

'Aprendiz de Proust': Gilberto Freyre in Search of a Lost Past and a Renewed Future in *Aventura e rotina**

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1 'Aprendiz de Proust': The Modern(ist) in Search of Lost Time

De uma dessas fidalgas ilustres—que conheci, aliás, nos meus dias de aprendiz de Proust em Lisboa, em casa de Madame Belfort Ramos—conta-se que, há poucos anos, quase foi apanhada, na Angola, por um belo leão.¹

In an otherwise glowing review, Malcolm K. McNee laments the absence of a literary scholar among the contributors to the volume *Gilberto Freyre: novas leituras do outro lado do Atlântico*, since a literary studies perspective might be able to shed further light on the 'remarkable combinations of or vacillations between scientific and literary modes and discourses' which a number of social scientists and historians noted in their respective contributions to said volume. McNee is clear: 'Freyre's own two "semi-novels" and attempts at literary criticism might have provided fascinating bases for a complex interrogation of the tensions around fictionality in his work at large'.² The present article shares McNee's insight that Freyre's fictional writings can provide a valid point of departure for a critique of his historical and sociological theory and writings as a whole. Indeed, when probing the tensions surrounding fictionality in Freyre's work, it becomes increasingly clear that it is not just Freyre's explicitly literary outputs that

* This work was supported by the Fundação Ciência e Tecnologia (Lisbon, Portugal), under Grant SFRH/BPD/71245/ 2010.

1 Gilberto Freyre, *Aventura e rotina: sugestões de uma viagem à procura de constantes portuguesas de caráter e ação*, prefácio de Alberto da Costa e Silva, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2001 [1st ed. 1953]), p. 372. Further references are to this edition and will be given in the body of the article.

2 Malcolm K. McNee, 'Recensão. *Gilberto Freyre: Novas Leituras do Outro Lado do Atlântico* de Marcos Cardão e Cláudia Castelo (eds.)', *Análise Social*, 220:LI (3.º) (2016), 734–37 (pp. 736–37).

display fictional traits.³ References, evocations and appreciations of literary works and authors abound in Freyre's non-fictional works, scattered throughout the texts and paratexts; together with the self-proclaimed literary character of his writings on sociology and history, these are presented as a supplement to scientific structures but can as easily be read as an alibi for the shortcomings of Freyre's arguments. Although present since *Casa-grande & senzala*, references to Proust and other authors will increasingly play a larger role (and sometimes, border on implausibility) as Freyre claims to catch a glimpse of the intimate unity behind the disparities of a 'mundo português' that he came to know only superficially during a trip sponsored by the Portuguese *Estado Novo* in the early 1950s.⁴ In *Aventura e rotina*, as Freyre overcompensates with literary allusions and evocations for his lack of historical and sociological insight, his reliance on literary references and tropes is exposed. Freyre's statement in the preface to the first edition of *Aventura e rotina* that he made no vow of 'castidade sociológica' will be repeated or echoed on multiple occasions (*Aventura e rotina*, 29). Tellingly, it is in a fictional work—his 1964 'semi-novela' *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*—that Freyre will most explicitly grapple with the productive tension, indeed confluence, between literary endeavours on the one hand and sociological and/or historical works on the other. The novel sets up an allegory of writing that will prove useful in understanding Freyre's *modus operandi* in his own historical and/or sociological works, in how his works do not just have 'literary character'; they are, rather, structurally fictional. The textual 'I' in *Aventura e rotina*, written over ten years before *Dona Sinhá*, is positioned in the same way as the narrator of the 'semi-novela': as a writer who paradoxically discovers that the fictional world he imagined is historically and sociologically true. This gives a new, *sui generis* meaning to the term *roman vrai*.

Freyre certainly cannot be accused of failing to be forthcoming regarding the role the literary played in his *oeuvre*; in the preface to his *Como e porque sou e não sou sociólogo* (1968), Freyre states:

Não sou nem pretendo ser sociólogo puro. Mais do que sociólogo, creio ser antropólogo. Também me considero um tanto historiador e, até, um

3 Freyre wrote poetry, literary criticism and two 'semi-novelas', as he calls them: *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* (1964) and *O outro amor do Doutor Paulo* (1977). For a study of Freyre's literary exploits in fiction, see Carmen de Fátima Henriques da Matta, 'Gilberto Freyre e a literatura: em torno de seu ensaísmo, ficções e método interpretativo', Doctoral dissertation (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2007).

4 In 1940, Freyre published a series of talks presented in 1938 using the term 'o mundo que o português criou'; see Gilberto Freyre, *O mundo que o português criou: aspectos das relações sociais e de cultura do Brasil com Portugal e as colônias portuguesas* (São Paulo: É Realizações, 2010 [1ª ed. 1940]).

pouco pensador. Mas o que principalmente sou creio que é escritor. Escritor—que me perdoem os literatos a pretensão e os beletristas, a audácia—literário. E ao lado do sociólogo reconheço haver em mim um anti-sociólogo.⁵

Later in the text, he reasserts the claim for good measure by presenting himself 'principalmente' as a '[e]scritor literário. O sociólogo, o antropólogo, o historiador, o cientista social, o possível pensador são em mim ancilares do escritor'.⁶ Freyre seems justified in presenting himself thus since his first book, *Casa-grande & senzala* (1933), 'was read as a work of literature as well as of social science',⁷ and certainly his penchant for the literary has not eluded Freyre scholars.⁸ Paradoxically, it is Freyre's non-fiction writing in general, and *Casa-grande & senzala* in particular, which has earned him praise from fiction writers and poets for its eminently literary qualities.⁹

Freyre's non-fiction work builds on numerous references to writers of fiction but Proust takes on a particularly significant role, as this article will explore. In line with Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo's insight into approaching Freyre's intellectual production in the context of 'um outro modernismo',¹⁰ Mariza Veloso identifies the persistent references to Proust as a symptom of the modernist practice of delving into the past so as to reevaluate the present and reinvent the future (to study the past without being

5 Gilberto Freyre, *Como e porque sou e não sou sociólogo* (Brasília: Editora da Universidade, 1968), 23.

6 Freyre, *Como e porque sou e não sou sociólogo*, 165.

7 Peter Burke & Maria Lúcia G. Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre: Social Theory in the Tropics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 89; see also pp. 78–81.

8 See César Leal *et al.*, *Expressão literária em Gilberto Freyre* (Recife: Conselho Estadual de Cultura, 1981). Other authors had already focused briefly on Freyre as a literary figure (see Dorothy Scott Loos, 'Gilberto Freyre As a Literary Figure: An Introductory Study', *Revista Hispânica Moderna*, 34:3–4 [1968], 714–20), and in the Introduction to the Venezuelan edition of *Casa-grande & senzala* (Caracas: Ayacucho, 1977) Darcy Ribeiro shares some penetrating insights on Freyre, the writer (see Darcy Ribeiro, 'Uma introdução a *Casa-grande & senzala*', republished in *Gentildades* [Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2011], 9–86 [pp. 16–21]).

9 See David Mourão-Ferreira, 'Gilberto Freyre, criador literário', in *Gilberto Freyre na Universidade de Brasília: conferências e comentários de um simpósio internacional realizado de 13 a 17 de outubro de 1980* (Brasília: Editora Univ. de Brasília, 1981), 85–94. The question of whether Freyre's essays on Brazilian history and society can be classified as 'literary' is ongoing: see, for instance, Silvana Moreli Vicente, 'Entre o inferno e o paraíso: o ensaio de Gilberto Freyre', *Estudos Linguísticos*, 34 (2005), 680–85; see also Fernando Nicolazzi, 'As virtudes do herege: ensaio, modernismo e escrita da história em *Casa-grande & senzala*', *Remate de Males*, 31.1:2 (2011), 255–82. However, the significance and strategy behind Freyre's constant references to, and evocation of, literature and literary figures is not explored in depth.

10 Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo, *Guerra e paz: 'Casa-grande & senzala' e a obra de Gilberto Freyre nos anos 30* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1994), 21.

