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Book Author(s): Stefan Helgesson

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A Latin American Counterpoint: Antonio Candido and the São Paulo School of Criticism

Having tested the currents, the initial sense of disorientation that Brazil can inspire in an Africanist gives way to recognition: yet again, so many variations on colonial cringe and the affirmation of locality, so many methodological disagreements fuelled by the desire for a proper conception of Brazilian literature (or a properly Brazilian conception of literature). If, as I am arguing, the decolonisation and conceptual worlding of literature are two aspects of the same world-historical process, then Brazil presents us with an astounding range of self-reflexive takes on its unfolding, a few of which will be in focus in this chapter. Schematically, we can identify four crucial phases in Brazilian criticism: 1) the long romantic period during early independence (post-1822), with its cult of individuality and indigeneity; 2) the positivist-evolutionist phase in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, heavily influenced by Comte, Taine and Spencer; 3) the modernist phase of the mid-twentieth century, with Antonio Candido and Afrânio Coutinho as leading (and opposed) institutional figures; 4) postmodernism, which began to be articulated in about 1970 – in parallel with the *Tropicália* movement – and has transformed continually until today. We could also add a fifth phase, premised on the Brazilian take on postmodernism: the growth since the millennium of gender, black and indigenous studies. This is a tentative chronology, not a neatly sequential image of intellectual history. On the contrary, these tendencies often co-exist and interlace with one another in a folding temporality, as we could see in the South African examples.

The second phase listed above coincides with the generation of the 1870s and the moment, in Candido's own estimation, when the literary 'system' of Brazil consolidates its autonomy – most famously in the figure of Machado de Assis, the 'master in the periphery of capitalism'.¹ This illustrates dramatically

1 Roberto Schwarz, *Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo: Machado de Assis* (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1990).

the temporal gap between South African and Brazilian literature. When Olive Schreiner published *The Story of an African Farm* in London in 1883 there was nothing remotely resembling a self-sustaining field of literary publishing and criticism in the Cape Colony, the early stirrings of Xhosa print culture and the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1857–1881) notwithstanding.² Machado's pivotal essay 'Instinto de nacionalidade' speaks, by contrast, already in 1873 to and from a fully formed local field. Arguing against the facile assumption that local colour would secure the authenticity of Brazilian literature, Machado already had his sights set on a more profound conception of national poetics: 'What we should expect of the writer above all is a certain intimate feeling that renders him [*sic*] a man of his time and country, even when he addresses topics that are remote in time or space.'³ This statement predates both the first Afrikaans language movement in 1875 and Schreiner's, by comparison, extremely modest declaration of aesthetic independence in her 1883 preface to *African Farm*, where she dismissed the flights of fancy of London-produced colonial romances and opted to dip her brush into 'the grey pigments' that surrounded her in the Cape.⁴ It is nonetheless as a counterpoint to South Africa that Brazil first enters my argument. Both countries have histories of rapid industrialisation, extreme inequalities and high levels of institution-building in the twentieth century. The strange hybrid of fascist authoritarianism and welfare-statism under Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s and 1940s, and its democratic continuation in the 1950s until 1964, offers both a contrast to and point of comparison with the apartheid era's mode of social engineering. If the former adopted an ideology of 'racial democracy', the latter developed racism as a legal technology – yet both can be described as racialised statist governmentality with thoroughgoing cultural consequences. Within literary criticism, the post-1945 decades were a period of intense productivity and change in both societies, although here the comparison needs to acknowledge local factors such as individual agency and specific events (the military takeover in Brazil in 1964, say, or the Soweto uprising in 1976). What does allow for comparison are the ways in which the concept of literature has been semanticised in the force-field of local and transnational discourses. This brings us back to the scale and temporal depth of Brazilian intellectual history: if the North–South dialectic of 'English' in South Africa tended to run, parochially, along the Britain–South Africa axis, at least until the advent of the world republic of theory in the 1980s, in Brazil the transnational outlook was far wider, with direct access to ongoing developments not just in France, but equally in

2 I must stress here that I am referring precisely to the autonomous aspect of literature – heteronomous forms of textual production and reading occurred of course in many other ways in South Africa at the time.

3 Translated by Robert Patrick Newcomb as 'Reflections on Brazilian Literature at the Present Moment. The National Instinct', *Journal of World Literature* 3, no. 3 (2018): 408.

4 Olive Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1975), 24.

Germany, Italy, the UK and the USA, as well as Hispanophone Latin America. This strength, as will become clear in this chapter, could also be seen as a weakness, in so far as it solidified a mode of intellectual Western-centrism that passed for cosmopolitanism. When eulogising Antonio Candido in 2017, Roberto Schwarz recalled how in the 1960s the group responsible for the department of literary theory in São Paulo would monitor new publications in English (that is, from the UK and USA), French, German and Italian: 'Thus, our department would keep abreast of critical developments in five major centres, or, in other words, with the worldwide state of the art.'⁵ I will return to this statement at the end of the chapter, but it indicates with precision how the impressive range in such a critical outlook made it all the more difficult to fathom its constitutive limitations. It was arguably easier in South Africa to provincialise 'Little England' (as in Kirkwood's attack on Butlerism) and from that point on to construct a rooted African cosmopolitanism (as did Es'kia Mphahlele). In Brazil, the lines of dialogue have been more entangled, Eurocentric positions more entrenched – and it is only in recent decades that Africanist (diaspora) positions have gained some prominence in the intellectual field, if not primarily in literary studies.⁶

These last points illustrate the second reason for my inclusion of Brazil in this book: the combination of Brazil and the three African cases is what builds support for my claims about the conceptual worlding of literature in the global South. South–South comparativism is an essential component of such an investigative endeavour, as many have argued before me, although this can be understood in two different ways.⁷ If we take it to mean comparativism based on direct interactions, then merely a handful of writers and critics in Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde stand for the majority of Latin American connections on the African side. Not only have they been attuned to Brazilian and Cuban culture in different periods, but after the 1975 revolutions both Mozambique and Angola attracted a number of dissident Latin American intellectuals (not to mention Cuban military support in Angola's fight against South African aggression).⁸ Literary

5 Roberto Schwarz, 'Antonio Candido 1918–2017', *New Left Review* 107 (2017): 51.

6 I will return to the particular case of Afro-Brazilian literature towards the end. Among recent studies contributing to the shift one might mention Regiane A. Mattos, *História e cultura afro-brasileira* (São Paulo: Contexto, 2007) and Marina de Mello e Souza, *África e Brasil africano* (São Paulo: Ática, 2008). Another interesting development is the current reception of African – mainly lusophone – literature in Brazil, as exemplified by Rita Chaves et al. (eds), *A kindá e a misanga: encontros brasileiros com a literatura angolana* (São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2007).

7 See, for example, Russell West-Pavlov (ed.), *The Global South and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). and Gesine Müller et al. (ed.), *Re-mapping World Literature: Writing, Book Markets and Epistemologies between Latin America and the Global South* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).

8 And this has of course much to do with African literature's entanglement with the Cold War, the most authoritative account of which is Popescu's *At Penpoint*.

journals in Angola and Mozambique, from the 1940s onwards, bear witness to a limited but important reception of Brazilian and other Latin American literature, and crucial twentieth-century figures such as the novelist Castro Soromenho or the filmmaker Ruy Guerra were rooted both in Brazil and Africa.⁹ These examples notwithstanding, African and Brazilian literatures have mostly been worlds apart. The impression one gets from mid-century literary criticism in Brazil is of a supreme detachment from all things African (with 'Africa', if invoked at all, referring not to the continent but to the African diaspora in Brazil).¹⁰ A corresponding detachment from Latin America and Brazil applies in South Africa (with rare exceptions such as the poet Wopko Jensma's riff on Drummond de Andrade or André Brink's setting of his play *Pavane* in South America).¹¹ But this mutual South–South ignorance presents us with another, arguably more important comparative angle: the resonances between the terms of debate in each field, resonances that clearly do not result from 'influence' but from historical positionalities produced by colonialism and global capital. The absence of mutual reception and contact alert us, in other words, to a deeper historical logic. Take, for example, this statement by Silviano Santiago in his famous essay 'O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano' ('The space in-between of Latin American discourse') from 1971:

The origin is the pure and unattainable star that contaminates without ever sullyng itself, and which shines for the artists of Latin American countries whenever they depend on its light for their creative expression. It illuminates the movement of the hands yet simultaneously subjects them to its superior magnetism. Since any critical discourse that speaks of influences establishes this star as the only value that matters, to establish the bridge – and thus reduce the debt and distance between the artist, a mortal, and that immortal star – is surely the essential role and function of the Latin American artist in Western society. In addition, he [*sic*] must fully understand the implications of the movement toward the star that the critic mentions and do so in order to inscribe his project on the horizon of Western culture.¹²

9 Helgesson, *Transnationalism*; Ros Gray, *Cinemas of the Mozambican Revolution* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2020).

10 To which I must of course immediately add a caveat: the historian Luiz Felipe de Alencastro has ever since the 1970s explored the African–Brazilian connections back in time, and more recently, scholars such as Carmen Lucia Tindo Secco, Rita Chaves and Nazir Can have produced first-rate research on African literatures. Brazil's academic relationship with Africa has in other words changed significantly for the better.

11 Helgesson, *Transnationalism*, 91; André Philippus Brink, *Pavane* (Cape Town: Human en Rousseau, 1974).

12 Silviano Santiago, *The Space In-Between: Essays on Latin American Culture*, trans. Tom Burns, Ana Lucía Gazzola and Gareth Williams (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 32. Silviano Santiago, 'O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano',

In a nutshell: Latin American art is structurally positioned as derivative and belated. This is directly relatable to the South African anxieties concerning provincialism and literary value in the 1950s and 1960s. It is a theme with almost endless variations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Brazil – and in Latin America more generally, from Rodó's *ariélismo* to Retamar's *Caliban*.¹³ Santiago's analysis, contemporary with Retamar's, appears, however, at a decisive moment in the history of this theme. Rather than present a materialist critique of dependency, Santiago deconstructs instead the notion of source and origin. It is in his dialogue with Derrida and Foucault that the Brazilian reception of postmodernism begins in earnest and an intellectual paradigm with the potential to challenge the version of critical theory shaped by Antonio Candido and his *paulista* followers – the main focus of this chapter – begins to emerge.

These are decades rife in intellectual pathos and energy. The 1950s and early 1960s were a moment of 'recuperative acceleration' when 'local experience gathered weight', to draw on formulations by Celso Furtado and Roberto Schwarz.¹⁴ The cultural process that had kicked off with the famous *semana de arte moderna*, the modern art week, in São Paulo in 1922, culminated in the 1950s and 1960s with bossa nova, *cinema novo*, and the high-modernist works of João Guimarães Rosa, Clarice Lispector and the poet João Cabral de Melo Neto. The illusion that this cultural blossoming accompanied an inevitable and progressive democratisation of Brazilian politics was, however, shattered by the coup in 1964 – causing an extended crisis also in cultural critique, to which Santiago's essay quoted above is one response.

This was, among other things, a crisis for the strong concept of literature. It occurred in parallel with the Africanist turn in South Africa in the 1970s, but with much higher literary stakes, as this chapter sets out to show. The post-1945 period in Brazil presents us, in fact, with some of the most

in Santiago, *Uma literatura nos trópicos: um ensaio sobre dependência cultural* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco), 18: 'A fonte torna-se a estrela intangível e pura que, sem se deixar contaminar, contamina, brilha para os artistas do países da América Latina, quando estes dependem de sua luz para o seu trabalho de expressão. Ela ilumina os movimentos das mãos, mas ao mesmo tempo torna os artistas súditos de seu magnetismo superior. O discurso crítico que fala das influências estabelece a estrela com único valor que conta. Encontrar a escada e contrair a dívida que pode minimizar a distância insuportável entre ele, mortal, e a imortal estrela: tal seria o papel do artista latino-americano, sua função na sociedade ocidental. É-lhe preciso, além do mais, dominar esse movimento ascendente de que fala o crítico e que poderia inscrever seu projeto no horizonte da cultura ocidental.'

13 José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*, trans. Gordon Brotherston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Roberto Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*, trans. Edward Baker (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989).

