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Deaf Literatura: Teaching and Reflections on a Deaf Model

Professor Dr. Marcio Jean Fialho de Sousa

Abstract- The objective of this article is to discuss the teaching of Deaf Literature as an important cultural production of the Deaf Community and to identify its formative and identity-building role. Furthermore, it proposes a reflection on the place of this so-called marginal literature in the official literary canon. As theoretical support, important studies proposed by Candido (2011), Carvalho (2019), Peters (2002), Karnopp (2006), among others, were used.

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Resumo- O objetivo deste artigo é discutir sobre o ensino da Literatura Surda como uma importante produção cultural da Comunidade Surda e identificar seu papel formativo e identitários. Além disso, foi proposta uma reflexão sobre o lugar dessa literatura, dita marginal, no cânone literário oficial. Como aporte teórico, foram utilizados importantes estudos propostos por Candido (2011), Carvalho (2019), Peters (2002), Karnopp (2006), entre outros.

Palavras-chave: literatura surda, comunidade surda, cultura surda, ensino de literatura surda.

I. Introduction

Literatura serve para ser irredutivelmente literatura[1].

Luiz Claudio da Costa Carvalho

In the emblematic book *Literatura e Sociedade* (Literature and Society), published in 1965, Antonio Candido presented several studies in which literature appears as a focal point for the formation of a critical, evolving, socially well-organised society, and, most importantly, committed to the common good. In this sense, Candido presents a study that is fundamental for the discussion proposed here: "Literature in the evolution of a society" (CANDIDO, 2011, p. 147). Right at the beginning of his essay, Antonio Candido argues his thesis by stating that "if there is no Paulista, Gaúcha or Pernambucana literature, there is undoubtedly a Brazilian literature manifesting itself differently in different States" (CANDIDO, 2011, p. 147). Indeed, regardless of the state where the literary manifestation occurs, all of them, within the national territory, presenting characteristic traits of culture and society, therefore compose the realm of Brazilian literature. There seems to be no further question about this, but what about so-called marginal literatures, what place should they occupy?

In response to these questions, it seems pertinent to look at the literary productions of marginalised communities, which exhibit many qualities and often emerge as voices of resistance and denunciation in the face of a society that oppresses, silences, or refuses to listen to those who, being quantitative and/or social minorities, are arbitrarily placed in this position, leading to their effacement. This often happens with black people, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and also the Deaf Community. The relevance of focusing on these marginal productions lies in the fact that, in addition to the quality of their works, they also belong to Brazilian literature, Portuguese, North American, British, French literatures, among others – even if, in many cases, they are not catalogued in manuals – and, above all, these literatures express cultural, historical, and, primarily, subjective values, inherent to all literary writing.

II. Deaf Literature and the Canon

In Marginal Literatures, their contesting aspect draws the reader's attention, aiming to highlight struggles and to mark the representativeness of a specific group that, being marginalised by society, uses literature to achieve its place of speech, as well as to be heard by dominant groups, like a silent and persistent scream. From this perspective, Deaf Literature is constituted by its linguistic diversity, as well as by its revolutionary role in the search for the representativeness of Deaf Culture. This ideology is equally present in Deaf Literature from various countries. According to Cynthia Peters, discussing North American Deaf Literature, for example, she states that:

> American literature is a smorgasbord that includes Native American literature, African American literature, Chinese American literature, and Hispanic literature. Such smaller literatures are also "American" but have features that distinguish them from literature considered mainstream (PETERS, 1996, p. 2).

Like Candido, Cynthia Peters highlights this literature and other marginal literatures as integral parts of canonical literature, giving these literatures due relevance in the literary scene, being distinguished only by their cultural peculiarities. However, it is worth noting that the history of deaf people has been marked by the

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[1] Literature serves to be irreducibly literature.

