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*Keywords:* *literature, decolonial theory, hinterland, brazil, Mozambique.*

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# "South-to-South" Dialogues: Comparative Literature as a Decolonizing Power

Walcler De Lima Mendes Junior [α] & Juliana Michaello Macêdo Dias [σ]

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## Introduction

The term comparative literature will be used here as a kind of toll or strategy that discusses aspects of decolonizing power. The main idea is to think of literature and its speeches – representative of the culture and the society – as a resistant subversive power against an ethnocentric or, more specifically, Eurocentric vision. Therefore, expressing this kind of interpretation or translation of literature means assuming a political position.

So, what does it exactly mean to talk about a "south-to-south" dialogue? To have a glance on this proposition we need to be clear about what the theories from the south mean.

> Theory from the South is NOT about the theories of people who may be wholly or partially of the south, least of all ourselves. Nor is it, as Aravamudan would have us confess, simply theory "about" the south. It is, as Mbembe has stressed, about the effect of the south itself on theory, the effects of its ex-centricity, to invoke Homi Bhabha's (1994:6) term, of its structural and tropic situation in the history of the ongoing global present. Of course, we have long had a species of "theory from the south." Its other name is anthropology: anthropology, that is, of a certain critical sort. Or, at least, it was-until much of the discipline, seduced by the neoliberal flight from history, society, structure, system, determination, and explanation retreated from theory *sui generis* in favor of contingency and the documentation of difference. (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012:4).

Developing this approach, we emphasize the need to think about this ex-centricity and going a little further, assuming a political position through the terms of certain regional literature, territorializing, de-territorializing and re-territorializing the center under a logic from the south, to the south, whithin the south. We could understand this as a kind of globalization movement without the traditional agents from the global power located in the so-called central countries.

Our aim here is to think about the territory of the hinterland, the backland described by Mia Couto and Graciliano Ramos, as global spaces created through the south. Therefore, the idea is to expand the concept of Globalization beyond the cosmopolitan and central cultures. Expand it beyond not only Global cities and their cosmopolitan characters but also from the kind of desert described by the American literature, ranging from the heroes of western movies to the beatniks poets.

Otherwise, it´s about understanding the hinterland in a perspective such as Guimarães Rosa's, who wrote "the backland is everywhere". This "backland" comes from the "south" and speaks from the "south" as a character, a persona, in the epic Brazilian novel – "Grande sertão: veredas" (Bedeviled in the Badlands).

A pertinent question formulated by the decolonial theories is the difference between the concept of "south" and the traditional concept of "third world".

> Despite the fact that it has replaced "the third world" as a more-or-less popular usage, the label itself is inherently slippery, inchoate, unfixed. It describes less a geographical place than a polythetic category, its members sharing one or more-but not all, or even most-of a diverse set of features. The closest thing to a common denominator among them is that many once were colonies, though not all in the same epochs. "Postcolonial," therefore, is something of a synonym, but only an inexact one. What is more, like all indexical categories, "*the* Global South" assumes meaning by virtue not of its content, but of its context, of the way in which it points to something else in a field of signs – in this instance, to its antinomy to "the Global North," an opposition that carries a great deal of imaginative baggage congealed around the contrast between centrality and marginality, kleptocracy and free-market democracy, modernity and its absence. Patently, this opposition takes on a hard-edged political and economic reality in some institutional contexts, like the G-8 and world bond and credit markets-a reality that makes it *appear* as though it has a

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> "hard" geo-cartography. That process of reification is precisely why we cannot simply do away with the term by fiat: it has a life in the world. Analytically, then, the problem for a critical anthropology is to account for when, why, and how it takes on that reality and with what implications. In other words, "the South" is not an analytic construct. It is an analytic *object*. Its very facticity-like its labile relationality and its capacity to signify-is something for which we have to give account (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012:4).

Thinking of the dialogue between the two authors encompassed in this article is, therefore, a political proposition. The bridge between the representations of the hinterland, both as vast and outraged land, in Brazilian and Mozambican literature expresses a kind of south-to-south construction, as a bridge rejoining two points usually separated or united only through their colonial legacy of a shared language.

> This is half of our "counter-evolutionary" story. Note that "counter," here, is intended to mean not just *inversion* but also *negation*. We deploy it to point to irony, not to teleology. The other half of our story has to do with the contemporary history of Euro-America, one of rising carceral populations, rising unemployment, a rising politics of the belly and the bellicose, spiraling inequality, spiraling crises of social reproduction and generation. It is not we who first noted that the "new normal" of the North appears to be replaying the recent past of the South, ever more in a major key. Which is why, in many respects-note, *many*, not all-Africa, Asia, and Latin America seem to be running ahead of Euro-America, prefiguring *its* history-in-the-making. And why the Global North appears to be "going south." (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012:4).

