At the threshold of academic writing: tension, pressure, and invention

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Abstract

The outline of this article is based on a reflection on the vicissitudes of academic writing and its points of convergence and divergence with writing in general. In this way, the article aims to analyze the conditions under which academic writing can become a place for experience, in its profound sense of formation and transformation of the self. To this end, aesthetic writing workshops were held with Stricto Sensu graduate students, characterized as a space for experimentation with the word. The experience of writer's block and the conflict between authorship and scientific norm are nodes of discussion fundamentally lateralized to the thinking of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes. Consequently, the importance of recovering the procedural dimension of writing and the intimacy with words that seems to be obstructed when students enter the university environment is highlighted. Based on the experience with the workshops and the bibliographic review, we developed arguments to think about research writing as a threshold experience, permeated by negotiations between creative practices and institutional demands.

Keywords: Academic writing. Aesthetic workshop. Text. Discourse.

No limiar da escrita acadêmica: tensão, pressão e invenção

Resumo

O delineamento deste artigo parte de uma reflexão acerca das vicissitudes da escrita acadêmica e seus pontos de confluência e divergência com a escrita de maneira geral. Dessa forma, o artigo tem como objetivo analisar as condições

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de possibilidade da escrita acadêmica se constituir em um lugar para a experiência, em seu sentido profundo de formação e transformação de si. Para tal, foram realizadas oficinas estéticas de escrita com estudantes de pós-graduação stricto sensu, caracterizadas como um espaço de experimentação com a palavra. A experiência do bloqueio da escrita e o conflito entre a autoria e a norma científica são nodos de discussão fundamentalmente lateralizados ao pensamento de Michel Foucault e Roland Barthes. Por conseguinte, destaca-se a importância de resgatar a dimensão processual da escrita e a intimidade com as palavras que parecem ficar obstruídas com o ingresso dos estudantes no ambiente universitário. A partir da experiência com as oficinas e da revisão bibliográfica, compõem-se argumentos para pensar a escrita da pesquisa como uma experiência limiar, permeada de negociações entre práticas criativas e exigências institucionais.

Palavras-chave: Escrita acadêmica. Oficina estética. Texto. Discurso.

En el umbral de la escritura académica: tensión, presión e invención

Resumen

El esquema de este artículo parte de una reflexión sobre las vicisitudes de la escritura académica y sus puntos de confluencia y divergencia con la escritura en general. De este modo, el artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las condiciones de posibilidad para que la escritura académica se convierta en un lugar para la experiencia, en su sentido profundo de formación y transformación del yo. Para ello, se realizaron talleres de escritura estética con estudiantes de posgrado *stricto sensu*, caracterizados como un espacio de experimentación con la palabra. La experiencia del bloqueo de la escritura y el conflicto entre la autoría y la norma científica son nodos de discusión fundamentalmente lateralizados al pensamiento de Michel Foucault y Roland Barthes. Por tanto, se destacala importancia de rescatar la dimensión procedimental de la escritura y la intimidad con las palabras que parece obstruirse cuando los estudiantes ingresan al ámbito universitario. A partir de la experiencia de los talleres y de la revisión

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bibliográfica, se argumenta que la escritura de investigación es una experiencia umbral, permeada por negociaciones entre prácticas creativas y exigencias institucionales.

Palabras-clave: Escritura académica. Taller estético. Texto. Discurso.

Introduction

> Perhaps it is time to shatter a fiction: the fiction that wants the research to be exposed but not written (Barthes, 2012)[1]

Academic work is a work with words. Research is reading, debating, interviewing, transcribing, decoupage, filing, summarizing, talking, writing. Either individually or collectively, doing research is to immerse into a set of letters and work with them; this sophisticated world codification system that we call language. Despite facing so many technological resources, the daily life of students and researchers is primarily or *exclusively* rooted in words, either on acquisition, disclosure, evaluation processes, or on the proper production of scientific knowledge (Franco, 2019). This situation is intensified in humanities, where even field activities such as groups, workshops, interviews, and forms are constitutively mediated by language – this gregarious artifice of classification and connection between humans esse artifício gregário de classificação e conexão entre humanos (Barthes, 2013).