'passadistas'). For Veloso, Freyre's distinctively Proustian take on time is linked to a wider movement in which 'alguns intelectuais voltam-se ao estudo do passado para encontrar, em sua força geradora, um salto para o futuro'. It is part of the drive in the 1930s (alongside Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Caio Prado Júnior) for the 'explicadores do Brasil' to focus on Brazil's colonial past with a view to 'reconstituir e analisar o processo histórico através do qual se constituiu a sociedade brasileira'.¹¹ In Freyre's own words, in the preface to the second English-language edition of *Casa-grande & senzala*:

I have attempted a study of Brazilian patriarchal society and culture in which the social reality is seen as a constant flow of the past and the present into the future—a constant flow of time that never stops to allow for definitive sociological conclusions about rigid 'historical periods'.¹²

Veloso's discerning account, together with Alfredo Cesar Melo's reevaluation of Freyre's 'strained and polemical relationship with the modernism championed by Mário de Andrade' in which he argues that both authors 'advance an understanding of Brazilian culture' focused on 'formative [...] South-South relations',¹³ highlight the underlying tensions in Freyre's modernist temporal and (geo)spatial refashioning of Brazil. Fernanda Arêas Peixoto is equally convincing when, in the wake of Antonio Candido, she focuses instead on how the 1930s were less the site of ruptures with the past than rather the site of actualization and popularization on a national level of ruptures announced or performed already in the 1920s; this would include the positive cultural charge attributed to 'mestiçagem'.¹⁴ In the same vein, Mary Del Priore emphasizes Freyre's insistence on explaining that 'as mudanças no Brasil se dão sem rupturas que afetem a estrutura da sociedade', that—in her words—'[o]ntem e hoje se confundem. Tradição e modernidade se articulam'.¹⁵

11 Mariza Veloso, 'Gilberto Freyre e o horizonte do modernismo', *Sociedade e Estado*, 15:2 (2000), 361–86 (pp. 368 & 372).

12 Gilberto Freyre, 'Preface to the Second English-language Edition of *The Masters and the Slaves*', in *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Culture*, trans. Samuel Putnam, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), xviii–lxx (pp. lix–lx).

13 Alfredo Cesar Melo, '(De-)Latinizing America: How Gilberto Freyre and Mário de Andrade Imagined the Global South', *Modern Language Notes*, 128:2 (2013), 298–316 (pp. 298 & 301).

14 Fernanda Arêas Peixoto, 'Relações raciais no Brasil: a utopia freyriana', in *Evocações e interpretações de Gilberto Freyre*, ed. Fátima Quintas (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco/Editora Massangana, 2003), 341–47 (p. 343).

15 Mary Del Priore, 'Entre tradição e modernidade: o exemplo de Gilberto Freyre', in *Evocações e interpretações de Gilberto Freyre*, ed. Quintas, 133–45 (p. 137).

The Janus-like character of Freyre's 'Proustian' take on time (and the time in and of Brazil in particular, simultaneously modern and traditional) goes some way towards accounting for Cláudia Castelo's bemusement regarding Freyre's approach: Freyre manages to be 'profundamente moderno' in methodological and disciplinary terms while also identifying himself with the ' "tempo perdido" dos seus antepassados' when recreating and celebrating 'as origens e a natureza da brasilidade'.¹⁶ Although Castelo has *Casa-grande & senzala* in mind, the same issue arises in *Aventura e rotina* and other writings supposedly less about 'brasilidade' and more about the 'lusotropical' world or cultures.¹⁷ Freyre's stated desire to embark on H. G. Wells' time machine in order to revisit the past, in *Aventura e rotina* (243), encapsulates the way in which Freyre's interest in the modern is tied to a compulsion to revisit the past and to project a future which adequately reflects the ulterior aims and objectives of his works. Freyre's literary allusions are inseparable from his attacks on rigid discourses, disciplines, typologies and structures which fail to address adequately the flux of the past (which in Freyre's work, historically speaking, may never have existed) and its relationship with the present and the future.

2 Creating Precursors: Freyre's Proust, or the Literary Character of Scientific Structures

El hecho es que cada escritor *crea* a sus precursores. Su labor modifica nuestra concepción del pasado, como ha de modificar el futuro.¹⁸

Freyre actively fostered comparisons to Marcel Proust through a barrage of ostensible, plural references to the author of *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927) in his non-fiction works, most often as a means to justify the

16 Cláudia Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo: o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa, 1933–1961* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998), 28.

17 The term 'lusotropical' is introduced by Freyre and used frequently in the travelogue *Aventura e rotina* and the companion volume *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*. The term 'luso-tropical' was first publicly conveyed in talks at the Instituto Vasco da Gama in Goa, November 1951 ('Uma cultura moderna: a luso-tropical') and at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, January 1952 ('Em torno de um novo conceito de tropicalismo').

18 Jorge Luis Borges, 'Kafka y sus precursores', in *Otras inquisiciones* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2005 [1st ed. 1952]), 131–34 (p. 134).

adopted methodology or perspective.¹⁹ These references will be used as a starting point for a questioning of the interdependency between non-fiction (the historical, the sociological) and fiction (the literary) in Freyre's *oeuvre*, a relationship fraught with tensions and contradictions. Francisco de Oliveira has words of caution for all carefree readers out there, lest the comparisons to Proust be taken too literally *and* literarily; Freyre may proceed as Proust, but this comparison should not be of a 'literary type':

[...] o que aproxima Freyre de Proust é a liberdade de investigação e a recusa à memória como passado 'passado': a memória, sempre seletiva é certo, serve mais à maneira psicanalítica, como seleção dos traumas fundacionais, e é um guia da fusão do que é do indivíduo com os processos societários estruturais. A forma literária é a única que permite essas liberdades. Desse ponto de vista, portanto, Freyre liberta-se dos condicionamentos canônica e chatamente metodológicos, ao optar por uma sociologia não sociológica.²⁰

Oliveira's assertion that the comparison should not be of a 'literary type' is somewhat at odds with his postulation that Freyre's freedom, comparable to Proust's, to delve into the past and refuse a passive take on the memory of the past is predicated on the possibilities opened up by 'literary form', 'a única que permite essas liberdades'. Most assuredly, reducing the comparison with Proust to the treatment of memory and to a certain understanding of the past will fall short of addressing the creative dimension of Freyre's creative, 'literary' exploits as a sociologist and as an 'escritor literário', as Freyre presents himself first and foremost in *Como e porque sou e não sou sociólogo*, as previously mentioned. The writer precedes the (non-)sociologist and another('s) writing precedes the book: the title is itself a reworking of José Alencar's intellectual autobiography, *Como e porque sou romancista* (1893). This anecdotal reference illustrates in a nutshell Antonio Candido's acute remark on the 'ambiguidade dinâmica' at play in Freyre's texts, the continuous slippage between the 'escritor' and the 'sociologista': when one searches the fictionalist, one finds the sociologist, and *vice-versa*.²¹

Freyre took the opportunity in the preface to the second English-language edition of *Casa-grande & senzala* to emphasize—and, to a certain

19 For a rebuttal of Freyre's brand of "'Proustian" sociology', see Richard M. Morse, 'Balancing Myth and Evidence: Freyre and Sérgio Buarque', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 32:2 (1995), 47–57 (p. 48).

20 Francisco de Oliveira, 'Casa-Grande & mucambos, sobrados & senzalas', in *Evocações e interpretações de Gilberto Freyre*, ed. Quintas, 21–35 (p. 29).

