Volume 19 Issue 37
Originally issued as H7



Global Journal of human-social science: H
Interdisciplinary
Volume 19 Issue 7 Version 1.0 Year 2019
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

The Local and the Universal Dialectic in Brazilian Modernism

By Isabela Chaves Silva

Abstract- This article aims to take up some important points in Antonio Candido's "Literature and Culture from 1900 to 1945", published in 1950. In it, Candido highlights how the dialectic of the local and the universal is the law that guides all Brazilian cultural life and which solutions Brazilian Modernism, in its different moments and in different forms, finds to deal with the impasse of the problematic coexistence of the two poles, the particular and the cosmopolitan, in national life.

Keywords: local. universal. dialectic. particular. cosmopolitism. antonio candido. modernism. brazilian literature. culture.

GJHSS-H Classification: FOR Code: 160899



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2019. Isabela Chaves Silva. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecom-mons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

The Local and the Universal Dialectic in Brazilian Modernism

Isabela Chaves Silva

Abstract- **This article aims to take up some important points in Antonio Candido's "Literature and Culture from 1900 to 1945", published in 1950. In it, Candido highlights how the dialectic of the local and the universal is the law that guides all Brazilian cultural life and which solutions Brazilian Modernism, in its different moments and in different forms, finds to deal with the impasse of the problematic coexistence of the two poles, the particular and the cosmopolitan, in national life.[1]**

Keywords: local. universal. dialectic. particular. cosmopolitism. antonio candido. modernism. brazilian literature. culture.

Introduction

This article seeks, from Antonio Candido's[2] texts, to make notes about the local and the universal dialectic, more specifically in the period of Modernism. In his text "Literature and Culture from 1900 to 1945", Antonio Candido[3] explains that it is possible to say that the dialectic of localism and cosmopolitanism is the law that drives the entire development of Brazilian cultural life, presenting itself in various ways. However, while this dialectic takes different forms in different periods and artists, it is certain that what has been best produced in the country in terms of art points to the balance between these two trends, the local and the universal.

This dialectic indicates a tension between the local matter, which appears as content, and the forms of expression inherited from Europe, given our colonial condition. The confrontation of the mismatch between the singularities of our environment, customs and history, and the European cultural models was present among us since Gregório de Matos[4], in the seventeenth century, until Mário de Andrade[5], in the twentieth century.

One of the expressions of the dialectic of localism and cosmopolitanism concerns our dependence on Portugal. At first we did not differ spiritually from the metropolis and, as we became aware of our peculiarities, we began to counteract them for self-definition. The highlight of this rebellion was the political Independence and the romantic literary nationalism, in which the Portuguese values were strongly denied.

Candido emphasizes the two periods in which the literary particular is mreaches its peak: Romanticism, between 1836 and 1870, and Modernism, between 1922 and 1945.[6] The particular is m of the romantics turned against the influence of Portugal, by defending what was our specificity.

The modernists, on the other hand, did not have to wage this war against Portugal because its influx into Brazil no long erexisted, causing the former rebel liousness to weaken.

The particularism of the modernists stood against the academism established in the first quarter of the century. Between 1900 and 1922, there is a "literature of permanence" that, in relation to the post-romantic phase, which goes from 1880 to 1900, did not advance at all, just formulating and maintaining what was produced in this previous period. Its writers sought, through copying, to achieve balance, harmony, and a literature that seemed European. Among them there was no concern with the artistic form or the desire for literary renewal: they were fine with the idea of not developing in

Author: e-mail: belinha_ch@hotmail.com

[1] Master in Literary Theory and Literatures by the University of Brasilia, Brazil, in there search line "Dialectic Literary Criticism". Email address: belinha_ch@hotmail.com.

