

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – PARANÁ
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
LANGUAGE ARTS PORTUGUESE/ENGLISH

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**FOR THE GATES OF PROSTITUTION IN POETRY: HARDY, RÉGNIER AND
GREGH'S LATE NINETEENTH-EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY SACRED
RUINED MAIDENS**

THESIS

CURITIBA

2014

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Thesis presented to the Language Arts
English/Portuguese College of the
Academic Department of Modern Foreign
Languages – DALEM – and the Academic
Department of Communication and
Expression – DACEX – of the Federal
University of Technology – Paraná, as a
requirement to obtain the Teaching degree.

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CURITIBA

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TERMO DE APROVAÇÃO

FOR THE GATES OF PROSTITUTION IN POETRY: HARDY, RÉGNIER AND
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MAIDENS

por

RENATA MORALES DIAZ

Este Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso foi apresentado em 19 de agosto de 2014 como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Licenciada em Letras Inglês/Português. A candidata foi arguida pela Banca Examinadora composta pelos professores abaixo assinados. Após deliberação, a Banca Examinadora considerou o trabalho aprovado.

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- O Termo de Aprovação assinado encontra-se na Coordenação do Curso -

I dedicate this thesis to Blanca Maria Sosa Morales, my mother, and to the memories of Dora
Valentina Sosa Morales, my grandmother and Crescencia Morales, my great-grandmother:
the matriarchs who have inspired me to pursue women's studies.

SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to thank my mother, who has been the greatest example of a strong hard-working woman I have ever had;

I thank my advisor, Doctor Regina Helena Urias Cabreira, for introducing me Marjorie Bolton and Nancy Qualls-Corbet, the scholars whose works have paved this thesis and Thomas Hardy, the greatest poet and feminist male author of the Victorian Era, and for being a great influence in my independence-pursuing life;

I also thank my friends – Robinson Luis Kremer, Bruna Dias Machado, Leonardo Mercher, Felipe Sell Jansen, Rodolfo Amaral – for accepting who I am and always empowering my decisions as a woman;

I thank Andrew Lindsay for revising my research proposal;

I thank my professor Andréia Rutiquewiski Gomes, for all of the support;

I thank my professor Ana Valéria Bork, for making me love the English language;

I thank my professor Marcia Regina Becker, for making me love Literature;

And I thank Cristiano Bueno, my eternal fiancé. The man who has been growing alongside me, who has been giving me love, and who has supported my decisions as a feminist and has helped me grow as a human being. *I love you today and always.*

IN MEMORIAM

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of the late author, dancer, singer, actress, scholar and poet Maya Angelou. We hope to make justice to her poetic studies legacy. She has inspired many generations of women to follow careers in the literary world, and to pursue independence and full self-accepting happiness. We open this work with the reading of one of the most inspiring poems addressing womanhood, with the expectation of inspiring more women to love themselves:

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise. (ANGELOU, Maya. 2014)

*There was a time when men were kind
When their voices were soft
And their words inviting
There was a time when love was blind
And the world was a song
And the song was exciting
There was a time
Then it all went wrong
(KRETZMER, Herbert, 1980)*

ABSTRACT

DIAZ, Renata Morales. **FOR THE GATES OF PROSTITUTION IN POETRY: HARDY, RÉGNIER AND GREGH'S LATE NINETEENTH-EARLY TWENTIETH SACRED RUINED MAIDENS.** 2014. 51p. Thesis – Language Arts English/Portuguese, Federal University of Technology – Paraná – UTFPR. Curitiba, 2014.

Considering that prostitution has been a controversial topic in almost all societies, it is inevitable that it has become a recurrent content approached in literature. Therefore, it seemed necessary and inescapable the study of prostitution inside poetry. The poems analysed are *The Ruined Maid* (1903), by Thomas Hardy; *For the Gate of the Courtesans* (1912) by Henri de Régnier, and *Courtesans* (1912), by Fernand Gregh. The analysis focus is literary with the support of historical-sociological evidence and it contrasts the figure of the prostitutes: a positive, reinforced by the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, and a negative image, reinforced by the impressions of the societies of the Victorian Era and the *Belle Époque*. Both images are depicted through the words of the poets. The analysis was conducted based on the bibliographical and analytical methods.

Key-words: Prostitution. Poetry. Hardy. Gregh. Régnier. Sacred Prostitute.

RESUMO

DIAZ, Renata Morales. **PARA OS PORTÕES DA PROSTITUIÇÃO NA POESIA: AS DAMAS ARRUINADAS SAGRADAS DE HARDY, REGNIER E GREGH DO FIM DO SÉCULO XIX COMEÇO DO SÉCULO XX.** 2014. 51p. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso – Licenciatura em Letras Inglês/Português, Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná – UTFPR. Curitiba, 2014.

Considerando que a prostituição é, e sempre foi um tópico controverso em quase todas as sociedades, é inevitável que seja recorrente na literatura. Portanto, torna-se indispensável um estudo que aborde a prostituição dentro da poesia. Os poemas analisados são *The Ruined Maid* (1903), de Thomas Hardy; *For the Gate of the Courtesans* (1912), de Henri de Régnier e *Courtesans* (1912), de Fernand Gregh. O foco da análise é literário com o suporte de evidências histórico-sociológicas e contrasta a figura das prostitutas: uma positiva – reforçada pela imagem do arquétipo da Prostituta Sagrada, e uma negativa – reforçada pelas impressões das sociedades da Era Vitoriana e da *Belle Époque*. Ambas imagens são retratadas pelas palavras dos poetas. A análise foi conduzida a partir dos métodos bibliográfico e analítico.

Palavras-chave: Prostituição. Poesia. Hardy. Gregh. Régnier. Prostituta Sagrada.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Common knowledge states that prostitution is the oldest and perhaps the first profession in the history of humanity. Throughout history, we have great examples of magnificent prostitutes: Mary Magdalen, the rumoured lover of Jesus Christ; Theodora, the empress of the Byzantine Empire; Veronica Franco, the Italian poet and courtesan; Carol Leigh (also known as The Scarlet Harlot), artist, author, film maker and prostitutes' rights activist, Eny (Emy Cesarino) the Brazilian prostitute and later brothel owner – one of the most successful examples of prostitutes who built up their careers, and many others. Although these women have accomplished many admirable deeds and have gained our love and esteem, they are not as respected or remembered as they should be.

During our education and growth, we are bombarded with sexist values, which demoralize women who embrace their sexuality, let alone explore and use it as a way to make their living. It is difficult to understand why women get into this profession, when our social status is so elevated and our moral values are so hypocritical. The reasons can vary from necessity, lack of opportunities, forced sexual exploitation, or even by free will. Regardless, the prostitute is usually patronized and has always been shoved to the underworld.

It has always been difficult to live as a sex professional due to this eminent segregation. Despite their isolation, the fact that – as Baudelaire¹ said – prostitution is art, the prostitute's final product engages many men and women of different social segments. Consequently, courtesans² have been muses for great artists for many centuries.

Having that said, in art there are many figures of prostitutes that have become the heart and soul of major works. For example, in the music scenario, the traditional folk song *The House of the Rising Sun*³ (n.d)⁴ tells the story of life surrounding a New Orleans brothel. In theatre we have *Anna Christie* (1921) by Eugene O'Neill, which is the story of a former prostitute who tried to turn her life around. In the plastic arts, there is the bronze sculpture *Belle*, created by the artist Els Rijeerse and unveiled in 2007 – raised in the honour of

¹ Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-1867) was a French poet and critic.

² This work wishes not to approach the technical differences in terms such as “courtesans” and “prostitutes”. Here the idea is to explore the world of certain characters in poetry that have financial compensation in exchange of sex. Therefore, although there are differences in these names, here they are approached in the same manner.

³ Although recorded in 1964 by the English rock group The Animals, it is believed that this song was written in the 18th century.

⁴ (n. d.): No publishing date.

prostitutes around the world. In cinema we have many blockbusters such as *Pretty Woman* (1990) directed by Garry Marshall, which centres prostitutes. In literature we have characters from canonical novels who are prostitutes, such as Moll, the exploited female in *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (1722) written by Daniel Defoe; Nancy, the tragic adolescent from *Oliver Twist* (1838), by Charles Dickens and Fantine, the loving mother in *Les Miserables* (1862), by Victor Hugo.

1.1 POETRY, PROSTITUTION, POETS

Poetry is one of the many artistic demonstrations of the self. What we may feel, what we may do, what we may say, what we may leave unsaid can be painted by words in poems. To define poetry one must understand the threads of light a woman or a man receive during their life within the darkness of existence. In many ways, art is a refuge, and poetry is the externalization of feelings expressed on a setting of words that function together as an organic being. This organic being allows us to study it even when dislocated from its author's care, from its time period and place of origin.

