The Feminine Identity in the Political Area:
A Symbolic Route in Language Ecology[*]

Dina Maria Martins Ferreira

Mackenzie University, São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

There is no denying that the presence of the feminine manifestation was one of the resources of the electoral process in 2002 Brazil. The September 7, 2002 issue of Época Magazine 'proves,' by means of linguistic marks, the presence of the feminine manifestation as a decisive instrument in the future of the country as it publishes on the cover that "Women will decide who will win the elections. First ladies are the stars at the finish line. The female vote is the majority for the first time." And, contextualized in this political movement- Brazil, September and October 2002 -, we will seek to configure the identity-promoting movement of the feminine manifestation built by/in distinctive games in the media discourse.

With so much interest in the figure of women in politics, the analytical corpus will center on subjects that overflow in/through the media- magazines and newspapers issued nationwide - taking into account that their emergence in language were always conditioned to movements of partisan political interests. Although the electoral movement in 2002 Brazil ended with Lula winning the elections for the presidency, I would like to make it clear that I am not proposing an analysis of the feminine manifestation resulting from a specific political moment, but arguing how political interests influence and even create identities. The issue is not limited to political facts per se, neither to whether the feminine manifestation is the winner or loser in this process, but in the way of establishing distinctive and attributive games in the building of identity-promoting feminine profiles under certain historical circumstances. Denominative illustrations will center on feminine figures, either in public office or accompanying the masculine figure, also in public office: the former presidential prenominee, Roseana Sarney; the candidate for the vice presidency of the country on José Serra's ticket, Rita Camata; the candidate for governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Rosinha Garotinho; the wives of candidates for president of the country, Patrícia Pillar (Ciro Gomes), Monica

---

Serra (José Serra) and Marisa Letícia Lula da Silva (Lula) and the mayor of the City of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy. Despite specifying the names of these feminine figures, very publicized by the media at that time, what interests most is the value-attributing role played by the feminine manifestation and not only the individual who occupies a functional space. The identity-promoting fortress lies in the functional space and how it is occupied by the subject. This means that the analytical proposal is not set on specific figures, but that they are at the service of the social-historical configuration of the feminine manifestation. Such an assumption is sustained by the representativeness not only of the social roles as well as that of media discourse, both of them places of rich cultural references due to their very collective and not only multivalence but collective imaginary relaying nature.

The choice of certain discursive fragments in detriment to others aimed at dealing with categories of the female component that would move in the Brazilian social-cultural symbolic system. The proposed categories - femininity and "femininitude-" are considered binary simply as a methodological resource, without the intention of establishing polarizing presuppositions. Femininity is organized in denominations which fulfil meanings of patriarchal value attributions; this profile of femininity- women, even if understood from the macho viewpoint-, whether you disagree with this appraisal or not-, is still part of the popular imaginary, in view of the media proliferation of a feminine image idealized by/ in the cultural system: the little princess; the spouse-companion, protected from the troubles of life; the elegant young woman; the respectable lady; the protecting mother available to family group appeals. "Femininitude"[1] fulfills a category composed of attributes that can move the feminine figure away from the universe of femininity; it is the achiever, who is active and has a functional life, no longer dependent on and/ or bound to the phallocratic universe, which does not presuppose excluding femininity or the masculine manifestation.

The argumentative route is made up of three pillars which are bound as they are woven. This net aims at dimensioning the linguistic component as the level of manifestation following epistemological issues, which render problematic how the "nature" of language behaves in symbolic systems.

---

[1] Neologism apud Ferreira, 2002: 105; it refers to contemporary women, who are modern and manage their world.

Language and its ecological nature

The first step lies in "reading" the denominative game attributed to women from the idea that language is ecological[2]. It is understood that it is part of the nature of language to be able to resignify itself each moment of its materialization into a specific language, for the language system does not exclude meanings along its long journey in historical space-time. On the contrary, with each signifying expression, meaningful residues are processed and remodalized. A case in point is, when formulating the sentence, "I will watch the sun set," at this moment, I would catch a glimpse of the Ptolomaic sense that the Sun rotates around the Earth and the Earth is the center of the galaxy, for I am seated, motionless in space, and see something that moves around me-I am the center in relation to that which moves. In a sentence that proposes itself a specific meaning, in the case of the example above, to watch the sun set in search of peace after a stressing day, you can find residues of other meanings, which were transformed, even concealed but not excluded.

