

THEMATIC SECTION:
ART EXPRESSIONS
AND CONTEMPORARY
SUBJECTIVITIES

Educação
& realidade

An Obnoxious Word: on the meeting between literature, writing and education

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ABSTRACT – *An Obnoxious Word: on the meeting between literature, writing and education.* Taking literary practices within the scope of cultural pedagogies, this essay analyzes the (counter)effects of the writers' public voice – mainly of journalistic circulation – as a vector for diffuse control of non-literary modes of writing, including the educational ones. By a theoretical dialogue with Michel Foucault, it is argued that literature, when associated with a pedagogical leitmotiv, becomes a veridictive-subjectivating apparatus sustained by discursiveness around writers, causing a political problem regarding the freedom of writing. Finally, it advocates for an unimpeded addressing to the scriptural gesture, capable of unfolding it into a myriad of possible achievements.

Keywords: **Literature. Writing. Writers. Cultural Pedagogy. Michel Foucault.**

RESUMO – *Uma Palavra Detestável: do encontro entre literatura, escrita e educação.* Perspectivando as práticas literárias no escopo das pedagogias culturais, o presente ensaio analisa os (contra)efeitos da voz pública dos escritores – de circulação sobretudo jornalística – como vetor de um controle difuso dos modos de escrita não literários, incluindo os escolares. Na companhia teórica de Michel Foucault, argumenta-se que a literatura, quando associada a um *leitmotiv* pedagógico, converte-se em um aparato veridictivo-subjetivador sustentado pela discursividade em torno dos escritores, acarretando um problema político no que tange à liberdade da escrita. Por fim, advoga-se em favor de um endereçamento desimpedido ao gesto escritural, capaz de desdobrá-lo em uma miríade de efetuações possíveis.
Palavras-chave: **Literatura. Escrita. Escritores. Pedagogia Cultural. Michel Foucault.**

Literature and Education: a different approach

The present essay is dedicated to putting in perspective the crossed relations between the literary and educational practices through the proposition of an analytical view which surpasses the *stricto sensu* school scope. More specifically, it is a matter of calling into question the dissemination of a certain creed in vigor about the literary field and its main craftsmen – namely, the writers – which would result in, according to our hypothesis, confusingly controlling the modes of non-literary writing, including those in place in the school context.

To this end, the argumentation here describes, in broad strokes, the theoretical primacy in the field of cultural pedagogy studies, according to which, “[...] just like education, the other cultural instances are also pedagogical, also offer their ‘pedagogy’, also teach something” (Silva, 2007, p. 139), and are, thus, a set of scattered instances in the sociocultural field that play a crucial role “[...] in constituting subjects, in composing identities, in disseminating practices and conducts, ultimately, in outlining the ways of being and living in contemporaneity” (Andrade; Costa, 2015, p. 61). As a matter of fact, literature could be readily included in the list of cultural practices examined by said field of studies, especially by those linked to the cultural media, that affirm themselves through the circulation of “[...] television, journalism, radio, advertisement, photo, and movie texts, as well as the so-called new media” (Andrade; Costa, 2015, p. 52).

If said premise is correct, we must enquire: which forms of being and living are outlined when an educational *leitmotiv* is associated with the literary task? How do writers operate when positioned as cultural educators? To what end?

Such type of phatic articulation between literature and education is drafted by historian Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior (2010) in one of the very few texts akin to what is being proposed here. The author emphasizes the need to investigate the educational practices beyond the canonic forms circumscribed to school teaching, championed in favor of an enlarged and, at last, sympathetic understanding to those of cultural pedagogies, considering that

[...] we live in societies and cultures where a multiplicity of pedagogies operate in the everyday life, aiming at elaborating subjectivities, producing identities, taming and directing bodies and gestures, interdicting, allowing, and instigating or teaching habits, customs and abilities, outlining interdicts, setting differences between the admitted and the excluded, valuing differentially and hierarchically tastes, preferences, options, senses of belonging, etc. (Albuquerque Júnior, 2010, p. 21).

In this direction, the historian points at the indefectible place in modern literature in the wake of this type of educational venture of culture, with focus on the novel – a genre contemporary to the rise of

the modern individual –, on the Bildungsroman on biographies, and on intimate journals; all of them effectively educational genres insofar as they present themselves as vector of certain veridictive-subjectivating configurations often permeated by sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit moral conventions.

Modern literature is an educational machinery where faces, characters are built as models to be subjectified; where landscapes are built, giving nature an orderly aspect, a humanized nature, subordinates and dominated by the human eye. Literature is an educational device, a mix of knowledge and forces proposing all the time to establish frontiers, to scrutinize bodies and nature: it teaches, it educates, it forms the subjectivities and the bodies to respect certain social and cultural demarcations, so that they will not cross some borders cross some borders, they will not enter certain zones, so that they will not come close to certain spaces and to those who live in those spaces (Albuquerque Júnior, 2010, p. 23).

It is Machado de Assis who Albuquerque Júnior (2010, p. 24) chooses as “[...] one of the most obstinate and militant educators in the Brazilian literature of the 19th century”, bearing in mind the fact that he would have taken the role of *educator of the nation*, through the dissemination of civilizing guidances to the population, who managed to be introduced into the customs of Modernity vaunted at the time.

