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Keeping and Disseminating Memory for the Shaping of Brazilian Identity

In August 6th and 7th 2018 the Aziz Ab'Sáber Garden of Science, located on the community of Cana Brava, in the town of Pureza, state of Rio Grande do Norte in Brazil, promoted the 1st meeting for interaction and experiences entitled “Our villages, our people”. This title was inspired by the phrase attributed to Leo Tolstoy: “paint your village, and you paint the world”. This meeting gathered researchers from Brazilian and Chinese institutions in lectures offered to the teachers of the region’s public schools, community members and invitees. The Journal of the International Forum of Ideas, which has as its main purpose the dissemination of scientific content was also invited to the event, and seized the occasion to transform this action into a special volume containing these lectures.

The meeting was presided by Professor José Medeiros da Silva, PhD (Zhejiang International Studies University – Hangzhou, China), and was coordinated by Professor Simone Maria da Rocha, PhD (Federal Rural University of the Semi-Arid Region, Brazil). The meeting also had the participation of Professor Maria Antônia Teixeira da Costa, PhD (Rio Grande do Norte State University), Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson F. da Silva, PhD (Federal University of Ouro Preto), Professor Nadir Arruda Skeete (Rio Grande do Norte Federal Institute, and a PhD candidate at the Federal University of Pernambuco), Professor José Willians Simplício da Silva (Roraima Federal Institute) and Diego Amorim Xavier, MA in Sociology at Zhejiang University (China), and a PhD candidate in the Social Sciences programme at the State University of Campinas (Brazil). Also, the meeting was attended by Professor Washington José de Souza, PhD, from the department of managerial sciences at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

This number of the journal presents the lectures by professor Nadir Arruda Skeete and commented by Rio Grande do Norte’s writer Franklin Jorge “Memories of a Humanistic Education: Octacílio Alecrim and his Submerged Province”, and “The Holy Spirit Festival at Guaporé Valley, Rondônia State”, presented by professor José Willians Simplício da Silva.

Have a pleasant read!

Memories of a Humanistic Education: Octacílio Alecrim and his Submerged Province

Professor Nadir Arruda Skeete: This talk, undertaken in the scope of the 1st meeting for interaction and experiences at the Aziz Ab'Sáber Garden of Science, seeks to briefly present the book *Submerged Province*¹ written by Octacílio Alecrim and first published in 1957. This book would not be reprinted in 50 years, and we could only access the book because, in 2008, that is, ten years ago, it was published for a second edition in a partnership between the Institute for the Memory of Macaíba² and the Brazilian Federal Senate. It consists in an autobiographical narrative about the childhood and youth of the potiguar³ author, who was born in the city of Macaíba in 1906, and passed away in 1968 in Rio de Janeiro.

These memoirs cover the period when Octacílio Alecrim lived in Macaíba, a cranny of the then province of Rio Grande do Norte, until the year 1930. Then, Alecrim moved to Recife to study law, after what he moved definitively to Rio. At the final part of the book, the author synthesizes what was written and reveals how he was inspired to write this aesthetical piece of great value for the literature of Rio Grande do Norte.

ME AND THE PROVINCE

And here comes to an end my remembrances of childhood and youth at the province – those filled with authentic toys, folkloric pretexts, and local habits. An affective field of experience for my first literary, philosophical and artistic diversions – always through some other people's books.

The idea of writing them – an inescapable duty for every man of letters – came about, three years ago, when a reproduction of Chagall's suggestive *Moi et le Village* transported me, like Proust before me, to my homeland. In truth, it is far in space and time, but it has left deep roots, as it can be attested by the first phase of my intellectual experience.

During this plot, the author made an effort to, above all, place himself as a mere accident of interesting testimonials made in a certain environment and in a certain era.

Here is why the true characters of the Submerged Province are the Memory, the Land, the Episodes, the Ideas, the Writers and the Books (Alecrim, 2008, p. 268)⁴.

¹ The book was never translated into English. Its original Portuguese name is *Província Submersa*. The name was translated for clarity (Translator's Note – TN from now on).

² Municipality in Rio Grande do Norte – population 76,000 (TN).

³ Potiguar is the denonym for one who is born in the state of Rio Grande do Norte (TN).

⁴ Translated from the original in Portuguese (TN).

The remembrances from childhood and youth consist, thus, the basis over which the book is built, leaving some important elements of our culture and our history to be glimpsed by the author.

When he speaks, for example, of the toys, the games played in his childhood, such as: soapbox carts, scooters, string toys, and so on... he is trying to recover these authentic toys, folkloric pretexts and local habits. In the same way, when he talks about his reading experiences, bringing his first read book to the fore, the moment when he began to be enchanted and impassionate by books and when he started to be interested by the world of letters. Sometimes we can spend our whole lives and the books are there, and we are the ones who are not curious to read and get to know them. To know the history of other people is a form of wealth, even if those are made-up stories, for those will still bring about real life experiences, through the life and imagination of another human being, as we seek to know what they knew and how they lived this knowledge. In this context, not only literary texts, but also the philosophical ones that reflect about life, about existence, are artistic pieces that can enrich us. Artistic expression is a part of our humanity. As it is said in a popular song: “it is not only food that we want, but food, fun, and art⁵”. We were not born merely to survive, but to live and live fully, that is, live to the full of our potential as human beings.

For Octacílio Alecrim, to write is an “inescapable duty for every man of letters”, that is, if he is in possession of that particular intellectual knowledge, he has the duty of registering that and to leave a legacy to coming generations. He reports that the inspiration to write the book was born three years before when he found the reproduction of the suggestive painting by French Artist Marc Chagall, *Moi et le village*, which transported him “like Proust before” – making a reference to French author Michel Proust, writer of *In Search of Lost Time*, considered to be the predecessor of the modern novel – back to his homeland, that stood far away in time and space. The author was then in Rio de Janeiro and twenty years had passed since his time in Rio Grande do Norte, which “left deep roots” in his “first phase of intellectual experience”. The reason for that is because what we learn and live in our childhood – in one way or another – will resurge in other moments of life.

On the plot, the author made an effort to, most of all, place himself as a mere accident of interesting testimonials made at a certain environment, that is, at a certain place, and at a certain era, that is the time when he lived. In that way, the true characters of *Submerged Province* are the *Memory* (that which he lived and remembers), the *Land* (the space where he lived and remembers), the *Episodes* (marking phenomena in his life), the *Ideas* (thoughts the author had contact with through books or people who influenced him), and the *Books and the Writers*, who also had a marked presence in his life.

⁵ The song *Comida* by the band Titãs was freely translated here to convey the meaning (TN).

