

Studies on Time: Time in Literature

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TIME IN LITERATURE

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R.GLEZER: We will now start our fifth round table, with the theme "*Time in Literature*" and the presence of Professor Antonio Medina Rodrigues, from the Department of Classical and Vernacular Languages, Bóris Schnaiderman, from Oriental Languages and João Alexandre Barbosa, from Literary Theory, current director of the School of Philosophy, Languages and Human Sciences and director of Edusp. The table will start with the presentation by Professor Antonio Medina Rodrigues.

A.M.RODRIGUES: The first evidence in the relationships between time and poetry or romance is in the impossibility of describing a fact exactly when it happens. From the moment the star seems to fall from one point to another in the sky, and the moment I describe this phenomenon, there is necessarily an invincible interval. Our common experience understands this when we remember that no one can say the word now exactly when now is happening. But if this interval between what happens in time and what happens in discourse is somehow invincible, when trying to describe what is happening now, it does not mean we can say we are outdated in time. What exists is a paradox, such as Achilles and the turtle. One thing is to say we cannot accompany, through discourse, the rhythm of what happens outside of us, we speak at an ox cart rhythm and the world in front of us changes supersonically, but another truth is that we must recognize that we are totally immersed in time, as all things are, and if we are silent we might be able to better perceive our contemporaneity, for example, with the grass that grows outside or the afternoon that slowly becomes night. Thus, we are only outdated from time when we wish to speak of it, because the time it takes us to speak of that now dislocates the now to the past. But if we are silent or speak of anything other than time, this becomes our contemporary and goes through us like it goes through all the things in the world. Saint Augustine, in Confessions, established this paradox saying that we know what time is when we do not think of it, but when we think we no longer know what it is. Therefore, the issue of time is complicated when we try to use the discourse in direct relation to it. I believe that with these examples I am showing one of the impairments of language. And I am not speaking of time itself, which cannot be captured. I am speaking of the symptoms of time, which are imprinted in the things we look at, and the way we see testifies that things change all the time. Well, this change in things is what language cannot accompany. For this reason, discourse, when speaking of a region of the world, seeks to reduce to a minimal summary, to a certain degree of brevity and filtering. The surprise is in our acceptance of this language as sufficient, as whole, as a satisfactory supplement of the world. The world we need is as if entirely imbedded in the language we receive. The poets, however, know that the interval always exists, and they try to fill it with beautiful lies. But how does literature solve the problem of the interval? We could ask the question more adequately, more efficiently, like this: how can literature take advantage of this natural inferiority of language? We could say that it is because of this natural inferiority of language regarding time, it is because of this incapacity to encompass the world that literature seeks to build a world that, as we know, the author prevails as a god. Incapable of dominating time and space, literature creates its own time as space. This, since Aristotle, has been called imitation. However, literature almost never speaks of time, for it usually ends in failure. Literature invents a double world where there can be an illusion of simultaneousness between time and discourse. This because the human language has a plasticity and an economy that the world does not have. If I look up

