

**Hacia una pedagogía de los estudios avanzados en la Universidad: la producción de una escritura académica inventiva en las Ciências Sociais, Artes y Humanidades**

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**Resumen**

Este artículo intenta contribuir a una discusión, por hacer en Portugal (así como en otros países europeos) –necesariamente teórica y práctica, pero en última instancia pedagógica– por la comprensión de las vías reflexivas a través de las cuales sería efectivamente posible “cambiar el paradigma de enseñanza” por la “transición de un sistema basado en la idea de la transmisión de conocimientos” mediante una escritura mimética, “para

**Abstract**

This article aims to contribute to a discussion, which remains to be done in Portugal (as well as in other European countries) –and which is necessarily theoretical and practical, but ultimately pedagogical–, that seeks to understand the reflexive ways through which it could be effectively possible to operate “a teaching paradigm shift” by means of “the transition from one educational system based on the idea of knowledge transfer” through

un sistema basado en el desarrollo de competencias” de escritura inventiva a nivel de la formación de posgrado. Esta fue la terminología utilizada por el Gobierno Portugués cuando, en 2006, implantó el Proceso de Bolonia y definió “la calificación de los portugueses en el espacio europeo” como “uno de los objetivos esenciales de la política para la enseñanza superior”. Nuestra atención se concentra en los discursos producidos alrededor del tercer ciclo universitario (para obtener el grado de doctor), y en argumentos teóricos y empíricos para avanzar en la defensa de un modelo de escritura académica inventiva en sus articulaciones potenciales con “la componente experimental y de proyecto” (MCTES, 2006). Enfatizamos la escritura de posgrado porque es en este ciclo de estudios que hay “esencialmente un aprendizaje orientado a la práctica de investigación de alto nivel”. Centraremos nuestra (auto)reflexión alrededor de los procesos de escritura académica en las ciencias sociales y humanidades, identificando algunos aportes y desafíos de la investigación en las artes como un caso paradigmático de *cómo se puede escribir una “tesis original”* (MCTES, 2009). Subrayaremos prácticas creativas específicas del artista-investigador.

**Palabras clave:** pedagogía, formación avanzada, educación superior, escritura académica, investigación artística, universidad.

mimetic writing, “to a system based on the development of competences” of inventive writing at the level of postgraduate training. This terminology was used by the Portuguese Government when, in 2006, it introduced the Bologna Process and established “the qualification of the Portuguese in the European area” as “one of the key objectives of the policy for higher education”. Our attention will focus on the discourses produced around the third university cycle (leading to the doctorate), and on the possibility of advancing theoretical and empirical arguments in defense of a model of inventive academic writing in its potential articulations with the “experimental and project-oriented component” (MCTES, 2006). We emphasize postgraduate writing because this cycle of studies is „essentially a practice-oriented learning of high-level research”. Centering our (self) reflection on the processes of academic writing in the social sciences and humanities, we seek to identify contributions and challenges offered by research in the arts as a paradigmatic case of *how it is possible to write an „original thesis”* (MCTES, 2009). Specific creative practices of the artist-researcher will be underlined.

**Key words:** Pedagogy, advanced training, higher education, academic writing, artistic research, university.

## Teaching and researching in Portugal: an articulation still unresolved at the University

Despite the profound changes that have shaped the fabric of the Portuguese higher education in recent decades – and which have become particularly visible in a sustained advancement of postgraduate studies –, the debate on the relationship between the university and science remains open in Portugal and, in many ways, it is “still an unresolved debate” (Nóvoa, 2013, p. 20). According to our view, this situation finds its most evident

explanation in a structural resistance to change which derives from old working habits that are deeply ingrained and installed in our academic institutions, and which are more focused on the *conservation, accumulation and transmission* of knowledge in various disciplines than in the dynamics that underpin the *ideation* and the *construction* of new objects and scientific territories.

As has been consensually shown by historians of education (Matos & Ó, 2013), until the last quarter of the the 20th century, the Portuguese university had almost completely exhausted itself in teaching tasks, while remaining distanced from the practice of research (except for some very specific areas). Nevertheless, it is equally true that, in our days, nobody has yet taken up the necessary analysis of the ‘investigative processes’ that, based on the interaction between teachers and students, will allow the creation, transmission and dissemination of culture, science and technology at its highest level. As we all know, the strengthening of postgraduate studies is one of the strategic lines that both the Portuguese governments and universities have been pursuing in recent decades (although the sustained effect of research policies had already been visible since the turn of the millennium).

Even against a background of acute economic crisis such as the one in which we live today, the University of Lisbon, for example, in 2012 has taken over the aim of achieving 50% of students attending postgraduate courses. Its broadest strategic guidelines also included the creation of doctoral schools. The other Portuguese higher education institutions all point in the same direction. In this regard, the numbers of the more recent past seem to indicate that there will be no room for any setback in the increasing search and demand for postgraduate studies.

In fact, the last decade has expressed unequivocally that the investment in studies leading to the PhD degree is not only regarded as ‘disinterested search for knowledge’, but that both the production of innovative knowledge and the training of young researchers are seen as key resources, whatever the scenario and the development options taken by any country may be. According to the *Direcção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência* (DGEEC, 2012), the doctorates which have been certified and recognized in Portugal amounted to a total of 8,888 (only in the year 2000), and this number is very close to the value accumulated within the preceding 30 years (11.628 diplomas were conferred between 1970 and 1999). The main scientific and technological fields in which doctorates were held in the past decade, in Portugal, let us perceive a certain constancy in the growth patterns of all areas, most notably, a continuous growth of doctoral research numbers in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. In fact, within the Humanities, the Arts were indeed the field pointing out the greatest exponential growth in the number of PhD theses completed: from 0 thesis in the period 1970-79 to 1 thesis in the period 1980-1989, and from 47 thesis in between 1990 and 1999, to 462 thesis in between 2000 and 2012. However, what remains to be seen, and known, is if this massive increase in the number of thesis and dissertations effectively corresponds to significant paradigmatic changes in the traditional processes and formats of the so-called *academic* research and writing.

## The Seminar

In Portugal, the framework of the pedagogic relationship prescribed by the institution of the *seminar* has been assumed as the central axis in the development of skills

(competences) that are considered fundamental to both the construction of the object of research and the ‚writing‘ of the doctoral thesis. The figure of the seminar is present in virtually every study plan of the 3rd cycle (Master and Doctorate). However, if the skills required to doctoral candidates and to the institution responsible for conferring the degree are easy to identify, the scenario of its implementation is very complex. According to the Portuguese legislation in what refers to each scientific domain, the doctor must combine a “systematic comprehension” with “skills and methods” that will enable him/her „to conceive, to project, to adapt and to perform a significant investigation“. The purpose is to understand how: (i) to devise a doctoral studies‘ plan which consist of curricular units and contents targeted at „research training“; (ii) to shorten the paths that, within *the forest of accumulated knowledge* on the respective theme and problem, will lead the candidate more easily to the elaboration of an „original thesis“ (MCTES, 2006). In short, the central point consists in establishing a pedagogical *setting* where these goals can acquire their own specific body.

As we all know, the concept of seminar materializes a broad discursive formation that inscribes the objectives outlined by international organizations, national governments, academic authorities, educational knowledge and ‚scientific‘ expertise. What matters the most, then, is to understand how the university has appropriated and institutionalized the concept of seminar in order to accomplish purposes that are specific to postgraduate training, namely, the development of research and writing competences. If we consider the extensive theoretical and practical dimensions to which the concept of seminar immediately refers, we will notice that the ‘transfer’, ‘import’ and ‘institutionalization’ of an education that takes as its basis the model of the seminar, has been taken for granted, in Portugal, without any further debate. Even more importantly, we will see that the old teaching practices – also called master classes or magistral lectures – have remained intact, only changing their designation. In other words, giving new names to practices that are everything but new, constitutes one of the most vivid examples of *the* historical and natural predisposition of the institution we call university: the resistance to change.

