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Artículos Científicos

La percepción del agua en el cuento “Es que somos muy pobres” de Juan Rulfo

The Perception of Water in the Story “It Is that We Are Very Poor” by Juan Rulfo

A percepção da água na história "Somos muito pobres" de Juan Rulfo

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Resumen

Generalmente, en nuestra cultura, el agua aparece asociada a cualidades positivas como la vida, la pureza, lo inodoro y lo insaboro, pero en el cuento “Es que somos muy pobres” de Juan Rulfo, publicado en 1953, el agua se percibe con cualidades negativas. En el presente artículo se utiliza un método de tipo cualitativo semántico para analizar el cuento, mediante el cual se describen las formas de nominar el agua, los calificativos del agua, el agua y los sentidos, las acciones del agua y la correlación entre determinismo natural y determinismo social. Se intenta dejar en claro, mediante los distintos abordajes que permite el análisis cualitativo semántico, que el agua y sus distintas manifestaciones son negativas, productoras de situaciones que se relacionan con el determinismo social planteado en el cuento. De igual forma, se intenta hacer evidente, a partir de la percepción que se tiene sobre el agua, cómo esta influye en la percepción de las cualidades morales de los personajes femeninos del cuento, específicamente las hermanas del narrador.

Palabras clave: agua, concepto, cualidad, determinismo, percepción.



Abstract

Generally, in our culture, water appears associated with positive qualities such as life, purity, odorless, and tasteless, but in Juan Rulfo's story "It Is that We Are Very Poor", published in 1953, water is perceived with negative qualities. In this article a semantic qualitative method is used to analyze the story, which is described by the ways of naming water, the qualifiers of water, water and the senses, the actions of water and the correlation between natural determinism and social determinism. An attempt is made to make it clear, through the different approaches that allow qualitative semantic analysis, that water and its different manifestations are negative, producing situations that are related to the social determinism raised in the story. In the same way, an attempt is made to make evident, from the perception that one has about the water, how it influences the perception of the moral qualities of the female characters in the story, specifically the narrator's sisters.

Keywords: water, concept, quality, determinism, perception.

Resumo

Geralmente, em nossa cultura, a água aparece associada a qualidades positivas como vida, pureza, inodoro e insípido, mas na história de Juan Rulfo "Es que somos muy poor", publicada em 1953, a água é percebida com qualidades negativas. Neste artigo, é utilizado um método semântico qualitativo para analisar a história, através do qual são descritas as formas de nomear a água, os qualificadores da água, a água e os sentidos, as ações da água e a correlação entre o determinismo natural e o determinismo social. Procura-se deixar claro, por meio das diferentes abordagens que a análise semântica qualitativa permite, que a água e suas diferentes manifestações são negativas, produzindo situações que se relacionam com o determinismo social levantado na história. Da mesma forma, procura-se evidenciar, a partir da percepção que se tem da água, como ela influencia a percepção das qualidades morais das personagens femininas da história, especificamente das irmãs da narradora.

Palavras-chave: água, conceito, qualidade, determinismo, percepção.

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Introduction

In the story "We are very poor" there is a negative and deterministic perception of nature, specifically of water, which is associated with a social determinism linking poverty and the non-possession of material goods to perdition, no longer being able to find a husband. Here there is a link between nature and bad habits and the doom of the narrator's sisters. It also explains how the main focus of the story is water, which is perceived as a source of misfortune. It has a negative function, since it brings ruin, death of the cow and her calf, invasion of houses and the town, destruction of houses and crops, and takes trees. At the same time, it is the object of qualifications not implied by the cultural concept of water and is associated with the five basic senses of perception of the human being.

Theoretical-methodological framework

The analysis carried out in this research seeks to make explicit the mechanisms through which the narrator of the story "We are very poor" by Juan Rulfo perceives water, so it is necessary to make clear what perception is and which ones are its components. Lupón, Torrents and Quevedo (2012) define perception as:

The process of active extraction of information from stimuli, and elaboration and organization of representations for the provision of meaning. Unlike the rest of the cognitive functions, it has the distinctive characteristic of having its origin in the physical interaction that occurs between the environment and the organism through the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) with what comes to be the meeting point between the physical and the mental (p. 4).

The analysis shows how the perception of water is carried out by the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch). This perception comes from the narrator's contact with his environment. But what is classified as perception does not depend solely on the information that the senses perceive, but these sensory stimuli are related in the brain with the previous knowledge of the perceiver, his ideology and his culture. Rivera, Arellano and Molero (2000) point out that the components of perception are the following:

Although the sensory stimuli may be the same, for all people, each of them will perceive different things. This phenomenon leads us to conceive of perception as a result of two types of inputs:



1) The sensations or physical stimulus that comes from the external environment, in the form of images, sounds, aromas, etc.

