

NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN STANLEY KUBRICK'S *EYES WIDE SHUT*

Thaís Flores Nogueira DINIZ*
Marília Sette CÂMARA**

Abstract: *The text analyses the adaptation of Stanley Kubrick, Eyes Wide Shut, from the novel Dream Story, by Arthur Schnitzler. It is based in the Brian McFarlane theory of filmic adaptation, which proposes an interpretation based in narrative functions initially proposed by Roland Barthes throughout his work. The analysis is focused on an informant function: the change of a password, from "Denmark", in the novel, to "Fidelio", in the film. This change alone is representative of the whole universe of the adapted work, difference from the fictional atmosphere of the romance: a transformation in time and space from Vienna in the beginning of the 20th Century to New York 1999.*

Keywords: *Stanley Kubrick; Arthur Schnitzler; Brian McFarlane; filmic adaptation*

For the layman, the problem of authorship hardly exists: it is the author who conceives and achieves a work. Of course things are not as simple as that. When it comes to filmic adaptation the questions becomes even less simple, if we consider the various kinds of interference which occur until we get to the final work.

For the analysis of the filmic adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's novel *Dream Story, Eyes Wide Shut*, by Stanley Kubrick, the theory of adaptation developed in Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film* proves most useful, and will be used in this paper. In fact, McFarlane's theory of filmic adaptation is based on Barthes's concepts for the analysis of the various semantic levels in literary fiction. In *Novel to Film*, McFarlane transposes to the analysis of filmic adaptation the two large groups of

* Professora Adjunta da FALE/UFMG, coordenadora do Projeto intitulado "O problema da autoria: romances adaptados para o cinema", a partir do qual o presente trabalho foi elaborado. Endereço eletrônico: tfndiniz@terra.com.br

** Bolsista de Iniciação Científica do Programa PROBIC/FAPEMIG, aluna do Bacharelado em Inglês da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG. Endereço eletrônico: tfndiniz@terra.com.br

narrative functions described by Barthes: *distributional* and *integrational* functions.

Distributional functions include actions and events crucial for the unfolding of the narrative. They are linearly connected and therefore directly transferable from one medium to the other. Distributive functions may be divided into *cardinals* and *catalysers*. Cardinals are the main actions and events. Catalysers are small actions, which support the cardinals, placing them in a more specific reality. They represent things less crucial to the general structure of the story, but at the same time are necessary in the classical form of literary narrative to support the fictional universe created by all elements together.

In *Eyes Wide Shut*, his last film, Stanley Kubrick as a whole keeps the cardinals of the novel, telling approximately the same story, and maintaining the ‘classical’ structure of the narrative practice as a whole (structure in three acts: introduction, climax and ending, for example). However, the novel takes place in Vienna, at the beginning of the 20th century, while, in the film, everything happens in New York, 1999. This change in place and time of course causes some differences in narrative aspects and consequently in the atmosphere of the story in general.

As an example of the catalysers, in the beginning of the film, a phone call lets the protagonist, a doctor, know about a patient’s death in his sleep – which “fires” his inner conflict in which the whole story is developed. In the novel, a messenger takes a long walk in order to tell the doctor about the same patient’s critical condition. In short, the change of scenery, as the film moves to 1999 New York, in opposition to Vienna at the beginning of the century, generates the set of catalyser functions different from the novel, but that still support the same cardinal functions. Therefore, even though there are no big changes in the plot (cardinals), these catalysers allow the portraying of a very different social context of the story first written by Arthur Schnitzler.

Other changes – caused by the use of different media – can also be observed. These have to do with the concepts of *adaptation proper* and *transfer*, contrasted by McFarlane. According to him, adaptation proper is the process undergone by elements characteristically literary in the passage from novel to film. At this point, it is necessary to consider the basic differences between the arts of writing and filmmaking. The adaptation proper deals with the elements of the written text versus moving pictures, which instead of words and description, also tells stories with colors, photography, mise-en-scène, editing, music etc. and even

the background of the actors starring the film. Transfer, on the other hand, happens when it is possible to transpose elements directly from one medium to the other, without any interference from the narrative “tools” available in each medium.

Having summed up the main points about distributional functions, we may now consider the integrational functions. They are not easily transferable. Different from the distributional, they are not linear, requiring a more diffuse reading, as they refer to the functionality of being, not of doing. They do not refer to actions themselves, but to the way they are portrayed and interconnected throughout the story. Integrational functions can also be divided into two kinds, *indexes* and *informants*. Indexes refer to the way the events are narrated: they must necessarily be adapted. Roughly, indexes can be better related to adaptation proper, as opposed to transfer. Informants can either be transferred or adapted: for they concern names, ages, professions, characters’ psychological profiles or physical characteristics, etc.