14 Roberto Schwarz, *Sequências brasileiras* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987), 107: 'uma arrancada recuperadora'; 22: 'peso acrescido da experiência local'. My translation here and elsewhere in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated.

sustained efforts to legitimise a strong concept of literature from a global South standpoint. The contrast with South Africa is therefore twofold: if, on the one hand, the hegemony of European literary values has been longer and more pervasive in Brazil, then, on the other, so has the attempt to overcome that hegemony. My identification of Antonio Candido as a central figure in that complex endeavour is hardly original, but no less motivated for all that. The clarity, integrity and cogency of his work has set the benchmark for generations of literary critics in Brazil to this day. At the same time, his unwavering dialectical commitment to a universalist vision of literature as a socially significant aesthetic resource would inevitably clash with postmodernist pluralism, which resulted in the 1980s in significant restatements of his position. It is the main task of this chapter, then, to trace the fate of the strong concept of literature in Candido's work. To do so, I begin with a long section focusing on Candido's magnum opus, *Formação da literatura brasileira* – both on its intellectual preconditions and its reformulation of the literary question in Brazil. Here I pay special attention to Candido's take on the racial dynamic of romanticism, which is a less discussed aspect of his work. Section two expands on the modernist genealogy of Candido's elite radicalism, and the third section looks at Candido's own response to the crisis of this position, as registered in the two later essays 'Literature and Underdevelopment' (1969) and 'The Right to Literature' (1988). The chapter, ends finally, with a note on the surprising failure of the São Paulo critics to account for Afro-Brazilian literature.

Relocating the Centre in Brazil

Sporting six images on each of two sides in the style of Egyptian hieroglyphs, the sharply rectangular slab of concrete rises some 40 metres above ground. This is the tower at the *praça do relógio*, or clock square, in the centre of the vast campus of the University of São Paulo (USP), with its images representing different fields of scientific enquiry. At the very top of this modernist riff on ancient obelisks there is indeed a clock, combining the antique allusions with the registration of an ongoing present. So here I am (or was, in 2015), at the internationally most recognised university in Latin America, facing a symbolic manifestation of the transfer of intellectual, academic capital to Brazilian soil. But this centre, if that is what it is, is not exactly teeming with people. The action is instead dispersed across the vast campus, with clusters of students teeming around various departments and schools, defying the modernist attempt at manifesting centrality architecturally. During my visit, I hear a few versions of the same story: that Getúlio Vargas wanted a dispersed campus, allowing potential student unrest to be nipped in the bud.

The short history of USP, founded in the 1930s, is an object lesson in how centrality and contemporaneity can be wilfully, and successfully, constructed. In its early decades, the university was staffed to a large degree by French

scholars who rapidly changed the terms on which São Paulo academics engaged with their respective disciplines.¹⁵ And these academics, in turn, would have a decisive influence on subsequent generations of scholars in Brazil. The symbolism of the *praça do relógio* – the aspiration towards centrality and contemporaneity in the local space – seems in other words to carry greater weight than is immediately apparent.

The problem of (re)locating the centre is an old one in Brazil. According to Paulo Eduardo Arantes, a prominent USP philosopher and leftist intellectual, the ‘dialectic of the local and the cosmopolitan’ is nothing less than a law governing the country’s ‘mental evolution’.¹⁶ The founding of USP and its rapid emergence as the first ‘contemporaneous’ Brazilian university is a key moment in this dialectic, but it is also a recent chapter in a much longer history. The Brazilian elite in the nineteenth century were obsessed with ‘catching up’ with modernity as represented above all by Paris. Euclides da Cunha, in 1902, famously spoke of the urban Brazilians as ‘blind copyists’ dazzled by European civilisation, and characterised the national space of Brazil in terms of a temporal rift between the modern, ‘contemporary’ South and the laggard inland.¹⁷ This drama of belatedness and peripherality would be reconsidered and rearticulated throughout the twentieth century as Brazil transformed into an uneven industrial economy. Three works in particular contributed to this reorientation of Brazilian self-perception: Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa grande e senzala* (1933), Sergio Buarque de Holanda’s *Raízes do Brasil* (1936) and Caio Prado Júnior’s *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* (1942).

Each of these interventions arose out of a perceived need to *make sense* of Brazil and its place in the modern world. This presupposed not only that the epistemological frameworks of the modern production of knowledge (sociology, anthropology, history, political economy) could be brought to bear on Brazilian material, but also that Brazil presented a riddle to be solved according to the protocols of what we today would call methodological nationalism.¹⁸ The framework of the nation united all intellectuals of the period: it constituted the obvious, if not always ultimate, horizon of their thinking. This was not for jingoistic reasons, but because the category

15 Paulo Eduardo Arantes, *Um departamento francês de ultramar: estudos sobre a formação da cultura filosófica uspiana* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1994). This transfer of French academic capital is mentioned also in Santiago, *The Space In-Between*, 17. Claude Lévi-Strauss is the most famous of these visiting academics; others were Roger Bastide, Robert Garric and Jean Maugué.

16 Paulo Eduardo Arantes, *O sentimento da dialética na experiência intelectual brasileira* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1992), 9: ‘caso fosse possível estabelecer uma lei geral de nossa evolução mental, ela tomaria forma de uma dialética de localismo e cosmopolitismo’.

17 Euclides da Cunha, *Backlands: The Canudos Rebellion*, trans. Elizabeth Lowe (New York: Penguin, 2010), 168.

18 Ulrich Beck, ‘The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 7–8 (2007): 286–90.

of the nation presented a *problem*. Holanda, for instance, openly stated that '[w]e have brought our forms of association, our institutions, and our ideas from distant countries, and though we take pride in maintaining all of them in an often unfavorable and hostile environment, we remain exiles in our own land'.¹⁹ This experience of exile was what *Roots of Brazil* sought to alleviate – although Holanda's 'we' was exclusionary, and predictably so, given that he only seriously considers the legacy of white male European descendants in Brazil. Freyre offered instead an affirmative account of Brazil's 'multi-racialism', especially of the importance of the African slave population and the sexual traffic between masters and slaves. The mingling of Portuguese and Africans on Brazilian soil was in his view ultimately benign, resulting in a society 'more harmonious in terms of racial relations than any other in the Americas'.²⁰ Freyre's ideological imaginary was, however, fatally flawed: by the 1950s, it had degraded into an apology for *contemporary* Portuguese colonialism – encapsulated in the notion of 'lusotropicalism' and eagerly exploited by the Portuguese dictator António Salazar's regime.²¹ Caio Prado Jr, by contrast, entertained no illusions about the motivation for colonialism:

All things considered, and viewed from a global and international angle, the colonisation of the tropics appears as a massive commercial enterprise, more complete than the older trading post model, yet retaining its key features by aiming to exploit the natural resources of a virgin territory for the benefit of the European economy. This is the true *significance* [*sentido*] of tropical colonisation, of which Brazil is one of the results [...]²²

19 Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Roots of Brazil*, trans. G. Harvey Summ (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 1. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014 [1936]), 35: 'Trazendo de países distantes nossas formas de convívio, nossas instituições, nossas ideias, e timbrando em manter tudo isso em ambiente muitas vezes desfavorável e hostil, somos ainda hoje uns desterrados em nossa terra.'

20 Freyre, *Casa-Grande*, 160: 'a sociedade brasileira é de todas da América a que se constituiu mais harmoniosamente quanto às relações de raça'. My translation here and elsewhere, unless otherwise indicated.

21 Claudia Castelo, '*O modo português de estar no mundo: O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933–1961)*' (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998), 69–109. Freyre's own complicity is demonstrated not only by his eager cooperation with the Portuguese regime, but also in his support for the Brazilian military coup in 1964.

22 Caio Prado Jr, *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2011), 28: 'No seu conjunto, e vista no plano mundial e internacional, a colonização dos trópicos toma o aspecto de uma vasta empresa comercial, mais completa que a antiga feitoria, mas sempre com o mesmo caráter que ela, destinada a explorar os recursos naturais de um território virgem em proveito do comércio europeu. É esse o verdadeiro *sentido* da colonização tropical, de que o Brasil é uma das resultantes [...]'

For Prado, this is the necessary starting point for any interpretation of Brazilian society and culture which also accounts for the historical originality of tropical colonisation. The commercial model of the plantation did not just repeat European practices of exploitation, but was an innovation whose essence was banal. Brazil came into existence to provide European markets with 'sugar, tobacco [...] gold and diamonds; later, cotton, and eventually coffee'.²³ All else follows from that initial fact: originality and subjection to European demands are dialectically intertwined.²⁴

These were some of the intellectual interventions that shaped young Candido, who eventually would spend his entire career at USP. Their urge to explain Brazil feeds directly into his *Formação da literatura brasileira*, a title that mirrors both Freyre's and Prado Jr's (with the subtitle *Momentos decisivos* also echoing Prado). In a famous turn of phrase, Candido explained that he wished to write a history of the Brazilians in their very 'desire to have a literature'.²⁵ The foregrounding of the *Brazilians* rather than *literary texts* as the core topic of his study places his work in the lineage discussed above. But so does the tell-tale use of the singular indefinite article in 'a literature' ('uma literatura'), which already tweaks the concept of literature in a decolonial direction. The notion of a collective desire to form a literature, and the distinctiveness of this desire's history, is hence the starting point for Candido's resemanticisation of 'literature' in Brazil.

The 'national' element in his thinking is, however, always only conceived dialectically in relation to 'the universal', a concept that he uses affirmatively and unhesitatingly. 'Our literature', he wrote in *Formação*, 'is merely an offshoot from Portuguese literature which, in turn, is a minor shrub in the garden of the muses', a statement whose self-deprecating tone indicates precisely the cosmopolitan ethos that underwrote all of Candido's work.²⁶ Candido's project was never to provincialise Europe, in the spirit of Dipesh Chakrabarty, but rather to bring the critical appraisal of Brazilian and Latin American literature to the same level as the best European criticism.²⁷

I state this up front, as his Europeanism stakes out the enabling and limiting condition of Candido's work. The claim might surprise Brazilian readers, for whom Candido's project always was to think from within his Brazilian location. Both statements are true and cannot, for that reason, be

23 Prado Jr, *Formação do Brasil*, 29.

24 Hence, a materialist, 'revisionist' historical analysis was established at an academic level in Brazil three decades before there was a corresponding development in South Africa.

25 Antonio Candido, *Formação da literatura brasileira: momentos decisivos 1750–1880*, 13th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul, 2012), 27: 'uma "história dos brasileiros no seu desejo de ter uma literatura"'.
26 Candido, *Formação*, 11: 'A nossa literatura é galho secundário da portuguesa, por sua vez arbusto de segunda ordem no jardim das Musas ...'

27 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

dealt with prematurely: we are speaking here of a historical predicament rather than an individual shortcoming. Therefore, this chapter attempts to approach this contradiction *by way of* Candido's own thinking, from within his intellectual and political horizon. For this reason, and in keeping with the concept-historical thrust of my investigation, I will now engage closely with some central ideas and constitutive tensions in *Formação*. This will then eventually expand into a further investigation of Candido's own formation as a public intellectual and university-based critic.

Pushback

Under what institutional conditions was *Formação* received in 1959? More admired than discussed at the time, according to Schwarz, the book nevertheless sustained one heavy critical attack.²⁸ In his 1960 essay *Conceito de literatura brasileira* ('The concept of Brazilian literature'), Afrânio Coutinho accused Candido of short-changing Brazilian literary history by opting for a political rather than aesthetic definition of literature. Candido, he claimed, had elided whole centuries of Brazilian literature – from the Baroque onwards – so as to privilege the late colonial and early independence periods as the 'beginnings'. In the 1980s, the poststructuralist Haroldo de Campos would similarly complain that Candido had neglected the Baroque poet Gregório de Matos, but for Coutinho it was not just a matter of including this or that writer – it had to do with national pride and integrity.²⁹

The Rio-based Coutinho was for many decades a leading figure in Brazilian literary criticism. Candido's senior by seven years, it was, however, his misfortune to publish *Introdução à literatura no Brasil* the same year as *Formação* appeared.³⁰ As a single-volume work of literary history, *Introdução* aimed to occupy the same space as *Formação*, but with a broader historical range and a New Critical methodological agenda. Disqualifying, in the spirit of Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*, all 'extrinsic' approaches to literature, his ambition was to arrive at a purely aesthetic account of literature in Brazil – and this is of course what animates his critique of Candido. But rather than an end in itself, New Criticism was for Coutinho a means to achieve the definitive decolonisation of Brazilian literature. To claim, as Candido did, that Brazilian literature was formed only after 1750 was 'a reactionary, Portuguese hypothesis, which can only be accounted for

28 Interview with Roberto Schwarz, 7 August 2015.

29 Haroldo de Campos, *O sequestro do barroco na Formação da literatura brasileira: O caso Gregório de Matos* (São Paulo: Iluminuras, 2011 [1989]).

