

Strategies of resistance as discursive potency in Lima Barreto's literature

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we propose a reflection on how (anti)racist discourses manifest themselves in language, especially in Lima Barreto's literary production. Using Foucauldian Discursive Studies (EDF) as a basis and in dialogue with Literary Studies, we analyze excerpts from the author's works "Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma" (2015) and "Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha" (2010), seeking to identify and denounce racist practices from the early 20th century and understand how they resist and persist today.

Considering the literary text as a space for the materialization of discourses, the next topic proposes an analysis of the enunciative clippings of the aforementioned works by Lima Barreto, exploring the controversial themes addressed by the author within the historical context in which they were written. In addition, the analysis and data obtained will be used to reflect on possible connections with the present and the discourses of (de)continuity of this literary object.

Keywords: Strategies of resistance, Lima Barreto.

LIMA BARRETO AND THE DENUNCIATION OF RACIST PRACTICES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

In this article, we propose a reflection on how (anti)racist discourses manifest themselves in language, especially in Lima Barreto's literary production. Based on Foucaultian Discursive Studies (EDF) and in dialogue with Literary Studies, we analyze excerpts from the author's works "Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma" (2015) and "Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha" (2010), seeking to identify and denounce racist practices of the early twentieth century and understand how they resist and persist today.

To begin this analysis, it is crucial to consider the relationship between literature and historiography. As stated by Perin (2019, p. 45), literary works are not mere reproductions of reality, but rather credible constructions that reflect cultural and social aspects of their times. Following the perspective of Foucauldian Discursive Studies, we understand that the statements should be analyzed considering the conditions of possibility that allowed their emergence. As Foucault (2008, p. 32) asks, it is important to investigate why a certain discourse arose instead of another, and what is this singularity that is revealed in the discourse.

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Thus, in this study, we conceive discourse as a set of statements that are based on the same discursive formation, as suggested by Foucault (2008, p. 135). In addition, we broaden the notion of literary text as an arena for inscription, circulation and production of discourses, seeking to understand how racist practices and discourses of the past still echo in the present.

Together with Michel Foucault's questions, exposed above, we aim to problematize the utterances and discourses on the surface of what is said, in the relations between the discourses with historical facts and in the places of subject assumed by individuals in the social field, or, in our study, the discursive places assumed by Lima Barreto's characters in the narratives chosen for this discussion. Therefore, we do not seek what is behind what is said (or hidden) or what the author meant, but to reflect on what was said, because it was said or written in a given time and place. The enunciative analysis, proposed by Foucault, takes into account the fact that the enunciation has a support, a date, a subject and a place, since there is no enunciation, and consequently, a neutral or isolated discourse of the historical plot. The utterances and discourses that are formed in Barreto's texts, in the exercise of the author-function, are aligned with the historical formations that characterize the passage of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the period in which the author produced his texts and reflections.

When referring to the term historical formations, we dialogue with Deleuze (2017, p. 13, lecture 01) and his reflections on the regimes of seeing and speaking of a given historical formation, when he delimits that "each epoch is defined by what it sees and makes seen and by what it says" (...) and, more emphatically, when he argues that "each historical formation sees and makes seen everything it can, as a function of its conditions of visibility, as well as saying everything it can, as a function of its conditions of enunciation" (DELEUZE 2017, p. 63. Lesson 01. Emphasis added).³ In which regimes of seeing and speaking do Lima Barreto's writings fall into inscription? What discourses are produced in Barreto's writings in the face of the power regimes of the time? These questions help us to understand the strategies of resistance produced in the work under study, because, according to Foucault (2014), the methodological path for the analysis of power relations must start from resistance movements, as they are the ones that indicate on which groups, bodies and spaces, for example, power falls and/or acts in the production of subjectivities and in the conduction of conducts.