As an example, Albuquerque Júnior recalls a chronicle published in 1883 titled *Regulamento dos Bondes*. With his usual ironical tone, Machado de Assis offers a series of recommendations on the adequate manners regarding the use of the new public means of transportation at the capital city (at the time), explicitly paying attention to fashionable hygienist and urban concerns at the time: the proper disposition of bodies in said means; the proper posture for both of those who were seated and those standing; the behavior for those congested with phlegm, etc.

In the pedagogical experience performed by the literary/journalistic chronicle, there is a clear correlation between the literary intent and an instructional gesture, aimed at a double strike: the educational edification of each (the individuals) and everyone (the population). This is an irrefutable example, in our opinion, of what is an object for social educationalization scholars, to whom

[...] this increasing attention paid to the educational sphere was also conceived in order to reach a moral elevation of the people [...] This still is the case for the 20th century, throughout which moral and ideological coercion of the individual was replaced by a justification from the point of view of the development of the self (Depaepe; Smeyers, 2016, p. 755).

In the historical period between the Machadian century and our time, it is a fact that the radius of action for writers has seen transformations of various types, resulting, in our view, in an educational hy-

petrophy without precedent, to the point of igniting, paradoxically, a significant political problem: the uncertain freedom of writing. This is the argumentative direction of the present essay.

Literature, what for?

In 1976, Clarice Lispector was interviewed by three fellow writers. Amid the several topics discussed, two stood out: invitations for conferences and the literary awards. Regarding the first, the writer stated that, even though it was a convention of the trade, she didn't appreciate taking part in this type of event: "I am not a professional writer, because I only write when I want to" (Lispector, 2011d, p. 155). About the second topic, Clarice shows a clear lack of appreciation for awards, considering that they would mean something foreign to the meanders of the writing activity. She also formulated some disconcerting judgement about literature: the title of this very essay.

Lispector's ambiguity regarding the literary institution once again came up in her last interview given the following year, 1977, broadcast on TV Cultura (Lispector, 2011a). After being questioned on her favorite pieces of writing, Clarice chose two: *O ovo e a galinha e Mineirinho*. On the latter, the writer offered her indignation about the police murdering a famous criminal at the time with 13 shots, when, according to her, only one would have been enough. For the author, it was a matter of showing off the cockiness and the desire to kill.

The reverberations of this episode in Clarice are described as follows, in the original short story:

But there is something that, if hearing the first and second shots brings me relief and safety, the third makes me alert, the fourth brings me unrest, the fifth and the sixth cover me in shame, the seventh and the eighth I hear with my heart racing in horror, for the ninth and the tenth my mouth is quivering, in the eleventh I say God's name in shock, the twelfth makes me call my brother. The thirteenth murders me – because I am the other. Because I want to be the other. This justice which watches over my sleep, I forswear it, humiliated for need it. Meanwhile, I sleep and falsely save myself. Us, the essential fools (Lispector, 2016, p. 386-387).

Beyond a clear scorn for this blazing social issue, some notion of justice seems to mobilize the author, by sizing the repercussions of social violence on her own existence: "Mineirinho has lived the anger for me, while I kept calm" (Lispector, 2016, p. 388).

In the 1977 dialogue, the TV Cultura interviewer questions her in search, we presume, of some social usefulness for literature:

– To what extent can Clarice Lispector's work, regarding the specific case of Mineirinho, change the order of things?

- It changes nothing... It changes nothing... I write without hope of my writing changing anything. It changes nothing.
- So why keep writing, Clarice?
- Do I know? Because deep down we don't want to change things. We want to blossom one way or another, don't we? (Lispector, 2011a, p. 179).

Both passages involving Clarice were selected here with the purpose of creating a possible debate about the counter(effects) of literary practices, especially when they are instilled with an edifying vocation, through an alleged humanization of readers-citizens, resulting in opposing effects and, moreover, reluctant to forego, one way or another, what the author claims. This is the troublesome horizon of the present essay.

Said edifying vocation of literature can be seen, for instance, in a famous text by Antonio Candido (2004), where the literary reading features as a right for each and every one. According to Candido, the immersion in literary works is deemed as an *incompressible good*, guarantor of the spiritual integrity of the readers, once it humanizes individuals as they become aware of the reality around them. Namely:

By *humanization* I understand (since I have been talking so much about it) the process which confirms, in mankind, those aspects that we deem essential, such as the exercise of reflection, the acquisition of knowledge, the good disposition towards the other person, the refinement of emotions, the ability to pervade life's problems, the sense of beauty, the perception of the complexity of the worlds and of the beings, the cultivation of humor, [...] in short, [that which] makes us more understanding and open towards nature, society, our neighbor (Candido, 2004, p. 180).

For the critic, furthermore, the literary reading allows the readers a double intent: to tame their own internal disorder, keeping the balance both mentally and emotionally, as well as correctly visualizing the external disorder, outlining to oneself a view of the world. Such is the eminently humanizing character of the experience with literature.

