(Sub)versions of Banditry: Ferréz’s Re-appropriation and Redefinition of the Marginal Identity

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(SUB)VERSIONS OF BANDITRY. FERRÉZ’S REAPPROPRIATION AND
REDEFINITION OF THE MARGINAL IDENTITY

by

MARISEL HERNÁNDEZ-ROMERO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Languages
and Literatures in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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(Sub)versions of Banditry.
Ferréz’s Re-appropriation and Redefinition of the Marginal Identity

By

Marissel Hernández-Romero

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Language and Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Ferréz’s work is related to the 19th and early 20th century banditry narrative. The current study examines the evolution of the work of Ferréz and discusses his relevance in Brazilian and Latin America literature. However, this dissertation examines in what extent Ferréz’s work transgresses the genre in that he breaks its rules and departs from its traditions. Rather than being the voice of the elite put into the mouth of a lower-class bandit character, Ferréz’s bandits speak with the voice of the oppressed and subversively criticize the elite. His work is not viewed through the lens of a single theoretical framework but rather through a dialogue of theories that can help to analyze its different cultural and literary dimensions. This study draws on the ideas presented by two manifestos: the manifesto, “Terrorismo Literário” by Ferréz, defines the principal features of Literatura Marginal and the “Manifesto de Antropofagia Periférica” by Sérgio Vaz, a poet from the group Cooperifa. Along with the two manifestos, theories of banditry provide another framework for this study. Two studies on banditry are essential to this research: Bandit by Eric Hobsbawm (2000), and Nightmare of the Lettered City: Banditry and Literature in Latin America, 1816-1929 (2007) by Juan Pablo Dabove.

This study also seeks to go beyond parallels with banditry and a genealogy of Brazilian bandits in that it addresses issues of representation and adaptation within the Literatura Marginal movement and how the lettered city’s perspective of banditry differs from the view from the margins. Ferréz’s work presents a new peripheral aesthetic that reasserts the voice of the bandits themselves, and contradicts the traditional view in Latin American literature of the bandit as “demonic force”. Furthermore, this dissertation examines the representations of marginality, the discourses enunciated by both the marginal and by the
critics and institutions that refer to them. Special attention is given to the issue of visibility of the marginal in Brazilian imaginary. Ferréz’s work allows for a questioning of an imposed performance and, thus, constitutes an effective mechanism of empowerment against the institutionalized power that forbids a thoughtful formation of selfhood.
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# TABLE OF FIGURES

**Figure 1. Photo published in *Capão Pecado, 1st Edition*** ……………………………………… 118

**Figure 2. Cover *Capão Pecado 1st Edition***. ………………………………………………….122

**Figure 3. Photo published in *Capão Pecado, 1st Edition***……………………………………132

**Figure 4. Photo published in *Capão Pecado 1st Edition***…………………………………134
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements........................................................................................................ vi
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ viii
List of Figures............................................................................................................... ix
Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
1. *Literatura Marginal*: A New Kind of Banditry Narrative.............................................. 30
2. Capão: Once Quilombo, Now Periferia................................................................. 73
3. Marginal Strikes a Pose.......................................................................................... 114
4. On Mimicry, Cultural Transvestism And Being A *Remediado*.............................. 151
Conclusion: *Literatura Marginal* Has The Game Changed?....................................... 181
Bibliography ............................................................................................................... 188
INTRODUCTION

Overview

Since 2000, the Brazilian cultural and literary movement *Literatura Marginal* has gained strength as a producer of culture. The movement, initiated by the author Ferréz (1975), is rooted in the underdeveloped space of the *favela*. Although some mainstream authors, such as Patricia Melo and Paulo Lins, also write about life in the periphery, the *Literatura Marginal* movement tells about life on the margins of society from the unique position of the people who experience it every day. The authors from *Literatura Marginal* redefine the ideological rupture between center and periphery and create new symbols to discuss the cultural and political conflicts of modern Brazil. Ferréz’s first three novels *Capão Pecado* (2002), *Manual Prático do Ódio* (2003), and *Deus foi Almoçar* (2012), along with texts by other authors such as Sacolinha, Sérgio Vaz, Alessandro Busso and Allan da Rosa have redefined culture in the periphery. The periphery is no longer just linked to poverty, drugs trafficking, or violent crime. The ambitious goals of *Literatura Marginal* make it different from other literary movements that are dedicated mainly to literary production. In contrast, *Literatura Marginal* encourages the self-management of the *favela* community by its residents and promotes many different cultural activities in the *favelas* located in the outskirts of São Paulo. The writers in this movement are also organizers, community

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1 Hereafter, *Capão Pecado* will be refer as *Capão*, *Manual Prático do Ódio* as *Manual* and *Deus foi Almoçar* as *DFA* in the parenthetical citations.

2 Other writers from different peripheries in Brazil have joined the movement. Among them are the poets GOC from Federal District, Jota C NPN and Preto C from Minas Gerais; and others are from Salvador, Bahia and Maranhão.
activists, and leaders that host *saraus* (poetry readings). They produce Hip-Hop and Rap music, build community libraries, have their own clothing line, and provide opportunities to the *favela* residents to write and publish.\(^3\) As Guilherme Azevedo stresses, the periphery does not “precisa mais de que alguém lhe conceda voz, espaço, porque ganhou voz própria, tem literatura, tem música, tem arte da melhor qualidade. E a periferia renova, rompe códigos, quebra paradigmas, inova” (n.p).

The main objective of this study is to examine Ferréz’s texts at a deeper level and to relate them to Brazilian and Latin American literary and cultural conventions and paradigms. In particular, this study analyzes how Ferréz’s work is related to the 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) century banditry narrative. Whether his texts focus on the experience of *marginal periférico* hidden in the alleys of the *quebrada* or on the daily life of a worker who wanders lost in the maze of the big city, Ferréz’s texts always criticize the same target: the structures and forms of social organization responsible for maintaining the practices of domination, violence and inequality between classes. The story of the *marginal* of the *favela* is a bandit story in that the *marginal* is drawn into a life of crime in order to fight against the repression of the dominant state. These young urban bandits, like their rural predecessors, are considered the enemies of state authority and a source of all evil. However, this study also seeks to go beyond parallels with banditry and a genealogy of Brazilian bandits in that it addresses issues of representation and adaptation within the *Literatura Marginal* and how the lettered city’s perspective of banditry differs from the view from the margins. Ferréz’s work presents a new

\(^3\) *IdaSul* is a clothing line designed by Ferréz and other entrepreneurs from Capão Redondo. More than ninety percent of their products are made in Capão Redondo. Part of the profits goes towards social projects in the community.
peripheral aesthetic that reasserts the voice of the bandits themselves, and contradicts the traditional view in Latin American literature of the bandit as “demonic force”.

Many of the critics who have analyzed Ferréz’s work as pieces of literature have limited their attention to connections between his work and the reality of favela life. Few critics have gone beyond this level of analysis. This dissertation proposes that Ferréz’s characters are alternative bandits who transcend the limited definition of “criminal” presented by the lettered city. They are marginal periférico that come from the most disenfranchised sections of Brazil. Therefore, this thesis examines all representations of marginality, the discourses enunciated by both the marginal and by the critics and institutions that refer to them. Literatura Marginal is the expression of an identity that has recognized the cultural differences between those who are marginal and those who live in the mainstream. The writers of the Literatura Marginal are challenging and reshaping from within distinctions that were first articulated by the lettered elite. In that sense, it can be said that it is the intention of the authors of the Literatura Marginal to alter the map and change the image of the periphery.

As members of the lower class fighting against the elite, Ferréz’s characters have much in common with the bandits of Latin American literature of the 19th century. Ferréz’s texts expand the bandido genre to include stories about the marginal periférico and the marginal remediado. However, since literature in the traditional bandido genre is written solely by members of the elite, Ferréz’s work transgresses the genre in that he breaks its rules and departs from its traditions. Rather than being the voice of the elite put into the mouth of a lower-class bandit character, Ferréz’s bandits speak with the voice of the oppressed and subversively criticize the elite. Through his writing, Ferréz acts out a marginality that
transgresses the rigid roles dictated by the mainstream script. Since all of the residents of the favelas are outsiders, they are all put in the position of being bandits. Ferréz is a bandit, himself, using words as his weapon to attack those in power.

More specifically, Ferréz’s work transgresses the bandit genre by using two of the techniques identified by Steven Butterman. First, Ferréz transforms the meaning of the acts of banditry. Rather than being perceived as only delinquent and criminal acts, they are additionally seen as positive and liberating (Butterman 8). Ferréz’s bandidos attract attention to the multitude of indignities suffered by those living in the margins and call the elite to task for their neglect. Second, Ferréz includes what Butterman calls a “carnavalesque play of language” (Butterman 8). Since the traditional 19th century bandit literature was written by the elite, their lower-class characters lacked authentic language. Hence, the transgression of Ferréz and other Literatura Marginal writers guarantees an authenticity – an authentic understanding of life in the favela and life as a bandit – and freedom to write (Butterman 8). Ferréz, for example, incorporates the slang of the periphery into his texts. His bandidos serve as a positive affirmation of identity and as a demand for social change. A fundamental part of this inquiry consists in examining the magnitude of success or failure in Ferréz’s transgression of the canonical paradigms of the bandido.

Studies on the bandit in literature cannot be understood outside the context of politics (Hobsbawm 7), hence, the political and social contexts that surround Ferréz’s three novels cannot be ignored. Although critics have denounced Ferréz’s novels as being inconsistent in terms of topics, style and character— from Rael (Capão Pecado 2000) to Regis (Manual Prático de Ódio 2003) to Calixto (Deus foi Almoçar 2012) –, these discrepancies correspond to the social and political changes that have taken place in the Brazilian imaginary. Brazil has
experienced many political transformations since 2000, the year of the publication of *Capão Pecado*. The three novels comprise testimonials from different cultural, social and political references. Thus, the transformation of archetypes and styles evident in *Deus foi Almoçar* corresponds to these changes.

Although the three novels have a fragmented and disjunctive structure, they are united in a political-ideological voice of contemptuous social critique. In 2000, the year of the publication of Ferréz second book *Capão Pecado*, poverty and inequality continued to be a major challenge in Brazilian society. Hence, it is logical that the characters portrayed by Ferréz in *Capão Pecado* are affected by institutionalized inequality and poverty. They are tormented by an “infância turbulent” (*Capão119*) and are suffering from hunger without any hope of a better future. However, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s election as president of Brazil and the beginning of his term in 2003 inaugurated a new era in the Brazilian imaginary. Lula’s election was important from a sociological standpoint because he comes from a very poor family and dropped out of school in the second grade. Likewise, Lula’s election was important from a political point of view since he made dramatic social changes initiating many programs to combat social injustice and increasing funding for cultural projects. His social and political ascendency was a potent symbol of the empowerment of Brazil’s poor. Thus, due to this “Lulism,” Ferréz’s 2013 novel *Deus foi Almoçar* includes the addition of a character that has risen from the *favela* to the new lower middle class.

It is impossible to examine the issue of visibility of the marginal in Brazilian imaginary without also analyzing the changes in Brazil’s international visibility. Starting at

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4 In 1997, Ferréz published his first book *Fortaleza da Desilusão*. It is a collection of poems published with the financial support of his then-employer.
the turn of the century, Brazil status in the world increased due to an economic boom and its revitalizing social programs. The entire country moved, in a sense, from a peripheral and marginal position in global politics (Costa 38), to one near the center. In 2001, Brazil joined other countries with emerging economies, Russia, India and China, to form BRIC (Costa 38). With this visibility, however, the negative side of Brazil was exposed to the world: Brazil is home to widespread institutional corruption and is a place of extreme violence and abysmal social inequalities. This discovery meant the destruction of the paradisiacal Brazil idealized by foreigners. The world was exposed to the extreme poverty of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the quebradas of São Paulo since there were more representations of them in cinema, literature and in tourism campaigns. A close look at these neighborhoods let everyone see, in the words of Ferréz, that they are not “inspiração para cartão postal” (this is the caption for one the photos of Capão Redondo that appears in Capão Pecado, n.p.). As Adriana Kertzer highlights, the favelas since 1990s have became “hallmarks of contemporary Brazilianness” (n.p). However, the exposure of these Brazilian shantytowns both locally and internationally gave the term favela a negative connotation (Perlman, Favela 2016).

The author shows the consequences of the política higienista of the State of Brazil that was in force from the late 1800s up until the time of Lula’s election, and sought to “clean” the center of the city by forcing the poor to the outskirts. Ferréz fights against this by increasing the visibility of the poor residents of the favelas and writing about their everyday

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5 With this caption, Ferréz is probably dialoguing with the writer Patrícia Melo who in her novel Inferno (2000) has a scene where a US tourist visiting the morro takes a photograph of the favela as the new image picture for a the postcard of Rio de Janeiro (292). The favela is described as a picturesque setting, exotic and colorful. As Santa Marias points out, the favela described by Melo is presented in its his panoramic complex reality (129), but it is never known from the inside, as in Ferréz’s texts.
lives. Ferréz’s novel Deus foi Almoçar also makes visible an alternative marginal space, Cinemão, located in the center of São Paulo city and examined in chapter four. This area is a homosexual “red-light” zone and the mainstream elite, even the homosexual elite, prefers to feign ignorance of its existence. Ferréz’s literary work reveals a segregated society where violence, physical or not, is a way to explain and justify all kinds of attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, Literatura Marginal must be seen in the context of power. Marginality as depicted by Ferréz is a product of confrontation and power that can be used as a weapon against repressive concepts. Ferréz’s texts are about Brazilian people who are denied their rights as citizens. Since they do not have enough power, by writing their own story, they fight against the elite and try to achieve whatever small amount of control over their lives they can. They have limited access to fundamental necessities such as adequate housing, food and education. They are also disenfranchised from the political system. According to Leila Lehnen, contemporary texts such as Ferréz’s are a way of counteracting this exclusion and marginality (3). Ferréz’s work allows for a questioning of an imposed performance and, thus, constitutes an effective mechanism of empowerment against the institutionalized power that forbids a thoughtful formation of selfhood. Ferréz summons the reader to see them, the residents of the periphery, and to read about them. He stakes claim to a positive identity for the residents of the favelas, one that challenges the labels commonly used.

The Literatura Marginal movement has challenged and altered the Brazilian publishing world. Typically, the city center of the elite serves as the narrative setting in Brazilian novels. However, the reality of life in the favelas of São Paulo and in the southern periphery of Brazil is the focus of the work of Literatura Marginal. Moreover, while all major Brazilian publishers are located in the city centers, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, the
writers of the *Literatura Marginal* self-publish their work within the *favelas*. Thus, Ferréz, in a sense, helped to “reterritorialize” Brazilian fiction not only from center to periphery, but also from north to south, since in the last two decades, the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro have received more attention from the mainstream than those of São Paulo. This southerly movement is important in that it allows scholars and intellectuals to compare representations of *favelas* in different parts of Brazil.

Accordingly, this movement of the creative subject and place of publishing from the center to the periphery took the Brazilian publishing and academic market by surprise. People who have been pushed aside and marginalized by the elite are claiming the right to tell their own stories. As Regina Dalcastagnè points out, Brazilian literary cities are traditionally devoid of women and the poor (Dalcastagnè 24). Thus, any representation of the periphery, even as a locus of excess and banditry, is very unusual. Karl Erik Schollhammer writes:

> No mercado brasileiro, surgiu, nos últimos anos, um outro fenômeno que, em intenso diálogo com as novas formas de realismo, coloca o contato com a realidade atual brasileira como foco principal. Trata-se aqui de uma literatura que, sem abrir mão da verve comercial, procura refletir os aspectos mais inumanos e marginalizados da realidade social brasileira. (98)

Some members of the traditional publishing community appreciate the accomplishments of this grassroots movement. Although Ferréz is well known in Brazil by those in literary circles, however, his work is not widely read outside these circles. Interestingly, his work has been translated into Spanish, French, and German; Ferréz has also received more acceptance as a writer of literature by foreign critics. They recognize that getting the attention of the
mainstream and overcoming the gap between the center and the periphery is a great achievement. Ferréz himself recognizes this accomplishment “Pra mim foi vitória, pois diz muito que não importa minha história de vida, o que importa é o texto” (Ferréz in interview with blog Canto dos Livros). Furthermore, foreign readers are curious about the meaning of being *marginal* and *periferia* in Brazil and about the people and language of *gueto* as described by an insider.

Others in the literary world, however, are disdainful of marginal writers’ work. For example, certain critics have questioned the literary quality of Ferréz's texts. Some reviewers believe that Ferréz’s literary production, or anything written by members of the movement, should be classified not as literature but as a type of documentary prose with a strong testimonial content (Coronel 30). This kind of thinking has not changed over Ferréz’s career and reappears after every one of his texts, poems or novels is published. Literary critic Flora Süssekind wrote that the first edition of *Capão Pecado* was simply a compilation of testimonies. Süssekind describes the book as “escrito em linguagem propositadamente de gueto, com material autobiográfico, por um ex-padeiro, filho de motorista de ônibus, morador do bairro Capão Redondo, da zona sul de São Paulo” (11). This debate seems to focus more on Ferréz’s *favela* origin and to ignore the question of his maturity as a writer.6 The real issue seems to be the fact that these authors are from the periphery.

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6 It is worth noticing that in the history of Brazilian literature there have been some famous writers from the periphery, such as Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914-1977) and Paulo Lins (1958). Additionally, as Lucina Araujo Marques stresses, some other prominent writers, such as Lima Barreto (1881-1922), came from an underprivileged background. Carolina Maria de Jesus and Ferréz are the only two successful marginal writers whose biographies are always mentioned. The works of Paulo Lins and Lima Barreto are often ignored.
Ferréz’s work has been labeled as a kind of *mutirão autoral*. According to Priberam online dictionary, *mutirão* is a collective initiative to help someone or to provide community service, for example, to implement projects that change the infrastructure. The application of this label of *mutirão* to Ferréz’s production is due to two facts: first, that in the first edition of *Capão Pecado*, the writer employs a distinctly collectivist speech, giving a voice to other leaders of the periphery in his novel; second, his books, as he himself has expressed, represent a larger collectivity. According to Queiroz da Silva, this “disrupts” the usual social order.

*Access Granted – The State of the Question*

Despite resistance from some critics and scholars, Ferréz’s literary production has been granted access into the academic community. His work is increasingly being studied in Brazil, France, Germany, and the United States. It takes just a short Internet search to find a number of articles, essays, and master degree theses on his work. This study attempts to take into account all of the previous scholarly works, both in print and digital form. Aside from research that has been conducted in literature studies, anthropologists and sociologists have also examined the *Literatura Marginal* movement. However, these studies have focused on the community self-management aspect of the movement within a sociological and anthropological point of view, overlooking the contents of its literary production.

As of yet, none of the studies on Ferréz and the *Literatura Marginal* has discussed this work within the framework of the banditry narrative. However, the dissertation “CIDADE DE DEUS. O aracaco e o modern no romance contemporâneo” (2007) by Tatiana Rossela Duarte de Oliveira Rocha includes a chapter that proposes that the novel *Cidade de Deus* by Paulo Lins shares some characteristics of banditry narratives. As it is shown in the
following pages, this study differs from Rocha’s proposal since Paulo Lins is not considered to be a member of the *Literatura Marginal* movement; his novel *Cidade de Deus* does not correspond to a subversion of banditry since he belongs to the cultural elite of the center. This dissertation proposes that Ferréz’s texts and the other texts of *Literatura Marginal* are the “casualidade interna” (internal causality) not to Lins’s novel but to other canonical banditry narratives. “Casualidade interna” is a concept developed by Antônio Cândido that suggests that contemporary Brazilian Literature has the capacity to produce works which follow national paradigms (*Educação* 153). In that sense, Ferréz’s texts and *Literatura Marginal* are a double internal causality in the sense that they not only reproduce a canonical trope, but also implement the same formula used by Paulo Lins to succeed in the literary realm.

This study uses the writings of Eric Hobsbawm and Juan Pablo Dabove on the bandit in 19th century literature as a basis for this interpretation. Eric Hobsbawm is responsible for the creation of one of the most influential archetypes: the social bandit. Since the first edition of Hobsbawm’s *Bandits* was criticized for neglecting to sufficiently examine the political contexts of banditry, in his last revision, Hobsbawm corrects this omission and analyzes the political contexts of the bandits. However, as the title of this study indicates, the work of the *Literatura Marginal* breaks from the traditional bandit mold and is a contemporary (sub)version of it. This reinterpretation is inspired by the work of Anton Blok and Richard W. Slatta. Anton Blok is one of the key scholars debating Hobsbawm’s thesis on social banditry; he argues that “the approach leaves little room for a more comprehensive analysis over time of particular bandits or bands” (“Peasant and Brigand” 495). For Blok, Hobsbawm fails to take into account the complexities of banditry by overlooking the element of class
conflict. On the other hand, Richard Slatta encourages the revision of Hobsbawm’s idea on banditry. Although Slatta applauds Hobsbawm for “his provocative model” (30), he also suggests other interpretations of social bandits. Juan Pablo Dabove broadens Hobsbawm’s model in his *Nightmares of the Lettered City: Banditry and Literature in Latin America, 1816-1929* and applies it to a thorough and well-informed study on Latin American bandits. Dabove proposes that banditry narratives are texts of monstrosity. He believes the elite are motivated by their anxieties regarding the social order to write bandit stories that portray the Other as a frightening force. The work of the *Literatura Marginal* also addresses the anxiety of the elite. However, the point of view changes in *Literatura Marginal* and these fears are described by those who are being looked upon as monsters.

This study focuses on the urban bandit; even if Hobsbawm and Dabove recognize this figure in their work, both concentrate on the rural bandit in their studies. This dissertation shows that the bandit is still present in Latin American literature, he has just moved from the rural periphery of the countryside to the urban periphery of the *favelas* of the city centers. Although the contemporary bandit shares his predecessors’ role as “the voice of popular discontent” (Bolk, “Peasant and Brigand” 495), Ferréz does not deal with traditional bandits but one particular to Brazil’s periphery reality, the *marginal periférico*. Additionally, this dissertation proposes Ferréz’s texts as a (sub)version because they break with the “uniformity of social brigandage” (Blok, “Peasant and Brigand” 494). Ferréz’s revival of the literary bandit is also a means for initiating and guiding a grassroots community movement. Ferréz’s

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7 Juan Dabove in a recent article, “*Plata Quemada: Banditry, Neoliberalism and the Dilemma of Literature at The End of the Twentieth Century*” (2010), examines the bandits in Argentina at the end of the twentieth century as depicted in the novel *Plata Quemada* (1997) by Ricardo Piglia.
books metaphorically adopt the Robin Hood’s slogan of stealing from the rich and giving to the poor (Halperin 50). The discussion expands on and gives a better understanding of the urban banditry narrative.

The initial articles and essays that include references to either Ferréz or *Literatura Marginal* are those written by João Cezar de Castro Rocha, Karl Erik Scollhammer and Flora Süssekind. All three essays examine the context of violence in Brazilian literature. Although these articles discuss issues that are pertinent to Ferréz’s work, none of them includes an in-depth analysis of his only published book at the time, *Capão Pecado*. Of these work, Rocha’s contribution has been the most influential to the current study. His essay “The Dialectic of Marginality: Preliminary Notes on Brazilian Contemporary Culture” provides a new framework for the imaginaries which are changing the so-called “pensamento social brasileiro”. The *marginal periférico*, the bandit character of Ferréz’s first two novels, is an example of this new imaginary. The article by Scollhammer discusses the role of violence in cultural and literary production. He presents aesthetic objects of violence and their relationships with the general process of the symbolization of social reality (Schollhamer 28). Finally, the article by Süssekind offers examples of recent Brazilian poems and prose that treat as subject matter the violent and exclusionary daily life in the suburbs of the large cities (Süskekind 11). Her paper pays special attention to the neo-documentalism that has increased in contemporary Brazilian fiction. This trend is marked by an overlap of the ethnographic and fictional discourses.

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8Rocha defines “pensamento social brasileiro” as the tradition of intellectual essays and scholarly books written about the fundamental elements of Brazilian society (Rocha 6).
Since violence is a part of life in the periphery, *Capão Pecado* is included in research that has focused on violence in Brazilian urban literature. According to Tânia Pellegrini, the novel responds to an aesthetic code which combines two variables: urbanization and poverty. Thiago Carvalhal in his paper “Ferréz en el círculo de los violentos: Ecos eruditos de la barca de Caronte en la escritura marginal en ‘O ônibus branco’” also analyzes Ferréz’s production as a part of a trend to narrate violence. Carvalhal argues that the brutality of urban life that is seen in Ferréz’s work is a criticism of the poor social conditions that are the root of the violence; Ferréz shows that the conditions in the *favelas* are unacceptable from an ethical point of view. Antônio Cândido has labeled this style as hyperrealism, neo-realism, or ultra-realism. The work of Leila Maria Lehnen explores some of the social injustices that lead to this violence in the periphery. Her book *Citizenship and Crisis in Contemporary Brazilian Literature* (2013) explores the ways in which contemporary Brazilian literature addresses the lack of citizenship rights of the poor. She discusses the texts of four writers, and dedicates a chapter to the work of Ferréz.

Many established scholars, such as Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, Lucíia Tennina, and Regina Dalcastagnè, among others, have carefully followed Ferréz since his very first literary efforts. Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda has devoted a section on her blog to Ferréz and his relation to the *Literatura Marginal* movement. She is one of the few scholars who have analyzed more than just the violent subject matter of his books. Although violence is an important issue in his work, it is equally important to examine the non-violent elements. Violence is not the focus of the narrative, it is just one part of the environment of the characters. Ferréz’s work is able to show violence without exoticizing the *favelado*. Although the writer gives particular emphasis to physical aggression and its direct consequences in the
daily lives of the favela residents, Ferréz does not show violence as the use of power to cause physical and psychological damage to another person. Instead, he shows it as a reaction to a transgression against justice and dignity. The use of violence is sometimes the only way to reestablish the equilibrium of the scale of justice (Arendt 86). Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda has stressed the use of this element as a way to promote a form of identification or at least of understanding of the marginal character that is new to Brazilian literature (“A Questão Agora é Outra” n.p.). Ferréz uses the violence he has witnessed to allow the reader to deconstruct, redefine and reshape their images of the periphery and its residents. In this sense, violence is instrumental as a starting point for Ferréz’s fictional production. For this reason, this study focuses on transgression rather than on violence.

Other scholars have explored the Literatura Marginal movement and its emphasis on positive identity formation in marginal communities. Some of these studies have also looked at the cultural changes that have been brought about by the group’s writings and collective projects. Angela Maria Dias’ article “A estrategia da revolta: literatura marginal e construção da identidade” focuses on how the writers use different language and voices in order to construct a communal identity. Another scholar who has written many articles on Ferréz and Literatura Marginal is the Argentinean Lucía Tennina. She has written extensively about Literatura Marginal; she has documented every sarau (poetry reading), reviewed all four novels by Ferréz and also examined other marginal writers such as Sérgio Vaz. She has also authored the only investigation that examines the Semana de Arte Moderna da Periferia that took place on November 4, 2007. Tennina has also written extensively on the history and characteristics of Brazilian Modernism. She states that Modernism manifests a process of displacement composed of three stages: 1) appropriation; 2) emptying; and 3)
update. This process can be applied to the work of the *Literatura Marginal*. Ferréz appropriates the discourse of the lettered city about the Other, empties it of the incorrect stereotypes, and updates it based on his personal experiences. Additionally, the research of Regina Dalcastagnè concerns Ferréz’s cultural importance and his place in the history of Brazilian literature. She identifies the writings of Ferréz as part of a “traditional canon of literatura marginal” that was inaugurated by Lima Barreto (1881-1922) and continued by Carolina Maria de Jesus’s (1914-1977) and João Antônio (1937-1996). These authors, like Ferréz, knew how to express in their books the stories of men and women surviving in segregated spaces of the city. In a way, Lima Barreto, Carolina and João Antônio are pioneers in representing the subjects and territories of the Brazilian suburbs; a distinction recognized by Ferréz and other marginal writers.

Many of the dissertations that have included Ferréz’s work have also focused on its cultural aspects. Luciana Araujo Marques master’s degree dissertation “Pacto em *Capão Pecado*: Das Margens para o centro do texto, do texto para o interior do homem” (2010) looks at how the effects of witnessing a traumatic event, a “pacto de verossimilhança,” influenced Ferréz’s *Capão Pecado*. Érica Peçanha do Nascimento’s study “Literatura Marginal: os escritores da periferia entram em cena” (2006) traces the *Litertaura Marginal* movement from its beginning with three special editions of Ferréz’s magazine *Caros Amigos*. Nascimento concentrates on the connection between social reality and literary creation. Additionally, she examines the lives of the members of the movement and how their shared experiences gave birth to a cultural movement. Luciana Mendes Velloso, in her thesis, “*CAPÃO PECADO*: sem inspiração para cartão postal” (2007) investigates how *Capão Pecado* interweaves literature with other media such as photography and to what extent it
serves the collective discourse about movement in the periphery. The dissertation by Luciana Marquesini Mongim, “Territorialidade Marginais e Construção Est(ética): Capão Pecado e Manual Prático do Ódio, de Ferréz” (2012), is a comparative study of the first two novels by Ferréz that explores the narrative voice in these texts. As a whole, these works have added to a greater understanding of the cultural forces that have shaped this literary movement and of the effects of the movement as a cultural force itself.

Framework

The current study examines the evolution of the work of Ferréz and discusses his relevance in Brazilian and Latin America literature. His work is not viewed through the lens of a single theoretical framework but rather through a dialogue of theories that can help to analyze its different cultural and literary dimensions. Moreover, this study draws on the ideas presented by two manifestos. The first manifesto, “Terrorismo Literário” by Ferréz, defines the principal features of Literatura Marginal.9 The second one is the Manifesto de Antropofagia Periférica by Sérgio Vaz, a poet from the group Cooperifa.10 In their manifestos, Ferréz and Vaz position themselves according to discourses of social

9 In her work, Lucía Tennina identifies three manifestos authored by Ferréz: 1) “Manifesto de Abertura: Literatura Marginal” [to which this study did not have access], 2) “Terrorismo Literário” [used in this study] and 3), and “Contestação” [used as a reference]. The manifesto “Terrorismo Literário” is hereafter is referred to as TL in the parenthetical citations.

10 Cooperifa is the name of a non-governmental organization in the neighborhood Chácara Santana, São Paulo, which acts in the political and cultural sphere, organizing screenings and, events related to literature like the poetry sarau, and the promotion and defense of human rights in contributing to the eradication of poverty. Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica is referred to as “MAP” in the parenthetical citations.
movements. Both writers use words in the titles of their manifestos that are part of the symbolic domain of “high culture”. As discussed in the following chapter, Ferréz appropriates the term *marginal* from a group of Brazilian writers from the 1970s. Similarly, Vaz borrows the term *antropofagia* from the title of Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* (1922). The perspective adopted in both manifestos integrates local social structural differences and historical transformations which encompass the single principle that governs Brazilianness: *antropofagia* (Adler 135). Ferréz and Vaz chose to co-opt these terms in order to gain recognition in mainstream Brazilian society for Capão Redondo’s literary production. When questioned about *Manifesto de Antropofagia Periférica,* the poet Sérgio Vaz explained that he chose the term *antropofagia* for the shock value of peripheral artists using a canonical reference. In that sense, the similarity between the two movements is strong. Both de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* and Vaz’s *Manifiesto de Antropofagia Periférica* articulate the idea that the definitions of an identity are born from the Other, but not necessarily from a subaltern position. However, the difference between the two movements is that the latter is enunciated from a territory of exclusion.12

Along with the two manifestos, theories of banditry provide another framework for this study. As mentioned above, two studies on banditry are important to this research:

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11 De Andrade was a poet from São Paulo who helped found the modernist movement. His work *Manifesto Antropófago* was a part of the famous Modern Art Week that the modernists staged in 1922.

12 Territory, from the political standpoint, Josefina Ludmer argues, is not a clearly defined physical space, but rather a space, which is controlled by a particular power (*Aquí América Latina* 123). This sovereign power does not allow an alternative power and will turn to violence if threatened.
According to Hobsbawm, two important factors can turn banditry into a real-world social movement: first, when it becomes a symbol of resistance that aims to disrupt and destroy the traditional order; and, second, when it includes a dream of a world with brotherhood and freedom and without oppression and subjugation (Hobsbawm 30-31). The work of the “social bandit” writers of *Literatura Marginal* has indeed inspired social change. As social movements, Ferréz’s *IdaSul* and Sérgio Vaz’s *Cooperifa* use values and symbols that characterize the periphery but that are also linked to social inclusion (Arbex 104). Luciana Paiva Coronel uses the term “ética da escritura” (Coronel 36) to describe how in minority literature, an anonymous voice speaks for the collective but also encourages a change or social transformation. *Literatura Marginal* has prompted other residents of the periphery to tell their stories and has given them the tools to do so by establishing poetry readings and a free printing service. Additionally, it has caused the elite of the city center to hear the voices of the marginal.

Another text about bandits and banditry that supports the analysis of this dissertation is Anton Blok’s book *Honour and Violence* (2001). Blok’s book is a collection of twelve essays wherein he analyzes the connection between honor and violence in certain cases of banditry. According to Blok, the citizens that are disregarded are also the most essential in

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society. One of the important influences of Blok to this study is his analysis of nicknames as a reproduction of the cultural code; this aids in the examination of the nicknames adopted by the *marginais periféricos* in creating their identities. Additionally, Blok’s argument that violence is never senseless (103-104) helps to understand the hostile image and pose of the *marginal* characters.

Chapter one, “*Literatura Marginal*: a New Kind of Banditry Narrative,” establishes the relationships between the banditry narrative and marginality. Similar to what many other scholars such as Franciele Queiroz da Silva and Luciene Almeid de Azevedo have done, this first chapter defines the many different nuances the term marginal has in the Brazilian imaginary. By doing so, this study aims to establish the parallels between banditry and marginality, but also to distance *Literatura Marginal* from the homologue movement of the 1960s. The dominant culture defines both banditry and marginality as negative and unconventional. The words have a power that goes beyond their original meanings. In Brazil, they have become signifiers of entire communities, the *favelas*, and of the entirety of life in these communities. Dabove indicates “much like the modern concept of ‘terrorism’, ‘banditry’ became more a part of the ‘metalanguage of crime’ than a specific crime itself” (“An Abundance”, n.p.). This study analyzes all of the meanings the terms “marginal” and “bandit” have in Brazil and explores how the words have come to be used interchangeably. The work on banditry by Dabove and Hobsbawm is applied to the concept of marginality and being *marginal* as defined by Ferréz and Sérgio Vaz in their respective manifestos and as described by other marginal writers in their works.

