

**TIME AND MEMORY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHRONICLES OF JOSÉ CHAGAS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article aims to demonstrate the importance and richness of Maranhão literature, focusing on the perspective presented by the studies of the theorist Paul Ricouer, based on the perspective of the writer José Chagas, who presents the city of São Luís as a literary space in his chronicles. Initially, there is a study on the chronicle textual genre, with emphasis on the writer José Chagas, when addressing the special look of the chronicler on the memories of the city and its daily life. In addition, the relationship established between Time and Memory in the short narrative of José Chagas in his work *On the Art of Speaking Well*.

**Keywords:** Maranhão Literature. Chronicle. José Chagas. Time. Memory.

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## INTRODUCTION

Scholars, in general, affirm that "literature is the art of the word". And, in fact, this definition is widely accepted, there are still those who say that "literature is language loaded with meanings". (Erza Pound). However, according to the thinking of one of the greatest names in the Portuguese language, Fernando Pessoa, defining literature is an arduous task. He says: "we can speculate, but never state categorically what it is." Therefore, we infer the richness of this term and its real importance, as well as its contribution to the variety of texts and literary genres existing in the construction of a literary historiography.

In this way, literature has been helping in the construction of a nation, a people and its history. Just to illustrate, let us remember the epic and founding poems of classical literature, Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, still present today in the literary and historical records of Greece. Literature plays a unique role in "making records", stories and memories of a nation, thus, we highlight the vast and rich Brazilian literature and, in this cut, the Maranhão one, specifically that of São Luís-land of great literary names that need to be disseminated.

Man, in order to demarcate his being in the world and in life, among many possibilities, seeks to understand social relations, raising some reflections on them. This process takes place when he seeks to understand the surroundings and the demands of everyday life. From this aspect and from the perspective of some chroniclers, we have a text born in the city and that gives its hands to society, seeking to signify it, understand it, etc. The chronicle helps the critical-reflective process of the environment and the historical moment through which the historical, social, and cultural segments pass, making it possible to analyze some daily actions, sometimes unnoticed, but eternalized by the chronicler's "small" gaze.

In this sense, it is essential to search for this detailed look, because everyday life is a word easily associated with gender, which does not cause surprise, because this look has as its genre, the report of the day-to-day, which sometimes goes unnoticed, given the urgency of time. However, for Walter Benjamin (1994, p.209), "the chronicler is the narrator of history". He brings in his writings reports of everyday life, eternalizing events in a fluid and light way, causing the easy association of the genre with a conversation. When the reader reads a chronicle, he usually sees himself as a character and perceives in it a little of his own history.

A characteristic that, according to Sá (1965, p.27), is thus associated when there is complicity between the narrator and the reader, and only achieved in well-prepared texts that possess the inexplicable magic of art. In addition, the chronicler is not individual, he



brings the collective, lays bare society and therefore works as a spokesperson, because he reveals ills and frustrations, in addition to being a partner in some revolutions.

Maranhão, despite the poverty that insists on threatening us, scores among the states rich in gastronomy, culture, folklore and literature. To further signify, he is graced with writers who immortalized him in verses and prose, bringing themes that present him in his most authentic essence. Many of these themes are novels, poetry and chronicles that speak of the history and daily life of the city and its people, revealing art and customs of the land.

The chronicle, being an apparently simple text, is initially addressed to those who are in a hurry, "who read in the short intervals of the daily struggle, in transport, or in the rare moment of the truce with television" ( SÁ 1985, p.10). However, carrying out a theoretical-reflective study on these narratives will allow us to observe the literary historical value of the genre, transforming craft and pleasure allied for those who propose to study it. Thus, we do not propose a stylistic or formal study, only, but a functional one of this kind, seeking the chronicler himself as an assistant in this exercise.

The study of some chronicles that narrate about the city of São Luís is essential for numerous reasons, after all, there are many authors who sing its charms and disenchantments, revealing everyday life with aesthetic skill. In this sense, we highlight a fantastic writer who contributes a lot to the literary growth of our Island: José Chagas who proposes with great responsibility and ingenuity, to provide lovers of literary reading, a linguistic, artistic and social movement through his work in special prominence: **On the Art of Speaking Well.**

In his book, the chronicler, whose feeling approaches reality and truth with great sensitivity, becomes a spokesperson for the city and why not for Maranhão society? His texts narrate lives, bring people, feelings and real criticism, so they are of great aesthetic beauty. Due to these characteristics, we find the due justification for the choice of the city of São Luís and the chronicler José Chagas who, in his chronicles, addresses several issues, from the simplest to the most delicate.

Although circumstantially, José Chagas makes reflections that arouse interest, giving rise to a reading that thinks about São Luís and his memories. His writing conveys the affairs of the City, in a simple language and, therefore, accessible to the reader. His chronicles, when published, democratize these subjects and the study of them. Thus, this work aims to analyze, in a critical-reflexive way, the daily life of Maranhão through the literary genre chronicle.



