



# “The Old Plague”- Considerations on the Construction of a Civilizational Model for the Paulista Peasant

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## Abstract

This article presents reflections on race and the paths of economic modernization in rural São Paulo. Civilizational models and projects were offered in order to arrive at an archetype of nation as a proposal on the meaning of land use and custom and the place reserved for blacks in the São Paulo imagination throughout the 20th century. We will make a brief contextualization to understand such transformations, walking between the readings of literary works, such as -Urupês|| by Monteiro Lobato and scientific works to understand the representations regarding naturalization, the social and economic legacies of the rural condition, modernization, economic globalization and operation of cooperatives in rural neighborhoods today.

**Keywords:** Rural Identity; Race; Economic Globalization

## Introduction

The “old plague” that gives the title to this article is found in Monteiro Lobato’s classic work “Urupês” [1], which refers to the caboclo from São Paulo described as a being unadaptable to civilization, a parasite of the earth. The work -Urupês||, which gained notoriety inside and outside literature, gave life to the character Jeca Tatu. A saying that had nothing frightening for a time when the national backwardness was linked to “*the classic type of the sitiante already out of class,*” a clear diagnosis that the civilizing problems of Brazilian society were associated with the indolence, laziness, and ignorance of rural populations. Also, nothing surprises us that the name given to the work is inspired by a type of parasitic mushroom that destroys wood, the urupê. Urbanization was a natural and inevitable consequence of the modernization of society and served to sustain arguments about the dichotomy between countryside and city. The rural space is still today

defined in the social imaginary as a non-urban world linked to the vision of an agrarian world with naturalized rural characteristics and with minimal changes, besides the decrease in the agricultural population as a consequence of the hegemonic effectuation of the productivist model. The founding myth of Rural Sociology that established the opposition between countryside and city in a relationship of subordination of the former by the latter as discontinuous spatial and social realities. The search for the essence of the rural and the urban involved a broad debate throughout the twentieth century that, of the many scholars on the subject as the authors Antonio C, Maria Isaura de Queiroz and Carlos Brandão-sought, in their time, the analytical paths in the development of rural appreciations from the perspectives of its modernization [2].

Such discussions have expanded due to researches addressing issues of agrarian production, population

contingent in rural areas and even in literature, which the latter, had a significant role in the construction of the social imaginary due to its interpretations and descriptions about the environment and the conditions of rural dwellers in highlight here the State of São Paulo. The title of this article leads us to reflect on how we are led to naturalize ways of life, reproduce social representations of a group and its place in society which, consequently, leads to preconceptions about a particular group or its possible inferiority in the social hierarchy emphasizing that social and cultural differences are linked to their schooling, economic position, the unequal, the dissimilar and the unknown and those who hold privileged social positions. Sensitizing our critical eye on issues related to ethnocentrism and racism based on economic, political, social and racial problems.

Studies such as those of Giralda S [3] help us to think about the power of stereotypes and the questionable superiority of the white European race, with skin colour being a classifying characteristic imposing a discourse of racism on assumptions of biological inequality among the human species, thus involving the so-called -lower races|| (non-whites), the -lower classes||, the -lower sex||, the -lower ethnic groups||, the -pulsating race|| (the mestizos in general). In Brazil, we witnessed the postulation of an intense policy of incentive to white immigration based on the civilizational discourse that resulted in social stratification, supported by scientific research such as that of Nina Rodrigues and Oliveira Vianna, which was also present in literature such as in the works of Euclides da Cunha and Monteiro L [1]. According to Giralda S [3], differences in race are used to separate people and designate their place in society and their position of social inferiority. The determining traits of the differences also impose a negative, generic, and pejorative identity, as we see linked to the regional identities of migrants coming from the North and Northeast regions, attributing phenotypical traits associated with inferiority or incivility to a generic category of “northeasterner,” “aaiano,” “paraibano” [3].

It is under this pertinent reflection that will guide the discussion presented in this article. Can the construction of differences be related to the construction of social representations? When we refer to studies of the rural universe, are the theme generally related only to economic issues, food production and advances in agribusiness? Why are race and class identities sustained by biological origin and play a central role in social disqualification? Is *Caipira* the one who has rude habits and manners, due to little education, scarce social interaction or is it a construction rooted in the popular imaginary and manifests itself through stereotypes?. Even if quickly, let us take a look back at this debate in order to elucidate the starting point of the issues we intend to discuss in this article, expanding the questions about what we know about the term “caipira”, what are the elements

of discrimination associated with a social position or an “uncivilized” behavior that carries classificatory traits due to the origin or appearance of the population that occupied the rural area. The reflection goes through the meaning, use and custom of the land, the social representations that have been built and that have reinforced an understanding about rural dwellers, such as the ways of life, the language and the jocular terms related to the bad health conditions of rural dwellers, especially in the State of São Paulo that gained visibility throughout the twentieth century and perpetuate until today in the social imaginary.

