


Poetry for Our Lady of the Conception: the written and the lived

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This text, of autobiographical character, is structured in the memories of the first author's literary-memorialist writing path, evoked for this purpose or even in the form of self-referencing. The author starts with the devotion to the patron saint of his hometown, Macaúbas - Bahia, Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of Conception), whose relationship, almost symbiotic between population/religious/historical devotees, awakens and directs his interest for the things and facts of his community until he becomes a local writer, whose work offers subsidies for regional and state history. The (auto)biographical method breaks the hegemony of the use of the third person in the scientific text and, by producing a narrative, interweaves the narrated facts with related theorists, producing a broad reflection on the studied theme. Thus, the result is a poetic-narrative text that sets elements of the religious culture of the city of Macaúbas and provides subsidies for scholars of regional history.

Keywords: Autobiography. Patron saint of Macaúbas. Regional memory.

Poesia para Nossa Senhora da Conceição: o escrito e o vivido

Resumo

Este texto, de caráter autobiográfico, estrutura-se, basicamente, nas memórias do percurso de escritor literário-memorialista do primeiro autor, evocadas para este fim, ou mesmo na forma de autorreferenciação. O autor parte da devoção à Padroeira de sua cidade natal, Macaúbas – Bahia, Nossa Senhora da Conceição, cuja relação, quase simbiótica entre população/devotos-religioso/histórico, desperta e encaminha o seu interesse pelas coisas e pelos fatos de sua comunidade até se tornar um escritor local, cuja obra oferece subsídios para a história regional e estadual. O método (auto)biográfico quebra a hegemonia do uso da terceira pessoa no texto científico e, ao produzir uma narrativa, entrelaça os fatos narrados com teóricos afins, produzindo uma reflexão ampla sobre o tema estudado. Dessa forma, o resultado é um texto poético-narrativo que fixa elementos da cultura religiosa da cidade de Macaúbas e fornece subsídios para estudiosos da história regional.

Palavras-chave: Autobiografia. Padroeira de Macaúbas. Memória regional.

Introduction

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It was a night of lightning flashing through the gaps in the roof. Watching for the next lightning bolt amused me and my mother hummed, lulling me to sleep: "sing the one about the little house!" And for the 200th time, she sang in a half voice: "Do you know where I come from? / A little house I have/ It's in an orchard. / It's a little house/ Up on the hill, where you can hear the sea far away [...]/ My patron saint/ Who is always at her altar..."¹ – Mom, what is a "patron saint"? And she gave me an explanation that I don't remember, but the example remained: "Our Lady of the Conception is the patron saint of Macaúbas". The example allowed me to grasp the idea, because at a very young age I had already sensed the importance of the December 8 festival for the Macauban community.

Some of the events I witnessed in connection with the festival, or in which I took part, can be mentioned, such as my maternal grandmother - Petrina Rego Figueiredo (1914-1987) - making fabric flowers for the girls making their First Communion on the 8th, or angel wings for the procession on the big day. I also remember her preparing a gift of burnt food packed in little tissue paper bags that looked like little nests. In the same way, the whole town was bustling on the days of the novena in preparation for the feast. Fireworks and the festive ringing of bells filled the air with celebration.

The bells are a striking element in the town of Macaúbas; they announce the feast and the sorrow and invite the faithful to religious functions with a language specific to each event. Like Freire (1989), who points out that he learned to read the world before reading words in the backyard of his childhood in Recife, I can say that the sound of the three bells in our bell tower was my first reading of the outside world. Playing in the large backyard of our grandparents' house, we learned about the death of men or women, the

¹ This is the novel "Casinha da Colina": Lyrics by Luiz Peixoto to a Mexican song, arranged by Sá Pereira (TAPAJÓS, [n.d.]).

call to catechism or other religious functions. I keep a synesthetic image of the sound of a festive drumbeat intertwined with the rays of a bright summer sun falling through the leaves of the mango and guava trees under which we played at midday on the novena days of Our Lady of the Conception. This sound and visual image is one of indescribable emotion; it is my image of the "Feast of Our Lady".

