

The interdisciplinary education of librarian and educator Zila da Costa Mamede (1928-1985)

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Abstract

This article defends the thesis that education plays a remarkable pedagogical role in the individual's formation process. Based on this statement, and also in line with the research corpus (interviews, letters, etc.), we try to delineate – in the light of the writings of Nobert Elias *About time* and *The society of individuals*, observing the contingency of the temporal dimension – interdisciplinary the formative experiences of formation, the specialized exercise of Librarianship and teaching in their institutional intersections and, also, the networks of sociability of the intellectual Zila Mamede in the course of her life. Confirmed the proposition at the beginning, it consolidates the evidence of the eminence of formative experiences, which are interdependent in relation to society, the individual's sociability networks and temporalities.

Keywords

formative experiences; university education; networks of sociability; temporalities.

A formação interdisciplinar da bibliotecária e educadora

Zila da Costa Mamede (1928-1985)

Resumo

Defende-se, neste artigo, a tese de que a educação desempenha uma função pedagógica no processo formativo do indivíduo. A partir dessa afirmação e, ainda, em consonância com o *corpus* da pesquisa (entrevistas, cartas, etc.), procura-se delinear – à luz dos escritos de Nobert Elias *Sobre o tempo* e *A sociedade dos indivíduos*, observando a contingência da dimensão temporal – as experiências interdisciplinares formativas, o exercício especializado da Biblioteconomia e da docência em suas intersecções institucionais e, igualmente, as redes de sociabilidade da intelectual Zila Mamede no curso de sua vida. Confirmada a proposição à partida, consolida-se a prova da eminência das experiências formativas interdisciplinares, que são interdependentes em relação à sociedade, às redes de sociabilidade do indivíduo e às temporalidades.

Palavras-chave

experiências formativas; educação universitária; redes de sociabilidade; temporalidades.

La formación interdisciplinaria de la bibliotecaria y educadora Zila da Costa Mamede (1928-1985)

Resumen

Este artículo defiende la tesis de que la educación desempeña un notable papel pedagógico en el proceso formativo del individuo. A partir de esta afirmación y también en consonancia con el corpus de la investigación (entrevistas, cartas, etc.), se pretende esbozar – a la luz de los escritos de Norbert Elias *Sobre el tiempo* y *La sociedad de los individuos*, observando la contingencia de la dimensión temporal – las experiencias interdisciplinarias de formación, el ejercicio especializado de la Bibliotecología y la enseñanza en sus intersecciones institucionales y también las redes de sociabilidad de la intelectual Zila Mamede en el transcurso de su vida. Confirmada la proposición al principio, se consolida la evidencia de la eminencia de las experiencias formativas, que son interdependientes en relación con la sociedad, las redes de sociabilidad del individuo y las temporalidades.

Palabras clave

experiencias formativas; Educación universitaria; Redes de sociabilidad; temporalidades.

1 Introduction

I feel tremendously happy to be a woman. I always wanted to be a circus girl, a trapeze artist, or the daughter of Gypsies (Mamede, 1975a).

In the book *Sobre o tempo*, sociologist Norbert Elias (1998) reflected on the development of the common heritage of cultural knowledge in Western societies, which is of preponderance for humanity and, precisely for this reason, merits greater attention. At the particular level, an individual must realize that their scripts "[...] are not inseparable from the direction of the transformations of the forms of community life and the people who are connected to them [...]" (Elias, 1998, p. 29, our translation), or even of formative experiences.

To Elias (1998, p. 58), there would be a succession of events in the life of each person in the course of the time lived "[...] that little is independent of the knowledge they have, nor inseparable from their life experience in general" (our translation). It is evident that education plays a remarkable pedagogical function in the formative process of each individual that is interdependent relative to the social universe where they are inserted. This is the thesis that is defended here.

However, based on Elias (1994), one may pose the following question: in the framework of references of the individual, social, and group temporal dimension, which of

such references were made primary in the case of a woman who was a poet, teacher, librarian, researcher, biographer, journalist, and writer – the intellectual Zila Mamede – in accordance with the web of formative experiences and the specialized exercise of library science and teaching in her intersections with formative institutions, the role of leader, and the insertion in sociability networks?

