

Axiological concepts in fables: a comparative analysis of Millôr Fernandes' and La Fontaine's statements

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Abstract:

This work aims to carry out an analytical and comparative reading of the fable “The Wolf and the Lamb” (*O Lobo e o Cordeiro*), in La Fontaine’s and Millôr Fernandes’s Portuguese versions, in the light of language dialogic conception through the axiological concepts of intonation, value judgment and the extraverbal. The fable was chosen due to its strong didactic-pedagogical appeal, with a constant presence in the teachers’ tasks of the Portuguese Language component. Furthermore, its ideological-allegorical content was also taken into account when dealing with human values/contradictions. To write the article, we revisited the theoretical assumptions of Volóchinov (2018, 2019), Bakhtin (2016); in addition to researchers such Gomes and Ohuschi (2021), Xavier (2023) Menegassi and Cavalcanti (2020). Results show that the linguistic-enunciative markers used in both, the traditional fable and Millôr's parody, express values that are in resonance with the social, historical and political forces of their time, French Absolutism and the period of the Civil-Military Dictatorship in Brazil. In this sense, it is expected that the research may contribute to future reflections regarding the dialogic perspective integrated into living discourse, imbued with life and materialized in the most diverse statements

Keywords:

Axiological; Concepts; Discursive Genre; Fable; Dialogism.

Resumo:

Este trabalho tem como objetivo realizar uma leitura analítica e comparativa da fábula “O Lobo e o Cordeiro”, nas versões de La Fontaine e de Millôr Fernandes, à luz da concepção dialógica da linguagem por meio dos conceitos axiológicos da entonação, do juízo de valor e do extraverbal. A escolha da fábula deu-se por seu forte apelo didático-pedagógico, com presença constante em tarefas de professores do componente Língua Portuguesa. Ademais, foi também levado em conta o seu teor ideológico-alegórico ao tratar dos valores/contradições humanos. Para a elaboração do artigo, revisitamos os pressupostos teóricos de Volóchinov (2018, 2019), Bakhtin (2016); além de pesquisadores como Gomes e Ohuschi (2021), Xavier (2023) Menegassi e Cavalcanti (2020). Os resultados expressam que os marcadores linguístico-enunciativos usados tanto na fábula tradicional quanto na paródia de Millôr expressam valores que estão em ressonância com as forças sociais, históricas e políticas do seu tempo, o Absolutismo francês e o período da Ditadura Civil-Militar no Brasil. Espera-se, nesse sentido, que a pesquisa possa contribuir para reflexões futuras no que diz respeito à perspectiva dialógica integrada ao discurso vivo, impregnado de vida e materializado nos mais diversos enunciados.

Palavras-chave:

Conceitos Axiológicos; Gênero discursivo; Fábula; Dialogismo.

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INTRODUCTION

“I do not follow Aesop, a poor moralist to be mocked because he is an icon of nonsense, like popular wisdom, which is only wise because it states things in every way. Most of them reactionary. And I think I've told you this before: the world has more frills than dramas. Count me out of this, as CBM used to say.”

(Millôr, 2003, *apud* Coleone, 2008, p. 25. Free translation).

Is it not always possible to establish healthy paths for argumentation in extreme situations? The concern comes from the (re)reading of the fable told by La Fontaine (and not only by him) entitled “The Wolf and the Lamb” (*O Lobo e o Cordeiro*). Reading fables is a constant in Portuguese language classes, as well as being always present in teaching materials of various kinds. Such narratives present an intense moralizing atmosphere whose statements require to be debated, confronted and thought about in a critical-reflective manner, in reading mediations carried out inside or outside the classroom. The fable discursive genre, therefore, can be a great reflection exercise when it is not understood as a children's text, but rather as an interwoven cultural artifact, filled and organized by situated values, belonging to singular moments in space-time and which have their axiological principles revalued, based on treasuring different life moments.

Given this assumption, there is no way to mediate explanations about fables - and about any statement - disregarding the concreteness of their manifestation, their relationship with the material fractions of life, the socio-historical, economic, political and ideological processes anchored to them. In this sense, in the architecture of statements, the word is anchored in life and cannot be separated from it. This fact makes the statement inherently inconclusive, as it is always in process, in a flow of permanent interaction between historically constituted subjects, through relationships marked by human tensions, manifested in different voices. In this study, we address, in light of axiological concepts (intonation, value judgment and extraverbal), two statements that intersect and diverge at the same time: two versions of the fable “The Wolf and the Lamb”. This little story has already been retold by famous fabulists, such as Aesop, Phaedrus, La Fontaine, among others.

Here, we revisit La Fontaine's classic fable, however, in addition to it, we present the version/revision/counter-response by Millôr Fernandes, a Brazilian writer, translator and comedian, who proposed a deconstruction of the meaning of the classic fable through parody. Through humor, Millôr ironizes traditional fabled morality and points out that we should view it and its classical values in a more suspicious manner. In order to reflect on the facts mentioned, we intend to carry out an analytical-comparative reading of the story presented by La Fontaine and Millôr Fernandes response, in order to verify the divergent ways of understanding the reality of those statements, based on the characters' valued actions. Thus, the analysis aims to reflect on the use of linguistic and expressive resources mobilized in the selected corpus in light of the axiological concepts proposed by the Bakhtin Circle. Furthermore, we sought to analyze Millôr's responsive attitude, which proposes a review of classical morality, the counterword, moving away from it through parody and mischaracterization,

which is in line with Bakhtin (2016) when he understands that situated, concrete statements always provoke a reaction. Such a reaction may converge or contradict the statement to whom it is addressed, but it will always reshape it, in a constant revaluation of what was said within its singularity.

