

Literature and representation: a critical analysis of Cacau, by

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Literatura e representação: uma análise crítica de Cacau, de

Jorge Amado


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ABSTRACT

This text intends to analyze the novel *Cacau* (1933), by Jorge Amado, in a perspective of literature as representation, in the wake of the studies of Louis Marin and Roger Chartier, considering the literary text as the representation of the sensibilities of certain men, in certain times, the idea they made of their own society, the meanings they wanted to build, or the way they understood the world in which they lived. In this sense, we propose an opposition to the idea that the referred work, circumscribed by Marxist criticism as a proletarian and regionalist novel, is a homology of the social structures of reality that refer to it, since we seek to build a study closer to the theoretical currents that investigate culture not as a level of reality attached to socioeconomic determinations, but as a complex dimension of men, which in no way can be explained by reductionist and deterministic models. Thus, the notion of representation allowed us to understand the relationships that the author or the group he was part of had with the social world, as a multifaceted construction, constituted of positions, choices, and interests. Based on Jauss, we propose that there is no hidden meaning, but a meaning that occurs in the relationship between work and reader.

KEYWORDS: Representation; Novel; Jorge Amado; *Cacau*

RESUMO

O presente texto pretende analisar o romance *Cacau* (1933), de Jorge Amado, em uma perspectiva da literatura como representação, na esteira dos estudos de Louis Marin e Roger Chartier, considerando o texto literário como a representação das sensibilidades de determinados homens, em determinadas épocas, da ideia que faziam de sua própria sociedade, dos significados que almejavam construir, ou a maneira como apreendiam o mundo em que viviam. Nesse sentido, propomos uma oposição à ideia de que a referida obra, circunscrita pela crítica marxista como romance proletário e regionalista, é uma homologia das estruturas sociais da realidade que lhe é referente, uma vez que buscamos construir um estudo mais próximo das correntes teóricas que investigam a cultura não como um nível de realidade adstrito às determinações socioeconômicas, mas como uma dimensão complexa do homem que, de maneira alguma, pode ser explicada por modelos reducionistas e deterministas. Assim, a noção de representação nos permitiu compreender as relações que o autor ou o grupo do qual ele fez parte mantiveram com o mundo social, como uma construção multifacetada, constituída de posições, escolhas e interesses. Baseado em Jauss, propomos que não há um sentido oculto, mas uma significação que se dá na relação obra e leitor.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Representação; Romance; Jorge Amado; *Cacau*

1 Introduction

In 1933, Jorge Amado published his second novel, *Cacau*, beginning what Brazilian literary critics called the “cocoa cycle” of Amadian literature, consisting of narratives set in the southern region of Bahia and which, in general, tried to represent social relations within the cocoa coronelismo, deeply marked by the inequality and the repressive power of the great rural oligarchies. So it is with *Terras do Sem Fim* (1943), which narrates the conquest of the land by



the first explorers of the region and the dispute between two rival families; *São Jorge dos Ilhéus* (1944), which deals with the collapse of the colonels and the rise of foreign capital in the exploration of cocoa; as well as with *Gabriela, cravo and canela* (1958), which approaches cocoa society from the perspective of the chronicle of customs; and, finally, the same theme being taken up more than 50 years later with *Tocaia grande* (1984), which proposes, in an impetus of reparation, to retrace the genealogy of the cities of Grapiúnas from the point of view of the losers and not more of the winners.

According to Aguiar (2018), *Cacau* had an initial circulation of two thousand copies that sold out in just over a month, making the debut author a public success, but for a less literary than political reason: “the bad words contained in the work caused the edition to be collected from bookstores” (AGUIAR, 2018, p.69). The writer and the editors of the book had to turn to friends, influential in the Vargas government, who interceded and managed to get the book released, carrying out the feeling that the censorship itself would have contributed to the novel being a commercial success. Shortly thereafter, a second edition was launched, and another three thousand copies were printed and offered for sale.

