

**Language and Creation: Singular Components of Human Knowledge /
*Linguagem e criação: constituintes singulares do conhecimento humano***

Vera Bastazin*

ABSTRACT

This study aims at highlighting how the poetic word can be a strong ally for the diversity of knowledge in its search for new ways of seeing, understanding and interpreting humankind and the world. In the article, our goal is to articulate theoretical approaches with texts or poetic fragments that, as a priority, give rise to the experience of language as a constantly evolving living organism, and of literature as space for non-automatic perception and knowledge.

KEYWORDS: Langue; Language; Diversity of Knowledge

RESUMO

O estudo pretende destacar a maneira como a palavra poética pode ser uma forte aliada para a diversidade do saber na busca de novas formas de ver, entender e interpretar o homem e o mundo. No artigo, nosso propósito é articular recortes teóricos e textos ou fragmentos poéticos que despertem, prioritariamente, para a experiência da língua, como organismo vivo em permanente transformação, e da literatura como espaço desautomatizador da percepção e do conhecimento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Língua; Linguagem; Diversidade do saber*

* Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUC/SP, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; vbastazin@uol.com.br

Literature, in its perspective of recovering tradition and a space where the imaginary is projected, presents itself as a field of possibilities for knowledge; it is a phenomenon of language, and as such, responds in a way to humankind's quest for knowledge of self and the world. Tracing humanity's path, one must remember that language consists of a reality that is revelatory as much as it is disruptive. It allows the perception, understanding and expression of the world as much as it can deny everything that we see and are, that is, everything that enables us perennially to produce new modes of representation. Creating gods or denying the existence of a great Creator are realities and language that coexist in the panoply of mythologies, philosophies, religious sects, or even simple social groups.

Thinking about language's great power is to face paradoxes: human limitations, such as being an animal, are set against human beings' infinite ability to produce new ways of expressing what we see, feel, and think. The linguistic system provides a vast array of options for expression of *beings'* perceived and intellectual interior, yet the incessant creation of words and expressions is a fact that breaks with the options offered by language and creates new alternatives that become part of the language of children, adults or, in a very special form, of poets.

Papai no Mel (Daddy in Honey) was the way a child reproduced the name of *Papai Noel* (Santa Claus), when this term was not yet part of the baby's repertoire, that is, in the first years of his/her life. The composition of the expression in this case implied an associative creation between what was familiar to it - *papa* (daddy) and *mel* (honey) - and the still unknown name of the old man *Papai Noel* (Santa Claus) who appears on the magical eve of Christmas. In this case, sound and meaning have been articulated and fused in the infant's mind, setting the ground for the possibility for a perceptive expression that, in the scope of language, is innovative and non-automatic.

The adult, in turn, who already uses a broad repertoire from a lifetime in society, finds that the creation also makes realization possible. The expression, for example, "a yellowed photo" (*uma foto amarelecida*) connects the semantic articulation of two realities of perception: one related to the color *yellow* (*amarela*) and another one to the adjective *aged* (*envelhecida*). The simultaneous composition of the two perceived phenomena spontaneously generated a word with an enhanced potential for meaning, breaking the language system, codified in a dictionary, without, however, compromising

communication, which, on the contrary, was strengthened precisely by the interlinking of old information with a new element, the nonexistent word in the dictionary.

In unexpected and original linguistic situations when the child produces words and/or expressions that escape convention, it would be interesting for teachers or educators in general – including parental figures, whose coexistence with children is intense – to highlight the “linguistic creation,” showing acceptance of what is unconventional, in addition to their instructive skill, observational shrewdness, and the apprehension of novelty.

In this context, we should remember the words of the poet “Since life is not enough, there is art.” (PESSOA, 2000, p.28).¹ This statement opens space for the attempt to understand what this power of language is, i.e., to reassess life. More must be said, however; we must say that which is beyond what the rules of language teach us; we must indeed say the possibilities that our human condition allows us, as linguistic beings – thinking, creative creatures who are always unsatisfied by the confrontation with our surroundings.

Facing the ability to project possibilities, *with* and *by* words, the poet feeds and strengthens his own ability to break the limits of the universe. Starting with the restriction of language which, as a predefined social system, imposes ways of *saying* and, why not, even of *understanding* and *thinking* about facts and phenomena. Words, sounds, rhythm, syntax, meanings, everything that makes up the linguistic system can become, in human hands and with the potential of the poet, the object of contravention. Rebelliousness is a manifestation of all those who feel unsatisfied, either with the facts of life or with the linguistic system, when it is presented in an authoritarian and restrictive manner. In the arts in general and literature in particular, there is always space available for the manifestation of the insubordinate word or gesture.

