

FROM TEXT TO WORK

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There is only one way to conquer the monster: you must eat it, bones, blood, skin, pelt, and gristle. And even then the monster is not dead, for it lives in you, is assimilated into you, and you are different and somewhat monstrous yourself for having eaten it.

ROBERT PENN WARREN
“Pure and Impure Poetry” (1943)

Emphatic concepts tend to produce a curious effect of meaning, to the degree that their strong potential for intelligibility clashes with the process of circulation to which they give rise. “The society of the spectacle” was coined by Guy Debord, with a clearly Lukácsian affiliation, as a new extreme degree of reification, that of the image and of the visual, only to be immediately, by means of the most inferior iterative displacements, diluted and converted into its opposite, a practically festive term, as if to suggest that life were a show. Something similar happened with “the culture industry,” an expression formulated by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer with the intention of generating astonishment by combining two spheres that were in reality antagonistic, but that today is used as a neutral, absolutely denotative notion by the media and in MBA programs.¹ Once the concept becomes crystallized, its content is converted into a formula and is then applied to the most diverse objects, which, in turn, welcome and adapt to that which the concept already brings pre-formed. Cases of this strange amphibious being that is the critical or theoretical commonplace therefore proliferate—something that blends sophistication (from a high cultural sphere) with obtuseness (from a lack of reflection). Its force resides in the obfuscation it creates, in the fact that it occurs to no one that it need not be an instrument, but could instead be an object of inquiry itself. However, it only takes questioning the critical commonplace to topple the sandcastle upon which it rested. For example, a short time ago Robert Hullot-Kentor revealed the absurdity surrounding the reception of Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” one of the most cited essays in the history of theory.² A “mixture of *non*

sequitur and untruth" (9), the work written against the notion of aura would become "itself auratic" (10), which in turn would allow a complete series of glaring problems to go unnoticed. The perpetuation of this blindness was only made possible thanks to the hyper-visibility of Benjamin's essay: a purloined-letter logic, only in a more dynamic sense, according to which it is the constant repetition of exposure that leads to concealment.

The same applies to the concept of "text," although there are significant differences; primarily due to its fluidity and capaciousness, it lends itself to notable terminological confusions. For example, there is its technical, linguistic, or philological meaning when we speak of the "establishment of the text" or of "textual cohesion"; there also exists an ordinary and neutral meaning that simply denotes any set of words under the written form; but what is of interest here is the theoretical use of "text," that which allows for both a metaphorization, allowing any practice to be designated as meaningful, as well as a conceptual investment that makes it the object of the most sundry lucubrations. To these semantic slippages we need to add a temporal effect, for if, on one hand, "text" is perhaps the most used term by language studies in general and by literary theory in particular, on the other hand it is somewhat *passé*. The moment of dazzle, of grand pronouncements, of triumphalist theorizations is gone. The "text" survives, today, in politicized versions, such as in postcolonial approaches; in technical versions, such as in linguistics and discourse analysis; or simply as a background figure, a conceptual minor character in the story told by various theories. Here, too, the imbalance between widespread use and lack of reflection is astonishing, and what was said above applies just as much in this case, since, having passed the initial phase of discovery, the "text" crystallized into something applied to another object, a tool for producing meaning and making it work. It rarely occupies the position of object of inquiry. Indeed, the fact that this critical commonplace has become so naturalized says a good deal about the state of the development of literary studies in Brazil, since this points simultaneously to an institutional achievement (the capacity to transmit the comprehension of a sophisticated conceptual framework) and to an intellectual weakness (the inability to think meta-theoretically).³

The first step towards defamiliarizing the "text" is to realize that, in fact, it is something radically new, and that a large part of the ease with which it circulates is due precisely to the easy slippage between its various meanings and to this appearance of naturalness and atemporality, the two most typical characteristics of ideology. In reality, the text is a paleontology in that sense that Derrida gives the term, as "the maintenance of an *old name* in order to launch a new concept."⁴ Gerhard Richter puts this point well when he affirms:

[...] all serious engagement with philosophical and aesthetic concepts and their political and historical traditions may require a form of paleonomic work. In modern writing, key examples include Kant's *critique*; Friedrich Schlegel's *irony*; Hegel's *system*; Marx's *ideology*; Nietzsche's *genealogy*; Freud's *unconscious*; Kafka's *law*; Heidegger's *Being*; Brecht's *gesture*; Lacan's *Real*; Foucault's *author*; Levinas's *Other*; Derrida's *writing*; de Man's *allegory*; and Debord's *spectacle*.⁵

The scope of this list leads to the suspicion not only that paleonomies made many of the achievements of the history of philosophy possible, but also, conversely, that neologisms, almost by definition, miss the mark. Carrying something of the logic of novelty and fashion, they in themselves already bear, precisely because the postulate of the new is recurrent in the history of modernity, something of the repetitive. In short, if paleonomic reason is correct, truly original concepts, those possessing content with a strong potential for survival, would emerge from within the force field of traditional concepts. "Text" is an example of this—not unlike its derivative, that noun that is at one and the same time differential and essentializing, *textuality*.

Undoubtedly, there is something limiting in speaking *of* the "text" as if it were a single and monolithic entity. Under this name, there developed, at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s, a whole variety of poetics with differing formulations by Greimas, Kristeva, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and others. There is no space, nor is it my goal here, to gloss over these modulations; however, a common point ought to be stressed from the outset: the fact that, in one way or another, the text will be conceived as a *system*, as a set of elements in play, in an internal relation (however widespread) with each other. It is well known that the central characteristic of the text, that which responds to the real rupture produced by structuralism, is a complication, in the best of hypotheses, and a suppression in the worst, of the referent.⁶ What appears unremarked is how it lends itself to being applied to the wide-ranging objects and how it tends to imprint on other disciplines the internal dynamics of literary interpretation.⁷ Female anorexia can be an object of public health, of psychology, or of the social sciences; however, when the body becomes conceived as a passive text of inscriptions, the interpretive *démarche* comes to resemble that of novels or poetry.⁸ The same applies to the category of narrative, which can include the nation, colonialism, and the products of the culture industry.

