind the text.

The interpretation of the motif according to its position within the literary sphere situates the diachronic analysis immediately within the framework of intertextuality, the interpretative current dedicated to the relationships between texts since its introduction by Julia Kristeva. As the motif arises from the recognition of intertextual relationships, I assume the relevance of the reader's perspective, as proposed by theorists like Barthes and Riffaterre. As a result of the forgoing, I define the motif as follows:

*A group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition.*

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<sup>1</sup> For clarity, I include the central terms of this thesis in Appendix 1.

In the broader context of literary tradition, the aspect of repetition connects the text to other texts where the same motif appears. The symbolic level of the motif relates to the element of universality, inherent in traditional literature and myth.

At the same time, the synchronic axis encompasses the repetitive elements within the text. Durand's myth criticism is concerned with the repetition of images that, since the times of ancient myth, represent the essential issues of the human being.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, within the framework of genotextual analysis, Kristeva ponders the individuation process recognised by the reader facing certain repetitive textual phenomena. Thus, two lines of inquiry are applicable when understanding the motif: for one thing, intertextuality according to Kristeva's perspective. Intertextuality, insofar as it refers to the interpretation of interrelated texts, serves to structure the interpretative instrument. However, I will focus on the route taken by Kristeva, which addresses the hybridity of the text, according to the irrational drives that transpire within it. On the other hand, myth criticism, the method that refers to the underlying motivation for symbolic language, in conformity to anthropological perspectives. Hence, this thesis presents the combined method of myth textuality, devised to understand and interpret the variation and persistence of the motif in literary texts.

In closing, I will align myself with the researchers who conduct their studies according to the female perspective, the "mythocritique au féminin" (Zupančič 2016). The explicitly female perspective on myth criticism can manifest in three ways: a preference for female mythical figures as an object of study; a preference for texts by female authors; the explicitly female point of view of the researcher. I consider the *au féminin* approach an indispensable perspective to rectify the unequal attention that literary criticism historically has paid to the work of female authors. In the context of

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<sup>2</sup> Evidently, 'myth' is a central concept in myth criticism; see for its definition Appendix 1, Terminology.

the present work, it inspires me to organise the research as follows: text selection occurs in a balanced manner, in the sense that I choose in equal measure theoretical and literary texts from authors who identify themselves as male or as female. Furthermore, I will approach the premises of the theoretical foundations critically, to bring into the open the potentially biased concepts about gender and agency.



## 1.1 Objectives

This research aims to enhance the understanding of the motif, by concentrating on the key elements of flexibility and persistence in literary tradition. Additionally, it introduces the symbolic value of the motif, incorporating the universal level that is attached to the anthropological and psychological motivations underlying any kind of narrative text, since ancient myth. For this purpose, I will construct a research model that combines the principles of genotext analysis with the analytical method of myth criticism. Therefore, my research presents a dual objective: first, I aspire to build a research model for comprehending and interpreting the flexibility and the persistence of the motif; second, I intend to put this analytical model into practice through the analysis of a corpus of literary texts, so as to explore the interpretative possibilities of the combined method.

First and foremost, I will provide an operational description of the motif, in order to facilitate the recognition of its manifestation in the corpus texts. Then I will address the theories of intertextuality and myth criticism separately, to determine which elements can be assimilated into motif analysis within the combined method. Subsequently, I will introduce the tool of myth textuality, the combination of the myth critical instrument and intertextual analysis into a comprehensive procedure for the interpretation of the motif. Furthermore, I will explore the cohesion of the model, according to the parallels and the complementarity of the constituent methods of myth textuality. I will demonstrate how this combination encompasses the interpretation of the motif to an extent that has not been considered before: both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, and the symbolic level, reflecting the underlying layer beneath the surface of the text.

## 1.2 State of the art in motif analysis

Before determining the point of departure of this thesis, this section provides an overview of the relevant studies of the literary motif. I use foundational texts that attempt to formulate a detailed definition of the motif or a relevant methodology, with a focus on the works that extend beyond the limited scope of inventory or taxonomic categorization of traditional motifs (Freedman 1971, Daemmrich 1985, Pimentel 1993, Márquez 2002, Morgan 2015). It is worth noting that originally the study of the motif falls within the realm of *thematology*, a branch of comparative literature. According to Pimentel,

Thematology studies particularly the abstract dimension of literature that encompasses the material that it is made of, as well as its transformations and innovations; it studies (...) the *themes* and *motifs* that, like filters, select, orientate and inform the production process of literary texts. (Pimentel 215)<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, thematology investigates the development of literary themes from a historical perspective, resulting in works of inventory or compilation, such as the key text *Europäisches Literatur und das Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948) by Ernst Robert Curtius. The taxonomic current of the study of themes and motifs comes closer to ethno-literature; a notable example is *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932-1936) by Stith Thompson, which enumerates and classifies 40.000 traditional literary elements (Pimentel 222). However, currently thematology adopts a broader perspective that includes the sociocultural situation of the text, as well as the agency of the author and

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<sup>3</sup> My translation MV: "La tematología estudia aquella dimensión abstracta de la literatura que son los materiales de que está hecha, así como sus transformaciones y actualizaciones; estudia (...) los *temas* y *motivos*, que, como filtros, seleccionan, orientan e informan el proceso de producción de los textos literarios" (Pimentel 215).

the reader: "[t]hematization, then, is an operation on meanings dominant in language, in culture, in society, performed by authors and also by readers" (Domínguez et al. 77).

Well then, according to the majority of the theorists, precisely the terms 'theme' and 'motif' are not interpreted with unanimity. As Morgan states:

It takes significant effort to work through the maze of definitions for motif, because the term occurs in different fields of research and has various meanings and applications in literary and biblical criticism. This fact is compounded within a multilingual research community in which language can bring various nuances to the notion of motif.

(Morgan 2-3)

For example: on the one hand, the motif is defined as "a backdrop, a broad concept, designating a certain attitude, or a basic, impersonal situation", while the theme is "the particular expression of a motif, its individualisation or (...) the result of the passage from the general to the particular" (Trousson 12-13).<sup>4</sup> In the field of French comparative literature this is the current definition (Márquez 252). On the other hand, there is a growing understanding that motifs usually are concrete (objects, situations), in contrast to themes, which are abstract (concepts, ideas, values) (Morgan 5). Therefore, the distinction between the concepts 'theme' and 'motif' requires clarification before integrating them into a comparative study (Daemmrich 1985, Pimentel 1993, Márquez 2002, Morgan 2015). Another relevant terminological distinction is between *motif*, *topos*, and *symbol* (Márquez 2002, Morgan 2015).<sup>5</sup>

In his historical overview, Daemmrich emphasises that motif studies generally agree on the fundamental parameter that the motif is a textual element with the capacity to

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<sup>4</sup> My translation MV: "une toile de fond, un concept large, désignant soit une certaine attitude, soit une situation de base, impersonnelle"; "l'expression particulière d'un motif, son individualisation ou, (...) le résultat du passage du général au particulier" (Trousson 12-13).

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1, Terminology.

persist in tradition. By investigating the continuous existence of certain motifs, he identifies a considerable number of earlier studies that connect this stability with the fact that "motifs capture a significant aspect of human interaction or perception of reality in a striking manner" (Daemmrich 568). They refer to the motif as the crystallisation of schematic structures of archetypal elements, linked to mythical forms or unconscious factors concerning personality formation. However, according to Daemmrich, such studies do not respond to the textual and functional nature of the motif when considering the creative process (568).

The concept of the symbol is part of the delineation of the motif, as the terms both refer to a symbolic value, representing in a concrete manner another thing that exists on an abstract level (Morgan 6). Other studies allude to the symbolic level of the motif as well, although implicitly (Freedman 1971, Daemmrich 1985). Furthermore, Pimentel also refers to myth, in relation with the study of themes and motifs (223). In other words, apart from persistence, which is a key aspect of the motif, its symbolic value and the inherent creative process are widely recognised.

Regarding the establishment of a research method, I observe two approaches: studies that focus on a detailed elaboration of motif manifestations (Freedman 1971, Daemmrich 1985), on the one hand, and the works that propose an update of the methodological axis (Pimentel 1993, Morgan 2015), on the other. Freedman specifies the indispensable factors identifying the motif; he also clarifies how to establish the effectiveness of the motif (126- 27). While focusing on the manifestation of the motif in a singular text, he suggests that his method combines an accent on the aesthetic level of the text itself with a biographical and historical analysis of the text's situation (Freedman 131). Daemmrich enumerates the principles governing the motif; he also

denominates the functions of the theme. Subsequently, he suggests that the identification of motifs and themes inevitably establishes "true literary constants", which reveal the text's structure, unexpected relationships between very different texts, and the historical situation of the author (Daemmrich 573).

More recent studies extend the thematological perspective. While referring to the mythical level of literary texts, Pimentel adds a methodological recommendation to her exploration of terminology: "Thus, and every time more evidently, the study of themes and motifs becomes inscribed in a *textuality theory* that can occur in the mythanalysis modality or that of an intertextual analysis" (223).<sup>6</sup> According to Pimentel, it is justifiable to introduce the principles of intertextuality; she argues that in the field of comparative literary studies Genette's transtextuality leads to an interrelated approach on literature (228).

To conclude, Morgan also expands the scope of thematology. To begin, he suggests that the study of the motif can be conducted in two manners: diachronically, as a part of historical poetics; synchronically, as an analysis of the motif's contribution to a singular text (3). By drawing first on the definitions and the functions of the motif as established by Freedman, he continues "to expand on the previous theoretical discussion by examining the intertextual and performative values of motifs" (11). In doing so, he covers the diachronic axis through the principles of intertextuality, while applying narratology in the synchronic analysis of the text.

In summary, the research into the persistence and the transformation of the motif depends on a method that combines the synchronic and diachronic analysis, as

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<sup>6</sup> My translation MV: "Así, y cada vez de manera más evidente, el estudio de temas y motivos queda inscrito en una *teoría de textualidad* que puede darse en la modalidad del mitoanálisis o en la de un análisis intertextual" (Pimentel 223).

effectuated by Morgan. It is plausible that a usable definition can be composed for the synchronic analysis of the motif in a singular text, by following the detailed descriptions given by Freedman and Daemmrich. Regarding the analysis of the motif's manifestation over time, it is imperative "to rely on the selections of representative texts" (Daemmrich 573). The intertextual component of the method proposed in this work conforms to the ideas of Pimentel and Morgan, who suggest integrating intertextuality principles into thematology. While Pimentel is relying exclusively on Genette's transtextuality, I will adopt a broader perspective that includes other intertextual theorists.

At the same time, although widely recognised, the symbolic value of the motif and its relationship with myth are not reflected in traditional methods (Freedman, Daemmrich) nor in recent adaptations (Pimentel 1993, Morgan 2015). Neither do studies of the motif consider the possibility of integrating the ideas of Kristeva about the genotext, although genotextual traces also appear through repetitive textual elements and refer to a subtextual layer beneath the surface of the text. It is worth noting that Pimentel, even though briefly mentioning mythanalysis, subsequently limits herself to transtextuality (223).

Following Morgan, who combines intertextuality with a synchronic analysis according to narratology, I will construct a similar combination: myth textuality. The structuration of myth textuality will be based on the general aspect of intertextuality, conceived as the reader's perception of relationships between texts; thus, I will cover the diachronic axis of motif interpretation. The myth critical component, analysing the corpus texts synchronically, will encompass the symbolic level of the motif that other theorists have recognised, but without integrating it in their investigation method. The genotextual analysis, also conducted in a synchronic way, will focus on another aspect

that is perceivable in the symbolic nature of the motif; in other words, the interpretation of the genotext will focus on the irrational factors that affect the symbolic value of the motif. It should be noted that until now, theorists have overlooked the genotextual perspective of the motif.

### 1.3 Problem statement, hypothesis and research questions

To define the starting point of the present work, I return to the definition of the motif, in order to concentrate on its key elements:

- a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition -

I distinguish two parts that pertain to the different axes of motif analysis. On the one hand, the part 'a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature' regards the manifestation of the motif in a particular text. It establishes the presence of the motif in the text according to the synchronic axis of the analysis. I discern two decisive aspects: the repetition of textual elements and their symbolic charge. A description of the motif, based on the works of Freedman, Daemmrich and Morgan, will elaborate on the characteristics that I will link to the element 'group of repetitive textual elements'. Such a definition will also support the selection of the corpus texts.

Since the element 'symbolic in nature' is of great relevance, it is necessary to underline first the conception of the term 'symbolic' in this work. In the broadest sense, 'symbol' is defined as "a sign whose presence evokes another reality that is suggested or represented" (Estébanez Calderón 1214).<sup>7</sup> While in linguistics it refers to the signification process, in the field of the interpretation of the imaginary the symbol is a concrete image that represents an idea, which is abstract. Clearly, the action of the symbol corresponds to the way the motif represents the theme. In literature, the repetitive use of a certain image denotes the symbolic quality of the text, because it suggests the presence of an underlying idea beneath the superficial layer of the text.

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<sup>7</sup> My translation MV: "un signo cuya presencia evoca otra realidad sugerida o representada" (Estébanez Calderón 1214).



Existing studies of the motif do not imply an analysis of the symbolic level of the text; nor do they provide a proposal for such an analysis, except for Pimentel's suggestion regarding mythanalysis (223).

On the other hand, the part 'recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition' concerns the diachronic axis of the analysis of the motif in the literary field. As argued by Pimentel and Morgan, the principles of intertextuality are vital for bringing to light the relationships between texts. The element 'recognisable' presupposes the reader/researcher's perception, a factor that has been accentuated by several theorists in the field of intertextuality. The fragment 'persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition' refers to the repetitive and flexible nature of the motif. I connect the persistence of the motif, on the one side, to the universality of the underlying themes that are the drive of the motif's symbolic quality. On the other hand, the variety of the motif corresponds to the situation of the text, spatiotemporal as well as socio-historical.

Regarding the universality of the drives that generate the recurrence of symbolic language in the text, I propose following Pimentel's suggestion about integrating myth criticism in the interpretative instrument. However, Durand's method, aside from being founded on the unifying principles of anthropology, interprets text variations according to their socio-historical situation. I assume the need for a complementary view that encompasses the individuation process, perceivable in the text and, like anthropology, universal in nature. Consequently, I introduce the ideas of Kristeva about the genotext, to address the psychological factors, inherent in the human being, that generate the repetitive textual elements. Based on Kristeva's definition put forward in "Narration and

transformation" (1969), I consider the theory of genotextuality, the relationship between the distinct text levels genotext and phenotext, as a form of intertextuality.<sup>8</sup>

The definition reveals the key elements of the motif: repetition, variation, and symbolic level. The interpretation of the motif in the literary field depends on the additional factor of reader perception. Conceiving the motif as a group of textual elements implies an interpretation of the text's structure; the symbolic quality of the motif suggests a method that encompasses the stratified nature of the text. The two parts of the definition also indicate a combination of the synchronic and diachronic axes of motif analysis. I propose that no existing method encompasses the key elements, according to both structural and intertextual interpretation, as well as the symbolic and universal quality of the text simultaneously. I hypothesise that understanding the motif, its combination of varied and traditional nature, requires a relevant analytical instrument. Therefore, I intend to devise an interpretative instrument that encompasses the opposite elements of the motif, by combining the central principles of intertextuality with the methodology of myth criticism. I will respond to the dual research question: Which are the elements of intertextuality and myth critical method that combine to form an instrument that enhances the understanding of the motif, by concentrating on the key elements of flexibility and persistence in literary tradition, symbolic nature and recurrence of textual elements? And: How does reading through the lens of myth textuality contribute to the understanding of the motif in the literary text?

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<sup>8</sup> See section 2.1 on intertextuality according to Kristeva.

The definition of intertextuality reads: "Intertextuality means for us textual interaction produced within the text itself. The apprehending subject understands the concept of intertextuality as an indicator of how the text reads history and locates itself in it" (Kristeva qtd. in Juvan 12).

The creation of the interpretative instrument is carried out in the first theoretical part following these steps:

- First, I examine the theoretical components of intertextuality that can be integrated in the combined method. To accentuate Kristeva's argument, I explore the central concepts of her theoretical work; subsequently, I respond to the question: what are the theoretical components of Kristeva's approach that can be integrated into the combined method, devised for motif understanding?
- Thereupon, I investigate how myth criticism can be applied within the framework of motif analysis. In order to build an adequate instrument, I explore the central concepts; then, I respond to the question: what are the elements of myth critical procedure that can be integrated in the combined method of myth textuality?
- As a third step, I respond to the final question: how do the theoretical approaches of intertextuality and myth criticism converge into a comprehensive reading tool that encompasses the key elements of the motif?

Subsequently, in the analytical part, I will conduct two case studies using the method of myth textuality, to establish the repetitions and variations of the motif in question in the texts of the corpus. The corpus is composed through a balanced selection, including in equal measure the texts of authors who identify themselves as male and female. Based on the results of the case studies, I will respond in the concluding section to the central question regarding the contribution of myth textuality to the understanding of the motif in the literary text.

## 1.4 Method

The Theoretical Part addresses the construction of the combined method of myth textuality. Chapter 2 begins with a detailed description of the motif, according to the theoretical texts by Freedman, Daemmrich, Pimentel, and Morgan. Subsequently, follows the composition of the interpretative instrument, consistent with the objectives of the present work. I explore the constituent theories, intertextuality and myth criticism, separately. I follow the same order in both sections: first, delineation of the historical background; then, the theoretical foundations; finally, the recommendations regarding the components suitable for motif interpretation, in line with a critical reflection on the procedure in question. In chapter 3, the theories are combined into an instrument that covers the key aspects of the motif, established in the introduction: repetition, variation and symbolic character. Furthermore, the additional factors, reader perception and text context, are taken into consideration. In the field of intertextuality, I select the tools that respond to the complex nature of the motif. The central theoretical texts follow the ideas of Kristeva, whose work will be the central foundation of the intertextual component. In the framework of myth criticism, I review the interpretative instrument created by Durand, by reducing its complexity and updating the terminology, especially in regard to gender issues. I will be using the fundamental works of both theorists, as well as the central comments on their body of concepts.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, I combine the updated instruments of Kristeva and Durand. I provide a schematic model detailing the three phases of the procedure and the corresponding steps. To conclude, there is a reflection on the parallelism and complementarity of the theories united in the research model.

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<sup>9</sup> See the introduction to chapter 2.

### **1.5 Conclusion: scientific positioning**

Myth textuality aims to provide an analytical instrument for motif comprehension, particularly in terms of recurrence and flexibility, and the symbolic nature of the text. To achieve this, it combines the central principles of intertextuality as articulated by Kristeva with the methodological concept of myth textuality, introduced by Gilbert Durand. As far as methodology is concerned, myth textuality is relevant on three levels: the expansion and deepening of intertextual analysis according to Kristeva's conception; the revision of myth critical terminology for motif analysis, meeting the requirements of clarity, applicability, and gender-neutral formulation of the concepts; the added value of the combined method, which offers an innovative procedure for the comprehensive analysis of all the key motif elements.

First, the conceptual amplitude of intertextuality enables the construction of an analytical instrument that responds to the diverse characteristics of the motif. In the field of intertextuality, which is rather a set of theories, selecting and (re)defining their own terminology seems to be the main attitude (Worton and Still viii). Therefore, it is legitimate to compose an applicable tool based on the concepts from theorists such as Kristeva, Barthes, Riffaterre, and Genette. Furthermore, I propose that Kristeva's theory on the genotext, which has remained relatively unknown among the interpretations of the initial concept by male theorists, deserves a reevaluation. The analysis of the unconscious drives, inherent in the process of individuation, is an essential complement to the interpretation of the universal nature of the motif.

Secondly, myth criticism lends itself to a diversity of applications in various scientific disciplines. After its introduction by Gilbert Durand in the 1960s, the terminology of figurative structuralism has undergone some reformulations since then. Even Durand himself, aware of his tendency to invent unusual jargon, reconsidered the division of

his system. In view of Durand's indulgent attitude towards the disciples who interpreted his system differently, I take the liberty to reformulate and update durandian terminology (Gutiérrez, interview 8 December 2021).<sup>10</sup> My starting point is a profound appreciation of the fundamental principles of his system and the confidence in the method's effectiveness, especially for the analysis of the symbolical aspects of the motif.

So let us return to the composite definition of the motif, introduced in the beginning of this introduction: a motif is a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition. By integrating intertextuality and myth criticism into the broader procedure of myth textuality, all elements of the motif are covered: repetition and variation of textual structures, symbolic quality, the perspective of the reader/researcher, and the socio-historical context of the text. Since no such comprehensive tool for motif analysis has been developed thus far, myth textuality offers an innovative research model.

To conclude, myth textuality is a combination of two methods, intertextuality and myth criticism. The interpretative directions provide the researcher with considerable freedom. In the present thesis, I emphasise on the convergence of myth critical and genotextual analysis, because these procedures offer varied coverage of the analysis of the text's symbolic level that aroused my interest. The amplitude of the combined method allows for a diversity of interpretations, enabling various researchers to accentuate the relevance of different aspects of the analytical procedure.

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<sup>10</sup> On December 8th, 2021, I conducted an on-line interview with Fátima Gutiérrez, the author of *Mitocrítica. Naturaleza, función, teoría y práctica* (Milenio, 2012). The conversation encompassed Gutiérrez' personal and working experiences with Gilbert Durand and his theory on myth criticism. I will refer to the data of this interview as follows: Gutiérrez, interview 8 December 2021.

## 2 KRISTEVA'S INTERTEXTUALITY AND DURAND'S MYTH CRITICISM

The collection of stories depicting the adventures of Ulysses, as portrayed in the *Odyssey*, is an inexhaustible source for recreations and reinterpretations. The reverse of the medal, the endless waiting of his wife Penelope, also lends itself to reconsideration: often, reimaginings of Penelope's tale represent a reevaluation of the submissive position of women in classical antiquity. The loom motif, symbol of the rhythmic nature of her solitary days, serves as a display of the cunning of Ulysses' wife in her intents to escape the suitors. It is situated in the centre of reinterpretations by very different authors, in texts such as *La tejedora de sueños* (1952), meaning the weaver of dreams, by Antonio Buero Vallejo or *The Penelopiad* (2005) by Margaret Atwood. A challenge for the reader trying to grasp the repetitive and transformed representation of such a well-known phenomenon.

The present theoretical chapter departs from the hypothesis that understanding the motif, its varied yet traditional nature, requires a relevant analytical tool. Therefore, I aim to build an interpretative instrument that encompasses the composite aspect of the motif, by combining the central principles of intertextuality with the method of myth criticism. On the one hand, I will interpret the components variation and repetition of the motif from a diachronic axis, considering its manifestation in literary tradition through the perspective of textual relationships. The diachronic angle connects to the general principles of intertextuality and the level of myth criticism that establishes a link between the text and ancestral myth. On the other hand, I will address the synchronic aspect through the analysis of the text's structure, detecting the repetition of textual elements.

The structural analysis of the text is the realm where the analogy is situated between myth criticism and intertextuality, in the conception of Kristeva. Other common ground can be found in the appreciation of the relationships between texts and the consideration of the textual level underlying to the surface of the text. In line with the symbolic nature of the motif, the function of representing concretely an underlying abstract value, I combine the analytical procedures of myth criticism and Kristeva's particular take on intertextuality, genotextual analysis. From this analogy, I elaborate in this theoretical chapter the method of myth textuality, created for the analysis of the motif's manifestation, which is stable and varied at the same time. In other words, apart from concentrating on the motif as a textual grouping that is recurring in literary tradition, the frame of reference of myth textuality accentuates the variation of the motif, expressing the original and creative qualities of the text in which it appears. I will address the major research question: which central principles of intertextuality can be joined with myth critical method towards an instrument that broadens the comprehension of the motif, by concentrating on the key elements of flexibility and persistence in literary tradition, symbolic quality, and recurrence of textual elements?

To provide an overview, this theoretical chapter begins with the composition of a foundational context: the introduction of the concept 'motif' in the preliminary section (2.0). The first section (2.1) explores which components of intertextuality can be integrated in the combined model. Devised by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, intertextuality has developed into a multi-faceted cluster of theories about text relationships. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the entire terrain to introduce the distinct interpretations of intertextuality by theorists such as Barthes, Riffaterre, Genette, and Hutcheon. Thus, I will establish the instrumental concepts that can be



integrated into the intertextual procedure that is applicable to motif interpretation. To inquire into the introduction of the concept 'intertextuality' I use Kristeva's texts "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966) and "Le texte clos" (1968), and include additional texts on intertextuality interpretations in literary criticism, such as Graham Allen's *Intertextuality* (2011) (2.1.2). Subsequently, I focus on the psychoanalytical angle embedded by Kristeva in the basic concept of text relationships, using: *La révolution du langage poétique* (1974), *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* (1980), and *Soleil noir* (1987); supplementary texts include *The Kristeva Reader* (1986) in the edition of Toril Moi and *The Portable Kristeva* (2002) in the edition of Kelly Oliver; finally, by Kristeva herself, the hybrid text *Thérèse mon amour* (2008). In 2.1.3, I provide a summary of the approach on the interaction between textual levels, genotext and phenotext. Lastly, I offer recommendations on the integration of Kristeva's principles, referring to both intertextuality in the broader sense and the identification of the genotext (2.1.4). Since Kristeva developed the analytical tools within the framework of her literary analyses, she has not presented a detailed method for recognising the genotext. Therefore, I will provide suggestions on the construction of a method for genotextual analysis.

Directing the attention to myth criticism, I then explore the components of the method that can contribute to motif interpretation. Although it is a comprehensive and original procedure, myth criticism appears as an inaccessible method due to its unusual terminology and demanding methodology. Section 2.2 unfolds its historical background and path of knowledge. Central theoretical texts are Durand's fundamental works *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (1960) and *Figures mythiques et visages de l'œuvre* (1979), and the more recent text by Fátima Gutiérrez: *Mitocrítica. Naturaleza, función, práctica y teoría* (2012). Subsequently, I will delve into the theory on the central aspects of myth criticism, the categorization of symbolic language

according to the regimes of the imaginary and the concept 'mytheme' (2.2.3). After a reflection on its theory and the practice, I will establish under which conditions myth criticism can meet the methodological requirements of motif analysis.

## 2.0 Identifying the motif

As the motif is the centre of the attention of the current work, I provide in this section the definitions of the core concept and some related notions, such as theme, *topos* or topic, and symbol. I also resume the aspects of the motif, in order to delineate the tool for its detection in the literary text.

Firstly, the theme and the motif are general concepts associated with the initial elaboration of the literary text as a whole. On the one hand, the theme is situated on the broader level of the *materia prima* represented in a piece of writing or a discourse; it has the abstract value of the principal idea. On the other hand, the motif displays a certain degree of elaboration, "distinguishing itself from the theme for being an almost autonomous *unity* and for its *recurrence*" (Pimentel 216-17).<sup>11</sup> As the motif is more specific, it delimits and details the theme (Pimentel 1993, Márquez 2002, Morgan 2015). Their strong imbrication is underlined in the following fragment:

On the one hand, both the theme and the motif are characterised by their nature of *materia prima* -*although in distinct degrees of figuration*- thus at a high abstraction level that precedes its realisation in a concrete text; on the other hand, in both cases the phenomenon of *recursiveness* is found, which determines its existence as theme or motif; both occur, finally, as invariable pre-textual forms, susceptible to textual variations. (Pimentel 220)<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, distinguishing between the motif and topic is not straightforward as both concepts are defined through their recurrent presence in literature. Originating from

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<sup>11</sup> My translation MV: "se distingue del tema por ser una *unidad* casi autónoma y por su *recursividad*" (Pimentel 216-17).

<sup>12</sup> My translation MV: "Por una parte, tanto el tema como el motivo se caracterizan por su condición de *materia prima* - *aunque en diversos grados de figuración* - por ende en un nivel de abstracción que precede su realización en un texto concreto; por otra parte, en ambos casos se observa el fenómeno de la *recursividad*, la cual determina su existencia como tema o como motivo; ambos se nos presentan, en fin, como formas pre-textuales invariantes susceptibles de variaciones textuales" (Pimentel 220).

the Greek root τόπος, which means 'referring to a place', the term '*topos*' refers etymologically to a 'common place'. Originally, it has its place in rhetoric, where the concept 'common place' was connected to the usual forms of argumentation and text structuring (Juvan 20-21). The notion has evolved to the interpretation of topic as "a storehouse of well-known thoughts and phrases, famous citations and proverbs; compositional or stylistic clichés; archetypal personages, images or motifs" (Juvan 21). Generally, the fixed formulation of the topic has a strong connection with certain moments in literary history. Thus, the topic of death appears insistently in texts from the Middle Ages, as it has a direct relation with the anxieties of that era. In the 18th and 19th centuries, against the backdrop of bourgeois modernity, the use of *topos* diminished, to give way to individual originality (Juvan 22).

To be considered as a motif, then, the textual element needs to repeat itself within a specific corpus and serve an integrative function within that corpus. Thus, when the topic appears repeatedly in the literary text, it is also a motif within that corpus (Márquez 255). Simultaneously, the motif can be a topic if it is a common literary formulation, "but if it does not meet this requirement, it cannot be seen as *topos*" (Márquez 255).<sup>13</sup> When considering the concepts from the general to the specific, the order is as follows: the theme is the most abstract, so it is implicit in the text; it is a general idea or concept such as life, death, or transcendence. The motif, of more concrete nature, denotes an action, a dynamic that the theme does not possess. Last, the topic is not necessarily present in a literary text; it is a fixed formula linked to the preoccupations of the moment.

Lastly, it is essential to distinguish the motif from the symbol. Morgan, drawing on Freedman, asserts that the difference lies at two levels: first, the symbol can appear

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<sup>13</sup> My translation MV: "pero si no cumple ese requisito, no podemos considerar que el motivo sea tópico" (Márquez 255).

only once and the motif must repeat to be considered as such; secondly, the symbol always is an object or event described, whereas the motif is often integrated in the description (Freedman 124-25, Morgan 6).

Considering the capital features of the motif, it becomes evident that they operate on two planes of the text, pertaining to structure and content.

*A motif (...) is structural in so far as the images making it up are seen as a chain, textural in so far as each is apprehended sensuously as it comes- and contentual, rather than formal, in so far as the chain carries a meaning that one link, an unrepeated image, would not. (Fowler 99-100).*

Other critics also use the metaphor of the chain, describing the motif as "a verbal pattern" (Freedman 124) whose manifestation is marked by its "positional alignment" (Daemmrich 569). The motif's occurrence at significant moments and central passages in the text reinforces its repetitive dynamic and enhances the persuasive value of the argument as well (Freedman 126-27).

In terms of aspect, two main elements determine the motif. First, its concrete nature as it appears with observable properties (Daemmrich 569). This concrete aspect results from the symbolisation process, which converts the abstract nature of the theme to a substantial image. Second, its improbability, making the motif noticeable and etching it to the reader's memory (Freedman 126). In other words, in a novel about a hatter, references to headwear would be very probable, while the repetitive mention of a dwelling, an automobile, or another type of clothing would likely point to a literary motif. Another relevant feature of the motif is its capacity to subdivide into a set of secondary motifs (Pimentel 221-22, Daemmrich 570); as stated by Freedman, the coherence of the network of motifs supports its effectiveness (127). Thus, the motif

can be based on a cluster of elements in tension, like father-son, rider-horse or attraction-repulsion. The polar dimension of certain partial motifs contributes to a process of "recognition, reflection, increased awareness, new observation, and continuing reflection" on the reader's part (Daemmrich 569).

In conclusion, the overview of relevant studies has established the fundamental features of the motif: the opposition repetition-variation and the symbolic level. Let us return to the definition of the motif, as proposed in the introduction (1.3): a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition. We can situate the motif in the principal perspectives of the method that is at the core of the present work: intertextual, genotextual and myth critical analyses. I will begin the next section with the perspective that encompasses the relationships between texts, the constituent that covers the diachronic aspect repetition-variation as well as the synchronic axis of recurrence of the literary motif.

## **2.1 Creating a network of texts: Julia Kristeva's intertextuality**

The recreation and reinterpretation of existing texts have been regular practice since classical antiquity. The narration of myth has always been repeated, either by reduction, embellishment, or transformation of the previous narrative. Intertextuality, conceived as the presence in a text of fragments created by other authors, is a universal practice. On the one hand, its theory is omnipresent in today's literary analysis, where the concept has been subjected to multiple interpretations that often approach it from different angles. On the other hand, it is also emphasised that the amplitude of intertextuality provokes a certain disorder of interpretations and varied terminology. In this section, I revisit the proposal of Julia Kristeva, who coined intertextuality, the perception of relationships between texts. Furthermore, I include the particular direction taken by Kristeva, diverging from the other interpretations of her initial concept, by incorporating the psychological angle of individuation. Kristeva's ideas about the textual level underlying to the surface of the text coincide with the symbolic nature of the motif. However, Kristeva does not provide a defined interpretative tool. Therefore, I launch the hypothesis that an elaboration of Kristeva's ideas, about the relationships between texts and the symbolic level of the text, provides the appropriate tools for the interpretation of the motif. I will respond to the research question: what are the theoretical components of Kristeva's approach that can be integrated in the combined method, devised for motif interpretation?

The first reference by Kristeva to the term 'intertextuality' appears in a text later published in the article "Bakhtine. Le mot, le dialogue et le roman" (1967). Other theorists adopted the term originally coined by Kristeva and assimilated it within a broad range of intellectual contexts, thus leading to multiple interpretations (Martínez Alfaro 273- 277). Even in the narrow field of literary research, there are differences in

interpretative angle and use of terminology. Besides the reinterpretations by other theorists, Kristeva herself took a divergent path in her understanding of text relationships, concentrating on Lacan's body of thought and adopting a psychoanalytic perspective towards the text. Since the emergence of the irrational level in the text seems to run parallel to certain aspects of the motif, such as the recurring manifestation in literary tradition and the repetition of textual elements, I will include the said part of Kristeva's work in the exploration of intertextuality.

I begin with a review of current and relevant studies on intertextuality within the framework of literary criticism (2.1.1). Then, I explore in 2.1.2 the origins of Kristeva's theory, followed by an overview of the interpretations of intertextuality that address the analysis of textual structure. I centre in 2.1.3 on the texts by Kristeva that refer to the psychoanalytical angle of intertextuality. To conclude, I comment in 2.1.4 the amplitude of Kristeva's approach; I summarise which of the ideas introduced by Kristeva can be integrated in the analytical tool, appropriate for covering the specific qualities of the motif.

### **2.1.1 State of the art**

While the reinterpretation of texts is a universal practice, the theory of Intertextuality is ubiquitous in contemporary literary analysis. However, although the term is readily used, due to the plurality of interpretations, intertextuality does not provide "a stable set of critical procedures for interpretation" (Allen 2). There is not even a singular theory; some critics refer in their work to multiple theories of intertextuality (Worton and Still 1993, Juvan 2008). Besides the theoretical diversity, the lack of a univocal set of terminology is also highlighted:



... [intertextuality] is a promiscuous inter-discipline (...) in that it certainly borrows its trappings now from psychoanalysis, now from political philosophy, now from economics and so on. Its practitioners enjoy playing with their own words (newly-coined) and even more so with other people's. (Worton and Still viii)

Juvan eloquently describes the variation of terms as a "terminological Babylon" (6). Generally, the specialists handle such a variety of terms and concepts in different ways. Some critics do not attempt to homogenise the terminology through a glossary of terms but allow the coexistence of different terminological interpretations in collected articles (Worton and Still viii). In contrast, Allen does provide a glossary of relevant terminology (217-28). Juvan, on the other hand, introduces his own terminological system, calling it "[a] classification of citational figures and genres" (178).

Most theorists offer the reader an overview of the historical and theoretical universe of intertextuality; notably, they mention a limited number of key participants in the realm of intertextuality: Bakhtin and Kristeva, Barthes, Genette, Riffaterre and Bloom (Worton and Still 1993, Martínez Alfaro 1996, Orr 2003, Juvan 2008, Allen 2011). They also attempt to indicate a distinction between the paths of intertextuality development: Roland Barthes' poststructuralist or deconstructive interpretation, the structuralist approaches of Genette and Riffaterre, the approaches that prefer to elaborate on author perspectives as proposed by Bloom, or Foucault's socio-political path (Martínez Alfaro 277, Allen 3-4).

Usually, the introduction of the concept by Kristeva is seen as the beginning of an innovative route, the incentive for the development of an entire interwoven set of interpretations and theoretical disciplines (Juvan 2008, Allen 2011). One also stresses the strongly political and radical charge of Kristeva's argument, which produced the dismantling of fixed ideas about text stability and the authority of the author over text production. Barthes' post-structural position surges as "an immense source of

intertextual theory" (Allen 91). However, Barthes does not provide the critic with adequate analytical tools (Martínez Alfaro 278). In contrast, the concepts defined by Genette aim to provide the criteria for a practical analysis of the literary text. Nevertheless, due to complex and partially overlapping terminology, Genette's theory is "a useful point of departure to be sufficiently defined later on by each individual critic/theorist" (Martínez Alfaro 281).

Juvan emphasises two currents since Kristeva's introduction: on the one hand, there is general intertextuality that pursues the theoretical elaboration of an until then non-existent conceptual framework (7). On the other hand, it is demonstrated how the new concept has been reductively integrated in the denomination of concepts that previously existed, such as influence, imitation, quotation or allusion (Orr 2003, Juvan 2008). Martínez Alfaro proposes as a third evolutionary conception of intertextuality the socio-political path, proposed among others by Foucault. His approach is centred on the situation of the literary text in a network of power factors; the "neglect of the gender-issues" in this context is remarkable (Martínez Alfaro 282). Nevertheless, the socio-cultural or political perspectives outline the directions in which feminist, postcolonial and eccentric origin critics reconsider intertextuality.

In brief, univocality of terminology and critical procedure are lacking, while there is also the coexistence of various intertextual perspectives in the same field of literary criticism. As proposed by Hutcheon: "There seem, therefore, to be several distinct critical perspectives - author-, text-, and reader-centred ones - each equally valid, each equally conditioned (even determined) by both the intellectual history and the literature of its privileged time and place" (237). In this thesis, I restrict myself to intertextuality within the framework of the practical interpretation of literary texts; in other words, the interaction between the reader and the text prevails. Kristeva's critical position will be

the inspiration for an attitude that attempts not to ascribe a fixed meaning to the text but allows an open examination of the components that converge in the variations of the motif. I will leverage the theoretical amplitude and freedom offered by intertextuality to compose a flexible analytical tool that aligns with the objectives of the present work.

It is remarkable that the theorists commenting on the *status quo* of intertextuality do not address Kristeva's theory on the interaction between genotext and phenotext. Their comments are limited to interrelated texts, while Kristeva also considers the interaction of textual levels that appears within the text itself. Allen underlines that Kristeva, while rendering her attention to the psychoanalytical angle, completely avoids the term 'intertextuality' in order to evade reductive interpretations of the concept that only address traditional notions of text relationships (51-52). I will attempt to demonstrate that, following the argumentation of Kristeva, it is plausible to consider the relationship between genotext and phenotext also as an aspect of Intertextuality.

The observations about the reach of Kristeva's theories as a whole recognise two central directions: for one thing, the axis of the epistemological orientation that is concerned with the theoretical and methodological problems of semiotics and with the elaboration of a sort of textual science; on the other hand, the inquiry of the processes that interpret meaning and culture (Bohórquez 40-41).<sup>14</sup> While the former also includes the practice of literary criticism, the second direction extends to Kristeva's essayistic work, the psychoanalytical reflection (*id.* 46). It is emphasised that within the path of knowledge, the distinction between the semiotic and symbolic levels of language, between genotext and phenotext, is Kristeva's most important contribution to language

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<sup>14</sup> The original quotations: "de orientación epistemológica, [que] se preocupa por los problemas teóricos y metodológicos de la semiótica (...) y por elaborar una suerte de ciencia del texto"; "los procesos de *interpretación* del sentido y de la cultura" (Bohórquez 40-41).

theory (Moi 1986, Oliver 2002). Lechte and Zournazi suggest that the work of Kristeva still is relevant at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because "she tempers abstraction with a concern for materiality and clinical experience; she allows the individual and the social to coalesce and she gives equal weight to subjectivity in an increasingly objectivising world" (2).

On the contrary, Beaujour perceives some theoretical limitations in Kristeva's original work, *La révolution du langage poétique*. To begin, he observes the absence of the reader in this study, an absence that is limited to the theoretical part of the text, as in the analytical part "Kristeva reads, deciphers, comments on and interprets several texts" (Beaujour 23). In this, his interpretation of Kristeva's approach opposes the assertion that in her fundamental work the semiological theory of writing supposes the reading of the semanalytic foundations of the text (Bohórquez 42).<sup>15</sup> In my interpretation of Kristeva's analytical procedure I accentuate the interaction between reader and text, such as is proposed by Bohórquez.<sup>16</sup> Beaujour also questions Kristeva's selection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century avant-garde poetic language as a vehicle for the genotext (15); he concurs with other critics who discuss Kristeva's preference for poetic language in connection with primary drives (Miller 1988, Butler 1989). In this, again I follow Bohórquez, who mentions the interpretations in *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* of the texts by prose authors such as Proust, Joyce, Borges, Artaud and especially Céline (43). On my part, I also include the reading of *Thérèse mon amour*, a recent work about the life and works of Teresa de Ávila, not mentioned in the commentaries. Thus, I will amplify the range of the texts analysed by Kristeva.

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<sup>15</sup> The original quotation: "[l]a teoría semiológica de la escritura es (...) lectura de los fundamentos semanalíticos del texto" (Bohórquez 42). The explanation of the terminology follows in section 2.1.3.

<sup>16</sup> The original quotation: "Lectura por tanto de ese proceso del sentido que configura al texto moderno como sujeto en crisis, en proceso" (Bohórquez 42).

Although Kristeva follows the psychoanalytic premises regarding the divided subject, introduced and elaborated by Freud and Lacan, the comments stress that she moulds the concepts to her will (Butler 1989, Oliver 2003). By situating the beginning of the subjectivation process (the surge of language) in the ambiance of the union with the maternal body, Kristeva opposes Lacan who places the origin of the subject in the so-called Symbolic Order, also known as The Law of the Father (Butler 105). However, especially Kristeva's emphasis on maternity in the process of signification provoked contradictory comments. Allen asserts that, for the most part, feminist theorists embrace the idea that the tension between genotext and phenotext acts as the opposition between the pre-social power of the mother-child union and the patriarchal nature of dominant social discourses. Thus, the feminine potential of language erupts in equal measure in texts by male and female authors (Allen 150-51).

In contrast, other feminist comments criticise Kristeva's approach, maintaining that she conforms to patriarchal structures in various ways:

- a) Kristeva considers the maternal as an infringement of a prohibitive paternal system, which supposes a hierarchical relationship between textual strata (Stanton 1986, Butler 1989), while omitting the role of the mother in the process of language acquisition (Silverman 1988).<sup>17</sup>
- b) Kristeva situates primitive drives on the same level as femininity (Jones 1984); she fails to provide a definition of femininity, thus not aligning with the discourses that prioritise women's position (Moi 1985).

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<sup>17</sup> Silverman argues that Kristeva excludes the maternal, "a writing out of the maternal", by attributing the acquisition of language exclusively to the paternal (119). Nikolchina dismisses Silverman's commentary: she stresses that Kristeva does not write out the maternal, but questions fixed concepts, like the integration of the concept of the *chora*, introduced by Plato (164).

c) Kristeva supports her theory with analyses of male authors (Jardine 1986, Nikolchina 2003), as opposed to the gynocentric position, which associates feminist criticism with the thematization of female authorship (Miller 1988).

Regarding point a) I will critically consider Kristeva's formulations (2.1.4), in order to arrive in section 2.3 at an instrumental interpretation of her theory, without taking part in the discussion of the maternal as the height of female writing. As for b) I align with Moi, who explains that Kristeva, while situating the semiotic in the pre-Oedipal phase, does not equate the primordial level with the feminine but encompasses masculinity as well as femininity (*Sexual/Textual Politics* 165).<sup>18</sup> Similarly, studies such as *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* and *Histoires d'amour* (1983), although they are limited to male authors, "could be valuably appropriated for feminism" (*Sexual/Textual Politics* 168). Finally, regarding the comments sub c) I mention the trilogy on Hannah Arendt, Melanie Klein and Colette, published together under the title *Le Génie féminin* (1999), and the recent work on Teresa de Ávila.

Nevertheless, considering the feminist comments on the imbalanced attention for female authorship by literary criticism as a whole, I underline the initial position of the *au féminin* angle in the present research. I propose a perspective that starts from the view of the reader/researcher (in this case a female researcher); the balanced selection of the corpus (consisting in equal measure of authors who identify themselves as male or as female); a critical approach of the theoretical premises to enable a discussion of gender differences, established by the reader in the text.

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<sup>18</sup> Moi asserts: "[t]he fluid motility of the semiotic is indeed associated with the pre-Oedipal phase, and therefore with the pre-Oedipal mother, but Kristeva makes it quite clear that (...) she sees the pre-Oedipal mother as a figure that encompasses both masculinity and femininity" (*Sexual/Textual Politics* 165).

### **2.1.2 The amplitude of intertextuality**

To delve deeper into the foundations of intertextuality, a concept devised by Kristeva, it is necessary to consider the lines that converge in her thinking. A native of Bulgaria, Kristeva came to France in the 1960s, where she studied under influential professors such as the literary theorist Roland Barthes and the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan; she joined the group of the avant-garde journal *Tel Quel*, which brought together the revolutionary theorists of the time. Thus, in her theories we can distinguish a variety of sources, both Russian linguists and French thinkers such as De Saussure, Derrida, and Lacan. In this section I first explore the origins of Kristeva's theoretical approach, and then discuss the extension of the theories about intertextuality.

#### **The origins of intertextuality**

Since De Saussure's ideas on language are to a large extent entwined in this theoretical frame, I will begin by examining them closely. His theory was elaborated in a series of his lectures, published posthumously in *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916). While considering the central question of the nature of the linguistic sign, De Saussure divides it into two constituent elements, conceived as the two sides of the same coin: the signifier, the sound-image part, and the signified, the concept. According to De Saussure, the linguistic sign is arbitrary, in the sense that the connection between the concept and the word that refers to it relies on convention. Thus, one refers to the concept 'tree' in the English language with the word 'tree', while other languages use 'arbre', 'árbol' or 'boom'. The meaning of the linguistic sign depends on its function in a system of linguistic signs. Therefore, at any given moment in time language, *langue*, is a synchronic system, where a specific linguistic element is chosen for communication, known as speech or *parole*.

At the same time, the linguistic sign is differential, in the sense that it is situated in a language system on the basis of the difference from other similar sounds and signs. In other words, 'tree' differs from other adjacent words like 'trunk' or 'branch', and from types of trees such as oak or chestnut. The vision of De Saussure appears this way: "Signs exist within a system and produce meaning through their similarity to and difference from other signs" (Allen 10). The selection of certain signs involves the pragmatic side of language: the combination of the sign with others, the formation of phrases refers to the syntactic field. Based on the said central principles surges *semiology*, the science that examines the systemic manifestation of signs in society. *Structuralism*, "a critical, philosophical and cultural movement based on the notions of Saussurean semiology" imposes itself from the 1950s onwards as a re-description of human culture, an innovative vision known as 'the linguistic turn' of humanities (Allen 10).

When Kristeva arrives from Bulgaria in 1964, French critical circles find themselves in full expansion of structuralism. At the same time, Kristeva is already familiar with the studies of Bakhtin, the Russian linguist who addresses, along with other critics like Medvedev and Volosinov, the idea of the use of language by individuals who are situated in a specific social context. The key concept is *enunciation*, an aspect of spoken language that is centred on the individual and the social specificity. From these principles, Bakhtin is situated opposite, on the one hand, Russian formalists and, on the other, De Saussure. Language is not connected to a static moment nor to a closed system, because "in its social dimension, [it] is constantly reflecting and transforming class, institutional, national and group interests" (Allen 18). It is an interaction between sender and receiver; it responds to previous enunciations and at the same time promotes future reactions. Thus, enunciations are always dialogical, for their meaning



depends on what has been said before and on how they will be received by others. The concept of *dialogism* emerges, conceived as a constitutive aspect of language. Bakhtin asserts that the dialogism of a language is a force that can destabilise social and institutional balance. The Russian linguist underlines how, especially in the novel, the dialogical nature of literature is transferred into *polyphony*, the coexistence of distinct voices within the text. He also introduces the term *heteroglossia*, conceived as "the recognition of the numerous different 'languages', of social and professional groups, of classes and literary movements, operating in society at one time" (Allen 29). Finally, the core of Bakhtin's argument is as follows:

... the dialogic, heteroglot aspects of language are essentially threatening to any unitary, authoritarian and hierarchical conception of society, art and life. If language is socially specific and thus embodies the stratifications, ideological positions and class conflicts at work in society in any epoch, and indeed at any specific moment, then no attempt to explain language or art through an abstract system of generalizable relations is viable... (Allen 29)

Kristeva brings her interpretation of Bakhtin's basic concepts to the French intellectual circles of the 1960s; she incorporates them in structuralist theory, while immersing herself as well in the turbulent ambiance of the journal *Tel Quel* in the revolutionary years of student protests. In that period poststructuralism emerges, based on the central concepts of De Saussure. In line with the argumentation of Bakhtin, it considers how dominant ideology represses revolutionary or unorthodox thinking through the fixed relation between signifier and signified. The articles in *Tel Quel* centre on subverting current ideas about the stability of meaning.

In parallel with Bakhtin's idea of the dialogism of the novel, Kristeva refers to the notion of *poetic language*: the literary word conceived as "*an intersection of textual surfaces*" (Allen 38). She distinguishes three dimensions of the dynamic literary

language: the subject, the addressee and external texts. The status of the word is defined in two ways: the horizontal axis between subject and addressee; the vertical axis directed to the relations with anterior and synchronic texts (Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" 36-37). Kristeva recognises that the horizontal and vertical axis coincide within the textual space of the literary work. In doing so, she redefines Bakhtin's theory on dialogism into the coining of a new term: intertextuality (Allen 38).

### **The extent of theories on intertextuality**

The following fragment from "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966) is considered to be the initial definition of intertextuality: "any text is read as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*" (Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" 37).<sup>19</sup> Although frequently referred to, this initial definition of intertextuality is only a limited representation of the amplitude of the concept proposed by Kristeva (Orr 2003, Juvan 2008, Allen 2011). In a later article titled "Narration and transformation" (1969) Kristeva adds: "Intertextuality means for us textual interaction produced within the text itself. The apprehending subject understands the concept of intertextuality as an indicator of how the text reads history and locates itself in it" (qtd. in Juvan 12). In this formulation appear the following key elements: the plurality of relationships with other texts, the textual interaction within the text, the perception by the subject (reader) and the relevance of the historical situation.

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<sup>19</sup> Kristeva amplifies the perspectives on the multiplicity of the text. In her article "Le texte clos" (1968), she declares that the text is not an isolated object, but rather a compilation of cultural textuality (Allen 35). She refers to intertextuality as a permutation of texts, by which several enunciations, taken from other texts, cross and neutralise one another in the space of the text. The original quotation: "dans l'espace d'un texte plusieurs énoncés, pris à d'autres textes, se croisent et se neutralisent" (Kristeva, "Le texte clos" 103).

After the introduction by Kristeva, other theorists set out to interpret her ideas about intertextuality; in general, one distinguishes two directions. On the one side, the theorists who develop the central concept of intertextuality from the poststructuralist postulate, while adhering to the tenets of deconstruction, psychoanalysis or historical-materialist discourse analysis. On the other side, those who approach intertextuality as a method for analysing the work of art (Martínez Alfaro 1996, Juvan 2008). They enhance the practical value of the instrument, while placing less emphasis on the radical nature of intertextuality. It is worth mentioning in this context Genette's theory on transtextuality.<sup>20</sup>

Among the theorists who follow the general line of intertextuality, several get noticed for innovative ideas that impact literary criticism. First, there is Roland Barthes, who worked alongside and parallel to Kristeva. In "Théorie du texte" (1974) Barthes proposes a redefinition of the relationship between author, reader and observer (critic) that brings about a radical change in the approach to literary text. In line with this revolutionary movement, he had already proclaimed the death of the author in a notorious article from the year 1968. In this text, Barthes breaks with "the illusion that a text possesses and conveys a meaning imparted to it by its author and thus that the text has a unity which stems directly from the unified and original thought of its creator" (Allen 70). Instead, the text originates from a plurality, constituted by voices, words from others, enunciations and texts from others (Allen 70). While referring the authority over the meaning of the text to the reader, Barthes disrupts the previously hierarchical relationship of ownership between author and reader. It is the beginning of a shift towards an emphasis on text reception.

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 2.

From Kristeva's initial vision on the dimensions of intertextuality, Barthes' assertion about the authority of the reader is situated on the horizontal axis of the word between sender and addressee. On this axis we can also place Riffaterre, who insists on the reader's controlling position in the intertextual process (Worton and Still 24-27). This broadens the definition of relationships between texts, which are not limited to the historical concept of derivation, thus referring to the reader's perception of texts' relationships with other texts that may precede or follow them (Riffaterre qtd. in Claes 49). The ideas of Harold Bloom are situated on the other end of the horizontal axis; he concentrates explicitly in the author as a personified and creative subject, equipped with drives, anxieties, and imagination. His key concept is *influence*, which he defines in *Anxiety of influence* (1973) as the interaction between the author and their experience of a relationship with their predecessors (Allen 131-32).<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to Riffaterre and Bloom's perspectives, which remain within the realm of the literary text, intertextuality applications inclining towards social discourse have emerged from the 1980s onwards. Inspired, among others, by Foucault's critical interpretation and his so-called instrumental archaeology, they promote the aspects neglected by the disciples of deconstruction, such as race, class and gender. In line with the idea that institutionalised forces determine the situation of the speaking subject and their body, the sociocultural context of the author and the text moves into the centre of attention (Juvan 119).

In conclusion, the influence of the concept 'intertextuality' extends to a considerable amplitude of theories, interpretations and instrumental terminologies. Nowadays one

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<sup>21</sup> Some critics find Bloom's position problematic in relation to Intertextuality, although his approach is close to Riffaterre's vision (Allen 134). As Allen asserts: "[O]ne cannot help but come to the conclusion that [Bloom's] theory of misreading is actually a defence against the plurality celebrated by Barthes and Kristeva" (137). That means, Bloom does not accept the social and cultural contexts as relevant concepts in the intertextual field, while permitting only a specific text as intertext (Allen 137).

distinguishes, on the one hand, the revolutionary, ontological and critical range that redefines textuality, and, on the other hand, the stylistic applications that transform intertextuality into "a value-neutral category of poetics" (Juvan 6). In contrast, by focusing on the analysis from a psychoanalytic angle, Kristeva omits from a certain moment on the references to the term 'intertextuality' in order to evade the reductive interpretations of the concept introduced by herself (Allen 51-52). I will investigate in the following sections the elaboration of Kristeva's thought, the extrapolation of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory in the realm of text interpretation.

### **2.1.3 The divided subject in the text: the key concepts**

After the introduction of the concept of intertextuality in her early works Kristeva continues to expand the scope of her theories. In *La révolution du langage poétique* (1974), meaning *The Revolution of Poetic Language*, she conducts theoretical research into linguistics that is centred on the speaking subject, a project already introduced in the article "The System and the Speaking Subject" (1973). Influenced by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan she succeeds in interpreting the hybridity of the text, introduced by Bakhtin, according to the unconscious drives of the divided subject.<sup>22</sup> She puts her theory into practice through the analysis of the texts of the modernist poets Mallarmé and Lautréamont. In later studies, Kristeva further expands the theoretical and practical scope of her ideas: in *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* (1980), meaning *The Powers of Horror*, she explores the concept of abjection, establishing it in prose texts, such as the work of the French author Céline. In *Soleil Noir* (1987), meaning *Black Sun*, on depression and melancholy, she includes visual art, while interpreting

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<sup>22</sup> The studies of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, who concentrates on the analysis of young clients, are another important factor in the development of Kristeva's ideas (Kristeva, "The System" 29).

besides literary texts the work of painter Holbein. In *Thérèse mon amour* (2008), meaning Thérèse my Love, a hybrid text in which fiction, theoretical exposition and analysis converge, she interprets the texts of Teresa de Ávila. In this section, I will examine the key concepts of the psychoanalytic conception of the interaction between various levels of textuality.

### **The initial phase of the *chora***

It is worth emphasising from the onset that Freudian theories of the unconscious are indispensable for the definition of the textual modalities, referred to by Kristeva as 'semiotic' and 'symbolic'.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, other theorists also supported their critical point of departure on the principles of psychology and psychoanalysis, centring on the manifestation of the author's psyche in their text. Marie Bonaparte conducts a Freudian analysis of the work by Edgar Allan Poe in *Edgar Poë [sic], sa vie, son œuvre, étude analytique* (1933). Bonaparte begins her analysis of the writings of the American author with the following declaration: "Works of art or literature profoundly reveal their creator's psychology" (209). Charles Mauron introduces the concept of *psychocritique* in *Des métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel* (1964); in this study he aims to enhance the understanding of the literary work through the recovery of repetitive textual elements that originate in the unconscious of the author (13).

It is noteworthy that Mauron analyses some texts by Mallarmé, the poet whose texts also have been Kristeva's object of study. However, I observe considerable differences between the procedures of Mauron and Kristeva. Mauron considers the unconscious

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<sup>23</sup> In Kristeva's theory, the terms 'le sémiotique' and 'le symbolique' refer to the signification process, to the constitution of language. Although they are subject to a certain lack of clarity, I will maintain these terms in this theoretical chapter. I will discuss the terminology, while offering an alternative, in section 2.1.4.

of the author as a given fact, without further explanation or theoretical support; he gives the bigger part of his attention to the practice of the textual analysis. In contrast, Kristeva makes an effort to offer particularly elaborate theoretical preliminaries. She supports her point of departure, the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic, in the theoretical perspective of Lacan, who reclaimed and developed Freud's ideas. While limiting herself to the realm of the text, Kristeva argues that the interaction between the two levels of the divided subject is reflected in every text, following the same divided movement between the logical and the illogical (*La révolution* 30). Toril Moi, in the annotated compilation of Kristeva's texts, summarises the importance of this theory in *La révolution du langage poétique*:

The crucial 'new' impulse which distinguishes this epochal book from most of her earlier linguistic writings is the way in which Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis here is presented as the indispensable theoretical starting-point for her explorations of the signifying process. (Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* 89)

Regarding the unconscious level, Kristeva introduces the elemental concept of the *chora*, which she defines as the pre-verbal state of the new-born, still in the process of defining itself as its own body.<sup>24</sup> She proposes that we can distinguish in the child a fluid and inarticulate phase, called *chora*, in which it still feels united with the mother's body. This phase precedes the use of language and logic, and the establishment of identity and subjective positioning. The *chora* does not adhere to a language conceived as a system of signs but is situated at the level of pre-symbolic functions, of corporeal drives. The maternal body becomes the organising principle of the semiotic *chora* (Kristeva, *La révolution* 27).

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<sup>24</sup> Kristeva takes the concept of the *chora*, of the Greek word 'χορὰ', from Plato (Nikolchina 163).

At some point the rupture between mother and child occurs, the beginning of self-definition, in opposition to the other. At that moment, the thetic phase, the process of signification, is set in motion. It initiates the scission that establishes the distinction between the subject and objects (Kristeva, *La révolution* 41). From that decisive separation on, commences the organisation through the relationships with objects and the family structure's protagonists (Kristeva, *La révolution* 26). A tension surges between the logical and socially accepted discourse and the unassimilable, pre-rational and pre-social language of the instinctual and sexual drives. Elementary stages in this phase are psychological developments introduced by Freud and Lacan: the mirror stage; castration, an aspect of the process that separates the subject as other; the constitution of the Other as a signifier (Kristeva, *La révolution* 43-46).

Let us focus on some elemental notions that arise within the context of this initial separation. To begin with, Kristeva alludes to *rejet*, conceived as the child's experience of rejection at the moment of separation from the mother; rejection also operates in the process of defining subjective identity facing the other (*La révolution* 113-14). Furthermore, we can situate in the field of rejection the corporeal phenomena of separation, such as metabolism and alimentary expulsion, even the original scission, being born. So, the inclination to separate, and thus to distinguish and signify, already is present in the body prior to the moment of individuation (Oliver, "The Crisis of Meaning" 40-41).

In *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Kristeva discusses in more detail the corporeal processes that provoke the rise of the subject. Situated in the centre of this work is the concept of *abjection*, which can be considered opposite to desire. Abjection precedes the separation that incites the process of signification, since it refers to the moment when



neither subject nor object exist. As it has an etymological root similar to the word 'rejection', abjection is situated in the same realm, encompassing the process of the primordial scission. However, the abject is constituted previously to rejection, only referring to the capacity of dividing and rejecting, without the actual realisation of division and separation (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 20). It occurs initially at certain moments of disgust, experienced by the new-born towards the body of the mother. Since the infant can only act in the corporeal ambiance, the experience refers to olfactory or tactile aversions; at the same time, the repulsion occurs in the maternal environment that still is connected to security and intimacy. Because it does not yet dispose of references to explain the ambiguities of this discontent, abjection causes profound sentiments in the child. They may be violent reactions, ranging from guilt and anxiety to a strong, although temporary, hatred.

Given that abjection is situated at the beginning of the trajectory of individuation and socialisation, it connects, on the one hand, with the early stage of the human wandering in the realm of animality and indigenous societies (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 20). On the other hand, it is associated with our personal archaeology:

... our most ancient attempts to distance ourselves from the *maternal* element before even ex-isting outside of her thanks to the autonomy of language. Violent and awkward distinction, always awaited by the relapse into the dependence from a force that is as protecting as stifling. (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 20)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> My translation MV: "nos tentatives les plus anciennes de nous démarquer de l'entité *maternelle* avant même que d'ex-ister [sic] en dehors d'elle grâce à l'autonomie du langage. Démarquage violent et maladroit, toujours guetté par la rechute dans la dépendance d'un pouvoir aussi sécurisant qu'étouffant" (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 20).

Abjection is linked with borderline phenomena because it relates to the first boundary experience. Although abjection mainly concerns corporeal aspects, it projects into the text as all kinds of impurity:

Thus, it is not the absence of cleanliness or health that renders abject, but the disturbance of an identity, a system, an order. That which does not respect limits, places, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the mixture. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with good conscience, the shameless violator, the murderer who pretends to save... (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 12)<sup>26</sup>

Kristeva denotes the extreme borderline experience as "l'abjection de soi", abjection of oneself (*Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 12). It is aroused by the feeling that all perception of the other, the starting point of individuation, resides in the culminating boundary experience: the inaugural loss. Thus, self-abjection suggests the recognition of the experience of absence, of necessity (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 12-13).

The abject, understood as the boundary experience, is articulated in the pathological domain through psychosis and neurosis, such as for example borderline disorders, phobias or personality dissociation (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 15). Since it does not submit to limitations, rules nor laws, abjection tends to perversion; therefore, to restrain abjection there is need for "Religion, Morals, and Justice" are needed (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 23).<sup>27</sup> Especially religious constructions such as rituals, tabus and alimentary laws regulate the perversion that is inherent in abjection (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 24). Due to the crisis of Christianity, Western modernity lacks opportunities to regulate abjection; aesthetic production explores the

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<sup>26</sup> My translation MV: "Ce n'est donc pas l'absence de propreté ou de santé qui rend abject, mais ce qui perturbe une identité, un système, un ordre. Ce qui ne respecte pas les limites, les places, les règles. L'entre-deux, l'ambigu, le mixte. Le traître, le menteur, le criminel à bonne conscience, le violeur sans vergogne, le tueur qui prétend sauver..." (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 12).

<sup>27</sup> My translation MV: "Religion, Morale, Droit" (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 23)

diffuse terrain and the fragile boundaries of the initial expulsion. There, in the field of boundary exploration, not only does modernist literary text reside, but all literature:<sup>28</sup>

On further consideration, any literature is probably a version of that apocalypse that seems to be rooted, whatever the socio-historical conditions may be, in a fragile frontier ('borderline') where identities (subject/ object, etc.) are not or hardly there... (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 245)<sup>29</sup>

So, there is a relationship between the experiences that constitute identity and the literary text; we will discover in the next section how Kristeva elaborates the recognition of the traces of the individuation process in the text.

### **The traces of the genotext**

We can perceive in the text the distinction between conscious and unconscious, reason and desire, the social and the pre-social. This connects to the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic, inseparable modalities of the signification process that constitutes language (Kristeva, *La révolution* 22). To refer to the analysis of this process, Kristeva suggests in "The System and the Signifying Process" the term 'sémanalyse'. She also introduces the distinction between the modalities that constitute the signification process: "Within this process one might see the release and subsequent articulation of the drives as constrained by the social code yet not reducible to the language system as *genotext* and the signifying system as it presents itself to phenomenological intuition as *phenotext*" (Kristeva, "The System" 28).

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<sup>28</sup> At first, Kristeva mentions the modern author, by stating that great modern literature is founded on boundary exploration: "La grande littérature moderne se déploie sur ce terrain-là: Dostoïevski, Lautréamont, Proust, Artaud, Kafka, Céline..." (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 25).

<sup>29</sup> My translation MV: "A y regarder de près, toute littérature est probablement une version de cette apocalypse qui me paraît s'enraciner, quelles qu'en soient les conditions socio-historiques, dans la frontière fragile («borderline») où les identités (sujet/objet, etc.) ne sont pas ou ne sont qu'à peine..." (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 245).

Thus, the text functions as an interaction between modalities of the same process: the semiotic is determined by affects and drives, while the symbolic is situated in the field of signification, connected to position and judgement (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva* 24). The difference between genotext and phenotext corresponds to the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva* 25). In the symbolic modality, the phenotext, the process of signification unfolds systematically: the subject refers to the object through denotation, and from enunciation (Kristeva, *La révolution* 53). The speaking subject strings denotations into a syntax; at the same time, the process occurs outside the subject, like a mere succession of textual elements. However, the subject re-emerges "when the semiotic *chora* disturbs the thetic position by redistributing the signifying order" (Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language" 108). This means that the manifestations of the genotext extend from the semiotic processes of the *chora* to the emergence of language. In other words, the genotext indicates the traces, in the text, of the *chora* and the beginning of the thetic phase, when there is still an inarticulate stage, halfway between the union with the mother and the definition of identity.

The phenotext is structured and grammatical, so it can be calculated; it facilitates communication, and it is static. In contrast, the genotext encompasses the instinctual force that lies under the text surface; it is a process, and not calculable. Although it does not yet possess a language, the pre-linguistic subjectivity erupts into the organised nature of the phenotext, by way of the genotext. Through the dialectic between the said modalities, the subject determines the type of discourse in question (Kristeva, *La révolution* 22). Though every text establishes a certain interaction between genotext and phenotext, in rational texts of a scientific or legal nature the proportion of the genotext is almost completely absent. In contrast, the poetic language

of modernist authors such as Mallarmé and Lautréamont displays a high level of genotext (Allen 50).

Now, how can we recognise the traces of the semiotic *chora*, the genotext, when they penetrate discourse, the phenotext, which typically is limited to communication and the transmission of facts? Since the genotext is the part of the text that stems from the energetic source of the unconscious, it is only recognizable through instruments such as rhythm, intonation, melody, repetition or narrative organisation (Allen 48-49). The irruption of the drives in the system of language provokes modifications in the phenotext: "We will call this new translinguistic organisation (...) a *semiotic dispositive*" (Kristeva, *La révolution* 207).<sup>30</sup> In the first development of semanalysis, which is limited to the poetic language of the modernists, Kristeva suggests that the semiotic dispositive appears through "various deviations from the grammatical rules of language" ("The System" 28). They act on four levels, which I will articulate in detail:

- Morphophonemic: phonetic (of sound) or semantic (of word) elements

On the level of sounds: the recurrence of phonetic groups that, although they structure the poem, do not adhere to the constraints of classical meter (Kristeva, *La révolution* 221); the manifestation of phonemes that refer directly to the babbling of infants. On the level of words: the deformation of the meaning of the word, such as the metaphor or metonymy (Kristeva, *La révolution* 230).

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<sup>30</sup> My translation MV: "Nous appellerons cette nouvelle organisation translinguistique (...) un *dispositif sémiotique*" (Kristeva, *La révolution* 207).

- Syntactic

Deviations in sentence construction and composition, through ellipsis, infinite subordinate clauses, or the irretrievable suppression of textual elements (Kristeva, "The System" 28).

- Pronominal: discourse instance

Alteration, splitting or multiplication of the enunciating subject (Kristeva, *La révolution* 315-35).

- Contextual

The disturbance of the logic brought forward by contextual references, such as metalinguistic discussion or alternation between literary genres (Kristeva, *La révolution* 341).

Besides the said poetic devices, the semantic dispositive appears by way of compulsive repetitions in the text, and relationships between the language and the divided body of the speaking subject and their familial and social associates. From a more general point of view, in the semantic dispositive "[a]ll functions which suppose a *frontier* (...) and the transgression of that frontier" prevail (Kristeva, "The System" 29). Since her approach is situated in the broader context of the psychological concepts of Freud, Kristeva also introduces the function of the libido: the surge of the genotext causes *jouissance*, because it touches "the capacity of renewing the order in which [the subject] is inescapably caught up: and that capacity is, for the *subject*, the capacity for enjoyment" ("The System" 29). However, as I already suggested in the previous section, by elaborating the concept of abjection, Kristeva extends and details the scope of semanalysis. On the one hand, she complements the libido of the semiotic with its opposite nature, through the surge of abjection. On the other hand, she pays

more attention to the manifestations of the borderline experience and its projection in the text. Thus, abjection takes shape in two different manners:

- Material

Alimentary repugnance; corporeal materiality such as excrements, blood and pus; debris; the cadaver.

- Abstract

Anxiety, horror, violence.

In later studies and essayistic texts, Kristeva continues her tentative path through the combination of literature and psychoanalysis. In *Soleil noir* (1987) she focuses on depression and melancholy, associated with the Freudian theory concerning “the same *impossible mourning of the maternal object*” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 19).<sup>31</sup> She defines melancholy as “the sign of a wounded primitive self, incomplete, empty” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 21).<sup>32</sup> She stresses the impulsive nature of the expressions of the said signal, which alludes to “a unsymbolisable, unnameable, narcissist injury, so premature that no external agent (subject nor object) can refer to it” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 22).<sup>33</sup>

Kristeva's analyses primarily cover texts by authors from the 19th and 20th century. Nevertheless, in *Thérèse mon amour* (2008) she changes her horizon: besides writing a highly hybrid work, she centres on the life and the texts of Teresa de Ávila, mystical nun from the 16th century. By way of a psychoanalytic protagonist, she does not attend to the poetry of the Carmelite sister, since “it is in the fiction -in itself intrinsically poetic and meditative- that the saint's writing excels” (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 107).<sup>34</sup> The character

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<sup>31</sup> My translation MV: “le même *deuil impossible de l'objet maternel*” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 19)

<sup>32</sup> My translation MV: “le signal d'un moi primitif blessé, incomplet, vide” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 21)

<sup>33</sup> My translation MV: “une blessure narcissique non symbolisable, innommable, si précoce qu'aucun agent extérieur (sujet ou objet) ne peut lui être référé” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 22).

<sup>34</sup> My translation MV: “c'est dans la fiction – elle-même intrinsèquement poétique et méditative – qu'excelle l'écriture de la sainte” (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 107). Kristeva excludes the poem “Muero porque

recognises the descriptions of the nun's visions as "the infrastructure of language, sensation becoming intelligible, first depiction of the sense that Julia Kristeva calls the 'semiotic'" (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 511).<sup>35</sup> So, while changing the material of her analyses, Kristeva maintains the semiotic as the foundation of her investigations, although she does not provide a definite methodology based on her consecutive studies. At the same time, her versatile use of terminology and appropriation of concepts from other disciplines can be confusing. In the next section, I will discuss the problematic nature of Kristeva's approach, to provide keys for a reinterpretation of her ideas that may serve for the analysis of the motif.

#### **2.1.4 Intertextuality according to Kristeva: terminological discussion**

In his essay on *La révolution du langage poétique*, Michel Beaujour criticises Kristeva for 'borrowing' points of departure, ideas and concepts from other theorists (31). The use of the term '*chora*' is mentioned as an example of the occurrence in her work of "so many heterogeneous terms, often drawn from the most unlikely sources" (Nikolchina 164). Another problematic aspect in Kristeva's discourse is the adoption of terminology of Freudian or Lacanian origin. Besides being a specialised field that needs an attentive approach, it provokes the objection, uttered by feminist criticism, that Kristeva still relies on traditional cultural constructs regarding gender characterization. Apparently, Kristeva does not adhere to terms or concepts, as also observed by Allen, who emphasises that Kristeva leaves behind her own term 'intertextuality' (52). Nevertheless, I sustain that intertextuality and the method of semanalysis in particular, despite not being articulated, offer the possibility to interpret

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no muero" from this observation; she includes the French translation in *Thérèse mon amour* (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 106-107).

<sup>35</sup> My translation MV: "infrastructure du langage, sensation devenant intelligible, sculpture première du sens que Julia Kristeva appelle le «sémiotique»" (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 511).



the motif in a considerably comprehensive way. Hence, I will discuss in this paragraph Kristevian terminology, as far as it addresses the integration of intertextuality in motif analysis. For clarity, I repeat the definition of the motif as formulated in the introduction: a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition.

To begin with, I return to the initial sections on intertextuality. At the beginning of her career, Kristeva gives a broad definition of intertextuality in the article "Narration and Transformation" (1969): "Intertextuality means for us textual interaction produced within the text itself. The apprehending subject understands the concept of intertextuality as an indicator of how the text reads history and locates itself in it" (Kristeva qtd. in Juvan 12). I will establish which elements of this definition coincide with the key components of the motif. In the first place, the fragment 'apprehending subject' accentuates the comprehension by the subject-reader, which corresponds to the word 'recognisable' in the definition of the motif. How the text itself is situated in history coincides with the manifestation of the motif over time, expressed by its 'persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition'. Finally, the part 'textual interaction produced within the text itself' refers in two ways to the motif. On the one hand, it alludes to the recognition in the text of traces of other texts, so as to cause a diachronic interaction that underlines the historical aspect of the motif. On the other hand, it connects to the synchronic level of the motif, the interaction of textual elements belonging to the motif, which accentuates the repetition within the text. Thus, the definition of intertextuality, offered by Kristeva, covers the following elements for the interpretative tool: the plurality of relations between texts; the textual interaction within the text; the perception by the subject (reader); the relevance of the historical situation.

Although intertextuality in the broadest sense encompasses certain cardinal points, it does not seem to touch upon the symbolic nature of the motif. However, the concepts rooted in psychology, which Kristeva includes in the continuation of her career, extend the textual interaction, as they concern the dynamic between two strata within the text. Of these layers, the genotext refers to the textual level that lies under the text surface, the phenotext, consistent with the abstract quality that emerges in the concrete level of the text. The relation between genotext and phenotext, thus, runs parallel with the symbolic nature of the motif, defined as the function of representing in a concrete way an underlying abstract value. Now, I argue that the interaction between genotext and phenotext, conceived as an intertextual interaction within the text, fits within the previous definition of intertextuality. Kristeva seems to confirm such a suggestion, when she introduces in *La révolution du langage poétique* the concept 'transposition': "the transfer of the drive to the symbolical, the passage from the semiotic (not yet sign) to symbolic system" (*La révolution* 232).<sup>36</sup> This statement even induces Allen to conclude that "Kristeva now drops intertextuality in favour of a new term, transposition" (52). Be that as it may, I consider transposition, the interaction between genotext and phenotext, a form of intertextuality. Another relevant factor is the relevance of the reader's view in recognising the traces of the genotext, as the reader's subject directs the identification of the textual traces of the individuation process, according to the recurrence of structures in the text.<sup>37</sup>

In synthesis, I define intertextuality in line with Kristeva's postulate as: the perception by the reader of textual interaction, produced within the text; the subject/reader

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<sup>36</sup> My translation MV: "le virement de la pulsion dans le symbolique, le passage du sémiotique (non encore signe) au système symbolique" (Kristeva, *La révolution* 232)

<sup>37</sup> As suggested by Lavers, "the genotext (...) has to be created anew in each reader" (202).

interprets intertextuality as the indication of the historical situation of the text. This way, intertextuality also addresses the symbolic quality of the motif, through the interpretation of the genotext. However, the particular concepts that refer to such an interpretation require terminology explanation for them to be integrated in the analysis of the motif.

To begin with, it is worth noting that Kristeva positions herself from the beginning of her studies between the critical followers of De Saussure, the inventor of semiology; she situates her starting point in the environment of semiotics, while introducing the concept of semanalysis ("The System" 27-28).<sup>38</sup> Within the frame of semanalysis, she distinguishes between two levels that are manifest in the text, the semiotic and the symbolic. At that point terminological problems arise, due to the use of concepts that are prone to various interpretations, while referring to theoretical or hermeneutical fields that do not belong to the analysis of the literary text.