Indexes are usually the most controversial of the functions, since they bring out discussions of the media themselves. A good example is how the first ball of both narratives (a Christmas party thrown by one of the hero’s patients) recalls the novel’s atmosphere through cenography, costumes, camera movements and the photographic construction. The ball takes place in the Greenwich Village in New York, at a mansion constructed in the beginning of the century in an old style. The architecture artifacts as well as the art works in the walls and furniture, along with a predominantly brown palette of colors, the soft camera movements following the classical music that the guests dance in pairs forming such a perfect choreography, also reconstruct the time in which the novel was written and portrays. Therefore, this isolated sequence leads to the conclusion that indexes may be always different in the novel and its filmic adaptation because it is a way of telling, but even so they can pass through very similar or even the same messages.

Back to informant functions, Roland Barthes defines them as information with immediate signification (McFARLANE, 1996, p. 14). For McFarlane, as he is talking about film adaptation, this concept may have a different connotation. If we consider Literature and Cinema as means of artistic expression, of course even a name or a physical characteristic can carry a bigger purpose than pure information. This can be illustrated in Kubrick’s film with the change in a password required to enter an orgy, a central scene in both novel and film. This alteration has a far reaching signification and also establishes connections with

A Clockwork Orange, another work by the same filmmaker, released in the 70's.

This is discussed in "Eyes Wide Shut: The Dream-Odissey of Stanley Kubrick", an article by Stuart McDougal, who points a relation between *Eyes Wide Shut* and the filmmaker's personal life.

In the novel, the word "Denmark" refers to the country where the hero's wife's phantasy happens. Being also the password to the orgy where the hero carries through his own phantasy, "Denmark" brings together the inner worlds of the couple in the story.

In the film, the password "Denmark" is replaced by "Fidelio", an ironic reference to fidelity (in a relationship between two people), one of the themes in both works. Besides, *Fidelio* is also the name of a Beethoven opera, *Fidelio or Married Love*. This is made clear when the movie's protagonist is talking to his friend Nick Nightngale, who writes down the password on a napkin. Using "Fidelio" as a password, Kubrick likewise refers to *A Clockwork Orange*, where the figure of Beethoven holds great importance for the protagonist. Beethoven's importance owes to the fact that Alex, the protagonist, is obsessed with his music – particularly with the 9th Symphony – while he is still free and inflicting his ultra-violence on others. Later on, the same music plays a crucial part in the treatment that cures him of the indiscriminate practice of violence. Named Ludovico – a reference to the composer's first name, Ludwig – the treatment consists in forcing the patient to watch movies with violent scenes (similar to the ones he had enacted himself) while the 9th Symphony is played.

Under medication, tied to a chair, with "eyes wide open" – in McDougal's words – by means of devices that have the specific purpose of preventing him from closing his eyes – Alex faces the screen. He is cured by the combination of drugs with the observation of violent acts and the simultaneous audition of Beethoven's music. For this reason, together with various other elements in *Eyes Wide Shut*, the Ludovico treatment brings about a metafictional moment that forces us to reflect on our role as spectators, and the role of cinema as not only information, entertainment or even art, but it also suggests a social "educational" role.

In this connection, we may add that Kubrick, once asked about Alex's taste for Beethoven, answered: "I think this suggests the failure of culture to have any morally refining effect on society. Many top Nazis were cultured and sophisticated men, but it didn't do them, or anyone else, much good" (KREIDER, 2000, p.42). The sentence reminds us of

the use of “Fidelio” as reiteration of this critique, and helps us consider Kubrick’s last work as an expression of his ideals and conjunction of his works through a story written by Schnitzler.

On the other hand, Alex’s nausea may be related to the repulse aroused in the spectator by the laying bare of North-American high society in *Eyes Wide Shut*. This relates to the first scene of the movie, when the hero’s wife (played by Nicole Kidman) drops her dress and stands stark naked. At this moment, the screen becomes black, and the words EYES WIDE SHUT appear abruptly, as a reproach to the audience, who of course would like to stare at the scene for a while. In this shocking scene, as in subtler ones, Kubrick forces the spectator to turn his eyes inwards, so that “eyes wide shut” are the characters’ as well as the audience’s.

At this point we may relate this discussion to a few elements pointed out by Tim Kreider in *Introducing Sociology*. The details pointed out support the idea of Kubrick using the catalysers to complement Schnitzler’s work, even though the film keeps most of the story told in the novel.

One of the questions raised by the catalysers, which Kreider points out, is the consumism and corruption of North-American society. According to Kreider the hero’s character can be defined by his first line: “Have you seen my wallet?”. Throughout the film, he deliberately shows his doctor credentials and gives away hundreds of dollars to buy, bribe or intimidate everybody, from taximen to prostitutes. The scenes involving the power of money and social status, given to him by the social value attributed to his profession, support the main actions. The meaning of the scenes is especially emphasized by the frequency of their appearance. In a world thus depicted, everything can be bought and sold.