Regardless of the complexity of what was lived in the field, it is the final textual production that objectifies the research in human sciences, that is, the researcher's capacity to translate their experience in words. This translation happens as a creative act, a sort of integration capable of expressing the knowledge production itself. This final practice, core, and conclusion of the research is called academic writing – and it is precisely what we will dedicate ourselves to in this article. This will be done by getting closer to and reflecting on the vicissitudes of this specific way of writing.

Provisionally, we can define academic writing as one that is "[...] purposely arranged to produce effects of truth" (Pereira, 2013, p. 214). Certainly,

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every form of writing, either poetic, literary or mythical, seeks an effect of truth regarding its signification strength. In this sense, there is no unique and transcendental truth, but different veridiction regimes that are constituted from different discourse practices (Foucault, 2014).

The truth rule to which academic writing is subjected is based on the scientific values of objectivity and neutrality, which demand a text production that leads the reader to unequivocal reasoning. Therefore, the hegemonic scientific discourse is characterized as the one that seeks not to leave any margin for questioning regarding its own truth. In this perspective, scientific language is what allows the control over truth, being based on regulatory proceedings for the production, distribution and circulation of statements, that is, a set of rules capable of distinguishing true from false (Foucault, 2014).

Defining academic writing is also to take the risk of producing generalizations and totalitarianisms that are not fruitful. If this is the risk of all nomination – as Barthes (2013) alerted us to the fascism inherent to language – we can only say that scientific writing is not an unique and circumscribed way of writing, but a practice that only happens in a specific context of institutional demands. Over-homogenizing the production done inside university would be unfair to the work of countless researchers that exercise creative forms of responding to those demands.

However, we are interested in highlighting some characteristics that configure a certain way of writing in human sciences, and the consequences of this to those who write. We can say that it is more about a form[modelo] than about a set of specific rules to be followed. This form produces a stiffening and a reproducibility in the scientific text's writing experience, that is often reduced to the productive need of statistical purposes and scores in awards[editais]. Consequently, we observe the massive production of serialized articles and a concerning state of psychological suffering experienced by students in graduate school (Silva, 2015).

We understand that there is a suffering characteristic of any writing process: a type of angst that we must go through in order to build the text; this nature of the word that works as a trench between prison and freedom of

thought (Pereira, 2013). On the one hand, if we fix ideas and experiences in words when writing, on the other hand, it is facing this adventure that we have the opportunity to materialize something that only existed as thought murmur. That is, many times we write exactly to express what we still do not know when we first face the blank paper innocently (Foucault, 2014).

In this sense, academic writing will be discussed as this turbulence zone, characterized by constant negotiations that include the game between reader and writer, between the one who demands the text and the one who writes it, between word and thought.

It is a matter of finding out which twists this space suffers, being fundamentally turbulent in the process of educating the *Stricto Sensu* graduate programs and its repercussion in the writing experience of research in human sciences. Moreover, we are interested in approaching the way academic demands towards writing are inserted in the daily life of graduate students and how they affect their psychical life. Thus, we aim to reflect on the vicissitudes of academic writing, their confluence and divergence points regarding writing in general, as well as analyzing the conditions that make academic writing a place for experience – in its deep sense of education and self-transformation (Larrosa, 2020; Foucault, 2014) – in the current Brazilian university scenario.

Method

This article shows results of a research whose objective was to analyze the conditions of possibility for writing as a place of experience for graduate students in the subjectivity field of study. For that purpose, writing aesthetic workshops were carried out for students in *Stricto Sensu* programs for all knowledge areas that have a research line related to subjectivity. The announcement was made through a digital pamphlet in institutional email groups and in social media. The registration also happened online, by filling out a digital form. Two editions of the workshop were carried out: one in person, at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and the other was online. The workshop happened in 4 two-hour long meetings, having 5 participants per edition. The reflections

shared here derive from the experience of conducting the workshops, from the writing experience of the researcher responsible and from the bibliography that has been produced on the theme.

The workshops' proposal intends to analyze the research's writing experience, as well as to intervene in these conditions, seeking to amplify the sensible regime of the participants with words and writing activity in general. More than designating contact and work with artistic languages, the aesthetic workshops, by definition, also seek to intervene in the ways of seeing, listening, feeling and thinking, constituting a strategy of shaking crystalized visions and the production of other visions to certain activities (Zanella, 2020).

