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“Me, reader of myself”¹: narrative knowledge and autobiographical reflexivity in the Potiguar backlands

“Eu, leitor de mim”²: saberes narrativos e reflexividade autobiográfica no sertão potiguar

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ABSTRACT

The autobiographical discourse is not limited to the episodic narration of what has been lived. It finds its foundation in the human action of narrating configured in the temporal course of experience. In this paper, we propose an interpretation of the narratives of young readers from the backlands of Rio Grande do Norte - Brazil, focusing on their Literary Education processes. The data reveals their perceptions about the gesture of composing memories and narrating them, in addition to their relations to Reading and Literature as symbolic knowledge. We are interested in understanding their literature reading narratives based on the memories evoked during individual interviews, highlighting the heuristic and autopoietic value of the self-narrative. The analysis suggests that the act of narrating plays an important role in young reader's lives as it brings the possibilities of reframing the past, assigning new meanings to the present and envisioning life projects in the future.

Keywords: Self-narrative. Reading memories. Literary Education. Narrative knowledge. Autobiographical reflexivity.

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RESUMO

O discurso autobiográfico não se limita à narração episódica do vivido, mas encontra seu fundamento na ação humana de configurar narrativamente o curso temporal da experiência. Neste texto, propomo-nos a interpretar as narrativas de jovens leitores do sertão potiguar sobre seus processos de educação literária, enfatizando suas percepções sobre o gesto de compor memórias e narrá-las, além de suas relações com a leitura e a literatura enquanto saberes simbólicos e experiências autoformativas. Interessamos compreender suas histórias de leitura a partir das memórias evocadas durante entrevistas autobiográficas individuais, realçando o valor heurístico e autopoietico da narrativa de si. A análise sugere que o ato de se narrar, de performar criticamente a rememoração, efetiva acontecimentos na vida dos jovens leitores, abrindo-lhes à possibilidade de reelaborar o passado, dar novos sentidos ao presente e perspectivar projetos de vida no porvir.

Palavras-chave: Narrativa de si. Memórias de leitura. Educação Literária. Saberes narrativos. Reflexividade autobiográfica.

Introduction

Auto-bio-graphing is trimming yourself with your own hands. Trimming here is used in its multiple meanings: to hold; to perfect; to resist suffering, to cut what is excessive and particularly, as they say in the Northeast of Brazil, to trim is to help to be born. This verb rich of meaning allows us to operate the synthesis of the meaning of creating a bio-graphy, here understood, at the same time, as the action of taking care of oneself and rebirth in another way.

Conceição Passeggi, at Memórias, memoriais (2008)

In this paper, we propose to analyze the narrative discourse of young people from the city of Ipanguaçu, in the Potiguar backlands, regarding their experiences with literary education, taking their autobiographical interviews as the object of hermeneutic reading. Our goal is to understand how these readers forged representations of themselves and handled time lived narratively. We seek to reveal the heuristic and autopoietic value of self-narratives before their reading formation in the countryside of Rio Grande do Norte and the social resonances that marked their individual narratives. The epistemological reflections intend to highlight the ontological potentialities of the so-called "biographical method"

in research whose focus is on the particularities of the historical-cultural trajectories of young people. We will observe that autobiographical discourse is not limited to episodic narration of what is lived but it finds its foundation in the human action of configuring narratively the temporal course of experience. In (auto)biographical research in education, we understand self-telling as a self-formative device from which the subject who narrates himself gives meaning to what he has lived by means of critical self-learning performances. In this way, the discursive production of self is articulated to the appropriation of different semiotic instruments that are triggered by the narrator to shape the story and the time experienced; or, taking up the epigraph of this text, to help him/her to trim himself/herself, to take care of oneself, to be reborn.

(Auto)biographic Research: to establish himself/herself as an epistemological parameter

Narrator, social agent, author, individual, writer, self-character, spectrum. In Brazil, the crisis of traditional institutions and structuralist and behaviorist paradigms in the 1980s catalyzed debates about the return of the subject to the center of research, which brought concerns in education, in addition to positioning the spotlight on the theoretical and practical implications that accompanied this scientifically radically critical split between researcher and object, reason and subjectivity, knowledge and body. Inapprehensible, elusive, complex, undisciplined - the human being is not enclosed in inflexible logical-mathematical schemes, deterministic social mechanisms, or notions of reality as apparent truth.

