

Greta Thunberg's biography Against climate change and the pandêmica: the educational and alarmista profiles /

Biografismo de Greta Thunberg contra as mudanças climáticas e a pandemia: os perfis educativo e alarmista

*Simão Farias Almeida**

Doctor at the Federal University of Roraima - Boa Vista/RR – Brasil. Researcher of environmental communication, environmental journalism and ecocriticism.

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8582-7485>

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ABSTRACT

Since 2018, coverage on news websites of the discourse and actions of the Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg has tended to provide visibility to her personal profiles of engagement and coherence, and her educational and alarmist social profiles, with regard to climate change. This article uses Ecocriticism (GARRARD, 2006), environmental journalism (BOYKOFF, 2011) and the biographical method of investigating the phenomenological field of the subject and understanding the extent of her experiences and her significance (VILAS-BOAS, 2008), in order to demonstrate the manner in which these profiles of the activist have been constructed in four journalistic articles from the websites: France Presse, G1 (Grupo Globo de Comunicação), Deutsche Welle Brasil and BBC News Brasil. The intention is to investigate whether this biography transverses a planetary mindset and an interdependent ecological awareness of solidarity against the global crisis of the earth's ecosystem and the Covid-19 pandemic, characteristics of future education and communication according to Morin (2003). The article concludes that Greta Thunberg is skeptical in relation to the apathy of governments and is authentic in her defense of climate causes, thereby decimating false inconsistencies between her educational and alarmist roles so as to criticize and change planetary mindsets.

KEYWORDS: Biography; Climate Change; Educational; Alarmist.

*  simon-jp@hotmail.com

RESUMO

A cobertura de discursos da estudante sueca Greta Thunberg e de suas ações por parte dos sites de notícias, desde 2018, tem a tendência de dar visibilidade a seus perfis pessoais de engajada e coerente, e seus perfis sociais de educativa e alarmista a respeito das mudanças climáticas. Faremos uso da Ecocrítica (GARRARD, 2006), do jornalismo ambiental (BOYKOFF, 2011) e do método biográfico de investigar o campo fenomenológico do sujeito e compreender a extensão das suas experiências e de seus sentidos (BOAS, 2008), com a intenção de atestar o construto desses perfis da ativista em quatro matérias jornalísticas dos sites G1 do Grupo Globo de Comunicação, Deutsche Welle Brasil e BBC News Brasil. Investigaremos se esse biografismo transita por uma mentalidade planetária e uma consciência ecológica interdependente e solidária contra uma crise global do ecossistema terrestre e da pandemia de Covid-19, características da educação e da comunicação do futuro nos termos de Edgar Morin (2003). Concluiremos que Greta Thunberg é cética em relação à apatia dos governantes e autêntica a respeito das causas climáticas defendidas, dizimando falsas incoerências entre seus papéis educativos e alarmistas com o intuito de criticar e reformar as mentalidades planetárias.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Biografismo; Mudanças Climáticas; Educativa; Alarmista

1 Introduction

Greta Thunberg, the Swedish schoolgirl, was named Person of the Year by *Time* (magazine) in its December 2019 issue, considering her to be one of the most influential voices warning against climate change. Thunberg is a young activist with no direct links to NGOs, capable of inducing individual, social and global mobilization in favor of the environment fifty years after the 1968 student protests. According to the *Times* bi-weekly website, “Climate change is our reality, and youth activists like Greta are doing everything within their power to work against it, and demand a change” (GONZÁLEZ, 2019). Although this discourse bestows contemporary political and environmental singularity upon Thunberg, the person responsible for her selection as one of the “*Times100*” personalities of the year, in a text justifying the choice, also suggested the seasonality of such leaders when recalling the civil rights movements of the 1960s, and the consequences in current youth struggles.

On the *Time* website, journalists Charlotte Alter, Suyin Haynes and Justin Worland (2019) justified Thunberg’s position on the list, due to her exceptional ability to have created a change in global attitudes through urgent measures, even though she has presented no magic solutions vis-à-vis climate policies as complex as the phenomena related to global warming. The French magazine *Valeurs Actuelles*, however, used exactly this argument regarding the scientific complexity of global warming and the controversies presented by denial scientists to criticize her (FONTON, 2019). When comparing the editorial line of these two publications, this article could consider the ambivalence of

reactions generated by the discourse and meanings proffered by Thunberg, however, it also aims to demonstrate the coherence between the activist's educational and alarmist biographical profiles, constructed by news websites.

In *Ecocriticism*, Garrard offers answers for the debates on the ecological crisis and environmental representation, as in the case of Greta Thunberg's thoughts. According to Garrard (2004, p.10), "The challenge for ecocriticism is to keep one eye on the ways in which 'nature' is always in some ways culturally constructed, and the other on the fact that nature really exists, both the object and, albeit distantly, the origin of our discourse". This assumption signals the interest of this theoretical and critical field not only for literary narratives, in fact Garrard also analyzes documentaries, as well as factual productions, including journalism, and demonstrates an interest in writing biographies of those from the tradition of ecological criticism. This was the case of the North American Rachel Carson, considered a pioneer writer of modern environmental thought with her nonfiction book *Silent Spring* (1962) regarding the damage caused by pesticides. Garrard (2006) profiled this author as a "political", "pragmatic" environmentalist. Thus, the biographical proposal has the role of revealing and valorizing the names of a tradition that need to be widely revealed and consolidated and does not hierarchize literature, journalism and other cultural and social media when defending the planet, natural spaces and all beings.

