

THE PAST-EVENT MEMORY AND THE EVENT MEMORY: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GENRES¹

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- **ABSTRACT:** Based on the notions of *field of presence* and *event*, developed by Tensive Grammar, this study proposes two discursive types of memory as an analytical category: the *past-event memory* and the *event memory*. These discursive memory organizations determine different ways the enunciatee adheres the discourses. Being more intelligible, the former captures the enunciatee through strategies that highlight the legibility of the text, whereas the latter promotes an essentially sensitive experience. Taking such instability into account, the aim of this paper is to analyze, on the theoretical framework of discursive semiotics, the interaction between enunciator and enunciatee in different autobiographical genres. The genres studied are the literary autobiographies in prose, autobiographical poems and academic autobiographies. Each of them promotes a particular combination between the *past-event memory* and the *event memory*. It is precisely the tension between these two types of memory, these two ways of knowing the world and producing it, which seems to be the foundation of the autobiographical discourses.
- **KEYWORDS:** Memory. Autobiographical genres. Semiotics. Tensive grammar. Enunciation. Event.

I invented a brat to be me.
He had a fine taste for the floor
From his gaze it flooded tree-like nobility.
He had a lack of hunger to obey the ordering of things².

Manoel de Barros (2008, p.II).

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¹ This paper builds on some of the conclusions which we arrived at our PhD thesis, *The discourse of memory: between the sensitive and the intelligible* (BARROS, Mariana, 2011), reviewed from our post-doctoral research. Both works were directed by professor Norma Discini de Campos. The research conducted during our PhD was financed by CNPq [140032/2008-8], and the post-doctoral was financed by CAPES [33002010103P3]. The publication of the thesis can be found at <<http://spap.flch.usp.br/node/68>>.

² In this paper, all the literary excerpts have been translated freely, unless otherwise indicated. Original text: “*Inventei um menino levado da breca para me ser. / Ele tinha um gosto elevado para chão / De seu olhar vazava uma nobreza de árvore. / Tinha desapatite para obedecer a arrumação das coisas*”, from the book *Memórias Inventadas*, by Manoel de Barros (2008, p.II).

Memórias inventadas: a terceira infância (2008, p.1) by Manoel de Barros presents as the “donors of his fountains”: the “birds”, the “drifters” and the “child”. “Everything I invent is false”, said the epigraph of Manoel de Barros’ book, in which the subject that remembers the past says he prefers not to put “a date in his existence”, rather he “fills the time”: “Our greatest date was the *when* [...] There are times in which I am *when* a rock” (BARROS, Manoel, 2007, p.XV). *Memórias inventadas* has an autobiographical tone, its conducting line is the imagination and in which, at every moment, we see the search for the settlement of new and outstanding relations in language.

While in Manoel de Barros the small things are in focus – the “sparrows”, the “frog” – in Humberto Campos’ (1947) book *Memórias* the reader is invited to learn the stories of the great deeds of a man who overcomes all things to take a “seat at the Academy and a chair at the Parliament” (CAMPOS, 1947, p.8). Throughout the pages of the book, each filled with certainties and eloquence, we find a narrator who says he prefers “confessing his ignorance to resorting to fantasy” (CAMPOS, 1947, p.11). This narrator constructs himself in opposition to imagination and he justifies the gaps in his text with uttermost sincerity.

I write the story of my life not because it is about me; but because it is about a lesson of courage to the wicked, of boldness to the poor, of hope to the discouraged, and, therefore, a useful map to the youth to follow. The vices that make it ugly, the mistakes that particularize it and which I proclaim with great tranquility, the rocks against which I have crashed, even those I made it work to my advantage, and so will those who read them. In knowing them, those who come after me will avoid them, running away from the dangers I have faced, and, then, seeking for more straight and safer ways to travel. (CAMPOS, 1947, p.8-9)³.

The memory itself is conceived differently in these two books, separated by over half a century. If, in Manoel de Barros, memory is associated to “invention”, “imagination” and “discovery”, highly characterized by inchoativity, in Humberto de Campos, memory seems to be the “trunk” where finished events are found, events that do not undergo any transformation in the moment when they are being remembered or narrated. There are only rare moments when the narrator of *Memórias* (1947) confesses it might be possible that his forgetfulness may have altered facts remembered, however, in circumscribing these moments of doubt, the narrator confers a greater degree of credibility to his words, by separating these doubtful moments from the rest of the text.

³ Original text: “Escrevo a história da minha vida não porque se trate de mim; mas porque constitui uma lição de coragem aos tímidos, de audácia aos pobres, de esperança aos desenganados, e, dessa maneira, um roteiro útil à mocidade que a manuseie. Os vícios que a afeiam, os erros que a singularizam e que proclamo com inteira tranquilidade de alma, os rochedos, em suma, em que bati, mesmo esses me foram proveitosos, e sê-lo-ão, talvez, aos que lerem. Conhecendo-os, saberão aqueles que vierem depois de mim, que devem evitá-los, fugindo aos perigos que enfrentei, e, conseqüentemente, procurando na viagem, caminhos mais limpos e seguros.” (CAMPOS, 1947, p.8-9).

Having before us these two different conceptualizations of memory brought forth in each of the aforementioned texts, a pertinent question may be raised: what quality of truth does each of these texts construe? As we have seen, memory can be presented as a faithful portray of the past or as an invention. The exam of the relations between memory and truth is, therefore, a pertinent guide to the studies of autobiographical genres.

It should be noted that, in this paper, truth will not be considered to have referential value, but rather it will be considered to be a result of a veridiction contract established between enunciator and enunciatee, as proposed by the discursive semiotics. According to this theory, enunciation is always presupposed. Such a conception of enunciation excludes the author in the flesh and does not characterize the discourses according to their external referents, but according to a fiduciary contract engaged in by the interlocutors, enunciator and enunciatee. It is this fiduciary contract that determines the veredictorial status of a given discourse and the stance assumed by interactants is anchored in the understanding that the “[...] role of language in construing the world of objects, and the relativity, correspondent to the diversity of human sciences” (GREIMAS, 1970, p.51, our translation)⁴. Thus the definition of a discourse as being autobiographical undergoes the exam of meaningful effects or simulacra created in the discursive immanence itself. These effects are connected to the genres, which establish relatively stable forms to the production of discourse, inserted in a given culture and in a given historical moment.

Given this line of investigation, the goals of this paper will not be to define whether created autobiographical scenarios are real of fictional, but will be to examine the truth effects proposed by the discourses and their enunciatees – readers projected by the discourse –, verifying how memorial architecture of discourse affects these enunciatees.

The corpus of analysis is composed of texts, produced in Brazil, of different autobiographic genres, such as academic memorial, literary autobiography in prose and poetry of autobiographic character. Academic memorial come from two areas of knowledge: Languages and Biology⁵. What is more, the demand of such texts is restricted to those written for public professorship tenure of University of São Paulo (USP), between 1970 and 2010. The literary autobiography in prose has in *Infância* [*Childhood*]⁶, written by Graciliano Ramos (2003), its main territory of investigation. Regarding poetry, for this study, we selected the poems *Infância*, by Manuel Bandeira (1993), which is part of the book *Belo Belo*; other poems by this author, such as *Evocação do Recife* and *Profundamente*, both from the book *Libertinagem*, should be used whenever they allow for comparison with our main texts. Poems were incorporated

⁴ “[...] participation de la langue à la construction du monde des objets, et de la relativité, correspondant à la diversité des sociétés humaines, du découpage du monde des significations”.

⁵ The present article does not make use of all the academic memorials analyzed for the larger PhD study.

⁶ For the present article, we chose to analyze just one literary text in prose, nonetheless in previous works, such as Mariana Barros (2011), we examine a large body of literary texts in prose, especially the ones written by Pedro Nava. Many of the generalization presented here, thus, are confirmed by our analyses presented in previous work.

to our research mainly because they allow for a comparison between autobiographic writing in prose and in poetry. What is more, considered with literary prose, they allow for a broader analysis of autobiographic literary discourse and also for a contrast with academic memorials. The type of corpus gathered for this research enhances the study of the relations between enunciative contracts and autobiographic genres, as well as the relations between genres from different circulation spheres, in this case, academic and literary.

The texts of this corpus, though from a variety of genres, have some characteristics in common: firstly, the effect of identity, emerging from different resources⁷, between enunciator, narrator and protagonist (main actor of what is narrated); secondly, the presence of a narrator in the present (time of narration), who tells retrospectively the life of the protagonist in the past (time of the narrated action); thirdly, the theme around “my life”.

The theoretical and methodological framework is Greimasian semiotics. Among the possibilities presented by this theory, we highlight the semiotic studies of enunciation and other tensive semiotic studies, with special attention to notions such as *event* and *exercise* (ZILBERBERG, 2007), and *field of presence* (FONTANILLE; ZILBERBERG, 2001). The notion of *field of presence*, such as developed from a tensive viewpoint, shall be one the epistemological guidelines on which the exam of the ways in which enunciatee adheres to autobiographic discourse is based, given that for each genre and each text the enunciator, in presenting their life in retrospective, regulates in specific ways the entrance of values in the *field of presence* of the enunciatee. We hope, therefore, to investigate the ways in which the enunciatee is affected sensibly in the different autobiographic genres and how this *sensitizing* from the enunciator interferes in the fiduciary relationship established between communicative partners.

