

Biotext microscopies in the classroom: perecquian propositions ^{1 2 3 4}

Microscopias biotextuales en el aula: proposiciones perecquianas

Microscopias biotextuais em aula: proposições perecquianas

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Abstract

In this study, we regard the classroom as a living and studying space which is often under tension. As a habitual space for actions which have persisted as daily practices, the classroom has become a place prone to dispersion. We aim to evince that such dispersion in the use of that place opens up a possibility for interruptions, thus enabling curricular readings to become agents in the invention of a personal and collective bio-text which is hypertextually intertwined. To do that, we show George Perec's poetics as a means to use the classroom.

Keywords: Georges Perec, classroom, reading

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Resumen

En este artículo se propone pensar el aula como un espacio de convivio y de estudio que vive en frecuentes tensiones. El aula es prefigurada como un espacio de actuación que insiste como práctica cotidiana, pero por habitual resulta como un sitio dispuesto a la dispersión. Nuestro intento es el de afirmar esa dispersión —en el uso de ese espacio— como una apertura a las interrupciones y, con eso, provocar que las lecturas curriculares sean agentes para la invención de un biotexto, personal y colectivo, que se hilvane hipertextualmente. Para eso presentamos la poética de Georges Perec como un modo de usar el aula.

Palabras clave: *Georges Perec, aula, lectura*

Resumo

Propõe-se pensar a sala de aula como um espaço de convívio e estudo que vive em frequente tensão. A sala de aula é prefigurada como um espaço de ação que insiste como uma prática cotidiana, mas, por ser habitual, acaba sendo um lugar disposto a dispersão. Nossa intenção é afirmar essa dispersão — no uso desse espaço — como uma abertura para as interrupções e, com isso, provocar que as leituras curriculares possam se tornar agentes da invenção de um biotexto, pessoal e coletivo, que se tece hipertextualmente. Para isso, apresentamos a poética de Georges Perec como uma maneira de utilizar a sala de aula.

Palavras-chave: *Georges Perec, sala de aula, leitura*

We can understand the procedure of creation – as Paul Valéry (1998), a reader of Edgar Allan Poe as translated by Charles Baudelaire, would say – as a way to process elements of the poetic experience of reading: an experience crossing a process similar to extracting and recomposing what was read. A procedure consisting of juxtaposed series which, in turn, interrupt a certain weft of words, isolating a representational frame from the reading act but without invalidating it. In *Variations sur les Bucoliques* (1956), this conception implies that writing is translating whenever it requires some reflection. Writing, or creating, would derive from an act of conscious imitation and would hence comprehend something new by gathering all the possible adaptations of what was imitated. Perhaps it is in this sense which Valéry (1991) extended his conception of poetics to *poïen*, to recover and highlight the idea that poetic strength is in doing something in which thought takes part as in sculpting: it is necessary to shape it in uncountable folds to enable it to achieve living strength. In Valéry's poetics, the creation act entails certain reading implications which are recognizable in Jorge Luis Borges and in Pierre

Menard's technique, i.e., in poetics grounded on rewriting and translating as a strange exercise of appropriation.

By evoking this notion of poetics, we have used George Perec's literary creation and thought of the classroom as an analytical unit which is inhabitable as a common place, i.e., a community place and, therefore, a space of resistance. This space is filled with potentialities to help its attendees resist becoming hostages to consumption. In this sense, the procedure of writing *Life: A User's Manual* has become of interest since it is regarded as a work which institutes a kind of poetics of archive and starts functioning as a "narrative machine" (Bahense, 1996, p. 72) by intertwining a group of novels around the disjunctive unit of meaning.

The idea is to work in a classroom as a place to gather and study, though often affected by tensions generated by the mensuration of education commodification, a criticism of its tradition or even the tedium it imposes on students and teachers' bodies. At the same time, thinking of the classroom is to think of the place of teachers' action —the teacher profession agency — and its changes due to those tensions. Hence, the classroom, as a space of daily practice, ends up as a space prone to dispersion and interruptions. In this sense, we know little about the classroom in which we are teachers or students, this space of convergences in which the ordinary, or rather, the infra-ordinary (Perec, 2010) sets its pace. There will be multiple interruptions, with their microscopic qualities. In the classroom, the scene is under permanent tension with teachers' movements, the space in which the classes take place, and the diversity of students attending them. Consequently, we ask ourselves: How can one translate the experience of a classroom, its gestures, stereotypes, potencies, effects, affections, and beliefs in the materiality of writing? How may minimal daily teaching events be preserved from oblivion? How can the classroom be rescued from its insistent teleological transitivity and its possible commercial and utilitarian destiny be interrupted? How can we eliminate any kind of use from it and convert it into a collector's item thus able to give it fetishized attention to turn it into a desired and loved object?

Based on these questions, it seems necessary to explore the field of imagination in current education and, particularly, in the classroom as a space in which we can open a path to a self-fictional imagery of new practices, a space in which students and teachers' common expectations can be expressed in other ways and means rather than those already known, or better, which can be created and expressed at the same time. For this purpose, we propose to

approach Georges Perec's writing as a possibility of work in and for the classroom. It is about taking Perecquian literary production as a didactics of appropriation and assemblage by making use of quotes, combinatorial games, inventories, lists, and rhetorical and imagistic exercises to constitute the poetics of classroom collectionism. It is about approaching and showing classrooms as a classroom-space with and based on artistic and literary proposals as practical materials for investigative teaching. Materials which help us generate perspectives to deal with knowledge, i.e., to learn once we understand that learning, in Deleuze's words, is establishing an encounter with signs coming from a multiplicity of relationships. In this context, we propose to show the result of crossing Perecquian reading with teaching as 10 short notes and a procedure, distributed as follows: 1) Georges Perec and OuLiPo; 2) restrictions; 3) the citational real; 4) brevity in multiplicity; 5) combinatorics; 6) assemblage; 7) ekphrasis; 8) order; 9) poetics of collection; 10) difference; and 11) the Perecquian work in the classroom.