Thinking literature as a political practice means, in the very beginning, deconstructing an hegemonic idea of what is and what is not science or academic production. This kind of deconstruction intend to problematize the existence of other rationalities and the need to put them in dialogue in order to comprehend the extent of their dissemination.

> The knowledge and wisdom represented in African literatures are often in opposition to Cartesian logic, without necessarily falling into exoticism. They mean, therefore, the institution and reinvestigation of other rationalities, the expression of a specific cognitive and identity territory. With them opened up new possibilities of construction worlds and creating imaginaries[1] (NOA 2012:97).

## I. Inventions

The idea of new possibilities of constructing or creating – translated trough the term "invention" – is always something that belongs to the order of illegality as a subversive act. Something illegal or subversive. "An invention always presupposes some illegality, the breaking of an implicit contract; it inserts a disorder into the peaceful ordering of things, it disregards the properties" (DERRIDA 2007:1).

In these terms, asking what´s the use of this kind of invention is inevitable. This question means, what´s the use of a subversive form of literature, a subversive form of political literature, or, even more precisely, a subversive form of political literature against the hegemonic invention of reality that places the occidental culture and the Eurocentric speech as the very and unique truth. This kind of "new invention" coming from the African and South American literature (and obviously from all the south-to-south experiences of dialogue) intend to destabilize the ethnocentric order, proposing the invention of the "other" (this "other" of the civilizing world, the civilizing culture the civilizing language, the civilizing speech) as a myth or fable (DERRIDA 2012). This subversive act proposes the inversion of the position of both "inventions". At least, the same treatment for the inventions that comes from the "North" and from the "South" cultures. Both treated as myths or fables serving different gods, through words written in canonic books in which truth is wrought. Through the south-to-south literature it is possible to assume this "invention of the other", the opposite of civilized, as a myth/fable created by the so-called "civilized culture". This kind of construction of reality obligates, for instance, scholars to speak, write and read in European languages to become world citizens.

Just like any myth, just like any invention, the invention of the "other" must take place somewhere in time for a group, a community or a society that respond to cultural models or patterns of identity. The problem of the invention of the other remains as a myth. After all, all invention must be created as something to believe in, as a truth sustained by law, empiric observation, logical thinking, and the proof and counterproof method. One should remember that all that belongs to an unique Greco-Roman culture and history that sustain values and process of the so-called modern science, modern state, occidental society (where the democracy seems to have been invented), European-Judaic-Cristian heritage, Caucasian ethnocentric…

Above all this series of signs, terms, concepts and values, one first invention remains: the human-being itself, man himself (with all the gender implications of this invention). As a consequence, a product of narrative, of a particular way of speaking and writing history, a way of thinking literature, myth and fable, the humankind was invented trough literature, myth and

[1] Os conhecimentos e saberes representados nas literaturas africanas estão muitas vezes em contraposição a lógicas cartesianas, sem que, necessariamente, caiam no exotismo. Significam, por isso, a instituição e reinvidicação de outras racionalidades, expressão de um território cognitive e identitário específico. Com eles abriram-se novas possibilidades de fazer mundos e de criar imaginários (NOA, Francisco. As literaturas africanas, valorização do conhecimento e as redes identitárias. IN: Portugal – Africa: Mitos e realidades vivenciais e artísticas. p.97, 2012).



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fable, sometimes inspired by moral and religious values, sometimes inspired by moral and scientific values.

Until now we face two different kinds of problems: the problem of the invention of the other through a narrative (myth or fable) and the problem of invention itself through a belief (it does not matter if religious or scientific belief). So, assuming that any kind of invention – or discovery – cannot be classified as natural, meaning spontaneous, it´s supposed that we need to create, to set up or to construct our relationship with the world, the environment, the things around us, even the others. When these relations are founded, we can assume that we "found" a truth or truths concerning to the others, the environment and so on.

> In the logic of Port-Royal, as in Descartes or Leibniz, we observe a common approach to the truth: even if it must be based upon a truth "that has to be found in the thing itself independently of our desires" (…) the truth that we must find there where it is found, the truth to be invented, is first of all the nature of our relation to the thing itself and not the nature of the thing itself. And this relation must be stabilized in a proposition. It is usually to the proposition that the name "truth" is given, especially when it is a matter of thuths in the plural. The truths are true propositions (…), mechanisms of predication (DERRIDA 2012:33).

