BRAZILIAN FICTION: DISLOCATION AND RELOCATION IN A BORDERIZED NATION-SPACE

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Não podia morrer sem contar que sabia com certeza ... que o povo pensa, que o povo pulsa, que o povo tem uma cabeça que transcende as cabeças dos indivíduos, que não poderá ser exterminado, mesmo que façam tudo para isso, como fazem e farão. ... Temos de ser tudo, mas antes temos de ser nós .... Viva o povo brasileiro, viva nós!

The formula-one champion Ayrton Senna had achieved what soccer, samba, and carnival could hardly do anymore: to send Brazil into trance, to create a collective identity, a feeling of nationhood, to stir up hope at each new start; hope of winning which meant not only being part of the so-called First World but beating it. Senna had magically driven Brazil into a burgeoning national self-esteem. When Senna died on May 1, 1994 his life and death was ritually enacted throughout the country: during four days and nights Senna was the only topic on Brazilian TV; in São Paulo, Brazil's economic locomotive, shops were closed and assembly lines stood idle; in Brasilia the parliament was paralyzed, forgotten the galloping inflation, the corruption scandals, the political disputes between the presidential candidates; in the streets one could see crying people, a sea of painted bodies and faces with national flags and banners canonizing the deceased Senna. Brazil had become a prime example of what Benedict Anderson termed an 'imagined community' - that is, "a nation ... conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" regardless of its internal strifes and cultural/racial/ethnic differences.2 A (post)modern nation at once characterized by a form of temporal synchronicity and deterritorialized by the tele-media: the programs of 'Manchete', the second largest TV station, were crossed by a black bar as a sign of mourning; the media giant 'Rede Globo' developed an aesthetic that increased the atmosphere of the streets through a combination of soft music, an endlessly repeated flow of images (often in slow motion) showing highpoints of Senna's life and death, and special lighting effects; President Itamar Franco announced a three-day national mourning and used
his presence in the midst of the televised funeral service as a political act that carried as much weight as any popular measure against inflation or corruption. In other words, while the tele-media linked the country's different regions, cultures and social strata together as a nation-people, it also produced the change which characterizes the public sphere and the dynamic of communication, namely, the emergence of a culture of the simulacrum, a society in which according to Guy Debord, "the image has become the final norm of commodity reification" (The Society of the Spectacle). I use the example of Ayrton Senna in order to emphasize the most recent type of collective self-portrayal in a country which has always been in search of its identity: a form of autoexoticism enhanced and globalized by the media on a massive scale.\(^3\)

In The Location of Culture Homi Bhabha has argued that Anderson's notion of a nation-people's cultural homogeneity and collectivity based on time and language "misses the alienating and iterative time of the sign" - that is, the sign of cultural difference as "performative process of signification," disseminating the "originary presence of the nation-people" with its multiple, alternative and continual structuring of meaning. Being constructed, the nation is simultaneously deconstructed, re-imagined from different perspectives, constituting a hybrid space "internally marked by cultural difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations."\(^4\)

In Brazil, as in most of Latin America, both conceptions of the nation - a stable, homogeneous and a hybrid, constantly changing community - exist side by side, constituting the liminal terrain upon which identity is presently symbolized.\(^5\) This can be discerned in Darcy Ribeiro's recent delineation of Brazil as "uma etnia nacional, um povo-nação ... um só povo incorporado em uma nação unificada, num Estado uni-étnico" [a national ethnic people, a nation-people ... one single people incorporated in a unified nation, in a uni-ethnic State].\(^6\) According to Ribeiro, Brazil, notwithstanding its racial, ethnic and cultural as well as regional differences - the sertanejos in the Northeast, the caboclos of the Amazon region, the crioulos of the coastal area, the caipiras of the Southeast and central Brazil, the gaúchos in the South as well as the Asian-Brazilians, German-Brazilians, Afro-Brazilians, and the many indigenous tribes, among others - has to be seen as a cultural and national unity; a unity, however, characterized by "distâncias sociais" and "diferenças raciais" [social distances/racial differences]. A relic of slavery, the abyssal
antagonism between a dominant minority and the subaltern masses - described by Ribeiro as "uma estratificação classista de nítido colorido racial" [a classist stratification of clearly racial coloring] - has become a "modus vivendi" which undermines this unity. That is why "somos um povo em ser, impedido de sê-lo" [we are a people in the process of being, prevented from becoming one].

Ribeiro imagines Brazil as a nation whose cultural ontology - the specific relationship between identity (ethos and worldview), location and locution - is based upon the ideology of mestiçagem, racial mixing: a transcultural process of "desfazimento, refazimento e multiplicação" [undoing, redoing and multiplication] which produzed "um povo síntese ... uma civilização nova" [a synthetic people ... a new civilization] by "desindianizando o índio, desafricanizando o negro, deseuropeizando o europeu e fundindo suas heranças culturais" [de-indianizing the Indian, de-africanizing the African, de-europeanizing the European, and blending their cultural legacies]. Although being influenced by Gilberto Freyre's idea of national and cultural harmony, he deconstructs the Freyrean 'racial democracy', that is, a racial mixing conceived as a harmonious assimilation which does not take into account the underlying relations of power. Both Ribeiro and Freyre provide the term mestiçagem with a double meaning. First, the racial question: Brazil is seen as a hybrid nation-people of principally three distinct racial groups, namely the Amerindian, the African and the European; and second, the notion of heterogeneity: Brazil is characterized by cultural, racial, ethnic, and regional plurality. Brazilian identity, then, is characterized by a unity-in-diversity that combines basically two dimensions: a variety of cultures and races and national unity. Freyre's legacy is precisely this ideology of syncretism based on cultural diversity: the polarities mansion/shanty and nation/region. Whereas in Freyre diversity signifies differentiation without conflicts and antagonisms - the slaveholder is not opposed to the slave; he is simply different from him and both constitute different elements of a harmonious whole - Ribeiro situates (and thereby deconstructs) this ideology in its historically specific sociocultural context. It could be said that Ribeiro in his scientific and creative works focuses upon the fissures of this cultural unity-in-diversity, problematizing a borderized nation-space/people as an (historical) effect of an international conflict which pits Brazil against the industrialized world within a (neo)colonial framework of domination and subordination. Yet while highlighting what Renato Rosaldo has described as "cultural borderlands" - "processes of change and
internal inconsistencies, conflicts, and contradictions ... zones of difference within and between cultures. Ribeiro unceasingly stresses the framing "cultural patterns" - a homogeneous nation-people - as in the following passage:

O surgimento de uma etnia brasileira ... que possa envolver e acolher a gente variada que aqui se juntou, passa tanto pela anulação das identificações étnicas de índios, africanos e europeus, como pela indiferenciação entre as várias formas de mestiçagem, como os mulatos (negros com brancos), caboclos (brancos com índios), ou curibocas (negros com índios). Só por esse caminho, todos eles chegam a ser uma gente só, que se reconhece como igual ... que anula suas diferenças .... Dentro do novo agrupamento, cada membro, como pessoa, permanece inconfundível, mas passa a incluir sua pertença a certa identidade coletiva.12

[The emergence of a Brazilian ethnic people ... that can involve and incorporate the different peoples who came together here is subject to both the annulment of the ethnic identification of Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans, and the undifferentiability between the various forms of racial mixing, such as the mulatos (blacks and whites), the caboclos (whites and Amerindians), or the curibocas (blacks and Amerindians). This is the only way all of them become a unified people that recognize themselves as equal ... that annul their differences .... Within the new group, each member, as an individual, remains distinct while assuming a certain collective identity.]

It seems from this that Ribeiro calls for a double coding, a reading through both continuity and rupture, a dialogism between the synchronous cultural patterns and nonsynchronous, polyrhythmic cultural borderlands that inform Brazil's postcolonial society.

The crucial question, then, is whether it is possible to imagine Brazil as a "single people," a "unified nation," or a "uni-ethnic State" in consideration of its heterogeneous cultural, racial, and ethnic makeup. In view of the official white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchal discourse and ideology, it is necessary to examine who imagines (and imagined) the nation from which positionality and standpoint. How can we explain and analyze the paradox that in Brazil multiculturalism/racial mixing and racism, the lived inclusion and exclusion of the Others, exist side by side? What roles do both the real and invented indigenousness and blackness play in terms of a perceived brasilidade? How do we explain that although a considerable percentage of the Brazilian population supports indigenous territorial claims, most Brazilians
usually deny their indigenous heritage? What makes the racial question in Brazil an intricate matter is the *apparent* openness of the entire nation to the presence, influence, and contribution of African Brazilians in the fields of culture, religion, politics and history\textsuperscript{14} as well as the *apparent* ease of racial mixing. Yet, they are virtually invisible in the media and other public arenas of discourse (with the exception of sports, music and performance arts) and African Brazilian literature, for example, leads a shadowy existence in literary studies. How do we define a nation that is paradoxically characterized by (and imagined as) a unity-in-difference - that is by multicultural *interaction* and a self-definition that perceives and accepts the Other as an integral part of its social structure, ethos and worldview - *and* by a racialized, genderized, and classist difference-as-separation?