2) The internal inputs that come from the individual, such as needs, motivations and previous experience, and that will provide a different psychological elaboration of each of the external stimuli (p. 17).

The objects of reality have various attributes or characteristics. In the field of the visual, for example, Smith and Kosslyn (2008) point out the following:

Visual characteristics include points and edges, colors and shapes, movements and textures. All of these are attributes that are not themselves objects, but which in combination can define the objects we see. They are the elements with which perception is built (p. 60).

The fact that perception has two components is important due to the fact that the narrator makes judgments about what he perceives, classifies the water by naming it, captures certain attributes of it that he selects and organizes to the point of presenting a negative vision of water shaped by his experience and cultural and ideological knowledge. Vargas (1994) says about the biological and cultural-ideological nature of perception:

Perception is biocultural because, on the one hand, it depends on the physical stimuli and sensations involved and, on the other hand, on the selection and organization of said stimuli and sensations. Sensory experiences are interpreted and acquired meaning shaped by cultural and ideological patterns (p. 47).

To understand how the narrator's perception of water is constructed, an analysis is essential that identifies the way in which water is perceived and its different nominations, as well as its attributes of perception, its relationship with the senses and the way in which it is perceived. relate to the context, prior knowledge and experiences of the narrator, who, as has been advanced, will end up relating the river water to the loss of his sisters in the social sphere, precisely because he is relating what he perceives to his ideology and his previous experience .

In the methodological aspect, a semiotic analysis is carried out that is based on the proposals of Fontanille (2016a, 2016b) on how an object takes actantial dimensions and the semiotics of odors applied to the smell of river water, and Zilberberg (2016) for the study of intensive and extensive valences in water flow. The semiotic analysis is the basis for

explaining the different names of water and its variants of manifestation, the attributes of water and the characteristics that water has in its relationship with the five senses.

The ways of naming water as perceived

There are various ways in which water is presented in the text and depending on the way it is manifested it receives a specific name. In the text, these nomination variants are important because they are determined by different manifestations of water: the place where it comes from, where it moves, by the form it takes, by its intensity, its quantity, the time in which it manifests and its identity characteristics, as can be seen in table 1.

Tabla 1. Nominaciones del agua según sus manifestaciones

Nominación del agua	Variantes de manifestación en el texto: plano, intensidad y forma
Lluvia	Procede del plano celeste. Forma: manifestación del agua en gotas. Intensidad: moderada.
Aguacero	Procede del plano celeste con fuerte intensidad. Manifestación del agua en gotas o goterones.
Olas de agua	Proceden del plano celeste en el texto, con tanta intensidad que ya no son gotas sino olas, las cuales, como se verá más adelante, presentan características orientacionales. Forma: la ola es una onda que se forma en el agua, tiene altura y amplitud.
Agua	Cae del cielo o forma parte del río. Se mueve en el plano celeste y terrestre. El texto se refiere a ella generalmente con fuerte intensidad.

	Se presenta en diversas formas.
Río	Curso del agua que se manifiesta en el plano terrestre con características orientacionales. En el texto comienza a expandir sus límites. El agua que contiene presenta intensidad de volumen y de fuerza de movimiento (corriente).
Nublazones	Agua condensada en el cielo que aún no cae y que es síntoma de lluvia. Se maneja en el plano celeste. La forma del sustantivo refiere gran tamaño.
Chorros	Forma de salir del agua, manifiesta fuerte intensidad y cantidad. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre.
Pedazo de río	Forma en que se describe una nueva parte del río, la cual era una casa. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre.
Corriente	Manifestación del río que invade terreno de casa. Tiene fuerte intensidad. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre.
Creciente	Elevación del nivel del curso de agua, manifiesta intensidad. Se presenta en el plano terrestre como parte del río.
Amontonadero de agua	Acumulación de agua como si fuera una cosa o un conjunto de cosas. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre.
La cosa aquella (río)	Forma de denominar a un río que parece haber perdido sus características de identidad. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre. Tiene fuerte intensidad.
El río este	Forma de denominar al río en el presente. El río se desidentifica con respecto al que solía ser. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre. Tiene fuerte intensidad.
El mismo río	Forma de denominar al río antes del aguacero y de que creciera. Se trata del río de la vida cotidiana. Su intensidad era moderada. Se manifiesta en el plano terrestre.
Llanto	El agua en forma de lágrimas. Es de fuerte intensidad, por el movimiento del pecho de quien llora. Se manifiesta en el plano humano.