In the first place, Kristeva uses two very similar concepts, while referring to 'la sémiotique', the theoretical framework in its entirety, and 'le sémiotique', the specific level in the text that is connected to the *chora*. In the French language, even more confusion occurs when one is also using without distinction the adjective 'sémiotique'. Secondly, the term 'le symbolique' designates in Kristeva's system the level of the text that is associated with the signification process. That is to say, that Kristeva gives the word 'symbolique' an interpretation that differs from the meaning of the word 'symbolic' in the definition of the motif, central in this investigation. Fortunately, Kristeva also refers to 'genotext' and 'phenotext', the two levels in the text that correspond to the semiotic and the symbolic. As I will interpret Kristeva's ideas to construct a tool for

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<sup>38</sup> Semiology introduced by De Saussure studies the systems of signs when they are used by the human being, while semiotics encompasses the processes that refer to the relations between the human being, the signs and the symbols (Kristeva, "The System" 27-28).

textual analysis, I assume that the said concepts meet the requirements for an appropriate terminology. Therefore, I will limit myself in what follows to the terms 'genotext' and 'phenotext'. It is worth noting that the term 'transposition' also is subject to ambiguity, as Genette uses the same term to refer to certain intertextual operations.<sup>39</sup> So I will indicate the reciprocate action of genotext and phenotext as 'interaction'. Lastly, in the context of literary analysis, I am particularly interested in the manifestation of the genotext, because it entails disruptions in the text that coincide with the variations of the motif. Therefore, I will substitute the word 'semanalysis' for the term 'genotextual analysis', in order to refer to the investigation and interpretation of the traces of the genotext in the literary text.

Well then, considering the concepts genotext and phenotext, the levels in the text that, on the one side, refer to the drives and, on the other, the process of signification, the issue of gender classifications arises. Based on the strong connection with the theories of Freud and Lacan, the connection between the paternal and the development of language, for one thing, and the relationship between the maternal and primary drives, for another, becomes apparent in Kristeva's study. As it seems, this constellation implies a hierarchical relationship between the textual levels of genotext and phenotext, which is why feminist criticism, in particular, rejects Kristeva's ideas. In order to avoid unintended implications, I suggest an open perspective that:

- limits references to maternity to biological processes, both physical and psychological
- disconnects maternity (biological process) from femininity (cultural construct)

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 2, which provides an overview of the concepts and procedure of transtextuality according to Genette.

- disconnects the process of signification (psychological process) from paternity (cultural construct)
- allows for a range of nuances between female and male, according to current tendencies.

Returning to intertextuality in the broader sense, putting Kristeva's concepts into use offers a considerable potential for the analysis of the motif. Since the focus on the relationships between texts differs greatly from the genotextual procedure, I propose to separate the perspectives that have their place in intertextuality. That means, in terms of methodology, that it is necessary to distinguish between the intertextual analysis, which applies to the relationships between texts, and the genotextual analysis that encompasses the symbolic level of the text. I suggest that the theory and terminology introduced by Genette in *Palimpsestes* (1982), provide sufficient tools for the identification of interrelated texts. At the same time, the integration of Kristeva's approach to genotext, for the analysis of the symbolic level of the motif, requires a critical and scrupulous examination of the terminology in question.

### **2.1.5 Conclusion on intertextuality**

Julia Kristeva originally coined the concept of intertextuality, textual interaction within the text; a variety of theorists in various fields have emphasised the amplitude of the said approach, while proposing their own interpretations. However, the combination of path of knowledge and essayistic route leads Kristeva to neglect or abandon fixed concepts in favour of further exploration. With the concepts of genotext and phenotext she adds a psychological dimension to Bakhtin's ideas on dialogism, thus rearticulating

and extending the theory of intertextuality. So, the concept 'intertextuality' lends itself to multiple interpretations.

Returning to the research question regarding the components of intertextuality that can be integrated in the investigation model, I repeat the definition composed according to the ideas of Kristeva: intertextuality supposes the perception by the reader of textual interaction, produced within the text; the subject/reader interprets intertextuality as the indication of the historical position of the text. Therefore, I refer to two levels of intertextuality: the relationship with texts that appeared previously, outside the text itself, connects to the historical situation; the internal textual interaction is also related to the manifestations of the individuation process. When following the components of the motif, intertextuality covers, on the one hand, the elements of repetition and variation in literary tradition, and reader perception; on the other hand, genotextual analysis, conceived as a particular form of intertextuality, pertains to the symbolic level of the motif, as far as it addresses the representation of the individuation process, perceptible to the reader. The universality of this individuation process activates the recognition, by the reader, of the traces of the genotext; the specific way of erupting in the organisation of the text links the genotext to the variety of the motif.

Thus, intertextuality according to Kristeva offers significant potential for motif analysis. Genette's approach to transtextuality, the elaboration of Kristevian ideas on the relationships between texts, lends itself to the practice of intertextual analysis. Regarding genotextual analysis, Kristeva does not strive to construct a stable methodology to be used within the narrow framework of literary interpretation. However, I argue that her theoretical studies and the practice of her literary analyses provide sufficient material to configure such a tool. Be that as it may, the application of Kristeva's ideas for the identification and interpretation of the symbolic quality of the

motif requires a defined instrument based on clear terminology. Hence, I recommend elaborating genotextual analysis as proposed by Kristeva towards a practical tool that encompasses the symbolic component of motif analysis.

With that said, following Kristeva's approach, the concepts and terminology concerning the genotext only cover the symbolic aspect of the text that refers to the individuation process. Genotextual analysis limits social relevance to the restrictions of society on the development of the individual. For the purpose of encompassing the symbolic quality in its entirety, it is necessary to include a perspective that implicates the processes in society that affect the text on a broader level. I assume that the integration of myth criticism will elevate the research model to that aspect of the text's symbolic nature. In the following sections, I will explore how myth criticism, while addressing the interaction between the text and society from an anthropological angle, can fill this gap in the tool for motif understanding.





## **2.2 Reading the text as if it were a myth: Gilbert Durand's myth criticism**

Motifs such as the castaway, the flâneur, the mirror or orphanhood, they all are represented through textual elements with a strong symbolic value. Frequently, they have recognizable mythical roots, like the myths of Narcissus and Oedipus, or the tale of shipwreck in the *Odyssey*. Myth criticism links the identification and the analysis of the symbolic content of literary texts to the anthropological aspects of the existential questions. Thus, myth criticism appears to be the appropriate method for the interpretation of the unifying factor that connects the motif to the universalism of myth. However, it surges as a complex procedure, carried out according to terminology that is sometimes incomprehensible and prone to ambivalence. Therefore, I launch the hypothesis that a reformulation of the terminological system of myth criticism produces the appropriate tool for interpreting the motif. The following sections will address myth criticism, in order to respond to the question: what are the elements of myth critical procedure that can be integrated in the combined method of myth textuality? To answer that question, I will first engage in the key concepts of the method, to indicate later which central terms apply to the analysis of the motif.

I will begin with an overview of the reception of Durand's method and the comments on his work (2.2.1). In part 2.2.2 I will explain Durand's approach, covering the origins of his theory, figurative structuralism, introduced at first in *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (1960). Then, I will provide in 2.2.3 an elucidatory summary of the terminology and the method operative in myth critical procedure. Lastly, I will discuss the problematic nature of the terminology and method of myth criticism, in order to provide recommendations for the application of myth criticism for the interpretation of the motif (2.2.4).

### 2.2.1 State of the art

Although devised at first in the 1950s, Durand's work still attracts the attention of contemporary researchers. Over thirty years after the publication of his study *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, philosopher Michel Cazenave asserts that it is "a systematic and well-ordered attempt to explore all the anthropological experiences of the human being" (10).<sup>40</sup> Ross Chambers agrees with the systematic and comprehensive scope of the work: he qualifies *Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary* (1999), the English translation, as "an impressive work of scholarship, both a catalogue and a glossary of the imaginarium, a repertoire or thesaurus of symbols" (101). He particularly appreciates the extent and the structured nature of the study (Chambers 102). At the same time, he questions the male perspective of the starting point in the text, originally published in 1960, stating: "Durand does not question the masculinism but treats it as a given, implying that it is natural and universal. He does not wonder whether it might not be rather a historical and local feature of the culture of the analyst" (Chambers 104).

Other comments emphasise the scientific position and the interdisciplinary character of Durand's theory. For example, in the popular-science journal *Sciences Humaines*, Jérôme Souty proposes that Durand's work provides the tools to study the images of individual creators, and social and cultural phenomena. Being an amalgam of many disciplines, his work on myths and symbols can be read as the rehabilitation of the imaginary (Souty 2006).<sup>41</sup> According to Durand's multidisciplinary approach, a

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<sup>40</sup> My translation MV: "une tentative systématique et réglée pour explorer toutes les données anthropologiques de l'imaginaire humain" (Cazenave 10).

<sup>41</sup> The original quotation: "a forgé des outils pour étudier les configurations d'images propres à des créateurs individuels, des agents sociaux ou des catégories culturelles. Son œuvre sur les mythes et les symboles, qui convoque de nombreuses disciplines, peut se lire comme une vaste entreprise de réhabilitation de l'imaginaire" (Souty 2006).

diversity of researchers frequently comments on the merits and the relevance of his work (Pintor Iranzo 2001, Herrero Cecilia 2006, Solares Altamirano 2011, Martins Portanova Barros and Contrera 2018).

Nevertheless, reflections in recent scholarly studies also assert that myth criticism up to this moment has not succeeded in gathering a broad following, since the method is practically unknown outside the world of Romance languages. Although some comments tend to confuse myth criticism and mythanalysis, the following statements apply to the field of literary criticism:

- a) The interpretation of the imaginary requires a methodology that does not meet scientific conditions (Solares Altamirano 2011, Martins Portanova Barros and Contrera 2018).
- b) The intrinsic ambiguity of myth prevents the definition of an analytical tool (Solares Altamirano 2011, Martins Portanova Barros and Contrera 2018, Pérez Amezcua and Quesada Cameros 2020).
- c) Myth critical procedure is a lengthy and challenging method that requires the ability to handle the structures and schemes in Durand's categorization (Franzone 2005). The unusual vocabulary, grounded in anthropological and psychological terminology, add to its inaccessibility (Xiberras 2002, Gutiérrez 2012b).

Gutiérrez states that one of the reproaches that one can bring upon the theory of Gilbert Durand is that it is not easily dealt with (*Mitocrítica* 17). Thus, she provides an explanation of Durand's study, without losing the extent of the original approach. Martine Xiberras also proposes that it is easy to get lost in the multiplicity of perspectives offered by Durand's work. Therefore, there is a need to give some elucidatory clues for the understanding of the method (Xiberras 2002, Gutiérrez 2012b).

*Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* is of a high theoretical calibre, which at first glance may appear somewhat impenetrable. While concurring with observation c) on the demanding process of myth criticism, I aim to challenge the comments under b) regarding the definition of the analytical tool. I will include the observations about some recent articles that are based on the regimes of the imaginary and the concepts of Durand. According to this analysis of the effectiveness of current studies and their use of Durand's terminology, I pretend to develop an operational research model.

Regarding comment a) I refer to Durand, who in the article "Fondements et perspectives d'une philosophie de l'imaginaire" (1990), on the foundations and perspectives of a philosophy of the imaginary, emphasises that he scientifically demonstrated how the imaginative power of the human being is situated beneath and prior to any reasoning. Gutiérrez underlines the rehabilitation of the imaginary as the essence of Gilbert Durand's thinking, which introduced a perspective on human beings that deviated from the rationalist predominance in the Western world (interview 8 December 2021). It seems plausible that such a position does not align with the scientific world, where rational thinking prevails. Regarding the analysis of the literary text, I argue that interpretation always supposes a reading that relies on the interaction between the text and the reader/researcher, as also asserted by Durand ("Pas à pas" 235). I suggest that the implementation of a practical model will expand the theoretical foundation of the interpretation, thus meeting scientific standards.

Besides the issue of the unfamiliar terminology, myth criticism is also at the centre of a debate about analytical procedures. Generally, researchers in the field of French literature know how to handle and apply Durand's comprehensive system.<sup>42</sup> This

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<sup>42</sup> The procedure is explained in section 2.3; see also the definitions in Appendix 1.

system that includes the diurnal and nocturnal regime of the imaginary categorises the images so as to group them in mythemes (Vierne 1989, 1993, Morales Peco 1997, Gutiérrez 2012b). However, Pierre Brunel, though his study has the title *Mythocritique. Théorie et parcours* (1992), avoids Durand's terminology, while proposing a personal approach to myth criticism and introducing alternative terminology (72). Gutiérrez questions Brunel's position, situating him in the perspective of traditional comparative literature, so-called "tradicional comparativismo", instead of myth criticism ("La Mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 177). She underlines the relevance of the systematic categorisation that consists of archetypes, schemes and mythic movements ("La Mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 183-4). In the context of the Spanish and Portuguese languages, the specialised scientific publication *Amaltea* presents itself as a 'journal of myth criticism'. While the articles rely on various concepts such as 'archetype', 'mytheme' and 'symbol', I observe a relative absence of Durand's essential concepts in most of its myth critical studies. Hence, *Amaltea* is characterised as a journal of comparative studies where one refers to myth, adopting a hermeneutical position that diverges from myth criticism according to Gilbert Durand (Gutiérrez, "Mythocritique" 7).

Recapitulating, despite the recognition of the theoretical solidity and the practical potential of the system devised by Durand, myth criticism has not made an impact and only is applied in the world of Romance languages. Regarding the theoretical postulates concerning the imaginative power of the human being, I will accept Durand's premise on the predominance of imagination over reasoning. I hypothesise that the power of symbolisation, studied through the durandian method, runs in parallel with the dynamics occurring between the abstract level of the theme and its substantiation at the level of the motif.

Therefore, I will incorporate Durand's postulates into the practice of motif interpretation. Due to the ambivalence and the complex nature of the terminology, current practice of myth criticism tends to engage in traditional comparative research, adopting thus a different hermeneutical position. My intention is to return to the original principles of Gilbert Durand's myth criticism, while taking notice of the methodological issues. I delve deeper into the myth critical system, to encompass its potential within the framework of motif analysis. In this process of reflection, I will also consider Chambers' comments on the predominance of the male perspective in Durand's model. To explore a method as unfamiliar as myth criticism, I will now turn my attention on the origins and the fundamental concepts of the theory.

### **2.2.2 Historical overview of myth criticism**

The critical approach to literature, as expounded by Durand, is built on the foundation of *figurative structuralism*, an extensive framework that encompasses a categorisation of all the images produced by humans. According to this typology a praxis develops, known as *mythodology*. Durand's methodological approach consists of two distinct procedures: the analytical method of *myth criticism* and the interpretative amplification of *mythanalysis*. Since myth criticism is often referred to without a clear distinction between these concepts, it is important to note that I will henceforward refer to the categorization of images as figurative structuralism. An exploration of the said system is not complete without a concise summary of the cultural and scientific movements that led to its emergence, followed by an explanation of Durand's approach. Lastly, I will elucidate on the two methodological axes that originated from figurative structuralism: myth criticism and mythanalysis.

### **The origins of figurative structuralism**

Durand is inspired by the thoughts of many of his contemporaries who contemplate the imaginative capacity of the human being. Thus, even in its conceptual phase the multidisciplinary nature of figurative structuralism is accentuated. Without pretending to provide a complete summary of the theories that melt into the said system, I will convey a general overview of the relevant directions. I will comment on them briefly, while restricting to the protagonists within the framework of the theoretical elaboration of figurative structuralism.

Starting with the primacy of the image, the premise emerges that it equates to the symbol, conceived as a motivated sign (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 70). Before expounding on his own systemisation of the images and the symbols, Durand explores the existing theories on the motivations that induce the human being to express himself symbolically, that is to say, through images. In the first place, he mentions the cultural motivations for the use of the symbol, which are situated in the field of cosmology, the elements and society. In this context, the symbolisation process serves to observe and give meaning to the world around us. The studies of cultural motivations encompass religions, the categorisation of substances or the organisation of society (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 70-71).<sup>43</sup>

Secondly, Durand stresses how psychological motivations of the symbolisation process have been analysed (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 72-75). Evidently, it was impossible to neglect the vigour of psychoanalysts such as Freud, Adler and Jung, whose body of thought was still very influential in his time. Importantly, literature (mythical narrative) and the theory of the human psyche frequently intersect in the studies of

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<sup>43</sup> For Durand, relevant theorists in the cultural context are: historian of religions Éliade, philosopher Bachelard, sociologists Dumézil and Piganiol (*Les structures anthropologiques* 30-34).

psychoanalysts. Durand comes to the conclusion of a hiatus in the entirety of these studies, because the first individual drive to the use of the symbol is missing; Durand situates this drive in the field of anthropology (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 76). This is where the notion of the anthropological path comes into play, defined as "*the ceaseless exchange taking place on the level of the imaginary between subjective assimilatory drives and objective pressures emanating from the cosmic and social milieu*" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 41).<sup>44</sup> To encompass a field as vast as this, a complementary study is needed of the elemental, communal and constant aspects that are present in the individual human being.

In this context, the work of the Psychobiological School of Leningrad, which elaborates the theories of Pavlov, becomes relevant. The postulate of this school, reflexology, implies that in any animal species, certain characteristic dominant reflexes can be studied. Thus, in the new-born human, certain instinctive, innate gestures dominate all the other reflexes. The three *dominant reflexes* in humans are as follows: the *postural* dominant of position is already evident in the new-born and refers to the gesture of straightening up; the *digestive* or nutritional dominant also manifests itself in the new-born through the feeding reflex; the *copulative* or sexual domain, which joins the previous ones in adulthood, refers to copulation. The ideas on the dominant reflexes incite Durand to categorise the subjective motivations for the symbolisation process in a similar way (*Les structures anthropologiques* 51).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The quotations in the text are from *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary* (1999), the translation by Margaret Sankey and Judith Hatten. The original quotations in the French language, from the third edition of *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (1978) will appear in the footnotes: "*l'incessant échange qui existe au niveau de l'imaginaire entre les pulsions subjectives et assimilatrices et les intimations objectives émanant du milieu cosmique et social*" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 38).

<sup>45</sup> The postulates of reflexology develop later on in scientific disciplines such as ethology and neurosciences. Durand sustains that, while relying on reflexology, ethology and anthropology, he demonstrates scientifically that the imaginative power of the human being precedes all reasoning (Durand, "Méthode archétypologique" 139).



The previously mentioned cultural, psychological and anthropological motivations explain why humans need symbolisation. The premise that the functioning of the imaginary is subject to well defined rules and confirmations, allows for a structuralist approach to the products of the imaginative power. Therefore, regarding the categorisation of the images and the symbols into a systematic structure, the influence of structuralism, the movement that is centred on the analysis of the formal structures of the literary object, is also apparent (Gutiérrez, "La mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 181). Concerning the structuralist nature of Durand's thinking, we need to consider in the first place Lévi-Strauss, whose work bridges structuralism and anthropology.

In his seminal work *Anthropologie structurale* (1958) Lévi-Strauss alludes in the chapter "La structure des mythes" to mythical thought and its specific characteristics. He constructs a method that identifies, at textual level, the elements that determine the myth, by breaking it down in short phrases that reveal its structure. He calls these minimal elements, characteristic of myth, "grosses unités constitutives" and introduces the term 'mythème' (Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* 233). Mythemes manifest themselves in the text through repetitive and accumulative presence.<sup>46</sup>

The original example of such a procedure is the structural analysis of the Oedipus myth by Lévi-Strauss, the so-called treatment *à l'américaine*. In this analysis the relevant situations in the myth are organised in four columns (see Figure 1). Two pairs of columns confront each other: the columns I and II pertain to exaggerated family ties and the ones that provoke violence; the columns III and IV refer to human autonomy and the impossibility of such autonomy. Thus, the opposing situation of the mythical structures serves to reconcile what appears to be contradictory.

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<sup>46</sup> See also the definition in Appendix 1.

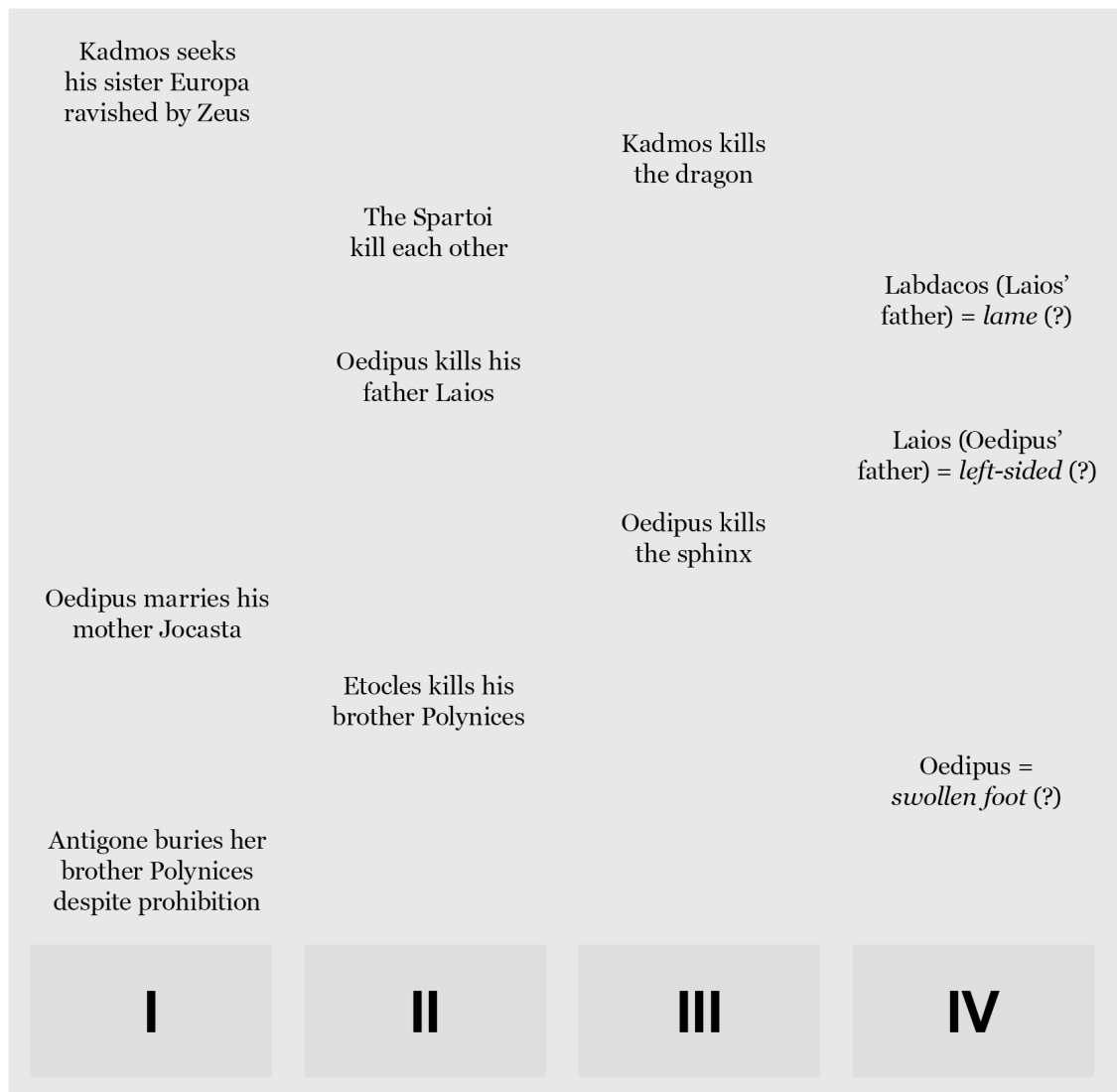


Figure 1. Oedipus myth according to Lévi-Strauss ("Structural Study" 433)

Lastly, it's worth mentioning the French scholar Charles Mauron, who, in psychocriticism, studies the human psyche through the structural analysis of texts, referring to the manifestation of a personal myth.<sup>47</sup> Besides shaping the term

<sup>47</sup> Mauron engages essentially in the field of the subconscious of the author (9). By determining in various texts of the same writer the presence of a network of "métaphores obsédantes", also called recurrent symbols, he formulates in 1954 the hypothesis of a personal myth, characteristic of every author and "objectivement définissable" (Mauron 9). Based on the said hypothesis and research, Mauron forms the method of psychocriticism for literary analysis. The personal myth is the aggregate of a limited number of dramatic scenes that is characteristic for the author; it surges from the subconscious of the author and its relevant features arrest the attention for their repetitive manifestation (Mauron 9).

'mythocritique' on the model of Mauryon's *psychocritique*, Durand also recognises the similarity between Mauryon's obsessive metaphors and his own interpretation of the concept of the mytheme (Gutiérrez, "La mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 179). However, he rejects the possibility of a personal myth, emphasising the interpretation of myth as proceeding from a primordial source, preceding the personal level (Durand, *Figures mythiques* 168).

Durand acknowledges the merits of structuralism and even adopts the term 'mytheme' and Lévi-Strauss' methodology. However, he does not support the reductionist character of structuralist methods (Gutiérrez, "La mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 183). Structuralist analyses remain on the surface of the object of study, reducing it to a mere structure of oppositions without penetrating towards the meaning of the mythical narrative. The inclination to recover the meaning of the artistic object leads him to devise a method that does not only establish the structure, but also, through the images that emerge in text, interprets the literary text itself (Gutiérrez, "La mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 181). For this purpose, he composes "the structural classification of the various possible contents of the imaginary" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 363).<sup>48</sup> Thus, figurative structuralism came into being, with the aforementioned work, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (1960). We will discover later on how the postural, digestive and copulative dominants fit into the dual systemization of the diurnal and nocturnal regime of the imaginary.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "une classification structurale des divers contenus possibles de l'imaginaire" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 437).

<sup>49</sup> See section 2.3.1, "The basic structure of the regimes of the imaginary".

### **Gilbert Durand's postulate**

Figurative structuralism is based on two premises, forming the fundamental pillars of Durand's thinking: the notion of the "anthropological trajectory" and, on a philosophical level, "the refusal of every dualism" (CRI2i 0.01.00-0.01.18).<sup>50</sup> Given the significance of these ideas in Durand's system, I will examine them more closely. A comprehensive approach prevails in Durand's work; he also refers to anthropological, rather than 'humanist' (Durand, "Fondements"). He employs the term 'anthropology' as a referent to the *homo sapiens sapiens* as a whole, sustaining that there is only one science of the human being, without epistemological divisions (Durand, "Méthode archétypologique" 133). In other words,

... it is in the Science of Mankind (in all its horizons: psychological, physiological, embryological, historical, neurological, cultural, social, etc. ...) that the "archetypal" constants appear that identify and allow for (...) understanding Sapiens Sapiens. (Durand, "Fondements")<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the construction of the system that encompasses all the images produced by humans presupposes a polyvalent theoretical base, as we will see in the following paragraph. At the same time, the anthropological starting point extends to the diversity of practices developed according to figurative structuralism. Therefore, practical application of Durand's theory spans a multitude of scientific disciplines and approaches: Durand "carries along many others with him", thus finding himself "at the

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<sup>50</sup> My translation MV: "trajet anthropologique"; "le refus de tout dualisme" (CRI2i 0.01.00-0.01.18).

<sup>51</sup> My translation MV: "c'est dans la Science de l'Homme (et tous ses horizons: psychologique, physiologique, embryologique, historique, neurologique, culturel, social, etc. ...) que se repèrent les constantes «archétypales» qui identifient et permettent de (...) comprendre Sapiens Sapiens" (Durand, "Fondements").

head of (...) a large movement where researchers have come to join who before had been separated" (Cazenave 10).<sup>52</sup>

The second principal element of Durand's thinking, the rejection of the reductionist dualistic postulates proposed by philosophers such as Aristotle, Descartes or Kant, paves the way for the premise of the primacy of the imaginary (CRI2i 0.01.20-0.01.25.). The imaginary is defined as:

... this capacity to symbolise, exclusive for and inherent in our species, this museum of all possible images, beyond which reason nor thought exists, since it is the imaginary that precedes and encompasses rationalism, which in its turn is just a type of imaginary and not the other way round. (CRI2i 0.01.25-0.01.48.)<sup>53</sup>

This rehabilitation of the imaginary, the fundamental and original aspect of Durand's approach, introduced a perspective that diverges from the dominance of rationalism in the Western world.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Durand elaborates the systemisation of symbols and images, initially introduced in *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Then, from the 1970s onwards, he builds the methodological approach of mythodology on the foundation of figurative structuralism; this set of methods encompasses myth criticism and mythanalysis, introduced and detailed in *Figures mythiques et visages de l'œuvre* (1979). In this work, Durand explains how the intricate categorisation outlined in his initial work is translated towards two critical perspectives; he also expounds in

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<sup>52</sup> My translation MV: "entraîne beaucoup d'autres avec lui"; "à la tête (...) d'un large mouvement où sont venus s'agréger des chercheurs que tout séparait avant lui" (Cazenave 10).

<sup>53</sup> My translation MV: "ce pouvoir de symbolisation, exclusive et inhérent à notre espèce, ce musée de toutes les images possibles, hors duquel n'existe ni raison ni pensée, puisque c'est l'imaginaire qui précède et englobe le rationalisme, lequel à son tour n'est qu'un type de l'imaginaire et pas le contraire" (CRI2i 0.01.25-0.01.48).

detail on the corresponding method. I will first focus on the application to the analysis of the literary work.

Myth criticism is "*the critical reading method that analyses the literary text in the same way as one analyses myth*" (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 127).<sup>54</sup> This entails identifying in the text the recurring images, charged with symbolic value. Put into practice, literary researchers have two options, based on Durand's theoretical work: on the one hand, by interpreting symbolic language according to the categories of the imaginary, they can practise figurative structuralism; on the other hand, myth criticism demands a specific method, relying on the recognition of isomorphic and recurrent textual elements. From these elements emerges the mytheme, while a specific configuration of mythemes connects to a defined myth.

Gutiérrez emphasises that the myth critical method by no means implies the search for the myth, but rather the myth arises, or it doesn't (interview 8 December 2021). In this sense, the method does not require designating a particular myth, but rather the identification of mythical strategy: using narrative resources to manage the perpetual tension between humans and the world, to confront the terrifying passage of time. Obviously, the recognisable presence of a particular myth in the text can facilitate the structuration of the recurring symbols.

Durand also applies myth criticism to other artistic expressions such as painting, analysing work by Bosch, Durer, Goya, Rubens and Rembrandt (*Figures mythiques* 117-156).<sup>55</sup> He aims to provide a comprehensive perspective to the work of art, by including previous strategies for analysis through the synthesis of historical,

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<sup>54</sup> My translation MV: "*el método de lectura crítica que analiza el texto literario de la misma manera que se analiza un mito*" (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 127).

<sup>55</sup> In "*Méthode archétypologique: de la mythocritique al mythanalyse*" (1989), Durand underlines that his method is "valid for every message of the human being and not just the 'literary' message" (My translation MV). The original quotation: "valable pour tout message émanant de l'homme et non seulement le message «littéraire»" (Durand, "*Méthode archétypologique*" 133).

psychological and structuralist perspectives. Myth criticism engages in the interpretation of a specific work, which can extend to the entire production of a single author or artist. While myth criticism submits the particular artistic object to an analysis, the purpose of mythanalysis is “*discover which myths sustain a particular cultural moment*” (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 128).<sup>56</sup> Thus, based on myth criticism, mythanalysis addresses a representative quantity of works produced in the same period or cultural context, leading to a socio-historical analysis. Furthermore, mythanalysis expands to other artistic or cultural expressions, for example, how myth is represented through the media. So mythanalysis lends itself to the interdisciplinary strategy that is currently applied in the framework of cultural and social sciences. Thus, the tension between certain culturally predominant myths in the West, at the end of the past century, is determined: the myth of Prometheus, the myth of Dionysus, and the myth of Hermes. Naturally, in this case particular myths are considered, which represent optimally the tendencies in a defined area or period. Corresponding to developments over time, the effective myth may transform or even disappear.

When reflecting on Durand's work, the impressive character of *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* stands out as a profound exploration of human imaginary products. Moreover, the methodology encompasses a wide range of artistic products and scientific disciplines. That being said, within the scope of the present thesis, I will limit myself to the domain of literature. The following section will address Durand's key theoretical elements that are applicable to the interpretation of the literary text, and thus to the analysis of the motif.

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<sup>56</sup> My translation MV: “*descubrir cuáles son los mitos que sustentan un determinado momento cultural*” (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 128).

### 2.2.3 Myth criticism according to Durand: the key concepts

Now, let us first concentrate on the core elements of figurative structuralism, the 'régimes de l'imaginaire'.<sup>57</sup> To address the dichotomy in the system of Durand, I will revisit section 2.2.1, where it is evident that Durand draws upon Lévi-Strauss' binary structure.<sup>58</sup> Thus, he develops the dual aspect of his systemisation of the imaginary, encompassing the division into two regimes, the diurnal and the nocturnal. However, Durand also grounds his categorisation of images in the reflexological dominants.<sup>59</sup> So, the tripartition of the dominants intersects with the bipartite categorisation of the images, as defined by Lévi-Strauss. Clearly, the bipartition diurnal-nocturnal suggests an opposition, but figurative structuralism implicates a more detailed set of reciprocal relationships. In the following part we will see how this dynamic system functions. I will start with the fundamental model built by Durand in *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. The distinction between the regimes, the difference between day and night, is concretised according to their strategy in managing the conflicts and essential anxieties of the human being: questions about the beginning and the end of life, about processes of transformation.<sup>60</sup> The answers to these eternal problems differ depending on the regime in question.

The diurnal regime, firstly, is characterised by antithesis. It starts from the idea that, in order to fight the threatening phenomena of life, there is initially a need to reinforce the representation of their negative value (the *negative hyperbole*) and then to assume

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<sup>57</sup> Although the English translation refers to 'the Orders of the Imaginary', I will maintain the term 'regime' to stay closer to the original text.

<sup>58</sup> Durand is also motivated by contemporaries in the field of (evolutionary) psychology, history and sociology of ancient people. He includes the affective schemes of Piaget, who addresses the primordial relations between the father and the mother in the infantile universe (*Les structures anthropologiques* 55-56). He also refers to the functional bipartition that Piganiol discovers between the pastors and the farmers of ancient people and to the functional stratification of ancient Rome (*Les structures anthropologiques* 57).

<sup>59</sup> Durand's theory rests on the reflexology of Betcherev, which encompasses the *postural, digestive and copulative* dominants (*Les structures anthropologiques* 46-49). See also section 2.2.2.

<sup>60</sup> Lévi-Strauss refers to the strategies to confront the opposite nature of the other (Gómez García 122).



the opposite position, being a reconquering of the negative valorisations, antithetic and methodical (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 70).<sup>61</sup> The nocturnal regime, on the other hand, is characterised by euphemism; it starts from the premise that the negation of negative values reduces or eliminates their threatening character. By integrating the dominants of reflexology into the bipartite categorisation, two distinct tendencies are attributed to the nocturnal regime, which leads to the following structuring:

1. **Diurnal regime:** antithetical.

A strong representation of negative values in combination with opposite images.  
According to the postural dominant.

2. **Nocturnal regime:** euphemising or antiphrastic.

The negative values are attenuated in two different ways.

a) **Mystical tendency:** represents the conversion of negative values.<sup>62</sup>

According to the digestive dominant.

b) **Synthetic or dramatic tendency:** thematizes the alternating union of opposite values.

According to the copulative dominant.

Clearly, the basic structure of image classification and the corresponding central concepts requires detailed illustration. Therefore, I will delineate in the following sections the diurnal and nocturnal regime and their manifestation in the artistic work.

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<sup>61</sup> "la reconquête antithétique et méthodique des valorisations [sic] négatives" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 70).

<sup>62</sup> Because he is anticipating the problematic nature of the term 'mystical', Durand defends the use of "the vaguer and less scientific term of 'mystical'", by referring to "its most current meaning in which are conjoined a wish for union and an inclination towards intimacy" (*The Anthropological Structures* 260). "le terme plus vague et moins scientifique"; "le sens le plus courant en lequel se conjuguent et une volonté d'union et un certain de la secrète intimité" (*Les structures anthropologiques* 307-08).

### **The diurnal regime: heroic or schizomorphic**

The diurnal regime, driven by the postural dominant, confronts the existential anxieties of the human being, the relentless course of time, and the fear of death. It includes two groups of images: the so-called 'faces of time', with negative value, and their counterparts. Durand considers the representation of evil, the symbolisation of anxiety, as "an essential component of the imagination", because representing them already is the beginning of dominating essential fears (*The Anthropological Structures* 119).<sup>63</sup> The symbols that **reinforce the negative value** of the images, according to the principle of the negative hyperbole, have three aspects:

#### 1. Theriomorphic images – aspect of animality

It is worth noting that many representations, with negative as well as positive value, display the aspect of animality. In the diurnal regime only the images with negative value are found, which are theriomorphic (from the Greek word θηρίων, meaning wild animal). This animalization of the image appears primarily through anarchic or uncontrolled movement, causing noise and chaos. It refers to the intrinsic fear of change. We can distinguish three main groups.

##### a) Crawling (or writhing)

The agitation of a multitude of small animals, such as insects, rats, mice or snakes. The favourite image of adventure films, like those by Steven Spielberg featuring Indiana Jones.

##### b) The horse

Represents the desperate flight from the pursuit of time, especially through its speed. Another animal that projects fear through speed and noise is the bull.

It appears in Goethe's ballad "Erlkönig" (1782), interpreted in the musical composition by

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<sup>63</sup> "principe constitutif de l'imagination" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 135).

Franz Schubert. It is also depicted in the poem "Canción del jinete" (1860) by Federico García Lorca, for example in the verses "Caballito negro/ ¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto?" (García Lorca 107).<sup>64</sup>

### c) The devouring monster (the ogre)

Takes on many forms, but they always feature "the mouth (...) equipped with sharp teeth, ready to crush and bite" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 82).<sup>65</sup> For example, the myth of Cronos, notably depicted by Goya in the work *Saturn devouring his son* (1819). Many are the devouring canine figures, such as the wolf in the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, Cerberus, or the Egyptian god Anubis.

## 2. Nictomorphic images – aspect of darkness

Just as the representation of the animal, the night also appears with two values. Evidently, we find the negative value of darkness in the diurnal regime. The night gives rise to monsters, malevolent animals and the corresponding anxiety. It is no coincidence that Mary Shelley brings Frankenstein's monster to life on a night of thundering cloudburst (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 92). Symbolically allied with darkness are:

### a) Blindness

The blind as well as the one-eyed are negative figures of the diurnal regime. Think of characters such as the blind monk in *The Name of the Rose* (1980) by Umberto Eco, the cyclops, or the countless one-eyed pirates in adventure stories.

### b) Black (hostile) water

Hostile water is the enemy of seafarers, such as Ulysses or Robinson Crusoe. Besides the blackness of water, this category also includes the image of the wave, connected to the undulating movement of hair. The range of corresponding mythical figures extends from Ophelia to Circe, Nausicaa, and Calypso. Thus, it is plausible that the connection between water and flowing hair leads to the next category:

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<sup>64</sup> Lorca's poem on the rider features the verses: "Little black horse/ where are you taking your dead rider?" (107). My translation MV.

<sup>65</sup> "la gueule armée de dents acérées, prête à broyer et à mordre" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 90).

c) The fatal female

Through the symbolism of menstrual blood (also dark and hostile water) the images of darkness move toward the negative valuation of femininity. There are many examples of dark femininity, for example mythical figures like Circe, the Furies and the Moirai.

3. Catamorphic images – aspect of falling

According to Durand, the fall brings back memories of the first frightening moment, the abrupt fall of birth (*Les structures anthropologiques* 122). The first association is:

a) Sin and punishment

In many traditional tales, the fall is related to the aspect of infringement: the biblical story of Lucifer, the myths of Icarus and Phaeton. The notion of sin is closely connected to the sexual interpretation of falling, which evokes the second group of images:

b) Carnality

The threat of carnal pleasures is linked to fatal femininity: it is represented in a diversity of narratives, from the unfortunate role of Eve and Lady Macbeth to the movie *Fatal Attraction* (1988).

The hyperbole of the images with negative value triggers a reaction: while the imagination projects anxiety through the monsters of death, “[it] is secretly sharpening the weapons to slay the Dragon” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 119).<sup>66</sup> The groupings of symbols **opposing to negative value** lead to the following oppositions, which I will detail subsequently.

animality (be in the power of the animal)	⇔ separation,
darkness	⇔ light,
falling	⇔ elevation.

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<sup>66</sup> “en secret elle aiguise les armes qui terrasseront le Dragon” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 135).

### 1. Ascensional images – aspect of ascent

The symbols of ascending verticality refer to the triumph over death and fear. They are placed opposite the symbols of falling and represent the restoration of lost power.

#### a) elevation

Appears like an upwards path or an elevated place. Frequent symbol is the ladder, as depicted in "En una noche oscura" by San Juan de la Cruz or in the chivalric novel. Other central images of this group are the peak and the mountain.

#### b) flight

Represented by the wing, the angel, and the arrow. Images of flight are abundant in fantasy literature and fairy tales, with winged figures such as fairies, elves and pixies. Christianity knows the figure of the angel; in heraldic symbolism, the eagle represents power.

#### c) sovereignty and virility

Connected with regaining lost authority. The configuration in the family sphere refers to the father, and in bodily terms, it alludes to the head and its symbolic connotations. Verticality translates to the gigantisation of the divinity. As we will see in the section on the nocturnal regime, gigantisation is not limited to male deities but is also manifest in the image of the Great Mother.

### 2. Spectacular images – aspect of light

Obviously, the archetype of light stands in opposition to the symbols of darkness. The regular appearance of the sun is accentuated, as the phases of the moon rather allude to a cyclical movement.

#### a) solar light

Connected to a great number of solar gods in various cultures and mythologies. As sunlight allows us to discern things, this group is associated with the symbolism of another luminous group:

b) vision and speech

Symbolises the potential of the eye, and the derived representation of the powers of clairvoyance, justice, and morality. Remember the examples of the prophet in classical literature, like the mythical seer Tiresias. The capacity to discern also refers to the distinctive quality of the word.

3. Diaeretical images – aspect of separation<sup>67</sup>

As light can separate, the ability to distinguish translates into the last group of symbolic images, referring to separation. It evokes an important constellation of symbolism that culminates in the figure of the solar hero, who is represented with his cutting weapon. This group of images is also associated with spiritual and ritual 'weapons': the act of purification.

a) the hero's weapon

The solar hero is a fighter, a warrior, and thus his principal symbol is the sword. Myths of solar heroes extend into romance of chivalry and superhero comics. Although predominantly male, examples of female heroism are also known: they include the Valkyries, Penthesilea, the queen of the amazons, and Joan of Arc. In popular culture and cinematography, we find the equivalent of the sword in the lightsabre from the Star Wars movies.

b) purification

Besides referring to purification by water, baptism, it is connected to purifying fire. Consider the striking example from popular culture: in *Lord of the Rings* (1954), only the flames of Mount Doom can destroy the One Ring.

The diurnal regime includes the schemes of separation and ascension, and the archetype of light. Durand points out that "the diaeretical gesture underpins this whole Order of representation", so that "The Diurnal Order is (...) essentially polemical. The

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<sup>67</sup> The adjective 'diaeretical' derives from the Greek word διαίρεσις (diaeresis) that means division.

figure expressing it is antithesis" (*The Anthropological Structures* 173).<sup>68</sup> Assembling the groups of symbols in the diurnal regime, produces the diagram of figure 2.

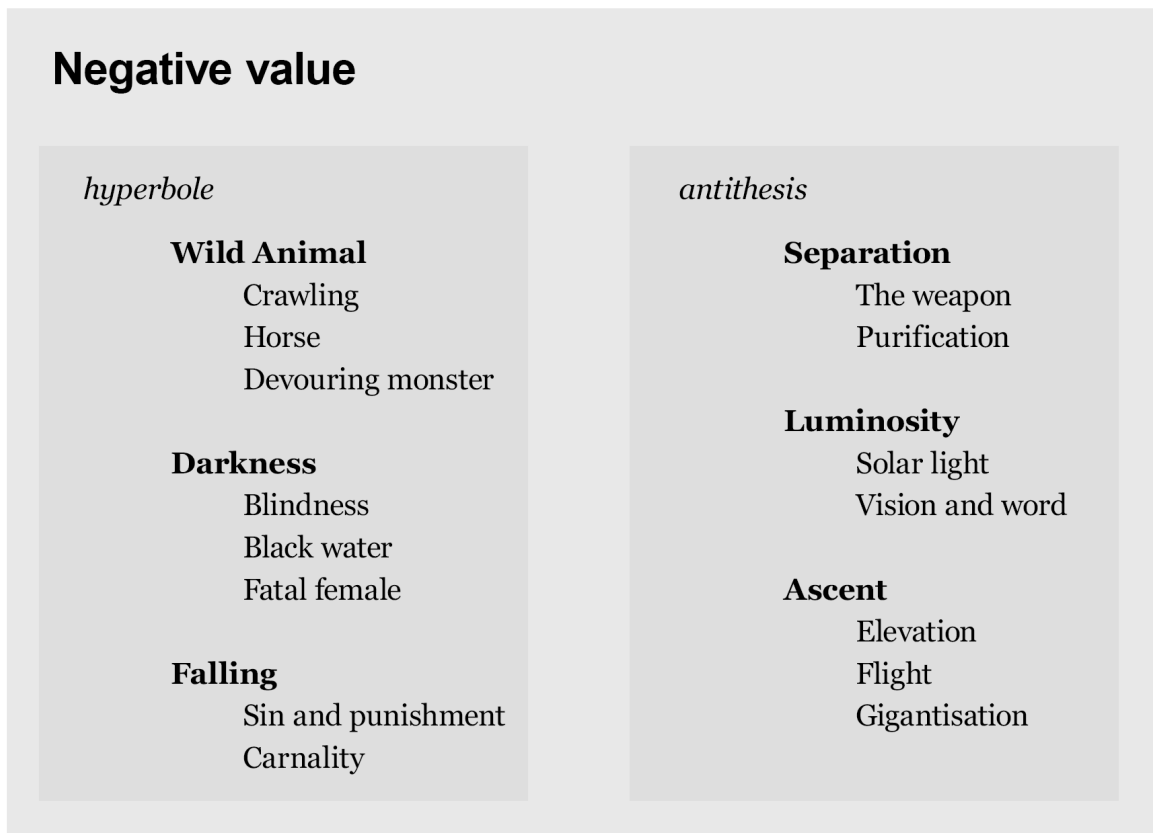


Figure 2. The diurnal regime

The diurnal regime corresponds to the postural dominant, to the tendency to ascend, also “to differentiate and distinguish more efficiently, and to have one’s hands free for diaeretical and analytic manipulations” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 173).<sup>69</sup> Thus, it adheres to the schizomorphic structure of imaginative representation, where principles of exclusion, contradiction, and identity prevail (Durand, *Les*

<sup>68</sup> “le geste diaïrétique (...) paraît sous-tendre tout ce régime de représentation”; “... [le] *Régime Diurne* est donc essentiellement polémique. La figure qui l’exprime est l’antithèse” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 202).

<sup>69</sup> “pour avoir la faculté de mieux séparer, de mieux discerner, et d’avoir les mains libres pour les manipulations diaïrétiques et analytiques” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 202).

*structures anthropologiques* 506). To give an example of this systemisation: the diurnal regime, associated with the postural dominant, comprises two schemes: the diaeretical scheme (manual as well as visual division) and the scheme of ascending verticalization (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 61). Manual division alludes to the weapon of the hero, the symbol of the sword; visual division is associated to the archetype of light: the images of the sun, the eye and the word. The ascensional scheme includes the archetype of the sky, linked to various symbols such as the ladder, the arrow or the supersonic aeroplane (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 64). The diurnal regime of the imaginary adheres primarily to the literary genre of the epos; diurnal imagination adopts the heroic attitude and takes up arms in "this combat against mortal destiny" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 118).<sup>70</sup>

### **The nocturnal regime: the mystic and synthetic tendencies**

The nocturnal regime in its entirety constitutes the opposite of the diurnal regime in the sense that it does not reinforce the essential anxieties, but uses the euphemism, by converting the threatening nature of the faces of time into symbols with positive value. Therefore, the nocturnal regime is also referred to as antiphrastic.<sup>71</sup> In line with the digestive and copulative dominants of reflexology, the nocturnal regime encompasses two major associations of images: the mystical tendency and the synthetic or dramatic tendency.

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<sup>70</sup> "combat contre le destin" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 134).

<sup>71</sup> The adjective 'antiphrastic' is related to the word 'antiphrasis'. It refers to a rhetorical figure that consists of connecting to someone or something an adjective that indicates qualities that are contrary to the ones they possess. The original quotation: "una figura retórica que consiste en poner a algo o alguien un adjetivo que indica cualidades contrarias a las que posee" ([www.retóricas.com](http://www.retóricas.com)). In the context of myth criticism, it means the inversion of the symbolic values of the diurnal regime.



**The mystical tendency** includes the symbols that produce the reversal of the negative value of the images that dominate the diurnal regime, by turning them into benevolent; they are the symbols of inversion and intimacy.

### 1. Symbols of inversion

The symbols of inversion refer to the same symbols as the ones that represent the faces of time, but they attenuate its negative value through a drastic inversion. I will clarify the first group of symbols of the nocturnal regime, by demonstrating their reversed affective value.

#### a) Jonah complex, swallowing

The reversal of the terrifying sense of the devouring monster, representing a protective swallowing. Besides the biblical story of Jonah in the whale, the Spanish fairy tale of Garbancito produces this phenomenon.

#### b) gulliverisation, reduplication

Opposed to the gigantisation inherent in the symbols of sovereignty and virility, the process of miniaturising takes place, often accompanied by the action of reduplication. Frequently present in fairy tales, through diminutive figures such as gnomes, dwarfs and little people.

#### c) benevolent night

The reversal of the frightening aspect of night, represented in the symbols of darkness, gives rise to the positive, intimate nature of night. Especially the (pre)romantics and the mystics concede a positive value to the night; a striking example is *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1800), Hymns to the Night, of the German poet Novalis.

#### d) the mother

The image of femininity also loses its fatal value in the nocturnal regime and transforms into a protective figure: the maternal woman. Its primary representation is that of the *Tellus Mater*, the Earth Mother in primitive cultures. As Durand proposes: "the Great

Goddesses (...) replace the single male Great Sovereign" (*The Anthropological Structures* 194).<sup>72</sup> It is connected to the water of the seas, so water also acquires a positive value. We recognise this relationship in Babylonian cosmogony, where Tiamat, goddess of the sea, is the origin of all creatures, and in the designation of the Virgin Mary as Star of the Sea (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 111-112).

## 2. Symbols of intimacy

The symbolic return to the mother, represented through the image of water or earth, leads to the euphemisation of death and the tomb. It translates into a revalorisation of burial rites, of tombs, and caves. In the end, this movement extends to other images of closed intimacy.

### a) closed and intimate spaces

Central images are the cave and the house, often reduplicated to the room as "a small house in the large" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 236).<sup>73</sup> Examples featuring intimate spaces are *Las moradas* (1577) by Teresa de Ávila; and the protected spaces in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) or *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* (1967) by Michel Tournier. Other symbolic figures of intimacy are the ship and even the automobile; miniaturisation produces the symbolic value of all containers, like the cup (the Grail), the nutshell or the egg.

### b) alimentation

As the containers are solidary with the content, the symbols of intimacy, ruled by the digestive dominant, also refer to nutrition. This first group of images goes back to the primary scheme of swallowing and alludes to all alimentary substances with symbolic value, such as milk, honey and salt.

The second tendency within the nocturnal regime, **the synthetic or dramatic tendency**, adopts a different position against the passage of time. It exerts control over

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<sup>72</sup> "les Grandes Déesses (...) vont remplacer le Grand Souverain mâle et unique" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 226).

<sup>73</sup> "une petite maison dans la grande" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 278).

being through “the repetition of temporal instants” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 271).<sup>74</sup> That is, an alternation of negative and positive values comes into play, in line with the copulative dominant that connects to the regularity of rhythmical movement. The repetitive force ultimately culminates in a movement of progression. Durand also designates the synthetic tendency as dramatic due to its alternating manifestation of tragic and triumphant phases (*Les structures anthropologiques* 323).

### 1. Cyclical scheme

The symbols of the cyclical scheme refer to the regular and infinite return of opposite elements; its archetypal image is the circle.

#### a) the cycle

The most frequent manifestations are the lunar and vegetal cycles. They can appear in narrative through “the so-called agro-lunar dramas, which narrate the death and resurrection of a mythical character”, such as the story of Adonis or the Egyptian myth of Osiris (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 118).<sup>75</sup> A typical example is the Greek myth of Persephone, the goddess who stays part of the year with Hades in the Underworld, the period that corresponds to the third part of the year when the earth does not bring fruit. Another important image is that of weaving: for one thing, it connects to the thread, the tie is a symbol of continuity; for another, weaving alludes to a rhythmic technique. We recognize the character of Penelope, who accentuates the back-and-forth of the loom, while undoing her work during the night.

#### b) the hybrid

Symbols that include two opposite elements at the same time; it is represented in the two-faced deity Janus. Another striking example is the androgynous figure (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 333). It can encompass the coexistence of good and evil, as in the duality of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

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<sup>74</sup> “la répétition des instants temporels” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 321).

<sup>75</sup> My translation MV: “los denominados *dramas agrolunares*, que narran la muerte y la resurrección de un personaje mítico” (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 118).

2. Myth of progress

The dominant archetype in this group is the tree, propulsor of the image of the cross, the union of opposites, totalising space and time; from the tree the fire comes into being, which also alludes to sexuality (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 123). The quintessential myth of progress is messianic myth.

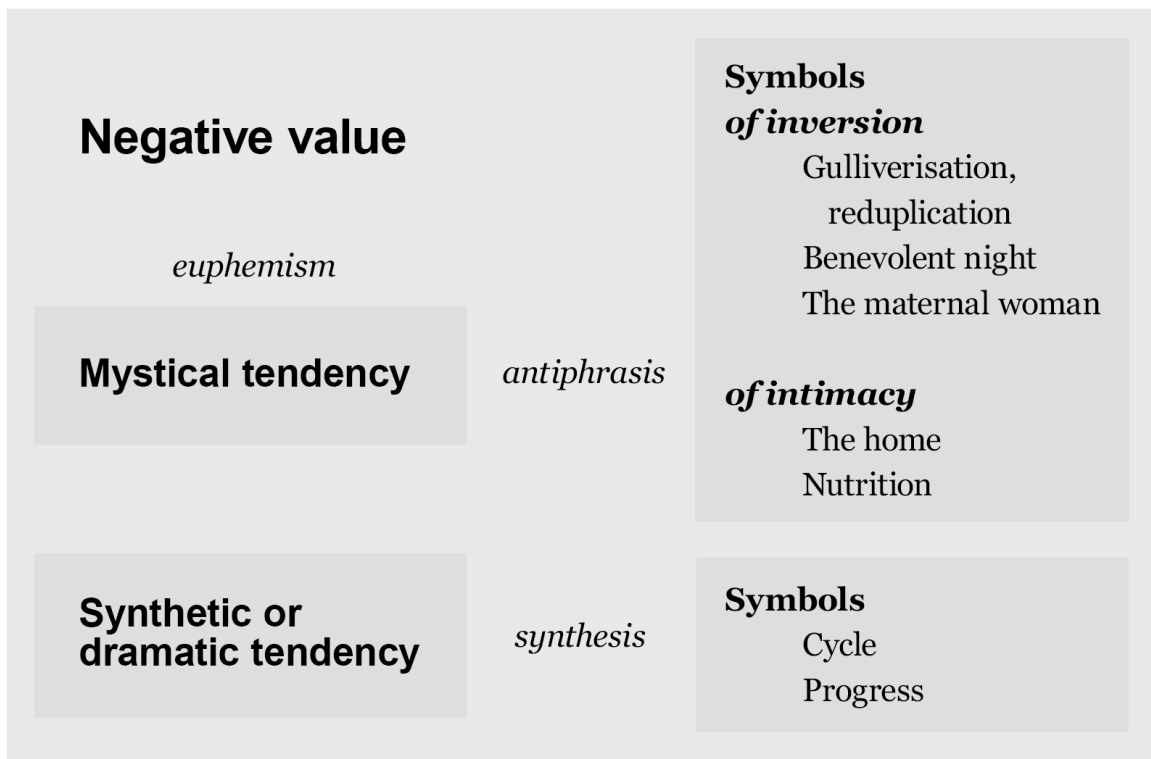


Figure 3. The nocturnal regime

Clearly, the mystical tendency corresponds to the digestive dominant, with “its tactile, olfactory and gustatory derivatives” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 416).<sup>76</sup> It shows a progressive inward movement, “returning to the maternal breast’s initial peace” (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 116).<sup>77</sup> In the mystical tendency the principles of *analogy*

<sup>76</sup> “ses dérivés *tactiles, olfactifs, gustatifs*” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 506).

<sup>77</sup> My translation MV: “el regreso a la paz primordial del seno materno” (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 116).

and *similarity* are leading; in the synthetic tendency *causality* prevails (Durand *Les structures anthropologiques* 506).

### **Myth criticism: identifying textual structures**

Now, let us shift our focus to the literary criticism discipline that investigates a work according to the principles of figurative structuralism: myth criticism. To begin with, Durand's categorisation of images conceived by humans enables the interpretation of repetitive representations that appear in a particular work of art, in this case in a literary text. According to the methodology, the interpretative process is preceded by an analysis of the formal mechanisms of the text. Subsequently, the text's symbolic structure is analysed, based on recurring images. Then, follows the grouping of repetitive textual elements into mythemes, from which the literary text can be connected to a specific myth. Finally, the results of the symbolic analysis are situated in the context of the author's biography.

In order to clarify the methodological process, I provide a summary of the effective concepts in these two phases of the myth critical procedure: the analysis of the text's symbolic structure and mythemic interpretation. Starting with the exposition of the concept 'mytheme', I revisit section 2.2.1, where it is explained how it proceeds from Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach. Durand adopts the terminology of Lévi-Strauss, while referring to mythemes as the minimal units with mythical significance (*Figures mythiques* 310). They manifest in the text through *isomorphism* and *redundancy*, the repetitive and accumulative presence of similar symbols.<sup>78</sup> It is important to note that isomorphism (meaning, with similar form) refers to the sense of the symbol and not its form (Gutiérrez, interview 8 December 2021). According to myth critical procedure,

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<sup>78</sup> See the definitions in Appendix 1.

textual units with similar symbolic value that repeat in the text, are joined together. The original example of such a procedure is Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the Oedipus myth: the relevant situations in the mythic narrative are organised into four columns.<sup>79</sup> Two pairs of columns are placed confronting each other, thus demonstrating how myth serves to reconcile what is apparently contradictory.

Let me point out that Durand expands Lévi-Strauss' conception of 'mytheme', while underlining that it refers to an object, an act, or a situation (Durand, "Pas à pas" 234).<sup>80</sup> Another relevant factor in the process of identifying the mythemes, is the fact that it can appear in two ways:

a) *overt*: through the explicit repetition of a homologous content, which can be a situation, object, character, etc.

b) *latent*: through the repetition of an implicit intentional pattern (Durand, *Figures mythiques* 310).

Especially the latent nature of the mytheme provokes the relevance of the verbal scheme, the situation and the action (Durand, "Pas à pas" 237).

In conclusion, despite its complex nature, one cannot deny the potential of the comprehensive system of figurative structuralism, which I have summarised in this chapter.<sup>81</sup> Besides the inaccessibility of the system, due to the unusual vocabulary rooted in anthropological terminology, arises the ambivalence of a large part of the

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<sup>79</sup> See Figure 1 in section 2.2.2.

<sup>80</sup> For example, in the myth of Hermes the emblematic object refers to the wings that the god wears on his helmet, on his heels and his caduceus, accentuating his function as an intermediary between high and low, between gods and humans, between the sky and the earth. In the case of the Hermes myth, the act or the situation would be robbery or exchange (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 185).

<sup>81</sup> See Franzone, who states that myth criticism is a long and painful procedure; however, those who manage the structures and schemes will find a rich and knowledgeable system (2005).

symbols, which, as we have seen, are situated in two categories whose union seems impossible. I suggest that a reinterpretation of the system would facilitate its use, in this case for the analysis of the motif.

#### **2.2.4 Reflections on the ambivalence of the system**

In the previous section I emphasised the multifaceted nature of myth critical methodology. However, due to its unusual instrumentation, it is no surprise that certain current myth critical analyses suffer from a lack of clarity regarding method and terminology. As it seems, using the myth critical procedure for a clear analysis of literary texts is not that evident. Although Durand attempts to clarify his method in later publications, he is mainly interested in the development of his ideas, like the introduction of mythanalysis and the multidisciplinary nature of his thinking.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, according to Gutiérrez, Durand is not preoccupied with the followers of his theory that take a diverging direction (interview 8 December 2021). Besides the terminological problems, the fundamental categorization of images is, in line with the era of its conception, primarily organised from a male perspective (Chambers 104). Well then, I maintain that, despite these objections, myth criticism provides a wide range of tools that covers the main aspects of the motif. At the same time, the starting point of the categorisation and the inherent terminology need a reevaluation. Hence, I will discuss in the following paragraphs the elements of myth criticism that can be integrated in an instrument for motif interpretation.

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<sup>82</sup> See for example *Figures mythiques et visages de l'œuvre* (1979) and "Pas à pas mythocritique" (1996).

I will first follow the steps of myth critical procedure to situate them side by side with the definition of the motif.<sup>83</sup> First and foremost, I connect the recognition of repetitive textual images, the first step in myth critical procedure, to the fragment in the definition that refers to 'a group of repetitive textual elements'; the establishment of the text's symbolic structure, according to the categories of the imaginary, coincides with the symbolic level of the motif. Secondly, the mythemic analysis, the association of the text with myth, corresponds with the text's situation in literary tradition; at the same time, myth criticism situates the flexibility of myth in the socio-historical context of the work, thus being consistent with the varied manifestation of the motif. Finally, although Durand does not accentuate the reader's perspective in his early studies, he alludes in *Figures mythiques et visages de l'œuvre* to the interaction between the reader and the text:

Thus, 'myth criticism' will immediately search for the work's essence in the confrontation between the mythical universe formed by the reader's 'taste' or understanding, and the mythical universe that emerges from reading a particular work.

The centre of gravity of this method is situated at this confluence between what is read and the reader... (Durand, *Figures mythiques* 309)<sup>84</sup>

On the face of it, myth criticism provides the appropriate instrument for motif analysis. However, given the problems of terminology and categorisation, the method needs a reevaluation. I will now reflect on the foundation of myth critical procedure: the

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<sup>83</sup> The definition of the motif, as it appears in the introductory paragraph: a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition.

<sup>84</sup> My translation MV: "La «mythocritique» va donc d'emblée chercher l'être même de l'œuvre dans la confrontation de l'univers mythique qui forme le «goût» ou la compréhension du lecteur avec l'univers mythique qui émerge de la lecture de telle œuvre déterminée. C'est à cette confluence entre ce qui est lu et celui qui lit que se situe le centre de gravité de cette méthode..." (Durand, *Figures mythiques* 309).



categorisation of the images that sustains the determination of the symbolic structure of the text.

It is worth noting, in the first place, that the exposition of the regimes of the imaginary in the previous paragraphs (2.2.3) largely follows the basic classification proposed by Durand in *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Gutiérrez suggests that nowadays the Durand school abandons the bipartition of the system and the subdivision of the nocturnal regime, adhering to a tripartition that directly refers to the heroic, mystic and synthetic regimes (*Mitocrítica* 84, 108).<sup>85</sup> It seems to me that a division in three groups is the fundamental option within the framework of updating the system; I will organise the argumentation for such a revision in conformity with pragmatic and theoretical factors. In the realm of myth critical practice, the separation of the tendencies of the nocturnal regime eliminates the problems concerning the delineation of the regimes.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, by removing the terms 'diurnal' and 'nocturnal', the ambivalent value of the allusions to darkness is reduced. As we have seen, in the original system of figurative structuralism coexist the notion 'nictomorphic', meaning aspect of darkness and referring to the symbols that are located in the diurnal regime, and the nocturnal regime, which also alludes to darkness.

Apropos of the theoretical arguments, it is evident that the distinction between the three categories corresponds directly to relevance of the reflexology dominants. Secondly, eliminating a strong opposition like the one between day and night responds

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<sup>85</sup> García Berrio y Hernández Fernández adopt in their *Crítica literaria. Iniciación al estudio de la literatura* (2004) the tripartition of the regimes of myth criticism according to the dominants of reflexology, although they do not follow the particulars of durandian terminology (174-5). Some critics, like Yáñez Félix in his analysis of *El amante de Janis Joplin* (2001), refer to a third category that addresses the cyclical (294).

<sup>86</sup> In the article on *El huésped* (2006) by Guadalupe Nettel, Cardozo González confuses tendencies of the nocturnal regime, while mixing up the manifestation of the hybrid, inherent in the synthetic tendency, with the concepts of inversion and intimacy, which are situated in the mystic tendency (116). Ilgürel neither knows how to distinguish the tendencies of the nocturnal regime in his study of *Postal de viaje* (2003) by Luz María Giraldo (2018).

to the comments of feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Hélène Cixous, who criticise in gender theory the reductive character of the said dichotomies. Finally, I will demonstrate that the division in three categories coincides with the key aspects of creative motivation, which will be presented in the next section.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, I will include the tripartition of the groups of images in the revised categorisation.

Besides the reorganisation in three categories, it is also necessary to reflect on the naming of the groups in question. To begin with, I replace the French term 'regime' for a neutral equivalent that underlines the function of the system of image groupings, which is to categorise. Hence, I opt for the term 'category'. Subsequently, I remove the terms that accentuate the nature of the categories: 'heroic', 'mystical' and 'synthetic'. In his later works, Durand already comments on the problematic use of the term 'synthetic', which suggests an unwanted relationship with Hegel's dialectics (*Figures mythiques* 28-9). To my understanding, the term 'dramatic' is not a useful alternative because it is mainly associated with theatrical arts. Furthermore, as it turns out from practical experience, the term 'mystical' is prone to some confusion due to its religious and spiritual connotation.<sup>88</sup> Finally, although the term 'heroic' could also refer to a female character, I prefer replacing it with a more neutral epithet.

Clearly, a clear denomination of the categories benefits the feasibility of an analysis centred on the concepts in question. Upon closer examination of Durand's systemization, it is apparent that its starting point is the diurnal regime. The nocturnal regime is then defined as "[the] imaginary process of the inversion of values" (Durand,

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<sup>87</sup> See paragraph 3.1.2.

<sup>88</sup> In his article about *Suma de claridades* (1992) by the poet Laureano Albán, Campos López situates his analysis in the mystical tendency of the nocturnal regime, based on the premise that the poetry collection belongs to Albán's mystical production, although without defining the categories and their characteristics (2016).

*The Anthropological Structures* 189).<sup>89</sup> In other words, one alludes to the nocturnal regime with an inverse formulation, which depends on the previous definition of the values of the diurnal regime.<sup>90</sup> The two tendencies of the nocturnal regime are then separated: the mystical tendency is the group of images “constituted by the simple inversion of the emotional value attributed to the faces of time” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 191).<sup>91</sup> The other tendency “alternatively exploit[s] the negative and positive valorisations of images” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 272).<sup>92</sup>

Although he does not mention the study by Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), it is probable that Durand was aware of this work.<sup>93</sup> Durand appears to have found inspiration in Campbell's text, published before his own study on figurative structuralism. Campbell conceives the concept of the monomyth, by proposing that every mythic narrative unfolds according to the formula of the hero's journey, as an initiation process. It is evident that this perspective adheres predominantly to the male viewpoint.<sup>94</sup> Even though Durand is not content with heroic myth alone, I suggest that his systemisation is not foreign to the predominance of the

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<sup>89</sup> “ce processus imaginaire d'inversion des valeurs” (Durand, *Les structures* 221).

<sup>90</sup> The study of Stendhal's work, published a year after the publication of *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, produces the same effect. The first part defines the protagonist of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Fabrizio del Dongo, according to the diurnal regime. His heroic appearance is accentuated in the chapter “L'exaltation du héros” (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 16), while his theriomorphic adversaries are identified: dragons, hellhounds and the fatal female. The second part shows how the ambiance of the hero changes, while introducing the maternal woman and the happy prison. It is noticeable that the first chapter of this part is titled “La conversion du héros”, the conversion of the hero (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 137).

<sup>91</sup> “constitué par une pure et simple inversion de la valeur affective attribuée aux visages du temps” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 224).

<sup>92</sup> “mettront alternativement en jeu les valorisations négatives et les valorisations positives des images” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 323).

<sup>93</sup> Campbell as well as Durand participated in the conferences of the Fundación Eranos, which took place in Switzerland in the thirties of the twentieth century.

<sup>94</sup> CrashCourse, the educational YouTube channel, asserts in its episode on the monomyth that “Campbell is (...) pretty divisive and had (...) a very narrow view of gender including the role of women” (CrashCourse 0.01.53). Despite all this, the numerous examples of its application indicate that it still is a popular analysis model, in literature as well as in film.

male perspective. Indeed, the network of concepts and definitions of the system in its totality is built on the original delineation of the diurnal regime as the sphere where the faces of time, the existential anxieties of human beings, are represented. At the same time, it is no surprise that a categorisation like Durand's system originally is built on the foundation of the diurnal regime. Besides the fact that we think preferably according to the diurnal, this category encompasses the diaeretical scheme, where the proprieties of argumentation and categorisation are situated. It seems plausible that the urge to provide a scientific frame for his theory led to a systemisation constructed on the base of the diurnal regime. Furthermore, Durand's theory acquired its initial form in the 1950s of the twentieth century, which makes it understandable that it accentuated the male voice.

Be that as it may, I argue that a fundamental inconsistency of Durand's system is rooted in advancing the diurnal regime. Based on the premise that the impulses that drive the symbolisation process are universal, terminology based on generic dichotomies cannot be used subsequently. When viewed from the perspective of gender polarities, the symbolism of verticality and the strong representation of the hero in the heroic regime is connected to masculinity. Besides, the heroic regime represents the confrontation between masculinity and femininity because it places the hero character at the centre of the fight with theriomorphic monsters, which often acquire the aspect of the fatal female. Aspects of sovereign power and leadership are in this category almost exclusively associated with masculinity.

The mystical regime accentuates its female quality by highlighting from the outset the significance of intimate spaces, like a movement of intrauterine regress. The fact that, in traditional myth, the symbols in question are mainly connected with the maternal, reinforces an exclusive connection between femininity and corporeality, on

the one hand, and maternity, on the other. Durand's systemization does not promote a link between the intimate space and masculinity, whereas in contemporary literature the accent on intimacy also appears in a male environment. Finally, the synthetic regime includes the union of masculinity and femininity, also represented by the figure of the androgyne. Given the current tendency to transcend the fixed lines of gender identity, it seems justifiable to let go of rigid divisions based on gender opposition.

In conclusion, in order to adapt myth criticism to the analysis of the motif, it needs a reorganisation of the procedure and an update of the categorisation foundation. Under this condition, myth criticism can be integrated in the interpretative tool, based on the methodological elements that coincide with the definition of the motif.

### **2.2.5 Conclusion on myth criticism**

With the introduction of figurative structuralism Gilbert Durand constructs an extensive categorisation of the human's imaginary. Based on that system, creative productions can be analysed by connecting them with ancestral myth. By accentuating the sociological and multidisciplinary situation of his theory, Durand develops his ideas towards myth criticism, method for the analysis of the individual work, and mythanalysis, which engages in the understanding of myth reinterpretations in a socio-historical framework. Durand's postulate concerning the predominance of the human being's imaginative power has inspired a wide range of theorists in a diversity of scientific disciplines; at the same time, myth criticism, as a defined method, has not brought forward a fixed theoretical direction, as it lends itself to different interpretations.

I investigated in this section which elements of myth criticism can be integrated in a research model, applicable to motif analysis. Myth critical methodology is centred on

text analysis according to the grouping of isomorphic and redundant symbols, and the interpretation of the symbolic value of these text elements. It also includes the connection of the text to possible ancestral myth and the relevance of the socio-historical situation of the text. Thus, myth criticism responds to the following key elements of the motif: repetition and variation in literary tradition; repetition of textual elements; the symbolic level that connects the text with myth. Myth criticism covers the unifying aspect of the symbolic level, in line with the anthropological starting point and the sociological tendency of the method. Since it engages in interpretation, the reader's view is also at stake, although it is not emphasised in the theory.

Meanwhile, I also established the fundamental problematic points of myth critical method, when used for the present-day analysis of literary texts. The impression prevails of complex terminology, according to theoretical concepts of diverse origin, and of a basic perspective that organises the categories from gender classifications that do not respond to current ideas. The integration of myth criticism into the tool for motif interpretation requires the revaluation of the starting point of the categorisation and the reformulation of the terminology, in particular the nomenclature of the categories.

It is worth noting, finally, that the structural approach to the text aligns with intertextuality, which also addresses the formal aspect of the text. Furthermore, the interpretation of the symbolic value of the text offers a unique interpretative level that complements the genotextual procedure, since it is associated with the text's meaning, in line with the understanding of the mythical tale. It is plausible to assume the added value of the convergence of intertextuality and myth criticism into a combined

instrument that comprehensively covers the understanding of the literary text, and in particular of the motif.





### **3 MYTH TEXTUALITY: A COMBINED MODEL FOR MOTIF ANALYSIS**

According to the objective of this theoretical part, I will compose in the following sections the combined analytical instrument that encompasses the key elements of the motif. To underline the relevance of the constituent methods, intertextuality and myth criticism, I refer to the definition of the textual element that is the centre of attention of this work, the motif. I have defined the motif as a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition. The hypothesis formulated in the introduction posits that understanding the motif, its simultaneously varied and traditional nature, requires a pertinent analytical tool.<sup>95</sup> I compose this instrument in line with the key aspects of the motif: repetition, variation, and symbolic level. The definition of the motif also highlights two additional aspects: the reader's perception, inherent in intertextuality, and the socio-historical situation of the text, component of both intertextuality and myth criticism.

In the following paragraphs, I will detail how these key elements are reflected in the analysis of the motif through the convergence of the aforementioned methods. I will respond to the central question: How do the central principles of intertextuality and the method of myth textuality combine to form a comprehensive reading tool that addresses the key elements of the motif?

The first paragraph (3.1), will encompass the delineation of the components of myth textuality, following the recommendations of the sections 2.1 y 2.2. To begin with, I will address the definition of the methods separately. From Kristeva's texts on the

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<sup>95</sup> See section 1.3.

genotext, I will derive a defined analytical instrument regarding the identification of the traces of the genotext. I focus on how the individuation process takes shape in the text, through thematization of borderline issues. Furthermore, I inquire into how to reformulate Durand's terminology into a manageable instrument. I intend to emphasise the internal dynamics of the categories, connecting them to the creative force that produces the work of art; I also eliminate problematic terminology by suggesting the use of alternative terms. Thus, an updated procedure is generated, with its emphasis on the dynamic of the creative process aligning with the drive that produces the motif. I then reformulate the myth critical method to adapt it to current conditions. Section 3.2 will concentrate on the concrete construction of the instrument from the convergence of the constituents intertextuality and myth criticism. I present a schematic model of the procedure in its entirety according to the methodological steps. Finally, I will reflect on the cohesion of the model by analysing the parallels and the complementarity of intertextuality and myth criticism (3.3). I will come to a conclusion of the theoretical part in 3.4.

#### **3.1 Exposition of the components of myth textuality**

In the previous sections, I established that the inventors of intertextuality and myth criticism, Kristeva and Durand, did not adhere to a fixed delineation of their methods. On the contrary, they appear to suggest a broad development of their work. On the one hand, various interpretations of their ideas and concepts emerged in the practice of intertextuality and myth criticism, by theorists from a diversity of disciplines. On the other hand, in their own theoretical trajectory, Kristeva and Durand tend to diverge from their initial concepts, as they comment on and refine their previous theories. Therefore, I take the liberty that they allow, to build upon the ideas and concepts of intertextuality and myth criticism. First, I compose an instrument for genotextual analysis based on Kristeva's ideas on intertextuality. Second, I reformulate the categories of the imaginary, introduced by Durand, to facilitate a clearer myth critical analysis. I detail the procedures separately in order to combine them later into a unified instrument for the interpretation of the motif,

The intertextual component is founded upon Kristeva's two-part definition: the reader's perception of textual interaction occurring within the text, and the reader interpreting intertextuality as an indicator of the text's historical context. It is evident that myth criticism, the analysis of the text to connect it with myth, resides in the same realm of recognising interrelated texts. Therefore, the general principles of intertextuality will serve as the foundation of the combined procedure, myth textuality. However, the duality present in the definition of intertextuality gives rise to two different interpretations. On the one side, the well-known intertextuality: the perception, within the text, of fragments from other texts. On the other side, the relationships between textual strata, like the interaction between genotext and phenotext. Both interpretations

are relevant for analysing the various components of the motif. Thus, two separate procedures that fall within the broader scope of intertextuality need to be considered: intertextual analysis and genotextual analysis. We will see in the section on myth criticism that this procedure requires a previous analysis of the formal mechanisms of the text. I propose that intertextual analysis can serve as the preliminary step to the actual myth critical analysis.<sup>96</sup>

### 3.1.1 Definition of the genotextual instrument according to Kristeva

As I asserted in section 2.1.4, Kristeva's ideas about the genotext provide a wide range of perspectives through which the motif can be interpreted. However, since Kristeva does not offer a refined analytical instrument, it is necessary to construct one based on the clues that appear in her texts. Hence, the question arises: how can a defined analytical procedure be derived from Kristeva's theory on the genotext? To begin with, we need to briefly revisit section 2.1.3 regarding the central concepts, genotext and phenotext. The genotext refers to the elements in the text that connect with the primordial level of the subject's existence, where pre-linguistic nature prevails, and social categories and linguistic divisions do not impose themselves. In contrast, the phenotext produces the unequivocal sense of communication, interpretable according to linguistic rules. While the phenotext can be analysed according to linguistic rules, the genotext is situated prior to and beneath linguistic organisation. Therefore, the genotext requires its own instrument for the recognition of its traces in the text.

