

**Noticing things<sup>1</sup>:  
suddenly something happens and we are somebody else**

*Reparar nas coisas:  
de repente algo acontece e somos outro*

*Darte cuenta de las cosas:  
de repente algo se pasa y somos el otro*

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**Abstract:** This text intends to share some reflections on the act of thinking and writing in the current academic practices, which, in most cases, result in texts that operate an enormous amount of information and quotations, and yet the voice of one who thinks and writes are absent. It is as though thinking-writing follows a protocol of good use of quotes from recommended authors without the scripture being allowed to be infected by them. The text, in the course of its course, states exactly the opposite of this: first of all, we think that we are involved in questions that grow in the political e social field and disturb us in such a way that it is impossible not to question ourselves about what is happening to us. The tone of the essay adopted seemed timely, because, and this is a characteristic of this genre of writing, he endeavors much more to propose questions, to suggest ways and to share them, than to evoke some definitive certainty about what he narrates. Moreover, it encourages deviations in the mode of writing as it accompanies the thinking that is taking place. This, of course, does not avoid the risk of contradictions and unfinished writing.

**Keywords:** Thinking. Writing. Academic Practices.

**Resumo:** Este texto pretende partilhar algumas reflexões sobre o ato de pensar e escrever presente nas práticas acadêmicas atuais, que, na maioria das vezes, operam uma quantidade enorme de informação e de citações, e, no entanto, a voz daquele que pensa e escreve encontra-se ausente. É como se pensar-escrever seguisse um protocolo do bom uso de citações de autores recomendados sem que com elas a escritura se deixasse contagiar. O texto, no seu decorrer, vai afirmando exatamente o contrário disso: antes de mais nada, pensa-se implicado nas questões que se adensam no campo político e social e que nos perturbam de tal modo que é impossível não se interrogar sobre o que está nos acontecendo. O tom ensaístico adotado me pareceu oportuno, porque, e essa é uma característica desse gênero de escrita, ele se empenha muito mais em propor questões, sugerir caminhos e partilhá-los, do que evocar alguma certeza definitiva sobre o que narra. Além do mais, encoraja desvios no modo de produção da escritura, na medida em que acompanha o pensamento acontecendo. O que, decerto, não evita o risco de contradições e inacabamentos.

**Palavras-chave:** Pensar. Escrever. Prácticas Académicas.

**Resumen:** El presente texto pretende compartir algunas reflexiones sobre el acto de pensar y escribir en las prácticas académicas actuales, que, en la mayoría de las veces, resultan en textos que operan una cantidad enorme de información y de citas, aunque la voz de aquel que piensa y escribe encuentra -se ausente. Es como si ambos pensar-escribir siguiera un protocolo del bueno uso de citas de autores recomendados sin que con ellas la escritura se dejara contagiar. El texto, en su transcurso, va afirmando exactamente lo contrario: antes que nada, se piensa implicado en las cuestiones se piensa implicado en las cuestiones que se adhensan en el campo político y social y que nos perturban de tal modo que es imposible no interrogar sobre lo que nos está sucediendo. El tono de ensayo adoptado me pareció oportuno, porque, y esa es una característica de ese género de escritura, se empeña mucho más en proponer cuestiones, sugerir caminos y compartirlos, que evocar cierta certeza definitiva sobre lo que narra. Además, alienta desviaciones en el modo de producción de la escritura, en la medida

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*en que acompaña el pensamiento pasando. Lo que, ciertamente, no evita el riesgo de contradicciones y escrituras inacabadas.*

**Palabras clave:** *Pensar. Escribir. Prácticas Académicas.*

First Instruction  
Knowledge  
is always  
close to the heart  
(RICARDO MARQUES)

I'm sitting in front of my computer, open Microsoft Word, the blank screen looks back at me. I'm smoking a cigarette. Usually I don't smoke. Both those actions, sitting and smoking, in this moment, complement each other. I finish reading the book from the writer Gonçalo Manuel Tavares (2013) – "Atlas do Corpo e da Imaginação" [Atlas of Body and Imagination] – an excerpt in which Picasso answers to a question he is asked on what would be necessary for one to become a painter. He answers: sitting down. The other, amazed, says: - Do you paint sitting? – No, I always paint standing. But then, what does that sitting means, in Picasso's answer? In that excerpt, Tavares (2013) lead us, sitting means waiting. Enter a state of needed preparation, preceding the action to come. In my case, writing a text.