### **The Sense in the Use and Custom of the Land and the Place Reserved for the Black Man in the State of São Paulo**

To understand the transformations that occurred in the rural area of São Paulo, it is necessary to cover the context and the formation of the state of São Paulo in the seventeenth century, taking into account the slavery sense in the use, custom and a possible place of the black individual in society. For Monteiro JM [4], slavery in São Paulo developed from the principles of economic exploitation, at first using indigenous labor, but in the molds of the exploitation of black labor that already occurred on the coast of the state. The Paulistas tried to rationalize and justify such practice by assuming, in an absolute way, the control of indigenous labor. A new way of life spread in places where there were mining nuclei, artisanal production and animal supplies expanded in this period. Several expeditions to penetrate in regions such as Vale do Paraíba, giving rise to new villages such as Itu, Sorocaba and Curitiba by Paulista pioneers. In São Paulo, the search for gold for an agricultural economy hastened the slash and burn to acquire new areas for planting, services and other goods. By the system of farms occurs the intensification of the use of slave labor and resorting later to massive European immigration that put thousands of workers at the disposal of commercial farming. According to Darcy R [5] the indigenous slavery was no longer supplying the demands, neither had the black slavery and the countryside dweller, marginalized, passes to a condition of dependence and without the possession of land. This process of changes, both in the form of production and in the strategies to intensify production with the demand for labor, triggered social and economic consequences that resulted in a growing number of black people who although free, still worked in conditions of slavery, and the creation of the industrial proletariat in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

In São Paulo, during the arrival of European immigrants, the majority of artisans and specialized workers (small business owners) were browns and free blacks. Censuses conducted between 1900 and 1920 reveal nothing about

the insertion of blacks in post-abolition society. However, newspapers and magazines aimed at blacks were already circulating, such as the periodicals *A Pátria* and *O Progresso* in 1899 in São Paulo, and *O Exemplo* in Porto Alegre. Alegre, in 1892.<sup>1</sup> Although they maintained different proposals, the great majority sought to express the need for education for the black population and point out the racial stigma that classified blacks and mulattos as people without intellectual capacity, thus fixing attention by orienting them to the labor market at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century.

In the 1920s, the formation of a small, “overwhelmingly” white middle class began to gain ground in São Paulo, and these periodicals became a means of denouncing the difficulties of insertion into São Paulo society, the social inequality between blacks and whites, and the restrictions suffered as a result of racial prejudice. The grouping of all the publications came to be known as the Paulista Black Press. During this same period, in 1931, the Brazilian Black Front was founded, which would later become a political party, extinguished along with the others with the creation of the Estado Novo. According to Andrews GR [6], data surveyed from 1940, shows that out of a black population of 862,255 only 623 owned non-agricultural businesses and about 15% of browns and blacks comprised the agricultural labor force in São Paulo. The public sector was the only area in which Afro-Brazilians achieved parity. In 1940, the Afro-Brazilian population of working age in São Paulo was 12% and of this percentage 8.8% were in public sectors, but far from middle class status, were in menial jobs such as street sweepers, construction workers, janitors and poorly paid office work as messengers and servants. When occupations are mentioned, it was often teachers in the public schools, clerks and lower level employees of the postal service, state tax collection, municipal government, or semiofficial agencies such as the telephone company.

Discrimination of color remained present in São Paulo, there was denunciation in black newspapers such as *Getulino* (1923), *O Combate* (1915), *O Clarim da Alvorada* (1924-1932), *A Voz da Raça* (1933-1937), the social columns of these newspapers made clear the importance of federal, state and municipal employment of the economic base for a would-be black elite. For Andrews GR [6], the doctrine of racial democracy exempted state policy from any further responsibility for the situation of the black population, even shifting it directly onto the shoulders of Afro-Brazilians themselves, those who questioned the notion of racial democracy ran the risk of being confronted with a detailed

analysis of the shortcomings of the racial group to which they belonged.<sup>2</sup>

According to Darcy R [5], the domination and a new way of life of São Paulo’s rural area dispersed the settlements that were concentrated in this region, the caipira population that was integrated in neighborhoods, strayed from this conviviality, was conditioned to a culturally limited horizon, unambitious, idle and loitering. The basic factor of this social and economic reordering was the reestablishment of the mercantile system and with it the valorisation of properties. The caipira from São Paulo, therefore, becomes marginalised, clinging to a condition and independence unviable without the possession of land. Even with the existence of millions of under-occupied caipiras. The plantation system had first to promote an intensification of the slave trade and then to appeal to the massive European immigration that put millions of workers at the disposal of the large commercial plantations. Confined to the most desolate lands, buried in poverty, the caipira watched impassively as multitudes of Italians, Spaniards, Germans or Poles arrived and settled as settlers on the farms to replace the Negro on the farm, accepting a condition that he rejected. This new mass came, however, from old societies, rigidly stratified, that disciplined them for wage labor, and saw in the settler condition a path of ascension that would make them, perhaps, one day small owners [5].

