

## FEET OF CLAY IN “PRODUCTIVIST” TEXTS IN THE ACADEMIC WORLD

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From Nietzsche (Ecce Homo) to Renato Russo, there has always been a suspicion that idols have feet of clay. But unless you look at their feet, it is only their stature that seems impressive. After all, given the size of the idol, it must be well supported – so much so, that people cannot understand it when an institution or a sound, well-respected political regime suddenly come crashing down; only later, do the analysts, journalists and historians, (who are astonished by the fall), seek to find the structural cracks and then assess them as compromising factors.

It is for this reason that, with regard to the feet of clay that belong to the thriving academic production of today, it may be taken that there is an ominous fixation on the most minor aspects of the question. The criticism of the features of the national and international normative structure that supports the phenomenon has

been accepted, together with the explanation of its policies and the description of the scenario which is encouraged in the environment of academic research, in particular, in the area of business administration and accountancy. Even recently, in publications in this area, there has been some good analysis carried out in the RAE Review of Business Administration and in the EBAPE Notebooks. The macro and micro contexts are sufficiently well known. This study seeks to pursue this issue in the simplest terms and adopt the informal style of an essay.

The focus on “feet” compels us to state at the outset whom one assumes they belong to or rather, what meaning is attached to the word “productivism”. The criticism that initially arises from the mention of an ‘-ism’ can be set aside. Terrible consequences follow at an individual level, such as mixing up the words “career” and “curriculum” (the dire effects of the

so-called “curricular obesity”) and the boundless personal absorption (“to produce, it is necessary to live, if time permits”) but the problem today has new dimensions and is here to stay, with or without CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior).

It is not only because there are wider borders that the problem is found in the stifling kind of work carried out in various sectors of modern life that are linked to large-scale social and technological processes and to the unprecedented availability of sources of information, but also because it has entered a spiral of emulation within the national and international academic world. Wheat and tares grow together.

And as a means of fostering growth, there are periodicals, conferences with their clamour for work, exchanges and research groups, all reflecting the force of “entrepreneurialism” etc – and yes,

of huge strides forward. For good or ill, the question has been diversified to other areas, where it has been complicated by the involvement of business interests in the work of the “teacher-scorer”; it is not sufficiently well expressed by the generic complaint “publish or perish”.

If the assessment standards of CAPES, which are currently disproportionate for the social sciences and humanities, are adjusted – as it is expected they will be – and the pressure on researchers is reduced, there is no certainty that what will follow will be an increase in quality or textual relevance. There is a faulty adaptation in the system and it must now be considered whether it can return to its original state.

When “productivism” is discussed today, it must take us from one social and political plane to another, where it is perhaps more difficult to work but, at the same time, where a distortion can be found: this lies in the way the quality of the text attempts to suppress and disguise the fact that the research project fails to achieve a mature level of discussion. Thus, productivism leads to an expansion of poor academic production. The federal system of post-graduate assessment should not be censured because of the pressure it causes but because it has an effect that is the opposite of what is desired and which it is responsible for in an obtuse way. (So poor CAPES! What else can it do for something so private as research?)

In view of this, the thoughts that follow will not simply involve hurling stones at an unshakeable monster, picked up (quite justifiably) from those it has left scattered in its path. It is not uncommon for these idealized monsters to look

down on people with disdain, and secure their own corners before going out to meet challenges. An attempt is made here to pursue a demystifying aim and draw attention to certain practices that occur in the composition and institutional legitimacy of academic work – in short, everything converges on the nature of the texts of articles. A good deal is made to seem plausible in the “academic chain” because if the activities of academics were found to be unjustifiable, they would be viewed as feet of clay. Thus the concern is to find a way to pin down productivism. It is recognized that institutions are deprived of supporting resources which are only granted in a limited supply, and as a result, they are left on the sidelines. For this reason, in the name of good science, they have established close ties with the sub-world of science, which is now attempting to cut off their feet.

### **What quotations really “yield”**

Scientific quotations that are chosen with precision allow the reader to return to the source material of the author and carry out the research again or check whether the argument in the text is being handled in a suitable way. At the same time, they form an important differential between the quality of the bibliographical research and the way the author becomes linked in a deferential way to a chain of academic antecedents. To quote or not to quote, to quote appropriately and independently, and to practise ethical research, that is the important question for anyone who writes academic texts and a difficult matter for initiates of the art. Above all, it should be

noted that citations are often used to take refuge from the dangers and mischief of productivism.