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repression and erasure of their specificities, especially linguistic ones, which caused various barriers to the consolidation of identity and the lack of records of this community for many centuries. The process of oppression experienced by deaf people was decisively marked by the Milan Congress in 1880, held with the purpose of deciding which strategy would be most efficient for teaching the deaf. The majority of participants at the event were hearing people and decided that the best approach for deaf individuals was the use of oral language; from then on, the use of sign languages was rejected worldwide. At that time, this language was already used by deaf people in several countries, as a form of expression and perception of the world. As language is one of the traits of cultural identification, Sign Language is the main characteristic of Deaf Culture, a culture that was invalidated with the repercussions of the Milan Congress, and the audist ideology superseded Deaf Culture for more than a century. However, during this period, deaf people found themselves in schools and conversed through Sign Language, hidden; it was a form of cultural resistance, since this, being their first language, enables natural expression and communication. Such resistance triggered studies and research on sign languages, with particular emphasis on the studies developed by William Stokoe in 1960, in the United States, which made it possible to prove the linguistic status of the languages in question. From this milestone, Deaf Culture was strengthened, coming to be conceptualised by deaf people themselves as:

> [...] o jeito de o sujeito surdo entender o mundo e modificá-lo a fim de torná- lo acessível e habitável ajustando-o com suas percepções visuais, que contribuem para a definição das identidades surdas. [...] Isso significa que abrange a língua, as ideias, as crenças, os costumes e os hábitos do povo surdo (STROBEL, 2008, p. 27).[2]

Deaf Culture is constituted by the specificities experienced by deaf individuals within their community, that is, in their spaces of representation, allowing for the perpetuation of values and knowledge built throughout the history of these subjects. According to Karin Strobel (2009), Deaf Culture is made up of various elements, which she calls "artefacts", including: visual experience, linguistic, familial, Deaf Literature, visual arts, politics, social life, and sports.

Deaf Literature, like other literatures, has its precursors, who gained prominence for their works that paved the way for subsequent publications. It deals with themes related to deaf people and their experiences, and in this context, the deaf writers Laura Reeden Searing (1855) and Dorothy Miles (1931) in the United States stood out; Emmanuelle Laborit (1971) in France; in Brazil, prominent deaf authors include Nelson Pimenta, who was the precursor of deaf theatre in that country; Shirley Vilhalva, Gladis Perlin, Ly Neves, Carolina Hessel, Fabiano Rosa; in Portugal, Marta Morgado, among others. It is important to affirm, however, that the idea of Deaf Literature is not exclusive to deaf writers; it encompasses the contributions of many hearing people who live in deaf communities, contributing to various debates about deafness, fostering discussions and further expanding this literary field. In this context, the contributions of Brazilian hearing writers Lodenir Karnopp and Claudia Bisol deserve special mention.

Establishing a dialogue with Candido's perspectives on literature as humanisation, literature "[...] neither corrupts nor edifies, therefore; but, freely carrying within itself what we call good and what we call evil, it humanises in a profound sense, because it makes us live" (CANDIDO, 2004, p. 176) , thus constituting itself as a humanising agent, by offering the reader words organised with a high degree of meaning, with a view to culminating in changes in the unconscious and transforming the way of seeing the other and the world; in this practice of alterity, the "I" reader re-signifies their mind and feelings through the experiences of the "other", giving rise to a new worldview. This process of transformation is translated by Candido as living, referring to new possibilities of perceiving what surrounds one.

The literature in question is characterised by demonstrating the idiosyncrasies of the deaf people and the Deaf Community; however, it is important to note that there is no separation between deaf and hearing people and that this is not the idea. On the contrary, there are moments and situations of coexistence between them that are relevant, by promoting cultural exchange, as affirmed by Cláudio Henrique Mourão:

> Como os surdos trabalham no meio artístico como atores, escritores de livros, de artigos, de peças de teatro, diretores de filmes curtos ou de teatro, entre outros, eles também têm contatos e vivem nas fronteiras e territórios da comunidade ouvinte e têm sua própria experiência vivida (MOURÃO, 2012, p. 3).[3]

The existing boundary between deaf and hearing people occurs through the interactions between both in the context of literary creation, as corroborated by Peters (1996), the existence of a linguistic and cultural relationship that permeates such literature and dominant literature is evident, considering North American literature, she states:

[2] [...] the way the deaf subject understands the world and modifies it to make it accessible and habitable, adjusting it to their visual perceptions, which contribute to the definition of deaf identities. [...] This means it encompasses the language, ideas, beliefs, customs, and habits of the deaf people (Translated by me. STROBEL, 2008, p. 27).

[3] As deaf people work in the artistic field as actors, book writers, article writers, playwrights, short film directors or theatre directors, among others, they also have contacts and live on the borders and territories of the hearing community and have their own lived experience (Translated by me. MOURÃO, 2012, p. 3).

