

## **In Search of Over There: education, space, and language**

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**ABSTRACT – In Search of Over There: education, space, and language.** Founded on the literary work *Falling out of time*, by David Grossman, the purpose was to indicate the creation of a space in language, through it, in the fracture of literature itself: a *there*, an *over there*, a *some where* language can take the author, characters, and readers to a space-place encounter expressed therein, in the words and silences. Literature as an intensive language, which, instead of seeking to say of the space-place-there as something outside, creates the space-place-there in the sharpening-folding of language itself, as it is its own raw material, the matter of expression of this space. Based on Deleuze and Pellerero's propositions about the political power of literature, address the opening of languages to less informative and more expressive aspects in teaching activities and, maybe, offering students themselves the possibility of providing us with visions – creating, resisting, acting with a will to art (Oneto) – others spaces-geographies not yet responsive to us, perhaps allowing us to invent possible others, other manners of witnessing (Vilela), other potentialities of literature in education, other manners of inhabiting space as Massey urges us to do.

**Keywords: Literature. Space. School Geography. Witnessing. David Grossman.**

**RESUMO – Em Busca do Lá: educação, espaço e linguagem.** A partir da obra literária *Fora do tempo*, de David Grossman, apontar a criação do espaço na linguagem, através dela, na fratura dela mesma: um *lá*, um *onde* a linguagem pode levar autor, personagens e leitores até o encontro do espaço-lugar expresso ali, nas palavras e nos silêncios. A literatura como linguagem intensiva que, ao invés de buscar dizer de um espaço-lugar-lá como algo fora dela, cria espaço-lugar-lá no burilamento-dobra da própria linguagem, ela mesma sendo matéria-prima, matéria de expressão, desse espaço. A partir das proposições de Deleuze e Pellerero acerca da potência política da literatura, lidar com o abrir das linguagens para vertentes menos informativas e mais expressivas nas atividades de ensino e, talvez, permitindo aos alunos a possibilidade deles nos darem a ver – criarem, resistirem, agirem com vontade de arte (Oneto) – outros espaços-geografias ainda não sensíveis a nós, permitindo-nos, também talvez, a invenção de outros possíveis, outras maneiras de testemunhar (Vilela), outras potências da literatura na educação, outras maneiras de habitar o espaço, como nos incita Massey. Palavras-chave: **Literatura. Espaço. Geografia Escolar. Testemunho. David Grossman.**

*We always write to give life,  
to release life there where it is captive,  
to draw lines of flight,  
to make see something and think of something  
that had remained in the shadows,  
obscured by the representations  
of knowledge and power,  
entities whose existence was not even suspected.*  
Eduardo Pellejero

## Language and Space: possible witnessings in education

How to expose children and youth to languages that only communicate and inform, without also proposing that they fracture these languages so they can say – say? –, express what they experience with and in this space where we live? How to experience the language with these children and youth so they can express what space is this where they live? ... since this our space is in a maelstrom, in straight becoming-other, in multiple metamorphoses and routes, more or less random or predictable, unable to be witnessed in the languages with which we are already provided and which we already know?

In a world such as ours, where the novel pullulates around every corner and every click, with each new event we need to reinvent the language so in it a new *possible* is opened where we can gestate the witnessing (Vilela, 2010) of the many events that present as unspeakable because extremely new. We should invest *against* the language in seeking to make it another to express this unspeakable, despite we know that this witnessing given will not tell us the fact, but rather its reverberation in the body that witnesses in language the event.

There is a fundamental distinction to make between the notion of *fact* and the notion of *event*. Manifesting a spatially and temporally identifiable and definable conscience, the fact presents as a materially evident presence to anyone who faces it. In a factual context the world is objective. It can be the object of a word that returns it in its factuality; object of an utterance that – referring to – states, names, describes, makes known. In an event-based (*évènementiel*) sense, the world is neither objective nor subjective. The event is the very movement of metamorphosis of the world and of the sense: a metamorphosis of the im-possible. Unexpectedly ripped in the shared body of the world and of the individual, the event is that which gives access to the *open* of the world that is opened in it to the possibility of the im-possible (Vilela, 2010, p. 407, emphasis in the original, our translation).

The im-possible being that which is reached not from an already foreseen trail, that can be tracked, but which is *found* when one is forced to create an act-language to say something that eludes the existing words and meanings. “The witnessing (event) is *pursuit: loss and encounter, presence and absence*” (Vilela, 2010, p. 437).

The witnessing occurs in the encounter with the inhuman – language – that pervades us. For it to be made, our engagement must shift from the human (formation or defacement of the teacher) to the inhuman (mobilization of the languages), which, despite its inhumanity, is more human than the human because it constitutes it: being human is to be of language. However, I refer to language here not as an always-already given thing, but rather as something in movement and imbalance, which unravels and is tormented in our bodies that wish to witness the novel they undergo. To this end, we need to make the existing language elude itself: “[...] drag all language, [...] make it escape, [...] drive it to its own threshold in order to find its Outside, silence or music” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 96). This Outside is beyond all syntax (Deleuze, 1997, p. 17), it is all that which is in language but that does not constitute it yet, which does not become effective in the utterances that in it come to exist. Outside that is language deviations, “[...] eternity that can only be revealed in the becoming-other, landscape that only appears in the movement” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 17).