Therefore, we observe that relationships are intertwined throughout time-space, in values that are different/divergent in each era or context of production and that such values act on each other in different appraisal. In this sense, as Volóchinov (2018) proposes, the construction of discursive interaction does not happen only due to the nature of the structure and organization of language as a closed system in itself, but in permanent reorganization, in which social voices clash in the ideological arena that is language, since “interaction is the very conception of language and constitutes the fundamental reality of language” (Menegassi; Cavalcanti, 2020, p. 100, free translation). Therefore, the subject is an axiological center in its singularity, that is, an axis of value that, when manifesting language, articulates/aggregates various elements which organize existence and will oppose other axiological centers.

Therefore, we begin the article with a brief presentation of the fable genre and the selected *corpus*, in this case Millôr's and La Fontaine's fables, providing contextual information about the positions and historical factors that may have influenced the choices or ways of organizing the statements. After contextualization, we briefly explain the axiological concepts which substantiate this analysis. Afterwards, we move on to the comparative analysis, in which we analyze Millôr's counterresponse to the traditional fable. When evaluating the statements comparatively, we reflect on the use of linguistic-enunciative resources expressed in the fables and their relationship with the axiological concepts exposed in the previous session.

FABLES: A BRIEF HISTORY OF VALUES

Fables are discursive genres which are always present in reading and writing activities in classrooms. Over time, such narratives were classified as childish, with talking animals, for example, assuming human attributes, aiming at instructing about desirable behavior. However, this assessment is mistaken. Fables are relatively stable forms of statement (Bakhtin, 2016) and are constituted as brief narrative texts, in prose or verse using allegories, metaphors and symbols through personified characters, representing socio-ideological values of a given culture or society. Each fable character is a small metaphor in the larger game of discourse manifested by the central allegory (an instruction) based on the valued appreciation of human behaviors expressed by the elements that make up the story. Regarding the origin of the fable, Farencena and Fuzzer (2010, p. 139, free translation) state that the term comes from

etymologically from the Latin “fari” = “to speak” and the Greek “phaó” = “to say, to tell something” (Coelho, 1984, p. 115), originally, the fable was an oral text told to people in informal everyday situations. Seeking to condemn uses, customs, behaviors and conduct, states Salem (1970), the fable developed as a critical and moralistic literature, with the aim of teaching man to live in a virtuous manner.

Thus, despite its apparent narrative simplicity, the fable is a discursive genre with many intertextual and (inter)discursive layers which ranges from a symbolic meaning to a more tangible factor, expressed by a value or a moral. The choice of animals is never random, being itself a manifestation of the social axiologies which constitute a specific chronotope, the living discourse, interspersed by historical, economic, political and scientific relations, in an integrated way. This process is in line with Bakhtin's thought (1998), when he states that

Dialogical orientation is naturally a phenomenon inherent to all discourse. It is the natural orientation of any living discourse. On all its paths toward the object, in all directions, discourse encounters the discourse of others and cannot help but participate with them in a living and

tense interaction. Only the mythical Adam who arrived with the first word in a virgin, still discredited world, only this Adam could truly completely avoid this mutual dialogical orientation of the discourse of others toward the object. For human, concrete, and historical discourse, this is not possible [...] (Bakhtin, 1998, p. 88, free translation).

What we could reflect/rethink is how these symbol systems represent and refract today's society. For theorists of the dialogic perspective, it is not possible to make excerpts of statements, because they are driven by unbreakable links, by uninterrupted chains of voices, which act on each other in permanent zones of tension. This is because “language is not something immobile, given once and for all and rigorously determined in its grammatical ‘rules’ and ‘exceptions’”. Language is by no means a dead and petrified product of social life” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 167). In this sense, Gomes and Ohuschi (2021, p. 51, free translation) state that

In any situation of verbal interaction, the author-creator cannot ignore that, in a given discursive genre, there is an interrelation of social voices and that the construction of meaning is not specific to a single concrete utterance read in isolation. We cannot, under any circumstances, isolate the genre from the essential link in its chain of discursive communication, because by disregarding the retrospective links of interaction, we lose the possibilities of attributing meanings that only occur when the reader recovers other discourses so that the prospective links are realized.

Such considerations resonate with Volóchinov’s thought (2019, p. 117), when he states that “the word is completed by life itself and it cannot be separated without losing its meaning” (Free translation). Therefore, the word is a cluster of values, which reverberates in the most diverse social appreciations, these being interwoven and enriched by the discursive interactions constructed between historical subjects in their singularity. It is important to reiterate that these values or appreciations are in a constant process of renewal and that this process is continuous, fluid and constitutes an ideological-discursive chain which projects/leans onto another consciousness and revalues the statement in a cumulative way. Therefore

there is no first or last word, and there are no limits to the dialogical context (it extends into the limitless past and the limitless future). Nor can the meanings of the past, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, ever be stable (completed, finished once and for all): they will always change (renew themselves) in the process of the subsequent, future development of the dialogue. [...] There is nothing absolutely dead: each meaning will have its own feast of renewal. A question of great time (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 410, free translation).