Allow me to break the linearity and jump back to 2001, when the "Centenary of the Big Bell" was being celebrated, concomitant with the Feast of the Patron Saint. It so happened that, on the second day of the novena, the bell cracked... At the height of the pain in the hearts of Macaubans, I wrote this short lyrical chronicle which, when read at the end of the novena, brought the assembly to tears:

Who will mourn him?
Yesterday he opened the Feast which was also the FEAST OF HIS CENTENARY.
Even today, at midday, he greeted his Lady festively.
Now...
He no longer exists. Yes, because what good is a bell without a sound?
That incomparable, unmistakable sound;
That sound that countless times announced the feast, the sorrow, that called the parishioners to penance;
That sound that announced to the city the miracle of transubstantiation or that Jesus was lifted up to bless the people;
That sound that mourned our grandparents and great-grandparents and that our great-great-grandparents united to acquire;
That sound that marked the hours by striking the Hail Marys in the morning, at noon and in the afternoon before clocks became popular. How sweet it was to hear it in the afternoon...
That sound... we'll never hear it live again.
And now?
What will our feasts be like? What about our Lenten feasts and prayers? And our funerals?
The BIG BELL couldn't bear the weight of age and died at a hundred... And who will toll for him? (BOOK, 1991, folios 60 - 60v).

Picking up the thread of time, I go back to my childhood. When I was six, I had the honor of being one of the people in charge of "children's night". My mother prepared a list and told me to go and ask for balls in the houses where there were children. She and other mothers went to great lengths to embellish the evening.

I grew up eager to hear the stories of other times in our town: its festivals, its politics, its genealogy, first heard in the family, then from a couple of friends who were part of the cultural and religious life of Macaúbas. They were maestro José Benedito do Amaral (1921-2009) and Idalina Guedes do Amaral (1926/-). For many years, this couple's home was the source of the elements that embellished the December Festival, such as floats, decorations for the main altar, crownings of Our Lady, and new dobrados. Here I see a clear similarity to Naipul's (2017) grandmother's house: "My grandmother's house was full of religion; there were many ceremonies and readings, some of which lasted for days" (NAIPUL, 2017, p. 102). In this couple's house, everything revolved around preparing for the Feast of the Patron Saint and, almost always, the Terno de Reis from Christmas onwards.

The year I finished high school (1988), Professor Doctor Ático Frota Vilas-Boas da Mota (1928/2016), a great folklore scholar, returned to Macaúbas. His motto was to take Macaúbas out of anonymity and give it the prominence it deserved on the (inter)national scene, which he partly achieved. So I became one of his disciples. This stage gave me a bit of a scientific approach to what I liked and practiced with a taste for curiosity, preservation or resurrection, without yet understanding that dynamism and functionality are inherent factors in folklore or popular culture (CARTA, 1995, p. 2) and that, therefore, the transformations that took place over time in the ways of celebrating the Feast of the Patron Saint were possible and inevitable.

The December 8th celebrations in Macaúbas are the starting point for this life story. I learned from these celebrations, both religiously and culturally; I produced for them, archived them and became enchanted by them. The field of interest then widened. I'm going to talk about this experience in this text, perhaps putting more emotion into it than science, but I'm sure that if we don't lack doses of either, emotion will provide the seasoning that will make science lighter and more palatable to ordinary people.

Autobiographical memory is defined by Kotre (1997, p. 14) as "the recollection of people, places, objects, events and feelings that are part of one's life." This

autobiographical text is therefore basically structured around memories of my journey as a literary-memorialist writer, evoked for this purpose or even in the form of self-referencing. Freire (1989) and Naipul (2017) provide the basic theoretical support based on productions that are also autobiographical.

When referring to the Feasts of Our Lady of the Conception as a child, my grandmother always remembered the encamisados, the argolinhas, the cavalhadas, the lanterns placed on the façades of the houses on "Rua Grande" (Praça da Matriz) on the eve of the feast and Antônio Lula's fireworks. Certainly, these elements were common on the days of public rejoicing, as there is a similarity with Aguiar's (1979) description of the July 2nd celebrations in 1882,

[...] in which, for many days, a population of around ten thousand people flocked to the town, indulging in all sorts of amusements, including patriotic battalions, cavalcades, argolinha, mouramas or Moorish warfare, attacks on fortresses and, above all, the curious encamisada, a nocturnal cavalcade with lanterns, resembling, due to the white clothing of the Turkish-dressed gentlemen, mounted on horses covered in long white blankets, a real oriental skirmish, as spoken of in the stories of ancient chivalry. (AGUIAR, 1979, p. 169; emphasis added).