Georges Perec and OuLiPo

Georges Perec was born in Paris in 1936 and died in 1982. He was an archivist between 1962 and 1979 in a neurophysiological research laboratory, a job which both provided him time to dedicate himself to literature and certainly fueled his taste for combinatorial lists, tables, arrangements, and exercises. In 1965, he published his first book (which he claimed having spent four years writing) *Things: A Story of the Sixties*, already packed with lists. The following year, he published *Which Moped with Chrome-plated Handlebars at the Back of the Yard?* and in 1967, *A Man Asleep*, whose adaptation to cinema was directed by Bernard Queysanne and released in 1974. In 1967, Perec was invited to join OuLiPo. Since then, the tone of his texts showed his belonging to OuLiPo more explicitly, i.e., they were characterized by a more explicit presence of *contraintes* (restrictions), prefiguring writing as a support preparing us to a certain degree of creation freedom, akin to provoking unusual encounters via invented rules which sometimes have unnecessary characteristics. In that sense, restrictions differ from rules (such as grammatical ones) since they are designed to shake the creation first by written language. In 1969, Perec published *A Void*, a book in which a lipogram is used as a *contrainte*, excluding words which contain the letter "e." In 1972, as a kind of reverse reflection of *A Void*, he published *Les*

Revenentes [*The Exeter Text: Jewels, Secrets, Sex*]. The title is a distortion of the word *revenants* [ghosts], using univocalism as a *contrainte*. In 1978, he published the set of novels *Life: A User's Manual* and in 1979, *A Gallery Portrait*. Between 1981 and 1982, he was a writer-in-residence at the University of Brisbane in Australia. As posthumous texts, *Thoughts of Sorts* was published in 1985, *L'Infra-ordinaire* in 1989, *Cantatrix sopranica L. Scientific Papers* in 1991, and *The Winter Journey* in 1993, among others.⁵ OuLiPo is a French group founded on November 24, 1960, at one of the meetings of the Collège du Pathaphysique. Raymond Queneau (1903-1976) and Françoise Le Lionnais (1901-1984) founded the Séminaire de Littérature Expérimentale, renamed OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle) at their second meeting. The acronym can be translated as 'potential literature workshop.' The word *Ouvroir* was chosen by Queneau to evoke manual work, such as in sewing workshops; the very idea of group work at a workshop prefigures that choice. It is a space to consider some writing restrictions and promote writing and literature toward a potential order, which entails the invention of ways to potentiate writing. From that experiment in OuLiPo, others emerged, and many others were to appear. This proliferation of workshops is represented by the acronym OuXPo, in which "X" stands for the theme/area which must be creatively potentiated and will be affected by the contact and interference of others from different sources. There are many adaptations, such as OuBaPo [comics]; OuHisPo [history], OuMaPo [puppets]; and OuPhoPo [photography]. We recently discovered OuAnPo [anthropology].⁶ We decided to emulate OuLiPo and form a study and research group we have called AtEdPo [Ateliê de Educação Potencial, Potential Education Workshop], as an attempt to think about education and, specifically, some didactic aspects in the Oulipian way.

⁵ See AGP – Association Georges Perec, in which we can find news, studies, documents, and catalogues with a list of his texts and publications. <http://associationgeorgesperec.fr>

⁶ About OuAnPo see the text by Bernard Müller, "Panfleto. Último momento. Los orígenes patafísicos de la etnografía: Al fin las pruebas," *Hyperborea. Revista de ensayo y creación*. 2 (2019), 167-180.

Restrictions

In 1930, Raymond Queneau started experimenting with language seeking to observe everyday poetics. In 1958, he published *Zazie in the Metro*, showing some of his research on everyday spoken French. However, he had already published *Exercises in Style* in 1947, a book which favors experimentation, a strategy to liberate writing in a movement to dislocate the linguistic norm from its status quo and free language to new combinations. OuLiPo's premise is to experiment with language, especially writing, resorting to old rhetorical practices and creating *contraintes* which function as a starting point for creation. The movement goes as far as to state that the rhetoricians of the 15th and 16th centuries were their plagiarists in advance, highlighting a central aspect of Oulipian creation: creative appropriation. It has to do with investigating and inventing restrictions for literary production and creation, used to awaken an impersonal force in writing. The style is more important than the plot, and the style would be an assemblage of enunciations (Deleuze & Parnet, 1995), involving personality decantation, the death of the author, the fabrication of obliquities, and restrictions turned deviations in an exercise of loss or displacement of identity and thus the exercise of liberty. Restrictions are, therefore, an important notion for Oulipian poetics; a formal rule is freely adopted to enable writing in multiple senses. As an example, let us take the Oulipian novel *Sphinx* by Anne Garréta, published in 1986. Anne joined OuLiPo in 2000. To write *Sphinx*, a restriction was proposed (*Contrainte de Turing*): to tell a love story, she omits the linguistic marks which assign gender to enunciators (either the narrator or the characters).