In times when conservatism dictates moral values and further oppresses minorities, the arts blossom and the cultural community enriches itself, consequently the *Ars poetica*⁵ does too. In the Victorian Era (1837-1901), there was a great contrast between the growing wealth of the Crown and the growing needs of the population. With these needs, women had to leave their households in order to support their families. With terrible work conditions in factories and in the countryside, some of these women had to turn to prostitution to guarantee their livelihood. (CEFARATTI, 2001)

Thomas Hardy was a British novelist and poet who was born in 1840 and often portrayed the difficulties surrounding the female condition in the Victorian Era through his body of work. He is considered a writer of the Naturalism, because he used detailed realism to show how social conditions were inherent for the shaping of human beings. For a further understanding of this literary movement:

The developments (of Naturalism) in relation to art and literature are complicated. (...)A new importance was given to the environment of characters and actions. Character and action were seen as affected or determined by environment, which especially in a social and social-physical sense had then to be accurately described as an essential element of any account of a life. This connected with the sense of careful and detailed

⁵ Ars poetica: The art of poetry.

observation, from natural history, but it was not (as was later supposed) detailed description for its own sake, or for some conventional plausibility; rather it rested on the new and properly naturalist sense of the determining or decisive or influential effect of an environment on a life. (WILLIAMS, 1985, p. 216, 217)

His characters were considered damned, immoral and obscene by his Victorian readers (MERRIMAN, 2008). In his poem *The Ruined Maid* (1903) – originally published in 1901 in his book *Poems of the Past and the Present* – he addressed the contrast between a woman who became a prostitute and her old colleague who remained working in the countryside. Ironically, the character who became a prostitute and was considered a ruined maid by the society was more successful than the one who kept her “honour” and country job.

Likewise, in France, the arts flourished within a time of peace and technological prosperity. At night, brothels and cabarets started to become the stage for cultural and artistic encounters. Artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec built their body of work surrounding establishments as the *Moulin Rouge*⁶. This period, known as the *Belle Époque* (1871–1914), was marked by economic and artistic success. Notwithstanding this success, the economic underclasses were susceptible to extreme poverty. As it happened in England, women left their homes to provide for themselves, their parents, children, siblings and other relatives. And as a hand offering help, prostitution was nearby.

Henri de Régnier, a French poet and novelist born in 1864, was an active literary critic in the French and Belgium scenario. He began his career in poetry by following the steps of the *Parnasse*⁷. Later he evolved into the *Symbolisme*⁸, although retaining some of the classical form tradition.

At its narrowest “Symbolism” refers to the French group which called itself so in 1886. Its theory was rather rudimentary. These poets mainly wanted poetry to be nonrhetorical, i.e., they asked for a break with the tradition of (Victor) Hugo and the Parnassiens. They wanted words not merely to state but to suggest; they wanted to use metaphors, allegories, and symbols not only as decorations but as organizing principles of their poems; they wanted their verse to be “musical,” in practice to stop using the oratorical cadences of the French alexandrine and, in some cases, to break completely with rhyme. (...) “antinaturalism, antiprosaism in poetry, a search for freedom in the efforts in art, in reaction against the regimentation of the Parnasse and the naturalists”. (WELLEK, 1973, p. 8, 9)

⁶ Moulin Rouge is a cabaret located in Paris, founded in 1889.

⁷ Parnasianism

⁸ Symbolism

Régnier used the picture of a prostitute as the persona⁹ of his poem *For the Gate of the Courtesans* (1912), originally published in 1899 in his book *Premiers poèmes*. Similar to Hardy, Régnier contrasted a courtesan and a woman who was still considering getting into this line of work. The French poet depicted prostitution as a gate with no return, which reflected the inner self of women and that of society. This poem shows prostitutes as beautiful creatures, relatable to nature itself.

Fernand Gregh, a French poet and literary critic, was born in 1873 and throughout his life he became an active member of the French Academy of Letters. In a time when literary schools were very much valued, he founded the *L'école Humaniste*¹⁰, in response to the decay of the *Symbolisme* and *Parnassen*. This Humanist movement was an attempt to rescue the values of Victor Hugo and Alphonse de Lamartine in the writing tradition of poetry; therefore the values of the *Romantisme*¹¹, which intended to return the portrayal of nature, the goodness of humanity and the importance of emotions over reason (ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE, 2014). Gregh – as Régnier and Hardy – also addressed the relation between prostitution and society in his poem *Courtesans* (1912), originally published in 1900 in the book *La Beauté de Vivre*. The poet illustrated prostitutes as graceful and artistic beings, necessary to the survival of many classes of men, but also as a disturbance to society's judgmental eyes.

This thesis proposes the analysis of the poems *The Ruined Maid* (1903), *For the Gates of the Courtesans* (1912) and *Courtesans* (1912) by Thomas Hardy, Henri de Régnier and Fernand Gregh respectively, centring on the subjects' segregation during the late 1800s and early 1900s London and Paris societies. The analysis focus is literary with the support of historical-sociological evidence and it will contrast the figure of prostitutes: a positive and a negative image. The positive image will be reinforced by the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute (both concepts will be further explained). The authors in the poems portray both these images. In one hand, we have the prostitutes as accomplished and influential women, who are in touch with their sexuality and nature. In the other hand, these same women are not well seen by their societies, are considered ruined, damned, immoral and obscene. Historical issues will reinforce the analysis during the period and place in which the poems were published.

⁹ Persona is the equivalent of the term *Eu-lírico* in Portuguese: *A dramatic character, distinguished from the poet, who is the speaker of a poem.* (POETRY FOUNDATION, 2014)

¹⁰ Humanist School.

¹¹ Romanticism.

One can wonder about the choice of a British canonical author and two French poets who are not as acknowledged as the first. It is important to take into consideration that the work of art here selected is attached to the humane representation of the prostitute's figure and not to the cultural status of the artists. In fact, *The Ruined Maid* (1903), *Courtesans* (1912) and *For the Gate of the Courtesans* (1912) are the common ground between Hardy, Gregh and Régnier: all three poems approach the prostitutes differently from the one-sided "moralistic" view of their societies.

2 THEORETICAL BASIS

This chapter intends to define and basically summarize the theoretical basis underlying this analysis and list some researches regarding the topic of prostitution. Every poetic interpretation and consideration is based on the ideals instated by Horace, regarding the *Art of Poetry* (2000) and by Marjorie Bolton, with the book *The Anatomy of Poetry* (1977). While contrasting the depiction of Hardy, Régnier and Gregh's prostitutes in this work, it will take into consideration the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, with the support of the research book *A Prostituta Sagrada: a face eterna do feminino* (1990), by Nancy Qualls-Corbett. Throughout the development of this analysis, the theory underlying it will always be quoted and rescued for the sake of the reader's comprehension.

2.1 ARS POETICA

A poem is like a painting: the closer you stand to this one the more it will impress you, whereas you have to stand a good distance from that one; this one demands a rather dark corner, but that one needs to be seen in full light, and will stand up to the keen-eyed scrutiny of the critic; this one only pleased you the first time you saw it, but that one will go on giving pleasure however often it is looked at. (HORACE, 2000, p. 108)

Horace brilliantly compared a poem to a painting, which is truly appropriate considering that poetry is one of the most developed forms of art. In this analogy he brought up the appreciation of poetry: readers must distance themselves from the poem in order to understand it. Also, every reading of the poem may provide different views on it, and these will further the pleasure provided by poetry. Furthermore, he stated that in order for a poet to be successful in his or her writings, he or she should, above all, detain one humane treasure: wisdom. He truly enlightened poetry considerations by saying that a poet can stamp his political and emotional views in the product, but must always remember the essence of art, by producing a poem with impeccable composition, form¹² and rhythm.

Although good poetry depends on the wisdom of the poet – as Horace said – it also relies on the interpretation of an instructed and good-willing reader. Given that the beauty of a poem can be questioned, there are some aspects that can be taken into consideration to further

¹² Form: relative grouping of the parts of a thing. (BOULTON, 1997, p. 01)

arguments sustaining it or not. When one is analysing poetry, one must take into consideration the formal aspects of the poem:

There seems to be one interesting exception to this liking for form; I cannot explain it and shall content myself with stating it. It is that experience in which energy or magnitude alone gives us the feeling that 'this is beautiful'. (...) There seem to be two kinds of beauty to which we respond; the beauty of form and the beauty of splendid formless. Perhaps the second kind is either much more primitive, or much more advanced, than the first kind. However, the pleasure we find in poetry is usually dependent more or less on formal beauty; (BOULTON, 1997, p. 02)

Therefore, good poetry is related to form and composition, whether it is an obvious format statement (poems which follow Alexandrines rules, for example) or not (free-verse poetry).