Outside as a *where* no event occurred yet, but that is there, amidst the world, coterminous to it, being part of it and at the same time extracting from it that which it is not yet. In *The Vocabulary of Deleuze*, we read that “[...] the concept of event marks the introduction of Outside in the time, or the relationship of time with an Outside that is no more exterior to it (unlike the eternity and its transcendence)” (Zourabichvili, 2004, p. 12), thus establishing an intrinsic connection between the Outside and the other becoming, pointing that “[...] the forces always come from out, from a more distant out than all forms of exteriority” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 130), referring the Outside to the impersonal, the non-significant, the formless chaos in language, the turbulence zones *where* the unknown becomes language in us. However, in the Out, there can also be found no language and be produced more chaos and impossibility of saying, because the Outside would be the *where* to err adrift, *where* we are exiled from ourselves and from the known world, constituting a *space between*, of gaps dug in the very gap where language opens – is forced – out of itself.

When speaking of the relationship with the Outside, we do not speak of a world that lies beyond or beneath our world. It is precisely of this world that we speak, but unfolded in its other version. All takes place as if in literature space, time, and language constituted a becoming-image, in which the world is reversed, reflected. It is not, then, another world evoked by literature, but the other of all worlds: the desert, the space of exile and wandering, the Outside (Levy, 2003, p. 25-26).

Outside as the desubjectivation space *where* the metamorphoses’ authorship comes not from the subjects, but from a sort of anonymous machine of becomings; space which “[...] exists, having no expression itself, but giving expression to all voices that project on it” (Gil, 2012, p. 27-28) risking an improvisation, as “[...] to improvise is to encounter the World, or be confused with it” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1997, p. 117). Encoun-

tering the Outside is to discover a new field of possibilities of expression amidst language imbalances.

Forcing the language, any language – written, photographic, cartographic... – to discover its Outside. Would this be a good way to act, for us to strive and garner efforts in the field of education in general and in education of geography in particular? Would it be good to go there where the Outside of language lies, believing that this *there* is wherein we can, perhaps, find (words to) express the current space in its greatest intensities, problems, and issues?

With regard to written language, to literature, precisely because it is founded on fiction, it has more power to make vibrate the language, since

[...] free from its subjection to truth, the thought rediscovers fiction as a force among others, and, even better, in fiction it recognizes its own expressive power, beyond the objective representation of reality (Pellejero, 2009, p. 17).

Fiction does not strictly appeal to the formation of a common horizon, much less endorse the project of a future citizenship or the hope of another world. Rather, by the work of fiction, opposes resistance to the values and projects established *de facto* as majority norm, as well as in relation to the inherited ideas and established truths, fissuring the established order and opening – it is its only hope – new fields of possibilities (social, political, cultural, epistemological) (Pellejero, 2009, p. 29).

According to this author, in the wake of Jorge Luis Borges and Gilles Deleuze, literature is a way of postulating reality, of inventing possible other modes of thinking and inhabiting the world, of forcing this world to be another by not attempting to translate what already exists in its words, but rather by opposing that which already exists, not in order to overcome it, but to move it, fork it, cause deviations in its ways that are meant to be strict.

This potentiality of literature becomes stronger when it effects a “[...] collective agency of enunciation [...] when it invokes this oppressed bastard race that is relentless in being agitated under the dominations, in resisting all that overwhelms and constricts, and in, as process, opening a space for itself in literature” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 15). Therefore, it is the more powerful the more intensely it brings to language the idiom of a minority whose “[...] fiction directly confronts and transforms the signs and forces of its world based on an experience of reality” (Bogue, 2011, p. 8-9) that deterritorializes the very idiom which gives it existence, causing it to stumble, stutter, deviate, fracture, in harmony with and in opposition to its Outside.

In the book *Critique et clinique*, Deleuze presents several examples of writers who imposed these variations and fractures in the idiom. In *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, he and Guattari draw an intricate panorama of how the work of Jewish-Czech writer who wrote in German metamorphosized this language to make it soberly express (itself) characters and scenarios both unusual and true.

In this essay, I will follow a similar path by taking a single book as guide to discuss about another space – *there* – constituted in the language that, in turn, was forced to become another to give existence to this other space.

### **The Empty Language: inform, communicate, note**

In the book *Falling out of time*<sup>1</sup>, Israeli writer David Grossman fractured the language to witness the borderline event of the death of a beloved child; he was forced to fracture the language so that it touched his Outside, murmurs, silence and music, where the ineffable (needed to be said) was posed before the reader: intensive truth, impossible to be written.

The character who initiates the book is *the town chronicler*. He takes notes of what is transpiring in the town to inform the *Duke*: “[...] as they sit eating dinner, the man’s face suddenly turns. He thrusts his plate away” (Grossman, 2012, p. 7). This chronicler gives existence to the town for the one who has power over it.

In the parts where the book refers to the *chronicler*, the sentences are in usual format of prose: consecutive and complete phrases from left to right on the page and jump to the line below in clear and chained sequences. In the parts where the book refers to the other characters, including the *Duke*, the format is that of poetry: cut words and sentences, concentrated on the left of the page, just start and fall into the void, into hiatus, into cut.

The other exception is the *centaur*. Also when he speaks it is in cursive prose that we read him. But before him, on his desk, the paper is blank. He is not able to say, there are no words in the idiom he knows to say what pervades his body, what is happening to him. That is why he envies the town chronicler. In the words of the centaur, the chronicler visits the hell of the others and, therefore, has a language that allows writing – informing, communicating – what is transpiring: what is happening with the others, not what is happening in it, it should be said.

“The centaur is jealous of the clerk!” (Grossman, 2012, p. 59).

Who would this enviable character be but us, clerks of science? We are not the ones who, in the name of any science or objectivity, take notes of everything and, with these notes, give existence to the town for the owners of power? We, teachers, are not the ones who create the reality in our words and images, a reality meant to be objective – constituted solely of verifiable facts that were observed and noted in the accuracy of the language?