30 And it is somewhat ironic that Candido contributed to Coutinho's multi-volume project *Literatura no Brasil*, which started appearing in 1955. But, at the moment, Coutinho no doubt extended an invitation to a bright young colleague from what he felt to be a strong and unthreatened position of authority.

on the basis of a waning Portuguese theory of historiography which still repeats schemas and formulations that today are completely unacceptable'.³¹ In *Introdução*, it becomes even clearer that Coutinho's concern is to liberate literature from its reductive inscription in the teleology of nation-building, which turns literature into 'a document of or a testament to the political fact' – hence his emphasis on 'literature in Brazil' (*literatura no Brasil*) rather than 'Brazilian literature'.³² Indeed, as the title of a later book by Coutinho shows – *O processo da descolonização literária* ('The process of literary decolonisation') – his ambition to consider literature separately from the history of political decolonisation is animated, somewhat paradoxically, by a powerful decolonial pathos. Pronouncing programmatically on the history of Brazil, Coutinho states that 'the local intelligentsia never allowed itself to be intimidated by the show of brute force [...] which resulted in a truly autochthonous culture'.³³ This emphasis on decolonisation by a self-proclaimed New Critic makes the divergence between Coutinho and Candido a point of genuine interest.

Coutinho argued in good faith that Candido was behind the times. *Formação* should have been published, he claimed, in 1945, when it would have served as a bridge between Sílvio Romero's older sociological school of literary history (the topic of Candido's PhD thesis) and the supposedly modern approach to literature that Coutinho himself represented. Schwarz means on the contrary that the methodology of *Formação* was ahead of its time.³⁴ These conflicting views confirm that the highest stake in criticism in the late 1950s was precisely the decolonisation of Brazilian literary studies, as understood by the academic elite at the time. On this, Coutinho and Candido could no doubt shake hands. The disagreement had rather to do with how to make decolonisation operational in critical practice. If Coutinho championed Brazilian literature by adopting the internationally most prestigious and influential conceptualisation of literary autonomy at the time, Candido's subtly dialectical method mapped out the local emergence of the very idea of Brazilian literature. This historicised Coutinho's pathos in ways Coutinho himself was blind to.

31 Afrânio Coutinho, *Conceito de literatura brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Acadêmica, 1960), 47: 'Essa é uma tese reacionária, portuguesa, só explicável pelo marasmo da teoria historiográfica lusa, que ainda repete esquemas e fórmulas hoje inteiramente inaceitáveis [...].'

32 Afrânio Coutinho, *Introdução à literatura no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1966 [1959]), 32: 'A inteligência local não se deixou intimidar ante a violência da mão forte [...] resultando uma verdadeira cultura autóctone.'

33 Afrânio Coutinho, *O processo da descolonização literária* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1983), 12.

34 Schwarz, *Seqüências brasileiras* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999), 54–70.

Neo-classicism and Romanticism

As the subtitle *Momentos decisivos 1750–1880* announces, the sixteen chapters (and 800 pages) of *Formação* deal with Brazilian literature before and after independence in 1822. Candido's originality lies in his double emphasis on neo-classicism and romanticism. While romanticism had always been understood to manifest a 'national longing for form' (to use Salman Rushdie's phrase), the neo-classicist period had typically been seen as colonial, derivative and not properly Brazilian. Conversely, the advent of romanticism had been regarded – prematurely – as a rupture with the colonial past, rather than itself shaped by external influences. Candido looked beyond such nationalist rhetoric. Trained as a sociologist, he combined textual and socio-historical analysis in order to understand the two literary periods as being both formed in a dialectic between the local and the cosmopolitan.

He makes clear already in the introduction that his conception of literature differs from casual uses of the word: 'we need first of all to distinguish between *literary manifestations* and *literature* proper, regarded here as a system of works connected by common denominators which enable the recognition of dominant traits in a given period.'³⁵ Implied here is a strong idea of what constitutes *a* literature. No literary text is an island, and no literature is constituted by texts in isolation. Instead, it is the conjunction of common denominators, both internal and external, that must be the object of literary scholarship:

These denominators are, besides internal features (language, themes, images), certain social and psychological elements – albeit organised in a literary fashion – that manifest themselves historically and turn literature into an organic aspect of civilisation. Among these one may discern: the existence of a group of literary producers who are more or less self-aware of their role; a group of recipients that form different kinds of audiences and without whom the work will not live; a mediating mechanism (in general terms a language, translated into styles), that connect the one group with the other. The combination of these three elements enables a type of inter-human communication, namely literature, that appears from this angle as a symbolic system through which the most arcane whims of the individual are transformed into elements of contact between people, and of interpretation of different spheres of reality.³⁶

35 Candido, *Formação*, 25: 'convém principiar distinguindo *manifestações literárias*, de *literatura* propriamente dita, considerada aqui um sistema de obras ligadas por denominadores comuns, que permitem reconhecer as notas dominantes duma fase.'

36 Candido, *Formação*, 25: 'Estes denominadores são, além das características internas (língua, temas, imagens), certos elementos de natureza social e psíquica, embora literariamente organizados, mais ou menos conscientes do seu papel; um conjunto de receptores, formando os diferentes tipos de público, sem os quais a obra não vive; um mecanismo transmissor, (de modo geral, uma linguagem, traduzida em estilos), que liga uns a outros. O conjunto dos três elementos dá

Once the activity of writers in a given period integrate to form such a symbolic system, another 'decisive element' appears:

[T]he formation of literary continuity – a passing of the torch between contestants that secure a coherent movement through time, thereby defining the outlines of a whole. This is the proper meaning of tradition, that is, of the transmission of something among people, and the conjunction of the transferred elements, forming standards that impose themselves on thought and behaviour, and to which we are obliged to refer, in order either to reject or accept them. Without such a tradition there exists no literature as a civilisational phenomenon.³⁷

This is virtually a blueprint for a *strong conception of literature* – a bare-bones description of its constitutive elements that allows Candido to piece together a history of Brazilian literature afresh, without ceding ground either to premature celebrations of national literature, or to inherited European models. The need for such a table-clearing gesture should be evident: dominant accounts of Brazilian literature in Brazil, including the work of Sílvio Romero, had been too caught up in the nationalist project themselves, even when grounded in the determinism of Taine rather than the romanticism of Madame de Staël.³⁸ As will become evident, however, Candido's own position is also split between distance and engagement, a split that retraces precisely the cosmopolitan–vernacular tension that undergirds his analyses. Put simply, he speaks both of 'Brazilians' at a remove, and speaks *in the name of* a Brazilian collectivity when invoking 'our' literature.

lugar a um tipo de comunicação inter-humana, a literatura, que aparece sob este ângulo como sistema simbólico, por meio do qual as veleidades mais profundas do indivíduo se transformam em elementos de contacto entre os homens, e de interpretação das diferentes esferas da realidade.'

37 Candido, *Formação*, 25–6: 'a formação da continuidade literária, – espécie de transmissão da tocha entre corredores, que assegura no tempo o movimento conjunto, definindo os elementos de um todo. É uma tradição, no sentido completo do termo, isto é, transmissão de algo entre os homens, e o conjunto de elementos transmitidos, formando padrões que se impõem ao pensamento ou ao comportamento, e aos quais somos obrigados a nos referir, para aceitar ou rejeitar.'

38 Sílvio Romero (1851–1914) is a towering figure in Brazilian intellectual history, commonly seen as 'the founder of modern criticism in Brazil' (Antonio Candido, *O método crítico de Sílvio Romero*, 4th ed. [Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul 2006], 17). It would be misleading to think of him as a naive nationalist. Rather, he dismissed romanticist conceptions of the nation and developed instead a naturalistic (if inconsistent) perspective on Brazilian literature, influenced not least by Hippolyte Taine. Candido's own critical intervention can arguably best be understood against the backdrop of Romero's legacy. Of importance here is that Candido resists Romero's valorisation of 'folklore' and popular literature, on the grounds that this may be of ethnographic (and hence national) interest, but fails to account for the specific aesthetic qualities of literature.

The crucial point here is his claim that Brazilian literature has always been 'engaged' (*empenhada*). The literary dialectic of imagination and reality is therefore always ultimately recuperated by a specific intuition of national duty:

Given that there exists no literature without an escape from the real, and attempts to transcend it through the imagination, writers often felt themselves hampered in their flight, compromised in their acts of imagination by the weight of a sense of duty which entailed the tacit obligation to describe the immediate reality, or to express particular sentiments with a general reach. This inbred form of nationalism contributed to a certain renunciation of the imagination or a certain incapacity to apply it properly to the representation of the real, a conflict which was sometimes resolved through the coexistence of realism and fantasy, of documents and daydreams, in the work of one and the same author, as in the case of José de Alencar.³⁹

Candido is only able, in other words, to tell the story of the autonomisation of Brazilian literature by way of its multiple and changing forms of connectiveness: between word and world, text and readership, author and nation. But he approaches this social dimension most compellingly through form and style.

His understanding of the fundamental difference between classicism and romanticism is captured neatly in what he identifies as the changed balance between language and its object. If, for the neo-classicists, language was fully adequate to the task of describing nature, romanticism caused imbalances: 'In eighteenth-century aesthetics, nurtured as it was by classical ideals, there were two superior terms in reality: nature and art, understood as craft; the artist was an intermediary who, in theory, would disappear from view once the artwork had been completed.'⁴⁰ With romanticism, this equilibrium between art and nature was unsettled. Language and form became inadequate to its task, resulting in a crisis of representation. The work of art could only intimate what was impossible to contain in language. Instead of an

39 Candido, *Formação*, 28–9: 'Como não há literatura sem fuga ao real, e tentativas de transcendê-lo pela imaginação, os escritores se sentiram frequentemente tolhidos no vôo, prejudicados no exercício da fantasia pelo peso do sentimento de missão, que acarretava a obrigação tácita de descrever a realidade imediata, ou exprimir determinados sentimentos de alcance geral. Este nacionalismo infuso contribuiu para certa renúncia à imaginação ou certa incapacidade de aplicá-la devidamente à representação do real, resolvendo-se por vezes na coexistência de realismo e fantasia, documento e devaneio, na obra de um mesmo autor, como José Alencar.'

40 Candido, *Formação*, 342: 'Para a estética setecentista, nutrida dos ideais clássicos, havia na verdade dois termos superiores: natureza e arte, concebida como artesanato; o artista era um intermediário que desaparecia teoricamente na realização.'

equivalence between language and nature, romanticism privileged nature and the artist, relegating language to a secondary, always inadequate, position. The 'sob' (*o soluço*), expressing at one and the same time the intensity of the artist's emotions and the shortcomings of language, became thereby a prime objective of romantic poetry.⁴¹ This also entailed a withdrawal of the poet from the public realm, since that public realm was incapable of containing the vision of the poet. At the same time, this withdrawal aimed at drawing *the reader* into the artistic vision. This, writes Candido, is what explains 'the romantic *magic* that replaces the mere *enchantment* of the Arcadians; magic as a literary atmosphere and as a technique deliberately employed to create this atmosphere'.⁴²

Despite, or rather because of, the perceived inadequacy of language, romanticism led to a gradual 'purification' of the lyric. Poetry would increasingly dispose of other functions such as commemoration and public debate in order to concentrate on 'lyrical investigation' as well as favouring the sonorous, melodic qualities of language at the cost of meaning. In this way, lyric let go of 'a rich ballast of novelistic, rhetorical and didactic techniques' – at exactly the same moment as the novel started coming into its own.⁴³ The novel in Brazil begins after all with romanticism, and can therefore be understood as the outcome of a new literary division of labour. Such a division of labour is what normally goes by the name of 'genre', but the new generic pair of the novel and the lyric displaced the older system of genres. It is also the case that the Brazilian novel made use of lyrical techniques in its imagery and vocabulary, hence refashioning the prose genre. In other words, the romantic crisis of representation disrupted in multiple ways the long-established, hierarchical order of language, whereby eighteenth-century poets were bound by rhetorical decorum to make use of stock phrases (describing the sun, for example, as 'blond Phoebe'), and introduced instead a poetics of singularity that aimed at shaping expression uniquely for each new instance.⁴⁴

If this account of the shift from classicism to romanticism seems familiar to any student of European literature, this is not by chance. Candido is consistent in viewing Brazilian literature as a post-European affair. He demonstrates not only how Portuguese and European neo-classicists were in their training and outlook, but also how the romantic turn was mediated via Europe, mainly France, but also Portugal, Germany and England. The French bias meant that romanticism was 'belated', but the impact of Madame de Staël and Chateaubriand, as well as the Portuguese writer Almeida Garrett, was profound and would have far-reaching consequences in independent Brazil

41 Candido, *Formação*, 342.

42 Candido, *Formação*, 343: 'Daí a *magia* romântica, sucedendo ao simple *encanto* dos árcades; magia como atmosfera da literatura e como técnica deliberadamente usada para criar essa atmosfera'.