[2] Dilva Frazão highlightsthat "Antonio Candido (1918-2017) was a Brazilian sociologist, literary critic, essayist and teacher, central figure of literary studies in Brazil. Author of "Formation of Brazilian Literature", fundamental book for those who want to understand Brazilian literature."FRAZÃO, Dilva.Antonio Candido: sociólogo e crítico literário brasileiro. EBiografia. 2019. Owntranslation. Availableat: https://www.ebiografia.com/antonio_candido/.

[3] The version of the text by Candido that was read to write this article was the original one, in Portuguese, whose data are as follows: Literatura e cultura de 1900 a 1945. *Literatura e sociedade*. 9 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2006, p. 117-144. The book wastranslatedintoEnglishby Howard Becker withthefollowingtitle: Antonio Candido: OnLiteratureandSociety.

[4] As Frazão points out, "Gregório de Matos (1636-1695) was the greatest poet of the Brazilian Baroque. He developed a loving and religious poetry, butstood out for hissatirical poetry, criticizing the society of the time, receiving the nick name 'Boca do Inferno' (in English: Hell's Mouth)." FRAZÃO, Dilva. Gregório de Matos: poeta brasileiro. EBiografia. 2019. Own translation. Availableat: https://www.ebiografia.com/gregorio_matos/.

[5] Still according to Frazão, "Mario de Andrade (1893-1945) was a Brazilian writer. He published "Pauliceia Desvairada", the first book of poems of the first phase of Modernism. He studied music at the São Paulo Conservatory. He was an art critic in newspapers and magazines. He had an important role in the implantation of Modernism in Brazil. His novel "Macunaíma" was his maximum creation, taken to the cinema. Ibid. Available at: https://www.ebiografia.com/mario_andrade/.

[6] Literatura e cultura de 1900 a 1945. *Literatura e sociedade*. 9 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2006, p. 119.

© 2019 Global Journals

anything the literature made so far. Grammatical purism, empty rhetoric, attachment to form, and superficiality set the tone of this phase.

The modernists of 1922 found two strands, the symbolist idealism and the academic naturalism, and broke with both, especially the first. Regarding the first strand of thought, Candido states that:

> Como vimos, este era sobretudo uma conservação de formas cada vez mais vazias de conteúdo, uma tendência a repisar soluções plásticas que, na sua superficialidade, conquistaram por tal forma o gosto médio, que até hoje representam para ele a boa norma literária. Uma literatura para a qual o mundo exterior existia no sentido mais banal da palavra, e que por isso mesmo se instalou num certo oficialismo graças, em parte, à ação estabilizadora da Academia Brasileira [...] As letras, o público burguês e o mundo oficial se entrosavam numa harmoniosa mediania.[7]

Modernism breaks the separadigms and initiates a new phase of the local and the universal dialectic. The Europeanization of the Indian, the idealization of the caboclo, the affectation with which nature was described, the alienation in relation to them is cegenation under go a process of resignification. Also, “historical, social and ethnic repressions” [8] are freed and acquire their own literary expression. The black and the mulatto were now subjects of study and sources of inspiration, the obstacles and risks of the tropical natural environment were valued, and primitivism was no longer seen as a problem but as enchanting.

In theareaof formal inquiry,the modernists of 1922 were partly inspired by the French and Italian literary vanguards.They endeavored to devise a vigorous national literary expression (particular tendency) through foreign formulas initially (universal tendency).

The issues that impelled the European avant-gardes could already be found in part here as well, which distinguished the character of the foreign borrowing now made from the preceding ones: the industrial outbreak between 1914 and 1918 that altered the pace of the big cities, the strikes between 1917 and 1920 in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the creation of the Communist Party in 1922, and the revolution of 1924.In addition, Brazil was closer to the West after World War I due to its greater role in the social and economic problems of the moment and there was a smaller cultural gap compared to Europe.The European avant-garde was also very interested in primitive culture, which was something very strong in Brazil. Thus, Candido emphasizes that "our modernists [...] have shaped both a local and universal type of expression, rediscovering European influence through a dip in the Brazilian debate".[9]

Another major trait of this generation of modernists is their desire to research and interpret Brazil. The iconoclasm of the 1920s paved the way for the vogue of the Northeast novel in the 1930s and a large production of historical and sociological essays, such as Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-Grandesenzala*, Sergio Buarque de Holanda's *Roots of Brazil*, and *Political Evolution of Brazil*, by Caio Prado Júnior.