There are two types of formal analysis: the mental and physical (BOULTON, 1997). The physical formal analysis has a methodical separation which many authors have written rule books on how to perform it. However, it is sometimes overrated, and it can beat the purpose of poetry. When overrated, it can favour the mechanical study of poetry: scholars who memorize steps of poetry analysis end up being more valued than the ones who study the mental form of poetry. For example, one could analyse the poem *For the gates of the courtesans* (RÉGNIER, 1912) by anatomizing it in separating syllables, trying to evidence a compositional rhythm, memorizing phonetic form and intonation. This study would prove the fact that Régnier has an impeccable style in form, but it would fail to connect this form to the intellectual effect¹³ of the poem. Some scholars fail to understand that the study of the mental state of the poem also addresses its form, but in a way where the mechanical form is only approached to reinforce the content expressed by a given poet. Therefore, this analysis will not produce an extent study of the mechanical form of the poems, this will only be approached when reinforcing an intellectual effect interpretation.

As said before, the rationalization of poetry can be very difficult. Poetry brings up our truest feelings and it incites our purest appreciation of art. When read by this thesis author and advisor, the poems by Hardy, Régnier and Gregh aroused amazement, sadness, admiration and questioning. The next step is to try to develop an analysis faithful to the beauty of the poems. Marjorie Boulton addresses this and says it is the path to a successful study:

¹³ Boulton (1997) uses the term intellectual effect to describe the interpretation that a poem can inspire in a reader.

Ideally, literary criticism ought to arise out of pleasure. What should happen is that we find something delightful and for a time are satisfied with the delight; later, because the healthy mind seldom remains unmoving, we begin to wonder what is the cause of our delight. We may find, rather disconcertingly, that the cause has nothing to do with beauty. (BOULTON, 1997, p. 04)

All three poets combined elements which infallibly produce good poetry. Whether they perform it at the same extend or not, is implied in the next chapter.

It is also important to consider, in a poetic analysis, that it is improbable to study every possibility of interpretation. As Horace stated, the readers must distance themselves from the poem, but when this happens it is inevitable to lose some aspects of it. To analyse a poem is to break it down:

We always find something in a poem that we cannot analyse because it exists only in the poem as whole. If we are trying to understand why a poem delight us, we separate the different parts; the reason for this is the crudely practical one that, though we can perceive several things at once, we cannot describe the several things that we perceive at once, all at the same time; we cannot think two complete sentences simultaneously. (BOULTON, 1997, p. 04)

It is important to do so otherwise the analysis would seem hysterical without a stable methodology, and it would not be clear for readers.

To finalize the poetic considerations underlying this analysis, a reading of one of the first quotes from the book *Anatomy of Poetry* (1990):

The things that are most interesting and most worth having are impossible to define. If we use our common sense, and are careful to say enough, so as to exclude all other objects, we can easily explain what a shovel is, or a telephone, or a bracelet, or even something a little more symbolic such as a sceptre or a pound note. The fact that a man or woman deeply in love can 'find no words' is well known, though the attempt to find words has produced some of our greatest poetry; the fact that the mystic cannot describe intuitive experience accounts in part for the constant arguments on the subject of religion; and hundreds of serious thinkers have been defeated in the attempt to define beauty. Thus, in any analysis which aims at 'explaining' the beauty of poetry, we are to some extent trying to explain the inexplicable. (BOULTON, 1997, p. 01)

Therefore, this analysis will try to expose the elements, of all three poems, which make them worthy of analysing: their images, the content and choice of their words, the feeling of continuity and the relation of their content with the Sacred Prostitute. However, as Boulton said, the essence of their beauty is improbable of logical explanation, it is susceptible to our

subjective feelings when reading and engaging with them. Hopefully, the ones who did not know the poems previous to the reading of this analysis and the ones who did know them, can appreciate the beauty that the poets expressed while writing these controversial poems.

2.2 THE SACRED PROSTITUTE

For I am the first and the last.
 I am the honored one and the scorned one.
 I am the whore and the holy one.
 I am the wife and the virgin.
 I am <the mother> and the daughter.
 I am the members of my mother.
 I am the barren one
 and many are her sons.
 I am she whose wedding is great,
 and I have not taken a husband.
 I am the midwife and she who does not bear.
 I am the solace of my labor pains.
 I am the bride and the bridegroom,
 and it is my husband who begot me.
 I am the mother of my father
 and the sister of my husband
 and he is my offspring.
 I am the slave of him who prepared me.
 I am the ruler of my offspring. (THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY,
 2014)

According to the Oxford online dictionary, a prostitute is “a person, typically a woman, who engages in sexual activity for payment.” (OXFORD DICTIONARY, 2014). Nancy QUALLS-CORBET (1990) is a psychologist who believes that most of the relationship problems our present society goes through is due to the oblivion of the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute. Since the beginning of Western society prostitutes were attached to a negative and impure image of the feminine. Actually, most women who deal with their sexuality with the same manner and naturalness that men are allowed to have are considered impure, unworthy and disgraced. This also happens to women who simply appear to have this behaviour. Every step closer to the behaviour of a prostitute has become a step closer to damnation. However, Corbett shows us that before the prostitute was linked to a negative side of morality she was considered sacred, and to relate to her meant to relate to deity.

When people were going through a journey (of physical or mental state) they would often get lost. When this happened, they could appeal to the refreshing company of a Sacred Prostitute. She was a priestess, a spiritual receptor of the female force, which went through her coming originally from the Goddess. Her female nature was dedicated to the highest purpose of bringing the fertilizing power of the Goddess in touch with the lives of the people. The Sacred Prostitute opened the gates between the male and the female divine. The travellers who consulted the Sacred Prostitute discovered that only love was capable to generate and – when needed – cure the soul. And love also needed the soul to be developed. She was a woman complete in herself, and this completeness made it possible for her to share her

connection with the Goddess with people in need. The sexual act allowed the body to enter into a state of spiritual connection with the sacred. This act was also considered the reinsertion of humanity to nature. Ever since humanity has left nature to live in concrete cities, we have distanced ourselves from our purest origin, nature. The sexual relationship was considered a situation in which people could not replace basic natural instincts. (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990)

In times when women were equal to men, and they also had a place in the clergy (with the same importance as a male priest), the Sacred Prostitute was considered the representation of the Goddess of Love and Fertility (the name varied to each civilization). The act of making love was not seen as something that women should be ashamed of, rather it was something positive – not necessarily commendable, but seen as natural and without prejudices. In those times, people were conscious about the fact that the feminine lived (still lives) inside men and women alike. The Sacred Prostitute became an archetype, defined by Carl Jung as:

The concept of the archetype... is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairy-tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. The more vivid they are, the more they will be coloured by particularly strong feeling-tones... They impress, influence, and fascinate us. They have their origin in the archetype, which in itself is an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time. (JUNG, 1989, p. 392)

Accordingly to QUALLS-CORBET (1990), the destruction of the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute resulted in the repression of the feminine, inside men and women alike.

QUALLS-CORBET (1990) continued to wonder about the consequences that came with the loss of the Sacred Prostitute, and later the loss of the Goddess. What does it mean to choose a male god above all others? The author gathered from her research that it resulted in a feeling of numbness and emptiness: the joy, beauty and creative energy that unite sexuality and spirituality were lost. This feeling combined with the forced superiority of a male deity over all females, started to arouse the inequality amongst women and men. Women started to have their sexuality tainted and taken to the extreme: or completely repressed or completely exploited and sold as a profane prostitution. This profane view is widely known; it manifests the petty ways in which female sexuality is improperly used.

The researcher cites Carl Jung, in saying that when an archetype (such as the Sacred Prostitute) is lost, it produces a great sense of dissatisfaction within our culture. She continues on by stating that this feeling leads us to give much more value to doing than being, to reaching than living, to thinking than feeling. When the Sacred Prostitute existed, the civilizations were sustained by the matriarchy. Thompson (1990 QUALLS-CORBET, p. 37) says that the matriarchy used to set customs, religious authority, the cohesion of the collective, tradition, cultural authority, whereas the patriarchy sets laws, military power, individualistic wars and political power.

The patriarchy is the social organization – the regime – in which we have been inserted for a long time. Although most of us have forgotten of the Sacred Prostitute, it seems that Hardy, Régnier and Gregh's (un)consciousness still remembered about Her when writing their poems. This thesis will show how all three poems have the aspect of the prostitute connected to this archetype, and the well-known profane aspect.

2.3 STATE OF THE ART

There is a significant amount of scientific papers that have prostitution as their subject and many of them approach the old profession differently from this one, which, although embracing the support of historical and sociological materials, has a literary focus. Many researchers studied the causes, consequences, laws and other political issues regarding the sex trade, but as one reads this thesis, one must remember that one of its purposes is to tie the scenario of poetry with history. No academic studies relating the poems *The Ruined Maid* (1903), *Courtesans* (1912), and *For the Gate of the Courtesans* (1912) with the analysis of the contrast of the Victorian and Belle Époque Societies impression and the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute were found.