The levels of autobiographic discourse

Literary autobiographies in prose, poems with an autobiographic tone and academic memorial rebuild, in language, a past time. Such past, even in the interior of each work, cannot be seen as whole, for it is perceived by the different “I’s” to whom this past is related: the enunciator, the narrator and the protagonist. Each of these instances is, therefore, a producer of perceptions and evaluations of the world, which may converge or diverge, and may even build themselves with a deictic center, which defines temporal and spatial relations. In order to treat with more precision each of these matters, it is necessary to distinguish the various levels in the organization of the autobiographic discourse.

⁷ The mechanisms for constructing identity effects between narrator, enunciator and protagonist were discussed in Mariana Barros (2011).

We can set as the first level the one that involves both the protagonist (the actor of what is narrated) and the world, both seen from the perspective of their interaction with each other. This first level has to do, therefore, with the simulacrum of the life being told. We can formulate this synthesis concerning the first interaction: *protagonist (the actor of what is narrated) and the world*.

It must not be forgotten, however, that life situations are presented in autobiographic works as someone's memory: there is a narrator who remembers and tells the life of an *I* in the past. Hence it is important to observe how the narrator, situated in the *here* and the *now* of the narration, is related to his narrated memory. The distance between the narrator and his memory may be shown as being greater or smaller, just as the separation between the subject of the present and the subject of the past: in one extreme of the scale is total immersion in the memory; in the other, complete caesura. We have then another synthesizer pair: narrator and memory⁸.

The enunciatee perceives these strategies as being orchestrated by the enunciator. What is more, the effect in autobiographic works is that the life being told is the life of the enunciator; something built with innumerable resources, onomastics among them. Language *be-making*, in the present, the image of the past. Therefore, memory comes about, to those who remember, as an image-simulacrum of the past; it cannot be ignored, nonetheless, that memory is a present-time experience. Memory is activated, filtered, selected and recreated from present-time experience and still felt in the present-time. More than just showing how life was lived, the autobiographic genres unveil the enunciator's views of the life narrated, part of which is his expectation toward the enunciatee. It must be emphasized that, be it in autobiographic discourse or not, the enunciatee partakes in the construction of the uttered-discourse meaning, with the implication that the subject of enunciation – producer of the utterance – is understood, in semiotic theory, to be formed by the enunciator and the enunciatee:

[...] the enunciatee is not merely the addressee of the communication, but also the subject responsible for producing the discourse, for the act of “reading” is, too, an act of language (a meaningful act) in the same way that the production of the discourse is. The term “subject of enunciation” frequently employed as a synonym for enunciator, covers in fact the two acting positions of enunciator and enunciate. (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.171)⁹.

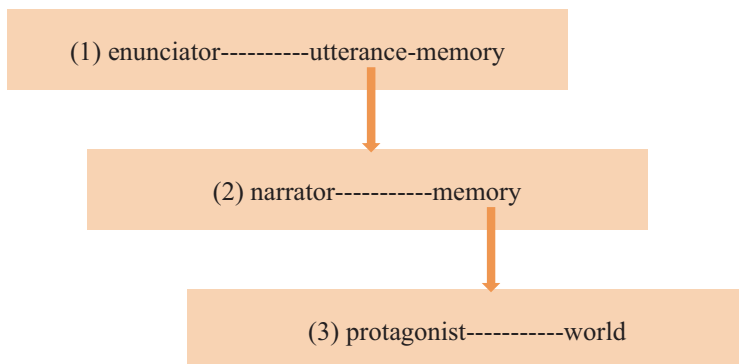
⁸ The narrator, in semiotics, is understood as an actant of uttered enunciation delegated by the enunciator, present explicit or implicitly in every enunciated-discourse (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.327). Thus even when we are dealing with poems, we will have a “narrator”, which does not mean we are disregarding what is specific to poetry.

⁹ Original text: “[...] o enunciatário não é apenas destinatário da comunicação, mas também sujeito produtor do discurso, por ser a “leitura” um ato de linguagem (ato de significar) da mesma maneira que a produção do discurso propriamente dito. O termo “sujeito da enunciação”, empregado frequentemente como sinônimo de enunciator, cobre de fato as duas posições actanciais de enunciator e de enunciatário.” (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.171).

In order to account for stance taking, it is necessary to consider, then, how memory is construed in the text, because it is the text that gives us clues about the autobiographic enunciation¹⁰. We propose, therefore, a third synthesizer pair: *enunciator and utterance-memory*.

The following schema represents the pertinent levels for analyzing autobiographic discourse¹¹:

Figure 1 – The levels of analysis of autobiographic discourse



Source: Author’s elaboration.

It must be said that level (3) could be unfolded in (3’), not represented in the schema, since the narrator may recall a past moment when he remembers an even more remote moment. This is what happens with the narrator of *Baú de ossos*, by Pedro Nava (2000). In an instant coincident to the point “Not that long ago” – therefore, not concomitant, syntactically, to the *now* of narration –, the narrator sees the turret in the police station and remembers Luís Felipe Vieira Souto. This unexpected recall drives him towards a reconstruction of the path taken by his memory:

Sometimes disturbed in their chaining, idea association hurts – like a metal sounding lead ill conducted making its *fausse route* in the body. Not that long ago I experienced it. The other day, arriving to the corner of Pedro Américo, via Catete Street, I looked at the precinct turret (now demolished). It was standing out over the white wall of the sky scraper, in the back. Looking at the wall, the representation of the white wall stood out with difficulty, in tumbling throbs, in a zooning agony, the memory of the deceased figure of Luís Felipe Vieira Souto. To myself

¹⁰ Marked with intentionality, enunciation is understood as “[...] a view of the world, a transitive-oriented relationship, by which the subject constructs the world an object while he construes himself” (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.168).

¹¹ The dotted lines represent the relations held at the same level; and the arrow indicates the change from one level to another.

the association was shocking, it figured to me as weird. It wasn't. I was following a train of reasoning that, being so repetitive, made me take in itself the short way and I skipped the wall, immediately, to the shadow, where I would arrive according to the chaining conducted by the habit. (NAVA, 2000, p. 293-294)¹².

The organization of autobiographic discourse in levels will be used throughout the analysis of the corpus, since it has an important role in the exam of the relations between enunciator and enunciatee in autobiographic works.

Event memory and past-event memory

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, two notions developed by the tensive grammar are of paramount importance to this study: *field of presence* and *event*. In this section, we briefly introduce these notions.

Semiotic theory has been dealing with the matter of existence by considering the category of presence, given that this theory has no interest in issuing ontological judgments about the nature of the objects under analysis:

The semiotic theory deals with the presence, that is, the “reality” of perceivable objects, a common problem, it is true, to scientific epistemology. At this level, epistemology can focus on an operation definition that does not take any sides, in saying that semiotics is a value of any kind and is determined by the transitive relation that, taking it as a knowledgeable object, is connected to the cognitive subject. (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.194-195)¹³.

According to Fontanille and Zillberberg, it would be necessary to take a step further regarding the notion of existence as presented in Greimas and Courtés' *Dictionary of semiotics*, and it would also be necessary to recognize, in such cognitive relationship, the perceptual basis of all signification (FONTANILLE; ZILBERBERG, 2001, p.

¹² Original text: “Às vezes perturbada nos seus encadeamentos, a associação de idéias dói – como sonda metálica mal conduzida fazendo *fausseroute* nos canais do corpo. Há bem pouco tempo tive essa experiência. Chegando, um dia, pela Rua do Catete, à esquina de Pedro Américo, olhei o torreão (hoje derrubado) da Delegacia de Polícia. Ele se destacava sobre a parede clara do arranha-céu, no fundo. Olhando a parede, da representação da parede branca destacou-se com dificuldade, num retubar de palpitações, numa agonia de tonteira, a lembrança da figura defunta de Luís Felipe Vieira Souto. A mim mesmo espantou a associação que se me afigurou estapafúrdia. Não era. Eu estava seguindo um curso de pensamento que, de tanto repetido, fez-me tomar nele o caminho mais curto e pulei da parede, imediatamente, à sombra, ao vulto, a que deveria chegar imediatamente segundo encadeamento regido pelo hábito.” (NAVA, 2000, p.293-294).

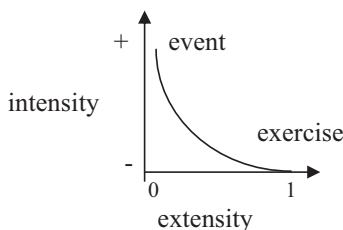
¹³ Original text: “À teoria semiótica se coloca o problema da presença, isto é, da “realidade” dos objetos cognoscíveis, problema comum – à verdade – à epistemologia científica no conjunto. Nesse nível, ela pode contentar-se com uma definição operatória que não a compromete em nada, dizendo que a existência semiótica de uma grandeza qualquer é determinada pela relação transitiva que, tomando-a como objeto de saber, a liga ao sujeito cognitivo.” (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.194-195).