The consequence of this farm system widened the social inequalities between caipiras, whites, mulattos and blacks. Under these circumstances, the contingent of blacks, already freed, had to submit even more to a form of segregation. As a result, economic motives for investments to attract white settlers to the country added to ideological incentives for this practice, the idea of racial democracy and the whitening of the São Paulo population as European immigration aimed at improving the race, also collaborated to the growing lack of identification of these caipiras with their history which contributed to studies on Brazilian social formation. The perspective of a harmonious relationship between

2 Gilberto Freyre is considered one of the fundamental scholars for the understanding of the Brazilian social formation and in the interpretative studies of Brazil and the Brazilian people. The theme of miscegenation was the center of his research and it was from the national and international impact exposed, mainly in the work “*Casa Grande & Senzala*” published in 1933, that the notion of the supposed “Brazilian racial democracy” was established, which, according to the author, from the previous contact between the Portuguese and people of darker skin, such as the Arabs, and from the consequent racial flexibility of the Brazilian of Lusitanian origin - heir of the characteristic plasticity of the Portuguese society, that “opened” the racial relations among us. He is the author of dozens of books, among which, *Casa-grande & Senzala* (1933); *Sobrados e mocambos* (1936); *Nordeste* (1937); *O mundo que o português criou* (1940); *Ingleses no Brasil* (1948); *Aventura e rotina* (1953); *Ordem e progresso* (1959); *Vida, forma e cor* (1962) among others.

1 ARAUJO, Valmir Teixeira de. “The role of the Brazilian black press”. In: *Alterjor Magazine*.

the three racial axes proposed by Gilberto F [7] was put in check. Florestan F [8] has questioned this position the critic and invested efforts in the task of investigating the social and economic problems of the black population in Brazil. Silva KG [9] studies focused fundamentally on investigating the problem of the socioeconomic conditions of the black population in a modern class society. From a series of surveys on the racial situation in São Paulo - compiled with research undertaken in parallel in other regions of the country - his analyses concluded that racial prejudice was widely practiced in Brazil. It manifested itself decisively precisely in the difficulty of the black population, in large metropolises, to insert itself as a full citizen in an institutionally liberal society with an industrial economy [9].

While Gilberto F [7] pointed miscegenation as a possibility to foster racial equality, Florestan F [7] exposed the error of relying on the idea that standards would be linked to examples of racial tolerance without addressing socioeconomic problems. In Silva KG [9] analysis, Gilberto F [7] proposes a parallel between the concept of race and democracy, in which the notion of race appears as an adjective of a political category, grounding the metaphor of racial democracy. However, Gilberto F [7] hypotheses confronted with Brazilian reality are not solidified when we present the data from the 1940 Census and the context in which the myth of racial democracy was sustained in Brazil, as highlighted here. Given the racial concentration of income, social prestige and power, the "coloured population" has no vitality to face and solve its moral problems. The inclusion of the Negro, -It is up to the government to come up with alternatives and a program to combat poverty and its effects within this population [10]. It is up to the government to raise alternatives and a program to combat misery and its effects within this population [10].

### A Social Model for the Project of Nationhood

Since Independence, national literature was concerned with building symbols that would bring up images and traditions and of elements of a national essence to escape formulations and links between metropolis Portugal and its colony, Brazil. Intellectuals such as Silva TT [11] gained national importance already in the nineteenth century, and it was up to him to lead sectors of the native elite, curbing recolonization projects, supporting Pedro to draft the Constitution of the new regime. From his writings emerges a civilizing project that aimed to make possible a model of nation, since for him, the Brazilian was gifted, by nature, lazy, indolent and ignorant, Brazilian education would need to be transformed into a homogeneous whole in all senses: racial, cultural, legal and civic [11]. The possibility of having a literature without Portuguese traces or with ecclesiastical overtones revealed itself in the romantic

sertanism, in the regionalism of the realist-naturalist period and the modernists, the latter mainly in São Paulo. Oliveira AT, et al. [12], vanguard of the modernist movement in São Paulo, with works of great national relevance with the publication of: "*Pauliceia Desvairada*" (1922) and the novel that also influenced the way of writing Brazilian traditions in "*Macunaíma*" (1928). Monteiro JM [4] was another writer from São Paulo who produced articles, reviews, chronicles, prefaces, letters, books on national importance at a time when books were edited outside the Brazilian territory, so in face of this scenario, the author also gained notoriety in Brazil with a series of renovations in textbooks and children's books and with themes related to the rural area of São Paulo.