43 Candido, *Formação*, 343.

44 Candido, *Formação*, 346.

(which, like the nation-states in Europe, also was an outcome of the post-Napoleonic order). What is of interest here is how Candido historicises this literary and aesthetic development. Or to use another vocabulary: he demonstrates some of the colonial and postcolonial twists of Brazilian romanticism, leading gradually to increasing differences between the substantive meaning of 'literature' in Brazil and in France and/or Europe.

Indianismo, Slavery and Abolition

The two most obvious indices of this semantic rift are *indianismo*, or Brazil's own version of nativism, and the poetry of slavery and abolitionism. Both are articulated from a middle-class and 'white' perspective, but their trajectories and motivations are significantly different. The *indianismo* of Gonçalves Dias and José de Alencar was little more than a fantasy, but this does not detract from the literary quality of their work, according to Candido. Although the *índios* of Gonçalves Dias were not more authentically *indigenous* than earlier attempts, they were more authentically *poetic*.⁴⁵ Candido singles out Dias, author of the long poem *I-Juca Pirama*, as the greatest innovator of style and diction in the romantic era, and seems to prefer him to the other major canonical figure of the period, Castro Alves. This evaluation says a great deal about Candido's refusal to make reductive connections between society and literary form. The meaning of the *índio* in Dias's work does have social implications, but this needs to be read first from within the historical logic of poetic form, rather than in terms of documentary or ethnographic veracity.

Such a reading, which addresses Dias's lyrical achievement, does not contradict the critical take on the *índio* figure that we find in the later chapter on Castro Alves and abolitionism. First-nation Brazilians, Candido explains, 'were virtually absent from the cities and therefore almost mythological' in the eyes of the writers. This enabled a sentimentalised projection of creole desire for national authenticity onto the *índio*, eliding the violence of colonial conquest. Sanctioned also by the European authority of a Chateaubriand, whose *Atala* (1801) provided a blueprint for precisely such a mythological projection.⁴⁶ This made it easy to transform the *índio* into a 'touchstone of patriotic pride'.⁴⁷ The African slaves, by contrast, were integrated into daily life and therefore difficult to 'elevate to an aesthetic object within a literature ideologically tied to a caste structure [*estrutura de castas*]'.⁴⁸ Castro Alves

45 Candido, *Formação*, 405.

46 And Chateaubriand himself drew inspiration from, among other things, early French travel writing on the Americas, such as Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre's *L'Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François* (1667–1671).

47 Candido, *Formação*, 589.

48 Candido, *Formação*, 589.

managed, however, more than any other poet to bring the figure of the slave and the African into the ambit of Brazil's white writing.⁴⁹ Candido describes this as a 'literary miracle', given that it challenged the powerful urge among the middle class to suppress their mixed heritage by simply ignoring and/or camouflaging the African presence not just in Brazil, but *in themselves*. A darker complexion, he explains, could be attributed with pride to an 'Indian' ancestor in order not to confront a slave heritage. The literary transformation of the black character into a hero was therefore a significant changeover that nonetheless remained marked by racial anxieties. To make a black slave a hero, he or she had to be whitened. The idealised slave protagonist was typically of mixed heritage, making him or her possible to 'contain within the bounds of *white* sensibility', and thereby position him or her within the affective register of the bourgeoisie.⁵⁰

Interestingly, if *indianismo* was an offshoot of French romanticism, Candido argues that Castro Alves's slave poetry derived from a rhetoric of humanitarianism, which enjoyed a high moment in the mid-nineteenth century – evident, for example, in the ineffectual but well-intentioned banning of the slave trade (not slavery) in 1850. The purification of lyric and the inward turn, as discussed above, were therefore not the only results of romanticism. This long era also engaged a social and public verbal practice that intensified in the politically dramatic decade of the 1860s. Even if Candido accuses this rhetorical turn of 'typically Brazilian verbal incontinence', expressive of conventional wisdom, the more important observation is that the 1860s saw the emergence in Brazil of a more vibrant daily press and outspoken advocates of democracy – in brief, of a public sphere in the modern sense of the word.⁵¹ In its successful literary moments, the synthesis of romanticism and rhetoric resulted in a stirring abolitionist poem such as Alves's 'O navio negreiro' (1868, 'The slave ship'), which combined sonorous cadences, the romantic sublime – the infinity of sky and sea, the depth of suffering – and emotional outpourings with a social appeal. Underlying such poetry is a dialectic of man against society, and of master and slave, which in Candido's reading ultimately subsumes the historicity of slavery by inserting it into the drama of 'human destiny' and drawing in this way on messianic tendencies in romanticism. A sceptical reading of such recoding of slavery by a white writer could see it as a way to evade, or at least attenuate, accountability. This should not, however, detract from the pathos of stanzas such as these

49 This could be compared to the role of Thomas Pringle's poetry written during and after his sojourn in the Cape Colony. Pringle was earlier by several decades, however, and a driving force in Scottish abolitionism.

50 Candido, *Formação*, 590. The full sentence reads 'Assim, os protagonistas de romances e poemas, quando escravos, são ordinariamente mulatos a fim de que o autor possa dar-lhes traços brancos e, deste modo encaixá-los no padrões da sensibilidade *branca*', emphasis in the original.

51 Candido, *Formação*, 585: 'a incontinência verbal tão brasileira'.

from 'O navio negreiro', where conspicuous ellipses flaunt how the horror of slavery exceeds the poem's linguistic grasp:

Era um sonho dantesco... o tombadilho
Que das luzernas avermelha o brilho.
Em sangue a se banhar.
Tinir de ferros... estalar de açoite...
Legiões de homens negros como a noite,
Horrendos a dançar...

Negras mulheres, suspendendo às tetas
Magras crianças, cujas bocas pretas
Rega o sangue das mães:
Outras moças, mas nuas e espantadas,
No turbilhão de espectros arrastadas,
Em ânsia e mágoa vãs!

E ri-se a orquestra irônica, estridente...
E da ronda fantástica a serpente
Faz doudas espirais ...
Se o velho arqueja, se no chão resvala,
Ouvem-se gritos... o chicote estala.
E voam mais e mais...⁵²

(As in a vision of Dante,
I saw the quarterdeck, slippery with blood,
The skylight washed with crimson.
The clanking irons ... the crack of a whip ...
Legions of men black as the night,
Dancing their horrible death-dance ...

Black-mouthed and listless children
Hang at their black mothers' exhausted breasts
Spattered with blood
Shivering and naked girls,
A crowd of ghosts dragging
Their wretched bodies ...

The ironic chorus laughs at itself
As the dark serpent coils
Its mad and spiralling dance ...
If an old man gasps for breath ... falls to the ground,
There are screams, the cracking of whips ...
And their feet move on and on ...)⁵³

52 Antonio de Castro Alves, 'O navio negreiro – tragédia no mar', in *Obra completa* (Rio de Janeiro: José de Aguiar, 1960), 280.

53 Antonio de Castro Alves, 'Tragedy at Sea: The Slave Ship', in *The Major Abolitionist Poems*, ed. and trans. Amy A. Peterson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990),

Alves's fragmentary diction in this poem shows how the romantic crisis of representation is exacerbated by its thematic turn towards the social reality of slavery. This is a crucial point. Slavery, after all, *is* being addressed by Alves (and Fagundes Varela and others), despite inheriting a conception of literature in which contemporary slavery and African subjects simply have no place. His occasional ventriloquising of African voices and his poetic projections of African landscapes are indeed 'romantic' in the pejorative sense of the word – imaginative, freewheeling, sentimental. But even so, the rupture with literary convention is palpable and ultimately as formal as it is thematic. Alves – and this is my way of developing Candido's point – transforms in 'O navio negreiro' the romantic sublime into an encoding of what might be called a trans-Atlantic sublime under the aegis of colonialism and capitalism, with the world-system metonymically and allegorically condensed to the slave ship, where French, English and Italian mariners share the same space as the slaves they torture and who recall their freedom in 'Sierra Leone'.

'O navio negreiro' can in other words be read as a privileged textual node that ties together the Brazilian, African and European trajectories of this book, but it also helps us to specify the overall tendency of Candido's historical account: it is those moments where topic and form connect and disrupt each other that are the 'decisive moments' in the formation of literature. The connection *and* disruption – both need to be considered simultaneously – can be understood, in Koselleck's sense, as versions of the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous. There is no homogeneous temporality here, in Benedict Anderson's sense of the imagined community: literary forms accumulate their own temporality, including the gradual emergence of a local tradition, which is so important to Candido's understanding of the literary system. But social and political time will likewise intervene in the literary realm, regularly producing aesthetic crises that affect the scope and meaning of literature. It is within such a layered diachronic view that we need to appreciate Candido's national conception of literature. National literature, as Schwarz correctly notes, is for Candido not an end in itself, but rather a significant instance of this ongoing and uneven historical-aesthetic transformation of the semantics of 'literature'.⁵⁴

This point is powerfully brought home in the final chapter of *Formação*, where Candido traces the history of literary criticism in Brazil. In doing so, he not only shifts focus to the self-reflexive element of this (national) transformation, but provides also a lucidly reflexive analysis of this self-reflexivity itself. The challenge of literary history, as he explains with hermeneutic sensitivity in the beginning, is to account for how literature was conceived of at the time, rather than impose contemporary categories on the past – but as his chapter demonstrates, such a retrieval of past semantics will inevitably reinstate a

15–17. It should be noted that this is a domesticating translation that smoothenes the syntax and disambiguates Alves's elusive imagery.

54 Schwarz, *Sequências brasileiras*, 20.

critical distance to the past, as it releases the contemporary observer from unexamined yet lingering attachments to past ideals and notions. Beginning with the claim that literary criticism in Brazil only came into its own with romanticism, he shows how this 'national' movement was in fact shaped transnationally by European thinking. He first pinpoints the programmatic inversion of literary value achieved philosophically by Wilhelm Schlegel when he contrasted 'top-down' classicism with 'bottom-up' romanticism. This inversion was given its less confrontational French articulation by Madame de Staël, and then conveyed to Brazil through the Portuguese writer Almeida Garrett and the globetrotting Frenchman Ferdinand Denis. We see here the workings of Casanova's 'Herder effect', which in Denis's version insisted that Brazilian literature must correspond to the 'genius' of Brazil rather than imitate classical models.

In Candido's view, Denis's *Resumo da história literária do Brasil* ('Summary of Brazilian Literary History') (1826) counts as the very foundation of 'the theory of our literature' and is the first time Brazilian literature is *identified* as a thing of its own. It would thereby have a defining impact on Brazilian criticism 'almost until today', a vague temporal indication that is intriguing if only because it reiterates once again Candido's own split vision of the national literary project.⁵⁵ Importantly, Candido sees the doctrine of national literary identity as not only attempting to equate 'national differentiation' with 'aesthetic differentiation', but also linking literature to an ideology of freedom. In Denis's formulation, 'America [here: Brazil] should be as free in its poetry as in its government.'⁵⁶ The irony is that the programmatic attempt to manifest such freedom in writing easily results in an externalised self-representation:

In the Brazilian case it became, in line with the dictates of the moment, imperative to pay heed to race and environment. In view of the latter, this resulted in wordy expositions [...] of the difference and grandeur of the tropics, which forcefully gave rise to different sentiments [than in Europe]. This led to a persistent exoticism which has contaminated our self-perception to this day, making us look upon ourselves as foreigners have done and perpetuating the literary exploitation of the picturesque in its European sense, as though we were condemned to exporting tropical products also in the domain of spiritual culture.⁵⁷

55 Candido, *Formação*, 638.

56 Candido, *Formação*, 639.

57 Candido, *Formação*, 639: 'No caso brasileiro impunha-se, portanto, segundo os cânones do momento, considerar a raça e o meio. Quanto a este, tudo se resumiu em tiradas [...] sobre a diferença e a grandeza tropical, originando forçosamente sentimentos diferentes. Daí um persistente exotismo, que eivou a nossa visão de nós mesmos até hoje, levando-nos a nos encarnar como faziam os estrangeiros, propiciando, nas letras, a exploração do pitoresco no sentido europeu, como se estivéssemos condenados a exportar produtos tropicais também no terreno da cultura espiritual.'

