

**The Clashing I's in Literary and Pedagogical Discourse**  
**André Brink's *A Dry White Season* in an EFL Portuguese Speaking**  
**Setting**

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**ABSTRACT**

In André Brink's narrative, in which a quest for identity in a multicultural environment during the Boer War is at the core, a Portuguese mature reader undoubtedly finds echoes of similar times of struggle as far as the Portuguese dominance in the African colonies, namely in Angola and Mozambique.

Two decades ago the reading of this novel would be necessarily dissimilar from the one undertaken nowadays by Portuguese EFL students. These, who mostly share an hegemonic Eurocentric posture and so does Ben (the teacher and the protagonist in the novel), would feel "like a visitor from a distant land, arriving in a city where all the inhabitants had been overcome by the plague" to quote the words of one of Brink's various narrators.

Thus, it is my purpose in this paper to discuss the significance of one of the layers of meaning in stylistic analysis, i. e. period, for the meaning potential of this narrative to be perceived through its many conflicting identities / voices. I believe that is the EFL teacher's task to facilitate the relation between fact / fiction and the readers' / students' various social, cultural and linguistic background so as to promote a fruitful discussion about the text.

*Ordinary experience, from waking second to second, is in fact highly synthetic (in the sense of combinative or constructive) and made of a complexity of strands, past memories and present perceptions, times and places, private and public history, hopelessly beyond science's powers to analyse (Fowles, 1992:40).*

I believe that the aforementioned quotation taken from John Fowles' *The Tree* could not but offer a starting point for the present paper, in as much as André Brink engages the reader with private and public narratives, evolving at specific historic periods up to the aftermath of the Boer War: "I am Ben Du Toit. I'm here. There's no one else but myself right here, today.", writes the protagonist in his diary entry offered in *A Dry*

*White Season* (a contrastive alternative voice to the narrator's discourse) claiming for a "peaceful existence", "plural development ... now that the Afrikaners have finally come to power in South Africa, showing the way to others" (*DWS*, 160).

Both the narrator's and the protagonist's aesthetic representation of troublesome periods constitute a powerful medium of reassessing contemporary issues, "man's contradictory relationship with the other" in the same community or across borders, "awareness of the self and reality" (Kandiah, 1995:xxiii), involving therefore multilingual / multicultural readers. Displaced subjects in heterogeneous communities seek to construct their identity by means of cultural and political resistance to ethnic imperialism or "that history which Gie calls 'The History of European Civilisation in South Africa'" (*DWS*, 162) concludes Ben Du Toit.

Accordingly, the reader perceives a novel mode of postcolonial critique since differing narrative voices are invited to interpret personal testimonies and relate them to events whether from an insider or outsider perspective, undoubtedly more memorable than any theoretical literature on the subject. Simultaneously, the implied reader and narrator, the latter is at times a reader as well, share/refuse a universe of values, a world of make belief, disclosing the writer's ideological pulls and dialogic interpretation of the colonial experience:

Humanity". Normally one uses it as a synonym for compassion; charity; decency, integrity. "He is such a human person". Must one now go in search of an entirely different set of synonyms: cruelty; exploitation, unscrupulousness; or whatever? (*DWS*, 161).

While acknowledging different identities in the reading process Brink fosters critical thinking about the target language and sensitises the reader to "otherness", that is, to values and beliefs mostly overlooked and universally categorised by a Eurocentrist schooling according to which a process of message decoding, as the one used by the teacher is solely at stake. Instead of defining and redefining the different codes using a metalanguage, Ben Du Toit, both diarist and protagonist (a teacher as well) in the novel, helps his students and/or any readers to whom his written testimony was passed on "to develop the ability to redefine generalisations about the target culture, in terms

of supporting evidence” and difference along with, and I quote Tomalin and Stempleski’s statement (1993:8), “achieve cross-cultural understanding-awareness of their own culture as well as that of the target language”.