Scripture's boustrophedonic movement and language ecology

Issues from Derrida´s philosophy which help in the argumentative set up-scripture's movement[3]- are associated to the first part of the thesis:

> "The question is scripture by means of furrows. The furrow is a line like the one drawn by the farmer: the route – via rupta – cut by the plowshare. The agricultural furrow - it is also evoked -, prepares nature for culture. Moreover, it is known that scripture is also born with agriculture, which does not come about before humans become sedentary." (Derrida, 1999: 351)

Derrida upholds that scripture has a boustrophedonic movement, that is, a continuous movement from left to right, like that of the plow of an ox sowing the seeds in the fields. From the boustrophedonic language perspective, it can be verified that there is no interruption in this movement, whose continuous nature enables you to reaffirm that language is ecological; in other words, it is a process of continuous 'reutilization' since the plow-language, in its is coming and going, produces an unveiling of meanings. If the cultivation process is

---

[2] Term used by Prof. Dr. Kanavillil, Rajagopalan, in class, in the Graduate Pragmatics Course, IEL, Unicamp, second semester , 2001.

[3] It is worth emphasizing that I am pondering over the nature of scripture, not of language- phoné, see Derrida, 1999.

continuous, at each language planting, residues from a previous planted area remain in order to aggregate themselves to the next one. The 'soil' in which designations are planted cannot get rid of or replace the traces of former planted areas; it is in the excavating of the plow-language that 'new' denominative grains meet residues of other grains, remodalizing themselves into new language games. Each historical moment of language does not exclude the previous one; nor does it exclude itself from the one that follows it.

The boustrophedonic movement, accomplished metaphorically by the ox's plow, leaves furrows and marks- deep furrows or not, depending on the historical moment in which they are carried out; their cultural imprints and meanings can be 'rediscovered' way beyond the moment they were plowed in, for, depending on the historical strength of the plow, the sedimented and crystallized furrows do not dissolve so easily:

> "Well, how do farmers go about their work? Economically. At the end of the furrow, they do not go back to the starting point. They turn the plow and the ox around and start again in the opposite direction. This saves time, space and energy. More work can be done in less time. The scripture of the ox's return- bustrofédon - ,... " (Derrida, 1999: 351-352)

Language, therefore, can be configured as a system which plows up its land (re)sowing its meaning attribution products. In doing so, it leaves residues because its pace is economical and its movement, uninterrupted. Furrows presuppose not only marks but lines, and ecology's fundamental requirement is reutilization. For its metaphorical contexture, the road-furrow with its marks can be considered as the making of language. The language route receives the fertilizers of form and content in each time- space covered because the social-cultural specificities of the language games cannot be denied.

Symbolic systems in language's ecological and boustrophedonic path

Owing to the fact that language is always on the move, it crosses cultures; and, due to this very nature, as it progresses, it unveils symbolic systems, which, owing to their very nature-symbols, crystallized meanings that are difficult to break up socially-culturally-, are not cut off from each other by borders.

The moment of a denominative meaning attribution can be considered as the reattribution of another meaning marked and furrowed at another spatial-time moment. In restropective semiosis, the proposal of this thesis, meanings of historical moments sharing constitutive semantic unit properties of current and previous symbolic systems are 'reharvested.' And, in case of prospective semiosis, the ecological movement is the same; meanings derived from meaningful solidification instances of previous denominative moments will be once again updated.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate, in language's ecological and boustrophedonic dance, how symbolic systems emerge in/through denominative games, which, in turn, configure identities of the feminine manifestation. This is where the three analytical pillars - the ecological, boustrophedonic and symbolic-, get together and are reflected in denominative games.

