A Textbook of Textbooks: Elements of Discourse Analysis / *Manual de manuais: Elementos de análise do discurso*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze, from a semiotic perspective, José Luiz Fiorin's book *Elementos de Análise do Discurso* [Elements of Discourse Analysis] as a "textbook of textbooks," i.e., a textbook that gathers prototypical characteristics of teaching activities in undergraduate textbooks. Besides, it establishes a way to think and to teach the semiotics of discourse in Brazil. Starting from the analysis of the texts pertaining to the publishing activity, such as the book title, its cover, and the author's presentation, I came to an inventory and an analysis of the textual segments related to teaching that were conceived by the textbook enunciator, such as theoretical exemplification and explanation. The reading suggested here seeks to put in evidence and to understand the originality and the contemporaneity of the book, which turned 26 years old in 2015 and has played a strategic education role for many generations of semioticians and discourse analysts.

KEYWORDS: Textbook; Practices; Didactics; Semiotics of Discourse; José Luiz Fiorin

RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar semioticamente a obra Elementos de análise do discurso*, de José Luiz Fiorin, como um "manual de manuais", isto é, um manual didático que reúne características prototípicas da prática didática de manuais universitários e que marcou um modo de pensar e ensinar a semiótica discursiva no Brasil. Partindo da análise de textos integrados à prática editorial, como o título da obra, sua capa e a apresentação do autor, chegou-se ao inventário e à análise dos segmentos textuais concebidos pelo enunciador do manual no âmbito da prática didática, como a exemplificação e a explicação teóricas. A leitura aqui proposta busca colocar em evidência e compreender a originalidade e a atualidade dessa obra que completou 26 anos em 2015 e que desempenhou um papel estratégico na formação de várias gerações de semioticistas e analistas do discurso.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Manual; Práticas; Didática; Semiótica discursiva; José Luiz Fiorin

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1 Reading *Elements*

Elements of Discourse Analysis (*EDA*) is José Luiz Fiorin's third book. It was published in March of 1989, a year after the publication of *Linguagem e ideologia* [Language and Ideology] (1988a) and *O regime de 1964:* discurso e ideologia [The 1964 Regime: Discourse and Ideology] (1988b). It turned 26 years old in 2015 and was re-edited 15 times until 2014. In this paper, we will analyze EDA's 11th edition, published in 2002, which essentially retains the features of the first edition. Whenever necessary, we will refer to the 13th edition, published in 2005, which, according to the front cover, is "revised and amplified." In fact, although the design, the cover, and some passages have been altered, in most cases the changes are not really substantial.[1]

EDA is essentially a textbook whose target audience is either secondary or higher education students. However, as it mainly focuses on the latter, one could expect that the work would only reproduce and explain elements of the semiotics of discourse, which the author presents as "discourse analysis." However, as he presents his "discourse analysis" through Greimas's generative trajectory of meaning, there emerged some very singular and updated choices and conceptions that have become his trademark of intellectual legacy. This is the hypothesis that I will examine and that will guide the reading of this work. Apparently in reverse order, instead of attempting to analyze a work in the light of the author's oeuvres, I run the risk of seeking to illuminate his oeuvres under the dim and partial light of the work.

As I have suggested elsewhere (PORTELA, 2007; 2008), to semiotically understand a textbook is to conceive of it as a complex semiotic object. The level of the text-utterance is recovered and re-signified by different semiotic practices that are somewhat autonomous. Thus, teaching practice, more than text-utterance, becomes the privileged object of our analysis in this paper.

There is a decisive element to consider when analyzing a textbook: how the aspectualization of enunciatees' assumed competence determines teaching practice, adjusting its explanatory and illustrative sequence to previous competence – to be developed – at introductory, basic, or advanced levels. The terminology for the aimed competence varies among textbooks, and many times, especially in university

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[1] As an example, the 11th edition and the ones prior to it are 93 pages long whereas the 13th edition is 126 pages long. This is essentially due to design change and not to important text addition.

textbooks, it is not clearly and progressively presented. The terminology becomes explicit when specific book collections include it or when it is apprehended by the way in which the enunciator presents the textbook's rationale. In terms of graded textbooks adopted in primary and secondary schools, the traditional demarcation of school years gives rise to the aspectualization of competence development, which plays a more explicit constraining role to the text-utterance of each textbook.

The enunciator of the textbook produces a didactic text precisely because he enunciates, that is, he acts and intervenes with words in the predictive scene of didactic practice. However, this same didactic text is integrated into a publishing activity whose main goal is to make it reach as many readers as possible and to promote it based on its specificities.

From the analysis of the paratexts (GENETTE, 1997)[2] that are part of the publishing activity, such as the work title, its cover, and the author presentation, I came to the inventory and the analysis of the textual segments. These segments were understood as theoretical exemplification and explanation by the enunciator of the textbook, which is in the sphere of the teaching activity. Here is the analysis path that I endeavor to follow.

1.1 A "Concessive" Title

The title *Elements of Discourse Analysis* has never led semioticians to indifference. If I am not mistaken, there is no use of the lexeme "semiotics" along the pages of the book, and yet semiotics is inherently present in the work. On the other hand, we find the lexical unit "discourse analysis" and the lexeme "rhetoric" 4 and 9 times in *EDA* respectively.

EDA helped me confirm my vocation to semiotics. At the same time, it demanded that my obsession for a paradise filled with semiotics and semioticians be moderate. Today this seems to be an absurd image. In my first years of learning, I was a dogmatic and obtuse Greimasian. In fact, I was obtuse because I was dogmatic, and I understood the title of the book as a concession.

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[2] GENETTE, Gérard. *Paratexts*: Thresholds of Interpretation. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Concession, according to my first reading or misreading, was a consequence of infidelity or, at least fidelity and change, as A. J. Greimas suggests in the introduction of the second volume of *On Meaning* (GREIMAS, 1987).[3] Only many years later did I start to understand the sphere in which semiotics was and is. This is when I began to be an advisor of my first students and to dimension the role that semiotics plays in linguistics programs and in discourse theories. I was thus able to understand that the title, i.e., this ethics project, was chosen in order to redeem semiotics among us and to guarantee that its teachings reached a wider audience, which the semiotics of discourse never did in France, for example.