Seeking to understand social relations, focusing on the social and historical aspect, bringing excerpts from theorists and scholars in the area: Cândido (1992), Moisés (1995), Sá (1985), Ricouer (1913) among others who will help to achieve the proposal.

For a better approach to the theme in question, the present work will be divided into four chapters. The first discusses the history of the chronicle literary genre, bringing its genesis, as well as some considerations about the content. The third will address the genre in Maranhão literature, as well as some of the main chroniclers of São Luís and we highlight the chronicler José Chagas, exposing his life and work. In the fourth, we bring some of his chronicles, spaces in which he declares his memories for the city of São Luís, discussing some themes - the main focus of the study.

## BIRTH AND HISTORY OF THE CHRONICLE

From the Greek *chronikós*, relative to time (*chrónos*), moving to the Latin *chronica*, we have the word chronicle. In the approach to the study of this genre, we realize that it is loaded with definitions, the result of its evolution throughout its history and over time. In this context,

Massaud Moisés, in **Literary Creation**, dedicates an entire chapter to studying it, not only from the point of view of its etymology. For him, the chronicle designated, at the beginning of the Christian era, a list or list of events ordered according to the march of time, that is, a chronological sequence. Situated between the annals and history, it limited itself to recording events without delving into their causes or trying to interpret them. (MOISÉS, 1995, p.101)

Furthermore, if we do a search in a dictionary of literary terms, we observe the following explanation for the word chronicle:

Derived from a Greek term meaning time, the word chronicle refers to a review of events in their temporal order and has a meaning close to the historical. The term chronicle is generally used in reference to any systematic narration of events, with little or no effort in its analysis and interpretation. (SHAN, 1982:130)

The definitions point out that the chronicle, since its beginning, has been related to time, the act of narrating events chronologically in a more specific way. Resuming the focus given by Moses, the initial role of the genre is evident, that is, that he made chronological records without details or comments, that is, he recorded events, without interpreting them.

We understand, then, that only that which was relevant to the history of a given nation was chronicle. That is, they had a record from the great adventures of the kings, to the relevant events of their reigns. When referring to the Portuguese chroniclers, for



example, França (2007:136) comments that their writings were of restricted circulation, only accessible to the court and when read publicly. Other than that, only scholars sought truthful information, since the genre served as a certificate of facts of the kingdom.

It was exactly this type of chronicle that became known as historical chronicle. A type that reached its apex in the Middle Ages, when writing emerged as a validation of the past, along with the belief that the past shed light on the present. This idea today has greater validation by philosophical studies, that is, by understanding the actions of previous generations of a given society, in everyday life. The present/future becomes clearer, and even some actions are justifiable.

In this sense, the genre served strictly to make chronological accounts of history, a definition that is still valid in European countries, with the exception of Portugal and places where Portuguese is spoken, as we read in Coutinho's words.

This was the shape of historiography, particularly in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, in all parts of Europe, at first in Latin and later in various vulgar languages, including Portuguese, in which true masterpieces were produced. This was the sense that prevailed the most in the various modern European languages, except Portuguese, until today.

In English, Spanish, French, Italian, the word only has this meaning: chronicle is a historical genre. And as a chronicle, "chronicler" and "chronicler" are only used in relation to the chronicle in that sense: they were the individual who wrote the chronicle, in the same way as in the French *chroniqueur chronique*. (COUTINHO, 1987:790).

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE CHRONICLE IN BRAZIL

The eighteenth century, in Brazil, was marked by a literary ideology with the creation of the Minas Gerais School, in the region of Minas Gerais, but frustrated due to the extinction of the Academy of the Forgotten - its base. One of the great importance of these schools and academies is the vestige of the Illuminists who defined the creation of academies in its most restricted and necessary sense.

With literary production, we continued a high quantitative and qualitative growth, as had not been recorded until now.

With this evolution, not only literary, but political and economic, we entered the nineteenth century with productions of different strands, and at different moments that characterize different expressions of social reality, in view, for example, of the Independence of Brazil in 1822. This fact called for the emergence of more liberal visions that gave rise to the feeling that would become the touchstone of Romanticism.



This literary school produced abundantly not only poetry, but prose, from which José Martiniano de Alencar stands out, who had accelerated recognition compared to other writers. As a novelist, he has preserved all the genres created so far; Indianism, mundane novel, historical novel, regional novel and social romance. Alencar, initially publishing in a newspaper, brushed his works with chronicler tinctures, as he poetically reported the birth of the Brazilian race in its most varied lands and customs.

