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Review article

The exergos-chapter relationship in the novel *The Flight of the Cat*, by Abel Prieto

La relación exergos-capítulo en la novela *El vuelo del gato*, de Abel Prieto

A relação exergos-capítulo no romance *O Vôo do Gato*, de Abel Prieto

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of paratextual elements in the artistic-literary text implies that the student establishes certain relationships that enrich his cultural and literary competences; however, there are shortcomings in the didactic treatment of exerges as a paratextual element. In order to influence the solution of this problem, it is proposed to establish the exerges-chapter relationship in the novel *The Flight of the Cat*, by Abel Prieto. The article aims to address the relationship between the exerges and chapters in the novel *The Cat's Flight*, in 12mo. Historical-logical analysis, analysis and synthesis, and hypothetical-deductive analysis were applied as fundamental methods. The article addresses the importance of studying the proposed relationship and enhances the understanding, analysis and production of deep contents of the novel, not only in stylistic terms, but also as an indicative substance of historical, social, cultural and ideothematic information experienced by a group of young people in revolutionary Cuba in the 1990s.

Keywords: didactics; literature; language exerge; novice; paratextual.

RESUMEN

El análisis de elementos paratextuales en el texto artístico-literario implica que el estudiante establezca determinadas relaciones que enriquezcan su acervo cultural y competencias literarias; sin embargo, existen insuficiencias en el tratamiento didáctico de los exergos como elemento paratextual. Para incidir en la solución de esta problemática, se propone establecer la relación exergos-capítulo en la novela *El vuelo del gato*, de Abel Prieto. El artículo tiene como objetivo abordar la relación existente entre los exergos y capítulos en la novela *El vuelo del gato*, en 12^{mo} grado. Se aplicaron como métodos fundamentales el análisis histórico-lógico, el

análisis y la síntesis y el hipotético-deductivo. El artículo aborda la importancia del estudio de la relación propuesta y se potencia la comprensión, análisis y producción de contenidos profundos de la novela, en términos no solo estilísticos, sino también como sustancia indicativa de informaciones históricas, sociales, culturales e ideotemáticas vividas por un grupo de jóvenes en la Cuba revolucionaria del período de los 90.

Palabras clave: didáctica; literatura; lengua; exergos; novela; paratextual.

RESUMO

A análise de elementos paratextuais no texto artístico-literário implica que o aluno estabeleça certas relações que enriquecem seu patrimônio cultural e suas habilidades literárias; no entanto, há insuficiências no tratamento didático dos exergues como elemento paratextual. A fim de influenciar a solução deste problema, propõe-se estabelecer a relação exergos-capítulo do romance *O voo do gato*, de Abel Prieto. O artigo visa abordar a relação entre os exergues e os capítulos do romance *O voo do gato*, no 12º ano. Análise histórico-lógica, análise e síntese, e análise hipotético-dedutiva foram aplicadas como métodos fundamentais. O artigo aborda a importância de estudar a relação proposta e potencializa a compreensão, análise e produção de conteúdos profundos do romance, não apenas em termos estilísticos, mas também como substância indicativa de informações históricas, sociais, culturais e ideotemáticas vivenciadas por um jovem grupo na Cuba revolucionária na década de 1990.

Palavras-chave: didática; literatura; Língua; exergue; romance; paratextual.

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to update the study plans from the new productions of national and universal literary works, the reading and analysis of the novel *The flight of the cat*, by Abel Prieto, is included in 12th grade.

When making an approach to how the Teaching-Learning Process (PEA) of the literature is manifested at an international level, Munita and Margallo (2019) mention that there are limitations such as following a paradigm that is built from criticism of the model historicist and the commentary of texts as an end in itself; meanwhile, as strengths they state the fundamental role of the reader and the development of literary competence.