Schwarcz (2019) highlights how one of the most serious abuses of slavery in the Americas was the prohibition imposed on captives from reading and writing. In the post-abolition period, Lima Barreto's itinerant literature through trains, streets, and suburbs (Schwarcz, 2017b, p. 164) led him to portray the

³ Gilles Deleuze's lectures on Foucault, built in dialogue with the Foucauldian notes of the archaeological phase. Michel Foucault's studies are divided into three phases, namely: archaeology of knowledge (1960s), genealogy of power (1970s) and ethics and aesthetics of existence (1980). This division of the work into phases fulfills a classificatory and/or didactic function, as the concepts are taken up at different moments in the philosopher's work and gain new garments and displacements.



high rate of illiteracy in Brazil, with characteristics of pre-modernist movements. In this way, Barreto, in his work, echoes the voices silenced by history, as mentioned by Foucault (1983, p. 3-23), when discussing "a writing of the self" in relation to the issues of subject and identity. The French philosopher problematizes the production of discourses, always linked to history, highlighting the restlessness in the face of the ephemeral materiality of discourse and the implications it carries. It goes like this:

“[...] uneasiness in the face of what discourse is in its material reality of something spoken or written; restlessness in the face of this transitory existence destined to be erased without doubt, but according to a duration that does not belong to us; restlessness of feeling under this activity, however daily and gray, powers and dangers that one can hardly imagine; restlessness of supposing struggles, victories, wounds, dominations, servitudes, through so many words whose use has long reduced the harshness” (FOUCAULT, 1996, p. 8).

In addition to the reflections on discourse, as evidenced in the excerpt above, Foucault develops several discussions about the subject. According to Albuquerque Júnior (2011, p. 1), for the author, the subject is understood as the search for the historicity of the processes of subjection and subjectivation that are responsible for the constitution of subjectivities and, consequently, of subjects in the modern world. In line with this perspective, Araújo (2007) points out that, in Foucault, the subject of discourse is not simply the person who performs a speech act, but rather the one who can use a certain enunciative act due to his training, institutional position or technical competence. In this context, the conception of the subject is regulated by the "episteme" or "regime of truth" of its time and culture (Balocco, 2005, p. 254).

To analyze the constructions and positions of the characters in the narratives of the novels, it is important to consider the concept of romantic literature à clef attributed to Lima Barreto, as pointed out by Pacheco (2017, p. 27). In this type of literature, the author's critical and combative position is evident, especially in relation to political issues involving the bureaucracy and corruption of the elites, as well as the antiquated view of women and the marginalized without horizons and perspectives, as observed by Tufano (2015, p. 11). Schwarcz (2017) also addresses this characteristic of Barreto's work, emphasizing its relevance for understanding the social and political dynamics of the time:

It is enough to remember the Anthem of the Republic that said: "we do not even believe that slaves once existed in such a noble country". "Once" was a year and a half ago, but no one wanted to talk about it. And Lima Barreto spoke all the time, in the chronicles, in the columns, in the novels, and I was very impressed by this solo voice of the writer, this solitary voice. Like, "I was called to the Chilean embassy. They didn't ask anyone for documents, they asked me. I got upset." That kind of statement was a very strong thing in that context and today. [...] Lima Barreto is an author who has more theses about him than critics of his literature.

Another characteristic of Barretina literature is the autobiographical tone and the dialogues with History. In his first novel, published in 1909, entitled *Recordações do escrivão Isaías Caminha*, Barreto

problematizes the social and racial prejudices of the *Belle Époque* in Rio de Janeiro and Schwarcz (2017b, p. 118) points out that this work would represent the writer's student phase. In addition, Bastos (2020, p. 34) theorizes that this "historiographical metafiction" uses "characters and their occurrences with the aim of materializing legitimate events, setting the imagination to the questioning of "possible historical truths" and their "modes of conception". About this literary work, Pinto (2017, p. 1160) presents the following argument:

Narrated in the first person, the scribe Isaías Caminha recounts his memories: mulatto and poor, coming from the countryside to study in the capital of the Republic. He deviated from his initial objectives and succumbed to the logic of lesser interests that prevailed at the time, from his hiring as an usher in a major newspaper of the time: O Globo, fictitious name of the then powerful Correio da Manhã. The Carioca scene, containing corruption, scandals and popular revolts, is recalled by the clerk. (PINTO, 2017, p. 1160).

