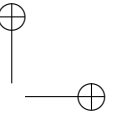
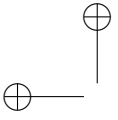


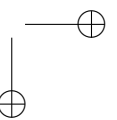
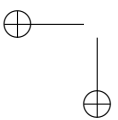
**CULTURA, LITERATURA,
MEMÓRIA E IDENTIDADES:
EM CELEBRAÇÃO DO
CENTENÁRIO DE CLÁUDIA
DE CAMPOS
(1859-1916)**

ISABEL LOUSADA, ROSA FINA
(direcção)

SANDRA PATRÍCIO, LUÍS PINHEIRO E MÁRCIO MATIASSI CANTARIN
(coordenação)



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**Cultura, Literatura,
Memória e Identidades:
por ocasião do centenário
de Cláudia de Campos
(1859-1916)**

Ficha Técnica

Título: *Cultura, Literatura, Memória e Identidades: por ocasião do centenário de Cláudia de Campos (1859-1916)*

Direcção: Isabel Lousada, Rosa Fina

Coordenação: Sandra Patrício, Luís Pinheiro e Márcio Matiassi Cantarín

Colecção: *Elas*, 2

Directores da Colecção: Isabel da Cruz Lousada, Alexandre Honrado, Isabel Baltazar

Director Adjunto da Colecção: Luís da Cunha Pinheiro

Composição & Paginação: Luís da Cunha Pinheiro

Centro de Literaturas e Culturas Lusófonas e Europeias, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa

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Isabel Lousada, Rosa Fina

(Direcção)

Sandra Patrício, Luís Pinheiro e Márcio Cantarín

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Female voices in a continuum: the contribution by Susan Lilian Townsend (1946-2014)

Alcina Maria Pereira de Sousa ¹



Studies in contemporary women's writing have been at the forefront of much research on uncovering discursive selves sharing standpoints across genres and styles. This way, canon-breaking and/or unknown authors have been gradually brought to light given their positioning in the world crisscrossing reflections on culture, society, writing, identity and memory. It is then more than appropriate to acknowledge the production of Cláudia Campos in the Portuguese scenario

¹ Universidade da Madeira, Portugal.

in the late nineteenth century as belonging to a set of writers silenced both by the course of time and Literary History, even though their production unveils references to other authors/writings and offers a standpoint in male/female positioning from decentred perspectives (SAID, E., 1983, 1994). This is to be inferred directly from the array of female characters' turn-takings or indirectly from the narrator's words, as follows: «Sofia represented the Christian wife, and she also represented an enlightened woman, tamed for centuries of serfdom, feeling dark atavisms ruminating in her own self, which made her awkward to govern herself, and left her unconsciously humble before the force of Man» (in *Ele*, CAMPOS, C., 2016: 29, translation mine)². Education in the sense of formal or informal instruction becomes then a way for women getting emancipated and fully playing a role in society.

Along the lines of a plight for vindicating women's voice and individuality among different generations of readers, this paper is meant to bring to light the writings by Susan Lilian Townsend, born in mid-twentieth century. Much in the style of Dickens, Townsend depicts everyday situations, settings and differing female voices of diverse walks of life often with a comic tone. Her writings deconstruct taboos and clichés, leading adolescents and adults alike to perceive the puzzling reality of a fragmented empire.

Having studied much of the written production by Townsend (SOUSA, A., 2005, 2009), from discourse analysis and stylistics stances (SIMPSON, P., 1988, 2003, 2014), it is my purpose in this paper to focus on the way the author and playwright addresses the aforementioned issues from a decentred, unfamiliar way also resorting to satire and humour, as a culturally situated discursive practice, to follow Simpson's tenets. Her selection of fictional characters displays a range of personality traits, including the allusion to mythical figures, exemplified in Pandora, evidencing her peculiar way of observing the surrounding world and people's interactions in day-to-day life.