21 Antonio Candido, 'Gilberto Freyre, Crítico Literário', in *Gilberto Freyre: sua ciência, sua filosofia, sua arte*, ed. Gilberto Amado et al. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1962), 120–24 (pp. 120–21).

extent, clarify—the 'literary character' of his ambitious undertaking. Freyre highlighted the ways in which literature, far from being antagonistic to 'scientific structure', was the structural solution to a combination of multiple scientific perspectives:

Of a history like the one outlined in this book—part history, part anthropology, part genetic or psychological sociology—with time-values that are also modified by differences of approach—the anthropological and the historical—I might say that, within modest limits, it was history attempted also as a 'living thing, all one and continuous ...' with something from one past always present in the other pasts. My aim has been to reach what Mr. Lindsay calls 'a creative image'. Hence the literary character of this anthropological-historical essay, which has been pointed out by some of the ablest French, Italian, German, and British critics in their generous comments, and irrespective of their 'Existentialist' or 'Sartrist' views of literature and of their Roman Catholic or Marxist or post-Marxist ideology. This literary character, not sacrificing its possible scientific structure—a structure maintained by a combination of several scientific approaches—was most clearly pointed out in *Le Figaro Littéraire*, by M. André Rousseaux, and by the critic of *The Economist* (London).²²

Freyre's defence of the 'literary character' as a supplement and not just a mere complement to scientific writing finds a parallel in Jacques Rancière's claim that the explanatory models used by 'sociology or history of institutions and mentalities' or by 'Marxist or Freudian science'—often with a view to explaining the (sociological, historical, scientific) 'truth' about the literary text—were 'the models forged by literature itself'. From Rancière's point of view, it was literature's 'very mode of intelligibility' that was passed on to those 'sciences of interpretation', and not the opposite:

To analyse prosaic realities as fantasmagorias bearing witness to the hidden truth about a society, to tell the truth about the surface by tunnelling into the depths and then formulating the unconscious social text that is to be deciphered there—this model of symptomatic reading is an invention peculiar to literature.²³

Let us not be tempted into putting the 'explicadores do Brasil' of the 1930s in the same bag. Freyre's is a far more extreme case: not only does Freyre make use of literary frameworks and present readings of literary

22 Freyre, 'Preface to the Second English-language Edition of *The Masters and the Slaves*', trans. Putnam, xxii.

23 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity, 2011 [1st ed. Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2006]), 22–23.

works, but he also militantly embraces the 'literary character' and deploys it strategically as part of his historical and sociological argumentation *both* in fictional works (such as *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*) and non-fictional ones. It is in this light that Freyre's proud assertion of the 'literary character', together with the systematic and purposeful use of references and comparisons to literary and artistic figures at play in his writings, should be read as a performative gesture. The numerous references to Proust, in particular, are anything but accidental; they simultaneously illustrate and legitimize Freyre's methods of introspection of the past, of his delving into intimate history. In the same preface to *Casa-grande & senzala*, Freyre continues by evoking, and then quoting, from Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*:

Some writers have compared the 'creative image' aimed at in this essay, as it tries to fuse the historical and anthropological past and their mixture with the present, with the Proustian technique of recapturing the past. In both cases there is a study of human figures and social situations in which the apprehension of those realities by the scientific observer's eyes, as space-forms, is completed by the apprehension of the same realities by the observer's participant mind, as time-formations. This technique is illustrated by Proust's conception of the Duchesse de Guermantes as 'a collective name [...] not merely in history, by the accumulation of all the women who have successively borne it, but also in the course of my own short life, which has already seen, in this single Duchesse de Guermantes, so many different women superimpose themselves, each one vanishing as soon as the next has acquired sufficient consistency'.²⁴

Proust's methods and techniques provide Freyre's argument with an element of prestige as he unfolds his approach and illustrates his search for a Brazilian past (searching for constants, or continuities) through references to the French novelist. Later in the same text, Freyre will define his approach as 'Proustian method extended to social history'²⁵ and will draw on the Goncourt brothers to evoke and convoke the notion of *roman vrai*:²⁶

For the Brazilian past here sought for has been almost exclusively that past that the French call *histoire intime* and the Spaniards sometimes

24 Freyre, 'Preface to the Second English-language Edition of *The Masters and the Slaves*', trans. Putnam, xxii-xxiii.

25 Freyre, 'Preface to the Second English-language Edition of *The Masters and the Slaves*', trans. Putnam, lviii.

26 Peter Burke has emphasized the influence of the Goncourt brothers on Freyre; see Peter Burke, 'Gilberto Freyre e a nova história', trad. Pablo Rubén Mariconda, *Tempo Social*, 9:2 (1997), 1-12 (pp. 7-8).

describe as *intra-historia*. When the Goncourts wrote of an *histoire intime* that it was a *roman vrai* and would eventually become *la vraie histoire humaine*, they had a vision of a modern development in both history and literature.²⁷

Despite Freyre's consistent reiteration of this problematic, the intersection between history and literature in the work of Gilberto Freyre has only recently been proportionately addressed by the volume *Reinventar o Brasil: Gilberto Freyre entre história e ficção* (2006). Jacques Leenhardt's analysis of the enthusiastic reception of Freyre's work in France provides insight into the coincidences and confluences between Freyre's work and that of the historians of the *Annales*; furthermore, it contextualizes Roger Bastide's remarks on a 'Proustian' sociology at work in the Freyrean text and on the importance of discursive language, or style, in resurrecting the environment of a past Brazil.²⁸ Sandra Pesavento's focus on the articulation between history and memory in the prefaces to Freyre's follow-up to *Casa-grande & senzala, Sobrados e mucambos* (1936; 2nd expanded edition 1951) leads her to the conclusion that Freyre's view of history 'se aproxima e se entrelaça com a Literatura', 'admite a presença da ficção' and is indeed indebted to (adopts as well as—I would hasten to add—adapts) Proust.²⁹

Freyre's historical 'reinvention', therefore, is quite distinct from a merely 'rhetorical' or 'literary' exploration of anthropological/sociological-historical discourse.³⁰ Freyre's particularity when it comes to the intersection and/or overlapping between history and fiction transpires in the way ambivalence and ambiguity are purposefully exploited with a specific view in mind: research (*la recherche*) and reinvention. In other words, it is not just the case that history is written as fiction in Freyre; it is also the case that Freyre's history (*roman vrai*, the intimate history of the Brazilian people) is structurally fictional. The previously mentioned preface to the English-

27 Freyre, 'Preface to the Second English-language Edition of *The Masters and the Slaves*', trans. Putnam, lxx.

28 Jacques Leenhardt, 'A consagração na França de um pensamento heterodoxo', trad. Eliana Cezar, in *Reinventar o Brasil: Gilberto Freyre entre história e ficção*, ed. Antonio Dimas, Jacques Leenhardt & Sandra Jatahy Pesavento (Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS/Editora da USP, 2006), 25–40 (pp. 27 & 37).

29 Sandra Jatahy Pesavento, 'O cativo de Clío: narrativa entre memória e história', in *Reinventar o Brasil*, ed. Dimas, Leenhardt & Pesavento, 157–74 (p. 165).

30 Freyre's discourse on the tropics is not alien to what Hayden White has termed the 'tropics of discourse'. Burke and Pallares-Burke have noted how White's taxonomy could be productively applied to Freyre: I am sympathetic to their description of the narrative of *Casa-grande & senzala* as a tragicomedy, with synecdoche as the most significant figure of speech (see Burke & Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*, 78–79).

language translation had in fact reiterated a perspective which had already been put forward in the preface to the first edition of *Casa-grande & senzala*:

A história social da casa-grande é a história íntima de quase todo brasileiro: da sua vida doméstica, conjugal, sob o patriarcalismo escravocrata e polígamo; da sua vida de menino; do seu cristianismo reduzido à religião de família e influenciado pelas crendices da senzala. O estudo da história íntima de um povo tem alguma coisa de introspecção proustiana; os Goncourt já o chamavam 'ce roman vrai'. O arquiteto Lúcio Costa diante das casas velhas de Sabará, São João del-Rei, Ouro Preto, Mariana, das velhas casas-grandes de Minas, foi a impressão que teve: 'A gente como que se encontra ... E se lembra de coisas que a gente nunca soube, mas que estavam lá dentro de nós; não sei—Proust devia explicar isso direito'.³¹

Lúcio Costa's wish for a sociological Proust appears to be, to all intents and purposes, Freyre's command, for Freyre adds:

Nas casas-grandes foi até hoje onde melhor se exprimiu o caráter brasileiro; a nossa continuidade social. No estudo da sua história íntima despreza-se tudo o que a história política e militar nos oferece de empolgante por uma quase rotina de vida: mas dentro dessa rotina é que melhor se sente o caráter de um povo. Estudando a vida doméstica dos antepassados sentimo-nos aos poucos nos completar: é outro meio de procurar-se o 'tempo perdido'. Outro meio de nos sentirmos nos outros—nos que viveram antes de nós; e em cuja vida se antecipou a nossa. É um passado que se estuda tocando em nervos; um passado que emenda com a vida de cada um; uma aventura de sensibilidade, não apenas um esforço de pesquisa pelos arquivos.³²

Thus, the adventure in sensitivity does not imply a withdrawal into a self-referential private sphere of the individual; or rather, this is only half of the (hi)story. Freyre brings Proust into play as an illustrious forebear of his own interest for the intimate history and the memory of the past in *Casa-grande & senzala*. Gilberto Freyre, as a descendant of plantation masters (*senhor de engenho*), saw himself as an actor (through heritage) of this patriarchal past and as the best-placed agent to retrieve it, as the 'Proustian historian' he 'was and deliberately presented himself' to be.³³

31 Gilberto Freyre, 'Prefácio à 1ª edição', in *Casa-grande & senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 48ª ed. (Recife: Global, 2003), 29–63 (p. 44).