This article analyzes how narratives published on the internet have represented the biographical profiles of Greta Thunberg, socially constructed and mediated by the media, through her own discourses and those of journalists. Statements by Greta Thunberg regarding climate change, environmental degradation and the Covid-19 pandemic are considered, whether related or not to the emergency panorama of the twenty-first century, when political, economic, social and environmental problems are interlinked. It shares an understanding that these man-made changes also originate from a discourse mobilized to confront a limited anthropocentric view by exclusively indicating natural factors of climate change on the planet (ALMEIDA, 2017), analogous to the concern of Ecocriticism in analyzing facts, discourses and their representations. The coronavirus pandemic is referred to as the "normality of the exception" since it creates the conditions for it to be overcome, according to Santos (in TOSTES; MELO FILHO, 2020), depending on an interpretation capable of considering causes and effects, as in the analysis of environmental degradation and global warming.

2 The object and the method of biographical research

Subjects build their own narratives and accumulate their own discourses, apprehended by cultural productions and other subjects interested in selecting and mediating particular aspects of life. Certain profiles are manipulated, offered to others or escape our control because we often fail to recognize them or they are marked by gaps to be subsequently filled in. As Vilas-Boas (2002) indicated, biographers and those they write about, broadly use the same patterns of interpretation, both accumulative and supplementary, to delineate a life. The biographical research method developed by Vilas-Boas (2008) has been selected in this article to analyze the discursive repertoire of Greta Thunberg regarding climate change and the pandemic, while being aware of the need to distinguish it from the practice by writers, journalists and historians in book format, also analyzed by Vilas-Boas.

According to Vilas-Boas (2008), journalistic narrative selects the perspective through which the reader will observe the person in the biography. He also highlights the role of journalism, which is not merely to provide news, in order to avoid a shallow viewpoint and to mediate the common experiences of subjects between their public and private lives. Thus, “it not only contributes to biography writing with narration techniques, but also in the way of researching, of discovering circumstances” (VILAS-BOAS, 2008, p.117). This characteristic of narrating the other depends on techniques capable of guaranteeing access to the experiences of the personages. But how may they be used when migrating from journalism to scientific knowledge? Vilas-Boas (2008) recommends the phenomenological method, which sets out with the aim of building a theoretical support that is able to investigate the ways in which a journalist biographs the facts, events and history of the subjects: “As researchers, we enter, as deeply as possible, into the phenomenological field of our biographed subjects and work with them, together, in order to understand the extent of the experiences and their meanings” (VILA-BOAS, 2008, p.32). He agrees with the idea that the subject's meanings migrate from their own perspective to that of the researcher. Thus, the phenomenology of the other is constituted on account of a perspectivism in transit.

Gomes (2009) also makes a phenomenological reading of journalism, since, according to this Brazilian critic, a fact is not definitive data, independent of the subjectivity of those who witness it or know it. It is much more than its manifestation in nature, and is objectively given through a

manifestation of the senses (GOMES, 2009). The phenomenology of the fact still assumes parameters of its own interpretation, which induce its apprehension. Thus, for Gomes, journalistic perspectivism is configured not only by direct experience,

[...] but above all because even in the direct perception our experience intervenes in order to constitute its data, spontaneously segmenting a dramatic unit in the continuum of events, implicitly valuing its elements, bringing into play the witness's prior knowledge, the plot of their own desires and social interests in the organization of their materials etc., so that the presumed "fact in itself" is not within our reach when we perceive it, even less when we state it (GOMES, 2009, p. 48).

Consequently, facts are objectified by the different perspectives of journalists, personages, information sources and witnesses. They cease to be facts in themselves and become mediated, even by emotions, hence, the author upholds that: "Wherever we 'move' in search of what is universal and public, perspective moves along with us and reforms itself; even if we 'move away' from it, it will always be to another perspective" (GOMES, 2009, p.49). Therefore, the phenomenological construct is (re)formed according to how the fact presents itself and the mediator perceives it. Perspectivism has rules for apprehending the senses:

It is possible to make a fact say [author's emphasis] many things, it is possible to interpret it in various ways and, in some cases, in a potentially infinite number of ways; what is not possible and, above all, cannot be done legitimately, is to make him say [author's emphasis] what he does not actually say, to interpret it in any way. Interpretation has its limits and these limits are given by the *autonomy granted* [author's emphasis] by the fact (GOMES, 2009, pp.61-62).

Hence, Gomes, together with (2008), broadens the movement of factual perspectives and limits their individual objectification based on the interpretation by different subjects. Thus, he defends the mimetic and tautological nature of journalistic narrative:

Mimetic [author's emphasis] because the narrative gives us a new presence, a representation of things that have already happened or are happening elsewhere; *tautological* [author's emphasis] because the event, as it unfolds, is duplicated, taking place for a second time in front of the reader of the report (GOMES, 2009, p.13).

Consequently, the journalist creates a new edition of the fact to be mediated and recognized by the readers receiving the journalistic material. An analogy may be made with the assumption of

Ecocriticism, beginning with the natural environment apprehended within itself and culturally constructed. Based on this kind of phenomenological control, by recognizing an objectified factuality, whose senses of reality migrate from subject to subject, a return is made to discuss biography based on the understanding of Vilas-Boas (2008) to analyze the manner in which the profile of Greta Thunberg is represented.

The question discussed herein concerns the experiences and perspectives to which the researcher has access. Hence, Vilas-Boas (2008) shares the assertion that understanding the other as an intersubjective process involves multiple individual consciences. It concerns empathy, of

[...] a state of consciousness in which one person experiences and participates with another person in a stream of thoughts, feelings and meanings. Meanwhile, it is also aware of the larger context in which the two exist. In this state, opposites may coexist without major contradictions (VILAS-BOAS, 2008, pp.30-31).

Following the pathway of phenomenological control, this article investigates the discourses of the biographed subject herself and the mimetic and tautological representations by journalists on news websites, with the science of coexisting common and distinct perspectives. It is necessary to envisage the empathy with the research subjects based on reflexivity grounded on the concern to record the experience of the other, in the “permanent attempt for researchers to feel what they would feel if they were in the same situations and circumstances as the other” (VILAS-BOAS, 2008, p.33). Therefore, Vilas-Boas (2008) advances in the discussions on method and proposes a meta-biographical bias, in which an explanation of the subject becomes the subject itself, and both the researcher and the author examine the process of biographing others and him/herself.