Based on the reading of literary excerpts, discussions with and between participants and the proposition of exercises, the workshops intended to lead participants on a sort of stroll of experimentation on the materiality of the word, with the aim of expanding their capacity to affect and to be affected by it. The implicit hypothesis of this proposition is that the creation of an intimacy with the words facilitates the understanding of the inherent procedural work of writing, and the textual production.

The literary mediation was based on a handout that was previously elaborated with short stories, poems, excerpts of texts and images that were worked on throughout the workshop. Each meeting had a specific theme that served as a starting point for the presentation of some aspects of writing, the exchange between participants about these themes and the proposition of playful exercises that aimed to activate a certain poetic nature of language (Kirinus, 2011).

The procedures used to collect information were the field journal and voice recordings of the meetings, which were later transcribed and submitted to decoupage. In addition, the written productions of the participants were collected and organized. The data emerging from the field were worked on based on the collective productions, disregarding the individual distinction of the participants.[2]

For data analysis, the Barthesian concepts of writing, text, semiology and language (Barthes, 2013; Barthes, 2012) as well as the Foucaultian

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discussion about the author-figure, the discourse and regimes of truth (Foucault, 2014; Foucault, 2001) were used. The treatment given to the research material is in the form of an essay, that is, through a link between theory and experience, theoretical language and poetic language, aiming to produce an interface between art and science, knowledge and imagination, objectivity and subjectivity (Larrosa, 2016).

At the threshold of academic writing

Thinking of writing as this zone of turbulence that demands constant negotiations, we dare say that the most delicate of these is this kind of force that removes the person from their place of knowledge and throws them into a zone where they *still* do not know for sure what to formulate. Therefore, a negotiation occurs between the interiority of the person who writes (their desire, conscience, rationalization) and their outside (unknown and otherness) (Pereira, 2013; Foucault, 2001). It is as if we launched ourselves into the adventure of writing precisely when we *sense* something, instead of knowing it. Thus, writing is crossing, or rather, inhabiting this threshold.

The threshold is a curious category: unlike the limit and the border, it does not designate the encounter between two domains, but the transition zone. The very ambiguity of the word zone helps us to open up this meaning. Thus, the threshold is something that is part of a broader register of movement, passages and overcoming (Gagnebin, 2014). Furthermore, the threshold, a concept gathered from the work of Walter Benjamin, commented on by the philosopher Jean Marie Gagnebin, carries the meaning of a kind of rite of passage. Consequently, we understand that words are not mere tools, and writing is not reduced to the technical issue of communication, but rather refers to a complex game of negotiation, constitution and differentiation of the subject.

On the other hand, in order to deal with the specificity of our object, let us return to the previous definition of academic writing as that which seeks an effect of truth (Pereira, 2013). This effect is produced by convincing the reader through the use of rhetorical resources capable of overcoming doubts, mistakes

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and ambiguities. Objectivity as a guarantee of scientific rigor is materialized in the text through strategies that have been historically valued and disseminated in scientific methodology, such as: concealment of the subject, use of the indicative tense and third person singular, and refusal of expressions that reveal the procedural nature of the research, such as the gerund and the participle, which indicate an *ongoing action*.

The concealment of the subject in scientific writing can be thought of as a kind of trick of the scientific discourse, which suddenly presents itself as coherent and true, assuming a place of authority (Burgarelli; Ribeiro, 2010). This legitimacy of knowledge is only achieved when it passes through the scientific sieve that is anchored in the regulations regarding the writing and formatting of the text.

Academic writing, predominantly valued as scientific, appears as a product and not an integral part of the research process. Therefore, an account of something that has already happened is written, and the research writing is thus disregarded as a mere representation of what has been done. In general, the dry form of syntax and the neutralization of the subject express the dominance of scientific writing – although, certainly, each area of knowledge (the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities) presents twists in this form, with their characteristic stereotypes.

In her doctorate research with graduate and undergraduate students, users of the Academic Publishing Advisory Center (Centro de Assessoria de Publicação Acadêmica - CAPA) at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), Rezende states that:

> In order to be institutionally acknowledged and legitimized, the academic master must hold back the exhibit of what is intimate, confusing, nascent and embryonic; needing to show the Other only the expression that represents the ethics of scientific authority: what is finished, the outer, the neutral, the clear, the grandeur setting, the utmost (Rezende, p. 144, 2021).