In the case of the word in its relation to the object, when it is purely conventional, it finds no backing in any perceptible logic. We will examine the potential tension that can be established between the linguistic and literary use of the word. If Margarida [Daisy] is a woman’s name, it is as arbitrary a choice as assigning to that word a botanical phenomenon that results in a flower. For the poet, this verbal reality can be different, as observed in “a margarida/... amarga a vida” [the daisy/...embitters

¹ Text in original: “Porque a vida não basta, existe a arte.”

life]. These two verses by Paulo Leminski (1985, p.118) empty the meanings of the word *daisy*, which ceases to refer to a feminine name or a flower, and decompose it into other possibilities created by the word's sounds: /amarga/ [/bitter/] and /vida/ [/life/]. The juxtaposition creates a *certain tension* by opening the possibility of associating the feeling or *act of love* with the bitter sensation of life, to the extent that the word *amarga* [*embitter*] in Portuguese contains the verb *to love* (*amar*) and the preconceived notion that the feeling of love would be associated with something good and not bad/*bitter* [*amargo*].

Playing with signifier/signified provides an example of the possible course between what words say and what they could say when they break convention and offer a new meaning that is conjured up by the play on sound and semantics.

The creation of the word is thus a continuous action by humans that enables the more accurate expression of what one intends to say as much as the disclosure of the word's power *to not say*, namely, to deny, or to hide. In this case, we limit ourselves to the universe of poetry, that is, *counter-communication*, as Décio Pignatari Pignatari (1971)² defined, or the *Non-Word*, in George Steiner's conception (1993).³ We will linger on these questions.

The discussion on *counter-communication* implies walking in the direction that is opposite to that intended by the encounter among people *by* the word, by the act of approaching and getting to know each other and exchanging information and life experiences using the word as a vehicle for social integration. What occurs in the *counter-communication* process is the inverse: the hypothesis that the creation of a noise, of an unexpected interference in the process of verbal or textual composition is always necessary. In other words, banal repetition would be a form of communication inefficiency. Every *meeting* among humans should presuppose a minimum of information in the form of an obstacle, unfamiliarity, an enigma to be deciphered. Within this context, what remains as information and/or experience is only that which immediately sets up a barrier, resistance, or difficulty.

² *Counter-Communication* is a concept associated with poetry as well as with the title of Décio Pignatari's work *Contracomunicação* (PIGNATARI, 1971).

³ The *Non-Word* is one of the arguments elaborated by George Steiner in *The Broken Contract* (STEINER, 1989). The full reference is: STEINER, G. *The Broken Contract*. In: *Real Presences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, pp.51-134.

As stipulated by Pignatari (1985), the mere redundancy in communication would not have meaning and would tend to disappear. It would be necessary always to add, to introduce something that showed up as new, challenging, offering a pause to reflect and decipher. Accordingly, all truly efficient information would be the result of a shock between the foreseeable and the unforeseeable, the known and unknown, or yet, the result of this *non-meeting* that would remain in the mind as an enigma to be deciphered, or information to be conquered and absorbed.

Developing this perspective, and taking the risk of proposing a more rigorous terminology, it can be said that *counter-communication* is one of the realities of poetic language. The word in poetry, unlike its manifestation on a colloquial level, is not presented to explain, but rather, to *un-explain*:

a poem
that is not understood
is noteworthy

the supreme dignity
of a ship
missing the route
(LEMINSKI, 2013, p.71).⁴

Let us examine the passage from the linguistic-referential level of reading and interpretation to the poetic-metalinguistic one. Referentially, the act of following a planned sea route must lead to some previously determined destination. Barring any surprises or new information, the course is predictable and therefore challenge-free. On the other hand, missing the route requires search and determination; it is necessary to look for and invest in alternatives that lead one in a desirable direction. The results can be surprising. For better or for worse, the taste of discovery will manifest itself. Either in denotative or connotative terms, what is already known is not (an)*notated*; what is registered is that which one wants to save, because it represents something new amid memory's stores of knowledge. This creates the possibility for interpretation: the poem, as the ship, must be understood as a risk on the ocean, whose movements of water can bring surprises and discoveries. The notion of mistake does not have a place in poetry. As Leminski (1987, p.285) expressed, the poet is the very *expression of error in genetic*

⁴ Text in original: “um poema/ que não se entende/ é digno de nota/ a dignidade suprema/ de um navio/ perdendo a rota.”

programming. His poetry disconcerts upon claiming that one does not “err just once,” but rather...

