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Digital narratives on entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school: ego-documents and written culture in history of the present time[1]

Abstract

The proposal of this article is discussing digital narratives written in the first person, taken in their widest sense as ego-documents. We analyzed 12 blogs and 4 personal websites that provide written stories on entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school (which were in force in Brazil between 1931 and 1971), as well as comments related to each post. The analysis of narratives was conducted having three irreducibly interconnected axes as a basis: the first one is methodological and requires discussing the possibilities and limits of exploring blogs and websites as adequate historical sources to grasp the contemporary phenomena of memory, narrative, and temporalities. The second axis implies analyzing narratives posted on blogs and websites as phenomena that contribute to provide the history of written culture in the present time with intelligibility. The third axis of analysis imposes thinking through meanings of the past and memory in the writings of one's own. The issues raised herein deal with challenges of the meaning and interpretation of time by subjects of the present. If we take into account that narrating one's life is a transcultural need related to the sense of existence, we must not give up thinking of changes that take place in human experience and its relation to historicity after hyper-connectivity, which became possible through the web 2.0, has significantly altered the flows of time and space.

Keywords: Written culture. Digital narratives. Entrance exam for the Brazilian secondary school.

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[1] The discussions presented herein bring results of two different but convergent work orders. The first one refers to the research project **Entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school: books, narratives, and memoirs in the construction of History as a school discipline (decades 1930-1970)**, approved by the CNPq (Proceeding No. 304878/2012-0), granted with a productivity scholarship for the triennium 2013-2016, in the area of History. The second deals with studies related to writings of one's own and history of written culture conducted at the Department of History and Philosophy of the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain, under the supervision of Ph.D. Prof. Antonio Castillo Gómez, within the period from February to July 2015, with a Senior Internship Abroad scholarship granted by the CAPES (Proceeding No. BEX/5955/14-9).

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Narrativas digitais sobre os exames de admissão ao ginásio: ego-documentos e cultura escrita na história do tempo presente

Resumo

A proposta deste artigo é discutir narrativas digitais escritas em primeira pessoa, tomadas em seu sentido mais amplo de ego-documentos. Foram analisados 12 *blogs* e 4 *sites* pessoais que trazem histórias escritas sobre os exames de admissão ao ginásio (que vigoraram no Brasil entre 1931 e 1971), bem como os comentários relativos a cada postagem. A análise das narrativas foi desenvolvida a partir de três eixos irredutivelmente articulados: o primeiro deles é metodológico e requer problematizar as possibilidades e limites de explorar *blogs* e *sites* como fontes históricas adequadas para compreender os fenômenos contemporâneos da memória, da narrativa e das temporalidades. O segundo eixo implica analisar as narrativas postadas nos *blogs* e *sites* como fenômenos que contribuem para dotar de inteligibilidade a história da cultura escrita no tempo presente. O terceiro eixo de análise impõe uma reflexão sobre os sentidos do passado e da memória nas escritas de si. As questões aqui levantadas lidam com os desafios sobre a significação e interpretação do tempo pelos sujeitos do presente. Se se considera que narrar a própria vida é uma necessidade transcultural relativa à significação da existência, é irrenunciável pensar nas mudanças operadas na experiência humana e sua relação com a historicidade depois que a hiperconectividade, possibilitada pela web 2.0, alterou significativamente os fluxos do tempo e do espaço.

Palavras-chave: Cultura escrita. Narrativas digitais. Exame de admissão ao ginásio.

Introduction

> *Stories are narrated, life is lived.*
> (RICOEUR, 2006, p. 15)

I start the text by means of this paradox because I think that understanding it allows us to better address the object of the discussion proposed herein: the human beings' almost unrenounceable need to narrate life and the way how this need makes it possible to grasp certain historical phenomena associated with the uses and functions of writing on digital media, in the present time.

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According to Paul Ricoeur (2006, 2010), what could be an abyss between story and life or between fiction and life is not actually so. First, because it is necessary to bear in mind that life and lived experience allude to different meanings. Life is a biological phenomenon while lived experience is a cultural phenomenon related to the experience of living, the space between birth and death in which human beings go through processes of 'acting and suffering.' The fabric of a life might be this intersection between ways of acting and suffering that alternate or overlap. There, in this key, story and life may be reconciled, "since reading itself is actually a way of living within the fictional universe of a work; in this sense, we may already claim that stories are narrated, and they are also *imaginatively* lived" (RICOEUR, 2006, p. 16-17, emphasis by the author). This is so because the configuration process does not end with the text, but rather with the reader, enabling a reconfiguration of life through the story, "more specifically: the sense or meaning of a story emerges at *the intersection of the text's world and the reader's world*" (RICOEUR, 2006, p. 15, emphasis by the author).

Among innumerable ways of narrating life, writing has held a special relation to the spatial and temporal dimension of existence and human activities, since its advent, at least 5,000 years ago. Viñao Frago (2002, p. 353) highlights that writting has allowed us to safeguard the ephemeral nature of orality, making possible the recovery of a written work in other spaces and times different from those in which it was originally produced. For a long time, people wrote only by hand and manuscripts were the fruits of a collective practice. Even with the press, after the 15th century, writting would remain as a collective practice. In Europe, it would only become individualized or even autobiographized from the 19th century onwards (LEJEUNE, 2008, p. 324). The fact is that writing as a collective or individual practice, handwritten or printed, has promoted a new awareness of temporality, through the flow of time linked to textuality. A relationship that the press certainly reinforced, although it did not immediately produce new ways of reading, since "changes in the order of practices are usually slower than revolutions in techniques" (CHARTIER, 2009, p. 63). But awareness of temporality and textuality, as well as the close relationship between them in the long run, might favor the development of historical awareness by comparing the past to the present (VIÑAO FRAGO, 2002, p. 354). Such a

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comparison would resignify the very idea of finitude, repositioning the place of writing in the history of human beings.

Chartier (2006) analyzes that fear of loss haunted European societies in the 16th and 17th centuries. In order to conjure this danger, they devoted themselves to fixing in written form the vestiges of the past, the memory of the dead, or the glory of the living, and all the stories that should not disappear. However, still according to this historian, the excessive amount of writings, which multiplies useless texts and suffocates thought under accumulated discourses, "was perceived like a risk as big as its opposite. Feared, erasure was then necessary, just as oblivion to enhance memory" (CHARTIER, 2006, p. 10). Grasping the tension between restlessness of loss and fear of excess, the relation between the sense of human experience and time, mediated by narratives, goes through the history of written culture. This history is understood herein through the studies by Castillo Gómez (2002, 2003, 2012) as a proposal to overcome the traditional distinction between history of writing, on the one hand, and history of the book and reading, on the other, so that they converge to a common space: that of social history of written culture, whose task might be: "the study of the production, diffusion, use, and conservation of written objects, whatever their concrete materiality - ranging from the official document to the private letter – or medium – from the clay tablet to the electronic screen" (CASTILLO GÓMEZ, 2002, p. 19).

However, these relations – between keeping the living's memory on written media and even the writing's culture itself – have undergone major shifts (still in progress) after the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs) since the second half of the 20th century. Of course, it is not just about changes in techniques, but about their resonance in reading and writing experiences. This is so because this revolution – already configured as the Web 2.0[2] in the 21st century – has made possible the existence of a digital sphere as a space of hyperconnected virtuality that provoked significant mutations in the ways of narrating life and in the relationships established between writing and orality. Certainly, these mutations also have implications for subjectivities,

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[2] The term aims to mark a new development stage for the Internet. It *roughly* refers to web formats that are characterized by facilitating intercommunication between readers, information sharing, and interactivity. See: Sibilia (2008, p. 14); Escandell Montiel (2014, p. 46).