La Fontaine's fable selected for this article is simple but impactful. It narrates the misfortune and discouragement of a Lamb when he encounters a Wolf who, already evil-intentioned, disregards the Lamb's consistent arguments and devours him. No matter how much reason was on his side, the Lamb could not resist the Wolf's strength and from there comes the moral: “There is no argument against force” (a moral that, in different versions of the fable, is updated and put in other ways). However, this is one possible version of understanding the Wolf's attitudes. Millôr's statement employs parody, distancing, and makes use of the structural resources of the fable for humor or the expression of irony. It is also important to highlight, according to Coleone (2008), that the book “*Fábulas Fabulosas*” (Fabulous Fable) by Millôr Fernandes was written in the context of the civil-military dictatorship in Brazil, more specifically in the President Médici’s government, marked by the draconian Institutional Act N. 5. It was a context of extreme authoritarianism. Regarding the comedian's work, the researcher assures that “Millôr is definitely not the traditional, classic fabulist, but the author of anti-morality through irreverence, portraying this socio-historical context of power, repression, domination, authoritarianism through the fabled characters” (Coleone, 2008, p. 24, free translation).

Fiorin (2001), in a fruitful study on fables and the classic/parodic relationship, states that the moral of the story says that “the reason of the strongest is always the best” (Fiorin, 2001, p. 89, free

translation). With this, it points to the fact that the speech of the strongest is not necessarily true. It is noted that, for the same narrative, there are different versions of the teaching. This permanent repositioning of discourse, based on dissonant or confluent voices, is an elementary principle of the dialogical conception of language, a perspective that demands the presence of the other, in a strong relationship of alterity, in which connections are manifested/constituted by reaction and non-indifference, an act that makes the subject no alibi of existence (Bakhtin, 2010).

Such statements corroborate the idea that statements change, that the word as an ideological sign does not have a fixed value, it will be continually (re)valued and is clothed with new mechanisms and semantic shifts based on the internal movements or social voices present in the socio-ideological consciousness of the subject who, upon coming into contact with the statements, tries to attribute to them other values belonging to the ground of experiences. In this set of values, ideology pulses, the “system of symbolic exchanges developed by a certain social group” (Miotello, 2008, p. 176). When considering the dialogic conception of language, more specifically in the category of social axiologies, we evaluate the selected statements and the way in which they manifest specific tones/colorations based on singular acts of language use in their linguistic-enunciative resources marked in the verbal style.

Thus, this work highlights how social axiologies (and everything which surrounds them) permeate language and how these values are expressed in the characters' behavior. In this sense, we highlight the linguistic-enunciative resources and how they reflect and refract the ideological marks of a singular chronotope. To this end, we adopted axiological concepts (intonation, value judgment and extraverbal) as guiding principles for the analysis, which we address in the next section.

INTONATION, VALUE JUDGMENT AND EXTRAVERBAL: BRIEF CONCEPTUAL STATEMENT

Life is transformation. Life is constituted and fed by change. The same is true of language, composed of historical, social, ideological and political connections in permanent (re)construction. When manifesting itself, language is organized into genres, discursive statements driven by social practices in the most diverse expressions of human knowledge. The statement is a discursive act and, as such, moves around itself various evaluative accentuations. Every statement is subject to social assessments or evaluations, since the “real essence of language is the social event of discursive interaction, carried out in one or many statements” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 268). In summary, the statements are permeated by axiologies, values historically constructed by the subjects and in society, and “this value is updated, adapted to the meaning of each group, considering their social, historical and ideological conditions at the time of verbal exchange” (Bezerra; Menegassi, 2022, p. 198).

Such values, depending on time and human relations, will change, taking on new tones and ideological coverings. The word, when filled with life, manifests and evokes different values, woven into the invisible threads of discursive links. When integrated into life, the word constitutes itself as a statement, which is organized into two parts: “i) the performed part (or updated, consisting of linguistic marks, whether verbal or verbal-visual) and ii) the implied” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 120). In the presumed (implied) part, shaped by the socio-historical-ideological context, we have discourses connected to each other, acting on each other, based on the values and experiences manifested in the social structure/fabric. Menegassi and Bezerra (2022, p. 199, free translation) point out that

the values, experiences, opinions shared despite certain issues, productive or counterproductive evaluations about human behaviors and actions can only be perceived in the statement, by the implied part, since they are not part of the individual, but of the collective.

As we have observed, the word in “life is not self-sufficient” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 117), which means that, when inserted into a particular chronotope, it gains in amplitude, dimension and value. It is then covered in an ideological atmosphere and assumes different semantic, syntactic and

pragmatic sequences. The word, when moving through the unpredictable force fields of human life, uses different masks, which are shaped and formed based on the conditions of production in which it (the word) was uttered. “The particularity of life’s statements consists precisely of the fact that they are intertwined by a thousand threads with the extraverbal context of life [...]” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 121). There is, therefore, no neutrality in the river-discourse and to exempt oneself means to take responsibility, because the word, when anchored to a reality, is clothed in the architecture of its time. In context, the word is subject to assessments and evaluations by those who interact with it, as it is in permanent conflict with the factors that make up reality. In this persistent flow, the word modifies whoever takes hold of it and whoever takes hold of it is modified. This process of inter(action), in which “the word comes into contact with everyday event, merging with it into an indivisible unity” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 118.) is called extraverbal.