Susan Lilian Townsend: life and work

Susan Johnstone, later Susan Lilian Townsend, was born in Leicester on the 2nd April 1946 and died on the 10th April 2014. Stemming from a family of humble origins (her father was a postman and her mother an assistant in a school canteen), she attended school until the age of 15, first married at the age of 18, and had four children. She was a socialist supporter and her criticism

² Cf. original version: «Sofia representava a esposa cristã, e representava igualmente uma mulher ilustrada, domesticada por séculos de servidão, sentindo ruminar em si obscuros atavismos, que a tornavam inábil para se governar só, e a deixavam inconscientemente humilde perante a força do Homem».

of the New Labour party was evidenced in her prose and drama texts, finely punctuated with irony and comedy, as a way of drawing attention to the oddness of (sub)urban life. These display an array of female characters most of which, in the case of Mole's saga, were defamiliarised and perceived by a chauvinist male character, apart from lightly fictionalised politicians and the royal family.

Townsend became one of Britain's renowned comic writers and has been widely known with Adrian Mole's saga: *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4* (1982), *True Confessions of Adrian Albert Mole, Margaret Hilda Roberts and Susan Lilian Townsend* (1989), *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole by Sue Townsend, Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years* (1999), and *Adrian Mole: The Prostrate Years* (2009). She wrote six other novels: *Ghost Children* (1997), on the psychological effects of abortion, *The Queen and I* (1992) and its sequel *Queen Camilla* (2006), about the fallen monarchy, *Rebuilding Coventry* (1988) and *Number 10* (2002), and living on welfare, *The Woman Who Went to Bed for a Year* (2012).

She wrote two non-fictional works (*Mr Bevan's Dream*, published in 1989, and *The Public Confessions of a Middle-aged Woman*, published in 2001), a dozen plays³ and she was also a prolific writer for the *Observer*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*, the latest with an Adrian Mole Column, entitled «The Secret Diary of a Provincial Man» (1999-2001). She had a rather difficult life and her formal instruction was discontinued given her life mishaps. She read extensively and her written production makes reference to canonical texts (SOUSA, A., 2009) like those by Jane Eyre, Oscar Wilde, or Russian literature, as well as mythological characters, among other.

At the age of 27 she wrote her first play, entitled *Womberang*, and was awarded the 1979 Thames Television Playwright prize, after having attended a short writing course at the Phoenix Arts Theatre in Leicester – later the Upper Brown Street Theatre and Phoenix Arts Centre. It was renamed as Sue Townsend Theatre, «to honour the Leicester author's legacy to the arts and to Leicester. The theatre is acknowledged at the context in which Sue began her writing career, working as a writer in residence» (Sue Townsend Theatre, accessed at www.leicestercollege.ac.uk/suetownsendtheatre, on 21-12-2016).

³ Cf. Townsend's plays: *Womberang* (Soho Poly, 1979), *The Ghost of Daniel Lambert* (Leicester Haymarket Theatre, 1981), *Dayroom* (Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 1981), *Captain Christmas and the Evil Adults* (Phoenix Arts Theatre, 1982), *Bazaar and Rummage* (Royal Court Theatre, 1982), *Groping for Words* (Croydon Warehouse, 1983), *The Great Celestial Cow* (Royal Court Theatre and tour, 1984), *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13 3/4-The Play* (Leicester Phoenix, 1984), *Ear Nose And Throat* (National large scale tour Good Company Theatre Productions, 1988), *Disneyland it Ain't* (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 1989), *Ten Tiny Fingers, Nine Tiny Toes* (Library Theatre, Manchester, 1989), *The Queen and I* (Vaudeville Theatre, 1994; toured Australia in summer 1996 as *The Royals Down Under*).

She dedicated her life ever since to writing despite life hardships and having suffered from a couple of serious health problems since her twenties, including heart failure, arthritis, and, later, diabetes, having led her to blindness and kidney failure. Her last writings were dictated mostly to her son Sean. She became an honorary fellow at the University of Leicester, a doctor of Letters at Loughborough University and a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Rather striking figures the creation of Adrian Mole's saga, particularly the reflections of a self-conceited male teenager who is then given the chance to mature, reflect on everyday issues, fiercely but unexpectedly sticking to tradition (including canonical and non-canonical texts). It is precisely this inside-out perspective which leads readers to look at diverse male-female educational patterns and roles to be followed by any educated lady in the Victorian period (featuring gender roles in the development of the narrative genre in 19th Century British literature).

