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The Devil in the Brazilian Backlands

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

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December 2014

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December 2014

The Devil in the Brazilian Backlands

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by

Eduardo Viana da Silva

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## ABSTRACT

### The Devil in the Brazilian Backlands

by

Eduardo Viana da Silva

This dissertation explores representations of the Devil in the narrative of Canudos through the lenses of Euclides da Cunha's classic *Os Sertões* (1902), the second manuscript of Antônio Conselheiro (1897), and the religious guidebook *Missão Abreviada* (1859). To understand the motivations of the Brazilian backlanders (*sertanejos*) to engage in the Battle of Canudos (1896-1897), one has to consider the role of the Devil in this battle. Conselheiro's followers believed that the apocalypse was approaching and that they were fighting the demoniacal forces of the republicans in order to save their souls.

This study starts by presenting the religious background of the *sertanejos*, their mysticism and their oral tradition, which includes tales about the return of D. Sebastião and myths rooted in the European tradition. It then analyses the teachings of Conselheiro and the importance placed on the role of the Devil as a threat to losing one's soul forever.

Conselheiro's followers were victims of the fanaticism of their leader and of the extreme forces of the Brazilian military which resulted in the decimation of Canudos and the death of over ten thousand people. By drawing an argument based on Euclides da Cunha's observation of events in his field notes, newspaper articles, and in *Os Sertões*, this study defends that Canudos was not the idealized community portrayed by many, but was instead a place under the theocracy of a fanatic leader. The last section of this dissertation frames Conselheiro's dominance of his subjects in Foucault's theory of the *pouvoir pastoral* (pastoral power of the priest). This study aims to contribute to the body of research on Canudos to an English speaking audience.



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## The Devil in the Brazilian Backlands

### Representations of the Devil in the Narrative of Canudos

#### Introduction

*O cão, Demo, Capeta, o Coisa-ruim, o Tinhoso, o Arrenegado, o Tisnado, o Pé-Preto, o Canho* are some of the common names used in the *sertões* (backlands) of Brazil when referring to the Devil. The *sertões* are a land of legends, superstitions, and religiosity. The *sertanejo* is a religious person, whose identity is strongly connected to his life struggles with the severe droughts in the region.<sup>1</sup> As Alexandre Otten explains in *Só Deus é Grande*, the *sertanejo* attributes to God or to the Devil (“em um Deus implacável ou nas forças demoníacas”) the reason for the natural disasters and his consequent misfortunes (102).

In the narrative of Canudos, the religious leader Antônio Conselheiro (1830-1897) and his followers attributed the attack on their village to the actions of the Devil. The Battle of Canudos (1896-1897) was a religious war for *conselheiristas* which had political implications since Conselheiro defended the Monarchy and was against the implementation of the Republic in Brazil.<sup>2</sup> He believed the Portuguese monarch was the only leader authorized by God to govern Brazil. Having this as the mind-frame for this study, we analyze the representations of the Devil in the narrative of Canudos.

The Battle of Canudos was a conflict between the Brazilian Government and the settlers of Canudos - a village of approximately twenty-five thousand inhabitants in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Sertanejos* is the name given to the inhabitants of the Brazilian backlands. While most of what is said in this dissertation applies to all *sertanejos*, we are referring specifically to the *sertanejos* in the backlands of Bahia.

<sup>2</sup> *Conselheiristas* are the followers of Antônio Conselheiro, the religious leader of Canudos. The Battle of Canudos lasted from November 6, 1896 until October 5, 1897.

isolated backlands of Bahia - between November of 1896 and October of 1897. Canudos was founded and administered by the religious and political leader Antônio Conselheiro, a self-proclaimed messiah who preached the end of the world and was against the political transition in Brazil from a monarchy to a republic.

This dissertation has three texts as its primary sources: Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões: Campanha de Canudos* (1902), the religious guide-book *Missão Abreviada* (1859), and the second and last manuscript of Antônio Conselheiro (1897). The representations of the Devil in the narrative of Canudos come mostly from a dialogue among these texts. Other sources of research are used as supporting material, such as the personal diary of Euclides da Cunha (*Caderneta de Campo*), Euclide's articles published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* – available in *Diário de uma Expedição*, the oral tradition in the *sertões*, and the *Literatura de Cordel*.

There are four elements that were of fundamental importance for the religiosity of *conselheiristas*: their conversion, repentance, penitence, and salvation. Antônio Conselheiro preached that the Devil interferes with each of these elements in his attempt to deceive the Christians and to condemn them to a life of eternal suffering. Salvation was the ultimate goal for *conselheiristas*. With the end of the millennium approaching, Antônio Conselheiro and his followers believed that the apocalypse was coming and that the Battle of Canudos marked the end of the world. For *conselheiristas*, the republicans represented the Devil, the establishment of the Kingdom of Satan, and because of that they should be destroyed.

Chapter one of this dissertation provides the background on the religiosity of the *sertanejos*. It analyzes the importance of the legends and superstitions related to the Devil in the backlands of Brazil. It also explains the European origins of such legends, basing the analysis on Oliveira Martins's *História de Portugal* (1879) and Câmara Cascudo's *Geografia dos Mitos Brasileiros* (1947). It then turns to Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* to give an introduction about the messianic figure of Antônio Conselheiro and the representations of the Devil in the apocalyptic prophecies of the leader of Canudos.

Chapter two presents an intertextualized reading of the representations of the Devil in *Os Sertões*, Conselheiro's manuscript, and *Missão Abreviada*: a religious guide-book that was an essential reading for Antônio Conselheiro. This book was published in Portugal and had a wide circulation in Brazil, serving as a reference material for public prayers. *Missão Abreviada* presents an extensive representation of the Devil and the apocalypse and much of its content is reflected in Conselheiro's manuscript. Chapter two focuses on the representations of the Devil with regards to the republicans, the portraying of hell, purgatory, and the salvation of *conselheiristas* facing the apocalypse in the *sertões*.

Chapter three explores the representation of the Devil in relation to sins and life in Canudos. Using the same method as in chapter two, the analysis focuses on the sins that were most condemned by Antônio Conselheiro and the guide *Missão Abreviada*: civil union, scandalous sins, and the consumption of alcohol. We also review the concept of Foucault's *pouvoir pastoral* (pastoral power of the priest) applied to the religious dominance of Conselheiro.

Overall, this dissertation researches a theme which has not been the focus of in depth studies on Canudos - the representations of the Devil. While some researchers argue that Antônio Conselheiro was not a radical religious leader, proposing that he followed the precepts of Christianity, we defend that Conselheiro in fact did not practice everything that he preached and that the Battle of Canudos was also motivated by his radical religious views. The inhabitants of Canudos believed to be fighting the demoniacal forces of republicans. The followers of Conselheiro were willing to give their lives in the name of God to fight the Devil and to save their souls. As Euclides ironically says, Canudos was the “imunda ante-sala do paraíso” (*Os Sertões* 308).

