



RESONANCES OF TOLSTOY'S THOUGHTS IN BRAZILIAN LITERARY JOURNALISM (1909-1922)

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ABSTRACT: The present work aims to discuss the resonance of the thought of the Russian writer Leon Tolstoy (1828-1910) among the intellectuals who collaborated with Brazilian literary journalism, especially the Rio newspaper *A Careta*. Count Tolstoy, in several of his libels, began to attack the authoritarianism of Russian autocracy, the social contradictions that accompanied modernity, and claim for the redistribution of land in his country. In the *Belle Époque* tropical, Brazilian writers had to reflect on a similar context. In these terms, we propose an analysis of the resonances of Tolstoism - which advocates the valorization and mystical communion with marginalized social subjects - in the national journalistic and fictional prose such as these are found in texts by José Veríssimo (1857-1916), Fábio Luz (1864-1931), Curvelo de Mendonça (1870-1914) and Lima Barreto (1881-1922).

KEYWORDS: Literary history, Intellectual History, First Republic.

RESUMO: O presente trabalho tem como objetivo discutir a ressonância do pensamento do escritor russo Leon Tolstoy (1828-1910) entre os intelectuais que colaboraram com o jornalismo literário brasileiro, especialmente o jornal do Rio *A Careta*. O Conde Tolstói, em vários de seus libelos, começou a atacar o autoritarismo da autocracia russa, as contradições sociais que acompanharam a modernidade e reivindicar a redistribuição da terra em seu país. Na Belle Époque tropical, os escritores brasileiros tiveram que refletir sobre um contexto semelhante. Nestes termos, propomos uma análise das ressonâncias do tolstoísmo - que defende a valorização e a comunhão mística com os sujeitos sociais marginalizados - na prosa nacional jornalística e fictícia, como são encontrados em textos de José Veríssimo (1857-1916), Fábio Luz (1864-1931), Curvelo de Mendonça (1870-1914) e Lima Barreto (1881-1922).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: História literária, História intelectual, Primeira República.

Historians and literary critics have, for some time, been making use of newspapers as a source of historical information. Nevertheless, the study of so-called print culture has been closely linked to traditional conceptions of scientific truth. Journals were considered, in uncritical approaches, merely objective records of facts.

According to Tânia Regina de Luca the recent questioning about the relationship between History and Literature endorsed important reflections on the press and the world of letters in the early twentieth century. During this period, Brazil experienced a turbulent panorama, well-marked by social tensions, many ways of authoritarianism and the implementation of a segregating modernity project. The intellectuals exposed their anxieties and political passions before the new republican order. At the same time, variety and literary magazines "in particular were clusters of aesthetic proposals" (LUCA, 2008, p.125)³.

We seek to provide some contribution for the study of the convergences between cultural creation and journalism, adopting a methodological perspective outside of rigid frameworks or corporatism. It is needed to insert the magazines and journals into wide documentary fields. In addition to printed material, it is necessary to search for notes, articles, letters, journals, novels and other forms of documentation in which we may detect how a certain public of writers accomplished an appropriation of a certain work that was elaborated in a distant place and historical period.

Russian literature was inserted in Brazilian literary debates through the mediation of French critics and translators. This cultural phenomenon was well analyzed in the doctoral thesis in theory and literary history of Bruno Gomide. According to the author, from 1880 on, the consequences of the diplomatic approaches between France and Russia were the insertion of writings, not only of Tolstoy, but also of Gogol, Puchkin, Turgenev and Dostoyevsky in the Parisian halls through translated editions, in its great majority, by Eugène-Melchior Vogüé (1829-1916). Russian literature - marked by characters with great psychological complexity and claiming autonomy in the face of official power - was an alternative to a literary panorama still influenced by Zola's naturalism, full of deterministic jargon, which has come to be considered, for a whole new Generation of scholars, too cold and scientific.

