

In the palimpsest of the classroom: the legitimation of disputed literary works at school*

Patrícia Aparecida do Amparo¹

ORCID: 0000-0003-1283-0901

Abstract

This article presents some results of research seeking to understand the disputes for the legitimate reading of literary works in daily school life. Based on it, it was understood that reading gains meanings in the fabric of daily life as the actions of teachers and students reveal socially structured points of view on the issue, frequently questioning the school imperatives. To this end, in dialogue with authors such as Pierre Bourdieu and Roger Chartier, class observations were carried out in three Portuguese-speaking high school classes, two of which in the regular modality and one in Young Adults Education (EJA), whose records originated the Field Diaries. Thus, the investigation uses the resources of school ethnography. Semi-structured interviews with two teachers and eight students, teenagers and adults, also make up the research material. Thus, the objective was to understand the tensions related to legitimate culture within a level of education that has been going through various processes of expansion and questioning of its formative meanings. The analysis of sources allows us to see reading as an element that supports and structures a relevant dimension of school life, while its meanings are constructed according to the logic of everyday interactions that help in the classification and identification of legitimate practices. It was possible to describe classrooms in the image of the palimpsest, in which the reading references of students and teachers occupy a marginal space but put pressure on the activities and literary dispositions offered to students.

Keywords

School life – School reading practices – Reading – High school – Literary works.

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1- Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. Contact: patricia.amparo@usp.br



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In general, studying is not producing, but producing oneself as capable of producing.
(BOURDIEU, 2014, p. 76).

Introduction

This article aims to understand the disputes and conflicts surrounding the legitimate reading of literary works in everyday school life. For this, its main objective is to apprehend the clashes between the representations of reading constituted by teachers, students and school imperatives in the construction of consensus on the subject. Since such conflicts were revealed in a subtle way in class observations and interviews with teachers and students, not only the teaching contents will be explored, but also the practices that involve them, indicating the form of relationship with the knowledge that such options suggest. Despite Pierre Bourdieu (CHARTIER; BOURDIEU, 2001, p. 237) considering reading a cultural practice “[...] more directly taught by the school system”, many speeches have highlighted its loss of prestige at school and the challenges of tying young people to the classics (PAIVA et al., 2011). At the same time, the value of reading continues to be reaffirmed in official programs, such as the National Book and Reading Plan, at the federal level, and the Municipal Book, Reading, Literature and Library Plan (PMLLLB), in São Paulo.

In this scenario, from a socio-historical perspective (NÓVOA, 1991), an attempt was made to discuss the issue by investigating the tensions staged in the school space between teachers, students and official prescriptions as evidence of a dispute that occurs when different understandings regarding reading of literary works coexist and generate, on the one hand, acts of negotiation, resistance and resignification and, on the other hand, the everyday meanings attributed to reading at school as a function of objectively practiced relationships (BOURDIEU, 2011a). In this coexistence, the ways of reading structured in belonging groups marked by gender and class cleavages, among others, generate modalities of appropriation of literary objects. By locating the issue in this way, based on Roger Chartier (1991a), reading was understood as an object of dispute in everyday school life.

For such purpose, we opted to carry out classroom observations in two public schools of the state of São Paulo: between October and December 2014, we monitored the teaching of Portuguese in two 1st year high-school classes at Escola Dom Quixote², and a class of the same level of education in the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) modality at the Anne Frank School. In the first institution, three classes per week were observed in each class; on Monday, two lessons per week. Each class had around 35 enrolled students. From this universe of students, four teenagers and three adults were interviewed, including five female and two male. The observation of classes gave rise to a *Field Diary*, in which we record everyday school life and practices involving reading. Allied to this, at the end of 2014 and 2016, teachers Valquíria and Celeste, responsible for the aforementioned classes, were interviewed at the end of 2014 and 2016. Based on the principle that textbooks, as

2- In order to preserve the identity of educational institutions, teachers and students, we use fictitious names here. With specific emphasis on schools, we opted for the titles of books most mentioned by students during interviews. It is also noteworthy that all ethical procedures were followed during the investigation.

well as state and national curricula, help in the daily construction of the meanings of literature, throughout the research it was observed how these materials were mobilized and used by teachers in the preparation and organization of classes. The *Field Diaries* helped to record and highlight certain classroom circumstances, teaching practices and interactions between teachers and students, and the interviews helped to support the representations of teachers and students about reading, as well as their impressions about the classes, the colleagues, and the school.

