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Latin American Prototypes of Prostitutes and Wives in the Miniseries "Amorteamo": Reinforced Continuities and Rupture Attempts

Os Protótipos Latino-Americanos de Prostitutas e Esposas na Minissérie "Amorteamo": Continuidades Reforçadas e Tentativas de Ruptura

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Abstract: The article focuses on the Brazilian miniseries "Amorteamo" as its empirical object, discussing Latin American melodramatic prototypes of the prostitute and the wife. The main objective is to identify reinforced continuities and rupture attempts in the analyzed melodramatic images. The literature review and theoretical framework address studies on the representation of prostitutes and wives in television fiction, with a specific focus on the melodramatic prototypes discussed by Oroz and Cassano Iturri. The methodology adopts a multimethod perspective, examining descriptive and interpretive dimensions, as well as the visual and sound aspects of the analyzed scenes. The findings highlight the intrinsic contradictions of television melodrama, particularly evident in three characters: Dora, the prostitute (in her suicide as a reinforced continuity of moral punishment and the "deserved" fate in the world of prostitution), and Lena and Arlinda, the wives (in their symbolic attempts to break away from the traditional "happily ever after" theme that pervades their marital lives).

Keywords: television fiction, melodrama, gender prototypes, women

Resumo: O artigo toma a minissérie brasileira "Amorteamo" como seu objeto empírico central ao discutir os protótipos melodramáticos latino-americanos da prostituta e da esposa. O objetivo

principal é identificar as continuidades reforçadas e as tentativas de ruptura nas imagens melodramáticas analisadas. A revisão da literatura e o arcabouço teórico abordam estudos sobre a representação de prostitutas e esposas na ficção televisiva, considerando, principalmente, os protótipos melodramáticos discutidos por Oroz e Cassano Iturri. A metodologia adota uma perspectiva multimetodológica ao examinar as dimensões descritivas e interpretativas, bem como os aspectos visuais e sonoros das cenas. Os resultados destacam as contradições intrínsecas do melodrama televisivo, particularmente evidentes em três personagens: Dora, a prostituta (em seu suicídio como uma continuidade reforçada da punição moral e do destino "merecido" às prostitutas), e Lena e Arlinda, as esposas (em suas tentativas simbólicas de se afastarem do tradicional "felizes para sempre" que permeia a vida matrimonial de ambas).

Palavras-chave: ficção televisiva, melodrama, protótipos de gênero, mulheres

INTRODUCTION

Melodramatic images are often read through the lens of the crystallization of the representational prototypes of its characters. Even criticism of the use of narrative strategies considered to be worn-out is recurrent in perceptions of melodramatic fictional products. In the words of Thomasseau (2009, p. 15): "Melodrama appeals to what is most vulgar in the soul and taste of the audience."[1] This "melodramatic excess" is used to justify, at least in a broad sense, some of the labels, such as "simplistic" and "appealing," by which melodrama is usually classified (Huppes, 2000, p. 12).

Especially in the context of television melodrama, it is more than visible how telenovelas, miniseries and series (endowed with social and political contradictions in their creative core) continue with this excess through representations of the villainous and heroic (Martín-Barbero & Rey, 2001) — even if the dialogues on screen may be considered, by critics, as too reiterative or verbose (perhaps another conception of the rhetoric of excess not yet fully understood or accepted by critics). Permeated by an "excess of gesture," in the words of Martín-Barbero (1993, p. 116), melodramatic narratives reaffirm the central role of the body in this mode of staging. For the author, it is possible to perceive in the corporality a certain type of voice, text and tone that were commonly suppressed by the dominant, oppressive classes and holders of a "way of knowing" understood as unique and monologic.

> Perhaps the emphasis on effects that we see in the melodramatic gestures is historically linked less to the tearful comedies [*comédie larmoyante*] than to the prohibition of the spoken dialogue in the popular performances, and the corresponding need for excessive

[1] The quotes from Portuguese, Spanish, and French references were translated into English by the author of this article.

> gestures. Here we find an emotional expressiveness in a culture [that] was not able to be 'educated' by the bourgeois patrons. (Martín-Barbero, 1993, p. 115-116).

Alongside Martín-Barbero's (1993) assertion, Huppes (2000, p. 11) states that "Melodrama languishes, but catches its breath with the emergence of modern varieties of popular entertainment. The mass media, especially cinema and television, provide it with a stimulating habitat." As it is considered "one of the most important aesthetic creations of the 19th century" according to Huppes (2000, p. 10), it is necessary to emphasize how adaptable, renewable, and permeable the melodramatic cultural matrix is, especially because even today melodrama can be recognized in the daily lives of millions of Latin Americans who consume television fiction. There are many reasons that could account for why melodrama has never been extinguished over the centuries. However, for Huppes (2000) melodramatic narrative procedures play a fundamental role in this process of permanence of the genre. Through the "scenic exuberance and the explicit artificiality of the plot and, mainly, the clarity of objectives as to the reaction that the structure of the work should produce in the spectator," melodrama reinvents itself daily amidst the "new social circumstances" that surround it (Huppes, 2000, p. 11).

This article intends to highlight the threshold zones through which melodramatic images enter the narrative of the Brazilian miniseries "Amorteamo" (Rede Globo). The main objective is to identify the reinforced continuities and the rupture attempts that are established in the melodramatic prototypes of the prostitute and the wife from a multimethod perspective. While serving as boundaries indicating the forbidden or uncouth on screen, the images of prostitutes and wives are permeated by contradictions that range from the reinforcement of representational continuities (long used in television melodrama) to attempts to rupture with these same aesthetic patterns of narrative composition.

EMPIRICAL OBJECT: THE MINISERIES FORMAT IN BRAZILIAN TELEVISION

Regarding the specificities of the empirical object, according to Balogh (2004), the Brazilian miniseries format can be considered "*la crème de la crème*" of national TV fiction. Even if it does not attract the same audience as the traditional telenovela — since the miniseries audience, traditionally, is considered more "demanding" — the idea exists that this format works with a high level of creative experimentation. In terms of quality in television productions, Muanis (2015) fleshes out the concept by discussing primary, secondary, and tertiary texts in television according to Fiske (1987). Following Muanis' (2015) discu-

ssion, "Amorteamo" can be understood as a product of stylistic innovation in Brazilian television. Its qualitative nature extends beyond the primary text (the storyline itself) and resonates in the secondary texts (promotional materials or direct references to the seminal work) and tertiary texts (mediations created by the potential of the work to foster audience dialogue, imaginative construction, and active cultural consumption). Therefore, the contextual aspects involved in the processes of meaning production reverberate in the miniseries and contribute to its formation as a "high-quality television work" with more sophisticated television grammar. On that account, the epithet "*la crème de la crème*" is not gratuitous.