The citational real

Perec's literature uses a process of appropriation [theft without acquisition] creating a temporary relation zone with what was acquired. In this process, there is no capitalistic relation (Guattari, 2013), i.e., no claim to any type of capital accumulation. Perhaps that is why theft is explicitly assumed [mimetic desire (Rocha, 2017)]: in terms of style, it renounces authorship in favor of use. It implies turning a work with quotes into an authorial expropriation of the materials, which could be a sentence, a paragraph or an entire book (as in *Homage to César Paladión*

by Bustos Domecq). In this sense, we can say that Georges Perec's literature operates a citational realism (van Montfrans, 1999). Perec does not use other artistic productions as models but rather as materials for his own productions. Much of what affects him in arts, philosophy, and science is an impetus for a new production. Thus, Perec seems to thematize the relation between copy and model. The works, artists, and authors Perec associates with each other by affinities function as style figures. When he wrote *Things: A Story of the Sixties*, he admitted that reading Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* and Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* was at the base of that text; in *A Man Asleep*, he states the same intention by mentioning Herman Melville and Kafka; and *Memories* involves American artist Joe Brainard's *I Remember*. In this process, there is a rhizomatic figure, or image of knowledge. Each point is a possibility of encounter for a new creation. Therefore, expropriation is followed by translation or transposition. A topical, geographical relation takes place in relation to the expropriated material, which is transferred to be transposed into another. In this transportation from one domain to another, in a kind of traffic of concept, something is created. It is an experiential transgression since unexpected encounters frame these relation possibilities.

An internal work occurs; something is done inside – *labor intus*. The labyrinth in the text could be that network of quotes evoking self-referentiality and intertextuality, enabling us to claim that the texts speak to each other and of other texts. The quote, then, gains meaning only through the force moving it (Compagnon, 2007).

Brevity in multiplicity

Italo Calvino (1995) selects the book *Life: A User's Manual* as an example of a hyper-novel or a novel as a great network. He tells us that today [i.e., then, toward the end of the last century] short writing is consolidated even in long novels which show a cumulative, modular, combinatorial structure. These would be precisely the characteristics of hyper-novels. Like Calvino's own works, they would be grounded on the principle of sampling the multiplicity of what can be narrated.

Combinatorics

The novels included in *Life: A User's Manual* make up a great network. With a complex structure, the book tells us about the life of countless people linked to the apartments of an old Parisian building. Its 99 chapters are concatenated in a plot regulated and generated by combinatorics, algorithms, chess, and the material transposed in many lists.

It is a long book with several intersecting stories. Calvino regards it as the last true happening in the history of the novel. He points out some of the reasons underlying his statement: a project accomplished despite its incommensurability, a novelty in its literary style, a compendium of a narrative tradition, an encyclopedic sum of knowledge which shapes an image of the world, carries a sense of the present which is equally made up of accumulations of the past and the vertigo of emptiness, supports both irony and anguish at the same time, and manages to unite a structural project with the imponderable of poetry. All that appears in this project as a multiplicity of associations (Figs. 1 and 2).

Georges Perec "La Vie mode d'emploi"

Cahier des charges

chapitres | l'immeuble | contraintes | divers | textes

• le plan de l'immeuble ->polygraphie du cavalier

11 - chapitre 59 Hutting,2 petit atelier	12 - chapitre 83 Hutting,3 chambre (Honoré)	13 - chapitre 15 ch. de bonne,5 Smautf	14 - chapitre 10 ch. de bonne,4 Jane Sutton	15 - chapitre 57 ch. de bonne,11 Orlowska	16 - chapitre 48 ch. de bonne,8 Madame Albin	17 - chapitre 7 ch. de bonne,2 Morellet	18 - chapitre 52 Plassaert,2 chambre (Simpson)	19 - chapitre 45 Plassaert,1 chambre (Trojan)	10 - chapitre 54 Plassaert,3 bureau (Troquet)
21 - chapitre 97 Hutting,4 atelier	22 - chapitre 11 Hutting,1 loggia	23 - chapitre 58 Gratiolet,1 salle	24 - chapitre 82 Gratiolet,2 chambre	25 - chapitre 16 ch. de bonne,6 Celia Crespi	26 - chapitre 9 ch. de bonne,3 Nieto et Rogers	27 - chapitre 46 ch. de bonne,7 (Jérôme)	28 - chapitre 55 ch. de bonne,10 (Fresnel)	29 - chapitre 6 ch. de bonne,1 Breidel	20 - chapitre 51 ch. de bonne,9 Valène
31 - chapitre 84 Cinoc,2 chambre	32 - chapitre 60 Cinoc,1 cuisine	33 - chapitre 96 Dinteville,3 salle de bain	34 - chapitre 14 Dinteville,1 cabinet	35 - chapitre 47 Dinteville,2 salle d'attente	36 - chapitre 56 escaliers,8	37 - chapitre 49 escaliers,7	38 - chapitre 8 Winckler,1 salon	39 - chapitre 53 Winckler,3 chambre	30 - chapitre 44 Winckler,2 atelier
41 - chapitre 12 Réol,1 salle (Hourcade)	42 - chapitre 98 Réol,2 chambre	43 - chapitre 81 Rorschash,4 chambre	44 - chapitre 86 Rorschash,5 salle de bain	45 - chapitre 95 Rorschash,6 chambre	46 - chapitre 17 escaliers,2	47 - chapitre 28 escaliers,3	48 - chapitre 43 Foulerot,2 chambre (Hébert)	49 - chapitre 50 Foulerot,3 chambre	40 - chapitre 5 Foulerot,1 salle de bain
51 - chapitre 61 Berger,1 salle	52 - chapitre 85 Berger,2 chambre (Speiss)	53 - chapitre 13 Rorschash,1 vestibule	54 - chapitre 18 Rorschash,2 salle	55 - chapitre 27 Rorschash,3 salon (Grifalconi)	56 - chapitre 79 escaliers,11	57 - chapitre 94 escaliers,12	58 - chapitre 4 Marquiseaux,1 salon	59 - chapitre 41 Marquiseaux,3 salle réunion	50 - chapitre 30 Marquiseaux,2 salle de bain
61 - chapitre 99 Bartlebooth,5 bureau	62 - chapitre 70 Bartlebooth,2 salle	63 - chapitre 26 Bartlebooth,1 anti chambre	64 - chapitre 80 Bartlebooth,3 chambre	65 - chapitre 87 Bartlebooth,4 salon (Danglars)	66 - chapitre 1 escaliers,1	67 - chapitre 42 escaliers,6	68 - chapitre 29 troisième droite,2 salon	69 - chapitre 93 troisième droite,3 salon noir	60 - chapitre 3 troisième droite,1 salon
71 - chapitre 25 Altamont,2 salle (Appenzell)	72 - chapitre 62 Altamont,3 boudoir	73 - chapitre 88 Altamont,5 salon	74 - chapitre 69 Altamont,4 bureau	75 - chapitre 19 Altamont,1 petit salon	76 - chapitre 36 escaliers,5	77 - chapitre 78 escaliers,10	78 - chapitre 2 Beaumont,1 salon	79 - chapitre 31 Beaumont,3 chambre	70 - chapitre 40 Beaumont,4 salle de bain
81 - chapitre 71 Moreau,4 salle	82 - chapitre 65 Moreau,3 cuisine	83 - chapitre 20 Moreau,1 chambre	84 - chapitre 23 Moreau,2 chambre	85 - chapitre 89 Moreau,5 chambre	86 - chapitre 68 escaliers,9	87 - chapitre 34 escaliers,4	88 - chapitre 37 Louvet,1 salle	89 - chapitre 77 Louvet,2 chambre	80 - chapitre 92 Louvet,3 cuisine
91 - chapitre 63 entrée de service	92 - chapitre 24 Marcia,1 arrière boutique	93 - chapitre 66 Marcia,4 antiquité	94 - chapitre 73 Marcia,5 antiquité	95 - chapitre 35 loge de la concierge (Claveau)	96 - chapitre 22 hall d'entrée,1	97 - chapitre 90 hall d'entrée,2	98 - chapitre 75 Marcia,6 chambre	99 - chapitre 39 Marcia,3 chambre (Massy)	90 - chapitre 32 Marcia,2 chambre
1 - chapitre _	2 - chapitre 72 caves,3 Bartlebooth	3 - chapitre 64 chaufferie,2	4 - chapitre 21 chaufferie,1	5 - chapitre 67 caves,2 Rorschash Dinteville	6 - chapitre 74 machinerie de l'ascenseur,2	7 - chapitre 38 machinerie de l'ascenseur,1	8 - chapitre 33 caves,1 Altamont Gratiolet	9 - chapitre 91 caves,5 Marquiseaux Marcia	0 - chapitre 76 caves,4 Beaumont .