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relationships established between subjects and temporalities, the meanings of past and experience and the expectations about the future. In the present, narratives in digital media become important documents to analyze new formats for writings of one's own, subjectivities, and the history of written culture. Thus, this article analyzes ways of narrating life through posts about the entrance exams to the Brazilian secondary school[3] on various blogs[4] and personal websites[5]. The idea is noticing how these texts written in the first person use the past and evidence interpretations on time when they inscribe memoirs on the schooling experience.

My encounter with digital narratives came when I was using Internet search tools in order to map studies and information about entrance exams to the Brazilian secondary school. These searches have led me to more than a dozen blogs and personal websites that provide nostalgic and romantic testimonials about "the time of the exams." I discovered men and women taking the role of narrators in versions of a story that was also my research object. But they were other stories and I discovered in them a taste – and a work possibility – that I had not proven and discovered by using the other documents mapped so far. They were narratives posted on blogs or websites, managed by the narrator her/himself or posted by other readers/authors who participated in this

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[3] For forty years, Brazilian students who completed primary school (7 to 10 years old) and wished to go on with their studies in secondary school (11 to 17 years old) should undergo oral and written tests of Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography, and History of Brazil. Only those tested could enroll in the 1st grade of the secondary (organized in two cycles, the first named as *gymnasium*, lasting 4 years, and the second named as *high school*, lasting 3 years). The compulsory nature of these exams was instituted by the Francisco Campos Reform (Brazilian Decree No. 19,890, enacted on April 18, 1931) and it officially lasted until 1971, when it was extinguished by Brazilian Law No. 5,692/71.

[4] According to Escandell Montiel (2014, p. 17-18, 20), it is hard to pinpoint the date of the advent of the weblog format, as there were many similar initiatives that emerged in various places from the second half of the 1990s onwards. But the term *blog* comes in 1999 when Peter Merholz coins the word, with some humorous intent, on the right side of his weblog "Peterme.com," making a play using the words "we blog," which might be, in turn, a contraction of the full sentence: "we blog because we weren't very popular in high school and we're trying to gain respect and admiration without actually having to be around people."

[5] A *blog* is also a *website*, but a *website* is not a *blog*. We may say that creating a website requires more complex programming requirements than a blog. In addition, websites are often created to provide information on products/services of a certain company. It is clear, however, that the websites cited in this article do not refer to companies, but to individual citizens who have created a website as a means to publicize their work and also talk about themselves. Among the administrators of these websites there are, for instance, writers/poets and also a pastor (Congregational Evangelical Church).

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recollection with their stories or comments, about school-time experiences regarded as unforgettable.

These considerations and the reading of some stories posted on these virtual spaces resized the ongoing research about the exams, as I realized the need to also think of the narratives and the websites themselves in their uniqueness as sources for historical research in the present time. They are narratives of one's own, individual and collective memoirs inscribed in a kind of "window that is always open and linked to dozens of people at the same time" (SIBILIA, 2008, p. 12) and in need of mobilizing analytical tools different from those selected to think of the textbooks and other documents of the research mentioned above, such as reports of the schools about the exams, for instance.

Twelve blogs, four websites, and their respective comments have been found and cataloged, and they provide narratives devoted to entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school. In order to write this article we have selected texts and images regarded as more capable of representing this universe. These narratives are analyzed through three different axes, irreducibly interconnected and separated herein only to try making the discussion clearer: the first is methodological and requires discussing the possibilities and limits of exploring blogs and websites as adequate historical sources to grasp the contemporary phenomena of memory, narrative, and temporalities. The second axis implies analyzing the narratives posted as phenomena that contribute to providing the history of written culture in the present time with intelligibility. A fertile investigation field, and particularly desolated by the restlessness arising from the significant transformations that took place in the writing composition techniques, its media and modes of appropriation, as Castillo Gómez (2002, p. 150) points out: "we are on the road with no return to digital networks and the latter necessarily imply other ways of relating to written material and even new and significant developments for the text's culture."

The third axis of analysis imposes thinking through meanings of the past and memory in the writings of one's own. In this study, digital narratives are understood as writings of one's own, taken in the widest sense of ego-document. The term *ego-document* was coined by the Dutch historian Jacob Presser, in 1958, to designate "the

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diversity of written expression forms of personal feelings and experiences. From its viewpoint, an ego-document is a text, of any shape or size, 'in which an ego is deliberately or accidentally hidden or revealed'" (AMELANG, 2005, p. 17). This concept gained recognition in the academic world, also affecting the historiographical literature, which shifted its focus to the breadth of written testimonies – letters, diaries, family chronicles, travel diaries, among others. In the present time, social media, blogs, and personal websites have diversified the media of these writings, further widening the textual genres that bring claims of one's own.

Even in various media, the digital narratives addressed herein have in common the first-person written form, whose narrative reflex consists in personal experiences of the narrator/writer. This reflection poses challenges on the meaning and interpretation of time by subjects of the present time. Indeed, if we start from the idea that "there is a correlation between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal nature of human experience, a correlation which is not purely casual, but rather takes the form of a transcultural need" (RICOEUR, 2010, p. 92), and that the Internet has significantly altered the flows of time and space, we must not give up thinking of changes that occur in human experience in its relation to historicity.

Blogs and personal websites as historical sources for writing the history of the present time

Every source is an "invented" source.
(ROUSSO, 1996, p. 87)

"Oral history means for writing the history of the present time what archeology means for writing the ancient history." This was one of the arguments on which I constructed a part of the reflections on history of the present time, in order to provide some issues of my Ph.D. thesis with a basis, more than a decade ago, and they have been published as an article later on (SILVA, 2006). Today, I could no longer say just oral history, but I would also add the Internet. Of course, not all of the work with oral history

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or the Internet is inscribed as a history of the present time. However, we may claim that, in recent years, historical research carried out in and on the present could no longer do without the Internet as a place of possibility for a new category of documentary sources.

I think that history of the present time gains momentum as a new domain in the historiographical operation and not as a chronological time frame added to the classic quadripartite organization of history. We may claim that it deals with temporal scales that may be located either in a rather distant past or in a more recent one, but which also refer to problems of the past that strongly challenge the present time. Therefore, it deals, with issues related to a past that does not pass by, particularly those related to phenomena of memory (disputes, prohibition of certain forgetfulnesses, celebration, heritage, archivistics, etc.) and displacements in relation to the perception of temporalities (the Telos giving room to the Kairos).

According to the analysis by François Dosse (2012, p. 6), this new conception of the historiographical operation might be "at the intersection of the present and the long run." Still according to this historian, the perception of successive crises – after the second half of the 20th century – resulted in pessimism about history or even disbelief in the idea of continuous progress, allowing the emergence of a totally new temporal relationship; the present would be both extended and closed in itself, producing a "dominant presenteeism" (DOSSE, 2001). A phenomenon that suggests the effervescence of celebrations, ranging from prohibition to forgetfulness, the significance of memory that put the instant, the moment in contrast with the "empire of the past." However, the same decades that marked the dissolution of the past and its celebration have also strongly brought the memorialistic expansion, with its museum-making and institutionalization of the past, "the Potemkin villages[6] and the historical theme-parks" (SARLO, 2007, p. 11). This movement also had as an effect other and new forms of

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[6] It is said that Russian prince and minister Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin built façade villages to impress the *czarina*, Catherine II, during her visit to the Crimea, in 1787. The façade villages might have been erected along the banks of the Dnieper River (Catherine II traveled by boat) to give the impression of a colonizing boom that did not exist. This version has not been proven, many historians doubt it or regard it as an exaggeration. However, 'Potemkin village' came to mean, especially in a political context, a literal or figurative farce for propaganda purposes. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potemkin_village. Accessed on: May 16, 2015.