As the scope of this paper does not allow me to address all these questions, I want to focus, instead, on what seems to me their common denominator: the in-betweenness or liminality of Brazilian culture and identity. Silviano Santiago, in his landmark essay "O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano", emphasizes the calibanic vengeance of Latin American culture, it's constant and systematic subversion of the Western concepts of "unity and purity" through what he calls "falar contra, escrever contra" [speaking against, writing against]. He ends his essay with the following remark: "Entre o sacrifício e o jogo, entre a prisão e a transgressão, entre a submissão ao código e a agressão, entre a obediência e a rebelião, entre a assimilação e a expressão, - ali, nesse lugar aparentemente vazio, seu templo e seu lugar de clandestinidade, ali, se realiza o ritual antropófago da literatura latino-americana" [Between sacrifice and play, between prison and transgression, between submission to the code and aggression, between obedience and rebellion, between assimilation and expression - there, in this apparently empty place, its temple and place of clandestinity, Latin American literature realizes its anthropophagous ritual].\textsuperscript{15} Both the *liminal* condition and the subversive particularity which Santiago ascribes to Latin American literature\textsuperscript{16} anticipate what Bhabha terms "the 'inter' - the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between space*" as a place of hybridity where cultural meaning is produced and reproduced in a continuous process.\textsuperscript{17} This interstitial space is characterized by ambiguity precisely because it instantiates the limit of the in-between of hegemony, a hybrid zone "where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other,"\textsuperscript{18} signifies the transcendence of
polarities and the possibility of formulating new social arrangements. What follows is an attempt at problematizing Brazilian cultural ontology as a liminal signifying space through the analysis of specific semiotic and psychic mechanisms operating in and through selected novels by Clarice Lispector, Antonio Torres, and Benedicto Monteiro.

Clarice Lispector

Lispector's deconstructive poetics could be seen as an oxymoronic writing that basically problematizes the autonomous subject, the mimetic representation of the real through language and the process of narration, history as a linear continuum and the implicit issues of truth and origin. She writes (in) liminality, a textual and existential contact zone where representation and transgression, objectivity and subjectivity meet and grapple with each other on the border separating the "intangível do real" [intangible of the real] from the "figurativo do inominável" [figurative of the unnameable]¹⁹; where the I is pluralized in fragments of discursive representations through "a relentless process of de-selfing ... de-egoization"²⁰; where the human, the animal, the mineral and the vegetal create links that dissolve stable borders into liminality; where silence speaks in the interspace between the said and the unsaid; where the interval between the creation of discourse and its materialization is problematized; where static description becomes an open-ended process of constant becoming: a stream of signification that transcends its closed semiotic boundaries, flowing into the heteroclite and heterotopic space of ambiguity, contradiction and transformation. Take, for instance, these examples from Água Viva (AV) and A Hora da Estrela (HE)²¹:

"O que te falo nunca é o que eu te falo e sim outra coisa. ... Entro lentamente na escrita ... . É um mundo emaranhado de cipós, sílabas, madressilvas, cores e palavras - limiar de entrada de ancestral caverna que é o útero do mundo e dele vou nascer." (AV, 18-19) [What I tell you is never what I tell you but something else .... I slowly enter into writing ... It is a tangled world of lianas, syllables, honeysuckles, colors, and words - the threshold of an ancestral cavern which is the uterus of the world, and from it I shall be born].

"Meu estado é o de jardim com água correndo. ... Eu sou antes, eu sou quase, eu sou nunca." (AV, 21-22) [My state is that of a garden with running water ... I am before, I am almost, I am never].
"Improviso como no jazz improvisam música, jazz em fúria ... uma orgia de beleza confusa." (AV, 27) [I improvise in the same way they improvise in jazz, frenzied jazz ... an orgiastic, confused beauty].

"Lê a energia que está no meu silêncio" (AV, 34) [Read the energy that is in my silence].

"O que me guia apenas é um senso de descoberta. Atrás do atrás do pensamento." (AV, 71) [What guides me is simply a sense of discovery. Behind what is behind thinking].

"... o vazio tem o valor e a semelhança do pleno." (HE, 20). [...] emptiness has its value and resembles abundance.

"Os fatos são sonoros mas entre os fatos há um sussurro. É o sussurro que me impressiona." (HE, 31) [Facts are sonorous but between the facts there is a murmuring that impresses me].

"... esta história é quase nada. ... E eu que estou contando esta história que nunca me aconteceu e nem a ninguém que eu conheça? Fico abismado por saber tanto a verdade. Será que o meu ofício doloroso é o de adivinhar ... a verdade que ninguém quer enxergar?" (HE, 31, 66) [...] this story is almost nothing .... But what about me who is telling this story that has never happened to me or to anyone known to me? It confuses me that I have such a profound knowledge of the truth. Can it be that my painful task is to perceive ... the truth that no one wants to face?].

Each of these examples demonstrates several aspects of the nomadic deterritorialization which imbues the style, structure, and themes of her fiction. Here language is less defined by what it says directly, than by the signifying rustle (in-)between the facts. Propelled by the desire to go beyond words/meanings/sources, that is, beyond any single essence, any border, her writing's reterritorialization resides in the relentless attempt at liberating the synchronic temporality and spatiality of rational thinking into its non-simultaneous counterparts, which, according to Ernst Bloch, are characterized by "Widersprüche" [contradictions] and "Dialektisierung ... 'irrationaler' Inhalte" [a dialectic process of ... 'irrational' contents], that is, by a "mehrstimmige ... und mehrräumige Dialektik" [polyphonic ... and
multispatial dialectic]. This deterritorializing movement, carried by a rhetorical strategy of de- and re-articulation, opens up a liminal space that facilitates the process and (utopian) construction of emotional reason(ing)-as-freedom intent on knowing the things before and behind things - Lispector's mysterious "it," the "fourth dimension" buried in the fleeting "now-instant." Note the inward-oriented mimetic form of articulation characterizing this interstice:

Quando se vê, o ato de ver não tem forma - o que se vê às vezes tem forma, às vezes não. O ato de ver é inefável. E às vezes o que é visto também é inefável. E é assim certa espécie de pensar-sentir que chamarei de "liberdade", só para lhe dar um nome. Liberdade mesmo - enquanto ato de percepção - não tem forma. E como o verdadeiro pensamento se pensa a si mesmo, essa espécie de pensamento atinge seu objetivo no próprio ato de pensar. (AV, 94-95) [When one sees, the act of seeing has no form - what one sees sometimes has form, sometimes not. The act of seeing is inexpressible. And sometimes what is seen is also inexpressible. And it thus becomes a kind of thought-feeling that I will call "freedom," just to give it a name. Freedom per se - as an act of perception - has no form. And since true thought thinks itself, that type of thought attains its objective in the act of thinking itself].

It is in this in-between space and liminal process of Lispector's written performance - where, according to Nádia Gotlib "a arte é representação e vida ao mesmo tempo" [art is simultaneously representation and life] that she problematizes the (im)possibility of giving a voice to the other, the marginalized subaltern, in a borderized nation-space, revealing crucial aspects of the concept of brasilidade. My following reading of A Hora da Estrela will illustrate this point.

The novel deals with two interrelated crises: the tension between literary representation and the process of literary production and the identity crisis of subaltern women in Brazilian society. They are linked through a highly fragmented plot that presents two stories - Macabéa's life and death in Rio de Janeiro and the narrator's problematization of how to narrate Macabéa's experience - and through Lispector's underlying discussion about the representation of the other (woman) from an other region (the Northeast) in an alienating southern urban environment. Macabéa has migrated from the poverty-stricken state of Alagoas to Rio de Janeiro in search of work. Making a living as a typist, she shares a room with other girls in a run-down boardinghouse. The narrative discloses her life through a series of fragmented
episodes: her childhood in the house of her strict Catholic aunt, her living conditions, her work experience, her short affair with Olímpico, her visit to a fortune-teller, and her death. In order to illustrate the ambiguity of mimetic representation and thereby to deconstruct the traditional idea of literature as a transparent reflection of the real, Lispector uses an ambiguous narrative voice that is internally split into basically two different categories: a first-person masculine voice, Rodrigo S.M., who functions at the same time as a framed author-narrator, Rodrigo S.M.-Clarice Lispector. (S)he problematizes this gendered narrative identity in an ironic way - "... eu não faço a menor falta, e até o que escrevo um outro escreveria. Um outro escritor, sim, mas teria que ser homem porque escritora mulher pode lacrimejar piegas" (20). [My presence does not matter at all and even that what I am writing could be written by another. Another writer, of course, but it would have to be a man because a woman writer can weep her heart out] - and tries to circumvent it: "a ação desta história terá como resultado minha transfiguração em outrem e minha materialização ... em objeto ... flauta doce ... macio cipó" (27) [The action of this story will result in my transfiguration into someone else and in my materialization ... into an object ... sweet flute, soft liana]. The ultimate failure of this androgynous process - "mas eu, que não chego a ser ela" (40) [but I who cannot become her] - does not minimize the overall objective, namely to deconstruct the traditional masculine narrative position by means of a constant dialogue with its feminine other. This negotiation of different narrative voices inscribes the mark of (gender) alterity into the semantical and syntactical articulation of the narrative enunciation: a double-voicedness as enunciative in-betweenness that problematizes the politics of representation in terms of gender, creating a performative temporality on the level of discourse in which the separation between the private and public spheres is subverted. Through this double-voiced narrator, Lispector succeeds in rendering public not only the intimate experience of writing the multiple others which compose her self24, but also her own experience on the threshold of death.25