According to Gruzinski S [13] the work of Mario de Andrade "*Macunaíma*" convinces us that appearances can have a meaning of multiple transformations. The context of globalization or globalized was the result of the encounter between Europeans and indigenous societies that left us as heritage the resistance, the mestizaje and the archetype of Brazilian and Latin American oscillating between such cultures, several characteristic traits of indigenous societies comes from the Iberian peninsula. The difficulty of thinking about the mixture of cultures can also result in interpretations that come more from our own way of seeing reality. Thus, we can analyze such questioning of Gruzinski S [13] in the Brazilian context. The European immigrants had the donation of vacant state lands forming colonies, but keeping their feelings of an ethnic European belonging. The non-adherence to Brazil, by immigrants, as their nation resulted in phenomena of rejection that we currently observe. The descriptions of the literati about the country man, emphasizing the differences and always assigning him the place of the abject, resulted in a series of prejudices and essentialized images about people, even so, with the justification of producing a national literature and without European traces. If we observe the well-known phrase in Oliveira AT, et al. [12] book -sou um tupi tangendo um alaúde|| (I am a Tupi playing a lute), it shows us the ambiguity of the search for Brazilian racial purity. So, since colonization. Everywhere, slaves served as currency of exchange: throughout the entire 17th century, the Indians of the Rio Negro could either practice the slave trade or, in turn, become slaves of the Dutch or Portuguese. In some years the Portuguese managed to seize, after real raids, a good thousand natives, who were then sent in appalling conditions to Belém and Grão-Pará, at the eastern end of the great forest. The survivors mixed with the local populations in miscegenations that became more pronounced over the years [13]. The construction of an identity becomes a thorough task, the work to identify in the rural man something that represented him went through explanations of traits of the "low rural people" through the eyes of the "rural nobility", as reminded by Brandão CR [14]. With the perspective of

the advance of capital in Brazil, the passage from the 19th to the 20th century introduced a new look by intellectuals in the construction of a Brazilian identity. Multiple representations of the population were produced, seeking to confer a national identity that would break with the past of dependence and countryside/city dichotomy was one of the central themes that stimulated the development of cultural and scientific production. It is at this moment that Brazil and its people occupied a central place in the intellectual debates in the search for the constitution of the specificities of the nation in formation: Finding a specific ethnic type capable of representing the Brazilianness became a great challenge to be faced by the intellectuality, which took upon itself the mission of finding *the national identity breaking with the past of cultural dependence*. This identity, constructed throughout the nineteenth century, was configured in multiple images that kept ambiguities [15].

When we think that all these projects of identity constructions, although with genuine interests in an idea of nation, national identity or production of national writings, directly affected the black, caipira, cabocla population. The countryside played a fundamental role in this scenario, and became abundantly represented in São Paulo's literature of the period, driven by writers such as Pires MLLS [16] and Monteiro JM [4], who gave the man from São Paulo's countryside diversified representations. The term -caipira|| over the years has taken various forms to adjectivize the countryside man and has taken strength until it reached the dictionaries. The meaning found in the dictionary carries synonyms such as: Jeca; Matuto; Saquarema. Person born or (who) lives in rural regions in the interior of the state of São Paulo; has simple ways and little education; individual little sociable, without social interaction. The inhabitant of the countryside or countryside, in general, with little education and poor manners, is identified as jeca, matuto, roceiro, sertanejo, caboclo, capiau or tabaréu. It is possible to observe that connotations such as "uneducated" and "jeca" are already inserted in the core of the word "caipira", thus naturalizing the image of "a man out of his time", unfit for urban life. For the rural dweller, his representation, consequently, will be related to "a simple and uneducated person" and, even if he has other knowledge, his culture ends up losing its meaning before the obligations of city life.

Meire SL [17] presents the hypothesis that the author Monteiro JM [4] created the caricature representation of the caipira in São Paulo, the arrival of immigrants in industries and plantations would bring hope for overcoming national decadence particularly by their discipline in relation to work. In the books *"Cidades Mortas"* (1906) and *"Urupês"* (1914) inaugurated the criticism of reality in opposition to the literary currents of the time (romanticism), the concern is not related to a structural analysis of Brazilian society,

but considers the caboclo as responsible for the national backwardness, irrational practices of this subject of -poor instruction|| would make him a useless individual for the nation, as the author points out [17]. Within these references, we resume the discussion on the term "Mamelucos", which directs the issue on how to think of rural people as bearers of a lazy nature and outside civilizing standards. According to this perspective, the ethno-cultural encounter between Europeans and Indians would have resulted in the emergence of the Mamelucos, a union between colonizers and Indians, which gave the European lord the right over the slave Indian. In this discussion introduced by Enid Y [18] points out that: One of the supports to ensure the operation of the colonialist system, that is, submission of the colonized - passed to make the use of force - is the manufacture and dissemination of the ideology of colonialism. Basically, the content expresses the superiority of the colonizer: he is dynamic, sensible, hardworking, truly Christian, participates in a superior civilization, and his means of expression, his language, is an instrument for the elaboration of high literature. By opposition, the colonized is marked negatively, through a diabolically simple mechanism: what is culturally attributed, the colonizer transforms into an essential element. Thus the native becomes, by *nature*, a lazy, indolent, incapable, idiotized, dirty, violent individual, using a rude speech that cannot accurately express more refined knowledge and nobler feelings. A language inadequate to literature [18].