In his quest for authenticity, justice, individuality, Ben Du Toit invites the reader to problematise a whole historical period, a culture, the ruling institutional power at his time, “but which neither he himself nor his contemporaries could consciously perceive and evaluate in the context of culture of their epoch” to borrow from Michael Bakhtin’s claim (1990:4) and Ben himself adds:

Everything used to take for granted, with so much certainty that one never even bothered to enquire about it, now turns out to be illusion. Your certainties are proven lies. And what happens if you start probing? Must you learn a whole language first? (*DWS*, 161)

Also recurrent for the reading of Brink’s novel, or any literary text, is the controversial issue on textual approach specially in the teaching/learning of a language in non-native environments. In this context several authors have argued about the benefits of using literary texts (see for instance Alan Durant, Gillian Lazar, Guy Cook, John McRae, Paul Simpson, Ronald Carter, among others who have extensively written on the subject) so as to make students sensitive readers. If the stylisticians’ heuristic model has been largely discussed and/or refuted in the academic field (particularly underestimated either by proponents of pure linguistics or literary criticism for its lack of scientific basis owing to a multifaceted theoretical framework), it has been overlooked by applied linguists and teachers alike.

First and foremost, the approach to texts should be based on a gradual instruction on different levels of meaning (synthesised by McRae as graphology, cohesion, coherence, lexis, dialect, register, period, function, style) and layers of context, that is the linguistic context, the interactional context and the social context, to use Van Lier’s terminology (1995:40). While not denying a whole tradition of literary criticism, these make the readers, in this perspective either teachers and students, concentrate on words, cohesive ties (anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric references or the troublesome

demonstrative determiners, proforms), otherwise overlooked, but determinant for the interpretation of any excerpt as well as for broader everyday literacy practices.

An urgent literacy and critical empowerment have changed the educational scenario and Portugal is no exception since the onset of a national reform in education. Thus, education and language education in particular have been the ground of multidisciplinary discussion ranging from linguistics, culture, psychology, philosophy, history, and literary theory criss-crossed with reading in education. Whatever the situation, it is nevertheless certain that now an effective teaching, including higher education, should be envisaged as problem-solving, as any communicative event, addressed to students' needs whether to develop their reading and writing skills, improve discourse competence, build on vocabulary, consolidate the knowledge of grammar, history, culture, or language varieties and change. Therefore, reading literature either with a small 'l' or with a capital 'L' (McRae, 1991) is nowadays of utmost importance in EFL/ESL contexts as "a particular set of learning objectives" which are "the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model" (Carter & Long, 1991).

Seen from a pedagogical perspective Brink's *A Dry White Season* provides a useful context for studying the reading/writing process: a dynamic reading of different text types, such as reports, diary entries, letters, interviews, a hearing at court, and many others, intended to be interpreted with certain generic expectations in mind. So are the narrator's words:

I must attempt to reconstruct intricate events looming behind cryptic notes; what is illegible or missing I must imagine. What he [Ben] suggests I must expand: *He says - He thinks - he remembers - he supposes*. With my assortment of probabilities and memories and his disorganised evidence I must forge ahead against the dull obstacles of worry and confusion, trying to maintain at least a semblance of confidence or certainty. (*DWS*, 33)

"This vivid imagined world" advance Collie and Slater (1991:4) "can quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society." Moreover the authors rightly claim that "reading the literature of a historical period is,

after all, one of the ways we have to help us imagine what life was like in that other foreign territory:our own country's past".

A critical analysis of the workings of a text coupled with looking for meanings of words depends on the teacher's explicit instruction right from the beginning of the course. His/her task is a multifaceted one:promoting "the necessary literary competence to be sensitive to the kind of styles, forms, conventions" or ultimately pointing to "an interesting combination of linguistic, socio-cultural, historical, and semiotic awareness"(Carter & Brumfit, 1987:18).

Now that I have briefly explained the choice of the reading of Brink's novel in an EFL class, I shall now discuss the significance of one of the layers of meaning in stylistic analysis, i. e. *period* - in this case historical time with its broader sense of "*open unity*" as posited by Bakhtin - for the meaning potential of this narrative to be perceived through its many conflicting identities/voices.

Over the last two decades much has been written about the importance of *context of situation* and *context of culture* while tackling texts (owing much to Hallyday's postulates), particularly for academic purposes, linguistics and literature studies or even as a starting point for text interpretation in foreign language education in more traditional settings. My claim, nevertheless, is that *period* should be both addressed in context (Halliday) and perceived by the reader, rather than considered as another layer of meaning to be tacked on to the literary text without sound evidence for the dialogic interpretation of the meaning potential of the text, to draw on theories advocated by Bakhtin and he emphasises that: "we are speaking here about new *semantic* depths that lie embedded in the cultures of past epochs and not about the expansion of our factual, material knowledge of them", however trying to understand a work solely in terms of the conditions of its epoch alone ..., will never enable us to penetrate into its semantic depths" (1990:4-6).