124). Hence they propose that semiotics should inherit from phenomenology, and, more specifically, from Merleau-Ponty, the notion of “field of presence”. Following the tenets of tensive grammar, field of presence may be understood, on the one hand, as the “[...] spatial-temporal domain in which perception is exerted, and, on the other hand, the entrances, the remainders, the exits and the returns that, at the same time, to which are owed its value and embodiment [...]” (FONTANILLE; ZILBERBERG, 2001, p. 125). Every value that penetrates in the field is evaluated by its extensity and of the intensity of the perception of the subject. Therefore, intensity has to do with the force with which we are affected by the values that penetrate our *field of presence*, and extensity has to do with, in first place, temporal extensity, and also spatial controlled by intensity.

The dimension of extensity, which subsumes the subdimension of temporality and spatiality, is formed of “states of affairs”, analogous to that which is intelligible. The subdimension of temporality has the basic opposition of *abbreviation versus stretch*, while the subdimension of spatiality, *concentration versus expansion* (ZILBERBERG, 2006b, p.230 e.p.237). The dimension of intensity, which has tonicity and *tempo* as sub dimensions, corresponds to the measure of affect that touches us in our relationship with the world, that is, to the “states of the soul”, to that which is sensible. Tonicity provides the basic opposition *tonic versus atonic*, and the *tempo*, the opposition *fast versus slow* (ZILBERBERG, 2006b, p.236 e.p.239).

From this perspective, it is relevant to retrieve the notion of *event*, such as conceived by Zilberberg (2007). Understood to be the syncretism between tonicity and *tempo*, which composes the axis of intensity, *event* is anything that surprises the subject, that saturates the subject’s *field of present*, and that, at first, is unintelligible. An *event* may be merely felt by the subject. The event corresponds to an increase of *tempo* and of tonicity, but it is not a slow increase, rather, it is abrupt, like a leap. There is acceleration, perceived as being the sudden entrance of a given value in the *field of presence*, long before one could predict its arrival. Tonicity is also revealed at its highest degree, since the subject is taken over in its integrality by the *event*, thus feeling its impact. The correlate term to *event* is *exercise* (ZILBERBERG, 2007), which is configured as that which opposes all. The following representation in Figure 2 shows a graph, which depicts slowness and minimal impact.

Figure 2 – The event and the exercise



Source: Adapted from Zilberberg (2007, p.19).

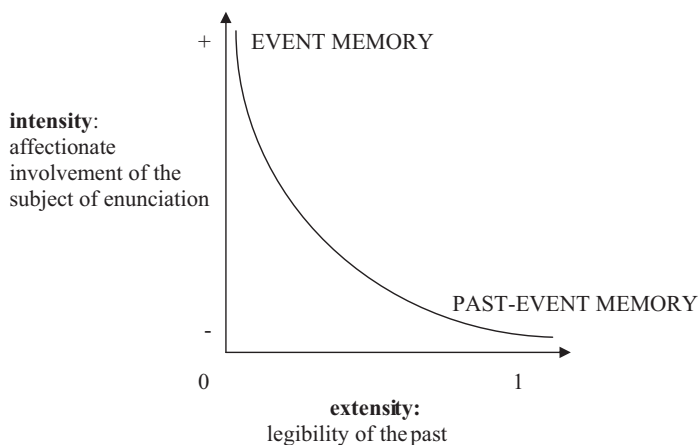
The subject, who lives the event, an affectionate experience, is not the subject of action, but the one who endures and suffers the effects of the *event*. With respect to what Zilberberg (2007) calls *mode of efficiency*, the manner in which a value is installed in a *field of presence*, the event corresponds to the modality of *survenir* (supervene, sudden accomplishment), which means that the value appeared in the field of presence unexpectedly, and the *exercice* corresponds to the modality of *parvenir* (achieve, reach, stepwise accomplishment), which is attained when the process is carried out according to the will of the subject¹⁴. *Survenir* and *parvenir* are conducted by the *tempo*.

With respect to what the author calls mode of junction, that is, the condition of cohesion by which specific information is or is not affirmed, the *event*, which institutes the unexpected, would function according to the mode of concession (although *a*, however *b*), since it subverts the causality postulated by the implication (if *a*, then *b*), which is the logic of the exercise. The *event* performs integration between *survenir* and the concession, while the *exercice* unites *parvenir* and the implication.

Building upon the notions of *field of presence* and *event*, we propose two discursive forms for construing *memory* as an analytic category of autobiographic discourses: the *past-event memory* and the *event memory*. *Past-event memory* may be compared to the image of an archive, because it is discursively formed as something which seems to be ready even before the writing of the text; as previously given data. Past event memory provides legibility to the past, which is elaborated with the effect of exhaustion of information. It makes the remembered past, and the text, an object that must be analyzed and explicated from distance, and whose scaffolding is provided by the effect of reference. *Event memory*, on the other hand, comes about as a construction of what is performed throughout the text. It captures in its *becoming*, in its action of bringing about the remembered past and making it disappear. It is dynamic, unstable. It does not create the illusion of conclusion, but every piece of the past attaches to the subject's affectionate engagement, and it is this subject that produces the text and is produced by it. *Event memory* displays the minimum with the highest degree of force. We propose thus these two categories of "memory" in order to analyze the relations between enunciator and enunciatee.

¹⁴ The pair *survenir* and *parvenir* do not find a perfect translation in English - especially not one that reflects the similar etymological root. The meaning and etymology of *survenir* are found in the word *supervene*, but *parvenir* would most likely be translated by *achieve*. Therefore, we have chosen to maintain the French terms throughout the text.

Figure 3 – Event memory and past-event memory



Source: Author's elaboration.

The event, in its tensive meaning, may appear in all the levels of autobiographic memory. In Level 3, in which the interaction between the protagonist and the world is held, surprises, such as birth and death, may be comprehended as accelerated and shocking. In the level of narration (Level 2), memories, in some moments, may abruptly invade the narrator's *field of presence*. It must be emphasized, however, that event memory and past-event memory concern the enunciation, and, thus reverberate differently in the situations of interaction between enunciator and enunciatee occurring in autobiographic genres (Level 1).

We turn now to a brief exposition of the analyses of academic memorial and of the selected poems by Manuel Bandeira, in order to show the tension between *event memory* and *past-event memory*, resulting in the predominance of *event memory* in academic memorials and of *past-event memory* in poems.

In academic memorials, the life remembered is elaborated in such a way that it displays a coherence that confirms the competence of the enunciator, who is capable of organizing these memories in a text. All events are dated. The actors are always presented with their name and surname. The places of paper presentations, conferences and courses ministered are anchored in a specific address that can easily be recognized by the enunciatee. In academic memorials, it is as if the facts narrated did not originate in the subject's memory – always subjective, with gaps and uncertainties – but in a previous discourse already established as reality. Thus, the effect of referential illusion is created¹⁵.

¹⁵ In academic memorials, toponyms and chrononyms are frequent, because they have an anchoring function. The use of these anchoring expressions has to do with the construction of the simulacrum of the external referent and the production of the effect of reality (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p.30). To these spatiotemporal indexes are

Around midyear 1993, SENAC invited me to give a lecture in Salvador, at the release of the book *Africa: moda, cultura e tradição*, which gathered texts by Fábio Ávila and Fábio Leite (and some excerpts from my dissertation (219), about photos by Maureen Bisilliat of African clothing in Abijan (PETTER, 2008, p.24)¹⁶.

The dates and important facts order activities chronologically, producing the effect of a “natural” transition of time, without failing before the expectations of the enunciatee: this type of sequential organization generates the comfort of knowing what is coming next, a *knowledge* which is reassured when the enunciatee advances in the text.

The frequency of toponyms, anthroponyms, chrononyms, and the chronologically organized textual sequence provide clarity to the past; such clarity is also attained by the dominance of implicative logic, proper to the *exercise*. The actor of what is narrated is presented as someone who planned his steps, followed the stipulated stages and attained the expected result; this brings about a relationship with the world in which the intelligible predominates. This manner of elaborating past experiences reassures the reading competences of the enunciatee, because he is capable of predicting with ease what will happen to the actor of what is narrated. The narration of a life in which *events* are emphasized could construct a path filled with surprises to those reading the text.

This way of organizing the narrative displays the protagonist (in autobiographic discourses identical to the narrator and the enunciator) as someone who managed to live their life harmoniously, with minor deviations from their main search program, which had already started in childhood. Because of the underlying implicative logic, each step is seen as a “natural” consequence of what preceded: “My Master’s in Botanic, advised by professor Estela Meria Plastino, was a *natural* continuation of the process initiated in my undergraduate internship” (URSI, 2007, p.2, added emphasis)¹⁷.

It is necessary to add at this point that, even in the case of academic memorials, life is presented as something absolutely planned, as we may see in the following excerpt of Ursi’s memorial, in which she sees herself “paralyzed” in finding out that, although it were expected basic level knowledge of Biology from the students, they believed water to be a living being:

Biology I, too, was a *great challenge*. [...] At the beginning of the course, I did a ludic activity about the main characteristics of life and my surprise was to see that about 80% of my students (a class with 72

added anthroponyms, which, in dominating the actors with proper names, individualizing them, take part in the figurativization and also contribute to the effect of reality.