This is also illustrated by the sequence of the costume shop, to which the hero goes in order to rent a costume required to enter the orgy party mentioned before. The owner agrees to help the protagonist and rent him a costume in the late hours of the night only after he offers him the payment of twice the normal price. As an example, this strikes a contrast with the corresponding episode in *Dream Story*, where the character tells the shop owner that money would be no problem, and gets as an answer “I ask what’s owing to me, nothing more”.

In isolation, these and other details may seem insignificant. However, brought together, they articulate a consistent whole and contribute to project significant differences between the novel and the

film, even though both tell approximately the same story. Kubrick has used film to express his personal stance before some of the themes developed in Schnitzler's novel, such as fidelity and corruption, which still remain relevant for our contemporaries.

DINIZ, T.F.N.; CÂMARA, M.S. Funções narrativas em *Eyes Wide Shut* de Stanley Kubrick

Resumo: O texto é uma análise da adaptação de Stanley Kubrick, *Eyes Wide Shut*, do romance de Arthur Schnitzler, *Dream Story*. Funda-se na teoria de Brian McFarlane, que propõe uma interpretação baseada em funções narrativas inicialmente descritas por Roland Barthes ao longo de sua obra. A análise focaliza uma função informante: a mudança da senha, de "Dinamarca", no romance, para "Fidelio", no filme. Essa única mudança é indicadora de todo o universo da obra adaptada, diferente do mundo do romance: uma transformação no tempo e espaço da Viena do início do século XX, para a Nova York, no fim do século.

Palavras-chave: Stanley Kubrick, Arthur Schnitzler, Brian McFarlane, adaptação fílmica

Works cited

KREIDER, Tim. **Introducing Sociology**. Film Quarterly, v.53 n.3, Spring 2000.

KUBRICK, Stanley. **Eyes Wide Shut**. Estr. Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman e outros. New York: Warner Bros., 1999. VHS – color.

McDOUGAL, Stuart Y. *Eyes Wide Shut: The Dream-Odissey of Stanley Kubrick*. In: _____. **Cadernos de Tradução VII** (Org. Thaís Flores Nogueira Diniz). UFSC, Ed. Pallotti, 2001/1. p. 189-202.

McFARLANE, Brian. **Novel to Film: an introduction to the Theory of Adaptation**. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

SCHNITZLER, Arthur. **Dream Story**. London: Penguin Books, 1999.

DAS NORMAS PARA A APRESENTAÇÃO DOS ORIGINAIS

A Revista Letras & Letras aceita para publicação, em fluxo contínuo, artigos inéditos em sua especialidade: estudos lingüísticos sobre línguas e/ou literaturas clássicas e modernas; teorias lingüísticas; teoria da literatura; estudos sobre o ensino de línguas e de literatura; resenhas críticas de obras publicadas nas áreas de ciências da linguagem e de teoria e crítica de obras literárias.

A Revista Letras & Letras aceita trabalhos redigidos em português, espanhol, francês e inglês, respeitados os padrões ortográficos vigentes em cada caso. Os textos deverão estar acompanhados de resumo e palavras-chave (no idioma do texto) e de abstract e keywords em inglês.

Se o(s) autor(es) achar(em) necessário, poderá(ão) indicar se o trabalho é resumo de dissertação ou tese; se o mesmo está vinculado a outros projetos, se obteve auxílio para a realização do projeto; enfim, quaisquer outros dados relativos à produção de material. No caso de resumos de dissertações ou teses, indicar o título da mesma, instituição onde defendeu o projeto e data de defesa.

É proibida a tradução para outro idioma sem a autorização do Conselho Editorial.

Ao enviar o material para publicação, o(s) autor(es) está(ão) automaticamente abrindo mão de seus direitos autorais, concordando com as diretrizes editoriais da Revista Letras & Letras e, além disso, assumindo que o texto foi devidamente revisado.

Dois membros do Conselho Editorial emitirão parecer sobre os trabalhos, aprovando-os ou sugerindo as alterações que julgarem necessárias. Em caso de um parecer ser favorável e outro contrário, o trabalho será enviado a um terceiro membro do Conselho Editorial.

Depois da análise, os trabalhos serão devolvidos aos autores, juntamente com cópia dos pareceres. Os trabalhos que requererem alterações serão encaminhados aos autores para procederem às modificações sugeridas e, em seguida, remeterem à Revista o texto devidamente corrigido, gravado em mídia eletrônica e acompanhado de uma cópia impressa.