Firstly, Townsend's discursive inventiveness is realised in the well-balanced combination of critical discourses of the self in biographies, confessions, digressions, reports and essays covertly reflecting influences from canonical developments within diary novel across periods. Secondly, stands out her creative way of presenting characters' social exchanges filtered by the diarist's perspective. The latter is the outcome of an evolving personality, from adolescence to adulthood necessarily implying physical, psychological and emotional unbalances in terms of knowledge and / or representations of the body, together with Adrian's encounter with the physical world (ROSENBLATT, L., [1938] 1999: 79) «constantly measured against the character's concern with normality». Indeed, Sue Townsend's rendering of the foreign and / or unfamiliar in Adrian's saga can be likened to her style as the author chooses to portray Adrian's quest for identity and nationhood in a satirical manner, foregrounding it via offering a stark insider / outsider perspective. This is aided by the author's representations of classic myths. In revisiting the myth of Pandora, for instance, Townsend opts to creatively realise her as a contemporary woman. Townsend's portrayal of the subtle nuances of gender relations filtered through a male-biased stance do not stop at the intertextual level though. They are further realised and brought to the fore by the author's resource to tropes, metaphoric language (LAKOFF, G., & JOHNSON, M., 1980; LEVENSTON, E., 1992), clichés, idioms and catch phrases commonly found in everyday language use and creatively contextualised by the author in the diegetic world.

In addition, Townsend's texts may be said to cross borders while touching upon previous texts known as «world literature», still, from a decentred view. Thus, Townsend continues the popular venture into classic literature by reinventing roles of Greek mythological characters like those of Pandora (originally in

Hesiod's *Theogony, Works and Days*, apud WEST, M., 1988) and her lifelong but ignored lover, in the *personage* of Adrian Mole, at first named as Nigel. The latter embodies some of Epimetheus's hopes of a joint future of happiness, much against his brother's dissatisfaction and warnings, the «subtle, shifting-scheming» Prometheus (WEST, M., 1988: 18), inevitably leading to the protagonist's abode accidental burnt down. The implacable divine punishment materialised by the fire, destroying Adrian's first attempt to live on his own (as he had unexpectedly inherited a house), late in his thirties, substantiated Prometheus wrath upon his brother's breaking of his promise. Adrian's major weakness stands for the protagonist's betrayal of his own ideals towards Pandora's political affiliations on behalf of a living together happily ever-after. After all, he sets an example to all those who give in their own opinions to get their aims fulfilled, in particular politicians (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 358): «Dishonesty is obviously the best policy».

Consequently, *Adrian Mole, The Cappuccino Years'* disclosure brings forth some of the classical features of the «misguided Epimetheus, who from the start turned out a disaster to men who live by bread» in the protagonist's fate (apud WEST, M., 1988: 18). With Pandora, there is never a chance to carry on Adrian's sexual drives except for «the kiss» – a motif in his saga – and the bare chance of touching her breasts in their short term youth relationship. As a matter of fact, the protagonist's desperate hope of an enduring love affair with Pandora compels him to double-cross his own ideals. As a result his late but unexpected inheritance of a house turns out into a tragic outcome because of being devoured by the fire which is narrated in the closing entry in *Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years*.

Female voices in a continuum

Adrian's female characters' *particular naming* embody both a universality, through their reference to first name and surname, and singularity in the fictional world, namely for their educational background, striking personality, along with their depiction from a contemporary western perspective. Gender issues also come to play a part in terms of address amidst characters offered in instances like «Ms Flood is free» (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 313). At this point, the reader might be uncertain about Mr. Roger Patience's statement, lest his words were not graphologically marked by inverted commas in Adrian's reported instance, to mark Adrian's detachment from the former's term of address, inasmuch as «Ms.» stands for the contemporary rendering of the female term of address, avoiding its former underlying notion of marital status, single or married – respectively «Miss» / «Mrs.». Once again, the authorial voice and / or knowledge of the pragmatic principles within the feminine agenda is likely to be inferred.

Equally recurrent, figures the very much debated contemporary issue on women getting ahead in the ladder of social hierarchy, emphasised, for instance, in the single passive clause (*op. cit.*: 125), «My auntie Susan has been honoured with the prestigious Prison Officer of the Year award». So run, for example, Adrian's mother's complaints about her own hopeless life, «Oh dear, and I'd planned to have at least four children, with that nice girl my mother is always going on about» (*op. cit.*: 27), facing a leaflet on Pandora:

She's a Doctor, a BA, and BA, and MA, a PhD, and she'll be an MP by tomorrow. «I've got nothing after my name and only Mrs before it,» she said bitterly. «And,» she added, «Pandora speaks six foreign languages, fluently. «All I can say is "Two beers, please" in Spanish». (*op. cit.*: 29-30).