What we see here is not just that what Graham Huggan once dubbed the 'postcolonial exotic' has a long history, but also how Candido's critique of literary nationalism is itself premised on the *value* of the national.⁵⁸ Without ignoring his self-professed universalism, it is, I argue, his orientation towards the assumed authenticity of national experience that authorises his criticism in *Formação* of outdated, inauthentic versions of national literature. At the very heart of this account lies the transition towards a conception of language as inadequate and dynamic, as discussed above, that is, 'the passage from a poetry based in the inherent properties of the word, to one which tries to exploit its musical potential to the very limits' but that also recognises the 'frailty of the word'.⁵⁹ It is in this liberation both of the signification and sonorous qualities of (the Portuguese) language that the national element comes into its own, enabling, as Candido puts it in his peroration,

the process by which the Brazilians became conscious of their spiritual and social existence by way of literature, combining in various ways universal values with local reality and, in this way, earning the right to express their dreams, their pains, the joy, their vision of the world and of their fellow Brazilians.⁶⁰

This conclusion indicates Candido's horizon of expectation at the time: ultimately, he was compelled to affirm the link between literature and the national community as such, even when providing an intermittently scathing appraisal of actual Brazilian literature. The apparent methodological paradox resulting from this is that Candido consistently works in two registers. One we might call the formal-historical register, which results in the conclusions I have presented thus far. Here Candido proceeds in a descriptive and analytic vein. The other is a formal-critical register, which tends to be unapologetically normative. Candido passes judgement on writers with harsh precision, flatly pronouncing on whether or not their work is of any enduring value.

The paradox can be accounted for if we recall that Candido's history of formation is also a history of autonomisation – and that his own literary generation had been shaped by a greater *local* aesthetic autonomy than ever before. To catch sight of this, we must return to the beginnings of Candido's role as a public intellectual during the Estado Novo, in São Paulo.

58 Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic*.

59 Candido, *Formação*, 671, 678: 'a passagem de uma poesia baseada nos valores próprios da palavra, para uma outra que tentará explorar até os limites máximos as suas virtualidades musicais.'

60 Candido, *Formação*, 681: 'o processo por meio do qual os brasileiros tomaram consciência da sua existência espiritual e social através da literatura, combinando do modo vário os valores universais com a realidade local e, desta maneira, ganhando o direito de exprimir o seu sonho, a sua dor, o seu júbilo, a sua visão das coisas e do semelhante.'

Back to the Future

For those who experienced the Vargas period there was, according to Candido, a palpable sense of a before and an after. The decline in the previous decade's avant-gardism was inversely proportional to its 'relative incorporation in the habits of artistic and literary practice'.⁶¹ This gave way in the 1930s to what Candido describes as a spreading of regionalist aesthetics on a national scale. The previous dominance, upheld by the Brazilian Academy, of linguistic purism and a 'culture for show' (*cultura de fachada*) tailored to meet the expectations of an external readership gave way to a poetics of non-conformism and anti-conventionalism. In the 1930s, Candido writes, 'almost every writer of note ended up as a beneficiary of the emancipation achieved by the modernists which contributed to the anti-rhetorical cleansing of language in favour of an increasing simplicity and colloquialism which parted ways with earlier artificial ideals'.⁶² It was, of course, the 1922 São Paulo modernists – spearheaded by Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade – who first achieved this rupture. Instead of the anxious normalisation of form that occurred with realism and naturalism, which upheld aesthetic and linguistic norms that were assumed to be European and 'cosmopolitan' but that had become outdated and produced increasingly conventional reproductions of the picturesque, the modernists reinscribed the local and the particular by drawing liberally on the new formal resources developed by European avant-gardes. In doing so, they redefined beauty and inverted the value of the local:

Our *deficiências*, assumed or real, are reinterpreted as signs of *superiority*. [...] It should no longer be necessary to say and to write, as in the time of Bilac or the count Afonso Celso, that everything here is beautiful and cheerful: instead the roughness, the dangers and the obstacles of the tropical landscape are emphasised. The mulatto and the negro are decisively incorporated as objects of study, as inspiration, as examples. Primitivism is now a source of beauty and no longer an impediment to cultural development. This shift is evident in literature, painting, music, the human sciences.⁶³

61 Antonio Candido, *A educação pela noite*, 6th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul, 2011), 223: 'Nos anos de 1930 houve sob este aspecto uma perda de auréola do Modernismo, proporcional à sua relativa incorporação aos hábitos artísticos e literários.'

62 Candido, *Educação*, 225.

63 Antonio Candido, *Literatura e sociedade*, 9th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul, 2006), 127: 'As nossas *deficiências*, supostas ou reais, são reinterpretadas como *superioridades*. [...] Não se precisaria mais dizer e escrever, como no tempo de Bilac ou do conde Afonso Celso, que tudo aqui é belo e risonho: acentuam-se a rudeza, os perigos, os obstáculos da natureza tropical. O mulato e o negro são definitivamente incorporados como temas de estudo, inspiração, exemplo. O primitivismo é agora fonte de beleza e não mais empecilho à elaboração da cultura. Isso, na literatura, na pintura, na música, nas ciências do homem.'

But no shift is definite. Candido's own slippage in this paragraph between the first-person plural (used in this particular essay in 1953 in an expatriate German-speaking context in Brazil) and the ambiguity of the 'mulatto and the negro' being incorporated *yet set apart from those doing the incorporation* is symptomatic of the problem of elitism that he highlights with greater critical force in his later essay (from 1980) on the cultural dynamic of the 1930s. While modernism's 'distribution of the sensible' (Rancière's term *partage du sensible* seems particularly apt here)⁶⁴ briefly combined aesthetic and democratic radicalism, the social domain of Brazil remained almost as uneven as before, with the impoverished and illiterate majority remaining virtually untouched by the advent of the New Republic. The cultural transformations of the period, which included the rapid popularisation of samba, a burgeoning interest in Brazil's African heritage and all round a heightened attentiveness among artists and writers to the social world of the 'masses', must therefore be understood as affecting a severely restricted sector of society, that is, the 'white' middle and upper classes. Without diminishing the intrinsic importance of these cultural and intellectual achievements, Candido's analysis nonetheless demonstrates the necessity to view the rebellious and democratic impetus of the period against a broader historical canvas. The 'margin of opposition' among cultural workers was dependent on 'the greater or lesser elasticity of the dominant system's aptitude to tolerate them [the oppositional artists] without disabling their work from exercising its corrosive function'.⁶⁵ A powerful illustration of this fundamental contradiction is Cândido Portinari's famous mural at the former Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro, which was commissioned by the proto-fascist government in 1937 yet expressive of an anti-authoritarian and anti-racist ethos.

On one level, then, modernism's democratic impetus could be read in a compensatory vein, as a means for the elite, in the context of international economic and cultural rivalry to come to terms with 'the people' and the paradoxes of Brazilian modernity, and in this way be relieved – thanks to the symbolic resolution of conflict – from the burden of substantially changing the power relations that produce these paradoxes. On another level, precisely by decisively and even aggressively expanding the autonomy of aesthetic labour within a restricted field of production, it inaugurates new and unprecedented formal possibilities, the significance of which is not contained exclusively by the political conjuncture of the 1930s or, indeed, of any specific moment, but is in unpredictable ways amenable to future reinscriptions.

The importance of the 1930s as not only Candido's intellectual seedbed but as the consolidation of a new and durable 'cultural contract' in Brazil

64 Jacques Rancière, *Le Partage du sensible* (Paris: Fabrique, 2000).

65 Candido, *Educação*, 236: 'A sua margem de oposição vem da elasticidade maior ou menor do sistema dominante, que os pode tolerar, sem que os deixem com isto de exercer a sua função corrosiva.'

is corroborated by Paulo Eduardo Arantes. Drawing on Weber's 'routinisation of charisma', Arantes argues that state institutions such as the new universities (USP most prominently) and São Paulo's municipal Department of Culture absorbed and routinised the charismatic force of the modernism of 1922.⁶⁶ Both were necessary, one could say, in order for modernism to gain significance as a new distribution of the sensible: both the aesthetic rebellion of a handful of individuals, and the reinvention of public culture on the back of this rebellion.⁶⁷ Hence, Candido's self-inscription in this phase of Brazilian intellectual history is noteworthy not because it individualises a historical process, but because it historicises the individual. He observes the generalisation of regionalism in the fact that a young boy in the 1930s, 'for example in the interior of Minas Gerais' (referring to himself), could travel all across Brazil through the works of Jorge Amado, José Lins do Rego, Abguar Bastos and others: 'It was as if literature had produced for the reader a new and unconventional vision of his country as diverse yet united.'⁶⁸ It is this youth, the son of a prominent doctor, springing from the 'petty oligarchy of Minas Gerais' in Roberto Schwarz's phrase, that would enter the fray as a public intellectual in São Paulo, apparently already fully formed, in the early 1940s.⁶⁹

The Little Magazine *Clima*

Candido first entered the public stage in the São Paulo press, particularly by way of the journal *Clima*. This was produced by a small group of young intellectuals – Candido himself was one of the editors – who all would come to enjoy prominent positions in the university system and/or the cultural sphere. Its first issue appeared in May 1941; the fifteenth and final issue appeared in October 1944. The very fact that it could go on publishing throughout the critical years of the Second World War speaks volumes of how Brazil's historical rhythm differs from Europe's. Starting as a self-avowedly non-political journal, devoted to literature, art, music and film – but also, to some degree, science, economics and law – politics enters the pages dramatically with a declaration in issue 11 (July–August 1942), dated 25 August 1942 and co-signed by nine young men (including Candido), just as Brazil entered the

66 Paulo Eduardo Arantes, 'Providências de um crítico literário na periferia do capitalismo', in *Sentido da formação: três estudos sobre Antonio Candido*, Gilda de Mello e Souza e Lúcio Costa, Otília Beatriz Fiori Arantes and Paulo Eduardo Arantes (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1997), 41–3.

67 Rancière, *Le Partage*.

68 Candido, *Educação*, 227: 'Foi como se a literatura tivesse desenvolvido para o leitor uma visão renovada, não convencional, do seu país, visto como um conjunto diversificado mas solidário.'

69 Schwarz, interview.

war on the allied side.⁷⁰ Although Vargas's belated decision to support the allies was opportunistic, the declaration in *Clima* is a clear statement by these 'soldiers to be' defining the war as a war against fascism. To dispel the confusion caused by the fact that Brazil is a Latin country with strong historical ties to Italy, the youngsters denationalise the conflict and insist instead that fascism is endemic across the world (they name, notably, Oswald Mosley in Britain as well as fascist movements in the USA, Belgium and France), but most powerfully supported by the governments of Germany, Italy and Spain. They take care at the same time to distance themselves from communism and introduce also a national dimension to their argument by claiming that it is in Brazil's own interest to combat racial ideologies.

We have here, then, a thinly circulating yet prestigious journal that against the intentions of its contributors must engage with the pressing matters of the day – and does so with history on its side. Yet, if we look at Candido's own contributions, the social dimension was never absent. In fact, in his first piece in the inaugural 1941 issue, Candido discusses the task of criticism by way of two possible choices:

The critic can position himself either in relation to the author or to the complex reality of the author and the environment. I believe I can say the latter is our chosen path. Criticism *sub-specie societatis*? Not quite. In one way or another, however, a type of criticism that refuses to see the author as an autonomous entity; that tries to discern the author's profound connections with the times and with the social group within which he [sic] works and creates.

There is however one difficulty that almost makes me lay down my pen before we have begun: the problem of the legitimacy and value of such a critical endeavour in view of the contemporary historical moment. The world is experiencing, under the aegis of disaster, one of its most pressing crises ever. [...] And while everyone is wringing their hands over whatever will decide the fate of man, what is the value of the literary work, and what attitude should one adopt in relation to it? Its justification lies in affirming, as far as possible, the individual's conscience [*consciência*] in the face of tragedy as an enduring manifestation of human dignity.⁷¹

70 The signatories were Lourival Gomes Machado, Alfredo Mesquita, Antônio Branco Lefèvre, Antonio Cândido de Mello e Souza, Décio de Almeida Prado, Marcelo Damy de Sousa Santos, Paulo Emílio Sales Gomes, Roberto Pinto de Sousa and Ruy Galvão de Andrada Coelho.