Would not that be precisely why the centaur envies the clerk? Because the centaur has *no* language to express what he lives and the clerk-chronicler has a language that seems able to express everything, to comprise and tell everything. As to the centaur the language is lacking. As to the chronicler the language flows. Nevertheless, what language is this? A language that is mere note taking. The centaur will say, enraged, to the chronicler:

[...] you – it turns out – can write, or rather transcribe, as much as you feel like. Whole notebooks, scrolls! But only what other people tell you, apparently. Only quotes, right? [...] Not even a single word that's really yours? Yeah? (Grossman, 2012, p. 77).

The chronicler, in turn, will recognize that he lives in the shadows, in dark backyards and that there is “nothing in me” (Grossman, 2012, p. 89). The chronicler is an emptied being. Would not this be the reason why he uses the language only in its function of communicating and informing about facts that happened to others? Is that why his words and thoughts are written in prose while those of the other characters are written in poetry?

### Literary Writing: the encounter out of time

It will be in the encounter between an emptied character and a deformed character that the other characters will flow. The encounter between the chronicler and the centaur narrates the story while making explicit the combat fought thereat as a *combat for the language fought in the language*. Combat is the opposite of war: “[...] war is general annihilation whereas combat is the conjunction of the flows and forces, it is struggle and embrace” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 70).

While the chronicler simply takes notes without thinking about what he writes, the character of deformed body, centaurized, is pressed to write to be able to understand, understand thoroughly. This thorough understanding is, to him, shifting in the between *here* and *there*. It is necessary to make the *there* shift so he, and the *here*, shift, vary, live. And, to this end, it is necessary to mix something of him with the lost son, make him, the son, the *there*, shift even one millimeter.

In the first encounter between the two, the chronicler writes: “The notebook is open; its pages have thin blue lines. As best I can tell from here, they are all empty” (Grossman, 2012, p. 39). The centaur has no words to say what paralyzes him, his son's death. He will need to fracture the language to be able to say. He will leave the prose – the existing and known language – and, slowly, forced, enter into poetry. His first ingress into poetry will take place upon encountering the chronicler, after the latter had been expelled by the first. “You are back. Finally” (Grossman, 2012, p. 77), says the centaur. That is when – then, and only then – he surrenders to the desire-profession of the chronicler and begins to bear witness, to tell his story since the death of his son. This story is in italics in the original:

[...] *And inside my head there's a constant war comma the wasps keep humming colon what good would it do if you wrote question mark what would you add to the world if you imagined question mark and if you really must comma then just write facts comma what*

*else is there to say  
question mark write them  
down and shut up  
forever colon at  
such and such time comma in  
this and that place comma my son  
comma my only child comma aged  
eleven and a half  
period the boy  
is gone  
period* (Grossman, 2012, p. 78).

The centaur starts his speech in prose and the prose flows in poetry. The combat is written there. Punctuation fluctuates: it is described from the start, as he dictates; then a comma is written when the text formatting – the first line – is already dragged to poetry; finally, everything is written, without any punctuation. Another idiom is present. Idiom taken from the intense and paralyzing *there* of the centaur's life that

[...] and with these last words, using both hands and terrible force, he pounded the table, and his face contorted so painfully that for a moment I thought, Your Highness, that he had struck his own body (Grossman, 2012, p. 78).

A language that arises from within a body torn apart by itself that, upon achieving existence in words and silences, is dilacerated taking with it all that is part of it. Period. In the (im-possibility of the) word and in its voids of silence, literature becomes intensive language, linked to whom writes on the fold of the world over the body, out that is in; language that, rather than seeking to say of a space-place-there that exists as something out of it, creates space-place-there in the crafting-folding of the very language, itself being raw material, matter of – poetic and true – expression of this space.

Furthermore, amidst the flow of the centaur's story, told already in poetic fashion, it will be the chronicler's turn to be dragged into another himself:

CENTAUR:  
[...] My wife padded it  
with soft fabric,  
but he could only fall asleep  
with me, on my chest. He would cling  
to me.  
I just remembered, you'll laugh,  
but there was a special sound  
I used to make to put him  
to sleep on me. A sort of quiet,  
deep, trembling  
moan. Hmmm...  
hmmm...

TOWN CHRONICLER:  
Excuse me, sir, would you mind if I also...

CENTAUR:  
Not at all... Hmmmm...

TOWN CHRONICLER:  
Hmmm...

CENTAUR and TOWN CHRONICLER:  
Hmmm... (Grossman, 2012, p. 105).

The encounter was complete, the two characters in a single gesture of language. Gesture which is and is not word, something that oscillates, a murmur, a chant, a prophecy, a lullaby, hmmm... Gesture which is done “suddenly”, that takes us and makes us leak from that which makes us and leads us to vary into unpredictable directions that which will make ourselves *others*.

In the chronicler’s next appearance, his words will already be written in the form of poetry.

And he moves  
and varies  
and lives (Grossman, 2012, p. 159).

At the end of the book, it is the centaur that perceives himself other upon finding that he was able to say, that he bent the language and accomplished giving words to that which kept him out of life. He made the language shift towards other landscapes. It was not by means of usual and everyday language that the centaur accomplished saying, but rather *through* a language invented to achieve the *there*.

Yet still it breaks my heart,  
my son,  
to think  
that I have –  
that one could –  
that I have found  
the words (Grossman, 2012, p. 169).