Her physical appearance, «a girl», contrasting with her maturity, determination, and self-assertiveness, makes her stand on her own in the world of the discourse:

Immediately after I had turned off the motorway I was confronted by Pandora's lovely face staring down at me from an election poster nailed to the trunk of a chestnut tree at the side of the road; I stopped the car and got out to take a closer look; it was a glamour shot, reminiscent of 1940s Hollywood. Pandora's highlighted dark blonde hair fell to her shoulders in rippling waves; her glossy lips were open, showing Harpic-white teeth; her eyes said bedroom! She was wearing a dark jacket thing; there was a hint of white lace underneath, and beneath that more than a hint of voluptuous cleavage. I knew that every man in Ashby-de-la-Zouch would walk on his knees to vote for her.

And I think that I, Adrian Mole, was the first to kiss those divine lips, and the first to insert my hand (left) beneath her white cotton-training bra. Also, on June 10th, 1981, Pandora declared her love for me.

The fact that she has been married once is of no consequence. I know that I am her only true love, and that she is mine. We are Arthur and Guinevere, Romeo and Juliet, Charles and Camilla.

When I married Jo Jo, Pandora came to my wedding and I saw her wipe the tears from her eyes before saying to my new wife, *Commiserations*. She quickly apologized for her faux pas and said, «I meant, of course, congratulations.» But I knew that her slip of the tongue betrayed her deep hurt that it was not she who was Mrs Adrian Albert Mole.

[...] I said, «I love you, my darling,» to the Pandora on the tree, then I got back into my car and continued my journey into Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Pandora's face smiled down at me from windows and signposts along the route. VOTE BRAITHEWAITE – LABOUR, the poster said. (*op. cit.*: 11-12, Adrian's emphases).

Creativity and inventiveness are evidenced in Townsend's selection of characters stemming from different walks in society and given social mobility via academic qualifications, political affiliations or in terms of job opportunities and / or ranks, «unexpected life opportunities» in Adrian's words (*op. cit.*: 90), achieved in the British society hierarchical order, which constitutes a parody of contemporary job and social instability. Rather illustrating, Edna Kent, Barry's mother, once a «lavatory cleaner» (*op. cit.*: 95), becomes Pandora's secretary, a «double degree taker» (*op. cit.*: *ibid.*) after her late enrolment in the Open University (*op. cit.*: 100). Actually, it might be perceived both as a development of Eliza Doolittle's unenthusiastic personal and social upheaval, portrayed in Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (first published in 1913), and in the more contemporary Rita's willing course of action towards personal fulfilment, gender emancipation in a patriarchal society, against social exclusion, creatively rendered in Willy Russell's text, *Educating Rita* (1986), as evidenced in the following passage:

It took a couple of minutes before I could fully take in the astonishing fact that **Edna Kent, council tenant, widow of a milkman, eleven-plus failure, secondary-school drop-out, aged fifty-five, is indeed working in the House of Commons as the secretary of the cleverest woman in Britain.**

I asked how she had made the dramatic change from **lavatory cleaner** to her present prestigious position. She laughed. «**Education, education, education,**» she said, sounding like Malcolm. «I used to clean lavvies at the university, and to be quite honest with you, Aidy, I've never heard such bleddy rubbish what them professors and lecturers talked in there. So I enrolled on one of *them* Access courses.»

[...] «**My first degree's in Family Law,**» she said. She had a head start on this one: the amount of times her children have been up before the courts. «**And my second is in Business Studies.** Our Barry reckoned I ought to be up to date with the new technology, e-mail, and the web and suchlike.» (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 100, emphases mine).

