



**Strategies for diffusing education in museums by means of writing:  
the performance of the National Historical Museum in its Annals and in the Revista do Ensino<sup>1</sup>**

Estratégias de difusão da educação em museus por meio da escrita:  
a atuação do Museu Histórico Nacional em seu Anais e na Revista do Ensino

Estrategias de difusión de la educación en museos a través de la escritura:  
la actuación del Museo Histórico Nacional en su Anales y en la Revista do Ensino

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**Abstract**

The present work aims to reflect, based on publications by author Roger Chartier, how it deepens the investigation on the composition of the texts in the materialities that make them read, emphasizing aspects that intend the curtailed freedom of the reader (such as the author, typographic forms and reading protocols). As an approximation of the empirical exercise, I chose a text by an employee from the National Historical Museum, Sigríd Pôrto de Barros, about education in museums, which was published in two different supports - the Annals of the National Historical Museum and the Revista do Ensino of Rio Grande do Sul - it will serve as support for the construction of the analysis. It concludes that the meaning of the text is not indifferent to the materiality of the object that communicates it, that is, the form transforms the meaning of the writing.

**Keywords:** History of Written Culture. National Historical Museum. Revista do Ensino.

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## Resumo

O presente trabalho se propõe refletir, a partir de publicações do autor Roger Chartier, como o mesmo aprofunda a investigação sobre a composição dos textos nas materialidades que os dão a ler, enfatizando aspectos que intencionam a liberdade cerceada do leitor (tais como o autor, as formas tipográficas e os protocolos de leitura). Como aproximação do exercício empírico elejo um texto de uma funcionária do Museu Histórico Nacional, Sigrid Pôrto de Barros, sobre educação em museus que foi publicado em dois suportes diferentes - os Anais do Museu Histórico Nacional e a Revista do Ensino do Rio Grande do Sul - servirá de apoio para a construção da análise. Conclui que o sentido do texto não é indiferente à materialidade do objeto que o comunica, ou seja, a forma transforma o sentido do escrito.

**Palavras-chave:** História da Cultura Escrita. Museu Histórico Nacional. Revista do Ensino.

## Resumen

El presente trabajo se propone reflexionar, a partir de publicaciones del autor Roger Chartier, como el mismo profundiza la investigación sobre la composición de los textos en las materialidades que los dan a leer, enfatizando aspectos que pretenden la libertad cercenada del lector (tales como el autor, las formas tipográficas y los protocolos de lectura). Como aproximación al ejercicio empírico elijo un texto de una funcionaria del Museo Histórico Nacional, Sigrid Pôrto de Barros, sobre educación en museos que ha sido publicado en dos soportes diferentes - los Anales del Museo Histórico Nacional y la Revista do Ensino de Rio Grande do Sul - servirá de apoyo para la construcción del análisis. Concluye que el sentido del texto no es indiferente a la materialidad del objeto que lo comunica, es decir, la forma transforma el sentido del escrito.

**Palabras clave:** Historia de la Cultura Escrita. Museo Histórico Nacional. Revista do Ensino.

## Texts are not stable

Texts are not stable. This sentence is a great exercise to question and deconstruct how we conceive reading and writing practices throughout history. In this sense, the author Roger Chartier contributes with an extensive research from the perspective of Cultural History, deepening in focus of interest that, as pieces of a puzzle, instigates us to make a set of assumptions to interpret history of written culture: subjects involved, supports and uses, reading protocols, reading methods, transgressed limits and restrained freedoms are, as an example, reflections that allow us to understand where is the place of writing in the knowledge production.

This work proposes to present some of the concepts covered by the author throughout his academic trajectory and, in an applied research, to articulate the author's axes of attention through a text by an employee from the National Historical Museum and published in two different supports: the Annals of the National Historical Museum and the Revista do Ensino. In this sense, some questions are raised: do the morphological characteristics of the printed material influence the writing material appropriation? Is the intention of dissemination and use of the text the same in both publications? In other words, is it the same text?

It is important to present the two print media. The National Historical Museum's staff, unlike other cultural institutions, had the concern of registering and disseminating works and knowledge produced by them. Therefore, writing, for example, was an important ally preserve, from the perspective of the institution, its actions throughout its trajectory, as well as inserting the museum itself in discussions of different areas that permeate the museum field from a national and international perspective.

