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## The Pluralism of Antonio Candido\*

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Antonio Candido: frustrated sociologist, anthropologist in disguise, accomplished literary critic? Which is the best portrait of this social scientist who has quietly left his mark in so many areas of knowledge in Brazil?

I was always very timid; I always thought that I didn't know anything, that the things I knew were not interesting to anyone (from taped interview).<sup>1</sup>

Some years ago Antonio Candido suggested that a necessary stage in an underdeveloped country's effort to overcome intellectual dependence lay in the ability of its people to produce first-class works influenced by national, rather than foreign, models. This would enrich the process of borrowing from abroad itself (Candido 1972). His suggestion spoke to the long-standing worry of Brazilian intellectuals that the immediate data of our experience are all around us, but our imaginations are basically European.

Antonio Candido once put this problem directly but ironically: "For us Brazilians, universalism is already European." His own solution was to recognize that our link to Europe (or the United States) was not an option but almost a natural fact, sociologically linked to the state of cultural dependency, and to suggest that becoming aware of the country's own intellectual lineage would eventually create a reversal of experiences and a more open circulation of differing values.

I will use Antonio Candido's own work to investigate this problem. My intention is to show the anthropological side of his work, as much in his sociology as in his literary studies. I intend thus to include him in the lineage of anthropological thought in Brazil, as someone who did anthropology without being aware of it.

Happily, the worldview of anthropology is not the privilege of anthropologists. Antonio Candido is not, and was not, the only one to do a hidden anthropology. But he is an excellent example because of the quality and timeliness of his work, in addition to always having been very near, even flirting with, anthropology. Institutional barriers should not limit our imagination. As the argument unfolds, Antonio Candido's perspective will emerge as paradigmatic, not only for thinking about anthropology in Brazil, but also for the social sciences in general.

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<sup>1</sup> In November 1978, Antonio Candido graciously granted me an interview in which he expressed opinions and spoke of his memories, with the objective of clarifying aspects of his intellectual trajectory. This material was used in my PhD thesis (Peirano 1981) and I based my treatment of the period of Antonio Candido's training on it. I have taken the liberty, throughout this article, of citing extracts from the tape recording which show Antonio Candido's fascinating personality.

Durkheim's sociology is a kind of canon at the University of São Paulo, brought by the French beginning in 1934. But it already had roots here. Some sociological precursors, such as Fernando de Azevedo, were fully under the Durkheimian influence.

An appropriate start might be to place the question in a context familiar to Antonio Candido: the relation between the individual and society, so much discussed in classical sociology, in which I will try to place Candido as an actor and character.

It may seem strange to investigate the community of social scientists itself in these terms. Nevertheless, like any other social actors, sociologists or anthropologists are socialized in a specific institutional milieu, which they conform to, adapt, or modify. In this process, vocations are formed and delineated, some gaining institutional support, others being rejected and refused.

This paper shows how Antonio Candido, today's respected literary critic, exemplifies the case of an intellectual who suffered difficulties by virtue of the intellectual framework existing at the time of his graduate training. Had he been born 20 years later, different options would have been offered to him. I suggest that one of them would have been anthropology, by virtue of the affinity his work has with certain basic attitudes in contemporary anthropological thought. I will touch on three topics: I will recall some aspects of academia at the beginning of "social science" in Brazil; I will reconsider two of his books, *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* (*The Farmers of Rio Bonito*) and *Literatura e Sociedade* (*Literature and Society*), from an anthropological perspective; finally, I will call attention to the relation between intellectual traditions and their institutional definitions, at different times in the same society, by contrasting the idea of a Brazilian "pluralist" social science with Geertz's conception of "blurred genres" in the United States.

## HIS TRAINING

My father was a doctor and wanted his three sons to be doctors. As God is good, God helped me, and I was denied admission [to medical school]. God and my ignorance. I am a deserter. This consciousness of guilt which I always carry with me is the consciousness of the guilt of not having been a doctor.

From the point of view of Antonio Candido, the kind of academic training offered by the Universidade de São Paulo in the 1940s was "pluralist." The dominant influence was, without doubt, Durkheimian sociology. But the students soon felt that Durkheim was in the past, and contemporary French sociology seemed weak to them. They assimilated, in this way, new influences: a certain "flexible Marxism" (in Antonio Candido's expression) through philosophy—dogmatic Marxism was largely linked to the Communist movement and was taught in the Faculty only in order to be criticized—and the ethnology of Boas and Lowie, with a strong emphasis on the concrete study of primitive cultures, as well as the theory of acculturation and the urban sociology of the Chicago School.<sup>2</sup>

The professors—Roger Bastide, Emilio Willems, Jean Maugé, among those most mentioned by Antonio Candido—tried to train "men of culture" with diversified interests, rather than professionals and specialists, properly speaking. Until then, philosophy was practically nonexistent in the academic curriculum. The purpose of introducing it at the Universidade de São Paulo was not so much to train philosophers as to create an atmosphere which might permit the development of a critical spirit turned toward reflection on

<sup>2</sup> This section is based on the interview mentioned in Note 1.

social and cultural problems (Candido 1978, p. 14).<sup>3</sup> This spirit at the university was responsible, according to Antonio Candido, for the greater part of his generation dedicating themselves to applying sociology and philosophy to other areas of interest, such as art, literature, music, and painting.<sup>4</sup>

Then, one fine day, I, who am a person of few impetuous independent gestures, made one. I went to the Faculty of Medicine at the time of enrollment, withdrew my application, and enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy. And I only called my father afterward.