Err once

I never make the same mistake
twice
I commit two, three
four five six
until this error learns
that only the error has its assured time
(LEMINSKI, 1985, p.118).⁵

The play of sound, syntax, rhythm and semantics offers a dance of meanings that defies linguistic norms and values. It creates subversion; that is, it creates a poetic text based on the narrative of fairytales, given the use of the present tense in the verses. The narrative of *era uma vez* (once upon a time) errs; in Portuguese, it stumbles at the /r/, it multiplies it, it produces the error that defies, but reaffirms; in poetry, playing with controversy gives the poet – and the reader – pleasure. We do not err once upon a time, but upon several times. In fact, according to the poem’s statement, there is no subject that errs, but rather, it is the very error that becomes an agent and learns that it has space and time in poetry. This therefore opens the space for the discussion about the richness and poetic potential of language. The reader has a space at his/her disposal for reflecting upon the meaning of the error in the use of the word: interesting grounds for tensions and highlights for everything that can be appropriate or inappropriate in the realms of linguistic and poetic possibilities.

In this sense, *communication* and *counter-communication* would be inspiring concepts for interesting reflection on different levels of learning. Effectiveness, immediacy, and objectivity rule communication. As a converse movement, counter-communication disrupts the intellectual comfort zone and the economy of sensations. Literature and *counter-communication* appear as meanings of the same universe, parts of the same game, different names for concepts that intermingle.

If the poetic word play is a *counter-communication* movement, what would the idea of an *after-word* mean to George Steiner (1989)?⁶ How should we understand his

⁵ Text in original: “Erra uma vez/ Nunca cometo o mesmo erro/ duas vezes/ já cometo duas, três/ quatro cinco seis/ até esse erro aprender/ que só o erro tem vez.”

thoughts about something found beyond the word, the main defining object of man as a social, communicative, and innovative being?

Steiner, considered one of the most sophisticated critics of the twentieth century, has used his position and countless books, published in both Europe and the United States, to express points of view that prompt reflection about the phenomenon of language, the power of the word for the transmission of ideas, and about literature, especially in the realm of contemporary poetry.

Starting from the shock of man versus the knowledge that everything can be said or unsaid, constructed or denied using the word, Steiner (1993)⁷ goes on to confront the challenge of offering a thought about the phenomenon of language outside the spectrum of representation. For accomplishing this, the author courses through the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, points out that the relationship between the word and the object or the phenomenon of reality is an empty convention, that is, bare of any meaning that can lend support to a logical understanding of relations. The consciousness of the dictionary's arbitrariness of the "dictionarized" word leads to the poet's irreverence. Lover of signs, the poet goes on to establish new relations with the word – feeling the texture of the sound, the concreteness of the sign. The invitation that it (the word) holds for the *awakening* of other meanings is encouragement enough for sailing adrift in its poetic dimensions. This would be, perhaps, the trigger for thinking not of a time for which the word would lose its value, but instead, of a contemporaneity that would arouse the detachment of the word from its immediate meanings measured in a reality that is external to it and therefore, to a certain extent, strange.

I see a butterfly go by
And for the first time in the universe I notice
That butterflies do not have color or movement,
Even as flowers do not have scent or color
[...]
The butterfly is just a butterfly
And the flower is only a flower
(CAEIRO/PESSOA, 1998, p.27).⁸

⁶ For reference, see footnote 3.

⁷ For reference, see footnote 3.

⁸ PESSOA, Fernando. *Fernando Pessoa & Co: Selected Poems*. Edited and translated by Richard Zenith. New York: Grove Press, 1998.

In Alberto Caeiro/Fernando Pessoa, this awareness of the sign inscribes itself directly alongside the plurality of heteronyms. Finally, exploring the word's poetic dimension gives rise to possibilities of which reason itself is unaware; the multiplicity of points of view is as dense a reality of poetic energy as the power of the sign to signify is socially dense.

In Caeiro's poem, *the butterfly [a borboleta]* suffers a depletion of the sign until it achieves the negation as *a being* of representation – *butterflies do not have color or movement / as flowers do not have scent or color*. This happens when it is reaffirmed only by its graphic design and audible qualities: *just a butterfly* or in the case of the flower, *only a flower*. In this case, the poet conducts a *scan* of meanings to be able to touch upon the *skeleton*, or the materiality of the word. For the reader, what remains is the impact from the search and absence: how can it be that *butterflies do not have color or movement*, and *flowers do not have scent or color*? What *flower* and what *butterfly* is this poet talking about?