About 10 years ago ANPAD (Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração) issued an official document to oversee the submission of academic studies, in which it recommended that the use of “apud” should be avoided in texts and this practice was subsequently adopted in other periodicals. The Latin expression *apud* (which literally means “together with” or rather “possible to find together with”) makes clear that the quotation cited is not directly from author (A) but another who is quoted (the term used is “*Capud A*”). In other words, it is the quotation of a quotation. It shows that the person who wrote the text did not have contact with the actual quotation (C), which can be found in another source (A) and is just being copied in an official way. C and A must both appear in the bibliographical references, The Brazilian Technical Standards Association (ABNT) refers to the term *apud* in NBR 10520:2002, item 7.1.3.

A favorable interpretation can be made of what is recommended by ANPAD, which suggests that authors should refer to their ultimate sources (quoted by those they were read by) and not be restricted to immediate sources and thus, the term *apud* is unnecessary. But it was not this that became the generalized practice in the outpouring of academic cultural production. What is overlooked is that the author in question (in the source) who is only being referred to at one remove and quoted by a secondary source, is in fact not the object of the research. Is this a “practical effect”? The result is

that one of two books or papers being researched propagates a host of others (which are not being researched). The text is “enhanced” in a subtle way and behold there is an impressive academic study full of quotations, including some from classical works or other languages which, in another situation, would be inaccessible. And as a result of everything, I can call myself an author, with the right hereinafter to be cited myself (and listed in the index of quotations).

What should one think about this trick? Does anybody with experience in the area of reading or assessing articles, theses and dissertations, doubt that it exists? What happens is that people who are conscious of this become hardened, to the extent that they come to regard the procedure as “natural”. Some will justify it on the principle that “all scientific production is a collective enterprise”. But no-one asks for this work to be arduous or original, or to bring about knowledge of a high standard that can perhaps serve as an industrial patent. What is required is only recognition, - the same right as that of any other literary creation.

Someone else will say: “What should one do? Return the text that has been assessed or call the author and ask for confirmation of how so many sources have been accessed, particularly when they are a set of sources?” Or more cynically: “Who is going to know?”

Will the researcher whose work has been drawn on but not cited, one day have to identify and complain about the violation of his/her intellectual property and the anonymous appropriation of his research work by someone else? And who is to guarantee, in this academically permissive climate,

that this researcher has not done exactly the same thing with regard to a given text? Authors, assessors and readers often know or suspect something but they have all had a similar experience and “understand” that without certain “academic resources”, they could never meet their deadlines or achieve their goals and above all, not be published in the most important media outlets or become academic high-fliers as a result of “competition”, with curricula that are perhaps equally impressive. “And the ship sails on” as Fellini said, which sadly is the case of the deceased lyrical singer Edmea Tetua, much revered for his scientific work, whose funeral was celebrated among friends and whose ashes were cast into the sea.

And now one wonders what would happen if we returned to the strict use of *apud*. Producing a text without *apud* is fine in itself since if it were included, the young (or experienced) author would have to go to all the sources to make it understood that they had been researched. Or, in another way, a text full of references to *apud* would reveal the poverty or the hasty nature of the work. An abrupt “stepping on the brakes” would occur in parts of the academic world. Would there be a fall in “production”? Would it lead to incidents? However, since the idea of strictly returning to the quotation of quotations is purely chimerical, it is raised here simply as an argument that seeks to demystify academic self-assurance.

We continue with this question of “citation” which has been chosen as a revealing factor that can jokingly be referred to as the tail of the productivist cat – something that is concealed and always left out...

The ABNT, item 3 in NBR

10520:2002, refers to indirect quotations (as well as direct quotes in the text) and only states the following “A text based on the work of the author being consulted”. The breadth of this expression is certainly a benefit to some academics who turn it into an ambiguous expression. The work that is cited, in its totality, generally involves a system of supplying the author and date without locating a specific page or pages. In that case what exactly is being referred to – the author of the text? Is it the meaning or general thesis of the book or article cited or in other words, the main contribution that is being made with regard to what is being known – a legitimate use of indirect quotation or something else in the whole work – that is related to a particular point, and that the author is stating in his/her text?

