

ABSTRACT

The present study looks into texts written by the Brazilian João do Rio from a hybridity perspective, and addresses the main question to explore different approaches to understanding the interface between center-periphery in the Carioca *Belle Époque* in the analysis of his texts. Our aim is to seek the voices of the urban Brazil in the historical moment of its re-Europeanization and the place of culture in the postcolonial context. Zones of cultural contacts, like Rio de Janeiro, reveal the “londonization” of Brazil, from a historiographic path of the sociocultural references related to Britain, viewing the paradigms of imitation and “cultural dependency”, as well as originality from the inside. Furthermore, they divulge the assimilation of foreign models regarding the lexicon, the architecture, the entertainment, the sports, the fashion and the literature in the commencements of the XX century.

KEY WORDS: postcolonial studies, literary studies, londonization, cultural hybridity.

CARIOCAS' CULTURAL BORDERS: THE TROPICAL BELLE ÉPOQUE IN JOÃO DO RIO

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RESUMO

O presente estudo investiga crônicas escritas pelo brasileiro João do Rio a partir de uma perspectiva do hibridismo cultural com o objetivo principal de explorar diferentes abordagens para o entendimento da interface centro-periferia na *Belle Époque* carioca. Propomos encontrar as vozes do Brasil urbano que se re-europeizava desde os oitocentos e o lugar da cultura no contexto pós-colonial. Zonas de contato cultural como a cidade do Rio de Janeiro revelam a “londonização” do Brasil, por uma visão historiográfica de referências socioculturais relacionadas à Grã-Bretanha, ressaltando os paradigmas da imitação e da dependência cultural, assim como a originalidade, a partir de seu interior. Além disso, revela-se a assimilação dos modelos estrangeiros, no que diz respeito ao léxico, à arquitetura, ao lazer, aos esportes, à moda e à literatura no início do século XX.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: estudos pós-coloniais, estudos literários, londonização, hibridismo cultural.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural questions have been transformed into questions of identity. Recent research on cultural hybridism has shown that there is no authenticity related to these issues but a *cultural continuum*, a plurality of identities built by different social and ethnic groups in different historical times.

This article focuses on texts by João do Rio (João Paulo Alberto Coelho Barreto's pen name, 1881-1921) from a hybridity perspective and addresses the principal question to search for different approaches to understanding the interface between center-periphery in the Carioca Belle Époque in analyzing his writings.

The object of our analysis is to seek, firstly, the voices of urban Brazil at the historical moment of its re-Europeanization and the place of culture in the postcolonial context; we then move on to examine the urban culture and the elite involved in the fantasy of Civilization context influenced by the aristocratic Franco-English model.

As we will argue, zones of cultural contact, like Rio de Janeiro, reveal the 'Londonization' of Brazil, observed in our research from a historiographic path of the social-cultural references related to Britain, viewing the paradigms of imitation ('copying') and 'cultural dependency' and originality from the inside - foreign elements combine and merge with the native ones in a vital way; furthermore, they divulge the assimilation of foreign models in crucial aspects of culture and society at the beginning of the XX century in the new Republic.

LONDONIZATION

Whenever we discuss cultural hibridity, we deal with a series of questions about the effects of cultural encounters and the constant and accelerated changes modern societies have been facing. Cultural transformations are intensified in the same proportion as different areas of the globe interconnect, producing waves of social transformation which potentially reach the whole of the Earth's surface. That is how Giddens summarizes the discontinuities that separate modern institutions from traditional ones; he also explains that "social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character" (GIDDENS, 1990, p. 38). Hall considers these transformations which occur in limitless, continuous time, and defines the consequences of the convivial experiences with them as one of the most important distinctions between traditional and modern societies

(HALL, 1999, p. 15). It is known that cycles of hybridity in contemporary history have been alternately more heterogeneous or more homogeneous, but for the purpose of our research, "Londonization" occupies a place of great concern when investigating contemporary culture in XIX century Brazil.