From the aforementioned couple, José Benedito and Idalina, I heard memories, mainly of the musical part, as he had been a musician since 1938, and she, a sacred singer. The names of some of the masses were mentioned, especially "Conceição", composed by Egídio Cardoso, a Macauban with bilateral anophthalmia. This intimate and familiar contact with our community's past was essential for awakening a love for the things of my home community. Naipul (2017) highlights the power that the stories told by his journalist father had in nurturing his vocation as a writer: "What was closest to me were my father's stories about life in our community. I loved how they were written and also the work I had seen put into writing them" (NAIPUL, 2017, p. 36).

When I was twelve, Almir Turisco de Araújo's memoir "A Son of Macaúbas" was launched. With this book, I was able to read, in graphic text, the first news of Macaúbas' past. The author dedicates this paragraph to the Feast of the Patron Saint:

On November 1st, the mast was carried in an erectile direction, accompanied by a large mass of people and the band of harps (pifanos) and zabumba of Mestre



Pedro. It was the beginning of the feast of the Immaculate Conception and on December 8th the people woke up to the ringing of Sebastião Defensor's bells (ARAÚJO, 1983, p. 18).

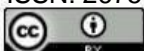
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All this information was buzzing around in my head, wanting to bring back the sparkle and excitement of the feasts of yesteryear. When I was a teenager, the Feasts of Our Lady had become very simple from a liturgical point of view and had completely faded from the outside. What remained were the auctions, which no longer took place every night, and the blessing of the cars on the eve of the Feast, the night of the drivers. I made such a fuss that I motivated the 1989 committee to raise the flagpole, without the noise of the past and without the possibility of driving it in an erectile direction to the parish church through the tangle of electric wires.

We can't pinpoint the beginning of the celebrations of the Feast of Our Lady of the Conception in Macaúbas, as there are no written documents. The oldest document of devotion to the patron saint is the deed of donation of land that Inácio Alves da Silva made in 1826 for the expansion of the primitive chapel of Our Lady of the Conception (FIGUEIREDO, 2015).

Involvement in the Feast of Our Lady of the Conception

As I said earlier, in 1977 I was responsible for a novena night for the first time, but my first real involvement in organizing the festival was in 1990. In my eagerness to learn about our community's past, I "discovered" in the archives of the Archdiocese of Salvador (still in Praça da Sé) the date of the creation of the Parish of Macaúbas, which was celebrating its sesquicentenary in 1990. In addition to the celebration committee that had been elected the previous year, the parish priest, Father Oswaldo Ribeiro dos Santos, appointed an auxiliary committee of twelve members to work on the jubilee celebrations. I was part of this team and, as such, I saw my first work printed without signing it, as it was the booklet with the invitation program for the Patron Saint's Feast.



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The cover (Figure 1) was my own creation, presenting four aspects of the outside of the Macaúbas parish church in drawings. The "second church" was a spoken portrait based on the memory of maestro José Benedito and the first was, therefore, the second without the side towers, also based on the chapels in the villages of Lagoa Clara (Macaúbas) and Bucuituba (Boquira),[Macaúbas and Boquira are municipalities that make up the Territory of Identity of the Paramirim Basin. Geographically, they lie between the Chapada Diamantina and the Sanfranciscana depression. The chapels of Lagoa Clara and Bucuituba are older than the parish church of Macaúbas, whose parish was created in 1840, made up of these branch chapels, plus the chapel of São Sebastião, now Caturama] which retain their original characteristics.

Figure 1: Cover of the Macaúbas Patron Saint Festival Program 1990



Source: Author's archive.

As well as the cover, I wrote a brief history of the Parish of Macaúbas, making a few mistakes due to a lack of historical sources. But what stands out from this program is the poetic tone of the invitation itself, which is transcribed below:

² It has not been possible to translate the image in order to preserve the excerpt from the original work.