While erupting in the structured appearance of the phenotext, the genotext encompasses the textual traces of two phases in the individuation process: the *chora*, the primordial state of union between the new-born and the mother's body; the initial

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<sup>96</sup> See the elaboration of myth critical procedure in 3.1.2.

scission, the thetic phase, which initiates the process of signification. Kristeva emphasizes the following factors that determine the presence of the genotext. First and foremost, the reiterative nature of the primary experiences of union and separation in the unconscious prevails. Therefore, they emerge in the text as “the compulsion to repetition” (Kristeva, “The System” 29). This repetitiveness reinforces the recognition of the traces of the genotext, prompting the reader to identify the genotextual elements in the text. Secondly, it always involves boundaries, “[a]ll functions which suppose a frontier (...) and a transgression of that frontier” (*ibid.*). On the whole, the boundary traces of the genotext are found in two ways: through the experience of initial separation and the subsequent phase; from the still unclear definition of the difference between subject and object, the exploration of boundaries. When explaining in more detail the two groups of genotextual manifestation, it is worth highlighting that both categories, the accentuation of the initial scission and the exploration of boundaries, partially overlap.

- **The accentuation of the experience of initial scission**

- ⇒ The thematization of separation, which can be both concretised at narrative level and through textual organisation. The representation of the illness of being separated, melancholy; separation that is fixed in a place results in feeling displaced. On the syntactic level, through gaps in the sentence structure. On the contextual level, through deviation from logic.

- ⇒ The expression of want and need. The aspiration for the restoration of the initial union, the yearning for corporeal continuity.

As it is a repetitive process, resulting in an eternal search for belonging.

- ⇒ The problematization of restrictions.

The experiences that follow the initial separation: the problematic experience of family order and social structure.

- **The continuous exploration of boundaries**

- ⇒ The distinction between the 'self' and others (between subject and object).

- The alteration, doubling or multiplication of the subject of the enunciation.

- ⇒ Abjection, the boundaries of what is physically and morally permissible.

- Material: alimentary revulsion; corporeal materiality like excrements, blood or pus; debris and the corpse.

- Abstract: anxiety, horror, violence, according to literary genres of horror, gothic fiction, crime fiction.

- ⇒ The rules of discourse.

- Poetic devices like metaphor, metonymy; divergent textual structure; deviation from contextual logic.

In conclusion, genotextual analysis encompasses a variety of textual elements: it involves imagery and semantics, while also covering style, syntactic-level structure and the graphical lay-out of the text.

### **3.1.2 Reformulation of Durand's myth critical method**

Within the framework of this study, myth criticism engages in the interpretation of the literary text in order to subsequently connect it with ancestral myth, while considering the socio-historical context of the work. The method identifies recurring images in the text and then categorises them according to the regimes within in the imaginary. From this symbolic structure, follows the organisation into mythemes that may reveal a connection with a mythic narrative.

As we saw in section 2.2.4, the integration of myth criticism into the interpretative tool requires a reformulation of terminology, especially the nomenclature of the categories. Furthermore, in line with current ideas about agency and gender identities, it is necessary to review the principles of categorisation. Therefore, I start from the premise that a reformulation of the myth critical instrument by enhancing terminological

clarity and balanced gender agency, promotes the feasibility and urgency of myth critical analysis. I will address the following research question: How is myth critical terminology reformulated to ensure clarity and applicability of the method in motif analysis?

As I explained in the previous section, Durand proposed reorganising the regimes into three groups. However, he retains the original nomenclature that suggests a hierarchical relationship between the three categories: heroic, mystic and synthetic. I argue that it is not sufficient to separate these groups of symbols; it is also necessary to define them according to the internal dynamics of each category itself. I suggest revisiting the origin of myth as an explanation for human anxieties and conflicts. Remember that Lévi-Strauss had advanced the idea that apprehending the other as opposition is the intrinsic motivation of all thought (Gómez García 122).<sup>97</sup> Lévi-Strauss' interpretation of the genesis of myth states:

In the background of every mythological system resides a sequence that is absolutely unspeakable -not oppositional-, that in the end reduces to a primary pair of opposition or 'primary asymmetry' from which the play of successive transformations occurs: high and low, sky and earth, water and ground, left and right, male and female... (Gómez García 122)<sup>98</sup>

Similarly, Durand asserts that the origin of every imaginative thought is grounded in Manichaeism; in his analysis of the work of Stendhal, he seems to agree with Lévi-

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<sup>97</sup> Since the constituent of myth, as of any thinking, resides in the perception of the other, the function of myth is rooted in offering a logical mediation for opposition or structural dissymmetries, thus correcting or dissimulating them (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 122-3). This coincides with Lévi-Strauss, who situates the myth's objective in providing a logical model for resolving a contradiction. The original quotation: "l'objet du mythe est de fournir un modèle logique pour résoudre une contradiction" (254). Therefore, the well-known analysis of the Oedipus myth leads to a structure of binary oppositions (Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie* 235-36).

<sup>98</sup> My translation MV. "En el fondo de todo sistema mitológico yace "una secuencia absolutamente indecible" -no oposicional-, que viene a reducirse a un primer par de oposición o "asimetría primera" de la que arranca el juego de las transformaciones sucesivas: alto y bajo, cielo y tierra, tierra y agua, izquierda y derecha, macho y hembra..." (Gómez García 122).

Strauss' proposition about dualism as the source of all thought (*Le décor mythique* 73).<sup>99</sup>

I propose that, by analogy, the conflicting situation, encountering the unfamiliar, provokes the motivation for all creation. Three types of *modus operandi* are employed to handle manifestations of alterity: first, polemical opposition to the other element, also known as the *principium tertii exclusi*.<sup>100</sup> Second, the inclusion of the foreign element. And finally, the creation of a third element, the result of an exchange that combines the two opposites, known as *coincidentia oppositorum*. This premise supports a reformulation based on the properties of each category separately. The three positions run parallel to the internal dynamics of the regimes of the imaginary. Clearly, the heroic regime takes the form of opposition; to avoid confusion with the narrower concept of heroic myth, which already refers to a specific group of mythical narratives, I will refer to this category as 'polemic'. I will call the category that constitutes the regular alternation of opposing elements as 'rhythmic', in accordance with the copulative dominant of reflexology. I suggest referring to the category that, according to the digestive dominant, is associated with the movement of inclusion as the 'centric' category. In line with previous observations, the terms 'synthesis', 'antithesis', 'antiphrasis' and 'euphemisation' referring to the movements in force in the regimes will be omitted in the reformulated model. As they conform to the internal dynamics of the categories, I retain in the adapted model the groupings of symbols, according to Durand's initial systematisation.

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<sup>99</sup> However, Durand is not satisfied with the antithesis but emphasises that a definite opposition "results in an absolute vacuity (...) or in polemical tension and constant stressful self-surveillance". From this statement follows the prolongation of the first category of images, the heroic regime, into "the plenary Order of euphemism" (*The Anthropological Structures* 187).

"débouche soit sur une vacuité absolue (...) soit sur une tension polémique et une constante surveillance de soi fatigante pour l'attention"; "le régime plénier de l'euphémisme" (*Les structures anthropologiques* 219; 220).

<sup>100</sup> Term from Aristotle's logic referring to the following situation: a proposition states one thing and another one contradicts it; if one of them is true, a third option is impossible.



By eliminating lesser-known anthropological terminology, we arrive at the following division:

1. The **polemic category** refers to groups of opposing symbols

- Aspect of animality                    ⇔ defence (the weapon)
- Aspect of darkness                    ⇔ aspect of luminosity
- Aspect of falling                      ⇔ aspect of ascent

The key dynamic is opposition and separation

2. The **centric category** encompasses groups of symbols that are linked to inward movement. Its key dynamic is inclusion; to avoid confusion, I will not use the term 'inversion'. Actions of doubling and nesting are conceived as insertion into a larger whole; in this category the symbol of the night gives presence to an enveloping entity and the maternal woman represents the return to the womb. Clearly, the intimacy of the symbols of home and nutrition conforms to the movement of inclusion.

3. The **rhythmic category** includes symbols connected to alternating movement, i.e., "the permanent exchange of contrasting angles and perspectives" (Yáñez Félix 293).<sup>101</sup> This category refers to the cycle and is represented by the image of the circle; it is also represented by the figure of the hybrid, which is both union and duality at the same time. Lastly, when the continuous exchange of alternating elements entails the dynamic of growth, myths of progress are produced.

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<sup>101</sup> My translation MV. "intercambio permanente de puntos de vista y de perspectivas en contrapunto" (Yáñez Félix 293).

In conclusion, according to myth critical approach, the convergence of opposing elements, whether through opposition or through the reconciliation process, lies at the root of all mythical representation. I underline the parallelism between this proposition and the premise that confronting with the other is the driving force of creative work. Although the classification of the categories seems clear, it does not imply a rigid delineation; the boundaries within the system are fluid. Two phenomena resulting from the interaction between the categories are of vital importance for the interpretation of the literary work: ambivalence and hybridity. Ambivalence in this context is understood as the possibility of two contradictory interpretations: we can choose the appropriate interpretation based on the context. The hybrid, on the other hand, unites the two opposing manifestations within itself. It is not a matter of choosing one or the other, as both possible interpretations are present simultaneously. As we saw in section 2.2.3, many symbols, such as darkness, femininity or engulfment often fall into both the diurnal (polemic category) and nocturnal (centric category) regimes, so they must be interpreted according to the context of the narrative in question. Durand himself emphasises the intrinsic ambiguity of symbolic images, proposing that the nocturnal regime continues to use the same vocabulary as the diurnal "but will cover quite a different imaginary context" (*The Anthropological Structures* 193).<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the process of euphemisation of the existential anxieties occurs in stages, partially retaining the terrifying sense of the symbols (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 193). The gradual transformation of symbols with negative value, from brutal animality to the carnal terrors of falling, is prolonged by internalisation of the symbols of inversion and intimacy.

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<sup>102</sup> "mais en lui faisant couvrir tout un autre contexte imaginaire" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 225).

What intensifies the ambivalence, is the coexistence of images from different regimes in the same literary text. For example, the analysis of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839) establishes a fluctuation between diurnal and nocturnal structures, distinguishing two pillars for the décor of the work: the heroic and the mystic. Thus, the prison where protagonist Fabrizio del Dongo is held takes on two aspects: it represents captivity, which is the threat to his heroic adventure, and at the same time it is the happy prison, the summit of intimacy (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 159). In the case of Stendhal's work, Durand interprets the ambiguity of the images as a tendency toward the novel. When the epos transforms into the initial form of the novel,

... human imagination seems to begin alternating different *regimes*, to glide from the diurnal regime, represented by the epic gesture and symbolised by the sword, to the nocturnal regime, which is mystical and symbolised by the cup and all the symbols of intimacy. (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 133)<sup>103</sup>

In other words, the novel is the literary genre *par excellence* where the images from the polemic and the centric category alternate.

Durand points out the complexity of his system by emphasising the importance of the semantic value in the process of categorising textual elements according to the appropriate regime. He includes certain groups of words in this "isotopic classification of images", aligning them with the regimes (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 416).<sup>104</sup> In line with the idea that at textual level, the symbolic values of the adjective and the verb prevail over those of the noun (Durand, "Pas à pas" 234), 'epithetic' archetypes and 'verbal' patterns are included, in the schematic representation of

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<sup>103</sup> My translation MV. "l'imagination humaine semble se mettre, tour à tour, à différents *régimes*, glisser du régime diurne, qui est celui de la geste épique et que symbolise l'épée, au régime nocturne, qui est le régime mystique et que symbolise la coupe et tous les symboles de l'intimité" (Durand, *Le décor mythique* 133).

<sup>104</sup> "Classification isotopique des images" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 506).

Durand's system.<sup>105</sup> Despite recognising the utility of semantic value in the process of identifying relevant textual elements, I find that some terms in the diagram also lead to confusion. Terms such as 'euphemism', 'confuse', 'unite' or 'relate' can result in misinterpretations.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, with the aim of providing greater clarity, I adapt Durand's scheme, introducing key characteristics that refer to the internal dynamics (Figure 4).

<b>Category</b>	<b>Polemic</b>	<b>Centric</b>	<b>Rhythmic</b>
<b>Internal dynamic/ Verbal scheme</b>	Opposition/ Separation	Inclusion	Alternation/Union of opposites
<b>Symbols</b>	Animality <=> Separation	Engulfment Gulliverisation	Cycle Hybrid
	Darkness <=> Luminosity	Benevolent night Maternal femininity	Progress
	Falling <=> Elevation	Intimate space Nutrition	

Figure 4. Reformulation of the terminology

<sup>105</sup> The epithetic archetype refers to an adjective closely linked to an archetype that is in use in the regime in question, so as to function as an archetype. The verbal pattern is a group of verbs that represent the dynamic of the regime.

<sup>106</sup> For example, Cardozo González connects symbols of inversion to change or metamorphosis, conceived as the rebirth of "a new image with contrary symbolic value" (my translation MV); the original quotation: "[una] nueva imagen con un valor simbólico contrario" (116). That means, in this case symbols of the mystical tendency are confused with a dynamic of the synthetic tendency.

The article by Ilgürel shows the difficulty of ambiguous concepts such as travel, becoming, change and progress, which can be situated in both regimes (121). The critic brings euphemism, which adheres to the nocturnal regime, in contact with fragments like "hace frente", confronting, which seem to belong to the diurnal regime (121-22).

The model represented in figure 4 allows for the interpretation of symbols in the literary text according to the internal dynamics of the categories; these are semantically translated through verbal patterns around the words 'oppose', 'include' and 'alternate'. Thus, I have revised the central concepts of figurative structuralism, resulting in a feasible and updated interpretative tool.

Now, the categorisation of figurative structuralism is only one part of the entire myth critical procedure. In the interview conducted on December 8, 2021, Gutiérrez defines the following steps of the method:

- Analysis of the formal mechanisms of the texts,
- Identification of the symbolic structure (regimes of the imaginary): recurring symbols,
- Symbolic analysis: grouping symbols into mythemes.

I will place this procedure in the context of practice, to arrive at a feasible version of myth criticism that addresses the symbolic value of the motif. Firstly, I will follow Fátima Gutiérrez's lead by beginning with the analysis of the formal mechanisms of the text. Since Durand was not a literary critic, this step is not defined in his theory (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 128). I propose integrating intertextual analysis into the first methodological step, based on the formal structures of the text.<sup>107</sup> Second, the concept of redundancy, conceived as the repetitive manifestation of images with the same symbolic value, prevails in importance (Campos López 2016, Gutiérrez 2012b). In this, I concur with

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<sup>107</sup> In her articles, Gutiérrez includes narratology as the first methodological step (interview 8 December 2021).

Gutiérrez, who underlines that isomorphism and redundancy are essential in the process of identifying relevant textual structures (interview 8 December 2021). Finally, regarding the central concept, the mytheme, it should be recognised that there is also a certain lack of clarity. The problematic nature of the latent mytheme springs to mind; its identification depends on the semantic value, on the verbal patterns in use (Durand, "Pas à pas" 234).

Regarding the introduction of specific mythical narratives or figures as the foundation of the analysis, I argue that their detection is not necessary for myth critical interpretation. I align with Gutiérrez, who emphasises the predominance of recognizing the mythical structure, the mytheme; from this structure, the myth "arises or not" (interview 8 December 2021). In contrast to Durand, who claims that myth criticism invites to go hunting for the myth ("Pas à pas" 230),<sup>108</sup> Gutiérrez insists that myth criticism does not entail the search in a certain (set of) text(s) for a specific myth, like the Oedipus or Orpheus myth ("La mitocrítica de Gilbert Durand" 183). It is necessary to realise that, through the premeditated identification of a specific mythical narrative, the perspective of comparative literature can furtively insert itself in myth critical procedure.

Recapitulating, the steps of the reformulated model for myth critical analysis are as follows:

- Analysis of the formal mechanisms of the text, through an intertextual analysis,
- Identification of the symbolic structure, according to repetitive images and conform the categories of the imaginary,
- Symbolic analysis: grouping of the symbols into mythemes,
- If possible, connection to a specific myth,
- Situation of the results in the socio-historical context.

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<sup>108</sup> The original quotation: "C'est donc à une «chasse» au mythe (...) que la mythocritique nous convie" (Durand, "Pas à pas" 230).

### 3 Myth Textuality: A Combined Model for Motif Analysis

To recap, the reconsideration of myth criticism results in a revised methodology, focused on the analysis of the text based on the grouping of isomorph and redundant symbols, and the interpretation of the symbolic value of these text elements according to the polemic, centric and synthetic category. By integrating the reformulation of the regimes conducted in the previous pages into an updated version of the method, the reinterpretation of myth criticism is produced. This updated method will be the component of the interpretative instrument that encompasses the unifying and anthropological level, connecting the text with ancient myth. It addresses the following key elements of the motif: repetition and variation of textual elements, and the symbolic level that connects the text to ancient myth. I will integrate the updated method as described into the research model that will be applied to the analysis of the motif.

### **3.2 Combining the components: myth textuality**

After defining the intertextual and myth critical procedures separately, it is possible to merge them into the combined instrument, by addressing the question: What is the delineation of myth textual procedure, conceived as the fusion of the relevant elements of intertextuality and the reformulation of myth critical method? Evidently, the procedure presupposes establishing the starting point: the selection of the motif in question. In other words, as a preliminary action, the researcher selects the motif according to the intention of their investigation. Broadly speaking, the procedure can be carried out along three different paths: the comparative route, which focuses on the manifestation of the motif in works by various authors, in different historical periods, or in distinct literary genres; the specialist's path, which centres on motifs within the works of a specific author; the thematologist's track, which focuses on the forms of a particular motif. Necessarily, the motif responds to the previously formulated definition, with regard to the aspect of repetitiveness over time. The researcher is free to introduce, in a preliminary paragraph, the motif within literary tradition.

Subsequently, a corpus of two or more texts is composed, depending on the characteristic of the motif that pertains to repetitiveness within the text. To guide the analysis, the composition of the corpus may be based on a defined dimension of the motif, especially in the case of a multifaceted motif. This means that the starting point of myth textual procedure is based on the reader's perspective: recognising the manifestation of the motif over time and the selection of the corpus, in line with their reading experience. It should be noted that the composition of the corpus depends on the researcher's reading horizon. Furthermore, the composition of the corpus determines the interpretative direction that guides the examination of the motif in a network of interrelated texts. I mention intertextual relationships in terms of gender,



socio-historical, cultural or geographical situation, of the author; the relationship between texts by two or more authors representing the same motif; the motif in two or more texts by the same author, representing their literary evolution. The selection of the motif and corpus, along with the interpretative direction, translates into the specification of the central research question, which is formulated in a general manner. In accordance with the research path, I distinguish three types of sub-questions: regarding repetitions and variations of the motif in a specific comparative context; regarding the motifs within the works of a specific author; regarding the characteristics of a specific motif.

First, the intertextual phase encompasses meticulously recognising the presence of the motif in the text, to establish the most prominently expressed motif elements. Subsequently, the pretext(s) are identified, based on intertextual references in the texts of the corpus, i.e., recognizable fragments from other texts. This is followed by an analysis of the pretext(s) to identify the motif's aspects in them as well. As presented in chapter 2.1.4, Genette's terminology is particularly useful for identifying and categorising the relationships between the original text and its derivations. I propose using the concepts regarding the transformations of the text within the broader framework of the relationship between pretext and intertext. An explanation of transtextual procedure and corresponding terminology is provided in Appendix 2. By limiting the intertextual analysis to the selected motif, the intertextual phase once again focuses on the motif's repetitive and varied appearance in literary tradition, while also concentrating on the structure of the text.

In summary, the selection of the corpus, based on the motif's manifestation, falls within the formulation of the procedure's starting point. The actual analysis begins with the identification of the shared motif within two or more texts, based on the principles

of concordance and transformation. It also serves as the initial step towards myth critical analysis, regarding the formal mechanisms of the text. Thus, the interplay of the constituent methods has already begun.

The second part of the corpus analysis encompasses the symbolic nature of the motif. As established in previous sections, the symbolic level appears in two ways: through the process of individuation and within the anthropological realm of the social context. We can analyse the symbolic expressions of the process of individuation through genotextual analysis, while myth critical analysis situates the symbolic appearance of the motif within the social context. This means that the interpretation of the motif's symbolic nature is divided into two separate analyses. Since the individuation process begins before social interaction, the analysis of the motif's symbolic value starts with the genotextual procedure. Thus, the symbolic phase begins with the first step, genotextual analysis, addressing repetitive textual elements linked with the borderline experience. The said experience materialises in two ways: the accentuation of the initial scission and the exploration of boundaries. Repetitiveness of textual elements encompasses both the content of the text, frequent images, and the formal aspects of the texts, such as style and graphic appearance.

Regarding the anthropological axis, we proceed to the second step of the symbolic phase, myth critical analysis. Remember that an analysis of the text's formal aspects precedes the actual myth critical procedure. So, in myth textuality, the intertextual analysis serves as the preparatory step to myth criticism. Subsequently, the symbolic structure is identified, based on recurring symbols in the text; these symbols are linked to the categories of the imaginary. Then isomorphic and redundant symbols are grouped into mythemes. Finally, the mythemes are connected to the motif, leading to

an interpretation in accordance with the universal nature of myth. This deviates somewhat from the original myth critical procedure as it does not necessarily complete the mythemic analysis that establishes the set of mythemes and, potentially, the corresponding myth. Both pretext and intertext are integrated in the symbolic phase of myth critical analysis.

While the initial phases of the procedure align with an interpretation of intertextual and myth critical methods, the combined model goes beyond simply adding the separate constituent elements. To begin with, the interplay between both procedures already emerges in various ways in the intertextual and myth critical phases. I mention the following points of convergence: the intertextual analysis serving as the formal analysis preceding myth critical analysis; the integration of pre- and intertexts in the analysis of the symbolic level; the division of the analysis of the motif's symbolic nature into two directions: genotextual analysis and myth critical analysis.

The added value of the method is reflected in the term that encapsulates the entire procedure: myth textuality. The concept of myth textuality combines the symbolic level of the analysis, through the genotextual and myth critical steps, reflected in the 'myth' part, and the realm of text relationship, through the 'textuality' part. In the third phase of the procedure the combined method is maximally realised, by returning, in the first instance, to the principles of intertextuality, in this case based on the results of genotextual and myth critical analyses, which focus on the symbolic value of the motif.

The third phase integrates the results of the analyses of the symbolic value of pre- and intertexts in the level of intertextual relationships, the transformations established in the transtextual analysis in the first phase. This means the return to the principles of intertextual analysis, by establishing correspondences and transformations, in order to

achieve a deeper interpretation of the motif's manifestation in the text. Thus, the intertextual focus expands into a comprehensive approach that includes the following elements: textual form, based on correspondences and transformations; the reader's perspective, shaped by motif selection and the perception of intertextual relationships; the meaning of the text, through the interpretation of the symbolic level.

To complete the procedure, a conclusion is produced regarding the repetitions and variations of the motif, according to the interpretative direction determined at the beginning of the process. In Durand's myth criticism the symbolic analysis of the literary work is followed by situating the results in the context of the author's biography and contemporary socio-historical situation (*Figures mythiques* 313). In other words, a link is established between the work's symbolic language and the situation of the text. In line with this step of the procedure, the conclusive part connects the motif's manifestation with a relevant aspect of the text's situation: the author's biography, its socio-historical or cultural situation, or the geographical setting. It is worth noting that this conclusive step means the return to the research (sub)questions, included in the starting point formulation.

Finally, depending on the research's intention, the researcher has some additional options. For example, by integrating the motif's manifestation in literary tradition, as outlined in the preliminary part, the exploration of the motif's varied appearance can be extended. Another possibility lies in reflecting on the reader's experience and the eclectic path of the research. In chapter 6, discussing myth textuality, I will revisit the researcher's options and the intuitive nature of the myth textual method.

### **Defining the steps of the procedure**

Building upon the previous explanation, I constructed the following reading tool, which details the three phases of the analytical process.

The starting point is the selection of the motif according to the researcher's intention; the motif aligns with the definition of the concept of the motif, as formulated in 2.0. The researcher composes the corpus, in line with their own reading horizon, based on the manifestation of the motif in the texts. After formulating the central research question, the combination of the selected motif and the composition of the corpus leads to the sub-research questions. The researcher has the freedom to present, in a preliminary paragraph, the motif in literary tradition.

#### **1. Repetition and variation according to intertextuality**

- a. Expose the motif in the intertexts
- b. Identify the pretext(s) and expose the motif in the pretext(s)
- c. Conduct intertextual analysis: compare the pretext(s) with the intertext(s) and establish transformations

#### **2. Symbolic level: analysis of pre- and intertexts**

- a. Attend to the symbolic level of the pretext(s)
  - genotextual analysis
  - myth critical analysis
- b. Attend to the symbolic level of the intertext(s)
  - genotextual analysis
  - myth critical analysis

**3. Myth textuality: integration of the symbolic value in the intertextual level**

- a. Integrate the symbolic value in the characterization of the pretext(s)
- b. Integrate the symbolic value in the characterization of the intertext(s)
- c. Conclude on the repetitions and the variations of the motif: compare the result of the previous steps in dialogue with the results of the first phase regarding the transformations of the motif.

The researcher is free to connect the conclusions, in a supplementary phase, with the exposition of the motif in literary tradition and a reflection on the reader's experience.

In conclusion, the exposition of the phases of myth textual procedure has already touched upon some aspects of the interplay between intertextuality and myth criticism. In the following section, I will take a step back to conclude with a reflection on the cohesion of myth textuality, the combined model presented in the preceding paragraphs. I will explore which parallels arise between the constituent perspectives, intertextuality and myth criticism, and the complementary nature of the two.

### **3.3 Parallelism and complementarity: the cohesion of the model**

An examination of the phases of myth textual procedure, and the corresponding consecutive steps, underlines that the methodological components intertextuality and myth criticism intertwine naturally. A key aspect of this intertwining is the fact that intertextual analysis acts as a preliminary step of the myth critical procedure. It is reasonable to assume that, besides the methods, the theories also respond to each other quite obviously. However, to synthesise them into a complete instrument, it is necessary for the procedures not only to resemble each other but also for each method to complement the other. Therefore, in this section I will delve into the tangential points of the two theories, answering the question: What are the similarities between the broad conception of intertextuality and myth criticism? Additionally, I will address the question: How do intertextuality and myth criticism complement each other?

#### **3.3.1 Similarities in the approaches of Durand and Kristeva**

Let us begin with recognising the parallels between intertextuality and myth criticism. I will detail them according to relevant theoretical concepts. First and foremost, it is obvious that myth criticism, the interpretation of symbolic structures in the text in relation to myth, is closely related to intertextuality, since it considers the text in terms of textual elements that are also present in other texts. Surely, Durand was not aware of the concepts of intertextuality, as the conception of his initial work predates Kristeva's early articles. Nevertheless, the common understanding of both methodologies lies in what Genette calls a relational reading: "this relational reading (reading two or more texts *depending on* each other) is surely the occasion to practise

what I call (...) an *open structuralism* (452).<sup>109</sup> Now, it is not a coincidence that Genette refers to structuralism, given that this movement, which is based on the analytical approach to the structure of texts, occupies a central position in the French humanities of the time. In line with the historical moment of the emergence of both theories, the structuralist perspective constitutes the second parallelism between intertextuality and myth criticism. By focusing on the structure of the text, both methods initially look for repetitive textual elements.

However, the structuralist approach is not sufficient for Durand or Kristeva. Since its full development, intertextuality incorporates and promotes various scientific disciplines that arrest the attention during the period of their emergence. At the same time, Durand grounds his theory in a comprehensive approach, a synthesis of the human sciences he calls 'anthropology'. Kristeva's proposition regarding the genotext integrates Lacanian ideas about psychoanalysis in a linguistic system. Durand's notion of anthropology includes Piaget's evolutionary psychology and Freudian ideas. It is evident that such an attention to the human psyche results in the introduction of concepts that operate on the unconscious level of the human being. Kristeva conceptualises the *chora*, the period in a new-born when reasoning and social awareness have not yet developed. The traces of the *chora* emerge in the genotext, a textual level that recalls the pre-rational moment, prior to linguistic disposition. On the other hand, Durand positions imagination and the power to symbolise, as preceding all reasoning. In other words, he also distinguishes a moment when the abstract, inarticulate image has not yet connected with linguistic expression.

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<sup>109</sup> The original quotation: "Cette lecture relationnelle (lire deux ou plusieurs textes *en fonction* l'un de l'autre) est sans doute l'occasion d'exercer ce que j'appellerai (...) un *structuralisme ouvert*" (Genette 452).



Durand supports the categorisation of the images created by the human being in the studies of the Leningrad Psychobiological School, which distinguishes three dominant reflexes, already present in human new-borns. These are physical reactions, which arise unconsciously, and are linked to the imaginative power of the human being, and its expressions in the social sphere. In Kristeva's approach, Lacan's ideas about the interaction between the unconscious and the conscious have a part in the distinction between genotext and phenotext; an interaction determining the process of signification that concerns the relationship between subject and object, between the 'self' and society. In both cases, there is an interchange between the biologic, the innate, and the social situation. Following Lacan, Kristeva links the *chora* and the genotext to the maternal, while logical and linguistic capacity are linked to the paternal. In contrast, Durand places the use of the word and reasoning in the diurnal regime, while the search for intimacy is found in the nocturnal. As we have seen, the diurnal regime is associated with the paternal and the mystic tendency of the nocturnal regime is linked to the maternal. It is evident that, according to Kristeva and Durand, both levels exist in the expressions of every human being. However, they make a distinction between female and male phenomena based on the use of problematic terms rooted in institutionalised gender dichotomy. In other words, in their theories, there is still a hierarchical relationship between the word and the corporeal, although Durand and Kristeva attempt to disconnect their theories from culturally determined constructs.

Nevertheless, both the unconscious impulses considered in the genotext and the anthropological issues inherent in myth critical approach, emphasise the universal nature of both theories. They presuppose a methodology that relies on the recognition of these universal elements by the researcher, who also is subject to the universality of drives and human issues. This assumption aligns with the premise of intertextuality

in the broad sense, which begins with the reader's recognition of the relationship between texts. In other words, each of the intertextual, genotextual and myth critical analyses requires the discerning view of the reader.

Regarding artistic creation, myth criticism posits that the convergence of contrary elements, whether through opposition or through the reconciliation process, lies at the root of all representation. It places this confrontation with phenomena of alterity in the social sphere. At an earlier stage, Kristeva recognises the rupture between mother and child as the starting point of defining the 'self', in opposition to the other. She suggests that, in this exploration of boundaries, the genesis of not only the modernist texts but of all literature is situated (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 245). In both cases, the use of the word, the creation of text, is a reaction to the experience of alterity. Besides the universal creative impulse, both theories also consider the specific circumstances of the emergence of the text. While intertextuality connects the situation of the text with the traces of other texts, myth criticism proposes to join socio-historical or cultural issues with the results of the myth critical analyses (Durand, *Figures Mythiques* 313).

Finally, as I emphasised in section 2.3.1, both Durand and Kristeva seem uninterested in developing a fixed method of establishing a methodological school. It is clear that they take their own path, integrating ideas and concepts from various sources without hesitation, engaging in the analysis of various types of artistic productions, and inspiring other theorists from a variety of scientific disciplines.

In conclusion, the correspondences between intertextuality and myth criticism are found in the epistemological domains of relational reading, structuralism and psychology. Both approaches underline that the emergence of the text is rooted in the perception of alterity. On the methodological level, they prioritise the recognition of

repetitive textual elements, the interpretation of the symbolic level, and the implication of the socio-historical situation of the text. The fundamental hermeneutical perspective lies in the interaction between reader and text.

#### **3.3.2 The complementarity of myth criticism and intertextuality**

The essence of combining two methods lies in the fact that each contributes, in a distinct manner, the indispensable elements for the execution of the procedure as a whole. In this section, I will examine how intertextuality complements myth criticism and vice versa. I will begin by considering complementarity from a methodological perspective. As we saw in section 2.2.3, myth criticism starts with an understanding of the formal mechanisms of the text. However, this methodological phase is not clearly defined by Durand (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 128). In my updated version of myth criticism, the intertextual analysis fills the gap left by this undefined methodological step. In other words, in the myth textual procedure, intertextuality complements the methodology of myth criticism.

Regarding the manifestation of repetitive textual elements, myth criticism is limited to the recurrence of images in the text, based on the condition of isomorphism and repetition. According to semantic relevance, the symbolic value of adjectives and verbs prevails over nouns. Genotextual analysis goes beyond images and semantics, covering aspects such as style, syntax-level structure and graphical lay-out of the text. Therefore, genotextual procedure includes certain formal aspects of the text that are not considered by myth criticism.

In terms of symbolic level, it initially seems that genotextual and myth critical analyses together encompass all aspects of the motif. Genotextual procedure focuses on the

interpretation of the symbolic level corresponding to the process of individuation, discernible in the text. Myth critical analysis engages in the representation in the text of the essential issues and anxieties of the human being, thus emphasising the unifying nature that connects the text with ancestral myth. It is important to observe that this is not a mere juxtaposition of two different facets of the text's symbolic character. The individuation process is a phenomenon that also touches upon the issues and anxieties of all human beings, making it amenable to a unifying perspective. It is evident that psychoanalysis theorists, in this case Freud and Lacan, root certain key elements of their approaches in mythical figures: in Freud's theory the Oedipus myth is predominant, and Lacan's concept of the mirror stage is connected to the myth of Narcissus. Therefore, it is not surprising that Durand incorporates certain concepts from psychology and psychoanalysis into the development of myth criticism. Similarly, Kristeva frequently includes the figure of Narcissus in her later work, for example while highlighting the significance of narcissism in *Histoires d'amour* (1983).

So let us focus on the attention to the human psyche that underlies both the genotextual procedure and myth critical analysis. It is worth noting that Durand's theory begins with the functioning of the imaginary. By proposing that the symbol, unlike the arbitrariness of the word, is a motivated sign, he investigates the motivations that induce the use of the symbol (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 33-34). Building on the prevailing theories of the time, he distinguishes between 'culturalist' motivations, which appear to be external to the human consciousness, and psychological motivations (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 76).<sup>110</sup> Regarding psychology, while acknowledging the value of the Freudian approach, Durand deviates from the idea that "the symbolic universe is the result of a conflict between individual drives (...) and their

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<sup>110</sup> The culturalist motivations include the elements, cosmology and the social sphere (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 76).

social rejection”; for him, the harmony between individual desire and the social and cultural environment produces the symbolic process (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 75).<sup>111</sup> He concludes that the anthropological path dominates “*the ceaseless exchange taking place on the level of the imaginary between subjective assimilatory drives and objective pressures emanating from the cosmic and social milieu*” (Durand *The Anthropological Structures* 41).<sup>112</sup> In other words, Durand underlines that the combination of disciplines engaged in human sciences addresses the understanding of the imaginary, arising from the convergence of the subjective and the social.

Well then, in stark contrast to Durand, Kristeva firmly confines herself to the realm of subjectivity, so as to keep her postulate closely tied to psychoanalysis. As established in section 2.1.3, Kristeva places the beginning of the signification process prior to the social sphere, in the corporeal processes that give rise to the subject. This moment occurs according to the mere capacity to divide and reject before division and separation have taken place (Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 20). For her, individuation is a continuous process that encompasses not only the interaction between the subject and the social sphere but also the search for the initial harmony. Kristeva concurs with Durand in not considering society's rejection of drives as the origin of the process of individuation. However, she retains the concept of rejection as a fundamental phenomenon in self-definition by the subject.

Therefore, I conclude that the integration of Kristeva's ideas in the investigation model advances and elaborates the relevance of unconscious processes. It entails the incorporation of the psychological component, which Durand also had considered but

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<sup>111</sup> My translation MV. "el universo simbólico resulta de un conflicto entre las pulsiones individuales (...) y el rechazo social de las mismas" (Gutiérrez, *Mitocrítica* 75).

<sup>112</sup> “*l'incessant échange qui existe au niveau de l'imaginaire entre les pulsions subjectives et assimilatrices et les intimations objectives émanant du milieu cosmique et social*” (Durand, *Les Structures anthropologiques* 38).

which did not take precedence in his anthropological method. This is not a rigid division between social processes external to consciousness, and the subject. Kristeva includes the interaction between the social and the subject in the individuation process, where also both rejection and the search for harmony occur. Genotextual analysis establishes the traces of this interaction in the text, thus encompassing a methodological element that is not included in myth criticism.

In the development of the concepts present in their theories, both theorists seek a systematic approach, based on strict categorization. Durand relies the total division of the regimes on a physical phenomenon, drawing from the psychobiology of dominant reflexes. Although he revises and reconsiders some elements of his system, he largely maintains the basic categorisation of figurative structuralism. Through this sophisticated system, he has managed to establish a school of thought and inspire a group of followers who adopt his method, albeit with modest diffusion. On the other hand, Kristeva accentuates the interaction between the unconscious and the conscious, remaining in the realm of psychology. She extends her work to essayistic texts that explore the political and social aspects of the theories, which originally started in the field of linguistics.

Finally, let us consider the complementarity of intertextuality and myth criticism in terms of the key features of the motif: the diachronic pair repetition-variation, synchronic repetition and the symbolic level of the text. We should also include the additional aspects of the motif, the socio-historical situation of the text and the perception of the reader. Firstly, I consider the manifestation of the motif over time, the diachronic perspective, which encompasses the key aspects of repetition and variation.

### 3 Myth Textuality: A Combined Model for Motif Analysis

Intertextuality covers these aspects according to the manifestation of the motif in literary tradition, the selection of the corpus and the transtextual analysis. Myth criticism operates on the diachronic axis when connecting the results of the analysis with ancient myth and considering the situation of the text. Secondly, the synchronic axis of the analysis, the repetitive manifestation of the motif in the text, is present in the intertextual, genotextual, and myth critical analyses, as all three procedures consider repetitive textual elements. Thirdly, the symbolic nature of the text is divided into the level of individuation, analysed through genotextual procedure, and the unifying level of anthropology, analysed in myth criticism. Finally, intertextuality and myth criticism address the socio-historical situation of the text. It has to be pointed out that the reader's view underlies the fundamental perspective in all the steps of intertextual and myth critical procedure.

Motif	Analysis		
	Intertextual	Genotextual	Myth critical
<b>Manifestation over time</b>			
Repetition	✓	-	✓
Variation	✓	-	✓
<b>Repetition in the text</b> (textual element)	✓	✓	✓
<b>Symbolic level</b>			
Individuation	-	✓	-
Anthropology	-	-	✓
<b>Situation of the text</b>	✓	-	✓
<b>Perception of the reader</b>	✓	✓	✓

Figure 5. Cohesion of the myth textuality model

## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

As can be seen in figure 5, myth criticism and intertextuality, united in myth textuality, combine into a complete procedure that covers the key aspects and the additional factors formulated in the definition of the motif. The third phase of the analysis, the myth textual phase, returns to all the characteristics of the motif, while integrating the previous analyses.



#### **3.4 Conclusion**

The present work aims at enhancing the understanding of the motif, defined as a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition. Upon close examination, the following key elements of this definition appear: on a diachronic level, the repetition and variation in literary tradition; at the level of the individual text, the recurrence of textual elements and the symbolic nature of the text. Additional factors taking part in the interpretation of the motif are the reader's perception and the socio-historical and cultural situation of the text. I posit the hypothesis that the comprehension of the motif, with its inherent flexibility and traditionality, requires a pertinent analytical instrument.

Intertextuality addresses textual relationships, through the recognition of repetitive elements and their variations in literary tradition, while myth criticism centres on the analysis of symbolic structures in the text, considering the variations caused by its historical and cultural context. Both methods start from the premise of the reader's perspective. Therefore, I have constructed an interpretative tool that encompasses the key elements of the motif, by combining the central principles of intertextuality with myth criticism's methodology. The dual research question is as follows: How do the central principles of intertextuality combine with the methodology of myth criticism to create an instrument that increments the comprehension of the motif, by centring on the key elements of flexibility and persistence in literary tradition? And: what is the contribution of reading through the lens of myth textuality to the understanding of the motif in the literary text?

The exploration of the constituent methods has produced the following recommendations regarding the principles of intertextuality and myth criticism that can be incorporated into the combined method. Regarding intertextuality, I give central

importance to the concepts Kristeva, who defines intertextuality as the perception by the reader of textual interaction, produced within the text; the subject/reader interprets intertextuality as the indication of the historical situation of the text. In her early work, Kristeva refers to intertextuality in terms of the perception of relationships with other texts. The implementation of this perspective by other theorists, such as Genette's transtextuality, offers the possibility of establishing correspondence between the text and its derivations, while also addressing the transformation of the pretext. Kristeva's particular direction diverges from interrelated texts, including Lacan's principles of the divided subject. She sharpens the concept of intertextuality into an interaction between textual strata, the genotext and the phenotext. Since the genotext encompasses an instinctive phase, preceding the emergence of linguistic capacity, I suggest a connection to the power of symbolisation expressed in the symbolic value of the motif. Given that Kristeva does not crystallise a defined method, I propose integrating the ideas about the genotext into the research model, provided that the genotextual procedure is outlined. Thus, intertextuality covers the elements repetition, variation, reader's perspective and situation of the text, while the specific procedure of genotextual analysis involves the symbolic nature of the motif according to the traces of the individuation process in the text.

The examination of the elements of myth criticism that can be integrated in the model for motif interpretation leads to the following key concepts: the exposition of the symbolic structures in the text, while connecting them to ancient myth. Therefore, myth criticism emphasises the central elements of the motif: repetition and variation. At the same time, it encompasses the interpretation of the symbolic language in the text, based on anthropology, which focuses on universality expressed in myth. Lastly, placing the results of the analysis in the socio-historical context is connected to the

text's situation. As it seems, myth criticism implicates all the cardinal points of the motif. However, a critical examination of the method reveals problems with ambiguous and elusive terminology, as well as a foundation rooted in outdated gender constructions. This has led to the recommendation of reformulating myth critical terminology into an updated version that meets current demands for a gender-neutral formulation of concepts.

The composition of myth textual procedure involves the fusion of relevant elements from intertextual and myth critical methods. First and foremost, it follows the recommendations of the previous paragraphs regarding the constituent theories. Intertextuality in the broad sense is divided into two directions: intertextual and genotextual procedures. The delineation of genotextual analysis based on Kristeva's propositions produces a method in which the reader recognises the textual traces of the individuation process, according to the recurrence of textual structures. Not only are repetitive images identified, but also certain formal indications recognisable in the text. The genotext involves two groups of textual traces: the expression of the initial experience of scission and the exploration of boundaries. The reformulation of myth criticism provides a revised methodology centred on text analysis according to the grouping of isomorphic and redundant symbols, and the interpretation of the symbolic value of these textual elements through connection to the polemic, centric and rhythmic categories.

The combined procedure is executed in three phases, following the motif's definition as a guiding principle. First, an intertextual analysis is performed of the texts within the corpus, which is composed on the basis of a specific motif (or a variation of the same motif); the researcher may choose to conduct a preliminary exploration of the motif's

manifestation in literary tradition. This first phase covers the diachronic axis of the motif, corresponding to repetition and variation. Subsequently, in the second phase, analyses involving the symbolic level of the motif take place: genotextual analysis and myth critical analysis. Both procedures focus on the repetition of textual elements and encompass the texts of the corpus and their pretext(s). The third phase integrates the results of the symbolic analyses in the variable manifestation of the motif, established in the first phase. A unique interpretative level is created because the symbolic analysis comprehends the underlying meaning of the text, thus deepening and complementing the intertextual analysis. The conclusion aligns with the interpretative direction and the sub-question formulated as the starting point of the analysis. Supplementary options include connecting the results of the analysis with the motif's manifestation in literary tradition and reflecting on the reader's experience of the researcher.

The parallelism and complementarity of the components demonstrate the cohesion of myth textuality. By reading the methods as texts, the principles of intertextuality can be applied to them. As they share the same historical and cultural context, they are grounded on comparable foundations: structuralism, the so-called 'relational reading' and the interest in psychological principles. The complementarity of the methods appears at both the theoretical and methodological levels. Returning to the key features of the motif, I conclude that both methods encompass the elements of repetition and variation, which are at the heart of the motif's paradoxical nature. Genotextual analysis and myth criticism address the symbolic level of the text, along the synchronic axis of repetitive textual elements; they follow the perspectives of individuation and anthropology. Additionally, intertextuality and myth criticism cover the elements of the reader's perception and situation of the text. Thus, what has been discussed so far implies the strong cohesion of the research model.

Myth textual procedure relies on the principles of intertextuality, formulated by Kristeva, and myth criticism devised by Durand. It offers a reclaiming and enrichment of the approaches of both theorists. Firstly, the clear definition of genotextual procedure allows for the use of principles from a theory that has received little attention, particularly in the circles of literary analysis practice. Furthermore, the revision of the unusual terms proposed by Durand eliminates inaccessible elements; the reformulation of terminology adapts the method to current requirements for gender neutral conceptual naming. Thus, the clarity and applicability of a method that nowadays seems to be neglected are enhanced.

Secondly, the combination intertextuality-myth criticism broadens the scope of both methods individually. On the one hand, genotextual and myth critical analysis, which involve the symbolic nature of the text, provide a deeper level of interpretation to intertextual analysis, which focuses on the formal structure of the text. The analysis of the symbolic level confirms the prior identification of intertextual relations and enhances the understanding of the correspondences and modifications between intertexts. It adds to intertextual relationships an understanding of two universal aspects of symbolic language: the continuous process of individuation and the dynamic anthropological level, inherent in myth. This way, an interrelationship level is included that up till now has not been considered.

On the other hand, myth critical procedure is improved in two ways, in terms of methodology and theory. Firstly, intertextual analysis is inserted in the myth critical method as the preliminary step leading to the understanding of the formal mechanisms of the text. Since this preliminary step is not defined in Durand's original methodology, the text's formal analysis from an intertextual perspective complements myth critical procedure. Additionally, the recognition of recurrent intertextual references helps

identify redundant symbols and their situation in the categories, a key element of the myth textual method. In terms of theory, the genotextual perspective, while concentrating on the process of individuation, covers an aspect of the symbolic nature of texts that has not been considered in the same way by myth criticism.

Lastly, myth textuality extends the scope of literary text analysis. First and foremost, it operates on the basis of a comprehensive definition of the motif, providing a foundation for motif analysis that up till now has not been available. The operative instrument provides an understanding of the motif according to the key features repetition and variation; thus, the reader/researcher constructs a network of interconnected previous and posterior textual manifestations, through the concordances and transformations of the motif. It then inserts the interpretation of the symbolic level in this network of texts, expanding our knowledge of the motif's appearance. Myth textual analysis encompasses various interpretative directions: it can start from a single text, focus on the entire work of a single author, or apply to texts by multiple authors by comparing the various manifestations of the motif. It allows for the study of texts in the context of literary tradition, within the specific framework of intertextual relationships, and at the universal level of myth's symbolic language. For the specialists of thematology, it provides a comprehensive approach to the study of the particular motif.

Both intertextuality and myth criticism are cultural analysis methods that were ahead of their time: they emerged as multifaceted approaches, leaving their marks in a variety of scientific disciplines. However, even today each of these critical approaches evokes discussion and is prone to different and even contradictory interpretations. I have taken advantage of the flexibility of both methods to select and update terminology and combine methods into a suitable tool for the analysis of the motif. I will demonstrate in

the following chapters how the method is put into practice, through case studies of the prose texts by Carmen Laforet and Antonio Muñoz Molina, as well as the poetry of Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz.

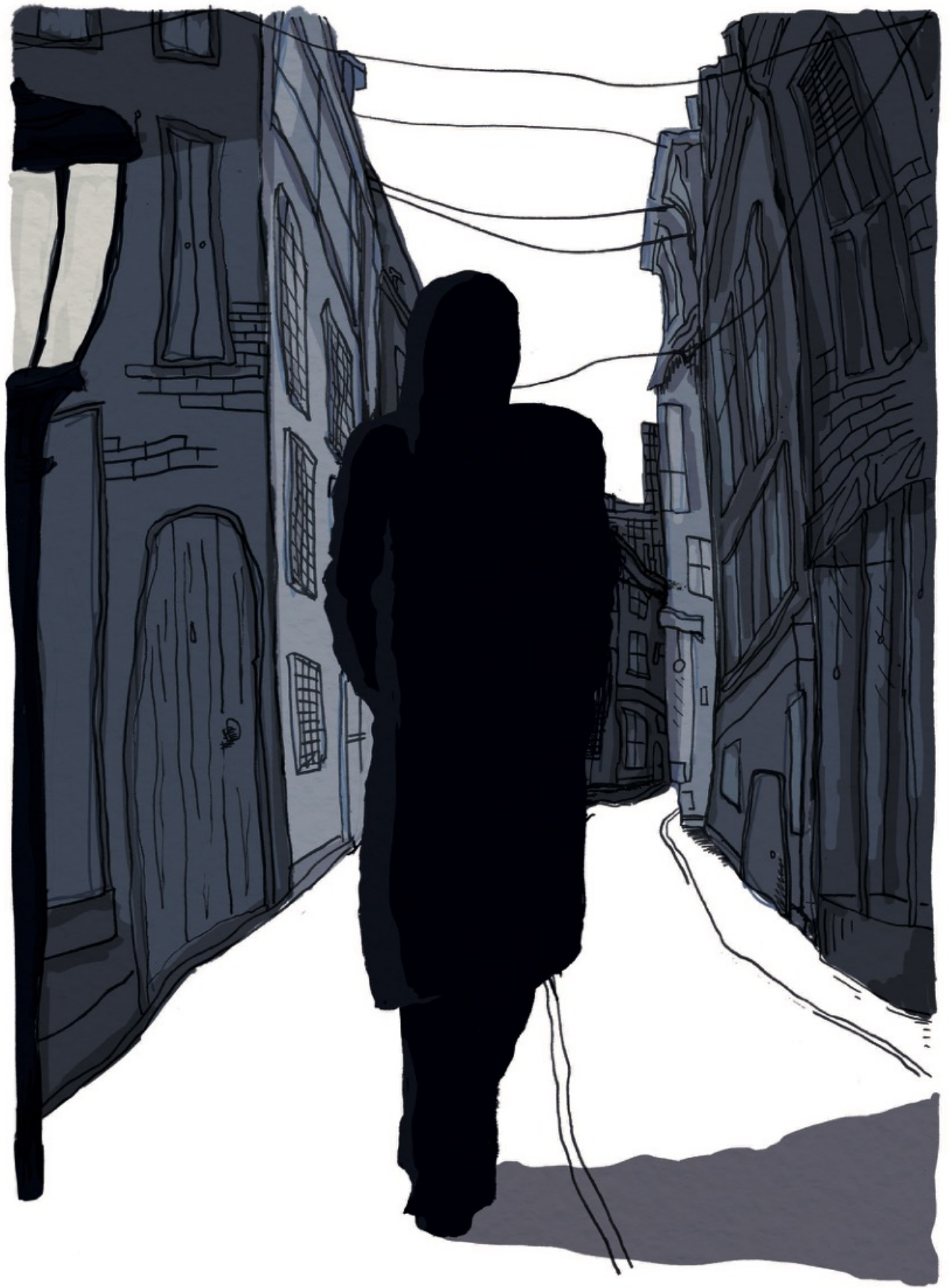




## **II CASE STUDY**

### **THE PRACTICE OF MYTH CRITICISM: ESTABLISHING THE CENTRAL RELATION BETWEEN MOTIF AND SYMBOL**

## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism



## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

#### 4 THE FLÂNEUR MOTIF

MYTH TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF CARMEN LAFORET'S *NADA* AND ANTONIO MUÑOZ MOLINA'S *UN ANDAR SOLITARIO ENTRE LA GENTE*, IN DIALOGUE WITH "THE MAN OF THE CROWD" BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

*Well, any man stops and talks  
But not the walking man  
He's the walking man, born to walk  
Walk on walking man  
James Taylor*

## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

#### 4.0 Presentation

The case study in this chapter presents the myth textual interpretation of the flâneur, a recent motif connected with the rise of modern urbanity. Since its emergence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the urban stroller, immersed in the human mass and devoted to the observation of the crowd, becomes the flâneur, the metropolis' literary motif. Initially, its develops fully in Charles Baudelaire's work, while the French poet supports his descriptions of the city's peregrine on the texts by Edgar Allan Poe and Thomas de Quincey. During the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the flâneur frequently returns to literary texts, transforming according to various factors such as the stroller's identity, alternative urban environment and pertinent ideological ideas. Therefore, I assume that the profound analysis of a motif this versatile operates in a dual way: on the one hand, it establishes the motif's flexibility in texts from different origin; on the other hand, it interprets the repetitions according to the motivations underlying the flâneurs manifestation in the text. This chapter aims to demonstrate how to understand the flâneur motif, following the perspective that addresses the interaction between the wanderer and the surrounding urban multitude. The analysis accentuates two key aspects of flânerista texts: the use of literary devices and the symbolic language inherent in the intersection with the mass. I investigate the flâneur's manifestation in the narrative prose of two Spanish authors situated in distinct spatiotemporal frameworks: Carmen Laforet (1921-2004) and Antonio Muñoz Molina (1956). Their texts will be connected to Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Man of the Crowd", considered the source of flânerista texts. To provide the research's context, I will begin with the historical backdrop of the flâneur motif, followed by a reflection on the analysis' central aspect, the interaction with the multitude.

## Historical background

Initially, the flâneur emerges in literature; the figure appears in well-defined circumstances, as it comes forward at a precise historical moment and in a specific geographical situation. In this section, I will elaborate on the emergence of the flâneur motif and its appearance in literature, in order to arrive at a basic definition of the concept in question. The literary figure of the metropolis' wanderer, the flâneur, takes shape with the expansion of large cities, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The word 'flâneur' comes from the French verb 'flâner' meaning strolling, wandering, walking about in an idle manner, thus originally referring to a wanderer who aimlessly roams the city streets. The flâneur appears in French literature, described as an urban type in Louis Huart's work, *Physiologie du flaneur* [sic] (1841).<sup>113</sup>

From the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the flâneur figure acquires other meanings, transforming into the symbol of modern life in the city. Baudelaire is considered the emblematic poet of flânerie, based on his portrayal of the ambiguous relationship between the urban figure and the mass character of the modern city. Authors from the 19<sup>th</sup> century who initiated the flâneur theme in a modern sense include Thomas de Quincey and Edgar Allan Poe; they preceded Baudelaire and influenced his work. A decade after the publication of "The Man of the Crowd", the poet Charles Baudelaire expresses his fascination with Poe's work; he engages in commenting on his texts and translating them into French (Quin 1957, Pichois 1961, Garrait-Bourrier 2002).

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<sup>113</sup> Huart wrote a series of illustrated portraits of urban types, portraits that studied the customs of his era. He presents the flâneur as a man with good legs, ears and eyes: "bonnes jambes, bonnes oreilles, bons yeux" (53). Thus, he refers to the figure's main features: the importance of wandering and the role of the senses to perceive the aspects of the city.



Baudelaire portrays the flâneur as a passionate observer, who enjoys the opportunity to immerse himself in the urban crowd and shapes his impressions through works of art (Baudelaire, “Le peintre” 68). The observer’s attitude of the flâneur gives rise to the relationship with the emergence of mass media. In order to observe the crowd discreetly, the flâneur-journalist requires physical distance: they often position themselves in a secluded space or use a disguise (Cuvardic García, “El flâneur y la flânerie” 28-29). The mode of observation extends to auditory activity, as the flâneur engages in espionage, visually and acoustically (Cuvardic García, “El flâneur y la flânerie” 29). From the 1880s onwards, the geographical scope of the figure expands: while Baudelaire’s flâneur is situated in the urban realms of Paris, the wanderer transcends the exclusive character of the Parisian bourgeoisie. For example, Cuvardic García places the flâneur in the Spanish realist literary genre of *costumbrismo* (2009, 2012); Ayala interprets Pérez Galdós’ chronicle *La casa de Shakespeare* (1895) as a flânerista text (2012).<sup>114</sup>

The figure of the flâneur gains prominence beyond the literary realm following the studies of cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), exemplified by his famous text “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire” (1939). Benjamin, from a Marxist perspective, broadens the interpretation of the flâneur by establishing a relationship between Baudelaire’s stroller and the urban world of consumption and materialism. In other words, by surpassing the strict limits of literature, revisions of the concept place the flâneur in other conditions. As Tester proposes, “the figure and activity appear regularly in the attempts of social and cultural commentators to get some grip on the nature and implications of the conditions of modernity and post-modernity” (1). Other researchers incorporate the figure of the flâneur into studies and rewritings with a certain ideological

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<sup>114</sup> See also the studies that recognise the flâneur in an alternative geographical context: Goebel 1998, Mostafa 2009, Kovács 2016, Gaylard 2017.

or emancipatory signature (Featherstone 1998, Nesci 2007, Elkin 2016, Coates 2017, Iglesias 2018). For example, Sánchez Sempere refers to the reclaiming of urban spaces "by women and other marginal collectives such as LGTB, queer, or the immigrant community" (49).<sup>115</sup> Finally, situated within the frameworks of the virtual city, certain types of netizens are interpreted as electronic flâneurs (Featherstone 1998, Cuvardic García 2012).

In conclusion, I understand the flâneur as a figure that represents the interaction of the human being with the urban environment. It occupies an ambiguous position towards the metropolis: it idly wanders through the city, immersing itself in its crowds, while simultaneously experiencing the overwhelming effect of the multitude. Through its dedication to observation, the flâneur figure takes on the role of a critic of the urban environment, often shaping the material of its observations into an artistic product, generally of a literary nature.

### **The interaction with the crowd**

Existing studies highlight that the observational nature is a central aspect of the flâneur's characterization. The historian Shaya, in his work on the development of mass culture in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century French press, distinguishes between, on the one hand, the flâneur and, on the other hand, the *badaud*, "the curious observer, the rubberneck, the gawker" (46). While the *badaud* is part of the crowd to participate in street culture, the flâneur maintains the necessary distance to analyse his observations and reflect on his experiences. It is a solitary figure situated within the multitude but

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<sup>115</sup> My translation MV: "por parte de las mujeres y demás colectivos marginales como el LGTB y *queer* o la población inmigrante" (Sánchez Sempere 49).

not belonging to the human mass (Shaya 49). Taking this distinctive aspect as a central premise, I consider the interaction with the crowd as the key axis of the investigation into the motif of the flâneur. Therefore, I will focus next on the exploration of urban multiplicity, to formulate a starting point of the analysis. It is worth noting in advance that urban crowds take various forms: the human mass, the variety of sensory perceptions, and the multitude of objects. They all belong to the universe of the flâneur and their “detailed attention for the phenomena, objects, and individuals of the city’s public spaces” (Cuvaradic García, “El *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 26).<sup>116</sup> The flâneur is not restricted to the street but is also found in other public spaces such as salons or cafes, public transportation spaces like stations, and commercial sites like bazaars and markets. Apart from the human multitude, the flâneur experiences the abundance of objects inherent in the urban environment. As the wandering figure emerges during the historical moment of industrialization that generates large cities, the realm of the flâneur is characterised by the growth of consumer goods and commodities. Both aspects of the mass, the human crowd and the multitude of objects evoke the overwhelming nature of multiple sensory experiences. Cuvaradic García associates the city with “the diversity of human experiences”, exciting the flâneur, from the “visual and acoustic shocks” (“El *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 33).<sup>117</sup> Baudelaire interprets this overwhelming experience in the poem “À une passante”, meaning “To a woman passing by”, with the following verse: “Around me roared the nearly deafening street” (*The Flowers* 189).<sup>118</sup> Through the words ‘assourdissante’ and ‘hurlait’, the reader experiences how the deafening noise of the streets resembles a roaring sound.

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<sup>116</sup> My translation MV: “atención detallada a los fenómenos, objetos e individuos de los espacios públicos de la ciudad” (Cuvaradic García, “El *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 26).

<sup>117</sup> My translation MV: “la diversidad de las experiencias humanas”; “*shocks* visuales y auditivos” (Cuvaradic García, “El *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 33).

<sup>118</sup> The original quotation: “La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait” (Baudelaire, *The Flowers* 188).

So, how do we interpret the phenomena of the crowd and corresponding enunciative strategies? First, I focus on the characterization of the human mass, by including observations from Elias Canetti's work *Masse und Macht* (1960), on Mass and power.

Canetti refers to *crowd symbols*, defined as:

... collective units which do not consist of men, but which are felt to be crowds. Corn and forest, rain, wind, sand, fire and the sea are such units. Every one of these phenomena comprehends some of the essential attributes of the crowd. Although they do not consist of men, each of them recalls the crowd and stands as symbol for it in myth, dream, speech and song. (Canetti 87)

The predominant parallel between the human crowd and aquatic phenomena is evident: the sea, the river, and the rain are crowd symbols (Canetti 93-98). It is noteworthy that in the first representations of the flâneur motif, in the texts of Poe, De Quincey and Baudelaire, descriptions of the urban mass rely on aquatic metaphors. In *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), De Quincey repeatedly alludes to water, associating its terrifying character to a sea of human heads; for example, consider the following passage: "that which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself" (61).<sup>119</sup> De Quincey represents the ocean of human faces in the framework of a dream, aligning with Canetti, who situates the crowd symbols in myths and in dreams. Since crowd symbols correspond to the unconscious level of the human mind, I found the analysis of the interaction between the flâneur and the mass on this concept, in line with the symbolic level of the motif. I include the following characteristics of the human mass: there is equality within the crowd; the crowd loves

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<sup>119</sup> Poe refers in "The Man of the Crowd" in a similar way to "the tumultuous sea of human heads" (475), connecting the human mass to the sea; the rainy scenes in the story also highlight the relevance of aquatic images. The use of the metaphor of the sea appears in Baudelaire's verse "Le noir océan de l'immonde cité" as well (*The Flowers* 128).

density; the crowd needs a direction (Canetti 32). The aspects density and equality also apply to multitudes of objects.

However, in line with the attentive view of the flâneur, the reader of flânerista texts discovers that the crowd also evokes the desire to describe and detail the separate elements of the multitude. Therefore, in the literary products that give presence to the flâneur, enumeration and fragmentation prevail (Cuardic García, “El flâneur y la flânerie 27). Clearly, the use of enumeration and detailed description did not originate in modernity but has occurred throughout the history of arts and literature, as Umberto Eco explains in his study *La Vertigine della lista* (2009), *The vertigo of the list*.<sup>120</sup> While referring to enumeration with the word ‘list’, Eco proposes that poetic lists occur in literature, referring to invented objects; moreover, as it originates from the impossibility of naming everything, the use of the list comes from “the poetics of the list for the list, drawn up for the pure love of the list, the list from excess” (23).<sup>121</sup> While authors of antiquity resorted to the list because words were lacking to express the infinite dimension of the world, things changed in modernity.<sup>122</sup> The modern list functions based on “the voracity of the word”, to accentuate the awareness of the plurality of the world and to question established relationships between things (Eco 30).<sup>123</sup> In modern

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<sup>120</sup> The quotations are from the Spanish edition by Carmen Espejo, titled *El vértigo de las listas*.

<sup>121</sup> My translation MV: “la poética de la lista por la lista, redactada por puro amor a la lista, la lista por exceso” (Eco 23). Eco, for example, cites the works of Rabelais and the penultimate chapter of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (Eco 23).

<sup>122</sup> Eco provides the example of the *Iliad*, in which the detailed description of Achilles’ shield represents the world in its entirety. In the circle of the shield is “everything that can be thought of or represented”, thus demonstrating how “art succeeds in constructing harmonic representations in which order, hierarchy, a relation between figure and backdrop are depicted” (Eco 17). In contrast, when Homer wants to convey the Greek army’s immensity, he can do no more than name the men and the ships of the Greek (Eco 17-18). Homer also employs crowd symbols, referring to “the masses of men, with their arms reflecting in the sun, as a fire expanding through the woods” (Eco 18).

My translation MV: “[t]odo lo pensable y lo representable”; “el arte consigue construir representaciones armónicas en las que se instituyen un orden, una jerarquía, una relación entre figura y fondo” (Eco 17); “aquella masa de hombres, con armas que reflejan la luz del sol, es como un fuego que se extiende por un bosque” (Eco 18).

<sup>123</sup> My translation MV: “la voracidad de la palabra” (Eco 30).

literature, the list goes beyond a playful device, while referring to "a form of knowledge, or rather of unknowledge, a crisis of the established knowledge" (Eco 34).<sup>124</sup> In line with this understanding of the function of the list, I propose a relationship between the overwhelming character of the excess of individuals, objects, and experiences in the urban environment, and their chaotic and incongruent representation in flâneur texts.

In this context Walter Benjamin, in his critical explorations of Baudelaire's work, considers the phenomenon of the flâneur as a sign of the alienation caused by capitalism (Shaya 47). In the realm of consumerism, the ragpicker emerges, the collector of waste and old junk. Commentaries have established a connection between the literary technique of the flâneur and the *chiffonnier*, the ragpicker; it is observed that both Baudelaire's essayistic texts and Benjamin's work fit into such a characterisation (Berdet 2012, Seal 2013, Sainsbury 2017). Hannah Arendt, on her part, emphasises the tendency to collect as a characteristic of Benjamin; a tendency that connects with the flâneur nature of his thinking (46-7). The ambition of the German critic to compose a work consisting solely of quotations and fragments aligns with this collector's character.<sup>125</sup> The fragmentary nature of the flâneur text, reflecting the ragpicker variety, is interpreted through the identification between urban and textual flânerie, which "cannot be textualized in a narrative structure, but in a descriptive one" (Cuvardic García, "El flâneur y la flânerie" 27).<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> My translation MV: "una forma de conocimiento, o sea de desconocimiento, una crisis del saber establecido" (Eco 34). Eco mentions the texts *Ulysses* (1920) by James Joyce, "Oda a Federico García Lorca" (1935) by Pablo Neruda and the essay "El idioma analítico de John Wilkins" (1952) by Jorge Luis Borges.

<sup>125</sup> Benjamin was unable to complete the work; it was posthumously edited and published under the title *Das Passagen-Werk* (1982), also known as *The Arcades Project*. In another text, *One-Way Street* (1928), he presents an innovative form, in which the text resembles a walk down a textual street (Jennings 8). In the introduction to Benjamin's *One-Way Street* (1928), Jennings suggests that it involves "the juxtaposition of seemingly antithetical forms", yet it remains highly structured (4).

<sup>126</sup> My translation MV: "la identificación de la flânerie urbana y la flânerie textual. La observación fragmentaria del acontecer social no se puede textualizar en una estructura narrativa, sino descriptiva, orientada a detallar acciones independientes unas de otras (en términos semióticos, en el cuadro urbano debe exhibirse una homología entre la forma del contenido -la multitud de acciones transitorias- y la forma expresiva" (Cuvardic García "El flâneur y la flânerie" 27).

Returning to the crowd symbols, in particular the aquatic metaphors, I note that they all contain the element of vastness while also representing the plurality of waves or drops. This ambivalence coincides with the stylistic procedures recognised in flâneur texts: infinite enumeration and attention to detail. Therefore, I propose that the interaction between the flâneur and the mass involves two axes of analysis: the infinite dimension and plurality. I will follow these two lines of interpretation in the analysis of the flâneur motif in the present chapter.

### **Composition of the corpus**

The selection of the flâneur motif comes from my own experience as a researcher, given that I have analysed the representation of the flâneur and the manifestation of the urban environment in the works of Antonio Muñoz Molina (1956) in previous analyses.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, in the present study, I choose Muñoz Molina's *Un andar solitario entre la gente* (2018), translated as *To Walk Alone in the Crowd*, as a corpus text. The reading public is already familiar with the narrator-wanderer in the author's work, portrayed in his novels from *El Robinson urbano* (1984) to *Ventanas de Manhattan* (2004). Thus, I conclude on the significance of the interaction with the city in Muñoz Molina's oeuvre. In *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, Muñoz Molina introduces a narrator who wanders the bustling streets of contemporary cities such as Lisbon, Paris, Madrid and New York. Explicit intertextual references to quintessential flâneur-authors such as Baudelaire, De Quincey, Poe, and Benjamin, leave no doubt about the flânerista nature of the text. *Un andar solitario entre la gente* alternates the first-person narrative of walks through various cities with fragments in which some of

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<sup>127</sup> See the article "*Flâneur* o *voyeur*: la ambigüedad de la figuración del 'yo' en *Ventanas de Manhattan* (2004), de Antonio Muñoz Molina" (Vulkers 2020). In the article "La ambigüedad de la ciudad insular: lectura mitocrítica de *Tus pasos en la escalera* (2019) de Antonio Muñoz Molina" (Vulkers 2022) I explore the interaction with the urban environment, while adopting the concepts of myth criticism.

his favourite authors become characters, representing significant episodes in the lives of Baudelaire, De Quincey, Poe, and Benjamin within the text.<sup>128</sup> During his meandering journey through today's cities, the narrator feverishly records visual and acoustic textual fragments. A notable element in the second part of the work is the anonymous character who walks from the southern tip of Manhattan to the Bronx, where Edgar Allan Poe's museum-house is located.

To complement the corpus, I choose *Nada* (1945) by Carmen Laforet (1921-2004) as a second corpus text. It is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel that predates Muñoz Molina's text by more than seven decades. The work is a part of the cultural heritage of Spanish literature, and especially since the centenary of Carmen Laforet's birth in 2021 attention has been rekindled for this novel.<sup>129</sup> Considering the perspective *au féminin* that serves as a starting point for this research, aiming for a balanced composition of the corpus, I select a text by a female author. To provide a contrast with Muñoz Molina's text, the traditional composition of *Nada* acts as a counterpoint to the fragmented construction of *Un andar solitario entre la gente*.

*Nada* portrays a protagonist who often escapes the confinement of her family's home to wander the streets of Barcelona, many times during the night. Since her solitary arrival in the city at the age of 18, Andrea, the narrator of *Nada*, regards the urban environment as her preferred escape from family constraints. From a feminine perspective, Andrea experiences the limited position of Spanish women, and the situation in the 1940s, during the Franco era, underlines cultural and social limitations. The reader recognises in the character the projection of restrictions inherent in the

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<sup>128</sup> The title refers to the verses of Luís de Camões and Francisco de Quevedo that also appear as an epigraph; therefore, the paratext contains explicit references to these authors. Muñoz Molina already deploys this tactic since his first works, like *El Robinson urbano* (1984) and *Diario del Nautilus* (1986), referring in the titles to the novels by Daniel Defoe and Jules Verne.

<sup>129</sup> See for example the article by Elvira Lindo: "Carmen Laforet, el indecible secreto", *El País*, 6 September de 2021.



historical context, which shapes the interaction between her and the urban environment.

Although not unequivocally, critics have recognised the texts of Laforet and Muñoz Molina as works representing the flâneur. Regarding *Nada*, opinions differ on the flânerista nature of the protagonist Andrea. On the one hand, the figure of the flâneuse and her interaction with the city are acknowledged: “parallel to her growing as a woman, Andrea will adopt for herself the role of the flâneuse, and from there she will discover (...) Barcelona, the modern city” (Tanner 172).<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, Andrea’s motivation to escape to the streets negates a flânerista attitude: “[i]t must be pointed out that Andrea is not engaged in *flânerie* as she moves around Barcelona; she does not use the city idly but views it instead as a place of refuge” (Wells 11). The interaction between the protagonist and the city is interpreted as an allusion to opposition against oppressive surroundings and an emphasis on freedom (Kronik 1981, Tanner 2021). Other comments connect the thematization of freedom with a feminist interpretation of the work and involvement with the social position of women (Martín Gaité 1987, Lau 2018).

Finally, as *Un andar solitario entre la gente* is a recent text, extensive studies are lacking. Prominent reviews focus on the theme of urban wandering (Barrero 2018, Benítez Florido 2018, Rodríguez Rivero 2018), the fragmented nature of the text (Barrero 2018, Benítez Florido 2018, Rodríguez Rivero 2018, López-Valero Colbert 2019), the interaction between narrator and the city (Sánchez Sempere 2020), and the graphical representation (Benítez Florido). Intratextual relations with previous texts (Barrero 2018, Benítez Florido 2018, Sánchez Sempere 2020) and intertextual

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<sup>130</sup> My translation MV: “de forma paralela a su crecimiento como mujer, Andrea aceptará para sí el rol de flâneuse, y desde allí descubrirá (...) Barcelona, la ciudad moderna” (Tanner 172)

relations with flâneurs of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are also emphasised (Barrero 2018, Díaz Navarro 2019).

In summary, two Spanish novels form the core of the motif analysis: Carmen Laforet's *Nada* (1945) and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* (2018) by Antonio Muñoz Molina. Thus, the corpus includes two Spanish works from different eras, with distinct geographical location for the flâneurs in the texts. The difference between the Spanish reinterpretations of the flâneur extends to the generic characterization of the author; furthermore, the career phase of the authors entails a different attitude towards the motif. Carmen Laforet being a novice author, still in the process of developing her personal and professional identity, influences her approach to the flâneur motif. Based on his professional experience, Antonio Muñoz Molina can consciously play with different aspects of the motif and its personal and historical implications. Therefore, the distinct situations of the texts and their authors allow for a varied representation of the flâneur figure, enhancing the richness of the analysis' results.

Given the presence of flânerie in both texts, I include Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" as a pretext, in line with the appreciation of this story as the foundation for diverse representations of surrendering to the urban crowd. Another reason for including Poe's story in the corpus, is its extensive use of literary devices inherent in the observant nature of the flâneur, such as enumeration and meticulous detail.

### **State of the art**

The figure of the flâneur has always been the subject of investigation, whether from a literary perspective, a sociological approach, or an ideological standpoint. In the following paragraphs, I will focus on the comments that refer to the characterisation of the wanderer and their interaction with urban masses. Nowadays, the motif of the

flâneur is included in various scholarly research areas; I will categorise them along the following axes: the (re)interpretations of the flâneur according to foundational texts, works on the flâneur as a concept for sociological theory, interpretations of the flâneur from an enunciative perspective. Additionally, I will consult existing studies that connect with the concept of myth textuality, especially concerning the interpretation of the symbolic level of the flânerie text.

I begin with the premise that the 'classic' texts about the flâneur revolve around Baudelaire's flâneur figure, including his predecessors Poe and De Quincey, and Walter Benjamin's seminal interpretation of Baudelaire's work (Gilloch 1992, Goebel 1998, Mitchell 2010, Young 2011, Kao 2013). The urban space where the flâneur operates extends beyond the streets, encompassing the Paris arcades, opulent interior streets with glass roofs and marble walls. Furthermore, the flâneur can position themselves in a café window to observe the crowd (Benjamin 1985, Cuvardic García 2009). Studies elucidating the historical flâneur figure often outline their role in the context of the urban types of the time, such as the *dandy* or the *badaud* (Shaya 2004, Cuvardic García 2012). These studies refer to the flâneur's primary activities: idly strolling and observing the multitudes (Birkerts 1982, Shaya 2004, Cuvardic García 2012).

Walter Benjamin dedicated a substantial portion of his texts to the figure of the flâneur as it appears in the work of the poet Baudelaire. In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), he expands the understanding of the flâneur figure by explaining how the ambiguity of modern life affected Baudelaire. The poet could not resist the attractive force of the crowd and, as a flâneur, also was a part of it. However, simultaneously he felt the urge to distance himself from the throng (Benjamin, "On Some Motifs" 168).

It is precisely this image of big-city crowds that became decisive for Baudelaire. If he succumbed to the force by which he was drawn to them and, as a *flâneur*, was made one of them, he was nevertheless unable to rid himself of a sense of their essentially inhuman make-up. He becomes their accomplice even as he dissociates himself from them. (Benjamin, "On Some Motifs" 172).

Benjamin establishes a connection between "The Man of the Crowd" and Baudelaire's work, highlighting how the threatening nature of the crowd in Poe's tale is reflected in the poetry of the Frenchman. However, he makes a relevant distinction: Baudelaire, as a *flâneur*, maintains a certain composure, whereas Poe's man of the crowd is not a *flâneur* because his behaviour has become manic (Benjamin, "On Some Motifs" 172). Benjamin seems to interpret Poe's character as a distorted representation of the *flâneur*. Nevertheless, I include "The Man of the Crowd" in this analysis from the idea that myth textual interpretation will deepen the understanding of the motif in the story.

