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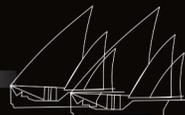
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ECOS

TEXTOS EM PORTUGUÊS/INGLÊS



DISCLOSURES OF MEMORY: DEGRADATIONS IN  
 GALILEIA AND DOIS IRMÃOS

REVELAÇÕES DA MEMÓRIA: DEGRADAÇÕES EM  
 GALILEIA E DOIS IRMÃOS

Elisângela Pereira de Lima<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** This study presents a comparative analysis of the novels *Galileia* (2008), written by Ronaldo Correia de Brito, and *Dois irmãos* (2000), written by Milton Hatoum. The objective of this study is showing the similarities and the contrasts. This contemporary novels permit to check up on the memory as the heart of the narratives looking at the space and family degradation. The characters and the spaces are presented with characteristics that show the authors style. Through their memories and the memories of others characters, the narrators expose the tragedy of the ruined families. This study finds help in the theories of Eduardo F. Coutinho and Tânia Carvalhal to think about the comparative literature; Alfredo Bosi, Marshall Berman and Peter Bürger to reflect the contemporaneity; Walter Benjamin and Gérard Genette to the narrator analysis; Henri Bergson to understand the memory; Gaston Bachelard to expose the space aspects; besides of contributions of other authors to fund this study.

**KEYWORDS:** Ronaldo Correia de Brito; Milton Hatoum; Galileia; Dois irmãos; Memory. Degradation.

**RESUMO:** Este estudo apresenta uma análise comparatista dos romances *Galileia* (2008), de Ronaldo Correia de Brito, e *Dois irmãos* (2000), de Milton Hatoum, com o objetivo de descortinar sentidos afins e contrastes. Essas obras contemporâneas permitem um exame acerca da memória como o cerne das narrativas, com vistas à degradação do espaço e da instituição familiar. As personagens e os espaços são apresentados com características que evidenciam os estilos de cada um dos autores. Os narradores, a partir das suas memórias e das memórias de outras personagens, exibem os dramas de famílias arruinadas. Este estudo encontra subsídios nas teorias de Eduardo F. Coutinho e Tânia Carvalhal para pensar a literatura comparada; Alfredo Bosi, Marshall Berman e Peter Bürger para reflexões acerca da contemporaneidade; Walter Benjamin e Gérard Genette para análise do narrador; Henri Bergson para entender a memória; Gaston Bachelard para revelar aspectos do espaço; além das contribuições de outros autores para a consolidação deste estudo.

**Palavras-chave:** Ronaldo Correia de Brito; Milton Hatoum.; Galileia; Dois irmãos; Memória; Degradação.

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## Introduction

*Galileia* and *Dois irmãos*, corpus of this study are narratives developed from a very significant element in numerous literary productions over the years: the memory. The author of *Galileia* (2008) is Ronaldo Brito Correia, from Ceará (in the northeast of Brazil), and the author of *Dois irmãos* (2000) is Milton Hatoum, from Amazonas (in the north of Brazil), son of Lebanese immigrants. In addition to the novel *Galileia*, Ronaldo Brito Correia is the author of the novel *Estive lá fora* (2012), of the storybooks *As noites e os dias* (1997), *Faca* (2003), *Livro dos homens* (2005), *Retratos imorais* (2010) and the children's novel *O pavão misterioso* (2004). Playwright, Brito is author of the play *Bandeira de São João* and co-author of the plays *Baile do menino Deus* and *Arlequim*. Milton Hatoum, besides *Dois irmãos*, is the author of the novels *Relato de um certo oriente* (1989), *Cinzas do norte* (2005) and *Órfãos do Eldorado* (2008) and a storybook called *Cidade ilhada* (2009). These writers had the opportunity to experience other cultures: Hatoum studied comparative literature at the University of Sorbonne, Paris, and was resident writer at the University of California at Berkeley, in 1996; Brito was also a resident writer at the University of California at Berkeley, in 2007.

Brito and Hatoum, contemporary authors, in *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos*, show creative processes that, despite being the first published novel of Brito and the second published novel of Hatoum, are presented as productions that engender reflections regarding the condition of the man nowadays. It is fine the thread that border these works of literary creation between surprising, as regards the raised admiration and brutal - employing a word of the critic Alfredo Bosi -, regarding the caused surprise. According to Bosi (2006, p. 434-435) there is a force that pervades the contemporary Brazilian fiction, a “[...] certain style of narrating brutal, if not intentionally brutalist, which differs from the ideal of writing mediated comment psychological and taste of the still existing reflective pauses in the ‘golden age of Brazilian romance’ between the years 30 and 60”.