Fiorin chose *Elements of Discourse Analysis* instead of "Elements of Semiotics." In other words, he chose the hypernym, that is, a broader term that contains and defines the nature of semiotics, which, as we know, is nothing other than a methodology for discourse analysis. Assuming an "ecumenical" position in relation to the name of the discipline that he is presenting, thus neutralizing theoretical differences in favor of a project of discourse legibility is, as we will discuss further on, refusing to classify semiotics as *the* theory of discourse. Fiorin himself makes it clear in *EDA's* introduction (FIORIN, 2002, p.10).

The title choice seems to have been dictated by concession. By concession, I do not mean renouncement, desertion, but the meaning given by Claude Zilberberg (2011). For him, concession is in the domain of the unexpected, the unpredictable; it is the surprising register of occurrences that shatter monotonous facts and certainties produced by implication into countless promises or possibilities.

It is in this sense that it is possible to state that *EDA* was given a non-implicative title. Implication would have led to a predictable title, such as "Elements of Semiotics." Today I believe this would have been an easy way out. It would have sounded simplistic, sectarian, and little strategic. *EDA's* concessive title derived from an ambiguous, difficult, and unusual choice, which was pragmatically (it is necessary to reach a wide audience) and programmatically (we are not whiteflies, *avis rara*; we are "people of discourse") based.

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[3] GREIMAS, A. J. *On Meaning*: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory. Translated by Paul Perron and Frank H. Collins. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

1.2 Prototypical Textbook

It is possible that *EDA*, the textbook on the semiotics of discourse, is a bestseller that has been the most used in higher education and the most commented on in Brazil. It is side by side Barros's (1990) classic textbook. Among us there has never been a semiotics textbook with so many editions (15 editions until 2014 whereas Barros's textbook (1990) had five editions until 2011) and probably in so many references of articles, essays, dissertations, and public examinations. The hypothesis that the number of editions of a specific work (not taking the number of printings into account) may say something about its editorial circulation and its reception in a specific scientific culture sounds reasonable. However, it would be necessary to conduct a detailed editorial and commercial study on the number of copies sold of each edition and the precise time interval between editions to prove it. Unfortunately, as we know it, a study that depends on information provided by publishers may not be totally accurate.

In what sense can one believe that *EDA* is a "textbook of textbooks"? First of all, it is due to its many specific features:

(1) *EDA* is our first semiotics textbook whose target audience is not necessarily university students;

(2) *EDA* is not limited to teaching semiotics. It unveils an authorial way to think of semiotics as a theory of discourse. The organization of the book chapters is a proof of that, for they deal with syntax and discursive semantics broadly, whereas the content of the majority of the textbooks on semiotics presents every element of the generative trajectory of meaning.

(3) In *EDA* narration is at the service of discourse, which in turn is on the borderline of enunciation and is sheltered by a rhetoric project.

(4) The book rejects elitist and superficial ideas of "flourished language" (FIORIN, 2002, p.10) and "rhetorical ornament" (FIORIN, 2002, p.62), which, along with other terms, still prevail in the teaching of language and literature. It endorses, however, the development of students' competence by enabling them to master a grammar of discourse and its mechanisms.

(5) The author's examples are erudite and popular, formal and youthful, academic and personal.

Secondly, *EDA* can be regarded as a "textbook of textbooks" because we recognize its modeling and prototypical nature if compared to other semiotics textbooks that have been published in Brazil and abroad. Besides, it perpetuates the tradition of textbooks on the semiotics of discourse, such as the works of Joseph Courtés (1976), Groupe d'Entrevernes (1979), Anne Hénault (1979, 1983), Mônica Rector (1979), Desiderio Blanco & Raul Bueno (1980), and Diana Luz Pessoa de Barros (1988). At the same time, as the first of its type in Brazil and in the world, that is, a chef-d'oeuvre – to use a Gallicism–, it lays the foundations for a new type of textbook, which teaches semiotics not as an end in itself, but as a means to help readers develop interpretation skills.

## 2 Publishing Paratexts

2.1 The Book Cover

As any other publication, *EDA* has a limiting dependence on publishing activity, for it is the publisher that makes it fit into a book series (*Repensando a língua portuguesa* [*Rethinking the Portuguese Language*]). The series, in turn, determines its own publishing specificities, such as objective, target audience, visual identity, paratextual organization, number of pages, etc.

It is possible for us to read *EDA* only at the enunciative level of the text, which allows us to sever it from its materiality and circulation. Nevertheless, we can still read it in the light of its relation to other texts, supporting objects, and practices even if briefly (FONTANILLE, 2008).

This approach takes us to reflect upon the cover of the book that has a containing/contained, represented/presented relationship with the content of the book. The cover fulfills the function of a true wrapping on which general and essential elements related to identification (nature and purpose), destination (enunciator-enunciatee relationship), and use (persuasive and initiative dimension) are inscribed.

On the upper part of the page of the textbook that we analyzed (11th edition) we find the title of the book series followed by the title of the book. Between the book title and the author's name, we find textual elements that can be read as some sort of sub-

title. However, we know they are not, for there is no syntactic connection between the predominantly nominal syntagms. Therefore, they are listed as a thematic element that is pertinent to the work:[4]
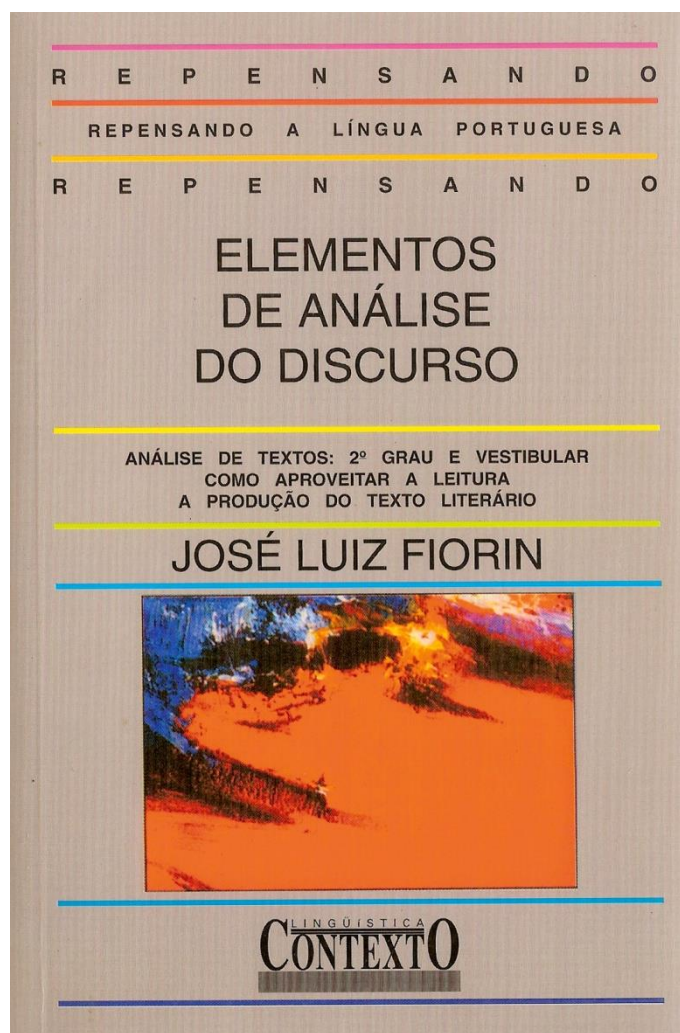
These "headlines," which draw the attention of a reader or a somewhat heterogeneous group of people, simultaneously and differently presuppose a need for and an aspectualization of:

(1) the identity of the enunciatee: a young high school senior who will take a college admission exam. His/her competence is in development, in progress;

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[4] [TEXT ANALYSIS: HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ADMISSION EXAM; HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF READING; THE PRODUCTION OF LITERARY TEXTS]

(2) the purpose of the enunciator, who connects the two ends of the process of text comprehension: reading, i.e., interpretation, and production. He holds, thus, the knowledge that is inclusive and, at the same time, settled, finished, complete.

It seems that the unfinishedness of the form is balanced by the finishedness of the methodological project of competence development.

"How to take advantage of reading" is the only syntagm that is evidently verbal. More than a narrative program, it is a counterprogram, for it makes us assume that there are either disadvantageous ways to read or ways in which we do not take full advantage of it. That is why one needs to "take advantage of reading."

If we analyze the formal aspects of the cover, conceived as the supporting object of the inscription, these sentences occupy a space of double prominence. Firstly, they are in the first page; secondly, they are placed between the title and the author's name as their intercalating elements.

The publishing project makes it clear that the book is of a didactic nature, for its target audience is high school and college students, and its purpose is (self)-competence development. That is why the enunciator of the publishing activity apparently inscribes these textual specifications in the in-between zone, which is the zone of mediation, so to say, between the work and the author. In this way, the readers and their needs and weaknesses come between the work and the author.

"The production of literary texts" is far from being a naive utterance, as it becomes an important filter in terms of competence development. The understanding of literary texts is not easily achieved in first language teaching classes. Besides, literary texts play an important role in students' passing college admission exams and are conferred considerable prestige in culture. More importantly still, they show the enunciator's analytical sensibility and delimit the teaching practice that guides the textbook.

2.2 The Author Inscribed in his Text

In *EDA* the first text to which the reader has access is entitled "The Author in Context," a third-person presentation of the author. It seems a narrated interview that uses direct quotes, a journalistic "profile."

"The Author in Context" presents the reader the humane dimension of the law student candidate who trod life's different paths, of the teaching missionary who roamed the countryside and the countryside man who traveled from Araraquara to Paris (how many others after him have not taken this emblematic air shuttle!), of the man who drinks, roots for teams, reads, criticizes, and is committed, moved, casting a mature look at the trodden path. He is a lyrical *bon vivant* and a politically active citizen at the same time. He is enchantingly disenchanted.

This presentation is far from being a sole narrative of the cognitive competence of *EDA's* enunciator. To the contrary, it builds an actor of high passionate density:

THE AUTHOR IN CONTEXT

(1)   JOSÉ LUIZ FIORIN is originally from Birigui, São Paulo. He intended to study Law at the University of São Paulo Law School.[5] However, life's unfortunate events[6] led him to stay in the countryside. As he studied Languages (Letters), an undergraduate program at Faculdade de Penápolis [Penápolis College], he became interested in becoming a teacher, which he did in different cities, such as Penápolis, Piacatu, Birigui, Distrito de Roteiro, Guaraçaí, and São Paulo. He remembers good-humoredly that he was almost sued by a girl student's mother because he had read an excerpt of *A Carne* [The Flesh].[7] He is also moved[8] when he remembers that in Distrito de Roteiro he taught Portuguese as a foreign language to immigrant adults who only spoke Japanese.

(2)   Having passed an official examination, he was transferred to São Paulo, where he got his master's degree and PhD in Linguistics at Universidade de São Paulo (USP). In 1980 he was a teacher in Araraquara[9] and in 1983 he did his "scientific specialization training"[10] at the École de [sic][11] Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales under the supervision of Prof. Algirdas Julien Greimas.[12]

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[5] TN. The University of São Paulo Law School is commonly known by its location in São Paulo, the state capital, that is, Largo São Francisco.

[6] In the book's 13th edition, "unfortunate events" is edited as "paths," which becomes a counterpoint due to its "subjective concision."

[7] TN. *A Carne* [The Flesh], a novel by Júlio Ribeiro, was published in 1888. According to Ateliê Editorial Publishing House (http://www.atelie.com.br/livro/carne), the book was bitterly criticized because of its explicit scenes of sex and sadism. The full reference of this book's edition is: RIBEIRO, Júlio. *A Carne*. Cotia, SP: Ateliê Editorial, 2002.

[8] In the 13th edition, the word "moved" is omitted.

[9] In the 13th edition, we find "He taught at Faculdade de Ciências e Letras da Unesp – Universidade do Estado (sic) de São Paulo in Araraquara."

[10] We find "postdoctoral training" in the 13th edition.

[11] In the 13th edition it was corrected to "des."

[12] In the 13th edition, the following text was added: "He taught Portuguese at the University of Bucharest in Romania in 1991 and 1992." Text in original: "No ano letivo de 1991 e 1992, ensinou Português na Universidade de Bucareste, na Romênia."

(3) Besides[13] having written many articles, he wrote, among others, *Semiótica da Cultura, arte e arquitetura* [Semiotics of Culture, Art, and Architecture] (EDUC)[sic]; [14] *O regime de 1964*: discurso e ideologia [The 1964 Regime: Discourse and Ideology] (Atual), and *Linguagem e ideologia* [Language and Ideology] (Ática). [15]

(4) Language, in all its forms, entices him: "from a chat with friends preferably in a bar drinking beer"[16] [17] to cinema, literature, theater, which do not necessarily have to be classified as high standard.[18] He loves police novels, popular music, and enthusiastically roots for Palmeiras soccer team, which, according to him, has made him more disappointed[19] than pleased for several years.