Aiming to circumscribe the scope of the research and delimiting our main objective, we parted from school as an institution responsible for cultural selection. As stated by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (2014), by enshrining some cultural objects and the relationships privileged by them, a *cultural discretion* is instituted, in turn understood as a set of reference knowledge for the education of students. In the words of Jean-Claude Forquin (1986), educational institutions re-elaborate knowledge according to the desired training objectives. Through the relationship with legitimate objects, students go through a training process consistent with the profile of experienced schooling and, thus, will represent “[...] the most specific product of an education system” (BOURDIEU, 2013, p. 206). In other words, they start to share concepts, vocabularies, reality perception schemes, among other aspects, resulting from the school training profile. However, it is the meaning of this school cultural transmission, as well as its content, which have been discussed in recent years due to social changes that stress this process (DUSSEL, 2009). In this article, we intend to understand the tensions related to reading, experienced in the classroom, and described here, through the image of the palimpsest, namely, a “papyrus or parchment whose primitive text was scraped off, to make room for another” (HOUAISS; VILLAR, 2009, p. 1417).

Building a point of view to analyze everyday school life

Observing, in the day-to-day at school, the tensions related to the dispute for the legitimate reading of literary works implies recognizing that, despite the issue being present in a more generalized way in society, it acquires a particular feature when situated in the school environment, since literature is responsible for a significant dimension of the consolidation of its formative goals. Thus, even though the literary field is defined by Pierre Bourdieu and Wacquant (2014) as a relatively autonomous space of forces, whose movement contributes to defining, socially and historically, what is understood, for example, by the notions of literary and classical work, we are interested in following the appropriations of books, authors and meanings of literature in the context of school culture³.

It is understood that the literary content is responsible, in high school, for the realization of an educational ideal based on the understanding of a legitimate culture, projecting, from that, a subject cultivated by incorporating aspects of the literate universe (CHARTIER, A-M; HÉBRARD, 1995). In dialogue with this interpretation, Regina

3- Further information about the literary field can be found in Bourdieu (1996).

Zilberman (1988) states that literary language constitutes the standard model for writing, inculcating values and good taste, a way of acquiring personal advantages and a space for the transmission of Brazilian literary heritage. Thus, there is an unfolding of the centrality of language in the school form, specifically in the roles that reading can play in effecting the inculcation of its culture. By being involved by the practices and representations that organize teaching, its double function is identified in reading: on the one hand, the most valued authors, titles and supports make up the direct content of teaching; on the other hand, the school establishes a particular mode of interaction with literature, marked by the distance between subject and language, that is, the *scriptural-school* relationship (VINCENT *et al.*, 2001). From this, it is possible to apprehend a structuring and fundamental dimension of schooling.

In the Brazilian case, it should be considered that secondary education was, for a long time, destined to the formation of elites, as highlighted by Elza Nadai (1987). It was only in the 20th century, especially between the 1940s and 1970s, that we witnessed the passage of secondary education through expansion processes, largely due to social pressures for access to this level of education (SPÓSITO, 1984; BEISIEGEL, 2006). This trend acquired new meanings in the 1990s, when a new wave of expansion occurred thanks to the growing demand in the public network (CORTI, 2015). With regard to Youth and Adult Education, there is a movement to expand its offer, especially after the 1988 Constitution, with the State assuming responsibility for training those who could not complete schooling at the expected age (OLIVEIRA; SOUZA, 2013). The growing occupation of the school by different social groups has generated, even today, pressures related to the so-called cultural selection, since the process of school expansion problematized the current training model. If the picture above suggests a closed circuit, when research is directed towards everyday school life, it is possible to identify the unforeseen ways of implementing the training intention, assuming that it takes place in a space of negotiation and friction between teachers, students, and school imperatives (ZAFFRAN, 2006). The research sources allowed recording the daily regularities that link the meanings of reading in the two known schools. It cannot be ignored that school culture is marked by unique norms and practices that define objectives in the formation and inculcation of values, described in a particular way through immersion in their daily lives (JULIA, 1991). Therefore, it is important to know the subjects who took part in this investigation.