Before mentioning the process of "Londonization" experienced by the country, it is necessary to state that the expression 're-Europeanization' defines the reemergence of the country in terms of European influence which began with the Portuguese in the XVI century, reached a point of discontinuity after a period of isolation during the colonial period shortly after its discovery, but it was never interrupted. We direct our attention to the XIX century, not only because of the impact of such interference but because it was when the colonial period came to an end followed immediately by a new neocolonialist order – this time dominated by the British. Consequently, the nineteenth century is relevant not for introducing or reintroducing European influence in Brazil, but for confirming its triumph (NEEDEL, 1987, p. 153)

The advent of the Industrial Revolution that saw the emergence of Great Britain playing the role of a young capitalist can be contemplated as the first steps of the Western world towards 'cultural homogeneity'. England, the hegemonic power, played a unique role in the world-economy of the XIX century by reaching beyond its colonial boundaries and imposing its will upon other countries, through the exportation of diverse supplies and new inventions, as well as new ideas, behavior patterns, artistic tastes, political preferences, consumerism – all of which would add distinctive cultural traces to the countries subject to its preponderant influence, be it directly or indirectly.

One of the most urgent effects related to the excitement of modernization refers to the immense changes originating a large-scale economy. Accordingly, the peripheral countries, already dependent on foreign funds, contracted even more debts in order to match the social, cultural and ideological patterns of the hegemonic powers. The consequence of this propagation of consumerism, be it dream or reality, can be seen as the outcome of a "global cultural supermarket" (HALL, 1999, p. 75).

It is somewhat complex to understand the country and its people after the arrival of the Portuguese Court in Rio de Janeiro in 1808. At first, Brazilians and Portuguese-Brazilians initiated a vague search in the direction of being transformed into a modern nation which could be accepted internationally, but in the late XIX century, they perpetrated a frantic move towards Civilization. At that point, the English played an important role in the demand for modernization, introducing new models of sheltering, furnishings, transport and new inventions in general. What is more, they collaborated in terms of improving health and comfort – the importation of

household goods, furniture, raw materials and machines – and established a profound transformation in Brazilian culture; culture in sociological terms – distinguished likewise when linguistic borrowings are analyzed together with hybrid artifacts, practices and representations (HANNA, 2004, p. 65).

Among the major items to be considered in this renewal, English food represents an important constituent regarding the renovation of our habits, as they added a real variety to Brazilians' taste and in the adoption of new ingredients, e.g. bread from wheat flour and the habit of drinking tea not for medicinal purposes, along with bed and kitchen wares – china, dishware, bowls, trays, flatware, accessories, scissors, razors, agricultural equipment, the use of the water closet, etc. Brazilian elites gradually assimilated and accommodated imported objects, luxury and hygiene goods in everyday use, taming and consecrating them all together by use, bringing up to date inner and outer spaces.

The Victorian British developed a more or less imperial relationship with semi-colonial Brazil in the XIX century, when people considered them either wizards or magicians. During the most active period of British penetration in the country – from 1808 to 1914 – engineers, railway workers, businessmen, missionaries, consuls, an unmistakable diversity of professions act as 'British cultural agents', especially those who reached our most important cities. The *Gringos*, the *Yankees*, the *Godemes* (from *goddamn*), the *Whites*, the *Beefs* – and a number of other nicknames the British were ascribed here – helped to promote the country technically and commercially divulging their customs, values and culture.²

As we know, important metropolises, mainly if they are ports, represent the most appropriate site for the adoption of new eating habits, household customs or patterns, linguistic borrowings. Places like Rio de Janeiro in the late XIX century, where the most vital trade zone was established, provide an ideal environment for the first stage of the idea of contact, the starting point, literally, for cultural globalization, since it was the exact location where the tendency to mix would turn into concrete basic elements to carry through the process of hybridization. The neo-imperial trade venture had created the 'contact zones' – social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple

2 They were rapidly transformed into disseminators of innumerable Anglicisms - words and expressions which were accepted and adopted as our own – bangalô (bungalow), tilbury, victoria, trolley, truque (truck), footing, piquenique (picnic), clube (club), esporte (sport), jóquei (jockey), performance, handicap, puzzle, matches, futebol (foot-ball), gol (goal), coquetel (cocktail), bisteca (beefsteak), rosbife (roastbeef), sanduiche (sandwich), lanche (lunch), and hundreds of others - sometimes with distinct changes in form, spelling and meaning, sometimes keeping just a vague resemblance of the original pronunciation which resulted in hilarious new sounds; and proper names as well, Franklin, Nelson, Lincoln, Milton, Gladstone, Walter, Newton, Wellington, Washington, Spencer, Edison, Elizabeth, Lucy, Victoria, etc.

with each other, where the crossing of trade and culture can occur spontaneously, a perfect locus for cultural encounters, as the presence of foreigners of various origins bumping into each other offers multiple superimpositions as well as cultural intersections. At first, it seems that a merely 'vague mixture' is taking place, but in due course, cross-cultural encounters together with distinctive episodes carry out deeper and more forceful and lasting changes.