The encounter with that excerpt has raised a few reflections that keep following me, for some time. The most urgent of them, maybe is the desire to align me to other modality of temporality in daily life, more encompassed, less urgent, less immediately responsive, committed to other ways of thinking. Stop to look, listening to, speaking. Speeches committed to ways of saying, in which the words are more than spokespersons of a place of certainty and work much more as a space for pollination of ideas. I refer to a certain flow of fresh air that a speech, a writing, and, why not to say, a life also must make pass, in order to impede the thought, coagulated, prisoned in models learned in our scholar trajectory, so suffocating, sterile, but only reproductive.

By choosing the word pollination, referred me to Peter Pál Pelbart's (2013) essay, "On Pollination in Philosophy", published in the book "Cartography of Exhaustion: Nihilism Inside Out". In a passage the philosopher alludes to the texts of Deleuze and Guattari as blows that make us to cross tribes, faunas, floras. Texts that bring movement, as those from Pelbart, and that lead us to the edges of understanding. It is dear to me, for the sense those philosophers intend to give to what is enunciate is of a precise imprecision. It predominates, in my opinion, a plasticity of thought, which I interpret as a calling each reader to write lines of reading from the singular position each subject occupies in the world. At least for me, I always get the impression that those writers demand me to become a living agent of idea production, putting into work associative logics. That I sit down for a moment in a comfortably position and feel in my skin what kind of air flow that text produces in me. What it wants from me? That I only reproduce it with perfection? Or that I twist it, bringing near to it alterities, other voices, and other timbres, which put more wood in the stake of that thought system, which, as I see, stimulates the friction between other bodies, which does not want to be the center of anything, which accepts to be infected.

Expanding this system requires to be alert to presences, carriers of other airs that force displacements in the habitual way of thinking, of feeling, of living. Besides, Deleuze himself, in his condition of philosopher, creates concepts that are not limited to the history of Philosophy, it is a whole combinatory of other planes of knowledge that propel the creation of his philosophic concepts. His thought is always engaged with some questions that interests him, it is never about a neuter exercise, of a mere thinking for thinking. Talking about an engaged thinking in Deleuze means talking about a production of concepts whose aim is to intervene in the world. Its *modus operandi* is casting itself outside of Philosophy, sniffing in other places, in literature, in painting, in the cinema, in the psychanalysis, operator to put his concepts into work, submitting them to needed twists, make them work under the perspective of what interests him to engender. There are other possible worlds to emerge, thought we think this one, acting under the neoliberal capitalist logic, is the only one. After all, it counts with the whole advertising and media machinery to validate and reproducing it. Naturalized to the exhaustion, hard to question.

A few moments about it was hot in the room I write, and suddenly it started to wind. My body before standing in the heat spreads relieved. I run to the window to welcome that good wind. I've been losing the fear to seem fool to others, especially to my students, by incorporation a speech or a gesture displaced from the expectative people in general have of what is a class. I have dared to seem strange, alert to what crosses by spirit during the class time: a noise from the lawn-mower from the outside, a pooch that enters the door, a superb light in sunset, a lovely grimace of some student, a sudden desire to sing a song or reading a poem. I believe there is something contiguous between the class I have prepared at home and those little noises that bring movement to what I have **rehearsed**. The intensity of life is ever present in our existence and disjoints the planned. I like to think that subject there, in front of all of us, sharing his reading, sometimes get distracted, deviates from the script and resumes it in another way. He has incorporate to his speech what has happened.

But what would be the dominant expectation of the students most of the time? That the teacher will **pass** information that will be **useful** and indispensable to their academic training. And the bigger the volume of accumulated **information**, the more equipped they will be to oil the neoliberal capitalist market, that rejoices in recruiting the productive force of the subjects stuffed with information, fully incapable of making sense of what happens *to* and *around* them. They are too much active, too much assertive, they have too much opinions, too much self-absorbed. That has been the majoritarian tendency of the current education. According to it, the conception of class, with its instituted fixed content, and little critically questioned, presupposes that everything presented there is indistinctively convenient to everyone, which forms the homogeneous base of education for all. That everyone, then, try to copy everything, to reproduce bit by bit latter.

