

15. (Self-)Interpreting the Formation of Brazil(ians)

Some of the aspects I have stressed in my discussion of José Maurício Domingues' texts - especially regarding the proposition of a "new history of Brazil" and the related claim that the formative process of the country has already achieved a fully modern condition, despite all the problems and considering all the specificities of its insertion into "global modern civilization" - are also tackled in many texts written by Jessé Souza. What interests me here in particular is the way Jessé builds his interpretation of the formation of contemporary Brazil from a detailed discussion of many of the interpreters of Brazil I have dealt with previously in this text.

Anticipating things a little bit, it is possible to say that Jessé agrees with José Maurício that Brazil has achieved a modern condition in its formative process. The crucial difference stems not only from how both conceive "modernity", but mainly from the fact that, while José Maurício does not seem to ascribe much importance to the study of most of those interpreters of Brazil such as Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Gilberto Freyre, and others, Jessé articulates his interpretation of Brazil exactly from the opposite direction (with a special place ascribed to Gilberto Freyre).⁶⁴⁰ I will discuss the implications of that articulation below.

Jessé Souza points out that both Karl Marx and Max Weber have been most often mobilized by interpreters of Brazil in order to identify the backwardness of the country in relation to the "West" and the "Protestant ethic" (see Souza, 1999, pp.17-8).⁶⁴¹ In his view, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, for instance, mobilizes a

⁶⁴⁰ In the second text from Jessé that I will approach here (Souza, 2003), other Brazilian texts are also given a special place, such as Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco's *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata (Free Men under Slavery Order)*, Luiz Werneck Vianna's *Liberalism e Sindicato no Brasil (Liberalism and Trade Union in Brazil)* and Florestan Fernandes' *Integração do Negro na Sociedade de Classes (Integration of the Black into the Class Society)* and *A Revolução Burguesa no Brasil (The Bourgeois Revolution in Brazil)*.

⁶⁴¹ The reader may recall some instances in which I have pointed out Max Weber's impact on "interpreters of Brazil" (see, for example, note 528). The play of mobilizations here is complex enough to deserve a clarification. Jessé discusses the appropriation of Max Weber's texts by interpreters of Brazil, in order, first, to stress the implications of the "ideology of backwardness [*ideologia do atraso*]" and, second, to propose a different reading of Max Weber's texts, highlighting their ambiguous position in relation to the "Western experience" (oscillating between seeing it as a superior moral experience and taking it as just a different, of equal value, experience of rationalism). My purpose, in turn, is to deal with Jessé Souza's interpretation of Brazil focusing on how he builds it from his discussion of some "interpreters of Brazil", and not to challenge his interpretation of those interpretes or of Max Weber's texts themselves.

comparison between the "Protestant" and the "cordial man", arguing that the latter, although formerly possessing certain qualities in the first centuries of Brazilian formation, represents at his time an obstacle to the creation of a fully modern nation: "[t]o the construction of modernity in Brazil, Iberian heritage becomes a synonym for backwardness and anachronism as opposed to the Nordic Protestant heritage" (Souza, 1999, pp.35-6). As a consequence, in Sérgio Buarque's *Roots of Brazil*, there is no "conscience of the constitutive ambiguity of the Protestant heritage" (Souza, 1999, p.36, italics dropped from the original).⁶⁴² Gilberto Freyre, in turn, is given a special place in Jessé's interpretation of Brazil, but I will get back to that later.

In general terms, Jessé Souza claims that "our social thought" has assumed that "our relative or absolute democratic incapacity" stems from the "absence" of certain characteristics that have supposedly been consolidated in "Protestant" countries (see Souza, 1999, pp.46-7). It is important to be precise here. What is at stake is neither the rejection of a certain "backward" condition ascribed to Brazil nor the generalization of this condition to every part of the world. Instead, the first thing to be grasped from Jessé's text is the effort to "qualify our backwardness, to make it relative, determined", without taking for granted some "exemplary and absolute societal models" (Souza, 1999, p.53, p.52).

These initial comments on Jessé's text serve me as an introduction to deal in more detail with two other texts: *A Modernização Seletiva: Uma Reinterpretação do Dilema Brasileiro* (*The Selective Modernization: A Reinterpretation of Brazilian Dilemma*) and *A Construção Social da Subcidadania: Para uma Sociologia Política da Modernidade Periférica* (*The Social Construction of Undercitizenship: Towards a Political Sociology of Peripheral Modernity*). The titles are significant in themselves. The notions of "selective modernization" and of "undercitizenship", linked respectively to "Brazilian dilemma" and to "peripheral modernity", carry an implicit reference to other processes of "modernization" and to a "normal"

⁶⁴² If Sérgio Buarque represents a "culturalist" appropriation of Max Weber, Raymundo Faoro is one of the examples Jessé gives of an "institutional" analysis: the Iberian heritage would be the major element of "state capitalism" in Brazil as opposed to "industrial capitalism" as Max Weber narrates (see Souza, 1999, pp.38-9; these examples are brought again in Souza, 2000a, especially pp.13-5 and ch.7). The point is that, from a reinterpretation of Max Weber, Jessé aims at emphasizing that "the multifaceted, tensional and ambiguous character of his work enables us to have a glimpse on alternative ways to the tackle the theme of the backwardness/modern pole itself" (Souza, 1999, p.43; see also Souza, 2000a, especially ch.1).

"citizenship" in "central modernities". I will discuss below, then, how that operates in Jessé's texts.⁶⁴³

The very first paragraph of the first text mentioned above is very clear on what is at stake:

The central theme of this book is the discussion of the assumptions of that which I take as the dominant interpretation Brazilians have of themselves, both in the dimension of the methodic reflection and in their manifestations of our social practice. This self-interpretation will be denominated, for our purposes, our 'sociology of inauthenticity', in which the idea of a modernized Brazil 'for the English to see' [*para inglês ver*], a superficial, epidermal and 'façade' [*de fachada*] modernity, gains leverage (Souza, 2000a, p.11).

To begin with, I would like to make two main remarks. Firstly, one of the great contributions Jessé provides is the attention he brings to the experiences that go beyond the so-called "intellectual environment" or "experience". His interpretation of Brazil is also concerned with the "social practices" that permeate Brazilians' "self-interpretations", with the daily practices of society and politics in and about Brazil(ians). I will get back to that later. For the moment, I want to focus on the second remark: the passage above is significant also for the problematization of the counterpoint established between an "inauthentic" ("epidermal", "superficial", "for-the-English-to-see") modernity and an "authentic" one. My take on Jessé's interpretation of the assumptions of that "sociology of inauthenticity" is concerned with assumptions governing Jessé's interpretation itself, especially his notion of "selective modernization".⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ The complementary relation between this text and the previous one is articulated by Jessé in the following way: while the first one is dedicated to the study of the assumptions of what he calls "sociology of inauthenticity", the second is concerned with the proposition of an alternative hypothesis to that tradition of thought (see Souza, 2003a, p.15).

⁶⁴⁴ The first part of his text is dedicated to some texts by Max Weber, Norbert Elias, Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor, from which Jessé builds his conceptual framework (see Souza, 2000a, chs.1-4); in the second part, he deals with three cases: the United States (ch.5), Germany (ch.6) and Brazil (chs.7-8). My focus here is on the last two chapters, and I will refer to the other chapters only insofar as they provide indications of Jessé's overall frame.