In this regard it is pertinent to note that, in a way, about the artistic manifestations affect some socio-cultural characteristics of each era, as stated by Peter Bürger (2008, p. 45): “As much as can aspire to supra-historically valid knowledge of its object, aesthetic theories are clearly marked by the time at which owe their appearance”. About the construction procedure of a literary text, so, although the authors enjoy freedom to convey the reality to fictionality, it is clear that the narratives, in addition to the sociocultural aspects, reveal, simultaneously, the standards and uses

of language of their time. Reis and Lopes (1988, p. 66) confirm this understanding to conceptualize the fictional production as “[...] set of texts usually of fictional nature, organized by the activation of codes and signs, carried out in various narrative genres and trying to fulfill the varied socio-cultural functions assigned at different times to artistic practices.”

*Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* are works that reflect the contemporary, since, among other things, have a dynamic of remembering which shows a relentless degradation. Thinking the degradation in Brito and Hatoum novels necessarily imply an allusion to modernity.

In an essay called *Tudo que é sólido desmancha no ar: Marx, modernismo e modernização*, Marshall Berman (2007, p. 111) allows a greater understanding about modernity to quote Marx’s conjecture about the capitalist world: “All that is solid melts in the air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and their relationship with other men”. From this perspective, the works under study, captive to the particularities of a given social reality, offer reflective plots that show a tangle of emotions that come of some conflicts and events that promote tension, in addition to presenting the deconstruction of certain values, elements incompatibility as between the sacred and the profane, the breakdown of the family institution and the destruction of significant areas, showing, finally, as the apparent is decomposable.

Still about contemporary prose, referring to Hatoum, Bosi says (2006, p. 437): “The accurate writing of a debutant as Milton Hatoum seems to indicate [...] a certain ideal of narrative prose, reflected and paced [...] is not necessarily the result of an irreversible aesthetic past”. In these terms, it is considered that Hatoum presents abilities to build a distant narrative of traditional literature. This ability can also be observed in Brito. It should be remembered, however, that Brito and Hatoum are not intended to deny the traditional forms of production, as there are in their works coexistence between the traditional and the contemporary. If the changes are part of the history of literature, Brito and Hatoum are authors that expose a new possibility of aesthetic creation, and thus, add value to contemporary prose.

*Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* are manifested as an art that picks up and represents the dynamics of human life, confirming the genre as that which takes place in accordance to the changes and tensions of the human being, as confirmed by Aguiar e Silva (1997, p. 684), the narrative genre “[...] does not cease [...] to put new forms and to express new content, in a

unique manifestation of the perennial aesthetic and spiritual restlessness of man.”

Finally, *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos*, through a particularly reality, sift through human dramas and transport them to the fictionality by a network of intertwined stories with a view to represent the complexity of the human mind and the relationship between humans, complexity lived in the family institution.

### **The Compative Literature**

In spite of quest for a definition capable of settle questions and provide a security of understanding, the conclusion reached here is the existence of a disagreement about conceptualization of what is meant by *comparative literature*. Tania Franco Carvalhal (2001, p. 6) reports that there is “[...] difficult to reach a consensus on the nature of comparative literature, its goals and methods [...]”. Also Sandra Nitrini (2010, p. 19) comments: “One of the most difficult tasks is to delimit the field of discipline of comparative literature, because its contents and objectives are constantly changing, according to the space and time”. In fact, discussions about the specificity of comparative literature back to its origin, settling since then a lack of consensus.

According to Carvalhal (2001), the word *comparison* is not synonymous of *comparative literature*, as is not limited to match procedure. Owen Aldridge (1994, p. 257) states: “The comparison can be used in literary studies to indicate affinity, tradition or influences. The affinity is the style similarities, structure, tone or idea between two works that do not have any other connection”. Carvalhal (2001, p. 7) thus specifies the goal of the area:

It can be said, therefore, that the comparative literature compares not by the procedure itself, but because as analytical and interpretative resource, the comparison enables this type of literary study an appropriate exploitation of their labor fields and the achievement of goals it proposes. In summary, comparison, even in comparative studies, is a means, not an end.

From this view, a comparative analysis doesn't consider the examination of all aspects of the construction work, once it would be a baseless claim because:

A study in compared literature does not have to be comparative to each page or each chapter, but the purpose, the emphasis and the overall implementation should be comparative. Checking the purpose, the emphasis and the execution also requires objective and subjective judgment. Therefore, one cannot and nor should establish strict rules beyond these criteria (REMAK, 1994, p. 185).

