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ILLNESS AS CHARACTER IN EVELYN SCOTT'S *ESCAPADE*

Doença como personagem | Enfermedad como personaje
em *Escapade*, de Evelyn Scott | en *Escapade*, de Evelyn Scott

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Abstract: This paper aims to reflect on the metaphorical process established in *Escapade* (2019[1923]), Evelyn Scott's modernist autobiographical narrative written during her self-imposed exile in Brazil from 1914 to 1919. More specifically, we are interested in examining how, through metaphorization (Leite, 2007), Scott's autobiographical self places illness in three dimensions: awareness of the possibility of contracting illnesses in Brazil, anxiety facing the reality of having become ill, and utmost desire of dying. The qualitative analysis draws from a small sample of quantified data that shows the significant frequency of words associated with the semantic field of illness. Based on these data, we chose appropriate excerpts from the book to develop the analysis. Results indicate that Evelyn Scott approaches illness as a character, portraying it alternately as a threat and as a journey companion.

Keywords: Evelyn Scott. Illness. Metaphorization. Emotion. Autobiographical Narrative.

Resumo: O objetivo deste artigo é refletir sobre o processo metafórico instaurado em *Escapade* [Escapada] (1995[1923]), a narrativa autobiográfica de Evelyn Scott, escrita durante seu exílio autoimposto no Brasil, entre 1914 e 1919. Interessa-nos examinar como a dinâmica textual, por meio da metaforização (Leite, 2007), situa a doença do eu autobiográfico de Scott em três dimensões: consciência da possibilidade de contrair doenças no Brasil, ansiedade diante da realidade de ter adoecido e desejo máximo de morrer. A análise qualitativa parte de uma amostra de dados quantificados que mostram a frequência significativa de vocábulos relacionados ao campo semântico da doença. Com base nesses dados, são escolhidos os trechos do livro sobre os quais se desenvolve a análise. Resultados indicam que Evelyn Scott aborda a doença como uma personagem, às vezes ameaçadora, às vezes companheira de jornada.

Palavras-chave: Evelyn Scott. Doença. Metaforização. Emoção. Narrativa autobiográfica.

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar sobre el proceso metafórico que establece *Escapade* [Escapada] (1995[1923]), el relato autobiográfico de Evelyn Scott, escrito durante su exilio autoimpuesto en Brasil, entre 1914 y 1919. Nos interesa examinar cómo la dinámica textual, a través de la metaforización (Leite, 2007), sitúa la enfermedad del yo autobiográfico de Scott en tres dimensiones: conciencia de la posibilidad de contraer enfermedades en Brasil, ansiedad frente a la realidad de haber caído enfermo y máximo deseo de morir. El análisis cualitativo se basa en una muestra de datos cuantificados que muestran

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la frecuencia significativa de palabras relacionadas con el campo semántico de la enfermedad. A partir de estos datos, se eligen los fragmentos del libro sobre el que se desarrolla el análisis. Los resultados indican que Evelyn Scott aborda la enfermedad como un personaje, a veces amenazante, a veces compañero de viaje.

Palabras clave: Evelyn Scott. Enfermedad. Metaforización. Emoción. Narración autobiográfica.

1 INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Evelyn Scott (1893-1963). The richness of her life and work has inspired biographers and scholars for quite some time (White, 1998; Callard, 1985; Jones and Scura, 2001; Maun, 2012). Her work ranges from novels to poems, letters, and essays. However, she has been particularly acknowledged for her autobiographies (Scott 1921; 1923; 1937), including *Escapade* (1995[1923]), the masterpiece she wrote in Brazil during *World War One*. This paper aims at reflecting upon the metaphorical process in *Escapade*, focusing on the representation of illness. More specifically, we are interested in examining how, through metaphorization (Leite, 2007), Evelyn Scott's autobiographical self places illness in three dimensions: awareness of the possibility of contracting illnesses in Brazil, anxiety about having become ill, and utmost desire for dying due to illness. The emotions that arose in Scott's discourse were being experienced while she was ill. That might explain her choice to use images and metaphors as a resource to vividly describe her pain in early twentieth-century Brazil.

