THE WOMAN'S PLACE IN LISPECTOR'S AND VERÍSSIMO'S WRITING

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ABSTRACT: Triggered by Robin Lakoff with the text "Language and Woman's Place", we conducted an analysis of short stories by Clarice Lispector and *crônicas* by Luis Fernando Veríssimo in order to reflect upon the possible existence of sexism in the Portuguese language. We focused on lexical choices in the representation of the characters regarding different gender, seeking to understand how women are linguistically depicted. We verified that Lispector's instances of nouns/adjectives used for women's representation were superior to Veríssimo's, regarding the same gender. A more extensive study of linguistic representation should be carried out to reflect upon patriarchal culture impact on language and if this culture is yet reinforced by language.
Keywords: Linguistic inequalities. Feminism. Clarice. Veríssimo.

RESUMO: Desencadeada pelo texto "Language and Woman's Place" de Robin Lakoff uma análise foi realizada de contos de Clarice Lispector e crônicas de Luis Fernando Veríssimo, a fim de refletir sobre a possível existência do sexismo na linguagem Portuguesa. Focamos em escolhas lexicais na representação das personagens em relação a diferentes sexos, buscando entender como as mulheres são linguisticamente representadas. Verificou-se que os casos de Lispector os substantivos/adjetivos usados para a representação das mulheres foram superiores aos de Veríssimo em relação ao mesmo gênero. Um estudo mais amplo de representação linguística é recomendado para maiores reflexões sobre o impacto da cultura patriarcal sobre a língua e se essa cultura é também reforçada pela língua.
Palavras-chave: Desigualdade linguística. Feminismo. Clarice. Veríssimo.

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INTRODUCTION

The position of women in a patriarchal and capitalist society has been long discussed by feminist theorists. The feminist movement had a boost in the 60s which characterize the second wave of feminism. By this time, not all women accepted the "new" way of life imposed on them (housewives and husbands/family caretakers solely) because they had already taken a job outside the house and began having independency. This movement did not remain only in the US or France, it spread rapidly. Those who denied roles faced discrimination and discontentment from society as answers to their conduct against the hegemonic power. This denial attitude was intolerant to the long unquestioned patriarchal beliefs, regarding the roles of women in society (FRIEDAN, 1963; WITTIG, 1980; WALBY, 1990; hooks, 2000). Adrienne Rich (1986), in her text "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", discussed some of the unquestioned patriarchal beliefs about the societal roles of women, and one of these beliefs is the denial of female sexuality and the imposition of the male one upon all. These beliefs devalued women's voice, power, place, desire, in sum, her existence in society. Perhaps, it is time to think of language as a product of patriarchy since women and men seem to be represented in unequal levels.

According to Butler's interview in the book *A Critical Sense* by Peter Osborne (1996, p. 111-12), gender is what matters, since gender is performative, although she avows that the body matters too, furthermore, heterosexual and sexist discourses help shaping and placing the body into patriarchal norms or destabilize subjects regarding their gender performativity. What we see out there in the world is much of this performativity being compulsory and heterosexual within patriarchal system in which men tend to dominate, dictate social rules and restrict other gender's ways of living, in turn; men have gained more prestigious than other genders regardless of the field. Is in writing any different? Does language follow a different rule? Having in mind that language is in constant change and it is also performative we may mistakenly think that it does.

It seems that the position of women still needs to be problematized, and one way of doing it is to bring differences among gendered speech to the debate. Since language is a core part of any debate of any field, it is relevant to identify the subtlety of certain gender choices while communicating ideologies and their

perceptions of gender and how linguistically restricted may women (and other marginalized groups) be considering the inequality in gendered speech/productions.

In 1929 in *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf wrote that women did not publish for not having money and a room of their own and that men were encountered in shelves talking about women, i.e., representing them. Nowadays women may publish more, but it is interesting to note how disparate the representation of women given by writers of different gender is and even how women represent themselves. For so long feminist studies have tried to subvert some patriarchal rules and find equality; however, there may be inequality inside our own language, if so, it is relevant to start combating from inside even if we feel outsiders in the system. Cardoso and Anzaldúa debated the *outsider-within* concept while relating it to African-descendents lives into white culture and how they reinvent their language, we may benefit for this debate bringing it, as well, to the analysis of supremacy in language, which may be placing women in the margin repeatedly. Anzaldúa as cited in Cardoso (2014, p. 966) redefines concepts to better place herself, she refuses to use Spanish and English language since she is against Mexican sexism and imperialism and, she adopts a hybrid language to create her own new space. Perhaps this is the path that women (and other minorities) should take in order to begin subverting certain patriarchal rules, finding a new place for women within system and within the language system.