My son, for 150 years I have been receiving your proofs of filial love, invoking my unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception; for 150 years I have been mediating your supplications to the Heart of my Son, who loves you so much; for 150 years, in short, the Parish of Macaúbas has been at the service of the Gospel of Our Lord.

Come, my son, celebrate my Feast of December 8, so that together we can thank the Most Holy Trinity for the jubilee of your parish, which I love so much. And, knowing that he who loves wants to see the object of his love loved by all, invite your friends, neighbors and relatives so that during the novena dedicated to me, I can tell them about my Son.

Attend the program, be punctual, participate in the Sacrament of Confession and the Eucharistic Banquet, open your heart to the voice of the speakers and you will come to know the wonders that Our Lord has in store for those who love him. (FESTA, 1990, n.p.).

In 1992, together with four friends, I formed the Patron Saint's Feast committee. We tried to revive some aspects of the festival that had been lost over the decades. I would highlight the "announcement of the feast" and the raising of the flagpole on All Saints' Day. On the previous Saturday, the announcing band toured the main streets of the town and various points of the weekly open market, inviting people to the opening of the festival the following day and presenting, in summary, the program.

Collected documents

Always involved in religious festivals, curious about conversations with older people, I got to know details of other festivals, having access to old programs, letters with requests for obols and other records that I'll talk about later. In this way, I received an old tin of Aymoré cookies from a family friend containing some letters with requests for oblations for various religious festivals and other old papers. Four of these letters refer to the Feast of the Patron Saint, between 1919 and 1935. One was handwritten (1919), two were printed (1926 and 1927) and the last one was typed (1935). The attorneys who signed these letters were José de Queiroz Matos, in 1910; Antônio Borges de Figueiredo, in 1926; Cláudio Domingues, in 1927; and Lauro Domingues, in 1935.

From this same period, there is a long text in verse entitled "Lembrança da festa de Dezembro (sic) de 1929", composed by Judith Pereira Aires, which appears in an

album with other poems by the same author, kept by the family. Given its length, only a few stanzas will be transcribed:

Of a religious feast
That I remember with nostalgia
Held here
On December 8th.

The humble attorney
José Aurélio Pereira
Chosen by the Virgin
Our exalted Patroness.
[...]
We went to prayers all happy
When we heard the bell ring
And returning immediately
We went to work for the feast.

Those were happy days
That I will always remember
And never in my life
I'll never have the same pleasure.
[...]

Leaping forward four decades, we come to 1973, when the Feast of Our Lady of the Conception was organized by José Benedito do Amaral and Idalina Guedes do Amaral. To raise funds, letters were sent to "absent countrymen". Some of them, in addition to the contribution requested, sent letters thanking us for the gift. We would like to highlight the letter from Alice Domingues Pereira - Quena - daughter of the 1929 prosecutor. Here's an excerpt from her letter

"[...] I would like to thank my fellow countrymen and tell them that due to my commercial occupations I am unable to be present at the festivities that on December 8 our entire Macaúbas will celebrate with the greatest brilliance in honor of our patron saint Nossa Senhora da Conceição" (Guanambi, 30/11/1973).

This letter illustrates the tradition that is passed down from one generation to the next in devotion to Our Lady of the Conception. In my case, I've already mentioned my mother and maternal grandmother directly, but it's only fair that I also mention my paternal grandfather - Manoel Messias de Figueiredo (1906-1977) - who was a prosecutor in 1942, whose feast was featured in the 15/12/1942 edition of A Tribuna, a local newspaper:

Although the torrential rains that have recently fallen in this city have created countless difficulties, the festivities dedicated to Our Lady of the Conception, thanks to the ingenious efforts and incomparable dedication of festival-goer Mr. Manoel Messias de Figueiredo, who relied on a group of dedicated friends and had the positive collaboration of almost all of Macaúbas, did not differ from the brilliance of the previous ones, thus continuing the traditions of the land (Figueiredo, 2006, p. 42).

Broadening the field of interest

Religiosity and mysticism are very powerful elements in defining small communities. The life of the group revolves around the calendar and religious events, which are usually significant for each individual. Naipul (2017, p. 28) recalls that "One of the first big public events I was taken to was Ramlila, the play based on the Ramayana, the epic about the banishment and subsequent triumph of Rama, the Hindu hero-deity".