The assertion regarding the breach of contract between creation and representation in the poetic universe is, to Steiner, an artistic reality stated in contemporaneity. The pact between word and world – extended by the relationships of *logos* and *cosmos* – develops and strengthens, according to Steiner (1993),⁹ with the intersection that Western thought establishes, throughout its constitution, with the most diverse areas of knowledge, among which stand out philosophy, art, history, and religion. These possible and substantial connections confer meaning to the world and to the existence of humankind as thinking, interactive *beings*.

If scientific, technological and artistic knowledge today represents not something merely cumulative, but above all, a human behavior measured by the dynamism and interaction in search of connections with nature, then, to us art seems, without a doubt, one of the areas with the greatest absorption and re-creation of knowledge. At the core of artistic, particularly literary, production lies discourse – the foundation for every systematic construction of knowledge – which can risk everything, not only because it pluralizes the voice, but above all, because it enables the permanent creation and re-creation of the present and the past that even if they only existed for

⁹ For reference, see footnote 3.

(re)updating the *here and now*, just like the hypothetical prospect of everything that has yet to come, even if it were mere speculation.

Reading as an Experience of Knowledge

Texts by Manuel de Barros (Cuiabá, 1916-2014) motivated our reflective process.

Disobject

The awkward boy saw a comb in the middle of the yard. The comb was nearly not a comb anymore. It would be closer to being a serrated leaf. Serrated a bit that it had already become part of the ground and was not a rock, a snail, a frog. The comb was something new. The soil would have soon eaten a few of its teeth. Layers of sand and ants had gnawed its organism. That is if a comb has an organism. The truth is that the comb did not have a rib. It was no longer possible to say whether that thing was a comb or a fan. The colors of the horn the comb was made of gave way to a greenish moss. I think the animals of the place would pee a lot on that disobject. The fact is that the comb lost its personality. It rested upon the roots of a tree, unusable, not even for combing a monkey. The boy who was awkward and had a knack as a poet, precisely he looked at the comb in that terminal state. And the boy began to imagine that the comb, in that state, had already been incorporated into nature, just like a river, a bone, a lizard. I think that the trees partook in that comb's loneliness [...] (2010, III).¹⁰

The text immediately raises a question: but what is a *disobject*? It is a strange way to refer to something when it stops being *the first, immediate thing* [that comes to mind].

The reading of the text actually offers the experience of a *disreferentialization* process, since the author presents the comb as a *textual being* in decomposition, either

¹⁰ Text in original: “Desobjeto / O menino que era esquerdo viu no meio do quintal um/ pente. O pente estava próximo de não ser mais um pente./ Estaria mais perto de ser uma folha dentada. Dentada um/ tanto que já se havia incluído no chão que nem era uma/ pedra um caramujo um sapo. Era alguma coisa nova o/ pente. O chão teria comido logo um pouco dos seus/ dentes. Camadas de areia e formigas roeram seu/ organismo. Se é que um pente tem organismo. O fato é/ que o pente estava sem costela. Não se poderia mais dizer/ se aquela coisa fora um pente ou um leque. As cores a/ chifre de que fora feito o pente deram lugar a um/ esverdeado a musgo. Acho que os bichos do lugar/ mijavam muito naquele desobjeto. O fato é que o pente/ perdera a sua personalidade. Estava encostado às raízes/ de uma árvore e não servia mais nem para pentear/ macaco. O menino que era esquerdo e tinha cacoete pra/ poeta, justamente ele enxergara o pente naquele estado/ terminal. E o menino deu para imaginar que o pente,/ naquele estado, já estaria incorporado à natureza como/ um rio, um osso, um lagarto. Eu acho que as árvores/ colaboravam na solidão daquele pente.”

as a referenced object, or as a word. In nature – or *in the middle of a yard* close to any boy, not any kind of boy though, but rather *the boy who was awkward* – the comb decomposes and starts to arouse the most unusual images. The verbs emphatically inflect in the different tenses of the preterit, establishing a play on displacements between the present and the past, inscribing various moments of the subject (boy) and the object's (comb) approach to each other: “the boy [...] saw... a comb/[...] It would be closer to being a serrated leaf [...] / It was no longer possible to say whether that thing was a comb or a fan/ The comb lost its personality/[...] in that state, it would have already been incorporated into nature, just like a river, a bone, a lizard/ I think that [...]”.