In Cuba, García , Pérez and Miló(2016) , Machín (2018) and Veloz, Méndez and López-Portilla (2020) point out , among other difficulties, the limited vision of the literary fact, the cold, mechanical and rote treatment of the content and the insufficient analysis of referents, evocations and cultural associations in the literary text In the studies by Fierro and Díaz (2018); Herrera (2018);Fierro (2019); García, Fierro and Montaña (2019) and Fierro, Díaz and García (2020) address the need to promote critical, reflective and creative thinking, through the study of literature as an interdisciplinary, intercultural and intertextual node and to turn reading into a source of pleasure and enjoyment and not just a mere school exercise.

The analysis of the exergues is integrated to this purpose, as it implies that the student establishes certain relationships with the main text, in a dialogue where he will have to resort to his sociocultural repertoire and literary skills to understand such agreement; however, the analysis of the relationship between the exergues and the text that heads them is not always deepened.

In the novel *The flight of the cat*, by Abel Prieto, the exergues play a fundamental role and constitute the prelude to what each chapter presents. In its analysis, it starts from the historical, cultural, philosophical and social conditions that frame the novel, in order to provide students with analytical methods that allow them to learn and promote reading practices.

This novel is located within the Cuban turn-of-the-century narrative and is part of the post-new literary current (Casamayor, 2002), whose characteristics manifest the feelings of the revolutionary generation of the 90s, expressed in the approach of new and dissimilar themes that reflect the complexity of reality, critical thinking and new forms of expression.

The title of the novel has to do with José Lezama Lima's poem "Universalidad del fricción", which, according to its author, is one of the most surprising and penetrating definitions of the cultural, ethnic, religious, spiritual, and historical miscegenation that gave rise to our identity: the Cuban (Prieto, 1999).

It can be established, based on the assessment published by Rojas (2021) that:

The wit of the novel, the cleanliness of the language and the sparkling plot of its content then made *The Flight of the Cat*, one of the novels that many critics applaud, the stellar narrative centon of the 1990s. Today it could be placed among the neat, entertaining, and profound literary texts that portray a crucial Cuban era (...) Abel's novel is a bath of Cubanness as profound as it is entertaining (w/w).

The novel is the story of some different friends, who together make up the diversity that enriches "la Piña", as they call their group of the Marianao preuniversity, where each character brings a particular stamp to the collective universe and, from the contrasts, a drawing of Cuban society and its subjects is made : isolated and together (Rivero , 2013) ; in his argument "(...) All imaginable miscegenations are present; syncretism and metamorphosis, and Cuban laughter (...) moves between fiction and essay, between costumbrismo and a Creole metaphysics, with hippies, stoics, rogues and spiritualists, in short, an amusing and mysterious inquiry into what Cuba is(Duarte, 2021, p.1) .

Thus, going back to the processes of integration, defined as transculturation by Don Fernando Ortiz (1963): "(...) very varied phenomena that originate in Cuba due to the very complex transmutations of culture that take place here, without knowing which it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Cuban people" (p. 98).

The treatment of the transcultural, for Noblet (2018) implies "(...) recognizing that culture as such is not uniform in itself, but is complementary and fragmentary, nourished by the intersection of processes that converge with each other; integrating a group, but maintaining differences and diverse positions; what is interesting is not what is homogeneous, but what is heterogeneous" (s/p).

From this perspective, in *The flight of the cat* the mestizo would remain not as the simple sum of the traits inherited from his two parents, but something else, different and unexpected. Therefore, that son begotten between the cat and the marten will not have the enviable skin of the father or the luminous eyes of the mother; but an original quality: the ability to fly. The unusual flying cat will bring something new and distinctive, in this case, Cubanness.

Cubanness analyzed in the exergos- chapter relationship"(...) for the development of the cognitive-affective from the potentialities of the literary content and the formation of values in the students "(Dominguez and Rojas, 2020, s/p). Understanding that the formation of values, at the upper secondary level, must constitute a fundamental premise in comprehensive training and is determined by the integration of the contents of the subjects" (Matos, 2019).

Therefore, this article aims to address the relationship between the exergues and chapters in the novel *the flight of the cat*, by Abel Prieto in 12th grade, given its importance for the analysis of ideotematic content.

DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the new study contents, the efforts of the specialists to provide the 12th ^{grade} Literature and Language Program (PLL) (MINED, 2019) with a current look at the best literary tradition of the island are noted. To this end, among other contents, the study of the novel *The flight of the cat*, by Abel Prieto, is inserted.

This unit of content is headed with an identifying title: The most contemporary narrative literary creation and the work of Abel Prieto, *The flight of the cat*, novel. As objectives it proposes, among others (MINED, 2019, p. 25-26), to read the novel in a pleasant way to achieve in its analysis:

- Mastery of the character system and its characterization.
- Understanding the novel through participation in activities aimed at analysis.
- The selection, in an organic way, of passages from the novel that reflect the political-social reality, taking sides with the transmission of the

message that the author leaves to the reader.

- The determination of the theme and the most important ideas addressed by the author, in the novel.

As specific content, the reading and enjoyment of the novel and the development of skills to demonstrate the understanding of the message transmitted by the work, as well as literary analysis, are programmed.

In accordance with what is stated in the Methodological Guidelines for the implementation of the PLL, the analysis of the novel *The flight of the cat* is inserted within the thirteen proposed classes: three are for the analysis of the first chapter. This article also suggests the proposal to include the study of other chapters such as 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, by the elements of Cubanness present in them, which go beyond the limits of the Antillean homeland to go back to the universal.

The exergue as a paratextual element

Alvarado (2019) refers to the paratextual as "(...) what remains of a book or other type of publication removing the main text" (p. 13). For Collaguazo (2019) they are:

(...) elements that surround the texts and are manifested through titles, subtitles, illustrations, prefaces, indexes, etc. These paratextual components function as a guide in reading, since the reader or student, when analyzing the paratextual, will be able to generate prior information of a textual content (p. 16).

Meanwhile, Martos (2019) values what paratextual statements in literary works guide the reader towards the construction of the meanings of the text and places it in its

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communicative context; León, Aguiar and Mora (2021) propose that the analysis of paratextual indicators, such as the index, the title, the introduction, the exergues, the prefaces, the cover and the back cover, contribute to enriching the power of textual suggestion, they allow to endow the text with meaning and constitute revealing or enriching elements; matching positions.

In this article, the exergue is considered as a paratextual element. The word exergue comes from the French *exergue* and means outside the work and its first appearance in a dictionary date back to 1787, in the *Castilian Dictionary*. In the novel that is analyzed, the exergues are found heading chapters or parts of these, they are quoted literally and they are presented together with some bibliographic data; which affects its link with the main text.

The reading of the exergue triggers an infinity of possibilities by forcing the reader to wonder about the reason for that quote, since, being indented as an isolated paragraph, it imposes a pause in the reading and, therefore, brings out a unit of meaning in relationship with the text (chapter) that heads. In this way, the exergue behaves as a reading challenge, as it implies precise relationships with the main text that enrich the analysis; after the title, it is considered the paratextual element that can offer more information about the content or meaning of a text.

In general, the analysis of the exergues in any of the genres of literary creation favors the discovery of the communicative intention of the author in relation to the deep content of his text and, based on this presupposition, the analysis in classes of the causal relationship that emanates from the selection of the exergue: the why and what for of its use, its contribution, not only in stylistic terms, but also to a great extent as an indicative substance of historical, social,

cultural, ideothematic information and even of characterization of the Author.

In Cuban literature, we can trace the use of the exergue since the 19th century, with predominance within the narrative, without forgetting its presence in the lyric; already in the 20th century we have very marked cases in the energetic exergues of the "Elegía a Jesús Menéndez", by Guillén and in the work of other poets such as Ballagas, Eugenio Florit, Lezama, Piñera, García Marruz, to mention some of the most notable Cuban writers. However, the best known and most analyzed case in our literature is, without a doubt, the presence of the 45 exergues in the novel *Cecilia Valdés*, by Villaverde (1972), from the first: "Such is the fruit of guilt" (Solís), to the last: "The biggest monster, jealousy" (Calderón).

It is notorious, therefore, that the distinctive use of exergues has had a certain tradition in Cuban letters, although it is not very commonly used in Cuban writers of the latest narrative promotions, that is, from the 1980s; hence, the repeated use of them in a novel from the end of the 20th century, such as *The Flight of the Cat*, is of suggestive interest.