and concentrate on two birds, it is evident that my gaze grasps many other things in the sky. Only I could not say them truthfully even if I consumed entire books. There are many things in the sky, especially if I really pay attention to the fact that every visible phenomenon has several others, as was noted by the extraordinary Irineu Funes, el Memorioso, a fantastic character by Borges, who remembered almost everything. But the protein character of language makes me save words and simply say that "*everything in the sky is beautiful*". Note that I use the word everything, and reference everything, nothing in the celestial world is lacking in my sentence. Therefore, to reference is not to make sense. To make sense I would have to say all the things, only then would my description give a real impression of the world, which is concrete, not abstract, as are our linguistic stratagems. But, precisely, if I will say everything, like Irineu Funes, I lose to the world. The more I say, time and space give me more to say. This is another paradox that I prefer to call the Brás Cubas paradox. In **The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas** we see a bold assault on time, an assault through which the narrator imagines himself in an absolute time, outside the limiting rhythm of life. The narrator Brás Cubas, when he tells us he is dead and therefore reviewing what he did and was, Brás Cubas wants to give us the impression that he is speaking from a time in itself. After all, he is no longer among the living, and does not depend on times and agendas. Brás Cubas, when he narrates, wants to give the impression of being outside of the world, out of space, and inside time. But this is pure illusion. We know that Machado, when writing that novel, was subjected to the same inferiority of language we are all subjected to. What did Machado certainly do? He lived a now, the same now we all live, a specific now, with zero degrees, and only after this opaque moment could he feel something that would come later, as if we were always on the threshold and never inside this mysterious house, that I am calling now. For anything that is in our head exactly now does not have sense in itself, it only makes sense if related to close thoughts, and close here, not meaning thoughts that are in limbo in the future, but thoughts or things that have been through experience. Therefore, if the physical time goes forward, if after each now there is a newer now, literature only pretends that this now goes forward. In truth, the now of poetry, which seems to go forward, awakens circles of memory, circles that involve experiences with the time of the revised emotion, not the physical time. Therefore, if literature, from the progressive pace of discourse, gives us the illusion of accompanying time, through the association of one word and another it orients itself to the past and to memory. Of course, if I am a reasonable poet, and I dive into my past and extract images that accede me almost spontaneously, if I combine these images and slowly they pour through the tip of my pen, of course they will fatally give a new, unheard of combination that no one has ever written, and of course, in this sense, literature also goes forward, since it creates the unheard of. With this I would like to say that time in literature is a pendulum, it comes and goes, and it only goes forward on the condition of having a stroll through the remote. Time in literature is a construction of desire. Brás Cubas, as the phenomenon is known, says he will tell his story from front to back, the most recent occurrences being easier to remember, which, as the novel itself shows, is not always true. It is not necessary to read the novel again to confirm this. It is enough to remember that there are people who have better memories of what happened ten years ago than what happened last week, and this shows that there can be a shuffle in distinct emotional times. This way we could conclude, temporarily and precariously, that time in literature, due to the memory's work, reminds not the ticking of the clock itself that only goes forward, but the tic-tac rhythm that we hear as if a back and forth rhythm. Time in the world does not imitate the pleasant alternation of the cuckoo, it only goes forward, never repeating what has been. But this is not the only difference. After Bergson we know that time in memory can stop, meaning there can be a duration, a certain fixation in that flower that was contemplated

before, or the image in a dream that impressed us, or a picture seen one day in any given wall. Thus, time in memory has a musical quality, it takes hold of some notes, goes faster in others, walks through the fusion of images in distinct times, and above all, likes to build symphonies in the soul, as if to confirm that memories will come simultaneously from several areas of the human body and will build a panorama, a space. Contrary to all this, time in the physical world does not stop, there are no brief, semibreve or quarter notes. Machado, who is one of the authors who most works with memories and most delights with digressions and durations of the conscience of memory, Machado is, after all, a great realist, who wants to speak of the world, and in this sense he seeks to simulate always in his greatest novels the inexorable march of time, which is outside of literature. Let's say that in these moments he obeys a compulsion to express the fatal sense of physical time. If Machado, on the one hand, likes to play with the memory game, which gives room to his pleasure, on the other hand he commits to trivializing this game with two great abysses, the abyss of life, where physical time punishes, and death, where the punishment is always expected in a type of death anguish, that he cannot cover up, in spite of all irony, all cynicism, all humor. For this reason I believe that all great novels by Machado constitute a type of self-therapy, meaning a catharsis where he could burn all this horror from the physical time, but bravely reproduce it through such discrepancies, so many deaths and disastrous happenings of many kinds that he shows us. But certainly all this horror, which Machado paints with great style, is not exactly the horror Machado would have felt regarding life, the pace of real time that he probably did not understand well, just as none of us understand well. If we followed the advice of poet Alberto Caeiro, pseudo-author, we should simply forget all this abstract nonsense, that does not have the reality of the stones and the flowers, and cannot be caught in our hands and simply live. But this is where Alberto Caeiro is wrong, if that can be said of a poet. He is wrong because no one feels the plenitude of life, without somehow being linked to time and death. It is true that we do not understand well these things we feel, but it is precisely this not understanding that may have worked, for Machado, as an impulse to the act of writing, which is the dimension in which feeling can be spaced, restored by comprehension and where another nature, a lighter one, installs itself with the emergence of memory, which chooses its own time. He will write to understand, to overcome the differences between horror and pity, which will appear together and overcome. To understand, dominate through writing is, as we know, a form of overcoming the immediate precariousness of feeling, which suffers with the alternation of pain and passion. To write is to fall into a greater spatiality than the deadly spatiality of the world. Because, in the written spatiality, I can always go back to the golden times of my existence. To write is, for many authors, a way of self-eternalization. It is a curious thing, there are authors who prefer to die to life, meaning to not live it, dive into the supposed eternity of writing and the "immortal" adjective, applied to these authors, means nothing else. There is, therefore, in literature, a conspiracy against physical time. It is not completely Machado's case, as we saw, because Machado also wants to face the issue of death in his writing. But it is the case of José Lins do Rego, to give a smaller example. I ended up speaking of writing without warning that the literary writing is a form of spatialization. Why? Because through writing the poet condenses or merges distinct times. This can only happen in a completely memorial time. In face of the reality of life we have no experience in merging distinct times, except through recreating memory. What happens in reality in life is that we constantly experience the simultaneity of events, not the simultaneity of times, and this is a miracle of space. This space, when transferred to the soul, which is a symphonic vibration of the body, originates the so called time of memory. You may have noted that, when speaking, each word comes after the other in time, however, when you are silent, all the words you know are contemporaries, in the spirit. And if in this last stage you