The truth is a proposition, a way of saying, a way of writing, a speech, writing, literature. As a proposition, an invention, it must suffer an effect of repetition to become true. These repetitions must occur in a discursive field as the invention of the language as writing that confirms the truth.

> The invention of the language depends on the knowledge of truths; but it is still necessary to find this knowledge or science through which everyone, including peasants, would be able to judge the truth of things, thanks to the invention of the language it would make possible. The invention of the language presupposes and produces science; it intervenes between two states of knowledge as a methodic or technoscientific procedure (DERRIDA 2012:33).

The invention of the language determining and judging the truth of things, may suggest thinking the language as the support for the "invention of the same" and the "invention of the other".

> An order where there is no absolute surprise, the order of what I will call the invention of the same. This invention comprises all invention, or almost. And I shall not oppose it to the invention of the order. (…), for opposition, dialectical or not, still belongs to the regimen of the same. The invention of the other is not opposed to that of the same, it´s difference beckons toward another coming about, toward this other invention of which we dream, the invention of the entirely other, the one allows the coming of a still unanticipatable alterity, and for which no horizon of expectation as yet seems ready, in place, available. Yet it´s necessary to prepare for it; to allow the coming of the entire other (…) letting the other coming is not inertia ready for anything whatever. No doubt the coming of the other, it has to remain incalculable and in a certain way aleatory (…), escapes from all programming. But this aleatory aspect of the other has to be heterogeneous in relation to the integrable aleatory factor of a calculus, and likewise to the form of undecidable that theories of formal systems have to cope with. This invention of the entirely other is beyond any possible status; (DERRIDA 2012:39).

This is the point where the deconstruction act start coming.

> To get ready for this coming of the other is what can be called deconstruction. It deconstruction precisely this double genitive and, as deconstructive invention, itself comes back in the step [pas] – and also as the step – of the other. To invent would then be to "know" how to say "come" and to answer the "come" of the other (DERRIDA 2012:39).

At these terms, we can assume that the deconstruction works in the way of destabilizing the economy of the same, the means of organization of the same, to allow the coming of the other. It means that talking about something is assuming our speech under their terms. Speaking about something presupposes handling with it in its own logic or manner of seeing and organizing the world. Or, in other terms, allowing the other to come "through the economy of the same, indeed, miming or repeating it, (…) to offer a place for the other, to let the other come" (DERRIDA 2012:45).

Opening space for the other coming is precisely what the impossible deconstruction act proposes.

> But one does not make the other come, one lets it come by preparing for its coming. The coming of the other or its coming back is the only possible arrival, but it is not invented, even if the most genial inventiveness is needed to prepare to welcome it and to prepare to affirm the chance of an encounter that not only is no longer calculable but is not even an incalculable factor still homogeneous with the calculable, not even an undecidable still in the labor of bringing forth a decision. Is this possible? Of course it is not, and that is why it is the only possible invention (Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Invention of the Other", *Psyche: Inventions of the Other,* California: Stanford University Press, p. 45, 2012).

This impossible act of deconstruction speaks about the possibility or predisposition to open space for the other to come. This deconstruction act when applied over the literature field produces exactly the kind of effect we are trying here. A kind of jump of faith, a kind of gambling, a betting, a hope that the "other" will come. This impossible act encounters in the literature field a kind of fertile space to put itself in practice. The description of the hinterland (backland) image into the literature from Mozambique and from Brazil would help somehow to approach the signs through this path that comes and goes from south-to-south. This "come and go" must be strong enough to invite Brazilians and Mozambicans speeches and – even more – the speeches coming from the modern colonizing languages, like English or French, betting in the possibility of deconstructing these separations, these differences, these relationships founded by the



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construction of the border between "north" and "south", "center and periphery", "colonizers and colonized".

## II. Literature as a Deconstructing Act

Literature works as a deconstructing act, as soon as it is heading to the direction of the *other,* an *alterity* with another *ethic,* logic, structure, values, culture and, even, history, as narrative, as fable, as invention. The literature works as an expressive field for the deconstruction whereas *writing* expresses itself, proposing the movement toward the other.