Therefore, between the zone of turbulence and the true, neutral and objective product, we observe a significant mismatch, as if writing, upon

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entering the academic universe and being subjected to the classical precepts of scientific production, were forced to suppress its vicissitudes.

> This evident mismatch creates the additional problem of fatigue resulting from constant self-surveillance and self-awareness, especially when it comes to writing. The individual must always behave "as if" they were producing science […]. Then, the mismatch between what one does and what one claims to do is the cause of an elusive – but constant – feeling of inadequacy and hypocrisy. This is a first difficulty directly linked to writing habits in the academic environment (Franco, 2019, p. 21).

This inaugurates a wide field of issues experienced by those who write within the academic context. It is from the diagnosis of this mismatch, this founding discontinuity, that we will discuss two latent points that appeared throughout the workshops: the writer's block and the issue of authorship.

It is important to emphasize that these points do not seek to exhaust the problems related to the vicissitudes of academic writing, nor to present something unprecedented; it is a matter of providing consistency – based on openness and attention – and formulating questions that are already known from other perspectives, but not overcome in the research writing process.

The sharp word: writing workshop

It was a cold Friday and the researcher[3] was organizing the environment with the elements she had at her disposal: cushions, a blackboard, a stack of books, a set of clipboards, paper, pens, colored pencils, crayons, coffee, tea and some things to eat. The researcher had a strong feeling that these apparently unnecessary devices were important allies in building the group. This was something she had learned from Manoel de Barros, when he whispered to her that the practice of the unnecessary and the somersault is fundamental to develop the ludic sense. Little by little the room began to fill with different researcher-writers and, after a few minutes, a writing workshop carefully called 'the sharp word' by the researcher – aware of the importance of any and all acts

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of naming – began. Suddenly, those people who had gathered voluntarily to practice writing began to gain depth, as stories were shared and some words were written on paper. The researcher followed those stories as if balancing on a crevice: her legs stretched out in a skillful stretch, each foot touching one of the edges that opened the workshop space. In one of them, she scribbled in her little red notebook in an attempt to record what would be of value for the research; in another, she experienced the fascination and childish curiosity of seeing herself in front of young writers and researchers, struggling with the pains and pleasures of writing and researching, a condition in which she also found herself and shared intensely. Her main objective was to awaken in those present the feeling of "I write!", so routinely buried by the specter of failure that accompanies the research writing in graduate school.

The block

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Reading and writing activities are central to the day-to-day of scientific work. This centrality is even more incisive in the human sciences, given that the specific object of this area of knowledge is the significant matter itself (Amorim, 2002). However, such activities end up being neglected in the form of a lack of attention to their exercise and their specificities: "[…] it is interesting because writing is one of the greatest sufferings there is. Not only because you have to publish it, but also because there is no space for it. There is no space to exercise this, which is highly demanded, but little exercised" (M. 2022)[4].

The narrated experience highlights this negligence expressed through the naturalization of the activity of writing, which is far from trivial. We can attribute this to a legacy of the Cartesian cogito that, by founding existence and being in thought itself, operates a split between body and thought. Therefore, there is a transcendence of the activities of thinking. Although this is an exhaustive discussion in the field of human sciences, we observe a lack of practical actions to counteract this legacy that constitutes university structures, as well as our imagination of what academic production is (Franco, 2019). It is no wonder that Barthes (2012) states that academic writing provokes an evaporation of

the body. This emphasis on intellectual effort and the distancing of knowledge production from its procedural and everyday dimension ends up producing in the imagination of young researchers the idea that writing a text is something given. Thus, they find themselves little receptive to the obstacles and anxiety that are typical of the beginning of writing, which ends up shortening the possibilities of creatively overcoming this first barrier and triggering acute processes of psychological suffering.

The experience as a writing advisor at CAPA at UFPR, reported by Rezende (2021) in her doctoral thesis, is something interesting to consider in this regard. According to the author, this is the first writing center in Brazil, a common space in renowned teaching and research institutions around the world. Despite being a space to practice skills related to scientific writing, that is, to "teach" and support students to write according to the assumptions critically exposed at the beginning of the article, it is also the possibility and guarantee of a space to focus on writing in its process. Therefore, a space for young researchers to share the difficulties, habits, strategies and pleasures of writing, guided by qualified professionals.