Symbolic systems: meaning endurance and equivalence

In trying to demonstrate that language ecology and its boustrophedonic route enable symbolic systems of different historical moments to touch, I am not underscoring from essentialism to symbolism, since the symbolic morphology of each culture cannot be denied. Each culture is a fall into history, and, as such, is circumscribed to a specific time and space. What is being proposed is the perception that

> (...) symbols are experienced and valued differently: the product of these multiple updates constitutes great part of the "cultural styles" (..) (and) insofar as historical formations, such cultures are no longer interchangeable; having already been constituted according to their own styles, they can be compared at the level of Images and symbols."[4] (Eliade, 1996: 173)

Contact among cultures through language would lie in their ecological character, which spreads meaning residues on scripture's boustrophedonic road. That two cultures touch is ratified by the residues on the uninterrupted road, if it is taken into account that symbols are very strong conventions, local crystallization instances, signs difficult to break up in the weariness of the historical route.

---

[4] The italics are mine; their purpose is to call attention to a specific argumentative focus.

To the extent that a symbol is understood as the crystallization and solidification of cultural meaning, the symbolization process presupposes the meaning stabilization possibility in detriment to signifiers that glide in social moments. The symbolic meaning solidification, due to its consistency, may cross significant historical contexts. An example will help in this argumentative route: a crown is what is placed on the head of a person others are paying tribute to, of leaders, noblemen, kings, queens; in short, it is an object indicating the subjects wearing them are important. It does not matter if worn at the time of the pharaohs, caesars, European nobility in both its prime or at present, African kings or emperors, the crown symbolizes - from the very beginning up to now, at least in the Western world that surrounds us -, nobility, that is to say, being above somebody or something. The signifiers change, but the symbolic meaning axis can travel across other times and spaces because they stick to the meaning 'being in a higher position than.' The symbolic movement is anchored in concrete forms rendered performative in each era, which expand abstractly in the direction of the meaning. For example, the crown of the caesars presents itself in the shape of leaves; the crown of Queen Elizabeth II presents gold and precious stones of an irregular oval- triangular shape, specific morphologies on their heads, but expanding their historical meanings in direction of the transhistorical meaning 'being in a higher position than.'

It is in this sense that residues of symbolic meanings are understood: endurable all along language plowings because meanings of cultural life are not crushed and dissolved immediately after the passage of the ox's plow. On the contrary, in this metaphorical, but not less logical, reasoning, symbols are understood as enduring meaning residues embedded in the furrows, whose deep marks of meaningful expansions are 'remembered once more' in signifiers suitable to the historical context; it is in this 'remembering' the symbolic universe 'once more' that it is possible to perceive the contact among cultures.

Relating to the issue of symbolic meaning endurance, the etymology itself of the term symbol already ratifies language's ecological and boustrophedonic nature, owing to the fact that the Greek verb symbállein indicates

> "...'throw together with,' hurl simultaneously with,' 'play together with.' At first,
> the symbol was a sign of recognition: an object divided into two parts, whose
> adjustment, comparison, enabled those who held the parts to recognize each other.

The symbol is, thus, the expression of an equivalence[5] concept." (Brandão, 1986: 38).

It is exactly in denominative games that equivalence games are established, semantic unit equivalence which takes place between the denominated object and the values of the symbolic system. The denomination supplies the symbolic system in the same way that the denomination meaning is supplied by the symbolic system. When a woman is denominated 'lady', the relationship of feminine figure x is established with the possible symbolic meanings set up and recognized by the equivalence with feminine figures y stratified in the social-cultural universe. The denomination x is equivalent to others y through the semantic unit sheath – a refined, pretty, elegant, well bred, noble, woman above the common standard-, traits constitutive of a symbolic universe, in which feminine traits of multiple histories dwell. As it allows for meaning equivalence, the symbol, dwelling in language furrows, is not immobilized within the time or space where it manifests itself. Its stable nature plus that of playing together with meanings in boustrophedonic march enables it to proceed in the direction of other histories without suppressing previous ones, rebuilding other modes of existence in its continuous plowing. The furrows made in bustrofédon open windows to the transhistorical component of the symbologies. In this sense, the denomination 'lady' can inhabit a woman in current politics, Roseane Sarney or Marisa Lula da Silva, and the Greek goddess Deméter, the lady of the Hades. In this case, the figure of the subject inhabits the denominative symbol and renders it performative. This movement of symbolic meaning attribution – being inhabited by a concrete figure- is one more element to exhibit symbol crystallization, owing to the fact that meaningful convention is gradually occupied by figures. It is the endurance of meaning in search of forms to emerge; it is the signified in search of signifiers; in short, the signified precedes the denominated form.