32 Freyre, 'Prefácio à 1ª edição', in *Casa-grande & senzala*, 45.

33 Burke & Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*, 67.

At this stage, it is important to restate that Gilberto Freyre's reinvention of Brazil (of its past and present self-image) and his unorthodox style (introduction of colloquial expressions and rhythms) are not merely complementary. A comparison with Proust might bear fruit provided it takes into account Roland Barthes' (a reader of Freyre, read by Freyre) view that Proust's text offers 'une complication extraordinaire entre l'écriture et l'histoire', an implosion between discourse and history—the past and memories are not reworked if not through writing.³⁴ This would make the very distinction, let alone separation, between form and content untenable. In Freyre's texts and paratexts, the performed retrieval of the 'tempo perdido' is inseparable from the writing which renders it accessible by (re)creating it.

Freyre's purposeful deployment of Proust, beyond any parallelism between both authors, is both *in* and *the* question. It acts as an elaborate exercise in misdirection: the presentation of Proust's 'technique of recapturing the past' in his historical-cum-sociological-cum-anthropological endeavours (as noted above, to 'fuse the historical and anthropological past and their mixture with the present') diverts attention from Freyre's 'recapturing' of the past being dependent on the possibilities opened up by literary devices and in imagining, sustaining and carrying out an 'aventura de sensibilidade'.

Freyre's project in search of times past, therefore, would seem to rest on the possibilities opened up by writing, namely literary fiction. The comparison between Freyre and Proust is, after all, in content and form, also of a literary type. The 'liberdades' provided by 'forma literária', as Oliveira puts it, are not an effect but rather a structural condition: it does not allow Freyre to set himself free from conceptual or methodological constraints, instead it is the means through which different conceptual notions or even frameworks are articulated in a cohesive manner. Beyond Candido's appreciation of Freyre's dynamic ambiguity between the writer and the sociologist, Freyre's self-definition as a writer first and foremost conceals in plain view the way in which the 'scientific structure' of anthropological and historical writings is both saturated as well as structured by 'literary character'.

34 Jean-François Chevrier, 'Proust par Roland Barthes', in *Prétexte: Roland Barthes, Colloque de Cerisy*, ed. Antoine Compagnon (Paris: Christian Bourgois éditeur, 2003), 413-438 (p. 437).

3 'Mais real que o real', or Fiction As a Vanishing Mediator

São incontáveis as vezes em que o antropólogo se deixa engambelar pelo novelista, sendo preciso ler e reler atento tanto ao gozo literário como aos saberes duvidosos, vendidos como boa ciência.³⁵

Freyre's interspersing of literary references throughout the texts and paratexts (see prefaces, introductions, or epilogues) allow the author to embezzle the reader with a half-truth: Freyre's approximation between non-fiction writings (historical, anthropological, sociological) and literature suggests that his writings share fictional traits and devices when, as a matter of fact, they are fictional through and through. The abundance of literary *allusions* distracts from the literary *structure* of Freyre's non-fiction writings. Crucially, however, they also lay the ground for Freyre to present himself, and he does just so, as the latest in a long line (or rather, several lines) of artists that he insistently keeps on bringing forth.

This section will take Freyre's self-proclamation as a 'escritor literário' at face value and resort to one of his fictional writings, the 'semi-novela' *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* (1964), as a point of entry into Freyre's non-fictional writings, namely *Aventura e rotina*; and, to some extent, as a template for a renewed reading of Freyre's 'quase-diário', as he terms it.³⁶ The plot of the 'semi-novela' stages a fusion between 'tempo artisticamente fictício' and the 'tempo histórico',³⁷ the device through which historical and literary figures, historical periods or elements, were woven together in *Aventura e rotina* more than a decade earlier.

Before addressing the text of the novel itself, it is worth considering Freyre's epilogue, 'Conversa do autor com o leitor, em torno do modo por que foi esboçada a seminovela *Dona sinhá e o filho padre*'. In it, Freyre supplements the meditation on the relation between history and fiction that takes place in the text of the novel. The author offers a rationale for his work and defends his method in an eerily familiar fashion to readers of prefaces and introductions to non-fictional works such as *Casa-grande &*

35 Ribeiro, 'Uma introdução a *Casa-grande & senzala*', p. 20.

36 See Gilberto Freyre, *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas: introdução a uma possível luso-tropicologia, acompanhada de conferências e discursos proferidos em Portugal e em terras lusitanas e ex-lusitanas da Ásia, da África e do Atlântico* (Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1953), 9. Subsequent references are to this edition and will be given in the body of the article.

37 Gilberto Freyre, *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre (seminovela)* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1964), 17. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given within parentheses in the main text.

senzala or *Sobrados e mucambos*. He defends a third way for fiction, beyond the genres 'romance histórico' and 'história romanceada': a 'terceiro tipo de literatura, ou de metaliteratura, ou de paraliteratura, ainda a ser rigorosamente classificado' (*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, 182). Freyre's proposal for a new classification for literature/fiction, which tests the boundaries between the novel (romance) and history, unsurprisingly mirrors Freyre's own practice in challenging rigid categories and distinctions between literature and history and/or sociology and/or anthropology, often by drawing from and combining a variety of genres, techniques and methods. The virtues of syncretism are extolled in the epilogue as Freyre puts forward the notion of 'ultra-realismo', in which the writer and the sociologist (and the philosopher, and the historian, and the sociologist and the biographer etc.) come together. In characteristic fashion, references to authors are thrown at the reader in order to frame a lineage and a tradition for the fluid concept that Freyre wishes to contrast with, in his view, outdated rigid concepts:

Ou inclassificável, como continua a ser quase tôda a produção de Unamuno só arbitrariamente denominada de romanesca. Ou aquela parte das novelas de Wells que, aparentemente ficção, são antes ensaios quase sociológicos. Tudo marcado pelo que nêle havia de genial; e, por conseguinte, de superior às convenções de gênero literário.

O ultra-realismo, quase sempre empático, pela identificação do autor com um ou com alguns dos seus personagens, a ponto de reconstituí-lhe a consciência e até o inconsciente, vem de Defoe a Dorothy Richardson, de Tolstói a Proust, de Flaubert a Unamuno, de Eliot a Hardy, de Melville a Gide, de Henry James a Thomas Mann, de Meredith a James Joyce, manifestando-se de vários modos, alguns arrojadamente experimentais, na literatura moderna, através de difíceis combinações da técnica de ficção com a da confissão ou a da autobiografia, com a da reconstituição biográfica ou histórica, com a do comentário sociológico ou filosófico, em tórno de assuntos postos em relêvo pela novela ou pelo romance. (*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, 182–83)

The epilogue to *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* thus illustrates once more Freyre's explicit attempt to, in Jorge Luis Borges' terms, create his own precursors—and thus better emphasize the originality and ground-breaking character of his very own contribution. Ultimately, 'ultra-realismo' is but another brick on the Proustian introspection and method applied to social history or the Goncourt brothers' *roman vrai* that Freyre has been peddling since his debut with *Casa-grande & senzala* in 1933. Decades later, in *Insurgências e ressurgências atuais* (1981), Freyre will still be faithful to his favoured mode of exposition by including himself, as a 'historiador ou

antropólogo social brasileiro de alguma repercussão fora do Brasil' who succeeded in 'restituir tempos perdidos—os do Brasil patriarcal', in a lineage that builds on the 'real psicológico do romancista Henry James, através de uma arte que Proust e Joyce ampliariam', and which can be traced back (via Roland Barthes) to Ignatius de Loyola.³⁸ It is an opportunity for Freyre to sing his own praises as a writer committed to the 'mais real que o real'.³⁹

The text of *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* already shows what the author is at pains to tell the reader in the epilogue: fiction is a means of retrieving a putative past. It may be counterintuitive to consider that a fictional work such as *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* could provide a template for Freyre's approach to the historical. However, this article has already established that a) in the case of Freyre, a rigid distinction between doing history and doing literature is consciously undermined; b) the non-fictional not only works like fiction, but actually *is* (structurally speaking) fiction.

