ART, CULTURE AND LITERACY IN THE ELDERLY

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ABSTRACT
The teaching of literature is a transmitter of art and culture for several generations of Brazilian society, with the narration of stories that arise from the imagination to situations that may have been the result of the reality of their creators. The objective of this article is to report the work of researchers in the area of literature and literacy, which took place in the extension project University of the Third Age, of the Federal University of Pará. This work is based on studies by authors such as Cosson (2006) and Soares (2003), who highlight the importance of a broader approach when teaching about literature. It is important to take into account, not only the understanding that students will have about the text, but also the development of the student's critical and interpretive skills. The work used as a methodology the study of literature and its literacy for the elderly public, with the use of orality and experiences of the reader, using much of the literature of Pará, such as its history and local culture. The orality and experiences of the students were essential for the progress of the classes, as they allowed the knowledge of the culture of Pará through the eyes of the participants. In addition, it was presented as a teaching tool: music, images and the work as a whole to attract the reader's attention and interest.

Keywords: Literature. Literacy. Teaching of Literature. Orality. Experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature, originating from the Latin litteratura ("letter" or "writing"), was consolidated as the art of the word and letters. As Zafalon (2013) emphasizes, "the literary text reveals itself to be an efficient means of contact with the plurality of meanings of the language, favoring the encounter with these meanings in a broad way, unlike informative materials that are attached to particular facts". Reading literary texts, therefore, encourages critical thinking and the ability to interpret and question the world around us.

Márcia Machado, in Literature, formation and education in the work of Antonio Candido: the humanization of man, cites Candido (1993), emphasizing that the formation of Brazilian literature should be understood as a "system" in movement, articulated with society and culture. She also reinforces the importance of defining both the function and the value of the works. Antunes and Oliveira (2017) add that literature should not be seen only as entertainment, but as an essential basis for human development.

Literary movements such as Realism and Modernism bring to the fore debates about social inequality, political injustices, and existential crises, challenging established norms and proposing new ways of thinking. The literary genre, in addition to being an aesthetic experience, inspires new ideas and ways of seeing the world, contributing to the advancement of the human sciences.

Dias (2023) states that the concepts attributed to literature and the arts are always based on specific historical and social contexts. Thus, to reflect on literary genres and other literary issues is to bring to mind a historical observation. The literature's audience is vast, encompassing different groups based on interests, age groups, education levels, and motivations.

For many, literature and its various genres, in addition to keeping the mind active, provide well-being. As a result, an increasingly active audience in extracurricular activities after retirement emerges: the elderly public. For many seniors, reading offers a way to reconnect with different generations and cultures. By exposing themselves to stories from younger people or from other parts of the world, they can broaden their perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of social and cultural changes (Sacks, 2017).

Literary reading provides the elderly with constant learning, allowing them to explore new themes, travel through stories and maintain intellectual development, whether through fiction or non-fiction. Often, the elderly identify with works that address reflections on the past, the family and aging (Gardner, 1983). Based on this assumption, the project aimed not only to expand reading skills, but also to reconnect participants with their cultural roots.

In view of this, the following research question arises: how can literary literacy, using Pará literature and orality, contribute to the critical and interpretative development of the elderly public, integrating their experiences into the learning process? The discussion of this issue is fundamental to understand how literary literacy can be adapted to the needs and experiences of this audience.

METHODOLOGY

For five months, a literary literacy workshop was held within the University of the Third Age (UNITERCI) extension project focusing on the experiences of readers. The objective was to develop methods and practices that would encourage the elderly public to become interested in and consume the literary genre. The workshop was attended by fourteen students, aged between 60 and 80 years.

To make the weekly meetings viable, we held meetings three times a week to discuss the themes and authors to be addressed, in addition to evaluating the progress and understanding of the participants in relation to the teaching of literature and literacy.

The methodology of this article has a descriptive and exploratory approach.

According to Gil (2002, p.47), "some descriptive research goes beyond the simple identification of relationships between variables, seeking to determine the nature of these relationships". Gil (2002) also mentions that this approach aims to understand experiences and behaviors from a subjective perspective.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The proposal of literary literacy for the elderly seeks to promote inclusion in non-family social contexts, in addition to providing continuous learning. Through reading, they can explore new themes, "travel" the world, and continue to develop intellectually, whether with works of fiction or non-fiction. The elderly tend to identify with works that bring reflections on the past, the family and aging (Gardner, 1999).