¹⁶ Original text: “Em meados de 1993, o SENAC me convidou para fazer uma palestra em Salvador, no lançamento do livro *África: moda, cultura e tradição*, que reunia textos de Fábio Ávila e Fábio Leite (e algumas citações de minha tese) (219), sobre fotos do vestuário africano feitas por Maureen Bisilliat em Abijan.” (PETTER, 2008, p.24).

¹⁷ Original text: “O Mestrado na área de Botânica, com a orientação da Dra. Estela Meria Plastino, foi uma *continuação natural* do processo iniciado no estágio da graduação”. (URSI, 2007, p.2, added emphasis).

officially enrolled students) thought that water was a living being. [...] I was *paralyzed* for a few seconds and I decided, at that moment, that I would not be a professor like the many others that had passed by those students' lives, who were focused on what was taught not on what was learnt (URSI, 2007, p.19-20, added emphasis)¹⁸.

Therefore, the unpredictable, too, conducted by concession, has its place in the academic genre. The *events* that shake the actor of the narrated reveal, on the one side, their heroism, because they overcome the “obstacles” and the challenges”; on the other side, they create the effect of reality proper to the genre: life does not allow for full predictions.

In spite of the presence of the unexpected, it is important to notice that much of that occurs as *event* to the actor of the narrated, under the attentive and distanced look of the narrator, may be presented as implicative, and thus being proximate to the *exercise*. The narrator presents, then, the competent researcher she/he seems to be. In the following excerpt from Negrão's memorial, we observe that, in the narration, a “great failure” is acknowledged by the actor of the narrated as one of the “causalities” that enabled new accomplishments.

Not being able to reach my first option was a *great failure* to me at that moment. Today, however, I see my acceptance for that second option as one of the *causalities* that changed my path (NEGRÃO, 2004, p.8, added emphasis)¹⁹.

In these cases, the event is restricted to the narrated (Level 3), which has to do with the relations between the protagonist and the world, because in the narration (Level 2), in which we have the relation between narrator and memory, the *exercise* predominates. This confirms that the memory in the academic genre is guided, predominately, by the *obligation* to explain everything, making the past intelligible for the reader.

As we will see, while in the autobiographic poems the narrator and the protagonists can, in diverse moments, experiment the same sensations, identifying them even more, in academic memorials it is almost always possible the occurrence of very few presentifications of the past, via the substitution of the present tense for a past tense,

¹⁸ Original text: Biologia I também foi um *grande desafio*. [...] No início da disciplina, fiz uma atividade lúdica sobre características da vida e qual não foi a minha *surpresa* ao perceber que cerca de 80% de meus alunos (uma classe com 72 matriculado) achavam que a água era um ser vivo. [...] Fiquei *paralisada* por alguns instantes e decidi, naquele momento, que não seria mais uma professora como muitas que deveriam ter passado na vida daqueles alunos, que estavam focadas no que era ensinado e não no que era aprendido. (URSI, 2007, p.19-20, added emphasis).

¹⁹ Original text: “Não conseguir minha primeira opção foi um grande fracasso para mim naquele momento. Hoje, no entanto, vejo meu ingresso na segunda opção como uma das *causalidades* que mudaram o meu percurso”. (NEGRÃO, 2004, p.8, added emphasis).

for example²⁰. Besides that, there is the predominance of enuncive tenses – “then” – that are anchored in a preterit moment, and not the enunciative tenses – “now” – that are anchored concomitantly to the enunciation (FIORIN, 1996)²¹. The construction of the space produces a similar effect, since the spaces are enuncive – “there” – and not enunciative – “here” – that predominates in academic memorials. All these resources make the past to be told as a spatiotemporal experience with no continuity to the *here* and *now* of the narration.

In metalinguistic reflections, when the narrator talks about the genre or about the writing of the text, taking them as a type of language to be examined, it is emphasized with greater stress the distance between the narrator and the actor of the narrated: “The writing of a memorial may be compared to the creation of a scrapbook”²² (NEGRÃO, 2004, p.4). This separation between the levels of autobiographic discourse strengthens the intelligibility of the utterance to the enunciatee, because, on the one side, it maintains the stability of time, space and persons of the discourse, and, on the other, it maintains the distance of the enunciatee with respect to the other levels of autobiographic discourse. Thus, the enunciatee is not involved kinesthetically and affectionately in the narrated past.

There are, however, moments in which the narrator of the memorials presents her/himself as being surprised by a past memory, losing control of remembrance:

The first memory I can register with respect to my interest towards Biology dates back to 1961, when I was four and I was witnessing the suffering of my (maternal) grandmother Kasemira due to final stage cancer. I solemnly swore to her that I would become a doctor to cure her. *Since then innumerable memories come to mind related to this same interest.* Some of the most significant memories are the experiments conducted with armadillo bugs and ants, some of them sadistic in their nature, normal to many kids, but others were of a ludic-scientific nature, such as the construction of labyrinths (with building-block games my father, who worked with civil construction, liked to give me) in order to see the poor little animals try to use the walls to their detachments. (MATIOLI, 2001, p.2, added emphasis)²³.

²⁰ *Presentification* is understood as a type of shifting in or neutralization in semiotics: “Contrary to the shifting out, which is the expulsion of the instantiation of enunciation, shifting in is the effect of returning to the enunciation, produced by the suspension of the opposition between terms of the categories of person and/or space and/or time, as well as by the denegation of the whole enunciation instance. Every shifting in presupposes, therefore, an operation of shifting out, which is logically prior to shifting in.” (GREIMAS; COURTÈS, 2008, p.159-160).

²¹ These observations about the discursive syntax of tense, space and person, presented in this paper, are aligned with the views presented in Fiorin (1996).

²² Original text: “O fazer um memorial pode ser comparado à montagem de um álbum de fotografias”. (NEGRÃO, 2004, p.4).

²³ Original text: “A primeira lembrança que eu posso registrar com relação ao meu interesse pela área biológica data de 1961, aos quatro anos de idade, ao acompanhar o sofrimento de minha avó Kasemira (materna) que estava com câncer

In this case the event takes place only at the level of narration (Level 2), in which there is the interaction between the narrator and the narrated memory. The discursive organization of this memorial does not, however, reach the point in which the work may be considered the work of an *event* to the enunciator or to the enunciatee (Level 1). The past memories are organized in the narration. There are no gaps to be filled by the reader. The narrator explains, with a certain number of details, the experiences with insects, using subordinate clauses, without fragmenting the syntax or the semantics of the text. This contributes to the creation of the effect of a world previously made, even before the act of narration itself. The narrator would have the role of narrating what is already given and confirmed by the documentation attached to the text, as shown in indications such as “doc 1”, “doc 2”, “doc 3”, common to the exemplars of this genre. Even when the narrator informs what was modified by the experience of the autobiographic writing, this, in the majority of the cases, is not confirmed by what is “said”.

The textualization confirms our assertions. The inconstant presence of a lexicon that expresses emotions and interjections, as well as punctuation and syntax employed with poetic effects instantiate a narrator whose simulacrum is that of one who does not allow oneself to be involved by the memories. The subject of the past experience, who experienced sensations and emotions, is well circumscribed in a preterit time.

These facts allow us to talk about the favoring of *past-event memory* in the academic memorials under exam: the enunciator “proves” his competences to do research and to the professorship when they carefully and from far “auscultate” their past. In the memories are laid out the chosen regularities under the apparent chaos. The enunciatee is thus manipulated by these strategies of the order of the intelligible. *Past-event memory* reinforces the limits that separate and distinguish the internal levels of autobiographic discourse, enabling unfolding (in opposition to the given condoning in *event memory*). To the subject of enunciation, it is built as continuity, it does not cause any discomfort or estrangement.

Let us turn now to the initial verses of *Profundamente*, by Manuel Bandeira (1993, p. 139):

Yesterday when I fell asleep
It was night of Saint John's
There was joy and rumor
Booms of light bombs of Bengala
Voices, songs and laughter
At the foot of bonfires.²⁴

terminal. Prometi solenemente a ela que torna-me-ia um médico para poder curá-la. Desde então *ocorre-me uma série de outras memórias relacionadas a esse interesse*. Algumas mais marcantes são os experimentos realizados com tatus-bolinha e formigas, sendo alguns deles de natureza sádica como ocorre naturalmente em várias crianças, mas outros de natureza lúdico-científicas, tais como a construção de labirintos (com jogos infantis de construção que meu pai, que sempre trabalhou com construção civil, gostava de me presentear) para os pobres bichinhos que teimavam em usar as paredes para seu desvencilhamento.” (MATIOLI, 2001, p.2, added emphasis).

²⁴ Original text: “Quando ontem adormeci / Na noite de São João / Havia alegria e rumor / Estrondos de bombas luzes de Bengala / Vozes, cantigas e risos / Ao pé das fogueiras acesas.” (BANDEIRA, 1993).

In this first stanza, a party emerges from a collection of kinesthetic traces: “booms”, “rumors”, “lights”, “voices, song and laughter, “bonfires”. These traits only allow for the enunciatee to rebuild a sensitive “night of Saint John’s”. To the enunciatee it is not available the precise information of the where and the when the party took place.

