Painful Narrative
A metafictional reading of The Hour of the Star,
by Clarice Lispector.

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I. Introduction

Clarice Lispector was born in Ukraine (former Soviet Union), on December 10, 1920. Lispector's family, of Jewish origin, fled the violence and hunger of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and in 1922 emigrated to Maceió, Brazil and then to Recife. Although Ukrainian and Yiddish were spoken at home, the language Lispector chose for her literature was Brazilian Portuguese. In 1935 the young Clarice moved to Rio de Janeiro and entered the Faculty of Law, although she never practiced as a lawyer. That same year she read Steppenwolf by Hermann Hesse, which according to Lispector, would mark her literature, with this book she gained confidence for what she wanted to write. In 1944 she published her first novel, Near to the Wild Heart, which was immediately recognized by critics. Despite having lived much of her life abroad, due to her diplomatic husband, Lispector chooses to set her stories and novels in Brazilian cities. She also wrote stories, her first book was called Some stories, published in 1952, where the author presents anecdotes about everyday life. In 1977, shortly before her death, Lispector published The Hour of the Star, novel that we will deal with in this research work. We are especially interested in investigating the metafictional features and see how these affect the conformation of the figure of the narrator and the act of writing. Linda Hutcheon defines metafiction as follows: “Metafiction [...] is fiction about fiction –that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity”. In short, a metafictional novel is one that talks about itself, about its own narrative, either to mention its creative process, its writing, its characters or its author. This is not something new, since the emergence of the modern novel, with Don Quixote by Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, metafictional features have been re–used by different writers to this day.

In The Hour of the Star the author presents us here with a complex and dual narrative voice: on the one hand, the figure of an author-character (actually Clarice Lispector) and on the other hand; the figure of a narrator-character whose name is Rodrigo S.M. It is through these voices, and especially that of the latter, that the author will make us participate as readers in the creative process. This is one of the metafictional features of the novel, taking the reader out of the plane of fiction to take him to the plane of reality, since at all times he lets him know that he is

2 Ibid., 2008, p. 10.
3 Ibid., 2008, p. 15.
5 From now on we will use the abbreviation THOS to refer to The Hour of the Star.
facing a fictional text. Likewise, we are interested in analyzing the different emotions that the narrator experiences in this process and if these have an impact on the writing. The narrator feels the act of writing as an annoying and painful event, an impulse that he cannot control, an obligation of existence. The narrator writes because he suffers, but at the same time he does it to free himself from the pain that writing itself produces. Consequently, we can anticipate that the pain experienced by the narrator is the creative engine in this novel.

Lispector’s work occupies a prominent place in 20th century literature, the French feminist philosopher and literary critic, Hélène Cixous, declared that Clarice Lispector was what Kafka would have been if he had been a woman, or “si Rilke hubiera sido un judío brasileño nacido en Ucrania. Si Rimbaud hubiera sido madre, si hubiera alcanzado los cincuenta. Si Heidegger hubiera podido dejar de ser alemán”7 “[“if Rilke had been a Brazilian Jew born in Ukraine. If Rimbaud had been her mother, if she had reached fifty. If only Heidegger had been able to stop being German”]8. Her narrative is characterized by a great renewal of themes and characters within the Brazilian literary tradition, as well as by the darkness of its plot, characterized by philosophical inquiry, psychological portrait and the problem of being and the complexity of its intricate storytellers. There is no doubt that Lispector marked a milestone in the history of 20th century literature. She dies in Brazil in 1977.

I. 1 Objective and questions

In THOS Lispector takes up a classic character from Brazilian literature: the northeasterner. In the words of Gonzalo Aguilar, the northeasterners are: “Los pobres, los campesinos, los iletrados: toda una legion de personajes que encontró, en la novela social y realista, la compensación que la vida no les daba”9 [“The poor, the peasants, the illiterate: a whole legion of characters who found, in the social and realistic novel, the compensation that life did not give them”]. Unlike the social and realistic novel, pointed out by Aguilar, which redeemed the poor and marginalized (although this redemption only occurred in the fictional plane, in the hands of a literate bourgeoisie), quite the contrary, Lispector in THOS gives us a crude and unsophisticated plot, without compassion. The latter places the author in another perspective with respect to the northeastern character in the

8 This and the following translations marked in square brackets are ours.
literary tradition of her country, in other words, she takes up the tradition, but at the same time renews it.

*THOS* is about the life of a northeastern girl, Macabéa, who, driven by hunger and misery in which her family was living in the northeast of the country, moves to Rio de Janeiro in search of a better life. However, the promise of the big city is fading fast, there too he will experience hunger, injustice and mistreatment. We know the life of Macabéa through the voice of the narrator, he feels the need to tell the life of the poor girl. Now, how does the narrator build this character? At all times he is trapped by the character, and he will only be able to free himself from her once he has written her story. The narrator experiences the act of writing as an unpleasant fact, that is why he will take many detours before beginning to tell the story. It is there, in these detours, where he begins to reason in metafictional comments, making us participate in the writing process. It is for all this that he seems wise to ask ourselves and give answers in this work to the following questions:

1. How does the narrator express the act of writing?
2. What role do the narrator's metafictional comments play in the plot?
3. What role does the reader play as an integral part of the story?

It should be clarified that we do not propose to carry out only a metafictional study of the novel, but to understand what effects these metafictional resources have on the narrative itself, especially with regard to the figure of the narrator and the act of writing, and, in this way, to be able to define in what way if he lives said act.

I. 2 Theory and method

The method used in the present study consists of performing a reading of *THOS*, based on the most relevant theoretical contributions of metafiction. There are several theorists who have devoted themselves to the study of metafiction. John Barth in his 1967 essay “The Literature of Exhaustion” warns about the use of metafictional resources in some authors of the mid-twentieth century. Authors such as Jorge Luis Borges, to whom Barth dedicates part of this study, serve as an example to account for this trend in the narrative of this period.10 Michael Boyd, for his part, is

going to talk about the reflective novel as the one that looks at itself —“the novel about the novel”—, and about its own creative mechanisms.\footnote{Michael Boyd, \textit{The Reflexive Novel: Fiction as Critique}, Londres and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1975, p. 7.} As well as the importance of the word itself and the act of reading. It is also interesting to highlight the concept of self-conscious novel postulated by Robert Alter in his book \textit{Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre} (1975), he distinguishes two degrees of authorial self-awareness, the one that interests us here is called fully self-conscious, that is to say, that novel that is fully self-conscious, where it is made clear that we are facing a fictional world of authorial creation.\footnote{Robert Alter, \textit{Partial Magic. The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre}, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975, pp.x-xi.} Another feature of the self-conscious novel, in the words of Alter, resides in the \textit{role of the reader} who knows at all times that he is facing a work of fiction, breaking down the boundaries between fiction and reality. Another aspect to consider in the metafictional narrative is \textit{the changes of plane}, that is, moving from the plane of history to the plane of language. The latter is very well pointed out by Edward Riley when he refers to the interruptions in \textit{Don Quixote de la Mancha.}\footnote{Edward Riley, \textit{Teoría de la novela en Cervantes}, Madrid: Taurus, 1966, p. 75.}

