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APPROACHES AND PATHS: ROSA AND LINA'S POETICS

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Abstract: The article originates from a concern about the creative process, portraying a theoretical and practical reflection. This article takes as its theme the work of two modern intellectuals who worked in different professional fields and aims to investigate the construction of interdisciplinary connections between architecture and other areas. This way, it touches on themes from literature, history, geography, philosophy and sociology. The focus of the analysis are two exemplary works: the novel: ``Grande Sertão Veredas`` (João Guimarães Rosa, 1956) and the ``Igreja do Espírito Santo do Cerrado`` in Minas Gerais (Lina Bo Bardi with collaboration of André Vainer and Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz, 1976). The first will be mediated by re-reading the texts of “Grande sertão.br”: romance of formation in Brazil” (BOLLE, 2004) and “O super-realismo de Guimarães Rosa” (CANDIDO, 2006). The second will be based on rereadings of Lina Bo Bardi’s texts published in the first five editions of Habitat magazine (1950-1951) and on her thesis “Propedeutic Contribution to the Teaching of Architecture Theory” (Bardi, 1957). The research that has been carried out aims to build a comparative methodological analysis, outlined from the tripod: Lina, Rosa and the issue of the “vernacular” in modern art and architecture.

Keywords: Architecture, Vernacular, Lina, Rosa, Veredas.

Although these two works, located one in Uberlândia and the other in the center-west of the countryside of Minas Gerais, adopt apparently different means of expression and methodological strategies, it is understood, or postulated, that both are related, each in its own way, with the traditional culture of the population of that region and show a genuine desire to value the cultural cradle of the Minas Gerais countryside. In order to overcome

the temporal difference in the realization of the analyzed works, the proposed research is based on the rereading of the first five editions of the magazine Habitat (1950-1951) and on the thesis “Propedeutic Contribution of Teaching the Theory of Architecture” (1957), both contemporary with Rosa’s work (1956). In Habitat, through texts, images and even layout, Lina also valued Brazilian popular culture. This aspect is fundamental to understand her work, late, from Uberlândia.

ROSE AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

João Guimarães Rosa, author of the book “Grande Sertão Veredas”, was a short story writer, novelist, diplomat and, for a short period, a doctor. Born in Cordisburgo (MG) in June 1908, Rosa remained an active professional for a period of ten years in the interior of Minas Gerais, returning to the region only years later.

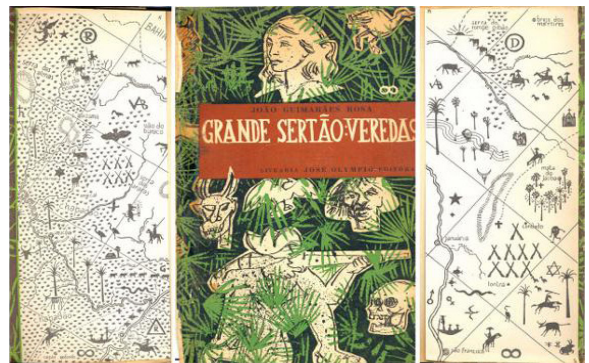


Figure 1: Cover of the 1st edition of ``Grande Sertão Veredas`` and cover of other editions, designed by Poty. Source: IEB USP – João Guimarães Rosa Fund. (“The illuminated space in the turning time (Grande sertão Veredas)”. Apud: MONTEIRO, 2006).

His biographers claim that the idea for the creation of the plot of the work “Grande Sertão Veredas” arose in 1952, based on the experience of having participated in a delegation led by the cowboy Manuelzão, leading a herd between the region of Sirga,

in the then village of Barreiro Grande (today the city of Três Marias) and Fazenda São Francisco, in Araçáí, former district of Sete Lagoas.

On the ten-day trip, which took place in May 1952, riding on the mule Balalaica, Rosa asked the cowboys who were his companions about everything. She wrote down the answers in notebooks, a kind of “travel diary”. (SALES, 2012, p. 5).

From these sources, the work incorporates an ambitious attitude, as it reintegrates the refractory wisdom of the countryside to the human struggle, in addition to activating its transcendent character, when comparing the countryside with the human essence. From this epic and also considered a metaphysical allegory (LOURENÇO, 1997), Rosa unravels the countryside in the same intensity that he investigates the depth of the human soul, standing out for the experimentation and recreation of the language used.