The relationship exergos-chapter in the novel *The Flight of the Cat*, by Abel Prieto

In its external structure, the novel consists of twenty-seven chapters; 13 of them open with exergues, belonging to various genres in the narrative, poetic and/or musical work of ten authors: Marco Aurelio, John Lennon, José Lezama Lima, Helena Blavatsky, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, Allan Kardec, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski, JH Elliot, and Agustín Pupo Domenech.

In its episodic dimension, the chapters go through the construction of significant wholes from successive events, with a wide range of narrative resources, among which

the following stand out: the use of predictive anticipation, interspersed stories and the subsequent story.

Next, an approach to this episodic dimension in its relationship with exergues is proposed, in chapters selected as object of study in 12th grade; for this, the exergues are identified, to which personalities of the universal culture they belong, from which particular works the author makes the selection and, what is the ideothematic relationship that they have with each other. That is, the necessary actions to unravel this interrelation: confirm the bibliographic data offered in the exergue, locate the original work, consult it, compare the content of the exergue with the content of the chapter; all this must provide the common interpretive key.

In the didactic treatment for the analysis of *the flight of the cat*, it is also specified:

(...) make inferences, reason deductively, evaluate ideas and hypotheses, drill into the meaning going through the different levels of analysis, choose the linguistic patterns based on the relationship that you want to establish with the interlocutor in the production of meanings, describe and explain the stylistic resources (...) reveal the intertextual and intertextual relationships and appreciate and value the reality that the author aesthetically enunciates (García, Fierro and Montaña, 2019, s/ p).

Examples of exergue-chapter analysis, in the novel

To delve into the exergue-chapter relationship, two exergues open the novel,

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one by Lezama: "The cat copulating with the marten does not give birth to a cat with starry Shakespearean fur, or a marten with phosphorescent eyes. They breed the flying cat"; and another of Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher emperor: "Your person is made up of three substances: a Body, an Animal Soul and a Reasonable Soul". Both will justify the fundamental edges from which the narrator reflects on the apparently trivial nature of the characters.

With the first, the idea of the mestizo who brings a new, "flying" condition is underlined, with which he manages to surpass his parents, as an improved capacity to face the increasingly complex challenges of reality and who does not settle for simple answers. A miscegenation that would be cultural, ethnic and moral, that is present both in a person or group, as well as in the national culture, where each of the main characters, however diverse, show the fusion of values, ideas and characteristics that go shaping their identities over time, building and rebuilding themselves along with that great *ajiaco* that is Cuban culture.

In the second, the experiences of "la Piña" nourish the story and are accompanied by the repercussion of all the events on the nature of the characters and each of their substances (Rivera, 2013).

Chapter three, entitled "Two families", appear two exergues. First:

"(...) Before the exquisite delicacies that are presented to me, I can perfectly tell myself: this is a fish carcass, that a chicken or pork carcass, this *falerno* is a little grape juice, that purple dress is nothing more than a fabric of old sheep's wool dyed the color of blood extracted from a shell. As for the pleasures of love, they are only a contact of

Bodies, any commotion that produces the excretion of a sperm material (...) It is necessary to act in this way with all the things of this life. When an object appears to the imagination as highly estimable, one must examine it internally, consider its intrinsic value and strip it of everything that can give it a fictitious dignity. A brilliant appearance is dangerously seductive; therefore, the greater attachment you have for a Thing that seems good to you, the greater your disappointment afterwards."

Thoughts, VI, XIII, by Marcus Aurelius.

The second:

"Imagine no possessions.

I wonder if you can.

No need for greed or hunger."

"Imagine" by John Lennon.

In both exergues, a particular philosophy is proposed about the value of things for the individual, of possessing material goods or satisfying certain appetites, marked as superfluous by the Stoics or, according to Lennon, by greed or hunger, which points to the greater objectivity of the ex-Beatle. In turn, the title "Two families", referring to Lezama's poem of the same name, establishes a link of common interest to the poetic account of the *petit Louise* who: "(...) If someone told her mother that she was Brazilian, she would show her Christian Dior models (...) But her eyes were black, like someone looking at a beach and waking up singing the carnival, which as a child he had

heard his old cook" (Lezama, 1977, pp 499-503).

