

Into the un-limits of the Word in Manoel de Barros: minor literature and childhood

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ABSTRACT – Into the un-limits of the Word in Manoel de Barros: minor literature and childhood. In order to enhance the becoming-nomad that pulsates in schools and subversifies the curricula, the article makes use of the concepts of minor literature, minor language, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, nomadism, molar lines, molecular lines and lines of flight, smooth and striated spaces, and nomadic war machine (Deleuze, Guattari and Parnet), and of uselessness, un-utensil, childhood, invention, un-limit of the word and *manoelês* idiolect (Barros), in order to problematize the concepts of ludic, play and seriousness, and to foster possible meaning productions from the babbling and stuttering of 2nd grade children in their process of reinventing a foreign language within a major language, in texts produced in a reading workshop.

Keywords: Curricula. Childhood. Literature. Manoel de Barros.

RESUMO – Deslimites da Palavra em Manoel de Barros: literatura menor e infância. Com o intuito de potencializar o devir-nômade que pulsa nas escolas e subversa os currículos, o artigo lança mão dos conceitos de literatura menor, língua menor, desterritorialização, reterritorialização, nomadismo, linhas molares, moleculares e de fuga, espaços liso e estriado, e máquina de guerra nômade (Deleuze, Guattari e Parnet), e de inutilidade, in-utensílio, infância, invenção, deslimite da palavra e idioleto manoelês (Barros) com o objetivo de problematizar os conceitos de lúdico, brincadeira e seriedade, e provocar possíveis produções de sentido a partir dos balbucios e gaguejos de crianças do 2º Ano em seu processo de reinvenção de uma linguagem estrangeira dentro de uma língua maior, em textos produzidos em uma oficina de leitura.

Palavras-chave: Currículos. Infância. Literatura. Manoel de Barros.

Inventions from an Uncertain Manoel

Manoel Wenceslau Leite de Barros was born in 1916, in Beco da Marinha, on the riverside of Cuiaba river, in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. He published his first book, *Poemas concebidos sem pecado* [*Poems conceived without sin*] in 1937, but public recognition was only achieved in the 1980s, with increasing importance since then. Manoel has built an innovative language, full of neologisms, while presenting the Portuguese language in its deepest and most primitive roots. His work sprouts from a Latin American, Brazilian wetland stronghold; from a geographically peculiar region that represents a stronghold of environmental preservation: the swampland of Mato Grosso in its invaded nature, like “[...] lost innocence” (Albuquerque, 2013, p. 87).

In the poems dedicated to his multiple childhoods, Manoel de Barros presents us with an invented biography which is, according to him, much more than true, for the author does not consider invention as a lie. The poet’s autobiographical inventions serve to enlarge the world. Between inventions of his own story and reinventions of language, the poet helps us to better understand childhood, through the reinventions of our own childhoods in the detours that his poems invite us to walk along.

A Minor Writer between Uselessnesses and Fabulations

One of the detours suggested by Manoel is made clear in his concept of poetry: “Poetry is the virtue of the useless”¹ (Barros apud Janela da Alma, 2001, n. p.), as he provided us with in his speech for the documentary *Janela da Alma* [*Window of the soul*]. The author claims that Rabelais is the author of his own statement, as if to invent an authoritative argument for his creation. And by stating in the documentary *Só dez por cento é mentira* [*Only ten percent is lie*] that the useless serves only for poetry, since poetry is not described, but discovered, found (Barros apud Só dez..., 2009), the poet asserts that he has invented a unique useless place of his own, a room inside his house where he invents verses and craftworks, where he subversifies and subverts through his manuscripts and his un-limits of the word.

In our modern pursuit of the usefulness of things, we seem to have tied ourselves to the concept of invention as an act that almost necessarily results in the making of useful things. However, ludicity and imaginary are also constituted through inventions, reinventions, subverses, subversions, creations, re-creations and recreations (it is worth mentioning the inseparable relationship between the words re-creation and recreation, which in French have similar spelling: *re-création* and *récréation*, as Foucault reminds us (1969, p. 18)).