One of the most relevant studies for metafictional theory belongs to Linda Hutcheon. In her 1984 book \textit{Narcissistic Narrative}, Hutcheon defines metafiction, following Freud's concept of narcissism, as a narcissistic narrative, since it looks at itself.\footnote{Linda Hutcheon, \textit{Narcissistic Narrative}, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980, p 6.} The narcissistic narrative exposes the creative process and the reader must recognize himself as a fictional entity.\footnote{Ibid. p. 6.} This implies that the reader takes a more active role than expected, because he participates intellectually in said process, since the act of reading is part of the narrative itself.\footnote{Ibid. p. 39.} For Hutcheon, metafiction focuses primarily on linguistic and narrative structures and the role of the reader. In summary, among the features of metafictional narrative pointed out so far, are: authorial self-awareness, self-referentiality (either to the narrator or to the work itself), literary theorization within the work itself, the revelation of resources and creative mechanisms, the focus on the word and the active role of the reader, among others.

For the purpose of this research, we have divided this work into four sections, each of which develops a different aspect of Lispector's narrative in \textit{THOS}. In the first section, entitled “Paratextual narrative: starting with the titles”\footnote{In the introduction to his book \textit{Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation} (1997), Gerárd Genette defines “paratext” as follows: "acertain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations”. See: Genette, 1997, p. 04.} we carry out a reading of the paratexts that
surround the work, such as the author's dedication and the plurality of titles. Here the idea that the plot begins much earlier becomes fundamental: in the paratexts. “Painful narrative: the fear of writing”, is the title of the second section, here we will dedicate ourselves to investigating the emotions of the narrator in the face of the act of writing. In the third section, “Narrative of the uprising: the word as protest”, we will study the possible relationship between writing and revelation and self-knowledge from the narrator's encounter with another. In the fourth and last section, “Narrative of the interrogation: the reader as interlocutor”, we will deal with the continuous questions of the narrator to a fictional reader. The work ends with the final conclusions. Finally, we have considered it appropriate to include an appendix with the titles of the novel in its original language, Portuguese and respective translation into English.

For the following study, we will use the 2011 New Directions Paperbook edition of *The hour of Star*, with the translation from Portuguese to English by Benjamin Moser.

I. 3 Previous research

In recent decades, Lispector's work has attracted the attention of critics, among the different investigations we are interested in highlighting the book by Marta Peixoto, *Passionate Fictions* (1994), in which she carries out a feminist-narratological study of the author's work Brazilian. Peixoto has pointed out that it is common to find in Lispector's work a paradigm of construction of the character based on her victimization, but that, at the same time, the roles of victim and/or victimizer are interchangeable. Says Peixoto: “I think it's fair to say that in Lispector the narrative often demands a victim or, conversely, that the victim demands a narrative”\(^ {18}\). Peixoto starts from an idea of writing by obligation, that is, it is the character who demands the story from the narrator, and not the other way around, which seems to us to be a correct idea. *THOS'* narrator feels obliged to tell Macabéa's story, which will lead to repeated evaluations of his character. We can add to Peixoto's study that the narrator is one more character in the novel and also a victim of the narrative, since he is unable to control the demands (albeit involuntary) of his character. We are interested in taking up certain paths of research initiated by Peixoto, such as her idea about textual violence and the character's victimization. Although Peixoto's work has been and is of great interest, when wanting to undertake a study of Lispector's work, there is a subject that has not been developed in depth and that we intend to expand on in this work. We refer to the

relationship that the author raises between pain and the act of narrating. Likewise, we consider that the study of the possible rebellion that the author wants to transmit in her texts has been neglected and that we also intend to address here.

Regarding the act of writing, it is worth highlighting the contribution that Gonzalo Aguilar, he rightly points out the coincidence of the act of writing in the three characters of the novel: Lispector, the author, (personified in a male author-character), Rodrigo SM, the narrator-character and Macabéa, whose profession is to be a typist. It is evident that the author has deliberately wanted to unite the three characters, and this union occurs through the writing. Also, Aguilar points out, the similarities between the social class of the narrator and the writer, both belong to the wealthy middle class, unlike Macabéa who is poor. Finally, Aguilar proposes to see the narrator as an intercessor, between the author and the character: Macabéa.19

For his part, Ítalo Moriconi, in his essay entitled “La hora de la basura”, points out that in three of her novels (Agua viva, 1973; La hora de la Estrella, 1977 and Un soplo de vida, 1978), the Brazilian author attempts to create “efectos de simultaneidad entre los hechos narrados y la escritura” [“simultaneous effects between the narrated events and the writing”] concomitant, in Moriconi's words, with the narrator's thoughts and feelings.20 This simultaneity between the narrated events and the act of writing is what will give rise, as we shall see, to the narrator's metafictional comments.

To finish, the article “Una lectura histórica de Clarice Lispector”, by Florencia Garramuño, is interesting because it compiles first-hand Lispector's thoughts regarding what she thought about the novel genre. In “Ficção ou não”, published on February 14, 1970, and compiled in A descoberta do mundo (1998), the author of THOS states that she is not interested in following the established canons regarding this genre, but neither does she condemn those who they do, even if she makes it clear that what she is interested in is writing without embellishments, without tricks.21 If we understand metafiction as a different way of making novels, since the limits between fiction and reality are broken, this appreciation of the author becomes relevant for our analysis.