In relation to the other novel, in the case of *Triste fim de Policarpo Quaresma*, Schwarcz (2017b, p. 146) reports how the main character presents traits close to the writer's father. Furthermore, Souza (2022, p. 2) points out that Lima Barreto, "born of free parents, a typographer and employee of the National Press and a mother who is a public teacher, make up a restricted group of Afro-descendants", who had access to reading. However, "Brazilian society at the beginning of the century, [...] racist and prejudiced, in a country that abolished slavery when our author was already 7 years old, was not willing to allow that grandson of slaves to have access to the intellectual elite [...]" (RESENDE, 2004, p. 10).

Even for Foucault, in modernity, literature is a zone where one allows one's limit experiences to be lodged and it is in it that one could "simulate these experiences of the outside, of transgression, of disorder" (MACHADO, 2005). In the meantime, Schwarcz (2017) demonstrates how Lima Barreto was an interpreter of Brazil and that in his context he represented a transgressive voice, a voice that did not settle. Furthermore, in order to think about the context of contemporaneity, in particular about literary literacy⁴, Souza (2016, p. 221) attests to the social relevance of Barreto's work "evidencing its updating and, consequently, its contribution to the appreciation of Afro-Brazilian history and culture (Law 10.639/03)".

Considering the literary text as a space for the materialization of discourses, the next topic proposes an analysis of the enunciative excerpts of Lima Barreto's works mentioned, exploring the controversial themes addressed by the author within the historical context in which they were written. In addition, the analyses and data obtained will be used to reflect on possible connections with the present and the discourses of (dis)continuity of this literary object.

ENUNCIATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIMA BARRETO'S WORKS: DIALOGUES WITH THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

⁴ Literary literacy is "the process of appropriation of literature as a literary construction of meanings" (COSSON, 2009, p. 67).



As a methodology, we chose to analyze excerpts from the works "Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma" (TFPQ) and "Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha" (REIC), by Lima Barreto, to understand the subject positions assumed by the characters through the statements present in dialogues, evaluations and descriptions. We will contextualize the excerpts selected in the narratives, but it is important to emphasize that the full reading of these classics is recommended for a more comprehensive understanding of the theme addressed.

It should be noted that, in the works analyzed, the construction of the female image is elaborated from the perspective of male characters. Lima Barreto constructs voices for the female characters in the aforementioned novels, inserting them in a Brazilian social context that pressured women to fulfill the roles of mother and wife. The author criticizes the wedding party as an opportunity for ostentation and addresses the harassment of women's bodies. Importantly, the women portrayed are white and belong to the middle class, while the black characters are depicted as poor working women.

In the following selected excerpts, we observe two statements in which the discursive subject satirizes the positions of the characters who are about to marry doctors, Olga and Dona Ismênia, respectively, using figures of speech as metaphor and irony:

"[...] she disappeared into the dress, the veils and those **obsolete garments** with which **girls who are about to marry are fastened** (TFPQ, p. 120, emphasis added)".⁵

"Life, the world, the intense variety of feelings, ideas, our own right to happiness seemed like trifles to **that little brain**; and, in such a way, getting married represented something important to her, **a kind of duty**, that not getting married, **being single, aunt**, seemed to her a crime, a **shame** (TFPQ, p. 50, emphasis added)".

In these lexical choices in bold above, there is a reification, an animalization of these female characters. According to the statements that emerge on this subject, there is a practical denunciation of these bodies, as in the episode of harassment that took place inside the streetcar, in front of the Chamber, by a senator, talk about a reality of whiteness. And at the end of the narrative, we perceive a statement that says what was expected of these "naturally female" subjects and who would be marked by blackness: "Do you see that little shame? A senator bolinar." (REIC, p. 92, emphasis added).