This is a fragmentary way of presenting the past, which we also find in *Evocação do Recife* (Evocation of Recife) and *Infância* (*Childhood*), (BANDEIRA, 1989, p.193-197). Especially in these two poems, a sequence of images is built in which they seem to be narrated while coming to the memory of the subject. Let us now turn to the poem *Infância* in order to see how this happens:

Childhood

Bicycle race.

I remember nothing but a bamboo curved over the stream.

Was I three years old?

This was in Petrópolis.

I forage deeper amidst memories.

How I would like to remember the black teat of my wet nurse...

... but my eyes can't pierce the perennial fog of time.

Still in Petrópolis... a hotel courtyard... toys strewn about the floor...

Later the house in São Paulo.

Miguel Guimarães, lighthearted, myopic, devilish,

suddenly pulling out a tin watch from my ear.

A buzzards, perched there on the garden wall.

I make a paper trumpet,

sound a command...

The buzzard obeys.

And I scurry off in fright at my first magic sign.

Later... Santos beach...

Races in circles traced in the sand...

Again Miguel Guimarães, finish line judge, with his little prizes.

The huge rat in the trap.

Another bamboo grove...

inspiration for my brother's one and only poem:

“I was going down the road

when I saw the Carnival brass.

The players marched straight through the bamboo

before falling on their...”

High tides of the equinox.
The flooded garden...
Uncle Cláudio picking up the tip of a shattered mast.

Poetry shipwrecks!

Later, once more in Petrópolis,
myself besides the wash tank, a string looped about a baby tooth
but lacking the heart to pull.

Christmas Eve... The little slippers behind the door...
And next morning, in bed, dazzled by the toys left by the fairy.

An the country house in Gávea?
The house on Don'Ana Street–
Our first dog, Boy.
(There would never be a dog of another name.
In our house even the female dogs would be “Boy”.)

Fear of thieves.
For me, they were men with wooden faces.

The return to Pernambuco!
Discovery of the mansions with their red tile roofs.
My mother's father – a saint...
My grandmother, a born fighter.

The house on Union Street.
The courtyard – nucleus of poetry.
The bath – nucleus of poetry.
The outhouse – nucleus of poetry (“la fraîcheur des latrines!”)

The music room – nucleus of mystery.
Little animal skin rugs.
No one ever entered there... Silence... Darkness...
The upright piano with its keys grown yellow and out of tune.

Discovery of the street!
The door-to-door peddlers
Oh that world of paper kites, of spinning tops, of hopscotch!

One night the little girl pulled me away from the circle
of children playing Rabbit Run. Imperious and panting, she
took me to a corner of Dona Aninha Viega's house,
then raised her little skirt and said, “Stick it here!”

Later my grandfather... Discovery of death!

At the age of ten I returned to Rio.
I had become familiar with life's most essential truths.
I was ripe for suffering
and for poetry.

The characteristics of spoken language, the varied size of verses relating to a particularized image of the past, the lack of order are some of the resources that contribute to the creation of the impression that the memories are narrated as they emerge, taking over the field of presence of the narrator in an unexpected way. The memory is structured, in this poem, on the field of the *event*, which is the combination of accelerated *tempo* and exacerbated tonicity, as mentioned earlier in this paper. Each fragment of memory stands as fracture in the present of the subject.

However, it is not only at the level in which the narrator is that memory is approximated to the notion of *event*. The reduced use of connectives conjoining the number of memories, and the abundance of verbless sentences or sentences with nominalizations – such as in “*Races in circles traced in the sand*” –, and the lack of an explicit order that would bring foreseeability to the discourse make enunciator and enunciatee also experience the abrupt transition from one memory to another (Level 1). The reading is fast paced and shocking.

Another strategy observed is the partiality with which the scenes are set, since there is an emphasis on kinesthetic and affectionate traits from the past. There is, in the poem, a close relation between the memory and the senses, among which vision stands out. It is as if the narrator looked at those scenes from his childhood again, side by side the young boy he once was. The narrator looks at what the child looked at; or the child looks at things through the eyes of the adult: the hotel courtyard with toys strewn about the floor, Uncle Cláudio picking up the tip of a shattered mast, the upright piano with its keys grown yellow and out of tune. The centrality of vision explains the reason why the past is retrieved via spatial means. The images recreated verbally seem to be connected to the spaces, and these images come about as the narrator, using language, passes by the places where the child passed by. It is necessary to stress, nonetheless, that the other senses are also evoked, for example, when he sees himself playing the paper trumpet (hearing), when he mentions the rugs made of animal skin (tactile), the “silence” and the out of tune piano (hearing).

Because of the strong kinesthetic appeal, a momentary fusion of the levels of the actor of the narrated and of the narrator is created (Levels 2 and 3), since the narrator is “moved” by the experiences of the past. And what is more, these two levels are approximated to the one in which holds the relation between the subject of the enunciation and the utterance (Level 1), which generates important consequences to the construction of the truth in the text. The sensation, recreated in figurativity and shared by verbal means, becomes the access to this powerful truth. Enunciator and enunciatee believe in the truth of the sensations they experience in the text, with no need of an external referent that corroborates them.

The discursive syntax can augment the interrelation between the levels of autobiographic works, although with different resources than those used by the discursive semantics. The use of present tense instead of the perfect preterit or of the imperfect neutralizes the oppositions of tenses, creating thus an effect of temporal proximity of the actor of the narrated with respect to the temporality of the narrator and of the enunciation itself. This is revealed in the following verses of the poem:

I make a paper trumpet,
sound a command...
The buzzard obeys.
And I scurry off in fright at my first magic sign.

It is as if the center of the field of presence of the subject, invaded by the adult narrator, were punctually dislocated to the center wherein the child perceives the world. The adult identifies himself with the child – another *I*. Not only the sensations and the impression are lived with affinities by the adult and by the boy, but also the deictic center, from which spatiotemporal references are built, is invaded by both. If we think of the enunciatee, this is an element that causes instability in the reading of the text, because the time in which each instance is anchored is less evident, as well as who is living each scene.

The impact on the enunciatee caused by this paratactic organization, by the emphasis on sensations, by the presentification of the past, among other resources, is only partially attenuated by the chronologic reading in the end of the poem *Childhood*, a characteristic also present on *Evocação do Recife*. However, there are few clues available to retrieve this order, such as the mention to age in “Childhood” (the poem starts with the memories from when the boy was three years old and it ends with his coming to Rio, when he was ten). It is necessary to stress that the recreation of spatial and temporal settings, in all three poems by Bandeira mentioned in this paper, is achieved above all from the connection with the biographic actor, which weakens the referential illusion and maintains the instability of the past in face of the subject of the enunciation. We do not find in these poems mentions to historic moments or dates, or historic places, touristic places, but we do find mentions to places and moments tied to what the narrator (identified as the enunciator) incorporates as being his own. This explains the sequence of negations that “peels” Recife of its own predicates:

Recife
Not the American Venice
Not the Mauritsstad of the ship-owners of East Indies lovers of eastern
India
Not the Recife of Mascates
Not the Recife that I learned to love later –

Recife of libetary revolutions
But the Recife with no story nor literature

Recife with nothing else
Recife from my childhood²⁵

These reified forms are presented, in the poem, as something that, having originated in an almost institutionalized knowledge about the city Recife, whether it is scientific or literary, was dessemantized due to discursive “bleaching”, the opposite of what happens with fixed forms that refer to popular knowledge about the city, found in catchphrases such as “Coelho sai!/Não sai!”. While reified forms show a weaker assumption of the subject of enunciation, fixed forms, treated as regenerative, are held more intensely²⁶.

In showing the memory in act, by guarding and revealing the past, autobiographic poems therefore propitiate the dominance of *event memory*. The same preterit experiences seem not to affect sensitively just the boy who is remembered but also the narrator who reports these experiences, as well as the subject of enunciation, who, in semiotics, is formed of the enunciator and the enunciatee. In this sense, we can speak of a compression of the autobiographic levels, in which times, spaces and subjects of the narrated, of the narration and of the enunciation seem to overlap. This is the domain of the sensible experience. *Event memory* is installed thus as a fracture of the *field of the presence* of the enunciatee, detaching itself from what is routine and predictable.

Up to this moment, we have seen that *past-event memory* is characteristic of academic memorials, and that *event memory* defines autobiographic poems. It is important to highlight, nonetheless, that this does not mean that event memory cannot be found in academic memorials. Arrigucci Jr (1990), with great conciseness, rebuilds in his academic memorial the relationship he had with rural fields and two big cities, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, when he was a little boy:

Rio was the sea and the big city, the astonishment of light, in contrast to São Paulo, grey and threatening, barely seen through the windows of the hotel rooms – especially from the City Hotel at that time – or in the scary hubbub of the streets. These images alternated in my life as a boy with the images of the farm, of the grass and of the rivers, of Campo Triste, of hunting and fishing, of the colonists’ farms that I visited many times with my dad, in assisting the ill. (ARRIGUCCI JR., p.1)²⁷.