The nature of the symbol was characterized by two traits, meaning endurance and equivalence: endurance is registered in the 'repetition' of historical concreteness which expands itself in the transhistorical abstract of sense; equivalence presents itself in the abstract dimension of the signified preceding form. Neither of these movements- from concrete to abstract and abstract components in search of the concrete- renders itself more relevant than the other; neither preexists the other since they are in continuous and complex intertwining. The order attributed to the endurance and equivalence movement corresponds to an analytical

---

[5] The italics are mine; they are used as an emphatic argumentative resource.

view, not to a determiner in its construction. The concrete and the abstract, form and content, figure and subject are constituted as threads in a complex net, which is configured in the texture of its own threads. There is no net without constructing weaving. What about its rules? The denominative games supply them in border-free crisscrossing, for there is no saturation point in meaningful networking, not even in symbolic networking, because

> "it is situated in and sensitive to space-time coordinates of contingent factors which mark its production (...) It is dispersion and dissemination in an uninterrupted process" (Rajagopalan, s/d: 3).

Denominative games in symbolic systems

Having described scripture's route - the ecological component being ratified by the boustrophedonic one, which allows for looking at its symbolic systems emerging in denominative games -, this analysis proposes covering the route in the opposite direction - that of linguistic marks in denominative games -, you can attain symbolic meanings, whose residues are harvested in language's boustrophedonic-ecological journey. In this contexture, dialectics lies in making current Brazilian political subjects flow out of denominative feminine games.

In Roseana Sarney,

> "The succession lady.[6] The daughter of the former president, with fragile health and a well-reputed tenure, Roseana Sarney becomes the star in the presidential race as she ranks as the first – runner-up in the polls." (Veja Magazine, 11/14/2001, p.36)

the feminine manifestation is a lady, the star of a political moment, a woman above common standards, who had very high public ratings; she is the feminine woman who can also command; she is femininity, the protected woman, for she is the former President's daughter and has fragile health; the power of "femininitude" is not denied, but it only manifests itself through femininity; it's political power still inactive.

---

[6] The use of italics in discursive fragments is a resource I use as a manner of calling attention to the categorization to be analyzed.

The identity-promoting denominations on the figure of Rosinha (Rosa Matheus Garotinho) already render femininity equivalent to femininitude," too, but the denominations constitutive of femininity are the ones that introduce and call attention to the practice of "femininitude":

> "The girl's strength. Garotinho takes the lead. At least in Rio, with the name of Rosa." (Veja Magazine 09/04/2002, 44) (...) "Rosinha's shine" (Veja Magazine, 11/14/2002, p.45)

(...) Rosinha Garotinho, in Rio, a first-lady so well appraised that she became the candidate of the current administration with chances of winning in the first round. With 45% of the female electorate's backing, she represents the successful woman, the mother of nine children – five of them adopted - who did not need to be detached from her husband to achieve success.

> "The image of the emancipated and welcoming woman is almost biblical, states the linguist Bruno Dallari (...) Garotinho's wife has a strong personality. She exerts such power over her husband, that a disagreement between them is enough for him to get completely lost." (Veja Magazine, 11/14/2002, p.34)

As a girl, she is young, and, in possession of her youth, she shines. She is a mother and more than this, since she extends her arms to nine children, including the adopted ones; for this role, she is welcoming. Such denominations profile her as a representative of femininity. Nevertheless, her strong personality empowers her to begin exercising "femininitude," power over her husband. And this road renders it feasible for her to be emancipated and candidate for the office of state governor.

The same play of forces between femininity and "femininitude" takes place with respect to a Marta Suplicy:

> "Pretty and expressing herself well, the mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, stirs up strong emotions among participants of Lula's political rallies. In the last two months, the candidate's rejection rate among women voters dropped 2 points– while those who declared it was their intention to vote for him increased 3 (..) the combative woman (from the PT[**]) is represented in political rallies by Marta Suplicy (...)." (Época Magazine, 09/09/2002, p.33).