The relevance of *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* stems not merely from its having as subject questions related to history and to the past but mostly from the allegory of writing which it presents: the novel within the novel that a young author is penning departs from literature with a view to address historical and sociological questions. The plot features a budding writer who somewhat inadvertently finds that the title for his yet to be written novel (*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*) is announced in the local newspaper. The aspiring novelist is then summoned by an existing Dona Sinhá, unbeknownst to the author, who confronts him about the title of his upcoming novel, that she presumes is about her and her deceased son. The budding novelist's *recherche*, the search and research for the intimate and constant features of the past is a projection: the writer will find that what he is in the process of inventing already had an historical existence. The expression *roman vrai* acquires a different semantic charge—not a novel that corresponds to reality but rather a reality that corresponds to what the novel had sought to represent:

É certo que eu vinha imaginando fazer de uma Dona Sinhá, talvez semelhante àquela, personagem de uma espécie de romance em que ela aparecesse ao lado do filho padre. Agora, para meu assombro, essa figura fictícia me declarava que não era fictícia: que existia. Existia à minha espera, já que eu a adivinhara, ao tentar compreender tempos inatuais perdidos no meio dos atuais. Veio-me de súbito, agora com uma nitidez absoluta, a idéia, sugerida pela própria Dona Sinhá, de que

38 Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales* is referenced as a methodological inspiration of sorts already in the Preface to the second English language edition of *Casa-grande & senzala* (lviii).

39 Gilberto Freyre, *Insurgências e ressurgências atuais* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Globo, 1981), 102.

eu, com efeito, só a procurara, porque ela existia: idéia, repita-se, de sabor um tanto pascaliano. A Dona Sinhá que me recebia na sua sala de visitas de São José do Ribamar não era nenhuma ignorante: via-se pelo seu comêço de conversa que alguma coisa aprendera com as religiosas francesas. Mas não ao ponto de ser lida em Pascal, pensei eu.

Não me foi fácil acomodar-me a situação tão inesperada: a de existir de certo modo a 'minha' Dona Sinhá. Situação fantástica, até, embora não se tratasse de fantasma de fora do mundo: só fora de tempo e a reclamar para si uma existência que tornava minha idéia de uma Dona Sinhá fictícia uma idéia que precisava, pelo menos, de ser revista. Afinal—refleti—não nasci para romancista inventor de casos e de personagens; e sim para outro gênero de bisbilhoteiro das intimidades da natureza humana: a bisbilhotice do real ou do mais real que o real, de que fala o francês. (*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, 7)

Fiction, the narrator concludes, is in his case but a means to a larger end. Faced with the need to revisit the idea that his fictional creation has in fact historical existence, the aspiring writer is not bogged down by his failure as an artist. Instead, he immediately comes to the conclusion that fiction is destined for greater things; namely, 'História'. His (the narrators and Freyre's) kingdom is not of this (fictional) world:

Agora eu tinha uma Dona Sinhá real, viva, experiente, para me suprir de informações miúdas que em vez de fictícias fôssem exatas. Històricamente exatas.

Havia nisso [...] uma humilhação para quem, com *Dona Sinhá e o Filho Padre*, pretendia libertar-se do imperialismo da História sôbre sua literatura e não apenas sôbre sua ciência. A História como que me surpreendera a querer traí-la, entregando-me a namoros com a Ficção; e antes que se consumasse o desvio como que me fazia voltar aos seus braços femininos porém fortes, absorventes, imperiais. A verdade, porém, é que eu experimentara o gôsto da traição; meu namôro com a Ficção não pensasse a História que fôra de todo platónico. Fôra um tanto sensual. Dona Sinhá e o Filho Padre, eu os inventara. Se a História agora se apresentava com uma Dona Sinhá e um José Maria iguais aos meus, eu tinha a certeza de ter precedido a História com a minha ficçãozinha. Talvez ninguém acreditasse nessa precedência. Mas a mim me bastaria o gôsto esquisito, que experimentara, de inventor de uma História e de uns personagens que arrancara se não de todo, em grande parte, da minha imaginação. Se a História, para afirmar-se senhora absoluta das minhas pobres letras, não me permitia traí-la de público uma só vez, devia eu ter paciência; e resignar-me.

(*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, 16–17)

History is a possessive mistress and the narrator will have to abandon fiction in favour of the historical 'real'. As in all love relations, there is pleasure in succumbing: in this case, the narrator's pleasure derives from the secret victory of his 'ficçãozinha', which arrived *there* (i.e., where history should be) first. There where the fiction crafted by the individual goes, history will eventually follow—indeed, pursue and embrace. The narrator's self-proclaimed adventure will find its counterpart in the Freyrean routine (con)fusion of different times into (the?) one:

Entretanto, era cedo para conclusões. A aventura em que eu estava mergulhado talvez me levasse a idéias de tal modo novas sôbre as relações entre o tempo histórico e o tempo artisticamente fictício que todo êsse meu pensar de agora tivesse de ser revisto. Haveria um tempo artisticamente fictício que fugisse ao domínio do histórico mas fôsse perseguido pelo histórico até os dois tempos se tornarem, pelo menos em alguns casos, um tempo só? Haveria uma verdade aparentemente inventada—a da ficção—parecendo independente da histórica, mas de fato, verdade histórica, a qual, sôlta no ar—no ar psíquico—a sensibilidade ou a imaginação de algum novelista mais concentrado na sua procura de assunto e de personagens, a apreendesse por um processo metapsíquico ainda desconhecido?

(*Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, 17)

Fiction, or the 'verdade aparentemente inventada', is a vanishing mediator: its sole purpose is to advance an historical narrative which departs from the real towards the abovementioned more 'real than real'. All that is required is the genius of a writer to arrive at the historical understanding which sublimates the fictional undertaking. A writer such as Freyre.

4 Time Machines: (re)ver and entrever

Trago os olhos cheios de Portugal: do Portugal que revi na Europa e do que entrevi no Oriente e nas Áfricas, em Cabo Verde e São Tomé.⁴⁰

Freyre's ruminations on 'ultra-realismo' in the epilogue to *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* paint a relatively clear picture of Freyre's own writings as a whole: a work of empathy within a national framing featuring a combination

40 Gilberto Freyre, 'Prefácio à 1ª edição', in *Aventura e rotina: sugestões de uma viagem à procura de constantes portuguesas de caráter e ação*, preface by Alberto da Costa e Silva, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2001 [1st ed. 1953]), 29–30 (p. 29).

of fictional techniques with confessional or autobiographical ones, with biographical or historical reconstruction, with sociological or philosophical commentary. If applied to Freyre's writing, this definition is valid for *Casa-grande e senzala*, *Aventura e rotina*, *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* and a number of other titles, including *Sobrados e mucambos*. The long introduction to the second edition of *Sobrados e mucambos* published in 1951 (two years before the publishing of *Aventura e rotina*) strongly hints that Freyre had exactly one writer in mind when he professed the cause of 'ultra-realismo' in 1964: himself. As was the case in the preface to *Casa-grande & senzala*, Freyre invokes once again the Goncourt brothers' notions of 'histoire intime' and 'roman vrai', and blurs the border between fiction and history by positioning himself in the dual role of interpreter and participant, the paradoxical discoverer of a novel that is historically true:

'Romance', sim; mas 'romance verdadeiro'. 'Romance' descoberto pelo observador, ao mesmo tempo intérprete e participante da história ou da atualidade estudada; e não inventado por ele.⁴¹

This is the situation in which the narrator of *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* claims to find himself when face to face with a living, existing Dona Sinhá; crucially, it is also the situation in which the narrator of the travelogue *Aventura e rotina* positions himself when, for instance, the individuals he observes during his sojourn in Guiné-Bissau are immediately portrayed as 'conhecidos velhos' (*Aventura e rotina*, 243), the West African slaves that helped build Brazil. *Aventura e rotina*, however, presents further challenges in relation to the 'aventura de sensibilidade' of *Casa-grande & senzala* or, the narrator of *Dona Sinhá's* 'aventura em que eu estava mergulhado'. In *Aventura e rotina*, as was the case in *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre*, Freyre creates a narrative in which the textual 'I' embarks on a journey into the past only to discover blissfully that reality fully coincides with the vision driving his quest. Both narrator-writers take some delight in embracing the supposed (ultra-)reality of the worlds they had envisioned by becoming participants and interpreters. In *Aventura e rotina*, furthermore, and as this section aims to address, it is more than a case of adopting (methods, strategies, inspirations from) fiction in order to retrieve a lost past; instead, what one is presented with is a case of the past being fictionally adapted so as to fit with a projected future. A future, as is claimed of the past, 'não inventado por ele'.