Chorretes de agua sucia (lágrimas)	Forma de denominar al agua producto del llanto que corre por la cara de Tacha. Fuerte intensidad por la alusión a “chorro”. Se manifiesta en el plano humano.
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Fuente: Elaboración propia

Fernández C. A. (2012) presents water in nature as follows:

Water covers more than 70% of the planet's surface; it is found in oceans, lakes, rivers; in the air, on the ground. It is the source and sustenance of life, it contributes to regulate the world's climate and with its formidable force it shapes the Earth. It has unique properties that make it essential for life (p. 148).

In the text, water is also found in different parts such as rivers, air, soil, which are the ones mentioned. Fernández CA (2012) also talks about its shaping force, which is what is present in the text through the intensity of the rain, which makes the river grow and this in turn begins to transgress its limits and invade the from town. The river begins to rise and changes the landscape. Now the houses, like the one in La Tambora, are a piece of the river. In the previous quote, water is also presented as essential for life. In the story, the river water is the essence of death and destruction. It should be clarified that, in the story, the water does not possess the qualities that are culturally attributed to it, but rather handles some antithetical to these.

Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1995) state that “the symbolic meanings of water can be reduced to three dominant themes: source of life, means of purification and center of regeneration” (p. 52). Undoubtedly, after the flood, the village will have to partially regenerate or rebuild the affected parts. However, Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1995) also indicate that “water is the source of life and the source of death, creator and destroyer” (p. 54) and that “it can act like death. The great waters announce trials in the Bible. The unleashing of the waters is the symbol of great calamities”(p. 56). As can be seen, the main cultural meanings of water are positive and associated with life, although it also has religious meanings associated with destruction. In this story, the river and the water are linked to destruction, but not in a religious sense, but in a natural, social and moral sense.

On the other hand, the river is named by means of nouns and noun phrases. The text is rich in ways of naming water as it manifests itself (as seen in table 1) and is perceived at a certain moment, with orientation characteristics, determined by its movement. The vertical



orientation determines the points: top-bottom. The horizontal orientation is specified by the way in which the water moves in the terrestrial plane, with a certain intensity and a specific form of manifestation (as was also observed in table 1). Next, in table 2, the structure of the way of naming water and the type of orientation in which it manifests is explained.

Tabla 2. Estructura de la forma de nominar y coordenadas orientacionales del agua

Nominación del agua	Estructura de la forma de nominar y coordenadas orientacionales del agua
Lluvia	Sustantivo común concreto. Agua en movimiento con orientación vertical.
Aguacero	Sustantivo derivado del sustantivo <i>agua</i> . El sufijo derivativo <i>-ero</i> denota intensidad y gran cantidad. Agua en movimiento con orientación vertical.
Olas de agua	Sintagma nominal. La palabra <i>agua</i> tiene la función de especificar la naturaleza o esencia del sustantivo <i>ola</i> . La ola tiene dos tipos de orientación: vertical, porque la ola tiene una altura, y horizontal, por su amplitud y movimiento.
Agua	Sustantivo común concreto. Se utiliza para nombrar el agua con orientación vertical (la de la lluvia). Y también se utiliza para denominar el agua del río.
Río	Sustantivo común concreto. Se utiliza para nominar el agua con orientación horizontal que corre por un cauce. En el texto se alimenta del agua que cae del cielo.
Nublazones	Sustantivo común concreto. El sufijo <i>-on</i> refiere gran magnitud o intensidad.

	<p>Agua que se encuentra en la orientación vertical arriba. Se encuentra condensada, carece de movimiento.</p>
Chorros	<p>Sustantivo común concreto.</p> <p>Agua en movimiento con orientación horizontal en el texto que sale de la casa.</p>
Pedazo de río	<p>Sintagma nominal. El sustantivo <i>río</i> especifica al sustantivo <i>pedazo</i>.</p> <p>Es un proceso de fragmentación para llamar a una nueva parte del río, la cual antes era una casa.</p>
Corriente	<p>Sustantivo común concreto.</p> <p>Forma de llamar al todo (río) por la parte (corriente).</p> <p>La orientación en horizontal, pues el agua se mueve de forma horizontal con fuerte intensidad. Orientación vertical, se eleva en el plano terrestre de abajo hacia arriba.</p>
Creciente	<p>Sustantivo común concreto.</p> <p>Tiene orientación vertical (arriba), pues refiere a un aumento de la elevación del agua del río.</p>
Amontonadero de agua	<p>Sintagma nominal. El sustantivo <i>agua</i> especifica al sustantivo <i>amontonadero</i>. El sufijo <i>-ero</i> refiere a gran cantidad.</p> <p>Se manifiesta en las orientaciones horizontal y vertical pues implica una altura y una anchura.</p>
La cosa aquella (río)	<p>Sintagma nominal, donde el sustantivo <i>cosa</i> es especificado por el adjetivo demostrativo <i>aquella</i>. El sustantivo es generalizante y el adjetivo refiere una distancia lejana entre</p>