It is ascribed to Scott's textual dynamics the construction of metaphorical meanings or, according to Leite (2007), metaphorization. Considering this process, the various illnesses of the autobiographical self in the narrative are transformed into a character, challenging the self's actions. In that line, illness is a character that fits Rosenfeld's (1971) idea of character composed of a synthesis of words that suggest a type of reality subject to an expansion of images. In this paper, we argue that the illness of the autobiographical self (as expressed) through the expansion of metaphorical images is transformed into a contradictory emotional experience, simultaneously evoking feelings of threat and companionship.

Scholars have shown that the difficulty of studying metaphor begins with distinguishing what is a metaphor from what is not. When the analysis involves a potentially rich metaphorical theme, such as illness (Sontag, 1978; Semino, 2017), and a type of discourse equally fertile in the imagistic description, such as the autobiographical discourse (Martens, 1985; Marcus, 1998), this difficulty acquires an even bigger dimension. Furthermore, we must consider the relationship between metaphor and emotion (Kovácses, 2000; Gibbs, 1994) since individuals are naturally loaded with emotion when enduring the concrete experience of illness. In Evelyn Scott's case, these emotions are strongly expressed through metaphorical images.

All these aspects indicate the need to adopt discursive theoretical support that approaches studies of autobiographical writings (Marcus, 1998; Diaz, 2009; Gordon, 1980), metaphor (Cameron, 2003; Semino, 2008; Sardinha, 2007) and the anthropology of emotions (Abu-Lughod; Lutz, 1990). The article is organized as follows: 2 Contextualizing Evelyn Scott and *Escapade*; 3 A Few Words on Metaphor; 4 Emotion and Metaphor; 5 Autobiographical Discourse; 6 Character and Metaphorization; 7 Method; 8 Illness in *Escapade*: a gaze upon gazes; 9 Final Remarks.

2 CONTEXTUALIZING EVELYN SCOTT AND *ESCAPADE*

The American modernist writer Evelyn Scott (1893-1963) was still legally a minor when she ran away from the United States to live a kind of self-imposed exile in Brazil during the uncertain years of *World War One*. Evelyn Scott was born Elsie Dunn in Clarksville, Tennessee, and grew up within the elite social environment of a typical traditional Southern family. Her maternal side combined financial wealth with a fine taste for books and the arts. Her paternal side had yank origins and prospered in the railway construction business.

In 1913, Evelyn Scott fell in love with Cyril Kay-Scott—the pen name of Frederick Wellman, a renowned medical doctor, scholar, and dean of the School of Tropical Medicine at the prestigious Tulane University. Since Dr. Wellman was more than twice her age, married, and father of four, the affair was more than a social scandal, having become a police case. Given such circumstances, the couple decided to escape with seven hundred dollars and no identification documents. They first left New Orleans for New York, then London, and finally Brazil right before the outbreak of *World War One*.

In Brazil, Evelyn and Cyril tried to survive in various regions, facing poverty, and social isolation. Things were particularly painful for Evelyn who, besides feeling like an object of curiosity everywhere she went, became seriously ill after a difficult labor delivered in utmost precarious conditions in the North city of Natal, where she gave birth to her only child. From then on, the writer was chronically ill. Feeling practically invalid, ‘illness’ became a constitutive aspect of both her life and her writing. This is particularly clear in *Escapade* (1995[1923]), the powerful autobiographical account of her years in Brazil, between 1914 and 1919.

Escapade was a landmark in Evelyn Scott’s life and work. After its publication, in 1923, she became increasingly recognized as an important voice in modernist American literature, and at the age of thirty, she had already published in many genres—novel, poetry, autobiography, short stories, criticism, and drama. In the early 1920s, she was compared to writers such as Dostoevsky, Virginia Woolf, and Dos Passos. Although she was a Southerner, her humanistic worldview helped her transcend her origins to address universal issues like women’s liberation and confrontation with the depiction of women as sexual objects. Her trilogy, formed by *The Narrow House* (1921), *Narcissus* (1922), and *The Golden Door* (1925), set historically between 1920 and 1940, is an illustration of how Scott valued those themes. The trilogy studies three generations of a family and questions the position of modern women within a patriarchal society. *The Narrow House* depicts the Southern Farley family, who, enslaved by social conventions, shape the family women to develop a romantic desire to the detriment of sensual love, be submissive to their husbands, and be confined to their domestic space. *Narcissus* continues to examine the Farley women through the eyes of Julia, a family member who, despite her intelligence, cannot escape being viewed as a sexual object. In *The Golden Door*, Evelyn Scott places the new generations of women in confrontation. In that site of struggle, the domestic woman is confronted with the woman who is willing to experience it. In summary, the trilogy suggests that Evelyn Scott’s women evolve and experience (Tyrer, 2013, p. 16-17).