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historicity as an experiment, since it implied a redefinition of the notion of event "as an approach to a multiplicity of possibilities, of virtual, potential situations, and no longer as something consummate in its fixity" (DOSSE, 2001, p. 92).

By ceasing to be only a space of time understood as an a-historical lapse, the present has denoted a field full of possibilities for historians willing to overcome its challenges. Such an enlargement might measure the complexity of the relation between the historian and a time that reserves to her/him "too ardent contacts" (BLOCH, 2001, p. 61) and it would also put the present as a historically constructed time. In this regard, Luisa Passerini (1996), inspired by Hannah Arendt, stresses the importance of not forgetting that the present we are dealing with is not a place of passage between a before and an after, a gap between the past and the future, but rather a field of forces constituted through human thought. A notion that allows us to better understand what the present may entail of discontinuity, of rupture, of bridge between the past and the future. A historical construction, time is not a continuum, because it is interrupted at the point where the human being is. Based on this assumption, it is understood that history, especially history of the present time, contributes "to create the gap that every new generation, every human being must discover and preserve through diligent work" (PASSERINI, 1996, p. 114).

It is also worth not forgetting that both a reading of the recent past and that of the distant past are organized according to interpretations and issues always situated in the present. Long ago, Michel de Certeau (1982) pointed out that the historiographic operation is organized according to rules of its own, constituting a part of the reality that it addresses, in a relation between a social place, a practice, and writing. Therefore, the historian's craft is tributary of its time; of its choices and interventions mediated by criteria validated by the pertinence of disciplinary practice and organized by having the particularity of its social place as a basis.

Still in the 1940s, the historian Marc Bloch (2001, p. 79) already claimed that "the diversity of historical testimonies is almost infinite. Whatever a man says or writes, whatever he manufactures, whatever he touches can and should inform us about him." This article takes this rather broad and current definition of "historical source," as well as

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the idea that history is not restricted purely to the past, but rather to men and women in time. Thus, I think that texts written in the first person on blogs and personal websites become indispensable documentary sources to think of the relations established between past, present, and future, since they evidence the subjective dimensions of the links between certain subjects and past events and how these events are selected, reprocessed, and produced as memoirs.

Of course, not only those who are devoted to studies related to a recent past or history of the present time see the Internet an inexhaustible means of resources. Various foundations, libraries, specific research projects, etc. keep files of different documents scanned on the Internet that are not limited to recent past events.[7] But texts written on specific media, such as blogs and personal websites, do not belong to the same order of these virtual documents and they are not gathered in a specific archive, objectively constituted for research purposes.

Working with historical sources inventoried on the Internet also displaces the very notion of archive in the historiographical operation. Ever since the emergence of the critical method and the professional historian, in the 19th century, the "archive" issue has occupied a central place in historiographical debates. But this place was destabilized and modified by the use of oral interviews and the emergence of a history of the present time, which might entail "direct confrontation and permanent dialogue with the living traces of the past – the player's memory" (ROUSSO, 1996, p. 85). From then on, an archive is no longer seen as the repository of "true documents" about the past, an almost sacralized place in which historians must access to look for "the proof," the source of

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[7] Just to illustrate, I mention herein some addresses that provide scanned documents. Newspapers and/or magazines, from digital hemerotecas, for instance, the National Library of Spain: http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/. Accessed on: May 22, 2015. National Library (Brazil): http://bndigital.bn.br/hemeroteca-digital/. Accessed on: May 22, 2015. Public Library of the State of Santa Catarina: http://hemeroteca.biblioteca.sc.gov.br/HEMO.html. Accessed on: May 22, 2015. Digital collection of the *Veja* magazine which makes available all the published issues, since its creation, in 1968; http://veja.abril.com.br/acervodigital/home.aspx. Accessed on: May 22, 2015. Miscellaneous documents: office notes, reports, etc. issued by the Brazilian Executive Power between 1821 and 1993, made available by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), headquartered in Chicago: http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil. Accessed on: May 22, 2015. Documents ranging from personal letters to government reports from countries in Europe, America, and Asia, referring to the project created and developed by Prof. Arnau González i Vilalta, Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), supported by Catalan institutions and private entities: http://documentsforhistory.com/pt/portada/. Accessed on: May 22, 2015.

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evidence of a certain historical fact. The archive, in the present time, is a physical or virtual place where original or reconstituted documents are preserved, organized into various collections. From this viewpoint, the archive loses its classical meaning as a place of "proof," constituting itself as a research place among others that take part in the historiographic practice.

If we agree with this broad notion of archive as well as that of document, we may follow the argument proposed by Henry Rousso (1996) that there are more features common to every historical source than irreconcilable differences. Thus, what makes a document relevant (or not) for a particular research is not its format (text, oral, audiovisual, iconic, photographic, etc.) or its medium (paper, clay, digital, etc.) or whether it is original or reconstituted, but fundamentally the good old issues previously asked by the historian.

Certainly, this procedure is not exempt from neutrality, since "there is no objective, innocuous, primary document" (LE GOFF, 2003, p. 545), after all the historiographic practice is indelibly marked by the social place of its production, and it is "due to this place that the methods are established, that a topography of interests is outligned, that the documents and the issues are proposed to them, organized" (CERTEAU, 1982, p. 66). Based on these premises, I think that the blogs and personal websites selected for this research may also be understood under the notion of document/monument as addressed by Le Goff (2003). First, because they are testimonies of the past – even if written in the present –, i.e. effects of choices by individuals consciously or unconsciously deemed as important to be inherited by a new generation that did not live "at the time of entrance exams." Second, because they may constitute a documentary series, a collection (particularly belonging to the researcher himself and/or to the research group to which she/he belongs), depending on an intervention by the historian, who decides what she/he regards as a testimony of the past and what she/he rejects. More than ever, in this case it is also the historical practice that "turns documents into monuments" (LE GOFF, 2003, p. 103).

If it is agreed that there are more similarities than differences between historical sources, it must be considered that those available on the Internet have an ephemeral

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nature that requires specific care by the historian. For instance, many blogs and websites are removed from the internet without prior notice, making it impossible to refer to them. One possibility for further reading of such material is by saving it in Portable Document Format (PDF)[8] files, something which allows the construction of a specific digital database. But constructing collections of specific documents is not something completely foreign to the practice of historical research: either through purchases (documents, books, etc.) or through handwritten copies, analog, or digital recordings, photocopies, photographs, and scanned images, the historians, for decades, form their private collections of written, oral, image-based documents, and so on. The difference is that, in the case of blogs and websites, the historian might go beyond forming a database of her/his own, she/he would also be responsible for conducting a "source-saving" work, in order to preserve it for further reading.

All pages selected for the collection of historical sources of this research were saved by using the print screen feature and then archiving in PDF, informing the date of last access. From then on, most of the readings were done in these files. Even today (June 2015), all of them are available on the Internet, although some are no longer active, i.e. with regular posting of new texts.

Once the issue of ephemerality has been remedied specifically with regard to these selected sources, I think that the biggest challenge lies on dealing with the varied time scales on which each text is built, i.e. long or very short period. And also the way how each text is organized; the presentation forms, especially concerning the relations between orality and writing; the media in which they are presented; the possibilities of reworking the stories; and readers' contributions in such a rewriting. Notwithstanding these rather specific issues of writing and narrative format (which will be described below), the other challenges still remain common to working with written texts, regardless of their materiality or medium: situating the social place of a writer and the

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[8] A file format used to display and share documents in a compatible manner, regardless of the software, hardware, or operating system. Invented by Adobe, the PDF is now an open standard maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The PDFs can contain links and buttons, form fields, audio, video, and business rationale. They can also be electronically signed and are easily displayed through the free software Acrobat Reader DC. Available at: https://acrobat.adobe.com/br/pt/products/about-adobe-pdf.html. Accessed on: May 17, 2015.