Valquíria and Celeste, both teachers, have similar trajectories. Coincidentally, they started their professional lives as accountants and completed a degree in Portuguese while working in the field of accounting in the 1990s. Teaching was, therefore, the second option for both, who reported, in the interviews, that they did not consider attending higher education, but saw university education as an opportunity to give new meaning to their educational expectations. Teachers seem to have benefited from a movement to increase vacancies for access to higher education, which took place in the 1990s through private institutions (PFEIFER; GIARETA, 2009). Like the students interviewed, their trajectories are marked by the expansion of schooling in Brazil and the consequent reconfiguration of schools, which are no longer occupied exclusively by subjects from Brazilian cultural

elites, as happened in the passage from the Empire to the Republic (HAIDAR, 2008). The accommodation to the unforeseen profession was crucial in the way the teachers built their relationship with teaching: in their professional trajectories an attempt to adapt to the culture valued by the school can be observed, understood, in this case, as a kind of second culture.

The three adults interviewed at the Anne Frank School, attending high school in the EJA modality, were workers aged between 35 and 45 years old, thus out of step with the other students in the class, most of them in their 20s. They exercised the functions of salesman, secretary and housewife and attended the evening course after working hours. Two of them were married and one of them was a widow, all with children. All shared a history of intermittent schooling, with phases of study and breaks due to the need to work, and yearned to improve living conditions through studying. In turn, students who attended the Dom Quixote School were on average 15 years old during the survey, attended school in the morning and, in some cases, took English and computer courses after hours. When comparing the education of parents of adult students and teenagers, it appears that the former studied, on average, up to elementary school, while the latter, for the most part, have completed secondary education. Among mothers, the most frequent professions are cleaning, saleswoman and nurse; among parents, many work in civil construction in formal and informal occupations. Based on these references and the spaces they occupy in the social world, teachers and students act within it, since the actions that take place in the school are syntheses of the social practices of individuals (SIROTA, 1988).

It is therefore convenient to approach the concept of *habitus* in order to understand school positions. Pierre Bourdieu (2011b, p. 22) understands *habitus* as “[...] principles that generate distinct and distinctive practices”. Developed amidst socialization processes arising from different positions in the social space and, therefore, linked to the logics of the home world, the dispositions resulting from this dynamic organize not only what the subject does, but also how they perform a certain activity. In addition to practical dispositions, socialization organizes forms of classification of oneself and others, that is, it helps in the production of *representations* that offer possibilities for action in objectively configured situations (CHARTIER, R., 1991b).

According to Roger Chartier (1991a), representations are ways of presenting an object that is absent, thus attributing meaning and content to the represented object. For the author, “representations of the social world [...] are always determined by the interests of groups that forge them” (CHARTIER, R., 1991a, p. 17). Consequently, social groups produce public images of themselves and distance themselves from others through “incorporated intellectual schemes”. For example, when elaborating certain relationships with reading, social groups produce representations of themselves through an approximation to culture, situate themselves in reality and produce meanings for it, thus instituting forms of classification that organize their understanding of the world. In the case of school, the conflicts around the legitimate reading of literary works may result from the tension between the representations constituted by the teachers, the students and the school imperatives, which do not always coincide.

In this way, one can think of the objectively established relationships in the school space as the description of specific forms of interaction that take place according to the logic of school culture, offering a specific structure, in turn interpreted and updated according to the *habitus*, generating practices and representations about the school and, above all, the reading of literary works. Next, an attempt will be made to understand how the subjects described above mobilize their representations and build practices that symbolize socially rooted ways of reacting and sustaining school life (SIROTA, 1988).

The encounter between teachers and students in the configuration of the school palimpsest

The description of some elements of the classes - the contents and their ways of teaching - is relevant for understanding the configuration of disputes around the legitimization processes of literature. For this article, data analysis allowed us to apprehend school routines marked by different logics of representation in this regard, as well as pedagogical relationships permeated with small misunderstandings, revealed in the mobilization of cultural references, in the choice of teaching materials, in the practices of teaching and defining the roles of literature in training. These small clashes, by recurrence and persistence, reveal that broader frameworks, such as the challenges related to school cultural selection, are shown by small gestures that configure a kind of school socializing matrix (LAHIRE, 2008), marked by tensions and divergent meanings.