Lakoff (1973), in her work entitled *Language and woman's place*, says that, in order to understand gender inequalities, sociology should be considered and comparative studies done between men's and women's speech. She focuses her study on the English language but suggests that these inequalities may be universal. In regards to the universality of language use or the "misuse" of language, perhaps a similar event happens when people, on the one hand, accept some word choice as granted, conforming to the inequalities; on the other hand, some may realize the existence of such a phenomenon, however, they might encounter resistance while trying to change standards. Nonetheless, questioning is fundamental to change people's consciousness regarding language use and, thus, to affect this use; moreover, without new concepts/practices, it may be difficult to fight linguistic inequalities. Regarding this issue, Lakoff (1973, p. 49) states that to change linguistic inequalities, firstly, the behavior and mindset of society must change, as in a cause and effect chain. We need to change it from within, since the core of the problem lies inside patriarchal culture.

Bearing this discussion in mind, I decided to examine two texts by two Brazilian writers: a woman and a man, from which I brought examples into this debate. I have analyzed short-stories and *crônicas* by Clarice Lispector, a Ukranian-Brazilian writer, and Luis Fernando Veríssimo, a Brazilian writer. The texts analyzed are part of the books *A Legião Estrangeira*[1] and *A Mulher do Silva*[2], respectively.

Bearing in mind the introduction of this study, we may wonder what patriarchal society and culture have to do with language. However, a more focused syntactical or semantic look into the structure of a sentence or into the daily use of innocuous expressions may be a useful tool for understanding why language works the way it does, and perceive the intrinsic culture woven into linguistic behavior. According to Lakoff, people have a linguistic behavior which may contain evidence of gender inequities. Some questions could be raised for the development of this debate, as for instance: a) How can women counter hegemonic culture by using language? Does Lispector do that? b) What linguistic differences can be found between Veríssimo's and Lispector's writing? Could a fictional text be considered data for such an analysis? I dare say it is even a better way of analyzing it, than by means of factual stories. To better explain this I move forward to Caldas-Coulthard's (1994, p. 305-08) proposition that reporting facts or telling a story is always a representation of reality, not the reality itself and there is always a filter depending on the culture of who is reporting/telling/writing. Therefore, it seems that texts are nothing but fiction and fiction does not mean either veracity or the lack of it, but simply a way of representing reality, which all texts do.

In addition to that, according to Caldas-Coulthard, behind a factual text there is always the voice of the writer, i.e., a "fact" or a journalistic article has the influence of its author, and so does the fictional text. Said that, there is always the writer's filter behind a text; it does not matter much if it is factual or fictional, as long as we can find cultural traces within it along with the writer's representations. Caldas-Coulthard (1994, p. 304) also says that, "The choice of who is given voice depends on the importance given to some people instead of others" i.e., also, to one gender instead of the other. "But again, the selection of the speaker reflects cultural belief systems and power structures".

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[1] The Foreign Legion (All translations along this study are mine)
[2] Silva's Wife

By analyzing factual and fictional narratives, Caldas-Coulthard found that women are far from being in a powerful position regarding language. Women are related to words of discrimination, powerlessness, ridicule or triviality. According to her, some examples are the verbs "gossip", "chat", "scream", "yell", all marking negative aspects connected to women's speech. The more "serious" words are, more often related to men's speech and this seems to mark their powerful social position. Lakoff and Caldas-Coulthard understood that women are linguistically undermined when talking is considered of some relevance to society. For example, an informing narrative, or a political issue would be more often delivered/discussed by men, and a more trivial issue, such as names of eccentric colors or dishes, would be given/discussed by women. Although factual reporters are more neutral, they also convey ideological viewpoints (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994, p. 305); and fictional writers do not necessarily have the urgency to be neutral, they can speak their mind more freely. Fictional writers can really add their voice to the imaginary characters. In sum, they can exist and express themselves without fear, counting on the excuse that that is only a character, and thus, convey their beliefs via the characters, as we may be able to see in the analysis that follows.

