


CHAPTER 100

Homoafetivity in portuguese literature : the case of the novel o barão de lavos

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we are going to deal with homosexual relationships between men, especially how they are represented in literature and, in a more specific way, in the Portuguese naturalist novel *O Barão de Lavos*. What is the opposite-sex or same-sex preference? A

genetic predisposition or upbringing? A combination of both? The fact is that many, all over the world, continue to have same-sex relationships, and nothing can stop the feelings and practices of such a relationship, mainly because in some there is not even sex. But is there a genetic predisposition to homosexual attraction? Now, sexual behavior in the attraction of the opposite sex has been 'normalized' throughout history, however, the predisposition of homosexual desire was, historically, considered abnormal or, let's say, unnatural.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, we are going to deal with homosexual relationships between men, especially how they are represented in literature and, in a more specific way, in the Portuguese naturalist novel *O Barão de Lavos*. What is the opposite-sex or same-sex preference? A genetic predisposition or upbringing? A combination of both? The fact is that many, all over the world, continue to have same-sex relationships, and nothing can stop the feelings and practices of such a relationship, mainly because in some there is not even sex. But is there a genetic predisposition to homosexual attraction? Now, sexual behavior in the attraction of the opposite sex has been 'normalized' throughout history, however, the predisposition of homosexual desire was, historically, considered abnormal or, let's say, unnatural.

Curious that, according to Naphy (2006), male prostitutes had sex with male devotees in shrines and temples in West Africa, Cyprus, Corinth, Carthage, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Sicily, Egypt, Libya, as well as in ancient times. and modern India, until the beginning of the second half of the 20th century.

The desire to blame someone for homosexuality is deep and typical of many societies, past and present. Another issue discussed would be the “difference” between active and passive homosexuals. In antiquity, the importance fell on the positions exercised by each of the individuals involved in the sexual relationship, as stated by the historian Nussbaum quoted by Naphy (2006, p. 22):

Sex was not (was) in itself morally problematic. Boys and women (were) often treated interchangeably as objects of (masculine) desire. What (was) important socially (was) to penetrate rather than be penetrated. Sexual intercourse (was) understood essentially not as an interaction, but as doing something to someone.

From the millennia before Christ until the Christian era, homosexual practices were an accepted activity in the cultures of the Near East, perceptible in several literary and legal texts where homoffective

activity is mentioned. We have the interpretation made by historians about two laws of the Middle Assyrian period, concluding that the homoaffective relationship was not seen as something degenerate and/or pathological, anyone could practice it freely, as long as they did not use violence to carry out the act, namely rape. In the meantime, there was a kind of culture on the sidelines where all kinds of ambiguities, mixtures and transformations were possible.

“Literature is not just a heritage, a closed and static set of texts inscribed in the past, but rather presents itself as an uninterrupted historical process of production of new texts” (AGUIAR E SILVA, 1991, p.14), the arts in general have offered extensive discussion of homosexuality. In the 20th century, more than tens of thousands of male homosexuals were killed in concentration camps by the Nazis. The representation of this, in a valuable text, we find in the play *Bent*, by Martin Sherman, awarded in the countries in which it was staged, exposing the Nazi persecution of homosexuals and their subhuman daily life in the concentration camp, through Max's trajectory. Let's see the plot: in the 1930s, in Nazi Germany, in the midst of a hunt for homosexuals, young Max tries to flee Berlin, but is captured and sent to a concentration camp, not as a homosexual, but because he is a Jew; there he met Horst, who had been arrested for signing a pro-gay rights manifesto. They live an unexpected and forbidden love story.

When we think that about half a century earlier, we had novels that dealt with homoaffectivity, such as *O Barão de Lavos*, in Portugal, and *Bom-Crioulo*, in Brazil, we see the importance of Art, even when it exaggerates the false Naturalist moralism of Abel Botelho, or in the dubious speech of Adolfo Caminha. We see here a very important milestone, at least as an incentive for further reading on the subject. “In Brazil, depositories of the ideals of patriotic tradition and patriarchal values, Brazilian elites have always been very defensive and, therefore, vulnerable to the specter of deviant desire” (TREVISAN, 2018, p.155)

In the novel *The Third Travesseiro*, by Nelson Luiz de Carvalho (São Paulo, 1998), we meet Marcus, a young man from the middle class, he is dating Renato and thinks about starting a family, but society prevents them. A third character appears. Using an ancient resource, the novel claims that its writing was based on a true story. Renato and Marcus have to deal with Beatriz, the former's ex-girlfriend. A friend of mine, from the public school in Pernambuco, in the late 1990s, was warned by his Department of Education and was almost exonerated for having recommended this book as reading for 3rd year high school students.

But let's go back to the Weimar Republic and the play *Bent*: there, homosexuals had obtained a kind of protection, because they registered with an organ, by which they were supposed to be protected (from murderous discrimination). What the Nazis wanted was everyone's record to hunt them down, and this persecution continued in the other German regimes that followed Hitler's, until 1969. Noting here that the German government, after World War II, dictated that some homosexuals to serve their sentences to the end. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, in 2004, the United States Supreme Court invalidated

the rest of the state laws that prohibited homosexuality , except in the Army. In other countries there have been big changes. In Europe, same-sex unions and LGBTQIA + rights are being legalized to this day.

In ancient Greece, homosexual relationships were established normally, but not exclusively, but between people of different generations – a younger man was the passive partner of an active, older man. In China (and most of the Far EAST), the most common homosexual relationship was between a lower-class man in the passive role and an upper-class man in the active role. It is interesting, in order to understand our study, to know a little about the long history of these practices on our planet so that we do not continue with the crime of wanting to punish someone for their homosexual practices and ignorance of their entire social path.

The gods of India, as in Greece and Rome, took on various appearances and showed a great willingness to love and have sex with various individuals, regardless of their sex. [...] The Hindu gods not only have homosexual relationships but also change sex and, what is more interesting, in some cases they can appear in both male and female forms – or even in both forms at the same time. [...] The result is that sex, sexuality and gender are interchangeable throughout the reincarnation cycle, generally speaking, or even within a given incarnation. [...] In fact, it was only with the dominance of Victorian Britain that Indian cultures began to change (NAPHY, 2006, p. 30 - 31).

Literature, as a whole, deals more with heteronormative relationships . The Western world is guided by Judeo-Christian-Islamic values. In one respect, however, Islam distinguished itself from these religions. For, as stated by Naphy (2006), in the 18th century, poetry and music began to be dominated by men. The same author also cites, in particular, a play with a homoaffective character , where the suffering of the lover who longs to see his beloved again is shown. Let's look at another book.

The name of the author of the novel *O Barão de Lavos* is Abel Botelho, and he dedicates the book to his brother (Luís Botelho). The narrative begins with the period “On that open and humid March night, great animation was merrily bubbling up at the end of Rua do Salitre. It was 1867”, that is, 11 years before the time in which the author is writing. Good, we have in our hands, a 19th century European novel about homosexuality , written in Portuguese. Good way to start a romance. Growing excitement, anticipation, spectacular attractions on offer. But the animation continues:

Facing each other, the varieties and the CIRCUS price [...] everyone wanted a ticket [...] the profuse lighting of the two theaters gilded, revamped, lifted the varieties' octogenarian shoes [...] a man wandered [...] he was in no hurry to get into [...] this tortuous anxiety of someone who is fervently looking for someone [...] The crowd passed by, automatically [...] In their eyes [...] the obstinacy of a desire [...] strong animal concern, on the lips and jaws. The eyes [...] rested preferably on the beardless, slightly downy faces of the teenagers. He looked at them with a greedy and somber fixity (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 7-8).