In the 1980s a student of Gilles Deleuze's, Claire Parnet, with whom he wrote a book, which was entitled "Dialogues" in English (DELEUZE; PARNET, 1998), proposes to the philosopher to conduct an interview-recording in which he would choose subjects from A to Z that were dear to him, and to talk philosophically and freely about them. The title of that conversation is Gilles Deleuze from A to Z, available at YouTube. In the letter P from

Professor, Deleuze will tell us things that destone a lot from the way we traditionally think about a class. I am going to list some phases that have hooked me. He treats the class as something musical, from which everyone picks what is most convenient to him. Some people, for example, fell asleep and wake up mysteriously in right moment something interests them. For Deleuze, the subject is not necessarily interesting, but **something more**. He will also say that in a class intelligence and emotion appear in balance, and Deleuze emphasizes emotion. A class without emotion is uninteresting. That **something more** would be transmitted by the gradient of emotion that circulates in a classroom. We should not forget that exists in the philosophical tradition, we have inherited, a terrible suspicion regarding emotion. It would lead us to error and imprecision, to failure, it would lack order and balance. But Deleuze disbelieves that division intelligence-emotion, and brings intelligence back to the arms of emotion, it that has the strength to make the body to vibrate, and from that encounter results living, contagious words, that construct ways of drawing the thought against automatisms and normalizations. They are words with people inside, committed to open territories of knowledge and of living together yet to be explored. Words that desire to formulate an unaccustomed way of thinking.

It is stimulating to think in a class like that, as a musical sheet, crossed by emotion and intelligence, in which the voices create woofs, woven by yarns that constitute the singular experiences the subjects bring inside: the books they read, the movies they watched, the cities they have been to, the bars they attended, the mouths they kissed, the beds they slept in. A space like that, in which the woof of the voices, some lower than the other, some higher, and with different timbres, some smoother, other rougher, it will never be a homogeneous mass, for each existence is unique, singular, finite.

Several thinkers today look at the devastating effects of the neoliberal capitalist regime over the natural environment. There are two very living examples in us, Brazilian, that causes us a lot of pain: the burst of the dam of *Samarco* mining, occurred in the city of *Mariana, Minas Gerais*, in 2015, and the burst of another dam, of *Vale do Rio Doce*, that reached the city of *Brumadinho*, in January, 2019. Even though it seems that not many people realize, those happenings splash mud in the subjectivity. Guattari (1990), in his book “The Three Ecologies”, published in France in 1989, and in the United States in 2000, already called our attention to the mesh and articulation of those three spheres: the ecological, the public, referring to the social bounds woven between the subjects, and that of subjectivity. And thinking about the possibility of creating other territories of existence would imply to **revolution**, a difficult world to apply today, those three instances:

The only true response to the ecological crisis is on a global scale, provided that it brings about an authentic political, social and cultural revolution, reshaping the objectives of the production of both material and immaterial assets. Therefore, this revolution must not be exclusively concerned with visible relations of force on a grand scale, but will also take into account molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire (GUATTARI, 2000, p. 28).

Within the limits of that text, I would like to pull the wire of subjectivity, in proceed in the direction that has been suggested, hopefully, through the text. It is about the actions of thinking and writing, performed by the students, but, maybe, we might include the teachers. I observe that, more and more, the student is encouraged to gather a bunch of information that

culminate in information, in general, categorical, that fulminate the text. That, then, is translated into a finished compact mass, ready to be consumed, does not leave room for conversation. And why it does not allow for getting closer to the other?

After attending a class or a conference, after reading a book or some information, after taking a trip [...] we can say that we know things that we didn't before, that we have more information about something, but, at the same time, we can say that nothing has happened to us, that nothing has touched us, [...] nothing has happened to us or in us (LARROSA, 2014, p. 19).

Today there is, consolidated in the practices of academic thinking and writing, a kind of coercion: of a quickly communicating some idea, presenting a result to be evaluated. It is needless to say that we live in a society with a vertiginous flow of information, which drag us along. That overall sensation is that we need to process everything quickly to dispatch answers, convictions. The work of voracious reception of bibliographic sources, quotes, shortens, it seems to me, the space for that other work, that one upon oneself, to be carried out. It would imply, to begin with, to admit that someone thinks and writes from a positioning in front of decisions, raised in the world, that call that someone to thinking-writing. And, surely, those are questions that insinuate in a singular subject, with singular practices of life, that cause some kind of uneasiness, some discomfort and perplexity, and, for that we write, exactly not to get rid of the discomfort, but to question it from closely. To exercise himself in other diagrams of possible existence. Rather, to fable other plausible plots, and being able to share it with other thinkers.