In these terms,

Tolstoy's reception differed from all other [Russian] novelists ... because it was the only posthumous one. When, between 1883 and 1886, the French market was overwhelmed by books and criticism books in countless volumes of translations by Russian authors, Tolstoy had not reached sixty years yet. He was an artist and thinker at the height of the capacity, still extended for two and a half decades. It is well known that Tolstoy was dramatically reworking his thinking and writing persona. He forefront placed the non-fictional tendencies that had been troubling him since his youth and which would be, from violent personal crises on, expressed in controversial philosophical and ethical indoctrination. (...) There was, therefore, a mismatch between

the critical theses that helped him to pave the international diffusion during the boom and the effective intellectual direction that the count had begun to tread. (GOMIDE, 2004, p. 202)⁴

In *The Literary Life in Brazil - 1900*, Brito Broca explored the cosmopolitanism atmosphere that was part of the reception of foreign literatures among Brazilian intellectuals from different regions, who came to inhabit Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital, as the city was the big city where most resembled from what it might be considered an editorial market for the standards of the time.

According to the author,

Tolstoy's mania in Brazil was united with the anarchist and socialist activities observed throughout the first two decades of the century; But at the same way between 1930 and 1940 the purely "literary" Marxists proliferated among us, even in the "1900's" anarchism was considered for many people only as "literature." Tolstoy was the paradigm of these utopian reformers. The term fashion does not seem exaggerated, since there was a feature (...) of modernity and modernism, in dreaming of a better world "under the universal blessing of anarchy". (BROCA, 1960, pp. 116-17)⁵.

Actually, from the age of 50, Count Tolstoy attempted to redeem himself from a youth marked by extravagances and abuses of authority typical of men belonging to the Russian nobility. The author of *Anna Karenina* once personified Slav archetypes of masculinity. He was a military man, a landlord, a compulsive gambler, and he did not hesitate to use the status to seduce peasants of modest social origin. However, his biography has passed to a radical turnaround. Reaching maturity, the writer refused to write novels aimed only at the distraction of the public reader and always devoted himself very hard to the genre of political libels and showed, over and over, unwillingness to participate in literary salons. Basically, the author postulated that a vegetarian lifestyle, fraternal, pacifist and in solidarity with the poor and *Moujik* was the key to a successful existence. Inspired by the Gospels, which extolled poverty and self-denial, the Russian literary even brought together a contingent of young people from the Slavic intelligentsia in their country estate, ready to adopt the principles of so-called *Tolstoyism*.⁶

In the 1885 issue *What I believe*, translated into English by Constantine Popov, Tolstoy points out that his intention was not to reinterpret Christianity but to put into practice its most basic principle: love for one's neighbor. It also expresses its rejection for the theological doctrine professed by the Catholic Church because he considered it dogmatic. The count also postulates that some practices exercised by

the Catholic Church, such as political persecution, intolerance, capital punishment, and the consent of wars, as well as repulsive to his spirit, were also incompatible with Christianity itself. Therefore, inspired mainly by the Gospels of St. Matthew, Tolstoyism extolled the valorization of marginalized social actors and abhorred any form of violence. For these and other reasons, Tolstoy's thoughts met worldwide repercussion and began to further ground the debate on the social function of literature among intellectuals who had nonconformist political convictions.

Thereby, the cosmopolitanism celebrated among intellectuals working in the Brazilian press has thus gained another benchmark. Tolstoy's name appeared in some columns in the magazine *Careta*: one of the modernization icons of the federal capital, deserving a few reflections here. The print was founded in 1908, by Jorge Schmidt and it kept periodicity until 1960. A longevity that differs from the average, since most of the literary magazines and varieties of that age had an ephemeral life. It had colorful and flashy covers, illustrated by J. Carlos (1884-1950): a talented cartoonist. In respect of content, it was eclectic, always counting on the publication of chronicles, poetries, national or foreign tales, literary polemics, indications of readings, reviews and photographs of urban life.

It was a common editorial strategy for the time, because the magazines in order to keep working had to try to attract as many readers as possible.