	<p>el que emite la voz (narrador) y el río (cosa). La expresión se utiliza para señalar que aquello a lo que se refiere no se reconoce.</p> <p>Al referirse al río tiene como orientación la horizontalidad porque el río se maneja en ese plano y verticalidad por la creciente del este.</p>
El río este	Sintagma nominal en el que un adjetivo demostrativo, <i>este</i> , marca una distancia cercana entre el que emite la voz (el narrador) y el río. La orientación es horizontal por el cauce del río y vertical por la creciente.
El mismo río	Sintagma nominal en el que el adjetivo <i>mismo</i> especifica al sustantivo <i>río</i> , hace referencia a una identificación de las instancias del río en el tiempo pasado. La orientación es horizontal.
Llanto	Sustantivo común concreto. Tiene una orientación y dirección vertical de arriba hacia abajo.
Chorretes de agua sucia (lágrimas)	Sintagma nominal para referirse a las lágrimas de Tacha. <i>Agua sucia</i> especifica a chorretes. Tienen una orientación y dirección vertical de arriba hacia abajo.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

As could be seen in table 2, the naming structures are two: nouns and noun phrases. The ways of specifying are fundamental to understand the perception of the water present in the text. The river is perceived as different from what was already known. The narrator marks a distance near and far with respect to him, the latter being a distance more of an emotional type than a physical one. In addition to the water specifications already seen, others are presented below, which reinforce the proposal of negative perception of water in the text.

The perceptual attributes of water

In the story, water acquires attributes that are far from the cultural concept of water. Water is usually conceptualized, and if not as colorless, it is translucent (you can see what is under it). The story tells of a heavy downpour and the flooding of the town generated by the river. The common water of the river, which was in the daily life of the narrator, has changed and the perception of him presents it with the following qualities associated with certain actions:

Tabla 3. Calificativos y acciones del agua

Atributos del agua	Acciones del agua
Dura como tierra corrediza	Entreveró y acalambró a la vaca.
Espesa	Se hace (proceso permanente).
Oscura	Se hace (proceso permanente).
Pesada	Golpeaba las costillas.
Negra	Entreveró y acalambró a la vaca.
Revuelta	Emite un olor.
Sucia	Correr.
Fría	Caía del cielo y quemaba la cebada. En el texto el agua fría quema.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

These qualifiers of the water that appear in table 3 are due to the fact that it has lost the qualities commonly observed in it, due to the process of dragging soil and trees, among other things. Two of these actions are violent: hitting the ribs and stabbing and cramping the cow. It is in a permanent process of becoming more and more heavy and dark, to the point that the narrator perceives it as hard and compares it with the sliding earth. It is not as runny as before.

The river before and after the downpour

From the nominations and qualifications of the water (tables 2 and 3) it is clear that the river is one before the downpour and another after it. The river from before has the intensive and extensive valences of the natural flow of fresh water as proposed by Zilberberg (2016).



Tabla 4. Tabla de valencias del fluir natural del agua dulce

Valencias	Tempo	Lentitud
Intensivas	Tonicidad	Moderación
Valencias	Temporalidad	Longevidad
Extensivas	Espacialidad	Abertura

Fuente: Zilberberg (2016, p. 131)

The valences in table 4 would correspond to the river before its flood increased and underwent a total transformation. It is the river that the Serpentine cow used to cross. It presents permanent categories over time to the way the river flows. But from being part of the geographical features of the space in which the story of the story takes place, the river changes and becomes a threat. The prolonged downpour (the waves of water that fell from the sky) increases the flood of the river, which overflows and invades the town (streets and houses) and carries animals and trees. As will be explained later, the river becomes an actor and its new characteristics modify the valences indicated above (see table 5).

Tabla 5. Tabla de valencias del fluir del río crecido

Valencias	Tempo	Rapidez
Intensivas	Tonicidad	Fuerza
Valencias	Temporalidad	Transitoriedad
Extensivas	Espacialidad	Abertura

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Almost all the valences have changed. The river flows with speed and force due to the large volume of water it carries, but it is a transitory phenomenon (it has a beginning and an end), it depends on the intensity of the water that falls from the sky, which will not be a downpour forever. Spatially, the river expands freely (opening), and invades the town (it enters the houses and goes up the streets).

