



For a *minor* literature

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ABSTRACT. This paper aims to present expanded functions of literary texts through the intercession of two important concepts: the ‘displacement’ proposed by Barthes in his ‘Inaugural Lecture’, and the concept of ‘minor literature’ developed by Deleuze and Guattari. The problem question that guides the research is: What are the functions of the literary text according to Barthes and Deleuze and Guattari? As methodological approach we have chosen to make entrances in the works of Franz Kafka, João Guimarães Rosa and Clarice Lispector making inferences that allow to approach these concepts in the literary narratives. As a result, we emphasize that the functions of the literary text, to Barthes, Deleuze, and Guattari, are displacements that escape the coercive forces of language - fascism - and allow the doubt about their senses, the contradiction and dynamicity of the text, characteristics that place it as minor literature.

Keywords: minor literature; displacement; literature.

Por uma literatura *menor*

RESUMO. Este artigo objetiva apresentar funções ampliadas dos textos literários por meio da intercessão de dois importantes conceitos: o de ‘deslocamento’, problematizado por Barthes na obra *Aula*; e o conceito de ‘literatura menor’, desenvolvido por Deleuze e Guattari. A questão problema que norteia a pesquisa é: Quais as funções do texto literário segundo Barthes e Deleuze e Guattari? Como procedimento metodológico, optou-se por fazer incursões pelas obras de Franz Kafka, João Guimarães Rosa e Clarice Lispector, realizando inferências que possibilitassem abordar esses conceitos nas narrativas literárias. Como resultado, sinaliza-se que as funções do texto literário, para Barthes, Deleuze e Guattari, são de deslocamentos que fogem das forças coercitivas da língua – o fascismo – e possibilitam a dúvida sobre seus sentidos, a contradição e a dinamicidade do texto, características que o situam como literatura ‘menor’.

Palavras-chave: literatura menor; deslocamentos; literatura.

Por una literatura *menor*

RESUMEN. Este artículo tiene el objetivo de presentar funciones ampliadas de los textos literarios por medio de la intercesión de dos importantes conceptos: el de ‘desplazamiento’, problematizado por Barthes en la obra *Aula*; y el concepto de ‘literatura menor’, desarrollado por Deleuze y Guattari. La cuestión problema que guía la investigación es: ¿Cuáles las funciones del texto literario según Barthes y Deleuze y Guattari? Como procedimiento metodológico, se optó por hacer incursiones por las obras de Franz Kafka, João Guimarães Rosa y Clarice Lispector, realizando inferencias que posibilitaran tratar estos conceptos en las narrativas literarias. Como resultado, se señala que las funciones del texto literario, para Barthes, Deleuze y Guattari, son de desplazamientos que huyen de las fuerzas coercitivas de la lengua – el fascismo – y posibilitan la duda sobre sus sentidos, la contradicción y la dinamicidad del texto, características que lo constituye como literatura *menor*.

Palabras-clave: literatura menor; desplazamientos; literatura.

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Introduction

I wanted to hear from him? Only if I wanted or not want it. Not even to be silently defined, in itself, a contrary absurd matter does not grant follow up. I returned to the coldness of reason (Rosa, 1986, p. 57, our translation)¹.

Among Brazilian writers, Guimarães Rosa is one of the most remembered when it comes to the subjection of language to fascism (that is, to the coercive force of language) imposed on writers and speakers. The author exercises this non-subjection to exhaustion, delivering himself to the challenge of causing constant displacements. *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* (original title: *Grande sertão: veredas*) is a paradigmatic case for its verbal gigantism. At the same time that the solitude of the backwoods (more properly the Brazilian *sertão*) imposes silences on the roughneck (called, in Brazil, *jagunço*), it is through these emptinesses that the language is fought and a distorted text, pierced by doubt and contradiction is constructed. With Riobaldo, the protagonist of this work, we learn that it is through the denial of the word that he manages to know himself, and, therefore, the *jagunço* never gets tired of repeating that the '*sertão é dentro da gente*' (the backwoods are inside us'). It is also in the suspicion of language, in the loss of confidence that words suggest to us, in the mistrust of their senses that we learn that 'everything is and is not'. And the master teaches us: mastering it is not an easy thing, and so, perhaps, he suggests that it is a task for angels and demons.

The previous epigraph brings to the fore the theme we propose to discuss: the escape from authoritarianism of the language, a question almost simultaneously problematized by Barthes (2007) and Deleuze and Guattari (1992), which directs us to the functions of literature. How to escape the fascism of the language? How to deal with a language that does not prevent something from being said, but that forces you to say it? It is the language that determines the semiotic coordinates that are contained in so many linguistic rules, which establish inflexible relations always carried in the utterance - elemental unity of language - coordinates such as the consecrated dualities of gender, number, word order (subject and verb), among others. In this sense, a statement is always a slogan or, as Kafka recalls, a 'death sentence'. When making a choice of any specific enunciation, the death of all other possibilities of signification is decreed.

Roland Barthes, in his *Lecture* (a work that is the result of the Lecture in Inauguration of the Chair of Literary Semiology, *Collège de France*, 1977) reaffirms language as fascist: "Language is legislation, speech is its code" (Barthes & Howard, 1979, p. 5). Also the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1992) approach the language as order-word. Making use of infinite linguistic possibilities, philosophers play with phonemes and with the etymology of words when they exemplify that the teacher who teaches the child in school is actually *en-signando*², that is, using signs to the same extent in which he/she makes use of grammatical and syntactic rules that express commands or orders: "[...] a rule of grammar is a power marker before it is a syntactic marker"³ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 14, our translation) and, poetically, they emphasize: "[...] language is not life, it gives life orders; life does not speak, it listens and waits"⁴ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 15, our translation). When creating the utterance, the subject of enunciation is constrained by harsh linguistic rules which, for example, compel him/her to put the subject first, followed by the description of the action. This denotes that, by linguistic characteristics, there is always a subject directly linked to the consequences of the verb. In the same way, all the time there is a choice between masculine and feminine, decreeing at each choice an agency, a marker of power, an order-word, or, as previously said, a sentence of death. When electing the masculine, the feminine is left aside and so on.