Among his collaborators, he counted on intellectuals of different profiles, from Literature lovers like Olavo Bilac (1865-1918), to avant-garde of Lima Barreto's stature (1881-1922). The Luso-Brazilian Parnassian poet, Filinto de Almeida (1857-1945), who signed a series of short texts in the magazine *Careta* with the pseudonym of Fly⁷, made the following report, in the edition of September 25, 1909:

The great Tolstoy wept for his secretary in exile. But why? He dispatched the master's works and letters! And Tolstoy protested against this iniquity, because the Russian police should have punished the author, not the servant, who executed orders. A high cowardice. (FLY, 1909, p.33)⁸

The success of Russian writers and thinkers from a supposedly backward and barbaric region of Europe - especially between Parisians and Italians - was remarkable in countries experiencing the advent of modernity with all its contradictions and traumas. Similarly, to the dilemmas faced by Russian authors, having to think of the utility of art at a time when the immense majority of Eastern European populations tackled the specters of misery, illiteracy, and political repression, Brazilian writers also had to reflect on the same contradictions.

Despite these considerations, the author of *War and Peace* was not a

consensus among journalists who collaborated with *Careta* magazine. The 19 November 1910 edition, printed on the eve of the Russian writer's death, possesses an anonymous note in which a mysterious columnist not only regrets the sad news about the literate health of the writer but also makes a hasty value judgment by demeaning the Tolstoy proselytizing and exalting the fictionist:

Perhaps at this time the famous and illustrious Russian Leo Tolstoy is dead. The last telegrams related to his state which arrived in this capital until the moment we wrote these lines, gave him as trembling and delirious at the station of Astorvo near Corne. His delirium should not cause you any surprises: it explains to you in a flash his exciting and amusing escape; escape which is, in turn, by those who monitored the strange evolution of Tolstoy and after having greeted a great and powerful artist lamented his deplorable messianic outbursts. (CARETA, 1910, p. 14)⁹

Written by an author of orthodox Catholic orientation or a skeptic in favor of the latest scientific fashions, the aforementioned judgment value accompanying the end of the story is rather obtuse. Possibly one of the most lucid essays on Tolstoy life and work made in the First Republic was signed by the *paraense*¹⁰ critic José Veríssimo (1857-1916). In 1902 work named *Men and Foreign Things*, the author affirms that the aesthetic ideology of the Russian - based on the idea that literature should serve as a tool to favor the universal communion of humanity - can be a much bolder alternative, mainly much more than scientific determinism and naturalism. For Veríssimo, these chains founded a "pseudoscience" with "the formula of abnormality, degeneracy, the pathological case", whose Brazilian adepts disqualified even morally (VERÍSSIMO, 1902: 222)¹¹. In this way, he continues his analysis of the mystical turn of the author of *War and Peace*:

Tolstoy's doctrine can be defined as an evangelical anarchism, penetrated with a broad humanitarian mysticism and generous and altruistic asceticism. Unlike classical asceticism, Buddhist or Christian, derived from the horror of men, Tolstoy's asceticism is inspired by man's love and it has its source in it.

In successive books, (...) Tolstoy exposed his whole love doctrine of humanity and good. Against the abuses that surrounded him in the society in which he lived, he often raised his voice in favor of the weak, the persecuted, the miserable. ... But his apostolate work did not kill the eminent artistic qualities, but rather increased and graced them, giving him inspiration, as to the great poets of mankind, a high and generous ideal. (Idem, 230)¹²

The intellectual independence of Veríssimo is undoubtedly amazing. During the preludes of the so-called Belle Époque Tropical, it is known that besides military, professors, jurists, doctors, politicians, diplomats, engineers, there were writers who also practiced liberal professions, partisans of the administrative initiatives - between 1902 and 1906 - in order to sanitize the city of Rio de Janeiro urbanely and morally. The era of the "Carioca Regeneration", tagged not only by the wave of demolitions of the old colonial houses for the construction of boulevards and buildings in Art Nouveau style, in the republic capital, also it also endorsed a series of measures to dock the bodies and popular habits in the public and private spheres based on eugenic theses (Cf. GUIMARÃES, 2012). Thus, Tolstoy's mention by the *paraense* critic as the protagonist of a modernist and engaged literature, without being contaminated by the sentences of social evolutionism, is quite current.