Certainly, the text brought with it a notable gain for the process of interpretation by enabling the emergence of a new status of objectivity for the literary artifact. It separated the linguistic materiality of the author conceived as source; it liberated novels, poetry, etc. from the need to be consistent with whatever extrinsic element, whether it be moral, social, or

even in relation to other texts by the same author. The concept of text enabled the cultural disciplines to emerge as *things-in-themselves*, open to interpretation.⁹ Beyond that, it provided the reader with a much more active and noble role. Because there are no longer external ties, any element of the verbal mesh can be meaningful, and it is left up to the reader to decide. Instead of being a decoder of a preexisting intention, the reader turns into an articulator of meanings, thus becoming like a co-author in the interpretive process. The result is a linguistic productivity (at least potentially) without limits, which dissolves author and reader, reading and writing, and which has as its horizon an enjoyment that annihilates subjectivity. At the same time, however, the textual revolution can be criticized by way of at least three principle arguments. First, the most well known of these refers to the difficulty the notion of text as system confronts when accounting for temporality as a transformative element.¹⁰ The text is simultaneous with itself; as a result of a synchronic cut, it only manages to conceive diachrony as a relation between two synchronies, and not as an internal *development*, which is to say not as something that changes itself as it is bathed in time. The fact that, in a system, identity is relational prevents time from acting *on* the text; instead, time is a *result* of the internal articulation of significant parts of the system.

The second critical argument concerns the difficulty that the text conceived as system displays in absorbing value. This is not surprising, since value is also something extrinsic to the differential game. Because all meaning is the result of internal combinations, it becomes impossible to submit it to some comparative scale, which already points to the problem of how to deal with the concept of *truth* in textual practice. Another way to say this is to point out that, precisely because difference is erected as a constitutive principle of the text as such, the differentiation between texts becomes just as problematic as its relation to referentiality. Responding to these difficulties, Roland Barthes's solution was ingenious: texts do not differ in terms of content, essence, substance, or reference, but in productivity, in their capacity to generate meaning.¹¹ The Text (now capitalized, *comme il faut*) becomes stamped with plurality, as opposed to the work, which would have a limited potential for meaning. It is symptomatic that it does not occur to Barthes to contrast the significant exuberance of Text with products of the culture industry, which contain that obvious heteronomous and restrictive element—concrete and not merely ideological—namely, the attainment of profit. In any event, it is with the Text that a whole lexicon of abundance, multiplicity, and plurality emerges in literary studies that, today, constitutes the discipline's biggest commonplace. It is this multiplicity that becomes most valuable when distinguishing between different texts.

All these observations can serve as an introduction to Roland Barthes's "From Work to Text" (1971), one of the most canonized essays in the

history of literary theory published fifty years ago.¹² The feeling of familiarity and comfort in reading it today is a sign less of aging than of the success of its dissemination; perhaps this justifies the attempt to reevaluate it at this moment. "From Work to Text" is composed of seven "propositions" that address the following topics: "method," "genre," "the sign," "filiation," "reading," and "pleasure." The essay's argumentation is entirely binary. The contradiction between the form of exposition and the content of the concept of text is glaring (as is the blindness of critics regarding this), but even more revealing is the degree to which the text *requires* this binarism to be able to present itself as such. The exercise deserves doing: when trying to describe the text without referencing the work as its opposite, the difficulty it encounters is noticeable as the argumentation begins to fluctuate and assume something dreamlike, for it needs the work as its opposite to grant it concreteness and support. Undoubtedly, the reader might object that "From Work to Text" is a brief programmatical and polemical essay in which ideas find themselves compressed and condensed. This is true but in the opposite direction. The programmatical-polemical nature is an internal characteristic constitutive of Barthes's writing. It is difficult to overestimate the combative nature of his writing from the very beginning, with *Mythologies* (1957), through the violent debate with Raymond Picard, and to the hedonistic writings of its final phase.¹³ Controversy, therefore, does not weaken but, on the contrary, is an important part of Barthes's writing and that of many of his fellow theorists of the text. Indeed, it would be interesting to consider whether current usage, purely instrumental and functional, smooth and without friction, would not be viewed with contempt by its original combative elaborators.

As a result of this expository binarism, it is alarming just how fragile the characterization of the notion of work (and, consequently, the attack aimed at it) becomes. The work is "Newtonian," "traditional," "a fragment of substance," "linked to the signified," "caught up in a process of filiation," "an object of consumption," the knowledge it generates is "rather depressing"—and so on.¹⁴ From this accumulation of negative terms there would arise an absolutely stereotypical, unreal image of what a work is: a typical model of the nineteenth century in its worst moments and unfaithful to the representation that the idea of work acquires *within the very works of great worth themselves*. Rarely do those that count put themselves in the position of vehicles of an absolute truth. Two contrasting examples should suffice here. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the book's manuscript is presented as being found by chance, something which greatly complicates the work's filiation with the empirical author; in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus* (1947), authorship of the great work is not simply linked to the diabolical, but, even with its help, requires extreme, practically superhuman efforts from the individual. Whether recognizing its

constitutive fictionality or assuming its precariousness (though other qualifications would still be possible), the conception that many literary texts have of the work is not banal. The most interesting effect from this binarism, however, happens by a curious inversion between work and text when we perceive that, on the one hand, the success of a book such as *S/Z* (1970), perhaps Barthes's most famous, is rooted in a performative paradox: all of its (excellent) interpretive discoveries emerge against the backdrop of the *limited* quality of Balzac's narrative.¹⁵ On the other hand, precisely because what is expected of the Text is, strictly speaking, impossible, since no empirical object, not even *Finnegans Wake* (1939), could correspond to the concept or serve as a satisfactory example, it takes on an auratic character.¹⁶ As a well-known critic affirms:

Although he juxtaposes work and text, Barthes refuses to let text and work be concepts that operate at the same level, or in the same way. One consequence of this is that while Barthes's account of the distinctions helps students find *du Texte* in older works, it does not help much for dealing with avant-garde works, which always fall short of the radical ideal and which are not much illuminated by accounts showing them to fall short. His insistence that the move to *text* is not just a methodological shift but that there are indeed works (which sometimes contain *du texte*) makes the idea of text seem something of a fetish, an ideal object so radical and disruptive that no actual discourse is adequate to the idea.¹⁷

It appears, then, that neither work nor Text are truly objects. It is this that allows one to deal with the latter more as a *symptom* than as something palpable. One can imagine, here, at least four interpretive possibilities:

1. First, the Text would be a *revolt* against extreme contemporary social fragmentation. The growing division of labor involves a contradictory movement of an intense separation between fields, disciplines and their subdisciplines, and of their growing interdependence. The Text, with its claim of transdisciplinarity, plays an emblematic role in such a process insofar as it is simultaneously a separate branch of linguistics, of textuality as such, and a category that lends itself to the interpretation of any sphere of culture. In other words, the Text's capacity to absorb the most diverse sources and universes of meaning presupposes the enormous conceptual specialization it bears and against which it turns. Incidentally, this is what critics such as Mowitt cannot see, for they ignore that the blowing up of barriers between fields of study makes for the limited and quite peculiar field that is literary theory, and that carries with it a series of presuppositions, such as the presupposition that the world is reducible to language.¹⁸

2. In relation to this, the Text can be viewed as announcing the computer era, which Barthes intuited theoretically but did not see firsthand. The lexicon of networks and connections of signification finds an elective affinity *avant la lettre* with the Internet and a good part of so-called poststructuralism appears, in reality, to debate this question without exactly realizing it.¹⁹
3. It is difficult not to read the Text as *compensation* for the insufficiency of art, as a symbolic remedy for a profound frustration related to the unfulfilled promise of culture, including its consecration and institutionalization. Barthes would thus be expressing a discontent with what Marcuse demonstrated so well with regard to the affirmative character of culture.²⁰ The paradoxical logic mentioned above, the fact that not even the most avant-garde and radical art would be equal to the Text, suggests as much. Everything that Barthes predicts about the Text, the rapture it generates, its dazzle and excess, its proximity to the sublime, in sum, the affective load with which he dresses up the concept, makes one imagine that it belongs to aesthetics and not properly to theory: it would be that which culture should be promoting at the moment of its decline.
4. Lastly, the concept of Text bore the *possibility of its own extrapolation*. The way it was appropriated after the fact, as an *a priori* space of full freedom and abundance active in any and all artifacts—ignoring the avant-garde residue contained within the destructive character of enjoyment to which it relates—was not merely a weakening and dilution, but instead corresponded to the strengthening of the forces internal to the concept itself. The proliferating impulse of textuality was rapidly institutionalized and incorporated into the academic/journalistic machine of the production of texts.

It is revealing that the question of the Text's *production* corresponds both to an internal determination of the concept, to which Barthes tirelessly alludes, and to its becoming concretely social. Without knowing it, the author was right, not just because the concept of textuality gave new life to the academic machine capable of producing meanings, but because the text is a suitable figure towards addressing an underlying reality, a new stage of the development of productivity in contemporary society.

II

It is in the emphasis on and investment (ideological, affective, of time and labor) in multiplicity as prerogative and production as ideal that the third critique of the concept of Text appears: namely, that it, in principle, has no end, that it cannot be delimited. Although it produces an interiority out of the play of signifiers, it is incapable of bringing forth, from within itself, a

threshold. Taken literally, the Text cannot but carry itself to the undifferentiation of objects and thereby generate an infinite succession from which the subject cannot be abstracted. Now, the concept which corresponds most adequately with this, that establishes something like an elective affinity with the text, is that of *flow*. From this similarity comes the interpretive hypothesis underlying what follows: that the fullest realization of the Text is of a linguistic/semiotic *flow*. Conceived in this manner, a transposition occurs where the Text starts to leave behind its delocalized locality, that of transdisciplinary discipline, to acquire a socially specific tonality within the scope of language, that of transposition, akin to the overproduction that characterizes capitalism today. The implications of the text as a flow are worth elaborating here. Historically, the principal event for its emergence was the invention of the assembly line. With this invention, a new level of productivity was reached, one which radically altered the notion of what it means to produce. The flow of the assembly line abolishes nothingness by converting silence into an interval. No item exists by itself, for now it becomes part of that which is a modern manifestation *par excellence*: the series. The flow's temporality is of an eternal gerund, and, with this, it reaches a limit of productivity, given that, with the abolition of the void, it is not possible to intensify the torrent except through its acceleration.

This has implications for the subject, who now feels overwhelmed by that which she produces. By not allowing for any rupture or silence, the flow of the assembly line demands an uninterrupted attention and repetitive motions from the subject: she becomes, as Marx pointed out, less than an object, an appendage of the machine. Since flow is by definition infinite, it resists any kind of organicity, requiring, so its operator does not become consumed by it, that a division be established between the time one is subjected to it and the time outside of it, so that physiological functions can be minimally satisfied. As is well known, the body's limit oscillates quite a bit between individuals and is also subject to internal variations, such as the effect of the will and self-discipline, and much of the politics of the twentieth century aimed to define this limitation of the human being, the maximum amount of time that man can be subjected to constant flow. The eight-hour workday, increasingly threatened by the liberal economy, was the historic achievement of this politics.

Nevertheless, it would still be possible to imagine an objection coming from a very familiar critical commonplace, according to which society today is itself postindustrial and the factory's flow now occupies a secondary role, perhaps more and more negligible. Immediate mechanical labor has been computerized and increasingly replaced by robots. The service sector rather than manufacturing is the center of the economy. In sum, the world of acrylic and silicon replaces the world of metal. This is, without a doubt, a long discussion that cannot be properly addressed here; it should

be enough, instead, to point to two decisive arguments. First, the development of automation did not mean the abolition of intensive manual labor; on the contrary, manual labor adjusted itself to automation, as the sweatshops in China or in any underdeveloped nation prove. However, in addition, it is important to question this representation, which very rapidly becomes a worldview, demonstrating that the alleged disappearance of flow from the assembly line does not imply that it has not spread beyond it. Quite the opposite, flow expanded and spread to all of society, assuming a central role in today's world.²¹ If the workday's labor was reduced, this did not mean it defeated the market's logic but rather created a space for its cunning, because what happened was merely an alteration of the valences in a much more cohesive system: while flows are *produced* in labor, they are *consumed* in entertainment.²²

The most propitious place to investigate the new life of the old concept of flow, its clearest and most epistemologically productive concrete manifestation, is there where it was most expected, inside that which has an absolute proximity to all of us: the television. It is the basis for what it means "to be online" and for the withdrawal syndrome, the deficit of Dasein, experienced by those who are disconnected.²³ Indeed, the inability to distance oneself is responsible, dialectically, for the impossibility of really *watching* television if, phenomenologically, this is what happens when one is in front of the screen. Be that as it may, what is important is to emphasize just how much this everyday experience, the most common of all perhaps, needs to be denaturalized, estranged in a Brechtian sense, so that something can arise that, completely new, deep down has been known to us all along.