For us Macaubans, the Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, with its celebrations and traditions, is the center of local culture and history. Our collective and official history begins with the primitive chapel built by no one knows who in an uncertain location at the foot of the Serra Geral de Macaúbas. Religious festivals marked the social life of the municipality (much more so in the past). It was for these festivals that masses were rehearsed with choir and orchestra, that dobrados were composed, that new clothes were made. There is thus a symbiosis between devotion to the Patron Saint and being from Macaubia. Bringing these elements together is an important resource for maintaining local culture because, according to Kotre (1997, p. 121), "we human beings need to stay in touch with the reality of the past in order to survive." With this in mind, I tried to help strengthen the sense of belonging, as the following examples show.

In 1991, we restored the "Terno A Mocidade em Flor" in order to raise funds to renew the instruments of the Philharmonic of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. To increase the repertoire of street marches, I changed the verses of a political jingle composed by maestro José Bedito in the 1950s. In the march, Our Lady of the

Conception appears as "the Queen": Bringing flowers / Let's all go to the lapinha, / With much love / Flowers also for the Queen.

At a later date, I composed a song for the girls of the "flower offering" in May, the second stanza of which goes like this: These flowers, dear Mother / Macaúbas offers / And to You they rise in prayer: / Give us peace for all our lives.

We close this group of examples of the intertwining between being from Macaúbas and devotion to Our Lady of the Conception, with the Hymn of Macaúbas, made official by Law No. 699/2019, based on the proposal to the City Council of a lyric about the "Dobrado Macaúbas", composed by conductor José Francisco de Figueiredo Filho - Zé Preto - (1897-1977). The second part of the lyrics evokes the municipality's past in these terms: First in a vast hinterland / Spreading knowledge, / Applying real justice / Spreading Christian living / Heroes with courage and bravery / Planted civilization / Brought in their luggage / Dream and determination. The "Christian life" mentioned in the hymn refers to the "Parish of Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Macaúbas", created by Provincial Law No. 124/1840.

As well as a walk of faith

Being a writer was a project I had nurtured since childhood and it came true. Today I can see that the reason that was latent in me was wanting to exalt my hometown - Macaúbas, Bahia - because I also wanted to be mayor to carry out a series of works to improve the town; because I also wanted to be a teacher and here, the same feeling of love for the land, because I wanted to improve the schools, restoring old activities that had been lost over time, which made the school a lively, pleasurable environment beyond bê-á-bá and two-plus-two. To do this, I needed to be principal, and I was, for more than a decade. Together with my peers and students, I managed to organize a lot of cultural and sporting events that gave me back my pride in being a student and a teacher. Other projects were more or less carried out. I mention all this because it helps to provide a

more complete self-portrait. I borrow the image of the polyhedron that Pope Francis (2020) used in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to portray the multiplicity of aspects that make up a society to also give the idea of the variety of facets that each human person represents, and I also draw on Sales (2008) who says: "[...] we are what we are able to tell what we are." (SALES, 2008, p. 29)

What world was I immersed in that allowed me to "want to write a book"? I grew up listening to the stories my maternal grandmother told about our city's past. I was close to the position of the "French boy" that Naipul (2017) uses as an example in opposition to himself: "[...] knowledge is waiting. That knowledge will be all around you. [And at school, the work of generations of scholars, reduced to school texts, will give them some idea of France and the French" (NAIPUL, 2017, p. 104). I grew up in a literate family, I had access to children's books and records. My grandmother and father read to me in the evenings. The preface to "A Educação em Macaúbas" portrays this period of my life:

Prof. AUTOR's liveliness made him a boy with references always linked to study, reading, creative play, an appreciator of good music and a collector by vocation. I can't remember a single moment of AUTOR, other than with his collections of books and records, on the journey he made every day between his grandmother Petrina's house in Rua Dr. Vital Soares and his home in Rua Dois de Julho. (Alves, 2012, p. 9).

