

**Online journals as research-training devices: a conversation
with the Avatar film^{1 2 3}**

***Diários online como dispositivos de pesquisa-formação: uma
conversa com o filme Avatar***

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Abstract

Inspired by research conducted in Curricula and Daily Life of the Education course at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ, the authors, based on the paradigm of complexity (Morin, 2003), principles of multireferentiality (Ardoino, 1998 ; Macedo, 2012), and the research approach with everyday life (Alves, 2008) aim to show, in light of the movie Avatar, how online journals can be used as an experiential device which enhances curriculum acts, considering factors such as such as: differences, diversity, alterity, autonomy, and authorship, among others. In this perspective, they bring education and arts closer together, encompassing the cultural, historical, literary, and political aspects inherent to the film.

Keywords: Cinema, Acts of curriculum, Online journals, Cyberculture.

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Resumo

Tomando como inspiração uma pesquisa realizada no âmbito da disciplina Currículos e Cotidianos do Curso de Educação da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - UERJ, as autoras, amparadas no paradigma da complexidade (Morin, 2003), nos princípios da multirreferencialidade (Ardoino, 1998; Macedo, 2012) e na abordagem da pesquisa com os cotidianos (Alves, 2008) objetivam mostrar, à luz do filme Avatar, como o diário online pode ser usado como dispositivo experiencial, potencializando atos de currículo, que levam em conta fatores, tais como: diferenças, diversidade, alteridade, autonomia, e autoria, entre outros. Nessa perspectiva, aproximam educação e artes, englobando aspectos culturais, históricos, literários e políticos inerentes ao filme.

Palavras-chave: Cinema, Atos de currículo, Diários online, Cibercultura.

Introduction

Considering that learning takes place throughout our existences, the ways we act, and the content of these daily actions are plural, dynamic, and temporary. Thus, they are characterized not only by *differentiation* under the influence of various factors which are often random but also by the *complexity* conferred by the entanglement of actions, interactions, and reactions that are established in all areas of human activities.

In this perspective, developing studies requires the extrapolation of research and analysis patterns inherited from modern science since, nowadays, no theory can restore a unit of thought to account for everyday problems and their complexity. Treating the contemporary world requires the hybridization of elements of nature, politics, and discourse since networks are, as Latour (1994) warns, at the same time real as nature, narrated as discourse, and collective as society. Thus, despite their relevance to the research process, these modern scientific standards increasingly constitute limits to what needs to be pondered to deal with the diversities, differences, and inequalities of the world.

Santos, B. (2010) notes that scientific hegemony is experiencing a moment of crisis due to the fact that, among other reasons, causalism, as a category of intelligibility of the real, is losing ground to finalism, to the extent that the idea of cause is directly related to an intervention in the real, discarding the possibility of seeing the real from an action on reality itself. For the author, we must consider the perspective of historical-cultural analysis, in addition to working

on notions of unpredictability, spontaneity, self-organization, creativity, and occurrence, shifting us from the regulatory knowledge that marked modernity toward a ‘liberating’ knowledge that ultimately enables social emancipation:

[...] a paradigm that tends to reduce the universe of observables to the universe of quantifiables and the rigor of knowledge to the mathematical rigor of knowledge, results in the (cognitive and social) disqualification of the qualities that give meaning to practice or, at least, of what is not reducible in them, via operationalization, to quantities; a paradigm that distrusts appearances and facades and seeks truth on the back of objects, thus losing sight of the expressiveness of the face-to-face of things and people, and where, in love or hatred, communicative competence is gained (B. Santos, 1989, p. 34).

Before the complexity of the world, Morin (2003, p. 71) argues that when simplifying and reductionist thinking fails to answer questions in which uncertainty, disorder, contradiction, plurality, and complication gain prominence, “the split, compartmentalized, mechanistic, disjunctive, reductionist intelligence destroys the complexity of the world into discreet fragments, fractionates problems, separates what is united, and ‘one-dimensionalizes’ the multidimensional.”

From this perspective, Mignolo (2004) states that the currently emerging paradigm has been moving away from the “uni-versality” of knowledge imposed by Christianity, secular philosophy, and modernity toward a “pluri-versality” of knowledge and understanding, subordinated to the goal of prudent knowledge for an adequate life. This new paradigm, proposed by Santos, B. (2010), emphasizes the need for a plural look that breaks the hierarchy between scientific knowledge and common knowledge, because “since no singular form of knowledge can account for all possible interventions in the world, all of them are, in different ways, incomplete” (p. 58).

In this context, cinema presents itself as a device that enables this multifaceted look since, unlike written narratives, in which we can detail characters’ physical and emotional characteristics, in cinematic narratives, all these characteristics are on account of the viewer’s gaze and perception, which can capture from characters’ body and facial expressions to aspects related to scenography and the soundtrack. Moreover, it has the potential to dare, experiment, and provoke critical-creative encounters with reality by its images and sounds; constituting a valuable object of study which must be explored in school daily lives since, as Fresquet (2013) states, between the real and the fictional, and reality and fantasy, cinema and education move and eventually meet.