This study also shows the relevance of a religious war that ranges from over a hundred years ago to present day. The Battle of Canudos resembles the conflicts of radical religious groups nowadays, such as the attacks of 9/11 and the extremist group ISIS in Iraq and Syria<sup>3</sup>. The appearance of radical religious leaders and the establishment of religious wars against “evil” governments do not belong to the past only.

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<sup>3</sup> The acronym ISIS stands for: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

## Chapter 1

### The Devil in *Os Sertões*

#### *A lei do cão...*

In a land of myths, Antônio Conselheiro (1830-1897) professed the domination of the Devil and envisioned the end of the world. His apocalyptic message resonated with his followers in the backlands of Bahia and ultimately resulted in one of the harshest wars in Brazilian history: the Battle of Canudos (1896-1897). This revolt ended with the decimation of Conselheiro's village and the death of over ten thousand people. As Euclides da Cunha magisterially registered on the pages of *Os Sertões*, Antônio Conselheiro had in the "Law of the Devil" the oracle of his prophecy: "A lei do cão... Este era o apotegma mais elevado da seita. Resumia-lhe o programa. Dispensa todos os comentários" (320).<sup>4</sup>

The image of the Devil played a central role in Conselheiro's message. It was with the message of a war against the Devil that Conselheiro kept his followers united through long battles against the troops of the Brazilian Government. Borrowing an expression from Kenneth Burke, there was a "collectivistic motive" for the followers of Conselheiro.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In Brazil, the Devil is commonly represented in popular culture as a dog. This representation has its roots in ancient cultures. Jeffrey Russell explains in *The Devil* that the iconography of the Devil has ancient precedents, which are not always clear. The association of a spirit as a beast is common in India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia with ambivalent deities: "Animals associated with evil were the pig, scorpion, crocodile, dog, jackal, cat, rat, toad, lizard, lion, serpent, and dragon. Of these, the pig, cat, toad, dog, and serpent appear most frequently in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The goat form of the Devil derives primarily from the image of Pan. From such a theriomorphic ancestor the Devil inherited his claws, cloven hooves, hairiness, huge phallus, wings, horns, and tail" (254).

In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles appears as a dog, a poodle: "Mephisto: Why all the racket? What's your wish, sir? / Faust: So it's you who was the poodle! I have to laugh – a wandering scholar" (48).

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Burke in *A Grammar of Motives* (1945) explains the collective nature of the sacrifice for those involved in a war, saying that all members of the society share the same motivation, except for the war profiteers: "... for the conditions of a war economy, as for the conditions of warfare itself, we need a *collectivistic* motive, which will be shared by all except the war profiteers and the empire-builders of big

Euclides da Cunha portrays in *Os Sertões* the fanatic mentality of *conselheiristas*.<sup>6</sup> His work had an undisputable impact on Brazilian and Latin American literature, especially on the *literatura do sertão*.

Before we go any further, it is important to make a reference to the positivist ideas presented in *Os Sertões*. Euclides da Cunha was part of the positivist school of his time; however, the multifaceted text of *Os Sertões* goes beyond a mere defense of positivism.<sup>7</sup> While there are, in many instances, positivist theories in the narrative, there are also plenty of contradictions to it. For instance, if the *sertanejo* is depicted as inferior, he is also, in the author's famous line: "antes de tudo, um forte" (207). The issue of positivism in *Os Sertões* is complex and Euclide's narrative cannot be reduced to a defense of the ideals of positivism. Leopoldo M. Bernucci points out that if we were to display side by side the many literary, historical, and anthropological qualities of *Os Sertões* with its positivist characteristics, the first column would surpass the second by far, "A diferença não é só quantitativa, mas também qualitativa, o que quer dizer que os acertos são muito maiores do que as falhas" (14). *Os Sertões* is above all a classic for its innovative literary style, its

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business" (397). Burke's argument focuses on the reality of the United States and of capitalism; nonetheless, as we see, the collectivistic motive applies to all wars.

<sup>6</sup> We will refer to the followers of Antônio Conselheiro as *conselheiristas* throughout this dissertation.

<sup>7</sup> Positivism was of great importance for republicans since it represented scientific advancement for them. In the "The Religion of Science and Its High Priest," Thomas Meaney explains that a statue of the father of *positivism*, August Comte (1798-1857) stands outside the Sorbonne with his motto "Order and Progress," which is also the motto of the Brazilian flag. The French philosopher August Comte (1798-1857) was the creator of Positivism, which is a philosophical system that justifies all knowledge through science: "In volume after volume, Comte pointed the way for science to substitute not only for France's lost sense of political order, but also for religion itself." (Meaney). Thomas Meaney argues that the belief that science could cure our political and moral problems is "persistent folly of modern thought." In this sense, the ideas of August Comte are relevant to this date still, as Raymond Aron reminds us: "It is easy to laugh at August Comte, but it is more important to understand the nature of his apparent *naiveté*."



contribution to the understanding of the Brazilian ethnicity, for its wide and deep look at the life of the *sertanejo*, as well as his beliefs and life struggles, and for its humanistic account of the Battle of Canudos, among many other important factors, as Bernucci explains in the introduction of his commented edition of *Os Sertões* (2001):

... é justamente essa disparidade de um produto miscelâneo que confere a esta obra uma dignidade própria, um certo aspecto humano e humanístico em que na coluna do *haver* encontram-se os experimentos com a língua portuguesa, a potência de uma retórica barroca que roça o conceptismo, uma enorme curiosidade de conhecer o tipo brasileiro, um esforço veemente por definir a nossa nacionalidade, um respeito referencial pela história brasileira, um afã de justiça por uma campanha militar que terminou em “charqueada” e muitos outros que elevam o livro à categoria dos clássicos, como até hoje tem sido tratado. (13-14)

In a combination of folklore, myths, and religious beliefs from the Middle Ages, Antônio Conselheiro created in his followers’ imaginations the representation of republicans as demoniacal forces.<sup>8</sup> Canudos was seen as the gates to heaven, the place of

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<sup>8</sup> In *Theory and History of Folklore*, Vladimir Propp argues that “many diverse phenomena of spiritual culture are hidden in folklore” (3). Vladimir defends that folklore concerns the spiritual production of a society, its verbal and poetic products and not the material one. His view of folklore clashes with Western European scholarship, in which folklore is defined by material (buildings, clothing, the village, plants, etc.) and also by the spiritual production associated to the peasantry. Vladimir Propp argues that although related, the material and spiritual productions are not the same. He explains that in the upper strata of society one separates the history of technology and architecture from the history of literature and music. Propp explains that the same difference should apply to folklore. Following Vladimir Propps’ approach, in this dissertation, we understand folklore as the verbal and poetic production of the *sertões*, in particular the *literatura de cordel* and the oral tradition of the *sertões*, including the tales about the Devil.

salvation. We will let the work of Euclides da Cunha guide us in understanding the person of Antônio Conselheiro, his beliefs, and how he articulated the role of the Devil in his sect.