The first axis of misunderstandings is expressed in the representations that articulate teaching positions. Valquíria and Celeste elaborate the function of reading literary works in everyday life through tensions between the need to teach the history of literature, so that the literary content is presented as a cultural heritage, and the images and representations made by students. Valquíria exemplifies this operation:

I would select one of the texts, talk about the characteristics of the trovas and troubadours, and then I would work on the text for them to understand why it arrived in that context. Why troubadour? Why this word? What is it about? So, inside the text, I pulled all the history and ideas, and through the text I included grammar as well. The 16th century also had this same sequel. (Valquíria).

When referring to the use of the textbook in the structuring of her classes, the teacher indicates that the presented temporal sequence, from Troubadourism to the 16th century, is relevant in the articulation of teaching contents. This sense of teaching literature is recurrent both with Valquíria and Celeste and among other teachers who, by mobilizing “[...] something about aesthetic movements and period styles following a certain timeline [...]” (REZENDE, 2013, p. 102), embody the teaching of literature as heritage and temporal sequence to be incorporated through selected teaching activities. This can be seen in the example taken from the *Field Diary*:

The teacher gets up and reminds them of the work on the Baroque, 'not to be overlooked'. They should explain the starting point, the main characteristics of the literary movement and talk about Gregório de Matos. (OBSERVATION made on November 4, 1st year B).

The privilege given to activities that involved the silent and individual reading of passages about the studied literary movement and the performance of written activities to be delivered was recurrent in the classes. Papers based on issues in the question and answer model or filling in the blanks were common, as observed in another situation:

This work "has to do with the Baroque, the work you are doing." Students will have to answer questions by reading the text. The teacher distributed textbooks. On the blackboard the teacher writes:

"Graded activity

Read the text 'Sermão do bom ladrão (ou da audácia),' pages 238 and 239.

Answer questions 1 to 3."

(Observation made on November 9, 1st year A).

If Valquíria privileged silent interpretation and written record, Celeste, for her part, structured the classes especially in terms of individual reading activities and collective oral interpretations of literary texts:

When she finishes distributing the texts, the teacher starts reading. In the corner of the printed page, there is an explanation of what the short story is. She reads this explanation and then reads the title of the story to be read: "The cannibal dog." The teacher asks the class what a cannibal is. They quickly answer that it's someone who eats people. The teacher starts reading the story. The other students carefully follow the reading. She constantly stops the text to talk about some word and, from them, address some grammatical issue: "What does the word 'enemies' evoke?" Only two students are able to answer the question. The teacher goes on to say that "[...] when we write a text, we have to be careful not to repeat words." They must be aware of this to take the ENEM test.

At another point, the teacher asks, "What does it mean to be successful?" "It's a sign of success," says one student. The teacher usually responds, "Very well, that's right." (OBSERVATION made on November 7, 3rd year B).

The class continues with the request for students to answer the book's questions about narrative focus, which will be taken up orally. Through activities like these, Valquíria and Celeste instill in students the meaning of the history of literature, as understood at school, and help them define ways of exploring these materials, such as interpretation of the meanings of words, information about literary genres, biographical data about authors, etc. However, students deal with such options problematically:

We even did an assignment. We didn't learn about it [Baroque], we had to do research about it (Manuela).

[...] I know that [Baroque] is an artistic movement that was built in Brazil, like a historical heritage, and that's what I remember. (Carolina).

There is a conflict between the teaching representation, nourished by the history of teaching the subject and the school culture, according to which literature is a heritage to be incorporated, and the representations of students:

[Doesn't like reading at school] because you have to read, I think that's boring [...] I don't like reading history, so I like reading books. (Amanda).

Ah, like the book... no book, mostly text. I'm reading, then it says that Aphrodite did I don't know what. I've heard about it, all the teachers talk about it, but I don't know if it's true or not. There is no proof that it happened. (Manuela).