At the end of the first edition of the workshop, I proposed a round of collective evaluation, in which all those present could share their impressions of the meetings. Three of the participants shared a feeling of frustration on the first day, as they had expected it to be a technical workshop on academic writing, with tips, information and practical exercises related to scientific writing. Even though they understood that this was not the purpose of the meetings, they remained present and said that they were positively surprised by the experience of approaching, thinking and practicing the power of words. In any case, this misunderstanding that affected some of the group members points to the lack of an institutional space that instructs and supports researchers in their writing processes and that, possibly, this type of device could also serve as a stimulus for inventiveness in writing work.

Furthermore, when asked about their relationship with writing inside and outside the university, participants unanimously shared the experience that they had a significant and pleasurable relationship with writing, which was lost

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after entering university. Therefore, even though an affinity with writing and reading somehow characterizes the profile of those who wish to pursue an academic career in the humanities – understanding that these are fundamental activities of daily work –, entering the academic universe somehow obstructs the experience of pleasure and enjoyment with the text: "[…] when I was a child, I played with words, I did whatever I wanted with words, but when you enter academia you see that you do not have the freedom to do whatever you want" (M., 2022). This feeling echoes in the experience of other participants: "[…] I like to write, but academia has this thing where you feel kind of restricted and also stuck in the parameters within which you have to write" (M. 2022). Another workshop participant also said that "[…] academia was kind of taking away my subjectivity and it seems like I was losing a bit of the spontaneity of writing" (M. 2022). The reports of the workshop's participants highlight the fact that this frustration with the formal demands of writing inaugurates the connection between writing and psychological suffering in graduate school. The writing experience is initially linked to the feeling of *blockage* and to terms such as *restricted*, *stuck*, *shame*, *embarrassment*, *suffering*.

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Such suffering is aggravated by the demands for productivity in accordance with the evaluation parameters of development agencies and the precariousness of working conditions in the face of privatization trends that reduce investment in Brazilian public universities. Thus, "[…] the university loses its place as a mediator between students and social reality, as it forces them towards the abandonment of the imperative of individual responsibility and performance" (Leão; Ianni; Goto, 2019, p. 61).

Therefore, the block is experienced individually and not as something collective and inherent to the writing operation. This difficulty is then subjectivized as failure, generating the feeling that productions are always below what they should be. Costa (2017), researcher and professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), when problematizing academic writing in the context of neoliberalism, formulates questions that still resonate:

> How can we establish other plans of political imagination when the major image that reaches us is that we have failed? […] In other

words, how can we remain resistant through what we write, when our writing is already, itself, mimicked by a design from which we should precisely escape? (Costa, 2017, p. 25).

If the act of writing was already not receiving attention due to the incongruence of the assumptions of scientific writing and the vicissitudes inherent to writing, this scenario faces a strong aggravating factor with the consolidation of neoliberalism in academic culture. The high demand for productivity – closely linked to the actions of scholarship promotion and distribution – makes scientific production even more focused on its *product* and its *results*. This points to the urgency of establishing spaces to think not only about writing, but about the text itself in scientific work, that is, spaces for "[...] political gestures that involve a careful treatment of language" (Costa, 2017, p. 26).

Text: core of the research

Facing the text: this is what we invariably do when it comes to research. But what is it? According to Barthes (2012), the text is understood as a field of textual forces and is not limited to the act of gathering letters and forming sentences. The text is that which has texture, that is, relief – a construction and transformation of space through the action of time, a weaving of various elements.

To begin with, we can think of two types of text: reading[5] and writing. Evidently, both affect each other and are even very characteristic of the research process, as when reading awakens in us the sudden desire to write (Costa; Costa, 2017). However, it is the second type that we need to focus on. Writing concerns contact with the poetic nature of language, a "[...] practice that enables self-knowledge and self-criticism of language, as well as its openness to what has not yet been said" (Perrone-Moisés, 2012, p. XVI). Therefore, it is not a spontaneity in the relationship with words, a "doing whatever you want" with the text, but something that is achieved precisely through serious language work.

