The "Cultural Archipelago" of Urban Representation in Contemporary Brazilian Novels

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Abstract: The dialectic of localism and cosmopolitanism, with the opposition between nationalists and cosmopolitans, since independence and perhaps even before, is an element that structured the spiritual life and the literature of a country such as Brazil, as it was pointed out by Antonio Candido. This dialectic in a globalized country which had been transformed by an extremely rapid urbanization, nowadays is perhaps stronger than ever. That could be seen in contemporary literature, on the level of the imaginary but also on the level of the representation of cities such as Manaus in the north of the country (*Relato de um certo Oriente*, by Milton Hatoum), Recife in the northeast (*Estive lá fora*, by Ronaldo Correia de Brito), or Brasilia in the central west (*Cidade Livre*, by João Almino). Through these three novels, this essay aims to analyze how a few years after the end of the dictatorship, at a time marked by important changes in Brazilian society, the fiction grasps the articulation between local specificities and the "globalized" city. To that extent, the reading of many urban contemporary fictions will build a kind of mosaic of Brazil and its cultural varieties, through the prism of the city.

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What if the big city, as a novelistic space, was a new theater of an old dialectic, which has left its mark on the history of Brazilian literature between local identity and universalism?

The critic João Cezar de Castro Rocha, referring to great masters of the past such as Borges and Machado de Assis, pointed out that as artists whose cultures are "non-hegemonic," the great Latin American authors, both Portuguese and Spanish speakers, have tended to break established hierarchies and to widen the repertoire of readings, crossing local and international influences. "The intellectual of a peripheral nation, becoming aware of his historical circumstance, comes to see the world through—literally—cubist eyes; that is, from a plurality of angles, apprehended simultaneously" (78).[1] The dialectic between the local and the universal, particularly evident in the Latin American space, has therefore often proved to be very fruitful on the creative level.

In "Narrativa hispanoamericana, Inc.," Jorge Volpi questions the meaning of the adjective "Hispanic American" when it is added to the noun "literature." The contemporary Mexican writer recalls that, since the independence of the Spanish-American countries, tensions and contrasts have

arisen around the definition of what Latin American identity refers to, between those who seek to find a model of culture in opposition to that of the former colonial power and between those who aspire to place themselves in the wake of the great powers. This would be the seed of an opposition between nationalists and cosmopolitans, which has continued to divide the cultural and literary field. One of the most prominent episodes of this conflict was the flourishing period of the Latin American Boom and magic realism, which some, especially in the publishing world, wanted to label as the typical mark of what would be Spanish-American literature. For Volpi, this old opposition has hardly faded away: "nowadays, the fierce war between the national and the universal continues, paradoxically, as one of the distinctive features of Spanish American criticism and culture" (101).

This phenomenon is also perceptible in the Luso-American world, a linguistic and geographical area that is both neighboring and distinct. The same oscillation between the local and the universal would indeed be the cornerstone of Brazilian literature, according to the critic Antonio Candido, a leading figure in literary criticism in his country:

"If it were possible to establish a law of the evolution of our spiritual life, we could perhaps say that it is entirely governed by the dialectic of localism and cosmopolitanism" (109). In a contemporary globalized society, this dialectic between localism and cosmopolitanism is more relevant than ever. To combine the two terms, global and local, and to illustrate their interpenetration, the sociologist Roland Robertson proposes the neologism of "glocalization," insisting on the fact that the relationship between them is always a dialectic between "particularization of universalism" and "universalization of particularism" (28). The sociologist Saskia Sassen sheds light on this: Although economic, political and cultural globalization is a transnational process, it is no less rooted in local territories and especially in those strategic nodes constituted by "territorial concentrations of multiple resources" (24)—that is, cities.

