

OF CHARTERS, PARADIGMS AND SPAWNING FISH:
A Look at Brazilian Literary Periodization and Canon-Formation

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Este ensaio examina os pronunciamentos de críticos e teóricos brasileiros sobre as questões da periodização e da formação do cânon, no que diz respeito à literatura brasileira. Embora os trabalhos pioneiros de Antonio Cândido, Afrânio Coutinho, Sílvia Romero e José Veríssimo sejam discutidos, o presente texto concentra-se nas contribuições mais recentes de Flora Süssekind, Silviano Santiago, Lúcia Helena, Haroldo de Campos, Roberto Reis e outros. O ensaio refere-se também às formulações teóricas de Jameson, Fernández Retamar, Foucault (*epistèmes*, formações discursivas), Kuhn (paradigmas) e Webster (*charters*), bem como aos conceitos de escritores anádromos e catádromos, desenvolvidos pelo autor. As conclusões principais são: 1) todas as tentativas de periodização e formação do cânon têm necessariamente uma origem ideológica; 2) o conceito brasileiro de período literário, embora evitando classificações rígidas importadas da Europa e da América do Norte, não se pode divorciar inteiramente destas devido à histórica dependência cultural do país; 3) algumas formulações recentes procuram invalidar a idéia de caráter nacional, utilizada há muito tempo para marginalizar algumas obras e autores; 4) seria um erro construir novas classificações binárias que só viriam a marginalizar autores anteriormente hegemônicos.

I. The issue of literary or cultural canonicity, so prominent of late in the academic and political debates of this country, has long been a thorny question in Brazilian intellectual circles. Authors such as the seventeenth-century bard Gregório de Matos, the late romantic poet Joaquim de Sousa Andrade, or "Sousândrade", and the *belle-époque* carioca novelist Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto have only belatedly been accorded their rightful places in Brazilian literary histories and anthologies, having been marginalized for many years by the country's intellectual establishment. Much the same thing could be said of a number of colonial and nineteenth-century female writers (Teresa Margarida da Silva e Orta, Bárbara Eliodora, and Francisca Júlia come to mind), of the romantic novel *Memórias de um sargento de milícias*, of the pre-naturalist playwright Qorpo Santo, and, in the twentieth-century, of Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* as well as much of Oswald de Andrade's theater and fiction.¹ Each of these authors and works has attained canonical, or deuterocanonical, status – or has at least begun to attract serious critical attention – only after a long period of being ignored or stigmatized. And it would not be amiss, I believe, to lay much of the early marginalization in most of these cases to ideological rather than strictly qualitative or aesthetic reasons, assuming, of course, that there are indeed "strictly qualitative or aesthetic reasons" that are not grounded to some degree on ideology.

Indeed, the canonization of authors and texts – the process of *canon-formation* – has come under greater scrutiny in Brazil in the last three decades. Several reasons may be adduced to account for this. Certainly, the Brazilian political experiences of the 1960s, culminating in the imposition of the military dictatorship and the promulgation of AI-5, produced greater skepticism toward canonical discourses in general. So did the heavy influx of North American mass culture, propagated, alongside the

conservative values of the Brazilian urban elite, by powerful communications media, the so-called "culture industry" of the Frankfurt School. To this could be added such factors as the growing demands of women and ethnic minorities for greater cultural recognition, the exhaustion of the modernist literary paradigm and, yes, even the anti-totalizing influence of imported French philosophy, historiography, and literary theory, particularly the thought of Foucault and Derrida. Nor should we discount the impact of *tropicalismo*, maligned though it has sometimes been.² If the literary iconoclasm of the 1920s, embodied in such works as *Macunaíma*, *Serafim Ponte Grande*, and the *Manifesto antropológico*, had remained largely sine prole, without progeny or immediate followers, its revival and reappropriation by *tropicalista* popular composers and musicians, artists, and writers further fueled the postmodern impetus toward demystification and desacralization.