To explain the extraverbal, Volóchinov (2019) uses an interesting example: “The man with the white beard, sitting at the table, after a minute of silence said: ‘Yes!’ The young man standing in front of him blushed, turned his back and walked away” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 283). For the thinker, such dialogue becomes impractical if we are unaware of the extraverbal elements that constitute, organize and structure meaning. Therefore, according to Volóchinov (2019), we need firstly to keep in mind where and when this dialogue takes place (common spatial and ideational horizon shared by the participants in the dialogue- the unity of the visible) and under what conditions; secondly, it is necessary to reflect on the objectives/themes of the dialogue and what is at stake (knowledge and understanding of the situation common to those involved in the interaction process); thirdly, it is essential to consider the manifest intentions and the roles played by the interlocutors, how they evaluate each other.

Based on these elements, Menegassi and Cavalcanti (2020, p. 101-102) consider that the extraverbal represents the factors “not explicitly demarcated in the analyzed materiality”. They are implicit contents, woven by socio-ideological horizons in continuous tension, which project, in an incessant flow, different perspectives of reality. In this sense, “it is precisely up to the interlocutor to identify these characteristics in the social environment so that the understanding of the statement is qualified, allowing the interaction to take place and the enunciation to become effective, generating the communicative act” (Menegassi; Cavalcante, 2020, p. 102). In addition to the situation and its constitutive principles, it is also important to appreciate the weight of the expressions, the expressive force of the words when manifested, that is, the intonation. Intonation is the “most flexible and sensitive conductor of those social relations existing between speakers in a given situation” (Volóchinov, 2019, p. 287). The subject, when speaking, takes a position (expressed in words, gestures or expressions) and carries an evaluative tone in his speech. He then expects a reaction or attitude from his interlocutor. Intonation has the role of “linking what is said and what is not said” (Menegassi; Cavalcante, 2020, p. 203) and emphasizes the subject’s attitude when taking positions. According to Volóchinov (2019, p. 123, free translation), intonation

always lies on the border between the verbal and the extraverbal, between what is said and what is unsaid. In intonation, the word comes into direct contact with life. And above all, the speaker connects with listeners precisely through intonation: intonation is social par excellence. It is especially sensitive to all the fluctuations in the environment surrounding the speaker.

Intonation, in this sense, is a product of human relations which externalizes semantic-social memory, always impregnated with ideological forces, value accentuations and value judgments. Regarding intonation, it is also important to revisit the studies undertaken by Menegassi (2022). For the researcher, intonation is conceived “as voice modulation when emitting a vocal sound” (Menegassi, 2022, p. 2, free translation). According to the author, we reiterate that it is not just about the physical voice, but the acoustic image which manifests itself in the inner speech of the one who produces and the one who reads the text. Interspersed with these elements are appreciations and values, formed throughout social interactions. In terms of definition, Menegassi (2022, p. 2) states that intonation is “vocal emission understood as an element that enables the constitution of a mental image of the voice, of its acoustics, which resonates within the individual's mind (Free translation)”.

The researcher also presents the aspects necessary for intonation: the expressive (which focuses on the style of language, linguistic choices, which are already loaded with values) and the evaluative (which brings social evaluations of the discourses that circulate in society). Menegassi (2022, p. 3) also states that “there is no way to separate expressive intonation from evaluative intonation, as they are two aspects of the same element, which are presented and constituted juxtaposed” (free translation), making it essential to understand how evaluative intonation is effective in written language, an idea that we will explain later.

In addition to what was discussed, we also have the value judgment, defined as “a social construction traversed by the spatio-temporal ideological positions that constitute the subject and the respective social group” (Volóchinov, 2019). The value judgment is added to intonation, defined as the “materializing element of the speaker’s evaluative attitude” (Bakhtin, 2010). Due to this active positioning present in intonation, marked by judgments and appreciative marks - of a constant reworking and updating of the word - Sobral (2009) opts for the terminology “valuative intonation”, since “[...] every enunciation involves an evaluative tone printed by the subject and its verbal alterations, according to its relations with its interlocutor and the moment of the interlocution” (Sobral, 2009, p. 83-84). In this sense, “the evaluative tone defined by the subject takes into account the interlocutor and the moment in which the communicative act is carried out, with its effective statements. Depending on who is being addressed, the speaker defines his/her evaluative tone” (Menegassi; Cavalcanti, 2020, p. 106-107, free translation).

It is through the association between these concepts (value judgment, extraverbal and intonation) that we move our intention, aiming at observing, in the selected corpus, how linguistic-enunciative resources are interspersed with social, ideological and historical values. This is what we present in the next section.