Barthes (2007) gives a typical example of the French language when the subject of enunciation marks the relationship with the other when choosing between '*tu*' and '*vous*'. When making this choice, Barthes says, the emotional or social 'suspense' is definitely rejected. This happens all the time in language; when the child calls the grandmother 'grandma', an affective, social, family, and power relationship is established. When a stranger on the street addresses the same lady by calling her 'grandma', another relationship is established, based more on age crystallizations related to the affective-political roles and the constraints associated with this condition.

¹ "Dele eu queria saber? Só se queria e não queria. Nem para se definir calado, em si, um assunto contrário absurdo não concede seguimento. Voltei para os frios da razão." (Rosa, 1986, p. 57).

² The authors make a pun with the words *ensino* (teach) and *signo* (sign) – in the continuous form.

³ "[...] uma regra de gramática é um marcador de poder, antes de ser um marcador sintático." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 14).

⁴ "[...] a linguagem não é vida, ela dá ordens à vida; a vida não fala, ela escuta e aguarda" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 15).

Deleuze and Guattari (1992) explain how this function-language-order-word occurs. It is in the redundancy between the utterance, the acts of speech and the order-word that the fascist character of language is established. It is the statement - not the enunciation - that subjects the individuals, that makes individuals subjective. This is so because there is an intrinsic relation between what is said and the action determined by speech in the same extent in which they are said. For example, the statement 'good morning' said by the teacher when entering the classroom causes immediate, performative changes in the subjects involved with the order-word. Statement is what is said, what is written, is the elemental unity of the language; the order-word is an immanent function of language. These are not imperative statements, but rather the relation of what is said with "[...] implicit presuppositions, that is, with acts of speech that are carried out in the utterance"⁵ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 18, our translation) which is one of the social markers of power. Nothing is said outside of what is socially or politically determined. This refers to another postulate or concept of language as a collective agency, since, in this theorization, there is no subject of enunciation, but rather subjectification - statements that subject individuals or individuals are subjected by language. Deleuze and Guattari (1992, p. 25, our translation) call "[...] semiotic machinations [...]" constructed by collective assemblages. Literature can and should be constituted by the lines of escape of this semiotic machination, but, for this, the writer must subvert the language, dribble it, misrepresent the text so that the reader can also penetrate through its cracks, pores, fleeing from the fatal trap that language forces us by its implicit and immanent function.

To Barthes, it is possible to escape using the language itself: "[...] to cheat with speech, to cheat speech" (Barthes & Howard, 1979, p. 6). It is this evasion that Barthes and Howard (1979, p. 6) call simply 'literature': "[...] to understand speech outside the bounds of power, in the splendor of a permanent revolution of language [...]". Barthes finds in literature libertarian forces - it is the salt of words - which, from form, displace speech and have the power to deconstruct the markers of power, and therefore has a utopian function, of unrest. We could cite several examples of libertarian forces in literature, but for now we will only cite the research of Martins, Neitzel, and Freitas (2016), which points out several paths discovered by writers pointing to the evasion of fascism of language. This evasion is constituted by the process of reversibility and interactivity that the author proposes, which give dynamicity to the text and allow the reader, in a broad game movement, to maintain a co-authoring posture and are examples that we can mention as displacements.

We have learned from Manoel de Barros (2010, p. 7) to draw from the language "[...] deep nonsense [...]", rip out novelties, games and discoveries, spring words, always green from it, that sprout again and again still unthought senses, unlearning the logic in which we were taught to read: "The boy fell into the river, splash, he got all fish wet"⁶ (Barros, 2010, p. 95, our translation). Manoel de Barros's literature warns of its non-utilitarian function and promotes a windstorm in words when he reveals a "[...] conversation in the dark" (Barros, 2010, p. 93), breaking with the authority of language, with its fascism, reallocating the senses and announcing new ways of composing: "[...] my pocket had a sun with little birds"⁷ (Barros, 2010, p. 95, our translation).

It is in the prologue of his book of essays, called *Essays critical and clinical*, that Gilles Deleuze (2006) recovers in the characteristics of a writer the problem of writing. In the epigraph, we have found Proust's precious statement: "[...] beautiful books are written in a kind of foreign language"⁸ (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9, our translation). Thus, to Deleuze, this is the issue, this is the problem, this is the task of literature: to invent a language that, in some way, is foreign. This is what the writer does in search of new linguistic potency within his/her own language: "Language seems to be seized by a delirium, which forces it out of its usual furrows" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 5). It is in this sense that we can affirm that literature will always be a frustrated attempt to represent the real or to supply unattainable desires, thus being not a concrete possibility, but always real without being current, as Deleuze and Guattari (2006) affirm in the Proustian inspiration.

Literature gives freedom back to language, provoking displacements, cheating with speech, delirium - process or situation that Barthes called '*utopias of language*'. When honoring the writer Mallarmé in his *Lecture*, Barthes prophesies: a possibility of scripture: 'to change the world'. To write in a different way from

⁵ "[...] pressupostos implícitos, ou seja, com atos de fala que se realizam no enunciado" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 18).

⁶ "O menino caiu dentro do rio, tibatim, ficou todo molhado de peixe" (Barros, 2010, p. 95).

⁷ "[...] meu bolso teve um sol com passarinhos" (Barros, 2010, p. 95).

⁸ "[...] os belos livros estão escritos numa espécie de língua estrangeira" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9).

everyone else. To create new languages, “[...] as many languages as there are desires” (Barthes & Howard, 1979, p. 9).

Literature as a practice of resistance through displacements. Resistance to what? Displacements as a resistance tool to “[...] move to where one is not expected, [...] to play with the [linguistic signs] instead of destroying them”⁹ (Barthes, 2007, p. 27, our translation). Metaphorically, Roland Barthes proposes a game with signs thinking also of a machinery of language in which security brakes were torn apart, to “[...] institute in the very heart of servile language a true heteronomy of things”¹⁰ (Barthes, 2007, p. 28, our translation). And so what the writer is able to do is to bring these possibilities into life, as Clarice Lispector (1998, p. 18, our translation) writes: “Why do I write? First of all because I have grasped the spirit of the language and so sometimes the form is the one that makes the content”¹¹. A form that promotes the reader’s movement in the reading of the literary, but not of any text, of a provocative text that affects, shakes the reader due to its form, as Neitzel and Carvalho (2014) point out. Researchers argue that a good text gives conditions for the reader to build him/herself up to be more demanding and prepared, since it is an aesthetic nutrition and, in this sense, contributes to the aesthetic education. A good text would be the one that enables this education by the displacements that it proposes.

