

Honors Thesis Proposal

Pages of the Revolution: Symbolism in Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen's *O Nome das Coisas*

Project Purpose and Importance

For my thesis, I will be analyzing the repeated symbolism of paper in the anthology of poems *O Nome das Coisas* by the Portuguese author Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, demonstrating how the author uses this image to represent the sentiments of the Portuguese people around the time of the Carnation Revolution, which resulted in the fall of the long-standing dictatorship. I will present poems about three different periods for analysis: before, immediately following, and some time after the Revolution. In these poems, Andresen repeats the symbol of paper in various forms, such as a poster or a blank page, using it as a metaphor to describe the present and future of Portugal from the people's perspective during these intervals of time. This repetition serves to illustrate how the anxiousness and oppression of the Portuguese people turned first to relief and rejoicing after the dictatorship fell and then to disappointment as political turmoil and instability followed.

Although Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen is one of the most well-known authors of contemporary Portuguese literature, this particular book of poems has largely escaped academic review. Additionally, the vast majority of critical analysis of this author's poetry concentrates only on her metaphors involving nature. I aim to emphasize Andresen's political writing as a form of expression equal in importance to her famous messages about nature and the sea.

Project Overview

My initial interest in this topic began with an individual research paper for a class focused on Portuguese women writers. As such, I have already thoroughly sought peer-reviewed and published sources that address Andresen's poetry and its connection with political events.

While most scholarly articles about the author in question focus largely on the symbolism evoked by the landscapes in her poetry, there are also sources that briefly highlight the political voice in many of her poems. Included is a preliminary bibliography listing these sources, which have contributed to forming my argument.

According to a biographical essay about Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, “The poet’s experience with the social and political problems of Portugal, combined with her analytical view of post-World War II society, resulted in the search for a more direct and simple literary language” (Silva). In other words, the author used poetry to describe the political and social climate of her time and instigate change. Additionally, Sofia de Sousa Silva claims that Sophia de Mello Breyer Andresen favored writing in which the poet’s social concerns were most evident (27). I intend to argue this through my analysis of *O Nome das Coisas*, demonstrating that Andresen’s political poetry is just as thought-provoking and powerful as her literary landscapes.

To further support my argument, I plan to research and gather information about Portuguese reactions to these politically significant events, tying my findings to the symbolic representations in *O Nome das Coisas*. I will search for this data in reliable sources such as scholarly articles, published journals and books.

Prospectus/Preliminary Outline

I. Introduction

I will provide an overview of my argument, detail the contributions other scholars have already made to this topic and explain what I will be adding to the discourse.

II. Historical Background

I will provide a brief summary of the events of Portuguese history to which the poems in *O Nome das Coisas* refer.

III. Part One: Before the Carnation Revolution

I will analyze the poems “Che Guevara” and “Guerra ou Lisboa 72” from the first section of *O Nome das Coisas*, which include the symbol of paper, describing Portuguese sentiments in an oppressive dictatorship. I will also include research findings that express similar feelings.

IV. Part Two: Initial Reactions to Revolution

I will explore the sentiments evoked through the symbolism behind the author’s use of paper in “Revolução,” “Revolução — Descobrimento,” “Liberdade” and “Os erros”—poems about the period of time immediately following the Carnation Revolution. Additionally, I will include trustworthy accounts of the people’s reactions to this historical event.

V. Part Three: Post-Revolution Turmoil

I will analyze “A forma justa,” a poem from the section of the book written during the post-revolution political instability, using reliable sources to support the author’s descriptions of Portuguese reactions.

VI. Conclusion

I will use the analysis previously presented to demonstrate how the author’s politically focused poetry has as much importance in the literary world as her famous writing about nature.

Qualifications of Thesis Committee

For my Thesis Committee, I have selected Anna-Lisa Halling as my faculty advisor and Cristina Cowley as my faculty reader. The Honors Coordinator for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese is Gregory Stallings. Dr. Halling is an Assistant Professor of Portuguese with a Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature and minor in Portuguese. It was in her class about Portuguese women writers that I wrote the research paper about this topic. Professor Cowley has a master’s degree in Portuguese with an emphasis in literature, and I have been in three of her classes at

BYU, including one on the Spring 2018 Portugal Study Abroad program. She grew up in Lisbon during the time Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen wrote *O Nome das Coisas*, so she has firsthand knowledge of the events and feelings I will be discussing in my paper.

Project Timeline

Honors Program Deadline	Projected Completion Date
Thesis proposal approved	August 31, 2018
Thesis draft submitted and defense scheduled	February 1, 2019
Thesis defense completed	February 15, 2019
Thesis final submitted for publication	March 15, 2019

Funding

I do not need Honors Program research funds for this project.

Culminating Experience

I hope to be published in *Entremundos*, the Brigham Young University Student Journal of Luso and Hispanic Languages and Cultures and present my thesis at the 2019 Honors Conference. I presented my Honors Great Questions Essay at the first annual Honors Conference in 2018, so I think it would be a great experience to be able to attend again, this time presenting the culminating project of the Honors Program. Nice!

Preliminary Bibliography

- Andresen, Sofia de Melo Breyner. *O Nome Das Coisas*. 5th ed., Assírio & Alvim, 2015.
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- Klobucka, Anna M. *O Formato Mulher: A Emergência Da Autoria Feminina Na Poesia Portuguesa*. Angelus Novus, 2009.
- Marques de Oliveira, Mariana. "Outro Mar, Outro Eu: Uma Leitura Sobre a Natureza Metaforica De Paisagem Com Mulher e Mar Ao Fundo." *Anuário De Literatura*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2013, pp. 112-122, *ProQuest*, doi:<http://dx.doi.org.erl.lib.byu.edu/10.5007/21757917.2013v18n2p112>.
- Martinho, Fernando J. B. "Dez anos de literatura portuguesa (1974-1984): Poesia." *Colóquio/Letras*, no. 78, Mar. 1984, pp. 17-29, <http://coloquio.gulbenkian.pt/bib/sirius.exe/do?issue&n=78>.
- Silva, Marco G. "Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Portuguese Writers*, edited by Monica Rector and Fred M. Clark, Gale, 2004. Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 287. *Literature Resource Center*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/H1200011473/LitRC?u=byuprovo&sid=LitRC&xidffc1cf29>.
- Silva, Sofia de Sousa. "Arte e artesanato em três poetas: Mário de Andrade, João Cabral de Melo Neto e Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Colóquio/Letras*, no. 180, May 2012, pp. 30-41.
- "Sophia: a Luz Dos Versos." *Biblioteca Nacional Digital*, Biblioteca Nacional De Portugal, 2011, purl.pt/19841/1/galeria/entrevistas/06.html.