However, in addition to the episode of censorship and good popular acceptance, a small note, at the opening of the novel, caught the attention of readers and critics: “I tried to tell in this book, with a minimum of literature for a maximum of honesty, the life of cocoa farms works in southern Bahia. Is it a proletarian romance?” (AMADO, 1971, p.121). The text seemed to confirm a trend towards political and ideological engagement that would mark a generation of artists from that period. According to Candido (2011), since 1930 there was a great mobilization in the scope of culture and arts in Brazil, motivated mainly by the desire to unify the country in an essentially Brazilian identity, in the wake of the modernist movement that started in 1922. There was great interest in this sense, in various spheres of culture, be it in public education, in artistic and literary life, in historical and social studies, and even in the media: the desire for a new ideological awareness that required a heightening in the political engagement by artists and intellectuals. While part of them was influenced by the experience of the 1917 Revolution in Russia and the consolidation of communist movements around the world, another part was enthusiastic about the ultranationalist ideology, defended mainly by the Mussolini regime, in Italy (CANDIDO, 2011, p.187-188).

The writers were committed to literature participating in the debate on social issues and the serious problems that affected Brazil at that time produced narratives that sought to portray

the reality of the forgotten, the least favored, the historically plundered, as well as the decay of the old oligarchies in the corners of the nation:

Novel strongly marked by Neo-naturalism and popular inspiration, aiming at the dramas contained in characteristic aspects of the country: decadence of the rural aristocracy and formation of the proletariat (José Lins do Rego); poetry and struggle of the worker (Jorge Amado, Amando Fontes); rural exodus, cangaço (José Américo de Almeida, Raquel de Queirós, Graciliano Ramos); difficult life in rapidly changing cities (Érico Veríssimo) (CANDIDO, 2006, p.130).

Still according to Candido, the Brazilian critics of the 1940s, however, went in the opposite direction, postulating that, under the justification of “social realism”, in this documentary way of making literature, many authors would be disguising their own deficiencies as artists of the word, triggering a certain disdain for formalism and for the aesthetic construction of the text. In this sense, *Cacau*'s previous note, “a minimum of literature for a maximum of honesty”, thus the author's position was situated, giving the impression that “honesty” is hardly compatible with literature, since this, synonym formal elaboration, would harm the faithful representation of reality. Some critics reacted fiercely to this modality of literary making, which became known as “proletarian romance”, and we may argue that Wilson Martins, in a text published in 1947 in the literary supplement *Arte Literatura*, of the *Folha do Norte* newspaper, in Belém, Pará, inaugurates what Eduardo de Assis Duarte called the “criticism of defects” in Amadian literature (DUARTE, 1996, p.32). Martins, when discussing what he considered a crisis in the Brazilian novel at that time, listed Jorge Amado as one of the most significant examples of the lack of formal clarity under the justification of rigorous representation of reality:

The case of a Jorge Amado, continually offering us the spectacle of his literary decay, either because he was definitely thrilled by party politics, or (what I think most likely) because his reserves of creative originality were quickly depleted, me it seems to be one of the most expressive (MARTINS, 1947, p.1).

Historian and literary critics Sérgio Buarque de Holanda made the same judgment about Amado's early novels. In a text entitled “Três Romances”, published in the same periodical, in the following year, Holanda suggested that political concern and party duties made it impossible for Amado to develop as a novelist. For the historian, unlike Graciliano Ramos and Raquel de Queiroz, the Bahian writer did not know how to give his text a universal character, nor managed

to achieve a psychological deepening in his characters, because “seducing his novels in the manner of a happy report”, “Although exciting for the imagination”, they lacked “severe and demanding qualities that are refined in attentive and often painful training” (HOLANDA, 1948, p.1).