Since its foundation in 1922, a regulation was fixed to publish the Annals of the National Historical Museum, this being a space for the employees to present their contributions in the construction of knowledge. Although only published from the 1940s onwards, the Annals had become a fundamental channel in the construction of the Museum's institutional history, recognized as a dissemination instrument of its museological conceptions and, consequently, of the perspective and educational potential the staff idealized in their actions.

As Moreira (2006) analyses, the work produced by the National Historical Museum's staff contributed to legitimize history told as from the material culture, building a writing that values the institution's pioneering spirit, producing a memory of the institution as well as a scientific profile to museological experiences. Through works published in the Annals of the National Historical Museum, three employees stand out with their reflections upon the relation between museum and education in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: Nair Moraes de Carvalho, Sigrid Pôrto de Barros and Dulce Cardozo Ludolf (FARIA, 2013).

However, among the three employees, in the annual reports the museum conservator<sup>2</sup> Sigrid Pôrto de Barros was singled out as the most involved with museum audiences, specifically following-up visitations. One of the future developments of this initiative was her nomination as head of the Research and Pedagogical-Museographic Assistance Section of the Educational and Cultural Activities Division of the National Historical Museum in 1977 (SÁ; SIQUEIRA, 2007).

Sigrid Pôrto de Barros initiated the Museum Studies Course in 1947 and graduated in 1949. Beginning her work at the National Historical Museum in 1953, since the institution's annual report in 1956 there was evidence that the employee has museum education as the

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<sup>2</sup> The Museum Studies Course, founded in 1932 at the National Historical Museum, aimed to teach specialized professionals to work in museums with the title of museum curators. It was only in 1966 that these graduates were officially called museologists.

centrality of her work (BRASIL, 1957), sharing her propositions not only among the staff, but also in the Annals of the National Historical Museum and in journals related to the Education field, such as *Revista do Ensino of Rio Grande do Sul*.

The *Revista do Ensino of Rio Grande do Sul* was part of the pedagogical press vehicles, that is, it was part of the set of periodicals formulated to professors by professors, or even students to their peers or professors, “[...] mainly aim to guide [the] daily practice, offering information about the content and spirit of the official programs, the conduct in class and the didactics of the subjects (BASTOS, 2007, doc. eletr., own translation). According to Bastos, Lemos e Busnello (2007), the purpose of the *Revista do Ensino* was to orientate the teacher, especially the primary school teacher, in scientific and instrumental pedagogical knowledge, providing readers with guidelines, legislation, courseware, for example:

In this way, it constituted a significant teacher education device, for intellectual and moral guidance and direction, conformation of their social and school practices, which allows to analyze what is expressed in educational and pedagogical terms, and how they act as devices and subjectivation of the modern teacher (BASTOS; LEMOS; BUSNELLO, 2007:44, own translation).

The *Revista do Ensino* had two editing phases: the first comprehends the years of 1939 to 1942, and the second from 1951 to 1978. Its trajectory reveals its importance in the educational environment, with a circulation peak of 50 thousand copies in the early 1960s decade, no longer limited to Rio Grande do Sul state, its repercussion became regional, national and international (BASTOS; LEMOS; BUSNELLO, 2007). Thereby, by approaching two supports that supposedly convey the same text, the composition of the arguments presented will contribute to the analysis of the hypothesis: The meaning is not entirely in the text, the objects that provide the reading contribute to the production of meanings, that is, they decisively play a role in the appropriation made by the readers.

### **Assigned roles to writing**

When investigating the place of writing in the relation between men and production of knowledge, Roger Chartier presents different assumptions to understand the history of reading and writing practices. The construction that weaves is not the history of the book, on the contrary, this is one of the many supports to read the text. According to the author, it is important to understand that the forms produce meaning, and a text, as stable as it appears to be, invites the reader to interpretations that can be differentiated due to the unprecedented status that the support provides (CHARTIER, 1998c).

Even though he considers that each reader produces an inventive appropriation of the text they receive, Chartier (1996:20, own translation) pondered that every writing has a reading proposal: “That being explicitly stated by the writer or mechanically produced by the machinery of the text, inscribed in the letter of the work as well as in the devices of its printing”. The construction of meaning of the text and its support have intentions and conventions, it also demands habits and competences for the reading practice. The reader's freedom is never absolute. The author, the editorial intention, the reading protocols and the typographic devices are central elements for the discussion of what the author calls the “world of the text”.