Very often the matter is left in the air and with a sense of ambiguity and the quotation can be taken in any way. This is a forced use of indirect (or general) quotation. In addition to the potential that indirect quotations have to make it easy for current researchers to find words in texts, is the database; and here is a strategy that is a fertile ground when preparing academic texts. It “simplifies” the study – since it is not necessary to read a book or article but only its title, the Abstract and the Keywords – and it yields a wealth of quotation that is sometimes wide-ranging. But it reduces research to a formal game, a reference-point that is destitute of real meaning. In effect, post-graduate studies in the regime of formalism gives rise to the strange figure of the “immature-productive” researcher, someone who “gets the hang of” the work, the young person whose curriculum

(lattes) amazes older people and who would say “my life is my curriculum”. And this is accepted.

The abuse of indirect quotations which is always very easy is also found in the lack of an understanding about how to use them. This is very serious and creates a situation which lapses into formalism. What does the author imagine – that every fact that is stated must be “hunted down” for a particular citation? - that the maximum number of publications should be mentioned to cover the concepts and theories about the question? – that it is a good idea never to miss an opportunity to include “a brief quotation”?

If, when looked at in a rational way, these assumptions fail to make sense, why then keep scattering quotations that go beyond the scope of the text? And why should quotations come to be regarded as a formal feature and not comprise a part of an argument that can help improve the quality of the text? And finally, why, in most research studies, does the opinion of authority have to be invoked as the main means of supporting the principal points (“this is corroborated by...”) ? And who is going to check so many indirect quotations that are included as being appropriate? Who, even a specialist in the area, can claim to be able to recognize the citations gathered by the researcher?

And how can one know who, among so many citations, is that particular unknown name? How many readers would know how to evaluate the degree of selectivity in the various periodicals referred to? While being subject to natural uncertainties and faced with an impressive array of quotations, one is left with the supposition

that at least some of them must be of value.... Productivism makes the idea of citation into a fetish! Citing is scientific! You can accredit the value of the article which among hundreds of others, you will not have time to read. Or, to put it in another way, it always helps because – who knows? And in fact, before starting to read an article and making a preliminary evaluation, many readers and assessors tend to have a glance at the list of references first.

The strategies outlined above, which play a role in the academic weight given to citation, are among those which make life easier for the author who is overwhelmed with work. Nonetheless, they are signs of a concern to produce a text that will impress the reader-assessor and make him/her more favorably disposed to the study and thus become more willing to accept other statements by the author which are “not so well documented” or at least be tolerant of any errors. Clearly, few researchers openly harbor “unscientific” intentions but the practices in use, (which they have acquired since the time they did their Master’s degree) provide them with a refuge and do indeed expose them to an interpretation of this kind.

### **Data analysis: what does it conceal?**

When areas of empirical research are examined, such as medical and biological science, engineering and the material sciences (and their various technological and industrial ramifications), we who belong to business administration and accountancy can learn two things from their differences. One is the degree of involvement of

production factors in a research text and the other is the relative size of the different features that comprise the text.

In the production of the text, the balance that is struck between inspiration, observation and interpretative statement, generally weighs most heavily on the second. In particular, research goes beyond the activity of generating data. From an agricultural product infected with a fungus to an anatomical part extracted through surgery, taken to the laboratory and tested for chemical compounds, or the effects of an intervention model in a natural environment, there are two resources that give rise to a wide range of research texts – the field and the tools. The former allows repetition and the latter differentiation. Nothing is wrong. This is a research study of binomial regularity/range (the nature and the company are defined in this way).

When composing the text, information about the empirical field, the conditions for testing or the systematic observations and the respective results, are granted a privileged space with regard to the contextualization of the problem or its theoretical results. Quite correctly. The value of the conclusions and recommendations depend on this, because it is a question of a research study that is highly standardized in its general design. Thus, the specialist reader wants to know exactly what the process was like, what technological tools were employed and how and where a particular detail makes a difference.

However, the human and social sciences and their applications in other areas make it necessary to carry out research into the possible human reactions which become

socially complex (or social reactions which have a complex effect on the individual). They attempt to understand the reasons for their actions, and employ their language; in addition, they make a great effort to create, set out and justify the existence of collective decision-making bodies. They cannot be too closely attached to a single method or keep employing it. In their view, one of the alternatives is empirical research (field surveys, systematic observation, partial experiments etc), which is conducted in a methodical way to yield data. When this strategy is employed, how, it might be asked, can empirical research (whether “quantitative” or “qualitative”) be adapted to maximize the production of texts in a way that benefits the instrumental and technological factors that are encountered.