It is within this liminal enunciative space that she re-creates Macabéa's story as an alienating in-between experience within an internally split nation-space. Lispector's attempt at delineating Macabéa's "fracas aventuras ... numa cidade toda feita contra ela" (21) [unremarkable adventures ... in a hostile city], her silence-as-death-in-life, her invisibility and objectification "numa sociedade técnica onde ela era
um parafuso dispensável" (36) [in a technological society where she was a mere cog in the machine] can be read as a postmodern response to and "re-vision" of modern Northeastern fiction. Her innovation, I want to argue, resides less in the critical self-reflection of the intellectual's role and the metafictional problematization of the process of signification as Gotlib argues, or in the poetics of "negation" analyzed by Castillo, but rather in the deconstruction of a regionalist writing that while implicitly criticizing the national project also helped to constitute and consolidate it. In order to elaborate my point, let me briefly characterize the genre which has come to be known as romances do nordeste. Northeastern fiction has developed from a regional literature that focused on the particularities of the Northeast to one that inserts these particularities in a national and international context. As Silviano Santiago argues, it developed from a décor-like regionalism, characterized by local color, to a regionalism which portrays the local conditio humana in its contradictory dialectic with the universal condition. Whereas premodern Northeastern novels, such as José de Alencar's O Sertanejo (1876), Franklin Távora's O Cabeleira (1876), José do Patrocínio's Os Retirantes (1879), Oliveira Paiva's Dona Guidinha do Poço (1888), Rodolfo Teófilo's A Fome (1890), and Domingos Olímpio's Luzia-Homem (1903), among others, render a realistically and naturalistically tinged romantic image of the region, the modernist novels of the 1930s delineate the living conditions of the Northeasterners in a realistic and/or naturalistic documentary fashion: life on the plantation, modernization of the plantation-based agricultural economy, life in the sertão with its periods of droughts and the resultant migration of the sertanejos to the major cities, life in the slums etc. Writers such as Jose Lins do Rego, Graciliano Ramos, Jorge Amado, Jose Américo de Almeida and Rachel de Queiroz, among others, incorporated regional dialects and idiolects into their writings and denounced the suffering of the people in the Northeast. Their social realism demystified what Antonio Candido calls the "encanto pitoresco" and "cavalheirismo ornamental" [picturesque charm/ornamental chivalrousness] which was ascribed to country people, demonstrating that their degradation was a direct result of the national project of modernization, industrialization and progress, which, based on a homogenizing policy, did not take into account regional differences and specific sociocultural contexts and thus contributed to the aggravation of widespread misery and injustice. However, in that they largely ignore specific issues, such as race, ethnicity, and gender, one could argue that their fiction becomes an integral part of this...
homogeneous national discourse. Clarice Lispector's critical answer to this literary tradition's ambiguous stance consists in the fact that she uses a *nordestina* from the lowest social stratum as the protagonist of her story. I want to read this choice as a counterhegemonic move against what Ernest Renan in his essay "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" ("What Is a Nation?") has delineated as one of the fundamental constructive elements of nationhood - that is, the importance of forgetting the conditions of the construction of the present national unity as an integral part of memory: the original violence and arbitrariness as well as the multiplicity of ethnic origins. Clarice Lispector evokes the past-present "forgetting" as a result of literary marginalization and silencing and thereby reveals both the implication of culture and imperialism and the absence of the subaltern woman in Brazilian literature. The significance of this choice furthermore resides in the deconstruction of the myth of the mulatta - a prominent figure of Amado's novels, which, together with soccer and carnival, became a Brazilian export commodity. Macabéa, the subaltern northeastern woman, embodies the *other* side of the exotic paradigm and Lispector's subaltern politics of representation: "O que queria dizer que apesar de tudo ela pertencia a uma resistente raça anã teimosa que um dia vai talvez reivindicar o direito ao grito" (90-91; my emphasis) [What I wanted to say was that in spite of everything she belonged to a resistant and stubborn *midget race* that would one day demand the *right to scream*]. Thus it is no accident that Macabéa's successful rival is Gloria, a mulatta who "oxigenava em amarelo-ovo os cabelos crespos" (68) [dyed her curly hair bright yellow]. Not only does she represent the dominant beauty code, but the fact that she belongs to the "ambicionado clã do sul do país" (68) [desirable southern clan of the country] turns her into Olímpico's irresistible object of desire: in a move that recalls Julien Sorel's in Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* Olímpico leaves Macabéa and begins a relationship with Gloria. In this process, Lispector emphasizes the effects of the social contract which are determined by the interplay of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and region - constitutive elements which do not appear as linked alienating signs of a cohesive nation-space in modern Northeastern regionalism.

Macabéa's experience, then, seems to be doomed to invisibility and solitude. Yet, according to Virginia Woolf, solitude may lead to freedom through consciousness-raising. At one point, Macabéa experiences the climax of her everyday life: a room of her own: "... no dia seguinte ... ela teve pela primeira vez na vida uma coisa a mais preciosa: a solidão. Tinha um quarto só para ela. Mal acreditava
que usufruía o espaço. ... Dançava e rodopiava porque ao estar sozinha se tornava: l-i-v-r-e! ... Encontrar-se consigo própria era um bem que ela até então não conhecia" (49-50). [The next day ... for the first time in her life she enjoyed a most precious thing: solitude. She had a room all to herself. She could hardly believe that all this space was hers to enjoy .... She danced and moved round in circles because solitude made her f-r-e-e! ... To confront herself was a pleasure that she had never before experienced]. On the one hand, Lispector celebrates Woolf's concept of freedom. On the other, she emphasizes the difficult applicability of Woolf's Western ideas - the satisfaction of intellectual hunger, the fight for one's space and to actively take control of one's destiny - in a hybrid tropical metropolitan space where the migrant's hunger is less spiritual than physical, where the deterritorialization is not only experienced in terms of gender and sexuality, but as a combination of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and region. Whereas Woolf's objective is to achieve freedom and to find truth by means of an intellectual process, Lispector uses a split narrative voice and its emotions in order to deconstruct such an essentialist unity.

