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The Relationship with the Book of Technicians in Training

This paper will address the complexity of the relationship between writing and the literary culture of Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers students. Our training practices have revealed, like a Russian doll, that the writing space of a Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers student is a locus woven into others. This is what makes it unique since as soon as it is a question of writing, it is these plural instances which are called together: school, knowledge, culture...in short, a tangle of several spaces which restrict the act of writing. From this observation, it is a question of demonstrating that, for most students, the universe of writing is the object of a trial process. Above all a trial process directed against "scholastic authorities" who would have, in a manner of speaking, hindered or compromised this relationship, this exchange with literature.

How does one move from the trial process to the project of writing? This question has been asked over and over again throughout the course of training, and, far from being an obstacle, it has become an essential means of thought and work. We will demonstrate the importance of this questioning as regards the "literary machine", by referring to the understanding that students have of the library and of the way they see the Book. Often compared to an inaccessible labyrinth, the library inspires both repulsion and admiration. And still, within the logic of the trial process, it is the teachers who are responsible. They are accused with having been the first and initial momentum which would have made possible the discovery of the text. If, in fact, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers students remember the compulsory readings, synonymous with boredom or with useless memorization, is it not in order to serve notice of their right to access the text? We will insist, moreover, on the emergence of stereotypes applied to literary writing, which is, it seems to us, to come into contact with the demand for the status of autonomous reader. In this way, a dialogue with the book becomes possible again, once the School is no longer involved. A new realm of experimentation is opened up: the book as symbolic object finds its noble function, it is the mirror of history and the memory of humanity. And so another kind of contact with reading can be established.

First, an outlet, then a paper, the world of books is also a place conducive to the creation of a new alphabet primer. And since schoolteachers are no longer the possessors of literary culture, who are the representatives of this universe? We will highlight the approach proposed by students, of notions such as Culture or Erudition, on the one hand, and on the other hand, their unique way of seeing what constitutes them. The examination of the reading habits of writers like Calvino and Pennac generally holds the attention of Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers students, who expect advice other than that offered by scholastic authorities. Thus the discovery that the book can be a meeting-place for two human destinies contributes greatly to an entirely different definition of it. At last, it can be accepted that the book has left a truly handsome heritage: the language which they have come to conquer in order to inscribe another voice. And from this perspective, even within a professional context, drinking from the source of literature allows for individualization in a coded genre and the forging of a more personal, and maybe even original, style.