Also, the nuclear female character in the diegetic world, Pandora, Adrian's muse to become the unity of the diary novel, Adrian's mother, the «Stinky insect» (Doreen Slater), though differing greatly in ethnic and socio-cultural background, have the chance to articulate their voices in his male biased world and contribute greatly to the unfolding of events in his life. It is not surprising that Adrian favours Pandora, his love and muse, from the novel's outset with an internal focalisation, whereas his mother and sister are presented from an external perspective. However, their «concern for appearance, dictated by norms of feminine attire» (GOODMAN, L., 1996), is vindicated by their own voice. In the closing pages of *The Cappuccino Years*, the protagonist unwillingly ends up stressing the fact that the female characters' interacting in the diegetic world, to borrow from

Foucauldian claims (*apud* USHER, R., & EDWARDS, R., 1994: 16), might be said to bear «no universal marks in the feminine rather different voices expressing their agency». This is enlightened in the passages to follow:

Pandora was sitting with her back to me, her stockinged feet resting on the old sweet-shop counter. A pair of black suede court shoes was lying on the floor, where she'd kicked them off. She was wearing a tight scarlet suit, a large red rose was pinned over her left breast and a rosette was fastened over the right. She was talking in a husky voice into the smallest mobile phone I'd ever seen. Her other hand caught up her long golden hair and scrunched it into a topknot, before letting it fall to her shoulders.

A plain-faced woman in a gored skirt and a cardigan handed her a cup of tea. Pandora smiled her radiant smile, and said, «Mavis, you're a sweetie.» Mavis beamed as though Richard Gere had just declared his love for her and asked her to run away with him to Malibu. (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 31-32)

Outcasts, such as juvenile delinquents (e.g. Barry Kent), add up to the host of credible characters in readers' frame of reference and schemata, becoming famous for their own accomplishments or sexual acknowledged identities in an environment with striking hints of conventionality, thus broadening the reader's world of fantasy: Adrian's aunt – Susan Mole, a lesbian prison officer; Adrian's best friend – Nigel, a gay Buddhist; Christine Spicer-Woods – top candidate to «Socialist Lesbians Against Globalization» (*op. cit.*: 27), or even one of Pandora's ex-husbands, later becoming gay. Amidst the extreme examples figure Lenny Purbright, Pandora's election agent, and Nigel, «Oh dear, and I'd planned to have at least four children, with that nice girl my mother is always going on about» (*op. cit.*: *ibid.*). Barry Kent, in the same fashion, an ex-convict and ex-skinhead in his youth, gets his literary accomplishment both as a prize-winning poet and a novelist for much of Adrian's awe and anger. Indeed, the diarist abominates his friend's register (cockney), by singling out the grammar of spoken English (BROWN, G., 1990; BRAZIL, D., 1995) and language change, also making part of the wide scope of mainstream culture (MERCER, N., 2000), *i.e.*, the culture of the playground (HULSE, M., *et al.*, 1988). In short, concludes Allen (2003: 191), «characters are then names to which groups of semes are attracted». As Barthes writes (*apud*, ALLEN, M., *ibid.*): «as soon as Name exists (even a pronoun) to flow toward and fasten onto, the semes become predicates, inductors of truth, and the Name becomes a subject».

However, credibility and reliability equally appear to be reinforced by Adrian's minute descriptions of settings, familiar both to British and non-British residents interestingly bearing some resonance with Dickens's portrayals of settings. At this point, Townsend's view and observation of everyday situations,

equally indebted to her professional and empirical knowledge to one of a social assistant, as she herself admits in an interview⁴, is rendered in the diarist's perspective:

My first impulse is to write about humour... I look at the world, and, honestly, I don't see any logics. I'm not referring to a scientific type of logics, what I mean is that there's a logical flow which helps people getting on with their lives. Not taking things seriously is the only way to keep one's mental balance. [translation Mine].

In this line, Forster's stance might rightly fit concerning (1990: 85) «the speciality of the novel» to the extent that «the writer can talk about his characters as well as through them, or can arrange for us to listen when they talk to themselves. He has access to self-communing, and from that level he can descend even deeper and peer into the subconscious». Concurrently, by drawing links between experiential and theoretical knowledge, Townsend provides the readers with a fictional autobiography. In this relation the protagonist in the diegetic world demonstrates the diverse facets of identity formation:

Tuesday February 17th

Glenn said to me today, «Do you think Glenn will play Michael, Dad?» I had no idea what he was talking about. I thought the boy had started to refer to himself in the third person, as Thatcher used to do. A sure sign of madness, or megalomania. (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 330-331).