Lispector's postmodern textual/cultural space is a heterogeneous in-between "zone of occult instability."31 Rio de Janeiro of A Hora da Estrela is a space characterized by a constant clash of disjunctive temporalities, a contact zone where local and global sociocultural forces and practices create a fluid field of antagonistic relationships between groups, a hybrid place crisscrossed by a variety of shifting boundaries where stable ontological values are disseminated - a process which Rosaldo and Canclini, among others, have delineated as the pluralization and dislocation of center and periphery. It is a setting where different local ways of life are subjected to the global sign of constantly changing times - an ever-quickening pace - as a result of the transnationalization of economic systems and the 'worlding' of cultural systems through the expansion of transportation, communication and new media networks.32 This simultaneity of nonsynchronous temporalities is impressively problematized in Macabéa's relation to the radio: "Todas as madrugadas ligava ... para o Rádio Relógio, que dava 'hora certa e cultura', e ... anúncios comerciais - ela adorava anúncios" (45) [Every morning she tuned into Radio Clock with its time announcements, cultural programs, and commercials - she adored commercials]. As Macabéa's source of information and communication this radio station determines her spatial and temporal (dis)orientation in an
anonymous urban space. The crucial fact is that Macabéa, who comes from a culture whose values are grounded in orality and collectivity, accepts the "rádio relógio" as reality per se. While in the Northeast she is an integral part of the community, in Rio de Janeiro she begins to imagine herself out of the margin into a simulated urban collectivity with the help of the radio. The distance and strangeness with regard to metropolitan customs and the newly instilled desire to belong to, to be at home in this place, constitute a liminal cultural limbo within which the Northeasterner moves: Macabéa, who suffers from malnutrition, tries to change her diet to fast food and begins to wear make-up in order to look like Marylin Monroe. Lispector, then, delineates the dramatic collision between different cultural realities by inscribing it in Macabéa's psychosexual, psychophysical and psychosocial condition. In this process, she renders the social changes and a diagnosis of urban life in the 1970s, a phase of massive modernization which based on foreign capital sought to make uniform cultural differences and thus create a homogeneous nation-people/space. The contradictions underlying this modernizing process are most tellingly described in the episode of Macabéa and Olímpico's Sunday affair. Whereas in the Northeast lovers meet in the city park on Sundays, Macabéa and Olímpico seem to be two strangers in exile, roaming the streets in the pouring rain, unable to communicate with each other and to understand their new cultural environment: "Nessa rádio eles dizem essa coisa de 'cultura' e palavras difíceis, por exemplo: o que quer dizer 'eletrônico'? Silêncio. Eu sei mas não quero dizer. ... O que quer dizer 'renda per capita'? Ora, é fácil, é coisa de médico" (58-59) [On this radio program they talk about 'culture', using difficult words, for example, what's the meaning of 'electronic'? Silence. I know but I don't want to tell you. ... What's the meaning of 'income per capita'? Well, that's easy, it has something to do with medicine]. It seems from this that both cannot keep pace with the changing events, a development that culminates in the scene of Macabéa's death where Lispector contrasts physical and mental slowness - "Macabéa ao cair teve tempo de ver, antes que o carro fugisse .... Ficou inerte no canto da rua, talvez descansando das emoções, e viu entre as pedras do esgoto o ralo capim de um verde da mais tenra esperança humana .... Macabéa lutava muda .... Macabéa lembrou-se do cais do porto" (90-93) [Falling to the ground, Macabéa had time to look before the car sped away .... Macabéa lay inert on the curb, maybe resting from her emotions as she saw the spare blades of grass between the stones of the gutter; their greenness conveyed the most tender human hope.
... Macabéa struggled in silence .... Macabéa remembered the docks] - with technical speed, the symbol of international capital: "... o Mercedes amarelo pegou-a .... Morreu em um instante. O instante é aquele instante de tempo em que o pneu do carro correndo em alta velocidade toca no chão e depois não toca mais e depois toca de novo. ... Eu vos pergunto: - Qual é o peso da luz?" (90, 97-98) [...] the yellow Mercedes hit her ... She died instantaneously. The instant is this flash of time in which the car tire touches the ground at high speed, touches it no longer, then touches it again. ... I ask you: What is the weight of light?]. It is an open question whether this ending signifies the doomed fate of the local at the hands of the global or the symbolic prize one pays for the choice of assimilation. What is of interest to me is that Lisperctor, by means of her style, structure, and theme, writes Brazil as a nation which comes apart precisely at its syncretic seams. By remembering the forgotten heterogeneity of the imagined community and thereby calling into question the accepted view of syncretism as a benevolent, harmonizing essence of Brazilianness, Lisperctor replaces the national myth of syncretism with cultural difference and rewrites the nation-space as a cultural borderland and culture "as a site of social struggle,"34 a constantly shifting terrain upon which multiple social groups form (or are in the process of forming) a variety of sub-national and/or transnational identifications which challenge the idea of a Brazilian identity derived from mere residence on Brazilian soil.

Antônio Torres

In what follows, I want to scrutinize the question of the Northeast in Antônio Torres' writing - an author who situates northeastern cultural particularities within a national and international context. His fictional 'worlding' of the local context has to be seen against the background of the changing relationship between the Northeast and the South since the 1960s. As a result of the military government's modernization and industrialization program, the contradictions between the traditional, basically agrarian Northeast and the developed, technocratic South have shifted to the northeastern interior and, because of the migrants, to the southern and northeastern urban centers, principally São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Recife, and Fortaleza. Focusing upon the social and psychological effects of this policy, Torres creates ambivalent in-between subjects in search of identity in an internally split national territory. I want to argue that he uses silence as a metaphor for the impossibility of communication based on cultural
differences and thereby rewrites culture as an antagonistic meaning effect produced by hierarchical relationships between different regions within the nation-space.

"Cresce logo, menino, pra você ir para São Paulo"\textsuperscript{35} [Grow up fast, little one, so that you can go to São Paulo], a saying that flashes through Nelo's mind while being beaten up in the streets of this megacity. For those who live in the northeastern interior, this "vasto desengano a perder-se na linha de um horizonte desolado que cerca o nada"\textsuperscript{36} [enormous disillusion that vanishes on a desolate horizon surrounding nothingness], São Paulo is the long-term goal of countless hopes, the promise of a better life. In reality, however, it is a Moloch using up more than 18 million people. For generations the nordestinos have migrated from the interior to the coastal cities and the South, driven by disastrous droughts, an agribusiness based on large-scale landholding, and/or the backwardness of the interior and the enticing progress of the city. In \textit{Essa Terra, Carta ao Bispo, Adeus Velho}, and \textit{O Cachorro e o Lobo} Torres uses this migration as the background of the story lines, problematizing its causes and effects on those who leave and the one's left behind.

The narration in \textit{Essa Terra} begins with a suicide: after having lived in São Paulo for twenty years and pretending to have made it there, Nelo returns to his hometown, Junco, in the interior of the State of Bahia, and hangs himself. The following plot renders not only the story of Nelo's failure but most importantly the story of the disappointed hopes of the town's inhabitants, the unmasking of their dream. While Nelo's father makes the coffin and muses about his life, Totonhim, Nelo's youngest brother, and Alcino, the town's idiot, remember Nelo's homecoming and last days and Nelo's mother goes mad because she cannot bear to bury the golden dream of her successful favorite son. At the end, Totonhim, following in his brother's footsteps, leaves Junco heading for São Paulo. The fragmented structure of the text, which interweaves past and present by means of juxtaposed and superimposed multiple perspectives, points of view and levels of oral and written discourse, expresses the intraregional and interregional boundaries of a borderized nation. Torres portrays this cultural borderization, the erosion of local values in an age of transnational capitalism, through split families. Whereas the mother of the family sees the future in the city so that her children can go to school, the father, a sertanejo from the sertão, stays in Junco, desperately trying to hold on to his land. When the price of tobacco plummets, he uses a bank loan
to plant sisal but loses his land, unable to repay the money. In the meantime, his wife and children have left him because, as one of his daughters puts it, "roça é uma porra" (107) [fieldwork is crap]. The absurd tragedy, Torres seems to suggest, resides both in a governmental policy which sells progress via loans, leading to the bankruptcy of innumerable small farmers and the general impoverishment of entire regions, and in the Northeasterners' rootedness in traditional values. The father of the family, for example, believes that "Deus lhe dariá muitos braços para o eito" (58) [God would give him many children for the field] and, after having lost his land, does not blame the bank but his wife: "... se a mulher não tivesse endoidecido por esse negócio de cidade e os filhos tivessem ficado, ele não precisaria de trabalhadores, não precisaria de dinheiro de banco nenhum" (55) [...] if the woman had not been crazy about the city and the kids had stayed, he would not have needed any workers and money from the bank].