In the history of the sciences, it has been agreed to call this paradigmatic crossing a narrative turning point, because of the recognition and use of language - especially narrative discourse - as the foundation of the transition from the disciplinary paradigm of the sciences applied to the transdisciplinary paradigm of reflexive actors (PINEAU, 2016). Suspicious, babbling, indolent, disobedient and sometimes incomprehensible, the language of the subject invited to talk about himself representing a double curse for the established Cartesian scientific field: on the one hand, the contact with subjectivities and forms of enunciation that have never been seen before or that are uncommon among scientists; on the other hand, the blatant theoretical-methodological limitation of the techniques of listening and interpreting in force to deal with a living corpus and with ethical

and political questions that have revealed the fragility of prescriptive rationalism in modern science of European origin.

The linguistic-pragmatic turnaround in movement with hermeneutics and semiology claims the idea that the human subject is in the world where discourse functions socially within a complex of discursive practices. This turning point questions, for example, how the social practices that constitute the world and the life in which the narratives of young readers of the Potiguar backlands are produced, reproduced and interpreted. It is about giving "meaning to the idea that the power that goes through discourse also goes through interpretation (and self-interpretation), the construction of identity and self-identity". It is imperative to emphasize that self-awareness (both in its formation and in its modification) is implicated "in the politics of discourse", which brings out an "identity politics" and "a political struggle around who we are" (LARROSA, 2004, p. 14).

The reactions that tried to invalidate the epistemological status of (auto) biographical research did not prevent the narrative turning in the university, although, at first, in a smuggled way. In Anglo-Saxon countries, *Biographical Research*, and in Germany, *Biographieforschung*, this is an already consolidated investigative field. In France, *Recherche biographique en éducation*, as well as in Brazil, *Pesquisa (Auto)biográfica*, and in other Latin-American countries, *Investigación narrativa*, even though this is still in the process of recognition and expansion. The variety of nomenclatures, the coexistence of different approaches and perspectives in working with narratives, which seems to characterize a mirroring of the heterogeneity of biographical and autobiographical sources in the constitution of the investigative field itself.

In spite of their particularities, these research traditions have inherited from Hermeneutics (the names of Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur stand out) and Phenomenology (which highlights the contributions of Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, Wilhelm Schapp and Alfred Schütz) an interest in the linguistic-discursive interpretation we give to the world and to ourselves, and the phenomena of consciousness. They share a common interest in the study of the conception and organization strategies regarding what the individuals mean and act in their experiences, producing previously nonexistent meanings and building "the historical consciousness of themselves and their learning in the territories they inhabit and are inhabited by means of biographic processes" (PASSEGGI; SOUZA; VICENTINI, 2011, p. 372).

The anthropological capacity to biographize from a narrative reason takes place in the construction of the experience. Thus, biography is a founding feature of this field of knowledge, which aspires to a singular knowledge, which questions processes of individuation, subjectivation and self-building, and the interactions that these biographical facts established with the other and with

the social world (DELORY-MOMBERGER, 2016). This is the territory of experience where learning and the socio-historical constitution of narrators are processes permanently nourished by autobiographical reflexivity, a condition erected when the subject transposes naive curiosity towards epistemological curiosity, towards the critical constitution of self.

Biographical knowledge is forged in the work of socio-individual genesis that the individual performs upon himself, structuring his perception of the social and historical world, while he produces this world and himself. This knowledge inscribes the author in biographical temporality, with its own grammar and syntax, making the narrative activity the fabric upon which time is humanly embroidered. The construction of experience, therefore, is the core of biographical activity, the knowledge intended by it and from which it is possible to explore the processes of individuation and socialization, question its multiple dimensions and better understand the relationships between individuals and societies (DELORY-MOMBERGER, 2016).