Was he the writer, the man out of writing who lost a son in the war, all of a sudden? Is there a way of disconnecting them from each other, the one who writes and the one who exists beyond the writing? Or would every human being – child, old, young, adult, student, student parent, teacher, principal – upon being seized by the act of literary writing become a centaur, a hybrid being, pervaded with forces that are not him – the language – but that only in him are given existence? Would every human being trigger several Outside of language by forcing it to be permeated by personal experiences? David Grossman’s book seems to indicate so by exposing the multiple expressions that the bodies and the language came to effect by being taken to their limits.

### **Walking with no Direction, Go Yonder**

The experience that spans the entire book is that of death, of the inexorable loss of a child, of someone who now inhabits the *there*: some-



one who no longer has a future, who escaped time (and is) strangling the life of those who remain in it.

The first act-gesture of the character *man*, as noted by the town chronicler, is thrusting the plate in front of him. “He rises and stands, and seems unaware as to where he is. The woman jumps in her chair” (Grossman, 2012, p. 7).

- I have to go.
- Where?
- To him.
- Where?
- To him, there.
- To the place where it happened?
- No, no. There.
- What do you mean, there?
- I don’t know.
- You’re scaring me.
- Just to see him once more.
- But what could you see now? What is left to see?
- I might be able to see him there. Maybe even talk to him?
- Talk?! (Grossman, 2012, p. 7-8).

Thus, we have many pages of poetic dialogue between the characters *man* and *woman*, in which recollections of the day they received the news of their son’s death in the war are permeated by memories of the love that exists between them and by the infinite solitude-pit that opened up before them, in them, upon receiving the news.

But in that loneliness,  
where – like soul  
departing body –  
I am torn  
from myself, there  
I am no longer alone,  
no longer alone,  
*ever since.*  
And I am not  
just one there,  
and never will be  
only one – (Grossman, 2012, p. 26, emphasis in the original).

In these many pages, the woman tries to dissuade the man.

WOMAN:  
I would go  
to the end  
of the world with you,  
you know. But you are not  
going to him, you are going  
somewhere else, and there  
I will not go, I cannot.  
I will not.  
It is easier to go  
than to stay.

I have bitten my flesh  
for five years  
so as not to go, not  
there,  
there is  
no *there!*

MAN:  
There will be,  
if we go  
there (Grossman, 2012, p. 33-34).

The man decides to go, “err in the quest” (Preve, 2013), extricate himself from his location-identity in/to invest in his pursuit of *there*. The town chronicler registers:

[...] He leaves the house and shuts the door behind him. [...] His feet hesitate, probing. He walks – strange – orbiting himself in a small circle. Slowly, carefully, again and again, one circle after another. His arms spread out, the circles grow the circles grow wider, he walks around the small yard, and now he circles the house – (Grossman, 2012, p. 34).

Then – after this dash that ends the sentence in the void of words – the character *man* becomes another character, *the walking man*. It is about him that the chronicler will say: “Again and again he circles the house, as if hoping his motion will rouse her and enthuse her –” (Grossman, 2012, p. 35). Once again the dash leaves the phrase inconclusive, touching us with a silence that seems to contain words, so many that they are not written there. And the chronicler registers the broadening of the circles he does: “[...] his circles growing larger and wider. He walks there – there is no *there*, of course there isn’t, but what if you go there? What if a man walks there?” (Grossman, 2012, p. 36). And thus follows: “He gradually encircles the whole village, then he does so again. He walks by houses, yards, wells, and fields, past barns and paddocks and woodpiles. Dogs bark at him and quickly retreat with a whimper, and he walks –” (Grossman, 2012, p. 36) until “[...] a small luminance of sorts encircles the town. A man walks there, up and down the hills –” (Grossman, 2012, p. 38).

The walking man goes in circles, around... himself, the house, the yard, the village, the town. Circles around the *town*: town as metaphor for civilization or language. He walks in circles around what he knows, but not knowing where to, adrift, for the very sake of walking in circles around... in search of other words and silences that can say, bear witness concerning the event. We can say, with Deleuze (1997, p. 143), that in this book “[...] there is a transfer: from the form of expression to the form of content”. The characters (the author being one of them) “[...] talk as they walk [...]: one is no less movement than the other”. Walking in circles around the town-language: in search to find words to translate the event that has no words to be expressed forcing the creation of something exterior – an Outside – to the idiom; walking in increasingly

large circles, from oneself to the town-civilization: create an exterior – an Outside – at each circle (subjective and social place at the same time) that shows to be unable to provide clues to find the *there* in the already known space-language.

The walking man searches for the *there* and will gradually attract to his walk all the other characters that also lost, suddenly, beloved children: the cobbler, the midwife, the deaf woman on/within the network, the old math teacher, the Duke, the town chronicler's wife. They will become, together, the character *the walkers*. It can be said that the action of walking of the character *walking man created* a new social group, *the walkers*, a collective that came into existence *through* the new, creating, and pointless gesture, of walking in search of *there*.

Think, create, write, less to assume the expression of a certain group or of a certain class, than in the hope that the agency of new forms of expression may summon the people to a joint action, to a common resistance, to a becoming people (Pellejero, 2009, p. 88, our translation).

It can be said that this new social group, created through a creative gesture, as unique as meaningless in the already established world, approaches the people due to coming from that which we are told by the quote above, inspired by the thought of Deleuze and Guattari (2003) when referring to the minor power of literature: that people who come to exist through a collective agency of enunciation, agency which in this book occurred by means of the man's new and unusual gesture: walking in circles in search of *there*.

However, the character *woman* will not come to him; she will become the character *woman who stayed at home* and then *woman at the top of the bell tower*, because instead of walking *there* she went to the highest place to watch the walking man's walk, to be with him with the eyes. And so he could be with her while walking in circles in search of *there*.