Another scholar who undertook to size the role of literature was Antoine Compagnon (2009). In his inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France*, he resumes the outlines of literary fruition since, according to him, its strength would be becoming even more scarce in face of a series of complicating factors: the vicissitudes of school didacticism; the crisis of literature in the press; the spreading of digital culture; at last, the technocracy of contemporary times. To this end, he posits a historical *overview* about the roles attributed to literature, which culminates in the *horrifying edge of the modern* (Compagnon, 2009, p. 41), embodied in the denying of any power to literature beyond some inward-looking. In addition, there is the fact that the literary practice would not have always served honorific purposes.

Literature wanted to respond by neutralizing and trivializing of the harm done by its long coexistence with authority, and initially with Nation-states whose emergence it helped. After the United States, France was overtaken by the resentment against literature, seen as the exercise of a domination. Inverting the idea of the Century of Lights, it is increasingly perceived as a manipulation, and more as liberation anymore (Compagnon, 2009, p. 44).

Objecting to such nihilistic view, Compagnon suggests reinstating the powers of literature, emphasizing the relevance attributed to them by the studies on cultural history and moral philosophy. From the latter he sustains the re-establishment of the notion of the literary reading, since it would contribute not only to an ethical formation of the individual, but also to the framing of the actions aimed towards the other; a double obligation, to be more precise.

By the same standard, Tzvetan Todorov (2009) bets on the moral potentiality of reading novels, notwithstanding it guarantees both the recognition of otherness and the respect for it:

What a novel gives us is not a new knowledge, but a new ability to communicate with different beings from ourselves; in this sense, they participate more of the moral than of the science. The ultimate horizon of this experience is not truth, but love, supreme form of human connection (Todorov, 2009, p. 81).

Candido's, Compagnon's and Todorov's understandings consist of indexes – as we see them, as legitimate as they are inflated – of the circulation of literary discourse in the reference points of the present, the repercussions of which occur directly on the practices of reading and, especially, of writing. It is an apprehension very distinct from the form operated by Michel Foucault, with which this essay is aligned.

Foucault and Literature

In 1975, retrospectively taking the use he had made of literature in his own studies thus far, Foucault (2006a) outlines a different analytical perspective, coming from a genealogical mindset.

In order to learn what literature is, it is not its internal structures that I wish to study. First, I would like to understand the movement, the small process, through which a type of nonliterary discourse, neglected, forgotten as soon as delivered, enters the literary field. What is going on there? What is unleashed? How is this discourse modified in its efforts by the fact that it is seen as literary? (Foucault, 2006a, p. 63).

Based on the premise that there wouldn't be texts in which history has decided to deposit its most lasting or admirable elements, the Foucauldian leap deflects the ambition to establish an alleged redeeming essence of literature. That is what Foucault (1987) does in *Discipline*

and *Punish*, by detecting the ideological effect of crime literature of the 19th century, responsible for the blocking in popular memory, through the aesthetic elaboration of crime and, with that, the naturalization of police action. Or, in *The History of Sexuality I* (Foucault, 1988), where modern literature would have had its genesis in the disciplinary praxis of making one tell the truth about sexuality and, through it, making one confess the alleged, not accessible truth of the subject.

The Life of Infamous Men (Foucault, 2003) follows the same argumentative axis by placing literature inside a new discursive order where the quotidian, by means of a *proto-police* justice of the king, should become known in detail. In the interview *Madness, literature and society*, Foucault (1999a) brings forth yet another important unfolding: occluding the transgressive power of literature. Coopted by the bourgeois writing system, it would have transmuted the subversion into something not dangerous anymore, that is, something expected, but soon forgiven and immediately absorbed.

The very notion that literary language would be self-related – the *cutting edge of modern* Compagnon refers to – is abandoned in the genealogical point of the Foucauldian trajectory. It is a matter of keeping away from the idea that in the literary world there would be exceptional deeds, depriving it, therefore, from the status of *general casing for all the other discourses* (Foucault, 2006a).

Thereafter, we will no longer see Foucault creating analyses on literary works, as he did on *Raymond Roussel* (Foucault, 1999b). In the past, those that had accompanied and, in a certain way, tinted his early intellectual projects, leave the stage, leading Roberto Machado (2000) to announce the *decline of literature* in Foucauldian works. Both in his new researches and in the retrospectives he will make of his journey, Foucault will leave almost completely behind his previous ideas about the literary field.

In the wake of the Foucauldian approach for this theme, it would be a matter of discontinuing *literature* as a sematic unit so that it can be addressed as a set of practices where discursive forces of various types – works, critic, theories, teaching, as well as an infinity of hybrid texts – intertwine. Hence the understanding of literature not as a *universal* whose genesis would lie in a specific object, but, precisely, as the concrete uses made of it, that allow it to take certain ever-changing space-time configurations. In other words, these are the discursive conditions that enable the practice to which we attribute the designation of literature to exist and function.

In this respect, we must consider it neither as a text genre, not as a trove of classics; but we cannot consider it a stylistic awareness of certain individuals either, or even an entity of language. Therefore, the literature we are dealing with here is not the same of critics, of scholars, of the literary artists or even of teachers, although it does not antagonize those.

Thus, we subscribe to an analytical perspective of literature along with the general notion of discourse, such as elaborated by Foucault (1996), which implies, roughly speaking, placing it in its practical dimension, far from any founding Metaphysics; given that the object under review would not exist in a germinal or inanimate state (Foucault, 2011). By doing so, we refrain from conceiving it as an independent structure from the subjects, which would be formulated and carried out from its own rules.