Benjamin's analysis extends his observations of the *flâneur* to culture and society, especially to materialism and consumerism that emerge with modernity ("Paris, Capital" 229-30). Critics emphasise that the *flâneur*, as a historical figure in flesh and blood, becomes a concept, the object of academic studies in Benjamin's texts (Birkerts 1982, Shaya 2004). Following Walter Benjamin's perspective, reinterpretations analysing the *flâneur* from a sociological standpoint have emerged (Featherstone 1998, Coates 2017, Iglesias 2018). As Shaya proposes:

The last twenty years have seen a flood of scholarship centered on the *flâneur*. Drawing on Benjamin, historians, urban sociologists, and literary critics have used the *flâneur* to explain the tumult of urban life, to trace the class tensions and gender divisions of the nineteenth-century city, to represent alienation and the detached relationship between individuals characteristic of modernity. (Shaya 47)

In this context, I mention studies dedicated to reinterpretations of the original flâneur from gender diversity (Nesci 2007, Cuvaradic García 2011, Dreyer and McDowall 2012, Elkin 2016, Lau 2018). Within the realm of literature, I align with the interpretation that considers the bivalence of the flânerista attitude: the identitary necessity and the societal involvement expressed in the texts.

In Benjamin's interpretation, the flâneur is a reaction to the fragmented nature of perceptions of the surrounding world (Shaya 2004).<sup>131</sup> According to the dissociative experience inherent in the interaction with the crowd, Benjamin develops the concept of the visual shock that stimulates the creative process ("On Some Motifs" 159). Other studies place the observer's attitude in the context of the rise of mass media, which is the tendency of urban growth (Shaya 2004, Cuvaradic García 2012). In both cases, whether artist or journalist, the flâneur is not devoid of purpose or intention (Neumeyer 52). The idleness of the flâneur takes on a different dimension; therefore, Cuvaradic García asserts that the word 'flâneur' refers to an urban wanderer who is idle, although intellectually active ("Le flâneur y la flânerie" 24).<sup>132</sup> Well, according to the conception of the flâneur as a literary creator, a line of investigation suggests that flânerie texts elaborate a literary expression accordingly. Therefore, I will address the manifestation of the flâneur as a literary phenomenon, delving into stylistic comments, literary devices, and the symbolic level of these texts.

Firstly, there is often reference to the correspondence between the flânerie attitude and the resulting literary product. The figure of the ragpicker, or *chiffonnier*, the collector of urban fragments recognisable in the works of Baudelaire and Benjamin

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<sup>131</sup> In line with this acceptance, Frow explains that Poe represented the city as "the site of an extreme illegibility" (37), where the urban multitude acts as the model for urban alienation (48). Many studies delve into the interpretation of "The Man of the Crowd" as a metaphor of the action of reading and understanding texts (Cagle 2009, Amaral 2011, Nicol 2013, Wang 2017).

<sup>132</sup> The original quotation: "La palabra *flâneur* (...) designa al paseante callejero urbano ocioso, aunque intelectualmente activo" (Cuvaradic García, "Le flâneur y la flânerie" 24).

emerges (Berdet 2012, Seal 2013, Sainsbury 2017). Cuvaradic García suggests that one cannot textualize the fragmentary observation of social events in a textual structure ((“Le *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 27).<sup>133</sup> In Benjamin's texts, this condition leads to the fragmentary style expressed in works such as *One-Way Street* (1928) and *Das Passagenwerk* (1982), described as: “to assemble a book consisting entirely of quotations from his readings, the pieces selected and arranged in such a way that they would make a seamless whole” (Birkerts 171). Certain literary devices inherent in the fragmentary nature of urban perceptions manifest in the texts of the era, such as enumeration and fragmentary detail (Cuvaradic García, “Le *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 27).

While recognising the style and literary devices that parallel the dissociative character of urban impressions, interpretations of the symbolic level of *flânerie* texts are scarce. In line with the gothic character of Poe's texts, comments extensively highlight how the strong presence of darkness coincides with the representation of urban reality in “The Man of the Crowd”, as “the crowded, gas-lit city streets, (...) seem to provide the perfect environment for the stalking-narrator's actions” (Nicol 10).<sup>134</sup> Therefore, the interpretations of the images and symbols in Poe's work implicitly refer to symbols of darkness. However, there are very few works that conduct a proper symbolic analysis of “The Man of the Crowd”. Philosopher Gaston Bachelard asserts in his studies of the psychology of the imagination an intense relationship between Poe's work and black water, connecting it to a substance of motherhood (64).<sup>135</sup> In line

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<sup>133</sup> The original quotation: “la observación fragmentaria del acontecer social no se puede textualizar en una estructura narrativa” (Cuvaradic García, “Le *flâneur* y la *flânerie*” 27)

<sup>134</sup> In the introduction to Poe's complete works, Self proposes that “the overtly Gothic ones are perhaps not the most frightening; a special reverence must be reserved for stories such as “William Wilson” and “The Man of the Crowd” that foretell the anomie and the alienation of mass urban society with equally upsetting legerdemain” (xv).

<sup>135</sup> According to Bachelard, “chez Poe cette matière privilégiée est l'eau ou plus exactement une eau spéciale, une *eau lourde*, plus profonde, plus morte, plus ensommeillée que toutes les eaux dormantes, que toutes les eaux mortes, que toutes les eaux profondes qu'on trouve dans la nature. L'*eau*, dans l'imagination d'Edgar Poe, est un superlatif, une sorte de substance de substance, une substance mère” (64).

with the ideas of the French philosopher, Dupeyron-Lafay emphasises the force of symbols of darkness in urban context, underlining how the new urban lyricism is linked with the aquatic metaphor and the symbol of the labyrinth, both in De Quincey's work and in Poe's text (2009).<sup>136</sup> I intend to follow Dupeyron-Lafay's line of thought by connecting the so-called urban lyricism to the crowd symbols, introduced by Canetti.

It seems reasonable to assume that there are no myth critical studies centred in the flâneur, due to the recent emergence of the motif. Regarding genotextual analysis, it is evident that Poe's work has piqued the interest of psychoanalytic researchers from the outset.<sup>137</sup> More recent studies have connected Kristevian concepts such as abjection and the language of the maternal body to the stories of the American author (Elbert 1993, Greven 2018). Kristeva herself devotes a chapter in her *Histoires d'amour* to Baudelaire but does not mention the flâneur motif. I propose to adhere to the interest of the unconscious level in Poe's texts by expanding the genotextual focus to the manifestation of the flâneur motif in the intertexts.

### **Hypothesis, research question and chapter organisation**

As established in the previous sections, the interpretation of the flâneur concept changed after its introduction in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The accent shifted from the acceptance of the flâneur as a historical portrait to understanding the inherent societal comment embedded in the representation of this motif. Nevertheless, criticism has consistently linked the dynamics of the flâneur, on the one hand, to its itinerant character and the observant nature of his wanderings. On the other hand, there has

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<sup>136</sup> Dupeyron-Lafay asserts: "cet art de la ville qui (...) dépeint le mal, l'errance et la désorientation dans un monde obscur, voire mortifère, dans des scènes de plus souvent nocturnes ou crépusculaires" (2009).

<sup>137</sup> See Marie Bonaparte's study (1949); Lacan dedicated one of his famous seminars to the analysis of Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (Lacan and Mehlman 1972).

been an enduring focus on the idle nature of the flâneur's path, albeit sometimes with an annotation regarding his 'intellectually active' nature. The studies that incorporate urban multiplicity in their analysis, emphasise the dissociative action of the crowd. I posit that, although such a strong confrontation profoundly affects the subject, the depth of the consequences does not always manifest in the definition of the flâneur

Therefore, the present analysis of the flâneur motif is centred on the interaction between the character and the surrounding crowd. Specifically, I intend to delve deeper into the manifestation of this interaction in the text. While existing studies have concentrated on the fragmentary style of flânerie texts and their inherent literary devices, research addressing the symbolic character of these texts is lacking. I suggest that primarily examining the symbolic level of the text will enable sharpening the definition of the flâneur in line with its interaction with the crowd. Hence, I launch the hypothesis that the myth textual analysis of the pre- and intertexts enhances the understanding of the flâneur motif. I will address the central research question: What are the repetitions and variations of the flâneur motif that manifest within the corpus? I will focus on the starting point of this analysis: the representation of the interaction between the flâneur and the urban multitude. Given the specificity of the analysis, I refine the research question as follows: What form does the flâneur's interaction with the crowd take in the pre- and intertexts?

To define the starting point of the comparative procedure, I will analyse the texts individually. Then, I will compare the manifestation of the motif in the network of interrelated texts within the corpus: I will examine how *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* are connected with the pretext "The Man of the Crowd"; I will establish the concordances and the differences between the manifestation of the flâneur motif



in *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. At the broader level of the myth textual interpretation of the flâneur, I will focus on previously unknown aspects of the motif:

- How do the genotextual and myth critical levels connect to the manifestation of the flâneur motif?
- How is the symbolic level of the flâneur motif interpreted, related to the socio-historical context of the pre- and intertexts?

Following the investigation model, I will begin in section 4.1 with the intertextual analysis. I will proceed with the analysis of the symbolic level of the flâneur motif, by conducting the genotextual and myth critical analysis separately (4.2). Then, in 4.3, I will combine both perspectives into the myth textual analysis, leading to the conclusion.

#### 4.1 Repetition and variation through intertextuality

As evident from the historical background of the flâneur, the figure of the urban wanderer emerges during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, making it a relatively recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, works from diverse origins have already interpreted the motif in various ways, depending on the context of the texts in question. In this first phase of the analysis, I investigate how the aspects of repetition and variation of the flâneur motif are recognised in the corpus texts, according to the principles of intertextuality. I will commence, in 4.1.1, by examining the flâneur in the intertexts, Carmen Laforet's *Nada* and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. Subsequently, in 4.1.2, I will conduct an intertextual analysis, presenting "The Man of the Crowd" as a pretext and elucidating the manifestation of the motif in this story by Edgar Allan Poe. I will then, in 4.1.3, follow Genette's propositions regarding transpositions. Lastly, I will draw conclusions on the diversity of the motif based on the intertextual analysis (4.1.4). In this section, I will address the central question: What is the network of interrelated texts that emerges based on the repetitions and variations of the flâneur motif in the texts of Laforet and Muñoz Molina, as revealed by the intertextual analysis?

##### 4.1.1 The flâneur motif in *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*<sup>138</sup>

So, what presence does the flâneur assume in the narrative prose of Laforet and Muñoz Molina within the corpus? Commentaries link the corpus texts to the theme of

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<sup>138</sup> The experience of working with the English translations of the corpus texts shows that, inevitably, some parts of the original text are lost in translation. Since the repetition of textual elements is especially relevant for the symbolic analysis of the motif, I consider it indispensable to base the analysis on the original Spanish texts. Therefore, I will refer in the analyses of *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* to the following editions (references between brackets in the analysis text):

Laforet, Carmen. *Nada*. Destino, 2021 [1945].

Muñoz Molina, Antonio. *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. Seix Barral, 2018.

The English translations will appear in the footnotes (references between brackets in the footnote text): Laforet, Carmen. *Nada* (translation Edith Grossman). The Modern Library, 2008 [1945].

Muñoz Molina, Antonio. *To Walk Alone in the Crowd* (translation Guillermo Bleichmar). Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021 [2018].

urban wandering, although not always explicitly using the term 'flâneur'. On the one hand, in Laforet's *Nada*, a protagonist is recognised whose "greatest relief it is to leave the house and wander alone for hours" (Martín Gaité 98).<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, it is affirmed that Muñoz Molina considers the flâneur to be a figure of great importance in his fictional world and in his non-fictional texts (Ruiz Rico 2011, Sperber 2015); the narrator in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* is "the urban walker, descendent of Thomas De Quincey, Baudelaire, Benjamin, Pessoa and many others" (Sánchez Sempere 50).<sup>140</sup>

I will first focus on *Nada*, the story of the orphan Andrea's stay in her family's house at the age of eighteen, covering a year of her life. It is evident that the protagonist feels comfortable in the Barcelonese setting from the very beginning, despite it being unfamiliar to her on her arrival:

Era la primera vez que viajaba sola, pero no estaba asustada; por el contrario, me parecía una aventura agradable y excitante aquella profunda libertad en la noche. La sangre, después del viaje largo y cansado, me empezaba a circular en las piernas entumecidas y con una sonrisa de asombro miraba la gran Estación de Francia y los grupos que se formaban entre las personas (...).

El olor especial, el gran rumor de la gente, las luces siempre tristes tenían para mí un gran encanto, ya que envolvía todas mis impresiones en la maravilla de haber llegado por fin a una ciudad grande... (81).<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> My translation MV: "[cuyo] mayor alivio es el de largarse a la calle y deambular sola durante horas" (Martín Gaité 98).

<sup>140</sup> My translation MV: "el caminante urbano descendiente de Thomas De Quincey, Baudelaire, Benjamin, Pessoa y tantos otros" (Sánchez Sempere 50).

<sup>141</sup> "It was the first time I had travelled alone, but I wasn't frightened; on the contrary, this profound freedom at night seemed like an agreeable and exciting adventure to me. Blood was beginning to circulate in my stiff legs after the long, tedious trip, and with an astonished smile I looked around at the huge Francia Station and the groups forming (...). The special smell, the loud noise of the crowd, the invariably sad lights, held great charm for me, since all my impressions were enveloped in the wonder of having come, at last, to a big city..." (3).

The fragments "el olor especial", the special smell, and "el gran rumor", the loud noise, underline the significant role of sensory perceptions in the protagonist's experiences. She characterises herself as an avid observer with the words "[y]o tenía un pequeño y ruin papel de espectadora" (293).<sup>142</sup>

The word 'masa' immediately appears in the opening episode of the novel, referring to people and houses: "la masa humana" and "una masa de casas dormidas" (82).<sup>143</sup> Throughout the events in the family house, the protagonist's preferred escape is always "vagabundear sola por la noche" (233).<sup>144</sup> *Nada* includes a night-time pursuit episode in the Chinese neighbourhood in Barcelona, reminiscent of the main action in "The Man of the Crowd" (140-44). Additionally, there are some rainy scenes, in which the constant rain in "The Man of the Crowd" resonates. The elements of the flâneur motif in *Nada* are thus: city, night and rain; strolling; interaction with the mass; observation and pursuit.

Explicit intertextual reference also appears in *Nada*, through the allusions to the fairy tale *Cinderella*: "para mí la palabra *baile* evocaba un emocionante sueño de trajes de noches y suelos brillantes, que me habían dejado la primera lectura del cuento de la Cenicienta" (271).<sup>145</sup> Other intertextual relationships in *Nada* include references to the so-called 'odd girl', the rebellious character Celia in Elena Fortún's children's books (Puchau de Lecea 2020).

*Un andar solitario entre la gente* is a text that interweaves non-fictional fragments within a fictionalised framework, presented from the perspective of the male narrator.

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<sup>142</sup> "I had a small, miserable role as a spectator" (184).

<sup>143</sup> "the human mass"; "a mass of sleeping houses" (3,4).

<sup>144</sup> "wandering alone at night" (134).

<sup>145</sup> "For me the word *dance* evoked an exciting dream of evening clothes and gleaming floors, the effect of my first reading of the story of Cinderella" (166).

It introduces a 'self' who goes hunting the urban crowd through overheard words and voices, embodying the attitude of the *chiffonnier*, the collecting figure connected with the flâneur. The narrator moves around in various major cities, encountering the crowd. The mass is predominantly presented through extensive enumerations of collected quotes and phrases. In the second part of the work, the narrator's story alternates with the journey of an anonymous character crossing Manhattan from the vicinity of Broadway to the Bronx.

The fragmentary nature of the work, resembling a travel journal or diary, incorporates collage-like forms (Sánchez Sempere 50-51). Besides this literary technique, the portrayal of the anonymous character as reminiscent of Walter Benjamin, evokes the German critic's concern with fragmentation and collection.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, numerous references to other well-known authors, whose texts frequently feature the flâneur, abound in the narrative, indicating that the narrator is particularly motivated by literary inspirations. Therefore, the manifestation of the flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* demonstrates the following aspects: metropolis; walking; interaction with the crowd; observation and collection; artistic expression.

Finally, a comment on the relationships between Laforet's and Muñoz Molina's texts. Since his early novels, Antonio Muñoz Molina's work has always displayed explicit references to other authors and texts; critics have identified traces of a wide range of

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<sup>146</sup> It seems that Walter Benjamin is an important reference for the author, given that in *Córdoba de los omeyas* (1991) he already proposes that, during the writing process, he used to read *One-Way Street* every morning, seated in the Córdoba *mezquita* (Muñoz Molina, *Córdoba* 24). The German philosopher has a special position between the intertextual references in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, since, apart from the episodes on his life (339-349), the narrator quotes from his letters (340, 344). Moreover, Muñoz Molina imitates for a large part the structural aspect of Benjamin's text, such as fragmentation and the use of a specific graphic representation. The fragmented structure that we know from Benjamin's and Pessoa's texts leads to the frequent use of enumeration (108-109).

authors, including Borges, Cervantes, Onetti, Verne, Faulkner, and Proust (Begines Hormigo 32-38). It is noteworthy that the list of literary examples in Muñoz Molina's work, to which many more authors can be added, consists solely of male authors. Nevertheless, considering that *Nada* belongs to the Spanish cultural heritage, it is reasonable to assume that Muñoz Molina's reading experience extends to the initiation into the adventures of the main character in *Nada*.

#### 4.1.2 The flâneur motif in the pretext

Since the analysis focuses on the interaction within the urban setting, I establish a connection between the texts *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, and the foundational text that represents the engagement with urban dynamics: "The Man of the Crowd" (1840) by Edgar Allan Poe. Muñoz Molina openly refers to Poe in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, by dedicating various fragments and episodes to him, while Laforet does not explicitly indicate a relationship with the work of the American writer. However, as *Nada* situates the protagonist's interaction in the nocturnal city, I assume that it also exhibits connections with Edgar Allan Poe's text. From the starting point of the interaction with the crowd, I recognise an intertextual relationship between the Spanish prose texts from different periods, *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, and Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Man of the Crowd" (1840).<sup>147</sup> Although, according to Benjamin, the character in Poe's story is not a flâneur, the interaction of this figure with the crowd forms the basis for Baudelaire's reflections on the dynamics of the flâneur in relation to the urban mass. Therefore, I consider Poe's text as the pretext for the intertextual analysis in this chapter.

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<sup>147</sup> From now on, every quotation from "The Man of the Crowd" comes from the following edition: Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Penguin Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, Penguin Books, 1982 [1840]: pp. 475-481.

In line with Walter Benjamin's well-known analysis, there is a common appreciation for "The Man of the Crowd" as the first representation of the flâneur (Brand 1991, Fink 2011). This idea has led to a series of inherent studies on Poe's story: those that accentuate the observation of urban reality (Rachman 1997, Sweeney 2003); those that interpret the wanderings of the man of the crowd (Dupeyron-Lafay 2009, Fink 2011); those that explain the text as the origin of the detective story (Kennedy 1975, Brand 1991, Nicol 2013). From the perspective of the literary genre, much of the criticism underlines the gothic nature of the text (Kennedy 1975, Cagle 2009, Dupeyron-Lafay 2009).

The pretext, Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Man of the Crowd", introduces an unknown narrator who pursues an enigmatic man out of sheer curiosity through a nocturnal and bustling London. The city environment and the crowd's commotion are described in detail, with emphasis placed on the contrast between darkness and lamplight, heightened by the dampness of the rainy streets. The peculiar behaviour of the pursued becomes the focal point of the narrator-observer's attention because the character rushes manically into the human mass. Some critics suggest a sense of doubling, involving the recognition by the narrator of the phantom-like man as the future of himself (Quin 190-91).<sup>148</sup> In this case, the duality represents two aspects of the flâneur, of the attraction that the multitude exerts on him: the man of the crowd's

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<sup>148</sup> As proposed by Kennedy, the double theme is inverted: "rather than flee his malevolent counterpart, the narrator of "The Man of the Crowd" actively pursues his double, seeking knowledge of the man's inner nature through a detective-like scrutiny of his outward appearance and behavior" (186). Brand suggests that the narrator and the man of the crowd are similar: "His obsession with the old man may reflect his ambivalent fascination with the latter's passive, thrillseeking consciousness, which is essentially a more advanced version of his own mood of passive, indiscriminate interest in the human spectacle" (85).

surrender to the mass and the meticulous observation of an element within the crowd by his pursuer.

Aside from the crowd, the human mass, another form of multitude occurs in the episode when the pursued enters a bazaar, where various shops and an abundance of objects are found (480). In terms of literary technique, the repetitiveness of enumerations is notable, showcasing the observing nature of the pursuer. Therefore, the story represents the following aspects of the flâneur: nocturnal and rainy city, wandering, immersion in the crowd, observation, and compulsive fascination. Starting from the central position of this foundational 19<sup>th</sup>-century text, I will conduct an intertextual analysis of *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. Using Genette's instrument of transtextuality, I will interpret the transformations of the flâneur motif in the texts of Laforet and Muñoz Molina, focusing on the description of the urban mass and the interaction with the crowd.

#### **4.1.3 Transpositions according to Genette**

Based on the pretext, the intertextual analysis begins with establishing the transpositions, as per the terminology introduced by Genette. I connect the intertexts, *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, with the pretext, "The Man of the Crowd". I will focus on the characters and their interaction with the urban crowd, including the spatiotemporal situation of the text, as it articulates the urban environment and the historical factors that determine the character's positions in relation to the types of crowds that occur in the city.

To define the starting point of the comparative procedure, I first outline the characters in "The Man of the Crowd" and their behaviour in relation to the crowd. The events take place in the city of London, and the descriptions of the urban environment



and its strollers suggest the temporal setting of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The narrative introduces two characters: first, the pursued, the man of the crowd. He experiences the attraction of the crowd and repeatedly immerses himself obsessively in the human mass. He indulges in his wanderings to the point of not noticing the presence of the other character, the narrator. Intrigued by his manic behaviour, the narrator obsessively continues to follow him. As an observer, he meticulously describes aspects of the crowd, its various elements, and their appearance. Attention to detail leads to enumerations and vivid language. The pursuit continues during a night of rain and darkness until, at the end of the next day, the process of nocturnal immersion begins anew.

Regarding the pragmatic transpositions, I consider the motivation of the characters and their valorisation of the interaction with the crowd. The man of the crowd, described as surrendering to the masses “with a mad energy”, is driven by irrational motivation (481). Contact with the crowd alleviates his delirious demeanour: “I saw the old man gasp as if for breath while he threw himself amid the crowd; but I thought that the intense agony of his countenance had, in some measure, abated” (480). For him, dealing with the crowd holds significant value as a calming attraction. The other character, the observing pursuer, is mainly motivated by his fascination: “Then came a craving desire to keep the man in view- to know more of him” (478). In his case, the importance of immersing in the crowd derives from this attraction, making it a secondary value.

#### **The pretext and *Nada***

It is worth noting in advance that *Nada* is a traditional novel with a linear narrative that follows the temporal course of a year. Compared to the pretext it represents a formal

transposition since "The Man of the Crowd" is a short story of six pages. However, in a sense, Poe's story also follows a defined temporal span, covering a mere twenty-four hours. Another common factor is the gothic nature of the text. The longer format and the novelistic genre of *Nada* allow for the development of the protagonist's characterisation and the detailing of the aspects of flânerie. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to include the flâneur motif within the broader framework of an extensive plot.

Regarding the thematic transpositions, I first address the diegetic level, the spatiotemporal situation of the text. As the flâneuse Andrea wanders through Barcelona in the 1940s, *Nada* represents a geographical and temporal transposition. Other diegetic transpositions are related to the characters: in Poe's narrative, there are two male characters, a first-person narrator and a ghostly figure that can be considered his double. *Nada* is limited to the first-person narrative of the adventures of a female protagonist, a change of the character's gender.

As for pragmatic transpositions, I will address the protagonists' motivation for and valorisation of flânerie. For the protagonist of *Nada*, the attraction of the city environment lies in the element of liberation from the stifling atmosphere in the family home. It differs from the manic or fascinated behaviour of the double character in "The Man of the Crowd", indicating a transmotation. Compared to the ambiguous value the immersion in the crowd holds for the character in Poe's story, Andrea values the city and the crowd positively, connecting them with adventure and freedom (81). Nevertheless, she also feels irrationally drawn to the city's smells and sounds, which "tenían para mí un gran encanto" (*ibid.*).<sup>149</sup> Similarly to the observer in "The Man of the Crowd", she engages in observation and sensory perception.

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<sup>149</sup> "held great charm for me" (3).

### **The pretext and *Un andar solitario entre la gente***

Regarding the literary genre of *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, it is important to note that it is a hybrid work, as the text by Muñoz Molina combines self-referential fragments, non-fictional biographical texts and fictional constructions. Both the length of the work by Muñoz Molina and its generic characterisation represent a formal transposition compared to the short story "The Man of the Crowd". Since many episodes of non-fictional character allude to literary examples that also depict the flâneur, there is an opportunity to highlight the relevance of the motif in various ways. I will focus next on the thematic transpositions, by connecting the pretext with the spatiotemporal situation, the motivation of the character and the value of the motif in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*.

I begin with the diegetic level, the spatiotemporal situation of the text. *Un andar solitario entre la gente* takes place in various contemporary cities, primarily in Madrid and New York, which means a diversification of the interactions with the urban environment. The description of the urban mass includes visual and acoustic phenomena associated with the 21<sup>st</sup> century city. Finally, *Un andar solitario entre la gente* features a narrator-character split resembling the attraction and observation in "The Man of the Crowd". However, Muñoz Molina's text involves various characters known for their historical existence as authors of texts depicting the flâneur. In other words, Muñoz Molina expands in his text the narrator's split into a fraternity of urban wanderers. In summary, compared to "The Man of the Crowd", *Un andar solitario entre la gente* is a spatiotemporal transposition with a change of the character(s).

Next, I examine the pragmatic transpositions in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. Concerning character motivations, the literary impulse to reinterpret the flâneur figure in a contemporary situation is manifest. However, the character's itineraries also are

motivated by an ideological stimulus, the desire to address consumerism and ecological concerns. In line with these transmotivations, *Un andar solitario entre la gente* assigns a different value to flânerie, which appears dually. On the one hand, the act of strolling represents an approach to the literary examples of the first-person narrator, the inclusion in the fraternity of urban wanderers. On the other hand, it allows for the collection of samples of acoustic and visual pollution inherent in the metropolis, signalling ecological issues.

#### **4.1.4 Conclusion of the first phase**

In broad terms, the intertextual analysis establishes that both intertexts repeat the cardinal aspects of the flâneur in the pretext, "The Man of the Crowd": city, wandering, interaction with the crowd, observation. *Nada* also introduces the aspects of night, rain, and pursuit, while *Un andar solitario entre la gente* adds the elements of collection and artistic expression. Regarding the variation of the motif, the formal changes encompass the length and the literary genre of the text. The diegetic modifications include, first and foremost, spatiotemporal transposition. As for the narrator-character double in Poe's narrative, *Nada* simplifies the construction to a single narrator, while *Un andar solitario entre la gente* complicates the split by introducing multiple historical author-flâneurs, who act as characters. Concerning pragmatic transpositions, strong transmotivations are observed in the intertexts: I consider the flânerie of the protagonist in *Nada* as an identitary expression, while the narrator in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* is motivated by literary and ideological reasons.

#### 4.2 The symbolic nature of the flâneur motif

In order to expand and complement the results of the intertextual analysis from the previous section, in this paragraph I will delve into the symbolic value of the flâneur motif. As outlined in the research model, the analysis of the symbolic level is conducted in two parts: the identification of traces of the *chora*, which is investigated through genotextual analysis, and the anthropological angle of myth critical analysis that connects the text to ancient myth. The genotextual and myth critical analyses will be conducted in line with the starting points formulated in the theoretical chapter.<sup>150</sup> The genotextual analysis is devoted to the textual level that represents the rupture of the original bond with the mother's body and the exploration of boundaries, inherent in the process of individuation. The myth critical analysis begins by situating the redundant symbols in the categories of the imaginary. Then, I will demonstrate the mythemes present in the corpus texts, potentially followed by their connection to a mythical narrative.

I will investigate how the interaction of the character with the urban environment is symbolised in the texts. I will also inquire about the images used to depict the city and the human mass. The results of the genotextual and myth critical investigations will be connected with the central motif of the flâneur. The text analyses will be carried out separately, starting in 4.2.1, where I will explore the pretext, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd". Subsequently, I will investigate Carmen Laforet's *Nada* in 4.2.2, followed by Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Un andar solitario entre la gente* in 4.2.3.

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<sup>150</sup> See also section 3.2 of the theoretical part.

#### **4.2.1 The pretext: "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe**

As one of the most renowned stories written by de Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man of the Crowd" has garnered significant interest among literary analysts, both for its gothic nature and the enigmatic character of its protagonist. Another aspect frequently studied is the appreciation of the story as the precursor of *flânerie* texts. Walter Benjamin, in particular, explored the connection between Poe's character and Baudelaire's work, focusing on the representation of the *flâneur* figure in these texts. In the broader context of Poe's work, other studies have delved into psychological analyses of the author, seeking to establish the relevance of the maternal figure and the abundance of aquatic metaphors.<sup>151</sup> However, none of these previous studies have included a symbolic analysis of the *flâneur* motif in "The Man of the Crowd". I posit that an analysis of the narrative's symbolic level will shed new light on the manifestation of the *flâneur* and their immersion in the crowd. The research question centres on the interaction between the protagonists and the urban multitude: what form does the interaction with the mass take in "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe?

#### **Genotextual analysis**

The genotextual analysis of "The Man of the Crowd" follows the propositions outlined in the theoretical chapter, drawing from Kristeva's ideas. In line with the definition of genotextual expressions, I will first engage in the representation of the initial rupture and the desire to restore primal unity.<sup>152</sup> It is evident that in "The Man of the Crowd" the search for union is prevalent on the part of both characters, the observer and the pursued. The enigmatic man repeatedly merges with the crowd, expressing

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<sup>151</sup> See Elbert on Poe's entire work; she underlines the relevance of maternal absence in the author's life and the non-verbal language that represents the mother-child relationship (23). See also Marie Bonaparte's study of Edgar Allan Poe's work (1949).

<sup>152</sup> See section 3.1.1 on the procedure of genotextual analysis.

satisfaction with each surrender to the masses. The fragments “the spirits of the old man flickered up” and “with a half shriek of joy” emphasise the joy of the renewed encounter with the crowd (481). In contrast, when the agitation subsides, he exhibits signs of unease, such as shivering, anxiety and pallor (480). The repeated inability to continue the union with the crowd underlines the significance of the separation underlying the man’s behaviour towards the multitude. The observer, on the other hand, feels a strong connection with the object of his pursuit; expressing the distress of losing sight with the word “a craving desire to keep the man in view” (478). Repetitive references to water establish a connection between the longing for union with the masses, on the one hand, and the maternal element, on the other. Not only is the urban mass described using aquatic metaphors such as the current or the sea.<sup>153</sup> The link between the urban environment and water is enforced with references to “thick humid fog” and “heavy rain” (479).

Lastly, both characters embody a predominant seeker attitude. While the enigmatic man requires repeated reunions with the mass, the observer seeks to understand the inexplicable behaviour of the unknown man. Ultimately, each character must accept the impossibility of their desires. On the one side, the man of the crowd recommences his pilgrimage the next day, imbuing his quest with an eternal character. On the other side, the pursuer is forced to admit the failure of his endeavour, with the words: “It will be in vain to follow; for I shall learn no more of him, nor of his deeds” (481).

The second part of the genotextual analysis, the identification of boundary exploration, is conducted on the following three levels. First, the challenge of the boundaries between the self and others is expressed in two ways. To begin with, it occurs through the immersion in the crowd by the enigmatic man, who only feels

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<sup>153</sup> See also the myth critical analysis, in the next section, which conducts the textual analysis of the references to water.

comfortable when situated "among the throng" (481). It also arises from the identification of the narrator with the pursued man; since he follows the mysterious man's tracks through the bustling city, "the singular being whom I had watched so pertinaciously", I consider the narrator as the double of the man of the crowd. The second level of boundary questioning, abjection and the thematization of fear, adheres to the gothic nature of the text, the elements of horror and crime. In particular the characterisation of the man of the crowd evokes in his pursuer "the ideas of (...) malice, of blood-thirstiness, (...) of excessive terror, of intense- of supreme despair" (478), thus inciting his description as "the type and the genius of deep crime" (481).

Lastly, the text exhibits a certain degree of poetization, distortion of language that I connect with exploring the boundaries of discourse. I identify, first, enumeration, which appears in two ways. The catalogue of types wandering the streets develops as "the innumerable varieties of figure, dress, air, gait, visage, and expression of countenance" (476). Then, a more detailed enumeration of various professional categories is provided, as in the following passage: "pie-men, porters, coal-heavers, sweeps; organ-grinders, monkey-exhibitors, and ballad-mongers (...); ragged artizans [sic] and exhausted labourers of every description" (478). Second, I recognise the rhetorical figure of the hypallage, which appears when attributing a qualification to a word in the sentence that would be more suitable to another part in the same sentence (Dubois 246).<sup>154</sup> Examples of hypallage in "The Man of the Crowd" are: "the dim light of an accidental lamp" or "he strode onward with elastic tread"(481). I suggest the use of hypallage is connected to the dissociative perception inherent in the tumultuous movement of the urban environment.<sup>155</sup> Finally, I mention the repetitive use of aquatic

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<sup>154</sup> The original quotation regarding the hypallage: "consiste en atribuir a una palabra de la oración lo que convenía a otra palabra de la misma oración" (Dubois 246).

<sup>155</sup> See Dupeyron-Lafay on the use of poetic devices such as the hypallage in 19th-century texts (2009).



metaphors: references to the sea and the current are associated with the human mass; allusions to fog and rain reinforce the connection between water and city multitude. Enumeration, hypallage, and aquatic metaphors all relate to the chaotic impression of the urban crowd.

### **Myth critical analysis: ambiguity**

Genotextual analysis has established the interest of aquatic metaphors in signifying the human mass: they operate as references to the maternal body while simultaneously questioning the boundaries of meaning. Viewed through the lens of myth criticism, the analysis of aquatic metaphors will lead to the identification of the mythemes. Then, I will examine the possibility of connecting the mythemes with a defined myth. I will focus on the flâneur motif in "The Man of the Crowd", considering the interaction between the character and the mass.

The predominance of water images emerges from the beginning of the narrative, when describing the initial situation before the pursuit of the man of the crowd, with the following words:

This latter is one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and had been very much crowded during the whole day. But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door. At this particular period of the evening I had never before been in a similar situation, and the tumultuous sea of human heads filled me, therefore, with a delicious novelty of emotion. (475)

I distinguish two aspects in this description of the city: darkness and aquatic symbols referring to the multitude. Initially, the darkness carries a sense of wonder because the night is depicted as "dark yet splendid, as (...) ebony" (478). The words "the closing in

of an evening" (475) suggest the intimacy of the night; furthermore, the repeated references to lights and lanterns mitigate the threatening character of darkness. In line with the luminous images, verbs emphasising the importance of sight stand out: see, look, observe, but also "scrutinizing" (478) and "examining" (479).

However, after the arrival of the enigmatic man the atmosphere changes:

It was now nightfall and a thick and humid fog hung over the city, soon ending in a settled and heavy rain. This change of weather had an odd effect upon the crowd, the whole of which was at once put into new commotion, and overshadowed by a world of umbrellas. (479)

In this fragment, the word 'nightfall' suggests the onset of night, leading to a suffocating situation, accentuated by words such as 'fog' and 'heavy rain'; the word 'overshadowed' emphasises the increase of darkness. The description of the mysterious wanderer alludes to his inability to see because he never perceives his pursuer, even though they end up directly facing each other. Moreover, he looks at things "with a wild and vacant stare" (480). I suggest a form of blindness, a symbol that also belongs to the negative imagery of darkness. I conclude that the presence of the ghostly man enhances the gloomy aspect of the environment.

Regarding the aquatic symbols, they frequently appear and vary in form. Not only is the word 'thoroughfare' used, which can refer to both a highway and a waterway, but the notion of 'tide' also manifests itself. However, the most relevant concept in this context is the expression "the tumultuous sea of human heads".<sup>156</sup> Other aquatic

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<sup>156</sup> Other references to the multitude, such as "throng" (479, 481) and "the passengers in masses" (475) reinforce the sensation of agitation of the city streets. There are also images that accentuate the animality of the mass, such as chaotic movement and noise. Some examples of these symbols of animality: "restless in their movements" (476); "[t]he waver, the jostle, and the hum increased in a tenfold degree" (479); "[i]t was the most noisome quarter of London" (480-1); "amid the momentarily increasing confusion" (481); "the turmoil of that street" (481).

elements in the story, the fog and the rain, are also indications of the relationship between multitude and aquatic mass. Using the words "press" and "densely filled with people", the description of the multitude underlines its density (476, 479). The idea also arises that the mass is composed of a multitude of similar elements, when, as the rain intensifies, "a world of umbrellas" appears (479).<sup>157</sup>

Now, how is the dynamic in which the characters engage with the crowd represented? On the one hand, the narrator proposes that "the wild effects of the light enchained me to an examination of individual faces" (478); then, he feels increasingly absorbed due to his fascination with the mysterious man (478, 481). On the other hand, it is evident that the pursued adopts an active attitude, which coincides with the density of the crowd: the verbs 'plunging' and 'threw' indicate that the character throws himself actively into the mass. Other pedestrians and the narrator also need to push their way through the crowd because the verbs 'make way' and 'push' are used (479).<sup>158</sup> To emphasise this dynamic, which suggests the penetration of the mass, the narrator's observational attitude is linked with a downward and inward movement: "Descending in the scale of what is termed gentility, I found darker and deeper themes for speculation" (477); "As the night deepened, so deepened to me the interest of the scene" (478). This descent coincides with the action of detailing the components of the crowd: "Soon, however, I descended to details" (476). Detailing the faces that make up the multitude corresponds to the dynamic of duplication, the fragmentation of the mass.

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<sup>157</sup> The characteristics of the crowd symbols, according to Canetti, appear: the similarity of the elements, movement and density.

<sup>158</sup> There are more examples of the dynamics of the character in the mass in Poe's text: "plunging through a great variety of devious ways" (480); "the audience were thronging from the doors. I saw the old man gasp as if for breath while he threw himself amid the crowd" (480); "making their way through the press" (476).

However, the course of the man of the crowd is not limited to the centripetal sense, as there are also numerous references to the back-and-forth movement: "crossed and re-crossed"; "turned and re-traced"; "to and fro"; "in and out..." (481) "backward and forward" (479 - 81). It responds to the swaying movement of the word 'tide', the aquatic term that also refers to the crowd (475). As a final allusion to rhythmic movement, the man of the crowd and his pursuer return in early morning to the same street where the previous night their ghostly pilgrimage began.

The images in Poe's story can be interpreted according to the three categories of the imaginary. First, the city and the crowd are represented through images of darkness: the night and aquatic symbols that connect to dark water, the narrator's experiences of engulfment, and the chaining of his attention.<sup>159</sup> These are contrasted with luminous images, the lanterns and vision, as well as the references to the narrator's observation. With the appearance of the man of the crowd, a growing sense of being devoured arises, as the narrator's attention is absorbed. Second, while describing the mass as a sea of human heads, the fragmentation of the crowd is suggested; this action intensifies as the multitude is detailed according to subgroups and their characteristics. Additionally, immersion in the mass is expressed as downward and inward movement by both characters. Finally, the ebb and flow of the tide are both present in the course

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<sup>159</sup> It is significant that Baudelaire makes in his description of Poe's "The Man of the Crowd", ample use of symbols of darkness and water, for example when referring to plunging into the crowd and swimming in the human ocean. The entire passage reads: "*L'Homme des foules se plonge sans cesse au sein de la foule; il nage avec délices dans l'océan humain. Quand descend le crépuscule plein d'ombres et de lumières tremblantes il fuit les quartiers pacifiés, et recherche avec ardeur ceux où grouille vivement la matière humaine (...) comme les hommes du déluge, il se cramponne désespérément aux derniers points culminants de l'agitation publique*" (Baudelaire, "Edgar Allan Poe" 153). In his own poetry, especially in *Les fleurs du mal* (1857) the images of the urban multitude also arise. One recognises the echo of Poe in Baudelaire's work, for example in comparing the city with the ocean, "[le] noir océan de l'immonde cité", translated as "this black city, this filthy sea" (*The Flowers* 128, 129). In the collection of prose poems *Petits Poèmes en prose* (1869), also known as *Le Spleen de Paris*, the immersion in the mass is depicted as "un bain de multitude", taking a bath in the multitude (Baudelaire, *Le Spleen* 24, 168).

of the pursued man and in the repetition of his ghostly pilgrimage over time. Thus, various types of symbolism are distinguished in the pretext, inherent in the dark and aquatic images and the concept of the mass.

To summarise the symbolism inherent in the interaction with the city and the mass, the following distinctions can be made: in the polemic category, images with negative value such as darkness (black water) and engulfment are opposed to those with positive value, such as light and vision. From the fragmentation of the mass, the beneficial immersion and the inward movement, I also establish the presence of images of the centric category. Lastly, from the rhythmic category I recognise the temporal cycle, regular interaction with space, and the alternation of opposite elements, such as darkness and light. Based on this categorisation of images, it is possible to distil the mythemes; I will limit myself to the mythemes connected to the interaction with urban environment:

- the threat of the crowd, represented as darkness and black water,
- the opposition to the darkness, through references to luminosity: light and vision, the observer's position;
- the fatal attraction of the mass, represented as engulfment,
- the fatal quality of the mass is mitigated by references to beneficial immersion in the multitude;
- opposite elements coexist in the same urban space: they refer both to the mass (growth and decline, fatal engulfment and voluntary immersion, darkness and light) and to the character's duality (pursuer and pursued, blindness and observation)
- surrender to the crowd repeats according to a temporal rhythm.

As a final step in the myth critical procedure, I connect the mythemes to a defined myth, in this case the myth of the eternal wanderer, a myth that has been frequently reinterpreted, especially in the realm of religion.<sup>160</sup> Some critics have recognised in Poe's narrative "The Man of the Crowd" the myth of the Wandering Jew, which is defined by mythemes such as transgression, punishment or condemnation, eternal wandering, promise of future redemption (Delpech 66-67).<sup>161</sup> I observe a tangential level between Poe's story and the myth of the wanderer, especially based on the mytheme of eternal wandering. However, it is worth noting that the aspects of transgression and punishment are implicitly present in Poe's narrative: the mytheme of condemnation arises from the fatality of surrendering to the crowd and the negative symbols of darkness; transgression only becomes acceptable from the assumptions of the observer, who underlines that the man of the crowd is "the type and the genius of deep crime" (481).

It is evident that "The Man of the Crowd" solely connects with the myth of the eternal wanderer through the mythemes connected to the pursued man of the crowd. The characterization of the pursuer inserts the element of observation. In other words, the doubling of the flâneur into two figures – maniac character and observing character – leads to the extension of the interactions with the crowd. The multitude becomes an

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<sup>160</sup> Examples of the myth of the wanderer are the myth of the titan Cronus, the biblical tale of Cain, and the legends of Pindola in Buddhism or Al-Sameri in Islam (Hernández 2018). Anderson mentions some well-known examples of the recreations, such as the legend of the Wild Hunt; the epic poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) of the poet Coleridge, the opera *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843) by Wagner, which is a reinterpretation of Heinrich Heine's homonymous tale and "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" (1824), William Austin's epistolary story (7-10).

<sup>161</sup> Some critics recognise the figure of the Wandering Jew, although without elaborating on their observations (Bonaparte 1949, Brand 1991, Frow 2009). Frow suggests the relevance of the Wandering Jew figure in the tradition of gothic literature (41). However, Fink conducts a detailed study of Poe's narrative and the characterisation of the man of the crowd as Wandering Jew. The analysis is based on how the Wandering Jew is generally portrayed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He then identifies in the description of the man of the crowd "the stereotypical demonic Jewish figure (the caution, the penuriousness, avarice, coolness, malice, and blood-thirstiness) that merged in the "supreme despair" of the legendary Wandering Jew" (Fink 26). He refers to Marie Bonaparte, who in her psychoanalytic study from 1933 of Poe's work had already indicated such a connection (Fink 18).

ambiguous element that alludes to both threat and intimacy, to darkness and light at the same time, and to both blindness and vision.

The characterisation of the flâneur in the pretext will be completed through the myth textual phase, which involves the combination of the analyses of the symbolic level, genotextual and myth critical, in dialogue with the results of the intertextual analysis of chapter 4.1. To provide such an interpretation, I will in chapter 4.3.1 return to the analysis of the pretext.

#### **4.2.2 Carmen Laforet's *Nada***

In section 4.1 I established that there is disagreement among critics regarding the flânerista nature of Andrea, the protagonist in *Nada*.<sup>162</sup> In contrast, critics tend to agree on characterising *Nada* as a coming-of-age novel (Andreu 1997, Nolasco 2001, Puchau de Lecea 2010, Sumalla 2013). I operate on the premise that an identification as a *Bildungsroman* does not exclude the flânerista nature of the protagonist, as both designations imply a specific interaction between the character and the setting of the action, in this case the city of Barcelona. I propose that the images that shape the multifaceted nature of the urban environment will shed light on the character's movements. Therefore, I hypothesise that the analysis of the symbolic level of *Nada*, genotextual and myth critical procedures in combination, will facilitate the interpretation of the interaction between character and urban environment. I will address the question: What presence takes the symbolic level of the interaction with the mass in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*?

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<sup>162</sup> See section 4.0 on the composition of the corpus.

Regarding the symbolic interpretation of *Nada*, Newberry interprets Laforet's aquatic imagery primarily as allusion to the fluidity of time, and to sexual realisation (1984).<sup>163</sup> As for another form of symbolism, the suggestion of darkness, Foster asserts that the gothic aspect of the house has been noted, as well as the resemblance to *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (47).<sup>164</sup> We will now see how genotextual and myth critical procedures complement the interpretations by Newberry and Foster.

### **Genotextual analysis**

In this first part of the analysis of the symbolic level, I will conduct the genotextual procedure based on Kristeva's approach. Initially, I will focus on the characterisation of the protagonist, then connect the results of the analysis to the flâneur motif. To begin with, I investigate the thematization of the initial scission and the desire for union; next, I will explore the questioning of boundaries.

Basically, *Nada* unfolds during protagonist Andrea's year in Barcelona, where she has relocated to study at the age of eighteen. From the moment of her arrival at the Barcelona train station, there is no doubt about the isolation of the protagonist. Being an orphan, she comes to live in her mother's family home after spending two years with her father's relatives.<sup>165</sup> Although she travels alone for the first time, no one awaits at the station (81). Immediately, she feels like an outsider, "una figura extraña con mi aspecto risueño y mi viejo abrigo", a feeling reinforced by her solitude among the

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<sup>163</sup> Foster also refers to the symbolic act of washing and "la ducha aliviadora", meaning the relief of the shower (52).

<sup>164</sup> The original quotation: "Varios lectores han notado el aspecto gótico de la casa (...) y se ha mencionado el parentesco entre la obra de Carmen Laforet y algunos aspectos de *Wuthering Heights* de E. Brontë y *The Fall of the House of Usher* [sic] de Poe" (Foster 47).

<sup>165</sup> Her aunt Angustias does not leave room for doubt about Andrea's orphanhood by emphasising that Andrea only has free matriculation because she is an orphan (15).



rushing crowd (82).<sup>166</sup> This experience is expressed using the water metaphor of the drop in the current, emphasising the impression of being isolated within the crowd: “Empecé a seguir -una gota entre la corriente- el rumbo de la masa humana” (81-2).<sup>167</sup> Throughout the year she spends in Barcelona, there are repeated moments when the character experiences total abandonment, whether amidst the urban tumult (293, 326, 328) or “viendo bailar a los otros” (288).<sup>168</sup>

However, despite the initial characterisation as a solitary figure, the character Andrea hardly delves into the past. She focuses on the current situation in the unfamiliar house, where she needs to establish relationships with family members.<sup>169</sup> Navarro Durán emphasises the significance of the feminine, by suggesting that the world in the family house “is (...) absorbed by women” (44).<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, the reader recognises a clear distinction between the ones Andrea considers hostile and restricting, aunt Angustias and the maid Antonia, and those who provide a secure environment, such as the grandmother and sister-in-law Gloria. In this regard, the relationship with Gloria is highly relevant, a sensual woman, depicted from the outset as a mother: “envuelta en un quimono viejo, daba a cucharadas un plato de papilla espesa a un niño pequeño” (98).<sup>171</sup> Her requirements, such as sheets and cribs, and her innate laziness create a languid atmosphere that I connect with the *chora* (85, 176, 198, 312, 316). Many times, the encounters between Gloria and Andrea take place in bedrooms (341), as in the following fragments:

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<sup>166</sup> “I must have seemed a strange figure with my smiling face and my old coat” (4).

<sup>167</sup> “I began to follow -a drop in the current- the human mass” (3).

<sup>168</sup> “watching the others dance”(179).

<sup>169</sup> I confine myself to the relationships in the family house. Outside, the friendship with Ena predominates. Andrea also establishes relationships with others, like the group of bohemian friends.

<sup>170</sup> My translation MV: “queda (...) absorbido por las mujeres” (Navarro Durán 44).

<sup>171</sup> “wrapped in an old kimono, [she] was feeding spoonfuls of thick pap to a baby” (16).

El cuarto de Gloria se parecía algo al cubil de una fiera. Era un cuarto interior ocupado casi todo él por la cama de matrimonio y la cuna del niño. Había un tufo especial, mezcla de olor a criatura pequeña, a polvos para la cara y a ropa mal cuidada. (104)<sup>172</sup>

Allí, en la cama, estaba unida a Gloria por el feroz deseo de mi organismo que sus palabras habían despertado (...) Algo así como una locura se posesionó de mi bestialidad al sentir tan cerca el latido de aquel cuello de Gloria que hablaba y hablaba. Ganas de morder en la carne palpitante, masticar. Tragar la buena sangre tibia... (200)<sup>173</sup>

In other words, Andrea associates Gloria with phenomena of animality, olfactory perceptions, nutritive desires, and bodily elements such as flesh, pulsation, and blood; all aspects linked to the initial state of union with the maternal body. Conversations with Gloria do not evoke the rationality of words but rather aquatic associations that convey a physical sensation: "Su charla insubstancial me parecía el rumor de lluvia que se escuchaba con gusto y pereza" (107).<sup>174</sup> Although Andrea attempts to connect with some male characters, the search for union ultimately culminates in the primary connection with her friend Ena. Reference is made to the solace evoked by this relationship in the following passage: "Me importaba la confortadora sensación de compañía, de consuelo, que estaba sintiendo como un baño de aceite sobre mi alma" (328-29).<sup>175</sup> The connection between well-being and liquid elements, expressed with the words 'baño de aceite', oil bath, is evident.

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<sup>172</sup> "Gloria's room was something like the lair of a wild animal, It was an interior room almost entirely filled by a double bed and the baby's cradle. There was a special kind of stink, a mixture of the smells of an infant, of face powder, of clothing not well cared for" (23).

<sup>173</sup> "There, in the bed, I was joined to Gloria with my body's fierce desire, which had been awakened by her words (...) Something like madness took possession over my animal nature when I felt the throbbing of Gloria's neck so close to me as she talked and talked. A desire to bite the palpitating flesh, and to chew. To swallow the good warm blood..." (106-107).

<sup>174</sup> "Her unsubstantial chatter seemed like the sound of rain that one listens to lazily, with pleasure" (25). Another passage also connects the conversations with Gloria to rain: "Siempre que hablaba Gloria conmigo largamente, llovía" (200).

"It seemed that whenever Gloria talked to me for a long time, it rained" (107).

<sup>175</sup> "What mattered was the comforting feeling of companionship, of consolation, like an oil bath on my soul" (215).

At the same time, the questioning of family and social boundaries is carried out through the problematic relationships with another woman, aunt Angustias. Acting from the moral obligation to motherly duty, there is no doubt that the aunt proposes to assume the task of making Andrea obey, “de moldearte en la obediencia”, which means strong restrictions, “que no te dejaré dar un paso sin mi permiso” (95, 96).<sup>176</sup> Angustias herself believes that there are only two honourable paths for women, marriage or the convent.<sup>177</sup> The strong imposition of societal and catholic religious restrictions creates in Andrea the impression of living “así como en prisión correccional”, evoking the necessity to rebel against Angustias (134, 169).<sup>178</sup> The protagonist seeks support from her peers, “aquellos seres de mí misma generación y de mis mismos gustos” (129), while shaping her rebellion through solitary wandering in the city, labelled by the others with disapproving words, such as: “eso a andar por ahí suelta como un perro vagabundo” (128).<sup>179</sup>

After Aunt Angustias’ departure, Andrea does not find the freedom she expected, but rather “enseguida encontré otros ojos vigilantes sobre mí” (178).<sup>180</sup> Not only do uncles Juan and Román try to restrict her but also her peers like Gerardo, who asserts: “En serio Andrea, si yo fuera tu padre no te dejaría tan suelta” (185).<sup>181</sup> Even her friend

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<sup>176</sup> “of moulding you into obedience”; “I won’t allow you to take a step without my permission” (14,15).

<sup>177</sup> The full quotation: “...es verdad que sólo hay dos caminos para la mujer. Dos únicos caminos honrosos (...). He procedido como una hija de mi familia debía hacer” (171).

“it’s true that there only two paths for a woman. Only two honourable paths (...) I’ve acted as a daughter of my family should” (79).

<sup>178</sup> “in something like a correctional institution” (48).

<sup>179</sup> “these beings of my own generation and my own tastes” (44); “wandering around loose like a lost dog” (43).

<sup>180</sup> “I immediately found other vigilant eyes watching me” (85-86)..

<sup>181</sup> “Seriously Andrea, if I were your father I wouldn’t let you wander around like this” (94).

In another fragment, Gerardo “me fue dando consejos paternos sobre mi conducta en lo sucesivo y sobre la conveniencia de no andar suelta y loca y de no salir sola con los muchachos. Casi me pareció estar oyendo a tía Angustias” (214).

“gave me paternal advice concerning my future conduct and the advisability of not wandering around like a manwoman and going out alone with boys. I almost thought I was listening to Aunt Angustias” (118).

Another friend suggests that Andrea would prefer getting married over a teacher’s career (153).

Ena questions the habit of wandering in the night on her own (233). However, Andrea's preference is reflected in the characterisation of other female characters: Ena's mother also "tiene algo de vagabunda" (189) and Gloria goes out at night, although it provokes strong conflicts with her husband.<sup>182</sup>

With her wanderings, Andrea challenges the moral laws of family and society, which I consider a form of boundary exploration. In the multiple spheres of the city, surrendering to the masses leads to the dissolution of the boundaries between the 'self' and the other. Particularly aquatic imagery reinforces the effect of immersing in the mass. I mention the metaphors of the sea and the current that refer to the human crowd, as well as various rain scenes (231), reflected in moments of relief when taking a shower. It is worth noting that these examples of the exploration of the boundaries between the 'self' and the other also refer to the desire for restoration of the unity with the maternal. Being the quintessential maternal element, the abundance of references to all kinds of beneficent water underlines Andrea's need to compensate for the absence of the maternal figure.

The second level of boundary exploration pertains to abjection, the thematization of fear and the horrific. This is expressed in *Nada* especially through the character of the house and the family members, which appear as a nightmare from the first moment on (83).<sup>183</sup> However, abjectness is not limited to the house and its inhabitants. Impulses

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<sup>182</sup> "is something of a vagabond" (97).

The conjugal fights between Juan and Gloria always evolve around Gloria's autonomous behaviour and the authority of her husband, who thinks: "Yo soy el único de esta casa a quien ella tiene que pedir permiso, y se lo concede" (166).

"She doesn't have to ask permission from anybody in this house but me, and I'm the only one who can give it" (75).

<sup>183</sup> The description of the bathroom is very eloquent in this respect: "Parecía una casa de brujas aquel cuarto de baño. Las paredes tiznadas conservaban la huella de manos ganchudas, de gritos de desesperanza. Por todas partes los desconchados abrían sus bocas desdentadas rezumantes de humedad. Sobre el espejo, porque no cabía en otro sitio, habían colocado un bodegón macabro de besugos pálidos y cebollas sobre fondo negro. La locura sonreía en los grifos torcidos" (87-88).

to deviate from desired behaviour also arise, albeit briefly, in Andrea and her friend Ena. Recall the vampirism scene in which the protagonist desires to bite into Gloria's flesh (107);<sup>184</sup> on the other hand, Ena explicitly alludes to the need to "expansionarse y dar rienda suelta a sus venenos" (332).<sup>185</sup>

Regarding the exploration of the boundaries of discourse, it should be noted that *Nada* is a conventional novel, "without significant technical innovations" (Navarro Durán 11).<sup>186</sup> Clearly, aquatic metaphors, as mentioned earlier, are prominent. Another striking aspect is the poetic language, which is associated with the impressionist quality of the work (Navarro Durán 60).

Finally, I connect the results of the genotextual analysis to elements that allude to the presence of the flâneur in the text. At first glance, Andrea's flânerie may not express loss or the desire for union but rather the tendency to emphasise what sets her apart from the family environment. However, the analysis establishes another aspect of the *chora*, which translates into a yearning for the state before the rupture from the maternal body. This irrational impulse entails the representation of the urban environment as a realm of security and harmony, an image that does not correspond to the historical situation of nighttime Barcelona of the era. In other words, the language of longing and need extends primarily to the search for harmony during the character's wanderings. In this context, the aquatic metaphor underlines the desire for the maternal element.

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"That bathroom seemed like a witches' house. The stained walls had traces of hook-shaped hands, of screams of despair. Everywhere the scaling walls opened their toothless mouths, oozing dampness. Over the mirror, because it didn't fit anywhere else, they'd hung a macabre still life of pale bream and onions against a black background. Madness smiled from the bent faucets" (8).

<sup>184</sup> Vampirism is repeated in the scene in which Román bites the ear of his dog Trueno (172).

<sup>185</sup> "expand and give free reign to [her] poisons" (218)..

<sup>186</sup> My translation MV: "sin grandes novedades técnicas" (Navarro Durán 11).

### **Myth critical analysis: water and night**

The genotextual analysis of the previous section establishes that the interaction between the protagonist and the urban mass extends to two levels. On the one hand, the movement of the flâneur turns into a wandering, in line with the protagonist's necessity to define herself. On the other hand, the character's loneliness and corresponding desire for the maternal are expressed through the accent on the beneficent nature of the multitude. This need is shaped through the abundance of aquatic images that connect with the mass. In this section, I investigate how the same text *Nada* connects with the symbolic level of myth. I begin by identifying the redundant symbols, to then place them in the categories of the imaginary.

As we have seen, the orphan Andrea resides in the house of her relatives, the narrative space where symbols of darkness and animality accumulate; it is a house of chaos, disturbed relationships and restrictions. The representation of the threatening nature of the house sometimes takes on an aquatic aspect, by using the symbolism of black water: "Aquellas noches que corrían como como un río negro, bajo los puentes de los días, y en las que los olores estancados despedían un vaho de fantasmas" (281).<sup>187</sup> Although the symbolism in *Nada* extends to other areas, I will limit the analysis of the symbolic structure to the city and the interaction between the protagonist and the urban environment.

Significantly, the first chapter begins with Andrea's arrival in Barcelona at midnight. Despite the hour, the city evokes pleasant feelings: "Era la primera vez que viajaba sola, pero no estaba asustada; por el contrario, me parecía una aventura agradable y

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<sup>187</sup> "Those nights that ran like a black river beneath the bridges of the days, nights when stagnant odours gave off the breath of ghosts" (174).

excitante aquella profunda libertad en la noche” (81).<sup>188</sup> The city is associated with multitude, which can be “una masa de casa dormidas” (82), “una ola humana” (243) or a tangle of sensory experiences, like in “[l]uces, ruidos, el oleaje entero de la vida [que] rompía contra aquellos balcones con cortinas de terciopelo” (92).<sup>189</sup> In the appreciation of this crowd, Andrea feels revitalised: “La sangre, después del viaje largo y cansado, me empezaba a circular en las piernas entumecidas” (81).<sup>190</sup> She realises that she is part of an enveloping unity: “Empecé a seguir -una gota entre la corriente- el rumbo de la masa” (81-82);<sup>191</sup> in another passage, the idea is repeated of being one more element in the intertwining of experiences (294).<sup>192</sup> The protagonist associates urban night with freedom and depth; despite the nocturnal moment, Barcelona is always full of light.<sup>193</sup> In summary, from the beginning, two images dominate the city and its multiplicity, water and night.

The first type of predominant symbolism arises from the images that link the city to a night of freedom, intimacy and harmony. Strikingly, in moments of despair, Andrea refers to “la gran dulzura de la noche” (355).<sup>194</sup> During a nocturnal walk, she perceives charm and mystery enveloping the Cathedral, while “el firmamento se convertía en tiras brillantadas (...) me fijé en el baile de luces que hacían los faroles contra sus mil rincones, volviéndolos románticos y tenebrosos” (183).<sup>195</sup> The protagonist enjoys the

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<sup>188</sup> “It was the first time I had travelled alone, but I wasn’t frightened; on the contrary, this profound freedom at night seemed like an agreeable and exciting adventure to me” (3).

<sup>189</sup> “a mass of sleeping houses” (4); “a human wave” (142); “lights, noises, the entire tide of life, broke against those balconies with their velvet curtains” (12).

<sup>190</sup> “Blood was beginning to circulate in my stiff legs after the long, tedious trip” (3).

<sup>191</sup> “I began to follow -a drop in the current- the human mass” (3).

<sup>192</sup> The full quotation: “Mezcla de vidas, de calidades, de gustos” (294).

““mix of lives, qualities, tastes” (184).

<sup>193</sup> The Spanish quotation: “la ciudad llena de luz a toda hora” (82).

“the city [is] full of light at all hours” (4).

In contrast to Andrea’s positive appreciation of the city’s turmoil, aunt Angustias thinks Barcelona is a dangerous city and compares it to hell, where “vive la gente aglomerada, al acecho unos contra otros” (96).

“People live on top of one another (...) they ambush one another” (14).

<sup>194</sup> “the great sweetness of the night” (238).

<sup>195</sup> The Spanish quotation: “la catedral envuelta en el encanto y el misterio de la noche” (183).

tranquillity that emanates from the building, expressed through the words referring to harmony, peace and clarity: 'armonía', 'paz', 'claridad' (184). References to the night are always immediately contrasted with images of light and colour, thus inverting the darkness by describing it as colourful and luminous.<sup>196</sup> Even during the day, brilliance serves as a counterpoint to blackness, like the words 'cristales' and 'diamantinos' opposite the references to blackness, 'ennegrecidas' and 'negruzcas', in the following fragment: "...altas casas de pisos, ennegrecidas por el humo. Bajo el primer sol los cristales de estas casas negruzcas despedían destellos diamantinos" (206-7).<sup>197</sup>

The second prominent image that refers to the interaction between the character and the multitude develops from the allusion to being a drop in the current (81).<sup>198</sup> I recognise a specific representation of water: the word 'corriente', current, refers to streaming water; at the same time, it highlights the capacity of water to separate into distinct particles without losing the impression of wholeness.<sup>199</sup> Moving water takes on various forms: recurrent aquatic aspects, apart from the current, are the sea, the river, the wave (also in the form of the words derived from 'ola', like 'oleada' and 'oleaje') and the rain. In the context of each of these representations of moving water the protagonist expresses feelings of security and happiness, as in the following phrase:

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"the sky turned into glittering strips (...) I stared at the dance of lights cast by the street lamps against its thousands of nooks and corners, making them romantic and shadowy" (92-93).

<sup>196</sup> Some examples: "Las aceras teñidas de la humedad crepuscular reflejaban las luces de los faroles recién encendidos" (195); "La noche era tibia pero cargada de humedad. Una luz blanca iluminaba mágicamente las ramas cargadas de verde tierno" (240); "La calle irradiaba su alma en el crepúsculo, encendiendo sus escaparates como una hilera de ojos amarillos o blancos que mirasen desde sus oscuras cuencas..." (294).

"The sidewalks, stained with twilight dampness, reflected the lights of the street lamps that had just been turned on" (103); The night was warm but heavy with dampness. A white light magically illuminated the tender green branches" (140); "The street displayed its soul at dusk, its shop windows lit like a string of yellow or white eyes looking out from dark sockets..." (184).

<sup>197</sup> "tall apartment buildings blackened by smoke. Under the early sun the windows of these dark buildings flashed like diamonds" (112).

<sup>198</sup> The Spanish quotation: "una gota entre la corriente" (81).

<sup>199</sup> The effect of movement is reflected in the fragment from the same opening sequence: "[I]a sangre, después del viaje largo y cansado, me empezaba a circular" (81).

"Blood was beginning to circulate in my stiff legs after the long, tedious trip" (3).



“Sin abrir los ojos sentí otra vez una oleada venturosa y cálida. Estaba en Barcelona” (91): another fragment alludes to “una ola de agrado” (98).<sup>200</sup>

The entire city is strongly connected to the sea, which is emphasised in the allusion to the ancient churches navigating through the waves: “[l]as torres de las iglesias antiguas parecían navegar entre olas” (269).<sup>201</sup> In another passage, poetic and mythical expressions seem to link the city to the Mediterranean: “Dulces y espesas noches mediterráneas sobre Barcelona, con su zumo dorado de luna, con su húmedo olor de nereidas que peinasen cabellos de agua sobre las blancas espaldas, sobre la escamosa cola de oro” (281).<sup>202</sup> The sea is always associated with happiness, also in another context, for example, in episodes where Andrea goes to the beach with her friends (205, 265).<sup>203</sup>

Another recurring aquatic image is rain, also in the form of a thunderstorm (98, 322). I have already established in the previous section that the pleasant moments with Gloria evoke the image of speech as beneficial rain (107, 200). In this context, rain surges as a realm of laziness and languor.<sup>204</sup> However, many times rain introduces an episode of relief after moments of tension, announcing an emotional release. The adjectives ‘opresivo’, meaning oppressive, and ‘pesado’, heavy, indicate the suffocating nature

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<sup>200</sup> “Without opening my eyes I once again felt a warm wave of good fortune. I was in Barcelona” (11); “a wave of pleasure” (17).

<sup>201</sup> “the steeples of the ancient churches seemed to sail through waves” (164).

<sup>202</sup> “Sweet, dense Mediterranean nights over Barcelona, with golden juice flowing from the moon, with the damp odour of sea nymphs combing their watery hair over white shoulders, over the scales of golden tails” (174).

<sup>203</sup> The emphasis on happiness, in combination with aquatic images, also arises in the memories of the village of her youth, where “me dejaba arrastrar por la corriente” (265).

“I let myself be carried along by the current” (161).

<sup>204</sup> The languidness of the rain also is found in the words ‘lacias’, meaning lank or slack, and ‘lenta lluvia’, slow rain, in the fragment: “Las hojas lacias y amarillentas caían en una lenta lluvia desde los árboles” (113).

“Lifeless yellow leaves fell from the trees in a slow rain” (30).

of the upcoming storm (320, 98); at the same time, the burst of rain brings an experience of liberation and purification, as in the following passage:

Cuando entré en la casa empezó a llover detrás de mí (...)  
Escuchaba el ruido de la lluvia. Los hilos del agua iban limpiando con su fuerza el polvo de los cristales del balcón. Primero habían formado una capa pegajosa de cieno, ahora las gotas resbalaban libremente por la superficie brillante y gris. (114)<sup>205</sup>

Andrea not only observes the rain; in some scenes, she physically surrenders to the torrential shower (231, 329-30). The function of the rain, acting as an element of mental cleaning, is reflected in the purifying drops of tears and the shower (87, 269, 345).<sup>206</sup>

Finally, images of light and darkness, on the one hand, and of water, on the other, have a strong relationship, and they sometimes intertwine. Such a combination occurs in fragments such as "las oleadas de luces" (182), "una apretada lluvia de estrellas" (181) and "[u]n río de luces corría calle Pelayo abajo" (240).<sup>207</sup>

Now, how do we interpret such strong symbolism based on the coexistence of darkness and light, and the predominance of moving water? I classify the recurrent images according to the categories of the imaginary. In line with the dynamics of the polemic category, symbols with positive value are situated opposite the negativity of the house and its inhabitants. At first glance, the interaction between Andrea and the

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<sup>205</sup> "When I came into the house it began to rain behind me (...) I listened to the sound of the rain. With their force the streams of water were cleaning the dust from the windows to the balcony. At first they had formed a sticky layer of grime; now the drops slid freely along the shiny grey surface" (31).

<sup>206</sup> Andrea proposes, regarding the tears after the dance: "my soul was being washed" (184). In another scene, Andrea starts "a thorough cleaning of my room, with disinfectant and hot water" (160).

The Spanish quotations: "mi alma quedaba lavada" (294); "a hacer una limpieza de [su] cuarto, a fondo, con desinfectante y agua caliente" (264)

<sup>207</sup> "a dense shower of stars" (91); "[a] river of lights ran down Calle de Pelayo" (140).

Referred to just as 'the lights' (92) instead of 'the waves of lights', the essence of the fragment "las oleadas de luces"(182) is lost in translation.

In the fragment that depicts buildings as bathing in shadows, water is connected with darkness of positive value.

The Spanish quotation: "bañados en sombras" (182).

city seems to be almost neutral. However, from the repeated use of the adjective 'suelta', meaning loose, wandering suggests an itinerary that is not restricted by a fixed course or the conventions of the era.<sup>208</sup> References to freedom oppose familial and societal restrictions, represented by the animal character of the inhabitants of the house. I consider the recurrence of the word 'suelta' an indication of the relevance of the symbolism of separation. From the same group of images, purification occurs, inherent in surrendering to the water of rain and the shower.

Evidently, the luminous symbols, so predominant in the descriptions of the city, stand in opposition to the darkness of the house. Another elemental way of dealing with urbanity, also from the group of luminous symbols, resides in perception and observation. The charm of the city lies in a diversity of sensory impressions, such as smell, sound, and lights (81); Andrea emphasises the importance of seeing: "[m]e gusta ver las calles. Ver la ciudad" (128).<sup>209</sup> Although she doesn't like this tendency to stay out of the action, she characterises herself as an observer with the words: "Unos seres nacen para vivir, otros para trabajar, otros para mirar la vida. Yo tenía un pequeño y ruin papel de espectadora" (293).<sup>210</sup>

I consider the inversion of night, according to the nocturnal presence as a moment of intimacy and security, belonging to the centric category. Adjectives such as 'profundo' and 'dulce', profound and sweet, indicate the symbolism of the beneficent night; references to harmony and beauty also fit in this context. Furthermore, the connection between the mass and the maternal substance of water pertains to the

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<sup>208</sup> Andrea's walks are described with expressions like 'andar por la calle', or 'irse a la calle', walk or go out to the streets (185, 195, 252).

However, walking gets a more specific meaning when she emphasises preferring her free wandering: "prefería mi vagabundeo libre" (193).

<sup>209</sup> "I like to see the streets. See the city..." (43).

<sup>210</sup> "Some creatures were born to live, others to work, others to watch life. I had a small, miserable role as a spectator" (184).

centric category. In addition, the representation of the consistency of water -the drop in the current- refers to the immersion in a totality of similar elements. Another centric factor is the intimacy of the homes of friends and the meals shared there. Finally, I consider the regularity of the urban walks as a temporal rhythm.

In summary, the predominant symbols in *Nada* that refer to the mass focus on the coexistence of light and darkness, and on aquatic metaphors. In the polemic category, the negative value is centred in the family house; the positive images adhere to separation, light and observation. The references to beneficent night and maternal water are situated in the centric category. The temporal regularity of the walks connects to the rhythmic category.

We can categorise the entire symbolism as follows:

- polemic category:
  - \* negative value: symbols of darkness and animality in the house and the inhabitants of the house
  - \* positive value: symbols of separation (purification) and luminosity, such as the lights of the city and observation
- centric category: beneficent night during the urban walks, surrender to aquatic mass, the homes of friend, communal meals
- rhythmic category: temporal cycle, rhythmic interaction with space.

From the mythemic analysis of the entire story, the following groups of opposing mythemes emerge:

- initial separation from the known family sphere
- final departure from Barcelona environment to live with friends

- restriction by society in general and the family house in particular
- resistance by the protagonist, projected in urban walks
  
- chaos and disorder in the house
- experience of beauty and harmony during nighttime walks

In such a mythemic structure, I recognise the hero's myth, representing the initiatory journey: the protagonist is separated from the realm of her origin, battles adversaries, and ultimately returns successfully. This mythemic structure coincides with the interpretation of *Nada* as a coming-of-age novel. It is worth noting that the mythemes corresponding to flânerie cover only a portion of the mythemic structure: resistance against restrictions and the experience of the city as the realm of security.<sup>211</sup> When placed in the historical context, I argue that the flânerista mythemes are the product of the text's identitary impulse, since they emphasise rebellion against accepted and restrictive norms. Thus, the characterization of Andrea as a flâneuse is inserted into the overall rebellious nature of *Nada*. Through myth textual analysis in section 4.3.2, I will further characterise the flâneur motif in *Nada*. I will revisit the results of the symbolic level analysis in line with the intertextual interpretation in chapter 4.1.

### **4.2.3 *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Antonio Muñoz Molina**

As one can infer from its title, *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, meaning literally 'Walking solitarily among people', is about urban wanderings. It introduces a figure who hunts for collected words and overheard voices in the crowd. He moves through

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<sup>211</sup> It should be noted that Andrea is not the only woman who has the habit of going out alone or behaving like a vagabond; Andrea's behaviour is reflected in Gloria (196) and Ena's mother (189).

a variety of major cities, encountering the multitude. The mass is largely represented through extensive enumerations of collected quotations and phrases. The second part of the work incorporates the pilgrimage of an anonymous figure to the museum-house of Edgar Allan Poe.

The analysis of the symbolic level of the text is centred on the interaction between the character and the urban mass. I established in the introductory part that comments widely recognise the presence of the flâneur in the text. The intertextual analysis confirmed the relationship with classic flâneur texts and their authors. Nevertheless, I posit that the symbolic interpretation of *Un andar solitario entre la gente* will reveal new elements regarding the interaction with the urban environment. Therefore, I hypothesise that the analysis of the symbolic level of the text, the combination of genotextual and myth critical procedure, enhances the understanding of the flâneur motif. I will address the research question: what presence takes the symbolic level of the interaction with the multitude in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Un andar solitario entre la gente*? In the layered structure of the text, three levels distinctly bring forward the interest of the flâneur motif: the textual aspect, the implication of biographical fragments about flâneur authors, and the narrator's story. Although this multiplication is the decisive characteristic of the flâneur in Muñoz Molina's text, the complex structure complicates a clear analysis. Therefore, in this analysis I will restrict myself to the symbolic level of the layers that most pertain to the interaction with the mass: the textual aspect and the narrator's story.

### **Genotextual analysis**

I conduct the genotextual analysis conform to the procedure formulated in the theoretical part, according to the angle of rupture and restoration of the initial union, on

the one hand, and the exploration of boundaries angle, on the other one. I will address the question: what are the genotextual traces that the reader can recognise in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*? At first glance, the bipartition of the entire work is significant: the part “Oficina de instantes perdidos” recounts the wandering of an anonymous narrator through various cities; in the second part titled “Don Nadie” the pilgrimage of an enigmatic character to the Edgar Allan Poe museum-house in New York is intertwined (7, 351).<sup>212</sup> Apparently, this structure coincides with the divided existence of the protagonist, who lives in two cities, of which Madrid seems to be his true home. Certain decisive events emphasise the narrator’s sense of rupture: firstly, the occurrence of temporarily losing his home in Madrid, which provokes a sensation of estrangement: “[e]l amor es otro y Madrid se vuelve una ciudad extranjera” (111).<sup>213</sup> Secondly, the increasing alienation in the second city New York, a feeling that leads him to abandon his apartment there and leave the city. The incurable condition of isolation has not diminished after ten years of living there; furthermore, “[m]i sensación de extranjería era la misma que la de muchas otras personas a mi alrededor, pero eso no bastaba para crear una fraternidad, ni siquiera de desconocidos” (388).<sup>214</sup> The words “condición incurable” refer to the repetitive character of the experience of isolation, which, according to Kristeva, connects with the ongoing process of individuation, following the separation from the maternal body (388). The observation that the character’s estrangement is similar to that of others accentuates the universality of such an experience.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> The translation of the chapter titles: “Office of lost moments” and “Mr. Nobody”.

I consider the name ‘Don Nadie’ an intertextual reference to the Odyssey, the mythical tale of eternal wandering. It also appears in other texts by Muñoz Molina, such as *El Robinson urbano* (1984) and through the reference to captain Nemo in *Diario del Nautilus* (1986).

<sup>213</sup> “Our love is a different love and Madrid is a foreign city” (88).

<sup>214</sup> “My sense of foreignness was the same as that of many others around me, but was not enough to form a fellowship. Not even a fellowship of strangers” (326).

<sup>215</sup> In terms of scission, the title of the first chapter, “Oficina de instantes perdidos”, is also relevant, as it refers to loss, the key experience to be expressed in the genotext (7).

According to the first axis of genotextual analysis, I consider the emphasis on bipartition as a genotextual reference to the experience of rupture. Indeed, isolation and rupture have always been part of the narrator's vital experiences, as seen in the fragment where he proposes: "Por muy atrás que me remonte en el tiempo no recuerdo una época en la que no hubiera una fractura en mi vida, en mis vidas: entre lugares, entre lealtades, entre deseos" (460).<sup>216</sup> In terms of textual disposition, the fragmentary nature of *Un andar solitario entre la gente* accentuates the thematization of separation; it becomes visible in graphic design, through short paragraphs, white spaces and alternation with italicised text.