Antonio Candido confesses that among the social sciences, anthropology always fascinated him more than sociology. American sociology, for example, seemed to him totally "uninspiring":<sup>5</sup> "social surveys, the sociology of moral apathy in American universities." Even urban ecology, taught in Roger Bastide's seminars and then much in vogue, bored him. In contradistinction, he encountered in anthropology a heavily accented poetic tone, which captivated him. He comments that he read, enthusiastically and assiduously, the *American Anthropologist* (American) and *Man* (British), as well as the classic monographs of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, and Nadel. Remembering the period of his graduate work, Antonio Candido says that he always felt a great attraction, on the one hand, for the qualitative aspects of social phenomena, and, on the other hand, for the individual case. As much in one respect as in the other, anthropology seemed more satisfying to him than urban studies and statistical sociological analyses. (Retrospectively, one might suggest that Durkheimian thought was congenial to "pluralism"—actually, Durkheim and Mauss, attempting to observe social diversity within universalism, were led to accept the variety of cultural values, including the values of the "others" studied as well as those of the investigators themselves. Heir to Durkheim and Mauss, anthropology defined itself thus as inevitably "pluralist"—in the sense conveyed by Antonio Candido. The affinity between his perspective and anthropology can be explained in this way.

To confirm these retrospective impressions, Antonio Candido mentions the case of his doctoral dissertation, presented to the Department of Sociology and later published as *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* (1975). When he defended it in 1954, Roger Bastide refused to give him the highest grade because he did not consider it a sociological work. He argued that the discipline was sociology and the work clearly had an anthropological stamp.

If I am studying a primitive culture, I am, in the end, preoccupied with the human problems of the human being who is before me. How he walks, how he sings, how he dances, how he sees the world. At the other extreme, that of sociology, I don't see any human beings at all. I see that 7,283 people use Kolynos toothpaste.

Contrasting two intellectual trajectories lets us see the range of possibilities available at that time. Here, the most interesting contrast is perhaps with Florestan Fernandes, one reason being that Antonio Candido himself patterns his discussion of his graduate years at the Universidade de São Paulo on the affinities and differences between the two.

<sup>3</sup> When the Universidade de São Paulo was founded, foreign professors were invited to teach the first generation of Brazilian students. French professors were chosen to teach at the Faculdade de Filosofia—which explains the emphasis on the "Durkheimian canon"—and they later became known as the "French mission" of the 1930s.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Candido's reference group was also organized with Bastide: besides our author, it included Ruy Coelho, also interested in literature; Gilda Mello e Souza, oriented toward the study of aesthetics; Lourival Gomes Machado, visual arts; Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes, cinema; Oswaldo Elias, popular culture; and Florestan Fernandes, interested in folklore at the beginning of the 1940s. For the recent publication of Gilda Mello e Souza's doctoral dissertation, defended in 1950, see Mello e Souza (1987). See Pereira de Queiróz (1976) for a study of Roger Bastide.

<sup>5</sup> The term, in English, is Antonio Candido's.

(Florestan Fernandes is considered the intellectual and institutional founder of what came to be known as "the sociological school of São Paulo" in the 1950s and 1960s, one of whose products was "dependency theory.")

Antonio Candido and Florestan Fernandes worked together in the organization of the Department of Sociology, and it was due to the efforts of both that academic sociology took the institutional direction into which it eventually settled. Mutual references occur frequently in their work, giving evidence of the great admiration each has for the other, which does not, however, prevent some veiled criticisms from appearing.<sup>6</sup>

If Florestan says that Antonio Candido, two years his elder, was a "kind of Mário Andrade" among their colleagues,<sup>7</sup> Antonio Candido says that Florestan is "the best model of the social scientist I know." In terms of self-evaluation, Antonio Candido sees himself more as an essayist who experiments, goes back to topics, and arrives at a conclusion as soon as the data appear coherent. Not Florestan: "Florestan is not satisfied with half-measures."

Institutionally, Antonio Candido recognizes that his position was disputed by the group which formed in Florestan's shadow. Because of the contrast between the two lines of work—Florestan trying to give a scientific stamp to sociology—it does not surprise Candido to be considered "an anthropological essayist of the bucolic sort."<sup>8</sup>

Antonio Candido remembers that despite their differences, they both struggled for years to incorporate into their academic work a dynamic vision which could reflect their social and political preoccupations. But just as their temperaments differed—"I am very skeptical, and he is very believing"—the solutions they found were different. Antonio Candido solved the problem by doing literary studies, in which the life of society is combined with and enters into aesthetic expressions; Florestan, with his studies of development, social classes, and Latin America, followed a more explicitly political line. At the end of the 1980s these observations could be confirmed in the contrast between the retired professor, always being invited to give seminars to a full house (Antonio Candido), and the activities of the elected legislator (Florestan Fernandes).

Florestan is a strong man, robust, athletically built; he is healthy, energetic. Not me: I am skinny, frail, physically weak . . .

Personality and biographical features naturally must be taken into consideration in thinking about intellectual and institutional trajectories: here it is impossible not to mention the quasi-pride Florestan manifests in relation to his humble origins (Fernandes 1977) and the criticisms made of Antonio Candido because of his aristocratic descent (Bosi 1978). What is really important, nevertheless, is to see that different perspectives were present at the same time in the same university and that students—as anywhere else—made their own combination of the elements available to them. Thus, while Florestan attempted to define a "sociology-made-in-Brazil," successfully bringing together a group of students to move his ideas forward, Antonio Candido separated himself from the Department of Sociology, in which he had taught for 16 years, in 1958. Recognizing the excellence of the two authors' academic production, the contrast shows the greater institutional success of one of them at that time.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Fernandes (1978) and Antonio Candido's preface to the same book.

<sup>7</sup> In an interview with Florestan Fernandes, also in 1978. Mário de Andrade is the respected writer, critic, and musicologist of the Modernist movement of 1922.

<sup>8</sup> An expression used by Antonio Candido.

I thought that it was my duty to like boring things, to like Talcott Parsons, who is the most boring person in the world.