Let us go towards the book's presentation, divided in five parts plus the introduction. In the introduction, the author speaks on the matter of the *souvenir* as an evocation of the memory of something, someone, someplace which has left a marking impression in our lives. In the remaining sections, it is possible to associate each and every one of them to the elements the author refers to in the end of the book. The first part corresponds to *Memory*, as is divided into three chapters: 'The Buzz of the Berimbau'⁶, 'The Swirl of the Screw', and 'Remembrances Almanac', all of them dealing to memoirs from the author's childhood. The second part contains only the chapter 'Briefs of a Book of Fables' and it refers to the *Land*. In this section the author describes some of the places of Macaíba, some of which are associated to legends and important historical facts. The third part relates to what Octacílio calls the *Episodes*, and is composed of three chapters: 'Guiding Fire', 'Evocations for Falling Stars', and 'Nostalgia for Infinity'. The fourth part will correspond to the *Ideas*, and has the sole chapter 'The Sign of the Scorpio', written with mythological references. The fifth and last part will refer to *the Writers and the Books*, and will have the single chapter 'The Survival of Antaeus', also referring to a myth.

On the names of the chapters, the writer Nelson Patriota – who worked on the revision, updating and orthographic correction of the original text of *Submerged Province* for the publishing of the second edition – published an article at the *Tribuna do Norte* newspaper, observing: “[the titles] are themselves standalone, succinct and significant creations, demonstrating the author's practice with subject titling, an art which he cultivated since his times as a militant in the liberal newspaper *A República*” this reveals “the author's aptitude for the art of creating – with two or three words – the specific ambience for each part of his work. Upon reading the book, one can surmise the meaning of each of the chapters, and each part is built around a theme indicated by the titles.

But anyhow, coming back to the introduction, it is worth mentioning the importance that the author gives to the theme of the souvenir. The author selects as the epigraph for his text an excerpt in French extracted from the book *Souvenirs; D'enfance et de Jeunesse*, written by Ernest Renan and published in Paris by the Calmman Levy publishing house, in 1883. The goal is precisely to express the importance to him of the remembrances from his homeland and how, through these memories, there can be unveiled certain nuances from his thinking, from his form of reflecting about the world and about himself. After citing the excerpt in French, Octacílio exposes the theme of souvenirs, thus constructing the introduction. There he refers to myriad writers – some of whom Brazilian – who, to use the terms of the author, -- “in prose and poetry talked about themselves in an autobiography”, they wrote “their remembrances from childhood and youth”, “depictions of sensitive boyhood and adolescence valued, above all, for their warp and exciting impressions of frankness and intimacy, culminating finally in what he considers “the most fascinating chapter of the matter: the affective souvenir of the province of birth or otherwise”, which he one presented by “Proust – in his ruskinian peregrinations for the

⁶ A one string instrument played usually in Brazilian folkloric music, and also used in rhythms used in Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art invented by African slaves.

lost province – is without a doubt the one I felt the most, and thus the one most admired by me (Alecrim, 2008, p. 23-34)⁷”.

Thus, influenced by Proust’s writings about his place of birth, Octacílio is taken to write about his own lost province, thus immortalizing Macaíba and the state of Rio Grande do Norte in a literary opus. This is very important because sometimes we cannot give the right value to what we are and what we do. Sometimes we can inhabit a land for twenty, thirty, forty years and not know anything about our place. Sometimes we cannot realize the value, beauty, wealth and joy of our people. Values we must pass on to our children and grandchildren. This is living, to not go about life and leave nothing to mark our existence.

We could speak now a little about the contents of each part of the book, relating it to our reality. *Memory*, as I said, is the first part of the book, dealing with his memories about his family: his father, his mother, his brothers and dependents who lived in the house. It is possible to visit his house that is still standing there in Macaíba, and to know how was his street, the church, the space where he lived, the toys and childhood games, his classmates etc. Speaking of which, it is of interest to us, for example, the memories of his enrolment in school, when he was bullied by another kid and had to learn to defend himself. These experiences teach us because they touch the reality of our school. When we get an undesired nickname it leaves a mark and, if we cannot move past that, we become sad, depressed in a corner. Also his teachers are of interest, especially those who were inspiring to him. When I got here, I observed the names honoured in the sidewall of the Garden of Science and I was moved to learn that on top lie the names of teachers from here, from Canabrava, teachers who touched José’s life, his story and his community’s story. These are people who gave a part of their lives to education. What would be of us if not for our teachers? How many teachers are here today? Who here is a teacher? See, that is beautiful! You see? You are the ones responsible for diffusing culture, art, science, mathematics, philosophy, sociology, geography, biology... anyway, knowledge! Octacílio will talk about the teachers who were important for him, references that shaped him as a man.

The second part of the book is the *Land*. The place where we are, where we are standing in space. With this theme, Octacílio recovers, in the second part, elements from popular history and tradition. Every city and every place has a history. This place here has a history or not?

Audience: Yes!

Professor Nadir Arruda Skeete: There are even some stories which are quite funny, some that are past from father to son. Octacílio Alecrim brings many of these stories and elements of popular tradition. These are connected to some specific places of his corner of the province. It is interesting to see him talk about the Lake Tapar in Macaíba, and about Flamengo Port. You know why Flamengo? There is an element of history here, the

⁷ Translated from the original in Portuguese (TN).

teachers know, I am sure. There was a time in our region when we were colonized by the Dutch. We were not only influenced by Portugal. There was a time of fight for control of our territory, and the Dutch came along. There were even massacres and looting. Octacílio tells, for example, about the massacre in the Ferreiro Torto Sugar Mill, which marked the place forever. The Reis Magos⁸ Fort⁹ was invaded and received the name Keulen Castle. The Dutch invaded and took possession of the land. Fighting ensued. Octacílio also refers to the Martyrdom of Cunhaú and Uruaçú from the same period. These are stories that we may not know, but they are part of our land, of our people.

He also refers to the battle of Estremoz, Guararapes etc. Macaíba in his time was ascending economically as a result of the cotton plantations and also for logistical reasons. There was a port, and the region prospered. This brought about also a quantity of politicians, intellectuals and influential writers. A city in its apex. Macaíba then took an economic downturn and it is not so prominent today. However, in the 19th, and even during the early 20th century, it was an important place, and this is reflected in the book, when he alludes to these places.