The phenomenological construct operates with the mimetic and tautological reduplication of the subjects' profiles, which reflect their own manners of mediating reality and the social environment, according to the assumptions of Gomes (2009). Thus, “[...] the individual's biography is apprehended as an episode located within the objective history of society” (VILAS-BOAS, 2008, p.50). Reconstituting the historical, social context in which the biographed individual is submitted to a journalistic cross-section by the journalist, helps to make it understandable (VILAS-BOAS, 2008). The angle, the insertion of the subject's singularity into his/her discourse and action space, does not redeem the subject itself, but passes through a phenomenological sieve because this singularity depends on the observer and necessarily implies some value judgment (VILAS-BOAS, 2008). Thus,

searching for profiles in narratives with phenomenological support implies selecting certain meanings to migrate from the journalist him/herself to the sources, witnesses and the subject, hence, always supplementary. The metabiographical method proposed by Vilas-Boas (2008, p.164) attempts to insert and redeem the personage from a “discourse system”, recognizing how he/she is objectified, mimicked and permeated by a tautology of reduplicated profiles, reconstructed in Gomes’ terms.

This biography through journalism, however, is never definitive, and it remains upon each researcher to face it as “risible”, i.e., recognizing in the subject an unfinished being whose profiles are in constant construction and change (VILAS-BOAS, 2008). Hence, we apply the biographical method to the analysis of the activist Greta Thunberg, considering the context defined and apprehended by digital productions before and after the UN Climate Conference in New York and the Climate Summit held in Madrid in 2019, also before and after the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, whose origins in time and place are still under investigation. Reality and biography intertwine and offer themselves as potential sources of information and references of individual, collective, social and universal profiles. “From a narrative viewpoint, there is a distinct possibility of concatenating the personage’s facets as a set of profiles, whereby each profile explores a different facet/episode of the person; and each facet is part of a hypertext” (VLAS-BOAS, 2008, p.244-245). Thus, each feature profiled in a factual narrative implies attitudes on the part of the subject, through which we recognize the intentions of the subject themselves, of others and the world, placed, manifest, to be revealed and complemented. The researcher recognizes in him/herself the need to legitimize, or not, the profiles and actions charged with the subject’s own intentions and in constant movement.

Given these issues raised by Brazilian authors, some techniques from the metabiographical method used in this article may be mentioned, such as the analysis of profiles through perspectivism, contextualization, objectification, subjectivation and the correlation of journalistic discourses. Through these techniques, it is identified how a biography is developed by each production subject and migrates from subject to subject, from discourse to discourse, thus, charged with subjective and objective meanings, which are always in circulation. This process is similar to the “subjectivation” mentioned by Hall (in SILVA, 2000), according to whom, the constitution of the subject and its subjectivity is implied by discursive practices. The trajectory is a two-way street: in order for the subject to externalize, to emerge, he/she needs to discursively question his/her intimacy and objectify it. Here, the interest is in the use of journalism by the personage of the news item in order to

internalize and publicly expose facts, desires and impressions. The research of this subjectivation must take into account the mediation of the journalist and the uses of journalistic practices and processes in order to gain access to the narratives of the subjects. In this article, attention is given to the operational modes of environmental media coverage.

3 Journalistic paradigms in environmental coverage

Environmental journalistic coverage demonstrates its ability to problematize factual paradigms in contemporaneity, such as objectivity in the treatment of facts. Wyss (2008) reveals the complex, challenging nature of the environmental agenda, whereby this specialty of the profession combines scientific and political coverage, conducive to adopting a position on the part of the media professional. With the demands for a journalism characterized by impartiality, and by balancing statements made by interviewees, do reporters take sides in favor of the environment? Wyss (2008, p.241) reminds us that the term objectivity may be misleading from the moment the reporter selects his stories, however, “While story selection, reporting, writing, editing, and presentation are all selective, good journalism still demands that environmental reporters follow certain tenets on each aspect of the story”. Wyss then enumerates these journalistic criteria: factual accuracy, rigorous transparency of facts, confronting fabricated and fact-based information, being fair to environmental demands, expressing the reason for covering certain stories and appreciation for environmental reporting. He also shares the idea of journalists joining the balance between objectivity and defending ecological causes. Considering ecocritical assumptions applied to communication and journalism, the media professional works with facts and the discursive social construction of environmental demands. If the public aspires to having guidance, the media loses credibility when reporters miss or pay little attention to important stories (WYSS, 2008).

It is believed that global warming, one of the consequences of climate change caused by man, is always a subject that depends on precision, rigor, transparency and engagement on the part of journalists. Almeida (2017), on the one hand, draws on the proposal of climate analysis by David Archer and Stefan Rahmstorf (2010), addressing data detection, attribution of causes and balance of evidence, in order to propose a standard interpretation based on these three items, and the composite of confronting factors and consequences between different contexts in journalism and, on

the other, he highlights the diversity of sources interviewed in productions from the area. The refractory discourse in covering this problem questions official/institutional and unofficial/citizen sources surrounding the causes of a recent past and impediments to a future recurrence of these facts (ALMEIDA, 2018). Climate change journalism needs to become entangled within subjective narratives beyond objective treatment. News coverage must be a radial construct, converging offers and demands on issues of gender, class, race, ethnicity, generation, through which subjects individually, collectively and socially legitimize their subjectivities and their rights to a preserved nature, among them citizens with no connection with institutions and instituted in their discursive manifestations as unofficial sources (ALMEIDA, 2018).