Another novelist who emerged in the second generation of romanticism, and was not a follower of any literary tendency, was Machado de Assis. Some critics say that he was the greatest writer that this century has ever had, because he built his own, personal and extensive line. Machado was a singular figure and served as a framework of influence for several writers of different strands. Within his vast production, the chronicle also deserved special mention.

It was in the nineteenth century, in Brazil, that the chronicle became a different genre, as it was not only up to him to make reports of the past, in practical terms, but to take upon himself the responsibility of aesthetically reflecting on everyday accounts. Built in a light and unpretentious way, with an accessible and uncomplicated language, it gained a place among the people and became fertile in the city, and progressively earned the nickname of literary genre.

In the hands of the chroniclers, the information that occupied only a footnote on everyday matters in the most diverse forms and different thematic axes, literature, art, politics, etc., was transformed into a chronicle.

Over time, it ceased to be a report and became an event, becoming a genre commonly associated with dialogue with present facts. Due to its character, it still requires mandatory reading in printed newspapers, because, although it has a fictional vein, it addresses the social in its various manifestations, keeping a critical eye on life and daily life.

In this way, situations commonly unnoticed by the urgency of the time or perceived by few who do not have a voice to be heard, are the most beautiful chronicles. The chronicler, then, is responsible for interpreting and habitually understanding the city and the feeling of its people through everyday situations. Thus, his role is not restricted only to exalting beauties, but also to highlighting ills and injustices to which the people are subject.

City city par excellence, the genre accounts for what happens in the city, whether with the chronicler himself or with other citizens. True facts that affect the population, the city and its places are food for a good part of the chronicles. Sometimes, they are associated with the news published in newspapers, the declaration of some facts and events. Hence we understand what Beatriz Resende says: "the chronicler is the confidant of



our small complaints, accomplice of our revolts, sympathetic in our losses and in our joys" (1995, p.35)

Can we talk about the Brazilian people's taste for the chronicle? Perhaps so, due to the wide variety of chroniclers we have today. This, perhaps, lies in the fact that Brazil's birth certificate is a chronicle. Although it is a letter from Pero Vaz de Caminha addressed to King Dom Manuel, it contains the poetic description of the new land. "Caminha breaks with the European writing molds to portray the circumstantial and produce a rich and reliable text in which the offal found in it is essential for a better understanding of the whole", says Sá (1985, p. 5-6).

Because it was published in daily or weekly editions, much was required of the chronicler's sensitivity for its production, as it must be recognized that this was not an easy job, because due to the amphibious nature of the text, it was the responsibility of the chronicler to soften the thin line that had been created between journalism and literature, but without ceasing to exercise the function of operating in the life of society and the beings that were in it.

Thus, the chronicle, today, due to its social role, routinely uses news published in the newspaper, but does not strictly follow the precepts to be an essentially journalistic text. This is a genre that has well-defined margins for those who have it as a craft, unlike the chronicler who has the freedom to

To go through all events, passing from jokes to serious subjects, from laughter and pleasure to the miseries and wounds of society; and this with the same grace and the same nonchalance with which a lady returns to the golden pages of her album, with all the finesse and delicacy with which a blond girl gives sota and basto to three dozen worshippers! To make the writer a kind of hummingbird fluttering in a zigzag, and sucking, like honey from flowers, grace, and salt, the spirit that he must discover in the most ordinary suit. (ALENCAR, apud BENDER; LAURITO, 1983, p.18).

In this sense, the difference between the work of the chronicler and the journalist is clear. It is up to the journalist to describe the facts, without comments or any intervention. However, those who write chronicles not only describe, but comment and translate the events in a way that is more accessible to the reader's understanding or delight. In other words, the chronicler constantly transforms his notes into a pleasurable activity, considering those who are in a hurry, allowing himself the act of reading in the small intervals.

The chronicler waits with expectation for "tics" that will give him deserved glory and language, that is, a "frivolous" and unimportant event can be the condition for creation. In this sense, a chronicle by Rubem Braga, "O pavão", whose lyricism draws our attention. In



this chronicle, Braga uses symbolic language to talk about the colors of the peacock's feathers. He says that they appear in the eyes of those who observe them and come close to the act of loving. By this optical phenomenon, which makes lovers glimpse beauty and light in each other.

In this line of thought, Machado de Assis (1977, p.12) comments on the frivolities that can give rise to a chronicle.

I cannot say positively in what year the chronicle was born; but there is every probability of believing that she was contemporaneous with the first two neighbors. These two neighbors, between dinner and snack, sat at the door to peck at the day's successes. They probably began to complain about the heat.

One said she couldn't eat dinner, another that her shirt was more soaked than the herbs she had eaten. To pass from the herbs to the plantations of the frontier dweller, and then to the amorous misdeeds of the said dweller, and to the rest, was the easiest, most natural, and possible thing in the world. This is the origin of the Chronicle.