started to walk among the words, as if silently tasting them, it is not the imperative of time that will determine the choice of one word over the other, but the rhythm of affection. This does not mean that affection always chooses what is “best” for us. Affection may like the infernal areas of life, those more intimately connected to an idea of fatality of time and death. Literature, even when playing its craziest game, is always somewhat imitational, reproducing life, even if reproducing it with a delay of speech from time, or with a great dose of illusion. Finally, in order for it not to be understood that I am saying that literature is not crossed by the physical world, I would remember that the time of the called internal duration, the specifically psychological time, so radically worked on in modern literature, this time could, for example, lead us to imagine a character that would spend its entire life with an image fixated in his mind, an image that would obsessively not change. Even then I would believe that the physical time would be there, invisible, of course, but it would be there, crossing the apparently unchanging placidity of the image. There are those who say that the written word does not ever age, as with the geometric entities, which will apparently cross all eternity being the same. I am not inclined to believe this. I think everything ages. If we do not notice it, I think it is a problem that depends on our ephemeral human condition, where certain things that last longer than us seem to ascend to the utopic condition of eternity.

R.GLEZER: Professor João Alexandre Barbosa.

J.A.BARBOSA: In my lecture I will try to be the most didactic I can, especially because I've been missing classes, only classes! So I will try to follow rigorously the theme I was proposed: “*Time in Literature*”. Before anything else, a small introduction to say this: the use of the word time, when referring to different knowledge, is multiple. I would remind you, for example, that in **USP MAGAZINE** number two some texts about time in Physics, Biology and Neurology were published. There are two texts by our colleague from the Institute of Physics, Professor Henrique Fleming, about time in Physics. They are worth reading! One of them is a review of Hawking's book, **A Brief History of Time**. The word time, the term time, is something that worries the most diverse knowledge areas, and the concept of time crosses, from one tip to the other, the reflections on literature. Therefore, to think of time regarding literature is to have, in front of you, a large group of concerns, of reflections. I would say that among the several uses of the term time in literature there are at least three that are very frequent and permanent on reflections on literature: the first use is of time as a motive, time as “*topos*” – time as a topic in all of literature, and then, in several ways, the use of the reason of time. It is enough to open, for example, the extensive and admirable work by Ernst H. Curtius, regarding European literature in the Latin middle ages, one of these fundamental western cultural words, and that magically we already have translated in Brazil since 1957, edited by the Instituto Nacional do Livro. The book by Curtius brings a study of “*topoi*”, in different periods of the western literature history, and it is possible to observe the recurrence of the topic, the motive of time in literature, be it in poetry, romance, or essays. In Michel de Montaigne, one of the creators, or the creator of the essay, for example, the topic of time is a recurrence also because it is characteristic of the time in which he wrote. This means that in that moment in European history the concern with time, with the downfall, with the beginning of a new era, with the end of what civilization was imagined to be and the beginning of a new one imposed, so to speak, a solitary reflection. In the case of Montaigne it was the solitary reflection on time. The poets have always been concerned with this, from which come recurring and very beautiful themes in poetry and literature, with time in the center, as a central topic. For example, the disappearance of youth, the urgency to live, the need