19 Aguilar 2011, p. 11.
II. Analysis

II. 1 Paratextual narrative: starting with the titles

Before entering the plot, it is necessary to pay attention to the paratext that surrounds the work, we refer to the “Dedicatoria del autor” and the THOS titles. In an interview that the writer gave in 1977 for the television program Panorama\textsuperscript{22}, and when asked by the interviewer about her previous reading, she said that when she was young she did not choose books by the authors, but by their titles. This predilection for titles is also replicated in her own work, a clear desire for elaboration on the part of the author is perceived in them, clearly, they are not an ornament. Her titles are attractive, poetic and motivated, and in the case of THOS they are replicated in the same work. How does this happen? Through the narrator's comments, who on more than one occasion will refer to the titles and the reason for them, allowing a glimpse of the novel's metafictional nature, since it takes the reader out of the plot plane to take it to the metafictional plane. On the other hand, the themes that are announced in the titles will also be replicated in the novel. The Brazilian author and essayist Vilma Arêas gives us a good example of the latter, stating that the word “star” included in the title of the publication symbolizes death, a central theme in the novel.\textsuperscript{23} She bases her interpretation on certain comments of the narrator, for example, when he refers to death as his favorite character.\textsuperscript{24} It is true, the thematic axis of death runs through the entire work, but not only that, death has another even greater meaning, in our opinion: it signals the end of writing. The narrator says: “If I still write it’s because I have nothing better to do in the world while I wait for death”.\textsuperscript{25} The contributions of Michel Foucault, in his conference entitled “¿Qué es un autor?”\textsuperscript{26} of 1969, become relevant at this point. From his studies, Foucault realizes that throughout the history of literature there has been an interrelation between writing and death,

\textsuperscript{22} Julio Lemer interviewed Clarice Lispector in 1977, in São Paulo, for the television program Panorama. This interview becomes important for the present work for two reasons, first because it is the only audiovisual record of the author and second, because it is the year of her death and the year where THOS ends. In the interview, the author is going to refer to this novel, but she is not going to reveal the name of the novel as she considers it a secret. This idea of secrecy can also be found in her narrative. See the interview in the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1es3Qh6HyiE
\textsuperscript{24} Lispector 2011, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{26} This text by Foucault arises from a conference that the author gave in 1969 at the French Society of Philosophy, dedicated to the study of the disappearance of the figure of the author.
“un parentesco de la escritura con la muerte”27 [“a kinship of writing with death”], which has changed over time. If the Greek epic was destined to perpetuate the immortality of the hero in writing, then what mattered was the life of the hero and not that of the author (and that is why most works were anonymous); in modernity, Foucault points out, with authors such as Flaubert, Proust or Kafka, writing is no longer linked to immortality, but to sacrifice. The author sacrifices his life in post writing. “La obra que tenía el deber de traer la inmortalidad recibe ahora el derecho de matar, de ser asesina de su autor”28 [“The work that had the duty to bring immortality now receives the right to kill, to be the murderer of its author”]. What Foucault is saying is that it is no longer necessary to sacrifice the hero in books, that he is the author himself the one who sacrifices his life at the expense of literature.

In Lispector, the action of writing is what precedes death, in this sense, writing is the productive part, it is life. In the conference that the writer gave for the television program, Panorama, the author understands death as part of existence. For her, the “hiatus” moments, as she calls them, are those in which there is no writing and, in the words of the author, comparable to being dead. Lispector says in the interview: “Yo creo que cuando no escribo estoy muerta”29 [“I think that when I don't write I'm dead”]. These comments of the writer, about the lack of writing as a synonym of being dead, have their correlate in the comments of the narrator of THOS who also refers to writing in these terms: “If I still write it’s because I have nothing better to do in the world”30. If we take both statements about death, that of the author in the interview and that of the narrator in the novel, we are faced with two types of deaths, one symbolic, the one that the author lives in life, “the hiatus”, and; a real one. The difference between the two is that the first, being part of life, harbors the hope that writing will continue, instead, real death definitively closes it.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this section, for Lispector the plot begins earlier, in the margins, in the paratextual, and the titles are proof of this. The first thing that the reader notices at the beginning of this novel are the thirteen titles that the author proposes, including the title of publication31: The Hour of Star. These thirteen titles that are found after the dedication of the author, and separated from each other by the conjunction “or”, and, therefore, alternative, have a double function: on the one hand, to anticipate the plot, and, at the same time, to reveal certain

27 Michel Foucault, “¿Qué es un autor?”, Colección de textos mínimos, México D.F.: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, 1985, p. 12.
28 Ibid., p. 12.
29 See the interview for the television program Panorama, minute 8:41: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1es3Qh6HviE
30 Lispector 2011, p. 62.
31 See “Appendix”, p. 29.
features of the THOS narrative, namely: the contradictions of the narrator and the plurality of voices. At times, the voices of the narrator and the author (we are referring to the fictitious author who appears in the dedication), become diffuse and their distinction is difficult. Lispector gives us a possible clue to disambiguate this lack of clarity, we refer to the use of parentheses as we can see in the following quote:

She’d become with time mere living matter in its primary form. Maybe that was to protect herself from the great temptation to go ahead and be unhappy and feel sorry for herself. (When I think that I could have been born her — and why not? — I shudder. And it seems to me a cowardly avoidance the fact that I am not, I feel guilty as I said in one of the titles32.)33

This distinction arises from the fact that the second voice, that of the fictitious author, is the one that refers to the titles, the one in parentheses. It is the author's voice that makes the metafictional comment, that is, it takes us out of the plot plane, by the narrator, to take us to the metafictional plane. Both speak of Macabéa, but they refer to two different aspects, while the narrator is concerned with conjecturing about the alleged happiness in which the character lives, the fictional author, on the other hand, is invaded by fear: “I shudder”. This fear arises from a specular game that the author (although at other times the narrator will also do) establishes with the protagonist, which consists of: being the other excluded. (Reflecting in an outcast is a constant in Lispector's work, and in most cases, it is related to the character's self-knowledge. A topic that we will develop in the next section.) Identifying with the socially-excluded, (a recurring narrative resource in Lispector's narrative and also in this novel), produces a feeling of guilt in the author. This feeling is already announced, as a prolepsis in the first title of the work: “It’s all my Fault”. The author feels guilty for not being able to establish an emphatic relationship with that other, on the contrary, he shies away from said possibility. In this quote the division between both voices seems clear, but in most cases it is not, at times the author's voice, referring to the titles, appears outside the parentheses and, consequently, differentiation becomes difficult. Which leads us to think that we are faced with a single narrator voice, imprecise and contradictory. This could explain the lack of clarity of who narrates, since both coexist in the same textual body and both refer to metafictional issues. In short, both voices, that of the author who is announced in the dedication and that of the narrator, can be synthesized in the figure of Rodrigo S.M.