The critic Antônio Cândido, who played an important role in the matter, declares that the chronicle belongs to the ground floor, that is, to the base, to the ground floor. Life on the ground floor is the study of the genre made by the critic to preface one of the volumes of **Para gostar de Ler**. In it, the author talks about the history of the chronicle and its evolution in Brazil.

Candido (1980, p. 16-9) says that "great prestige is a good symptom of the process of searching for orality in writing, that is, of breaking artifice and of an approximation with what is most natural in the way of being of our time. And this is humanization of the best!"

Candido explains that the chronicle is literally related to the simplicity of the word and it was over time that it became so close to the point of being Brazilian thanks to José de Alencar, Machado de Assis, Olavo Bilac among others. Candido recalls that these chroniclers (serialists) contributed significantly to the genre becoming ours due to the naturalness with which it acclimatized here and the originality with which it developed. The critic also adds:

Before being a chronicle itself, it was "serial", that is, a footnote article on political, social, artistic, literary issues [...] Little by little, the "serial" was shortened and gained a certain gratuitousness, a certain air of someone who is writing for nothing, without giving it much importance. Then, it entered frankly by the light tone and shrunk in size, until it reached what it is today. (1984, p.7)

Note that Antônio Cândido explains why this literature has become so close to the reader: the orality of writing and the simplicity of language. They became a perfect





marriage, and according to the theorist, because it is a short narrative, it asks for a new look. That is, something familiar, intimate that little by little awakens in the reader the "intimate coexistence with the word". A text that, while entertaining the reader, also provides reflections on oneself and from a different perspective on the world.

This prestige about which Candido speaks allows us to dialogue about these topics with great lightness. The chronicle not only informs, but offers an excellent harmony with the author, that is, an immediate interpretation is carried out in this linguistic channel. In **Commentary-Mediation-News**, by Luciana Stegagno Picchio (1997:543), she says that the great prestige of the chronicle is that it provides the reader, author, critic, theoretician with these three aspects to be worked on, fundamental accessories that enrich its construction.

It is also worth mentioning that born in the newspaper as a serial, and having its own place or footer, the genre has a direct relationship with the ground floor, that is, a footnote article on the issues of the day, police, social, artistic, and literary issues. Also according to Antônio Cândido, this "serial" little by little, was shortened and gained a certain gratuitousness, a certain air of someone who is writing for nothing, without having much importance. Then, "it entered frankly by the light tone and shrank in size, until it reached what it is today". (1984, p.7) He completes the review with the following:

For this very reason, she manages almost unintentionally to transform literature into something intimate in relation to each one's life, and when she goes from the newspaper to the book, we find ourselves somewhat astonished that her durability may be greater than she herself thought. (1984, p. 6)

If since its birth, Brazil has had a strong connection with the chronicle about the land and its people transformed into literature, the genre tells about us and our history. This letter, or the first Brazilian chronicle, was not the only legacy that Brazil, its landscape and its people wrote in the literary scene as a whole. Chroniclers emerged and left their legacy, not only for quantity, but for quality, just to mention a few: José de Alencar; Machado de Assis, Rubem Braga, Nelson Rodrigues, Carlos Heitor Cony, Arnaldo Jabor, among others.

## THE CHRONICLE IN MARANHÃO LITERATURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The chronicler, generally, is the one who has the ability to be indignant with a piece of news, with an observed fact, but who can also understand the deviation of an individual or of this in society. He can also perceive the hidden side of everyday life and predict the unusual, offering suggestions.

To be a chronicler is to be a magician of words and satisfies the reader with his actions and magic. Thus, the success of those who write chronicles is to provoke in the



reader a pleasure, a smile of satisfaction. And, even if there is a contrary reaction from those who read your opinion, the reader almost always experiences a feeling of pleasure for sharing the subject commented on.

In any case, the genre is, and will continue to be, a place of expression for the writer to bring a moment of lightness to the reader. To produce this effect, he needs, in addition to simplicity and clarity, not to go down obscure paths or to use elaborate language. In the words of Lourival Serejo (2011), "it must flow like a river, obeying the limits of the banks, without, however, ceasing to cause erosion to widen its space for creativity". Serejo also adds that what magnifies the chronicle is the way of talking to the reader about a subject that is sometimes so banal or even the lack of a subject. Manuel Bandeira liked Rubem Braga's chronicles without a subject because, according to him, it was in them that the chronicler best expanded his genius. (O Estado do Maranhão, 21/08/2011)

Unfortunately, this genre is still little studied, so it is essential to focus on some texts that allow us to reflect and theoretically work on its importance and validity, as well as to get to know the plethora of artists who skillfully deal with this record made in real time. From this perspective, we understand that the Maranhão chronicle offers its literary contribution capable of enchanting, awakening and preserving in memory, not only local, but national, the subjects addressed.