To the above-average aesthetic standard another very relevant factor is added: the "poetic enclosure" of the text (Balogh, 2004, p. 99). By this term we understand that miniseries are not open works, but, unlike telenovelas, they have a predetermined plot that allows incursions by national and international literary texts, the creation of universes that, while small in relation to the number of cores, are very rich in the construction of dialogue, costumes, scenery, dramatic situations, and musical production, among other elements. Following a consonant path, Mungioli (2006) states that:

> In terms of treatment of the narrative elements, the closure of the text also allows the director an aesthetic treatment and a more refined thematic finish, since he is not dealing with a text under construction. The indissoluble relationship that exists in every work of art between form and content can thus be seen. (Mungioli, 2006, p. 106)

Brennan (2012, p. 544), also using the Brazilian cultural context to discuss this matter, explains that even though miniseries may have contact zones with telenovelas and soap operas "by placing a close-knit (or sometimes vast) group of characters in dramatic situations that often reflect timely social themes or events," they are still observably sui generis:

> Particular to the mini-series, however, is the way in which the form immerses its core nexus of intimate contacts and relationships into a larger political or historical context, the latter often buttressed by "real" figures and "actual" events. This can help viewers of the mini-series to make sense of political and social histories through the familiarity of the intimate and domestic. (Brennan, 2012, p. 544)

Being part of this creative scenario, the miniseries "Amorteamo" was aired from May 8 to June 5, 2015, on Fridays at 11:30 pm, in five episodes with an average duration of 45 minutes each. Produced by Rede Globo, the work was created by Cláudio Paiva, Guel Arraes and Newton Moreno, written by Cláudia Gomes, Julia Spadaccini and Newton Moreno, and directed by Flávia Lacerda. In the narrative field, this television fiction fits into what Buxton (2010) and Jost (2012) call, respectively, a "*feuilleton*-ish" series and the "*feuilletonisation*" of

narratives, since the logics of production, distribution, and exhibition of the work followed a sinusoidal structure (i.e., a narrative work that develops its storyline by tension, denouement, new tension, new denouement, and so on) and uses the classic feuilleton strategy of the cliffhanger to capture the viewer for the next chapters.

Thus, two love triangles structure the storyline of "Amorteamo," set in the late 19th and early 20th century in the city of Recife (Pernambuco, in the Northeast region of Brazil). The first love triangle is formed by Colonel Aragão (Jackson Antunes), his wife Arlinda (Letícia Sabatella), and her lover Chico (Daniel de Oliveira). The second love triangle is formed by the youngsters Malvina (Marina Ruy Barbosa), Lena (Arianne Botelho), and Gabriel (Johnny Massaro) – the latter, Arlinda's son from her extramarital relationship with Chico, but raised as the "legitimate" son of Aragão.

In parallel, other stories and characters compose the miniseries' narrative: at the bar, the gossip of Cândida (Guta Stresser) and her husband Manoel (Aramis Trindade) reveal plots and the past of the city's characters; in Dora's (Maria Luisa Mendonça) brothel, the nights of lust nuance the power relations between men and women; in the local church, Father Joaquim (Gustavo Falcão) has the difficult mission of leading a dwindling congregation after replacing Father Lauro (Gillray Coutinho) who committed suicide; and, finally, in the town cemetery, Zé Coveiro (Tonico Pereira) works as a gravedigger and serves as a bridge between the natural and the supernatural worlds. With all of these characters and stories, "Amorteamo" is a melodrama that addresses how romantic disputes between two love triangles provoke, in an unusual way, the return of the undead to a provincial society.[2]

The issue of the living dead in the narrative of "Amorteamo" gives rise to a two-way dialogue between national and international productions on this theme (Silva, 2021). The Brazilian tradition of working with this thematic representation was already visible in the miniseries "Incidente em Antares"[3] (created by Charles Peixoto and Nelson Nadotti and directed by Carlos Manga and Paulo José), which aired from November 29 to December 16, 1994, on Rede Globo. The story of "Incidente em Antares" tells what happened on the curious day of December 11, 1963, in which seven people from different social classes die on a single day in the town of Antares. When the town's gravediggers go on strike,

[2] For more information about the plot of "Amorteamo," its characters, screenwriters, direction, context of audience and critical reception, visit: https://memoriaglobo.globo.com/entretenimento/series/amorteamo/.

[3] The work is an adaptation of the book of the same name written by Brazilian author Erico Verissimo in 1971.

the deceased start wandering around, searching for the intimacy of relatives and friends. "Amorteamo" also dialogues with international series from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Australia[4] that address the issue of the undead through a path characterized by García Martínez (2016) and Silva (2021) as a process of "sentimentalization," that is, the representation of undead/zombie figures as sentient beings, humanized and capable of creating conflicts based on dramatic, amorous, or nostalgic situations in their relationships with the living and other undead.

Cultural Context: The Importance of the City of Recife in the Series

Among the influences on the cultural context that permeated the production of "Amorteamo" it is necessary to highlight the importance of the "*causos*" (popular oral stories) that have long populated the imaginary of the Northeastern region of Brazil. According to Newton Moreno, one of the creators of the work: "'Amorteamo' has a genesis in and is based on the legends from Pernambuco that are very present in Recife," (JC Online, 2015a). In addition to the influence of an aura of mystery and supernatural coming from the legends, the plot of the miniseries is also influenced by the work "Assombrações do Recife Velho" from 1955, written by Brazilian sociologist and anthropologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987). Moreno adapted this book into a homonymous play in 2005. Freyre's book[5] and Moreno's play were equally important in the inspiration and creation of the fantastic universe of "Amorteamo" (JC Online, 2015b).

On the cultural crossings, Moreno states that "Recife is the protagonist of the story. The city, the bridges, the townhouses — everything is considered. Recife is a character, I would say. The sonority, the accent, and the prosody are present, which bring in a little of this sensory universe," (JC Online, 2015a). Thus, in a country where oral culture is still a constant mark of social relations

[4] Among the works that featured full seasons or even those that only had their pilot aired, one can mention: "Babylon Fields" (2007, CBS), "Awakening" (2011, CW), "Les Revenants" (2012-2015, Canal Plus), "In the Flesh" (2013-2014, BBC3), "Resurrection" (2014-2015, ABC), "The Returned" (2015), "iZombie" (2015-2019, CW), "Glitch" (2015, ABC), "Santa Clarita Diet" (2017-2019, Netflix), and "Sea Oak" (2017, Amazon).

[5] As to this kind of inspiration or even semiotic exchanges between books and miniseries in the Brazilian cultural context, it is beneficial to revisit the work of Mungioli (2006, p. 95) when she states that "Much of the relationship between literature and television occurs within the immense intertextuality upon which contemporary societies are founded."

and cultural exchange processes, it is not surprising to see the strength and presence of teledramas in the daily lives of thousands of people narrating not only fictional accounts, but also being part of what can be considered a "narrative of the nation" (Lopes, 2003).

Regarding the role of cities in television fiction, Brunsdon (2018) highlights the tendency of serialized fictional narratives to undervalue cinematic cities. The televisual city is often mundane and repetitive, serving as a mere backdrop for character conversations. However, Brunsdon argues that analyzing these seemingly ordinary depictions can provide valuable insights and historical perspectives. Billingham (2000) shares a similar perspective, emphasizing the importance of cities in televisual contexts. By deconstructing character development and narrative structures, the author reveals a "sense of the city" where urban politics and identity intersect. This approach uncovers specific ideological anxieties related to the city and its impact on the characters, highlighting the interdependence of urban life and personal identity.

Recife's cultural importance in "Amorteamo" goes beyond its portrayal as a televisual city, as discussed by Brunsdon (2018), and extends to shaping the characters' actions and personalities, aligning with Billingham's (2000) concept of a "sense of the city." Recife not only reflects the historical dominance of elitist agrarian colonels who have long exerted control over the city, but also portrays the marginalized nightlife space inhabited by prostitutes, wherein pleasure is laced with moral hypocrisy. This emphasizes that televisual cities should be acknowledged as more than secondary elements, prompting further investigation by scholars like McNutt (2017), Fernandes (2015), and Castellano and Meimaridis (2017). Their research reveals how cities dynamically shape narrative arcs, character development, and thematic exploration in audiovisual productions. Analyzing the interplay between cities and narratives enhances our understanding of Recife as an active agent deeply intertwined with the storyline, motivations, and complexity of "Amorteamo's" characters.