Apart from the sensation of rupture, the text subtly highlights the desire for returning to the *chora* phase, as in the rare passages that refer to the relationship with the beloved as an experience of shared breathing (55). Another passage depicts this encounter with words that refer to humidity and corporeal fluids, such as "la saliva diversa pero ya tan mezclada de los dos" (202).<sup>217</sup> I connect the reference to shared breath and bodily fluids with the longing for the corporeal continuum, the unity phase of the mother's and child's bodies. However, the insertion of extensive enumerations, of collected text fragments and biographical passages of authors and artists also fits in the expression of the desire for union. The fervent immersion in the words of others, perceived visually or acoustically, suggest the desire to merge with the undefined mass, an allusion to maternal substance. Through such literary allusions, also in the

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<sup>216</sup> "As far back as I can recall, no period in my life, or lives, has been without a fracture -between places, loyalties, desires" (390).

<sup>216</sup> The sensation of isolation arises since the younger years of the narrator, period in which "... [los padres] siempre habitaban en otro mundo exclusivamente suyo, como yo habitaba en el mío" (71).

"My father and mother (...) lived for the most part in a separate world that was exclusively their own, just as I lived in mine" (50).

<sup>217</sup> "damp with fluid and saliva, the spit of mingled mouths" (167).



form of biographical fragments about those authors, the desired fraternity appears, the immersion in the lives of kindred souls.<sup>218</sup>

In addition to the allusions to union through the word, physical references to the *chora*, the initial state of unity in which the consciousness of 'self' has not yet developed, emerge in the narrator's reflections: "No tiene nombre ahora mismo, ni biografía, ni cara. En su consciencia no hay una separación entre la vigilia y el sueño, igual que no la hay entre la sombra de su cuerpo y los bultos de negrura en la habitación, y la oscuridad misma del aire" (353).<sup>219</sup> The same state of dreams appears in another fragment where the relationship with the liquid substance of the maternal body extends to the prenatal state: "Está en la cama como (...) un feto sumergido en el líquido amniótico, envuelto en capas sucesivas de confort" (281).<sup>220</sup>

The second axis of genotextual analysis, the exploration of boundaries, begins with the establishment of the narrator's character splitting. At first glance, the representation of the pilgrim walking to Edgar Allan Poe's house seems the projection of a possible

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<sup>218</sup> I consider the repeated references to authors such as De Quincey, Poe, Baudelaire, and Walter Benjamin consistent with this inclination to converge with the other. The biographical passages are found on the following pages in the Spanish edition: Thomas de Quincey 37-43; Edgar Allan Poe 48-53, 433-50, 462-65; Walter Benjamin 73-75, 339-49, 477-78; Charles Baudelaire 79-81, 207-211, 462-65. They also surrender to the masses, whether it is the multitude of the streets, or the fragmentation and collection of texts.

The fragment that refers to "la fraternidad de los caminantes por la ciudad", the fraternity of city wanderers, links Baudelaire to De Quincey and Poe, on the one hand, and to Benjamin on the other (128).

In the fellowship of wandering flâneur authors also fit other writers like Fernando Pessoa (28, 139, 141, 405, 494), Herman Melville (289, 307, 309, 364-65) and James Joyce (5, 122, 141, 289, 477).

<sup>219</sup> "He has no name, at present, no face, and no biography. There is no boundary in his mind between sleep and waking, just as there is none between his shadowy limbs and the dark shapes of objects in the room or the very darkness in the air" (297).

Notably, some fragments collected during the character's acoustic expeditions seem to thematize the need to return to the primal state, like for example: "Feel like a child again" (53) or "For your inner child" (56).

The Spanish quotations: "Vuelve a Sentirte Niño" (74); "Para el Niño que Llevas Dentro" (77)

<sup>220</sup> "He is ensconced in bed like a silkworm in its cocoon or a fetus floating in amniotic fluid; enveloped in successive layers of comfort" (233).

It should be noted that other dreams refer to the state of depression, thus acquiring a phantasmal character (115).

Walter Benjamin, according to the initial description as a figure wearing round glasses and carrying a briefcase (357).<sup>221</sup> However, despite the external focalisation, the pilgrim increasingly coincides with the narrator and his task of collecting overheard fragments and scraps of paper. The blurry line between first and third-person narration suggests the merging of two manifestations of the same subject. I recognise in several more fragments the questioning of the limits of the 'self', the boundaries between the subject and others. Firstly, the strong identification with other flâneur characters, which coincides with the essayistic and fragmentary style of the texts. Very significant in this context is the collected phrase "Yo que tantos hombres he sido".<sup>222</sup>

Secondly, the thematization of "no ser nadie, Don Nadie, Monsieur Personne, Mr. Nobody" alludes to a continuous challenging of the subject's limitation (70).<sup>223</sup> It runs parallel with the expression "[I]o que más me gusta de andar solo por ahí y hablar en otro idioma es la suspensión parcial de la identidad" (324).<sup>224</sup> I interpret the desire to be nobody, the tendency to reject one's own identity, also as a strong reference to the longing to return to the initial state. Indeed, being nobody has two aspects: it ranges from euphoria (70-71) to the extreme isolation of the New York stays (385-88). Finally, the blurring of the boundaries between the 'self' and everything that surrounds it is expressed in the narrator's immersion in the mass, which can be the human crowd, the multitude of objects, and the abundance of sensory experiences. The range of

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<sup>221</sup> It is unfolded from the possibility that Walter Benjamin might have escaped to make himself an existence between the other Jews in exile in New York.

The Spanish quotation: "Pero pudo haberse salvado" (398).

<sup>222</sup> "I, who have been so many men" (297, 298).

The expression 'I, who have been so many men' is also relevant for the Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa, who "se esconde o se multiplica en identidades inventadas" (139). His posthumous text *O livro do desassossego* (1982), written under the pseudonym of Bernardo Soares, displays a fragmentation similar to Walter Benjamin's work. The narrator mentions this title when he refers to the objects in his 'office' (199).

"conceals or multiplies himself through his various fictional identities" (110).

<sup>223</sup> "no one, a nonentity, Don Nadie, Monsieur Personne, Mr. Nobody" (49).

<sup>224</sup> "What I enjoy most about wandering on my own or speaking a different language is the partial interruption of identity" (271).

convergences with multiple matter expands to the immersion in writing, which resembles a dissolution; as the narrator proposes: “[m]ás bien me disgrego y me dejo ir” (66).<sup>225</sup>

The second type of boundary exploration, abjection, takes shape through the strong representation of the terror of the mass and the environmental pollution caused by urban commerce: “La ciudad (...) sumergida en un gran clamor de palabras simultáneas, como en una nube de contaminación” (134).<sup>226</sup> I propose that the generation of waste and “basura verbal”, verbal trash, can be interpreted as the production of non-physical excrements (480);<sup>227</sup> the word “estercolero”, dunghill, in the fragment “[e]l suelo es un estercolero tan alfombrado de basuras de plástico como el fondo del mar” supports the connection between garbage and excrements (374).<sup>228</sup> The link with bodily rejection is also evident when the accumulation of garbage causes physical effects as strong as food poisoning: “[u]n malestar, una náusea (...) algo tan inmediato como las primeras indicias de una intoxicación alimentaria” (481).<sup>229</sup> Both excrements and physical rejection are inherent in abjection. As the final exponent of terror, abjection adopts an apocalyptic aspect in the collected fragment that links consumerism with the end of times: “LIQUIDACIÓN FINAL, LIQUIDACIÓN TOTAL, ÚLTIMOS DÍAS” (292).<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> “I just disperse, letting myself go” (47).

<sup>226</sup> “The city is submerged in a flood of simultaneous words as in a vast cloud of pollution” (108). In this fragment, the translation of the word ‘clamor’, meaning shouting or uproar, is lost.

<sup>227</sup> The central thematization of words accumulated in the public sphere is situated in the context of the fellowship of wanderers, through the connection with another flâneur: “Baudelaire dice que siente «l’horreur des affiches»” (134).

“Baudelaire says that he suffers from «l’horreur des affiches»” (107).

<sup>228</sup> “[t]he ground is a dunghill as thickly carpeted in plastic trash as the bottom of the sea” (315).

The Spanish quotation: “El suelo es un estercolero tan alfombrado de basuras de plástico como el fondo del mar” (374).

<sup>229</sup> “A kind of nausea or malaise (...) something as immediate as food poisoning” (407).

<sup>230</sup> “LAST CHANCE, EVERYTHING MUST GO, FINAL DAYS” (243).

Lastly, the questioning of the limits of discourse, so evident in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, is due to the heavily fragmented structure and the divergent graphic design. In terms of the graphic disposition of the work, the repeated rupture is immediately visible: short paragraphs, always preceded by a bold title; graphic alternation through fragments in italic referring to news articles; paragraphs consisting of textual collages of collected quotes; the insertion of clippings and photographs of flâneur writers. In terms of literary devices, extensive enumerations that acquire a poetic nature through rhythmic word repetition are prominent. Another repetitive element is the use of anaphora, which also provides a poetic impression, as for example “la hora y el día y el año y la época en que ha despertado” (353).<sup>231</sup> I interpret such rhythmic texts as an acoustic reference to the flâneur's rhythm, to the dynamics of the walker's steps. Comparisons and metaphors, especially aquatic images referring to the mass, reinforce the poetic character of the text. I consider the poetic nature of the text in contradiction to the non-fictional character of the essayistic and journalistic episodes. I identify such a procedure as a discrepancy with contextual logic.

In *Un andar solitario entre la gente* flânerie acts as the central axis of the text, both in the characterisation of the narrator and his doubles, and in textual structuring. Genotextual references connect as follows with the flâneur motif, according to the results of the analysis. The thematization of rupture, firstly, coincides with isolation, which manifests in the characterisation of the flâneur as estrangement within the crowd, “un extraño entre [los] semejantes” (335).<sup>232</sup> Secondly, the desire for reunion with the maternal surges through immersion in the mass of perceptions, objects, and words. Furthermore, the longing for union is expressed through the creation of a

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<sup>231</sup> “the time of the day, the day of the week, the year, the period of his life” (297).

<sup>232</sup> “a stranger among [his] fellow human beings” (282).

fraternity of wanderers, which also refers to the exploration of identity boundaries. Finally, the exploration of boundaries is strongly connected with the thematization of the terror of garbage and the fragmented textual structure, also a characteristic of flânerie texts.

### **Myth critical analysis: multiplication**

According to the genotextual analysis, the interaction between the protagonist and the urban mass moves between poles. For one thing, the flâneur's movement becomes a beneficent immersion, in line with the longing for maternal substance and the need to feel united with flânerista literature. This need is shaped by the mass of collected words and literary references. On the other hand, the isolation of the narrator is expressed through the accent on rupture and the exploration of boundaries. In this section I investigate how *Un andar solitario entre la gente* connects with the symbolic level of myths. To begin, I identify redundant symbols, to then situate them in the categories of the imaginary. I centre on the characterisation of the mass and the narrator-character's interaction with the multitude.

It should be emphasised beforehand that the city is the confluence of three types of multitude: people, objects, and experiences. So, how does the urban mass behave? In broad strokes: like water and like the animal. Beginning with aquatic symbols, I recognise images that refer to the sea (93, 132, 433) and to the flood and the river (367, 376, 433-34).<sup>233</sup> There are a large number of other water forms, especially

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<sup>233</sup> Besides the aquatic images, the symbolism takes the form of another crowd symbol; the image of the woods appears in the fragment "El bosque de las miradas" (371), meaning the forest of glances. The crowd symbol gets lost in the translation, "the thicket of glances", which diminishes the overwhelming nature of the forest (313).

moving water.<sup>234</sup> Apart from explicit mention, the sea emerges implicitly through allusions to literary characters such as “[el] Ahab errante por una calle arbolada de Madrid” (93)<sup>235</sup> and Robinson the castaway (220-21, 225).<sup>236</sup> Another aquatic image, undulation, is derived towards the movement of the flag (311, 375, 413, 475). A strong representation of the aquatic nature of New York's Times Square is found in the extensive episode that unfolds the image of the aquarium, where there are “grupos de turistas tan apretados como bancos de peces idénticos” (373).<sup>237</sup>

The verbs “desbordarse” (292, 293, 307) and “inundar” (95, 190, 292), referring to overflowing and flooding, indicate the extreme nature of the aquatic manifestations that mostly refer to the multitude of unwanted experiences and objects: commercial propaganda material and waste (292, 293); verbal trash (480); human mass, especially tourists (95, 190).<sup>238</sup> In this context, the aquatic references connect with images of animality, thus extending the symbolism to threat.<sup>239</sup> The anxiety caused by the crowd

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<sup>234</sup> The references to moving water appear as follows: “borbotón”, meaning bubble (82); “caudal” and “riada”, meaning massive stream of water (406, 362); current (374, 376, 406, 425); wave, “oleada” or “oleaje” (361, 92); “torbellino”, meaning whirlpool (311). Rarely, there is mention of still water in “la calle, [el] gran charco de claridad de la acera” (123).

“the great puddle of light on the sidewalk” (98).

Also rarely, there are references to humidity such as fog, clouds, or rain (311, 361, 418, 425).

Drawing on Melville, Broadway is compared to the Mississippi, the Amazona and the Nile (307, 365); in some fragments various aquatic images are mingled: “el Mississippi de Broadway como la multitud de corrientes diversas que forman el caudal en apariencia uniforme del río” (406).

“the Mississippi of Broadway like the many different currents that form a river's seemingly uniform stream” (343).

<sup>235</sup> “old Ahab wandering around Madrid” (70).

<sup>236</sup> Even in the cracks of the sidewalk there traces of sea-life: “Las huellas de gaviotas o correlimos en la arena recién alisada por la marea baja” (369).

“the scattered marks left by seagulls and plovers on a stretch of sand that has been smoothed by the receding tide” are recognised (311).

<sup>237</sup> “Tight groups of tourists move like shoals of identical fish” (314).

<sup>238</sup> The experience of verbal harassment is expressed in passages like “las corrientes poderosas de las pantallas de anuncios” (374) and “el río y la serpiente marina de palabras avanzando con contorsiones de látigo” (376).

“the powerful currents of the advertising screens” (315); “a river and a sea snake of words curving like a whip” (317).

<sup>239</sup> References to animality take the form of noise (91, 94, 365, 367, 403, 418) and chaotic movement (176, 418, 423, 452). I suggest that the verb “pulular”, meaning swarming, alludes to chaotic movement and to crawling and squirming. In some fragments of the translation, the essence of this verb is lost.

Another aspect of the agitated movement of the human mass, surges in the reflection on *The Garden of Earthly Delight* (c. 1500-1505) by Bosch, through a comparison between the swarming of the medieval bodies on the painting and the crowding public (175).

is projected in the adjectives ‘monstrous’ and ‘fearsome’, in fragments like “[e]l bajo continuo monstruoso del tráfico” (91) and “[e]l rumor de esa temible multitud” (367).<sup>240</sup> Another aspect of animality, engulfment, takes form through allusions to the devouring monstrosity of the multitudes. This occurs in Times Square, where the images on the large screens take the aspect of “sirenas buceadores” (375) and “especies de las profundidades, calamares gigantes, ballenas” (377).<sup>241</sup> I consider phenomena such as sirens, giant octopuses, and whales as direct references to the devouring monster.

Finally, terms that highlight the oppressive nature of the urban atmosphere frequently emerge.<sup>242</sup> They apply to the three types of multitude, as can be seen in the following fragment: “tanto espesor de presencias humanas, de ruido, de tráfico” (366).<sup>243</sup> Well, returning momentarily to Canetti’s crowd symbols, I recognise in Muñoz Molina’s text a key characteristic of the mass: its density. I propose that, implicitly, the density of the mass also is connected to engulfment. The threatening nature of the mass evokes in the character “una creciente sensación de ahogo” (366);<sup>244</sup> the horrifying experience of the multitude causes the exclamation that it is necessary to emerge as soon as possible to the shore: “[e]s preciso emerger cuanto antes en una orilla de realidad y cordura. Hay que salir del desfiladero submarino de Broadway” (377).<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> “the monstrous bass” (68); “[t]he rumble of that fearsome crowd” (308).

<sup>241</sup> “diving mermaids” (316); “creatures of the deep, (...) whales and giant squids” (317).

<sup>242</sup> The words that appear in this context: “abrumadora”, overwhelming (362); “apretar”, to press (190, 361, 362, 374); “densidad”, density (95, 419); “espesor”, thickness (95, 373); “sofocante”, suffocating (95); “tupido”, dense (371). In some fragments of the translation, these words (or their essence) are lost.

<sup>243</sup> “such a density of human beings; of noise, traffic, things” (308).

<sup>244</sup> “a growing sense of suffocation” (308). It is worth noting that the Spanish word ‘ahogo’ also refers to drowning, which might be appropriate in the aquatic setting of these scenes.

<sup>245</sup> “He must reach a shore of reason and reality as soon as possible. He must leave Broadway’s underwater canyon, emerge as quickly as he can from the liquid realm of screens” (317).

In conclusion, *Un andar solitario entre la gente* gives presence to the urban manifestation of mass through the symbolism of water and animality.<sup>246</sup> A similar symbolism is found in the scenes that describe the periods of mental distress experienced by the narrator, expressed through the darkness of a shadow (124) and the feeling of "ahondar en la negrura" (257); the animality of being devoured appears in "el hocico de angustia" (124), the presence of the vampire (124, 257) and the references to tunnels (124, 257).<sup>247</sup>

Let us now proceed to the characterisation of the narrator in relation to the multitude, by addressing the question: how does the character experience the mass and what are their actions? In line with his quality as flâneur, it is evident that the narrator's main action is wandering. This protagonism of the act of walking is sustained by a diversity of images.<sup>248</sup> A notable symbol of the walker is the foot, an image that leads to the mention of all kinds of footwear.<sup>249</sup> Although there is hardly a dialogue or an argument in the text, a key event, which affects the interaction with the city, illustrates the importance of wandering the streets. During a period of depression, the narrator's mental discomfort is projected onto the difficulty of walking; it causes physical effects that hinder the walk: weakening the legs, adhering to the knees, attaching lead soles to the shoes (123-24, 243-44). The event highlights the relevance of the streets as a

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<sup>246</sup> Very seldom symbols of falling also are found, such as the words "acantilado" (378), "desfiladero" (377), and "fosa" (376), cliff, canyon, and trench, to refer to the New York streets.

<sup>247</sup> "sink more deeply in the darkness" (214); "the prodding muzzle of a creature" (98).

<sup>248</sup> Some specific figures represent the wanderer, such as the references to the work of Giacometti, the creator of the walking figure (70, 242, 259). The framed poster with a design by Giacometti, frequently admired in the neighbourhood café, shows a passing figure that is the emblem of the attitude of the walker-by; it is similar to the "hombrecillo verde de los semáforos" (260) whose image appears in the Spanish edition on page 352.

"little green man on the crossing signal" (217).

<sup>249</sup> The types of shoes include children's shoes, sandals, high heels and orthopaedic shoes (20, 21, 23, 93, 144-45, 288, 311). The relevance of feet projects into references to the shoes of the urban wanderers; for example, through the pages that expand on the boots of the writers Stevenson, Baudelaire, Dickens or Edgar Allan Poe, and the lace shoes of Fernando Pessoa (179-80).



vital environment: “La caminata (...) es una condición permanente, un ritmo orgánico tan acompasado y tan eficiente como los latidos del corazón y la entrada y la salida del aire en los pulmones” (379).<sup>250</sup>

The second level of activity includes two actions that go hand in hand: observing and collecting. The narrator has assigned himself a task: making a visual and acoustic registration of the advertising messages that manifest on the street, “grabar conversaciones y recoger cosas del suelo”, thus going “como un peregrino o un excursionista por Madrid” (321).<sup>251</sup> A complete interweaving is carried out, in which visual and auditory perceptions are intertwined. In this context, references to vision do not adhere to the polemic category, given the strong connection with the act of collecting, which I consider centric. It is no accident that some passages characterise the flâneur authors through their lack of adequate vision.<sup>252</sup>

The walk runs parallel with the dynamic of ‘dejarse llevar’, letting oneself be carried away, like a “caminante sonámbulo” (18); it is the central interaction with the city (11, 66, 123, 307, 425).<sup>253</sup> The ambivalence of such an attitude is alluded to in the following passage: “Caminar es hacer algo y no hacer nada. Es ir por ahí sin propósito alguno y al mismo tiempo con una dirección marcada por el trazado de la calle que viene siguiendo desde su principio” (365).<sup>254</sup> It coincides with an inward movement, entering into the multitude (454), in line with the repetitive words that allude to immersion (96),

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<sup>250</sup> “Walking now is a permanent condition, an organic rhythm as efficient and well-timed as the beating of the heart or the periodic intake of air into the lungs” (319).

In another fragment a similar relationship is found between steps, on the one hand, and the pulse and heartbeat, on the other.

The Spanish quotation: “los latidos del corazón y los ritmos del aliento” (123).

<sup>251</sup> “recording conversations and picking things up off the ground”; “wander through Madrid like a pilgrim of a traveler” (268).

<sup>252</sup> Pessoa and Benjamin are both near-sighted and wear round glasses, “los dos son miopes, usan gafas redondas” (139); James Joyce and Pessoa are both busy, near-sighted and often drunk, “Los dos caminan atareados y miopes, y con frecuencia muy bebidos” (141).

<sup>253</sup> “like a sleepwalker” (10).

<sup>254</sup> “To walk is to do something and to do nothing. It means wandering aimlessly along but also in a particular direction traced by the course of a street that he has followed from the very beginning” (307).

submersion (132, 494), and the submarine environment (376, 377, 463). Both the action of letting oneself be carried away and submersion are connected to the aquatic quality of the mass. Significantly, the verb 'to dissolve' alludes to the loss of identity that comes from submersion: "mi consciencia se disolvía en [la ciudad] como me sumergiera en un sueño de opio" (494).<sup>255</sup> I connect the actions of letting oneself be carried away and submersion to the beneficent aspect of water, of the centric category.

Apparently, the continuous interaction with the mass evokes the immersion in words. Writing, conceived as the creation of a multitude of similar elements, refers to multiplication, an action that fits in the centric category.<sup>256</sup> The preference for literature grants the intoxication of wine or music, "la exaltación lúcida", and the awareness of being "plenamente quien soy y al mismo tiempo a ser cualquier otro y a no ser nadie, Don Nadie, Monsieur Personne, Mr. Nobody" (70).<sup>257</sup> The desire to be nobody, the terms 'embriaguez', meaning intoxication, and 'exaltación', and the focus on oneself are also indications of a centric attitude. Finally, despite his wandering, the narrator always carries with him his "oficina de instantes perdidos" (197).<sup>258</sup> The mobile set of instruments consisting of notebooks, pencils, and scissors in minimum size create the intimacy of a personal space. Although they are not connected with flânerie, the episodes about the home, the house that the beloved is preparing for the narrator, belong to the same category of intimate spaces.

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<sup>255</sup> "my mind began to dissolve in [the city] as in an opium dream" (418).

<sup>256</sup> In a significant quote from his letters, Benjamin explains that he needs to write "un libro bajo el que cobijarse" (344).

"write a book in which he can take shelter" (290).

<sup>257</sup> "a lucid high"; "fully who I am yet someone else as well, or no one, a nonentity, Don Nadie, Monsieur Personne, Mr. Nobody" (49).

<sup>258</sup> "office of lost moments" (162).

However, by adopting the aspect of animality, the mass becomes threatening, which provokes the sensation of ‘ahogo’, which can be seen as suffocating or drowning (308). This connects to the symbolism of engulfment, of the polemic category. A similar abrupt change is expressed in the fragment in which being nobody turns from freedom into anxiety: “No es nadie. No siente peso ninguno. Pero la sensación no es ahora de libertad sino de miedo” (367).<sup>259</sup> That is, submersion is an ambivalent movement, a paradox that is made explicit in a passage dedicated to Baudelaire:

Él formuló literalmente lo que había intuido en las narraciones de sus maestros, sus dos predecesores sucesivos: que la fascinación y el horror pueden ser la misma cosa, la entrega y el rechazo, la complacencia en aquello mismo que se quiere destruir; y que en la ciudad se hace visible la cercanía entre el oro y el barro, entre la maravilla y el desperdicio. (80)<sup>260</sup>

In summary, in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* the city and the multitude are represented in two ways: in one respect, with images with negative value of the polemic category, symbols of animality, dark water, and falling. They accentuate the disturbed state of the character at these moments. On the other hand, relief surges through submersion in the mass, whether it is a fraternity of author-flâneurs, a collection of textual fragments or the shelter of writing. I suggest that the use of vision and word are connected with the action of collecting, thus belonging to the centric category as well. The interaction with the crowd also includes rhythmic activities such as walking, the

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<sup>259</sup> “He is no one. He feels devoid of weight. But the feeling now is one of fear rather than of freedom” (308).

<sup>260</sup> “He articulated more explicitly what he intuited in writings of his two masters and predecessors: that horror and fascination can be the same, like devotion and contempt or like taking pleasure in the very thing we want to destroy; that in the city we can see the real closeness between filth and gold, wonder and trash” (59).

temporal regularity of the strolls and regressing in time to the lives of the writers resembling the narrator. The symbolic characteristics are summarised as follows:<sup>261</sup>

- polemic category
- \* negative value: dark water, animal nature of the mass (mental depression)
- centric category: collecting, immersion in the mass, be Nobody (home)
- rhythmic category: walking, temporal regularity (remembering)

Based on the entire text, the recurring images produce the following opposite pairs of mythemes:

- assign oneself a task
- return home
  
- the threat of the city
- the relief of rhythm (walking, time)
  
- isolation
- the intimate space of multiplication

I recognise in this constellation a combination of myths that allude to the theme of wandering. On the one side I propose a partial parallelism with the myths of the eternal wanderer, although without the mythemes of punishment and future redemption. On the other hand, the final return to the home prepared by the beloved echoes the tale of Ulysses. Evidently, the *Odyssey* is an amalgama of mythical stories combining among others the hero's journey and the wanderer's itinerary. It should be emphasised

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<sup>261</sup> Between brackets, the elements that do not connect to the flâneur motif.

that the mythemes corresponding to the protagonist's flânerie cover only a part of the mythemic structure: the threat of the city against the relief of rhythm, the isolation of the character against intimacy. In other words, as in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* the mythemes of positive value of the polemic category are lacking, the conformity to the hero's myth also is only partial. Consequently, the identification with Ulysses, who also hid under the name of Nobody, entails a distortion of the mythical figure. While Ulysses performs in confronting the Cyclops a trick, a rational action, the narrator of Muñoz Molina's text responds to the irrational impulse to merge with undefined mass, the maternal substance. Notably, the use of the name Nobody, which is both a mythical relationship and an intertextual reference, is a recurring preference emerging in Muñoz Molina's oeuvre since his first work (*El Robinson urbano* 93). I will complete the combination of intertextuality and symbolic level through the myth textual procedure, in section 4.3.2. With this aim, I will integrate the results of the genotextual and myth critical analyses in the intertextual interpretation of section 4.1.

### **4.3 Integration: myth textual interpretation**

The third stage of the analytical procedure will be conducted in this section, the myth textual phase. After the analysis of the symbolic level, applied to the separate texts, I will return to intertextuality in order to compare the aspects of the motif in the pre- and intertexts, and create a network of flânerie manifestations. I will address the research question: what shapes does the interaction between the flâneur and the urban mass take in the pre- and intertext? To begin, I will compose the starting point by integrating the symbolic level into the characterisation of the motif in "The Man of the Crowd" (4.3.1). Then, I will compare in section 4.3.2 the pre- and intertexts, by resuming the results of the intertextual analyses in 4.1 and connect them to the symbolic aspects of the motif, established in 4.2. Finally, I will arrive in 4.3.3 at the conclusions about the characterisation of the motif, in particular regarding the crowd symbols and the interaction between the flâneur and the multitude.

#### **4.3.1 The flâneur motif in the pretext**

At the beginning of this paragraph, I delineate the starting point of the comparative sections, by establishing the characterisation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd". I will address the question: What form does the interaction with the crowd take in the pretext? The intertextual analysis brought to light that the story outlines, through the double character of the wanderer-pursuer, the duality of the attraction of the multitude and the surrender to the mass, on the one hand, and the detailed observation of the elements of the crowd separately, on the other. The city of London is described in detail, through the contrast between the darkness and the streetlights, and the agitation of the crowd, accentuated by the humidity of the rainy streets. Apart from the human mass, there are the abundance of objects and the repetitiveness of the

enumerations, examples of the observing nature of the pursuer. The story, therefore, represents the following aspects of the flâneur: nocturnal city and rain, wandering, immersion in the mass, observation and pursuit.

With the aim of enhancing this basic characterisation of the motif, I include in what follows the symbolic level of the text, based on the results of the genotextual and myth critical interpretations from section 4.2.1. Beginning with the results of the genotextual analysis, I conclude that “The Man of the Crowd” emphasises the longing for the restoration of the primal union, on the part of both characters, observer and pursued: the enigmatic man expresses the need to unite with the crowd, while the observer seeks unity with the object of pursuit. The diverse and repetitive aquatic images connect the longing for surrender to the mass with the maternal element. Both characters have to accept the impossibility of their desire: in the case of the man of the crowd, the continuation of the search prevails, giving his pilgrimage an eternal character. The rupture preceding the desire to unite is implied in the repetitiveness of the search.

The tendency to unite coincides with the exploration of the boundaries between the ‘self’ and the other, which is expressed in two ways: through the total immersion in the mass by the man of the crowd, and the narrator’s identification with the pursued man. Abjection and the thematization of fear, the second level questioning boundaries, adheres to the characterisation of the man of the multitude, provided by his pursuer. It coincides with the gothic nature of the text, the elements of horror and crime. Lastly, the exploration of the limits of discourse manifests through a certain degree of poetization and the distortion of language. I distinguish the literary devices of enumeration, the detailed description of the elements of the mass, the use of hypallage and the repetition of aquatic metaphors. In each of these literary procedures the

multiple and chaotic impressions of the urban mass are reflected. In summary, the genotextual analysis reveals the ambivalence of the interaction with the crowd: it manifests, on the one hand, as the search for union; on the other hand, it refers to the questioning of boundaries. I suggest that both aspects are connected to the dissociative nature of the phenomena of multitude.

From the myth critical procedure, the symbolism inherent in the interaction with the city and the mass is resumed as follows: from the polemic category, images with negative value (darkness, black water and engulfment) are opposed by those with positive value, such as light and vision. However, according to the fragmentation of the mass, the beneficent immersion and the inward movement, I establish a strong presence of images from the centric category. Lastly, of the rhythmic category I recognise the temporal cycle, the rhythmic interaction with the crowd, the alternation of opposite elements, and the doubling of the character. In accordance with this categorisation of the images, I conclude that the interaction with the multitude mainly adheres to the combination of the centric and rhythmic categories.

Based on the mythemes that are connected to the interaction with the urban environment, I conclude about the manifestation of the myth of the eternal wanderer, especially from the rhythmic repetition of the itinerary. It is worth noting, however, that the connection with the myth is partial since the central elements of crime and punishment seem dubious. In addition, the doubling of the flâneur into two characters -pursuer and pursued- produces the extension of the interactions with the mass. The multitude turns into an ambiguous element that refers to both threat and intimacy, to darkness and light at the same time, to both blindness and vision.



### 4.3.2 Comparative integration

Given that the basic characterisation of the motif in the pretext has been completed, I can now begin the comparative path that contrasts the pre- and intertexts. I will first extend the appreciation of the flâneur motif in the intertexts, Carmen Laforet's *Nada* and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. With this aim, I revisit the variations of the motif established in section 4.1, centring on the interaction with the urban multitude. I will integrate the symbolic value of the motif, discussed in the sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, into the intertextual interpretation. I will respond to the questions: What form does the interaction between the character and the mass take in the intertexts? And: How does the characterisation of the motif in the pretext relate to the manifestation of the flâneur in the intertexts? The comparative procedures are conducted separately.

#### The flâneur in *Nada*

Let's begin with the completed interpretation of the first intertext, the novel *Nada* by Carmen Laforet. I briefly return to the results of the intertextual analysis: the characterisation of the flâneur motif in *Nada*, which narrates the stay of the orphan Andrea in the family house in Barcelona. The protagonist feels comfortable in the nocturnal realm of the city; sensory perceptions largely determine her experiences. From the beginning of the novel, references to the multitude occur; events in the family home highlight the urgency of the urban walk, which becomes an escape. *Nada* includes an episode of night-time pursuit; moreover, some rainy scenes stand out. Therefore, the elements of the flâneur are: nocturnal city and rain, wandering, interaction with the mass, observation and persecution. Based on this characterisation, the transtextual analysis from section 4.1.3 first establishes a formal transposition, the

extension of the text format that may influence the representation of the flâneur in the text. The spatiotemporal transposition situates the protagonist in Spain of the 1940s; the character change concerns the protagonist's gender and the simplification of the narrative instance. With regard to the pragmatic transpositions, there is a strong transmotivation regarding flânerie since the activity operates as an escape from the restricted family and societal norms. Evidently, such a change also produces the modification of the motif's value, which becomes an identitary and emancipatory expression, and a comment on the societal situation of the time.

The integration of the symbolic value of the motif in *Nada* will now expand the interpretation of the flânerista character of Carmen Laforet's novel. I start by investigating what form the interaction with the multitude takes in the text, combining the aforementioned with the results of the genotextual and myth critical analyses from section 4.2.3. The genotextual analysis establishes that the primary experience of loss translates in *Nada* to the longing for the restoration of the harmonious state of the *chora*. This irrational impulse leads to the representation of the urban environment as a realm of security and harmony, an image that does not correspond with the historical situation of night-time Barcelona of that era. In other words, the language of longing and need mainly encompasses the search for harmony during the character's strolls. In this context, the aquatic metaphor underlines the longing for the maternal element. The exploration of boundaries arises at plot level, through the explicit questioning of family authority and societal restrictions regarding women's freedom of movement. The urban walk, especially during the night, is the exponent of the inherent rebellion in the challenging of limits. In terms of style, the surrender to the mass, represented through the metaphors of moving water and rain, equals the confluence with the enveloping

material. I consider this interaction with the multitude as the exploration of the boundaries between the subject and the surrounding environment.

The second axis of the symbolic level, the myth critical analysis, establishes that the predominant symbols in *Nada*, referring to the mass, are connected with the coexistence of light and darkness, and the aquatic metaphors. From the polemic category, the negative value of darkness and animality is concentrated in the family home; the positive images adhere to purifying water, symbol of separation, and to light and observation during the walks. The references to beneficent night and maternal water, connected to the nocturnal and rainy city, are situated in the centric category. The regularity of the walks links to the rhythmic category. The grouping of opposing mythemes evokes the mythemic structure of the hero's myth, which represents the initiatory journey. This structure coincides with the acceptance of *Nada* as a *Bildungsroman*. However, the mythemes that correspond with the protagonist's flânerie only cover a part of the mythemic structure: the resistance against restrictions and the experience of the (nocturnal) city as a realm of security.

Based on the foregoing, we can return to the question about the relationship between the motif in the pretext and the manifestation of the flâneur in *Nada*. I begin with the formal transposition in comparison with "The Man of the Crowd", the change of literary genre that entails the extension of the format. The expansion of the text implies that the flâneur motif in *Nada* is inserted into a broader plot. The spatiotemporal transposition to the Spain of the 1940s raises the questioning of certain societal issues of the time, in this case the restriction of women's movement. The change of character into a single female protagonist of eighteen years, adds the identity need of the character who still seeks to define her individuality and delimit it from others. In other

words, the flâneur motif in *Nada* is situated within the framework of identity construction, both in the broad sense of women's emancipation and in the narrow sense of personal individuation. The manic walk of Poe's tale is modified towards the protagonist's and other female characters' reclaiming of the streets. Therefore, the accent on the dissociation of the multitude, so prominent in the pretext, becomes the emphasis on the complete and enveloping nature of the mass.

In line with the identitary urgency, the transmotivation and transvaluation established by the transtextual analysis occur: the motivation for the escape from family and societal restriction, and the valuation of flânerie as an identitary and emancipatory expression. The genotextual analysis evinces the impulse toward identity in construction, since the thematization of rupture is not manifested, remaining implicit in the search for unity with maternal substance. Furthermore, the continuous questioning of restrictive boundaries highlights the need to define one's identity. In accordance with this oppositional dynamic the myth critical analysis establishes the predominance of polemic mythemes. The connection with the hero's myth is evident; this means that *Nada* follows the model of the initiatory journey, representing processes of individuation and emancipation. Within the totality of the hero's journey model, the flâneur motif is limited to aspects of identity construction. The interaction with the urban mass corresponds to the inward movement and the rhythmic coexistence of opposite symbols, light and darkness. Or rather in Kristeva's terms: surrendering to the multitude equals the desire for the return to the maternal substance and the questioning of family and societal restrictions.

I established in section 4.3.1 that "The Man of the Crowd" shapes the interaction between the character and the mass in conformity with the spatiotemporal situation of

the text: the dissociative action of the multitude of impressions causes the character's splitting and the ambiguity of the mass, which is threat and intimacy, light and darkness, blindness and vision at once. In *Nada*, the univocal representation of the mass as an environment of security and harmony is evident. In this context, the images of beneficent multitude such as water in movement and rain are manifest. This means the delimitation of the flâneur aspects, compared with the pretext. I conclude that the unilateral manifestation of the multitude in *Nada* fits into the emancipatory nature of the novel, which places urban wandering in the process of individuation. The identity construction of the protagonist runs parallel to the emancipatory need of the Spanish woman of the time.

#### **The flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente***

I continue the myth textual procedure with the interpretation of the second intertext, the hybrid work *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Antonio Muñoz Molina. By resuming the results of the intertextual analysis, this section begins with the basic characterisation of the flâneur motif in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, to then continue with a review of the transpositions. My questions are: What form does interaction between the multitude and the character take in Muñoz Molina's text? And, how is the manifestation of the motif in the pretext related to the interaction between the character and the mass in the second intertext? At first glance, the unusual aspect of the text, which intersperses non-fictional fragments within a fictional framework, stands out; the uncommon procedure brings the fragmentary character of the work forward, similar to the amalgamation of a travel journal, diary or collage. The text introduces a male narrator who goes hunting for the urban crowd through overheard words and voices; with this aim, he crosses paths with the multitude of people from

various major cities. Some textual and stylistic forms are mixed: extensive enumerations of collected quotes and phrases, biographical episodes about known authors in whose texts the flâneur frequently appears, the narrator's first-person reflections, and the third-person narrative of an anonymous character's walk traversing Manhattan. For one thing, the narrator seems driven particularly by literary motivations; on the other hand, the observation of the mass thematizes the acoustic pollution and the abundance of waste, so the reader appreciates the strong implication in current ecological issues. In short, the representation of the flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* manifests the following aspects: various cities, wandering, interaction with the mass, observation and collection, artistic expression.

Regarding the transpositions in comparison with Poe's story, both the extension of Muñoz Molina's text and its generic characterisation mean a formal transposition. In terms of diegesis, the spatiotemporal transposition of the text, which unfolds in various contemporary cities, entails a diversification of the interactions with the urban environment. Finally, in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* the splitting of the narrator extends towards the identification with a multiple entity of urban wanderers. Apropos of the pragmatic transpositions, the motivation of the narrator also diversifies: for one thing, the literary impulse to reinterpret the flâneur figure in a contemporary situation is brought forward; for another, the wanderings of the 'self'-character are motivated by an ideological stimulus, the urge to thematize the ecological situation. In line with these transmotivations, *Un andar solitario entre la gente* attributes a different value to flânerie: the flâneur motif permits the narrator's self-definition in terms of his literary preferences and his ideological commitment. Based on the stratification that is reflected in all aspects of the text, a flâneur appears whose multiple aspect is its main feature.

By integrating the symbolic level in the basic characterisation of the motif, I will further expand the understanding of the interaction between the character and the urban mass. First, I will include the results of the genotextual analysis. The thematization of rupture coincides with the definition of the flâneur as the stranger within the multitude. The characterisation of the narrator expresses the rupture in various ways: through the preference of presenting himself as a Nobody and the splitting of the character. Although a plot is hardly developed, the divided existence of the narrator and the event of having to leave homes in Madrid and New York emphasise fracture at the level of the intrigue. Evidently, the heavily fragmented nature of the text highlights even more the relevance of rupture in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*. Secondly, the desire for union surges through the immersion in a multitude of perceptions, objects and words. I consider the abundance of references to moving water, the quintessential crowd symbol, as the predominant sign of the urgency to unite with the maternal element. Furthermore, the creation of a fraternity of wanderers, which also refers to the exploration of identity boundaries, shapes the longing for the union with similar souls. Lastly, I mention the passages of nostalgia for home and the company of the beloved.

To conclude, the tendency to question boundaries is evident at the level of textual structure and style. To begin, the outline of the character is broken up through the alternation between first and third-person narrative; sometimes the reader can not immediately distinguish between the narrator and the anonymous pilgrim. I consider the biographical episodes about the flâneur authors as a blurring of the boundaries between the flâneur-characters. In other words, apart from splitting, the character multiplies. Secondly, I interpret the thematization of the mass of waste as a form of abjection. Especially the terror caused by the various forms of pollution extends to

apocalyptic horror. Lastly, the exploration of the limits of discourse predominates, through the textual structure and the graphic design. The fragmentation of the text, so characteristic of flâneur texts, is obviously striking. However, the violation of the laws of discourse also surges on the level of textual logic, through the unusual confluence of literary genres. In this context, I mention the use of literary devices that usually fit into poetry: extensive enumeration, anaphora, and recurring metaphors. I conclude, therefore, that the exploration of boundaries is present in three levels: the definition of the subject, the questioning of the limits of what is morally permissible, and the deviation from the rules of discourse.

As flânerie is the central axis of the text in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, the genotextual level comes into light in many flâneur aspects, especially the divided characterisation of the protagonist and his doubles, and the fragmented structure of the text. From the genotextual analysis, I interpret the interaction with the mass at three levels: the isolation within the crowd, which is so characteristic for the flâneur; the search for union with the maternal substance conceived as immersion in the mass; the exploration of the boundaries of the 'self' and of discourse, through the multiplication of the character and the poetic devices inconsistent with the literary genre. By extending the implication of the symbolic to the results of the myth critical analysis, the characterisation of the flâneur can be completed. In *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, the city and the multitude are represented by images with negative value, especially the symbols of animality and black water. This threatening symbolism accentuates the character's disturbed state at these moments. In contrast, relief also emerges through the immersion in the mass: the collection of text fragments, the shelter of writing, and the company of like-minded authors. The use of vision and word is paired with the actions of collecting and writing, which in this case also fit in the centric category.



Additionally, the interaction with the mass adheres to a range of rhythmic elements such as the physical action of walking, the regularity of the strolls and the frequent return to the lives of authors who display similarity with the flâneur character.

Therefore, the recurrent images that are linked to the interaction with the mass mostly encompass the symbolism of the centric and rhythmic categories. The symbols with negative value, from the polemic category, cover the threat of the multitude. This reveals the turning point where the action of letting oneself go becomes drowning. The ambiguous nature of the mass appears, which has already influenced authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire. The relief of rhythm opposes the threat of the city; isolation is situated opposite the intimate space of multiplication. Based on the mythic structure that proceeds from the symbolic analysis, I conclude about the partial connection with the myths of the eternal wanderer, especially with the tale of Ulysses in which the hero's journey and the wanderer's itinerary are united. As in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* the symbols with positive value from the polemic category are missing, the identification with Ulysses entails a distortion of the mythical figure. In the case of Muñoz Molina's work, the cunning of hiding under the name of Nobody turns into the irrational impulse to merge with the undefined mass, the maternal material.

Well then, how do the transpositions presented in section 4.1 relate to the completed characterisation of the motif in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*? The formal transpositions, the extension of the format and the diversification of the literary genre, provide the opportunity to highlight the relevance of the motif in various ways. Compared to the pretext, this modification produces the imbrication of the literary interests of the narrator and the insertion of his reflections. From the self-referential

episodes, the genotextual analysis discovers a character defined by the experience of rupture, in combination with the desire to unite with the multitude and the relief of regular walking.

In terms of diegesis, I assumed that the spatial change of the text, which takes place in various cities, would lead to the diversification of the interactions with the urban environment. However, the symbolic analysis shows that the variety of cities does not influence the interaction with the mass. In contrast, the temporal transposition affects the representation of the mass, thus changing the dissociative appreciation of the multitude in "The Man of the Crowd", which I consider consistent with the never-seen turbulence of the expanding 19<sup>th</sup>-century metropolis. The current ecological crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century turns the representation of the mass into an apocalyptic abundance of garbage. In accordance with this threatening mass, the need arises to seek intimacy through the identification with a group of like-minded authors, which corresponds with the change of the character: the splitting is modified into multiplication.

Finally, in terms of pragmatic transpositions, I established the literary and ideological motivation; the change of the motif's value occurs in conformity with the transmotivations: the representation of the flâneur allows for the self-definition of the narrator in terms of literary preferences and involvement in ecological issues. However, based on the genotextual analysis, which emphasises the strongly divided nature of the narrator's character, I conclude about the identitary crisis of the character, The results of the myth critical analysis support this conclusion, according to the unilateral symbolism of the polemic category: an only partial connection with the *Odyssey* through the deformed representation of the mythical figure of Ulysses. The analysis of the symbolic level, therefore, shows an underlying motivation to the literary and ideological stimuli: including the motif of the flâneur is also generated by the need to

express the identitary crisis. The value of immersing in the multitude becomes the relief of merging with the mass and the tranquillity of the rhythmic walk.

Returning to the symbolic level in its entirety, I establish that the genotextual analysis exposes the weight of the rupture, underlying the strong desire to unite with the mass. According to the myth critical procedure, the representation of the identitary crisis adopts the aspect of drowning in an undefined mass of words and debris. The multitude means both the threatening face of anxiety, the intimacy of the multiple environment, and the calming rhythm of walking, and of the temporal oscillation.

### **4.3.3 Conclusion: repetitions and variation of the flâneur motif**

In this case study, I explore the flâneur motif, focusing on the interaction between the character and the urban masses. I delve into the intertexts, the novels *Nada* by Carmen Laforet and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Antonio Muñoz Molina, putting them into dialogue with the pretext, the story “The Man of the Crowd” by Edgar Allan Poe. Through the conclusion about the repetitions and the variations of the flâneur motif in the corpus, I aim to answer the question: What form does the interaction with the mass take in the pre- and intertexts? To respond to this question, I begin with the characterisation of the flâneur figure in the corpus. I establish that the manifestation of the flâneur in the corpus texts shares the following components: city, wandering, observing, interaction with the mass. In other words, in the three texts of the corpus, the flâneur largely corresponds to the definition that I have formulated in the introduction, from the existing studies on the historical figure of the flâneur: a figure that represents the interaction of the human being with the urban environment. It occupies an ambiguous position towards the metropolis: it idly wanders through the

city, immersing itself in its crowds, while simultaneously experiencing the overwhelming effect of the multitude.

According to the previously defined elements of the motif, I will now focus on the manifestation of the city and the aspects of the multitude. Edgar Allan Poe's story portrays the city as a confluence of lights and darkness; he refers to the mass as a multitude of persons, objects, and sensory perceptions. Such a mass entails the preference for the following literary devices: poetization of the text, enumeration and detailed description. In terms of symbolism, the multitude is represented through symbols of moving water and rain; the density of the mass extends to the threatening symbols of engulfment. In the first intertext *Nada*, the city of Barcelona takes on the appearance of the harmony of lights and shadows; the multitude of people and sensations emerges. The mass adopts the enveloping aspect of moving water and rain; the poetic descriptions highlight the harmonic character of the urban environment. In the second intertext, *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Antonio Muñoz Molina, a confluence of cities and forms of multitudes unfolds: of persons, objects, and perceptions. I established a multiplicity that extends to the fragmentation of the text, the various forms of graphic design, and the abundance of collected quotations. The mass is manifested through symbolism of water and animalism; the accent on the density of the multitude refers to the image of engulfment. In the predominance of water in the pre- and intertexts I recognise Canetti's crowd symbols, which underlines the simultaneity of inexpressible dimension and plurality of waves or drops. This ambivalence coincides with the stylistic procedures recognised in flâneur texts: infinite enumeration and attention to detail.

Let's turn the attention on the central axis of this analysis, the interaction between the mass and the character. From the perspective that the term 'interaction' refers to the action between two parties, I will distinguish between the action of the masses and the behaviour of the character. It is worth emphasising beforehand that the city and the multitude exert a great attraction on the flâneur, an appeal that can turn against the wanderer. It follows from the previous characterisation of the mass that its actions extend between two opposite poles. On the beneficial extreme are the actions of enveloping and covering, in line with the centric aspect and the maternal substance of water. On the other extreme are the aquatic dynamics of inundating and the animal movement of swallowing, according to the symbolism of threat.

The analysis shows that the behaviour provoked by the multitude unfolds in a similar way between the two extremes of immersion and drowning. I will detail them according to the texts separately. In the pretext, the splitting of the character allows for the division of the interactions with the mass: on the one hand, the man of the crowd experiences immersion in the masses as a relief from his tormented state of being; on the other, the observer feels a fatal attraction that, in the end, leads to the impossibility to delve into the detail of the masses. While remaining essentially outside of the action, the narrator describes the multitude as "the tumultuous sea of human heads" (475). In the first intertext, the protagonist surrenders voluntarily to the mass with which she considers herself united like a drop in the current, "una gota entre la corriente" (81). In the second intertext, the character multiplies, allowing for a diversification of behaviour regarding the masses: feeling united with what surrounds him, he can let himself be carried away, while the threat of the multitude causes the impression of drowning.

Essentially, the character maintains an eccentric position, "un extraño entre [sus] semejantes" (335).<sup>262</sup>

Finally, the attraction of the urban mass evokes two more actions: the temporal rhythm of the strolls and the observation of the multitude. Both movements display a strong ambivalence: the regular wandering refers to the fatality of the attraction, mental weight, lightness, relief and escape; the sensorial experience, be it visual, auditive, or olfactory, refers to the bivalence of perceiving harmony and feeling threatened. When the flâneur engages in writing, the plurality of experiences is reflected in the fragmentary nature of their literary productions.

Thus, I return to the central question about the repetition and the variation of the flâneur motif. I will start with the variations, situating them in their historical context. It is obvious that the pretext, "The Man of the Crowd", produced in 1840, has a strong relationship with the emergence of the modern city. Given the novelty of the metropolis and the agitation of the multitude, it is no surprise that the story shapes the ambivalence of the human being towards the urban aspects of the era. The splitting of the character and the bivalence of the interaction with the mass run parallel with the experience of dissociation brought about by the urban crowds, an effect already recognised by Benjamin (2007).

The first intertext places the flâneur, who in this case is a flâneuse, in the Spain of the 1940s. Apparently, the city has lost its threatening nature although the characterisation of Barcelona does not correspond to the historical situation in question. However, the insertion into the plot of a coming-of-age novel shifts the motif to an auxiliary level, where it supports the central line of the argument. Due to the

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<sup>262</sup> "a stranger among [his] fellow human beings" (282).

emphasis on the identitary impulse and the emancipatory motivation of the text, only the beneficial value and the rhythmic interaction with the mass are accentuated. Thus, the text fits into the implementation of the flâneur motif as an emancipatory instrument, an interpretation presented in recent studies (Dreyer and McDowall 2012, Elkin 2016, Sánchez Sempere 2020).

In contrast, the second intertext, set in the apocalyptic situation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, reinforces the dissociation through the coexistence of immersion and drowning, of letting oneself be carried away and feeling fear. The reader recognises how the narrator's mental crisis transpires in the contradictory impressions of the masses. The literary motivation and the involvement in ecological issues are projected into the central position of the flâneur motif, whose ambivalence takes centre stage in the multiple characterisation of the protagonist and the amalgama of literary genres. Furthermore, the experimental character of the work extends to the fragmentation of the text, the unusual graphic design and the imbrication of explicit intertextual references. Thus, the stratified nature of the work coincides with various interpretations of the flâneur motif: representation of the dissociative character of the multitude as recognised by Benjamin (2007); the relevance of enunciative strategies highlighted by Cuardic García (2009); the implication of societal issues emphasised by Iglesias (2018).

I conclude that the flexibility of the motif allows for its inclusion in various ways: the complete ambivalence of Poe's flâneur or the partial representation of the same; at an auxiliary level or situated in the centre of the text; in a story, a novel, and a hybrid text. In accordance with this variety, the myth critical analysis establishes the connection with the myth of the eternal wanderer, the hero's myth and the story of Ulysses, conceived as a hero and a wanderer at the same time. That said, it is worth noting that

the variable aspect of the flâneur should not be surprising, given that flexibility is a key characteristic of the concept 'motif'. Nonetheless, I propose that the emphasis on repetitive images, inherent in the analysis of the symbolic level, brings an innovative perspective to the flâneur motif. I return to the sub-questions that focus on the aspects of the motif that have hitherto been unknown, beginning with the question: how are the genotextual and symbolic level expressed in the manifestation of the flâneur motif?

Upon examining the results of the genotextual and myth critical analyses, three aspects of the motif emerge in each of the pre- and intertexts: aquatic metaphor, voluntary immersion in the mass, conceived as a beneficial and harmonious realm, and flânerie as a rhythmic action. To begin with the symbolic value of water, it is worth emphasising that water is a potent symbol that adheres to each of the categories of the imaginary. In the polemic category, it not only refers to the threat of dark water but also to the positive value of purification; in the centric category it refers to enveloping water; in the rhythmic category it is connected with the movement of the waves and the tide. The predominance of such a versatile symbol highlights once again the plural environment where the flâneur is found. In my view, this strong multivalence of the symbolic level emphasises the multifaceted aspect of the flâneur motif.

That said, the consonance with the second common element, immersion in beneficial water, indicates that the inward movement and the value of inclusion prevail. In terms of genotextuality, this connects with the need to reunite with maternal matter, an urge that implies the previous rupture of the *chora* state. Furthermore, I establish a relationship between water and the third common element, the rhythmic dynamic of walking. The genotextual procedure links the temporal rhythm to the repetitive character of the experience of rupture and the corresponding search for unity. In this



sense, the rhythm also refers to the coexistence of opposite elements, a situation that evokes the exploration of boundaries that is expressed in the genotext as well.

Therefore, I conclude from the constellation of recurring symbolic elements that the interaction between the flâneur and the urban masses always adheres to identity construction. Evidently, depending on the elaboration of the motif in a concrete literary context, the form taken by this individuation process varies. That is, in the framework of a *Bildungsroman*, the motif is associated with identity definition; in other cases, it is about the reconstruction of identity after an experience of dissociation or crisis. In line with the diverse literary contexts in which the identity construction unfolds, the myth critical procedure establishes the connection with myths. The hero's journey shapes the initial identity definition, while the myth of the wanderer highlights the continuous repetitiveness of the individuation process as a quest. The modified representation of the Ulysses figure in the second intertext indicates the character's identity crisis.

Based on the foregoing, I establish that none of the flânerista versions in the corpus texts fulfil the condition of the so-called 'idle stroll', in accordance with the definition formulated from the original meaning of the French verb 'flâner'. Moreover, since the first literary manifestations of the flâneur in the texts of Poe, De Quincey and Baudelaire, the interaction with the masses never has been gratuitous. The situation of the individual within the mass that surrounds them, always involves the urgency to reformulate the boundaries between the subject and the other. This conclusion goes beyond the observation that mentions the intentions of the flâneur (Neumeyer 1999: 52); it also surpasses Cuvardic García's remarks characterising the flâneur as "idle, but intellectually active" ("El flâneur y la flânerie" 24).<sup>263</sup> Both characterisations limit the

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<sup>263</sup> My translation MV: "ocioso, aunque intelectualmente activo" (Cuvardic García, ("El flâneur y la flânerie" 24)

flâneur's intention to their professional occupation as a journalist or artist. In contrast, underlying the apparently idle wandering of each flâneur, regardless of their occupation, resides an identitary impulse provoked by the surrounding mass, the recurring tendency to define oneself through confrontation with the other. All the above leads to a reformulation of the flâneur motif:

The figure of the flâneur represents the interaction of the human being with the urban environment: they stroll through the city, immersing in the multitude, while simultaneously experiencing the overwhelming effect of the crowd. The confrontation with the masses evokes the urgency of an identitary (re)definition, a reaction underlying the apparently idle character of the stroll.

As a result of this redefinition of the motif, I can now revisit the flânerista qualifications of the corpus texts. First, I question Benjamin's statement that Poe's man of the crowd is not a flâneur because he is maniacal ("On Some Motifs" 172). I propose that the character's doubling in Poe's story accentuates the identitary confusion caused by the dissociative force of the mass, especially in the context of the unprecedented turbulence of the city at the time. Both the manic behaviour of one and the strong fascination of the other derive from the interaction with the crowd. Second, regarding the first intertext, I support the qualification of Andrea, the protagonist of *Nada*, as a flâneuse. Considering the immersion in the masses as an escape from the family and societal restrictions aligns with the identitary and emancipatory interpretation of the motif, as proposed by several commentators (Lau 2018, Sánchez Sempere 2020). In this, I differ from Wells' critique, which complies with the relevance of the flâneurs idleness (11). Finally, despite explicitly adhering to the well-known manifestations of the flâneur, both in literary sense and as a societal comment, the analysis of the symbolic level in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* uncovers the identitary aspect of the

work. In this case, the multiplied representation of the character shapes the sensation of personal crisis that runs parallel to the threatening nature of the ecological problems. Until now, studies focused on the manifestation of the flâneur in Muñoz Molina's work, such as those by Ruiz Rico (2011) and Sperber (2015), have not paid attention to this identity aspect of the flâneur motif in the author's texts.

In summary, I answer the second sub-question of this research about the interpretation of the symbolic level of the flâneur motif, in relation to the socio-historical situation of the pre- and intertexts. As I established in the passage on flexibility, the motif is inserted in a variety of literary genres and adapts to different spatiotemporal situations. The symbolic level of the motif is closely related to the identitary need of the character, through the crowd symbol of water. The socio-historical context influences the interdependent relationships between the flâneur-character and the multitude: in one respect, it determines the aspect of the masses and their effect on the character; on the other hand, the same current situation influences the identitary need of the character and therefore, their way of appreciating the crowds.

In conclusion, the myth textual interpretation of the flâneur motif, focusing on the interaction with the masses, establishes the tendency to link the multitude with water. Being a crowd symbol in the sense proposed by Canetti, water refers to movement and density. The analysis of the symbolic level of the motif, according to the genotextual and myth critical procedures, evokes the interaction with the multitude as an inward movement and rhythmic cadence, aspects that are linked to the construction of the subject's identity. I note that these aspects of the crowd symbol of water add depth to Canetti's concept. In terms of the understanding of the motif, I emphasise that there have not yet been myth textual studies pertaining to the symbolic level of the

flâneur. Therefore, the myth textual interpretation elevates the understanding of the flâneur motif to a level that has not been achieved until now. It generates the redefinition of the flâneur motif, in line with the identitary impulse inherent in the confrontation with the mass. It is also worth noting that this case study encompasses a corpus of only three texts; it will be the task of future investigators to develop this line of research to give depth and breadth to the understanding of flânerie as an identitary impulse.





## 5 THE TREE MOTIF

MYTH TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF GABRIELA MISTRAL'S *DESOLACIÓN* (1922) AND  
OCTAVIO PAZ'S "ÁRBOL ADENTRO" (1987), IN DIALOGUE WITH TERESA DE  
ÁVILA'S LYRICAL TEXTS

*When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.*  
Mary Oliver





## 5.0 Presentation

With the objective of extending the scope of myth textuality, the present chapter aims to shift focus to an archaic motif that allows for the application of the interpretative instrument to a distinct literary genre, in this case poetry. Therefore, I choose the tree motif for the second case study. Being the quintessential cosmogonic archetype, the tree motif appears in numerous myths that depict the origin of the universe; it is also a symbol of the (re)creative force of nature, so the tree represents life, growth and vegetal rebirth.

As it is also connected to texts of mystical nature, the tree motif surges in lyrical works that poetically express the longing of the 'self' for the union with the divine or cosmic element. The present chapter centres the attention in the manifestation of the tree motif in the poetry of two Latin-American poets, Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz, in dialogue with the lyrical work of Teresa de Ávila, the Spanish mystic par excellence.<sup>264</sup> To provide an ample background to this archaic motif, I will first outline how the arboreal image takes form in literary tradition; then, I will focus on the connection between the tree motif and mystical poetry.

### The tree motif in literary tradition

In ancestral cultures the tree is sacred; it acts as a vegetal object of veneration, considered animated; it is represented as the dwelling of the tree spirit or the place where spirits are embodied (Frazer 131-139). Over time, the tree spirit dissociates from the tree, acquiring an anthropomorphic aspect; that is, the arboreal phenomena transform into forest deities (Frazer 141). Arboreal deities have many beneficial

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<sup>264</sup> I will use the neutral Spanish name 'Teresa de Ávila'. She is also known as Teresa de Jesús and Santa Teresa. Studies of the nun who founded the order of barefoot Carmelites also refer to her as La Santa, meaning the Saint, and La Madre, The Mother.

properties: they provide rain and light, promote the growth of crops, and encourage the multiplication of flocks and facilitate human conception (Frazer 142). Ancient tree idolatry persists in millenary customs, such as the celebration of the May tree, bonfires, and the traditional planting of a tree on the occasion of a child's birth.

Due to its predominant role in the thinking of ancient mankind, the tree was never absent in archaic sacred places, which constituted a microcosm, a centre of the world. The arboreal manifestation of the centre of the world is the *axis mundi*, or the world's axis, which is a phenomenon of continuous creation (Campbell 32). This world tree or cosmic tree is represented in a variety of cosmogonic myths, in which the branches of the tree extend to the sky, while the roots are based in the underworld. There are many examples of such a mythical narrative: chapter fifteen of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Hindu sacred text, refers to the banyan tree whose branches and roots intertwine; in the *Edda*, of Norse mythology, the cosmic tree Yggdrasil is found, the perennial ash tree whose branches and roots unite nine different worlds.<sup>265</sup> In the realm of Latin America, indigenous cultures link the tree to cosmogony and the regenerative force of nature.<sup>266</sup>

Many studies place the origin of the cosmic tree image, found in Oriental and Hebrew mythologies, in the Sumerian-Akkadian cultures of the Ancient Middle East, where the tree initially was revered as the integral generator of life (James 241). From

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<sup>265</sup> The universality of the cosmic tree extends to all the corners of the world, occurring also in archaic Chinese texts, in myths of the Arctic peoples to the Pacific Coast (García Barreno 1996). Campbell mentions the Japanese myth of Amaterasu, in which "[t]he tree is the World Axis in its wish-fulfilling, fruitful aspect -the same as that displayed in Christian homes at the season of the winter solstice, which is the moment of the rebirth or return of the sun" (182-3).

<sup>266</sup> Heyden refers to Meso-American history, in which the tree is connected to anthropogony and wisdom, since it is the ancestor of man and symbolises the master: "el árbol, simbólica y metafóricamente, fue el ancestro del hombre y simbolizaba el tlatoani y el maestro" (217). The fallen tree is a metaphor for change and new events (Heyden 217). An example of such a myth is *El árbol de la abundancia*, the Tree of abundance, of the Colombian people of the Uitotos. It proposes the tree as the origin of the Amazon region. Of the union between a worm and a maiden that represents generating earth, comes a fertile tree that grows in such a way that is necessary to cut it down to obtain food (Urbina Rangel 26-27). That is the beginning of the Amazon delta: "Tumbado,/ el tronco inmenso formó el gran Amazonas,/ sus ramazones/ la red casi infinita de los ríos,/ y frutos y semillas regados por doquiera/ dieron origen a la selva inmensa,/ sustento de los hombres y las bestias" (Urbina Rangel 27).

this tradition, the well-known episode of the *Gilgamesh* epos emerges, in which a magical plant is described, symbol of continuous (re)creation and of immortality. From the same root also arises the biblical *Genesis* story, about the Garden of Eden where the Tree of Life was found. Due to the confluence of two variants of the same motif, *Genesis* also represents the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, symbol of the sapiential tendency, which refers to acquisition of human wisdom (Londoño 173). Buddhism contemplates a comparable phenomenon, the Bodhi Tree; according to the legend of Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama sat under this tree, where he achieved spiritual enlightenment after a period of meditation.<sup>267</sup> Meanwhile, the Hindu text *Bhagavad Gita* links the leaves of the world tree to the Vedic hymns, that is, to the words of spiritual knowledge.<sup>268</sup> In both cases, the tree is connected to wisdom and a specific language of reflection. However, as Londoño argues, biblical wisdom is not theory, but knowledge “for making decisions, transcending instincts, penetrating the secrets of the world, and having the power to imitate the works of God, that is, creativity” (173).<sup>269</sup>

While the Old Testament represents the tree in situations of revelation or prophecy, in the New Testament the tree becomes the cross. In this way, a relationship between the resurrection of Christ, the cross, and the tree is manifested, a symbol of recreated life.

In Christian iconography the Cross was symbolized as the Tree of Life, being the emblem of the victory of Christ triumphing over death. As the Fall of man was attributed

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<sup>267</sup> Campbell proposes: "The Buddha's enlightenment is the most important single moment in Oriental mythology, a counterpart of the Crucifixion of the West" (25). He considers the Bodhi Tree or *Immovable Spot* as an example of the *axis mundi*. In my opinion, the Bodhi Tree rather is situated at the level of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as both symbols refer to the moment of understanding, previous to the institution of a religious movement.

<sup>268</sup> It is a tree whose leaves are Vedic hymns; the English translation refers to "scriptures" (Easwaran 232). Moreover, "the limbs of this tree spread above and below. Sense objects grow on the limbs as buds; the roots hanging down bind us to the action of the world" (Easwaran 232).

<sup>269</sup> My translation MV: "para tomar decisiones, trascender los instintos, penetrar en los secretos del mundo y tener el poder de imitar las obras de Dios, es decir, la creatividad" (Londoño 173).

to the Tree of Knowledge in Eden so the Tree of the Cross was equated with the Tree of Life as the means of redemption and resurrection. (James 244)

From the above, we arrive at the following definition of the tree motif: the cosmic tree represents the origin of the universe, while the tree can also be conceived as the symbol of the renewal of life, at the level of nature, the universe, and humankind.<sup>270</sup>

### **The tree and mysticism**

Even though many cultures included forests and trees in their cultural world, the appreciation of these arboreal symbols oscillates

... from the exquisite and almost maternal welcome on its positive side, to the horrifying place where misfortunes occur. Between these two extremes, there are many nuances, which have led to the creation of religious rituals with diverse characteristics, like marvellous natural churches, and connections that range from the supernatural to mysticism. (Gordi Serrat and Bruguera Barbany 11)<sup>271</sup>

Within the vast array of mythical manifestations, the representation of the tree as the image of the mystical union between the human being and divinity is found in a variety of civilisations and cultures. The image of the tree is found in Oriental mysticism of Hindu origin; the Tree of Life surges as the symbolic key to Jewish mysticism; from the presence of Muslim culture, arboreal symbolism also converges with the Christian mysticism of the Iberian Peninsula. As it appears linked to the representation of the

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<sup>270</sup> As sustained by James, the tree image connects to "the induction and impulsion of ever-renewing vitality, and the riddance and expulsion of barrenness, aridity and sterility. This death and resurrection motif has found expression in the concept of the saviour-god who has passed through death to the fullness of life (...) This also has been manifest in the seasonal cycle in nature and the periodic renewals in the universe as a cosmological process" (James 245-46).

<sup>271</sup> My translation MV: "desde la exquisita acogida casi maternal en su vertiente positiva, hasta el lugar pavoroso donde sufrir infortunios. En medio de estos dos extremos, muchos matices, que han llevado a recrear rituales religiosos de características muy diversas a modo de maravillosas iglesias naturales y con conexiones que van de lo sobrenatural al misticismo" (Gordi Serrat and Bruguera Barbany 11).

motif in the corpus texts, I will give preference to the tree image in Oriental and Hebrew traditions; I will also include the manifestation of the arboreal motif in Spanish Christian mysticism.

Regarding the tree in the context of mysticism, it is important to note that the arboreal image adopts various aspects, in line with the diversity of interpretations of the concept 'mysticism'.<sup>272</sup> Generally, it refers to a highly personal and incommunicable experience about the union with divinity or a cosmic entity; this sense of union emerges after a journey that includes asceticism, contemplation, or meditation. I define, within the scope of this research, mysticism as the unspeakable experience of spiritual union between the human being and the divine or cosmic entity. Frequently, forests gave rise to "contemplative stays where one can learn and understand, within and outside oneself, the reasons for tangible and intangible realities" (Gordi Serrat and Bruguera Barbany 11).<sup>273</sup>

Due to the inexpressible nature of the mystical experience, the mystic tends to use poetic language, employing a multitude of literary devices such as allegory and metaphor. Thus, when the mystical poet uses the image of the tree, they project the mystical experience into that image, so the tree acquires a defined aspect, adhering to divine and cosmic union. On the one hand, it is important to differentiate mystical poetry from "the various genres of sacred, devote, ascetic and moral poetry", as emphasised

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<sup>272</sup> "Mysticism, the practice of religious ecstasies (religious experiences during alternate states of consciousness), together with whatever ideologies, ethics, rites, myths, legends, and magic may be related to them" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, entry 'mysticism').

The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language refers to: "Belief in direct experience of transcendent reality or God, especially by means of contemplation and asceticism instead of rational thought" (entre 'mysticism' in The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language).

<sup>273</sup> My translation MV: "estancias contemplativas donde aprender y comprender dentro y fuera de uno mismo los porqués de realidades tangibles e intangibles" (Gordi Serrat and Bruguera Barbany 11). González Wagner mentions another possible connection between the tree and mystical ecstasy, residing in the psychoactive properties of certain plants, also applied in religious ceremonies (González Wagner 1984).

by Menéndez Pelayo (142).<sup>274</sup> On the other hand, mystical poetry is not limited to the Western world nor to religious boundaries; Hatzfeld asserts that mystical experience "is attested (...) by all the mystics from the East and the West" (13).<sup>275</sup> In Spanish literature, the so-called 'classical mysticism' emerges from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Hatzfeld 18), with Teresa de Ávila and San Juan de la Cruz as being prominent figures; it is also worth mentioning their Catalan precursor of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Ramon Llull (Hess et al. 193). In the texts of these representatives of Christian mysticism, biblical, Hebrew, and Muslim motifs converge, reflecting the cultural nature of Spain at that time.<sup>276</sup> In the Golden Age, and especially in mystical literature, "devotional structures, visible in kabbalist *Zohar* and in Teresian *Moradas*, can be identified, sometimes explicitly, with the arboreal form they share with Sufism" (Conde Solares 21-22).<sup>277</sup> At the same time, Oriental mysticism has many facets, like for example the Sufis and the Bhakti movement (Dasgupta 70). Sometimes oriental currents mix, as in the work of the philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore. In 20<sup>th</sup>-century Indian mystical literature, elements of Christian spirituality were introduced, "when mostly learned people were exposed to western culture, education and religion" (Samantaray 45) .

In summary, the tree image refers to cosmogony, anthropogony, and the cyclical growth of nature. Its meaning extends to the development of the human being, both physical and psychological, so the tree often takes on an anthropomorphic aspect. In

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<sup>274</sup> My translation MV: "los varios géneros de poesía sagrada, devota, ascética y moral" (Menéndez Pelayo 142).

<sup>275</sup> My translation MV: "dan testimonio (...) todos los místicos de oriente y de occidente" (Hatzfeld 13).

<sup>276</sup> Thus, the symbolism of the Kabbalah is inserted in the preferred images used by Llull (Hess 175). While the Tree of Life is the central symbolic key of Hebrew mysticism (Saban 2020), a similar arboreal image appears in Llull's texts: the fundamental work *El Árbol de Ciencia* (1295-96), meaning The Tree of Science, and the treatise "El Árbol de la Filosofía d' Amor" (1298), meaning The Tree of Love Philosophy.

<sup>277</sup> My translation MV: "Las estructuras devocionales, visibles en el *Zohar* cabalístico y en las *Moradas* teresianas, se pueden identificar, a veces de manera explícita, con la forma arbórea que comparten con el sufismo" (Conde Solares 21-22).

mysticism, the arboreal image is connected to the spiritual union between human beings and the divine or cosmic entity; in Christianity, it adopts the aspect of the cross. The corpus will be composed in the following section, in line with the definition of the motif and its connection with mysticism.

### **Composition of the corpus**

To demonstrate the versatility of the analytic tool, I limit the central texts to poetic works. With the aim of amplifying the geographical scope of the texts, I include in the corpus the work of two Latin American poets who enjoy great prestige: Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) and Octavio Paz (1914-1998). The selection of the corpus corresponds with the mystical character of both authors' poetry. First of all, I briefly clarify the relevance of the arboreal image in the work of both authors.

The tree motif in Mistral's work is initially associated with the vegetation in her country of origin; a chapter titled "Naturaleza", nature, is found in the volumes *Desolación* (1922) and *Lagar* (1954), published more than thirty years apart. However, the motif is not limited to the arboreal manifestation in nature, since it also unites with the tree image of the cross and with the figure of the son, conceived in the sense of the biological creature and in the religious interpretation as an allusion to Christ. Regarding mysticism, it is worth noting that Mistral was nourished by literature of very diverse kinds, such as Oriental, biblical, and mystical readings, so her texts transmit the confluence of telluric, Christian and Oriental spirituality (Girona 32; Sánchez 39). Throughout her life the Chilean poet published four poetry collections, of which *Desolación* (1922), *Tala* (1938) and *Lagar* (1954) are considered the constituents of her poetics (Sánchez 32). As it is not possible to carry out a myth textual analysis of the entire production, I will concentrate on *Desolación*, the work with which Mistral, at

the age of 33, first manifested herself in the literary world. The work includes "Sonetos de la muerte", meaning The Sonnets of Death, the poems that won the contest *Juegos Florales* in Santiago in 1914. Since the collection contains the poet's early work, it enables an interesting analysis of the motif in young poetry, not only at the level of the genotext but also from myth critical perspective.

The work of Mexican poet Octavio Paz thematizes the tree motif both in poetry and in certain prose texts, so I assume his predilection for the arboreal symbol.<sup>278</sup> It is relevant that, for example, Paz stages the play *La hija de Rappaccini* (1956), reinterpretation of the story "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844) by Nathaniel Hawthorne, around a great central tree, an element missing in the original text.<sup>279</sup> Regarding mysticism, the poet is interested in the spiritual world of the East; in light of his book on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, he also has knowledge of Christian mystical poetry. In his essayistic work, Paz connects Western religious practices with those of the East.<sup>280</sup> Thus, his connection with mysticism seems to be at a theoretical and reflective level. However, the poetry of Paz displays from his early collections a strong tendency to shape the arboreal image. The preference for the metaphorical figure of the tree extends to his last collection, titled *Árbol adentro* (1987), meaning A Tree Within. As this collection is considered the condensation of his poetics, I include the homonymous chapter of this work in the corpus, in order to analyse how the tree motif is shaped in the final works of a mature poet.

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<sup>278</sup> Besides the poetic texts, Paz wrote the essay "The tree of life" (1971) and "Árbol de Diana" (1962), meaning Diana's Tree, the introduction to the homonymous poetry collection by Alejandra Pizarnik, *El árbol de Diana* (1962).

<sup>279</sup> Hawthorne's story is situated around a fountain and a fantastic shrub (389). Paz's adaptation changes the scenery: "the balcony opens to the garden. In the centre stands a fantastic tree" (my translation MV). The original quotation: "un balcón (...) se abre sobre el jardín. En el centro se levanta un árbol fantástico" (Paz, "La hija de Rappaccini" 283).

<sup>280</sup> *La llama doble* (1993) encompasses biblical and Hindu texts, and the poems of San Juan de la Cruz (Paz, *La llama doble* 22-23). In *Conjunciones y disyunciones* (1969) Paz thematizes various religious and spiritual practices.



Given the interest of both authors in mysticism, I include the texts of the Spanish mystic Teresa de Ávila as pretext. In line with the poetic work of Mistral and Paz, I select a mystic who expresses herself lyrically. Furthermore, she manifests inclusivity, in the sense that she adopts a spirituality that does not exclude images from other religious traditions, according to the heterogeneous symbolism inherent in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish culture.

### **State of the art**

First of all, I will summarise in this section the existing studies on the authors of the corpus; I will limit myself to the works that focus on the following topics. I will discuss the manifestation of mysticism and the tree motif in their texts; I will indicate which critical texts recognised the mythical nature of the corpus texts; I will also cover the studies conducted in line with the thought of Julia Kristeva.

The studies of Teresa de Ávila's work emphasise a multitude of roots in the mystic's texts, including her youthful enthusiasm for chivalric books (Auclair 1981, Kristeva 2008). Her *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares* (1575), meaning Meditations on the Song of Songs, supposes a profound reading of the biblical text "Song of Songs" (Janés 2015). Other notable traces are the symbols that find their origin in the Islam (López Baralt 1982, Janés 2015).<sup>281</sup> Finally, because of the Carmelite nun's Jewish ancestors, Kristeva also suggests the presence of Jewish ideology in her work. I will approach the pretexts in line with the heterogeneous character of the roots and literary preferences of the author.