However, what fascinates is the humility composed in the analyzed work, allowing itself to observe its object, its source of study, the countryside, in a way that is as close and sensitive as it is distant - in the universal gaze - enjoying the ambiguity present in the work. Issue of the vernacular, here also understood as meaning the language in which it is spoken, in an innovative way, this being one of the aspects to be addressed in the article.

Guimarães Rosa descends into the basement of Brazil as a language, discovers, and not by chance, those Minas without which Brazil as it came to exist would never have become a nation - that nation -, and, in this descent, he crosses the layers of speech, the times of a language that reinvents itself - or endlessly recreates - to tell the story of an apparently dead past - and which is simply the Portuguese language without a subject and with all subjects. (LOURENÇO, 1997, p.24)

LINA AND THE CLOSED

The work: “Igreja do Espírito Santo do Cerrado”, in Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, by Lina Bo Bardi, was designed between 1976 and 1981. Ahillina Giuseppina Bo (1914-1992, Rome, Italy; São Paulo, Brazil) was an architect, designer, scenographer, editor and illustrator. The beginning of her training took place at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Rome, in 1940. Her coming to Brazil, which she affectionately referred to as “my homeland of choice”, took place with her husband Pietro Maria Bardi (1900-1999), in 1946. He settled, first in Rio de Janeiro, then in the capital of São Paulo and later in the capital of Bahia, having finally returned to São Paulo.

When we are born, we don't choose anything, we are born by chance. I wasn't born here, I chose this place to live. That's why Brazil is my country twice, it's my 'Choice Country', and I feel like a citizen of all the cities, from Cariri, to the Triângulo Mineiro, to the cities of the Interior and those on the Border. (BARDI, Lina Bo. Literary Curriculum, 1993, p. 12.)

The invitation to build a chapel to meet the demand of the local community was made by the orders of the Franciscans and the Barefoot Carmelites, and came through their friend and artist Edmar de Almeida and by Friars Fulvio Sabia and Egydio Parisi, after her visit to Uberlândia (MG) in 1975. Upon becoming aware of the construction method, aiming at the proposal in a joint effort composed of the Jaraguá neighborhood community, known in Uberlândia for being a peripheral neighborhood, the architect accepted the invitation. (MIRANDA, 2014)



Figure 2: Photograph from 1978 illustrates Lina Bo Bardi and Frey Egydio with the group of collaborators for the work: “Igreja Espírito Santo do Cerrado”. Source: ILBPMB collection. In: *An Idea of Architecture - The Writings of Lina Bo Bardi*. GRINOVER, 2017, p.17.

It is observed in Lina’s choice, an opportunity to apply in practice all her technical knowledge, mainly those aimed at valuing popular culture, together with her political values, very exposed in her writings, such as “The Propedeutic Contribution to Teaching the Theory of Architecture”, carried out in 1957. “The study of technique, combined with vernacular knowledge (a recurring theme in his career, being possible to use simple materials from the place); and the possibility of a “joint work”, where collectivity meant removing the population from a state of permanent passivity, replacing, through the big group event, the political and cultural awareness of the population.” (MIRANDA, 2014). In which, according to Lina herself, she reports her experience:

“The church was built by children, women, parents, in the middle of the savannah. Built with very poor materials, things received as gifts, in alms. It’s all given. But not in the paternalistic sense, but with cunning, how things can be achieved with very simple

means. (FERRAZ, Marcelo Carvalho; LATORRACA, Giancarlo (Orgs).” *Igreja do Espírito Santo do Cerrado*”, 1999. p. 31)

This experience emphasizes the architect’s position and mentality in a context of subordination and inferiority of the rural population of Minas Gerais in relation to the rest of the state at the time. (SILVA, 2015). This nation is delimited by a vision which Bardi called pseudoculture (1958. In: RUBINO; GRINOVER, 2009, p.87), which reflected a Western culture characterized by a decontextualization of the local reality, this denomination being the result of consumption. Silva (2014) states that Bardi:

“he considered that a true cultural appropriation of identity would be possible precisely by the excluded popular mass, who, due to their need for survival, think of new and original solutions. And he adds that this is consistent with modern thinking, which breaks with and overcomes [pseudo] Europeanized academicism.” (SILVA, 2014, p.40).

In order to carry out this article, a previous reading was carried out of the book “Contribuição Propedêutica ao Ensino” of Theory of Architecture, a thesis presented to the Course of the Chair of Architecture Theory at “Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo” in 1957 by Bardi herself. From this source, there was a systematization of the knowledge and learning provided by the architect, which she constantly referenced during her work. It is noted that in the same period, there is the publication of the work: “Grande Sertão Veredas”, by Guimarães Rosa, which alludes in a literary way, precepts and convictions that Lina mentions and defends during her thesis.