Literature Review: Studies on the Representations of Wives and Prostitutes in Brazilian Television Fiction

When it comes to examining gender in Brazilian television fiction, several contemporary studies shed light on the portrayal of women and the complex dynamics surrounding their representation. Notably, Abrão (2020), Bernardino (2012), Mauro (2019) and L. L. F. Rocha (2016) provide relevant insights into

this topic in their doctoral dissertations. Bernardino and L. L. F. Rocha, in a perspective that explores the constitution of villainous characters, discuss how these figures are constructed in the narratives of authors such as Sílvio de Abreu, Aguinaldo Silva, and Gilberto Braga. Mauro explores the concept of the Brazilian "popular woman" in the works of João Emanuel Carneiro, and Abrão delves into the representation of women in the "discursive everydayness" of TV fiction, focusing on the works of Glória Perez.

In terms of the representation of wives in Brazilian television fiction, the studies by Limeira et al. (2022), Moretzsohn (2004), Sifuentes and Ronsini (2011), Reis and de Oliveira (2018), and Trotta (2011) stand out. These articles debate popular works like "Memorial de Maria Moura" (1994), "Caminho das Índias" (2009), "Novo Mundo" (2017), "Um Lugar ao Sol" (2021), and "Pantanal" (2022) from various theoretical and methodological perspectives, covering aspects from textual analysis to reception. The authors provide valuable examinations of the multifaceted roles, complex narratives, and intricate social dynamics that shape the experiences of wives in fictional contexts. Their discussions shed light on the cultural, historical, and gendered dimensions that inform the representation of wives, unraveling the nuances of their agency, resilience, and challenges in the face of arbitrary expectations. Furthermore, these studies offer a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between the characters' personal journeys and broader social structures, revealing how the portrayal of wives reflects and influences attitudes, power dynamics, and evolving notions of femininity in Brazilian society.

Similarly, studies by Duarte (2008), Johnson and Ribeiro (2014), Martins (2014), Nascimento (2017), and Oliveira (2018) delve into the depiction of prostitutes in Brazilian television fiction. Their articles highlight how melodrama serves as the foundational basis for constructing this specific character type, which holds significant importance in renowned national works such as "Gabriela" (1975), "Tereza Batista" (1992), "Laços de Família" (2000), "Paraíso Tropical" (2007), "O Negócio" (2013), and "Verdades Secretas" (2015). By examining the intricate representation of prostitutes, the authors explore their roles as agents of desire, victims of societal constraints, and catalysts for moral conflicts. They analyze how these characters navigate love, survival, and stigmatization within patriarchal spaces characterized by moralism and hypocrisy. These articles contribute to broader discussions on gender, sexuality, and inequality, prompting critical reflections on the complex relationship between popular culture and the norms of a male-dominated society.

A common intersection point in several studies, regardless of the year they were conducted or the empirical object studied, is the utilization of Oroz (1992) as a primary author or a correlated reference, often in conjunction with other authors, when the topic is the study of gender representations in melodrama. This reinforces the significance and relevance of Oroz's thinking in Brazilian research on the subject. Even though her ideas may be criticized (Baltar, 2007),[6] her pioneering role in the field and the continuity of her ideas in Latin American academia are undeniable.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE FEMALE PROTOTYPES IN LATIN AMERICAN MELODRAMA

In the context of Latin American melodrama, Oroz (1992, p. 50) contributes to this scenario by defining four main paradigmatic themes of the genre, based on the possible combinations of the myths coming from Judeo-Christian culture interpreted on the continent: love, passion, incest, and woman. For the author, the basis of these four themes is justified because she sees prohibition (of unrequited love, impossible passion, or the incest taboo, for example) as a way of normalizing and guiding morality in social relations between men and, especially, women. Oroz also points out that the presence of the woman in these paradigmatic themes is due to the existence of a hegemonic sexism synthesized in the intersection of "erotic privileges", which "reside in the fact that a man's erotic prestige leads to Don Juan, and a woman's to the lost. In the first case there is prestige, in the second, disqualification," (Oroz, 1992, p. 71). Accordingly, she proposes to think of the female prototypes[7] that would understand the roles of

[6] Baltar's criticism (2007, p. 128) pertains to Oroz's (1992) thinking, which could lead to conclusions or interpretations of an immutability of melodrama due to the persistence of universal archetypes. Thus, even though Oroz's reading is utilized in this study, it is emphasized that the theoretical and methodological tension presented here considers these prototypes as subject to change, redefinition, and increased complexity in conjunction with societal developments and movements (progressive or otherwise) that examine women and their place in the social fabric through melodrama.

[7] Throughout her work, Oroz (1992) does not seek to make an epistemological distinction regarding the potential difference (if it exists and what it would be) between the conceptions of "protótipo" (prototype) and "arquétipo" (archetype). During her discussions, especially in Chapter 3, "Os 'fílmes para chorar': o melodrama cinematográfico," the author uses the terms interchangeably and synonymously. Although she mentions authors such as Levi-Strauss and Jung when discussing these two terms, for example, there is no conceptual division separating the two words in the author's vocabulary. Even in the translation of her work into the Spanish language, titled "Melodrama. El Cine de Lagrimas de América Latina" (1995), a comparison between the two versions reveals that the terms continue to be used interchangeably. This includes the translation of "protótipo" as

women in melodrama in six manifestations: the mother, the sister, the girlfriend, the wife, the prostitute (also named "the evil one"), and the beloved. Although Oroz's discussion focuses on the cinematic field, for explanatory purposes, only the prototypes of the wife and prostitute will be discussed and relocated here under the gaze of melodramatic television images.

This is why, first of all, it is necessary to situate that these prototypes act, to a great extent, by an intimate relationship between gender roles and the idea of romantic love. Here such a link gains peculiar contours by the counterposition between idealistic romanticism and amorous confluence, as Giddens (1992) conceptualizes them:

> Romantic love, which began to make its presence felt from the late eighteenth century onwards, drew upon such ideals and incorporated elements of amour passion, while nevertheless becoming distinct from both. Romantic love introduced the idea of a narrative into an individual's life – a formula which radically extended the reflexivity of sublime love. (p. 39)

Romantic love is intimately connected to a type of social place predetermined for women and, even more, for "[...]the created image of a pure woman, a wife/mother, which impregnated the ideals of romantic love [...] Motherhood and femininity were integrated and became part of the woman's personality," (Bilac, 2012, p. 95). Confluent love, on the other hand, centers *ars erotica*, that is, the ability to make reciprocal sexual pleasure the main point in the maintenance or dissolution of the marital relationship (Giddens, 1992, p. 62). In other words, confluent love is "[...] more real than romantic love, because it is an active love that is not based on projective identifications, fantasies of completeness, the idea of only and forever" (Bilac, 2012, p. 98). However, the moments in which it is possible to perceive confluent love in some of the prototypes presented by Oroz (1992) are rare (or even non-existent)—the presence of romantic love not only feeds the conformation of her prototypes, but also enables the maintenance, resignifications and persistence of these prototypes that are still consumed in contemporary melodramas today.