These displacements are possible, to Barthes (2007, p. 30, our translation), when the phonemes, the words and the syntaxes of the “[...] network of rules, constraints, oppressions, grammatical repressions”¹² are freed. In other words, to subvert the syntactic order, to use unusual grammatical constructions, to create neologisms, to rescue archaisms and to give voice to many becomings, as Guimarães Rosa, Manoel de Barros, Kafka, Clarice Lispector do when they defy the gravity of the language by proposing a juggle-writing: “Actually, I am more of an actor because with just one way of punctuating, I juggle intonation, I force the breath of others to accompany me [along] the text”¹³ (Lispector, 1998, p. 23, our translation).

Regarding juggling, Deleuze and Guattari (1992, p. 92, our translation) named certain writers as “[...] butchered acrobats in perpetual juggling [...]”¹⁴, those authors who slide between literature and philosophy, providing, with their writings, a change, a movement in the world. Writing as an event. One reads a text, it seems that nothing has changed, but after reading the world is another. The reader is another. The man constantly becoming. The potency of literature in moving the world.

Returning to the question initially posed, if language contains this condition of order-word or death sentence, how can we escape this tautological trap? Deleuze and Guattari note that language as life is always in continuous variation and that the quantum of this variation correspond to the variation of potency to infinity. In fact, this variation of potency to exist as a continuous variation of affection contributes to the displacements and to the characterization of a minor literature, an issue that we seek to unveil in the selected literary texts. However, for now, let us stay in language and, from language, we will arrive at the literature - from there to the affections and from these to the potency of life. Then, if, on the one hand, the language is subordinated to hard and inflexible variants; on the other hand, language is always in continuous variation. If the rule is defined by its center function, there is always a possible variation to that center, to that rule. From music, Deleuze and Guattari bring two poetic-sonorous concepts: escape and minor. It is about “[...] creating possibilities (potency) of escape, looking for passwords of passage. Making the tongue vibrate and to stand against itself, in favor of life, of the light, of the creation of the new”¹⁵ (Nova Cruz & Mostafa, 2012, p. 126, our translation).

This is the path we propose in this paper: entries into literary texts in order to observe their displacements and their potency in constituting themselves as a minor literature, making use of the concepts of Barthes (2007) and Deleuze and Guattari (1992), since the three thinkers make the recognition of structural characteristics that allow us to discuss these aspects in the literary text. We are going to explore the philosophical concepts of French authors to emphasize the potency of the literary narrative and thus broaden the discussion about the functions of literature.

⁹ “[...] transportar-se para onde não se é esperado, [...] jogar com os [signos linguísticos] em vez de destruí-los” (Barthes, 2007, p. 27).

¹⁰ “[...] instituir no próprio seio da linguagem servil uma verdadeira heteronímia das coisas” (Barthes, 2007, p. 28).

¹¹ “Por que escrevo? Antes de tudo porque captei o espírito da língua e assim às vezes a forma é que faz conteúdo” (Lispector, 1998, p. 18).

¹² “[...] rede de regras, de constrangimentos, de opressões, de repressões [...]” (Barthes, 2007, p. 30).

¹³ “Na verdade sou mais um ator porque com apenas um modo de pontuar, faço malabarismos de entonação, obrigo o respirar alheio a me acompanhar o texto” (Lispector, 1998, p. 23).

¹⁴ “[...] acrobatas esartejados num malabarismo perpétuo [...]” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1992, p. 92).

¹⁵ “[...] criar possibilidades (potências) de fuga, buscar senhas de passagem. Fazer a língua vibrar e colocar-se contra si mesma, em favor da vida, da luz, da criação do novo” (Nova Cruz & Mostafa, 2012, p. 126).

To start talking about minor literature

Any song of pain
 It is not enough for a sufferer
 It does not even seem a torn heart.
 But it's still better
 Suffering in C minor
 Than you suffer silently¹⁶ (Buarque, 1980, our translation).

Chico Buarque's song, *Qualquer canção* (Any song), says that it is better suffering in C minor than to undergo silence. In the tonal musical system, there is a rule of using musical notes. This structure determines that all the notes used rotate or relate around a main note. There are two systems of musical scales: major and minor. The major tone is the referential, since the minor is always comparable to the major one. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2007a, p. 38, our translation), in *A thousand Plateaus*, whose first edition dates back to 1980, the minor tone gives music a "[...] fugitive, evasive, accentuated character"¹⁷. The minor in music frees itself from the major, enters into variation, it makes the music vibrate, becoming another.

This taste for determining rules is common not only to music, but to other languages such as literature. To seek a minor tone for the utopian task of literature is to provoke a displacement proposed by Barthes, to stutter in the own language. It is, as Deleuze and Guattari (2007a) propose, to replace the is, is, is by and, and, and; to be foreign in one's own language, to create in language a minor way in which the writer uses "[...] dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibrium"¹⁸ (Deleuze, 2006, p. 124, our translation). The minor is the voice of what is hidden within each one. The disutility of Manoel de Barros's poem makes one speak the least, written in the archaic "Manoelian idiolect" which, according to him, is "[...] the dialect that idiots use to speak with walls and with flies"¹⁹ (Barros, 2010, p. 228, our translation). A poetic exercise to make speak the one that has no voice and "[...] to be the voice of a darkened lizard"²⁰ (Barros, 2010, p. 339, our translation), to provoke the absurdity of verbal delusions that draw "[...] similarities of people with trees / people with frogs / people with stones"²¹ (Barros, 2010, p. 340, our translation). We have brought here two examples, one of music and another of literature, which bring to the fore the concept of 'minor' that we want to discuss, which expands the function of literature.