We see that the 3rd person narrator works with a Freudian game of *fort da* (show/hide). It seems to observe everything from a distance, but imposes subjectivities, too. From the boys who passed quickly to those who stopped, in these the man “stroked them lightly with his arm; he touched his thighs with his cane, as if distracted; he was placed beside them [...] cautious [...] lest someone he knew appear and surprise him” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 9).

We see that the narrator quickly set up an arbor of orgies, salable and forbidden. Man is called a “night owl hunter”, “tyrannized by a secret vice”, perhaps “fierce melancholy” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 9). He finds a colonel who greets him: - “Bravo, baron!”, the Colonel left and the nobleman took a “boy, 15 years old, dark skin, reddish eye, insinuating type of marauder [...]” selling “goodies” with her basket. When he saw himself being stared at, he approached: “ — Do you want pastries, customer?”. A “warm cinnamon and butter” smell rose (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 10). The baron insinuates himself, the boy walks away with a “contemptuous tone”. Friend Henrique Paradela appears. Such an appearance during the “twirling mystery of hallucination of his addiction, shamed him, clarified his reason, gave him the measure of his own debasement” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 11). We see here that the narrator criticizes this type of relationship from the beginning.

The Baron shows himself to be an individualist. “There are several ways to deconstruct, expand the individualist subject, in particular, through identities generated from gender, ethnicity and race, or even social class, nation and culture.” (LOPES, 2002, p. 175). All this adds to the narrative that moves like a whirlwind with a man at the center in an unconventional artistic, sexual and social frenzy.

The text makes it clear that heteronormativity is an inviolable axis. But the man says: “ — I'm waiting for some boys... We agreed to come to the circus today... But they take a long time [...] — And Elvira?” asks Henrique's wife to the Baron. So we assume that he is married (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 11). Leonor says she's going to buy things for “the little ones” and a gift for a maid who's getting married “the day after tomorrow” and called her godmother. Here we have a sociological picture in summary. The woman said goodbye, sent the Baron to warn Elvira. “The day after tomorrow, don't miss it” (BOTELHO, p. 12). From inside the circus came the crack of a whip. Inside, the “function” continued “with the usual monotony”: Clowns, trapeze artists, dogs, horses, but “a monolithic Hercules and an acrobat boy, “rekindled his pederast instincts” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 13). It seems that the narrator criticizes and feels the same attraction as the character, paradoxically, [...] the hot dementias of pagan sensualism. Both virile and sweet [...] it hypnotized him [...] black velvet eyes” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 14). The narrator insists when comparing the eyes and looks with the velvet. “Desire bit his nerves [...] crazy fascination [...] painful [...] Socrates was no longer entirely subjugated, in his first meeting with Alcibiades” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 14)

By invoking Greece, the narration borders on the obvious, in the midst of what already brings to mind, the famous relationship of the ugliest old man with the most beautiful young man in Athens. The Baron attracts a young man with “big, strong and silky eyelashes” who lets himself be seduced by a few pennies, takes him to a corner, proposes things to him (which the narrator sees from afar and does not hear for the first time), seems to approach From the nerve center of this first chapter: “ — You're crazy!... I don't, sir!” It was raining. The two of them stayed in a corner under the same umbrella. The narrator says that the conversation was “ignoble” (BOTELHO, 1982, p.14). “Infamous project of seduction [...] the boy listened meekly, resigned”. Then the performance ends, the circus audience passes by. The narrator says that among the boys there are some with “well-built bodies” (we see confirmed the dubious attitudes of the narrative

focus). The Baron gives the boy a gold coin and says “don't miss it! [...] they separate: the pederast, light, proud, with hope radiating in his features; the ephebe, crestfallen, bending over a problem, touching the paving stones, grave, meditating” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 15). The picture looks clear: prostitution for social reasons. But it is also essential to remember how homophobia began (1300-100 BC)

It is fair here to deal with the biases of this type of relationship, for money or by nature, and how a punishment was ardently sought for this:

Monotheism also had a code (the Mosaic law) that put behavior and “being” in the foreground, enhancing the impact of the acts themselves. In addition, the law also classified as abominable wearing clothes of two types of fabric or sowing two kinds of seeds in a single field – as well as sexual acts between people of the same sex. Finally, the number of situations or acts that could lead to someone being excluded (temporarily or permanently) from the people of Israel was equally eclectic: having defective testicles; being an illegitimate child; suffer from eczema; have nocturnal emission; live in a house with dampness or woodworm. Male prostitutes were often castrated and participated in ceremonies displaying their androgyny and effeminacy. It is quite possible that aversion to homosexuality (or at least its “sacred” version) explains in part why the Bible forbids eunuchs from participating in public assemblies (Deuteronomy 23:2) or transvestism (Deuteronomy, 22). :5). Like the Levitical regulations, the story of Sodom must be understood in this context. It is the main biblical account outside the scope of the law that presents opinions about homosexuality. To demonstrate that the main reason for the destruction of Sodom was homosexuality we would have to interpret Ezekiel's "abominable things" as alluding only to homosexuality and thus ignore everything Ezekiel enumerated first. Also, knowing the Hebrew literary method of making a statement and then repeating it for emphasis. The first sentence as the main clause and the second as a reformulation of the first. The Flood was also justified in part by sexual acts (NAPHY, 2006, 39-40).

It is in the light of so much horror and phobias that spread like social cancer that we delve into the reading of Abel Botelho's novel. Knowledge of diegesis can be practical or theoretical. The behavior of a scholar in front of the Portuguese naturalist book *O Barão de Lavos* reminds us, as always in literary fiction, that there is an animal life, a political one, an artistic one, and that we must, at times, observe the cultural environment interrelated with the work and that, given the literary fact, we can adopt 5 types of behavior: 1) that of a reader interested in understanding the work; 2) that of an analyst, interested in breaking down the work into its elements, with a view to a deep and rigorous understanding of its form and content; 3) the historian, interested in determining the situation of the work in its historical system; 4) that of critic, interested in judging the work, even a very old work, according to scales of value, such as artistic, moral, intellectual, as we are doing here and complementing this with a theoretical look interested in extracting from the work and of everything related to it, general ideas, and to elaborate these ideas with a view to formulating a quasi-theory about what is essential in literary phenomena, remembering that the Theory of Literature has as its object of study, all literary facts. We have to define ourselves: analysis, historiography, criticism or literary theory, we are left with the latter, because it deals with all literary facts.

Let's go back in time once more to follow historical footsteps that lead us to further clarify the researcher interested in the topic.

The last great “Roman” (Byzantine) emperor, Justinian (AD 482-565), introduced the first laws designed specifically to prohibit all types of homosexual relationships. In 533, he placed all

homosexual acts under the law that punished adultery (with death). In 538 and 544, other laws urged all homosexuals to repent of their sins and do penance. Those who continued to be “practicing homosexuals” (to use a current expression) were to be handed over to the mayor (magistrate) of the city.[...] Shortly afterwards, the emperor ordered that all those found guilty of homosexual relations be castrated. [...] From then on, those who felt desire for other men lived in terror (NAPHY, 2006, p. 92-93).

After weaving such observations that lead us to compare times and values, between nobles and commoners, we will start with the genetic structures of the novel *O Barão de Lavos*, its aesthetic-literary categories that condition the work and allow our understanding. Let's establish our method. The theory at this point is not propaedeutic, we can only resort to it, knowing that what concerns us now would not be to use it in the analysis of the structure of the work itself. We do not seek dogmatic, judgmental rules.

2 THE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

Our study develops in two levels of work. One of a scientific nature (research, analysis of literary facts), another of a philosophical nature (formulation of working hypotheses and theories about the results of this work).