Moreover, there are limitations that should be considered and a difficulty is precisely the impossibility of achieving all the meaning of a work. Roland Barthes (1997), when talking about the open direction of the text, warns about the many ways that a text has.

One has to also add that the text is recognized as such by its constitution as a whole. The elements, that are fundamental, that structure texts are, actually, the structural threads that are bonded to the construction of a web as a whole, whose functionality is explained as follows by Adolfo Casais Monteiro (1964, p. 38):

Because in fact of provide a whole is the ultimate affirmation of genius, and it is not speaking particularly of anything as there is objectively transportable to the table of dissection, which can reach the core of its structure, revealing its true meaning, communicate its personality.

Something else may be considered on a comparative examination: the concepts related to comparative literature, here, specifically, intertextuality.

Coined by Julia Kristeva, in 1969, word of Latin origin, intertextuality, presents the *inter* suffix in its composition, meaning *among*, alludes, thus, to the sense of reciprocity, the correlations. In this sense, among some works it's possible to notice a dialogue.

There is also a relationship between the process of making the literary text and the readings performed by the author throughout his intellectual life. Carvalhal (2001, p. 50) explains the conditions that, somehow, inspire the development of the literary text: "The writing process is seen, then, as a result also of the process of reading a previous literary corpus. The text is therefore absorption and replication to another text (or several others)". As can be seen, it can be said that a literary text is assimilation - conscious or unconscious - of a number of other texts.

In general, wide is the field of studies and ongoing discussions that promote the specificities of the comparative literature. Modestly, in

this study, the comparative literature will be considered as another possibility to reading some literary texts, such as a lighting exercise.

### **A view about *Galileia* and *Dois Irmãos***

*Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* are examples of intertextuality. At first glance, they can be approximated by its intertextuality with the biblical text. It can be said that the reading of biblical scripture influenced the construction of Brito and Hatoum's works, in different ways. Brito, including, in an interview entitled *Obsessivo pela exatidão* to the journalist and writer Roger Pereira, in a virtual literature newspaper called *Rascunho*, in Clube Gazeta do Povo, reveals that he learned to read in a book called Sacred History, a book that presents stories of the Bible, and he says:

I learned to read in Sacred History, a select of the Old and New Testament texts, illustrated by Gustave Doré. For a long time this was the only book of our home, which was a lot. I have always considered the Bible a book of narratives, without giving it any religious significance. I read it with the same delight which I read Odissea, Iliad, Mahabharata and Ramayana. [...] Reading the Bible and listen to the stories of oral tradition, many of them inspired by the Bible, marked my writing (BRITO, In: PEREIRA, 2009).

The literary text, in this perspective, appears as a kind of renewal. The contact with the biblical text allowed Brito a renewed narrative production.

But, even though *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* dialogue with biblical texts, this dialogue does not mean that such texts are restricted to a reproduction of biblical narratives. The novels allow, in fact, that another look to rest upon the theological narratives that become re-read and, above all, reinterpreted in a different way, free from dogmatic ties, since the literature enjoys freedom to discuss theological issues, dilating the possibilities of interpretation. Thus, reading the novels indicates a new reading perspective of the uncoupled biblical text of theological precepts.

The purpose of the term *interpretation*, Rubem Alves (2005, p. 89), in his book *A maçã e outros sabores*, when tackle the issue of textual interpretation, refers to Octavio Paz that says "The answer to a text should never be an interpretation. It should be another text". This statement allows the perception that a literary text can be understood from another literary text or not. Think intertextuality in this direction is to recognize it as a feature that favors the examination of literary texts.

*Galileia* and *Dois irmãos*, even approaching of other texts are works that have their own meaning, with narratives that show some characteristic features of a contemporary society, whose plots, drawn from memory developments, promote psychological discussions, denounce concussions caused by dissolution of an deep-rooted cultural system, expose a tragedy that emerges from the clash between tradition and modernity and exhibit a process of degradation of human life.

Since the title, *Galileia* proposes a dialogue with the speech of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the novel, *Galileia* is the farm where the plot happens, space that interact with the characters and where the characters act and live the consequences of their actions. Also the chapter titles - except 5 of them - refer to books or biblical characters, Adonijah, David, Tobias, Ishmael, Natan, Jehoshaphat, Esau and Jacob, Elijah, Daniel and Solomon. Other Bible texts are also reported in Brito's *Galileia*, confirming the messianic theme, such as: Genesis, Samuel and Acts. The stories of Cain and Abel, and Esau and Jacob, in the Old Testament, appear both in *Galileia* and in *Dois irmãos*. There is also in *Dois irmãos*, the book of Job, a Bible book. It's worth mentioning other texts by renowned authors in Portuguese, with whom the novels are correlated: the novel *Caim* by José Saramago and the novel *Esau e Jacó* by Machado de Assis. There is a significant similarity between the novels *Dois irmãos* and *Esau e Jacó*, because, among other things, it is worth remembering that the way as Rania, the character - passionate by her brothers Yaqub and Omar - is described, equivalent to how Flora - passionate by Peter and Paul - is also described.