I was lucky enough to be taught for most of my primary school years by Maria Jesuína Defensor Vaz - the dear Professor Zu - who taught Didactics at the Aloysio Short State School. Around July 6 - the town's anniversary - economic, historical, geographical and cultural aspects of our town were the subject of Social Studies lessons. I still have old notebooks with copies, dictations and exercises on this subject. If we didn't lack the motivation, we still lacked the printed text and that made me want to "write a book about the history of Macaúbas"!

In 1991, at the age of twenty, I had access to the book "Simplesmente Barreiras" (Simply Barreiras).³ That was the last straw to get me started! And I started writing "Macaúbas, terra bendita" (the first verse of a song by maestro José Benedito). I even

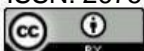
³PINTO, Suely. *Simply Barriers*. Salvador: Gráfica Central, [1988].



scribbled a cover, but soon realized that my project wouldn't fit into a single book. I kept the doodles, but continued to store data, which gave rise to a collection with the chosen title, which currently has six volumes: 1 - Ternos e Reisados em Macaúbas - in partnership with Idalina Guedes do Amaral (1997); 2 - Efemérides Macaubenses (2000); 3 - Paróquia de Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Macaúbas (2001); 4 - A Música em Macaúbas (2003); 5 - A Educação em Macaúbas (2012) and 6 - Aspectos da História de Macaúbas (2015).

However, my debut on a book cover was, almost by chance, as the organizer of the anthology "Poetas de Macaúbas" (Poets of Macaúbas), launched to commemorate the 161st anniversary of Macaúbas - July 6, 1993. It happened like this: in a conversation with Professor Ático Mota, in the office of the President of the Prof. Mota Cultural Foundation, the idea of commemorating Macaúbas' anniversary with an anthology came up. I immediately set off in search of texts with the poets and poetesses I knew, gathering nineteen vates. Once I had the poems, I typed them up and Professor Ático took the material to Brasília to give it to his editor, the Portuguese Victor Alegria. In the space of twenty-seven hours, Editora Thesaurus printed the book and the editor personally brought the package. One late Sunday, Professor Ático called me to see my name printed on the cover. A huge surprise! And so I became a young writer from Macauba.

Each book has a story; I won't remember all of them, but the first-born has a special flavor - literally a flavor. Orora - the affectionate nickname of Idalina Guedes do Amaral, wife of maestro José Benedito and my second cousin - has wonderful pitch and a wonderful ear. I spent countless mornings in her kitchen writing down lyrics, then transcribing the melodies amid the delicious smells of food being put on the fire, coffees with avoador and brevidade or jenipapo, cinnamon or milk liqueurs. This went on for a few years. During this time, we were organizing suits, creating plays and even parodying them. It was a good time, a carefree time, as I even wrote when I set to music, some time later, a swing by maestro José Benedito for a ballet by A Mocidade em Flor: "To enjoy youth is necessary, / For there is no repetition of this court / In which the soul breathes





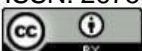
soft perfumes / And that living is summed up only in smiles!" The book was launched on the day I celebrated my wedding anniversary with Acidália Paula and we baptized our firstborn Miguel Inácio (June 1, 1997).

The attentive reader will have noticed a long gap between volumes 4 and 5 of the "Macaúbas, terra bendita" collection. Between 2003 and 2012, I produced other works outside the collection, but I also slowed down because in 2007 I took over as head of the Aloysio Short State College, which became Cetep da Bacia do Paramirim during my tenure. From 2009 onwards, I did three specializations, two of them as a result of being principal, and between 2013 and 2015 I did the Professional Master's Degree in Letters at UNEB. During this period, I launched the "Cadernos Macaubenses" series with three booklets (2004) and ventured into the field of fiction with the novel "Ponte do Tempo" (2005), which, due to its great reception and the fact that it was part of reading projects in municipal schools, was published for a second time in 2018.

Two biographical works followed. In 2006, I wrote the booklet "Centenário de Manoel Messias de Figueiredo (1906 - December 5, 2006)" to commemorate my paternal grandfather's centenary. In 2009, I released "O Capitão que desafiou o Império", the result of many years of research. This, I can say, was my most scientific work to date, and it was even bought by the University of Texas; this book also had a second edition.