Television represents the transposition of the factory flow to the sphere of language. If the former offered an homogeneous and continuous material to be worked on by repetitive motions, in televisual flow the spectator is the worker of semiosis, that instance that articulates the meaning of what would otherwise be a chaotic agglomerate of images and sounds. In other words: the task of the viewer is literally to make meaning. The only reservation to note refers to the fixity of the interpretant, since, for Pierce, if semiosis is, by definition, infinite and its triadic elements of "sign, object, and interpretant" can alternate within a chain, here, the subject is shackled to the role of interpretant by the overwhelming nature of the flow.²⁴ Now, semiosis defines what it means to be human; it becomes an activity from which it is not possible to abstain. With that, one's actions in front of the television exhibit something defensive: protecting oneself, by means of forgetting, from the bombardment of meaning to which one is subjected. But this defense is structurally partial and incomplete, since inevitably there will be content that will arouse the interest of those who absorb images and sounds.

Just as with the factory flow, the television has no end; its limit is organic: turning off the television because one is hungry, thirsty, or tired. The absence

of an external regulatory authority, of a boss who forces one to work, makes it so that control, initially, is in the hands of the spectator, facilitating the formation of a logic of addiction. This is coupled with the fact that flow tends toward a homogeneity of meanings; or, better yet, towards a de-contentualizing [desconteudização] of content. The only way to avoid this is through the constant repetition of a determinate signifier evoking a fixed signified. There arises, in this way, an unavoidable opposition between, on one hand, flow as maximum productivity and its tendency toward flatness and, on the other hand, its need to fix the meaning of commodities.

As a consequence of all of this, flow abolishes just as much the qualitative concept of time as that of space, but by no means does it abolish exchange. These two categories become nothing more than material support for the existence of this last. Richard Dienst has an interesting thesis with respect to televisual temporality that describes a new production of time; as he puts it:

Just as the capitalist buys labor power rather than an individual's labor, so the advertiser buys a unit of social time-power—the hypothetical fusion of “free” time and “free” images calibrated in price according to estimates and averages of productivity and potential return. Television, in its fundamental commercial function, socializes time by sending images of quantifiable duration, range, and according to its own cultural coordinates. By generating a realm of collective, shared time, and by setting standards for the valorization of this time, television advances capitalism's temporal rule: everybody is free to spend time in their own way only because, on another level, that time is gathered elsewhere, no longer figured as individual.²⁵

The exchange that takes place, therefore, is between the image/sound composite and time. In Dienst's words: “Televisual images do not represent things so much as they take up time, and to work through this time is the most pervasive way that subjects suffer through, participate in, and perhaps even glimpse, the global unification of contemporary capitalism.”²⁶ If the text shares with flow a lack of limits, it becomes imperative to think about what could sever them: the authority that will promote this is none other than the work itself, which will merit its own paleontology.

III

Certainly, this polemical approximation of the text with the idea of flow, whether it be in factory production or on television, has its problems. It might seem extreme, in addition to taking into account primarily just one model of textuality: the Barthesian model. It can also be countered that we did not give sufficient consideration above to the ruptures within the

text, to its ability to possess chasms within itself, nor to the disalienating role of the activity of reading. This, in reality, is not all that important because the main purpose here was not to destroy the concept of text, but to make use of the impasses it generates in order to glimpse at a renewed notion of the work. Therefore, one should respond to the major criticism aimed at the work, i.e., the restriction it implies through something extrinsic—be it the author's intention or the coherence of his *corpus*—by saying that, on the contrary, it is precisely its becoming a work that allows for an approximation to the ideal of the text. Some of the main features of this refined concept of the work would be the following:

1. The work is no longer conceived as arising in opposition to nothing, as the product of the interaction of the artist's genius with the raw material of nature. Instead, it emerges as the negative of flow, as its *rupture*. Both are mutually implicated: the work wishes to be itself, and its interpretation, in turn, has an individualizing function. If the work, on one hand, contains within itself recurring elements that mark its form, on the other hand, it is the task of form to configure verbal material into significant chains of relation. To put this another way, the work presupposes and suggests its form; conversely, the work would not be possible without the silence of the before and the after, the interruption of flow. It is precisely this process that is at play in John Cage's "4'33", a silent piece in which there is not a single note. Its failure lies in the gamble that a caesura alone would be able to establish a work; its success is evident when one realizes that it is rupture, and not, as Cage wanted, the sounds of the world, which is its true content. The violence of this caesura will be greater the stronger the flow. In this way it becomes clear that its being a work [ser-obra] is not given beforehand, but is the result of an interpretive process—*en passant*: traditional works themselves, when conceived of as "classics," as monuments in the gallery of culture, easily become flow, as evidenced by literary festivals and the entire industry that supports itself on the ideological idea of "great works" in order to sell its products.
2. The limit—both self-imposed and configured by interpretation—prevents speed from assuming a predominant value, allowing what has passed to come back as something different. Slowness in this way becomes possible. Following its own dispositions, the work's very being is established as a tool to slow down objects: it is easier to slow down a novel than a film, a film than the TV, the TV than the Internet.
3. Precisely because of this, form projects distance, which is what allows for a stronger constitution of subject and object.
4. Instead of leading to the annihilation of the subject (common to both Barthesian enjoyment and the factory flow), the work causes the subject

and object to exchange places: the former becomes the arena for the staging of the work, which now seems to speak as a subject.²⁷