Additionally, chapter one introduces the main elements of the *Literatura Marginal*, the *marginal periférico* as a new literary character and the periphery as a new literary setting.
The chapter discusses how the appearance of a new setting and characters calls for novel ways to analyze the phenomenon and how the work of Ferréz and the *Literatura Marginal* challenges traditional notions of author, style, and representation. Further, the chapter examines to what extent the lettered city has been able to control public discourse in the context of growing marginal dissemination.

Chapter one also applies the work by Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre regarding space and territory to *Literatura Marginal*. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau excogitates a theoretical framework for understanding the production of urban space and the way it is experienced – and ‘written’ – through the everyday practices of a city’s inhabitants. His thoughts support the current study’s reading that the *marginal periférico* “reappropriate[s] the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production” (xviii). De Certeau’s framework states that “the ordinary practitioners of the city live ‘down below’, below the thresholds at which visibility begins” (93). Ferréz challenges this with writing and social activism that makes the “ordinary practitioners” of the periphery visible. Additionally, Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (1991) supports the arguments presented in chapter one. In his book, he proposes that people create the space in which they live by shaping it with their projects and their uses of it; “space is produced by human intentions” (Molotoch 887). While Lefebvre elaborates on the meaning of production, he also develops the meaning of space. According to Lefebvre, space comprises not only geographical locations, but also the routines of its people. Lefebvre’s ideas are essential to understand how Ferréz recreates the reality of the *favela* in his books.

To study marginality as banditry, it is necessary to refer to Janice Perlman’s studies about the *favela* and marginalities. Perlman introduces a theory of marginality to uncover the
myths that are generated about it. Among other things, Perlman proposes that marginality as a myth functions to keep the status quo of social inequalities (Myth 259). She argues that marginality became a political issue not because some people are out of the system, but because those that are in powerful positions take advantage of the lack of organization of the people of the favelado. Additionally, Perlman claims that marginality is seen by the mainstream as a deviation of personality, for example, those living in the margins are seen as lacking social adaptation skills. Hence, this leads to the belief that the behavior of marginalized people is the cause of their social exclusion and, thus, their segregation is their own fault. Perlman debates this idea by arguing that, on the contrary, the favelados are “integrated into society, although in damage to their own interest” (Myth 195). For this study, Perlman’s thoughts support the reading of Ferréz’s texts as a tool to break with the idea that the marginal is responsible for his or her struggle. To achieve this, Ferréz assembles a narrative comparing what the favela means for the outsider and what it means for the insider.

The second chapter, “Capão: Once a Quilombo, Now Periphery”, focuses on the settings and the characters of Literatura Marginal, primarily of Ferréz’s first two novels. There is a general characterization of two fictional spaces of exclusion in Brazilian literature since the twentieth century: the favelas and the sertão.14 Traditionally, Brazilian literature is about the city center and it excludes those of the periphery. However, Literatura Marginal overturns this perspective by focusing on the periphery and casts the elite of the city center as the outsiders. Chapter two also proposes that historically and culturally a product of slavery.

14 The Northeast in the Brazilian imaginary, where the sertão are located, is viewed as a “barbaric” region, as opposed to the “civilized” nation.
The chapter emphasizes the connection of the periphery with the *quilombos* (settlements of runaway slaves) and examines the origins and the struggles both loci share.

Additionally, chapter two also analyzes the periphery/center dichotomy in Brazil. The term “periphery” carries a derogatory meaning since it represents poverty. Unlike in the United States, where the affluent middle class inhabits the peripheral suburban areas of the cities, in Brazil, poor people predominantly occupy the urban periphery and the richest groups occupy the core. Fictional Capão Redondo, like its predecessors, shelters all those whom the dominant society has labeled as not meeting its standards: poor whites, immigrants, prostitutes, pimps, homosexuals and nowadays all the *marginais*. In some cases, Ferréz even incorporates into his work the pejorative language that the media and the government use for the *marginal*: vandals and delinquents. Ferréz’s work emphasizes the differences between Capão Redondo and São Paulo and highlights the segregation and social disparities. Traditionally, Brazilian literature shows a city that is extremely elitist and exclusionary, just as the real cities are. Ferréz’s job is to shine a light on an invisible layer of São Paulo’s society.

Chapter two also includes a spatial analysis supported by Gaston Bachelard’s view of home as a poetic image, as it was developed by the philosopher in his book *The Poetics of Space* (1958). In *Capão Pecado* and *Manual Prático do Ódio*, there is a dynamic relationship between the settings and the characters. The *favela* has the same functions as a home; it is an element of psychological integration and a shelter for memories (Bachelard 9). The *favela* is its own all-encompassing universe; it has its own power hierarchy, rules, culture, economic system, etc. Chapter two also applies the ideas of Roberto da Matta to *Literatura Marginal*. Da Matta uses and interprets the concepts of “street” and “house” in order to understand
aspects of Brazilian society. For Matta the terms “rua” and “casa” not only define spaces, but also are producers of emotions, reactions, and laws, similar to any other domain of social action. Following Matta’s proposal, the *favela* only makes sense when it is contrasted with “a rua,” the city center. This approach is significant since traditionally when most Brazilian writers use the term “casa,” it means large houses and the wealthy families that occupy them. For example, Gilberto Freyre’s influential book *Casa-Grande & Senzala* is about the “famílias patriarcas” that control Brazilian society. However, when Ferréz uses the term “a casa,” he makes reference to the *favela* and highlights the antagonism that exists between the center and the periphery. The *favela* becomes a symbol of conflict.

The third chapter “Marginal Strikes a Pose” applies Sylvia Molloy’s notion of “pose” to analyze the visual aspects of the characters of *Literatura Marginal*. The chapter analyzes which aspects of the image and identity of the *marginal periférico* are self-created and which are created by those in power. In her essay “La política de la pose,” Molloy analyzes Oscar Wilde from the point of view of the construction of gender and sexual identity and acquiring identity visibility. Molloy’s ideas about visibility are connected to Ferréz’s characters since they also must fight to acquire visibility. Further, this study uses the notion of “striking a pose” that was popularized by pop star singer Madonna in her 1990s hit *Vogue* (1990). What principally links Madonna’s song to this study is her manipulation of and resistance to identity boundaries. By striking a pose, the *marginal periférico* acknowledges his difference while at the same time rejecting his definition by others. The *marginal* moves, sometimes unwittingly, from the periphery to center stage. He must perform and “strike a pose” even when he wishes to return to the shadows. The chapter will also examine a series of photos
that appear in the first edition of *Capão Pecado*. These photos provide a means for Ferréz to visually represent the marginality of the periphery’s residents.

This analysis of pose draws on Judith Butler’s ideas on performativity. Since there are no studies or theories on the performativity of marginality, this chapter is informed by gender and queer theories and the concepts of cultural studies. Butler proposes that gender is a social construction, and this study proposes that marginality and banditry are as well. This study shows that there are two different performances of marginality: the first one being *marginal periférico*, used to promote empowerment; and the second one being the *remediado*, used to criticize the fallacy of social inclusion and social ascension in Brazil’s contemporary discourse. However, in its recognition and analysis of the performance of marginality, this study does not intend to define the marginalized as a simple category since that would homogenize their performance. By creating a parallelism between gender and marginality, it can be argued that both are “an ongoing discursive practice, …open to intervention and resignification” (Butler, *Gender* 43). Consequently, this dissertation examines marginality as a performance that modifies itself depending on the social and historical context where it takes place. The poses of the characters are seen within the framework of a performative act that is deconstructed and reconstructed as necessary. The characters must perform different identities depending on whether they are in the periphery or the city center. Indeed, part of the construction of the *marginal* character is the need for flexibility. The marginal does not have the luxury of one inflexible identity. To say that marginality is performative is to argue that marginality is “real only to the extent that it is performed” (Butler, “Performative” 527).
The chapter also looks at the dress codes of the territories through which the characters of *Literatura Marginal* travel. Whenever they go, the appearance of Ferréz’s characters makes them devalued outcasts. Some of the characters wander the city in a quest to be treated as *gente*, valued citizens (Perlman *Favela* 316), however, they do not possess the clean-cut look of *gente*. They do not have a well-groomed appearance with short hair, an absence of facial hair and clean pressed garments. Ferréz’s message is twofold: he shows that everyone has, even if they do not follow the mainstream, dress codes and he demonstrates that the dress codes that aid in survival in the periphery are very different from those of the city center. The chapter introduces the characters from Ferréz’s first novels and examines their poses, clothing and belongings in order to better understand the world of the marginal.

Chapter three also applies Freud’s work on the uncanny and Julia Kristeva’s thoughts on abjection to the characters of the writings of *Literatura Marginal*. Freud develops the concept of uncanny in his essay “The Uncanny” (1919) and identifies it as a fear that is caused by an object that is repeated from the past (11). The *marginal periférico* fits Freud’s theory of the uncanny because the *marginal* provokes fear in members of the elite but is also a familiar object that draws their attention. In that sense, the notion of uncanny is relevant to this dissertation since the *marginal periférico* present a repressed and hidden threat to Brazilian society that has emerged to remind everyone of their existence. Also, as a bandit, the *marginal periférico* is a reminder of a past that is familiar: the rural bandits. The identity of the *marginal periférico* also corresponds to Kristeva’s theory about abjection in that he is treated by the mainstream as an object of waste, which is “essentially different from ‘uncanniness’, more violent too” (5). In her book *Power of Horror: An Essay on Abjection Summary & Study Guide*, first published in 1982, Julia Kristeva examines the notion of
abject as an idea that is alive in a person’s mind but that eventually leads to repression. The repressed idea eventually manifests itself. She explains the abject as “To each ego its object, to each superego its abject. It is not the white expanse or slack boredom of repression, not the translations and transformations of desire that wrench bodies, nights, and discourse; rather it is a brutish suffering . . .” (2). Chapter three shows the marginal periférico as an abject, not only because the elite are disgusted by his existence but also because the marginal represents the pivot on which society bases its moral regulations. This causes for the marginal a sense of detachment and bewilderment that is imposed upon him from the city center. Those that are in powerful position, like the Brazilian elite, base their control on the idea that the good citizen must be protected from the abject. The elite are at the same time drawn to and repulsed by the marginal periférico.

These ideas also correspond to the seven theses on the monsters that inhabit society as outlined in the essay “Monster Culture” by Jeoffrey Jerome Cohen. The marginal periférico, as a monster, has provoked feelings of fear and anxiety in Brazil’s high culture. The idea that a monster is never truly destroyed or defeated support the proposal of this study that the marginal periférico is a continuance of the 19th century’s bandits; the monster is always an outsider, but never of the same kind. Additionally, as a monster, the marginal is an indication of a “category crisis” (Garber 36) since it brings out and exposes society’s flaws.

However, it is in Chapter four, “On Mimicry, Cultural Transvestism and Being a Remediado”, where the “category crisis” as depicted by Marjorie Garber is examined in depth. Chapter four focuses on the performativity of being a remediado in Ferréz’s Deus Foi Almoçar (2012). The term remediado in this study alludes to a resident of the periphery who has acquired enough money to purchase some middle-class luxuries. The chapter argues that
when the remediado tries to fit into society as the “new middle class,” he gets lost in the process since he ultimately does not belong there. The remediado is forced to pretend to be who he is not in order to try to fit into mainstream culture.

Due to the lack of studies on the performativity of marginality, chapter four applies gender and queer theories, such as Judith Butler’s ideas on gender performativity, to the situation of the remediado. The chapter also draws upon the postcolonial studies of Homi Bhabha’s about the “in-between” space and “mimicry”. “Mimicry,” as defined by Bhabha is a strategy used by the colonized to take over the culture of the colonizer by imitation and a process of repetition. Bhabha’s theories are applicable to the studies of marginality in Brazil.

The chapter also applies the ideas espoused by Marjorie Garber in her book Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (1994) to the situation of the remediado. Her work provides insight about the figure of the transvestite and its cultural significance. Garber suggests that the transvestite cannot be considered as just an idea but rather as a “category destabilization altogether” (36). In other words, the figure of the transvestite disrupts the binary system of male and female. Correspondingly, the figure of the remediado disrupts the social order since he neither belongs to the center nor to the periphery.

Chapter four is also informed by Jossiana Arroyo’s application of queer theory to the behavior of minorities and the process of cultural transvestism. Arroyo, in her book Travestismo culturales: literatura y etnografía en Cuba y Brasil (2003), explores the cultural vision that helped to build the nations of Cuba and Brazil. Her proposal is that in order to organize the cultural imaginary in these countries, it was necessary to integrate the black population into the national discourse. However, a key observation made by Arroyo is that such inclusion is only superficial and another way to control and discipline the
subjugated. The lower class is made to think that they are accepted because certain lower-class cultural elements are accepted, however, they remain excluded and powerless. Arroyo argues that adopting, imitating and repeating the elite culture, now understood or perceived as the Other, has adverse consequences for the lower class. Arroyo’s idea is applied to the situation of the *remediado* who may seem to be embraced by the mainstream but will never play an important role in the political process.
CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURA MARGINAL: A NEW KIND OF BANDITRY NARRATIVE

1.1 Introduction

As the turn of the 21st century approached, Brazilian Literature welcomed a new protagonist in its imaginary: the marginal or marginal periférico. This character calls to mind the social bandit trope first described by historian Eric Hobsbawm in his now classic book Bandits (1969), and later applied to Latin American literature by Juan Pablo Dabové in his book Nightmare of the Lettered City (2007). According to Eric Hobsbawm, although the concept of bandit/banditry may give the impression of being historically remote, it is indisputably present whenever second-class citizens resist the impositions of certain norms or lack thereof (Bandits 9). Given that the concept of banditry has mainly been used in cultural and literary studies to describe outlaws or outsiders in the 19th century, one might surmise that the trope would disappear. However, the bandit trope’s timeless and mutable features make it relevant to this study of contemporary Brazilian literature. Banditry names entities that are in a state of continuous mutability, frustrating the attempts of those in power to eradicate them.

Brazil’s Literatura Marginal shares many characteristics with the classic banditry narrative and the work of Ferréz contains the elements of the classic bandit paradigm: 1) identification with a territorial space; 2) representation of an alienated subject and 3) the need for social mobility. Nevertheless, there are also differences. For example, literate white middle-class writers unfamiliar with the world of banditry predominantly wrote the social bandit literature of the nineteenth century, whereas the Brazilian authors of the marginal
periférico literature are self-proclaimed writers who are considered to be marginal by the elite.

The story of the marginal is also a story about how the collective subjects are repressed by the dominant state and/or nation, and this story contains the restos salvajes (the savage residue) as described by Juan A. Hernández (444). The emergence of the marginal in Brazilian literature is partially a result of the conflicting image of Brazil as an “offspring of unique synthesis and harmonious integration” (Valente 13) and the reality of social injustice in the country. Hence, if being a bandit means being a member of an oppressed group and having a defiant attitude towards the elite, then the appearance of the marginal in contemporary Brazilian literature could be understood as a reappearance of the bandit motif. These “bandit” writers of the marginal movement are a reaction to the social inequities of Brazil and a result of “casualidade interna.”

1.2 Banditry and Marginality

The inability of Latin American countries to forge a homogeneous identity after independence from European colonizers caused a representational emptiness. Latin American scholars and thinkers of that period delineated in their essays and fictions two different forms of self-imaginary: the man of letters and the illiterate. As a consequence, the insertion of a dichotomous imaginary to the national foundational narrative gave birth to the bandit trope as a new cultural imaginary. The bandit was a conception whose possibility of formation and eventual establishment concerned the letrado (lettered) of Latin America and played a fundamental role during the development and formation of Latin American nation-state
identities as an “imagined community.” In Ángel Rama’s words, the lettered men were disciplining the symbolic order of national cultures. In his seminal book *La ciudad letrada* (1984), Rama defines the lettered men as priests, administrators, educators, professionals, writers and others who “managed the quill” (25). Juan Dabó describes the lettered men as masculine-literate, “white,” proprietor-urban, and thus, Europeanized (*Nightmares* 2). Although the bandit figure seemed subversive, this kind of character helped the educated elite highlight and list what needed to be excluded, subordinated, or suppressed.

Eric Hobsbawm asserts that social bandits are usually peasants and landless laborers who are ruled over, oppressed and exploited by someone else. Hobsbawm classifies them into three categories: the noble robber, the primitive resistance fighter or guerrilla unit (*haiduks*), and the avenger (22-23). Hobsbawm also explains that bandits by definition resist obedience, are outside the range of power and are potential rebels (12). Correspondently, in 19th century Latin America, the bandit had three distinct characteristics: 1) he is the devious brother or someone of unknown origin who was the originator of violence; 2) he was the “Other” who needed to be destroyed because he/she was “the sum of all fears of the lettered elite;” and 3) he was an instrument of critique functioning as a method for mediation among the lettered elite (Dabó, *Nightmares* 285).

The complicity between the lettered men and the government in power is based on the exercise of writing, which means that the real-life existence of a figure such as the bandit hardly matters. Foremost, *banditry*, in general, can be understood as a concept which reflects

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15 Benedict Anderson coined the term “imagined communities” to explain the way nations are conceived and understood by their members. According to Anderson, a nation is imagined in the sense that it is defined by the common elements which the people believe they share.
an ideal and/or aspiration. Bandits are assumed to be portrayed as an internal enemy since they escape the control of the elite and their standards (Dabove, Nightmare 4). Banditry, then, lays bare a conflict turning around representation and inclusion.\textsuperscript{16} There is not a specific criminal act to describe banditry, the classification of social bandits is thus based not so much on their actual activities but on what people perceive them to be, or more accurately, on how the bandits are described by lettered men. The bandit figure shifts between the opposing forces of civilization and barbarism, order and disorder, security and threat, and center and periphery; he or she represents a fundamental opposition still not resolved.

Throughout its history, bandits, like the ones described above, have populated the Brazilian imaginary. Some of the bandit tropes are documented in a favorable light whereas others have a notorious reputation in the collective imagination, the cangaceiro being one of the most renowned. The folklore of the cangaceiros is based on their real-life stories. The canganceiros were armed men from the sertão (backlands). They had their own rules and laws, but were eventually killed by the government. As social bandits, they were supported by the coiteros, poor people who sympathized with them. Their experiences are still recalled and recounted, and, in some cases, people have created a kind of nostalgic worship for historical figures such as Lampião, Rei do Cangaço.\textsuperscript{17} But cangaceiro is also a pejorative

\textsuperscript{16} Eric Hobsbawm adds that banditry as a social phenomenon is also about class, wealth, and power (Bandits 9).

\textsuperscript{17} Lampião ("Oil Lamp") is the most renowned cangaceiro bandit in Brazil. He was the leader of a Cangaço, a band of outlaws, who terrorized the Brazilian Northeast in the 1930s. At the end of the 1930s, the federal government increased their efforts to eliminate the bandits. Lampião and his companions were executed in 1938.
expression; it used to describe a person who cannot adapt himself/herself to the lifestyle imposed by a society of European descent.

Since the setting of the traditional banditry narrative is rural, changing the setting to an urban one opens up the possibilities for including different characteristics, including marginality. Marginality theories aim to explain the reasons why these individuals fail to integrate into urban life, given their social, cultural, economic, and political aspects. Accordingly, people are recognized as marginal if they are either related to the margin, live between two cultures in conflict or are labeled criminals, delinquents, outlaws, etc. (Da Silva 5). Similar to the definition of banditry, the marginal condition is constructed by means of moral accusation; it is a narrative designed by the dominant class to demonize the oppressed. Marginality serves as the status quo’s continuing discourse about the norm and the fear of its transgression. The independent scholar Janice Perlman labeled this narrative The Myth of Marginality (1979). According to Perlman, the myth of marginality helps maintain the existing conditions and reinforces the sense of superiority of a few (Marginality Revisited 9). It also serves to:

1) provide an accused or a victim for a wide selection of societal problems, and allows some to feel superior, while legitimatizing the dominant norms;
2) “purify” the self-image of the rest of society by considering the marginals the source of all forms of deviance, perversity and criminality;
3) shapes the self-image of those labeled as marginal; these people then suffer the consequences of the internalization of negative traits (8-9).

Such a discourse suggests the disfranchisement of a considerable amount of the population of the periphery. Additionally, the marginality discourse supports labeling individuals as
“marginal” and blaming them for being unable to adjust to the urban life into which they are supposed to be integrated.

The connection between the marginal and the bandit is such that it is possible to trace the lineage of the *Marginal Periférico* to the bandits who have populated the Brazilian imaginary, e.g., the *sertanejo* and the *canganceiros* described by Euclides da Cunha, and even the *malandro* portrayed by Manuel Antônio de Almeida. Even more, marginal literary characters are called bandits (and vice versa) and *marginal* has been used interchangeably with *bandido* in Brazil.¹⁸ *Marginal, periférico* and *bandido* belong to the same semantic family in Portuguese, they signify one who is distant from the center. The *marginal* is depicted by the dominant hegemonic discourse, as other bandits such as the *canganceiro* once were, as a dangerous remainder, a disobedient subject, a product of chaos and violent promiscuity.¹⁹ Marginality, like banditry, subsists as an excuse to exclude those not suitable to the elite’s belief in an imagined commonness. The role of “marginal” is to strengthen, by negativity, the value of social norms and order.

The concept of marginality also stems from a notion of position, which locates the *marginal* at the opposite side or at the periphery. This association with a distant space allows one to imagine that the real and symbolic boundaries help to slow the movement of everything that is against the norm, or threatens stability and order (Reguillo-Cruz 56). The role of residential space is of particular interest for this study since there is a strong

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¹⁸ Other names used to label the *marginal* in Brazil are *bicho-solto, malandro, vagabundo* and *bicheiro*”

¹⁹ Here “hegemonic” is used as it is defined by Rossana Reguillo, “a set of representations, discourses, and projects able to seduce people into believing that the current cultural proposal is not only the best but the only possible” (Reguillo).
correlation between marginality/banditry and distance from the lettered city. In the 19th century, the lettered men associated the social bandit with a rural space, the Sertão, the backlands, far from the elite city. Similarly, the marginal is related to the periphery and to the neighborhoods of the poor people who live there. The general term used for these neighborhoods is favelas, however, the favelas of São Paulo are more precisely called quebradas. Although these favelas are in an urban setting, they are on the outskirts of the city, far from the city elite. The dissemination of the marginal through the city is restrained and kept away from the center. This supports stigmatization and excludes outsiders from integrating into the privileged class system. Thus, despite urbanization and progress, there still exists in Latin America an effort to keep the poor away from the city center. The continuance of the bandit as a literary image is a result of this segregation.

The discourses of otherness and subalternity reinforce marginality. For the most part, marginality conceives of the Other as incapable of reasoning, denying him the ability to represent himself through his own consciousness as well as not allowing him an opportunity for expression. Gayatri Spivak criticized the treatment of subalterns in her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). According to Spivak, the issue is not that subalterns have no voice, but that their speech has never been heard or recognized by those in power. Spivak suggests that the lettered cannot speak for subalterns and that their voices should be heard. Brazilian literature has always been a space of exclusion. In the history of Brazilian literature, there are countless writers, such as Carolina Maria de Jesus, who are spoken about

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20 The Northeast in the Brazilian imaginary, where the sertão are located, is viewed as a “barbaric” region as opposed to the “civilized” nation.
by literary critics with “estranhamento, do exótico, do Outro” (de Miranda 5).\textsuperscript{21} The limited access of marginalized writers is a recurring subject in studies of Literatura Marginal. Even though Literatura Marginal Periférica can be read within the subaltern and otherness discourse, according to the manifesto “Terrorismo Literario,” it is literature: “feita para e por pessoas que foram postas a margem da sociedade” (TL12). It must be kept in mind that once writers in a subordinated position find a space for their voice, they are no longer considered subalterns. The fact that writers from the periphery create Literatura Marginal Periférica shows that the marginals have abandoned the subaltern position as Ferréz claims in the “Terrorismo Literario”: “não somos retrato, pelo contrario, mudamos o foco e tiramos nós mesmos a nossa foto” (TL9). Ferréz believes that ideally everyone’s voices would be heard in Brazilian society to the extent there would no longer be any voiceless subalterns.

Ferréz and other marginal writers confront the myth of marginality by speaking from and about their marginal condition. Their tactic is to affect society by stressing their differences and writing about themselves and for themselves through a literature that “se faz presente para representar a cultura de um povo, composto de minorias, mas em seu todo uma maioria” (TL 11). On this matter, Michel de Certeau states that marginality is a massive and pervasive issue of a silent majority (xvii) forced to constantly elaborate tactics of survival and resistance. A “tactic” as defined by Michel de Certeau must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into opportunities (38-39). There is no doubt that marginal writers do not define themselves as subaltern since they have been able to construct a narrative that

\textsuperscript{21} Although the lettered elite of her time did not label Carolina Maria de Jesus as “marginal,” she was, indeed, a member of the marginal and was further marginalized by the failure of the literary elite to officially include her in the “marginal” group.
“jogando contra a massificação que domina e aliena cada vez mais os assim chamado por eles de ‘excluídos sociais’” (TL11). The marginal writer perceives himself/herself as “aquele que faz cultura” (TL10) and confronts the well-established representations in the literary tradition while reaffirming the legitimacy of his/her own literary construction.

1.3 Literatura Marginal Periférica

Como é essa literatura marginal publicada em livros? 
Ela é honrada, ela é autêntica…
Terrorismo Literário

Since Brazil’s history is saturated with individuals identifying themselves as marginal, it is necessary to discuss how the word has been used historically in Brazilian literature and how Literatura Marginal Periférica currently defines the term. Fernanda Rodrigues de Miranda points out that Brazilians, mainly from urban centers, have over the years experienced a number of self-named marginal cultural movements in the areas of film, music, visual arts and poetry (4). The definition of marginal is complex since it is exceedingly polysemic and often used with ambiguity when it is related to art forms. In a general sense, marginal artistic productions defy the canon by breaking the rules of the dominant aesthetic paradigms of the privileged. In Brazilian literature, marginal writers can be classified into one of two categories:

1. Those who used publishing technologies outside of conventional publishing avenues during a time of censorship, for example, producing mimeographed works, fanzines, photocopied pamphlets, etc.
2. Those whose topics represent the speech of the excluded; for example, the selection of perspectives, characters and themes related to the world of “social marginality”: poverty, prostitution, crime, etc. (Souto n.p.).

According to current marginal writers, the writers who belonged to the first category were not truly marginal in the sense that they were a part of the lettered elite who had their access to the press temporarily restricted. Writer Allan da Rosa, in an interview with Lucía Tennina, uses the term “marginal alternativo” to designate this first category and reserves the term marginal for those writers who truly come from society’s periphery.

The alternative marginal writers, who were also known as the Geração Mimeógrafo, wrote during the Anos de chumbo when there was a great deal of censorship by the Military Dictatorship Regime. These writers labeled themselves marginal, however, as Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda explains, the literary value of the term marginal for this generation is more related to their means of production. Since the government did not allow them to publish their work, they found alternative means for production and circulation, such as buying and using their own mimeograph machines. The well-known expression “seja marginal, seja herói” by Hélio Oiticica characterized a series of alternative marginal works that became known as marginália or cultura marginal. In addition, the lifestyle adopted by

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22 Anos de chumbo (the Leaden Years) was the most repressive period during the Military Dictatorship Regime in Brazil, from 1969 to 1974. These years are also known as the Brazilian Economic Miracle due to the exceptional economic growth during the military regime.

23 The marginália contained the work of a number of artists, including that of members of the intellectual group from the Tropicalismo movement of 1967 and 1968. After the arrest and exile of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, artists such as Hélio Oiticica began to use a more radical and oppositional response to the cultural dilemmas of the time.
these poets, similar to that of the hippies in the United States, was “alternative” or “eccentric” in that it conflicted with the socially accepted behavior of the time (de Oliveira 32). However, these poets were not truly marginal in that they belonged mostly to middle-class and upper middle-class, and not to the disenfranchised poor. Today’s marginal writers do not consider these poets to be marginal and, in fact, marginal writer Ferréz has labeled them as boyzinhos (spoiled ones). Ferréz has also said, “o mimeógrafo foi útil, mas a guerra é maior agora” (TL 12). According to Ferréz, fighting the repression of the military establishment was not as big of a battle as the current fight of the oppressed against the elite of Brazil.

The writers of the Literatura Marginal Periférica chose the word “marginal” not only because it is an accurate description of their social position, but because of the term’s history in Brazilian literature. However, it is not a tribute to the alternative marginal writers but rather a way to use these writers’ fame to draw attention to their own cause. According to Ferréz, the lettered elite did not recognize the marginal literary movement for many years, “não era conhecida como nada!” (Ferréz in an interview with Tennina). By using the term “marginal,” Ferréz suggests that such literature is marginal since it is situated on the border of mainstream culture and excluded from the official lettered culture. Ferréz defines Literatura Marginal Periférica as: “Uma literatura feita por minorias, sempre é bom frisar, sejam elas raciais ou socioeconômicas. Literatura feita à margem dos núcleos centrais do saber e da grande cultura nacional, isto é de grande poder aquisitivo.” (TL 12) These are writers from a voiceless population who are struggling to find their voices and to be heard.

24 In an interview with Erica Peçanha, Ferréz speaks about writers already legitimized by the canon as boyzinhos to reinforce the difference between him and those writers, “Os outros escritores pra mim eram boyzinhos e eu passei a falar que era ‘literatura marginal’” (Peçanha 15).
They have been ostracized from the mainstream and are seeking to establish a society where they may belong. It is, thus, a literature, which is enclosed in the contradictions of silence and voice, and of belonging and separation.

Since these authors are not a part of the literary elite, the mere act of giving their movement a name and identifying their work as literature is a transgressive act. By appropriating the term “literature,” they are challenging the right of the mainstream literary establishment to decide what is and is not literature, “marginais mas antes somos literatura” (TL10). Accordingly, this seemingly simple act of naming is actually an act of defiance and banditry. As literature written by a bandit, Literatura Marginal Periférica serves as a counter-discourse in relation to the dominant canon. Ferréz states:

> Uma coisa é certa, queimaram nosso documentos, mentiram sobre nossa história, mataram nosso antepassados. Outra coisa é certa: mentiram no futuro, esconderão e queimarão tudo que prove que um dia a classe menos beneficiada com o dinheiro fez arte. (TL11).

The lettered men are threatened by the presence of marginal and have not only tried to eradicate his past, but will always actively attempt to suppress it in the future.

*Literatura Marginal* contains the three principal features of minor literature as outlined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: 1) a deterritorialization of language; 2) a political element; and 3) collective significance. Deleuze and Guattari state that minor literature “does not come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Delueze & Guattari 16).
However, Ferréz refuses to define the marginal population as the minority. He sees that it is those who are living on the periphery who are in the majority and that *Literatura Marginal* is “uma literatura maior, feita por maiorias, numa linguagem maior, pois temos as raízes e a mantemos” (TL 13). Ferréz’s quote demonstrates the double-play marginal writers must employ in order to challenge, evade and overcome the standards imposed by the dominant ideology. The reference to Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of *minor literature* is evident and congruent with Ferréz’s in-between position and his anthropophagic predisposition. Ferréz reminds the readers how this literature remains enclosed in contradictions. In the case of *Literatura Marginal*, the deterritorialization implies an interference in the marginal society by the culture that isolates it. *Literatura Marginal* as a bandit narrative articulates the stories of a sector in Brazilian society, which, as the *marginal* writer claims, can better be told by one of them – “nada mais que os autênticos” (TL 11) – , and yet they need to be told following the paradigms of the established culture of the lettered city.

*Literatura Marginal Periférica* as a cultural reterritorialization movement (Martins 32) condemns the risks of theoretical reductionism and moral apathy and insists upon honoring human beings in their entirety: morally, psychologically and culturally. The *terrorismo literário* (literary terrorism), as Lucía Tennina has pointed, consists in irreverently challenging canonical culture, and at the same time, celebrating the subversive connotative power of the term *marginal*. In this matter, Josefina Ludmer has explained the role of violence as a means of constructing societies, and therefore, also identity:

En las ficciones literarias “el delito” podría leerse como una constelación que articula delincuente y víctima, y esto quiere decir que articula sujetos: voces,
It is difficult for *marginal* writers to proclaim their identities and have a sense of belonging when the culture in power does not even allow the *marginal* to decide what “marginal” means. The lettered elite considers the writers of the *Literatura Marginal* to be sociologically marginal, but do not want them to use the label of “marginal writers.” As Ferréz states, “A própria linguagem margenando e não os da margem” (TL 9). Additionally, the mainstream elite do not want them to use the label “literature.” Historically, the criteria which defined the literariness of a text and separated and ranked what was good and bad was always determined by a select few.

The manifesto of the *Literatura Marginal Periférica*, the “Terrorismo Literario” states, “O barato já tá separado há muito tempo, só que do lado de cá ninguém deu um gritão[…] foi feito todo um mundo de teses e estudos do lado de lá…” (13). Nevertheless, Ferréz maintains that this literature does not need the approval of a canon or academy, “Sabe duma coisa, o mais louco é que não precisamos de sua legitimação” (TL 10). This statement highlights the autonomy of *Literatura Marginal Periférica*. Many marginal writers are proud to proclaim their defiant marginal status. Ferréz, e.g., writes, “Cala a boca uma porra, agora a gente fala, agora a gente canta, e na moral agora a gente escreve” (TL 9). Although it is difficult to say whether or not the *marginal* movement is completely independent of domination by the mainstream, it is certainly true that it is a powerful criticism of the cultural norms of the language. Homi Bhabha writes, “What emerges between mimesis and mimicry
is a writing, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable” (Location 125). In questioning the literary mainstream, the *marginal* movement co-opts some of its power.

Following Benedict Anderson’s notions about print, the work reproduced and disseminated by the *marginal* writers acts as a common language that helps change how these writers see themselves. The act of putting thoughts and experiences into words is very powerful. Michel de Certeau declares that the act of speaking or writing “is not reducible to a knowledge of the language” (xiii). By speaking or writing, the *marginal* writer makes an appropriation or re-appropriation of language, establishes a “present” in relation to time and space, makes a contract with a partner in a network of relationships and places, and uses a given linguistic system (de Certeau xiii). Additionally, the marginal writer’s choosing of the particular language of the periphery represents an act of insolence and is commonly perceived as a threat. The *Literatura Marginal Periférica* is written with a “non-standard” vocabulary which belongs to the linguistic practices of the periphery, “temos nosso próprio vocabulário que é muito precioso” (11). The linguistic variant used by *marginal* writers in their texts, the slang of the outskirts of São Paulo, is not always respected; this leads to a feeling of awkwardness and discomfort for the mainstream. As “users” or “consumers” as de Certeau describes them, the *marginais periféricos* make many changes to adapt this vocabulary to meet their own interests. For example, writers sometimes exaggerate the use of certain slang terms, flooding texts with expressions like “mó” (*muito*/a lot), “truta” (*amigo*, *parceiro*/ friend, partner), and “tá ligado” (understood), among others. This emphasis on certain slang terms occurs because language helps affirm one’s identity or one’s particularity.
from others (Jaspal 17). *Literatura Marginal* is then a literature about the differences that separate their culture from the mainstream and help to define it. According to Bhabha, the representation of difference is not a simple denial for the sake of denial, but rather, a process of refutation (*Location 86*). *Literatura Marginal* claims a language in order to proclaim a symbolic identity. Therefore, *Literatura Marginal* can be understood as a movement that affirms the identity of the peripheral community and is committed to its self-recognition as a group with a particular culture and collective projects. According to Manuel Castells, identity-building itself is a dynamic impetus in forming a society, it is “the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning.” In that sense, language reflects membership in a particular culture and provides members with a sense of identity.