At each line in the reading process, the comb moves away from the referent of mimetic representation – the object for combing hair – and *becomes a new thing: serrated leaf, rock, snail, frog, organism without a rib, fan, river, bone, lizard*. Are there similarities between the forms? Perhaps, but the external reality matters little when imagination enters the stage. From that point on, the comparisons and the metaphors become valid; the affirmations and the denials; the simple suggestions [...] *the loss of personality* [...], everything turns into an argument for a *poetics of disreferentialization*. It is an exemplary associative exercise in the construction of knowledge.

The gaze brings the memory of experiences and connects it with the land-text that enriches the forms and the layers of sand; the ants gnaw the organism. In fact, what are ants for other than carrying substances that justify their tireless work of displacement and transformation? Haven't the oldest fables already told us about that?

Overlapping time and sand, the color changes tones and the transformation takes place. From the hard and clear substance of *horn* to the fragility of *greenish moss*, everything points to the passage of time-text. In the eyes of the poet, the forms change themselves. If *the state* of the comb is *terminal*, the same cannot be said of the writer's ideas – a restless being who incites (*in the poet's unique way of expression*) his reader to live with him and give oneself over to the river's nature, which is water that goes by like a lizard in fast and slow movements, making space for the taste of imagination.

If the *trees partook in the comb's loneliness*, the same is not true for the poet's loneliness when he becomes the object of the questions - *But, then, is this poetry?* Where is the love of which the poets spoke? Where is the inaccessible object of love?

Other types of question would be appropriate: What is it? How is it done? How does one read and understand poetry?

The search for the one *lyrical I*, marked by romanticism, seems to endure among many readers. However, the discovery of a new meaning for poetry seems to be something that abruptly awakens in everyone's perception. A linguistic phenomenon manifests itself and proclaims a new verbal gesture. Neither men who love nor unattainable muses are necessary to *make* poetry. What we have in hand, mind, letters and sounds are words, concomitantly present and in flight, words that cry out and hide – doubles that dislocate between the visible and the invisible.

Here, we believe that it is time to remember Merleau-Ponty (1981, p.90):

[...] What is irreplaceable in the work of art [...] is that it contains, better than ideas, *matrices of ideas*. A work of art provides us with symbols whose meaning we shall never finish developing. Precisely because it comes to dwell in the world in which it makes us at home though we do not have the key to it, the work of art teaches us to see and makes us think as no analytic work can, because in the analysis of an object we cannot find anything other than what we have put into it. What is hazardous in literary communication, or ambiguous and irreducible [...] it is the price we must pay to have a conquering language which, instead of limiting itself to pronouncing what we already know, introduces us to new experiences.¹¹

From this vantage point, we can then ask ourselves what kind of comb the text is arousing in us. Illogical, the improper object has already stopped being or meaning by losing its intended function. In the discursive logic, the *being* comes to be with no external reference and goes on to compose the child or the crazy person's universe in the triviality of his existence. Color-changing and multiform, the chameleon surprises, shocks, charms, and opens a multitude of voices. In physics, time's action upon objects transforms them to the point of nonbeing – *what is left of the comb?* In biology, minerals and vegetables communicate among themselves, creating a scene in which the *rock, sand, leaf, greenish moss, trees and river* play a role. Amongst the living beings in the poem's design are *the scallop, the frog, the ants, the lizard...the animals*. Articulating all the aesthetic-literal composition, as a sensitive and sage painter would, is the *thinking animal, primitive* writer in the spontaneity of his poetic regard, writing

¹¹ MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice. *The Prose of the World*. Translated by John O'Neill. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1981.

down the word: the textual man is not just any being; instead, he is one of unique *ways of expression*, one that lives as a misfit in life.

When I was born, one of those twisted
angels who live in the shadows said:
“Carlos, get ready to be a misfit in life!”
(DRUMMOND DE ANDRADE, 2015, p.3)¹²

In the first stanza of *Seven-sided Poem*, [...] “twisted angels / misfit in life”/ [...] Drummond (1902-1987) *prepares* the reader for Manoel de Barros (1916-2014), who, in turn, sheds new light on memory through his creation: “the boy who was awkward /left and had a knack for being a poet” [...].¹³ Therefore, the identification of the poet as one whose words are not clear and therefore confuse us, goes against the logic of our thinking; it is a common voice throughout history. The poet, (a crazy person!), who speaks disconcertedly, confounds us; he is a being who walks in the margins – he does not say *one thing coherently*; he always lives in disagreement with life itself, seeks alternatives for the creation of another world. Indeed he could only *be a misfit in life!*

The poet says and does not explain. He is always in search of new ways of saying; he creates anachronisms, metaphors, ironies, contradictions, analogies... How does any of that help the reader? Prior to any answer, yet another question: is he really supposed to explain?