“This character of real and utilitarian tangible existence is the true character of architecture, the only one that can include, in its concept, the government palace, the popular house, the popular house, the school, as well as the design of a bed

or from a plate; the only one that justifies the humble, almost eclectic attitude of the architect today.” (BARDI, 1957, p.43)

Lina is faced with a search in Brazil for an understanding of the roots of Brazilian culture, demonstrating and highlighting the beauty contained therein. This way, she becomes an important piece in the construction of Brazilian identity, just like Guimarães Rosa.

THE VERNACULAR LOOP

From these first approximations, the article aims to investigate the similarities between these works, verifying possible affinities and common principles, which seem to be linked to the appreciation of vernacular culture, considering two aspects: both in its approach, during the intellectual work, and in its result, fruit of this intellectual synthesis facing reality. The approximations between Rosa and Lina will be discussed here from the perspective of the vernacular¹.

This word originates from the vernacular term, which comes from the Latin term *vernaculus*, which refers to the meaning of appropriation, defined in the dictionary itself as “Proper of the country or nation to which it belongs.” Vernacular optics applies both in the linguistic and architectural field. From a linguistic perspective, the reinsertion of backcountry culture is brought to the erudite environment through the vernacular language under which the novel: “Grande Sertão”: Veredas is presented. Rosa disseminates local dialects and creates neologisms that reiterate her inventiveness and potential. From an architectural perspective, vernacular architecture can be considered as a hybrid result in which techniques already employed by certain cultures, when remodeled and reinvented, are enhanced and disseminated, improving not only the transformed environment, with other similar environments,

1 This presented approach consists of one of the three perspectives analyzed in the complete scientific initiation. Two other aspects studied would be the perspectives of speech and drawing.

as claimed by Rubenilson Texeira (2017):

“The ‘architects’ of vernacular architecture are not concerned with adding ‘words’ to be incorporated into the existing architectural ‘vocabulary’, at least not consciously. Despite this, they often arrive at interesting results, which proves that “beautiful” does not necessarily arise from the “new”. (TEXEIRA, 2017)

Based on Frampton’s precept, in his 1983 text entitled “Perspectives for a critical regionalism”, discussions about the tension between the modern and the popular are reiterated.

“This is where the paradox arises: on the one hand, the nation has to plant roots in its past, forge a national spirit for itself and unfurl this cultural and spiritual claim before the colonialist entity. But, in order to be part of modern civilization, it is necessary to participate simultaneously in scientific, technical and political rationality, which often requires the pure and simple abandonment of an entire cultural past.” (FRAMPTON apud NESBITT, 1995, p.505)

This quest for recognition of an identity linked to local roots is influenced by foreign thinking, whether in terms of culture or civilization. Whose process of reciprocal fertilization and impure reinterpretation, named by Frampton himself, would occur through the contamination of both parties.

In the case of Rosa, her approach to the construction of the novel: “O Grande Sertão Veredas” begins with her journey in May 1952, towards the countryside of Minas Gerais and Bahia. He accompanies a herd of cattle, whose same route is reported by the writer in his travel notebooks, which provides a frank knowledge of the daily life of the analyzed object, the Brazilian countryside. (GAMA, 2013)

“You know my notebooks, don’t you? When I go out riding a horse, through my Minas

Gerais, I take notes of things. The notebook is impregnated with ox blood, horse sweat, bruised pages. Each bird that flies, each species, has a different flight. I want to find out what characterizes the flight of each bird, at each moment. There is nothing like it in this world. I do not want a word, but a thing, movement, flight.” (BLOCH, 1989, p.100)²

In this report to Pedro Bloch (1989) during an interview³, Rosa exposes her registration process, whose data collection takes place “in loco”, with the agents in the scenario. Based on this dimension, his interest in simple and banal attitudes, often seen by the author as “details”-cowboys’ habits, proverbs, colloquial expressions typical of the region-collaborate for the veracity of Rosa’s narratives.

Its inventiveness lies in the fact that it reinterprets the countryside music without subjugating or stigmatizing it, but facing all its complexity. This adopts the contrast that resides in the analysis of the lexicon of the title itself, the “Grande Sertão” that resumes the “grandiloquence of the owners of power, always at the top” in opposition to the shallowness of the paths, where resides “the humble speech of the people”, according to analysis by BOLLE (2002).