It would be possible indicate other texts in order to exemplify the intertextuality, but this analysis is not intended to appointment of each page, or each chapter or even every aspect, but the similarities and differences between the two works analyzed.

### **The novels by Brito and Hatoum**

We proceed now to the examination of the two works, focusing particularly on the question of temporality, more particularly to interlace between the present and the past.

#### ***Galileia***

Adonias, Davi and Ismael are cousins - and main characters - who are reunited and together they cross the hinterland of Inhamuns, Ceará, returning to the decaying farm *Galileia*, in order to participate of the anniversary celebration of the grandfather Raimundo Caetano. Mar-

ried to Maria Raquel Fonseca Rego Castro, the patriarch of a large family, Raimundo Caetano do Rego Castro, with over eighty years old, is sick and wait passively for the death. The death of Raimundo Caetano, the family patriarch, is the possibility that the family unit breaks.

In this novel, memory is presented as the core, through which performs the narration. It is therefore through the memories of the characters that the past remains alive, reflecting actions in the present time. The recall begins, then, during the return trip of the cousins to *Galileia* and runs all the work. The narrator Adonias, to remember some events from the past, begins a narration that presents the family and their respective histories. The stories and more: the mixture between the sacred and the profane; a fusion between reality and legend; ambiguities between tradition and modernity in northeastern backlands; discomfort in the face of environmental degradation; the nonconformity of submission; the barbarity about a crime of murder; declared enemies; adultery and its results; the tension that arises from the rape and the mystery about the perpetrator; ghosts' showing; forbidden relationships for a given society and the estrangement caused by incest; in short, tragic events and transgressions that trigger the feeling of desolation and make the characters experience a new pain within an existing pain.

In the farm, dominant scenario of remembrances, where the Rego Castro family took root, the cousins Adonias, Davi and Ismael, who lived together during childhood, are reunited in a particular circumstance, the impending death of the patriarch. The cousins, although have shared childhood, represent a “[...] generation who left the farm to never return to” (BRITO, 2009, p. 114). Adonias, a doctor, studied in the UK and made his career in Pernambuco; Davi, a musician, lived in São Paulo, but toured the United States and Europe, playing piano in bars; and Ismael went to Norway with the intention of trying to life, but it was a frustrating experience.

In the farm, the grandchildren who have migrated to urban centers are reunited with family members who remained in the hinterland and face the remains of *Galileia*, which intensifies the remembrances that engender the construction of narrations: “[...] word by word recreate the narrative” (BRITO, 2009, p. 24). Such narratives unleash a process of reflection about the episodes of a family of impulsive aggression.

Finally, the central characters in the novel - Adonias, Davi and Ismael - expose the complexity of family relationships to reveal veiled secrets of the Rego Castro, that someday experienced prosperity but now

face an atrocious decay. By leaving *Galileia* farm at the end of the novel, to return to Recife, Adonias, the narrator, leaves, not just an ambience, but also a family, his family, in a process of degradation; leaves his grandfather once proud “[...] by the moral of a time when men gave orders [...]” (BRITO, 2009, p. 60) sees his family being held by Maria Raquel, who starts to manage the manufacture of craft networks; leaves a grandfather with a high degree of lucidity, conscious of its deterioration process, the body and the soul and that even wishing to death, remains alive “- Adonias, I want to die. - I know, Grandpa” (BRITO, 2009, p 220-221.). This is what Adonias leaves, but he also takes: he takes intense pains and takes mainly the memory that makes these chronic pains.

### *Dois Irmãos*

Yaqub, Omar and Rânia, children of Zana and Halim, live in Manaus, scenery city of a decadent age, consequence of the Rubber Boom ends and a rapid growth that results in the creation of the Zona Franca of Manaus.