In turn, the *Episodes* constitute the third part of the book, where the marking or curious facts lived by the author are told. He also touches on his contacts – either personal or otherwise – with important figures of the Potiguar or the Brazilian cultural scene. This is interesting for us because one of the figures is the author Câmara Cascudo¹⁰ that, as you can see, gives name to the Kitchen-school of the Garden of Science, in a more than just homage to his memory. Many pages of the book are dedicated to Câmara Cascudo so as to show the value of this great anthropologist, scientist and historian who revolutionized the studies about our culture. A man that is known more outside of our borders than nationally, or indeed in his own state, Rio Grande do Norte. The Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte now has the Câmara Cascudo Centre for Research, which has developed many research projects, however many of us who live here do not know anything about him. People from São Paulo, Rio, Minas Gerais, and other places would, many times, know more about the man than us, and that is wrong. We should be able to lecture the world on the works of Câmara Cascudo. So, in this book, Octacílio will tell us about this figure. He tells some stories and facts on how they met in Natal, how was the relationship between these two intellectuals. He also shows how Câmara Cascudo was generous. Did you know he once went to fetch Jorge Fernandes's – one of the greatest poets of Rio Grande do Norte – book of poems for publication? So, these figures are highlighted in the book: Câmara Cascudo, Jorge Fernandes, and Palmyra Wanderley from this state. But he also talks about Gilberto Freyre, from Pernambuco, the author of *The Masters and the Slaves*, a classical book that tries to explain a little of what Brazil is, of how Brazil was constituted from the ethnic mix that lived here since the times of the

⁸ Portuguese denomination for the Biblical Magi (TN).

⁹ The fort is in Natal, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Norte. It should not be confused with the homonymous fort in Goa, India (TN).

¹⁰ Luís da Câmara Cascudo (1898-1986) was a Potiguar anthropologist, historian, folklorist, lawyer, author and journalist born, raised and deceased in the city of Natal. He is the author of the Dictionary for the Brazilian Folklore, and also wrote, among myriad others, the History of Nourishment in Brazil.

colonization. Alecrim also talks about Ronald Carvalho, a modernist author, among other writers and references that he brings in the book.

The *Ideas* are the fourth part of the book, where the author presents some fields of interest for him as an intellectual and scholar. Then we can observe his preoccupation about Brazil's social and political issue, something we to this day do not understand very well since we do not study and do not understand our past. As a result, some things keep repeating themselves and we do not have the capacity to intervene with our political and social positions. Anyhow, he speaks of the political and social issues of his times, bringing some general understandings on history and didactics, his fields of interest and research. He was also interested in psychology for it is so important to work on our self-knowledge. Also he was drawn to literature and philosophy and to the writings of Joaquim Nabuco, another writer from Pernambuco who made great contributions to the abolition of slavery. In this scope, he talks about the writings of Joaquim Nabuco about Walter Bagehot, the influence of the American and English essences, Queen Victoria, Rodolfo Dantas, Soares Brandão, the burial ceremony for the emperor, the Ragamuffin War, the influence of Lincoln, the approximation of the two Americas, Lincoln's centennial, Elihu Root and peace, and also on the writings of Eduardo Prado about the American Illusion. Octacílio also wrote about Oliveira Lima and the US and Japan, Ronald de Carvalho on the grounds of Brazilian nationality, among other authors who he considered authentic humanist thinkers. The grounds of Brazilian nationality is also a very dear theme to José Medeiros here, who seeks to know more about our reality to characterize our identity: who is the Brazilian, how are we constituted as nationality, as nation, as country.

Finally, the fifth and last part of the book will be focused on some *Writers and Books* that were of marked importance for Octacílio. Specially prominent in the section are Gilberto Freyre and Maurice Barrès.

Although we can make each part of the book to match its corresponding element: *Memory, Land, Episodes, Ideas, Writers and Books*, they are constantly interpenetrating and are present throughout the book. He does not leave the writers and books to the end, for he talks about all elements since the beginning. Each part is but a focus in each element.

Now that I have made these considerations about the book, I would like to present to you how I intend to analyse the book during my PhD. My initial project was a study on classics. I intended to verify how classical literature was brought by specifically during secondary education. Broadly speaking, our students are no longer interested in the great classics of literature, and I believe these are absolutely central for one's education, for they are books that left an indelible mark in mankind's essence. These are books that we cannot do without knowing. It is not that we will read everything, but that we read at least one, for they have something to tell us about our humanity, about how to be one in the world. However, as a proposed it, the project was inviable, so I had to adapt. That was when a copy of this book came to me through a colleague from Macaíba who was part of our research group on Potiguar literature and culture. I fell in love with it and somehow I

re-found my original idea of working with classics for, in this book I can attest to the importance the author gives to them, and how he was himself a product of those.

To develop my study, I decided to work with a humanistic conception of literature, for there are many forms to conceive it. I bring you a reference from Todorov, a Bulgarian writer who, during the time of the communist dictatorship in Eastern Europe wound up living in France. His conception is very interesting because, during a long time, he had a more structuralist perspective of literature, seeking to study the forms used in literary texts. Afterwards, he started to see literature more broadly, as art for art's sake, with a humanistic view of how to shape mankind.

Denser than daily life but not radically different from it, literature expands our universe, prompts us to see other ways to conceive and organize it. We are all formed from what other people give us: first our parents and then the other people near us. Literature opens to the infinite this possibility of interaction and thus enriches us infinitely. It brings us irreplaceable sensations through which the real world becomes more furnished with meaning and more beautiful. Far from being a simple distraction, an entertainment reserved for educated people, literature lets each one of us fulfil our human potential (Todorov, 2007, p. 16-17)¹¹.

Sometimes we think literature to be only for a few people, those who are more studious, the nerds and bookworms. But that is simply not true. Literature is not only reserved for those most educated and who enjoy reading. Literature is important for all of us, for it allows us to respond better to our calling as human beings. Literature works with human matter, it is what we are, we are made of this. This contact with literature makes us more human, for not every man is human. So, literature gives us moments of human formation, what I intend to show through this study of Octacílio Alecrim's book.

To show us how this reading experience can makes us more human, we formulate a research problem from Brayner's reference, who speaks about the making literature more pedagogical, and pedagogy more literary.

If in the first case literature offers us elements for an inner dialogue through the experience of other men (fictional or otherwise), in the second one ambitions are broader: making education a rewriting of oneself, as if the educational act exerted over itself (as some kind of self-subjectivation) will confuse itself with fictional writing. As such, life and literature will interpenetrate and form an "aesthetics of existence" (Brayner, 2005, p. 64)¹².

¹¹ Todorov, T. "What is Literature For?". *New Literary History* 38.1 (2007), p. 13-32.

¹² Translated from the Portuguese in the original talk (TN).