Walk in circles around the town-civilization, go into a trance by the circular and decided movements without a destination. Just walk. In walking in the meaningless of the gesture he conjures those who also bear in the body the ultimate meaningless of the life that came undone with the sudden, abrupt death of the beloved child. Death that unites the lives of those who stayed alive. Death that is there... and here.

*There* is a place they cannot be reach, but that affects the entire lives of these characters. It is this personal *there* (the place where the dead children are) that makes their lives cease to be something that transforms and proliferates into multiple directions and possibilities. Life ceases to be life by being trapped in a *there* that is both unreachable and existing, ubiquitous, paralyzing.

## From Personal to Social: from death in the Family to Collective Death

In an interview with TV show *Roda Viva*, broadcasted by TV Cultura network, David Grossman spoke about the Holocaust for Jews as a place, not as a time:

People always refer to this place as 'country over there'. What had happened in the Shoah (Holocaust) had occurred in the 'country over there'. When Jews, in any idiom, talk about the Shoah, they talk about what happened 'over there'. When non-Jews talk about the Shoah they talk about what happened 'then'. There is a great difference between 'then' and 'over there'. Then means that it is over, that it will not happen again. To us Jews, in a way, it is 'over there', in parallel with our existence. There is still the possibility of... [...] All attitudes of Israel and all our behavior are impregnated with the trauma of the Shoah. [...] (Due to the fact we remain under constant threat, a war of more than 100 years) we are in a situation in which we live solely to survive (Grossman apud TV Cultura, 2010, our translation).

This author explains that the existence of the *there* pervades personal and collective lives and is constituted as that – a place – which makes life mere survival, mere conservation of that which one is and has. Succinctly, a life that is no longer life, as it cannot be reinvented in the new encounters the world promotes.

In this part of the interview, Grossman notes that the limit experience of death in the family addressed in his book *Falling out of time* has a correlation with the limit experience of a people, of a social group that was and is impregnated with a sort of experience that paralyzes life.

So it does not seem I am talking about an experience that is distant and disconnected in relation to everyday life in Brazil, I ask: would we have social groups that are close to us who lived and live experiences similar to this? Could we say that, to some extent, the urban slum dwellers or the suburban migrants or the workers of agricultural borders or the indigenous peoples or even Bolivian immigrants in São Paulo live situations like this in which some kind of death – genocide, suicide, silencing, guettification, discrimination... – of many of them, some excessive and constant violence, created a *there* where live these dead-mortified ones that paralyze the life of those living here?

But would not it also be death experiences that which many of us experience in our cities undergoing transformation, in our river banks that become bottoms of dams? Would not it be a death experience investing in a single type of family, in a single form of love? Would not it be a death experience a condominium full of cameras and guards to produce the feeling of security? Would not it be a death experience that experienced by people that have no idea of how to use an ATM and, however, need to get the money that is there? Would not it be a death experience to sit in front of a screen and have no slightest idea of how

you can be watching and talking and crying with someone who answers and cries from Japan? Would not it be a death experience having my garden, so well-kept!, ripped out and, in its place, an avenue built where cars travel where before there were flowers? Would not it be a death experience some other expropriations carried out based on territorial planning that we make ourselves in our legal language?

If I am correct in my assumption, it would be wise to ask ourselves to what extent these various *theres* that pervade the Brazilian life prevent these same social groups from inventing other ways of living, from devising other ways of inhabiting the space, from having power to give a vivid character (Massey, 2008) to the place they inhabit? Vivid character such as the one that makes life thrive beyond what it is, life as metamorphosis, as becoming-other rather than conservation.

It would also be wise to ask ourselves if this paralyzing experience still pervades these social groups because they were unable to make use of language to talk about it, to go to this *there* and make it resonate here? This will be the encounter experienced in the book *Falling out of time* by the walking character and by the centaur: both will find the Outside of language – words, silences, and music – and the possibility of expressing the child's death and, with it, they will lead the *there* where the dead are to find passage to the here where the living are. And then the living will be vivified!

In other words, maybe it is in the Outside of some language – written, photographic, cartographic... – the possibility of provoking landslides in these various *theres* that are fixed and paralyzing, setting them in motion, in becoming-other upon being connected – via language – to that which is here, in the contemporary bodies, in the current space. Making the language vary to the extent of finding its Outside may be a potent way of giving life to each person of these social groups paralyzed in the *there*, but also of giving more power to our own possibilities of making life an invention, since when we reduce these groups to stunned social agents of precarious conservation of what they already have, not allowing them to give us ourselves other views of our world, other manners of inhabiting the space, other ways of composing the place, of coexisting in a same place where that which is to come is an opening and not a conservative closing of the (little) that is possessed.

If this *there* is only reached through and in the languages then it is in them where we can find the passages between the here and the there, between that which is the life lived and that which mortifies (us) and paralyzes (our) life, making this life mere survival.

Thus, language is, probably, the most intensive of the space, that which allows us access to places that pull us out of life, to the multiple *theres* that coexist with this more visible existence, with this already sensitive existence, still not being effectively sensitive for us so we can share them in the world in which we live.

This perspective of language would indicate a power of literature to be experienced in education in general and in school geography in particular?

## The Outside: the – educational – power of literature

David Grossman said that “[...] literature is an excellent way to understand problems” (TV Cultura, 2010). He exemplifies this based on a conversation with Shimon Perez, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel: “He told me that whenever he would travel to other countries, he would first ask to read one or two newspapers of the country to be visited, next he would read two or three books of that country, and, then, he would really understand that place” (TV Cultura, 2010).