to recover what you know will pass, and it is enough to read, for example, Ronsard, in the famous paraphrasing from him, which people do not think as his anymore, but as Manuel Bandeira's, to have the presence of the topic of time; of the disappearance of the former snow, which is a recurrence in literature. This means that time as a reason crosses over literature from one end to the other. I brought an example I think is admirable, that is the example of one of the greatest poets in this century, and one of the most complete writers in the century. Great poet, great translator and great essay writer, T.S. Eliot, an Anglo-American poet who, in one of his **Quartets**, called "Burnt Norton", starts like this: "*Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future and time future contained in time past. If all time is eternally present, all time is unredeamable*", which is wonderful: {The speaker here repeats the text loosely translated in Portuguese}. This means that this idea of time, of the simultaneously of time is something that chased the Eliot concerns, to the point of taking him to a conception of literature which implies that all works are simultaneous. Time, therefore, in eternal movement, which he will make more explicit later in the quartet, when he says: "*Words move, music moves, only in time, but that which is on the living can only die; words, after speech, reach into the silence; only by the form, the pattern, can words or music reach the stillness, as a Chinese jar, still, moves perpetually in its stillness*". Beautiful, right? {The speaker here repeats the text loosely translated in Portuguese} This, from Eliot, seems like a comment, and is, in a sense, to the great poem of the nineteenth century, from who he greatly admired, John Keats, **Ode to a Grecian urn**, in which the entire movement of the poem, in Keats' case, is given by the "*stillness*" of the images, which lead to what is fundamental in this perception of time as a motive in literature, meaning the existence and deflagration of the memory to which Professor Medina has referred to. Thus, this is a first fundamental use of the term, of the concept of time in literature, of time as a motive, as "*topos*". There is a second use, which seems basic, which is the use of time as an analysis category for the literary work, the author of the literary work or the reader of the literary work. In general, when we think of time as a category for analysis, we think of time as a category to analyze the work, like the category space, for example, or work, on in the case of narratives, as some categories of the characters in a work, for characterization, to analyze the work; and how the author builds time, which we know is not the same as real time, but is the time of the work, with which we comfortable identify ourselves and read – it is the time of the work – it is a category, a way to organize, to articulate the work, be it a poem, be it a narrative. You saw, in the case of Eliot's text, time being used as a motive, but it is possible to think of time, in Eliot's poem, as an element, as a category which articulates the elements of the poem. And a third use, which seems basic to me, of time in literature, which is time as an element or characteristic for interpretation, and then not only for analysis, but for interpretation beyond the text, beyond the work or falling short of the work. This means that beyond the work, when I think of social or historic time, for example, when I think that the work answers to specific circumstances, or that it articulates elements from this circumstance, or translates elements from this circumstance. This means that I cannot safely think of literature without temporality, and in this sense frequently I use the word temporal, temporality, time, when I think of literature, a social time, a historic time, etc. **Social Time** is, by the way, for example, the title the colleagues from the Sociology Department decided to name the magazine. **Social Time**: What do you mean by social time? Are there many social times? Are there many social times that cross each other in a social time that you have for analysis? Thus is the literary work! That specific work I have in front of me is resulting not only of the social-historic time, with which it immediately lives, but can be remembering other times, being an element to articulate times that cross each other. Therefore, to think of the use of time as an element or interpretation category is fundamental in literature. Having said these three

uses of the term time *in* and *by* literature, I will work on mixing the second and third uses; mixing the use of time as an analysis category and time as an interpretation category. The analysis and interpretation of literature, on the bias of time. In this sense, I will examine three occurrences of time in literature. All in threes, see how dialectical I am being! All in threes, no one can say I am not fond of structure. In this sense I will examine three occurrences of time in literature: time and the author of the literary work, time and the literary work, time and the reader of literary work. Time and the author of the work: what do we have there when we think of time regarding literature? Certainly the marks, the memories, the relationships between author and time. It is precisely from that that several disciplines appeared, as well as several ways of thinking, of studying and of trying to explain literature in a first moment. That is where, for example, lies the eminence of a discipline that has lost its turn, but comes back once in a while and has returned lately, which is the Biography, which during a certain time, in the long history of critics of work, was central to think of the works. Who wrote it? Where did this author live? What were his relationships with his time? How did he see his time, and how is this present in the work? Which were his appointments, his notes, the marks of his existence? Then came the numerous diaries, the newspapers, everything that would serve as a script to understand the author of the work, the person behind the work. It is a most eminent discipline. I recently read, for example, a book by a very important Italian historian, a historian and historiographer, Arnaldo Momigliano, where he studies biography among the Greeks, the origin of biography. What is biography? How did it start? Where does this concern come from, which professor Medina referred to as immortality? Time and the author in the sense that the author of a literary work, in that work, in the work he writes, reveals, leaves marks, traces, vestiges. Just like a paleontologist finds millenary vestiges in a sea shell, the author leaves marks, vestiges, traces of a relationship with time. How does he organize this? In a recent book by a history theorist, an American, which has not been mentioned much in the new history trends which have been going on, but he is one of the founders of this new way of thinking of history, of thinking about the history of literature and literature and history, his name is Hayden White. Striking and fundamental, called **Metahistory**, about the historic imagination in the nineteenth century, he uses an example that seems notable to me, which is a page from the medieval chronic from the twelfth century if I am not mistaken, where dates and happenings appear, and he uses that page to verify this: is there history here? Or is it lacking in discourse? What you read on the column on the left are dates, and on the right is what happened, are they articulated in terms of history? What is lacking, says Hayden White, is a fundamental dimension, a notion, a perception of time. It is as if each happening translated a date, much more than a moment, and is the date. But no interpretation, no relationship between data and what happened, no articulation that would show the perception of a result, meaning, of time. What happened between 1011 and 1012, because dates come chronologically ordered, we do not know through that record. We know what happened in 1011 and 1012, which for that person was fundamental: the flooding of a great river, the death of a noble; but what is the relationship between the flooding of the river and the death of the noble? Why those things were fundamental at that time we do not know; it lacks the foundational element for history, which is perception, the temporal dimension and the discourse which articulates this temporal dimension. This means that the author appears as the person who articulates this dimension. In the case of literature "strictu sensu", meaning fundamental. We know, not as an element which explains the work, but a fundamental element for the work to be better grasped, to say, as Mário de Andrade, in its totality; so that looking back we may have enriched our knowledge of the work. This first relationship that is established is very important to interpret and analyze the work – the idea of articulation between time and author. The second occurrence is the time