Foreigner in his/her own language, Manoel de Barros - the poet from *Pantanal*²² who prefers to speak of small things - he says to make use of a vegetable and mineral wisdom that allows him to be tree, river, stone; a wisdom that does not qualify him for clarity, but for the potent, joyful, vital, organic, sensitive theorizing of the ever unfinished, always in becoming. It is at the very least that he sees exuberance - in fact, Manoel de Barros surprises us by escaping rationalistic logic and affirming that "[...] the ass of an ant is also much more important than a Nuclear Power Plant"²³ (Barros, 2010, p. 341, our translation). This is a new function-language, a new condition of existence of language, a minor function - the one that gives power, empowers "[...] the adrift / the in vain / the useless"²⁴ (Barros, 2010, p. 340, our translation).

In Manoel de Barros's poetry, there is always a possible escape from the dominant language. If there is a major system in music, there is a dominant system in language. If the minor in music is always relative to the major, in languages as well: there is dominant English and several linguistic variations of English everywhere; there is a dominant Portuguese, formal, standard, susceptible to orthographic agreements, and there are several Portuguese languages that bifurcate and do not stop it. What Deleuze and Guattari (2007a) claim are not different types of language, but rather two distinct treatments for language within the same language. In any language, where syntactic, semantic and grammatical rules are known, there will always be two possible systems or treatments for these variables: a major treatment, which establishes limiting and universal rules, or a system that envisions language in infinite continuous variation (minor treatment or system). New language functions

¹⁶ "Qualquer canção de dor/ Não basta a um sofredor/ Nem cerze um coração rasgado/ Porém ainda é melhor/ Sofrer em dó menor/ Do que você sofrer calado" (Buarque, 1980).

¹⁷ "[...] carácter fugidio, evasivo, acentrado" (Deleuze & Guattari 2007a, p. 38).

¹⁸ "[...] combinações dinâmicas em perpétuo desequilíbrio" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 124).

¹⁹ "[...] o dialeto que os idiotas usam para falar com as paredes e com as moscas" (Barros, 2010, p. 228).

²⁰ "[...] ser a voz de um lagarto escurecido" (Barros, 2010, p. 339).

²¹ "[...] semelhanças de pessoas com árvores / de pessoas com rãs / de pessoas com pedras" (Barros, 2010, p. 340).

²² Pantanal, located mostly within the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, is a natural region that encompasses the world's largest tropical wetland area.

²³ "[...] o cu de uma formiga é também muito mais importante do que uma Usina Nuclear" (Barros, 2010, p. 341).

²⁴ "[...] o à toa / o em vão / o inútil" (Barros, 2010, p. 340).

theorized by Deleuze and Guattari (2007a). It is in this tension between the minor and the major that language constructs displacements to make the unspeakable speak.

Fugue in music means a composition that varies in several ways by revolving around a main theme. These variations are always repeated in different ways by instruments or minor voices that return to the main theme, composing a fertile texture. One of the great examples of main themes and their fugues are Bach's preludes and tocatas. It is important to point out that, to Deleuze and Guattari, it is not about majority, it is not a numerical issue. Major presupposes a hegemony, a determinant, a comparative pattern from which the variation occurs. What is very relevant to our theorizing is that, within this image of thinking, it is the minor that matters, it is this becoming-less that brings the creative and creator potency that causes the displacements of the language and creates a space out of power, place to dream out loud, to allow to say without worrying about communication, without subjecting the saying to the hegemonic rules of language, coining the language of the absurd, untouched literature because it belongs to minorities, literature of resistance (Barthes, 2007). It is by working with language, by the search for the ideal word, by the game that puts the words and their significations under a veil, that the minor literature gains power and empowers the reader.

Franz Kafka's minor literature

It was from reading Franz Kafka that Deleuze and Guattari brought to literature the concept of minor literature, or minority, when they identified in the writing of the Czech Jew, who wrote in German, characteristics and use of, rather, a minor function of language. To shift, to vary the German language, greater, dominant, rigid to give voice to a bastard population. To give voice to the affections of people. Kafka's literature demonstrates the need to bring forth a minor affection that underlies a larger, dominant language: "[...] a population [the whole population] needs to give voice to what goes on inside, below, in between, in the entrails"²⁵ (Nova Cruz & Mostafa, 2012, p. 127, our translation).

Deleuze and Guattari (2003) immersed themselves in Franz Kafka's literature and from there they came with the recognition of the use of a minor function, immanent to the language itself. His novels reveal the nightmares of characters subjected to servitude, their innermost feelings and domination to inviolable bureaucratic conventions and determinations. Kafka (2012) led a lonely and often tormented life. He placed this minor becoming into words, shifting the 'tragic' and 'guilty' to 'joy' - understood here as potency - and to 'politics' - while revealing the collective assemblage of a whole population that the author 'put to talk' - a true abstract-desiring machine. The collective assemblages of enunciation as voices of machinations of the desire of one, of others, of all. The voice of the minority revealed by Kafka's (2012) literature shouts for its autonomy. It provokes a political revolution without having anything of ideological or of subversive language. Combat that sets against the power of language, silently, affirming the irreducible by literature, without being a servant of the art of writing, but cultivating the quality of one who has the persistence of the spy. "To persist means, in short, to maintain, over and against everything, the force of drift and of expectation. And it is precisely because it persists that writing is led to shift ground" (Barthes & Howard, 1979, p. 9).

Deleuze and Guattari read Kafka and point out in their readings the components of the minority becoming of the language. One can enter into Kafka's work by 'multiple entrances', many doors, several gateways. It is a rhizomatic work, produced in an incessant circulation of texts, whose hypertextuality is constituted by the force of its *palimpsestos*, which allow the crossing of several stories. Writing that demonstrates the need to organize, on the same plane, the multiplicity of the possible, composing what Deleuze and Guattari call a strong coefficient of deterritorialization. When writing in German, Kafka finds himself faced with several impossibilities of writing: it is impossible not to write, it is impossible not to write in German (which in Prague is already revealed as a deterritorialized language). Still, and above all, it is impossible not to express something counter-German. How to overcome so many impossibilities? To deterritorialize and re-territorialize using a password of passage. To put the tongue in variation. To create something new, a new territory. To persist and to shift to escape the servitude, proposing a linguistic anarchy established through the game and the theater, throwing language in the territory of the impossible, without exhausting it, but fully exploiting its power (Barthes, 2007).