This dissertation will elaborate on the representations of the Devil in the *sertões*, which are rooted in the European traditions that the Portuguese colonizers brought to colonial Brazil.

In European literature, the classics Goethe's *Faust* (1790) and Dante's *Inferno* (1313) are the greatest European plays (or poems) that portray the Devil.<sup>9</sup> Goethe's *Faust* is based on a sixteenth-century German legend where Faust is a scholar and magician who makes a pact with the Devil in which he is to know: "the grounds of all things in heaven or earth" (Goethe 443). In Dante's *The Inferno*, the poet goes into a journey to Hell guided by Virgil. Hell is located in the center of the Earth, where Lucifer is imprisoned by ice.<sup>10</sup> Curiously, Euclides da Cunha makes a reference to the description of Hell in Dante in his personal notes comparing it to the battle scenes in Canudos:

Quando, à 1 hora da tarde, da porta da Farmácia contemplei o quadro comovedor e extraordinário achei pequeno o gênio sombrio e formidável de Dante. Porque há uma coisa que ele não soube pintar e que eu vi naquela sanga estreitíssima, abafada e ardente, mais lúgubre vale do *Inferno*: a

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<sup>9</sup> Ernst Curtius in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, explains that Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe were considered "the three peaks of modern poetry" in the century after Goethe's death (348).

<sup>10</sup> "In the organization of Hell, Dante recognizes the seven deadly sins as well as the "golden rule" and punishes these infractions severely, but he structures the sins and punishments with an eye to classical notions of human failings, taking his ideas primarily from Aristotle with suggestions from Cicero" (Bondanella ed., *The Inferno* xxxvi).

blasfêmia orvalhada de lágrimas, rugindo nas bocas simultaneamente com os gemidos de dor e os soluços extremos da morte... (Cunha, *Caderneta* 31)

The narratives about the Devil and the threat of Hell are also represented extensively in the Middle Age Galician-Portuguese literature. In *Canticles of Holy Mary* (*Cantigas de Santa Maria*), composed at the court of Alfonso X (1252-1284), king of Castile and León, the confrontation of death with the possibility of salvation or damnation is an essential component of the *Cantigas'* poetic narratives. The poems are also accompanied by illuminations which provide a visual dimension to the scenes, making them even more appealing and, perhaps, convincing to the reader. In *Cantiga* 85, for instance, the illumination shows the Virgin Mary facing an angel and pointing at a caldron full of sinners, which is being set on fire and stirred by three demons. Following a long tradition in Catholicism, the Virgin's intervention represents the chance of salvation at the moment of death, as we can note in the verses below from *Cantiga* 409:

...mais com'irmãos  
todos alçand' as m'ãos,  
com corações sãos,  
en esto companheiros  
deven seer obreiros,  
loand'a Virgen santa;  
que o demo quebranta  
por nossa amparança (vv. 87-95, 371)

Critic Elvira Fidalgo points out that although the *Cantigas* portray the Devil's physical appearance briefly, it will be in the illuminations that the Devil's appearance is portrayed in detail:

En numerosas cantigas se alude al demonio a través de rápidas pinceladas que nos permiten imaginarlo en su repulsiva apariencia, aunque en muchas más el maestro que lleva a cabo el programa iconográfico se ha detenido en retratarlo con todo detalle, dibujándolo como un ser monstruoso, horrendo, diferente a cualquier ser conocido, definido con los rasgos que conoce por las homilías y las descripciones más comunes de los exempla.” (234)

Elvira Fidalgo explains that the representations of the Devil in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* reflect the importance given to the Devil during the Middle Ages, arguing that the clergy used its horrific images “con el fin de aterrorizar a los fieles e inducirlos a un buen comportamiento” (231). In “El diablo en las *Cantigas de Santa María*,” Fidalgo analyzes the representations of the Devil regarding its iconography - deformity, monstrosity, and metamorphosis – and also in instances in which the Devil tries to disguise his victims with the goal of taking them over to his kingdom: “No encontramos demonios hermosos, confundidos entre los ángeles en las *Cantigas*, pero sí demonios que se hacen pasar por lo que no son, de modo que su víctima no reconoce en él a un enemigo” (236). For example, at times, the Devil transforms himself in a human being - a wise man in *Cantiga* 17, and other times in an animal - a pork in *Cantiga* 82 and a bull in *Cantiga* 47.

*Orto do Esposo* is another example of a medieval literary work of significance that portrays the image of the Devil in several of its stories.<sup>11</sup> Written around the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth century, *Orto do Esposo* is composed of two-hundred and four stories, from which 96 of them are of religious nature (Williams 207). Above all, *Orto do Esposo* has the intention of teaching moral values; it fits in the medieval literary genre of *exemplum* (*narrativa exemplar*), composed of treatises and narrations with moral intentions.<sup>12</sup> The fourth book of *Orto do Esposo*, titled “Da vaidade das coisas humanas,” is where most representations of the Devil take place. In the prologue of chapter 1, a holy man (*santo varão*), Furseu, has his soul taken by angels in a trip through an abyss where his soul saw the fire of lies, the fire of greed, and the fire of discord. Furseu’s soul also encounters demons engaged in battles of fire against holy men.<sup>13</sup> In chapter 11, a man in despair for alcohol makes a pact with the Devil to maintain his addiction, and as in some of the portrayals of the Devil mentioned in *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, the Devil appears to the alcoholic man disguised as an old man: “E ele, estando desesperado, veeo a ele o diaboo em semelhança duu homem velho e disse-lhe: Vai tu aa tavern e eu te darei dinheiros que te avondem por tal que dees aazo aos outros que bevam

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<sup>11</sup> “... *Orto do Esposo* tem um título alegórico, sendo Jesus Cristo o esposo e as Sagradas Escrituras seu orto. Para o povo medieval, acostumado havia muito tempo ao simbolismo bíblico, principalmente o dos Cantares de Salomão, o nome *Orto do Esposo* era particularmente significativo” (Williams 202).

<sup>12</sup> “Para o homem medieval, o *exemplum* constitui uma alternativa à visão espiritual imediata, aquilo que na terminologia monástica recebeu a designação de *theoria*, termo que, neste contexto intelectual, se aplica à visão directa da divindade, do tipo da que Moisés experimentou sobre a montanha, mas que é extremamente rara, sendo reservada a visões extáticas ou proféticas. Ao fornecer uma descrição visual daquilo que mentalmente apenas se pode alcançar por alusão, o *exemplum* possibilita uma visão corporal que se substitui a uma forma de visão perdida ou só possível a alguns eleitos ou em situações excepcionais, não se confundido, no considerar três tipos de visão no sistema medieval exemplar – divina *theoria* (visão imediata de Deus), visão mental e visão corporal” (Morais XIV).