32 Those highlighted in italics are ours.
33 Lispector 2011, pp. 36-37.
As for the contradiction that characterizes said voice, it is also perceived in the titles. In “Let her deal with it”, third title in order of appearance, the author would seem to show a sort of indifference with respect to his character, however; in the novel, he shows compassion for his character, to the point of feeling as if it were her own, the struggle of the northeastern women without a voice. The latter is also related to the following title: “The Right to Scream”, which, as we will see in section II.3, will make up what we have called the narrative of protest. As we can see, the narration begins much earlier, even before the plot itself begins. Already in the titles, not only the thematic nuclei of the novel can be perceived, but also these voices in dispute, or a single voice full of contradictions. The titles also act as warnings to the reader, there are frequent indications by the narrator to what has already been said, even in the titles: “I warned that this was a cheap tearjerker”\textsuperscript{34} and “I feel guilty as I said in one of the titles”\textsuperscript{35} are examples of these metafictional references. All this demonstrates our initial hypothesis: the narrative in THOS begins in the paratexts.

The title “Cheap Tearjerker”, title number twelve, not only tells us about a popular genre, but also about the relationship that the author establishes between the form and the content of the novel. The rise of this literature –coming from Spain and Portugal–, had its flourishing in the Brazilian northeast, a marginalized and stigmatized region of the country and where the main character of this story comes from. String literature was consumed by illiterate people, it was a common practice to meet in groups to listen to these stories. From the beginning, we can notice the similarities that Lispector establishes between the string narrative, popular and aimed at a poorly educated public, with the configuration of the novel's main character. Macabéa, comes from the Brazilian northeast where this literature had its heyday, almost illiterate, she did up to third grade and barely knows how to write. Still, she works as a typist. In this sense, Lispector establishes a similarity between the narrator and the character, as Aguilar points out, the profession of both consists of writing.\textsuperscript{36} Moriconi has also expressed himself on this, when he says that the simultaneity between the narrated events and the writing is a recurrent characteristic in the author's narrative.\textsuperscript{37} In other words, she writes and, at the same time, talks about how she writes. The latter is another of the metafictional features that this novel presents. In addition to the parallels that Lispector establishes between author-narrator-character, as Aguilar has expressed.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{36} Aguilar 2011, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{37} Morinconi 2011, p. 113.
There is a title that draws attention due to its form and content, we refer to: “.As for the future.”, the fifth title of the work. What makes it special is that this title hides a mystery, a secret, that the narrator himself will be in charge of highlighting:

An exterior and explicit story, yes, but which contains secrets – starting with one of the titles, “.As For The Future.” which is preceded by a period and followed by another period. This isn’t just a notion of mine – at the end perhaps you’ll understand the need to delimit. (I’m barely starting to make out the ending which, my poverty permitting, I’d like to be grandiose38.) If instead of a period it were followed by ellipses, the title would be open to possible imaginings of yours, perhaps even depraved and pitiless.39

In this quote, both voices (or a single voice) refer to the same thing: the creative process. While the narrator has more information about the outcome of the story; for the author (in parentheses), on the other hand, the end is still uncertain, although he expresses his intention to influence it. It would seem that narrator and author speak to us of two different creative processes, and, therefore, place the reader in two different metafictional dimensions; even so, both reveal the artifice: being before a fictional text, with a beginning and an end.

The future that is announced in the title is going to be uncertain and this lack of certainty is going to be reflected both in the writing and in the plot. In the novel, more than once, the narrator refers to the uncertainty of the content, that is, he does not know how the events are going to be narrated, and also, he gives an account of the future threats to which the writing is exposed. When the reader reads the scene of the narrator's maid throwing the papers with the novel's progress in the trash, she understands that there was a previous, original writing, and that what she is reading now is a rewriting. So, what is read is a trace of what has already been written, and consequently, the narrator is affected by possible forgetfulness, therefore, he sows doubt in the reader about what he is telling. In this sense, we are facing an unreliable narrator. Once again, the narrator dislodges the reader, taking him out of the fictional plane to take him to the metafiction plane. And this produces, as Boyd warned, that the work turns on itself, exposing its fictionality, revealing the artifices that compose it.40

Lastly, we will refer to the titles: “Singing the Blues” and “Cheap Tearjerker”. These titles advance the crossing of genres that Lispector makes in this novel, namely: melodrama and string literature. As a melodramatic genre, the author will use music to intensify the different moments of the plot. The narrator says:

38 This and the following highlights are ours.
39 Lispector 2011, p. 16.
40 Boyd 1975, p. 7.
I forgot to say that everything I’m now writing is accompanied by the emphatic ruffle of a drum being beaten by a soldier. The moment I start my story, suddenly the drum will cease.\textsuperscript{42}

This quote reflects the narrator’s mastery of the work, although, as we can see, he is a bit messy in writing, since he admits to having forgotten to say that the narration is accompanied by music. This oblivion does not go unnoticed, the musical references run through the entire novel, from the titles, through the author’s dedication and the plot. Even towards the end, when the narrator says that Macabéa is “a music box that was slightly out of tune”.\textsuperscript{43}

The music accompanies the narration to intensify important events, such as the beginning of the novel or the entry or exit of a character, which gives the work a melodramatic flavor or musical theater. On the other hand, we can see how the narrator here establishes an analogy between his figure and that of an orchestra conductor, thus establishing a parallelism between: writing and score, and at the same time, he positions himself in the place of the one who controls the narration. In this quote, we can also detect as a metafictional resource, the use of \textit{authorial self-awareness} proposed by Alter.\textsuperscript{44} The narrator is fully aware of his writing, and stops the rhythm of the narration to reflect on it. Then, he looks at himself and reflects on his way of writing, making it clear that we are facing a fictional world.

Finally, we can also say that the musical titles are a reflection of the author’s passion for music, since they account for the mixture of arts and genres. We can anticipate then that \textit{THOS}’ narrative is painfully musical, “so high-pitched I sing a strident and syncopated melody”\textsuperscript{45}: the narrator’s pain before the act of writing. In the next section we will deal with the emotions that arise to the narrator in said act.