In other words, still in line with the thought of Elias (1998), we seek to address, by the contingency of the temporal dimension, the interdisciplinary formative experiences, professional activities, and, equally, the sociability networks of the intellectual Zila Mamede. For this purpose, the documentary corpus of this research comprised the material stemming from the personal archive of Zila Mamede (recorded interviews, letters, curriculum vitae, etc.) under the custody of the Central Library "Zila Mamede" of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

Methodologically, the conception of time by Elias was used, especially considering the breadth of the references to the events, the development of the formative, human, social, and pedagogical experiences and of the level of ideas. In the words of this thinker, one finds a plausible explanation for such a choice:

The determination of time rests on the human ability to relate two or more different sequences of changes, one of them serving as a measuring scale of time to the other or the others. This type of intellectual synthesis represents a feat far from elementary, given that the reference sequence may be profoundly different from that for which it serves as a measurement scale (Elias, 1994, p. 60).

To Elias (1994, p. 11), in view of this, the dimension of time translates the individual efforts made to be located within the relative continuum flow "[...] to the acquisition of knowledge, of human experiences, structurally interdependent and, to a greater or lesser extent, correlated with each other in the chain of social interdependence" (our translation). In this flow, society not only produces the differentiated and the similar but also the singular individual.

This article is one of the products of the research project entitled "*A educação de mulheres ao longo dos séculos XIX e XX*" ("The education of women throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries") of the interinstitutional research group "*Educação de mulheres nos séculos XIX e XX*" ("Education of women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries"). It is organized through the prominence of the temporal dimension in the breadth of the formative experiences, professional activities, and, equally, the sociability

networks of the intellectual Zila Mamede, comprising the following sections: Beginning times (1928-1949), Times of transience (1951-1959), Intermissions (1960-1979), and Epilogue times (1980-1984).

2 Beginning times (1928-1949)

The poet, librarian, teacher, researcher, biographer, journalist, writer, and intellectual Zila da Costa Mamede is the ninth daughter of Josafá Gomes da Costa Mamede (mechanic, joiner, and other activities) and Elydia Bezerra de Medeiros (housewife and first teacher of her children). She was born on September 15, 1928, in the then-village of Nova Palmeira, belonging to the state of Paraíba, Brazil. During the Memória Viva show of the University Television of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, she presented her references from the town of birth, thus pronouncing:

Nova Palmeira is the ground where I was born, and I would like it to be in Rio Grande do Norte precisely because I feel so much from Rio Grande do Norte that I get shocked when I look at my birth certificate and identity card because they are from Paraíba and not from Rio Grande do Norte. In this, there is no prejudice against Paraíba. I was just transplanted very little, in time to feel rooted here [...] (Mamede, 1987).

Zila Mamede resided in Nova Palmeira until the age of 7. On school breaks from the Rudimentar Mista Elementary School (where she was a student of teacher Josefa Emília De Medeiros), she and her siblings used to go to the *O Alto* ranch, belonging to their maternal grandfather and godfather – Francisco Bezerra de Medeiros –, who taught them, as if he were a teacher, the names of the sertão trees existing there so that they would refer to them by their proper names: imburana, pereiro, jitirana, jurema, and urtiga. In the words of Zila Mamede (1987): "These names and these trees, I distinguish them wherever I find them, and I know exactly what each one is" (our translation). It would have been through this maternal grandfather that she heard the first readings of popular brochures. In recollection of that time, Zila made the following record:

The first characters in Cordel literature I met were *Carlos Magno e os doze pares da França* (Charlemagne and the twelve peers of France) and *Roberto do diabo* (Robert of the devil). Many times, I heard and cried at the reading of *A donzela Teodora* (The maiden Theodora), *A princesa Magalona* (Princess Magalona), and *A Imperatriz Porcina* (Porcine Empress). But my emotion was with the reading of *O pavão misterioso* (The mysterious Peacock). Everyone who was born and grew

up in the sertão knows this popular literature, at least from hearing (Mamede, [1982], p. 4, our translation, emphasis added).

The family moved to the city of Currais Novos when Zila was seven years old, in 1935, a municipality belonging to the Seridó region of Rio Grande do Norte, at the invitation of cotton farmers. In this city, at the time – according to Barros (2015) – the posts of the Inspectorate of the Textile Plants Service and the Promotion of Cotton Classification were gaining projection due to the distinctive quality of the cotton produced there.

In this region, Zila's maternal and paternal grandparents had been born, as well as her father. Like the men and women of the sertão of Rio Grande do Norte at the time, they went to live in the sertão of Paraíba, especially in Nova Palmeira (maternal grandfather) and Picuí (paternal grandfather).