Concerned about reflecting on the tendency of the fusion between journalism and literature in the early decades of the twentieth century, João do Rio (1881-1921) organized and published a series of interviews with writers of different aesthetic aspects in 1908. In *The Literary Moment*, Parnassian, symbolists, naturalists, decadents, mystics, anarchists, liberals, and socialists are convened by the chronicler to render an account about the work in the newspaper writing and the readings that have contributed most to their formation. Among the interviewees is the sergipano Curvelo de Mendonça (1870-1914), lawyer and author of the little known novel *Regeneration* (1904) - in which he made important considerations about the importance of Tolstoyism for the construction of a national literature committed to scrutinizing the Social contradictions verified, mainly, in the Brazilian rural environment.

According to what can be seen, the interview given to João do Rio also served Mendonça defend himself against criticisms made by Veríssimo to the *Regeneration* content:

Mr. José Veríssimo once said that pure Christianity, Christianity without priests and dogmas, the sublime Christianity in Tolstoy manner, has no place in our midst, is something that "offends the feeling of the real." He's not the only one who thinks so, I know. Some others, not in large numbers, will subscribe to his judgment; But I believe they are deeply mistaken. His talent and his observation are directed at diverse things. They do not take a good look at the facts and currents that modify our civilization.

Tolstoy's doctrine is not his or Russia's privilege. If in Brazil, as in France and in all around the civilized world, all people read and appreciate Tolstoy, because he was

able in translating the universal anxiety of peoples into good modern language. The same social forces work everywhere. The whole world is renewed in search of solidarity and pure love in human relations.

Brazil has long been shaken by such ideas. (MENDONÇA, In: RIO, 1994, p. 50)¹³

As clarified by the critic Antonio Arnoni Prado, in his article about anarchist narratives and utopia in Brazil in the early twentieth century, Veríssimo accused Curvelo of having exaggerated when writing a novel inspired by Tolstoyism, with a character inspired by the Russian author. In the reading of Veríssimo, the author of *Regeneration* was less effective as he could not elaborate a convincing representation of seigniorial relations based on the old country landowner structure, or that Tolstoy's doctrine and its libertarian implications - life in commune, absence of State and clergy – it was the most viable solution to the social illness that had motivated several popular riots since the proclamation of the Republic. If he had sought references in the messianic effigy of Antônio Conselheiro, in order to justify his ideals, perhaps the *sergipano*¹⁴ writer had obtained more recognition at the time where his book was launched.

In fact, this comparison had already been made in the work *Ideologist* (1903), by the doctor, writer and anarchist Fabio Luz (1864-1938). The narrative hinges on the trajectory of Anselmo, who, from a wealthy family of landowners, becomes a solitary activist who begins to preach Christian principles and also the organization of communes governed by equality and fraternity among the marginalized in the Rio de Janeiro outskirts and poor farmers in the interior of Minas Gerais. In a conversation with Commander Noronha about the Canudos slaughter, Anselmo highlights the differences between the Russian literate and the blessed countrymen:

Tolstoy, a peasant, counselor of the masses; Tolstoy, a mystic preacher of the purity of the Gospel; Counselor, the evangelizer of a new religion; Tolstoy, the apostle of the commune of equals; Counselor, the apostle of a commune without government that gave life to the abandoned; Tolstoy, the intellectual and enlightened guide; Counselor, the half-literate conductor in defense of the poor people of the backlands. (PRADO, 2000, pp. 94-95)¹⁵

The comparative exercise of Arnoni Prado suggests that both *Ideologist* (1903), by Fábio Luz and *Regeneration* (1904), by Curvelo de Mendonça, are closely intertwined narratives, as well as postulates that Curvelo succeeded in advancing the literary composition of a utopia around Brazilian society describing, in more detail, daily life in New Jerusalem: a commune formed by poor peasants in Pernambuco, Sergipe, Bahia and Alagoas, administered by Antonio and his two pilgrims, called José Doutor and Ricardo Moreira, financed by local elites. Still according to the

literary critic, “more consistent than Anselmo’s, the physiognomy of the Tolstoyan hero of Curvelo de Mendonça” (Idem, p. 99)¹⁶ succeed in govern the transformation of an abandoned factory into an opulent city that counts on the blessings technological advances of modernity, however it was organized by community and religious codes that refer to colonial Brazil without the devices of marginalization of blacks and immigrants.