WORDS AS WEAPONS OF A LINGUISTIC COLD WAR

In the short-story "Os Desastres de Sofia"[1], the first of *A Legião Estrangeira*, Lispector plays with metaphors in long and short lines with a touch of poetry. The story is about self-discovery and it presents the characters of a girl and her teacher.

In a society where a girl is expected to behave according to standard rules, to talk in a low voice and to be beautiful, Lispector shows the opposite, making use of a 9-year-old girl's voice to counter dominant culture. She describes herself with eccentric adjectives as: "*imprudente*", "*importuna*", "*monstruosa*", "*odiosa*" "*fantasmagórica estranha*" "*melindrada*"[2], i.e., qualities not commonly well accepted to describe a girl within patriarchy. Such words are not expected, although she shows that a girl may behave oddly and still acquire self-knowledge. Sofia feels free to be wrong in the view of society, to invert rules, to question language power

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[1] "Sophia's debacles"
[2] "Reckless", "importunate", "monstrous", "hateful", "ghostly strange", "piqued".

throughout the narrative by using, for instance, "minhas próprias palavras" (16).[1] According to Lakoff (1973, p. 47), a woman tends to wait for men's approval of her own words and this is a norm of speech in patriarchy. A woman tends not to be emphatic in her statements; instead, she opts for question tags to double check her use of language, as for example in: What a lovely song, isn't it?

While presenting Sofia, Lispector does not make use of Portuguese question tags in the girl's statements, neither in her inner dialogue nor during interactions with the teacher; instead, she (Lispector) makes use of imperative and affirmative sentences as in:

> a) Teacher: "– Cale-se ou expulso a senhora da sala." Sofia: "– **Pode me mandar!**" (11)[2]

> b) "**Meu coração morria de sede, sim. Meu coração morria de sede**." (19)[3]

From these instances, we may consider there is a subversion of patterns in order to problematize expectation regarding word choice and gender representations. Although the "man" teacher, on one hand, also employs the imperative form in the example above, on the other hand, he uses the term "*Senhora*" for Sofia which implies distance and more respect in Portuguese, causing the imperative used by the girl to be seen as defying the rules of teacher/student interaction, expressing much more freedom than expected for girl in patriarchal society. The girl is depicted as strong minded through her choice of words and linguistic structure use: imperative and affirmative statements. In "*Essa não é flor que se cheire*!"[4](13) and "*Suportando com desenvolta amargura as minhas pernas compridas e os sapatos sempre cambaios, humilhada por não ser uma flor* (...)[5]"(14) Lispector uses the noun "*flor*" to exalt the girl's non-standard behavior, since, a

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[1] "My own words" Numbers shown in parenthesis at the end of examples along this study will always refer to the work of the analyzed author, in this case, Lispector or Veríssimo.

[2] Teacher: Shut up or I will have you (Senhora/Mrs) out of the classroom! Sofia: You wouldn't dare, as to say: Go ahead and do it!

[3] My heart was thirsty, yes. My heart was thirsty.

[4] "Bearing my long legs and loose shoes with nimble bitterness, humiliated for not being a flower"

[5] "Essa não é flor que se cheire" it is a famous quote in Portuguese meaning a person (usually female) who cannot be trusted, or lacks good qualities; "This is not a flower one can smell"

flower (*flor*) should be delicate, gentle, soft, good-smelly, fine and beautiful, but, Sofia is a rather strange and slouchy figure.

One word that stands out in the text showing ambiguity and, to a certain degree, a derogatory meaning, is the verb "*ciscar*"[1], as when she declares the girl's impatience in the passage: "*Fui para o recreio, onde fiquei sozinha com o prêmio inútil de ter sido a primeira,* **ciscando** *a terra* (...)"[2](17). This choice, in Portuguese, has a denotative meaning related to women, since that action is the one of a hen, which is considered a dumb and fearful being; it can also be understood as a promiscuous woman in a figurative sense. This linguistic choice was the way the author found to show Sofia's ignorance in life and social relations, but also her self-consciousness about her leaving the class earlier for no prize at all. Nevertheless, a man does not go through that process via such a verb, a man does not *cisca*, the rooster sings powerfully.