The dialogical relationship between individual and society is a guiding principle of (auto)biographical research and one of its apparent contradictions. On this issue, Ferrarotti (2014) argues that narrating life is a paradoxical effort, a transit zone between deconstruction and the restructuring of social relations from private appropriation and their interiorization and conversion into psychological structures. "How many biographies will be necessary to achieve a sociological 'truth'? What biographical material will be the most representative and will provide us, before others, general truths?", the sociologist asks. For Ferrarotti, "each autobiographical narrative report, in a horizontal or vertical cut, a human practice [...] and any individual human practice is a synthetic activity, an active summation of the whole social context" (FERRAROTTI, 2014, p. 70-71).

The scientific status of autobiographical narratives, which Ferrarotti calls the heart of the epistemological paradox of the biographical method, is based on the claim of scientific subjectivity. The traces, tracks, paths that make individual life trajectories present themselves to access the scientific knowledge of a social system. As it is not linear, this path presents itself as encrypted, codified, demanding from the researcher methodological postures and innovative concepts.

(Auto)biographical research questions the supposed infallibility and rigidity of the hypothetical-verification process to launch itself on the processes of interaction, intercession and exploration of what is read between the lines, of the emotions, of the lacunar movements. It calls for the presence of the research subject, recognizing his creative part and his constructions in social life. As evidenced by the *Letter of the International Association of Under*

*process Life Stories and the Biographic Education Research*³, published, in Brazilian Portuguese, at the first number of the Brazilian Magazine of (Auto) Biographic Research (ASIHVIF'S LETTER/OUR LETTER, 2016, p. 177), the (auto)biographical research allocates the narratives of oneself at the epicenter of reflection on our common, axiological, epistemological and methodological references, whose purpose is to develop practices of life history through the narrative of life, based on procedures that place the narrator subject at the center, as the one who defines his/her object of search and develops a project of self-understanding, for oneself and through the mediation of the other.

The human being interprets himself and the narrative forms are our main mode of self-interpretation. In this way, we must think about how the relationship between the subject - which is both the subject of self-consciousness and the subject of intersubjectivity, historicity, culture, society - and the discursive genre of the narrative takes place. The main characteristic of the subject of narration is not the search for what he is, but the sense of who he is for himself and for others. This critical awareness of oneself is constructed through peculiar and sensitive materials: the stories we tell and those we are told; after all, "the sense of who we are is analogous to the construction and interpretation of a narrative text and, as such, obtains its meaning both from the intertextual relations it maintains with other texts and from its pragmatic functioning in a context" (LARROSA, 2004, p. 13). Our relationship with the narratives we hear, read, and see constitute us as they are produced within unique social practices and experiences which bring meanings to our existence in specific and collective contexts.

We are a reflection, never completely clear and transparent, of the narratives that surround us and that dwell within us; we are necessarily a text in continuous elaboration, a combination of intertextualities - crossed by other texts and other words called to the relationship with us - and multimodalities - since these relationships are built with different languages, forms and means. We are narrative constructs, especially if we understand that narrative gives form to things in the real world and offers conditions of access to reality through translations and re-elaborations from the unique experience of each narrator.

The privileged position of the narrative discourse in autobiographies is also articulated to the generating theme of the work of remembrance and narration of young people: it is a literary education. Although inseparable from the schooling of literary texts and the formal teaching of literature, we understand literary education as an active process of appropriation of aesth(ethical) artifacts

3 Association of Under process Life Stories and the Biographic Education Research (Associação Internacional das Histórias de Vida em Formação e da Pesquisa Biográfica em Educação).

of written, oral and imagetic cultures and critical configuration of (inter) subjectivities proper to the reader and his/her social world. We go beyond school education and institutionalized curricula to broaden the spectrum of the write's literary and pedagogical experiences, contemplating visions of education and literature that "animate thinking from, and with, genealogies, rationalities, knowledge, practices and distinct civilization and life systems" (WALSH, 2013, p. 28).

In addition to an inventory of formal reading/writing practices, literary education allows us to enter particular territories proper to each reader because the literary experience is lived from the places they occupy within the groups they integrate and the singular forms of introjection of social and cultural codes. Consequently, its complex learning processes of reading and literature combine public and private, private and community, socially and subjectively monitored by linguistic-discursive practices. It is from the perspective of non-opposition between individuals and society that we recognize reader's self-portrait narratives as actions of interpretation, learning and self-knowledge engaged in *dialogues*.