In Brazil, group status is more important than individual status. Ferréz’s work creates a sense of community with his constant reference to and use of words like *irmão* or *mano* (brother), *gente* (literally meaning “people” and used to signify “we”). This terminology pronounces brotherhood and solidarity and makes clear who is a member of the *marginal* and who is not. The “we” allows members to establish bonds in their community (similar to Anderson’s idea of imagined community), even when they are in a different physical space. Furthermore, the use of the pronominal expression *gente* (we) is to be someone who is important to others and to have the dignity and respect denied by the mainstream who call them *vocês* (they) (Perlman *Favela* 316).

The *marginal* writers’ inside view, according to most marginal writers, is unique and their representations of the *favelas* and their residents are more accurate than those written by authors whose views come from the outside. Ferréz’s writing gives a firsthand perspective
rather than that of an observer which, according to Ferréz, “transforma a vida da periferia em ‘national geographic’” (in A. Dias 18). Outsiders have a tendency to romanticize crime and to spectacularize the events of the favelas. **The olhar interno** (inside look) of the *Literatura Marginal* provides a realistic, detailed and empathetic portrayal of the protagonists. The works are realistic thanks to the inclusion of biographical features of the authors’ lives (their origins and identifications with these spaces: favelas, suburbs, prisons, etc.). **The olhar interno of the Literatura Marginal** indicates, first, that the *marginal* writer has direct access to the authentic.

Historically, the creation of a collective self for groups of artists has always been an effective tool for the empowerment of gender and ethnic minorities. Besides the principle of identity, Tennina and other scholars have stated that this construction of the sense of community is built around a collective definition of an adversary and a project of common transformation. According to the *Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica*, the marginal writers fight “contra reis e rainhas do castelo globalizado e quadril avantajado” (MAP). The “kings and queens of the castle” are evidently not only the academics in the “ivory towers” of the Brazilian universities, but all of the members of the global elite who profit from the repression of the poor. To wage battle against these oppressors, the writers of the marginal propose not only an aesthetic change, but also an ethical one, “contra a arte patrocinada pelos que corrompem a liberdade de opção. Contra a arte fabricada para destruir o senso crítico, a emoção e a sensibilidade que nasce da múltipla escolha” (MAP). This is a clear call to action to expand the boundaries of literature and not to be restricted by the rules traditionally imposed by the mainstream literary establishment. According to da Silva, the *Literatura*
Marginal Periférica is a literary resistance movement since it proposes not only an aesthetic change but an ethical one as well (da Silva 14).

The Literatura Marginal Periférica creates a collective self for these authors that allows them to define themselves in part by their group membership. The existence of the group “pressupõe um mundo a parte” (Peçanha 56). Additionally, the negative features of inequality, which originally were used by the mainstream to exclude them, are now used by the group itself to create a sense of belonging and community and bring about social improvements. Néstor Garcia Canclini has pointed out that when cultural differences are no longer perceived as features of inequality, they can even cause positive future change (Imaginários 47). The shared experience of life on the margins of the mainstream is a source of emotional strength for these authors.

1.4 On Being a Marginal Writer

Both of the manifestos that define the Literatura Marginal movement, “Terrorismo Literario” (2000) and Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica (2007), express the rebellious attitude of a bandit, “Somos contra a sua opinião” (MAP n.p). Additionally, they write “na rua, loco, estamos na favela, no campo, no bar, nos viadutos,…” (TL 10). These writers fight with their words in the same types of places where the bandits traditionally fought their battles, away from the centers of power. Likewise, in true bandit fashion, the marginal writers have no connection to any authority; instead, they have a connection with a community or group of people with whom they share common values.

Marginal writers are not only connected with their communities, they also have an obligation to serve them. Their self-defined role in the Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica
is that of “um artista a serviço da comunidade, do país.” The writer is an *artista-cidadão*, described in the *Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica* as someone who does not tolerate the mediocrity in the arts that serves to keep the people living in the margins in their place (MAP). They are akin to the “operative writer” as described by Walter Benjamin; they are writers who will contribute something new with their literary work, and whose techniques can be taught to others (Benjamin 88). Similar to the bandits of 19th century literature, the goal of these writers is to improve the lives of those in their community. The figure of Ferréz, the forefather of the *Literatura Marginal* movement, is helpful in illustrating this new form of banditry. By using the term *marginal* which is very familiar in Brazil’s imaginary and in the history of Brazilian literature, Ferréz not only ascribes a new meaning to it, but he also helps his community by deconstructing the *Myth of Marginality*.

The use of writing as a form of expression arises from the aspiration to participate in the cultural production from a highly valued culture, a literate culture. Normally, members of the lettered elite have written literature about bandits. However, with *Literatura Marginal*, it is narrated from the point of view of the bandit, and thus, the reader hears bandit stories as told by the bandits themselves. For these writers, it is not enough to write only about their own personal stories; their writing needs to touch upon all the problems inherent in the lives of the communities they represent. Ferréz, for example, is a writer who lives “dentro do tema...para representar o grito do verdadeiro povo brasileiro...” (TL11). Authenticity for these writers is a construction of the artists that represents their culture and identity. In most cases, this constructed identity is communicated by way of a “mini-biography” which states the neighborhood or area where the artists live, what kind of work they do in this community and occasionally mentions their militancy (Silva & Tennina 19). An example of this is Preto
Ghóez’s description in his short-story *A Peleja de Firmino* that even includes an email and a phone number (in *LMTEP* 19). Another example is the poet Ridson Mariano da Paixão who “mora na favela do Jaqueline, na cidade de São Paulo e pertence à família extremamente, movimento de cordel urbano” (in *LMTEP* 74).25

The marginal writers’ practice of presenting information about their backgrounds recalls the acts of graffiti-artists/writers during the 1980s (These graffiti artists often wrote personal information next to their works). The writers of *Literatura Marginal* and graffiti artists share other elements in common; both address marginalized subjects and are not a part of the mainstream art/literature market of the lettered city (Rama 52). Both reject and challenge the control of the lettered city over art. Rama argues that art and writing can serve as a battlefield for those who are fighting for power. *Literatura Marginal* and graffiti are, in essence, marginal texts / arts which redirect the traditional means of cultural production to reveal their normally excluded existence. Both *Literatura Marginal* and graffiti subvert the social, cultural, linguistic and moral order; they are perverse writings that uncover what is forbidden (Silva n.p).

There are, however, key differences between the writers of the *Literatura Marginal* and these graffiti artists. For example, according to Armando Silva, the reason that some graffiti artists leave their personal information on their works is that they hope a gallery owner will offer them a show (n.p.), whereas the inclusion of personal information by the *marginal* writer is a proclamation of legitimacy, assuring others of their “internal observer condition” (Silva n.p.). Thus, in general, some of the graffiti artists of the 1980s had a desire

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25 *LMTEP* stands for Literatura Marginal. Talentos da Escrita Periférica (2005), an anthology edited by Ferréz.
to be accepted by the traditional art establishment, but that is not the case of the writers of the *Literatura Marginal Periférica*. They, the marginal writers, write for the people of their communities. They do not seek success nor want to take on the characteristics of the oppressive elite, “não é seguir o padrão, não é ser empregado que virou patrão” (TL9). They do not desire to become a part of the mainstream, instead, they wish to give a voice to those in the periphery.

Ferréz, the leader of the *Literatura Marginal Periférica*, started his career as a bandit because of “an injustice against him” (Dabrace *Nightmare* 286), a recurrent motif in bandit life. The injustice in this case was the act of preventing him and his peers from participating in cultural production. Ferréz’s first act of banditry was his choice of *nom de plume*; Ferréz’s legal name is Reginaldo Faria da Silva. The name Ferréz was inspired, according to Maria Aparecida Costa dos Santos, by two famous bandits of Brazil’s historically-based folklore: Virgulino Ferreira da Silva, better known as Lampião, Rei do Canganço, and Zumbi dos Palmares (dos Santos 4). Dos Santos explains that Ferréz does not use his legal Christian name because he does not believe in the Catholic Church since the institution of the church is used as a tool of repression by the elite, and also because, by creating his name, Ferréz feels in control of his life (4). Additionally, by combining the names of two of the most renowned Brazilian bandits, he reaffirms his position as part of the *marginal*. In an interview with

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26 Zumbi dos Palmares was the leader of the black anti-slavery movement during the time of Colonial Brazil. He was the leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares, a free community of fugitive slaves, Native Brazilians and poor whites who had been expelled from farms. The Quilombo dos Palmares was considered a political and social threat to the colony. The government organized several expeditions to suppress the Quilombo of Palmares. The community was conquered in 1695 after the military assault of bandeirante Domingos Jorge Velho.
Nascimento, he describes how he has taken the pejorative term of *marginal* and transformed it into a positive symbol of power:

(...) eu sempre fui chamado de marginal pela polícia e quis fazer como o pessoal do hip hop que se apropriou de termos que ninguém queria usar. [...] quis me autodenominar marginal.

Self-labeling with a derogatory term is considered a defiant action against a stigmatizing constraint. It is a form of power that contests who can use the term (Galinsky et al. 2021). In that sense, Ferréz has done what Castells states other social actors have done in the past; he has internalized the features assigned to him by others and built his sense of identity around this internalization (29). Ferréz is aware of the cultural dimensions of social exclusion and inequality, and he uses them to create his bandit identity. The myth of marginality identifies certain values that are unique to the inhabitants of the periphery, such as “pobre” (poor), “clasificados por três letras classes” (classified by three letters: C, D, E), “marginais” (marginal) and “excluídos socias” (socially excluded).  

The conditions of production of the writers of *Literatura Marginal* are also “bandit” in the sense that they disseminate their work outside of the mainstream publishing market. These writers do not charge their community for access to their work. They hold poetry readings and rap music parties in order to reach their audience. Although they ask for donations, they do not charge a fee. Some of the money raised by these donations is used to

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27 Brazilian social classes are divided as follows: A and B Classes are the economic elite with a monthly income higher than R$ 4.591 (US $1,459.35); C Class or the middle class has a monthly income between R$ 1.064 and R$ 4.591 (US $331.45 and $ 1,459.35); D Class or the *remediados*, neither rich nor poor, earn between R$ 788 and R$ 1.064 a month (US $239.00 to $331.45); and E Class or the poor have a monthly revenue lower than R$ 788 (US $223.00).
make copies of their work. These copies are sometimes passed out for free on street corners; they are modern-day Robin Hoods passing on knowledge to the people. Due to his success, Ferréz has been able to start a publishing company, Selo Povo, within his favela with the purpose of publishing “livros esses escritos por e para mãos operárias, rebeldes, marginais, periféricos” (Ferréz et al).28

The writers of Literatura Marginal struggle between assimilating the original styles of the classics of the literary canon and producing a new text that challenges and sometimes negates the originals (Santiago 35). According to Silviano Santiago, there has been a tendency among Latin American artists to take elements of artistic works from other cultures and incorporate them into their own work (33). This in-between position can be seen in the pensamento antropofágico (anthropophagic thinking) developed by the Brazilian Modernists. The Modernists perceived themselves as consuming the artistic works of Europe and reimagining them through a distinctly Brazilian lens, e.g., adding elements of Brazilian folklore and colloquialisms. The writers of the Literatura Marginal are, in a sense, in a situation of double consumption. They consume elements of the work of the Brazilian mainstream and elements from European cultures. They, however, do not see this consumption as a submissive act, but as a defiant one, “não batemos na porta para alguém abrir, nós arrombamos a porta e entramos” (TL10). The ultimate result of the consumption is a unique self-empowering literary product, “literatura das ruas despertando nas calçadas” (TL). The writers of Literatura Marginal have even coined the term antropofagia periférica. As with their use of the word marginal, they use the word antropofagia to capitalize on the word’s cultural recognition. Although the literature analyzed in this study is influenced by

other literary traditions, it is not a reworking of mainstream literature. In his stories, Ferréz deconstructs the myths that surround the periphery; he reintegrates the periphery into the Brazilian imaginary, with its own myths, vision of the cosmos, traditions and customs.

The *marginal* writers use the word “periphery” to signify this in-between space where they are operating; they live in the marginal world of the bandits and yet are still affected by the actions and events of mainstream society. According to Paulo Roberto Tonani do Patrocinio, the term “periphery” can also be used to indicate what occurs in this space, the practices and discourses of the participants in social or cultural movements (640). Additionally, the space of the periphery can be a part of the identity formation of marginalized people. The in-between space provides a place for the elaboration of tactics of individual and communal selfhood based on cultural differences (Bhabha, *Nation*, 1).

Interestingly, Ferréz is now in an in-between world of a different type. Although his stories are developed inside the periphery with firsthand knowledge of the bandit/marginal world, he now has worldwide recognition and is paid by groups of lettered people to give presentations. He is in between the world of the periphery and of the elite. The term *entre-lugar* (in between) better describes his position. He performs the role of an *artista-cidadão* (citizen-artist) whose function is to establish a connection with the dominant culture in order to give a voice to his people.

It is not enough to write about life in the margins to be a part of the *Literatura Marginal* movement. For example, some scholars have tried to link Paulo Lins to the *Literatura Marginal*. However, in his book *Cidade de Deus* (1997), Lins does not challenge the behavior of the elite and uses the reality inside the *favela* to create an object of
entertainment. Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda explains this tendency in the decade of the 1990s:

Nessa época, surgia, de forma mais explicita o interesse das classes medias pela intensificação da violência e dos confrontos policiais…Foi nessa levada que o romance Cidade de Deus (que diga-se de passagem, nasceu de uma pesquisa antropológica sobre violência) de Paulo Lins, tornou-se um best-seller[…] foi avaliado pela critica, provocou interesses na academia...

(Hollanda n.p).

Using Walter Benjamin’ words Paulo Lins is a “bourgeois author of entertainment literature” who, even when he places himself on the side of the marginalized, is working “in the service of certain class interests” (Benjamin 85). For Lins, the novel was a mean to enter into the established literary world, not a way to stay there and protest social conditions. Lins has used the written word to climb to a better social position, as expressed by Rama: “la letra apareció como la palabra del ascenso social, de la respetabilidad pública y de la incorporación a los centros de poder” (74).

In the last decade, Brazilian literature, which for so long remained in the social imaginary as a sole privilege of a literate elite, “has expanded its ground among the ‘illiterate’” (Benvenuto 1). Part of the role of the marginal writer is to contribute to the destruction of the dichotomies (Benjamin 90) normally assigned to the literature of the lettered men and the literature of the Other; that of the lettered is traditionally consider to be “literatura boa” written with a “caneta de ouro” whereas that of the Other is “literatura ruim” written with “carvão” (TL9). The marginal writer must construct a counter discourse, “Contra o racismo, a intolerância e as injustiças sociais” (MAP n.p.), in an attempt to reverse
the stereotypes perpetuated by the myth of marginality. They need to be “armado de verdade, por si só exercita a revolução” (MAP) and to have as a goal the renovation of literature and a restructuration of the ways to produce and access literature. Words are a tool to fight against the elite who are in control for arbitrary reasons and not because of merit. Marginal authors must rethink their work and see their relationship to the literary means of production in a revolutionary way. Ferréz is a writer who, through his texts, builds an identity as “escritor do gueto, buscador de auto estima” (Ferréz’s Fortaleza da Desilusão 1997). He knows from his own experience that life “do outro lado da ponte” is not very enchanting. Ferréz understands that people in the periphery have been victims of the capitalist society to which they contribute, but from which they do not benefit, “Um dia a chama capitalista fez mal a nossos avós, agora faz mal a nossos pais e no futuro vai fazer a nossos filhos o ideal é mudar a fita...” (TL 10).

As a writer and as a publisher, Ferréz is a threat to the Brazilian Academy of Letters and the editorial market. Ferréz and other marginal writers’ interest in literary expression as a means of transmitting the experiences of the marginalized population challenges the fact that normally literature is restricted to the intellectual elite. According to Ferréz’s manifesto “Terrorismo Literário,” this situation must change:

[...] para nos certificar de que o povo da periferia/favela/gueto tenha sua colocação na história, que não fique mais quinhentos anos jogado no limbo cultural de um país que tem nojo de sua própria cultura, a literatura marginal se faz presente... . (TL 11)
Marginal writers must produce a “writerly text” which encourages readers to become writers themselves and tell their own stories.⁹ Its goal must be to “trazer o sorriso na boca da dona Maria ao ver o livro que o filho trouxe para casa” (TL12). Benjamin believes that writers have a social role to fulfill and a responsibility to use their art for political change. In other words, the organization of society should be addressed in the literary work. According to Benjamin, it is a necessary condition of literature for writers to strive “not to play the spectator but to intervene actively” (Benjamin 88).

1.5 Protagonist: Marginal Periférico

Lucía Tennina explains the referential pact (pacto referencial) as the tendency by marginal writers to claim they have an insiders’ perspective. Because of the referential pact assumed by the marginal writers, their characters will always be semi-autobiographical to at least some degree, a mixture of real life and fiction. For example, both the characters and the writers share some of the bandit traits. Marginal writers insist only those who have experienced the periphery can tell its stories. As a consequence, some autobiographical references in the texts are expected. For example, Rael, the protagonist of Capão Pecado, has been read as Ferréz’s alter ego; both are avid readers who are interested in comic books and their mothers are both maids. Further, there appears to be a physical resemblance between the writer and the character, “Seu aspecto sempre agradava as mães dos colegas: gordinho, cabelo todo encaracolado, e um óculos grande e preto que ele já usava há muito tempo. Tudo isso lhe conferia a aparência de um pequeno cdf” (Capão 26). Ferréz obviously recognizes

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²⁹ The term “writerly text” was coined by Roland Barthes in S/Z (1970) to describe a text that seeks to motivate the reader to become a producer of texts him/herself (S/Z 4-5).
this overlap since he felt it was necessary to include a disclaimer on the back cover of his book *Manual Prático do Ódio*. Ferréz clarifies that, although he can relate to the characters, they are fictitious:

Todos os personagens deste livro existem ou existiram mas o *Manual prático do ódio* é uma ficção. O autor nunca matou alguém por dinheiro mas sabe entender o que isso significa – do ponto de vista do assassino.

The characters that inhabit the *Literatura Marginal Periférica* are “myths” in the sense that they find imaginary solutions for the tensions, conflicts and contradictions that are not solved in reality (Chauí 9). These myths are often written as bandit narratives. The protagonists are young anti-heroes whose lives, like those of many other bandits, are changed by a tragic event. Ultimately, fate shows itself to be more powerful than the bandits’ will and they cannot escape their destiny: death haunts them until they become prey. The bandits of the *marginal periférico* are killed off as if they were “savage waste” or “social excess” (J.A. Hernández 448). The mainstream society desires their annihilation because they are a threat to their power. However, the bandits in the work of the *marginal periférico* always threaten to return. After death, they become spectral dimensions that magically survive and continue to haunt us (Zizek 84).

Fear and violence play an important role in the work of the *marginal periférico* as they do in all bandit stories. The Christian commandment “love thy neighbor as thyself” becomes “fear thy neighbor as thyself” (Zizek 55). As Ferréz states in the quote from the above paragraph, he “understands” how a murderer might feel. As someone who lives in the

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30 Both Hobsbawm and Dabove describe bandits as usually being young men from fifteen to twenty-six years old.
periphery, he understands the reasons for hatred and violence. Ferréz apparently rejects the commonly assumed notion that violence is brutal and irrational, and he uses it as a structure for his work. Ferréz outlines the differentiated perception of the sources of evil in his work. Crime, murder and death become acts with aesthetic possibilities. In her book *On Violence* (1970), political theorist Hannah Arendt argues that violence is an essentially human quality that has an instrumental role in the realm of politics and human affairs. Violence is experienced on a daily basis in the periphery, thus, it is a commonplace event and not a spectacle.

In 2006, Brazilian scholar João Cezar de Castro Rocha came up with the notion of *dialectics of marginality* that posits there has been a change in Brazilian literature in how lower-class characters deal with social conflict. Previously, the characters solved their problems in a no confrontational way as Antônio Cândido describes in his *Dialectics of Malandragem*. Rocha explains this change:

[...] the seminal work of Antônio Cândido is being replaced by a “dialectic of marginality,” which is mainly based in the overcoming of social inequalities through confrontation instead of reconciliation, and through the exposition of violence instead of its concealment. Thus, whereas the “dialectic of malandroism” was represented by a joyful way of dealing with social

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31 In 1970, Antônio Cândido, a literary critic from Brazil, published *The Dialectics of Malandragem* - an innovative interpretation of Brazilian society based on the novel *Memoirs of a Militia Sergeant* by Manuel Antônio de Almeida. In the essay, Cândido discusses how the *malandro* figure has the ability to use his bravado and charm to take advantage of different situations in a way that his behavior then reduces social conflict. This shows how in Brazil differences are traditionally negotiated more with agreement than transgression and more by reconciliation than conflict.
inequalities as well as with everyday life, on the contrary, the “dialectic of
tinality” presents itself through the exploration and exacerbation of
violence, seen as a way of denouncing the social dilemma in Brazil. (2)

According to Rocha, the elite of Brazilian culture prefer to keep on presenting Brazil as the
country of malandro and compromise. However, as João Cezar de Castro Rocha points out,
the malandro never achieves any real change and only serves to falsely present social
inequalities as less harsh than they are in reality. The characters presented by the marginal
periférico are symbolically disputing the representation of Brazil by showing the violence
instead of concealing it. Additionally, Literatura Marginal is an effort to recognize the
source of social inequalities and not just show the effects, e.g., the violence and the
contumacious vocabulary. Ferréz’s characters remind the reader that Brazil is not the country
of the friendly malandro, but a country of the opportunist malandro, on one hand, and the
marginal periférico, on the other. This does not mean the vanishing of the malandro, but
more likely, its displacement in the Brazilian imaginary.

Movement is important for the characterization of the bandits and of the marginal
periférico. They move socially and spatially and are always “on the move.” The marginal
writers use the movements of these characters and the evolution of their movements to
comment on the process of social change. Their movements are a reorganization of reality.
They represent the “overall movements” of an urban society, a city, and help explain its
structure and history, its memory and its “becoming.” This movement, this territorial
dynamic, could be “compiled” into a kind of recurring theoretical “motif,” a specific
arrangement of problems linked directly to each character and action and to the territorial
situation. The bandit of the marginal periférico belongs to two territories at the same time.
Even though the *favela* is the primary locus of the stories, the actions also sometimes take place in the city center.  

As previously mentioned, one of the traditional characteristics of social bandits is that they have become bandits because of injustices committed against them (Dabove *Nightmare* 286). They start their stories not as bandits, but as victims of situations, which push them towards crime. The crime committed against the *marginal* bandit is that which is perpetrated by the elite against all who live in the periphery. With their social policies, or lack thereof, the elite condemn those born in the *favelas* to a life of misery (TL13). Another of the social bandits’ traditional characteristics, whether chosen or imposed by circumstances, is to fight injustice. This generally comes about as a result of an inability to directly achieve vengeance for the wrongs committed against them or reparations for the wrongs committed against others. The manifesto *Terrorismo Literario* proclaims, “estamos na área, e já somos vários, estamos lutando pelo espaço para que no futuro os autores do gueto sejam também lembrado e eternizados” (11). However, it is important to remember that the writers of the traditional social bandit stories were not bandits themselves, whereas the writers of the *marginal* *periférico* are bandits; they resemble their characters who are the enemies of the authorities that victimize their communities.

As previously discussed, the writers of the *marginal* *periférico* reappropriate terms with a strong linguistic heritage and alter their meanings as a tactic to weaken their stigmatizing force. As with the term *marginal*, they transform the terms *periferia* and *favela*;

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32 Henceforward, the idea of city center in this study alludes to the center of São Paulo city that comprises eight districts, Republica, Sé, Bela Vista, Consolação, and Liberdade among others, and which is where most of the characters travel and where most economic, cultural, and social activities take place.
they use them not only to indicate locations but as symbols of pride. According to Castells, people’s primary identities are partially shaped by the spaces where they live (29). The characters’ association with the *favela* is a recurrent theme in most of the texts of the *Literatura Marginal Periférica* and it is what all of Ferréz’s characters have in common. Likewise, traditional social bandit narratives include specific relationships between the characters and the territory. According to Dabove, many social bandits are identified by their locality (291). In *Literatura Marginal Periférica*, “periferia,” as well as “quebrada,” “gueto” and “favela” are used as signifiers of an identity that is constructed on the basis of a common or shared experience:

> O periférico é bem esse lance de periferia, mesmo, a gente pode pensar com todas as palavras, mas "periferia", na historiado Brasil, isso traz a gente para essa segunda metade do século XX, migrações, alta demografia urbana, explosão suburbana, problemas de política e saúde, de escola, de transporte (Allan da Rosa in an interview with Lucía Tennina).

These characters are not only from the periphery in a spatial sense, there is also a considerable social distance between them and the majority (Sibley 4). The identification of these characters as *marginal periférico* is a coherent choice. Many youth groups in the *favelas* have established an identification with the periphery, and consequently, the periphery has becomes a broad category which alludes to the strength and courage of its members.

1.6 The Locus: The Periphery

Banditry narratives traditionally portray a rural and/or isolated area like the Sertão (the backlands) as their main setting. The *Literatura Marginal Periférica* brings another type of landscape into the banditry narrative. It uses the contemporary settings of the *periferia*
Paulista, the “Bahia que Caetano e Gil não cantaram,” and other marginalized territories.\(^{33}\)

Although these territories are now included in the Brazilian imaginary, they are represented in an inconsistent manner. Since the publication of the *Os Sertões* (1902), at least on an imaginary level, all cultural productions are influenced by the periphery.\(^{34}\)

A distinctive feature of the fiction of Ferrêz and the other *Literatura Marginal* writers is its hyperlocal focus on the periphery. The periphery has become important in Brazilian culture; it has a mythic function, similar to that of the Eiffel Tower for the people of France as discussed by Roland Barthes in his book *Eiffel Tower*. The periphery has taken on multiple meanings; it is a “monument,” an object, a metaphor and a symbol that functions both as the unifying force and as a representation of extremes. The *favelization* of Brazil has been taking place since the early 1990s.\(^{35}\) For example, to construct the myth of inclusion\(^{36}\), the periphery and its *favelas or quebradas* have been assimilated into the imaginary of Brazil as referential places and as the stage for cultural activities such as samba and Carnival (Peixoto 172). However, most of the residents of the *favelas* believe the basis of discrimination in

\(^{33}\) “A Bahia que Gil e Caetano não cantaram” is the name of a poem by Gato Preto that appeared in the first *Caros Amigos* special edition about *Literatura Marginal*.

\(^{34}\) Licia do Prado Vallardes identifies *Os Sertões* as the book which made intellectuals understand the emerging *favela* as an agglomeration of excluded rebels that forms a cohesive community and endangers the social order (30).

\(^{35}\) “Favelization” is the process through which the *favelas* have become an image of Brazilianness. Adriana Kertzer defines “favelization” as “the process through which something that has been maligned throughout history is transformed into a signifier of attached value, stereotypes, coolness and Brazilianness” (n.p.).

\(^{36}\) Marta Peixoto traces the beginning of this myth to the 1930s and the Getúlio Vargas regime. Peixoto explains that this myth served to ease tensions and hide race and class conflicts.
Brazil is *favela-ism*, being from a *favela* (Perlman, *Favela* 153). For them, the stigma of living in a *favela* is the strongest basis for social exclusion.

Comparable to the definition of *marginal*, “periphery” also has its ambiguities. The periphery can paradoxically represent both sides of certain dichotomies – the *morro/asfalto*, the informal city/the formal city, the curvilinear/the rectilinear— from a focus on coexistence with those positioned in a more central point to a focus on exclusion. The periphery often has a negative connotation; for example, it is associated with the criminal world. Most of the time, the periphery is portrayed as “a place close to hell” (Peixoto 171) and as an unlawful place apart (Perlman, *Favela* 3). It is represented as the locus of epidemics and diseases, the quintessential home of bandits, a cradle of promiscuity and lazy people without morals. Perlman describes their reputation thusly:

> Squatter settlements were seen as syphilitic sores on the beautiful body of the city, dens of crime, and breeding grounds of violence, prostitution, family breakdown, and social disorganization (Perlman, *Favela* 12).

In his novel *Cidade de Deus* (1997), Paulo Lins tries to give a voice to the periphery, however, he unfortunately ends up reinforcing its negative image. For example, he writes:

> Os novos moradores levaram lixo, lata, cães vira-latas…restos de raiva de tiros, noites para levar cadáveres, resquícios de enchentes…vermes velhos em barriga infantil…olhos para nunca ver, nunca dizer, nunca dizer, nunca… ensanguentar destinos, fazer a guerra…. gonorreias mal curadas (Lins 18).

Despite the fact that Lins is an author from the “inside,” he shares the “outsiders’” vision and repeats a discourse that blames the victim. The housing project *Cidade de Deus* is shown in the novel in full isolation from the rest of the city as a self-rulled territory inhabited by the
newly marginalized, *neofavelado*, transgressing and violating the world which has rejected them. Lins’ protagonist makes use of his authority and abuses it through coercive action and the expropriation of local resources. Regrettably, in his creation of this character, Lins intimates that the problems of the excluded are due to their own “innate” savagery.

Since Lins lived inside a *favela*, he is familiar with its jargon and culture. Although he claims to have simply “transcribed” the lives of the people he chose to be his characters (Santos 567), his choice of words and his storyline portray the *favela* in a stereotyped manner. For example, he uses the verbs “levar,” “ensanguentar” and “fazer” which echo both official and popular views of the *favela* as a social problem. Lins produces and reproduces the discourse of labeling the *marginal* and the *favela* as a threat to the social system. Instead of analyzing the underlying reasons for social conflict, Lins adopts the conservative tendency of territorializing the violence. His stigmatizing rhetoric divides the city into zones and the *favela* is depicted as a zone filled with violence, angry young boys and poverty. He perpetuates the demonization of the periphery through the excessive use of scenes with a remarkable amount of violence as if everyone in the *favela* were a criminal. These are the same stereotypes about violence which Mexican social scientist Rossana Reguillo-Cruz identified in Mexican imaginary: a territory inhabited by poverty and an environment portrayed as the incarnation of moral flexibility and vice (56).

Similar to Lins’ novel, Rubem Fonseca’s short-story “Cidade de Deus” shows the negative integration of the *favela* and its *moradores* (residents) into the mainstream middle-class social system. In his raw writing, Rubem Fonseca describes the daily life of

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37 The story was published in the book *Histórias de Amor* (1997). This study is using an electronic version from Projeto Releitura http://www.releituras.com/rfonseca_cidade.asp.
unpleasant characters from Rio de Janeiro’s urban poor and middle-class neighborhoods such as Barra da Tijuca. The protagonists, both from the middle class, use the *favela* as a place for committing violence:

Mandei meu pessoal pegar o menino quando ele ia para o colégio e levar para a Cidade de Deus. De madrugada quebraram os braços e as pernas do moleque, estrangularam, cortaram ele todo e depois jogaram na porta da casa da mãe.

(n.p)

Fonseca perpetuates the erroneous idea that marginality and poverty equal hostility. Since much of the violent drug-related activity takes place within or at the entry points to the *favela*, the story only fortifies the already culturally entrenched stereotype of poor suburban spaces as sources of social threat “…mas é conhecido como Zinho na Cidade de Deus, uma favela em Jacarepaguá, onde comanda o tráfico de drogas” (n.p.). The *favela* is too often subjected to this type of homogenization and stigmatization. A clear line of separation is drawn between the city and the *favelas*, shifting the image from *favelas* as places of misery to spaces that cause suffering. This is what the *dialética da malandragem* proposes, sly acts of transgression rather than acts of confrontational violence. This is not to imply that the work of the writers of the *Marginal Periférica* does not show violence in the *favelas*. Indeed, there are parallels, e.g., both Rubem Fonseca and Ferréz show that “ninguém é inocente,” and that violence is not exclusive to periphery. However, whereas Fonseca’s work does not have political and social goals, Ferréz’s texts are grounded in the principle of overcoming social inequalities.

Henri Lefebvre’s concept of social space is the best spatial model to employ in an explanation of the overlapping of wealth and poverty in the work of the writers of the
Marginal Periférico. In his book The Production of Space, Lefebvre states that Social Space is a “part of an interaction between subjects and their surroundings” (16) and highlights that the knowledge we have of space allows us to have a better understanding of the processes of its construction and transformation. The periphery, as difficult as it may be to understand, is always intelligible to those who work and live there. Lefebvre suggests that the production of space is a sign of a change in both the production, in this case, the periphery, and the productive forces, in this case, the Literatura Marginal. Ferréz’s texts proclaim a reversal of the prevailing perspective of social exclusion. The periphery becomes the “center,” in the words of Sergio Vaz, “A periferia unida, no centro de todas as coisas” (MAP). In other words, the Literatura Marginal’s literary production is about space and territory. It is the periphery that provides context to the stories. In Ferréz’s work, the violence that occurs in the scenes in the quebradas is part of the environment, not the main theme of the narrative. Ferréz paints refined portraits of Capão Redondo, the quebrada where he grew up and still lives today, and of São Paulo. His interpretation of São Paulo as a “cidade-monstro” (monster-city) in the Manual Prático do Ódio (21) is quite different from the progressive Paulicéia depicted by the modernista Mario de Andrade.\(^{38}\)

Ferréz limns the connection between narrative space and geographical space in two of his books, Capão Pecado and Ninguém é Inocente em São Paulo. Both books treat territory as a locus that defies all attempts to be categorized by the conventions of the lettered city. Ferréz develops a strong social-political critique through his articulation of spatial relations

\(^{38}\)Paulicéia is the name by which the city of São Paulo is known. In 1922, the modernist writer Mario de Andrade published a poetry book Paulicéia Desvairada (Hallucinated City) in which he praises the urbanization of São Paulo.
and practices. São Paulo’s periphery becomes a counter-space, a configuration that challenges the discourse of hegemonic production and reproduction in order to demonstrate its limitations (Locane 118). Ferréz indicates both the space and the people as the “periphery,” and thus, utilizes the double meaning of periphery to construct an analysis of power in the urban space of São Paulo. Ferréz finds “opportunities” in the hegemonic discourse, as proposed by de Certeau, to start his tactical movement “within the enemy’s field of vision and within enemy territory” (de Certeau 37). He reproduces the periphery as it already exists:

Subúrbio, periferia, o inferno da cidade, onde pessoas vivem no mais baixo nível da cidadania, tá ligado? Não bastasse isso, vivem amontoadas em barracos sem qualquer condição básica de higiene, o córrego a céu aberto, a água escassa, a energia é puxada por extensões malfeitas e sem proteção (Capão 159).