The aforementioned students resist approaching literature based on historical sequence, or even away from the literary content specific to the scriptural relationship with teaching content linked to the school form (LAHIRE, 2008). The representation of literature, for them, has other meanings:

Oh, I loved it, I liked Patativa do Assaré. I loved his poetry, which was simple poetry, from the countryside. As I'm from the countryside, I identified myself [laughs], I thought they were beautiful. I didn't know him. Then one day she [the teacher] told us to research [...] I told her: "Wow, I love this guy!" (Claudia).

Nice books, which get attention, even if you don't like to read, for our age, it's good that something has action, when the guys go in there, so, like, it's something that gets attention. (Carolina).

Previous statements indicate that, although students resist, in some cases, certain authors and books present in the school canon, what distances them from pedagogical proposals is based on a different understanding of what would be, for example, fiction. For them, literary content is understood as a reason for entertainment, evasion, and recognition. When literature is presented to them in its historical function, the possibility of identifying and engaging with its content becomes problematic. In this sense, the options and forms of mobilizing school activities seem to accentuate such misunderstandings.

In the previous examples, through exercises that involved silent reading, writing and talking aloud, the teachers mobilized the literary content and its forms of school interpretation. We observed, however, that the activities did not produce links between the representations of teachers and students about reading literary works and school meanings. In general, the teachers expected the students to solve the questions by themselves, ignoring the gap between the assumptions contained in those questions and what the students represented as literature, in broader terms, and school literature, in particular. That said, the activities seem to be enough to establish certain values associated with

the teaching of literature, such as the constitution of a literary heritage, school forms of analysis, among others. However, all these blanks do not seem to be filled by students and, as Stéphane Bonnéry (2007) well states, they gradually lose the sense of their presence in the classroom, which is more problematic in the case of students whose cultural practices are far from those valued by the school. It is also observed that the pillar that structures the school legitimacy of literary content varies between the teaching and student positions, as the former are based on the value of literature in its own right, as a heritage and artistic form, while students assert the legitimacy of fiction based on the possibility of avoidance, entertainment, and circumstances of identification with their lives.

Added to this disagreement is the role played by curriculum documents. When discussing the organization of their classes, the interviewed teachers say that the *National Curriculum Parameters* exert a lot of influence on their work. As mentioned above, both began their careers in 1990, in the context of implementing the curricular parameters and, as a result, participated in in-service training and discussions that resulted in the appropriation of the ideas in this document in a privileged way. In addition, the presence of textbooks in class planning is noticed. Valquíria organized the classes according to the order of the volume *Viva Português: ensino médio*, by Elizabeth Campos, Paula Marques Cardoso, and Sílvia Leticia de Andrade (2010), while Celeste resorted to reproductions of various textbooks available at the school. From these fragments, the teachers composed a mosaic that supported their classes. The question that arises, however, refers to the way in which these teachers have been appropriating, over the decades, the curricular changes related to the role of literature in schools.

The documents constitute a representation of the meaning of the literature that sought to deal with the expansion of education systems. According to the fertile image produced by Miriam Schröder (2013), in the 1960s there was a transformation in the teaching of literature, in which the concern with the study of literature was replaced by the teaching of its *uses*. Given that secondary education was, for a long time, addressed to the formation of elites, aiming to transmit what was considered literary cultivation and lack of interest in studies, the changes undertaken in the context of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) of 1961 disarticulated such meanings by valuing specialization, training for work and utilitarianism (SOUZA, 2009).

Such trends structured the teaching of literature and accentuated the expressive functions of language. The *National Curriculum Parameters for High School* (2000), widely cited by Valquíria and Celeste, highlighted literature in a communicative sense associated with a level of education understood as a “place of exclusion to be overcome” (1999). Literature itself had little centrality in the document, and the notion of text prevailed as a unit of communication and social expression. *The curriculum guidelines for secondary education* (2006) can be understood as a turning point in this tendency to privilege the communicative dimension of language in favor of valuing literature as a work of art to be recognized as such. As a result, it is possible to observe the construction of impasses around the school meaning of teaching literature as increasingly broader social groups occupy its interior. With regard to the teaching position, given the need to produce

meanings in the teaching of literature through the articulation of fragments arising from teaching materials, which tended to reinforce the teaching of the history of literature as a heritage, and the documents that emphasized the expressive character of language, sometimes its aesthetic function, Valquíria and Celeste ended up producing consensus in the daily school life, making use of their cultural *habitus*.