The first thing to note is Jessé Souza's general assumptions in this text. One of them, already mentioned, is that ideas, on the one hand, and social and institutional practices, on the other hand, are intertwined. The other is that most of our actions derive from habits and from stimulus localized somewhere between consciousness and unconsciousness. This means that a methodical effort must be carried forward in order to bring to the fore the ideas and motives governing our actions, as well as the "scientific practice"; this is ultimately a process of consciousness-acquisition without which "free choice and rational conduct" do not exist (see Souza, 2000a, p.12).⁶⁴⁵ To Jessé, Brazilian "sociology of inauthenticity" does not reflect upon its assumptions and end up "appropriation, in the sphere of science, objective illusions of the common sense" (Souza, 2000a, p.12).⁶⁴⁶ That said, Jessé has a specific target: the common-sense illusions and their internalization by that kind of sociology.

Jessé highlights that three specific concepts have been articulated as the outcome of the internalization of common-sense illusions: Iberian heritage, personalism and patrimonialism. Together (and in varied combinations), they obliterate the "discontinuity and radical novelty" in the formative process of the beginning of the XIX century in Brazil, overestimating, at the same time, the continuity of the Portuguese colonial traits.⁶⁴⁷ In addition to that, Jessé is concerned with showing that "Western development" - "capitalist and democratic" - cannot be taken as an exemplary model according to which other experiences have to be scaled or even included or excluded; instead, it is necessary to "emphasize the historical variety and multiplicity through which that development took place in each particular case" (Souza, 2000a, p.14). In this same vein, he also warns that no national development gathers all the fundamental virtues generally ascribed to the so-called "Western culture". Hence, in his view, rather than an "intrinsically

⁶⁴⁵ As he puts later, there are two possible attitudes before the role of ideas: "we can keep them unthought-of and unconscious... or we can face the difficult challenge of making them thought-of and conscious, in a way to perceive their influence upon our life" (Souza, 2000a, p.160).

⁶⁴⁶ Later, he reiterates this point, by saying that that sociology "becomes easily captured by common sense prejudices and tends to gain its persuasive force from precisely a more or less talented systematization of beliefs and assumptions not adequately reflected upon" (Souza, 2000a, p.206). In the text I will deal with next, this conception is reiterated: the convincing force of "essentialist theories of culture" - according to which "modernity" has been modulated in "peripheral" societies by previous, "pre-modern" forces - is said to come from the fact that they internalize and correspond to the "unarticulated perceptions of common sense prejudices" (see Souza, 2003, pp.95-6).

⁶⁴⁷ Sérgio Buarque's *Roots of Brazil* is mentioned as the foundation or at least the most influential text of the sociology of inauthenticity (see Souza, 2000a, p.13).

personalized and pre-modern society, as our sociology of inauthenticity defends", Brazil is indeed "a peculiar variant of this [Western] logic of development", despite being a variant with a "high degree of comparative selectivity" (Souza, 2000a, p.42). In short, selectivity, that is, "the partial accomplishment of aspects that we usually associate with the singularity of Western culture" (Souza, 2000a, p.127), is something shared, in different degrees, by "all concrete forms of development observable in Western history" (Souza, 2000a, p.127).

In order to define the precise terms of this selectivity, Jessé's text proposes a series of identifications and differentiations among modernizing formative processes - as I have said, the qualification of modernization as "selective", referred to in the very title of the text, implies the mobilization of comparative parameters. For instance, referring to the "re-Europeanization" that has occurred in Brazil since the XIX century, Jessé claims that "[h]ere, as opposed to Europe, it did not take place the movement - common to all the European nations irrespective of their specific differences - of equalization among classes within each national horizon" (Souza, 2000a, p.56). The absence of slavery in Europe enables, according to him, this equality among classes achieved through the modernizing process; in Brazil, to the contrary, modernization has left behind "an entire class, that of slaves, which since then has never recuperated any productive function in the new order". (Souza, 2000a, p.56). The major outcome of this process is the creation of a class of "urban and rural pariahs", composed of people that are considered by society as a whole (including above all the victims themselves) to worth less than the others; thereby, "[i]n such a context, citizenship does not exist in an objective way, but only under and overcitizens [*sub e supercidadãos*]" (Souza, 2000a, p.57; 2001, p.65), which is basically a relation that perpetuates internal inequality.

Jessé devotes two chapters (five and six) to a brief study of two concrete formative processes, in the United States and in Germany. Very schematically, in relation to the United States he says that it represents an unparalleled example of a "unitary, despite also pluralist, culture", where a "universalist" normative culture has prevailed over a "particularist" one. This way, "the basic evaluative consensus that characterizes the universalist interpretation of the American normative culture has succeeded in penetrating all social classes and groups" (Souza, 2000a, p.138, italics dropped from the original). Regarding Germany, nowadays "an open, critical and liberal culture", Jessé claims that its form expresses a high degree of social

solidarity, while, in the United States, the major principles have been individual freedom and equality before the law (see Souza, 2000a, p.155).

According to Jessé Souza, the dominant and most influential interpretation of Brazil is focused on "a specificity that is non-European, in the classical sense of the term: the Iberian influence" (Souza, 2000a, p.160). This "pre-modern Europe" (Iberian and mainly Portuguese), considered to have been little or even unaffected by the main events of modernity (such as Enlightenment, Protestant Reform, French Revolution, industrial capitalism), is given an interpretative weight that becomes an uncontested assumption and an internalized common sense in the (self-)interpretations of Brazil(ians) - be them "scientific" or not. The identification of a "Brazilian singularity" is intrinsically tied to the assumption held by the "sociology of inauthenticity", according to which Iberian traits have an enduring or reminiscent inscription in the national formation.⁶⁴⁸ In his words: "the conception of Iberian Brazil is profoundly embedded not only in our bookish self-comprehension, but also in our institutions and social practices" (Souza, 2000a, pp.160-1); that sociology is ultimately a "unilateral, incomplete and biased form of perceiving our reality" (Souza, 2000a, pp.167-8).

The Iberian heritage marking the formative process of Brazil is most often identified in the "sociology of inauthenticity" as the major obstacle to the achievement of modernity. As the previous paragraph stresses, a differentiation within "Europe" is assumed, posing, on the one hand, a "pre-modern" (Iberian and, more precisely, Portuguese) part and, on the other hand, a fully-modern part. This modern/pre-modern divide is related to the notion that, in the Iberian part, society has been tamed and left underdeveloped by the state. To Jessé, this assumption is pervasive in that sociology and represents "the classical liberal belief according to which state action invariably entails the weakening of the vital forces of any society" (Souza, 2000a, p.180). But, through a comparative mobilization, Jessé warns that this assumption is wrong, since, with the exception of the United States,

⁶⁴⁸ Jessé Souza points out that, in many versions of that sociology, the state of São Paulo is considered an exception to the rule of Brazilian formative process: "[i]n a current that goes from Sérgio Buarque to Raymundo Faoro and from the latter to Simon [Schwartzman], we can recognize the development of the idea of a *Paulista* [São Paulo] exceptionalism and the defense of a 'Sãopaulinization' of Brazil as a kind of 'political program' of the theoreticians of patrimonialism" (Souza, 2000a, p.181; see also Souza, 2003a, pp.135-6). This alternative development expressed by the state of São Paulo is taken as a path to modernization that the rest of the country, supposedly attached to the Iberian heritage, has not been capable of putting forward.

"in all the other historical examples of capitalist development the state was and is a fundamental reality" (Souza, 2000a, pp.180-1);⁶⁴⁹ hence, the thesis of patrimonialism, which blames the presence of a strong state for the absence of a strong society, relies, according to Jessé, on the exceptional case of the United States, neglecting all the other historical formations. In short, Jessé's comparative mobilization operates with the goal of correcting the comparative mobilization implicitly or explicitly made by the "sociology of inauthenticity".