Kristen Antonia Harris Aspevig, in her PhD dissertation *Fact and Fiction: representations of prostitution in contemporary British news media and novels* (2011), provided an empirical analysis of the competing constructions of prostitution in media and literature. In her research there is a segment in which she illustrated the historical factors that contribute to female prostitution, and work conditions in the Victorian Era. Also, Aspevig depicted prostitution through the eyes of Victorian feminists. However, when introducing literature to the research, she analysed media and novels of the twenty first century, which greatly differ from the format of this proposal.

The thesis by Rebecca Cefaratti *The archaeology of prostitution: literary and material evidence* (2001) gathered – through many genres of literature – evidences of the oldest of trades. Literature was a great source in this research due to the lack of official written documents in the early ages, and it helped depict the daily living of prostitutes throughout history. Although this work relied on literature to sustain its topic area, it was not its centre.

Stanley Renner, in his article *William Acton, the Truth about Prostitution, and the Truth about Hardy's not-So-Ruined Maid* (1992), related some topics this work intends to connect. William Acton wrote the book *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities; with Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of its Attendant Evils* (1857) which illustrated prostitution in the Victorian Era, and clarified some Victorian beliefs about these women. Renner brilliantly interpreted the poem by Thomas Hardy while relating it to Acton's sociological statements about the Victorian Era, in order to confirm his understanding of the poem.

Finally, it is of great importance to consider the virtual blog of a woman retired from prostitution, Maggie McNeill. Scholars may ask why this blog is here instated, why it is listed

among other scientific-university-published works included in this state of the art. The answer is simple: if there is the possibility to see the world through the eyes of the subject of this research or, as McNeill said, “*a whore’s-eye view*” (McNEILL, 2012), should not this opportunity be grabbed at once? Regardless, McNeill listed seven poems regarding prostitution and gave her impressions about each one. Luckily, three of them are the same which will be studied in this research. Regarding Gregh and Hardy’s poems, the blogger characterized them as a realistic view on prostitution, without the judgment of the authors, solely from their societies. McNeill perceived Régnier’s poem, however, as a critic from the poet himself, saying that he “*shows himself as moralistic and judgmental as any Englishman of his time*” (MCNEILL, 2012). This analysis intends to clarify this statement, considered a misinterpretation.

3 ARS INTERPRES¹⁴

3.1 THE RUINED MAID

1¹⁵ "O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown! A¹⁶
 2 Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town? A
 3 And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" — B
 4 "O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she. B

5 — "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks, C
 6 Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks; C
 7 And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!" — B
 8 "Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said she. B

9 — "At home in the barton you said thee' and thou,' D
 10 And thik oon,' and theäs oon,' and t'other'; but now D
 11 Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!" — B
 12 Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she. B

13 — "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak E
 14 But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek, E
 15 And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" — B
 16 "We never do work when we're ruined," said she. B

17 — "You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream, F
 18 And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem F
 19 To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!" — B
 20 "True. One's pretty lively when ruined," said she. B

21 — "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown, A
 22 And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" — A
 23 "My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be, B
 24 Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined," said she. B
 (HARDY, 1903, p. 113)

3.1.1 Intellectual Effect And The Sacred Ruined Maid

In the first stanza of Hardy's narrative poem, Amelia seems to be a character who has disappeared for some time. The greeting of her friend reveals that the friend is amazed by their meeting in town, seen in verse 2. In verse 1, with the choice of the word *crown* to describe their reunion, it is inferred that Amelia has improved her manner, and is now noble like. The choice of the word *Town* in verse 2 also sets the climate of surprise, because in the

¹⁴ The art of interpretation.

¹⁵ The numeration of each verse of all poems were inserted by the author of this thesis in order to facilitate the understanding of the interpretation of the poems.

¹⁶ Letters inserted in all poems by the author of this thesis in order to indicate the verse rhymes.

Victorian Era wealthy women were not accustomed to attend major city centres without being accompanied. The women who frequented these centres alone were often workers (farm and industry or workers such as courtesans). Continuing in verse 3, these new noble features Amelia unveils are portrayed with her new *garments*, new clothing, with a rich air, rich feel to it. In 4, Amelia reveals that the reason that has made her rich and empowered somehow has ruined her. Also, we begin to see the pattern of the poem: Amelia speaks at the end of each stanza.

The second stanza continues on with more information about their background. The friend who is still amazed describes the contrast between what Amelia used to do with what she is now. The content here incites our imagination regarding images – almost flashes – of Amelia’s old life. She wore rags for clothing (*tatters*) and was constantly barefoot, which explains her friend’s amazement, in verse 3, with *such prosperity*. Hereon we see another pattern: the friend lists Amelia’s past problems to then praise her improvements. Now we have a better insight about the economic changes in her life, having jewellery and hair decorations. Here, there is also the possibility that the economic status of Amelia is not necessarily linked to her social status, because the decorations mentioned are not considered fashionable, but somewhat vulgar due to the exaggeration of it.

Not all the irony may be employed to the advantage of the ruined maid pretty clearly she is not quite the epitome of refinement she thinks she is. She is a little overdresses, she does “strut about Town”, at least the perhaps prejudiced view of the country girl, rather vaingloriously, and her pride in being above her friend on clearly questionable grounds does not altogether do her credit. (RENNER, 1992, p. 25, 26)

Continuing the reading of the stanza, when Amelia addresses her improvement, she again states that it is conditioned to the fact that she is ruined. Considering *that’s how* ruined women *dress*, the reason to her life change starts to be hinted. Relating this situation with the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, we see that both are embellished in their predicament BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 35) illustrate this while talking about an ancient Sacred Prostitute called Enheduana: (...) *The day was good for Enheduana, because she had jewellery. / She dressed with the beauty of women. / As the first rays of moonlight on the horizon, how exuberantly she dressed!*¹⁷ Although they have their

¹⁷ Original source from which the quote was retrieved: O dia foi bom para Enheduana, pois ela vestiu-se de joias. / Ela vestiu-se com a beleza própria das mulheres. / Como os primeiros raios de luar sobre o horizonte, Quão exuberantemente ela se vestiu! BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 35)

jewellery, they also rely in their natural beauty, which is enhanced by their objects. The profane prostitutes and the Sacred Prostitutes have in common the fact of valuing their female beauty and energy. Both take their sexuality to a higher level than common women and accentuate it and other traits of the female body. In Amelia's case it was considered vulgar, although her friend was amazed by the beauty of it.

In the following stanza the friend reveals the farmyard home in the *barton*, and the linguistic traits (Hardy's colloquial diction) that could characterize them in low-class economic standards: (verses 9 and 10) *thee' and thou'/(...) thik oon, theäs oon, t'other'*. These words were a strategy used by Hardy to describe their oral language. We see that Amelia has also bettered her speech, although her friend has not (verse 11). Again, when Amelia speaks she conditions her new, better and richer way of life to her ruin. This predicament can also relate Amelia's image with that of the Sacred Prostitute described by HASTINGS (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 46):

We know that the Sacred Prostitutes were very numerous. According to Estrabão, the temples of Aphrodite at Eryx and Corinth had more than a thousand of them, while in each of the two Comanas lived about six thousand of them. They had social status and were well-educated. In some cases, they remained politically and legally equal to men.¹⁸

Therefore, we see that both Amelia and the Sacred Prostitutes had a higher social status than "regular women" such as Amelia's country friend. The *high company* (verse 11) Amelia has been enjoying of, has inserted her in a stratum of power and influence, which has provided her a sense of security. As the Sacred Prostitutes were priestesses and advisors of royalty, they had protection and the same rights as men, which made them equal. Although prostitutes such as Amelia did not have legal equality to men, their sense of security was well-founded especially because of the power they obtained over men by sharing intimacy.