The ludic and imaginary aspects are present in the jokes, creations, re-creations and recreations of Manoel de Barros’s *image-word*, not as transcendence, but as what the poet imagines, invents, *trans-views* from the world he invents and transforms. “The imagination

that *transviews*, transfigures the world, makes another world” (Barros apud Janela da Alma, 2001, n. p.). The emergence of the subject occurs, therefore, as a singular impersonality that invents through fabulations, through *word childishing*.

According to Rose (2001, p. 146), the best way to view subjects “[...] is as ‘agencies’ that metamorphose or change their properties as they expand their connections”. Thus, our focus should be less on what language means than on what it does, potentiates, produces, on the agency that the speech exerts. Agency “[...] does not refer to language productivity, but to sign regimes, to an expression machine whose variables determine the use of language elements” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, p. 26).

The fabulation is, therefore, becoming-other, involving passages in metamorphic imbalance between distinct bodies and different forms of existence (Bogue, 2011), it is experimentation in reality through inventions of characters and actions in their sociopolitical aspect and by means of interventions in the universe of their various environments (natural, material, social, institutional and political). Fabulation demands, thus, the invention of both a projective mythography of images that will come to life, and the invention of a people to come in the collective and political agency of a minor literature that will eventually be effected through the deterritorialization of language (Bogue, 2011).

The deterritorialization promoted by the minor literature is immediately social and political for it belongs to “[...] a language that a minority constructs within a major language” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 16). A minor writer acts as a culture physician by politically and collectively managing perceptions and affects, and by transforming the signs of the world through his work. In minor literature, everything is political and takes collective value. Thus, a minor writer acts through his minor literature, as a sociopolitical practice, mediating the collective voice, reinventing the language, revealing a foreign language within his own language in the stumbling, babbling, and stuttering promoted in the established and conventional language which institutes and advocates the consolidated and dominant values. The style and aesthetics that are present in the stuttering, stumbling and babbling of minor literature have a political function.

It is noteworthy that the adjective *minor* does not qualify certain literatures, but rather the revolutionary conditions of these literatures in the face of the so-called major, adjectiveless literature for being the first immediately social, political and collective. A minor literature socio-politically seeks the language of minorities within a major language, and is affected by a strong coefficient of deterritorialization of the major language made possible by stumbling, stuttering, babbling, playing, dreaming, and by subversions, creations and inventions of subjects living in a language that is not their own, a major language they do not yet know (or hardly know) and “[...] are forced to serve” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 19).

Manoel de Barros’s poetry presents a style that creates a foreign language in its own language, making the language stutter in colorful

words and images. A language stutter: not a speech stutter that strikes pre-existing words, but a stutter that creates and relates new words and new images. It creates an intensive, vibrating language that is typical of a language system in constant imbalance, forked by its ever-changing terms.

The creation of a foreign language within one's own language causes it to acquire a state of tension toward something that is not syntactic and does not even concern language: an *out-of-language*. The *out-of-language* arises, just as life and knowingness do, as a condition of a knowing about life. Not any kind of knowingness, but a knowingness that is not given to anyone, which escapes common sense and recognition, creating new vital possibilities, new forms of existence (Machado, 2009).

In order to understand the deterritorialization and the nomadism of Manoel's minor writing, we refer to the concepts of smooth space and striated space developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1997). According to the authors, the striated space reveals order and control, and its paths are confined to the characteristics of the space that determine them. In contrast, the smooth space is open to chaos, to nomadism, to becoming, to performing, that is, as a space of patchwork (of mixtures), which is therefore open to new sensitivities and realities.

Performative form-forces are open to experimentalism and/or to new experimentation through three main vectors: the ludic, the visual emphasis, and the excess. In this sense, the smooth space would be a nomadic space, without previously determined paths. For Deleuze and Guattari (1997), if the nomad can be called deterritorialized, it is because reterritorialization does not take place *a posteriori*, as in the case of the migrant, or by the property regime mediatized by the state apparatus, as in the case of the sedentary. In the case of the nomad, the relation with *spacetime* is always deterritorializing, since the nomad reterritorializes in one's own deterritorialization, in one's constant experimental movement that produces a deterritorialized territory.

It is important to consider that, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1997, p. 180), the two spaces can only exist by coexisting, that is, thanks to the mixtures between them, "[...] the smooth space does not stop being translated, transverted into a striated space; the striated space is constantly reversed, returned to a smooth space".