71 Antonio Candido, 'Livros', *Clima* 1 (May 1941), 108: 'E o crítico pode colocar-se em face do escritor ou em face da realidade complexa escritor-meio. Creio poder dizer que esta é a nossa tendência. Crítica *sub-specie societatis*? Nem tanto. De qualquer maneira, porém, crítica que se nega a ver no autor uma entidade independente; que pretende sentir as suas ligações profundas com o tempo, com o grupo social em função do qual trabalha e cria.

Há uma dificuldade, entretanto, que me faz quasi [sic] suspender a pena no início dos nossos trabalhos: o problema da legitimidade e do valor de semelhante tarefa

At the age of 23, this is already the Candido of *Formação* speaking, an impression strengthened by his full-length review, published in issue 2 of *Clima*, of Almir de Andrade's *Formação da sociologia brasileira*. The phrasing in the quotation above is more idealistic than the mature Candido would appreciate, but his fundamental concern with the nexus of literature and society is in place. In a subsequent essay, 'The Novel Has Sold Its Soul', Candido accuses contemporary novelists of having forgotten the specific value of novelistic narrative as a craft and an art, caught as they are between the imperative to use the novel as an instrument to address social problems and the 'scandalous curiosity of modern man, aroused by advertising and sensationalism, and elevated almost to the category of a fundamental need that must be satisfied'.⁷² *Littérature engagée* and mass culture are the problem, in other words. But in what can seem like an Adornian twist – he is writing simultaneously with the composition of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* – he insists that he is not calling for a retreat to art for art's sake, which 'morbidly exaggerates the question of form'.⁷³ Rather, the novel at its best achieves a transformation of whatever material it uses. Referring to writers such as Stendhal and Machado de Assis, Candido states that it is not 'the problem' in focus that makes a novel valuable, but rather how the novelist transposes the problem through plot and attention to detail.

A similar attentiveness to form is evident in his remarkably early 1944 review of the first volume (of the first version) of Fernando Pessoa's complete works, where he reflects on how to make sense of the three heteronyms Ricardo Reis, Álvaro de Campos and Alberto Caeiro plus the author name Pessoa. While the individual struggle with inner conflict normally leads either to a harmonisation or to a pathological fragmentation of the psyche, what is extraordinary about Pessoa is that he evades pathology and manages to write poetry that 'is a miracle issuing from four heads'.⁷⁴ His aesthetic assessment is nonetheless balanced, identifying a 'Gongoric flaw' in the 'verbal antics' but also acknowledging 'unprecedented images' and moments when 'poetic

diante do momento histórico. O mundo experimenta, sob o signo da catástrofe, uma das crises mais angustiosas por que tem passados. [...] E enquanto todos se crispam diante dos fatos que decidem a sorte do homem, qual o valor da obra literária, e qual a atitude a se tomar em relação com ela? A sua justificativa está em afirmar, até onde lhe for possível a consciência [sic] do indivíduo diante da tragédia, como manifestação permanente da dignidade humana. Se, portanto ela continua a existir apesar de tudo, é porque há razão e há necessidade da sua existência.'

72 Antonio Candido, 'O romance vendeu a sua alma', *Clima* 6 (November 1941), 28: 'esta escandalosa curiosidade do homem moderno, excitada pela propaganda e pelo sensacionalismo, e elevada quasi [sic] á [sic] categoria de necessidade basica [sic] a ser satisfeita.'

73 Candido, 'O romance', 29: 'Como já disse, nada tem a vêr com a arte pela arte, que, exagerando morbidamente questões de forma, passa a considerar o meio em vêr do fim.'

74 Antonio Candido, 'Livros', *Clima* 15 (October 1944), 65: 'um milagre de quatro cabeças'.

artifice disappears in view of its graceful simplicity'.⁷⁵ Candido wrote this long before the full scope of Pessoa's oeuvre became known, which is what makes the review astonishing: Candido exhibits from the very beginning an ability to combine independent aesthetic judgement and historical analysis in a cosmopolitan spirit.

All told, *Clima* has a conspicuously 'world republic of letters' profile, with essays devoted to Proust, British romanticism, French romanticism, Spengler and Kant, North American film, contemporary British poetry, even Chinese poetry, but it is notable that this cosmopolitan horizon feeds into a strong sense of national purpose. The 'engaged' intellectualism of Brazil of which Candido speaks in *Formação* is evident here, as is a feisty, oppositional spirit. Some of its most political material includes an essay (already in 1943) on the viability of a future United Nations (UN), a searing critique of the ideology of racism and a long piece by Pierre Monbeig in the penultimate issue on Algeria, democracy and the resistance. The geographer Monbeig, one of many Frenchmen teaching in Brazil, sees Algeria as a privileged site for French resistance against Hitler and the flowering of a post-war democratic order. He does so, however, without questioning for a moment the *colonial* order of French rule. *La résistance*, he writes, becomes both a patriotic and a democratic force through which the French find themselves in communion with 'other enslaved peoples'.⁷⁶ This enables a return to the French democratic tradition, whereby France, 'in Michelet's expression', can serve as a 'pilot of humanity'.⁷⁷ Yet, he flatly states that Algeria is not a colony but a French department – in accordance with official French discourse at the time.⁷⁸ The contradiction, in what is otherwise a glowing appeal to democracy, is glaring and altogether characteristic not just of the 1940s but of what would become the 'liberal' option in the Algerian conflict.⁷⁹ This conspicuous absence of

75 Candido, 'Livros', *Clima* 15, 66: 'Muitas das suas poesias trazem uma tara gongorica que lhes dá um esplendor dourado e difícil de obra rara. As ousadias vocabulares se sucedem, e o poeta segura o idioma com vigor, tirando dêle imagens imprevistas, construções complicadas – as únicas capazes de exprimirem o seu sonho. Outras vezes, entramos em plena seara de João de Deus, clara, escorreita, tão levemente melodiosa que o artifício poético desaparece ante a sua simplicidade cheia da graça.' João de Deus (1830–1896), it should be noted, was a Portuguese poet, known for the unaffected simplicity of his style and regarded by authoritative critics as 'more modern' than any of his contemporaries. See António José Saraiva and Óscar Lopes, *História da literatura portuguesa* (Porto: Porto Editora, 1987), 973–5. Luís de Góngora (1561–1627) was a major Spanish baroque poet.

76 Pierre Monbeig, 'A resistência, Alger e a democracia', trans. Ruy Coelho, *Clima* 14 (September 1944), 25.

77 Monbeig, 'A resistência', 25.

78 Monbeig, 'A resistência', 17.

79 The most famous proponent of this option being Albert Camus, who supported the establishment of democracy with equal rights in Algeria, but without severing ties with France.

anti-colonial perspectives in *Clima* is noteworthy. Racism and fascism are on Candido's and his co-editors' agenda, but not colonialism. His cosmopolitan habitus is directed instead towards Europe and North America, largely in accordance with the imperial 'order of civilisations', which ignored entire swathes of the world's populations and placed them beyond the purview of sovereignty. Monbeig's essay demonstrates such a world view in action.

This alerts us to the peculiar status of the postcolonial order in Brazil and Latin America, where decolonisation in the nineteenth century (with Haiti as the lone exception) consolidated the position of creole elites but perpetuated the repression and silencing of indigenous groups as well as racialised slave (descendant) populations, and maintained an exceptionally uneven ownership of wealth and land.⁸⁰ These colonial-derived problems are precisely *not* understood as colonial but as national problems, often coded in terms of miscegenation and uneven development (as in *Os sertões* by Euclides da Cunha). Crucially, the renewed interest in the 1930s in Brazil's colonial past was never connected to *contemporary* instances of colonialism in the world. It is from this historical and intellectual horizon we need to take stock of Candido's brand of radicalism. In the 1940s and 1950s, Candido is far removed from what Robert Young calls 'tricontinentalism' and the anti-colonial surge in Asia and Africa.⁸¹ As was the case for his generation of intellectuals, both left and right, colonialism was a Brazilian – and Portuguese – legacy.⁸² Prior to the radicalisation of the 1960s and the rise of *tiers-mondisme* in Brazil – spearheaded by the film-maker Glauber Rocha – it therefore seems that there are few expressions of South–South solidarity in Brazil.

'Underdevelopment'

Moving beyond the moments of *Clima* and *Formação*, it becomes clear that Candido's position in relation to the 'Third World' evolved over time. Combining a *comparative* and a *cumulative* optic, as Arantes puts it, Candido grasped the historical unfolding of 'dual loyalties' that have torn Brazilian writers between the ambition to '*update oneself*' to the extent of losing sight of one's local grounding and float around in empty space like a make-believe

80 In Alfredo Bosi's analysis, the very creation of Brazil was the work of a 'plantation bourgeoisie within a system dependent on slavery and agricultural exports' ('burguesia latifundiária em um sistema agroexportador e escravista'). Alfredo Bosi, *Literatura e resistência* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002), 12.

81 Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

82 In the case of Gilberto Freyre, as mentioned earlier, this would lead to an obscene *defence* of Portuguese colonialism, also in twentieth-century Africa, under the banner of 'lusotropicalism'. See, for example, the propagandistic pamphlet produced in Lisbon for an international audience: Gilberto Freyre, *The Portuguese and the Tropics* (Lisbon: The International Congress of the History of the Discoveries, 1961).

European [*européu postiço*], or align oneself with the falsified position [*posição em falso*] of the country, which is nonetheless the only real one, and turn one's back on the contemporary world'.⁸³ Importantly, Arantes recodes the geographical problem of literature in temporal terms. As we could see in the case of South Africa, it is *contemporaneity* that is at stake, or rather, the conflict between contemporaneity and the sedimentation of local time. If the perennial dilemma of Brazil had been understood as a lack of a consistent and gradually developing local tradition, it is *the unfolding history of the lack* that becomes increasingly central to Candido's account. Put differently: it is the temporal deficit of 'incompleteness' and 'backwardness' as such that intrigues Candido. But as soon as that is said, it needs to be understood dialectically, as an inroad to the resolutely local quality of Brazilian experience.

'Literature and Underdevelopment', a widely circulated essay, provides a sharp consideration of the temporal deficit, written at the height of repression in Brazil in 1969. Here it is the contemporary condition of possibility for literature in Brazil as well as Latin America generally that is in focus, and the argument is directly relevant to constructions of 'theory from the South'. The instructiveness of the essay in relation to *Formação* lies in its focus not on national autonomy but rather on the world-systemic predicament of 'underdevelopment'. Drawing on Mário Vieira de Mello, Candido notes that the content of Brazilian futurity began to transform in the 1930s. If the main narrative until then had framed Brazil, optimistically, as 'the new country' that hadn't *yet* come into its own but possessed a glorious future, an increasingly influential sense of 'underdevelopment' emerged from the 1940s onwards. In the temporal structure of underdevelopment, the future would not entail transcendence but only – at best – a reduction of differences with the 'advanced world'. This seems to contradict not just Candido's argument about the cultural confidence of the 1930s, but also the successes of Brazilian modernity and modernism in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, it needs to be read as an attempt at tracing retrospectively a subtle shift that could help to account for the reactionary political turn of the 1960s. Candido registers the shift through its national effects, but it had of course world-historical dimensions: 'development' and 'underdevelopment' were key terms in international relations post-1945, at no point more powerfully so than in the 1960s, as noted at the time by, among others, Claude Lévi-Strauss.⁸⁴ This was, in other words, a point at which Candido's concerns and those of post-1945 decolonisation met.

Underdevelopment is not all bad. Provocatively, Candido sees it as a reality check. If the previous 'country of the future'-paradigm had been a fantasy that

83 Paulo Eduardo Arantes, 'Providências de um crítico', 32: 'atualizar-se a ponto de perder de vista a implantação local e girar no vazio como um europeu postiço, ou alinhar com a posição em falso do país, porém a única real, e dar as costas ao mundo contemporâneo', emphasis in the original.