The forth stanza continues the pattern of the friend remembering and describing her old hopeless life, and how it affected Amelia's appearance. With their reunion, the friend is baffled with the classiness of Amelia, her healthy look and rich accessories. Verse 16 is the first big hint about the reason that Amelia has her economic success without *work* and with social ruin. The historical context can be provided by William Acton in:

¹⁸ Original source: (...) sabemos que as prostitutas sagradas eram muito numerosas. De acordo com Estrabão, nos templos de Afrodite em Érix e Corinto havia mais de mil, enquanto que em cada um dos dois Comanas residiam por volta de seis mil. Elas gozavam de status social e eram cultas. Em alguns casos, permaneciam política e legalmente iguais aos homens. HASTINGS (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 46)

We must recollect that she (the prostitute) has a healthy frame, an excellent constitution, and is in the vigour of life. During her career, she has obtained a knowledge of the world most probably above the situation she was born in. Her return to the hearth of her infancy is for obvious reasons a very rare occurrence. (ACTON, 1866, p. 64)

Here the great irony of contrast appears in Hardy's poem: she is beautiful, wealthy, healthy, rich, sophisticated without working and by doing what she is doing, she is considered ruined. In the Sacred Prostitutes' life, this contrast was not possible. They had beauty, wealth, health and sophistication but their jobs as priestesses was never considered in a negative aspect, on the contrary, as BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 33) shares: *Lady of all essences, full of light / good woman, dressed in splendour, / that who possess the love of heaven and earth, / friend of the temple of An, / thou doest wondrous loud, / thou wilt the tiara of the high priestess / whose hands hold the seven essences.*¹⁹ This sophistication allowed them to take a closer step to the image of the highest priestess, and therefore closer to the Goddess. In both Amelia's and The Sacred Prostitute's cases, their flaunting beauty labelled their situation, although the latter was respected and worshiped by society.

In the fifth stanza the friend remembers how Amelia used to consider her life an oppressing witch's nightmare (*hag-ridden*), and how she was not accepting of her life condition. We can see that Amelia was a very unhappy person, but with her ruin she began to appear joyful with high spirits. She confirms it by saying that women as her – who are ruined – have to have the appearance of being *pretty lively*, contrasting with the *megrims* of her past, and of the previous verse. Hardy piled irony into the poem towards society, by the contrast of Amelia's appearance with her ruin, being Hardy a naturalist, caused by the environment she was inserted.

Although Amelia has depicted her social status as ruined, her friend seems not to take this into consideration in the last stanza. She is astonished by 'Melia's lifestyle and wishes to be the same, she desires to have the economic power and freedom that her friend has. Amelia seems to warn her friend that they could not be the same, due to the fact that a simple *country girl* who still has her "honour", and therefore is not ruined, does not have access to the possibilities that ruined girls have. Some authors have considered that some verses reveal that

¹⁹ Original source: "Senhora de todas as essências cheia de luz, / boa mulher, vestida de esplendor, / que possui o amor do céu e da terra, / amiga de templo de Na, / tu usas adornos maravilhosos, / tu desejas a tiara da alta sacerdotisa / cujas mãos seguram as sete essências." BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 33)

‘Melia’s economic improvement has not added an intellectual one, therefore she would be considered rich but not worthy.

The likelihood that Hardy intended the irony to rebound on ‘Melia may be indicated by “her lapse into dialect in the last line” (...) But her use of “ain’t” is not unambiguous evidence of illiteracy. For among the English gentry (as well as those of the American South) the proper use of “ain’t” for “am not” was actually a sign of sophistication and security of social position. (...) actually, it is the next-to-last line, “such as you be” that more unequivocally indicates Hardy’s ironic undercutting of ‘Melia’s pretensions. (RENNER, 1992, p. 26)

Therefore, Amelia has grown regarding her economic status, but as the title suggests, she is still considered ruined. She would not mix into her society, because to many aspects of her life reveal her low-status birthplace, what could prevent her from marrying into a life of respect and “dignity”.

By analysing the title of the poem in contrast to the poem itself, we see the great irony Hardy has illustrated: the title indicates that the core of the poem is a ruined maid, a ruined single woman. When one reads the title alone, one can assume that it will be a story of everything that is implicit while reading “ruined” and at the same time, remembering that this is a Victorian poem, therefore the ruin would probably be related to sexuality. However, Hardy broke this expectation because he provides us a fresh take on Amelia’s situation because although she is morally ruined by Victorian standards it is quite evident that Amelia is conscious of her status as a morally ruined maid and that she sees no grandeur about it, in spite of her improvements considering her past life. In every single verse representative of her talk, she finalizes it with the word ruined or ruin.

Also, considering the metres of the poem, as indicated above, we see that her verses are always in the same pattern (B). Considering that the last two verses of each stanza follow the same pattern, it gives the impression of a monotone in Amelia’s speech, contrasting the amazement of her friend, with ‘Melia’s blasé responses. Hardy not only achieved these differences in amazement and blasé with the content of each stanza, but also by the rhythm, as we can see by the indication above (AABB, CCBB, DDBB, EEBB, FFBB, AABB). Although in stanzas 1-5 the penultimate verse is still of the friend’s talk, it sets the tone for ‘Melia’s response, and it also adds to the notion that the ruined maid knows that there is no grandeur about her situation. It seems that the poem is constructed as a cautionary tale, at the end of each stanza she is warning her friend about her predicament, and that is why her tone at the end of the stanza seems quite melancholic. This poem is very lyrical, and the rhymes give a

sense of a cycle, especially because it finishes with the same metre of its beginning, therefore suggesting that this situation may happen with many other girls.

The biggest question following the reading of this poem is about the social status of the encountered Amelia. How, in the late nineteenth century (considering the poem was written in 1866), a woman could transit from a lower working class to a social class in which women did not work but were still financially empowered? Prostitution was the answer. Hardy wrote this poem on a time when prostitution was a much debated controversial topic. *The Contagious Diseases Act of 1866 and the understandably heated debate that went on around it provided the immediate context for "The Ruined Maid", dated the same year.* (RENNER, 1992, p. 24) This Act was a resolution by law instated to try to prevent venereal diseases in military officers. In army towns or naval ports, prostitutes were arrested and taken to hospitals to be checked. If the prostitute were to have any kind of disease, she would be locked away until cured. (WOJTCZAK, 2009) Therefore, being Hardy a well-informed critical thinker, there is the possibility that he, after reading the book by William Acton *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities; with Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of its Attendant Evils* (1857), and understanding Acton's ideal of accepting prostitution and trying to better their situation, had named his ruined maid Amelia when considering the term Ameliorate – coined by Acton – used to enlighten readers that *"thus, instead of trying to stamp it (prostitution) out, society would better spend its energies in trying to AMELIORATE its deleterious effects."* (RENNER, 1992, p. 27).

Finally, as Renner (1992) concluded, the main idea of Thomas Hardy's poem is to show that the career of prostitution was a better path for working class women, than the path of "virtue". The irony of the poem is mainly directed to the Victorian society, which perpetuated that scenario. This contrast allowed us to relate the image of the successful ruined maid with the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute. Amelia's life was drawn by the poet as a continuous improvement starting by her ruin. In the Sacred Prostitute's time, a woman started to enjoy the magnitude of her life when losing her virginity. Upon this act of love, her energy would be higher, she would find joy and respect in life, and it was the stepping stone for the beginning of the female life. And Amelia has started her life in the same breaking point.

3.2 FOR THE GATES OF THE COURTESANS

1 IF to the town thou come some morning, to A
 2 Join the sweet, frivolous, futile sisters who A
 3 Bestow their love and sell their beauty, wait B
 4 Before thou enter my returnless gate, B
 5 Whose folding-doors are mirrors; there descry C
 6 Thy coming self, thou who art tempted by C
 7 The gold, it may be, and the banquet's hum, D
 8 Thou from a vast and distant country come, D
 9 Thou who still pure, and innocently bare, E
 10 Smilest, with autumn's russet in thy hair, E
 11 And summer's fruits upon thy breast embossed, F
 12 And thy soft skin like fabled sea-caves mossed, F
 13 And in thy warmest flesh's secret fold G
 14 The form of rosy shells the seas have rolled, G
 15 And beauty of dawn and shadow, and the scent H
 16 Of flowers and gardens, woods and sea-weed blent! H
 17 Tarry, ere the ineffable alms thou bring I
 18 Of being both the autumn and the spring I
 19 To those who far from dawn and harvests live. J
 20 Listen, thou mayest yet return, but if J
 21 Thou must, I open, glad to see thee pass, K
 22 Laughing and double past my double glass. K
 (RÉGNIER, 1912, p. 113)

3.2.1 Intellectual Effect And The Sacred Gate

Régnier's single-stanza poem furthers the theme of prostitution with a different perspective. Differently from Hardy's narrative poem, which has two female characters, this one has the voice of one person: the persona, who is a prostitute. The feeling we get by reading the poem is that it is a dialogue, however with only one voice. This dialogue appears to be between a girl who is considering becoming a courtesan and a woman who is one already, and probably is also a brothel owner. Her speech is beautiful and alarming, but overall convincing, which can be understood by the following fact:

After successfully winning a long series of obstacles related to regulations and the police, it is necessary to fill the house with fresh meat. For recruiting, one must possess gifts of persuasion, of shrewdness, audacity, business acumen and good penetration in certain circles.²⁰ (ADLER, 1991, p. 51)

²⁰ Original source: Depois de ter conseguido vencer uma longa série de obstáculos relativos aos regulamentos e à polícia, é necessário encher a casa de carne fresca. Para saber recrutar, é preciso possuir dons de persuasão, de perspicácia, audácia, tino comercial e uma boa penetração em certos meios. (ADLER, 1991, p. 51)

The persona starts the poem questioning the reason of someone's visit and by making an assumption; if this visitor chose that morning to come to the town (leaving the countryside, further seen in verse 8) to join the women *who sell their beauty* and use their love, she should wait as the persona warns her that this path has no return: *returnless gate*.