Me, myself narrator: young readers at the Potiguar backlands

As we approached the interviews⁴ with young readers from Potiguar backlands, it was necessary to criticize social representations about youth that, normally, tend to insert them in an age cut fixed by values and social practices. The definition of youth regarding only generational conditions overshadows the different ways of being in the world experienced by young narrators and

4 In the experience of this research, young people were interviewed who accepted to talk about their lives, putting into motion meanings of body and spirit proper to human relationships. An interview was carried out with each subject, besides the conversations that preceded and succeeded that moment. The interviews took place between April and June 2017 at places and times chosen by the young readers, a strategy that aimed to recognize the temporalities inherent to the narrative interview, taking as its center the options and limits of the subjects in the spatial plans. We ratify that the autobiographical and/or narrative interview takes into consideration that the human being has always found ways to tell stories and talk about his life, or others, because of his ability to narrate. The first assumption in this type of interview is that human experiences can be narratively enunciated from a generating question that impels subjects to speak of their trajectories in a certain depth, mobilizing them to the evocation of memories of their stories in a singular way (JOVCHELOVITCH; BAUER, 2002). This work of remembrance has allowed the research and interpretation of intercultural processes inscribed in the experiences of narrator subjects, such as those of literary education

it runs the risk of devaluing the singular and communitarian experience to the detriment of an age structure that would imprison them, if considered as the only objective of analysis.

We understand youth as a socio-cultural construction of modern societies, which constantly undergoes re-readings, conformed by different social, cultural and economic realities. As Peralva (2007, p. 13) explains, "the ages of life, although anchored in the biopsychic development of individuals, are not a purely natural phenomenon, but a social and historical one, dated and inseparable from the slow process of modernity's constitution". Also, Velho (2006) points out that the e-generational denominations are established based on different ways of negotiating reality, through processes of social interaction, influenced by racial, gender and sexual, socioeconomic, political, territorial, and symbolic factors.

The young people we hear are Ipanguaçu citizens entangled in this web of complexities. Listening to their narratives according to our objective of choosing literary education as the compass for their autobiographical adventures was the starting point for understanding them, within their biography/self-knowledge movements. Most of the narrators live in the Tabuleiro Alto settlement, but some live in the communities of Porto and Pataxó. Tabuleiro Alto and Porto are peasant areas belonging to the set of lands expropriated by the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform in 2008, and allotted among rural and fisherman workers. Pataxó, on the other hand, although it is part of the countryside, it is one of the municipal districts (relatively urbanized territories, in relation to most of the so-called rural communities, but which are not considered urban areas). Approximately 65% of the county population lives in the countryside, while 35% lives in the urban perimeter, a demographic reality that has been blending over time.

The eight readers interviewed were between 15 and 22 years of age, four male and four female, five black and three white students, all high school students in public schools, with the exception of one who was in his final year of elementary school when interviewed. Even though they lived in rural communities, almost all of them studied in institutions based in or around the city of Ipanguaçu.

The student's families monthly income varies from one to two minimum wages, their formative itineraries as readers converge in several aspects and inform elements of the peasant youth condition in the backlands: deprivation or restricted access to traditional spaces of written culture, such as libraries, theaters, museums, universities, art galleries, cinemas, cultural centers, bookstores, etc; precarious conditions of schooling during their childhood and adolescence; participation in religious youth groups (with the exception of one, who participates in a book club); limited contact with writing and reading in

family environments, and; the centrality of the school in their stories of literary reading experiences such as *momentos-charneira*⁵ of their biography process.

In contrast to speeches that blame the public Education system, teachers and education professionals for the low levels of reading and literacy in the country and for the reproduction of social and cultural inequalities, the processes of literary education of these young peasants seem to antagonize, or at least put under question, this type of reader's stereotype. Although the school and the subjects of formal education are not the only biographical facts present in their narratives in the face of Literary Education, the school is a decisive and remarkable context of their growth: the first books, the creative writing contests, the freedom to choose what to read, the contact with radically different cultural universes, the understanding of oneself and the other from the perspective of the literary books, the confrontation with repressed emotions and feelings, the exercise of critical and political readings of reality and the presence of teachers and fellow readers, creating community affection in the act of reading. Also, the grandparents are portrayed as storytellers, old narrators of their families and communities. They are remembered by the youth, who referred to them as "guardians of knowledge", "living memories" and "human libraries".