²⁵ Original text: “Recife / Não a Veneza Americana / Não a Mauritsstad dos armadores das Índias Ocidentais / Não o Recife dos Mascates / Nem mesmo o Recife que aprendi a amar depois — / Recife das revoluções libertárias / Mas o Recife sem história nem literature // Recife sem mais nada / Recife da minha infância”

²⁶ The incorporation of these variant linguistic forms considered, in Brazil, to belong to low registers are taken in Modernism literary school to be the “more Brazilian-like” way of speaking. When these poems were published these forms caused astonishment among the readers.

²⁷ Original text: “O Rio era então o mar e a cidade grande, o maravilhamento da luz, em contraste com uma São Paulo cinzenta e meio ameaçadora, mal percebida de passagem pelos quartos de hotel – sobretudo do City Hotel daquele tempo – ou no rebuliço assustador das ruas. Essas imagens se alternavam, em minha vida de menino, com as da roça,

In this excerpt there is a strong investment in semantic density, due to the figurativization. The reader is directed kinesthetically, especially via the exploration of visual elements. São Paulo, the “grey” and threatening city, contrasts with Rio, whose luminosity astonishes the little boy. The discovery of these two metropolises is an intense experience to the child, but not only to the child, since the remembrance and the recreation of those memories in the text reveal a narrator and a subject of enunciation deeply impacted. It is possible to see this in the manner of presentation of the cities. Each city receives a synthetic description, in which their kinesthetic aspects are highlighted. “Rio was the sea”, says the narrator, who, in using metonymy, intensifies the shock, by means of the use of non-conventional language and also of the condensed presentation of the city. In order to achieve full comprehension, the enunciatee needs to unfold the senses concentrated in this and in other figures of speech employed in Arrigucci’s memorial, decelerating the sensible impact. Many elements proper to the literary language can thus be easily recognized in this memorial. This indicates that not only the autobiographic actor can experience these frugal aesthetic encounters, but so can the narrator and the subject of enunciation.

Just as *event memory* may be found in academic memorials, *past-event memory* may be found in autobiographic poems. In the poem “Childhood”, for example, there is an attempt to balance the discomfort produced over the enunciatee by *event memory*, allowing him for a few moments to regain intelligibility of the text, in spite of an accelerated poetics. The first verse sets in a noun phrase a scene with no temporal or spatial anchoring, and yet with no onomastic identification particularizing the actors. Who are the cyclists? What are they doing there? In the following verses, however, the enunciatee gains a better understanding of the scene: the “cycling race” is part of the memories of the narrator. The age “3 years old” anchors the event, even though in a vague way – mainly if we were to take into account the question marks at the end of the verse –, and it provides more stability to the reader of the poem. The same effect is attained by the use of the name of the city: “Petrópolis”.

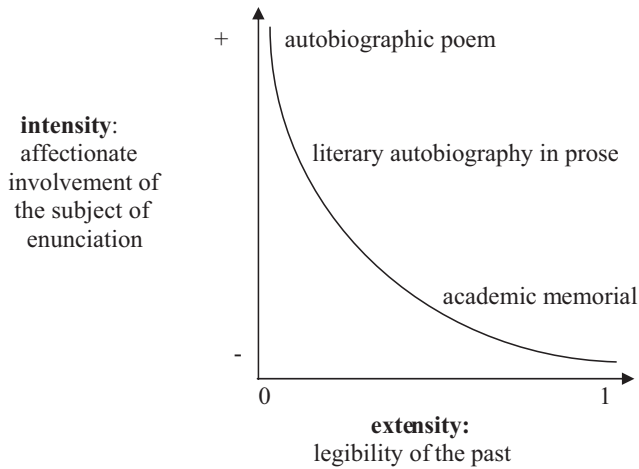
It is possible to affirm then that *event memory* occurs in academic memorials in a milder configuration, since it is dominated by *past-event memory*. Following the same logic, event memory prevails in the poems, even though there is a timid presence of *past-event memory*²⁸. The many genres that compose the corpus of this work can be organized on a scale, at whose extreme points are academic memorials and autobiographic poems. Literary autobiographies in prose are located in the middle of the scale, showing inclination to either of the extreme points. The graph below displays the sensible and intelligible relations in autobiographic genres²⁹:

do mato e dos rios, do Campo Triste, das caçadas e pescarias, das fazendas de colonos que eu visitava muitas vezes com meu pai, no atendimento aos chamados dos doentes.” (ARRIGUCCI JR., p.1).

²⁸ It would be necessary to prove these statements with respect to autobiographic poems via an exam conducted in works of other authors, since we only analyzed more systematically Manuel Bandeira’s poems.

²⁹ It is necessary to state that this schema only organizes comparatively the genres with which we have worked on our research, observed with respect to one another and not in isolation. The incorporation of other genres, such as

Figure 4 – The relations between the sensible and the intelligible in autobiographic genres



Source: Author's elaboration.

Autobiographic literary prose combines in a more balanced manner the two discursive configurations of the memory³⁰. The book *Infância*, by Graciliano Ramos (2003), starts with the first memory of the narrator, the event memory:

The first thing I kept in the memory was a twisted china vase, filled with *pitombas*, hidden behind the door. I ignore where I saw it, when I saw it, and if a part of this case did not flow in another posterior case, I would consider it to be a dream. Maybe I don't remember the vase that well: it is possible that the image, shining and slim, remains because I told it to people who confirmed it. Thus I do not preserve the memory of a weird implement, but of its reproduction, corroborated by those who gave it its form and content. The appreciation in any way must have been real. The notion of *pitombas* was engrained in me this during this time – and the *pitombas* served me to designate all round objects. Later I was told that this generalization was a mistake. (RAMOS, 2003, p.9)³¹.

curriculum vitae, that presents the activities as a list and thus does not favor the emergence of authorship styles, would lead to a reorganization of the whole schema proposed, since this genre is less propitious to the appreciation of event memory than academic memorials are.

³⁰ As stated in the beginning of this paper, we were able to attest these facts with respect to autobiographic literary prose in previous works, in which we examined a body of books besides *Infância*.

³¹ Original text: "A primeira coisa que guardei na memória foi um vaso de louça vidrada, cheio de pitombas, escondido atrás de uma porta. Ignoro onde o vi, quando o vi, e se uma parte do caso remoto não desaguasse noutra posterior, julgá-lo-ia sonho. Talvez nem me recorde bem do vaso: é possível que a imagem, brilhante e esguia, permaneça por eu ter comunicado a pessoas que a confirmaram. Assim, não conservo a lembrança de uma alfaia esquisita, mas a reprodução dela, corroborada por indivíduos que lhe fixaram o conteúdo e a forma. De qualquer modo a aparição deve

This is a memory surrounded by uncertainties. The narrator cannot say when or where they happened, he can only place them within the chronologic line, not of his life, but of his memories: this is the first thing he remembers. The narrator cannot attest to the reality of the event that originated the memory, rather he uses the modals indicating “possibility” and still as verisimilitude. In what follows, he admits that the registered image is, in fact, a result of posterior conversations.

Here we have the prognostic of what the book will be about, whose organization imitates the come-and-go of the memory. The chapters are constructed with associative relations, one narrated event attracts another; and some events seem to be narrated more than once³²: “Verão” ends with a reflection about the causes that made the father become so violent; the following chapter, “Um cinturão”, narrates the father exerting all this brutality; “Padre João Inácio”, “O fim do mundo” and “Inferno” deal with themes connected to religion. Maybe this explains their sequential ordering.

What is more, in *Infância*, the narrator fixates only in the moments lived by the child and in her perceptions of the world around him, without crossing the limits of the childhood experiences. Few facts are presented even about the ancestors, the narrator talks about his great-grandparents, grandparents and parents, and still with not much detail. All these elements strengthen the readers’ impression about the content of this book, which is not about the past, but about the memory of the past. This does not mean that the book does not provide a glimpse into the society in which the boy lived; on the contrary, the only facts not portrayed are those in which the narrator did not have direct participation and those of which he did not have news while a boy.

The determinations imposed by the memory hinder an absolutely linear presentation of the past, but it is still possible to perceive that the story begins when he was between 2 or 3 years old and ends when he was a teenager, approximately 11 years old. A chronologic line is established, although somewhat frail. There are few dates and temporal anchoring, such as history moments, or the identification of people’s ages. The landscape of time is marked, above all, by the changes of the seasons, by climatic alternations and spatial dislocations, more specifically, the family trips.

On the contrary of what happens in academic memorials, the narrator of *Infância* uses expression such as “one day”, “at that time” in order to circumscribe the moment when the events happened; this creates a semantically underdetermined past, but organized under the mark of preterit.

My oldest memories of the environment where I grew up like a tiny animal date back to that time. Until then some people, or fragments of

ter sido real. Inculcaram-me nesse tempo a noção de pitombas – e as pitombas me serviram para designar todos os objetos esféricos. Depois me explicaram que a generalização era um erro.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.9).

³² Here, we maintain the names of the chapters in Portuguese, in their original title. Some of these chapters had already been published individually in newspapers and magazines from that time, when the book was released. We opted, nonetheless, to analyze the book as it was published, considering the meaningful effects created by the organization of the book.

people, had manifested themselves but to put it properly they lived out of space. They started little by little to locate themselves, and that upset me. There were imprecise places; between them there was no continuity. Foggy dots, drafts of islands in an empty universe. (RAMOS, 2003, p.12)³³.