We all know the importance of reading in the work of a citizen who lives in a printing society. Because to live and work in the urbanized and computerized society of the twenty-first century, it will be necessary to have an increasing mastery of reading and writing. This domain requires teaching centered on the relationships between social subjects and that respects their competences, capacities and skills to be developed. (Toledo at all, p.13, 2024)

Literature plays a valuable role in the lives of seniors, offering benefits that go beyond entertainment. For many, reading keeps the mind active, stimulating memory,

reasoning, and other cognitive functions (Sacks, 2017). In addition, literature promotes emotional well-being, helping to deal with loneliness and anxiety through stories that generate identification and reflections on life and aging. According to Cosson (2006, p. 17), "literature tells us what we are and encourages us to desire and express the world for ourselves". This highlights the contribution of literature to the quality of life in old age.

Literary literacy in old age is a process that involves interpreting, appreciating, and reflecting on texts in a deep and creative way. For seniors, it offers the opportunity to explore unknown or poorly understood topics. In addition, it contributes to the development of a sense of belonging and the creation of new social bonds through reading groups and literary debates (Barbosa, 2020; Sacks, 2017).

Soares (2003) emphasizes that literacy goes beyond simple literacy; It involves reading and writing in contexts that make sense and are integrated into the student's life. When bringing cultural manifestations, such as literature and music, to the elderly public, it is essential to develop practices that rescue their memories and life experiences.

Literature and music, together, have a profound impact on the emotional well-being of the elderly. Music, in particular, awakens memories and emotions in a unique way, becoming a valuable resource to work with this audience, who often find in art a way to express their personal story (Sacks, 2007).

Gardner (1983), in his theory of multiple intelligences, points out that human beings can learn by various methods, and music is one of them. In the context of classes for the elderly, music plays a crucial role, because, in addition to keeping students engaged, it facilitates the understanding of topics. Many find it easier to interpret a song than a written text. Thus, music was a powerful guiding thread to integrate the culture of Pará into the classes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, the workshop took place through 10 meetings, and during these meetings, activities were carried out that had as their main focus to bring senior students closer to Amazonian literature, exploring various genres and methods. Each class had a careful planning to integrate the local culture, with the help of literary texts, in addition to novels and other elements that are part of the students' daily lives. Thus, the specific objective was to promote a deep and critical understanding of the texts. And also to encourage, through a production, the knowledge of a little-used genre, the fanfiction genre.

It is worth noting that the previous class plans were ready, it was known what was to be worked on, but it was not possible to go with completely closed lesson plans, because

the individual needs of each student were not known and it was possible that there would be changes because of this. Next, in order to demonstrate the strategies and themes used in each class, the 10 meetings will be reported in detail.

FANFICTION AT LITERATURE

The first class had as its central focus the presentation of the concept of literary literacy. On that day, students were invited to reflect on how literature is present in their lives, whether in soap operas, songs, radio or even in other local cultural manifestations. The explanation was accompanied by examples that show the versatility of literature in various forms.

After this moment, the fanfiction genre was introduced, an important tool for the development of creativity, in addition to allowing students to work with already known stories and reinvent them from their own perspectives. At this point, it was a little difficult for the students to understand the genre presented, so, in a simple way, some examples of stories that were created through fanfiction were provided.

BRAZILIAN SOAP OPERAS AS A GENRE

It was notorious the difficulty of the students to imagine an already existing story where they themselves would modify it. So, it was at this moment that the initial plan was modified to meet the difficulties of the students. Initially, it was not an objective to use soap operas as a tool to teach about literary literacy, since few talk about Amazonian culture or Pará culture. However, the students' interest was observed when the soap operas were briefly mentioned in the first class. As most of the participants already demonstrated familiarity with soap operas, this was the starting point for introducing different types of narrative and the concept of literary literacy. An example of a soap opera that was on the rise at the time of the class was selected, and the characters and plot were discussed so that students could understand the literary structure involved.

During the class, the students came up with stories about soap operas that marked important moments in their lives. For example, one of the students said that she listened to a radio soap opera when they did not have a television. Another said that she worked in a clothing factory and that when she came home from work, she already started to follow the soap opera of the time.

At the end of the class, as the first task of the workshop, the students were motivated to write a brief fanficiton, that is, a fan story, using characters from the soap opera discussed. The students were able to count on the support of those who encountered

difficulties, encouraging creative writing. After the production, the students read aloud, promoting an exchange of experiences among the participants. In the end, it was noticeable that the students began to understand the objective of the class.