The prototype of the wife is linked to the mother, because, again, in a sexist view, it is her responsibility to take care of and preserve her home, a private space and a kind of confinement. Patience, understanding, fragility, economic dependence in the marital relationship, submission to the husband, dedication to

"arquetipo" in the Spanish edition, even when the term "arquétipo" is preferably indicated instead of "prototipo" in the Brazilian edition within the exact excerpt. However, since the author uses the term "protótipo" (prototype) when referring to the six possible characterizations of femininity in melodrama, this article continues using this terminology when discussing the subject.

the family nucleus, and fear of the authority that comes from the man are terms that stand out in the characterization of this prototype. According to Oroz, this prototype can be shown in two possible ways: the juvenile-wife and the responsible-wife. However, the common point in both cases is that their amorous past is marked by the love from one man: "They are dramatically passive roles, which do not change the story. This is why they are most often secondary characters," (Oroz, 1992, p. 66).

The prostitute (or the "evil one") is the most complex and detailed prototype delineated by Oroz. The author starts by pointing out that this prototype is the reason for the unbalance in any dramatic structure, "since, unlike the other prototypes, she is the one who symbolizes the woman outside the private space," (Oroz, 1992, p. 63). She is seen as bad and dangerous precisely because she dares to "invade" spaces that are not prescribed for the female figure. It is interesting to note that the prostitute is judged as wrong and lacking values, but simultaneously seen as a "necessary evil." This double standard of judgment happens because, instead of the chaste virgins and unmarried girls (and married women as well) getting led astray by men's insatiable sexual desire, this function is assigned to the prostitutes. They are defined as evil not only for their view of morality and breaking of "good manners," but also because they can take revenge on those who cross their path (prostitutes' supposed connections with the devil and occult forces can also be seen here). The prostitute is vengeful, bold, rebellious, hated, feared, desired. She defies orders.

In a path close to that of Oroz (1992), Cassano Iturri (2019) presents a similar discussion on gender and television melodrama outlining four possible female models: the *mariano*,[8] the maternal, the seductress, and the prostitute. According Cassano Iturri (2019, p. 86), the first model, the *mariano*, "[...] supposes a female superiority that becomes an object of worship, transforming women into beings close to divinity, morally superior and with a spiritual strength that distinguishes them from men." The maternal model, in turn, is subdivided into three-possible readings: the *mariana* mother (who "[...] shares the characteristics of the *mariano* model [...]"), the heroic mother (who "[...] is supported by the idea that the feminine essence resides in motherhood. This model represents the struggling mother, the tireless worker. She is a multidimensional woman who obtains domestic claims.") and the modern mother (who "[...] is a wife and mother, but she

[8] *Mariano* (also, *mariana*) is an adjective connected to Virgin Mary's characteristics and qualifications.

is also a professional, she is a person who has her own goals"). In contrast, the seductress concerns the "[...] woman who exercises her sexuality at will, is defined by being aware of the power that gives her sexuality. It is a model associated with physical beauty, flirting, awareness of her body, her sensuality, and the power that these elements give her to seduce men," (Cassano Iturri, 2019, p. 87). Ultimately, the model of the prostitute is tied to sin, as the prostitute's body and sexuality are possible means of negotiation. "It represents the danger of sexuality, it usually occupies a marginal place. The image of the prostitute is always the reference for the sanctioned, it functions as the border marking good and bad female behavior," states Cassano Iturri (2019, p. 88).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES: THE MULTIMETHOD PERSPECTIVE

The investigation of "Amorteamo" used a multimethod perspective. A multimethod perspective in television fiction analysis refers to an approach that combines various methods and analytical frameworks from different disciplines to examine audiovisual productions and gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and subtleties of narratives, characters, themes, and stylistic elements. This approach allows for a more holistic and nuanced examination of television narratives, taking into account their textual, visual, and contextual elements. Therefore, it involves analyzing the following aspects:

I. The descriptive and analytical dimensions of "Amorteamo" (derived from television stylistic studies) as discussed by Butler (2010) and S. M. Rocha (2016): According to Butler and S. M. Rocha, the descriptive and analytical (also known as interpretative) dimensions are essential for understanding television style. They contribute to our comprehension of the perceptible surface of audiovisual materiality. In addition to the two aforementioned dimensions, Butler also presents the evaluative dimension as a possibility. However, in this work, the evaluative dimension is not included because "[...] there are still no systematically defined aesthetic norms that can guide television evaluation," (S. M. Rocha, 2016, p. 34).

II. The television verbal-visual aesthetic dimensions in the miniseries (procedures adapted from the Analysis of Moving Images method created by Rose [2000]): Focusing specifically on the field of television audiovisuality, the Analysis of Moving Images method was developed by Rose through a qualitative perspective. Within this method, the British author emphasizes the importance of considering the verbal-visual aesthetic

> dimensions (referred to here as "visuality and sonority") as significant parts of the language elements of television messages and codes. In other words, beyond the context of application for television (the Brazilian scenario rather than the British one), it is also necessary to reposition Rose's (2000) ideas through the understanding that "audiovisual media are a complex amalgam of meanings, images, techniques, shot framing, shot sequence, and much more. It is therefore imperative to take this complexity into account when analyzing its content and structure," (p. 246).

Secondarily, the analysis of the miniseries' narrative structure adopts a narratological perspective within a post-structuralist framework, incorporating insights from authors such as Balogh (2002), Borkosky (2016), Jost (2016), and Reuter (2007) on the role of television diegesis and fictional articulators. These discussions are conducted in parallel with the interpretative and analytical dimensions, with a particular focus on the verbal-visual aspects. The authors explore concepts such as time, space, tone, rhythm, and referentiality, among others, to deepen the understanding of the miniseries' storytelling.

The analytical context focused on three main aspects: (1) the opening credits, (2) twelve central characters in the plot, and (3) seven scenes that emphasized excess in terms of content, representation structure, and themes. Furthermore, two secondary analyses were conducted: (4) examining internal dialogues and intertexts, and (5) exploring external dialogues and the sentimentalization process of the undead in relation to other works.

However, for the purposes of this article, this discussion focuses on three characters (Dora, Lena, and Arlinda) and on two scenes (in the last episode of the series). The analysis will center on these characters, highlighting their roles and characteristics in relation to the melodramatic elements portrayed in "Amorteamo" and examining how they serve as a form of empirical operationalization for the melodramatic images of the prostitute and the wife.

ANALYSIS I: THE PUNISHMENTS FOR THE PASSIONATE PROSTITUTE: REINFORCED CONTINUITIES

Context of the scene (descriptive dimension)

After the happiness of finding Chico again in her brothel, now as an undead person, Dora discovers that the dubious character of her former lover is still the same: she catches him in bed with another prostitute named Maria (who is a kind of goddaughter to Dora). Irritated, she slaps Maria who nervously reminds her of the first rule at the brothel: "Whores don't fall in love." Disillusioned, Dora argues with Chico, but he turns the question of betrayal back on her when he brings up what she did in the past—it was Dora who told Colonel Aragão about his wife Arlinda's extramarital affair with Chico. As the narrative shows, Chico was murdered by the Colonel at the exact moment he was in bed with Arlinda.

Bewildered by the discovered secret and the feeling of not being the only woman in Chico's life, Dora tries to stab Chico, ignoring the fact that the man had already died and returned from the dead, and therefore can no longer be killed. While he cackles maliciously, she screams in despair. Later, Maria is preparing to leave the brothel, and as she is saying goodbye to Dora, she discovers that her godmother-friend, after combing her hair in front of the mirror in her sumptuous room, has slit both her wrists in an act of hopelessness (Figure 1).