To exchange fieldwork for a life in São Paulo, as Nelo's example demonstrates, amounts to a constant struggle against racial prejudice, exploitation, and cultural alienation. In Adeus Velho Virinha furthermore reveals the humiliating body politics involved in this move: "Mulher, meu filho, só consegue alguma coisa arriando as calcinhas ... Você tem que abrir as pernas ..." [A woman, my friend, only achieves something by pulling down her panties ... You have to open your legs ...]. Torn between a home-as-exile and an exile that is no home, the Northeasterner becomes a border subject caught in a liminal cultural limbo, expressed by Totonhim as follows: "Vinte anos para a frente, vinte anos para trás. Eu eu no meio, como dois ponteiros eternamente parados, marcando sempre a metade de alguma coisa - um velho relógio de pêndulo que há muito perdeu o ritmo e o rumo das horas" (18) [Twenty years forward, twenty years backward. And I am in the middle like two hands of a clock that has eternally stopped, always indicating half of something - an old pendulum clock which for a long time has lost the rhythm and the course of its hours]. Condemned to constantly cross borders on their errant journeys between places and regions and into a memory and imagination that juggles past and present, old and new, self and other, most of the characters in Torres' novels fall silent rather than discover the cultural creativity and authority to formulate, in Victor Turner's words, "new models, symbols, and paradigms" - a state of muteness produced in and through a torrent of words. In Carta ao Bispo Gil writes a letter to the bishop before poisoning himself; Virinha in Adeus Velho is a victim of slander; in Balada da Infância Perdida the
protagonist is haunted by dead children, friends and family members with whom he talks throughout a night of heavy drinking; in *Um Táxi para Viena d'Austria*, Veltinho, stuck in a traffic jam, recalls fragments of his ruined life in a soliloquy. All these anti-heroes with their shattered identities try to understand what went wrong with their lives. Like the soldiers, described by Walter Benjamin, coming home from the battlefields of World War I not enriched but impoverished by their experience, Torres' postmodern common men fail because of a complex and overwhelming reality which they do not understand, cannot control and therefore not even translate into words. A crisis-laden reality which not only pits different national regions and their cultures against each other but also has international and universal implications which further undermine the stability of the nation and its identity. After two decades of dictatorship, which began in 1964 with the interference of the United States\textsuperscript{39} and was characterized by torture, repression, paranoia, and innumerable economic crises,\textsuperscript{40} Brazilians continue to suffer from this experience: like Veltinho in *Um Táxi para Viena d'Áustria* they have lost faith in themselves,\textsuperscript{41} in others, in their country characterized by amnesia, heterotopia, ignorance, fear, idleness,\textsuperscript{42} corruption, violence\textsuperscript{43}, and ecological disaster.\textsuperscript{44} Torres' Brazil seems to have lost its Brazilianness: a nation whose people have substituted their collective memory for a transnational one: "Será que até o espírito de Lampião também já morreu? ... Ele trocou o parabelum e a peixeira por uma guitarra e um sintetizador eletônico, o cangaço pelo rock'n roll? Chocante, xará. ... Ingrato é você, que ainda não me levou ao McDonald's"\textsuperscript{45} [Could it be true that even the spirit of Lampião has already died? ... Did he exchange his pistol and knife for a guitar and a synthesizer, banditry for rock'n roll? Shocking, brother .... You are the ungrateful one; the one who hasn't taken me to McDonald's yet]. According to Torres, this collective amnesia erodes the nation's identity and produces zombies on schizo-walks across the absurd void of a materialist and highly consumerist world-as-exile. In this sense, Calunga's remark in *Balada da Infância Perdida* could be seen as a synopsis of Torres' explicit, often sarcastic attacks on capitalism: "Faz sentido essa caravana que você vê, um bando de fanáticos entupindo as ruas, se engarrafando, se atropelando, se matando só por causa de dinheiro? É uma marcha diária, estúpida e vazia. Pra nada"\textsuperscript{46} [Does this caravan you see make any sense, a bunch of fanatics blocking the streets, caught in traffic jams, running into each other, knocking each other down and killing each other for the
sake of money? It is a daily, stupid, and meaningless march]. The atomization of the subject, the region, and the nation as an effect and characteristic of the process of globalization is, according to Torres, one of the gravest forms of damage done to contemporary Brazilian culture and identity.

While according to Marshall McLuhan and Bill Gates our new global order transforms the world into a village, Torres delineates the village shrouded in silence - a noncommunication brought about by the mass media and heightened migration. Taking up the story of Essa Terra, O Cachorro e o Lobo depicts Totonhim's journey back home to Junco on the occasion of his father's eightieth birthday. Between 1976 and 1996 basically three things have changed in Junco: migration from Junco has accelerated, parabolic antennas adorn almost every roof, and agriculture has been replaced by civil service. Junco has apparently changed from a backwoods hamlet inhabited by country bumpkins to a modern small town with a school, a bank, a supermarket and paved roads. Yet, as Totonhim observes, the town lacks its former animation and sociability because most people have left - "... o povo daqui sumiu. Não mora mais aqui"47 [... the people have disappeared; they don't live here anymore] - or are busy watching TV - "Aqui agora é assim: televisão, televisão, televisão. Até caírem das cadeiras, mortos de sono"48 [Nowadays all that matters here is television, television, television. Until they fall dead tired from their chairs]. A frightening silence hovers over this in-between town, a "lugar que hoje vai levando a vida entre os antigos sonhos e a modernidade das antenas parabólicas"49 [place that exists nowadays between old dreams and the modernity of parabolic antennas], the symbol of a seemingly eternal deterritorialization-as-reterritorialization, or as Totonhim puts it: "A gente está sempre indo e vindo. Essa é a nossa sina. O destino dessa terra. Ir e vir. Vir e voltar"50 [We are always leaving and coming back. This is our destiny and the destiny of this place. Going and coming back, coming and going back]. Totonhim, who visits his father for one day before going back to São Paulo, shares a nomadic life, a crisis of in-betweenness with the other characters in Torres' novels: "... desprovidos de fala própria quando se chega às suas mínimas aspirações de vida, ou os seus mínimos desejos cotidianos"51 [... without a voice of their own concerning their minimum aspirations or everyday wishes in life] they are not in control of their destinies. All of them reterritorialize their deterritorialized voices in soliloquies, dreams and/or memories. While most of Torres' characters fall in a state of liminality lived as exile, Totonhim experiences liminality as
home-in-exile, that is, he accepts his positioning between regions and cultures as a way of life. Constantly crossing borders, he is unable to transcend but tries to handle the "anxiety," which in Bhabha's memorable words, constitutes the cutting edge of a "longing for place" and a "borderline existence." Their movement between roots and routes, their social experience as Northeasterners in Southern Brazil and the journeys which constitute the link between the past and the present, home and exile, mirrors a culture's and a nation's anxiety-as-in-betweenness, "the mediatory moment between a culture's ontology and its displacement, the tryst between the phantasm of rootedness and the memory of dissemination."\textsuperscript{52}

Benedicto Monteiro

While the Italian anthropologist Massimo Canevacci in a recent study celebrates Brazil as a prototype of cultural syncretism, a "cenário produtivo em que tudo pode ser contaminado, deglutido, entrelaçado"\textsuperscript{53} [productive scenario in which everything can be contaminated, devoured, intertwined], Monteiro, in \textit{A Terceira Margem} (1983), describes Amazonia as an interstitial space within a disseminated nation, an intra- and intercultural border zone where different cultures "meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination," as Mary Louise Pratt put it.\textsuperscript{54} In what follows I want to analyze how Monteiro in \textit{A Terceira Margem}\textsuperscript{55} engages in a politicized poetics of memory to re-create and mine a specific local site, thereby remapping Brazilian cultural geography and temporality.

According to the Amazonian writer and critic Milton Hatoum "a viagem é um dos topos mais importantes da ficção contemporânea na Amazônia" [the journey is one of the most important topoi of contemporary Amazonian fiction]. He emphasizes that the reason for this resides not only in the geographic features of the region, but most importantly in the colonial past: "Fruto do binário poder/conhecimento, que norteou a política de ocupação durante o período colonial, as expedições dos naturalistas europeus não pretendiam apenas classificar a fauna e a flora do mundo natural e retificar sua geografia. Os viajantes também desejavam conhecer o Outro, já que para dominar e colonizar é necessário conhecer o território e o idioma de quem nele habita"\textsuperscript{56} [A product of the binary opposition power/knowledge, which characterized the occupational policy during the colonial period, the expeditions of the European natural scientists aimed not only at classifying the fauna and flora of the natural world and
rectifying its geography. The travelers also wanted to know the Other since, to dominate and colonize, it is necessary to know the territory and the language of its people.]. In other words, the Amazon region has always been a transit zone with porous borders, a paradigm of anthropophagous transculturation in the sense of both Oswald de Andrade and Fernando Ortiz.⁵⁷

If, as Ortiz suggests, the formation of Cuban ethnicity, what he calls "la cubanidad," was characterized by "continuas, radicales y contrastantes transmigraciones geográficas, económicas y sociales de los pobladores," that is, by a "perenne transitoriedad de los propósitos"⁵⁸ [continual, radical and contrastive geographical and socioeconomic transmigrations of the inhabitants ... a perennial transitoriness of purposes], then I would argue that the Amazon region was and continues to be one of the prime examples of this transcultural "transitoriedad." The specific feature of the Amazonian transitoriness is that as an interstitial space the Amazon region has been isolated within the nation. According to the writer and critic Paes Loureiro, the most critical moment of this intracultural isolation was during the Ciclo da Borracha⁵⁹ when Amazonia with its two major cities, Belém and Manaus, had more intense cultural and economic relations with European nations than with the rest of Brazil. This strong presence of European cultures in the history of the region resulted in an internally split regional identity: while valorizing and internalizing foreign cultural elements, what Paes Loureiro calls the "subordinação aos padrões da cultura européia"⁶⁰ [subordination to European cultural paradigms], much of the Amazonian population, but especially the elite, looked upon the popular culture of the region with disdain.⁶¹ When the rubber boom abruptly ended during World War I, Amazonia stumbled into modernity with two beautiful capitals, a decadent economy, and an even more hybridized population marked by an inferiority complex. While Amazonian literature⁶² has recently contributed to deconstruct this collective sense of inferiority through a politicized poetics of memory - in the sense of remembering the past, myths and legends, historical events and figures and thereby re-membering the fragments of a shattered cultural identity - new forms of national and international neocolonialism have persisted until the present. The intense dynamics of the conflictive cultural contact between people from different cultures and races - Asian, African, Amerindian, and European - throughout the centuries have contributed to an increased rhythm of the region's borderization.⁶³ In this sense, the geographer Bertha K. Becker ascribes an accelerated temporality to the
Amazonian frontier which differs from the rest of the country: "... nela [a fronteira] se sucedendo rapidamente as inovações" [within the border innovations succeed each other rapidly].