> Writing is the outlet as the descent of meaning outside itself within itself: metaphor-for-others-aimed-at-others-here-and-now, metaphor as the possibility of others here-and-now, metaphor as metaphysics in which Being must hide itself if the other is to appear. Excavation within the other toward the other in which the same seeks its vein and the true gold of its phenomenon. Submission in which the same can always lose (itself). Niedergang, Untergang. But the same is nothing, is not (it) self before taking the risk of losing (itself). For the fraternal other is not first in the peace of what is called intersubjectivity, but in the work and the peril of interrogation; the other is not certain within the peace of the response in which two affirmations espouse each other, but is called up in the night by the excavating work of interrogation. Writing is the moment of this original Valley of the other within Being. The moment of depth as decay. Incidence and insistence of inscription (DERRIDA 2005:35).

Therefore, when literature proposes a certain narrative (invention) of the wilderness in Africa and in Brazil it makes a movement towards the other. However, which other? Other of whom? Derrida affirms that the deconstruction act of the toll called *writing undecidable* works over the reason, the *ratio*, the meaning, significance and sense that guides the language, and its desire or pulse for totality. The meaningless, the unintelligible, the uncomprehensive metaphor, that thing impossible to translate reposes in the field of literature, working as *pharmakon,* at the same time, as sense and madness against the desire of totality, the necessity of explaining each phenomenon, each relation of cause and effect, each sense and sensibility for each and all subject of their society. Derrida suggests two possibilities:

> Either do not mention a certain silence (a certain silence which, again, can be determined only within a language and an order that will preserve this silence from contamination by any given muteness), or follow the madman down the road of his exile. The misfortune of the mad, the interminable misfortune of their silence, is that their best spokesmen are those who betray them best; which is to say that when one attempts to convey their silence itself, one has already passed over to the side of the enemy, the side of order, even if one fights against order from within it, putting its origin into question. There is no Trojan horse unconquerable by Reason (in general). The unsurpassable, unique, and imperial grandeur of the order of reason, that which makes it not just another actual order or structure (a determined historical structure, one structure among other possible ones), is that one cannot speak out against it except by being for it, that one can protest it only from within it; and within its domain, Reason leaves us only the recourse to strategems and strategies (DERRIDA 2005:42).

From now on, we will start to use the strategy proposed. Against the desire of totality and logic, rationality, supported by the language, we propose to work with the impossible translation of the Brazilian northeastern backlands (the Brazilian backland, the "sertão") as a sign of the Mozambican "savanna" or vice versa. The impossible approach between both signs meaning at the same time a third (totally different) sign and the same sign. The metaphor of the third edge of the river that is at the same time both and none of the sides of the river. Not as a paradox, but as a double possibility and so on. The "savanna" as "sertão". The multiples signs of "sertão" as the multiples signs of "savanna". The imprecise translation of multiple signs emerging from the literature saying "sertão/savanna"

Approaching images of both "sertão" and "savanna", we emphasize those related to *loneliness* and *wideness*. Loneliness and wideness are inseparable in both speeches - the Brazilian backland of Graciliano Ramos and the Mozambican savanna of Mia Couto - in contrast with the big cities, the crowd, the possibilities, the new challenges and the unknown. These big cities to where the family of the Brazilian novel needs to migrate are completely unknown. Therefore, they don´t have another option but to make this movement toward the so-called civilized city, even if it is frightening. New technologies, new patterns and a new way of behavior, must be learned by them. Therefore, besides their fear, it represents their unique hope, their unique way out from the dry Brazilian backland.

> He did not feel the weight of the gun or the sack, or the small pebbles that had got into his sandals. Neither did he note the stench of carrion that hung over the road. He was under the spell of Vitória's words. They would go forward; they would come to an unknown land. Fabiano was happy; he believed in that land because he didn't know what it was like or where it was. Docilely he repeated Vitória's words-words which she murmured because she had confidence in him. They trudged southward, enveloped in their dream. A big city, full of strong people. The boys at school, learning difficult but necessary things. The two of them old, ending their lives like a pair of useless dogs-like the dog they once had. But what were they going to do? They hung back, fearful. They were on their way to an unknown land, a land of city ways. They would become its prisoners. And to the city from the backland would come ever more and more of its sons, a never-ending stream of strong, strapping brutes like Fabiano, Vitória, and the two boys (RAMOS, 1999:167).

After this sentence, a picture, a painting, immediately comes to mind. The red and brown earth under the dirty and tired feet. The white sky over the curved head. So much light that blinds the eyes. No one can see further. The weight of the bodies slowly heading



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on the infinite road that goes to an untouchable horizon. It´s a long road.