Cinema is not limited to creative productions but engages in the creation of life forms. It is in this creation that the school community participates, to the extent that cinema allows us to impress some doubts on what we see, authorizing us to make critical and creative readings of what we are given to see, and to think about the possibilities of changing the world beyond ideological criticism or passive perception. In this sense, cinema acts as a driving force to transform the educational practices themselves. (Fresquet; Migliorin, 2015, p. 17).

In this perspective, we ask permission to James Cameron, author of the film AVATAR, to enter his work – whose details and synopsis are shown below – and dialogue with it, aiming to reflect on the role of online journals as a potentiator of curriculum acts in research-training in the cyberculture.

Together with cultural practitioners⁴, the co-authors of this research, we articulate the film script to the learning situations and communication practices mediated and structured by network digital technologies and experienced in the context of the “Daily Life and Curricula” discipline in the Education course at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (PROPED-UERJ).

In our course, developed in a hybrid teaching format, we seek, through processes of self-, hetero-, and eco-training to understand the meaning of daily life in knowledge and meaning networks in which we insert ourselves, as well as the expression of these networks in these environments, emphasizing the relations ‘*insideoutside*’⁵ schools, in ‘*learningteaching*’ processes, in the multiple cultural artifacts used, and in the ‘*makingknowing*’ of ‘*professorsstudents*’ in these multiple curricular processes.

⁴ Practitioners (or cultural practitioners), as conceived by Certeau (2013), refer to those who dialogically live and engage with everyday practices. For the author, the focus of culture begins when the ordinary person becomes the narrator, when she defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous) space of her development. From this perspective, the spaces and times of collective creation and political action emerge as fundamental components in the process of school transformation.

⁵ We adopted the term ‘*insideoutside*’, among others, with a purposefully altered spelling, because we were inspired by Alves’ (2008) theoretical framework on everyday life research. According to the author, “in some cases, the combination of terms and their inversion, as to how they are ‘normally’ enunciated, seemed to us, some time ago, the way to show the limits of research in/of/with daily lives within the dichotomy created by modern science to analyze society” (Alves, 2008, p. 11).

AVATAR

Details

Title	Avatar
Production year	2009
Directed by	James Cameron
Premiere	December 18, 2009 (Brazil)
Runtime	162 minutes
Rating	12 - Not recommended for children under 12 years old
Genre	Action Adventure Fantasy Science Fiction
Countries of Origin	United States of America United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Source: Filmow⁶

Synopsis

AVATAR, a science fiction film produced by *Lightstorm Entertainment* and distributed by 20th Century Fox was released in London in December 2009 and nominated for nine Academy Awards. Its story takes place in 2154 on a planet called Pandora, in which a three-meter-tall bluish humanoid species, the Na'vi, lives in conflict with human settlers who intend to dominate their territory to explore an ore known as unobtainium.

⁶ Available at <https://filmow.com/avatar-t8531/ficha-tecnica/>. Accessed on: Nov. 8, 2019.

At the same time, aiming at a peaceful relationship with the locals, the AVATAR Program is developed to create human-Na'vi hybrid bodies since, though humans need to understand the locals' way of life – in total harmony with nature –, they cannot breathe in Pandora's methane-, ammonia-, and carbon dioxide-rich atmosphere. Jake Sully, a paraplegic former Marine, is called to participate in this program, coordinated by Dr. Grace Augustine, in which humans can mentally control a Na'vi body and thus, acquaint themselves with their lives.

Though he has no experience or knowledge of the locals, Jake is chosen to replace his twin brother, a program scientist who was killed in a robbery, due to the similar DNAs. This allows Jake to use his brother's avatar⁷. As Jake sees this is as a great opportunity to perform the surgery which would restore the movement of his legs, Jake accepts Colonel Miles Quaritch's proposal to mingle with the locals, learn their customs, and identify their weaknesses. In other words, study them and seek their collaboration, since the Na'vi territory is located above the largest reserve of the precious mineral so coveted by Quaritch.

Dr. Grace, who prepares a book on Pandorian botany, initially disapproves of Jake's hiring. She sees him stereotypically, as do the other researchers, since he lacks familiarity with the area. However, she ends up accepting this condition which evidences Cameron's message of the importance of joining forces and competences to achieve goals.

In a first foray to the planet, a creature attacks Jake. He gets separated from the group and is saved by Neytiri (a Na'vi woman) who introduces him to her family since she believes he was sent by mother-nature Eywa, a deity to whom everything and everyone connects. The Jake avatar gains the trust of the Na'vi people and Neytiri's heart. From then on, she teaches him the customs of her tribe.

As time goes by, Jake begins to value and prefer the Na'vi way of life. The colonel hears Jake report, in his online journal, that nothing and no one will be able to get the natives to leave their home and, upon discovering his romance with Neytiri, vengefully has his Avatar turned off.