With Modernism and the period of greatest consolidation of its achievements, the 1930s, it is concluded that:

> fundiram-se a libertação do academismo, dos recalques históricos, do oficialismo literário; as tendências de educação política e reforma social; o ardor de conhecer o país. A sua expansão coincidiu com a radicalização posterior à crise de 1929, que marcou em todo o mundo civilizado uma fase nova de inquietação social e ideológica. Em consequência, manifestou-se uma "ida ao povo", um *V Narod*, por toda parte e também aqui, onde foi o coroamento natural da pesquisa localista, da redefinição cultural desencadeada em 1922.[10]

Therefore, we saw that, in the 1920s and 1930s, there was a commitment of the writers in the construction, in Brazil, of a universal literature, participating in the world problems of its time, but on the basis of the local matter.

Already in the 1940s, aninversionoccursandthe local matterisrejected, investing in formal and interior research.“Regionalist, folkloric, libertine, populist modernism” [11] slows down, and the representatives of the previous decades also reveal greater formal concern and an “antisectarian” yearning. Some of which publish some of their best books in this 1940s: José Lins do Rego, with *Fogo Morto* (*Dead Fire*), and Jorge Amado, with *Terras do sem-fim* (*The Violent Land*), both from 1943, and Carlos Drummond de Andrade with *Sentimento do mundo* (*Sentiment of the World*) and *Rosa do Povo* (*Rose of the People*), from 1940 and 1946, respectively.

The literary production intensified until 1945 due to the editorial boom ofthe 1930s, publishing the new

[7] Ibid., p. 126.“As we have seen, this was above all a preservation of increasingly empty forms, a tendency to repeat plastic solutions that, in their superficiality, have thus conquered the average taste, representing the good literary norm to it to this day. A literature for which the outside world existed in the most banal sense of the word, and that is why it even settled in a certain official is m thanks, partly, to the stabilizing action of the Brazilian Academy […] The letters, the bourgeois public and the official world merged into a harmonious averageness.” (Own translation)

[8] Ibid., p. 127.

[9] Ibid., p. 128-129.Own translation.

[10] Ibid., p. 132. “The liberation of academic is m, of historical repression, of literary officialism; the trends of political education and social reform; the ardor to know the country weremerged. Its expansion coincided with the radicalization after the 1929 crisis, which marked a new phase of social and ideological unrest throughout the civilized world. As a result, a "trip to the people", a V Narod, manifested everywhere and also here, where it was the natural crowning of the localist research, of the cultural redefinition unleashed in 1922.” (Own translation)

[11] Ibid., p. 134.

© 2019 Global Journals

and the old authors. The preponderance of the willingness of the former to deny the "ideological" literature has led to a loss of quality in novels and a spread of the formal and psychological research into lyricism. As a result, there was a fragmentation that placed "social" literature on one side and literature with more aesthetic concerns on the other, largely dissolving the concomitance that existed in the 1930s. Politically uneasy writers began to produce in propagandistic form and writers who denied an interested art isolated themselves from social reality.

From this perspective, the 1930s were characterized by "a moment of balance between local research and cosmopolitan aspirations" disconnected again in the 1940s, with "the narrow sectarianism jostling with formalism".[12]

These changes in the literary patterns must be understood historically within the context in which they occurred. Candido shows the circumstances that led to this passage from a literature of interest in the 1920s and 1930s to a literature that separated aesthetic concerns and social concerns in the 1940s: on the one hand the sectarians who produced in a pamphletary sense and, on the other, writers who distanced themselves from social reality.