It does the poet well
Disexplain -
As it grows darker, the fireflies light up.
(BARROS, 1989, p.55).¹⁴

Literature constitutes an area of knowledge that expresses sensitive and cognitive actions of human beings in search of their (self) knowledge. It forms itself in the bosom of language with which it becomes a unified object of opposing tensions, a controversial being. It attracts and it repulses; it charms and makes an enigma of the world.

¹² DRUMMOND DE ANDRADE, C. *Multitudinous Heart: Selected Poems: A Bilingual Edition*. Translated by Richard Zenith. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2015.

¹³ Text in original: “o menino que era esquerdo e tinha cacoete pra poeta.”

¹⁴ Text in original: “Ao poeta faz bem/ Desexplicar ___ / Tanto quanto escurecer acende os vagalumes.”

If, as we have already seen, literature is an open space for *disexplanations*, it is up to the reader to confront the *misunderstanding* of the word, to construct meanings that the text only suggests. Pieces of knowledge are threads made of words that are waiting to be woven together. The weft is what decides who we are. Colors and textures multiply in reading the text: Do we want the conventional pattern that exists close to the ground or the tumultuous course of the rocks in the middle of the way?

The specific deciphering of what is literary involves a subject in revealing action – the reader – and a revealed object – the text itself. In this sense, when we speak of literature and textual operations, we are speaking not only about a peculiar syntax, but also about an agent who operates the text, using it to build a new universe of meanings.

It is within the scope of perceptual experience that humanity has access to the latency of the world and consequently tries out the ways of looking and (re)cognizing this world. This is due to the fact that, as *literature* tells us, each new look by man creates the possibility of establishing new knowledge about the object observed. Here, literature and phenomenology are in contact; their movement, unlike what generally occurs in the sciences, produces unexpected results, free of preconceived theories for collecting results. Each experience would be a unique and irreplaceable reality.

The visible/invisible binary, apprehended by literature as much as by phenomenology, inhabits the phenomena and, according to Merleau-Ponty (1981),¹⁵ is printed in everything that constitutes the world. The essence of objects and phenomena resides in the interconnection of this pair. Not all possible truth would be a consummated fact, but rather, just a phenomenon of the *here and now* to be gathered and saved as a victory over a piece of knowledge that one wants to *keep*.

However, what does this *preservation* represent in poetry? Would this be the value of tradition or the inevitability of evolution? Let us be clear. In principle, evolution is a word that does not exist in the realm of art. The value of all aesthetic forms of representation lies in their contemporaneity; however, it is also projected in the future as much as it sheds light on the remotest past. This means that speaking about art in general, or literature in particular, is tantamount to speaking about a time without time. In the conscience of time, everything is present in a triple dimension: the *here and now*; the past at the present instant of memory; the future as a mere projection of

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 11.

the present – a complexity of any great phenomenon (Saint Augustine).¹⁶ Language speaks of humanity as it speaks of itself. Would there be language without humankind? Much less humanity without language! These are facts about conscience and the power of language. However, let us return to the issue of temporality in its articulation with the preservation of values in art. What does it mean to retain value in art? Saving it how? By hiding, preserving, diffusing, multiplying it?

Antonio Cícero, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1945, is recognized as one of the great expressive voices of his generation of poets. He inscribes his poetic experience upon the meaning and action of *keeping* something. In the tradition of words or the innovation of ideas, the constitution of a being happens amidst the challenge of the projection of a time that carries with it everything that has been or that introduces itself in the present. Language, as a living being, expands and establishes itself; as a being of tradition, it is always sheltering its values and preserving its mysteries.

Keeping something does not mean hiding it or locking it.
In a safe nothing is saved.
In a safe things are lost sight of.

Saving something is looking at it, staring at it, aiming at it
admiring it, that is, illuminating it or being illuminated by it.

Saving something is keeping watch over it, that is, to be the night
guard for it, that is, to stay up for it, that is, to be awake for it,
that is, to be there for it or to be for it.

Therefore, a bird's flight is better kept
than a flightless bird.