Closely linked to this heightened interest in the literary canon in Brazil has been the question of *periodization*. It too has been shown to rest on largely ideological premises, whether oriented primarily to formalistic criteria or to historical or sociological concerns. Traditional divisions of Brazilian literature into periods, fashioned by turn-of-the-century critics such as Sílvio Romero and José Veríssimo, tended to stress the evolution of Brazilian literature from a largely Portuguese phenomenon (*período de formação; período clássico; era colonial*) to an authentically Brazilian one (*período de desenvolvimento autônomo; período romântico; período de reação crítico-naturalista; etc.; era nacional*) – this according to Carlos Burlamaqui Köpke (Köpke 193-94).³ But such categorizations often obscured important stylistic and philosophical differences, lumping together schools or currents for the most part antithetical to one another. Early twentieth-century literary historiographers, such as Ronald de Carvalho, Artur Mota, Afrânio Peixoto, and Nelson Werneck Sodré, usually invoked similar schemata, relying primarily on historical and chronological models.⁴

It was not until the 1950s that Brazilian literary historiographers began to employ the concept of "period styles" (*a periodização por estilo de época*) to works and authors. Most prominent among these scholars were Antonio Cândido and Afrânio Coutinho, who are usually held to represent sociological

and formalistic approaches, respectively. In his *Formação da literatura brasileira* (1959), published in two volumes, Cândido attempted to situate, in the words of José Paulo Paes, “a análise e a avaliação propriamente estéticas do fato literário no contexto histórico-social em que ele ocorre” (Paes 65). Subtitled *Momentos decisivos*, the work invoked largely sociological criteria – the absence of a Brazilian reading public and the inexistence of a printing industry, for example – to relegate seventeenth-century literary production to the category of isolated *manifestações literárias*, while privileging the *arcadismo* of the eighteenth-century for its development of an organic literary system and the romanticism of the nineteenth-century for its definition of a truly national literary consciousness.

Coutinho's *A literatura no Brasil*, originally published in four volumes, from 1955 to 1959, sought for the first time to impose formalist, or “stylistic”, criteria to the periodization of Brazilian literature. Written by a team of Brazilian literary scholars with varying methodological orientations, the work, nevertheless, was primarily inspired by the aestheticist or immanentist doctrines of Anglo-American New Criticism, according to its organizer, and incorporated some of the suggestions for periodization made in recent years by the émigré critic Otto Maria Carpeaux.⁵ It was an attempt to counter what Coutinho perceived as the dominant “histórico-sociológico-cultural” bias in Brazilian literary historiography inherited from Sílvia Romero (Coutinho *A literatura*. . . I, xx). “Este livro (. . .) representa mais uma tentativa de reação contra o sociologismo, o naturalismo e o positivismo, e contra o historicismo”, he claimed, “em nome dos valores estéticos, em nome da crítica intrínseca ou estético-literária, ou poética. . .” (I, 42-43). Yet, despite its own obvious biases, the work was indeed a notable achievement, not only for its monumental scope and attempt to innovate literary periodization, but especially for its positing of a Brazilian baroque, which Coutinho seemed to regard as the initial flowering of a Brazilian literary nationalism.

Since the 1960s, as in the case of canon-formation, the question of periodization has drawn ever greater critical attention in Brazil. Indeed, some of the same factors may be said to explain this occurrence. Younger literary scholars have now begun to

reevaluate and challenge as well the formulations of Cândido, Coutinho and their followers, proposing, in turn, new ways to categorize Brazilian literary production which, they feel, are more consistent with the specificity of Brazil and its literature. I should like to discuss some of these proposals, particularly as they bear on the question of canon-formation. It is my contention – by no means an original one – that the two questions are intimately linked to one another and that both, as I have suggested, are ultimately ideologically driven. I am not so naïve as to imagine that this is an earthshaking assertion; indeed, such a linkage is often implicit, if not openly stated, in the literary value judgments and theoretical formulations of even Romero, Veríssimo and their precursors. The attempted marginalization of Machado de Assis by some and the stigmatization of the nineteenth-century naturalist novelists by others, generally their ideological rivals, attest to the historical and ongoing validity of this claim.⁶ What I should like to stress here, however, is that even in those cases which purport to eschew narrow ideological considerations – indeed, perhaps especially in such cases – there is always already an unacknowledged ideological subtext, a hidden “axe to grind”, so to speak, one that is often disguised in seemingly innocuous axiological terms. If I am right, then, the present analysis should enjoy no exemption from this rule: the fact that I take no sides here or set forth any proposals of my own for periodization or canonization should not be read as a claim to objectivity.