Antonio Candido says that he left the Universidade de São Paulo when, after defending his doctoral dissertation, the Faculty decided to promote him from assistant (*assistente*) to full professor (*titular*), giving him the chair of sociology of education, a newly created discipline, since they thought he was threatening to resign because his feelings had been hurt by having been kept an assistant professor for so long. It was then, he says, that he realized that though he might teach sociology, he was not a sociologist. In one way the decision was not very difficult because he felt that he was teaching his courses in sociology with little passion, repeating the vocabulary of the general courses; still, he delayed because he was very much attached to the department. Antonio Candido says that he always had a half-masochistic tendency "not to teach courses about what I knew, in order to teach courses about what I didn't know and didn't like." After the doctorate, he felt free to devote his entire time to literature.

At that time, the courses were very rigid. There were general courses, introductory, always the same thing: methods, induction, social classes; I had no choice. There were still no postgraduate programs and no monographic courses in sociology.

It is necessary to emphasize that Antonio Candido's interest in literature did not precede his interest in sociology. The two interests coexisted to the point that he wrote at the same time *Os Parceiros* and *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, the now-classic study of the development of Brazilian literature (Candido 1964), which took him 12 years to write. Nevertheless, he waited until after the defense of his dissertation to follow his deepest inclinations. Again, he used features of his personality to explain the delay of his decision. His sense of obligation led him to try to be a "pure sociologist," and anything like the "sociology of literature" seemed a subterfuge. If today he calls it the "foolishness of youth" or his puritanism, he believed then that his teaching responsibilities should take first place. During the 1940s and 1950s there were very few professors at the Universidade de São Paulo—seven or eight, he says—all needed to teach the basic courses. A specialization in sociology of literature thus would have seemed a waste of resources, although Antonio Candido had elaborated a program for this discipline, which appeared in the faculty yearbook.

Today, says Antonio Candido, the stamp of sociology appears as an undeniable point of view in his work. Having left the Universidade de São Paulo, he thinks that he came to do a kind of criticism which was freer and, paradoxically, more sociological. It is this criticism, present in *Literatura e Sociedade*, that is more impressive to the anthropologist, through the affinity of focus and method. First, however, some observations on *Os Parceiros de Rio Bonito*, his doctoral dissertation, will introduce us to Antonio Candido's sociology.

### OS PARCEIROS

*Os Parceiros* was originally planned as a study of *cururu*, a dance sung by the rural people of the state of São Paulo. This popular poetic form (generically known as a *desafio* [a challenge or dare]) is based on a sort of musical duel between two singers, who improvise verses of unvarying rhyme, which changes after each stanza. Antonio Candido intended to show the transformations through which *cururu* has passed:

The old modalities were characterized by the simplest structures, the rusticity of the resources, the collective character of their invention, the obedience to certain religious norms. [In contrast] those of the present manifested an increasing individualism and secularism, the socializing choreographic element disappearing as well, so that the challenge might remain in its purity of personal confrontation (Candido 1975, p. 9).

With this basically Durkheimian project, Antonio Candido planned to show how urbanization brought with it a progressive individualization.

The final product was quite different from the initial plan. As he wrote the text, Antonio Candido concluded that his musical knowledge was insufficient to study *cururu*. He had taken his field notes by hand—there were no tape recorders at that time—and so could analyze only the verbal part of the *cururu*. Judging that an analysis which failed to include the musical part would be dishonest, the present *Parceiros* is an expanded version of the 30 initial pages with which the author had planned to introduce the *cururu* as a theme.

In an abbreviated way, *Os Parceiros* discusses the transformation of the lifestyle of the rural lower classes—the *caipiras*—in the interior of the state of São Paulo, following a strategy which combines anthropological and sociological orientations:

We could say, perhaps, that those (the orientations of anthropology) are based on descriptions, built on details and on people, in order to integrate them into a vision which covers, in principle, all the aspects of a culture; these (the orientations of sociology), eminently synthetic in their objective, making use of very large representative samples, are interested in the averages into which individuals are dissolved, almost always limiting themselves to interpreting certain aspects of the culture (1975, p. 17).

Antonio Candido seems to tell us that anthropology deals qualitatively with a social totality, while sociology refers more to a statistical approximation, taking the general context less into account. This vision does not differ much from that made explicit earlier.

The book is well known among Brazilian social scientists: in the first part, Antonio Candido shows the traditional life of the *caipira* through historical sources of the eighteenth century, especially the economy, food habits, housing conditions, and forms of solidarity. There follows a description of the contemporary situation, especially work relations and food habits. These portraits of past and present establish parameters for the analysis of change, which Antonio Candido conceives in terms of "persistences" and "alterations" (1975, p. 163).

Every social equilibrium assumes these two aspects. Change occurs when, in variations of the equilibrium, the factors of alteration grow until they motivate a recomposition of the structure. The situation of crisis is defined by still-unresolved tensions between the factors of persistence and alteration, which can provoke a more or less profound reorganization of the structure.

A political position emerges at the end. The book closes with an appeal to planners to take cultural variables into account, mentioning that the situation studied leads one to think of the problem of agrarian reform: "Without rational planning, the urbanization of the countryside will proceed increasingly as a vast cultural and social trauma, in which hunger and anomie will continue to play their familiar role (p. 224-5).

I think the book is so easy . . . it has such a simplicity . . . I think that perhaps it does not have that minimum of complication which gives dignity to academic works. Sometimes to be too clear is counterproductive.

This is the book to which Roger Bastide refused to give the highest mark when it was presented as a doctoral dissertation. He did not consider it pure sociology. It is true that Malinowski, Firth, Audrey Richards, and Redfield are some of the principal references in the book, together with Antonio Candido's version of Marxism, based on the idea that the mode of production must include a specific *way of life* of the individuals (1975, p. 24). Other facts therefore must be taken into account in understanding the episode of the defense of the dissertation: most important, at that time, 1954, Florestan Fernandes was already engaged in the project of creating an intellectual and institutional definition of what sociology-in-Brazil ought to be. In the context of this theoretical definition *Os Parceiros* may have been taken as ambiguous, at least insofar as it emphasized ethnography more than theoretical analysis.