84 Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Anthropology: Its Achievements and Future', *Current Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (1966): 124–7.

compensated for the impoverished grandeur of Brazil ('In America everything is great, only man is small'), the sense of underdevelopment might provoke a political response to the national problems. This leads Candido for the first time to address illiteracy as a key index of Brazilian and Latin American 'backwardness', in terms that would have been relevant to the situation in South Africa at the time:

In fact, illiteracy is linked to the manifestations of cultural weakness: lack of the means of communication and diffusion (publishers, libraries, magazines, newspapers); the nonexistence, dispersion, and weakness of publics disposed to literature, due to the small number of real readers (many fewer than the already small number of literates); the impossibility, for writers, of specializing in their literary jobs, generally therefore realized as marginal, or even amateur, tasks; the lack of resistance of discrimination in the face of external influences and pressures. The picture of this weakness is completed by such economic and political factors as insufficient levels of remuneration and the financial anarchy of governments, coupled with inept or criminally disinterested educational policies.⁸⁵

But if illiteracy is a *general* feature of underdevelopment, Latin America differs from other 'underdeveloped' regions in so far as two European languages are widely spoken on the continent – languages connected, moreover, to two of the few 'underdeveloped' countries in Europe, Portugal and Spain. A striking remark: this is the first time Candido places Brazil and Latin America in a comparative 'Third World' framework, juxtaposing the predicament of Latin American writers to that of Léopold Senghor and Chinua Achebe, 'doubly separated from their potential publics', given that they are read only in the metropolitan West or by an 'incredibly reduced' local public.⁸⁶ In Latin America the *potential* audience is vast, although Candido predicts a bleak future for

85 Antonio Candido, 'Literature and Underdevelopment', in *On Literature and Society*, ed. and trans. Howard S. Becker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 121–2. Antonio Candido, 'Literatura e subdesenvolvimento', in *Educação pela noite* (Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre Azul, 2011), 172: 'Com efeito, ligam-se ao analfabetismo as manifestações de debilidade cultural: falta de meios de comunicação e difusão (editoras, bibliotecas, revistas, jornais); inexistência, dispersão e fraqueza dos públicos disponíveis para a literatura, devido ao pequeno número de leitores reais (muito menor que o número já reduzido de alfabetizados); impossibilidade de especialização dos escritores em suas tarefas literárias, geralmente realizadas como tarefas marginais ou mesmo amadorísticas; falta de resistência ou discriminação em face de influências e pressões externas. O quadro dessa debilidade se completa por fatores de ordem econômica e política, como os níveis insuficientes de remuneração e a anarquia financeira dos governos, articulados com políticas educacionais ineptas ou criminosamente desinteressadas.'

86 Albeit an acknowledgement, the remark also reveals a very superficial acquaintance with Senghor's and Achebe's work. Candido, 'Underdevelopment', 123; Candido, 'Subdesenvolvimento', 174.

'erudite literature': the masses, he says, are embroiled in folkloric culture and oral communication, exchanging rural folklore for the urban folklore of mass culture once they move to the city. His argument – as we already saw in *Clima* – is directed with particular vigour against commodified 'mass culture', which can sound almost quaint in our day. But his reasons for doing so have a political grounding. '[T]here is no point', he writes, 'for the literary expression of Latin America, in moving from the aristocratic segregation of the era of oligarchies to the directed manipulation of the masses in an era of propaganda and total imperialism.'⁸⁷

Candido's strong conception of literature, steeped in Enlightenment values (with a capital 'E'), is put to the test here. Speaking out against 'aristocratic segregation' is in itself a questioning of the legacy of Enlightenment thought in Latin America. With Brazil's Pedro II and the Ateneo group in Venezuela as notable examples, a cult developed around education and the printed word. Castro Alves even imagined 'America' to be the true homeland of print. His poem 'O livro e a America' ('The Book and America') connected Gutenberg's invention of print technology to Columbus's voyage.⁸⁸ In Candido's reading, Alves's attempt to claim the imagined glorious future of America as a historical necessity was a disavowal of the conflicted conditions of Latin American literature having largely been written for an imagined ideal audience in Europe. Anticipating Pascale Casanova by several decades, he speaks of writers having produced 'false jewels unmasked by time, much contraband that gave them an air of competitors for some international prize for beautiful writing'.⁸⁹ In this way, Candido underlines the uneven and layered aesthetic temporality of the republic of letters:

All literature presents aspects of backwardness that are *normal* in their way, it being possible to say that the average production of a given moment is already tributary to the past, while the vanguard prepares the future. Beyond this there is an official subliterature, marginal and provincial, generally expressed through the Academies. But what demands attention in Latin America is the way aesthetically anachronistic works were considered valid; or the way secondary works were welcomed by the best critical opinion and lasted for more than a generation – while either should soon have been put in its proper place, as something valueless or the evidence of a harmless survival.⁹⁰

87 Candido, 'Underdevelopment', 125. 'E não há interesse, para a expressão literária da América Latina, em passar da segregação aristocrática da era das oligarquias para a manipulação dirigida das massas, na era da propaganda e do imperialismo total': Candido, 'Subdesenvolvimento', 176.

88 Castro Alves, 'O livro e a América', in *Obra completa*, 76–8.

89 Candido, 'Underdevelopment', 127. Candido, 'Subdesenvolvimento', 179: '[...] muita joia falsa desmascarada pelo tempo, muito contrabando que lhes dá um ar de concorrentes em prêmio internacional em escrever bonito'.

90 Candido, 'Underdevelopment', 128 (translation modified). Candido, 'Subdesenvol-

Candido parts ways with the later model of Casanova in his emphasis on locally grounded legitimacy. 'Anachronism' may be not just legitimate, but the only durable antidote to the extroverted predicament of Latin American literature, which the successes of Jorge Luis Borges, Mário Vargas Llosa, Júlio Cortázar, Juan Rulfo, João Guimarães Rosa or Clarice Lispector demonstrate. Here, Candido is at one with the moment of the Latin American 'boom', but not as a translational phenomenon produced in North America.⁹¹ Rather, what he sees in these writers is a reconfiguration of the aesthetic field that takes the inherent anachronisms of Latin America as its substance and point of departure, rather than anxiously locate the centre of aesthetic gravity elsewhere, in Paris or New York. Of course, such an account needs to be tempered with the reminder that each of the above-mentioned writers (with the exception of Rulfo) led peripatetic, 'cosmopolitan' lives with long sojourns in Europe and North America. Even so, in the context of 'underdevelopment', writers from the 'developed' strata of Latin American societies achieved an enduring connection with the full 'combined and uneven' panorama of their life-worlds. Borges less so, and in Lispector's case it becomes more evident in her late work, but it is emphatically the case with the others.

The Right to Literature

'Literature and Underdevelopment' coincided with Silviano Santiago's 'O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano', which I quoted at the start of this chapter. Symbolically, this could be seen as a changing of the guards: the young Santiago, backed with the most current French poststructuralist thought (notably Foucault and Derrida), entering the scene to displace Candido's authority and, more importantly, the quest for a sociologically grounded conception of literary form. Contrary to the materialism of Candido's 'literary system', Santiago's project of emancipation sets out to deconstruct the logic of the 'source' and 'origin'. The Brazilian reception of poststructuralism and postmodernism is not my topic here, but I would nonetheless warn against a sequential understanding of these developments. Santiago held Candido

vimento', 180–1: 'Toda literatura apresenta aspectos de retardamento que são *normais* ao seu modo, podendo-se dizer que a média da produção num dado instante já é tributária do passado, enquanto as vanguardas preparam o futuro. Além disso, há uma sublitteratura oficial, marginal e provinciana, geralmente expressa pelas Academias. Mas o que chama a atenção na América Latina é o fato de obras secundárias serem acolhidas pela melhor opinião crítica e durarem por mais de uma geração – quando umas e outras deveriam ter sido desde logo postas no devido lugar, como coisa sem valor ou manifestação de sobrevivência inócuas.'

91 And his argument resonates, I must add, with other key theorisations of Latin American literature at the time, not least Angel Rama's.

in high regard, and it is rather the case that poststructuralism unfolded *alongside* other approaches. The São Paulo school, with its materialist reading of literary form, would continue to flourish (to this day) thanks to critics such as Roberto Schwarz, Salette de Almeida Cara, Benjamin Abdala Jr, Walnice Nogueira Galvão, Alfredo Bosi and Maria Elisa Cevasco. The question then becomes how Candido adapted his strong concept of literature to a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

In one of his late essays, 'O direito à literatura' ('The right to literature') from 1988, we can witness this concept being stretched to a breaking point. The reason is obvious: after 'Literature and Underdevelopment', Candido's conception of literature remained fatefully challenged by popular and 'unlettered' culture. If the validity of literature hinged on the desire of 'Brazilians' to have a literature, and if literature was equated with writing, this left out the majority of Brazilians with no stake at all in print culture – a proportion of 'sixty-thousand readers to 110 million inhabitants', as this absurdity was once stated.⁹² 'O direito à literatura' was his attempt to square the circle of social justice and aesthetic discrimination. The title is a sign of the times: if human rights discourse had a low profile in the 1960s, it rose sharply in the 1970s and 1980s. A simple ngram search on the term 'human rights' shows a steep and steady ascent from 1972 until the turn of the millennium.⁹³ The result corroborates Samuel Moyn's identification of the 1970s as the turning point for human rights discourse, but also its depoliticised apotheosis in the post-1989 period as the 'last utopia'.⁹⁴ But the local timing is even more important: 1988 marked the end of 24 years of military rule in Brazil, which meant that human rights were no mere theoretical concern.

In the essay, Candido suggests that our age is marked by extreme hypocrisy in relation to the ideal of justice. Never before has it been as technically feasible to achieve social equality. Never before have human rights been so widely proclaimed. Never, in fact, has civilisation been so advanced and so pervasive. And yet, social injustices remain, inequalities are aggravated and barbarism is rife. Both rationality and irrationality are at peak levels. But it is *because* of this situation, in which 'barbarism is directly connected to a maximum level of civilisation', that human rights are being pursued more intensively than ever before.⁹⁵ Hypocrisy can therefore be given an optimistic interpretation: contrary to earlier eras, it is no longer possible for leaders to valorise barbaric deeds. Instead, they must be denied or camouflaged, since there has developed at least a minimal consensus concerning the right to human rights.

92 Santiago, *The Space In-Between*, 79. The figure derives from the 1970s. Today, the population has almost doubled.

93 Google books ngram viewer, 23 July 2020.

94 Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

95 Candido, 'O direito', 172: 'uma barbárie ligada ao máximo de civilização.'

Literature enters Candido's argument in two ways. First as an anthropologically generalisable phenomenon: 'all poetic, fictional or dramatic creation at all levels of society and every cultural context, from what we call folklore, legends, jokes, to the most complex and difficult written artifacts of the great civilisations'.⁹⁶ In this respect, it is a 'universal manifestation of all human beings throughout the ages', and there is no group of humans anywhere that has lived without 'some form of fabulation'.⁹⁷ Calling literature, with a nod to Otto Ranke, 'the waking dream of civilisations', he concludes that it is as essential to the sanity of societies as sleep and dreaming are to the individual.⁹⁸

Although the appeal to the 'universal' is familiar, this is a reversal of Candido's strong concept of literature in *Formação*. In the earlier work, he insisted on a substantive conception – an accumulated density of readers, publishers and writers – whereas here the premise is an anthropological abstraction of literature. 'O direito à literatura' begins therefore by claiming the high ground of universality and placing literature outside of national constraints altogether, but does so at the cost of allowing literature to become a weak concept. By adopting 'humanity', 'civilisation', but also 'world' as operative terms, he is attempting to reformulate literature as a value that is not reducible to instrumentalist or rationalist formulae:

Whether we see this clearly or not, the orderedness of the literary work makes us capable of organising our own feelings and thinking; and, as a consequence, more capable of bringing order to our vision of the world. This is why a hermetic poem that is hard to comprehend and lacks any tangible connection to the reality of the mind or the world, can work to such an effect, by offering a kind of order that suggests a way of overcoming chaos. The literary product pulls the words from nothingness and presents them as an articulate whole. This is the primary humanising level, contrary to what people normally think. The ordering of the word communicates with our spirit and prompts it, first of all, to organise itself; secondly to organise the world. This happens even with the simplest forms, the ditty, the proverb, the fable, that synthesize experience and reduce it to a proposal, a moral, a piece of advice or simply a mental spectacle.⁹⁹

96 Candido, 'O direito', 176: 'todas as criações de toque poético, ficcional ou dramático em todos os níveis de uma sociedade, em todos os tipos de cultura, desde o que chamamos folclore, lenda, chiste, até as formas mais complexas e difíceis da produção escrita das grandes civilizações.'