This excerpt is relevant for us to reflect on the identity issues of the black subject: he was expected to lack parents and good customs. In addition, there is an inversion of the notions of something extraordinary, since the character Isaiah, socially ascended, has access to everything that is banal and commonplace to this other historically privileged social group:

⁵ Haret (ar.rei.o) *sm.* 1. Set of parts that equip the horse for riding. [More us. in pl.] Available at: <https://www.aulete.com.br/arreio>



"I realized that he was very surprised to tell her that he had a mother, that he had been born into a family environment and that he had raised me. This, to him, was extraordinary. What seemed extraordinary to me in my adventures, he thought natural; But to have my mother teach me how to eat with a fork, that was exceptional. I didn't come to that intimate thought until later. For him, as for all the more or less literate people in Brazil, the men and women of my birth are all the same, even more equal than the dogs on their farms. Men are scoundrels, flatters, parlapatões when they learn something, matches of politicians; **women (the notion here is simpler) are naturally females.**" (REIC, p. 287, emphasis added)

These excerpts and the next ones that take place in the text attest to the form of resistant participation present in the exercise of Lima Barreto's fiction, which dialogues intensively with its context, as highlighted by Pacheco (2017, p. 28). These statements point to the ways of seeing and talking about this historical formation in Brazil and, together, form the discourses of inferiority of black subjects produced in this book. In this sense, we present the moment when the main character, Quaresma, is mocked and the subject of jokes due to his requirement of Tupi-Guarani as the official language of Brazil. By reporting that the comments did not cease and that he had no relations in that environment, the character, in the position of subject that he occupies in the discourse, denounces certain practices of journalism and the press in relation to personal favoritism:

Lima Barreto did not allow himself to be fossilized, his fictional work reveals his ethnological look at the city, at the characters that inhabit the neighborhoods of these cities, his countless exiled characters, his exile as a black man in a racist society like the Brazilian one did not immobilize him, in his case exile was a productive engine, it engendered an incessant writing/walking, the latter is a common practice of Lima Barreto, who describes in his diary his long walks through the city of Rio de Janeiro, always observing the urban and suburban types, which equally invade his fiction (PACHECO, 2017, p. 31).

"[...] the comments did not cease and the absence of relations of Lent in the midst of which they left, made them of an unusual constancy". (TFPQ, p. 66).

In the course of the plot, especially after the vexatious episode generated by Policarpo's demand from the press, he decides to leave the city and move to Sossego, a rural area that becomes the new setting of the novel. He goes contentedly to the "land that grows all things by planting." In the dialogues with their employee, Anastácio - who was enslaved -, they discuss the processes of importing European labor, which devalue the national worker, in this case for agricultural work:

"Earth is not ours... And *frumiga*?... We don't have the tool... That's good for Italian or *German*, who government gives everything... **Government doesn't like us...**" (TFPQ, p. 133, emphasis added).

This statement is uttered at a time when the importation of blacks was prohibited by the Eusébio de Queirós Law (1850) and resonates with relevant historical events. There were multiple motivations for importing white people from Europe, linked to Brazil's eugenicist whitening policies (scientific racism), whose concept of race was thought of in the biological sphere (Almeida, 2019), or associated with theories

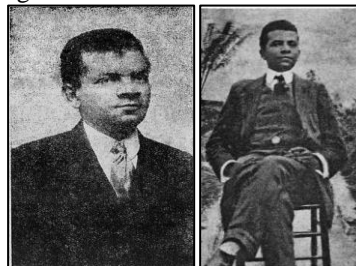
of "involution" of certain races (Schwarcz, 2017b, p. 216). In this sense, the character Policarpo begins to become aware of this process and positions himself in the face of the neglect and neglect (save himself who can) towards the Brazilian people, composed predominantly of newly freedmen, while those who came from abroad were benefited.

"[...] noted that the *Government's self-help was only for nationals*; for the others all the help and facilities, not counting on their previous education and support from the patricians." (TFPQ, p. 133, emphasis added).

On the topic of bleaching, it is relevant to note the scarcity of portraits of the writer Lima Barreto. Of the few photographs available, despite being black and white images, it appears quite different from what was described (with olive skin color). In Brazilian literary historiography, especially in compendiums or manuals such as those of Sílvio Romero, there are explanations for what may have prevailed in the Brazilian intellectual and literary scene at the end of the nineteenth century. sets, poses, etc., reflecting the social standards of the time.