He challenges what Lefebvre names the “representation of space” (33), the conceived space usually represented in maps, discourses and memories which is closely linked to the established order imposed by the hegemonic elite.

Lefebvre emphasizes that if people are unhappy with their spatial component, then change is inevitable. In the case of the favelas, Literatura Marginal is calling for this change. With his writing, Ferréz confronts the hegemony of the elite and questions the role the elite play in the definition of the periphery residents’ particular space. As Lefebvre states, “State-imposed normality makes permanent transgression inevitable” (18). According to Lefebvre, any reform or change, either political or social, has a consequence expressed in the spatial.

Janice Perlman highlights the advantage most favelas have in their hillside location, thus “providing vantage points from which to look down on anyone coming up the entryways.
This makes them easily defendable” (Favela 175). The physical height of the favelas creates a type of antagonist vertical competition with the high-rises that stand on the other side of the João Dias Bridge. Therefore, the periphery in Ferréz’s texts also symbolizes the human desire for power from above. Ferréz clearly understands that altitude, as Roland Barthes highlights, adds an incomparable power which each resident of the periphery can assume in an instant because it “gives us the world to read and not only to perceive; this is why it corresponds to a new sensibility of vision” (Barthes, “Eiffel Tower” 5). In this sense, the periphery depicted by Ferréz functions as a heterotopia, a concept developed by Michel Foucault to describe non-hegemonic places and spaces. Foucault uses the idea of a mirror as a metaphor for the oppositional duality, reality and unreality of utopian projects (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” 4). In the case of the periphery, it could be seen as a mirror in the sense that it reflects the way Brazil’s society relates to its own image/imaginary.

In addition to the importance of the location of the favelas in Literatura Marginal, the bridge has an important supporting role. Traditionally, the symbol of the bridge, according to Michel de Certeau, represents the potential to cross over, thus decreasing the strangeness of what lies on the other side and giving it objectivity (de Certeau 128). However, in Ferréz’s work, rather than retaining its conventional meaning of unification, the ponte becomes a symbol of a transgression of limits and of disobeying authority. Ferréz produces a profound discomfort because the symbolic barriers are not respected in his texts. Ferréz

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39 The João Dias Bridge crosses the Pinheiros River in the city of São Paulo. It connects the Santo Amaro district (which is changing its profile with the construction of several skyscrapers) to district Campo Límpo (a district with extreme social divisions), Capão Redondo (the poorest district) and Morumbi (a wealthier district).
desires to incite his readers to change their perspectives, to focus more on urban societies, life practices and their boundaries.

Ferréz’s tactic is to create the sensation that it is the place, e.g., Capão Redondo, which speaks. He produces this effect by using a narrative sequence of recognition, exploration and control, however, not necessarily in that strict order. Ferréz builds a representational space which overlays the physical space and makes symbolic use of its objects (39). As described by Lefebvre, representational space is the place as experienced by its inhabitants and users, a place where the imagination seeks appropriation and change. The catchphrase “É tudo nosso,” which appears at the end of the Manifesto da Antropofagia Periférica, is a symbolic manifestation of this space. For Lefebvre, this is a space of “appropriation,” of “should be;” an environment that will be modified in order to satisfy and expand human needs and possibilities:

An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d’être which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one (167).

In this manner, Ferréz and the other marginal writers are rearranging the social space and using their collective power to shape the urban space according to the specific needs and diverse interests of its people. They are claiming their right to the city.

Ferréz’s text uses the characters’ spatial and social practices to reorder space. Lefebvre suggests that the reader refrain from looking at and analyzing deductible codes and pay attention to the social practices that produce these codes (41). He further argues that the spatial and social practices provide continuity and some degree of cohesion (Lefebvre,
to the norms and regulations of a given social context. On the other hand, Michel de Certeau describes social practices as an effective way of escaping power and the dominant culture. He holds that spatial practices are interventions that require certain skills and performances from the members of a society. Ferréz shows the normalized spatial and social practices of the residents of Capão through their perceptions about their space, “Primeira lei da favela, parágrafo único: nunca cante a mina de um aliado, se não vai subir” (Capão 85). This shows how spatial and social practices that deal with issues of power must be created. In consequence, the community creates its own laws, oral laws which have more value than the ones written by those in the centers of power that ignore the reality of the favela. Ferréz’s narratives make constant reference to the legal order in the territory and delineate which social practices are banned. According to Lucía Tennina, Ferréz makes reference to Article 121 of the Brazilian Penal Code in a passage from Manual Prático do Ódio. While introducing the character Lúcio Fe, the narrator says, “…não havia mano mais considerado na quebrada, mas fazia uns 121 para viver, ou seja, vira e mexe matava alguém por dinheiro” (Manual 26). However, it is also possible that Ferréz is making reference to Article 121 of the Federal Constitution of 1934 which guarantees national unity, freedom, justice, social and economic well-being, protection for the workers and fair working conditions, such as “salário mínimo, capaz de satisfazer, conforme as condições de cada região, às necessidades normais do trabalhador” (JusBrasil. n.p). If Ferréz is making reference to the Constitution, then he is doing so in an ironic sense. Most of the bandits of

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40 CP - Decreto Lei nº 2.848 de 07 de Dezembro de 1940 Art. 121. Matar alguém...
Ferréz’s texts find themselves in situations where the only way to obtain their “rights to the city” is in doing what the written law criminalizes.

Ferréz’s first two novels, *Capão Pecado* and *Manual Prático do Ódio*, are central to a percipience of this phenomenon in his work. These novels show interruptions of the normal legal order as well as the lack of rights experienced by each of the characters. Since the conflicts occur in an area where there is another unwritten law, there are no defined “outlaws” in Ferréz’s texts, only outsiders. As David Sibley has remarked, the members of the marginal will always be considered as outsiders “because their social structures and economies are perceptibly different from those of the larger society” (4).

Ferréz proposes self-management of the periphery instead of control by the elite, i.e., he believes the *marginal* possess a “right to the city” as defined by Lefebvre. The renovation of the periphery is marked by the struggle for the use of urban space between the legal city and the illegal one. Ferréz’s work and the *Literatura Marginal* must be read as a “cry and a demand [...] The claim to nature, and the desire to enjoy it displace the right to the city [...]” (Lefebvre, *Writing on Cities* 158). The “right to the city” cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed “right to urban life” (Lefebvre, *Writing on Cities* 158). Ferréz’s “right to the city” is the right of the *marginais* to transform themselves by changing the city, and as it has been stated above, this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. Ferréz’s spatial practices and the re-
appropriation of the city reveal all the urban aspects that the official outlook of the panoptic and disciplinary elite tries to hide.  

Michel Foucault describes “panoptic” as a type of control over an individual wherein everything a person does is always under the observation of an unseen and vigilant guard (Foucault, *Vigilar y Castigar* 184-189).
2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave a general description of the main features of the texts of Literatura Marginal, as well as those of the bandit or the marginal periférico, mainly focusing on the literary work of Ferréz. It also introduced the locus, not at all amoenus, to which these figures belong: the southern periphery of São Paulo, specifically, the neighborhood of Capão Redondo. This second chapter will delve into the lives of these bandits of the written city of São Paulo and show their sufferings and insecurities as they journey through the city. It will examine Ferréz’s portrayal of a city populated with marginais and playboys in separate territories such as the asfalto and the periferia. The São Paulo depicted in Ferréz’s texts Capão Pecado and Manual Prático do Ódio is a land of social contradictions and economic disparity which oscillates between the modern face of globalized capitalism and “bolsões de pobreza e de riquezas, escassez e prosperidade” (Carril 108). The term asfalto itself implies development and planning; both of which are absent from the periphery. However, even in areas of the periphery which literally have some

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42 During the editing of this chapter, a Master’s Degree dissertation entitled Capão Pecado: sem inspiração para cartão postal (2007) was obtained. It was written by Luciana Mendes Velloso and defended at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. It includes a section in the first chapter with the same title chosen for the name of this chapter: “Antigamente Quilombo, Hoje Periferia.”

43 “Asfalto” is a metonym that refers to well-served areas that have paved streets, schools, health clinics and public utilities such as lighting, water and sewage as opposed to the favela/quebrada territories (Cotelo & Rodrigues 2).
asfalto or paved areas, a sense of deprivation is pervasive, “... aqui é o inferno de algum outro lugar e desde o quilombo a gente paga, nada mudou” (Capão 73).

Ferréz’s work reflects the great contradictions of Brazil. Many even talk about “dois” Brazils or “dois” São Paulos as if the distinctions were vast enough to constitute two separate worlds within Brazil (Buttermann 14). The city of São Paulo historically is characterized by the center/periphery duality in its territorial configuration (Arbex 104). São Paulo has followed the typical pattern of the city center belonging to the elite and the poor being pushed out to the periphery. The justification for this is the late urbanization in São Paulo. The new urbanization of São Paulo has four characteristics: 1) it is dispersed instead of concentrated; 2) middle and upper class live in centralized legal neighborhoods while the poor live in the precarious and illegal periphery; 3) home ownership became a must for both poor and rich; and 4) transportation depends on roads, with buses for the working class and private cars for the middle and upper classes (Caldeira 220). The periphery is described by the city government as “far from where the jobs are, without the assistance of public transportation, lacking adequate urban services and equipment, in houses mostly built by the occupants themselves” (Herling 18). Further, despite a decrease in job opportunities for the poor, more and more migrants keep moving from rural areas to the periphery. This “urbanisation without a city” (Herling 18) is the land of the bandits of the Literatura Marginal.

As the title “Once Quilombo, Now Periferia” suggests, it is proposed that the peripheral district of Capão Redondo, fictional and real, is a place which offers shelter to those who do not fit the standards of the legal and the lettered city, a sector perceived by
many as the *classes perigosas*. In that sense, Capão Redondo performs a role similar to that of the *quilombos* (settlements of runaway or freed slaves), which once offered safe haven to slaves and other outcasts. This chapter will explore the definitions and stereotypes assigned to the spaces of Capão Redondo: the *asfalto*, the lower middle-class area with paved roads; the solitary *barracos*; the *quebradas*; and the COHAB, the government subsidized housing project. This proposal is a response to the question formulated by Lourdes Carril in her book *Quilombo, Favela E Periferia. A Longa Busca da Cidadania*, “What does the expression ‘antigamente quilombos, hoje periferia’ mean nowadays?” (209). The expression was fashioned by MC Gaspar from the collective Z’Africa; it comes from the text which appears on the cover of the first edition of Ferréz’s novel *Capão Pecado*. The phrase “Antigamente quilombo, hoje periferia” suggests, precisely, that forms of marginality do not only belong to the past, but rather, since the social inequalities of the past have never been adequately addressed, they are a part of the present. What Ferréz writes about is not limited to the past or to a single experience, but to something which has happened, is happening and will continue to happen if nothing is done to change it. There is a link between both the *quilombo* and the *quebrada* and the specific situation of otherness. There are many parallels between the *quilombo* and the *quebrada*, which are reflected in Ferréz’s representation of Capão Redondo.

44 “*Classes perigosas*” (dangerous classes) was coined by Mary Carpenter in the mid-nineteenth century to refer to social groups formed on the margins of civil society. Brazilian politicians adopted the expression during the repression of 1888. It is a concept that links poverty with vice and crime and sees every poor person, without distinction, as a threat.

45 A “*barraco*” is a self-made dwelling, improvised out of box wood, waste materials and tin sheets. COHAB, Companhia Metropolitana de Habitação (Metropolitan Housing Company)
Ferréz does not try to fully represent the human experience of the periphery. Rather, he focuses on very limited and marginalized areas. The district of Capão Redondo belongs to the southern outskirts of São Paulo. Within this same periphery, there are segments of the population who suffer extreme social exclusion. It is what some urban planners call *hiperperiferia*, places distant from the center; they have a deficient infrastructure, a high concentration of black people, a lower income level and unemployed people whose income is insufficient to pay the rent, etc. (Torres & Marques 52). Ferréz constructs a fictional Capão Redondo that essentially constitutes a *hiperperiferia*. When reading Ferréz’s work, it is essential to keep in mind that there are not one, but several peripheries, including gradations between them and it is usually evident during the bus rides of the characters. For example, in his short-story “O Plano,” Ferréz himself is a character that takes the bus on his way back to home from work. The story begins with a description of the women of the periphery who are pictured by the narrator as warriors and, as it is shown further in this chapter, occupy a lower position in the periphery. During the trip to Capão Redondo, Ferréz describes the people who board the bus, “dois manos de cadeira de rodas no final de Capelinha, um outro de muleta, um cego entra logo depois” (Ferréz, *Ninguém* 15). As can be seen from the description, those who ride the bus are the marginalized and the outcast. The working poor of the periphery use the buses to travel to their jobs, but they do not spend leisure time in the city. They have never even been in the Confluência da Forquilha, a busy street in the center of São Paulo, unless they work there “prepararam lindos pratos” or “cuidam da segurança dos outros” (Ferréz, *Ninguém* 15). Distance and movement are important dimensions in Ferréz’s work as he uses them to show the isolation of the periphery and its inhabitants.

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46 Capelinha is a neighborhood in the district of Capão Redondo.
Another concern that Ferréz addresses in his work is the barriers that separate the periphery from the center. For example, although there are now some upscale areas in the periphery of the city, these have walls and security systems designed to exclude the “Other.” As Teresa Caldeira points out in her book, since the 1940s, São Paulo city has experienced a new pattern of urban segregation generated by the increase of crime in the city that has led to new strategies of protection (1-2). The city of São Paulo follows a visual pattern of verticality. In Lefebvre’s words, “the purpose of this display of this need to impress is to convey an impression of authority to each spectator” (Production 98). According to Lefebvre, this “phallic verticality” results in:

the general fact that walls, enclosures and façades serve to define both a scene (where something takes place) and an obscene area to which everything that cannot or may not happen on the scene is relegated: whatever is inadmissible, be it malefic or forbidden, thus has its own hidden space on the near or the far side of a frontier (Production 36).

Verticality is a manifestation of “potentially violent power” (Lefebvre, Production 98), but it is also about the terror of the proximity of the Other. In this sense, the horror of the outside world, the periphery, is presented as a legitimate part of the inherited order. Additionally, Calderia describes São Paulo city as a “fortified” territory that reinforces separation and that “quando resolve buscar o que lhe roubaram, é posto atrás das grades pelo sistema. Tentam proteger a sociedade dele, mas também escondem sua beleza” (Capão 15). Ferréz portrays the anxiety triggered by racial and class prejudice that leads to the profiling and locking up of the residents of the periphery. The characters in Ferréz’s stories live the daily reality of
racism, violence and injustice that makes them the preferred victims of “generalized suspicion” – which is the essence of “classes perigosas.”

Taking into account the fact that contemporary Brazilian literature is linked to outlaw violence, the *marginal periférico*, as a bandit, is a signifier that represents changing scenarios in Brazil’s segregation. The *marginal periférico* is similar to a “Noble robber” whose role is that of the champion, the righter of the wrongs, the bringer of justice and social equity. His relation with the community is that of solidarity and identity. En masse, they are more than symptoms of a crisis and tension in their society: famine, pestilence, war, etc. They are a form of self-help to escape from difficult circumstances (Hobsbawm, *Bandits* 29).

Ferréz also deals with positive aspects of the periphery, e.g., the representation of the *quilombo* is meant to reference strength and resistance. In Capão Redondo, self-identification with a *quilombo* is a political-organizational choice that helps people formulate their economic, cultural and political demands. Ferréz’s work attempts to spur the population of the *quebrada*, the “quilombolas periféricos,” to coalesce around a common cause whose scope is significantly greater than their specific neighborhood.

2.2 Story of a Territory of Exclusion

To write about a territory of exclusion it is also to educate and provide awareness of the space and its relation with the hegemonic culture. As Luz Santa María Muxica highlights, the exclusion began as a way of maintaining a social order based on segregation to ensure maximum security and speed up the process of economic development (121). If inclusion is defined as a way where every human is relevant to the extent that all are treated as citizens or social actors, exclusion is the opposite. Exclusion implies that the necessary conditions to
belong to a system and to be considered a citizen are not met. Santa María suggests that this
distinction between inclusion and exclusion should be comprehended within spatial
boundaries where the control of the movement of bodies is a fundamental feature for the
spatiality of exclusion (122). David Sibley states that power is expressed in the appropriation
of space and the relegation of the weaker groups (Geographies of Exclusion 547). The
*marginal periférico* perfectly fit in the “weaker group” as defined by Sibley. The members of
such groups possess traits that are discordant and ominous outside of theirs surroundings.
For the *marginal periférico* to belong to the “weaker groups” means to recognize himself as
male, black, young and poor. Nevertheless, the effect of being excluded from a system for
the *marginal periférico* is buffered by the fact that this move implies his inclusion
somewhere else. In this sense, the identification and representation of Capão Redondo as a
*quilombo* implies that Capão has always been a territory of exclusion.

The history of this exclusion has its origins in the period of slavery in Brazil. Slaves
who managed to escape took refuge in well-hidden places and organized settlements in the
forests. Later, marginalized people who were expelled from the city’s central regions were
incorporated into these communities called *quilombos*. In these predominantly black
communities, they lived according to African culture and values. Most of the *quilombolas*
(maroons), as the dwellers of the *quilombos* are known, were persecuted because they were
seen as a symbol of non-development and non-civilization. Most of the *quilombos* were
destroyed soon after their establishment, however, the largest of them, Palmares, survived
almost a century. After the abolishment of slavery, the whites who controlled the government
and the economy continued to fear the blacks, the *mestizos* (those of mixed race) and the
poor whites. This fear led to a territorial division of urban and rural areas and to segregated territories such as Capão Redondo.

Capão Redondo was founded in the last decade of the nineteenth century during the period when slavery was abolished in Brazil. There are many hypotheses about the origin of Capão Redondo, however, little historical evidence remains. What is known today is that the favelas emerged as refuges for poor rural migrants who came to the cities to look for work and could not afford the cost of urban housing. Eventually, it became the place for both the legally persecuted and the forgotten during the period of urban expansion. From this historical perspective, the real and fictional Capão Redondo is a part of the historical pattern of segregated urbanization in Brazilian cities. Shortly after the publication of Capão Pecado in 2000, the São Paulo City Hall, MCs, scholars, and writers began to circulate the “story” of Capão Redondo. 47 Many of them are published on the Internet, making them readily accessible. All of the stories agree on five characteristics about the neighborhood:

1. Capão Redondo is a large territory located in the southern region of São Paulo City.
2. Its population is known as the Caipira. 48
3. Capão Redondo is considered one of the most violent zones in Brazil. 49
4. The transformation of the neighborhood began with the arrival of the Adventists.

47 Every publication claims to recount the authentic story.
48 “Caipira” is a Tupi name that means “bush cutter.” The natives used the name to describe the white people who inhabited rural or remote areas. The term is now used by urban whites to refer to rural whites. The word has a pejorative meaning.
49 It is one of the neighborhoods with the highest rates of violence, drug trafficking and crime in São Paulo.
5. Capão Redondo was a land of quilombo(s).

However, few of the stories sufficiently take into account the different cultural contexts of Capão Redondo and there are also many differences between the versions. For example, many of these self-proclaimed “Official Stories” relate discrepant variants of the origin and meaning of the name “Capão Redondo.” In the most reliable story, the word “capão” comes from a word in the Tupi language, which means “virgin forest.” In contrast, according to one of the characters in the novel Capão Pecado, the community obtained its name because it looks like a big “cesta redonda” (round basket) when seen from the distance:

“[...] e o que tinham lhe explicado era que o nome era tirado de um artefato indígena[...] e vendo essa área de longe se tinha a impressão de ser uma cesta. Colocaram o nome de Capão Redondo, ou seja “uma grande cesta redonda”” (Capão 26)

Since there are so many inconsistencies and ambiguities regarding the real history, one of Ferréz’s objectives, and that of the Literatura Marginal movement, is to rescue or invent the history of Capão Redondo. In the manifesto “Terrorismo Literário,” Ferréz underscores his concern regarding the manipulation and obliteration of Capão Redondo’s history, “uma coisa é certa, queimaram nossos documentos, mentiram sobre nossa história, mataram nossos antepassados” (TL 11). Ferréz’s work is a (re)written history of the neighborhood of Capão Redondo.

Since many residents of Capão, including rappers and Ferréz, claim to be quilombolas and that Capão is a quilombo community, their histories of Capão Redondo will reflect the rebellious spirit of the quilombos. In fact, the historical memories of slavery, as well as that
of Zumbi’s heroism, are constant motifs in Literatura Marginal. An awareness and pride in their heritage can be seen in their texts:

Paulo era negro, sabia tudo sobre a história de seus ancestrais, conhecia de cor as histórias fantásticas de Zumbi, de Anastácia e era apaixonado pela rainha Nzinga, sempre se imaginava contando a história dos verdadeiros heróis brasileiros para seus filhos, falaria da coragem e do talento de Clementina de Jesus, e contaria para a pequena sobre todos os sofredores que ajudaram a construir tudo o que eles estavam vendo desde que nasceram (Manual 81-82).

Ferréz comprehends Capão Redondo as part of a long history of ethno-racial social exclusion with ancient ties to the quilombos. Carril has pointed out that concepts such as quilombo, senzala and casa-grande are still part of everyday youth discourse from the periphery, especially among rappers and poets.

In the community of Capão Redondo, quilombo is associated with resistance and the fight against oppression. Within this framework, some writers, including Ferréz, relate the experience of life in the periphery to the historical memory of black oppression, “... ao contrário dos senhores das casa-grandes que escravizaram nossos irmãos africanos e tentaram dominar e apagar toda a cultura de um povo massacrado” (TL 11). The reference to “os senhores das casa-grandes” who tried to erase the memory of the oppressed alludes to Gilberto Freyre who wrote an influential but polemic study about the origins of Brazilian society. Gilberto Freyre’s thesis examines the impact of slavery on Brazilian society as a

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50 Casa-grande is the architectonical structure associated with the patriarchal system on which Gilberto Freyre based his idea of political and social organization; he believed that this structure included everybody.
whole. His proposal views Brazil through its historical origins and development, originating in the colonial patriarchy. Freyre uses the hierarchical structure of the familial and political patriarchal mode of life to describe Brazil’s social and racial relationships. One of the results of Freyre’s thesis was a progressive defense of “mestiçagem” which concluded in “racial democracy,”\textsuperscript{51} the idea that Brazil has managed to overcome the legacy of slavery and is currently an inclusive environment. Unfortunately, this “racial democracy” is another foundational myth. Black and mixed-race people in general have failed to overcome the difficulties arising from the strong racial biases in Brazil that are the product of its violent colonial past. Ferréz and the other writers of \textit{Literatura Marginal} have a sharp awareness of the policies of exclusion that have restricted African descendants to marginal places and functions.

The identification of Capão Redondo with the \textit{quilombos} is not an acceptance of this exclusion, but rather, a noble version of the origin story. Being a \textit{quilombo} offers new possibilities because belonging to an ancient group and to an ancestral tradition allows one to claim a historical memory. Furthermore, the historical process that gives individuals the group self-identification of \textit{quilombos} makes the question of identity a central element for the reaffirmation of the condition of being and living in a territory (Carril, \textit{Territorio} 158).\textsuperscript{52} The

\textsuperscript{51} The trajectory of Brazilian state policy on race in the twentieth century can be described as a transition from antidiscrimination to affirmative action. Nevertheless, despite the implementation of some legislation, the result has been a \textit{status quo ante}.

\textsuperscript{52} The struggle for possession of the land where the \textit{quilombos} were and the urban black movement led the 1988 Constituent Assembly to approve Article 68 which grants the land titles to descendants of \textit{quilombolas}. Since the 1988 Constitution adopted the article, the meaning of \textit{quilombola} has changed to a broad Afro-Brazilian identity, not necessarily descendants from runway slaves.
quilombo and periferia are not only loci of segregation but also territories from which new discourses have emerged, discourses that make claims to rights which have been historically denied. \(^{53}\) The writers of the Literatura Marginal proclaim themselves as being of African descent, not only for ethnic reasons, but also for historical and political ones.

Conversely, the definition of the neighborhood as a “cesta rendonda” limits the territory and metaphorically turns it into a place where lives remain in a closed cycle (Damascena 11). This is significant since the lives of the disenfranchised are stuck in circularity; beginning and ending at the same point. The lives of those inside the round basket are isolated from those on the outside; their lives are contained and restricted. On the other hand, the term “redondo” can be associated positively with a perfect circularity as suggested by Gaston Bachelard in his study of the phenomenology of roundness. For Bachelard, in roundness it is possible to achieve unity (237-38). Additionally, since the circle is a figure of never-ending progress, it implies a constant transformation. The cesta (basket) can also be where garbage is placed, a wastebasket, and the quebrada is the city garbage dump in the minds of the elite. They not only view the area as being dirty and full of worthless material objects, they see the people who inhabit the quebrada as useless and disposable. Capão Redondo, as a basket, is also a place of crowded lives that are stacked chaotically one on top of each other. Consequently, Ferréz uses the term “cesta redonda” in Capão Pecado to expose the way in which the people of Capão Redondo are trapped in the cycle of poverty and to expose the negative prejudices of the elite.

\(^{53}\) The city in Brazilian fiction, especially in novels, represents segregation, both in the story and in the life of the authors.
The writings of Ferréz also highlight the cultural diversity of the neighborhood. Capão Redondo was built and established predominantly as housing for impoverished and persecuted groups. Therefore, it became a space shared by whites, free Native Brazilians, free blacks, mulattos, and former captives, as well as by European immigrants. Ferréz honors this diversity in his texts through characters such as Maria Bolonhesa (*Capão Pecado*) and Alemão (*Manual Prático do Ódio*). The writer also includes characters of northeastern origin, the *nordestinos*, who are generally inadequately represented in Brazilian literature. Many *nordestinos* travel to São Paulo to escape drought, famine and high regional unemployment and to find a better life. Since São Paulo is Brazil’s largest and richest city, it has become a *mecca* for the poor living in other regions of Brazil. Ferréz shows how urban settings, especially that of the periphery, bring together very different individuals. However, he also shows the social homogeneity of the population in terms of their experiences: life-threatening situations, financial difficulties, unemployment, unstable social relationships and early death (Mendes 13).

For Ferréz and some rappers and poets, Capão Redondo is a lawless area outside of the bounds of the city center and development. Life there is akin to that on a battlefield, a constant struggle to survive the “pobreza, injusticia, ruas de terra … crianças descalças, tensão e cheiro de maconha o tempo todo” (*Capão* 24). It is its own world that developed on

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54 Initially, the district was mainly comprised of Natives, Afro-descendants, *nordestinos/retirantes* and Italians; at the end of the nineteenth century, Syrians, Turks, Spaniards, Russians and Japanese arrived (Carril 113).
its own, “fora das idéias”, without the planning and involvement of the elite. The elite are very aware of this sprawling “illegal” city but choose to overlook it.

2.3 Capão Redondo, Home, Battleground and School

The Brazilian imaginary has always presented two cities, one understood by writers and their characters as the visible city in the center, and the second one understood to be the invisible city in the periphery. The “official space” of the city of the center is for the wealthy and is well-served by public facilities, while the “unofficial space” of the city of the periphery is for the people with low (or no) wages and it lacks in basic services and infrastructure. In Ferréz’s Capão Pecado, the reader encounters two “cities” within the city of São Paulo: a visible, global and industrialized São Paulo and:

A matéria dizia que São Paulo era uma das cidades mais badaladas do mundo, uma das únicas que funcionam 24 horas por dia. Na matéria se destacavam casas noturnas, restaurantes e todos os tipos de comida que eram encontrados nas noites (Capão 35);

Capão Redondo is the exact opposite of the ostensible images of São Paulo as a city of wide boulevards, theaters, restaurants, and historical sites. Ferréz’s work speaks often about the existence of two separate “marcas” within São Paulo:

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55 “Lugar fora das idéias” denotes the illegal city that emerged and was not a result of urban planning.

56 Marcas is used here in the sense proposed by Josefina Ludmer, as a delimitation of a territory that belongs to the subject who produces it. According to Ludmer, the “marca” can be a stone, a signature, a line which can be read “con cualquiera de los varios lenguajes o gramáticas: el literario, el filosófico, […] el político, el económico, el del arte y del poder” (Aquí América Latina 123).
The passage begins with “Brazil,” then there is a repetition of “São Paulo.” At first sight, the repetition of “São Paulo” could be understood as referring first to the name of the state and then to the name of the city. However, Luciana Marquesini proposes that “São Paulo” is repeated in order to show the double meaning of the toponym and the duality of the city (Marquesini 91). The end of the passage welcomes readers to Capão Redondo, which is at “the bottom of the world.” Although Capão Redondo includes terrain which is located on the hillsides, the area is metaphorically “at the bottom” in the sense that it is invisible, abandoned and set apart from the city center of São Paulo. Capão Redondo is “suburbia, periferia, o inferno da cidade, onde pessoas vivem no mais baixo nível da cidadania” (Capão 159). The downhill movement in the poem recalls Dante’s vision of Hell. As in Dante’s Inferno, Capão Redondo, which was “por Deus abandonado e pelo diabo batizado de Capão Pecado” (Capão 18), is described as the place where people are subject to punishment, depending on the severity of sins committed in life, in this case, their sin is their existence. Inside fictional
Capão Redondo traitors are also considered the worst sinners; their punishment is death. 57

There are many other similarities between Dante’s Hell and Ferréz “inferno.” The reader is introduced to a part of society considered Other, with a different cultural background and their own laws. There are rules in the periphery that may not be broken under penalty of death.

According to Hobsbawm, social bandits proliferate in situations of social deprivation or during natural tragedies. The physical properties of the favelas and how they are connected to the land and to the climate are often featured in the work of the Literatura Marginal. The favelas in the outskirts such as Capão Redondo were not the result of urban planning and the dwellings are often substandard and exposed to environmental risks. The dwellings, which are built from either found materials or very inexpensive ones, are highly vulnerable to environmental hazards such as floods and landslides. The precarious state of these dwellings is made particularly evident in a scene in Manual Prático do Ódio. A day of heavy rain, described as “clima de Armagedon,” provokes a flood and, eventually, a landslide which destroys José Antonio’s house, “viu a parede da sala cair inteira, e descer pelo morro, num momento estava com a casa somente cheia de água e lama” (209). Later, the reader learns that José Antonio, “senhor evangélico muito batalhador”, while living in the favela Heliópolis six years earlier, had lost his home in a fire (219). In Capão Pecado, Ferréz very clearly comments on the physical condition of Capão Redondo. This is not the Brazil of sunny beaches and luxury condominiums, which is presented on television, nor the Brazil that the elite want the world to see.

57 Dante’s Inferno is divided into nine circles. The lowest and worst one is for traitors such as Judas, Cain, Anthenor and Ptolemy. For Dante, as well as for the marginal periférico, the worst sin is betrayal.
For the poor of Brazil, little has changed over the years. The modern-day dwellings of the *favelas* are similar in their vulnerability to the houses in which the poor peasants of the Sertão lived more than a century earlier. In *Os Sertões*, Euclides da Cunha describes the houses of the Sertão as a “parodia grosseira da antiga morada romana” (da Cunha 119). As in the Sertão, most of the houses in Capão Redondo are constructed with mud. This makes them indistinguishable from the land itself. Thus, mud is a metaphor linked to the land (Dabove 222), and moving to the city does not cancel the connection between the migrants and the land from which they came, “sertão ainda esta lá” (Pelegrini, “Voz” 135). Thus, the presence of the *sertão*, although dim, still resides in the Brazilian imaginary and in its literature. The presence of the *sertão*, though, is not just about connecting with one’s heritage, it is a political statement. The people of Capão Redondo live subject to the whims of nature in inadequate housing because of a failure on the part of the government to ensure that the poor workers of the city have access to safe affordable housing. Hence, Capão Redondo reflects the failure of modernity and its mission of modernization. The lack of safe housing is just one of the ways in which the government has betrayed the people of Capão Redondo. The area lacks modern sanitation services, paved roads, daycare centers, employment, leisure options, and more.

The stories narrated in Ferréz’s books reveal an everyday life marked by social exclusion in São Paulo’s periphery. Every text exposes the struggle of disadvantaged people to gain societal and spatial access to resources and full participation in social life. For example, the bus for Ferréz’s characters is a matter of necessity, the means they use every day to get to work, to school, church, etc. However, even if the buses have many routes, they run throughout the city center yet end on the border of the periphery. This lack of access to
reliable public transportation system hampers the marginal periférico’s mobility, “[O] que mais condena o trabalhador é o transporte coletivo” (O Plano 15). As pointed out by Alexandre Damascena, those who use public transportation may differ in religious beliefs, color, age, sex, but they share the financial and social conditions of poverty (31). Indeed, the people of the favelas of Capão Redondo share many physical hardships, for instance, a constant lack of improvements of the infrastructure. Additionally, they are permanently subject to the process of favelization, as expressed by Mano Brown, “eu era bem pivetinho e já ligava o nome de Capão Redondo a sofrimento” (Capão Pecado 23). Thus, for the residents of Capão, fictional or not, Capão and suffering has become synonymous, interchangeable words.

Paradoxically, the violent space of the favelas is where its residents feel most at ease. It is where they were raised and where they, their families and their friends live. It is, in the words of Gaston Bachelard, their “home” since “all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home” (5). Capão Redondo is “home” in that it is a space which protects its residents, or at least prolongs their lives, with its labyrinth of alleys, streets, and cesspools. The residents know the secrets of the labyrinth and know where to find refuge while outsiders become lost in the maze. This sense of home can be seen in Capão Pecado when Rael, the main character, takes a bus from the neighborhood of Liberdade back to the periphery, “Pegou o primeiro ônibus, desceu no terminal Capelinha e lá pegou o Jd. Comercial. Conforme o ônibus avançava, ele se sentia melhor, se sentia mais em casa”

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58 There was no metro station in Capão Redondo before 2002.