Figure 1 - Fanfiction Office

Image: Authors' collection

MUSIC AS A TEACHING TOOL AND CULTURAL MEMORY

In the first class, in addition to the soap operas, the students' taste for music was mentioned. Thus, in classes 3 and 4, music was used as a teaching tool, unlike soap operas, music is very present in Amazonian culture and Pará culture. Then, an opportunity was seen to teach about the local culture, and thus, a song by a composer and singer from Pará was chosen to bring the participants closer to their own culture and history.

The chosen singer was Nilson Chaves, an important name in local music who often addresses aspects of Amazonian culture in his songs. The song chosen for the reading was "Sabor do Açaí", which portrays important points of the city of Belém and its beauties, in addition to the reading, the students had the opportunity to listen to it as well. It was a song known by the participants of the workshop, and one of the students, who likes to write a lot, showed a song that also talked about the beauty of Belém.

Throughout these two lessons, students were encouraged to analyze the lyrics of the song, highlighting the cultural aspects present and sharing their personal experiences related to the places mentioned in the song. The activity aimed not only to work on textual interpretation, but also to activate affective and cultural memories, and thus, arouse the

interest of students to share their experiences, this initiative enabled an exchange of experiences, valuing orality as a form of literacy.

Finally, the students were proposed a homework assignment: to bring to the next class a personal narration about a remarkable event from their past. This story should involve a significant moment in their lives, involving elements that were worked on during classes, such as highlighting the place in the state where the story took place. The point to be reached with this activity was to reinforce the importance of experiences in the construction of narratives and in the appreciation of one's own history.

AMAZONIAN LITERATURE AS A GENRE

In the fifth class, the objective was to work on the work "It rains in the Fields of Cachoeira" by Dalcídio Jurandir, a well-known author from Pará, who sends us to the culture of Marajó Island. Through this work, it is possible to explore both the narrative and the culture of the region mentioned in the story.

With respect to the work, it offers a vision of the challenges experienced by local residents, as well as a rich view of landscapes and traditions. During the class, the importance of the writer Dalcídio Jurandir in Amazonian literature was discussed and how the local language is used in his works, making them more alive for readers. The last objective of working with this book was to prepare students to use the characters of the book in their written productions for the final activity.

Initially, the class began with the reading of an excerpt from the work, followed by a brief explanation about the context and the main characters, such as Alfredo and Euthanázio, with their contrasting personalities, which enriched the students' understanding of the narrative. During this moment, the students were asked if they considered the brothers to be family people because of the characteristics provided throughout the work. And many answered yes, and one of the students said that, like Alfredo, her son also left the interior of the state to seek improvements in the capital.

At the end, the participants received a sheet containing the text and interpretation questions, which aimed to stimulate the critical and reflective analysis of the work, as is required in literary literacy. The questions were designed to facilitate the understanding of the cultural and natural elements present in the novel, as well as the social and emotional dilemmas of the characters. In addition to answering the questions, the students were also encouraged to share their perceptions about life in Marajó, relating the work to their own experiences and cultural memories.

Figure 2 - Reflections on the impressions of reading

Image: authors' collection

MARAJOARA CULTURE AS ORAL HISTORY

In the sixth class, a change in the planning of the classes was necessary due to the difficulty of the students to imagine the scenarios described in the work "It rains in the fields of Cachoeira", by Dalcídio Jurandir, mainly because many had never visited the Island of Marajó and had not had deep contact with the Marajó culture. As a didactic tool, a video and 20 minutes of a report was shown that addresses different aspects of Marajó Island, such as tourism, handicrafts, and various curiosities about the daily life of the island. The video also brought an overview of the famous buffalo breeding, the region's economy, in addition to the rich local culture, with emphasis on boi-bumbá and cuisine.

After the video, a conversation was started with the students, asking what had caught their attention the most in the video and connecting this information to the work of the writer from Pará Dalcídio Jurandir. In this way, we discuss the impact that the geographical isolation of the island has on people's lives and how it shapes the traditions, challenges and beauties of Marajoara life. This class allowed students to connect with the oral history of the Marajoara people and to visualize with more familiarity the scenario described in the book, in addition to helping a greater understanding of the Amazonian cultural reality, since many of them recognized aspects of the culture, even if superficially.