Our starting assumption is that the importation and incorporation of the concept of seminar into Portuguese higher education – reality which dates back to the 18th century and to a specific tradition of the European university, but that only imposed itself in the course of the 20th century in major institutions around the world that have taken *research as their mission* – is interchangeably mingled with both the identification of curricular units, and with specific methodologies of work shared by professors and students. This also means that the concept’s assimilation remains to be done in the Portuguese university. In the proper *relational* plan, there are in fact visible and well known situations in which both the master classes as well as the *master-apprentice* relationships give continuity to learning-teaching arrangements which transit from education levels that are previous to postgraduate studies whereby underscoring old hierarchical academic routines that are more compatible with teaching than with practices of research and inquiry. This is to say that the classic image of the *student-listener* is kept operative and uncontested.

In order to demonstrate our assertion, we propose a brief overview on the conditions of the circulation of the word seminar within the courses of advanced training in the fields of the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. We are faced with an enormous

diversity of contexts and situations, which is in itself symptomatic of a lack of reflection on its meaning and on its use to refer to pre-existing educational practices. There is a vast semantic field that offers itself to us when we face the multifarious uses and applications of the concept within the academic environment: optional seminars, tutorial seminars, seminars on topics of study or areas of expertise, interdisciplinary seminars, seminars of postgraduate studies, research seminars, orientation seminars, research-oriented seminars, doctoral seminars, methodological seminars, work in progress seminars, thesis project seminars, lunchtime seminars, seminars/conferences, and so on. In these terms, the word seems to interchangeably designate the pedagogical practices developed within the classroom, the practices of guidance and mentoring of students, the practices of oral presentation of research projects (or thesis projects). More generally, it also seems to connect to many contexts and typologies of presentation or communication – mainly in oral format – focusing on certain epistemological subjects and disciplines, and covering a wide range of specific topics or specialized domains of academic expertise.

Also in the case of the 3rd cycle degrees that are ,artistic‘ in nature, we often find in their study plans and curricula the notion of seminar where formerly it was more common to find words such as *studio* or *workshop*. Today, the various academic specialties of Fine Arts (painting, sculpture, design, etc.) are object of postgraduate studies, and their study programs often provide ‘specialty seminars‘ and ‘research development and orientation seminars‘ – meaning with these designations a single curricular unit that is divided in two semesters or composed by two independent units. Within the seminar other actions of training and dissemination of results are usually included: cycles of conferences (with contributions from different areas of knowledge, and counting with lectures from prominent figures of great prestige and recognized expertise in the fields of contemporary artistic production and curatorial practices). Similarly to what occurs in other academic and disciplinary areas, the entire process of elaboration of thesis or dissertations is expected to be accompanied by tutorial guidance, and is subjected to the previous presentation and appreciation of reports written by the doctoral candidate on each semester, in each discipline. The provision of the final exam for obtaining the PhD degree requires prior approval on seminar attendance as well as on semestral reports. Although the study plans of most postgraduate courses offered by the Portuguese higher education institutions tend to consider the seminar as one stage in the process of evaluation of *the knowledge acquired by the doctoral candidate* in each curricular unit (UC’s) of his/hers respective advanced training courses, it is primarily seen as a mere device (or occasion) for oral presentation and discussion of doctoral individual projects and thesis.

In the specific context and conditions of *academic research in the arts*, the seminar is usually understood as a place or *platform* where doctoral students are given the opportunity to present and discuss their experiences of research and writing –almost inevitably, in paper formats– while articulating conceptual or *discursive* practices with artistic or *non-discursive* processes of material thinking, experimentation and exposition. Furthermore, it seems to provide doctoral students one of the greatest challenges in artistic research: *to verbalize* sensuous, tacit and visual forms of knowledge, while finding the appropriate words *to say the unsayable* and ways of linguistic communication as demanded by the necessary exchange of ideas of work in progress within the institutional context of the academy. Seen from this perspective, the research seminars in the artistic field are not only that which may result from the *individualized research*

*plans* of doctoral candidates – focusing on the specific materials and methodological issues of each personal research project –, they are also envisioned as *a gathering place* whose primary function is to promote unexpected encounters and effective interaction among artists, researchers and teachers whose actual creative processes are usually deemed both excessively and inevitably self-centered –if not, hermetic–, making of artistic creativity a very vulnerable endeavour and thus a lonely trip (Quaresma, Dias & Guadix, 2010, pp.6-7; Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2007, p.3; Pienimäki, 2007, pp.10-11).

It is clear that we are currently faced with a variety of educational contexts and situations that charge the word seminar, and the pedagogical practices thereby implied, with multiple meanings and specific contents. But it is also clear, given this brief account, that we're still very distanced, in Portugal, from a higher educational model or paradigm in which all the skills and competences connected with writing in its various processes and layers of transition in-between learning and research –specially, the ones we can indisputably call *inventive* or *creative*–, are properly trained and encouraged. Undoubtedly, academic writing in Portuguese higher education is a little explored field, especially if we look at it more from an angle of risk and potentiality for experimentation, and not so much in its capacity for incorporation and reproduction of research models and paradigms already tested.

The truth is: it is still *the listener*, *the lone worker* who prepares him/herself for the final verdict and evaluation decided by their supervisor and the academic examining board. We haven't yet seen the day when *the methodological craft* starts to dominate the scenery of the relationship between doctoral candidates and their masters. Even after Bologna, we have not yet been able to invent *ways of being together* that are very different from those that existed before Bologna. It has not yet arrived the time in which students and teachers reflect throughout the investigative process about the mechanics of this process itself. The Portuguese university still values, above all else, the traditional displays and performances of *a perfectly finished and ready-made knowledge* that offers itself as both *the model* and *the mould* of everything that can be said, written, thought and imagined as academic research. If we accept this argument as an evidence of the present, then we will be forced to admit that –even in the face of an historic moment in which the need to legally expand high-level research is consensually assumed by virtually all governments and academic communities–, ours is the civilization that endlessly perpetuates the means of its own salvation by relating itself to a written culture that, in turn, relies on practices of demonstration and display of *great masterpieces* and on the sacralization of *the book*, glorified as structures which have the power to reveal truths and to disseminate them as necessary to all those who aspire to become writers and creators.

Based on a critical analysis of the current state of affairs, it becomes possible for us to say that, throughout the process of teaching and learning at postgraduate levels, the real possibilities for the doctoral candidate to experience him/herself *vis-à-vis* the academic community as a researcher and writer who takes the fantasy of difference and of displacement as his/her own commitment, remains scarce if not only remote. No teacher can actually deny that their practices of guidance and supervision are still characterized by a great dependency on a strong disciplinary economy that relies on methodological-theoretical closure and modes of pedagogical interaction almost exclusively dominated by formal procedures of evaluation and assessment that are based on textual correction

and thesis examination. Nevertheless, as we witness this state of affairs, we must also recognize the university's potential for renewal as largely dependent on its ability to consolidate, within its own tissue, forms of pedagogical relation that are *experimental* and processes of writing that are *inventive*, that is, that are fully motivated to explore the borders of *the forest of knowledge*, and to dare –without previously defined expectations or outcomes– into *the tomorrow of science*. Ours is, therefore, a time of great challenges, and it must be in order to speed up this process that we shall position ourselves *critically* toward the present.