Galib, widower, father of Zana, is the owner of Byblos, a restaurant in Manaus. This restaurant is the stage of Halim’s statement that, in love with Zana, in a burst, recites poems culminating in conquering the girl. Married, Halim enjoys the delights of love for Zana, “[...] in the things of love, with Zana, always wanted, always asked more” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 149). However, the pleasures of this relationship suffer gradually interference. The death of Zana’s father, Galib, is the first one; Domingas, an Indian who becomes aggregate of the family, is the second; and the request for Zana to Halim, is fatally the third interference: “Three, dear. Three children, neither more nor less” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 66). But Halim “He didn’t want three children; moreover, it depended on his will, he would not have any” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 66). In spite of Halim resistance, perhaps selfishly or sense irreversible losses in the relationship with Zana, the children come, and with them begins a degradation process of the family. The twins are born first - who give title to the novel - after a girl is born, Rânia.

Life and family conflicts are presented by the narrations of Nael - son of the servant Domingas - who exposes the hate relationship between the twins Yaqub and Omar, hatred unleashed by the matriarch Zana, who prefers to Yaqub, fact that triggers a rivalry that lead to a dramatic series of episodes. Zana, however, does not recognize her responsibility for the hostility between the twins.

Besides the mother's preference and consequently the father's contempt for Omar, there is a fundamental matter that justifies the numerous conflicts: Yaqub and Omar are characters of distinct personalities. Yaqub is fearful, reserved, careful, cautious, polite, independent and enhanced intelligence: "The image that people made of him was of a perfect being, or someone who sought perfection" (HATOUM, 2000, p 111.). Omar, a *bon vivant*, is brave, adventurous, impulsive, seductive, reckless, undisciplined, dependent and unruly: "The other, the youngest, exceeded in the juvenile daring: missing the Latin lessons, bribed dour gatekeepers of the school of priests and went out to night, in uniform, transgressor from feet to neck [...]" (HATOUM, 2000, p. 32). They are undoubtedly opposing characters. Between the brothers is Rania, a character that nourishes a kind of veneration by her brothers, a character that participates of the conflicts, supporting the brother she judges weaker for each struggle, trying to keep a pseudo family harmony.

Nael, the narrator, to recall his past builds the narrative, mainly taking advantage up to other characters' memories: Halim and Domingas. The doubt cast on the novel about Nael paternity is one of the reasons that stimulate the whole recollection. The memories fragments of the characters constitute a narrative that reveals aspects of the complexity that surrounds the family relationships: the pain of death and loss; selfishness and passion follies; manifestations of a ritualistic religiosity; the consequences of rejection; jealousy and envy as feelings historically constituted; hostility between twin brothers; vulnerability triggered by wounded pride; the effects generated from excessive vanity; aggressiveness as a translation of imbalance and frustration; the incest sentence; interpersonal, verbal and physical violence; danger and squalor of a calculated ambition; madness and delirium as an escape. This all arises in environments that degrade gradually, as a kind of reflection: the house and the family trade and the city of Manaus.

Nael, not only narrates, but also shares many feelings to participate in the daily life of the family, his family, although he ignores his origin. "I did not know anything about me, as I came into the world, where I had come from. The origin: the origins" (HATOUM, 2000, p. 73). For this reason, Nael desires so much the revelation of his father's identity, which would allow the construction of his own identity: "Years later, I suspected: one of the twin brothers was my father" (HATOUM, 2000, p. 73). The memories collected insinuate, but not reveal his father's name because perhaps the name should even remain only in memory.

## Unveiling similar directions and contrasts

### Memory in the hands of storytellers and in the minds of characters

As the man acquires knowledge and live experiences, the memory takes charge of retention and subsequent manifestation of memories, according to the needs and offered stimuli. For Henri Bergson (1999), these knowledge and experiences are printed in memory and transformed into images that are stored in a dissimilar way. Thus, Bergson (1999, p. 84) has the following assumptions: “*The past survives under two distinct ways: 1) in motor mechanisms; 2) in independent memories*” (Emphasis added by the author). About the former, the author clarifies:

The first would register in the form of images-memories, all the events of our everyday life as they unfold; it does not neglect any detail; it assigned every fact, every gesture, its place and date. No ulterior motive of usefulness or practical application, it would store the past by the mere effect of a natural need (BERGSON, 1999, p. 88).

And about the second hypothesis, Bergson (1999, p. 88-89) elucidates: “But all the perceptions extend in a rising action; and, as the images, once perceived, attach and align in this memory, the movements that continue them, change the organism, create in the body new dispositions to act”. This means that the memory presentification will happen by the spirit, or by the action. These are the two ways of survival of the past.

