

Death and Fragmentation in Carlos Drummond de Andrade.

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According to French philosopher Georges Bataille, eroticism is part of human beings' inner experience connected to death. In this sense, Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade (1912-1987) explores the theme of death in his erotic poems by comparing it to orgasm, "paz de morto," or "se morria beijando," and "A morte, entre nós dois, tinha parte no coito." Drummond also exposes fragmented body parts throughout the poems, such as "língua," "bunda," "vulva," and "membro."

Published in 1992 with the title "O Amor Natural," his erotic poems caused sensation in the Brazilian literary world as well as the mainstream audience. Drummond is considered one of the best Brazilian poets of the twentieth century, and even though love is a constant theme throughout his work, his erotic poetry revealed another side of a poet, who always projected a timid yet retrospective image. It was a revelation for many readers and generated the classic debate between eroticism and pornography, between high and low culture.

This debate became visible in an excellent documentary directed by Heddy Honigmann (*O Amor Natural*, First Run Features, 1996) where elderly people are invited to read his erotic poems and comment about their own sexual life. What became clear in the documentary is that nobody was shocked while reading out loud some of the explicit content that could be considered pornographic. Quite to the contrary, Drummond's erotic poetry illustrated in this documentary evoked beautiful moments of reflection upon relationships and moral codes.

A psychoanalytical interpretation of Drummond's fragmentation using Lacan's theory of language, could suggest the feminine submission to the Phallus, which in this case, become a "signifier" of desire. One example is the poem "Sem que eu pedisse, fizeste-me a graça" where the line "Nunca pensei ter entre as coxas um deus" refers to the penis as a god adored by women. But using the same theory by Lacan, we could say that the contrary is also valid, since most of Drummond's literary production also venerates the vagina and other feminine body parts as "men's heaven." Another interpretation might say that the use of death in these erotic poems reflect the poet's search for a divine connection throughout the senses, where orgasm becomes a channel to ecstasies beyond the human experience. Therefore, death for Drummond becomes "paz dos deuses," gods' peace, as orgasm enables inner transformation of the human being. And that's exactly how the elderly couples in the documentary felt by reading Drummond's poems.

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