However, as long as Tolstoyism someone has been appropriated in its narratives, a certain survival of racial and geographical determinism still prevails in the Fábio Luz and Curvelo de Mendonça fiction. The redemption of the uncultured and ragged social stratum that spread the country was only possible in their respective novels by the initiatives of nonconformist, but religious leaders from the oligarchies and by the contact and the membership of the workers and peasants of the latest news of European erudite culture. Accordingly, in spite of pertinent social criticisms, the anarchism of mystic character as it has been presented by the prose of Ideologist and Regeneration ended up imbricated in Brazil with reasoning theories.

In Literature as a Mission, Nicolau Sevcenko analyzed how the intellectuals used journalism and literary societies to also try to put into practice their civilizing project of Brazilian society. The main strategy was to ruthlessly combat the specter of illiteracy, which haunted 80% of the country’s population. After all, what are the functions of the writer in a nation with so derisory indices of readers? When they realized that the First Republic did not take their ambitions seriously and carried out a bloody and uprising version of liberalism, what remained for a whole generation of scholars was the encapsulation in the Brazilian Academy of Letters or a visceral disenchantment with official politics - and the letters - that found their greatest exponents in Lima Barreto (1881-1922) and Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909). (Cf. SEVCENKO, 2003).

Lima Barreto’s interest in international politics was constant. Curiously, in the journalistic production of the writer from Rio de Janeiro, gathered in *Bagatelas*, *Urban Life*, *Marginália*, *Things from the Kingdom of Jambom* and even in the first volume of the recent edition of *Every Chronicle*, there is a gap between the period from 1903 to 1911.¹⁷ Period in which erupted several popular riots in Russia against Tsarism. Even in the author’s epistolary, organized within a linear logic, there are not references to this climate of social upheaval in Eastern Europe well disseminated in the printed matters of that time. This does not mean that Lima was unaware of these facts. In a letter he sent to his loyal friend Antônio Noronha Santos in 1908, the charm felt by Afonso Henriques when reading a renowned Tolstoy masterpiece distorts this historical panorama full of violence: “The day is magnificent, very pure, soft and

a little cold. I have just read Anna Karenina [sic] of Tolstoy, an adaptation to the theater, by someone called Giraud. I felt that you were right to boast about the book” (BARRETO, C1, 1956, 84) ¹⁸.

However, it is still rather challenging to deduce what motives lie behind the writer’s silence around the Russian popular uprisings. The writer may have been afraid to publicly express his views on the military crackdown on the uprisings in St. Petersburg. During that time, it was only a short time and hard that Lima Barreto was able to be appointed to the post of clerk at the Secretary of War, already bearing the enormous responsibility of sustaining eight persons between relatives and clusters.

However, Lima Barreto’s silence on politics in Russia between 1903 and 1911 still contrasts sharply with the flood of reports that have appeared in the Rio press, either extolling Tolstoy’s ideas or denigrating them. In French publications such as *Revue des deux mondes*, one of Afonso Henriques¹⁹, favorite journals, the author of *War and Peace* was everywhere. This and other prints delighted in printing images of this Slav writer in peasant suits, barefoot and plowing crops in Yasnaia Poliana. Modernist publications linked to the labor movement brought controversial articles about and from Tolstoy.

It can be deduced that Lima Barreto and Tolstoy experienced the advent of the modernization of their countries as a drama filled with violence and oppression. Although Tolstoy was a European aristocrat in search of redemption; he has been accused by his wife and children of family neglect, while Lima Barreto a Latin American intellectual, black, from a modest social origin, having sought in alcohol a refuge for his troubled domestic life, these two modernists claimed an art conception that could be understandable and useful, especially for marginalized social segments.