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<sup>281</sup> Janés proposes that the allegory of the mansions of the soul, "El símil de las moradas del alma", finds its origin in Islamic symbolism (18); López Baralt also includes the mystical tree in the symbols of Teresa de Ávila that come from Islamic literature (644).

Regarding Gabriela Mistral as a reader, a notable variety is pointed out in the readings of the Chilean poet: theosophical, occultist, and, later in her life, Buddhist works (Taylor 2012, Girona 2021, Sánchez 2021); a clear biblical presence (Espinoza 1957, Cecereu Lagos 1978, Taylor 2012, Girona 2021, Sánchez 2021); apparent literary tastes for mystics such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Teresa de Ávila y San Juan de la Cruz (Oyarzún 1957, Saavedra qtd. in Conde 1970, Vidorreta 2019, Sánchez 2021); a preference for the mysticism of the Mexican Amado Nervo (Taylor 2012).<sup>282</sup> Furthermore she was well acquainted with Tagore's work, through good Spanish translations (Espinoza 100).<sup>283</sup>

Since his work encompasses, besides poetry, literary criticism and essay writing, Octavio Paz displays a great diversity of readings. I will mention the main currents: myths from various origins, including Mexican tradition (Phillips 1972, Sucre 1973); 20<sup>th</sup>-century surrealist literature (Phillips 1972, Sucre 1973, Wilson 1979); Eastern culture (Phillips 1972, Sucre 1973, Cervera Salinas 1989, Poniatowska 1998). Traces of Spanish-language mystics such as Ramon Llull (Cervera Salinas 1989), Sor Juana de la Cruz (Sucre 1973), and Teresa de Ávila (Meidl 2015) are also mentioned. Much of the criticism notes the confluence of Western and Eastern cultures in Paz's work (Phillips 1972, Gullón 1973, Palencia Sampayo and Navarrete Tolomei 2019). I will follow the suggestions expressed in the aforementioned works in the section about intertextual relationships.

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<sup>282</sup> According to Sánchez, the poem "Éxtasis" contains a clear reference to sister Juana Inés de la Cruz (26- 27).

<sup>283</sup> In her prose, Mistral wrote about spiritual men from India like Krishnamoorthi and Tagore (Gazarian-Gautier 19). Cecereu Lagos details the influence of Tagore in Mistral's literary production, through an inclination to poetic prose, using lyrical motifs: "una orientación hacia la prosa, pero en sus formas poéticas, en donde los motivos se harán fundamentalmente líricos" (66). Mistral recognises Tagore's ideas about the union of the human being with "the fleeting forms of the world" in the Bengali philosopher's poetry (Taylor, *Gabriela Mistral's Religious Sensibility* 71). Finally, Conde draws on Julio Saavedra, who asserts that Mistral met Tagore personally; she then wrote the article on Tagore in New York, "Un Tagore de Nueva York" (48). Mistral incorporates Tagorean ideas in her poetry and in her educational practice.

Regarding mysticism, there is no doubt that Teresa de Ávila is one of the most well-known mystics, which is why her work transcends the frontiers of Spanish literature (Menéndez Pelayo 1956, Hatzfeld 1968, Underhill 1993). It is recognised that her mysticism is mainly represented as the loving union between the Christian soul and God, also known as nuptial mysticism (Auclair 1981, Kristeva 2008, García Mateo 2012). Furthermore, she expresses in her work a strong identification with the Christ figure, symbol of suffering and resurrection (Kristeva 2009, García Mateo 2012).

Critics have identified three major trends in Mistrals' work: themes related to love and pain, religiousness, not always connected to Christianity, and nature. According to Guillén de Nicolau, the three trends are united through mysticism by nature (xxviii). Similarly, Pomès mentions among the themes "nature, trees, landscape, and memories", represented through "the tone, not loyal to a narrow-minded belief, nor pantheist, but essentially, profoundly religious" (41-42).<sup>284</sup> Sánchez describes this amalgama as follows:

... the voice of the earth at the foot of the cross de Christ, in a religiosity (re)shaped by a heterodox perspective of Christianity that sometimes intersects with suggestive orientalism, fruit of the multiplicity of her travels -in the style of Saint Teresa of Jesus and her foundations... (Sánchez 39)<sup>285</sup>

Within the predominance of nature, the prominent role of the tree in Mistral's imaginary is noted (Conde 1970, Guillon Barrett 1975).

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<sup>284</sup> My translation MV: "la nature, arbres, paysages, souvenirs"; "le ton non pas de fidèle d'une croyance étroite, ni non plus de panthéisme, mais essentiellement, profondément religieux" (Pomès 41-42).

<sup>285</sup> My translation MV: "la voz de la tierra al pie de la cruz de Cristo en una religiosidad (re)conformada por una perspectiva heterodoxa del cristianismo que a veces entronca con un orientalismo sugestivo, fruto de la multiplicidad de sus viajes -al estilo de Santa Teresa de Jesús y sus fundaciones" (Sánchez 39).

Finally, Octavio Paz aspires to a mystical ecstasy, in which resonates the religious experience, the union of physical love, and the act of creation, which is the poem (Bernhard 7). Thus, poetry equals the true mystical experience (Xirau 1970, Vázquez Vélez 1997); others refer to the tendency towards universal reconciliation (Sucre 1973). Within this universality, there are abundant images of nature, especially archetypal ones, such as water, wind, and the tree (Bernhard 1967, Phillips 1972, 1973, Sucre 1973); among them, the predominance of the tree image is recognised (Poniatowska 1998).

In summary, these works give the impression of a diversity of interpretations of mysticism in the corpus texts. I suggest that the myth textual approach to the poetry of the corpus, based on the concepts of Kristeva and Durand, will provide a deeper understanding of its mystical character and the use of the tree image.

Finally, I will discuss the main axes of myth textuality, myth criticism and Kristeva's concepts on the genotext. Of the studies mentioned so far, none were dedicated to the corpus works according to the method of myth criticism. However, certain aspects of myth were detected in the corpus texts, like the use of archetypes and mythical structures: in Mistral's texts the telluric vision to the relationship between mother and child are found (Matthews 1990); in Paz's poetry the figure of the Great Mother (Bernhard 1967, Phillips 1972, 1973), telluric archetypes (Sucre 1973) and cyclical structures (Bernhard 1967, Sucre 1973) are noted. I propose that the myth critical analysis of this chapter will investigate the mythical aspects in a structured way, extending the general view of the mythical character of the texts.

Regarding Kristeva's approach, it should be noted that she thoroughly analysed the life and works of Teresa de Ávila in *Thérèse mon amour* (2008). She establishes a

connection between certain aspects of genotextual analysis and mysticism in a broad sense, stating:

The religious space becomes an amorous scene, the search for truth becomes a body-to-body, spirit-to-spirit, body-to-spirit; and, without distinction between the 'categories', mysticism commences a real revision of metaphysics. (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 51)<sup>286</sup>

Within this fictionalised text, Kristeva includes fragments of the nun's life, drawn from Marcelle Auclair's biography, and psychoanalytical analyses of fragments of Teresa de Ávila's work. Nuria Girona analyses Mistral's work based on Kristeva's ideas on melancholy; she focuses on *Soleil Noir*. That is, she does not refer to the term 'genotext', nor to the concept used by Kristeva, semiotics (Girona 2021). She mainly addresses the collections *Tala* and *Lagar*. On the other hand, Irene Matthews centres, from a feminist perspective, on the maternal nature attributed to Mistral's texts; she uses psychoanalytic concepts that also fit Kristeva's method (Matthews 1990). The studies by Kristeva, Nuria Girona and Matthews will, therefore, complement the procedure of genotextual analysis, as formulated in the theoretical chapter. Lastly, a tendency in Paz's poetry to highlight an original separation and the desire to recover the initial union has been widely recognised (Bernhard 1967, Xirau 1970, Sucre 1973, García Ponce 1974). Since they implicitly refer to the state of the *chora* and to possible indications of the genotext, I will use these studies as a starting point for a proper genotextual analysis of Paz's poetry.

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<sup>286</sup> My translation MV: "L'espace religieux se transforme alors en scène amoureuse, la recherche de la vérité devient un corps-à-corps, esprit-à-esprit, corps-à-esprit; et, sans distinction entre les « catégories », la mystique amorce une réelle refonte de la métaphysique" (Kristeva, *Thérèse* 51).

### **Hypothesis, research questions and chapter organisation**

In this chapter I will investigate the mystical aspect of the tree motif in the poetic work of two Latin-American authors. I will establish the representation of the tree in the poetry of the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral and the Mexican author Octavio Paz, putting the texts in dialogue with the lyrical work of Teresa de Ávila. It is worth emphasising in advance that the specificity of the genre, in this case poetry, affects the analytical process. Firstly, the poetic devices, such as the use of rhetorical figures, rhythm, or the graphic arrangement, can play a role in the construction of an image or structure that is relevant for the myth textual analysis, both at the intertextual level and in the analysis of the symbolic character of the texts. Secondly, the poetic text usually displays a high density of symbols and images relevant for myth textual analysis. Finally, as the poem often is not constructed from a plot or a narrative line, a complete mythemic structure may not manifest. This complicates the mythemic analysis, which is part of the myth critical procedure.

Critics have linked the work of both contemporary authors to the tree motif, although not always in connection with mysticism. On the one hand, the predominance of the tree image is recognised in Mistral's poetry. On the other hand, it is affirmed that the tree is a symbol of great importance for Octavio Paz, in his poetic work as well as in his non-fictional texts. As I will focus on the mystical aspect of the tree, I will connect the texts of Mistral and Paz to the basic texts of Teresa de Ávila that depict the mystical tree.

It is known that Mistral was interested in a diversity of thinkers and writers, with whom she showed varied affinity. "Woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she finds in the Middle Ages and in the Gospels the spiritual qualities she needs to move towards her work"

(Gazarian-Gautier 17).<sup>287</sup> For his part, Octavio Paz also exhibits diverse interests: for one thing, he dedicated much of his essayistic work to Oriental thought (Sancho Dobles 2007); on the other hand, the poetic postulates of Paz connect to Spanish mysticism.<sup>288</sup> Therefore, I suppose that the spiritual texts of Teresa de Ávila, mystic of the 16-th century, have left their marks on the works of both Latin-American poets.

Now, how is this interest in the work of the mystic Teresa de Ávila expressed through the thematization of the tree in the poetry of Mistral and Paz? I launch the hypothesis that myth textual analysis enhances the understanding of the tree motif. I will address the central research question: what form does the tree motif take in *Desolación* by Gabriela Mistral and “Árbol adentro” by Octavio Paz? I restrict myself to the mystical nature of the text, a tendency that implies the desire for the union with the divine, expressed in a highly personal manner. Furthermore, the literary genre of the corpus texts, in particular their lyrical nature, gives rise to an open manifestation of the author’s ‘self’. Therefore, I recognise two elemental factors that connect the tree motif with the writing of the self. In this way, the research question is specified: what form takes the tree motif in the writing of the self in the pre- and intertexts? After the analysis of the pre- and intertexts separately, I will delve into the comparative level of the manifestation of the tree motif in the network of interrelated texts of the corpus. The answers to the sub-questions will follow:

- How are *Desolación* and “Árbol adentro” connected to the pretexts by Teresa de Ávila?

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<sup>287</sup> My translation MV: "Mujer del siglo veinte, encuentra en la Edad Media y en los Evangelios las cualidades espirituales que necesita para encaminarse hacia la obra" (Gazarian-Gautier 17).

<sup>288</sup> The studies of Paz’s essayistic work and poetics detect traces of the texts by San Juan de la Cruz (Palencia Sampayo and Navarrete Tolomei 2019) and Ramon Llull (Cervera Salinas 1989).

## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

- What are the concordances and differences between the manifestation of the tree motif in *Desolación* and "Árbol adentro"?

At the broader level of the interpretation of the tree motif in the pre- and intertexts, I add the sub-questions:

- How are the distinct manifestations of the tree motif interpreted in relation to the socio-historical situation of the texts?
- How are the diverse forms of the tree motif understood, in relation to the literary genre of the pre- and intertexts?

According to the research model, chapter 5.1 begins with the intertextual analysis. Then the analysis of the symbolic level of the tree motif follows, performing genotextual and myth critical analyses of the separate texts (5.2). Finally, I will combine in 5.3 the two perspectives in the myth textual analysis, leading to the conclusions.



### 5.1 Repetition and variation through intertextuality

The tree is a multifaceted phenomenon in the field of cultures and especially in literature, where the constancy and the variety of this motif are found. Therefore, I will begin the myth textual procedure with the intertextual analysis. First, I will clarify the selection of the corpus, by establishing the manifestation of the tree motif in the central texts of Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz; the emphasis will fall on the representation of the tree as the image of the mystical union between the human being and the divine element. In the second section I will explain the selection of the texts of Teresa de Ávila as pretext.<sup>289</sup> Then the transtextual analysis will establish the transformations of the motif, comparing the tree motif in the pretexts with the manifestation of the arboreal image in the intertexts. Finally, I will conclude, answering the question: what are the repetitions and variations of the tree motif that appear from the intertextual analysis of the pretexts of Teresa de Ávila and the poetry of Mistral and Paz?

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<sup>289</sup> I will confine myself to the Spanish texts, adding, if necessary, an explanation or a translation into English. The experience of working with the English translations of the corpus texts shows that, inevitably, some parts of the original text are lost in translation. Since the repetition of textual elements is especially relevant for the symbolic analysis of the motif, I consider it indispensable to base the analysis on the original Spanish texts; the English translations in the texts will be mine. I will refer in the analyses to the following editions (references between brackets in the analysis text):

- Mistral, Gabriela. *Desolación*. Valparaíso Ediciones, 2021 [1922];
- Paz, Octavio. *Árbol adentro*. Seix Barral, 1987;
- Teresa de Ávila. "Cantos del corazón enamorado." *Poesía y pensamiento. Antología*, selected and presented by Clara Janés. Alianza, 2015, pp. 27-49 (Cor);
- "El encendido amor y el no entender entendiendo." *Poesía y pensamiento. Antología*, selected and presented by Clara Janés. Alianza, 2015, pp. 113-151 (Med).

The following existing English translations of the corpus texts are available. They will serve as a reference for my own purpose:

- Mistral, Gabriela. *Desolation*, translated by Michael P. Predmore and Liliana Baltra. Latin American Literary Review Press, 2014 [1923];
- Paz, Octavio. *A Tree Within*, translated by Eliot Weinberger. New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1988 [1987];
- St. Teresa of Avila. "Poetry." *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 3, translated by Adrian J. Cooney. ICS Publications, 1985, pp. 375-410;
- St. Teresa of Avila. "Meditations on the Songs of Songs." *The Collected Works of Teresa of Avila*, Vol. 2, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez. ICS Publications, 1980, pp. 205-60.

### 5.1.1 The tree motif in *Desolación* and "Árbol adentro"

Now then, what form takes the tree in the corpus texts, the poetry of Mistral and Paz? By first directing attention to the elements of repetition in Mistral's work, I observe the predominance of nature and religiosity, both linked to the arboreal image. Mistral projects in the first poetry collection titled *Desolación* (1922), meaning desolation, the suffering of the lyrical subject in the identification with Christ's pain and the deserted nature of the landscape, emphasised by the solitary tree (155, 157). As depicted eloquently by Pomès, "the trees themselves are merely skeletons there" (49).<sup>290</sup> In this way, the poet uses the arboreal image to refer to the human being, comparing the virile and delicate woman to a splendid oak: "Esta alma de mujer viril y delicada,/ dulce en la gravedad, severa en el amor,/ es una encina espléndida" (95). That is, the anthropomorphic image of the tree emerges, the image that represents the relationship between the human being, often the poetic 'self', and the arboreal element.<sup>291</sup> Besides the natural tree, the cross occurs predominantly in the poetry collection; the reader appreciates the isomorphism of "Cristo,/ brazos extendidos" (67), the Christ-figure with extended arms, the form of the cross itself, and the tree.

The relevance of the tree image continues in *Tala*, whose title refers to the pruning of trees as a metaphor for the writing process (Arce de Vázquez 71); the same occurs in *Lagar*, a work in which the three "Sonetos de la poda", Pruning Sonnets, refer to a similar creative act.<sup>292</sup> The tree as a spatial phenomenon of rebirth is also found in the

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<sup>290</sup> My translation MV: "Les arbres eux-mêmes n'y sont que des squelettes" (Pomès 49).

<sup>291</sup> Examples of the relation between humans and trees are found in the poem "Tres árboles", meaning Three trees, which represents the tree reaching out with his arms and trembling foliage, "tiende/ su brazo inmenso y de follaje trémulo/ hacia otro" (156); in "El espino", The hawthorn, the tree speaks with the 'self' and they hug like brothers (157-58). Furthermore, the anthropomorphic form appears in the poem "La cruz de Bistolfi", Bistolfi's cross, comparing the relationship between the believer and the cross with the bond between mother and child: "Estuvimos prendidos, como el hijo a la madre,/ a ti, del primer llanto a la última agonía" (56).

<sup>292</sup> In *Tala*, the reader appreciates how the lyrical subject's expression of solitude connects with the recent death of the poet's mother (Girona 33). In the poem "Hijo árbol", Son tree, the 'self' refers to cutting a tree into shape to make it look like a child, until it becomes a creature: "por darle gesto como

poem "Último árbol", meaning The Last Tree, where a final identification is suggested with a tamarind or a cedar, and the poetic subject expresses the desire for a new life in which she prefers to live under a tree (Mistral, *Tala/Lagar* 407).

Sánchez resumes the confluence of nature and spirituality in Mistral's poetics as "the voice of the earth at the foot of the cross of Christ, in a religiosity (re)shaped by a heterodox perspective of Christianity that sometimes intersects with suggestive orientalism" (39).<sup>293,294</sup> This interpretation coincides with the examples of explicit intertextuality in Mistrals' poetry: open references are found to the Bible, to Christian theologians like Thomas a Kempis (81), to Teresa de Ávila (Mistral, *Tala/Lagar* 212), and to Tagore (90). In summary, the impression of *Desolación* as an amalgamation of nature and spirituality conforms to the poet's diverse reading. The tree appears according to a diversity of components: the solitary tree, the tree of paradisiacal nature, the spatial phenomenon that promotes mystical union, anthropomorphism, the Christian image of the cross.

The public appreciates Mexican poet Octavio Paz as a reader of Hindu and Buddhist texts, and a connoisseur of Christian mysticism. The relevance of the tree motif in this total oeuvre has been recognised; it is no coincidence that Elena Poniatowska titled the book of memories to her compatriot *Octavio Paz. Las palabras del árbol* (1998),

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a un hijo mío/ hasta que se me vuelva criatura" (Mistral, *Tala/Lagar* 304). Moreover, in *Lagar*, again the tree connects with pain, like in the poem "Luto", Mourning, in which the poetic subject sees a tree of mourning, "el árbol de luto", grow within herself, affirming to be a cypress, a tree of smoke: "Soy yo misma mi ciprés, (...) árbol de humo" (Mistral, *Tala/Lugar* 341-42).

<sup>293</sup> My translation MV: "la voz de la tierra al pie de la cruz de Cristo en una religiosidad (re)conformada por una perspectiva heterodoxa del cristianismo que a veces entronca con un orientalismo sugestivo" (Sánchez 39).

<sup>294</sup> In *Desolación* there are always Christian entrails to be found under poetic wonder (Barrios 27). The original quotation: "bajo la maravilla poética, siempre la víscera cristiana".

Taylor emphasises in his extensive study of the religiosity in Mistral's work how the poet tried to connect "the three irreconcilable deities of Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism, each with its own brand of righteousness, pain, and charity" (*Gabriela Mistral's Religious Sensibility* 117).

meaning The Words of the Tree.<sup>295</sup> In *Octavio Paz. A Study of his Poetics* (1979), Wilson refers to the tree as an obsessive image in Paz's work (92); he notes the appearance in Paz's poem of "dancing trees, transparent trees, musical trees, trees of precious stones and sacred trees. It is another crucial symbol" (92). The universe of the tree expands with connected phenomena: they range from seed to fruit. Other frequent images are linked to the tree and verticality: the column, the stem, and the forest (Wilson 92). Paz himself includes, in *Corriente alterna* (1967), the tree in the enumeration of mythical elements that occur often in his imagination (96).

In the last collection *Árbol adentro*, the poetic universe is populated by all kinds of trees: pine, poplar, oak, maple, ash, eucalyptus, palm, and banana tree.<sup>296</sup> The key functions of the tree are defined in the poem "Cuarteto", meaning Quartet:

Para esperar la noche me he tendido  
a la sombra de un árbol de latidos.

El árbol es mujer y en su follaje  
oigo rodar el mar bajo la tarde.

Como sus frutos con sabor de tiempo,  
frutos de olvido y de conocimiento.

Bajo el árbol se miran y se palpan  
imágenes, ideas y palabras. (23)

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<sup>295</sup> Poniatowska produces a numerical summary: in the 313 poems, published between 1935 and 1988, the word 'árbol', tree, appears 165 times. While mentioning the varieties of tree manifestations she exclaims: "You are always a man at the foot of a tree" (My translation MV). The original quotation: "¡Te imaginas! además de árbol, árboles, arboleda, también son una constante fresno, pino, chopo, eucalipto entre follajes, hojas, ramas enredaderas, jardines. Eres siempre un hombre al pie de un árbol" (Poniatowska 149-50).

<sup>296</sup> *Árbol adentro* is published in 1987, dated after Wilson's study, which appeared in 1979. Therefore, the collection is not included in Wilson's analysis.

The tree is manifested in the poem as the drive of creative and mystical experiences. Firstly, it provides the spatial factor for creation, because in this place, under the tree ("bajo el árbol"), images, ideas and words ("imágenes, ideas y palabras") can be seen and touched (23). The foliage (follaje) especially facilitates poetic transformation, with the movement of the submarine foliage of language, "los follajes submarinos del lenguaje" (118). Secondly, the tree is the metaphor for mystical transformation: the tree is a woman ("El árbol es mujer") (23). This personification of the tree is found in multiple more fragments, where the tree of heartbeats ("árbol de latidos") is emphasised (23).

The final chapter of *Árbol adentro*, which carries the same title, displays the intensification of the central aspects of the tree motif: the inspiration that occurs when lightning nests in the foliage (157); the vertical form, the column or pillar, in combination with vital functions such as heartbeat or respiration. Couples are living columns, "columnas vivas" (151), or an entwined breathing tree, "enlazadas, un árbol que respira" (152). The crucial representation of the interaction between the human tree and its creative production from the loving union is depicted in the poem "Árbol adentro", A Tree Within.<sup>297</sup> A tree with roots and branches that are veins and nerves grows in the lyrical subject's forehead; the movement of the foliage coincides with thoughts. The gaze of the beloved ignites the production of fruits, so the tree speaks, "el árbol habla" (137). Lastly, the intertextual references in "Árbol adentro" are very diverse, but not repetitive. In summary, the tree appears according to the following components: metaphor for creation and inspiration, loving union, place of cosmic union from the poetic word, metaphor of vegetal renewal.

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<sup>297</sup> The full text of the poem is included in Appendix 3.

Finally, a comment on the relationship between the texts of Mistral and Paz. Existing studies link the work of these authors to mysticism, by establishing in their texts a mix of influences from Western and Eastern spirituality. Both are seen as globetrotters, as passionate participants in public debate, and as multifaceted authors, aspects that the reader recognises in their work. Therefore, it seems legitimate to compare their texts; the difference in gender identity will add interest to the analysis.<sup>298</sup>

Regarding the use of the arboreal image, they have in common the expression of the desire to remain under a tree, the place that inspires the poetic word. While Paz is always the man at the foot of a tree, Mistral formulates the wish for her next life as follows:

Y yo paso por el mundo  
en sueño, carrera o vuelo,  
en vez de umbrales de casas,  
quiero árbol de paradero.  
(...)  
Pero tal vez su follaje  
ya va arrojando mi sueño  
y estoy, de muerta, cantando  
debajo de él, sin saberlo. (*Tala/Lagar* 407-408)

Despite the difference between the two, the fragment establishes an analogy with Paz's frequent images: besides the preference for the tree as a place to rest, "quiero árbol de paradero", "debajo de él", Mistral's poetry references foliage as the impetus for the creative process, "su follaje/ ya va arrojando mi sueño" (*Tala/Lagar* 407-408). As we saw, in Paz's texts foliage is linked to life, to the propulsion of creation. In

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<sup>298</sup> It is known that Mistral and Paz were acquainted, because in his letter of September 1950 Paz refers to meeting Mistral, and to previous correspondence (Paz, Letter 1950). Therefore, it is plausible that they knew each other's texts.

Mistral's "Otoño", meaning Autumn, dead leaves serve as an omen for death, as in the rumour of dry leaves, "un rumor de hojas secas" (161).<sup>299</sup> Another point of coincidence arises from the thematization, by both poets, of the tree as the centre of vital pulsation.<sup>300</sup> Thus, I recognise an intertextual relationship between the work of Mistral and Paz, regarding the use of the tree image. I will continue the intertextual analysis in the following paragraph, extending the perspective towards the pretexts in which the arboreal image also predominates in connection with mysticism.

### 5.1.2 The tree motif in the pretexts

Remaining within the wide realm of mysticism, I identify an intertextual relationship between the 20<sup>th</sup>-century texts *Desolación* and "Árbol adentro", and the texts of Teresa de Ávila, 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish mystic. To fit the poetic character of the corpus texts, I will limit myself to the lyrical texts of the Carmelite, focusing on the poetry compiled in the edition by Clara Janés, under the title "Cantos del corazón enamorado", meaning Songs of the Enamoured Heart; I will also analyse from the same edition a selection of *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares* (1567), reflections on the biblical texts "Cantar de los Cantares", Song of Songs. In the nun's poetry, the arboreal image of the cross occupies a central position. In *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares*, she uses the tree image as well, based on fragments of the biblical text that is also considered mystical. Thus, I distinguish in her poetry the recurrence of the arboreal image, a significant element of the mystical nature of the work. Moreover, the texts of Teresa de Ávila are characterised as an amalgam of thought currents, where mystical tendencies of

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<sup>299</sup> I also observe a similarity between Mistral's verses "Tal vez morir solo sea/ ir con asombro marchando" (161) and the poem "Coda" by Paz: "Tal vez amar es aprender/ a caminar por este mundo" (173).

<sup>300</sup> In the poem "Himno al árbol", Hymn to the Tree, Mistral observes in the tree the pulsation of existence, "la pulsación del existir" (*Desolación-Ternura-Tala-Lagar* 98). Paz refers repetitively to the human being as a tree of heartbeats.

diverse origin are represented. Therefore, I attribute to her an amplitude of spiritual reflection that is also found in the texts of Mistral and Paz.

In order to form a starting point for establishing the relationships between the corpus texts, I will first centre on the tree motif in the pretexts. Teresa de Ávila's mysticism is a nuptial mysticism that is concentrated on the amorous relationship between the soul of the Christian human being and God. Evidently, in *Castillo Interior o Las Moradas* (1588), meaning Interior Castle or The Mansions, which is her best-known text, the room is the central image that captures the situation of the mystical experience. However, in some fragments of the first chapter the soul adopts the aspect of the tree that is planted in the vital waters of life, "está plantado en las mismas [sic] aguas vivas de la vida" (Teresa de Ávila, *Obras* 13).<sup>301</sup> In the poetry, the representation of the loving union with divinity moves to the identification with the Passion, the suffering of Christ, so the accent falls on the image of the cross. It is no coincidence that Teresa, who chose the name of 'Teresa de Jesús', and her contemporary Juan de la Cruz, Saint John of the Cross, dedicate their spiritual name to the crucified Jesus. Lastly, in *Meditaciones sobre las Cantares* (1567) the nun is inspired, in some chapters, by the biblical metaphor of the apple tree. In these episodes, the benevolence of God, projected in the tree's properties of generating shade and fruit, is revealed to the Christians through the intermediary of the Passion of Christ. That is, the tree image in the work of Teresa de Ávila includes a confluence of natural and divine characteristics that culminate in the figure of the cross.

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<sup>301</sup> As stated by López-Baralt, Teresa de Ávila "notices how the tree (which represents her soul and not the universe) will grow well or poorly according to the type of spiritual waters that feed it: the pure ones of grace and the rotten ones of sin" (my translation MV).

"... advierte cómo el árbol (que representa a su alma y no al universo) crecerá bien o mal dependiendo del tipo de aguas espirituales que lo alimentan: las limpias de la gracia o las pútridas del pecado" (López Baralt 646).



According to the definition of the tree motif in the mystical sense, the image is connected with the spiritual union between the human being and the divine or cosmic entity; in Christianity, it takes on the aspect of the cross.<sup>302</sup> On the one hand, the tree provides the place where the connection with the divine entity occurs; on the other hand, it is the metaphor of the unification referred to by mysticism. I conclude that the Christian mysticism of Teresa de Ávila displays the desire for divine love, expressed through the loving union between the believer's soul and God. The divine love culminates in the suffering of Christ, represented by the cross, the arboreal image of Christianity. Another aspect of the tree, in its natural manifestation, coincides with the spatial factor that fosters the mystical union.

In summary, the corpus includes the pretexts of Teresa de Ávila and the poetry of two Latin-American authors; the collections *Desolación* of Gabriela Mistral and "Árbol adentro" of Octavio Paz will be the intertexts. Regarding the corpus in its entirety, the intertexts differ from the spatiotemporal situation of the pretexts; in addition, the personal interpretations of mysticism diverge, according to the projection of mysticism in the tree motif. The situation of the intertexts authors is comparable, even though their career phases are different. Thus, the distinct interpretations of the motif allow for an analysis centred on the variation of the motif in mystical poetry, connected with the pretexts.

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<sup>302</sup> See the definition in section 5.0, "The tree and mysticism".

### 5.1.3 Transpositions according to Genette

Starting from the pretext, the intertextual analysis encompasses the variations, according to the concepts of transtextuality.<sup>303</sup> I will connect the intertexts, *Desolación* of Mistral and "Árbol adentro" of Paz, to the texts of Teresa de Ávila, which I consider to be pretexts. I will focus on the thematic transpositions, based on the characterisation of the lyrical subject, the poeticised 'self' that transfers the poet's feelings and perceptions, and their spatiotemporal situation. As the tree motif emerges in a personified and anthropomorphic way, I assume the relevance of the features of the poetic 'self'.

I will first detail the traits of the 'self' in Teresa de Ávila's texts. The spatiotemporal situation is limited to 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spain. In the poems, which display a strong lyricism, the poetic 'self' places herself in the situation of God's lover, emphasising the happy encounters as well as moments of loss. She surrenders herself completely to the tasks imposed by the Lord. In contrast, in the commentaries on the Canticles, the spiritual mother and teacher appears, who enlightens her followers on the interpretation of biblical texts. This is, indeed, an intuitive interpretation, given that the 'self' emphasises that she lacks theological training. A figure emerges whose ambiguity, docile and leading at the same time, remains within the predominant Christian religiosity.

Regarding the pragmatic transpositions, I limit myself to the reader's perception of the poetic subject's motivation and the valorisation of the tree image in connection with the mystical experience. In Teresa de Ávila's work the image of the cross is repeated, a specific manifestation of the tree in the realm of catholic religiosity. At the same time, the cross, metaphor of Christ's suffering, is connected with the limitations and obstacles that the nun personally experiences in her trajectory as a reformer. Her

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<sup>303</sup> See Appendix 2 on transtextuality.

motivation, therefore, is both ideological and personal. In the *Meditaciones*, the biblical image of the natural tree appears, metaphor for the divine benevolence and spatial reference to the privileged place for the union with God. Thus, the arboreal images in the Carmelite's work come from various traces connected with the spiritual intention of the 'self', keeping the heterogeneous valorisations of the tree motif within the framework of mysticism.

### **The pretexts and *Desolación***

Establishing the transpositions entails comparing the pretexts with *Desolación* of Gabriela Mistral. Before addressing the thematic transpositions, first, an observation on the format of the text. It should be noted that *Desolación* is longer than the pretexts, so it can detail the various aspects of the motif.

Regarding the diegesis, the lyrical subject of Mistral's poetry is initially located in the poet's home country, while later poems follow the global journey of the poetic 'self'. As Mistral's poetry is situated in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I conclude on a spatiotemporal transposition. What unites the texts of Teresa de Ávila and Mistral, is the open adherence to roles that are traditionally considered feminine, such as mother and teacher.<sup>304</sup> Nevertheless, Mistral's characterisation of the lyrical subject as a lover who laments the loss of the deceased beloved, does not coincide with the religious position depicted by the Carmelite. Moreover, in Mistral's work the references to religiosity and nature primarily emphasise a feeling of absence. It is, therefore, a spatiotemporal transposition with a change of character.

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<sup>304</sup> It is worth noting that in other texts Mistral displays an undetermined characterisation of the lyrical subject's gender, by connecting the subject sometimes to the masculine form of the adjective, like in "Himno al árbol" (Mistral, *Desolación-Ternura-Tala-Lagar* 97-99).

In terms of thematic transpositions, I will limit myself to the reader's perception of the poetic subject's motivations and valorisations of the tree image in connection with the mystical experience. I recognise in *Desolación* the combination of religious and personal motivation for the use of the tree image, a tendency that is also found in the texts of Teresa de Ávila. That is, in her first poetry collection, the Chilean poet adheres strongly to the Christian aspect of the tree motif, the image of the cross. Besides, the natural tree appears, conceived as the space that fosters the union with God. Therefore, the heterogeneous valorisation of the tree that is found in the pretexts emerges, based on Christian religiosity. However, at personal level, the personified tree as the metaphor for solitude, inherent in the title of the work *Desolación*, means a transvalorisation of the tree motif by the lyrical subject. Another aspect of the natural tree, representation of the home country, arises from the memories of the 'self' that also accentuate her solitude. These are significant deviations from the valorisation of the tree, as until now I have only considered the arboreal image as the symbol of unification.

### **The pretexts and "Árbol adentro"**

In this section, the identification of the transpositions implies the comparison of the pretexts with the chapter "Árbol adentro" in the poetry collection with the same title by Octavio Paz. To begin with the form of the texts, "Árbol adentro" contains a number of poems comparable to "Cantos del corazón enamorado", although some of them are longer. Such an extension suggests the concentration of certain aspects of the tree motif.

The poetry of *Árbol adentro* as a whole gives presence to a lyrical subject that is both Mexican and cosmopolite; based on the topics, like for example the reflections on

works of art and contemporary artists, the poems date from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Comparing the pretexts to the chapter “Árbol adentro”, I distinguish conformances and differences regarding the poetic subject. Teresa de Ávila, reader of chivalric novels, portrays a lyrical ‘self’ in parallel with the predominance of romantic love in Paz’s work. However, the lyrical subject of the male author Paz is endowed with a great deal of intellectual interest, while the ‘self’ of the Carmelite nun repeatedly accentuates the lack of literary and academic training (Janés 15). That is, the diegetic comparison of the pre- and intertexts results in transpositions of the spatiotemporal universe of the text combined with a change of character.

Regarding Paz’s essayistic texts, the motivation of intellectual exploration arises, linked to reflection on love. In his poetic approach, the romantic nature is expressed, encompassing above all the aspiration to universal union, mediated by the presence of the beloved woman. The tree motif adheres in his work to the universality of nature, its renewing force, and the spatial aspect that promotes both the loving and cosmic union, in connection with poetic creation. Besides the implications in Oriental spirituality, I note a highly personal religiosity, which causes the transmotivation of the tree motif. The valorisation of the tree motif -anthropomorphism, recreative force, and spatial aspect- is consistent with the value of the tree in the texts of Teresa de Ávila. It should be noted that the Christian manifestation of the cross, catholic image par excellence, is absent in the poetry of Paz.

#### **5.1.4 Conclusion of the first phase**

In summary, the exploration of the tree motif in literary tradition leads to the following definition: the tree image refers to cosmogony, anthropogony, and the cyclical growth of nature. Its meaning extends to the development of the human being, both physical

and psychological, so the tree often takes on an anthropomorphic aspect. In mysticism, the arboreal image is connected to the spiritual union between human beings and the divine or cosmic entity; in Christianity, it adopts the aspect of the cross. The intertextual analysis shows the repetitions and variations of the tree motif, in the pretexts by Teresa de Ávila and the intertexts of Mistral and Paz.

Beginning with repetition, the Christian texts of Teresa de Ávila emphasise the nuptial character of her mysticism. The tree is the place where the loving connection with the divine entity occurs; additionally, it is the metaphor of the unification referred to by mysticism. The divine love culminates in the suffering of Christ, represented by the arboreal image of the cross. I observe a strong connection between the poems of Mistral and Teresa de Ávila's interpretation, both in their adherence to the Christian model and from the corporeal aspect of the union with God. Paz's poetry unfolds the cosmic character of the union with nature, centring explicitly in the tree image. At the same time, Paz accentuates the union with the beloved woman, which aligns with the nuptial character of Teresa de Ávila's mysticism. The anthropomorphism of the tree is manifest in each of the texts.

Regarding the variations, the lyrical subjects appear in line with the spatiotemporal situations of the texts. Besides the parallelism of the characterisation of the 'self' in the texts of Teresa de Ávila and Mistral, the lyrical subject of the Chilean poet concentrates on the painful experience. As for the pragmatic transpositions, a comparable religious and personal motivation occurs in the texts of Teresa de Ávila and Mistral. Since references to nature are inserted, even though they are situated specifically in the poet's homeland, the value of the tree diversifies.

On the other hand, the 'self' in "Árbol adentro" adheres to intellectual interest, which differs from the characterisation of the lyrical subject in the texts of Teresa de Ávila.

The poems of Paz show a transmotivation with respect to the Christian devotion of the Carmelite nun, while the Mexican maintains the predominance of the loving union; the transvalorisation is based on a combination of various values of the tree motif.

## 5.2 The symbolic nature of the tree motif

Now that I have outlined the repetitions and the variations of the tree motif in the pre- and intertexts, I proceed with the symbolic nature of the same motif. Following the propositions of the research model, the analysis of the symbolic level is carried out according to two perspectives: the individuation process, which is investigated through the genotextual analysis, and the anthropological angle of the myth critical analysis. The investigation of the genotext will be conducted in line with the starting points formulated in the theoretical chapter. I consider the genotext to be the textual level that connects with the rupture of the initial state that involves the fusion with the mother's body, and the exploration of boundaries that is connected to the individuation process. The myth critical analysis starts with placing the redundant symbols in the categories of the imaginary. Then, I will perform the symbolic analysis that will demonstrate the mythemes of the corpus texts, eventually followed by the connection with a mythical narrative. Lastly, I will connect the mythemes with the tree motif.<sup>305</sup>

I will analyse the pre- and intertexts separately, according to the following order: Section 5.2.1 will investigate the symbolic level of the texts of Teresa de Ávila, the lyricism that appears in the collections "Los cantos del corazón enamorado" and "El encendido amor y el no entender entendiendo", a selection of *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares*. Then, I will analyse in section 5.2.2 the poetry collection *Desolación* of Gabriela Mistral. Finally, I will explore in section 5.2.3 the symbolic level of "Árbol adentro" by Octavio Paz. I will investigate how the search for mystical union is represented, through the image of the tree.

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<sup>305</sup> See section 3.2 of the theoretical chapter.



### 5.2.1 The pretexts: Teresa de Ávila's lyrical texts

Spanish mystic of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Teresa de Ávila produces her writings in remarkable circumstances: besides diverging from the submissive position of women in her era, she also evades the rules of the religious order to which she initially belongs. She reclaims an exclusive position in her mystical relationship with God, while denying her individuality in an attitude of total submission to the demands of her own religiosity. As we saw in chapter 5.1, she is an avid reader of heterogeneous texts, amongst which stand out the chivalric novels and biblical texts. I suggest that, despite the seemingly contradictory nature of their author, the reader can appreciate the coherence of the nun's texts. I launch the hypothesis that the analysis of the symbolic level, carried out from the genotextual and myth critical perspectives, will establish the conformity between the texts of Teresa de Ávila. Focusing on the tree motif, I will address the question: how does the symbolic level of the motif manifest in the lyrical texts of Teresa de Ávila?

#### Genotextual analysis

In this section I will explore the traces of the genotext in the pretexts, the lyrical work of Teresa de Ávila. I will answer the question: what are the genotextual traces in the texts of Teresa de Ávila, the poems and the selection of *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares*? First of all, I will explore the group of genotextual marks that concerns the emphasis on the initial experience of rupture. I will concentrate on the repetitive text elements. As the poems of the Saint were originally recited and sung in the convents, the repetitiveness primarily appears in the refrains (Janés 24).<sup>306</sup> However, to highlight

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<sup>306</sup> The original quotation: "los poemas de la Santa (...) se recitaron y cantaron en los conventos" (Janés 24).

the vigour of their recurrent manifestation, I will connect the choruses to the other textual repetitions.

In the poems of "Los cantos del corazón enamorado" and the lyrical texts of the reflections on the Canticles, the accent seems to lie in the search for union with God. The lyrical subject already lived through this unifying experience a few times, as can be seen in fragments in which she claims that her soul was one with her Creator, "mi alma quedó hecha/ Una con su Creador" (Cor 29), and that God lives within her, "mi Dios que vive en mi" (Cor 32). The sense of unification is projected in the repeated representation of corporeal aspects; I mention the arms, "los brazos del amor" (Cor 29), the entrails (Cor 34, 37), and the chest (Cor 34, 43). Evidently, such a corporality gives the impression of the erotization of the union with divinity. However, it is an ambiguous corporality, given that these parts of the body are also linked to the first physical relationship with the mother. The accent on bodily parts is a constant factor in the work of the Carmelite, since in *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares* she begins by choosing the fragment of the Song of Songs that also refers to certain physical elements: the mouth and the breasts appear in the stanza "let the Lord kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, for your breasts are better than wine", "Bésemelo el Señor con el beso de su boca, porque más valen tus pechos que el vino" (Med 118).<sup>307</sup> In explaining the meaning of this fragment, the nun shapes the beneficial experience of the union with God with maternal references such as being suspended in divine arms, "suspendida en aquellos divinos brazos", leaning against divine breasts, "arrimada a (...) aquellos pechos divinos", and being nourished with divine milk, "sustentada con aquella leche divina" (Med 135). She extends the metaphor of milk as the material

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<sup>307</sup> My translation MV.

image of the fecundating vigour of the mystical experience, while comparing the soul to the suckling:

Porque así como un niño no entiende cómo crece ni sabe cómo mama (...), así es aquí, que totalmente el alma no sabe de sí ni hace nada ni sabe cómo ni por donde - ni lo puede entender- le vino aquel bien tan grande. Sabe que es el mayor que en la vida se puede gustar (...). No sabe a qué lo comparar, sino al regalo de la madre que ama mucho al hijo y le cría y regala. (Med 136)

In the fragment, thus, the repeated mention is noted of bodily parts that refer to physical contact with the mother; the maternal value of the mystical experience appears strongly through the use of the terms nursing, 'mamar', and milk, 'leche', in the same context.<sup>308</sup>

However, despite the beneficial nature of the spiritual matrimony, the unification is characterised by a considerable inconsistency. Time and again, the bond between the soul and the love of God is broken. The separation takes form, first, through a spatial displacement, using the metaphors of prison and exile; this occurs in the poems "Muero porque no muero" (Cor 30-32), and "Ayes del destierro" (Cor 40), meaning Sighs of exile. Secondly, the interruption of the state of content appears at the level of text structure through gaps in the fluidity of the sentence. Especially the compulsive use of exclamations makes the textual discontinuity visible and audible. In the Spanish language, the formal manifestation of the exclamation mark itself doubly breaks the continuity of the text. A clear example is the use of the "¡Ay!" in "Ayes del destierro"

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<sup>308</sup> I suppose that the relevance of the mother figure also appears through the self-definition of Teresa de Ávila, who portrays herself as La Madre, The Mother, when addressing her daughters in *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares* (Med 122-125, 141).

(Cor 42-43).<sup>309</sup> It is significant for its lyrical character that exclamations also appear in *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares*, which actually is an educational text.

All the above leads to the conclusion that the mystical trajectory, expressed in the texts of Teresa de Ávila, occurs as a search that continually crosses the frontier between union and disagreement. The preoccupation with divine union leads to the desire to cross the ultimate border, between life and death; it is strongly expressed in the refrain of "Ayes del destierro", in which the longing for being with God brings forth the desire to die:

*¡Cuán triste es, Dios mío,  
La vida sin ti!  
Ansiosa de verte  
Deseo morir.*<sup>310</sup> (Cor 40)

Life occurs as extremely bitter, "amarga en extremo", in contrast with benign death, "muerte benigna" (Cor 40); it carries the phenomenon of the ambiguous opposition uttered in the poem "Muero porque no muero", meaning I die because I do not die (Cor 30). The procedure of juxtaposing affirmation and its negation not only explores the limits of the concepts in question, but also encompasses a rhetorical figure characteristic of mystical poetry (Meidl 21). It seems that the poet herself thematizes the use of that poetical device, when she refers in the poem "Hermosura de Dios" to the union of two things so unequal: "¡Oh ñudo que así juntáis,/ Dos cosas tan desiguales" (Cor 33). In other poems oppositions stand out, such as: "Sin acabar

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<sup>309</sup> Another example of the text's discontinuity are the refrains that appear in italic in the edition of Janés. Thus, the refrains are visually distinguished from the rest of the text.

<sup>310</sup> The fragments in italic appear as such in the edition of Clara Janés.

acabáis,/ Sin tener que amar amáis" (Cor 33); "*Alma, buscarte has en Mí,/ Y a Mí buscarme has en tí*" (Cor 34).<sup>311</sup>

As for the other manifestations of exploring boundaries, Teresa de Ávila's texts show a strong inclination to immerse in borderline issues. Regarding the convergence of the subject with the other, the Relationship with God is first noted; the sister uses the terms 'spouse' and 'beloved' to indicate the mystical couple; in addition, she refers to God as a lover. It is such an intense identification that the lyrical subject suggests that the identities are intertwined, her soul being one with its creator, "Y mi alma quedó hecha/ Una con su Criador" (Cor 29), and God living within her, "mi Dios que vive en mí" (Cor 32). Especially the expression "trocado", swapped, which appears twice in "Mi Amado para mí", implies a total exchange of identities (Cor 29).

*Ya toda me entregué y di,  
Y de tal suerte he trocado,  
Que de mi Amado para mí,  
Y yo soy para mi Amado. (Cor 29)*

The interaction with the soul, which acts as an intermediary between 'self' and God, is also characterised as an Exchange of identities: "*Alma, buscarte has en Mí,/ y a Mí buscarme has en tí*" (Cor 34).

Concerning the infringement of the laws of what is permitted, abjection, I propose in the works of Teresa de Ávila the relevance of pain, both physical and mental. The image she frequently uses is the cross, the metaphor that encompasses the mystical and sacred dimensions of the tree. In her mystical trajectory, Teresa de Ávila

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<sup>311</sup> "Without ending you end,/ Without having to love you love" (Cor 33); "Soul, you must seek yourself in Me,/ and Me you must seek in thee" (Cor 34), my translation MV.

consciously seeks pain and suffering, which indicates crossing the questionable boundaries of self-inflicted torture. However, direct references to such episodes are conveyed rather in other autobiographical texts.<sup>312</sup>

### **Myth critical analysis: the tree and the cross**

As I have established in the genotextual analysis, each of the pretexts conforms to the mystical nature through the expressions of the desire for the union with God. In what follows, the myth critical analysis will respond to the questions: What mythemes emerge from the recurrent images? And: how can the mythemes be connected to a specific myth? I will combine the answers to the manifestation of the tree motif in the pretexts.

As can be seen from the title of the first collection of texts, "Los cantos del corazón enamorado", the heart, *el corazón*, is the principal metaphor for the love that is the fundament of the mystical aspiration (Cor 27, 30, 37, 49).<sup>313</sup> Other frequent images referring to love are spatial allusions that emphasise intimacy: expressions that mention the room, the house, and the dwelling, "mi aposento,/ (...) mi casa y morada" (Cor 35), and the divine prison, "Esta divina prisión/ Del amor en que yo vivo" (Cor 30). That is, indications appear of the intimacy that comes with the achievement of love. From its central position in the human body, I consider the heart a centric symbol; the multitude of references to the intimate dwelling supports the relevance of the centric category. There are also verbs connected to inclusion: surrender, become one, to join, to reach, to attach. In this sense, the poems that thematize the desire for death show the extreme tendency of inclusion, that is, the need to reconcile with the earth. In line

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<sup>312</sup> See also *The Book of her Life* (1588) of Teresa de Ávila and *La vida de Santa Teresa de Jesús* (2014) by Marcelle Auclair.

<sup>313</sup> Other fragments that refer to central parts of the body are the chest, "en mi pecho" (Cor 34, 43) and the entrails, "mis entrañas" (Cor 37).

with this tendency, death is referred to with soft adjectives such as sweet, “dulce” (Cor 31) and benign, “benigna” (Cor 40).

I consider allusions to food, like the reference to sweetness (Cor 36) and the mention of the words fruit, “fruto”, and oil, “aceite”, in line with the centric nature of the text (Cor 46, 47). It is notable that in the comments on the biblical texts of the Song of Songs Teresa de Ávila links the love of God with nutrition. She includes the fragment Cant. 1,2, which reads: “let the Lord kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, for your breasts are better than wine” (Med 118).<sup>314</sup> According to the Teresian interpretation, which draws on the metaphor of the divine milk, the love of God is similar to the gift of the mother who loves the child, while nurturing and indulging it, “al regalo de la madre que ama mucho al hijo y le cría y regala” (Med 135-36).

However, just as frequent as the images of intimacy and happiness, are the displays of agony: a striking example is the poem “Ayes del destierro” (Cor 40-44) that expresses how the longing to be with God evokes pain. As a result of the alternation of happiness and agony, a multitude of oppositions that touch on paradox appear, the poetic device that is the culmination point of mystical literature.<sup>315</sup> The central opposition union-rupture echoes in antonymic combinations, such as life-death, war-peace, health-sickness or weakness-strength (Cor 37). According to the recurrence of such oppositions, the poems of Teresa de Ávila thus adhere to the rhythmic category.

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<sup>314</sup> My translation MV. “Bésememe el señor con el beso de su boca, porque más valen tus pechos que el vino” (Med 118). It is notable that in current versions the second verse diverges, while referring to a “love more delightful than wine” ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).

<sup>315</sup> Meidl asserts that “in theology and mysticism, both Western and Eastern, the paradox is conceived as the rational medium to capture the irrational” (my translation MV). “... en la teología y mística tanto occidental como oriental la paradoja se concibe como medio racional para captar lo irracional” (22).

Also according to this category, the repetitive presence of the images of the cross and the tree is found in the Carmelite's poetry. In the poem with the same title, the cross represents suffering and at the same time connects to salvation, juxtaposing cross and glory, and suffering and comfort: "En la cruz está la gloria,/ Y el honor,/ Y en el padecer dolor/ Vida y consuelo" (Cor 48). Based on the tree's vegetal cycle and the resurrection of Christ after crucifixion, both images imply the alternation of life and death. The poet explains the equivalence of tree and cross in the poem "La cruz", where the cross is linked to the palm tree, the olive, the green tree and the tree of life (Cor 46-48).

Es la cruz el árbol verde  
Y deseado  
De la esposa que a su sombra  
Se ha sentado  
Para gozar de su Amado,  
El Rey del cielo... (Cor 47)

This poem of Teresa, who is an expert reader of biblical texts, makes direct reference to the Canticles. In the fragment the words resonate of the Old Testament section that inspires the sister to write the controversial text *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares*. She includes in her reflections the verses of Cant. 2,3, where there is a direct reference to the tree:

Como el manzano entre los árboles silvestres,  
Así es mi amado entre los jóvenes;  
Bajo la sombra del deseado me senté,  
Y su fruto fue dulce a mi paladar.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> [www.biblia.com/ books/rvr60/So2.3](http://www.biblia.com/books/rvr60/So2.3).

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest/ is my beloved among the young man./ I delight to sit in his shade,/ and his fruit is sweet to my taste" ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).



In the commentaries on this biblical text, Teresa evokes the apple tree, which not only provides sweet fruit, "fruta dulce", but also shade, a site of intimacy and protection. (Med 138). The Saint asserts: "this divine apple tree lowers its branches, so that [the soul] sees and enjoys the fruit that Jesus Christ our Lord took from his Passion, watering this tree with his precious blood, with such admirable love" (Med 141).<sup>317</sup> In another passage this equivalence becomes explicit, with the declaration "I understand the apple tree to be the tree of the Cross" (Med 149).<sup>318</sup> That is, once again the tree and the cross are equated, ambiguous concepts implying that the soul, besides feeling joy, has to serve and work, "no ha de siempre gozar sin servir y trabajar [sic] en algo" (Med 149). In summary, in the texts of the Carmelite nun two types of arboreal images are found: on the one hand, the natural tree, which bears fruit and gives life; on the other hand, the cross is suffering and, through the Passion of Christ, leads to eternal life. In both cases, the arboreal image belongs to the rhythmic category, based on the link with the natural cycle and the religious concept of resurrection.

The frequent images in Teresa de Ávila's texts fit in the following categories: first, a strong tendency to seek union is recognised, from corporeal symbols, and images of intimacy and food, all of the centric category. This longing for happy union alternates with an anguished state, so the texts as a whole adheres to the rhythmic category. In line with this category, rhetoric figures appear in the texts that highlight opposition and paradox, in which images of antagonistic value unite. Another element of the rhythmic category is the frequent use of the cross image, symbol of the suffering and resurrection of Christ. In Teresa de Ávila's work, the cross and the tree are connected,

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<sup>317</sup> My translation MV. "... baja sus ramas este divino manzano, para que (...) vea y goce [el alma] del fruto que sacó Jesucristo Señor nuestro de su Pasión, regando este árbol con su sangre preciosa, con tan admirable amor" (Med 141).

<sup>318</sup> My translation MV. "Entiendo yo por el manzano el árbol de la Cruz" (Med 149).

both symbols alluding to renewal, of vegetation as well as of the human body.

Therefore, I conclude on the following mythemes:

- the accent on the agonies of life
- the constant search for union with the divine entity, which frees from pain
  
- moments of harmony alternate with a state of pain and agony
- the alternation of opposite phases of union and separation leads to an indefinite state of waiting, the expectation of a future in harmony with God

According to the mythemes, I connect the texts of Teresa de Ávila with messianic myth.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition the messianic figure refers to a figure, the Messiah or Christ, who promotes the restoration of the initial paradisiacal state; this moment of total renewal is preceded by an apocalyptic episode (Eliade 24). The arrival of this messianic figure is announced by the predictions of sacred scriptures and prophecies. In the Christian version of Messianic myth, the cross surges as the symbol of the Passion and the resurrection of Christ. In cosmic sense, the tree is connected with rebirth; it also represents the opposite states of being planted in the ground and, at the same time, reaching towards the sky.

It should be emphasised that the complete characterisation of the tree motif in the pretexts is carried out through the myth textual phase of the analysis: the combination of the previous analyses, in dialogue with the results of the intertextual procedure of chapter 5.1. In order to provide such an interpretation, I will resume the analysis of the pretexts in section 5.3.1.

### 5.2.2 Gabriela Mistral's *Desolación*

As observed by the critics, Mistral's poetry accentuates pain and longing. "A similar disposition (...) transects [the] three works in their various modulations" proposes Girona; the search for unification radiates through Mistral's entire work and the feeling of separation situates the lyrical subject facing different opponents such as the mother, the son, and the beloved (Girona 35).<sup>319</sup> Existing studies highlight the central axes of this tendency: a lyrical subject characterised by the longing for the home land and the sadness over the death of a lover who took his own life. However, I posit that from the symbolic language of *Desolación* a distinct direction towards the future also emerges. Therefore, I hypothesise that the analysis of the symbolic level of the work, through the identification of the genotext and the mythemes, will enable a deeper interpretation of the characterisation of the poetic 'self'. Focusing on the tree motif, I will respond to the central question: how is the symbolic level of the motif distinguished in Gabriela Mistral's *Desolación*?

#### Genotextual analysis

In line with the interpretation of Girona, who draws on the Kristevian text on melancholy, (35), I will adopt Kristeva's ideas in the genotextual analysis of the poetry collection *Desolación*. The investigation addresses the genotextual traces that appear in the text. I will start the analysis by exploring what form the initial rupture takes and the desire for restoration of the primary union.

To begin with, Mistral evokes the painful separation from her homeland with memories referring to her land of ambrosia and of gold, "mi tierra de ambrosía" (64)

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<sup>319</sup> My translation MV: "Una misma disposición (...) atraviesa [las] tres obras en sus diversas modulaciones" (Girona 35).

and "tierras de oro" (153), that is, by representing a paradisiacal landscape, The reference to the homeland, which is linked to the world of childhood, coincides with the accentuation of the longing for the maternal body. This occurs mainly by attracting the nearness of the mother, through her explicit presence in the text. On many occasions, mentioning the mother acts as the vehicle that brings memories.<sup>320</sup> The final verses of the poem "La mujer fuerte", meaning The strong woman, are significant; they express the absence of the mother whose face she has not found between hundred mundane women: "entre cien mundanas no he encontrado tu cara/ ¡y aún tu sombra en los surcos la sigo con mi canto!" (64). The impression of being motherless and without a homeland returns in references to orphanhood (71, 86, 113) and to exile (138).<sup>321</sup>

At the same time, the reader observes that some poems express the concern for the maternal feelings of the lyrical subject: the burden of being without children is present as well as the substitute of teaching.<sup>322</sup> Other verses convey similar feelings of longing for the lost lover, on whom maternal love is projected in the context of his burial, with references to motherly sweetness "dulcedumbre de madre", and the softness of the crib, "suavidades de cuna":

Te acostaré en la tierra soleada con una  
dulcedumbre de madre para el hijo dormido,  
y la tierra ha de hacerse suavidades de cuna  
al recibir tu cuerpo de niño dolorido. (117)

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<sup>320</sup> Situating herself on foreign grounds, the subject evokes the light of her gardens and songs of her mother in her land of gold, "la luz de mis huertos" and "la conmovida lengua que en tierras de oro mi pobre madre canta" (153).

<sup>321</sup> Orphanhood extends to universality in the verse "we are orphans, as we go alone" (my translation MV). "... somos huérfanos, que vamos solos" (71).

<sup>322</sup> For example, the poems "La mujer estéril" (65), meaning The sterile woman, "El niño solo" (66), "Futuro" (72), "Poema del hijo" (134), meaning Poem of the son, and "Serenidad" (147).

This impression of lack fits into the accumulation of images that allude to division and loss: from them emerges melancholy, seen as “the sign of a wounded primitive self, incomplete, empty” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 21).<sup>323</sup> Suggestions of such a wound are abundant: verbs like to split, ‘hendir’, to break, ‘romper’, and to nail, ‘clavar’; tools that pierce such as the hook, iron, the dagger and the nail; direct references to the wound and the sore. The recurrence of the word ‘surco’, meaning furrow, is also noted; it can be taken as a wound in the land and is obviously connected to the cultivation of wheat.<sup>324</sup> The extreme expression of the wounded appearance is found in the figure of Christ, the one with flesh peeled open, “el de las carnes en gajos abiertos” (57). The image of the open side, the prototypical wound of Christ, is transferred to other figures, like fallen trees (156) and the lyrical subject itself.<sup>325</sup>

An intense identification with Christ occurs, expressed through the frequent mention of body parts such as the chest and the arms, in Spanish ‘brazos’:

Brazos de mi Cristo,  
brazos extendidos  
sin ningún rechazo:  
¡desde que os he visto  
existe mi abrazo! (67)

The same parts of the body occupy, in the chapter "Dolor", meaning ‘Pain’, a central position in the thematization of the failed union with the beloved: the words ‘pecho’ and

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<sup>323</sup> My translation MV: “le signal d’un moi primitif blessé, incomplet, vide” (Kristeva, *Soleil noir* 21).

<sup>324</sup> The word ‘hendir’ appears on the pages 55, 58, 101, 106, 119, 156; references to the wound on the pages 55, 59, 81, 84, 99, 119, 123, 142, 155, 156, 172; references to the sore on the pages 56, 59, 100, 115, 132, 140, 155. See also Matthews’ observations (63).

The word ‘surco’ is found on the pages 55, 59, 61, 64, 81, 101, 138.

<sup>325</sup> For example, in the verses “I also bear my open side” and “I have my heart in my hand, and feel/ that my side is pouring” (My translation MV).

“Llevo abierto también mi costado” (115); “Llevo al corazón la mano, y siento/ que mi costado mana” (164).

'brazos', chest and arms, are repeated, while allusions to the kiss also include the mouth. Besides the erotic connotation of these references, they also emphasise the body parts that indicate the initial relationship with the mother. On a more basic level, I also include the repeated mention of the words 'blood', 'flesh', 'lap' and 'entrails' in this tendency to adhere to the maternal body.

It is significant that the connotation of the body parts often is ambiguous. The chest and the entrails can allude to both pain and intimacy. A persuasive image, in this sense, is the omnipresence of references to the mouth, the kiss and the lips. While at first glance they are linked to the primary interaction of suckling and the intimacy between lovers, in Mistral's poetic universe the mouth also is a wound, as can be seen in the verses that compare Christ's wounded side to opened lips: "Costado de Cristo,/ otro labio abierto (...) ¡desde que te he visto/ rasgué mis heridas!" (67). Therefore, there is an intermingling of the need to return to the initial state, connected to the mother's body, and the thematization of loss, not only through the projection in the absence of the homeland and the death of the beloved, but also from the identification with the suffering of Christ. We can interpret such an alternation as the continuous thematization of the primary frontier, the archaic rupture. In what follows, I will analyse the other samples of borderline exploration.

Beginning with the frontiers between the 'self' and the other, I mention the remarkable aspect of Mistral's self-identification: throughout her career, the Chilean poet coincides with a constructed persona, based on the significant pseudonym 'Gabriela Mistral'. In her prose, Mistral identifies strongly with the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish mystics.<sup>326</sup> In

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<sup>326</sup> A striking example is "Castilla" (1989), the story of her journey to Spain 1925. In this text, Mistral brings Teresa de Ávila to life in an apocryphal conversation with the Saint. In another text, a letter to Victoria Ocampo, she refers to "my precious Saint" and to "the wild ones we are like that". The use of

*Desolación*, biblical figures like María, Ruth, Magdalena, Verónica, Agar, and Judith appear (59, 62, 73, 80, 87, 171); they are the examples of a tendency that surges in the totality of Mistral's poetic work. As Girona states:

It is necessary to note the symbolic filiation to which the author often subscribes: that of the biblical matriarchy. (...) Read in sequence, these names operate as indications of various identities that point to the same thing. They all belong to the cultural universe of mother and daughters and suggest a dispersion of the self in a constellation of elusive identities, an heiress (...) that remembers the adhesion to the lost mother. (Girona 40)<sup>327</sup>

To complement Girona's argument, I propose that, apart from situating herself in the biblical matriarchy, the lyrical subject in *Desolación* continuously alternates three feminine aspects: the mother, the teacher and the lover.<sup>328</sup> Apart from what Girona calls the dispersion of the self, I distinguish a strong identification with another figure, that is, with Christ. "Nocturno" very eloquently evokes, through the exclamation "Our Father who art in Heaven, why have you forsaken me", a lyrical subject sold for a kiss in the "night of the Garden";<sup>329</sup> I observe, therefore, an accumulation of references to the Passion of the Christ (115-16). A similar identification occurs in "Canto del Justo",

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the possessive pronoun 'my' and the first-person plural is noted; the appropriation of the characteristic 'salvaje' that Mistral attributes to the mystics suggests an identitary confluency with them. My translation MV. "... mi preciosa Santa [Teresa] y a los otros que Ud. también ama, el San Juan que cada día me gusta más y los Luises suave-agudos. Los salvajes somos así..." (Mistral qtd. in Vidorreta 804).

<sup>327</sup> My translation MV. "Es preciso anotar la filiación simbólica a la que a menudo se inscribe la autora: la del matriarcado bíblico. (...). Leídos en cadena, estos nombres operan como indicios de diversas identidades que apuntan a lo mismo. Todos pertenecen al universo cultural de madres o hijas y sugieren una dispersión del yo en una constelación de identidades inasibles, heredera (...) que conmemora la adhesión a la madre perdida" (Girona 40).

<sup>328</sup> Although the life of the author is not the centre of this analysis, it is worth observing that Mistral cultivated the mythical image of herself as mother/teacher (Girona 21). In addition, she fictionalised the story of the fatal suicide, which served as the vehicle for the melancholy that transects her poetic work (Sánchez 22).

<sup>329</sup> My translation MV. "¡Padre Nuestro que estás en los cielos, por qué te has olvidado de mí!"; "noche del Huerto" (115-16).

where the 'self' displaces Christ's body parts for her own chest, hand, arms, and side (67-8).

Such an intertwining of identities coincides with the use of the poetic device of personification; in relation to the lyrical subject, this rhetorical figure not only implies a fading of the frontiers of the self, but also an extension of the limits of discourse. I agree with Guillon Barret, who points out the anthropomorphic image of the tree in Mistral's work (44). The tree, endowed with corporeal parts such as arms and eyes (156) and subject to human anxiety, "una angustia humana" (155), interacts with the poetic subject in conversation (157, 169) and emotion (95-96). For example, the 'self' alludes to the interaction with the thorn like embracing it as a sister in a knot of despair:

Le he abrazado como una hermana,  
cual si Agar abrazara a Job,  
en un nudo que no es ternura,  
¡porque es más desesperación! (158)

From the solitude emanating from the arboreal image, the explicit identification between the human being and the tree emerges, like in the verses that compare the soul of a virile and delicate woman to a splendid oak (95).<sup>330</sup> Besides the tree, the cross also adopts an anthropomorphic aspect, expressed through the image of the arms (56). The cross is even likened to Christ, with its extended arms that urge the lyrical subject to embrace: "brazos extendidos/ sin ningún rechazo:/ ¡desde que os he visto/

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<sup>330</sup> "Esta alma de mujer viril y delicada,/ (...) es una encina espléndida de sombra perfumada" (95). The identification with the tree is not limited to the lyrical subject, since the poem "El pensador de Rodin", meaning Rodin's thinker, unfolds the comparison between the Thinker and a distorted tree, "árbol torcido de sol en la llanura" (55). In another collection the 'self' identifies with the tree, seeing herself as an eroded and smouldering tree, "yo que me ahogo me veo/ árbol devorado y humoso" (Mistral, *Tala/Lagar* 341).



existe mi abrazo!" (67). There is, thus, a tripartite conglomerate of tree-elements with which the lyrical subject identifies: tree- cross- Christ.

Regarding the use of other poetic devices, it is appropriate to note the conventional manifestation of Mistral's poetry: sonnets, identical stanzas, often sustained by rhyme. The probing of the limits of discourse appears in a traditional way, in line with the poetic genre. I mention the frequent use of enjambment, conceived as the interruption of textual fluidity. Another form of textual rupture is the rhetorical figure of exclamation, also recurrent in Mistral's poetry.

Finally, I consider the emphasis on explicitly physical aspects of suffering inherent in another form of exploring boundaries, abjection. The poems that underline pain often refer to flesh and entrails, to corporeal liquids such as blood and tears; especially the mention of bile, in Spanish 'hiel', recalls the biblical traces of the texts (74, 83, 149). In line with this morbid disposition the preoccupation with death also arises, through delving in graves, "hurgar en las sepulturas" (72). From the death of loved ones, the lyrical subject emphasises the desire to die, to unite in the tomb with the deceased beloved. We can interpret this as an infringement of what is morally permitted, as it happens in the "Los sonetos de la muerte" (117). Therefore, the 'self' needs to involve God, to approve of her unusual longing "¡Tú, que vas a juzgarme, lo comprendes, Señor!" (118). At the same time, the tomb appears in these sonnets as a safe place, an intimate depth, "hondor recóndito" where the lovers can share their pillow, "soñar sobre la misma almohada" (117). In this sense, death seems to be welcome; or, like suggested by Girona, an embrace (55).<sup>331</sup> In other words, just like the other genotextual references in de *Desolación*, death also is an ambiguous experience; it

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<sup>331</sup> The original quotation: "En la muerte hay un abrazo" (Girona 55).

extends to both the desired union and the irremediable frontier, which is the loss of the loved one.

### **Myth critical analysis: the desire for resurrection**

From the genotextual analysis of the previous section, the dominant impression came to light of *Desolación* as a poetry collection situated in the ambience of melancholy, the continuous thematization of loss. Similarly, the genotextual analysis revealed the tendency to ambiguity, the oscillation between rupture and the desire for restoration of the initial state of union. Well then, how can we interpret the same text, titled *Desolación*, in terms of the categories of the imaginary, by connecting it to ancient myth? The myth critical analysis of Gabriela Mistral's *Desolación* will begin with situating the redundant images in the categories of the imaginary. I will focus on the chapters "Vida", "Dolor", and "Naturaleza".

As the title suggests, the work is centred around solitude and pain; I suggest that this main key promotes the emergence of some central figures, which I will analyse below. I consider the mother figure as the first omnipresent image, according to the characteristics corporeality and intimacy, and the attachment to the earth. The image of the maternal woman adopts various aspects, in line with the emotion conveyed in the poem. Represented as the woman of her youth, "la mujer (...) que era mi niñez", the mother of the 'self' carries childhood memories (64).<sup>332</sup> In other poems, the poetic subject represents herself in the quality of mother; these texts imply mainly the lack of physical motherhood, as evidenced by the title of the poem "La mujer estéril" (65). Maternal sentiments are then transferred to the professional level of teaching:

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<sup>332</sup> In the poem "Desolación", the deserted nature of Patagonia is opposed to the land of gold, "[las] tierras de oro" of childhood; the melancholy of the memories is highlighted by the reference to the mother's song (153).

Los niños cubren mis rodillas;  
 mirándoles a las mejillas  
 ahora no rompo a sollozar,  
 que en mi sueño más deleitoso  
 yo doy el pecho a un hijo hermoso  
 sin dudar... (147)<sup>333</sup>

This poem from the final part of the collection leaves the reader with the impression of satisfaction. Nevertheless, most of the verses express a strong feeling of pain through various levels of absence. The lack of a child obtains more intensity by connecting it to the memories of the deceased lover: “tener tu semblante/ era cual tenerte un hijo” (139).<sup>334</sup> Judging by the exclamations in “Poema del hijo”, Poem of the son, the loving emotion merges with the maternal desire: “A son, a son, a son! I wanted a son of you/ and me, back in the days of burning ecstasy” (134).<sup>335</sup> The caesura between the words ‘you’ and ‘me’ seems significant: having a child not only brings the lovers together, but also establishes an exclusive relationship between the lyrical subject and the child. Moreover, the ‘self’ seems to prefer the bond with the son over erotic experience as evidenced by the following fragment, in which the fire of lust did not come to her bed, but she would dream of opening her arms for the one who would be born:

En las noches, insomne de dicha y de visiones,  
 la lujuria de fuego no descendió a mi lecho.  
 Para el que nacería vestido de canciones  
 yo extendía mis brazos, yo ahuecaba mi pecho... (134)

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<sup>333</sup> In the poem the poetic subject affirms that seeing children on her knees doesn’t make her cry anymore, because in her happiest dreams she is suckling her own son.

<sup>334</sup> “... having the likes of you, would be like having your child” (my translation MV).

<sup>335</sup> My translation MV: “¡Un hijo, un hijo, un hijo! Yo quise un hijo tuyo/ y mío, allá en los días de éxtasis ardiente” (134).

However, since the son replaces the lover, he would also have the unfavourable traits of him, the traitor; finally, the 'self' is content with not having children by own experience, emphasising once again the replacement of teaching.

In conclusion, the maternal figure serves as a standard to measure the dimensions of the poetic subject's life, as occurs in "Coplas" (138) and "Futuro":

Mi madre ya tendrá diez palmos  
de ceniza sobre la sien.  
No espigará entre mis rodillas  
un niño rubio como mies. (72)<sup>336</sup>

The recurring manifestation of the maternal woman, also in the aspect of teacher, seems to indicate a strong inclination towards images of the centric category. According to this category, typical actions of the mother figure involve physical union: being attached (56), rocking (56, 65), sleeping on knees (74), holding close to the chest (66). In line with closeness, bodily and sensory aspects predominate in the interaction with the mother, such as warmth and smell (65), and pleasant sensations like tenderness and bliss (66). Based on the link between the mother and physical intimacy, the maternal body also represents security, for example in the verses that convey the image of the sleeping child (66, 74) and the reference to the intimate lap, "regazo/ recóndito" (163). Furthermore, as I established in the section of the genotextual analysis, the physical manifestation of maternity occurs in corporeal parts such as entrails, the chest, the lap, the arms, and the lips.

The centric tendency is underlined through some other aspects that also adhere to this category. The earth manifests in this context as a place of intimacy, connected to

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<sup>336</sup> "My mother already has ten palms/ of ashes on her temple,/ between my knees will not sprout/ a child as blond as wheat" (my translation MV).

the human body when it is as sweet as a human lip, “la tierra es dulce cual humano labio” (172). The images of intimacy, including references to the dwelling, also involve recipients, conceived as intimate spaces that are subject to gulliverisation. Mythical images such as the cup, the cradle, and the tomb extend through minimal versions of the intimate space. In “Los sonetos de la muerte” (117-18) this implication of maternity-intimacy expands.<sup>337</sup> Being close to the icy niche, “nicho helado”, where they placed the beloved, the lyrical subject transfers the maternal tendency, infant care, to the body of the deceased (117). In the tomb environment, the words ‘niche’ and ‘cradle’ allude to spatial intimacy (117). Other examples of such a recipient are the vase and the amphora, which serve in the poem “El vaso” as a burial place for the ashes of the beloved. From the verses that situate the ashes close to the eyes and the urn close to the cheeks, the recipient connects to physical closeness (131).<sup>338</sup>

Now, it is clear that the allusions to intimate space are limited to a resting place in death, created for the reunion with the deceased beloved. The image of the earth appears once again, the ultimate receptor of the deceased human body. The predominance of images of telluric nature extends to maternity: the poetic subject’s mother is a woman of the earth. Therefore, the poem “La mujer fuerte” refers to the woman who was her childhood, evoking the image of the “segadora”, the female

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<sup>337</sup> The triad of poems expresses the grief over the suicide of the loved one, through the exploration of a possible reunion in death. Indeed, it is an impossible union since the Christian laws do not permit a reencounter in eternity because he took his own life. Despite the passionate requests and interrogations of God, the ‘self’ has to accept that a reunion cannot be achieved. The text of “Interrogaciones” asks God explicitly how suicides are resting, “¿Cómo quedan, Señor, durmiendo los suicidas?” (119). In another poem titled “El ruego”, The request, the lyrical subject asks for the clemency of God towards the one who left without waiting for God’s sign “se fue aquella tarde sin esperar tu signo” (132). Thus, the situation entails the need to imagine a reencounter with the beloved in the realm of the earth. The poem “Volverlo a ver”, Seeing him again, elaborates the same desire to reunite with the deceased lover (128).

<sup>338</sup> The original quotation: “un vaso (...)/ que guarde tus cenizas cerca de mis miradas;/ y la pared del vaso te será mi mejilla” (131).

mower (64). This earthly quality is highlighted through the opposition to mundane women; mundanity is equated to a laxness not found in "La mujer fuerte" (64, 65). The bond between maternity and the telluric implies the omnipresence of allusions to fertility; there are numerous references to the maternal through images that convey the culture of wheat and the actions of mowing and sprouting (64, 149). In this context emerges the metaphor of the wheat field in connection with conception, like in the verses "no sembré por mi troje" and "Apacenté los hijos ajenos, colmé el troje/ con los trigos divinos" (137).<sup>339</sup> References to body parts that are associated with motherhood, like the breast and the lap, are compared with tilling the land; an example of such a connection is the fragment that equates a pregnant woman's breast with a granary: "una mendiga grávida, cuyo seno florece/ como la parva de enero" (65). In "Serenidad", harmony arises through images that unite maternal aspects with fertile elements such as fruit, the new-born lamb, orchards and the honeycomb:

De sol a sol voy por las rutas,  
y en el regazo olor a frutas  
se me acomoda el recental:  
¡tanto trascienden mis abiertas  
entrañas a grutas, y a huertas,  
y a cuenco tibio de panal! (147).

Since the maternal figure is associated with fertility and creation, poetic creation also surges in the environment of the maternal, as another phenomenon of fertility. The poem is represented as a child that grows in the entrails: "Tengo ha veinte años en la carne hundido/ (...) un verso enorme"; the verses are sustained, like a child, with bodily fluids: "Como un hijo, con cuajo de mi sangre" (69). The poem "Elogio de la canción"

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<sup>339</sup> "I did not sow for my granary"; "I fed the children of others, filled the granary/ with divine wheats" (137) (my translation MV).

connects poetic creativity to conception, in the verses “entre las entrañas/ se hace la canción” and “El cantor es madre/ de la creación” (88, 90). Thus, the maternal essence is drawn into the circles of poets, of the poetic subject’s own creative activity.<sup>340</sup>

The text transfers, therefore, the image of the mother, represented through allusions to corporeality and intimacy, to the realm of the Great Mother, female figure and goddess of fertility. Situated in the rhythmic category, this telluric femininity implies the vegetal alternation of life and death. Durand proposes: “In the burial of grain, there is always an idle period”; from this phase surges “the renewal of spring” (*The Anthropological Structures* 286).<sup>341</sup> In line with this alternation, the so-called ‘agro-lunar drama’, rhythmic figures that represent a return to life are found in the same category, according to the similar scheme of death followed by resurrection.