59 The spiral labyrinth prototype is a primitive symbol of infinity and a marked center which initiates a neverending movement. It is a representation of god, the cyclical rhythm of nature, life and death.
(Capão 35). After the hostility Rael experiences in the city center, the favela (home) acquires the virtue of protection (Bachelard 46). By expressing relief in coming home, the character marks his own neighborhood as a “safe zone,” as opposed to the center, the “dangerous zone.” The city center is a dangerous place for the favela residents since they feel like, and are considered, foreigners there. The marginal periférico does not know how to navigate the city’s labyrinth of social rules and language. They are also identified by the city residents as outsiders who are there to be subordinated and exploited. As Luciana Mongim states, the word “casa” used by the narrator to refer to the periphery carries a sense of community as a place of protection (94). Additionally, for the marginal periférico, being out of the house can denote a traumatic act because, if we are expelled from our homes, we are deprived of our safety. Likewise “sentir-se em casa” suggests, according to Roberto DaMatta, a space where relationships are harmonious and disputes are avoided (A casa & a rua 50).

Capão Redondo also provides an informal education for its residents. Its alleys and confusing streets are uma escola where the manos (brothers) and manas (sisters) are educated and where they learn the unwritten laws early on. Significantly, in several episodes in both texts, Capão Pecado and Manual Prático do Ódio, the characters discuss the worthlessness and inappropriateness of their formal school education. The quebrada is an environment where orality dominates and reading and writing are associated with exclusion. The characters believe that the creative side of the periphery – drawing, “[jogar] bola do caramba,” “[fazer] um rap bem fabuloso”— is the only possible way in which Capão Redondo can overcome its condition of social invisibility and its inhabitants can acquire the same opportunities as the playbas:
-Deixa pra lá, vou continuar com a ideia. Então se liga, os playbas têm mais oportunidade, mas na minha opinião, acho que temos que vencê-los com nossa criatividade, tá ligado? Temos que destruir os filhos da puta com o que a gente tem melhor, o nosso dom, mano (Capão 119).

The use of creativity is one of the survival tactics the residents of Capão Redondo acquire as they grow up. According to De Certeau, “creative opportunity” as a tactic is “the art of weak” (37), the poor do not have at their disposal the strategies of those in power. Furthermore, the marginal inhabitant must become educated in the tactics that can be practiced in situ in the quebrada. Their lives are in a sense confined because it is difficult for them to find jobs and almost impossible to ascend through public education.

Quebrada is a term that symbolizes identification with the space of the periphery. Its residents face risk, violence and abject poverty, but they also have a feeling of belonging and build relationships of solidarity and companionship. Quebrada refers to one’s own neighborhood, one’s own “pedaço” (Pereira 157). The characters in Capão Pecado and Manual Prático do Odio are first and foremost members of their “pedaço,” but they are also part of a network of individualized relationships with the residents of other quebradas in the outskirts of Sao Paulo, “Capão Redondo, pra mim é um mundo à parte, é um pais com vários estados que são as quebradas: São Luis, Vaz de Lima, Capelinha… Valo Velho” (Capão 160). Thus, for Ferréz, the periphery surpasses the spatial reference. It becomes a way of living in the city wherein residents must have some common social references and dominate certain codes. As Alexandre Barbosa Pereira points out, the periphery is not only a spatial category but an identity that refers to a kind of belonging. In the texts, sometimes the periphery is understood as a social space that allows alliances between manos, alliances
reinforced by unemployment, the use of recreational drugs and alcohol and the fact that they
are all residents of poor neighborhoods in the outskirts of São Paulo. The negative stigma of
life in the quebradas is replaced with a positive sense of alliance and belonging. Teresa
Caldeira’s term “talk of crime” can be applied in a novel way in this situation. While people
outside of the periphery talk of crime and fear to justify the construction of walls, an increase
in surveillance and the building of a separated society, Ferréz talks of the ability of crime and
fear to create community.

2.4 Brotherhood of Dangerous People

As a home of bandits, Capão Redondo is essentially a male space wherein a code of
manly honor and brotherly love is fostered. Fraternal relationships develop among manos
whenever they form a group that recognizes their complicity. Brotherhood gives to each
mano a group of people who understand his performance as a member of the periphery.60 In
Capão Pecado, the central characters are Rael and Regis, two manos whose lives intersect
with those of the other characters. Since they are the only characters that have relationships
with everyone else, they give structure to the novel and link the other disparate characters
scattered throughout its plot.

The lives of Rael and Regis are intertwined with those of a plethora of secondary
characters. In Capão Pecado, the reader also learns the sagas of other bandits/marginais such

60 Even Ferréz has his brotherhood of writers: Gaspar, Mano Brown, Casacão, Outraversão
and Negrado e Conceito Moral. Texts by these writers appear all through Capão Pecado.
Luciana Mendes Velloso has named this fellowship “exército de quilombolas” (Army of
Maroons) because they form a community which reacts to their living conditions through
literature (46).
as Matcherros who sleeps all day because he has been unemployed for a long time; Carimbê, introduced in Chapter 10, an “aquela bosta” [a good for nothing] (Capão 98) who migrates to Sao Paulo after he loses his job as a bricklayer’s helper in Rio de Janeiro; and Burgos, the killer of the neighborhood. Additionally, Regis, who is a member of a gang, has many friends and colleagues who have “profisão perigro” (Manual 14): Lúcio Fé, one of the members of Regis’s quadrilha, who even though he attends church every Sunday, “diziam por aí que o bicho tinha pacto com o cão” (Manual 26); Aninha, the only female member of the quadrilha, who will be discussed later in this chapter; Celso Capeta, “malandro respeitado,” presented as a contradictory figure who at times acts with serenity and subtlety, but at other times, commits completely thoughtless and immature acts (Manual 17); and Mágico who rises to the middle class and becomes a liaison to “quem detinha realmente uma parte da riqueza nacional” (Manual 14). Aside from sometimes sharing individual personality traits, these characters all share the effects of their socio-economic position; e.g., they have had a poor education or none at all. They gather to play video games, smoke some baseado (joint), or plan the robbery that they hope will get them out of misery. It is worth noting that some of their tales have the same middle and end; similar to what happens in the bandit saga, the marginais periféricos experience a sequence of tragedies and then their own premature death.

61 Carimbê is one of the few characters who appears from the city center of São Paulo. Originally from the state of Minas Gerais, Carimbê goes to Rio de Janeiro in search of work. His story in these cities seems to repeat what occurs in the outskirts of São Paulo, supporting Outraversão’s statement that “Periferia é tudo igual, não importa o lugar: zona leste, oeste...Não importa se é no Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Brasília ou em São Paulo” (quoted in Capão 89).
Most of the characters are murdered or their bodies are mysteriously found dead; the body becoming just one of the many corpses found in Capão Redondo, arousing curiosity in residents until another body turns up. Rael, the protagonist, and Regis are part of a *turma* comprised of young boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty. Age is important in the periphery since life expectancy there is shorter than in the city center. For example, in the autobiographical shortstory “O Ônibus Branco” (*Ninguém é Inocente* 49), Ferréz is one of the few bandit/marginal who makes it to his thirties. In the story, Ferréz must cope as he sees a procession of young male acquaintances become young corpses. Similarly, Rael and Regis must learn to deal with the constant presence of death. There is no hope of a new beginning for any of the characters in *Capão Pecado* or *Manual Prático do Ódio*.

The tale in these books is frequently interrupted by a sort of Greek choir of voices that comments on and reflects on life in Capão and in the city. As Michel de Certeau proposes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the periphery and the city act as theaters of conflict in these stories; these polyphonic spaces are the product of a multiplicity of voices. The characters live in a physical space which is crowded, noisy, and lacking in green spaces such as parks that could lend solace to their lives. For the characters it is impossible to avoid frequent contact with others, and often these encounters only sharpen their feelings of pain and suffering. Many of the protagonists are presented as a cluster that lives and coexists in a “campo de batalhas” rather than as individuals. At some moments in the narrative, it

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62 The writer Sérgio Vaz, when explaining the address where the “*Semana de Arte Moderna da Perifera*” would take place pointed out that the only spaces the residents of the periphery have for leisure are bars, “O único espaço público que temos é o bar. Não temos outras áreas de plazer” (Vaz in interview with Guilherme Azevedo n.p). In another interview with Lucía Tennina he explains that the states only left them the bar as cultural center, because in the periphery there is not theater nor cinema nor museum” (“*O povo comunicar*” 266).
even seems that it is the space itself that speaks as the reader is bombarded with the voices of unidentified characters:

--Aí, mano! Eu bebo todo dia, cê tá ligado?
--Fumo pra cacete, mano, durmo sempre aqui em frente à vendinha da Maria.
--Já vi de tudo aqui no Capão, coisa que até o diabo duvida, mano, cê tá ligado?
--Sobrevivo comendo coisas que ganho, mano, e até reviro os lixo, é mó treta com os cachorros, cê tá ligado?
--Já fui esfaqueado duas vezes, mano… (Capão 25)

The voices of the periphery repeatedly ask, “Tá ligado?” (You got it?). Perhaps they are just checking for comprehension on the part of the other characters and the reader. Luciana Araujo Marques, however, proposes that “tá ligado” can be interpreted as a verb of communion (to join by moral and/or affective bond). In this sense, the speaker is asking his companions more than just “You got it?” but also “Are you with me?” The characters use language not only to be heard and understood but to create emotional connections. These voices represent all of the people produced by the degrading conditions of social inequality in Brazil. Sadly, the misfortune of these characters is not unique but is repeated in the lives of the inhabitants of the slums of all large cities. According to Christina Komi, collective suffering is proliferating and thus causing the extermination of individual voices.

The manos in Capão Pecado rarely arrange formal meetings, instead they usually se trombam. The lack of public squares and parks turns the sidewalks, streets and alleys into meeting places:
Na pequena roda em torno do poste estavam Matcherros, Panetone, Amaral, Cebola, Alaor e Amarelos. Rael chegou cumprimentando os manos, e já entrou na conversa logo de cara, como era de seu feitio. (Capão 36)

It is underneath posts and hidden in the shadows where these young characters are dating, keeping away from the police, playing cards, smoking, and making friends. An encounter at a simple streetlamp is an opportunity to connect and communicate. Football fields are also spaces of socialization and one of the few recreational options available. From the most banal to the most complex conversations can be heard emanating from every corner in the periphery.

All these spaces constitute a part of the circuit of the marginal in the city. Their movements and wanderings draw a social map of the city marked by the separation of class. The cities of the rich are distinctly separated from the cities of the poor:

O lugar é bonito, Morumbi Sul não é pra qualquer um morar, ainda mais em casa, um apartamento até que dá, mas casa é só pra que tem, Regis sabe disso e sempre que chega à casa do parceiro cresce os olhos, queria ter aquilo… .

(Manual 124)

The characters move in an unequal, divided city, separated between winners and losers, employers and workers, manos and playboys, periphery and center, asfalto and quebrada. The characters’ wanderings often appear linked with youth (Komi 68). They are adolescents who walk aimlessly looking to create their identity; they lack the purpose and structure that a formal educational setting would have provided. For example, Lúcio Fé, one of the characters in Manual Prático do Odio, wanders with no clear goal:
A rua estava calma, Lúcio Fé, não sabia para onde iria, só queria andar[...] desceu a rua principal e entrou na viela em frente, desviou da poça [...] virou à esquerda e depois à direita, cumprimentou algumas pessoas[...] pensou em pegar um ônibus, tal vez em ir e voltar (Manual 143).

This sort of aimless wandering is also one way the characters can relate to the outside world and escape from their inner world. For Lúcio Fé, wandering turns out to be his only way to be in contact with the city.

The birth of a bandit: Rael – Capão Pecado

Rael is the marginal bandit whose story is told in Capão Pecado. Rael is an intelligent adolescent who is described as a “crânio-de-ferro” (nerd) because of his big black glasses “que ele já usava há muito tempo” (Capão 26). He possesses the stereotypical virtues of the “good boy;” he is honest and hardworking “[s]eu aspect sempre agradava as mães dos colegas: gordinho, cabelo todo encaracolado” (Capão 26). As Luciana Araujo Marques stresses, there are several times in the text when Rael is introduced as if he were special and different from the other quebrada residents (71). For example, Rael’s reading skills bestow him with a special gift of understanding of situations. However, in true bandit circumstances, he must confront oppression. This oppression comes in the form of his socio-economic circumstances. As a child, he moves with his family to one of the quebradas in the neighborhood of Capão Redondo because it was “onde seu pai pôde comprar um barraquinho” (26). This is a place where even a “book-smart” boy cannot succeed by the mainstream route of formal education. Further, it is a place where ultimately no one ever succeeds since even a wealthy quebrada criminal will probably die young or at least suffer
through the deaths of his loved one. The oppression pervasive in the *quebradas* makes them ripe for banditry.

While Rael is different in many respects, his life shares the same circumstances of the other boys growing up in the *quebrada*. He acquires friends, experiences the deaths of some of them, goes to school, reads comic books, and plays video games. Rael has the life of “mais uma família comum” of Capão Redondo. He feels that his family is different because his father lives with them, whereas in most of the homes the children are being raised by single mothers due to the difficult economic circumstances of life in the periphery. However, his father Seu Zé is a humble, depressed, illiterate man who has also succumbed to alcoholism and thus does not provide Rael with a proper role model. Rael’s mother, Dona Maria, is a hard-working, frequently-ill woman (29). Rael aches to have a family of his own as do all of his *manos*. They desire the intact nuclear family which they never had and which for them epitomizes the families of the middle class and the rich. When the story begins Rael works at a bakery and later gets a better job at a metallurgic factory. He works as a means to live with dignity and overcome his fate of remaining poor. Thus, he escapes the central problem of unemployment; a concern which is referred to several times in the novel as a collective problem. Nonetheless, there can be no happy ending for the bandit. Additionally, Rael is, in a sense, a “double bandit” and is thus doubly condemned. He must struggle against the oppression of the elite and also fight against his *manos* in the periphery.

Rael is doomed because he cannot win either of his battles. Certain passages of the text augur Rael’s bad fortune, “Mas Rael era muito curioso” (*Capão* 28). Rael’s material conditions and his place in the world are images of absolute exclusion. He does not wish to stay in the periphery but can never belong to anywhere else. As in every bandit saga, it seems
that all occurrences conspire to spoil his dreams and aspirations. Every event in the course of the plot—his new job, fast ascension, his marriage, and the birth of his child—which seems to be a sign of inclusion into the middle class, must be regarded as a false hope.

Rael’s first act of banditry involves breaking the rules within the periphery. Rael falls in love with Paula who is the girlfriend of Matcherros, one of Rael’s best friends. In doing so, he breaks the most important law of the favela, “nunca cante a mina de um aliado, se não vai subir” (85). Rael and Paula flirt with each other, eventually marry, and have a child. The betrayal of the lovers creates an atmosphere of impending doom as it is locally known that an act of this kind is avenged with death. Early in the novel, Matcherros foresees Rael’s destiny: “…da trairagem nem Jesus escapou” (165). This treason is Rael’s death sentence although his death does not happen immediately. According to Hobshawn, a bandit will only perish by treason. 63

Rael’s next act of banditry occurs in the traditional battle against the elite. Rael’s wife has an affair with his wealthy boss Seu Oscar and eventually abandons Rael to live with him. Rael is tormented by jealousy and driven by his thirst for justice and his distress over a shattered future. He bands together with Burgos, the killer of the neighborhood, to murder Seu Oscar. The passage from an honest and ethical worker to a criminal is meaningful. Even though Rael has turned into a criminal, the narrator considers it necessary to clarify the difference between his motivations and those of the other characters, “Rael ia fazer por

63 Death because of an act of treason is a recurrent motif in Ferréz’s texts. One example is the short story “Pega ela” (Ninguém 19-22). In the story, two male lifetime friends, Alemão and Lipo, are talking about their relationship and its importance, then Alemão confronts Lipo about having kissed the girlfriend of a “irmão.” Even a kiss can be a death sentence in Capão.
The only “explanation” for the decision to kill his wife's lover and for his arrest is supplied in those exact seven words. When Rael, the lower class worker, kills his boss, he is committing an act of banditry against the elite. The event even echoes the constant fears of the Brazilian elite of the past who believed the slaves would rise up and kill them. Interestingly, this affront to the mainstream law, is in compliance with the law of the *quebrada*. The code of honor in the name of justice is judged a priori within the moral evaluation of the current framework in this universe: the ethics of social banditry.

The price which Rael pays for breaking the laws of the city is to be imprisoned in jail. Once in jail, he must pay for his treachery within the *favela*. When Rael is in jail, Burgos pays another inmate to kill Rael. Since Rael has already broken one rule and taken a friend’s girlfriend, he may break another rule and tell the authorities about Burgos’ involvement in the crime. Thus, the end of Rael’s trajectory is the same as that of every other bandit. This seems to prove what his “*manos,*” Narigaz and Matcherros, anticipated: that Rael’s knowledge and dedication to study and work would not produce any different outcome.

**The lyncher bandit: Régis – *Manual Prático do Ódio***

Régis, the *marginal* bandit character of *Manual Prático do Ódio*, is a “double bandit” similar to Rael in that he fights against the elite, but also breaks the unwritten laws of the periphery. Again, Ferréz brings to life the complications and details of the periphery which were unknown and ignored by the white elite authors of the nineteenth century bandit novels.

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64 Anton Blok considers honor and violence to be “inevitable facts” of human existence that are as inevitable as birth and death (*Honour and Violence* 9). Blok argues honor and violence are critical for any person to survive physically and socially. According to Blok, people need protection and this protection sometimes takes the form of honor-motivated violence.
Like Ferréz himself, Regis is a character who comprehends in a critical manner the hatred of the people of the marginalized urban areas. Ferréz uses the character of Régis to speak against the social class oppression from which they all suffer and to take a critical look at the actions or inaction of the state. Régis has confidence and intelligence that set him apart from the other characters in the novel. He is known and respected by the residents in the neighborhood. Other bandidos seek him out and ask him for advice on the best ways to commit crimes. As in the traditional bandit stories, these crimes take place outside of their community and their victims are members of the elite. In Manual Prático do Ódio, the crimes usually take place in the center of the city, and their main targets are banks, shopping malls, and the homes of people involved in the underworld. Régis is a malandro from Rio de Janeiro who acts according to his own rule, “Em rio que tem piranha boi toma água de canudinho” (Manual 14). But in São Paulo, he is a bandido who makes a living by doing “correrias.” He belongs to a quadrilha whose activity follows the paradigm of steal, spend the stolen money, and then steal again. Regis’s quadrilha plans to make a big correria, the one which is supposed to change their lives and allow them to retire from a life of crime and become lawful citizens. However, the reader knows that the bandit will ultimately never win against his oppressors.

Regis and his partners are angry about the conditions into which they are born and over which they have no control. He comes from a poor childhood marked by hunger and humiliation (Manual 44). As a child he suffers from the social stigma of poverty. He learns young that the value and power of an individual are directly related to the economic place he occupies in society, “A patroa da mãe de Régis lhe disse uma coisa que ficou esse tempo

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65 Correria is an illegal transaction.
todo, e ele guarda como o começo de todo o ódio que nutria por quem tinha o que ele sempre quis ter, dinheiro” (Manual 44). Therefore, in his logic, he must first do the “correria certa” in order to abandon the life of crime because he “tinha sonhos mais complexos” (Manual 13-14). Régis dreams of integrating himself into the world of consumption, a society where equality and citizenship are measured by money. He becomes a bandido because that is the only path for ascension that is open to the poor children of the quebrada. Régis represents the strong hatred and resentment felt by the quebrada residents; he revolts against those who have everything the latter lack. Mongim stresses that Régis is not a bad guy (137), rather he is a non-conformist in practice and in ideology. He thinks money is the solution to his problems and wants to control the game, but loses control in the end. As with any true bandit, fate will catch up with Régis, and he will meet a tragic end.

As in the case of Rael, a betrayal of the laws of the quebrada plays a part in bringing about his demise. Throughout the novel, Regis betrays and is betrayed by his partners. For example, Regis breaks the fundamental rule of not becoming involved with the girlfriend or wife of a mano:

Abriu os olhos rapidamente, afastou a coberta e levantou a cabeça, olhou fixamente e não a reconheceu, desviou o olhar para toda a casa e finalmente se situou, estava na casa de Rita em São Mateus, tocou o pingente que trazia na corrente e fez uma curta oração, olhou para o relógio e deduziu o horário que Anízio, o marido de Rita, chegaria... (Manual 11).

Additionally, he breaks the rules about remaining loyal. After the bank robbery, Régis becomes involved in a scheme with Mendoza, a corrupt policeman. Régis causes the deaths of his manos and gives the money from the robbery to the police in exchange for not being
arrested. The final scene is narrated in a long paragraph that seemingly has no end. It describes Régis’s last minutes as he suffers from a bullet to the chest. He reflects on the social environment which surrounds him and thinks about what his life has become, concluding that he has failed in life. Ultimately, his story demonstrates that the price of being a bandit/marginal periférico is a certain death.

Aninha – Manual Prático do Ódio

While Literatura Marginal is a male narrative, there is a female bandit who gains relative distinction in the stories: Aninha. She is the most influential female character in Manual Prático de Ódio and in Ferréz’s texts in general. A female bandit in Latin America’s novels is not common, at least in the nineteenth century. However, the figure of Aninha recalls other female bandits in Latin America, such as Doña Barbara (Doña Bárbara by Rómulo Gallegos, 1929), La Pintada (Los de abajo by Mariano Azuela, 1915), and Diadorim (Grande Sertão Veredas by João Guimarães Rosa, 1956), to mention some. They have been labeled as bandits by some scholars such as Juan Pablo Dabove, Carolina Castellano, and Pascale Baker, respectively. The existence of female bandits breaks with the idea that women in banditry narratives are just companions of the men.

After Aninha masculinizes herself as a way to achieve empowerment, she becomes a bandit. Similar to Doña Barbara, she is an orphan and has been raped; like Diadorim, she is part of an all-male group and is always dressed like a man. Similar to La Pintada, Aninha joins the quadrilha not for social justice but because she desires certain commodities. Aninha adopts all the manners that would generally be acceptable in a male character: smoking, drinking and always being armed. Because of this, Aninha is treated by her male colleagues
with that permeates the narrative. She, is at times seen as a woman, but at other times, her womanly image overlaps with her bandit image. Similar to the other bandits, Aninha cannot be portrayed as a fully-realized character of any personal and social complexity. At times, the narrator puts the character in contact with her vanity - or even the lack thereof - and these moments are crisis generators for Aninha:

Saiu do chuveiro e se enxugou, resolveu pôr o sutiã, fazia tempo que não usava um, seus pequenos seios na verdade não precisavam de um, mas o colocando se sentia mais feminina, pegou o batom na gaveta e passou levemente nos lábios, cor suave (Manual )

In spite of her masculine activities, fragments such as the one above demonstrate that Aninha wants to be attractive, to be loved, to be a mother and to have a family and the affection of a mate.

Aninha is the only woman participating in the “banca of Régis.” She is a young woman in a male environment who struggles to improve her social and economic status. Criminal life gives her a certain autonomy. Dressing like a man and living a life of crime makes Aninha the consummate figure of a fearless woman and gives her the “dona de si” condition that distinguishes her from the other women in Ferréz’s texts. However, there is a dual identity in her. Aninha, at moments, is a sort of condensation of all female roles, but she also embodies a bandit; this gives the character a gender ambiguity since she displays both female and male features.

Aninha’s full name is Ana Cirô Gomes Lopes, but she begins to be called by the diminutive Aninha when she moves to São Paulo. She is originally from Várzea de Poço in the state of Bahia, and like many other retirantes, she arrives in São Paulo expecting better
living conditions. Back home, in her earlier years, she was discreet but, once she moves to São Paulo, she diverts from the expected domestic patterns for women by taking on the roles of criminal and rebel:

Ana, em Várzea do Poço não tinha colocado nem um cigarro na boca, assim que chegou foi a primeira coisa que aprendeu, alguns meses depois estava descavando um cigarro de maconha como ninguém e, após um ano, Aninha, como era seu apelido agora, já sabia montar e desmontar uma pistola de olhos fechados (Manual 21).

Back in Bahia, her life was marked by suffering and poverty: she did not have television or running water, was motherless since childhood and was repeatedly raped by her father. As a result of her early victimization, she develops a hostility that sidelines her. When she feels she can no longer stand that life, she makes the decision to move to Sampa without saying goodbye to anyone. In São Paulo, she turns into a violent young woman who fights with her neighbors, both men and women; she beats them all.

Even with the money she earns, Aninha is still in a situation of misery, “Aninha sentia uma imensa falta de algo que ela nunca teve e não sabia bem o que era, Aninha jamais poderia explicar como sentir falta do que não teve, mas sentia.” The text is ambiguous regarding the kind of sorrow to which Aninha is confined; perhaps it is the fact that she lives in Capão and struggles to survive like all other residents, or perhaps it is that she lacks something material or emotional or that she is not happy with her life as a woman.
Other female characters:

Although Ferréz’s literary production depicts a number of other marginalities and his definition of marginal is wide-ranging, his literary production is a recreation of the male-dominated society. *Capão Pecado* and *Manual Prático do Ódio* are the stories of certain men, deprived of their own dignity, who are struggling to survive in their community. It seems that in his novels, and as part of his ética da escritura (Coronel, “Escríta” 36), the author wants his readers to learn about the living condition of the marginalized, but mainly the neglected and excluded male characters that are forced to live in vulnerability. The characters are described as men facing acts of social injustice or persecution who take the law into their own hands and consequently initiate their life into banditry.

However, like Aninha, there are other female characters in fictional Capão, although not with the same prominent role as hers. Because banditry stories are mostly male narratives (Dabove 289), female characters are typically described as extensions of male identity. In Ferréz’s texts, apart from Aninha, the female figure holds the place traditionally reserved for women; they are silent, buried in housework and confined to private life. This confinement prevents female characters from building bonds of partnership and complicity similar to those observed between the male characters; the brotherhood achieved among the manos does not extend to the minas in the same conditions of poverty (Marques 109).

Even when Ferréz’s narrators describe female characters as fighters or strong figures, they are still held to the hegemonic discourse. Most of the time, the female characters are represented in Ferréz’s novels as stereotypical sensual, seductive Brazilian women or

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66 Luciana Paiva Coronel defines “ética da escritura” as an intentionality in literature written by minority authors to use an anonymous voice that speaks for the collectivity but also encourages a change or social transformation.
submissive, maternal women; their roles are either minimized or silent. Their relativity in the narrative depends on the role they play in their relationships with the men. In the context of the periphery, a woman’s role corresponds to three prototypes: housewife, domestic worker, or prostitute. In her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Gayatri Spivak states that in the context of male dominance, “the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (150). On this matter, David Sibley also argues that although “both men and women experience exclusion as members of an oppressed minority group” (Geographies of Exclusion 548), men are dominant. Regarding Spivak’s notion of subaltern, Ferréz uses an array of female characters to portray how women are particularly victimized in male-centered environments. As the narrator in Manual Prático do Ódio informs the reader “A vida na periferia para as mulheres sempre foi mais cruel” (Manual 79).

The perpetuation of patriarchy and marianismo outlines the expectations for men and women in the texts. In general, the female characters are classified as strong hard workers – “Mulheres musculosas de tanto lavar e passar” (Capão 55) – or demonized, “Mulher é bicho raro em que não se confia” (Capão 61). Furthermore, the female figures in Ferréz’s texts are associated with futility as they are often degraded by the male characters. There is a message of reaffirmation of manhood and of hierarchical relationships between men (those in power) and women (who must submit to this power). This constitutes a reproduction of the same power structure that Ferréz condemns when it is between one man from the periphery and another man from the city elite center. Ferréz seems to ignore past events that have also affected the marginalized women, e.g., slavery, racism, and violence. Women in Ferréz’s texts are doubly marginalized bodies who suffer all kinds of subjugation and violence, not only from society but also from their own community.
Although Ferréz seems to be against any kind of violence, his texts obviously perpetuate gender-based violence. Even when the narrator is describing a sexual act that is supposed to show the love between two characters, it ends up being a violent act. Sex scenes are always narrated violently:

…o prazer de Régis era foder o cu dela assim, sem nada para facilitar, depois de alguns minutos, enfiou os quatro dedos em sua boca e mandou que ela chupasse, […] ele com a outra mão tampou o seu nariz, ela começou a sufocar e era disso que ele gostava[…] gostava de ver a dificuldade dela em respirar […]pediu para que ela abrisse a boca, e logo em seguida enfiou o pau, começou a comer sua boca como se estivesse comendo sua boceta (Manual 61-62).

The male figure forces the female character to perform oral sex with the clarification that the female character resists at first, but she somehow enjoys it, and/or she knows what she is doing “ela já tinha experimentado.” The sexual act, or rather, rape, is disguised by feelings of “shame” and “pity” that the female fakes according to the narrator. There is a scene between Rael and Paula (Capão Pecado) in which they engage in a sexual intercourse. Paula attempts on at least three occasions to stop Rael, and he always forces her to keep going, “Ela não concordou de imediatamente, mas ele insistiu a forçando para baixo”; or “ela ainda tentou recuar…mas Rael apoiava sua cabeça com as duas mãos e ela não podia fugir do que ele desejava fazê-la sentir” (Capão 102). The narrator justifies the rape by thinking “ela gozou várias vezes durante o ato” (Capão 102-03).

The presence of women in the texts happens thanks to a kind of inventory supplied by the narrators of both novels, Capão Pecado and Manual Prático do Ódio. This inventory
systematically provides the reader with information about the female members of Capão’s population. The inventory, or record, not only helps classify women as traitors, mothers or prostitutes, but it also functions as a census as we learn their origin, race and civil status, etc. For example, the readers learns that there is one nordestina and one Italian who are both poor and one Russian from the upper class and that the women’s ages range from nineteen to twenty-four years old and from thirty-five to forty-five years old. We also learn seemingly small details that actually give very telling information about the live of these women. For example, we learn that there are seven mothers who, identify themselves as single mothers even though their official civil status is married.

The Marias

In the culture of the periphery, the Virgin Mary is widely viewed as the epitome of femininity, and she is held up as a model to which Latin American women should aspire. The Marias, Dona Maria who is Rael’s mother and Maria Bolonhesa who is the mother of two of Rael’s friends, are a classic example of a conventional literary archetype, the Marian mother figure. Their names evoke the Virgin Mary and the marianismo that defines the ideal woman as selfless, submissive, and possessing great spiritual strength. Ferréz’s Marias represent all of the mothers in the periphery: for example, Dona Gertrudes, a unique lady who is always calm and willing to help (Manual 16) and Dona Elvira and Dona Ana, two mothers who appear in Capão Pecado. These Marias are “qualquer; aquela que cozinha bem, que trata dos filhos dos outros bem, as que dificilmente teria seu nome lembrado” (Capão 94). The name of Maria is also used as a synonym for a woman who suffers, especially, due to the loss of her child, “…Dona Maria Bolonhesa correu logo que soube de acontecido, abaxiou-se,
abracou o filho fatalmente baleado e chorou, chorou, chorou” (*Capão* 51). It behooves these Mary-mothers to be in a permanent state of intercession. For example, Maria Bolanhesa is not able to sleep when her sons move back to Capão since she is so worried about their safety. Before bedtime, she performs a ritual of intercessory prayers for them (48).

*The Housewife. The Case of Eliana (Manual Prático de Ódio)*

Another one of Ferréz’s female characters is Eliana, a devoted housewife and dedicated mother who does not distrust the exploits of her husband Regis because she is a “mulher direita e prendada” (*Manual* 15). Once again, Ferréz reproduces the ideology of *marianismo* and the patriarchal system; women are expected to be nurturing and morally superior to men. Women have been traditionally tied down to responsibilities related to the family, in particular, the education of children. Like Eliana, most of the women in Ferréz’s texts have been relegated to the loneliness of the private domestic sphere. Eliana feels an immense loneliness due to the long absences of her husband and this leads her to feel angry (Momgim 149). This is drawn from the idea that women live subjugated to men, do not show resistance and are only partially integrated. Their job is to ensure that the house is spotless, that there is always food on the table, and that clothing is washed and ironed. These household duties serve Eliana as an escape and at the same time they are a means of integration and even survival. It is striking that, in the narrative, she has no friends and her sociability is as poor as her existence. She cares for her son and is constantly waiting for her husband. However, that does not suffice, the character suffers a permanent state of solitude.
Her relationship with her husband Regis is built over the foundation of a past failed relationship of Regis. The image of a woman overlaps the image of a young girl; hate overlaps love. Eliana is a doubly marginalized woman who is oppressed by society on the one hand and by her husband Regis on the other hand; in other words, she lives in the shadows of others. “A parceira de traição”

The character of Paula is described as the “parceira de traição” (Capão 102) and, as an extension to that title, she plays a key role as the igniter of the tragedies in the plot. She is the originator of Rael’s change of fate. Paula, who at the beginning is portrayed as an angelic creature, becomes a victim of sexual exploitation and becomes a traitor. Paula is a young woman who is blamed for “sonhos do menino terem ido por água abaixo” (Capão 17). She emerges as a temptation and is responsible for exposing Rael to the forbidden. Paula is described with all the conventional attributes of a woman, “uma bela garota de olhos castanhos-claros, cabelo extremamente negro, rosto angelical e o corpo escultural,” with “saia minúscula e suas pernas bem torneadas” (Capão 59). She is characterized as a threatening element because her sex appeal imperils the loyalty and union of the brotherhood. When Rael looks at her during their first sexual act, he sees in her a devil that draws him away from his loyalty to his friend and mano. If the Marias own suffering largely sanctifies the mother figure, the figure of the lover, Paula, is demonized as the temptress who drags man to perdition. Even Rael considers her responsible for the treason to Matcherros because Matcherros “não sabia nem suspeitava da traição de sua namorada” (Capão 105).

There are other female characters in Ferréz’s inventory. The purpose of this list is not clear, but as it has been shown, it seems to serve to “discredit” the female characters.
Although Ferréz’s work manifests his repudiation of a system that oppresses his community, he recreates in his books an oppressive dynamic based on gender.
CHAPTER THREE
THE MARGINAL STRIKES A POSE

Se o cara é bem nascido de berço, usa tênis caro,
roupa de marca é normal, se o cara nasceu
na dificuldade e coloca um tênis legal
e uma peita boa ai é “ostentação”
Ferréz (ferrez.com.br)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine marginality and banditry as a performance. Since banditry, as well as marginality, subsumes a representational outlook, the bandit/marginal periférico trope implies a performance. Historically, society has always used public acts of discipline in an attempt to control the bodies of those who break the laws of the elite. Michel Foucault in his writings informs about how previous to the 18th century, public executions and corporal punishment were a way to reform the bodies of law breakers. As a performative example, Juan Dabove describes how in the 18th and 19th centuries one of the punishments reserved for bandits was to force them to take part in a play where they performed the role of bandits. At some point in the play, they were then executed on stage (Dabove, Nightmares 23). As Dabove stresses, the label of bandit suggests the performance of any act of domination. What Dabove identifies as the “theater of law” consists of the execution of the bandits, either hanged from trees, publicly shot or decapitated and sometimes even photographed for the public to have full visibility of the punishment (Dabove Nightmares 24).