According to Chartier, in its publication *Reading Practices* (1996:96, own translation), the guidelines produced in the text by the author to conduct the reading are

relevant for the investigation of the role attributed to the text: “These instructions, clearly directed or unconsciously imposed on the reader, aim to define what should be a correct relation with the text and to impose its meaning”. In the publication *The book adventure: from the reader to the navigator* (1998a) it reinforces, from Foucault, that certain genres call for the name of the author as a fundamental identification, in order to circulate and be received, while in others do not. In the first case, the figure of the author often legitimizes the decision to read a text, as well as stimulates the reader in the appropriation of meanings and in their multiple uses.

The academic text is an example of authorship appreciation. It is interesting to observe Chartier’s premises to analyze a text produced by Sigrid Pôrto de Barros, former employee of National Historical Museum. Originally elaborated in 1948, but published only in 1958<sup>3</sup>, Barros wrote to the Annals of the National Historical Museum a text titled *The Museum and the Child*. It is important to highlight that one of the Annals production policies was that the published texts were written by the museum staff, legitimizing the researches and the actions taken inside the institution. The text aims to present the planning work in visits to the National Historical Museum, specifically to primary school. Therefore, it presents suggested methods to each scholar grades estimating attractive and participative activities. In 1963, a summary of the text was published in *Revista do Ensino*.

Did the practical and reflexive experience of the author legitimize her text to be shared as a proposition to guide visitors in history museums? The text, upon its diffusion in *Revista*, underwent through adaptations. Would they have the same intentions and propositions when read in different supports?

Although they are the same words, when approaching the format of the supports, it feels like it is not the same text. And, according to Chartier, it is not. In addition to the author, the editorial intention reinforces a meaning given to the text and the reader’s limited freedom: through codes and conventions, the discursive and material forms of the texts that are read reinforce limitations that govern reading practices (CHARTIER, 1998a; 1998c).

According to Chartier (1998a:53, own translation), the editor is a “singular entrepreneur who also sees himself as an intellectual and whose activity is carried out equally with the authors; hence, in fact, their often difficult and tense relationships”. Ergo, their participation in the writing practice is as significant as the operations performed by the author: “[...] the text arrangement and division, its typography, its illustration. These book production procedures do not belong to writing, but to printing [...] and could suggest different readings of the same text” (CHARTIER, 1996:97, own translation).

To understand which mechanisms produce an intention in the printed objects uses, in the ways of reading and reading appropriation, Roger Chartier formulated an expression to understand the text order: reading protocols.

The reading protocols set out the meaning of the text to be given by the reader. They can be internal to the text, elaborated by the author stimulated by a disciplinary will, or attributed in the printed form by its edition, composition, typography printing, conferred by editorial intention. In this sense, reading protocols can be conceived both by the author and the editor.

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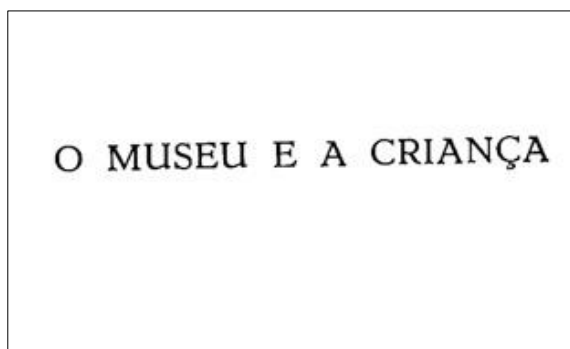
<sup>3</sup> Discrepancies between the edition of the volume and the actual publication of the Annals of the National Historical Museum were recurrent until the year 1964, still publishing articles that were written in 1953, due to the waiting list service obligation of the National Press, publisher of the periodical. In the covers it is registered both years, in the case of the object of study, 1948 as the year of the volume’s organization and 1958 as the year of its printing. In the text both years will be evidenced, using square brackets for the original year of production of the text.