Taken in its empirical concreteness and, strictly speaking, in its own multifaceted exteriority, literature is portrayed as a discursive machinery which enables the production and circulation of certain policies related to writing; a machinery which encompasses at least three realms. First, institutions such as the editing system and the university, responsible for the appreciation and for the selection of works considered exemplary (Foucault, 2006a). Second, the elaboration of knowledges by means of literary theories, with their canonical objects and concepts: oeuvre, author, tradition, influence, literary quality, etc. And to finalize this triangle, there emerges an arrangement not only of positions, but also of processes of subjectifying carried by the individuals in this specific area: writers on one side; readers on the other; critics and scholars between them. This dispersive set of institutions, knowledges and subjectifying processes – not assuming that one scope precedes the others or prevails over them – conforms the opportunity for certain texts to function as literary texts, making readers relate to them differently from the way they would do with nonliterary texts.

In this framework, literature loses its standing as an exception, no longer possessing a distinction which would grant it any kind of epistemological privilege. That is to say, it becomes reputed, just like any discursive formulation, in the terms of power-knowledge which have historically made into a shared discourse or, in its materiality, a set of practices. Therefore, literature is no longer seen as pure language or counter-discourse, but as an enunciating field where forces of creation and submission that lurk the writing experience collide.

The Writer's Social Role: from Hero to Expert in Writing

The 20th century has witnessed remarkable discursive changes regarding the social role of the writer. This theme is approached by Leyla Perrone-Moisés (2011) by evoking the conferences given in 1840 by the Scottish scholar Thomas Carlyle, *The Hero as a Man of Letters*—possibly the first systematized discussion of a certain magnanimity granted to the literary. About authors such as Dante e Shakespeare, Carlyle said (apud Perrone-Moisés, 2011, p. 252):

A writer must be considered the most important of the modern people; [...] The writer's role is the same those attributed to the Prophet, the Priest and the Divinity in past eras [...]. The contemporary society offers difficult conditions to a writer, from both the moral and the mate-

rial standpoints; however, it should recognize the writer's importance and give them the governance of nations; [...] the Man-of-Letters-Hero is not victorious, but a fallen hero.

It is also a literary life connected to the image of a hero that Walter Benjamin (1991) discusses in his essays about Baudelaire; even though, in a certain sense, this was a twisted hero. Perrone-Moisés sees here the first announcement of the decline of an ideal, since a missionary, ascetic, philosophical or, at the limit, tragic way of living no longer has anything to do with the lives of contemporary writers:

Writing does not intimidate anybody anymore. Publishing is no longer an object of metaphysical and existential doubt, it is only a matter of finding an editor, of editing independently, or getting the text on the internet. [...] Being successful is, mostly, a matter of print run (Perrone-Moisés, 2011, p. 254).

It would seem that the former heroes of literature would be all dead, and the conditions for heroism would now be inexistent. This point of view is shared by Lars Iyer (2012). The British author perceives different temporalities for writers' supposed striking existence. In the already very distant first, there are the mountain writers, isolated from social interaction. More than the work, what mattered the most to them was a kind of experience oscillating between the sacred and the philosophical.

At a later moment, according to Iyer, the writer would have given up the habit of living in the heights. Living in the woods, he would have intertwined the spiritual experience of the mountains with the mundane interaction of the cities: "He gathered crowds, stirred up minds, caused scandals, participated in the political scene, and in duels, as well as instigated revolutions" (Iyer, 2012, p. 155-156).

Then, cities would be populated by writers, who would begin to take up the literary circuit, working for publishing houses, universities, or the advertising industry, depending on the need. This way, we would have reached a time when a melancholic aporia would rule over anyone who wanted to write:

Now you sit at your desk, dreaming of Literature, skimming the Wikipedia page about the 'Novel' as you snack on salty treats and watch cat and dog videos on your phone. You post to your blog, and you tweet the most profound things you can think to tweet, you labour over a comment about a trending topic, trying to make it meaningful. You whisper the names like a devotional, *Kafka*, *Lautréamont*, *Bataille*, *Duras*, hoping to conjure the ghost of something you scarcely understand, something preposterous and obsolete that nevertheless preoccupies your every living day. And you find yourself laughing in spite of yourself, laughing helplessly at yourself, laughing to the verge of tears (Iyer, 2012, p. 156).

If Iyer is right in his inquiries, it will also be correct to assume the disappearing of the writer's image as someone who stands out from the masses: and ending motivated by a series of factors in the wake of the introduction of the logic of the market into the world of letters, through the economic-publishing rules and the professionalization of the writer. To that we add the popularization of the means of publication, facilitated by the virtual world, which has created opportunities for the rise of a throng of anonymous writers.

Both Perrone-Moisés (2011) and Iyer (2012) resonate a recurrent discussion among the literary milieu: that the end of heroic existences would mean the end of literature itself and of the great oeuvres. In this regard, despite painting a critical picture, Perrone-Moisés restricts herself to subsuming such prognostics to the list of many and never achieved endings foretold at the turn of the 20th century, considering it only a table of contents for historical mutations, of which literature would not have been spared.