Through three emblematic contemporary Brazilian novels center on cities of different regions, we hypothesize that in the fictional representation of the city, a new tension between cultural specificities and urban homogenization or standardization could be taking place. The game is established on two scales: on the level of the cities of reference and on the level of the imaginary and literary construction. This is between the local picturesque and a universal vision. The idea is to go beyond reductive critical visions that affirm sometimes a unilateral characterization of local color in fiction, sometimes a universal and totalizing dimension without considering the heterogeneity of literary works and the spaces they represent.

1. Focus on Three Novels

We insist that our reflection on the dialectic between local and global could be extended to a great number of other urban fictions of the last few years, especially novels whose narrative spaces take us outside the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis—there are many examples—but let us mention *Quarenta dias*, by Maria Valéria Rezende or *As Éguas*, by Edyr Augusto. We see in them how their plots develop in Porto Alegre and Belém, respectively. We cannot also forget to mention the fictional accounts whose plots are set in Brazil's southeastern cities, but where the work comes from writers out of the outskirts, poor suburbs, or favelas, who offer a counter-view of the big city and its western ways of life. These have become essential references in Brazilian literature, including Paulo Lins, Ferréz and Conceição Evaristo. Nonetheless, to focus on the question at hand, we center discussion here on three

novels in which large Brazilian cities, very distinct by their geography, are represented. This brings to light the entangling of the local and the global. These three authors are of the same generation; their publications, recognized by critics and a relatively large readership, make them leading figures in the literature produced after the military regime (1964-1985).

1) *Estive lá fora*, by Ronaldo Correia de Brito

Almost all of Ronaldo Correia de Brito's fictional work questions the relationship between the city and the sertão, between the urban world in the process of becoming uniform and, on the other side, vestiges of popular oral culture, the religiosity of the countryside or a memory of the rural Nordeste. What he presents, especially in his novel *Galileia* and also in his collection of short stories *Faca*, is a globalized sertão. Sometimes the reader of *Galileia* encounters characters with hybrid identities, like the young man of mixed race partly discovered from generations of *jucás* Indians, who has returned to the place of his childhood after many years as an emigrant worker in Norway; sometimes he is struck by anachronistic images, like the old woman who pulls three emaciated cows on the cable of her motorcycle. The urban and the mass culture engulf and transform the sertão. This is the thematic subversion that Correia de Brito sets up in his fictions: There is no more localism in the sense of a fixed place, not even when it comes to the remote countryside of the Northeast Region of Brazil. The sertão is a place of passage, of transit, which embodies the uprooting of modern man, almost a non-place in the sense of Marc Augé (130); the peri-urban is a sertão, a degraded sertão.

In *Estive lá fora*, Correia de Brito's second novel, the main setting is no longer this mongrel countryside, but what is interrogated is the part of sertão that remains in the big city—more precisely, in Recife, Pernambuco's state capital. Certainly, the sertão of the Inhamuns, from where the protagonist Cirilo comes, is sometimes characterized emphatically by its radical distance from urban centers. It would be "the end of the world, where *The Devil* has lost his boots and where the *cangaceiros* do not even dare to venture" (229).[2] Yet more often than not, the text highlights a relationship of continuity between sertão and city, two chronotopes that telescope—and besides, what the sertão bequeaths to the city is often not very pleasing. The back and forth between Recife and the sertão of the Inhamuns appears in the narrative narrated in the third person. For example, when the Recife policeman enters the scene, he is a man "representative of coronelism"[3] who "gives orders while shouting as if he were commanding a troop of *jagunços* in the dry lands of the Northeast" (54).[4] However, the dialectic between these two worlds is even clearer when the correspondence between the protagonist Cirilo and his mother is transcribed. These excerpts of letters awaken superstitious beliefs, family legends, and anecdotes that show the decline of the agricultural world. Correia de Brito's literature thus summons lyrical voices that sometimes remind us of cordel literature, of the popular tales peddled by poets on the road and told from person to person.