In the same line, and as far as *period* is concerned, McRae asserts that this semantic layer is important to the extent that "a contrast between the new and the familiar, a use

of words from a different period to give contrast, colour, and often reinforcement to what the author wants to say” are offered (1990:20). Still, with reference to McRae’s notion of *period*, several aspects should be taken into account, notably: cultural background, historical and literary knowledge, literary periods (1990:19) and intertextuality, in short what is broadly analysed as *context* in discourse stylistics put forward by Ronald Carter, Roger Fowler and Paul Simpson.

In fact, the term *period*, as considered by the stylisticians Alan Durant and McRae, owes much to what Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1993) have discussed about the context of situation and the wider context of culture, which “make up the non-verbal environment of a text” and whose meaning potential “arises from the friction between the two” (1993:47). Moreover, while broadly describing the *context of situation* and the *context of culture*, these authors point to their dialectic nature and the educational setting, that is, “the school itself” or “the university”, figure as “a good example” of an “interface” between both. These linguists rightly claim that “for any ‘text’ in school...there is always a context of situation... and the assumptions that have to be made if the text is to be interpreted” (1993:46-47).

However, several authors have discussed EFL teachers’ manipulative use of literary texts as “merely displaying of a cultural/historical artefact” in class, to borrow Tomalin and Stempleski’s criticism (1993:8). Therefore, I do not wish to incur into an impressionistic conclusion, “standing before the text” (McRae, 1990:20) and it is my goal to discuss the notion of “period” as a way-in to texts if this is one of the main focuses of the text to be read in depth. Besides stylistic patterns should never be taken as recipes, otherwise they would turn out to be mechanical activities in as much as traditional teaching.

Hence, and drawing on Durant’s assertion that “thinking about texts in their contexts, unless they are contemporary, involves thinking historically” (1992:65) does not necessarily imply that everywhere there are different situations, the ‘other’ of a culture should not become “simply stereotyped as the unknown” (1992:186). Actually, a communicative event does not only depend on language accuracy, but on a sensitive

critical usage of the different layers of meaning to which the narrator in *A Dry White Season*, Brink's novel, gives the reader some hints right from the opening paragraph onwards:

I used to think of him as an ordinary, good-natured, harmless, unremarkable man. The sort of person university friends bumping into each other after many years, might try to recall saying: "Ben Du Toit?" Followed by a quizzical pause and a half-hearted. "Oh, of course. Nice chap. What happened to him?" Never dreaming that *this* could happen to him. (*DWS*, 9)

From the pedagogical point of view, the analysis of the cataphoric reference, clearly standing out in the text, as offered in italics, acts as a basis for "prediction of future development" and readers, teacher and students, become aware "of the particular narrator's point of view and presence" as well as time references.

Similarly Ben, also a teacher, tried, and I quote Collie and Slater's words, "to create a whole new world in the readers' imagination" also helping the learners "find a way into what is usually an intensely personal and private experience, that of coming to terms with inhabiting an author's universe" (1991:7):

Perhaps that is why I have to write about him after all. I used to be confident enough that, years ago at least, I'd known him reasonably well. So it was unsettling suddenly to discover he was a total stranger. Or does that sound melodramatic? It isn't easy to rid oneself of the habits of half a lifetime devoted to writing romantic fiction. (*DWS*, 9)

The varied first person narratives engage the readers with the world of discourse over a period of time and this is a shared experience both by the actual readers and the implied author, that is the main narrator. Both try to make sense of the pieces of memories, testimonies left by Ben, in a risk-taking enterprise of treading a previously unknown territory depicting racial segregation and colonial imperialism.

Different narratives "cast new light on familiar sensations and open up new dimensions of perception in a way that can be exhilarating but also startling and even unsettling" (Collie and Slater, 1991:5) as regards: readers (teacher and students in the case of reading in a foreign educational setting), narrators and main character.