Considering the conventions of autobiographies, hitherto representative of male public protagonists, *Escapade* is innovative not only in style and technique but also in content. The story is told by an unnamed narrator, and the text is fragmented, with short episodes lacking transitions between them. There are seven parts, and Part 7, which seems to have no connection with the rest of the story, keeps intriguing scholars and reviewers to this day. Most importantly, perhaps, Evelyn Scott explored in *Escapade* unprecedented graphic ways to describe her own experiences with pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood, and sexuality in the backlands of Brazil during her self-imposed exile. According to Dorothy Scura, “*Escapade* combined a metaphysical internal journey with cool, distanced descriptions of the people, vegetation, animals, and landscape of Brazil” (1995, p. 288).

Besides its modern and sophisticated confessional language, the book is rich in images and metaphors, many of these associated with illness or, more precisely, with illnesses, as these images evoke not only Scott’s illness but also the suffering of other people that she witnessed closely. So, this work aims to analyze the metaphorical process developed in *Escapade*, a work drafted *in locus*, meaning under the effects of the real-time and space within which the illnesses were being experienced. More specifically, some linguistic metaphors have been selected to analyze how they reveal the writer’s emotions and viewpoints about illness and being ill in the then patriarchal, precarious Brazil of the early twentieth century and how illness can be viewed as a character within her autobiographical narrative.

3 A FEW WORDS ON METAPHOR

The traditional Aristotelian approach considered metaphor as a language phenomenon without cognitive value, a deviation from ordinary language, and a resource to persuade readers through its estrangement. So, it was possible to distinguish science from poetry: the first, designed to be understood and expressed through reason and the literal; the latter, expressed through imagination and metaphor. That traditional view was later confronted by the notion of metaphor as an omnipresent principle of language (Richards, 1936, p. 90). According to this point of view, metaphor implies the relationship between two thoughts of different things that, when actively supporting one another, originate a new word or thought whose meaning reflects the relationship between them. Metaphor is, in that sense, a relationship between thoughts that occurs by comparison, and language metaphors derive from this comparison.

The more recent approach supported by cognitive linguistics (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980) has shown that metaphors are not mere figures of speech but rather figures of thought. In that vein, there is a conceptual system that is significantly metaphorical, and the concepts that rule how people think are not limited to the intellect. In fact, besides ruling quotidian activities in their most trivial details, these concepts structure the way people behave in the world. For Lakoff and Johnson (1980), our concepts result from the imagistic schema and domains of experience whose conceptualization relies on abstraction mechanisms that include metaphor. It is about a cognitive process that allows the mapping of concrete schema apprehended by our body within abstract domains. Therefore, how we think, our experiences, and everything we do in our daily routine is a metaphorical issue.

In theory, metaphors happen in terms of entire domains of experience, not as an isolated concept. In saying LOVE IS A JOURNEY, or TIME IS MONEY, people understand the basic domains of love and time from their experiences of the other basic domains of journey and money (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980, p. 208). There are conceptual metaphors underlying the quotidian linguistic expressions in this perspective, and there might be an infinite number of linguistic expressions that belong to the same metaphorical concept. While, previously, different linguistic expressions corresponded to different metaphors, implying an infinite number of metaphors (Richards 1936), now the number of metaphors is smaller than the number of linguistic expressions to represent them. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 208) take the example of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, which is present in several expressions, such as: *Your arguments are indefensible*; *She attacked all the weak points of my argumentation*; *Your criticisms went straight to the target*; *I destroyed your argumentation*, among others. For the authors, this metaphor is experienced in some cultures because it structures actions during an argument.

More recently, the term *systematic metaphor* was introduced by associates of a discursive approach to metaphor (Cameron, 2000), an approach that puts together theories of others with theoretical principles of its own. The idea is to focus more on the use of metaphor as an end in itself (Sardinha, 2007) rather than on overestimating the mental processing of individuals who use metaphors.

The most relevant concepts embraced by the discursive approach to metaphor are systematic metaphor, linguistic metaphor, processual metaphor, metaphoreme, vehicle domain, and topic domain, among others. Systematic metaphor has been defined as a set of semantically linked words of a vehicle domain used to talk about a set of connected ideas of a topic during a discursive event (Samino, 2007). In this case, the vehicle is the metaphorical portion, and the topic is the non-metaphorical portion of this set of terms forming a systematic metaphor.