This woman is often dragged by prostitution nets and is locked in slaughter houses. Others abandon the profession and go back to their place of origin, to their previous jobs. Some try to alternate during a biggest time gap possible the phases of wealth and poverty, tortured by the dread of the police toughen by alcohol. They become the prey for which the suspicious house owners yearned for, who used them as bait.²¹ (ADLER, 1991, p. 38)

In 2, the persona describes these women as silly and vulgar. Although the persona calls these women sisters, there is not a feeling of community in this verse, instead of loneliness, considering that *even though courtesans find themselves frequently surrounded by people, they are alone in life and they know it.*²² (ADLER, 1991, p. 33), and especially considering the gate that separates them from society.

The persona's warning also mentions that the gate has in its doors mirrors that reveal and discover the traveller's necessities for income and food, translated by *gold* and *banquet* in verse 7. The *banquet's hum* reinforces the idea of temptation started in verse 6, creating an image of the richness of the banquet calling for the girl. Therefore, we see the temptations of survival as the biggest motivation for women to step into the profession, as William Acton showed in his study, reinforcing Régnier's poem.

It is a shameful fact that the lowness of wages paid to work-women in various trades is a fruitful source of prostitution; unable to obtain by their labour the means of procuring the bare necessities of life, they gain, by surrendering their bodies to evil uses, food to sustain and clothes to cover them. What wonder if, urged on by want and toil, encouraged by evil advisers, and exposed to selfish tempters, a large proportion of these poor girls fall from the path of virtue? (ACTON, 1866, p. 129)

²¹ Original source: Essa mulher com frequência é tragada pelas redes de prostituição e trancafiada em casas de abate. Outras abandonam a profissão e voltam ao seu lugar de origem, à sua profissão anterior. Algumas tentam alternar durante o maior espaço de tempo possível as fases de riqueza e de miséria, torturadas pelo pavor da polícia embrutecidas pelo álcool. Tornam-se as presas pelas quais ansiavam as proprietárias de casas suspeitas, que as utilizavam como iscas. (ADLER, 1991, p. 38)

²² Original source: mesmo que as cortesãs se encontrem frequentemente rodeadas de gente, elas estão sozinhas na vida e sabem disso. (ADLER, 1991, p. 33)

The persona continues by describing the woman, and the words chosen began to elaborate an image: a pure, peasant young girl and *innocently bare*, as if she were wearing a nightgown, indicating vulnerability. Also, with the description of her as a reddish-brown, in *10 autumn's russet in thy hair*, we can infer that this season being known as the fruitful one, can indicate a sexual ripeness of the girl. The persona furthers the description, by comparing her breasts with summer's fruits, being the sweetest of all. Here it is possible to compare this image of the beautiful courtesan with the description of a Sacred Prostitute by MICHENER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 14)

She was an exquisite human being, a perfection of the goddess Astarte, for no man could look at her provocative form without seeing in her the sublime representation of fertility. She was a girl whose purpose was to be loved, to be taken away and made fertile so that she could reproduce her grandeur and bless the earth.²³

The way the poet describes the young girl provides for the reader a feeling of a natural beauty, and the aforementioned sense of fertility and sexual ripeness, and the Sacred Prostitutes emanated the same. Therefore by evoking natural symbols such as autumn, summer's fruits, the poet ended up evoking the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, symbol of nature and female sexuality and holy fertility.

There are many more symbols drawn by this poem, described by the persona, it is possible to see one when she continues to build the girl's imagery, by bringing the picture of *sea-caves* covered in moss, and by doing so, isolating something precious of the girl. In continuing this isolation, the persona refers to the *warmest* secret of the flesh: folded in the form of *rosy shells*, a hidden *beauty of dawn and shadow*, which incites the smell with odours of nature in its most beautiful forms, seen in 16. This symbol of the female genitalia is beautifully and subtly built in a comfortable speed with an effective choice of words. Also being able to relate to the image of the Sacred Prostitute for this one is a woman with perfect female traits, accepting and highlighting the preciousness of the woman body, such as the female genitalia intensified by Régnier's metaphor.

In 17, interestingly enough, the persona begins to describe how the girl causes linger before the unspeakable charity she provides by being both *autumn and spring*, and by completing the ones who do not have the privilege of being complete as she is. In 19, the

²³ Original source: Uma perfeição da deusa Astarte, pois homem algum conseguia olhar sua forma provocante sem nela ver a representação sublime da fertilidade. Era uma menina cuja finalidade era ser amada, ser levada e tornada fértil, para que pudesse reproduzir seu esplendor e abençoar a terra. MICHENER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 14)

persona describes the people who will eventually ask for the girl's services – in case she goes through the gate of prostitution – as people who have important aspects of life missing from theirs. As if she would become a balm for these souls, a gift from nature itself. Amazingly, this charity provided by the courtesan was also provided by the Sacred Prostitutes:

Translation: The sensual magic of sacred prostitutes, or Horae, soften the behavior of men. They were often known as Lovable or Grace, once are referred to the unique combination of beauty and goodness called charis (Latin caritas), later translated as "charity". In fact, it was like the Hindu karuna, combination of motherly love, tenderness, comfort, mystical awareness and sex.²⁴ WALKER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 43)

The sexual act in ancient times was the connection between mortals and goddesses. These priestesses would act in the life of their subjects as loving mother-like figures. They provided comfort for the ones in need, as did the courtesans accordingly to Régnier's poem. His description of the courtesans is surprisingly similar do that of the Sacred Prostitutes: *the sensual priestess - human woman that brought the attributes of the goddess to the life of human beings. The connection with an important layer of instinctual life - joy, beauty, creative energy that unites sexuality and spirituality.*²⁵ (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p.16) Régnier's prostitute and the Sacred Prostitute differ only by the way society sees them, but they are equally important to the lives of many souls.

Yet after these beautiful symbols constructed by the persona, she wraps the poem with the warning she began in verse 3 (*wait*). First she appears to give the girl a chance to go back home, but also allows the continuance of the path, because this woman, who is already a prostitute or a brothel owner, or both, will be glad to see one more sister in her mirrored gate. They would go through this gate together, and the girl would cross the gate as a person, and get to the other side as a changed one, *double past*. Considering the title of the poem with the poem itself, we read the mirrors on the gates as the reflection of life inside and out of the brothel: inside there is the perversion of the profane prostitution and the sold sexual relationship and outside there is the perversion of the society that leads young girls into this

²⁴ Original source: A mágica sensual das prostitutas sagradas, ou Horae suavizava o comportamento dos homens. Eram frequentemente conhecidas por Amáveis ou Graças, uma vez que se referem à combinação única de beleza e bondade chamada charis (latim caritas), mais tarde traduzido por "caridade". Na verdade, era como a karuna hindu, combinação de amor-de-mãe, ternura, conforto, percepção mística e sexo. WALKER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 43)

²⁵ Original source: (...) a sacerdotisa sensual – a mulher humana que trazia os atributos da deusa à vida dos seres humanos. A ligação com uma cama importante da vida instintiva – alegria, beleza, energia criativa que une sexualidade e espiritualidade. (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p.16)

life, especially the ones from the countryside, as the one from the poem. The reflected image is how the girl sees herself and how she would not recognize herself in the way out, due to her impending ruin in society, signified by the prostitution. Society drives her into ruin and at the same time casts her out.

In *For the gate of the courtesans* we can see how the legacy of the *Parnasse* has made a great impression in Régnier's work, although he had shifted to *Symbolisme*. Every couple of verse rhymes, showing his flawless metres and giving the notion of continuity to the reading of the poem, as if it was something that was impossible to be stopped not only in this girl's life, but in the life of many. The metres of the poem contribute to the idea that prostitution will hardly end. Where Hardy used irony to enhance the positive side of prostitution, Régnier used forms of nature: both approximated to the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, but in different manners.