Dr. Grace and the other scientists try to convince Jake that he cannot contain the invasion, but to no avail. Since the locals deem humans as traitors, a war breaks out between them, and the military imprison the Na'vi. Many dies; among them, Neytiri's father. All avatars

⁷ In Hinduism, Avatar consists in the bodily manifestation of a superpowerful being.

are turned off. Trudy Chacon, a ship pilot, disgusted by so much destruction, adheres to the Na'vi cause, saving the scientists, who return to their Avatars. During the escape, Grace is hit by a bullet. Many attempt to save her, including the Na'vi, who try to transfer her soul to the Avatar, but she is unable to survive.

Jake manages to overpower Toruk, a creature much feared and respected by the Na'vi, and ends up regaining the trust of the locals. In defense of Eywa and the planet, he joins them against the humans. When defeat seems imminent, Jake prays to the goddess Eywa for protection of Pandorian nature. In response, Pandora's fauna comes into play, and, with determination and rudimentary weapons, the locals manage to overcome technological might and expel the military from Pandora. The colonel still tries to kill Jake by removing him from the capsule that controls the Avatars, but Neytiri manages to stop him by killing him.

In the end, Jake becomes a real Na'vi and joins Neytiri. Together with the scientists, the pilot, and the locals he takes possession of the fortress built by humans and makes it his new home since the Hometree⁸ was destroyed. Jake decides to permanently transfer his soul to the Avatar through the 'Tree of Souls'⁹. Thus, he definitively conquers this new state of being, crossing the dividing line beyond human life and being completely reborn as an Avatar.

⁸ A tree which is the source of knowledge and union of all living beings of the planet Pandora since, through it, the Na'vi have access to their ancestors' memories and the possibility of connecting to their divinity Eywa.

⁹ Tree considered the mother of all things, a symbology of the maternal archetype.

Online journals as a potentializing device for curriculum acts

Field note, logbook, research journal, online journal, itinerancy journal, among others, are just a few names that can indicate the “minute and intimate description, and therefore dense, of existentiality, which some researchers, stripped of objective ties, build throughout the elaboration of a study,” according to Macedo (2000, p. 195).

In addition to enabling moments of data analysis produced throughout research, the journal is itself a data producer, to the extent that these do not emerge spontaneously in the experienced reality but are produced by researchers’ actions and cultural practitioners’ more or less broad acceptance.

Thus, it consists in the continuous writing of facts, meetings, readings, reflections, and studies, among others, organized around experiences lived in different ‘*spacetimes*’ whether in work, conjugality, in the relationship with the Other¹⁰ or with itself, providing: (a) research training by dialogue with issues that emerge in the field; (b) writing training by the continuous exercise of recording narratives; and mainly, (c) authorial training in the context of research. In this perspective, it carries a pedagogical dimension since it consists, at one time, in a device and in a process, since “to train is not to instruct... It is first to reflect, it is to think a lived experience” (Borba, 2001 *apud* Barbosa; Hess, 2010, p. 54).

In this device, each individual makes notes about everything she feels, reflects, and poemizes, and also about what she retains from a theory or conversation; that is, what she builds to give meaning to life, granting it an instrumental meaning at the service of research.

In the film, Jake, upon returning from Pandora after his first mission, begins his online journal. Observed by Dr. Grace, he records his first impressions on a cell phone:

“*Time is 21:32.*” “*Do I have to do this now?*”, asks Jake. “*I really need to get some rack.*” “*No... now, when it’s fresh,*” answers the doctor, encouraging him to express his formative itinerancies to share them with other subjects involved in the process.

¹⁰ Understood as the one to whom we isonomically relate, respecting their identity, individual baggage, intellectuality, ideas, and worldviews.

“Ok. Location, check. And the days are starting to blur together. The language is a pain, but, you know, I figure it’s like field-stripping a weapon, just repetition, repetition,” continues Jake.

Thus, the online journal *allows* its author to record, in real time, attitudes, occurrences, and various events. Thus, these records, which are always dated, should signal the involved subjects, location, experienced situation, influence of routine, institutional norms, and the general conditions that can interfere in the observed phenomenon. Thus, Jake does not merely describe what he saw, but attributes meaning to the lived, perceived, and conceived to understand his actions.

Seeking approximations with the ideas of Macedo (2010), when we began our research, in addition to using the journal as a reflective instrument, we appropriated the author’s ideas as a way of knowing what cultural practitioners lived, learning the meanings these actors give their experiences; in line with the thought of Bogdan and Biklen (1994), when they state that field notes contain two types of material: a descriptive one, in which the concern is to capture an image, through words, of the places, people, actions, and conversations observed, and another, reflective, to better appreciate the observer’s point of view, ideas, and concerns.

A bubbling of concerns such as “how would our insertion as professors-researchers be perceived by the group?” “How would practitioners react to our proposal to work on school daily life, both face-to-face and online, exploring the potential of digital network technologies?” “How could our mediations add value to discussions and the training process?” were essential so we could plan, problematize, and update our practices in face of this tessitura of knowledge.