Grossman also said in that interview that writing and reading fiction is to be in contact with that which does not constitute us, it is to open gaps in our certainties.

Nevertheless, I think that in his book *Falling out of time* – addressed in this essay – he points to other powers of literary writing, powers that lie in the very language. Literature has been for centuries one of the most important ways to make the written language go adrift, touch the Outside and make sensitive some part of the world that already affected us, but that we were not able to express. Once again using the words of Deleuze, each time a writer bends the language to write as a foreigner in his/her own idiom he/she takes this idiom beyond, making it function in a state of convulsiveness, being strange to itself while expanding its limits of language (Deleuze, 1997, p. 141) by bringing to itself that which priorly was only silence and music, murmur, sobbing, wide eyes.

It is from this perspective that the (educational) power of literature does not lie properly (or at least not solely) in enabling the perception, bringing to presence a world of existing relationships, in which we can say or indicate the geography or the history or the nature or the society that is there, let us say, reflected in words and silences.

The power of literature that I want to emphasize is that in which we can find something that exists outside of it: geography, history, nature, society. But yes, I want to point out that its greatest power lies in that which exists in it, which unfolds from it, which achieves existence there, and which should not be subject to questions or searches such as: *what elements or phenomena of geography are there in this work?, the geographic content of such work is to present in detail the Hinterland or the Pantanal or the city of São Paulo?*

The questions and searches shift to *what geography or geographies resonate from this work?, in what way does the hinterland achieve existence in this book or poem?, what new hinterland dimensions unfold therefrom?* The geography that unfolds therefrom is a geography made of words and silences and music... a geography that finds it to be the Outside of language and that comes to exist in this act of discovery in which the language and geography – form of expression and form of content, so to speak – are convulsed by each other, making one the intercessor of the other, metamorphosing by having entered into becoming upon engaging in a “negotiation” (Massey, 2008), a “[...] relationship of comradeship [...] (that) is this variability, which implies an encounter with the Outside” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 81) of that which related and was

put in becoming-other: the Outside of Literature and the Outside of Geography.

In these terms it seems to me clearer that literary language is more intense (intensive), since rather than seek to say of a space-place there as something out of it, it does so in the crafting of language itself, itself being matter of expression and of content of this space. This is one of the reasons that led me to choose the book *Falling out of time* as a guide in this essay. In it, poetry is the form of expression of a content – the *there* – whose form achieves more intense existence in the poetic form of the written language. This book, despite being a novelized narrative, is written in poetry in order to open the language to this walk towards the *there*. Walk is the spatial image that the book brings the reader: the characters walk around the town in search of *there*, *there* where can only be reached in the intervals-gaps opened in the here and now of the language-town.

It is necessary, therefore, to fracture the language to be able to approach the language. And the book *Falling out of time* presents several of these fractures in the language so it can tell what is underway *in* the characters, what pervades them with (as) force when they invest in the search of *there*, when they embrace the Outside of language that, then, stutters.

We can note that in the stuttering of the midwife-cobbler couple. In this stuttering “it is no longer the character who stutters in the speech, it is the writer who becomes a *stutterer of the idiom*: he makes stutter the *idiom as such*. An affective, intensive language, and no longer an affection of the one who speaks” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 138 – emphasis in the original).

MIDWIFE:

Y-y-yesterday she w-w-would have been f-f-five.

COBBLER:

I’ve told you a hundred times not to think about these things! Enough, it’s over!

MIDWIFE:

I lit a candle by her p-p-picture and you said n-n-nothing. Don’t you ever think about her?

COBBLER:

What is there to think? How much of a life did she even have? A year?

MIDWIFE:

And a h-h-half (Grossman, 2012, p. 41).

If the midwife’s stuttering takes place in words that already exist in the idiom, the cobbler’s stuttering will occur in the very mouth. He who, in the words, seems unaffected by the daughter’s death.

MIDWIFE:  
Your m-m-mouth,  
the m-m-mouth,  
open  
your mouth!

COBBLER:  
No, leave it, don't touch, they give me all my power.

MIDWIFE:  
And I never  
n-n-noticed... How?  
I th-th-thought  
it was only when you  
worked that you... And now  
did you eat that w-w-way?  
How anything?  
T-t-take them out, please,  
I beg you, take them  
All out –

COBBLER:  
No, I can't, who'll protect me so I –

MIDWIFE:  
*Take them out!*

COBBLER:  
So I don't bite me –

MIDWIFE:  
Y-y-yes, more,  
remove them, spit them, there are  
more, and another,  
yes, give them into my hand...  
There are more, dear God,  
it's sharp... there's blood,  
your whole m-m-mouth  
is sores and  
rust (Grossman, 2012, p. 67-68).

Lacking words to translate what he is undergoing, the cobbler sticks nails in his mouth lest he bite himself in the silence imposed by the absence of words with which to say what befalls his body. He wounds his mouth with his own working instruments forcing the mouth to create words that hurt less. While they do not come, time becomes rust and blood.

In many other moments we accompany the characters in search of the language with which to relate the event that paralyzed their lives in this absence of words. I already mentioned above the poetic form that makes the written language jump to another line in the middle of a phrase, create gaps between lines, paper vacuums where there seems to exist words that are still nonexistent to say that which is lived. Voids that are forces pushing the language towards *there*, beyond the here of language.



There are also phrases that do not end, interrupted or not by dashes. Phrases that leap to the blank of the page, in the desert of the idiom, and may be continued by any other because they lost any sense to be followed in the known idiom, in the established language. These phrases force us to go in search of other words, of another idiom within the very idiom. While the idiom does not open the silences are tangible, sometimes written by the author, sometimes dispersed throughout the page in need of words that end the phrases.