Yet, it is crucial to have in mind that the comparisons mobilized by Jessé do not lead to a frame separating modern countries from pre-modern countries. The notion of selectivity, as I have already mentioned, is seen as shared by all concrete national formative processes. In this regard, when he mentions the cases of Germany and of the United States, what is at stake is not a denial of some degree of selectivity in their modernization, but the scaling of different degrees across national experiences. It is worth mentioning moreover that, according to Jessé, the deficit of legitimacy of politics in relation to economy is a structural feature of modern countries. He states that point after raising an example of corruption in Germany and after pointing out the deteriorated image ascribed to politics (in the narrow sense of the term) by American citizens (see Souza, 2000a, pp.201-3; 2001, p-56-7).⁶⁵⁰ That said, Jessé Souza rejects the notion that corruption (institutional or personal) is a Brazilian idiosyncrasy; his effort is rather oriented towards the specificities of Brazilian formative process as a "Western" country. To put it differently, he wants to explain the social logic (or "deep social grammar") at stake from certain "global social rules and norms" (Souza, 2000a, p.204), in order to account for the degree of selectivity in Brazilian modernization. According to Jessé, the "sociology of inauthenticity" is marked by an "atavistic culturalism" linked to the assertion that Brazilian specificity is attached to the persistence of the Iberian heritage (more specifically, of the Portuguese heritage); with that, the argument goes, it becomes disconnected from actual social stratification and institutional dynamics (see Souza, 2000a, p.205-6). He claims, then, that these were in Brazil very different from their configuration in Portugal, which indicates "a

⁶⁴⁹ In another passage, "[the patrimonialist thesis] presupposes a demonization of the state action and a reconstruction of the exceptional American case as if it were a general rule of Western development" (Souza, 2000a, p.182).

⁶⁵⁰ For another instance of his comments on corruption, see Souza (2012a, pp.44-5).

singularity of its own to the kind of social *formation* that has developed here" (Souza, 2000a, p.206, italics added). The triad familism, personalism and patrimonialism, prevalent in (self-)interpretations of the formation of Brazil(ians), is thus challenged as a valid explanation of "our social backwardness and our (under)development" (Souza, 2000a, p.207).⁶⁵¹ To do so, Jessé proposes a reinterpretation of Gilberto Freyre, in particular of *Casa Grande & Senzala* (The Big House & the Slave Quarters, CGS) and *Sobrados e Mucambos* (The Mansion and the Shanties, SM).⁶⁵²

The special place ascribed to Gilberto does not mean that he, too, does not share some of the assumptions of the "sociology of inauthenticity". The crucial difference, however, is that Gilberto's texts also enable the escape from the above-mentioned atavistic culturalism. In this sense, the emphasis CGS puts on the specific configuration the Portuguese plastic contemporization acquired in Brazil during colonization calls the attention to the "Europeanization" process in the contact between colonizers and colonized (in particular slaves): "the sun of an African slave woman with the European master 'could' be accepted as 'Europeanized', that is, *there was this real possibility, however further actualized or not*" (Souza, 2000a, p.225, italics in the original).⁶⁵³ It is precisely this "Europeanization" the theme of SM, and that which places Gilberto in a special position in relation to those interpreters of the "sociology of inauthenticity".

In CGS, the centrality of the patriarchal family in Brazilian formative process implies a kind of social isolation and the absence of intermediary institutions. In this vein, Gilberto's use of "sodomasochism" as an interpretative key to society is further explored by Jessé, who sees in it a rupture with the idea of a long-term continuity of an Iberian heritage transplanted from Portugal: "[i]t is

⁶⁵¹ "Familism" means here the prevalence of family relationships precluding the formation of a modern, impersonal public space. The other two - personalism and patrimonialism - have been largely discussed previously in this text. Elsewhere, instead of "atavistic culturalism", Jessé employs the expression "essentialist culturalism" (Souza, 2003a, p.13; 2003b, p.51).

⁶⁵² As I will not challenge Jessé's interpretation here, let me refer to my interpretation of both texts on pages 99-121. The special place given to Gilberto Freyre is justified on the grounds that a selective reconstruction of his argument enables an alternative reading of the assumption of Brazilian cultural and social singularity (see Souza, 2000a, p.15; see also Souza, 2000b). As he puts in another text, Gilberto is "at once perhaps our most talented, innovative and instigating social thinker, on the one hand, and our greater ideologue and myth-producer, on the other hand", so that the purpose is to "*use Freyre against Freyre*" (Souza, 2003a, p.102, italics in the original).

⁶⁵³ An almost identical passage is found in Souza (2000b, p.80) and Souza (2003a, p.114).

precisely as a constitutively and structurally sadomasochist society... that Gilberto Freyre interprets the essential seed of Brazilian formation"; in such kind of society, "the other's pain, the non-recognition of alterity and the perversion of pleasure become the maximum goal of interpersonal relations" (Souza, 2000a, p.228).⁶⁵⁴ These sadomasochistic patterns of relations represented a hyper-valorization of the role of the patriarch, who would arbitrarily define the scope of his protection, the intimacy allowed to those individuals with whom he kept personal relations, and the degree of violence deployed in his personal(ized) relations. The complex big-houses-&-slave-quarters was opened to contemporarization and the upward mobility of mixed-race people - *mestiços* -, but this mobility did not mean an overturn of the patriarchal system, since those *mestiços* that socially ascended gradually identified themselves with the values and the interests of the oppressors (see Souza, 2000a, pp.230-4).

Now, Jessé stresses that in SM, his "sociological masterpiece", Gilberto is dedicated to the study of the decline of this rural patriarchal society and the emergence of the urban environment throughout the XIX century. This process is marked by multidimensional changes: political (a new form of the state), economic (an incipient capitalist market), and ideological and moral (new habits and patterns of behaviors). Ultimately, this period expresses the first time the rural patriarchalism faces "universalizing values" (see Souza, 2000a, p.234-5). The crucial point here is that, instead of interpreting SM as the narrative of an epidermal, inauthentic, superficial modernization, Jessé proposes to interpret it in a different way. On the one hand, "[i]n SM, Gilberto Freyre perceives the 're-Europeanization' of Brazil during the XIX century as a process that certainly had merely 'for-English-to-see' kind of imitative elements; typical elements, by the way, in every society in a process of transition" (Souza, 2000a, p.236). On the other hand, however, there were also "important elements of an actual assimilation and cultural learning. Even more important is the construction in this period of fundamental institutions, such as an incipient state and a (capitalist) market, on the basis of which new universalizing and individualist values could be developed on autonomous bases" (Souza, 2000a, p.236).

⁶⁵⁴ Sadism permeated the relationship of the Portuguese men with Indigenous and black women; of the masters with their wives; and also of the masters with their children (see Souza, 2000a, pp.230-1).