Several characters, in addition to Cirilo, are young people who have just arrived from their small towns in the countryside. For them too, the narrative makes the constitution of a hybrid identity perceptible. Their cultures are comparable to heterogeneous assemblages, such as those displayed on the walls of Paula's apartment, where there was "a jumble […] of magazine stars, pop singers, and then prints of saints brought from Juazeiro do Norte, which recalled the decorations of the simple houses of the *sertão*" (Correia de Brito 47)[5]. The same heterogeneity is found in the intertextual references of the novel, which range from nods to Pernambucan poets to quotations of Rolling Stones's lyrics. Beyond an aesthetic that gives pride of place to the composite, the text puts into perspective how much

these shared identities, between the sertão and the city, can constitute personal tears, especially in the case of Cirilo who experiences a lot of suffering in wanting to join different times and conceptions of social life—religion and memory. Essentially, the question of Brazil's rural exodus, with its subjective implications on the characters, is a kind of background music in Correia de Brito's novel, which is presented as an immersion in this indistinct space between the urban and the rural.

2) *Relato de um certo Oriente*, by Milton Hatoum

Let us go now from the Nordeste to the Amazon. In *Relato de um certo Oriente*, as in most of Milton Hatoum's texts, Manaus is populated by "curumins" and "cunhnantãs," two words from the local vocabulary for "caboclos" children, half-breeds of indigenous and white people. Tribal masks are brought out on the steps of the houses with stilts (palafitas), the river is offered to the readers' eyes everywhere, and the text reveals socio-cultural and historical specificities of the city. The author does not hesitate to call up some of these elements that make Manaus, for the outside viewer, an exotic city, surprising if only because of its improbable geographical location. For Tânia Pellegrini, the writer recomposes a certain type of regionalism, not a regionalism displaying a somewhat fake local color, but a regionalism that crosses several human substrates—the Amerindian matrix, the point of view of immigrant children, the point of view of foreigners like the German character Dorner, as well as several narrative voices and types of stories or fables, referring through this mosaic to national or even universal issues, especially when it comes to social inequalities and the acculturation of the Indians. Hatoum's particular regionalism "always has the function of accentuating the cultural peculiarities developed in the interior regions, helping to define their position from others," a bit like Jorge Amado, in a previous generation, reinforced the peculiarities of Bahia in his novels. However, "at the same time, the author reinserts these peculiarities in the bosom of the national culture, understood as a whole, through universal themes" (Pellegrini web).

By highlighting the exile of several family members (of Lebanese origin) and the deculturation at work in the streets of the city center and the port of Manaus, this novel testifies to a gap in relation to global socio-economic "centers"—Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in Brazil, but also European cities such as Barcelona. The latter was where the narrator's brother settled, and it represents a counterpoint to Manaus. *Relato de um certo Oriente* is a Proustian novel of the search for a lost time, a novel of the here (Manaus and the life of a family established in Brazil) and the elsewhere (the East, the Lebanese reminiscences, the spiritual life), a very contemporary novel in that it puts forward multiculturalism through a structure that gives pride of place to collage, to the assembly and the convergence of heterogeneous elements. And it is by no means regionalist in the sense of a freezing of traditions, but rather the example of a "regionalism revisited" that questions the cultural diversity of a region and the fragility of identities in the orbit of modernization.

The problem with the word "regionalism" is that it has been mentioned so many times in the history of criticism of Brazilian literature and tends to become folkloric and "regional." In other words, all space belongs to rural areas and even more broadly, to territories that escape the cultural centralization around São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This term is not completely out of place as long as we do not obscure the universal background of the fictions when they illuminate the diversity of local spaces—"regional is revisited" would be at the same time a "decentered universalism" (Almino, *Escrita* 8). That is the term used by João Almino, the third author we intend to present, whose fifth novel, *Cidade Livre*, puts into perspective, through the artifices of fiction, the construction of the

Brazilian capital as well as the impasses and setbacks of its founding ideals.