Although they had no school education, according to Zila, they were all excellent mechanics, woodworkers, and blacksmiths. As for her father, in addition to these professions, he also mastered the knowledge of arithmetic calculations. Probably, due to the comprehensiveness of this practical and theoretical knowledge, he was ahead of the construction of bridges and dams in Paraíba under the charge of the National Department of Works against Droughts.

In the city of Currais Novos, little Zila was enrolled by her parents in the Capitão-Mor Galvão school group (created by Decree No. 256 of November 25, 1911), where she studied until the sixth grade of the elementary program (1936–1941) with teachers Dinorah Fonseca, Ezilda Elita de Nascimento, Elça Sant'Ana, Filomena Herôncio de Melo, Maria Antônia Pinheiro, Maria do Carmo da Cunha, and Rosa Cunha. This phase of Zila's life was described by her as follows: "The freest of my later childhood and early adolescence from 8 to 12 years old" (our translation). In this sertanejo town, she was encouraged by musician Suetônia Batista, who, in addition to playing mandolin, guitar, and accordion, among other musical instruments, was an attentive buyer of records and books, which she used to lend to Zila so that she could enjoy good and instructive readings. She recalled such a time as follows:

Currais Novos [where I became an incurable sertanejo] had no libraries. Therefore, from 8 to 12 years old, I read *Almanaque Capivarol*, *Tico-Tico*, *Alterosas*, *Eu Sei Tudo*, *Vida Doméstica*, all the novels by M. Delly and Monteiro Lobato, all the children and youth tales that fell into my hands (Mamede, [1982], our translation).

With the outbreak of World War II (1939–1945), the construction of the Air Base located in the municipality of Parnamirim, Rio Grande do Norte, began. According to Mamede (1987), due to this worldwide event, her father's mechanical workshop was leased by the Americans to be integrated into the construction of the Parnamirim Air Base. Thus, the Mamede family moved to the capital, Natal, in December 1942.

In 1943, she lived for a few months in the city of João Pessoa (Paraíba), in the house of her godfather, physician Francisco Medeiros Dantas. He was a cultured and Marxist man who began to guide her readings at that time. He told her to read the literature books in his library, such as the novel *O castelo do homem sem alma* (Hatter's Castle) by Archibald Joseph Cronin. On the departure of his goddaughter back to Natal, he advised her: "From now on, start reading, read everything that passes through your hands, and then choose what is important" (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

In Natal (1944), Zila was enrolled by her parents in the high school program of the Imaculada Conceição Technical School of Commerce, belonging to the Imaculada Conceição School of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Dorothea, which granted her the diploma of office assistant for the studies completed in 1946. In this same Imaculada Conceição School, she attended the technical program in Accounting from 1947 to 1949.

Whether by reading in childhood and early adolescence, by reading the books in the library of her godfather, or even by the sociability aroused, the academic program in which she would like to have entered was the classical high school, which, perhaps, would have made it difficult to get an immediate job. Envisioning such a probability, she explained her decision: "My father, already at that time, had the wisdom that literature did not bring employment and sent me to study accounting [...]" (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

An educated woman, poet, librarian, teacher, researcher, biographer, journalist, and writer, with all the deference of her interdisciplinary formative experiences, one of her interviewers in the Memória Viva show (professor Alvamar Furtado) asked her about the circumstances of time and place of her mastery to write, to which she replied:

At the Imaculada Conceição School, I had a Portuguese teacher, Mother Esmeralda. She was the person with whom I learned Portuguese, the Portuguese I know how to write and use to this day. She was an extremely well-prepared and

demanding Portuguese teacher who did not forgive a comma (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

As for the written word, the following is how she defined it for her interviewers:

The written word is, for me, much more than a written thing because it has an immense load of meaning of what is lived, seen, and felt. I took advantage of strong and common words that added to my still very incipient vocabulary to write the book *O Arado*, which is a sentimental portrait of my maternal grandfather's ranch. It is practically entirely written of sertanejo words, which are strong words (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

3 Times of transience (1951-1959)

Despite the commercial high school and technical programs, which helped Zila to get her first jobs as an accountant in industrial firm "Sérgio Severo" (from March to October 1951) and in the Social Service of Industry (from November 1951 to October 1953), the written word, by borrowing the readings of the books she embraced to read or that embraced her for her to read, would compete, perhaps, to her poetic propensity, for her to write her inaugural book *Rosa de pedra* (1953). To her interviewer (Carlos Lyra), Zila made an almost psychoanalytic confession: "That first book was absolutely intuitive" (our translation).