The journey in *A Terceira Margem*, then, is more than a structuring device upon which Monteiro strings the incidents of plot. Rather it is integral to the unfolding of a borderized *space* as ethnic *place* through the individual's consciousness. It functions on two plot levels as a double movement through space/place and spirit. On the first level the narration delineates the journey of an unnamed geographer, the leader of a research team whose objective is to study the specific problems of the region and to find out whether it is possible to build 'The City of the Future' in the Amazon region. He links this scientific project with his personal project to write a book about the legendary Miguel dos Santos Prazeres. On the second level we are confronted with the mytho-archetypal journey of Miguel, the Amazonian *ribuirinho*.65 While the geographer is in search of Miguel, that is to say the Amazonian Other in himself, Miguel tries to find himself through procreation: two narrators who talk to without meeting each other, two shifting identities-in-process. Both represent two different zones which are linked within the Amazon region yet clash on the national level: the city and the interior.66 Whereas the geographer and his team think and act according to the rational, scientific, and cosmopolitan value system of the (inter)national metropolis and thereby instantiate the Western reifying gaze67 that regards Amazonia as a commodity, Miguel represents a region characterized by ethnic hybridity, orality, and mythology. Miguel and the geographer, traveling through Amazonia, remap its cultural and geographic territoriality and temporality, translating them into liminality through a discourse of silence. It is in this in-between space that the tension between the urban and the rural cultural elements produce a differential identity in conflict, a transcultural ethnicity68 composed of diverse elements which materialize, interrelate and are disseminated through the structural device of two journeys and the act of writing. In other words, through the poetic images of traveling Monteiro re-creates the Amazon *space* as *place*, as a setting with a specific ethos and worldview.69 Territoriality, seen here as the imagined and lived sense of the Amazonian locality, is thus rendered through the characters' agency, a subjectivity formed in experiences which then becomes the agent of specific cultural practices and their expression. That is, the meaning of territoriality is transmitted through the consciousness of spatiality, its social practices and relations of power.70
If, as Bachelard argues, poetic images are the origin of consciousness and "space" cannot be conceived without poetic images (house, corner, garden, etc.), the enormous importance of discourse, of each word-as-house/image, becomes obvious. In A Terceira Margem, the revision of the regional and national cultural ontology as a fluid movement (in-)between borders is expressed on the level of discourse and enunciation through the use of multiple narrators, points of view and perspectives. The fragmented text is borderized by three different adjoining margins: the rational discourse of the geographer and his research team, Miguel's mythomagical skaz-like discourse,71 and a hybrid metadiscourse, a collage of literary and documentary quotations and comments focusing on the process of literary production and national and international imperialist policies in Amazonia. This hybrid intra- and intercultural discursive mosaic which locates the regional within a national and international cultural context by means of a complex performative enunciative configuration defies firmly established borders between regions, cultures, races, worldviews, and genders, between truth and fiction, literature and history, history and myth.

While the geographer and the research team as urban intellectual intruders are disturbed and confused by the overwhelming presence of nature as well as by the different attitude of the people - "existe ... alguma coisa nos olhos e na fala do povo que eu ... ainda não consegui decifrar ...." [there is ... something in the eyes and language of the people which I haven't deciphered yet]72 - an out-of-place feeling which they are able to tone down, but cannot totally overcome during their journey, Miguel dos Santos Prazeres embodies the Amazonianness through an interactive 'being-in-the-world'. The difference between the geographer's and Miguel's discourse and worldview can be perceived in the following juxtaposed passages. With respect to his journey in search of Miguel the geographer observes:

Tenho viajado de barco, tentando reconstituir os caminhos de Miguel .... Parece que ando sempre na sombra ou nas águas desse ubíquo rio andante. Vou de margem em margem e de porto em porto, a pretexto de uma rota simplesmente geográfica. À medida que me afasto da cidade, que subo ou desço os rios, entro nos lagos e quase me perco nos igarapés, sinto mais de perto que é quase física a sua realidade (85).

[Traveling by boat I have tried to reconstitute Miguel's itineraries .... It seems to me that I am always moving in the shadow or in the waters of this ubiquitous
moving river. I am traveling from one riverbank to the next, from port to port under the pretext of a geographic route. Leaving the city behind, traveling upstream and downstream, entering lakes, and losing my way in the interconnected waterways, I can more and more feel his presence, which is almost physical.

His lostness in this space differs sharply from Miguel's close attachment to his native place:

Já quando me avereci pela canoa gita, desapareceu pra mim essa questão de margens e ribanceiras cortantes. Os furos, os igarapés, os rios e os lagos uniram todos os caminhos andantes. Só eram separadas, de vez em quando, por correntezas e remansos. De repente, o mundo ficou sem ilhas - o senhor sabe - não precisava pontes. A travessia era um caminhar constante (31).

[Right after getting used to the small canoe, the question of dividing margins and riverbanks disappeared. The rivers, lakes, and interconnected waterways united all the paths. Only sometimes were they separated by currents and countercurrents. Suddenly, the world was without islands - you know - not in need of bridges. The journey was a constant progression].

For Bachelard the poetic image is a means of liberation from the reductive prisonhouse of order. By means of its transgressive and transformative nature it contains the possibility of liberating us into freedom. "[L.]anguage," he asserts, "bears within itself the dialectics of open and closed. Through meaning it encloses, while through poetic expression it opens up."73 In other words, even though consciousness is hold within language, images may liberate consciousness from the binary opposition of a sign's inside and exterior. For, according to Bachelard, the poetic image transcends division - "causality" - by relying on and furthering "inter-subjectivity": "The essential newness of the poetic image poses the problem of the speaking being's creativeness."74 Elaborating on Bachelard, I want to argue that in *A Terceira Margem* Monteiro uses the tropological image of the *boto* as a means to subvert the opposition between subject and object, past and present, history and myth; that is, through the imagination of this mythological Amazon figure, this space of habitation activated through memory, Monteiro re-creates Miguel's world as habitable places characterized by transsubjectivity and "transtempo" [transtemporality] within the Amazon space.75 In the oral tradition of the Amazon region, the *boto* is an androgynous creature - part fish, part man - in a constant state of metamorphosis. In trickster-like fashion it subverts and transgresses any established order, its favorite ritual being the seduction and impregnation of women.
Miguel-as-boto instantiates the telluric ethos of the Amazon region as a constant process of performative and hybrid becoming of all elements:

... não era só a intimidade que eu tinha com os peixes. Havia também a maior intimidade que eu tinha com os pensamentos. Era paresque um gozo sereno de liberdade, o senhor entende? Eu era quase um peixe dentro d'água, uma árvore crescendo da terra úmida, ou um pássaro voando livremente ... Eu via e ouvia por dentro, de olhos fechados. As cores verdes invadiam toda a minha vista. Era como se eu abrisse os olhos no fundo da água limpa. Nuvens e ondas se misturavam. E folhas, folhas verdes, vertendo cores de todas as cores, reverdeciam na água. E a água e as nuvens na minha mente. ... Boiei de canga-pé como boto ... no meio delas (mulheres). ... Eu sou um e sou muitos (32, 34, 36, 130).

[... it was not only the intimate relationship which I had with fishes. There was also an even more intimate relationship with my thoughts. It seemed to be like a serene orgasm of liberty, you know what I mean? I was almost a fish in the water, a tree growing out of the humid soil, or a bird flying free.

... I was looking and listening within me with my eyes closed. The green colores invaded my entire vision. It was as if I opened my eyes in transparent water. Clouds and waves were blending. And leaves, green leaves, spilling colors of all colors, were turning green in the water. And the water and the clouds in my mind. ... Like a boto I drifted craftily ... surrounded by them (women). ... I am one and I am many].