II. Jameson, in his book *The Political Unconscious*, warns of the pitfalls of periodization. Associating this practice with Althusser’s negatively valorized notions of “historicism” and (to some extent) “expressive causality”, he asserts that:

any rewarding use of the notion of a historical or cultural period tends in spite of itself to give the impression of a facile totalization, a seamless web of phenomena each of which, in its own way, ‘expresses’ some unified inner truth – a world-view or a periodstyle or a set of structural categories which marks the whole length and breadth of the ‘period’ in question.

. . . [T]he construction of a historical totality necessarily involves the isolation and the privileging of one of the elements *within* that totality (a kind of

thought habit, a predilection for specific forms, a certain type of belief, a 'characteristic' political structure or form of domination) such that the element in question becomes a master code or 'inner essence' capable of explicating the other elements or features of the 'whole' in question. (Jameson 27)

He concedes that such period concepts, though highly unsatisfactory, are indeed "indispensable. . . for any kind of work in cultural study" (28), thus placing them, for all practical purposes, in the realm of all generalizations, reductive, yes, but also "necessary fictions" for us to carry on any meaningful thought or discourse.

In recent years, it has become fashionable in literary critical and theoretical circles to invoke such concepts as Foucault's *epistèmes* and *discursive formations*, Kuhn's notion of scientific *paradigms* and Webster's notion, modeled on it, of critical *charters*, in discussions of literary and cultural history.⁷ It is sometimes claimed that such formulations, foregrounding as they do the deeper semiotic, philosophical and ideological continuities and discontinuities of cultural history, tend to avoid to varying degrees the traps of totalization and essentialization necessarily entailed by earlier periodizing schemata, stylistic or otherwise. While I am sometimes tempted to switch my allegiance to these and similar concepts – and have, indeed, had recourse to them in some of my later work, I think to good advantage – I am not entirely convinced that they resolve all of the problems mentioned above by Jameson, for reasons that will become clearer in the following discussion.

Suffice it to say here that, whether employed in place of traditional period concepts or even in conjunction with them, such latter-day formulations, in much the same way as many of the earlier historical and chronological labels, often have the effect, insofar as they cut across traditional period concepts, of ignoring or minimizing significant philosophical and aesthetic differences. Nor are such contemporary formulations automatically transferable to the realm of literary production. Admittedly, the notions of *paradigm* and *charter* have usually been applied not to literature *per se*, but to interpretive communities: scientists or literary critics. Their extension to

literature might indeed be beneficial to the degree that they emphasize rupture, discontinuity and paralogism – in a word, revolutionary transition from one paradigm to another – over the traditional evolutionary trajectory. But, in so doing, they, like the aforementioned Foucauldian concepts, would seem to negate any dialectic vision of history and culture.

One of the most traditional and recurring Brazilian and Spanish American complaints about many of the nineteenth – and twentieth – century period concepts is that they are European imports that do not correspond to the Brazilian or Spanish American literary phenomenon.⁸ I shall not attempt here to enumerate such grievances. Usually, they point not only to the frequent time lag but also to such things as the mixture of critical currents and the distinctive dependent status of colonial and post-colonial Latin American culture. Yet, most would also agree that there is a limit to the extent to which such period concepts should differ from European models. Cândido implies as much when he states, in his *Formação da literatura brasileira*, that “[a] nossa literatura é galho secundário da portuguesa, por sua vez arbusto de segunda ordem no jardim das Musas. . . Estamos fadados, pois, a depender da experiência de outras letras. . . (Cândido I, 9-10). The Cuban Roberto Fernández Retamar, in his essay “Some Theoretical Problems of Latin American Literature,” puts it more specifically:

The “periods” of our [i.e., Latin American] literary history must unequivocally be ours, but can they be so to such an extent that they will bear no relation to the ‘periods’ of the literary histories of the countries with which we have had close ties or whose social structure is quite similar to our own? Of course not. They will be ours because they will imply a particular kind of link to the rest of the world, because they will be instances of our way of being in the world. Our colonial origins, our subsequent neocolonial process, our complex and difficult configurations through our own history make periodization an arduous task. We cannot simply substitute a fierce, naïve *tabula rasa* for metropolitan categories and periods. (Fernández Retamar 92)

The inadequacy theory, then, though it is accepted by most, should not lead scholars to posit a totally different periodization, so strong are the ties that link Brazilians and Spanish Americans to the cultures and literatures of the metropolis.