The chapter is nourished by a sharp characterization of the two families: Escobedo and Laferté and the repercussion of some internal contradictions in Marco Aurelio and Freddy, which determined the personological ingredients of both protagonists: "(...) Mamoncillo was born in the heart of Pogolotti, son of a Haitian pigeon, of a corpulent and black Guantanamo man, well planted and a bricklayer by trade and of a very white and very fat, purebred Habanera" (Prieto, 1999, p. 22).

But, the maternal ideas about "the ethnic-erotic-religious" mark a certain tendency in Freddy, which leads to an authorial reflection, as a complete homodiegetic prolepsis: "(...) In Mamoncillo the maternal idea of Advancement as the goal highest of love, because most of his girlfriends were white-white, impeccably white and only in a few cases, I accept conscientiously, with the exception of one of those very disguised miscegenations" (Ibídem, p. 29).

The chapter closes with a revealing episode, where certain nuances are revealed about the "50-year war" carried out by the parents of the Little One, around the True Life and the Fictional Life; the trip to Miami of the mother and the photos with the relatives, especially the sad photo taken at *Disney World*: a description, in its indicative function of dysphonic connotation, in which the voice of the narrator with precise tones, feels more than exposes that family picture:

What were shocking about that photo were his spiritual aspirations, his pathetic desire to speak to the Reasonable Soul. The Little One felt in his chest, for the first time, a dry blow, a heartbeat of compassion towards his relatives and towards his

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mother, towards all those creatures of the same blood that crowded there, in the multicolored square, next to the dolls of Walt Disney (Ibid, p. 34).

you must have learned something in all these years! / Ah, how do you manage to sleep, ah, how do you manage to sleep at night?

In chapter six, entitled Faculty of Humanities, the exergue appears:

So Sergeant Pepper (Sergeant Pepper) took you by surprise.

Better watch that son of a bitch's eyes.

Those freaks were right when they said you were dead, (this phrase is an indirect attack, on the fact that "it's not the same Paul anymore").

The only mistake you made was in your head.

How do you sleep?

Oh, how do you sleep at night?

"How do you sleep?", by John Lennon.

The rest of Lennon's song continues:

You live with `good' people who tell you that you are a king, jump when your mom tells you something / the only good thing you did was `yesterday', (Alludes to the song "Yesterday")

And since you left, you're just one more day / ah, how do you manage to sleep? Ah, how do you manage to sleep at night? /A pretty face can last a year or two, but pretty soon they'll see what you can do / the sound you make is like background music to my ears,

The song composed by Lennon appears on the album *Imagine* (1971) and is John's response to what Paul McCartney did in his first record as a soloist, after the disagreement between the two due to personal contradictions, principles and interests. McCartney expressed the first blow to the friendship in the song "Too Many People", directed at John and Yoko and, although it was a subtle attack, it aroused in John an anger and a grudge that he would eventually distill into what he did best: music. This is how "How do you sleep?" was born", an ode to all the flaws of Paul's personality, from the eyes of John.

In the song, he satirizes Paul's career, both during his time with *The Beatles* and in his solo project, and contains harshly critical expressions about his more superficial and frivolous streak. John points out in the song that Paul only plays mediocre, lukewarm music created not to offend anyone and is commonly heard in elevators.

So why take this exergue for the novel's most personal chapter? Because the chapter is also an answer: the Pineapple, practically dispersed, unites victoriously before the key question of the Carmel gathering "(...) the question of the night came and went, repeated in different tones and forms: Which of the two Greats contributed more to the miracle of the Beatles? (Ibid, p. 61).

Framed in the complex environment of the 70s, the Pineapple is defined in the "speech of the guarapo". A speech starring Angelito, el Chino, the only glorious moment dedicated to a hidden figure throughout the novel until chapter 21.