## Self-reflexivity

It is in these terms that a movement of self-reflective nature becomes an essential condition to overcome the structural resistance to change that characterizes the university as an historical institution. We are convinced that the first condition of possibility for us to start *thinking research as capable of triggering and producing forms of thought-other*, is to analyse the mechanisms of power that cross without ceasing this very practice, while keeping it hived off a social world that increasingly calls for differentiated products, but doesn't seem know yet –neither seems to want to know–, how to democratize the processes that unleash and support inventive writing toward the unknown.

Once more, self-reflexivity points directly at the heart of a practice –whose roots are essentially skeptical–, which consists in questioning, ruthlessly and relentlessly, all that which is nearest to us and thereby constitutes ourselves as the most transcendent or founding of our inner convictions. As if it was only through this endless critical task that it could, finally and effectively, be possible for us to feed the desire for new models of scientific binding and discovery. We believe that only through self-reflective lens it is possible for us to look differently into the nature of our own work as researchers and teachers, to the extent that we have to think simultaneously about the cognitive, emotional and existential dimensions in which we find ourselves. This movement consists not so much in trying to walk the path in order to justify another reform initiative, and more in trying to organize practices that are able to confronting the power-knowledge relations that historically remain unquestioned and unquestionable within our most venerable cultural or critical-academic institutions (Connor, 2000, p. 18). As if we could start pressuring on these institutions that we so blindly worship –as we find ourselves immersed within its schools of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences–, *turning* them into places of open and inconclusive discussion.

Because it is precisely there, at the heart of the school institution, in this place that is the most familiar one of our lives –the classroom–, that the multiple power relations are settled to work endlessly toward the objectification and dissemination of inherited knowledge structures, often giving way to routines that leave little or none room for anything other than the doctrines of truth. To our tragedy, the most remote model that identifies us since we sat down on a school bench –from primary school into the University– is the model of *recognition*. This model defines itself by the concordant exercise whereby the same subject can be at different times remembered, imagined and conceived. We believe that by accepting this harsh conclusion about our educational systems, it will be less difficult for us to claim the only certainty that university itself should take as its own – *the certainty that it is only within production that the processes of production can be best understood*. Therefore, any attempt to understand the

institutional blockages imposed to our own change as teachers must necessarily pass through the development of epistemologies and methodologies for the reworking of our own systems of thought alongside with our students. As teachers we must work with the performativity of language and with our students as writers, fighting all the forces that hold him/her in the position of the *listener-spectator-reader* that one day, after having accumulated and digested the information received and collected, will be eventually able to draft, in the loneliness of her/his own knowledge, a masterpiece also named thesis.

This is all about assuming, within the communal space of the classroom, working habits and practices that are only and exclusively focused on the *tessiture* of the text and on the problems posed by it. To create a space for unexpected encounters and for trying different ways of working together that are characterized by the heterogeneity of views and by the experimentalism of the textual practice. To this purpose we evoke the definition coined by Roland Barthes in *Criticism and Truth*: a writer is someone for whom language constitutes a problem, who experiences the depth of language, not its instrumentality or beauty (2007, p.44). In one word: we should only invest ourselves in processes of *decoding* instead of *overcodification*. We should always commit ourselves to accentuate the perpetual entanglement of language instead of consenting those leveled servitudes to truth as they were promised by the public school, and continuously accomplished, as expected, by the great mass of its students.

Our cause is to make the university to understand that its mission is to build modes of enunciation that are inventive, that is, marked by hybridity, by multiple affiliation, by intertextuality. And also by ontological and epistemological incompleteness. Enunciations that do not conceive themselves as having necessarily to express finished truths, but rather as contingent positivities always longing for new developments and new directions. Our minds must only obey to this very clear principle: all the knowledge produced by the schools of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities should clearly evidence its own impossibility of completion, of totalization, of saturation, of arriving at something that would be of the order of architecture or building. It's the mythical image of the Tower of Babel which, we believe, best serves to characterize the type of encounter that must occur among teachers and students.

We carry on our backs an heavy past that separates teaching from research. In fact, for centuries the Portuguese university realizes in its faculties of Medicine and Sciences—more recently also in the faculties of Letters and the Human Sciences—a marked distinction, if not an explicit opposition, between those participating in the permanent task of reworking and turning into scientific research, and those who are oriented to the transmission of the so-called legitimate culture, and therefore find themselves almost exclusively consumed in the function of conservation and reproduction of accumulated knowledge. Inside the university, research and teaching are thus commonly perceived as being constantly in tension, which makes any accommodation extremely vulnerable in time and space. As we all know, there are teachers who hold up to a knowledge that takes on the colors of contingency and permanent *becoming*, and there are teachers, on the other hand, who hold on to the authority of the classics and never let go of it. This old antinomy will always be ahead of us, intact, unstoppable. This evidence is not surmountable, and neither is that our mission here. On the contrary, it is our purpose here to identify a consensus, or perhaps a blind zone, beyond that known opposition.



It seems to us that no one is available or interested in promoting the necessary pedagogical analysis with regard to the processes of community work that we maintain with our students, whom cannot experience –when meeting with these two distinct kinds of master– ways of learning and knowing that are so deeply contrasted. The dissonance and antagonism that the teachers of Arts and Humanities and the teachers of Social Sciences often tend to highlight among each other, only serve to reinscribe –to the extent that they ignore– the difficulty that comes out from the isolation and the idealization of the figure of *the sage*, and the monologue of the master-apprentice relationship. In other words: the figure of the Father. This is to say that the Portuguese university little or nothing has been able to absorb from the practices of community interaction focused on the awareness of the creative processes that have emerged from other areas of the Portuguese cultural and artistic life since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The endless tasks of synthesis and summary –and even the practices of copying, counterfeiting and plagiarism– still impoverish much of the encounters that could take place between students and teachers in the university. That is why there is also the current belief according to which the difficulties that many students experience in ideating and assembling their research objects are mainly the result of their own intrinsic and personal *creative inability*, and not, as it should be evident, the result of the demands that are common to every educational institution that takes as its mission the *normalization of thought*.

And this is a problem that is anything but new. The notion that the Portuguese University should modernize teaching as a result of the needs of research, gave rise to an increasingly disappointment that was already visible, in Portugal, since the end of the 1920's – only a decade after the creation of the University of Lisbon. The criticism to university rose its tone and, by the end of the 1960's, it was deafening in its demands for a significant investment in the production of science, in particular, at postgraduate levels. The vision of a structural sclerosis and decay, led then to the thesis according to which the crisis of the traditional model of the Portuguese university proved that it was simply *irreformable*, and therefore its salvation could only rely on a radical solution. This is the reason why we must seek our academic heritage in other institutional landscapes. The clothes of the so-called 'modern university', which became classic in most of the demoliberal states about two centuries ago –and which was distinct from the Napoleonic-Latin model that marked the Portuguese tradition since the 1830's–, postulated, beyond the principle of academic autonomy that was its mark since the Middle Ages, a practice of *problematizing* all knowledge and of searching for the truth without any constraints or limits of departure. Even if very hidden in our country, the fundamental belief that crossed the entire university was its discussion without any limits or constraint.