In the first case, based on studies by Philippe Meirieu, one has literary reading which is accompanied by and reflected upon, with the objective of moral and personal betterment, thus going beyond formal education – as many authors defend. Thus, not only will you go to school, but you will read to self-educate, and this can be a literary book, or perhaps a non-literary one. The experience brought by this other human being will help me to better myself as a human being. In the second case, taking as reference works from Jorge Larosa, one puts education as this forming process, as a rewriting of oneself, such as the educational act is exerted over itself as a form of self-subjectivation, in other words, I am speaking about myself. This is confused with fictional writing where life and literature interpenetrate and take shape of an aesthetics of existence. I make my life my own artwork. This is very interesting and I believe Octacílio does that when he talks about the books that helped his formative process, and when he writes a book which is a rewriting of himself. Thus this is what I would like to show in my PhD work. To investigate if and how literature can contribute to the intellectual and human formation, seeking to verify which was the trail followed by him, which are the books and writers that he interacts and identifies with, how and why. To do that I will adopt Bryner's perspective.

What is the importance of studying this? It is a possibility that I will have to rethink the articulation between cultural hermeneutics and literature, seeking to verify how is this culture learned. Also, I believe it can contribute to the genre of autobiographies and memorialist – the genres that categorize *Submerged Province* – and to the diffusion of knowledge and literary production of the State of Rio Grande do Norte. Besides, I will be promoting the rescuing of the work's and the author's value in literary and educational terms, and also of the authors and works discussed by the text itself.

My general objective is to discuss the relationship between literature and human formation coming from Octacílio Alecrim's work. I will seek to investigate through the experience narrated by the author-narrator-character and how the reading of literary works contributed to his human and intellectual formation, to the broadening of his imagination, his dominance of language and the very expansion of his being. My specific objectives are the following: to make a survey based on pre-established criteria on the main works and authors Alecrim refers to; to describe the degree of receptiveness, what is shown with the cited and commented work and how it is transmitted; to recuperate relevant facts that were selected by memory in the process of construction and resignifications of the narrative, which are the ones that enabled the construction of the self, of the other and of the world to the narrator; to define and characterize the work, from the viewpoint of the autobiographical genre, considering its hybrid character, and its memorial, essayistic and documental elements. So, this is what I have for you. Thank you very much for your patience, and again I thank José and everyone for being so well received.

Professor José Medeiros: Once again I would like to thank you all for being here. We made a point out of inviting a researcher for an academic lecture. Even the language is different. What is fantastic here today is to see children following on your communication. So, it is possible that, one day, we will have some of these children here as researchers, for they are becoming more familiar with the necessary patience for the

production of knowledge. Research requires patience, mastery of language, reflection, and we also have many professors here who are, after all, researchers. This lecture is an invitation to follow on this path.

Just one quick reminder, today in the afternoon we will inaugurate, in the space of the Câmara Cascudo kitchen-school, a photography exhibition named “A view of Japan”. Also, in the Maria do Socorro Silva museum-library you can appreciate the exhibition of traditional Chinese paintings made by the artist Qiu Ningning, a graduate of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. Tonight we will also have a bonfire where we will be able to get to know our guests. Now we will open the floor for two questions.

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: It is not a question per se. Nadir’s work has a fundamental point. The author you are currently working on, Alecrim, who wrote this book in 1957, and was republished only in 2008... I have a Master’s and a PhD in political science, and I am a historian by trade. I would just like to say that, when you are doing your undergrad in history, we are told that history exists when it is told. This saying that we are in history, that we live history, that is all a lie. We are in life. We pay bills, wake up in the morning, brush our teeth, go to school, have a fight with our husbands, that is life, history is different. History exists when someone sits down to narrate those happenings. To write or to research about those facts... that is history. So pay attention, the author comes from Rio Grande do Norte, the same as you all here, but his history was lost until Nadir told it. The question I ask, and you do not need to answer here, but the question I ask anchored in Nadir’s extraordinary work is to you professors: how many writers are from Canabrava and are lost with their stories untold? How many poets may be here? How many people may have their memories and keep notes, and those are just forgotten? “I am the cousin of such-and-such, I even know about him!” That is good, but the rest of the planet has no idea about it. I believe that even using the internet, and using Nadir as an example, you could even indirectly supervise a rescuing of the memory of the people who are from Canabrava in the city of Touros, and who wrote something, produced something here, and have their stories untold.

Because if you do not tell the stories of your townsmen, people from your own land, you can be sure that no one else will. This is the big question for me, and I believe it is a fantastic lesson! I always remember a saying from Mário de Andrade that we should not serve as an example, but as a lesson. I believe Nadir is teaching us a fantastic lesson, and I believe you could copy that lesson, copy and paste it, since we are here talking to teachers and students. Let us copy Nadir, right? And maybe we can start building the history of Canabrava. But it must be the rescuing of the memory of those who produced things... a poet, a writer, a person who wrote short stories. How many may be out there, or in here? What if no one tells their story? If you do not, unfortunately, this will exist only while they live, for when they die, their stories will die with them.

Professor Nadir Arruda Skeete: like the stories of Trancoso¹³, right? Folkloric tales...

Professor José Medeiros: We are going to take one more question and then Nadir will make a brief presentation on the Potiguar writer Franklin Martins, who honours us with his presence, and was a friend of our sorely missed Câmara Cascudo. It is worth noticing that afterwards we will have a tree planting session as a way of paying homage to the first educators in our community, such as Maria das Dores Santos de Brito, Maria do Socorro Batista da Costa, and Maria Carvalho de Lima (the three of them are here today), and people like Waldyra Jackson Ferreira da Silva, now aged 80 years old, who dedicated a great part of her life to the children and youngsters in Rio de Janeiro. We want these trees to be a reference for the continuing memory of our educators. Now I give the floor to professor Maria Antônia.

Maria Antônia: Thank you so much for your invitation José! A big hug to each and everyone here! Some days ago I asked José about how many people were coming. He said: ‘about 30 people...’, but in fact there are many of you here today! Nadir, congratulations on your work! I would like to reflect on something: how could we, then, relate the memories of a humanistic formation to Canabrava? How can I relate the memories of the humanistic education of Octacílio Alecrim told in his *Submerged Province* to our living experiences, to our life, to our day-to-day here in Canabrava, what we do and what we are not doing... so when we say “the memories of a humanistic formation”, each and every one could write about their own memories. In truth, the time where history was made only by heroes is past. Each and every one here, a youngster or a child, are here today – and I see that they are paying attention – can write their own story, and this story is bright! From the man who ploughs the field, to the father who leaves his home in the morning to work, weed and plough the fields, who seeds and harvests... because, if we didn’t have farmers, we would not have food for the cities. How can we have a humanistic approach in our current lives? When we are faced with the current levels of violence and barbarism? So my thinking goes along these lines... each person here has an important story, and he or she could write it right now. We can write not only the stories of others, but our own story. Of course it is important to discuss a book like the one written by Octacílio Alecrim. We will discuss, investigate, analyse and reflect upon its contribution to our history. But my talk here is specifically to say that everybody is important, each and every one has their story, and without our story we cannot seek alternatives for our villages. So as to speak of God’s world, we need to speak of ourselves. In this note, I would like to end asking Nadir to respond to what I said, to make a relationship between her studies and the goal of our event. I would like you to talk about the memory of people, for we are being silenced, we do not write, we do not value our own stories. Thank you!