Thus, by offering a new look, the chronicle can guide the reader, whether a young student or an experienced educator, to new knowledge. Therefore, she offers, promotes and gifts, through her universe, especially with regard to the city of São Luís with its vast literary wealth. As such, this literature needs to be appreciated by the people of Ludovica. Hence, therefore, the presentation and construction of this research that goes beyond the merely academic, to offer a social, educational and pedagogical collaboration.

Getting to know the city of São Luís evokes the memory of several chroniclers, among them, perhaps the one who has sung it the most in his chronicles: José Chagas. Although he is not from Maranhão, he comes to personify São Luís. Nauro

Machado says that the poet is, in fact, "the introspectively unifying projection of a secular history: the one that extends from Santana dos Garrotes, his home ground, to the heart of the Island where he landed and spread in the multiple chorus of his particular voice" (2012, p. 136).

Studying chronicles that narrate São Luís is essential for numerous reasons. The authors who tell their charms and disenchantments, revealing everyday life with sensitivity and aesthetic skill, show true feelings, which is why they are considered spokespersons for



society. Due to these characteristics, we find the due justification for the choice of chronicles and various themes in **Da Arte de Falar Bem**, by José Chagas.

Studies reveal that Maranhão literature and its most outstanding authors have given the due merit that the present day demands. Therefore, it is necessary that we demonstrate this presence, not only in the school space, but also in society in general. We need to awaken in the people of Maranhão the feeling of belonging, because those who feel this way take care. An example of this are the chroniclers who notoriously realize the importance of an awakening to the preservation, memory and knowledge of this literature of local chroniclers.

Due to the need to value and elevate local literature, it is of paramount importance to make Maranhão authors better known, since this literature participates in the formation of a people and its history. Undoubtedly, this plethora of authors and works will appear in the historical records of a society as a whole. For these reasons, we will address questions and discussions that involve the genre and its linguistic and literary content, but at the same time, social in the work of the writer José Chagas.

Now, why not demonstrate the importance of this knowledge in academic spaces? Offering the student a visit to the past and a new look at the future through our literature is fundamental. We can do this by focusing on the fantastic that only the literary universe provides, promotes and offers in a very pleasurable way and with various themes of everyday life that the short narrative also points out.

The chronicle is directly related to ephemerality, a character that is its own. As the etymology itself defines "Khrónos", it means time, that is, this narrative species is involved in what is fleeting and ephemeral. From this perspective, we highlight some names that give this artistic, literary and linguistic universe a noble contribution to the memory of our city. This literary art that expresses the construction of the city, also enriches and gives "testimony" of the role of the chronicler.

In general, this is the behavior of the chronicler and. in São Luís these actions are similar. Several chronicler writers exert influence on our Maranhão and Brazilian literature, notably of relevance. Thus, the list of chroniclers who have imprinted their name in the history of the Maranhão chronicle is vast, and in the city of São Luís, it is no different, as it has, today, a pleiad of renowned chroniclers, such as José Chagas; Ubiratan Teixeira, Ivan Sarney, Joaquim Itapary, Américo Azevedo Neto, among others no less important.



## O CHRONICLER JOSÉ CHAGAS

José Francisco das Chagas born on October 29, 1924, the poet José Chagas left a great cultural legacy in more than 20 published books, most of them dedicated to São Luís

Born in Paraíba, but from Maranhão in heart and soul, José Francisco das Chagas, José Chagas, knew how to sing the beauties and ills of São Luís in verse and prose. Born on the Aroeiras farm, in the municipality of Piancó, Paraíba (now Santana dos Garrotes), on October 29, 1924, the poet, if alive, would celebrate his 95th birthday today. A mass in memory of the poet will be celebrated today, at 6 pm, at the Church of Remedies.

Deceased on May 13, 2014, the poet left an enormous contribution to the culture of Maranhão through works such as "Cannons of Silence", "The Roofs", "Tiles of Time", "Caught from the Ground" and "Maré/Memory", among others.

On the occasion of receiving the title of Citizen of Maranhão, made official on October 27, 2004 by the Legislative Assembly as part of the celebrations for the passage of his 80th birthday, the poet said: "I see this moment in an exciting way, a most unforgettable gift. This title complements the involvement I already have with the city, from the beginning, as I was integrated by São Luís and São Luís integrated by me".

Based in Maranhão since 1948, where he spent his entire literary life, José Chagas was a retired employee of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). He was a councilor of the City Council of São Luís for one term, where he also served as director of the General Secretariat.

A professional journalist, he worked as a technician in Social Communication at the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA) until he retired. He was a columnist in the newspaper O Estado do Maranhão, in which he had a weekly column.

In love with the land of Gonçalves Dias, the poet is the author of more than 20 books, most of them dedicated to the city. The poet debuted in 1955 with the book "Canção da Expectativa". José Chagas assumed Chair No. 28 of the Maranhão Academy of Letters (AML) on April 3, 1975. He was the patron of the 5th edition of the São Luís Book Fair, promoted in 2011 by the City Hall.