In *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos*, the past pulsates and it would be possible to say that the present, as shown, is the result of a whole past recollected, even because the remembrance in the novels establishes a circular movement between the past experiences and the present experiences. What at first appears as keepsakes, representation, reaches in a second moment, in the works, a deeper stage and begins to materialize as actions. They are, therefore, reminiscences of the past that convey the actions of the present. The memory is then an element that, when operating the past means the actions that are triggered in the present, as explained by Bergson (1999, p 88-89): “In truth, it [memory] no longer is in our past, it enacts; and if it still deserves the name of memory, it’s no longer because keep old images, but because it extends its effectiveness until the present moment”.

Thus, it can be said that the reality of what remained of the families of Lebanese-Brazilian and Rego Castro can only be understood from

the memory of the narrators and other characters that contribute to oral reports.

Walter Benjamin, in *O narrador* (1994, p. 197), exemplifies the difficulty to approach to narrator: “As family that is his name, the narrator is not really present among us, in his living today. It is something distant, and further away”. Ingenuity therefore aspire to understand the narrator in its entirety, for various reasons, but the biggest one is the own fictional character.

At this time, it is appropriate to question the degree of reliability of stories, not only in relation to the narrators, but also to other characters. The narrators do not participate of all the past events, and the other characters also not, they present, so often their interpretations of the facts. This does mean that the story is - beyond memory - in the hands of the narrators.

Walter Benjamin, in *A imagem de Proust*, contributes to reflect about this subject:

We know that in his work Proust did not describe a life as it actually was, but as it was remembered by the one who had lived it. However, this statement is imprecise and far too crude. For the important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory [...] (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 37).

The memory presentification is considered here as the shaft that establishes narratives, since the novels take place from and by memory. Explaining: from memory, because the facts are of a past time and by memory for it to be kept alive, as announces João Domísio in *Galileia*: “Loneliness is tiring but worst of all is forgetfulness” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 152). It is possible to notice at this time, the value of memory.

The way that narrators deal with the memories has particularities. From Gérard Genette’s theory that denominates three narrative possibilities - autodiegetic, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic - it is possible the identification and perception of the manifestation of the narrators in the analyzed novels, Adonias, autodiegetic, is a character narrator; Nael, homodiegetic, is a witness narrator. Thus, while Adonias participates of the story as the protagonist, as part of Rego Castro family, Nael participates of the story as witness, exposing the episodes of a peripheral location, as he doesn’t belong of the Lebanese-Brazilian family, or rather, is not recognized as a member of this family. Nael, thus, was very close of the

events, unlike Adonias, who was inside the events. From this angle, Nael can be understood from Silviano Santiago (1989, p. 45):

[...] The postmodern narrator is one who wants to extract himself from the action narrated in an attitude similar to that of a reporter or a spectator. He narrates the action as a spectacle that he watches (literally or not) from the audience, the bleachers or an armchair in the living room or in the library; he does not narrate while active.

This quote enlightens Nael condition in *Dois irmãos*: as he does not participate effectively, he narrates the events among other voices, as he notices them: “Domingas told me this. But much of what happened I have seen, because I saw out of that little world. Yes, outside and far sometimes. But I observed this game and I witnessed many trump cards, until the final bid” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 29).

Under these conditions, Adonias and Nael do not have access to the mental state of the other characters. Escapes of these narrators the power of omniscience, they are limited, thus, to their perceptions. As noticed, in addition to memory, not omniscience of the tellers affects the revelation of the story. It should announce an element that is established in the works and follow the narrators, intensifying the aesthetic effect, the secrets: the Davi rape in *Galileia*; the identity of the narrator’s father in *Dois irmãos*. Remains in the works the following questions: Who raped Davi? Who is the father of Nael?

These questions are unknowns that, against the reader’s expectations, are not solved. They are secrets that appear repeatedly in the narrative, casting suspicion on some characters. From this perspective, we note the existence, in the novels, what Gérard Genette identifies as repetitive anaphoric frequencies. The narrative passages that surrounding the episode of the rape and the identity of Nael’s father point out past events which curiosity is aroused continuously through constant anaphoric references. To thus form, they are ellipses, unresolved in the narrative, ensuring the tension in both the report level when the narration.

Finally, we resume the two hypotheses of Bergson (1999, p. 96) about the memory: “The first, conquered by effort, remains under the dependence of our will; the second, completely spontaneous, is as capricious in reproducing as faithfully to preserve”. *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* present the past as an element that enhanced by the memory, sentences the present.

### Simultaneous degradations: space and family

The space in *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* is an element that expresses the degradation as a simultaneous process, this means that, as family conflicts occur, indicating the deterioration of the family institution, also appear the degradation of the space inhabited by the families of Lebanese-Brazilian and Rego Castro.