and work. Here there is an issue that seems fundamental to me. It is one of the issues that, particularly, interest me the most, but I think it is always current, and bothersome: it is the issue of the work's perennality. Why do we still read certain works? Why do we read **Dom Quixote**? Why do we continue to read **Dom Quixote**? If we say **Dom Quixote** is a literature classic, it is good to add quickly: it is a classic, as the British critic Frank Kermode would say, because there is a significant surplus. This is true. It means that it is a classic not because of its meanings alone, but that the work over the significants was done in a way that still allows for fulfillment, after so many centuries. This means that the reader that reads **Quixote** again reads differently from the man in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. But he reads the same thing, the text is the same. But as Frank Kermode said, author of the book "**What is a classic**", which is a conference given in the same chair where Eliot read his conference entitled "**What is a classic**" (this is a recurring question, what is a classic?), in every classic there is a "surplus" of "signifier", of significance, because it allows the incessant reading which we complete. Today we say: **Quixote** is a fundamental book when speaking of intertextuality. See how wonderful – imagine that Miguel de Cervantes would never think of this. If he had thought of this he would not be able to have Sancho say so many sayings and proverbs. But the intertextuality, which is a contemporary creation by Bakhtin, Kristeva, etc., really applies entirely to **Quixote**. Let us say that there is a surplus of significance in such a way, as Kermode says, that we complete it, and up to where we can imagine, this is incessant. I have several examples (and I know that when I start speaking of these things I can go on forever and my time is limited), but I will say only one which seems extremely curious, interesting, and is a personal discovery of mine and therefore I will refer to it proudly. Reading **The Maias** by Eça de Querós, for the hundredth time I think (it is a book I read again almost every year) in the last chapter there is a meeting in a square in Lisbon, between João da Ega and Carlos Eduardo; they meet after Carlos Eduardo returns from exile, they are strolling and suddenly see on the other side of the sidewalk a person they knew and Carlos Eduardo did not like at all, he thought it was a repellent, adipose person called Damaso Salsedo. And Carlos Eduardo says to João da Ega: "Isn't that Damaso over there?" He says: "Yes, Damaso is married". "Really, he married?" "He married the youngest daughter of the Counts of (I forget) Agueda (I think) and the family foisted her on him and he helps to buy the older one's dresses", which is in itself a trenchant critique do Damaso's character; then he says: "Is he happy?", "I don't know", "Is the girl he married pretty?", "She is, and is making a boy named Raposo very happy". That is horrible and goes into what Eça is a master in, and Carlos Eduardo says "Poor thing" (Coitado), and João da Ega says "Coitado, coitadinho, coitadíssimo". Reading I saw this was very well arranged, and is not gratuitous. Today, reading Eça, I am used to the adventures of the significant, of the post-lacanian, post-freud, I read meaning wherever it is, and when I saw that I read something else, I read more, maybe, than the man from the nineteenth century in 1888 (last year it was a century old), would have read in **The Maias**; but I read, in that characterization of Damaso, the etymology of the word: coitado, coitadinho, coitadíssimo, which comes, as you know, from coitus. So when he says "Coitado", and the other repeats "Coitado, coitadinho and coitadíssimo" he insists, in my opinion, on the etymology underneath. Well, if I read this, I read many other things in **The Maias**, which makes me read the book again. Thus, the perennality of the work comes from overcoming the temporal limitation by discovery, as Kermode says, of a surplus of significance. I do not stop if I start speaking of this, and I should stop. There is also the example of a sentence by Roland Barthes that seems fantastic to me, that is not quoted much (Barthes was a great writer, right?). Barthes says this, speaking of the eternal works (which is the problem with perennality)"*Une oeuvre, elle ester eternelle non par cequ'elle impose un sens unique à des homes différents, mais par*