The water and the senses

Although traditionally it is handled that the water is tasteless and colorless, in the story it appears linked to the five senses that human beings have: sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch. It is not common to find texts or expressions that talk about the smell and taste of natural water. Rodríguez and Silva (2003) state that water in its natural state may have some



flavor or smell, although "even so, the simplistic idea persists that water must be colorless, odorless and tasteless as quality parameters." (p. 166). This simplistic idea to which the authors refer is the cultural notion of water. It is not a simplistic idea, as it could be perceived from a hydrological perspective, but rather it is the conception shared by the social subjects that are part of the same culture. Juan Rulfo intentionally handles qualities that are opposite to those of water in a socially shared conception, except that of being cold. They differ notably from the quality parameter imposed on social perception. This is why in the story water can be perceived by all the senses, as shown in table 6.

Tabla 6. El agua y su relación con los cinco sentidos del cuerpo

Sentido	Expresión	Características
Auditivo	“El estruendo que traía el río”. “El sonido del río”.	El río es portador del sonido.
Auditivo	“Ese sonido se fue haciendo igual hasta traerme otra vez el sueño”.	El sonido del río arrulla.
Auditivo	“El ruido del río era más fuerte y se oía más cerca”.	El sonido se percibe ya como ruido, el río ha crecido y ello se determina por la cercanía del sonido.
Auditivo	“Abajo, junto al río, hay un gran ruidazal y solo se ven las bocas de muchos que se abren y se cierran y como que quieren decir algo; pero no se oye nada”.	El ruido del río ha aumentado de intensidad y se denomina como <i>ruidazal</i> . No permite oír lo que dicen otras personas.
Auditivo	“El chapaleo del agua se oía entrar por el corral”.	El agua del río suena al chocar con cosas.
Gusto	“La creciente sigue subiendo. El sabor a podrido que viene de allá”.	El agua del río sabe a podrido. Esto indica estado de descomposición.
Olfato	“Se oía como se huele una quemazón”.	Se trata de una comparación del olor del río con el humo.

Olfato	“El olor a podrido del agua revuelta”.	El agua huele a podrido. Se trata de agua revuelta. Hace alusión a un estado de descomposición (tal vez de todo lo vivo que ha arrastrado el río: vegetales y animales).
Vista	“La creciente esta que vemos es la más grande de todas las que han bajado el río en muchos años”.	Magnitud de la creciente: grande, se percibe por la vista.
Vista	“Agua revuelta”. “Aquel amontonadero de agua que cada vez se hace más espesa y oscura”. “Aquella agua negra”.	Revuelta, espesa, oscura, negra son cualidades que se perciben por el sentido de la vista.
Tacto	“El agua pesada le golpeaba las costillas”.	El agua puede dar golpes.
Tacto	“El agua fría que caía del cielo quemaba aquella cebada”.	Expresa la temperatura del agua.
Tacto	“Aquella agua negra y dura como tierra corrediza”. “Aquel amontonadero de agua que cada vez se hace más espesa y oscura”.	La dureza y la espesura, aunque se pueden percibir por la vista, solo se constatan por el sentido del tacto.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

In the text, the river water has a rotten smell. Fontanille (2016a) affirms that smell means and that the smell of rotteness, specifically, comes from a heterogeneous state in which there is disunity of organic matter, which indicates the passage from unity to plurality and from life to life. death. Indeed, the river in the story carries dead animals like the cow, as well as the trees it has uprooted and dirt. The unity that was the river has given way to a



heterogeneous mixture, where the living that the river has dragged now dies in it and decomposes. The rotting process is evidenced by the smell it gives off.

The actions of water

Being perceptible by all the senses, including the intellect, since the narrator makes judgments, qualifies and hypothesizes with respect to water, this element is emerging as one more character, because in addition to this, it performs, as will be seen later, multiple actions (the main ones in the story) and interact with the characters. Juan Rulfo makes water one of the main characters in the story. Most of the story focuses on the actions of water and their consequences. Regarding the writer-work relationship, in relation to phenomena of nature and in particular with water, Lanzuela (2009) comments:

Thus, the poet contemplates the world transformed into being animated and here it speaks to him. In fact, this macroanthropes, which is the cosmos, is not mute, but quite the opposite, it has a body, a look, a breath, a human voice. It is Gaston Bachelard (1978) who remembers him on several occasions: "Thus, water will appear to us as a total being: it has a body, a soul, a voice. Perhaps more than any other element, water is a complete poetic reality" (p. 30).