Brink's novel brings about a philosophy of conflict as its characters have to keep up with more than two languages/cultures, hopelessly fighting for a hegemonic position. The particular period at which the narrative evolves - in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer war and the subsequent years of Boer domination - is determinant for the understanding of the multiple conflicting identities, social, political and cultural exile to which dispossessed, disempowered ethnic groups are devoted.

I assume that now I may come back to the encapsulating title of this paper, and second main aim in this paper, namely, "The clashing I's in pedagogic and literary discourse" to be forwarded by a schematic presentation on the clashing and/or overlapping identities (see Appendix A) to come to play in the reading of the novel in an EFL classroom.

Brink brings to life contemporary characters to whom the readers/teachers/learners can instantly relate and in whose experiences we can see our own Portuguese colonial background. In his diegetic universe, in which a quest for identity in a multicultural environment during the Boer War is at the core, a Portuguese mature reader undoubtedly finds echoes of similar times of struggle with reference to the Portuguese dominance in the African colonies, namely in Angola and Mozambique. Other episodes explicitly or implicitly described in the novel, for instance rape, imprisonment, arrest, murder, or public riots would be familiar to any adult Portuguese reader.

Two decades ago the reading of this novel would be necessarily dissimilar from the one undertaken nowadays by Portuguese EFL students. These, who mostly share a hegemonic Eurocentric posture and so does Ben (the teacher and the protagonist in the novel), would feel "like a visitor from a distant land, arriving in a city where all the inhabitants had been overcome by the plague" to borrow from one of Brink's various narrators (*DWS*, 81).

In other respects, I dare say that the same way an author exerts control over his/her reader's thoughts, feelings and emotions, using Wayne Booth's assertions (1991), so



does a language teacher whose power should be the one of “showing”, “giving previous” instruction towards language accuracy, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, cohesion, coherence, style and register, that is the stylistic patterns.

One must surely feel uncomfortable if one has to decide for such a risk-taking, demanding practice as the one undermined by different views, notably educational theory, linguistic perspective, the practical realities of teaching (namely learners’ age, interests, previous learning experience, country, educational ambitions and job opportunities) together with a whole language approach within the theoretical view of McRae’s and Carter’s pedagogical stylistics.

Brink provides the reader with new reading/writing dimensions to the extent that the narrator reads, deconstructs and rewrites someone’s life story at a particular relevant period. The narrator himself exerts a didactic function in the diegetic universe because he not only presents but also analyses his own meaning creation, and the reader has the chance to interact with his own thoughts and efforts to make sense out of his former friend’s memories. Both the implied reader and the narrator embark on a metaphoric voyage.

The main narrator recollects a former schoolmate’s life story, Ben who, in his turn, becomes the protagonist of the narrative and another alternative speaking voice to depict reality leading the reader, narrator and narratee to examine the socio-cultural and political setting, that is (re)discover the African heritage.

More than a construct of the complex reality of life through characters, narrative point of view, theme and literary devices, the narrator’s critical response to Ben’s “diaries, notes, disconnected scribbles, old accounts paid and unpaid, the photographs” (*DWS*, 9) sent in a “dilapidated box” is infused with his keen sense of humanity and cultural experience. So are the narrator’s words:

What was unfinished to him is complete to me; what was life to him is a story to me; first-hand becomes second-hand... Trying to reconcile

the calm and self-contained man I knew with the paranoid fugitive I met in town that day. (*DWS*, 33)

Embedded of a contextual understanding to English itself, his fiction examines conflicting identities, though universal in the depiction of coexisting cultures. The narrator adds:

but it was only after I'd looked through the cuttings that my memories were clarified. Even then I couldn't make out what Ben's connection with them had been. Actually, it put me off. My novels deal with love and adventure, preferably in Old Cape settings or in distant romantic surroundings; politics isn't my "line". And if Ben had chosen to get involved in that way I didn't want to be drawn into it as well. (*DWS*, 15)

What is at stake from the opening page of the novel onwards is the quest for an identity, for a character in fact, the narrator's task to interpret Ben's psychological, sociological and political exile in a multicultural society whose colonial hierarchical foundations have been the cause for everlasting conflicts. In fact, this setting is also the writer's world, yet he wishes to avoid any political commitment with Ben.

As far as students are concerned, these also bring their own knowledge, experience and point of view in the target situation as postulated by Collie and Slater who advance that a "considerable effort is required on the part of the reader who is tackling the text in a foreign language" (1991:5) so as to interpret the information within the context of the target culture and in comparison with their own culture.