Thus, Deleuze (1997) thinks of art in its relation to becoming and, for him, becoming does not mean reaching a form: it means escaping from a dominant form. It is a movement of expression deterritorialization, it means to

Go always farther in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 19).

Poetizing, for Deleuze (1997), is to become something else, to become a foreigner to one's own self and one's own language. Thus, thinking the process of minorizing the writer means thinking the relation among the writer, the minor literature and the minor people or the missing people, since minority is a potential becoming that deviates from the model. Minor languages, existing in function of major languages, are potential agents for making the major language enter a becoming-minor, a becoming-revolutionary.

Childhoods in/from/with Manoel

Manoel de Barros's mischievousness on his childhoods are but interventions in the universe of his environments and inventions of a mythography projecting images that come to life. And it is through his "[...] verbal drawings [...]" (Barros apud Janela da Alma, 2001, n. p.), as Manoel himself states, that he seeks to place an image in the reader's view. "The image is this very race itself, it has become becoming" (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 22). In addition, the projected images that come to life through his invented mythography are but words that we lacked in the major language. In his "[...] opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor" (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 27), Manoel dates and marries several women, dies many times, listens to the color of the leaves, holds the glass of his grandfather's eye, catches the voice of a fish. Through his inventions, the poet enlarges the world. For Barros (Só dez..., 2009), "The owner of the subject matter is not the one who describes it, but the one who invents it". And regarding the set of words that the poet invents, he names it as *manoelês idiolect*, which he defines as the language of oaf and idiots.

An oaf is always someone added of a child. Oaf is a tree exception. Oaf is one who likes to talk deep nonsense with the waters. Oaf is the one who always speaks with an accent of his/her origins. It is always someone obscure of a fly. It is someone who builds his/her house with little speck. It's one who found that afternoons are part of the beauty of birds. Oaf is the one who, looking at the ground, sees a worm, being it. Oaf is a kind of sanies with dawns (Barros, 2006, n. p.).

Through the deterritorialization of language and by word child-ishing, Manoel creates a universe that is both absurd and tangible. By fertilizing words with his babbling, stammering and stumbling, the poet invents a people to come, reinventing the language of children, backland and wetland people as a path to political and collective agency. In his inventive writing, the deterritorialization of language overflows imitation which is always territorial (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986). The becoming-child that is present in the invented memories of his childhoods (Manoel de Barros states that he has always been a child and therefore only knows how to write about childhood) takes place through its wandering gait, its nomadic writing, through lines of flight

and deviations, for the becoming lives in escape. Manoel makes use of the polylingualism in his own language, making a minor use of it and opposing the oppressed aspect of the language to its oppressive aspect, finding “[...] points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 27), by which the world is *transviewed* and enlarged, the insignificant is magnified, the uselessnesses are invented and the words go through a childishening process.

In Manoel de Barros’ writing, “there is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1986, p. 26). By being attentive to the greatness of the insignificant, to the ruins, the wreckage, the uselessnesses, the rattletraps, the rust, the ground, the creeping, the childhoods, the backland and wetland people, the child, to what is minor, Manoel de Barros invents his various un-utensils, such as the creamy pliers, the device for being useless, the velvet screw, the rustling nail, the river shrinker, the dawn opener, the horizon stretcher. “Only the creeping things celestialize me” (Barros, 2001b, p. 41).

He explains the dignity that he confers to these beings and things, highlighting that, among them, the child has no voice heard to compose the legitimate discourses about her/himself. By realizing the world state of ruin, Manoel sees in language (and in childish language) the possibility of inventing another story.

In the unbeginning was the word.
Only later did the delirium of the word come.
The delirium of the word was at the beginning, there
where the
child says: **I can hear the color of the little birds.**
The child doesn’t know the word hear doesn’t work
for colors, but for sounds.
So if a child changes the function of the word, it gets de-
lirious.
Well then.
In poetry which is the voice of poets, which is the voice of
giving birth –
The word has to get delirious.
(Barros apud Vieira, 2007, p. 86, our emphasis).