The “criticism of defects”, identified by Duarte, however, finds in Álvaro Lins his greatest representative. A respected literary critic, Lins, who in 1955 was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters, wrote, throughout the 1940s, some articles evaluating Jorge Amado's novels published up to that time. Lins' texts significantly influenced a whole generation of critics who, in the following decades, would write anthologies and literary compendia, like Alfredo Bosi. Álvaro Lins's articles were gathered in *Os Mortos de Sobrecasaca: ensaios e estudos 1940-1960*, published in 1963. Among the scathing criticisms, Lins states that Jorge Amado is an “incomplete and mutilated novelist, in whose hands the subjects and the problems remain in a natural state as if asking for the necessary developments ”; he further asserts that “Mr. Jorge Amado's main problem is that of his ignorance, that of his lack of contact with culture, that of his literary inexperience” (LINS, 1963, p.242-246).

2 The notion of representation as opposed to Marxist criticism

In spite of undertaking a criticism without further analytical deepening and more concerned with pointing out only Jorge Amado's defects, what Álvaro Lins and the detractors of Amadian literature did was to take the author's biography and its socio-historical context as the only possibilities of interpretation for the literary text. Thus, they constructed an analysis of the work based on a Marxist conception of socioeconomic determinism, from a materialist perspective, considering literature as a mere reflection of the author's reality or psychology. In opposition to these reductionist and deterministic models, what we propose is precisely to understand the Amadian text through the concept of “representation”, in the wake of the studies of Louis Marin and Roger Chartier, considering it as the representation of the sensibilities of certain men at specific moments in history, the idea they made of their own society, and the meanings they intended to build, as a multifaceted elaboration that involves a set of practices impregnated with positions and choices. Thus, the discourse of fiction is mimetic, but it imitates other current discourses of that society rather than empirical reality, because the verisimilitude of these texts occurs from the set of truth regimes that a given society legitimizes.

That said, what we defend is an opposition to the idea that the work, circumscribed by Marxist criticism as a proletarian and regionalist novel, is a homology of the social structures of reality that refer to it, since we seek to build an analysis closer to the currents theorists who investigate culture not as a level of reality attached to socioeconomic determinations, but as a complex dimension of men that in no way can be explained only by models based on historical materialism. In this sense, the idea of a preservation of the past in the literary work that we defend differs from the concept of mirroring or transposing social reality to fiction, since we intend to analyze the novel *Cacau* not as a historical document, or as a reflection of a conjuncture social and economic that allows us to reconstruct the Grapiúna society from the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century as it existed. Our objective is, precisely, to escape this reading that is very common in the tradition of literary criticism, based on the notion that the work is an ideological construction determined by the author's social place and that the text can only be interpreted by a referent outside himself.

Thus, the proposal of historians linked to the New Cultural History, from the 1980s on, seems to us the most reasonable to read the Amadian text, because it aims to decipher societies in another way: understanding the modalities of acting and thinking, through the notions of “practices” and “representations”, which can be useful to examine the cultural objects produced, the producing and receiving subjects, the processes that constitute this production and the norms to which societies conform by consolidating their customs. The field of “practices” and “representations”, which encompasses notions such as “appropriation” and “negotiation”, seems to us, in this sense, the best alternative to investigate the Amadian literary text in a perspective of literature as something constructed from a “Thought structure” that acted in a certain period, in a specific physical space:

The representations of the social world thus constructed, although they aspire to the universality of a diagnosis based on reason, are always determined by the group interests that shape them. Hence, for each case, the necessary relationship between the speeches made and the position of those who use them (CHARTIER, 1998, p.17).

In *Cacau*, we are led by a narrator-character who, in the first chapter, entitled “Fazenda Fraternidade”, presents the scenario of the plot and the terrible conditions experienced by rural workers on the property of Colonel Manuel Misael de Sousa Teles, the “king of cocoa”, or Mané Frajelo, a pejorative nickname given by the workers themselves. After introducing some

characters that will compose the plot, such as Colodino, Antônio Barriguinha and Honório, all hired at the farm, the narrator interrupts the timeline in the next chapter to return to his own childhood in the state of Sergipe. Son of the owner of a fabric factory in the city of São Cristóvão, the boy, despite belonging to a more affluent class in the region, had early contact with clothing workers and residents of poor neighborhoods. With the death of his father, as a child, he started to work in the family business, which was now managed by his uncle, an unscrupulous man who managed to increase the profits of the factory and expand the business at the expense of the exploitation of workers.