5. The author's intention is no longer seen as a determining element, nor as anathema, but as one of the components of the aesthetic material, which can be worked on in countless ways both by the author and the critic—because intention itself can become material.
6. Form, like any other constitutive element of the work, possesses something of the organic to the degree to which it ages and can die. Indeed, for it to emerge as such, it is necessary for determinate content to fade and allow one to glimpse their regulating principle.²⁸
7. In line with this, form itself acquires a determinate content, which prevents it from being confused with a mathematical formula. The work, therefore, cannot be subjected to a model or be used to exemplify whatever may be. There is something irreducibly antididactic in the work, which does not mean that it does not possess cognitive value when considered as sedimented social content.
8. By delimiting a time and a space (whether it be from the composition, the reception, or the merging of the two horizons), form establishes a *singularity*, even if it is not identical with itself, even if it contains an infinitude *within* itself, at the same time that it imposes limits and borders. Form does not isolate the work but presents itself as a tense mediation between inside and outside; form strives to include within itself what happens outside the work. That which is not able to do this dies as an aesthetic object, even though it survives as a document.
9. As a result of all of this, what emerges is the possibility of characterizing art as its own sphere. Take careful note, this is not about recovering the old concept of aesthetic autonomy as something given or as a quality or attribute of literature. On the contrary, as already suggested above, the assertion of “art” or “literature,” now conceived as a rupture, should come rigorously *a posteriori* as a *result* of interpretation.²⁹ In other words, in a world where everything tends to become flow, the definition of the aesthetic becomes that which is subtracted from this by way of interpretation.

This interpretive program is more difficult to carry out than it may seem at first. With this strong approximation between the singularity of the object, aesthetic field, and interpretive act, the middle ground that defines the critical commonplace, those average artifacts so important for thinking in a literary discourse, disappear. What comes into being is just either the successful work/interpretation or nothing at all. It remains to be seen how much of this the school/university system is capable of tolerating. After all, it will always be possible to continue writing texts.

Excursus: Questioning Intertextuality

It is not an exaggeration to say that structuralism was the intellectual fuel which led to the establishment and consolidation of the field of Literature and Linguistics as we know it today in Brazil. There are at least three fundamental factors to take into account when we bear this process in mind. First, structuralism brought with it a scientific ambition, a desire for rigor and precision that would free the study of language from guesswork and impressionism, that would purge language of prejudice and pre-judgments, and that would abolish, in literature, any ethical investment, the belief that it participates in the Good.³⁰ As Niilo Kauppi points out, structuralism arose from general changes in the French academic context, such as:

[...] the rapid growth in the number of both university students and teachers, and the institutionalization of many disciplines such as sociology and linguistics. A separate degree in sociology was created in 1958. In the 1960s, the number of students in letters tripled from 7,000 in 1960 to 20,000 in 1969. Both of these factors [...] contributed to important changes in the structure of the market of symbolic goods and in the models of intellectual modernity.³¹

Among them, it is worth mentioning a new relationship between the French university and the culture industry, which now found a specific niche among intellectuals (and pseudo-intellectuals, no doubt). In Brazil in the 1970s, at the height of the dictatorship, the structuralist project could only be well regarded, not only for depoliticizing its object of inquiry, but also because it adapted the military's conservative agenda of modernization: a fast and efficient technical improvement that would radically change the nation without altering at all its class structure.³²

Second, as is well known, structuralism positioned itself as the unifying agent of the humanities. The Saussurian idea of system as a differential game—each element acquiring its identity from its *différence* [*diferença*] vis-à-vis all the others—presented itself as a key procedure that could be appropriated, with varying degrees of metaphoricity, by all the humanities. The conception of humanity as promoter of civilization gave way to man as a signifying animal. Be that as it may, the promise of annulling disciplinary distinctions ended up never being realized, but the project and its ambition lay the groundwork for the marriage of linguistics and literary studies in Brazil.³³ This association is not obvious or natural—in the United States, where the institutionalization of literary studies took place under the aegis of New Criticism, it is closer to history, philosophy, and sociology rather than linguistics, which, in turn, communicate more directly with the applied and hard sciences, such as mathematics, speech therapy, or computing. The

debate around the disciplinary configuration in literary studies is something that should be on the agenda and faced head on. On one hand, structuralism's aging weakened the ties that link literature and linguistics around a common view of language; on the other hand, new subfields such as Applied Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, or Literary Theory claim, respectively, a greater autonomy against the rigid nucleus of linguistics (phonetics/phonology, morphology, and syntax) and traditional textual analysis.

Finally, the third factor, closely related to the two aspects already mentioned, refers to the terminology created by structuralism. This was a set of notions that could be accepted by everyone, concepts that would circulate without generating much friction or that would demand explanations for each use or application. It was on this lexicon that linguistic and literary studies progressed—and here the problem lies, because, although terms such as “syntagm,” “paradigm,” “signifier,” “sign,” “idiolect,” or “discursive formation” no longer generate the enthusiasm they did 40 years ago, the developments that literary studies went through did not put them to the test but superimposed them like a fresh layer of novelty over an older and worn out one. Deconstruction, cultural studies, postcolonial criticism, or Lacanian psychoanalysis, in one way or another, built their foundations on the structuralist horizon, immediately, to develop it or to simply abandon it. In other words, however forceful the critique of the idea of system as totality had been—for example, in the celebrated essay by Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”(1967)—it never called into question the assumptions on which the structuralist edifice was erected; on the contrary, these assumptions were radicalized. And when the critique did not happen, subsequent thought simply left the structuralist legacy behind. Derrida's example is once again relevant; for example, starting with his ethical turn in the 1980s, terms such as “signifier” gave way to “alterity.”

Without a doubt, all that has been said so far does not mean that structuralism has reigned supremely in literary studies in Brazil without any kind of alternative or opposition from other theoretical strains: impressionism can still be found even today; the old comparativism, New Criticism, and philology, not to mention orthodox Marxism or the more refined one of the Frankfurt School, endure. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the founders of academic criticism in Brazil, Antonio Candido and Afrânio Coutinho, were not structuralists, although they could, here and there, accept some of its practices. Yet, the interpretive impulse that each one proposed, although of considerable impact, was incapable of withstanding the movement coming from France. On one hand, this was due to the relatively limited metatheoretical aims of these authors, concerned as they were with the explication of works specific to Brazilian literature, which underwent a comprehensive reformulation. In other words, the formation

of a Brazilian literary tradition imposes itself as a primary task; the foundations on which the diverse interpretations of works and specific authors could happen emerge only with the establishment of that tradition. On the other hand, and as a result, neither Candido nor Coutinho invented new concepts, tools of interpretation that were their own. Their findings, such as the “dialectic of malandroism” [dialética da malandragem], are derived from concrete experiences of reading that discourage extrapolations; attempts to immediately apply these concepts lead to normally predictable and sterile results. Again, what distinguishes structuralism from both the insufficiently formalized approaches that preceded it as well as from the sophisticated theorizations that followed it is the unified, comprehensive, and universalizing character of the concepts it managed to articulate.