And he reacts against the fact that the infant is the one who has no voice: “How not to ascend even further in the absence of the voice? (Absence of the voice is *infantia*, with *t* in Latin.) For how not to ascend to the absence of the voice – There where we can see the very fetus of the verb – yet without movement” (Barros, 2001a, p. 41).

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1986, p. 21), “children are well skilled in the exercise of repeating a word, the sense of which is only vaguely felt, in order to make it vibrate around itself”. To invent, to fable, to subversify, to subvert, to *transview*, to sense, to pre-sense. Such as the child and all those who currently live in a language that is not their own (those who do not even know, or do not yet know, or who hardly

know the major language they are forced to use), Manoel de Barros, in his many childhoods, in a deterritorializing, political, and collective agency, vaguely pre-senses the meaning of the word, making it vibrate around itself. He expands the world to the word childish, thus making the poetic word become a *word-toy*.

We draw on the poet's uselessnesses and fabulations, which, through his poetic childish inventions, causes us to expand the world in order to question how children's inventions and fabulations help us think the schools, the childhoods, the curricula, the teachers, the educational policies. How are the inventions and artistries going on schools? Do we devote time to listen to and look at the poetic mischievousness of the childhoods and teaching practices in/of schools? Thus, we seek to dive with children and teachers into the detours they make daily so as to invent the intensive life in schools, a pulsating and enchanting life. A life that is constituted in immanence and which is open to the unusual, to the extraordinary, to the fabulation.

Word Childish: towards the *word-toy*

The acts of playing, telling and reading stories and poems aloud for children constitute fun not only for children, but also for the one who proposes playing with words, telling or reading stories and poems aloud: the teacher.

However, historically and culturally, between the educator and this pleasurable and seemingly simple task, an obstacle seems to have been imposed, partly due to the fact that we have been repeatedly taught that playing is suitable for children only. As adults, we feel unauthorized to play. However, we ask ourselves, as teachers: how can we rescue the play, if not by playing it? How can we invite our students to play some new game if not by playing with them? Playing does not exist in a definition or in a guideline on how it can be done. The play exists in the process of playing. The play takes place by playing it. Besides, we all have been children before. We have experienced, in a more or less distant past, this precious period of our development in which ludicity was an instrument of socialization, learning and fun. We therefore propose that the teacher takes active part in the classroom play, whether as a player, a mediator or an instructor, but always playing.

In our society full of dichotomies, it is common to oppose play to seriousness. And since being serious is a necessary condition for work and business environments, play and imaginary are unwelcomed in this context: they must be avoided, preferably banished, removed from the adult world, the working world, the business world. Being serious at work means to perform labor with care, caring, diligence, sobriety, honesty, sincerity, correctness, importance, truth, punctuality, method. Playing, in turn, also requires care, caring, diligence, sobriety, honesty, sincerity, importance, truth, creativity, invention. There is, thus, an immense congruence between play and seriousness.

The problem seems to be in the fact that, in certain contexts, being serious is equated to being stern, frowning, severe, circumspect, and playing may denote, in certain contexts, lying, mocking, being untrue, or something unimportant. But if invention and play undeniably come together, and if invention and truth go together, since Manoel defends that all he does not invent is false, then playing requires truth.

Sticking to the first conceptions of seriousness and play and setting aside the idea of being serious as being stern, frowning, severe, and circumspect and also the idea of playing as lying, mocking, being untrue, unimportant, we set out in defense of playing and of playing with the word as a powerful insight into education.

I carry my beginnings in an *andor*²
My voice has a source addiction.
I would like to move forward to the beginning.
Get to the childishness of the words.
There where they still urinate on their legs.
Even before they are shaped by the hands.
When the child scribbles the verb to say what there is not.
Hold the sound stamen.
Be the voice of a darkened lizard.
Open an insight to the arcane
(Barros, 2001b, p. 47, our translation).

Yes, the educator is one of the only professionals who are allowed (and encouraged) to sing while performing their job, one of the very few professionals who can still tell stories and poetize while carrying out their work, in short, is one of the only ones who can still create possible detours for their educational doing through playing. Singing, narrating, playing, and poetizing represent practices that were once common to a wide range of economic activities in the most diverse cultures, and which are now extinct in most fields due to the development and consolidation of the hard lines of the professional excellence model (for which being serious also means being stern, frowning, severe, and circumspect).