Freyre's interpretation of post-colonial Brazil contemplates the individual and the social features in a particular way, not repelling or excluding one another; on the contrary, he considers the study of the individual in relation to the whole of the situation. There is thus no moral or social vacancy. The Brazilian sociologist's ideology of interpenetration of cultures judges the process as an articulator of the customs of a society which can originate "a new and hybrid, multiple and rich culture, even though confused in its heritage, in its development techniques, in its values and moral, intellectual, aesthetic and material life style" (FREYRE, 2000, p. 38); that is, it does not imply a disintegrated practice of the cultures involved – a major current analysis in Cultural Studies.

One of the terms Freyre takes up when he refers to the British influences besides *adaptation*, *accommodation* and *negotiation*, is *invasion*, since the *Yankees* had not always been accepted entirely in a pleasant way – there was a feeling of "colonization" in the air. Ironically, the author calls this incursion "a soft, white revolution", wrought by English families in the interior of the Brazilian social environment – the introduction of purely material values is seen as directly associated with the changes in domestic habits and customs which had come with them (2000, p. 221).

Apart from this, there is the notion of *commodity fetishism*, used by Needell (1987) that tries to explain the attempts of the Brazilian elite to accommodate European paradigms, in addition to their enthusiasm in copying every single foreign item – cultural identification in those days was transformed into veneration, easily recognized in all the particulars money could buy. It is worth noting that despite the fact that Rio de Janeiro was a tropical port, it did not prevent the Cariocas from recreating the Franco-English models – intact patterns reverently copied – not considering how dislocated they might look when being used in a hot and steamy city. The integral translation the "civilized customs" neglected adaptations which should be made from one culture to another – and trends in fashion is a good example. Disregarding the climate, the tropical scenery and the sandy beaches, the Cariocas proudly exhibited the thickness of their clothes – the rich could be recognized as cultured and civilized from the layers of cotton

and linen underneath the wool coats – the only thing that counted was people and the city being seen as Europeanized.

The symbolic references were categorical in an environment where the fetishism in adopting the appropriate model meant ‘being different’ from the local inhabitants and “being equal” to those from the great, civilized centers. Being elegant, being noble meant, primarily, having the power to own goods and this reality was to be translated through the clothing – the perfect way to incarnate the overstated appreciation that the dress code expressed one’s level of civilization.

In replicating the Franco-English upper-class life openly, not to mention the fact that putting up theaters, *boulevards*, restaurants, parks, public and private buildings in Rio with meticulous European architectural traces, Cariocas translated habits and manners of aristocratic urban culture with passion. It seems this behavior is directly associated the fact that the country did not show any concern about its own identity. Moreover, Brazilians seem to denote a certain disdain for or no sense of what a superior cultural tradition really meant. They tended to see themselves as backward – that is why, Carioca consumers’ fantasy points to fetishism, points to a mere copy (NEEDELL, 1987, p. 161).

If, on one hand, it is apparent that there was an exact copy of the European fashion trends, on the other, in the process of receiving new attitudes, Brazilians not only adopted and assimilated them but also developed, recreated and “Brazilianized” new modern ideas. The intellectual and political elite, especially journalists, writers, columnists, artists in general, had the chance to gain access to the new media and to experiment similar sensations toward the world. They participated actively in the cultural transnationalization process as they shared the same artistic tastes and adopted similar rites and codes of behavior. Most of all, they ensured the flow of their symbols by spreading the new thinking in salon parties, tea parties, literary meetings, cafés, confectioneries, clubs, and bookstores.

At the same time they introduced, discussed, absorbed and spread new concepts, they became responsible for the strengthening of new communities of significance and the reorganization of urban culture. That is the reason they are sometimes granted not very flattering nicknames given that arrogant intellectuals interpreted foreign interference as negative influences – as *copy*, as *imitation* – and, in condemning the *imitators*, they used to say that they were either “Frenchified” or “Anglicized”³ – the Brazilian

3 From this perspective Freyre claims that: “O que é certo dos, dentre eles, acusados de terem se anglicizado como Machado – por alguns chamado ‘mulato inglês’; ou se afrancesado ao ponto de terem desnaturado pelo afrancesamento a língua portuguesa, como se disse de Joaquim Nabuco; ou

novelist and poet Machado de Assis, for instance, was rudely called *mulato inglês* – *English mulatto*, an expression of prejudice.