The concern of theorists and critics of climate change journalism has been to warn about the positioning of scientific and lay discourses. Authors such as Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller (in BOYCE; LEWIS, 2009) argued that discursive manifestations contrary to the argument of anthropogenic climate change, i.e., caused by man, decimate collective and state responsibility for the problem. Boykoff (2011), on the other hand, criticized the norm of balancing voices that promotes an anthropocentric conception of climate change, focused exclusively on exempting humanity from responsibility for its actions; contrary to this, journalistic coverage must use scientific understanding regarding the distortions of its causes and its effects, neither hierarchical nor balanced, but denouncing these distortions. While contextualization, according to Boykoff (2011), helps to deflate controversies generated by “uncertainties”, more statements by scientists neither resolve conflicts with political voices nor replace their arguments.

Unofficial sources, represented by citizens whose testimonies of the facts are detached from discourses capable of representing certain institutions or organizations, as well as those of journalists, may also interpret climate change and reveal the regime for covering up climate issues by public authorities, by being the biggest victims and, often, not the cause of these contemporary evils. “These considerations of ‘who speaks for climate’ via mass media may be as important as formal climate governance architectures themselves to the long-term success or failure of efforts to take carbon out of the atmosphere or keep it out”. (BOYKOFF, 2011, p.188). Equally as important as the authorship of statements engaged in warning against global warming, is to investigate how positive profiles in relation to the causes of climate change developed in journalistic narratives help to consider visible models by the public, capable of dispelling climate denial.

An analysis is undertaken of how the biographical profiles have been constructed of Greta Thunberg, who has engaged in personalizing warnings on the causes and effects of climate changes, the degradation of the environment and the coronavirus pandemic, in news website productions (*France Presse, G1, Deutsche Welle Brasil and BBC News Brasil*), during the period from 2019 to 2020. This young Swedish woman has gradually become an “accumulative” source of information, according to Wolf (2009), until as a news agent, she has offered her image and her discursive system in favor of an appealing planetary cause. With the discussions of Mouillaud (in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002), it is possible to state that she began to have engaged “organic” connections with the production of her statements, and, thus, stood out beyond her discourses. This movement away from her own meanings has enabled journalists to appropriate them and paraphrase them in indirect and even direct discursive manifestations, the fidelity of which depend on the scrutiny of the newspaper when defining it totally or delimiting it partially inside quotation marks. The risible character of the testimonies of interviewees, i.e., open to the apprehension of other subjects, depends on the media professional's manner of operating with total fidelity, usually established because the interviews are always edited, or partially edited, in relation to the original discourses.

The configuration of informants in sources and agents has fluid borders, but their discursive operations begin to function when they gain more and more “status”; media evidence in addition to social evidence (MOUILLAUD in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002). In this case, according to Mouillaud (in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002), the “power-to-speak” works as a “presupposition”, i.e., the agent of information is frequently recalled by the media in order to offer ideas of factual and social interest according to journalistic uses. The discourses of these agents need to be faithful to and operated by journalistic routines, practices and processes. The newspaper is no longer focused on stating the origin, but on its interpretation, its social and cultural construction. What is said is just the symptom of a meaning “updated by a discourse”, but this is not the necessary operator if it is not preceded by the fidelity of informants (MOUILLAUD in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002). In the case of the corpus analysis proposed herein, attention is paid to the character of accumulative, supplementary and mutual legitimacy between Greta Thunberg and the media, so that climate change, its factors and its effects, including global warming, the emergence and proliferation of pandemics are given a preferable angle.

4 The accumulative journalistic profiles of a climate activist

Thunberg's accumulative biography is analyzed here in four narratives, by considering the techniques of perspectivism, contextualization, objectification, subjectivation and the metabiography of the discourses and profiles. Although she is not a scientific source, Thunberg has become an information and reference agent, whose perspectives, contexts and the reports that surround her are of interest to the media readership. She has been invited to participate in demonstrations and conferences on climate and against global warming, due to protests held in front of her school in Sweden. Thus, she began to constitute both an official and unofficial hybrid source of information, i.e., a citizen and also institutionalized, due to her participation in international events in the environmental field, even though she had no links to any institution, government, party, researchers or NGOs.

One year after calling a school strike for climate, Greta Thunberg says that the message has become more accepted (France Presse/G1), from 08/13/2019, was published a year after these protests began, and opens by attributing to the activist the belief that “[...] her message has become more accepted, although there are still insufficient concrete actions” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). The discourse thereby reveals skepticism in relation to actions taken by government officials to reduce the causes and effects of climate change. The article goes on to legitimize the activist's environmentalist coherence when traveling by racing yacht from the UK to New York, thus avoiding the emission of polluting gases into the atmosphere caused by aircraft. The personage views criticism as proof of her sway over public opinion: “The debate is changing. I feel that people are facing this with more urgency, they are starting to be more aware, slowly” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). Thunberg's words highlighted in the body of the factual narrative charged with externalized desires are ambivalent because, while they express her self-confidence they also reinforce the skeptical manner with which she views the slow mobilization and reaction surrounding the cause.

As Bhabha highlights (1998, p.87), “It is only by understanding the ambivalence and antagonism of the desire of the Other that we are able to avoid the increasingly easy adoption of the notion of a homogenized Other, for a celebratory, oppositional policy, of the margins or minorities”. The activist, part of a select group of protesters from the ecological cause, declares her opposition to climate change denial from representatives of the political and economic elites, by means of two

facets capable of increasing her supporters and restricting opponents, thus remaining coherently alarmist and skeptically hopeful. According to Thunberg, “When you see the big picture, almost nothing positive is happening” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019) in terms of actions, and yet this seemingly isolated voice has “dominated the headlines” and “met with several political leaders and entrepreneurs from all over Europe” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). She also managed to arrange a suitable racing yacht to cross the Atlantic Ocean without leaving a carbon footprint, because of the solar panels and underwater turbines, thereby amplifying her cause. This act served to illustrate how not to contribute to global warming and corresponds to media representations because of the image generated for the public and aggregated to previous discourses.