3) *Cidade Livre*, by João Almino

The narrator of *Cidade Livre* often refers to the millions of migrants, mostly from the poor regions of Minas Gerais and the Northeast Region, who came to earn a living at the construction sites of the new city; at one point in the story, he makes these comments, which, from a metaliterary point of view, say a lot about the readings that have enriched João Almino's writing, but from which, at the same time, he is trying to rid himself, in part at least:

> If I had been interested, I would have accepted João Almino's [the blog's proofreader] suggestion to compose here a thick regionalist novel about the Northeast Region in which the wells were dry, the earth was cracking, the rivers turned into sandy roads, the carcasses of animals signaled more deaths to come, and the emigrants arrived in caravans [...]. (*Cidade Livre* 164)[6]

The irony, related to the reproduction of regional stereotypes, offers an image that implicitly magnifies the author's literary project: the choice of Brasília as the only fictional setting for his first five novels would be a way to avoid the exhausted mechanisms of a form of literature linked to the great spaces and misery of the Northeast Region. Brasília was therefore a chance, a way to invent a story in a novelistic land still virgin, safe from any rooting in an identity; a place where writing could also be made of everything thanks to the symbols and Utopian dreams that accompanied the birth of this new city. In the words of Almino: "This rootless city, populated by migrants, where identity is open and multiple, rejects the notion of a single origin. Here origins can be what they really are: myths or changing references. The city serves as a vaccine against the picturesque" (*Escrita* 18).

This does not prevent the writer, throughout the novel, from enjoying a form of intertextual play with a type of literature that he places at a distance. For example, he makes a point of sprinkling his text with references to a regionalist lexicon, especially when his characters are walking in the vast expanses of the Brazilian Plateau and, at a bend in the road, they meet a toucan perched on a *buriti*—the tree and the bird being, as if by chance, two symbolic elements of a certain Brazilianness, very present in the literature that gives pride of place to the rural world.

And here it is necessary to differentiate the folklorist or traditionalist writings, that flourished especially at the end of the 19th century, from the so-called regionalist writers of the 1930s and 1940s such as Graciliano Ramos or José Lins do Rego, who exposed with great accuracy the psychological disorders of characters crushed by the conditions of their physical, social and cultural environment. As Almino willingly declares, reading Ramos and other writers of this generation has undoubtedly infused his writing. If his novel remained at the stage of winks, of rather anecdotal references to the regionalist movement, and if he chose to set his plots in Brasília, it was not, far from it, out of any disdain for his illustrious predecessors, but rather to repel the temptation of a sentimentalist inclination when evoking the Northeast Region of his childhood (he was born in the State of Ceará). To avoid, also, stereotypical representations of a rural Brazil frozen in time, just good for feeding backward-looking speeches on a population and a space whose real dynamics and transformations are ignored.

The capital of the country, in this sense, offered for Almino an ideal thematic field, conglomerating different Brazil: at the same time, the Brazil of the character Valdivino, a "*candango*" (the term that designates a worker at the construction sites of Brasília, having migrated from the

poorest regions), with a popular language and a disconcerting simplicity, who, like so many others, came to try his luck in this city, which was presented to him as a new Eldorado; but also, on the other side, the ambitious Brazil, resolutely modern and urban, often cruel and elitist, of the engineers, urban planners, real estate promoters and politicians, of whom the novel offers a beautiful gallery of portraits. In Almino's novel, we find an extension of themes dear to regionalist authors, who were the first in the field of fiction to point out with such acuity the upheavals brought about by the passage from an agricultural economy to an essentially urban and industrial economy. Moreover, Almino is not the only contemporary Brazilian author to admit a certain filiation with a writer such as Ramos, whom Hatoum and Correia de Brito also frequently cite in their interviews as a model.[7] In Ramos, these authors admire his capacity to create a language that integrates and reworks orality; they praise his refined syntax, lapidary, and at the same time full of expressiveness; but they are also aware of the modernity of Ramos and his regionalist colleagues, in their way of creating novelistic situations that shed light on a world in transformation, with migratory pressures and the annihilation of old rural structures.