According to Sardinha (2007), while the systematicity of metaphor suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) is limited to the systematic relation of certain conceptual metaphors with their corresponding metaphorical expressions regardless of discourse, the discursive approach advocates that such systematicity can only be identified within discourse through evidence of metaphor uses.

That is the approach adopted to analyze Evelyn Scott's autobiography, based on the hypothesis that the discourse of the self metaphorically transforms illness into an antagonistic character. However, it is not just about considering the systematicity of uses in discourse but also about the writing process that transforms what is non-metaphor into metaphor, as it occurs in *Escapade*.

In this paper, we adopt the concept of textual metaphorization (Leite, 2007), which suggests that metaphorical meanings are built in the act of interpretation because of the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions related to the textual dynamics. Thus, metaphors continually take on new dimensions as they evolve into textual and discursive contexts. Consequently, they assimilate new semantic features that are beyond linguistic expressions alone, even though the first departure from the latter. That offers a means of identifying, in the text, implicit social practices filled with background knowledge that readers can activate during the interpretation process.

4 EMOTION AND METAPHOR

Emotion has been studied in theories that range from essentialism to contextualism. The first conceives emotion as a natural phenomenon shared by all humans regardless of any external circumstances, an experience involving a set of preexisting basic universal emotions. According to Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990), essentialists believe that emotion is an individual experience inherent to all individuals across cultures and societies, although they acknowledge the relevance of culture to the expression of emotion. Influenced by Darwin's evolutionism, they completely reject the idea of emotion as a socially constructed phenomenon. Differently, contextualist followers approach emotion as a discursive practice that can be analyzed through the language in use. In that sense, the concept of emotion moves away from the individual sphere of feelings, getting closer to the notion of discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Since emotional discourse is closely related to the social performance of language, Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990) affirm that emotion cannot be viewed as substances that are carried by discourse or expressed through discourse, but rather as "pragmatic acts and communicative performances, a form of social action that creates effects in the world, whose effects are culturally interpreted by interlocutors of the emotional discourse" (1990, p. 12).

As for the relationship between metaphor and emotion, scholars have highlighted the conflict between objectivism and subjectivism. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) mention that the fear of metaphor originated from the objectivist tradition advocating accuracy, impartiality, justice, and rationality in contrast to subjectivism, focusing on intuitive knowledge, human feelings, imagination, and emotion. For them, the fear of metaphor within the empiricist tradition is, in fact, fear of emotion and imagination, which is probably the reason why scholars such as Hobbes despised metaphor and other language resources, identifying them as "emotional misunderstandings" (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980, p. 38).

Within the aesthetics reception field, Stevens (1954) and Ginsberg (1966) point out that many poets affirm that metaphor has a special capacity to evoke deep emotional responses and elevate the spirit. Moving towards experimental psycholinguistics, Gibbs (1994) approaches metaphor as emerging from aspects of our daily lives, as people's shared understanding of quotidian language is constituted by a schema of metaphorical thought. The use of metaphor, thus, is not a transcendence of ordinary language, thought, or reality. On the contrary, the aspects of experience—mostly constituted by metaphorical thought—are the ones that are more conventional in the social reality. Furthermore, metaphor is crucial to our cognitive understanding of emotions, and our emotional experiences are inherently structured by metaphor. In Evelyn Scott's case, the feeling of helplessness seems to be present in her day-to-day life, being a type of emotion that structures her metaphorical discourse.

In one of the most comprehensive studies on the relationship between metaphor and emotion, Kövecses (2000) points out the highly figurative features of emotional language, reminding us that it is a language especially marked by metaphorical expressions, which mostly belong to conceptual metaphors. For instance, in *She is boiling with anger*, ANGER

has a corresponding metaphorical concept: ANGER IS A HOT LIQUID IN A CONTAINER. Similarly, in *I am starving for love*, the metaphor LOVE has the corresponding metaphorical concept LOVE IS A NUTRIENT (Kövecses, 2000, p. 34).

Besides demonstrating that metaphors appear abundantly in emotional discourse (Kövecses, 2000), cognitive linguistics indicates that human emotions are frequently conceptualized and expressed through emotions based on embodied experiences (Gibbs 1994; Yu, 1998). That is the reason why, in referring to an angry person, it is usual to hear people say that the person “was releasing smoke by her mouth” or “was fumigating” (Yu, 1998, p. 36). These expressions reflect the omnipresent metaphor in which the abstract concept of anger is thought of in terms of heat inside and outside the body.