Given the impossibility of developing the natural and human sciences in Brazil until the 1930s, literature long occupied a central role in national spiritual evolution, filling the gaps in the elementary demands of knowledge about the country and giving shape to thought. Modernism, as a broad cultural movement, favored the broad production of the historical-sociological essay, which sought to know and interpret the country in the 1930s, and the development of educational theory, politics, ethnographic and folkloric studies. Modernism created the conditions for a greater specification of the attribution so each spiritual activity. Thus, from the decade of 1940, the literature was losing its main position. Added to this, the new communicative media emerged, such as radio, cinema, comics.Faced with this new condition of intellectual life, the writers reacted in two ways: or by emphasizing the uniqueness of their field, the artistic, by producing a literature focused only on formal issues, thus addressing a restricted audience; or producing narratives that approached journalistic or radio reporting, which enabled them to compete with the new expressive media.[13]

Still, in the 1940s, innovative writers such as Clarice Lispector appeared, whose debut was in 1943, Guimarães Rosa in 1946, and Murilo Rubião in 1947.

As for the writers of the 1950s, Candido points out that they made the "consolidation of the average", that is, stabilized the achievements of the 1920s even more, making them the language proper to literature. According to the critic, if, on the one hand, "there were fewer eruptions of high creativity," on the other, "there were more good books than at any other time in our fiction."[14] Some of the writers who debuted or matured in these years were: Dalton Trevisan (1959), Osman Lins (1955), Fernando Sabino (1956), Otto Lara Resende (1963), Ligia Fagundes Teles (maturity reached in 1954) and Bernardo Ellis (1956).

According to Candido, from the list above, only Ellis is regionalist, while the others move through the urban universe, "relatively disconnected from a more lively interest in the place, the moment, the customs, which in their books enter in filigree so to speak".[15] He further points out that none of them show concern for ideological issues, which changes a little after 1964, making it difficult to classify them as "left or right, personal or social romance, popular or scholarly writing," positions that, if previously problematic, are no longer grounded "in relation to a comprehensive experience, whereby siding or denunciation is replaced by the mode of being and existing, from the angle of the person or group".[16]

Candido's course on the presence of the local and universal dialectic in our spiritual life is fundamental because, just as the integration - not always harmonious - between the two poles was and is part of our evolution as a nation, it also guided the formation and development of Brazilian literature. Understanding the dialectic of the particular and the cosmopolitan is key to understanding the formation of the country and most of the dilemmas experienced by authors at different times and in different ways, as well as the solution some of them found to this impasse.

Bibliographic References

1. CANDIDO. Antonio. A nova narrativa. In: _____. *A educação pela noite*. 5 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2006
2. _____. Literatura e cultura de 1900 a 1945. In: _____.*Literatura e sociedade*. 9 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2006.
3. FRAZÃO, Dilva. Antonio Candido: sociólogo e crítico literário brasileiro. EBiografia. 2019. Availableat:<<https://www.ebiografia.com/antonio_candido/>>.Accessedon: Sep 13th 2019.
4. _____. Gregório de Matos: poeta brasileiro. EBiografia. 2019. Availableat: <<https://www.ebiografia.com/gregorio_matos/>>. Accessedon: Sep 13th 2019.

[12] Ibid., p. 134-135.
[13] Ibid., p. 137-145.
[14] CANDIDO, Antonio. A nova narrativa. In: _____. *A educação pela noite*. 5 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul, 2006, p. 248.ThisarticlebyAntonio Candido hasnotbeentranslatedintoEnglishyet.
[15] Ibid., p. 249.Owntranslation.
[16] Ibid., p. 249.Owntranslation.

© 2019 Global Journals

5. _____. Mario de Andrade: escritor brasileiro. EBiografia. 2019. Availableat: <<https://www.ebiografia.com/mario_andrade/>>. Accessedon: Sep 13th 2019.

© 2019 Global Journals