“With the wide incorporation of popular language in his work, Guimarães Rosa considers the countryside musicians not as “objects” of research, but as subjects of invention, that is, as narrators of their own stories, which he began to collect and integrate into in his stories and in his novel. In this perspective, the story of the demon-possessed farmer Riobaldo is just one more among many other stories, in a polyphonic historiography, outlined in “Grande Sertão Veredas”, which also contains the model of a rewriting of the history of Brazil.” (BOLLE, 2002, p.364)

It is also verified that in both artists there is a strong presence of a regional character that

2 BLOCH, Pedro. Pedro Bloch Interview. Rio de Janeiro: Bloch, 1989, p. 100. Originally published in the journal *Manchete*, in 15 Jun. 1963.

at the same time becomes universal, according to Frampton’s second criterion. In the case of Guimarães Rosa, the work: “Grande Sertão Veredas” itself is proof of this fact, as reported by Antônio Candido (2006) below:

“With regard to Guimarães Rosa’s very personal manner, I spoke a long time ago of ‘super-realism’, because he elaborates the regional through an experimentalism that brings him closer to the project of the avant-garde. There is no ornamental picturesqueness, no imitative realism, no social conscience and, above all, the thematic dimension is less important than the linguistic dimension, which seems to create another reality, because the word gains a kind of transcendence, as if it were worth in itself. same. That is to say, he not only suggests reality in a way that is far from realistic, but also elaborates autonomous verbal structures. In it, the word is creative by itself and transcends the narrated matter. That is why “Grande Sertão Veredas” transforms the particularity of the region into a limitless universe, which expresses not only the countryside, but the ‘human man’, to use Riobaldo’s words.” (CANDIDO, 2006)

Regarding Lina, her frank approach with the community of Jaraguá is evidenced in several reports during the execution of the work on the “Igreja do Espírito Santo do Cerrado”. Like Rosa, Lina does not idealize the subjects in question, but reinterprets them based on their everyday and private experiences. In this project, the criteria that Frampton highlights, such as awareness of the place and tectonics, for the efficiency of appropriating architecture, are touched upon in the active presence at the construction site.

“It is noted that the construction process was the main point of contact between the architect and the construction team, as a process open to local execution considerations, which was a decisive factor for the autonomy demonstrated by the

workers associated with the workers' fidelity to the original conception." (LAZZARIN, 2015, p.75)

His reinterpretation of that experience highlights "a spatial synthesis of the Brazilian redemocratization process", in the words of Lazzarin (2015). As Luís Antônio Jorge (2012) himself puts it below, the fine line between both intellectuals occurs mainly in the methodological field, in their approaches to the challenge of conformation and reiteration of a hitherto marginal identity, such as the backwoodsman.

"The way in which the architect Lina Bo Bardi approached popular knowledge was very similar to Rosa's creative approach: an internal link, a dialogue held at the level of the invention of language and not its idealization, typical of those who hold the authority of a knowledge refractory to the experience of others. Like Rosa, Lina perceived, in contact with the richness of popular culture, an invitation to another architecture (not the current type) where inventiveness was widely contemplated in order to nourish modern culture with popular knowledge. A frankly affective architecture, radically simple and humbly committed to our true needs." (JORGE, 2012)

From these considerations, we understand that the possibility of understanding both objects of study as results of these possible syntheses, or ways of understanding the

world, is unveiled. Positions often considered utopian, which serve as inspiration for future experiments of possible "Brazils" to come. For both accept the Brazilian reality, each in its own moment, and enjoy the potential they face, each intervening according to its own critical and creative process.

This work only proposes a first approximation between authors and themes, considering the definition of vernacular architecture defended by Rubenilson Texeira (2017):

"a traditional architecture, resulting from the historical development of a certain people. It dispenses with both the architect and the project, in its contemporary conception. It does not fit into the stylistic classifications of conventional architecture. It originates or is more frequent in rural areas. It respects and adapts well to different technological and physical-environmental limitations. Technology is autochthonous, primitive, rudimentary when compared to formal technology. It allows variations at the language level, but not at the word level. Vernacular architecture is fundamentally the expression of a people, and therefore a cultural act." (TEXEIRA, 2017)

In seeking to contribute to the discussion of the issue of the vernacular, the article only initiates the debate, understanding that it is possible to deepen new studies that move in this direction.

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