THE FICTION OF "IT RAINS IN THE WATERFALL FIELDS" AND ITS CHARACTERS

In the seventh, eighth and ninth classes, we continued the study of the work It rains in the fields of Cachoeira by Dalcídio Jurandir. In the first part, we selected important excerpts from the book, since its length prevented complete reading in class. These

excerpts highlighted the characteristics and role of some characters essential to the narrative. In all, we worked with five female and five male characters, whose characteristics and functions were listed on a paper given to the students. The proposal was for the students to carefully read the descriptions of the characters, since this activity would serve as a basis for the creation of a fanfic about the book, connecting the fanfiction genre with literary literacy. During the last 30 minutes of the seventh class, we also used a game about Amazonian legends, which provided a moment of relaxation and at the same time reinforced the content.

Figure 3 - socialization of the game about legends

Image: Authors' collection

In the eighth and ninth class, there were classes to deepen the understanding of the characters in a more individualized way. We again handed out the descriptions of the characters and asked the students to imagine their physical characteristics based on the information provided. As a way to better establish the importance of the description of the characters, something that will be important in the final task, they were asked to choose a character and describe it the way they imagined it and a student visualized him as a dark boy, with a fisherman's hat and typical clothes from the region.

The students and teachers realized together that this activity helped to reinforce the connection between them and the characters in the work, in addition to stimulating creativity. These classes integrated reading with the students' imagination, culminating in the preparation for the final activity, which would be the creation of a fanfic about the work. Taking into account the final activity, a draw was made of which characters each student would work with, and also, they were asked to bring the beginning of the story to the next class.

THE PRODUCTION OF THE FINAL WRITING

In the tenth and last meeting, the production of the final stories based on the characters known during the collective readings of the book "It rains in the Fields of Cachoeira" began[4]. As previously agreed, the students brought the texts they started to finish during class. The class began with the reading of what each one brought and their ideas to give continuity, some mentioned points that they wanted to elaborate in a deeper way. For example, the student who characterized the character Válerio in the previous class, made his story from a different point of view, no longer being a fisherman. However, one of the other students mentioned that he wished he had read the entire book again so he could write a better story. The class continued with the production of the stories and finally, it was asked if they would like to read aloud their productions and thus, we held a literary soiree with the students. After reading everyone, the students asked for the material to be kept and show gratitude for the content they learned during the 10 meetings. Below are two of the six productions that were performed in theaters:

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[4] This book is the first novel by the writer Dalcídio Jurandir from Pará and later became the first volume of the series called Extremo-Norte. It is a narrative of people who live and survive on Marajó Island, with their expectations, fears, dreams, disappointments, angers. The work brings regional narratives, linked to the intimacy of the characters that anchor the course of the narration. Highlight for the protagonist Alfredo, the main character, a riverside dweller from Cachoeira do Arari (Pará), who goes to Belém do Pará in search of advancing in his studies and a better life in the big city. Alfredo's narrative extends throughout the cycle of Dalcídio's works, but it is in the work Passagem dos Inocentes that Alfredo faces his greatest challenges in front of the capital of Pará.
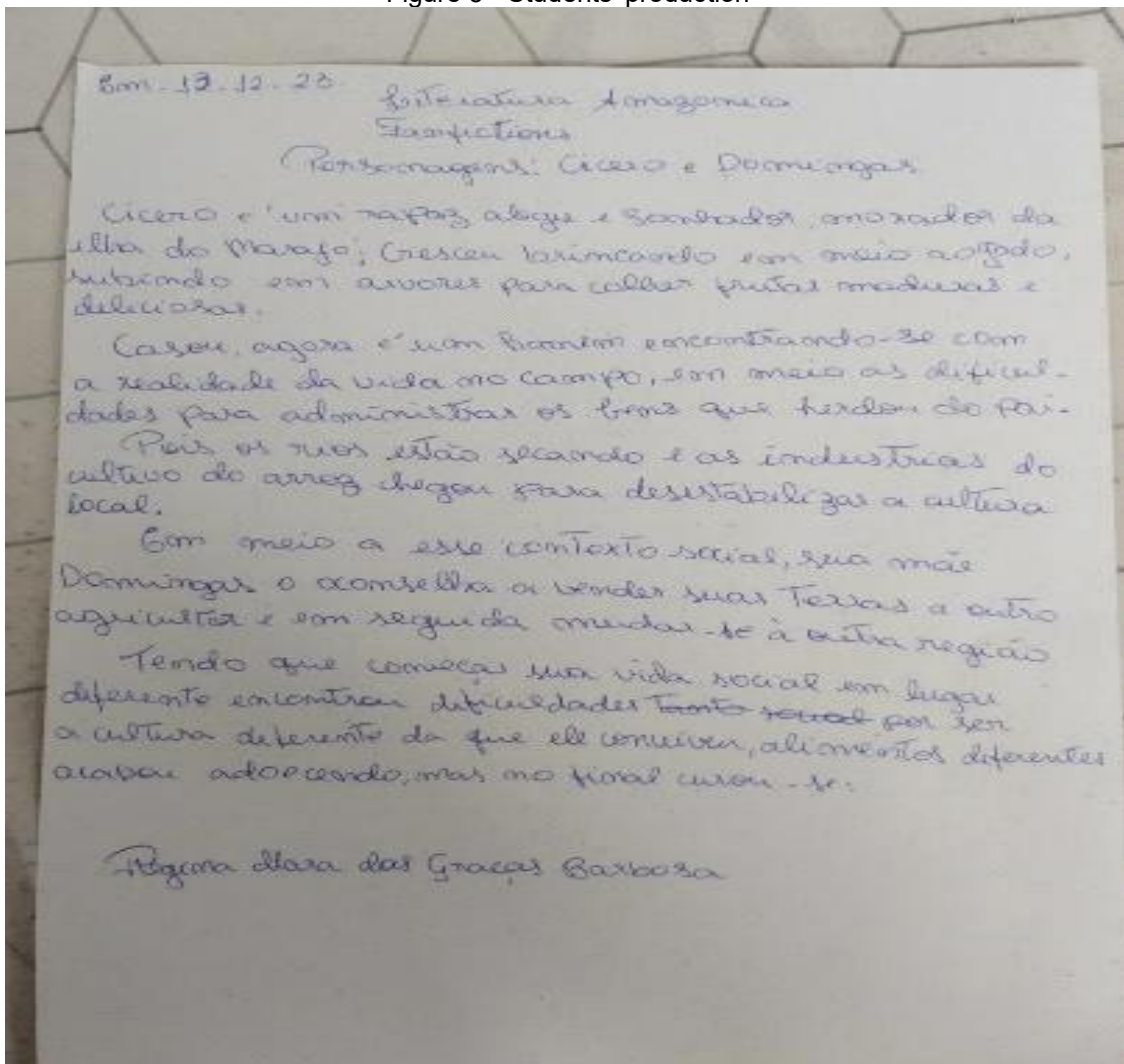
Figure 4 - Students' production

Source: Authors' collection

Figure 5 - Students' production

Source: Authors' collection

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The insertion of literature in the experience of the elderly public, through literary literacy, has brought visibility to a group that often believes it is no longer interested in learning something new. By promoting a novelist theme, literary literacy enables them to interpret, critically reflect and contribute to enriching debates, based on their vast life experiences. For the elderly, literary education can bring benefits to well-being, such as improved mental health, active memory exercise, and encouragement of socialization. In addition, literature can be a source of pleasure and discovery, helping them to revisit memories, broaden perspectives, and keep their minds active, contributing to quality of life and emotional well-being at this stage of life.

According to the words of Rildo Cosson and Magda Soares, literary literacy can be used in teaching with various methodologies available, as long as the specificities of the students are taken into account. In view of this, literary literacy can contribute significantly to the critical and interpretative development of the elderly, and by using Pará literature and

orality, students can connect stories and literary texts with their own experiences. Pará literature, in particular, works as a mirror for senior students, allowing them to recognize themselves in the narratives and deepen their understanding of the contexts presented. This is because regional literature makes it possible to work with cultural, historical, and social elements, both from Pará and the Amazon.

Likewise, orality was an essential element in the construction of this workshop, since it goes beyond sharing stories, but values experiences and creates a space where these experiences become personal memories that dialogue with literature. The integration between experiences and literature facilitates the critical interpretation of texts, as it allows students to relate the events that occurred in the text to their own lives.

Following this logic, it would not be possible to ask students to perform a deep reading of the texts without first encouraging them to reflect and question important issues highlighted in the lyrics of the songs, in the synopses of the novels and in the book discussed in the classroom. Pará literature contributed to preserving the cultural identity of each student and this stimulated a deeper analysis of the texts and in each class, the students connected their experiences with the texts.

Therefore, literary literacy with the help of orality and regional literature, makes the learning of the elderly public a dynamic process, where personal experiences enrich reading and in turn reading increases the critical and interpretative capacity of the elderly, making a connection between them and stories and cultural manifestations.

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