Hence the need to reevaluate the structuralist legacy: ultimately, questioning it and showing its weaknesses implies shaking the very structures that support the field as a whole. This is, in short, equivalent to bringing to literary studies a disciplinary crisis that is already plaguing several fields of the humanities, and possibly knowledge in its broadest perspective. The goal here is to take a small step in this direction, to question a key concept of the structuralist lexicon that remains widely used by teachers and students of literary studies, even though its theorizing has not advanced much recently. Due to a lack of space, it will not be possible to take up the countless previous critiques of structuralism. It will have to be enough to mention Fredric Jameson’s hypothesis, namely that structuralism cannot cope with time as a transformative entity and that the concept of text has an inescapable ideological character, or Carlos Nelson Coutinho’s attack in favor of the dialectic and Marxism.³⁴ In fact, the vast majority of criticism directed at structuralism aims at its epistemology, the static nature of the idea of system, the semiotization of the world, the disappearance of the referent, etc; rarely do they question the terminology itself, the tools that allow structuralism to work. Finally, it will not be possible—and this is a more important omission—to develop a counterproposal that envisions a methodologically satisfactory alternative. To remedy this lack, it will be enough to refer to works already published and to aim at a theoretical ideal, that of the suspicion of metalanguage: that interpretation should forge, for each occasion, its own instruments of reading.³⁵

The concept of intertextuality is derivative; it rests on that of text, discussed above. There are certainly various definitions and treatments of the term according to theorists as different as Greimas, Todorov, Barthes, Kristeva, or Derrida. However, what matters here is less the elaborations of particular critics than the way in which intertextuality configured itself as a work tool, a mechanism of thought that, in turn, supports and reinforces institutional apparatuses. In other words, in contrast to singular ideas, it is a question of ascertaining a diffusional dynamic, the way in

which intertextuality spread, lending itself to extended and repeated use. To account for the dissemination of the term, it would be necessary to find something like a nucleus of meaning or a common denominator of comprehension, in an authoritative source that summarized the constructed knowledge and projected a wide circulation. Here is the entry from the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics*:

Intertextuality refers to those conditions of textuality (q.v.) which affect and describe the relations between texts, and in most respects is synonymous with textuality. It originates in the crisis of representation and the absent origin that would guarantee meaning, centrality, and reference. Without an ultimate referent that would make possible the self-presence and meaning of a text, texts are by definition fragments in open and endless relations with all other texts.³⁶

The definition, accordingly, is articulated from the counterpoint of two different universes, of two opposing notions of language, one in which meaning has a ballast, based on a fixed origin, and another in which such a link was lost and with it any kind of *a priori* guarantee. The entry opposes five premises of traditional criticism and seven belonging to the practice of intertextuality; the former believes:

(1) that language has the capacity to create stable meaning; (2) that such meaning exists within the confines of form; (3) that the artist is in control of meaning; (4) that a work has closure, its tensions ambiguities, and ironies coming to a point of resolution; and (5) that criticism is an ancillary activity, separate from literature.³⁷

For intertextuality, on the other hand:

(1) Language is not a transparent medium of thought or a tool in the service of communication; it is arbitrary and dense and its very excessiveness leads to an infinite number of interpretations. (2) Texts are fragments, without closure or resolution. No text is self-sufficient; each text is fraught with explicit or invisible quotation marks that dispel the illusion of its autonomy and refer endlessly to other texts [...]. (3) Given the above, no writer can ever be in control of the meaning of the text. Intertextuality does away with the concept of “author” in its conventional meaning (authority, property, intention), supplanting it with the concepts of “author-function” (Foucault) or “subject” (Lacan). (4) Meaning is supplanted by the notion of “signification” (a sign is composed of signifier and signified, but in post-structuralist thinking the signified is lost, leaving the signifier in search of a referent it can never find). Poststructuralism thus discards the humanistic

version of human beings as creators of meaning, and proposes them instead as creatures (effects) of language. (5) Criticism is no longer an ancillary activity, but is now considered part of the poem, creative of its meaning or signification. In formalism and humanism, the task of criticism is “explication”, which distinguishes the reading subject from the literary object and defines literature as discipline and a mode of knowledge. Intertextuality stands in direct opposition to explication, with its explicit distinction between primary and secondary texts, and instead opens up literary, critical, and indeed many other texts to illimitable relations. (6) Disciplinary boundaries are eased: such fields as philosophy and psychoanalysis are all considered discursive practices and ultimately inseparable from literature. (7) Finally, poststructuralist criticism defies the rules of reason and identity and suggests instead the idea of contradiction [...].³⁸

There is much to comment on here. First, it is important to recognize that textuality organizes itself around the negation of the idea of influence, which is seen as problematic because it presupposes an authoritarian conception of authorship, the result of a centered, transparent, and self-present subjectivity. Influence, therefore, would work with a linear causality and with a metaphysical notion of origin: an origin as plenitude from which everything is deduced. It is not possible to say that, rigorously, such representation is wrong; however, after reading German philologists like Erich Auerbach, Leo Spitzer, and Wolfgang Kayser, or American New Critics like John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, and Allen Tate, for example, it gives the impression that there is something of a *reduction* [an *oversimplification*] in the picture painted. The presence of a positive idea of origin coexists in these authors with a sometimes very refined sensibility in relation to language, its ambiguities, ironies, and forms of unfolding. Philology, stylistics, and New Criticism knew how to deal with textual uncertainties, recognized the existence of variants, as well as different types of authorial performance. In the gesture of making a tabula rasa, of refusing previous critics’ contribution in order to start from scratch, structuralism (along with its *post* variant) displays an avant-garde impulse that, in turn, shows a possible affinity not just with an avant-garde logic but also with that of science.