Based on a principle of research-training in which all subjects involved train and are trained by dialogical, interactive, and collaborative processes, we sought individual and collective transformation movements, based on the experiences woven in the dialectical approximation between *practice, theory, and practice*. Thus, we assume the complexity of reality, highlighting the social practices that emerge from diverse work and learning contexts. Then, we tried to record our perceptions in detail, reflecting continuously on our actions and reactions. We shared impressions, feelings, anxiety, and interpretations, and expressed the difficulties experienced in our relationship with cultural practitioners, in which the idea of implication, otherness,

authorization, and negatricity¹¹ – concepts presented by Ardoino (1998) which are very dear to us – becomes fundamental. This allowed us to rethink the lived without the usual “lenses” which overshadow our view of reality, more safely analyze what was observed, and build new visions/versions from the experiences described in our journal.

Based on Alves’ ideas (2008), we experienced *the feeling of the world*, seeking references of sounds, varieties of tastes and odors, touching people and objects, and letting us be touched to better understand the complexity and network of knowledge, powers and doings woven in these spaces, revealing what exists beyond their formal discourses and allowing the flow of feelings, senses, and attitudes of sharing, cooperation, and collaboration. As mediators, and stripped of pre-concepts, we conceived practitioners as the co-authors of the learning process. As impressions, feelings, and perceptions surfaced, we went, via our records, to autonomy and creation processes, establishing a communication with our own inner core and expanding our training, which allowed us to exercise psychological and intellectual independence.

Already in the first meetings, we realized that we would have to manage some questions since, in general, students, coming from several degrees and used to expository lectures, experienced some discomfort in offering their opinions to the group, compromising their interaction with the Other. Another aspect was related to fear of exposure in social networks. Students alleged lack of privacy and difficulty of moving from a more individualistic position to a more collective practice with a view toward the tessitura of knowledge in these educational spaces. Finally, there was still the non-recognition of the Other as someone who holds distinctive knowledge, possibilities, and limitations which deserve respect, as highlighted in the testimony of practitioner Luana below:

“Some people are extremely shy, which makes it impossible to participate fully in the learning process, because the classes are intended to give voice to students, to know what they think about the subjects covered. This practice is innovative, but individuals are quite used to expository lectures, in which they are not invited to interact or construct knowledge.”

¹¹ The idea of *alteration*, coined by Jacques Ardoino, affirms the other who is different from us not only as otherness but also, and fundamentally, as a condition to change us. This idea is totally interrelated to the experience of negatricity, the movement by which every social actor, not being the same, can contradict set expectations and unplay the game of the other. The concept of authorization, in turn, implies processes in which we are co-authors of ourselves via our indelible negatricity (MACEDO, 2012).

As our initial doubts dissipated throughout the ‘*learningteaching*’ process and other dilemmas arose, we realized the importance of the journal as a training strategy and a reflection instrument about each practitioner’s formative history in different ‘*spacetimes*.’ These threads that non-linearly and chaotically entwine themselves seemed to us, at first, disconnected in their variety, but gradually led us to ‘*learnresearchteach*’ and ‘*researchteachlearn*.’ To better illustrate this movement, it is relevant to highlight two of many notations made in this device about what was experienced in the discipline around the initial dilemmas that emerged in the field.

Dilemma 1: Managing conflicts

We observed that despite carrying mobile phones or *tablets*, students did not explore the potential of these objects. Invited to post their productions on a Facebook page we created for the course, two students told us that they had chosen not to use this environment and that they would not like to do so. They were, then, instructed to join their respective groups to learn from them how to proceed in inserting these artifacts in that interface. At the end of the class, one of them told us:

“I don’t want to make a criticism, but you are being very invasive in forcing us to post these products and filming us during class. Not only was I not asked about the public use of my image, classes with many group dynamics, like those you propose, affect us, because not everyone likes to expose themselves.”

We, then, explained that the images and information were not public, and that, at the end of the course, they would only be used in our study if the group had agreed to that. We emphasized that the course was elective and that our proposal had been negotiated with all at our first meeting. We also pointed out that daily life research first involves practice, and then, theory, so it can reflect on the practice with a view to new actions. Although the student seemed to have accepted our arguments, she did not return to subsequent classes, preferring not to participate in the course (an item provided for in our consent form).

Dilemma 2: When the unexpected happens

During the proposed activity, there was a power outage. When power came back on, the Wi-Fi network did not work properly (little or no signal). Then, we uploaded the productions via Bluetooth and 3G, which took longer than expected since most students were not very familiar with the required procedures. As practitioners tried, with our help, to update their productions on Facebook, a student complained about the waiting time, claiming that the vast

majority of the class had idle hands. So, she suggested we put technology aside and resume the course by traditional expository lectures.

Without underestimating the student's observation, but seizing the opportunity, while the groups completed their posts – there were only two left – we talked to the class about daily “events” that somehow modify our plans, such as what had occurred in our classroom; that this happened in different situations, and that it was necessary to choose other paths without losing the essence of the proposal. It was decided that everyone, regardless of whether they were able to insert their artifacts into the network, would create their narratives in the next class. This made this activity very productive due to the debate that was established about the relationship ‘*practicetheorypractice*’, based on the recommended reading on daily life.