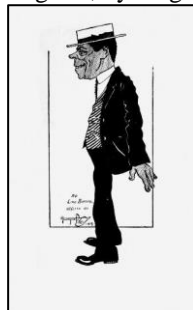
It is possible to contrast this approach with the caricature "A Cigarra", by Pires (1919), which represents the author as a "carioca trickster", as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 1 - Portraits of Lima Barreto



Source: Blog da Companhia, 2017.

Figure 2 - A Cigarra, by Hugo Pires (1919)



Source: Blog da Companhia, 2017.

In the following excerpt, the character Isaías Caminha has one of the first experiences of color discrimination: in the restaurant setting he and a "golden" receive different treatments and he does not understand why. In this sense, these works advance discussions that have also taken great reverberation



nowadays because they present a look at racism as a way of social organization (structural racism) when it shows the positions of self-care (resistances) that the characters had even in the face of the power devices that objectified them in manual labor:

[...] I went to the small counter where there was coffee and cakes. There were many passengers there. I helped myself and a small note to pay. As if they were taking a long time to bring me the change, I complained: "Oh!", said the clerk indignantly and in an unbridled tone. "What hurry are you?! **You don't steal here, you know?**" At the same time next to me, a blond boy was claiming his, which was gladly handed to him. **The contrast wounded me**, and with the glances that those present gave me, my indignation grew. I enjoyed a mute rage for seconds, and she almost burst into tears. Stumbling and dizzy, I boarded and **tried to decipher the reason for the difference between the two treatments. I didn't shoot**; In vain did I search my clothes and my person. My nineteen years were healthy and sparing, and my body regularly shaped. He had broad shoulders and agile, elastic limbs. **My noble hands, with sharp and slender fingers, were an inheritance from my mother, who had them so valiantly beautiful that they remained so, despite the manual work to which her condition forced her.** Even in face, though my features were not extraordinarily regular, I was neither hideous nor disgusting. He had a perfectly oval shape, and a complexion of a **pronounced olive color** (REIC, p. 80, emphasis added).

The statements in this excerpt shed light on the power relations that affect black bodies, exposing this form of conduct and diagnosing this historical formation. As a result, they produce resistance by questioning the power relations that segregate blacks and whites in the social field. The discursive subjects position themselves by also enunciating in relation to the myth of racial democracy and meritocracy, as discussed more recently, demonstrating even at that time the difficulties encountered by blacks in the sphere of work:

"The fat proprietor was a moment considering, waved his little eyes lost in the big face, examined me properly, and said at last, turning back, turned his back on me in a bad mood: It does not fit me. / Why? - I dared. / Because it doesn't fit me. And he came slowly to one of the front doors, while I was literally crushed. That refusal of the baker to admit me, I discovered a kind of place placed in my life. Being forced to work, **I was refused work in the name of unjustifiable feelings.** I easily generalized and convinced myself that **this would be the general course.**" (REIC, p. 144, emphasis added).

"It revolted me that I was forced to expend so much willpower, so much energy on things that others spent little on. It was an absurd, stupid inequality, against which my anguished thinking and my liberal sentiments that **I could not particularly accuse the baker would be broken.**" (REIC, p. 144, emphasis added).

"That society with people who had suspected me of being a thief, weighed me down, slaughtered me. Hope of a humble job had faded. The systematic refusal of the baker had led me to suppose that this was the case in all professions. Such would be the hoteliers, the owners of cafes, confectioneries, and stables. I didn't know where to get out; **it was a real place⁶ in my life** that I had a feeling. All day long I was not left with these thoughts." (REIC, p. 146, emphasis added).

⁶ 2. [Figurative] Insistence or persecution. "sítio", in Priberam Dictionary of the Portuguese Language [online], 2008-2021, <https://dicionario.priberam.org/s%C3%ADtio> [consulted on 03-01-2023].



The statements of the novels problematize the context of local politics, referring to discourses of a concern with personal prestige and not with the community, since the figures of "stereotyped characters are peculiar characteristics of the comic, but loaded with criticism of the chronic problems that have crossed the history of Brazil since the colony: coronelismo, nepotism, corruption" (LIMA, 2015, p. 7). In the following excerpt, in *Sossêgo*, the character Policarpo receives visits from the servant Antonino who had his sights set on receiving money and votes and, when he does not receive what he wanted, rebels and creates plans for revenge (cutting his wings):

[...] it was necessary **to clip the wings of that foreigner**, who came from who knows where" (TFPQ, p. 104, emphasis added).