By assessing how and to what effect the image of a marginal is constructed by the marginal himself and/or by society, this chapter will consider the marginal periférico from a constructionist perspective that examines outfits, names, nicknames, and poses as a part of
their images and performances. Additionally, it is proposed that the *marginal periférico* is not just a bandit but also a *poseur*. A *poseur* is a figure of the turn of the 20th century who, like the bandit, is a product of normative ideas about what does or does not belong to the imaginary. Being a *marginal periférico*, a bandit and/or a *poseur* traditionally means “being in society” and yet living on the periphery and being ignored. It means existence without a name because those who control the established culture refuse to name them, the *marginais*, the bandit and/or the *poseur*. To reflect on the *marginal periférico*’s pose, it is necessary to recover the body which, according to Sylvia Molloy, is where the norms are manifested (*Poses de fin de siglo*). Discipline is a conglomerate of systems by which the operation of the body is coerced (*Vigilar y Castigar* 123). Molloy argues that bodies are used by authors to represent cultural declarations and testimonies (*Poses de fin de siglo*). Molloy proposes that constructs regarding gender and sexuality are about what does not fit the norm and what differs from it. She further argues that the construction of the norm does not precede the differences, but happens to it, and derives from said differences. (*Poses de fin de siglo*). To control the body is to control the individual, therefore, there are norms surrounding the body that seek to standardize its behavior in the public and in the private worlds, for example, norms concerning walking and dressing. Accordingly, the elite not only create the circumstances which lead to bandits and label them as such, but they compel them to perform their banditry. The *marginal* body should be understood as a stage where the spectacle of urban violence is played out. The body of the *marginal periférico* becomes a platform full of cultural sign systems where multiple discourses exist and differ according to the circumstances surrounding the spectacle of urban violence.
However, when punishment ceases to be a punitive spectacle that intimidates, the elite use other disciplinary practices to restrict the rights of the body of the marginal. It is held hostage in the periphery where the rules and hierarchies of the center are registered and reinforced. Therefore, if there is a failure to adopt certain acceptable manners, there is an attempt to erase the bandit/marginal and remove them from the imaginary. As members of the periphery, the marginais periféricos are forced to remain hidden since they represent the failure of the modernization and urbanization that drove people into second-class citizenship. According to Eric Hobsbawm, although invisibility is a consequence of oppression, there are moments when invisibility is a necessary condition since the authorities hunt the bandits. Nevertheless, despite the effort to keep them buried, the marginal periférico has become known to the world and has been able to “come out of the closet.”

Since performativity has to do with the repetition of oppressive and painful norms (Butler, Bodies 12), this chapter will assess how and to what effect the image of a marginal is constructed by themselves and/or by society. It will be argued that when the marginal periférico strikes a pose, it becomes a destabilizing force. This chapter will show how the characters in Literatura Marginal written by Ferréz speak largely through their appearance, clothing, gestures and gíria/slang; they destabilize the certainties of normativity by proclaiming individuality as a self-constructed product. As Dabove highlights, bandit narratives, including Literatura Marginal, focus on the body as a visible manifestation of self-government (Nightmares 137). For the first time, the bandit is producing a definition of his own image. João Rocha states that “the dialectic of marginality also means seizing control of one’s own image” (29). In that sense, the dialectic of marginality is not only a process for articulating the marginal periférico’s life and uncertainties, it is also a process for governing
and controlling the use of one’s own image. Hence, the pose is an essential element of one’s control over identity. The direct confrontational style of the *marginal* bandit is also contrary to the traditional style of the social bandit. The *marginal periférico* brings the bandit out into the light since this is a bandit who wishes to make an open statement and change the *status quo*. To see and be seen as a *marginal periférico* is to break the rules and to challenge the traditional order.

3.2 Marginal as a poseur

In 1990, pop singer Madonna released “Vogue,” a song inspired by the vogue movement. The history of vogue as a movement goes back to black drag queens in Harlem, New York who gave performances in nightclubs in which they imitated the strutting of rich and glamorous women by using extravagant gestures, clothing and poses (Upadhye n.p.). Madonna’s song became the anthem of the pose for the black, Latino and LGBT communities since, according to Mariano López Seone, it encourages people to assume a pose as a way of self-affirmation (211). The lyric advises, “Don't just stand there, let's get to it. Strike a pose, there's nothing to it” (Madonna, “Vogue”). To strike a pose is to hold one’s body in a particular position to create an impression; it is an intentional action. The pose is a premeditated creation for public consumption. When the *marginal periférico* strikes a pose, he assumes a posture or an attitude. At the same time, the pose forces the audience to look at the image, gestures, clothing and performance. Clearly, Ferréz’s goal is to make visible what is supposed to remain hidden. Pose, like performativity, is constructed as a powerful discourse to produce effects through reiteration (Butler, *Bodies* 20). The pose of the *marginal periférico* helps to give visibility to an alternative (almost forced) way of life, and it
also instructs other members of the *marginal* in new ways to be nonconformist. In its focus on the characters’ physical and social characteristics such as body, manners and name, being *marginal periférico* implies an excessive visibility. As such, their story of visibility is a story about how they see themselves.

The poseur knows he is posing; nonetheless, he does not want to lose his essence (Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 11). In that sense, “striking a pose” is an essential act in claiming one’s identity. The act of posing does not label an individual, but rather an attitude, which is assumed and represented in the theatrical sense. The elite arbiters of culture as a matter of course depreciate the culture of the periphery as something unnatural or even perverse. This has led to the obviously defiant attitude against the system that can be seen in *Literatura Marginal*. Ferréz’s rebellious performance started with the publication of three special editions published by the magazine *Caros Amigos* called *Literatura Marginal*. Ferréz divided the three editions into three acts as if he were directing a play, *Ato I*, *Ato II* and *Ato III*. Lucía Tennina stresses that by labeling each edition in this manner, Ferréz is making a statement that goes beyond aesthetics and includes political intervention and practice. Ferréz’s selected titles incite other writers and residents of the periphery to *atuar* (act), to assume an “attitude” and write about their identity that is *marginal periférica*.

The legend tagging the following picture reads, “*Atitude vem comigo*” [Attitude comes with me]. The picture, taken by João Wagner and included in the first edition of *Capão Pecado*, announces a visual sense of identity that stakes out a public space and
demands that others acknowledge the *marginais periféricos* presence. The attitude in the picture is of a perceived safety that is based on the existence of a supporting group.

Additionally, the notable pace of the men in the photo is a proof of the sense of safety provided also by a group which is ready to attack if necessary. All of this stems from the position of “tough boy.” Aggressiveness belongs to the image of the *marginal periférico* to the extent that it becomes a possible way to get rid of his invisibility. Although some of the characters are defined by their good actions, most of them are defined by their cruelty. In a bandit saga, it is important to the bandit to look terrifying and merciless. As Hobsbawm points out, terror is indeed part of the image of numerous bandits (*Bandits 67*). Those who do not act rough and tough will not survive and will remain victims; and as a victim, a *marginal*

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67 The use of photos and/or drawings was a common practice for the first publications of most of the *marginal* writers. In the case of Ferréz, the second edition of *Capão Pecado* (2005) and his following books do not have visual components. However, in his last novel, *Os Ricos também morrem* (2015), Ferréz returns to combining written text with comics or graphic novel elements.
periférico can only occupy a place in the world where he is ignored. It is only as a bandit that he can be heard and becomes one of the heroes, albeit a disturbing one. His violent reactions, expressed through nicknames, clothing, and actions, are a way to establish a connection to a society that ignores him. This tactic creates a public image that displays what it is to be marginal and uses the same discourse that was enunciated by those in power. For the marginal periférico, toughness forms part of their public image. As Molloy explains, to take the pose of a certain identity, in this case, the identity of a criminal, is an act of presence and does not necessarily mean to act like one or be one. To take the pose of an identity is a performance that on some occasions, depending on the circumstances of the poseur, leads to becoming that identity. Oscar Montero and Jorge Brioso connect this occurrence to silence. According to them, the pose creates a series of significant silences, as the pose is neither what is said nor what is kept silent (2).

The pose is also a way for the marginal periférico to construct an alternative identity. Ferréz presents an entire repertoire of personalities from the marginal periférico that do not fit in within society’s acceptable boundaries. Regis (Manual Prático de Ódio) is mindful of the role that he plays in choosing the career of a “profissão perigo.” His choice is the same as a member of the elite who chooses the pose of a banker or any other career which has profitable outcomes:

O certo seria aceitar que ele e os que conhece são delinquentes por necessidade, por querer também participar das melhores coisas da vida

[…] Régis sentia-se um herói, estava jogando certo no jogo do capitalismo

[…] os exemplos que via o inspiravam ainda mais, inimigos se abraçavam em

Ferréz’s work shines a light on the violent pose of the official authorities who are criminals themselves. When those who are in positions of authority commit a crime, it is not considered as such. On the contrary, it is accepted as a way to preserve the social order. Like the character of Seu Oscar (*Capão Pecado*), Rael’s boss at the metallurgy workshop, that exposes how the privileged class of Brazil holds on to their economic and political power and maintains its privileges. Seu Oscar represents the paternalist founding father who uses the labor of the *marginal* to stay on top. According to Dabove, the heads of the families of the elite share power with the government in that they help maintain the current social order by having property, servants and employees (149). Hence, the violent pose of the elite is not questioned or scrutinized when it comes to the high stakes of preserving the status quo. The *marginal*’s pose proclaims its presence to a society that persecutes and criminalizes it and wants it to remain invisible.

The portrait of the *marginal periférico* is a complex one that fluctuates between being seen as a victim and as a victimizer. One of the poets of the *marginal periférico*, Preto Ghóez, uses the metaphor of the monster, “Um Frankenstein latino,” (“A soma do que somos” 18) to show how the *marginal* suffers from the same contradictions as Frankenstein’s monster: He can be both docile and violent, both repulsive and beautiful, and both strong and weak. These visions of monstrous excess are effective at promoting the desire to look. The image of the *marginal periférico* strives to incorporate both positive and negative aspects. Ferréz’s characters combine terror and cruelty with dignity and humanity. Their image is a balance between these two extremes. Although young men rarely identify themselves as
marginal periférico, they are conscious of their condition, “É obvio, nós sabemos quais são as carências daqui” (Capão 89). 68

Cultures assign roles and characteristics to people according to numerous factors, e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, weight, age, etc. Thus, the first pose the marginal assumes is that given to him or her by the normative structure of society.

Um dia, durante uma conversa entre a patroa e sua mãe, a patroa perguntou de que bairro eles eram, sua mãe disse o nome do bairro, a patroa passou a mão na cabeça do pequeno e disse: -Então é esse pivete que um dia vai crescer e vir roubar minha casa? (Manual 44).

Marginal periférico/bandit is in Butler words “itself a term in process, a becoming, and a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification” (Butler, Gender 43). This is a constant motif in Ferréz’s texts; most of the characters are labeled and viewed as possible criminals and so their poses are a reaction to this stereotype.

The second pose or performativity assumed by the marginal periférico is an act of reiteration of this set of norms. Performative is the discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names (Butler, Bodies 12). For example, the photo on the cover of first edition of Capão Pecado is of a young boy who is posing as a criminal.

68 “Se eu quero, eu posso, eu sou” comes from Outraversão. This text has the same textual polyphony that is characteristic of the First Edition of Capão Pecado.
The boy is shirtless and shoeless with his arms outstretched and a gun in his hand. His eyes are obscured by a black bar to conceal his identity as if he were a sought-after criminal. The image of this boy and his defiant bandit pose are intended to disturb those outside the periphery. Ferréz uses this image to expose the process of “descabezamiento cultural” (Moffatt 39) that aims to confuse the oppressed, depersonalize them and eventually make them accept their marginality. The residents of the marginalized sector never see themselves or their culture being valued. On the contrary, they listen to the epithets of the elite and see themselves as inferior and violent, as happens to Régis in the quote above in page 121. In order to attract the attention of the reader, Ferréz sometimes exaggerates negative aspects of the periphery. For example, he highlights the perversity in the marginal periférico and uses his characters to give it corporeality. In this sense, Ed Cohen argues that posing is a fabrication of personhood as a disposition insofar as it makes explicit that one can present oneself as a particular character (40). Ferréz creates characters that pose as monsters and reveal the hidden monstrosity.
The pose acts as a signifier in two ways: it visibly identifies someone as *marginal*, and it is reinforced and strengthened by how others respond to it. Usually the pose that the residents of the periphery make is a reaction to the suspicious look of someone from the city center. For example, Rael must pose when he goes to the center of the city to pick up his mother’s pay from her boss Halim:

Mas Halim notou algo em seu rosto, algo estranho, talvez por um momento Halim tenha visto nos olhos daquele simples menino periférico um sentimento de ódio puro e tenha sentido por algum momento que um dia o jogo iria virar (Capão 35).

*The marginal periférico*’s appearance breaks the apparent harmony of the Brazilian Community. The physical brutality (or semblance thereof) of the *marginal periférico* is related to the problem of a representation that no longer has unity. What is of particular interest here is the act of looking at the Other. The social recognition of the Other depends therefore on how he is perceived by those in power. Halim sees Rael as an outsider, a bandit, so Rael must strike the pose of a bandit. Halim’s look is the consequence of the dichotomous logic that casts the world of the Other as deviant and different. This logic stigmatizes what is different as strange, undesirable, inferior and as belonging to an enemy and a transgressor. According to Sylvia Molloy, the Latin American elite feels anxiety and fear when faced with the disturbing presence of the Other. However, the question remains as to what is the origin of the fear. Kristeva writes, “Nevertheless, does not fear hide an aggression, a violence that returns to its source, its sign having been inverted” (38). Thus, the source of the elite’s fear of the periphery lies within themselves. Indeed, the greater the visibility of the periphery, the greater the anguish is for the elite of the city center. Therefore, the boundaries between
poverty and wealth are not fixed; they intersect and shift. Nevertheless, more importantly, Ferréz is aware of the potential to change the boundaries and change the situation of the marginal. Ferréz encourages the marginais to rediscover their denied identities and use them to transform themselves.

It is important to understand the marginal periférico within the context of the control and power of the elite since the violence of the marginal is an attempt to have control over one’s own life circumstances. Violence is interlinked with the human body, which often serves as a cultural medium, as a source of metaphoric material to symbolize power relations. The bandit, by definition, is a potential exerciser of power (Hobsbawm 12) contesting the norms of the elite. The norms of the center inform certain constructions and definitions that result in the anxiety and anguish of change. For example, the elite propose the extermination of the Other in urban development. From a general and abstract framework, the issue of otherness emerges as a key point even in local and everyday contexts. Thus, the fear and anxiety that the center/elite feel in contemplating the marginal periférico can also become the reaction of the marginal himself. In this way, resentment is present on both sides of the bridge and Capão residents are identified as the source of that feeling of anguish.

Ferréz problematizes the question of the marginality and invisibility of the marginal periférico in terms of body image. It is the voice, the manners and the body that the elite find impossible to tolerate. For the, the face, e.g., reflects negative inner qualities and flaws, “Ela andava bem malandreada, é verdade, mas não se achava tão estranha assim, deviam saber pelo rosto, com certeza o seu mostrava todo o sofrimento que passou na Bahia” (Manual 57). The face functions as the medium for interpersonal communication, but the face – the presence— of the marginal periférico is frequently shown to transmit deviancy:
Durante o percurso ela se lembrava do último passeio no shopping Morumbi e dos olhares dos seguranças, que sempre estavam próximos, quando entrava já era notada, e até no banheiro tinha uma segurança a seguindo (Manual 56-57).

Despite the members of the *marginal periférico* being targets of elite society, he draws attention to themselves instead of hiding, with the aim of making this harassment known publicly and ending their alienation.

In his work, Ferréz identifies the derogatory language the elite employ to further marginalize the people of the periphery. The elite refer to the *marginal* as “porcos” [pigs] and to black people as “macaco” [monkeys], implying that they are base animals and that they belong to an evolutionary stage prior to a development of morality. The term “macaco” shows the racism to which black Brazilians are subjected by the state and, in this case, by the police:

Vamos, porra, vamos falando, por que aqui só tem preto?

Porque…porque…

Por que o quê , macaca? […]

Fala, macaca

É que todo mundo na rua é preto (Ferréz “Fabrica de Fazer Vilão” 12).

The racism behind the area’s development and current state of existence is undeniable. The residents of the periphery are further subjected to racism in the form of white standards of beauty. Ferréz is exposing the racist language that is meant to dehumanize them. Ferréz and other affiliated artists of *Literatura Marginal* such as Mano Brown condemn it in their writings. Brown writes, “São Paulo Massacra os+ pobres e aqui no extremo sul eu senti na pele o que é ser preto, pobre, filho de mãe solteira negra, que veio da Bahia com doze anos
de idea” (in Capão 24). Apparently and unfortunately, the marginal periférico does not have any other alternative but to face racism since neither Ferréz nor the other marginal writers seem to believe that it will end soon. They are denigrated as being unattractive, even repugnant to the senses. Ferréz shows this in the following exchange between a police officer and a marginal:

“Sabe o que você é?”

“Não”

“Você é lixo, olha suas roupas, olha sua cara, magro que nem preto da Etiópia” (“Fábrica de Fazer Vilão” 13)

The scene ends with the police officer turning off the lights so that he will not even see his next victim. He, the police officer, sees the marginais as bosta (waste) that he tries to eliminate. The other side of the territorial limits, the periphery, is a land of waste, the place for objects that are thrown out of the city center. The feelings of repugnance and indignation on the part of the elite lead to acts of exclusion or violence on the bodies that they consider to be mere objects (Kristeva 23). However, it is difficult for the elite to eliminate the marginal from society. These social bandits of the periphery may change and transform but their existence is permanent.

According to Lucina Marquesini Mongim, it is stressful for members of the periphery to be unable to move around other territories without receiving frightened and uncomfortable glances from members of the established society. Ferréz describes the discomfort Rael feels about the prejudice and discrimination he suffers when he is out of the periphery, “Ele (Rael) tinha nojo daqueles rostos voltados para cima…” (Capão 35). The “rostos voltados para cima” of the elite announce that they are from a different class. The elite almost never notice
nor observe the *marginal periférico*, but when they do, it is with a discriminatory look. To Rael, these are the looks of “pessoas hipocritas” (*Capão* 35). Rael even has a sense of physical repulsion after being subjected to the judgmental looks of the people of the city center. When he arrives at his home, he runs to the water tank to try to clean off the prejudiced looks:

Entregou o dinheiro para sua mãe, correu para o tanque, lavou o rosto como uma forma de desabafo, como se estivesse se lavando dos olhares daquelas pessoas hipócritas (*Capão* 35).

This scene shows the pain of trying to be acknowledged as a worthy fellow human being and being denied this acknowledgement. Furthermore, Ferréz also aims to problematize and make visible the mainstream’s lack of diversity of perception (Dalcastagnè 34).

Similarly, Ferréz uses the image of the devil to attract attention and show how the *marginal* is demonized by the elite. In Brazil, the Church is linked to high society and thus, helps develop the discourse that demonizes the residents of the periphery. Furthermore, throughout history, the Church has used the notion of sin to control the body of the Other. That is the story of Tio Chico, one of the many characters of *Capão Pecado*, who in a visit to the Church is labeled as a devil. At first, Tio Chico has a conversation with a group of “envangélicos” who want to convert him. Initially, he laughs them off, but then “posou de sério” when he sees that they are protestants. Tio Chico goes to their church, however he begins to feel uncomfortable and scared when the “pastor” begins to preach about the need to attack God’s enemy who is in the church at that moment:

Se o demônio, o sujo, o filho de belzebu, o canalha, o porco, o inescrupuloso, o traidor. O Impotente, o filisteu, o dito, o afrescalhado, o que tem chifre, o que
tem rabo, o que num tem mãe, o que queima meu povo no caldeirão quente, o que vicia, o que droga os filhos dos irmãos; essa praga tá aqui, saia! (Capão 140)

This is not a discourse of tolerance and redemption, it is a call to the congregation to attack the Other. When Tio Chico then attempts to leave, the church members grab him and take him to a room to beat the devil out of him. Tio Chico is condemned for being a devil based solely on his appearance. He is an alcoholic and his body is “destruído parcialmente pelo álcool” (Capão 139). Thus, Tio Chico’s appearance is used to justify a repressive and violent response. The scene vividly shows how physical appearance has the ability to evoke a strong emotional response.

Ferréz also highlights the need of the residents of the periphery to vary their behavior depending upon the people with whom they are interacting and the situations in which they find themselves. The author shows that character and personality are not fixed and stable attributes. The *marginal periférico* must present a different persona to others outside of the periphery, one that is different from their *marginal periférico* persona. They must be able to adopt the appropriate styles and manners of expression for the social milieu. For example, they might need to adopt a public representation that shows a certain moral quality, “Aninha sabia que estilo de bandido ninguém pode se esconder, Aninha gostava de ostentar, e um dia ia ter muito dinheiro para não olharem mais assim” (Manual 57). Aninha’s appearance questions hegemonic expectations about clothing and decisions about what to wear. According to Morgan, people’s ability to change their public selves is one of the most important social skills (5).
The marginais periféricos adopt their pose in order to make visible their lack of rights since they are treated as non-citizens. Their pose reveals a lack of the basic necessities of life and of a basic level of dignity. The pose of the marginal declares its outsider/bandit status; it declares that it is not a citizen. In that sense, the marginal periférico is posing tactically in order to interrupt social and cultural realities. Their pose and style of dress is a part of how they achieve their goals. For example, on the day of the bank robbery, Regis and his colleagues take into consideration what outfits they should wear so as not to give away their marginais periférico status, “Aninha usava um lindo vestido azul, o cabelo com duas presilhas amarelas e os brincos compridos a faziam ficar bem acima das suspeitas de todos...” (Manual 182). The struggle of the marginalized resides not only in fighting against the middle class, but, paradoxically, in also appearing to be the middle class. The marginalized use the attire and accessories associated with the bourgeois in order to climb the social ladder. The power of money is intertwined with the fiction that it leads to complete happiness and fulfillment. The characters’ task is, thus, to get it at all costs. When they are committing the crime, Aninha dresses in the clothing of the city center in order to pose as a citizen. Aninha’s pose and her dress is an aspect of herself in that she likes these clothes, however, the clothes are incompatible with her social reality. Aninha and the other marginais know that they live in a world where body image often speaks louder than words.

The next to the last pose of the marginal periférico is that of a cannibal. Kristen Guest stresses that cannibalism in literature is a call to a common humanity (3), therefore it is an act of protest against treatment as a non-citizen. The act of cannibalism draws attention to how differences are constructed by a social context. The Manual Prático do Ódio contains one scene of cannibalism:
…Modelo continuava a serrar e dessa vez tirou o braço esquerdo do corpo do Mágico, após terminar de cortar, pegou o braço e o jogou na churrasqueira…Os músculos começou a queimar, e em alguns segundo fizeram a flexão do braço, para a posição de pugilista (*Manual* 230)

Although it is not clear if Modelo and his cousins ever eat any part of the body, the passage clearly implies a possible act of cannibalism. The scene provokes a reaction in readers because it prompts a sense of horror at the act of consuming others who are like them. Even when this quote seems to reinforce the dominant ideology that the *marginais periféricos* are “savage,” its purpose is quite the opposite. The scene should be read as a radical gesture of defiance since it is usually the elite that are “consuming” and profiting from the *marginal*. As Mimi Sheller states, although the white colonists were afraid of cannibalism, it was really the colonists who were the cannibals since they “posed a threat to the bodies, health, and lives of the indigenous people of the region, and later to the enslaved and indentured workers who were consumed in the system of plantation slavery and colonial capitalism” (143). In that sense, cannibalism is a transgression of the limits of the body that have perversely shaped the identity of the resident of the periphery.

The final pose takes place after the reader has witnessed the disintegration of the body of the *marginal* and he becomes a corpse:

> Se o corpo ficasse exposto, as varejeiras chegariam nele, colocariam ovos, e duas horas depois as larvas se erguiam e virariam novas varejeiras, como o corpo foi enterrado foram as chamada moscas de caixão que ganharam o alimento. (*Manual* 231)
Dead or alive, the body of the *marginal periférico* is always repugnant, not due to any absence of cleanliness or health, but because his presence disrupts the system. Thus, his body exposes the fragility of the system. The fate of the *marginais* is sealed by the fact that they live in the periphery. They are what Komi calls “los muertos vivos que pueblan las grandes urbes” (139). Their bodies will either be consumed by drugs or alcohol, or will be shot dead by the law enforcement of the state or by another *marginal*. According to Julia Kristeva, the body that has inevitably fallen violently disrupts the identity of that which has been considered as fragile and devious (3). The act of death makes the *marginal* into an object of waste that is discarded. The objectification of the *marginal* is complete as he has been permanently eliminated. The *marginal*, who is considered as waste, is claiming his rights and exposing the fact that the actions of and lack of action on the part of the elite condemn the lives of the residents of the periphery.

3.3 The Marginal Style/Look

One does not need to be a fashion enthusiast to notice the importance of clothing and dress codes in the texts of the *marginal periférico*. Through the manipulation of clothing, the *marginal periférico* is able to undergo the transformation from an ordinary person to a fearsome and intimidating one. Their style demands the viewer’s attention and inspires both fear and admiration. At the same time, the clothing of the marginal is the apparel of both the victim and of the attacker, of the aggressor and of the oppressed. Ferréz’s descriptions of the garments of the *marginal periférico* indicate the social distance between the periphery and the center. In some ways, Ferréz is suggesting a “democratization in dress” (Aindow in
Fashion in Fiction 35) by paying attention to and highlighting his characters’ clothing. He uses the powerful performativity of clothing to help convey his messages.

![Figure 3. Pedro Cardillo. Photo published in Capão Pecado, 1st Edition. Labortexto. São Paulo, 2000](image)

This photo, taken by Pedro Cardillo also appears in the first edition of Capão Pecado, shows four men, renowned MCs and DJs from Capão Redondo. They face the camera with angry looks on their faces, giving the viewer their best bad boy look. They are wearing the oversized clothes and knit caps that are popular in the periphery. Their tough appearance is a code for “this man is not tame” (Hobsbawm Bandits 41). According to Roland Barthes, the act of dressing implies a personal mode in which the wearers adopt the dress code proposed to them by their social group.

Outfits highlight if people belong or if they are part of an enemy group. For Barthes, details in costume are essential because they allow the person to become other (Fashion n.p.). Thus, the young men of the quebradas have a distinct manner of dressing that is similar to all of them, yet each member has made slight variations to this shared style. The power of dress to threaten boundaries is emphasized by items of clothing that exemplify the duplicity
and the co-existence of camouflage and revelation, presence and absence. Style offers the powerless a potent way to communicate resistance to or alienation from the dominant social order (Peiss 4).

An interpreter should be careful, however, when attempting to decipher the meaning of the clothing and style choices of the residents of the periphery. The clothing has meaning for the wearer but it also has different meanings for the viewers. The elite created the belief that the clothes of the young favelados are dangerous “as they sought a threatening symbol to describe and encapsulate an array of behaviors and demeanors that to them made little sense” (Peiss 13). 69 In the minds of the elite, the marginais periféricos’ dress is associated with delinquency. These youths come from a disadvantaged sector that lacks basic resources. In much the same way that clothing is a means through which privileged people express their wealth and leisure (Aindow 35), Ferréz makes evident that the clothing of the marginal periférico expresses their needs and lack of basic services. Their clothes are a reminder that the social order has failed to give them equality and now must deal with their youthful energy that has not been given a productive means of expression. They exhibit their differences; and a means to announce such differences is through their clothing.

In his texts, Ferréz manipulates the characters’ clothing choices to give them symbolic meaning. For example, he uses the typical marginal clothing of the characters as a way to presage that a violent event will occur. There are careful descriptions of Burgos’s clothing and the author writes that every time Burgos dresses in big t-shirts, it is a sign that

69 Kathy Peiss has identified a similar situation with the zoot suit used by Africa-American and Mexican youth during the 1940s. The authorities decided that the suit was unpatriotic and a symbol of opposition to mainstream American values. As a result, the State regulated manufacturing, retailing and marketing of the zoot suit (Peiss 16).
he is armed and “alguma coisa tava pegando” (*Capão Pecado* 46). Ferréz also emphasizes the wearing of hooded sweatshirts and oversize jeans as symbols of the *marginal* and the racist aggression to which such garments have been subjected. Hoodies and baggy jeans are associated with minority and socially disadvantage youth. Wearing these items can make a statement and has profound effects since they have been linked to criminality. The wearers of these items risk losing their civil rights and being mistreated by the police. As Jeremy Lewis wrote, there is perhaps no more malevolent garment than the hoodie (“How the Hoodie Became a Racially Charged Garment | VICE | United States”). The first edition of *Capão Pecado* is full of images of men from the *quebrada* wearing hoodies and baggy jeans, usually black ones. There is a picture of Ferréz himself wearing such a garment and adopting the same defiant pose of the boy on the front cover. It is accompanied by a legend that reads “Me tomaram tudo, menos a rua.”

![Figure 4. Daniel Guimarães/Folha Imagem. “Me tomaram tudo, menos a rua”. Photo published in *Capão Pecado* 1st Edition. Librotexto. São Paulo, 2000.](image)

Wearing a hoodie has become an excuse for racial profiling and social stigmatization because of its association with criminal activities. The hoodie is marketed as the garment of thugs. However, for Ferréz, the hoodie is a symbol of social injustice. Like hip-hop, punk, and skate
cultures, Ferréz and his *Literatura Marginal* uncovered a common ground in the aversion society had for them. It would be wrong to see these items as symbols of poverty and rePRESSION. Rather, for Ferréz, they are a way to exalt the *marginal periférico* and take a stand against society’s prejudice and discriminatory practices. Hence, the hoodie Ferréz wears in the picture is interlaced with the culture of defiance he promotes.

The images in Ferréz’s work also make a statement by showing clothing made by the company IDASul. This company, started by Ferréz and his colleagues, makes clothes and accessories. Their objective is to overcome the influence of consecrated brands such as Nike, Reebok, Adidas, etc., and interfere with the capitalist patterns of consumption in the region. In this way, they divert the money that normally goes to the elite and keep it inside the periphery. This gives them economic power; they can give meaningful jobs to residents and use some of the profits to help other artists in the *quebrada*. The idea seems to be “to dress a change of attitude” to show support for Capão Redondo.

Additionally, Ferréz draws attention to the extreme poverty in which some of the residents live by describing clothes that are torn and ripped. Rocha states that these clothes represent the uncertainty of a population that finds itself on the margins of society with respect to the most basic human needs (31). Many who live in the *quebradas* cannot afford adequate clothing. This is the aspect of *marginal* clothing that the elite do not want to recognize; they prefer to draw attention to the sweatshirts and jeans, not the torn clothes that implicate them in the problems of these neighborhoods.

Ferréz also alludes to other physical symbols to give a complete portrayal of his characters. His bandits show off their toughness through their movements and the use of various accessories, such as guns, sticks or clubs, and motorcycles. Ferréz’s characters walk
through their territory with a swagger that conveys confidence and every text presents a huge inventory of weapons that are bought and sold by the *marginais*. Their arsenal includes weapons such as the Rossi 38 Brazilian revolver, the Bretta 92 FS Italian semi-automatic pistol, the American pistol .45 ACP, the USA Armed Forces Colt M199, the Belgian GP35 Browning and the Russian assault rifle AK-47. The characters use the weapons in order to facilitate their movement across the geographical borders of Capão Redondo. The scenes described by Ferréz are very similar not only to events which occur in the *favelas*, but also to what happens in some of the violent ghettos of the rich cities of the northern hemisphere. Therefore, many readers from Ferréz’s intended audience are familiar with the universe of consumption and of weapons used by the characters (Santos 563). The *marginais* are condemned to “dirty cosmopolitanism” (Santos 563) because of the restrictions forced upon them by the elite.

However, in Ferréz’s texts, weapons are not only symbols of manhood and virility. Additionally, they are symbols of the precariousness of the lives of the residents. Given the extreme poverty of the *favelas*, weapons are necessary for these young men to guarantee one more day of life. For example, in *Manual Prático do Ódio*, Mágico makes the deadly mistake of leaving his house without his gun. He is anxious about the planned robbery since he has not yet heard from his colleagues and goes into a bar to have a beer and distract himself. Unfortunately for him, Alemão, a *pé-de pato* (hit-man) looking for trouble, is also there:

Mágico pressentia que o homem só queria arrumar um motive para fazer uma merda qualquer, Codorninha havia se afastado, e pediu para Mágico se afastar também, só que daquela situação não havia saída […] e Mágico só lamentava não estar armado (*Manual* 174)
To carry a weapon is a badge of readiness to act for the *marginal periférico*. As in the classic bandit stories, the bandits of the *periférico* are young people who will eventually be killed by a violent act. On this matter, Judith Butler states that people’s identities are partially constituted by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies (Butler, *Precarious Life* 20).

Similarly, the character of Rael dies a violent death. Although Rael uses a gun to be in control momentarily, he is ultimately powerless to control his life situation. When Rael’s wife Paula leaves him for his boss Seu Oscar and takes their son with her, Rael uses a gun to exact revenge:

> Burgos lhe explicara tudo […] Burgos estava do outro lado, Rael ia fazer por vingança, pela honra […] Rael adentrou a metalúrgica e Seu Oscar suou frio quando o viu com uma calibre 12 nas mãos […] Rael encostou a arma em sua cabeça e lembrou de Ramon […] Rael balançou a cabeça afirmativamente, Burgos saiu. Rael se esqueceu de Deus, de sua mãe e das coisas boas da vida, apertou o gatilho… (*Capão* 165)

When his wife leaves, Rael loses everything of which he had ever dreamt: his wife, his home, his son, his family. In losing his family, he loses his chance of being a citizen and of ever being accepted by mainstream society, since family is the basic unit on which the social, economic and political system is based. Family and state institutions are very similar, though they act in different spheres. Individuals have a place and an identity in relation to their family and to their state that involve certain rights and duties. At birth, a person acquires this identity, which is very hard to ever change. For the elite, their identity is a source of pride, however, for the *marginal*, their identity can be a source of discontent and shame. Thus, although Rael obviously commits this crime as an act of revenge and to reclaim his dignity, it
could also be argued that the murder is a result of Rael’s general frustration with his life as a marginal. Rael’s story of revenge is really a story of conflict between the oppressed and the privileged.

Aside from weaponry, Ferréz also uses the motorcycle as a symbol. The possession of a motorcycle suggests the possibility of easy movement, not just of physical movement but also that of social ascension. According to Luciana Araujo Marques, the motorcycle is one of the accouterments of the warrior. The motorcycle creates an image of a man patrolling and controlling his territory. Under one of the photographs in Capão Pecado, there is a caption that reads “empinando o cavalo.” This image depicts the marginais as men who tame wild animals, a metaphor for the marginais controlling the elite. However, just as the gun ultimately cannot give any real power, neither can the motorcycle. The motorcycle can take them temporarily out of the periphery; but they must eventually return to their territory and their outsider identity.