The journalistic narrative follows on with a representation of her skeptical profile when she addresses her option to avoid air pollution: “This just shows how impossible it is to live sustainably these days, it's absurd that you have to navigate the Atlantic Ocean in this way to get there without producing emissions” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). She refers more to her own uniqueness rather than to her isolation in personifying climate activism by being “one of the few people in the world who can do this, I want to take this opportunity to do it” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). She also snubbed the US President of the time, Donald Trump, when referring to the lack of a public meeting on his agenda, as “I don't see what I could tell him that he hasn't already heard” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). Thus, she seems to embrace a rule of not dialoguing with personalities who adopt a contrary stance, in much the same way that certain political authorities who deny climate change react in relation to activists.

Her skepticism is often aware of the limits she has in amassing sympathizers and sometimes isolates the dialogue, strategically planned within the context of conflicts and contradictions. This provides an authenticity closed to conviction in the face of contradiction. Despite having participated in the World Economic Forum, a UN meeting, and being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, she is skeptical about certain invitations, as noted by the *France Presse* article: “Many people see this an opportunity to invite us, school striking people, to clear their name in a way” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). Hence, she recognizes that she is capable of impacting ideas on climate, and children and young people of her own age, in addition to ignoring opportunists “because, at the same time, it is in fact, a good sign that they are trying to keep us quiet, as it means that we are making an impact, and that they see us as a threat” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). Such discourse reveals her profile as a

leader built from the fact that she represents global public opinion, bringing people together around the reality of the effects of climate. “Then together we create an international opinion, and movement so that people stand together and put pressure on the people in power” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). However, despite her engagement, she defines herself as a “mere activist” despite having the “special strength” of teenagers: “We tell it like it is, we don't care to be polite. And we make people feel very guilty” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). This discourse ends the narrative, seeming to problematize Greta Thunberg's biographical profiles so that the readers are able to take a position on her personality.

Is the French news agency indicating a contradiction between the authentic, skeptical, alarmist and educational profiles? The biography is created throughout the article just with statements of fact made by the personage, but the meanings migrate from discourse to discourse, placing skepticism and dialogue in opposition, the role of planetary and pedagogical alarm of consciences. It is up to the reader and the researcher to confront these perspectives, as suggested at the end of the website article. By referring to her as a “mere activist”, we believe that Thunberg is aware of how far she may go to convince on global warming in light of its effects on planet Earth. In a similar manner, she forms her followers also as climate activists. Thus, opinion and the international movement depend on an engagement capable of playing on two fronts: reducing the strength of the deniers and expanding the number of supporters of the cause. Within this context of contradictions, the biographical construct sometimes models the alarmist and often educational profiles, legitimizing the sometimes impossible skeptical capacity for dialogue. Therefore, public and global alarm has the ambiguous awareness of amassing and strengthening the league of supporters, while at the same time forging ahead to weaken the current of denial. The educational character reinforces this game of knowing how to deal with differences by showing dialogue as a process in which only those subjects that are open to it are part of it, even though this personage in the narrative is limited to the belief in the following statement: “[...] together we create an international opinion, and movement so that people stand together and put pressure on the people in power” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019).

The profiles of engagement and skepticism prevail, and range across a metabiographical manner between the words of the news agency stating “although there are still insufficient concrete actions”, “their claims are influencing people”, and statements by the personage for whom “almost nothing positive is happening”, although “I want to take this opportunity to do it”, because “If I do this

it is because I am making an impact” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019). Her manner of bringing people together and creating an international opinion has generated meanings that are inclined to overcome the fact that “we don’t care to be polite” (FRANCE PRESSE/G1, 2019), and this is hierarchized throughout almost all the discourse of the article. However, it collides with the problematized meanings at the end of the narrative, in which the lack of concern about being polite and the desire to make deniers feel guilty seems to generate contradictions between the profiles listed, especially since Thunberg suggests that she does not accept her skepticism in the face of climate denial and apathy. A hypertext is created around itself, which begins with its subjectivation and then objectifies layers of meanings and profiles willing to disperse conflicts around its name and seek to share its ideas through journalistic productions, mobilized to predict the urgency and importance of climate causes, without generating distortions and uncertainties. In the *France Presse and G1* website article, the discursive system of this engaged young woman and of the news agency is concerned with reflecting her public activities, however, it does not report data, nor the causes and consequences of the global problem. It remains to be seen whether the meanings of climate analysis, engagement, skepticism and education are accumulative in the following subjects to be analyzed.

In *Greta Thunberg’s Coherence in the Struggle for Climate* (Agencia Deutsche Welle Brasil), from 08/20/2019, she is initially legitimized as being a public voice and activist for the climate change cause, and coherent by “crossing the Atlantic without generating emissions”, who left anonymity when she protested in favor of the “School Strike for Climate” in front of the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019). Referring to the school boycott of Friday classes, known as “Fridays For Future”, may even dissociate the educational character from her personified image of the cause. Considering the expanding manifesto across other countries, “For many activists, the student has become a kind of icon” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019), capable of generating meanings around herself. Thus, the article clarifies the problem of the school strike by addressing her break with “compulsory education” as “the necessary impulse to create a revolution, attracting crowds of young people to the streets” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019). Hence, it objectifies her ideas of engagement, of activism and of a new education for climate. Thus, the first section of the article is entitled “The birth of a global movement” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019).