Since the memory holds the narrations of Adonias and Nael, the spaces are configured as relevant components in the works, because they are places that bring out the memories' families. Considering the space of fiction as the place where the actions happen and where the feelings are manifested, the narrators, by exposing the plots, demonstrate how this space undergoes transformations: in *Galileia*, the house, the farm and the northeastern hinterlands; in *Dois irmãos*, the house, the family trade and the city of Manaus.

A first look to the spaces of *Galileia*: the hinterland and the farm. The northeastern backlands presented in the narrative differs from a backwoods idea ago very widespread. The modernization process, so intense in urban areas, reaches the hinterland. Thus, the hinterland incorporates common elements in urban centers, such as the phone and a *fórró* band in a metalhead style, whose vocalist uses a nose ring, as well as a motorcycle that replaces the horse tasks, as stated by Adonias, the narrator: "Woman in a motorcycle carries an old woman on the rump and herds three lean cows. Two myths crumble before my eyes in an instant: the male cowboy, leather, and the horse of the stories of heroes, when pulled by cattle tail" (BRITO, 2008, p.8). In short, there is a contemporary representation of the hinterland and that contemporary deconstruction of the traditional image of space is evident.

*Galileia* farm, the territorial space of Rego Castro, besides being the scene of the conflicts in the family, is also the place of remembrances. Once prosperous because for many years had been a productive landlordism, the farm goes through a process of decay until reach a sorry stage, as the following report:

The cheesemaking's room is ruined, and the presses resemble skeletons of dinosaurs, the milk glut memory. It seems that a meteor fell on the *Galileia*, burned pastures, killed the cattle, put the corrals down. Even the songs of cowboys are heard only on radio programs. In wood stoves people do not roast coffee, nor butter, nor produces soap of the fat pigs and cattle. Clay pots and copper pots, jugs and bowls lost their function (BRITO, 2008, p. 69).

It is evident the ruin of the farm and in agreement with this fact is the health of the grandfather Raimundo Caetano. The grandfather disease, described in the works with a tragic tone, deposes the grandfather of the condition of sovereign patriarch, and represents the situation of the farm, as seen by the narrator's voice: "*Galileia* reflects the grandfather disease. The same infection that destroys their flesh seems to ruin the land. The weeds invade the crops, fences and corrals decay" (BRITO, 2008, p. 111). The degeneration of the soil is closely related to the family degradation.

Studying now the novel *Dois irmãos*, we must analyze the spaces of the city and the family trade. The city of Manaus is presented in the narrative at a time marked by fervent transformations denouncing a paradoxical situation: the collapse as a result of the modernization process. Representing a decadent economy, due to the end of the Rubber Boom, the work exposes a city in transition, the industrialization. Beside an urban growth are the characteristics of a small-town place. Here is a telling excerpt:

With the end of the war, they migrated (the rubber soldiers) to Manaus, where they lift stilts at the edge of the creeks, in the ravines and the city gaps. Manaus has grown like this: in the tumult of who comes first. Halim participated of this tumult; he sold things before anyone. He sold without succeed but he paid attention to the threat of decay, that one day he assured me be an abyss (HATOUM, 2000, p.41).

The mantle of deconstruction covers the city of Manaus and the result is the ruin. If modernization can be thought as synonym of progress, this novel - and not only this novel but also the socio-economic reality of the country in that period - dethrones the idea.

The trade, which in the work is the guarantee of supporting for many years to the house and to the family, reflects, simultaneously, the modernization and the decay of the places. So, in the narrative, the trade appears several times following the significant transitions of the time. In addition, the store building reveals the complexity of the characters in family life.

Finally, we can analyze the house; a space that occupies a prominent place in both narratives, influencing the family relationships as well as the coexistence between family members affects the house. The description of the surroundings of the house, the description of rooms, the description and provision of furniture and appliances compose a unit that

surpass the boundaries of physical space, becoming a revealing element of the characters and the family institution. Gaston Bachelard (1993, p. 23) about house's space states:

For a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space, the house is, evidently, a privileged being; it is clear, since we consider it at the same time in both its unity and its complexity, trying to integrate all its particular values in one fundamental value.

In the case of the analyzed novels, the images of the houses reveal the family identities. The importance of this space is so deep that it's possible to notice an interaction - and would not be audacious to say, an influence - among the characters and the house, place where the actions and the remembrances occur. Bachelard (1993, p. 26) shows the house as “[...] one of the greatest powers of integrating for the thoughts, memories and dreams of man”. *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* houses can be understood in this perspective, because the memories expose a way of life in which the present is due to a past. The same author expands the understanding of the memories within the house: “Of course, thanks to the house, a large number of our memories are housed [...]” (BACHELARD, 1993, p. 27).