Iyer, for his part, faces this question in the following terms: we would live today *literary-sick*, not writing anything which would not nostalgically refer to its ghost, and regurgitating a *kitsch* writing, fooled by the idea that we would be converting a corpse into a puppet, trapping us in the past. Offering it an afterword, thus, would be presenting a healthy exit and an opportunity to write again, even if something else rather than literature.

Lost heroes forever or not, the fact is we find ourselves far from an indifference towards the fascination caused by artistic lives, namely literary lives. Hence the reason for questioning if we wouldn't be looking at a process of constant renewal in the social distinction between the literary men and literature, bearing in mind the proliferation, by leaps and bounds, of writers' biographies, biographical motion pictures, interviews for the press, media appearances, etc.

By putting themselves in a position of exteriority towards the common way of life of the individuals, one can justify, we assume, the supplementary interest in these characters. This is how it is often attributed a status of exception to the writers of our time, whose countenance always seems to reveal some flicker of genius.

In fact, a distinctive experience seems to emanate from the socially shared images about the present-day literary; an experience considered as rare, magical to some extent. Roland Barthes (2009) had already highlighted the extravagant character of the writer's image, often resulting in mystification.

To publicly assign the writer a very carnal body, revealing that he loves dry white wine and his steak rare, is equivalent to turn our eyes into even more miraculous and divine in essence products of his art. The details of his everyday life not only do not become closer, not throw light on the nature of his inspiration either, but, on the contrary, it is the mythical singularity of his condition that

the writer exposed in these confidences. For there can only be attributed to a super-human nature the existence of very important beings who wear blue pajamas in the very instant when they manifest as universal conscience or even profess their love for the 'Sabóia cheese', with the same voice they use to proclaim the next 'Phenomenology of the Ego' (Barthes, 2009, p. 35).

Spotted under this light, the writers would have their lives more and more scrutinized, leading the biographical narratives, *lato sensu*, to fight for space with their works. Thereby, the fictional work would allegedly have its feet planted on the real, that is, on the writer's concrete life: the remarkable biographical episodes, the books he read and that influenced him, the people who have been part of his education, etc. Following this ideology, two types of discursive production stand out: biographies and interviews (Arfuch, 2010).

On one side, there is the meticulous work of archiving their lives, carried by archivists, biographers, and, in some cases, the writers themselves. It is a matter of gathering, selecting, organizing, preserving and offering these documents to the public, from which it would be possible to create other discourses, especially, biographies. Concerning oneself with the life next to – or, on the limit, before – the work, the biographic undertaking relies on of prolonged exposure of the *modi vivendi* of artists, so that it would be difficult to imagine nowadays some author about whom we couldn't know episodes or peculiar biographical traits. One example Clarice Lispector herself, poked at by the biographic assault, as one can observe in Borelli (1981), Ferreira (1999), Gotlib (1995; 2004), and Moser (2009).

On the other side, there are interviews given by artists, seen as coordinated gestures between journalists and the literary in the interest of dissecting the latter. Here it is the living writer, in person, put into speech. For this reason, we choose dedicate more time to this kind of production.

The history of such discursive front began in Brazil in 1905, through an initiative by João do Rio. Signing up to a trend already attested in Europe, the chronicler from Rio de Janeiro went in search of testimonies from the literary for the *Gazeta de Notícias*. Later, such testimonies were compiled in a book, the first of this kind, under the title *O momento literário* (*The Literary Moment*, Rio, s/d). This work, as well as the myriad of testimonies given by writers that are broadcast to this day, would not be possible, at all, if interviewers weren't able to rely on the consent and even the disposition of interviewees in publicly sharing their lives.

Thereby, a new discursive front was born, from the meeting between journalistic and literary practices: the public voice of the writer. The readership will no longer turn only to what the literary chose to offer through his work. Henceforth, opinions about a range of topics will become more important and, if not replace, they at least fight for space with what has been written. The relation between the writer and the

world is no longer, so to speak, a simple impersonal testimony, it becomes a proposition in the first person; so that the writer will no longer be seen as distant and enigmatic social character, even marginalized sometimes. Instead, the rise of the writers' public voice is celebrated precisely as the collapse of the ivory towers where they would traditionally hide.

It is a fact that writers, even before the zest of interviews, would already participate in the world of newspapers, sometimes writing for them, sometimes publishing feuilletons, or even contributing to a rising literary genre: the newspaper chronicle. But if they were already part of the journalistic field, the new element brought by the turn of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th is the circulation not only of their work, but of their very presence as public figures.

João do Rio's gesture will repeat itself in the history of Brazil. Since the first undertaking, until our current days, curiosity about writers has taken up space in printed media, as well as – later – on the radio, television and virtual platforms. This is why it is possible to admit that testimonies given by the literary have become prestigious among journalist writings in the course of the previous century. This can be attested by the following paragraphs.

Approximately over thirty years after the testimonies in *O momento literário* were published, another compilation, *A Academia de Letras na intimidade* (The Intimacy of the Academy of Letters, Galvão, 1937). In the beginning of the 1940s, in São Paulo, José Benedicto Silveira Peixoto (1940; 1941), journalist and writer, published the first two volumes of *Falam os escritores* (Writers Talk), soon to be followed by two large investigations published by *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper (Cavaleiro, 1944; Neme, 1945). In 1956, *República das Letras* (Republic of Letters, Senna, 1968) came about, a work of reference compiling, in testimonies offered by scholars of the Portuguese language, long interviews with characters known to the readership of that time, such as Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Manuel Bandeira e Graciliano Ramos.