Like Cecilia Meireles, who wrote in the column *Comentário do Diário de Notícias* from Rio de Janeiro (1930–1933), Zila – according to Sobral and Dantas (2019) – debuted as a journalist in the columns of "Tribuna Social" (1951) and "Revista da Cidade" in newspaper *Tribuna do Norte* from January 10 to February 8, 1952, working under the pseudonym Maiana. In light of the publications of the column "Revista da Cidade", at that time, Sobral and Dantas (2019, p. 51), the researchers on Zila – the journalist –stated the following (our translation):

There is a clear and authorial voice of the young journalist Zila, at the age of 24, a poet in search of her voice and a professional in search of her destiny. Zila seeks to correspond to the purpose of a social column but does so in an authorial and extremely provocative way [...] expanding the repertoire to the cultural field, given that she was a poet and lived with the intellectuality of the city and, perhaps for this reason, she wrote under a pseudonym.

To these researchers, journalist Zila exercised a "hybrid journalism" due to the genre of her publications: chronicles, articles, social columns, film commentary, reports, and dissemination of her poems.

Zila dedicated the book *Exercício da palavra* (1975b) to Governor Sylvio Pizza Pedroza (1951-1956) for owing him her first public job and the profession of librarian, exercised in the direction of the library of the Instituto da Educação (Institute of Education), inaugurated on March 4, 1954. According to her *curriculum vitae* (Mamede, 1965, 1975), by authorization of this governor, she represented the state in the 1st Congress of Librarianship (July 1954), held in the city of Recife (Pernambuco), and participated in the Intensive Course in Library Science, aimed at the Technical Assistance to Brazilian Libraries (from September to November 1954), promoted by the Instituto Nacional do Livro (INL, National Book Institute).

It is worth noting that only six years after completing the technical program in Accounting, Zila was approved for the higher program on library science promoted by the National Library of Rio de Janeiro (1955-1956). Before this academic, social, and cultural season in the Brazilian capital, in addition to the network of sociability former of an intellectual elite, the writer and reader were inseparable, as one may observe from her own testimony:

I started reading everything that passed in my hands, what was possible to read: geração de 45, modernistas, jornal de letras, and becoming aware of the existence of famous poets, until I came to Manuel Bandeira through his old books and the more modern books (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

With the intellectual admiration she had for Manuel Bandeira – the person, the scholar, and the celebrity of his literary writings – Zila did not hesitate to visit him in Rio de Janeiro. To her interviewers, she praised the master who forced her to study the classical authors, as she revealed in her brief statement:

He interfered so that a scholarship would soon be provided to me from the National Library. [...] And did more: he forced me to study. Also, in his letters to me, he forced me to study Latin and to get to know the classics, saying that without reading them, no one was a poet. I say that he forced me to take poetry seriously (Mamede, 1987, our translation).

Zila's determination to "get to know the classics" was notorious upon her return to Natal in 1957. At a literary level, the readings of the poetry and prose books by Manuel Bandeira extended to the classic works of Marcel Proust (*À la recherche du temps perdu*) and Camilo Castelo Branco (*Amor de perdição*) and the letters of Mário de Andrade to Carlos Drummond de Andrade.

In the framework of the references of the temporal dimension, the collection of poetic works of this writer from Rio Grande do Norte, already known and recognized in the Brazilian intellectual environment, was born: *Rosa de pedra* (1953), *Salinas* (1958), *O arado* (1959), *Exercício da palavra* (1975b), *Navegos* (1978), and *A herança* (1984). Bosi (1996, p. 32) defended that the temporal dimension represented by a composition of recurrences and analogies "[...] is generally (un)satisfactory for understanding the simultaneous spheres of human existence and social existence" (our translation).

At the temporal level of library science, Zila resumed the direction of the library of the Institute of Education, remaining in office for two years (1957–1959). In 1959, she was appointed by Governor Dinarte de Medeiros Mariz (1956–1961) to reorganize the library of the Court of Justice of Rio Grande do Norte and teach an intensive course in library science to the staff of the library of the School of Philosophy, Science, and Arts of Natal (from May 12 to June 12, 1959). A pioneer of library science in the state, Zila was aware of the tenuous border between bookish culture and literary, bibliographic, patrimonial, and documentary culture, the cataloging of collections, library science standards, as well as the sociability networks of the universe of the library institution.