In *Aventura e rotina*, as past and future are further entangled, the result of a movement which fuses and confuses the literary-fictional with the historical-sociological-anthropological, enter the references to Proust once

41 Gilberto Freyre, 'Introdução à segunda edição', in *Sobrados e mucambos*, 7th ed., vol. I (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1985 [1st ed. 1936]), lviii-cxiii (p. lxxv).

again. The figure of Proust is deployed as a literary alibi for Freyre's procedure which purportedly blurs the distinctions between form and content, on the one hand, and between history/sociology/anthropology and literature, on the other. References to Proust function as a metonymy aimed at, more than recovery, the creation and recreation of a shared intimate and deep past history which, in the process, inscribes a prosthetic origin for the Freyrean teleology of the new world in the tropics and the lusotropical world: a writing of the past which aims to construct a narrative for the present and a teleological vision of the future.

The adjective and adverbial forms 'proustiano' and 'proustianamente' appear at key junctures throughout *Aventura e rotina's* detailing of impressions, feeling, thoughts and remembrances that emerge from the narration of Freyre's visit to Portugal and the Portuguese colonies. Proustian as an adjective or an adverb is used to refer to the environment of social saloons (Madame Belfort's, during Freyre's exile in Lisbon [*Aventura e rotina*, 52 & 181]), to Salazar's reclusion (159), to anticipated culinary delights in Manica and Sofala (439). Proustian as an adjective or an adverb is used variedly, but not indiscriminately. An entry on Goa reveals not so much a search for a lost time (times) as for a presence:

Essa viagem, eu a venho fazendo um tanto proustianamente como quem viesse ao Oriente em busca menos de um tempo que de uma presença de certo modo perdida; mas não tão perdida que não se encontrem seus traços nos homens e até nas coisas 'imutáveis', da classificação do americano [Thomas Wolfe], ao conceber um tempo 'imutável'. Encontram-se. E há, a meu ver, todo um estudo sistemático a fazer-se no sentido de uma captura desses traços lusitanos no Oriente.

(*Aventura e rotina*, 288–89)

The subtitle of *Aventura e rotina* is not ambiguous in the slightest when it comes to its Proustian overtones: *sugestões de uma viagem à procura de constantes portuguesas de caráter e ação*. The search for the traces of a(n almost) lost presence must be, in the terms set by Freyre, Proustian through and through. Freyre draws on Proust once again when discussing the 'sugestões lucidamente impressionistas' which he found in books on Portugal by poets and writers Carlos Queiroz (*Paysages du Portugal*, 1944) and Miguel Torga (*Portugal*, 1950):

[...] impressionismo mais profundo de que dizia Proust que era para o escritor o mesmo que a pesquisa de laboratório para o homem de ciência—não só sobre o que ver como sobre o que pressentir ou adivinhar em terras portuguesas. E entrever é mais importante do que ver quando se trata do que há de humano, de pessoal, de íntimo nas paisagens. (*Aventura e rotina*, 93)

High praise indeed, and revealing, for what Freyre will see in the journey (in the colonies and in the metropolis) is but a springboard to what Freyre seeks to glimpse and foresee ('entrever'): the ulterior objective—and, pragmatically speaking, the only objective—of *Aventura e rotina* is to project Brazil as a political and cultural leader (of the lusotropical world, for starters).⁴² As was the case with his view of the Brazilian past, Freyre's much touted, 'modern' challenging of strict boundaries between disciplines and genres sits uneasily with a traditionalist view of Portuguese history (mainly an idealized sixteenth-century Portugal) and a politically conservative view of the status and aspirations of Portuguese colonies.⁴³ As previously mentioned, revisiting the 'histoire intime' of the past was always a strategic necessity in Freyre's construction of a desired narrative of 'brasilidade'; the same applies when it comes to the 'mundo lusotropical'. Portugal (metropolis and colonies), however, ultimately plays the role of a contributor to the Brazilian future and nothing more. Freyre equates his search for an intimate history with the historical (and, in the case of Fernão Mendes Pinto, written accounts of) the travels in the heydays of Portuguese imperial expansion, a prosthetic origin to his own forward-looking, Proustian-fuelled journey as he travels from the metropolis to the 'overseas provinces'. The landscapes, smells, colours, shapes and sounds may help to reveal traces of lost Portuguese presence; ultimately, however, they will allow Freyre to 'entrever' a future for Brazil:

Mas como tempo e espaço não se deixam separar de modo absoluto, um matemático moderno diria que a viagem que agora empreendo é, na verdade, quase a mesma que Pero [de Covilhã] foi obrigado a empreender por ordem de Dom João II. Quase a mesma no espaço e quase a mesma no tempo: pelo menos no tempo que Thomas Wolfe, o autor de *Of Time and the River*, ampliando Proust, considera o 'tempo imutável'. O tempo dos rios, das montanhas, dos oceanos. O tempo das oliveiras. Aquele que se deixa viver de novo, ou recapturar, através de odores, cores, formas, sons como que imortais. Ou dos sons, odores, formas, cores que dependem dos homens e de suas culturas

42 See Rachel de Rezende Miranda, 'Além-mar: *Aventura e rotina*. O lugar do Brasil no mundo luso-tropical de Gilberto Freyre', Masters dissertation (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2002).

43 See Freyre's response to independentists and his defence of the 'solução portuguesa' (*Aventura e rotina*, 436 & 459–60), even after the annexation of Goa and the breaking out of hostilities between Portugal and Angolan independentists (see Gilberto Freyre, *O Brasil em face das Áfricas negras e mestiças* [Rio de Janeiro: Federação das Associações Portuguesas, 1962]).

simplesmente históricas. Dentro deste sentido de tempo, minha viagem pela Europa e pela África, que se alonga pelo Oriente, será quase a mesma que a de Pero de Covilhã. Um tanto como a de Fernão Mendes Pinto. Vou ver águas, árvores e coisas iguais às que eles viram com olhos de portugueses. Os meus são de brasileiro. (*Aventura e rotina*, 287)

The last sentence, with the reference to 'Brazilian eyes', introduces a change of register and a change of perspective which updates timespace itself: the reader is invited to depart from Portugal to the lusotropical world i.e., with Brazil as leading agent and Freyre as its usher; consequently, from the past into the future. Freyre will play up this same point in *Insurgências e ressurgências*, a 1981 book which picks up on ideas first presented in *Aventura e rotina* and *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas* when, referring to the writings published in 1953, he mentions his 'perspectivas brasileiras e, por isto mesmo, retrospectivamente portuguesas em alguns pontos e, em outros pontos, futuroológica: prospetiva'.⁴⁴

In very much the same way, what Freyre seeks from his visit to the 'mundo português' is a better understanding of Brazil as he reflects, in Guiné-Bissau, on the role of Portuguese and West African contributors, however unwilling, to the construction of Brazil.⁴⁵ Freyre's search for 'constantes portuguesas' entails disparate timespaces being sown together in a teleological view which revisits the past with a determined future already in mind. Freyre's extrapolations on the expression 'peças da Guiné', which he claims is in the back of his mind throughout the journey (*Aventura e rotina*, 242), is exemplary of Freyre's 'proustianamente'—i.e., his Proustian method extended to social history in action:

Em contacto com indivíduos desses vários grupos, diferentes nas formas do corpo, na cor da pele e sobretudo nas formas de cultura que, dentro dos meus limites de tempo, venho visitando nas suas próprias aldeias, tenho a impressão de que vejo os próprios começos africanos do Brasil. Domina-me às vezes a sensação—sensação física—de que estou aqui dentro duma máquina inventada por um novo Wells, ao contrário do inglês—todo empenhado em ver o futuro—, proustianamente decidido a capturar o tempo perdido. O passado. Máquina que me teria trazido até

44 Freyre, *Insurgências e ressurgências atuais*, 208.

45 The 'lançados' in Guiné-Bissau foreshadow the Portuguese settlers of Brazil, as 'Ramalhos ou Caramurus ou "bacharéis de Cananéia" desgarrados pelas brenhas tropicais da África'. Furthermore, the 'peças da Guiné' (i.e., slaves) play a decisive role in the colonization of Brazil through their labour in the sugar plantations of Pernambuco, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro (*Aventura e rotina*, 246–47).