¹³ Portuguese writer Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso (1520-1596) is considered one of the first short-story writers in Portuguese language. He wrote *Tales and Stories of Enjoyment and Example* (1575). This gave origin to much of Brazilian children stories, fantastic literature, and popular tradition.

Professora Nadir Arruda Skeete: Thank you, Maria Antônia. Your speech is absolutely in line with what we want to do. I would like to respond by calling a writer from Rio Grande do Norte, who I made a point out of bringing here, and I was absolutely delighted by his book, which I just finished. I did not know him, but he writes since the 1960s and he lives in Natal. I was so enchanted that I even told my husband: “Arthur, if I was not doing the proposal with Octacílio Alecrim, I was going to study Franklin Jorge”. Come here, Franklin! I want people to know you. Bring the book, I want to show it! Here, people, I am telling the truth, he is a real writer. I made a point out of bringing him here, so we can know our land’s worth, that we do not know and we do not cherish. Franklin Jorge started his career as a journalist, worked in the Rio Grande do Norte’s main newspapers like Tribuna do Norte and Diário de Natal... I think he can speak a little bit about his experience. But the first book of his that I read is “Livro dos Afiguraves¹⁴”. He also donated many copies of the book to the Garden so you can get to know his work. This book, Maria Antônia, brings a story of the common people told by Franklin Jorge. He had contact with these people like we are here in contact with you. Franklin went to the town of Luis Gomes in the west of the state. Do you know Luis Gomes – or Bom Jesus da Serra, like the town was called before? He collected some recounts from those modest people – well people from all walks of life – their stories, the stories of their place. As critics say, Franklin Jorge is a writer that brings the dead back to life, he gives voice to those who do not have it, those who are forgotten in their nooks, in communities like Canabrava, for example. This is very interesting. In this book, we can get to know stories from very humble people, and those are the truest of them all. I am going to read a small piece.

Joanita, born Joana D’Arc, got to the town as a 22-year-old, and went to live in a ranch right on the foot of the mountains of Bom Jesus. Now an old woman, she was born in the town of Marcelino Vieira in 1931, and spends her day sitting on a chair in the sidewalk, where she observes and thinks about the facts of life.

‘Here’ – she says finally after reluctantly agreeing to talk to a reporter who’s gone to the mountains to write – ‘people don’t even believe in God’. ‘I don’t like gossip or small talk’ – she bursts. ‘Every conversation of mine is short, I don’t ingratiate, and I don’t like flattery. Believe me when I say there are people here worse than I am. But in these circumstances, I leave it to God. I didn’t vote for this mayor, but there is a man that did much for Bom Jesus. Pio [the mayor] changed the town’s face. If even only for the overlook he built. People say there is even a pool up there... I’ve never been, I am not willing to risk it, but people talk about it. The truth is, he is getting things done’.

‘I am a black woman, and I pay flattery to no one. Those who kowtow deserve no confidence. I don’t know anything, and I don’t want to. I never wanted to learn, and now I live tired to know things that don’t matter. When I was young I liked to dance, play

¹⁴ Afiguraves is a neologism in Portuguese created by the writer Franklin Jorge. A simple translation for the title would be “The Book of Figures”. The verb “afigurar” means to create an imaginary picture. Another possible translation would be “The book of imagined figures” (TN).

around, drink. It was a shambles, I didn't think of the future. But that was a long time ago'.

'When I first came to the city, there were only three or four streets. They had names like: Souls Street, Eternal Pipe Street, Butcher's Street, Town Hall Street... right here in front there was a thicket. There was only a market, something that can't go amiss, it's the centre of a town's life'.

'Life is so good that it's better to live than to die. Even living in the worst conditions, nobody wants to die. Everyone, *everyone* wants to somehow escape death'.

'When I used to confess, I took communion in fasting, even without washing my mouth so as to not offend the communion wafer, as it was the habit of Catholics in my time, things were different. I see today a lot of people taking the wafer with their bellies full. They have no consideration for the sacrament of communion'.

'Priest Oswaldo is attached to the church like a dog to a bone. In his age he should give way for the younger priests, but no! He is stubborn. There are old people that are like that. They cling to life like there is no Heaven, no eternal life. I think this is the case for this priest'.

'And even with her disenchantment and pessimism about the future of men, Joanita tells that the Minister for the Eucharist comes regularly to give her blessings. 'Don't write that down' – she says – but the congressman that was elected with the votes from Bom Jesus and is visiting the city today is worse than being poor. He is ungrateful. In his last campaign he was here buying votes. I was sitting here, right here, writing, when he came with his posse. They were buying votes and kowtowing around. Well, to make the story short, because I am a woman of few words, he gave money around with some women. I used to even wash his clothes, but he gave nothing to me, he didn't remember me. Nothing, not even good morning. He is a truculent man. He who buys votes does not value the voter, doesn't respect him. A voter with a price doesn't respect himself. Even so, I know he was ungrateful to the one who washed and ironed his clothes'.

'Thank God I am illiterate! Thank God! I can only imagine how much suffering the ones who know go through. I prefer ignorance, not knowing. And even so, even wanting to be deprived of knowledge, how I suffer! Oh, how I suffer – she sighed'.

Franklin Jorge: I am having a tough time finding the words to speak, but I just wanted to say a few words about what motivated me to write. As I was telling Nadir today, my grandmother instilled this in me. As I grew up in a rural area in a times when there was no television, we had many books, and reading was our pastime. My grandmother read much and she guided my readings. She thought I should be a writer to distinguish the family name. She thought only writing had permanence, and I internalized that. I remember she would take me for a walk in the streets of Natal and show me the houses

where Elói de Sousa¹⁵, Henrique Castriciano¹⁶, and Ferreira Itajubá¹⁷ lived. She would tell me stories, and sometimes memories betray me, the flee. I remember that in 1966 Glauce Rocha¹⁸, a famous actress back then – equivalent to the heights of Fernanda Montenegro¹⁹ today. She took me to the theatre, but since I was too young I could not get in – there was always someone outside checking ages. Once she took me to the back door of the Alberto Maranhão theatre so I could watch the play. I watched from the backstage, and I couldn't get to where the audience was sitting, so as to not be identified by one of the inspectors. After the play my grandmother went to compliment Glauce Rocha, and she invited us to visit her in the hotel – the main one in Natal at the time, called Grande Hotel. She was staying there, and she invited us up to her room. In her bed there were three books, and one of those was one of my grandmother's favourites, one that she read to me often in her effort to educate me. I was very impatient, and I realized later that these books were from French thinkers and philosophers. So she told me to be patient, for the sweeter fruit is the one ripened slowly. She taught me that clarity is a writer's honour. Only later in life, when I took her personal books to read that I understood that a lot of what she taught me was a reproduction from those books.