Figure 1 - Print of a page of one of the general tables of lists used by Georges Perec to compose *Life: A User's Manual*. It is among the documents in the Fonds Privé G. P. in BnF, Arsenal, Paris. <http://associationgeorgesperec.fr/>

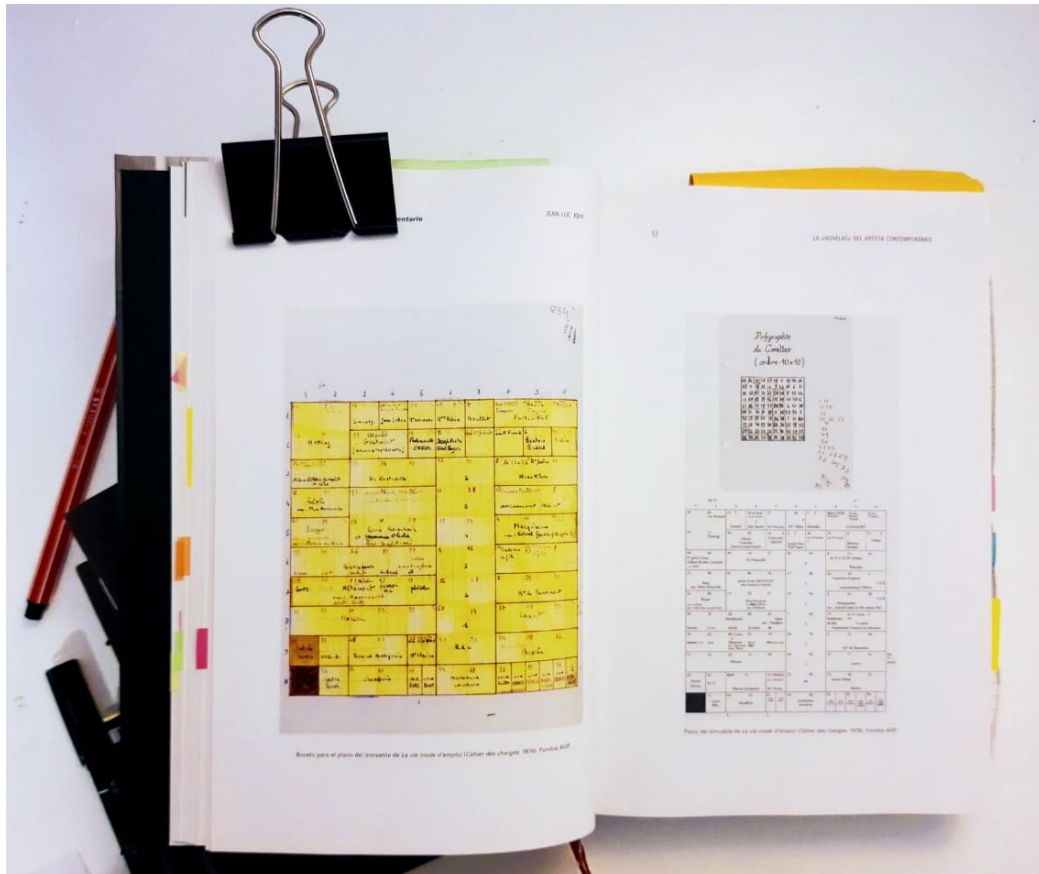


Figure 2 - Photograph [personal file] of the article: Joly, Jean-Luc. (2011) The “novels” of the contemporary artist. In.: Luis Seoane Foundation (Coruña) Pere (t) c: inventory attempt. San Francisco: Maia, p.53-54. Plan of the apartment building used to compose *Life: A User's Manual*. It is among the documents in the Fonds Privé G. P in BnF, Arsenal, Paris.