Concerning this same discussion, two texts of Jacques Derrida deserve mention: *Eyes of the university* and *University without condition* (2001 e 2002). In both texts the philosopher professes his faith in the institution, in the figure of the teacher and in what he calls the "Humanities of tomorrow". According to his vision, it is important that we feel essentially heirs of a social organization that, despite all its contradictions and miseries, has never stopped wanting to affirm itself historically as a community place and as a social link to the endless configurations of scientific research. Derrida's analyses are based on the principle that the past of the university requires and reclaims *unconditional* freedom of questioning and proposition, namely, the right to say publicly all that which research, knowledge and the thought of *truth* require. Here one finds

legitimized what he himself defines as *the vocation of the university* on the basis of its essence: to occupy *the ultimate place of critical resistance* –and more than critique itself– *all the dogmatic and unfair powers of appropriation*. The university has therefore *the unconditional right to pose critical questions*, not only to the history of the concept of man, but to the very history of the notion of critique, to the shape and authority of the question, to *the interrogative form of thought*. For Derrida, all this implies the right to do so affirmatively and performatively, that is, by producing events, for example, by writing and by giving birth to *singular works*. In the university nothing should be out of question, of discussion, of reworking. We need to know how to take *not only a principle of resistance, but a force of resistance – of dissent* (2001, pp. 13-14, 16-18, 22).

It is not new the fact that the university affirms the justice of heteronomy, of radical doubt and dissidence whose origins are to be found within itself. Hence the regular conflicts with the various political governments of the modern State and with its fantasy that sovereignty is indivisible. The fundamental text that first defended the autonomy of the institution is, as we all know, the Kantian *Conflict of the Faculties*, followed by several others (Schelling, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Humboldt, Hegel and Heidegger) around the University of Berlin (from 1807 to 1810), and the German University in general, as founder of an *inseparable relationship between research and teaching* on which was based the contact of the academics with the State and The People as the referent to a political practice that structures, produces, archives and transmits knowledge and its most diverse techniques. Under the impetus of Humboldt, the German scientific project aimed *not only the acquisition of knowledge by individuals but the formation of a subject of knowledge* (Lyotard, 2003, p. 71).

It should be noted that the fundamental problem of Kant was to make this institution a place of active resistance –*to think and to say true*– to any kind of despotism and abuse from totalitarian power. Since Kant, knowledge –rational, rigorous and built in conscience– cannot be subjected to any other authority than the one that is limited and prescribed by the university as community. In Kant we find the *arkè* of that absolute freedom of *the word of the scholar* as being linked to essentially theoretical judgements, i.e. to philosophy. Kant himself departs from the evidence that the *higher Faculties* (Theology, Law and Medicine) had their authority granted by the temporal power, while the *lower Faculty* (Philosophy), should be sanctioned only by *the peculiar reason of learned people*. Regardless of the provisions of government with regard to doctrines, this Faculty should have the freedom, not to utter orders, but at least to judge all those that had to do with scientific interest, that is, with truth itself, so that reason should be authorized to speak publicly; because, without similar freedom, truth would never come to light. Philosophy was the privileged locus of free reason, of that creed that welcomes no determination or rebuttal from above. Only the philosophical Faculty had the power to judge with autonomy, and to show the wide range of knowledges to those who were recognized in their right to tell everything, under its purview (Kant, 1993 [1794], pp. 21-22).

Anchored in this old possibility, we still maintain the university in its old function of producing and exposing specialized knowledges whose *principles* and *foundations* only Philosophy has the right to legitimize and sustain. The tradition of modern university would consolidate the assertion according to which the ability for scientific creation feeds itself on speculative thought (theory). Research and development of scientific knowledge

are not justified, in these terms, by a *use value*, by its *immediate truth*, nor by the search for an ultimate rational unit of encyclopedic type. This utopian project was admittedly present in *Bildung*; however, what in the German training model continues to attract us is the ability to build and maintain a whole speculative language device that knows how to highlight the antagonism between statements, and how to make them shatter and, at the same time, to be able to situate them on a plan in which they discover themselves tangled within each other. The possibility of being at a University that is “questioning and not totalizing”, as Lyotard states (2003, p. 78). It is certainly not by mere coincidence that, “historically, the academic writing of students has been profoundly shaped by the seminar, a pedagogical practice that was introduced to teaching at the beginning of the 19th century in Germany”. In such an old tradition, “seminars were founded to actively engage students in research by making them study original sources and write seminary papers on their investigations and the discussion in the seminar group”. What matters is then to realize that the seminars were instrumental in the change “from an orally conceived teaching system to a writing-based system that relied on autonomous interest-oriented learning with minimal external control” (Kruse, 2006, pp.331-332).

### **Toward a writing of becoming: the legacy of postmodern social theory**

The following pages are intended to identify, in the so-called postmodern social theory, the arguments of all those who risked what they knew in the questioning of boundaries and in the perpetual re-inscription of the craft of the researcher within inventiveness. All we can do is to rejoice with their multiple reflections on the creative process and continuous demarcation of the notorious *academia mediocritas*, as they defy us not to succumb to a kind of epistemology that celebrates our eternal submission to inherited knowledges and cherishes the values of prudence and suspicion, thereby sustaining the horror that goes with any kind of intellectual risk.

It is widely known that the project that takes ‘the social’ as its object –by theorizing and decomposing it with the purpose to systematize it–, constituted one of the major concerns of modernity, whose origins date back to the Enlightenment and to the hypotheses formulated by the great *philosophes* around the possibility of emancipation of reason and freedom. However, since the last decades of our time, the reiterated obstinacy, typical of the science of the Lights –with rationality, universalism and the idea of progress– has been widely questioned and problematized in both its epistemological and ethical plans. This is currently accepted, and does not constitute for us any matter of doubt. But, if we want to be precise, we should also recognise that a whole tradition of reflection, prior in time and once again within the framework of the German philosophical thought, had already anticipated postmodernism through a powerful critical vigilance with regard to the limits and restrictions of the modern social order. As a matter of fact, the premises of this situation, as well as their cultural artifacts, had been openly shaken, *avant la lettre*, by Nietzsche, Heidegger – the founders of the so-called *philosophy of difference* –, Simmel, Weber, Benjamin, Adorno, Horkheimer (only to name a few). To them we owe the first attempts to frontally discuss and problematize the analytical propositions of the modern social thought. Among these propositions, we shall highlight the criticisms, on one hand, to the reiterated presumption according to which knowledge is progressive, cumulative, total, universal and rational –a notion

that found its own incarnation in the image of the 18th century enciclopedia— and, on the other hand, to the principle according to which it is *the subject* who must be at the centre of the analysis and of the theory and, at the same time, who is the source and root of all thought and action.

It was only through the texts and interpretations bequeathed by those men who were born in the middle of the 19th century, that we had the chance to begin to understand how the programmatic bases of modernity had been so historically distanced from *the truth* that the world, in the meantime, was evidencing. By reflecting on the principles, practices and achievements of modern life, those authors explored the complexity, the irregularity and the unpredictability of the consequences of modernity. They alerted us to the fact that the rationalization of the socio-political life obscured our understanding of the contradictions that this same rationalization was responsible for engendering (Smart, 2002, pp. 405-407). The condition of research in Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities supposes, therefore, the recognition that any explanation that imagines itself as absolute and omnipotent in its attempts to explain *the order of the world of men and of things*, is only in the service of a power of legitimacy, that is, in the service of a series of practices, of a cultural self-image, of a dominant discourse and, in short, of an institution. It is, therefore, not only useful but desirable that research within the university learns how to continue this gesture which sought to produce a sense of *instability in the face of modern episteme*; that it knows how to work towards a *metaphysics of presence* that is able to break with the closed loops of signification that often dominate the analysis that scholars make from reality.