In fact, field notes invite us to a continuous process of analysis in which we evaluate our implications and productions and plan new learning strategies. Due to its importance in our research, we wanted to go a little further, make it overflow and meet other practitioners, going across everyday practices. We needed to share our impressions, questions, and concerns so they would serve as a fold between observing practices and reflecting on them, and so we did. Data were collectively discussed and given a new meaning in the research process since, as Barros and Kastrup (2009, p. 70) assert, “these reports are not based on objective opinions, interpretations or analyses, but seek, above all, to capture and describe what happens in the intensive plane of forces and affections.”

The tessitura of knowledge, therefore, did not occur only based on rationality, but involved, among other aspects, motivations, desires, and expectations in the subject/object relationship during the investigation process, enabling both the unsealing of the object and of subjects. The inspiring writing of the journal revealed unique points that helped us to turn our gaze on ourselves and our teaching practice, seeking a more ethical and qualified education. The reflection provided by these records enabled a certain distancing from what was experienced, which contributed to untangle the actions undertaken.

These episodes reminded us that the multireferential gaze involves a game of mutual influences, triggering “games typical of will, desires, anguish, manifestations of an unconscious life, of an imaginary functioning [...],” as Ardoino emphasizes (1998, p. 43), generating tactics (Certeau, 2013), ambivalences, and resistances which point to “uncertain” and “incomplete” paths inconceivable in the perspective of positivist epistemology. It is worth mentioning that,

regardless of the care taken to make the research process occur in a climate of collaboration and cordiality, there is no guarantee as to the development of a dialogical and interactive relationship during its course.

Thus, by conceiving teaching as a research practice, we experience formative experiences in cyberspace: we are trained training the Other; we constitute ourselves constituting the Other; which made us more subjects in this relationship of otherness. In this context, as asserted by Santos, E. (2014), journal writing not only enabled reflection on experiences, knowledge, skills, and values but also led us to understand meanings, reorient strategies, and find new meanings in practices, contributing to the self-, hetero-, and eco-training experience (Pineau, 1988)¹².

In his mission, Jake has to learn how to see Pandora – an enlightened, magical territory that breathes life – through Neytiri’s eyes; that is, from her point of view, as Jake points out:

“It’s hard to put in words the deep connection the People have to the forest. They see a network of energy that flows through all living things. They know that all energy is only borrowed and one day you have to give it back.”

As it turns out, “looking”, unlike “seeing”, closes a complex process that supposedly leads to the essence of the things of the world. Thus, Jake gradually learns to live on Pandora and no longer distinguishes between one reality and another, wishing to be in that place, in the Avatar, all the time:

Do not look in her eye. You must choose your own ikran. And he must choose you. [...] When you are ready. All this is your fault! / So why not just let them kill my ass? What’s the thinking? / You have a strong heart. No fear. But stupid! Ignorant like a child! No one can teach you to See.

Similarly, “sensitive listening”, a term coined by Barbier (2007), is an act of self-transcendence since it consists in seeking to understand what is said, interested in both the speech of the Other and the informed situation. Thus, when the Other is understood, his words do not fail to empathically reach her.

¹² Self-training – the subject reflects on her personal and professional paths; hetero-training – formed in relations with the Other; and eco-training – formed through things - knowledge, techniques, cultures, arts, technologies, among others - and their critical understanding (Pineau, 1988).

“Everything is backwards now. Like out there is the true world, and in here is the dream. Hard to believe it’s only been three months. I can barely remember my old life. I’m not sure who I am anymore,” Jake reflects, listening to “the voice of words” (experience) inside, as can be seen in the following account:

“Neytiri calls me skxawng. It means moron,” Norm’s attitude has improved lately.” This is a very important part: *“It’s good he’s back on board, but he thinks I’m a skxawng too. My feet are getting tougher. I can run farther every day. But its’ not [...] It’s not just I’m seeing you in front of me. I see into you.”*

For Larrosa (2004), the experience is of the order of the event. It is when something touches us and requires us to stop, so we can feel and think about the lived experience, which “requires stopping to think, stopping to look, stopping to listen, think slower, look slower, and listen more slowly, stop to feel, [...] to learn slowness, to listen to others, to cultivate the art of encounter, to silence oneself a lot, to be aware and to give oneself time and space” (p. 24).

Thus, we put into practice “sensitive listening”, negotiation, and flexibility, reasons why interactions gained prominence in our research, since it is in the exercise of dialogue that knowledge is woven. Thus, we arranged the room in a circle to break the ice — a common behavior when entering a new environment.

As they arrived, students looked for their peers (colleagues) and formed little groups. After the presentations, we asked them to write on a blank sheet one of their characteristic or even an image that identified them. After folding the leaves with their writings, each practitioner took one of them to try and guess to whom an account or image belonged. Even though many did not know each other, almost all discovered their authors.