In scientific research, Antonio C [19] organizes investigations based on the ways of life in a group of caipiras in the municipality of Bofete (SP), in the years 1948 and 1954, in the work *"Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito"* (2001), in this same study, the author refers to the descriptions made by Pires MLLS [16] of the various representations of what comes to be the caipira<sup>3</sup>. According to Antonio C [19], Pires MLLS [16] elaborated meanings and took into account the various ethnic types of the rustic Paulista culture of the time and therefore became a reference in the study of caipira identity. In his analyses he points out that:

To designate cultural aspects, here we use *caipira*, which has the advantage of being unambiguous (always expressing a way of being, a type of life, never a racial type), and the

3 Cornélio Pires offered great importance to this theme by the work *"Conversas ao pé do Fogo"* (1921) since there was already a concern of the author about what comes to be the "caipira" as a Paulista identity, he sought to divide by categories each type of caipira that emerged and that brought a new perspective in the structure of the country life of the time without leaving aside the identity. Pires was also inspired by the poem *"O Poema da raça caipira"* (1953) by Alberto Rovai referring to the expression of caipira culture. Cornélio Pires was also a journalist, musician and composer, one of the precursors to get the Brazilian music industry to release records with country music, it is even possible to say that he was one of the creators of country music. The importance of his works came to be recognized when he quotes, and is quoted, in Antonio Candido's studies.

disadvantage of being restricted almost only, by inveterate use, to the area of historical Paulista influence. As in this study we do not leave it, the inconvenience is mitigated. Pires MLLS [16] describes, in one of his books, the “whitecaipira”, the “caboclocaipira”, the “blackcaipira”, the “mulatoaipira”. It is the fair way to use the terms, also because it suggests the accentuated incorporation of the various ethnic types to the universe of São Paulo’s rustic culture - a process that could be called *acaipiramento*, or *acaipiração*, and that in fact *investigated* them in a rather homogeneous set.

Within these varied representations of the caipira, ways of life and their conditions, one of the main issues concerns the availability of land. Whether due to favourable situations, in which the rural man has reasonably productive land, or in difficult situations, when even if he has a small piece of land, his own or owned, he lives to ensure subsistence. In this last case, the survival situation is complex, since the non-legalization of the lands puts him in a vulnerable situation, either in relation to the surrounding large landowners, or in function of the expansion of the agricultural frontiers, as it happened in São Paulo - and still happens in diverse regions of Brazil. In the condition of “-Agregado”, or “posseiro”, the caipira ended up being “pushed” to more and more unpopulated areas, ending up being represented as a subject at the margins of history. With his economic, social, and cultural heritage, the caipira was left with the marks of non-adaptation to intense and continuous effort, or to rationalised and market-oriented work, leading the urban and modern world to blame him for an alleged low standard of living. It is noted that the rusticity of the caipira’s life did not escape the creation of a negative representation<sup>4</sup>. The understanding of the caboclo, the rural poor man, was assigned to pejorative stereotypes an imagnetic representation of the character Jeca Tatu, evidencing the construction of a disqualified figure of an identity inserted in the national economic context, in a caricatured way of “-fungo da terra” goes from victims to a race of “-depleted and nameless degenerates”.

Our mountain is the victim of a parasite, an earth louse, peculiar to the Brazilian soil as the “Argas” is to chicken coops or the “Sarcoptes mutans” to the leg of domestic birds. We could, analogously, classify it among the varieties of the “-Porriogo decalvans” the parasite of the scalp that produces the “-pelada”, as he watches as the earth is stripped of its vegetal coma until it falls into warm decrepitude, naked and barefoot [1]. The difference and identity tend to be naturalized, crystallized or essentialized, not obtaining effectiveness if, for example, the narrative created around the character Jeca Tatu did not take into account the sentimental

and affective side of the character. Thus, identity is the point that defines difference and these two share characteristics that result from acts in linguistic creation that has no value in isolation. Language is a system of differences that is constituted in the context of cultural and social relations being subject to hierarchical power relations and in constant dispute, as Silva TT [11] points out. The author also points out that the definition of identity and difference has become an object of dispute between social groups that are relatively in power. Differentiation is the central process for the construction of identity and that, consequently, the difference is produced that: In the identity dispute a broader dispute over other symbolic and material resources of society is involved. The assertion of identity and the enunciation of difference translate the desire of different, asymmetrically situated social groups to secure privileged access to social goods. Identity and difference are thus closely connected with power relations. The power to define identity and to mark difference cannot be separated from broader power relations. Identity and difference are never innocent [11].

Such reflection by Silva TT [11] enables us to understand that identity and difference translate into statements of who belongs and who does not belong, thus being a separation between “us” and “them” and are closely linked to the forms of classification that society produces.

### A Civilizing Modernization for the Countryside

The State of São Paulo was the stage for changes in the period of territorial occupation, from the undertaking to find productive land for coffee plantations, with the expansion of railway lines, to the advance that culminated in land appropriations and expropriations. In the latter case, the situation of survival is complex, since the non-legalization of land placed the peasant in a situation of vulnerability, whether in relation to surrounding landowners or to the expansion of agricultural frontiers, as occurred in São Paulo and still occurs in various regions of Brazil.