Recently, the Brazilian literary critic and theorist Roberto Schwarz has taken the inadequacy and dependency claims a step further. Schwarz, whose influential notion of *as idéias fora do lugar*, or "misplaced ideas", has usually been applied to the ideology of Brazilian literature and culture in general, notes, in the article "Nacional por subtração", published in 1987 in the collection *Que horas são?*, that it has often been observed that Brazilian intellectual life seems to begin from zero with each new generation. This he attributes to a kind of "truncation effect" wrought by influential intellectual currents, imported from Europe and the United States, on the development of Brazilian scholarship. He states:

[É] fácil observar que só raramente a passagem de uma escola a outra corresponde, como seria de esperar, ao esgotamento de um projeto; no geral ela se deve ao prestígio americano ou europeu da doutrina seguinte. (. . .) o gosto pela novidade terminológica e doutrinária prevalece sobre o trabalho de conhecimento, e constitui outro exemplo, agora no plano acadêmico, do caráter imitativo de nossa vida cultural. (. . .) Percepções e teses notáveis a respeito da cultura do país são decapitadas periodicamente, e problemas a muito custo identificados e assumidos ficam sem o desdobramento que lhes poderia corresponder, (Schwarz "Nacional. . .", 30-31)

Although he is here referring primarily to interpretative paradigms, such as literary criticism, and does not call specifically for a reevaluation of literary period concepts, it would not be farfetched, I think, to infer from this that Schwarz regards Brazilians' historical adherence to European literary currents too as imitative and incongruous and their present-day categorization, largely by imported criteria, as thus at least somewhat suspicious. As in his earlier critique of Brazil's nineteenth-century importation of European liberalism, exogenous

period concepts would thus be seen as truncated, non-fitting elements within the Brazilian context.

Similar are the cases of the critic-theorists Haroldo de Campos and Lúcia Helena in that, again, there is no specific call for a reperiodization. Unlike Schwarz, though, both of these scholars have sought in recent years to devise literary taxonomies that cut across the existing chronological period concepts. In his 1982 article, "De la razón antropofágica: Diálogo y diferencia en la cultura brasileña", published initially in Spanish, Campos detects the presence of two, antithetical types of "nationalism" over the course of Brazilian literary and literary critical history. The first, he labels (in Spanish) *nacionalismo ontológico*, the second, *nacionalismo modal o diferencial*. He associates the former with the search for origins and for the appearance or *parousia* of a national *logos*. It espouses an organicist and teleological view of the world and instantiates what Derrida has called a Western "metaphysics of presence". In its quest for *logofantas*, he suggests, this *nacionalismo ontológico* suppresses difference – "las disrupciones, las infracciones, los márgenes, lo 'monstruoso'." (Campos 13). On the other hand, *nacionalismo modal o diferencial* forsakes the search for essences and *teloi*. It is eminently dialogic and revels in the discontinuous, the heterogeneous, the fragmentary – in a word, in all that is difference.

It is interesting to note here that Campos lumps both Cândido and Coutinho into the former category. For, despite their differences, he feels the two of them to be engaged in the same organicist quest.⁹ Yet, he lauds Cândido for his conceptualization, in the 1970 essay on Almeida's *Memórias de um sargento de milícias* ("Dialética da malandragem") of a "*malandro* tradition" present in a number of Brazilian literary works since colonial times – in writers such as Matos, Sousândrade, the Mário of *Macunaíma*, Oswald, the Concretist poets (of which he himself is one) and the *tropicalista* musicians of the late 60s and early 70s. Campos goes on to equate this marginal tradition as well with such things as Bakhtinian carnivalization and, of course, *antropofagia*. It is the anti-normative tradition on the periphery of Brazilian literature, one which has sought to deconstruct the logocentrism of canonical discourses.

In her book *Uma literatura antropofágica*, published the following year (1983), Lúcia Helena continues this line of theorization, taking it a step further. She detects in the history of Brazilian culture two competing traditions: one characterized by rationalism, classicism, realism and referentiality, which she labels *linha do bom senso e do bom gosto*, and the other, dionysian, anthropophagic and carnivalizing, which attempts to demystify, to parody the dominant cultural canon by laughing at it and tampering with its codes. She calls this, by contrast, the *linha do muito riso e do pouco siso*. In it, she too includes such authors as Gregório, Oswald and the Mário of *Macunatma*.