uma Guiné não só pouco europeizada no espaço como no tempo: um tempo que seria, ainda, em certas áreas, socialmente quase o mesmo dos dias decisivos da colonização portuguesa do Brasil. Há pretas, pretalhonas, moleques, molecas, molecotas, negros velhos que aqui me surgem aos olhos—alguns quase nus e mesmo nus, outros tatuados, vários com seus panos de cor, seus timões ou seus camisolões brancos de mandingas, algumas pretas com seus turbantes, suas pulseiras, suas chinelas, seus peitos gordos e em bico e à vezes suas nádegas e os seus próprios sexos inteiramente à vista—não como figuras inesperadas ou quase fantásticas, mas como conhecidos velhos. Não que os tenha conhecido inteiramente assim no Brasil, onde, menino, ainda vi escravos velhos não só crioulos como da Costa d'África. Mas estes quase nus e até nus são meus conhecidos velhos dos desenhos de Rugendas, de Debret, dos livros de Koster e Maria Graham. (*Aventura e rotina*, 243)

The evocation of an H. G. Wells' time machine that could be used to retrieve 'proustianamente' a lost past highlights the pretence of a fluidity of time while also setting up and consolidating the confluence between past and present experience (including the author's childhood experiences), impressions (the above-mentioned reference to Proust's take on impressionism as the laboratory of the artist is important), and artistic representations of the Brazilian historical slaveholding past. 'Proustianamente' does not stand for a technique or a method but for an approach to the past, a reflection on the present and a projection of a future based on individual autobiography, memory, experiences and sensitivities. In sum, exercises in 'entrever'. Faced with Guiné (or with the expression 'peças da Guiné', first and foremost), Freyre evokes the decisive days of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil as he is 'decidido' to capture lost time. When glancing through the people of Guiné-Bissau, Freyre captures a glimpse of the origins of Brazil, 'entrevê' the intimate history of Brazil. Freyre's 'olhos de brasileiro' make him 'ver' 'indivíduos desses vários grupos', but 'entrever' 'meus conhecidos velhos' (emphasis on 'meus'); these individuals are *Aventura e rotina's* reverse-mirror equivalents to Dona Sinhá, silent and wholly deprived of agency. Freyre is merely interested in the slaves as a 'creative image' (tellingly, he evokes portraits by foreign illustrators) and in slavery as a trigger for remembrance, affectivity, and intimacy. The delight Freyre takes in reproducing the lexicon of the racial categories and in describing the bodies does betray, none the less, the latent violence (symbolic and otherwise) underwriting and undermining the intimate history that Freyre's texts propose.

5 Reading Freyre Literally and Literarily: Brazil's Future As *déjà vu*

The model for historical intelligibility, in short, is literary narrative. We who hear and read stories are good at telling whether a plot makes sense, hangs together, or whether the story remains unfinished.⁴⁶

It would be tempting to dismiss Freyre's *sui generis* combination of disparate writers and artists in the aforementioned passages on the voyage of Vaz de Caminha and Fernão Mendes Pinto and on the expression 'peças da Guiné' (i.e., Proust, Wolf, Mendes Pinto, H. G. Wells, 'Rugendas, de Debret, dos livros de Koster e Maria Graham') as a purely rhetorical compensation for an argumentative lack of substance. However correct, this approach would prove to be equally insufficient: for in creating a tradition, and precursors, Freyre creates also a teleology and a framework. The references to a vast array of mainly literary references allow Freyre to articulate equally disparate characters and references from the historical past in *Aventura e rotina*. As in art, so in the historical past, as rendered explicit in the introduction to the second edition of *Sobrados e mucambos* (1951): 'Do passado se pode escrever o que Proust escreveu do mundo; que está sendo sempre recriado pela arte'.⁴⁷

As the plot of *Dona Sinhá e o filho padre* illustrates, and as is performed in *Aventura e rotina*, to 'entrevê' is to find a *more real than real* or an *ultra-real* which, as a result of said fiction (or truth invented), *will be there proustianamente* and, *ergo, freyreanamente*. What Freyre sees in his journey is always already framed as *déjà vu*; Freyre does not let what he sees get in the way of what he anachronistically 'entrevê', keeps facts (historical, cultural or political) from getting in the way of a good story, revisits the past in order to lay the foundation for a teleological view of the future. In *Aventura e rotina*, the past is retrieved also as a result of the literary references/interferences which are clearly and ostensibly visible. Freyre's strategic use of literary style, tropes and references effectively creates precursors to Freyre's text; to the extent that when Freyre's writing seemingly retrieves a past time or presence, this is but the creation of Freyre's championed fluidity and fusion of disciplines, genres and techniques.

46 Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 20.

47 Freyre, 'Introdução à segunda edição', lxiii.

Freyre's aforementioned comparison of his journey to those of Pêro da Covilhã and Fernão Mendes Pinto, the latter mostly known as the author of a manuscript retelling his own journeys in the East (*Peregrinação*, first published in 1614), falls precisely into the model of a revisit of the past with a view to legitimizing a projected vision of the future. By comparing his journey and his writing to that of Mendes Pinto (both mature authors, retelling their adventures)⁴⁸ while openly invoking Proust's method ('proustiano'; 'proustianamente') as the guiding reference, Freyre fuses and confuses both different time-spaces as well as, to use the terms set in *Dona Sinhá*, the 'tempo artisticamente fictício' and the 'tempo histórico'. Mendes Pinto is *both* the idealized sixteenth-century Portuguese man/*Lusiad*⁴⁹ and the forerunner to the insights later revealed by contemporaries such as Proust, first and foremost, but by no means exclusively:

Nessa variedade de expressões, de atividades, de funções, [Fernão Mendes Pinto] transbordou sua inquietação de homem incapaz de ser só de um tempo, de um lugar ou de uma profissão: sôfrego de viver sua vida em vários tempos, em vários ritmos e várias funções e não dentro de qualquer rotina ou limite de espaço ou de tempo. Pois um homem que é missionário vive num ritmo que não é o do homem que se entrega à atividade comercial; e variando de ritmo varia social e psicologicamente de tempo: de tempo no sentido bergsonianamente psicológico que Proust aplicou ao romance memorialista.

Não terá, entretanto, séculos antes de Bergson e de Proust, Fernão Mendes Pinto escrito páginas também de memorialista em que o herói procura a ressurgência do tempo perdido e revive vários tempos: os vários ritmos de ação ou de atividade ou de aventura que experimentou? Parece-me que sim. (*Aventura e rotina*, 328–29)

The same idea is repeated further on, with a difference (from Bergson to Joyce):

De *Peregrinação* talvez se possa dizer que é vaga antecipação do método joyciano e dos proustiano: antecipação no modo de fundir um escritor os vários tempos vividos por seus personagens ou por ele próprio.

(*Aventura e rotina*, 332)

In Mendes Pinto's literature, according to Freyre, time is the main character (*Aventura e rotina*, 331); as was the case with Freyre himself—and just as

48 Mendes Pinto's literary creation was 'arrojo já de velhice' (Freyre, *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*, 78).

49 Fernão Mendes Pinto is offered as an example of Portuguese traits and virtues (see *Aventura e rotina*, 206–07).

Proust (and Joyce, and Bergson)—Mendes Pinto sought to bring back to life lost times and to experience several different times. In the accompanying volume to *Aventura e rotina, Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*, the work of Fernão Mendes Pinto is explicitly presented as foreshadowing Proust:

[...] uma espécie de antecipação 'à procura do tempo perdido', de Proust, pelo que acrescentou a uma autobiografia desembaraçada de preocupações de rigor cronológico, de descrição e caracterização de homens, grupos e lugares não só diversos como em diferentes épocas ou situações, algumas deformadoras do que parecia fixo em certas personalidades. (*Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*, 77)

The fashion in which Mendes Pinto presents his subject matter is 'artisticamente desordenada' to the extent that it 'faz pensar—repita-se—em antecipação de Proust' (*Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*, 81). The emphasis on artistic disorder (i.e., not fitting within established, rigid frameworks) is anything but innocent: it highlights Freyre's very own method and style.