<sup>13</sup> “Depois que os angios disserom esto a aquele sancto homem, teve ele mentes e vio os demões que andavam voando em aqueles fogos e fazendo batalhas contra os sanctos homees. E uu daqueles demões lançou sobre Furseu ua vestidura” (*Horto* 86).

mais” (*Horto* 119). The moral teaching is that “...parece que o beber é laço pera cairem as almas em perdiçom” (119).

There are many other representations of the Devil in book four of *Orto do Esposo*, as the Devil who transforms himself into a butler to teach a lesson to the rich (chapter 11), the Devil who protects a vain young woman (Chapter 20), and the Devil who worked for a rich man, married his hostile daughter and after the struggles of a difficult marriage decided to return to Hell for a better life (Chapter 61). Although there are other narratives that include representations of the Devil and of Hell in *Orto do Esposo*, the message remains the same, it aims to provide a moral lesson framed in the medieval genre of *exemplum* mentioned earlier.

Other noteworthy example in Portuguese medieval literature is the *Visão de Túndalo* (*Vision of Tundale*), written originally by Marcus, an Irish Benedictine monk in 1149 and translated to various languages; the Portuguese translation dates from the end of the fourteenth century or beginning of the fifteenth. As in Dante’s *Inferno* and in Gil Vicente’s play *Trilogia das Barcas*, this manuscript explores the afterlife world in Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. The narrative describes the travels of the knight Túndalo, who is accompanied by an angel in his adventure.

In the late Portuguese Medieval literature and beginning of Renaissance, Gil Vicente’s play *Trilogia das Barcas* (1517) resembles Dante’s trilogy *Divina Commedia* (1321). In *Auto da Barca do Inferno*, an Angel and the Devil conduct the judgment of several social types in which only four knights and a *parvo* are saved. All the others end up

on the *Barca do Inferno* or the *Barca do Purgatório*. Gil Vicente's trilogy is usually compared to Lucian of Samosata's satiric play, *Dialogue of the Dead* (AD 125 – AD 180).

It is the representations of the Devil in Cordel literature (*Literatura de Cordel* or *folhetos*) that had probably the most impact on the *Nordeste* of Brazil.<sup>14</sup> Mainly because of its popular language register and low cost, the *folhetos*, which started their long tradition during the Middle Ages in Europe, are still an important component in the literature and oral tradition of the Brazilian *sertões*. As Candace Slater states in her 1982 book, *Stories on a String*, "Many of the themes that their poorly educated authors continue to rework date back to long before Cabral laid eyes on Brazil in 1500. This pamphlet literature is, however, also a distinctively national legacy. For almost a century, these stories have been the principal reading matter for the lower classes in the Brazilian Northeast..." (xiii). This was certainly the case of the inhabitants of Canudos at the end of the nineteenth century, as reported in studies by historians José Calasans, Sílvio Romero, and José Silva. Through *folhetos*, the *conselheiristas* maintained their oral traditions about their mystical beliefs, including the myth of D. Sebastião, the miracles attributed to Conselheiro, and among other beliefs, the myths related to Salvation, Hell and the Devil, as we can see in the verses below from the anonymous poetry of *Cancioneiro Histórico de Canudos*, compiled by José Silva:

Quem ouvir e não aprender

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<sup>14</sup> "Denominados *libri popolari* em Itália, *volksbücher* na Alemanha, *chapbooks* em Inglaterra, *livrets bleus* (devido à cor da capa) ou *livrets de colportage* em França, aplicando-se-lhes neste país a designação genérica de *littérature de colportage*, *pliegos sueltos* (e *literatura de cordel*) em Espanha, *folhetos* em Portugal (onde também lhes corresponde a expressão *literatura de cordel*) e no Brasil, esses produtos inserem-se num mercado colateral de impressos escoados a um baixo preço, com as vantagens editoriais e económicas das técnicas próprias da grande distribuição: expansão célebre e progressiva num extenso circuito de vendas" (Nogueira, *Literatura* 8).

Quem Souber e não ensinar

No dia do juízo

Sua alma penará (61)

The law of the Devil (*a lei do cão*) appears with certain frequency in the *Cancioneiro Histórico de Canudos*, in a reference to the republican laws as evil. The excerpt below references the election of the Brazilian president, whom the *conselheiristas* associate with the Devil:

Bem desgraçados são eles

Por fazerem eleição

Abatendo a lei de Deus

Suspendendo a lei do cão (78)

In addition to the *folhetos* about the events in Canudos, the Cordel literature portrayed extensively the image of the Devil, as André Nunes Nascimento points out in the historiography of the Devil by analyzing three major *folhetos* from the twentieth century: Manoel D'almeida Filho's *A mulher que enganou o Diabo*, José Pacheco's *A Chegada de Lampião no Inferno*, and Leandro de Gomes de Barros's *Peleja de Manoel Riachão com o Diabo*.

André Nunes Nascimento notes that the Devil presents a comical perception in the poetry abovementioned, in which he is generally defeated by the astuteness of the *sertanejo*. Nascimento explains that the Devil is part of the imaginary of the *sertanejos* and the popular stories represent the popular Catholicism of the *sertões*, which according to him differs from the traditional stories of the Devil in mainstream Catholicism: "As



popularizações da imagem demoníaca, recheadas das nuances do imaginário nordestino, provocam um afastamento, no que diz respeito às construções diabólicas, dos preceitos cristãos tradicionais” (7). We do not agree completely with Nascimento’s position, since one sees also the humor element in medieval narrations of the Devil, as in the example of the story in chapter 61 of *Orto do Esposo*, mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, the images of the Devil explored in the *folhetos* are part of the cultural world of the *sertanejos*. A *Chegada de Lampião no Inferno* illustrates the humor of the stories analyzed by Nascimento; it plays with the idea that Lampião - the most famous bandit leader during the 1920’s and 1930’s in the *sertões*, a type of folk-hero - is not accepted in Hell for being worse than the sinners that the Devil is willing to accept. The verses below narrate the conversation of Satan with the Hell gate keeper, asking him to refuse Lampião’s entrance:

Não senhor Satanás disse  
vá dizer que vá embora  
só me chega gente ruim  
eu ando meio caipora  
eu já estou com vontade  
de botar mais da metade  
dos que têm aqui pra fora (Pacheco)

As the narrative continues, Lampião forces his entrance in Hell and engages in a battle against Satan and demons; then after being defeated, Lampião is expelled from Hell. Since he cannot find a home in Hell or Heaven, the narrator suggests that Lampião has

certainly ended up in the *sertão*: “No inferno não ficou/No céu também não chegou/ por certo está no sertão” (Pacheco).