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To think about the text and to deepen its meaning is to direct a more attentive look at the situations we experience in the day-to-day work of scientific research, but do not value. Thus,

> […] from the moment that research concerns the text
> (and the text goes far beyond the work), the research itself becomes
> text, production: […] 'research' is then the prudent name
> that, under the imposition of certain social conditions, we give to
> the work of writing (Barthes, 2012, p. 393).

In other words, the writing proposed by Barthes is a writing practice for those who think of language in its state of enjoyment. That is: enjoyment, pleasure and benefit. Thus, "[…] it is not a matter of placing scientists and researchers on one side and writers and essayists on the other: writing is done wherever words have flavor" (Barthes, 2013, p. 20). This is how academic writing finds *writing* as an important tool for the construction of a text policy, in which "[…] the objects of writing function more as a condition of possibility than as a Reason for writing" (Costa; Costa, 2019, p. 175). It is about enjoying a space to experience the word in its radicality and strength, exploring the text with the language as an opportunity for effective formation, transformation and production of knowledge.

The radicality of the word concerns its phonetics, its semantics and its syntax, that is, its sound regime, its meaning regime and its graphic structure. Glória Kirinus, a professor of didactics at UFPR and a writer, draws our attention to the fact that the word itself, in its etymology, has a historical depth (Kirinus, 2011). Therefore, to explore the word is to activate this historical articulation of meaning production that the word carries. Leyla Perrone-Moisés (2012, p. XVI), in the preface to the collection of texts by Barthes, presents a consonant idea when she states that "[…] languages carry a history, they bear marks of previous uses […] so it is not enough to use language with the aim of communicating new meanings. It is necessary to work on its forms, to free it from its stereotypes, from its oldness".

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In other terms, a text policy is a combat strategy against a certain decay of language.

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Throughout the workshops, we could observe that the writing experience was frequently associated with the pressure of tailoring the text to a format that is unrelated to the researcher's desires regarding the transmission of their experience. Added up to the challenge of putting words in a singular research path, the research's participants were accompanied by the sensation of inadequacy and the discomfort with the scientific norms accompanied, and it is possible to say that those haunt and retract many graduate students.

The elaboration of a text policy serves to create tools to expand this format or, at least, not to be constrained by it, considering that "[…] the contours of what is canonically acceptable, when it comes to an academic text, are points of negotiation for the writing of the research" (Moschen; Do Ó, 2021, p. 746). It is about emphasizing negotiation, which seems to recover agency in relation to the form of written production for the research subject.

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Between authorship and reference

In 1969, Foucault (2001) gave a conference at the French Philosophy Society about the author-figure. The French philosopher proposed four important points regarding the issue of authorship: the first concerns its historical emergence, intrinsically linked to the legal and institutional system that articulates discourse, creating the possibility of inferring penalties to the subject who writes or says a certain formulation. The second refers to the fact that the author-figure presents different configurations throughout history. The third point – of greatest interest to our discussion – is that the author is not defined by the correspondence of a discourse to an individual. The fourth point indicates that a single author can give rise to several and simultaneous egos. Thus,

> […] what in the individual is designated as author (or what makes an individual an author) is only the projection, in terms that are always more or less psychologizing, of the treatment given to the texts, of the

approximations that are made, of the traits that are established as pertinent, of the continuities that are admitted or of the exclusions that are practiced (Foucault, 2001, p. 277).

It is clear that the French thinker builds an intimate relationship between authorship and the "treatment given to texts", placing the immediate correspondence we make between the author and the individual as a *projection*. Therefore, the issue of authorship does not arise from the subjects who write, but as we think about the text and its policies, styles and formats.

This theme stood out in the discussions of the writing workshop due to a feeling of strangeness regarding the use of bibliographical references. This feeling of strangeness is experienced based on a difficulty in discerning a researcher's formulation from a reading carried out during the research, putting the authorship of the text in question:

> This is a struggle when writing because… Of course, when we do research, we read a lot of things. So, this border of what is yours and what is from reading and having to reference it is hard. It's an anguish. Because, sometimes, when you cite the reference, you lose what is yours (M. 2022).