In this combination of denominations, the feminine figure is not denied, owing to the fact that she is pretty, but "femininitude" appears in the political game through the qualities expressing

---

[**] translator's note = The PT is Lula's Party.

herself well and combative. "Femininitude" and femininity solidarize, for both categories are present in the act of stirring up strong emotions, denomination encompassing in its meaning the "emotion" of femininity and the "strength" of "femininitude."

The play of forces among the symbolic categories of the feminine manifestation continues because both Rita Camata and Patrícia Pillar, women known by the media as having professional careers and being independent – the latter, a movie, theater and television actress; the former, a politician and now nominee for the vice presidency of the republic – work and are, in a certain fashion, annulled in/by femininity:

> Rita Camata - "Wedding shower. Rita brings together from brassy women to feminists. This event took place on Tuesday, at Andréa Gouvêa Vieira's house; Rita Camata's meeting with so-called 'varied social segments' of the feminine universe of Rio de Janeiro (...) There, one of the guests – a true toucan[***] - appropriated two expressions of Rita Camata's in her speech, declaring, 'I, as a woman, in terms of what women like, would rather be in a shopping mall. " (Folha de São Paulo, 07/12/2002, A6)
>
> Indecent Proposal. The politician from the PT José Genuíno did not lose time when he saw his colleague Rita Camata (PMDB) in Congress. 'Get affiliated to the PT. You are in the wrong place." (Folha de São Paulo, 06/12/2002, A10)
>
> Patrícia Pillar - "The actress Patricia Pillar pays back public affection, beside Ciro Gomes (...) Patrícia becomes the star of one of Ciro's events." (Folha de São Paulo, 07/20/2002, A6)
>
> "Circumlocution and applause. Considered one of the greatest trump cards in her boyfriend's candidacy, the actress played, in the insertion, the role of announcer. (Folha de São Paulo, 06/22/02, A1)
>
> "Right hand. Patrícia Pillar is increasingly more influent in Ciro Gomes's campaign". (...) In the debate among presidential candidates, she was the only first-lady-to-be to have access to the area reserved for main campaign aides . (...) "When she is not behind the scenes, the actress bets on her husband's plans; her most important asset : the image built in years of a discreet career and engaged in playing the role of positive characters with a social-transforming role (...) Patrícia warrants the campaign a certain committed and ethical tone (...) 'My companion plays one of the most important roles, which is to sleep with me. Sleeping with me is a fundamental role. " (Época Magazine, 09/09/2002, p.32)

Rita Camata changes the profile of the position candidate for the vice presidency, since she is the one whose role is established in a wedding shower; she brings together brassy women and

---

[***] translator's note = A toucan is a member of the PSDB, Fernando Henrique's party. FH was the President of the country in 2002.

feminists, so they will say they would rather be in a shopping mall, indicating that their favorite capacity is that of consumer, not the political one. She is the feminine figure comparable on the male side to an indecent proposal alluding to the American movie very popular in its day for featuring famous actors and actresses, "Indecent Proposal," in which a married woman (Demi Moore) makes allowance for a love-making night, for US$1 million dollars, with a millionaire in love with her (Robert Redford), with the connivance of her husband. This is the case of a powerless woman who gives in to circumstances. The femininity degree, under the phallocratic perspective, is sarcastic, ironically indicating women's real task. In this case, "femininitude" is not even presented; what remains is just an ideological expression scorning femininity.

Patrícia Pilar, on the contrary, is denominated presenting her mature "femininitude": discreet and engaged, a committed and ethical tone, a dynamics evidencing her figure is a trump card in her husband's campaign. She is the active independent woman who is, notwithstanding, a companion, insofar as she bets on her husband's plans. This would be a clash difficult to resolve one way or the other; however, the masculine component reduces the ideal figure of the feminine manifestation, according to the media, the woman who struggles and is a companion. She becomes important because her basic role is to sleep with me. The pleasure woman suppresses the achiever. Once more, sarcasm destroys the 'glory of "femininitude".