As a teenager, after a quarrel with his uncle, which led him to resign from the factory, the young man heard promises of wealth and prosperity in the cocoa crops in Ilhéus, in the south of Bahia, and decided to venture out with a mass of Sergipanos (people born in Sergipe) attracted by the land of golden fruits. That is how the narrative, little by little, takes us back to the starting point, “Fazenda Fraternidade”, and we learn that the narrator-character was one of Colonel Misael's employees, one of the so-called “rented”, men who are hired in conditions similar to slavery, who live in makeshift shacks and who are forced to buy food and other supplies in establishments owned by the contractor himself. Through Sergipano, as he is called by his companions, we know the routine in planting, harvesting and processing cocoa, the “heroes of the stake” and jagunços who protect the colonels and help maintain, through violent repression, order and the good functioning of the farm, as well as the very few moments of fun for workers, on weekends, in the prostitution houses of poor villages in the region. For the plundered, victims of coronelismo, poverty, forced labor and subhuman conditions were seen as natural:

Nobody complained. Everything was right. We lived almost outside the world and our misery didn't interest anyone. We lived to live. Only very far did the idea arise that one day it could change. How, we didn't know. We couldn't all get to be a farmer. In a thousand, one got rich (AMADO, 1971, p.151).

Gradually, as he is affected by the harsh reality of peasant workers on cocoa farms, Sergipano acquires a “class conscience”, even though he is unable to elaborate exactly what this means. The routine of Fazenda Fraternidade is interrupted by the arrival of Colonel Misael and his family for the traditional festivities of São João. It is when Sergipano meets the beautiful Mária, daughter of the “king of cocoa”, who ends up becoming fond of him. Mária asks her father to put the worker at her disposal for the days that she is on the farm and, thus, Sergipano approaches the boss's daughter, who soon falls in love with him and proposes marriage. The

worker, however, rejects the girl's request, because Mária sets as a condition for the marriage that he stop being employed and becomes a boss, but Sergipano does not accept and prefers to stand firm with the workers, the poorest: “The love for my class, for the workers, human and great love, would kill the petty love for the boss' daughter. I thought so and rightly so” (AMADO, 1971, p.221).

In one of the last chapters of the novel, called “Correspondência”, the narrator-character, called throughout Sergipano's narrative, reveals that he is called José Cordeiro and had the idea of writing the story after reading the letters of rural workers, prostitutes and friends he kept after the period at Fazenda Fraternidade: “Later, already in Rio de Janeiro, rereading these letters, I thought of writing a book. Thus ‘Cacau’ was born. It is not a beautiful book, phrased, without repetition of words. It is true that today I am a worker, a typographer, I read a lot, I learned a lot” (AMADO, 1971, p.210). By revealing the narrator of the text and attributing its authorship to a man who did not have full mastery of the stylistic resources of literature, even though he became a typographer, but who knew the reality of rural workers and factory workers, the author demonstrates to be in agreement with what he recommended in the opening note of the novel: “minimum of literature for a maximum of honesty”. Thus, if the text lacks more elaborate constructions and if there is one or another flaw from the aesthetic point of view, it is because reality needs to be presented in a crude and direct way by those who experienced it.