Schwarz (2017b) points out Lima Barreto's duality (or idiosyncrasy) in relation to the author's criticism of the "doctors", since this had also always been his goal, even with all the rejections and mishaps. In the following excerpts, one can perceive the contempt in the personality of the characters who are doctors for the majority of the social category that had not stepped on the benches of the academy, as well as the "mythification" of the title of doctor, ironizing the veneration of Brazilians, in the dialogues of the character Cavalcanti, who was a student of Dentistry:

Her husband had been very reluctant to accompany her there. **That intimacy with a guy without title, without a brilliant position and without fortune did not seem right to him.** He did not understand how his father-in-law, after all a rich man from another sphere, could have maintained and strengthened relations with a small clerk in a secondary office, and even made him his compadre! That **the opposite was true was fair; but as it was, it seemed to shake the entire hierarchy of national society** (TFPQ, p. 55, emphasis added).

In the intervals of the conversation, they all looked at the novel dentist as if he were a supernatural being.

For all those people, Cavalcanti was no longer a simple man, he was a man and something else sacred and of a higher essence. [...] for some he was still vulgar, common, in appearance, but his substance had changed, he was different from theirs and he had been anointed with I don't know what thing vaguely outside the earthly, almost divine nature (TFPQ, p. 54 and 55, emphasis added).

In the following statements, a slightly different way of narrating can be perceived, since as a memoirist, the narrator, in the first person, assumes positions of a subject who not only describes social practices, but also evaluates and/or critiques in relation to *status* and other modes of social separation of people, whether by color, diploma or social function:

Oh! It would be doctor! **I would redeem the original sin** of my humble birth, I would soften the pressing, excruciating and omnimodal torment **of my color**... In the folds of the card's parchment, it would bring everyone's consideration into it. Sure of respect for my majesty as a man, I would walk with her more firmly through life outside. I would not hesitate, I would not hesitate, I could freely speak, say loudly the thoughts that were twisting in my brain (REIC, p. 75, emphasis added).



The following statements say of the medical practice that he did not even call patients by their names, but by "patient number". So what are the discursive effects of character in naming patients as mere numbers? In addition, the narratives portray the prestige of the public servant in that period when the Republican State was less than a decade old:

Dr. Armando Borges himself, the husband of Olga [...] Doctor and rich, because of his wife's fortune, he was not satisfied. The ambition for money and the desire to be named spurred him on. He was already **a doctor at the Syrian Hospital, where he went three times a week and, in half an hour, saw thirty or more patients.** He would arrive, the nurse would give him information, the doctor would go from bed to bed, asking: "How are you?" "I'll do better, doctor," replied the Syrian in a guttural voice. In the next, he asked: "Is it better yet?" And so the visit passed; Arriving at the office, he would prescribe: "Patient No. 1, repeat the recipe; Sick 5... Who is it?" ... "It's that bearded man"... **"Ahn!" And he prescribed.**

But a doctor in a private hospital does not give fame to anyone: it is essential to be from the government, otherwise he would be nothing more than a simple practitioner. He wanted to have an official position, a doctor, a director or even a lecturer at the college (TFPQ, p. 159, emphasis added).

The narrator addresses how that academic teaching did not offer solutions for an essentially agricultural nation (problems in the plantations) and that "the empirical knowledge of the man of the region (Anastácio) worked much better than the theories of the books of Lent and the utilities of their equipment" (PERIN, 2019, p. 56):

And there was no one who knew how to heal. In a land whose government had so many schools that produced so many scholars, there was not a single man who could reduce, by his drugs or prescriptions, that considerable injury. (TFPQ, p. 148).

Never intending to write anachronisms, we can say that the statement that appears in the scene of the character Doctor Armando, who exchanges the spines of the "easy books" for the classics of French literature, resembles the statements that appear in the period of social isolation, during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, it was noticed that in some *lives the chroma key cloths* fell or the false library backgrounds failed, used to demarcate the space of the house or environment as a place of reading and the status of reader; There is a criticism of an idea of how to behave as a reader, since it would be enough to have a bookshelf or hold a book to build status.