Accordingly the teacher / reader should turn the EFL language class into a multicultural setting in which far away places are constructed in the students' / readers' minds drawing on their own experience of the world. The latter is perceived differently and data, be it of objective or subjective nature, is given new meanings.

Notwithstanding that the readers have to interact with the text for meaning creation, there are aspects, such as period, culture and style that clash and end up in misunderstanding depending on many issues, namely reader's experience, age, culture and background knowledge, to name just the ones focused in my argument. "Without

imparting information about the author, the background of the work, the particular literary conventions that inform the text”, aspects advanced by Collie and Slater (1991:9), the teacher, thus, may have to design specific activities so as to overcome students’/readers’ possible misunderstandings when different cultures / periods come into contact.

Several instances depicting the educational system in the diegetic world are perceived so as to highlight teachers’ difficulty in bridging the gap between oppressing discursive practices and the individual struggle for identity and own thinking practice.

The daily timetable at school; the rotation of standards and subjects... History, geography. The neat and solid facts, unassailable in black and white; nothing outside the prescribed syllabus was relevant. For years he’d been rebelling against the system, insisting that his pupils, especially the matrics, read more than had been set for them. Teaching them to ask questions, to challenge assertions. But now it had become much easier to resign himself to the given, as it liberated his thoughts for other things. (DWS,187)

The time reference “now” is highly meaningful for the character’s present resignation to events, time, or even his own priorities whatever contradiction it might offer to his former beliefs or values. It is then the diarist, the focaliser, who takes over and explains the protagonist’s sudden change as if both represented different persons in a dialogic interaction:

Something essentially different. As if you now exist in another time and another dimension. You can still see the other people, you exchange sounds, but it is all coincidence, and deceptive. You’re *on the other side*. And how can I explain in the words of “this side”? (DWS, 158)

Clashing Identities, differing points of view, contrasting time and place references throw the reader into a world of make-belief, a constant search for meaning and the implied narrator tries to criss-cross facts, from newspapers cuttings to tv snapshots, with autobiographical notes. So is the reading process: no sooner is the cognitive triggered than schemata come into play: “It wasn’t until the following day, working through the cuttings and notes again, that I recognised the same face on some of the newspaper photographs. Of course: Melanie Bruwer. The recent rumpus in the press” (DWS,15). At this point, I believe that it is the EFL teacher’s task to facilitate the

relation between fact/fiction and the readers'/students' various social, cultural and linguistic background so as to promote a fruitful discussion about the text.

For a young contemporary reader in a foreign language, the protagonist's abdication of his social role, first as a citizen and then as a teacher would be undoubtedly criticised. Nevertheless, as a mature adult reader and teacher, the latter and other descriptions of events drove me back to Portuguese colonial times three decades ago, which marked my generation of schoolmates not only on the mainland but also overseas and particularly in academic circles. Rather universally striking is the depiction offered by the implied author:

While we were still standing the police sirens started wailing and from all directions vans and armoured vehicles converged. The sudden sound shocked from our trance. (*DWS*, 19)

History does play a part in understanding messages for its "social nature", as acknowledged by Tony Bex (1996), and the narrator himself comments on his friend's former public demonstration against the status quo:

In this era of demos and Student Power his action might appear ludicrously insignificant; but in those days, in the heart of the war years, it caused a sensation. (*DWS*, 18)

Actually, making sense out of experiences can be equally individual and the protagonist's unpredictable attitude, either for his shy character and underprivileged origins or the troublesome historic period, definitely struck his fellow students when he as an undergraduate fought against "unjust behaviour and ineffectual teaching methods" (*DWS*, 18) whatever punishment or outcome.

Later on the narrator concludes, "and in my efforts, at this stage, to sort out and clarify my meagre personal recollections of Ben I find it easier to explain Susan", Ben's wife, either because he felt some inclination for her or owing to his ideological beliefs, as he explicitly states,

we were both too well conditioned by our respectable backgrounds to indulge in anything rash... Unless it is the fanciful writer in me taking over again. I really don't know: I'm not used to this sort of stock-taking

and fiction still comes much more naturally to me than brute indecent truth. (*DWS*, 21)

Given the first prompt, and the narrator also equates the characters' own attitudes, students should concentrate on descriptive features in the literary passage itself so as to "create an impression of the person described" or "linguistic details". Henry Widdowson proceeds (1991:102) "What we are trying the learners to realise is that if the person being presented in this passage is a figment of the writer's imagination", there are individual instances in the literary discourse relating "to social factors", undeniable historical events related to a particular period.