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person she/he writes to, identifying the content and how it was organized, the possible uses and appropriations of the text by readers, etc. A work that requires organizing the dispersion and interpretation to allow the "document to speak," and, in this process, do not forget to provide a critique of the document in its status of monument. In short, primary and irreducible lessons in the historiographical practice.

Digital narratives as ego-documents

> *Ego-archiving is not a neutral practice;*
> *It is often the only occasion for an individual*
> *to make her/himself seen as she/he sees her/himself and as*
> *she/he would like to be seen.*
> (ARTIÈRES, 1998, p. 31)

From the 19th century onwards, diaries and letters written by hand, in quiet and private spaces of the house, kept in a paper medium, were common practices of confessing, exteriorizing the interiority, the intimate sphere. Paula Sibilia (2009, p. 315) points out that, in order to write these confessional texts and to consequently creating "a self that is at the same time author, narrator, and character of one's life," solitude and silence were needed. In addition, these writings required "a spatial and temporal distance from the recipient of letters and from the possible readers of diaries." However, with the advent of the "age of access," the practices of confessing intimate stories and the format of diaries would change; in the present time, they are visible to everyone, on the social media, on the personal websites, on the blogs.

Paula Sibilia (2008, p. 29-31) defines the new practices of communication and expression on the Internet, which exhibit intimacy (or "extimacy") as belonging to autobiographical genres. It is understood that the stories posted on the blogs are narratives of one's own, which implies thinking of a set of major issues raised by Sibilia (2008), as for the fictional nature or not of these narratives, of possible displacements concerning the "ego-experience as me" in the organization of lived and reported experiences.

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Blogs have become popular since the late 1990s, in the form of a virtual diary, where one or more people write periodically. They multiply on the Internet as tools of a hybrid narrative (a mix of diaries, journalistic chronicles, and correspondences), whose structure allows rapid updates based on addition of articles and/or comments. Blogs have potentiated ways of telling about one's own and they have brought about changes in relation to the traditional formats of the past, such as letters, journals, and memoirs. However, they are not responsible for producing the narrative effects of the self and they have not invented the will to tell personal stories. Such moods of subjectivity exist long before the social media, what happens is that, through them, this need seems to unfold without limits.

Regarding the selected pages, it is observed that personal writings are posted as memoirs, in this case, schooling experiences that evolve around a common theme: entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school. The written texts are hybrid, they alternate texts and images, rather intimate, personal tones, with rather informative excerpts. The page administrators, almost always also the authors of the texts posted, are mostly men. Out of the 16 websites, only 4 are run by women. Today, the storytellers addressing entrance exams are retired teachers, liberal professionals, civil servants, writers or poets, lawyers, and there is a pastor (Congregational Evangelical Church)[9]. They live in various Brazilian cities and most of the memoirs are built having this spatial approach as a basis, such as: São Paulo/SP, Campos do Jordão/SP, Catanduva/SP, Belo Horizonte/MG, Palmeira/PR, Santa Maria/RS, Óbidos/PA, Macau/RN, Crato/CE, Delmiro Gouveia/AL, among others.

Administrators, collaborators, and/or commentators (writers/authors of the texts) are all adults, perhaps – to a reasonable extent –, they might fit the description of "digital immigrants"[10], since their memoirs are organized around the analog artifacts with which

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[9] These social places overlap, such as retired teachers who are civil servants, civil servants who are not teachers, but writers and/or poets, too, etc.

[10] "Digital natives" and "digital immigrants" are metaphors that may serve to describe people's dexterity in using ICT tools. The natives might be young individuals and children who were born surrounded by screens, keyboards, and mice, having access to one or more devices, such as computers, tablets, and cell phones, from an early age and using these devices in their private and out-of-school life on an effortless basis, even whether no one has formally taught them to do so. These people use such devices to create,

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they have lived and showed to appreciate. All pages have a primary design structure, presenting the standard organization made available by the format developer[11]. The aesthetic features are due to color and letter type and size, which differ in titles and captions. This organization can be better observed in images 1 and 2.

Image 1. Website – O baú de Macau[12].

Image 2. Blog – Caminhos e movimentos.

The texts stand out on the pages and, often, the stories are accompanied by other traces of the past: photographs of the time when narrators were young, certified with

invent, and share information with their flesh-and-blood friends or with their social media friends. In turn, the immigrants may be the adults who had an analogical childhood, without computers, cellular, Internet. Its cultural artifacts were – and still remain, even after access to the Internet – tangible products: books, sheets of paper, physical libraries, etc. Their way of learning how to use the modern tools available is, above all, formal education (CASSANY; AYALA, 2008).

[11] Various companies provide a series of templates and free step-by-step manuals on the Internet, so that interested people can create their personal page as a website or blog. The creation of a website requires primary knowledge in HyperText Markup Language (HTML), besides the need for a domain, hosting, etc. In turn, the creation of a blog is not complex, requiring a primary knowledge. One of the most popular services is "blogspot.com," owned by the Google company, since 2003, as well as the "wordpress.com."

[12] In order to make the text cleaner, the complete address of the cited pages, followed by the date of last access, are available only at the end of the article, after the references.

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exam notes, photographs of former teachers and colleagues, school façades, and, with a certain prominence, cover images of the preparatory books for the exams that circulated within the period of its validity. It is worth noticing that most of the texts have covers (and also sometimes frontispieces or other pages) of these books, as we can see in images 3 and 4.
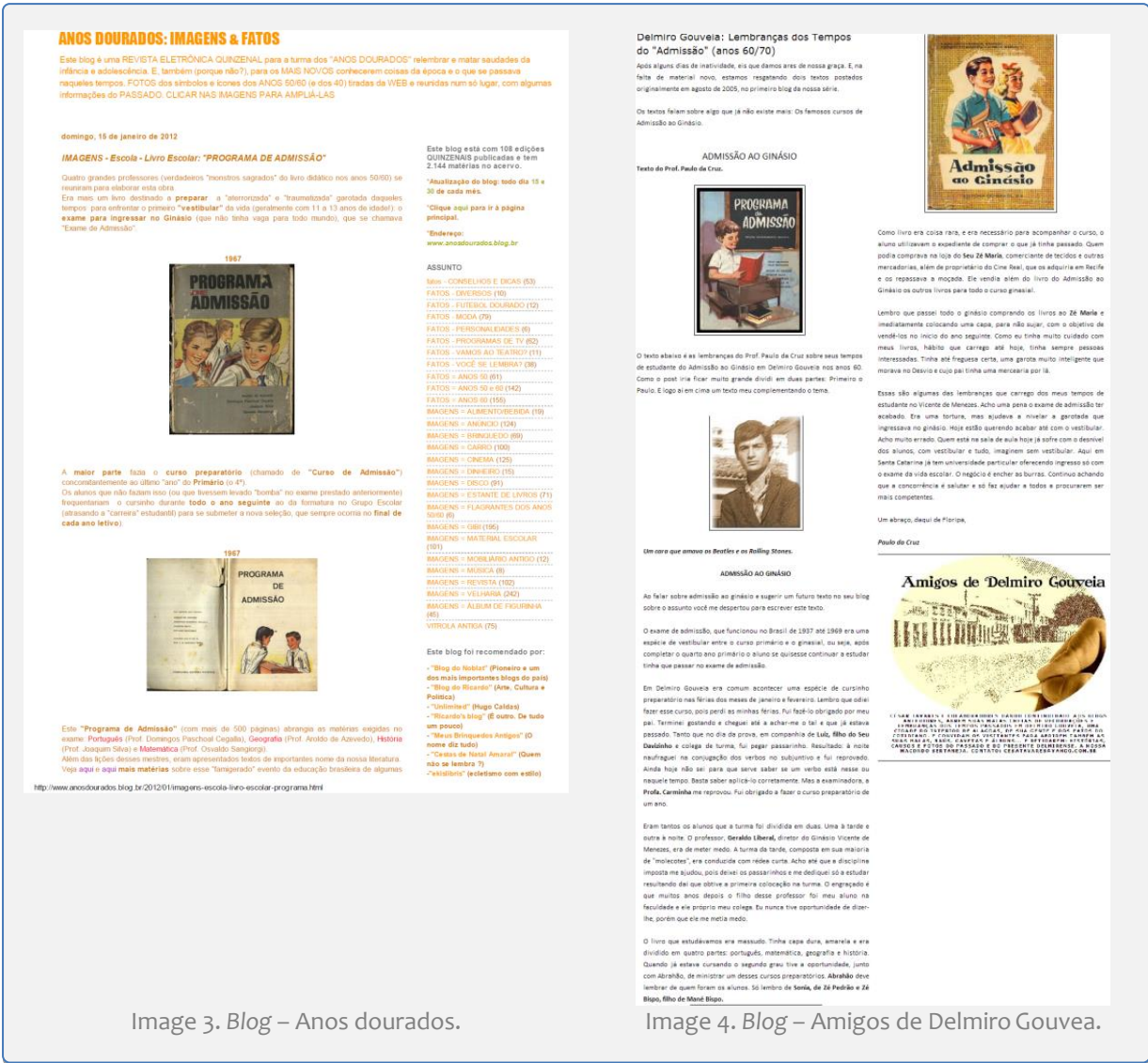