In the story, the water seems to have a body because of the actions it performs and the way it moves. In addition, it has an impact on the social world of the characters, as will be seen later. The action of the water that comes from the sky is only to rain, to manifest itself in a downpour, in waves of water and clouds. The impact of their actions comes from the rising of the river. The water that comes from the sky is presented as the cause of what happens in the story. On the other hand, the effect is the swollen river. At the same time, the river becomes the cause of flooding and material losses, and is even associated with moral damage. The actions of the river are summarized in table 7.

Tabla 7. Las acciones del agua, sus implicaciones y consecuencias

Acción	Implicaciones y consecuencias
Crece	Al hacerlo, inunda el pueblo, generando pérdidas materiales.
Traer estruendo	Indicador del crecimiento y de la intensidad de la corriente y la inundación.
Perder las orillas	Indicador de la inundación.
Subir por la calle	Indicador de la inundación
Meterse en una casa	Indicador de inundación y de pérdidas materiales.
Entrar y salir del corral	Indicador de inundación y de pérdida de animales.
Causar perjuicios	Daño económico y estructural.
Arrastrar cosas, vegetales y animales	Indicador de pérdidas materiales.
Matar	Mata a la vaca de Tacha, la arrastra, la voltea y se la lleva. Esta acción del río es la que genera un daño social y moral a Tacha. La condena a la perdición.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

The rising of the river is the center of the actions of the story. The town had not seen such a flood in many years, but it is not claimed that it has ever been. Populations near rivers often suffer from this type of disaster. In this regard, Vergara, Ellis, Cruz, Alarcón and Galván (2011) comment on the following:

However, although floods have been present in the history of civilizations since their inception, they are one of the natural events that increasingly affect populations strongly and cause isolation, human, material and economic losses. (p. 46)

It is clear that, although floods are present in the past of a population, they are a matter of concern and disaster for the population that is currently experiencing them, that seems to be the objective of the story: to clarify the magnitude of the material damage and they can carry, the different way in which the river can behave and its social implications.

Fontanille (2016b) indicates that an object can become a body and even an actor if it has its properties:

- 1) A dynamic, capable material structure under pressure from self-organizing energies.



- 2) A figurative structure that includes, on one side, an envelope-inscription surface (the form-envelope), and on the other side, a movement (the force or machine body).
- 3) An actantial role.
- 4) A modal and thematic-figurative identity, which opens the way to accident, chance and contingency, and which defines the body-actor (p. 328).

The river in the story meets these characteristics: water is a set of water particles, under the pressure of natural forces that self-organize it as a river, which is its envelope, with a continuous movement that manifests itself in the current. His conception as an actant is defined by his actions (growing up, bringing, going up the street, entering a house, entering and leaving the corral, causing damage, dragging and killing), he moves like a living being, with a body. It is subject to the rain that made it grow, it causes material and moral damage, as will be seen in the next section of this work, for which it receives complex actantial properties such as being linked to moral aspects.

The correlation between natural determinism and social determinism

Based on the above, it may appear that nature periodically brings disasters like the flooding of the town in the story and that this flood can be measured in terms of material or physical losses. No one loses their life in the story, but the water has a social-moral impact on the text. The river has killed Tacha's cow, La Serpentina, and possibly her calf, although no one knows that the river has taken it. The narrator, Tacha's brother, states with regard to the calf: "I hope it did not occur to him to go through the river behind her mother. Because if that was the case, my sister Tacha is so retired from being a jerk "(Rulfo, 1983, p. 32). In addition, the cow was an important possession for Tacha, as it ensured her future well-being, not only financially, as the narrator specified: "With the cow it was different, since there would have been someone who would have the courage to marry her, just to take also that beautiful cow "(Rulfo, 1983, p. 32).

Apparently there is no virtue that is worth for Tacha to find her husband; Before the loss of her, someone could "make up his mind" to marry her just to take the cow. Faced with this situation, the only reason for hope is the calf: "The only hope we have is that the calf is still alive" (Rulfo, 1983, p. 32). The calf is the other material good that could save Tacha from her doom. Rulfo makes clear the social value of material possessions for a poor girl,



since they open the possibility of marriage. Therefore, the natural disaster, the flood, is condemning Tacha to perdition.

He also alludes to social determinism. The narrator tells us about her other sisters: “According to my father, they had spoiled because we were very poor in my house and they were very upset” (Rulfo, 1983, p. 31). But this social determinism is associated with river water: “They would go every so often to the river for water and sometimes, when one least expected it, there they were in the corral, rolling on the ground, all naked and each one with a man climbing on top ”(Rulfo, 1983, p. 32). Going for the river water was an excuse for the sisters to lie with men in the corral. This correlation between being poor and going to the river for water does not seem to be something that Rulfo has randomly put in a story where the central actions are carried out by the river. The downfall of the Tacha sisters is also related to the river and their social destiny: “They went to Ayutla, or I don't know where; but they walk around ”(Rulfo, 1983, p. 32). The father of Tacha's sisters affirms that the situation "no longer has a remedy" (Rulfo, 1983. p. 33). That confirms social determinism.