Since the usual clothing worn in the quebradas can lead to negative perceptions from those in the city center, Ferréz’s characters sometimes use other clothing to escape the labeling. Some of the characters wear more mainstream clothing when they go to the city center in an attempt to improve their social position and obtain a job. For example, as mentioned previously, Aninha dresses in more conventional clothing on the day of the robbery in order to pass as a member of the elite. The character of José Antônio also uses mainstream clothing for a specific end. He is, however, not doing so for the eyes of the elite. He eschews his regular bandit style clothing in order to impress family of a girl he likes, “José Antônio também tinha suas qualidades, lembrou a primeira vez que o tinha visto, de jeans e camisa branca, bota de couro e sempre com a carteira a mão…” (Manual 238) He
uses a white shirt, jeans and leather boots along with a wallet in hand that shows he is ready to pay for his date. These clothes are meant to lend him an air of respectability and morality. Although Aninha and José Antônio may benefit from these changes in appearance, they are not allowed to permanently enter the world of the elite. Additionally, although these clothes may sometimes fool the elite, the other residents of the periphery notice immediately if one of their own is not wearing one of the approved outfits for the quebrada. An attempt to dress in the stylish apparel of a *playboy* can even be perceived as an act of treason against the community and as a threat to the social order.

Although adopting the entire look of a *playboy* may be viewed suspiciously, it is quite common for *marginais* to wear one or two particular mainstream items as a symbol of success. Ferréz’s texts feature the lives of men who are very conscious of fashion. For example, these men are willing to kill and risk death just to get the latest style of brand-name shoes. For these characters, buying a fashionable pair of shoes is a step upward in the struggle to overcome poverty and marginalization, since having access to brands such as Nike and Adidas is a statement that they are equal to the elite; their level of success is related to owning expensive shoes. To own these shoes is to have a part of the happy world of the middle class. For many of the *marginais periféricos*, the struggle is not to fight against the bourgeoisie but rather to look like them and climb the social ladder. Frances Negrón-Muntaner argues that in many cultures shoes denote social class. Negrón-Muntaner explains that this is because shoes literally lift one off the ground and separate one’s foot from the dirt and scum (“Celia’s Shoes” 101-103). However, since most of the *marginais* live in torn shoes and clothes, some objects, like a pair of sport shoes, can foster resentment. For many, seeing these items is just a reminder of how much they lack.
The characters of Celso Capeta and Modelo show this desire to obtain clothing and expensive possessions that are symbolic of success. At one point in the novel, Celso obtains a classy new wardrobe that suggests the beginning of a new life, “Celso Capeta gastava muito, e não se contentou em comprar vários tênis caríssimos, comprou uma moto que ninguém havia visto igual na quebrada...” (Manual 235). The character of Modelo is also very interested in his looks and presentation. Ferréz describes him as a vain young man who likes to show off for the neighborhood children, “O tênis é notado pelo menino que brinca de bolinha, queria ter um, o espelho é Modelo” (Manual 30). However, since both of them are marginais, any change in their lives brought about by their belongings is actually superficial and their lives are still precarious since they will always be marginais. The character of Neguninho is a vivid representation of this inability to escape the periphery. When Neguninho wears the “uniform” of the elite, he feels physically uncomfortable:

Era a primeira vez que Neguninho da Mancha na Mão passaria por aquela situação...a camisa social dava a sensação de sufoco, os sapatos de bico fino estavam esmagando seus dedos, e a calça social que pegou emprestada com Régis realmente parecia feita para outro corpo. (Manual 130)

Ferréz refers to Neguninho’s physical discomfort to concretize the great differences, financially and socially, between the haves and the have-nots of Brazil. Although men like Neguninho can present themselves with the clothes and style of a playboy, ultimately, it is as if they are wearing a costume that must eventually come off.
3.4 The Secret Code of the Marginal – “favelês”

The use of a specialized language that is unique to the periphery also provides a sense of belonging and identity. According to Marco Antônio Rosa Machado, the style and linguistic register of language help in identity formation (195). Numerous times Ferréz shows his awareness of linguistic codes by adapting the speech of the characters as a function of their environment. In an interview with Ingrid Hapke Ferréz expressed his intention to create characters that speak “favelês” like Jorge Amado once did with his characters that speak “baianês” (154). By choosing to use the language of the marginal, the language becomes an instrument of separation and a means for identity reaffirmation. Likewise, Ferréz is conscious of the fact that his characters’ language should vary depending upon their specific history and place of origin. Ferréz’s attitude towards his readers, both those inside and outside of the favelas, influences his writing style. In an interview published in the journal Folha de São Paulo, Ferréz states that one of his objectives is for the maloqueiro to read his books and not encounter any complicated words (“Com as próprias mãos”, n.p.). His primary audience is the favela resident. He believes that if anyone is going to have difficulty reading his texts, it should be someone from the city center who does not understand the gueto slang. In doing this, Ferréz is employing two similar tactics of linguistic accommodation as delineated by Howard Giles. In the first place, Ferréz uses linguistic convergence by adopting a less elaborate language that is closer to the everyday language of the marginal. Secondly, Ferréz uses linguistic divergence by using language that indicates that the text could not have been written by someone who belongs outside of the quebrada. In this manner, the voice of the narrator is able to transmit the emotional cost of his rough life and the brutality of his life.

70 “Maloqueiro” is another word used to refer to a resident of the favela/quebrada.
situation (Candido, *A educação pela noite* 211). This is in opposition to an earlier tendency that uses the third person, preventing the identification of the narrator with the character and creating a social distance between them (*A educação pela noite* 212).

Many of the words Ferréz uses are completely foreign to standardized Portuguese speakers. Due to this, his texts may appear to those who do not live in the *favelas* as having been written in a secret code that is almost impossible to decode if one lives “fora do tema”. As Machado points out, the language used in Ferréz’s texts represent the exact speech of the young residents of the periphery in their daily life (201). Like the following conversation between Tuburão and Pantera contains many *giria* words:

Aí, Tuburão, tudo bem?
Tudo bem, Pantera, você viu algum cabeça branca?
Negativo, Tuburão, mas o Paulão ligou e disse que na João Dias tem cavalo de aço.
Tá tudo pintimbado na ponte do chocolate, os cabecinha branca tão tudo pra lá, copia?
Copiei, num vou mais pra lá hoje, pois perdi a boa, QSL.
Bons bonecos pra você, QSL (*Manual* 48-49). 71

By using the *giria* of the *quebrada*, Ferréz places the periphery residents in a specific social position by identifying them with a group and, as a consequence, he distances them from

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71 *Bonecos* is a slang term used in the state of Ceará to refer to an out-of-control spree.
their opposite, the *playboys* (Machado 201). Many of the *marginal* slang words in the above conversation are related to the defense of territory. The *parceiros* are watching out for each other’s safety. The character of Tuburão, whose nickname curiously means someone dangerous or someone who cannot be trusted, needs information about the military police’s location (the *cabeça branca*). Pantera informs him that there is a police roadblock (*cavalo de aço*) on the bridge so the situation is not safe (*pintimbado*). When using the slang of the periphery in his writings, Ferréz gives voice to the excluded of Brazil and proclaims their right to speak. His narratives are replete with the colloquial language that is representative of the real world of the *favela*. Further, other scholars have pointed out that Ferréz’s inventive use of the colloquial language of the illiterate, the “errors” and the slang, has the additional benefit of giving his writing dynamism and a fast and intense narrative pace.

The practice of giving nicknames is very important in the *quebradas*. Nicknames can represent information, experiences and feelings. They give additional meaning to one’s identity. In general, the nicknaming system serves three main purposes: (1) The nicknames are used to identify who is a member of a particular group and sometimes give an indication of status within the group; (2) They are used to identify groups who have some kind of privileged position, e.g., *playboys*, *mauricinhos* and *patricinhas*; (3) They are used to give someone a pejorative name or “slot” this person (Morgan 46-47).

In the periphery, every nickname has a unique story. Sometimes they are based on remarkable life events or a peculiar personality or physical feature. In *Capão Pecado*, Ferréz uses the character of Capachão to tell the origin stories of some of these names. One night,

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The reference to playboys and the use of its linguistic variations indicates the social conflict to which are succumbed the residents of the *quebrada*, including Ferréz, that force them to seek an identity linguistically marked.
When Capachão is not able to sleep, he lies in bed and remembers his *manos* and their *apelidos*:

Capachão acordou lá pelas três da manhã [...] lembrava dos amigos, aqueles que estavam todo o tempo com ele, nos momentos mais difíceis: Cebola, Alaor, Narigaz, Amaral, Rael, Panetone [...] Entre aquelas brincadeiras surgiram os apelidos, O Cebola tinha um corte de cabelo igual ao de um frei, seu cabelo era todo redondinho. Panetone era magro e tinha o cabelo encaracolado e sua cor se parecia como o papel que embrulha o panetone. Amaral, apesar de ser paulista, tinha um jeitão bem nordestino, tinha o olho um pouco torto e a comparação com o jogador [...] não demorou a lhe render o apelido. (Capão 136)

Another example is Celso Capeta whose nickname is about his deviant behavior; he earned his nickname “Capeta” (devil) because his thoughts were “100 por cento concentrado em maldade” (Manual 16). There is also Lúcio Fé who is nicknamed “fé”. Nickname of Lúcio Fé contains a double and sarcastically ambiguity by alluding to the Christian origin of the name but also it sounds like Lucifer, the king of darkness. This name is appropriate because, although he goes to church on Sundays, he is also a coldblooded killer. He is the fallen angel, “frequentava a igreja todos os domingos, tinha muita fé, seu apelido fora posto ainda pequeno e no latrocínio só dava ele” (Manual 27). There are also characters whose nicknames refer to physical traits. There is Neguinho da Mancha Na Mão who has a mole on his hand and Panetone whose haircut resembles the wrapping of a Panetone cake. Nicknames

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73 The reference here is to Alexandre da Silva Mariano, best known as Amaral, a retired defensive midfield Brazilian soccer player.
not only give the reader an idea of the characters’ personalities and physical appearance, they emphasize their group membership.

Additionally, Ferréz uses the voice of a narrator with fluency in the two codes to act in the position of narrator. In the interview with Hapke, Ferréz highlights that most of the time “o narrador é culto, tem que ser culto, mas a personagem, não, fala cru” (154). However, As Machado has stressed, the narrator also positions himself on the side of the *marginal periférico* (Machado 201). Because of this, in both novels, the narrators never use words such as “bandit,” “criminal” or “assassin,” but rather when talking about the *marginal* refers to them as “mano,” “truta,” or “parceiro.” All three words indicate that the narrator is their equal as the three words means brother or bro. Additionally, other words that may suggest that the *marginal* is linked to crimes or is a criminal are avoided by the narrators (Machado 202). Instead of using “roubo,” the narrator will refer to the act as “corridas.” The same occurs when he is describing a scene that involves the uses of drugs. The narrator never talks about cocaine or crack but in its place uses words like “pó” or “farinha” for cocaine, and “pedra” for crack. By using these words, the narrator does not approve or agree with the action of the *marginal*, but confirms that he is a member of that community and understands their actions, thus creating a “pacto referencial”.

3.5 The Image Represented

Ferréz’s first texts use many images to show the inequalities of life in Brazil and to document the segregated space of the *quebradas*. As mentioned previously, Capão Redondo is not a city that belongs on a postcard. It is the city of poverty, a maze of streets and alleys, full of structurally unsound buildings. Ferréz’s photographs not only denounce the indignity of the housing situation, they rebel against the image of the legal São Paulo (Neves 9). To
see the periphery and to be seen in it is, basically, a criminal act. The photographs in the first edition of *Capão Pecado* express what he is not able to express with words. He uses them to communicate multiple ideas. On one level, they criticize the urbanized city and the process of urbanization which led to the existence of the *favelas*. On another level, they have narrative value. The first edition of *Capão Pecado* is full of photographs that complement the written story. Ferréz’s writing blends perfectly with the photos. The images resemble the narrative, not necessarily the reality of the periphery as it is normally viewed. Flora Sussekind argues that the function of photography is to give an immediate visibility and recognition (6). The photos do not interrupt the story but oblige the reader to engage at a deeper level with the text. Photography, however, besides its function to support the story, also helps to keep alive the image of the *marginal periférico* despite the efforts of the elite to eradicate them. Ferréz uses photography in his work to enable everyone to see his bandits. The images serve a dual purpose: they help the readers of the periphery relate more easily to the text and they confront the elite with images of life in the periphery.

Although his texts are written for the people who live in the periphery, Ferréz also desires to increase the visibility of the *marginal* by having the mainstream market read his work. This is apparent in his message to mainstream readers in *Capão Pecado*, “Querido sistema” você pode até não ler, mas tudo bem, pelo menos viu a capa” (*Capão* 19). Ferréz knows that many will pick up his book and then choose not to read it, so he still claims a small victory in the fact that they have at least seen the cover. The cover photo, as described earlier, is a disturbing image of a young boy armed with a gun. In his staging of this photo,

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74 There are a total of thirty-three photos in the narrative.
Ferréz seems to propose that *Capão Pecado* could be the story of any child, particularly a boy, trying to survive in Capão Redondo. The covering of the boy’s eyes gives the child a dimension of universality; he could be any young victim of injustice. His posture carries multiple possible interpretations. His wide-open arms seem to dare the viewer and to promise confrontation and revenge. His chin is lifted in a confident manner that seems to say “I can handle this and more.” However, the posture also resembles the crucifixion and the boy can be perceived as a young victim of oppression. Interestingly, the boy’s entire body is colored red. According to Oliveira and Pellizzaro, this red represents the start of a new life that is without horizons, but that is dangerous and doomed to an early death (24). The boy is behaving as an adult, but ironically may never reach the adulthood. The image runs counter to the usual one of the periphery and challenges the Brazilian imaginary. Rossana Reguillo-Cruz states that representations of the poor in the city are normally associated with inutility, ignorance and weakness (60). The elite associate the *marginal periférico* with three activities: drinking all day, being a *vagabundo* 75, and stealing. However, in contrast, this image vividly shows the human cost and loss of innocence that are the result of excluding people and pushing them to the margins.

Ferréz understands the importance of all types of images in contemporary Brazilian society. He realizes that the symbolic construction of the peripheral resident is created via many types of media. In the preface to *Capão Pecado*, Ferréz claims that Brazilians are too focused on watching TV, when they should be focused on the living conditions of the *favelas*, “Toda nação está olhando para uma janela electronica […] ninguém vê é a porta que

75 “*Vagabundo*” is a derogatory term for someone who does not work.
fica ao lado, que está trancada…” Capão 18). For Ferréz, TV acts as a door or a window, a transition point that marks the desertion of one space and the entrance to another. It is (literally and figuratively) a screen that allows the viewer to look away from reality and pay attention, instead, to more pleasant, acceptable images. Ferréz accuses the elite of not wanting to go through the door that conceals the periphery. He also condemns the consumption of representations of the periphery that only reinforce stereotypes and the exclusion of the poor. 76

Ferréz also addresses the powerful influence television has on the lives of the marginal. Television presents many dreams, however, for the poor these dreams will never come true. In Capão Pecado, as well as in Manual Prático do Ódio, both narrators list all of the programs that let them dream of a better life: 77

Mas o que mais agradava era que o seu temor não tinha se cumprido, os seriados e desenhos ainda eram os mesmos; e, por incrível que pareça, até os horários haviam sido mantidos, e em sua pequena televisão preto e branco se via numa realidade melhor. (Capão 26)

This symbolic gap between the dream and reality leads to daily frustration since the lifestyles shown and the products advertised are outside of the financial reach of the marginal. Ferréz’s characters watch many American programs such as the Miami Vice TV series (1984 – 1990). Miami Vice was very popular in the favelas and it created a desire to imitate the actors’

76 In the first chapter, the discontent generated by the success of City of God, the movie, among the residents of the periphery was discussed.

colorful and stylish designer clothing. This style of clothing has no utilitarian purpose, but rather an ornamental one that helps the marginais assert their visibility. As R.L. Rutsky explains, the setting of *Miami Vice* is a fallen world, a place where style and fashion merge with the circulation of vice (79), similar to what is described in Ferréz’s books. However, Ferréz, by making reference to *Miami Vice*, presents how dangerous a game it can be to dream about a wardrobe, fancy cars and a house, and to be taken in by false appearances.

All of the images that Ferréz creates and that he references make up part of the bandit image of the marginal. The bandits have neither been displaced nor erased from the collective memory. That is why their presence is familiar. This recalls the Freudian concept of “the uncanny.” Freud proposes that the objects people find the most terrifying appear that way because they once seemed familiar (Freud 157). Although the marginal “arouses dread and creeping horror” (Freud *The Uncanny* 1) for the elite, and “ought to have remained hidden and secret,” (Freud *The Uncanny* 4) Ferréz will make sure his image is seen. Since the bandit has never died in the imaginary, the marginais periféricos are the “residuos salvajes” that constantly reoccur and will never disappear.
4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the characters in Ferréz’s first two novels behave as poseurs, using their bodies to express their otherness. They assert their identity in defiance of the repression of the cultural elite that subordinates them economically as well as culturally, and denies their existence. Ferréz’s work shows the ways in which the powerful influence of the hegemonic culture invades the bodily manifestations of the marginal periférico. Additionally, Ferréz’s work explores the performative techniques used by the marginal to overcome this control.

The dominant culture enforces its rules about identity and gender performance in order to categorize and condemn Others who do not live exactly according to these standards of normality. The performance of the marginal periférico can be analyzed in terms of its deviance from behavioral rules that have been established by those in power in Brazil’s city centers. Judith Butler notes that “[t]he rules govern intelligible identity, i.e., that enable and restrict the intelligible assertion of an ‘I,’ rules that are partially structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, operate through repetition” (Butler, Gender 185; emphasis in original). In the case of performance of marginality, the repetition of well-established behaviors highlights the artificiality of rules imposed by the hegemonic culture to which Butler refers (Butler, Gender 187). Ferréz’s texts create a dialogue with hegemonic references between the marginal and the elite. As Luciana Paiva Coronel has highlighted, this is a dialogue with didactic intentionality (33).
In contemporary urban cases, banditry and marginality must be understood in light of today’s world of consumerism. Brazilian new middle class is actively and perversely participating in the hegemonic system under the ideas of consumerism and purchasing power. This chapter pays special attention to the character of Calixto, the protagonist of the novel Deus Foi Almoçar (2012), as a representation of another form of marginality. This other version of banditry/marginality is that of the “new Brazilian middle class,” or the remediado. According to the online dictionary Priberam, a remediado is someone who holds an in-between position in Brazilian society since (s)he is neither rich nor poor; (s)he has an average and modest financial situation with enough money to meet his/her needs. As point out by Coronel, already in Manual Prático do Ódio and in Ninguém é Inocente em São Paulo, Ferréz delivers the points of view of several characters that differ from those of a typical quebrada resident. For example, Mágico, a secondary character in Manual Prático do Ódio, who does not live in the quebrada and “que por viver na classe média mantinha constante contato com quem detinha realmente uma parte da riqueza nacional” (Manual 14). However, it is not until the publication in 2012 of Ferréz’s novel Deus Foi Almoçar that this other type of marginality has a principal role.

Deus Foi Almoçar is the story of Calixto, a character who, similar to his counterparts Rael (Capão Pecado) and Regis (Manual Prático de Ódio), struggles to survive in the chaotic world of São Paulo. Through the figure of Calixto, Ferréz brings to light a sector of society that has emerged over the last ten years: the remediado or new middle class. The remediado is in a unique social position; although he has managed to achieve some social mobility, he still belongs to an urban underclass. As a consequence, the character is victim of a “double marginalization” since he experiences social alienation from both rich and poor
and is considered an outsider in both spatial—periphery and center—and social contexts. In fact, his position shows just how powerless the periphery residents are. Despite great effort and achievement, the success of the *remediado* is relative. He remains in a powerless social and economic position and will never be a member of the decision-making elite.

Eric Hobsbawm explains how some bandits move between their underprivileged communities and the world of the elites. According to Hobsbawm, this movement makes ambiguity an important element in the position of the social bandit. On the one hand, the bandit “establishes his freedom by means of the only resources within reach of the poor, strength, bravery, cunning and determination”. As a consequence, the bandit shares characteristics with the poor population, “he is one of them” (*Bandits* 95). However, on the other hand, Hobsbawm points out that:

> At the same time the bandit is, inevitably, drawn into the web of wealth and power, because, unlike other peasants, he acquires wealth and exerts power. He is ‘one of us’ who is constantly in the process of becoming associated with ‘them.’ The more successful he is as a bandit, the more he is both a representative and champion of the poor and a part of the system of the rich. (*Bandits* 95-96)

This description fits the situation of Calixto since he will never be fully integrated into one community. As a bandit-*remediado*, Calixto will forever remain on the borders of systems—“neighborhood systems, power systems, ethical systems and class systems” (Halperin 51).

Likewise, Homi Bhabha’s thought on the articulation of cultural differences is applicable to the situation of the *remediado*. Bhabha uses the image of staircases to delineate the liminal path between territories. In Bhabha’s terminology, Calixto is perpetually
situated/located on the stair steps that separate the *quebrada* from the city center. In Bhabha words:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designation of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower,[…]. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. (*Location 4*)

Calixto is limited to this in-between and, thus, is a vivid example of the limitations of the discourse about social ascension. In the novel, Calixto is never situated in any particular geographical setting until the middle of the story. This is of particular significance since Ferréz’s work usually includes a large number of spatial references. By not fixing Calixto’s position physically, Ferréz emphasizes Calixto’s emotional position of living in yet another type of marginality, between the periphery and the center. Calixto’s life is precarious; although it is very easy for him to descend the staircase and re-enter the lowest social level, it is next to impossible for him to get off of the stairs at the top and join the elite.

Furthermore, because of Calixto’s in-between position in society, Ferréz uses the character as a liaison to other marginal characters, such as the transvestite. Transvestism has often been used in literature as a cultural metaphor since it can articulate the intersection of diverse interests. The lives of transvestites parallel in many ways that of Calixto as they both must decide to what degree they should be like the Other. As Sara Muñoz stresses, transvestism plays an important role in the search for identity (72). However, unlike Calixto, transvestites are more consciously aware of their choices concerning identity.
Both remediados and transvestites have marginal identities that are intertwined with another marginal identity. In the case of remediados, the marginal identity was acquired at birth as poor quebrada residents. For transvestites, it is the women they aspire to be in a male-dominated Brazilian society. In that sense, Calixto’s act of crossing social boundaries and the transvestites’ act of crossing gender boundaries prevent both of them from being attached to a specific identity, since they can choose to act out one identity or the other, or even both at the same time. The transvestite characters in Deus foi Almoçar also carry additional meaning since they work as prostitutes. They represent the way Brazilian society in general treats certain people as commodities and does not value them as citizens.

Like in Ferréz’s previous books, the locus in Deus foi Almoçar is the periphery. This location can be understood as both a geographical space and as a part of the identity of the marginal. The marginais have to build up survival strategies and try to make sense of their existence within the context of the specific rules and culture of the quebradas. Furthermore, Calixto’s in-between state is not only represented in terms of social ascension, but also in terms of space and time. In this way, Ferréz shows again Capão Redondo as a universe apart from the city center of São Paulo.

4.2 Calixto: Life as a Remediado or the Problem of Having to Fit In

The middle-class figure of the remediado is not new to Brazilian Literature or to the Brazilian imaginary. Writers such as Machado de Assis (1839-1908) and Lima Barreto (1881-1922) have included him in their works. The character of the remediado has been used to expose the political and social changes happening as a consequence of a new type of government. Before the publication of Deus foi Almoçar, the figure had never been part of
literature about marginality or banditry. However, the sociopolitical circumstances in which the *remediado* emerges in *Deus foi Almoçar* are not significantly different from those of the *remediados* of the end of the 19th and early 20th century. In general, the representation of the *remediado* marks a period when the population in the middle of the social stratum begins to have more political, social and cultural participation. Therefore, the *remediado* figure helps to highlight an atmosphere of hope for progress and integration into modern life (Melo 11).

Lula’s 2000 presidential campaign created high expectations for improving social equality and for poverty reduction in Brazil. As the narrator says when Calixto thinks about his past, “ai começa tudo de novo, a socialização, a batalha por um lar” (DFA 149). The mere existence of the extreme poverty of the *favelas* was an indicator that there was a great need for change. The dreams of the poor and disenfranchised became a part of the imaginary of Brazil. The social programs created by Brazil’s Workers’ Party (PT) during Lula’s presidency were effective and by the time *Deus foi Almoçar* was published, millions of Brazilian had emerged from poverty to join the middle class. The economic boom that started in 2003 created a new middle-class, also known as *Classe C*; over the past decade, the members of *Classe C* have been able to adopt a better lifestyle, partly due to having access to reasonable loan rates.

Because of this purchasing power, this Class C is sometimes mistakenly thought of as having the economic stability of the members of Brazil’s Class B or of members of the middle class in the United States. Although the members of Class C have more than those of Classes D and E, they still lead precarious lives that can change quickly with a little misfortune. In this sense, the life of Calixto is more difficult than those of the *remediados* of previous eras. The narrator gives several hints that guide the reader to discover Calixto’s true
social position. In the first pages of the novel, his job as a filing clerk is criticized because he has to “arquivar sem pensar, catalogar sem decidir” (DFA 13), and he ends his workday feeling drained and exhausted. His job as an arquivista is not very well remunerated, however, it is good enough to allow him to enter Class C, “Calixto não arriscaria sua vida de classe média” (DFA 13). Calixto, similar to his counterpart Rael, thinks of himself as different from other poor quebrada residents with which he grows up, “enquanto muitos experimentavam o cigarro e depois viciavam, eu estudava cada vez mais, ...” (DFA 138). His love for his studies makes him believe that one day he will have the opportunity to have a better life, and, indeed, he achieves this goal. He manages to purchase a television, a videocassette player, a car, a radio, and a refrigerator that together with having a banheiro in the barraco add up to the fifteen points that according to the Brazilian Association Research Institute (ABEP for its abbreviation in Portuguese) classifies someone as “Classe C2.” However, Calixto struggles to maintain the lifestyle of the new middle-class. His salary is spent as it is earned and he has no economic safety net, “o salário não dava para tudo isso” (DFA 99). Classifying the members of Class C as “the new middle class” is a fallacy in the sense that its members often find more stress than happiness with their new social status and are closer to falling back into Class D than to ever moving up to Class B.

Furthermore, many of the marginais periféricos who move into Class C have to suppress their past cultural identity in order to succeed. However, they do not have a strong sense of identity as remediados and end up living in an ambivalent and confused state. The process of adaptation to a new lifestyle does not happen right away. For example, Calixto still does the house chores “à moda primitiva” (DFA 13). It is impossible for the marginal to
escape a life full of struggle. Calixto no longer belongs to the world of his birth and youth, but neither does he belong to the world of the upper classes.

Ferréz’s *remediados* show how difficult it can be to move into a more privileged position. The *remediados* have been labeled as *intermediários* (intermediary), located between the poor and the wealthy. The name seems to legitimize their status and the social order, yet in reality their status is ambiguous. This “in-between” class does not alter the social system in any meaningful way; it does not change or challenge the power and control of a small elite. This condition of “in-betweenness” makes the situation of the *remediados* closer to that of the *marginais*. As a *remediado*, Calixto is in an indefinite state, as he is neither middle-class, in the sense of bourgeois, nor poor. Calixto is very conscious of his in-between position:

Tô no meio do meio.

Meio do meio?

Meio do meio do resto da vida (DFA 79).

He is caught in between two worlds. He does not hold a clearly-defined position within the social system and feels he is without identity or influence, marginalized and excluded. In more general terms, the classification of *remediado* marks the border at which a passage can be made from one space to another but that can never be a part of either space (Lang n.p.). Calixto is living in a social limbo where, as a former poor man, he gravitates around the social order supported in the center-periphery binomial. Ferréz creates the character of Calixto to condemn hegemonic thought. The novel shows that despite the *remediado’s* economic advantages over other characters, a restful life is still not guaranteed.
Similarly to Ferréz’s other protagonists Regis, Aninha and Rael, Calixto is lost in a universe of dreams, visions, and mental turmoil. Additionally, like these other characters, Calixto repeatedly speaks about his desire to leave the city. Most of the literary critics who write about Ferréz’s work, such as Lucía Tennina, believe that Calixto’s urge to leave is motivated by his depression, “Talvez estivesse cansado dessa vida, talvez descesse: era isso. [...] Motorista, pare a vida que eu quero descer do mundo” (DFA 19). In the process of becoming a part of the new middle-class, Calixto identity becomes displaced and fragmented, “...olhava para o forro da casa e sabia que não estava mais entendendo nada sobre a realidade. Estava confuso, quanto vestígios, talvez um velho filme, talvez retalhos de lembranças” (DFA 77). Since he has experienced so many life changes, Calixto has trouble staying rooted in reality.

Besides suffering from a troubled mental state, Calixto also suffers the negative effects of mimicking the behavior of the elite. In his essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” Homi Bhabha defines mimicry as “the representation of the difference that is itself a process of disavowal” (Location 86), where a person imitates those in power, hoping to have access to that same power. While the process of mimicry is voluntary, it is arguable that if Calixto wishes to improve his life economically, then mimicry is a necessary part of becoming middle class and, in that sense, it is not optional and is forced upon him. The subordinated person always looks at the one in power to be the role model. According to Bhabha, mimicry is constructed in a state of ambivalence (Location 86). Calixto’s condition of “new middle class” is constructed around an incongruity where he is the “reformed, recognizable Other, a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha Location 86). Calixto cannot maintain both his new identity and his identity
of origin and, thus, pays an emotional price for restraining his authentic identity, that of being from the periphery.

Calixto’s process of becoming a part of the middle class is similar to the process described by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his book *The Rites of Passages*. According to van Gennep, rites of passage mark the movement of people from one social position to another. Van Gennep distinguishes three phases of this progress: separation, transition, and incorporation (10-11). In the first stage, people must separate themselves from those who were a part of their former social condition. In the case of Calixto, he loses his wife and daughter and isolates himself from his neighbors, friends and family. In the second transitional stage, people must make their old identity invisible in order to construct a new identity, as it is evident in Calixto’s thoughts:

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acho que aos poucos, com o passar dos dias, anos, séculos, vamos nos tornando rascunhos do que éramos, como se tivesse uma imensa borracha nos apagando aos pouco, sei que não vou chegar a nenhum lugar, vou continuar caindo. (DFA 189)
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At the time of the events narrated in the novel, Calixto appears to be stuck in this transitional in-between stage. Like the staircases depicted by Bhabha, Calixto’s transition is a period of uncertainty, a liminal period that is also a life-crisis (Lang n.p). Calixto’s crisis is not only a psychological one, it is also a time of social insecurity, “Calixto sabia que seu trabalho estava no limite do suportável, que sua vida não seria aquela por muito tempo” (DFA 164). As a *remediado*, Calixto exists in between two clearly defined social positions, but unlike those who belong to these two positions —those in the periphery and those in the center—, he does not foresee an end to his ambiguity. One of the consequences of this stage is that Calixto
finds himself without parameters by which to judge himself. According to Victor Turner, those who live in poverty are not the only people who live a marginal existence, also those who are “simultaneously members (by ascription, potation, self-definition, or achievement) of two or more groups whose social definitions and cultural norms are distinct from, and often even opposed to, one another” (233). In this sense, it is impossible for the residents of the *favelas* to ever escape their marginal existence and liminality in Brazilian society, which is “institutionalized and preordained” (Turner 248). This idea of inescapability reinforces the proposal of Janice Perlman that the *favelado* is perversely integrated into the system.

Even when Calixto has managed to obtain most of the things his *parceiros* Rael, Regis and the others yearn for—a steady job and the luxury of buying what he desires—he is not comfortable with his achievements. He continually has his setbacks: “Saiu, caminhou apressadamente pela multidão, até que alguém pôs um pé na frente, ele tropeçou e caiu...” (DFA56). His life has only changed from the perspective of consumption: “Foram à loja de brinquedos, andaram pelos corredores, vendo os pedaços de plástico para os adultos e as maravilhas coloridas para as crianças, vendo os preços para os adultos, e o que era mágico para as crianças”(DFA 15); and he stands out in a negative way due to his differences: “…os funcionários da central já deviam ter avisado Hamilton que Calixto era esquisito, senão insuportável de conviver...” (DFA 117). Homi Bhabha states that the process of becoming powerful makes people different from their own group and community; and thus, they become excluded and belong to neither their own people nor to the powerful. Calixto needs to negotiate his way through boundaries without, however, being completely incorporated on either side.
In order for Calixto to be completely incorporated into the Brazilian middle class, he must be successful, happy and submissive. In *Deus foi Almoçar*, Ferréz shows how this submissive attitude keeps the elite in power and how the elite use the discourse of self-help to “sell” this compliant attitude to the new middle class. Self-help phrases such as, “Como se entupir de dinheiro” or “Como obter visto para morar na cidade Bispo Valdomiro” (*DFA* 104) imperceptibly manifest to Calixto as a signal to overcome the depression and stress that arise from trying to survive in the city center. The use of self-help practices supposedly results in responsible citizenship. In reality, however, such practices have less to do with the benefits of individual autonomy and are rooted in the elite’s manipulative strategies. The middle class follows the self-help dictates in an attempt to achieve the promised rewards of family, friends, a good job and a happy life (Rimke 63). Success, happiness and submissiveness keep the middle class focused on consumerism and do not challenge the current power structure. Calixto’s life is structured around making the necessary middle-class purchases:

Quanto tempo tinha sido prisioneiro já não sabia mais, pagar apartamento, condomínio, IPVA, seguro, mensalidade da escolar […] janeiro é época de comprar material, julho é férias, dezembro Natal, compromissos, compras, compar compromissmos (*DFA* 18).

Through Calixto Ferréz criticizes consumerism as the main cause of the misery of the urban poor. According to Heidi Marie Rimke, reading self-help literature implies a self-
modification or improvement individually (62). However, in this supposed act of individuality, the subject relies in the expertise of a hegemonic Other, an external authority.

Additionally, the self-help philosophy lays out the rules for the behavior of a good citizen, as the narrator in Deus foi Almoçar says, “A máquina de fazer o bom cidadão foi ligada” (DFA 147). Self-help philosophy attempts to tell people what they need to do in order to be successful citizens and, hence, how to prevent become a bandit; any failure is their own fault. Within the self-help ideology, there is no space to complain or to be depressed. Self-help also tells the individual that complaining about oppressing power is childish (Rimke 64) since doing it distracts people from seeing the real issue, the individual (Rimke 64). By advising people to practice self-regulation, this type of literature overlooks the context of social power. By assuming the role of remediado, Calixto displays the ability to correct his behavior to fit the standards of the elite. From the point of view of the elite, the reproduction of their image by the marginal periférico is the exemplification of the discourse of correcting. Those at the periphery are finally accepting the imposition of the culture of the center and pleasing the elite.