<http://associationgeorgesperec.fr/>

This compositional mode helps us to think about teaching by a certain openness to unusual readings and situations; in fact, this same openness to the combinatorial mode of reading would provoke the unusual. The interest in the unusual allows for new combinations and re-combinations. This is how teaching can be thought from encounters with literature, art, science, and philosophy but also with television series, streaming, newscasts, talks among friends, new and old passions, and new and old social attacks in which our singular individuality intervenes.

Assemblage

If teachers articulate the gathering called class – supported by curricular guidelines, plans, and schedules – what do they or can incorporate into their profession so that the gathering in the classroom is an event of multiple appropriations which neither means nor produces unity and instead instigates heterogeneity? It seems to us that for the latter to occur in the practical dimension of teaching, the order of composition and its process should be highlighted. Then, the class would be an encounter of materials subject to new organizations and dispositions which equate teaching with experimentation and creation as something with assemblage characteristics. If we conceive assemblage as temporal, it would operate with anachronisms like the Oulipians who claimed that ancient rhetoricians were their plagiarists in advance. Film assemblage, for example, operates an intervention in time, cutting between frames to insert new images, i.e., intervening and cutting to make the air circulate, to make room for difference. Perec's literature is made of those cuts, of those interventions, of the air introducing difference not in a proposition about the concept but in the use of the writing materials. Assemblage operates with interruption and works with dispersion as a material added to the process.

Ekphrasis

Perec uses the ekphrastic exercise as an ethnographic practice converted into literature. Perecquian ekphrasis is also read as an exercise to remember something lost, or rather, remember a void. Perhaps this explains his exhaustive use of strictly visual enumerations and descriptions. His is the practice of writing as a sign of irreparable annihilation, of a descriptive exhaustion of a piece of the world, leaving a groove, a trace, a mark or a sign. We are interested in transferring some of this practice to teaching to transpose sound, visual, and plastic images into texts, with the hope that this exercise entails saying the simple everyday things which are rarely the object of our attention. At this point, the notion of the infra-ordinary also emerges an exercise for the microscopic becoming commonplace. Ekphrasis penetrates teaching as a proposal for reading and writing, or better, as an exercise to transpose what is read into images and rewrite it, as in a recall of curricular readings. Thus, the images, quotes, and phrases heard by crossing the text and creating hypertextuality result in a bio-text by each reader-student. The idea of a bio-text, a text made up of biographical details — biographemes retained by the writer

(Magné, 1992) — recovers the Valéryan notion (1991) that there is no theory which is not a carefully prepared fragment of some autobiography.

Order

In Perec, order and classification are necessary and provisionally definitive issues. The importance of giving name and place to everything, of distributing and inventing the world according to codes is at stake. Inventing codes is a way of both giving a place to things and living in such a way as to be able to work around them. Giving a name, in that sense, enables us to take detours and hence find out something about differences, evincing that every name carries a radical otherness and that order, as a useful and daily practice, even comes close to things in their free and wild states, i.e., close to radical difference, difference itself.

Poetics of collection

Perec made prodigious collections; he collected notes, lists, quotes, and thought images. In *Life: A User's Manual*, he seems to go beyond collecting to forming an enormous archive. The novel composed of novels is a narrative machine encompassing a building of 26 apartments with 100 rooms, 167 characters, 99 chapters; a chronology from 1833 to 1975; 107 stories of all kinds; and more than 1,500 references (Conte, 1992). This suggests a collector's file (material making up Perecquian poetics), a kind of puzzle in which the order of the pieces contains the enigma of the end of the game. The collection only gains meaning in the enigmatic game of its organization, its end as a whole.

Difference

Difference emerges here as an event which causes ruptures, thus leading us again into a search with a desire to go and investigate. The difference would be a cut, an interruption, so that air circulates in the face of consensus, a cut inserting something of another order, from another place, so that one can become interested in apparently worthless objects whose value is

simply contingent since it is our gaze which establishes a connection with other objects (Ferreira, Bahia, & Checluski, 2019). As Calvino tells us of Gadda: “[...] to know is to insert something into what is real, and hence to distort the real” (Calvino, 1995, p. 123). To know in this way would be to represent something by deforming it and, as in a specular action, this process leads to our own deformation and disfigurement. It is a way of weaving without attenuating “[...] the simultaneous presence of the most disparate elements that converge to determine every event” (Calvino, 1995, p. 121) and our first action would always be reading and the task of writing it. With Piglia (2004), we know that, by believing we are writing our readings, we are writing our lives.

Perecquian work in the classroom

After presenting these 10 short notes – with some points on the Perecquian poetics we are interested in developing while teaching – we propose to explain how to implement them in the classroom, i.e., the way we turn the classroom space into a space for poetic appropriation as didactics.