The profile of engagement is reinforced in the second section of the journalistic narrative, in which the news agency mentions that the subject of the biography did not feel intimidated when

facing the audience of the UN Climate Conference, in Poland, and denounced that: “Our biosphere is being sacrificed so that people in rich countries like mine can live in luxury” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019). The meanings from the profiles of engagement and alarmist then migrate from this declaration of the problem itself, indicating, to an extent, that the cause of consumerism is capable of impacting the terrestrial biosphere, and are then amplified within another speech, given at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, and are journalistically objectified by gaining status, evidence and an accumulative character also in the following paragraph: “I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. Then, I want you to act as if our house were on fire, because it is” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019). Her role as a leader is forged and reinforced by repeating the verbal form “I want”, and added to it is a kind of pedagogical alarmism accumulated in the words of *Deutsche Welle Brasil*, according to which, before the Environment Committee of the European Parliament, at the National Assembly of France and in the UK Parliament, “The student has repeatedly warned of the devastating future that awaits humanity, as shown by all scientific predictions, if nothing is done against global warming” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019).

The article indicates the efforts of the information agent to legitimize an accumulative discourse in the media, developing “organic” links with it and a presupposition of the “power-to-speak” depending on the loyalty of the media, in the terms of Mouillaud (in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002). Even though each reproduced announcement legitimizes her manner sometimes from an alarmist perspective, sometimes educational, on the whole, the discourse of the personage dissipates all attempts to attribute her with any incoherence through the presence of these two profiles evidenced as being mutual and common to journalism, in addition to being in society and institutionally in parliaments, in conferences and at the UN. The narrative in the following two sections, however, goes on to describe the activist’s supporters and enemies, aiming to disperse the alarmist and pedagogical biographical profiles of the climate message in a constant attempt to harness it, both by Thunberg and by the news websites. If the support of artists, periodicals, political and religious authorities and nominations for awards seem to have “caused little commotion”, it has motivated her to continue transmitting her message. The more that conservative, populist deniers claim “that a 16-year-old girl cannot understand international relations”, and is a “victim of a widespread smear campaign” whose purpose is to depersonalize her presupposition, her social

evidence and her public authority as an agent of official information in the media, *Deutsche Welle Brasil* functions to balance support, both skeptical and even violent dissent in relation to it:

Although she doesn't like being the center of attention, Greta Thunberg knows perfectly well how to stage her public appearances. She hardly ever takes a train ride without writing a tweet. The post is not just a teenager's selfie, but an advertisement for environmentally friendly trips (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019).

Indeed, the Swedish student generates an image of personality, however, the news agency does not express this personage as essentialist, but ecological, aware of Thunberg's accumulative process of becoming an information agent capable of offering agendas of planetary interest with regard to climate changes, whose social evidence generates and depends on journalistic routines and the construct of metabiography. While it legitimizes this image, it also criticizes her ways of operating the presupposition of personalizing a chronic problem through “enactments” and photographic productions. Further on, it offers a kind of right to reply, permitting the personage of the news item to speak, precisely because it knows how to operate the value of her discourse, which has been assumed by the media as moving, and socially and globally legitimate. It expresses the success of her educational proposal, even though she is alarmist: “The violent reactions also show that our climate protests hit a weak spot and have an effect. And this is positive” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019).

Following these words, using the declaratory verb “retorted”, and mentioning her “sabbatical year”, the period in which she will not be attending school, the journalistic production continues by attempting to address the activist's apparent controversies. However, seen in the general plan of the presented discourses, it should be reinforced that while her alarmist, educational profiles move through apparent contradictions, they go on to converge in the dual action of attacking deniers and gaining increasingly more supporters in favor of preserving the earth, even if for this to happen, it is necessary to snub the dialogue directed at the opponents. This attitude is seen as even being coherent by Thunberg and her followers, after all, she traveled on a yacht on which electricity was “generated by solar panels and underwater turbines” and “once again shows the unshakable coherence of the environmental activist in her fight against climate change” (DEUTSCHE WELLE BRASIL, 2019). Although far from being a model for crossing the Atlantic, as pointed out by the website, the young woman's sustainable option gains a symbolic forum, reinforcing her strategy of

continuing to assume, negotiate and direct her image, her discourses and solutions in favor of the climate, needed by the planet and the media.

The alarmism of pressure and of learning to confront, converging with one another, circulate between the discourses of the German website and of the personage, manipulating meanings beyond the controversies, whereby it is down to the news agency to appease impressions capable of dispersing the image and the preservationist discourse of the activist. She serves the emergencies of the present and the perspectives of the future, mobilizing messages from the attitude of her generation and her condition as a student through which she has also been educating since the first climate strike. This does not replace the perspectives of scientific and political deniers, but complains about the collective and state responsibility for the problem. Without being a scientist or head of state and without guaranteeing a standard or complex interpretation (neither she nor the journalist provide data capable of detecting the problem in question), she moves between the official and non-official information sources. This serves as an angle for the facts and desires, whose meanings demand a certain partiality, and help media professionals to confront fabricated and fact-based information even in the absence of data, factors, effects and contextualization, and to be fair with the planet's environmental demands. While the first story portrayed the skeptical perspective more strongly, this second journalistic story has imposed the alarmist perspective, although in both cases, they overcame the contradictions and converged to an educational proposal on climate change. However, the climatic analysis remains lacking in supporting data, factors and effects.

The third narrative, *The activist Greta Thunberg arrives in Sweden after traveling for four months to participate in the UN Climate Summit and Conference (G1)*, from 12/17/2019, thus legitimizes her “active voice in defense of effective policies that reduce the emission of polluting gases” and her coherence in emitting a low carbon footprint on her journeys, including a crossing of 6,300 km in a yacht with “zero carbon emissions” (G1, 2019). Her message, therefore, expands the organicity of climatic meanings due to the status of her image and her discursive system built over one year of public and media appearances. The web portal, however, through the citations, prefers to demarcate the authorship of the personage in the news item in the excerpt referring to carbon emissions, thereby exempting itself from investigating the quantitative information. The article shares the engaged discourse of the activist regarding the “unstoppable” strength of young people, with the word enclosed in quotation marks, and their ability to put pressure onto world leaders.