It would not have been for nothing that she accepted the appointment of professor Onofre Lopes da Silva – appointed by the governor (on February 6, 1959) as rector of the newly created University of Rio Grande do Norte – to be the director of the Central Library Service (created by University Council Resolution No. 14 of May 2, 1959), with the task of structuring and organizing the sectoral libraries, in addition to the acquiring academic works. In the course of eight months in this position, President Juscelino Kubitschek sanctioned Law No. 3848 of December 18, 1960, which transformed that state university into the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). At that time in 1959, the universe of the library institution was mainly equivalent, in the understanding of Zila ([1959-1979]), p. 1), to an "[...] intellectual laboratory common to the entire reading population [...]" (our translation).

At the institutional level, Zila would integrate, as Elias (1994) suggested, the distribution of university education decisions. At the integrative level, the duties of the director of the Central Library Service referred her to coordinate and systematize the technical and library science activities of the sectoral libraries, spearhead the centralized acquisition of bibliographic materials, especially books and magazines, in all areas of

human knowledge and their respective cataloging and classification, as well as intercede in covenants with Brazilian public institutions and mediate exchanges of publications in Brazil and abroad, especially with the United States.

According to Marques and Araújo (2020), the director of this service decided, together with assistants of rector Onofre Lopes, to install it in the Rectory building in Natal, where it remained for 14 years (1959–1973). Later, she spoke in favor of its transfer to the building of the Industrial School of Natal, where it stayed for a year (1973–1974), later moving to the building of the Central Library of the university campus of UFRN, under advanced construction.

It is quite true that that time as director of the Central Library Service amounted to immediate library science instructions by universal standards for the assistants of those seven sectoral libraries, with a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes (books and magazines) and an average of 500 readers/month. According to the curriculum vitae of Zila (1975a), in the capacity of director of that service, she taught an intensive course in library science (in October 1959) to all the assistants of the sectoral libraries, in articulation with the INL.

That time stood out for the successive updates of the bibliography on library science with expanded concepts of library, conventions, loans, and circulation of books in the communities of studies, research, and academic production of teachers and students, as well as protocols for internships, covenants, and national and international exchanges. As advocated by Chartier (2010, p. 57), "[...] so that [all this] would make references in a concrete time and place [...]" – as, for example, in the newly created UFRN.

4 Intermissions (1960-1979)

Philosopher Kant (2001, p. 96–97), in his work *Critique of Pure Reason*, referring to the time domain, stated that "[...] only in it is the whole reality of phenomena possible" (our translation). Therefore, time is given a priori.

In the period from 1960 to 1969, library science shone with possibilities of transcendence of interdisciplinary theoretical and technical formative experiences. During her time as director of the Central Service, "studying English seriously", Zila was awarded by the American Embassy, based in Rio de Janeiro, with a scholarship from the American

government to fulfill an internship program at the library of the American University of Syracuse (from April 6 to 16, 1961). About this internship, she wrote in her travelogue (1961): "I attended a business class. So far, there was really been nothing new to me" (our translation).

In this interregnum in the United States, Zila was at the Cleveland State Library and the National University of Colombia when, at the latter, by her decision, a covenant for the exchange of publications with UFRN was put into effect.

Later that year, she was one of the foreign guests of the 80th Annual Conference of the American Library Association, held in Cleveland (July 9 to 16, 1961), and was invited to meet the United States Library of Congress. Given this performance of Zila, it is worth mentioning the hypothesis by Elias (1998, p. 18) that, within the constituted groups to which she belonged, "[...] the individual commonly disposes of some margin of autonomy, has some latitude in their power of decision" (our translation). Certainly, to a greater or lesser extent, librarian Zila exercised this personal and institutional attribute.

To Elias (1994, p. 51), the individual margin of autonomy and decision-making is "[...] quite variable in its nature and extent, depending on the reach of personal power [...]" (our translation) – we add: and of the institutional burdens. This seems evident in the following letter from Zila to her friends Luíza and Fernanda [Leite Ribeiro], written on December 9, 1963:

There are so many things to be thankful for: the pictures, the books... [...]. I do not know what would happen, but I know one thing, Fernanda: I will not stay in Natal, definitely. It is almost definitive [my] decision to go to Brasilia to do the Master's [...]. I would like to have news about the program promised by p. Lídio for UFRN on bibliographic orientation. I will write officially (Mamede, 1963, p. 1-2, our translation).