Debates concerning hybridization point to a current inclination to celebrate hybridity and take up Bakhtin's interpretation of intertextuality and plurality of voices, destabilizing the notion of copy. Hybridization is seen as a fusion of diverse cultural traditions and a powerful source of creativity as it offers countless opportunities for new forms of culture production. Conversely, there are those who fear and condemn it; they argue that hybridization means indetermination and implies relativism. In debates on post-colonialism, dealing with the nature of colonized subjects, and the way they must simultaneously embrace two different cultural identities, it is said hybridism also produces a "dual consciousness". Above all, hybridization can be seen not only as a process of encounters, changes, exchanges, contact and interaction, but also as a process of loss of local traditions and local roots, provoking inevitable tension between local and global knowledge.

Cultural influences hardly occur in an easy or similar manner. Debates on cultural interactions favor discussions about the consequences of cultural invasions, for there are several different forms of receptivity which may stimulate diverse reactions such as rejection, segregation, resistance, or the opposite, healthy accommodation - in Brazil, in particular, it seems the latter predominates. Likewise, the results or consequences of cultural interactions are unpredictable as traditions are constantly being constructed and reconstructed. What is more, although it is evident that reconstruction implies innovation, the process implies some sort of adaptation, that is, a reconciliation of differences.

Active reception involves a continuous transformation, and together with adaptation, it can also be explained as the domestication of the different – an adjustment to a new situation. All in all, we can state that in cultural encounters, there will be continuous underlying creativity, be it individual or collective. In other words, substitutions or half-substitutions will at all times occur in a context of cultural interaction.

JOÃO DO RIO: *COPY, IMITATION, MIMICRY*

Before briefly examining João do Rio's panoramic literature (Benjamin 1999), regarding his first plastic plane with its informative background, and the second plane, with its broad, extensive panorama, it is essential to pose a

se tornado um subinglês no seu modo de ser idealista prático: acusação feita a Mauá; ou um simples imitador do americano Cooper no seu indianismo: acusação feita ao tão brasileiro José de Alencar, glorificador, quer de Iracemas de pés selvagememente nus, quer de sinhazinhas morenas da corte de Pedro II" (2000, p. 28).

question on the crossing of the social and cultural features of his writings observed in different segments. The writer's "mirror-texts" divulge the cultural aspect of the Cariocas' elite and their fascination for foreign ideas and habits: the fantasy of Civilization, the imitative passion for European standards, the transformation of customs, cosmopolitanism, peripheral centers and hegemonic powers, identity and patriotism are items to be considered. The language, the subjects, the moral values and rules identified in his writings and displayed by the society of his time and the environment he lived in, when combined, determine the social dimension of his literary text.

The citizen-of-the-world role notion we have nowadays as we live (or will live) in the interstices (Bhabba) – between two or more societies, two cultures, two countries, etc. is also present in João do Rio's portrayal of the city. He is the *flâneur* who wandered through Rio de Janeiro divided into countless others – the city of the *grand monde* and *bas-fond*, of the *charmiers* and *scoundrels* (*encantadores* and *canalha*), the sacred and profane – registering all sides in his reporting. What is more, in doing so, he also unveiled himself. Frequent in his writings is the idea of *in-betweenness* – cultural values are negotiated continuously and cultural difference is admitted and produces an international culture based on the articulation of cultural hybridism – likewise, bringing ambiguity into the multiple identities and citizenships. João do Rio was a pilgrim, a wanderer who lived between Rio de Janeiro and Europe, between the charmiers' Central Avenue (Avenida Central) and the scoundrels' slums. In his amazing multiplicity of subjects, the in-betweenness of the panoramic literature reveals itself as a hybrid genre, written as well as pictorial, reportorial, as well as literary and imaginative.