The theoretical knowledge of literary facts is based on the following principles: 1) the creative act, reactions of the reader, this not without literary analysis, nor historiography, nor critical treatment; 2) the theoretical study itself, the form, the work and its influence on the public; 3) speculations about abstract realities of literary life (based on scientific knowledge); 4) objective analysis of the psychological act that created this work, a “trend”, “literary fashion”, as they used to say, and literary analysis; 5) as the theory of literature is a discipline *in progress*, we want to understand its evolution, its current study, its perspectives. Always remembering that our primary object is the work, the secondary ones are: the cultural environment of the work, the writer, the reader, the public and the literary history of which it is a part.

The public is not only the sum of readers, but also a collective entity, a social group with its own peculiar behavior. However, we can take as an object of study of literary theory its relations with other literary studies (criticism, analysis and literary historiography) and with psychology, linguistics, stylistics, sociology, philosophy, history, aesthetics and ethics dialogue with the theory of literature, a science of the spirit whose object is the literary world created by man over the centuries; sciences such as it cover all domains of multimodal human activity. The theory of literature cannot aspire to the complete objectivity, rigor and exactitude that characterize the exact sciences and the sciences of nature.

In the psychoanalyst sense, in the second half of the 19th century, homosexuality was seen as a perversion, which appears in this novel, *O Barão de Lavos*, a conception that was not unanimous. “The homosexual perversion of psychoanalysis made the sad and pitiful guardian figure of the belle époque [...] an indefensible notion” (COSTA, 1992, p.85).

The question is expressed in this Portuguese naturalist novel. What would be the purpose? Depending on the theoretical point of view adopted, we can see Literature as a means to something or as

an end, as a sign of change or record of an epoch, as a symptom of the evolution – or not – of the human psyche or a trace of which it maintains itself. same over the millennia. This is not to say which theories are right or wrong, just to demonstrate that each part from a different theoretical point of view, and increasingly the starting point is not Literature itself, but Psychoanalysis, Sociology and Linguistics – to give names to the main theories of literary studies.

How to look at the year 1867 (of the narrative or 1888, of the author compared to the work)? We never want to say “that was the way it was in those days”, this is ridiculous in the face of iconic works of the lyrical, narrative or dramatic genres. We want to remember here that a literary study must be democratic, never elitist. The very concept of literature, reading and criticism should not stand between the reader and the work. We must eliminate this repression.

We think that Literature *could* be defined as writing, in the sense of fiction. Literature uses language in a peculiar way. The formal literary elements would provoke the effect of estrangement, or *defamiliarization*. Under the pressure of such artifices, common language is intensified, condensed, twisted, reduced, enlarged, inverted, renewing habitual reactions, making objects more perceptible. Result: intensification of our life. In this work by Abel Botelho, sex between men is pointed out as an aberration that fatally leads its practitioners to the most terrible decadence.

How to evaluate, on the other hand, the literary value of this work? Literature is not a stable and well-defined entity. Value judgments in this area are notoriously variable. The act of classifying something as literature is extremely unstable. Interests are constitutive of our knowledge. Naturalism sought to make the pathological study of society in an intense social critique. *Value* means everything that is considered valuable by certain people in specific situations, according to specific criteria and in the light of certain objectives. What values do we find in the novel *O Barão de Lavos* ?

Literary value judgments can be subjective and self-serving. There is a close relationship between them and social ideologies. But do we interpret Literature, to some extent, in the light of our own interests? Is our reading of *O Barão de Lavos* today similar to that of the late 19th century, when it was released? Or are literary works rewritten, even if unconsciously, by the societies that read them? What about a person who believes that sex roles have roots only in human biology, as the narrator of the aforementioned novel does?

The beautiful, in Greek tragedy: it was not convenient to show “good” people passing from happiness to misfortune, nor bad men passing from crime to prosperity. Analyzing the character of *Baron de LAVOS*, trying to define him in terms of our ideas, knowing how abstract the essence of the creative act of this work is, is what interests us. The creative process that produced this work was inside Abel Botelho, it became a portrait.

Another literary fact that we are looking for is the reader (after the author and the work) in his effort to understand (here we will launch our hypotheses, nowadays). There are no recipes for a perfect novel, but creative freedom in this area has its inventive power under the technical aim of an industry that now has a

technology never before achieved and we do not want to despise everything that we are witnessing in the world when analyzing this book that focuses on points that interest us: heteronormativity , homoaffectivity , the issue of pleasure. If we look at how matters were treated in antiquity, we will see remarkable facts such as:

Christianity (along with Judaism and Islam) has traditionally valued procreation over (if not to the exclusion of) pleasure. Indian culture does not have it – understanding rather that pleasure (kama) finds “its purpose in itself”. Pleasure is an end in and of itself. [...] The culture of India, in its many social and religious forms, seems more interested in emotion and love than in the mechanics of procreation. [...] Thus, masculine and feminine are not distinctions of essence, but categories “created by society” to which certain roles are assigned (NAPHY, 2006, p. 45).

In this conception, it is possible to perceive that the sexual act was commonly directed and explained more for the purpose of the reproduction of the species, something that reverberates until today in some communities, excluding the human capacity to feel pleasure, through the *climax moment* , provoked by the junction of two self-conscious beings entwined in the movement of sensations called eroticism, a concept defended by Bataille in his work *Eroticism* , discussed later in the body of this book.

3 HOME OF THE PEDERAST

“Good evening, Vivi”, the baroness read *Madame Bovary with interest* . The second chapter couldn't start more interestingly. He kisses his wife “mechanically”. The narrator chooses modern words. The wife, with “ruffles on her tiny forehead”, smiled at her husband with “kind indifference” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 18).

Neither Eça nor Machado struck such a precise and comprehensive blow. *Madame Bovary* , reads the pederast's wife. We already know what's coming, but the linguistic game is tasty, in the sense of Roland Barthes, in *The pleasure of the text* .

What a book, this one!... – exclaimed the baroness in a deep admiring accent, resuming with delight the interrupted reading [...] I have never read anything that touched me so much!
— Do you know who I saw?... [...] Os Paradelas .
But the baroness, cutting right away:
— Yes, yes ... but let me read” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20).

The family is displaced from the usual axis that moves the entire system. The wife reads Bovary and the husband made an appointment with an underage boy, he was going to buy him sex favors. The narrator will examine her, introduce her to the reader: “a delicate woman”, small , fragile, spicy [...] (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20). We note that the fetish surrounds this narrative. A certain appetizing thing “light and frivolous. Big eyes between gray and green” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20), the narrator pulls us to look closely at that woman on the chaise-longue. The eyes

[...] an all-nothing metallic [...] translucency dry and healthy [...] imperceptible, thin nose, raised at the base in a rivet [...] like a provocative, between malicious and haughty [. ...] the forehead, clear, smooth [...] there was no news of the passage of a serious thought [...] of a just notion of duty [...]

by the curve of the face, of a crass milky whiteness, the sinuosity of a very tenuous vein rose on either side of the chin to the springs (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20).

The final superlative seems to us to be an important conclusion to the linguistic game in progress. But the Baron is the protagonist, and not this lady, exposed there, in “a fascinating combination of youth and grace, of petulance and pampering” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20). If we were to compare her to Miranda's wife, in *O Cortiço*, we would see with what difference the adultery will be consummated. For now, the Baron (we don't know his name, yet) “brains and hands on fire”, savors the relief of arriving at that “little house” (a small palace, it would be better to say) (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20). “If the senses were normalized, the soul continued to struggle in a painful exaltation. That silence was exasperating. He wanted to talk, but “Vivi” said this: “Haven't you been there without me so far?... because it lets me read” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20). The linguistic marks are repeated from the first lines: the use of exclamations and interrogations leave the reader in a kind of vacuum that creates an affected rhythm, in a way, in the narrative.

The narrator, still about Vivi (Elvira, who married for her mother's interest and had no children), reveals to us:

[...] his mouth was creased at the corners, very acrid, and the little veins of his face were slightly thickened purple [...] there is a screen, with five panels, of black satin, soberly embroideries of wading birds, hair grasses and fine flowers [...] delicate fantasy [...] old porcelain [...] a grand piano on a platform [...] paintings [...] in the purest style (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 20).