VALUE JUDGMENT, EXTRAVERBAL AND INTONATION IN LA FONTAINE’S AND MILLÔR’S FABLES: A COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTIVE READING

The fable “The Wolf and the Lamb” is present in the selections made by great storytellers of humanity. Originally, as indicated by Xavier (2023), the narrative is attributed to Aesop (6th Century BC). However, over the countless ages, many versions have emerged. For this work, we brought the translation made by the poet and art critic Ferreira Gullar, from the French version written in verse by La Fontaine; In addition to this, we present the version by the Brazilian writer and comedian Millôr Fernandes. The versions are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Fables The Wolf and the Lamb by La Fontaine and Millôr Fernandes

<p style="text-align: center;">Text I O Lobo e o Cordeiro The Wolf and the Lamb La Fontaine</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Text II O Lobo e o Cordeiro The Wolf and the Lamb Millôr Fernandes</p>
<p><i>Na água limpa de um regato, Matava a sede um Cordeiro, Quando, saindo do mato, Veio um Lobo carniceiro. Tinha a barriga vazia, Não comera o dia inteiro. – Como tu ousas sujar a água que estou bebendo? – rosnou o Lobo, a antegozar o almoço. – Fica sabendo que caro vais me pagar! – Senhor! – falou o Cordeiro – encareço a Vossa Alteza que me desculpeis, mas acho</i></p>	<p><i>Estava o cordeirinho bebendo água, quando viu refletida no rio a sombra do Lobo. Estremeceu, ao mesmo tempo que ouvia a voz cavernosa: "Vais pagar com a vida o teu miserável crime". "Que crime?" - perguntou o cordeirinho tentando ganhar tempo, pois já sabia que com o Lobo não adianta argumentar. "O crime de sujar a água que bebo". "Mas como posso eu sujar a sua água se sou lavado diariamente pelas máquinas automáticas da Fazenda?" - indagou o cordeirinho. "Por mais limpo que esteja um Cordeiro é sempre sujo para um Lobo" - retrucou o Lobo. "Mas como posso eu sujar a sua água, se estou abaixo da corrente?, tornou a argumentar o cordeirinho. "Pois se não foi você foi seu pai, se não foi seu pai, foi seu</i></p>

que vos enganais: bebendo,
quase dez braças abaixo
de vós, nesta correnteza,
não posso sujar-vos a água.
– Não importa! Guardo mágoa
de ti, que, no ano passado,
me destrataste, fingido!
– Mas eu nem tinha nascido.
– Pois, então, foi teu irmão!
– Não tenho irmão, **Excelência**.
– Chega de argumentação.
Estou perdendo a paciência!
– Não vos zangueis, **desculpai!**
– Não foi teu irmão? Foi o teu pai
Ou senão, foi teu avô –
disse o Lobo carniceiro.
E ao Cordeiro devorou.

Moral: Onde a lei não existe, ao que parece,
a razão do mais forte prevalece.

avô, e eu vou comê-lo do mesmo jeito, pois sou
**arbitrário e, segundo rezam os manuais, só me
alimento de carne de Cordeiro**" - finalizou o Lobo
preparando-se para devorar o cordeirinho. "**Ein
moment! Ein moment!** – disse o cordeirinho, que sabia
seu alemão **kantiano**. "**Dou-lhe toda razão, mas faça-
lhe uma proposta:** se me deixar livre atrairei pra cá
todo o rebanho". "Chega de conversa" - disse o Lobo -
"Vou comê-lo, e está acabado." "Mas, espera aí" –
tentou ainda o Cordeiro, "isso não é ético". Eu tenho,
pelo menos, **direito** a três perguntas". "Pois bem" –
disse o Lobo. - "**Qual é o animal mais estúpido do
mundo?**" "**O homem casado**" - respondeu prontamente
o Cordeiro. "muito bem, muito bem!" - disse logo o
Lobo, logo refreando, envergonhado, o súbito
entusiasmo. "Outra: a zebra é um animal branco de
listas pretas ou um animal preto de listas brancas?"
"Um animal sem cor pintado de preto e branco para não
passar por burro". - respondeu o cordeirinho.
"Perfeito!" - disse o Lobo engolindo em seco. "Agora,
por último, diga uma frase de **Bernard Shaw**". "**O
Marechal Lott é o futuro Presidente da República**" -
respondeu logo o Cordeiro. "Muito bem, muito certo,
você escapou!" - deu-se o Lobo por vencido. E já ia se
preparando para devorar o Cordeiro quando apareceu
o caçador e o esquitejou.

Moral: Quando o Lobo tem fome não deve se meter em
filosofia.

Source: La Fontaine (1997, p. 12); Fernandes (2007, p. 188).

Right at the beginning of La Fontaine's statement, we immediately notice the characters' characterization. For example, a formal and polite use of language is given to the term *Cordeiro* (Lamb). However, when referring to the term *Lobo* (Wolf), he uses an excessively polite tone through address pronouns such as: *Senhor* (Sir), *Vossa Alteza* (Your Highness) and *Excelência* (Excellency). Such terms affirm the humble/subservient of the Lamb's position before the Wolf - submission, or a possible attempt to exalt the Wolf's figure in order to escape his fate. Furthermore, there is a gradation/scaling in the use of these pronouns, the first form is 'Sir' as a sign of respect; then, 'Your Highness', used for people of nobility and, last but not least interesting, the action-word 'Excellency' is used for judges, for example, people moved by the law, which brings a paradox within the story, since the judge was the executioner himself, with the Wolf being the executor of the sentence.