Data

First, we should show some data. This creative experimentation was carried out in line with the study plan for undergraduate courses intended for teacher training, i.e., aimed at undergraduate degrees in a number of courses attending classes in “Teaching and Research: Classroom, Method, Educator” and “Teaching and Teacher Identity.” An average of 40 students from courses such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, geography, social sciences, history, drama, dance, visual arts, languages/literatures, and philosophy share classes at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, located in the municipality of Porto Alegre, Brazil. Students attend classes at the Education College, in charge of the Department of Education and the didactics curriculum. The disciplines, as shown in their summaries, study, investigate, and debate conceptual issues, didactic situations, and curricular training involving contemporary complexities of pedagogical action and thought. Attention is drawn to the classroom as an analytical unit to think about the class space and to the method as a work of

thought and writing-reading (Corazza, 2008). Educators bring all of this about by their historical, social, and cultural dynamism. The disciplines are shared in a series of 19 meetings, making up 60 hours of classes per term.

Poetics of the didactic creation

Interested in taking Perecquian poetics as a poetics of didactic creation, we set up the course from a series of procedures emulating part of Perec's Oulipian work in an attempt to translate his way of composing *Life: A User's Manual* to teaching material. Our first step was to show the way Perec worked, i.e., to minimally extract the poetics of the archive and the collectionism which writing that book entailed. In summary, we can say that Perec composed it from various lists, tables, and chess moves, such as the polygraphy movement of the knight. Firstly, we proposed to set up our classes from a particular series of readings recommended in the study plan for that term. They form an individual and collective set which was presented and debated in class every week. However, to do that, we imposed a *contrainte* [restriction]. So reading would not be simply limited to repeatedly interpreting texts, we instituted a poetics of reading based on a strangely difficult and particularly complicated ekphrastic action: reading the text and, as far as possible, recalling it – by recreating it – via an image, quote, question or sentence heard on the street. At each meeting, we divided the class into small groups to discuss the particular collections derived from the readings and choose a set which represented that discussion to be addressed with the whole group. Given that way of reading, we were able to put together a very extensive, personal, and collective file which would be randomly distributed all over a bisquare. We made a list from one to 100, fixing the distribution of the material to compose an elective set in each number of the list. With the intention of obtaining a diversified set for the production of individual essays, we created a new fold using the Perecquian procedure. On this occasion, we sketched an orthogonal Latin bisquare of order 10, i.e., a square composed of one hundred smaller squares like a checkerboard of 100 squares. We stole an algorithmic calculation shown by Perec using the problem of the knight polygraph, i.e., the movement of the knight in chess, in which it is possible to go through all the squares of the board without repeating any of them, as we can see in Figure 3.

Georges Perec

Polygraphie du cavalier

« Il aurait été fastidieux de décrire l'immeuble étage par étage et appartement par appartement. Mais la succession des chapitres ne pouvait pour autant être laissée au seul hasard. J'ai donc décidé d'appliquer un principe dérivé d'un vieux problème bien connu des amateurs d'échecs : la polygraphie du cavalier : il s'agit de faire parcourir à un cheval les 64 cases de l'échiquier sans jamais s'arrêter plus d'une fois sur la même case. Il existe des milliers de solutions dont certaines, telles celle d'Euler, forment de surcroît des carrés magiques.

Dans le cas particulier de La Vie mode d'emploi, il fallait trouver une solution pour un échiquier de 10 X 10. J'y suis parvenu par tâtonnements, d'une manière plutôt miraculeuse. La division du livre en six parties provient du même principe : chaque fois que le cheval est passé par les quatre bords du carré, commence une nouvelle partie.

On remarquera cependant que le livre n'a pas 100 chapitres, mais 99. La petite fille de la page 295 et de la page 394 en est seule responsable. »

extrait de « Quatre figures pour La Vie mode d'emploi », L'Arc n° 76, 1979.

59	83	15	10	57	48	7	52	45	54
97	11	58	82	16	9	46	55	6	51
84	60	96	14	47	56	49	8	53	44
12	98	81	86	95	17	28	43	50	5
61	85	13	18	27	79	94	4	41	30
99	70	26	80	87	1	42	29	93	3
25	62	88	69	19	36	78	2	31	40
71	65	20	23	89	68	34	37	77	92
63	24	66	73	35	22	90	75	39	32
72	64	21	67	74	38	33	91	76	

Figure 3 – Print of the page “<http://escarbille.free.fr/vme/?txt=poly>” showing the polygraphy of the knight in the chess game with the movements used by Perec and the algorithmic arrangement of the numbers on the board.

From that moment on, we established a specific starting point in the board since we wanted everyone to start the game in a different place. The idea was not to work with 100 movements covering 100 squares in the board, but only 10 due to the amount of material generated and arranged in each square and the time we had for productions and presentations.

We designed a table associating the letters of the alphabet with numbers, as the one used in numerology. Each student chose a keyword which would function both as a script for

preparing their essay and as a way to find a starting number on the board. Let us take the word *identity* as an example. With this word, we arrive at the number 43 and, by adding these two digits, we obtain the number 7.

With that result, we could start from three points in the bisquare. Two possibilities would be to locate the numbers 43 and 7 on the board and then choose one of them as a starting point; a third possibility would be to find the number on the intersection of line and column 7 – in the algorithmic group we used, that number was 78. In these examples, as Figure 4 shows, the starting number is 43, and the knight polygraph forms the following series after 10 moves: 43, 93, 5, 4, 17, 87, 86, 16, 49, and 6.