Another element that reaffirms natural determinism, apart from water, is when Tacha is compared with the palo de ocote: “The dangerous one is the one that remains here, the Tacha, which goes like a palo de ocote grows and grows and already has some Breast beginnings that promise to be just like her sisters: pointy and tall and half-messy for attention. " (Rulfo, 1983, p. 33). The natural development of Tacha's body such as growing and breast development are enough to consider her dangerous and her breasts, not her, will attract the attention of men. This is where nature's determinism comes in as well.

In addition to the above, the dirty river, the one that has caused losses and misfortunes, seems to have entered Tacha: “Dirty water runs down his face as if the river had gotten into it” (Rulfo, 1983, p 33). In addition to this, Tacha's contact with the river water is linked to her loss:

The rotten taste that comes from there splashes Tacha's wet face and her two little breasts move up and down without stopping, as if they will suddenly begin to swell to start working with their doom. (Rulfo, 1983, p. 34).

The contact with the rotten smell of the water that splashes Tacha's face and the movement of her chest that her body makes when crying are perceived as a sign of doom. And not because of Tacha's will, as a thinking being with a will, but as an act of her breasts. The mere action of swelling of the breasts is a sign of doom and, in reality, they have not



even swollen, it is only the natural movement of the pectorals when sobbing or crying, but it is the perception of the narrator.

In the story there are several conceptual metaphors through which the impact of water on the perception of reality can be understood. It is clear that there is a negative vision around water, since it, in its various forms, has wreaked havoc on the town. The metaphors appear especially in the final part of the story and are essential to understand how water also impacts the perception of the three sisters of the narrator. The following quote: “—Yes—he says—, it will fill the eyes of anyone wherever they see it” (Rulfo, 1983, p. 33) already expresses the father's resignation about the fate that Tacha will have, like the older sisters her. But this phrase also expresses the conceptualization of Tacha's body as a liquid that will "fill" anyone's eyes. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2015), this makes sense for the following: “It is a natural metaphor, which results from the fact that when one looks towards a territory (land, soil, etc.), his visual field defines a border, that is, the part that one can see” (Lakoff and Johnson, 2015, p. 68). And it is not only the fact that the visual field is perceived as a container, but this way of understanding the visual field turns Tacha into a substance that has to be introduced into the eyes, which is related to the following quotes, in which it seems that Tacha suffers directly from the negative actions carried out by the river. The following quote allows us to see the contact between Tacha and the river: "Dirty water runs down his face as if the river had gotten inside it" (Rulfo, 1983, p. 33), which already expresses a fusion between the river water and the body of Tacha (previously expressed as a liquid and now also as a container). The following two quotes will help to perceive the influence of the river on Tacha: “From its mouth comes a noise similar to that which is dragged along the river banks” (Rulfo, 1983, p. 34). The narrator already perceives that her sister Tacha emits a noise similar to that produced by the river, which is in relation to the previous quote, in which it seems that Tacha has adopted more qualities of the river. The fact that the narrator begins to make comparisons between Tacha and the river gives the guideline to think about the extent to which the river has also wreaked havoc on her. The following quote ends by confirming:

The rotten taste that comes from there splashes Tacha's wet face and her two little breasts move up and down, non-stop, as if they suddenly began to swell to start working for their doom (Rulfo, 1983, p. 34).



This phrase is made up of two sentences that are joined by a conjunction and there appears to be a cause-and-effect relationship between sentence one and sentence two. This sentence summarizes in a concrete way that contact with water has resulted in the swelling of their "breasts". To understand this phrase, it must be understood that the "rotten taste" is used to refer to the river water, which "splashes" on Tacha's face. It is just one more expression that confirms the contact that the river and Tacha have, since the narrator is exempt from this. However, it is after this last contact with the water that the movement and growth of Tacha's breasts take place, which the narrator later relates to his future doom. In the same way, the way of being of the other two sisters can be understood by the contact they had with the river, since it is this element that appears in the story as the producer of misfortunes.

All of this can be understood by considering what has been said about water. The physical qualities of the dirty and tumbled river water seem to carry qualities of a moral nature, which seem to greatly influence the women and specifically the sisters of the narrator. Finally, it would be necessary to add the following quote "According to my father, they had spoiled because we were very poor" (Rulfo, 1983, p. 34). In this case, it is worth stopping at the expression "to spoil", as if it were a fruit or meat, a similarity between the older sisters and the water of the river that floods, which has also been spoiled, since it smells rotten.