Moving in his canoe from the first margin (the town by the river) on the borderline of the waterways to the third margin (the rain forest), Miguel orally remembers his sexual encounters with women from different races: a cabocla, a Japanese, a Turkish, a Black, a Northeastern, a Portuguese, and an Indian woman. By means of his offspring - seven children whom he has never seen but feels within himself - Miguel engenders his multiple identity, his hybrid caboclo ethnicity - an ethnic identity that cannot be thought without its temporal and spacial context, namely history and nature, both being increasingly fragmented and obliterated by the global onslaught of modernization and industrialization. In view of the fact that it is the caboclo, together with the Indian, who preserves the profound knowledge of how to live with and survive in nature without destroying it, Miguel's pride in having procreated seven children with different women, I believe, should be seen less as a sign of his macho attitude, but rather as
a subversive strategy of resistance. Resistance to progress, to the oblivion of what Benjamin has called historical "barbarism,"76 to the irreversible loss of ethnic knowledge: "... ponho toda a minha força e a força do meu querer pra fazer um filho, um filho homem. Sei que estou criando de novo a natureza" (107-108) [I use all my strength and my willpower to father a child, a boy. I know that I am recreating nature]. Furthermore, resistance to the written word of dictatorial power77 and the dictatorial power of written words by means of an orally and mythically tinged counter-memory that situates local events in a national and international framework in order to reveal existing yet suppressed (hi)stories and revise a dominant historiography that renders a partial picture.78 Thus, challenging hegemonic politics and homogeneous constructions of the nation, culture, and history, Miguel rejects the written word: "Nunca dei o meu nome pra ficar escrito, o senhor sabe. Sempre tinha medo que a minha alma ficasse amarrada nessa porção de letras. Sabe, eu tenho medo que o meu nome escrito me entregasse pra Governo. Mas como o senhor paresque entende das muitas cores e das muitas palavras, é capaz de se embrenhar pelos meus caminhos sempre abertos" (185) [I've never given my name to be written down, you know. I've always been afraid that my soul would be tied to these letters. You know, I am afraid that my written name would expose me to the mercy of the government. But as you seem to understand many colors and many words, you are capable of penetrating my routes that are always open].

Miguel's cultural difference is transmitted by the spoken word, the word-as-being in a continual becoming that performs openness, change, movement: the poetic expression as freedom. In this sense, Miguel, like the boto, assumes an identity-in-process rather than a fixed, stable one. Together with the geographer, whose search for Miguel continues at the end of the novel, and the author-narrator who translates their cultural differences through an oral-written discourse, Miguel taps his individual memory as a collective site of a region and country whose ethos and worldview are not one but many and in a constant state of traverse. Both Miguel and the geographer transform their otherization, imposed by the dominant culture and its ideological distortions, into a re-created cultural difference, that is they reterritorialize their identity through an insurgent process of deterritorialization. While the geographer, through his book project, is gradually leaving behind the rational paradigms of his scientific project, moving from one margin toward the other, crossing borders in search of crossroads, Miguel is way
ahead, leading the way. Both, although unable to meet, lag the chronotope of the signifying chain based on the autonomous subject and the cohesive nation-people/space, creating (as they move through) an interstitial space where cultural difference is articulated and signifies a possible inversion of power relations in a performative process of multiple translations, transformations, translocations, and transculturations that relocate borders in relation to different points of reference such as place, time, history, politics, individual and collective experience.

Conclusion

The narratives by Lispector, Torres, and Monteiro challenge the transcendent identity of a monocultural Brazilian nation born of and existing as a happy miscegenized family (in the Freyrian sense) sharing an imagined community. By tracing the positioning and relationship of their characters within Brazilian society, they map the conditions out of which identities are formed and individuals act and through the disorienting experiences of their characters, who share a loss of cultural solidarity as they cross and move between the shifting boundaries of an internally split nation-space, they unwrite both a homogeneous stable individual and collective identity. Drifting as deterritorialized migrants through a time and space which is "out of joint," most of their characters nevertheless yearn and search for a recuperation of myths and the rediscovery of an individual identity rooted in collective memory. If memory is a "consolation for something that is missing, ... an index of loss," the memory narratives by Lispector, Torres, and Monteiro refuse their characters a geographic and cultural homecoming. Instead, they become citizens of a borderized nation-space where homecoming is transformed into a constant process of going home across and between the shifting borders separating different regions and cultures, the old from the new, event from fact and fiction, and homogenization from diversification. Going home, then, means moving through space and coming to places only to embark again, that is, it connotes a borderline existence in which the fixed borders between location, dislocation and relocation dissolve. In this sense, the identity of Brazil and its people in the analyzed novels appears as multiple identities, discursive positions that are continuously reinvented, reimagined and rewritten, multiple "way[s] ... with different re-departures, different pauses, different arrivals." As identity categories constitute a continuous transformative process, the concept of identity in the novels cannot be seen as a fixed entity but
rather as a traverse: "a site of permanent openness and resignifiability," a continuous movement between the deconstruction of those spaces and times which turned opaque in the wake of successive processes of appropriation and control of the other and the construction of provisional transparent spaces and times. This movement between negation and affirmation, dislocation and relocation, in which a politicized poetics of memory effects new ways of relation with the other, does not affirm authentic identities, but opens the concept up to further bricolage: an unfinished synthesis with provisional beginnings and ends, located in an open process of construction and constituted in a situational and contrastive manner. Consequently, it seems to me that Brazil and brasilidade, as delineated in the above-analyzed novels, are characterized by an in-betweenness, an interstitial syncretism composed of multiple poles existing in what Becquér and Gatti have termed "antagonistic ... relations which are animated by the partial presence of the other within the self, such that the differential identity of each term is at once enabled and prevented from full constitution." Brazil in the un- and remaking ...

Notes

6 This unity does not embrace and is not affected by what he calls the many "microetnias tribais" [tribal microethnic peoples]. All translations in this paper are my own.
9 According to Freyre, Brazilian racial democracy ("democracia racial") is composed of the Indian's affectivity, the Black's sensuality, and the colonizer's rationalism. His paternalistic and patriarchal gaze, however, is that of the aristocratic dominant class who argues that slavery was good for the Afro-Brazilian
precisely because his food and housing, and therefore his happiness were guaranteed. This valorization of cultural diversity, however, has to be seen in direct connection with its simultaneous negation, that is, the apology of racial mixing through a politics of homogenization-as-assimilation (explained as the natural outcome of racial mixing) which annuls cultural, racial and ethnic differences. This is why Roberto da Matta in his book Relativizando: Uma Introdução à Antropologia Social (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1981) calls the myth of racial mixing, seen as a construct of national unity based on racial and ethnic heterogeneity and socioeconomic stratification, "a fabula das três raças" [a fable of the three races] that expresses "racismo à brasileira" [Brazilian racism].

Which causes José Carlos Reis to argue that "Freyre apagaria as tensões, as agudas contradições reais, que caracterizam as relações sociais entre senhores e escravos" [Freyre obliterates the tensions, the intense real contradictions that characterize the social relations between masters and slaves]. José Carlos Reis, As Identidades do Brasil: De Vainhegen a FHC (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1999) 59. In this sense, Freyre is an excellent example of Renan's "forgetting," of how both the embellishment and moderation of cruel facts and cultural differences lead not only to the distortion of reality but have a negative impact on cultural/national memory. On Freyre's racial ideas see also Renato Ortiz, Cultura Brasileira & Identidade Nacional (São Paulo: Ed. Brasiliense, 1986) 90-106; Dante Moreira Leite, O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro. História de Uma Ideologia (São Paulo: Ática, 1992); Oliveira Lima, Formação Histórica da Nacionalidade Brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Top Books, 1997); and Bosi Dialética 27-30, among others.

Renato Rosaldo, Culture and Truth (Boston. Beacon Press, 1993) 28. See also 207-215. Both in Maíra (1976) and Utopia Selvagem (1982), Ribeiro translates this borderland vision of Brazilian reality by means of transcending the division between a historical ethnographic and a literary fictional discourse. The mixing of genres in Maíra - the text begins as a detective novel and in its further development moves between a historical novel, ethnographic description, travel writing and mythical narration - allows Ribeiro to emphasize the literariness of anthropological writing/sources (and thereby to indicate the aporia of modern science) and to problematize on a metanarrative level his own position as a writer in search of possibilities to articulate the history, the memory, and the culture of the Other. The criticism of Western civilization in his fiction, then, focuses upon the unbalanced relationship between culture and nature and should be seen as an appeal to change the attitude towards the historically constituted Other.

Ribeiro 133.

I am indebted to bell hooks who uses this term in various forms throughout her oeuvre.

This does not apply to Native Brazilians. See De Oliveira, Ensaios.

Silviano Santiago, Uma literatura nos trópicos (São Paulo: Ed. Perspectiva, 1978) 18,19, 28 (11-28).


Bhabha 37-38.

Bhabha 25.

Clarice Lispector, Água Viva (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1994) 17, 86.


Ernst Bloch, "Ungleichzeitigkeit und Pflicht zu Ihrer Dialektik (Mai 1932)," Erbschaft dieser Zeit (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973) 126 (104-126).

Nádia Battela Gotlib, Clarice uma vida que se conta (São Paulo: Ática, 1995) 324.