The subject of *copy*, *imitation*, *mimicry* is recurrent in his writings, which means the search for an authentic identity opposing the foreigners'. In several of his texts he demonstrates his disdain for Brazilians' plagiarism. In 1916, he writes *Traditions*⁴ (*Tradições*) – a dialogue between two gentlemen, a twenty-five-year-old youth and forty-year-old man on Christmas Eve. They discuss the impossibility of maintaining and returning to the traditional family dinner party with the habitual grandmas' *rabanadas* (kind of French toasts). João do Rio shows young Cariocas *copying* Paris, "copying Paris, repeating Paris on the Avenue". He condemns their performance, stating "it is deplorable mockery, dissimulation"⁵. He confirms his resentment in, "The

4 All the titles have been translated from Portuguese by the researcher.

5 The young man: "Vou daqui ao florista. Tenho que mandar flores a diversas senhoras. Depois vou a uma "confiserie". "Bonbons", meu caro, para diferentes damas. Depois, o almoço grande com alguns rapazes em uma certa casa. Passeios à tarde. Casaca. Um jantar como os condes de Portanogra. Em seguida a corrida aos reveillons. Tenho de comemorar o nascimento de Jesus com champanhe em vários lugares ao mesmo tempo, a começar pelo Assírio, onde estará a haute-gomme, até os cabarets...

traditions miserably disappear from our customs” (RIO, 2001, p. 27) – a reaction shared with part of the Carioca population who felt excluded from the modernization process. Nevertheless, João do Rio, known for his paradoxical behavior, continues in the same narrative criticizing the loss of tradition, but at the same time defending it: “it is much better to help destroy them [the traditions] to keep them in vain”⁶ (RIO, 2001, p. 27).

It seems he is aware of the worldwide problems on the topic of traditions and globalized attempts at accommodation. What is original in the text is his premonitory vision that the binarism tradition/modernity would be progressively affected; although the traditional colonized cultures remained diverse, they would gradually aspire to enter modernity (HALL, 2003, p. 73). Giddens emphasizes the combination of modernity/tradition in concrete environments, “tradition”, affirms the British sociologist, “is not wholly static, because it has to be reinvented by each new generation as it takes over its cultural inheritance from those preceding it” (1990, p. 37). The very argument, however, has been challenged on the grounds that Brazilians, in João do Rio’s view, seemed not to show any concern for their earlier traditions. Within this discourse of tradition, the globalization of culture would also redefine the meaning of tradition which opposes permanence in a remote past; modern tradition implies an international memory whose compositional elements have always been recycled; the past mixes up with the present and determines new conceptions of the world, new behaviors, creating new roots for the globalized man in his everlasting mobility (ORTIZ, 1994, p. 213).

In João do Rio’s *Imitation (Imitação)*, published on July 29, 1916 (in Peixoto, 2001: 113-115), the title can be taken as premonitory of what he comprehends from *transferring* or *translation* when he announces that “Brazil is an intense country when it comes to accompanying novelties”, for it is, admittedly, “the country of *imitation*”:

There is no similar country. One can take, as an example, the adaptations which are the origins of the transitory Fashion in the civilized capitals; one can take the negroes from hinterland Africa who imitate the whites from the expeditions. Compared to Brazilians, they are isolated. In this

Já mandei guardar uma das mesas de corbeille no Assírio. O homem de quarenta anos: - “Mas, criatura, estás apenas copiando Paris, está repetindo Paris na Avenida. É uma lamentável macaqueação, um fingimento” (RIO, 2001, p. 25).

6 “The man 40 years old: - Então eu sou mais velho e ainda hei de agüentar com a tradição? Então tu jantas com a linda condessa de Portanogra, e mandas-me para a vovó Guilhermina? Então tu tens mesa na corbeille de um reveillon mundano e atiras-me para um jantar de crianças? Pedro, a tradição é para a mocidade. Eu sou de meia idade. Anda daí. Vou contigo. Tenho de mandar flores também. As tradições desaparecem dos nossos costumes miseravelmente! Mas é muito melhor ajudar a destrui-las do que mantê-las em vão...” (RIO, 2001, p. 27).

country, there is nothing original. And if by any chance there is, it immediately forgets its condition, for the fervor of imitation.⁷ (PEIXOTO, 2001, p. 113)⁸