During the same decade, the 1950s, a group of young American writers created a magazine which would become a milestone in the history of contemporary literature: the *Paris Review*. In its tenth anniversary, the first compilation of these testimonies was published in the book *Writers at Work*. In Brazil, its first translation, *Escritores em Ação* (Cowley, 1968), was published in 1968. Later on, by the end of the 1980s, the first and second volumes of *Os escritores: as históricas entrevistas da Paris Review* (Os Escritores, 1988; Os Escritores, 2, 1989) were published.

As of the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a journalistic and editorial movement not only more constant, but also more diverse. The circulation of interviews by writers has increased considerably with literary supplements in newspapers, magazines and radio shows.

In May 1968, *Manchete*, one of these large circulation magazines, started publishing a series of interviews titled *Diálogos possíveis com Clarice Lispector* (Possible Dialogues with Clarice Lispector). The writer

engaged, in the course of a year and a half, 56 testimonies from scientists, athletes, politicians and artists. Six years later, *De corpo inteiro* (Full Body, Lispector, 1975) would be published, compiling some testimonies obtained previously, among which we can find eleven Brazilian writers. After a break in her journalistic activities, Lispector would only go back to the interviews in 1976-77 period, this time, for the *Fatos & Fotos: Gente* magazine. This second run, in turn, would result in other testimonies, five of which given by writers and included in the book *Entrevistas/Clarice Lispector* (Interviews, Lispector, 2007).

As well as a large number of books offering panels of active writers, there have also emerged authors' compilations, created from the estate of literary figures and from specialized research, encompassing illustrious names in the literary field. In this direction, some highlights have been the collection *Encontros* (Meetings), edited by Revista Azougue, compiling testimonies by Vinicius de Moraes (Cohn; Santos, 2007), Roberto Piva (Cohn, 2009), Manoel de Barros (Gismonti; Müller, 2010), Carlos Drummond de Andrade (Ribeiro, 2011) and, once again, Clarice Lispector (Rocha, 2011), among others.

Thus, the 20th century has witnessed the consolidation of a specific front of discursive production about writers, in the wake of which there has been the double movement of dissemination of nonliterary accounts by writers and their appropriation by the readers.

But in the end one can ask the question: which are reasons for celebration our culture has to offer, for over a century, regarding what an author thinks, says, does, beyond their own body of work? Why does the microphone end up competing with the pen? What is the possible justification for exposing the privacy of the living or disturbing the rest of the dead?

Even if the writer's voice has become decisive when it comes to occupying the public sphere, another intervening element comes up when he or she chooses to talk to the masses: the writer is heard as the bearer of a supposed knowledge about life, about the world, about the present, etc. To some extent, the writer is still heard either as a prophet, or as a master of the existence.

Going even further: if reading the works, as the enthusiasts of literature preach as pedagogy, has the magic power of humanizing us and making us more aware, supposed kindred effects would be at stake in the production, circulation and reception of public manifestation from writers, considering a certain lack of distinction between the body of work and the life operated in such context, as stated by Leonor Arfuch (2010) through the media dissemination. Thus, in the pages of newspapers, teaching textbooks, in the marquees of the literary events, they are quick to fulfill an educational role in a world which seems eager to equip itself with guidances about a myriad of things.

From this perspective, another – even more centrifugal – range of the public appearance of the writer points to the social ideology around the writing practices exogenous to the literary perimeter, with direct

impact on the teaching of writing itself. Through the manifestations of writers about their craft, everyone could have access to which techniques, schedules, and tricks the literary make use of in order to create their works. This way, their *creative processes* could reveal not only the backstage of any given work, but also its alleged conditions for being. Furthermore, but hearing about the “how did I do” from the writers, both those with literary aspirations and those aiming at learning to write well could, in theory, obtain fruitful teachings. Some examples are the initiatives by José Domingos de Brito (2007a; 2007b), titled *Como escrevo?* and *Por que escrevo?* (How Do I Write?; Why Do I Write?), as well as the three volumes of *Viver & escrever* (Living; Writing; Steen, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c), and the testimonies gathered and compiled by Giovanni Ricciardi (1991, 2008a; 2008b; 2009).

Keeping the same pattern, to the interests that incite the public appearance of a writer there would be a correspondence, in our opinion, of three educational demands: 1) how to read the works, paying attention to the possible relationships they would have with the reality witnessed by the authors; 2) how to live a life along the lines of the lives of the literary, about which hover the notions of freedom, criticism, creativity, etc.; 3) how to write as the authors, known as authorized keepers of the good writing.

So, it is in our best interest to point to the fact how writers address the regular audience would result in a strong social tutelage of the writing practice. Of course, one could claim that such attribution would also fall upon other specialists, such as grammarians, journalists, and teachers. And nothing could be said against such legitimacy. However, in the figure of properly literary writing practices that we believe there is—and emanates from—a social and decisive authorization, translated not only by the free dissemination of the literary discourse, but also through the persuasive force such dissemination carries.