We know that illness and excess often constitute lines of flight (Deleuze; Parnet, 2004) from a boundary, exit paths from a closed system (striated space). However, some usages of the ludic in the word, the same word which reaches the degree of toy in Manoel's poetry, allows us to resort to lines of flight and to flat and smooth spaces in the daily school life, subversifying and subverting spaces that are determined by prescriptive forms of the major language we are forced to use.

As children acquire language, they experience it, feel its sounds, perceive its lines, and reinvent it through playing, stuttering, scribbling, and babbling. They subvert language and subversify the world at every moment, reinventing the language and the world, and showing that while these are prior to them, they can still re-create and detour them by playing with the word. This reinvention of the world and the language, in our perspective, is a practice of resistance and re-existence. It is a way to speak of a major language by creating a minor language. It

is transiting the un-limits of the word, leading it to its childishness, inventing a language from another one which is not yet mastered. Among phonemes, graphemes, sounds, scribbles, silences, spaces, screams and contours, children stutter, scribble, have fun with the uselessness of what they create and are delighted by the insight of the language and the world they dare to invent.

When the Verb ‘to Play’ Raves and Reinvents School, Curricula, and Childhoods

In 2015, on the occasion of the carrying out of a research and extension project activity with the 2nd grade class of the Municipal Elementary School *Aprendimentos*³ from the municipal educational system of Vitória, there were, between August and October, weekly meetings with film workshops, animation, music and literature. Within this project, we held a reading workshop with the children, totaling three meetings of about fifty minutes each, in which we were able to expand our good encounters (Spinoza, 2009) and include the children in our conversation networks. And, as well as the *bugre*⁴ Manoel, we found the best surprises in the deviations of these encounters. We were provoked by images, scribbles, stutters, mischievousnesses, and everyday inventions.

In our first encounter, we read the books *Exercícios de ser criança* (*Exercises of being a child*), written by Manoel de Barros (1999) and *Girafa não serve pra nada* (*Giraffe counts for nothing*), by José Carlos Aragão (2000). After the reading, we started a conversation about the usefulness and uselessness of things, inviting children to invent collective texts based on the uselessness or strange usefulness of the objects chosen by them. After proofreading with the class, the texts took final form:

THE USEFULNESS OF THINGS (Workshop students)

EYE

Stores the tears

REFRIGERATOR

Mouth that stores food.

WINDOW

It's when we pull a tooth out.

It's for the tongue to look out.

DISPOSABLE CUP

It's used to make corded phone.

To rip and make a little spider.

To make octopus.

To use as a hat.

DENTURE

It's the mouth drawer.

HAT

To keep little balls over the head.

TAP

It is the key to getting water out of the sink.

LIGHT SWITCH

It has the key to turn on the light.

EAR

Gateway for words.

MATCH

Wood that keeps the fire.

TUNNEL

It's the only road that can dry out the car when it is raining.

In the first collective text produced, the word childishness takes place, through the inventions of the world, the mythography of the objects and the fabulations, so that the eye is not seen in its usefulness to make us see, for instance, but to store the tears: it is when the emotions of our affections replace the objectivity of sight. The refrigerator comes to be seen as a mouth since it stores food. The window, for the children, is but the lack of a tooth through which the tongue looks out. The disposable cup, in its reuses, turns into an octopus, into a little spider, into a corded telephone, into a hat, into toys; the affections suppress objective usefulness once more. The denture is a drawer by the way it fits into the mouth. The hat reveals the enchantments with which magicians and jugglers make use of their useless usefulness: keeping little balls over their heads. The tap is a key to water and the switch is a key to light. The ear is a gateway for words. The match keeps the fire. The tunnel is a road to dry out the car when it is raining. The language of the idiots reveals itself as a powerful idiolect, as a minor language, as a political and collective agency of those who do not master the major language and the truths imposed by it, those who babble and stutter with the accent of their origins, and therefore can play and reinvent and, in these reinventions, be the owners of the truths they invent.