In *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948), Ernst Curtius shows the representation of the Devil in the anonymous text *Panegyrico por la poesia*, which appeared in Seville in 1627.<sup>15</sup> The Spanish theological art-theory text, as Curtius explains: “propounds some absurd ideas, such as that the Devil writes poetry” (547). The unknown author refers to Lucifer as a poet. According to his theology: “The Bible contains the perfect poetry (“lo más culto de la Poesia”)” (556). The Spanish author explains that Cyril of Alexandria, Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine, and Cassiodorus taught that all the poetic styles (meters, figures, tropes) steam from the Bible. Also, after the creation of the world, the first poets to appear were Lucifer and the angels who praised God in hymns (Job 38:4 and 7) (Curtius 556).<sup>16</sup> The unknown author defends that the Devil was a poet who composed the oracles: “Though once, when he [the Devil] was present in the body of a man possessed, he was ordered by the exorcist to recite some verses and made a mistake in one stanza, as is well attested, ‘it was only because he wished to do so, not from ignorance’” (Curtius 556-57).

The representations of the Devil in the greatest works of European literature have had an extensive impact on various forms of arts. They also contributed to the

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<sup>15</sup> *Panegyrico por la poesia* is not an expressive work of literature. Our interest in it is only because of its unusual representation of the Devil as a poet. “Menéndez y Pelayo mentions it in a note among seventeenth-century works of literary theory which deserved mention “but not analysis” (Curtius 547).

<sup>16</sup> Job 38:4 -7 (Authorized King James Version – AKJV):  
4 “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?  
Declare, if thou hast understanding.  
7 When the morning stars sang together,  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (709-10)

popularization of myths about the Devil, as in the case of Goethe's *Faust*, and the visualizations of Hell, as in Dantes' *Inferno*. The European imaginary has constructed an image of the Devil, not only from the Biblical stories, but also from high literature, visual arts, music, folk tales, myths, and oral tradition, among other sources. In music, for instance, Goethe's *Faust* inspired the composition of Schubert's haunting song *Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel* (1814) and Charles Gounod's opera *Faust* (1859).<sup>17</sup> In the visual arts, Dante's *Inferno* inspired the portraying of Minos and Charon being dragged to Hell in Michelangelo's fresco *The Last Judgment* (1541).<sup>18</sup> The varying portrayals of the Devil in European literatures and arts added new nuances to the biblical images of the Devil in the European imaginary, which would then be brought to Brazil by the colonizers.

Furthermore, the figure of the Devil is still of impact in more recent literature, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of Baskervilles*; John Conrad's *Dark Heart*; and in Riobaldo's ambiguous pact with the Devil in Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas*.

The images of the Devil were not created by the *sertanejos per se*. Nonetheless, Euclides da Cunha argues that the *sertanejos* were easily influenced by mysticism, which would then contribute to their belief in the personification of the Devil.

In order to understand Antônio Conselheiro the man, Euclides da Cunha starts the second section of *Os sertões (O Homem)* by explaining the men of the Brazilian backlands.

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<sup>17</sup> Other novels were also based on the myth of Faust, including: Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1604), Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus* (1947), and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (1967).

<sup>18</sup> The 2003 publication of Dante's *Inferno* edited by Peter Bondanella lists a number of works of art inspired by Dante's play, among them the illustrations of the *Divina Commedia* by several artists: Gustave Doré, Sandro Botticelli, William Blake, Amos Nattini; and the wood engravings of Salvador Dalí in celebration of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dante's birth (1265).

<sup>19</sup> He characterizes the religion of the *sertanejo* as a mestizo-religion. For Euclides, the *sertanejo* is easily influenced by superstitions, even the most bizarre of them: “É o homem primitivo, audacioso e forte, mas ao mesmo tempo crédulo, deixando-se facilmente arrebatar pelas superstições mais absurdas. Uma análise destas revelaria a fusão de estádios emocionais distintos. A sua religião é, como ele – mestiça” (238). Such explanation helps justify the credulity that *conselheiristas* had in the teachings of their leader, following the lifestyle imposed by him. Euclides explains the *sertanejos*’ beliefs as part of their own formation, characterized by the mixture of race, which translates to a tendency to accept several religious manifestations, such as Kabbalistic rituals, visions, fantastic manifestations, prophecies, pious pilgrimages, penitence, and other religious practices (*Os Sertões* 239). It is no coincidence then that Euclides da Cunha mentions the inclination of the *sertanejo* to believe in the prophecies of what he refers to as insane messiahs. This is exactly how Antônio Conselheiro is characterized in *Os Sertões*: as an insane man.

Perhaps, a contradictory argument to the fact that the *sertanejos*’ religiosity comes from their mixed race is the fact that most of the legends and religious practices that the *sertanejos* follow are rooted in the European tradition. Antônio Conselheiro, in particular, preached mostly the religious content of the Biblical readings published in Portugal, as we will see further in this dissertation. The representation of the Devil comes in great part from those texts.

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<sup>19</sup> This section covers the genesis of the men in the north of Brazil: *vaqueiro*, *sertanejo*, *jagunço*, *gaúcho*, and the life of Antônio Conselheiro. For the scope of this thesis, the main focus is on the *sertanejo* and in Antônio Conselheiro.

Euclides da Cunha describes the *sertanejo* as someone who believes in all kinds of evil-haunting and all temptations from the Devil: “ ... todas as *tentações do maldito* ou do diabo – esse trágico emissário dos rancores celestes na terra” (*Os Sertões* 238). He goes on listing several legends that are alive in the imagination of the *sertanejo*: *caapora*, diabolic *sacis*, wolf man, and *mulas-sem-cabeça* (238).<sup>20</sup>

In *Geografia dos Mitos Brasileiros* (1945), Câmara Cascudo explains that despite the expressive influence of Africa in Bahia, most of the popular myths come from European and Indigenous roots:

Na Bahia os mitos de maior divulgação pertencem aos europeus e indígenas. São o Lobisomem, a Mula-sem-cabeça, o Batatão, Batatá ou Biatatá, as Mães d’águas, confundidas com os cultos iurubás, o Zumbi que é uma espécie de Curupira ou de feiticeiro, etc. Os mitos locais e secundários são mosaicos, reconhecíveis as procedências na coloração complexa do entalhado. (21)<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the representations of the Devil were not part of the indigenous repertoire of myths, they were introduced to the indigenous people by the European colonizers with the intent of catechizing them. This was the case of the myth of Jurupari-

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<sup>20</sup> “Resumo dos caracteres físicos e fisiológicos das raças de que surge, sumaria-lhes identicamente as qualidades morais. É um índice da vida de três povos. E as suas crenças singulares traduzem essa aproximação violenta de tendências distintas. É desnecessário descrevê-las. As lendas arrepiadoras do *caapora* travesso e maldoso, atravessando célebre, montado em caititu arisco, as chapadas desertas, nas noites misteriosas de luares claros; os *sacis* diabólicos, de barrete vermelho à cabeça, assaltando o viandante retardatário, nas noites aziagas das sextas-feiras, de parceria com os lobisomens e *mulas-sem-cabeça*...” (Cunha, *Os Sertões* 238).