Nonetheless, a value dispute does not always take place. In the case of Mônica Serra, wife of the candidate to the Presidency of the Republic on the current administration ticket, the categories seem to be covered up:

> "Owing to her discreet temperament and academic biography, the psychotherapist Sylvia Monia Allende Serra reminds you of Ruth Cardoso, the only Brazilian first lady with a professional career detached from her husband. (...) At the age of 58, two children, a grandchild in gestation, a strong Chilean accent, Monica is one of those multimedia women, difficult to classify." (Época Magazine, 2002, 31).

The discretion not only of "femininitude" (academic, psychotherapist, detached) but of femininity (the mother of two children and grandmother of a grandchild in gestation), hinders the emergence of an identity-promoting profile bordered by conventions; as she is a multimedia woman, a classification with borders is difficult to establish.

The only figure who does not conceal her "femininitude," because she does not seem to have it, is Marisa Lula; there are no tensions in the denominations attributed to her:

> "At the age of 52, Marisa Letícia Lula da Silva is going through her husband's fourth presidential elections – but , for the first time, she is participating actively. She appeared in the political rallies looking thinner, a more congenial expression for facelift, hair cut by Wanderley Nunes, Gisele Bünchen's hairstylist. When she is close to Marta Suplicy, they look like sisters. (...) She had her mind on her youngest 17-year-old son, who has a skin allergy diagnosed by a doctor as 'mothertosis' (...) Marisa taped a statement for the party program on television during the presidential campaign, reformulated her image and went to the political rallies (...) Ready to act during the campaign rather to evidence her husband's family aspect (...) What Marisa really likes is to go barefoot, wearing overalls and a straw hat, and take care of the goats, chickens, rabbits, pheasants and peacocks she raises in their country house near São Bernardo do Campo (...) Being the first lady was never her life's aspiration. She has already stated that, if Lula is elected, she will observe protocol, but, whenever possible, she will go and see if everything in their domestic life is running smoothly." (Época Magazine, 09/09/2002, p.33).

Marisa is the feminine figure molded in femininity to fulfil the political objectives of the moment; by means of denominative games, she renders euphoric the political path of her husband (Lula – the current President of Brazil), a father, who has a standard domestic life. Marisa glides her femininity signifier through vanity and personal care (facelift, haircut), through her mother role (mommy), through her homemaker role (barefoot, wearing overalls and a straw hat, go and see if everything in their domestic life is running smoothly). The feminine component was set up at a symbolic level so as to help the masculine subject attain the object of his desire; she is adjuvant of the project of the other's fulfilment. The patriarchal system prevails safe and sound through femininity's gentle gliding.

The identity-promoting policy of the feminine manifestation

The analytical contexture of the feminine manifestation made use of two categories that take the symbolic system into account; on the one hand, the woman who is gentle and a companion of the masculine manifestation and, on the other hand, the achiever. Undoubtedly, it cannot be denied that the identity-promoting profile "only exists when denominated, and the universe of meanings is none other than that of language" (Barthes, 1989, 12). But, if the term "exists" is replaced by "manifests itself," the issue of the representation policy would be contemplated with more flexibility, and not only the representation per se, for the latter could

presuppose entering the feminine manifestation essentialism underlying the denomination of the symbolic load of the categories femininity and 'feminitude.' Identity is a "construct," not something found lying around "in natura" (Rajagopalan, 2002:77), so much so that the femininity and 'femininitude' categories may represent an issue of the representation policy of the feminine manifestation, "affirmed and claimed" (Rajagopalan, 2002:86) by the political interests of a 2002 Brazil specially interested in canvassing votes.

In the corpus, the discursive performance of these symbologies already identifies the nonfixedness of such values, owing to the fact that they move among each other constituting performatives configuring movements against the hegemony of one of these categories as identifier center of the feminine manifestation. The figure Marta Suplicy is denominated pretty and expressing herself well, value attributions that blend, in a single subject, different symbolic meanings, pretty categorizing femininity and expressing herself well categorizing 'femininitude.' At the level of social action, Mônica Serra is detached from her husband; feminine independence is reaffirmed by the denomination detached; notwithstanding, the idea of detachment presupposes the existence of having been joined; moreover, one role does not annul the other, for the role of wife of- does not exclude the professional performance of a studious person. It is not possible to detach a piece of information that is part of the anatomy of her identity; Mônica Serra is attached to her husband in her role as wife. The identity-promoting contour is not a boundary. The denominative game contrasting or uniting categories, both in the discursive and social dimension, is the play of the presence of the Other in the creation of a new identity to be highlighted:

> "The importance of identifying the Other to, immediately afterward, demonize it
> as essential condition to give oneself a new identity and a new reason for being
> was highlighted..." (Rajagopalan, 2002: 84).