Again a superlative in the narrator's speech. The description of some rooms in the house, described in detail, seems to be made to characterize the couple, the social class and prepare the reader to follow the drama of the wives, a kind of duel is announced.

The bored Baron hears Vivi say “there are the newspapers to read” (Ibidem, p. 23). He chooses *Gazeta de Portugal*, in which he collaborated. “Very far from each other”, he “in addiction”, she “poisoning the senses in *Madame Bovary's dissolving tragedy*” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 23).

In the semantic field, expressions such as “poisoning the senses” (she), “ derailing her addiction” (he) abound. But it is still the Baron who is in a worse frenzy than that of Ema Bovary. From the wife we do not have access to what he aspires to, yet. The narrator makes a comment: “It was logical, it derived naturally from nature; from the education of the conditions of connection between the two this mortifying situation” (BOTELHO, 1982, p.23). We know then that the Baron comes, by “double bastard grafting” from two of the oldest and most illustrious families in Portugal and signed “D. Sebastião Pires de Castro e Noronha”, a nobleman with a *pedigree*, but of a lineage impregnated with vices.

Here we could establish one of the pillars of our theory about the texture of the novel, with regard to the narrators, an essential characteristic of this genre, a fundamental element. We can talk about form,

content, style, not yet about the author, but we can already say that Eça paved the way for Abel's Naturalism, later to Realism. The reader, the public, the cultural environment were already folded, but now the lens turns to the physical attraction between men. And there is a wife at work.

One of the characteristics of the literary work is the type of reality that it conveys: intuitive and individual knowledge, the knowledge that each one of us has of facts and things. We know what goes on inside us (feelings, ideas, imagination) and around us (people's behavior, natural and social phenomena, etc.). The same occurs with the writer, and so we say that his work (like any work of art) expresses his individual and intuitive knowledge of reality.

We cannot forget that when reading a novel, such as this one by Abel Botelho, what characterizes a literary work is, in principle, its content, similar to the common content of people, but which is distinguished by being the result of a deeper and original of reality.

In the literary work, the rules of expression are those created by the artist himself. Content and form distinguish the novel *O Barão de Lavos* as one of the most provocative works of Portuguese literature in the last frontier of the 19th century. Because? Let's investigate.

When elaborating on the figure of D. Sebastião, what an irony to call the Baron he created that way. Botelho does not seem to use subtlety when dealing with his subject. What begins to throb from the beginning of the work seems to border on obviousness without camouflage, although there are prolonged digressions such as the one used to narrate the Baron's origins 300 years earlier. When a Castro kidnapped a virgin, he laughed at a mass and publicly distrusted the Jesuits (1541), in the days of King João III.

Literary theory has been studying the issue of narrative focus diligently. The resurgence of certain aspects has proven effective, at times, as in the narrator's digressions. Machado de Assis gave examples of this in his *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cuba* and in other works. When delving into the Castro's "romanesque mancebia", defying King João III, at the time of the "outbreak of the sinister autos de fé", the narrator was perhaps using cunning, planting something to harvest later. This is how the 6th grandfather of our Baron de Lavos was generated. Here comes a key: atavism generating the "constitutional vices". Let us remember that scientism was at its height in 1888, the year in which the work was written. The "crazy instincts of pederasty" would have been "inoculated and progressively aggravated in Portuguese society by the ethnological modalism of its formation. The sexual inversion of love, the cult of ephebes, the preference given over women to beautiful adolescents, came to us with the Greek and Roman colonization" (BOTELHO, p. 26).

According to the narrator, pederasty was "an obscene invention of Ganymede, a Trojan prince of wonderful beauty [...] a trivial vice throughout the East" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 27). Note the contradictory game exposed with the word "wonderful", in the excerpt highlighted above. There are no limits to the exposition and the narrator draws support from Vaschkala, one of the Rigueed Upanishads of Indian mythology, when Indra himself abducts the young Medhatithi. Returning to the Romans, he says that the "veil of friendship covered the most infamous blunders" (BOTELHO, p. 27). It seems a text more to attract

than to repudiate such instincts. Reciprocity in sensual enjoyment was the best bond for the hearts of two friends” (BOTELHO, p. 27). This Roman heritage, through a “cruel transfusion” (the narrator always uses superlatives) took place in the Iberian Peninsula under the influence of the colonizers, in the “druidic twilight of its forests” (BOTELHO, p. 28). It looks like a baroque game, language used in the creation of the text. Something permeated by an evident ambiguity; this homoaffective practice is also mentioned as an Arab heritage, the “strong approximations”, the unavoidable demands” among men, far from women in the “sensory perk of the flesh”. This is to talk about how the Baron's 6th grandfather was born, in a heterosexual *affair*. Since the “first cardinal” pederast “lowering his contrite eyes before the images of the avenging God” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 28-29). It seems the Baron represents only evil. When reading *The Literature and Evil*, by Georges Bataille (1989) we can notice that evil is a recurring theme in literary works and in this way my interest in this study perspective was consolidated.

Freud, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, comments on the purpose of human life, a question raised several times without a satisfactory answer:

[...] if it were shown that life "has no" purpose, it would lose its value [...] we have the right to discard the question [...] only religion is capable of solving the question of life [...] men want to be happy and remain so [...] this is the principle of pleasure. This principle dominates the functioning of the psychic apparatus from the beginning (FREUD, 1996b, p. 83-84).

When analyzing the character of the Baron, the narrator rubs him with the social phenomena of that space and time. The tour ends to talk about the Baron's childhood, at the age of ten, in high school, when his father, already old, leaves Lisbon to live in Lavos, Sebastião will be educated by Jesuits. The boy was studious and liked to “pick up the beautiful side of things” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 30). He exchanged “ridiculous” primers, “hasty copulation rehearsals in the bathrooms”.

The descriptions of the agonies of the young Sebastião's homosexuality are made by a narrator who seems to understand a lot about the subject, even when he treats masturbation as “seminal evacuation caused by himself”. At 16, the boy leaves high school for an outside life. Black eyes, narrow shoulders, “wide basin” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 30-31). He continued in Lisbon, studying at the Polytechnic, away from his father. No mention of his mother. At 20, Sebastião preferred girls to boys. The narrator uses exclamations to talk about the taste for the ineffable, in the incursions into art, the focus of the young man. The narrator praises the painting showing the nudity of Antinous, the emperor's lover (BOTELHO, 1992, p. 33). This reminds us of some aspects of the struggle for such “passions” between equals:

Sexual acts (from masturbation, through fornication, adultery and homosexuality, to bestiality) are simply condemned as sterile, unnatural and sodomic. There is no evidence of a hierarchy of sins with homosexuality at the top. On the contrary, or as far as we can tell, adultery and incest were considered the worst sexual sins imaginable. Thus we see the Council of London (1102), explicitly demanding that sodomy be confessed as a sin. Interestingly, St Anselm (1033-1109; Archbishop of Canterbury) simply refused to publish the decree, saying in a letter to one of his archdeacons and close friends: “This sin has hitherto been so public that hardly anyone is ashamed of it, and could therefore have incurred it because he was ignorant of its gravity”. The sin could be serious but St. Anselm seems to have shown little interest in taking effective action against it. Furthermore, the

decree of the council must be seen in context. Before the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) stipulated annual confession, most Christians confessed their sins only once – in the safety of their deathbed (NAPHY, 2006, p. 98).