97 Candido, 'O direito', 176: 'manifestação de todos os homens de todos os tempos', 'alguma espécie de fabulação'.

98 Candido, 'O direito', 177: 'o sonho acordado das civilizações'.

99 Candido, 'O direito', 179: 'Quer percebamos claramente ou não, a caráter de coisa organizada da obra literária torna-se um fator que nos deixa mais capazes de ordenar a nossa própria mente e sentimentos; e, em consequência, mais capazes de organizar a visão que temos do mundo. Por isso, um poema hermético, de entendimento difícil, sem nenhuma alusão tangível à realidade do espírito ou do mundo, pode funcionar neste sentido, pelo fato de ser um tipo de ordem,

It is perhaps never clearer than in this passage that Candido, other similarities notwithstanding, is *not* a Brazilian Bourdieu. Literature is presented here as an irreducible value, far exceeding the specifics of print publication and position-taking. But it is also clear that Candido is attempting to reconcile two imperatives: social justice and what we might call literary justice. His materialist instincts do not abandon him here – he is fully outspoken about poverty and the abuse of power. He refuses nonetheless to abandon quality as a criterion for literary judgement. As Maria Sílvia Betti puts it, his unwavering insistence on the importance of so-called erudite literature derives from the fact that a ‘greater aesthetic effectiveness and more complex expressive resources’ has a more thoroughgoing ‘humanising potential’.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the structural reduction of form, which Candido sees operating in the shortest of jokes as well as the longest of novels, is directly connected to his conception of human society as an unfinished project. But because of the complexity of that project, it is also the more complex aesthetic forms that deserve special attention and whose dissemination needs to be supported in a democratic society. Indeed, literature itself has contributed substantially to the very idea of human rights. Candido mentions how ‘the poor’ enter literature through the work of Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens, but also how Castro Alves brought slavery to the readership’s awareness. Not unlike Lynn Hunt in her historical account of human rights, Candido grants literature a privileged role in the historical and, indeed, global emergence of egalitarian ideals.¹⁰¹

The contradiction between equality and quality is of course not *resolved* in this essay. But the structure of the argument is no less important for all that. By engaging rights discourse (as Homi Bhabha would later do with his coinage of the ‘right to narrate’),¹⁰² Candido reconfigures the strong concept of literature to position it – just as neoliberal instrumentalism was on the rise – as an essential component of an emergent democracy. The temporal logic of this ‘right’ is proleptic: it speaks to the present by anticipating a possible future. But this is *not* a teleology of the future anterior (‘it *will* have been’) – instead, it is an open future in which the right to literature enables the continued, dialectical and above all unpredictable labour of making society inhabitable and more just. In one of his last public appearances, at the age

sugerindo um modelo de superação do caos. A produção literária tira as palavras do nada e as dispõe como todo articulado. Este é o primeiro nível humanizador, ao contrário do que geralmente se pensa. A organização da palavra comunica-se ao nosso espírito e o leva, primeiro, a se organizar; em seguida, a organizar o mundo. Isto ocorre desde as formas mais simples, como a quadrinha, o provérbio, a história de bichos, que sintetizam a experiência e a reduzem a sugestão, norma, conselho ou simples espetáculo mental.’

100 Maria Sílvia Betti, ‘Sobre “O direito à literatura”, de Antonio Candido’, *Literatura e Sociedade* 30 (2019): 59.

101 Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

102 This has long been a theme in Homi Bhabha’s work, and his long-awaited book with that title remains forthcoming.

of 90, Candido explicitly addressed accusations that he was a proponent of 'Enlightenment' values:

I consider this reprimand to be the highest praise. It means that I remain loyal to the tradition of Western humanism as it was shaped from the eighteenth century onwards, according to which man is a being capable of perfection, and that society can and shall adopt measures to improve social and economic conditions, having as its horizon the achievement of the highest possible level of social and economic equality and of harmony in human relations. Our present moment seems to doubt or even deny this possibility, and there is generally little faith in utopias. But the important thing is not whether the ideal goals are reachable, fully and concretely. What counts is that we dispose ourselves *as though* we could reach them, because this may impede or at least attenuate the proliferation of the worst in ourselves and in our society.¹⁰³

Provocative though the emphasis on *Western* humanism (and on *Western humanism*) can seem today, I think we at this stage can read the statement not as a conservative attachment to a fixed set of values, but as an unwavering commitment to historical change, and to the interpretation of that change, in the service of a justice always yet-to-come. To contemplate these words today, in the era of the extreme-right takeover in Brazil, is doleful, to say the least.

Afterthoughts: Of Négritude and Literature in Brazil

But Candido himself, and the São Paulo school, must ultimately themselves be historicised. Candido's 1988 essay appeared on the cusp of a new period of democracy – or democratisation, rather – as well as on the centenary of abolition in Brazil. His principled broadening of the scope of literature chimes with the new democratic spirit, but it is notable that his engagement with *actual* texts in the essay does not extend the domain of literature.

Ten years previously, in 1978, a slim anthology of poetry entitled *Cadernos negros* appeared in São Paulo. Drawing inspiration from African decolonisation

103 Quoted in Salete de Almeida Cara, 'Percurso histórico-estético da ideia de formação', *Literatura e sociedade* 30 (2019): 45: '[C]onsidero esta restrição como um elogio. Ela quer dizer que me mantenho fiel à tradição do humanismo ocidental definida a partir do século XVIII, segundo a qual o homem é um ser capaz de aperfeiçoamento, e que a sociedade pode e deve definir metas para melhorar as condições sociais e econômicas, tendo como horizonte a conquista do máximo possível de igualdade social e econômica e de harmonia nas relações. O tempo presente parece duvidar e mesmo negar essa possibilidade, e há em geral pouca fé nas utopias. Mas o que importa não é que os alvos ideais sejam ou não atingíveis, concretamente na sua sonhada integridade. O essencial é que nos disponhamos a agir como se pudéssemos alcançá-los, porque isso pode impedir ou ao menos atenuar o afloramento do que há de pior em nós e em nossa sociedade.'

and Black Atlantic intellectual formations – notably *négritude* – this collection challenged the silencing of black writers in the Brazilian literary field; it would lead in 1980 to the formation of the Quilombhoje, a São Paulo-based activist group of black writers and artists. Although new *Cadernos* have continued to appear annually ever since, ‘becoming increasingly prominent in their endeavour to promote black Brazilian writers and break the “publishers blockade” against this work’, their example was not invoked by Candido, despite their obvious relevance to the complex matter of literature and human rights.¹⁰⁴

To be fair, the problem is a much broader one in Brazil, as noted by the Portuguese scholar Pires Laranjeira:

In the books by Alfredo Bosi, Antonio Candido, José Aderaldo Castelo, Massaud Moisés and others one encounters, if anything at all, merely scant references to specific black authors, who also fail to show up in the circuits of literary distribution and critical legitimation: whatever happened to Carolina de Jesus, Luiz Gama, Solano Trindade, Oliveira Silveira, Cuti, Éle Semog or Conceição Evaristo? A book or two with a second-rate publisher, a book analysed in a course at university or a regional college, a national edition once every 20 years, a certain level of fame in the world of song lyrics (as in the case of Nei Lopes) or obscurity pure and simple, such is the fate, even today, of black Brazilian writers.¹⁰⁵

But this is precisely why Candido’s omission can seem so puzzling. As Medeiros da Silva argues, it is Candido’s *own* theoretical conception of the literary system that can enable an analysis of the position of black writers in Brazil. Their marginality, that is to say, must be understood as *constitutive* of their literary production, just as Candido saw ‘underdevelopment’ as constitutive of Brazilian literature.¹⁰⁶ In addition, Silva’s study also makes clear that Candido had *registered* the existence of contemporary black writers, but little

104 Nazareth Soares Fonseca, ‘*Cadernos negros*: sobre a história da coleção’, *Afro-Hispanic Review* 29, no. 2 (2010): 55: ‘um lugar de destaque entre as publicações destinadas a tornar mais visíveis a produção literária que pretendia mostrar os textos de escritores negros brasileiros e furar o “bloqueio editorial” a essas produções.’

105 João Pires Laranjeira, ‘A poesia “é-sou” negra’, *Acta Scientiarum. Language and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2010): 36: ‘Não encontrarão, nos livros de Alfredo Bosi, Antonio Candido, José Aderaldo Castelo, Massaud Moisés e outros senão parcas ou nulas referências a certos escritores negros, que nem sequer aparecem condignamente nos circuitos literários de distribuição e legitimação de fortunas críticas e fiduciárias: *cadê* Carolina de Jesus, Luiz Gama, Solano Trindade, Oliveira Silveira, Cuti, Éle Semog ou Conceição Evaristo? Um ou outro livro saído numa editora secundária, um livro analisado num curso universitário ou num vestibular regional, uma edição nacional a cada 20 anos, alguma fama em letras de canções (como acontece com Nei Lopes) ou simplesmente a obscuridade, eis o destino, até à data, dos escritores negros brasileiros.’

106 Mário Augusto Medeiros da Silva, *A descoberta do insólito: literatura negra e literatura periférica no Brasil (1960–2000)* (Diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2011), 51–2.

more than that. The silence and general neglect with which Afro-Brazilian writers long were treated, alerts us therefore to a fault line between two conceptions of literature among the intellectual left in Brazil – the dominant one organised according to a national–universal dialectic (comprising also cultural hierarchies), the emergent one attuned to the hierarchies of racialisation. If, in the human rights essay, Candido saw ‘folklore’ and ‘popular literature’ as an aspect of literature, *Cadernos negros* would have presented him with recognisably ‘erudite’ literature – criticised by other Afro-Brazilian activists for being merely a ‘bourgeois distraction’¹⁰⁷ – yet a form of literature that resisted absorption into the dominant conception of national Brazilian literature. The question is a complex one, given that canonised writers such as the black Cruz e Sousa and the *mestiço* Machado de Assis have indeed been central in the Brazilian canon. Even the modernist Mário de Andrade has been claimed as black, although not without controversy.¹⁰⁸ But the prominence of such writers – if their racial positioning had been taken into account at all – would previously have been taken as evidence of the *non-racial* nature of Brazilian society. *Cadernos*, Quilombhoje and the work of writer-intellectuals such as Cuti who self-identify as black issued in this way a challenge to Candido’s foundational formulation of the ‘desire to have a literature’.¹⁰⁹ The appearance of *Cadernos* in 1978 manifests such a desire for which *national* literature in Brazil rather than European literature presents itself as the big Other. It offered an alternative ‘formation’ not reducible to the procedures of methodological nationalism, but presupposing a transnational/cosmopolitan intellectual horizon shaped by the Harlem Renaissance, négritude, the work of Frantz Fanon, but also a Brazilian lineage of marginalised black writing – including Abdias do Nascimento’s journal *Quilombo* (1948–1950), which was fully in tune with international developments among black writers and activists.¹¹⁰ This is therefore a point where the conceptual temporalities of literature in Brazil twist and turn, and it becomes clear that African and diasporic criticism is, in this specific sense, far ahead of the game. Schwarz’s pronouncement on the ‘worldwide state of the art’ in literary theory in the 1960s as being an exclusively western European and North American affair expresses a de facto disavowal of this development.¹¹¹ Put differently, Schwarz’s comment is beholden to a particular version of literary time that, for all the sophistication of his critical take on its dynamic of dominance and peripherality, failed to register the twentieth-century articulation of a new regime of literary relevance within the Black Atlantic. It is in this regard ironic that the instant canonisation of Paulo Lins’s 1997 novel *Cidade de Deus* (*City of*

107 Leonardo Nascimento, ‘A força literária e política de *Cadernos negros*, que completam 40 anos em 2018’, *Pernambuco* 145 (March 2018): 15.

108 Medeiros da Silva, *A descoberta*, 112–13.

109 Candido, *Formação*.

110 Medeiros da Silva, *A descoberta*, 52.

111 Schwarz, ‘Antonio Candido 1918–2017’.

God) was due not least to Schwarz's enthusiastic review in *Folha de São Paulo*.¹¹² A more generous reading, however, is that this review was one moment when the temporalities of canonical literature and black writing merged, producing new future possibilities for the formation of Brazilian literature.

112 Schwarz, *Sequências*, 200–10.