Mendes Pinto serves Freyre's purposes in *Aventura e rotina* well. According to Freyre, Mendes Pinto, a precursor to European writers who ventured in search of the exotic, is proclaimed as an uncommon writer, 'tão incomum que talvez deva ser considerado o maior em língua portuguesa', a 'escritor poderosíssimo' because he conferred 'unidade [...] a essa disparidade de vidas, de experiências e de aventuras' (*Aventura e rotina*, 329). A writer as unusual and powerful, it might be inferred, as Freyre, who, in the preface to *Aventura e rotina*, claims to follow in Mendes Pinto's footsteps (*Aventura e rotina*, 30). After all, Freyre is able to discern ('entrever'), as the section on 'peças da Guiné' illustrates, an intimate unity ('conhecidos velhos') behind and beyond apparent disparities. The professed Proustian method boils down, as announced in the brief preface to the first edition of *Aventura e rotina*, to a Freyrean *déjà vu*:

Mais de uma vez minha impressão foi a do *déjà vu*, tal a unidade na diversidade que caracteriza os vários Portugais espalhados pelo mundo; e tal a semelhança desses Portugais diversos com o Brasil. Donde a verdade, e não retórica, que encontro na expressão 'lusotropical' para designar complexo tão disperso; mas quase todo disperso só pelos trópicos. (*Aventura e rotina*, 29)

In *Aventura e rotina*, Freyre invented the truth (in artistic and fictional time) of an intimate history of the 'mundo português': the unity in diversity, the similarity of the several and diverse Portugals with Brazil. Brazil is emphatically presented as '[...] um dos líderes - se não for, sob vários aspectos, o principal líder - das modernas civilizações tropicais' (*Aventura e*

rotina, 288) and, consequentially, of the lusotropical world. In this context, the reference to Fernão Mendes Pinto presents an interesting supplement to the ubiquitous Proustian element, a Portuguese historical means to a Brazilian artistically fictitious end, 'mais real que o real'; it is no accident that Mendes Pinto is presented as an example of literature that *intensifies* reality ('intensificação da realidade' [*Aventura e rotina*, 333]). The circle is complete: Fernão Mendes Pinto, a chronicler of Portuguese sixteenth-century expansion, who foreshadows Proust, legitimizes Freyre's Proustian rediscovery in the twentieth century of the 'mundo que o português criou'/'lusotropical'.

One notable aspect differentiates the references to the writers Mendes Pinto, on the one hand, and Proust, on the other, in Freyre's writings. In contrast to Proust, the references, evocations and comparisons to Mendes Pinto are relatively scarce in Freyre's writings; they proliferate only during those periods when Freyre engages more directly with the 'mundo português'. This indicates, above all, the performative traits of *Aventura e rotina*, and of the travelogue's aims and purposes. The significance of the fact that, as duly noted by Peter Burke and Maria-Lúcia Pallares-Burke, Freyre pulled no punches in *Casa-grande & senzala* and painted a contemptuous picture of contemporary Portugal,⁵⁰ in sharp contrast to later representations of Portugal that have commonly been referred to as lusophile, does more than fuel a legitimate suspicion that Freyre may not have been at his most earnest when he adopted a panegyric tone in support of the Portuguese *Estado Novo*. Ultimately, it reveals the extent to which Freyre would be willing to go in order to serve his ultimate goal—a vision of Brazil as leader of the lusotropical world. Portugal and Portuguese writers such as Mendes Pinto had provided, in a very specific geopolitical context, a historical alibi and had acted as a prosthetic origin, recreated and reinvented to fit the teleological narrative of the fulfilment of Brazil as regional leader and global actor in an era defined by Cold War asymmetries and pressures for decolonization.⁵¹ During the 1950s and early 1960s Freyre

50 Burke and Pallares-Burke note, the treatment given to the contemporary Portuguese in *Casa-grande & senzala* is very different in to *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas* and *Aventura e rotina* and both the authorities (Portuguese *Estado Novo*) and author seemed to overlook these words when they, respectively, issued and accepted the invitation for the voyage (Burke & Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*, 186–87). The authors leave in the air several questions regarding Freyre's apparent dramatic change of heart and mind, as well as querying both Freyre's knowledge (or lack thereof) regarding the reality of Portuguese colonies but also his aims and motivation (*Gilberto Freyre*, 188–89).

51 Regarding lusotropicalism as a foreign relations policy and doctrine, see Rafael Souza Campos de Moraes Leme, *Absurdos e milagres: um estudo sobre a política externa do lusotropicalismo (1930–1960)* (Brasília : Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2011); Carlos Piñeiro Iñiguez, *Sueños paralelos: Gilberto Freyre y el*

was still happy to produce panegyrics (*O Luso e o trópico* [1962]; *Integração portuguesa nos trópicos* [1958]) which served the intersecting interests of Freyre (ever with Brazil in mind) and the Portuguese colonialist state, by praising the 'método português' and defending the *Estado Novo*. It was a useful tool in Freyre's confrontation of the 'inferiority complex' in relation to Anglo-Saxon cultures by rejecting the idea of Brazil as an underdeveloped and under-civilized distant attempt to catch up with Anglo-Saxon civilization.⁵² Freyre's recentered perspective allows for a contrasting posture, in which Brazil can be taken as a point of reference,⁵³ and the almost lost presence of the Portuguese provided a useful artificially construed origin for the Brazilian emergence.⁵⁴ Both *Aventura e rotina* and *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas*, purportedly on the lusotropical world, refer ultimately to Brazil, and end on Brazil. The last section of *Aventura e rotina* narrates Freyre's return to Brazil, armed with an old and rare edition of the sixteenth-century epic poem *Os Lusíadas* encased in a coffer made of commodities extracted from different Portuguese colonies, courtesy of the *Estado Novo*. The last text featured in *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas* is Freyre's brief discourse to the Brazilian President to whom he was charged with delivering the edition of *Os Lusíadas*.

The references to Proustian introspection as a method and a technique—and in *Aventura e rotina*, the framing of Mendes Pinto as a precursor of Proust, *inter alia*—aims to justify in retrospect a recreation of Brazil, both as it is *and*, from Freyre's perspective, as it should become. It is in this light that the closing remarks of former President of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso's preface to *Casa-grande & senzala* should be read. Cardoso's preface ends on a note which is as wary as, until that moment, the preface as a whole had been uncharacteristically—given the author's respective political and sociological views and trajectories—forgiving of Freyre's book: the (implicitly Brazilian) reader of the book, warns the preface,

lusotropicalismo—identidad, cultura y política en Brasil y Portugal (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano-Galerna, 1999); and Jerry Dávila, *Hotel Trópico: Brazil and the Challenge of African Decolonization, 1950–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke U. P., 2010).

52 See Luiz Antônio de Castro Santos, 'O espírito da aldeia: orgulho ferido e vaidade na trajetória intelectual de Gilberto Freyre', *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, 27 (1990), 45–66.

53 Sergio B. F. Tavoraro, 'Gilberto Freyre e nossa "modernidade tropical": entre a originalidade e o desvio', *Sociologias*, 15:3, (2013), 282–317 (p. 295).

54 Following on from Castro Santos, see Cristiana Bastos: 'a elaboração do luso-tropicalismo e o enaltecimento da originalidade das culturas lusófonas' could be read, among other things, as 'uma resposta energizada pela "afrota" primordial e pelo narcisismo ferido' (Cristiana Bastos, 'Tristes trópicos e alegres lusotropicalismos: das notas de viagem em Lévi-Strauss e Gilberto Freyre', *Análise Social*, XXXIII:146–47 [1998], 415–32 [p. 427]).

'[a]prenderá com ele algo do que fomos ou do que ainda somos em parte. Mas não o que queremos ser no futuro'.⁵⁵ Not that Freyre did not have a strong vision for the future of Brazil and the collective Brazilian people; just one in which 'we' might not (indeed, according to Cardoso, should not) take part. Cardoso is accepting of Freyre's vision of the past as long as it does not lead on to Freyre's vision of Brazil's future, but Freyre's literary structuring of the historical-antropological that this essay traced suggests that considerable caution should be exercised when considering Freyre's search for the intimate histories of the past, more often than not subordinated to and shaped in accordance with the same vision of the future about which Cardoso is wisely fearful. For, in Freyre, the Brazilian past is a *déjà vu* country—it reflects a projected future.

55 Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 'Um livro perene', preface to *Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 48^a ed. (Recife: Global, 2003), 19–28 (p. 27).