As Dora agonizes in her last minutes of life in the arms of the other harlot, she remembers how much she loved Chico and how lonely she now feels, abandoned and punished for having loved so much. Eventually her crying stops, she collapses, and an immense pool of blood seeps out through her long dress and around her inert body.

FIGURE 1. DORA'S SUICIDE

Note: Frame from "Amorteamo" © Rede Globo, 2015.

Visuality and sonority (verbal-visual aesthetic dimensions)

The fields of visualities and sonorities in this scene are a singular space for discussion out of the entire work of "Amorteamo." One of these reasons is that Dora's brothel (the only place where the color red appears in the sets and costumes of the work) and even her depiction are by far the greatest examples of excess as represented content. The room where the prostitute's suicide takes place is very reminiscent of the space of excess in which there is a love for exaggeration, for the "too much."

From this point of view, the prostitute's room is the space of excess as content by the exuberance of red in all corners of the place, the red roses arranged on the dressing table, the fluttering curtains, the crimson walls, the many pillows spread at the foot of the bed, the statues of two crouching lions inside the room, the heart-shaped bed, the layers of gaudy jewelry on her body, etc. That synthesizes – metonymically – the excess present in the representation structure of the character and of the analyzed scene.

In addition to the "*Altas Madrugadas*" (Late Nights) music that pervades various cores and situations of the plot, as in the analyzed sequence, the sound includes a sound effect when Dora slits her wrists that demonstrates what Williams (2018) understands as an excess as a potential quality in the pulverization of melodramatic modes. The intentionally unnatural noise of the slash emphasizes the *pathos* of the scenic sequence of the suicide, whereas the noise of Dora stabbing Chico moments before enhances not only the *pathos* (of her suffering) but also the inherently comic sensation that follows from Chico's debauched laughter when he states that one cannot be "killed twice."

Dora's cry of despair, when she realizes the impossibility of killing Chico (again), in parallel with the choked crying and the tears that, though repressed, insist on falling at the moment of her suicide, highlight, finally, how the pervasive excess operates in very different ways. That is, the pulverizing and modular character of excess is in the understanding of melodrama as a fluid way of constructing pain, laughter, pleasure, and sadness, in short, the human possibilities of reacting to the multiple phases of life (dramatized by fiction). Therefore, excess cannot merely be seen as a pejorative element or demerit in the consumption of melodramatic plots.

Discussion on the prototype of the prostitute (analytical dimension)

Even in the most superficially perceptible aspect of the plot, the prototype of the prostitute stands out in the context of melodrama and excess as being developed by the idea of a binomial of inferiority and dangerousness. Thus, she is a prototype, as Oroz (1992) notes, inferior in relation to the virtue of the other bodies that are part of the melodramatic narratives. But she is also dangerous because she defies the patriarchal standards of society. More than that, the prostitute is seen as malevolent because she develops the skill of seduction and mastery over her own body like no one else. She is dangerous, from another point of view, because when she is challenged or hurt, she does not think twice before taking revenge to appease her annoyance. In the plot, it is exactly the desire for revenge that motivates Dora to report Chico to Colonel Aragão.

Through the melodramatic worldview, it becomes very clear how her death, beyond her guilt, is seen as a redemption: self-punishment, by suicide, is a kind of renunciation of the life and the man she will never have. Moreover, her death represents, through exacerbated symbolization, the notion that even the prostitute suffers for giving herself over to passion (Baltar, 2007). However, unlike virtuous loved ones such as wives and sisters (Oroz, 1992), harlots are not granted the same right to fall in love, even though their profession is symbiotically linked to desire and sin. Sentimental education again operates alongside morality by punishing Dora and making it evident that the example of her life is not acceptable. It is worth remembering that the prostitute made Arlinda's life a living hell when her husband, Colonel Aragão, forced her to stay in the brothel. That is, the morally wrong actions, in the final moment of the narrative, turn against Dora and demand punishment for her iniquity. Therefore, as Sarlo (1985, p. 11) states, in melodramatic representation regimes "[...] when desires oppose the social order, the solution may be exemplary: death or the fall." Dora is a reinforced continuity of melodramatic images about prostitutes, their fates, and their punishments.

Chappell and Young (2017) discuss that the representation of strong female figures combined with the idea of transgressive women is, especially in Western audiovisual culture, an almost immediate correlation. The reason for such an association, according to them, is that these female representations (in which the prototype of the prostitute can also be included) embody the woman who defies, ignores, or goes beyond patriarchal boundaries intentionally made to circumscribe her to certain spaces and situations allowed by society (Chappell

and Young, 2017, p. 1). It is also possible to see that Dora's choices during her dramatic arc (as is the case of her "snitching" on Chico to the Colonel, motivated by her jealousy of the bon vivant) lead her to an invariably melodramatic fate:

> The inauspicious outcome reserved for these originally good characters is related, therefore, to the unbridled passion. They seal their fate when they move to the negative pole, dragged by sentimental impulse. They will find punishment instead of happiness. If they do not have time to repent and make amends for the evil done, they will be subject to the same reproach that falls on the genuinely evil ones. (Huppes, 2000, p. 115–116)

The character of Dora fits in this reading proposed by Oroz and Cassano Iturri, mainly because of the ambiguity predominant in the representation of "bad women" who are simultaneously seen as strong, dangerous and powerful, but also sexually attractive and fetishized so as not to disturb the social status quo in which they are located. Still, in the model of seduction and the model of prostitute that make up the character Dora, it is worth pointing out how, before anything else, sex appears as a transgressive element in her composition: "[...] Sex is a dangerous force. [...] The antagonist is the woman who personifies this depravity, she is the character who freely exercises her sexuality," recalls Cassano Iturri (2019, p. 88).

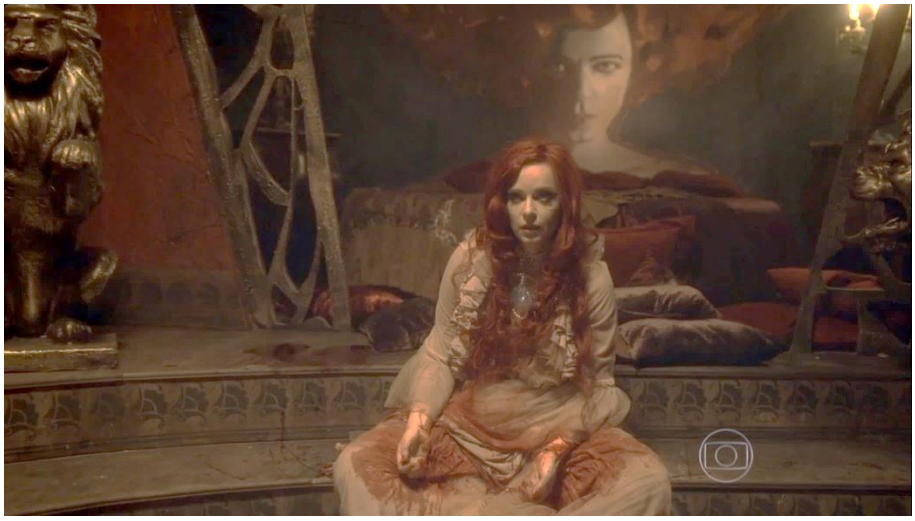
To perceive the referentialities evoked in the scene, it is necessary to stress how the references to Judeo-Christian morality (which compose, in large part, Latin American society's understanding of prostitution) are employed in the dialogue and in the performance of the bodies on the screen. The first quotation referencing that (literally and explicitly) is said by Maria who, upon realizing that Dora had cut her wrists, panics and cries out, "My God.... For the love of Mary Magdalene, what have you done?" Besides the reference to the famous prostitute forgiven by Christ, another allusive reference (in a non-literal and implicit way) is made at the end of the scene: while Dora takes her last breaths, blood drips down the room, and her body lies in Maria's lap, who, crying, speaks a phrase of rare sorority in the plot: "Well, go in peace, Godmother, because you have always had my love." And so, in a position reminiscent of Michelangelo's "Pietà," the two prostitutes take center stage in a *plongée* shot. Therefore, it is expected that the audience seeing the end of Dora's life, at the same time that they feel the music elevating their emotions, will be able to sympathize and "forgive" (or at least, understand) the prostitute and her actions (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. DORA AND MARIA, THE PROSTITUTES