2. Brazilian Mosaic: The Cultural Archipelago

It was in the 20th century, as the Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro reminds us, that "the urban network exploded and covered the entire Brazilian territory" (177), even though there were already some beginnings of this spectacular urban boom in the 19th century, especially in Rio de Janeiro, once the country's capital. In spite of the deculturation, the rural world has left traces in the collective representations and in the great national narratives, of which the literature has often been a resonance box. All this in a huge territory where population densities are sometimes almost zero, over thousands of kilometers. In this context, the oscillation between urban and rural poles, universalist and regionalist, is a leitmotif of Brazilian literature, a motif that the great novelists of the 1930s and 1940s have admirably delinated through their fictions … and that continues to find an echo in a more recent literature, including in fictions centered above all on the city. The tension between specifically local or regional elements and a national or even global culture would have gained even more intensity in today's large cities, which concentrate the paradoxes to which the phenomenon of globalization subjects our contemporary societies.

From this point of view, against the logic of rupture and destruction, the three texts that we had presented, through memory and the novelistic imagination, seem to oppose another logic, that of the blending of eras and the confluence of the new and the old, of the urban and the rural. By highlighting temporal and spatial discontinuities, by novelistic situations that expose numerous areas of friction between traditional and ultramodern aspects, like asynchronies in the heart of metropolises, these fictions dig into an important aspect of life in Latin America—if we are to believe the sociologist Nestor García Canclini: "We Latinos live in a tension between traditions that do not disappear (neighborhood traditions, forms of organization and styles of urban communication) and a modernity that has not finished flooding the Latin American countries […]" (87).

Literary texts are a singular testimony to this: to say, in the age of globalization and the growing importance of large urban centers, that the local no longer has any meaning is an absurd statement, a form of intellectual myopia, a stubborn refusal to admit the complexity and duality of globalization, especially the fact that it translates as much into integration and diversification as into exclusion and

homogenization. These considerations are perhaps a key to better understand the literary craze around cities and to explain the multiplication, in Brazil in particular, of novels whose main material is formed by cities and by urban issues. Critics have sometimes pointed out the insignificant or even nullified part in today's literary panorama of fictions that present themselves as "great national allegories," although these had previously played a very important role in the country's literary history, from *Macunaíma* to *Viva o povo brasileiro*, without even going back to the Romantic period and a novel like *Iracema* (1865). The stakes may have shifted, the question of national identity has certainly not disappeared, but it has been diluted in more dynamic and complex interactions between the local, national, and global spheres, and it would make more sense to question it through the prism of the city, the nerve centre of these new identity processes.

Despite the factors of uniformity and global standardization, the novels mentioned, and others that represent various cities in the four corners of the national territory, when superimposed and placed next to each other, nevertheless build a kind of mosaic of Brazil and its cultural varieties, through the prism of the city. A mosaic or even "a cultural archipelago." The term refers directly to Vianna Moog's interpretation of Brazilian literature: In a lecture delivered in 1943, this writer and intellectual from Rio Grande do Sul defined the Brazilian cultural reality as heterogeneous, being formed by seven "islands," seven regional areas. In his *Interpretação da literatura brasileira*, Moog argues that the main characteristic of French literature is its Cartesian sense of measure and clarity, that of German literature is its philosophical and metaphysical drive, and that of English literature is the sublimation of temporal and spatial realities (17-18). However, according to him, Brazil "is fragmented in regions where the same climate, the same geography, the same forms of production prevail" (20), and that is why Brazilian literature would be characterized by the absence of a principle that could give it a unity. In other words, it would be necessary to give up the will to embrace this literature as a whole, but rather to consider cultural islands according to divided large regional areas.