It seems to me that what these last two critics have attempted to do, as I suggested above, is to bring about a “*Gestalt* shift” of sorts in our perception of literary paradigms, proposing alternative, non-chronological configurations that transcend the accepted period concepts, but, at the same time, still leaving these period concepts largely intact. Despite its obvious differences, Flora Süssekind’s “*Tal Brasil, qual romance?*”, originally prepared as her master’s thesis at PUC-Rio in 1982, under the direction of Silviano Santiago, seems to share this goal. She is concerned, however, not with the documentation of a marginal *malandro* or anthropophagic current running through Brazilian literature, but with what she regards as the permanence or persistent recurrence of a naturalist-realist literary discourse since the end of the last century. In her opinion, this discourse may be seen to have occurred primarily at three junctures: first, as naturalism proper, at the end of the nineteenth-century; second, as a kind of neo-naturalism predominating in the social novels of the 1930s and 40s; and, third, in the *romances-reportagem* prevalent in Brazil in the 1970s. Like Campos’ *nacionalismo ontológico*, this discourse, she asserts, has had the effect of obscuring the ruptures, discontinuities and differences in Brazilian history and culture. She states:

Ao invés de proporcionar um maior conhecimento do caráter periférico do país, o texto naturalista, na sua pretensão de retratar com objetividade uma realidade nacional, contribui para o ocultamento da dependência e da falta de identidade, próprias ao Brasil. Pressupõe que existe uma realidade una, coesa e autônoma que

deve captar integralmente. Não deixa que transpareçam as descontinuidades e os influxos externos que fraturam tal unidade. Como o discurso ideológico, também o naturalista se caracteriza pelo ocultamento da divisão da diferença e da contradição. E não é muito difícil reparar que não é só uma estética, mas uma ideologia naturalista o que se repete na ficção brasileira. (Süssekind 26)¹⁰

Proporcionalmente à dominância das fraturas, da diferença no plano social, se constrói uma literatura marcada por uma operação ideológica característica: a produção de identidades. Uma literatura que funcione como uma espécie de sinal de igualdade ou proporção em matemática, que produza ficcionalmente a nacionalidade. Ou, como um mágico, uma literatura que faça surgir na cena brasileira, de dentro de um fundo falso naturalista, uma tão ansiosamente desejada identidade nacional. (103-04)

It is, of course, not difficult to see what the existence of such a persistent authoritarian literary discourse, engaged in forging a narrow, univocal definition of a Brazilian "national character" – based on what Campos would call *logofantia* – might do to skew the process of canon-formation. More later on this point.

Still other recent critics and theorists have more openly advocated a reconsideration of the current periodizing schemata, among them Silviano Santiago and Roberto Reis. In a 1982 essay, "Fechado para balanço: Sessenta anos de modernismo" and again in 1985 in the article "A permanência do discurso da tradição no modernismo", both appearing in the 1989 volume *Nas malhas da letra*, Silviano has called attention to what he regards as the authoritarian and sometimes reactionary nature of many of the Brazilian modernists of the 1920s and 30s. In some cases, there was even cooperation between prominent modernist writers and the Vargas dictatorial regime. "Conivência no autoritarismo, consenso no projeto cultural. Mãos dadas: política e arte, modernismo e Estado Novo", he states (Santiago "Fechado. . ." 80). He goes on to propose a rereading and reevaluation of modernist texts, one that will transcend the predominant view of

modernism as an aesthetics of rupture and discontinuity and seek to document in the permanence of a discourse of tradition.¹¹

Roberto Reis, in his book *A permanência do círculo: Hierarquia no romance brasileiro*, published in 1987, and even more forcefully in his 1992 study *The Pearl Necklace*, stresses the urgent need for a reperiodization of Brazilian literature.¹² In the "Apresentação" to the first book, Silviano Santiago comments:

Vemos (. . .) que se faz premente no estudo de Roberto a rejeição da periodização por estilo de época. Isso não só porque a estrutura sistêmica única é a da longa duração, como também pelo fato de que a *evolução*, no fundo, não se deixa fragmentar, já que permanece una e inalterável na sua essência.