There are multiple searches to find – when walking in circles around the town-language – the *there* of the language. *There* that “[...] is the *out* of the language, (which) is not out of it” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 145 – emphases in the original). *There* that, being human language, always occurs as a twist, in vertigo, in the body.

There is the Duke who talks of himself to himself “[...] Look,/my lord, you are blessed:/here on a platter/is a newborn day,/its teeth not yet emerged –/[...]” (Grossman, 2012, p. 44); there are repetitions of words “[...] or just/to to to be,/to be one sheer full simple second no more no less/just that, God,/just be” (Grossman, 2012, p. 46); there are rhymes “[...] an exemplary duke –/no./No./A man not-himself/has awoken from this night –/all hollow bones,/hah, the gravity/of tragedy./ [...]” (Grossman, 2012, p. 47); there is “a ventriloquist of my womb” (Grossman, 2012, p. 63); there are forms of writing carried out by means of superpositions, disconnected connections of pornography and numbers: graffitied walls and “small and organized writing” (Grossman, 2012, p. 63); there is use of the intimate word, of the names that exist only in intimacy: U-i instead of Uri (Grossman, 2012, p. 87); there are the metamorphoses of one into another when “for some reason, he persists in crying using my voice” (Grossman, 2012, p. 86); there are whispers, fears, and prohibitions: “my lips suddenly quiver [...] I fear on them might be read words I would rather keep to myself [...] Nor are longings, yearnings, and so forth permitted” (Grossman, 2012, p. 97); there are folds in bodies that have “sudden heart pangs, or churning contractions of the gut, nor any kind of crying, whether sobbing or the faintest sleepy whimper” (Grossman, 2012, p. 97); words cut in the middle “and there is not a single,/e/ never be just/ one –” (Grossman, 2012, p. 130); there are mouths moving nonstop, gaping mouths, there is screaming and vomiting words and non-words.

[...]  
like whips they lashed, leaped, caught –  
caught whom – the words –  
the words? The miserable words,  
they devoured all the it-cannot-be,  
they swallowed all or it in fire, everything  
[...]  
[...] we promised  
silence  
yet we screamed, we vomited  
a brew of words, horrendous  
words, it cannot be,  
it cannot be, and she – (Grossman, 2012, p. 124).

All are ways to force the idiom to find something that still is not itself, to make it vary and, suddenly, touch the Outside of the idiom. And that this Outside come to be integrated with it, to be language when captured by some body that insists in saying, that re-exists in the very act of witnessing that for which there was no language yet.

Even if these twists on the bodies and on the idiom are dispersed throughout the book and are effected by the many characters, it is really in the conversations between the town chronicler and the centaur that this search of fracturing the idiom is clearer. “It’s like a murmur, the centaur explain [...] A *murmur*, or a sort of dry rustle inside your head, and it never stops” (Grossman, 2012, p. 48-9 – our emphasis).

CENTAUR:  
Sometimes I play games  
on it, the goddamn *it*,  
activities: ‘Death is  
deathful’. I wink at it,  
like play: ‘Death will deathify,  
or is it deathened? Deatherized?  
Deathered?’ I patiently recite,  
over and over, rephrasing, finessing:  
‘We were deathened, you will be  
deatherized, they will be  
deathed’.  
What else can I do –  
neither write  
nor live. At least  
it is still  
somewhat free,  
unraveled. The language  
is wise, isn’t it true, my fool? Full  
of mysteries and allusions  
and freedom. See the word  
I ‘dadded’, I was dad,  
‘So much  
I dadded  
my son’ – (Grossman, 2012, p. 84).

Facing the freedom and imbalance of the language, the centaur imposes to it other possible modes of existing, fracturing the very idiom. Fractures that are performed when the centaur decides that, with anger, irony, and contempt, he will tell the chronicler that, *under deep and vehement protest*, he will write everything to tell the Duke, in detail, what is underway.

‘Veritably’? you need to know what’s going on with me?  
[...] Okay, then, gird your gonads and do some chronicling.  
Write down that it’s, let’s say, like dry leaves. What are you  
ogling at like an idiot? Leaves! But dry, right? Crumbling.  
Dead. Did you get that? And someone keeps stepping on  
them, over and over again... So? Is that veritable enough  
for you? Will the duke be pleased?  
[...]

‘Someone keeps treading on them, on the dry leaves’ – write this! – ‘walking around in a circle, dragging his feet...’ Now make a note of this: khrrrrsss khrrrrsss. Like that, yes, with three s’s at the end. I bet that little detail will clarify the situation for the duke *veritably!* (Grossman, 2012, p. 49 – emphasis in the original).

The existing language is these dried, dead, rustling leaves, that generate an indefinite, random murmur, that upon being impregnated by the experience lived by the centaur is not able to gestate any precise, thorough information, but rather simply new words that still mean nothing because they are open, they crawl under and over the idiom, push it Outside of itself, by means of gestures performed with “[...] bloodshot eyes [...] babbling, swearing, cursing” (Grossman, 2012, p. 50), so the idiom “deride and complain about” everything that is kid stuff, still formless novelty (Larrosa, 1999). The centaur will also say that “[...] there are whispers, too, all the time, like this: Hmmm... Hmmm... And then he lunges like a swarm of wasps, buzzzzzzzz, drilling through my brain [...] You can’t hear it, can you?” (Larrosa, 1999, p. 54 – my emphasis). No, he can’t. The chronicler has no language to hear the humming, the whispering, the murmurs, the onomatopoeias, the perforations the centaur imposes on the language to be able to say, in order to testify, translate the event and, finally, live.