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> In Native American literature, we can see features of the oral culture along with features of the mainstream literary tradition. Likewise, these same opposites have come together - felicitously or not – in a bicultural, bimodal, bilingual Deaf American Literature (PETERS, 1996, p. 5).

Given the above, Deaf Literature is not isolated or distant from dominant literature; it can be seen that marginal literatures are ceasing to be mere background to the canonical, opening possibilities of speech to those who until then were placed on the margins of society. For Lodenir Karnopp, Deaf Literature in Brazil refers to:

> [...] a produção de textos literários em sinais, que traduz a experiência visual, que entende a surdez como presença de algo e não como falta que possibilita outras representações de surdos e que considera as pessoas surdas como um grupo linguístico e cultural diferente (KARNOPP, 2010, p. 161).[4]

The author, in conceptualising such literature as a form of expression of the deaf subject's experiences, exposes deafness not as a deficiency or a lack of something, but rather as the presence of visual perception as a striking aspect of the cultural difference between the Deaf Community and the hearing community. Another extremely relevant factor in this context is language, which stands as a distinctive feature between cultures. For Vilhalva, it is "Through Sign Language, which is a complete Language, with a structure independent of Portuguese Oral or Written Language, enabling the cognitive development of the deaf individual" (VILHALVA, 2004, p. 37), that the deaf subject has effective access to concepts and knowledge related to the environment in which they live. From this perspective, the literary productions of this group initially occurred in Sign Language, through signality, initiatives that originated in deaf associations, spaces where deaf people told stories and narrated, using Sign Language composed of visual and spatial characteristics as a channel of communication. Thus, just as hearing people transmit stories and traditions through orality, "Historically, the Brazilian deaf people have transmitted many traditions in their organisations of deaf communities, the most well-known cultural space of all are the deaf associations" (STROBEL, 2008, p. 71).

Research conducted by Mourão regarding Brazilian Deaf Literature reveals information that complements the previous concept, bringing forth a broader literature, that is, composed not only by deaf people but also by hearing participants and activists in the Deaf Community.

> A Literatura Surda traz histórias de comunidades surdas, os processos sociais e as práticas relacionadas que circulam em diferentes lugares e em diferentes tempos. O envolvimento que as comunidades surdas compartilham, não é somente interno à comunidade, mas também externo, com comunidades ouvintes, através da participação tanto de sujeitos ouvintes quanto de sujeitos surdos (MOURÃO, 2011, p. 50).[5]

In this perspective, and as previously stated regarding the intellectual who speaks and provides a voice for the marginalised, Deaf Literature, which was previously seen as exclusively by deaf people and in Sign Language, gains new paradigms, coming to be understood as productions that highlight the cultural, historical, and social specificities of deaf people, written or signed by deaf or hearing individuals, as Karin Strobel assures:

> Muitos surdos e poetas também registram suas expressões literárias em língua portuguesa, como testemunhos compartilhados de suas identidades culturais e, assim, a Cultura Surda passou a ganhar espaço literário com lançamentos de livros e artigos com temas nunca antes imaginados (STROBEL, 2008, p. 57).[6]

This process clearly evidences the process of deterritorialisation, which is one of the main characteristics of minor literature, as proposed by Deleuze. Deaf Literature, by using the Portuguese language to address Sign Language and the cultural particularities of deaf people, makes a movement of leaving its territory to build a new territory in the field of dominant literature, that is, of hearing people.

However, more recent studies bring a new perspective on this discussion. Luiz Claudio Carvalho (2019) presents a challenging view on the established concepts, for this author, the definitions that permeate Deaf Literature are linked to the concept of *deaf literature*, not taking into account the cultural specificities of Brazilian deaf people in relation to North American deaf people. Another question proposed by this author concerns the fact that the discussion around the term "Deaf Literature" is delaying more necessary studies and discussions regarding the productions of the Deaf Community.

> Argumento que a hipertrofia identitária internacionalista e messiânica das narrativas em torno do tema da "Literatura Surda" esteja adiando a discussão, o estudo e a prática urgentes das possibilidades de expressão de subjetividades literárias em Libras (ou na forma de escrita

[4] [...] the production of literary texts in signs, which translates the visual experience, which understands deafness as the presence of something and not as a lack, which enables other representations of deaf people and which considers deaf people as a different linguistic and cultural group (Translated by me. KARNOPP, 2010, p. 161).