Another image comes from emptiness and surviving characters. A picture of nowhere land. A painting of dead people over a dead road. "War had killed the road thereabout" (COUTO, 2006:1). Once again, people are running away from their own land. Not because the drought and starvation caused by it, but from the war, the extreme violence and the emptiness of meaning to justify it as normal, as quotidian. The victims of social environment conditions heading on to somewhere away from their homes. Where do they go? A big city waiting for them? Probably not. A land of dream that never could be dreamed? Maybe yes, maybe not. A land of letters and images, narratives and pictures, memories and desires, past and future condensed in notebooks and little souvenirs. At the end, all this will become the same land. At the end, letters become grains of sand and all the writings become pages of earth.

> An old man and a boy make their way along the road. They walk with swaying gait, as if journeying has been there only occupation since birth. Their destination is the other side of nowhere, their arrival a non-departure, awaiting what lies ahead. They are fleeing the war, the war that has contaminated their whole country. They advance under the illusion that somewhere beyond there lies a quiet haven. They walk barefoot, their clothes the same color of the road. The old man´s name is Tuahir. He is skinny and seems to have lost all his substance. The boy is called Muidinga. He has been walking ahead ever since he left the refugee camp. He has a slight but noticeable limp, his leg dallying longer than his step. The vestige of an illness that had but recently dragged him near to death. (…) Muidinga became a little boy all over again. But this second childhood was hurried along by the needs of survival (COUTO, 2006, p. 1).

At this point, assuming a position becomes very necessary. It means taking as an "effect of truth" or an "erased truth" – at least, in this position – that to be in the "South", speaking, listening and watching the "South", configures a privileged place on interpreting these signs. In addition, it configures a strategic position in straight opposition to the speeches and the listening coming from the "North".

A second point we are assuming here –and it probably will sound radical – is that English is not the best language to translate the pictures above. Meaning that certain words, expressions, even sensations are very difficult to translate without an adaptation that makes sense mainly for the listening skill of the "northern ears". This kind of injunction provokes a difficulty hard to overcome. Some can assume that the English language emphasizes objective and direct aspects of communication, lacking the passive voice and the variations of the verb tenses as it occurs, for example, in the Latin languages. Others could pose the problem in the context of these images, too regional, too local. The regional aspects of these images cause a misunderstanding when in contrast to a kind of globalized or cosmopolitan vision of the phenomena and narratives in question.

Here, we assume that this apparently insuperable barriers must be moved, dislocated, deconstructed trough a proposed project of a global view very different from the model experienced during the nighties and two thousand years. It means to overcome the hierarchy among cultures divided in "North" and "South" as proposed by the modernity based on values of culture, history, science, civilization etc. Second, it´s time to build direct bridges, language and communication between different cultures from the "South". This proposition recognizes the paths opened by post-colonial theories – we could cite here the hybridism and multiculturalism discussed by Bhabha and Hall – but aiming to establish other connections that do not pay tribute to the center and colonial nations and cultures.

It means that some words should not be translated – for example the word "sertão" or the similar Mozambican (even meaning something different) "savana". These words are very hard to be transposed for a "northern ear", just because translating means transposing a very complex joint of experiences to another. Therefore, what is proposed here is a kind of redirection of the communication channels to make possible a direct line between signs, speeches, narratives, images and pictures coming from "south" to the "south" by abolishing the historic passage through the northern cultures.

Sometimes the problem is not a specific word but an entirely perspective of the historic, political and social context. The passage below describes an apparently very simple situation about the relationship in a poor country family between a mother and her child. The boy is concerned about "hell" and after asking for an explanation, her mother ignores him.

> Nobody had never mentioned Hell in his hearing before, and surprised at old Miss Terta's language, he ask for an explanation. Vitoria, whose attention was on another matters, said vaguely that Hell was a very bad place, and when the boy asked her to describe it she merely shrugged her shoulders (RAMOS, 1999:92).

After this passage, he will use the image of "hell" in his own dialogues with the dog "Baleia" (whose name, "Whale", suggests an ironic dislocation from the dry territory in which the novel develops). Hell as a bad and hot place, suggesting that it has no relationship with the place where they live. *"All the places he knew were good: the goat pen, the corral, the clay pit, the yard, the water hole"* (RAMOS, 1999:95).

> He sat up, cuddled the dog's head in his lap, and started in a low voice to tell her a story. His vocabulary was almost as limited as that of the parrot that had died during the drought. As a result, he had recourse to exclamations and gestures, and the dog replied by wagging her tail and



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licking at him with her tongue, and making other movements that were easily understood (RAMOS, 1999:94).