Systematizing: our critical relations with modernity tend to produce consensus around the repudiation of universals, and around the assumption that there is no common denominator that ensures the unity of the world. As suggested by Lyotard (2003) in *The postmodern condition* (first published in 1979), modernity may have replaced the divinely providential narratives of the human destiny by other set of narratives that despite being secular weren't less universalizing or *metanarrative* in nature: the predominance of Reason and the enlightenment project; the dialectics of spirit and self-consciousness in the wake of the Hegelian philosophy; the emancipation of the rational subject and of the worker as fixed by Marxist approaches. Some may argue that “under the impact of secularising, democratising, computerising and consumerising pressures”, our post-modern condition is “a social formation” in which “the maps and statuses of knowledge are being redrawn and re-described” (Jenkins, 1991, p.60). While others, in turn, affirm their disbelief in the face of this sort of essentialist visions of humanity. The social landscape that is offered to our interpretation does not behave, anymore, as *the truth* that science once spoke through a subject who imagined him/herself as sovereign.

The analysis that is now required from us—teachers, researchers, artists, writers—, must give an account of the “multiplicity and malleability of identities”, the “complexity and incommensurability of human worlds”, the “crossing of borders”, the “hybridity”, the “collage” of the contemporary discourses of “assemblage and *pastiche*” in artistic and cultural productions. It is the obligation of the researcher to perceive and to respond to the complexity of the proposals and of the solutions of social life, while rendering these through “irony, ambiguity and ambivalence”, through “contingency and precariousness” or even through “indeterminacy, insecurity, contradiction and violence” (Bauman, 1993; Connor, 2000; Harvey, 1989). The texts that, in this interpretative context, we—teachers

and students– are led to produce can only provide a single service: the perpetual expansion of explanation.

There is no common denominator that is able to ensure that the world is one and sustained on the possibility of a natural and objective thinking. The primary, and perhaps the only, *law* of postmodernism is that information does not cease to multiply. The increase of social production registered in our time can only correspond to a build up and accumulation of perspectives, of models, of angles, of contingent points of view of the teachers and researchers who subscribe them. This is how one must question the universality of the assertions of truth, while arguing that any *meaning* is nothing but an active construction that depends both on the pragmatic of its own context and on the specific rules of certain discursive regimes. This should also be the starting point of any pedagogical relationship at the level of postgraduation.

It is important that we stop with some sense of wonder before the influential text of Lyotard, since it is the “condition of knowledge in the most developed societies” that this text takes as its object of study. According to the diagnosis traced by Lyotard, the crisis of contemporaneity is the crisis of legitimation of *the metanarrative device* that corresponds to it and which, in turn, corresponds to the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university on which it depends. Lyotard argues that the narrative loses its function, its hero, its main objective, and becomes dispersed into the clouds of the elements of narrative language which are denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and which configure the crossroads in which each contemporary subject is immersed. According to Lyotard’s diagnosis, we do not make language combinations that are necessarily stable, nor are the properties of our invented languages necessarily communicable (2003, pp.11-12).

The problem of the legitimation of knowledge arises in entirely different terms in a society and a culture that recognizes no more credibility to any unifying or totalizing discourse, be it directed toward speculation or toward emancipation. Lyotard argues that the development of techniques and technology since the World War Two has significantly contributed to accentuate the means of action to the detriment of its ends. Since then, the crisis of scientific knowledge appeared as the result, on one hand, of the exhaustion of the encyclopaedic array in which each science occupied its rightful place and, on the other, of the announced independence of the so-called mediators responsible for the dissemination of knowledge.

In the first case, we should call attention to the fact that the classical settings of the various scientific disciplines started to be problematized and this caused not only the “disappearance of certain knowledges” but also a reconfiguration of the borders of science and, finally, the birth of new territories. The institutional rearrangement of the traditional hierarchy of speculative knowledge provoked the breakdown and dispersion of the ‘ancient’ faculties into ‘institutes and foundations of all kinds’, and this situation has led most schools of higher education to adopt a logic of mechanical transfer –and inevitably impoverishing– of the previously ‘established knowledges’ in order to ensure, through didactics, the production of teachers more than of sages. As to the second case, the post-modern condition emphasizes the element of *Aufklärung* as *dispositive of emancipation*, and as the notion that tends to establish the legitimacy of science –and of its truth– as based on the ‘autonomy’ of the mediators that are

'committed' to knowledge as an 'ethical, social and political practice.' As noted by Lyotard in this particular point, current science no longer has conditions to sustain the existence of cognitive and denotative statements that can be taken for their practical value or universal scope. And from here we arrive at an important thesis about postmodernity: science plays its own game and cannot legitimize other language games, for example, the game of prescription (2003, pp.82-83). In short, it is precisely at this point that *the self-reflexive exercise* can begin, and we can finally realize that the most distinctive trait of science in our time is *the self-immanence of the discourse on the rules which serve to validate it* (Lyotard, 2003, pp.81-82, 111).

Once that we are driven away from the possibility of a *metadiscourse of knowledge*, we must seek to think the change of the status of science from the standpoint of a 'pragmatics of research'. As we come closer to realize that the legitimacy of knowledge stems from its performativity, we understand that the 'enrichment of arguments' and the complexity of the process of 'administration of evidences' are the fundamental characteristics that mark our craft of researchers and teachers. The acceptance of scientific statements lives, today, on the 'flexibility' of their means and on the 'multiplicity' of languages. And the most challenging of all this is that our current development of knowledge can correspond to an unexpected unfolding, to a new argument, to the invention of new rules and, namely, to the change of the game itself. Following Lyotard's lesson, we discover within this practice of multiplicity and multiplication a crucial displacement of our own 'idea of reason'. Instead of a *metalanguage* and of a universal dialectic of spirit, we have now at our disposal a plurality of systems that may even be assumed as 'formal and axiomatic' as long as we all know that they are finite in time and space.

In short: all that which counted as a 'paradox' or even as a 'paralogism' in the knowledge systems of the classical and modern science, finds now a new conviction and approval within 'the community of experts' of these systems. The sense of knowledge in post-modernity is thus shifted from the domains of the ready-known and forecast results into a logic of evolution prospected as 'discontinuous', 'catastrophic' or even 'paradoxical'. The science that we strive to make today *produces not the known but the unknown*. And here lies the real essence of our discussion: research becomes useful not because it has a 'scientific method', but rather because it presents a methodology of empirical and theoretical work that, by manifesting the assumptions and propositions through which science itself is made and built upon, allows for the continuous act of appearance of new ideas and new statements. The model of legitimacy is now marked by a *differing* activity or imagination toward the unexpected. The concept of difference is translated by Lyotard as *paralogy*, and it refers to notions of open system, co-variation, local consensus, finite and limited meta-argumentation. The scientific policy scenario in which we find ourselves in, at the same time as we struggle from within the university is, in Lyotard's words, marked by the "desire for justice and the unknown" (Lyotard, 2003, pp. 87-90, 119, 133).

## **Writing differently within artistic research: controversies and critical challenges of the present**

Due to its recent integration in the university system, in recent decades the European art academies have been building up their own identity around the seminar and the training

of artists-researchers. The national and international debates on the possibility of operating a paradigm shift in the models of teaching and learning in the university, insist more and more on the need to implement alternative and differing pedagogies for the development of research and writing skills in the various scientific fields, including now research-creation processes, and the experimental and project-based components that are specific to the artistic field. In the past ten years, several terminologies, methodologies and pedagogies for research-creation in the arts have been proliferating throughout the academy, linked to the very possibility of experiencing and institutionalizing new formats of writing and publishing that suit the aesthetic dimensions and materialities of artistic works. The new paradigms often resort to writing as a secondary practice that mainly serves the purposes of documentation and description of processes, products and results of artistic creation.