Fainsilber and Ortony (1987) show that people use more metaphors when

describing their emotional states than when they refer to their behaviour in general. Furthermore, the use of metaphor is more frequent when people speak about intense emotions than about smooth emotions. Gibbs (2001), on the other hand, states that our emotions are understood through multiple and conflicting metaphors. For that reason, people have so many conventional clauses and phrases to express different aspects of their day-to-day emotional experiences. Metaphors are relevant to emotional discourse, as they show aspects of how people perceive the complexity of their emotional experiences.

Metaphor is a constitutive part of any discourse. Given the nuances offered by different approaches to metaphor in this paper, we follow the contribution of cognitive conceptual metaphors (Kövecses, 2000), the discursive approach of systematic linguistic metaphors (Samino, 2017), and the idea of the process of metaphorization in writing (Leite, 2007). All these approaches shed light on the analysis of Evelyn Scott’s autobiographical discourse proposed in this work.

5 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE

Autobiography is part of a broader field identified as life writing (Marcus, 1998), which—we add—might be viewed as a narrative that expands beyond the record of selected acts chosen by the autobiography writer in a chronological or otherwise form. Therefore, it is relevant to point out that the mere description of facts and personal memories, however interesting they seem, does not constitute an autobiography. For that to happen, these descriptions must assimilate the discursive dimension of a report about the historical and social context witnessed by the autobiographer, turning the report into an autobiographical discourse.

Investigating life-writing in the period identified as modernist, between late 19th Century and early 20th Century, Max Saunders (2013) offers a new perspective on the relationship between modernism and life-writing, arguing that the theoretical question regarding the relationship between autobiography and fiction is complex and much wider than most scholars suggest. For him, *autobiografiction* is a concept that shows the authors are aware of the interfusion between autobiography and fiction when they are writing.

Also—perhaps most importantly—*autobiografiction* is a concept related to themes and strategies like egotism, spirit, and inner life, crucial themes to Evelyn Scott’s writing process. In its wider sense, it is “a register of true spiritual experiences strung in a credible autobiographical narrative only more or less fictitious/fictional” (Saunders 2013, 171). On the other hand, Laura Marcus (1994) adopts the term *autobiographic*, defining it as a system of discourse that involves an interdependence between autobiography and fiction. For her, any act of literature is autobiographical to a certain extent. It is in that vein that Saunders legitimizes the hybrid concept *autobiografiction*.

The modernist writer Evelyn Scott was immersed in a profound spiritual journey, egotism, and inner life search during her process of writing *Escapade*. Referring to *Escapade* as a memoir, Mary White (1998) claims that, in form and content, the work

was as unique as Scott herself. [...] It is a work that shows Scott in search of a defined self, the work’s female subject, as well as its author, discovering herself through the autobiography involves a constant negotiation between the woman her Southern society expected her to be and the woman she sought in rebelling against such expectations (p. 31).

Another important aspect raised by White is that Evelyn Scott was not sure about the nature of the book herself.

After publisher Thomas Seltzer accepted the manuscript in January 1922, Scott tried to describe it to Theis: “[*Escapade*] is the first three years in Brazil written in broken impressionistic prose with some prose poems thrown in, a few critical comments on life, and Shadow play [...] to finish it up [...] It is a frank autobiography, though not of the usual kind as it has dreams and things (I wrote them down at the mines) contained in it verbatim” (White 1998, p. 33).

Evelyn Scott’s *Escapade*, originally published in 1923, works as an example since it is an autobiographical discourse reconstructing part of Brazil’s geography, culture, and social reality of the earlier twentieth century. More importantly, in circulating the discourse of her personal drama and artistic crisis as a young foreign woman going through self-imposed exile, Evelyn Scott expresses a movement of double resistance. On the one hand, she resists the Puritan discourse of the American society that she abandoned to search for the dream of artistic and personal freedom; on the other, she resists the Brazilian patriarchal discourse imposed on her within the precarious, almost primitive society.

6 CHARACTER AND METAPHORIZATION

A character is a language being, which means that it is fictional and created to perform in successive states in time, revealing human beings’ actions. Yet, Rosenfeld (2009) defines characters as anthropomorphised beings and the time itself as the narrated man, since the unreal time of fiction can only be manifested from the starting point of the verbal relations between his actions. The narrated character can also be, for instance, a city (Silva, 1973). In certain plots, the city becomes the main topic of the story.