In *The Baron of Lavos*, the main character traveled through Europe and enjoyed works depicting handsome young men, in the Louvre and other museums. “In 1860, his father died” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 34). Only child, inherited everything. The “debauchery began, the “physiological deviation [...] was afraid” (Ibidem, p. 35). He married the daughter of a cloth dealer, Elvira, a “lightheaded and ignorant bourgeoisie, futile, not having the strictest understanding of morals [...] narrow intelligence” (Ibidem, p. 35). She was not looking for a “male”, she wanted to marry the noble D. Sebastião and she did so, going to live in the mansion, satisfying her bourgeois aspiration. When we meet them in the first chapter, they had been married for three years.

Literature is a form of knowledge, understanding applied to man and his relations with the universe, to his struggle for assimilating this universe, a way of knowing. In the novel *The Baron of Lavos* this is portrayed, we see the imitative fiction, the laborious, almost impossible reproduction of the interior landscape that makes up the kaleidoscope of the characters. Abel Botelho sketches a devastating interior panorama of a repressed homosexual subject, seen from the perspective of a society that denied him. It is not a photographic copy, but a tendentious deformation, a fusion of planes, enlargements, exchange of vibrations and effluvia. There we see that artistic knowledge seems unchanged since the most remote times: Botelho uses the weapons of intuition, these have been complicated over time through artistic expression. The senses have not gained new sharpness, the techniques are what sharpened in creation, we are talking about literature here, it is the creation of a supra-reality with deep, singular and personal data of the author's intuition. The aesthetic emotion comes from the harmony between the originality of the background or the set of new intuitive data and the expressive relief of form. The social and individual framework exposed in this novel is something that demands attention from us today.

The third chapter announces that an “acidic embarrassment”, “annoying”, a “rebarbative turmoil of displeasure”, a uneasiness of dispute “overshadowed that conjugal atmosphere in the appearance so calm [...] the storm was rapidly building up [...] a spark of hatred would spark” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 38). The use of alliteration in the rest of the text makes us think of the search for a sound effect to join the other resources that the author makes use of, such as the rhythm, somewhat dissolute. But “domestic decorum” is maintained, with reservations, such as the one we saw in chapter one, when Elvira prefers contact with *Madame Bovary* to talking to her husband who has arrived from a fiery evening.

The next morning the baroness, with her “plump and fresh little body”, looked at the women and gave orders to the waiter, avoiding the gaze of her husband, who also did not want to meet her gaze. The narrator describes the environment, clothes, props and bodies of the characters in detail. Although we have a moralistic narrator, the observations remind us of someone who knows the *metiér very well*. We don't have descriptions as specific as the one below, but subtly we could find something similar:

Some practice the perverse act of sodomy by rubbing their penis with their hand (masturbation, mutual or solitary); others rubbing it between the thighs (intercruel sex) of young people (teenagers), which is what they do most nowadays; and rubbing around the anus and introducing the penis into it in the same way as it is introduced into the sexual parts of a woman. People knew what men do to one another. That some important figures of the time had relationships with other men (and women) was also well known. Thus, the amorous adventures of Richard I, Heart of the Lion, King of England (1157-1199), for example, were the subject of much comment. His first known affair (as Duke of Aquitaine) was with Philip II, King of France (1165-1223): They ate every day at the same table and from the same plate, and at night their beds did not separate them. And the King of France loved him as his soul; and they loved each other so much that the King of England (Richard's father, Henry II) was absolutely astonished at the great passion between them, and marveled at it. The Third Lateran Council (1179) specifically prohibited "that (fornication) which is against nature." Any priest caught in the act of sodomy would be stripped and confined to a monastery for life, while lay people would face excommunication and social exclusion. A royal edict of Castile said that "whoever commits this sin, once proven, both (must) be castrated in front of the entire population... then hung by the legs until death" (NAPHY, 2006, p. 99).

Leaving the historical-scientific side of the text above, and its technical-academic details, we see in Botelho's novel a *belle-époque lyricism*, when, for example, he describes the *first roses of the season*, picked in the garden, serve as a narrative counterpart to frivolity. of the woman, malice, in front of her husband who is in a tailcoat, she in a "cashmere robe the color of grain, decorated with cream lace" (Ibidem, p. 38). Her "sour eyes" do not help the reader to take her side in general events. The narrator is calculatingly manipulating the issue from the point of view and the various possibilities of the 3rd person in the narrative pole. "— O daughter [...] — Well! Nothing else was missing. Now call me a child!". The Baron "gave the woman a stern look of reprimand" and she looked at the ceiling "with a provocative stamp of foot. An elastic and feline trepidation ate his lap" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 40).

He wants to go out alone, refuses her proposal to go together. She says she would rather not have married someone who doesn't love her. She says she thinks she's a stupid and docile housekeeper to "sew on the buttons of his underwear". Interesting detail: she talks about her husband's underwear at this moment. "The canaries of the beautiful golden nursery had burst into a chirping mockery" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 41). How many signs in rotation at the same time! A cornucopia narrator fills the reader's mind with plenty. He slams the door on his way out and she goes to "bury herself in the chaise-longue", "crying", "shivering" in her impotent rage, the "poor creature" suffered that "affront" like "the slamming of a tombstone" closing the tomb" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 42). Abel Botelho: a master of letters with almost 400 pages more to outline his opinion on homosexuality and adultery in a conservative society, but he does not dispense with cynical synthesis, as in this construction: "He had undone it, thrown it to the sidelines like a point cigar", she ignored the reason (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 42).

The narrator does not describe their situation in bed. Did not focus on this point. "The tears were crying drop by drop" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 42). Simplistically tears don't cry, of course. "Despised, humiliated!", indirect speech – free reigns. The wife begins to draw analogies between her situation and that of Ema Bovary. "His mouth opened in a panic" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 43); soon recovered her great confidence in her husband, then a character enters the plot: Doroteia, a maid, from

- “[...] rogue curiosity”, “mouth torn from ear to ear [...] squashed nose – asking:
 - Did you call?
 - Not me, woman [...]
 - I wanted to apologize, it seemed to me - he ventured [...] do you want something? [...] I am your friend [...] I have served in Lisbon, before that, 6 houses [...] the husbands left [...] the wives went to the window to face others.
 - Don't say that, woman! (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 43).

We also notice popular expressions from Portugal at that time and class such as “Tó rola”, used by Doroteia to criticize the baroness for not reacting at that time. The maid, when asked about the time, says something like this: “Lisbon clocks have two hands, I don't know why... In my land, the clock in the church tower has only one hand [...] and we govern- if with him, and regulates very well... now this two is a mess” (p. 46). We are in 1867 and the representation of Portuguese society is implacable. When dismissed by the baroness, “she shot the bitch in the eyes [...] you are like the most!” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 46).

For Bataille (1989) man differs from other animals: he is guided in society by interdicts, what is prohibited, illicit or immoral. About interdicts Bataille states that they have a dual nature, since each society has its idea of what are considered immoral acts. The author affirms the need to circumvent the interdicts, but never disregard them in their entirety. Evil is not only a means for the self-satisfaction of the damned, but of the moral being as well, as we see below “In this way, Evil, authentically considered, is not only the dream of the wicked, it is in some way the dream of the good. .” (BATAILLE, 1989, p.18). Regarding the transgression of interdicts, the author points out that man needs courage to transgress moral laws, but that when acting against them he will feel a sense of accomplishment and ends by comparing the act of transgression of man in his society with the transgressions represented in literary works. , since it is inorganic and thus can say everything (BATAILLE, 1989, p. 22). Prohibitions and transgression would be inseparable, because for there to be transgression it is necessary to have laws, however, prohibitions should not be ignored but violated. The literary text would thus be a kind of violation of interdicts. Botelho brings us something of this violation, at least by exposing the fundamental laws of the Lisbon society of his time. What we read in his work is that evil is not present in choices and attitudes that have their origin in taking material or personal advantages, such acts are selfish, but evil is not exactly the desire to take advantage of something.