Another linguistic choice that characterizes women/girl speech is the expression "*ai de mim*"[3] (13) when she brings the girl's idea of being a happy and monstrous nun, which is an abomination, given that a nun is a saint, nothing else. According to Lakoff (1973, p. 50), "(...) choice of particle/expression is a function of how strongly one allows oneself to feel about something, so that the strength of an emotion conveyed in a sentence corresponds to the strength of the particle." In Sofia's case, there is modulation in speech: in spite of her being a rebellious female, the speech is still standardized to a certain extent and the expression above conveys fear for being who she believes she is, **not a saint**.

Lispector also uses the verb "*ver*" (to see) 22 times compiled on pages 21 and 22 to show the development of the girl by emphasizing the nude reality before the girl's eyes; in a more critical viewpoint, it is remarkable that the growth happened, ironically, through the man's attention to her, i.e., the teacher made her "see" her new reality and her new self, because it is he who has the initiative of

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[1] To peck and scratch.

[2] "I went to the break, where I got alone with the useless award for being the first, scratching the earth (...)

[3] Poor me

calling her closer, as in: a) "*Chegue mais perto*" (19); b) Sofia: "*Eu vi um homem com entranhas sorrindo/Ver a esperança me aterrorizava* (...)"[1] (21; 22).

This counterculture, however, is not frequent in Veríssimo's *crônicas*. Veríssimo (1997) writes in a freer way in regards to word choice, since the majority of the texts in *A Mulher do Silva* have a humorous tone, stereotypical ideologies in regard to gender roles and it presents more swear words. Yet, many of the humorous instances, if analyzed in the feminist perspective, are generalized concepts regarding women's nature and social relations. In the *crônica* "A volta de Ed Mort",[2] the verb choice applied to the woman's speech shows the reader that the female character is not as powerful and strongly humanized as in Lispector's stories; instead, she is depicted as an evil, seductive traitor with a more sexual approach, as in: a) "*Seus seios, sob a blusa fina, **pareciam dizer**: 'E nós? E nós?*'" (8)[3]; b) "***Está gostando** da comida? - **Perguntou** ela.*(...) "*Eu ia **sugerir** o meu apartamento (...) **Tomar** um drinque. Talvez...**comer** alguma coisa. E ela **sorriu**. Covardemente.*" (16)[4] These statements reinforce women's patriarchal positions, where she is responsible for satisfying and serving men, being a sexual object and dependent on male opinion. In example "a" - "*Seus seios, sob a blusa fina, **pareciam dizer**: 'E nós? E nós?*'", there is a man's gaze desiring the woman, although the verb choice "*pareciam dizer*" creates the idea that the woman is offering herself to the man, thus diminishing the seriousness of a businesswoman (which is the case) and the use of a part speaking literally for the whole. As Butler (1996) stated, the bodies matter too, and in patriarchy the imposition of sex upon all is what seems to matter most. The man speaks for them (*os seios*[5]), but the woman does not affirm anything. In example "b" she does not make affirmative sentences; instead, the woman checks if the man is pleased by questioning, making an offer and smiling as if she is the strong mind behind the action, although she is the one who does the "invitation", the focus is on the man and the "prize" he may get; the voice is his, not hers.

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[1] a) Come closer/b) I saw a man with his insides smiling/To see the hope in me used to strike me.

[2] The return of Ed Mort.

[3] Her breasts under the thin blouse seemed to say: 'What about us? What about us?'

[4] Are you enjoying the food? - She asked (...) "I would suggest my apartment (...) to have a drink...maybe ...eat something. And she smiled, sensually.

[5] The breasts.