The outcome of this transitional process is not the replacement of the old oppressive system by a universal system; rather, if it is true that "[t]he social system becomes governed by an increasingly impersonal and abstract code of values", it is also true that oppression remains in place, now conducted less frequently by masters against slaves and more often "by bearers of European values - either effectively assimilated or simply imitated - against the poor, African and indigenous people" (Souza, 2000a, p.237). Over time, the modernization process carried further the consolidation of those fundamental institutions of "modernity", the (capitalist) market and the state, concomitantly with the process of urbanization.⁶⁵⁵

A new space prone to the upward social mobility of the *mestiços* was created with the diffusion of knowledge, so that a biologically mixed-race person could become a sociologically white person, that is, he could occupy the social position of a white person in the system (see Souza, 2000a, pp.243-4). In this sense, Jessé argues that "[t]he effort towards the assimilation of values and of Western technology is precisely the point according to which the racial and class differences have always been and still are relativized" (Souza, 2000a, p.247).⁶⁵⁶ In other words, the social possibility of becoming "white" has meant the capacity of a person to contribute to the modernizing process of the country, implying thus a differentiation between those capable of "becoming white" and those whose fate would be segregation. In Jessé's words, the "[re-]Europeanization Gilberto describes... is the actual modernizing and bourgeois revolution in Brazil. It is *at once the beginning of the modern Brazil and of the Brazilian misery*" (Souza, 2000a, p.250, italics in the original). That is to say, it enables the upward social mobility of wide social

⁶⁵⁵ By linking Brazilian modernization to the XIX century incipient formation of the state and the market, Jessé Souza is opposing himself to those interpreters of Brazil that emphasizes the immigration to the state of São Paulo as the fundamental modernizing event in Brazilian formative process. It is beyond the scope of my discussion to develop this point, but it is worth noting that, underlying this disagreement, is the controversy surrounding the importance of the state of Rio de Janeiro in relation to the state of São Paulo in the construction of "modern Brazil" (see Souza, 2000a, pp.253-4). According to Jessé, the industrial development of the state of São Paulo during the XX century should not lead to the conclusion that two systems of values relate to two different geographical regions within Brazil (see Souza, 2000a, p.254).

⁶⁵⁶ "Relativization" here is not a matter of denying racial prejudice, but to see it as "relative and dependent upon a scale of values that exists, so to speak, *behind color*, enabling the separation of colored-people worthy of social recognition from others unworthy of the same recognition" (Souza, 2005, p.65). What lies "behind color" is something "more fundamental and less visible": "what is behind colors, specially the black color, that makes it the 'indication' of something else, at once more fundamental and less visible, and that is manifest *behind color*?" (Souza, 2003b, p.59). I will get back to that below, dealing more closely with another text from Jessé, but I want to indicate that his use of concepts such as "selective modernization", "undercitizenship", "new periphery", is closely linked to his effort in answering this question.

groups, but it also leaves behind, abandons, an entire group that becomes "rural and urban pariahs" (see Souza, 2000a, pp.250-1). The fundamental criterion discriminating both groups is the possession of "individualist European values": it "will legitimate social domination of one layer upon the other; it will justify the privileges of one over the other; it will silence the conscience of injustice by rationalizing it; and it will allow the 'naturalization' of inequality as we perceive it and live it today" (Souza, 2000a, p.251). In short, since the modernizing revolution that took place in the XIX century, "Brazil has only *one prevailing code of values: the code of the Western moral individualism*" (Souza, 2000a, p.254, italics in the original).

The emphasis on the qualification of this individualism as "moral", as opposed to an "empirical" individualism, is crucial to Jessé's argument. It is this kind of individualism that he sees as the fundamental trait of all "the cultural achievements of Western modernity": capitalist competitive market, liberal democratic state, free press, rational scientific discussion, subjective rights doctrine and "any of the other gains or positive aspects that we may imagine in the transition from traditional to modern society" (Souza, 2000a, p.254). The prevalence of this "Western code of values" does not mean that Brazil is on equal foot in relation to "Western central countries" in terms of modernity, wealth and democracy; it means, instead, that personalistic values were superseded both in the private and in the public sphere, replaced by the modernizing discourse as "the only legitimate discourse capable of gathering wills" (Souza, 2000a, p.255). Elsewhere, he states that Brazil is marked by a "perverse singularity: a Westernization with inequality" (Souza, 2000b, p.98). It should be clear that Jessé is not arguing here that all social spheres have been equally modernized or that no other competing codes of value exist; rather, the point is that modernization has become the only legitimate code.

In this vein, the master/slave binary has ceased to be the central feature of society, giving place to new, impersonal binaries that rely on modern criteria, such as those opposing people considered "doctors" to "illiterate" people; or the opposition between skilled and unskilled workers; or the opposition between people living in bourgeois neighborhood and those living in *favelas* (see Souza, 2000a, p.260). All these binaries presuppose an impersonal logic of domination, instead of the personal logic prevalent until the beginning of the XIX century. Under these conditions, the upward social mobility of people from underprivileged layers of the

population is possible only on an individual basis, not as a collective mobility; moreover, in case they do not manage to ascend, it is considered an individual failure, since systemic inequality is naturalized up to the point of precluding any kind of collective articulation of dissatisfaction (see Souza, 2000a, p.261).

Jessé mobilizes, then, a comparative account, in order to contrast the case of Brazil, where modernization preserves elements of the slave society, with the case of "Western central countries, where a new source of self-esteem is transformed into a revolutionary political ferment" (Souza, 2000a, p.262). In Brazil, a major historical continuity coexists with a major discontinuity: the historical continuity refers to the scaling of values that guarantee upward mobility provided that the values of the oppressor are assimilated by the former oppressed; the discontinuity, in turn, refers to the modernizing revolution that, from then onwards, would inaugurate a new and long-term continuity (see Souza, 2000a, p.264). In this scenario, *selectivity* expresses both that continuity and that discontinuity:

[i]t has a five-century, secular bond... After all, it will still be only those subordinate people that adhere to the *values of the father* that will be awarded with advantages and favors. With modernization, the values are no doubt transformed from personal to impersonal values, in a movement that goes from the European traditional *father* represented by the Portuguese to the impersonal *father* of capitalism brought by European nations in the avant-garde of the process; but something of the initial logic remains in place (Souza, 2000a, p.266).

The play of continuity and discontinuity marks thus a certain reminiscence of an old logic in the new one. Intriguingly, modernity and non-modernity seem ultimately to coexist in contemporary Brazil. At least this is how I interpret Jessé's interpretation of Brazil, otherwise it would be hard to make sense of the following terms, placed almost at the end of his text:

Brazil is not a Western and modern country in the comparative sense of material affluence and of development of democratic institutions. But Brazil is certainly a modern country in the Western sense of the term if we take into account that the modern and Western values are the only ones

accepted as legitimate. These are the dominant values and that explains the fascination towards the theme of modernization among us (Souza, 2000a, p.267).⁶⁵⁷

I have pointed out to being with two major contributions provided by Jessé's *A Modernização Seletiva (The Selective Modernization)*: first, the discussion of the assumptions governing interpretations of Brazil within and beyond the intellectual environment, and, second, the proposition of the concept of "selective modernization". Well, the account on selectivity, in Jessé's interpretation, requires the assessment of the already-mentioned "deep social grammar", that is, the determination of "the hierarchy of values that governs the institutionalization of selective stimulus to the conduct of the individuals that compose it. This selectivity, in turn, requires the consideration of the variable of the relative power of groups and classes involved in the social struggle for ideological and material hegemony" (Souza, 2000a, p.191; see also Souza, 2001, p.51). The relation between social stratification, institutional practices and social values is built by "unintentional processes without subject, through which groups and classes identify themselves with values and are, at the same time, permeated and driven by these values in the social dynamics" (Souza, 2000a, p.192). Hence, Jessé's interpretation aims at unveiling that deep social grammar of Brazil, providing thus the means for the eradication of those illusions that keep Brazilians (intellectuals or not) away from reality. In this vein, the notion of selectivity performs a double role in his (re)interpretation. On the one hand, it challenges the "atavistic culturalism" and its corresponding pre-modern/modern and inauthentic/authentic divides. This way, "selective modernization" questions the assumptions of the interpretations of Brazil. On the other hand, this conceptual device operates as an enlightening mechanism that unveils common sense illusions and their internalization in intellectual systematizations.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ I call the attention for my use of "non-modern", instead of "pre-modern". I do think, however, that there is some room to interpret the reminiscence of this "old logic" as a reminiscence of what Jessé identifies as "pre-modernity" in Brazil. The coexistence of dominant with secondary values would also be, in this sense, the coexistence of the old, pre-modern, and the new, modern condition. In any case, I have chosen to keep his words: "Brazil is not a Western and modern country... But Brazil is certainly a modern country...".