[5] Deaf Literature brings stories of deaf communities, the social processes and related practices that circulate in different places and at different times. The involvement that deaf communities share is not only internal to the community, but also external, with hearing communities, through the participation of both hearing and deaf subjects (Translated by me. MOURÃO, 2011, p. 50).

[6] Many deaf people and poets also register their literary expressions in Portuguese, as shared testimonies of their cultural identities, and thus, Deaf Culture began to gain literary space with the launching of books and articles with themes never before imagined (Translated by me. STROBEL, 2008, p. 57).

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escolhida e desejada por todos aqueles indivíduos ou grupos sociais polimórficos que se autodenominam surdos) (CARVALHO, 2019, p. 216)[7].

For Carvalho, it is necessary to have more heated discussions about productions in Libras made by the Deaf Community, with the aim of enabling creations that truly express the subjectivities of deaf people.

In light of the ideas about Deaf Literature presented, there is a growing interest and expansion of discussions on this new literary field, which enables the representation of deaf people and their community. Therefore, even though the deaf community is, in a way, present in groups spread throughout the national territory, their texts share the same desires, challenges, and aspirations. These points bring it closer to other literary productions, but imprint the identity and creativity of the authors, given that what is recorded in their texts are subjective experiences about their lives and testimonies. At this point, it is worth noting, for example, that the denunciation of the treatment that deaf individuals receive in traditional education systems is recurrent and is configured by the same patterns, as can be seen in the autofictional texts below:

> [...] minha avó avisou a professora para que ela deixasse eu sentar na primeira cadeira por que eu não ouvia direito, na verdade eu não ouvia nada apenas lia as palavras que as pessoas diziam, lendo os lábios, a expressão do rosto e das mãos fazendo mímica representativa ou indicativa, usando exageradamente a intuição e vivia mais na dúvida do que na certeza.
>
> [...] Se eu sentasse na primeira carteira as coisas ficavam mais difícil, pois sempre em vez de ver a professora por inteira só via a barriga dela [...] *Nem sempre o que os ouvintes acham que é bom para os surdos realmente é*... (Grifo meu. VILHALVA, 2004, p. 21).
>
> Um dia, minha mãe foi informada de que [...] havia uma escola para surdos. Então eu passei a estudar lá [...]. a escola era oralista e o uso de sinais era proibido. Eu não gostava daquele método, que eu já conhecia da escola de Rio Grande. Nós sofríamos por não poder usar sinais e por sermos forçados a oralizar (DANIEL, 2018, p. 72-73)[8].

This common treatment received by many deaf children demonstrates a long tradition based on the lack of adequate training for teachers who, often, ignore sign language, also revealing a lack of empathy from these professionals towards what is, supposedly, new or different. These traumatic experiences are not exclusive to Brazilian educational culture. This posture is also recorded in other countries, such as France, as presented by Emmanuelle Laborit:

> *A mãe diz:* "Até aos dois anos foste para um centro de reeducação, situado precisamente por cima dum consultório para doenças venéreas. Isso enfurecia-me. Surdez: seria uma doença vergonhosa? Em seguida pusemos-te no infantário do bairro. Um dia fui buscar-te, a professora estava a contar histórias ás crianças para elas aprenderem a falar. Tu estavas a um canto, sozinha, sentada a uma mesa sem prestar a menor atenção, a desenhar. Não parecias muito feliz" (LABORIT, 2000, p. 25)[9].

But what do these reports present that is new? From the experiences of those who lived them, the authors cited, for example, we are invited to reflect on how much literature goes beyond the lists presented in literary manuals and how much this subjective look at facts carries strength and characteristics that sometimes unite through anguish in the face of received oppression, and sometimes innovate through creative and revealing writing that is also a denunciation of teaching methods that do not favour the learning of all students, in their specificities. Even though there are authors who produce their compositions in sign language, such as Ly Neves and Nelson Pimenta, many record their experiences in Portuguese. In this way, Brazilian deaf literature has a field of action: the deaf community, but it carries inherent values of Brazilian hearing literature, which, in turn, are universal. These points make deaf literature a collective manifestation, as it expresses dialogues between the creative word and facts common to deaf people, mobilising affinities that unite people from the same place, the same community, and the same reality. Thus, dialoguing and paraphrasing Cynthia L. Peters (2002), stories or poetic forms can be in Portuguese, but deal with the experiences of deaf people, or they can be in Libras, but expressed in the literary form of written tradition.