This is what is involved in the statistical application and processing of data which, in the case of business administration and accountancy, has now led to a vast increase in the number of papers! It is in this way that we have come to adopt the replication model in the experimental sciences and technology! It is very possible that we have entered this realm quite by chance; that it is giving legitimacy to hollow production; and that the “era of academic papers” has reached our area without any consolidated methodological traditions and is a long way from being guided by instruments.

This means that researchers are divided by the methodological tools to which they are subjugated and this has reached the extent where it affects the way the problem is formulated when research interests should be given priority. In other words, someone who “works”

with a particular kind of research software, tends to seek objects of research that are compatible, thus triggering off the instrumental factor. The problem for this researcher or his/her students when under pressure for texts, can become a question like: “what do I put in my machine now?”

The main concern has shifted to obtaining “raw material” or rather, data about the processes or behavior (of objects) – because, otherwise, the academic world, by adopting the tactic of the so-called “research question”, is not used to having any difficulty in creating a problem for research. Care is taken to introduce input, reports on output, fresh ideas, which might result in research that is full of interesting “findings”. By reversing what was thought until now about human creativity, the machine has performed the small miracle of knowledge!

The power of the self-reproduction of data should not be looked on with disdain: in databases, data are composed or designed in a diverse and hypothetical fashion with regard to the real contexts from which they originally emerged and data mining has become a research strategy. Thus, because so much special attention is given to the data processing instrument, there is a blurring of the distinction between a good, secure, innovative quantitative study and work that is uninspired and sets out on the wrong track.

In recent decades, statistical analysis software has entered into a particularly fertile field made up of autonomous discourses and conversations. These can be mapped out and categorized and include a distinctive vocabulary,

grammar and semiotic structures underlying the text. This makes it feasible to conduct a good deal of analysis, make discoveries and reach conclusions about intentions that are not made clear by the speakers and hence everything is changed into facts about language that are meaningful and computable.

There seems to be a case here of the instrument guiding the hand of the artist and increasing the volume of academic work. But who today in the area of linguistics does not yet recognize that the full meaning of what is expressed in natural (and not artificial) language is above all in the contexts that are involved? Some of these are remote and only known to the interlocutors while others are purely circumstantial and extrinsic to the text, in the verbal “implicators” and the pragmatic area that involves linguistic relational practice. To use a powerful metaphor, how can it be assumed that the dissection of a corpse can reveal a person’s gestures when still alive? However, this complacency can be found in the most remote areas of linguistics, with the opportune aid of software which can be used in areas from textual analysis to fruitful research.

At the end of the paper which is closely linked to data processing and its conclusions, a number of substantive questions can be thrown at the author: “Why have you written this research now?” “How did you begin this story?” or “Why did you observe this in particular?” - as Popper asked in his “Holistic Theory of Social Experiments”, in his attempt to explain knowledge. What would, at the outset, have guided the choice (“the collection”) of what later would become transformed into the datum, or rather, into a meaning in

a triable form? There are answers to these questions because every rational discourse includes them; however, they lie outside the text and are submerged in forms of motivation and explanations that are completely alien to the matters in hand and sometimes reach down to the very foundations of science.

In the empirical sciences referred to at the beginning of this section (medical or biological, engineering etc), the papers are much shorter and devote a lot of space to the description of experimental or observational procedures which underpin the results, without the need for any extensive commentary. In contrast, certain traditions in the social sciences, including business administration, include textual analysis of much greater length, including the case of generated empirical research and data analysis.

There are a wide range of styles: discursive, linked to roots and quantitative (condensed into charts and tables). However, the most common is to maintain a high degree of discursiveness, especially in the methodological hybrid of the so-called theoretical-empirical studies where there is no clear idea of place or sense of a theory (“the theoretical reference-point”) in the empirical strategy. Moreover, given the limited number of pages, the “solution” has been to cut short the description of observational processes and data analysis both in the quantitative research and in others (usually called “qualitative”).