That is why people write, that is why people say,
that is why people publish, that is why people
declare and disavow a poem:

To keep it:
So that it, in turn, keep what it keeps:
It save It save whatever a poem wants to save:
That is the reason for the roll of the poem:
For saving what people want to save
(CÍCERO, 1996, p.26).¹⁷

¹⁶ Based on readings from Book XI of the Confessions of Saint Augustine The full reference is: SAINT AUGUSTINE. Book XI. In: *Confessions*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1961, pp.253-280.

¹⁷ Text in original: “Guardar uma coisa não é escondê-la ou trancá-la./ Em cofre não se guarda coisa alguma./ Em cofre perde-se a coisa à vista.// Guardar uma coisa é olhá-la, fitá-la, mirá-la por/ admirá-la, isto é, iluminá-la ou ser por ela iluminado./ Guardar uma coisa é vigiá-la, isto é, fazer vigília por ela, isto é,/ velar por ela, isto é, estar acordado por ela, / isto é, estar por ela ou ser por ela.// Por isso melhor se guarda o vôo de um pássaro/ Do que um pássaro sem vôos.// Por isso se escreve, por isso se diz, por isso

Reading this poem seems almost like the act of exposing the artistic nakedness of the word: “so, saving is not...?” Everything that was already established in our cognitive universe falls apart. After the moment of shock begins the hollowing out of the sign/word: “to keep” it is not; then, what did we always think it was?

As we distance ourselves from the text, our admiration for the discovery reveals itself: it all makes sense! If the act of saving stems from the awareness of value and admiration, then subverting the automatic understanding of the word will be necessary. The act of saving, then, stops being associated with the act of hiding to, conversely, allow light to invade the object, granting it a view of its beauty. After all, brilliance must never be hidden!

The poem deconstructs what is established. In fact, the establishment has no space in art. Oxygenating the meanings is to cast other glances, to grope the object with other hands, to let the skin absorb the new sensations – the feelings that do not yet live in us, that seem unknown to us.

How does one establish concepts in a literary reading? If there was intention, it was because there was also carelessness. Aesthetics shifts the gaze, casts it to uninhabited spaces. It forces it to discover what the eyes do not want to see. What is necessary is a new space of knowledge in which ideas open themselves up to the *act of keeping* along with the movement of admiration that require closeness and conviviality, never distance or separation.

Illumination requires the search for light. This is where the humanistic sense of the literary emerges. There must not be lonesome heroes. The one who discovers must bring to light the discovered object, an act whose purpose is searching for community with others. If keeping something for oneself is a self-centered and solitary attitude, sharing is the distribution of pleasure and victory. It is aesthetic learning for the discovery of knowledge.

The metaphors give rise to the relationship with the other: to keep *the bird's flight* is to make it fly to its full potential to share the act of freedom; keeping a *flightless bird* would thus be a multiple imprisonment: the invalidation of the wings and

se publica, por isso se declara e declama um poema:/ Para guardá-lo:/ Para que ele, por sua vez, guarde o que guarda: / Guarde o que quer que guarda um poema:/ Por isso o lance do poema:/ Por guardar-se o que se quer guardar.”

the imprisonment of the being in a two-fold dimension. Humans do not exist for this, but rather, for living like the bird, for the enjoyment of each flight.

Construction, deconstruction, reiteration of ideas is the dance offered by the poet. That is why *people write*, that is why *people say*, that is why *people publish* [...] that is the reason for *declaring a poem* – a roll of the dice to the chance of imagination.

Paul Ricoeur¹⁸ states in his writing that the role of literature seems to be that of destroying the world; following this argument, it is possible to recover Antonio Cicero's poetic proposal and establish a dialogue between both of them. For the poet, the need to deconstruct what is already peacefully established is clear. His text is a coherent writing of assertions that subvert the meaning of the act of “*guardar*,” or “*saving/keeping/guarding*” in order to offer a new signifying charge to the verb that now becomes *clearer* and offers more signifying potential.

The hermeneutic question in place is not only methodological, that is, the interpretation of two versions: the old, already established meaning *versus* the meaning proposed by the poem. It is, above all, a question of a hermeneutics that proposes reviewing, rethinking and reinterpreting within a field that is always out in the open: literature. There is no doubt that the text is a provocation: Thus, does our understanding of *keeping* make sense? Would this not be a mistaken meaning? In the opposite sense, they can be seen as meanings that reinforce each other. The text is truly revealing. The reader understands, admires himself, and declares with an ecstasy of discovery, “but, so, keeping is . . . ”; it really seems that it makes *more* sense, that is, the meaning exceeds the word, opens itself up for new meanings. Our dictionary gained new entries!