As Luciana Pavia Coronel points out, Ferréz appropriates the self-help discourse. By doing so, the author highlights the bizarre idea promoted by the self-help books that good citizens care for themselves by isolating themselves from social relations. Calixto distances himself from the people of his past; he prefers the safety of looking at photos to the risk involved in actual human interactions:

Vejo fotos.

O quê?

Vejo fotos quando tenho saudade de alguém.
Calixto understands photography as a kind of “social media” where a sort of social performance takes place. Through photography, it is possible to create an objectified version of oneself and use it to initiate and maintain social relationships without the risk of causing real-life damage. However, Calixto grows progressively dissatisfied with the new world around him. He realizes at some point that his middle-class social position renders him invisible — most of the time because of his refusal to see others. Calixto is incapable of establishing significant relationships in his new surroundings.

Ferréz associates the function of the self-help ideology promoted by the elite to that of religion. Especially in chapter thirty-two, “Meu passado,” the author insinuates that self-help messages are another way for those in power to oppress and control the masses. Calixto is constantly bombed by self-help and religious messages on television; this propaganda tries to convince him either to “ser salvo ou comprar mais algo inútil e se sentir satisfeito por mais alguns minutos” (DFA 153). For example, Calixto watches a program that promises salvation and whose host is preacher but acts more like an “escritor de livro de autoajuda” (DFA 153). Religion, an “opiate for the masses” as Karl Marx defines it, can serve society by teaching morality, values and beliefs, but it can also teach people to be complacent and accept the current power structure. Both, religion and self-help provide a sensation of relief and the hope that better events are yet to come with more effort from the oppressed.

Practicing any religion is the same as reading a self-help book as both give people the illusion that everything will turn out well if they just follow the prescribed set of behaviors.
The narrator says, “Talvez sonhar mais, vencer na vida, hora extra, trabalhar aos domingos, fazer carga dupla, a caravan a Israel…” (DFA 154). In all his three novels, Ferréz criticizes the church as an institution that oppresses his people and tries to convince them that God has a plan for everybody and their suffering must be for a reason. The only consolation of a bandit is to know that, “se tiver os livros, terá a palavra e com ela tudo que quer se realizará, logo que a ler. Abrirá a boca e receberá tudo que quer” (DFA 154). In the novel, the preacher, like a motivational speaker, on television recites a passage from the bible, Matthew 6: 25-36, The Sermon on the Mount, which starts with a message about not worrying:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? (Matthew 6: 26-27)

This passage of the bible that teaches the believer to live without worries. The passage continues with an encouragement call so people accept their life and to trust God to provide:

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. […] Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. […] So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ […] But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:28-34).
The sermon above establishes the rules for being a good Christian and, hence, a good citizen. For a Christian, worrying about material concerns is a sin. For Calixto, Matthew’s verses must be confusing because they state that planning for the future is needless since God will always provide. However, life experience has taught him the opposite, in order to be someone, “é preciso de dinheiro” (DFA 154). As someone who is raised in a Christian culture and as a citizen, Calixto must work hard to balance fighting against oppression with following the preordained rules.

In Deus foi Almoçar, society deprives people of a non-personal public space where they could play a social role. When people exist only in a strictly personal sphere concerned with only their immediate needs, then they lose the ability to operate socially. In a way, Calixto’s story is that of a man who has been forced to dodge society. In the process of trying to fit in, Calixto becomes invisible, “Sempre me senti invisível, talvez fosse meu superpoder, cada ano que ganhava eu era menos notado, e hoje ninguém nem sequer sabe que eu existo, essa é a impressão que tenho” (DFA 24). This realization that the world refuses to acknowledge him, forces him to live hidden from it. In that sense, Calixto only has relationships that are intimate or a projection of his own desires. Thus, he misses the opportunity to exist and act as a social subject. In the name of social inclusion, the marginais periféricos –visible bandits– have become invisible people copying and mimicking whoever comes their way without logically considering the far-reaching consequences.

The desire to be a part of a larger community has gone deep into the psyche of Calixto, “ele se esforçava para se igualar a todos por ali” but, “não conseguia” (DFA 98). This is one of the biggest contradictions for the remediados: the more they struggle for inclusion, the more they find rejection and isolation. Bhabha argues that “the menace of
mimicry is its double vision” (*Location* 89). The act of imitating those in power never produces an identity nor a differentiation; the person has only a “partial presence.” Although Bhabha considers mimicry to be a destabilizing strategy in postcolonial discourse, it seems that Ferréz believes otherwise. He suggests that for the *remediado* entering into the “symbolic order” and repeating the lifestyle of the elite has now extended to an imitation of their way of speaking, dressing, living and even feeling:

Hoje eu tô mal.

Mal como?

Muito depressivo, como vontade de morrer.

Para como isso Calixto, o que é esse lance de depressão, isso é para Jimi Hendrix, para Kurt Cobain e esses caras americanos.

O que isso tem a ver, cara?

A depressão é estadunidense, eles é que são assim (DFA123).

Calixto is even plagued with feelings of depression that for his internal voice are typically associated with Americans. Ferréz once again problematizes the performativity of an identity based on the repetition of a behavior that is considered to be a part of the identity of successful people. As Bhabha says, “mimicry repeats rather than re-presents” (*Location* 88). In that sense, mimicry should also be considered as one of the most effective strategies of oppression. This articulation process is a dynamic process of continuous exchange. When minority group members change their social status, they make their own identities out of these hybrids, away from the traditional fixed categories. Identities are not rigid, but rather involve a negotiation of meaning and a constant process of transformation.
The process of mimicry is never complete since there is always an element missing. The initiation of Calixto into another social group detached him from his former position in the social structure. When people have been in a subjugated position, their transition to another position is always obstructed, either by a difference in culture or by racism. Through mimicry or cultural transvestism, as we shall see, Calixto experiences the feelings that belong to the domain of the civilized. However in the novel, there is a perverse transgression against the imposing systems of embourgeoisement.

4.3 The Haunting Desire to Be Like the Elite

Brazil has been built around what Josianna Arroyo identifies as necessary fictions; narratives that function to demarcate the borders in Brazil’s imaginary. Among the founding discourses are those of race, gender and sexuality. The function of these narratives is to show an apparent acceptance of the different as an essential component. Brazil’s discourses nowadays are based on social inclusion and social ascension. However, these discourses also function to control and discipline the body of the Other. In order to better understand these narratives, instead of mimicry, Arroyo proposes the concept of “travestismo cultural” [cultural transvestism] to describe the appropriation of the elite’s traits by the Other. Cultural transvestism, as defined by Arroyo, encompasses the constant change of social position that ends up enclosing the melancholic posture of the subject (7). The melancholic posture, argues Arroyo, builds a marginal or ambivalent identity written from the rhetoric of violence. In his attempt at inclusion, Calixto doubts the veracity of his situation and he has an uncanny feeling about his new role, “Era como quem está vendo um bom e velho filme e de repente está sendo o ator principal. Eu não estava vendo, naquele momento eu fazia parte de tudo, eu
pertenecía” (DFA 106). As a result, being a *remediado* or a *marginal periférico* cannot be comprehended “as a role which either expresses or disguises an interior self” (Butler, “Performative” 528). Ferréz shows that although certain middle-class privileges are given to some people, at the end, they are still subjugated to the power of the elite. As a *remediado* or *arrivant*, Calixto will always be essentially that: an *arrivant*, waiting to (be)come. Calixto will never be middle class even if he uses a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline in order to adopt the standardized behavior of the middle class.

Both cultural transvestism and mimicry imply the performativity of a “discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names “(Butler, *Bodies* 13). To maintain authority and control over the subordinated, the hegemonic power requires the subdued to repeat the behaviors on a daily basis. This leads to a submissive tolerance of the cultural imposition. Such cultural violence is disguised under the discourse of social inclusion and ascension. The attempt of the *marginal* to culturally and textually incorporate the elite’s code implies vulnerability (Arroyo 5). The periphery still looks towards the center, considering it sophisticated and underestimating itself. Ferréz’s work shows that mimicry can result in the mental and psychological dependence of marginalized people.

During the process of trying to see which aspects of the elite might be useful, Calixto uncovers the ghostly world of middle-class. Calixto is haunted by a consumerist cycle that triggers his efforts to achieve a level of material wealth that is based on the consumerism of first-world countries. As one Calixto’s internal voice says about poor Brazilians, “*somos contentes[...] o povo comendo[...] tá pulando, festejando até em final de juniores*” (DFA 123); after this comment, Calixto poses the question, “*só a alegria é nacional?*” The culture of the elite dominates the determinations of the patriarchal metaphor; the system favors white
embourgeoisement, authoritarian and violent masculinity, and paranoia about homosexuality. All of the intrapsychic domain structures and the social hierarchy territorialize the subject without permitting any alternatives.

When Calixto speaks about his depression, his internal voice references Kurt Cobain and Jimi Hendrix, two celebrity musicians who suffered from depression. Cobain, Hendrix and Calixto are similar in that they all know that society views “winners” with high regard and “losers” with disdain. Additionally, they all had troubled childhoods and lacked a stable family life. The three focused on achieving financial success: Jimi Hendrix once declared he was going to be someone important and rich; Kurt Cobain declared that he wanted to be like Jimi Hendrix; and Calixto “…tinha uma meta de vida, e ela iria dar certo, afinal eu tinha meu próprio ritmo, ou achava que tinha, não vou pelo ritmo da massa” (DFA 138).

Both Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain are members of the “27 Club,” a term used to refer to a group of talented artists who had a history of drug and alcohol abuse and died tragically at the age of twenty-seven. The reference to these two music icons suggests that Calixto perhaps is around the same age. This could also mean that Calixto has reached the maximum age traditional *bandidos* would turn, a presage of that Calixto will ultimately lose his battle and encounter an premature death.

Likewise his rock-and-roll idols, Calixto also uses drugs to help him get through the harsh realities of life. Calixto always carries a spoon in his pocket; this utensil is used by heroin or crack addicts to burn the drug and later consume it. Calixto’s hallucinations may be a result of his drug use. Perhaps, in his effort to fit in and be like the elite, Calixto uses drugs.

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to escape from the many internal contradictions that he feels and from the external conflicts created by his fight to stay in the middle class. On a psychological level, Calixto suffers from a violent paranoia with strong hallucinations of grandeur that corrupt him and lead to an early dementia, distrust, hatred and destructiveness. Cultural transvestism, like mimicry, is strategy of identification with another social group, “de los juegos de poder propios de la representación” (Arroyo 5). In that sense, social ascension and social inclusion impose a transvestism that forces the poor and the *remediados* to transform themselves. This imposes a state of dependency on them and creates a large-scale problem.

Ultimately, Calixto ends up as a failure. Eventually, Calixto’s emotions are narrowed; he either feels empty, lost, bored, sad or angry. Ferréz refers to blindness as a metaphor for Calixto’s inability to enjoy his new lifestyle, “Se a felicidade é um ponto de vista, Calixto estava cego” (*DF* A 11). For Calixto, blindness is not a problem in the retina, but the impossibility of seeing the world with all his senses. Calixto’s emotional and personal failures eventually become more than events in his life, they become a part of his identity. Failing is no longer something that happens to him, but something he is: a loser. By presenting Calixto’s life as a failure, Ferréz is showing that the *remediados* do not have any personal nor financial value to Brazilian society. Only those who are born into the Brazilian elite profit from the system and there are no prizes for the “losers” lower down the social hierarchy. Ferréz is also criticizing the current culture of affluence that equates happiness with consumerism. Happiness is no longer rooted in family and relationships. This culture leads many to a feeling of a false existence and the perception of an empty inner life.
4.4 Prostitutes and Transvestites

The city is a space of tensions that feed distrust, crime, despair, and madness. The texts of Ferréz show consumer society as the dominant model of life. They show how traditional institutions such as the family and the community, as well as traditional moral beliefs suffer while people focus on consumerist dreams and ideals. For Calixto, the urban space is a means to feel better about his life. Although for some people walking in the urban space is linked to feelings of freedom, happiness and quietude, for Calixto, wandering about the city is not simply a happy and improvised appropriation of urban space, but also a kind of compulsion, the result of his frustration. Calixto’s wanderings around the city make him feel superior and empowered since he can compare himself to others who are inferior to him. However, Calixto ultimately feels hollow since even he knows that he is not really a superior person.

An important figure in the novel is that of the prostitute. As Ariágada dos Santos Moreira points out, prostitutes and brothels represent certain social stigmas and forms of moral exclusion (239). The so call “mercado do sexo” has a large role in Ferréz’s work, particularly in Deus foi Almoçar. In the novel, Calixto visits a brothel multiple times and these frequent visits appear to be a structuring element of the text. The prostitutes are Calixto’s companions and unconditional lovers. They are, above all, essential to highlight an exclusive society and the meaninglessness that has alienated Calixto. Prostitution is usually linked to the dark areas of a city that society wants to ignore. Calixto’s fascination with prostitutes is perhaps due to the fact that he feels that a prostitute is willing to do anything for him:
Isso, isso! Deixe o cabelo balançar também, vou tirar a calça, fique parada agora. […]

Não, vou ficar aqui, você obedece.

O que é isso que tirou da calça?

Um controle remote. […]

Não é nada disso, eu vou controlar você, quando eu apertar você age com emoções automatizadas de um robô. […]

Tá bom, gato, tá bom, vamos lá (DFA 49).

As the quote above shows, Calixto rises as king of the universe in the space he shares with a prostitute; his wishes will be orders; obedience is guaranteed. At the brothel, Calixto is treated in an exalted manner. He escapes from a world of anonymity and insignificance while temporarily saves himself from the suffocating atmosphere of his life. Brothels in Ferréz’s work are spaces of profane lust where the characters break the norms. In Ferréz’s work, they are fiendish places. The brothel is a space that caters to all sorts of fantasies, however strange, and unlikely they may be.

The brothel is a place of submission but also a place of agitation and farce where the name of the game is to challenge the social order. The brothel is then a place where the author has the opportunity to bring together all other spaces created by the hegemonic culture—intimacy, work, leisure—in order to confront them, deform them, twist them and annul them. Calixto is similar to the prostitutes in the sense that both are workers who make a living selling their bodies. According to Waldman, the prostitute is a modern figure that comes from the liberalization of customs, the disconnection with traditional social bonds and the multitude of new sexual practices (31). The novel points to a moment in São Paulo
lifestyle when the privatization of sex embodied by monogamous marriage and prostitution established collective and differentiated forms for the circulation of desire, ones that closely followed the circulation of money.

_Deus foi Almoçar_ only includes one obvious reference to the periphery and Calixto’s marginality. In Chapter twenty-five, “O Nome do Filme Era Pesadelo,” Calixto decides not to go to work one day and makes a trip to downtown. The trip takes him around an hour (DFA117), approximately the same time it takes to go from Capão Redondo to the city center. He apparently wants to visit the city center since he is feeling “saudade de todo aquele movimento, daquela bagunça que só o Vale do Anhangabú e as barracas de hot-dog...” (DFA 116). By referring to the center as a “banguça” (a mess), the narrator questions how civilized it really is. The center of São Paulo falls short of the utopian desires of the elite; it is a space of confusion, chaos, disorder and spontaneity. Rather than seeing it as an organized space, Calixto describes the “asfalto” (the center) as having “ruas tumultuadas (tumultuous streets)” and “sujeira” (dirt), and as a place where the boundaries between the social classes are blurred and “onde a cidade começava e onde termianva já não interessava” (DFA 117). In essence, the _marginal_ writer recreates urban images that define the center as a troublesome space since the _marginal remediado_ is more vulnerable in this foreign space.

Ferréz makes references to many specific places in _Deus foi Almoçar_. The Vale do Anhangabú, mentioned in the quote in the paragraph above, is a region of the center of São Paulo. It is a public space where demonstrations, political rallies, presentations and popular shows often take place. The space is also connected to other squares in the central area by way of the Metro and the Praça da Bandeira staircases, which are currently occupied by a bus terminal. Ferréz mentions the Praça da Bandeira in all three of his novels since everyone who
is travelling from the southern zone heading north must pass through its bus terminal. Along with the other *remediados*, Calixto travels to a world that is “da ponte João Dias pra lá.”

There is a border between Calixto’s neighborhood and the territory of the “outside” that he must cross every day. Ferréz reminds the reader that although the elite residents of the center perceive the periphery as hostile, it is the center that is hostile and dangerous for the *marginal periférico*. By the same token, the center, rather than the periphery can be perceived as a dislocated space and the periphery can be seen as a space that resists the imitation and imposition of cultural transvestism. Additionally, Ferréz criticizes the notion that cleanliness and hygiene are a manifestation of civilization. The civilizations found in the periphery and in the center are not different by degree but by design.

Although Ferréz at times identifies locations in the novel, at other times there are no indications of specific sites. For Ferréz, this is a departure from his usual style since, as I have explained above, he identifies almost all of the locations in his first two novels. The spaces visited by the characters in *Deus foi Almoçar* lose their quality as recognizable places and are bordered by generic streets and squares. For example, besides the reference to Praça Bandeira, there is no other indication of specific streets. However, Ferréz gives clues about the settings. For example, when he describes a scene of transvestite prostitution inside of a theater on a street with many movie theaters, Calixto is probably at *cinemão* area, a zone in São Paulo with pornographic movie theaters. It is interesting that Calixto, who comes from the periphery, goes to pornographic cinemas during his visit to the city, since these are considered to be marginal spaces even within the gay community of São Paulo (n.p). Steven Butterman stresses that the motif of homosexuality and homoeroticism has often been used in contemporary Brazilian literature as a metaphor for more general issues of political power.
and social repression (14). Calixto goes to a “cinema de travas,” a movie theater known for transvestite prostitution, “Era um travesti, […] Era feio demais, tinha silicone nas bochechas, duas mechas louras que pareciam raios num cabelo seco preto, os dentes de cima proeminentes para a e um furo no queixo” (DFA118). In much the same way that the lettered man tries to cover up signs of barbarism in his narratives, Ferréz uses the artificiality of the transvestite as the décor for the new banditry narrative.

The feminine is the center of the enigma of the transvestites; they are Others who create illusions. Ferréz shows that it is almost impossible to trace a clear line to separate order and legality from disorder and illegality. It is ironic that the supposed characteristics of the periphery are in reality also shared with the cinemão area that is in the city center: dirty and badly painted walls; exposed electrical wiring, broken and torn chairs, crowded and dirty bathrooms. The place is rarely cleaned or sanitized and the floor is always dirty with garbage, condoms, cigarette butts, bodily fluids, etc.

Transvestism can also be understood as a performance of a constant process of evolution. According to Arroyo, it can be understood as an allegory of “spaces of representation” from which are written contemporary discourses about cultural construction (Arroyo 239). The presence and behavior of the transvestites in the city is constituted as a destabilizing force in the “orderly” city. “An orderly” city that has been projected since the time of the colony (Rama) as the center and epicenter of the origin of the Latin American nation.

Ferréz uses the behavior of the transvestites as a parallel for Calixto’s behavior. Just as the transvestites are acting out the role of a woman, Calixto is acting out the role of someone of the middle class. Hence, the bodies of the transvestites and the bodies of the
remediados, by performing different roles than those which were assigned at birth, speak about identity as a fabrication (Arroyo 238). Judith Butler’s idea that gender is a social temporality applies to Calixto and the transvestites. To perform an identity and/or a role implies a path for transformation or a manner of existence that goes beyond conventional norms. The temporality in the case of the remediado and the transvestite is that of the reproduction of a set of values already established by society, but there is a certain unsteadiness inferred in the progression (Butler, Performative 519-20). Calixto is a cross-dresser in the sense that he is posing as someone he is not. The remediados and the transvestites are both subjects that break with the binary system. Both are to be considered to be impersonators performing an identity other than their own. Both are also bodies that articulate the particularity of a specific space. Both belong to the streets; they circulate around the city center and dress up according to the social rules of a different, sometimes opposing, social category. Furthermore, the transvestites are also a symbol of society’s apparent acceptance of an alternate identity; the transvestites who were once relegated to the sidelines are now a part of the daily life of the urban center. Arroyo argues that if the social imaginary is formed from a series of ambiguities, the transvestites embody these contradictions (242). When Calixto visits the cinemão and the transvestites, he is seeking the reflection of another Other who is also not performing the role initially imposed by society. In this way, Ferréz shows that, similar to the transvestites, Calixto embodies the ambiguities of Brazil’s social status system. Ferréz criticizes the elite’s desire to have a homogenized culture and demonstrates that there is a need to reformulate urban subjectivities as new subjectivities.
Transvestites master the art of simulation and fabricate identities. They assume a role that requires them to be conscious at all times of the reality of another identity. The transvestites’ bodies are always in process of individual transformation. From this perspective, the transvestite also breaks the carefully constructed myth of the urban, macho, heterosexual subject. Similarly, Calixto questions the discourse of heteronormativity:

Talvez, um jovem comum, com vontade diferente, que de tanta publicidade, desfiles de lingerie, capas de revistas masculinas, tantas bundas, talvez tivesse pensado que um homem tem que ser muito macho pra ser gay. (DFA 119)

The transvestites of the city of São Paulo are segregated from the mainstream, however, Deus foi Almoçar emphasizes their success in surviving alongside the mainstream in the city center. In his role as voyeur, Calixto admires the transvestites’ sexuality and their transgressive possibilities. The presence of the transvestites questions the imposition of the image of the “enemy,” the lettered man, white, heterosexual and powerful.

It is worthwhile to note that the transvestites pay an emotional cost due to the threats they live with in the daily life. Therefore, the construction of their identity is consolidated in a social direction. This self-construction arises because of their desire to appear to have a full life. A double identity builds around the transvestites or, in the words of Hélio Silva, “O travesti tem dupla pele: a de purpurina e a de humilhação. Em que ordem não se sabe. Ou talvez numa pele só tecida pelos dois ingredientes” (41). On one hand, transvestites seek to change their appearances for exhibitionism. On the other hand, for every appearance in public, transvestites risk having their created identity mocked by society. The transvestite is a text, an Other, that retains the quality of self-made and remade in his otherness (Arroyo 244). Transvestites construct a feminine identity, as Calixto constructed a middle-class one. In that
sense, *remediados*, similar to transvestites, transgress the notion of fixed categories and “*remediado*” becomes a “category in crisis”. As a category in crisis, *remediados* place themselves in a “third” category (Garber 9) that breaks the binary dynamic of the center and the periphery. Therefore, *remediados* embody another type of Other, one that breaks with official standards.

Transvestite fashion functions as a sign of over determination—a mechanism of displacement from one blurred boundary to another (Garber). Garber argues that transvestism is a specter that rose up—both in the theater and in the streets—to mark and control difficult social and economic change. Cross-dressing is about the anxiety of economic or cultural dislocation, the anticipation or recognition of “otherness” as a form of loss (Garber 388). An inability to establish permanent categories denotes the impossibility of implementing a new category. It is necessary to understand transvestites and *remediados* as metaphors of a society that constructs its identity based on imitation with a degree of resistance. Opposing the repressive demands of culture grants the body the ability to form a distinct identity; one that is in tune with a fleeting notion of self and a genuine movement toward a finite future, but certainly authentic in its fragility and transience (Díaz 33). Transvestites must confront society’s ambiguous feelings towards them on a daily basis. Although they are seen as a deviant, they go out into the street and do not stay in peripheral, little frequented social environments.

The figure of the transvestite in *Deus foi Almoçar* can also be read as a metaphor for Ferréz’s new style of literary production. As such, the novel is not only an example of

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80 “Category crisis” is a term coined by Marjorie Garber. “Category crisis” implies a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another (Garber 17).
cultural transvestism but also of literary transvestism. Ferréz’s literary production has changed the course of writing in the lettered city. The otherness in Deus foi Almoçar, in terms of writing style, uses a language that is more universal. In that sense, the transvestites represent the challenging, rule-breaking style of Ferréz and Literatura Marginal. Perhaps Josefina Ludmer’s proposition of “ficción especulativa” is a suitable approach for comprehending Ferréz’s writing. By “ficción especulativa,” Ludmer understands a Latin American literary production that proposes a different mode of experience and does not pretend to be either real or false, “la concepción de una pura posibilidad” (Ludmer, Aquí America Latina 10). As Ludmer stresses, speculation develops a different world than the one that is known. What better than transvestism, that other way of being and existing that the marginal periférico desires, to express the need to listen to and feel the rhythm of different rituals? With transvestism, one can recognize how the drama of Brazilian reality has become more marginal and unconventional and has forced society to move beyond the comfortable and imaginary identity (the other transvestism) that produces (and is produced by) power and tradition, and establishes the canon.
This study demonstrates that the concept and figure of social bandit, present in Latin American literature since its inception, have evolved in Brazil into the urban prototypes of the *marginal periférico* and the *remedidado*. The similarities between these figures of the literary imaginary were delineated and Ferréz’s literary production and *Literatura Marginal* were compared to an established and canonical literary trope of the bandit. However, in the process of examining the intersections between the banditry narrative and *Literatura Marginal*, this study also highlighted how Ferréz’s writing and *Literatura Marginal* break with traditional bandit literature. *Literatura Marginal* redefines the bandit narrative by reappropriating the terms *marginal* and *periferia* in order to create a new order in the articulation of ideas and meanings that come from a territory of exclusion.

Nonetheless, this gain represents also a risk because, in response to this potential of the culture and production of the periphery, the hegemonic culture launched an attempt of assimilation and standardization of the aesthetic of the periphery and of the elements of *Literatura Marginal*. This normalization began in 2005 with the exhibition *Estética da periferia* that was curated by stage designer and architect Gringo Cardia. The purpose of this exhibition was to give exposure to the visual and cultural language of the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and to display some of the creative visions in the fields of architecture, visual arts, industrial design, and fashion.

Ferréz’s success as a writer and the publication of *Deus foi Almoçar* in 2012 has raised two important questions: first, if Ferréz’s work now belongs to the canonical spaces,
can he still be considered a marginal writer (Leroux & Rodrigues 11) and therefore, a bandit?; second, should Deus foi Almoçar be categorized as Literatura Marginal just because its writer is from the periphery? Some critics and scholars, such as Lucía Tennina and Laeticia Jensen Eble, who have been following Ferréz’s work from the beginning, have accused the writer of having taken too different an approach in Deus foi Almoçar. Both scholars claim that the author has sifted the marginality out of his literature since the novel does not focus on the topics he explored before: social injustice, drugs and physical violence. Deus foi almoçar allegedly lacks the “marca” of the quebrada since it tells the story of “un personaje de clase media que se encuentra inmerso en un profundo drama personal, en la que no aparece ni una sola vez la palabra “favela” (Tennina 196). If by “marca” Lucía Tennina refers to an expectation about subject matter, aesthetics or something that could be immediately recognized as marginal, then the marginality of the latter book is questionable.

However, it is arguable that while it might be true that the “marca” of literatura marginal seems to be absent in Deus foi Almoçar, some other recurring features in Ferréz’s writing, such as criticisms of labor relations and mass culture, are still present, particularly the presence of the marginal periférico/bandit. Moreover, a profound reading of Deus foi Almoçar leads the reader to recognize other features of Literatura Marginal beyond the thematicatization of exclusion and its consequences in the quebrada scenario. For example, as was shown in chapter four, in Deus foi Almoçar, once again the setting is the periferia that is characterized as a space where there is always a loss or lack of something or someone. Additionally, there is a constant search on the part of the characters for something they never had and will never get. Finally, there is a universal discourse advising the reader that there is no way to escape from the world of the periphery. In that sense, Ferréz not only highlights
social injustices but also changes the rules of the game. Therefore, *Deus foi Almoçar* should be seen as *Literatura Marginal* not only because Ferréz is from a *quebrada* and still lives in Capão, but also because “marginal” does not only mean what is not accepted by the canonical discourse (Oliveira & Pellizzaro 28), but also refers to a subject who is isolated from the system, voluntarily or not. In *Deus foi Almoçar*, Ferréz reframes and broadens the sense of what it means what it means to be marginal and to be socially marginalized.

The novel has been criticized for other changes, in structure and style. For example, *Deus foi Almoçar* has fewer characters than Ferréz’s previous novels, the language is no longer the slang characteristic of the peripheries, and the fast dynamic pace that resembles a hip-hop performance has vanished. Additionally, the author has distanced himself from the label “*periférico.*” However, Ferréz cannot be accused of keeping a distance from reality; his work is still an expression of social realities. His objective, which he has voiced on several occasions, is still to link reality and fiction. A look at his Facebook page, Instagram, or Twitter accounts demonstrates that he is still engaged with the *favela* community. In an interview with Rodrigo Casarin for the blog Canto dos Livro, Ferréz denied that he is seen as a traitor by his community:

> Ainda não, pois faço um trabalho de base forte, palestras em escolas públicas, ONGs, fundação casa, presídios e onde a literatura couber. Não falo para ricos nos eventos. Na verdade faço muitos eventos em comunidades, então quando pinta algo mais elitizado ninguém me enche o saco, pois me vêem em outras paradas (n.p.).

Despite his commercial success and a maturation of his writing style, Ferréz has not lost touch with his roots.
Ferréz’s ability to maintain his own voice and his connection to his community is admirable given the tendency of the hegemonic culture to effect homogenization and standardization of the material that it brings into its system. What replaces the invisibility is a kind of visibility that is cautiously regulated and that ends up shaping the stereotypes held by the elite. For example, when Tennina criticizes Ferréz’s more recent work for not being *favela* enough, she is expressing an expectation about the periphery that has been constructed outside of the periphery. This criticism is an attempt by the elite to control and normalize *Literatura Marginal*. It is to the benefit of the cultural elite to support the myth of marginality and to define the *marginal* as an object of study having certain characteristics that the reader will recognize because like the myth they are “anchored in people’s minds by roots” (Perlman 242) and remain unshaken by any other structure. This criticism denies authors from the periphery the creative rights held by mainstream writers, it castrates their imagination, and claims that those who live in the *quebrada* can only write about poverty, responding to the dominant culture’s expectations. The restricted universe of representation of characters from contemporary Brazilian novels comes from an equally limited universe of authors working in the national literary system (Coronel 570). The historical connection between culture and power shows that the literary canon is the result of an authoritarian way of organizing the world, dictating who is and is not deemed an author of “literature” and setting the rules for how it should be written.

Ferréz and his work resist this imposition of rules and definitions by the cultural elite. By strengthening his “marginal” identity, Ferréz reveals his absolute otherness in relation to the traditional profile of fiction writers. When German scholar Ingrid Hapke asked Ferréz in an interview if he had abandoned all topics related to the periphery, he replied, “não sou só
escritor periférico” (154). Ferréz creates his own category in the hegemonic order of the established literary system that is usually comprised of white middle-class male writers who are consecrated by the critics and the public. Luciana Paiva Coronel points out that Ferréz’s stance represents more than a change of attitude towards the hegemonic culture, it also reveals his intention to remain “nas margens do sistema cultural como forma de preservação de uma identidade própria” (Coronel 34). Ferréz is aware of the impossibility of complete autonomy in an era of global capitalism that envisions cultural property as profitable goods.

By necessity, Ferréz had to first “mora[r] dentro do tema” and focus on life within the periphery since that was his entire world at the beginning of his writing career. His initial work led to the emergence of an unprecedented space in which the very periphery could take on the lettered city and *marginal* authors could circulate within and outside the boundaries of their territory. Asserting himself as *marginal* became, then, the condition for an author from the periphery to get legitimacy and entry into the canonical space. The second edition of *Capão Pecado* in 2005, published without the photos, reinforced Ferréz’s belief in the power of words and spurred his desire to be recognized as an author of fiction (Damascena 21). As a writer, Ferréz understands the discourse of marginal authenticity as an initial and important stage for his admittance into the mainstream literary field from which he as well as others producers from the periphery were historically excluded. Ferréz initially identified himself as an author of *Literatura Marginal* and as an “escritor marginal periférico”, that is, someone who is outside the system. His statement “não sou só escrito periférico” evidences that Ferréz has realized that by adopting the speech of the periphery, his work has been limited. According to Ferréz, in different interviews, that he himself as a writer has become a prisoner of the subject itself, “Não estou abandonando o tema, simplesmente quis fazer outra coisa.
Acima de tudo sou escritor, sabe, não sou só escritor periférico. Posso escrever sobre qualquer tema, posso escrever um conto sobre os Estados Unidos, posso fazer história em quadrinhos (155). Ferréz desires to expand his repertoire as an author, he does not wish to abandon the culture of the periphery. However, mainstream literary critics such as Tennina, who has been one of his biggest supporters, do not seem to understand this. They question the authenticity of his new work and seem to think that writers who are from the periphery should only write about life in the periphery. This limiting logic is unjust; white male authors who belong to the literary establishment have obviously written about subjects beyond their personal experiences. This criticism creates a double inconsistency for marginal writers within the field of literature: if they must “morar dentro do tema” and the periphery must be the theme of the narrative in order to be legitimate, then this legitimacy becomes a trap. The terms “periferia” and marginality turn out to be restraining labels that attempt to limit Ferréz (and others) to writing about only what he has personally lived. The author in his manifesto “Terrorsismo Literário” foresees the nullification of his work from the part of the academia and literary critics when he states “Sua negação não é novidade. Você não entendeu? Não é quanto vendemos, é o que falamos, não é por onde, nem como publicamos...somos marginais”(TL 10). In other words, Ferréz is conscious that his place will always be that of the Other; either his literature is too testimonial or not sufficiently referential. Even if he is now published on a major label, Ferréz will always be marginal because being marginal destabilizes the center.

Everything about Ferréz is marginal: the publication and circulation of his work and its place in the Brazilian literary scene and Ferréz’s work within the community to promote artistic expression. The phenomenon that is Ferréz and the Literatura Marginal is one that
still deserves much attention and debate. The identity of these *marginal* characters will always be that of the Other. However, Ferréz wants his readers to understand that for the residents of the periphery, it is the elite who are the exotic and foreign Other. In *Deus foi Almoçar*, multiple centers emerge, coexist, and complicate relationships of power in terms of territoriality as well as in terms of identity. Ferréz’s work is important to readers in both the periphery and in the mainstream because it shows that places do not always have fixed meanings and that notions about the center and the periphery are always changing and will be adjusted every time there is an alteration in the social and cultural order. The *marginal periférico* marks the existence of two societies living side by side in conflict, rewriting the struggle between civilization and barbarism and its associated signifiers: order versus disorder, center versus periphery, written law versus oral law, and so forth.


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