[7] I argue that the internationalist and messianic identity hypertrophy of narratives around the theme of "Deaf Literature" is postponing the urgent discussion, study, and practice of the possibilities of expressing literary subjectivities in Libras (or in the form of writing chosen and desired by all those polymorphic individuals or social groups who self-identify as deaf)" (Translated by me. CARVALHO, 2019, p. 216).

[8] [...] my grandmother told the teacher to let me sit in the first chair because I couldn't hear well, in fact I couldn't hear anything, I only read the words people said, reading lips, facial expressions and hands making representative or indicative mime, overusing intuition and living more in doubt than in certainty. [...] If I sat in the first chair, things got more difficult, because instead of seeing the whole teacher, I only saw her belly [...] What hearing people think is good for deaf people isn't always really good... (Emphasis added. Translated by me. VILHALVA, 2004, p. 21).
One day, my mother was informed that [...] there was a school for deaf people. So I started studying there [...]. The school was oralist and the use of signs was forbidden. I didn't like that method, which I already knew from the Rio Grande school. We suffered for not being able to use signs and for being forced to oralise (Translated by me. DANIEL, 2018, p. 72-73).

[9] *Mother says:* "Until you were two, you went to a rehabilitation centre, located precisely above a venereal disease clinic. That infuriated me. Deafness: could it be a shameful disease? Then we put you in the neighbourhood nursery. One day I went to pick you up, the teacher was telling stories to the children for them to learn to speak. You were in a corner, alone, sitting at a table without paying the slightest attention, drawing. You didn't seem very happy" (Translated by me. LABORIT, 2000, p. 25).

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III. The Teaching of Deaf Literature

When dealing with the teaching of deaf literature, it is urgent that some points regarding the production and dissemination of this literature be reflected upon. Therefore, it is emphasised that the teaching of deaf literature perpetuates and keeps alive the history of deaf people and their challenges of yesterday, so that it serves as reflections for the present. Thus, literature, as a resource of collective memory, contributes to the liberation of preconceived and, therefore, (pre)prejudiced thoughts, breaking with stagnant perspectives that support servitude and abasement. Although Deaf Literature presents social marks, like other literatures, it is not limited to geographical boundaries, but reverberates in the most distant territories, leading its readers and writers to perceive that the challenges and reflections are very similar, including in other countries. That is, as Leyla Perrone-Moisés states, "literature is, precisely, a powerful mediator between different cultures, a function that nowadays, in a world globalised by information and human displacements, is more opportune than ever" (PERRONE-MOISÈS, 2016, p. 77).

In the book titled *Mamadu: o herói surdo* (Mamadu: the deaf hero), written by the Portuguese deaf author Marta Morgado, the reader learns the story of the little Guinean boy Miguel, also known as Mamadu in Creole: "Miguel was Miguel, and Miguel was Mamadu" (MORGADO, 2007, p. 7). The story tells that in Guinea-Bissau there was no school for deaf children; therefore, for them to study, the government sent them to study in Portugal, but the children were left alone in the school in the destination country, without contact with their families for years of their lives, due to the distance and the families' lack of financial means.

> Um dia, o presidente daquele país, que tinha ouvido falar daquele menino, ofereceu-lhe uma viagem de avião.
> Os pais ficaram felizes e com esperança que em Portugal houvesse um milagre, de o pôr a ouvir e logo voltar para seu país.
> Mas ao mesmo tempo estavam tristes, porque o filho ia para longe deles (MORGADO, 2007, p. 16)[10].

Although the book is intended for deaf children, the author, who is the first deaf person to write for children in Portugal, provides information at the end of the book about real stories of people who went through situations identical or analogous to Mamadu's. In Brazil, only in 1962 was a kindergarten for deaf children created, headquartered at the National Institute for the Deaf – INES, and only in 1974 was elementary education implemented (Cf. MAIA, 2016, p. 32-33), always centralised in Rio de Janeiro. This centralisation made it difficult for many children to access formal education, as those from other regions or states ended up having to move to Rio de Janeiro to attend school. Consequently, many deaf children remained without schooling. From this example, it is understood, in dialogue with Antoine Campagnon's perspective (2009), that literature offers a means of preserving experience and transmitting it to those who are distant in time and space, and to those who differ in living conditions. It thus promotes the exercise of empathy; "it makes us sensitive to the fact that others are very diverse and that their values differ from ours" (CAMPAGNON, 2009, p. 47).