One day there was no water. (RAMOS, 2003, p.28)³⁴.

This figurative underdetermination of the past, characteristic of remembering and forgetting, also resounds in the actorial and spatial constructions. Last names, which are rare, are used normally when a person was called and known by others by name and last name. Their main function is to create the illusion of the real. The actors are characterized mainly by their actions and by the relations they have with the child or with family and friends³⁵. The spaces in which the events occur are not followed by precise addresses: “Our house was in Straw Street, next to Mrs. Clara’s house, who was a serious person and had several children, a cat, an invisible husband” (RAMOS, 2003, p.59).

All the resources presented – such as the organization that “imitates” the functioning of the memory, temporal and spatial underdeterminations, among others – point towards the *event memory*. There remains *past-event memory* in *Infância*.

In some excerpts of the book, we find a thorough description of spaces, such as in the chapter “A vila”, dedicated to the presentation of Buíque, in which the narrator builds the town as a “crippled body” (RAMOS, 2003, p.51). In this chapter, the narrator locates, always with respect to the “body”, the streets and important places in Buíque, such as the school, houses of known or famous people, among others: the house of Mr. Galvão was in the crotch, the Stone street and the Palha street were the legs (one folded and the other stretched), the alleys were the elbows. In this chapter, we also find important information about the social organization of the village; there is the presentation of the most powerful families and the places they frequently visited, the role played by his father in this micro-society, among others.

What is more, even though the book *Infância* is construed as a simulacrum of the memory, the narrator establishes, in many excerpts, a certain distance in narrating the past – this is achieved not academically, like in the memorials, but literarily. When he describes the thoughts and the sensations of the child after seeing the ossuary in the

³³ Original text: “Datam desse tempo as minhas mais antigas recordações do ambiente onde me desenvolvi como um pequeno animal. Até então algumas pessoas, ou fragmentos de pessoas, tinham-se manifestado, mas para bem dizer viviam fora do espaço. Começaram pouco a pouco a localizar-se, o que me transformou. Apareceram lugares imprecisos, e entre eles não havia continuidade. Pontos nebulosos, ilhas esboçando-se no universo vazio.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.12)

³⁴ Original text: “Um dia faltou água em casa.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.28).

³⁵ According to Antonio Candido (1992, p.65), it is mainly from situations that we can understand Graciliano Ramos’s characters: “By the way, he is not primarily a creator of characters, but he is a creator of situations whereby the character is expressed [...]”.

cemetery, he affirms: “These letters seems to me at that time confusing and pedant. But the craft of composition does not exclude substance from fact.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.191). In some moments, he blends memory and metalinguistic reflection, as if he were trying to control the irruptions from the memory, not welcomed, since the past bears dysphoric values. The narrator examines in many parts the manner in which the past is narrated, distancing himself from the narrated matter, and thus creates a new level of language. It is necessary to say that, in doing so, he observes the functioning of his memory:

From this old life altering summer there are few traces left. And I can't even say if I actually remember them. The habit leads me to create an environment, imagine facts to which I give the status of reality. With no doubt the trees stripped themselves and blackened, the reservoir stanchied, the gateways of the corrals were opened, useless. It is always like this. I however ignore if the withered and black plants were seen at that time or in later droughts, and I keep in the memory a reservoir filled, covered with white birds and flowers. With respect to the corral there is a strange omission. They probably were in the neighborhood, but this is pure speculation. Maybe the bare minimum necessary to characterize the farm somewhat destroyed had not been observed afterwards. For sure there exist things by derivation and association; they repeat themselves, impose themselves – and, with capital letter, they gain conscience, grow roots. We hardly ever would portray a northeastern summer in which the branches were not black and the wells empty. We gathered elements considered indispensable, we play with them, and if we ignore a few, the picture will be incomplete. (RAMOS, 2003, p.27-28)³⁶.

In this book, the limits that separate the levels of autobiographic discourse are not, therefore, always broken, given that the narrator distances himself from the boy he once was. What is more, the presentifications of the past are less frequent than in other autobiographic literary prose works; and they usually take the form of the adverb “now”, instead of an enuncive adverb³⁷:

³⁶ Original text: “Desse antigo verão que alterou a vida restam ligeiros traços apenas. E nem deles posso afirmar que efetivamente me recorde. O hábito me leva a criar um ambiente, imaginar fatos a que atribuo realidade. Sem dúvida as árvores se despojaram e enegreceram, o açude estancou, as porteiras dos currais se abriram, inúteis. É sempre assim. Contudo ignoro se as plantas murchas e negras foram vistas nessa época ou em secas posteriores, e guardo na memória um açude cheio, coberto de aves brancas e de flores. A respeito de currais há uma estranha omissão. Estavam na vizinhança, provavelmente, mas isto é conjectura. Talvez até o mínimo necessário para caracterizar a fazenda meio destruída não tenha sido observado depois. Certas coisas existem por derivação e associação; repetem-se, impõem-se – e, em letra de forma, tomam consistência, ganham raízes. Dificilmente pintariamos um verão nordestino em que os ramos não estivessem pretos e as cacimbas vazias. Reunimos elementos considerados indispensáveis, jogamos com eles, e se desprezamos alguns, o quadro parece incompleto.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.27-28).

³⁷ In *Baú de ossos* (NAVA, 2000), for example, this resource is largely employed (RAMOS, 2003, p.27-28).

In ordinary nights, in order to escape the residents of the dark, I wrapped up my head. This saved me: no ghost would follow me under the sheet. Now I could not preserve myself. The extinct firebrand came closely acquainted with the brine that shed deep cracks. (RAMOS, 2003, p.98)³⁸.

If the narrator and the actor of the narrated may be identified via the discursive syntax – both designated by the personal pronoun “I” –, other elements hold a separation between them. Besides the reflections of the narrator about his memory, the metalinguistic comments and the little use of temporal neutralizations, irony, too, distinguishes the adult position from the same facts when he was a boy. The child was more in accord with the worldview of the family, or at least she tried to mold to it. In the chapter “Adelaide”, the boy’s surprise with the “inversion of roles”, as he calls it, that is, the fact that a black teacher mistreats her white cousin, with “proprietary soul”, reveals his immersion in a society with slavery values. The narrator tells, ironically, that, when he was a kid, he saw these power relations as being natural, without an understanding of the reason why black teachers mistreated their white cousins. The reader, however, is lead towards the perception that the adult behaves differently:

It did not occur to me that someone handled the hoe, worked hard in planting cotton and cane: the plants grew spontaneously. [...] Dark place the kitchen. Why did they leave there, coming to the living room to pull Adelaide’s ears? I could not believe that. What harm had Adelaide done them? (RAMOS, 2003, p.185)³⁹.

The manner in which the narrator explains the past, filling gaps in the memory, and the manner in which he perceives the world of the child strengthen the *past-event memory*. In this book there is the selection of ravishing moments to the actor of the narrator, but these are moments the adult wishes to present “from a distance”.

Each chapter usually narrates a great transformation undergone by the child, even though she was not prepared for such transformation. She sees herself compelled to rebuild her world each moment; she cannot see a law that allows to establish some connections and to make predictions and, therefore, to act. The large employment of inchoative aspect is worth noting: “The first thing I kept in my memory”⁴⁰ (RAMOS, 2003, p.9), “The first time they talked about the devil”⁴¹ (RAMOS, 2003, p.28), “My

³⁸ Original text: “Em noites comuns, para escapar aos habitantes da treva, eu envolvia a cabeça. Isto me resguardava: nenhum fantasma viria perseguir-me debaixo do lençol. Agora não conseguia preservar-me. O tição apagado avizinava-se com a salmoura que vertia de gretas profundas.” (RAMOS, 2003, p.98).

³⁹ Original text: “Não me ocorria que alguém manejara a enxada, suara no cultivo do algodão e da cana: as plantas nasciam espontaneamente. [...] Lugar de negro era na cozinha. Por que haviam saído de lá, vindo para a sala, puxar as orelhas de Adelaide? Não me conformava. Que mal lhes tinha feito Adelaide?” (RAMOS, 2003, p.185).

⁴⁰ Original text: “A primeira coisa que guardei na memória” (RAMOS, 2003, p.9).

⁴¹ Original text: “Pela primeira vez falaram-me no diabo” (RAMOS, 2003, p.28).

first contacts with justice were painful and they marked me deeply.”⁴² (RAMOS, 2003, p.34), “I had never seen a dead body”⁴³ (RAMOS, 2003, p.95), “for the first time I laughed at myself”⁴⁴ (RAMOS, 2003, p.204). The aspectual changes, marked by the *first times*, are responsible for initiating a new duration.

Thus the boy sees each event in isolation, with no repetition. The adult narrator, on the other hand, gives clues that what was understood as gratuity is repeated inside and outside the family. The narrative of the memories endows with meaning this universe and still constitutes an opposition to it. The narrator, via the report, acquires the knowledge to do and the power to do, like it happens when he tries to explain his father’s attitudes from a socioeconomic viewpoint:

Today I find it natural the violence that blinded him. If he were low, free of ambitions, or up high, in prosperity, the boy José and myself would have lived peacefully. (RAMOS, 2003, p.31)⁴⁵.