The perspectives in Veríssimo's texts come from a male gaze, while in Lispector's the gaze is always via female characters, with the exception of *"Evolução de uma miopia"*[1]. Considering that, we may go further and check if the choice of characters' gender (as well as their author's gender) has any impact on linguistic choices, as it semantically has. Indefinite articles from both books were counted, to test the hypothesis that if a female writes about a female character the story should show more "feminine indefinite article" which in Portuguese is *uma* and if, the other way around, a male writer's text should demonstrate a higher number of the masculine indefinite article *um*. One may go beyond and come to think that there might be a problem with the majority of the articles that refer to nouns which have grammatical gender but not human gender. Check the table below:

Table 1 – Instances of feminine and masculine indefinite articles in both books [2]

Lispector's total feminine articles	*uma 303* instances
Lispector's total masculine articles	*um* 431 instances
Veríssimo's total feminine articles	*uma* 203 instances
Veríssimo's total masculine articles	*um* 388 instances

That difference shows that the authors address nouns/adjectives mostly as masculine – a baseline figures for this distribution would be helpful to see if there is any bias in their writing. However, Veríssimo seems to use about 10% more masculine articles than Lispector. In this case, we may consider the existence of sexism in Portuguese, since most nouns/adjectives are related to men or given by men, and this may set women under a subaltern position in social relations. In other words, we may observe that the use of masculine nouns/adjectives are more common than the feminine ones, even when the writer is a woman writing about women's characters as we see in Lispector's list. However, regarding the feminine articles, her use can be seen as bigger than Veríssimo's with a difference of 100 instances. Therefore, the hypothesis that if a woman writes about a female character there is an increase of instances of feminine indefinite articles seems to be correct. Therefore, each gender tends to emphasize a representation regarding their own gender.

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[1] Evolution of myopia.

[2] Fonte: *A Legião Estrangeira* and *A Mulher do Silva*. Analysis and table made by the author of this study: Regis, H.F.

Furthermore, the question that arises is: Are the nouns that appeared after these articles impartial to the concerns involving sexism? Regarding this, I selected all the instances in which the articles precede nouns of gender, with semantic relevance, and looked for fragments in order to debate sexist issues concerning word choices. The findings are as following:

Table 2 - Veríssimo's instances:[1]

Positive aspects in the use of nouns / adjectives regarding men	Negative aspects in the use of nouns / adjectives regarding men	Positive aspects in the use of nouns / adjectives regarding women	Negative aspects in the use of nouns / adjectives regarding women
Um investigador independente	Um machista	Uma moça agradável	Uma moça de bigode
Um detective infalível	Um ladrão muito pequeno	Uma donzela (?)	Uma malufista
Um rapaz politizado	Um intruso	Uma jóia (?)	Uma ninfa a mil
Um rapaz bonito, alto, atlético	Um retrógrado	Uma princesa (?)	Uma velha
Um fauno varonil	Um primitivo	Uma cristã (?)	Uma cara desconhecida
Um amigo de lei	Um japonês veado	Uma garota (?)	Uma cara
Um homen moderno	Um incorrigível	Uma moça	Uma vênus de bigode
Um galanteador	Um estorvo	Uma espanhola (?)	Uma camponesa de unhas sujas
Um tipo em extinção	Um duro (twice)	Uma mulher (twice)	Uma porcelana rara (?)
Um moço respeitador	Um ex terrorista de esquerda	Uma menina (?)	Uma conhecida (?)
Um farmacêutico	Um pinóquio sem nariz	Uma turista americana (?)	Uma avó bacana (refering to an ex-girlfriend with sarcasm)
Um violonista	Um possível traidor	Uma mulher madura (?)	
Um analista de sistemas	Um detetivezinho qualquer		
Um alto funcionário da chancelaria francesa	Um pato		

Um homen honrado	Um cordeirinho		
Um membro da guarda	Um chato		
Um homem grande	Um deficiente		
Um macho	Um travesti (4 times)		
Um dos líderes mais velhos	Um morto de fome		
Um herói	Um terceiro assaltante		
Um cara inteligente			
Um bom patrocinador			
Um médico			
Um oficial romano			
Um soldado romano			
Um ministro da República			
Um homem sério			
Um homem (21 times)			

The positive aspects are more serious nouns and powerful adjectives such as: profession titles (*ministro, official, medico, patrocinador, analista* etc)[1]; good character qualities (*respeitador, sério, bom, inteligente, amigo, honrado, politizado* etc)[2], the alpha male (*líder, herói, macho, um tipo em extinção, bonito, alto, atlético, varonil* etc)[3]; opposing to the negative aspects which have the humorous tone regarding men, so the reader may not take the negative aspects as a "real" representation of men, while the positive aspects are believable ones, since there is no humorous tone or absurdity in the word choices. Profession nouns are more mentioned along with masculine than feminine articles.