Note. Frame from "Amorteamo" © Rede Globo, 2015.

Under such understanding, combined with the issue of breaking the basic principle that governs the dynamics of a harlot's life (not falling in love with anyone), Dora remembers the past, her failures and, in an unburdened tone, speaks to Maria: "My time has come, Maria. [...] Yes, whores do fall in love. And when this happens, she gathers all the love she pretended to have for all the men she lay in bed with and dedicates it to just one. But I have killed my love... and now I will die for it. Chico was my only one, and now he will be my last." This, in itself, is the greatest example of excess as thematization and, at the same time, as structure of representation in the scene under analysis. The contrast between the huge image seen at the bottom of the screen (something close to a self-portrait fresco) versus the image of Dora dying at Maria's feet is something to be highlighted. While the painting of the room shows her as a prostitute with a strong, haughty, and threatening look (with her red hair done up in an extremely voluminous hairstyle); the image shown now is that of a common, ordinary woman, with a sad look, who suffered too much for love and, giving up on life, inconsolable, finds her shelter in death (Figure 3). Even her voice and the rhythm of speech are atypical: she speaks in a paused, almost whispering tone and moves about the room in a staggering gait. This situation is something very different from the firm tone of voice and erect body that she always imposed in front of the other prostitutes and her clients.

FIGURE 3. DORA AND HER SELF-PORTRAIT FRESCO



Note. Frame from "Amorteamo" © Rede Globo, 2015.

No matter how much the prostitute showed herself to be an extraordinary woman throughout all the five episodes of the miniseries, in the end, the moralizing principle comes back to punish her. In other words, her transgression is not perennial. It returns to the status quo (also by the melodramatic cosmovision) that virtue rules by morality and the unruly are punished (in this case, death, unrequited love, and the depraved lifestyle that brings about their final doom). Rolling her eyes, now no longer from pleasure but from pain, sadness and guilt, Dora laments in her last breath of life: "I am very sad that I don't have someone to cry over my death because I am not loved by anyone."

ANALYSIS II: "THE WIFE, THE MARRIAGE, AND THE HAPPY ENDING..." OR NOT? – RUPTURE ATTEMPTS

Context of the scene (descriptive dimension)

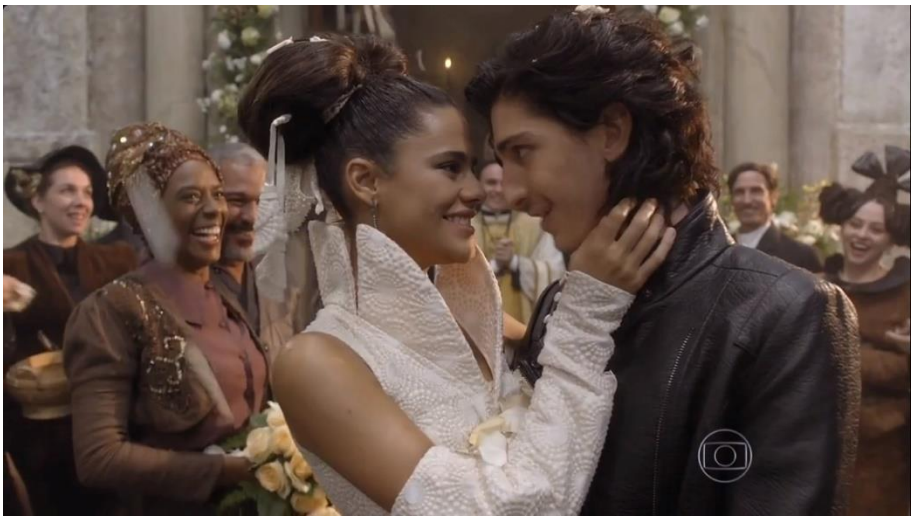
After Malvina, the corpse-bride character, is buried (for the third and last time) in the story of the miniseries, all the undead make a procession to the cemetery and to their graves. Finally, everything returns to normal and Gabriel and Lena's love is made concrete by their wedding that draws nearly the entire town to the church. As Huppes (2000, p. 37) states, in melodrama:

> The idealization of the beloved and the conviction that this is the only person who can bring happiness until the last day of one's life justifies the tremendous effort invested in getting closer. A closeness that, by the way, only marriage can legitimize.

In the scene, the bell rings in the church tower, announcing the wedding, and people line up to welcome the bride and groom, throwing flower petals over their heads. Gabriel and Lena exchange vows of eternal love and the scene, suddenly, cuts to the roof of Colonel's old mansion (the "*casarão*" or "*casa-grande*") on the sugarcane plantation. Then, through the gaps of broken tiles, Colonel Aragão's image appears, lying on a lonely bed in the attic, looking apparently lost. However, when the camera zooms in, it is possible to see that he is looking at a photograph of his marriage to Arlinda (at this point in the narrative she is already dead from Chico's misdirected gunshot, which was intended for the colonel).

The photograph comes to life and the viewer is taken, through a flashback, to Aragão and Arlinda's wedding day. As in an adapted repetition, the smiles and joy of Gabriel and Lena (Figure 4) seem to be the same characteristics that also stand out on the faces and bodies of the colonel and his wife.

FIGURE 4. LENA AND GABRIEL'S WEDDING



Note. Frame from "Amorteamo" © Rede Globo, 2015.

In this flashback, Aragão kisses his beloved and the two effusively promise to be happy ever after – something that, as it was seen, turned into a relationship marked by pain, tragedy, and betrayal. The image moves away from the festivities and again shows the church tower echoing with the ringing of the bell (this time, in a sinister way) but suddenly the sky abruptly darkens. Amidst

lightning and thunder, the day turns into a frightening night and the word "*Fim*" ("The End") is drawn on the screen with the same typography and color as the name "Amorteamo" appears in the opening credits. This is how the miniseries theatrically ends.