Actually, the book is not at all revolutionary in theoretical terms. For those who include it in the literature of "community studies," the book is dated despite its excellence. We can, nevertheless, remember that Antonio Candido anticipated such proposals as those of Stanley Tambiah, which suggest an approach which combines persistences (like Antonio Candido's "persistences") and transformations (his "alterations") in order to analyze the ideological presuppositions implicit in the idea of "tradition" (Tambiah 1971). In another sense, *Os Parceiros* is a book which, focusing on the regulatory action of traditional factors in the process of urbanization, also renews the questioning of the theory of modernization from inside: "The situation studied is not one of the mechanical substitution of patterns, but rather of the redefinition of traditional incentives, by means of the adjustment of old patterns to the new social context" (Candido 1975, p. 200). In addition, however, the book has a markedly characteristic style.

I think that my generation is the last to which literature still appeared as a "must." Earlier, medicine needed to present itself in literary clothing; law also; sociology, to display itself, had to do so as [Euclides da Cunha] did in *Os Sertões*.

Some examples of this style show the aesthetic care Antonio Candido takes with his prose. To speak to us about something as plain as the importance of corn in the diet of the *caipira*, Antonio Candido expresses himself thus:

Green, it is eaten on the cob, roasted or boiled; made into a paste and baked; in porridge; in cakes, pure or combined with other ingredients. Dry, it is eaten as popcorn, *quirera* [broken in small pieces], and hominy; ground, it furnishes two kinds of meal, coarse and fine, the basis of almost all baking among the *caipiras*, including various cookies, large and small cakes, and cornbread, its ubiquity second only to wheat; mashed in a pestle, it makes flour and *beiju* [a kind of manioc pancake], not to forget its role as animal fodder (1975, p. 53).<sup>9</sup>

If we move from diet to religious representations, we find this:

Magic, sympathetic medicine, divine invocations, the exploitation of flora and fauna, agricultural knowledge thus fuse in a system which includes, in the same continuum, the fields, the forest, the seed, the air, the beasts, the water, and the sky itself. Turned inward on himself by the subsistence economy, enclosed in a frame of neighboring

<sup>9</sup> The translation does not reproduce the use of linguistic resources of Portuguese such as the alliteration and other devices present in a series like *biscoitos*, *o bolão*, *bolinhas*, *broas* (here cookies, large and small cakes, cornbread), which give Antonio Candido's prose the literary tone referred to.



groups, man himself appears as part of a vast sphere, at once natural, social, and supernatural (p. 175).

A last example: To show the disequilibrium in which we find the *caipira*, Antonio Candido selects a series of contrasts:

[N]eighborhood solidarity declines and is commercialized—but the situation of the sharecropper and of the small farmowner does not permit them to free each other of their mutual obligations. Domestic production atrophies—but the *caipiras*' acquisitive power does not permit the replacement of these products by manufactured ones. The old utensils and tools are devalued—but the new do not become accessible. Hunting and fishing are reduced to almost nothing as a source of supply—but they cannot be replaced with commercial meat (p. 219).

If Antonio Candido was careful about the literary construction of his sociology/anthropology combination, Florestan Fernandes, on the contrary, produced his books on the Tupinambá ignoring—or perhaps purposefully being unconcerned with—the aesthetic aspects.<sup>10</sup> The important thing was the method of analysis; for Antonio Candido what was important was intuition and sensibility.<sup>11</sup> Thus Fernando Henrique Cardoso commented that his generation was trained with a foundation of “the rigorous scientific method and mental discipline of Florestan Fernandes” and, as an ideal, “the discreet British charm of the essayism of *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito*” (Cardoso 1972).

Florestan Fernandes, when he wrote *A Função Social de Guerra* [*The Social Function of War*], was not absolutely preoccupied with the aesthetic problem. Gilberto Freyre, when he wrote *Casa Grande e Senzala* [*The Mansion and the Shanty*], or Sergio Buarque de Holanda, when he wrote *Raízes de Brasil* [*Roots of Brazil*], were thinking of their work also as literary compositions. Literature as an approach to reality; that's what is gone.

Another point to remember, however, is that *Os Parceiros* did not follow Antonio Candido's original plan, which might have brought Bastide, who considered his student a bit too calm, to react negatively to the final product. Did such facts perturb Antonio Candido? Not much, he says. He had, finally, the compensation of having written a book which differed from the aristocratic sociology of an earlier Brazilian era, exemplified in the works of Gilberto Freyre and Oliveira Vianna: “I studied the oppressed, the subject who gets hungry.” In this way, when some present-day critics emphasize the aristocratic roots of his work, Antonio Candido considers the observation unjust, since they don't take into account the historical context in which he and his generation studied and produced their work.

When someone says to me: “Professor, please excuse me, I am going to be frank with you: I think that *Parceiros do Rio Bonito* is a book that is very much based on intuition,”

<sup>10</sup> Some of their students took advantage of and combined diverse influences. Antonio Candido thinks that perhaps he inspired the works of Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiróz and of Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, the latter a student of Florestan Fernandes. It is in literature, however, that he identifies his students: Roberto Schwartz, Walnice Nogueira Galvão, Davi Arrigucci Jr., João Lafetá, José Miguel Visnick, for example: “These are my Fernando Henriques [Cardoso], my Otávio Iannis,” referring to Fernandes's most famous students.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred Métraux wrote in his diary for November 12, 1951: “Long conversation with Florestan Fernandes, more intoxicated than ever with his theory and methods” (1978, p. 329).

I respond: "Wonderful! That is just what I wanted: to transmit an exact vision of reality without keeping my sensibility out of it."