At first glance, her persistent obstinacy to go beyond the daily routine of the present time to advance in another, that of the improvement stage of her specialized work in library science, appeared. As foreshadowed by Elias (1994, p. 44):

The further the social division of labor advances in a society, the greater the exchange between people, and the more closely they are interconnected by the fact that each person may only sustain their social existence together with many others.

Indeed, thanks to the creation, at the University of Brasilia (UnB), of the master's program in library science (1964) in the field of Brazilian Bibliography, with the purpose of

integrating and training librarians, librarian Zila was one of the three graduate students approved, starting the program on March 24, 1964. The other two would be Fernanda Leite Ribeiro (director of the Brazilian Institute of Bibliography and Documentation) and Gilda Maria Whitaker Verri (librarian of the Federal University of Pernambuco).

According to Zila's curriculum vitae (1975a), this first class of master's program in Library Science fulfilled a program of theoretical studies in the first two years (1964–1965) with the following courses: Brazilian Bibliography (professor Rubens Borba de Moraes), Bibliography I (professor Pérola Cardoso Raulino), Bibliography II (professor Edson Nery da Fonseca), and New Methods and Techniques of Knowledge Dissemination (professor Edson Nery da Fonseca), among others.

As a scholarship-holding graduate student, Zila took up teaching the following courses in the UnB undergraduate program in library science: Introduction to Librarian Science, Bibliographic Techniques, and Bibliography I, in addition to having been a translator of conferences and catalogs on the classification of books and documents.

Nevertheless, it happened that, with the outbreak of the civil-military coup on March 31, 1964, by executive intervention of the Armed Forces with American activity, UnB suffered severe political and institutional crises. According to Borges (2013), these crises resulted in the abrupt cancellation of the master's program in library science and the removal of the first three master's students.

Due to this time of dictatorial regime, Zila did not complete the master's program in library science at UnB, predicted for more or less three years. Still, the idealized master's work was carried out and published with the title *Luís da Câmara Cascudo: 50 anos de vida intelectual, 1918–1968: bibliografia anotada* (Luís da Câmara Cascudo: 50 years of intellectual life, 1918–1968: annotated bibliography (Mamede, 1970b).

In the course of four years (1970–1974) – according to library documents – Zila carried out the plan to improve the UFRN library system combined with the creation of more sectoral libraries (School of Education and the Applied Psychology Service, for example) and the increase in bibliographic material (40,225 books and 3,138 journals in 1970, and 57,856 books and 3,936 journals in 1974), in addition to covenants with the INL and international organizations (Organization of American States and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

In addition, due to the new theoretical and conceptual knowledge of library science, Zila, on the other hand, decided on a training plan for UFRN librarians in the bachelor's programs in library science and further training courses in scientific documentation at the Universities of Brasília, Minas Gerais, Maranhão, and Paraíba, in addition to the Brazilian Institute of Bibliography and Documentation in Rio de Janeiro (the current Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology – Ibict).

In addition, she drew up another plan for institutionalizing the UFRN Central Library in place of the then-limited Central Library Service. This plan was approved by Consepe Resolution No. 140/74 of November 14, 1974, during the administration of rector Genário Alves da Fonseca (1971-1975).

Certainly, Zila's remarkable institutional and interdependent decisions made up what Elias (1994, p. 48) called stages of burdens, which differentiate and singularize themselves in the web of interpersonal and reciprocal relationships and, given this, "[... possibilities for individual decisions open up...]" and, at the same time, of recognition in the sociability networks of leaders of national institutions and international organizations. A mention that may be revealed in the sociability networks that intertwined Zila's web of interpersonal relationships makes her fruitful correspondence through letters stand out.

At first, Zila wrote a letter to librarian and writer Maria Alice Giudice Barroso Soares – director of the INL from 1970 to 1974 (dated December 24, 1970) – highlighting the invitation received by the then-rector of the Federal University of Maranhão.

In response to an invitation, I shall go to Maranhão on January 3 to supervise the internship of the 1st graduating class of the School of Library Science of the Federal University of Maranhão [...]. But both the work interests me professionally, and rector Onofre Lopes is interested in me fulfilling the request of rector Cônego José de Ribamar Carvalho. From this city of Natal that I adore, I renew and assure my great admiration for you and your intellectual activity (Mamede, 1970a, p. 1-2, our translation).