Accumulatively, this discussion unfolds from an attempt to take responsibility for the subject in motion, adding the meaning attributed by the UN Secretary General that governing bodies “talk too much and listen too little” (G1, 2019). This other partially quoted excerpt expresses, once again, the exemption on the part of the G1 portal to incorporate the need attributed to the interviewee to accumulate discourses and desires regarding herself and the targets of her criticism.

This is the only story, from among the four analyzed, to provide space for citations from another deponent, in addition to the personage of the news item. It operates the journalistic construct, in terms of Mouillaud (in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002), on the one hand, by addressing statements as if they were its own, and on the other, by strategically preserving the “status” of certain sources of information. The website article in question hierarchizes statements capable of presupposing the preservation of the planet and humanity. Mouillaud (in MOUILLAUD; PORTO, 2002) indicates the discursive regime of journalism in dissimulating its manipulation by naturalizing the testimonies of interviewees in quotation marks, although internet news users are duly prepared currently to understand that interference has taken place in each quoted or paraphrased discursive manifestation. In the *G1* narrative, the angle is revealed by adding statements of common meanings, either authorizing the naturalization and autonomy of discourses in citations, or displacing their authorship forged in the words of the portal.

Thunberg's following discourse against the denialists is treated as scathing and in quotation marks, assigning her the authority to alarm adults and global leaders, even being a young student:

“How dare you? You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words [...] This is wrong, I shouldn't be here. I should be at school, on the other side of the ocean [...] You still come to us, the young, for hope. How dare you?” (G1, 2019).

The discourse, partially cited in quotation marks. and followed by words from the news website itself, in which the student holds adults responsible for not doing enough for the environment, marks the non-homogenized and “oppositional” ambivalence of the student's skeptical, alarmist meanings in the expression “How dare you?”, accumulative to another declaration that further legitimizes the global alarm of the activist: “We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?” (G1, 2019). The persistence in addressing her words in relation to the problem itself and extended towards the

authorities present at the Climate Summit enables alarmist skepticism, is incapable of conforming to the lethargy of others, and gains a forum for a pedagogical power-to speak due to its regularity, presupposition and movement, whose status of factuality and desires are loyal to the media.

It then links its construct to a larger discursive system, reinforcing the alarmist meanings despite minimizing the skeptical content in relation to the rulers, probably aiming to bring to bear on its power to convince in a final attempt to educate. “For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough [...]. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil” are words mobilized towards a global awakening, finalized by a sense of hope in “And in this I refuse to believe” (G1, 2019). It assuages her disbelief in legitimizing the pedagogical purposes of her skeptical, alarmist perspectives, disarming the criticism of certain opponents who are charged with a presumptuous style and inaccessible to dialogue.

The website article, however, concludes by accusing politicians and entrepreneurs of attitudes that create “clever accounting and creative PR” and a real change “when, in fact, almost nothing is done” (G1, 2019), excerpts partially cited to indicate interference in the personage's public discourse, and exempt the portal from criticizing economic capital. Thus, the metabiographical discursive construction of the article problematically transits between alarmist, skeptical and educational profiles, testing the detection of data on carbon emissions, but isolated in the face of the prevailing subjectivation of preservationist desires. It thus provides a change in the alarmist nature in order to try and convince deniers, with a predominating skeptical perspective of the main personage with the probable intention of insinuating the permanence of a scenario of political, economic and social conflict surrounding the theme. It mimics in a “tautological” manner, in the words of Gomes (2009), and ambivalently, the global paradox of the climate change discursive system objectified in the perspectives of news websites and Thunberg.

In the final narrative, *Climate change ‘as urgent’ as coronavirus, says Greta Thunberg* (BBC News Brasil), from 06/20/2020, according to the definition between quotation marks in the headline, the declarant reinforces the urgency of the risks of global warming and signals the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic context decreed on March 11, 2020, by the World Health Organization (WHO). In an interview with the newspaper *Le Monde* (TRUONG, 2020), translated into Portuguese by the *Carta Maior* website (04/23/2020), Morin assesses that the coronavirus has generated new

uncertainties, the integration of which depends on the complex challenge of confronting, selecting and organizing knowledge on disaster chains. Santos (in TOSTES; MELO FILHO, 2020) however, refers to the ability of the current pandemic to create the conditions to overcome it and the origin of a “better state of affairs”, but demands its explanation by the factors of its actuality. The two intellectuals, therefore, defend a broad understanding of the factors responsible for the appearance of global calamities, something that climate interpretation demands (ALMEIDA, 2017).

Thunberg legitimizes the emergency to treat the ecological and health crises: “*Greta Thunberg says the world needs to learn the lessons of coronavirus and treat climate change with similar urgency [emphasis by website]*” (ROWLATT, 2020). The lede in this journalistic article, positioned to cause an impact on an abbreviated summary of the subject’s treatment in the body of the website article, reinforces Thunberg’s educational concerns, and is followed by her political impulse in defending that the world should “with necessary force”. The expression highlighted by the reporter, followed by others, such as the “green’ recovery plan” and “social tipping point”, creates a discursive system attributed to it but still permeated with friction between the denouncers of global warming and climate deniers, a “lifetime moment” that has mobilized her not to contain herself in the face of spaces opened by the media and susceptible to the accumulation of mass meanings.

Further on, this is yet another news item to highlight Thunberg’s skeptical character in relation to the motivations of world leaders regarding climate change, and its implications for political, economic, social and environmental problems. She states that “The level of knowledge and understanding even among people in power is very, very low, much lower than you would think” (ROWLATT, 2020). Her sense of criticism swings between the disinterest and incapacity of government officials to resolve climate change, whereby contrary to expectations, they either postpone or assign solutions, as well as refusing to interfere with lifestyles susceptible to destructive behaviors, demarcating spaces for supplementary meanings opposite to their own.