Image 3. *Blog* – Anos dourados.

Image 4. *Blog* – Amigos de Delmiro Gouvea.

Teacher Paulo da Cruz, besides writing about the preparatory course and its teachers, posts a photo of the book cover and describes it in his text posted on the blog "Amigos de Delmiro Gouvea," on May 15, 2012: "it had a hard cover, yellow, and was divided into four parts: Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography, and History. [...] As a book was rare, and it was necessary to follow the course, the student resorted to buying what

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had already been taught." Antônio Moraes, on the blog "Sanharol," opens his text entitled "Nos anos 60" [In the 1960s], posted on January 21, 2013, featuring the image of the cover of the same book, *Admissão ao ginásio* [Entrance to secondary school], by writing: "my book was at least an eighth-hand book, i.e. it had already gone through eight [students] before me. All figures were scratched, the pictures had mustaches, glasses, even horns in."

The comments posted also share memories of the same books, such as that by Graça Cantalino, who, on September 4, 2012, commenting on the text by Márcio Lima (published in the blog "marcioonline"), wrote: "a delicious memory of my book, read and reread, which passed from hand to hand, as the useful books should be. I remember a colleague from my class at that time has memorized all the texts, indeed... he knew them all. Any one of those could be drafted in the test. Awesome!"

Some of these books reached a huge editorial success, many of them with successive editions until the 1970s. On the blogs, the books whose cover images appear more frequently and those that are more usually referred to in the memoirs are two: the book written by Aroldo de Azevedo, Joaquim Silva, José de Arruda Penteado, José Cretella Jr., and Oswaldo Sangiorgi, entitled *Programa de admissão* [Entrance syllabus] (AZEVEDO et al., 1956). Published by the Cia. Editora Nacional, this book had, in the year 1956, two editions: the first with 50,000 copies and the second with 100,000 copies. Its fifth edition, published in 1959, had a circulation of 150,000 copies. The survey found the 22nd edition, published in 1970, and evidence of reprint of that edition in 1971, the year the exams were extinguished. And the book by Aida Costa, Marcius Brandão, Renato Stempniewski, and Aurélia Marino, entitled *Admissão ao ginásio* [Entrance to secondary school] (COSTA et al., 1951). Published by the Editora do Brasil S/A, the first edition of this book was published in 1943. In 1958, the book reached its 180th edition. The copy found in the survey does not provide information about the print run, but until 1969 there were 548 editions of this work[13].

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[13] I would like to thank Teacher Maria Helena Câmara Bastos, who generously lent me different editions of the books *Admissão ao ginásio* and *Programa de admissão*, as well as other lesser known works, belonging to her personal collection. I also thank Teacher Maria Teresa Santos Cunha for making available the 12th edition of the book *Programa de admissão*.

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Writings on one's own posted on online diaries have sensitive differences from the traditional ways of confessing the self. These differences relate more to the form and structure of how writings are organized and conveyed and not fundamentally to the need to narrate life, to record the past, keeping life dimensions for the future. "It is, firstly, for one's own that a diary is written: we are our very recipients in the future" (LEJEUNE, 2008, p. 261). In the past, in addition to writing for one's own, diaries also called for a later reading. Unless the writer had the courage to destroy it, even secretly, the diary served to "convey some alter ego lost in the future, or a humble contribution to collective memory" (LEJEUNE, 2008, p. 262). In the present, the point is that when it comes to virtual diaries, reading is not restricted to posterity, there is an appeal to the other that is immediate; otherwise, what would visitors counters serve for on those websites? This is so because "the Internet provides a device that conciliates, in the same experience, withdrawing and coming back to the other [...], diarists read each other" (LEJEUNE, 2008, p. 343). I have found some references that confirm this peculiarity. The posting of the text "Admissão ao ginásio nos anos 60" [Entrance to secondary school in the 1960s], on July 7, 2012, written by Wilma S. Legris (administrator of the blog "IECC-Memórias") brings the covers of two books, stating that they had been posted on the blog "Anos dourados," on February 28, 2009, and on January 15, 2012, respectively. It is also common that a blog recommends reading another one and that each blog tells who has recommended it.

In traditional diaries the base is the date, "the diarist's first gesture is putting it just above what he is going to write" (LEJEUNE, 2008, p. 260). Thus, writing is organized from the oldest to the most recent. Digital narratives also privilege the date that is immediately followed by a title and the respective text. But unlike traditional diaries, the organization prioritizes the most recent entry to the detriment of the oldest. Older texts keep getting behind, and although remaining accessible, they lose visibility to readers.

Writings on blogs, as a part of the history of present-day written culture, need to be analyzed by considering the functions and uses related to writing and reading practices (GOMÉZ, 2002, 2003, 2012). As for the texts analyzed, one of their main functions is "archiving the self" (ARTIÈRES, 1998, p. 31), with irreducible links both to

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publicizing the private and the intimate and to the conservation and monumentalization of certain past events, elevated to the status of memory, something that should not be forgotten. An example of this is the blog "IECC-Memórias," devoted to the Education Institute "Caetano de Campos," in São Paulo. The page's opening indicates at the top that the blog "Caetano de Campos" is a "publication of memoirs: from 1957 to 1968, having the IECC as a backdrop in a changing Brazil; photos; texts; book excerpts; contacts; reactions and exchange of ideas between the alumni." The texts posted are an attempt to prevent the oblivion of this traditional school in São Paulo, as well as some of the people who attended it. But also, in the same way, it is a way for the administrator, Wilma S. Legris, to publish and read versions of this school, its past, its present, an invented daily life and life story, although they are not lies. This blog represents the feasible combinations between inventions of one's own, memory, and forgetfulness, in hybrid texts that combine orality, writing, word, and images, experienced and imagined realities. When Wilma addresses her readers, it is just as if she was talking to close friends, the tone is colloquial: "so, I'm going to do my written portrait herein and leave some pictures to introduce myself to new blog readers and to those who know me superficially, so that they can have a rather intimate, closer knowledge." The text deals with her life trajectory, it provides photos by plotting the dispersion, organizing it chronologically; while doing so, she gives meaning to her own existence.

all written text is written for someone, it has a recipient. As for the texts under analysis, it is observed that they are primarily aimed at the network of sociabilities in which the author, her/his friends, and, to some extent, a few relatives are inserted. They are the first readers, sometimes those who first comment and contribute to other texts. In addition to this nearest group, the texts are addressed to acquaintances of the past in an attempt to resume/rebuild old ties. This is so because the privileged references (either through photographs, citation of names, and specific events) allude to people who, somehow, participated in the past of this narrator/author, either because they were there or because they followed the stories more closely, even if not experiencing the latter. Of course strangers are more than welcome, but not any unknown person, but those who share a taste for the past, for memories. That is why blog administrators share each

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other's content, recommending readings, informing other blogs' addresses. Readers show up, there, at varied levels, modulated by distance from and closeness to the person who writes.