From February 8 to 17, 1971, as a professor at this university, Zila dedicated herself to supervising the pressured internship of the graduating students of the library science program. Despite all this effort, she mentioned, in another letter (dated March 17, 1971) addressed to Maria Alice Barroso, the "excellent friendships" added – say, in the sociability networks that were linked. But, thwarted by the lack of some library science services to any of the libraries of this institution, she presented a covenant plan:

[At the University] of São Luís, there is *no* journal publication sector set up in any of the libraries. They have had *no* conditions yet to assemble a National and International Exchange Service. With these two services here working very well with employee Gildete – I then proposed an institutional covenant: her going to study library science at this University in exchange for a work grant paid by the Central Library, where she would set up the above services (Mamede, 1971a, p. 2, our translation, emphasis added).

Certainly, due to the similar specialties (librarians and writers), the personal and intellectual esteem, and the common and reiterated sociability networks since the time of their undergraduate studies in library science in Rio de Janeiro, Zila was surprised by an invitation from Maria Alice Barroso to the direction of the National Library. Even with the kindness of Maria Alice's invitation, Zila hesitated to embrace the position. In a letter dated September 16, 1971, she used the occasion of being the director of the UFRN Central Library to make available any technical assistance from the INL in the Northeast and North regions. In her response, she thus wrote:

You are a mermaid who has been singing to my ears the song of libraries throughout immense Brazil, because you know this dream enchants me. However, my dear friend, I'll be staying here in this northeastern world. [...] I have in my hands another dream: the Central Library at the University Campus. My world is this intellectual territory of Natal, of Rio Grande do Norte, but also of Brazil [...]. I am at the disposal of the INL for any possible technical assistance here in the Northeast and North of Brazil [...] (Mamede, 1971b, p. 1-2, our translation).

Despite this, it seemed remarkable to her to agree with Maria Alice Barroso about the laborious role of the literary book advisor (INL Ordinance No. 50 of March 27, 1972, supported by Letter No. 158 of March 29, 1972, by rector Genário Alves da Fonseca), remaining in it for two years. In the first year of the direction of writer and journalist Herberto Sales (1974-1985) at the INL, Zila, certainly in view of the singularities of each management in its time, enunciated, through a letter, the *before* and the *come to be* in this institution:

Initiating our professional activity in this Institute from April 1, 1972, we exercise the function of Literary Book Advisor and answer for the Literary Book Coordination. We come, therefore, through the present letter to put at your disposal the roles for which we answer in this Institute. Sincerely (Mamede, 1974, p. 1, our translation).

In turn, the dense network of sociability interwove, over time, the webs of interpersonal and reciprocal relationships of librarian and writer Zila Mamede. This prism

shines through in her letter dated January 23, 1979, to Dr. Almir de Campos Brunetti, professor at Tulane University in New Orleans.

I am honored to acknowledge receipt of your letter in which you formulated the invitation to present conferences at Tulane University, New Orleans, from March 12 to 16. Thanking the honor, I confirm my presence in the mentioned period. I am sending Xerox copies of the outline of the conferences I shall present on the published poetry of Cecília Meireles and the bibliographic research I am conducting on the poetic work of João Cabral de Melo Neto. Also attached is a copy of my book *Navegos* so that you may duplicate it in a timely manner and all texts that you consider of interest for discussion and debate [...] (Mamede, 1979, p. 1, our translation, emphasis by the author).

This letter by Zila may be viewed and even used as an epigraph of work on the history of education, articulated with the history of the book and the history of reading in a social time of the twentieth century – is it not a whole becoming of intellectual human experiences and networks of sociability and exchange of knowledge? That is why it may be said, with Elias (1998, p. 17), that it is equivalent to the recognition of the "[...] mutual imbrications and interdependence between society, individual, and temporality" (our translation).