José Francisco das Chagas has a collection of several works, as mentioned above. In this way, his literary, linguistic, social, cultural and why not say pedagogical contribution is evident, since literature leads us to reflect on ourselves and the world we inhabit. The expression that this citizen exerts in the formation of our cultural plurality is abundant. Therefore, this notoriety is important to understand and, much more than that, to insert his work for knowledge, so that in this exchange of knowledge between writer-work-reader a precious opportunity is glimpsed: the immersion in Maranhão literature.



## SÃO LUÍS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JOSÉ CHAGAS

**Da Arte de falar bem**, published in 2004, is the third book of chronicles selected by Duarte, with the assistance of the chronicler. The chronicler chooses to defend some children of the land, and, essentially, of the cultural heritage of Maranhão. Chagas preserves a very fine irony, a quality that has always been peculiar to him. Added to this is a spirit full of dedication to its passionate city and everything that inspires and exudes reflection. By narrating certain events, he pays tribute to the historical, geographical and literary truth of yesterday's São Luís, and why not say of today's São Luís? His texts constitute a kind of map of the city, especially of São Luís. He also dedicates to Alcântara, a historic city in Maranhão, one of the longest and most beautiful poems: Alcântara: negotiation of the blue or the castration of angels. To highlight this information, we will follow the sequence of texts studied.

## WHERE THE SKY HAS THE MOST STARS

When choosing the chronicle: Where the Sky Has More Stars, we selected some excerpts that address the city of São Luís. José Chagas says: "São Luís gave the Island such a rich geographical breadth that, in the memory of the peoples, it becomes today a continent of Brazilianness and portentous traditions of culture" (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 24). This is a fragment of the chronicle Where the sky has more stars, one of the chronicles that make up the collection On the art of speaking well. All of them were published in the newspaper O Estado do Maranhão and deal with various topics. However, these texts, for the most part, do not go beyond local boundaries in theme. To organize them, the chronicler had the help of Duarte who, in the presentation of the work, expresses: "the honoree anticipates the welcome and solid sympathy that, for more than five decades, has been his bread and wine at the table full of his coexistence with the people of Maranhão" (CHAGAS, 2004). Duarte draws attention to the distance between one publication and another. The simple distance in the date on which these two works came to light shows a certain editorial forgetfulness or neglect, which can be divided between reasons of imponderable origin and weight: the relative discredit of the chronicle in relation to the poem; the notorious scarcity of interests, in the Province and in the Country, because what is not an immediate demand and easy digestion is printed in the book world; and the lack of importance that the author himself has attributed to his work in the daily press, suffice it to know that, of this material, he hardly even kept the originals.

(CHAGAS, 2004) Also in the preface, Duarte explains that the title was chosen in symmetry and in opposition to Carlos Heitor Cony's book, On the art of speaking badly,



published by Civilização Brasileira, in the 60s. The preface confesses to remembering a comment he once heard from a person: "Chagas is a great writer, there is no doubt. But he only knows how to speak badly." To speak of the seriousness with which the chronicler works and his coherence with the inherited values, Duarte explains that the problem is to know what it means, in a proper and full sense, to speak badly, while questioning:

Is it speaking evil to cry out against evil and against the wicked, telling the truth? That being so, shouldn't we stone all the biblical prophets? Or is it not doing good, when one has the courage, moral elevation and sincerity to lend the word to so many who cannot make use of it, attached to 110 creeping reasons that our reason does not reach, including simple and prudent survival strategies? (CHAGAS, 2004)

### A CLEAN PAST POND

In the chronicle *Uma lagoa passa a limpa*, when he learns that one of the squares of the tourist complex of Lagoa da Jansen would be named after him, the chronicler confesses: "the Lagoa da Jansen, which was my dirty enemy for so long! Who would believe that? It is as if the governor led the city to tell me: look, if one of your angers was this Lagoa, you will now experience great joy" (2004, p. 264). The chronicler, upon learning of this intention, answers: "the Governor knows of my relationship with São Luís, a relationship of the most authentic and sincere, because it is a relationship of love and hate: the two faces of well-wishing" (2004, p. 264). In the same chronicle he confesses how much the subject had bothered him:

The Jansen Lagoon was, several times, the reason for me of violent insults against those who passed through it and touched it, and the more they touched it, the more their fetidity increased. The Lagoon was not really a flower that could be smelled, not even from afar. And it was openly said that its rottenness was not only environmental, but, above all, moral. It was even said that it was not exactly a lagoon, but a source of illicit wealth. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 264)

About the aforementioned tribute that is paid to him, without "being deserving" of it and without it being known to him, the chronicler replies: Now I am the name of a square, I who never imagined could be the name of something in the world. I don't know if the square accepted this baptism well. She was not consulted. But you must console yourself with me, because I didn't go either. When I found out, it was already a given name, and there was no more remedy. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 263).