This does not mean that all gaps are filled. The work comes to existence in fragmentation, more explicit in some moments than in others, for example, when the narrator remembers a violent experience. The chapter “Um cinturão”, in which the father wakes up without the belt and jumps on the boy, is, in this sense, exemplar. The child, taken over by fear, cannot move nor speak, she feels the threat of the father as recrudescence of intensity and almost nullifies extensity: “If the fear did not hold me back, I would try to scape. [...] I must have thought about it, standing still, behind the coffins” (RAMOS, 2003, p.34)⁴⁶. What was experienced as an impact by the boy emerges into the field of presence of the narrator, now, as a memory, but with the same strength.

A lump in my throat, the house spinning, my body falling in the wind, flying, bees – and, in this hubbub, the fearful question. Nausea, sleepiness. Where was my belt? To sleep a lot, behind the coffins, free of martyrdom. (RAMOS, 2003, p.36)⁴⁷.

⁴² Original text: “As minhas primeiras relações com a justiça foram dolorosas e deixaram-me funda impressão” (RAMOS, 2003, p.34).

⁴³ Original text: “Eu nunca tinha visto um cadáver” (RAMOS, 2003, p.95).

⁴⁴ Original text: “pela primeira vez ri de mim mesmo” (RAMOS, 2003, p.204).

⁴⁵ Original text: “Hoje acho naturais as violências que o cegavam. Se ele estivesse embaixo, livre de ambições, ou em cima, na prosperidade, eu e o moleque José teríamos vivido em sossego”. (RAMOS, 2003, p.31).

⁴⁶ Original text: “Se o pavor não me segurasse, tentaria escapulir-me [...]. Devo ter pensado nisso, imóvel, atrás dos caixões”. (RAMOS, 2003, p.34).

⁴⁷ Original text: “Aperto na garganta, a casa a girar, o meu corpo a cair lento, voando, abelhas – e, nesse zunzum, a pergunta medonha. Náusea, sono. Onde estava o cinturão? Dormir muito, atrás dos caixões, livre do martírio”. (RAMOS, 2003, p.36).

The hairy hand locked me down, dragged me to the middle of the living room, the leaf of leather flogged against my back. Howls, useless outcries, rattling. (RAMOS, 2003, p.36)⁴⁸.

Textual fragmentation is the strategy found to show the narrator imprisoned by the image and by the sensations associated with fearful times. It is in those moments that *event memory* appears in its totality in the work. The sequence of juxtaposed clauses, nominal sentences, isolated nouns, the use of deviant syntax, somatic expression thrust the *event* to the level of the enunciation (Level 1). At first, the enunciatee does not make a clear sense of this, but may come to realize sensitively the anger experienced by the adult, as well as the boy's fear.

In this point it is relevant the distinction proposed by Zilberberg (2006a, p.233) to the *survenir*, which establishes one of the access points of a value in the field of presence of the subject, and the other, the *parvenir*. Because it corresponds to a sudden realization of the unrealizable, the semiotist defends that *survenir* represents a radical fiduciary crisis. Without any warning, it virtualizes the modal competences of the subject. In this case, we see that the boy loses the possibility of acting against his father; the narrator, in a certain way, has his voice interrupted; but the enunciatee, too, experiences the momentarily fiduciary lost in facing the fragmented text, which, at first, he cannot read. The work *Infância* seems to be closer to autobiographic poems than to academic memorials.

Based on our analysis, we present a chart with some textual and discursive elements that in combination allow recognizing the dominance of each form of memory. It is important to say that not all elements are compulsorily present in all realizations of these discursive organizations of the memory.

Frame 1 – Event memory and past-event memory

Past-event memory	Event memory
Abundance of chrononyms, antroponyms and toponyms, among other elements that contribute to the creation of referential illusion.	Almost complete absence of chrononyms, antroponyms and toponyms, among other elements that contribute to the creation of referential illusion.
Spaces and times predominantly enuncive,	Spaces and times enunciative and enuncive (balance).
Little use of temporal and spatial shifting in.	Predominant use of temporal and spatial shifting in.
Events presented to the enunciatee according to the order of the predictable (usually, chronologically).	Events presented to the enunciatee according to the order of the unpredictable.

⁴⁸ Original text: "A mão cabeluda prendeu-me, arrastou-me para o meio da sala, a folha de couro fustigou-me as costas. Uivos, alarido inútil, estertor". (RAMOS, 2003, p.36).

Past-event memory	Event memory
Relation between the protagonist and the world is guided by the logic of the exercise.	The world is construed as event to the protagonist.
Relation between narrator and past memory is guided by the logic of the exercise.	Past memory is construed as event to the narrator.
Textualization construed such as to augment the intelligibility of the memory.	Textualization is construed such as to reduce the intelligibility of the memory.
Strengthening of the lines that separate and distinguish the internal levels of the autobiographic utterance, enabling unfolding.	Dilution of the lines that separate and distinguish the internal levels of the autobiographic utterance, enabling compression.

Source: Author's elaboration.

Between the sensible and the intelligible

The two notions proposed here, *event memory* and *past-event memory*, allow us to make reflections about the enunciative contract established in autobiographic discourses, and, therefore, the interaction between enunciator and enunciatee, starting from the relation between sensible and intelligible.

The fact a given text is autobiographic seems to indicate that there is a greater affectionate involvement of the enunciator, who talks about what was lived. The link with what is said in the text is thus strengthened simply because it is an autobiographic discourse. However, in order for this effect of involvement to be accomplished and recognized and empathetically partaken by the enunciatee it is necessary that the enunciatee recognize in the uttered-discourse the marks that make the text and autobiographic one. Therefore, we could imagine that the construed discourse with autobiographic marks always appeals predominantly to the enunciatee's affections.

This is not the situation, nonetheless. The exam of innumerable autobiographic works, literary and academic in nature, reveals that the enunciatee may be manipulated either by strategies of the order of sensibility (*event memory*) or by strategies of the order of intelligibility (*past-event memory*), which result in different experiences of the text by the enunciatee.

In texts dominated by *past-event memory*, the truth is grounded in memories construed as preexistent to the act of narration. Every anchoring resource that inserts times, spaces and subjects in a shared social discourse, as well as the provision of separation of the levels of the autobiographic discourse and the language that is distanced from the aesthetic component contribute to the creation of this type of referential truth, taking the truth to be a discursive effect. In this case, the past has a maximal degree of legibility and a number of competences are summoned on the enunciatee that allow him/her to understand past memory while maintaining a certain degree of distance.

In the texts dominated by *event memory*, on the other hand, we find the aesthetic work as a frequent strategy that favors the sensible and affectionate involvement of

the subject of enunciation. The creation of novel and authentic ways of narrating may strengthen the link between enunciator and enunciatee with the discourse; the effect is that they come about at the moment when man meets the world, not before. Because it is presented as a discourse that signifies language, the aesthetic discourse makes the illusion of reference to lose importance in a great number of autobiographic literary works, especially in poetry, since other rules are created to its evaluation.

Therefore, past-event memory and event memory seem to put in tension two uses of language in autobiographic genres, two rationalities and distinct modes of interaction between enunciator and enunciatee. This reveals that different veredictory contracts are established between communication partners. In one of them, the truth is construed by sensations and emotions; in the other, truth appeals to the intellect.

The genres that compose the corpus of this research can be organized in a scale at whose extreme points are academic memorials and autobiographic poems. At the center are literary prose autobiographic texts. Obviously each work will have its own specificity.

We highlight, however, that the relations between communication partners are not discrete, because both types of discursive organization of the memory – *past-event memory* and *event memory* – coexist in each text. The tension between these two types of memory, between these two forms of knowing and producing the world, seems to be foundational of autobiographic genres, which license us to only talk about dominance.

BARROS, M. A memória do acontecido e a memória-acontecimento: um estudo semiótico dos gêneros autobiográficos. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.60, n.2, p.367-397, 2016.

- *RESUMO: Com base nas noções de campo de presença e de acontecimento, desenvolvidas pela gramática tensiva, são propostas duas formas de memória como categoria analítica dos discursos autobiográficos: a memória do acontecido e a memória-acontecimento. Essas organizações discursivas da memória determinam modos diferentes de adesão do enunciatário aos discursos, uma vez que a primeira coloca em cena estratégias que privilegiam a legibilidade do texto e a segunda explora sua dimensão sensorial e afetiva. Tendo isso em vista, o objetivo central deste artigo é investigar, no quadro teórico da semiótica discursiva, a interação entre enunciatador e enunciatário em diferentes gêneros autobiográficos, como a autobiografia literária em prosa, os poemas de caráter autobiográfico e os memoriais acadêmicos. Em cada gênero, a memória do acontecido e a memória-acontecimento se articulam de forma singular. É justamente a tensão que se estabelece entre essas duas memórias, entre essas duas formas de conhecer e produzir o mundo, que parece ser fundadora dos discursos autobiográficos.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Memória. Gêneros autobiográficos. Semiótica. Gramática tensiva; Enunciação. Acontecimento.*

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