According to a speech partially quoted in the news item in question, greenhouse gas emissions are not recorded, and affect other regions without any containment measures. However, in general, neither Thunberg nor the news portals detect the data, or attribute the causes and consequences in the articles analyzed herein, and thus, do not introduce a “system of differentiation that allows the cultural to be signified as reality”, according to the assumption of Bhabha (1998, p.86). Thus, the planet and dialogue directed towards solutions, i.e., the facts themselves and their

objectification in discursive manifestations, in terms of ecocritical studies and environmental journalism, are totally or partially degraded, despite being permeated with the desire for a change in thinking. This is why it is necessary not only to denounce the apathy of political representatives, but also the misinformation and control of public opinion engaged in denouncing climate denial, since Thunberg has still not offered data detection and, broadly speaking, is limited to dealing with the factors responsible for climate change and its consequences. The website article legitimizes the accumulative value of the appeal of "necessary force" objectified and amplified by Thunberg, from questioning her understanding of climate facts, by repeating this expression, in this second moment, directed at how we deal with global crises during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Thunberg, the pandemic scenario has made it possible to change the behavior of government officials in relation to scientists and specialists "since you cannot put a price on human life" (ROWLATT, 2020). This discourse, however, charged with ambivalence, insinuates the exceptionality of respecting life in times of generalized crises and demands, in the terms of Santos (in TOSTES; MELO FILHO, 2020), a broad explanation of its relevance, when considering a complex climate analysis.

The pandemic, according to Thunberg, "should open up a discussion about the urgency of taking action to help the people who die from illnesses related to climate change and environmental degradation right now as well as in the future", even in the face of disbelief in relation to heading for the safe limits of a "catastrophic" global temperature rise of 3-4 degrees (ROWLATT, 2020). The meanings of climate emergency in the words of the activist, even articulating symptomatic problems arising from an interiority permeated by apprehending the present and the future of the planet, must face the facts and their solutions, such as "to tear up contracts and abandon existing deals and agreements that companies and countries have signed up to" and the sustainable transition from a carbon-polluting culture to a renewable energy economy (ROWLATT, 2020), and through data detection, even when presented in a standard manner, without being confronted with different contexts, in which the effects impact differently, more or less, societies and regional and local communities.

Thunberg, however, does not associate the effects of global warming to the degradation of ecosystems, fauna, flora and the emergence of pandemics, and generally limits herself to alarming, in the educational sense of the term, humanity towards an "awakening" where "people are starting to find their voice", as quoted by the journalist in excerpts from the interview. He does not apprehend

the organic mobility of the meaning beyond her discourse, with the intention of superimposing the symptomatic value of the moment, in which humanity is a victim of the coronavirus and of linking factors to the facts of environmental damage beyond the desires for a preserved and conserved world. Bueno (2008) calls this type of journalistic angle “paralyzing coverage” isolated from causes. Even considering solutions for climate change, Thunberg or the reporter should associate anti-ecological factors and impacts on public health, defining supplementary discourses regarding the facts of global warming and the pandemic, and personified through Thunberg and the professional mediator of the events.

The journalist Rowlatt (2020) does not return to the facts themselves (GOMES, 2009), objects and sources of new discourses (GARRARD, 2006), so that he may objectify them in another perspective, his own or that of an expert. He paralyzes the range of correlations between contexts and events, in addition to reducing the pedagogical charge in the personage’s discourses, when on the contrary, he could do so taking into account the accumulative repertoire of stories from *Folha de Londrina* (SARIS, 2020), from 03/28/2020, and *Veja* (THOMAS, 2020), from 06/05/2020, which associated the emergence of pandemics with the degradation of nature, thereby motivating the proliferation of viruses and bacteria. Ultimately, greenhouse gas emissions resulting from deforestation may accentuate it and cause global warming at the same time. Considering the presuppositions of Vilas-Boas (2008) on biography, the reporter remained stuck in the extension and supplementarity of the meanings, of the experiences of the biographed source, and did not produce a cross-section of the historical and social context in which the Swedish student internalizes and amplifies the facts, in order to comprehend the limits of her understanding regarding pandemics. Furthermore, he does not expand the metabiographical and risible character when dealing with her profiles of engagement and education, and reinforces the alarmist facet.

Final considerations

The facets revealed in the discourses of Greta Thunberg defined in the four journalistic narratives signal the predominance of alarmist and skeptical biographical profiles, sometimes added to a pedagogical value when they disarm themselves from more accusatory content, often sometimes detached from an educational proposal in the case of not presenting data, factors, effects and

concrete contexts. More than balanced and impartial in the treatment of climate change, the articles were generally ambivalent in relation to the subject's profiles. The contradictions are assuaged by the German agency *Deutsche Welle Brasil* and maintained for the readership by *France Presse*, *G1* and *BBC News Brasil*. Although they allow Thunberg to confront information fabricated by the authorities, expressing her manifestations generally removed of contextualized facts and data on climate change, the factual productions were fair towards the environmental demands and the engagement permeated by the young activist's subjective wills, even though she was not a scientific source and despite not properly relating anthropocentric climate changes and the consequences of the pandemic. The portals also do not supplement the standard analyst profiles nor those with a complex interpretation of the issues in question, partially rendering climate change journalism precarious.

According to Leff (2008), Thunberg intertwines non-scientific knowledge, practices and knowledge, constituting a new social "rationality" through environmental information. Her declarations emerge as a coherent, reduplicated voice under ambivalence, even apart from the differentiating system of vulnerable contexts and standard or complex interpretation. She is engaged in a planetary mentality dependent on the constant circularity of supplementary meanings and in an interdependent and solidary ecological awareness, characteristics of education and communication in the twenty-first century, according to the assumptions of Morin (2003). She continues to assume her image and her representativeness even when themes related to climate predominate in public opinion. Her accumulative biography, amplified by the media, guarantees the meta-perspectivism of profiles necessary for the alarmist or skeptical debate on preserving the planet and humanity, to which the paradigms of Ecocriticism and environmental journalism must continue to contribute.

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