\textbf{II. 2 Painful narrative: the fear of writing}

So far we have seen how the plot begins much earlier than expected, already in the titles the reader finds thematic nuclei that the author will later develop in the novel. In addition to those already announced in the titles, today two themes become relevant, because they open and close the plot, namely: love and death. At the beginning, in the “Dedication by the Author (actually

\textsuperscript{41} The highlight is ours.
\textsuperscript{42} Lispector 2011, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{44} Alter 1975, pp.x-xi.
\textsuperscript{45} Lispector 2011, p. 15.
Clarice Lispector” illustrates the union of these thematic poles. The same thing happens towards the end of the novel, where the love presaged by cartomancy is transfigured into death. These topics do not appear separately, but together, as if one needed the other. The narrator understands death as a painful and common fate, however, not everyone is worthy of love.

Right from the beginning Lispector involves us as readers in the story, makes us part of it, but not from pleasure, but from pain. The narrator tells us that this story is going through a “toothache” and that this pain causes a stitch in his mouth. We could say then that, like death, it is a shared pain, because what is narrated, the life of a poor and excluded girl, is what causes pain to the narrator:

But what about me? What about me telling this story that never happened to me or anyone I know? I’m astonished to know the truth so well. Could it be that my painful task is to guess in the flesh the truth that nobody wants to see?

The job of the narrator is to sing/tell the painful life of the character, “So high-pitched I sing a strident and syncopated melody”, although he later says that this story “lacks a cantabile melody” and that “its rhythm is sometimes discordant”. If we think of these comments by the narrator in contrast to the consecrated musicians who appear in the dedication (such as Schumann, Beethoven, Bach and Chopin), the narrator places his narrative at the antipodes of what is understood by harmonious composition. This has to do with the fact of “detuning” in terms of the narrated matter. Lispector narrates what the bourgeois reader is not interested in: “So don’t expect stars in what’s coming: nothing will twinkle, this is opaque material and by its very nature despised by everyone”. THOS narrates the life of a poor girl, Macabéa, who arrives in the big city of Rio de Janeiro in search of a better life. In short, the material of the story arises from the suffering of the other: “The toothache that runs through this story has given me a sharp stab in the middle of our mouth”. This sensation of pain that invades the narrator does not stop, only at the end, when there is nothing to tell, achieves a certain tranquility.

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46 Ibid., p. 11.
47 Ibid., p. 11.
48 Ibid., p. 15.
49 Ibid., p. 51.
50 Ibid., p. 15.
51 Ibid., p. 19.
52 Ibid., p. 19.
53 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
54 Ibid., p. 15.
Pain is also related to lack, Macabéa's story is synonymous with the scarcity of something recognizable, recognizing oneself in the other also means recognizing one's own lack, as the following quote demonstrates:

If there's any truth in it –and of course the story is true though invented– may everyone recognize it inside himself because all of us are one and he who is not poor in money is poor in spirit or longing because he lacks something more precious than gold –there are those who lack the delicate essential.55

An idea of shared lack emerges from this quote, just as we saw before with death, no matter what is lacking, the narrator assumes that we all have a lack. Consequently, he imposes on the reader a specular relationship that consists of seeing himself in the other, since the other also has something that is missing. In this sense, the negative value that contains the idea of lack is reversed, it is through this that one reaches the recognition of oneself. In short, Lispector subverts the negative idea of scarcity to make it something positive. The narrator says: “But the emptiness has the value and the appearance of plenty”.56 In this quote, he returns to expose the contrast between “the void” and “the full”, but at the same time gives them a complementary value. If we relate this to the beginning of the novel where “there was the never and there was the yes”57, we can see that the author returns again and again to form this type of contradictory dualisms.

Even the narrative form is going to be given by the lack, the narrator tells us that he wants to write in a simple way, that he knows how to use a more “succulent terms”58, but that he prefers narrative simplicity, not intended for “minds that are very demanding and covet refinement”59. However, this idea of a simple narrative, postulated by the narrator, does not coincide with the real structure of the plot, as we have already said, Lispector gives us a complex narrative in THOS. In addition, the narrator says that he is tired of literature and that this is a story based on facts, like “hard stones”60 (which remind us of the author's Jewish origin and the stones that Jews usually leave in the tombs of their dead). In this commentary, the narrator opposes literature, as a fictional place, to the facts that he considers true, giving more value to the latter. Once again, he takes us out of the realm of fiction to take us to the plane of reality. And with this, the narrator gives us to understand an idea of writing more related to action than to contemplation. From the

55 Ibid., p. 16.
56 Ibid., p. 17.
57 Ibid., p. 15.
58 Ibid., p. 18.
59 Ibid., p. 18.
60 Ibid., p. 19.
beginning, the narrator makes us participate as readers in the creative process, this being—as we have already indicated at the beginning—one of the features of metafiction. He tells us how the story originated and how he is going to organize it, as well as what kind of story it is, what language and narrative resources he is going to use.

The narrator addresses in an accusative tone a reader of the wealthy middle class, to which he himself belongs:

How do I know everything that’s about to come and that I myself still don’t know, since I never lived it? Because on a street in Rio de Janeiro I glimpsed in the air the feeling of perdition on the face of a northeastern girl. Not to mention that I as a boy grew up in the northeast. I also know about things because I’m alive. Everyone alive knows, even if they don’t know they know. So you gentlemen know more than you think and are just pretending not to.\(^61\)

What he is trying to say here is that he knows how to see the poor and recognizes himself in them. On the other hand, the rest of his class knows that the poor man exists, but they play dumb. He also accuses them of knowing more than they imagine, because he understands that the experience of knowing what class one belongs to also means knowing what one is not: a poor person. In this way, this novel is also a criticism of a part of the society of his time. Even later, referring to the title: “.As for the Future.” the narrator is going to say that this delimitation is not a whim, on the contrary, that it is made on purpose to take away the possibility of this group of readers being able to imagine a cruel future for the character, since he understands that their imagination is “perhaps even depraved and pitiless”\(^62\).