(5) He believes he has arrived at the age of realism, "in which one learns to live with one's limitations."[20] He also believes this is a generation issue: "my generation lived the certainty of change and the disenchantment of repression."[21] [22]He quotes Alex Polaris's lines:

Our generation had little time
It started at the end,

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[13] This paragraph was completely rewritten in the 13th edition: "Besides having written articles and books, he wrote, among other works, *O regime de 1964*: Discurso e Ideologia [*The 1964 Regime*: Discourse and Ideology]; *Linguagem e ideologia* [*Language and Ideology*]; *As astúcias da enunciação*: As categorias de pessoa, espaço e tempo [*The Astuteness of Enunciation*: The Categories of Person, Space, and Time]; *Para entender o texto*: Leitura e Redação [*To Understand a Text*: Reading and Writing]; *Lições de texto*: Leitura e redação [*Text Lessons*: Reading and Writing]. The last two were written by José Luiz Fiorin and Francisco Platão Savioli. Among others, he edited the following works published by Editora Contexto: *Introdução à linguística I*. Objetos Teóricos [*Introduction to Linguistics I*: Theoretical Objects] and *Introdução à linguística II*. Princípios de análise [Introduction to Linguistics II: Principles of Analysis]. Text in original: "Além de artigos e capítulos de livros, escreveu, entre outros, as obras *O regime de 1964*: discurso e ideologia; *Linguagem e ideologia*; *As astúcias da enunciação*: as categorias de pessoa, espaço e tempo; *Para entender o texto*: leitura e redação; *Lições de texto*: leitura e redação (os dois últimos em parceria com Francisco Platão Savioli). Organizou, entre outros, os livros *Introdução à linguística. I. Objetos teóricos* e *Introdução à linguística. II. Princípios de análise*, ambos da Editora Contexto."

[14] This piece of information, which we find in different editions from 1989 until about 2002, is not correct. *Semiótica da Cultura* [Semiotics of Culture] is not a book; it is an essay that was published in OLIVEIRA, A. C.; SANTAELLA, L. (Org.) *Semiótica da cultura, arte e arquitetura* [Semiotics of Culture, Art, and Architecture]. São Paulo: EDUC, 1987, v.1, pp. 67-78.

[15] After the presentation of his works, the 13th edition added the following: "He was a member of CNPq's [National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development] Deliberation Council from 2000 to 2004 and a representative of the Department of Language and Linguistics of CAPES [Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel] from 1995 to 1999." Text in original: "De 2000 a 2004, foi membro do Conselho Deliberativo do CNPq e, de 1995 a 1999, foi representante da área de Letras e Linguística na Capes."

[16] Text in original: "desde a conversa com os amigos, de preferência num bar, acompanhada de cerveja."

[17] In the 13th edition we read: "beer or *caipirinha*." Text in original: "de cerveja ou de caipirinha."
TN. *Caipirinha* is a typical Brazilian alcoholic beverage made with *cachaça* (Brazilian rum), lemon juice, sugar, and ice.

[18] In the 13th edition, the comment "which do not necessarily have to be classified as high standard" was suppressed.

[19] In the 13th edition, we read: "He confesses that in the last years [...]." Text in original: "Confesse que nos últimos anos o time o tenha brindado."

[20] Text in original: "em que se aprende a conviver com os limites."

[21] Text in original: "minha geração conviveu com a certeza da mudança e o desencanto com a repressão."

[22] In the 13th edition, we read: "and the disenchantment that calls for the end of utopia." Text in original: "E o desencanto com o que se chama o fim das utopias."

But our search was beautiful
Oh darling, how beautiful was our search!
Even with so many lost illusions
Even with so many broken illusions
Even with so many splinters of dreams
With which even today
We cut ourselves![23]

(6) Today he teaches in the Department of Linguistics at USP. (FIORIN, 2002, pp.7-8).[24]

This is José Luiz Fiorin in his "context." He is presented through a narrative story of competence acquisition, which pinpoints every step of successful learning, viz., vocation (§1), experience acquisition (§1, 2 e 5), acknowledgement in the form of publication, and as an authority in the field (§ 3 e 6).

2. 3 The Epigraphs

EDA is comprised of an introduction and four chapters: 1 Why a Semantics of Discourse?; 2 The Generative Trajectory of Meaning; 3 Discursive Syntax, and 4 Discursive Semantics. The consequence of this division, which gives the discursive level a place of prominence (in detriment of the other levels of the generative trajectory

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[23] TN. Translation of the lines by Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira. The full reference of the work is: VIEIRA, Else Ribeiro Pires. Translation in Post-Dictatorship Brazil: A Weave of Metaphysical Voices in the Tropics. In: BALDERSTON, D.; SCHWARTZ, M. E. (Ed.). *Voice-Overs*: Translation and Latin American Literature. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002, p.207.

[24] Text in original: "O AUTOR NO CONTEXTO. (1) JOSÉ LUIZ FIORIN é de Birigui, estado de São Paulo. Pretendia estudar Direito no Largo São Francisco, mas os azares da vida prenderam-no no interior. Cursou Letras na Faculdade de Penápolis, tomando gosto pelo magistério. Lecionou em Penápolis, Piacatu, Birigui, Distrito de Roteiro, Guaraçaí e São Paulo. Das andanças pelo ensino lembra, bem humorado, quase ter sido processado pela mãe de uma aluna por ter lido, em classe, um trecho de A carne. E comovido lembra também de ter ensinado, no Distrito de Roteiro, região de imigrantes, Português a adultos, que até então só falavam Japonês. (2) Transferido, por concurso, para São Paulo, fez mestrado e doutorado em Linguística, na USP. Em 1980 lecionou em Araraquara e em 1983 fez estágio de aperfeiçoamento científico sob a supervisão do prof. Algirdas Julien Greimas, na École de (sic) Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. (3) Além de vários artigos, escreveu, entre outros, as obras *Semiótica da Cultura, arte e arquitetura* (EDUC) [sic]; *O regime de 1964*: discurso e ideologia (Atual); e *Linguagem e ideologia* (Ática). (4) A linguagem o atrai em todas as suas modalidades "desde a conversa com os amigos, de preferência num bar, acompanhada de cerveja" até o cinema, a literatura, o teatro que não tem, necessariamente que ser de alta qualidade . Adora, por exemplo, romance policial, música popular e é palmeirense roxo, embora confesse que há vários anos o time venha lhe brindando mais com decepções do que com alegrias. (5) Pensa ter chegado à idade do realismo, "em que se aprende a conviver com os limites". E acredita que isso é um problema de geração: "minha geração conviveu com a certeza da mudança e o desencanto com a repressão". Cita os versos de Alex Polaris: *Nossa geração teve pouco tempo, / começou pelo fim / mas foi bela nossa procura / ah! moça, como foi bela nossa procura / mesmo com tanta ilusão perdida / quebrada, mesmo com tanto caco de sonho / onde até hoje / a gente se corta!* (6) Atualmente é professor do Departamento de Linguística da USP."

of meaning), will be discussed further on, when we examine the relationship between reading and isotopy (cf. section 4.3).