The main feature that differentiated a nascent structuralism from the interpretive practices that preceded it was the normative horizon of validity in the latter regarding truth, the assumption that, in the end, when all the indeterminations were weighed, there would be a version of the text (be it in its establishment, be it in its interpretation) that would be most adequate, even if still incomplete or imperfect. It is in this emphasis on choice, on the belief that there exists *a* more correct interpretation—again, even if it contained some insoluble problem within itself—that lies the main point

of disagreement. Underlying this is the question of value, something which structuralism has completely changed. Since anything external to the system, to the play of oppositions, is problematic, structuralism could not be thought of as something subjected to an order given beforehand; on the contrary, value arises as a *result* of the positioning of a determinate item within a determinate organization of the system. (This also applies to time, which is conceived as the *effect* of the structure's combination of elements, and not as something external to it.)

Now, the consequence of this is an inability to distinguish between good works and bad works, those invested in the construction of their own singularity—which implies avoiding clichés and commonplaces as much as possible—and those that yield to any type of conventional pre-molding. Thus, any barriers to the potential relation between texts disappear: in principle, any text can relate to any other. The best idea in the entry [from the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics*], that of “explicit or invisible quotation marks,” can only supply an (almost poetic) image of this.³⁹ Here, structuralism meets its predecessor, the old comparativism, which, in its worst moments, compared anything to anything. In any case, the notions of value and uniqueness present in the previous criticism yields, in structuralism, to a *primacy of production*: the text is that which generates multiple meanings, potentially without end. This is the main point from which it is possible to analyze all the parts of the encyclopedia's definition.

First, the question of authorship: the projection of a pure presence, of a total mastery and coincidence between authorial intention and the final result of composition is the necessary logical precondition to unlock it from semiosis. Without the figure of the author affecting the process of textual coherence, any component can relate to any other. Form, on the other hand, is conceived at the same time as something both limiting and static. It is true that it separates what would be the artifact's interior from its exterior, but this does not mean that it is immobile or passive. Anyone accustomed to dealing with closed forms, such as a sonnet, for example, knows that the limit is productive, for it allows for a strategic rupture that in this way gains an emphasis that is otherwise difficult to obtain. In fact, one of the greatest challenges of modern literature was to compensate for the loss of external limits arising from the increasing liberty with regard to representation, generating self-impositions immanent to the composition of works. The idea of autonomy criticized in the entry was an historic achievement of art in its struggle to free itself from religion, morals, and good customs; blindness to this fact can itself be seen as a sign of the disappearance of the social conditions that raised autonomy to an ideal.⁴⁰ In any case, to say there is a centripetal force in the works is not equivalent to saying that they cannot be dynamic. This watertight notion of form comes at a price to the intertextual imagination. Because

the notion of limit or resistance becomes practically unrepresentable here, it draws close to a paroxysm of associationism. To repeat the same idea, with a variation: intertextuality becomes a normative aspect, so much so that any term not intertextualized simply connotes the lack of relational work. An interesting paradox comes into view, then, for, as the entry perceives, the idea of intertextuality is completely absorbed by that of textuality *tout court*. In fact, there is no epistemological reason for the existence of intertextuality: as a superfluous term, it is perhaps the only one that cannot be used intertextually.

The argument that criticism, in (post)structuralism, loses its auxiliary nature also deserves consideration. It is truly necessary to show the mistake of representing the commentary as a mere appendix, a subservient type of writing and secondary vis-à-vis the interpreted work. When thought of “as part of the poem,” criticism becomes something peaceful, a collaborator or coauthor of the literary artifact, whereas it is much more interesting to recognize the antagonism that constitutes the relationship between work and criticism. The latter wants to be able to give the last word on the text; it aims to generate a type of knowledge so perfectly glued to the text that one becomes confused with the other.⁴¹ Furthermore, it is necessary to recognize that the image of every reader as an active agent, co-participating, rather than a mere decoder of preexisting meanings, contains something of *wishful thinking*. It is, without a doubt, exciting; empirically, however, it does not hold up: the world is not made up of a multitude of inventive producers of meaning. In the best of hypotheses, this image is simply a misrepresentation; in the worst, it is a mechanism of alienation and loss of contact with reality.

Finally, with regard to disciplinary de-differentiation, it is worth reiterating what was mentioned in the previous chapter, namely, that the unification carried out by structuralism did not have a neutral or obvious character, but was supported by a displacement of the problem of civilization—and consequently of the opposition with nature—into the question of meaning.⁴² No longer opposed to barbarism, civilization would become equated with the emergence of language. The concept of text has already been characterized as an anti-disciplinary object that cannot be restricted to a specific field.⁴³ However, ironically, what appears in defense of the refusal to conform the disciplines is their reinforcement as a precondition for obtaining knowledge, that is, an emphasis on a disciplinary base necessary for a posterior deconstruction. When fighting the disciplines, pay attention to their validity; it would be better to forget them.

The conclusion has already been drawn out at several points in this text; what remains is to condense it into a new formulation: that textuality favors the quantification of meaning; that it incentivizes an accumulative idea (and practice), after all, the more links, references, and connections

there are, the better.⁴⁴ It tends to transform the academy into a great industry; the determination of intertextual traces ultimately ends up meaning labor pure and simple, and the Brazilian, free, and inclusive *universidade pública* starts to manifest a typically capitalist dynamic.

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NOTES

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¹ Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Em que sentido exatamente a indústria cultural não mais existe," in *A Indústria Cultural Hoje* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2008), 17-28.

² Robert Hullot-Kentor, "O que é reprodução mecânica?," *Remate de Males* 29, no 1 (2009), 9-23. All subsequent citations appear in parentheses in the text. Walter Benjamin, "A obra de arte na era da sua reprodutibilidade técnica," in *Magia e técnica arte e política: ensaios sobre literatura e história da cultura*, trans. Sérgio Paulo Rouanet (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1995), 165-196.

³ This was one of the reasons that led me to write *Teoria Literária Americana: uma introdução crítica* [American Literary Theory: A Critical Introduction] (Campinas: Autores Associados, 2011).

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972), 96.

⁵ Gerhard Richter, *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1.

⁶ It is interesting to note that the term itself already belongs to the field of questions raised by the textual mentality. That is, calling the "object" or the "thing" a referent already brings a whole specific set of problems.

⁷ David Simpson, *The Academic Postmodern and the Rule of Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). It is worth noting that the text encountered a contentious barrier in sociology, which is largely due to the fact that textuality is ill-suited to empirical and statistical work, neither with conducting interviews nor with the formulation of questionnaires. This is a topic that deserves to be further developed.