In this sense, as we mentioned earlier, we can say that Jorge Amado is in conformity with what his peers, the so-called generation of the novel of the 30s, sought in Brazilian literature: the production of narratives that portrayed those historically forgotten through a language that represents them. However, even though Jorge Amado has a specific objective in this direction and builds his narrative based on social realism, this is not the only way to read the Amadian novel. According to Jauss, we know that the historical life of a literary work is inconceivable without the active participation of its recipient and that the aesthetic experience, therefore, does not begin by understanding and interpreting the hidden meaning of a work, much less by reconstructing the intentions created by the author. Reception studies, on the other hand, show us that the meaning of the text is not an “expression of something else”, previous and independent of it, because of this the naivety of the assertion is refuted that literature is the expression of reality. Thus, the real world is not given to the text in advance, but it obtains it through a relationship that is established between the work and the reader, the latter impregnated with orientations and values that he himself is not aware of. To use Lima's words, reading Jauss:

“it is the effect (product of orientations and values) updated in the reader that serves as a filter to lend meaning to the indeterminacy contained in the structure of the text” (LIMA, 1970, p.24). By “indetermination”, present in the text structure, we can understand what appears a gap to be filled by the reader, as a gap that causes hesitation or ambiguity, and that distinguishes the literary text, for example, from a pragmatic message or a theorem.

Thus, in the same way that the concept of “representation”, analyzed from Chartier's studies, allows us to escape the idea that every literary work is the product of a certain historical moment, of a “homogeneous totality, endowed with an ideal is unique meaning present in each of the manifestations that it expresses”(CHARTIER, 2002), Jauss's thought, in stating that meaning is engendered in the reading process, helps us to avoid both the Marxist view of historical contemplation and the formalist view of merely aesthetic contemplation. Both methods see the literary object enclosed in the circle of production systems, in the case of historical materialism, and of pure aesthetic representation, in the case of formalism.

In view of this, if we think of a system of private power with enormous political and economic influence, which was established in Brazil, during Old Republic, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but with roots rooted in the colonial period, we can use the concept of representation to analyze how the practices and signs of coronelismo served for classification and social hierarchy. The ways institutionalized by certain representatives to pursue the coherence of a community, its own social identity and, thus, legitimize its domain. Examining this system of domination based on the representation undertaken by Amado in *Cacau*, allows us to understand the relationship that the author himself had with this practice. When reconstructing Ilhéus from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th, Amado does so, according to the testimony of the writer himself, from his personal and family memories, from conversations with the elderly, from stories heard during childhood on the farms in Ferradas, where he was born. In other words, the narrator, as Benjamin said, seeks in his personal experience the raw material for his narratives, the best being those that are least distinguished from the oral stories told by the countless anonymous narrators. Thus, the mentality of this individual, whether he is a narrator or not, is precisely what he has in common with other men of his time. For Chartier, the level of the history of mentalities is that of the everyday and the automatic, it is what escapes the individual subjects of history because it reveals the impersonal content of their thinking (CHARTIER, 1998, p.41).

[...] any documentary source that is mobilized for any type of history will never have an immediate and transparent relationship with the practices that designate them. The representation of practices always has particular reasons, codes, purposes and recipients. Identifying them is a mandatory condition to understand the situations or practices that are the object of the representation (CHARTIER, 2011, p.16).

By exposing the mandonism and the mechanisms of the coronelista political-economic regime, based on oppression and violence, revealing social tensions typical of that period and anchored in characters that seem to indicate the representation of historical figures from the region, the Amadian literary discourse establishes a relationship of “Negotiation” with social reality. Therefore, we cannot say that Colonel Manuel Misael de Souza Teles, an Amadian character, is the same Manuel Misael da Silva Tavares, one of the largest cocoa producers in the southern region of Bahia, also known as “king of cocoa”, and considered by historians as the most promising cocoa farmer in the country: “Misael Tavares owned about eighteen farms, employing more than four hundred men in his daily work, and was one of the few local farmers to harvest more than forty thousand cocoa groves” (FALCÓN, 2010, p .60). In Amado's fiction, the narrator refers to him as "rich man", "feudal lord", and "king of cocoa" (AMADO, 1971, p.179).