These observations lead us to conclude that things were changing despite the pluralism which predominated at the Universidade de São Paulo at the time of Antonio Candido's graduate training—a pluralism which allowed Florestan Fernandes to write anthropology disguised as a sociologist (as in his work on the Tupinambá) and Antonio Candido, conversely, to credit his own intuitions more than method. The distinction between the two disciplines—sociology and anthropology—began to turn into a reality and to be seen as a necessity. Antonio Candido remembers that long debates went on to decide whether a specific work was "sociology" or "anthropology," "pure cinema" or "theater," "sociology" or "literature." If the "desired and suitable" (Candido 1978) moment for academic definitions still had not arrived, the process at least was underway. In this context Antonio Candido was a PhD in sociology who did not feel himself a sociologist; nor did he feel comfortable in a department of anthropology (since, at the time, it privileged the study of indigenous groups); nor did he feel himself completely a literary critic because that category did not have the institutional support which might legitimate it academically.

This "pluralism" of the 1950s of which Antonio Candido speaks today has its parallel in the discussion which has developed in the United States over the interpenetration of literary genres or, in the words of its best-known proponent, "blurred genres."

With this expression, Clifford Geertz speaks of the mechanisms through which these rearrangements are produced in contemporary social thought. Just as Antonio Candido recalls the discussions of the 1950s about the adequacy of considering a work "anthropology" or "sociology," "pure cinema" or "theater," today Geertz says that "blurred genres" can be found when philosophical inquiries look like literary criticism (Stanley Cavell on Beckett, Sartre on Flaubert, for example), parables pose as ethnographies (Castañeda), theoretical treatises are presented as travelogues (Lévi-Strauss), epistemological studies are constructed like political tracts (Paul Feyerabend), and ideological arguments are cast as historiographical inquiries (Edward Said). As the social sciences move away from the search for explanations and laws and move more and more in the direction of a search for meaning and interpretation, they use the images of the humanities as inspiration and model (Geertz 1983).

I will return to this topic. For now, there remains only the observation that the "pluralism" of the Universidade de São Paulo had its niche in the teaching of philosophy and that at the time, some saw this pluralism as undesirable: "the auspicious combination of sociology and anthropology," as Antonio Candido describes that period, was considered eclectic and therefore not very scientific. North American "blurred genres" arise in a contemporary context in which the social sciences (defined as psychology, linguistics, and ethnography) propose to draw on the imagery, method, theory, and style of the humanities, resulting in a "general muddling of vocational identities" (Geertz 1983, p. 23). If we bring this problematic to the 1950s in Brazil, we see that Antonio Candido had already chosen that liminal space between the "social sciences" and the "humanities," even if, for the same reason, he found no legitimate space for his way of thinking and working.

#### ANTHROPOLOGY OF LITERATURE

If *Os Parceiros* bears the mark of anthropological thought, *Literatura e Sociedade* is anthropology of literature. For Antonio Candido it is simply a matter of "literary criticism," defined by the attempt to transcend theoretically the dichotomy between internal factors (of the composition of the text) and external ones (the social sphere). Antonio Candido

believes in the necessity of fusing text and context in such a way that external social factors become significant not as causes but rather as elements, with specific roles in the construction of a structure, in a way that makes them internal. When the external is transformed into the internal, it is no longer sociological criticism but simply "criticism": "The social element becomes one of many which influence the creation of a book, alongside the psychological, the religious, the linguistic, and others" (Candido 1976, p. 7). In this kind of analysis, the structure of the text becomes the point of reference.

But what does Antonio Candido consider "structure"? First, he observes that the artistic work maintains an arbitrary and distorted relation to reality, even when its aim is to observe and copy it rigorously. This liberty is the measure of the fantasy necessary to artistic expression: "Such a paradox is the core of the literary work and guarantees its efficacy as a representation of the world" (1976, p. 13). Second, art presupposes something different and better than the mere experience of the author. The focus must be on the interrelation between the artist, the work, and the public: "To the degree that art is . . . a symbolic system of interhuman communication, it presupposes the permanent play of relations between the three, which form an indissoluble triangle" (p. 33).

These references show us the similarity of literature to what anthropologists see as symbolic phenomena: rituals, myths, taboos, and so on. The question of the efficacy of the work of art as a representation of the world makes us think immediately of Lévi-Strauss's ideas about "symbolic efficacy." The way Antonio Candido uses the triad of artist-work-public to compare artistic expressions in different societies sounds still more familiar.

It would be simplistic to say that Antonio Candido's work recalls anthropology solely because he makes extensive use of material collected by anthropologists, which is something he does. The important thing, however, is to observe his comparative grasp of artistic expression in different societies, which often leads him, in his interpretation, beyond the studies whose data he uses. He proposes to show that different societies produce different forms of art and that although any judgment of value is inadequate in this context, it is not impossible to link different styles to different contexts.

First, he delineates the problems in terms of two extreme poles: on the one hand, an anthropocentric vision in which the reality of the "other" is reduced to that of the observer; on the other, the perspective of those who exaggerate the absence of differences between individuals, groups, and cultures. He contrasts Lévy-Bruhl and Malinowski and criticizes both (1976, pp. 41-44): one for the theory of the prelogical mind, the other for the belief that "the savage is our equal." Adopting what might be recognized as a Maussian posture, Antonio Candido shows the tension between the universalism of the human mind and cultural differences. Only thus is it possible to combat the two extremes, "modalities of the anthropological fallacy—whether by seeing in the primitive a beast, almost of another species, or by wishing to reduce him mechanically to our image, freeing ourselves from the obligation of perceiving his uniqueness" (p. 43).

We might say that Antonio Candido was unfair to Malinowski and excessively rigorous with Lévy-Bruhl, but the contrast permits him to position himself:

The discovery that cultures are relative brings us to think about such uniqueness, which could be explained not in the light of ontological differences, but with respect to the specific ways that each general context influences the significance of particular features and, reciprocally, determines diverse configurations (p. 43).