On the other hand, new “pedagogies of invention” set themselves the task to explore the possibilities of the “experience of supervising across paradigms”, while addressing “the question of writing as a research practice with the positioning of writing as an embodied practice” (Allpress, Barnacle, Duxbury & Grierson, 2012, p. 10). In fact, there is a current proliferation of literature around *the problem of teaching and learning innovative approaches to writing* and, mainly, around the possibility of *writing differently* in art and design (Borg, 2012; Friedman, 2014). These emerging cultures and practices of writing focused on art-education and artistic projects aim, in most cases, to respond to the new demands for the production, accumulation and transfer of knowledge. These new demands result, on one hand, from the changes introduced by the Bologna Process in the traditional art schools and academies –and corresponding models for educating the artist-teacher– and, on the other hand, from an *educational turn* and an *academic turn* that have been taking place in the artworld since the last decade (Rogoff, 2008; Lesage, 2009a).

With its own specific processes of production and training, the field of art arises in this new context of academic and pedagogical turning as a privileged ‘aesthetic platform’ for questioning the standard definitions of science –with its traditional systems of classification and distribution of ‘fields’–, and for the establishment of ‘discipline crossovers’ and relations of ‘hybridity’ and ‘multimediality’ among different scientific and technological fields, from the social sciences and the humanities to the new engineering and technology sciences (Moran, 2009; Borgdorff, 2009; McNamara & Ross, 2007). On the other hand, the unprecedented proliferation, on an international scale, of advanced studies programs in the areas of artistic creation and training is symptomatic of the emergence of a *specific academic culture* with its own publishing policies and *writing politics* increasingly focused on the possibility of “experimenting” with *indisciplinary theories* and methodologies for the production and “exposition” of aesthetic and poetic *knowledges* strategically situated at the confluence and/or intersection between artistic practice, teaching and research (Rancière, 2006 and 2008; Schwab, 2013).

In the last two decades, there has been a “multiplication of doctorates” in the Portuguese universities and, with special incidence since the past ten years, an exponential growth of doctorates in the field of Arts: between the years of 1970 and 1999 there were 48 doctoral dissertations completed in Arts (for a total of 486 doctorates defended in the field of the Humanities). For the period comprehended between 2000 and 2012 the number of dissertations in the Arts amounted to 462, in

a universe of 2160 dissertations in the Humanities (MCTES, 2002; DGEEC, 2012). The institutionalization of the Arts as a disciplinary area of academic research was officially consecrated when, in September 2009, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education recognized the importance of 'the award of the degree of doctor to creators of works and achievements resulting from the practice of project in domains and forms hardly *compatible* with the dominant model of the doctoral thesis'. The same Ministry also recognised the 'international' existence of an 'heritage of relevant experience' in areas such as 'artist's conception, musical composition, literary or cinematic work, staging or *performance*'. Whereas 'in some of these areas, the new knowledge produced is partially or wholly embedded in works and achievements', the Portuguese legislation clearly stated: 'although the meaning and context of this knowledge can be described by words, their deeper understanding can only be achieved with reference to these works and achievements' (MCTES, 2009, p. 6310).

Intending to contribute for the reflection on the subject of *academic research in the arts*, and in order to adapt the system of higher arts education in Portugal to the international panorama, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) had previously commissioned a report to an 'international panel of experts' who performed the analysis of the Portuguese artistic higher education. In the report (dated July 21, 2009), the international experts acknowledged that even though the Portuguese legislation presented "no formal restriction to the pursuit of practice or evidence based PhD's", in "reality" there were still "significant cultural barriers to be overcome", namely, the Portuguese universities (such as many universities around the world), were still embedded in "traditional paradigms not always sympathetic to the emerging methodologies of practice-based research". Furthermore, "the conventions and habits" that dominated the Portuguese university still regarded "practice-based methods in the creative and performing arts as inappropriate or unsuitable for advanced academic research". This situation was confirmed by the evidence that most "university PhD methodologies" were still "largely based upon textual sources and scientific paradigms" whereas those in Arts were "evolving through the development of practice-based methods and object scholarship" in which "artefacts (whether paintings, performances, objects or compositions)" counted as the main "containers of knowledge" and "their making" was itself considered as "the process of enquiry" (Hasan, 2009, p.23).

These evidences were further supported by the emergence, in recent years, of "practice-based regulations for PhD programmes" in many European and North American countries, where "models of good practice" were already "well established", and where "the relationship of a written exegesis to the submission of an artefact, composition or performance" –and the respective "supervisory framework" for these types of "work"– had already been argued and demonstrated. Some of these PhD programs had begun to offer to "established artists, designers or performers" the opportunity to use "creative work" (whether exhibitions, performances or musical compositions) for partial fulfilment of a "PhD by Publication". This "standard practice" functioned as a "recognition" of "the different career trajectories of practitioners in the creative arts", as long as the "body of existing creative work" could *demonstrate* "a coherent line of enquiry that has led to original conclusions of significance", and "the methods of enquiry" could *embody* "intellectual rigour". According to this "model", the body of creative work should be "assembled for examination with an accompanying text" that "articulates and provide the evidence for a range of research questions and methodologies" (Hasan, 2009, pp.24-25).



Despite these observations, a systematic investigation into the portuguese university regulations for PhD registration and examination revealed that “the question of how to acknowledge artistic, practice based research on a PhD level” was largely dominated by “traditional tenets of literary investigation and scientific empiricism”. Furthermore, “the wording of regulations” was often “biased towards the submission of written work” derived from “traditional pedagogies”, which meant that PhD degrees were mainly conferred on the basis of a written “thesis” to be “evaluated by a committee nominated by the competent council in each University”. In other words, university regulations in Portugal, as well as in many other European countries, did not “specifically embrace practice-based outcomes in performance, composition or exhibition”. As a consequence, the international panel of experts recommend that current legislation on PhD degrees should clearly promote and facilitate the conduction of practice based-research and the awarding of PhD degrees “on the basis of a body of work (either through publication, exhibition, composition or performance) that displays the originality and rigour expected of a research degree in any field” (Hasan, 2009, pp. 24-25; MCTES, 2006).

Aligning the step with the guidelines defined by the international experts, and responding to ‘the need to overcome’, in certain cases, ‘the traditional form of the doctoral thesis’, as well as the need to avoid the ‘discouragement’ that this same situation was causing on those creators who, based on ‘the practice of project’ had already been developing ‘research methods typical of artistic activity’, the Portuguese Government issued legislation introducing the possibility of obtaining the degree of doctor ‘based on the recognition and analysis of works’, and on the basis of published academic work. The same legislation determined that the program of studies leading to the degree of doctor in the field of the arts could be integrated by ‘a work or group of works or achievements with innovative character, accompanied by a written statement explaining the process of conception and elaboration, research capacities, and its framework in the advancement of the domain in which it is inscribed’. In addition to these guidelines, the legislation highlighted the fact that the cycle leading to the PhD degree should be focussed on the ‘oriented learning of the practice of high-level research’ (MCTES, 2009, pp.6310-11).