"The front room in the upper basement had been turned into a library. The walls were lined with shelves that groaned under the weight of the great treatises. At night he would open the windows of the shutters, light all the gas burners, and set himself at the table, all in white with an open book under his eyes.

Sleep was not long in coming at the end of the fifth page.... That was the devil! [...] His pedantry, his false knowledge, and the poverty of his general education made him see in all this toys, pastimes, gossip, all the more so as he slept reading such books. But he needed to deceive himself and his wife. Moreover, from the street, they would see him and find himself sleeping on his books?... He tried to order some novels by Paul de Kock in **spines with changed titles** and kept me from sleeping." (p. 160, emphasis added)



By way of possible conclusion, the statements present in Lima Barreto's works are marked in the enunciative spaces by the strong presence of racial hegemony and the expectations of a young black man in the face of the discourse of meritocracy proposed by the liberalism of the beginning of the Brazilian Republic between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (CHAVES, 2019, p. 99). These are identities of the subject of otherness (HOOKS, 2020), or otherness. The experiences through characters set in Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital at the time, are created by an author much studied in Brazilian universities and abroad, increasing his prominence, as being honored at the International Literary Festival of Paraty in 2017, and having columns and blogs about his work and person. The "mulatto writer saw literary criticism and journalists (the main targets of his acid narrative) receive his work with a disingenuous indifference. Today, however, [...] it is recognized as one of the great works of Brazilian literature" (AMARAL, 2016, p. 1220).

In this way, we understand that the linguistic and discursive constructions of these statements of literary or (auto)biographical status speak of an alter ego position of the author and "his ideological position against a mild consciousness of history [...]. The cultural identification of this writer surprises us because it narrates a nation of the margins, of the excluded. Hence the importance of Lima Barreto's out-of-place" (GOMES, 2008, p. 47). All writings are powers and resistances to power games aimed at a color defect.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We perceive the actuality of Barretian's work and how from it it is possible to draw dialogues both with contemporaneity, such as the inferiorization and subjugation of black epistemes, or the silencing that certain voices historically have. These "novels with a key" (roman à clef) echo and speak of a potency of resistances and demarcate the importance of understanding the discursiveness that this knowledge of literature produces and moves (FOUCAULT, 2001). From this perspective, Lima Barreto, through his linguistic and literary tactics, constructs discursive meanings that denounce, criticize and evaluate the techniques of maintaining power over docile bodies. They are literary works with an ironic, comical and current tone; and the discourses and practices of two or three centuries ago are reconfigured, in other discursive practices, in contemporaneity.

Nowadays, Conceição Evaristo has questioned, and a lot, the myriad of rules that led her, for example, to be recognized belatedly, in contrast to other white writers, whose recognition is carried out in a different way. When asked about this issue, Evaristo takes a strong stance on this case of "exception", saying that "stories of exception help us to think about the rule". This reflection serves both to think about the place destined to the writings of black authors today and in previous centuries. Keeping the necessary



differences, after all the discursive practices are different, what remains is that racism still maintains, in the 21st century, echoes of other discourses of Brazilian literary and cultural historiography.

If the practices of exception help to understand the rule (EVARISTO, 2018), and the resistances are the starting point for the study of power relations (FOUCAULT), we can make use of this parallel to highlight the problematizations made by Lima Barreto, as a strategy for analyzing the practices of resistance inscribed in the novels studied, because, in an inventive way, the novelist problematizes the exercises of power and the discursive practices of the early twentieth century, shedding light on the rules of formation of discourses that fall on black bodies. Knowing the rules and how power relations work is the first step to bending them and building other spaces for action.

In this way, alterities and writings (EVARISTO, 2008), from an attentive look, allow processes of (re)reading of the past as well as serving as exceptions to understand the rules of operation of this game of the present - which are neoliberal, sexist and racist, essentially. Finally, we value these writings, as they generate identification and empowerment in a critical way.



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