Starting from this perspective, the author's principal objective is to observe the total configuration in which a specific expression arises. He observes the triad artist-work-

public in different societies: he discusses and compares the function of the artist among the Bantu, the Trobriand Islanders, and the Chinese; observes the configuration of works (in poetry, music, and popular sayings) among Boas's Eskimos and in medieval Europe; compares the public in the case of the *caipira* and that of an erudite audience. Pursuing the importance of the cultural context, he shows that literature, folklore, and mythology, insofar as they are different forms of communication, appear in different types of societies and demand necessarily to be studied from different perspectives.

The differences, for Antonio Candido, can be as much spatial as temporal; exactly in the style of Mauss he compares the two dimensions simultaneously. This type of comparative approach is possible because Antonio Candido inquires into the role and ideological value of a specific expression in different societies; the definitions are therefore native, and lead researchers to question their own concepts. Thus, in the chapter "Literature and Social Life," Antonio Candido suggests that as a product of industrial societies, the adequacy of the method of literary analysis itself for the study of other traditions must be questioned.

But after a time, now, after getting older, I'm returning again to criticism, which is, I think, linked to sociology. The French say that if you try to get rid of something that is your natural tendency, it returns immediately: "*Chassez le naturel, il revient tout alors.*"

An illustrative example is the discussion of the portrayal of food and nutrition in art. Analyzing the appearance of the theme in different societies—among the Nuer, in French and German poetry, and in some classical Brazilian novels (1976, pp. 57–70)—Antonio Candido sees that representations of the act of feeding oneself, one of the basic human necessities, show how expressions of emotion and their aesthetic elaboration vary in different social contexts.

Among the "primitives," eating can have magical connotations. The sacralization of food is common in the societies studied by Audrey Richards, Evans-Pritchard, and Boas. Antonio Candido analyzes a Nuer song in order to show how cattle, so important in that society, are used to express the discomfort caused by the presence of the English (1976, pp. 58–60). Among the "civilized," however, the picture is different. Poems of Victor Hugo, Shelley, and Rilke (pp. 61–66) exemplify how the poetic associations related to food are so diluted that they virtually disappear. These poems eliminate every vestige of the physiological dimension, in this way contrasting with the "primitive" form, which exposes freely and directly the organic base of nutrition and its relation to art's dominion. Antonio Candido postulates, in a Durkheimian vein, that in these "primitive" societies the social context is more apparent in the artistic forms. The organic emotion of nutrition, for example, is not submitted to numerous mediations, as is the case among the "civilized." He thus intends to link structure to history or, in his words, "to fuse text and context."

Just when contemporary anthropology feels, as one of the most serious challenges of poststructuralism, the incorporation of the temporal dimension into its studies, it is interesting, as a final example, to see how Antonio Candido analyzed the poem "Caramuru" at two historical periods: the end of the eighteenth century in Portugal, and the beginning of the nineteenth in Brazil.

#### LITERATURE AND HISTORY

"Caramuru" was first published as an epic poem in Lisbon in 1781. It remained unknown in Brazil until the 1830s, when the romantic movement adopted it as one of its banners. The theme of Brother Santa Rita Durão's poem turns on the Portuguese colonist Diogo,

who, spared from being sacrificed by the Tupinambá in the sixteenth century, transformed himself into Caramuru, one of the local tribal chiefs and, as such, an intermediary between the Indians and the Portuguese. The poem shows the transformation of the hero from Diogo to Caramuru and, in a parallel and inverse form, the change in the Indian woman Paraguaçu, Caramuru's wife, transformed into Catarina and later baptized in France.

Antonio Candido's central question is why it took half a century for the poem to be discovered in Brazil. He suggests that the historical or social function of a specific work rests in its literary structure. In turn, this rests in the organization of certain mental representations, conditioned by the society in which the work is conceived, and is thus historically variable.

As a literary epic, "Caramuru" was developed around three themes: the celebration of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil; a sublime and euphoric vision of the country; and the conception of the Indian as a natural element, pure and perfect, deriving from the worldview of Renaissance Europe. Together these three themes are organized around expressive elements represented through ambiguity: First, the colonization is primarily an initiative of the Portuguese, but represents at the same time the vindication of the Brazilian, who began to be aware of his own individuality. Second, "the country's total nature, in turn, is treated as a 'vision of paradise' but from an angle which actually is valid only for unusual segments of the landscape" (1976, p. 179). Finally, the Indian displays "features of a natural goodness and a social order based in reason—but the other side of this is cannibalism and barbarism, deprived of the light of grace and incapable, therefore, of complete happiness" (p. 179).

These ambiguities are resolved by religion. In the poem, "the Catholic faith will function and rule by means of colonization; the unusual sublimity of the country is explained as the scene of battles and works of religion; and the germs of the Indian's plenitude, in which they live, are still another preparation for the conversion to which he will eventually come" (p. 179). In short, "the local and the universal are united in the superior expressive and ideological unity of Catholicism" (p. 179).

I think that romanticism is especially Brazilian, but it is dangerous and leads to regionalism and particularism. And neoclassicism is dangerous to the degree that it deindividualizes and leads to an excessive universalism.

"Caramuru" suited the necessities of founding a local tradition genealogically and historically, a preoccupation of Brazilian romanticism in the nineteenth century. In the postindependence period at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Brazil proclaimed its independence from Portugal in 1822), literature was seen as a mark of national autonomy. In turn, "to be good, literally, meant to be *Brazilian*; to be *Brazilian* meant to include in one's works what was peculiar to the country, notably the landscape and the aborigine" (1976, p. 171). Thus Indianism appeared as a supreme symbol.