<sup>21</sup> Throughout this dissertation I have chosen to adopt the current orthography of Portuguese in the quotes that are in the body of the text. For the quotes in the footnote I have kept the original orthography of the texts.

Diabo. The Jesuits, in order to promote Christianity, made an association between God and Tupã. Before that, the indigenous tribes did not have an entity which was considered God under the interpretation of the *cronistas*: “Não conheciam Deus. Era o depoimento unânime dos cronistas” (Casculo 83). Câmara Casculo mentions several of them: Friar Vicente do Salvador, Father Manuel da Nobrega, Jean de Léry, and others. It is important to keep in mind that the *cronistas* were referring to God as the Biblical God. If the sun was a God for the indigenous population, this was certainly not the kind of God that the *cronistas* would consider valid.

The legend of Jurupari was born out of a conscious religious decision to counterbalance the presence of Tupã: “jurupari foi escolhido para incarnar a personalidade demoníaca e responder por todos os malefícios causados às tribos” (Casculo 84). The Jesuits had created a religious model within an indigenous framework: Tupã and Jurupari, representing good and bad, moral and immoral, God and the Devil.

The idea of the Devil and of hell was not inherent to the language of the tribes in Brazil, neither was the concept of hell part of the indigenous mentality, as Luís da Câmara Casculo points out:

O indígena não sabia o que vinha a ser inferno. Ignorava o fogo-satânico, o demônio, os tormentos causados pela combustão do enxofre. Foi preciso adaptar tudo. Jurupari ficou sendo um radical. *Jurupari-tatá*, fogo-de-Jurupari, é o fogo-eterno. *Jurupari-tatá-pora*, morador do fogo de Jurupari, era o Diabo. O circunlóquio denuncia a inexistência do termo e sua ideia para a mentalidade indígena. Para o inferno o trabalho ainda devia ter sido

maior. Arranjou-se *Jurupari-tatá-retama*, a região do lugar do fogo de Jurupari. Esse vocabulário (registrado em Stradelli) é trabalho intelectual, erudito, artificial. Surgiu para a função religiosa. Não pertencera ao linguajar de nenhuma tribo. (86)

In the centuries to come, different connotations of the concepts of hell and the Devil would emerge within the indigenous populations of Brazil.<sup>22</sup> It was not, however, a linear process, Jurupari was taken by some tribes as part of their rituals and sometimes assuming the position of a God. Some indigenous rituals involved the use of maracas by Pagés, drinking, dancing, and scourging each other with religious practices that would also include eroticism, which was certainly not the intention of the Jesuits (Casudo 88).

Another very popular legend in the *sertão* is the Caapora (or Caipora). In Tupi, it means: “habitante do mato” or “o que contem o mato” (Casudo 130). Caapora is the myth of a woman - especially in the Northeast - or a man that rides a wild pig and protects nature, having the power to resurrect dead animals. It is the protector of the forests and it is not usually associated with the Devil. In *Os Sertões*, Euclides describes Caapora as a man: “travesso e maldoso, atravessando célere, montado em caititu arisco, as chapadas desertas, nas noites misteriosas de luas claros” (Casudo 238). There is a correct perception in Euclides da Cunha’s description. Even if Caapora is not associated with the Devil *per se*, it helps to picture the fear of the *sertanejo* for unknown creatures; legends

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<sup>22</sup> “As orações em tupi, escritas pelos padres, mencionam sempre Tupã como Deus. É a mesma historia cristã. Filho de mulher virgem, de nome Maria, Tupã não casou, é puro, simples e bom, ama o pobre e está morando acima das estrelas, no alto dum trono, cercado de Maratás (santos)” (Casudo 84).

that are real for the fear they instigate in the population of the backlands. These legends are all part of the imaginary of the *sertanejos*.

Saci or Saci-Pererê is a legend that is widespread in the Brazilian territory as a folkloric figure of a magic black elf with one leg only. Saci was initially a myth from the South of Brazil that extended to the other areas of the country. In the North-East region, the concept of Sacis was modified, incorporating elements of other myths, such as Curupira and Caapora (Casculo 151). It seems, however, that the origin of this myth can be found in classic European fables, as the Ciapodos, Monocoles, and Trolls. One of these fables originates in the twelfth century Hildesheim, in Saxe, where an elf by the name Hecdakin lived peacefully and was known as “espírito do boné,” a red cap that he would never remove from his head (152). There is also an account of a Saci that belongs to Portuguese folklore. The Portuguese Saci used a red hood “carapuça vermelha”, which is one of the most common names for the Devil in Portugal according to J. Leite de Vasconcelos in *Tradições Populares de Portugal* (152). In the *sertão*, Saci is known for going after the cattle at night, riding horses, and sucking their blood. The day after, the animals look drained and exhausted. Saci is also notorious for his trickery: if he finds travelers at night, he whistles in their ears and makes their journey difficult by riding the animal with them during the rest of the night (Casculo 157). The *sertanejo*, imbibed in superstitions, had his solution to deal with Saci: “O sertanejo premune-se contra esses malefícios pendurando-lhes [aos animais] ao pescoço um rosário de capim ou um bentinho” (Barroso 156).

Among the several legends, Mboi-tatá is worth mentioning. Its name translates as “cobra de fogo” (Casculo 163). The fire is part of a universal myth: “O fogo-fátuo é um



tema universal do folclore e não há país que desconheça narrativas que procuram justificar-lhe a corrida noturna e coruscante” (164). In the North-East of Brazil, Mboi-tatá is known as Batatão, the protector of the fields. The legend says that Batatão follows the arsonists, killing them with their own fear or by fire (165).

When describing the religiosity of the *sertanejos*, Euclides da Cunha reflects the scientific views of his time justifying the mestizo-religion as a result of the mix of three peoples (Portuguese, native-Brazilians, and Africans). The result is a melting of beliefs: “Não seria difícil caracterizá-las como uma mestiçagem de crenças” (*Os Sertões* 239). The legends mentioned before would be the outcome of this miscegenation of credulities. Euclides da Cunha is giving an account of the mysticism of the *sertanejos* that is based on historical facts. A large number of the myths in the Northeast region of Brazil and of the rest of the Brazilian territory have their roots in Europe as mentioned before. These myths were imported to Brazil and adapted to Brazilian realities. In the case of the indigenous populations, the Portuguese Jesuits and colonizers forged the concept of hell and of the Devil, which were not part of indigenous beliefs. The legends of *mula-sem-cabeça* and *lobisomem*, for instance, also have their origins in much older legends from Europe. The wolfman (*lobisomen*) comes from the Greek classic tradition. Oliveira Martins explains how the wolfman is seen in the Portuguese imaginary: “Os traços com que a imaginação do nosso povo retratou o Lobisomem são duplos, porque também essa criatura infeliz, conforme o nome o mostra, é dual... Nasce-se Lobisomem: em certos lugares são os filhos do incesto” (Martins, *Sistema dos Mitos* 294-95).