It is important to notice that our young readers bring in their autobiographies, oral practices marginalized by the hegemonic written culture. They experience different pedagogical and language practices. Among these experiences, we highlight reading mediations exercised by mothers, family, friends and church members and particular strategies for selecting and reading/scouting texts. Regarding writing, the subjects reported creative and/or autobiographical writing practices in journals, short stories, poems, chronicles, and other genres.

The act of remembering one's own history of Literary Education is political and pedagogical, because it allows to glimpse the effects of subalternity/subalternization contexts and to recognize the opportunities, circumstances, tactics and artifices they used to accomplish their education process. Starting with the recollection-narrative of the past, self-knowledge emerges as a provocation to the dilemmas of the present, cracking "asphalt, tedium, disgust and hate" (ANDRADE, 2006, p. 28).

5 For Josso (2010), the experience that forms implies a conscious articulation that is elaborated between activity, sensibility, affectivity and ideation, a process that symbolizes learning, attitudes, behaviors, thoughts, know-how, that characterizes a subjectivity, but not only; they embody an identity. From this emerges the concept of *momento-charneira*, which is characterized as a decisive moment in the subject's life, a watershed between a certain reality and its unfolding.

Reading oneself: literary Education, biography and self-knowledge

The biographical subject, based on the intertwining of remembering-narrating, is always an unfinished being in motion, unpredictable and anchored in the context. This process makes the memory of the narrator an inescapable artifact for us to understand that the events narrated are choices made in the time-space of life. If "memory is an island of editing", as the poet Waly Salomão (2014) wrote, this selection does not take place arbitrarily, but because we are able to relate the remembrances to scenes which are representative of our path and that gain more intensity when constellate meanings bring light to them.

This makes of *remembrance* a return to the past that opens to the memorialist subject possibilities of recognizing and elucidating oneself, of burling an identity whose roots float in one's inexhaustible belonging. The testimony of Camilo⁶, our first reader, exemplifies the act of remembering to affirming which is: "[...] *happy to be telling a story that really happened, were moments that I lived and will be kept with me forever; I never thought I could go so far, finally, I am very happy for this nostalgic moment!*".

For him, remembering is a time of nostalgia. He realizes, as he narrates, that he has overcome obstacles that were insurmountable before and that it is valuable keeping these memories. His posture bears similarities to that of writer Graciliano Ramos (1976, p. 15), when he writes in the fifth chapter of *Memories from Incarceration*: "Those who have slept on the floor should remember this, impose discipline, sit on hard chairs, write on narrow planks. He may write roughness, but that is what life is made of: useless to deny it, to go around it, to wrap it in gauze".

This active posture of someone who remembers and narrates his memories should not be confused with that of an informer who only testifies about a specific topic. In fact, the narrator appropriates of the discursive situation in which he participates and, through the critical exercise of self-consciousness that goes through the process of biographization, he/she weaves the warp of his memory hermeneutically. In other words, in the listener-narrator relationship, the young readers have not presented us with reports of themselves, but interpretations generated in the dialogues between biographical mediators and self-reflexive writers.

6 We use the name and other data that identify the young participants in the research with their consent, as expressed in terms of informed consent (TCLE) signed by the individuals themselves or by their legal guardians. The youth expressed a desire to see their real names mentioned in the text on the grounds that they would like to be recognized and acknowledged in their accounts.

For the reader Lucas, to talk about his literary education is to reflect on the processes of critical awareness about what one lives:

[...] The uniqueness of it all, of remembering my own history from what I read. When we reflect on the books and stories, we read we change our opinions and ways of seeing the world because books like '1968: the year that didn't end', 'Anne Frank's diary' and 'The Tenement' make us, in some way, more critical and creative.

Thinking of reminiscences as a semblant that involves memory - like other processes such as resentment, forgetfulness and silence - we attribute to these "important pasts that we compose to give more satisfactory meaning to our lives" a decisive place in the way we listen to and interpret the narrative of a young reader whose experience with the books, marked the passing of time with the search, conscious or not, for a more consistent articulation between past and present identities (THOMSON, 1997).