Linked to the field of artistic practices, whose action is often proclaimed as exterior or contrary to the relation of the powers the be, the literary *establishment* seems to rely on a kind of ethical-political safeguard, given that it is primarily connected to something originating in a creative subject. A subjectivity either insurgent, or demiurge, always extemporary. Ultimately, a free subjectivity or, better yet, free from the situational restriction of the historical present.

Regarding the current discursivity on literary writing, however, it is up to question: to which other practice one could assign the currency of libertarian, other than the one which answers by the artistic quality? Writing which also imposes a condition as emancipated from grammar as transcendent when it comes to journalism, as well as oblivious to the reductionism of teaching.

For that matter, the distinctive features of said writing machinery are well discussed by Barthes (2007) in the essay *Authors and Writers* (*Escritores e escreventes*). The latter would use this term—whether through teaching or testimony—as a means to communicate a certain

truth to the world. The former, absorbing the “[...] *reason why* of the world in a *how to write*” (Barthes, 2007, p. 32), would open ambiguities that challenge the real as a question, never as an answer. Said challenging potency, however, would have been entirely absorbed by the literary institution.

This is how the myth of *fine writing*: the writer is a salaried priest, the keeper, both respectable and insignificant, of the sanctuary of the great French Word, a king National Treasure, sacred merchandise, produced, taught, consumed and exported in the framework of a sublime economy of values (Barthes, 2007, p. 34).

It can be concluded, then that *fine writing* would be the quasi-absolute prerogative of authors, who end up taking a key role in intricate network of discursive rules outlining the means of appropriating the writing gesture in our society. In other words, it concerns what we see here as pertaining to the order of the unwavering management of writing, seconded by diffuse imperatives ruling different subjects, knowledges and institutions, including the school work.

Such horizon is considered troublesome by us, since it is essentially dividing, and takes roots in a present moment where, on one side, differentiating powers of writing in general are proclaimed; and, on the other, the difficulty or even lack of the fine writing are routinely declared. Hence the unavoidable pit between the literary wholesale and the school retail, the latter marked by infinite hardships of the writing labor.

Beyond the Divide Authors *Versus* Writers: Repercussions

Haunted by so many embarrassments of writing, we would all – connected to the educational world or not – by riddled by the fear of writing. Reverential fear towards authors, that’s a given, or what has been made of them. Fear in face of their creative processes. Fear of their scholarship, of their ingenuity, of their innovative potency. Fear, in short, in the presence of a ghost-writing, arising, perhaps, from some secret instance of those who already write, and only theirs. Occasion for intimate fictions, almost, incarnate, the voices of authors have come to haunt regular texts.

Foucault (2006b; 1996) had already pointed out said effect in *O que é um autor?* (*What Is an Author?*) and *A ordem do discurso* (*The Order of Discourse*). According to the philosopher, the author function, especially strong in the order of the literary discourse, would both exert a form of control of the senses possibly brought up by fiction, and command the various fates of a text: its status, its classification, its position regarding other texts, etc. We are talking about two effects that result from giving name to a set of texts, securing a nexus given by the notion of individuality. For this reason, it won’t be hard to find in school and university classrooms, textual exegeses that prioritize biographical data, historical context, ideological projects, etc. The work of writing

gets muddled, thus, with the representations of writing, resulting in a range of uncertain effects.

In face of so many voices alleged wielding the *fine* writing, the managing of the word couldn't be confused with a unencumbered gesture, leaving the common public with the task of adhering to a specific position: of a mere diligent reader. Hence the canonic voice, often reified by the school logic: reading as a substitute for writing, and not as its raw material. Carrying this reputation, especially in the school perimeter, writing finds itself transforming into a Herculean operation, reserved to the few keepers of an alleged talent for it. For our part, we understand that such cultural ability – in the opposite direction of recurring understanding of being an extreme complex and costly dexterity – could be carried out in an undaunted manner and, thereby, be unfolded in a myriad of possible accomplishments.

If the handling of writing were to be arbitrated in this manner, it would leave us a mere compositive attribution. Barthes (2007, p. 21) has already stated this:

The writer does not 'wrest' speech from silence, as we are told in pious literary hagiographies, but inversely, and how much more arduously, more cruelly and less gloriously, detaches a secondary language from the slime of primary languages afforded him by the world, history, his existence, in short by an intelligibility which pre-exists him, for he comes into a world full of language, and there is no reality not already classified by men: to be born is nothing but to find this code ready-made and to be obliged to accommodate oneself to it.

Then it would not be a matter of not dismissing or discrediting the double gesture of cutting-pasting. A trivial operation, not at all transcendent, such as Compagnon (1996, p. 41) sees it:

Writing is, then, always rewriting, not differing for quoting. The quote, thanks to the metonymic confusion ruling over it, is reading and writing, reading or writing is performing an act of quoting. Quoting represents the early practice of text, the basis of reading and of writing: quoting is repeating the archaic gesture of cutting-pasting, the original experience of paper, before it was the surface to inscribe the letter, the medium of the manuscript or printed text, a form linguistic meaning and communicating.