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Two aspects of the participant's speech draw attention: the first is the use of the word anguish, which on the one hand points to the suffering experienced by the researcher and, on the other, to writing the research as an intensive experience of the graduate education – and not just the product of a path already taken. The writing experience is something that takes hold of the researcher and places her in a place of suffering that loses sight of its cause and that runs through her intensely; anguish. The second aspect that catches our eye is the *loss of what is yours*, which also leads to an ambiguous analysis. This excerpt may refer simultaneously to an expropriation of the researcher's ability to create – as if everything in her written production were referenced to someone else – and also a reflection on the ownership of thought. In fact, from the moment an idea is formulated and published, it ceases to belong to the author. It is in this sense that "[…] the birth of the reader must be paid for with the death of the author […]" (Barthes, 2012, p. 64) and that there is an inevitable exposure that makes the exercise of authorship something even more challenging in writing.

Once again, the threshold of the scientific writing process is noted; in the ambiguities of the statements exposed above, but also in the blatant conflict between desire and the demand that permeates the research process. However, the internalized demand by the student body for clean and unequivocal academic writing, within the regimes of truth, progressively reduces the possibility of elaborating on these conflicts and constructing creative solutions in the relationship with the text.

The author's voice is, par excellence, the crucial point of the encounter between the form and content of the text (Amorim, 2002). It is in the exercise of authorship that we find the opportunity to negotiate with the parameters of scientific writing and give way to the things we feel, experience and think about throughout the research and for which we lack words – a typical challenge of an area of knowledge that investigates an object as variable as the human being and his/her productions. A dose of caution is recommended so as not to situate this voice in an original place of writing, limited to the individual. The author's voice is not a starting point, but the fabric of a miscellany of voices. Therefore, the author "[…] is not the origin of writing, nor are they in a position of complete mastery over it […] they decant from the path of the text, as a resultant - and not a result - of the impasses of thought" (Moschen; Do Ó, 2021, p. 741). In this way, we can think that the education trajectory concerns this authorization to become an author; to appropriate the discourse of the other, making slight twists and imprinting small singular differences.

Expanding on the discussion about the anguish in articulating the theoretical basis of the research with one's own thinking, another workshop participant comments that:

> […] maybe this difficulty of referencing – and I also have this problem – is more linked to an ignorance of ours to understand the real function of the reference than to an actual difficulty. Because what you have appropriated, what is your knowledge, nobody will question if you state in your own words: "oh, but you didn't reference this" (M. 2022).

We then begin to think of the reference as a kind of protection for the researcher: "[…] where you faltered, that's where you should have placed a

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reference to hide behind someone" (M. 2022). The use of the word "falter" is interesting, as it refers to a stumble, an obstacle, a failure, a difficulty. Thus, the referenced citation can present itself both as an interruption of the writing flow and as a support point for the researcher's "falters". In this sense, it is not about "hiding behind someone", but about assuming the text in its collective dimension, as a composition of forces in which otherness is always at stake: in the theoretical interlocutors, in the field interlocutors and in the dialogue with oneself inaugurated by writing.

In any case, given the rigid parameters of writing and the high demands on productivity, we can think of a sort of alienation from the research work. The researcher finds him- or herself oblivious to the meaning of certain formal demands, which necessarily accompany the production of scientific text and loses the ability to make active and creative use of the form.

This observation opens up space for us to think about the process of bureaucratization of academic writing, based on the automatic reproduction of certain protocols that are devoid of meaning. In formal writing, there is no creation of familiarity with words, triggering a replacement of originality by the exercise of following previously established and institutionally consecrated writing schemes. The constraint and obstruction of the flow of writing caused by the rules of bibliographic references reflects more the bureaucratization and the resentful acceptance of citation norms, than the lack of relevance of these formal requirements.

Alienation from references and the possibilities of creating a text can even lead to plagiarism, given the complexity involved in scientific writing. Academic writing is fundamentally based on previous sources and requires the researcher to elaborate on these readings and integrate them into a minimally original formulation. An interesting analysis of these situations is that they do not occur for moral reasons, but rather due to a gap in higher education regarding the incorporation and use of scientific textual formats (Festas; Matos; Seixas, 2020).

> It is not uncommon to hear master's and doctoral students commenting and complaining about the dizzying paths of research

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> production in which there is no time to waste on other experiences
> that may destabilize what has already been agreed upon as more
> adequate and relevant to appear in reports and produce impacts on
> articles (Linhares, 2016, p. 10).