²⁵ "[...] um povo [o povo todo] precisa dar voz ao que se passa por dentro, por baixo, por entre, nas entranhas" (Nova Cruz & Mostafa, 2012, p. 127).

The second characteristic of the minor literature is its political character. Everything is political in Kafka. Every existential question of the Kafkaesque individuals becomes political. The conflicts of the father and the son, of the individual with the bureaucracy, become, in Kafka's literature, conflicts of all, of all-the-world, with revolutionary potential, without being ideological or subversive (Kafka, 2012). It is a use, a function of language, a political sentence, of life. Subverting the language, writing in a way that allows a re-reading, a rethinking, selecting syntactic structures that mislead the traditional form of saying demonstrate a choice, and they are never naive.

The collective value of minor literature is its third characteristic. Political and collective value. Kafka's novels are true machines of collective assemblage, machinic abstractions of the desire of all. Collective and revolutionary enunciation. Kafka claimed that literature was a matter for the people. There are no subjects, it is not the person or the individual that is at stake. The minor literature expresses the collective assemblages and desires. It is something like looking for its own mitigation point, its own place outside the hegemonic, its own territory, its own minor hiding place. Even if it is a personal aspiration, a desire of the writer to rebel against the language to make speak what has no time and voice, there is a collective artifice that supports this proposition, an ideal that overcomes the individual, the desire of a literature that is reversible, open, encyclopedic, hypertextual, plural.

How did Kafka attain this minor becoming? This made the German vibrate, stutter, vary in intensity. Instead of making use of the language in a conventional, grammatical, meaningful way, while maintaining the symbolic value of words within the rules, use the language with intensive value. The minor literature, when coming from minorities (often immigrants living in a major language), has to become nomadic, vary, deterritorialize. And re-territorialize, build new territories. Deleuze and Guattari (2007b) point out that children do this very well, repeating words whose meaning is only intuited: "This greatness mania: I will build up the poor things of the ground pissed on with dew"²⁶ (Barros, 2010, p. 343, our translation). Or the animals, 'when they speak'. Better when the literature becomes a bug. "A fly hanging on the edge of a drain - I think it's more important than a pendant jewel"²⁷ (Barros, 2010, p. 341, our translation). This is the liveliness in the minor literature. Becoming-animal- is not to transform into an animal, it is to extract from language tonalities without signification that have something to say: "[...] the words [...] in their own way climb about, bark and roam around, being properly linguistic dogs, insects, or mice" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 22). This is Kafka, with his insect in *Metamorphosis* (Kafka, 2012).

João Guimarães Rosa's minor literature

It is impossible not to accommodate Guimarães Rosa's tales and novels to the concepts hitherto exposed without identifying the minor character of his literature. Considering the aspect of verbal and philosophical gigantism, as well as the linguistic subversions that operate in his work, one can even risk a title for a supposed book dedicated by the French to the illustrious Brazilian: *Rosa, the 'most minor' of all minors*. The minor concept is philosophical and aesthetic. Guimarães Rosa's characters speak Portuguese, but they speak a minor, much minor language. Everything in Guimarães Rosa is intensive. A few times a resource of language is used only in a representative way, it usually appears in a metaphorical way: "Love? Bird that lays eggs of iron"²⁸ (Rosa, 1986, p. 56, our translation). The neologisms, the new syntaxes, the meanings of words are intensive, at the extremes, at the limit, breaking the normality, shifting certainties: "Everything is and is not", "Look and see"²⁹ (Rosa, 1986, p. 10-11, our translation).

The concepts created by the French philosophers, from Kafka, can be thought of for Guimarães Rosa's literature, without fear of misappropriation.

Recrudescence of regionalisms, with reterritorialization of dialects; [...] bilingualism and even multilingualism; [...] creative procedure that directly connects the word to image; [...] widespread intensification; [...] creative escape routes; [...] to be a foreigner within his own language; [...] to make use of polylingualism in his own language [...]³⁰ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 51, 50, 54, 55, our translation)

²⁶ "Com esta mania de grandeza: hei de monumentalizar as pobres coisas do chão mijadas de orvalho"²⁶ (Barros, 2010, p. 343).

²⁷ "Mosca dependurada na beira de um ralo – Acho mais importante do que uma joia pendente" (Barros, 2010, p. 341).

²⁸ "O amor? Pássaro que põe ovos de ferro" (Rosa, 1986, p. 56).

²⁹ "Tudo é e não é", "Mire e veja" (Rosa, 1986, p. 10-11).

³⁰ "Recrudescência dos regionalismos, com reterritorialização de dialetos; [...] bilingüismo e até multilingüismo; [...] procedimento criativo que conecta diretamente a palavra à imagem; [...] intensificação generalizada; [...] linhas de fuga criativas; [...] estar na sua própria língua como um estrangeiro; [...] servir-se do polilingüismo na sua própria língua [...]" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 51, 50, 54, 55).

All these statements - and numerous others throughout the book *Kafka: for a minor literature* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003) - are appropriate to define Guimarães Rosa's work. The following sentence, also by Deleuze and Guattari (2003), could be the epigraph of one of Guimarães's books:

To make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play³¹ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 55, our translation).

It would be impossible to read Guimarães Rosa's short stories and novels after reading Deleuze and Guattari without realizing that there is something new - not previously thought - revolutionary, creative and creator. When describing the task of a writer who subverts the language into a new language, Gilles Deleuze (2006) emphasizes that the limit of language must be extrapolated by seeking it out of language. This finding has to do with the relationship of writing with the act of seeing and hearing. To Deleuze, the writer is a listener and a visionary who seeks relentlessly to overcome the syntactic and grammatical limits to reveal, through these subversions, what is hidden or tied up by the determined linguistic constants. "One must say of every writer: he is a seer, a hearer, a colorist, a musician"³² (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9, our translation). Guimarães Rosa is one of our listeners, a visionary writer from Brazil. His texts are true "[...] events on the frontier of language"³³ (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9, our translation).