In our visit, Glauce Rocha was surprised by my staring of her books, for I was too young to be interested in that. She wound up giving me that specific book as a gift, so surprised she was by my interest. She asked: "And this pretty boy here, what do you want to be when you grow up?" I said: "A writer or nothing". She was impressed, she recognized my answer. I am telling you this because since I was a boy I wanted nothing more than to write. My first contact was with older people, rural workers... I would sneak out of the house to listen to their stories, and listening to them I knew, for example, how they survived the great drought of 1877, to the flood of 1924 – that destroyed one of the more prosperous places in Rio Grande do Norte – where there was the production of beef jerky. When Rio Grande do Norte, that could become the great producer of meat in Brazil was still inhabited by the Native Guaranis.

I listened to those stories and thought sadly to myself that they would vanish once those people died. So, intuitively, I took notes. When I was 18 years old, my grandmother told me: "Do you want to be a writer? So, first, you need to get to know your land!". She told me to travel around the state for a year, so I did and I talked to people.

Since I started at 18, later on in 2013 I was interviewing and writing about the grandchildren of the people I had first interviewed, for example, I talked to some of the

¹⁵ 1873-1959, Sousa was a journalist and politician, who served as Congressman and Senator from 1914 to 1937.

¹⁶ 1874-1947, Castriciano was a writer and politician famous for his contributions for popular education.

¹⁷ 1877?-1912, Ferreira was a Potiguar poet.

¹⁸ 1930 – 1971. Famous Brazilian actress in the 1950s and 60s.

¹⁹ 1929-. Better known for her role in the film *Central Station* (1998), for which she was nominated for an Oscar, and a Golden Globe, and won the Silver Bear. She also won an International Emmy Award for her role in *Sweet Mother* (2012).

victims of the attack of Lampião²⁰ against the town of Mossoró. On an interesting note is that, for example, sometimes when I talked to people they told me an open-ended story and, 30 years later, I could find someone who could complete the story unbeknownst that I knew part of it. Things worked as a chain, that is, I also wrote something with a Proustian spirit, for I read Proust since I was a boy. Octacílio Alecrim was founder of the Brazilian Proust Club. He was a great Proustian like my uncle Edgar Barbosa was. We have this tradition here of Proustian writers: Edgar Barbosa, Madalena Antunes who wrote a book that complements Joaquim Nabuco's *Massangana*, with the plot composed by memories of a *Sinhá Moça*²¹.

I didn't want this memory to be lost. I marvelled at those stories, but it was also a sad feeling for I thought: people die, these stories will disappear with them. This was, let's say, the fuel that led me to write what I have wrote, namely this interest of rescuing and preserving memory. A teacher at the Sítio Novo primary school, who studied at the University of São Paulo (USP), has a very interesting story. I do not know her personally yet, but she was a person who – if I am not mistaken – learned to read and write when she was 30 years old, but she has a PhD from USP, and, by chance, she read a book of mine, the one for which I won an award on the Centennial of Câmara Cascudo. I am not very competitive, but it was such a special date that I, even though I never contended for a prize, decided to run. I was worried because the three members of the judging commission did not like me very much. But I won, and for the first time by an unanimous decision, with the work *Fictions*, which is a gathering of fragments from other books. I never thought of running for an award with that book. In short notice I took fragments from 12 books, some published, some unpublished, and named it *Fictions, Frictions, Affrictions*". The original book was just *Fictions*, but a friend of mine, who encouraged me and was a Professor of Semiology and Semiotics thought that I should include 'frictions and affrictions' in the title, for he thought my literature was the fruit of my readings. Thank you!

José: That is it, guys! We have finished here, and now we are going to go all together to the tree planting session. Maria Matias, mainly Mrs. Maria das Dores, Socorro, Gabi, and Professor Antonio, and of course also our writer Franklin Jorge, we are all going to go there now. My brother Gaspar is already watering the land where we are going to plant and pay homage to these teachers present here. To all that came here, I hope we can have an event like this in the Garden every year. Thank you all!

²⁰ Virgulino Ferreira da Silva (1898-1938) was the most famous bandit leader of the Brazilian Cangaço, a form of outlaw and violent practice most common in the Brazilian northeast. His feats turned him into a kind of man of the people or folk hero to this day.

²¹ A term for a young woman usually the daughter of a sugar mill's owner.

The Divine Holy Spirit Festival at Guaporé Valley

Presentation by José Willians Simplício da Silva

First of all, I would like to thank the invite from Professor José Medeiros, and in his name I would like to greet all the other professors and teachers, public authorities, friends and family. To all here present, thank you very much for the invitation and the opportunity.

I intend to talk about a more than 100-year-old festivity that happens in the State of Rondônia: the Divine Holy Spirit Festival held in Guaporé Valley. I would also like to take the occasion to structure my talk around the book I wrote: *The Divine Holy Spirit Festival – Religiousness and Popular Culture in the Guaporé Valley*.

This festival is a yearly event that has been around for 124 years. The historical roots of this Festival in the state of Rondônia are intimately connected with religious celebrations held in Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade in the State of Mato Grosso²². In the year 1894, quilombolas Manoel Fernandes Coelho and Antônio Gomes, together with other brothers defended the creation of a festival in the Guaporé Valley and, to that end, they brought the Divine Crown to the community of Ilha das Flores.

According to literature on the theme, the festival was ‘invented’ under the context of Portuguese religious traditions of the 13th century. This made these festivals to become prominent in Brazil from the 18th century on, especially on the capital of the Portuguese empire back then, namely, Rio de Janeiro. This tradition took flight and swept across the nation. In Rondônia, or more specifically in the Guaporé Valley the festival is very unique, for it is organized mostly by quilombolas, but brings together also native Indian and white populations from Brazil and Bolívia. It is a religious festivity with an international face, unlike perhaps any other in Brazil. According to the Catholic Liturgical Calendar, the Divine Holy Spirit Festival is undertaken between May and June. This temporal scope goes from Resurrection Sunday to Pentecost, thus lasting around 50 days.