ce qu'elle suggère des sens différents à une homme unique que parle toujours a la meme langue symbolique à travers des temps multiples. L'oeuvre en propose, l'homme dispose". "A work is eternal not because it imposes a unique sense to different men, but because it suggests different senses to a same man, which speaks the same symbolic language through multiple times. The work proposes and the man disposes." In another case, as would say another author that I must name, I speak of him everywhere I go, as Paul Valéry said: "There is always an old man in every poet", ("*un homme ancien*" said Valéry). It is an old man because he seems to be always starting, discovering, inventing language again, even though it already exists. Well, I think this occurrence of time and work, thinking of time in the work in this sense, in this line I referred to, remembering only one of the issues which is central for me, is the perennial, the perpetuation of the work, where we can think of what I said I would speak quickly of again, which is the idea of the simultaneous in works, which is the theses by T.S. Eliot in **Tradition and Individual Talent**, and simultaneity of works. Works that overcome their times, says Eliot, the arrival of a fundamental work depends on the modification of the previous tradition. When Eliot said this he was offering an epigraph for Jorge Luis Borges, who uses this as a quote in his text **Kafka y sus precursores**. You may not know the text by Borges, but it is a central text where he speaks of Kafka and his precursors, and if it were not for Borges we would imagine this is banal, because every author has precursors, but the case is not this alone, it is Borges. This means that the fact that there was Kafka created his precursors. So the precursors of Kafka are those created by the existence of Kafka. Thus, in this case, Machado de Assis can be thought of as a precursor of Kafka, after Kafka existed, as we can think of several Brazilian authors, not several, a few, some Brazilian authors who are Machado's precursors; we find here and there a sentence, a period: and we say – that is totally Machado. Or we think of authors precursors of Guimarães Rosa: Hugo de Carvalho Ramos, for example, was a post-rosiana discovery that became a type of precursor for Guimarães Rosa. Of course there are dilutors, of villages in the confines, but that comes later. Thus, time and the work can be an extraordinary occurrence for reflection, in the case of the big problem of time in literature, basing on the central issue of the perennial, of the simultaneity of works, etc., such as was said by Medina, the problem of specialization. Literature has always been thought of as a temporal art. Lessing, in **Laokoon** traced the division of waters. But before it had been said: a painting that speaks and a poetry that paints! (among the Greeks that was the thought). Well, Lessing came to stop this with his rationality (temporal and spatial arts should not be confused, please). However, the modern literature confuses this. When arts became more specified they started to converge and we have, for example, at least since Flaubert, the attempt to create spatial form literature in the narrative. This is an example given by an American who studied this in what became a famous essay. **The spatial form in modern literature**, the author's name is Joseph Frank, also the author of a bibliography about Dostoyevsky. The example he used as the beginning of the spatial form was the work of Flaubert, and in it the scene of **Madame de Bovary**, which some might remember: in the agriculture fair, in the agriculture parties the mayor is speaking, the representatives, the agriculturers, the men of the city, the salesmen are speaking and there is a conversation of lovers on the balcony and those conversations cross over each other, meaning this is the spatial form Flaubert did in an extraordinary way and evidently gained the top with the work of James Joyce – from Ulysses to the later works, and this also in contemporary poetry to Joyce, Eliot and Ezra Pound, for example. There is a central thing there, that when you speak of spatial form in this case you are speaking of breaking the temporal barrier, time becomes the same time. The great poem by Eliot, **The waste land**, is space, but is time. It is the occurrence, on the same page, of Buda a Dante, the Provençale, Verlaine, Nerval and the Sanskrit literature, Buddhism, the sacred