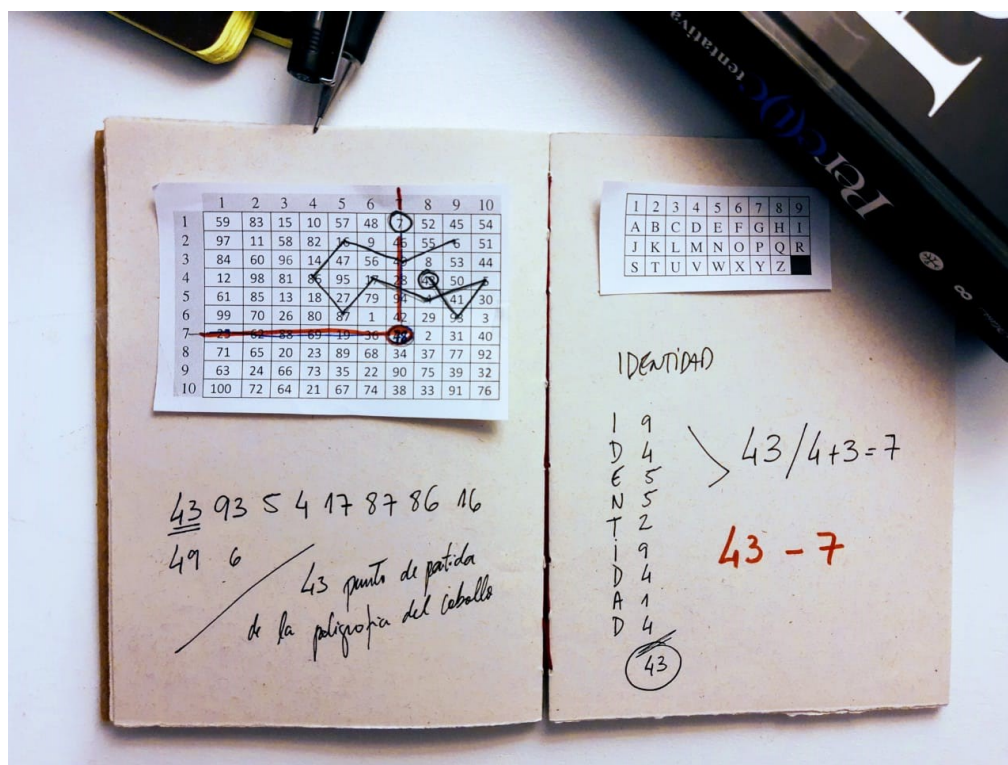


Figure 4 – Photograph of the procedure of polygraphy of the knight [left side of the image], and the procedure to highlight the starting number [right side of the image] on the board. Personal file.

With the set of materials randomly chosen by the knight polygraph, students were invited to produce an essay. These numbers, as we have already explained, indicated the materials in an archive organized as a list of images, quotes, questions, and sentences heard on the street which were individually collected and discussed in the group. After defining the

moves, we worked on the face-to-face emulation of that gesture. We assembled an orthogonal Latin bisquare of order 10 in the classroom. It had the dimensions of an A4 sheet multiplied by 10, thus making up an area of 6,237 cm², i.e., 210 cm x 297 cm, consisting of 100 spaces of 210 mm x 297 mm, in which the collections were arranged in lists, as we can see in Figure 5.

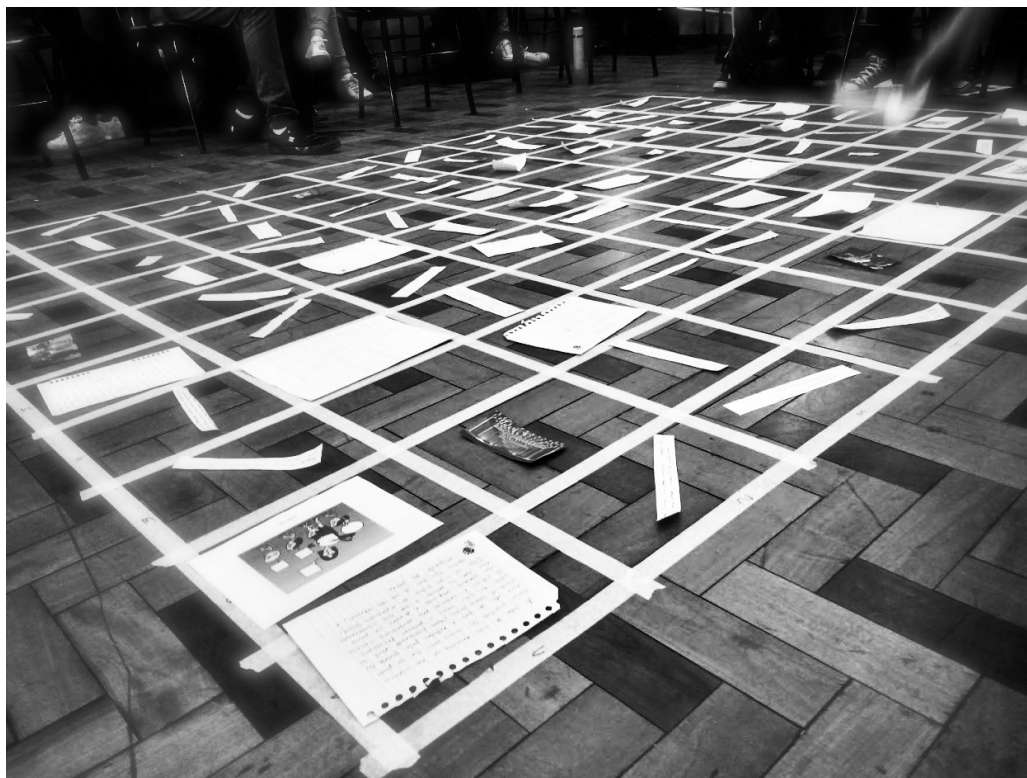


Figure 5 – Photograph of the beginning of the distribution plan of the individual reading collections on the 6,237 cm² board in the classroom. Personal file.

The required essays could be produced and presented in various ways. Participants could choose the type of production, justify their choice, and then present it as comics, films or theater scripts, videos, radio interviews, invented dialogues or other types of stories and texts from the multiplicity of options which the “potential and multimodal academic-artistic” production can offer as forms of creative expression.