When the use of the negative noun *traidor* was made, the word *possível* was added before the noun to diminish the impact of the word traitor, so the man character is a **possible traitor** only, thus, there is flexibility in the judgment. Other

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[1] Minister, officer, doctor, sponsor, analyst.

[2] Respectful, serious, good, intelligent, friendly, honest, politicized.

[3] Leader, hero , male , a type endangered , beautiful , tall, athletic, manly.

humorous examples are *pato* and *cordeirinho[1]*, depicting men as dumb or delicate animals. The nouns *deficiente* and *travesti[2]* are examples of prejudice, but the intention is to be humorous again regarding the representation of men, therefore, the reader does not take the representation seriously. The use of the noun *homem[3]* 21 times seems to be neutral, since he attached no adjectives to it. In Veríssimo's representation of men, there are more positive aspects than negative.

Regarding the positive aspects in the use of nouns/adjectives concerning women, we may consider an emphasis on patriarchal values with nouns such as: *cristã* (a woman needs to be religious); *jóia, princesa, donzela[4]* (a woman needs to be perfect, beautiful – lady-like). But in: *uma avó bacana[5], avó* is humorous since the character was talking of a former lover of his, and the use of the adjective *bacana* in Portuguese is considered a euphemism to diminish a person's sweetness; instead of being *maravilhosa[6]*, she is just *bacana*. Nouns with interrogation marks are also interpreted as neutral, since it could be either negative or positive, although this ambiguity is more perceivable in the women's list of nouns.

I interpreted as neutral use the nouns *uma menina, moça, mulher, desconhecida[7]*, since there were no adjectives attached to them. As can be seen, the representation of women by Veríssimo is more neutral, or, demonstrating a not significant women position in society. No professional adjectives to women were mentioned; instead, they were depicted as dolls, princess, and perfect beings reproducing patriarchal portrayals of women. This representation of women lacks a more profound gaze into women varied social roles and importance.

In Lispector's short-stories the instances below were highlighted:

Table 3 - Lispector's instances:[8]

Positive aspects in the use of	Negative aspects in the use of	Positive aspects in the use of nouns /	Negative aspects in the use of nouns /

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[1] Duck and little lamb.

[2] Handicapped and travesty.

[3] Man.

[4] Christian, jewel, princess, maiden.

[5] A nice grandma.

[6] Marvelous.

[7] A girl, girl, woman, unknown woman.

[8] Fonte: *A Legião Estrangeira* and *A Mulher do Silva*. Analysis and table made by the author of this study: Regis, H.F.

nouns/adjectives regarding men	nouns/adjectives regarding men	adjectives regarding women	adjectives regarding women
Um adulto	Um moleque	**Uma adoradora**	**Uma freira**
Um homem forte	Um homem muito pobre	**Uma menina bem plantada**	**Uma fantasmagórica estranha**
Um alpinista	Um grande morto vivo	**Uma jovem digna**	**Uma boneca partida**
Um grande	Um mendigo	**Uma menina (6 times)**	**Uma porcaria de criança**
Um ex amiguinho	Um caráter masculino (?)	**Uma doidinha (twice)**	**Uma criança confusa**
Um homem (21 times)	Um sozinho	**Uma criança (3 times)**	**Uma virgem anunciada (twice)**
Um menino (5 times)	Um desastrado	**Uma menina safadinha (?)**	**Uma intrusa**
Um caráter intelectual	Um cego	**Uma cabeça humilde**	**Uma doida (twice)**
Um professor	Um rosto bonito (?)	**Uma mulher (10 times)**	**Uma distraída**
Um rapaz	Um palhaço	**Uma menina muito engraçada**	**Uma velha sequinha**
Um amigo (3 times)	Um nome	**Uma moça (7 times)**	**Uma velha misteriosa**
Um agente (twice)	Um igual	**Uma pessoa (3 times)**	**Uma velha (twice)**
Um agente	Um desertor	**Uma doçura de mulher**	**Uma preta**
Um amado	Um outro	**Uma amiga**	**Uma chata**
		Uma tal delicadeza	**Uma intrometida**
		Uma extrema doçura	**Uma magra**
		Uma escolhida	**Uma estranha**
		Uma ocupada	**Uma pessoa morta**
		Uma senhora (3 times)	**Uma cara pálida de meia idade**
		Uma senhora muito boa	**Uma menina muito antipatica**
		Uma prima	**Uma cara extremamente quieta**
		Uma mulher sem filhos	