books, meaning that spatial form breaks also the barriers of the divisions of temporal marks. This is regarding, however, the second occurrence. The third occurrence is due to these first two, and I will mention it because I know I have already exaggerated. I am going beyond what I could. The third occurrence would be time and the reader of the literary work. Here we have to think that this means something very current, the retrieval of the reader, because there is a history of the work, a history of the author, but there is really very little about the reader, a history of the reader. The reader who registered himself, much more than being registered, the one who registered himself as a great reader and the first in modern literature is one I have already made reference to, called Michel de Montaigne (who registered himself all the time, the great reader, the archi-reader registering himself) but it is not a story of the reader. And time and the reader of the work is fundamental, because we need to know how there is a relationship between the time of the reader, the time of the work and the time of the author, and how to explicit the time of the reader. In general the time of the reader is the time of reading, and not just of the reader. The most grateful, most certain example of this reader marked by time may be that of the modern writer that transformed the reason of time in the reason to rescue his own artistic work, which was Marcel Proust's "**In search of lost time**" (*À la recherche du temps perdu*), the lost time is substituted by the work, when speaks of **Le temps retrouvé** which is the last volume, time is discovered, found again, it is the new meeting with the work. This means that it is the realization of the work. Maybe no other has taken this as radically as Proust, meaning that time is the realization of the work. It is not simply the reason for the work, although it is also that, but it is the realization of the work. Time found again is the work done and Proust is certainly the privileged reader because his work is the work of a reader. It is impossible to think of **À la recherche du temps perdu** without thinking of Proust who writes *Contre Saint-Beuve*, meaning in his critical dialogue, with the critique, with other books. His dialogue as a reader is, to say, what instigates Proust to write, to seek the time he says is lost, but that he finds as he finishes the work. Well, we know that the reader today, in the days that go by, thinking in this sense, is a privileged element in the reflection of the history of literature. In the history of literature, which is a basic discipline if we think of time. Above all, thanks to the called esthetics of reception and effect, where the reader appears as a basic element, although he is not evidently an invention of the esthetics of reception, because this is in previous authors, frequently, but there he is defined and configured in a clearer manner. So I think I will stop here, because I have said too much and I hope to debate with you soon. Thank you.

R.GLEZER: Professor Bóris Schnaiderman.

B.SCHNAIDERMAN: I want to use this round table to discuss the way we can, regarding literature, view the approach Fernand Braudel establishes between short time and long time in history. While the true work of the historian would be the study of history in the long time, the other history, the short time one, the occurrences, the *événementielle*, would be above all the action field for chronic and journalism, although the traditional history has concentrated, with few exceptions, on the "drama of the great events" and has worked with the short time.

But established this distinction, it shows a great fascination with what happens, with living, with the immediate repercussion of events on the psyche, according to what is stated in his book "**Writings on History**"¹. "*Let us suspect this history that is still ardent, as the contemporaries felt it, described it, lived it in the brief rhythm of their life, brief as ours. It has the dimension of its choleras, of its dreams and illusions*". He also writes about "*the dangerous world (...) from which we would have conjured the enchantments and*

curses, having been previously fixated in these great subjacent currents, frequently silent, where meaning is revealed when you embrace great periods of time. The resounding happenings are not really more than instants, where manifestations of these large destinies are only explained through them". At each step, however, he seems to impose on the author, whether he wants it or not, the seduction of the immediate, of the before that are really no more than instants, where manifestations of these large destinies are only explained through them".

At each step, however, he seems to impose on the author, whether he wants it or not, the seduction of the immediate, of the lived with intensity. "*Personally, through a morose captivity, I fought to escape the chronic of these difficult years (1940-1945)*".

These excerpts I now read appeared in an article of mine, where I remember that he admirably defined the work of the historian: the right road would be to "*incline the hourglass both ways*" and go "*from the event to the structure, then from the structures and models to the event*". There you can see that, even though he wants to convince us to remain in an Olympic attitude and only think of history in the long time, in reality, in the moments when the theoretical discourse is shaded by the immediate and contingent, the reflection of the great lines of historic development acquires, in his work, another dimension and intensity.

These passages impressed me very much, including because, from writings of a great thinker of history, we also have the illumination of an entire path to comprehend literary works.

I believe that literature fluctuates between the long time and the short time that work as limits, and it cannot be placed totally one way or the other. In the first case, it ends up going into philosophy's terrain, and in the second, it becomes journalism.

A very important text to think of the limits between philosophy and literature, as shown in a specific work, is, without a doubt, "**Letters upon the aesthetic education of man**", by Friedrich Schiller². As Anatol Rosenfeld remembers in the introduction to the first Brazilian edition: "*Maybe you should read this essay with a certain esthetic disposition, somewhat like the dialogues of Plato: as a dramatic work that, in this specific case, does not lack great comedy; the destiny of man, the failed and ambiguous hero, goes, after several adventures, from misfortune to happiness*". But the writer correctly points out that, even so, it is an essentially philosophical work. We may say that there is there, in the terms of Braudel, a true passage from the universe of short time to that of long time.

The starting point for Schiller's reflection was really a concern directly linked to the occurrences of his time: the horror provoked in the west by the violence in the French Revolution. But from these events his work becomes an esthetic philosophical reflection and a development of Kantian conceptions about art.