Chapter III has about 25 pages that include a romantic description of environments, such as the garden (plants from the tropics, etc.). The interdiscourse with the novel *Madame Bovary continues* , as we observe Lisbon through the eyes of Elvira, who wants a Rodolfo, similar to that of Ema Bovary (black velvet jacket and white knit shorts and knee-high boots, mounted on a superb black horse).

The Baron was in the Grêmio, not even the risqué scoundrels of French literature, that of the boulevard , which he tried to read, distracted him. A tour of Lisbon follows. He went to the apartment he rented for furtive meetings, in whose “mercenary interior there was not the slightest emotion of family life” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 49). Here we have a peculiar observation, the bread and fire that characterize a home were lacking. This at a time when homosexuality still held something that could lead someone to a terrible

punishment. The Baron discusses part of the study he had been working on for a long time, and here we present part of our research on the subject:

During the Black Death, Europeans tried to explain why God had punished them so horribly. Many groups began to be singled out as scapegoats. [...] with the help of preachers and moralists it was easy to see that the wrath of God was provoked by sexual immorality. Two groups came to be in the line of fire (literally, at the risk of going to the fire): the sodomites and the prostitutes [...] these groups became the biggest threat to society, the cause of all ills and problems. The solution was eradication. Europe wanted to erase the last vestiges of classical polysexuality or the licentiousness of the high Middle Ages [...] until very late in the 15th century (and in many cases, until the 16th century) brothels were an accepted – and legal – element of the public panorama. The brothels were built with public money and run by a “madam” (often called an “abbess” or “queen of prostitutes”) appointed and sanctioned by the state. Thus, in 1447, Dijon erected a grandiose building to function as the city's brothel. It had quarters for the manager, a spacious living room, and nearly two dozen large bedrooms, all with stone fireplaces. This city of 10,000 souls was very well provided for, with more than 100 legal prostitutes (NAPHY, 2006, p. 105).

The Baron was thirty-two years old. The narrator gives you typical description of naturalism, which even includes acne, to compare how time has done its relentless work on your face. The boy arrives, barefoot, for the appointment at the exit of the circus (chapter 1). The detailed descriptions will continue throughout the narrative. Often excessive. The Baron stripped the 16-year-old boy's torso: “white lap, fleshy [...] plump pectorals [...] like ripe fruit [...] the Baron got inflamed [...] greedy kiss [...] fatal turbulences of sodomite”. Entirely naked the boy was ordered to stand on a dais; “the chest in milky white” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 54 - 56). The Baron draws a picture of him, who had “the anatomical particularity he was looking for”.

Dozens of boys, women and girls had been there before, on Rua da Rosa, where the Baron would examine their nudity in the realization of his fantasy. There is the boy he saw and harassed, when he suddenly left the circus; to whom he had given a gold coin in advance.

“It is said that only words have a use, not sentences, but at the bottom of each figure lies a sentence, almost always unknown (unconscious?) that is used in the significant economy of the subject in love” (BARTHES, 1991, p.3).). the character of the Baron is cunningly constructed by the author through accumulations of small details such as particles that come together. Let's see your next steps.

He put down his pencil, his jaws “oscillated like a carnivore, he went to take the boy in his arms and took refuge with him in the dim light of the alcove...” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 58). As we see there is no description of the sexual act, yet.

Pause, space, longer between paragraphs, an hour later, comes the dialogue between them. The boy says he has been arrested once, for “robbery”, he was innocent, he complains, “my freedom is worth more than bread!” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 59). Again the word bread is mentioned in this passage as a sign. The Baron proposes to live there: maintained by him. “I am for whatever you want”, was his reply (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 60). The Baron orders a Miss Ana, who works in the ground floor shop, about the new tenant. It should be noted that sometimes the word Barão is sometimes written with a lowercase and sometimes with a capital letter (mainly in direct speech), as if the reader were allowed the lowercase “b” due to the intimacy

with the character. "She's your maid," says the Baron to the boy, giving him two more gold coins, ordering them to wash themselves well. "The pederast quickly descended the stairs, the light hurting his eyes led him to a certain regret, and he was engulfed in a thousand disastrous concerns" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 61).

Form and content, fundamental elements of the literary work, in concomitance and unity, translate well the unspeakable of this somewhat vexing situation, to say the least, what is offered in the reader seems like a concrete reality, but it is not, it is just art, concrete. we have only the form of the work, its expression. Content is abstract reality that existed in the author's mind and comes to exist in the reader's mind, through the form and content exposed there (this separation is merely theoretical).

Yes, on average the chapters in this novel are about 25 pages long. In Chapter IV, secondary characters are described with almost pointless whimsy. Elvira and Sebastião are in public, with friends. The futility of the rich, mocking "Lisbon worldliness"; Falstaff was talked about and how "the world was dying between the brothel and the barracks" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 80). On the way back, in the *coupé* (carriage), the couple fight, he didn't like to see Elvira getting intimate with Xavier da Câmara, a kind of high society stallion. He humiliates her, calling her a "fan" head. At home he tries to console her for crying, in bed, he was in the next room and came to her: "I love you so much, Vivi!" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 89).

The reader reads, for the first time, about the couple in bed, where Sebastião exposes the "hyperthermia of his virility to the contact of that young and beautiful woman" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 90). "Leave me," she said, to the "sensual contagion of her husband [...] — I beg you, go away. And the BARON lay down, but beside her [...] the two drowned in an intimate embrace – long, sighing, electric – the last harshness of the quarrel" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 90). Yes, bisexual.

As we have seen: the form, expression or language is a concrete element, structured in the sense of constructed with words and phrases that we can read, analyze objectively. The terms that Elvira, the baron and the narrator use, weave the element that fixes the content and transmits it from the author's spirit to our readers. The content loaded and fixed by the form, on the other hand, is immaterial reality. Actions and characters created by the author's imagination come to exist for us, only in imagination. The meanings, there, are also immaterial.

In his "sinister andromania", D. Sebastião (sometimes he is called that, sometimes "Barão, by the narrator), in his encounters, with the boy in his apartment on Rua da Rosa, "lubriciously", many times, after a long "scene" with the boy (as the narrator says), the Baron would leave "broken, exhausted, stumbling, with weakened nerves, his eyes sore, his soul humiliated and gloomy" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 91). The narrator attributes this to the physiological abnormality of that act. As we see the vocabulary selection, along with the combination of signs placed in volatile rotation, lead the reader to a certain frenzy of perverse curiosity. It is cited to

[...] the Baron's genital arrogance, his organic evolution to the maximum [...] appetites for penetration and possession that the man ordinarily feels towards the woman [...] however [...] an effeminate movement: his spirit sparked [...] the passivity [...] surrendering, being possessed, enjoyed, being female in short (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 92).

Here we are entering a psychological probe, which soon assumes the positivist character, pointing out that this was the end of the Baron's lineage. An “edema of moral nature, purulent, soft, growing treacherously without pain and without itching”. The subtitle of the work itself suggests this deduction (“Social Pathology”). The pathological ruin of the Baron, who inside saw his own horror... “in the obscene depth of his debasement, he came to despise himself” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 93).

The “healthy movements” with his wife were disturbed by young men who blackmailed him. The months pass with the new boy, in the same “effervescence”, contrary to what happened with the others: “a strange love, “a sick obsession, passion cold as a mirror in the shadows” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 95).). It is here to see how this can be analyzed in terms of instruments of the Theory of Literature: literature is a *non-pragmatic discourse* . This doesn't mean they can't be read pragmatically, does it? The idea of clearly distinguishing between the “practical” and “non-practical” ways of relating to language is far from being clear. Literature would be a focus on the way of speaking and not on the reality of what is said. It is a kind of self-*referential language* . Literature cannot be defined “objectively”. (EAGLETON, 1997, p. 1). There are ordinary people who regard “literature” as writing that looks “beautiful”. (EAGLETON, 1997, p. 14). Literature is not a stable and well-defined entity. Value judgments in this area are notoriously variable. Interests are constitutive of our knowledge. The act of classifying something as literature is extremely unstable. *VALUE* means everything that is considered valuable by certain people in specific situations, according to specific criteria and in the light of certain objectives.