Therefore, the rigid writing pattern contaminates collective forms of writing, creating resistance in the researchers themselves who venture into a creative relationship with language. However, just as there is contentment on the part of the students, there is also something in the very nature of writing that insists, intimately implicating them in this process: "[…] it's not even that I like writing, I kind of need it. I don't know, it's something that helps me keep my head on straight. It's really hard to write and at the same time it's harder not to write" (M. 2022).

We must recover the meaning of writing norms, not as imposition, but as an aspect of accountability on knowledge production, without discarding implication and invention in the text. Anyhow, it is about recovering the researcher's agency capacity regarding the institutional demands without crushing and mortifying the research's desires and concerns.

Barthes (2007) proposes a distinction between two figures who write: the writer and the scribbler. The writer is the one for whom writing is an intransitive verb. In other words, there is no need for any complement. For the writer, writing is a way of existing, and the word is an infinitely worked material. Thus, the writer is open and committed to the drifting movements to which writing leads them. The scribbler, on the other hand, is the one for whom language is an instrument, with writing being a transitive gesture. There is also a third, bastard type, the scribbler-writer, which is precisely where Barthes will place those who research.

It is precisely on this point that academic writing assumes itself as a threshold and "[…] can be, at the same time, mastery (determination of the object, injunction of the search) and desire and slippage (going where the movement takes you)" (Henriques, 2021, p. 253). It is the simultaneity between mastery and desire – between knowledge and taste, in Barthesian terms – that creates the conditions of possibility for academic writing as a space for the formation and exercise of authorship.

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Final considerations

If "the word is an arena, meaning is not a comfortable place" (Amorim, 2002, p. 8), and this conclusion presents itself as an opening to think about the text and its circularity. From now on, paths are opened for the maturation of questions related to the vicissitudes of academic writing as a threshold experience.

Thus, the importance of recovering the procedural dimension of writing and the centrality of working with words in the area of human sciences is highlighted. This implies moving writing away from a transcendental place in which there is the impression of a natural relationship of expression between thought and words. The research points to the inexpressible existing in all written activity (Barthes, 2007; Larrosa, 2016; Moschen, Do Ó, 2021) – a point of confluence between academic writing and writing in general. However, academic writing differs from other modalities due to the specificity of its web of institutional negotiations. Given the above, two important points in the writing experience for graduate school are highlighted: the writer's block and the issue of authorship. The first was thought to be the result of a loss of intimacy with words, often associated with entering the university environment, while the second arises from a kind of bureaucratization of scientific writing that alienates the researcher from the meaning of its regulations.

To state that academic writing is a threshold experience means that it is in the *in-between* that it is made: between form and formation, reference and authorship, blockage and necessity, reader and writer, between institutional request and the desire to think and write – it means to locate it between the freedom and responsibility of thought. This affirmation also implies the importance of establishing a dose of inventiveness within the practice of writing, without it falling into an empty space, into a rotten language made of jargon, quotations and catchphrases. Ultimately, it is about thinking of inventiveness as a type of rigor – which is concerned with treating the object of study in its singularity.

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Notes

1. All citations have been freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese. The original citations can be found in the works referenced at the end of the article.

2. The research was approved by the Committee on Ethics and Research with Human Beings of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa com Seres Humanos da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina - CEPSH/UFSC), according to the International Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Beings, with C.A.A.E. 70673123.7.0000.0121.

3. The use of the third person singular is used here as a fictional narrative strategy to get the reader closer to the experience that was lived in the field. To deepen this discussion, see: COSTA, Luis Artur. O corpo nas nuvens: o uso da ficção na psicologia social. In: Fractal: Revista de Psicologia v. 26, p. 551-576, 2014.

4. The citations in italic refer to the material produced in the scope of the research and are referenced according to this magazine's norms of interview citation. All of them were freely translated from the original interviews in Brazilian Portuguese.

5. In this excerpt, the author refers to a kind of reading text: "[…] when reading a book, have you never been frequently interrupted, not for disinterest but, instead, for a flux of ideas, excitements, associations? In a word, has it never occurred to you to read raising your head?" (Barthes, 2012, p. 26-27).

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