We have chosen, among many, *A hora e a vez de Augusto Matraga* (Rosa, 2009) - *The Hour and Turn of Augusto Matraga* - and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (Rosa, 1986) - *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* - to discuss the characteristics of minor literature: deterritorialization, its political character and its collective value. Let us begin by thinking about the space in which the two stories take place: the backlands (*sertão*). Riobaldo never gets tired of stating that "*Sertão* is the size of the world"; "*Sertão* is inside us"; "*Sertão* is without place"; "*Sertão* has no windows, no doors"³⁴. These sayings lead us to think of deterritorialization and the reterritorialization of a *sertão* that is big and small world, "[...] but since everything is very small, and *sertão* is even smaller [...]"³⁵ (Rosa, 2009, p. 26, our translation).

The blurred image of the *sertão* in both works, as well as the misty image of the *jagunço* who sometimes appears as a malefactor, sometimes as a benefactor, a being who kills, plunders, threatens the order, but also blesses himself and prays, thus oscillating between God and devil, he sustains the contradiction. From an infamous brave and bloodthirsty man who has no pity for anything and no one, *Nhô*³⁶ Esteves becomes a child again when his body whipped by his enemies (or by divine punishment) is welcomed by the black couple hiding in the wilderness of the *sertão*. Augusto Esteves becomes Augusto Matraga, and, after years of godly redemption, working and praying untiringly to have his sinful past forgiven by God, he slowly returns to transgress in a process of thought and body. This leads him to take actions that "[...] not even God imposes and not even the Devil performs!"³⁷ (Rosa, 2009, p. 49, our translation), and, when saving the innocent family from the bloodthirsty revenge of Joãozinho Bem-Bem, Augusto Matraga finally realizes that he has won his place in heaven, even if it was by force.

This organizing principle of the work, which values ambivalence, due to the double process of writing, creates a new territory, a movement of desestratification, an opening achieved by the effect of duplicity that involves the work in a textual dynamism, movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Besides, Augusto Matraga and Riobaldo are nobody. "Matraga is not Matraga, he is nothing"³⁸ (Rosa, 2009, p. 7, our translation). Exactly for being nobody, for being one and many is that the characters *Nhô* Augusto and Riobaldo bring in themselves the minority becoming. As Ulysses - the character of Homer's epic - on his return to Ithaca, he passes through different territories and temporalities, embodying in his own body the heteronymous character of all. They are minor giving voice to the assemblies of a whole population that wages an inglorious struggle with themselves, with others and with existence, inexorably lost between heaven and hell. Both represent the clash between good and evil that happens under the forces of nature of the Brazilian *sertão*.

³¹ "Fazer desta um uso menor ou intensivo, opor a característica oprimida desta língua a sua característica opressora, encontrar pontos de não-cultura e de subdesenvolvimento, zonas lingüísticas de terceiro mundo por onde uma língua escapa, por onde um animal se enxerta, ou um agenciamento se conecta" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 55).

³² "De cada escritor é preciso dizer: é um vidente, um ouvidor, é um colorista, um músico" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9).

³³ "[...] acontecimentos na fronteira da linguagem" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9).

³⁴ "O sertão é do tamanho do mundo"; "Sertão é dentro da gente"; "O sertão é sem lugar"; "O sertão não tem janelas, nem portas".

³⁵ "[...] mas, como tudo é mesmo muito pequeno, e o sertão ainda é menor [...]" (Rosa, 2009, p. 26).

³⁶ *Nhô* is a short word for "Senhor" (Sir), originated from the Colonial period. The slaves used it to refer to their "masters".

³⁷ "[...] nem Deus não manda e nem o Diabo não faz!" (Rosa, 2009, p. 49)

³⁸ "Matraga não é Matraga, não é nada" (Rosa, 2009, p. 7).

The Portuguese written by Guimarães Rosa makes the Portuguese language vibrate intensely, subverting the traditional syntactic order, sprinkling the story with creative neologisms and fertile and tasty expressions: a house of prostitution as a place “[...] where serious people enter but do not pass” (Rosa, 2009, p. 10, our translation); being “[...] with huge debts, politics on the losing side; [...] a virgin will [...]” when Matraga wants to do good or a “[...] sick desire to do badly made things”³⁹ (Rosa, 2009, p. 27, our translation); ‘*Sujigola*’ for *gola suja* (dirty collar); ‘*bicipalidade maciça*’ (massive bicipality) to describe physical force (Rosa, 2009, p. 35, our translation), among many others. Rosa writes in another language, reversing the subject-predicate order, just as he inverts or subverts the spelling of the words. It is in this linguistic transgression, in this deconstruction of established rules, that the author releases voices, bodies and affections, creating the new people that are missing. Whether in the short text of fifty pages or in the five hundred *Grande Sertão*, Guimarães Rosa crosses the *sertão*-world, accompanying Riobaldo and Augusto Matraga’s crossing.

When manifesting himself as a writer committed to invention, Guimarães Rosa reveals, through his literary work, a complex comprehension of the real, understood as “[...] a mediated relation of men and things, the nervous structure of the ‘beings’”⁴⁰ (Portella, 1991, p. 199, our translation). Brazilian agrarian life is drawn in a mystical and mythical dimension. A portentous Brazil of sayings - superstitions, beliefs, dialects -, of natural wealth - fauna and flora - is insinuated. Rosa’s effort in the artistic elaboration of his work expands the reader’s perception, works his/her sensitivity, opens his/her reception channels, refines his/her senses and the world goes through a filter that throws the reader into a state of movement. After all, “[...] language is not outside of man, it is not a simple tool that can be used. Language is in man in the same way that man is in language”⁴¹ (Portella, 1991, p. 201, our translation).

In this perspective, we affirm that Rosa’s work is a minor literature whose form and content delineate a political and collective movement, since in the *sertão* as in the world the role played by blacks and whites, hicks and colonels, scarlet women, wives or daughters. The work of Guimarães Rosa is an event, and an event, to Deleuze and Guattari (1992), occurs when nothing has happened and the world is another. *The Hour and Turn of Augusto Matraga* and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* has just been read and nothing has happened, but the *sertão* is another. As Guimarães Rosa wrote: “[...] nothing seemed to happen; when nothing happens, there is a miracle that we are not seeing”⁴² (Rosa, 2009, p. 26, our translation). It is literature that makes all the people of the *sertão* to have a voice.