These are two essential paragraphs to transform any night at Carmel into "(...) the sad night for McCartney's supporters and the night of the definitive victory for Lennon's" (ibid., p. 61). And in this position taken in favor of the most admirable former Beatle is the axis of the chapter, in that unifying criterion that will maintain the essential threads of friendship until the 90s.

(...) To begin with, Angelito said, we would have to know if we are talking about music, serious music, or if we are talking about garbage to sell records, that is what he said, and he cast his incisive gaze over the mass of hippies in Carmel (...) If you are talking about music seriously, the first thing you have to do is put McCartney in his place (...) And the place that corresponds to McCartney, he said, his just, precise and very well earned place, is that of an effective commercial guarapo manufacturer. That is his place and no one can argue with him (Ibídem, p. 63).

Chapter 17, which is entitled, the beautiful in the nineties, opens with the exergue:

"I would trade all my tomorrows for just one yesterday."

Me and Bobby McGee by Janis Joplin.

This phrase appears in the original text of the American rock and blues singer Janis Joplin who, with her torn voice, extraordinarily gifted to transmit emotions, was a leader of the hippie movement. His disagreement with the consumer society became one of his lines of action. However, he had problems derived from his difficulty in assimilating and managing his star status, his private and public life, and a notorious drug addiction.

Joplin died in 1970, in a hotel room in Hollywood, as a result of a heroin overdose. So, why does the author use this exergue to talk about Lourdes the beauty and her story with Heriberto?

The song tells us about another story of love and abandonment in which a happy yesterday contrasts with a bitter present. It describes an adventure, where two young lovers travel by road, a fairly frequent theme in *country music* of the time. It offers brushstrokes of situations and typical moods of when a couple travels with few monetary resources, letting themselves go in search of adventure, until they reach an indeterminate place, near Salinas (California), where Bobby leaves and the young woman left alone, starts drinking and ends up on a beach throwing her song and her sadness towards the stars.

Yes, Bobby shared the secrets of my soul / Through all the climates / For everything we did / Yes, Bobby protected me every night from the cold / One day for Salinas I let him escape / Looking for a home to live / *I would change all my tomorrows For just one yesterday* / Holding Bobby close to me / And feeling good was easy Lord when he sang the blues / Feeling good was good enough for me / Good enough for me and my Bobby McGee...

This is how both stories touch, in their heartbreak and nostalgia. In the chapter it is narrated that: "(...) Lourdes lost Heriberto in the 1990s and it was as if she was left out in the open (...) The deterioration hurt Beauty's body in her image and in her health (...) Heriberto was (...) Infallible companion, support, skeleton and matter, framework and ashlar in the existence of Lourdes" (Ibid, p. 162-167).

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Changing all his tomorrows and even his present for a single yesterday would mean taking up the "love story" of the song. An impossible return that, analyzed and discussed in a whole gathering of the Pineapple, only leaves the narrator pointing out the understanding of a transcendental truth, for the final plot of the novel: "(...) in the rigid and stoic Marco Aurelio Escobedo, the flowing quality of Freddy Mamoncillo also inhabited" (Ibidem, p. 172).

In chapter 20. Insomnia and Guilt. The exergue says:

- How do you sleep?

Oh, how do you sleep at night?

How do you sleep? By John Lennon.

It takes up the same text of chapter six, to extract the exergue, but in another dimension of the Pineapple, the sources of guilt, the Cuban guilt and the types of insomnia that it generates in the group. The narrator makes a retrospect of events common to Piña, and thus arrives at insomnia as an effect of guilt: "(...) Insomnia, the inflexible, the cruel insomnia, drew them on his pale countenance and he did it very early, since Marco Aurelio joined the family of the sleepless, of those who do not rest, as just a child" (Ibidem, p. 196).

And this is the first revealing fact about the question: Does Cuban Guilt Generate Insomnia? Later, in successive waves, other guilts would come to add to the insomnia; those related to their lives in the Faculty of Humanities, in the School of Law, in the Military Service, in intimate and family life "(...) Guilt, one and diverse, and its inexhaustible questions" (Ibid, p. 204).