Before getting to the life of Antônio Conselheiro in *Os sertões*, Euclides da Cunha outlines the events in the colonization of Brazil that had an impact on the religiosity of the *sertanejos* which involves the mix of the anthropomorphism of the savage with African animism.<sup>23</sup> It also includes: “o próprio aspecto emocional da raça superior, na época do descobrimento e da colonização” (239). He is referring to what would be an aspect that had survived its time and remained untouched in the isolated area of the backlands of Brazil. The author believes it to be an important case of atavism in history: “Este ultimo é um caso notável de atavismo, na história” (239). Euclides da Cunha makes a parallel between the fanaticism of the *sertanejos* and the decline of Portuguese civilization at the end of the sixteenth century under the monarchy of D. Manuel III:

Considerando as agitações religiosas do sertão e os evangelizadores e messias singulares, que, intermitentemente, o atravessam, ascetas mortificados de flagícios, encaçados sempre pelos sequazes numerosos que fanatizam, que arrastam, que dominam, que endoidecem – espontaneamente recordamos a fase mais crítica da alma portuguesa, a partir do final do século XVI, quando, depois de haver por momentos centralizado a história, o mais interessante dos povos caiu, de súbito, em decomposição rápida, mal disfarçada pela corte oriental de D. Manuel.

(*Os Sertões* 239)

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<sup>23</sup> “Antropismo: antropomorfismo ou sistema consistente em imaginar os deuses ou as coisas dotados de qualidades humanas. Animismo: tendência a considerar todos os seres da natureza como dotados de vida e capazes de agir conforme uma finalidade” (*Os Sertões* 239).

Euclides da Cunha explains that during the colonization of Brazil and under the monarchy of D. João III there was an overwhelming influence of ideas from the Middle Ages that crystalized in the Catholic Church.<sup>24</sup> Such influence had encountered in the backlands of Brazil a place to be cultivated. Because of its geographic and cultural isolation from the rest of the country, the Brazilian backlands would keep the religious practices that characterized the decline of Portuguese civilization. Euclides identifies the *sertões* as a place which was three hundred years behind the rest of civilization as it existed on the coast of Brazil.

Euclides da Cunha bases his analysis on a study by the Portuguese historian Oliveira Martins in *História de Portugal*, explaining that the colonization of Brazil was intensively carried out during the monarchy of D. João III in a moment of “completo desequilíbrio moral,” quoting Oliveira Martins: “todos os terrores da Idade Média tinham cristalizado no catolicismo peninsular” (*Os Sertões* 239).

In *História de Portugal*, Oliveira Martins describes the court of D. Manuel as eccentric and vain. In a chapter of Martins’ book entitled: *A Catástrofe*, the Portuguese historian portrays in detail the popular revolt in Lisbon in 1506 against the Jews. This revolt was marked by a violent and bloody confrontation that killed over two thousand Jews in a matter of days: “Três dias e duas noites durou a orgia; e no fim contavam-se mais de trezentas pessoas queimadas, mais de duas mil mortas, e não se sabe quantas mulheres, chorando com amargura a sua viuvez, a sua orfandade, a sua miséria, a sua desonra”

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<sup>24</sup> “O povoamento do Brasil fez-se, intenso, com d. João III, precisamente no fastígio de completo desequilíbrio moral, quando “todos os terrores da Idade Média tinham cristalizado no catolicismo peninsular” (Cunha, *Os Sertões* 297).

(Martins, *História* 2: 17). This revolt against the Jews was instigated by two friars who were later hanged as punishment ordered by the king. However, the real catastrophe that gave the name to this section of Oliveira Martin's book was the decline of Portugal as a strong nation and its unification to Castile in 1581.

One could ask: what are the implications of the Portuguese monarchy's crisis in the Brazilian backlands? This is one of the connections between the events in Portugal in the first part of the sixteenth century and in the Brazilian *sertão* of Antônio Conselheiro: in both places there existed a large population dying of hunger and in hopes of finding a better life elsewhere. In the case of the Brazilian backlands, the cyclical droughts that assailed the *sertão* forced the *sertanejo* to emigrate to other parts of the country, normally to the coast. In Portugal there were also droughts; the drought of 1521 caused hunger and deaths: "Fomes sucessivas tinham dizimado também a população. Em todo o ano de 21 não choveu, e no seguinte a miséria lavrava por todo o reino. Lisboa regurgitava de pobres e morria gente de fome pelas ruas, sob os alpendres das casas" (Martins, *História* 2: 26). In addition, Portugal experienced a strong emigration to India promoted by the commerce of spices, around eight thousand people per year, with an estimate that the Portuguese population had dropped by half, from two million people to one million people during the monarchy of D. João III (1521-51).

The religious intensification, fanaticism, and proliferation of messianic figures was a reflection of desperate times brought about by the droughts and the hunger of both the Portuguese population in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and in the Brazilian *sertões* of Antônio Conselheiro. Fanaticism and mysticism were the rule in both scenarios. This holds

true in the history of the *sertões* and also in Portugal during the Aviz Dynasty (1500-1580), as Oliveira Martins describes:

Se a nobreza ingênita e o orgulho de caráter se tinham transformado em uma vaidade miserável, também a doença entrara na fé. A devoção, tornando-se em hipocrisia ingênua, e o misticismo em embriaguez carnal, tinham exagerado o número dos frades e clérigos, por não haver mais farta nem rendosa vida:

Somos mais frades que a terra

Sem conto na cristandade. (*História 2: 29*)

The droughts and hunger in the first half of the sixteenth century intensified the mysticism of the Portuguese population. In addition to this, another factor had an overwhelming impact in the religious fanaticism of the time, especially in regards to the image of the Devil: the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal.

The Inquisition was officially established in Portugal in May of 1536, with its headquarters in Évora, where the Portuguese Court resided. D. João III had his request for the Inquisition approved by Pope Paul III. The Inquisition attributed the behavior of those accused to the influence of demons, defining their actions as manipulations from the Devil and implanting the idea of a pact with the Devil. This would result in torture and forced confessions where the inquisitors convinced the victims that they were possessed by the Devil: “... começavam [os condenados] a crer-se monstros, a acreditar em tudo aquilo de que eram acusados: tinham visto o diabo em pessoa, tinham-lhe vendido a alma, tinham partido com um machado um crucifixo, etc.” (Martins, *História 2: 34*).