In the text of Jorge Larrosa (2014) there is a very precise intention to distinguish information from experience. I will not enter the engendering of the discussion he puts, timely, tough, enriching and much more complex than what I will appropriate here, to reflect upon what we are naming as knowledge production. And that speaks, it seems to me, not only to our students, but especially to us, teachers, and many times write our ideas with neuter words, as if we wanted to erase the prove that there is someone alive, pulsing, inhabiting those words. Well, but we have been taught not to contaminate our texts, it is scientifically incorrect, it is not technical. The most curious thing is that, by disguising our voice, we subtract from the text the trace of joy that other people's voices have proportionated us and allowed for our transformation.

For Larrosa (2014), the subject of experience, differently from the subject of information, is someone vulnerable to what happens to him. Vulnerability seems to me a key point, for it says about another logic at play, that of the slowing down, and that implies a stop to listen to oneself, to the other, and to the world around us. The eagerness to gather information and discharge opinions are not cogitated here, nor accounted for.

From the text of Jorge Larrosa, I highlight the two following relevant quotes:

We are not only ultra-informed subjects, teeming with opinion and super-stimulated, [...] we are always active, always mobilized, we cannot stop (LARROSA, 2014, p. 24).

The subject of experience defines itself not by its activity, but by its passiveness, by its receptiveness, by its availability, its openness. It is, however, a passiveness which

precedes the opposition between active and passive, of a passiveness made of passion, of surrender, of patience, of attention [...] (LARROSA, 2014, p. 26).

Submerged into the excess of activity, of proactivity, of desperation to quickly draw conclusions on what we read, we see ourselves fully captured by the logic of information, that dominates our way of existence, and that bring us the comforting sensation that we are up to everything, we are very smart, but that, in fact, it only resulted in noise thought and written. On the other hand, adventuring oneself for that strange pathway of passive activity can be translated into a kind of emancipation from that hegemonic scheme of thought production, in which we all fell, students and teachers, that, by the end of the day, is satisfied with the results presented in texts, where does not exist any subtlety of thought, nor even point out other horizons for those who read them. They say, at the most, more of the same.

A passivity made out of passion, patience, attention, three inestimable words articulated by Larrosa (2014), which in our daily teaching practices seems to find little space for growth. Especially for they are at service of other modality of knowledge production, that committed to life. In that sense, resuming one of the ideas presented in the beginning of this text, ones do not think for thinking, one thinks implied in the questions that compels him to think. However, it is not what we have been taught to practice. We are subjected since childhood to reproduce content, communicating in a clear an objective way what we think, using the language in a mere instrumental way. This is the inherited way of academic writing. Narrating or rehearsing, is producing literature. That the text does not come splashing emotion. And the emotion I am talking about is that, I suppose, for Deleuze, that advises intelligence, bending over it right trajectory, messing up with its pretense conviction about everything.

Patience and attention, by their turns, go entirely against the educational practices disseminate today. Both collapse with the logic of instantaneous results, based on the gathering of data, ready to be used. They work on the listening of what impel them as living beings, and that requires a positioning, an ethic.

The school is taking charge of molding subjectivity, flattering the voices, depotentializing those which dare to confront its working, revoking autonomy to think and ways of saying different from the expected. Most of us were trained according to those guidelines. It is not easy to break with that legacy and allow ourselves to thinking-writing with our uncertainties and possible flaws, and especially support our doubts. We are stimulated to cultivate and athletic intelligence, that argues with property about the theme chosen, whose written text seems to have forgotten the subject outside.

Finally, maybe it is the case of asking: what we seek in our classes and tutoring? Is it to invent with our students a field propitious to speculations that transit by multiple perspectives of thinking and writing, and draw centers of balance deliberating unstable? Why not to welcome, inclusive, some nonsense that affect the exercise of thinking, without quickly getting rid of them? Maybe we need to stimulate in the students and, above all, in ourselves, the production of singular discourses, woven with shaking, doubts, hesitations, for not thought if ready beforehand. As we are impelled to thinking, it is an exercise. And what we intend is to transmit beyond the results the processes that lead someone by pathways they were unaware of, which were accessed with attention and patience little by little, and getting closer, at the end,

of oneself, and of certain understanding of the world that called on him the urgency of some kind of deciphering.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Ernane Oliveira.