Obviously, it is not about promoting or making apology to plagiarism, but to bringing to light a key aspect of writing, whether literary or school-related: the force and the rigor contained in the exercise of rewriting the other. We advocate, then, in favor of a writing courage materialized in terms of an unobstructed and, therefore, renewed addressing of a fair will to write in all of us; fair because it is no longer in disadvantage or subalternity. To this end, Clarice Lispector is, once again, the one that sheds lights in our thoughts.

In the last interview given by the author, in 1977, there is a difficult encounter, which always seems on the verge of crumbling. Whether it is in the eyes of the writer, a little harsh, or in her dry answers, some tiredness and exasperation can be found.

The same Clarice had already stated that “[...] the most authentic answer to almost everything you have asked me would be: I don’t know” (Lispector, 2011c, p. 30). The same Clarice who had suffered, since the beginning of her career, due to the fact that “[...] many people think so, but I am not the boogeyman. But I do seem doomed to live alone—go to bed early, go to the movies with no one by my side. That is the price of fame” (Lispector, 2011e, p. 45). The same Clarice had said once, so candidly: “[...] when I was a child, I used to think that books were not written by people, they were like trees that grow by themselves. When I found out that behind them there was an author—then I wanted to try it myself” (Lispector, 2011b, p. 49).

The same Clarice heard from her last interviewer the following question: “[...] as you see it, what is the role of the Brazilian writer nowadays?”, to which she briefly retorted: “To talk as little as possible” (Lispector, 2011a, p. 179).

Not long before this final statement, it is José Castello, journalist and aspiring writer, who tried to interview the author, downcast by the existence. The narrative of this meeting (Castello, 1999) sums up the main elements of the relationship between literature, writing, and education that, throughout the present essay, we have tried to put into question.

During his youth days, Castello had sent a short story to be appraised by the author. Time goes by, and without hope of receiving any answer,

[...] the phone rings and a scratchy, deep voice, says her name: ‘Clarrice Lispectorrr’. She dives right into the subject. ‘I am calling to talk about your short story’, she continues. The voice, previously uncertain, becomes firm: ‘I have only one thing to say: you are a very frrrrrightened man’, and the Rs in this ‘frrrrrightened’ still scratch my memory. The deafening silence that ensued makes me believe that Clarice had hung up the phone without saying good-bye. But soon her voice reemerges: ‘You are very frrrrrightened. And nobody can write if they are afraid’ (Castello, 1999, p. 19).

Years later, the *frrrrrightened* author, now a journalist, is assigned with the task of asking Clarice for a statement who, at the time, has announced to have closed the doors to the press. Castello calls her and, surprisingly, the author agrees to grant him an interview. After a series of obstacles, she welcomes him into her home. And immediately recognizes the young author and recalls exactly what she had told him all those years ago.

‘So you are the author of that short story’. ‘She is the author here, I am only a reporter – so this observation shocks me. Even so, elated, I say yes. ‘That’s me’. I am trying to take the observation as a kindness when she shoots: ‘I didn’t like your short story. You are too frightened to be a writer’ (Castello, 1999, p. 22).

About to begin the interview, and while the reporter is using a small recorder, the author has a kind of spasm, succeeded by “[...] long wails, laments stripped of sense [...]. Clarice continues to twirl in a nonsensical ballet, arms hanging, in helix, dragged by an invisible wind, the face shattered” (Castello, 1999, p. 22-23). Then the author commands that the recorder, target of intense and, to the eyes of the journalist, incomprehensible disgust, be immediately confiscated and removed from the premises. “Her eyes, as beautiful as ever, are filled with tears and despair” (Castello, 1999, p. 23).

Alone in a room full of paintings of the writer’s countenance, Castello doesn’t know what to do. So he waits. After some time, Clarice comes back. The interview begins at last. The questions asked by the journalist stick to platitudes, which results in scrambled answers. To the questions, Clarice reciprocates some disdain. Then the interviewer fires:

‘Why do you write?’, I ask, in one of my worst moments. Displeased, Clarice frowns. She gets up, threatens to go to the kitchen, but pauses and reacts: ‘I am going to answer with another question: – Why do you drink water?’. And she stares at me, angry, ready to shut down our conversation then and there. ‘Why do I drink water?’, I repeat, trying to buy time. Then I answer: ‘Because I am thirsty’. It would have been better not to say anything. Then Clarice laughs. Not a laughter of relief, but of refrained anger. And tells me: ‘That is, you drink water so you won’t die’. Now she seems to be talking only to herself: ‘Well me too: I write in order to stay alive’ (Castello, 1999, p. 24).

From the failed interview, a brief and intense friendship is born, permeated by timely meetings that have deeply touched Castello. Soon after, Clarice would be diagnosed with cancer; she passed away in December 9, 1977. Her friend came to the funeral, and

[...] on my way back, trying to evoke the fragile moments we spent together, I recall a sentence, a terrible sentence, that I had forgotten: ‘Understand one thing: writing has nothing to do with literature’, I think she said to me. But did she really, or could it have been only what was left of what she couldn’t say? And how would that be? If it wasn’t writing, what would literature be? What breach was that, which Clarice, filling me with courage, had opened beneath my feet? (Castello, 1999, p. 27).

Writing – any writing – such as courage; some freedom, perhaps.

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