In the following encounter, after a conversation about the previous experience, we read the poems *A porta, A casa, O pato e O leão* (*The door, The house, The duck and The lion*), from the book *A arca de Noé* (*Noah's Ark*), written by Vinicius de Moraes (2000), then we disposed a pair of school scissors in the middle of the students circle, inviting them to create a collective text, which we were able to record during the invention process. The result, following group readings and reviews, was as follows:

GUESS WHAT CUTS SO MUCH? (Workshop students)

Tic, tic, tic, tic,
Tic, tic, tic, tic,
Go there cut it.

It looks like an alligator's mouth,
It looks like a nose,
It looks like a rabbit,
It doesn't cut clouds,
It looks like an x.

It makes a little sound like this:
Tic, tic, tic, tic.

It looks like a bird's beak,
It looks like a person,
It looks like a little finger,
It looks like a bird flying,
It looks like a weather vane,
Singing a song like this:
Tic, tic, tic, tic.

Guess what it is:
Tic, tic, tic, tic.

Nietzsche (apud Deleuze, 1986, p. 104) shows what many adherents of dogmatic and bureaucratic thinking conceal: "The 'truth' is an easy-going and pleasant creature, who is continually assuring the powers that be that no one need fear any trouble from its quarter". However, children do not seem to be bothered by the troubles of the instituted truth, as they make a point of shuffling the cards of school life game very well.

The observation that the children made of the object pair of scissors, starting from what it is not (leaving aside, therefore, the instituted truth and its troubles), invented in this object an alligator's mouth, a nose, a rabbit, an x, a bird's beak, a person, a little finger, a flying bird, a weather vane. The pair of scissors of inventions from the second text, although it serves to cut, as revealed in the first stanza, does not cut clouds. In the children's almost riddle, the little sound of the scissors is a sung song: tic, tic, tic, tic.

Lins (2017) emphasises how much Deleuze contributes by stating that it is the power of the false which dethrones the form of the truth. Every model of instituted truth collapses in favor of narration. In this context, the images should be produced in a way that proceeds from the possible to the impossible. The false (as well as the truths invented by the children and by Manoel de Barros (Janela da Alma, 2001, n. p.), who inverts, reinvents and subverts the notions of false and true by affirming: "All that I do not invent is false") is perceived as a power, as a nomadic war machine that displaces illusions, and prioritizes the chaos, the uncertainties, the untimely, and the deterritorializations.

But the power of the false and the invented truths to dethrone the form of the truth went further. In the third encounter, we asked the students what they would like to invent with the words, and one of the students asked us to repeat the poetic creation activity we had done in the previous meeting, but then from the object 'glasses'. Everyone agreed. Some of the students who wore glasses disposed them on the table so that everyone, from observing the object, would be able to devise from it. After re-readings and revisions by the group, the text reached the following format:

GLASSES (Workshop students)

The moon is lovely.
Lovely, lovely.

The moon wears glasses
With dark lenses.
The glasses wear the moon
With light lenses.

Both are dark and light at the same time:
The glasses and the moon.

Time has a clock
And the clock plays music.
The watch has glasses lens
And even watch numbers wear glasses:
0 is a glasses lens,
7 is a glasses leg,
8 looks like both lenses at the same time.
9 is a broken glasses,
And 787 is a cool glasses.

By observing the glasses, the children invented a moon which was seen from the reflection of the room's light on the spectacle lenses, both the transparent lenses observed by the children and the sunglasses taken by one of the students. In the text, in a reflected and inventive way, both the moon wears glasses and the glasses wear the moon. The moon and the glasses also encounter each other in the fact that they are light and dark at the same time. The possible proceeds to the impossible as the instituted truth collapses. In the children's babbling and stuttering, a minor language is invented. The moon and the glasses encounter each other in a mythology invented by the class, until the moment one of the children revealed that his pointer watch also wore a spectacle lens. The moon is then left behind while the clock is focused. The reading of the glasses starts to be taken from the Arabic numerals on the watch face from the moment a boy sees the numeral 0 from the number 10 as another eyeglass lens. Number 1 was compared to a spectacle leg by another student, but one student soon said that 7 would be a perfect spectacle leg, '7 even has a curve for the ear'. Number 8 was the two lenses, while 9 represented broken glasses with only one lens and one leg. The same girl who had said that number 7 had a curve for the ear, joined the two lenses and the two legs of the glasses in number 877, but in their inventive conversations, the children came to a new agreement on the numbers order: "Number 8 must stand in the middle of 7, just like the glasses. 787 is a cool glasses". We readily respected the use of the word glasses in the singular. The poetic license was guaranteed in the uniqueness of the glasses collectively created by the students: when plurality reinvents itself in the uniqueness of a minor language.