This image here is from the book’s cover. It says a lot about the festival, and who are the subjects and the symbols of the feast. I am going to make a small presentation of the image here: we have the crew inside the batelão – is this small boat that has this cover here, which is called a penteado (hairdo) by quilombola populations. Inside the batelão the crew is formed by the rowers; the greeter is the one here with a skyrocket in hand, and he announces the arrival of festival times. The feast’s symbols: the crown, the sceptre, the flag and pole; here in the middle we have the guitar player – also called the master-reveller. He is the one in charge of selecting via open competition some teenagers who are here wearing green. Those youngsters are called ‘revellers’, usually 12 to 14 years of age, who spend almost 2 months covering approximately 2,200 kilometres of water and land across the Valley.

²² To put this into context, the capitals of those two states are separated by about 1,500 kilometers (approximately 930 miles) (TN).

It is a very unique feast for those reasons: it lasts about 50 days, and the fact it has to be done by water most of the time, and also by land because it is made by Brazilians and Bolivians. Also, the crew for the *batelão* is composed by Brazilians and Bolivians. Also in this boat we have the one in charge of the crown; this object to the left with coloured promise bands. This man in charge is a *quilombola*, and only he can carry the crown during the festivities and their journey across the Guaporé river and its effluents. In the centre here we have the Flag Lieutenant – and we see that there is a hierarchy among the members of this peregrination, those who are authorities, or represent an authority have more significant duties – by the side of the Lieutenant we have the drummer, who is responsible for playing; and in the bow of the boat we have the Brazilian flag, the flag of the state of Rondônia, and the Bolivian flag.

As we look at the picture, the crew is executing a half-moon. These are the three loops the bark does before arriving at the community for the feast. They do the three loops, and each row in the water means respect, salutations and consideration to the devout people who were waiting for the symbols of the Divine in the waters. This devout manifestation was one of the first ritual acts to the Holy Spirit made by the local population and its vicinities. So we have a hierarchy among the navigating corps, that I call a mobile holy place. The crew members cannot ingest alcoholic beverages during this holy and profane time, they cannot have sexual intercourse, they cannot dance in the profane festivities, the balls, or during the *forrós*²³. For that reason I call the *batelão* a ‘mobile holy place’ in one of the chapters written to discuss the *batelão*’s crew. Another issue here is a matter of gender. You can see here that there are no women present. They are barred from setting foot on the *batelão*, even if it is anchored and parked.

In many respects we can see that this feast should not be seen merely from the aesthetics vantage point, but also as a representation of society. As such, this relation of gender and power are present. Thus, the female figure is kept apart from these rituals.

My work was done based on accounts and oral interviews. The members of the *batelão* said that this relationship with gender is a matter of tradition, but could not explain why this tradition came about. This was not clear, and it is a matter that can be investigated further. Another unclear matter is the extent of the relationship between these pilgrims and the catholic church. This was not the object of my research, nor of the matters discussed on the book.

What we have here is a feast of popular Catholicism. We see a patent religious syncretism. People are devout and make promises to the intersection of the symbols of the feast that are carried by the crew: the flag, the pole, the crown all join together with the spirit’s sceptre. We can see that this is not a parochial celebration, or a devotion to the town’s patron (Saint Francis of Assisi). This is a festival for popular religion and, as such, it mixes aspects of African, Native Indian, and Catholic religiosity.

²³ *Forró* is a kind of musical style very popular in northeast Brazil.

It is not a closed festival, neither is it an official parish feast with its dogmas, rules and norms. This is not an institutional celebration. The first rite to be observed during the feast, as discussed in the book, are the three loops of the Batelão on the Guaporé River. Another ritual verified were the promises, as promissants will show their gratefulness for the graces conceded by God via the divine symbols. We can see promissants lighting candles, asking for their grace, and others thanking God for a conceded grace.

Using Bourdieu's terminology, we can see here an example of symbolic exchanges: the relationship is created between the divine and the promissant. Devout people will make a promise and receive God's grace. Then, he will thank the Saint for interceding with the divine symbols. I gathered many verbal reports and testimonies of people who reached their graces. They had health or financial problems usually, and they would promise something to God in exchange for deliverance. When they were contemplated, they would come back to receive the holy symbols and fulfil their promises.

This is what we call, based on Pierre Bourdieu, 'symbolic exchanges'. It is also interesting to notice the sense of symbolic exchanges between man and the Divine as a moment of great relevance for the construction of the festival. It is the right moment for the faithful who received a cure to thank and to please the saint for a miracle, and to serve as testimony to the powers of the Divine Holy Spirit, represented here as a dove. After this first moment when the crew does a half-moon with the batelão to greet promissants, the symbols disembark, and they are handed over to the main authorities of the feast, namely, the Emperor, the Empress, the pole captain, the flag lieutenant, and the butlers to the Divine. We see here another hierarchy among the core organizing group of the feast. It is also important to notice that this is organized by 15 brotherhoods. These are religious associations, 9 of which Brazilian, and 6 Bolivian. Any community in the Guaporé valley, in Rondônia or Bolívia, that wants to receive the festival in its community needs to have a church, a chapel, and a brotherhood. Many communities want the festival to come to them, but first they need to fulfil these requirements: to create their brotherhoods and build churches.

The catholic church, in a sense, wants to have some tutelage of the event, but the faithful and the quilombolas pay homage to symbols in their own way, escaping clerical rigour.

So these are the main figures of the festival: the Emperor, the Empress, the pole captain, the flag lieutenant, and the butlers. When the symbols leave the batelão, they are delivered to these figures. Since the festival is cyclical, going around the 15 brotherhoods, this 'committee' lose their reign in what I call a 'practical and symbolic reign'. Symbolic because it represents an outside authority, a notion of empire, and practical because people obey the solicitations of the main figures of the party, namely the Emperor and the Empress. It is the duty of the empress, when the empire is institutionalized, to appropriate from the Divine Sceptre. Only the empress can carry the sceptre around and bless people, who thank the sceptre and believe they will be safe from danger, and sickness.

The emperor takes the crown in procession to the church, and to the houses of the Divine Festival, crowning people who wish to receive grace, or want to exchange a promise band.

These bands are only exchanged by one person, and not by the man responsible for the crown. Just one person can look to the crown and clean it. We do not see its shape, we just know it is made of silver. Only this person is chosen in the community to take care of the crown and to exchange bands. All of these adornments in the crown are promise bands of people who had their request attended, or who want to make a request.