⁶⁵⁸ Let me push this point a little further. Jessé positions himself as an interpreter of Brazil that discloses assumptions held by other interpretations, and identifies their unconscious and unthought-of internalization of common sense prejudices. That is to say, if it is indeed the case that, from Jessé's

Let me push this point a little further, since I will get back to that below. Jessé positions himself as an interpreter of Brazil that discloses assumptions held by other interpretations, and identifies their unconscious and unthought-of internalization of common sense prejudices. That is to say, if it is indeed the case that, from Jessé's own assumptions, there is an intimate connection between social and institutional practices, on the one hand, and ideas, on the other hand; it is also the case that his "idea" (or "concept") of "selective modernization" is used to raise Jessé above the (almost invariably unconscious) common sense prejudices and illusions and, mainly, above their (sometimes unconscious) internalization by intellectual interpretations of Brazil. To put it differently, placing himself as an intellectual (a conscious observer), Jessé seems to suspend for a moment that intimate connection, in order to develop a conceptual framework that will ultimately unveil the mechanisms - the deep social grammar - that feed the connection itself. This intellectual position will remain in operation in the next text I will approach.

I will move now to his text *A Construção Social da Subcidadania: Para uma Sociologia Política da Modernidade Periférica (The Social Construction of Undercitizenship: Towards a Political Sociology of Peripheral Modernity)*.⁶⁵⁹ I have already mentioned that the notions of "peripheral modernity" and "undercitizenship" will be crucial to his comparative accounts and ultimately to his interpretation of the formation of Brazil. I want to stress that, in addition to that, Jessé is suggesting that, through the study of the formative process of "peripheral" societies, aspects of the "central" societies can also be problematized. In this direction, practices of undercitizenship and marginalization in "peripheral societies" can foster a reinterpretation of "similar circumstances in central countries, even if the virulence of those phenomena is no doubt comparatively lower there in relation to peripheral societies" (Souza, 2003a, p.16).

own assumptions, there is an intimate connection between social and institutional practices, on the one hand, and ideas, on the other hand; it is also the case that his "idea" (or "concept") of "selective modernization" is used to raise Jessé above the (unconscious) common sense prejudices and illusions and, mainly, above their (unconscious) internalization by intellectual interpretations of Brazil. To put it differently, placing himself as an intellectual (conscious observer?), Jessé seems to suspend for a moment (unconsciously?) that intimate connection, in order to develop a conceptual framework that will ultimately unveil the mechanisms - the deep social grammar - that feed the connection itself.

⁶⁵⁹ In the first part of the text, Jessé builds his interpretative framework from Charles Taylor and Pierre Bourdieu; in the second part, he deals with "peripheral modernity"; and, in the third, with the notion of "undercitizenship".

This text reiterates that the "dominant paradigm" of "Brazilian sociology" during the XX century diffused the notion of a persistent "pre-modern society", in which "personalism", "familism" and "patrimonialism" precluded the formation of a democratic and competitive order, reinforcing the "sovereign of the past over the present" (see Souza, 2003a, p.13; 2004, pp.79-80). Once more, Jessé is concerned with the reproduction, in the conceptual sphere, of "*ad hoc* prejudices, pre-notions and explanations that are impinged on us by the pragmatic imperatives of daily life and common sense" (Souza, 2003a, p.14). To replace that position, he reiterates that social inequality in peripheral societies is not naturalized due to "a supposed pre-modern and personalistic heritage"; to the contrary, it stems from "an effective process of modernization in great proportions that has gradually taken over the country since the beginning of the XIX century", which implies after all that "our inequality and its generalization in daily life *is modern*, since it is tied to the efficacy of modern values and institutions relying on their well-succeeded 'outside in' importation" (Souza, 2003a, p.17, italics added; see also Souza, 2004, p.80). In short, Brazil has been witnessing *modern inequalities*.

By saying that Brazil - and "periphery" as a whole - has modern inequalities, Jessé is also proposing a reinterpretation of those inequalities witnessed in "central" societies. According to him, despite the "huge advance of welfare societies in the overcoming of the more virulent social conflicts, I am not convinced that their levels of effective equality are the desirable ones" (Souza, 2003a, p.78). Hence, by considering both "central" and "peripheral" societies "modern", Jessé is arguing that "the fundamental principles of social organization are... the same in both cases, even if their outcomes and consequences are different to each kind of society from the economic, social and political points of view" (Souza, 2003a, p.78). The "comparative critical sociology" he wants to develop assumes that both kinds of society are modern, despite their respective different levels of inequality and social (non-)recognition (see Souza, 2003a, p.87). That is the main reason why his reinterpretation of "periphery" implies a reinterpretation of the "center", ultimately scaling them in levels of modernity, as I would suggest.

Moving more specifically to the case of Brazil, this position has profound implications.⁶⁶⁰ Two of the most important are the following. Firstly, it is at stake a

⁶⁶⁰ Let me recall that his effort relies on a "center/periphery" divide, therefore is not exclusively linked to Brazil, as if its singularity placed it apart from other "peripheral" societies.

deep critique of modernizing narratives that defend an interpretation according to which the main obstacle to progress in Brazilian formation is the persistence of the past in the present, of the "pre-modern" in the "modern". Secondly, Jessé advances an opposition to what he calls the "fetishist power of the economic growth", that is, the belief that the economic variable can by itself overcome problems of social exclusion/inclusion and inequality, as well as other widespread common sense and sometimes conceptually internalized beliefs.⁶⁶¹ It is worth quoting at length:

The tendency to believe in the fetishist power of the economic growth; of establishing regional cleavages between modern and traditional parts within the country; or, moreover, the populist crusades against corruption, are all legitimized from the same ideational frame and serve as an ideological mask against the theoretical and political articulation of the specific class conflicts in periphery (Souza, 2003a, p.17).

The passage reiterates, then, that Jessé's interpretation of the formative process of contemporary Brazil is constantly concerned with the links between the interpretations of Brazil and the political projects articulated. Moreover, it also reinforces the center/periphery frame from which he scales variations across "modern" societies. These variations, it is worth reiterating, do not correspond to the presence of a "selective modernization" in some societies and its absence in others; they are also not based on the supposed specificity of "corruption" in "peripheral" societies. In short, to Jessé, selectivity and corruption are shared traits of any modern country, if only in very different scales (see Souza, 2012, pp.44-5).