For Chartier, some literary works have the capacity to shape collective representations of the past in a much more powerful way than the writings of historians, because there is a force in them, called “social energy”, able to appropriate instances of the real , but which are not the real (CHARTIER, 2009, p.25). The referent, in this sense, may even trigger the process, but it does not lead or complete it, because the meaning is always constructed outside the referent. Although, in a way, contiguous to reality, we understand that fiction is a world apart. We can say that the borders that separate one from the other are porous and easily transposed, however, here, we understand the border not in the sense of demarcation and delimitation, but as a place of transit, communication and dialogue:

Literature records and expresses multiple aspects of the complex, diverse and conflicting social field in which it is inserted and to which it refers. It is constituted from the social and cultural world and also constitutes it; it is a witness made by the filter of a look, of a perception and reading of reality, being an inscription, instrument and proposition of paths, projects, values, rules, attitudes, ways of feeling ... As such it is a record and reading, interpretation, of what exists and proposition of what may exist, and points to the historicity of the experiences of invention and construction of a society with all its mental and symbolic apparatus (BORGES, 2010, p.98).

The idea of representation proposes the identification and understanding of regulatory forces that act on the collective life of individuals, built from the real, whose importance is not established by the criterion of truth, but that of credibility. In this way, the representations are not a reflection of reality, but an elaboration of reality based on a varied set of social, cultural, political and institutional aspects. In this perspective, to represent is to give meaning to the absent, it is also to create, because, many times, the one who represents describes a society as he imagines it to be, or as he would like it to be. According to Marin:

This would be the first effect of representation in general: to do as if another, the absent one, was present; but not an effective presence, but an effect of presence. It is not the same, but it occurs as if it were the same and, sometimes, even more than the same (MARIN, 2009, p.137)

In the essay *Powers and limits of representation: Marin, discourse and image* (2002), Chartier highlights the concept's duplicity. On the one hand, to represent is, as we said, to give presence to an absence, on the other, it is also to display a presence as an image. Chartier says that Marin uses a classic French dictionary from 1727 called Furetière to find these two apparently opposite meanings for the word representation.

In the first sense, representation is when an image takes the place of an “absent object (thing, concept or person)”, being able to replace it appropriately. “To represent is, therefore, to make things known mediately “by painting an object”, “by words and gestures”, “by some figures, by some marks”- such as enigmas, emblems, fables, allegories” (CHARTIER, 2002, p.165). In a discourse more commonly used in politics and in the legal environment, we can say of a person who puts himself in the place of another and, through this substitution, assumes the power and authority of the first. In the second sense of the term, referred to in the Furetière, to represent is also the “demonstration of a presence, the public presentation of a thing or a person” (CHARTIER, 2002, p.166). Thus, the image and the referent are the same.

Thus, through the representation of the passport at the border, the holder not only appears there, but also presents his legitimate presence by the sign that authorizes or permits, and even obliges him. The representation remains here in its element and intensifies it by doubling it. In that sense, it is your reflection, and to represent will always be to present yourself as representative of something. At the same time, the representation constitutes its subject. This would be the second effect of representation in general, that of constituting a subject through reflection of the representative device (MARIN, 2009, p.137).

Amado's literary discourse evokes the emblematic figure of the “colonel” who, when entering the scene, “presents himself representing something” in a reflexive dimension of representation. Like farmer Manuel Misael de *Cacau*, cocoa colonels, for the most part, did not need to use physical force or violence to impose their rule, because they almost always resorted to forms of symbolic domination. Whether by the image itself, by the exhibition, or even by the apparatus, the power of the “colonel” was represented by devices around him: the constant presence of jagunços, the boots, spurs, the hat, the rebenches, the parabélum. Artifices that represented the “colonel's power” and aroused, without resorting to any act of violence, submission and unconditional obedience. In this sense, the instruments of symbolic domination ensure at the same time “the negation and conservation of the absolute of force”, as Marin warns: “Negation, because force is neither exercised nor manifested and because it is at peace in the signs that signify and designate it; conservation, because the force, by and in the representation, will be given as justice, that is to say as an obligatory binding law under the death penalty” (MARIN, 2009, p.137).