It is impossible not to point out the possible relationships with the social and historical forces of his time, since we are talking about the years of the court of King Louis XIV (1643-1715), characterized as the maximum expression of Absolutism. It is important to bring this fact to light, because Millôr's parody, as we will see later, also arises in a context of authoritarianism. This allows us to evoke the idea of the ideational spatial horizon, which implies "the historical-cultural context and the knowledge of those involved, such as the topic discussed, the social positions of each interlocutor, etc." (Menegassi; Cavalcanti, 2020, p. 102). As reiterated in previous topics, the word cannot be deprived of life, of the historical forces of the time to which it belongs, because "language lives and is historically formed precisely here, in concrete discursive communication, and not in the abstract system of language forms nor in the individual psyche of speakers" (Volóchinov, 2021, p. 220). According to Volóchinov (2013, p. 86, free translation),

A concrete utterance (and not a linguistic abstraction) is born, lives, and dies in the process of social interaction between its participants. Its meaning and form are generally defined by the form and character of this interaction. By tearing the utterance from the real ground that nourishes it, we lose the key that unlocks access to understanding both its form and its meaning;

in our hands we are left with either an abstract linguistic framework or an abstract scheme of meaning.

In a later reflection, we will demonstrate how the elements which are not directly presumable in the text give them, when conscious, new tones and dimensions. Therefore, we reaffirm that these choices are representations, evaluative tones of the values debated in Fontaine's fable, in the contrast between innocence and cruelty. In this sense, it is through verbal actions, in specific interaction situations, that interlocutors act on each other and manifest, in their discursive path, their printed evaluative tones (Sobral, 2009). Furthermore, it is imperative to pay attention to the fact that, in relation to the Wolf, there are always linguistic choices to manifest his violent character, such as the accusatory and intimidating tone: “*como tu ousas; vais me pagar*” (how dare you; you will pay me off). This points to the moral which will be outlined at the end of the story, that the Wolf had no doubts about what he was going to do, that all of his actions (and this includes specific linguistic marks, such as accusatory language) indicate that he was already determined to devour the Lamb. Besides, it is interesting to note the moral of this particular version, which extols the importance of the law as a regulating principle of society, as the means that makes it possible to prevent the escalation of violence. Wouldn't the fable, then, be implicitly a critique of the world of its time? Here, we can expand the notion of the extraverbal. Regarding this historical moment, Avila (2018, p. 35, our emphasis, free translation) states that:

we must bear in mind that any analysis of humankind, whether social, political, economic, or otherwise, is situated within a specific context and language. Humankind is the product of a series of circumstances that shape its character, physiognomy, language, and customs. Its way of acting is imbued with its historicity. **However, since La Fontaine refers to the man of the Court, and he speaks of a period marked by the absolute monarchy, in which the king called himself ‘the Sun’, the greatest star, which all others should surround, it is more than fruitful for us to dedicate ourselves to analyze who these stars are and why they surround their star.**

When reflecting on these observations, we can conclude that, for an effective understanding of statements, there is a need to evaluate their production process, the way they interact or circulate in the world, that is, the extraverbal aspect must be considered, an element that favors interaction between participants in the communicative process. Menegassi and Cavalcanti (2020, p. 103) state that, for understanding to be established, dependence on context “requires that both participants in the communicative act know at least some common traits about what is said, the situation in which it is produced, and the conditions of reception established”. In his reply, Millôr returns to the fable in its classical structure/organization, with the Wolf and the Lamb on the banks of a stream and their threatening approach; Furthermore, the writer uses the term *cordeirinho* (little lamb), which also refers to the traditional organization of the fable: “The little lamb was drinking water when he saw the shadow of the Wolf reflected in the river. He shuddered as he heard the hollow voice: ‘You will pay with your life for your wretched crime’” (Free translation). But, after the introduction (which makes all the difference to the reader familiar with the story), the narrative changes perspective, and the growing tension, expressed in the traditional scheme, is abandoned and we now have a very different Lamb: “‘What crime?’ - asked the little lamb, trying to gain time, as he already knew that there was no point in arguing with the Wolf.” (Free translation).

If the French fabulist's text offers a critique of the customs of his time, Millôr's version suggests an appreciation for the historical moment (the period of military dictatorship in Brazil). This assertion can be exemplified by the beginning of the narrative, where it becomes clear that the Lamb is no longer naive, that he will not act subserviently, as he asks, “What crime?” Furthermore, we can confirm the character's repositioning through the use of *dicendi* or declarative verbs (“thought”, “asked”, “answered”). This difference in intonation is intentional, it marks an active positioning, because it dialogues with the resizing of the representation of the characters, presenting a proud and shrewd Lamb, sure of what was to come. Furthermore, there is the presence of interrogative sentences, structured in the form of a dialogue (with constant change of turns), a strategy of the Lamb to gain

time, but also as the use of reason, of argument, to escape the Wolf (representation of the arbitrary). Here, we have a different answer proposed by the author, as it is not strength that stands out, but intelligence.