I include in this tendency the examples, in Mistral’s text, of the repeated efforts to promote the union after death with the beloved, to evoke his resurrection in a way that evades the restrictions of Christianity. Within the framework of such an inclination, the second central figure, that of the Son, makes its appearance.<sup>342</sup> In contrast to the connotation of the child, dependent on physical maternity, the Son is transfigured towards the archetype that traditionally “retains masculine valency next to the femininity of the celestial mother” (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 289).<sup>343</sup> It occurs in mythical texts as the typical mediator, the Saviour characterised by the Passion and resurrection (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 289-91). Evidently,

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<sup>340</sup> The poem “A la Virgen de la colina” confirms a similar relationship between the poet and their poems: the creation of poetry occurs under the gaze of the Virgen Mary, to whom the lyrical subject refers as a mother, “Madre mía” (74). The Virgen Mary is the figure who provides the light of her vision and the shade of her mantle: she gives inspiration and security to a solitary ‘self’.

<sup>341</sup> This translation is a less strong representation of the alternation vegetation, referring to an ‘idle period’, where originally the words ‘temps mort’ appear: “Il y a même toujours, dans l’ensevelissement du grain, un temps mort”; “renouveau printanier” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 340).

<sup>342</sup> Matthews proposes: “In mythic sense, and within Mistral’s own cosmos, the child was associated with innocence and with eternity” (61).

<sup>343</sup> “conserve la valence masculine à côté de la féminité de la mère céleste” (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 344).

we recognise in such an image the Judeo-Christian figures of the Messiah and of Christ.

According to Mistral's Christian roots, Christ frequently manifests in the poetic landscape of *Desolación*. However, the representation of Christ acts primarily as an emphasis on suffering (57, 61, 67, 115, 156). The biblical references, like the title of the poem "Gotas de hiel" (83), Drops of bile, and the allusions to the Via Crucis and the Passion of the Christ, reinforce the sensation of agony.<sup>344</sup> At the same time, the poetic subject invokes Christ as an intermediary, to save misguided believers (58), to end the suffering of the 'self' (103) and to mediate for the beloved's salvation (132). In the "Poema del hijo", the images of the desired son and those of Christ are intertwined: the description of the son depicts the portrait of the crucified Christ, the forehead and the lips of stupor and longing, as can be appreciated in the following verses: "¡Un hijo con los ojos del Cristo engrandecidos,/ la frente de estupor y los labios de anhelo!" (134). The son not only adopts the features of Christ, but also acts as an intermediary between the 'self' and the deceased beloved.

In the same stanza, the son-Christ is described as a shaken tree, extending his buds to the sky, "¡un hijo! como el árbol conmovido/ de primavera alarga sus yemas hacia el cielo" (134). In this fragment emerges the third key image in *Desolación*, that of the tree. Endowed with considerable versatility, the tree image can manifest in various contexts.<sup>345</sup> On the one hand, in the realm of Christianity, the tree adopts the aspect of the cross, also represented through the mention of its material, wood. In consistency with the predominance of the Christ figure, the cross also occurs frequently in the poems in *Desolación*, in its entire form, or from material or partial references (56, 57,

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<sup>344</sup> There are more allusions to the suffering of Christ: the poem "Mis libros" refers to the writers who did their Via-Dolorosa like Christ (81), the poem "Nocturno" evokes scenes of the Last Supper and the garden of Gethsemane (115), "Tres árboles" conveys the three crosses of Golgotha (156).

<sup>345</sup> See section 5.1.1, about the tree motif in literary tradition.



61, 69, 133, 156). The anthropomorphism of the cross is emphasised, the human form that extends to the manifestation of the tree itself. Notably, the poem “Tres árboles” evokes a scene similar to that of Mount Calvary: the ‘self’ encounters three forgotten trees, with blood on their split timber and an open side (156).<sup>346</sup> The cross, the tree, and Christ merge in an action of renewal, by providing the poetic subject with substances that will be like fire, “Me serán como de fuego” (156). These verses reveal the relationship between the archetype of the fire and resurrection, the renovating ability of wood.

On the other hand, according to the same human aspect, but situated in nature, the tree acquires a strong sense of abandonment and grief, like in the verses in which the arms of a tree are crunching in the autumn wind, “Al viento otoñal, de un árbol/ crujieron los secos brazos” (121). The first poem already conveys this solitude with the image of a tree in the plain, twisted by the sun, “árbol torcido/ de sol en la llanura” (55). Although the allusions to the tree also serve to outline the landscape (101, 107, 123, 138, 139, 173), the poems about desolation, like “La espina”, the hawthorn, and “Pinares”, pine forests, express strong entwining of the human and the arboreal figure (157, 168). I observe similar identification in the poem “Árbol muerto”: against a backdrop of nature, linked to the landscape of the homeland, the solitary tree, dry, broken, and bitten by sores, depicts the separation from loved ones.

En el medio del llano  
 un árbol seco su blasfemia alarga;  
 un árbol blanco, roto  
 y mordido de llagas,  
 en el que el viento, vuelto  
 mi desesperación, aúlla y pasa. (155)

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<sup>346</sup> The original quotations: “sangre viva en los hendidos leños”; “su costado abierto” (156).

The verses evoke a longing for the reunion, even in death, that already appears in the first poem, "El pensador de Rodin" (55). However, it is a death that awaits resurrection, promoted by the predominance of the images of the rhythmic category: Christ, the cross, and the tree. The poem referring to having lost life the same way an orchard does, "después de tener perdida/ lo mismo que un pomar la vida", associates human mortality with the death of nature (147). When the poems exude tranquillity, like "Serenidad" (147) and "Palabras serenas" (149), they announce the return to life. This resurrection, surging like a new-born from living waters, is due to the Passion of Christ, represented through the allusion to his wounded side:

Creo en mi corazón, que cuando canta  
hunde en el Dios profundo el flanco herido;  
para subir de la piscina viva  
como recién nacido. (78)

The above considerations imply that Gabriela Mistral expands in *Desolación* the poetic universe of a self submerged in complete abandon, from the homeland and loved ones. The image is conveyed of the solitary tree in the deserted plain. Another manifestation of the natural tree coincides with the Edenic state of the homeland. Moreover, the references to the suffering of the crucified Christ accentuate the sense of abandonment. In seeking recovery from desolation, the poetic subject searches for the union with the mother-figure, represented through images of corporeality and intimacy, from the centric category.

However, since Mistral's maternity inclines towards the symbolism of vegetal fertility, the figure of the Great Mother predominates, the archetype inherent in the rhythmic category. The search for reunion extends towards a strong complicity with death, conceived as the beginning of rebirth. In line with the tendency to resurrection,

the references recur to the Christ figure, sustained by the anthropomorphism of the images of the cross and the tree. I consider the triad Christ-cross-tree as the second axis of the rhythmic character of Mistral's imaginary. Therefore, the symbolic analysis involves the following mythemes, based on the predominance of the rhythmic category:

- thematization of abandonment, entailing the agony of complete decline
- awaiting of resurgence, renewal
- reunion in death
- implication of an intermediary that promotes the overcoming of temporal mortality

I distinguish in such a constellation the intertwining of myths that emphasise temporality of death. On the one hand, I recognise Messianic myth, conceived as the Christian form of awaiting new life; it adheres to the manifestation of the myth of Edenic loss. On the other hand, emerges the myth of the Great Mother, which represents the regular alternation of vegetation. Given the interaction between mother and daughter, I identify the relationship with the mythical figures Demeter and Persephone. The aspects of the tree motif appear according to two main facets. First, the tree that represents solitude and suffering: the natural tree, anthropomorphising into the self's desertedness; the tree that represents the Edenic land of childhood; the cross, symbol of the suffering of the poetic subject. Second, the tree that stands for temporal renewal: the natural tree referring to vegetal resurgence; the cross, symbol of Christ's resurrection. I will complete and revisit in section 5.3.2 the characterisation of the tree motif in *Desolación*, to then establish the repetitions and variations in the broader framework of myth textual interpretation.

### 5.2.3 "Árbol adentro" by Octavio Paz

In contrast to the literary debut of the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, *Desolación*, we find in the last poetry collection of Octavio Paz, *Árbol adentro*, the sophisticated text of a mature author. I agree with Meidl, who states: "Reconciliation with nature through woman represents a mystical participation in 'the other', and in a psycho-emotional sense it is an allegory of the recovery of one's own centre" (244).<sup>347</sup> Apart from this suggestion about the individuation process that can be appreciated in the text, I also assume a relationship at anthropological level, with archaic myth. I launch the hypothesis that the complete analysis of the symbolic character of the text, from the genotext and myth criticism, will add depth to the interpretation of the reconciliatory relationship. I will concentrate the genotextual analysis on "Árbol adentro", the last chapter of the homonymous collection. It is a coherent compilation, consisting of ten intensely lyrical poems that thematize the interaction between love and the creative process. Consistent with its title, it gives centre stage to the arboreal image, initially represented through the allegory of the tree. The representation of the mystical union through the image of the tree will be the central axis of the analysis.

#### Genotextual analysis

I will approach the text according to the groups of genotextual traces: the search for union and thematization of the primary rupture; then follows the exploration of boundaries. I will address the question: what traces of the genotext can the reader identify in "Árbol adentro"? In line with the recurrence of textual elements, I will first denominate the prevailing image in the collection of ten poems: that of the union with

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<sup>347</sup> My translation MV: "La reconciliación con la naturaleza a través de la mujer representa una participación mística en 'lo otro', en un sentido psíquico-emocional es una alegoría de la recuperación del propio centro" (Meidl 244)

the beloved woman. As is clear from the fragment that mentions the union through blood and heartbeat, “la sangre nos junta: somos un río de latidos”, the unification rests on a physical foundation (141). However, this corporeality also refers to a phase prior to individuation:

Los cuerpos anudados  
 son *el libro del alma*:  
 con los ojos cerrados,  
 con mi tacto y mi lengua,  
 delecto en tu cuerpo  
 la escritura del mundo.  
 Un saber ya sin nombres:  
 el sabor de esta tierra. (153-54)<sup>348</sup>

The union of bodies, “cuerpos anudados”, restores the time when, the eyes still closed, “los ojos cerrados”, touch and oral contact, “mi tacto y mi lengua”, predominated (153-54). This is the period when signification did not exist, which is indicated with the words “saber sin nombres”; sensorial experience prevailed, “el sabor de esta tierra” (154). In the same poem, other fragments refer to a phase without place nor time that I interpret as the inarticulate state of confluence with the mother body. For example, the verses that refer to an undefined magnetic centre, “Estamos en el centro/ imantado de ¿dónde?”, and to a moment without time between the end and the beginning, “Entre el fin y el comienzo/ un instante sin tiempo” (153,154). That is, the union with the woman represents, besides the interest of the loving relationship, also a return to the mother’s body.<sup>349</sup> Especially corporeal elements stand out, such as blood and heartbeat, referring to prenatal maternal closeness.

<sup>348</sup> The cursive appears in Paz’s text.

<sup>349</sup> The corporeal union that ends in the disappearance of the ‘self’ is represented through the words ‘dissipated presence’, “presencia disipada” in the poem “Regreso”. The full fragment reads: “Fluyen por

At the same time, the beloved woman acts as the intermediary between the poetic subject and his inclination to cosmic unification. The union appears in the verses of the poem "Carta de creencia", Credential, which allude to love as the reconciliation with the Great Everything, "reconciliación con el Gran todo" (172). This loving connection has its roots in the earth, because the woman's gaze contains the seed that generates creation (141, 174); in addition, she is like a fertile place, a backwater- water in the shade, "Un remanso –agua en sombra" (159) and a spring (159, 148). The beloved remains in the vicinity of the tree, lying at the foot of the eucalyptus, "tendida al pie del eucalipto", and at the foot of the palm tree, "a los pies de la palma" (148, 159). The frequent representation of the tree symbolises the union with space and provokes creation, the production of words thematized in the poem "Árbol adentro".<sup>350</sup>

Intense entanglement occurs between the lyrical subject and his beloved: depicting them like the sun and a comet, a complex interaction takes place that terminates in total dissipation:

...los astros giraban y cantaban,  
al volar dibujaban figuras,  
se unían, separaban, unían,  
eran dos y eran uno y eran ninguno... (147)

The explicit reference to the alternation of union and separation is noted. In "Canción desentonada", Song off-key, a similar alternation is found: the 'self' needs to see the beloved to see himself, or *vice versa*; "No te encuentro -no me veo", and "No me encuentro -no te veo" (143-44).<sup>351</sup> At first glance, the visual level seems indispensable

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las llanuras de la noche/ nuestros cuerpos: son tiempo que se acaba,/ presencia disipada en un abrazo" (150)

<sup>350</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>351</sup> In "Regreso" the same occurs, when the reciprocate gaze creates presence: "Te mirabas mirada por mis ojos/ y desde mi mirada te mirabas" (150).



The verses oppose the unscarred unity, in Kristeva's terms the *chora*, to loss. Being two implies a continuous search to return to oneself, "ser uno mismo"; it involves the duration of the opposition between embrace and fight, "abrazo y pelea"; and not even love does leads to a definite solution, since being two is always two, "es dos, siempre dos" (170).<sup>352</sup>

The duality of unity and rupture is also found, in a more subtle way, through the interruption of the union with the beloved. Repeatedly, she is unavailable, being intimate and remote, "entrañable y remota", when she has closed her eyes because she is asleep (141, 139-40).<sup>353</sup> In another fragment, the lyrical subject needs to knock on the door of her eyelids, "la puerta de tus párpados", to get access to the beloved's eyes (150). He always needs her to make the frontier dissipate, whether is it a street, "cruzas la calle y entras en mi frente", or the eyelids of time, "tus dedos de aire abren los párpados del tiempo" (156).

Paz's poetry in "Árbol adentro", therefore, manifests the continuous return to the woman, not only out of romantic interest, but also as the element that propels the words, and thus the poetry itself. As I established in the previous sections, sometimes the boundaries between the poetic subject and the beloved disappear completely. In the poem "Árbol adentro", the gazes ignite, "encienden", the tree in the poetic subject's forehead, thus giving rise to the word (137). The final poem repeats this interaction,

Tu mirada es sembradora.  
Plantó un árbol.  
Yo hablo  
porque tú meces los follajes. (174)

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<sup>352</sup> The poem "La guerra de la driada o Vuelve a ser eucalipto" features a strong example of the fight between lovers (145).

<sup>353</sup> Besides having no access to the gaze, in those moments the tactile sense also lacks, when she vanishes at the touch of his hands: "te tocan mis manos y te desvaneces" (144).



In another chapter of *Árbol adentro*, tree and woman converge: the lyrical subject lies down in the shade of a tree of heartbeats “a la sombra de un árbol de latidos” and affirms explicitly: the tree is a woman, “El árbol es mujer” (23). From the union with her, the tripartite interaction lyrical subject-woman-tree densifies, when they are, entwined, a tree of heartbeats, “somos, enlazados, un árbol de latidos” (152). The intertwinement of three factors generates creation and forms the place where images, ideas, and words emerge, “imágenes, ideas, palabras” (152).

The continuous exploration of boundaries also takes place at the level of poetic language. Octavio Paz employs a diversity of poetic devices that imply testing the limits of discourse. First, “the Mexican poet practises the presentation and overcoming of oppositions of a great linguistic and medial variety”; the preferred rhetorical figures are paradox, oxymoron, and synaesthesia (Meidl 20, 21).<sup>354</sup> A strong sample is the poem “Canción desentonada”, in which each of the five stanzas begins with verses that oppose the short day to the long hour, “El día es corto,/ larga la hora” (143-44); the oppositions continue in fragments that combine running with not moving, and saying with not saying, “sin moverme recorro los pasillos” (143) and “dice sin decirnos” (144).<sup>355</sup> The suspension of opposition occurs mainly in the fragments that thematize time. An undefined situation unfolds when the day has not completely ended, and the night still has not begun: “el día no acaba de irse,/ la noche no llega todavía” (155); “Entre la noche y el día/ hay un territorio indeciso./ No es luz ni sombra:/ es tiempo” (162).<sup>356</sup> I consider such an undetermined realm as another aspect of the poetical

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<sup>354</sup> My translation MV: “el poeta mexicano practica la presentación y superación de oposiciones de gran variedad lingüística y medial”; “la paradoja, el oxímoron y la sinestesia” (Meidl 20, 21).

<sup>355</sup> Some examples of opposition and paradox: large against small: “Vasta como la noche,/ cabías en la cuenca de mi mano” (149); earth against sky: “reino de las raíces,/ república de las alas” (153); being asleep and awake at the same time: “dormida con los cinco sentidos despiertos” (155).

Synaesthesia is found in the fragments that entwine touch and vision, “casi lo palpaban mis miradas” (139), and touch and hearing “oída con las yemas de mis dedos” (149).

<sup>356</sup> “Between night and day/ there is an undecided territory./ It is neither light nor darkness:/ it is time” (my translation MV).

exploration of the semantic limits of discourse. Lastly, I mention some of Paz's poetic preferences that also imply the testing of limits, whether through the extension of the semantic value or by distorting the syntactic construction. First, I observe the frequent use of chiasmus, conceived as syntactical parallelism that appears in a crossed manner. That is, the rhetorical figure vacillates between union and rupture; it is found in the fragments "con los ojos te palpo,/ te miro con las manos" (141) and "sus raíces son venas,/ nervios sus ramas" (137).<sup>357</sup>

Second, there is paronomasia, the word play that rests on the partial coincidence of words that appear in the same phrase. It is a similar vacillation between correspondence and distinction, as can be seen in the fragment "Un saber ya sin nombres:/ el sabor de esta tierra" (154); that similarity between the words 'saber' and 'sabor', meaning knowing and taste, suggesting a semantic relationship, invites the reader to realise the difference between them. Finally, as we could see in the quotes from the previous pages, the syntactical rupture of the indented line frequently appears; such interruption of the phrase visually and acoustically accentuates the textual gap.<sup>358</sup>

### **Myth critical analysis: confluence of myths**

The myth critical procedure focuses on recurring images. To guide the analysis, I will follow the thread that manifests in the first poem "Árbol adentro", of which the full text is included in Appendix 3.<sup>359</sup> I consider the analogy between the human being and the

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<sup>357</sup> "with the eyes I touch you/ I see you with the hands"; "its roots are veins/ nerves its branches" (my translation MV).

<sup>358</sup> See the fragments on the preceding pages.

<sup>359</sup> Paz revisits the images he had used in the poem "Cuarteto", like the anthropomorphism of the tree, the foliage, the connection between fruit and knowledge, and the spatial indication 'under the tree'. They appear in the following fragment: "Para esperar la noche me he tendido/ a la sombra de un árbol de latidos.// El árbol es mujer y en su follaje/ oigo rodar el mar bajo la tarde.// Como sus frutos con sabor de tiempo,/ frutos de olvido y de conocimiento.// Bajo el árbol se miran y se palpan/ imágenes, ideas y palabras" (23).

tree as the central image of the poem.<sup>360</sup> In the first place, the concordance expresses itself at the corporal level, since parts of the tree resemble the veins and the nerves of the human body (vs. 3, 4). In the second place, the tree connects to the brain, situated in the forehead where thoughts unfold, according to the movement of the foliage (vs. 5).<sup>361</sup> That is, the link between the human and the tree, expressed through the anthropomorphism of the tree, extends to two poles: the body and the brain. Another aspect of the tree also refers to the human being: both are subject to the effects of time, which is articulated in the poem through elements of nature such as growing (vs. 1, 2) and the production of fruits (vs. 7), and the terms 'night' and 'dawn', which refer to the cyclical passage of time (vs. 9). While the body begins in darkness, the gaze of the beloved evokes the light by igniting the tree (vs. 6), so it dawns in the night of the body, "Amanece/ en la noche del cuerpo" (vs. 10). This same illuminating act promotes the words of the lyrical subject, an action situated at cerebral level, since there, inside the forehead, the tree speaks, "Allá adentro, en mi frente,/ el árbol habla" (vs. 11-12). It is worth noting that the interaction between the 'self' and the beloved occurs in a place of intimacy, as suggested by the words 'in', "dentro" (vs. 2), and 'inward', "adentro" (vs. 11). Well then, I will use the images of this poem as a starting point for the following analysis of the chapter "Árbol adentro" in its entirety. I will conduct the myth critical analysis according to the inherent categorisation: the symbols of the centric category that include the intimacy of the union with the woman and the corporeal elements; the luminous images of the polemic category that entail light, the

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<sup>360</sup> There was already a similar image in the 1957 poem "Piedra de sol", meaning Sun Stone, which referred to a mental tree that matures inwards, growing within and expelling a hallucinating foliage. The fragment reads: "... madura hacia dentro, echa raíces,/ crece dentro de mí (...)/ me expulsa su follaje delirante" (Paz, *Piedra de sol* 62-63).

<sup>361</sup> The image of foliage also appears in the poems "Cuarteto" (23), "La vista, el tacto" (114), "Un viento llamado Bob Rauschenberg" (116), and "La casa de la mirada" (127). In the fragment that refers to the underwater foliage of language, "los follajes submarinos del lenguaje", it is linked to the use of words. (118).

gaze, and the word; the images of the rhythmic category that refer to the temporal cycle.

The centric category includes images of an intimate nature such as benevolent night, the dwelling and the maternal body; its cardinal dynamic involves including and unifying. In the poems of the chapter "Árbol adentro", the references to the beloved exhibit an intertwining of centric images, where night and woman are connected, and night and body. Examples of these combinations are found in the poem "Regreso", meaning return, where the poetic 'you' is referred to as vast as the night, "Vasta como la noche" (149). This is an intimate night that promotes the union of lovers, as in the verses in which the united bodies are portrayed as dark boats, tied up in the shadow, "Juntos, barcas obscuras/ a la sombra amarradas,/ nuestros cuerpos" (149). Another fragment alludes to bodies that flow through the plains of the night, "Fluyen por las llanuras de la noche/ nuestros cuerpos" (150). In other poems, the link between the nocturnal and the corporeal also emerges, in the recurrent expression 'the night of the bodies', "[la] noche de los cuerpos" (137, 161, 169).

The union between the poetic subject and the beloved takes place through the corporeal; for example, in verses like "La sangre nos junta", the blood joins us, and "Los cuerpos anudados", the tied bodies (141, 153). That is, verbs that allude to union, such as tie, join, and knot, run parallel to references to the body. Other repetitive images emphasising such a combination are 'heartbeat' and 'couple', appearing often in the same fragment as arboreal references like 'column' or 'pillar'. The poem "Pilares", meaning Pillars, which draws a line of concordance between Mexico and the East, gives presence to the poet's home country, where couples emerge as immobile, living columns, and pillars of heartbeats:

... brotan columnas vivas  
 e inmóviles: parejas.  
 Enlazadas y quietas,  
 entretejen murmullos:  
 pilares de latidos. (151-52)

Similarly, in another hemisphere, "En el otro hemisferio", in a nocturnal ambience that unites centric elements such as femininity, abundance and water, the linked couple is a breathing tree, "ya somos, enlazados,/ un árbol que respira" (152). In this way, the anthropomorphic nature of the tree and the arboreal image of the human being allude to the union of man and woman.<sup>362</sup>

The couple formed by the lyrical subject and the poetic 'you' operates as the starting point for the poems of the chapter "Árbol adentro". As emphasised in the poem with the same title, the interaction between the two relies, apart from the corporeal function of touch, on sight. A similar interaction occurs in the following fragment, where both lyrical subject and the 'you' are lost in each other's eyes, causing the disappearance of names and bodies:

Yo me pierdo en tus ojos  
 y al perderme te miro  
 en mis ojos perdida.  
 Se quemaron los nombres,  
 nuestros cuerpos se han ido.  
 Estamos en el centro  
 imantado de ¿dónde? (153)

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<sup>362</sup> Paz returns to the images of the prose poem "1930: Vistas fijas", which refers to tied arms and couples that are forests of feverish columns: "las parejas (...), los cuatro brazos anudados, árboles incandescentes sobre los que reposa la noche,/ las parejas, bosques de febriles columnas" (60).

That is, in the gaze, identities become blurred, as in a mystical confluence. Sometimes the 'self' cannot reach the beloved, when he cannot see her or when she sleeps: "no te encuentro, no te veo" (143-44). The word 'eyelids' is emphasised, used repetitively in the sense of a door, an obstacle to finding her; this occurs in the verses where the lyrical subject knocks with an impalpable fist of the door of her eyelids, "con puño impalpable golpeaba/ la puerta de tus párpados" (150); the same goes for the verses that depict an impalpable village sleeping under her eyelids, "duerme bajo tus párpados/ un impalpable pueblo" (161). Apparently, the gaze forms for the 'self' the way to make contact with the beloved.

Apart from meeting the lyrical subject, the beloved's gaze has a different charge that parallels this achievement of amorous union. The eye, along with light and the word, is situated between the images of luminous aspect, in the polemic category. They oppose the images with aspect of darkness, such as night and shadow in the threatening sense. They underline the rational element, the capacities to argue and categorise, which are linked to the brain. In "Árbol adentro" the brain emerges through the metaphor of the forehead. On the one hand, the beloved is represented from beneficent images of light, such as the sun and the stars (147) or the double bird of brilliance, "el doble pájaro de lumbre" (148). On the other hand, there are many terms in the text that refer to the use of the word, such as 'language' and 'syllable', and to reasoning, as in 'premise' and 'consequent'. Notably, the latter are found in a poem that represents a conflict between the 'self' and the poetic 'you'; in this context, she dismantled his premises and shattered his consequents, "desmantelaba mis premisas,/ hacía añicos mis consiguientes" (146). Apparently, a confrontation unfolds between the rationalism of the lyrical subject and the poetic 'you', provided with all

kinds of mythical accessories, like four horses of foam and an eagle, “cuatro caballos de espuma y un águila” (146).

At the end of the poem, the beloved incites the ‘self’ to return from the fight, urging him to become a eucalyptus again, "*Vuelve a ser eucalipto*", which means the return to the words that were leaves, "las palabras que eran hojas" (148). It is a resumption of the arboreal images of the first poem that imply the inspiring union, the source of poetic creation. In the part "Coda" of the last poem, Paz revisits the tree motif, depicting how the sowing gaze of the beloved planted a tree that generates words by swaying the foliage:

Tu mirada es sembradora.  
Plantó un árbol.  
Yo hablo  
porque tú meces los follajes. (174)

In these verses, the woman that already appears in the first poem, is represented once more through terms of the rhythmic category: to sow, to plant and to sway. She brings with her the seed of the sun, “la semilla del sol”, that equates the forgotten syllable of time, “la sílaba olvidada del tiempo” (141, 142). Indeed, she is depicted with terms that suggest a rhythmic action, with a body like a land of dunes, "país de dunas" (149). Another poem, with the rhythmic title “Noche, día, noche”, mentions the valleys and hills of her body, "los valles y montes/ de tu cuerpo" (158). That is, apart from the centric appearance of intimate corporeality, the beloved woman adopts the rhythmic aspect of the goddess of fertility.

Other indications of the connection with the rhythmic category are conveyed by a strong implication in the circularity of time: the poem “Primero de enero”, meaning First of January, alludes to the possibility of starting anew, when the year returns and

time puts things in the same order as yesterday, "en un idéntico orden de ayer" (139). The same goes for the poem "Antes del comienzo", Before the beginning, which thematizes the undecided moment when another day begins, "Otro día comienza" (141). Verbs that allude to recommencement, such as 're bloom' and 'return' attract the attention (144,145); the poem "Regreso" makes such a dynamic explicit, referring to bathing in a river of heartbeats and returning to the perpetual recommencement, "nos bañamos en ríos de latidos,/ volvemos al perpetuo recomienzo" (150). Evidently, the union with the beloved invokes this renovating movement, since below her eyelids live the successive faces of a life that is death and a death that is life, "los rostros sucesivos/ de la vida que es muerte,/ de la muerte que es vida" (161). Various verses connect love with temporal renewal, like in the fragments that refer to: the axis of the rotation of generations, "Eje/ de la rotación de las generaciones"; the transgression of the natural fatality, "Transgresión/ de la fatalidad natural"; love which is vivacity, to die and to relive and to re-die, "Amar/ es morir y revivir y remorir:/ es la vivacidad"; love as reconciliation with the Great Everything, as returning to the beginning day, to today, "Amor:/ reconciliación con el Gran Todo/ (...) Volver al día del comienzo./ Al día de hoy" (169, 171, 172).

In Paz's poetic universe, love and the word act as the driving force that annuls primary rootlessness, since the couple that is expelled from Edenic paradise is condemned to invent one:

La pareja  
es pareja porque no tiene Edén.  
Somos expulsados del Jardín,  
estamos condenados a inventarlo... (173)



The union of man and woman, two opposite elements, is the continuous tendency to restore this initial separation, whether at erotic level through bodily unity, or through unification at cerebral level, the creation of the word. At the same time, the frequent unavailability of the woman, necessary intermediary, entails the temporal suspension of the return to the paradisiacal state. I agree with Meidl, who suggests a relationship between the use of the indented line and the effect of temporal suspension (Meidl 20). I propose that the frequent use of the paradox, conceived as a semantic hybrid that unites two opposites, pertains to the same scheme of undecided connection. Instead of causing “the impression that oppositions are suspended” (Meidl 21),<sup>363</sup> I suggest that the repetitive use of paradox alludes to an unstable union.

In the chapter “Árbol adentro”, Octavio Paz evokes a world where the poetic ‘self’ needs the beloved woman to restore the expulsion from paradise. Images of the centric category abound, referring to physical love and uniting the feminine with the earth and with benevolent night. However, she also connects with light, while fostering the ability to use the word and reasoning, elements of the polemic category. In line with this category, the tree adopts sometimes the aspect of column or the pillar; this refers to the verticality that pertains to images of elevation. Therefore, the tree displays a certain ambiguity, connecting to union, both corporeal and cerebral. In the same way, the woman is an ambiguous figure that adheres to the body and to the brain at the same time. In addition, she manifests with rhythmic value, since she appears with characteristics of fertility and creation; in this context, the significant term is the word ‘seed’, *semilla*, which alludes both to nature and to the germ of artistic creation.

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<sup>363</sup> My translation MV.: “la impresión que se suspenden las oposiciones” (Meidl 21).

Thus, the symbolic analysis brings forward the following mythemes, based on the centric, polemic and rhythmic categories:

- experience of separation from the Edenic state
- bodily unification with the beloved woman
  
- unification with the universe at cerebral level, through the word
- temporal restoration of the paradisiacal situation, suspension of final reconciliation

From the mythemes, the manifestation of Edenic myth emerges; at the same time, the effect of suspended reconciliation evokes the messianic myth. In addition, according to the occurrence of the woman who fosters the seed of fertility and creation, I establish in the poetic 'you' the archetype of the Great Mother, the mythical figure that unites vegetal and maternal fertility. Since the central female figure adheres to elements of luminosity, the myth of the dual goddess of fertility, Selene, also emerges. The tree motif connects with the role of the female figure, since it is the metaphor of her dual function: tied to the earth, while also reaching for the sky. Therefore, the anthropomorphism of the tree goes in parallel with the aspects of body and brain that are the thread of this analysis. Furthermore, the tree of nature acts as a spatial indication, the place where the physical union with the woman and the spiritual unification with the cosmos occur. The characterisation of the tree motif in "Árbol adentro" will return in section 5.3.2, to integrate it in the broader framework of myth textual interpretation.

### **5.3 Integration: myth textual interpretation**

The third phase of the analysis, the myth textual phase, will revisit the relations between texts, broadening the view towards the symbolic value of the motif. I will respond to the central question: what form does the tree motif take in the pre- and intertexts? I begin outlining the starting point; that is, I will integrate the symbolic value into the characterisation of the motif in the texts of Teresa de Ávila (5.3.1). Then, the pre- and intertexts will be compared to each other, returning to the results of the intertextual interpretation of chapter 5.1 and adding the symbolic manifestations of the motif (5.3.2). Thus, I will insert the symbolic value into the intertextual axis, to give more depth to the analysis of the variations of the motif (5.3.3).

#### **5.3.1 The tree motif in the pretext**

To define the starting point of the comparative sections, I depart from Teresa de Ávila's texts, the selection of the poems and of the reflections on the Canticles. I will address the question: what form does the tree motif take in the writing of the self of the pretexts, the lyrical texts of Teresa de Ávila? The intertextual analysis revealed that in the Christian texts of the sister a nuptial mysticism is found, in which the tree refers to the place where the connection with the divine entity occurs. In addition, the arboreal image of the cross is the metaphor for the unification referred to by mysticism. In Teresa de Ávila's Christian understanding, divine love culminates in the suffering of Christ, represented by the cross. Besides the link with the Passion of Christ, the cross also connects with the limitations and obstacles personally experienced by the Carmelite in her reforming trajectory. I will extend next the basic characterisation of Teresa de Ávila's texts, according to the results of the genotextual and myth critical analyses.

I begin with the genotextual level, the traces of the *chora* in the texts. The lyrical texts of Teresa de Ávila translate the desire for unity, in line with Christian mysticism, into the explicit expression of the urge to unite with God. Frequently, she imagines the mystical union through its extreme experience of unification in death. Aligning with the nuptial character of her texts, corporeal elements indicate the erotization of desire. At the same time, references to the maternal body are recognised in these physical images. In other words, the option for the expressions of nuptial mysticism coincides with the phenomenon of the *chora*, the longing for the restoration of the bond with the maternal body. In the comments on the Song of Songs, the allusions to corporeality intertwine with the spatiality of the tree, seen as the place where the mystical union occurs.

Despite the desire for union, the poetic subject frequently is separated temporally from the object of mystical love, provoking in the perception of the reader memories of the initial rupture. However, the pretexts do not explicitly underline the memories of a painful past, but rather focus on the immediate mystical experiences that continually oscillate between ecstasy and pain. This means that the reader appreciates a continuous probing of limits, of the delimitation between union and separation. The exploration of the frontiers of the discursive instance coincides with the strong identification with Christ. The representation of physical suffering produces indications of abjection. In this context arises the relevance of the cross image, Christian symbol *par excellence*, appearing with the arms of the anthropomorphic figure. The identification with Christ implies the emergence of the tripartite conglomerate tree-cross-Christ. In the realm of poetic devices, the intertextual analysis already recognised the anthropomorphism of the arboreal image and the use of the metaphor of the tree as an intermediary between the earth and celestial space. Based on the

genotextual analysis of the pretexts, other forms of stretching the laws of discourse are found: the use of paradoxical opposition conforms to the alternation of union and separation; the exclamation emphasises visual and acoustical separation on the level of syntax.

All the above implies the predominant alternation of union and separation, both on the level of the *chora* and in the realm of borderline exploration. In line with the genotextual characterisation, the myth critical analysis establishes the tendency of the rhythmic category and the mythemes that underline the alternation of the opposed phases integration and separation. Additionally, there is an indefinite state of expectation, of a future in harmony with God. The central intermediary figure, which enables final resurrection, runs parallel with the messianic aspect of Christ. In this figure the archetype of the Son is recognised, connected with the arboreal image of the cross and the anthropomorphism of the tree. In view of the wait for the final rebirth in God, the connection with messianic myth is evident. Therefore, I conclude that the pretexts represent a self that is centred on the present of the mystical experience and the future of the union with God, even if only in death. The tree, mainly the arboreal aspect of the cross, manifests as the archetype of spiritual resurrection.

### **5.3.2 Comparative integration**

In order to integrate the symbolic value of the motif in the intertextual level, I will revisit the variations discussed in chapter 5.1. On the basis of the appearance of the tree motif in Teresa de Ávila's work, I will then delve into the manifestations of the same image in the other corpus texts. From the preliminary characterisation of the pretexts, I will add depth to the relationships with the intertexts, focusing on the representation of the tree. I will integrate the motif's symbolic value in the intertextual relationships

and transpositions established in 5.1. I will respond to the question: what interaction is there between the motif in the pretexts and the manifestation of the tree in the intertexts, Mistral's *Desolación* and "Árbol adentro" by Octavio Paz?

### **The tree in *Desolación***

To begin, I will return briefly to the results of the intertextual procedure. From the initial analysis arose the characterisation of *Desolación* as an amalgam of nature and spirituality; according to the title of the poetry collection, the impression of solitude and sadness prevails. Therefore, a variety of components of the tree motif manifests in the compilation: the solitary tree and the tree of paradisiacal nature. In addition, the arboreal phenomenon takes the form of the place that promotes mystical union, adheres to the image of the cross, and to anthropomorphism. From this basic characterisation, the transtextual analysis was conducted in section 5.1.3, in order to establish the transpositions. In comparison with the pretexts, *Desolación* is a more extensive text whose spatiotemporal situation, with a change of the character, allows for expanding the aspects of the tree motif. The change of the character coincides with the predominance of desolation, in line with the work's title. The strong accent on the personal impulse to the use of the tree image, in combination with marks of catholic religiosity, means transmotivation; all this also causes the transvalorisation of the tree motif.

Well then, let us broaden the perspective towards the symbolic value of the motif in *Desolación*, with the aim of complementing the interpretation of the arboreal manifestation in Mistral's poetry. First, I address the question: what form does the tree motif take in the self-writing in *Desolación* of Gabriela Mistral? I will combine the results

of the genotextual and myth critical analyses in section 5.2.2. The genotextual analysis establishes the thematization of the wound, which confirms the representation of the initial rupture, of the *chora*. The poems represent this initial scission through explicit allusions to the past of the lyrical subject. That is, melancholy, conceived as the recollection of a vital loss, transects *Desolación* in a variety of ways. The image of the solitary tree acts as an accent on the desolate situation of the 'self'; moreover, the trees in Chilean nature resonate the reminiscence of the homeland. The strong presence of the crucified Christ appears as another manifestation of the wound, especially through physical references. Thus, the image of the cross, inherent in Christian symbolism, is inserted in the diverse accentuation of the poetic subject's solitude.

From such a rupture, the desire arises for the restoration of the initial union. The references to the body that underline the erotization of desire coincide with the nuptial character of the mysticism in the texts. The longing for unification culminates in the thematization of union in death. Still following the example of Teresa de Ávila's religiosity, the catholic model. However, the genotextual analysis interprets the same physical images as an evocation of maternal corporeality. The reader appreciates that Mistral strongly identifies with the mother, an identity that is repeatedly and diversely manifested.

Regarding identification, the probing of the limits of identity, the lyrical subject represents herself associated with various figures, such as the other, Christ, and the personified tree. Despite the diversity of the levels of identification, which seems to indicate an unstable identity, it is evident that they all refer to the wound and to solitude. Identification with Christ, in *Desolación*, entails abjection, from the references to suffering and its physical consequences. Thus, the image of the cross, quintessential Christian symbol, accentuates personal suffering. Finally, exploration of the limits of

discourse is evident through exclamations and enjambment, poetic devices that underline separation at syntactic level.

In summary, the genotextual analysis broadens the appreciation of the manifestation of the motif. As I have already established in the intertextual analysis, in *Desolación* predominate arboreal anthropomorphism and the metaphoric use of the tree, conceived as an intermediary between the earth and the sky in a broad sense. According to the genotextual procedure, I interpret the personified arboreal image, both the solitary and the crucified Christ, as an allusion to the lyrical subject's initial wound. The tree of nature, impulse for reminiscence, pertains to the range of references to solitude. Identification, which usually relates to the exploration of the individual boundaries, establishes in *Desolación* the isolated situation of the lyrical subject, through arboreal models, namely the crucified Christ and the natural tree.

Despite the accentuation of solitude, the genotextual interpretation discovered considerable ambiguity in the use of certain images, such as the cross and physical references. The results of the myth critical analysis go in parallel with this ambiguity. For one thing, the centric manifestation of the maternal figure appears, which I consider, in a genotextual sense, inherent in the inclination to return to the initial state of union with the mother's body. At the same time, there is a strong tendency of the rhythmic category of the imaginary. In the identification levels resonate the three archetypes of the Great Mother, the Son and the tree. Each of the three indicates the expectation of the recovery of what was lost, whether it is vegetal renovation or spiritual resurrection. The tree motif emerges in two ways: on the one hand, the tree of nature emphasises the solitude of the 'self' and the memories of the lost paradise. On the other hand, the metaphorical tree represents the temporal renovation of nature, also in the form of the cross that symbolises spiritual resurrection in Christ. The tree image



connects with Edenic and messianic myth; in broader sense, vegetal renovation in consonance with the mother-daughter relationship refers to the myth of Demeter and Persephone.

So, how can we connect the characterisation of *Desolación* with the pretexts? I established in section 5.3.1 that in the pretexts a self appears who, according to the spatiotemporal situation and the features of the character, is centred in the presence of the mystical experience and the future of uniting with God. The tree, especially the arboreal aspect of the cross, is manifested as the archetype of spiritual resurrection. In line with the rhythmic character of the texts, a relationship with messianic myth arises.

In *Desolación*, a loss of paradisiacal past is clearly emphasised, often situated in nature. In this context the images of the personified tree of solitude and the landscape of the homeland are found; the connection with Edenic myth is evident. To underline pain and suffering, the image of the cross and the identification with Christ are inserted, so Christian symbolism influences the personal characterisation of the 'self'. This means an extension of the arboreal manifestations in Teresa de Ávila's work, consistent with the formal and spatiotemporal transpositions, and the change of the lyrical subject's character. Furthermore, it confirms the transmotation, which underlined the relevance of the personal impulse, and the transvalorisation established by the transtextual analysis.

However, the result of the myth critical analysis reveals that the 'self' is not content with thematizing loss but intertwines images of the rhythmic category that refer to vegetal and spiritual rebirth.<sup>364</sup> Thus, messianic myth manifests itself, conceived in its

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<sup>364</sup> In the last part of *Desolación*, titled "Voto", the poet expresses the intention to leave the desolate tone of the poetry collection behind in the future: "Lo dejo tras de mí como a la hondonada sombría y

Christian form of the await of eternal life. Hence, *Desolación* also follows the religious model of the Carmelite's texts. Additionally, recurrent images indicate another myth that refers to the temporality of death: the myth of the Great Mother, which represents the regular alternation of vegetation. This way, the adhesion to the mystical tree motif pertains to an ensemble of archetypes, being the Great Mother, the Son and the tree, which indicate resurgence at personal level. Therefore, I nuance the previous conclusion about the religious motivation of the lyrical subject in *Desolación*, seeing that the use of Christian symbolism fits within the broad framework of the personal impulses of the 'self'.

Once again, I establish the extension of the motif's manifestations, given that I recognise various aspects of the tree of nature: it anthropomorphises to represent the solitude of the 'self'; it refers to the paradisiacal nature of the lost land; in the context of the rhythmic category, it represents the temporal renovation of vegetation. On the other hand, there is the metaphorical tree that transforms into the cross, not only the symbol of Christ's resurrection, but also the metaphor of the poetic subject's suffering. All of the above implies that *Desolación*, despite its apparent adhesion to the symbolism of Christian mysticism, uses arboreal images to give presence to a 'self' that exhibits loss and solitude, while symbols of resurgence also arise. Therefore, although considerable analogies with the Carmelite's work are found, I observe a more complex poetic universe in Mistral's work. This increased complexity runs parallel with the varied manifestations of the tree motif. Just like the arboreal appearance in the pretexts, the tree motif in *Desolación* is summarised as the confluence of nature and spirituality. However, while the use of the motif in the pretexts serves to sustain the

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por la laderas más clementes subo hacia las mesetas espirituales donde una ancha luz caerá sobre mis días" (177). I establish that the myth critical analysis recognises the unarticulated tendency towards spiritual renewal in Mistral's poems.

univocal religious tendency of the poetic subject, the diversity of the tree images in *Desolación* emphasises the personal need to represent a 'self' that struggles with rootlessness.

### **The tree in “Árbol adentro”**

Returning to the results of the intertextual analysis, I begin with the characterisation of the tree motif in “Árbol adentro”, followed by a summary of the transpositions. The first question is: what form does the tree motif take in the self-writing in “Árbol adentro” by Octavio Paz? The tree manifests in the poetry collection as the propulsor of experiences that are mystical and creative at the same time. First, it provides the spatial factor for creation, which occurs under the tree through the movement of foliage. Second, the tree is the metaphor for mystical transformation, since the tree coincides with the beloved women, which emphasises the anthropomorphism of the tree. The motif appears, in short, according to the following components: metaphor for creation and inspiration, loving union, place of cosmic union through the poetic word, anthropomorphism, image of vegetal renovation.

Regarding the transpositions, in “Árbol adentro”, which is comparable in size to the poetry compilation of Teresa de Ávila, there is a spatiotemporal transposition with change of the character. The lyrical self appears in accordance with the predominance of romantic love in the pretexts, while it displays a high degree of intellectual interest, in contrast with the lack of academic formation in the texts of Teresa de Ávila. The transmotivation includes aspiration to universal union, to foster poetic creation, mediated by the presence of the beloved woman; the absence of the Christian manifestation of the cross means transvalorisation.

To complete the characterisation of the tree motif in "Árbol adentro" with the symbolic value, I will integrate the results of the genotextual and myth critical analyses. First, the genotextual procedure discovers the strong accent on unification, expressed by the love for the beloved woman and the physical union with her. In line with the results of the intertextual analysis, the tree acts in two ways as a main element: it is the privileged place for unification; the arboreal phenomenon converges with the female figure. From the relationship with the beloved woman, the second phenomenon of unification occurs, at cosmical level, with the poetic universe. However, apart from the predominance of unity, the amorous relationship evokes the experience of loss, in view of the recurrence of the temporal unavailability of the beloved woman. In this transient separation, the reminiscence resonates of the archaic rupture that took place before unification. It is worth noting that Paz's poems emphasise the universal nature of such a scission, situating it in a shared past, based on philosophical and biblical texts. Thus, references to the loss inherent in the *chora* are placed in a context that is only approachable for readers with previous knowledge.

It is evident that the text of the Mexican poet sometimes takes the reflective position that discusses the very function of the word in cosmic sense. Another notable factor is the inclusion of references to other texts that contemplate initial union and archaic rupture in a philosophical and mythical manner. In other words, apart from the intuitive nature of the poems in which the traces of the *chora* appear, the texts simultaneously display the use of reason to reflect on the same issues. I conclude that "Árbol adentro" explicitly thematizes universal archaic rupture, while also representing, on impulse level, the alternation between union and separation. The anthropomorphic tree image emphasises this duality, from the identification with the tree. On the one hand, the upper part, foliage, connects with the brain where the word emerges. On the other

hand, the desire for union occurs through three forms of fusion: poetic subject-tree; beloved woman-tree; culminating tripartite unification poetic subject-beloved woman-tree. This plural identification coincides with the probing of limits of identity, also a characteristic of genotextuality. In the realm of poetic devices, the frequent use of chiasmus, paradox and paronomasia pertains to the exploration of the boundaries of discourse; in terms of graphic layout, this also goes for the use of the indented line.

In summary, traces of the *chora* involve the alternation of references to union and separation, in which the tree motif refers to union through the intermediary figure of the beloved woman. I also observe the body-brain contrast, which I consider inherent in the genotext-phenotext opposition. That is, according to the genotextual analysis the motif manifests through dual ambiguity. The myth critical analysis sustains such a bivalence, establishing recurring images of the polemic and centric category. On one side, the references to the word and to light, of luminous aspect, pertain to the polemic category that links with argumentation and the use of reason. The vertical form of the tree, represented as a pillar or column, fits into the same category. On the other side, I connect the emphasis on the physical union with the beloved woman, beneath the intimacy of the tree, to the centric category. Both phenomena, the physical and the cerebral, serve to redeem the expulsion from Paradise, mythical equivalent of the archaic rupture that Kristeva situates in the *chora*. The alternation of the polemic and centric categories conveys the rhythmic nature of the motif, inherent in the regenerative function of the tree, in a vegetal sense as well as consistent with the impulse of poetic creation. The corresponding mythemes refer to a confluence of myths: apart from Edenic and messianic myth, the representation of the archetype of the Great Mother is established.

Regarding the comparison with the pretexts, it is necessary to revisit section 5.3.1, which characterises the 'self' of the pretexts as a Christian woman in whose texts nuptial mysticism takes the form of physical references to love. In addition, she accentuates the intuitive interpretation of biblical texts, in which the tree adopts two forms: the spatial element that fosters the mystical union and the arboreal image of the cross, metaphor for the future union through present suffering. As for "Árbol adentro", whose size is comparable to the collection of poems by Teresa de Ávila, we can assume a similar extent of the motif's elaboration. Compared to the pretexts, in Paz's collection occurs a spatiotemporal transposition with a change of the character: the lyrical 'self' displays a high degree of intellectual interest, in contrast with the lack of academic formation that Teresa de Ávila emphasises in her texts. The cosmopolite nature of Paz's poetic subject, in combination with the freedom of thought in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, enables an extensive exploration of diverse mystical tendencies. This brings forward the transmotivation of the religious intention to the aspiration to cosmic union; the absence of the Christian slant means that the arboreal value of the cross is missing.

So, how do these changes influence the manifestation of the tree motif? First, it should be noted that in Paz's texts the tree image adheres mainly to union. The unifying function of the tree takes on two forms, similar to the mysticism of the pretexts: the spatial aspect and the anthropomorphism. Another point of coincidence is the use of paradox, conceived in genotextual sense as the simultaneity of union and separation. Lastly, it is important to note the relevance of the intermediary figure, based on love, which adopts in the poetry of Paz the feminine aspect. Thus, at symbolic level, appears the mysticism that aspires to final union. Since Paz's poems do not follow the Christian model, the representation of the mystical union relies on the cosmic image of the tree of nature.

However, I also observe in the texts of the Mexican the extensive consideration of archaic loss, situated in the Edenic realm; in this, they deviate from the pretexts that do not thematise this initial rupture. Moreover, in line with his analytical nature, Paz's 'self' also adopts a meta position, situating the discussion of the original scission in a philosophical, mythical, and literary context. That is, still in accordance with the premise of genotextuality, in the poems of Paz rational interpretations of the archaic rupture converge with the intuitive expression of ongoing need for unification. The results of the myth critical analysis confirm such an intertwining, demonstrating that recurring images pertain to the polemic and the centric categories. The tree image follows this diversification, since it combines the vertical form of the column, polemic reference, with the identification with the beloved woman, centric reference.

Thus, two arboreal elements are inserted in the basic characterisation in the pretexts, which adheres to the rhythmic category and follows the model of messianic myth. First, poetic creation is added as a component of the mystical union, connecting the emergence of the word with the movement of the foliage. In line with the importance of poetry, Paz's poems display, apart from the mystical paradox that is taken from the pretexts, an ample range of poetic devices. As the word pertains to the symbols with positive value from the polemic category, it unites with arboreal verticality. I consider both aspects inherent in the rational nature of the lyrical subject. Second, references to the archetype of the Great Mother are evident, the figure where the centric nature of the maternal woman is intertwined with the rhythmic character of vegetal renewal. While the myth of the Great Mother implies suspension of time, similar to messianic myth, it is situated outside the narrow framework of Christian mysticism. In other words, it connects with the expansion of the cultural and historical universe in "Árbol adentro", inherent in the spatiotemporal transposition of the pretexts.

### **5.3.3 Conclusion: repetitions and variation of the tree motif**

In the present chapter I investigated the repetitions and the variations of the tree motif in the poetry of Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz, bringing them in dialogue with the pretexts, the lyrical texts of Teresa de Ávila. To begin with repetition, I conclude that the common factor of the motif in the corpus always adheres to mystical union. The predominance of the arboreal image of mysticism takes on two forms: it refers to unification and to the place where the very union takes place. Since it is represented as an amorous relationship, the nuptial character of the mysticism is evident. Adopting a human aspect, the unifying tree acts as an intermediary between the lyrical subject and the objects of mystical love, which can be divine or cosmic. The intermediary function implies a dynamic identification between the poetic subject and the arboreal element, from the alternation between union and separation. This supposes, in genotextual terms, the ongoing exploration of boundaries. In line with this confluence of opposite movements, the myth critical interpretation indicates the predominance of images of the rhythmic category. The mythemic analysis involves recognising the connection with messianic myth, the anticipation of future resurgence through the union with the object of mystical love.

Within the range of repetitions, there is also a considerable variation; I will contrast the flexibility of the motif in the poetry of Mistral and Paz, in dialogue with the pretexts. I distinguished two major deviations from the scheme of the catholic mysticism in the interpretation of Teresa de Ávila. It should be noted, first, that the reformatory trajectory of the Carmelite is projected in the mystical texts. As lyrical as the texts that are directed to a renewed future may seem, they always fit into the narrow framework of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish Catholicism. In contrast, Mistral and Paz base the longing for future resurgence in a past that emphasises an elemental rupture. Consequently, the



motif takes two opposite directions, as it refers to future union and past rupture at the same time. That said, it is evident that the primary scission is represented very differently. Mistral underlines, in accordance with the title *Desolación*, the melancholy of a lyrical subject that suffers loss in personal life: the arboreal image takes the personalised form of the solitary tree; the tree of Edenic nature refers to the landscape of childhood. In addition, the references to the cross adhere mainly to the painful characterisation of the 'self', so the Christian representation of the tree of resurrection changes in character.

Contrary to the personal rupture represented in *Desolación*, Paz situates the reminiscence of archaic loss in the universal context of a shared past, alluding to philosophical and mythical interpretations of such a separation. Thus, Paz's poems place the Edenic tree in a historical and literary context. In these references resonates the intellectual character of the 'self' in "Árbol adentro", which distinguishes itself both from the religious characterisation of the lyrical subject of the nun and the introspective 'self' of Mistral. In accordance with the situation of initial loss in the ambiance of paradisiacal nature, I connect the intertexts to the Edenic myth of expulsion from paradise.

The second major difference between the pretexts and the poems of Mistral and Paz resides in the elaboration of the female factor. While the 'self' in the pretexts adheres to the feminine models of mother and teacher, the function of intermediary towards final resurrection is limited to Christ, the archetypal figure of the Son. The poetic subject of Mistral identifies, similar to the 'self' of Teresa de Ávila, with the traditional feminine roles of mother and teacher. However, the intermediary between the 'self' and recovery of the lost paradise is the maternal figure of fertility, in which the archetype of the Great Mother is recognised. In "Árbol adentro", the intermediary figure

also refers to the female archetype of fertility. However, not the maternity of the intermediary figure is accentuated, but rather the physical relationship with the woman who fosters, according to her identification with the arboreal image, literary creation. In line with the characterisation of the 'self' -male gender and intellectual aspiration- two layers of mystical union are manifest: first, the amorous relationship with the female figure prevails, consistent with the romantic nature of the pretexts; second, vegetal renewal acts as the metaphor for spiritual resurgence, situated at the cosmic level of the poetic word. In both intertexts the connection with the myth of the Great Mother emerges, the mythical narrative of vegetal renewal that complements the rhythmic charge of the messianic myth. In *Desolación*, the mother-daughter interaction entails the recognition of the figure of Demeter; "Árbol adentro" accentuates the luminous nature of the beloved woman, establishing the connection with the lunar goddess Selene.

So, in interpreting the tree motif in a wider context, I will respond to the sub-questions concerning the socio-historical situation and the literary genre of the texts. In the first place, connecting the results of the myth textual analysis with the socio-historical situation of the texts, I conclude that the intertexts expand the mystical scheme of the pretexts, a nuptial mysticism that connects to messianic myth, according to catholic tradition. *Desolación*, a more extensive text than the pretext, broadens the interpretations of the motif, connecting the tree to the solitude of the poetic subject. For its part, the size of "Árbol adentro" is comparable to the pretexts. Nevertheless, the text deepens the interpretation of the motif, incorporating a mystical level that is linked to poetic creation. I consider these extensions of the motif in accordance with the historical and geographical situation of the intertexts. In terms of intertextuality, the

pretext, despite the multiple cultural ambience of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spain, is founded on the formation of an author who, being a woman, is allowed a limited number of texts. The cosmopolite character of the lyrical subjects of the intertexts, in combination with their origins in Latin-America, implies reading a wide range of traditional and mythical texts. In addition, the freedom of thought of the era tolerates a personal exploration of the pretext's mystical tendency. Therefore, although they seem to be rooted in similar cultural grounds, the intertexts of Mistral and Paz display considerable variety in the elaboration of the tree motif. I consider the intuitive introspection of Mistral, accentuating the isolation of the lyrical subject, in accordance with the moment in the poetic itinerary of the author, being at the beginning of her career. The poetry collection of Paz, written at the end of his oeuvre, concentrates on poetic propositions, in an effort to edit his poetic legacy. It results in condensed reflection on the motif that has always been a key factor in his poetics.

In the second place, focusing on the manifestation of the tree motif in the realm of mystical literature, I address the question how the distinct interpretations of the motif are interpreted, from the literary genre of the texts. It should be noted that lyrical poetry allows for strong self-expression. Therefore, both intertexts add values to the tree motif, each consistent with the characterisation of the poetic subject of the text. *Desolación* introduces the image of the solitary tree, a personalised manifestation that reflects the melancholy of the lyrical subject. It is noted that the anthropomorphic image of the tree is viewed from the outside, thus emphasising the distance from others experienced by the 'self'. The cross takes on a changed value, diverging from the Christian spirituality, as it serves as a metaphor for the suffering of the 'self'. In "Árbol adentro", the cross is completely absent, following the motivation of the lyrical subject for a personal and eclectic spirituality. The emphasis on the verticality of the tree and

its driving function for poetic creation are added, both values in accordance with the intellectual interest of the 'self'. It is striking that, at the same time, the poems accentuate the close relationship with the arboreal element, since the poetic subject incorporates, in line with the title of the work, the tree in an inward, 'adentro', movement.

Following the mystical path, Teresa de Ávila showed a strong inclination towards individuality, through a highly personal relationship with God. This inclination is translated into the lyrical nature of her texts. At the same time, she remained within the strict mould of catholic tradition, emphasising in her work the arboreal image of the cross. In contrast, Mistral and Paz produced their texts in a less restrictive ambience; in addition, they had access to other mystical currents than catholic religiosity. Thus, they found the liberty of expression that allowed for the personal elaboration of the motif.

The foregoing supports the conclusion that the tree motif, as expected, exhibits a great diversity within the repetitiveness of its manifestation. The exposition of the motif in literary tradition established that the tree connects to a wide range of cosmogonic myths. The myth textual analysis shows that, within the narrow framework of lyrical poetry of a mystical character, it is also connected with the universal level of archaic texts and with various myths. In addition, despite its archaic character, the motif is represented in texts from diverse, more recent eras: in the case of the pretext in Baroque literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; in the intertexts in 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist poetry. This means that the motif can conform with the cultural context of authors from other eras; at the same time, it assimilates to the reading horizon of the current reader, thus lending itself to the interpretation by today's researcher.

It is worth emphasising that the present analysis, carried out from the limited interpretative direction of the motif in mystical literature and in the poetry of Mistral and Paz, does not add new elements to the understanding of the tree motif. However, mystical poetry implies the strong presence of the lyrical subject, the projection of the author's 'self' in the text. The myth textual analysis shows that the tree motif has the capacity to adapt to this level of self-expression, representing various moments of the individuation process and a variety of unconscious aspects, projected in the characterisation of the poetic subject. From the novelty of the analytical instrument, the myth textual interpretation broadens the understanding of the mystical poetry in the corpus texts. Therefore, I underline the interest of the results of the present analysis for specialists who focus on the interpretation of the poetic work of Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz.



### **III CONCLUSIVE PART**





## 6. DISCUSSION OF MYTH TEXTUALITY

There once was a life in which I was oblivious of projects like doctoral theses. In the professional sphere, the principal components of that life were teaching dance and creating choreographies. In my view, choreography supposes interpretation, through the strong connection to an existing piece of music. This means approaching the musical work in two ways: sensing its emotional value and understanding its structure. Analysing the structure of the piece, through factors like time, phrasing, and accentuation, supports the organisation of the dance. Connecting to the emotional level of the music permits the translation into another, bodily language. Needless to say, the creation of the new work, the dance, depends on the personal view of the choreographer and their 'reading' of the music's narration. Therefore, although situated in another field, the conjunction of intuition and systematic approach already was a part of my professional attitude. As we will see, it was the same combination that directs the research perspective underlying this thesis, since the elements of interpretation, analysis and intuitive understanding are the founding components of the instrument for motif analysis that I present in this thesis: myth textuality.

The development of myth textuality originally comes from the intention to interpret certain repetitive elements, also known as motifs, in the work of just one author. I discovered that this repetitiveness manifests in the work of the author himself and, at the same time, establishes an intense relationship with the texts of other writers. That is, the interest grew in the recurrent presence of typical characters, emblematic objects or universal situations in literary texts. I noticed that this universality does not preclude the relevance of notions such as invention or originality, which assume the imaginative force of the author. Therefore, I investigated in this thesis how to interpret and

understand the paradoxical nature of literary texts, the simultaneity of repetition and variation, of universality and originality.

Well then, the moment has come to distance myself from the investigation process and ask: what have the years of theoretical exploration and exhaustive analysis brought forward? The investigation process led to the construction of myth textuality, the analytical instrument for the interpretation of the motif in literary texts. In the case studies, I analysed the flâneur motif in the prose texts by Antonio Muñoz Molina and Carmen Laforet, and the tree motif in the poetry by Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz. This means a considerable extension of the scope of the investigation: from the premise regarding the manifestation of myth in just one author's work to defining the myth textual tool. That is, from the specific repetitiveness in the work of a single author to the construction of a versatile instrument for motif analysis, implementable in a variety of literary and multidisciplinary studies. A path of advance that implies the expansion of the theoretical breadth of the thesis as well as my personal growth as a researcher. While entering into detail about the investigation process in the next paragraphs, in this part I reflect first on the changes in my personal analytical perspective.

Evidently, the lookback always reveals things that one does not perceive during the events themselves. In retrospect, I establish that my researcher profile presented itself gradually; I permitted this individual point of view to become visible in the investigation process. To begin with, I mention the change of perspective that underlies the execution of this thesis in its entirety: the explicitly feminine position of this work. Over the years, the urgency of a feminine vision on literature had invaded my basic position as a researcher. At first, it developed independently from the current work. However, I realised that in this day and age every theoretical and analytical approach that

pretends to interpret the expressions of the human being needs to be aware of possible prejudice built on superseded gender constructs. I emphasise that the *au féminin* perspective is a personal position that is inserted in all the aspects of the current work. Besides directing the development of the theoretical framework, it caused abandoning the protagonism of the texts of one single male author in the analytical part.

The second subjective transformation level has a strong relationship with the interest in the grounds for human behaviour. This attention to psychology brought forward the desire to investigate repetition in literary texts, by focussing on the motif. It also led to the initial option for myth criticism, of which the categorisation of images impressed me for the connection with the pre-rational level of human drives. However, my methodical temperament took over the analytical process, in line with another inclination, my systematic tendency. That is, the analyses were executed in accordance with the instrumental nature of the tool, leaning mainly on the categorisation of myth criticism. As a consequence, the results did not confirm the supposed relationship between repetition in the text and the dynamics of the human psyche.

The crucial change occurred when, during a philosophical summer course on Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal*, I became acquainted with Kristeva's ideas on the divided subject. I realised that there is a parallelism between the theory of Kristeva regarding the genotext and Durand's myth critical postulate. Although Kristeva had not developed a systematic method, I understood the relevance of her ideas about the connection between the individuation process and textual repetition. I intuited that including genotextuality would complement the comprehension of the motif in literary texts. Implementing Kristeva's postulate implied elaborating her ideas into a usable tool. Using the instrument also entailed recognising traces of the individuation process

in the text, a path that is associated with the researcher's view. As the researchers' gaze always is determined by their own experiences, the personal horizon entered in myth textual procedure. It is notable that this personal horizon extended to the analytical level as well: the reading experience of the researcher directs the selection of the motif and the corpus texts.

Recapitulating, the confluence of intuitive path and systematic tendency formed the definite research perspective. The combination not only corresponds to the characteristics of the motif, but also complies with a very personal necessity on my part. Admitting this necessity to pervade the investigation meant the true beginning of the research process. In a way, allowing personal experience as a valuable tool for the interpretation of human expression has a connection with the *au féminin* perspective, since intuitive approach traditionally has been attributed to the feminine view. While the exploration of her ideas was not a focus of this investigation, during the concluding stage of this investigation I found resonance with María Zambrano's concept of poetic reason, *la razón poética*, as a compelling illustration of the proposition that unites intuition and rationalism. As is well-known, the Spanish philosopher developed from the 1930's on a body of thought concerning the relevance of the poetic image, and particularly the metaphor, as an instrument for understanding human life. She opposes poetic reason to the mechanic, discursive rationalism that is predominant in Western thinking and that she considers insufficient to appreciate the human being in its entirety (Maillard, *Creación* 22-32). As a result of its unusual character, Zambrano's postulate was disdained and silenced. However, although her body of thought initially passed into oblivion, the value of Zambrano's poetic reason gained interest in the second half of the twentieth century (Mendizábal 85).<sup>365</sup> Today, researchers situated on the

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<sup>365</sup> The recognition of Zambrano's work culminated in her being honoured with two of Spain's most important awards in the field of philosophy and literature: in 1981 she received the Premio Príncipe de

interdisciplinary crossroads between philosophy and other research fields, such as literary theory, value the concepts introduced by María Zambrano.<sup>366</sup> I consider in particular the relevance of intuition as a part of understanding the motif's symbolic nature as an example of the value of María Zambrano's ideas.

Clearly, it is not possible to separate the transition in the personal research position from the development of the theory, as they interacted to a considerable extent. Therefore, I will hark back to the aforementioned in the following paragraphs, in which I extend the view on the present investigation towards various directions. To start, the look back is directed to the research process, expounding on the decisive moments in the research trajectory and the practical use of the instrument. This way, I will share my experiences with researchers who intend to follow the myth textual path and engage in motif interpretation. I begin 6.1 with the evaluation of the research process, revisiting the theoretical foundations and valorising the practical effectiveness of the tool. Obviously, the scope of the case studies does not cover the totality of the method's possibilities. I will arrive in 6.2 at a set of recommendations for expanding the use of the instrument and its employment in future projects. Finally, I emphasise that one cannot realise a project as extensive as the current thesis without significant changes in the researcher view. I will enlarge in 6.3, from the meta-position, on the applicability of myth textuality in the field of motif analysis and on the myth textual

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Asturias in Communication and Humanities; in 1988 she was the first woman to receive the Cervantes Prize for literature.

<sup>366</sup> Philosopher Chantal Maillard elaborated poetic reason in *La razón estética* (2021) towards a plea for sensibility education, thus situating her work in the philosophical field of ethics and aesthetics (*Razón estética* 9-11). Similarly, Juana Sánchez-Gey centres her studies on the work of María Zambrano on the crossroads of philosophy and education, like in her presentation "Razón poética como teoría del valor en María Zambrano" (2023). In the field of literature and myth, María Carrillo Espinosa focuses on the relevance of Zambrano's postulate in literary analysis; an example is "Los juegos de la razón: la figura de Atenea en la obra de María Zambrano" (2014), which interprets Zambrano's line of thought through an analysis of the manifestation of the goddess Athena in her works.

## Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

scope in the broader framework of the interpretation of literature, culture, and the world around us.

### **6.1 Evaluation of the research process**

To evaluate the scope of this thesis, I return for a moment to academic discourse, repeating the capital elements of the introduction: points of departure, hypothesis, and research questions. I started from the intention to investigate universal manifestations of repetition in literary texts. To guide the investigation, I centred on repetitive textual elements referred to with the term 'motif', defined as a grouping of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and varied manifestation in literary tradition. From the premise that no existing method encompasses the key elements of the motif, the hypothesis arose that the understanding of the motif implies a relevant analytical instrument. I posited that no new theories were needed, since we can reinterpret and combine existing theories that apply to repetitiveness and variability of texts. The conceptual amplitude of intertextuality encompasses the relations between texts, from the reader's perception; the specific perspective of genotextuality applies to the symbolic level. Myth criticism covers the relations with archaic myth as well as the symbolism of the texts. By integrating intertextuality and myth criticism in the broader procedure of myth textuality, the elements of the motif are covered: repetition and variation of textual structures, the symbolic level of the text, the view of the reader/researcher, the socio-historical situation of the text. Thus, I aspired to construct an interpretative tool that encompasses the constitutive elements of the motif, through combining the central principles of intertextuality with the method of myth criticism. I formulated the dual question: which central principles of intertextuality and myth criticism can be combined into a tool that enhances the understanding of the motif, while centring on its key elements? And: What is the contribution of reading through the lens of myth textuality to understanding the motif in literary texts?

The following paragraphs will explain the development of the investigation model, based on the profound study of the concepts introduced by Kristeva and Durand. I consider it useful for those interested in the method to appreciate at which point I felt the need to readjust the research direction. I will expound on the classes on myth textuality and their effect on the investigation process. Subsequently, I will concentrate on the case studies, the analysis of the very different motifs of the flâneur and the tree in a corpus of Spanish and Latin-American texts. I will return to the conclusions of the analytical chapters, in order to valorise the effectiveness of the instrument.

### **Decisive moments**

Initially, I focussed on Muñoz Molina's texts, from the idea that his work can be qualified as the myth of the *robinson urbano*, the urban robinson. Therefore, the search for the adequate theoretical material led to myth criticism, Gilbert Durand's postulate that implies the understanding of the relationship between the literary text and myth. Continuing to consider the work of Muñoz Molina, where an abundance of explicit references to the texts of other authors is found, the necessity of including somehow the concepts of intertextuality was also evident. Of the possible paths within the intertextual tendencies, I chose Genette's transtextuality for its systematic approach to the transformations that occur between the literary text and its pretext. The initial combination of the two theories met the requirements of an operative instrument for the analysis of repetitive textual elements. It manifested chiefly as an interpretation process based on the classification of images (Durand) and textual transformations (Genette).



It is fit to emphasise that the option for myth criticism was a remarkable path, given the unusual terminology and the ambivalence inherent in the categorisation. Even so, I was enthusiastic about the wealth of Durand's system, particularly the link between textual repetition and the irrational impulses of the human being. Interpreting the text as a survival strategy, in line with the motivation of mythical texts. I was attracted by the idea of broadening and deepening the level of the literary text's understanding in a way that had not been done before, by updating the terminology of myth criticism and including intertextuality. Therefore, the desire to adapt myth criticism to requirements of clarity brought forward the initiative to readjust the research's direction and lay the emphasis of the investigation on the theoretical part. The first crucial moment occurred when I decided to focus on the development of an extensive theoretical framework. As a consequence, the analysis of Muñoz Molina's texts would be transferred to the level of case study. Therefore, I constructed a three phase-method for text analysis, initially denominated 'intertextual myth criticism', from the combination of myth criticism and transtextuality.

From that moment on, the research developed along two paths that ran simultaneously: on the one hand, through sharpening the terminology and detailing the methodology, based on the teaching experiences during the courses at Utrecht University, in the academic year 2021-2022. I will return to these classes in the next paragraph. On the other hand, by amplifying the theoretical background according to the observations about my own analytical practice, the first analyses of the motifs of the island, the wanderer and the mirror in the work of the author Antonio Muñoz Molina.

I followed the steps of the procedure: recognise repetitive textual elements in his work, organise them according to the categories of the imaginary, and identify the transformations with respect to the pretexts. In general, the components of the initial

instrument were founded on well-defined concepts. That is, this path responded to my own intrinsic desire to proceed systematically, from delineated categories.

Despite the unusual nature of myth criticism, the systematic path was in essence a route without risk: categorising repetitive textual elements and situating them in the adequate context. Although my mastery of the myth critical instrument had improved, the results of the analysis were limited to a classification of textual elements, complemented by the establishment of possible ambiguities of the symbolism. The denomination of the transformations coincided with Genette's terminology. I had to admit that the results of these analyses, however interesting, did not produce the expected level of profound comprehension. They did not confirm my intuitive supposition that textual repetition, apart from common anthropological factors, is also determined by individuality. In other words, I supposed that, besides the socio-historical situation of the text, the dynamics of the human psyche have an influence on the contradictory nature of texts.

Then, my interest in the tangential realm between literature and psychology directed me to Kristeva's ideas on psychoanalysis and the divided subject. I discovered the parallelism between the dynamics of the genotext - separation, (re)union, and the exploration of boundaries – and the categories of the imaginary. The second defining moment occurred, when I decided to include Kristeva's concepts regarding geno- and phenotext in the analytical procedure. This decision underlined my personal research perspective, the conjunction of intuitive path and systematic mode. Thus, the definite structure of the theoretical chapter was outlined: preliminary explaining of the motif (2.0); exploring intertextuality, with an accent on the concepts of the genotext (2.1); researching myth criticism (2.2); combining intertextuality and myth criticism into myth textuality (3).

### The classes on myth textuality

Except for the evolution of the personal perspective, another factor determined the course of the investigation, be it on another level. This additional aspect came to light during the courses on myth textuality. Lectured at Utrecht University, the classes provided the opportunity to put the prototypical phases of the research model into practice. In the course *Reading Between the Lines*, the students used the model, then named 'intertextual myth criticism', to create a network of interrelated texts around the novel *Nada* by Carmen Laforet.<sup>367</sup> The assignment implied identifying the pretexts, denominating the transformations according to transtextuality and situating repetitive textual elements in the categories of the imaginary in conformity with myth criticism. The lectures, of which the material was united in a comprehensive manual, encompassed explaining transtextuality and the practical use of the categories of the imaginary.

The first partial assignment, recognising the pretexts of *Nada* and classifying the transpositions, produced some noticeable results. The suggestions included in the course material contained the following pretexts: "The Painter of Modern Life" and "The Crowds" by Charles Baudelaire; the fairy-tale "Cinderella"; the children's books by Elena Fortún about the character Celia. The majority of the student groups chose their pretext according to this pre-selection. However, two groups seized the opportunity of selecting another pretext: the texts *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1945) by Federico García Lorca and *Huis clos* (1944) by Jean-Paul Sartre. Thus, the amplitude of the instrument manifested, based on the liberty of the researcher and in line with their own reading horizon: the network of texts related to *Nada* encompassed a diversity of

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<sup>367</sup> The bachelor course *Reading Between the Lines* took place at Utrecht University, from September till November of 2021.

literary genres: a short expository text, a prose poem, a fairy tale, children's literature, and even theatrical texts.

Regarding the denomination of the transpositions, the evaluation of the course indicated that the first-year students found transtextuality an abstract system, which is difficult to put into practice. Since the students discovered many concordances between the pretexts and *Nada*, the necessity arose to delimit the material for the second partial assignment, the myth critical analysis. To allow for the selection of a single textual entity, I introduced the term 'motif'. Obviously, later on the motif became the axis of my investigation. In contrast with transtextual terminology, the students considered the categories of the imaginary, presented in the manual with examples from literature and film, comprehensible. However, the results of their analyses showed that they had not always grasped the nuances and ambiguities of myth criticism's system. It has to be emphasised that this was a reflection of my own gradual learning process of myth critical practice.<sup>368</sup>

For the second course, *Masterclass Comparative Literature*, I took notice of the students' comments and my own observations about the analytical process.<sup>369</sup> In dialogue with the participants of the first course, the components of the procedure were synthesised into a single denomination: myth textuality. I refined the description of the procedure's steps, while the motif became the starting point of the analysis. The final assignment for the students changed into the analysis of a given motif, the flâneur, according to myth textual procedure. The course material included the pre-selection of

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<sup>368</sup> Working with myth criticism in a group of mature and experienced readers confirms the impression that the categorisation of images introduced by Durand is a complex system. It needs prolonged study and explanation, as well as an awareness of the images' ambivalence.

<sup>369</sup> The course *Masterclass Comparative Literature* took place in February and March of 2022.

the basic flânerie texts by Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe and Walter Benjamin.<sup>370</sup> The participants chose the corpus in line with their own reading horizon. Furthermore, they conducted a complete myth critical analysis, defining the mythemes and connecting them to a myth. On an operative level, the results of the analytical process established the relevance of the preliminary definition of the motif, to evade a possible mistaken selection of the corpus texts.

Regarding the corpus, the students of the course *Masterclass Comparative Literature* situated the flâneur motif in a diversity of literature. That is, the key function of the reader's view produced the following variety of the corpus texts: *Jejuri* (1976) and *Kala Ghoda Poems* (2004) of the Indian poet Kolatkar; *Tokyo Ueno Station* (2014) by Yu Miri and *After Dark* (2004) by Haruki Murakami; *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) by Rainer Maria Rilke and *The Moviegoer* (1961) by Walker Percy; *Convenience Store Woman* (2016) and *Earthlings* (2018) by Sayaka Murata. Texts of which the publication dates cover more than a century; texts of philosophical nature, Asian poetry and Japanese contemporary novels; texts by male and female authors. Furthermore, the analysis results established the connection with the biblical myths of the Messiah and the prodigal son, and the Greek myths about Odysseus and Sisyphus.

Summarising, I consider the realisation of such an amplitude the central achievement of this master course. The view of the reader becomes a relevant point of departure, since the reading horizon determines the selection of the motif and the corpus texts, while identifying the relations with myth as well. Although genotextuality was not a part of this course, it has to be observed that the researcher's experience also directs the recognition of the genotext's traces in the text.