Hell, in *Sleepwalking Land,* appears in obvious places like the road or the bus filled with burned corpses. Even yet, at these times of war and lack of hope, the bus became a temporary home for the old man and the boy. A protection from the heat of the sun, a shelter over their heads. At these times, the whole country was in hell, manifested in the image of a moribund whale, eaten alive by the starved people.

Now, I saw my country like one of those whales that come to breathe their last on the shore. Death hadn´t even occurred and knives were already stealing chunks of it, each one trying to get a bigger peace for himself. As if it were the very last animal, the last chance to gain a share. From time to time, I thought I could still hear the giant sighing, swallowing wave after wave, turning hope into an ebbing tide. After all, I was born in a time when time doesn't happen. Life, my friends, no longer lets me inside it. I am condemned to perpetual earth, like the whale that gives up the ghost on the beach. If one day I try and leave somewhere else, I shall have to carry with me the road that doesn´t let me depart from myself (COUTO 2006:16).

For the little boy in "Barren lives" hell is something more abstract, imagined through the musicality of the Portuguese word "inferno".

"Hell, Hell-" He couldn't believe that a word with so musical a ring could be the name of something bad. He had decided to argue with Vitória. If she had said that she had been there, all well and good. Vitória's authority was visible and powerful, and made itself felt. It would have been all right too if she had referred to some higher, invisible power. But she had tried to convince him by giving him a crack on the head, and this struck him as absurd. Knocks were natural when grownups were angry; he even thought their ill-humor was the sole cause of all the raps and ear-pullings he received. This belief made him distrustful and caused him to observe his parents carefully before speaking to them. He had gathered up courage to address Vitória because she was in a good mood. He explained this to the dog with an abundance of cries and gestures (RAMOS, 1999:97).

In the passage about the land with no "reason" – at the beginning of "Sleepwalking land"- what is called "reason" has no relationship with the European logic or sense. It is closer with some matter of sensibility, usually relegated to the border of the occidental science or academic questions. This sensibility associated with a reasonable evaluation of a social or political context is something at least strange for the occident.

Muidinga remains unconvinced. He looks at the plain; everything seems to have faded. In that land, so devoid of life, to be right is something you no longer care about. For that reason, he does not press his point (COUTO 2006: 2).

In the original Portuguese text, in the place of "to be right", the word "reason" seems to call the sense and the logic trough a sensibility way. Like an inner voice that gives advice in hard times. Time of hell in the "savana" and the "sertão".

Another point that is worth emphasizing is the relationship between man and nature, considering a dialogue of two different speeches where both have voices, languages and ways of expressions. Feeling and expression as simultaneous acts.

The dog was his companion in that hour of trial. She had been stretched out beside the stones on which Vitória did the cooking, drowsing in the heat, waiting for a bone. In all probability she wouldn't get one, but she believed in bones and she found the state of torpor enjoyable. She stirred a bit from time to time, raising to her mistress black eyes shining with confidence. Having accepted the idea that there might be a bone in the kettle, she was not going to let anybody or anything disturb her modest hopes. She got an occasional kick for no reason at all. The kicks were to be expected and did nothing to dispel the vision of the bone (RAMOS, 1999:93).

In the novel Sleepwalking Land, we remark the passage between the protagonist and the cock with the spirit of his little brother, disappeared in the henhouse during the war.

Little brother stopped living in the house. My old man got him a place in the hen house. At break of dawn, he thought the boy to sing, just like the roosters. It took a while to attune. After many dawns, brother junhito already clucked with perfection, covered in a bag of feathers that my mom sewed for him. It seemed to match with those fluffs, swarmed with fleas (COUTO 2006:19).

Another point of controversy and difficult comprehension is the "dreaming" as described in both novels. This dreaming sometimes gets close to the notion of Dreamtime from the aboriginal culture in Australia. It has less relation with the eastern notion of dream – something that happens during your sleep time as something desired or feared. The "dreaming" at these novels has a complementary relation with the "real" world. It means, the things that happen in the "dreaming" must guide the actions during the waking time. This dreaming condition appears in Sleepwalking Land as a central metaphor resumed by the idea of a "land that forgot to dream" (STACUL 2016:136), placed not just like a metaphor but also as a living condition. Meaning that the material and narrative worlds are mixed. The novel does not recognize the border between these two perceptions of the world.

The mixing between different worlds or realities in Barren Lives is more evident on the relations among people, animals and the environment. Together they can unveil the mysteries of nature, heaven and hell, crossing the way and destiny of people. Therefore, these mixed impressions appear sometimes as good destinies and actions, sometimes as nightmare, starvation, misery, migration through the arid backlands of Brazilian northeast.