To a certain extent, the exercise of political domination in the Grapiúna society, by the cocoa colonels, was supported by the continued “exhibition” of an apparatus of symbolic forms, which contributed considerably to the relative social conformation within this oppressive and unequal structure that was the coronelist system. Symbolic domination, therefore, ensured that rural workers, blacks, and mestizos, under a regime similar to slavery, accepted the conditions imposed by the colonels, to the point of incorporating this exploitation and, thus, naturalizing them.

However, we know that this system of symbolic domination that operated in coronelism was not restricted to physical violence and its repressive nature, as a negation and the conservation of the absolute of force. In Amado's literary discourse in the aforementioned novel, as well as in other texts of the so-called “cocoa cycle”, we find some clues to the sociability relations between the colonels and their employees. In the chapter “Jaca”, for example, the author describes the baptism of children of rural workers, by Colonel Manuel Misael. Thus, the figure of the great cocoa farmer, owner of the land, his people, and his laws, was also associated with the image of a protector, defender of his “men”, of his “possessions”. The custom of “sponsoring” the sons and nephews of employees gave the colonel other forms of recognition and respect, not just the repressive route. The practice, also common in the relations between master and slave during the slave regime, is still a legitimization of paternalism, which concerns “another

form of control more effective than the whip of the overseer”, “in which the dominated accepts the system as long as certain rights and privileges are respected, and also that bargaining is possible” (REIS, 1989, p.102).

The baptisms were held every year for Christmas. The colonel and the family invited a priest to celebrate Mass in the fields. Families from Ilhéus, Itabuna and Pirangi filled the big house. Pigs, chickens, turkeys and sheep were sacrificed, and they danced at night to the sound of a record player. Eight days of fun for those people in the city, who avoided touching people for fear of getting dirty and who started, from afar, talking to mock the bullshit we said. With Christmas Day the big party came. Workers from the most distant places, whole families of contractors, came on foot to baptize their children (AMADO, 1971, p.75).

If, on the one hand, there is a mechanism that operates through physical and symbolic violence, on the other hand, we need to consider that sponsorship, especially in the 19th century, was seen as a strategy sought by farm employees, blacks and mestizos, to reach greater insertion in this society. Through sponsorship, for example, many of them had access to a set of practices and knowledge that would otherwise be impossible to reach. In *Cacau*, even the way of treating the colonel and his family changed after the workers' children were baptized: “They started calling the colonel a godfather and Mária a godmother” (AMADO, 1971, p.177). This contradictory practice demonstrates that there was a bargaining space between the oppressor and the oppressed, which demystifies the idea of hegemonic and absolute power.

[...] It is obvious that the owners and their agents had an enormous initial advantage, based on access and powerful material, social, military and symbolic resources. That is why slaves had to face them with intelligence and creativity. They developed a fine personal malice, a disconcerting cultural boldness, a worldview open to the new (REIS, 1989, p.33).

Reis warns us of the existence of resistance tactics that triggered some ruptures in the domination system through small acts of disobedience and manipulation. As Michel de Certeau points out, despite the view that the devices operated by the forces of domination always aim to produce control and coercion, the “common man” also has the ability to engender devices of resistance to face these mechanisms that try to control them. Certeau calls these mechanisms “tactics” and thus defines them:

[...] A calculation that cannot count on its own, nor, therefore, with a boundary that distinguishes the other as a visible totality. The tactic has only the place of the other. It insinuates itself, fragmentarily, without apprehending it entirely, without being able to retain it at a distance. It has no basis on which to capitalize its profits, prepare its expansions and ensure independence in the face of circumstances. [...] On the contrary, due to the fact that it is not a place, the tactic depends on the time, watching to 'capture on the flight' possibilities of gain. What she gains, she does not keep. You have to constantly play with events to make them 'occasions'. Without ceasing, the weak must take advantage of forces that are foreign to him. He achieves it at opportune moments where he combines heterogeneous elements [...], but his intellectual synthesis has as a form not a speech, but the very decision, act and way of taking advantage of the 'occasion' (CERTEAU, 1998, p. 46 -47).