In this path, Millôr's intention of not returning to the classic fable by approximation is already revealed to the interlocutors, which manifests an intonational change in relation to the classic text, based on the perspective assumed by Millôr in re-evaluating the original text. Thus, for the Circle, "value judgment is a social construction traversed by the spatial-temporal ideological positions that constitute the subject and the respective social group" (Volóchinov, 2019). Regarding this process, Volóchinov indicates that the "ideological field coincides with the field of signs. They can be equated. Where there is a sign, there is also ideology. *Everything that is ideological has sign significance*" (Volóchinov, 2018, p. 93, author's emphasis, free translation.). The option to parody traditional texts involves taking a position, in which there is a permanent dialogue-response between past and current perceptions. In Millôr's case, we can evoke the context of the civil-military dictatorship, within the period of Institutional Act No. 5, the most repressive political period of that historical moment.

Here, Cordeiro reinforces the idea of questioning and intelligence, which can be used in contexts of force and violence. It is no coincidence that he also employs resources from Philosophy, a field of knowledge which presupposes contestation. In this sense, considering the statement as an integrated manifestation (social, historical, political, scientific, economic) allows for a more responsive perspective, with a greater capacity for interaction with what is said (and not already said). In relation to this process, Gomes and Ohuschi (2021) state that every enunciation comes from a concrete situation, in which the pragmatic, contextual and historical aspects, in an interconnected way, articulate and act to produce meanings.

These extraverbal factors allow us to establish incursions into contemporaneity with regard to the Wolf's discourse, within the common appreciative content of verbal interaction and the evaluative tones which mark/constitute the architecture of the statement. During the argument between both, another point that deserves consideration is when the Wolf claims the following: "*if it wasn't your father, it was your grandfather, and I'm going to eat him anyway, because I'm arbitrary and, according to the manuals, I only eat lamb meat.*" (Free translation). We see here that the Wolf fences himself off with a false argument of authority, indicated by the conformative conjunction "according to", indicating that there are references that justify his behavior. However, the argument is vague, as there is no clear evidence of these manuals. We also perceive a careful selection of signs in order to constitute and organize the author's project of speaking. Regarding this process of semiological stitching, in which values and ideologies are evoked manifesting themselves in the materialized discursive genre, Bakhtin (1998, p. 100, free translation) states that "the word of the language is a semi-alien word. It only becomes one's own when the speaker populates it with his intention." In the passage: "*I agree with you completely, but I'll make you a proposal: if you let me free, I'll bring the whole flock here*". "Enough talk", said the Wolf, "I'll eat you, and that's it". "But wait a minute", tried the Lamb, "that's not ethical". "I have at least the right to three questions". "Very well," said the Wolf" (free translation), we observe that the Lamb is firm, a behavior expressed even in his actions in the text, very different from the characterization made by La Fontaine. More than firm, the Lamb is a questioner.

In the classic fable, the Lamb does not question; he accepts his fate. In Millôr's narrative, the Lamb uses the artifice of reason, of dialogue (in Socrates' manner?), to escape brutality (Isn't this the great lesson of the fable?). And it is curious that it uses the expedient of Philosophy, a field of knowledge historically persecuted by tyrants and authoritarian figures, as evidenced by Faustino (2019, p. 354, free translation), in his article "The risks of philosophical thinking in authoritarian times" (*Os riscos do pensar filosófico em tempos autoritários*).

And we believe that this is the moment when philosophy presents a certain danger, because it is when it accepts the challenge of opening itself to the world and dialoguing directly with it, that thinking realizes the power to undo, thaw, and excavate that which in language—concepts, phrases, definitions, doctrines—has been buried in tradition as the "normal," the "ordinary," or the "common" (ARENDDT, 2009, p. 197). It is from this point on that philosophy becomes a

"disturber of the peace" (JASPER, 2003, p. 140), because its inherent criticality reveals a destructive and corrosive power over all officially established criteria: values, standards for good and evil, rules of conduct, identities, genders, etc.

In the very organization of the fable, there is a dialogue, in questions and answers, interspersed with argumentation, which we can infer is a possible homage to Philosophy, as a sphere of human activity in which knowledge is the central axis (as opposed to authoritarianism). In addition to the aforementioned facts, the Lamb resorts to ethics, asserting that he has the right to a challenge. The Wolf respects this right, which contrasts with the attitude of the Wolf in traditional fables, who refuses to engage in dialogue.

Another element that also sparks reflection are the questions asked to the Lamb, which contain traces of nonsense. However, even though at first glance it may seem pointless, we recognize the questions as a strategy to gain time. The first question is an assessment of marriage and, more specifically, the married man: "What is the stupidest animal in the world? - The married man." (*Qual o animal mais estúpido do mundo? – O homem casado*). In addition to the Lamb's prompt response, which remains confident throughout, without hesitating before the questions (being a questioner himself, which does not happen in La Fontaine's classic version), the nature of the questions also awakens this aspect of the deconstruction proposed by Millôr with his fabulous fables, in a posture of reply to the classic text.