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> All the places he knew were good: the goat pen, the corral, the clay pit, the yard, the water hole. This was a world peopled by real beings—the herdsman's family and the ranch animals. Beyond this world there were the blue hills that rose in the distance, the ridge where the dog went to hunt cavies, the brushland with its all but imperceptible trails, its isolated clumps of trees, and its impenetrable thickets of macambira. This was another world, populated by stones and plants, each with a life of its own, just like people. These two worlds lived in peace with one another. At times the frontier between them was broken down. The inhabitants on either side understood each other and lent each other a helping hand. There were undoubtedly evil forces at work everywhere, but they were always overcome. When Fabiano was breaking an untamed horse there was obviously a guardian spirit that kept him in the saddle, that showed him the least dangerous trails, that delivered him from thorns and sharp branches. (…)The relations between the two worlds had not always been friendly. A long time back his people had had to flee, without knowing where, weary and hungry (RAMOS, 1999:94).

The anthropozoomorphic sign in this deconstruction interpretation encounter many ritualistic forms in Sleepwalking Land, commanding actions and relationships between man and animals, dream and reality, material and spiritual worlds.

> The journey had hardly begun and my old man's spirit was already following me. (…) I remembered the nganga's advice, and took the dead bird out from under my seat. I was prepared for this battle with the forces of beyond. In each hole, I placed a white feather. From each feather, a gull was suddenly born, and as it took to its wings, the hole disappeared. The flight of the birds that I sowed as I went along erased any trace of me. And it was with such skills that I won the first round in my trial of strength with the spirit world (COUTO 2006:35).

The spells also appears in Barren Lives as something almost not intelligible for a child. A strange word – hell – that should mean it´s opposite meaning, but doesn't. The little boy after being punished by Vitória, not satisfied, decides to ask her again about the strange word.

> Abandoning his pastime, he had gone to question Vitória. What a mistake! The fault was all old Miss Terta's. The evening before, after saying a prayer to cure the pain in Fabiano's chest, she had come out with a strange word. She hissed when she talked, with her pipestem firmly clamped between her toothless gums. The boy wanted a clear idea of what the word meant, and he was disappointed when his mother talked about a bad place with spits and bonfires. Hence he had protested, hoping she would change Hell into something else (RAMOS, 1999:94).

These foreign words, stranger words, weird and wonderful words, the savana and the sertão enroll a series of signs. Described as strange places, spaces, territories, labyrinths, emptiness, amplitudes, wideness and vastness. Places crossed by nomadic herds, carts pushed by donkeys, horses and cattle, old trucks, hordes of migrants, nomads and settled communities. All of them moving against their wish by the forces of nature or social crises, poverty and war. Living as "space-nomads", pastoralists looking for better conditions of survival. At the same time, the promise of an "Eden", an earthly paradise waiting for the lucky ones, for the faithful men, for the believer who fear the power of the gods and pray. In order to survive, this nomadic-colonial model develops life strategies enabling survival and growth despite habitat destruction. All these signs bring a problem or a question to the occidental logic meaning the impossibility of applying the rational model of occidental science – any field of science – to the specification of the Mozambican or Brazilian culture placed at these signs.

> In this context of civil war, the father dies and the brother Junhito Disappears, Kindzu feels the dynamics of independence as a kind of abortion. Tradition has not been reconciled with modernity. The wisdom of Did not articulate with the teachings of the school. The dimension Supernatural nature so present in everyday life is not respected by a Rationality that some pretend to impose by force. Mestizos are Threatened. In spite of his will, Kindzu embodies conjuncturally These fractures and you will need a long learning trip to Weld them (LOPES 2014:191, translated by the authors).

This new order, where a different kind of logic or reason emerges is marked for the *anthropozoomorphic* language.

> At the end of Terra Sonambula, Kindzu has a dream that seems to connect decisively with the metaphorical dimension of the animality of Junhito, which in turn can be read as metonymy of the Mozambican people torn by fratricidal combat. Just as the child, who from our point of view could acquire the symbolic value of embodying a developing present and ends up transforming himself into an irrational galinacio, the popular people gathered to listen to the apocalyptic discourse of "nganga" dehumanize themselves and form an authentic Bestiary (LOPES 2014:191, translated by the authors).

The *anthropozoomorphic* aspect is present in *Barren lives* narrative. Either on the bestialization of human characters or in the humanization of animal characters.