Ben, himself, learns more about his own period and environment when he is committed to uncover the murder of Gordon's son, Jonathan, and chapter one starts off with an unequivocal statement: "It all really began, as far as Ben was concerned, with the death of Gordon Ngubene ... at the height of the youth riots in Soweto... when he'd start contributing to the schooling of the then fifteen year old Jonathan" (*DWS*, 37). At the time he still thought that he could really change the course of action and the narrator lets the reader directly grasp Ben's own words: "Rather than trying to take the world by storm I think one can achieve more by doing quietly what your hand finds to do in your own little corner. And working with kids is a thankful job" (*DWS*, 28).

The reader is undoubtedly offered a historic, linguistic reappraisal of conflicting views on human attitudes not only using the implied author's reconstruction of events juxtaposed with Ben's memoirs and old newspaper cuttings but also other characters' own voice. Thus a philosophy of conflict undermines the writer's purpose with this narrative: a construct of the protagonist's past fight against blind/biased justice. Rather striking figures one episode, in which his father-in-law, though a priest, condemns Ben's involvement in recent riots:

"Don't you know your own people then?.... Look, I'm not saying there aren't some exceptions among us. But it's ridiculous to start generalising about 'injustice' and so on."

....

“How many of us were thrown in jail in the Forties just because this land was more important to us than to be drawn into England’s war—the same English who used to oppress us?”

...

Don’t you realise what the government is doing for the blacks? One of these days the whole bloody lot of them will be free and independent in their own countries. And then you have the nerve to talk about injustice. (*DWS*, 212)

In fact, Ben’s metalinguistics of truth, the ideal course of justice (be it within the personal, social or political domain), has always guided his existence and gradually contributed to his becoming a stranger in his own conceited family circle, a suspicious subject shortly after his determination to rehabilitate undervalued non-white citizens, a subversive teacher of History and Geography to the senior lectures, in short a political enemy to the mainstream ideological policy. Only later did he realise that his own major failure was that he was too naïve to believe that he could be neutral, neither a “Boer”, nor an Englishman, and unlike Stanley (another character in the novel), he could not “have contacts on both sides of the fence, among the blackjacks as well as in the deeper recesses of the underworld” (*DWS*, 41). Melanie (a journalist and key character for Ben’s mental awakening) once reminded him that:

You’re an Afrikaner, you’re one of them. In their eyes that’s just about the worst kind of treason imaginable. (*DWS*, 195)

These social pulls between ‘I’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ were definitely cleared out in Ben’s mind when Melanie explicitly stated that:

My mother was a foreigner, don’t forget. I’m working for an English newspaper. They’ve written me off long ago. They simply don’t expect the same sort of loyalty from me that they demand from you.... I only want to make quite sure you have no illusions about anything. (*DWS*, 195)

Restore his confidence, share the responsibility with her, posits Melanie, would stand for the ideal attitude, the metaphor: “It’s like the river I landed in when I was in Zaire. You’ve got to believe you’ll reach the other side. I’m not even sure it matters who or what you have faith in. It’s the experience itself that’s important” (*DWS*, 195).

Before his tragic end, Ben comes to the conclusion that his fight was useless at that period, in that particular setting and he states:

I thought that to reach out and touch hands across the gulf would be sufficient in itself: as if good intentions from my side could solve it all. It was presumptuous of me. In an ordinary world, in a natural one. I might have succeeded. But not in this deranged, divided age.

...