A tese de Roberto é radical: a sociedade (nacionalista e progressista) escrita pelos romances brasileiros dos séculos XIX e XX não é ativada pelo não-conformismo, ou seja, por uma teoria ou uma prática de tipo revolucionário. É como se dissesse que a *frase* do romance brasileiro continua a mesma, apesar de ser sensível às evoluções estéticas modernas, que privilegiam as *rupturas*. (Reis *A permanência*. . . , 11)

The Pearl Necklace continues this line of analysis, placing greater emphasis on the twentieth-century. In it, Reis eschews the conventional labels as well as the "aesthetic-stylistic" criteria employed by earlier critics, preferring instead to use the Foucauldian concept of *discursive formations*, of which he seeks to undertake an *archaeology*. Instead of considering the phenomenon of modernism primarily as a rupture with the past, then, he seeks to analyze the period from 1850 to 1950 in Brazil as a continuous *transition* from a backward agrarian system to an urban-industrial society with its attendant literary discourses. Nineteenth and twentieth-century authors, both canonical and marginal, are analyzed in terms of their authoritarian or dialogic tendencies. Several modernist writers, traditionally lauded as champions of social justice, are shown to hold great reverence for the patriarchal past, while other modernists and pre-modernists

are shown to embody the contradictions of their times or are rehabilitated despite earlier negative assessments. There are several surprises, as Roberto, following the lead of his mentor, Silviano, carefully documents the persistence of authoritarian and dialogic discourses well into the modernist heyday.¹³

III. What, then, can we conclude from these proposals with respect to canon-formation or revision?¹⁴ It seems to me that what the foregoing projects have in common, besides their desire for a reconstellation, or alternative constellations, of the several "periods" of Brazilian literature, is a desire to alter that canon to conform more closely to their own aesthetic and ideological preferences. As I see it, there is nothing nefarious in these designs. Indeed, I would contend that any such attempt to change the ways in which we classify or organize a national literature, such as that of Brazil, will inevitably carry with it the ideological formation of the classifier. Furthermore, such an attempt will necessarily affect the corresponding literary canon.

But, what, then, are some of the specific canonical effects that would be generated by the adoption of such proposals? As I suggested earlier, the Campos, Lúcia Helena and Sússekind formulations seem to advocate a kind of peaceful coexistence with the currently accepted period concepts. At least, they make no mention of a need to replace the old epochs and labels. By attempting to transcend the chronology of the periods in question, however, they do indeed call our attention to alternative configurations within the canon that might otherwise go unnoticed. But that is not all. In each of the formulations in question, there occurs a dichotomization of Brazilian literature, along with a hierarchization, an implicit privileging of one member over the other. In both Campos and Lúcia Helena, the second, or anthropophagic, current is clearly the winner. By this assessment, the works identified with this current would thus be preferred over all others in the canonical sweepstakes. Meanwhile, in Sússekind, the privileged element would clearly be composed of the works that do not belong to the recurrent "naturalist" tradition; those that do would be considerably devalued.

The Santiago and Reis proposals, though putatively more radical, seem to have mixed results. On the one hand, they both appear to devalue some of the same authors as Sússekind,

particularly the social novelists of the 1930s. On the other hand, not all modernists or regionalists are tarred with the same authoritarian brush. This is especially true of the Reis proposals, which, though not limited to the "modernist period", find in it not only fallen icons but also an unsung hero or two. Indeed, it would seem that his reconstellation of "modernist" and "pre-modernist" authors posits the coexistence of at least two contrasting currents, one valorized positively, the other negatively, according to the relative authoritarianism/conservatism or dialogism/progressiveness of their respective literary discourses. In fact, all five of the aforementioned critics erect such concepts as "difference" and "dialogism" as the touchstones of their classifications and assessments. But, it is the Reis proposals, I think, that go the furthest in shaking up the traditional period concepts and that, whatever their drawbacks, have the greatest potential of altering the canonical landscape.

Ichthyologists make a basic distinction between *catadromous* fish, which migrate down river to the sea to spawn, and *anadromous* fish, such as salmon, which swim up river from the sea to breed in fresh water. When I first undertook to write this paper, it occurred to me that such a distinction might well serve as an analogy in literature for two kinds of authors. The first category, the "non-salmon", would contain the majority of writers, who prefer to swim *with* the current to produce their literary offspring, while the second, the "salmon", would refer to those few who choose instead to swim *against* the current, defying the mainstream, to spawn their works. I thought of Brazilian writers who might fit into one category or the other: on the one hand, the Botelho de Oliveiras, the Macedos and the Coelho Netos, who seemed to embody all of the best and worst features of their respective currents; on the other, such mavericks as Gregório de Matos, Sousândrade, Machado and some of the other brave, often marginalized figures whom we mentioned in the opening paragraph. Of course, analogies are by their very nature imperfect. And it soon became clear to me that this one could not help to explain many of the characteristics and difficulties of periodization and canon-formation. Like the period concepts to which Jameson made reference, it tended to totalize, here ignoring the non-fitting elements of a particular writer which might militate against such a facile, Manichaean classification.