There is an epigraph from João Cabral in every chapter but chapter 2. Especifically in this chapter the epigraph is from Dante, in the original in Italian: "Le cose tutte quante / hanno ordine tra loro, e questo è forma / che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante" (FIORIN, 2002, p.15).[25] This is a little whim of someone who is in love with *The Divine Comedy*.

The epigraphs from João Cabral are thematically and narratively related to key moments of EDA's theoretical reflection. This is the epigraph in Chapter 1, entitled Why a Semantics of Discourse? (FIORIN, 2002, p.11):

> Situated in a pool, water resembles
> a word in its dictionary situation:
> isolated, standing in the pool of itself
> and, because it is standing, stagnant.
> Because it is standing, it is mute,
> and mute because it doesn't communicate,
> because this river's syntax, the current
> of water on which it ran, was cut.[26]

The picture of the water, the river, and its misfortune in this epigraph reveals the impossibility to signify by using an isolated unit; thus, it discloses the need for integration and dynamism, i.e., the need to go from morphology to syntax and then to discourse.

The epigraph in Chapter 3, entitled Discursive Syntax (FIORIN, 2002, p.39), is:

> a river needs many currents of water
> for all of its pools to be phrased –
> being restored form one pool to the next
> into short phrases, then phrase to phase,
> until the river-sentence of the only discourse
> in which it can speak will defy the drought.[27]

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[25] TN. Translation of the lines by John Ciardi: "The elements of all things, […] whatever their mode, observe an inner order. It is this form that makes the universe resemble God." The full reference is: ALIGHIERI, Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Transl. John Ciardi. New York: New American Library, 1970, p.600.

[26] TN. Translation of the lines by Richard Zenith. The full reference is: MELO NETO, João Cabral de. Speechless River. Transl. Richard Zenith. In:_____. *Selected Poetry, 1937-1990*. Edited by Djelal Kadir. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994, p.141.

[27] TN. Translation of the lines by Richard Zenith. For reference, see footnote 24.

Here the picture of connection, superposition, dominance of elements, enunciation in its peculiar movement between unity and fragmentation is revealed.

> Make the loose word adhere
> to the body of its referent,
> fusing it into a solid, dense thing,
> able to clash with the one next to it.
>
> Don't let its speech stick out
> but impose the discipline
> of speaking anonymously -
> just another word in the line.[28]

These pictures reveal the relationship between that which manifests and that which is manifested. It also discloses the coherence of the means of expression, their cohesion and homogeneity, and the notion of recursivity and of likeness between types and families.

These three epigraphs comprehend a whole semiotics program: The theoretical pictures underneath the poetic pictures were what Fiorin was able to find in João Cabral and what he chose to work on in his textbook.

3 The Exemplarity of the Examples

3.1 The First Examples...to Students

In EDA, the first examples given by Fiorin clearly show who the book's enunciatees are, viz., the young students:

> [writing about the deep level] (for example, passing college admission exams and the ark of the covenant in the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark* are the same in a deeper level, i.e., they are about *being able to do*: in the first situation, it is about being able to enter college; in the second, to defeat the enemies) (2002, p.13).[29]

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[28] TN. Translation of the lines by Richard Zenith. The full reference is: MELO NETO, João Cabral de. Barceo's Catechism. Transl. Richard Zenith. In:_____. *Selected Poetry, 1937-1990*. Edited by Djelal Kadir. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994, p.158.

[29] Text in original: "[ao falar sobre o nível mais profundo] (por exemplo, a aprovação no vestibular e a arca da aliança, no filme "Os caçadores da arca perdida", significam a mesma coisa num nível mais profundo, *poder fazer*: no primeiro caso, poder fazer um curso superior, no segundo, poder vencer os inimigos)."

[writing about the diversity of manifestation] the content of a soap opera is manifest concurrently by a plane of verbal expression, visual expression, etc. (2002, p.14).[30]

These unpretentious and enticing examples (college admission exams, Indiana Jones, and soap operas), based on everyday life, are pictures that refer to students as his enunciatee. Students, in turn, become the inscribed actor in the utterance on page 9, which is the first page of the textbook. They are referred to 6 times (FIORIN, 2002, p.9):

(1)   "The school teaches *students* to read and write";
(2)   "(the teacher) asks the *students* to write";
(3)   "questions that are not intellectually challenging to the *student*";
(4)   "If the *student* makes a question";
(5)   "It is not enough to recommend that the *student*";
(6)   "Just like we teach *students*."[31]

3. 2 The Sacred and the Profane

From one page to another the enunciator goes from the biblical example of the temptation of Christ in the desert (FIORIN, 2002, p.24) to the unveiling of the secret in *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie (p.25). He goes from religious culture to mass culture and tries to make his enunciatee aware of the heuristic power of the semiotics of discourse. At the same time, he includes literary and religious texts in the same category of objects that can be analyzed and, therefore, questioned.

3.3 The Poetry Lover

From page 30 to 37 Fiorin presents a kaleidoscope of epochs, styles, and poetic languages: Drummond (who is back on p.88), Augusto Meyer, Oswald de Andrade, Paul Verlaine, Cruz e Souza, P. B. Shelley, T. S. Elliot, and Walt Whitman. On pages 45 and 49, respectively, we find Raimundo Correia and Bilac, and on page 63, of course, Machado, the sonnet writer. There is also Casimiro de Abreu (p.76), Bandeira (p.78), João Cabral (p.84), and Cassiano Ricardo (p.86).

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[30] Text in original: "[ao falar sobre a diversidade da manifestação] o conteúdo da telenovela é manifestado, ao mesmo tempo, por um plano de expressão verbal, por um visual, etc.."
[31] Text in original: "(1) A escola ensina os *alunos* a ler e a escrever; (2) (o professor) pede que os *alunos* escrevam; (3) perguntas que não representam nenhum desafio intelectual ao *aluno*; (4) Se o *aluno* lhe pergunta; (5) Não basta recomendar que o *aluno*; (6) Assim como ensinamos aos *alunos*."