Nonetheless, in the academic legitimacy attributed to this solution, unadmitted improvisations are very often concealed. Tables and results follow the summarized methodological information such as: “the content analysis of L.

Bardin was employed” (a method regarded as qualitative); “x in-depth interviews were conducted with [...] the main results of which are shown as follows”; “a multiple-choice questionnaire was employed with the use of the Likert scale”. Now, how does the researcher carry out his/her work in cases like this? It is assumed and taken on trust that in this “mechanical” part, everything has been fine and is in accordance with the techniques.

How do these and other similar procedures become accepted? “There isn’t space for more than this” – the author complains when out of time. And thus the focal point of empirical research, out of which a new version of the object arises, becomes a “black box”.

In other situations, the suitability of the scales and tests for statistical significance between the variables is poorly justified with regard to the nature and circumstances of the data collection and the size of the sample. Sampling is a research device based on regularity and the framing of models of occurrence expressed in statistical language and the (demonstrable) representativeness that it aims at, forms the basis of the conclusions of the tests. It is a large apparatus of methodology that has to be dealt with technically and its origins must be respected!

However, after some authors of manuals on research methodology decided to apply the scientifically prestigious technique of sampling to other procedures for defining the empirical field, “convenience sampling” was created, which was an aberration of the criterion. This is because it denies the randomness of the phenomenon that occurs and replaces it with factors that are alien to its nature, generally to

suit the researcher (closeness, ease etc) where what is demonstrably possible, is replaced with what is possible in practical terms. The situation readily degenerates into a “it was what was supposed to succeed” syndrome and nobody will refuse to accept a student’s research for this reason.

Studies that are structured with the centre of gravity of their argument on observation, and generating and handling data, must ensure that the way the text is composed is suitable for this methodological alternative. It could be much shorter and be accompanied with a methodological appendix provided for the reader, where the process is carefully explained and includes a display of questionnaires, official forms, models of analysis and classification tables. None of this is trivial but in the weak enforcement of general parameters there is a misuse of the cases.

### **A free methodological territory**

This “free methodological territory” integrates the research subworld where self-declared

“qualitative” studies have been radically changed. Improvisation and incompetence take refuge there. It has been recorded that in the last 10 years, the proportion of qualitative and quantitative studies has been reversed in favor of the former. The wide range of qualitative research procedures or in other words, those that are not concerned with interpreting facts in numerical language, allows one to find the forms that result in good research. These avoid wasting time, mobilizing resources or wearing out the researcher, all of which

tended to happen in the data collection (production) and analysis of quantitative data.

This is clear and benefits the relationship between production and time. Despite this, it raises doubts about the degree of quality/production or whether there is hidden ambiguity and methodological evasion. It is certainly the case that qualitative procedures cannot be judged by quantitative criteria such as accuracy, the use of formal parameters and the rigor of language. In effect, it would be more precise to admit the reverse - in particular, the incapacity for precision and numerical language to express the essential features of behavior, decisions and the inner human nature, as well as the highly complex driving-forces that bring about relationships between people and can (or cannot) alter them.

What should be examined however, is the need to transfer the ambiguity of the (human and social) object to the method and as a result, act without criteria, clear procedures or a suitable conceptual and theoretical contextualization. This does not mean an escape from rigor - which in this kind of research is of real value and should be redefined - since this would be practising a kind of methodological evasion and shifting the borders of scientific consensual agreement. The appeal of the "Intepretavist Paradigm" and "Phenomenology" is an example of this, as a means of justifying the enthronement of the simple intuition of the researcher in the analysis of oral and written texts.

It may be taking a bold step but it should be observed that the slackness of the kind of procedures that lead to poor

research have taken refuge in the congenital ambiguities of the so-called "qualitative methods". This expression brings together everything that should not occur and is a useless methodological "umbrella" but its paradigmatic consistency (the paradigm of the research) has never ceased to be questioned in over half a century of intense activity in the social sciences. It is a residue that is hard to separate from ambiguity and unfortunately methodological evasion accounts for the lack of epistemological identity or general methodological characterization in the area of business administration. To put it in another form, its linguistic pluralism and radical interdisciplinarity have still not been sufficiently clarified.

### **The risk of discourse in a vacuum - where is the "outside reader"?**

Why express increased dissatisfaction if our area has managed to meet the official requirements for production - which can be seen in the *Qualis* periodicals in the last three triennial periods? The answer is that there has been an attempt to express this dissatisfaction through the concept of relevance. But since this cannot be an absolute concept (which would involve a universal normative parameter) the question must be - relevant to what?