What becomes evident from the confrontation between classical and contemporary fables is that, even though they are distant in time, these statements slip into each other and establish dialogical relations between them, "[...] They touch on the territory of the common theme, of common thought" (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 320). In addition to the facts mentioned, it is essential to clarify that the questions stem from the author-creator's project of speaking, through his valued choices regarding the use of linguistic resources. In them, he (the author) expresses his appreciations, which are articulated not only in the choice of terms such as "married man" (which in the internal and shared discourse of readers can manifest as humor), but also in the structure of the questions, ratifying the departure from the classic text, parodying it. Menegassi (2022, p. 6, free translation), regarding this process, states that

The lexical choices, the syntactic constructions, are not just presented, they are thought, reflected upon, constructed so that the effects of meaning inferred here are revealed to the reader based on the linguistic materiality, which characterizes the expressive intonation, necessarily linked to the social evaluation intended by the author and to the values present there.

One observation we cannot fail to make is the allusion to essayist and writer Bernard Shaw, author of satirical comedies and known for his irreverent spirit and for exposing the hypocrisies of his time. Despite being an iconoclast, Shaw is a controversial figure, as Zanirato (2011, p. 14, free translation) indicates when he states that, even as a reader of Darwin, Max and Lamarck, the Irish writer remained

influenced only by specific aspects of his theories, resulting in a physiological and aristocratic determinism. He thus resembles Nietzsche's "Superman" and the eugenic ideals later adopted by Nazi-fascism, something manifested in his play "Man and Superman" (published in 1905). Of course, Shaw's personal creed is somewhat paradoxical. He shifts from a politics with slight touches of totalitarianism to an exclusionary biological determinism, while simultaneously preaching politically in accordance with a utopian socialism.

Let us note that, once again, we have in the Wolf's voice a flirtation with authoritarianism. No less interesting is the Lamb's response to the Wolf, as it is a statement that does not belong to the writer. In fact, it conceals a reference to Brazilian history, with Marshal Lott as an emblematic figure. In 1955, Henrique Batista Duffles Teixeira Lott intervened significantly to ratify the prevalence of the popular vote and thus guarantee Juscelino Kubitschek's inauguration in the presidential election. Furthermore, he publicly defended the vote of illiterate people and was a figure persecuted by

representatives of the extreme right wing. This composition of elements is unique, as we have a representative of history who was moved by forces contrary to authoritarianism, a legitimate representative of Democracy in his attitudes. There is here a strong expression of the singularity of the statement, which, according to Bakhtin (2010, p. 328, free translation),

Only the utterance has an immediate relationship with reality and with the living person (the subject). In language, there are only potential possibilities (schema) of these relationships (pronominal forms, modals, lexical resources, etc.). However, the utterance is not determined solely by its relationship with the object and the speaking subject-author (and by its relationship with language as a system of potential possibilities, as a given), but immediately—and this is what matters most to us—with other utterances within a given field of communication.

This choice of terms is related to the discursive intention of the authors, each with well-oriented purposes based on ideological positions/bundles present in the organization of actions, in the choice of signs, which carry within themselves volitional-emotional tones, since, in the process of constructing the enunciation, the interlocutors mobilize values and evaluative tones expressed in their discursive path (Sobral, 2009). Readers are responsible for carrying out appreciative reading in order to bring out such value-based assessments present in the linguistic marks of the text, with the aim of experiencing a meaningful and profound reading trajectory that promotes the intersection of words with life, the central objective of this work.

As we have observed, it is essential that these statements be discussed in all their dimensions. In the classroom, for example, comparative readings of fables can expand and enhance students' socio-ideological awareness, enabling them to recognize the non-random nature of signs. Besides, these choices involve axiological processes, evoked by the singularity of the historical relationships to which they belong. Therefore, the choices are not random, they represent evaluative cuts of reality, fragments that need to be put up for debate, since, in order to maintain the democratic spirit, plurality must be encouraged, as well as a discerning look at the diverse social voices living in a society. Thus, we hope that this work may contribute in some way to the debates about axiological concepts and their manifestation in the most varied statements that permeate society, in this definitive and powerful ideological arena that is human existence.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this brief work, in light of axiological concepts (intonation, value judgment and extraverbal), we seek to address the traditional fable “The Wolf and the Lamb” by La Fontaine, and the counter-response by the Brazilian writer Millôr Fernandes. Our objective was to carry out an analytical-comparative reading of the selected statements and to verify, based on the valued actions of the characters, the dialogical relationships, since, as advocated by the thinkers of the Circle, it is only possible to establish and construct a dialogical vision based on integral statements, in which divergent forms of understanding reality are manifested based on linguistic-enunciative choices.

The corpus was selected due to the constant use of the fables discursive genre in tasks involving the teaching and learning of the mother tongue, which makes essential a consistent debate about these texts. In this sense, we selected the fable “The Wolf and the Lamb”, taken up by well-known writers, whether in the classical tradition or in contemporary writing, such as La Fontaine and Millôr Fernandes.

Although Millôr's text revisits La Fontaine's statement, it is clear that the resumption of the former is constituted by negation; the latter establishes an approximation to the classical meaning. In this sense, based on the analysis carried out, we evidenced that such markings or singularities of terms choices and signs reflect and refract singular aspects of the reality of the statements which constitute the corpus selected in this article. In this sense, we hope to have contributed to reflections in the language field in relation to the dialogic perspective and its reflections and refractions of the concepts in the most varied contexts.

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