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<sup>370</sup> In the concrete, the pre-selection of the pretexts included: "The Painter of Modern Life" (1942) and "The Crowds" (1869) by Baudelaire, "The Man of the Crowd" (1840) by Edgar Allan Poe, and "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1970) by Walter Benjamin.

### **The scope of the theoretical framework**

After the exposition of the decisive moments and the contribution of the courses on myth textuality, I return in this section to the first research question. That is, I will explain which central principles of intertextuality can be joined with myth critical method into an instrument that broadens the comprehension of the motif. In order to cover its key elements, I composed a synthetic definition of the motif, situating it in the analytical field of thematology (section 2.0). Outlining the valid concepts establishes that the theme, which is an abstract idea or general concept that is implicit in the text, transfers to the concrete level of the motif, appearing with observable properties. The movement from abstract to concrete level situates the motif in the same field as the symbol, which also is the substantiation of an abstract idea. However, contrary to the symbol, which can appear only once in the text, the motif stands out for its repetitive manifestation. While also including its repetitiveness in literary tradition, the definition of the motif is completed: a grouping of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and varied manifestation in literary tradition. In this definition the postulates of Freedman (1971), Daemrich (1985), Pimentel (1993) and Morgan (2015) are combined. The elements of this synthetic definition form the guiding threads of the analytical instrument's construction.

The exploration of the components that may be included in the investigation model concerns intertextuality and myth criticism. Centring the research of intertextuality on the ideas of Kristeva (section 2.1), the definition provided in "Narration and Transformation" (1969) prevails: intertextuality supposes the perception by the reader of textual interaction, produced within the text; the subject/reader interprets intertextuality as the indication of the historical situation of the text.

In relation with the characteristics of the motif, textual interaction encompasses two interpretative directions: the relationship with other texts covers the elements of repetition and variation in literary tradition; the internal textual interaction refers to the manifestation of the genotext, which is connected with the symbolic level of the motif. Both levels of intertextuality depend on the perception of the reader. Thus, intertextuality, introduced by Kristeva, offers a considerable potential for the analysis of the motif. The transtextuality concepts of Genette, developing Kristevian ideas about the relationships between texts, serves for the practice of intertextual analysis. Genotextual analysis, conceived as a particular kind of intertextuality, establishes how the individuation process irradiates in the text through the traces of the *chora*; the specific way in which the genotext erupts in the organisation of the text touches on the following aspects of the motif: repetition of textual elements within the text and symbolic value.

The bivalence of Kristeva's theory has to be underlined: an achievement for the richness of her thinking and, at the same time, a challenge for the impenetrability of the central work where the genotext is presented: *La révolution du langage poétique* (1974). While she developed her concepts through studies that combined theoretical reflections with concrete analyses, Kristeva did not build an outlined method. Furthermore, not many researchers followed her example, so there are few existing studies that might serve as a model for genotextual analysis. According to the works in which she elaborated the thinking on the divided subject, such as the theoretical parts of *Pouvoir de l'horreur* (1980) and *Soleil noir* (1987), the central lines of the individuation process' manifestation in the literary text become more intelligible. This way, Kristeva's studies provide the material for configuring a practical tool that encompasses the symbolical component of motif analysis.

While following Kristeva's postulate, genotextual analysis is limited to individuality development. To cover the symbolic level in its totality, Durand's myth criticism, directed at the interaction between the human being and society from an anthropological perspective, will elevate the research model to the social aspect of the motif's symbolic nature (section 2.2). As it connects the literary texts to ancient myth, myth criticism also attends to the manifestation of the motif in literary tradition. The potential of myth criticism, similarly to genotextuality, turns out to be ambivalent, achievement and obstacle at the same time. On the one hand, from the first moment on prevails the impressive amplitude of Durand's system and the richness of this panorama of images produced by humans. At the same time, myth criticism leans on unusual terminology and on such a complex systemisation that it requires the complete attention of the researcher who intends to understand its scope. Understanding all the instrumental aspects of a method that is characterised by ambivalence requires a stratified process, appreciating more and more the nuances of the concepts. However, constructing an elaborate combination of myth criticism and intertextuality is worth the prolonged effort. The study of myth criticism and the growing understanding of the system makes it clear that adapting the terminology is imperative, while maintaining the amplitude of the categorisation of images.

According to the recommendations of the previous sections, chapter 3 builds the investigation model. First, the genotextual and myth critical analyses are presented in keeping with their (re)defined instrument. The outlining of the genotextual procedure follows two lines of inquiry: the accentuation of the archaic rupture, on one side, manifests through the thematization of scission, the desire to reunite with maternal matter and the problematisation of family and societal restrictions; exploration of boundaries, on the other side, appears at the level of narrative instance, abjection, and



the laws of discourse. Reformulation of myth criticism proposes the renovated nomenclature of the polemic, centric, and rhythmic categories, in line with the strategies of confronting the other as drives for artistic creation; the central principles are adapted to current requirements regarding gender-neutral formulation.

After elevating both constitutive procedures of myth textuality to an updated level, the analytical instrument comes to a definition. The three-phase process is guided by the characteristics of the motif, intertwining the distinct aspects of the constitutive theories. The first intertextual step directs the composition of the corpus based on the manifestation of the motif in the texts; transformations are established in accordance with Genette's terminology. The second step realises the analysis of the texts' symbolic level, through separate genotextual and myth critical analyses. The third myth textual step combines the previous steps into a complete characterisation of the motif in the corpus texts, in order to deepen subsequently the comparative interpretations. To surpass the intuitive nature of the methods' combination, the theoretical foundation is elaborated, based on the complementarity and the concordance of both. The parallelism of the constituents encompasses the relations between texts, the perception of repetitiveness within the text, and the accent on the symbolic level of the text. The complementarity extends from the field of method to the psychological base that sustains the symbolic level. Regarding method, intertextuality serves as the preliminary step of myth criticism; the psychological base encompasses the societal relevance in the individuation process and in the confrontation with society in an anthropological sense.

Consistent with the definition of the motif, that is, the elements repetition and variation in literary tradition, repetitive manifestation in the text, symbolic level, and reader's

view, I establish that the myth textual tool encompasses each of these key characteristics. Furthermore, myth textuality comprises the combination of intertextuality principles and myth critical method towards a three-step procedure; the cohesion of the model is founded on the parallelism and complementarity of the constituents. Comments from the participants of the VII International Conference on Myth Criticism confirmed my ideas on the relevance of the combination of myth criticism and Kristeva's concepts about the genotext.<sup>371</sup> Therefore, I have achieved the objective of constructing an interpretative tool that encompasses the characteristics of the motif, from the principles of intertextuality and the method of myth criticism. On the theoretical level, the composition of myth textuality brings forward certain unexpected effects. First, I provide a complete definition of the motif that includes the view of the reader and the symbolic level, thus contributing to the theoretical approach to motif interpretation. Second, I propose the definition of the updated analytical components, genotextuality and myth criticism. Based on their theoretical potential for motif analysis, I turned both procedures into instruments that can also be used separately, outside the combined framework of myth textuality. On the one hand, I systematised Kristeva's concepts, offering a practical guide for the analysis of the genotext. On the other hand, the reformulation of the categories of the imaginary updates and clarifies Gilbert Durand's myth critical system.

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<sup>371</sup> At the VII International Conference on Myth Criticism, held from 25 to 28 October 2022 at the Complutense University of Madrid, I presented the theoretical proposal of myth textuality, with the title "Mitotextualidad: la unión de los planteamientos de Durand y Kristeva". I adapted the conference presentation's text to the article "Myth Textuality, Unifying Durand and Kristeva", to be published in April 2024 in the journal for comparative literature *CompLit*.

### **The case studies: towards a redefinition of the motif**

The analyses realised by the students gave an indication of the possibilities of the myth textual tool. In line with these results, I departed for the selection of the case study material from the amplitude of the procedure. Therefore, I organised the analyses as follows: selecting two different motifs; diversifying the literary genre of the corpus texts; regarding the paired authors of the central texts, opting for gender diversity; aspiring to a balanced division of pretexts as well. I emphasise that this diversity does not necessarily represent the ideal point of departure for motif analysis according to myth textuality. Still, it does produce some interesting conclusions regarding the procedure in its entirety. Therefore, I will proceed with a reflection on the analytical process, to evaluate subsequently the results. First, I comment on the preliminaries, the selection of the motif and the corpus composition. Obviously, previous knowledge of the motif facilitates defining it and situating it in literary tradition, which also affects the selection of corpus texts. In this case, my previous research experiences caused me to choose the *flâneur*, a rather recent motif.<sup>372</sup> I decided to contrast the *flâneur* by opting for the tree as a second case study, which is an ancient and multifaceted motif. Since I had not studied it previously, the plurality of the tree motif complicated its definition, despite the availability of existing studies.

Regarding the corpus composition, the factors that have an effect on myth textual analysis need to be considered: the form of the text, that is its extension and genre, and the motif's function in the text. In general, an extensive text may intertwine various aspects of the same motif, while a text that is too concise impedes the recognition of repetitive textual elements. Furthermore, the limited extension of the text affects the

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<sup>372</sup> See the articles about the *flâneur* in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Ventanas de Manhattan* (Vulkers, "Flâneur o voyeur" 2020) and about the island city in *Tus pasos en la escalera* by the same author (Vulkers, "La ambigüedad" 2022).

mythemic analysis, which is based on narrative lines. At the same time, the poetic text's expressive nature may provoke a strong density of images, an abundant source for the symbolic analysis; besides, poetry allows for great liberty concerning textual arrangement and literary resources, factors of interest in genotextual analysis. It is also notable that the texts' autoreferential level, be it prose or poetry, may influence the genotextual traces in the text.

With regard to its function, the motif may operate in the text in various ways: at an auxiliary level in a traditional novel, like the flâneur in *Nada*, or centred on a single representation, like the personification of the tree in "Árbol adentro". On the other hand, the motif may also manifest a diversity of aspects, like the flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, or adopt various forms that merge with one another, like the tree motif in *Desolación*. Although the motif's function in the text is a relevant factor, it is not always possible to foresee it, only coming to light from the symbolic analysis. Lastly, the availability of previous studies of the motif in the corpus texts may be an additional factor for the selection of the corpus; for example, as *Un andar solitario entre la gente* is a recent text, I did not have existing studies or analyses at my disposal to direct a possible line of enquiry for the flâneur motif. By contrast, I could follow and deepen the works that studied the tree motif in the work of Mistral and Paz. That is, once the corpus has been selected, existing studies of the motif in the texts concerned serve as a reference for the myth textual analysis.

Apropos of the symbolic analysis, it is relevant that the corpora of both case studies are untypical: in the case of the flâneur, the narrative prose of *Nada* as well as *Un andar solitario entre la gente* displays a high expressive level, fostering the symbols' recognition. As far as the tree motif is concerned, the poetry in both Mistral's collection and Paz's chapter has a strong narrative vigour, which facilitates completing the

mythemic analysis. Poetic language in combination with narrative structure brings forward a richness of images that is usable for symbolic analysis. In *Un andar solitario entre la gente* it was necessary to separate the multiple aspects of the flâneur to delimit the analysis; the abundance of tree references in *Desolación* caused the necessity to narrow the analysis down to three chapters.

That said, I now continue examining the notable results, which not always responded to previous expectations. I begin from the comparative perspective, the organisation of the work of various authors around a single motif. Regarding the flâneur, I compare first the pair of texts by Laforet and Muñoz Molina. At first sight, *Nada* and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* are two very different texts. However, the myth textual analysis produces results that contradict such a difference. Both texts are connected to “The Man of the Crowd” by Edgar Allan Poe. The intertexts have a relationship with the hero’s myth and integrating the pretext also reveals a concordance with the myth of the wanderer; evidently, both myths are elaborated differently. All three texts represent the interaction with the crowd through aquatic metaphors; the genotextual analysis underlines the strong connection between these metaphors and identity definition in the three texts. Precisely this conclusion concerning the identitary urgency caused by the interaction between the flâneur and urban multitude elevated the analysis of the flâneur motif to another level. According to the results of the myth textual analysis, I arrived at a redefinition of the flâneur motif: the flâneur represents the interaction between the human being and the urban environment; they stroll through the city, immersing themselves in the multitude, while experiencing simultaneously its overwhelming effect. The confrontation with the mass evokes the urgency of an

identitary (re)definition, a reaction that is situated underneath the apparently idle character of the stroll.

As for the tree, I begin comparing the analyses of Mistral's and Paz's poetry. On the face of it, they are similar texts according to the lyricism of the poetry, its mysticism, and the relationship with the pretexts by Teresa de Ávila. Nevertheless, certain notable differences appear from the symbolic analysis. The genotextual analysis establishes that the tree motif in Mistral's text accentuates rupture, while underlining the solitary nature of the poetic subject. Paz uses the tree image to emphasise the desire for union and the extension of the boundaries of the 'self' and of discourse. The intuitive attitude of Mistral induces an intertwining of arboreal images, while Paz makes the symbolic process explicit and centres on a personified representation of the tree. The myth critical analysis shows that the pre- and intertexts are connected with messianic myth, although elaborated differently. Both intertexts are also associated with the myth of the Great Mother; while Mistral gives presence to the mythical figure of Demeter, references to the goddess Selene appear in the texts by Paz. These interpretations remain within the definition of the mystic tree: the arboreal image connects with the spiritual union between the human being and the divine or cosmic entity; in Christianity, the tree image adopts the aspect of the cross.

After completing the analyses of the flâneur and the tree, it is now possible to compare the results of the case studies among themselves. First, I establish that in both cases the dialogue with the pretexts is a necessary point of reference. Furthermore, the symbolic analysis is the key to the interpretation of the motif. Since the flâneur is a recent motif that has not been studied extensively from the point of view of comparative literature, the myth textual analysis has brought forward a redefinition of the motif. By

contrast, the tree is an ancient motif, already analysed profoundly, also in its capacity of symbol for mystical union. The myth textual analysis of the tree motif does not add new elements to its definition; hence, the contribution to understanding the motif is restricted to the manifestation of the mystical tree in the corpus texts.

Besides the comparative perspective, the case studies are also relevant for the line of investigation centred on a single author. The contributions to the comprehension of the motifs in the separate texts are defined as follows. In *Nada*, the myth textual analysis sustains the interpretation of the protagonist as a flâneur, like proposed by Martín Gaité (1987) and Tanner (2021). Through connecting the flâneur motif to identity issues, the myth textual analysis discovers an aspect of the flâneur figure in Muñoz Molina's work that other studies (Ruiz Rico 2011, Sperber 2015) did not recognise. The myth textual interpretation of the tree motif in Mistral's text, besides the accent on loss and solitude as proposed by Girona (2021), also connects with the aspiration to resurrection. Lastly, the myth textual analysis of Paz's text deepens the recognition of the tree's relevance, according to the genotextual analysis that links the desire for mystical union to the individuation process.

So, let us now turn the attention to the second research question: how does examining literary texts through the lens of myth textuality enhance the understanding of motifs? Based on the aforementioned discussion, I conclude on the multiple scope of myth textual procedure; I will comment on the specialist perspective, the comparative path, and the theoretical course of thematology.

First, I discuss the interpretation of the motif in the work of a single author, the specialist perspective. The results of both case studies establish that the myth textual interpretation broadens the comprehension of the corpus texts separately. In one

respect, it determines the motif's manifestation in the text, thus sustaining the propositions of previous studies (*Nada*). On the other hand, it adds profoundness to the interpretation of motifs that are already identified by other studies, like in the case of the flâneur motif in Muñoz Molina's work and the tree motif in the texts by Mistral and Paz. In other words, myth textual interpretation is the adequate tool for the researcher that is interested in the work of a specific author, possibly in relation with other texts or in its socio-historical context. In the field of comparative literature, myth textuality contributes to the comprehension of a specific motif, recognised in the texts by various authors. In both case studies, the results of myth textual analysis manifest the amplitude of the motifs in question and their aptitude for variation. I establish a relationship between the symbolic level and the irrational drives that propel the repetitiveness of the motif. In the case of the flâneur, the analysis results demonstrate how myth textual interpretation sharpens the definition of the motif.

Similarly, I can extrapolate the more in-depth interpretation of the motif to the realm of thematology. In the theoretical part I proposed a synthetic definition of the motif, based on a compilation of the suggestions in existing studies. The results of the myth textual analyses go beyond this definition, adding an innovative level of comprehension. It is established how the irrational drives direct textual repetitiveness, linked to the symbolic level of the motif. They correspond with the appreciation of literature as a survival strategy, suggested by Durand as well as by Kristeva. Durand's myth criticism establishes the way to confront the questions of life and the world around us, while genotextuality introduced by Kristeva interprets the textual expression of the individuation process. Considering this extension of the motif's interpretation, I return to the synthetic definition proposed in the introduction, complementing it as follows:



The motif is a grouping of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and varied manifestation in literary tradition. The motif gives presence to the irrational drives of the human being, manifested in the text at the shared and public level of interaction with the surrounding world and at the particular level of the individuation process.

In any case, the interpretation of the symbolic nature of the motif is essential. Investigating the symbolic level of the text brings forward aspects that only come to light after a profound and stratified process of reading and interpretation. Obviously, it is not possible to anticipate the results. Since it depends on the researcher's view, myth textuality is an intuitive procedure that coincides with the reader's recognition of symbolic factors. In line with the eclectic nature of the method, the results of the case studies evolve out of my choices, which encompass only a limited portion of myth textuality's possibilities. I will enlarge in the following section on the method's versatility, in order to then detail the alternative options for myth textual analysis.

## 6.2 Recommendations for future research

Based on the observations concerning the theoretical framework and the results from the case studies, put forward in the previous paragraph, we can conclude that the researcher's freedom, autonomy and creativeness are characteristic of the myth textual tool. The tool is elastic and flexible; it allows the researcher to guide the entire process, choosing how to employ the instrument. Clearly, this liberty is in consistency with the key perspective of the inventors of both constitutive theories, myth criticism and intertextuality. As Fátima Gutiérrez emphasised, Gilbert Durand himself did not object to divergent interpretations of the concept 'myth criticism', although he also founded a school of disciples, united in the *Centre de Recherche sur l'Imaginaire* in Grenoble (interview 8 December 2021). As far as Kristeva's position is concerned, she is known for not attaching much value to fixed concepts and constraining methods, but preferring the constant challenging of meaning, through textual, semiological and psychoanalytic research (Bohórquez 46).

Given that it is a combined method, I suppose that the instrumental versatility will attract the interest of researchers whose expertise might involve other fields of interest than mine. Therefore, I will also discuss the part of the method's potential that has not been utilised in the present analyses, thus projecting towards the future the diversity of myth textuality's possible paths. Returning first to the *au féminin* position, I emphasise that the emancipatory perspective can be extended to different points of departure, like for instance literature that promotes a queer or non-binary orientation. Another form of corpus expansion might be literature of eccentric or non-occidental origin. The remaining research alternatives will be commented on according to motif, corpus selection and the researchers' methodological options.

I demonstrated that myth textuality is operative in the field of thematology and comparative literature; furthermore, it serves as an instrument for the specialists who dedicate themselves to the work of a specific author. In general, one employs myth textuality for analysing manifestations of repetitiveness. While referring to this recurrence with the term 'motif', researchers operate in line with the definition of the motif: they recognise repetition that occurs in literary tradition as well as in the text. According to the concrete nature of the motif, it has observable characteristics; it can manifest as:

- a figure, like the flâneur or the castaway
- a location or a spatial organisation, such as the garden or the island
- an action, like strolling or weaving
- an object, such as the mirror or the dagger
- a concrete quality, like form or colour

It is not necessary to search in advance for the motif's symbolic value since it comes to light during the second phase of the analysis.

Regarding the corpus, it is worth mentioning that the concept 'motif' also occurs in other forms of artistic expression. Therefore, myth textuality can be operative to investigate repetitiveness in music, visual arts and cinema, as long as there is a combination present of recognisable repetition and certain narrative lines. To make some suggestions, Wagner's operas, such as *Ring des Nibelungen* (1876) and *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), are known for the strong presence of musical motifs that accompany certain characters or dramatic movements. In popular culture, the same occurs in film-series like the *Harry Potter* or *Lord of the Rings* movies. Likewise, one finds visual motifs in film, like the repetitive presence of mirrors and birds in Hitchcock's cinematographic work. In terms of symbolic analysis, musical and theatrical forms can

be the object of myth textual investigation. For instance, according to myth criticism, the mathematical floor patterns created by Dutch choreographer Hans van Manen might be interpreted according to the polemic category of the imaginary. On the contrary, the dynamics of the large groups of dancers swarming the floor in the choreographies by Pina Bausch are reminiscent of the unifying tendency of the centric category. Finally, myth textuality also applies to visual arts, given the relevance of the concept 'motif' in this realm. It is notable that Kristeva as well as Durand dedicated some of their analyses to this field. Kristeva's *Desire in Language* (1982) includes an essay on Bellini's paintings of the Madonna and Child, in which she discusses how the spatial representation of mother and child alludes to a separation between them (Bann 59). Durand mentions the work of Van Gogh as an example of viscosity, the tendency to agglutinate, inherent in the centric category. Viscosity appears in the thematization of bridges as well as in the "linking of objects of pictorial matter" (Durand, *The Anthropological Structures* 263).<sup>373</sup> Thus, an analysis of the motif's symbolic level can also be conducted on visual artistic productions.

In the realm of literature, researchers have a range of possibilities at their disposal, since the motif manifests in narrative prose, poetry, theatre texts, and hybrid textual forms. As I put forward in the previous paragraph, the text's extension is a relevant factor as far as the feasibility of myth textual analysis is concerned. In one respect, it is possible to perform a complete analysis of the motif in a short text, like a poem or a story, as long as images appropriate for symbolic analysis manifest in sufficient measure. Think of "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe, which is a story of only seven pages with a high density of symbolic images. Another option is to select the manifestation of the motif in a coherent set of short texts, like the chapter "Árbol

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<sup>373</sup> The original quotation: "la liaison de la matière picturale" (Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques* 312).

adentro” by Octavio Paz or the poetry compilation by Teresa de Ávila. On the other side, in the case of an extensive text it may be necessary to limit the analysis to certain aspects of the motif, like in the case study of the flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* and the tree in *Desolación*. Needless to say, that concise texts impede the recognition of repetition in the text, which is the motif’s key component. Finally, it is worth considering that in translated texts the images that are relevant for the analysis of the motif’s symbolic nature may get lost in translation. As I observed in the case study of the flâneur, in *To Walk Alone in the Crowd*, the English translation of *Un andar solitario entre la gente*, some of the aquatic images and references to the suffocating character of the multitude disappear. Both types of images, of water and of devouring, are essential for myth critical analysis. Therefore, it is advisable to cross-reference the translation with the original language text, when conducting a myth textual analysis. For myself, I prefer to work with original texts in the languages that I master sufficiently to appreciate their symbolic level.

Once the motif and the corpus have been selected, researchers have more than one possibility at their disposal. I will give some examples corresponding to the case studies. The novel *Nada* and the poetry collection *Desolación* in their entirety lend themselves also for a myth textual analysis that investigates various motifs in the same text. The analysis of the flâneur in *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Muñoz Molina can be expanded to all aspects of the motif in the text. Regarding Paz, the specialists that study his work would be interested in the interpretation of the tree motif in other texts by the same author. The same goes for the flâneur motif in Muñoz Molina’s oeuvre. Following the perspective of comparative literature, myth textual procedure

can place the flâneur and tree motifs in other historical and geographical situations.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, there is the possibility to explore one single motif in distinct literary genres, like the tree in narrative prose or the flâneur in poetry. Lastly, for the specialist in flânerie literature it would be interesting to verify the adjusted definition of the flâneur motif in other texts.

In short, there are various choices: according to the motif in the work by two or more authors; according to the motif in two or more texts by one and the same author; according to various motifs in the same text. Based on the corpus, the sub-questions are formulated in dialogue with:

- the author of the text
- the spatiotemporal situation
- the literary genre
- the researcher's reading horizon

In the case studies, I executed the analysis as complete as possible, to give an indication of the scope of the method. The range of possibilities extends to the corpus, in which literary texts combined with other artistic disciplines, like music, visual arts and cinema. In that case, the concepts of intermediality interpret the relationships between artistic genres. To give some examples of intermediality, I mention the presence of musical structures in literature, like the fugue in Muñoz Molina's *Sefarad* (2001) and in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1920);<sup>375</sup> in the poetry collection *Poemas del cante jondo* (1931) by Federico García Lorca some chapters are structured according to

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<sup>374</sup> See the case study that situates the flâneur in *Flights* (2007) by Olga Tokarczuk, in dialogue with "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe (Vulkers, "Myth Textuality").

The students of the myth textuality courses placed the motif in very diverse literature, according to their own reading horizon. See the paragraph on the classes (6.1).

<sup>375</sup> While considering counterpoint as the predominant aspect of the fugue, Valdivia proposes that the combination of different voices and narrative lines in *Sefarad* refers to the fugue structure (76). The chapter "Sirens" in *Ulysses* is another example of the literary interpretation of the fugue (Barska 124).

flamenco styles, like poems that are reminiscent of the *siguiriya*.<sup>376</sup> Another form of intermediality is the confluence of visual art and literature, often in the shape of ekphrasis, the vivid verbal description of a work of art. The chapter “Visto y dicho” (Seen and said) in Paz’s *Árbol adentro* is a strong example of ekphrasis, including poems referring to the works of artists such as Joan Miró, Marcel Duchamp, Bob Rauschenberg, and Antoni Tàpies. The poem “Cuatro chopos” (Four poplars), although not mentioning the painter, alludes to the series of tree paintings by Claude Monet.<sup>377</sup> Thus, the Monet paintings might serve as a visual pretext for an intermedial analysis of the tree motif in Paz’s poetry.

However, the researchers’ freedom also consists of accentuating a part of the procedure, consistent with their interest or their specific expertise. Thus, it is possible to use the tool partially. For example, situating the motif in literary tradition adds value to the analysis, but it is not indispensable to include it in the analysis. That way, it serves for the researcher’s orientation, without redacting it. The first intertextual step may indicate the relationships between texts without using the specific terminology introduced by Genette. Obviously, the symbolic analysis is vital, in line with the symbolic nature of the motif. In this regard, researchers may restrict themselves to only one interpretative axis: if they engage with the unconscious path, emphasising the role of non-verbal, affective, and often disturbing elements that exist beneath the surface of conscious thought, they intensify the genotextual analysis; if they are interested in myth, they accentuate myth critical procedure. In terms of literary resources, the poetry specialist in the realm of metre or the linguistic expert interested in phonemes can opt for another type of analysis. For example, the analysis at phoneme level, as the one

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<sup>376</sup> The poems that García Lorca dedicated to the *siguiriya* follow the structure as well as the emotional force of this flamenco style (Miller 69-74).

<sup>377</sup> The verses give a vivid description of the interplay of lines and the colours of the trees reflected in water, just like they are represented in Monet’s work (Paz 123-26).

conducted by Kristeva in *La révolution du langage poétique* on Mallarmé's texts. Clearly, the third phase of the procedure is executed in line with the accents placed in the previous phases.

Besides considering myth textual analysis as such, there is also the opportunity to include the procedure in interdisciplinary approaches. Evidently, it lends itself to the confluence of literary analysis and the scientific fields that are inserted in myth textuality: psychology, the study of myth, anthropology, and sociology. It is no coincidence that, for example, psychoanalysts like Freud, Lacan and Kristeva, and the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss sustained certain parts of their studies on the interpretation of myth and other literary texts. Thinking of how Kristeva unified in her work on Teresa de Ávila psychoanalytic approach with literary analysis and biography, I imagine that myth textual analysis can be integrated in collaboration projects, uniting literary studies with adjacent disciplines that encompass individual as well as societal aspects expressed in texts. As suggested earlier, myth textuality is also suitable for intermediality studies, combining literary analysis with other artistic disciplines: visual arts, cinema, or music. The analysis of the symbolic value of the shared motif will add another level of interpretation to its combined manifestation in different art forms.

Another option is incorporating myth textuality in translation studies. Remember that the English version of *Un andar solitario entre la gente* by Muñoz Molina (*To Walk Alone in the Crowd*) eliminates certain repetitive elements from the translation. Such a deletion affects the motif's vigour in the text, the symbolic aspect that connects most strongly with the responsiveness of the reader. I propose to consider myth textuality's capacity to interpret the relevancy of repetitive textual elements in the framework of literary translation. Therefore, I suggest including myth textuality's capacity to interpret motifs in the theoretical approach to literary translation.



Resuming, when beginning a myth textual analysis, researchers choose their trajectory: they select the motif and the corpus, and formulate the specific research questions, in line with the objective of their investigation. Given the great flexibility of the tool, researchers dispose of a diversity of possibilities that can be summarised as follows: free selection of motifs and corpus texts, according to their reading horizon and life experience; execution of a full or partial myth textual analysis, in line with their interest and expertise; option for literature or other artistic forms of expression, if desired in combination with and according to intermediality; the interdisciplinary approach, incorporating myth textuality in another type of investigation that encompasses the relevance of textual repetitiveness.

On a theoretical level, the innovative nature of the concepts and methodology introduced in this project brings forward the need for further investigation. In the first place, from the field of thematology, I advocate examining the tenability of the motif's redefinition, in particular its connection with identity construction and existential life's issues. Secondly, I propose exploring the methodological implementation of myth textuality's constitutive theories. To be concrete, I would welcome comments on genotextual method as defined in this thesis, and on myth critical procedure according to my reformulation of terminology. Therefore, I suggest a thorough examination by specialists in the field of Durand's myth criticism and by experts on psychoanalytic concepts as applied by Kristeva in the realm of literary analysis. In the same context, I also encourage observations on the cohesion of the model.

To conclude, I return briefly to the defining point of departure of myth textuality, the confluence of intuitive and systematic approach that corresponds to the characteristics

of the motif. Nowadays it is considered one of the main assets of the Humanities that they are supported by a different kind of intelligence, not leaning predominantly on the instrumental, mechanical nature of rational thinking.<sup>378</sup> In the review of my individual learning path, I established that exactly the integration of Kristeva's genotextuality, which is sustained by the intuitive recognition of elements of the individuation process, led to the completion of myth textual procedure. Therefore, I wish to emphasise that in myth textuality intuition, working from sensitivity, is a path of knowledge that is not just permitted, but indispensable. For future motif research in the field of myth textuality, I advocate deliberately mobilising this intuitive power and denominating its operation in the investigation process. In this context, again I refer to the relevance of María Zambrano's poetic reason. Furthermore, I underline the interest of investigating such an approach from the point of view of education sciences.

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<sup>378</sup> Although the academic world still prioritises science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines (the so-called STEM direction), the need for "creative scientist" is also expressed (Madden et al 541). Recent tendencies in education propose that STEM curricula might benefit from incorporating so-called soft skills. By integrating creative skills and knowledge of the arts, the so-called 'STEAM projects' produce scientists with more diverse skills (Madden et al. 543).

### 6.3 Final reflections

As myth textuality finds literary interpretation on the understanding of the irrational impulses of the human being, using the instrument brings forward in the researcher the awareness of such dynamics in a broader sense. Therefore, I will now, besides the retrospective view and the extension towards the future potential of the instrument, adopt an eccentric position regarding the research process, in order to reflect on the influence of the myth textual perspective on the comprehension of literature, culture, and life's issues.

From the more general to the specific, I begin with the question: how does the myth textual view affect life in the broad sense? I propose that myth textual perspective translates mainly into a more understanding interpretation of human behaviour, be it one's own actions or the conduct of others. Conceiving life as a narrative, once again I consider the manifestation of motifs: elements of repetition, symbolic level, and personal perception. Repetitive decisions and reactions often come from an underlying stratus of the human psyche, to express and overcome the traumas of life. At the same time, we all coincide in basic reactions to alterity, according to polemic, centric, and rhythmic strategies. In line with the symbolic nature of the literary motif, repetitive human reactions reveal universal impulses that do not manifest at first sight. Since we all share the initial trauma, separation from the maternal body, as well as confronting alterity, the comprehension of the underlying drives for human actions augments the empathic position towards others. Evidently, the capacity to perceive and understand these underlying drives depends on one's own horizon of experiences, like a 'reading' of the indications from the part of the subject.

While transferring this intuitive comprehension to a cultural level, the contribution of myth textuality extends to the appreciation of artistic expression: why do certain works

of art immediately impress us profoundly? I suggest that an intuitive preference for works that emphasise harmony or project contrast connects with irrational impulses. Obviously, the specialist in visual arts or music can operate from myth textuality to investigate intuitive appreciations on an analytical level. I propose that, in general, the work of art with universal and timeless appeal necessarily connects with the symbolic level, to make it accessible for the perceptive subject, be it in an intuitive way. Thus, I postulate that the use of Artificial Intelligence does not work for the true artistic expression, which is always in contact with irrational impulses, from the personal archaeology of the artist as well as the receiver's intuitive appreciation.

In this sense, it is interesting to return to my initial intention to investigate Antonio Muñoz Molina's texts: Why was I attracted from the beginning by the figure of the *robinson urbano*, in particular its solitary nature and the island situation? This could be the material of an expositive or literary essay, myth textuality on the crossroads of life's issues and literary preference. In the field of literature in the broader sense, myth textuality has deepened my appreciation of texts to such an extent that they now have different levels. The valorisation of the work's rational axis is situated on the plane of intrigue and plot, of the intellectual content. In Kristeva's terms, the phenotext. At the same time, in certain texts I feel intrigued by the symbolic reading level; the assumption of an additional, underlying level occurs, which cannot be interpreted immediately in its entire profoundness.

In conclusion, the conception of myth textuality deepened my intrinsic interest in the irrational impulses of the human being, which resulted in the research of the literary text's profoundness, in the concrete through focussing on the motif. As I suggested in the opening section of this conclusive chapter, I underwent a process of growth as a

researcher, both on a theoretical and on a personal level. I am looking forward to continuing the myth textual path, according to the axes explored in this section: augment the comprehension of life's issues, deepen the intuitive appreciation of artistic expressions, and, preferably, proceed the research of the stratified nature of literary texts. For future projects, I see three possible directions on the myth textual path: theoretical, educational, and analytical approach.

In the practical field of literary analysis, I am drawn to researching the texts of authors whose work up till now has been approached from a limited perspective, to contribute to the profound appreciation of their texts. Concretely, I propose to centre on international literature, written in the Spanish, French or English language. To comply with the *au féminin* implication, I limit myself to the work of authors who identify themselves as female, preferably from the twentieth and twenty-first century. I mention some options: motifs in current rewritings of antique myths, such as done by Margaret Atwood, Natalie Haynes, and Madeline Miller;<sup>379</sup> the mythical nature of Ana María Matute's work and the inherent motifs, in dialogue with current authors such as Pilar Quintana, Elisa Victoria, Pauline Peyrade and Annie Ernaux.

Complying with the broader perspective of myth textuality as an instrument for literary interpretation, I foresee bringing it to the attention of those interested in the relationship between the text and the underlying, irrational dynamics that evoke its production. On a theoretical level, this implies presenting myth textuality in the academic field, through participation in conferences and research collaborations. While taking into consideration the central perspective of motif analysis, these activities would be situated in the liminal field between literature and myth, on the one side, and psychology and anthropology, on the other. Obviously, bringing myth textuality into the

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<sup>379</sup> *The Penelopiad* (2005) by Margaret Atwood; about Medusa, *Stone Blind* (2022) by Natalie Haynes; *The Song of Achilles* (2011), *Galatea* (2013) and *Circe* (2018) by Madeline Miller.

world also supposes the educational aspect of including it into university curricula and research projects. Furthermore, given that the interest in literature interpretation is not limited to the academic territory, motif interpretation and myth textuality might also be forwarded into other realms, through presentations and publications addressed at a broader public.

Finally, again I hark back to the importance of personal experience and sensitivity in the context of academic research. Developing myth textuality, along the theoretical as well as the personal research path, made me aware of the interest of uniting intuition and rationality. Needless to say, the importance of a more intuitive approach has been proposed by others, like the concept of poetic reason introduced by the Spanish philosopher María Zambrano. Durand as well as Kristeva also founded their conceptual frameworks on the relevance of pre-rational impulses in the realm of human forms of expression. Durand underlined that the imaginative power of the human being is situated beneath and prior to any reasoning ("Fondements"). Thus, he joined imagination and systematisation in his panorama of the images produced by humans. Kristeva showed how traces of the pre-rational level of being, the *chora*, irrupt through the genotext into the rational level of the phenotext. The products of the imagination and the genotext are closely connected to the symbolic level of the text. Well then, the relevance of concepts such as symbolic value and poetic reason must not be underestimated. In concluding this project on myth textuality, I advocate ongoing attention for the intuitive approach to the impulses for and the interpretation of literary production, through combining the postulates of Julia Kristeva and Gilbert Durand. Like in dance, the sensitive appreciation of musical language combined with the analysis of

its structure propels the music's interpretation and the creation of a new bodily text: the choreography.





## **APPENDICES**



## **1 Terminology, in alphabetical order**

The following definitions are valid in the realm of literary criticism in general, and in particular in the present dissertation. The items marked with \* are concepts I introduced in the framework of this thesis.

### **abjection (Kristeva)**

Experience of rejection on the part of the new-born with respect to the mother, at the beginning of the individuation process. It translates in artistic products into exploring the boundaries of what is permitted, in material and in abstract sense.

### **antiphrasis (Durand)**

Inversion of the symbolic value of the images pertaining to the diurnal regime.

### **archetype**

Primordial image that concretises in traditional narrative through symbolic language. The archetype is abstract and unchangeable.

### **centric, category\***

In the reorganisation of myth criticism: section of the images that display an inward movement; its principal dynamic is inclusion.

### **chora (Kristeva)**

Pre-verbal state of the new-born, when it still feels united with the maternal body, on the way to defining itself as its own body.

### **diegetic, transposition (Genette)**

Change of the spatiotemporal universe of the pretext.

### **diurnal, regime (Durand)**

Section of original myth criticism containing images of opposition and heroic symbols.

### **figurative structuralism (Durand)**

Hermeneutical system invented by Gilbert Durand, which builds the analysis of artistical products on the interpretation of its mythical motifs.

### **formal, transposition (Genette)**

Regards the transposition of the text's form; may refer to a change of the language, the extension or the genre of the text.

**genotext (Kristeva)**

Stratus that lies beneath the surface of the text, defined by affects and drives, erupting in the phenotext through deviations of the textual organisation.

**genotextual, analysis\***

Textual analysis, based on Kristeva's concepts, that establishes the traces of the *chora* in the text. It is conducted through two approaches: the accentuation of the experience of initial scission; the continuous exploration of boundaries.

**intertext\***

Corpus text, in which the reader establishes a relationship with other texts.

**intertextuality (Genette)**

The effective presence in the text of a part of an earlier text (Genette 1982: 8).

**intertextuality\***

The reader's perception of textual interaction, produced within the text. Encompasses relationships between the intertext and previously read texts, as well as the interaction between genotext and phenotext. The subject/reader may also interpret intertextuality as an indication of the historical situation of the text. (Based on Kristeva, qtd. in Juvan 12)

**isomorphism (Durand)**

In myth critical procedure, referring to the images of similar meaning that can be identified in the text; isomorphic and redundant symbols are the point of departure of the interpretation of the symbolic value of these textual elements.

**motif\* (initial composite definition)**

A group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and variable manifestation in literary tradition.

**motif\* (final redefinition)**

The motif is a grouping of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and varied manifestation in literary tradition. The motif gives presence to the irrational drives of the human being, manifested in the text at the shared and public level of interaction with the surrounding world and at the particular level of the individuation process.

**mystical tendency (Durand)**

The part of the nocturnal regime that contains the images of inversion and intimacy.

**myth**

Traditional and a-historical narrative in which the essential issues of the human being are projected. The fundamental characteristic of myth is reinterpretation.

**myth criticism (Durand)**

Method that analyses the literary (artistic) work from the manifestation of repetitive textual elements and their interpretation according to the regimes of the imaginary.

**myth criticism\***

Updated model of durandian myth criticism that interprets the literary work according to the polemic, centric, and rhythmic categories.

**mythanalysis (Durand)**

Socio-historical analysis that establishes, based on the myth critical investigation of a representative corpus, those mythical tales that represent a particular cultural realm or era.

**mytheme (Durand)**

Minimal unit with mythical meaning, recognisable in the text (Durand 1979: 310).

**nocturnal, regime (Durand)**

Section of original myth criticism containing antiphrastic images, cyclical images, and myths of progress. Comprehends the mystical and synthetic tendencies.

**phenotext (Kristeva)**

Structured and grammatical stratus of the text, connected to the process of communication.

**polemic, category\***

In the reorganisation of myth criticism, section that contains two groups of images that operate in opposition.

**pragmatic, transposition (Genette)**

With respect to the pretext: change of the story's course of events or actions.

**pretext**

Text, recognised by the reader as connected with the intertext, based on their personal reading experience.

**quantitative, transposition (Genette)**

Regards the change of the pretext's extension; can refer to reduction of augmentation.

**redundancy (Durand)**

Repetitive and accumulative presence by which the relevant textual elements manifest in the text.

**rejet (Kristeva)**

The child's experience of rejection felt at the moment of separation from the mother's body.

**rhythmic, category\***

In the reorganisation of myth criticism: section containing the images that display a rhythmical alternation of opposite elements; its principal dynamic is interchange.

**scheme (Durand)**

In original myth criticism, the dynamic that produces myth; the mental drive fostering the constitutive elements of myth.

**semanalysis (Kristeva)**

Analytical procedure that distinguishes in the text the division between the semiotic and symbolic modalities, which connect to the unconscious and the conscious.

**semiotic, modality (Kristeva)**

Text level that connects to unconscious processes, also referred to as the genotext.

**symbol (Durand)**

Concrete image through which the archetype concretises in myth. Symbols are variable, according to the particular era or culture in which they manifest.

**symbol\***

Concrete image, substantiation of the abstract nature of underlying themes and ideas.

**symbolic, modality (Kristeva)**

Text level that connects to communication, organised and grammatical in nature, also referred to as phenotext.

**synthetic tendency (Durand)**

The part of the nocturnal regime that contains cyclical images and myths of progress.

**thematic, transposition (Genette)**

Refers to the change of the text's content; may include change of the spatiotemporal universe of the text or modifications of the argument or the characters' actions.

**theme**

Abstract drive that impulses the conception of the literary text; it translates to the concrete level through the motif.

**topic**

Also referred to as *topos* or 'common place'. Fixed formulation referring to the concretisation of the theme, connected to specific moments in literary history.

**transmotivation (Genette)**

Pragmatic transposition referring to the motivation of the characters' actions.

**transposition (Genette)**

Transformative action taking place between pretext and intertext.

**transtextuality (Genette)**

Every type of relationship between a text and other texts (Genette 1982: 7).

**transvalorisation (Genette)**

Pragmatic transposition referring to the valorisation of the characters' actions.

## 2 Transpositions according to Genette

Genette's analytical model adheres to the structuralist approach, centring predominantly on *hypertextual practice*: the transformative action that takes place between the previous text, the *hypotext*, and the subsequent text, the *hypertext*. It distinguishes two types: *transformation* and *imitation*. In the case of transformation, the action of a text is translated to a distinct environment: that is, the same story told in a different way. By contrast, imitation produces a hypertext that is generically compatible with the hypotext; that is, formally as well as thematically. In other words, something else is told in the same way (Genette 1982: 12-3). By also applying a division according to the functions 'ludic', 'satirical' and 'serious', Genette arrives at the following explanatory diagram (1982: 37).

relation \ régime	ludique	satirique	sérieux
transformation	parodie	travestissement	transposition
imitation	pastiche	charge	forgerie

Figura 6. Transformative operations according to Genette (1982: 37)

In the framework of the research model, I refer to the terms 'pretext' and 'intertext', being the components of the comparative procedure. Furthermore, I confine myself to the operation referred to by Genette as 'transposition'; I include an overview of the most elementary transposition operations.



- The transposition of the pretext can be *formal* and *thematic* (Genette 1982: 238). The most relevant transpositions of the text's form are translation (transfer to another language) and quantitative action (reduction or augmentation of the text's extension) (Genette 238, 263).
- Thematic transposition includes *diegetic* and *pragmatic* transpositions (Genette 341). Change of the story's universe (temporal or spatial) pertains to diegetic transpositions. Modifications of the plot or the characters' actions are pragmatic transpositions (*ibid.*). Transmotivation (regarding the motivation of the characters' actions) and transvalorisation (regarding the value of the actions) are the key pragmatic transpositions (Genette 372, 393). It has to be noted that changes of the text's form or diegesis generally lead to pragmatic transposition.

Based on this overview of transtextuality, I composed the following operative diagram of transpositions.

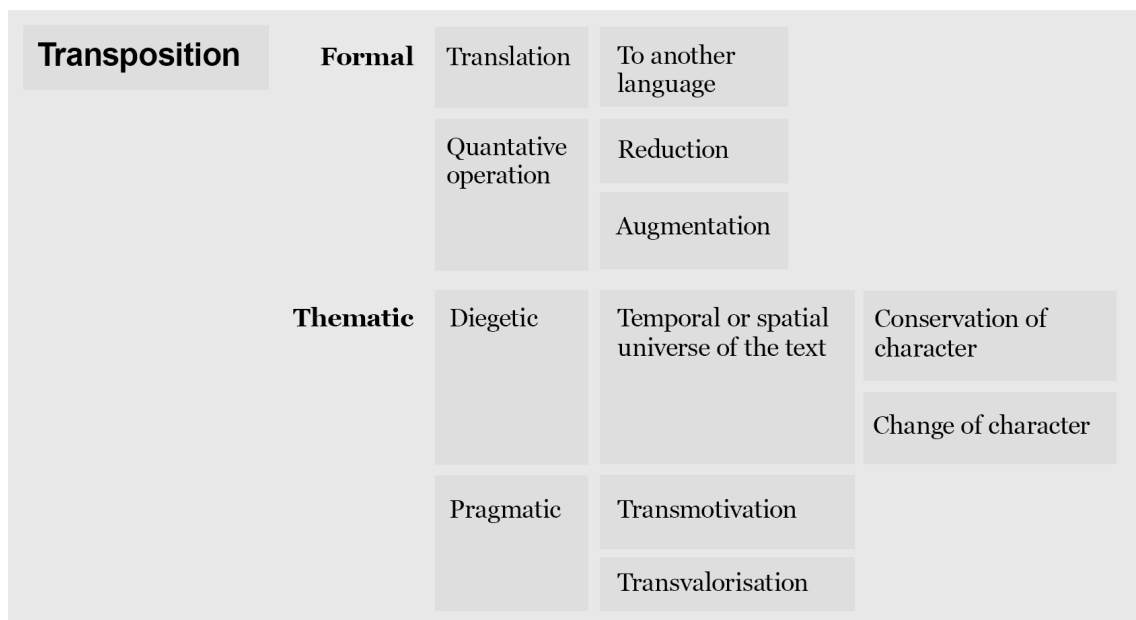


Figura 7. Transpositions according to Genette

### 3 "Árbol adentro" by Octavio Paz

#### Árbol adentro

Creció en mi frente un árbol.  
Creció hacia dentro.  
Sus raíces son venas,  
nervios sus ramas,  
sus confusos follajes pensamientos.      5  
Tus miradas lo encienden  
y sus frutos de sombras  
son naranjas de sangre,  
son granadas de lumbre.  
   Amanece  
en la noche del cuerpo.                      10  
Allá adentro, en mi frente,  
el árbol habla.  
   Acércate, ¿lo oyes?

*Árbol adentro*. Seix Barral, 1987: p. 137

#### A Tree Within

A tree grew inside my head.  
A tree grew in.  
Its roots are veins,  
its branches nerves,  
thoughts its tangled foliage.                      5  
Your glance sets it on fire  
and its fruits of shade  
are blood oranges,  
are pomegranates of flame.  
   Day breaks  
in the body's night.                              10  
There, within, inside my head,  
the tree speaks.  
   Come closer – can you hear it?

*A Tree Within*. New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1988 [1987]: p. 115.

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**ABSTRACT**

Literary texts are known for their pursuance of universality while striving for originality at the same time. While the author intends to create a unique text, the reader may recognise in it figures or situations that have been represented in other texts. Understanding and interpreting this paradox in literary texts is at the centre of the present thesis. Since it refers to textual repetition as well as variation over time, the concept 'motif' is the point of departure for the theoretical framework. The synthetic definition assembled from existing studies of motif interpretation serves as the initial guideline: a motif is a group of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent as well as varied manifestation in literary tradition. Existing motif studies operate from two different angles: defining the manifestations of the motif, over time as well as in the text (Daemmrich, Freedman); proposing an update on methodology, by including the principles of intertextuality (Pimentel, Morgan). Current approaches to motif analysis mostly limit themselves to a diachronic or a synchronic perspective; they do not attend to the symbolic level of the motif.

This leads to the hypothesis that understanding the key aspects of the motif requires a relevant analytical instrument. From the premise that existing procedures already engage in textual repetition and variation, and in the symbolic level of the text, this thesis combines intertextuality and myth criticism towards *myth textuality*, a comprehensive instrument for motif interpretation. Myth textuality unites current procedures regarding repetition and variation, while adding the interpretation of the essential aspect of the motif, its symbolic level. The theoretical framework of this thesis determines which elements of intertextuality and myth critical method combine to form myth textuality, an instrument that enhances the understanding of the motif. The case

studies determine how reading through the lens of myth textuality contributes to the understanding of the motif in the literary text. The *au féminin* perspective is valid for the investigation in its entirety, through balanced text selection and a critical approach to the theoretical concepts, especially regarding gender and agency.

### **Theoretical framework**

Chapter 2 begins with the outlining of the concept 'motif', in the context of adjacent notions, such as theme and symbol. While the theme refers to an abstract quality, the motif turns it into a concrete image, thus operating on the same level as the symbol. The motif functions as a structuring text element, its properties are observable, and it has the capacity to operate in a cluster of interrelated sub-motifs.

Examining the components of myth textual procedure starts with the theories of Julia Kristeva, who coined the concept of intertextuality. In the broadest sense, intertextuality refers to the perception by the reader of interrelated texts. From the ideas of psychoanalyst Lacan, Kristeva also explores interrelated levels within the text, according to the irrational drives that are translucent in it. The fundament of this theory of *genotextuality* resides in the *chora*, the primordial phase in which the new-born still feels united with the mother's body. This phase precedes the use of language, logic, and the establishment of identity. Then, the separation between mother and child designates the beginning of self-definition. Kristeva posits that the divided movement between logical and illogical persists, producing the tension between socially accepted discourse and the pre-rational language of the *chora*, a tension that also is reflected in texts. Thus, a continuous interaction takes place between two textual modalities, denominated *genotext* and *phenotext*. The genotext, determined by affects and drives, erupts in the organised character of the phenotext, which is characterised by structured

discourse. Regarding its suitability for motif analysis, intertextuality in the broadest sense alludes to repetition and variation of text elements over time. The particular angle of genotextuality appears from repetition within the text that refers to an underlying, abstract layer, thus connecting mainly to the symbolic level of the motif. Since Kristeva did not present a defined procedure for genotextual analysis, a method needs to be derived from her literary analyses.

The second component, myth criticism, departs from an interdisciplinary view on human sciences and the predominance of the humans' imaginative powers over rationality. Gilbert Durand posits that, ever since ancient myth, narratives reflect the coping strategies that humans employ to face the issues of existence. Therefore, myth criticism proposes to read the literary text as if it were a myth. Methodologically, myth criticism detects repetitive elements in the literary text, subsequently situating them in the categories of the imaginary that are connected to the human being's survival strategies. As a second step, these repetitive elements are clustered into narrative lines called mythemes, which may be connected with ancient myth. Myth criticism's extensive panorama of images produced by human beings covers the main elements of the motif: repetition and variation over time, repetition within the text, and symbolical level. However, Durand's terminology suffers from lack of clarity; at the same time, its point of departure is based on the predominance of the masculine view, thus holding on to superseded gender constructs. Therefore, reformulation of myth critical terminology and systemisation is required, to make the method suitable for motif analysis.

Following the recommendations in the aforementioned paragraphs, chapter 3 composes the myth textual tool, beginning with the sharpening of the constitutive elements. The definition of genotextual method is based on the two ways in which the

genotext manifests: by accentuating the primordial experience of separation and by the continuous exploration of boundaries. The former may lead to the representation of rupture, the desire of reuniting with maternal material, and the challenging of family and society restrictions. The second way appears through a continuous exploration of frontiers: the boundaries between the 'self' and the other; the limits of the morally and ethically permitted; the frontiers of discourse. The genotext involves imagery and semantics, while also covering style, syntactic-level structure and the graphical lay-out of the text. The reformulation of the second component, myth criticism, is founded on gender neutral categories, from the premise that encountering alterity provokes the motivation for all creation. The denomination of the categories runs parallel with the universal coping strategies that are projected in the literary text: opposition, inclusion, and alternation. Thus, the categories of the imaginary are (re)named *polemic*, *centric* and *rhythmic*. The polemic category contains symbolism of negative value (animality, darkness, and falling) opposed by positive images (elevation, solar light, and defence); the centric category refers to an inward movement, by symbols of inclusion and intimacy; the rhythmic category includes the cycle and images that unite opposites.

Subsequently, myth textuality presents the components intertextuality and myth criticism, combined into a three-step method for motif analysis. Motif selection and corpus composition take place as a preliminary action. The first intertextual step identifies the motif in the corpus texts and establishes the relations between pre- and intertexts. The second step involves the symbolic level of the motif, through genotextual and myth critical analysis of corpus texts separately. The third integrative step provides a complete characterisation of the motif in each text, to then compare the various manifestations of the motif on a comprehensive level.

The components of myth textuality intertwine naturally, thus enhancing the cohesion of the procedure. Intertextuality and myth criticism have in common that they consider repetition and variation over time, the structural approach to repetition within the text, and attention to the symbolic level of the text. Besides, both operate from the reader's perspective. Their complementarity is founded on methodological as well as theoretical aspects. In terms of method, intertextuality serves as the necessary preliminary step before myth critical procedure. Furthermore, genotextual analysis considers manifestations of textual repetition that are not covered by myth criticism. On a theoretical level, the components attend to different aspects of the irrational drives that determine the motif's symbolic level: myth criticism concentrates on societal factors, while genotextual analysis covers the process of individuation.

### **Case study**

To evaluate the potential of the procedure, myth textuality is put to practice through the analysis of the motifs of the flâneur and the tree. Chapter 4 addresses the motif of the modern city wanderer in the Spanish novels *Nada* (1945) by Carmen Laforet and *Un andar solitario entre la gente* (2018) by Antonio Muñoz Molina. The principal perspective of the analysis encompasses the figure's interaction with the crowd. The intertextual analysis identifies "The Man of the Crowd" (1840) by Edgar Allan Poe as a pretext. Symbolic analysis, the second step, establishes the repetitive presence of water metaphors, an accent on the inward movement of immersion, and the relevance of rhythmic cadence. The mythemes reveal a connection with the hero's myth and the story of the eternal wanderer. According to the third, integrative step, all symbolic elements are linked with identity construction, thus contradicting the initial acceptance of the flâneur as an idle figure. Accordingly, the redefinition reads: the flâneur

represents the interaction of the human being with the urban environment: they stroll through the city, immersing in the multitude, while simultaneously experiencing the overwhelming effect of the crowd. The confrontation with the masses evokes the urgency of an identitary (re)definition, a reaction underlying the apparently idle nature of the stroll.

Chapter 5, about the ancient tree motif, addresses the poetry collections *Desolación* (1922) by Gabriela Mistral and *Árbol adentro* (1987) by Octavio Paz. It centres on the particular aspect of the tree as a symbol for mystic union, through examining texts of a lyrical nature. Accordingly, the intertextual analysis identifies the lyrical texts by the Spanish mystic Teresa de Ávila as pretexts. The second, symbolic analysis establishes a dynamic identification between the poetic subject and the arboreal element, from images such as the cross, the solitary tree and poetic inspiration. In genotextual terms, the common aspect, alternation between union and separation, supposes the ongoing exploration of boundaries. The myth critical interpretation indicates the predominance of images of the rhythmic category, recognising connections with messianic myth, Edenic myth and the myth of the Great Mother, through the figures of Demeter and Selene. The third, integrative step shows how the ancient tree motif adapts to distinct geographical and historical contexts. Therefore, although not enhancing the comprehension of the tree motif in general, the myth textual interpretation broadens the understanding of the mystical poetry in the corpus texts.

### **Conclusive part**

The discussion of myth textuality, in chapter 6, extends the distanced view on the present project towards the history of the research process and recommendations for future research. From the initial intention to investigate repetitive textual elements in



the work of a single author, the construction of myth textuality supposes a considerable extension of the research's scope. Decisive moments in this process are diverse: on the one hand, my personal view as a researcher developed, according to the interest in the tangential field between psychology and literature. On the other, the input of the students during the classes of myth textuality led to the refinement of the actual tool. Both intertextuality and myth criticism turned out to be useful and challenging theories at the same time. Still, I have achieved the objective of constructing an interpretative tool that encompasses the characteristics of the motif, from the principles of intertextuality and the method of myth criticism. Besides, I propose the definition of an outlined instrument for genotextual analysis, based on Kristeva's concepts, and an update of Gilbert Durand's myth criticism. Both procedures can also be used separately, outside the combined framework of myth textuality.

Regarding the second research question, about the contribution of reading through the lens of myth textuality to the comprehension of the motif in literary texts, I conclude on the multiple scope of myth textual procedure. Besides being operative in comparative literature, it is also beneficial for the specialist viewpoint, centred on the work of a single author. In the general field of thematology, myth textuality provides an innovative approach, based on the relevance of the symbolic level of the literary motif. Finally, the results of my research enhance the initial understanding of the motif, redefining it in accordance with the irrational drives that are expressed in the text. Subsequently, the complete definition of the motif reads as follows:

The motif is a grouping of repetitive textual elements, symbolic in nature, recognisable for its persistent and varied manifestation in literary tradition. The motif gives presence to the irrational drives of the human being, manifested in the text at

the shared and public level of interaction with the surrounding world and at the particular level of the individuation process.

Recommendations for future myth textual research underline first and foremost the versatility of the tool and the corresponding freedom, autonomy and inventiveness of the researcher. To mention some options, according to the researcher's interest and experience: free selection of motifs and corpus texts, a full or partial myth textual analysis, the option for literature or other artistic forms of expression, or an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating myth textuality in other types of investigation that encompass the relevance of textual repetitiveness. On a theoretical level, the innovative nature of the concepts and methodology of myth textuality brings forward the need for further investigation. In particular from the field of thematology, I advocate examining the tenability of the motif's redefinition, its connection with identity construction and existential life's issues. Secondly, I propose exploring the methodological implementation of myth textuality's innovative components, genotextuality and myth criticism.

Finally, the conception of myth textuality deepened my intrinsic interest in the irrational impulses of the human being, resulting in the research of the literary text's profoundness. It also made me aware of the interest of uniting intuition and rationality, along the theoretical as well as the personal research path. Both Durand and Kristeva underlined the relevance of pre-rational impulses in human forms of expression and incorporated these dynamics in a theoretical framework. Continued research through myth textual procedure will follow and extend the path of including personal experience and sensitivity in the context of academic research.

**ABSTRACT (Nederlands)**

De literaire tekst streeft naar het universele, maar tegelijkertijd is originaliteit van belang. Terwijl de auteur probeert een unieke tekst te produceren kan de lezer daarin figuren of situaties herkennen die ook in andere teksten worden beschreven. De interpretatie van deze paradoxale kwaliteit van de literaire tekst staat centraal in dit proefschrift. Het begrip 'motief', dat verwijst naar herhaling en variatie, is daarbij het uitgangspunt. Gebaseerd op eerdere studies, stel ik de definitie samen die in eerste instantie zal dienen als handleiding: een motief is een groep repetitieve tekstelementen, symbolisch van aard, en herkenbaar vanwege zijn herhaalde en gevarieerde manifestatie in de literaire traditie. Bestaande studies gaan te werk volgens twee benaderingen: de verschijningsvormen van het motief definiëren, in de tijd en in de tekst (Daemrich, Freedman); de methodologie actualiseren, door intertekstualiteit erbij te betrekken (Pimentel, Morgan). Huidige benaderingen in motief analyse beperken zich meestal tot een diachrone of een synchrone visie; zij laten het symbolisch niveau van het motief buiten beschouwing.

Dit leidt tot de hypothese dat het begrip van de centrale aspecten van het motief een relevant analytisch instrument vereist. Uitgaande van de premisse dat bestaande procedures herhaling en variatie in teksten al behandelen, alsmede het symbolisch niveau ervan, combineer ik in dit proefschrift intertekstualiteit en mythokritiek tot *mythotekstualiteit*, een complete procedure voor de interpretatie van het motief. Mythotekstualiteit verenigt bestaande benaderingen van motief interpretatie wat betreft tekstuele herhaling en variatie, en voegt een essentieel aspect van het motief toe, het symbolisch niveau. Het theoretisch kader van dit onderzoek bepaalt welke onderdelen van intertekstualiteit en mythokritiek gecombineerd kunnen worden tot *mythotekstualiteit*, een leidraad die het inzicht in het motief vergroot. De *casestudies*

onderzoeken hoe lezen door de lens van mythotekstualiteit bijdraagt aan het inzicht in het motief in de literaire tekst. Het *au féminin* perspectief geldt voor het onderzoek in zijn geheel, door een uitgebalanceerde selectie van teksten en een kritische benadering van de theoretische concepten, met name wat betreft *gender* en *agency*.

### **Theoretisch kader**

Hoofdstuk 2 begint met de definitie van het begrip 'motief', in de context van aangrenzende begrippen, zoals 'thema' en 'symbool'. Terwijl het thema verwijst naar aan abstract idee, manifesteert het motief zich door zijn concrete kwaliteit, en opereert dus op hetzelfde niveau als het symbool. Het motief structureert de tekst, heeft waarneembare eigenschappen en het kan zich voordoen in een cluster van onderling verbonden sub-motieven.

Het onderzoek naar de componenten van mythotekstualiteit begint met de theorieën van Julia Kristeva, die het begrip 'intertekstualiteit' introduceerde. In de ruimste zin verwijst intertekstualiteit naar het herkennen, door de lezer, van onderling gerelateerde teksten. Op basis van de ideeën van de psychoanalyticus Lacan, onderzoekt Kristeva ook verschillende niveaus binnen de tekst, volgens de psychologisch impulsen die erin doorschijnen. Het fundament van deze theorie ligt in de *chora*, de primordiale fase waarin de pasgeborene zich nog steeds één voelt met het moederlichaam. Deze fase gaat vooraf aan het gebruik van taal en logica, en aan identiteitsvorming. Vervolgens markeert de scheiding tussen moeder en kind het begin van zelfdefinitie. Kristeva stelt dat de afwisseling van logisch en onlogisch blijft bestaan, waardoor er een spanning ontstaat tussen het sociaal geaccepteerde discours en de pre-rationele taal van de *chora*, een spanning die zich ook in elke tekst manifesteert. Aldus is er een continue interactie tussen twee tekst-modaliteiten, *genotekst* en *fenotekst* genoemd. De

genotekst, bepaald door emoties en impulsen, doorbreekt de organisatie van de fenotekst, die zich voordoet als een gestructureerd discours. In de context van motief analyse, heeft intertekstualiteit in de ruimste zin te maken met herhaling en variatie van teksten in de tijd. Het specifieke perspectief van *genotekstualiteit* betreft herhalingen binnen de tekst die verwijzen naar een onderliggende, abstracte laag. Genotekstualiteit staat dus vooral in verband met het symbolisch niveau van het motief. Omdat Kristeva geen omliggende procedure voor genotekstuele analyse presenteert, dient er een methode afgeleid te worden van haar literaire analyses.

De tweede component, mythokritiek, gaat uit van een interdisciplinaire benadering van de menswetenschappen en van de predominantie van de menselijke verbeeldingskracht over rationaliteit. Gilbert Durand stelt dat, sinds de oude mythen, vertellingen blijf geven van de overlevingsstrategieën van mensen, wanneer zij geconfronteerd worden met de vragen van het leven. Mythokritiek stelt zich daarom ten doel de literaire tekst te lezen alsof het een mythe is. In termen van methode, brengt mythokritiek repetitieve elementen in de literaire tekst aan het licht, om ze daarna te groeperen volgens de categorieën van het imaginaire die overeenkomen met de menselijke *coping* strategieën. In de tweede stap worden deze herhaalde tekstelementen geclusterd tot narratieve lijnen, *mythema's* genoemd, die kunnen worden verbonden met een mythe. Via een veelomvattend panorama van de menselijke verbeelding, bestrijkt de mythokritiek de centrale aspecten van het motief: herhaling en variatie in de tijd, herhaling binnen de tekst en het symbolisch niveau. Echter, de terminologie van Durand wordt gehinderd door onduidelijkheid; daarnaast is het uitgangspunt van de mythokritiek gebaseerd op de mannelijke blik, waardoor de theorie uitgaat van achterhaalde *gender* constructen. Herformulering van de

mythokritische terminologie is dus vereist om de methode geschikt te maken voor motief analyse.

Volgend op de aanbevelingen die geformuleerd zijn in de voorgaande paragrafen, definieert hoofdstuk 3 het instrument 'mythotekstualiteit', te beginnen met het aanscherpen van de samenstellende onderdelen. De genotekstuele methode gaat uit van de twee manieren waarop de genotekst zich in de tekst manifesteert: door het primordiale trauma te accentueren en door het voortdurend verkennen van grenzen. De eerste manier geeft de ervaring van scheuring weer, thematiseert de wens herenigd te worden met moederlijke materie en ondervraagt restricties van familie en samenleving. De tweede manier verkent de scheidlijn tussen het 'ik' en de anderen, de grenzen van wat er moreel en ethisch geoorloofd is en de wetten van het discours. De genotekst betreft symboliek en semantiek, alsmede de stijl, de syntactische structuur en de grafische lay-out van de tekst. Het herformuleren van mythokritiek, de tweede component, gaat uit van de premisse dat de motivatie voor elke vorm van creatie is gelegen in de confrontatie met 'het andere'. De genderneutrale benoeming van de categorieën loopt parallel met hoe de universele coping strategieën worden geprojecteerd in de literaire tekst: door oppositie, inclusie en afwisseling. Aldus vindt de herbenoeming van de categorieën van het imaginaire plaats: *polemisch*, *centrisch* en *ritmisch*. De polemische categorie omvat symbolen met negatieve waarde (dierlijkheid, duisternis en vallen) tegenover die met positieve waarde (verheffing, (zon)licht en verdediging); de centrische categorie verwijst naar een inwaartse beweging, door symbolen van inclusie en intimiteit; de ritmisch categorie bevat de cyclus en beelden die tegenpolen met elkaar verbinden.

Vervolgens presenteert mythotekstualiteit de combinatie van beide componenten tot een richtlijn voor motief analyse, uitgevoerd in drie stappen. Vooraf vinden de

selectie van het motief en de compositie van het corpus plaats. De eerste, intertekstuele stap herkent het motief in de teksten van het corpus en stelt de relaties vast tussen pre- en interteksten. De tweede stap betreft het symbolisch niveau van het motief, door genotekstuele en mythokritische analyse van de corpus teksten afzonderlijk. De derde, integrerende stap leidt tot de complete karakterisering van het motief in de teksten van het corpus, gevolgd door de vergelijking de verschillende verschijningsvormen van het motief, op een allesomvattend niveau.

Doordat de componenten van mythotekstualiteit natuurlijk met elkaar vervlochten zijn, vertoont de procedure een sterke cohesie. Intertekstualiteit en mythokritiek hebben met elkaar gemeen dat zij zich bezighouden met herhaling en variatie van teksten in de tijd, met de structurele benadering van herhaling binnen de tekst en met het symbolisch niveau van de tekst. Daarnaast gaan zij beide tewerk vanuit het perspectief van de lezer. De complementariteit van de componenten is gebaseerd op methodologische zowel als theoretisch factoren. In termen van procedure, functioneert intertekstualiteit als de noodzakelijke stap voorafgaand aan mythokritiek. Verder behelst de genotekstuele analyse aspecten van tekstherhaling die mythokritiek niet behandelt. Wat de theorie betreft, richten de componenten zich op verschillende aspecten van de irrationele impulsen die het symbolisch niveau van het motief bepalen: mythokritiek concentreert zich op maatschappelijke factoren, terwijl genotekstualiteit ingaat op het individuatieproces.

### **Casestudy**

Om het potentieel van de procedure te evalueren, wordt mythotekstualiteit in de praktijk gebracht door de analyses van de motieven van de flâneur en de boom. Hoofdstuk 4 behandelt het motief van de moderne stad-slenteraar in de Spaanse

romans *Nada* (1945) van Carmen Laforet en *Un andar solitario entre la gente* (2018) van Antonio Muñoz Molina. Het centrale perspectief van de analyse behelst de interactie tussen de flâneur en de menigte. De intertekstuele analyse herkent "The Man of the Crowd" (1840) van Edgar Allan Poe als pretekst. The symbolische analyse, de tweede stap, stelt de herhaalde aanwezigheid van watermetaforen vast, een accent op de inwaartse beweging van onderdompeling en het belang van de ritmische cadans. De mythema's laten een connectie zien met de mythe van de held en het verhaal van de eeuwige zwerver. De derde stap brengt de teksten in verband met identiteitsconstructie, hetgeen de eerdere interpretatie van de flâneur als een inactieve figuur tegensprekt. De herdefiniëring luidt dan ook: de flâneur vertegenwoordigt de interactie van de mens met de stadsomgeving; hij/zij slentert door de stad, dompelt zich onder in de massa en wordt tegelijkertijd de afgeschrikt door de menigte. De confrontatie met de massa veroorzaakt de noodzaak de identiteit te (her)definiëren, een reactie die schuilgaat onder de ogenschijnlijk inactieve aard van de wandeling.

Hoofdstuk 5, over het aloude boom-motief, behandelt de poëziebundels *Desolación* (1922) van Gabriela Mistral en *Árbol adentro* (1987) van Octavio Paz. De analyse concentreert het zich op het specifieke aspect van de boom als symbool voor mystieke eenwording, door het onderzoeken van lyrische teksten. Dus herkent de intertekstuele analyse het lyrische werk van de Spaanse mystica Teresa van Avila als pretekst. De tweede, symbolische analyse stelt de dynamische identificatie vast van het poëtisch subject met de boom, door beelden als het kruis, de solitaire boom en poëtische inspiratie. In termen van genotekstualiteit, veronderstelt de gemeenschappelijke factor, de afwisseling tussen eenwording en scheiding, een doorgaande verkenning van grenzen. De mythokritische interpretatie onderkent dat beelden van de ritmische categorie overheersen en stelt een connectie vast met de Bijbelse mythen van de



Messias en het Paradijs, en met de mythe van de Moedergodin, via de figuren van Demeter en Selene. De derde, integratieve stap laat zien hoe het oude boom-motief zich aanpast aan verschillende geografische en historische contexten. Ondanks dat het inzicht in het motief in algemene zin niet vergroot wordt, verruimt de mythotekstuele interpretatie het inzicht in de mystieke poëzie in de corpus teksten.

### **Ter afsluiting**

De bespreking van mythotekstualiteit, in hoofdstuk 6, kijkt terug op het onderzoeksproces en doet aanbevelingen voor toekomstig onderzoek. Ten opzichte van de oorspronkelijke intentie om herhaalde elementen in het werk van één enkele auteur te onderzoeken, betekent de constructie van mythotekstualiteit een aanzienlijke uitbreiding van het bereik van het onderzoek. Beslissende momenten in dit proces zijn divers: enerzijds, ontwikkelde zich mijn persoonlijke onderzoeksperspectief, in overeenstemming met de interesse in het aangrenzende veld tussen psychologie en literatuur. Anderzijds, leidde de input van de studenten van de colleges over mythotekstualiteit tot de verfijning van het instrument. Intertekstualiteit zowel als mythokritiek bleken nuttige, maar ook uitdagende theorieën te zijn. Niettemin heb ik de doelstelling bereikt een interpretatieve richtlijn te ontwikkelen voor een analyse die alle kenmerkende onderdelen van het motief omvat. Daarnaast stel ik een gedefinieerde methode voor genotekstuele analyse voor, gebaseerd op de concepten van Kristeva, en een update van Gilbert Durands mythokritiek. Beide procedures kunnen ook separaat, buiten het kader van mythotekstualiteit toegepast worden.

Betreffende de tweede onderzoeksvraag, naar de bijdrage van lezen door de lens van mythotekstualiteit aan het inzicht in het motief in de literaire tekst, stel ik het veelomvattende bereik van het mythotekstuele procedé vast. Behalve toepasbaar op

het gebied van *comparative literature*, kan mythotekstualiteit ook ingezet worden door de specialist die zich concentreert op het werk van één auteur. In het algemene veld van de thematologie voorziet mythotekstualiteit in een innovatieve benadering, gebaseerd op het belang van het symbolisch niveau van het motief. Tenslotte, de resultaten van dit onderzoek verfijnen de oorspronkelijke definitie van het motief als volgt: een motief is een groep repetitieve tekstelementen, symbolisch van aard, en herkenbaar vanwege zijn herhaalde zowel als gevarieerde manifestatie in de literaire traditie. Het motief geeft vorm aan de menselijke irrationele impulsen, die zich manifesteren in de tekst op het gemeenschappelijke niveau van interactie met de omringende wereld, en op het specifieke niveau van het individuatieproces.

De aanbevelingen voor toekomstig onderzoek benadrukken in de eerste plaats de veelzijdigheid van deze leidraad en de overeenkomstige vrijheid van de onderzoeker. Om een aantal opties te noemen, in overeenstemming met de interesse en de ervaring van de researcher: vrije keuze van motief en corpus teksten; een volledige of partiële mythotekstuele analyse; de optie voor literatuur of andere artistieke expressievormen, zoals film of beeldende kunst; een interdisciplinaire benadering, door mythotekstualiteit te incorporeren in andere soorten research die uitgaan van de relevantie van tekstuele herhaling. Op theoretisch niveau brengt het innovatieve karakter van de concepten en de methodologie van mythotekstualiteit de noodzaak voor verder onderzoek met zich mee. Met name in het veld van thematologie, pleit ik ervoor de houdbaarheid van de herdefiniëring van het motief te onderzoeken, de connectie met identiteitsconstructie en existentiële levensvragen. Ten tweede, stel ik de implementatie voor van de vernieuwde componenten van mythotekstualiteit, genotekstualiteit en mythokritiek.

Tenslotte, de conceptualisatie van mythotekstualiteit intensiveerde mijn intrinsieke belangstelling voor de irrationele impulsen van het menselijk wezen, resulterend in een onderzoek naar de gelaagdheid van de literaire tekst. Ik werd mij ook bewust van het belang van de combinatie van intuïtie en rationaliteit, in theoretisch zowel als persoonlijk opzicht. Durand en Kristeva benadrukten beiden de relevantie van pre-rationele impulsen in menselijke uitdrukkingsvormen en incorporeerden deze dynamiek in een theoretisch kader. Voortgaand onderzoek volgens de mythotekstuele leidraad zal deze route, die persoonlijke ervaring en sensitiviteit opneemt in de context van academisch onderzoek, vervolgen en verder uitbreiden.



**BIOGRAPHY**

Mieke Vulkers (Johanna Maria) was born on 23 April 1955 in Zwolle. She obtained her gymnasium beta diploma and after completing her training to be a schoolteacher she responded to her passion for dance. Since 1980 she has worked as a dance teacher and choreographer, occasionally in theatre productions. During that time, Mieke always maintained her interest in languages and literature, an interest that led to striking out on a new course from 2013 onwards. In 2016 she got her bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Culture, at the University of Amsterdam. This was in 2017 followed by a *cum laude* master's degree at Utrecht University, in the Spanish track of the programme Literature Today. At the same time, Mieke attended classes on literature and philosophy, given by Hans Achterhuis at the Literatuurhuis Utrecht; at the Centre Erasme, School for Philosophy, she took courses by Hans Achterhuis, Marc de Kesel, and Ruud Welten. The course 'Writing about Poetry' at Stichting Perdu resulted in her activities for the Dutch poetry journal *Awater*, as a reviewer of Dutch poetry.

March 2018 was the start of her PhD project at Utrecht University, on the interpretation of universality and originality in the literary motif. During this PhD, Mieke assisted in bachelor's and master's courses on myth textuality. Her publications in the Spanish academic journals *Signa* (2020) and *Monteagudo* (2022) revolve about the work of the author Antonio Muñoz Molina. At the VII International Conference on Myth Criticism, held October 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the Complutense University of Madrid, Mieke presented her research on myth textuality, titled "Mitotexualidad: la unión de los planteamientos de Gilbert Durand y Julia Kristeva". The corresponding article about myth criticism will be published April 2024 in *CompLit, Journal of European Literature*,

Myth Textuality: Combining Kristeva's Intertextuality and Durand's Myth Criticism

*Arts and Society*. Currently, Mieke is preparing future presentations and publications to bring the procedure of myth textuality to the attention of a broader public.

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Outside the university context, I enjoyed the stimulating philosophy summer courses at Centre Erasme, where the classes by Hans Achterhuis, Ruud Welten and Marc de Kesel provided insights that later surged in the myth textuality research.

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