The autobiographical narratives of young people are dependent not only on memory, but also on time, since they are exposed to changes in each life experience. Reflecting on the value of self-narratives in the evocation of her experiences of Literary Education, the reader Alana assumes that she does not find an appropriate term to define the process: "talk about, remember, live again... I don't even know the word". However, reveals that:

Telling details of my first steps with reading has been an inexplicable experience because only when I talk about it, I realized how difficult and beautiful it was to know better what reading has to show us. Reflecting on this, I am sure, is and will continue to be an addition to life's curriculum, because talking about what we read is always valid, since each and every reading experience helps us build new visions about ourselves and about others, even if what we read doesn't please us, initially [...], our eyes will give us more critical visions.

The words of Passeggi (2011, p. 103), "narrating is human", bring an echo of Alana's speech. According to her, narrating his relationship with reading uncovered the critical process that integrates his story of reading. In affirming that these reflections add up to the "curriculum of life", the reader assumes the

importance of narrative in the present, from which she remembers and narrates, arguing that remembering her experiences of literary education allowed her to recognize in life a faculty common to reading: the possibility of rehearsing new ways of seeing and giving meaning to reality.

Alana's perception of the act of narrating dialogues with the point of view taken by the reader João Neto, who takes the telling of his own life as a possibility of organizing a memorial legacy:

It's pleasant to hear stories, but it's also pleasant to tell our story because it's from there that we look at ourselves in the mirror and manage, just like a writer narrates in chapters, to orally narrate a different and unpublished story, which is our own story. I believe that in everything we do it is necessary to stop and reflect. Reflect on the relevance of what is done, on the tools that help us to do it, on the method with which we do it so that we can return to the world what we read in the form of action and transformation and to those who opened the doors for us to know reading, gratitude and recognition.

João uses the metaphor of the mirror to express a demand of autobiographical work, that is, the confrontation with images of the past from the place we occupy in the present. The originality that he certifies to his history is articulated to the understanding of the narrative of himself as an artifact in movement, informed by the singularity of the moments lived and inspired by specific temporalities that accompany the narrator in his growth. The young reader also highlights the coherence inherent to the act of making his life a text, especially when he says it is relevant to think about what (and how) we do, in addition to the effects this has on the world. For him, the transforming agency of reading needs to be remembered, as well as the gratitude and recognition to the people and places where Reader's Literary Education takes place.

The reader's narratives call into question who we are as self-aware subjects and our ability to reflect biographically and to reinvent the senses we attribute to our lives and experiences. For Larrosa (2004, p. 15), the experiences are part of a complex game of interpretations: "what we are is nothing but the way we understand ourselves" and this way of understanding is analogous to "the way we construct texts about ourselves" and the form of these texts depends on "their relationship with other texts and the social devices in which the production and interpretation of identity texts take place".

The reader Rafaela reaffirms the epistemological power of the narrative as an art of the self and she says that the challenge of self-interpretation as an

unease that causes subjective dislocation. According to her, while narrating fragments of her life as a reader, "[...] *I problematized and reflected on this [literature] and other issues, I broadened my field of vision a lot, first of all as a reader, but also as a person, thus causing a concern in me*".

Besides the idea of writing her own reading memoirs, the young reader told us that she wished to "provide a little of my experience and that feeling to others" and stated:

[...] I started reading children's books for children at the school in my community, where I graduated as a reader, and this [reading for children] became something bigger, because with the help of some friends I idealized a project, which is still on paper, to read in all schools in the city of Ipanguaçu and to spread the love for literature, like causing a snowball that will form more and more readers, because reading is education and, as master Paulo Freire already said: education does not transform the world, education changes people and people transform the world.

Rafaela's inspiring words corroborate the idea that literary reading provokes changes, first in those who read and then in the community. Her interpretation focuses on the political dimension of reading, by making knowledge available to those in need and life projects that combine individual and collective senses and aspirations.