## **Making ways through the forest: the debate on research in the arts**

Although the problematic relation of the artist with the word *research* is not unprecedented in the history of the modern artworld (Picasso, 1992, pp.210-213), it was only very recently that the concept of *academic research* in the creative and performing arts began to ignite debates, discussions and struggles among different groups of interest –artists, writers, curators, critics, sociologists, philosophers, etc.– who advocate different (and often competing) schools of thought, theoretical and practical positions, political agendas and standard views of science represented in both the art academy and in the artworld. Some argue in favor of methodological and institutional anarchy, while others react to artistic research with reserve, if not with scepticism or outright rejection (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005, p.14; Lesage, 2009b, p.2; Borgdorff, 2012, p.4). Finally, many of these people ask the historical and existential question: If *art cannot be taught* (Gropius, 1919; Elkins, 2001), *why should* and *how can* artistic research be taught or learned?

Since the emergence of the problematic of *artistic research* as a key task of the Academy after Bologna (Lesage, 2009b, p.1), many voices –“sometimes polemical, sometimes ‘academic’, sometimes poetic, sometimes scientific, sometimes philosophical, sometimes pragmatic”– have claimed the need to find and mobilize “more allies and more arguments” within “the world of academic research” and “the science system” of the humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, anthropology, physics and engineering, for the recognition of *the specificity of artistic research* in the context of the “expanded epistemic culture” of our contemporary “knowledge-based economies” (Lesage, 2009b, p.1; Borgdorff, 2012, p.12; Holert, 2009, p.10). Paradoxically, the debates around “the central question” of artistic *specificity* have mainly contributed to reinforce both “a tangible tension” and/or an “interaction” between “those who practice artistic research” and, therefore, tend to be “skeptical” about any “meta-discourse on that practice” – the artists or practitioners –, and “those who reflect on practices” of artistic research – the theoreticians or critics (Lesage, 2009b, p.2; Borgdorff, 2012, p.17). As a matter of fact, a line of division and demarcation has been traced (and also blurred) between those who stand for “the practice turn in contemporary theory” (Schatzki, Cetina & Savigny, 2001), and those who recognize that “contemporary art practice is now so highly saturated with theoretical knowledge that it is becoming a research practice in and of itself” (Bush, 2009, p.1; Mäkelä, Nimkulrat, Dash & Nsenga, 2011, np).

In general, the critical debates around “the phenomenon of artistic research” and the problem of “knowing what this type of research embraces”, have often led to discussions around “the epistemic particularity of the arts” that tend to picture “the field” of “artistic research education” (Borgdorff, 2012, p.107; Wilson & Van Ruiten, 2013, p.22) as a sort of “a forest” in which there are many possible “ways”, “cracks in method” and “creative processes” (Quaresma, 2010 and 2011; Ferreira & Nolasco, 2014). Even though research *in* and *through* the arts has certainly been theorized and produced at various moments and places over the last twenty years (Frayling, 1993; Gray & Malins, 1993; Durling, Friedman & Gutherson, 2002; ELIA, 2005), it was not until ten years ago that the different fields of art and artistic expression – from music via design to theatre and from the fine/plastic arts to visual culture – have become widely concerned with *the figure of the artist as researcher or the reflective practitioner in between art and research*, and with *the formation of a discourse on their own specificity as research*, both in themselves and in relation to other research traditions and paradigms (Gray & Malins, 2004; Balkema & Slager, 2004; Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005; Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2007; Nimkulrat & O’Riley, 2009).

A lot of ink has been spilled on the Artistic Research Debate (...). A recurrent qualm about the Artistic Research Debate is that it is very much in the abstract, more about what ‘artistic research’ could theoretically mean than about concrete research outcomes. (...) Still, after almost twenty years of debate, there is as yet no satisfactory answer as to what artistic research is. Few people outside the contemporary art world are aware that there are currently thousands of artists pursuing a PhD. (Solleveld, 2012, p.78)

The emerging *discourse on artistic research* is inseparable from the contemporary debate on the reform of higher education in general, and of the art Academies in particular (Rogoff, 2006; Madoff, 2009). It also should be clear that any further reflection on the historical and recent developments of artistic research education must acknowledge the fact that “most artists have a love-hate relationship with the Academy” (Lesage, 2009b,

p.2). Not to mention the fact that traditional visions on “the autonomous work” and “the liberating cognitive practices of artists” still provide the basis for an whole rationale of resistance at any attempt to convert the “unregulated field of research in the arts” into “disciplined academic research” according to institutionalized and normalized concepts of “science” and “scientific rigour” (Borgdorff, 2012, pp.4-5). In fact, both the concept of artistic research and the figure (simultaneously real and imaginary) of the artist-researcher *as scholar and writer* (Daichendt, 2012; Borg, 2012) have become ontologically and epistemologically problematic since 2003-05, when the third cycle leading to the doctorate was officially legislated and institutionalized through advanced (or postgraduate) programs in art, design and performing arts that were systematically created and put in practice in most of the European art schools, academies or universities (Lesage, 2009a; Wilson & Van Ruiten, 2013).

Among the paradoxes and controversies that have historically marked the uneasy relationship between universities and art schools all over the world, one argument continues to persist after Bologna: the three cycles offered by most of the European universities “are mainly based on historical, theoretical and critical pedagogies with little, if no, evidence of learning by doing through practice-based assignments” (Hasan, 2009, pp.9-10). In “trendsetting countries” such as the United Kingdom and Finland, where artistic research and practice-based PhD’s have been initiated since the early nineties, now more than 2000 (UK) and 400 (Finland) researchers are working in art universities or research-intensive environments. In Portugal, for example, there are currently six PhD university programs in art and design (the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon is the largest with 100 doctoral students). The practice PhD has full legal status since 2009 and, accordingly, students can choose between pursuing “practice-based” and “theoretical research”. The overall picture shows that the number of new enrolments into higher art education has been rising steadily since 1996-97, almost doubling over the decade (from 2, 955 to 5,588). In Portugal, the growth of students numbers in the domain of Arts has been greater than the growth of enrolment in all higher education. It also should be noted that the growth patterns in all artistic subject areas –especially in audio-visual techniques, excepting craft skills that maintained relatively low increase– suggest the “changing needs of a post-industrial knowledge economy and the growth of digital economies” (Dibosa & Ophuysen, 2013, pp.2, 4; Hasan, 2009, pp.15-16).

It is now possible to say that *artists as researchers* are becoming *a new paradigm for art education in Europe* (see, for example, the seminar series and interuniversity project based collaboration on *The Education of the Artist: Research and Academic Capitalism*, Spain, 2013). Nevertheless, despite the exponential growth of the number of artists in doctoral studies, and the intensive massification of publications, seminars, symposiums and exhibitions on artistic research education, “it remains to be seen whether this new paradigm will settle into universities and artistic programmes as a kind of eccentricity” or whether it will become “a dynamo or catalyst for a more general trend towards research orientation in the arts world and beyond.” It is also true that the different European national arrangements show a “variety” of “institutional frames” and “models” for artistic research-training, and there are still too many art universities and schools offering PhD degrees in art history and related disciplines, which in general is not considered as artistic research (Hannula, Kaila, Palmer & Sarje, 2013; Dibosa & Ophuysen, 2013, p.1).

All this variety of institutional frameworks and educational models, in turn, is symptomatic of the constitutive *métissage* that characterizes the processes and products of art making, teaching and researching. Besides being a field that is strongly proliferating, artistic research is a controversial *discipline* whose academic status is disputed in-between theory and practice, in-between discursivity and non-discursivity, in-between the laboratory, the art studio and the artworld, in-between the paradigms and paradoxes that regulate the historical and contemporary relations (and territorialities) of science and art. As a consequence, the proliferation of theoretical and methodological frameworks for research, writing and publishing in the fields of art has been particularly intensive since the last decade.