We begin by locating a watershed: does the academic lecturer study internal theoretical problems or problems to do with the organizational and professional world? If it is the former, everything is easy to understand; we can leave the academic world in peace. However, it is the latter that gives rise to so much dissatisfaction. The

point here is that the criterion of relevance for production must be, in some way, outside the academic environment or else it will be locked in internal formal criteria which provide a locus for an empty discourse.

An "empty discourse" does not mean saying nothing - which would make no sense - it is "devoid of interest" because it was not "requested". And even if it is offered, it falls into emptiness. The nub of the question is that for many academics, the criterion of interest is self-referenced. Hence, the discourse of a researcher is tolerated by someone else who is also self-referenced, since he/she complies with formal rules of structuring and presentation. Thus the discourse devoid of interest tends to attach maximum importance to the formalizing process. And in the long term, it runs the risk of becoming an empty discourse.

In the sphere of the social sciences, political scientists, historians, geographers, economists and even sociologists have, (in the everyday course of events that journalists bring to the attention of the public), an occasion to utter qualified opinions. There they are, invited by the press itself and to public forums to express their views. These take place against a background of experience and circulating information, including that of the newspaper commentators themselves and in this way the relevance and importance of what they say is tested and controlled on the basis of research and published studies. They have limited space for their forecasts and criticisms and reveal the nature of their science in making them.

Yet when it is a question of

markets and public management, or business, corporate, managerial (public or private) and social issues, who is invited to express an opinion? – entrepreneurs, managers, consultants, lawyers, politicians and the economists and sociologists themselves (which includes openly discussing public policies). And what do the business administration academics discuss – for example, about an applied social science? Do they lay out their solutions in projects for public and private global organizations and thus compete with professional policymakers? Some people will answer that academics do not set out any projects or express any opinion! They explain the phenomena in scientific terms, in the style of the natural sciences, even if this has not been requested and they choose – they themselves – what phenomena are worth explaining. But in that case, what objective link with society can, in the long term, prevent them from constructing a scientific culture in a vacuum by arresting internal formal criteria?

The assessment statements used in conferences and periodicals, a key feature of cultural training used by assessors in institutions, are the point of convergence for this whole question. Once all the criteria have been met, the text is released to the public and seeks its readers. Despite all the improvements that have taken place, the academics are losing the war against a facile and gratuitous form of production, because they are unable to break free from their prior commitment to formal criteria. It is no longer a question of simply speaking about factors related to the abundance or quality of references to the literature, or to

good internal organization and the vernacular presentation of the text.

Today what predominates in the reports and decisions of the assessors, is the relation between aims and results. The goals still remain on a formal footing since they are designed to “deliver what they promise” (“delivery” should ensure approval). The reason for this is that from now onwards, the judgement of the assessor will shift to another sphere of legitimacy, where formalism is hidden in the old “objective v subjective” dilemma. The constant difficulty of evaluating a colleague in the open field of scientific positions, is concealed in the confusion between objectivity, which is the quality of reasoned argument, and formalism, which is the quality of complying with rules that have been agreed by a consensus. The formal assessment says: “you’ve met all the requirements? – then you can pass”, In this way, as far as the assessor is concerned, the person who makes the decision about the life or death of the submitted article, the question of “originality and relevance” and “the nature of the contribution made to the subject-area”, are factors that can be regarded as “subjective means”.

Perhaps one cannot ask much more from the assessment reports than what they carry out today, unless in attempting to bring about integration, they adopt an even more delayed stance. A second stage of assessment that is also decisive, involves being detached from the previous analysis, autonomous, informal and having a substantive interest in the article and public delivery – but what is this good for and to whom?

Clearly, the reader must appear on the scene, and be raised to a

level well above any interest the author might have in undertaking another article. And if the academic reader-assessor is partly involved in the conspiracy of the productivist desire to give prominence to formal criteria, perhaps this can usefully be called the “outside reader”. He/she can help break the vicious circle. The “outside-reader” is spelt like this to suggest a greater symbolic sense: the breaking of an unjustifiable selective barrier that has denied readers access to some social point. Who represents this interest? Who can speak for them so that this fundamental communication agreement can occur and perhaps be able to obviate the risk of the academic discourse tending towards emptiness?