But in addition to the necessary denunciations, Deaf Literature transmits the knowledge of the deaf people, their language, customs, and traditions, as in Mamadu's story, for example:

> Era uma vez um menino de dois nomes.
> [...]
> Tinha dois nomes porque nasceu num país muito distante, em África, num país vermelho onde só existem duas estações no ano, a estação da seca e a estação húmida (MORGADO, 2007, p. 5)[11].

Upon arriving at school, Mamadu comes to have three names:

> Mamadu agora tinha três nomes:
> Mamadu, Miguel e o nome gestual. O nome gestual foi dado pelos amigos surdos que arranjara na escola. Ele tem dois sinais na bochecha, logo o nome gestual passou a ser esse: “dois sinais na bochecha” (MORGADO, 2007, p. 29)[12].

The fragments above, though short, carry a rich cultural load that transcends the limits of deaf culture and also present common cultural traits in African Portuguese-speaking countries. In the first excerpt, the reader is introduced to the boy who has two names, one "name that people gave him when communicating in Creole, and the official Portuguese name, from the identity card" (MORGADO, 2007, p. 7). Thus, the identity card name comes as a legacy of the colonisation period of African Portuguese-speaking countries, a period in which the Portuguese language was imposed by the colonisers and Portuguese names eventually became a *sine qua non* condition for African peoples to be recognised as citizens within the colonial regime. Next,

[10] One day, the president of that country, who had heard about that boy, offered him an aeroplane trip. The parents were happy and hopeful that in Portugal there would be a miracle, to make him hear and soon return to his country. But at the same time they were sad, because their son was going far from them (Translated by me. MORGADO, 2007, p. 16).

[11] Once upon a time, there was a boy with two names. [...] He had two names because he was born in a very distant country, in Africa, in a red country where there are only two seasons in the year, the dry season and the wet season (Translated by me. MORGADO, 2007, p. 5).

[12] Mamadu now had three names: Mamadu, Miguel and the gestural name. The gestural name was given by the deaf friends he made at school. He has two signs on his cheek, so the gestural name became this: 'two signs on the cheek (Translated by me. MORGADO, 2007, p. 29).

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another piece of information catches the eye of the reader who, perhaps, is unfamiliar with deaf culture: there is a gestural name. Mamadu, at school, receives a gestural name that originates from a characteristic that seems evident to his new deaf friends: "two signs on the cheek". In this case, it is common to say that he was baptised by a deaf person; this is a typical case of great relevance in the deaf community. That is, he entered the deaf community, was accepted by it, and took part.

Thus, dialoguing with Jacinto do Prado Coelho, I agree when he says that "literature is not made to teach: it is reflection on literature that teaches us" (COELHO, *apud* PERRONE-MOISÈS, 2016, p. 70), that is, teaching through literature should be the result of a moment of enjoyment and inevitable reflection, and not the opposite. Thus, literature would not be a pretext for teaching; teaching would be a consequence. According to Luiz Claudio da Costa Carvalho (2019), when discussing the concept of deaf literature, literature should serve no utilitarian purpose. It should "be, among other things, a moment of rest and revolt against the heavy demands of reality and the reality principle. Literature serves to be irreducibly literature" (CARVALHO, 2019, p. 41).

Thus, it is the satisfaction of empathically and cathartically moving with the characters of a narrative or with the lexical organisation that produces the expressiveness of poetry, that the reader acquires new knowledge and realises a new experience in and through reading, as in the poem "Hoje vim descobrir..." (Today I came to discover...), by Shirley Vilhalva:

> Na melodia do tempo, hoje vim descobrir os corpos e suas linguagens com a arte da música, da dança, do teatro e da vida.
> Os olhos dos homens conversam tanto quanto suas línguas. Os olhos que veem o céu, que veem a terra e o mar, que contempla toda beleza desta existência.
> Os olhos que se iluminam de amor ante o majestoso festival de cor da generosa natureza.
> Mas nós que perdemos a faculdade de ver o belo, vemos com a alegria incontida uma flor tanto pelo tato, pelo olfato suas pétalas, seus perfumes e sua cor.
> A missão para arte não tem dor. [...] (VILHALVA, 2004, p. 69)[13].