Nevertheless, the way "Caramuru" was adopted by romanticism differed in two important aspects from its initial formulation. First, instead of the epic poem, Brazilians preferred the French prose version: "The passage from verse to prose in the translation was an important resource, which emphasized the novelistic element of the plot, and thus shattered the suggestions specifically linked to the metric and stanza structure" (p. 186). The French version had a style intermediate between poem and novel, and prepared the ground for the Indianist fiction so characteristic of Brazilian literature in the middle of the nineteenth century. Second, romanticism saw "Caramuru" as a response to its search for Brazilian features, and in this process the ambiguities of the Diogo-Caramuru character gave way to nationalist sentiments.

I think this tendency to want to assert, no matter what, that Brazil has a literature which is its alone, is profoundly wrong. We speak Portuguese, which is a European language, write verse which has an Italian metric, all this inspired by Byron, who was English

In sum, given a poem whose structure as much as the configuration of its principal character had ambiguous features, the Brazilian romantics produced a double distortion: ideological and aesthetic. In Antonio Candido's words:

Confronted with a poem which could as easily be taken to be a celebration of the Portuguese colonization as to be an affirmation of local excellences and peculiarities, they chose the second aspect, looking at the work as an Indian and Brazilian epic. On the other hand, in the aesthetic complex of the epic, they became attached to the novelistic element and to the exotic touch, seeing in it a kind of Indian pre-novel (1976, pp. 191-92).

Here literature is seen as a cultural phenomenon, and Antonio Candido's anthropological perspective asserts its modernity in the attempt to link the structural analysis, for many years so dominant in the discipline, to a historical approach. He concluded that the study of the historical-literary function of a work acquired full significance only when it referred intimately to the work's structure, "in this way overcoming the gap which frequently exists between historical investigation and aesthetic orientations" (p. 192). History and aesthetics always need to be combined, to the degree that history is a development over time of different mental representations.

#### BLURRED GENRES BRAZILIAN STYLE

Antonio Candido: anthropologist? This question leads us back to the problem Candido himself confronted in discussing "Caramuru." Why now, after three decades, is it possible to bring *Os Parceiros* and his critical studies nearer to anthropology?

Naturally, there is no one answer. One point concerns the changes which anthropology itself has undergone: today, more than an experimental science, anthropology sees itself as dedicated to interpretation, and conceives social life as organized through symbols whose meaning we must grasp if we are to understand that organization and formulate its principles. Or, to use Geertz's peculiar formulation of the problem, "As social theory turns from propulsive metaphors toward ludic ones, the humanities are connected to its arguments not in the fashion of skeptical bystanders but, as the source of its imagery, chargeable accomplices" (1983, p. 26).

It is in this context that it is possible to propose that Antonio Candido foreshadowed this potential of anthropology 30 years ago. For him, the social sciences were never aimed solely "to find out the dynamics of collective life and alter them in desired directions," as Geertz affirms was the basic goal during the golden age of the social sciences (1983, p. 34). For him, interpretation, intuition, sensibility were already allies and tools that Antonio Candido used in his sociological and literary studies, long before that became fashionable.

However, Antonio Candido was not simply a premature "humanist" disguised as social scientist, or a social scientist inspired early by the humanities. I believe that it was because he was a social scientist with a traditional training that he could trespass in different academic fields and develop an innovative kind of work. In other words, it was the canonical teaching of the French professors of the Universidade de São Paulo in the 1930s

and 1940s that allowed him, and many of his generation, to follow the path known today in the United States as the humanities.

In this way, even the subject to which he decided to dedicate himself was sociologically inspired: Antonio Candido seemed to have learned from Marcel Mauss that magic exists only when it is socially recognized. Candido is thus an ethnographer of our society when he selects literature as the empirically relevant element for an understanding of our intellectual life: unlike other countries, he says, "Literature has been here [in Brazil], more than philosophy and the human sciences, the central phenomenon of the life of the spirit" (1976, p. 156). Historically, literature appeared as the privileged "point of view" in Brazil; until recently, literature—not science, philosophy, or technology—took on itself the job of interpreting the world around us. Literature, acting like "a powerful magnet," influenced the sociological tendency, "giving rise to that mixed genre of the essay, constructed in the confluence of history and economics, philosophy, or art, that is the most Brazilian form of investigation and discovery of Brazil" (p. 157).

It thus seems legitimate to think that Antonio Candido dedicated himself to literature not only as a vocation—or, if that was what he did, it is a happy case of affinity. The social recognition which defined magic for Mauss has its parallel in literature in Brazil: literature served as the locus of social-political research until it lost its hegemony of genre in the 1930s. From then on it was thought that the institutionalization of the social sciences would force a division of intellectual labor which would make literature moderate its ambitions. Its sphere would come to be restricted more purely to the study of aesthetic patterns, leaving social and historical problems in the hands of the sciences of culture.

That is the viewpoint of Antonio Candido himself. Nevertheless, it is he who comments that in 1978, the best novels of the decade had been written by a doctor, a film critic, and an anthropologist,<sup>12</sup> thus disproving his earlier prediction. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the "social science" which was institutionalized in the country succeeded in realizing fully the ideal of becoming an objective, systematic, pure, and positive reflection, doing away with literary inspiration or replacing definitively the historical-sociological essay. Antonio Candido himself is the counterexample.

In the area of the "social sciences" proper, that was Florestan Fernandes's proposal in the 1950s, and we owe to him, without doubt, the institutional establishment of patterns of academic excellence. But perhaps exactly because this happened, today we can acknowledge that the teachings left by Roger Bastide, Emilio Willems, and those French professors of philosophy have not disappeared. This influence remains, and we acknowledge it when we see questions raised, in our everyday academic life, about the work of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and historians: here is the anthropologist who "is not really an anthropologist"—he is more a "sociologist of development"; there the political scientist who does history as well; over there the historian with anthropological tendencies. On the other hand, new studies can present themselves as a combination of "social and literary history, cultural criticism, and political analysis."<sup>13</sup> It is even more interesting that all this occurs under the rubric which describes most of us even today—that of the "social sciences"—a label we preserve in certain contexts precisely in defending departmental divisions in the institutions to which we belong.<sup>14</sup>

This historical "pluralism," then—the result of the ideological value attributed to liter-

<sup>12</sup> He referred to the novels of Pedro Nava, Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes, and Darcy Ribeiro.