Preparação dos originais

O material para publicação deverá ser encaminhado à Diretoria da Revista em 03(três) vias impressas digitadas em Word for Windows versão 6.0 ou superior, em papel tamanho A4, acompanhadas de gravação em mídia eletrônica. Em duas dessas cópias não deverão constar identificação do autor (ou autores, se for o caso) nem o nome da instituição à qual pertencem nem quaisquer outras referências que possam identificá-los. Os textos devem conter até 30 (trinta) páginas no máximo, incluindo bibliografia e anexos quando for o caso, digitadas com espaçamento simples.

As páginas deverão ser configuradas da seguinte maneira:

Largura: 16cm

Altura: 21,5cm

Numeração: fora (canto inferior)

Margem Superior: 3cm

Margem Inferior: 2,5cm

Margens esquerda e direita: 2cm

Tipo: Times New Roman

Texto: corpo 11

Notas: corpo 9

Obs: Trata-se de uma configuração do tamanho do papel, de natureza personalizada, na qual a mancha do texto quando impressa na folha A4 fica reduzida. As notas de rodapé devem figurar necessariamente ao pé da(s) páginas onde seus índices numéricos aparecem.

Estrutura do trabalho

Os textos devem obedecer à seguinte ordem:

Título em maiúsculas com negrito, centralizado. Duas linhas abaixo do título, alinhado à direita, **nome do(s) autor(es)** por extenso, sendo o último sobrenome em maiúsculas; **filiação científica**, em nota de rodapé, puxada por um asterisco, constando a titulação máxima, o nome do instituto ou faculdade a que pertence, o nome da universidade (sigla) e o endereço eletrônico do(s) autor(es), **resumo**, no idioma do texto (máximo 200 palavras), duas linhas abaixo do nome do autor, sem adentramento e em espaçamento simples; **palavras-chave** (até sete), duas linhas abaixo do resumo, separadas por ponto e vírgula; **texto**: duas linhas abaixo das palavras-chave inicia-se o texto, em espaçamento simples entre linhas e duplo entre parágrafos; os **subtítulos** correspondentes a cada parte do texto deverão figurar à esquerda, em negrito e sem adentramento. Duas linhas após o término do texto, à esquerda, em negrito e sem adentramento, deverão constar **título** (em inglês) e demais referências sobre o artigo (Ex.: SILVA, M. título em inglês). Duas linhas abaixo, deverão constar o **abstract** e **keywords**. Em seguida, também duas linhas abaixo, sem adentramento, deverão figurar as **referências bibliográficas**, em ordem alfabética e cronológica, indicando os trabalhos citados no texto. Após as referências, deverá figurar a **bibliografia**, com a indicação das obras consultadas ou recomendadas, não referenciadas no texto, também em ordem alfabética e cronológica.

Referências bibliográficas: devem ser dispostas em ordem alfabética pelo último sobrenome do autor, atendendo-se aos padrões da NBR 6023:2000 da ABNT.

Abreviaturas: os títulos de periódicos deverão ser abreviados conforme o Current Contents.

Exemplos básicos:

Livros e outras monografias

SILVA, I. A. **Figurativização e metamorfose**: o mito de Narciso. São Paulo:EDUNESP, 1995. 276 p.

Capítulo de livros

JOHNSON, W. Palavras e não palavras. In: STEINBERG, C.S. **Meios de comunicação de massa**. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1972, p. 47-66.

Dissertações e teses

CORRÊA, G. G. **As reformas educacionais brasileiras**: programas de ensino em Ciências e seriação escolar. 1997. 201 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação). Centro de Ciências Humanas e Artes, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, Uberlândia, 1997.

Artigos de periódicos

CAMPOS, M. M. Educação infantil: o debate e a pesquisa. **Cadernos de Pesquisa**, São Paulo, n. 101, p.113-127, jul. 1997.

Trabalho em congresso ou similar (publicado)

MARIN, A. J. Educação continuada: sair do informalismo? In: CONGRESSO ESTADUAL PAULISTA SOBRE FORMAÇÃO DE EDUCADORES, 1, 1990. Águas de São Pedro. **Anais**....São Paulo: Unesp, 1990. p.114-118.

Publicação On-line – Internet

TAVES, R. F. Ministério corta pagamento de 46,5 mil professores. **O Globo**, Rio de Janeiro, 19 de maio 1998. Disponível em <http://www.oglobo.com.br>. Acesso em 19 maio 1998.

Citação no texto

O autor deve ser citado entre parênteses pelo sobrenome, separado por vírgula da data de publicação (BARBOSA, 1980). Se o nome do autor estiver citado no texto, indica-se apenas a data entre parênteses: "Morais (1955) assinala...". Quando for necessário especificar página(s) esta(s) deverá (ão) seguir a data, separadas por vírgula e precedidas de p. (MUMFORD, 1949, p. 513).