When the symbols reach a community, then it comes the time of festival. During this time we see various types of acts and devotional rites that are practices in front of the Divine's symbol. Here we see, for example, a man on his knees. People walk in procession and go on their knees to receive the magical touch of the crown, the sceptre, and also de Divine's pole. In this image we can see how many people pay homage to the symbols in a ritual that is very similar to the ones made for saints that are officially canonized by the Church of Rome.

People in churches go on their knees and pray for their preferred saint, so do people during the Divine Holy Spirit Festival in Guaporé. People give grace to the crown, the sceptre, the pole and the flag of the Divine. In that image to the right we see the luminous procession indicating the last day of feast, the highest point of the event.

I noticed a profound devotion on people. It is important to highlight that, during the luminous procession, people carry a mast made out of an açaí tree, that can only be cut down and painted by the mast captain. In this image, we can see that this came from a green açaí over 20 metres high and very heavy. People believe that to touch the mast and to take part in the procession will allow them to reach deliverance in many of their afflictions. So people go to the house of the captain, take the mast and leave in luminous procession passing by the houses of the faithful. The denomination luminous procession was given because, on the day before Pentecost, faithful from the festival will make a night procession carrying the heavy mast to the local church, with lit candles and fireworks. In this fashion, the lit candles and skyrockets illuminate the road for the procession, thus luminous procession.

Other devotional rites: the flag to the left with that quilombola gentleman over there. The flag is one of the main symbols of the feast, for it shows more clearly the figure of the dove, which the faithful believe to represent the Holy Spirit. People give grace to the flag, wrap themselves in the flag, make wishes and show devotion to the flag. They also pay homage to the sceptre, a small baton made of silver, adorned with promise bands also donated by promiscants, and in its tip there also figures the dove. Like the crown, the sceptre represents authority and can also be considered an hierarchical symbol, since the holy crown belongs mainly to the Empress of the feast to wear and to bless the other faithful.

Some people attribute miracles to the symbol and, as reverence, go down to their knees and kiss the symbol considered sacred. The symbol is wrapped in a small towel with the initials D.E.S., the Portuguese acronym for Divine Holy Spirit.

About the mast, this must be made by the mast captain. The crown – to go more in depth – is not only a religious symbol, but it is also a kind of safe. People want to make promises and pay in any way they can, so the centre of the crown has a 50 reals bill tied to it. This bill comes from some promise that was delivered, and thus went to pay for this exchange of symbolic goods, as said by Pierre Bourdieu.

This does not mean exploitation for the faithful, it is important to emphasize this. For the devotee this represents a matter of devotion and faith in the saint he believes. The crown, as I said, can only be cared for by one specific person. Inside the boat it is taken care of by the man responsible for the crown, and in the festive community it is taken care of by the Emperor. According to Martha Abreu, it is possible that wearing the crown is a cultural manifestation originated on the symbol of the temporal power of the Portuguese royalty for, as affirmed by the author, Queen Isabel left the palace in a procession. We have talked about the flag as one of the main symbols of the party, but it is also a symbol of hierarchy. As such, and just like the crown, it can only be carried by a specific person, namely the flag lieutenant. So there is a hierarchy inside the boat, there is a hierarchy during the Divine's procession, and we can see many hierarchies, relations of gender and politics.

When we talk about this feast should not be seen only from an aesthetics vantage point, but also as a reflection of the dynamics of society, with prejudices, relations of power etc. These images are important because we can see from the moment the mast is taken out of the forest, and is manufactured to the last day of the feast. For example, in this image here the mast captain has taken the mast out of the forest, brought it to the community, polished it, painted it in the colours of the feast, namely blue, white and red. Then the mast that, up to that point, was not a sacred symbol, turns to be so during the luminous procession. Then, it is taken in procession through the streets of the town and put in front of the church celebrating the event. After this mast is landed and placed in front of the church, it becomes a holy cross, for people start to light candles and give grace to it, praying.

It is a moment of great faith. Speaking of which, we also have a very particular moment when the symbols visit each house indicated by the Divine's butlers. Chosen are particularly those who are ill. This image calls attention, for the person depicted here is very debilitated, and she asked for the presence of the symbols so as to give grace to the Divine, believing in a recovery. During the feast we can see that the symbols run through the entire community, and that the procession also has a hierarchy.

The flag guides the procession with the sceptre and the crown by its side. After going through the community, the revellers ask for permission to enter a faithful's house. In this moment, the symbols are received in the holy domestic altar. As there are altars in church where the celebrations take place, there is, in a faithful's house a domestic altar to receive the symbols of the event, in an event similar to the ones held for canonized saints. It is then that families meet, when they are entering and exiting different houses. It is the time to visit with distant relatives who came for the party, a moment for conversation, a

moment for drinking chicha – a traditionally native fermented beverage made out of corn – it is an informal moment. So there is this informal moment of receiving symbols in the domestic altars with lit candles, towels etc.

Just one last comment. The Divine Festival is made through donations. These slides were product from the Divine Festival in 2014. 16 big animals (not counting pigs and chickens) were slaughtered so as to have enough food for tourists, curious people, faithful, participants etc... so this is a feast of plenty, and nothing can be sold. Everything is donated, and if it's donated people won't sell it. Coming from the literature I used, we see that this plenty has a meaning for the party, for in a poor man's table there is a sense of community. During my research it was evident that, for the faithful in the community, the act of offering a meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner), is a moment of joy and satisfaction. Also it sometimes means paying for an achieved deliverance by the Divine. To finish here we have the brotherhoods, religious associations that organize the feast. This here is a meeting of the General Council of the Brotherhoods. These meetings are quite tense, there are conflicts and negotiations. But these conflicts do not hamper the Festival, because these are supposed to assess possible flaws during the event. While the religious manifestations are taking place, they are meeting. The representative members of the general directorate take part in the General Council that gathers annually to discuss problems in the feast and solve them. Each brotherhood has a flag, and this is the limit for what each represents inside the council. During the party there is also a novena, the Novena for the Divine, and is exclusively masculine. Men pray and chant repeatedly. And the mass – after the novena there is a mass – means that in this party the church has a place, but it is not the main actor. The feast also contains a dance, the forró where the members of the pilgrimage are barred from participating as a statutory norm in the brotherhoods. Anyway, I thank you all for you patience, and I hope to have contributed to the event. Thank you professor José, from my heart, and to all participants. I hope we meet again, and I am available for anything you need. Thank you!

José Medeiros da Silva: Willians, thank you! Thank you also to the teachers here present, and also to the mayor of Pureza (Neto Moura), and some of your municipal secretaries that were present here during the whole afternoon for this cycle of lectures and reflexions. We are in a moment of signalling what is next, and I think this sets the tone.