In *The Model (O Figurino)* written in 1911 (GOMES, 2005, p. 169-174), he admits his doubts concerning the authenticity of his own performance; he realizes he is a victim of imitation like the Cariocas he criticizes. He confesses he is an 'imported' dandy, "I stopped a little surprised when I looked at myself". At that moment he realizes how much he resembles, in attitudes, manners, and tastes any other person who is in evidence in a prominent metropolis, as if all of them belonged to a "kind of a cooperative of attitudes". Taking himself very seriously as an object of observation, he declares he wears a top hat, gloves and makes gestures identical to those of any dandy or *flâneur* in Rio and around the world. He declares himself a snob in "an environment of artificiality" stating that there was a state of sameness distinguishing modern society. He writes,

Everything in the world becomes more and more models. The model is a contemporary obsession [...]; the model exists everywhere, in everything – in arts, in politics, in sports, in religion, in uses and customs, as in the *toilettes*. [...]; the model is an obsession which attacks the individual, the classes, the whole population.⁹ (GOMES, 2005, p. 171)

Actually, it seems João do Rio feared the cultural homogeneity the globalized world would fall prey to almost a century afterwards. He argues, "Man is essentially vain. He copies gestures, attitudes, phrases and clothes – everything he can see" [...]; "there is a consecutive and permanent imitation, desperate *mimicry*." [...]; "modeling is law" (GOMES, 2005, p. 171). The writer recognizes himself among those who followed the hegemonic countries, the most important centers of civilization, he knew he belonged to a group which was responsible for spreading the elements or systems of culture, "most people imitate the role models irresistibly – the most intelligent, a little angry for not being imitated, the rest, did not even realize what they were doing"; he claims "That is copy, the mimicry of snobs" (GOMES, 2005, p. 172).

7 "Não há terra igual. Podes tomar as adaptações que são a origem da Moda transitória nas capitais civilizadas, podes pegar dos negros do interior da África, que imitam os brancos das expedições. Diante do brasileiro, ficam todos longe. Neste país não há nada original. E quando há, imediatamente deixa de ser, pela fúria da imitação" (PEIXOTO, 2001, p. 113).

8 João do Rio's texts have been translated from Portuguese by the researcher.

9 "Tudo no mundo é cada vez mais figurino. O figurino é a obsessão contemporânea. [...] Assim o figurino existe em tudo – em arte, em política, em sport, em religião, nos usos, nos costumes, como nas toilettes. [...] O figurino é obsessão como ponto de comparação moral, que ataca os indivíduos, as classes, as populações."

Besides *copy, repetition, adaptation, imitation, mimicry* found in the digressions of João do Rio, the idea of “national loyalty”, intertwined in the concept of patriotism and based on the for-or-against position can be seen in many of his writings. His approach exposes the *in-betweenness* of his attitudes, the love he devoted to the country and the love he devoted to Paris or London. In *When will Brazilians discover Brazil? (Quando o Brasileiro Descobrirá o Brasil?)* published on August 11, 1908, a century after the arrival of the Portuguese Court in Brazil (it was being highly celebrated in an attempt to start a movement of national self-knowledge), he depicts the *charmners’* limited intellectual thinking when they meet in the European scenery of dinner parties in Rio de Janeiro and talk about their international voyages. He introduces them as experts in the history, politics and cultures of the French, British and also of faraway countries such as Egypt, Siberia and Turkistan. Nevertheless, they are badly informed of the geography of Brazil, they do not even know that “In Minas Gerais State there is no seaport”¹⁰.

His observations are rather sarcastic and he disapproves of the ignorance and the lack of national awareness of the Carioca elite. The narrator explains to an astonished young lady that “although Brazil has a long coastline, Minas is one of the four central states with no seaport”. He ironically identifies the meeting as an “interesting and scholarly lecture” and describes the conversation running “in a perfect intellectual salon” where the tea preparation follows a “Russian style with lemon”. He portrays the guests sarcastically: “There were ladies deliciously well-dressed and the gentlemen were superiorly rich” [...]; “They showed that insolent and exhausted air which allowed a fool to show his abilities [of knowing Brazilian geography], and the lady who was questioning him, did it simply for being disgusted though civilized”. He assures us she absolutely did not care about the Brazilian states and whether or not they were central or coastal states, she is firmly interested in showing off that she belongs to the high society of voyagers.