The main texts are well written and case sensitive, besides having well-structured sentences and paragraphs with little or no spelling or concordance errors. Unlike the comments, rather informal writing spaces, which borrow more traits from oral language, can be written without any concern for punctuation, and may even be fully written in capital letters. But in the same blogs we observe that the main texts or the comments can even bring some incorrectly spelled words or some sentences lacking or featuring incorrect punctuation, but they are mainly written without resorting to abbreviations. Abbreviation also seems to be a feature of young people, the so-called "digital natives."

I think it is important that the reading of these differences has reflections on social markers related to generation, gender, class, etc. as a basis. Due to space constraints, this article does not account for everyone here, but when it comes to generation, for instance, it is observed that such narrators like writing and they show to know how to use correctly the traditional codes of reading and writing. They do not pose risks to a "future without words," alluded to in some analyses on children, adolescents, and written culture on the Internet. Castillo Gómez (2004a) draws attention to such a risk as children and young people, even without mastering writing and reading, join social media on the Internet, using symbols, abbreviations, and images instead of words. But as this historian also adds, the problem "does not lie on technology, but on the way how we use it. And that is where one of the fears at stake emerges [...] i.e. the contemporary hegemony of new technologies may lead us to replace the investments in reading and in written culture by multimillion-dollar literacy plans" (GÓMEZ, 2004b, p. 70).

The adults who write on these pages dominate the reading and writing codes and the uses they make of these spaces are very different from the uses made by children and young people. The story's authors/narrators are very strongly bound to the past, to memories. This characteristic is a major generational trace. Based on various studies, Leonor Arfuch (2014, p. 30) claims that young people seek approval, apply for membership in a particular, sectorized community, configured according to certain

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standards of distinction. Young people might have an online identity that is updated all the time, encompassing a part of being, existing, and experiencing in some present time, something which may reveal a symptom of globalized solitude, linked to an affective weakness that involves, at the same time, fear of denial in the face of such exposure. In turn, the adults use diaries as another strategy to bind to the past , their writings might be closer to a "Proustian recovery of lost time." The virtual space appears as a possibility of reunion for networks and friends, a place of searches not exempt of nostalgia and that, also for them, could serve to explore new identities and reinvenciones of self, "after 'the turns of life,' its failures or its frustrations and the consequent temptation to make real what 'could have been'."

It is worth noticing that the main texts are always authored by administrators. They guide the themes of memoirs, choose what should not be forgotten. The other texts that respond to this "initial interpellation" are posted by readers who contribute to the story and there are also comments that both add new things to the narrative and also correct some information or simply thank and/or praise the text. In relation to this rewriting, we may mention, for instance, the story by Teacher Paulo da Cruz (blog "Amigos de Delmiro Gouveia"), followed by the text by César Tavares (the blog administrator). Both texts had 14 comments[14]. I selected 3 of these comments, the last one by Teacher Paulo da Cruz, author of one of the texts posted, who takes the opportunity to go on with the story:

> *Time goes by, and all of us go along, without stopping, our steps stay on the ground... In 1973, I began to study at the school group Francisca Rosa da Costa, at the time we lived very close to the Paulo Roberto (the so-called Beto de Dolores), too close to the weavers' trade union, where the so feared Admission course took place. My father was a merchant and he always talked about such a course to join the 'GVM,' and that his sons always stopped studying in this wall, but at the same time he praised the course and blamed children for lack of interest in studying. Thank God, in my time there was no such wall, but a rather strict discipline, where textbooks were already included in the school syllabus. I remember as if it were today the leading characters of my first book at the first grade, namely: Fernando, Silvinha, and Benedito. As for the classroom, filled with about forty illiterates, Teacher Lenilda really managed to convey content on*

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[14] In order to preserve the difference between comments and texts, no corrections were made regarding form in the original text written in Portuguese within the excerpts from blogs and websites.

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the subjects that were included in the curriculum at the time. I miss you, I miss you… (Reginaldo de Bastião, May 16, 2012, 13h11)

I pursued my admission course at the Gymnasium "Paulo Afonso" and the big book adopted was that featured in the first illustration. I do not know if I'm making a mistake, but it seems to me that these books named as ADMISSION PROGRAM brought some figures with countryside landscapes, urban settings, etc., so that we could write a composition based on what we saw. Then, what was really at stake was the creativity of each one. (Paurílio, May 19, 2012, 11h04)

Talking about the "Entrance to secondary school" leads to a strong return to the past. The course had its importance by reviewing the subjects "learned" during the four years of primary school. It worked as a kind of college entrance exam, so that after the fourth grade it was just a matter of undergoing the exam and, if approved, entering secondary school. It was usual to attend a preparatory course, in the interval between the end of classes at the school group and the day of the exam. I attended this course and tried to enter secondary school soon. (Thankfully) I did not succeed on the exam. If it had been approved, my life would probably have taken a different path. I was forced to attend admission for a whole year. My classes were in the evening. There was another class of students at night. This suggests how many people were trying to enter secondary school. That was during the year 1971. It's been a long time. The book used, as I recall it, was similar, if not the same, to that featured in the photo you posted. It is not easy to find it these days. A search in second-hand bookshops on the Internet showed only three copies available, some in poor condition. As for the price, it is very high because of its rarity. Solving the mystery, regarding the identity of the woman who bought my books, I may say that the options you listed include her. She was Risalva Oliveira, Mr. Rosalvo's daughter. My books, thanks to the care I provided them with, were a matter of dispute. Usually in September I already began to be asked about the possibility selling them, at the end of the year. The sale of books was a common practice at the 'DG' back then. Besides helping to buy the books for the following year, it avoided that the old ones became useless, in case there was no younger brother in the waiting line. A schoolbook is designed to be used, the more it is used, the more it fulfills its role as a knowledge disseminator. (Paulo da Cruz, July 29, 2012, 9h15)

It is observed that the initial texts were rewritten by means of additions. Written culture in the digital sphere is characterized both by constant abbreviations – of time, of words, of events – and the speed at which a text can be released, transmitted, received, appropriated. It is also noticed, at this intersection between the acceleration of time and the need to recall, a blurring of boundaries between writers and readers. In these blogs, writers and readers participate in a text's rewriting; we notice there, together, the

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fragmentation and modification of ideas and narrative paths. Such rewritings are re-released on different days, and what we have is a network of multiple connections, with their fugacities and the ease with which text can change, transform, or restructure itself, as well as disappear, even forever. They are authors and readers who write, read, and rewrite at varying intervals of time, setting up other relationships between narrative and time, between the writer's and the reader's world, between the oral and the written word.