At the end of the textbook, on pages 87, 90, and 91, there comes to his assistance the long-awaited and ever-touching Portuguese poet, that is, the lyric and epic Camões.

3.4 Teacher - Reader

As to prose, we find examples from Machado de Assis's *Memórias póstumas* [*The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*][32] (p.26, p.60, p.66, p.68, p.73) and *Memorial de Aires* [*Counselor Ayres' Memorial*][33] (p.50, p.58, p.59), from Guimarães Rosa's *Grande sertão: veredas* [*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*],[34] Raul Pompéia (p.44), Graciliano Ramos's *Vidas secas* [*Barren Lives*][35] (p.47, p.72), Monteiro Lobato's presently polemic *Negrinha* [*Little Black Girl*] (p.56), José Cândido de Carvalho (p.61), José de Alencar's *Senhora* [*Senhora*: Profile of a Woman][36] and *O Guarani* (p.70, p.80), and Aluísio de Azevedo (p.71, p.91).

Some other examples in prose and poetry indicate personal preference, whether due to text type or selected author. Such is the case of José Júlio da Silva Ramos (p.15; an extract from Antônio Lages's *Florilégio Nacional* [*National Anthology*]), Gil Vicente (p.25), Maquiavel (p.53), Walnice Nogueira Galvão (p.74), and La Fontaine (p.81).

3. 5 Humor

A particularly curious example is that "funny story," that is, that joke on the correspondence between the "Gentle Lady" with the "Pastor." The story goes that she asked the Pastor where the W.C. of the summer house that she would like to rent was.

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[32] TN. This novel has been translated into English. The full reference is: ASSIS, J. M. Machado de. *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*. Translated by Gregory Rabana. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

[33] TN. This novel has been translated into English. The full reference is: ASSIS, Joaquim M. Machado de. *Counselor Ayres' Memorial*. Translated by Helen Caldwell. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1972.

[34] TN. This novel has been translated into English. The full reference is: ROSA, João Guimarães. *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. Translated by James L. Taylor and Harriet de Onis. New York: Knof, 1963.

[35] TN. This novel has been translated into English. The full reference is: RAMOS, Graciliano. *Barren Lives*. Translated by Ralph E. Dimmick. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1971.

[36] TN. This novel has been translated into English. The full reference is: ALENCAR, José de. *Senhora*: Profile of a Woman. Translated by Catarina F. Edinger. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994.

The Pastor, the owner of the house, thought that by asking about the W.C., she meant the White Chapel:

> Gentle Lady,
> I have the pleasure to inform you that your place of interest is 12 km [7,4 miles] away from the house. It is very convenient, especially if one is used to going there frequently. In this case, it is best that one take some food to spend the day there. Some people go there on foot, some by bike. The place fits 500 people (400 sitting, and 100 standing). As seats are velvet covered, it is recommended that one arrive early to find a seat. Children sit next to their parents, and everybody sings in unison. Upon entering, every single person is given a sheet of paper; however, if one arrives after papers are distributed, one may use the paper of the person next to him/her. Upon exiting the place, one must return the paper so it can be used again during a month period. There are sound amplifiers. Everything we are given is for the poor children who live in the district. Photographs taken by special photographers are published in local newspapers so that everybody can see their fellow humans doing such humane deeds (FIORIN, 2002, pp.82-83).[37]

I really wished that this example had come on page 15, where the Apólogo dos dois escudos [Apologue of Two Shields] by José Júlio da Silva Ramos is. It is maybe the caprice of an anxious and bold reader. Due to the semantic rhythm of the selected examples, it is obvious that this joke, in terms of its strategic use, has terminative rather than inchoative value. Thus, it would hardly come as the first example of this type of textbook, in which its responsibility to the canon is evident.

4 Semiotic Anthology

Now I present a brief anthology of *EDA*. It is a commented selection of the most remarkable and quoted passages of the textbook. They have been repeated so many times that we become unaware of its depth and explicative potential.

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[37] Text in original: Gentil Senhora. Tenho prazer de comunicar-lhe que o local de seu interesse fica a 12 km da casa. É muito cômodo, sobretudo se se tem o hábito de ir lá frequentemente; nesse caso, é preferível levar comida para passar lá o dia inteiro. Alguns vão a pé, outros de bicicleta. Há lugar para quatrocentas pessoas sentadas e cem em pé; recomenda-se chegar cedo para arrumar lugar sentado, pois os assentos são de veludo. As crianças sentam-se ao lado dos adultos e todos cantam em coro. Na entrada é distribuída uma folha de papel para cada um; no entanto, se chegar depois da distribuição, pode-se usar a folha do vizinho ao lado. Tal folha deve ser restituída à saída para poder ser usada durante um mês. Existem ampliadores de som. Tudo o que se recolhe é para as crianças pobres da região. Fotógrafos especiais tiram fotografias para os jornais da cidade a fim de que todos possam ver seus semelhantes no desempenho de um dever tão humano."

4. 1 Text against "the" Theory

In a time of a relatively formal rigor of the discursive semiotic theory, *EDA* chooses to deal with "some elements of discourse grammar" and "some of the theoretical projects of discourse analysis" in its syntax and semantics. It follows the generative trajectory of meaning, and although it does not deny the cultural, social, and historical aspect of texts, which is (significantly) called "dialogic," *EDA* parenthesizes it:

> One can approach a text from two complementary standpoints. On the one hand, one can analyze the syntactic and semantic mechanisms that are responsible for meaning production; on the other hand, one can understand discourse as a cultural object that is produced according to historical conditions and that is dialogically related to other texts. In this book we intend to discuss some elements of discourse grammar. We have already analyzed ideological determinations reflected in language in other books, which are found in this book's References. *Our goal is not to present "the" theory of discourse analysis but to introduce one of the theoretical projects of discourse analysis that are under development.* Other projects that have the same goal are on the way. Each and every one of them has virtues and limitations. That is the reason why this book does not show "the" truth, but one of the many truths related to language, which is "multiform and heteroclitic" and has defied men of all places and times (FIORIN, 2002, p.10; our emphasis).[38]

Making evident the dialogic nature of texts in semiotics had never been done in textbooks of discourse semiotics. *EDA* does it throughout the whole book.