Visuality and sonority (verbal-visual aesthetic dimensions)

In the field of visualities, the presence of flowers (in the bouquet, in the arrangements that decorate the church, and in the petals that are thrown over the newlyweds) is another possible reading that attests to the fragility of romantic love (Giddens, 1992) expressed in melodramas. Perenniality is non-existent in this romanticized love. Just as a flower withers, loses its vivacity and eventually decays, so, too, the promises of love are heading towards an inescapable finitude. It is no coincidence that flowers are part of the whole plot of the miniseries (from its opening credits to its final scene) as a reminder that the beauty, youth and lightness of Lena and Gabriel's love can turn into bitterness, sadness and desolation of a putrefying love such as that experienced by Arlinda and Aragão. In a unique way, the scene of Arlinda and Lena as wives contests Williams's (2018, p. 216) explanation that a melodrama will end in the happiness of marriage and eternal love. In "Amorteamo" there is a clear rupture attempt from the traditional "happy ending."

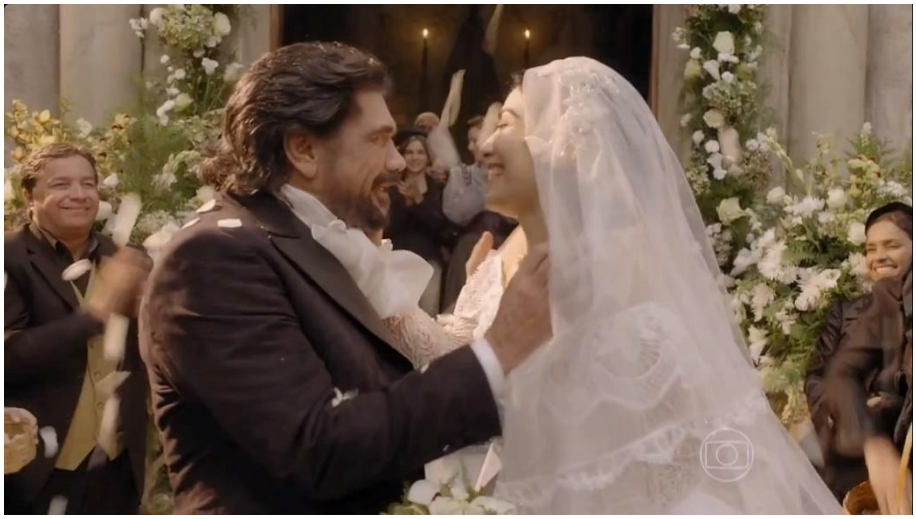
In the field of sonorities, in turn, we must pay attention to how the ringing of the bell is reread in a very particular way in this fragment of the miniseries, from the camera tilt and the *contre-plongée* angle that open the sequence showing the church tower. As one can see in "Amorteamo," the fearful sound of the church bell was a harbinger of tragedies or hauntings that permeated the gray and gloomy Recife. Now, on the day of the young couple's wedding, the character Zefa, Lena's mother, expresses a great relief when she hears the peal of the bell, differently than before: "Since the death of Padre Lauro, this is the first time that this bell rings and my heart doesn't freak out," she says.

And yet, as we can see, the "red herrings" (Jost, 2016) of the lovers' happiness is unveiled when the images migrate to the attic where Aragon is found and the flashback of his marriage is brought to the audience. One realizes, then, that the sinister noise of the bell in the church tower had already given signs that the unusual and the strange would terrorize the city (even before the priest Lauro's suicide took place in the church itself or when the undead characters comeback). In the combination of the aesthetic dimensions of sound and visuals,

we can see how polarity is a constant mark of this process of re-reading the "happy ending." While the day of Lena and Gabriel's wedding is graced by an open and blue sky, after Aragão and Arlinda's wedding flashback, we see that the clouds close in, thunder resounds in the air, and the day becomes a darkened night where the only light is that offered by frightening lightning bolts.

The rhythm of the scene is set by the accelerated vivacity of the first wedding (Lena and Gabriel's wedding) with clapping, petals that fall on the bride and groom, and music that accompanies the bodies on screen. The rhythmic deceleration occurs through a cut that shows, as in the opening episode, the view of Recife near the roof of Aragão's old mansion: there the music is slower, the body of the dying colonel in his bed is almost inert, and the camera slowly zooms to a framed sepia photograph. The deceleration is only broken by the liveliness of the past in the Arlinda and Aragão's wedding flashback (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. ARLINDA AND ARAGÃO'S WEDDING (FLASHBACK)



Note. Frame from "Amorteamo" © Rede Globo, 2015.

Thus, we also see that the song that begins as soon as the image of a sorrowful Aragão appears on the screen is the same song that opened the first scene in the miniseries, that is, "*Farol*" (Lighthouse) performed by Juliano Holanda. This time, re-read, the verses "*Desde que você partiu, / Espero / Do jeito mais sincero / Que me é possível. / Do jeito mais visível, / Que se pode estar / Em frente*

ao mar, / Como um farol"[9] no longer recall Arlinda's longing for her lover Chico, but rather the memories of a distant love lived by Aragão and Arlinda. In a movement to close the cycle initiated by the plot, again the audience's complicit gaze accompanies what the camera has to discover in the attic. The entrance through the slender hole in the roof, together with the movement of the camera toward what Aragão seems to obsessively observe (the framed photograph) reaffirm how the audience visualizes the scene in a way that coparticipates in the drama that is exposed there.

Discussion on the prototype of the wife (analytical dimension)

First of all, it should be noted that the melodrama marriage presents an idea deeply rooted in moral and Judeo-Christian precepts. Family and religion are part of the central elements of the plot and, together with the ideal of romantic love (Giddens, 1992), corroborate the marriage of Lena and Gabriel as something uncontaminated and blessed by these two institutions (Oroz, 1992; Huppes, 2000). In the scene of the young couple's wedding, Arlinda and Aragão's marriage is also brought to mind: the same promises of love, but with a fate diametrically opposed to the promised happiness. This parallel synthesizes the duel between fate and free will as a primordial factor of the melodrama.

However, in the final scene there is an attempt of a relevant rupture in the traditional "happy ending" of television melodrama. To use the theoretical vocabulary of Brooks (1995) and Baltar (2007), the exacerbated symbolizations (the wedding flowers, the wedding itself, the first peal of the church bell, etc.), the anticipation (of the victorious ending of romanticized and pure love over villainy) and the obviousness (good wins over evil, therefore the terrain of melodrama remains untouched by the moral occult of melodramatic excess) create a "red herring" for the audience. In other words, this "red herring" makes the public think that they are watching a miniseries finale in which the wife finally realizes her greatest wedding wish and the beloved man, a hero throughout the narrative, can finally rest in the arms of the one he helped save.

In the television diegesis, as Jost (2016) states, TV fiction has the peculiarity of bringing "red herrings" to the audience that can lead to hasty conclusions (and wrong ones, like the one seen in the analysis) about the narratological directions in the melodrama. More than that, the deconstruction of this scene breaks with the continuity of the "narrative plunder" (*pilhagem narrativa*), that

[9] "Since you've been gone, / I've been waiting for you / In the most sincere way / That I can. / In the most visible way, / That someone can be / In front of the sea / Like a lighthouse."

is, when a melodramatic story borrows and uses the same strategic artifice of the "happy ending" over and over to close the knots and plots it has been building throughout the dramatic arc (Meyer, 1996, p. 165). Even the use of elements of melodramatic excess linked to the idea of obviousness (which, in theory, represents a kind of "spelling book" that teaches how the audience needs to react, in Baltar's [2007] words) becomes ambiguous.