Unlike in a theatre play text, in which the characters absorb the words and become their source, in a narrative, the character is constituted by words. This argument is relevant to the hypothesis that the autobiographical self in *Escapade* constructs—through words and metaphorization—illness as an antagonistic character in the narrative. This character is discursively constructed through associations of semantic items on deceases, as indicated in the section below.

7 METHOD

First, we used the computer search tool to identify the word ‘ill’ and its derivations in *Escapade*. By doing so, we could verify whether the word was used as a noun or adjective. Furthermore, and most importantly, we could verify the degree of pervasiveness, thus of relevance, of the topic in Evelyn Scott’s work. We noticed that the topic is brought up every five pages of the book, be that through the word ‘ill’ itself or words derived from or associated with illness, as indicated in Table 1. In a total number of two hundred and ninety-three pages, there are twenty-four occurrences of the word ‘illness,’ thirty-two of the word ‘ill,’ one occurrence of the word ‘ill’ to refer to more than one person being ill, five occurrences of the word ‘ill’ being used as a female plural adjective, and one occurrence of the word ‘ill’ as a male plural adjective¹.

The word count makes a total number of sixty-three words within the same semantic field, as indicated in Tabela 1 below:

Table 1: Semantic field of the word ‘ill’

Words	Occurrences
Illness	24
Ill (singular noun)	32
Ill (plural noun)	1
Ill (female singular adjective)	5
Ill (male plural adjective)	1
Total	63

Table 1 above shows the significant role of the theme in *Escapade*, demonstrating that Scott built an autobiographical discourse shaped by the intimate circumstances of a person who is ill. Her discourse is thus marked by both confessional and emotional aspects usually experienced by a sick individual.

Table 2 below shows the occurrence of the word ‘illness’ as categorized by the social context it refers to and the individuals who serve as protagonists in each context. This mapping aims to facilitate the identification of linguistic metaphors associated with ‘illness’ and the possible concepts subjacent to them. Furthermore, it might help develop discursive analyses and better understand Evelyn Scott’s choices for specific metaphors to describe how she views her and others’ illnesses.

¹ Ver: Evelyn Scott. *Escapada*. Rio de Janeiro: Versal, 2019.

Table 2: Occurrence of the word ‘illness’ according to the context and protagonists

Context	Protagonist	Occurrences
In a Hotel	Evelyn Scott	1
Labor	Evelyn Scott	16
Post Labor Surgery	Evelyn Scott	20
Family Survival	Nannete (Evelyn Scott’s Mother)	5
Labor	Petronilla (Maid)	7
Ranch Decline	Animals	2
Epidemics	People outside Evelyn Scott’s Conviviality	4
Total		63

Looking through the data, one can infer that Evelyn Scott wrote *Escapade* under emotions shaped by challenges of physical and mental order. She was thus being doubly challenged: physically, in trying to survive severe illness; mentally, in trying to understand and accept poverty and extreme isolation. The test of physical resistance was related to the illness itself. The test of mental resistance was directly associated with external conditions that challenged Evelyn Scott’s capacity to overcome what seemed unimaginable to someone with her social background.

Evelyn Scott uses metaphors to build images to express her living conditions and sense of isolation more vividly. Metaphor, thus, is not an embellishment of language, but rather a constituent of emotion (Kövecses 2000) to describe her extreme experience of being ill and isolated.

8. ILLNESS IN *ESCAPADE*: A GAZE UPON GAZES

In this section, we examine how illness is represented, or maybe what are the illness metaphors in *Escapade*. We are particularly interested in knowing how these metaphors are discursively related to illness to indicate that illness is a character that challenges Evelyn Scott’s autobiographical self along a narrative written under a strong emotional context. Being ill and witnessing others’ illnesses contribute to Scott’s gaze upon Brazil and her birth country.

Even before her serious condition, Evelyn Scott seemed concerned with her health in Brazil. Not surprisingly, she observes and describes in detail the architecture and functioning of the various boarding houses and cheap hotels where she and her travel companion stayed, pointing out aspects of the Brazilian perception of hygiene patterns whose logic seemed to her simply incomprehensible. This dilemma would reveal Scott’s constant concerns about illness, an issue that would become crucial to her experience in the country and with which the writer keeps a disjunctive relationship, ascribing to illness the role of a character, a challenging being that inflicts fear and vulnerability.