In this list the use of *menino* e *homem*[1] is more neutral since there were no adjectival attachments. Overall, instances of negative aspects for men were more specific in Lispector's representation of men, such as: *desertor, palhaço, cego, desastrado, mendigo*[2] etc; the positive aspects of nouns/adjective choices were more neutral, such as *rapaz, homem, menino*[3] etc, with fewer adjectives attached to the nouns. In *safadinha* and *doidinha*[4], the use of "*inha*" makes the statement more caring than usual, in the context of a child, which is the case; thus, it was interpreted as a semantically positive noun choice for a girl. It is prominent the higher number of adjectives which makes the representation of women more complete than Veríssimo's representation. In other words, Lispector emphasizes the female gaze and employs more feminine articles, nouns/adjectives to women, in opposition to Veríssimo who applies the male gaze, depicting women in the role of minor characters usually stereotyped by sexist views. Lispector's description of women characters is also more extensive than that of men. This may be a sign of going against cultural norms, since Veríssimo emphasizes the description of men in a more positive way and that of women within patriarchy standards, although Lispector does the opposite by bringing more detailed descriptions for the women characters, countering the idealization of women with uncommon adjectives for feminine figures.

In Lispector's short-stories the main characters are: a rebel girl, a bored woman, an innocent teenager girl, a mother, a woman thinker, a little girl, an old and homeless woman, an overweight woman typist, etc. While Veríssimo presented the male characters as the fooled detective, *Lenin and McCartney*; the cheated husband, Joe; the romantic guy; the handsome and dumb Mauro; the kisser; the old-fashioned husband; José the land worker; the passionate guy; etc. In Lispector's narratives women prevail as the main character, differently from Veríssimo, in whose narrative men prevail and end by becoming tragic-heroes leaving women characters to be blamed or forgotten.

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[1] Boy and man.

[2] Deserter, clown, blind, fumbling, beggar.

[3] Young man, man, male child.

[4] Little naughty, little crazy.

FINAL REMARKS

The representations in both books mould conceptions and create beliefs regarding gender. Lispector's writing has an overall sad tone, adding to it, her choices of words have a deep, strong impact, with strong marks of realistic life, and on the other hand, Veríssimo's choices are ironic, full of happy metaphors and funny tones. Along with that account we should take into consideration that the texts are different literary genres and that may impact their representations on a certain degree.

By understanding the linguistic strategies we may get clearer messages and notice how language may be used as weapons in a system embroidered in sexism, male and white supremacy and so many forms of segregation of others. We may never be sure if the writer selected these indefinite articles and nouns intentionally, but we may bring the issues further by questioning gender influence in articles choice or any grammatical class choices when writing. We could also wonder if this happens only in Portuguese, or yet, if it is possible to think that other languages may go through the same phenomenon regarding gendered speech and the use of certain classes of words. To expand this idea, studies on gender and linguistics should be encouraged in order to uncover and debate subtle inequalities.

Through literature it is possible to counter hegemonic culture as diminish consequences and reinvent ourselves as asserts Schmidt as cited in Almeida, 2013, p. 691:

> "(...) Literary studies have the potential to interfere with the critical discourse, revitalize teaching and inspire educational and pedagogical one – this political agenda is able to stop the historical continuities of exclusion, violence and prejudice. (...) [It helps] the decolonization of thought in broad and unrestricted sense and the reinvention of subjectivities."[1]

If "language uses us as much as we use language" (Lakoff, 1973, p. 45), we need to step forward to learn its hidden strategies in order not to end up being the ones used by the systematically shaped language of patriarchy. It is time to reinvent ourselves.

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[1] My translation

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