As we already referred to in the first section, the narrator is the one who has control of the work and even restricts the imagination of the readers by delimiting it. At this point, the narrator returns to establish a comparison, no longer from equality, as he did before with the character, but from difference. The narrator differentiates himself from this group of readers to say that he does have the right to be “sadly cold and you don’t”\(^63\) with the main character, while they are not allowed to, and he closes off any possibility of participation. Even that which is in the order of the abstract as being: the imagination. In other words, the narrator cancels for them the possibility of imagining that other, but, at the same time, writing about her makes her recognizable:

\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 16.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 16.
\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 16.
This isn’t just a narrative, it’s above all primary life that breathes, breathes, breathes. Porous material, one day I shall live here the life of a molecule with its possible bang of atoms. What I write is more than mere invention, it’s my obligation to tell about this one girl out of the thousands like her. And my duty, however artlessly, to reveal her life.64

The narrator feels obliged to make visible the story of a poor northeastern girl, and places himself as the authorized voice to do so. Also, in this quote we can see how she confronts narrative against reality. For the narrator, what is essential is not fiction, but what gives rise to it, that is, life itself. This is also a metafictional feature, the narrator theorizes within the novel about the concept of fiction and the sources that he is going to use for the story that he intends to narrate. Lispector’s narrator constantly interrupts the story, this has to do with what Riley called change of plane, with his comments the narrator slides between the plane of the story to the plane of language, and in this case he does it to theorize on literary theory.

As we have already mentioned before, the proliferation of titles speaks to us of a desire to start narrating, even before the plot begins. However, once the story begins, the narrator does nothing more than delay the beginning of it, stopping at metafictional comments. For example, he spends several pages reflecting on the act of writing and giving an account of how the idea of narrating arose. This delay is due to two reasons: first, he writes while he thinks and, at times, he does not know, or does not have enough material to start the story: “But I suspect that all this chitchat is made just to put off the poverty of the story, because I’m scared”.65 The narrator is self-aware of the writing and its metafictional digressions, and also of the fear that writing provokes in him. “No, it’s not easy to write. It’s as hard as breaking rocks. But sparks and splinters fly like flashing steel. Oh I’m so afraid to start and don’t even know the girl’s name”.66 Secondly, he is afraid of failure, he knows that what he says is not a word thrown into the void, but that there is a reader who receives and judges what he said. Finally, he considers that the best way to overcome fear is to enter the narrative quickly, like a plunge into cold waters.

The narrator sees the act of writing as an obligation and not as a desire: “(But why am I bothering with this girl when what I want more than anything is purely ripe and golden wheat in summer?)”.67 If we understand writing as part of culture, the mention of “wheat” and the “summer” can be interpreted as a longing to return to a state of nature, and therefore, move away from literature. It is not unreasonable to think this, in the novel there are several references to

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64 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
65 Ibid., p. 19.
66 Ibid., p. 21.
different primitive states. The beginning of the world, writing without embellishments, facts without literature, and nudity are clear examples of the above. In addition, this quote shows that the author cannot escape the character, but that there is a force that requires him to narrate the girl's life, because if he could, he would abandon the project. Therefore, we can say that this is not a writing of pleasure, but of something that is imposed on the author, something that goes against his will and, therefore, he feels uncomfortable with the situation. According to David Herman, it is the emotions that motivate a writer to write, but this does not happen in Lispector, in her it would seem that it is the discomfort generated by the character that incites her to write, and she finds in writing a way to get rid of this. We are facing the narrative of victimization developed by Peixoto, and which we have mentioned above. In this Peixoto points out that the roles of victim and aggressor are interchangeable, such is the case of the narrator who is at the same time a victim and aggressor of his character. On the one hand he suffers for her and, at the same time, it bothers him. So, writing is an obligation that the character tacitly imposes on the narrator, since writing about Macabéa means that he stops suffering.

This discomfort is also going to be replicated in a framed story, where the narrator indirectly compares the northeastern girl with an old man who climbs on the shoulders of a young man to cross a river, but who does not want to get off after crossing it. This story functions as a *mise en abîme* for the main story. Like the young man who carries the old man on his back, the narrator carries the character, he cannot be shaken off. This weight is a consequence of the guilt felt by the narrator for not having done anything for Macabéa. Ultimately, he is a narrator who suffers for his character, even he goes so far as to say that he loves her. As we can deduce so far, the narrator is linked to the character, not only from the narrative level, but also emotionally. Therefore, we are dealing with a subjective narrator, what he narrates will be conditioned by his emotionality, and therefore, he is unreliable.

The action of writing takes place behind closed doors, in a room without contact with the outside, which speaks to us of a narrative of the imagination, of the word. In addition, this confinement will be crossed by a self-provoked abstinence, the narrator considers that to talk about the northeastern girl, her marginality, it is necessary to blend in with her, and that such blending is only possible from the lack that the character experiences:

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69 Peixoto 1994, p. 78.
It’s not comfortable now: to speak of the girl I can’t shave for days and must acquire dark circles under my eyes from lack of sleep, nodding off from sheer exhaustion, I am a manual laborer. Besides wearing old ragged clothes. All in order to put myself on the northeastern girl’s level.  

And later:

I’ve also had to give up sex and soccer. Not to mention that I avoid all human contact. Will I someday return to my former way of life? I very much doubt it. I now see that I forgot to mention that for the time being I read nothing for fear of polluting the simplicity of my language with luxuries. Since as I said the word has to resemble the word, my instrument. Or am I not a writer?  

Turning away from worldly pleasures brings him closer to the figure of an ascetic than to that of a writer. We could say that it is an asceticism of writing, since the writer wishes that nothing external contaminate it, and in this way, reach a pure and original state of the word. The latter refers us to the importance of the word as a metafictional resource of the reflective novel pointed out by Boyd. The narrator becomes self-reflective and questions his essence as a writer, if the word is the instrument to give materiality to the narrative, the writer is your intermediary. What Lispector proposes to us, through the voice of her narrator, is a pure writing, without artifice, only in this way will he be able to “capture” the soul of the character. Lispector understands writing as a moment of introspection, through which the encounter with another occurs. In the next section we will see how the word can be considered as a form of protest.