Bio-textual microscopies

With this practice of poetic appropriation, we propose the artistic didactics of translation (Corazza, 2013) i.e., engendering ways of asking ourselves what constitutes the meanders and limits of didactic creation. We cannot find answers except in practice. Practices enable us to see and read a little of the inventive inversions of theories in the bio-textual microscopies of the productions presented in the classroom. Those presentations are like microscopic fortunes in which we can put singularities into perspective at the same time we collectively read curricular discussions and are affected by the remains of particular stories which have shaped these theories with new ways of reading them. Thus, we are trying to know what didactics is and with which materials we can restore its experience by approaching its meaning.

Inventory of effects

How can we make an inventory of some of the effects of a didactic proposition? Here, we consider the idea of working with a kind of subtraction, which means taking a remainder out of our class notes. What remains is what is subtracted as experience, something which creates an instable series like a “[...] microscopic profusion of events that repeat and expand [...]” (Piglia, 2015, p.92), events in which the teacher’s proposal guided connection and editing, uniting dispersions on the run, for this editor-teacher has an interest in knowing the effects of the proposition as particular fictions which, tied together, provide a set of readings and, at the same time, show a tiny part of an unattainable whole. Composition requires examining the effects caused on the bio-text shaping it and details are interesting and important to enhance the text by bringing more life to it.

We have highlighted some sentences collected from class notes. They were heard and pointed out, giving us the chance to see a kind of dispersive and proliferating results with some didactic power.

We asked participants the following question: What can you say about the ways of reading and writing we have proposed? We have highlighted the following sentences: *a) I thought I did not understand what I had to do but I was doing it anyway. In the end, I realized that the process is everything and always an enigma, and that the things with which we share our readings choose us and not the*

other way around. b) I commented that I was doing combinatorial reading and writing exercises with colleagues, and I told them I was enjoying that. They called me postmodern. What is it to be postmodern? I thought about it all week and I don't have an answer but it occurred to me that those ways of reading and sharing my readings with the readings of colleagues is something like doing anything with attention, something like making the study space evident. Then, being postmodern could be to feel pleasure in paying attention to the space of our actions and want to free ourselves from what oppresses us. c) all this made me think that the school is a place for us and the students to have a contact with other people. It's like a combinatorial game like these we made. I think it was not the readings, but rather the way my body behaved along the semester. I felt a lot of anxiety because I didn't know what I was going to do with it until I finished doing it. d) I think that this method is like a spell, that's why I began to write about the spell as a method. An oracle working with a file. A class does not exist, it must be created. Did what a teacher didn't see really happen? e) I think we couldn't 'see the theory while walking.' An experience matters when it takes us to some level of abstraction. I think I was able to reach some level of abstraction. It was still difficult. f) What people produce can help them either find themselves or get lost. At first, I didn't quite understand what was happening. I felt as if I were in a dark room. This discipline served to destabilize me. I felt as if I were in a dark room, facing something devoid of purpose and it turns out that I didn't want to move from there, it was dark and full of life.

These sentences were collected from notes taken along seven classes between 2017 and 2019. They function as an effect and put into circulation something of our didactic intuitions, i.e., they are an attempt to sculpt the evidence of the classroom from that dispersive materiality which language is. If, as Deleuze and Parnet (1995) tell us, learning is an encounter with signs, that encounter, it can be said, is something which happens between one and the other. Even if there is a mixture and an exchange, something occurs in the intermediate space of encounters. In those gaps, which are also silences, there is a remainder or something like a remnant of signs connected as a thought without an owner, a collective thought withdrawn from encounters. Didactics is associated with that remainder (which would be effects), linked to that precarious and insufficient return in which what is taken from learning to construct knowledge is beyond certain human and non-human individuals. It would be something which occurs in encounters and survives them as a silent tension refusing to determine itself. Even so, the productions resulting from these combinatorial encounters with the reading materials and the bodies of undergraduates are concrete. Their potencies are not determined by some eloquent discourse which can be attached to them in a fixed way; they emerge from a certain context which creates or triggers them as productions. Hence, we can say that there is determination and will in each

production, but also a kind of accident which transcends the guidance of the senses and emerges as a rupture within knowledge.

Looking up

Artistic didactics of translation, as suggested by Corazza (2013), welcomes and honors the scientific, philosophical, and artistic elements extracted from the creations which set the curriculum in motion as in a kind of contiguous expropriation. A practice executing self-creation in commutability and differentiability with the materials in which it shares its operation. We could say that this sort of didactics *is not*, but rather, it works. Although we do not know how this work occurs, a class has pauses, silences, microscopic spaces, and times which, like the gesture of looking up while reading Barthes (1994) described, underscore the idea that the main material of this kind of didactics is life itself. How can we assume life itself as didactics? How can we assert dispersion as a bio-textual matter for a teaching self-creation? Looking up while reading is precisely the gesture of interruption provoked by an influx of ideas, excitements, and associations which make reading look outside itself in that disrespectful gesture of interrupting the text, the necessary escape to follow the questionable propulsion of composing with the text “[...] which we write in our head *when we look up*.” (Barthes, 1994, p. 36).

We propose the task of creating areas and stakes so that, in daily teaching in the classroom, interruption and dispersion are also affirmed as materials of active creation in composing the act of knowing. It is about affirming the classroom space, which is also an assemblage space, an explosive force which, therefore, generates dispersive energy for that space is never alone or isolated; rather, it is full of ideas, associations, and meanings already given and not yet thought of but rehearsed as topological propositions. It is a gesture of confidence in studying as an act of choice and in students and teachers as active editors of this assemblage. Look up to grasp something beyond a dispersive nonsense. Make the body work in a planned but never determined breakthrough.

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