The center/periphery frame advanced gains some complexity when some specifications are made. According to Jessé, United States, England, France and Germany are the main examples of "central" societies, those who "formed the core of Western rationalism in its many faces", while the other societies are divided roughly in two kinds: "the world great civilizations and great religions of the East", such as the Hindu and the Chinese, and the "new peripheries". The latter correspond to "national *formations* that... were constituted as complex societies only since the

⁶⁶¹Jessé insists on the "fetishism" of economic progress on many occasions (see for instance Souza (2003a, p.17; p.190, n.4; 2003b, p.51; 2004, p.80; 2005, pp.66-7).

influx of the Western rationalism expansion process"; this process did not leave room "to compromise or reaction" towards the "material and symbolic culture" that came "outside in" (Souza, 2003a, p.96, italics added). So, one can see that a threefold distinction is established - "center", "new periphery" and "old periphery" - based mainly on the relation between inside and outside in their respective formative processes. A "national formation" can only be understood properly, in this sense, once its inside/outside constitutive dynamic is grasped.⁶⁶²

Actually, it is plausible to say that Jessé's interpretation of modernity in the new periphery relies both on a certain relation between the inside and the outside, and in a certain articulation of past, present and future. The encounters with "Western modernity" has led to different peripheral configurations: the "old" and the "new". The former, ancient cultures as they are, have shown a strong continuity in relation to their past, which implies a stronger resistance towards the "outside-in" flux (the "Western expansion process"); the latter, in turn, have been taken over by this flux, incorporating "modern fundamental institutions" and "modern values", which implies that their "past" have been considerably overturned by the encounter with modernity. Jessé could not be clearer on how irrelevant he takes the presence of the (pre-modern) past to be in the "new peripheral" case of Brazil: "the sociological 'fairy tale' that assumes the existence of an operative catholic religiosity associated with a political patrimonialism organized in the colonial Brazil is not only an historical nonsense"; it is also the pillar to the assumption of "a timeless personalistic and familistic atavism" (Souza, 2003a, p.97). This assumption is held, according to him, both by prevalent interpretations in the "new periphery" itself and by "the international reflection about the periphery"; what they share, in short, is that a long-term "pre-modern" continuity resists being fully modernized (see Souza, 2003a, pp.97-8).⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² Brazil, in comparison with "central countries" is case of "late and exogenous modernization" (Souza, 2005, p.63). This distinction operates within the same frame of reference, which means that they are not separated as "modern" and "non-modern", but are scaled according to "modern" variations (see Souza, 2012, p.58). Jessé is quite clear elsewhere: "I do not take the assumption that there are 'better', more 'just' or 'humane' societies in comparison to others as a wrong assumption. The failure of traditional modernization theories was relapsing into the error of associating the abstract notion of 'better' and more 'just' to the concrete example of the American society, what is certainly true in many aspects" (Souza, 2012, p.58).

⁶⁶³ As I have said in relation to the previous text from Jessé, he positions himself as a social scientist who unveils the persistence of common sense prejudices and pre-modern ideas, as well as their systematization and internalization in the interpretations of Brazil. The vocabulary of "illusions",

Jessé Souza's position would imply a wholesale rejection of any "pre-modern" reminiscence in "modern" Brazil. Nevertheless, in this text, as in the previous one (as I have pointed out above), some telling remarks are raised - most often in passing. For instance, right after the previous statement on the assumption of a timeless "pre-modern" continuity, it is read that the persistent modulation of pre-modern forces in face of modernization should not be taken as a "positivity" - that is, as an "all-too-powerful pre-modern heritage", as modernization as well as hybridization theories assume in his point of view -, but rather as a "negativity" - that is, "as an absence of certain preconditions existing in the central modernity" (Souza, 2003a, p.98). A play of presence and absence is at stake here: the presence of modern institutions and values coexist with the absence of certain modern conditions; this absence, in turn, is intrinsically related to restrictions (thereby the "negativity") posed by "pre-modern" reminiscences.

This play of present/absent (pre-)modernity seems to me a plausible way to interpret the criterion he uses to distinguish central societies from new peripheral societies: relying mainly on Max Weber and Charles Taylor, Jessé argues that "in societies of central modernity, ideas precede institutional and social practices", while "an important specificity" in the new peripheral modernity is the precedence of "modern 'practices'" in relation to "modern 'ideas'" (Souza, 2003a, pp.98-9). In other words, the importation of the modern state and the modern market to the new periphery during the XIX century has not been accompanied by the establishment of a consensus around modern values: "[f]or instance, it did not exist [in the new periphery] the consensus on the necessity of social homogenization and of generalization to all social layers of the kind of bourgeois personality and emotional economy, as it was the case in all of the most important European and North American societies" (Souza, 2003a, p.99). Phrased in the terms I suggested above, while in the "center" the *presence* of modern ideas has led to the *presence* of modern practices, in the "new periphery" the *presence* of modern practices still coexist with the *absence* of modern ideas.

Since Jessé's interpretation does not leave any room for the existence of ideas that are neither modern nor pre-modern, the only plausible conclusion left from the above seems to be that the *presence of modern* practices coexists with the

"ideology", "sociological fairy tale", "prejudices", "unconsciousness", comes most often as an opposition to "reality", "real practices", "conscious-acquisition".

presence of pre-modern ideas. Indeed, this conclusion is explicit in his text: "...this does not mean that the context previous to modernization... has no effectiveness. This effectiveness is certainly much lower in comparison with what the theoreticians of personalism of yesterday and of today imagine, but it does exist, however overdetermined by modern and impersonal mechanisms" (Souza, 2003a, p.101). Therefore, if it is true that Jessé rejects modernizing and hybridization theories on the grounds that they both misinterpret new peripheral societies to the extent that they assume a persistent "pre-modernity" within "modernity", at the same time his text iterates this coexistence in a different way. Now, this play of presence and absence is worked out through the qualitative distinction between practices and ideas. In any case, Brazilian *modern inequalities* appear not to be exclusively modern, contrary to what Jessé at times explicitly states.

The aspects of continuity of the past within the present become clear when Jessé approaches the question of slavery. This is crucial to his interpretation, since slavery is what allows him to emphasize the discontinuity between the formation of Portugal and the formation of Brazil, as opposed to what he sees as a long-term continuity in most of the interpretations of Brazil. Relying again on Gilberto Freyre's texts, his attention is devoted to show that it is possible to point out, first, the most important aspect of the upward social mobility in Brazilian society - that is, the assimilation by the oppressed of the values of the oppressor -; and, second, how the modernizing process of the XIX century has taken to Brazil, at that time an "extremely primitive society, materially and symbolically", the "two most fundamental and important institutional practices of the modern world": the state and the capitalist market (see Souza, 2003a, p.137).

In addition to that, *A Construção Social da Subcidadania: Para uma Sociologia Política da Modernidade Periférica (The Social Construction of Undercitizenship: Towards a Political Sociology of Peripheral Modernity)* is also concerned with the fact that "the structural place, both in the social and in the economic sense, of the slavery system has projected its shadow to other social relations" (Souza, 2003a, p.121), both synchronically (to different social relations during the colonial period) and diachronically (over time, even after the abolition of slavery). A wide contingent of human beings, comprising both slaves and people that were neither slaves nor masters, has been formed and reproduced throughout the colonial period. The latter, people occupying an intermediary position (neither

master nor slave), formed what Jessé calls a *ralé* (rabble), composed of men that are dispensable, detached from the productive processes of society, relegated to marginal conditions of living, and dependent upon personal favors from the masters, since no autonomous, objective, impersonal moral code exists (see Souza, 2003a, pp.122-6).