Guidelines in the production of meanings, reading protocols can have different intentions: interpretive, complementary, illustrative, persuasive, reality effect to the text. A reading protocol can be found, for example, in quotations, in conclusive terms, in footnotes, in the didacticization of the text, in an illustration:

Indeed, we can define as relevant to the production of texts the passwords, explicit or implicit, that an author inscribes in his work in order to produce a correct reading of it, in other words, one that will be in accordance with his intention. (CHARTIER, 1996:96, own translation)

Reading protocols are significant in the text by Sigrid Pôrto de Barros. The first to stand out, probably developed by the editor, is the title (Figures 1 and 2). Although it is the same formulation, “The Museum and the Child”, the typography used in the Annals of the National Historical Museum and in the Revista do Ensino change radically the perception of the text: the first one is composed entirely of serif letters, bringing the seriousness of a typed text, as well as the academic tone of the production. In the second one, the crafted composition, particularly in the word The Museum, evokes a didactic approach, very inviting, attractive, consistent with its support.

**Figure 1** –Title “The Museum and the Child”  
Annals of the National Historical Museum



Source: BARROS, 1958 [1948]:46

**Figure 2** - Title “The Museum and the Child”  
Revista do Ensino



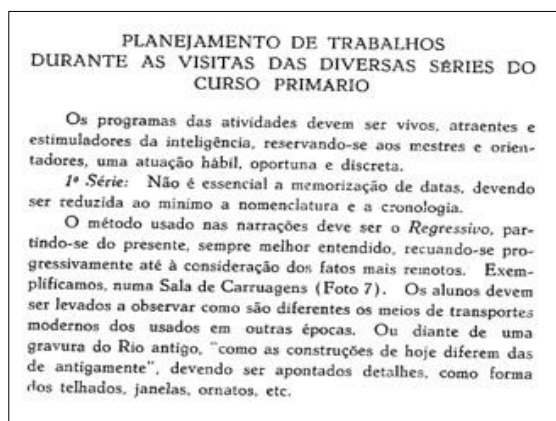
Source: BARROS, 1963:48

Another important Reading protocol, possibly elaborated both by the author and the editors, are the divisions that make the text didactic. The first version has, in total, 27 pages. In Revista do Ensino, three pages. Upon careful analysis, it is clear that the subtitle presented in Revista “WORK PLANNING DURING VISITATION VARIOUS GRADES FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL” is, in the Annals version, one of many sections that guide the text reading. This selection of a part of a text provokes us to focus, according to Chartier (2004:18, own translation), the “attention to particular practices, specific objects, determined uses” of the text, whether from the perspective of the producers will on discourses and norms, or in the reader's differentiated appropriations.

In this sense, by emphasizing the subsection of the Annals of the National Historical Museum and the text of Revista do Ensino, it is clear that, although they use the same words, their organization, presentation and extension make the same text unique (Figures 3 and 4). This impression is reinforced in its distribution: the use of columns modifies the reading. In the Annals, the text is continuous. In Revista, the layout is three columns. As a reader that studied both versions, I noticed that the reading of the first one appears to be heavier than the second: the long line of the text appears to propagate the

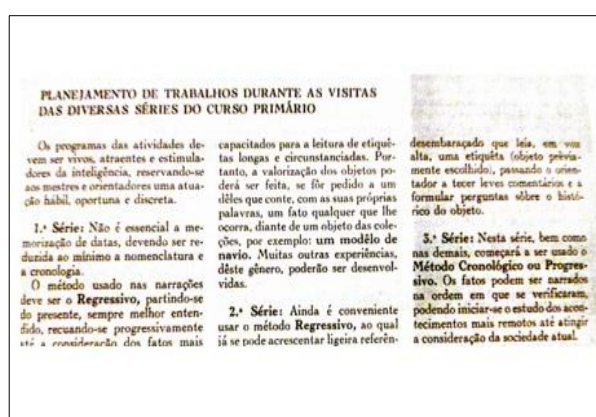
content with greater formulation, while in the second the short lines provide a more agile and objective appropriation, giving it a sense of a manual in comparison to the previous version: “The work is never the same when inscribed in different forms, it carries, each time, another meaning” (CHARTIER, 1998a:71, own translation).