Water is usually associated with the masculine and feminine. In this regard, Soler (1999) states:

Water has masculine values, such as fertilizing, remember the work of García Lorca "Yerma", here the woman receives the same adjective that is given to sterile land. But she also has feminine values, the water that is inside the earth and that fertilizes life. Rainwater would be masculine and that of a spring or well, feminine (p. 684-685).

In "We are very poor", the trigger for the river's flooding is rainwater, which, following this quote, would be masculine (vertical and with strong intensity). The river that overflows, floods and destroys is nourished by this male rainwater. But it is the contact with the narrator's sisters that reaffirms the masculine character of the river water. For he symbolically condemns them to perdition as a man would have done, as if a man were when Tacha and her sisters have contact with his water.



Discussion

The findings made with the analysis of the story imply that 1) the water is an actor, the actions of the water are the focus of what the narrator said. This implies, in turn, that a natural and non-animated element such as water is conceived with the actions of a subject moving through a town. It is rare to find literary works where the center of the actions is a natural element. 2) The fact that the qualities and several of the actions of water are negative and violent reflects that the water is perceived with qualities not present in the traditional and cultural concept of water. It is as if Juan Rulfo is intentionally presenting the harmful part of the water. The fact that it is not associated with life but with death is given by qualities associated with the dark, dense and rotten, culturally associated with mud and death. 3) The various ways of naming water represent the multiplicity that this liquid element can take in the natural and social reality of the human being, and this multiplicity is associated with the orientation of water in the states in which it is found and the way in which scrolls. 4) The relationship between natural and social determinism indicates that the vision that arises in the story is that an element of nature can function as a determining factor of a woman's social destiny.

The findings corroborate the hypothesis that water is perceived as having negative qualities, both in the natural and social levels, and this is manifested from beginning to end in the analyzed text.

The perception of water is negative, it is perceived as a harmful element and with qualities that are opposed to the attributes of the cultural concept of water. The analysis carried out can inspire the study of natural phenomena and elements of nature in the work of Juan Rulfo. The present study is limited to treating the perception of water by the narrator in the first person. The door is left open for the study of water as an actant and as an actor in the story "We are very poor" for future research.

With regard to the work of Juan Rulfo, this story is not the only one in which a confrontation of man with climatic factors or elements of nature is presented, other stories refer to the arid land or an earthquake, for example.

Studies prior to this have worked, on this same story, topics such as the metaphors of the river and milk by Salazar (1996) and the ideology in "Es que somos muy poor" by Campbell (1991). With regard to the environment and meteorological, geological and geographical aspects, Bell (2015) presents an ecocriticism of the Llano en llamas. As can be



seen, antecedent studies have already approached the river in the metaphorical aspect and the meteorological and geological phenomena, but this article focuses on water and the phenomenon of sensory perception regarding it.

Conclusions

In the story "We are very poor", water is presented in its destructive version. The perception of water in the text is through the intellect and senses of the narrator, who names it in various ways and qualifies it with negative attributes. The river water has undergone such a transformation that it breaks with the prototypical qualities to the point of being able to be perceived by all the senses (taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing). It manifests itself with a body as a character and performs harmful and invasive actions and appears linked to the moral, as it is associated with the doom of the narrator's sisters. It is presented as a fundamental element of natural determinism that appears in the text and is interrelated to social determinism. The swollen river and the narrator are the main characters in the story. The river has an active role and the narrator a passive role. The swollen river manifests itself and the narrator perceives it, describes it, and makes judgments. The story sends water with actantial qualities as a symbol of destruction and with characteristics opposed to the cultural concept of water.

Future lines of research

From the analysis carried out in this article, it can be observed that points of interest and approach for future research arise, such as: 1) The analysis of the literary text from cognitive neurosciences, to deepen the way it is perceived and conceptualizes in a literary text. 2) Another field of interest for research is cognitive linguistics, from which the various ways of calling water, as well as its appearance, can be approached from the theory of conceptual metaphor: function, structure and analogy. 3) In the area of the social, the work offers areas of interest for the social sciences, from the sociology of literature the social determinism present in the story can be worked in a specific and profound way. 4) The text can be approached interdisciplinary by natural sciences such as meteorology and geology, as already mentioned in a previous section, but there is also hydrology and landscape studies by geography to study water and the natural and rural settings that are presented in the story. 5) Finally, there is the approach from cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology that



have the open field to investigate the expressions used in the text to name water, as well as the cultural factors associated with water present in Juan Rulfo's story.

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