> The basic opposition in this mythical word, the binary model man/animal, is similarly discussed by Affonso Romano de Santana (…) in which he considers the + human characters as one mathematical set opposed to the – human ones as a second set. (…). Throughout the novel the components of subset one, + human, are identified with the elements of subset two, -human; i.e., Fabiano e Sinhá Vitória, as well the older and the younger boys posses the qualities given to both Baleia (the dog) whom and the parrot. They, them, appear to strive for higher goals, to ascend to + human. In the realm of degradation Baleia and the parrot refer to Fabiano and Sinhá Vitória, especially in the chapter dedicated to Fabiano. In the realm of aspiration the referent is, in the case of Fabiano, the linguistic ability of Seu Tomás for whom Fabiano greatly admires, and often whom



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> Fabiano models himself in his endeavor to become a real human being (CERQUEIRA 1982:73)

Just like in *Sleepwalking land*, the *antropozoomorphic* matter in *Barren Lives* is not only a language effect. Instead, it helps to emphasize the non-individual condition of the characters. This condition operates a social critic showing that the starvation and terrible social conditions of the characters is not just their fault, something individual, but also a whole politic-economic-social structure problem that implies the elites, the government, the way of production, the distribution of wealth and opportunities in a very unfair social context. In these contexts, many times humans are treated like beasts.

This "animal" placed in the middle of the anthropocentric rationality is very strategic for the deconstructive acts we proposed in the beginning of this article. It is a movement that not only defiance the anthropocentric logic, it also proposes to get deep into the investigation of the "other". "Otherness" as a category demanding questions: What is the other? Who is the "other" – or yet – Who invents the other?

The sign of the "animal" expresses the impossibility of definition of the "other" as something stabilized, an image, a closed and identified concept. The sign of the "animal" expresses this shape, this extreme image, the one classified as "completely other" from the human. The one who has its language denied, the basic rights named *human* rights. The one who was muted. Therefore, thinking about the invention of the other, in both novels, as this one far from the human rights and close to the animal condition is a strategy of social criticism. It is also a warning on how the north silences the south. Once a decolonizing position is assumed, thinking about this plain difference placed between man and animal is a start to think about ways of domination.

> Criticism interprets this anthropocentric posture as partly justifying violence against "inhumanity" (a term which in itself already expresses what is reserved for the "other" of man) dedicated to everything that does not belong to the category of humanity. In part, according to this same interpretation, to operate the fold of anthropocentric logic against "other" human beings who share code, culture, and language, characterized henceforth as less human, parahuman, protohuman, then amenable to Same or almost same violent sanctions suffered by the group formed by ants, elephants and frogs etc (and that although radically heterogeneous is quietly homogenized in the animal term). From this second violence directed at the "others" of humanity, a man-man rupture, reinforced by the man-animal rupture, separate what is said to be central, global, modern culture proper to civilization, in contrast to the culture of the "other", local , Archaic and peripheral. The "languages" of the "dialects", the "technologies", the entire electronic bric-a-brac, the "primitive" or "archaic" artifact, all traditional forms of production are also violently separated. And the simple act of opening a lighter in front of an indigenous group that preserves the fire and operates with this a mythical game of techniques of maintenance of the flames in the village, leads not only to question the validity of its technology, but in this questioning for all doubt The symbolic system that sustained group and individual as a living being and producer of specific culture, whether there, how different in its form of inscription (MENDES JR 2011, translated by the authors).

The junction among the south-to-south literature field and some of the questions and concerns of *Deconstructivism* reveal aspects of decolonial positions – decolonization as a weapon against centuries of north to south domination, sometimes trough the armies, politic plots and exchange economic wealth, sometimes trough ideas, values, concepts and hegemonic thinking.

Finally, we propose the possibility that this "south to south" literature comes to rescue thinking from the barbarian of science. The barbarian expressed in the negative construction of the other of science. Exactly like the category of "animal" exists as the negative of human. These are categories (the barbarian, the animal) that must be silenced and reified for the human being to emerge and get detached from. These are categories that have to be controlled for the sake of the central and colonial power.

Considering the way the "south to south" literature works breaking and deconstructing some rules and differences between the eastern and western logic, we see in the literature that emerge from the south a way to deconstruct the relations established by colonial globalization. This kind of literature tears the structure of some divisions such as science and religion, or human beings and animals, or language and communication, even extending the language as a character of all animals when territorializing or communicating, including the human beings. We see the approximative reading of these discourses as a tool for rearranging the symbolic and material views of the globalized world.

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