One fact drew our attention: one sheet of paper was missing since a student, despite having done the activity, did not put her paper for distribution. When asked why, she simply said she did not do it because she did not want to. We then decided to leave her at ease, even if we found what happened strange since that student is well articulated. After class, we tried to talk to her. She told us she had written negative things about her, showing a very low self-esteem. We were attentive to that and worked to value her actions, inviting her to think about the logo of our Facebook page since she was a Visual Arts student and drew very well, especially manga. At this point, it is relevant to record the testimony of this student at the end of the course, evidencing her growth and integration into the group:

During these classes, we could perceive the importance of the professor identifying and recording in his field notes his dilemmas and observations, in addition to students' difficulties and potentialities, sharing them with the class to seek and propose new teaching methodologies, aiming to overcome barriers, especially in such a heterogeneous class. The experience lived here made it possible for us to reflect on alternative methodologies, which emphasized interdisciplinarity, creativity, and originality, important characteristics for the creation of resources, by the professor, in an authorial and creative way.

Aware that appreciating the movement of everyday life in all its details – identifying the tactics used by practitioners which are evidenced in their actions – requires us to be attentive to everything and dive with all senses in what we want to apprehend, we took reality beyond the clichés instituted in daily life and, breaking the walls of the University, we intertwined the online environment and the city, opening doors to other ways of reading, seeing, feeling, and conceiving the world.

Bakhtin (2011) asserts that narratives establish the dialogical relationship between subjects, stories, and characters from their own stories and the stories of others. Thus, mobilizing these narrative skills enabled cultural practitioners to develop autonomy and authorship, to the extent that they more systematically directed their views to the reality that surrounded them to elaborate something about it.

In this context, we exercised shared mediation, encouraging students to express themselves via multiple languages, moving from the simple record of reality to writing with authorial signs. Thus, the training process was instituted based on the curriculum acts we created. Acting as mediators of mediations, we ensured that mediation was done in orientation and reorientation.

Complex realities, imaginary worlds, fragility of relationships, and plots which seem to move towards a negative outcome, characterize, in general, contemporary cinema. As the analyzed film shows, in addition to its technical aspects - the use of three-dimensional effects - James Cameron used metaphors and allegories to communicate with the public, which helps us understand who we are and our place in the world based on our “projections-identifications” transformed into moving images (Morin, 1997). Thus, the imaginary built in Avatar involves viewers by combining Jake's real and the virtual world – Pandora – which allows him, by taking control of an Avatar, to free himself from his limitations: being able to walk freely in an enlarged nature, with superior physical capacity, breathing, running, jumping, and smiling. Although his eyes are his Avatar's, they shine and radiate happiness, as expressed in his speech:

“I can run farther every day. I have to trust my body to know what to do. I try to observe the flow and energy of the animals. I try to understand the strong connection of the People with the forest.”

Unlike the real, which consists of the possible, static, and already constituted, the virtual represents the problematic complex, the node of trends or forces that accompanies a situation; an event, an object or any entity, and that calls a resolution process: the update (Lévy, 1999). In this perspective, the film *Avatar*, although fitting in the scope of the Cultural Industry¹³ by reproducing a series of common places; for example, persecutions, shootings, forbidden romance, an attractive soundtrack, among others, to conquer young audiences with purchasing power who consume entertainment and culture, also contemplates contemporary issues, problematizing, in a multireferential perspective, aspects of reality related to environmental protection, political and ideological criticism, religiosity, technology, culture, and existence itself. For Arduino (1998), multireferentiality is exercising a plural reading of practical or theoretical objects, which implies both specific views and appropriate languages since it recognizes the complexity and heterogeneity that characterize social practices.

Pandora is a world full of utopias that permeate the human collective imaginary, especially regarding the trilogy man, nature, and wildlife, as Gomes (2010) claims, based on Foucaultian ideas of heterotopia¹⁴. Thus, Cameron shows Pandora as a distant, multicolor planet possessing a unique beauty characterized by the diversity of its fauna and flora. It works as if it were a “[...] mirror, returning us a vision of ourselves or of our culture,” (*idem*, p. 45) taking us to the idea of domination, in which “invaders”, based on asymmetric relations of power and trade established with other peoples, exploit natural resources on other continents, supplant cultures, and destroy nature, as Quaritch expresses¹⁵ by stating that the village was on top of a fortune, and though killing is not correct, it is necessary to meet shareholders’ demands.

¹³ Cultural industry refers to culture production in industrial capitalism. It mainly designates the situation of art in industrial capitalist societies, marked by modes of production mainly aimed at profit. Created by Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), intellectuals of the Frankfurt School in Germany. It appeared in the 1940s, in the book “Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments”, later published in 1947.

¹⁴ Spaces of microbial practices and microphysics of power resulting from more daily sociospatial practices, but at the same time, endowed with elements that support the existence of “other spaces” with regards to other types of power relations and another dimension of power in its social relations. (FOUCAULT, 2001).

¹⁵ Miles Quaritch was the main antagonist of *Avatar*. A colonel who served as head of security at Hell’s Gate on Pandora.

The political and environmental issue discussed by Cameron – also present in our time – is revealed in the appropriation of other people’s lands and the destruction of natural resources, and can only be overcome by changing human behavior in relation to their way of being, living, and relating to the Other; which implies the articulation of subjectivity in a nascent state, the *socius*, in a changing state, and the environment at the point where it can be reinvented (Guatarri, 1990).