In *Cacau*, these tactics are not enough to promote an effective transformation in the characters that engender them, as for example with Negra Risoleta, an ex-slave and worker on a cocoa farm in *Terras do Sem Fim* (1943), who benefits from the baptism of the colonel to obtain privileges and even obtain plot of land. However, both in the first and second novels there is a profound inequality and an absolute impediment to social mobility of these characters. Although the two works are classified by Brazilian critics as “proletarian romance” or “social romance”, since they are attributed a Leninist-Marxist orientation, having as reference the model of Soviet realism, we cannot say exactly that the texts urge the working classes to revolution. Perhaps the opposite, because any attempt to revolt and mobilize the peasants in *Cacau* is completely rejected and boycotted before it starts. In some moments of the novel, Sergipano even shows awareness of the violence to which they are subjected: “Poor women, who cried, prayed and got drunk in Rua da Lama. Poor sex workers. When will the day of your deliverance come” (AMADO, 1971, p.164). In another section, after a conversation with Colodino, a carpenter who lived in the same shack as José Cordeiro on the farm, the character narrator reflects on the conditions of the cocoa farms: “We looked at the cocoa trees and we did not find the solution. If we were not used to misery, suicides would be daily. Wouldn't there be a way out of that situation?” (AMADO, 1971, p.184).

The proletarians, therefore, find no way out of the exploitation to which they are subjected, they do not rebel, nor do they position themselves against the coronelista structure. Those who do not agree with the condition of semi-slavery on cocoa farms prefer to leave, to try life in other lands, leaving behind the companions who will continue to be plundered. José Cordeiro, the character-narrator, even plans to revolt when Colonel Manuel Misael decreases, without explanation, the wages of all farm workers. The riot, however, does not gain strength,

because they imagine that the boss will fire them to hire other people who would work for the established amount:

— We are beaten before the fight starts.
— We are born defeated ... — sentenced Valentine.
We bow our heads. And the other day we went back to work with five hundred Réis less (AMADO, 1971, p.216).

Conclusion

In short, what we find in the Amadian narrative is the total impossibility of the disadvantaged classes to rise and the consolidation of the colonels' power. So there is no outrage, there are no revolts, there are no strikes. If we were to build a critique based on historical materialism, which values the author's biographical data, we could say that what the novel does, instead of social denunciation, is a reaffirmation of the untouchable values of the coronelist ilheense society, and it undertakes a true apology for the ruling classes and the grapevine agrarian bourgeoisie, of which Jorge Amado himself was a part. As we know, the writer is the son of a cocoa colonel, farmer João Amado. However, the proposal is not to go in that direction, since we refute these reductionist models that intend to interpret the text based on determinisms. What this seems to demonstrate is the complex and heterogeneous character of the Amadian text itself.

In this way, we believe that the concept of representation can encompass this dimension of Jorge Amado's literature, allowing the understanding of the relationships that the author or the group of which he is part have with the social world in a much more effective way than the notion of mentality, since it may suggest the idea of a supposed objectivity of social structures, as opposed to the subjectivity of the concept of representation as a multifaceted construction, which involves a set of varied practices, consisting of positions, choices, and interests. As we have already mentioned, the notion is capable of understanding the set of “theatricalized and stylized” forms by which men and societies construct images of themselves, which “are not an immediate, automatic, objective expression of the status of one or the other's power. Its effectiveness depends on the perception and judgment of its recipients, adherence or instance before mechanisms of presentation and persuasion put into action” (CHARTIER, 2002, p. 177-178).

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