The encounter with the modern impersonal system during the XIX century in Brazil did not eradicate the social position of the *ralé* (rabble). Instead, the system that established new institutional practices reproduced its structural position, since those practices were not followed by the ideational framework consolidated in "central societies". The *ralé* (rabble), then, is a category with a long-term continuity in Brazilian formative process, but whose configuration has been altered since the XIX century modernization. Following Florestan Fernandes, Jessé claims that the bourgeois, in Brazil, "did not emerge as a spiritual creation whose unintentional practice transforms himself into an economic agent"; "he" is, rather, "a strictly economic product", not an outcome of a revolutionary perspective on all dimensions of social life, such as in "Europe" (Souza, 2003a, p.131). So, while "central modernity" witnessed a process of social homogenization of human beings under an impersonal system, the "new periphery" reproduced certain patterns of subordinate relations expressed by the persistence of subaltern classes, that is, the *ralé* (rabble) (see Souza, 2003a, p.129).⁶⁶⁴

According to Jessé, the anteriority of institutional and social modern practices in relation to modern ideas and worldview in the formation of "new peripheral" societies generates a crucially restrictive role: "the impossibility of a conscious articulation of the worldview and of the daily behavior that these very institutional and social practices involve" (Souza, 2003a, p.132). The lack of consciousness is linked to the naturalization of supposedly universal principles that, in fact, operate in the production of hierarchies among social groups. This way, the practices through which state and market position individuals in different levels according to their functional imperatives (for instance, meritocracy and individual performance) are ultimately not reflected upon.

⁶⁶⁴ In an interview years later, Jessé, in a comparative mobilization, said that "[t]he '*ralé*' has never been... 'perceived' as a 'social class' among us... It is the existence of this class of social abandoned people, however, more than anything else, that marks the social and political Brazilian backwardness and what, in fact, explains our backwardness in relation to more advanced countries in all dimensions of social life" (see Feitas, 2012).

Let me insist on a crucial aspect at stake here. Jessé's distinction between "center" and "new periphery" does not mean that the formation of the latter occurs in parallel and unconnected with the former.⁶⁶⁵ I have already stressed that the articulations of inside and outside, and of past, present and future, are inseparable from his interpretation of Brazil. The "pre-modern" past is intrinsically linked to the inside/outside dimension of colonization. Since the modernizing process, this past is reconfigured (but not completely eradicated, as I have said) along modern practices, conserving in certain way pre-modern ideas. The specificity of a "new peripheral" society is that its formative process has been fundamentally marked by a hugely desynchronized relation between the incorporation of modern practices and the assimilation of modern ideas.

It should already be clear by now that Jessé's interpretation is at once modernizing and a critique of modernization. The latter operates in two interrelated dimensions: on the one hand, as a critique of Brazilian modernization, and its corresponding reproduction of the subalternity associated to the *ralé* (rabble); on the other hand, Jessé also suggests a critique of "central modernity", in spite of the fact that this is not the focus of his discussion. In relation to the modernizing aspect, it is enough to have in mind that his interpretation is mainly concerned with the obstacles - mostly on the sphere of values and ideas - to the progress of modernity in Brazil. His words could not be clearer than in the following passage:

[t]he final victory of the Brazilian peripheral modernizing process will require not anymore merely the exogenous, "outside-in" influx, but also - as an outcome of a slow process of conscious-acquisition and of political struggle - an endogenous, "inside-out" influx, that is the conscious and reflexive formulation of an autonomous and national modernizing process (Souza, 2003a, p.145).

The main difference between *A Modernização Seletiva: Uma Reinterpretação do Dilema Brasileiro* (*The Selective Modernization: A Reinterpretation of Brazilian Dilemma*) and *A Construção Social da Subcidadania:*

⁶⁶⁵ The third kind of society, the "old peripheral", is not discussed at length by Jessé's text.

Para uma Sociologia Política da Modernidade Periférica (The Social Construction of Undercitizenship: Towards a Political Sociology of Peripheral Modernity) seems to come in the last part of the latter, when "citizenship" is discussed. There, Jessé claims that, if Brazilian modernization begun in the XIX century, the 1930 revolution has changed its level: industrialization, economic development, political participation of a wider parcel of the population, among others, have become central dimensions of modernization in the following decades.⁶⁶⁶ Jessé's focus, however, is on "the *formation* of a specifically peripheral pattern of citizenship and undercitizenship" (Souza, 2003a, p.153, italics added).

The main proposition advanced in this part of the text refers to the operation of certain prejudices in Brazilian society. According to Jessé, skin-color prejudice is not the key to interpret this problem. Rather, what is at stake is a prejudice in relation to "a certain kind of 'personality', judged as unproductive and disruptive to society as a whole" (Souza, 2003a, p.159). Not surprisingly, that prejudices is directed against the so-called *ralé* (rabble) (skin-color represents, in this sense, an additional problem, and not the ultimate one). Adapting Pierre Bourdieu's concept, Jessé Souza argues that the production of the *ralé* is intrinsic to a "precarious habitus", "that constrains those groups to a marginal and humiliating life at the margin of the included society" (Souza, 2003a, p.160).⁶⁶⁷ This precariousness does not correspond to an "'inertial' continuation of the past in the present", but to the "'modern' redefinition of the black... as 'worthless (*imprestável*)' to any relevant and productive activity in the new context" (Souza, 2003a, p.161; see also Souza, 2003b, pp.58-9). In fact, not only the redefinition of the black, but of any other person that is part of the *ralé*.

⁶⁶⁶ See note 242 above on the "1930 revolution".

⁶⁶⁷ Jessé's conceptual move is to pluralize Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus". This way, the "primary habitus" refers to the "gigantic homogenizing historical process" consciously and deliberately conducted in "central Western societies", and that led to the formation of a single humankind within national societies, despite inequalities among classes. The "precarious habitus", in turn, is composed of individuals that are not considered "productive and useful in a modern and competitive society". This kind of habitus, although also present in "central societies", correspond to "a permanent mass phenomenon" only in "peripheral countries such as Brazil". Finally, the "secondary habitus" refers to a source of recognition that presupposes the generalization of the "primary habitus" to a wide part of the population. In short, the precarious habitus is below the primary habitus, while the secondary habitus is above, in the sense that it stipulates criteria of social distinction provided that the generalization of the primary habitus had already been achieved (see Souza, 2003a, pp.165-8; 2003b, pp.61-73; 2004, pp.86-9; 2005, pp.53-6).

Phrased differently, the end of the prevalence of personalized relations and the establishment of impersonal social relations have rearranged the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in Brazilian society (and in the "new peripheral" condition as a whole). These patterns ascribe different degrees of humanity and citizenship to different human groups. The value of the member of the *ralé*, that is, of someone that is part of the precarious habitus, is lower than that of the other two kinds of habitus. It should be noted that the precarious habitus is not exclusively found in "peripheral" societies, but, there, it represents a mass phenomenon. The comparative parameter is clearly articulated in the following passage:

In the case of the "primary habitus", what is at stake is the effective dissemination of the notion of dignity of the rational agent that makes him/her a productive agent and a full citizen. In advanced societies, this dissemination is effective, and the cases of "precarious habitus" are marginal phenomena. In peripheral societies such as the Brazilian, the "precarious habitus", that implies the existence of invisible and objective networks that disqualify precarious individuals and groups as underproducers and undercitizens..., is a mass phenomenon (Souza, 2003a, pp.176-7)