In his accounts, Jake also reveals the economic crisis in his country, which can be expanded to the entire planet. In his own words, participating in the Program was akin to going into battle, which he might regret: “*Tommy was the scientist [...] Me ... I was just another dumb grunt gettin’ sent someplace I was gonna regret.*” Referring to other military personnel, he states that “*they must be prepared to pass any test,*” suggesting that, in fact, none of them would want to be involved in those disputes, absent from time with their families in meaningless fights. He emphasizes the lack of governmental attention to veterans when it comes to the precariousness of war hospitals and the tiny pensions received by those who, instead of fighting for freedom as they did on Earth, become mercenaries on Pandora, working for the company.

Understanding everyday reality and the dialectical relations between power, knowledge and doing, interiority and exteriority, singularity and totality, and reason and emotion, requires from us, researchers, much attention and continuous questioning so we go far beyond the look that sees to include feelings, senses, and attitudes of sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.

Recognizing the need for this multidimensional look led us to associate the scientific knowledge proposed in formal curricula to the knowledge of everyday life, thus opening us to new communication agencies, finding, in contours and bends, escape lines that allow us to look at and articulate other spaces in which singularities and heterogeneities can emerge in multiplicity, affections can be constructed, and self-referential subjectivity can also reveal itself, as stated by Deleuze and Guattari (1997).

Coulon (1995) points out that, as practical actions are developed, rational actions are performed (*reflexivity*) from external (environmental) and internal (personal) stimuli. Through narratives, subjects build their networks and share with others these accumulated experiences by stories told and retold countless times (*reportability*).

In fact, via curriculum acts, we developed a praxis that allowed subjects to be trained while involved with the lived world; a training committed to the development of creativity, authorship, and autonomy. In this perspective, we started from students' reality and their life stories to better understand their points of view and the training quality they experienced since, in our practice, narratives play an important role in synthesizing and reproducing reality, giving meaning to it, as we can see in the practitioner Marco Paulo's account on how cultural artifacts influence our formations and our choices, allowing us to read far beyond what was written, making us reflect on new curricular practices possible in our daily lives (Figure 2).

I remember as if it was not long ago – I, in the sixth grade of elementary school (7th grade), like many students at my old school at that time, had trouble with the much feared Mathematics (...) From this grade on, I began to like the subject more and more (...) by the way a mathematics teacher taught (he is retired now), the way he passed on his knowledge and what, in fact, was his passion for mathematics and his profession. My cousins and sister, with, on average, four years of age difference from me, had many doubts about many subjects in school, including mathematics... which made me decide to buy a blackboard and put it on the wall of my room so I could teach them math (...) I started teaching what I knew about any subject, including mathematics. I tried to reproduce the way my teacher (mentioned in the previous paragraph) taught, the way he explained; tried to be as clear as possible when explaining the issues. From these experiences I discovered that I liked to teach — We are not born teachers, we become teachers in practice and in the reflection of practice (Paulo Freire). Today I see the relationship between Freire's quote and my blackboard – I, in my innocence as a child, wanting to teach and “play” in a way (because I told them I wanted to play school and asked them with what subject they had trouble), ended up realizing that I wanted to be a teacher in a child's play, so to speak.