The most ominous consequence of the lack of commitment of the literate man, before the social injustices envisaged by these two writers, was the widening of the gap between artists and people. The taste for art as a form of pleasure, cultivated until it became an affected form of distinction, culminated in an opportunistic, isolating and useless erudition.

Tolstoy’s conviction that “the effect of the true work of art is to abolish, in the consciousness of the recipient, the distinction between himself and the artist,” giving individuals a “liberation from their isolation and their solitude” to promote “a contagion “between” the author and with those who perceive the work “ (TOLSTÓI, 2002, p. 202) found, therefore, among Brazilian writers from different social origins and political tendencies, strong resonance.

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³ In original: “em especial foram polos aglutinadores de propostas estéticas” (LUCA, 2008, p. 125). [Free translation]

⁴ In original: “A recepção de Tolstói diferiu da de todos os outros romancistas [russos] (...) por ter sido a única que não foi póstuma. Quando, entre 1883 e 1886, o mercado francês viu-se avassalado por livros e livros de crítica e por incontáveis volumes de traduções de autores russos, Tolstói ainda não completara sessenta anos. Era um artista e pensador no auge da atividade, estendida ainda por duas décadas e meia. É bem sabido que Tolstói, àquela altura, estava reelaborando de forma dramática o seu pensamento e a sua persona de escritor. Colocava em primeiro plano as tendências não-ficcionais que o vinham inquietando desde a juventude e que seriam, a partir de crises pessoais violentas, expressas em polêmica doutrinação filosófica e ética. (...) Havia, portanto, descompasso entre as teses críticas que lhe ajudaram a pavimentar a difusão internacional, durante o boom, e a efetiva direção intelectual que o conde passara a trilhar” (GOMIDE, 2004, p. 202). [Free translation]

⁵ In original: “A voga de Tolstói no Brasil conjugou-se com as atividades anarquistas e socialistas aqui verificadas nas duas primeiras décadas do século; mas da mesma maneira que entre 1930 e 1940 proliferaram entre nós os marxistas puramente “literários”, também no “1900” o anarquismo foi para muita gente apenas “literatura”. E era Tolstói o paradigma desses reformadores utópicos. O termo moda não parece exagerado, pois havia um cunho (...) de atualidade e de modernismo, em sonhar com um mundo melhor “sob a benção universal da anarquia” (BROCA, 1960, p. 116-17). [Free translation]

⁶ For further and detailed understanding of Leon Tolstoy’s life trajectory and how his heterodox reading of the Bible has completely changed not only the content of his publications but also his writer’s values, we recommend reading the Tolstoy: The Biography, by Rosamund Bartlett, Translated into Portuguese in 2013.

⁷ The associations between name and pseudonyms made here, whose use were quite common in the literary life of the time, are based on clarifications that are diluted throughout the bibliography read to support this article, as is the case of the study of Brito Broca. However, the connection between Fly’s epithet and Filinto de Almeida is reported in a partial report by the philologist and writer Claudio Cezar Henrique (UERJ) for the elaboration of the Dictionary of Surnames of Brazilian writers, published in 2012.

⁸ In original: “O grande Tolstói chorou pelo seu secretário preso e exilado. E porquê? Expedia as obras, as cartas do mestre! E Tolstói protestou contra essa iniquidade pois a polícia russa deveria ter punido o autor e não o servidor, que executava ordens. Uma alta cobardia” (FLY,

1909, p. 33). [Free translation]

⁹ In original: “Talvez a essas horas esteja morto o famoso e ilustre russo Leão Tolstói. Os últimos telegramas que, sobre o estado dele, chegaram a esta capital até o momento em que escrevemos estas linhas, davam-no como trêmulo e delirante na estação de Astorvo, perto de Corne. O seu delírio não deve causar surpresas: explica-o diafanamente a sua emocionante e divertida fuga; fuga que é, por sua vez, por quem acompanhou a estranha evolução de Tolstói e depois de ter saudado a um grande e poderoso artista lamentou os seus deploráveis surtos messiânicos” (CARETA, 1910, p. 14). [Free translation]

¹⁰ Born in the state of Pará, Brazil.