In 1916, during the First World War – an event which stopped Cariocas from traveling to Europe and made them envious of those who were still there – João do Rio demonstrates his difficulty in belonging to two different countries, to different worlds at the same time. He admits nostalgia towards overseas in his text called *Missing Paris deeply (Saudade)*, published in the same year (PEIXOTO, 2001, p. 107-109). He perfectly portrays the ambiguity, the feeling of a secluded sense of belonging in those Cariocas, even the ones

10 “Mas então, Minas não tem um porto de mar? – Infelizmente, minha senhora. Apesar do Brasil ter as costas largas, Minas é um dos quatro Estados centrais, sem porto de mar. – Quatro, só? – Infelizmente, quatro, só. Apesar do Brasil ter muitos Estados, os outros não aderiram ao movimento de horror ao oceano.” (RIO, João do. *Cinematógrafo: crônicas cariocas*. Porto: Chardron, 1909. p. 275-283. in <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/>).

who had never been there. He anticipates the dilemma of belonging to two countries simultaneously, a sentiment currently suffered by individuals in diasporic situations. He means there was a kind of hesitation if any chance of choosing between two citizenships could be undertaken,

I know in Paris there is a Brazilian patriotism. Paris teaches how to be patriot because Paris owns all the nobilities. There is no foreign being on the banks of the Seine who does not learn to love his country, loving France. But when leaving Paris, we love our land, we love our country with obsession: deeply missing Paris.¹¹ (PEIXOTO, 2001, p. 108)

The narrator regrets not acting as the Parisians who are proud of loving their country, their geography. Brazilians, on the contrary, worry about “the others”, mimicking Europeans in different levels, but forgetting to imitate the French and English in the way they loved and respected their countries.

The misinformation of Brazilian culture and lack of patriotism observed in the Cariocas were abominated by João do Rio especially during his moments of patriotic fervor. He preserved neither the rich nor the poor in his writings, whereas he expressed himself contradictorily and dressed up like English dandies in suits and hats actually made in London. The new Rio de Janeiro, center of the national mentality, was inspiration for a writer who painted modern life with all its inconsistency; his particular way of seeing the city, criticizing the Cariocas, progress, modernization also exposes public spaces as animated characters. His attentive observation of commonplaces, of circumstantial everyday events becomes a reference of the city; his reading of the capital reproduces Carioca life during the twenty years of enduring civilization, unveiling its vanities, qualities, vices, beauties and sorrows.

In his ambiguous position, he condemns the increasing popularization of habits and the tendency to artificialize customs – both recognized in the irony of his characters and narrators. When he makes them talk losing individuality and the singularity of being different, he proves himself alternatively, being dandy, being artificial, being unique, confirming the “us” and the “others” in constant conflict. In the simulated and illusionary environment of the copy, João do Rio shows his double consciousness, his living in-betweenness, the modern reporter who celebrates the vitality of urban space with its cultural diversity and interstitial location.

11 “Em Paris, bem sei, há um patriotismo brasileiro. Paris ensina a ser patriota, porque Paris tem todas as nobrezas. Não há nenhum estrangeiro que nas margens do Sena, não aprenda a amar a sua terra amando a França. Mas quando se sai de Paris, amamos a nossa terra a nossa pátria, com uma obsessão: a saudade de Paris.”

CONCLUSION

The impertinent dandy pictures the society of imitation with high curiosity in everyday language stressing the artificiality of the Carioca upper classes. João do Rio died of a heart attack in 1921 when the first manifestations in the search of a Brazilian identity with native roots began being brought to debate by intellectuals. The sense of “being or not being a Brazilian” went on being discussed in the first decades of the XX century, given that the past of slavery and the republican present were blurred. The modernists worried about an idealized future and pursued pure aesthetics in Brazilian culture, one which could bring together present and past in harmony.

There were countless ways of articulating the process of social adjustment and innumerable other attempts to organize Brazilian politics at the beginning of the XX century. One of them was expressed by the written language, by poetry, novels and social narrative. The relationship between the writers and their texts and their roles in society was symbiotic; the poet, the novelist, the reporter, the painters, the photographers were to capture the great moment of social transformation in Brazil, to recreate the news and expose it to the elites with as close as possible an outline as they wanted to view.

This is the way we read João Paulo Emilio Cristóvão dos Santos Coelho Barreto, this is the way we read the *flâneur* João do Rio, the novelist, the reporter, the narrator, the translator of Oscar Wilde; our approach rests upon the assumption that views all of them united representing the modern photographer, the modern ethnographer, the scholar dedicated to cultural studies.

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