The jump to the "present" of the authorial voice is quick: "(...) Today I also have bags under my eyes and I can recognize them under the oblique eyes of Angelito El Chino

and in Mamoncillo, on his round face" (Ibid, p. 205). And the answer to that other question: "Are we all guilty?" focuses, repeatedly in the chapter, where the forms of guilt and the types of Insomnia portray their carriers "(...) their reflection, catches the guilty or not (...) each one had to discover or remove the deep cause of the Insomnia or learning to live with it" (Ibidem, p. 206).

Chapter 21. The Summit of the Pineapple in the nineties opens with the exergue:

Said Ivan to Alyosha:

Why have you looked at me all the time with that anxious aspect, if not to ask me: do you have faith or do you not?

The Brothers Karamazov, by Dostoevsky.

In the question of the exergue, which is a fragment belonging to chapter III of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel, known as "Dialogue of faith between Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov" and, because the confessional voice of the author stands out in that account of the summit without which: "(...) this book would not have been written" (Ibidem, p. 214), we find the primary substance of *The flight of the cat* and in that faith of Lourdes la Bella for: "(...) Returning to the past, similar to the scattered Pineapple, in the face of the harsh nineties. Rebuild, an unlikely act because (...) Now all of us (except Marco Aurelio who had just divorced) were married; all of us (except Freddy) had children to support, all of us (without exception) had become a little bitter, we were members of the brotherhood of insomniacs and we wore the corresponding dark circles" (p. 221).

And because, although Bella (returns the authorial voice) "(...) She put a lot of vehemence and a lot of faith... those present did not understand the moral, philosophical

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and spiritual value of all that" (Ibid, p. 226). This is how the Cuban Guilt of the Pineapple emerges, in its inability to resume, rebuild, continue...

(...) remembering that encounter and calling it a failure, we exaggerated the harmful influence of La Rusita... it hindered us from looking back, or rather to the sides... that mobile past that Bella was doing slipped away again, without understanding it, the past that the beauty was becoming present before us (ibid., p. 227).

And not even the debate about "the Thing" and disintegration manages to reconstruct... Talking about "here" and "this" deepens the distances:

(...) But Marco Aurelio... with that watery drink of his, insisted on talking about "here" and "this" and the Thing, criticizing in passing the " evasionist attitudes ", that is, the line of Mamoncillo and the mine, and we perceive both in the good eye and in the bad the question that Iván discovered in Alyosha's gaze (Ibid, p. 231).

A faith that did not exactly imply the invitation to rebuild and continue in the same way, but to find a deeper result: verify truths, authenticate, evoke and almost curdle in the Cuban Laughter, above the harshness of past and present years. , but common, and write *The flight of the cat* with all the faith that mature reflection imposes on a time that was: "(...) the Summit imposed a halt, a stop, a pause... in the feverish race of the nineties, and we had to stick our heads out for a few seconds from `the turbulent waters and catch our breath and stop the diligence and its runaway horses and spend some time thinking about life'" (Ibid, p. 235).

Chapter 24, "Delay and Advance", contains two exergues, the first:

"(...) Hybrid vigor is defined as the greater vigor that hybrids from crosses between races or lineages usually show compared to their parents. The opposite phenomenon is consanguineous depression: the set of affections that individuals from crosses between related individuals usually show".

The Cuban fine rooster, by Agustín Pupo Domenech .

The second of the exergues:

"(...) the position of advance was a hereditary title, granted by the Castilian kings during the Middle Ages, which conferred on its holder special military powers and the rights of government over a border province."

The Imperial Spain, by J. H. Elliot, (1469-1716), translated into Spanish in 1965.