¹¹ In Portuguese: “Para Veríssimo, essas correntes fundamentaram uma ‘pseudociência’ com ‘a fórmula sandia da anormalidade, da degenerescência, do caso patológico’, cujos adeptos brasileiros desqualificou, inclusive, moralmente” (Veríssimo, 1902, p. 222). [Free translation]

¹² In original: “A doutrina de Tolstói pode ser definida um anarquismo evangélico, penetrado de um largo misticismo humanitário e de um ascetismo generoso e altruísta. Ao contrário do ascetismo clássico, budista ou cristão, derivado do horror dos homens, o ascetismo de Tolstói inspira-se justamente no amor do homem e tem nele a sua fonte. Em livros sucessivos, (...) expôs Tolstói a sua doutrina toda de amor da humanidade e do bem. Contra os abusos que o cercam na sociedade em que vive levantou muitas vezes a sua voz a favor dos fracos, dos perseguidos, dos miseráveis. (...) Mas a sua obra de apostolado não matou nele as qualidades eminentes de artista, antes as aumentou e engradeceu, dando à sua inspiração, como aos grandes poetas da humanidade, um alto e generoso ideal” (Idem, p. 230). [Free translation]

¹³ In original: “O Sr. José Veríssimo disse uma vez que o cristianismo puro, o cristianismo sem padres nem dogmas, o cristianismo sublime a maneira de Tolstói, não tem cabimento em nosso meio, é uma coisa que “ofende ao sentimento do real”. Não é ele só que assim pensa, bem o sei eu. Alguns outros, não em grande número, subscreverão o seu juízo; mas eu acredito que estão redondamente enganados. O seu talento e a sua observação estão voltados para coisas diversas. Não reparam bem os fatos e as correntes que trabalham a nossa civilização. A doutrina de Tolstói não é privilégio dele nem da Rússia. Se no Brasil, assim como na França e em todo mundo civilizado, toda gente lê e aprecia Tolstói é porque ele soube traduzir em boa linguagem moderna a ansiedade universal dos povos. As mesmas forças sociais atuam em toda parte. Renova-se o mundo inteiro em busca da solidariedade e do amor puro nas relações humanas. O Brasil vai sendo há muito tempo abalado por tais idéias [sic!]” (MENDONÇA. In: RIO, 1994, p. 50). [Free translation]

¹⁴ Born in the state of Sergipe, Brazil

¹⁵ In original: “Tolstói campônio, Conselheiro orientador de massas; Tolstói, um místico pregador da pureza do Evangelho; Conselheiro, o evangelizador de uma religião nova; Tolstói, o apóstolo da comuna de iguais; Conselheiro, o apóstolo de uma comuna sem governo que deu vida aos deserdados; Tolstói, o intelectual e guia iluminado; Conselheiro, o condutor semiletrado em defesa da gente pobre dos sertões” (PRADO, 2000, p. 94-95). [Free translation]

¹⁶ In original: “mais encorpada que a de Anselmo, a fisionomia do herói tolstoiano de Curvelo de Mendonça” (Idem, p. 99). [Free translation]

¹⁷ Since Lima Barreto’s complete set of works was published by Editora Brasiliense in 1956.

We will use some abbreviations to better specify the title of the work we are referring to.

¹⁸ In original: “o dia está magnífico, muito puro, suave e um pouco frio. Li agora mesmo o Ana Karênina [sic] de Tolstói, uma adaptação ao teatro, por um tal Giraud. Senti que tinhas razão em gabar o livro” (BARRETO, C1, 1956, p. 84). [Free translation]

¹⁹ In addition to having bound a series of articles from the *Revue des deux mondes* and placing this booklet on top of his desk, possibly to always have the volume on reach of his hands, Lima Barreto was found dead in his room by his sister Evangelina, after a heart attack, still holding a copy of the magazine in his hands.

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