3.3 COURTESANS

1 O COURTESANS, Love's witching, wild priestesses, A
 2 You charm the universe from end to end! B
 3 Heroes are always fettered by your tresses, A
 4 Kings for their pleasure on your bed depend. B

 5 Your pose is graceful, and your nostril quivers, C
 6 Your feet go dancing, and your deep eyes burn, D
 7 Your supple bodies bend like reeds of rivers, C
 8 Your robes like incense round about you turn. D

 9 Poor men are full of anger when they see you E
 10 Come from your segregation of disgrace, F
 11 Matrons cast envious eyes at you and flee you, E
 12 And the wise, scolding, turn away their face. F

 13 But still the sighs of boys with passion paling G
 14 Soar up to you in sultry evenings when H
 15 You pass, the dreams of lonely artists trailing, G
 16 And gray regrets of amorous old men; H

 17 And long, strong sighs of young men sick and ailing, G
 18 Whose blood chafes at the scent the summer floats, I
 19 Longing to take your breasts like fruits, inhaling I
 20 Love in the odour of your petticoats. G
 (GREGH, 1912, p. 28)

3.3.1 Intellectual Effect And The Sacred Courtesans

Gregh's poem addresses the societal aspect of prostitution and how it is received by people from different economic status and gender. The persona begins the lyrical stanza – clearly dedicated for courtesans – by referring to them as magical and untraditionally religious. Since the persona begins the poem by calling the courtesans *wild priestesses*, it is important to understand the work of the Sacred Prostitute:

The light of the Sacred Prostitute penetrates the heart in the darkness. (...) she is the priestess enshrined in time, spiritually receptive to the female force that flows from her coming from the Goddess, while emanating the conscious satisfaction of beauty and passion in her human body. Indulging the cosmic energies of love, she glorifies the Goddess in physical delight and spiritual ecstasy.²⁶
 (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 9)

²⁶ Original source: A luz da prostituta sagrada penetra o coração em meio à escuridão. (...) ela é a sacerdotisa consagrada no tempo, espiritualmente receptiva à força feminina que flui a partir dela vinda da deusa, ao mesmo tempo que emana a satisfação consciente da beleza e da paixão em seu corpo humano. Entregando-se às energias cósmicas do amor, ela glorifica a deusa em deleite físico e êxtase espiritual. (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 9)

The priestess provides comfort and light into the darkness of the mundane life. She is the link between humanity and deity, between men and the goddesses, she connects people with beauty and passion occurred by the female force. The act of love glorifies the goddess when in ecstasy. This is the role of the priestess, of the Sacred Prostitute.

This first stanza also expresses how courtesans are influential in every aspect, seen in 2. In verse 3, the persona begins to detail their influence and the tools of their spells. In 3 we begin to assemble the symbols conveyed by the poet: the courtesans chain heroes with their locks of hair and kings become dependable of their pleasurable skills in bed. The Sacred Prostitutes also had kings depending on their beds, as illustrated by KRAMER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 32) in his description of the relations between a king and a Sacred Prostitute:

The awaiting mass sings hymns and love songs to highlight the ecstasy and fertilising power of the goddess and her lover, the sacred prostitute and her king. The king turns with his head held high to the holy lap, he goes with his head held high towards Inanna's holy lap, The king coming with his head held high, Coming to my queen with his head held high... Embraces Hieródula...²⁷

Gregg demonstrated how kings were dependent on courtesans with the narration of his neutral persona, and in the same manner that these prostitutes charmed the universe, Sacred Prostitutes had whole communities rooting for their love, for their unity with kings. The difference between Gregg's courtesans and the Sacred Prostitute is – again – the judgement of society.

The persona dedicates the second stanza to the courtesans' distinctive qualities, which can be understood considering the harsh routine of caring for their appearances:

The everyday life of the courtesan is organized, repetitive, and full of duties entirely towards the perfection of representation. She gets up around eleven o'clock, has lunch and takes a very, very long bath. Smoothness and the whiteness of the skin treated with milks, creams and perfume. Fragrant humidity of the room that connects with the bathroom, from where intoxicating fumes escape. Dressing

²⁷ Original source: A massa que aguarda entoa hinos e canções de amor para realçar o êxtase e o poder fertilizante da deusa e de seu amante, a prostituta sagrada e seu rei. O rei dirige-se com a cabeça erguida ao colo santo, Ele se dirige com a cabeça erguida ao colo santo de Inana, O rei vindo com a cabeça erguida, Vindo à minha rainha com a cabeça erguida... Abraça a Hieródula... KRAMER (1990 apud QUALLS-CORBET, p. 32)

table covered with crystal glasses full of rare perfumes.²⁸ (ADLER, 1991, p. 32)

In 5 and 6, artistic traits are attributed to these women, whose smooth movements translate as a dance, and whose intensity can be seen in their eyes. The persona compares their flexible bodies with the movements of water plants when being stirred by rivers, and compares their robes as a cloth of incense. It seems to be describing the qualities of the courtesans while engaging in the sexual act, being this stanza a symbol for it. Considering that the words here selected are always related to motion, and the scheme rhyme regularity (CDCD) brings stability to the stanza, it adds to the notion of regular movements.

The third stanza addresses the negative aspects of the courtesans' lives. Men who cannot afford their company resent their existence, as do married women, whose envious looks order the segregated courtesans to run away. And the ones who are wise reprimand these women and look away:

During the entire nineteenth century until the 1920s, the army of moralists does not stop worrying about prostitution, writing long treaties, winning the public opinion, doing polls, appealing to legal and political authorities, doing surveys, urging the legal and political authorities for the evil to not grow and customs not to deprave: from that sanitation campaign actively participate together, especially doctors, ideologues, physiologists and some writers. Thus, there is no pity for the women whose profession is love. The police are called to repress them, and moralists want to imprison them. The wildly free battalion from dishevelled Madalenas that roam the cities in all directions for these groups.²⁹ (ADLER, 1991, p. 42, 43)

These women's lives were not easy, and still are not easy. They participate of the lives of different strata, but at the same time are not accepted. History shows us how women were always in the verge of being renegaded or scolded, whoever they were and whatever they did. Courtesans were always influential, but their acceptance was given in night time, in closed

²⁸ Original source: A vida cotidiana da cortesã é organizada, repetitiva, cheia de obrigações inteiramente voltada para a perfeição da representação. Ela se levanta por volta das onze horas, almoça e toma um banho muito, muito longo. Maciez e brancura da pele tratada com leites, cremes e perfumes. Umidade perfumada do quarto que se comunica com o banheiro, de onde escapam emanações inebriantes. Penteadeira coberta de vidros de cristal cheios de perfumes raros. (ADLER, 1991, p. 32)

²⁹ Original source: No decorrer de todo o século XIX até os anos 1920, o exército de moralistas não para de se preocupar com a prostituição, escrevendo longos tratados, conquistando a opinião pública, fazendo enquetes, apelando às autoridades jurídicas e políticas para que o mal não cresça e os costumes não se depravem: dessa campanha de saneamento participam ativamente, em conjunto, principalmente médicos, ideólogos, fisiologistas e alguns escritores. Dessa forma, não existe piedade para as mulheres que fazem do amor sua profissão. A polícia é convocada para reprimi-las, e os moralistas querem aprisiona-las. O batalhão selvagememente livre de Madalenas descabeladas que percorrem as cidades em todas as direções para esses grupos. (ADLER, 1991, p. 42, 43)

doors and in secrecy. This segregation was sometimes the reality of some Sacred Prostitutes, who, for some reason, were banned from their sanctuaries. Here is the example given by BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 QUALLS-CORBET, p. 35) regarding the priestess Enheduana:

You asked me to enter the holy cloister, Giparu. / And I entered it, I, the high priestess Enheduana! / I carried the ritual basket and sang in your praise. / Now I find myself banned amid lepers. / I cannot even live with you. / Shadows penetrate the light of day / light darkens around me / shadows penetrate the daylight, / covering the day with sandstorms. / My soft honey mouth becomes suddenly confused. / My beautiful face is now dust.³⁰

Although this particular priestess was later accepted back into her sanctuary, it was not different from what the French profane prostitutes lived. They were segregated as lepers, sometimes deprived from even the right of prayer, excommunicated and banned from churches, not having the solidarity and comfort of religion. In fact, what should be the biggest comfort and what should provide the biggest security for them, ended up being their biggest nightmare. Religion was the highest motivation for the scolding of prostitutes.