I can compare my work to that of a prospector in unknown terrain or a harvester in a field that had long been choked by weeds because there was no one to look after it. The data was somewhere, but difficult to access... I spent hours in the Public Archives of Bahia, for example, to find the appointment of the first public teacher in Macaúbas. I draw another parallel with Naipul (2017):

I worked intuitively. Each time my goal was to make a book, to create something that was easy and interesting to read. At each stage I could only work with my knowledge, sensitivity, talent and worldview. These things developed book by book. And I had to do the books I did because there were no others on those subjects to give me what I wanted. I had to clarify my world, elucidate it for myself." (NAIPUL, 2017, p. 107):



I'm not saying that I didn't have a plan, but I can say that it was altered due to the discoveries that were being made, including in the presentation of "Aspectos da História de Macaúbas" (Aspects of the History of Macaúbas) correcting information contained in the historical-geographical references of "Ternos e Reisados em Macaúbas" (Suits and Kings in Macaúbas) [FIGUEIREDO, 2015, p. 15]. Between volumes 2 and 4 of the collection "Macaúbas, terra bendita" there is always a list of titles to be released, however, what we see is the growth of the collection with unforeseen titles.

Starting in 2018, I took a leap forward, moving from local to state history, publishing "The Apostleship of Prayer in Bahia" (2018) and "The Marian Congregations in Bahia" (2019). The former had a larger print run and was much more widespread, with three launches. Initially, in Barreiras, during an event of the local diocese; then in Macaúbas and, finally, in Salvador, during the II Symposium of the Apostleship of Prayer of the Archdiocese. Symbolically, you could say that the book crossed Bahia from west to east.

Finally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I launched "O Semeador de Letras" (2020), a collection of eight articles on the pedagogical work of Dr. Abílio César Borges, the Baron of Macahubas, whose literacy method was the subject of my study/dissertation during my Professional Master's degree. This book was the first to be released by a commercial publisher and in e-book version.

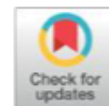
Closing the conversation

With this text, I delved into my past, focusing on aspects linked to my writing side: people, facts, situations that encouraged me directly or indirectly. In structuring it, I used the freedom that the (auto)biographical method gives us to escape from classificatory oppression (SALES, 2008). In this way, I eschewed an introduction along the lines of today's, because the life narrative takes on the features of "[...] fiction based on real events" (JOSSO, 2008, p. 28).

It has already been proven that the family environment is the first element that encourages the development of individual potential. So, I took as my starting point a moment of warmth and poetry that enabled me to (re)get to know Our Lady of the Conception as "my patron saint" and time made me understand the symbiosis between Her and Macaúbas. Similarly, and as examples, we can take the image of Our Lady of Aparecida as the first element of national identity (Alvarez, 2014), or Senhor do Bonfim, whose (popular) hymn composed in 1923 to commemorate the 1st Centenary of Independence in Bahia in a mixture of civility and religiosity "[...] is the song that identifies Bahia, and constitutes, consecrated by the people, its official anthem" (Dois Séculos, [1995], p. 36).

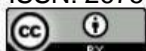
Throughout my life, I've met people and situations, or even excavated them, that have continued the encouraging work of my childhood and, intuitively, I've produced a mixture of literature and historiography. Alencar (2015) makes this observation: "A master of the vernacular by training and a historian by nature, Alan conveys in his work the historical enthusiasm and literary genius necessary in both areas" (Alencar, 1915, p. 13), in which he agrees with Trindade (2009) when he prefaces "O Capitão que desafiou o Império": "Finally, I would like to say that the book transcends the characteristics of a work on history. It advances into the realm of literature" (Trindade, 2009, p. 12).

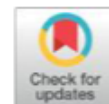
Looking for a golden key, I quote Freire (1989) with his desire to form proficient readers based on their culture: "Somehow, however, we can go further and say that reading the word is not only preceded by reading the world, but by a certain way of 'writing' or 'rewriting' it, that is, transforming it through our conscious practice" (Freire, 1989, p.20). I am sure of one thing: the generations that succeed me and will succeed me will not miss the way I missed us meeting in the printed text, as a community. They will be able to find flaws and improve, in a process of rewriting. But, as an inveterate parishioner, what more could I wish for others to follow the road I helped to open, almost as a pioneer??



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