Her plans, animated by Freirian thought, bring Literary Education closer to integral human formation, linking collective commitment, social justice and the formation of readers. The evident appreciation and love for literature seems to move her on thinking about political strategies to spread her literary knowledge through positive literary experiences, which by stimulating others can perhaps change the world, in the way of weaving mornings. Her account suggests that the narrative of herself gives the subject the opportunity not only to rework the past, but to build projects and perspectives for the future. By telling our own stories, we build our identity and (re)cognize ourselves in what we tell about ourselves. Whether these stories are true or not is a problem that does not interest (auto)biographical research, because both fiction and history can touch our identities. The narrative plot spun by the imagination occupies a central place in the story of the reader Lariza when she says that:

One can't help connecting a book, or a story, to something lived in every day life [...] no matter how fanciful it may be. We make it up! The mind is

a wonderful business! With fantasy, we end up bringing knowledge from the imaginary to our reality. In fantasy, there are monsters and in real life there are monsters too. In the stories, we see how to overcome them and in everyday life it is also possible to beat them. I don't mean that every story should have a happy, but that alternative endings are possible, different endings, changing endings, write your own story. It's possible to do it so.

In Lariza's words, we realize that the events in her reading story are not simple occurrences, but a narrative component proper to her existence. Ricoeur (1994), in *Time and Narrative*, says that time becomes human time as we organize it as in a narrative. This makes sense for those who narrate because it contains the traces of temporal experience. The narrative character of the interpretation of events can only be accessed when we understand that an event is not just an occurrence, a trivial fact, but a narrative component because our very existence is inseparable from the ways we account for ourselves.

Experienced feelings are a fundamental aspect of memory and narrative elaboration of oneself. They are the stuff which biography is made of. Without someone's feelings, memoirs may assume the role of mere repetition, when, in fact, they need to come to light as reappearance (BOSI, 1987). Rafaela reinforces this argument when she states:

[...] someone has already said that to remember seems to be to live again, and to relive my memories from childhood to the present day, linking all of this to literature, gave birth to a good feeling in me, sprouting a deep desire that everyone could go through this: to have memories, to remember a sister reading to you to sleep, to mourn the death of a character.

In her point of view, remembering and feeling are synchronous experiences and they brought hope that others could also experience. The young woman exposes the subjective dimension of memory and puts her narrative at the service of the sensitive and affectionate lapidary of herself.

For João Neto, another reader, "*to remember is to live*". The young man from the Pataxó community, remembering his literary experiences, said that "*it was like building a true memorial*" through which "*he followed the lines*" that "*led him to the construction of the individual*" who was "*there*". His speech refers to the phenomenology of remembrance as an image and to the social fabric of memory, which symbolizes more than the juxtaposition between social pictures and evoked images. In narrating that while remembering scenes from his life he

seemed to build a memorial, he highlights his trajectory as the substance of the person he was at that moment. His emphasis is on the itineraries traveled and inscribed in the social plots. After all "inside memory, at the core of the evoked image, *general notions* related to language occur" which, by their "objective, trans-objective character", make these images endure in time and become memories (BOSI, 1987, p. 22).

The excavation on the land of himself, of which Benjamin (2012) writes about, have an effect on the *now*, but also leads the subject who narrates to reframe and project himself into becoming, as Emmanuel suggests: "*I believe that remembering what I experienced helps me to reflect on my formation as a reader today and in the future*". Care for oneself in autobiographical narratives and in the production of memory is intrinsically therapeutic, since it proposes to seek in the nucleus of the remembered one the strength to move the subject in his or her handling of life itself, making memories the energy that vivifies the spirit and the communities, as the young reader insinuates by supposing that "*if I become discouraged or think of giving up, I will remember and reflect a lot on the books and people who were by my side during the discovery of myself and literature*".

Made out of flashes and fragments, memory is made of highlights that have marked a history, and its art comes from *elsewhere*. In Lara's narrative, "*the experience of thinking about the past was wonderful and I am moved as I think about it because what I am narrating are not just memories, but what I am*". Self-awareness operates in her discourse by revealing the effects of remembering that illuminate her own gaze upon herself. Her pondering of the work on memory is very important, because it reveals that far from just remembering and informing facts, she is, from what she remembers, looking at and redoing images of who she is, becoming biographical, decanting the ability to integrate new experiences to those she has already had.