II. 3 Narrative of the uprising: the word as protest

“Few protest and as far as I know they never complain since they don’t know to whom. Does this whom exist?”. If in the previous section, we referred to the painful song of the narrator, now, telling the story, will be related to “the right to scream”. But who has that right? In THOS Lispector gives us a novel of pain and screaming, the pain that the character causes the narrator and the latter's scream as a complaint through writing and the use of words. The protest that the narrator is going to lead is announced in two of the titles: “The Right to Scream” and “She doesn’t know how to Scream”. The narrator takes the floor for the northeastern girl and makes the cause

70 Lispector 2011, p. 21.
72 Boyd 1975, p. 7.
73 Lispector 2011, p. 17.
74 Ibid., p. 17.
75 Ibid., p. 13.
his own and, at the same time, positions himself as her savior, since he understands that it is not possible for her to undertake such a fight:

I have to say that the girl isn’t aware of me, if she was she’d have someone to pray to and that would mean salvation. But I’m fully aware of her: through this young person I scream my horror of life. Of this life I love so much.\textsuperscript{76}

However, the narrator is going to fall into contradictions, if on the one hand he wants to save her, on the other hand, Macabéa's passivity makes him angry:

(She makes me so uncomfortable that I feel hollow. I’m hollow of that girl. And the more uncomfortable she makes me the less she demands. I’m angry. So enraged I could smash cups and dishes and break windows. How can I avenge myself? Or rather, how can I make up for it? I’ve got it: by loving my dog who has more food than that girl. Why doesn’t she react? Can’t she grow a backbone? No, she is sweet and obedient.)\textsuperscript{77}

The narrator's rage is that the northeastern girl does not demand anything of him, but rather that he has taken Macabéa's life as his own. The recognition that society does not grant to Macabéa, is given by the narrator through his writing. However, this situation generates an internal struggle for the narrator with his character. Finally, he finds relief in the reunion with his class, in this quote he gets out of the mimicry of the character, which we had mentioned above, to rediscover himself with bourgeois privileges and, in this way, place himself, from a class perspective, above of his character. But at the same time, it is the narrator who feels sorry for her, since he understands that she was forever condemned: “So she was. Before her birth was she an idea? Before her birth was she dead? And after her birth she would die?”\textsuperscript{78} These comments coincide with the idea of invisibility that surrounds Macabéa in her excluded condition and that the narrator takes care to highlight. First when she reproaches society, that “accusative you” for not wanting to see the poor, and second; when Macabéa, after being fired from her job, like a vampire, does not reflect in the bathroom mirror, because, as the narrator has referred to on more than one occasion, she is not aware of herself, and therefore, she cannot see herself. Her image exists only in the narrator's head, on the plane of ideas, and only he can make it socially visible through writing, but, as we have already seen, it is a gaze conditioned by the narrator's subjectivity.

The problem with Macabéa is, according to the narrator, her lack of self-knowledge. Looking at oneself in \textit{THOS}, and in Lispector's work in general, involves pain. The narrator says

\begin{small}
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\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 32. \\
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, pp. 26-27. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, p. 28.
\end{small}
about her: “If she was dumb enough to ask herself ‘who am I?’ she would fall flat on her face. Because ‘who am I?’ creates a need. And how can you satisfy that need? Those who wonder are incomplete”.

With this comment from the narrator, Lispector presents us with a different idea from the Greek “know thyself” which contains the idea of fullness. On the contrary, in Lispector self-knowledge generates an existential void, since it supposes that this causes the subject more questions. Here we can establish a parallelism between the narrator's self-knowledge from the encounter with that excluded other and the writing of the novel itself, the narrator says: “As long as I have questions and no answers I’ll keep on writing”.

What moves the plot forward in THOS is precisely this lack of answers. For Lispector writing is equivalent to existing, because writing is what allows inquiry, it is through this that self-knowledge can be reached. The problem is that Macabéa cannot reach self-knowledge because she is not given to think: “That girl didn’t know she was what she was, just as a dog doesn’t know it’s a dog. So she didn’t feel unhappy”. It is ignorance that makes her live in an unfounded state of happiness, since her lack of knowledge believes that people “had to be happy”.

It is for this reason that the narrator assumes the pain that it is not possible for the character to assume? The truth is that the narrator is located in a tower above the character and the bourgeois reader to whom he addresses. The writer comes to illuminate the darkness that surrounds them both.

In order for a story to be narrated, the union of “the never” and “the yes”, two poles in tension, is necessary. With this, Lispector draws a parallel between the creation of the universe and the act of creating analogous to the Big Bang. Before this there is nothing, there is emptiness. The narrator, like a god, creates from thought, starts from abstraction to give rise to things and events. The narrator starts from nothing, it is through the thought that will give rise to the story: “If this story doesn’t exist now, it will. Thinking is an act. Feeling is a fact. Put the two together –I am the one writing what I am writing. God is the world”.

We are facing a narrative of existence, of the here and now, where the creative act manifests itself in the mind and body of the narrator. As we can see, the narrator builds an idea of existential creation that goes from non-existence, from the abstract, to matter.

The body of the writer becomes similar to the textual body. However, such creative freedom would not seem to be total: “The fact is I hold a destiny in my hands yet don’t feel

79 Ibid., p. 18.
80 Ibid., p. 21.
81 Ibid., p. 28.
82 Ibid., p. 28.
83 Ibid., p. 15.
84 Ibid., p. 15.
powerful enough to invent freely: I follow a hidden, fatal line”. The narrator is conditioned, not only because of the fate of the character, but because of his own destiny as a writer. The act of writing is driven by a feeling of emptiness, although, paradoxically, this emptiness is full of questions. As we referred to above, we find ourselves before a novel whose plot is driven by the questions that the writer asks himself, both about his own existence and that of his character. From a narratological feminist perspective, we could ask ourselves if there is a feminine or masculine view of history. Lispector is going to ask herself this question in the novel to tell us that the story of Macabéa would not have been the same if it had been written by a woman, because “a woman would make it all weepy and maudlin”. In this case, one could misunderstand this statement and think that Lispector chooses to camouflage herself under the clothes of a male narrator, precisely in order not to fall into sentimentality. Which would go against the melodramatic genre. As we can deduce, this narrator's comment expresses an asymmetrical relationship between both genders, putting women writers on the level, not of reason, because this corresponds to men, but of emotions. However, we believe that this is not the case, that what Lispector is doing through the voice of Rodrigo S.M., is that what male writers produce could be written by any other writer; the material becomes interchangeable because there is no difference between who writes and what is written, there is no differentiating voice, there is no identity. In short, what Lispector is doing is reviewing Brazilian narratology from a feminist point of view, to distinguish what conception of gender one has based on who writes and, in this way, dismantle the pre-established patriarchal patterns to recover the value of the texts produced by women. Implying that there is a patriarchal idea of literature, which despises and minimizes the literature produced by women considering it as trivial or dedicated to minor genres. And also to show that you can choose low genres to write something of quality. What she seeks is to expose gender inequalities in the literary field of production. Given the context of the writing and publication of the novel, in 1977, it is not surprising that Lispector was influenced by the second wave of feminism, which took place in the ’60s.