According to Viñao Frago (2002, p. 355), digital writing borrows traits from oral language: spontaneity, imminence, and immediacy, and in so doing, it weakens the detachment traditionally associated with writing and reading acts, as well as the separation in time between the production of a text and its appropriation by readers situated at various times. We follow this historian, who claims to be at this intersection between orality and writing that the most important mutations in the field of written culture and communication have been taking place at an accelerated pace.

Beyond these points of contact between writing and orality, digital narratives also stress dislocations concerning the perception of temporalities. The ephemeral assumes complex dimensions when it also intersects with the memory work, through writings and testimonies of one's own. The discussions conducted by Lejeune (2008) suggest an expansion of memory works by means of digital writings. In such a crisscrossed path, memory and archive, classic pillars of the "biographical space" (ARFUCH, 2014) conceal the ephemeral temporality of the digital space, showing that people do not want to lose anything there, they do not want to forget.

Digital narratives and the configuration of subjectivities

We learn to become the narrator of our own story without entirely becoming the character of our life.
(RICOEUR, 2006, p. 21)

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Ricoeur (2006) defines subjectivity as a narrative identity. According to the author, subjectivity is neither an incoherent series of events nor an immutable or inaccessible substance of becoming. Each subject reinterprets the narrative identity that constitutes her/him through the reports proposed by the social and cultural world which he lives in. She/he argues that this self-understanding might have the same tradition traits as the understanding of a literary work, and that is why we have learned to become narrators of our own history without becoming altogether authors of our life. When narrating our own life, we would apply to ourselves the concept of narrative voices that constitute the intrigues of epic poems, tragedies, dramas, and novels. In these works, the author disguises her/himself as a narrator to write the stories we read, and we, as narrators of ourselves, can only imitate these narrative voices without becoming authors. "This is the big difference between life and fiction. Thus, it is really true that life is lived and that a story is narrated" (RICOEUR, 2006, p. 21). This difference between life and fiction could be partially suppressed through imaginative variations when we try to reach a narrative understanding of ourselves and use references to the schemes which we have access to in our culture. Narrative identity might be situated in the midst of this process of reinventing one's own, of reinterpreting one's own as history.

The selected digital narratives deal with memories, belong to past times turned into present times concerning the entrance exams to the Brazilian secondary school. But going beyond the exams, the texts firstly address individual trajectories of people who rewrite themselves when they write these stories. Teacher Paulo Cruz wrote the text entitled "Admissão ao ginásio" [Entrance to secondary school], on the blog "Amigos de Delmiro Gouveia," on May 15, 2012:

> In Delmiro Gouveia[15] it was usual that a sort of preparatory course took place during the January and February vacation. I recall that I hated attending this course because I missed my vacation. I attended it because my father obliged me to do so. I ended up liking it, so I got bigheaded and thought I had already passed the exam. Thus, on the day of the test, along with Luiz, Mr. Davizinho's son and classmate, I went out to look for birds. The outcome: at night, I failed the conjugation of verbs in the subjunctive and got disapproved. I still do not know what is the use of knowing if a verb is in this or that tense. Just knowing how to apply it

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[15] A municipality in the countryside of Alagoas.

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correctly is enough. But the examiner, Teacher Carminha, reproved me. I was required to attend a whole year's preparatory course. There were so many students that the class was divided in two. One in the afternoon and another in the evening. The teacher, Geraldo Liberal, director of the Gymnasium Vicente de Menezes, was a frightening teacher. The afternoon class, mostly consisting of "immature big boys," was taught according to strict rules. I even think the discipline imposed helped me, because I left the birds alone and devoted myself to studying, something which led me to achieve the first place in that class. The funny thing is that many years later the son of this teacher became my student at college and he himself became my colleague. I never got a chance to tell him, but he scared me. The book we were studying was thick. It had a hard, yellow cover and was divided into four parts: Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography, and History. When I was attending high school, I had the opportunity, along with Abrahão, to teach one of these preparatory courses.

Antônio Moraes wrote on the blog "Sanharol" the text entitled "Anos 60" [The 1960s], published on January 22, 2013:

At that time, until the late 1960s, at least, there was an entrance exam for the secondary school. It was usual for children attending the fourth grade of primary school to do some kind of preparatory course to get ready for the Entrance exam. My book was at least an eighth-hand copy, i.e. it had belonged to eight people before me. All figures were scratched, the pictures had mustaches, glasses, even horns in. My dear and unforgettable teacher Dona Iracy Bezerra de Morais prepared our class for a second-year exam to fill five or six remaining vacancies offered by the gymnasium school facility. I got approved and thus entered the old high school course in 1965.

Thelma, on the blog "Caminhos e Movimentos," wrote on January 17, 2006:

Previously, the primary course lasted 5 years [...] All of us had to undergo a general knowledge exam – Mathematics, Portuguese, History, Geography, and Science –, which was named as *entrance exam for the secondary school*. The contestants' age varied between 10 and 12 years. It was a very feared test, which caused general nervousness – both among parents and students. If we did not get approved and classified, we should go back to primary school and attend it another year [...]. In our household, the financial status did not allow us to take this exam at private schools. Therefore, we only applied to public schools. In the case of our municipality, Santa Maria, in the countryside of Rio Grande do Sul, there were two very good public schools that rivaled each other: the Secondary School "Maria Rocha" and the Secondary School "Manoel Ribas" (also known as "Maneco"). I had never realized they had a woman's name and a man's name. Maybe that's why I studied at the

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Manoel Ribas and sympathized so much with the Maria Rocha. My brothers and I took exams at these two colleges and passed them both, but all of us chose the Maneco – the secondary school whose uniform had a large M (Maneco) letter on its chest. Fortunately, none of us needed a second exam. All of us passed the entrance exam with high marks. At this point, I want to register that a few students – always the smartest and most prepared ones – did not complete the 5-year primary school, like the overwhelming majority. These students, when they finished 4th grade, were enrolled to undergo the entrance exam for the secondary school. They were those who "jumped the 5th grade." They passed directly from grade 4 of primary school to the secondary school. Only those who were really well prepared got approved and classified to the secondary school, because, theoretically, the 5th year was the time to review everything that had been learned during primary school. That was the year to prepare for the entrance exam. One of the few students who achieved this feat was my brother, Jayme. He achieved this historic feat, which was acknowledged by everyone! At that time, at our age and considering our life context, "jumping the 5th grade" was the utmost achievement! [...] This brother of mine was the first to enter the Maneco. He carried along with him the reputation of being intelligent. In a short time, the teachers already loved and cared for him with special attention. Years later, my second brother entered, Felipe, who had always been the most disciplined, studious, and gentle, and he still pleases both Greeks and Trojans nowadays. He was a 10-point scale student, one of those every teacher loves to have in her/his classes. When I entered, I already had a well-known surname in that secondary school and, obviously, teachers' expectations were already outlined when it came to me. But I did not manage to respond to such expectations, unfortunately. I was not that intelligent or the most disciplined student, nor the nicest or the most easy-going person. The truth is that I did not have the brilliance and charisma my brothers had.

In these narratives, expressions such as "in the old days," "back then," "it was usual" situate memories in a past time, and examples of how the school or exams are nowadays mark a period of changes, of time passing by in which the present shows up as worse when compared to a much better past. The personal mark is engraved and it gives the tone in these writings: "I hated to attend the course [...] I devoted myself entirely to study" (Paulo da Cruz); "my book was at least an eighth-hand copy" (Antônio Moraes); "I was not that intelligent or the most disciplined student, nor the nicest or the most easy-going person. The truth is that I did not have the brilliance and charisma my brothers had" (Thelma). Another thought-provoking issue is considering that the memories of these former students made present in various narratives are almost unrelated to the

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results of studies pointing out the selective and highly exclusionary nature of entrance exams and secondary school within the period (NUNES, 2000; PESSANHA; DANIEL, 2002; MINHOTO, 2007, 2008).