In his famous study *The Practice of Literary Criticism* (1929), the critic Ivor Armstrong (IA) Richards (University of Cambridge) sought to demonstrate how subjective and capricious literary judgments can be. (EAGLETON, 1997, p. 21). There is a close relationship between them and social ideologies.

Do we interpret Literature, to some extent, in the light of our own interests? “Our” Homer is not the same as the Homer of the Middle Ages, nor “our” Shakespeare the same as that of this author's contemporaries. Literary works are “rewritten, even if unconsciously, by the societies that read them” (EAGLETON, 1997, p. 17). The claim that knowledge should be value-free is itself a value judgment. (EAGLETON, 1997, p. 17). What about a person who believes that sex roles are rooted only in human biology?

Here we see something that borders on tragic lyricism. The boy was a foundling, the result of sexual relations between a military man and a nun. At ten he left the house of mercy to work as a servant, maritime work, rowing, handling cables that had hardened his hands. He stole from his boss and fled to Lisbon (he came from Aveiros , where he was born). “Today in one neighborhood, tomorrow in another” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 96), sleeping in the span of bridges or in places like that. He became a street vendor, earning tips. We don't know if the Baron was the first man she slept with. His name is revealed: Eugênio Dias Lebre, nicknamed: *the one marked*, by a scar near the armpit. He made a lot of money to “put up with” the Baron.

Eugenio had all the best, to his lover's credit. Even his speech was corrected, even though the Baron liked to hear the “plebeisms” coming from the lover's “cherry mouth”, with “a clumsy flavor” (BOTELHO,

1982, p. 99). The Baron wanted to turn him into a dandy and one day introduce him to his acquaintances, as a mockery of a PYGMALION .

Eugênio, who had an “ astonishing assimilative faculty”, drew up a plan to get by in life, through the “cynical” baron who taught him everything. The boy learned to use cutlery and other things from the world of the rich. For dozens of pages, the digressions continue: art, history, etc. Time passes and Eugênio takes on a life of its own. Sebastian suffers, but resists. People looked at him imploringly. But in chapter VI this situation breaks out: “Son, do not leave me! [...] do what you want!” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 131). Eugênio says he has an affair with a Jewish woman named Ester, who has been “in her life” for six months. The young man wants to go to Sintra with her, the Baron goes with her.

Let's see, the form and content of a work, being different realities, can be theoretically separable, arise from the author's creative act, impose themselves on the readers, form unity, made aware by us together. The images of the Barão's mansion and his apartment with Eugênio jump from the artist's creation to the reader's recreative act, who composes them in his heart, where form and content are concomitant, interactive, interrelated realities. Literary theory has them as a unit, and when it separates them it is to methodize its reflections.

Elvira's mother, D. Jacinta, says that if what the Baron wanted was a slave and not a wife, "let him go to the blacks and get her!" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 135). Complains about the son-in-law. The narrator takes the opportunity to turn the reader against her: “the armpit smoked a lot of sebaceous and forehead [...] in the large mass of the breast [...] soft [...] the chin, nose and broad face disappeared. face , of her congested [...] bearded matron's head” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 137).

In one game, the narrator leaves us unaware of the Baron's trip to Sintra, with his boyfriend and a Jewish prostitute. Elvira freaked out, went out into the night in despair, came back depressed. The next day, the Baron invited her boyfriend to the house, to be received by Elvira, who is about to begin her revenge.

The narrative continues with digressions into art, as Oscar Wilde will do in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* , for pages and pages . Eugênio becomes assiduous and Elvira becomes intimate with him. Eugenio can barely read. Word is that the Baron is a sodomite. Until a close friend, Henrique questions him about Eugênio:

— Do you have with him...?
— No [...]
— [...] You know what they say [...] you're married.
And the Baron, getting irritated :
' What moralistic bores!' [...]
— Sorry ... (BOTELHO , p. 177).

There was the matter of Xavier da Câmara, who showed himself to be thrown at Elvira at a party, and even wanted to take Eugênio as a lover. The Baron was furious. High society gathers for Elvira's birthday. Too much luxury displayed in the far-fetched narrative, there. Suddenly, someone spoke out loud (Colonel): “I feel disgusted with these people who can like boys...” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 190). The Baron

surprises everyone and draws attention, saying the opposite, on his wife's birthday. Everyone looked intrigued. The Baron goes on to say that males are more beautiful in nature than females, Xavier da Câmara did not agree with any point and the Baron replied: "Let anyone else disagree with my ideas... but you!..." (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 195). A fight starts, but it breaks up.

Elvira thought Eugenio was a soapy imbecile. The latter, with the money that the Baron gave him, rented a house for his lover Ester, the reader knows little about their relationship. The narrator describes the entire homosexual act with contempt and prejudice: the lover Ester knew that "the sodomitic origin came to her abundance" that Eugênio offered her "but he didn't care" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 203).

For several pages the narrative yields to the Lisbon chronicle. The city is portrayed in a picturesque way, for example from pages 207 to 218, a June night in the City Center. The baroness begins to feel attracted to her husband's lover, he gets into a duel and is injured, which leaves the boy with more free time. Elvira thus begins to give in to Eugênio's tempting beauty. She thinks of adultery for "this handsome young man, primitive and blunt" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 240). The baron asks that they call themselves cousins. The boy wanted to "possess, enjoy the baroness!" (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 242). The Baron did not notice, convalescing from the wound he suffered in the duel. Care in bed for lover and wife.

We have here the literary work as a (more or less arbitrary?) gathering of artifices in the use of images, rhythm, syntax, narrative techniques, in short, formal literary elements that would provoke the effect of "strangeness", or *defamiliarization*. Under the pressure of such artifices, ordinary language was intensified, condensed, twisted, reduced, enlarged, inverted, renewing habitual reactions, making objects more perceptible. Result: intensification of our material life, in the words of Eagleton (1997, p.42). The narrator from the middle of the book onwards delves more into the characters Eugênio and Elvira, but there are also excessive landscape/environment discretions. This one was with the baron for a season on Figueira beach. He wrote letters to Eugene, who mocked them with his lover Esther. I burned such correspondence, most of the time, without reading it. The narrator does not fail to opine on the side of convenience. We imagine that it must not have been easy for Botelho to publish his work so full of information about the Lisbon of his time compared to so many other cities and times.

For Naphy (2016), throughout history and around the world homosexuality is less common than heterosexuality (the attraction and sexual acts between people of the opposite sex). However, this is clearly a very real feature of the human species as a whole. The existence of same- sex people is, in other words, a natural component of humanity – it is a normal feature of the human condition. "We emphasize that Christianity has always had a very negative attitude towards sex in general" (NAPHY, 2006, p. 284): (Christian dichotomy between the spirit and the flesh), an explicit desire to "mortify" the carnal side, repulsion non-procreative sexual activities; Is this an extreme example of the imperialist propagation of Western culture and values in general, when the vast majority of cultures have recognized that homosexual attraction is only one facet of the human condition? Is homosexuality abnormal, unnatural?

Upon returning to Lisbon, the baroness gave in to adultery: “Eugênio touched the back of the baroness' neck with his lips on fire” and confessed “I love her very much [...] it's time, Elvira, let's go!” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 271); the baroness gave in to “Eugênio's masculine audacity” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 274). In “dialectical sum, the barones hesitated and became fixed again [...] it was dialectical fascination” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 277). The baron arrived later, Elvira had had sex with Eugenio.