85 Ibid., p. 22.
86 Ibid., p. 17.
As Heta Pyrhönen rightly points out, feminist narratology is a result of this movement, which demanded equal treatment between men and women.\(^7\) In this sense, we can understand this as a kind of struggle from within the literary institution. The narrator says: “And at least what I’m writing begs no favors and asks for no help: it puts up with so-called pain with the dignity of a baron”\(^8\), which denotes a narrator struggling with the impositions of the publishing market, at that he prefers to ignore in order to follow his own voice. The narrator hides himself by saying that he is not a professional, and that is why he writes what he wants. The theme of not considering herself a professional also appears in the interview that the author gave for the *Panorama* program in 1977. We interpret this as a shield to protect her freedom as a writer, to maintain a certain autonomy with respect to the possible claims of the publishing market.

As we have seen so far, in *THOS* there are two types of struggle that the author materializes through writing: on the one hand, the narrator's struggle on behalf of the excluded northeastern women, to give them, from what she writes, visibility before society, and, on the other hand; the fight against the established canons of writing. In this sense, writing becomes a field for struggle and protest.

### II. 4 Narrative of the interrogation: the reader as interlocutor

From the beginning of the novel, the narrator establishes a dialogue with the reader, on the one hand he identifies with him, but at the same time he challenges him. The narrator feels part of the group of middle-class readers to whom he directs his writing: “Here I’m playing the role of a safety valve for you and from the massacring life of the average middle class”.\(^9\) This narrator's comment sounds like a little contradictory, since if on the one hand the cause of the northeastern girl was shouldered, on the other hand; he expresses a certain complicity with this group of readers by offering them a story that takes them out of “the massacring life” in which they find themselves immersed. In short, he writes what the reader of the class expects from him, but at the same time provokes him. Towards the end of the novel, the narrator questions the reader in the following way: “Was the ending as grandiloquent as you required?”.\(^9\) This question actually hides a provocation, it is ironic in relation to the literary tastes of the middle class. Following

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\(^8\) Lispector 2011, p. 19.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 30.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 74.
Garramuño, we can think of the latter in relation to what Lispector pointed out, in one of her writings, about not following the established canons, not following fashions in writing, but writing based on one's own tastes and interests. What at first seemed to be aimed at a specific audience of readers, giving them a type of literature that satisfies them, what follows from the previous quote is quite the opposite, the ending surprises this group of readers. The narrator continuously appeals to the reader, asking him questions that the narrator himself cannot answer, he says in the dedication: “It's an unfinished book because it’s still waiting for an answer. An answer I hope someone in the world can give me. You?”. 91 If we compare this quote with the one above, the narrator contradicts himself, while here he is insecure about the lack of answers, and expects the reader to provide them, in the previous quote it is he who positions himself above the readers.

Among all the questions that this novel presents, the question about existence stands out, whether that of the narrator in his role as writer, or that of his character. The narrator does not conceive of his own existence without that of the reader: “This I that is all of you since I can’t stand being just me, I need others in order to get by fool that I am, I all askew”. 92 Which leads us to think of a literature written for someone else, otherwise it is not literature. In other words, the book is completed by the reader's reading. This is also related to the importance of the act of reading 93 pointed out by Boyd as a metafictional feature, since, when questioned, the reader becomes a participant in the plot and the creative process.

In short, the narrator places the reader in an active role, and this causes that –following Hutcheon 94 – the reader recognizes himself as a metafictional character in the story. Likewise, the challenge to the reader breaks the barrier that separates fiction from reality, a trait that Alter 95 also highlighted as metafictional. The following quote is a good example of the latter: “If instead of a period it were followed by ellipses, the title would be open to possible imaginings of yours, perhaps even depraved and pitiless”. 96 Here the limit that the narrator places on the reader is perceived and, at the same time, he takes it out of the story to take it to the level of the metaliterary, the narrator interrupts the narration to make a comment about one of the titles. This quote demonstrates, as we have already mentioned before, the narrator's dominance over the plot.

91 Ibid., p. 12.
92 Ibid., p. 9.
93 Boyd 1975, p. 7.
95 Alter 1975, pp. x-xi.
96 Lispector 2011, p. 16.
III. Final words

As we have seen in this work, the narrator experiences the act of writing in an ambiguous way, on the one hand he feels attracted to the character, but on the other hand, narrating the story makes him uncomfortable, it becomes a painful act; but at the same time an obligation that the same character –although without being aware of it– imposes on him. As we have seen, the narrator tries to avoid the beginning of the story for fear of failure, and also because he does not have enough materials for the narration. Lispector's writing manifests itself in a here and now, the narrator thinks the story while he writes it. At the same time, in this delayed start of the plot, the narrator expands on metafictional comments. One of the features to highlight is the authorial self-awareness, on more than one occasion, the narrator wonders about his destiny as a writer and, in addition, he questions the way other writers narrate, positioning his writing above what expected according to market trends. Another feature is self-referentiality, whether to the narrator, to the work itself or to the writing. The narrator continually refers to his way of writing and how to tell the story, as well as the emotions that the character provokes in him.

His reflections on the language to be used is another metafictional feature. At this point, the narrator establishes a similarity between the precariousness of the character's life and the simple language that he will use to tell his story. Likewise, the narrator reveals the creative resources and mechanisms, he tells us what he is going to do and how he does it. Finally, among the metafictional features, the active role that he gives to the reader stands out, whom he questions, but at the same time represents. Consequently, the reader at all times knows that he is facing a work of fiction, since the narrator breaks the barrier that divides fiction from reality. And with this, the reader becomes a participant in the creative process, positions him, as we have seen, in an active role, since he participates intellectually in the development of the novel. It is through the metafictional comments that the reader feels inside and outside the work, as an active participant, based on the narrator's insistent questions, but also as a reader and spectator of the events.
IV. Bibliography

Primary source


Secondary source


V. Appendix

- The titles in its original language, Portuguese, 97 and the English translation 98:

![Image of A Hora da Estrela with Portuguese and English translations]

**THE HOUR OF THE STAR**

IT'S ALL MY FAULT
OR
THE HOUR OF THE STAR
OR
LET HER DEAL WITH IT
OR
THE RIGHT TO SCREAM

As for the Future.
OR
Singing the Blues
OR
She Doesn't Know How to Scream
OR
A Sense of Loss
OR
Whistling in the Dark Wind
OR
I Can't Do Anything
OR
Account of the Preceding Facts
OR
Cheap Tearjerker
OR
Discreet Exit Through the Back Door

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98 Ibid., p. 13.