The examples brought up here show that conflicts around the legitimacy of literature at school occur through small misunderstandings during classes. However, the persistence of these small clashes generates an atmosphere of tension that erupts in more direct disputes around the issue. Such is the case of the situation recorded in the *Field Journal*, when Celeste talks to the students after reading the short story “O amor por entre o verde” by Vinícius de Moraes:

At that moment, a student says: “he is checking the brotos”. The teacher takes the opportunity and says that the expression helps to know the narrator’s age. She asks the students how it is possible to know this. Some students claim that no one speaks like that anymore. The teacher asks: “If it were today, what word would the author use?”. Students get more agitated and one says “novinho e novinha”, receiving full support from classmates. At the same time, the teacher says no, because “novinho and novinha are not slang, they’re adjectives.” The students are not convinced of the answer and start to argue among themselves, and the speech noise increases. Suddenly, a student says “gatinhos”, a term accepted by the teacher.

(Observation made on November 31, 3rd year B).

The teacher directly sanctions a word often used in songs linked to *funk*, a relevant influence among students. In this way, the previous passage is representative of a constant operation within the classes, which consists in maintaining these elements of student life as a blur over a tangle of meanings already defined by the school. Thus, despite the pressure exerted by the reference culture of students, it is little mentioned, which increases school conflicts and, at the same time, puts pressure on curricular options and teaching practices. The tensions around what would be a legitimate interpretation gain space here and emerge through the meanings constructed in this tense environment. It is significant to think that throughout classes a possible socializing matrix is affected towards reading literary works (LAHIRE, 2008), marked by negotiations in the face of sometimes contrasting reading representations and the educational objectives used by teachers when they amalgamate references textbooks and curricula. The classroom seems to function as a palimpsest, in which the meanings of literature, legitimated in the past, seem to be blurred and shuffled in the present by student reading practices⁴. Consequently, deciphering the content that the new text can offer becomes difficult.

4- Other developments of the issue can be found in Amparo (2021).

The reading practices of teachers and students: reciprocal proximity and distance

We can think with Lucrecia D'Aléssio Ferrara (1993) that teachers have the role of providing totality or cohesion to classes by functioning as emblems that articulate, from their cultural references and transit through language, the daily life of classes. For this, it is up to the teachers to daily manage a classroom in which contrasting reading representations are at work. Since the *cultural habitus* of the interviewees has characteristics that distance them from school cultural references, there are many challenges faced by both:

Newspapers, books, everything, *Capitães de Areia*, I would see him [father] read *Capitães de Areia*, I'd what else he'd read, he talked a lot about Camilo Castelo Branco, Amor de Perdição, there were some books there, many classics like that, many classic books there, always on the shelf for us [...] He would buy more and more, there was a collection from a newspaper, right... (Valquiria).

The newsstand and its organization became a privileged space for accessing written culture, despite facing depreciation as a space for accessing the culture legitimized by the school. In the case of teachers, we notice not only the access to literary objects, but also the way in which their logic of organization of the literary language becomes familiar among the reading practices of the teachers, who take it as a reference for their professional performance.

In addition, the teachers indicate an approximation between the oral and written repertoires, resorting to them whenever they were asked about their literary references during classes or even when they taught aspects specific to writing, which reveals an important capital for both (BAUTIER; ROCHEX, 2008). The most significant teaching experiences recorded during classes were those in which the teachers rescued such memories as work elements. As an example, it is possible to mention one of the classes in which Celeste sang *Eu sei que vou te amar* with the students after reading *Soneto da Fidelidade*, by Vinicius de Moraes, following the class in which they discussed *O amor por entre o verde*:

They remember the name, but they don't remember exactly what they know. A student in the back of the room remembers *Garota de Ipanema*. The teacher confirms that it's his song and starts declaiming the beginning of the *Soneto da Fidelidade*.

De tudo, ao meu amor serei atento antes

E com tal zelo, e sempre, e tanto

Que mesmo em face do maior encanto

Dele se encante mais meu pensamento

Then the teacher starts to sing *Eu sei que vou te amar*, followed by some students, who sing with the teacher. One of the students says "Cálice" to the classmates who are singing along.