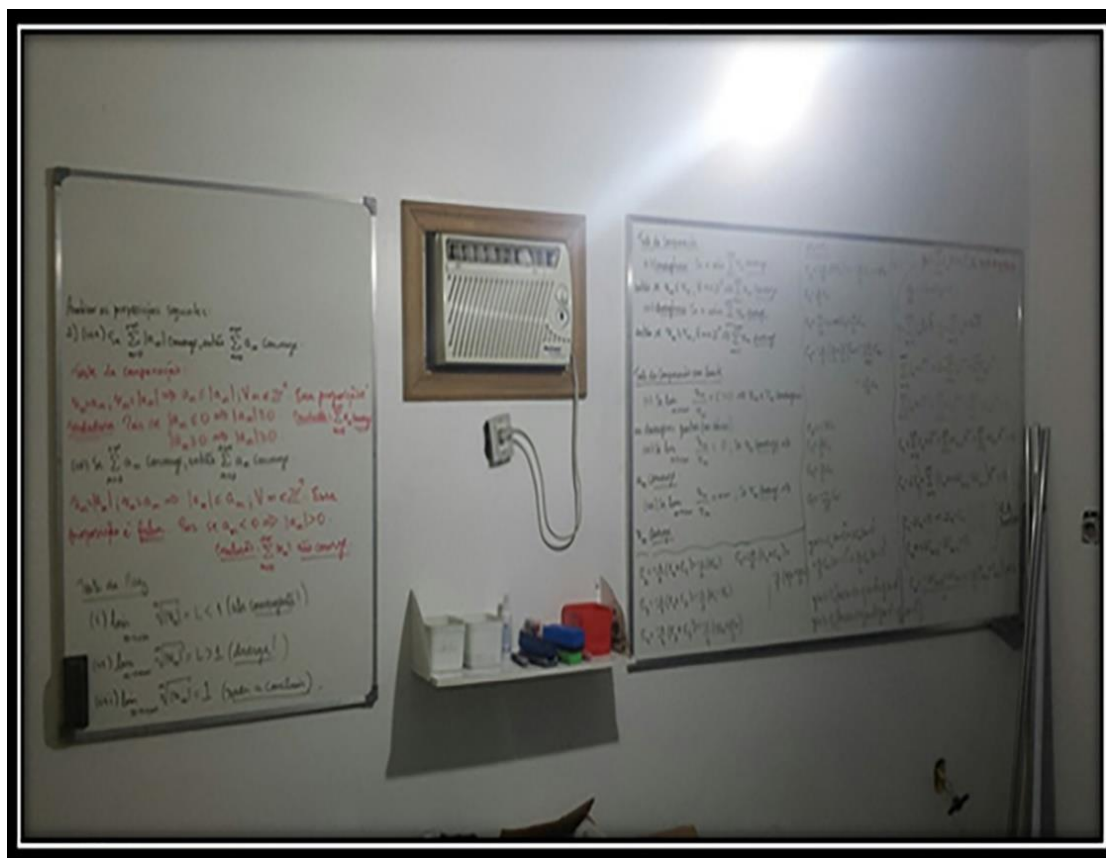


Figure: Artifacts that make us
Source: Amaral (2014, p. 143).

Marcos Paulo's narrative was also the subject of much reflection. After all, what has really changed in the *'learningteaching' process*, since the old chalkboard began to lose ground to digital technologies? We dare say that little, very little. Technologies have changed, but the paradigms that give sustainability to education have not since technological transformations lack a more effective monitoring from pedagogical transformations. The emphasis given to an educational model centered on expository classes and occasional evaluations is inconsistent with the connected, information-filled contemporary world.

It is interesting to highlight that technology is shown in the film as something positive, able to unite Na'vi¹⁶ and humans (creation of Avatars) for the benefit of a common good. However, we observe that, in relation to technological advances, a war opposes the developed world, constituted by humans and their conceit, and another, the underdeveloped (backward)

¹⁶ Native inhabitants of Pandora

world of Na'vi and their culture which could be seen as a simulated way for the author to seek public support for new technologies that emerge every day.

Nowadays, this isn't much different. Since technologies are objects constructed by men, properties of neutrality or non-neutrality cannot be attributed to them. As Santos, E. claims (2014), its use, for good or evil, depends on the intentions of those who appropriate them. This goes against Castells (2003) who warns us that we cannot analyze cyberculture only from the singular perspective of the business culture since it neither acts alone nor dominates the media only in its processes of information dissemination.

Closing his statements, Jake questions himself why continue, if all they tell him to do is a waste of time since the natives will not leave their territories: *"No matter what happens tonight. I don't want to be late. After all, today is my birthday. Jake out."*

As we can see, Jake's records are guided by personal positions, resulting from experiences, which can refer to feelings of attraction and revulsion, thus connecting fragments of his observations and narratives to his worldview. This reflection awakens his ethical sense and belonging to that group, with whom he decides to be definitively, valuing its singularities and effectively collaborating for its survival.

Likewise, in interacting with cultural practitioners, we came across multiple voices, silences, and "silencings" that enmesh us and permeate our discourses in the presence of the Other. In fact, in these intersections of voices, there are aspects impossible to be translated into dialogical contexts, which took place in the meetings between researcher and researched – laughter, sounds, applause, tears, absences, tiredness, tension, and boredom due to the lack of a sense of action; there is always a gap between experience and translation; that is, that which we cannot translate, just feel (Amorim, 2004).

This record plurality, mobilized by the online journal, configures it into more than a simple data collection tool provided by research subjects. In the relationship of otherness, we experience, together with the practitioners, the feeling of the world from the perspective of a multireferential look, attentive to everything and everyone, thus exercising our writings and authorizing ourselves.

Conclusion

Transformations to the world in recent decades have impacted different areas of human activities, requiring a deeper reflection on contemporary problems and their intertwining with academic production in education. Emergent ways of thinking the different educational networks (face-to-face and online) that are established – true spaces of reinvention, creation, and recreation in which life flows, in a dynamic and integrated way, and subjects articulate themselves, training and forming themselves as citizens and professionals, producers of knowledge and meanings, as well as information consumers.

As we have seen, more than fleeting entertainment destined for mass consumption, the dialogue with the film *Avatar* enabled the authors to reflect on the importance of online journals as a catalyst and potentiator of curriculum acts in multi-referential research-training, to the extent that it emerged as a media device capable of stimulating reflective, critical, and creative processes; from problematizations that go beyond their didactic appropriation as simple illustration of the contents formalized in official curricula to encompass the cultural, historical, economic, existential, environmental, and political aspects inherent to it.

In this content, JOURNALS enabled us to describe, in a detailed and reflexive way, our perceptions about our actions and reactions in the daily life of the research conducted. Through them, we shared impressions, feelings, restlessness, and interpretations; we expressed the difficulties experienced in relationships with the Other, in which the idea of otherness has become fundamental; we remembered perceptions, reactions, feelings, the predicted, and the unusual/unexpected. Records were, therefore, in recursive support to the engendered practices, aiming to improve pedagogical practice.

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