<sup>13</sup> The comment is that of Francisco Foot Hardman in the introduction to José Murillo de Carvalho's book (1987).

<sup>14</sup> The prestige of The National Association of Graduate Programs and Research in the Social Sciences [ANPOCS] attests to this point of view. The prizes for best thesis, nevertheless, are divided into three areas: sociology, anthropology, and political science.

ature in the essayistic style, combined with a hundred-year-old Durkheimian tradition, reinforced by the French mission of the 1930s and no less by the role of the intellectual as an *interested* citizen<sup>15</sup>—is something we should not forget. Sociology, anthropology, political science, and history were never completely separated and distinguished from one another as disciplines in Brazil.

This pluralism was questioned once: under the umbrella of the teaching of philosophy, intellectual pluralism did not last. But paradoxically, when the several disciplines created their institutional identities, pluralism was recognized again. Perhaps, then, intellectual “pluralism”—or what is known as interdisciplinarity—can be properly realized in the long run only when disciplines are so solidly defined that the barriers can be transgressed. That is, when the banner of inter- or (as is now fashionable) transdisciplinarity is raised as a progressive move in contemporary Brazil, one should not forget that this proposal has a genesis in Brazilian social thought which goes back to, if it does not antecede, the institutionalization of the social sciences in Brazil.

In this context, the case of “blurred genres” allows us to make an illuminating contrast, even taking into account the historical-social differences between the two countries. The contemporary North American proposal, voiced by Geertz and his followers—that the “social sciences” and the “humanities” merge in the unique direction of an interpretive effort—does not have institutional reorganization as a goal. This is in marked contrast with what happened in Brazil, where institutional rearrangement was supposed to lead to separate intellectual identities. In North America the experiment with interdisciplinary departments did occur, but was ephemeral: founded at the end of the 1940s in such universities as Yale, Harvard, and Chicago,<sup>16</sup> just 10 years later they existed in name only. Today Clifford Geertz says explicitly that it is not interdisciplinary brotherhood that is needed, but rather the direction the “social sciences” must borrow from humanistic analogies (Geertz 1983, p. 23).

In sum: it is redundant to speak of interdisciplinarity in Brazil. Due to a “pluralist” sociogenesis, intellectual interdisciplinarity has always been a reality in Brazil, even if the path to academic excellence moved through institutional specialization. In contrast, in the United States, where disciplines were traditionally organized in conventional university departments, interdisciplinarity, once proposed in departments of “social relations,” is now the goal—modified, naturally, in its relation to the humanities—of new “cultural studies/humanities research centers.” In these centers, the canons of rigid academic disciplines are challenged and “broad(er)” perspectives are detected (Marcus 1991). In Brazil, it seems that it was the existence of a specific canon—Durkheimian sociology—which made the diversity of academic genres possible, as much as intellectual “pluralism” allowed.

Fernandes is the one who is historically right. Not me. I only continue, I try to preserve, in order not to allow to be lost, a certain tradition of the humanistic essay, sensitive, of a literary type. On this point I consider myself quite near to Sérgio Buarque, who is one of my masters.

We thus return to Antonio Candido and his felicitous pluralism. Making his own *bricolage* as a student, he learned from Roger Bastide to protect himself from the dangers

<sup>15</sup> I use here an expression borrowed from Antonio Candido himself when he characterizes literature in Brazil as “interested,” wishing to call attention to the fact that it is marked by a commitment to the life of the country as a whole (1964, p. 18). The general political commitment of social scientists in Brazil is a variation of the “interested” role of which Antonio Candido speaks.

<sup>16</sup> See Brew (1968), especially the article by Fred Eggan.



of ethnocentrism and to attack reality from various angles; with Sérgio Buarque, to see intellectual life in Brazil as a dialectic between localism and cosmopolitanism, and to search for the central phenomenon of the life of the spirit in literature; finally, with Mário de Andrade, the modernist, to focus minimalistically on a specific phenomenon in order to draw universal values from it. This is not to diminish the importance of Florestan Fernandes, who, as friend and colleague, became the significant other he needed to confront.

There remains only this question: What if Antonio Candido, in the 1950s, had chosen anthropology? The choice would undoubtedly have been a mistake. Anthropology, when Antonio Candido was doing his graduate work, made Brazilian tribal groups the privileged object of study. It was the era of a German-inspired anthropology, of Egon Schaden and of Herbert Baldus. And sociology? Of Durkheimian origins, it lost its institutional hegemony when Bastide lost the leadership to Florestan Fernandes. It was in literary criticism—one of the spin-offs of sociology in the 1930s—that Antonio Candido succeeded in finding the institutional niche which allowed him to create a hidden anthropology of literature, within the frame of reference left by Bastide, by Sérgio Buarque, and, indirectly, by Mário de Andrade. In this way he did not have to deny his poetic inclination, his elegant prose, his refined intuition, and his sensibility.

We cannot remake history, but we can recover it. And, recovering history, we can bring Antonio Candido to the campfire of anthropology, seeing his "pluralism" as an affirmation of the present preoccupations of the discipline, and his literary criticism as a way to an anthropology of Brazilian intellectual life. And to recognize that if Antonio Candido never attained institutional political power, strictly speaking, he did achieve intellectual prestige, something that he, like many others, perhaps considers more gratifying. In a country whose modernist movement called itself "anthropophagic," he escaped being devoured.

I'll make a confession candidly, since my name is Candido.

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