Alongside, period, in the sense of (McRAE, J., 1990: 20) «cultural background, historical knowledge», comes mediated in Adrian's texts through Townsend's intertexts (SOUSA, A., 2009). As McRae puts it (*op. cit.: ibid.*), «this involves writers alluding to – or perhaps quoting directly from – other writers or literary sources» through pastiche and parody, for example. In fact, Adrian's monologues, aside comments, and confessions, singled out in his diary entries, allude extensively to the British history, tradition and society (including past and present public figures), some of which mentioned in his witty dialogues undermined by a satirical tone. Adrian's anchorage to the British tradition is so strong that some entries are organised in accordance with British holidays, religious festivities, historical dates, the monarchy (*e.g.*, The Royal Wedding), or even elections and, of course, the school and lunar calendar (in his adolescence), his (mis)achievements and most certainly his unstable relation with his first love and source of inspiration. Pandora along with Adrian might be said to entail the (KAYSER, W., 1976: 70) *leitmotiv* in the loose unity of the diary form envisaged in their essence and

⁴ «A Vida Secreta de Sue Townsend», *Livros – O Independente*, Ministério da Cultura, Instituto Português do Livro e das Bibliotecas, No. 8 (April 2000), pp. 24-29.

humorous effect upon readers. The former entries are intertwined with the diarist's response to private and public life. So unfolds, for example, this dialogue enclosed in one of Adrian's diary entries:

And how did Thatcher give birth to the twins, Carole and Mark? I told Pandora about my «William Hague is Thatcher love-child theory». She said, «No, William Hague is the result of a cloning experiment conducted in the sixties. The sperm was taken from Churchill and the eggs were donated by Thora Hird». (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 246)

Finally, female characters' straightforward tone and blatant sarcasm in spoken register come to the fore in the literary discourse particularly in the negotiations of public discourses. In this line might come Hobbs stance (tagging along some of Deborah Tannen's tenets in «The Aesthetics of Conversation», 1982), in that (1990: 7): «literature is a second-order effect on the already magnificent achievement of ordinary discourse, and that the best literature, just as the best conversation, is characterised primarily by the relationship that is created between the writer / speaker and the reader / listener».

Diverging from the commonplace of opening diaries with an allusion to the «Dear Reader», in Adrian's diaries (MACOVSKI, M., 1994: 23) «all listeners become interlocutors, voices within a tripartite linkage of social utterance... seek[ing] to instantiate dialogue by explicitly inscribing a listener's position into the text». Accordingly, and extending from the Bakhtinian dialogic premise associated with a text, (*op. cit.: ibid.*) «and manifested in the language of deictics, demonstratives, and prolepsis within the text», there is the speaker's discourse (character / protagonist), the listener (reader) and the object (either a character or a subject matter).

Adrian's narratives blend personal digressions and characters' discourses directly afforded so that the reader may acknowledge (*op. cit.: ibid.*) «ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes». Social literacy skills evidence his audience awareness in different modes of discourse (tenor, field, register, terms of address) most times punctuated by his peculiar «point of view, aspect, perspective» (van PEER, W., & CHATMAN, S., 2001: 10) along with an unusual sense of humour. Amidst the blatant stances might figure his talks on Radio Four (TOWNSEND, S., 1989: 54, 62).

Welfare and economic crisis come up in Adrian's critical diary entries culminating with his giving in to the Blair's movement to follow her muse, Pandora, in his «cappuccino years» in his thirties, a symbolic age for redemption. Hyperbole is a resource in Adrian's speech with a twofold meaning. Sometimes reminding readers of their role in attentive consumers (FAIRCLOUGH, N., 1992, 1995),

«given that language practices are increasingly targets for intervention and control». Fairclough concludes, thus, (1995: 222) «a critical awareness of language is a prerequisite for effective citizenship, and a democratic entitlement». Yet, Adrian's message is wrapped up in a humorous fashion avoiding the so-called (*op. cit.*: 223) «linguistic parochialism and prejudice», illustrated in:

I stressed that unless she kept to the rules I was not going to fork out for the hair extensions.

[...]

I called Rosie into my bedroom and we unpacked the baby doll. It was unsettling realistic – it looked like a prettier William Hague. It was wearing a yellow Babygro, and a label around its neck, which said: ... *Warning!* Do not attempt to tamper with my solar-powered batteries. Do not bathe me. Do not ingest my eyeballs.