⁸ Susan Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Fertility," in *The Norton Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, eds. Vincent B. Leitch, William B. Cain, Laurie A. Finke, et al. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 2360-2376.

⁹ It is no wonder that textuality was central to the development of cultural studies in its desire to make products of mass culture into objects worth reading.

¹⁰ Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism*

and *Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Fredric Jameson, "The Ideology of the Text," in *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986*, preface by Neil Larsen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 17-71.

¹¹ Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 56-64.

¹² Barthes, "From Work to Text," 57.

¹³ Jean-Jacques Pauvert, *Nouvelle critique ou nouvelle imposture* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1965) is a criticism of Barthes's *Sur Racine* (Paris: Seuil, 1963) and *Essais critiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1964). Barthes responded to the attack with *Critique et Vérité* (Paris: Seuil, 1966).

¹⁴ Barthes, "From Work to Text," 57, 57, x, 61, 62, 64.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1992).

¹⁶ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Jonathan Culler, "Text: Its Vicissitudes" in *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 108-109.

¹⁸ John Mowitt, *The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Christoph Türcke approximates the Deleuzian concept of rhizome to the Internet's hypertext and interprets the Derridian trace [Spur] as a return to the mythical past and *différance* as a Zauberswort. See *Vom Kainszeichen zum genetischen Code: kritische Theorie der Schrift* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005), 153-190

²⁰ Herbert Marcuse, "Sobre o caráter afirmativo da cultura," in *Cultura e Sociedade* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1997), 89-136. It is worth noting that in the famous debate between Barthes in "The Death of the Author" (1967) and Foucault in "What is an Author?" (1969), it is this revolt that accounts for the superiority of the former's position, still imbued with aesthetic experience, in relation to the latter, more markedly functional and instrumental. Indirectly, this also helps to explain the ease with which the Foucaultian version of authorship was incorporated by discourse analysis and why this [field] finds it difficult to deal with literature and art as autonomous forms.

²¹ Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2013).

²² Theodor W. Adorno, "Tempo livre," in *Palavras e Sinais, modelos críticos 2*, trans. Maria Helena Ruschel, ed. Álvaro Valls (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1995), 70-82.

²³ Christopher Türcke, *Sociedade Excitada* (Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2010). The connection between flow and television was proposed by Raymond Williams in *Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) and resumed by Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism* (1991).

²⁴ This immobility does not affect the characteristics presented by João Queiroz, all of which were present before televisual production, namely: 1. irreducibility of the triadic relationship; 2. action and procedure; 3. irreversibility; 4. continuity; 5. convergence to the dynamic object; 6. trend towards infinity. See Queiroz, *Semiose Segundo C.S. Peirce* (São Paulo: Educ/Fapesp, 2004), 62.

²⁵ Richard Dienst, *Still Life in Real Time: Theory After Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 61-62.

²⁶ Dienst, 64.

²⁷ Shierry Weber Nicholzen, *Exact Imagination, Late Work* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 15-58.

²⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), 12-14.

²⁹ It was this process that I tried to describe in *Modernismo e Coerência: Quatro Capítulos de uma Estética Negativa* (São Paulo, Nankin Editorial, 2012).

³⁰ Indeed, moral content is the watershed that separates the social view of the area from its self-representation. Because it is still a general opinion that: 1. for language, there is a substantive norm, essentially correct, and that all deviations are wrong and have a negative value. It is not surprising, of course, that this norm is of the ruling classes; 2. for literature, what matters is the feeling, the immediate experience, perhaps close to the ineffable. By taming affects and promoting self-understanding, contact with the literary would be this way inherently humanizing. These commonplaces are usually present in most of those entering a Literature program. The first year of graduation thus assumes an odd importance, as it is the one which, significantly, realizes the transition between cliché and *métier*.

³¹ Niilo Kauppi, *French Intellectual Nobility: Institutional and Symbolic Transformation in the Post-Sartrean Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 17.

³² It is interesting to think of modernization not only as a profound transformation in industry, in the physical machinery, so to speak, but also as a reversal in the plane of thought, in the way that concepts are formed, ideas and propositions are articulated, etc. In this way, it is possible to glimpse at a final inseparability between “intellectual” and “manual” labor in an increasingly integrated capitalist society.

³³ It would be worth investigating how this promise functioned as a strategic argumentative gesture in structuralism [...]. Its disappearance can act as a transitional marker between structuralism and poststructuralism, which no longer saw itself as part of a project to be completed but as a participant of an already finished reality.

³⁴ Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language*; Carlos Nelson Coutinho, *O Estruturalismo e a Miséria da Razão* (São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2010).

³⁵ Durão, *Modernismo e Coerência*.

³⁶ Helen Regueiro Elam, “Intertextuality,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 620-622. In the original chapter, the English translation is found in the footnote (620).

³⁷ Elam, 620. In the original chapter published in Portuguese, the English translation is found in the footnote.

³⁸ Elam, 621. In the original chapter published in Portuguese, the English translation is found in the footnote.

³⁹ It takes recognizing the appeal of a representation such as this: the indeterminacy

of the quotes converts the text into something like an electric field of possibilities, a bundle of synapses in random connection, a network of potentialities. It is difficult, however, not to identify here a metaphorical use passing for a literal one, in the context of a scientific claim.

⁴⁰ For an interesting approach to the relationship between the desire for autonomy (political, behavioral, sensorial, etc.) and the acceleration of society, see Hartmut Rosa, “Kritik der Zeitverhältnisse. Beschleunigung und Entfremdung als Schlüsselbegriffe einer erneuerten Sozialkritik,” *Was ist Kritik?* eds. Rahel Jaeggi and Tilo Wesche (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009), 23-54.

⁴¹ See “Para uma crítica da multiplicidade nos Estudos Literários,” in *Do texto à obra e outros ensaios*.

⁴² It is always good to remember that Structuralism does not have tools to account for nature as a thing-in-itself, nor does it know how to approach questions relating to the origin of language.

⁴³ Mowitt, *The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object*.

⁴⁴ Complaints against productivism have now become commonplace in the university. However, its usual target is the researcher conceived as an autonomous agent. Rarely does criticism return to the constituting process of production, either through the institutional apparatuses that support it, or through the concepts that make it possible.