Consequently, what is observed in this scene is the discussion about how there are not necessarily unquestionable truths embedded in the phrases "Till death do us part," said by Gabriel, or "I hope our happiness lasts forever," said by Lena. On the contrary, the thematization of the "happy ending" with an excess present in melodramatic plots is cast into doubt when the flashback demonstrates the fallibility of the very same vows of love recited by Aragon ("Till death do us part") and Arlinda ("I hope our happiness lasts forever") on their wedding day. There is an ironic sense that unmasks the idea that only death can end the lovers' lives together and, more profoundly, it even questions the whole theme of this miniseries about love being stronger after death. Thus, the role of irony in melodramatic construction comes into evidence as a relevant characteristic of expression of the contradictions intrinsic to this type of fictional story, as the works of Ang (2007) and Mercer and Shingler (2004), in other contexts, have also pointed out.

About the female prototypes in the plot, it is important to highlight how Cassano Iturri's (2019) *mariano* model does not approach either of the women in the scene (Lena and Arlinda). Both of them, with their qualities and imperfections, represent human possibilities of being a woman. Arlinda moves from Oroz's (1992) prototype of the perfect wife represented in the flashback of her marriage to, through the course of the work, being a woman who combines the models of motherhood (heroic mother) and seduction (Cassano Iturri, 2019). Even after Aragão's wrath, Arlinda (who is forced to live in Dora's brothel) transits, momentarily, through the prototype of the prostitute (as a moral definition of bad behavior, therefore deserving of scorn and punishment).

Lena, in turn, walks through the prototypes of beloved and wife (Oroz, 1992) and, by the (false) assumption of incest, also the prototype of sister. Even while being the maximum representation of the young girl who suffers during the melodramatic narrative and shows loyalty to the beloved, she does not allow herself to be framed by the *mariano* model that demands purity (and almost divinity) from the female figure. On the contrary, she sleeps with Gabriel before marriage (upon discovering that they are not siblings) and thus shares, in an ephemeral way, the model of seductress as part of the attempts to rupture the melodramatic images of the (future) wife (Cassano Iturri, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this work was to identify the prototypes of the prostitute and the wife within the context of Latin American melodrama through the analysis of the characters Dora, Lena and Arlinda in the Brazilian miniseries "Amorteamo." As a theoretical framework to structure the basic approach, the discussions of Martín-Barbero (1993) and Huppes (2000) were used to locate melodrama both in family relations and in the rhetoric of excess—elements of extreme importance in understanding how melodramatic images give life to their characters, modes of staging and, above all, the intrinsic contradictions present in the creative strategies of the fictional story.

The importance of employing a multimethod approach in analyzing audiovisual narratives, especially miniseries, is accentuated across various dimensions. Descriptive and analytical dimensions help understand television style elements, while verbal-visual aesthetic dimensions enable a comprehensive examination of language elements and codes. Adopting a narratological perspective within a post-structuralist framework deepens the understanding of storytelling by considering aspects like time, space, tone, and referentiality. Therefore, the multimethod approach applied to "Amorteamo" encompasses character and scene analyses, which focus on specific individuals and narrative moments, allowing for an exploration of their roles and significance, particularly in relation to the portrayal of melodramatic elements in Latin American productions.

For the empirical operationalization, the reflections of Oroz (1992) and Cassano Iturri (2019), primarily, were able to pave the analytical path through the prototypes and models reserved for the constitutions of the feminine, their gender roles, and the conformation of romantic love (Giddens, 1992) represented in melodramatic narratives. Thus, to understand how the prostitute and the wife are read in "Amorteamo," two scenes were highlighted among the five episodes of the work as complex and rich loci of enunciation in the constitution of the meanings that are intertwined there. To summarize the key findings:

1. As a relevant result, we emphasize that the fate reserved for the prostitute Dora reaffirms the characteristic patterns that form the prototype of the prostitute. In the melodramatic images through which the figure of Dora passes, there is a reinforced continuity that demarcates that the character's dissolute lifestyle is not only morally unacceptable, but also "deserves" a punishment that matches her transgression of moral norms. Therefore, her trajectory in the plot, her guilt, the weight of breaking the

tacit professional paradigm that "whores don't fall in love," and all the idiosyncrasies of the harlot's professional activities eventually lead her to suicide inside her own brothel—an excellent outcome of melodramatic sentimental education.

2. The representation of the prostitute archetype in melodrama often depicts a sense of inferiority and danger. Dora, as a prostitute, is portrayed as strong and sexually attractive but also morally deviant and dangerous. Her choices lead to her tragic fate, as melodrama punishes characters who succumb to unbridled passion. References to Judeo-Christian morality, such as allusions to Mary Magdalene and a Pietà-like moment between Dora and Maria, enhance her portrayal and challenge societal judgments.
3. The scene's thematic and representational structure emphasizes the portrayal of Dora's character in an exaggerated manner. The contrast between her self-portrait fresco, depicting a powerful and threatening prostitute, and her vulnerable state in her final moments accentuates the melodramatic representation of her downfall. Despite Dora's exceptional qualities, her character is ultimately depicted as deviating from "normal" gender roles, making her an unconventional and negative example.
4. Yet, at the other extreme, the final scene of Lena and Gabriel's wedding (intersected by the remembrance of Arlinda and Aragão's wedding) points to a rupture attempt from the traditional content and style of melodramatic storytelling (Martín-Barbero & Rey, 2001; Williams, 2018). In other words, the rupture with the almost crystallized pattern of the "happy ending" as a prize to a beloved wife who stayed morally close to good social manners, denotes an ironic role in the formulation of the story. As a "red herring" (Jost, 2016) that causes a jolt in hasty readings of the characters' endings, this attempted rupture materializes precisely in a miniseries that, until then, had reaffirmed melodrama as a major driving force. In the same way that Arlinda and Aragão's love vows collapsed with the bitterness of life, the freshness of the young lovers will possibly also come to an end. And so, "Amorteamo" imprints on the screen a doubt about the alleged perenniality of love and lovers, so strongly replicated in the melodramatic images of which this television fiction repeatedly made use of.
5. The miniseries challenges the conventional portrayal of marriage in melodrama, which often idealizes the institution based on moral and religious values. In the wedding scene of Lena and Gabriel, it is paralleled with the

doomed marriage of Arlinda and Aragão, exploring the theme of fate versus free will. The scene raises questions about the reliability of this melodramatic trope, introducing ambiguity and highlighting the fallibility of promises made in the context of romantic love and marriage.

6. The female characters Lena and Arlinda defy melodramatic stereotypes of wives. Arlinda evolves from the perfect wife archetype to embody the roles of a heroic mother and a seductress. Lena navigates multiple roles, challenging expectations of purity imposed by traditional models. Her actions, such as sleeping with Gabriel before marriage, aim to break free from traditional melodramatic images and challenge the conventional portrayal of the wife.

Finally, as potential paths for further investigation, four avenues can be highlighted: (a) Future analysis should focus on understanding other melodramatic female archetypes, such as the mother, sister, girlfriend, and beloved, as explained by Oroz (1992); (b) Possible discussions could explore the specificity of maternal models, as explained by Cassano Iturri (2019), aiming to comprehend the unique qualities and representations of mother figures in melodrama; (c) A perspective that examines gender issues from an intersectional standpoint would be valuable to explore showing how female representations in melodrama intersect with other factors such as race, class, and the role of the body in shaping melodramatic narratives; (d) A longitudinal analysis of the representations of wives and prostitutes in Brazilian television fiction would help us understand whether these portrayals tend to reinforce stereotypes and traditional models of representation, or they attempt to introduce ruptures to break away from the "classic formula" and present non-traditional portrayals within the melodramatic field.

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