On another plane, in a perspective where history unites with literature – and the intensity in which this occurs, for the historian Braudel becomes a wrist writer here! – the "ardent history", which would have the dimension of the cholera, dreams and illusions of humans, and which would be a history of short times, we have in reality a vibrant approach, very close to us. Let us see how the same theme was approached by Mário Faustino in the posthumous collection of articles "**Poetry-Experience**"³, "*...poetry serves society by testifying of it, interpreting it, registering the several spatial and temporal phases of its expansion and evolution. In this, poetry is like every art: a living document, expressive, of the state of spirit of a certain people, in a certain area, in a certain time. Poetry is, by the way, incomparable when it registers – with the condensing and mnemonic capacity only it has – certain nuances in point of view, in feeling, in attitude, in sentiment and thought, individual and collective, nuances that, many times, are much more expressive of a people and a time than the big events*".

This way, he points not only to the connection with the immediate, but to an action on hearts and minds, and also the relationship with the long term history that Braudel deals with. Truly, if we think of literature as a factual document, in terms of the “immediate aspect”, the great literary art can become less important than a mediocre book, and Lucien Goldmann has demonstrated this to society in his study on sociology of romance⁴, but if we want to apprehend the values of a people and a time, know how they thought and felt, the great literature cannot be replaced. And there we are fully in the domain of the long term history. And it is not by accident that, giving in to dealing with this history, many modern historians are increasingly closer to literature and the fictional world, a theme on which there is vast bibliography.

It does not seem less instructive, however, this approximation that has been attempted between literature and the immediate recordings, between literature and journalism. All can remember that starting at the end of century XIX there is a saturation in literature, a tiredness of the psychological and social realism, that manifests frequently in a refusal of fiction. Thus, in the diaries of Tolstói, there are insistently invectives against the lie that would be in inventing characters and fictional situations, when life itself was in the author’s reach for a direct apprehension. The same loathing of fiction is found in other authors from that time. It is enough to remember the position Valéry had on this. Similar affirmations can be found in texts by José Martí and Euclides da Cunha, among others.

A complete loathing attitude with the fictional was common in the avant-garde in the 1920’s. Thus, in 1962, going back to his *Nadja*⁵, after 35 years, André Breton points that “*the tone of the report is based on medical observation, especially neuropsychiatry*”, which is clearly denied from reading the book, thanks to its great vital charge, and the photographs added there, that aimed to substitute the literary descriptions, are perfectly integrated in the text, which does not put aside literature to become a document. This, the great conquest of this work is precisely in its failure as a project.

The same can be seen in the anti-fiction preaching of the Russian avant-garde. Thus, in his resumed autobiography, “**Myself**”⁶, Maiakóvski writes regarding year 1925: “*This year I shall finish my first romance*”. And a little later, under the same date “1925”: “Regarding the romance, I have finished writing it mentally, but I have not put in on paper, because when I finished writing I was filled with a hatred to fiction and started demanding of myself to write it all with my name and real facts”. This was written in 1928, in the midst of the expansion of the *facta literature*, the literature of real facts, when many soviet writers renounced fiction for a more direct apprehension of reality.

Once again, however, literary realization was greater than the initial project. What remained from the vast “*documentary*” production of those years? With very rare exceptions, exactly that which went beyond the limits of a simple registration and imposed itself as fiction, even when in the form of an autobiography or a diary. In this sense, it is enough to think of the work of Isaac Bábel. He was marked by the concern to apprehend the instant lived, but his great accomplishment was mainly achieved by the connection he did between the *facta literature* and the “*ornamental prose*”, developed in Russia from the beginning of the century, with Andréi Biéli and Alekséi Rêmisov as its main representatives.

Short term and long term, the limits between which literature moves, what is fictional and history and historical in fiction, here are some themes we need to work with always, and that should be the object of continued reflection.

- (1) Fernand Braudel – **Escritos sobre a História**, Editora Perspectiva, 1978, São Paulo, translation by J. Guinsburg and Tereza Cristina Silveira da Mota.
- (2) Friedrich Schiller – **Cartas sobre a educação estética da humanidade**, Editora Herder, 1963, São Paulo, translation by Roberto Schwarz.
- (3) Mário Faustino - **Poesia-Experiência**, Editora Perspectiva, São Paulo.
- (4) Lucien Goldmann - **Sociologia do Romance**, Editora Paz e Terra, 1967, São Paulo, translation by Álvaro Cabral.
- (5) André Breton - **Nadja**, Gallimard, 1964, Paris.
- (6) In Bóris Schnaiderman - **A poética de Maiakóvski através de sua prosa**, Editora Perspectiva, 1971, São Paulo.

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