What is more, by privileging the second group, the “salmon”, I was in essence marginalizing the former myself while implying that writers who typify their particular literary currents are invariably inferior to those who defy them, whatever their other qualitative differences may be.¹⁵

I am honestly not certain just what to make of this failed analogy as I search for a way to end this paper. I am intrigued by all of the proposals surveyed above, but at the same time remain leary of their occasional oversimplifications. As I see it, the current period concepts are plainly inadequate to account for many of the cross-currents and underlying continuities/discontinuities – the undercurrents – brought out by many of the recent formulations. Moreover, they are for the most part of European origin and often do not apply as neatly to the Brazilian literary phenomenon, hybridized or “cannibalized” as it frequently is. Yet, given the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism in Brazil, it is just as unsatisfactory to postulate wholly endogenous schemata as it is to mimic the exogenous period concepts of Europe or North America. Furthermore, we would do well, as Jameson suggests, to reject the kinds of essentializing taxonomies that hypostatize, that reduce, that lead to the predication of a *Zeitgeist* or quintessential style for each “period”. Indeed, it behooves us to proceed with caution as we search for better, more appropriate classifications. Whatever we do will have significant ramifications for the Brazilian literary canon. And, it seems to me that we should also try to avoid replacing old imperfections with new ones or, like the fish analogy, trading one marginalized group for another.

NOTES

¹ Reference here is to Gregório de Matos Guerra (1633-1696); Joaquim de Sousa Andrade (1833-1902); Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto (1881-1922); Teresa Margarida da Silva e Orta (1711-1793); Bárbara Eliodora (1759-1819); Francisca Júlia da Silva Munster (1871-1920); *Memórias de um sargento de milícias* (1852-53), written by Manuel Antônio de Almeida (1831-1861); José Joaquim de Campos Leão (1829-1883); *Macunaíma* (1928), written by Mário de Andrade (1893-1945); and Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954).

² The most prominent *tropicalistas* were poet-composers Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil; singers Gal Costa and Nara Leão; the rock grupo Os Mutantes (of which vocalist Rita Lee was a member); lyricist-poets Capinam and Torquato Neto; songwriter and sometimes performer Tom Zé; and arranger Rogério Duprat. For a more detailed discussion of *tropicalismo*, see Perrone (58-64, 99-104). Another view of the movement is provided by Schwarz (“Cultura e Política. . .”) and by Larsen (91-96).

³ Romero (1851-1914) published his most important work, *História da literatura brasileira* (2 vols.) in 1888. Veríssimo's most notable books include his six-volume *Estudos da literatura brasileira* (1901-07) and his *História da literatura brasileira*, published in 1916, the year of his death. He was born in 1857.

⁴ Carvalho, a modernist poet, is known for his *Pequena história da literatura brasileira* (1919); Artur Mota published his *História da literatura brasileira* in 1930; Peixoto's *Noções de história da literatura brasileira* came out in 1931; Sodré's *História da literatura brasileira: seus fundamentos econômicos* appeared in 1938.

⁵ Carpeaux's *Pequena bibliografia crítica da literatura brasileira*, originally published in 1951, utilized such period labels as "barroco", "rococó", "classicismo ilustrado", "classicismo pré-romântico", "neoclassicismo", and "pré-romantismo".

⁶ Attempts to marginalize Machado by Romero and, more recently, by Antônio Callado are documented by Süsskind (13-15).

⁷ Foucault (*Archaeology* 191) has defined *epistème* as "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems. . ." *Discursive formations* may be described roughly as paradigms of discursive practices of particular epochs. In his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn treats the history of science as a series of interpretive paradigms, of paradigm shifts. The usual development of mature science, he asserts, occurs through revolution rather than by sheer accumulation or evolution. He regards scientific revolutions as uncommon events taking place only in times of crisis amid strong resistance from the dominant paradigms. In contrast, the business of "normal science" is to fill in the gaps in these dominant paradigms. Webster (*Republic* 10) defines *charter*, his term for a literary critical paradigm, as "a set of literary values which relies on a grant of intellectual authority, is embodied in a document, organizes a critical community, and is limited in time and function, with the corollary that society as a whole can support a variety of critical charters".