By showing the fragility and proving that man is a passenger on Earth, the houses of the works in analysis show a process in mutation. Changes in characters' lives and in the houses. In *Galileia*, Adonias, the narrator, announces:

In more than two hundred years since they demolished the first construction of rammed earth and built in its place a large brick building with masonry of clay and lime, beams, rafters and cedar strips, and roof tiles molded in the thighs, the house of Galileia was renovated and passed by additions. Each resident has left in the house a mark of his passage, an ornament or damage (BRITO, 2009, p. 60).

Also in *Dois irmãos*, there is a process of transformation of space throughout the narrative: “Yaqub surprised us even more: he sent money to restore the house and paint the shop” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 129). It is observed in both novels, that before the ruin of the spaces, there were reforms of these spaces. To carry out a reform is necessary a planning for the purpose of reorganization, of renewal and even of the repair. But even planning, any reform causes exhaustion. Thinking the novels in this perspective, the meaning of the reform is a need, not necessarily physical

- of the space - but the lives of the characters and the relationships among the family members. Fact that does not happen, because by the reform appear the stresses that cause an undue degradation. So, finally we can see the reality of the house of the farm and Rego Castro family: "When were in the house only Raimundo Caetano, the grandmother Raquel, Tereza Araújo and the two boys Esaú and Jacó, the house fell into decay, threatening to collapse on the owners" (BRITO, 2009, p. 60). Degradation in *Dois irmãos* is also explicit: "After Halim's death, the house began to fail apart" (HATOUM, 2000, p. 220). The decline of the families, therefore, is closely related to the transfiguration of the spaces.

Notable, in short, are the spaces of the works, spaces that also represent the individuality of the characters and the unity of the families, awaken memories of the family dramas that culminate in a traumatic degradation.

### Final Considerations

In this analysis, the comparative literature is presented as a universe of reflection from the approach of two literary texts: *Galileia* (2008), by Ronaldo Correia de Brito, and *Dois irmãos* (2000), by Milton Hatoum. Through a comparative examination, it would be possible to follow many ways that would be able to reveal other gems that compose the work, but the intent of this study is identify certain related senses and contrasts between the narratives.

One of convergent points is explained by the intertextuality. Both novels refer to biblical texts proposing a reinterpretation, while maintaining their own meanings. There is thus a dialogue between the works and biblical texts, enabling a connection between the novels.

The intertextuality, specifically biblical, can be understood from the intellectual formation of authors and also the way these authors apprehend the meaning of the texts read throughout their lives.

Another convergent point is the way as the authors work with the memory element. The novels, which result from a dynamic creative process, show discussions about the memory, putting the ruin of the family institution as the fulcrum. In this way, the memories are configured as a kind of bridge. Explaining: bridge because there is a connection between the events of a past time and the experiences of the present time. It is the establishment of an interdependent relation.

As contemporary narratives, *Galileia* and *Dois irmãos* also show the deconstruction as a process that result from a given socioeconomic

reality. If from modernity it's possible to observe the fragility of things, beings and feelings, nowadays all of these things tend to intensify. The novels, through memory, highlight the family as an institution tragically marked by the condition of contemporary world: the disintegration.

Deconstruction, perceived from the narrators memories and from some characters memories, reveals through the degradation that, from the moment they take shape in the narratives, shows the ruin of the families. About narrators - with different representations in the works - they announce the episodes through the memory, which means a certain freedom, because the narration through the memory provides the interpretation and re-creation of the episodes.

In novels, values are deconstructed through the representation of a daily routine with emphasis on interpersonal, verbal and physical violence. Human dramas are exposed through complex characters that experience ambiguities, promote transgressions, engender evils, cower in front of the offenses and violate the limits of respect and tolerance. All of this in a space that reflects the process of ruin.

The spaces in the novels reveal the ruin: in *Galileia* the countryside, in *Dois irmãos* the urban space. These spaces maintain a close relation with the characters, showing a degradation that is not limited to the relationships among the family members because it is clear the deterioration of the spaces where life takes place.

Representing a peculiar universe, the novels allow the recognition of literary language as a way to promote social reflections that go beyond the apparent layers. At last, it's important to say that at the extent that the novels are next to each other, it is possible to identify the differences between them, because even in face of each element of convergence, it is possible to notice specificities that characterize the particularities of each novel.

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