Barthes (2007) identifies that literature is a utopian attempt to represent reality, but, as Guimarães Rosa reminds us, the relationship between life and literature is: “[...] and everything went well, because it had to, since it was so”⁴³ (Rosa, 2009, p. 28, our translation). After all, “[...] it has been at least six or six and a half years, right this way, nothing more and nothing less, without a lie, because this is an invented story, and it is not a happened case, no sir”⁴⁴ (Rosa, 2009, p. 25, our translation). “Literature is health [...]”⁴⁵, as Deleuze (2006, p. 9, our translation) states. It is the measure of health because it brings to the scene the missing people when it creates a language capable of resisting, of keeping this bastard race alive, when it resists the hegemonic and dominant and, as a process tears open spaces for affections that, otherwise, would not have how to resist (Deleuze, 2006).

Clarice Lispector’s minor literature

Thinking is an act.

Feeling is a fact.

The two together - it's me who writes what I'm writing⁴⁶ (Lispector, 1988, p. 21, our translation)

³⁹ Respectively, “[...] onde gente séria entra mas não passa” (Rosa, 2009, p. 10); “[...] com dívidas enormes, política do lado que perde; [...] uma vontade virgem [...]”; “[...] vontade doente de fazer coisas mal-feitas” (Rosa, 2009, p. 27).

⁴⁰ “[...] uma relação mediada de homens e coisas, a estruturação nervosa dos ‘entes’” (Portella, 1991, p. 199, grifo do autor).

⁴¹ “[...] a linguagem não está fora do homem, não é uma simples ferramenta a que possa recorrer. A linguagem está no homem da mesma maneira que o homem está na linguagem” (Portella, 1991, p. 201).

⁴² “[...] parecia não acontecer coisa nenhuma; quando nada acontece, há um milagre que não estamos vendo” (Rosa, 2009, p. 26).

⁴³ “[...] e tudo foi bem assim, porque tinha de ser, já que assim foi” (Rosa, 2009, p. 28).

⁴⁴ “[...] assim se passaram pelo menos seis ou seis anos e meio, direitinho desse jeito, sem tirar e nem pôr, sem mentira nenhuma, porque esta aqui é uma estória inventada, e não é um caso acontecido, não senhor” (Rosa, 2009, p. 25).

⁴⁵ “A literatura é uma saúde [...]” (Deleuze, 2006, p. 9).

⁴⁶ “Pensar é um ato./Sentir é um fato./Os dois juntos – sou eu que escrevo o que estou escrevendo” (Lispector, 1988, p. 21)

A writer, when he/she is able to write a minor literature, he/she goes into becoming-minor to emit another voice different from the dominant standard. Clarice Lispector also escapes this pattern by weaving another form of narration, assuming the posture of one who is not satisfied with making fiction from a simple and linear plot. The process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the language in the work is carried out not by neologisms or syntactic ruptures, but mainly by the exploration of metalanguage, by the complexity that is established between the subjects of the plot. Lispector's latest novel, *The Hour of the Star*, is built on doubt, on the questioning of the act of writing itself, whose playful proposal opens the symbolic field, "[...] another way of narrating, more difficult, for certain, but it allows us to bring a new perspective on life [...]"⁴⁷, Clarisse Fulkelman (1998) tells us in the presentation of *The Hour of the Star*.

Clarice ironically becomes man to speak of the intimate, mysterious and moving universe of Macabéa, protagonist of *The hour of the star*. "I dedicate myself to the very scarlet red color like my man's blood at full age and therefore I dedicate myself to my blood"⁴⁸ (Lispector, 1998, p. 19, our translation). The narrator of *The Hour of the Star* is a man. Only by understanding the amplitude of becoming-another and the concept of becoming-minor to comprehend why a woman writer needs to become man to write Macabéa's tragedy. In order to speak and give voice to this woman, as minor as Macabéa, a certain detachment is necessary. A leave of her feminine universe, not only by means of a man's gaze, but rather with a gaze and an ear of a minor man, a suffering narrator, who does not know what to do with Macabéa, who lives within herself and who, from the beginning of creation, senses the tragic end, but who is perhaps looking for another way out for the protagonist other than the ultimate "[...] discreet exit by the back door" (Lispector, 1992, p. 9).

A minor literature has a political character because, through it, it is possible to understand the world. Macabéa represents thousands of girls who, when they reach urban centers like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, find the rudeness of life, anonymous women, alone, poor, disenchanted, alienated, decadent. "She had what is called the inner life and she did not know she had it. She lived on herself as if eating her own bowels"⁴⁹ (Lispector, 1998, p. 46, our translation). Her miserable body is described as carious, cannot be traded.

I know there are girls who sell the body, the only real possession, in exchange for a good dinner instead of a mortadella sandwich. But the person from whom I will speak barely has a body to sell, no one wants her, she is virgin and innocuous, no one misses her.⁵⁰ (Lispector, 1998, p. 23, our translation).

However, despite everything, they are strong. Rough life taught them how to survive. With Macabéa, the social masks become visible, her history is denunciation of the human crisis through which we pass in modernity, a crisis that reveals our lack of humanity, the inhuman. It was "[...] a chance, a fetus thrown into the garbage wrapped in a newspaper"⁵¹ (Lispector, 1998, p. 11, our translation).

The Hour of the Star takes oppressed voices to the reader. Texts that symbolize the resistance of the weakest, of the people that are missing, of that whole people who are each of us, who are all of us, who is no one, who is minority, minor, Severino, Matraga, Ulysses. The hour and turn of Augusto Matraga, the hour and turn of Macabéa, the hour and turn of forgotten stars. "If I know almost everything about Macabéa, it's because I've already caught a glimpse of a yellowish Northeastern once. This glance she gave me with her whole body"⁵² (Lispector 1998, p. 57, our translation).