The oral memory composed and performed in the narrative of herself, in this case, does not commit to the institutional unilaterality of the so-called *official memory* because the contradictions and paradoxes are part of it and one of its greatest richness. In dialoguing with the reconstruction of what was lived, Lara, like the other young people, elaborated a narrative that escapes the objectives of orthodox currents of history theory and illustrates what is known today as the history of sensibilities or the history of mentalities. The attention in this type of discourse is not on the verification of narrated facts, but on the passions, impulses, and emotions that permeate the episodes shared by the narrator. This kind of approach to memory and biographical fact is already a tradition in literature, in works that bring out the rejects despised by the so-called official history.

Final considerations

The relationship we seek to establish with young people is guided by the understanding of the role of literary education as a political-pedagogical process, unavoidable for the liberation of individuals through critical, transforming self-awareness, and by the conception of language as the constitutive social production of interactions between subjects, in which dialogism is the touchstone of the meaning of discourse.

The points of intersection between the two perspectives lead us to establish non-violent ways of communication and in association with narrators, prioritizing their right to speak and enunciate themselves comfortably, so that they could share their stories with us.

The processes of listening, mediating, transcribing and interpreting narratives revealed that the autobiographical discourses of the young readers interviewed are not limited to "products" of the act of narrating, but have the power to make the narration effective.

We noticed in the reader's narratives, when they referred to their families, schoolmates, friends or even to the characters of the books read or the stories they heard in collective contexts, the links between what they told about others and what they elaborated discursively about themselves, so that their life itineraries cannot be enunciated apart from the real or symbolic subjects that glued themselves to the skin of their own memories.

The object of their discourses points to several directions: the social contexts they occupy, the groups they integrate, the relationships they establish with them, the role of books and narratives in daily life, the centrality of the school in the processes of literary education, the importance of orality and the storytellers of their communities, etc. However, they are the center from which they remember, which refine their memory, elaborate their enunciation, configure their narratives and produce self-reflexive knowledge. It has to do with the way the subject narrates his autobiographical discourse and how it is sewn into social reality.

The fragmentary, lacunar and elliptical character of a life story composes one of the main arguments of this research. We did not aim at verifying origins, linearities or homogeneity in what was narrated by the young readers to whom we spoke. Searching for truths that pre-existed to the elaboration of the narrative would incur in instrumentalizing it uncritically, emptying it of its strength and relegating it to a secondary place in the development of research and in our relationship with the subjects of this study.

We are thinking with and through narratives about how young people respond to what comes to them, what reaches them, what builds them up. There is no partiality in individuals that divides them into, sometimes social, sometimes individual, since we are partially social and partially individual. This conclusion is only possible because the condition of hybridity and movement that makes up our identities allows them to shock, talk, dissipate, dilute, articulate and unite within every social event we participate.

Such understanding of the production of sociability of individuals weakens the suspicious glances cast at autobiographical sources that end up gluing stigmas to this approach: the "intimacy" of the subjects, the "apartment" of the social problems that the individual narrative would cause, the "illusion" about oneself, the supposed "denial" of codes and ways of existing shared within cultural communities, and the "alienation" regarding economic and social inequalities.

Interested in the singular configurations and constructions of form and meaning that narrators give to their experience, (auto)biographical research in education is not limited to collecting data, nor does it propose to dissect narratives, to submit them to historical scrutiny, or even to elect them as linear, absolute, and real volumes of life. In the research that gave rise to this text, we neglect aspects that contributed not only to the success of the work, but also to our own self-training: the change in the relationship between researcher and research subjects, the type of information collected/produced during the study, the instruments of reading and interpretation of biographical facts and biographical processes, the focus on the particular, the resignification of the narrative interview as an autobiographical interview, and the recognition of other types of knowledge/information.

On the borderline between the singular and the plural in the field of memory and narrative organization of the biographical fact, we reiterate that the particular experience that is narrated dialogues with the events lived in collectivities of which the subject feels part, which makes the mnemonic construction and the narrative knowledges an activity conditioned also by the forms of socio-historical, racial, gender, regional and cultural belonging of those who remember and narrate. Amalgamation of stories, each person keeps multiple faces of their life that gain renewed senses when reflected and selected from the meshes of the past to mean the present. The critical exercise of forging memory and narrative configuration is an affirmative action on oneself in the folds of time; it is a psychosocial work of power, conflict, contradiction, but, above all, of revolution mediated by biographical reflexivity and self-knowledge.

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