Also in this chronicle, despite everything that could be a chatter, since he himself, in so many chronicles, had repudiated such a practice, Chagas explains the true relationship he maintains with the city:

St. Louis accepts me as I am and I accept it as it is. This does not mean that we are necessarily in agreement on everything, all the time. The thing is that I love her so much that I sometimes hate her and say snakes and lizards about her. And we all know that the hatred of those who love only increases love, because it is one thing to speak badly, out of simple and deliberate condemnation, another is to speak badly, aiming at the good of what one loves. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 263)

### REASONS FOR MY CANDIDACY

I really stopped going back to my land (...), and I kept singing in my poetry the rooftops of the old city, censoring, with some satirical poems that came to be known throughout Brazil, defects and vices of men who never knew how to love Maranhão, and who live from it, without working for it, nor for it. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 45)

This "rooting" of the chronicler in São Luís and among his friends, has been building a series of chronicles that stand up in favor of good talking about some 112 illustrious people from Maranhão, as well as about some projects of the land. In this way, those who have or had a relationship of friendship, work and intellectual experience with the chronicler, whether from a social or affective point of view, are present here. For example, in the launch of *Poema Sujo*, by Ferreira Gullar, in a chronicle, Chagas comments: "*Poema Sujo* is a kind of *Song of Exile*" (2004, p. 168). And when talking about the poets and the children of the land, he adds.

Wherever they are, they carry Maranhão within themselves. And, in distance and nostalgia, they transform it into poetry, not by mere overflow of nostalgic nature, but for a greater reason of emotional transcendence, in which the very love of the land is crystallized in a poem of life and truth, for the enrichment of our cultural heritage. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 168)

### TIME AND MEMORY

What is there remembrance? Whose memory is it?" (RICOEUR, 2007, p. 23). In the wake of Husserlian phenomenology, these are essential questions when the theme focuses on the issue of Memory. In relation to the chosen work *On the Art of Speaking Well*, we tried to understand how the author handles memory to build his narrative. And making use of Paul Ricoeur's (2007) proposal proved to be a viable path for reflection. Let us agree that



José Chagas' text encompasses the concept of memory and promotes a broader discussion of its use, as we are dealing with an author who articulates "true" memories with the fictional process. . It is a double work, which forces us to remember that it is a pretension to define the status of "truth" of memory. This is not the case. Because we are dealing with fiction too, and in this aspect we enter the realm of imagination, which leads us to think about the following statement:

It is under the sign of the association of ideas that this kind of short-circuit between memory and imagination is situated: if these two emotions are connected by contiguity, to evoke one—i.e., to imagine—is to evoke the other, and therefore to remember it. Thus, memory, reduced to remembrance, operates in the wake of imagination. (RICOEUR, 2007, p. 25)

This is very propitious for our thinking, because when we speak we are referred to fiction. And here we are dealing with a book, that of José Chagas, in which the imagination is also mixed in memory. This confusion is not uncommon and is welcome, because it enables investigation in the fictional field, even valuing it, since fiction operates from reality. José Chagas' chronicle confirms this, and it takes no effort to realize that memory is our access to the past. Therefore, it is our access to the real.

Considering purely the theme of memory, the dialogue we observed is very productive between the work of José Chagas and the studies of Paul Ricoeur. Returning to Ricoeur (2007), what he postulates about a guiding idea that dissociates imagination and memory draws our attention — when we think about the status of "truth" of memory:

It is in the current tradition of devaluing memory, on the margins of a critique of the imagination, that a dissociation of imagination and memory must be carried out, taking this operation as far as possible. His guiding idea is the difference, which we can call eidetic, between two objectives, two intentionalities: one, that of imagination, focused on the fantastic, fiction, the unreal, the possible, the utopian; the other, that of memory, turned to the previous reality, the anteriority that constitutes the temporal mark par excellence of the "thing remembered", of the "remembered" as such. (p. 25-26).

Starting from this assumption is very pertinent, especially if we take into account, in the case of imagination, that this difference proposed by Ricoeur may be questionable. How to dissociate imagination and memory? He considers imagination to be something invented. But where does the invention come from? And, in general, memory? Isn't there something imaginative in it too?

Especially if we move in a field where reality and imagination mix. On several occasions, Ricoeur (2007, p. 27) refers us to the Platonic theory, but it is Aristotle who





makes the idea more concrete and declares that "memory is the past". This statement serves as a guide for Ricoeur's exploration and, in a way, works as a guide for our reading.