Thus, because he has no ears to hear the idiom that is about to come to exist in the effort of the centaur, the chronicler has no other choice but to note: “I feverishly write completely transfixed by him not looking at the page my hand rushing on its own” (Larrosa, 1999, p. 71). A hand that does not write, but rushes, a language that cannot be contained by the eye, but rather, unrestrained, is made with letters in creative disorder: a new writing takes place there, feverish, virulent, mesmerizing because so intense in its absolute novelty: it is born along with that to which it gives expression, witnessing of the untranslatable, making the chronicler when writing, perhaps, listening.

### **Expression: languages and persons adrift**

I propose, as final movement of writing, to establish a parallel between the town chronicler and the teacher; between the centaur and the students. Bend the literary encounter into an educational encounter, seeking to extract some new possible modes of thinking the two encounters.

Regarding the teacher, it seems there is always language to say. We always have many words to say and explain. Regarding the student, language always seem to lack.

If at first this parallel seems real to us – and I think it is – in a second moment other senses, also true, seem to exist in our talk of teachers: would not this teacher verbiage that dominates us when we are in the role of teacher also be a way for us to force the language to say something that occurs and that, definitely, we do not understand what it is?

Would not our endless words already show our fragility to manage to tell our students what is happening in our world?

Nonetheless, in addition, I also think that there is something more intentionally true in our chatter that connects precisely in trying to force the world to fit in our language. And as the world in which we live insists in eluding our explanations in a manner that is increasingly obvious to our students, we insist in enhancing our languages to keep the world contained in that which we can say “the space is:”. And, after this colon, all the experiences and lives that exist or have existed or will exist will be contained within the definition of space we will impose on students, appalled to not find themselves there, be it in small and scattered situations experienced by themselves, in small and scattered readings they made of the lives of others, in small and scattered news they saw on the news last night, in small and scattered posts on Facebook, scenes from soap operas and movies, cell phone games...

There is always something that eludes the school explanations, the didactic texts and images, the questions of tests, and internet researches.

But this has not made us leave aside the verb to be and assume the whisper, the murmurs, the shouts, the vomiting of the world and of each of the bodies that inhabit it. “The space can be... may be...” would probably be phrases more attuned to the gaps that open upon each attempt to contain the world within our language that is frontally insufficient to tell of so many unspeakable experiences as they are so new and unusual, gestated in the connections between the very new forces and flows of the new technological machines, of the new monitoring and management models, of the new forms of creation, of the new forms of relationship between people and between people and things, of the new... all this forcing new and unsuspected negotiations that configure the space as something open (Massey, 2008), lived in its multiple potentialities of producing becomings that are unforeseen by the world that is ceasing to exist in a speed that leaves us perplexed. Yet still not too perplexed that we assume that the language – or the set of languages: spoken, written, photographic, cartographic... – we provide students with has been formatted in a restricted and restrictive manner of saying – informative, communicative, note-taking – and that it is, therefore, insufficient for them to express (themselves) (in) the world in which they live and with which they have to cope daily in an ocean of mysteries that fluctuates so much that their lives are far more similar to a boat in open sea than to a walk in the metropolitan maze: it is the ground that moves, not them.

Faced with this restricted and note-taking language, students resist in the most varied ways, with a wide gamut of resistances that includes the denial of any encounter with us and the invention of other languages to express themselves, and sometimes it is the same gestures that effect these languages.

Thus, I think we could experiment with – and along with – our students languages that are less literal and more literary, which are constituted more as instruments of combat – something mobile and open,

in constant imbalance – rather than as closed field – finished and pre-defined form, which takes only one direction. Languages that are adrift and that assume (themselves) (as) expressive instruments precisely by connecting with that which still does not constitute these languages, but that are excited in them in permeating the eager bodies of children and youth who seek their here in this world.

The expression has an autonomy and an effectiveness of its own. The expression represents, in the context of a series of material impossibilities, an excess of possibles (Pellejero, 2009, p. 79).

It is not a matter of escaping from the world that exists [...], but rather of creating the conditions for the expression of other possible worlds, which, by the introduction of new variables, come to trigger the transformation of the existing world (Pellejero, 2009, p. 19).

More clearly, as pointed out by François Zourabichvili, this is about working for the emergence of new collective agencies, which respond to new possibilities of life, of which the thought would wish to be the expression (Pellejero, 2009, p. 18).

In opening the languages to perspectives that are more expressive with regard to teaching activities, expose students to the possibility of them making us observe, creating – resisting, making re-exist, when acting with will to art (Oneto, 2009) – spaces-geographies not yet sensitive for us, teachers. In opening the language we will, perhaps, be making the very language re-exist, making it go adrift and gain power to its own collapse, to find itself in other landscapes, in its Outside, and create (make us see-feel-live) other spaces-geographies.

Another school also seems to interfere there, in this *there*, by experiencing languages in which centaurs and school chroniclers listen to each other and metamorphosize with each other; another school extracted from the opening to the education paths for languages constituted both of grammars and pursuits, both of conventions and searches. Searches of the *there* where these experiences have taken place in the contemporary world, especially in the young bodies and in the children that are exposed to it with much more ambition, resourcefulness, and courage. It seems interesting to me that they have languages to express that which was lived, translate the event, testify their own experiences that configure them as beings in continuous and inevitable becoming-other, in continuous and forcible search of languages that lead them to inhabit the world more literarily.

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## Note

1 All of the translations to English of this Grossman's book in this article are based in Grossman, David. *Falling Out of Time*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2012.

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