Teacher Paulo da Cruz, Antônio Moraes, and Thelma took the exams at different times and places, but their memories have common traits: the pressure to pass the exams, the consequent anxiety about the volume of contents they had to study, the difficulties of that time, and the significance assigned to passing the exams, which gives rise to their constitution as winners. They also have in common the need to organize, in the writing's scheme, the life's scheme: the before, the after, the actions, the distresses, the victories, after all, the peripeteias that provide the narrative with meaning and, at the same time, which provide their existence with meaning.

According to Ricoeur (2010), it is the narrative that makes accessible the human experience of time, and time, in turn, becomes human only through the narrative. We belong to the "narrator species" because narrating shapes our existence. We interpret ourselves through stories, or rather mimesis operations "through which practical experience provides itself with works, authors, and readers" (RICOEUR, 2010, p. 95). The texts published on these pages are examples of close links between works, authors, and readers. Sometimes, there is no way to separate the work from the author and the author from the reader. The memories on entrance exams are just another way found in order to lead someone to talk about her/himself, organize and interconnect the dispersion of elements in her/his life, the various temporal levels, the comings and goings in a chronologically organized narrative, in a succession of events , in a story.

As for writings on one's own on the Internet, it is worth considering in the analyses the feasible displacements in relation to the "experience of the self as I," or rather, the "status of the subject's narrator" (SIBILIA, 2008, p. 31). These reflections pose challenges on the meaning and interpretation of time by subjects in the present, the meaning of their existence, of what is public or private when it comes to intimacy. May these changes be perceived in digital narratives? There, we should take into account the discontinuity dimension that reading on the screen implies. Such a reading constitutes

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one of the "revolutions" in written culture: to transform habits and perceptions through electronic textuality.

It is understood that digital narratives can and should be thought by means of the studies by Paul Ricoeur (2007, 2010), i.e. as meaning effects that describe and represent actions, subjects, and times and configure human existence. The narrative has an integrative dynamism that turn dispersion and seemingly unrelated incidents into a one and complete story, which may be interpreted, reconfigured by the reader.

In this work, memories were read as representations of the past (RICOEUR, 2007), which may have been made present due to the need to anchor life experiences before an enlarged and hypertrophied present, resulting from a regime of present-driven historicity[16]. But they also respond only contemporaneously, using the resources available at this time, to an old need which concerns practices of writing on one's own: need to record the past and also to apprehend the future, need to take a distance from one's own, need to archive one's life, to witness, to invent and reinvent one's own. Zahide Muzart (2000, p. 189) concludes by stating, "Intimate diaries, on the Internet, have lost their secrecy and intimacy, but they still register what is ephemeral and discontinuous in time."

Some notes by way of (in)conclusion

> It has been said that man is a symbolic animal, others say that it is a playful being, others define it as "homo faber" or "homo economicus," while others claim that it is a thinking being. But we may also say that what characterizes us universally is the fact we are beings who narrate their own history. Just as in nature there are rodents and herbivores, humans belong to the narrator species. They narrate orally, narrate in writing, narrate through theater, narrate through film, narrate through

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[16] According to François Hartog (2013, p. 28), a regime of historicity may be understood resorting to two meanings, one more restricted "how a society addresses its past and deals with its past" and another wider that "would serve to designate the modality of self-awareness in a human community." Accompanying the analyses proposed by Reinhart Koselleck, Hartog identifies three distinct historicity regimes: history as the master of life, dating back to Cicero, hegemonic until at least the 18th century, and where the relationship between past and future is ruled by the past; modern regime of historicity, installed between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century (it would be up to the future making the past clearer); and from 1989 onwards the presentism would install another order of time in which the hypertrophied present is, in itself, its very horizon, without future and without past or generating in the present the past and the future that it needs.

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> color and volume, narrate through dance, narrate by talking on a street corner, narrate through the newspapers, narrate by gossiping by phone, and even through e-mail, they do nothing but narrate (SANT'ANNA, 2004, p. 2).

This text dealt with the almost unrenounceable need to narrate that human beings show. These stories were thought of as writings of one's own, and thus were not taken as truths or fictions, but rather as narratives that integrate, through mutual referentiality, aspects of lived life and imagination, of fiction. In the sense that writings of one's own contain aspects of the lived experience, of what one imagines to have lived, of what one wanted to have lived... Leonor Arfuch (2014, p. 29) recalls that no account escapes fictionalization, even if the autobiographical pact is established, according to the classic definition by Lejeune (2008), even if we assumes in the self the "illusory unity of the subject," the narrator of one's own constructs her/himself as a nature at a clear distance from the empirical self.

Analyzing stories published on blogs requires, of course, specific methodological and theoretical attention, after all, we are dealing with "new modes of construction, publication, and reception of historical discourses" (CHARTIER, 2009, p. 59). However, I think that the challenges implied in the almost limitless vastness of documentary sources that the Internet makes available, as well as its analysis, may be equated using the methodology available and theory of history (of course, more than ever, resorting to the interdisciplinary dialogue needed). A focus will always be necessary, regardless of the file size and whether it is in physical or digital format. A historical research that has pertinent questions regarding its object and problems will surely determine the documents that best allow the intended approach. The better the quality of the question and the object definition, the less painful it will be to select the most relevant sources. Having selected the sources, we should also choose the appropriate methodology to analyze the document, according to its materiality and medium. The methodology will help rewording the questions, thus qualifying them. And just like any other historical research, intelligibilities, feasible answers, explanations "must be sought where they have always been: in the good old theory of history. The concepts capable of thinking abstractly the

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methodological issues generated by history making are grouped there" (FERREIRA; AMADO, 1998, p. xvi).

In recent years, researchers from various areas have been focusing on digital media attentive to mutations in the social, cultural, and psychological relationships of individual and collective subjects. The study possibilities open up by these resources for writing a history of the present time, but not only, are undeniable. Works such as Robson Fonseca Simões (2012), Pedro Eurico Rodrigues (2012), and Camila Guimarães Dantas (2008) inform how the times in which the tools available on the Internet (re)signified the relationship of subjects to writing and reading and to other users that share the same networks or social communities. They also highlight memory resizing by means of the new forms of registering the past, which implies other looks not only at the history of written culture, but also on the ways of re-elaborating memory in the present.

As it could not fail to be, concern about the present and memory made substantial changes in history writing. As a cultural construction, the present time determines new relationships to the past and expectations regarding the future (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 16). This approach imposes new ways of thinking and representing the past and its uses, as well as the construction of events and the institutionalization of some memories to the detriment of others. This process entails the establishment of new relationships also in relation to memory. According to Paul Ricoeur (2007, p. 108), memories are distributed "into archipelagos, by and by separated by abysses." The challenge is analyzing narratives as a place of memories in the plural and of memory in the singular, as a strategy of differentiation and continuity.

I think that the analyses presented herein are subject to revisions and other interpretations, especially considering that we deal with ephemeral and rather unique documents. As a historian, I face a double difficulty: the first lies on the exercise of thinking about these digital media and their contents as historical sources, especially with regard to the issues concerning their archive and registration as a document/monument (LE GOFF, 2003). In spite of these difficulties, I believe that the incorporation of such media into the historiographical operation can contribute to the studies on the history of written culture in the present, especially in terms of its forms of production, placement,

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and appropriation. As writings of one's own, they are unparalleled sources for thinking through the subjective dimension of the past – in this case, operations of choices, silencing, and interpolations on the schooling experience – by means of an individual and collective memory concerning the entrance exams for the Brazilian secondary school. Likewise, they are sources to think of our status as "men-story" (RICOEUR, 2006), subjects that do not separate life from the need to narrate.

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