In *EDA* the text is defined by its complexity. It is understood as an object that transcends the boundaries of theory and impels us to even conceive of "the" omnipotent theory when analyzing texts. The enunciator takes an ethical stand when he carefully relativizes the role semiotics plays in different approaches to discourse and tries to

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[38] Text in original: "O texto pode ser abordado de dois pontos de vista complementares. De um lado, podem-se analisar os mecanismos sintáxicos e semânticos responsáveis pela produção do sentido; de outro, pode-se compreender o discurso como objeto cultural, produzido a partir de certas condicionantes históricas, em relação dialógica com outros textos. Neste livro, pretendemos tratar apenas de alguns elementos da gramática do discurso. As determinações ideológicas que incidem sobre a linguagem foram por nós analisadas em outros livros, que constam da bibliografia. *Nosso objetivo não é apresentar "a" teoria da análise do discurso, mas um dos projetos teóricos de análise discursiva que hoje se desenvolvem.* Outros projetos com essa mesma finalidade estão em andamento. Cada um deles tem virtudes e limites. Por isso, neste livro, não está "a" verdade, mas "uma" das muitas verdades a respeito da linguagem, fenômeno "multiforme e heteróclito", que tem desafiado o homem de todas as épocas e de todos os lugares."

neutralize extreme views of what is good or bad, appropriate and inappropriate in text analysis.

4. 2 Proper to Semiotics

If the text is defined as bigger than theory, the semantic understanding of discourse, such as Greimas understood it, is not relativized. This is how Fiorin defines it, using the same format of the definition found in Greimas and Courtés's *Semiotics and Language*: An Analytical Dictionary (1982):[39]

> For Greimas, Semantics must be:
> a) generative – it must create models that apprehend the levels of progressive meaning invariance so one may come to the realization that different elements in the surface level may render the same meaning of those in a deeper level […];
> b) syntagmatic – it must explain the production and interpretation of discourse rather than lexical units that make up a sentence;
> c) general – it must postulate the unicity of meaning, which can be manifested by different planes of expression (one at a time or several of them at the same time. For example, the content 'negation' may be manifested by a verbal expression, such as 'no,' or by 'shaking the head' […]) (FIORIN, 2002, p.13).[40]

Whether generative, syntagmatic and general, deep and superficial, or manifested in different planes of content and expression, the generative trajectory of meaning is introduced to enunciatees as a project of rigor, present in all its specificities.

The syntax and the semantics of the levels of the generative trajectory of meaning are the axes of the book. They are valued as the means to go from singularity (autonomous, relational) to plurality (different layers of semantic investment):

> The syntax of the different levels of the trajectory is also of a conceptual nature. That means that every combination of forms produces a different meaning. The difference between syntax and

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[39] GREIMAS, Algirdas Julien; COURTES, Joseph. *Semiotics and Language*: An Analytical Dictionary. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982.

[40] Text in original: "Para Greimas, uma Semântica deve ser: a) gerativa, ou seja, deve estabelecer modelos que apreendam os níveis de invariância crescente do sentido de tal forma que se perceba que diferentes elementos do nível de superfície podem significar a mesma coisa num nível mais profundo [...]; b) sintagmática, isto é, deve explicar não as unidades lexicais que entram na feitura das frases, mas a produção e a interpretação do discurso; c) geral, ou seja, deve ter como postulado a unicidade do sentido, que pode ser manifestado por diferentes planos de expressão (por um de cada vez ou por vários deles ao mesmo tempo: por exemplo, o conteúdo /negação/ pode ser manifestado por um plano de expressão verbal 'não' ou por um gesto como 'repetidos movimentos horizontais da cabeça' [...])."

semantics does not stem from the fact that one produces meaning and the other does not. It means that syntax is more autonomous than semantics, for the same syntactic relation may receive vastly different semantic investments (FIORIN, 2002, p.18).[41]

The nature of meaning's orchestrated *work in progress* is asserted by the freedom that syntax, which structures the levels of the trajectory, and semantics, which is in charge of filling them with modalities, figures, themes, and values, have.

4.3 Reading and Isotopy in "Discourse Analysis"

Issues related to reading and text analysis are dealt with in *EDA*. This is done on the bases of a semiotic reflection and especially on the bases that founded the criticism addressed to the theory. For Fiorin, the grammar of discourse resembles *roughly* a theory on reading, but "not on every and any reading":

> We have heard so many times that texts are open, so any interpretation of a text is valid. When one says that a text is open to different readings, it means that a text allows more than one reading, but not every and any reading. What is the difference here? The different readings that a text allows are inscribed in it as possibilities. That means that in a text that allows multiple interpretations there are indicators of polysemy. Thus, the different readings are not done according to readers' arbitrary decision, but to the significant virtualities that are present in the text (2002, p.81).[42]

A text in the semiotics of discourse is a somewhat open work, for it is possible to define its boundaries and to confirm its polysemy. Thus, it is subject to parameters of interpretation. This discussion works as some sort of strategic counterprogram that responds to the programs that criticize and belittle the theory. *EDA's* enunciator unveils his knowledge about the academic and institutional scenario in which his presentation

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[41] Text in original: "A sintaxe dos diversos patamares do percurso tem também um caráter conceptual, o que significa que cada combinatória de formas produz um determinado sentido. A distinção entre sintaxe e semântica não decorre do fato de que uma seja significativa e a outra não, mas de que a sintaxe é mais autônoma do que a semântica, na medida em que uma mesma relação sintática pode receber uma variedade imensa de investimentos semânticos."

[42] Text in original: "Inúmeras vezes ouvimos dizer que o texto é aberto e que, por isso, qualquer interpretação de um texto é válida. Quando se diz que um texto está aberto para várias leituras, isso significa que ele admite mais de uma e não toda e qualquer leitura. Qual é a diferença? As diversas leituras que o texto aceita já estão nele inscritas como possibilidades. Isso quer dizer que o texto que admite múltiplas interpretações possui indicadores dessa polissemia. Assim, as várias leituras não se fazem a partir do arbítrio do leitor, mas das virtualidades significativas presentes no texto."

of semiotics is and aims to develop his reader-enunciatee's competence by disclosing and anticipating other problematic and critical perspectives.