In other words, "peripheral" societies are marked by the existence of a "structural *ralé* (rabble)", and therefore of a mass condition of undercitizenship. Hence, if it is true that every kind of society can exhibit all the three kinds of "habitus", what differentiates them in relation to one another is mainly the structural condition of precariousness and undercitizenship as an exclusive "peripheral" characteristic - or, more precisely, exclusive to "peripheral societies modernized in an outside-in process" (Souza, 2003a, p.181). Moreover, Jessé insists that this "structural *ralé*" is *modern*, since it is placed not within personal relations of coexistence, but within impersonal ones.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁸ I cannot develop the point here, but let me note that the focus Jessé ascribes to "social classes" stems from his view that the "racial variable" cannot be understood as the single or the ultimate source of Brazilian inequality: "the determination of the specific weight of the racial variable in the wider theme of social inequality as a whole requires a wider, inclusive and totalizing theoretical frame of reference" (Souza, 2005, p.45; see also pp.64-5). My interpretation of Jessé's texts,

The beginning of the XIX century and the year of 1930 become dividing lines to Jessé's periodization. The former, for the reasons already discussed. The latter because, since then, the transitional period - during which a dual reality marked the coexistence of a majorly modern configuration in the cities and a majorly traditional configuration in the interior - has come to an end, and, as a consequence, the impersonal and capitalist logic has encompassed all social relations as the prevalent pattern of civilization. In fact, instead of two dividing lines, what one has is a long-term process throughout which modernization gets increasingly all-encompassing. Recalling that Gilberto Freyre interpreted the XIX century in terms of "re-Europeanization", Jessé claims that the formative process since then has led to the discrimination between "Europeanized" and "precarious" sectors. "Europe" becomes the reference to a conception of human being that takes part in a hierarchy of values that has "Europe" as its historical and geographical source, but has then expanded towards other parts of the world (see Souza, 2003a, p.181; 2004, p.89). Societies of the "new periphery" has not been able to generalize these "European" values - the primary habitus. So, being "European" operates as the ultimate criterion of social segmentation among individuals and social classes. It operates, in other words, as that which separates the citizen from the undercitizen, the human from the underhuman (or subhuman).⁶⁶⁹

I have stressed before that Jessé's texts provide two major contributions. Firstly, the possibility to explore the links between "intellectual" and "common-sense" interpretations of Brazil. The notion of "interpretations of Brazil" is conceived as something wider than the so-called "intellectual" experiences or articulations produces within the academic environment. The familiar perspective of the "ivory tower", according to which an abyss often separates the "academic" reflections from the "daily" or "real" practices, has led to different reactions, including a certain anxiety on the part of some "intellectuals" to get away from this "tower" towards the "real politics" or "political practice"; it has also led to the

however, has been focused on his account on the formative process of Brazil as a "new periphery", as opposed to a "central country".

⁶⁶⁹ As he puts elsewhere, what is at stake is a "historically constructed and culturally contingent notion of personality and of conduct of life that will separate and unite, through bonds of solidarity and prejudice, people and social groups into superior and inferior, according to criteria that begin to be seen as incontestably objective due to their inscription in the opaque and non-transparent functioning logic of state and market" (Souza, 2005, p.49). In short, the contingent frame of discrimination is naturalized into a self-evident reality.

opposite reaction, reaffirming the separation of a "scientific" approach to politics or society from an "activist" mobilization.⁶⁷⁰ Well, in this regard - although not explicitly tackling the issue -, Jessé's texts become a site to interpret the relation between "interpretations of Brazil" and "self-interpretations of Brazilians".⁶⁷¹

The second major contribution is the attempt of reinterpret "modernity" through a reinterpretation of modern Brazil. In this aspect, his texts aim at avoiding the reproduction of a theoretical positions according to which there is a clear-cut distinction between a "central" modernity (truly and fully modern) and a "peripheral" (pre-)modernity (incompletely modern or even lacking the so-called modern condition). His notions of "selective modernization" and "undercitizenship" represent attempts to problematize certain interpretations that assume a "central", "fully modern" condition as the parameter in relation to which "imperfections", "incompleteness" and "absences" of modernity in other parts of the world are identified and differentiated.

In relation to the first contribution, I have remarked that Jessé positions himself as an observer that aims at unveiling the deep social grammar of Brazil, contributing thus to the eradication of common-sense illusions that are often internalized in "intellectual" interpretations of Brazil, keeping Brazilians (intellectuals or not) away from reality. In other words, he struggles against the "sociological fairy tale" intrinsic to the "sociology of inauthenticity", in order to work towards the establishment of a "true", "unbiased" account on Brazilian modernity. I will not dispute that here, but Part I, as well as the last part of this text, give a clear sense of my resistance towards this stance.

Nevertheless, in my interpretation of Jessé's texts, I have dealt more closely with the second contribution (although it is obviously linked to the previous one). In my view, his attempt to escape from notions of "pre-modernity" and "incomplete modernity" ultimately implies an iteration of the center/periphery dichotomy. More

⁶⁷⁰ These reactions are certainly not exclusive to the fields of "Political Science", "Sociology" or "International Relations", but seem a widespread problematization across "social sciences" or "humanities".

⁶⁷¹ I am deliberately leaving aside a more careful discussion of the link between the interpretations of Brazil I have approached here and those interpretations of Brazil that are not confined to the "academic environment". On that, let me reiterate, this text is suggesting, but not exploring, that the "interpretations of Brazil" should not be seen as an exclusivity of "intellectual" or "artistic" domains - in fact, this very distinction is itself problematic. This does not mean, however, that the "intellectual" or "artistic" interpretations migrate, in a unidirectional way, to "daily practices". This cannot be dealt with here, but I think it is a pressing discussion to those interested in the "interpretations of Brazil".

precisely: it is certainly the case that, on the one hand, this dichotomy is problematized within his wider problematization of the assumptions of traditional theories of modernization; on the other hand, his interpretation of Brazil (and of the "new periphery" as a whole) constantly develops a comparative account that situates different modernities under the same scale. Suffice to recall here the notion that, in "central modernity", a primary habitus has been generalized, as well as the condition of full humanity and full citizenship, as opposed to what has taken place in the "new periphery", where the precarious habitus is a mass phenomenon; one can also recall his statement that the modern condition of Brazil does not imply that its modernity is on equal foot in relation to central modern countries; or, one can also recall his conception of the relation between modern social practices and institutions, and modern values in "central" countries as opposed to "new peripheral" ones.⁶⁷² In short, his reinterpretation of modernity through the reinterpretation of modernization in "new peripheral" places, especially Brazil, is both a critique of modernization and a modernizing perspective.

Moreover, one of Jessé's main claims - that Brazil has become "modern" since the XIX century - coexists in his texts with remarks that point to the existence of other, non-modern, code of values. So, the undisputed legitimacy of modern dominant values does not preclude other values from operating in society, including some values that are reminiscent from the "past". This can be seen, for instance, in his interpretation of the *ralé* (rabble). Hence, Brazil is ultimately both "modern" and "non-modern" and, in a certain sense Jessé is ultimately closer to some aspects of the "sociology of inauthenticity" than what could be expected from his explicit rejection of that sociology.

Some points I have been tackling here have been advanced similarly by Sergio Tavolaro, with some twists that are crucial to my discussion. Some of his texts will help me thus in delineating the problematization.

⁶⁷² Recalling the previous point, regarding his position as a conscious observer unveiling the mechanisms of internalization of common sense beliefs and illusions into intellectual interpretations of Brazil, one could even ask oneself whether Jessé's interpretation itself has not ultimately internalized in a very talented and intellectually sophisticated way the common sense belief that separates a "center" from a "periphery" - a belief that permeates, by the way, not only the way "Brazil" is interpreted in relation to "central modern countries", but also the way specific places in mid-size and big cities (not exclusively in Brazil) are demarcated as "peripheral zones".