At a time when the traditional northeastern plantations were in crisis, political measures taken from 1850 on, such as the “Eusébio de Queiroz Law”, created to solve the problem of lack of slave labor and to guarantee the interprovincial trade, and another one, the “Land Law”, known for reorganizing the policy of access to land that stimulated the coming of European immigrants to work in the coffee plantations in search for lucrative interests, were renewed and gained a new meaning for land ownership. After the extinction of the slave trade, the government started to stimulate the coming of European immigrants to work in the plantations, at the same time that it reorganized the policy of access to the land. That piece of land that was given to the poor peasant

4 In general, the general meaning of the word rustic is associated with what is rural, rural, what is related or belongs to the countryside, to the rural environment. Rusticity is a feminine noun that names the quality of that which is rustic, which has impoliteness, rudeness, incivility.

now could present profits for the agricultural market, so the farmer -owner||, -possessor|| or -aggregate|| was expelled, pushed to another place being subjected to rebuild his life elsewhere. This practice became endless on the borders of the State of São Paulo. Many had their lands usurped by large landowners who arrived with titles in their hands being forced to sell their lands, some migrated to other places, and others were absorbed by the farms as direct workers, partners, being allowed in some places to have a -food crop||. In the latter case, according to Carlos Brandão CR [14], the survival situation is complex, since the non-legalization of land placed the peasant in a situation of vulnerability, whether in relation to surrounding landowners or to the expansion of agricultural frontiers, as occurred in São Paulo and still occurs in various regions of Brazil.

It is from 1978 onwards that research related to the rural areas of São Paulo became the object of analysis, questions about unemployment and security, both in rural and urban areas, the entry of sugarcane for the production of fuel alcohol also influenced the policies of access to land pushed by the oil crisis. In the legal sphere, specifically law no. 8629/93, a new classification of rural properties into small, medium and productive properties was distributed; however, the market's logic of using Labour power equates small producers with settlers, that substantially in the question related to the latifundium, minifundium of rural enterprise and family property: Their interests are, without a shadow of a doubt, much closer to those of rural workers than to those of the large landowners. The latter work the land, but indirectly, giving orders, in the capacity of employer. The small owners, also called peasants, use labor paid in money, (in kind only in exceptional situations, exercising, only in rare occasions, a control over other people's work).

Analyses as José CM [2] approached questions in the economic sector and population in the Brazilian regions pointed that the state of São Paulo had the double of the population growth in the field (3% p.a. against 1,5% p.a.) in the year of 1999, and only in the South region of the country that there were signs of fall in the rural areas. The sectors that had a fall in production and problems in agricultural income and expenses, interest and bank expenses that increased from 5% to 15.3% in the period 1985- 1993 due to the great financial stability. In other studies such as -Old and new myths of the Brazilian rural areas|| Silva LM [17] the author points out that employment of an agricultural nature had been declining throughout the country in the years 1992-1999, but the population residing in the countryside began to grow again-or, according to the author, stopped falling-this scenario is explained in part by the increase in non-agricultural employment in the countryside.

Non-agricultural activities in the State of São Paulo have

been gaining space in rural neighborhoods and are known as recreational sites, leisure services (fish-pay, farm hotel, inns, restaurants, spas) or productive activities with considerable commercial value, production of flowers, vegetables, domestic orchards near the cities. The *part-time farmer* refers to the new social actor consolidated in the paradigm of the "post-industrial" society, seeking to adapt agricultural and non-agricultural activities in the countryside.

Based on the question raised by José CM [2], other authors, such as Baudel WMN [20], point out that this adaptation to the new "demands" and challenges of rural development in a technological era. The "modernization" of the organization of work in the field does not reproduce the classic model of the capitalist company, even though it is integrated to the market and responds to its demands, it is guided by the new decisions that the farmer must take in the new contexts to which he is submitted, in many cases the structures of the division of Labour originating in the unabolished peasant tradition remain. Economic failure or minimisation, without major investments and governmental support, agriculture becomes associated with a "business relationship" that transforms the social relations in the field, overvaluing one in detriment of the other.

The rural environment is in an accelerated process of transformation, both in economic activities and in social and cultural realities, and it has become difficult to apply a uniform definition of the notion of rural. Debates about a possible extinction of the cultural tradition based on agricultural practice by the current capitalist logic, and with direct actions of cooperatives that offer financial support, increasingly mediate the access of small and large farmers to the universe of economic globalization, in such a way that the restructuring of the elements of rural culture have been incorporating revisions of urban culture. However, other debates also gain space as the strengthening of the link with the field, bringing to the rural world possibilities of a quality of life, food and mental health culturally defined by social actors who perform activities that are not homogeneous and not necessarily linked to agricultural production, not fitting anymore in the affirmation of the trend to its social, economic and cultural emptying.