**Figure 3** – Arrangement of text in a single column in Annals of the National Historical Museum



Source: BARROS, 1963:48

**Figura 4** - Arrangement of text in three columns in Revista do Ensino



Source: BARROS, 1958 [1948]:63

It is noteworthy that, in the text used as example for the analysis, there is intentionally a significant change when bringing the two versions close together: the images choice. According to Chartier (1998b), the printed image is conceived and handled as a knowledge instrument, making it suitable for elaborating the truth of the constructed discourse. Associated with the text, by gaining the adhesion of those who look at it, it produces persuasion and belief, legitimizing it:

The image is often a proposal or a reading protocol, suggesting the reader the correct understanding of the text, its fair meaning. [...] it can be built in a memory place that crystallizes, in a unique representation, a story, an advertisement, a teaching, or it can be built as a moral figure, symbolic, analogic, that provides a global meaning of the text, in which a discontinuous and rambling reading could lose it. (CHARTIER, 1998b:15-16, own translation)

Analyzing the use of image as a typographic device (1998b), Roger Chartier ponders: its meaning and role are not the same when it is dissociated from or inscribed in the text. The use of image as a reading protocol presupposes that the reader abstractly establishes the relationships that give them meaning.

The same part of the text of Barros that was published in both Annals of the Museu Histórico Nacional and in Revista do Ensino has two images as a reading protocol. However, in each support, different photographs were selected that modify the conceptual and theoretical construction of the text, transforming it decisively. This selection operation and purposeful relations collaborate to “understand how the same text, when read in different

ways, can produce not only different meanings but also different audiences” (CHARTIER, 2012:163, own translation).

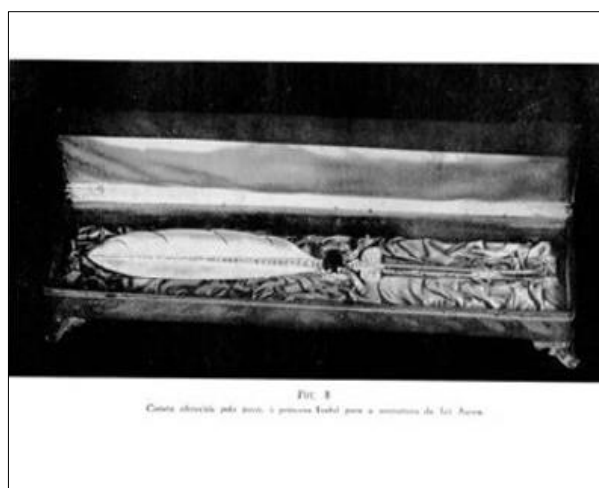
In the Annals of the National Historical Museum, the images selected and introduced in the middle of the text (Figures 5 and 6) are objects that are part of the institution’s collection. Each image fills an entire page, thereby obtaining great emphasis. Along with the images, the captions reinforce even more the cultural heritage appreciation by linking it to great heroes and great facts: In photography 07 of the publication, which features a land transport, the caption “Gala coach that served D. Pedro II” (Figure 5); in the following page, photography 08 is a pen and the caption reveals: “Pen offered by the people to Princess Isabel for the signing of the Lei Áurea” (Figure 6).

**Figure 5** – Photography 7 of Annals of the National Historical Museum’s article



Source: BARROS, 1958 [1948]:64<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 6** - Photography 8 of Annals of the National Historical Museum’s article



Source: BARROS, 1958 [1948]:<sup>5</sup>

The presentation of these objects, as well as the captions, value the lesson of things method in the scholar visits and reinforce the Museum as Homeland School or the House of Brazil, titles that the employees and the press of that time propagated to encourage civic education.

By contrasting the images of the text on both supports comes a surprise: in Revista do Ensino it was also selected two photographs. One can be found in the upper part of the text, beside the title, filling part of two sequential pages. The second one occupies half of a page. What is interesting to observe is that it is the same objects presented in the Annals article, the coach (Figure 7) and the pen (Figure 8). However, the visibility of the cultural heritage is radically transformed, because instead of the image revealing the object itself, it captures students interacting with the heritage. They are touching them, a practical inhibited by contemporary safeguard process. There is the expression of curiosity, of attention, energetically qualifying the use of the text proposal, as informed by its subtitle: Work Planning during visitation of various grades from Primary School.

<sup>4</sup> Caption transcription: Gala coach that served D. Pedro II” (BARROS, 1958 [1948]:64).

<sup>5</sup> Caption transcription: “Pen offered by the people to Princess Isabel for the signing of the Lei Áurea (BARROS, 1958 [1948]:65).