In this composition, the writer shows that it is the experience brought by time that makes us contemplate life through the beauty of the arts, through the contemplation of nature and the beauty of life itself. This gaze must be attentive to the beauty that life shows us and nature gives us, because, as she states, "we have lost the faculty of seeing beauty". Similarly, in Mamadu, the reader is moved by his journey to Portugal, accompanying his fears and joys, such as the one he felt upon seeing the School for the Deaf for the first time:

> [...] logo recuperou a felicidade quando chegou à escola de meninos surdos, onde ia ficar para aprender a escrever, perceber como nascem os bebés, como era o seu corpo, conhecer as árvores, saber o nome dos frutos, os nomes das cores, saber quem era a sua família e os seus amigos. Precisava de "ouvir" histórias bonitas. E ia arranjar muito amigos para brincar (MORGADO, 2007, p. 22)[14].

The emotion also arises from sharing Mamadu's sadness in the face of constant longing for his family, as he spent years without seeing them:

> Mamadu, às vezes, ficava triste porque tinha saudade do colo da mãe, saudade dos passeios com o pai e saudade dos irmãos com quem jogava à bola. Saudade do calor, que ali fazia mesmo frio nos dias de inverno.
> E outras vezes estava contente porque arranjara muitos amigos e aprendia muitas coisas novas (MORGADO, 2007, p. 28)[15].

As can be seen, literature speaks for itself, fulfilling its role through mimetic representation and the cathartic effects it produces.

IV. Some Considerations

In the essay "A literatura na sociedade: um olhar fictício do real" (Literature in society: a fictitious look at reality), published in 2019, the author already discusses the necessity and urgency of teaching literature and reading practices for enjoyment in current society as a fundamental part of human formation. This is because, as discussed throughout this article, through the examples drawn from the texts of deaf writers Marta Morgado, Shirley Vilhalva, Emmanuelle Laborit, and Daniel Lopes Romeu, literature proposes reflections on the human condition, where "the person is treated in their totality" (SOUSA, 2019, p. 140). Thus, the teaching of Deaf Literature promotes, like other literatures, delight and reflection, but also presents a community that has been silenced for many centuries, exposing its struggles, challenges, and achievements. Therefore, studying and, above all, reading literary texts produced by the deaf community is necessary for the

[13] In the melody of time, today I came to discover bodies and their languages with the art of music, dance, theatre and life. Men's eyes converse as much as their tongues. Eyes that see the sky, that see the earth and the sea, that contemplate all the beauty of this existence. Eyes that light up with love before the majestic festival of colour of generous nature. But we who have lost the faculty of seeing beauty, we see with uncontained joy a flower both by touch, by smell its petals, its perfumes and its colour. The mission for art has no pain. [...] (Translated by me. VILHALVA, 2004, p. 69).

[14] [...] he quickly regained happiness when he arrived at the school for deaf boys, where he would stay to learn to write, to understand how babies are born, what his body was like, to get to know trees, to know the names of fruits, the names of colours, to know who his family and friends were. He needed to 'hear' beautiful stories. And he would make many friends to play with (Translated by me. MORGADO, 2007, p. 22).

[15] Mamadu, sometimes, was sad because he missed his mother's lap, missed walks with his father and missed his brothers with whom he played football. He missed the warmth, for it was truly cold there on winter days. And other times he was happy because he had made many friends and learned many new things (Translated by me. MORGADO, 2007, p. 28).

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human practice of alterity. For the deaf reader, literature brings the relief of perceiving oneself in the other, belonging to a community, since in many cases the deaf person belongs to hearing families. By perceiving oneself in community, the deaf person realises that they are not in a battle alone. For the hearing reader, the exercise of empathy can even lead them to sympathise and fight with the other. The reader becomes more human as they become aware of the cultural and globalised diversity of a plural world. Thus, recalling and paraphrasing Luiz Claudio da Costa Carvalho, it is necessary to revolt against the heavy rules of reality. In literature, revolt also occurs through the reading of Deaf Literature.

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