And thus, all of a sudden, the question for the editor or the editorial board converges in the area of periodicals (or their artificial substitute, the area of conferences). The current practice of pre-selection is an opportune space for a judgement that gives prominence to the social importance of the endeavors of the researcher. The responsibilities of the editor are public (he will carry out the “publication”). Perhaps it is no longer enough, after a preliminary reading, for him to see the level of quality (in genere) of the article submitted and send it to the specialist assessor who is responsible for making the essential and overall judgement.

With regard to at least several subjects of the articles, one must think of the first and decisive stage in which the public interest of the text will be represented. This notion would be completely new in the academic world and could give it some fresh air; it could suggest the productive, governmental and



other means which are occasionally called on to say something about the text. This product of science is not worth less than what the industrial technology provides the shops and markets. There is just a difference between the appropriate language and the social relevance of the text – and someone wants the former to combine with the latter.

And if an area bordering society, like business administration, were capable of doing it without a loss of quality, the scientific world would look forward to it. And we have learnt that productivism is not just an internal problem in the academic world. Someone outside is ceasing to be provided with the inestimable cultural value of a good academic text.

And here ends these thoughts about practices – largely details – of the everyday experience of preparing and giving legitimacy to academic texts in which productivism can be identified and subjected to criticism. These practices support and make feasible an irrelevant science. They become institutions and there is a need to discredit them – which will take time and generations to carry out. One is reminded of the dream of the Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar, which was interpreted by the young David, in which a giant, representing the fifth generation of his successors, was destined to become weak and have feet of clay.

A post-script. These pages are those of a penitent author. He has been guilty of almost all the sins outlined in this text. Now that he is repentant, he seeks to expiate his sins and once redeemed, enjoy hearing the reader one day, (as in an ancient Christian ritual “renounce the pomps and seductions” of productivism.

## NOTES OF THE AUTHOR

1. MACHADO, A. M. N; BIANCHETTI, L. (Des)feticização do produtivismo acadêmico: desafios para o trabalhador- pesquisador. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, v. 51, n. 3, p. 244-254, 2011.). RAE – Revista de Administração de Empresas, v. 51, n. 3. p. 244-254, 2011. From a different perspective, the RAE also published a text that shows the results (in particular, quantitative results) of the Action Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation (PACTI), run by the Federal Government, in the four-year period 2007-2019: (RESENDE, Sérgio, M. Produção Científica e Tecnológica no Brasil: conquistas recentes e desafios para a próxima década. *RAE*, v. 51, n. 2, p. 202 – 209, 2011. It is worth remembering the counterweight to the perspective of the article, carried out by the editorial board itself of this number of the review (<http://rae.fgv.br/rae/vol51-num2-2011>).

2. FARIA, A. Repensando produtivismo em gestão no (e a partir do) Brasil. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 9, n.4, p.1164-1173, 2011; FREITAS, M. E. O Pesquisador hoje: entre o artesanato intelectual e a produção em série. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 9, n.4, p. 1158-1163, 2011; ALCADIPANI, R. Resistir ao produtivismo: uma ode à perturbação acadêmica. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 9, n.4, p. 174-178, 2011; GODOI, C. K; XAVIER, W. G. O produtivismo e suas anomalias. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 456-465, 2012. This last study contains a good bibliography on the subject and as a result this essay has many points in common (such as the “anomalies”).

3. Being aware of the forcefulness of these statement, this author attempted to argue in favour of the standpoint adopted in pages 457-464 de: MATOS, Pedro Lincoln C. L. The results of this (qualitative) research cannot be gene-

ralized: putting the record straight is a kind of safeguard. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 9, p. 450-468, 2011. Here expressions like “qualitative methods”, “qualitative methodology” and their equivalents, serve as a simple communications resource with those who employ them in an ordinary way. The author would like to be able always to put them between inverted commas as a way of showing that they refer to what others call them (and not what they do) and thus describe and treat methodological language in a consistent way .

4. MASCARENHAS, A. O; ZAMBALDI, F; MORAES, E. A. Rigor, relevância e desafios da academia em administração: tensões entre pesquisa e formação profissional. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, v. 51, n. 3, 265-279, 2011. The gist of the argument in this article is the question of relevance.