Both exergues complement each other in the same way that they refer to the positive and negative effects of transmissible crossbreeding, and function as a reaffirmation of the concepts that title the chapter. The ideas that arise from the plot are detailed, both ethnically and religiously, spiritually, socially, economically, sexually, ethically... of the characters. In this way, the narrator outlines the conclusive advance towards "Último friso" and "The house of tricks", materialized with a complete homodiegetic prolepsis; Little Marcus Aurelius's confession:

(...) She, he concluded tearfully, as Stoics should not conclude any speech, was the most important thing that happened to me in my life. So, he said, and a tear welled up in his good eye and a tiny bubble appeared in the bad eye, which pretended to be a second tear, but the bad eye moved (it would move without rest until Judgment Day) and would not let it form, nor go out, nor express oneself (Ibídem, p. 272).

Chapter 27, which is entitled "The House of Tricks", is also headed by two exergues. First:

"The universality of rubbing, of rubbing, of coitus in the rain

and his petty questions about the land. What monstrosities for a new race!

What a new offspring of man and stone!

Universality of friction, by José Lezama Lima.

The second:

"We were both nervous, feeling guilty.

And no one really knew why

Good, good well, oh well.

Good well, oh good".

"Well, well, well" by John Lennon.

Lennon's song refers to a hypothetical confusing situation, where withdrawal is imposed, with a certain mischievous humor, in a relationship where things are not clear, the necessary trust and/or honesty do not exist. The irony is accentuated by the

chorus: "well, well, well", which actually means the reverse.

The novel closes in November 1999 and ends a decade, and a century gives way to another, and outside the House of Tricks, the result of the universality of friction (What a new offspring of man and stone!), of the uncertainty of why (we were both nervous), impose the suggestive "well, well, well" Are we guilty or not? Are we advancing or delaying in the paths that cross? (Ibid, p. 306). This is how the thoughts of both friend's flow, so different and equal, united by the common denominator of the past and the not so common of the present: "(...) they flowed through channels and byways" (Ibídem, p. 307).

It dawns twice, and in the final scene, which, in the words of the narrator, embodied once again: "would deserve a cinematographic moment and an aerial view and a bit of background music. In a distant general shot and a frequency camera, which pays tribute to a bird's-eye view: "(...) filming my two associates from the Pre (...) like two expectant little animals, like two fluttering fish, nervous, defenseless, in front of the house of the tricks, in front of the great sleeping whale of Maternidad Obrera (Ibid, p. 313)?

Then the essential touch of the scene would emerge, the revealing and diverse *back ground*, common to the group "(...) that does not bring misfortune and shadows, but light and that tells us about the future and what is being born somewhere in the whale". Above ups and downs, misunderstandings, frustrations, protests and even "(...) Hollywood guarapo", sharing the last sip of complicit rum... (Ibid, p. 313).

That is why the author's proposals have been different from those of other Cuban authors who address both the same issue and the same historical stage and because this allowed him to build a different novel from

Translated from the original in Spanish

two non-exclusive elements: consciousness and meaning, seen from the recreating power of memory, both filtered by a third factor: laughter, where the essence of the text lies (Romero, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

The flight of the cat, a 1999 novel by Cuban Abel Prieto, is located in the Cuban turn-of-the-century narrative that presents distinctive characteristics such as the feeling of the Cuban revolutionary generation of the 1990s, the approach of new and dissimilar themes that reflect the complexity of reality, critical thinking and new forms of expression. It tells the story of some different friends who together make up the diversity that enriches "la Piña", as they call their group, which with their actions recreates the very essence of Cuban identity, mixing philosophical, religious, sociological and ethnographic notions.

The twelfth grade Literature and Language program requires the study of specific contents that include the best Cuban literary tradition, for which the insertion of the analysis of the exergue-chapter relationship in the novel *the flight of the cat*, by Abel Prieto, favors the development of models, theories, methods and skills for literary analysis.

The analysis of the exergue-chapter relationship, when conceived as a task integrated to the objectives of the theme of Unit # 10, enhances in the analysis of the chapters under study the integration of deep contents of the text, in terms not only stylistic, but also as an indicative substance of historical, social, cultural, ideothematic information and even characterization of the author, who, with *The flight of the cat*, proposed to unite several elements that would lead him to investigate and unravel in a sui generis way, problems that have

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concerned Cuban intellectuals of the revolutionary stage.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare not to have any conflicts of interest.

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The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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