Eu sei que vou te amar

Por toda a minha vida eu vou te amar

Em cada despedida eu vou te amar

Desesperadamente

Eu sei que vou te amar

(Observation made on October 31, 2014, 3rd year B).

When interviewed, the students reaffirmed the importance of that day. However, as mentioned above regarding the students, we noticed that the cultural references of the teachers were also sidelined or in a marginal space during classes. The same was not seen in Valquíria's classes. The professors maintain an ambiguous relationship with the practice of dense reading of positive experiences linked to family space, because as they accessed higher education and prepared for teaching, they went through training experiences that devalued such cultural experiences in favor of an objective and distanced relationship with literature. In this regard, Celeste mentioned in one of her classes:

Yes, she did everything and I remember, in the 1st literature class she said: I'm very sad, she said starting her 1st class, it was the 1st class where they really gave it some effort. I remember she said: I'm very sad today, *I'm going to ruin literature for you*. Everyone: why Maria Lucia? Ah, because now we're going to see literature from the inside out. (Celeste).

The teacher suggests that in her professional training process she went through a situation of disarticulation of her relations with literature in favor of school practice, something that did not happen without conflicts. In a study on Portuguese teachers in São Paulo, Gabriela Rodella de Oliveira (2008) reveals that this situation is somewhat common, pointing out that the researched group's university education experiences do not allow for autonomous appropriation of literary content. However, the teacher representation attributed to the teaching of literature strains the school ideal and its formative trajectories:

[...] I've always been enchanted with history, I really like history, I really like to tell stories, I really like to hear stories, so I like the chroniclers, I like short stories, I like motivating stories, stories that point to a more enlightened thing in life itself. (Celeste).

I think it's making them stay, raising awareness, you know, touching them like this, not being so mechanical, people who look, as they say, know how to look more carefully at things, at life. There is, as they say, the same taste that I had and the same sensitivity that I developed, that they also have the same opportunity that I had [...] for them to see, like, not seeing a street or not being able to observe if it is an elderly person trying to cross the street, to have a view of the world. (Valquíria).

Despite organizing teaching practices that reinforce literature as a historical heritage, when they feel more comfortable talking about the meanings of literature in their lives, the interviewed teachers resort to ideas of identification, motivation, and a certain humanization. Thus, they experience by themselves a dilemma around what should legitimize their teaching action: the school meaning, or the meanings constituted in their

training. Faced with this conflict, which is little explained, the problematic attempts at teaching experiences that they know are attributed to students, who are understood as unprepared or as people alien to the school game. When talking about her teenage students, Valquíria emphasizes that they “[...] do not have the habit of reading. The family does not have the habit of reading. Most Brazilians are very visual, they like television a lot, so this reading thing is not instilled”. As will be seen below, this statement can be stressed when we observe students’ reading practices. For her part, this is how Celeste understands her students:

[...] The problem with EJA is this: they arrive tired at school, they don’t want anything that is difficult, nothing that requires a lot of reasoning, they don’t want any of that. (Celeste).

In the school environment, students seem to be classified only as poorly proficient readers or simply non-readers. A closer look at the students’ reading practices, however, contradicts this representation and points to one more circumstance of conflict between family and school reading practices. It is in the school game that students are understood according to the logic of positive or negative classifications, based on standards of excellence or failure built within them (AZANHA, 1990/1991). Like the teachers, adult and adolescent students buy books, magazines and booklets at used bookstores, newsstands, bookstores located in *shopping centers* and by borrowing from friends and acquaintances. We can cite as an example the case of Margarida:

But when we go to the mall, we always go to the bookstore to see the books... Then, when my mother can, we buy a book. She lets us choose a book, then we pick one. (Margarida).

But I go to the newsstand more often, you know? To buy magazines. (Margarida).

The possibilities of access to cultural goods are enhanced by the places where students, adults or teenagers circulate, especially on the way to school or work and on weekend trips. Roger Chartier (1999) emphasizes that learning to read also occurs between people’s belonging groups, promoting practices that strengthen social bonds and people’s subjectivity:

She [mother] is going to take me, to accompany me and give me the options of which book I should take or not! [...] She said: “you’re the one doing the reading, you choose”. But sometimes I’m a little undecided as to which one to bring, so my mother helps me choose. [...] she reads the summary here [points to the back cover of the book I’m holding], which shows what happens. She checks who the author is, and says: “I think you have to take this one, it looks more like you. You have to take this one. (Manuela).