This is the case when a macho husband demonizes 'femininitude' in favor of femininity, or if demonization has to do with femininity in order to bring out the 'femininitude' performance of the feminine manifestation in a leadership position; the presence of the Other, demonized or embraced, is a political game so that a new identity can be highlighted.

The feminine representation by means of categorial valence is not a matter of thinking of representativeness as value immutability and fixedness in identity constitution, since the performative process in its construct cannot be denied. What may be immutable is the

moment of the recognition of the symbolic meaning, ecological-boustrophedonically stored in the collective imaginary. This recognition is already a performative and, as such, continues following its processual nature of manifesting itself in multiple moments of the language games.

The feminine profile oscillates according to the representation policy required by the historical moment with its ideological and political targets. The "hybridism, the crossbreeding" (Rajagopalan, 2002: 82) of cultural values emerge in moments of political interests and historical transformation:

> "The issue of the representation policy acquires utmost importance, for it is by means of representation that new identities are constantly affirmed and claimed." (Rajagopalan, 2002: 86).

The representational nature of symbolic denominations is ratified because denominative games use meanings sedimented by cultural values that, through equivalence, display residues of the ecological–boustrophedonic route. Nevertheless, the crystallizing nature of the symbol does not become permanent, since it is an instrument of the performative component. A paradox is, thus established, for what is enduring serves the interest of the moment which, in turn, becomes the moment insofar as denomination for a specific end; the representation feeds on performatives, which, in turn, are exhibited in representation. The symbolic system, indicative of social-cultural crystallization instances, does not withstand the political component of language, turns into a performative resource of the feminine manifestation's identity. Language, although manifested in and by the symbolic system, is political, a space where the feminine identity is established.

But, the problematic issue of the identity-promoting construct by means of denominative games goes on beyond the political manifestation because

> "(...) reality is to a great extent indifferent to the descriptions we make of it and to that which the human self is constituted of through the use of a vocabulary, instead of, adequate or inadequately, expressing itself by means of the latter." (Rorty, 1995: 90).

About the Author

The author teaches at Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, São Paulo.

Email: dinaferreira@terra.com.br

Acknowledgement

References

Barthes, R. (1989) Elementos de Semiologia. São Paulo, Cultrix.

Brandão, J. de S. (1986) Mitologia Grega, Volume I. 2nd.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes.

Derrida, J. (1999). Gramatologia, trad. Miriam Chnaiderman and Renato Janine Ribeiro 2nd. ed. São Paulo, Editora Perspectiva.

Eliade, M. (1996) Imagens e Símbolos. São Paulo, Martins Fontes.

Ferreira, D. (2002) Discurso Feminino e Identidade Social. São Paulo: FAPESP/Annablume.

Votre, S. J. (2002) "Linguagem, identidade, representação, imaginação" In Ferreira, Lucia M.A. and Orrico, Evelyn, G.D. (orgas.) Linguagem, Identidade e Memória Social. Rio de Janeiro: UNI-RIO, FAPERJ, DP&A Editora, pp. 89-107.

Rajagopalan, K. (2002) "A construção de identidades e a política de representação" In Ferreira, Lucia M.A. and Orrico, Evelyn, G.D. (orgas.) Linguagem, Identidade e Memória Social. Rio de Janeiro: UNI-RIO, FAPERJ, DP&A Editora, pp.77-88.

Rajagopalan, K. (s/d). The world as a stage magic realism and the politics of representation. (xerox, research CNPq no. 306151/88-0)

Rorty, R. (1995) Contingência, ironia e solidariedade. Lisboa, Presença.