The new hermeneutic principle and the restless look amidst the subversion of meanings questions how much literature, from our standpoint, belongs to the universe of phenomenology. Stemming from the knowledge marked by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, this philosophical-intellectual movement proposes the understanding of the world as a perceptual experience, which demands a new principle for examining and interpreting what comes before us. All truth in the world is not a consummated fact, but rather a phenomenon in movement. It is in this sense that the word is an incomprehensible, chameleonic and treacherous being.

¹⁸ RICOEUR, P. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

there are those who pass by
and everything that passes by
with paces already past

there are those who part
from the rock to the glass
leaving everything parted

and there are, better yet,
those who leave
the faint impression
of having stayed
(RUIZ, 1988, p.47).¹⁹

What does Alice Ruiz's poem talk about? Is there a hidden or just obliterated referent? What is hiding or being announced in the lines of these verses? Does the text foresee an interactive reader who marks himself in the text for the construction of meaning? The questions multiply and trigger the movement of coming and going through the verses' spaces, looking for alternatives to answer the questions. After all, how do we walk?

From the very first tercet, the reading brings the reverberation of occlusive sounds /p/, which explode between the lips, followed by the friction of the /s/, sounds drawn out by the verses: *os que passam / se passa com passos já passados*/ [those who pass/ that pass by with paces already past]. From the ear to the brain, there is only intuition. Willing to make the meanings explicit is impossible. The ship is adrift. Composing referents, if possible, will require making time for doubts and questions.

Alice Ruiz, born in Curitiba in 1946, is a writer who leaves a trace of her experience with haiku in her poems. The short texts, like poetic capsules, have the power of synthesis and conciseness of ideas; they associate themselves with a verbal acuity whose mastery belongs to very few writers. The verses pass by, the words pass by, everything that has already become *passé* passes by. Precision and imprecision get tangled in the verses. On the one hand, the absence of referents is clear; on the other hand, the word *everything* [tudo] is the synthesis of a totality from which nothing would be left out.

The verses create spaces of uncertainty. However, just as "there are those who pass by," there are also "those who part." We enter the poem's second tercet with the

¹⁹ Text in original: "tem os que passam/ e tudo se passa/ com passos já passados// tem os que partem/ da pedra ao vidro/ deixam tudo partido// e tem, ainda bem,/ os que deixam/ a vaga impressão/ de ter ficado."

same question: Who parts? There is still a new surprise: it is not just the verb to *part* [*partir*] that comes in the verse. Ambiguity is also present: there are those who *part* by displacing – from one place to another – and those who *part* (from) *the rock* (to) *the glass* and *leave everything parted*. *To part* [*Partir*], used to mean breaking the glass or the rock is another possibility in this reading. Uncertainty appears again: Everything parts! The hypothesis of the verb *to part* [*partir*], or to break, as displacement, along with a certain satisfaction that appears in the implied interjection *better yet!* and in “there are those who leave the faint impression of having stayed.”

The poet plays with the words, constructing ludic semantics that opens space for interpretation, but there are no interrogations in the text; they are strictly made in the mind of the reader. After all, what were poems made for other than disexplaining!

In the magic of composition, the text suggests more than it affirms, especially because in poetry, the truth of the text is its own reality, that is, a space of uncertainty and imprecision. However, the readers would say, “this is new poetry!” It seems to be a rebellious being that does not want to be understood. What were words made for other than to understand ourselves and cultivate peace, harmony, the dream of certainty? ... Really?

The poetic utopia draws itself as the dream of happiness – a space where there would be no disagreements. Nevertheless, is that possible? The dream of men with pleasure islands, the dream of poets with words that could say everything. Again, here is the paradox, but would the poet want to say everything, or just fragments that we can understand? Oddly, the poet constructs his text and the possibility to say the world with it.

Suspense, terror, the unusual, the extraordinary do not cease to be utopian artifice, desires for the poet to construct, with the brush/word, the reality of art: magic and regeneration of life. It is up to the reader, by interacting with the word, to construct his/her part, that is, the interpretive text to be interpreted, the text based on his/her repertoire and ability in dealing with language itself.

I looked for myself throughout life and I did not find myself -
thus I was saved

(BARROS, 2011, p.357)²⁰

²⁰ Text in original: “Me procurei a vida inteira e não me achei - pelo que fui salvo.”

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Translated by John Ellis-Guardiola - jelgua@gmail.com

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