There are many terminologies –with different genealogies and authors of reference– that focus on the problem of *artistic practice as research*. Nevertheless, “terminology” in this field is “flexible”, which means that terms such as “practice-based, art-led and practice-led research” have been used more or less “interchangeably” in recent “discourse” to designate “individual research projects conducted by artists and designers” (Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2007, p.3; Nimkulrat & O’Riley, 2009, p.7). In general, “the new academic *modus operandi* or discipline called *artistic research*” is framed by “practice-based and practice-driven research” which, in practice, tends “to open and to include, not to exclude or build barriers between médiums of expression and methods of knowledge production” (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005, p.9). Here, too, there are those who argue in favor of “(art) practice as research” (Sullivan, 2005; Barrett & Bolt, 2007a; Nelson, 2013), while others stress that although “practice” and “research” can coexist and interplay, “they are distinct categories and should not be misunderstood as identical” (Nimkulrat, 2013, p.2). Others are there for whom the relationships between art practice and research, and between teaching and learning, dwell within a “third-space”, “in-between *theoria*, *praxis* and *poesis*”, although admitting that: “if preference needs to be given to one of the two, it would be practice rather than theory” (Irwin, 2004, pp.28-29).

Derivatives of this *shift toward practice* are terminologies such as: “arts-based research” (Eisner, 2006; Barone & Eisner, 2011), “practice-based research”, “practice-led research”, “practice-oriented research in the arts” (Borgdorff, 2006). There are also specific approaches for the exploration of the potentialities and limits of “writing research” (Nystrand, 2006) within the field of research-creation in the arts: “writing creative arts practice research” (Barret & Bolt, 2007b), “writing inquiry” (Nielsen, Cole & Knowles, 2001). Then, there are the educational approaches to the field of art practice: “arts-based educational research (ABER)” (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis & Grauer, 2006), “arts-based research in education” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Smithbell, 2010). In abridgement, the different terminologies and epistemologies around the problem of research *on, in, through, for* the arts have produced a revigorating effect in the field of art education, by drawing art teachers and art professionals into *(self)reflexivity* and into the possibility of questioning of their own artistic-pedagogical practices and entrenched convictions.

By placing a new emphasis on “studio practice” and on the “aesthetics of research experience”, the epistemologies and methodologies identified under the generic name of “arts-based research” provide a counterpoint to the theories, policies and educational strategies of “visual culture” which tend to minimize the role of

artistic practice in art education. For artists-teachers directly committed to artistic practice –and linked to art schools or academies–, the issues raised by “arts-based”, “practice-based” and “artistic” *researches* were understood as a kind of invitation to the reconciling of historically distanced roles of the artist, teacher, researcher, writer, while validating the continuity and vitality of art in the double “hybrid” that is, today, “education” and “research” (Thompson, 2006: 2; Borgdorff, 2006: 1). In fact, “arts-based theoretical models – or art for scholarship’s sake – are characteristically poststructural, prestructural, performative, pluralistic, proliferative, and postparadigmatic, offering the promise of divergent pedagogical pathways worthy of new exploration” (Haywood, 2010: 102). And it is precisely this hybrid and ambiguous condition that makes of the artist-researcher-teacher someone who is in a favourable position to dare to venture into unknown territories.

## Conclusion

The present in Portuguese university, with regard to the 3rd cycle of studies, is characterized by a strong pressure – social, political, epistemological – towards a change in which the new paradigm is no longer *the reproduction and transfer of knowledge*, but rather the *ideation* and *construction* of new objects of research and scientific territories. Ours is the time in which the need to strengthen research in the university –and, namely, the need to democratize the processes and outcomes of research in ways that are socially and epistemologically inclusive–, affirms itself as never before. In fact, the reigning discourse of both academic and governmental authorities is dominated by the need and urgency to adapt higher education institutions and pedagogies to new forms of work and productivity that are characterized by (and that are able to encourage) experimental approaches and project-based components. The urgency in fulfilling this objective has been translated, since the past decade, in a multiplication not only of postgraduate programs but also of the number of completed doctoral dissertations in all areas of the scientific and technological spectrum, as well as by an exponential increase in the social demand for advanced studies across all the disciplines of the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

But it is equally clear that the intended structural change needs – in order to succeed – to be supported in a wider debate that goes from the definition of an innovative scientific policy into the heart of the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students, whether in the context of the classroom and the art studio, whether in the tutorial relationship between the advisor and the doctoral candidate as researcher. Therefore, this article takes as its starting point the evidence that the contemporary Portuguese university –as well as other European universities, in general– has forged its own identity within *a traditional resistance to change* which derives from old working habits that are deeply ingrained and installed in our academic institutions, and which are more focused on the *conservation, accumulation* and *transmission* of knowledge than on the organization and development of inventive pedagogies and processes of knowledge production that are able to call into question our own *academic* practices and representations of inventiveness, creativity, originality. It is in these terms that a movement toward self-reflexivity becomes an essential condition to overcome the structural resistance to change that characterizes the university as an historical institution. Resistance which becomes particularly visible in the formats of PhD dissertation writing, publication and defense still regarded as *scientifically* valid and *academically* legitimized.

It is also in this context that the necessary reflection around the conditions of production and processes of teaching of academic writing and publication in the context of the 3rd cycle acquires great relevance and urgency. To that extent, the present article seeks to contribute to a debate –self-reflective in nature– that can actually help us *thinking the conditions of possibility* of ‘transfer’, ‘import’ and ‘institutionalization’ of a *language of change*, giving as an example of this *possibility to think* and *to put in practice the necessary change*, the paradigmatic case of research in the arts. At the same time, this article also seeks to contribute to a genealogy of the idea according to which *university* –and university work– is synonymous with freedom of thought as questioning, as well as it is inseparable from the desire to produce *forms of work* and *ways of being together* that are able to trigger this *desire of invention* that so often has been considered an exclusive right, natural gift or appanage of writers and artists.

A fundamental example of this possibility of thinking the academic space as *a way of being, thinking and creating together* is related to the concept of seminar –a concept that is often taken for granted in the Portuguese university’s legislation and terminology of postgraduate research and teaching, without any further debate. We have in mind, here, the situation of the Social Sciences and the Humanities, but we focus specifically in the reality of artistic research education, since it is in this area that, today, the desire for processes and products of *differing creation* has been proliferating with the utmost intensity, within the university space. Taking into account that it was only very recently that the field of art was integrated in the university and recognized by it with the status of academic research, we argue that it was precisely in the fields of *artistic specificity* that emerged, since the last decade, a sense of urgency to debate and to question the historical conditions of possibility of the very concept of academic research, as well as its relevance in the present, on an international scale. In a way even more decisive, it has been in the field of art that the problem of creativity and inventiveness –*how is it possible (if it is possible at all) to teach-learn to write an original thesis?*– has been more evidently and paradoxically formulated. Put in other words: it is in the field of art that *the processes of writing* –and thus writing as an inventive process of academic production– became, in fact, *a problem*.

The knowledge of the nature of the gesture implied in postmodern social theory – the arguments of all those who risked what they knew in the questioning of the boundaries and in the perpetual re-inscription of the craft of the researcher within inventiveness–, seems to us essential to prompt a debate that, on one hand, is actually focused on the possibility of developing a writing that is mobilized to explore and to make *pathways within the forest*, and to meet the unknown of science and, on the other, is able to alert us for the need to remain critically vigilant with regard to the limits and restrictions of modern social order that still governs fundamental parcels of university’s life, and which express themselves on the reiterated presumption that knowledge is progressive, cumulative, total, universal and rational.

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