Society perceives the triangle. Elvira did not suspect her husband. This seems like a plot flaw until more than halfway through the book, but this ruse won't last long. Eugenio asks her for money, too, who had to sell many of her things to give him more and more money. He was filled with debts.

Elvira confesses to her mother that the young man has led her to ruin and blackmails her. The baron suspects she has a lover, something hinted at by the eavesdropping maid, Doroteia. “Marry, marry. What nonsense! Out of the capital mistake of his life! [...] life was for everyone to enjoy [...] lavishly!” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 300-301). He thinks about sending his wife away and staying with Eugênio. But when he was sure that his wife's lover was Eugenio, that the two were having an affair, his life became hell. Here the narrator almost transforms everything into melodrama, but wins the naturalist aesthetic. He hatches a plan: he wanted to catch the two of them; his wife and Eugênio, in the compromising situation. He pretended he was going away and came back later, surreptitiously. And he saw it all: the two of them in the nakedness of the act. Elvira curled up at his feet, and he showed her a revolver and locked the door as she entered. Eugene ran away. The baron followed him. He ended up at his friend Henrique's house, to whom, in a state of shock, he told everything about his “secret” life.

Meanwhile, a friend goes to the baron's house and tells him that the whole town knew about her husband's affair with Eugenio. “Such astonishment struck Elvira to death. Crushed with astonishment and pain.” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 347).

“A whole little mythology tends to make us believe that pleasure (and singularly the pleasure of the text) is an idea of the right [...] .30). We are here before the representation of hedonism, yes. The Baron only thinks of running away and, like someone who leaves a dirty garment, puts on a clean one. Refusing to go down to “judicial separation”, he notified his wife that he would no longer live with her. (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 349). The narrative leaps from one paragraph to the next of this climax and will become more and more bitter and scorching: after six months, we understand that the Baron has gone to live far away. “On his return, the baron was as good as new. Entire amnesia of the past. It was transfigured. He was now another character, a man from afar, a stranger, an ignorant” (Ibidem, p. 350). He decided to own a photographic studio and work on the artistic nude, but he did not find models.

In chapter XIV (p. 369) we know that Eugênio is going to make his debut as an actor in an operetta. He had spent time abroad with a woman from whom he had “sucked contos de réis”. And the night of that premiere comes. He came in with a tight jersey, sang and was applauded. He had become famous for his scandalous affair with the Baron and the Baroness. The Baron gave a standing ovation and went to all the performances.

Carnival comes, the “Entrudo”. The baron took another boy to a cheap hotel to have sex. After the act, he asks: “ —Has no one ever done this to you? To which the boy, who replied, buttoning himself up: — Just yesterday... a priest. It was black” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 350).

Typical of Naturalism, the description of the act is made in a shocking way and the narrative loses vigor, slowing down: “the baron’s life drags on, torporous and dreary [...] madness and childhood” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 382). The main character let his passions dominate him: “he had the corruption of the century in his soul” (p. 582). The anti-hero is identified as lonely, selfish, unoccupied, without a family: “hungry to enjoy” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 383). The only thing he kept was his precious *O stamp. abduction of Ganymede* , the only thing left from the collection of the old mansion.

His food came from his friends. His friend the Marquis gave him an allowance. Even so, the baron asked one and the other. He sneaked through the streets only at night. The narrator speaks of an “erectism crisis” or even “the last contortions of his sinister tarantular ” (BOTELHO, p. 388). Serious problems with the kidneys, chest, intestines, tendons, tingling, gastric crisis, bilious vomiting, sciatica, diabetes. He fainted, couldn't control his body, didn't feel his feet, in short: total decay. The clinical picture indicated paralysis and death. An ordeal. At the same time , he was tormented by priapism , bulimia, “seminal spills [...] like an ape, he masturbated, he began to prostitute himself, he thought about begging. He was in epileptic fits of pain and despair. It was man's sputum.” (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 94)

If the character Eugênio only reappeared in a small passage, after almost a hundred pages, the same happens with the Baroness Elvira, who only reappears in the last chapter, the number XVII: remembering the “all animal passion” for Eugenio, already overcome. She rekindled her friendship with an old boyfriend, and continues in this “discreet and sweet” affection. He was forty years old (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 408).

Later, in the last pages of the novel, the baron appears “an old man”, thinking of suicide. He died mocked by some boys, the old baron on the street, “an old man, withered [...] it was a policeman to help [...] he imagined a drunk, he faced a corpse”. (BOTELHO, 1982, p. 415), are the final words. And then comes the time the author spent writing the book: “March 1888 to May 1889”.

4 THE BARON'S DRAMA

The *Baron de Lavos* catches us in the midst of a whirlwind, a tangle of threads giving knots that are almost impossible to untie, overlapping images of a humanity that both in the West and in the East, both in ancient and newer civilizations of a subject considered taboo. Let's think about the following examples, some of them with data provided by Naphy :

Around 1900, another Zulu chief followed Chaka 's example , ordering his soldiers to abstain from sex with women. “ Nngoloza ” Mathebula (1867-1948), also known as “King Nineveh”, led a resistance movement against whites in South Africa. Older soldiers (*Ikhela*) were to choose teenage boys (*abafana*) as “boy-wives” (*izinkotshone*). When he was arrested and tried, he said that homosexual acts were common among his warriors. [...] Two features of the colonial mentality further complicate attempts to identify the presence of homosexuality in Zimbabwe. First, although

they wanted to control the sexual behavior of whites to avoid scandal, the British also had a tendency to avoid public debates about the sodomy trials (NAPHY, 2006, p. 237 – 240).

Let's go back to Botelho and his work. We know that form and content are together in the author, not in a profound way, as he strives to express the (emotional?) state that dominates him in intuition and creative technique. But there is something unspeakable there. Thus, the work triggers in the viewer a complex system of reflexive reactions, different to each one of them.

5 CONCLUSION

In a language with extremely far-fetched passages and others simple and direct, we have the portrait of a character that borders on caricature, due to his affectation, forged by the partial narrative when dealing with certain problems of homosexuality . It gets to the point where the wife, described as “ bourgeoisite ”, will present her weapons. If Eugênio, the “ephebe”, has already foreshadowed his outbursts, now it will be the voice of the character Elvira to express what she came for. What are the author's intentions in taking the narrative to this level?

Let us reason: the content of a literary work (and its form), what is in the lines, between the lines and what is silenced, all this also deals with the undefinable and the unspeakable. The fiction writer strives to express what he says and not what he wants to say to the reader. He says so, but the literary phenomenon is more than that.

The characters' attitudes produce a reaction in us: “how do you say that? What's that? Because? These are questions that we are asking ourselves, as readers. To what extent is what we read not what we have in us? We can find in the work moments similar to certain memories of our own, about ourselves or others we know. The drama of the Baron and his wife is closed in a perverse triangle, under the eyes of a society that deals very badly with this very complex problem called homoaffectivity , which, as far as is known, is timeless and universal.

The written novel is a material reality, a concrete fact that, when read, will transform itself in us into an abstract reality. The basis of the narrative is the linguistic structure (written or spoken). The writer varies the expressive structure of the works, this structure can be very varied, as for the levels of expression (popular, erudite, etc.) it sometimes depends on the type of content the writer wants to convey. Ariano Suassuna in his comedies sought the structure of popular speech, he did this with an effective technical effort to make the reader feel and understand his work. Abel represents the spirit of his time, the language of his time, the concern with the stigmatic “Social Pathology”.

Our literary analysis focused on the structure of the work, verifying how the author worked with the linguistic materials. It is not just grammar that matters, but the manipulation of these linguistic materials, as in any literary work, which will also give value to works such as this one, *O Barão de Lavos* , where writing blazes with devastating and acidic excitement, the to enjoy and suffer, in the tail of instincts, in the

“fever of burning lust”, to quote an expression of the author who thus inscribed his name in the list of classics of Portuguese Literature.

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