One could argue that Lispector's handling of the narrative voice is a prime example of what Cixous in La Jeune Née describes as bisexual writing: the written translation of "the location within oneself of the presence of both sexes, evident and consistent in different ways according to the individual, the non-exclusion of difference or of a sex, and starting with this 'permission' one gives oneself, the multiplication of the effects of desire's inscription on every part of the body and the other body." Susan Sellers, ed. The Hélène Cixous Reader (New York: Routledge, 1994) 41-42. In this process, she makes "gender trouble" by subverting and displacing "naturalized and reified notions of gender that support masculine hegemony and heterosexist power." Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990) 33-34.
25 A Hora da Estrela was written and published in 1977, the year when Clarice Lispector died.
30 In general their literary discourse represents a heroic male world of cangaçeiros, cowboys, and slum dwellers. One exception is Queiroz's O Quinze, a novel that focuses upon the social and psychological life of a woman. As a teacher, she represents the typical woman of the Vargas era who leaves the private space in order to embrace the modernization of the country. For a detailed analysis of modern Northeastern fiction see, among others, Adonias Filho, O Romance Brasileiro de 30 (Rio de Janeiro: Bloch, 1969) and Flora Sussekind, Tal Brasil, Qual Romance (Rio de Janeiro: Achiare, 1986).
32 See Renato Rosaldo, Culture and Truth (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993) and Canclini, Culturas. For excellent Brazilian studies of these issues see also Renato Ortiz, Mundialização e Cultura (São Paulo: Ed. Brasiliense, 1994) and Muniz Sodré, Reinventando a Cultura (Petrópolis, RJ.: Ed. Vozes, 1996).
33 In the 1986 film of the novel Suzana Amaral renders this aspect congenially by staging their rendezvous under six-laned urban freeways.
35 Antônio Torres, Essa Terra (São Paulo: Ática, 1991) 47.
37 Torres, Adeus 123.
40 Based on deterritorialized capital as a global force that flows from the center to the periphery, producing what Deleuze and Guattari have termed a "development of underdevelopment." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996) 231.
41 Antônio Torres, Um Táxi para Viena d'Austria (São Paulo: Schwarcz, 1991) 102.
42 Torres, Balada 36, 80.
43 Torres, Táxi 8-10, 13, 17-18, 53-54.
44 Torres, Adeus 156.
45 Torres, Balada 79, 84.
46 Torres, Balada 127.
48 Torres, Cachorro 161-162.
49 Torres, Cachorro 172. Emphasis added.
50 Torres, Cachorro 185.
51 Silviano Santiago, "As ondas do cotidiano," Vale 156 (151-159).
55 The book is part of a tetralogy whose protagonist is the caboclo Miguel dos Santos Prazeres: Verde Vagamundo (1972), O Minossauro (1975), and Aquele Um (1985).

While it was the Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz who coined the term *transculturación* in 1940, the Brazilian writer Oswald de Andrade had published *Manifesto Antropofágico* in 1928. Ortiz defined transculturation in Cuba as an open-ended, tension-laden *process* which implies the partial loss of culture ("desculturación"), the absorption of elements from other cultures ("acculturation") and the creation of a new culture ("neoculturación"). Oswald de Andrade and the modernist vanguard used the anthropophagous ritual of the Tupinambás - a collective practice of vengeance to maintain the stability of their tribal structure - as a metaphor for the violence they practiced in their literary cannibalism. In an effort to define the cultural identity of the nation, Andrade stressed throughout the manifest that the assimilation of the Other, extracting the essence from it while transforming it into something new and different, has always characterized Brazilian culture. His objective, then, was to create an autonomous cultural project through the consumption of the colonizing legacy. While both Ortiz and Andrade stress the agency (as action and not only as reaction) of the local, autochthonous culture, which does not imitate metropolitan imports but reshapes them, Andrade's subversive paradigm is even more radical since its objective was, in the words of Lucía Helena, to "chegar à semente' nativa renegada pela atitude colonista que marcou o pensamento político-cultural do colonizador europeu e das elites brasileiras que lhe deram continuidade" ['get to the native seed' denied by the colonial attitude, which characterized the political and cultural thinking of the European colonizer and was perpetuated by the Brazilian elite].


Ortiz, *Contrapuneto* 95.

Roughly between the 1860s and the 1910s.


In other words, the Amazonian shares with inhabitants of other colonized regions an ambiguous relationship (a double consciousness with regard) to the local cultural legacy, ethos and worldview: on the one hand it is taken as a positive element of one's past-present being but at the same time, through the eyes of the other and via internalization, it is seen as something negative and inferior.


The *ribeirinho* is a person who lives in close proximity to the rivers and in close contact with nature.

The interior of the Amazon region includes both small cities, towns, hamlets, the communities on the riverbanks, and the areas of the rain forest.


Yi-Fu Tuan in his Space and Place (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977) makes the following distinction between space and place. "'Space' is more abstract than 'place'. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. ... From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (6). This pause, seen here as the interested, value-laden gaze of the author - the poetic image - is only possible on the basis of movement through space, or in the words of Bachelard: "Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. ... In the realm of images, the play between the exterior and the interior is not a balanced one." As I will argue later on, it is through memory-as-imagination that Monteiro mines the Amazonian place-as-ethos within the nation-space. Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969) xxii. On the distinction between ethos and worldview see Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 126-141.

My reasoning was triggered by Edward Soja's conception of space and by Claude Raffestin's concept of territoriality. In Geografías Pós-Modernas: A Reafirmação do Espaço na Teoria Social Crítica (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1996) Soja proposes an interpretation of space which begins with "o discernimento de uma geografia humana interpretativa" [the discernment of an interpretive human geography] in order to establish a "hermenêutica espacial" [spatial hermeneutics] (8), that is, an analysis of the characters' agency and actions based upon a configurative hermeneutics of the space and its conflicting temporalities within which the characters are inscribed. In Por uma Geografia do Poder (São Paulo: Ática, 1996), Raffestin argues that territoriality is a specific type of space delimited by the characters' agency. The limits of this space are not so much established by cartographic measuring and mapping but rather by the semiotic system of language and its articulated images. In other words, maps can be read alternatively as a rhetorical instrument and a medium of spatial perception.

Bakhtin uses 'skaz', a Russian word, to indicate an oral discourse at work in and acting upon the written discourse. See Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 190-193.

Benedicto Monteiro, A Terceira Margem (Belém: CEJUP, 1991), 80. Further references will be paginated in the text.

Bachelard, Poetics 222.

Bachelard xx.

See his autobiography, Transtempo (Belém: CEJUP, 1993). Transtemporality signifies a temporal continuum, a fluid time as duration in Henri Bergson's sense (Time and Free Will, 1910) in which all times exist in the continuous present of our imaginations.


The novel's plot is set in the 1970s during the military dictatorship.

Monteiro's version of counter-memory, then, slightly differs from the one defined by George Lipsitz in Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990) 213. Not only does Monteiro address "hidden histories," but most importantly their specific ethos.


This notion of identity is not an exclusive characteristic of contemporary Brazilian fiction. It can be observed in the long tradition of the *literatura de cordel*, and in the fiction of writers such as Mario de Andrade, Adonias Filho, and Guimarães Rosa, among others. In *Macunaima* Andrade uses a triple narrative stance, the transcultural adventures and journeys of Macunaima - "héroi de nossa gente" [hero of our people] - and the anthropophagous translation of the indigenous Tupi mythology (principally from the Taureang and Arekuná tribes) as mytho-archetypal pastiche expression in order to delineate a borderized nation-space characterized by a heterogeneous language. While Jorge Luis Borges traveled the labyrinthine paths of his conjectural Tlön-world - an anti-traveler in a heterogeneous simulacrum where causality and identity lose their symbolic sense due to the nonexistence of spacial and temporal continuity - Guimarães Rosa, in his landmark novels *Sagarrana* and *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, revealed the identity of Brazilian subalterns who move in the anonymous shadow of the official history and discourse. The use of orality and multiple accentuations of language (heteroglossia) in his writing establish the transformative effect of human action on language, which becomes a living parole characterized by diversity, variation, and transitory, accidental and unsystematic innovation. Thus, Rosa emphasizes the illusion of a homogeneous nation not only through the movement, the permanent traverse of his characters, but most importantly through the deconstruction of its stable unison linguistic identity. Adonias Filho, one could argue, writes as a "transculturador narrativo" (Angel Rama) who gives a voice to the diverse ethnicities that compose the nation. Throughout his oeuvre, but especially in *Luanda Beira Bahia, As Velhas*, and *O Forte*, spacial mobility implies a fluid, mobile identity and attests to an intercultural dynamics as spacial and temporal discontinuity within the nation-space. Like João Ubaldo Ribeiro's *Viva o Povo Brasileiro*, Filho's writing constitutes an antiverison of the official discourse - a discourse based upon the deliberate silencing and forgetting of the many others who were and are a vital part of the nation's development. Or, using the opening image of *O Forte*, Adonias Filho opens the doors and windows of the closed fort (Brazil) to let some fresh air reach the many subaltern voices that like a gas are suppressed between and within its walls. Adonias Filho, *O Forte* (São Paulo: Difel, 1983) 1.