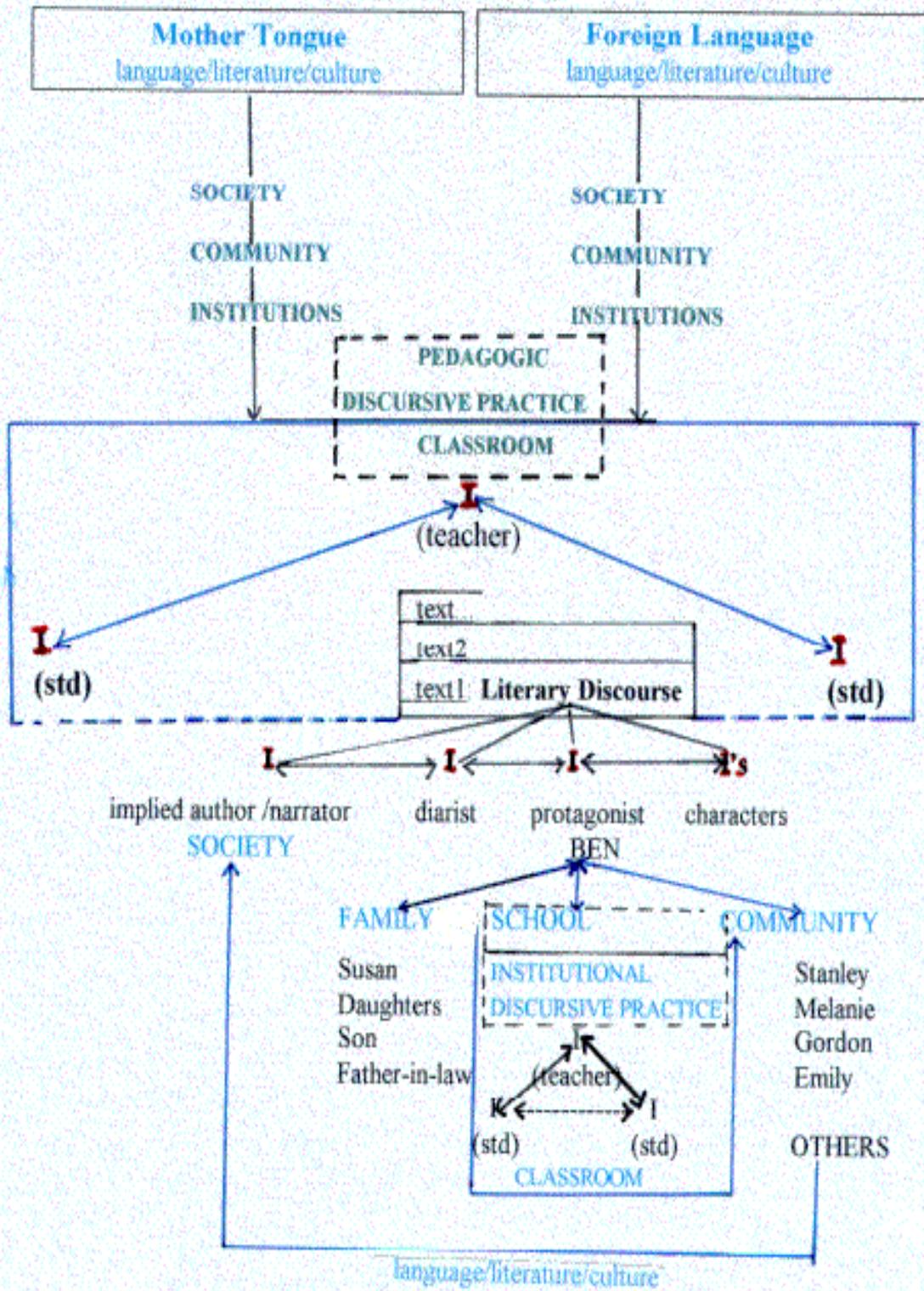
Alone. Alone to the very end. I. Stanley. Melanie. Every one of us. But to have been granted the grace of meeting and touching so fleetingly: is that not the most awesome and wonderful thing one can hope for in this world?

To conclude, I shall quote Collie and Slater once again whose words might appear right at the beginning of the novel and serve as a prompt for the narrator's return to the past so as to read the future be it a Portuguese or English readership as "there is always a degree of shared knowledge between writer and reader" (McRae, 1990:21), some degree of convergence as well as divergence towards the acceptance of the otherness, thus becoming really multicultural:

In the creative endeavour of interpreting this universe, a group with its various sets of life experiences can act as rich marshalling device to enhance the individual's awareness both of his or her own responses and of the world created by the literary work (Collie & Slater, 1991:9)

## Different Subjects

### Clashing/Overlapping Identities





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