From there we can infer that Macabéa's experience signals a misery that is not particular, but collective. Just as the narrator of Augusto Matraga affirms that the story is true because it is made up, the narrator of *The Hour of the Star* also confirms or reaffirms the attempt of literature to represent existence, reinforcing its collective character:

If there is truth in it - and it is clear that the story is true though made up, that each one recognizes it in oneself because we are all one and who does not have poverty of money has poverty of spirit or longing for lacking something more precious than gold.⁵³ (Lispector, 1998, p. 12, our translation).

⁴⁷ "[...] um outro modo de narrar, mais difícil, por certo, mas que permite provocar um novo olhar sobre a vida [...]" (Fulkelman, 1998).

⁴⁸ "Dedico-me a cor rubra muito escarlate como o meu sangue de homem em plena idade e, portanto, dedico-me ao meu sangue" (Lispector, 1998, p. 19).

⁴⁹ "Tinha o que se chama de vida interior e não sabia que tinha. Vivía de si mesma como se comesse as próprias entranhas" (Lispector, 1998, p. 46).

⁵⁰ "Sei que há moças que vendem o corpo, única posse real, em troca de um bom jantar em vez de um sanduíche de mortadela. Mas a pessoa de quem falarei mal tem corpo para vender, ninguém a quer, ela é virgem e inocua, não faz falta a ninguém" (Lispector, 1998, p. 23).

⁵¹ "[...] um acaso, um feto jogado na lata de lixo embrulhado em um jornal" (Lispector, 1998, p. 11).

⁵² "Se sei quase tudo de Macabéa é que já peguei uma vez de relance o olhar de uma nordestina amarelada. Esse relance me deu ela de corpo inteiro" (Lispector, 1998, p. 57).

⁵³ "Se há verdade nela - e é claro que a história é verdadeira embora inventada, que cada um a reconheça em si mesmo porque todos nós somos um e quem não tem pobreza de dinheiro tem pobreza de espírito ou saudade por lhe faltar coisa mais preciosa que ouro" (Lispector, 1998, p. 12).

When the author writes about Macabéa, it is a whole population she is describing, women whose luck and fate make them wander through the streets of the great cities, lost, frightened by a reality that does not represent them, do not protect them. A historical and collective portrait of what goes on in the innermost recesses of these so frail and helpless people.

Lispector never admitted that the name Macabéa was an antithesis to Lady Macbeth. However, the counterpoint between Shakespeare's perfidious and tricky character and the miserable 'virgin and innocent' Brazilian northeastern is irresistible. Both protagonists of tragedies are as two possible sides of the feminine existence: one that nobody misses; and the other, due to her existence makes life impossible. Stammering of the tongue, the vibrating, the continuous variation of language, they can be seen right in the cover sheet, in which the title of the work is followed by thirteen other possible titles, interspersed by the conjunction 'or', which, under the Deleuzian lenses, could well have been replaced by the conjunction 'and'.

THE HOUR OF THE STAR

THE BLAME IS MINE

OR

THE HOUR OF THE STAR

OR

LET HER FEND FOR HERSELF

OR

THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

AS FOR THE FUTURE

OR

SINGING THE BLUES

OR

SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO PROTEST

OR

A SENSE OF LOSS

OR

WHISTLING IN THE DARK WIND

OR

I CAN DO NOTHING

OR

A RECORD OF PRECEDING EVENTS

OR

A TEARFUL TALE

OR

A DISCREET EXIT BY THE BACK DOOR

(Lispector, 1992, p. 9).

Each of the thirteen titles compose, when placed graphically at the beginning of the book, a true presentation of what is to come: a text open for many readings, complex, full of possibilities. A moving text that puts intimate feelings of authors, characters and readers side by side, doing what good literature does, that we find out what is human about these very different subjects, who are so similar when presented in the form of a literary narrative.

Final considerations

In another of the thousand plateaus, in the fourth volume, Deleuze and Guattari (2007b) describe the concepts of becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible. One of the characteristics of the minor literature is its state of being unfinished. Always being on becoming. This is because “[...] literature is before that at the side of the report or of the incompleteness”⁵⁴ (Deleuze, 2006, p. 11, our translation). Writing is a process of recording intensities, flows that cross what can be lived. To make minor literature, the writer always needs to become another. This does not mean turning into another person or something else. To become another to the writer, according to Deleuze (2006), is to find a way to lessen his/her own self. To let go of the forces and flows of intensities which, in a greater becoming, are imprisoned or chained by the affections, thoughts and determined and dominant rules.

Thus, to Deleuze (2006, p. 11, our translation), “[...] writing is inseparable from becoming”. In the same way that the minor treatment of language refers to a more dominant pattern, becoming another for the writer is always becoming someone other than the white, heterosexual man who lives in large cities. The minor in relation to man would then be the becoming woman, the becoming child, the becoming mad, the becoming animal. It must be clear that becoming is not a transformation into a woman, a child or a mad person. It is not about identity or copying, but it is about establishing a zone “[...] of neighborhood, indiscernibility or indifferenciation”⁵⁵ (Deleuze, 2006, p. 11, our translation) that has been achieved through linguistic and literary composition processes.

To summarize and emphasize: the function of literature in the conception here advocated is to make up a language that, in some way, is foreign, causes the reader to think critically through displacements. A literature in which meanings are shifting, are not given, everything is constructed by the hands of the reader, because the writer makes use of procedures that leave the text unfinished. It will be up to the reader to accept the challenge of putting the pieces together, assembling them, playing with the senses. This the writer does by searching for new linguistic potencies within the own language, proposing a minor literature that is deterritorialized, has political character and collective value. It has its own sound and flavor, stutters, cheeps, swipes. It revolutionizes without being ideological or subversive. It is an abstract machine of collective assemblages. These characteristics are all certainly very present in the literary texts chosen here. Thus, we conclude that the reading of literary texts such as those mentioned above is capable of resisting that oppressive, fascist or slogan character, from which language must flee to give voice to affections that otherwise could never come to the surface in the writings of the authors or in the readings of each one of us: readers of the narratives of ourselves.

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⁵⁴ “[...] a literatura está antes do lado do informe ou do inacabamento” (Deleuze, 2006, p. 11).

⁵⁵ “[...] de vizinhança, de indiscernibilidade ou indifferenciação” (Deleuze, 2006, p. 11).

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