Contents

Doll

Electronic bottle

Transportation sling

Bottle-cleansing solution

Six diapers

1 comforter (TOWNSEND, S., 1999: 218)

Considering Adrian's frequent use of irony, it is noteworthy that it involves, advances Hutcheon about its participatory nature (1995: 123), «culturally-shared knowledge of the rules, conventions, expectations» (PRATT, M., 1977: 86) in play in a particular context: «a discursive community must therefore exist». This community is traced out in Adrian's narratives which are grouped under different themes (FIELD, T., 1989: 120) according to the diarist's life stages: from true confessions of Adrian Mole (*e.g.*, a young adolescent's exaggerated plea for justice), Wilderness Years, Cappuccino Years in his thirties to the Prostate Years. When readers interact with the literary discourse, they may unveil data related to outer contexts, particularly through a diversity of discursive practices, for example: postcards, letters, memos, messages, or recipes. These may also build on a certain image of the implied author. All these ascertain Townsend's particular creative fictional writing foregrounded by an autobiographical set of data tailored by an interpretive act in Adrian's diaries. They might be also understood as a dissimilar but striking way of women (FOUCAULT, M., 1994) referring to gender-related matters on women's perspectives about themselves and their ways of making a stand in the fictional / real world in a witty and cheerfully manner via a defamiliarised male character's standpoint, though as much balanced as possible from birth: English blood, colour and morals, scientific opinions, intellect and gender prejudice.

In addition, it appears that the polyphony of voices, or rather the series of voices in a continuum, stands for two modes of alignment: class and gender. Adrian's beliefs, opinions, interests and behaviour stand out «as using an altogether different expressive» register «quite distinct» not only from other masculine voices, but also feminine voices. Ironically, Adrian becomes an alien in his diegetic world, yet he strongly believes that his patterns should be followed uncritically: «Men have murdered for less».

In this regard, and to draw on Herman's assertions (2001: 65), «the situations that [Adrian] finds most discomfiting and disempowering» are those accompanied by register styles whose users align themselves against and try to take up a position of dominance or control. Along this cline figure Pandora, Adrian's mother and aunt, Jo Jo or Sharon, for example, despite their distinct (*op. cit.*: 71) «ways of seeing and speaking» because of «different backgrounds and group identity associations». To conclude this brief synopsis on the clash of register styles believed as «a matter of culture», it appears pertinent to borrow from Herman (*op. cit.*: 71), in that this clash «constitutes the antagonist structuring of men's and women's participant roles, rather than merely reflecting or signifying it». Semino and Culpeper (2002: 139) further claim that «By understanding different presuppositions and by uncovering what we take for granted, it is possible to develop a habit of constantly questioning whatever you read or see or think or do. This constant questioning in turn develops a heightened responsiveness».

The brief analysis of discourse and peculiar style (MCRAE, J., 1990: 23) was «intended to establish a relationship between language and artistic function», or highlight the way choices of «*manner* rather than *matter*, of *expression* rather than content» and clues emerge from discourse analysis of some of the literary production by Townsend. As evidenced in several parts of this paper, a wide array of possible topics was likely to be raised in the light of Adrian's beliefs, traits, points of view and direct rendering of characters' words concerning gender, of which Male appropriations or imitations of «femaleness», female or «feminine» language, female bodies, producing and consuming femininity, motherhood, maternity, and family roles, woman and myth, women, power, and femininity or even beauty are an example.

All in all, it can be said that Townsend has a peculiar way of identifying several female characters in her diegetic world(s) owing to a style of writing that privileges the satirical as a strategy to draw in readers' attention and emotional engagement with the narrative and the larger sociocultural conventions at play therein. Combining this with the confessional, adequate to the diary genre, by writing in a conversational tone and in different registers, results in Townsend stylistically portraying several female characters in a memorable manner. She succeeds in creating resonant representations not only of the characters them-

selves, but also of the relationships (MILLS, S., 2014) among them and how these are constrained and / or affected by gender and its impact upon both individual and collective identities. It seems adequate to quote Johnson (1997: 25) in his claim that «for every known story of a writer's life, there is the echoing of thousands of others. Over centuries, many found darkly ingenious outlets for creativity». From the discussion and illustrations given throughout this paper, it is clear that through the creativity and mastery of language in the satirical depiction of contemporary society in the saga of Adrian Mole, and much like Cláudia Campos herself, Sue Townsend is one more in a long line of authors striving to write about and represent gender relations, emancipation and social commitment in an innovative and socially impactful way. Townsend is, in effect, one more in a continuum of female voices.

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