⁸ Another, related contention is that Brazilian and Spanish American literatures, insofar as they "cannibalize" or tamper with European and American literary codes, correspond at best parodically to such imported period concepts. For more on *antropofagia* and its successors, see, besides Campos and Lúcia Helena, Larsen (78-86) and Chamberlain.

⁹ States Costa Lima (111): "As Haroldo de Campos points out, the two contemporary models for Brazilian literary historiography, those of Antonio Cândido and Afrânio Coutinho, despite their deep differences, see Brazilian literature in the image of a seed that breaks open, grows, and matures in the manner of a 'process of genealogical construction' ". Santiago ("Apresentação" 9) observes: A importância dos trabalhos historiográficos de Antonio Cândido e de Afrânio Coutinho (e sua equipe) pode-se medir pela rentabilidade do método adotado - o da periodização por estilo de época. Revolucionária no momento do seu aparecimento, na década de 50, essa forma de periodizar tinha a vantagem de dar crédito ao componente intrínseco à obra de arte, que era o seu compromisso com os valores propriamente estéticos manifestos na obra literária. Valorizando os aspectos estilísticos comuns a uma escola, um movimento ou um grupo, o texto historiográfico ressaltava a tinta igual que revestia as diferentes obras, isolando-as em compartimentos com autonomia. Só a acuidade crítica do historiador e a leitura zelosa do intérprete é que podiam salientar os matizes diferenciais depois do trabalho de englobar o conjunto das obras de um período debaixo de uma etiqueta definitiva e consagrada".

¹⁰ In a recent Ph.D. dissertation, Eva Paulino Bueno contests Süsskind's assertion that nineteenth-century Brazilian naturalist fiction presents a unitary, seamless vision of Brazil. By contrast, Suleiman's *Authoritarian Fictions*, an in-depth examination of the *roman à thèse*, would appear to buttress the view of the realist-naturalist tradition as essentially univocal and disambiguating.

¹¹ For more information on the sociopolitical and ideological connections of modernist intellectuals, see Miceli and Carlos Guilherme Mota. The latter (22-51) tenders his own periodization of Brazilian historiography or of the history of "produção cultural" during the years 1933-74. See also the excellent paper by Johnson.

¹² The present essay was written prior to the recent publication of *The Pearl Necklace*. See "Works Cited" for details.

¹³ The periodization of the contemporary, postmodern period in Brazilian literature is beyond the scope of the present study. Among the most notable analyses of Brazilian postmodernity are those of Merquior and the articles published in the special issue of the *Revista do Brasil* (2, 5 [1986]). See also Santos.

¹⁴ Commenting on the existence of a literary canon, Said (150) states: "[I]t seems to me that it goes directly against the grain of reading and writing to erect barriers between texts or to create monuments out of texts – unless, of course, literary scholars believe themselves to be servants of some outside power requiring this duty from them". Ribeiro (14) remarks on the economic factors affecting publication and canon-formation (o *corpus*): "São muitas as obras que só viram a luz porque encontraram quem as financiasse, fora de um esquema de interesse comercial. Além disso, o critério de mercado constitui por si só um esquema fortíssimo de seleção e, portanto, de censura. [...] o que chega à luz em forma de livro é já, e sempre, um produto institucionalizado, um resultado marcado pela ideologia. Por outro lado, dos livros que chegaram a ser publicados, nem todos chegaram sequer ao nosso conhecimento. Apenas as obras que 'ficaram' são referidas pela historiografia literária, pela crítica e pelas instituições". Showalter (194) takes a different tack, noting that "canon-formation is an aspect of the power of critical discourses and institutions; simply to be against canons is to leave the power of canon-formation to someone else".

¹⁵ I am reminded here of other, similar binary taxonomies, such as Barthes' *écrivains/écrivains* (Barthes "Écrivains et écrivains" 148, 151), his "readerly"/"writerly" texts (Barthes *S/Z* 4), and his *textes de plaisir/de jouissance* (Barthes *Le Plaisir*. . . 25-26), Eco's "closed"/"open" works (Eco *Opera aperta*), and Hillis Miller's "canny"/"uncanny" critics (Miller 419-21), in which there is also a deliberate privileging of the second group. It should be noted moreover that such taxa usually break down when applied to concrete cases; any given writer, text or critic is normally somewhere in between the two extremes.

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