There is something fundamental in the racial attitude toward plumbing. In the indescribable toilets there are signs which request guests not to through paper in the bowls, cockroaches rattle through the empty tin provided as a waste-paper receptacle, and from a nail depends on a soiled clothe with which to wipe off the wooden seat. There is one tub in the hotel, but I am too frightened of disease to bathe in it (Scott, 1995, p. 10-11).

The excerpt “I am too frightened of disease to bathe in it” points out Evelyn Scott’s fear of becoming ill by using the hotel facilities. Therefore, given the terrible hygiene conditions in the place, the writer misses the opportunity to enjoy the minimum privilege of having a tub available in the hotel. Metaphorically speaking, being attacked by viruses and bacteria is a concrete risk in her surroundings. The writer feels overwhelmed by emotions of fear and anxiety that keep her constantly on guard against enemies that might cause any disease, possibly death.

After becoming seriously ill, Evelyn Scott begins to worry about how people treated or perceived her during the time she was ill. The writer vehemently rejected the idea of being treated as a victim. It seems to her unforgivable that the cruel existence of disease is used as justification for the victimization of the patient:

Mr. Ames came into the bedroom and sat down near me. He glanced at me once, sympathetically, but looked away again. [...] I won’t be condescended to because of **my** illness. The attitude of everyone has a faint complaisance which I find absolutely maddening [...] (Scott, 1995, p. 72, our emphasis).

At some point in the narrative, Evelyn Scott uses the lexeme *illness* followed by determinants that imply specific discursive effects. In the excerpt above, for example, *my* is a possessive pronoun representing control over the situation. Once she owns the illness, she is also in control and can dictate how people should approach it.

All the same, besides having to worry about being ill, the writer had to worry about other people’s gaze upon her illness. It seemed to her that only through this double emotional strain would she be able to fight the idea that a person who is ill does not have control of a life of her own and should be thus at the mercy of others.

Evelyn Scott’s daily life was shaped by symptoms that forced her to remain in bed most of the time. Nevertheless, on rare occasions, she toyed with the idea that she was all right and gave to the temptation of her young body in search of small pleasures. In one of these rare adventures in Natal the writer defied the body limits and decided to go with her partner for a walk along the beach.

John goes every day into the surf. This morning, I put my clothes on and walked down to the beach with him. When he was in the water, I took off my shoes and stockings and ran after him. He begged me to keep back, but it was **intoxicating to imagine** for a moment that I was well. The waves were enormous, translucent like swelling glass. They were cold however and broke against my breast with such force that I could scarcely stand. The effort of withholding them made me feel at once sick and weak (Scott, 1995, p. 72-73, our emphasis).

Here, the two concepts complement each other to detach the contrast between the reality of illness and the ideal of a healthy body. In that contrast, illness becomes the opposer against the healthy life Evelyn Scott so much desired, to the point of saying to herself that “it was **intoxicating to imagine** for a moment that I was well.” The naïve adventure at the beach required enough strain to take Evelyn Scott back to bed, where she had to confront the hard reality of being ill. At this point, fear emotion appears, followed by the idea of illness as an enemy that attacks—mainly expressed through the verb *attack*:

This afternoon I am in bed again. I feel frightened. I don't think of the pain I suffer as any ordinary illness which has **attacked** me from the outside, for as long as I lie perfectly quiet I am well, I am hungry at meal time and interested in life (Scott, 1995, p. 73, our emphasis).

This is a classic example of the military metaphor ILLNESS AS AN ENEMY THAT ATTACKS, which favors the idea that an ill person is passive and handicapped. Evelyn Scott's situation is so extreme that she gets to wish for the end of her existence: "When people become broken, maimed, they ought to be put out of their misery. To let them live amounts to an injustice" (Scott, 1995, p. 73).

For Evelyn Scott, illness provokes extreme suffering. In the position of someone ill, she feels as though it is a place from where she wants and deserves to leave. This representation is seen when she mentions that people who are ill "ought to be put out of their misery."

Besides approaching her suffering and illness as an enemy and confinement, Evelyn Scott establishes a moral opposition between healthy people and people who are ill through the idea that ill people are morally inferior to healthy people. For her, "Everyone they [the ill] come in contact with is unconsciously superior to them" (Scott, 1995, p. 73).