It is certainly no longer possible, in today's increasingly urbanized and globalized Brazil, to demarcate such clear boundaries between cultural nuclei. It would be overstated, even incongruous today, to automatically associate the contemporary literature of the Northeast to a "social" dimension showing the divisions between classes, while the work of an Amazonian author would be above all "telluric." Moog's interpretation is in fact indebted to the context, in a period in which "regionalism" was in the forefront, defended by Gilberto Freyre and brought into the field of fiction by writers such as Ramos or Lins do Rego in the Nordeste, or Erico Veríssimo in Rio Grande do Sul.

But Moog himself specifies: he would not want his system of interpretation to be the source of dogmatic, exclusive, mechanical commentaries; he simply proposes the identification of cultural nuclei as "great Brazilian realities" (45), allowing them to illuminate the great social and artistic phenomena of the country. In his conclusion, he suggests that the nuclei can evolve, especially by undergoing the influences of other nuclei of the archipelago. Beyond a very strict division between territories, what seems particularly fertile in this interpretation is that it places the diversity and the heterogeneity of cultures and aesthetics as an element of definition, if not the only element of definition of what is the Brazilian culture, and more specifically the Brazilian literature. This angle of view allows it to illuminate the richness of the contemporary literary panorama, offering a varied panel of themes and aesthetic choices. A panorama in which authors from peripheral social backgrounds figure prominently, as well as others, such as Hatoum, who inscribe their imaginations in atypical local cultural frameworks, and whose success can be explained in part by a renewed interest on the part of the readership in the logics of standardization, in alternative identities and in

the preservation of cultural specificities.

Ribeiro, in a more recent past, also used this notion of archipelago to characterize the plurality of cultures that are the foundation of the "Brazilian people" (246). The "archipelago" is constituted by "Brazilian islands. Each one of them singularized by an adjustment to the local conditions, so much ecological as related to the types of production, but always configuring itself as a renewal of the same matrix" (244). That is to say, the Brazilian population would be the matrix constituted historically as a coherent whole, "a national culture with a high degree of homogeneity" (232). This is an essential point in Ribeiro's essay: the articulation between local cultural components and the unity of the Brazilian people; indeed, "the main variants of Brazilian popular culture" (246), which range from the "*Gaúcha* culture" to the "*Cabocla* culture," passing through the Japanese-Brazilians or the Teutonic-Brazilians who have arrived more recently as new migrants, are all linked, by what they have in common, to the Brazilian society as a whole.

Ribeiro's interpretation gives an account of dynamic cultural phenomena, as he exposes how these local and popular cultures evolve, are homogenized under the action of industrialization and, at the same time, can take new forms or implement processes of cultural resistance. "These [new forms], although they correspond to the 'Western' standard common to all post-industrial societies, give Brazil particular characteristics linked to the specificity of the national historical process" (241). In the novels we have presented, sertão is globalized, Manaus turns into a Middle Eastern city, Brasília becomes the city of mystics after having failed to fulfill all the dreams of modernizing utopia. These fictions, in a general way, express this double articulation between certain features of identification of the cities, and then national or even universal problems.

3. Conclusion

In a certain way, the vision in archipelago of the Brazilian literary panorama could be brought closer to "the archipelagic thinking" such as it was defended by Édouard Glissant. The poet from Martinique advocates creolization, a process of linking cultures, which enriches the imaginary of the "Whole-World" through cultural interference and encounters, without leading to a loss or dilution of identities, like a Creole language that "plays with differentiated linguistic 'zones' to draw its own original material" (25). And if "the archipelagic thinking is [thus] appropriate to the pace of our worlds," it is not because a soft relativism which would impoverish the cultures in a homogeneous whole, but that it preserves the force and the intensity of the cultures through the dialogue, the confrontation, the intermingling of the worlds. In other words, through a real

> poetics of the Relation, this possible of the imaginary which carries us to conceive the elusive globality of such a Chaos-World, at the same time as it allows us to raise some detail of it, and in particular to sing our place, unfathomable and irreversible. (Glissant 22)