Analyses such as that of José CM [2]<sup>5</sup> alert us about the

5 In the analyses made by Maria José de Carneiro (1997) the term "neorural" exemplifies the meanings of the social practices that permeate, both in the countryside and in large urban centers, pluriactivity movements and *country culture*. In the process of pluriactivity, the integration of the village into the global economy and society, making agrarian, tourist, and cultural innovations allowing them to adapt to the economic and technical needs in favor of their existence and their value system. The *country culture*, in the scope of the agricultural fair the city becomes rural, promoting a singular insertion of the rural in the general world, getting rid of the notion that associated it to the traditional, being an affirmation of the rural world with

complexity of analyzing the process of social transformation that occurs in the countryside through the dichotomous vision of field/city, which ends up resulting in a generalized worldview, simplifying social relations, reproducing the productive and technological rationality of urban values. The appropriation by urban culture of cultural and natural goods of the rural world produces a situation that does not necessarily translate into rural values, the “neo-rurals”<sup>6</sup> do not produce a rupture with the capitalist mode of production, but end up reproducing the bourgeois ideology, their own style of life close to urban standards, however, in another scenario. The disappearance of the boundary between rural and urban, the expansion of new reflections on analytical instruments developed to understand the rural universe, continue qualifying spaces and social universes in contemporary societies sustained in the duality of generic categories. Among these instruments, according to José CM [2], in data collected and analyzed from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) conducted by the IBGE in 2000 that shows that: In Brazil, even though more than two thirds of the population is counted as -urban|| (IBGE, 2000), the majority of the inhabitants of small municipalities are in rural areas. According to PNAD data, the Brazilian rural population has been increasing since the second half of the 1990s, recovering an annual growth rate (1.1% per year) very close to the growth of the total population in the same period (1.3% per year), despite differences between regions of the country. In São Paulo a greater revitalization of the rural world is observed, while in the South the movement of emptying the field is still predominant. But what is interesting is that this retraction movement of rural exodus is accompanied by a significant decline in non-agricultural occupations, which, according to data from PNAD, began to grow at an annual rate of 6.1% in the period 1996-1999 [2].

Thus, the theme also deals with the ambiguity that of two elements for reflection, one would be the permanence of the dichotomy between rural and urban, and the other, the small towns formally defined as urban among small municipalities that would be in the mediation of two codes of social relations, the integration of the rural world with the more general system of cities and the link with nature [2]. And we can even include a third reflection that would be in the debate already proposed by Gruzinski S [13] within the problematic about the contact between Europeans and Amerindians and its results reflected in the complexity of the game of neoliberalism, modernity and economic globalization, being these that proliferate phenomena that shuffle our usual references: mixtures of world cultures, multiculturalism and identity retreats in forms ranging from the defense of traditions to expressions of xenophobia and

ethnic purification [13].

### Cooperatives, Modernization and Economic Globalization

There is field research that addresses the emptying of rural areas due to the direct actions of cooperatives. One of the works we can cite is the Master’s dissertation - “*Permanências em movimento- resistência familiar no bairro rural Taquaruçuzinho em Frutal do Campo (SP)*” (2019)-in which the question is raised about the impact of the actions of cooperatives on small farmers in the rural area of the municipality of Cândido Mota (SP) on the indebtedness and the purchase/sale of the properties of small farmers who owned properties in the region, In this region, there is an increasingly intense presence of agribusiness with a demand to supply sugar and alcohol mills. The principle of cooperativism is to facilitate insertion and more active participation in the economy, with support and strengthening of productive activities as well as access to new tools, machinery, technologies, credit, opportunity to enter more competitive markets, tax advantages that allow small farmers the opportunity to strengthen their productive activity, through membership in associations and cooperatives. However, it is not possible to understand the modifications without integrating them to political, economic, cultural and symbolic movements, marked by modern revolutions such as the technical-scientific revolution, among the conceptions of the relationship between the urban and rural environments<sup>6</sup>.

The dominant representations of a society are related to the exercise of power, dominance of the State and hegemonic power that produce representations of space and influence the production of symbols, codes, and dominant sign systems of a society. Such power, centered in the modern capitalist city, produces signs of territorialities, both rural and urban, redefining their roles and identities that are changed by actors who hold this power. When referring to the socially constructed, territorialized space, which expresses a place of relations, appropriations and dominations, we can reflect that This type of representation has the ability to account for the dynamics of actions apprehended in the space and this is important, because it is in constant transformation throughout history (as well as the power relations), influencing the permanent redefinition of this space and, consequently, of the territory. It is to this conception of space, made territory that we refer from now on.

<sup>6</sup> We can also mention here a movement that became known as the “Green Revolution”, a process of intense modernization of agriculture experienced in the second half of the twentieth century in the United States and Europe, which drastically impacted productivity in agriculture, raising production levels and implying an intensive use of industrial products in the field.

the urban world, expression of the modernization of the rural (CARNEIRO, 1997, p. 59-60).