The metaphorically accomplished enemy, however, might disappear through a displacement move in space. According to Scott, that brings relief and a strange sensation of happiness: "When the pain dies away from me, it is like a great sound fading. What is left is a happy silence" (Scott, 1995, p. 73). However, while pain is compared to a being that moves to bring happiness, Evelyn Scott's confused mental and physical state views illness as a kind of journey companion. Although the silence is described as a happy silence, the writer feels "lost in the silence" (p. 73). Furthermore, an identity crisis takes over so overwhelmingly that Evelyn Scott begins to deny the existence of her own life: "I wonder what I am and if I have actually ceased to exist" (p. 73).

At that point, she struggles with a set of conflicting emotions related to the fact that she is ill and to people's perception of illness. Scott had to fight for her health as well as with how people in her surroundings viewed her condition. According to the writer, her mother, for instance, approached illness in a contradictory way: sometimes, Dona Nannette saw illness as the reason for concern, sometimes as a privilege, and sometimes as a motive to blame Evelyn Scott's partner for all the suffering situations.

When I greeted Nannette I felt she must observe that I had become utterly different. [...] She is terribly nervous. She says she is much distressed about **my illness**. [...] Nannete evidently considers illness a **luxury**. [...] She considers John responsible for my decision to leave home and my poor health is a proof, to her, that his grandiose plan has failed. He is the only person [...] who has reduced me to my present condition (Scott, 1995, p. 75, 78, our emphasis).

Amid such a complex scenario of physical pain and mixed feelings triggered by twisted views about her illness, Evelyn Scott sees illness as a kind of abyss where one might escape and sink with no return. Implicitly, it is a place that welcomes death. For the writer, in this place, the pain is like an insatiably hungry person whom Evelyn Scott is both subjected to and feeds. Illness is a character that triggers self-destruction since Evelyn Scott feeds the character that devours her.

I sink into deep sleep like a stone into a pool. [...] **My illness** is like a **long sleep**. But I do not wish to awaken from it. If only the **pain** were not so **hungry**. I can't feed it enough. Yet there is more and more of myself to give (Scott, 1995, p. 81-82, our emphasis)

9 FINAL REMARKS

The American modernist writer Evelyn Scott was an upper-class Southern woman who abdicated her fortune to live in poverty with the love of her life in the Brazilian early twentieth century, from 1914 to 1919. The romance involved a renowned physician, a married scholar, a father of four, and twice her age. At the time, the social scandal soon became a police case, as Evelyn Scott was legally a minor in the hands of an older man.

Under those circumstances, the couple escaped to Brazil without documents, carrying only seven hundred dollars. However, soon after they disembarked in Rio de Janeiro in 1914, there were challenges in adapting to the new social environment, especially for Evelyn Scott, who had become pregnant and did not know a word of Portuguese. Additionally, perhaps most importantly, she became seriously ill after a complicated childbirth in the impoverished surroundings where the writer lived most of her years in the country. From then on, illness gets over her daily self-imposed exile life.

Escapade (1995[1923]) is Scott's autobiographical account of her struggle to survive in the patriarchal society of those days. She wrote the first draft *in locus*, under illness, poverty, and isolation. In this paper, it was noticed that illness is the most relevant aspect of her daily life in the tropics. That is why illness plays a crucial role in the autobiographical narrative as well. Furthermore, Scott uses linguistic metaphors in *Escapade* to unveil her view about illness and being ill in Brazil and how people approached her illness. Thus, the metaphor is not an embellishment of the language but rather a constitutive element of Evelyn Scott's emotional discourse: a discourse that describes an extraordinary human experience within the context of self-imposed exile.

The qualitative analysis was based on a small sample of quantified data that shows the frequency of words associated with the semantic field of illness. Based on these data, appropriate excerpts from the book were chosen to develop the analysis. Results indicate that Evelyn Scott approaches illness as a character who is both a threat and a journey companion. Illness discursively represents various contradictory characters, ranging from an enemy that attacks her body and soul to a journey companion.

Crucially, it was within the harsh realities of illness, poverty, and isolation that Evelyn Scott, through metaphorization (Leite, 2007), wrote the first draft of what would later become the autobiographical masterpiece *Escapade*. Through this process, she was able to vividly describe the immense suffering caused by her experiences in early twentieth-century Brazil—circumstances completely unimaginable for someone from an elite Southern background like hers.

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