It becomes evident that working with the imagination is related to the human need to fill in the gaps in memory, consciously or unconsciously. Failures that we can attribute to forgetfulness. The problem of forgetting is posed from the beginning as "erasure of traces and as a lack of adjustment of the present image to the impression left as if by a ring of wax. [...] since those founding texts, memory and imagination share the same fate". This situation makes Aristotle's statement that "memory is time" (RICOEUR, 2007, p. 27) more evident.

With regard to the empty spaces of memory, what is at stake is the status of the moment of remembrance, treated as an acknowledgment of impression. The possibility of falsehood is inscribed in this paradox"

(RICOEUR, 2007, p. 30). Here we think about the fact that human memory is not totally reliable. But this does not disqualify the fiction we consider. In relation to the work *On the Art of Speaking Well*, it refers us to a question that the philosopher poses:

Could the relationship with the past be just a variety of mimesis? This confusion will not fail to accompany us. If our doubt is well-founded, there is a risk that the idea of "faithful resemblance", typical of eicastic art, has provided more of a mask than a scale in the exploration of the veritative dimension of memory. (RICOEUR, 2007, p. 32)

This language makes José Chagas introduce us: **We, the fishermen of dreams**. In it, the chronicler speaks of José Sarney, not the man, but the writer of the novel *115 O dono do mar* which, translated into French, was published in Paris. "At this point, the sea, which has an owner here, begins to belong to the world and it is itself that now navigates to other shores" (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 142). This sea now receives its true owner – the fisherman Cristório, the protagonist of the novel. He "fishes today for the world and now takes his fish to France, harvested in the same sea sailed by Daniel de La Touche" (id., ib.).

It is through verbal action that José Chagas traces the path of a work, whose living influence of literature goes beyond the limits of land and sea and will be read by other people who one day wanted to found here in our lands another France, the Equinoctial. Chagas says: "our destiny as Maranhão people was really in the hands of the Portuguese. We repel the other peoples who experienced us directly, such as the French and the Dutch" (id., ib.).

Chagas continues:

It turns out that, by translating his novel into Flaubert's language, José Sarney broke with our historical determinism, inverted the facts, transporting, in a way, Maranhão to France and creating a French São Luís there. Instead of making his journey by sea, as was



the case with Daniel de La Touche when he came to found France, Sarney did was to take the sea of our island there, with its mysteries, its fantastic piocos, its poetry and its telluric force, in the ambience of a regionalism that is universalizing. (...)

The novel is more than a message of our oceanic experience, a message from the distant island, taken to the French who founded a city there, but did not stay, having been defeated and expelled by the Portuguese, in the battle of Guaxenduba. It is not known what magic the Lusitanians did to mobilize forces from beyond, because even Our Lady, according to legend, placed herself next to them, transforming sand into gunpowder to help fight those who were considered invaders. (CHAGAS, 2004, p. 143)

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The studies, debates, theories explored that mentioned the history of the chronicle, according to the historical cut of the nineteenth century, led me, based on several theorists and scholars of literature, such as Antônio Cândido, Eduardo Portella, Massaud Moises, Paul Ricouer among others, to the understanding that the chronicle has an expressive role in literature, in addition to the fact that it exerts a lot of influence for the understanding of the problems that emerge in the daily life of the city. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the chronicle has an expressive role in literature, in addition to exerting a lot of influence in society.

To get to what it is today, this short narrative had strong influences on the literary work of each author, whose touch and look is different, although with the same objective, that is, to make the literature of a people. From the various transformations that the chronicle has undergone over time until it was exercised in our literature, it was a long road.

From this perspective, the city of São Luís, rich in subjects to be unveiled by lovers of letters, writers and poets who collaborated with excellence in the preservation of the memory and identity of our capital, but at the same time, who dedicated a critical eye to it, as we realize when studying the chronicles of José Francisco das Chagas. His chronicles that talk about the capital of Maranhão in the work **Da Arte De Falar Bem**, therefore, important reading to be disseminated, known in any reading and study environment.

For this reason, there are many benefits that this literature offers to the student, therefore, the need to know, study and value, whose value is immeasurable. In other words, the chronicle offers the reader in general the creation of research projects, monographic works, articles, such as this work, born from the need to ignore our literary wealth and the necessary conservation of our identity as citizens of Ludovica, inhabitants of a land rich in writers, but little explored.



In this way, we believe that *Time and Memory: an analysis of the chronicles of José Chagas* is an access to an awakening of all, especially those who claim to be educators. We urgently need to observe how and in what way we can work, in the educational universe of Maranhão literature, through this wonderful genre that is the chronicle.

In this way, we will be allowing students a fantastic meeting and exchange of knowledge, in which everyone can participate directly or indirectly in the formation of a society, revisiting the past, but also looking to the future through their own literature. For this reason, I understand that this work is relevant and that, through the knowledge acquired, it awakened in this researcher under construction, greater commitment and commitment to our literature in Maranhão, through the chroniclers of our city of São Luís.



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