After all, as evidenced by Nunes (1992, p. 133), "[...] the individual is radically temporal and therefore so is their decision-making". By the way, it is worth reviewing the text by Zila on the flap of her book *Exercício da palavra*:

From 1972 to 1974, in the Literary Book Coordination of the INL, I lived and coexisted with Brazilian literature, with the authors, with the publishers, with the distributors, and I was able to learn up close what the literary struggle in Brazil means in the sense of production and consumption. What I wish most is retirement day: *bureaucratic liberation*, the clock stopped, owner of each of the hours of my life. I want to see the sun rise, read everything I haven't read yet, ride a bike, swim, chat with friends. There will always be poetry and poets. I would still choose a country house with my friends, my books, my records [...] (Mamede, 1975b, our translation, emphasis added).

5 Epilogue times (1980-1984)

Consistent with Zila's firm decisions, on March 28, 1980, the Brazilian Federal Official Journal published the retirement of this holder of the librarian position after 21 years (1959-1980) as a public servant at UFRN.

Machado and Fialho (2013) drew attention to the fact that, regarding the desire for her "bureaucratic liberation", she did not lead it to the ultimate consequences. Three

years after retirement (1983), she accepted the invitation of the then-governor of the state, José Agripino Maia (1983–1986), to coordinate the Câmara Cascudo State Public Library. In 1984, through a covenant between the José Augusto Foundation in Natal and the INL, she implemented the National Public Library System and, according to librarian Rejane Monteiro (2021), instituted and coordinated the Caixas Estantes project, with the concept of an itinerant library, aimed at the socialization of books and the encouragement of *reading* for residents of peripheral neighborhoods of the municipality of Natal.

Fate, however, interrupted the course of the life of this remarkable intellectual still in full-fledged labor. On December 13, 1985, at age 57, Zila died while practicing one of her favorite activities: swimming at Praia do Forte in Natal (a beach near the Forte dos Reis Magos).

6 Conclusion

In the work *A sociedade dos indivíduos*, Elias (1994, p. 45) positioned themselves as follows: "History is always the history of a society, but, without the slightest doubt, of a society of individuals [...] that are linked to each other in a plurality, that is, of a given society" (our translation). In this same work, Elias pondered the fact that the course of individual formative experiences, which singularizes and differentiates a person from others, in reciprocity with the sociability networks, is, at the same time, permeated by "[...] continuous interweaving of needs, in a desire for constant fulfillment and the alternation of giving and receiving through the interaction with others" (Elias, 1994, p. 36, our translation).

In turn, English philosopher Peters (1979) stated that everything an individual increasingly desires and/or even accomplishes is largely the result of their initiation into formative education. To this philosopher, it is rare for an educated/schooled individual to reveal having arrived at the aspired destination; rather, the simultaneity of existential and cultural times instigates them to live with a differentiated perspective on life. Life, on the other hand, does not have exclusive purposes beforehand:

It is the individual who points out the purposes. It presents only a few orderly problems [...]. It is, therefore, education that provides that touch of eternity, making resignation transform into dignified acceptance, yet begrudgingly, and animal pleasure into a virtue of [finite] life (Peters, 1979, p. 130, our translation).

Unequivocally, in Zila (1975b), education as training presupposed a vast transmission of universal human values, the expression of the word being its common way of promoting its existential engagement: "With words, I can verbalize all my passion, my anguish, and my perplexity in the face of love, life and death, hunger, multiple wars, aggression".

Indeed, for Zila, education, as training and interdisciplinary interlocution, transcended individual existence itself. In view of this, it places itself as an intermediary between human dignity, emancipation, autonomy, freedom, and the audacity of literary language.

It is quite true that the temporalities experienced in rhythms, thicknesses, and transnational sociability networks in which she was integrated flowed to let come to the fore, in this work, perhaps, the vast range and eminence of the formative experiences of interdisciplinary tangents, the specialized exercise of library science and teaching in her institutional intersections, the enlargement of an elite of women with diversified cultural capitals and inter-individual differences, which, apparently, she did not waste intellectually. All this is interdependent relative to society, the sociability networks of the individual, and temporalities.

Therein lies the fascination of the domain of education in the formative process of each individual. It happens that, as one may observe in Nunes (1992, p. 133), for each individual, there are particular rituals of ineluctable temporal determinations, "[...] which are often finite, the condition of the finitude of the human being, in the sense of the present or the past or the future" (our translation).

In the course of the fast time from the past to the present with its distances and familiarities, the reach of Zila's personal/institutional power in the relative domain of university education (teaching, research, extension, graduate studies) brings, therefore, elucidating research elements for reflection regarding the study of empowered women, notoriously in the light of the web of interdisciplinary formative experiences, essentially in collective and/or collegiate interactions.

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