The practice of reading in family circles makes them structure representations through which students, in the classroom, take ownership of school initiatives. The presence of *funk* culture, cell phones, magazines aimed at a young audience, such as

Todateen, books present in the school canon, publications recommended by *booktubers*⁵ and *bestsellers* make up the students' reading universe:

So my favorite writer is Rick Riordan who wrote Percy Jackson, Nicholas Sparks and John Green... This Rick Riordan, I'm in love with Percy Jackson. My favorite book, Percy Jackson. John Green, *The Fault in Our Stars*. (Aline).

The teacher plays the role of sanctioning this dimension of family culture for students:

Yes. Harry Potter, right? Which I haven't read, a story that doesn't interest me, but I've read a lot of Harry Potter text because it's what they liked, it's what they wanted. I let them tell me, you know. I let them tell me a lot. "But what are you reading?" The last class I had, most of them read it. When they finished the assignment "Oh, can I read, teacher?" They had their books. It had nothing to do with what I had asked for. I had asked them to read only *Anne Frank's Diary* this year. (Celeste).

Such elements, however, are not allowed in the school environment and, as a result, despite the strong presence of the students' various reading objects, their circulation through the universe of literate culture, the cell phone and their reading and writing practices, are either invisible to teachers or considered illegitimate. We follow, therefore, the hierarchization of cultural references within the school, according to their forms of classification (ZAFFRAN, 2006).

Consequently, little by little, students start to assert themselves as non-readers or poorly proficient readers: "I don't know how to talk about my reading" (Aline). This formative effect is established as teaching practices establish a cultural discretion but generate few forms of creative appropriation of school knowledge associated with reading so that students – and even teachers – can understand themselves as capable of creating from them.

Final considerations

The beginning of this article referred to the multiplicity of interpretations about the reading of literary works at school, some of them emphasizing the disinterest of students, and others, valuing the book at school and in society. The search for a dialogue with such questions led us to investigate the conflicts that permeate the daily lives of teachers and students in the constitution of a school's legitimacy for literary works. The observation of misunderstandings in the clashes between contrasting reading representations, teaching practices that involve literary content, valuing some authors and banning others, pointed to persistent disputes and conflicts around the investigated topic.

5- *Booktubers* are digital influencers who keep virtual pages in which they talk about books, whether new releases or classics. Some influencers advertise books from established publishers, while others sell their own titles.

Disagreements reveal tensions around a certain relationship with school knowledge, organized according to the scriptural logic in an objectified, externalized and disembodied manner (LAHIRE, 2008). Thus, teachers select teaching practices, exercises and fictional texts that emulate such ways of relating to knowledge. However, as the first axis of conflicts, the representation of literature as a literary heritage is questioned by students in favor of an image constituted by them in their family spaces. For students, literature is entertainment, evasion, and an opportunity for identification. Simultaneously, the curricular documents and teaching materials, taken by the teachers as mosaics, articulate contrasting meanings of fictional books at school. As observed in the description of the reading practices of students and teachers, this school form of organizing literary knowledge works as a palimpsest, in which they are unable to engage their representations constituted in the family world as fertile dispositions for the appropriation of schooled knowledge. Thus, the school legitimacy of literature as an object of admiration and value in itself is not sustained and, simultaneously, the basis of legitimacy constituted in the experiences of family socialization of teachers and students is also not welcomed, generating the conflicting school environment that our research registered.

Returning to the epigraph of this article, we can think with Pierre Bourdieu that the school is an institution in which, by engaging in studies, students can produce themselves as people capable of producing in the literary language, according to the different dispositions of the school knowledge. As the article demonstrated, the relationships with language, in general, and with literary language, in particular, are structural elements of schooling and, therefore, fundamental in the education of students. In this sense, we emphasize the need to think about how the acceptance of cultural practices of all students would be possible as a constitutive element of their educational ideal.

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Patrícia Aparecida do Amparo is a professor at the Faculty of Education at Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Master (2012) and Doctor (2017) in Education from the same institution. Doctoral internship at Lumière Lyon 2 University, in Lyon, France. Coordinates a study group on reading practices and training.