Through this reading workshop we realized how children can, with their reinventions, detours and fabulations, undo the norms of the major language, the probable functionality or usefulness of things, or

even the need for them to be useful. They disrupt certainties, subvert school plans and chronological time, making it possible for the school to have all the names in the world.

The instituted truth of the striated spaces and the molecular and molar lines is what marks and controls time. It is all that tries to confine and inhibit the pulsating life in schools – the prescriptive curricula, the evaluative descriptors, the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC), the major language, etc. The power of the false, of the invented truths, aims at the experimentation of its flow: childish artistry, inventiveness, mischievousness, “[...] passion of the novelty, unknown by the known, uncreated, always remaking, recovering forces through creation” (Lins, 2017, p. 364).

The teachers, in their becoming-children, also make nomadic war machines, and produce singularities. The nomadic war machine transforms the power relations. Manoel’s poems, as well as children and teachers’ inventions, the curricular movements, the *learningteaching* processes that are constituted in the flow of intensive and vibrant life in schools can be considered nomadic poetic works (Lins, 2017), for they differ from a dogmatic and amorphous thinking, which does not change, since playing, poetizing, artistizing, and inventing are always becoming and manifesting themselves as acts of re-existence in the face of the unique ways of thinking that try to shape inventive bodies, voices and lives in school spaces. The nomadic war corresponds to the movement of children in the school *spacetime*. It rises, it constantly acts, it does not give up, because it is moved by desire. “Desire is life. Life is desire” (Shöpke, 2017, p. 301). Desire is the production of a new life, of a life with new connections, ideas, values, different ways of being, of pleasure, and of expansion of worlds.

What goes on in these bodies? What forces, flows of intensities are being experienced in these movements of curriculum inventions? What attempts to shaping and confining life and language need to be torn apart?

The nomadic war machine is active and creative, it is creative power. It seeks to find our zones of intensity, the vibrating forces that inhabit us. Thus, through stuttering and scribbling, children create lines of flight, possible life lines. The becoming-revolutionary of Deleuze and Guattari means “to become a war machine in behalf of life, of its affirmation, the multiplication of affections for the benefit of joy” (Shöpke, 2017, p. 290).

However, Deleuze and Guattari warn us that we must be wise to choose what strengthens us and expands our inventive, vibrant, nomadic life. As Spinoza (2009) teaches us in his *Ética (Ethics)*, good encounters empower us and strengthen our bodies and our spirits. While there are also encounters that weaken and disempower us. As we ask ourselves how children and teachers expand the inventive power of curricula in schools, we are not hesitant to answer that it is through their reinventions and the movements of creating a minor language by means of fabulations, word childishness, and childish inventions.

Deleuze (2003) states that more important than the thought is what makes one think. And he reminds us, when quoting Proust, that in the encounter with the artistic signs, instead of contemplating “[...] one single world, ours, we see it multiply, and we have as many worlds as there are original artists, more diverse among themselves than those rolling from infinity [...]” (Proust, 2004, p. 172).

In the encounters with the signs of art during the workshops, the teachers, the children, and us, had the opportunity to encounter the stutters, the inventions, the mischievousness and the childishness, as deterritorializations that unfolded and multiplied in many others, in such a way that not even the children, not even the teachers, not even us, not even the curricula, not even the schools or our worlds, were ever the same again.

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Notes

- 1 All direct or indirect quotations extracted from texts in Portuguese were here translated by the authors.
- 2 The Portuguese word *andor* means a kind of framework or platform with poles used for carrying religious images in a procession.
- 3 We chose to use a fictitious name in order to preserve the institution and at the same time honor the poet we researched, naming the school with the title of one of Manoel’s poems.
- 4 *Bugre* is a denomination given to Brazilian natives for being considered non-Christians by the European settlers.

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