As in Moog's or Ribeiro's interpretations of Brazil, embracing the totality is not mutilating, "The Whole-World, which is totalizing, is not (for us) total" (22). Rather, it incites us to a general enrichment by putting us in contact the imaginary. This rhizomatic, archipelagic thinking would be the key to a true globalization in the sense of an interculturality and not of a homogenization of cultures. Moreover, in the field of the analysis of literary spaces, it also overlaps with the "geocriticism"

of Bertrand Westphal, who proposes to study the literary place according to "a poetics of the archipelago," that is to say by starting from a "reading oriented towards the plural perception of space" and its various "mobile islands" that are memory, collective representations, intertextuality and also the subjective impressions of the characters (18).

Starting from Moog, but joining Ribeiro's intuition about the inflection of local cultures in their interactions with national or international homogenizing logics, it is possible to consider a set of current novels as a "constellation," an "archipelago" of literary representations of the Brazilian city. At the time of the entanglement between the local and the global that globalization implies, it would be more than time, indeed, to stop the dichotomous readings that make regionalism and universalism two absolutely divergent poles. As Volpi thinks about Spanish-American literature—and once again we believe that the parallel with Brazilian literature makes sense, the new generations of authors seem to turn their backs on such schemes:

> The distinction between the global and the local, the nationalist and the universalist, the virile and the effeminate, has certainly not disappeared, but what seems to separate the new Spanish-American narrators from their predecessors is the naturalness with which they distance themselves from these polemics. The best that can be said by observing them together is that their affinities are as great as their differences and that they are not willing to let themselves be pigeonholed so easily. (112)

Notes

1. For all texts referenced in languages other than English in our bibliography, we have provided our own translations.
2. For the three novels presented, in order to do justice to their language, we have preferred to indicate also the original text "[…] Trata-se do fim do mundo, onde o cão perdeu as botas e nem os bandos de *cangaceiros* se aventuraram." The "cangaceiro," highwayman, is another great figure of the *sertão*, with a mythical aura.
3. *Coronelism* is a specific Brazilian term for the control of power by a small group of large landowners; it is a legacy of colonial structures and, subsequently, it was how Brazil's political system was articulated during the Old Republic (1889-1930), where local powerholders dictated their own private laws, while serving as a relay for the public power of the State.
4. In the original text: "[…] O representante do coronelismo dá ordens aos berros como se comandasse uma tropa de *jagunços* nas terras áridas do Nordeste." We have kept the word "*jagunço*" in our translation; one of the meanings of this word refers to the henchmen who went around the *sertão* to impose, by force and violence, the laws set by the authorities, the "*coronéis*." In *Estive lá fora*, the analogy between times and types of behavior is very explicit, and it is further developed a few paragraphs later: "The coarse gestures of the cousin, the incessant puffing of his cigar [...] led one to reflect on the transposition of *coronelism* from the *sertão* to a city like Recife. [...] They are the same medieval structures in different settings." ["Os gestos grosseiros do primo, as baforadas incessantes no charuto […] faziam refletir sobre o deslocamento do coronelismo sertanejo para uma cidade como o Recife [...]. As mesmas estruturas medievais em cenários diferentes"] (Correia de Brito 56).
5. In the original text: "Nas paredes do apartamento misturavam-se [...] astros de revistas, cantores pop e estampas de santos trazidos de Juazeiro do Norte, repetindo os modos de exposição de casas simples do interior sertanejo."
6. In the original text: "Se fosse do meu interesse, aceitaria a sugestão de João Almino de compor aqui um denso romance regionalista nordestino no qual as cacimbas secavam, a terra rachava, as plantas se pintavam de cinza, os rios viravam estradas de areia, as carcaças de animais sinalizavam mais mortes e os retirantes vinham em caravanas [...]."
7. We refer in particular to the interviews conducted as part of our thesis (Weigel 511-527; 533-545).

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