

Abstract

This work deals with the motive of water in the novel *The Silence* of contemporary Portuguese author Teolinda Gersão, from 1981. The book is described as a key work of Portuguese women's work of the 20th century and also as a literary milestone of the period after the Carnation Revolution. The objective of this paper is to find and analyse various forms of water, from the sea, through the rain, to tears, which function as symbols of freedom, dreams and change and their connection with female protagonists. Gaston Bachelard's study *Water and Dreams* and Teolinda Gersão's short story book *Free water* are helpful guidelines for interpretation. Part of the paper is a chapter devoted to the life and work of the author and the historical and social context in which the novel was written.