It is not by chance that when one refers to reading, isotopy has to be defined. Moreover, it has to be asserted as an instrument of disambiguation, allowing the analyst to determine the planes of reading and the types of text:

> The concept of isotopy is extremely important to *discourse analysis*, for it allows one to determine the plane(s) of reading, to control the interpretation of plurisignificative texts, and to define the mechanisms used to create specific types of discourse, such as comedies (FIORIN, 2002, p.86; our emphasis).[43]

This is a result of the fact that, as we know, the isotopic principle is grounded in semantic reiteration:

> In *discourse analysis*, isotopy is the recurrence of the same semantic trait throughout the text (FIORIN, 2002, p.81; our emphasis).[44]

> [...] The recurrence of semantic traits establishes how the reading of a text is to be done. This reading is not a result of the reader's imagination: it is inscribed in the text (FIORIN, 2002, p.82).[45]

An isotopic analysis is an antidote that prevents reading from being *ad libitum*; in other words, it stops readers from using their free will and imagination when interpreting texts. Besides, it does not allow them to say whatever they want about the text, once it seeks to draw conclusions from discourse within the boundaries of its own creation. Somehow this emphasis on isotopy hints at the fact that *EDA* took a stand for discourse analysis. This can be perceived in the way the book was organized. If we look at the book's Content, we see that there is no chapter that discusses the narrative components of texts especifically. In *EDA* the narrative level is absorbed by a broad semantics of discourse, which becomes not only the semantics of the discursive level *per se*, but the general semantics of discourse.

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[43] Text in original: "O conceito de isotopia é extremamente importante para a *análise do discurso*, pois permite determinar o(s) plano(s) de leitura dos textos, controlar a interpretação dos textos pluri-significativos e definir os mecanismos de construção de certos tipos de discurso, como, por exemplo, o humorístico."
[44] Text in original: "Em *análise do discurso*, isotopia é a recorrência do mesmo traço semântico ao longo de um texto."
[45] Text in original: "[...] A recorrência de traços semânticos estabelece a leitura que deve ser feita do texto. Essa leitura não provém da fantasia do leitor, mas está inscrita no texto."

When reading the quoted texts, we are not unaware that the author insistently mentions "discourse analysis," found in many other passages throughout EDA. This attempt to present the semiotics of discourse as a theory of discourse, which is so dear to Fiorin, must not have gone unnoticed by the discourse analysts (in the narrow sense) of his time.

4.4 Enunciation and Rhetoric

EDA's most striking innovation is the fact that it integrates mechanisms of rhetoric with the syntax of discourse, viz., enunciation. This integration, which would only become a reality in France at the end of the 1990s, is not found in the Greimasian work of the 1980s and much less in the textbooks of discursive semiotics prior to that.

This precocious dialogue with Rhetoric does not seem to be originated only from Fiorin's erudition, but from the construction of an enunciator who attempts to intervene in the teaching practice of his time and who explored the most current rhetoric figures as strategies to text reading. Thus, especially for an enunciator who wants to take a stand for theoretical and methodological integration and inclusion, it is almost natural that he tried to semioticize that which was commonly used in teaching.

> [In *O coronel e o Lobisomem* (The Colonel and the Werewolf)][46] The agreement between utterance and enunciation creates predictability, normality, and certainty. It does not create contradiction. The disagreement between them, however, constitutes the realm of unpredictability, uncertainty, abnormality, lability, and contradiction. From this point of view, rhetorical mechanisms are not "ornaments" that can be omitted; on the contrary, they are means of speech that cannot be substituted. Besides, they should not be called figures, but procedures, mechanisms (FIORIN, 2002, p.62).[47]

This is what Fiorin will pursue more intensely decades later in works such as *Figuras de Retórica* [Figures of Rhetoric] (FIORIN, 2014) and *Argumentação*

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[46] TN. *O coronel e o lobisomem* [*The Colonel and the Werewolf*] is a novel written by José Cândido de Carvalho. It was first published in 1964.

[47] Text in original: "(Em *O coronel e o lobisomem*) O acordo entre enunciado e enunciação funda a previsibilidade, a normalidade, a certeza, a não contraditoriedade, enquanto o desacordo constitui o terreno da imprevisibilidade, da incerteza, da anormalidade, da labilidade, da contraditoriedade. Desse ponto de vista, os mecanismos retóricos não são ornatos que se possam suprimir, mas constituem uma maneira insubstituível de dizer. Aliás, não deveriam ser chamados figuras, mas procedimentos, mecanismos."

[*Argumentation*] (FIORIN, 2015): to refuse simple figures, used in detriment of mechanisms or procedures. *EDA* is still a germinal project, but it presents all the key lines of argumentation.

The work also proposes a classification of figures (better yet, of "mechanisms") of thought. This classification is based on the oppositions between what is inscribed in the utterance and what is assumed in the enunciation. These oppositions between utterance and enunciation are understood as categorical (affirmation and negation) or gradual (more and less). This *avant la lettre* tensive treatment, with its increase and decrease, i.e., this way of treating rhetorical mechanisms, aims to place them at the service of an enunciator who is aware of his means and goals:

> As these rhetorical figures are used as strategies of persuasion, we have no interest in working on isolated figures as textbooks usually do. What really matters here is to show their function in the general control of meaning production (FIORIN, 2002, p.55).[48]

In *EDA's* inventory, we find irony, litotes, preterition, and ellipsis as categorical opposition, and euphemism and hyperbole as gradual opposition. Whether the oppositions are discreet or ongoing, we clearly see Fiorin's intent to introduce rhetorical figures (and their major and minor variations) and tensions in reading. These tensions control the semiotic existence of entities that are actualized and realized in rhetorical operations.

5 To Conclude: Seeking what they Sought

This paper aimed to showcase that, under the apparent simplicity of this best-selling textbook, there is a complete, original, and current program of semiotics. This program has been developed by José Luiz Fiorin in different ways and in different works for the past 26 years.

The present analysis of *EDA* attempted to explicit an intellectual project that began in the 1980s and proved vigorous and coherent. It was established on the

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[48] Text in original: "Como essas figuras retóricas são usadas como estratégia de persuasão, não há nenhum interesse em apreender figuras isoladas como fazem os manuais escolares. O que importa é mostrar sua função na economia geral de produção de sentido de um texto."

threshold of theory and in the search for the enunciative dimension (and, consequently, rhetorical) of discourse.

I carefully observe the way Fiorin has inscribed himself in the history of Brazilian semiotics: He became a reference to Greimasian semioticians at the same time he read and promoted Bakhtin's work (BARROS; FIORIN, 1994, FIORIN, 2006) and actively engaged himself in a rhetoric project (FIORIN, 2014, 2015). When I do that, I can only think of the saying attributed to Matsuo Bashō: "Do not follow in the footsteps of the Ancients; seek what they sought" (BASHŌ, 2005, p.139).[49] This is the scientific and ethical project that José Luiz Fiorin pursued in *EDA* and throughout his work: to seek what the Ancients sought.

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