The understanding of inequalities in peripheral-rural spaces dominated by urbanized centers reproduces the backward/advanced dichotomy. Rural and urban spaces, countryside and city, integrate the same spatial rationality marked by the organization from the city, industry, outsourcing in contemporary society, reproductive bases of capitalism and the polarization built between these is exercised by the logic of agricultural relations, not taking into account the social interactions present in space as an environment of factory production where the land only produces something, being empty of social relations. The very term “city” (in its multiple origins) is appropriated to create the social representation of the “polished, political, educated, citizen”. The rural-rus, ruris, in Latin, which derived in rude-becomes seen as the “other, in these representations”. With the studies on development after the Second World War, which emphasized the technological to the detriment of the social and the communities (a predominant vision until today), the rural was being constructed as a synonym for agricultural, which further accelerated the existing dichotomies. Also production); export agriculture, technically advanced, has been privileged, while domestic market agriculture has been called -subsistence agriculture|| and considered small farmers (owners or not) as unable to keep up with technical, economic and social progress.

The concern in modernizing the field in the final years of the 20th century was in responding to the demands of the globalized world, to accompany the demand of -rationality|| to be employed in planting, care, harvesting, storage, stocking, packaging, transportation and commercialization thus justifying the emergence of educational institutions and applied research in the area of agriculture. The modernizing movement, from 1970, accelerated the large productions in the field that also modified the forms of rural employment and labor relations in the sector; credit assistance was one of the investments of the state of São Paulo. According to Silva S [21] only the state of São Paulo received 33% of the total amount available and such stimuli, generated by credit, monoculture is again privileged and the rural interior of São Paulo, specifically the region of the municipality of Cândido Mota, starts to have a new scenario.

After the frost of the 1970's and the deactivation of the local railroads, a strong rural exodus begins in the center west region of São Paulo and, consequently, a heating up of the third sector and the growth of local urban areas. With the high urbanization rate of the main cities of the region, the growth of the latifundia would become inevitable, making the big landowners to incorporate the small properties that belonged to those who left the country life to try something new in the cities. Government incentives in the early 2000s stimulated alcohol production and the expansion of sugarcane production. The installation of mills and companies in the

industry brought to the region job openings for people who wanted to work as cane cutters. Interested parties coming from other cities of São Paulo and even other states settled in the region in search of opportunities [22,23].

Family farming has survived in the midst of competing conditions and resources aimed at favoring monoculture and large properties. In this sense, cooperatives are conceived for their ability to organize space and rural production and are identified as an alternative capable of organizing productive activity, enhancing the advantages of family farming and revitalizing territories [24-26]. However, small farmers must constantly deal with the presence, or “help”, of cooperatives that mediate the farmer with financial sectors and the means of production (inputs, tractors, harvesters, planters, seeds, grain storage silos, among others.) dictating planting rules that end up subordinating the small farmer to follow such rules in order to maintain the structures of an agricultural production. Rural territories reflect capitalist modes of production, accumulative dynamics, technical and technological apparatus produced by large corporations multinationals, the competitiveness of production in the market and the race to maintain a high level of production scale. In this perspective, the land becomes a commodity and consequently passes to have use and exchange value, and one of its consequences, the relationship of dependence of agriculture (and the farmer) with access to financial credits to remain active in the market, in an unfair competition between small and large farmers.

### Final Considerations

There is still no exhaustion of the subject related to the Brazilian rural area, nor is it possible to place the land only as an object of work as an expression of a productive factor without considering the social values it contains. Although it goes beyond the limits of an academic framework, the conceptual value of family farming suffers from difficulties from a theoretical point of view. For some, the concept of family farming is confused with the operational definition adopted by the National Program for the Strengthening of Agriculture (Pronaf), for others, it corresponds to a certain stratum of farmers, capable of adapting to the modern demands of the market as opposed to the other “small farmers”, the so-called “consolidated” farmers, or those who are able in the short term to consolidate themselves, thus other configurations of production and social form offer analytical elements and occupy an important place in the current scenario of the Brazilian economy and society [20]. It is possible to find literary references on the territorialization of agribusiness in the Brazilian countryside, cooperatives, including in the interior of the state of São Paulo, questions on the historical trajectory and religious

tradition in rural neighborhoods <sup>7</sup>, however, unfolding in empirical work are still minimal, both on cooperatives active in small regions of the state of São Paulo<sup>8</sup>. The national social, political and economic structure remains largely supported by agricultural activities, which is a relevant theme for contemporary Brazilian social sciences [27-29]. Rurality remains one of the main bases for the development of sociability in Brazil, transforming over time and thus contributing to the composition of Brazilian modernity. However, approaches to these themes that contemplate only the optics of the economic relationship of rural versus urban based only on a position of backwardness versus advanced highlights an important characteristic of this dynamic, which is the difficulty of understanding the racial component associated with constructions of differences between what is of the rural and urban universe. Studies on miscegenation and raciality help us to understand how some determining traits of characteristics related to phenotype, inferiority or incivility are constructed, architecting characteristics for a generic and pejorative identity representation, of physical, moral and intellectual inferiority, which served as the basis for the imagetic representation of the caipira paulista.

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