Despite this segregation, the persona continues, boys overcome fences by flying pass them to meet these courtesans in hot passionate nights. *Lonely artists'* dreams of desire, and old regrets of elders with sexual yearnings make trails that follow the courtesans' steps. Young men in poor health whose blood becomes damaged by these women's scent spread by summer, desire to have the courtesans while absorbing the love their undergarments propagate. This desire of men towards the courtesans can be related and explained by the function of the Sacred Prostitute:

Translation: By turning to the stranger, the sacred prostitute takes her saffron robe and gestures for him to rise before the image of Venus. (...) He kneels in sign of respect before the Goddess of passion and of love, and offers prayer of supplication for Her to receive her offering. (...) The woman and the stranger know that the consummation of the act of love is consecrated by the Goddess through which they are renewed. The ritual itself, due to the presence of the divine, is transformative. The Sacred Prostitute is now no longer a virgin, she is started in the fullness of femininity, the beauty of her body and her sexuality. Her true feminine nature

³⁰ Original source: Tu pediste-me para entrar no claustro santo, o Giparu. / e eu entrei nele, eu, a alta sacerdotisa Enheduana! / Eu carreguei a cesta do ritual e cantei em seu louvor. / Agora encontro-me banida, em meio aos leprosos. / Nem mesmo eu consigo viver contigo. / Sombras penetram a luz do dia, / a luz escurece-se à minha volta, / sombras penetram a luz do dia, / cobrindo o dia com tempestades de areia. / Minha suave boca de mel torna-se repentinamente confusa. / Minha linda face agora é pó. BARNSTONE; BARNSTONE (1990 QUALLS-CORBET, p. 35)

was awakened to life. And divine love element resides in her.³¹
(QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 29)

Love was and will always be the biggest need of society. What most men looked for when meeting a courtesan was the same of what, in ancient times, men looked for when consulting a Sacred Prostitute. The feminine is a complement of the masculine, as the masculine complements the feminine, and the repression of the feminine has brought a sense of incompleteness in society for a long time, including Gregh's *Belle Époque*. Therefore, men paid for the company of courtesans to feel complete, and that is why, as Gregh's poem illustrated, men had such desire of having these women. They not only desired the women themselves, but desired the ritual they provided. As Hardy and Régner, Gregh seemed to be evoking the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute when describing the positive aspects of the courtesans/prostitutes.

³¹ Original source: Ao voltar-se para o estranho, a prostituta sagrada tira a sua veste cor de açafão e gesticula para que ele se erga diante da imagem de Vênus. (...) Ele se ajoelha em sinal de respeito diante da deusa da paixão e do amor, e oferece-lhe oração de súplica para que ela receba sua oferenda. (...) A mulher e o estranho sabem que a consumação do ato do amor é consagrado pela deusa através da qual eles se renovam. O ritual em si, devido à presença do divino, é transformador. A prostituta sagrada agora não é mais virgem, foi iniciada na plenitude da feminilidade, da beleza de seu corpo e de sua sexualidade. Sua verdadeira natureza feminina foi despertada para a vida. E elemento divino do amor reside nela. (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 29)

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It becomes quite evident in the poem *The Ruined Maid* (1903) how Thomas Hardy was a follower of the Naturalist movement. The poem emphasises how the environment surrounding Amelia and her unnamed friend and society had a great influence in them, and how it was basically the cause for the conditions in which both characters found themselves. The conditions of the Victorian Era provided to women were decisive in their predicaments and therefore determined by its environment.

With the same intensity of representing his movement Henri de Régnier filled his poem *For the gates of the courtesans* (1912) with metaphors and symbols as the core of his poem and the biggest means of broadcasting his main idea. Also, although Régnier tried to break with the formal tradition of the *Parnasse* by making a single stanza poem, he was able to create a poem with flawless rhyme scheme and pairs of verses with same sounds after every last word stressed syllable (AABBCCDDEEFFGGHHIIJJKK), clearly promoting his earlier traits. Maggie McNeill has referred to Régnier as a judgmental and moralistic poet and overviewed *For the gates of the courtesans* (1912) as (it) *depicts a beautiful woman's decision to "waste" her beauty and sex appeal making a living on her own terms as passage through a mirrored gate through which it is impossible to return. Once a woman chose the path of whoredom she was "ruined", unable to return to the "purity" she left behind* (McNEILL, 2012). Interestingly enough, she considers this the opinion of Régnier himself, but she discerns the "ruin" of Hardy's poem as a take of the society, but not that of himself. This is the main difference of points of view of this thesis and of McNEILL (2012): we believe that he portrays the difficulty of prostitution because of the impossibility of acceptance by the society that surrounds it, but by portraying the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, we can have a glimpse on his sympathy towards prostitutes.

Gregh, the follower of the perhaps least known literary movement *L'école Humaniste*, differently from Régnier, attempted to recover the traditions of Victor Hugo and of the *Romantisme*, and he was successful in romanticizing one of the images of the courtesan, the one relatable to the Sacred Prostitute, as mentioned in 3.3.1, and he also portrayed the realistic side of them, such as McNEILL (2012) stated: *In general, the French poet romanticizes the whore far less than the English does; even while extolling the virtues of a particular fille de*

*joie*³² who has enchanted him, or of demimondaines in general, there is generally a recognition of the pragmatic realities of harlotry. The poem *Courtesans* (1912) presents alternate rhymes (ABAB CDCD EFEF GHGH) except on the last stanza with an enclosed rhyme (GIIG). He was successful in guarantying the traits of the movement he himself founded, by portraying nature and by glorifying feelings over the “rational” behaviour of his *Belle Époque*. Gregh was perhaps the most obvious poet, probably because of his literary school, considering that it intended to break with the pictures created by the *Symbolisme* and the subtlety of the Naturalism. He relied too much on the rhetoric of words, restricting the possibilities of construction of images such as in the poem *For the gate of the courtesans* (1912).

Besides the differences of characteristics in their writing of poems, Hardy, Régnier and Gregh portrayed the prostitutes – or courtesans – in a different manner in which their societies were used to portraying. This new manner was what allowed this relation of their characters with the archetype of the Sacred Prostitute, and it can be possible to say that these poets were not oblivious to this archetype, considering the great similarities of their characters with it. Prostitution should not be scolded by society, because in many cases it allows families to live with comfort and health, and it does not mean a distance between these women with religion:

Miss D. is pleased to tell you that the cruellest reverses of fortune would have reduced the last acts of desperation if she had not been contained by a religious sentiment which prohibits disposal of what comes from Heaven. His austere and circumspect behaviour, the care that she has with her father and mother, who lavishes care to the children, made her worthy of the esteem and consideration of all good people; cannot deliver the job, she asks permission to receive six women in his house..³³ (ADLER, 1991, p. 51)

Here we see a woman who had her religion as the motivation to get into the profession of prostitution – not as a courtesan necessarily, but probably a brothel owner – in order to provide for her family and not commit the biggest of sin, suicide. This is a letter sent to the chief of police in the region of France, in the end of the nineteenth century.

³² Euphemism for the word *prostitute*.

³³ Original source: “A senhorita D. tem a honra de vos dizer que os mais cruéis reveses da fortuna a teriam reduzido ao último dos atos de desespero se ela não tivesse sido contida por um sentimento religioso que proíbe dispor daquilo que vem dos Céus. Seu comportamento austero e circunspecto, o cuidado que ela tem com o pai e a mãe, o cuidado que prodigaliza aos filhos, fizeram-na merecedora da estima e da consideração de todas as pessoas de bem; não podendo se entregar ao trabalho, ela solicita autorização para receber seis mulheres em sua casa”. (ADLER, 1991, p. 51)

As seen in this thesis, prostitution is not a recent issue in society, it is as ancient as civilization itself and the possibility of our history having forgotten about the Sacred Prostitute can be one of the reasons for many problems regarding sexuality and femininity. Female sexuality completes male sexuality and Régnier and Gregh portrayed this sense of completion in their poems as, respectively, charity provided by prostitutes and as male dependence on them. QUALLS-CORBET (1990) elucidates this relation:

Throughout the ages, women have been the repository of meaning, emotions and values attributed to the goddess of love. By valuing the pleasurable, self-confident and sensual nature of their priestess, the Sacred Prostitute, both men and women come into contact with something valuable within. Women can be carriers of this vital aspect of female nature to the world. Men can once again open up to the dynamic aspect of the feminine and thus facilitate the modifications that are necessary to the political, social, economic and religious structures. Thusly, humanity can restore to conscious the creative and loving force of the feminine nature, which for so long was personified in the Sacred Prostitute.³⁴ (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 213, 214)

There is a huge contrast with the benefits of the female sexuality and how societies of each poem exploit it, being the great irony suggested by Hardy, Régnier and Gregh. As a suggestion for future works, this thesis suggests the possibility of studies regarding the representation of the Sacred Prostitute in great characters of literature (novels, plays, a bigger variety of poems) and also in different means of art.

³⁴ Original source: Através dos tempos, as mulheres têm sido o repositório do significado, das emoções e dos valores atribuídos à deusa do amor. Ao valorizar a natureza prazerosa, autoconfiante e sensual de sua sacerdotisa, a prostituta sagrada, tanto homens como mulheres entram em contato com alguma coisa valiosa dentro de si. As mulheres podem ser portadoras desse aspecto vital da natureza feminina para o mundo. Os homens podem mais uma vez abrir-se para o aspecto dinâmico do feminino e assim facilitar as modificações que se fazem necessárias nas estruturas política, social, econômica e religiosa. Dessa maneira a humanidade pode restaurar à consciência a força criativa e amorosa da natureza feminina, que há tanto tempo era personificada na prostituta sagrada. (QUALLS-CORBET, 1990, p. 213, 214)

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