**Figure 7** – Coach photography in the text published by Revista do Ensino - lower portion of the page



Source: BARROS, 1964:49

**Figure 8** – Pen photograph in the text published by Revista do Ensino - center of two pages



Source: BARROS, 1964:48-49

It should also be noted that the photography's caption complements their action as a reading protocol within the text. The intonation proposed when reading the information presented in the caption is modified by textual codes that give the phrase a kind of dialogue: the dash, the quotation marks, the bold, the ellipses and the exchange of the term coach for carriage enhance writing as it is a speech, legitimizing the didacticization of visiting museums, reinforced by the image of students, and the interaction with the reader who, in Revista do Ensino's case, had the teacher as a target audience: – “With this pen Princess Isabel signed the **Lei Áurea**” (Figure 8) “this carriage carried, in the old days, the emperor Pedro II to great solemnities...” (Figure 7).

The author, the editorial intention, the reading protocols, among which the typographic devices form a complex operation that allows the text to be read: "The limitations exist, the limitations are in the texts, in the objects that convey these texts, in the voices that enunciate their meaning" (CHARTIER, 2012:167, own translation). However, although there are limitations that belong, as the author refers, to the order of speech, “[...] a text only exists if there is a reader to give it meaning” (CHARTIER, 1998c:11, own translation). These movements make the text unique and, at the same time, added to the reader's own references, provide a sense that is more or less shared to the uses and significance roles assigned to writing.

### Final considerations - the roles assigned to writing

One text, two impressions in different supports. By bringing together what seems to be the same text, based on the assumptions formulated by Roger Chartier, is to propose new perceptions about the uses, the handling, the ways of the text appropriation. In this sense, the author gives a guidance in analyzing the writing and reading practices, centered in the subjects, whether they are the creators that limit the senses, or the readers who, by attributing meanings, transgress the limitations.

Sigrid Pôrto de Barros text had become an interesting object of study: it was published in the Annals of the National Historical Museum, a scientific publication of the institution in which the articles produced contributed to legitimize the history told from the material culture, being a tool for propagating discussions among peers (MAGALHÃES, 2006), as well as in Revista do Ensino of Rio Grande do Sul, a prominent vehicle in the pedagogical press, being part of the set of periodicals that was formulated by teachers for teachers, or even students for their peers or teachers, guided the daily

practice of teaching (BASTOS, 2007). From a theoretical text, with extensive formulations based academically on museum education, it became through reading protocols and its support, a manual on how to carry out educational visits in museums.

Vidal and Faria Filho (2005) address three aspects that constituted the History of Education in Brazil: the first was marked by the contributions of Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, systematizing a narrative about the country's educational practice; in a second period, the authors highlight the Normal Schools as a place for studying History of Education, perceived as a discipline, integrated theoretical references with everyday school life; and the third important movement was granted by academic writing, making History of Education a study field that was able to aggregate multiple objects that relate to learning and school cultures. It is observed, from the perspective of the History of Education, that the production of museum curator Sigrid Pôrto de Barros is consistent with the context of the field of education in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the search for education qualification, by providing opportunities for life, whether it is in artistic encouragement, promotion of recreational socio-educational activities and encouragement of cultural extension. It was up to the school to encourage the student to obtain knowledge, while the teacher was assigned the role of facilitator of learning, sharpening their curiosity and interest.

One development on this perspective in Brazil was *Pioneers of New Education Manifesto: the educational reconstruction in Brazil*, signed by 26 intellectuals and published in 1932. The document was considered a divider between conservative and liberal Brazilian educators. Peres (2005) observes that history of New School, also known as Active School or Progressive School, presents divergences and disagreements in relation to the ideological project of a renewed school. However, she highlights that the reaction against formalism and the habit of putting school on the edge of life were presuppositions that united the reaction movement. The museum conservator Sigrid Pôrto de Barros expressed by writing her bond with Active School, defending education in museums as a process capable of contributing to a Brazilian society transformation. It is not a coincidence that her text was published in *Revista do Ensino*, a printed journal that had as a target audience professors from Normal School.

Therefore, the approach to the theoretical assumptions formulated by Roger Chartier and the empirical essay show how dynamic a text is – the trajectory of formulation, circulation and sharing of a text demonstrate how the act of writing and reading are practical, and first of all, are cultural. Their complex relationships encourage the researcher's attention to uses, appropriations and attributions of meaning given to texts conditioned processes and, at the same time, transgressed, by producers who offer reading and readers who have different ways of reading the text.

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