The image of the Devil presented in Oliveira Martin's narration is part of the first unofficial condemnation of the Inquisition in Lisbon in September of 1540. It included the presence of King D. João III.<sup>25</sup> Among the accused, a man was condemned as a sorcerer for learning from the Devil how to cure people using the book of St. Cyprian. Two women were condemned as witches for interacting with the Devil – who would appear during the day as a black cat and at night as human in the form of a dwarf. The nominated witches were accused of going to a river with the Devil where other witches would be among other demons as well and after bathing together they would perform sexual acts with the Devil (Martins, *História 2*: 39).<sup>26</sup>

The variety of representations of the Devil during the time of the Inquisition in Portugal is reflected in the legends of the Devil in the Brazilian backlands. Its importance is fundamental to understand Antônio Conselheiro's apocalyptic message and his claim that republicans represented the Devil. His religious reasoning followed traces of the inquisitors in Portugal, who associated men and women as sorcerers and witches that had made pacts with the Devil.

Euclides da Cunha makes a strong connection between the religious fanaticism in Portugal at the end of the sixteenth century and the religious practices in the *sertões*. The

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<sup>25</sup> This event happened before the Inquisition had been officially approved by the Pope (Martins, *História 2*: 35).

<sup>26</sup> “O diabo aparecera a um, e ensinára-lhe as curas infernaes, pelo livro de S. Cypriano. Sangrava os doentes na testa, com alfinetes... A's bruxas o diabo aparecia de dia sob a fôrma de um gato preto, e de noite, de fôrma humana de homem pequeno; assim o dizia gravemente a sentença, com o depoimento das testemunhas. A bruxa saía com o demonio, e iam juntos a um rio, onde as outras estavam com outros demonios; e depois de se banharem tinham coito com circustancias lascivas e abomináveis: a sentença enumerava-as, e a devassidão da côrte e do povo percebia-as, commentava-as. De volta do sabbath, de madrugada, as bruxas entravam invisivelmente nas casas, perseguindo as familias honestas e piedosas” (Martins, *História 2*: 38-39).

main reason for this is that: “O povoamento do Brasil fez-se, intenso, com D. João III, precisamente no fastígio de completo desequilíbrio moral” (*Os Sertões* 239). As mentioned previously, the geographic and cultural isolation of the Brazilian backlands would have contributed to the conservation of religious beliefs that belonged to sixteenth-century-Portugal and to the Middle Ages. The following passage of *Os Sertões* explains in details the origins of religious fanaticism in the Brazilian backlands:

Uma grande herança de abusões extravagantes, extinta na orla marítima pelo influxo modificador de outras crenças e raças, no sertão ficou intacta. Trouxeram-na as gentes impressionáveis, que afluíram para a nossa terra, depois de desfeito no Oriente o sonho miraculoso da Índia. Vinham cheias daquele misticismo feroz, em que o fervor religioso reverberava à candência forte das fogueiras inquisitoriais, lavrando intensas na Península. Eram parcelas do mesmo povo que em Lisboa, sob a obsessão dolorosa dos milagres e assalto de súbitas alucinações, via sob o paço dos reis, ataúdes agoureiros, línguas de flamas misteriosas, catervas de mouros de albornozes brancos, passando processionalmente; combates paladinos nas alturas... E da mesma gente que após Alcácer-Quibir, em plena “caquexia nacional”, segundo o dizer vigoroso de Oliveira Martins, procurava, ante a ruína iminente, como salvação única, a fórmula superior das esperanças messiânicas. (240)

The religious climate in Portugal in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was surrounded by mysticism and fanaticism. The Inquisition performed some of the killings of ‘sinners’ in public spaces

as part of a process that would start with a procession headed by armed colliers with pikes and muskets, followed by members of the Catholic Church carrying the banner of the Inquisition, followed then by honored members of society and family members of the convicted, and those sentenced following behind. First came the bodies of the ones already executed, followed by those who were still alive and would be either forgiven or condemned to death by fire in the *Auto da Fé*. Their sentences were read; the ones condemned to death by fire were tied to poles and the colliers would set fire to the firewood. Members of the crowd would then throw stones and other items at the ‘sinner’, as in the description of the killing of a sorcerer in 1540: “Os rapazes e mulheres da Ribeira, salteando-o com paus e garranchos, arrancaram-lhe um olho. Atiravam pedras, pregos e tudo; e faziam-lhe feridas por onde escorria sangue: tinha a cabeça aberta e um beijo rasgado” (Martins, *História* 2: 40).

Nonetheless, executions by fire were not introduced to Portugal by the Inquisition, as it had already been used in Portugal before the Inquisition was established as part of its own court system (Martins, *História* 2: 31).<sup>27</sup>

Oliveira Martins characterizes King D. João III as “um chefe de religião coroadado,” given his religious devotion and fanaticism, and also as “o fundador da colonização do Brasil” (*História* 2:41).<sup>28</sup> Thus, the government of the State was compromised by the

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<sup>27</sup> “O que identificam a crueldade com o habito dos dominicos, não se lembra de que antes de haver Inquisição, quando os processos de heresia corriam pelas mãos dos bispos, a crueldade era tão grande como foi depois. Em 1548, em Gôa, sob o governo de Martim Affonso de Souza, que presidia com o seu ouvidor é meza secular, e que por parte da justiça civil confirmou a sentença: em 1548, dizíamos, o arcebispo, predecessor dos inquisidores, condemnava um réu de heresia de ser queimado vivo, consentindo, porém, piedosamente, que, se retractasse... o afogassem” (Martins, *História* 2: 32).

<sup>28</sup> See *O Brazil e as colônias Port.* (2<sup>a</sup> ed.) 6-15 as quoted by Oliveira Martins.



religious fanaticism of the king. Oliveira Martins describes the Court of D. João III and his subjects as being blinded by religion: “Os costumes beatos tornavam a gente sonâmbula, cegando-lhe a vista” (42). It was the most propitious environment for the appearance of miracles and representations of the Devil: “Mas esta doença da corte era a doença de todo o reino: os doidos que apareciam por toda a parte a fazer milagres ou endemoninhados, traduzindo a loucura universal de um povo” (42).

### ***Satanás no Sertão, Pedra Bonita***

In *História Secreta do Brasil* (1937), Gustavo Barroso starts chapter XIII (*O reino encantado do Diabo*) with: “Satanás não andou solto unicamente na Paulicéia. No tempo da Regência, sua ação se estendeu aos sertões nordestinos, numa região em que a mão da natureza erguera, por estranha e curiosa coincidência, duas altas colunas de pedra, que pareciam as de uma colossal loja maçônica em campo raso...” (311). The historian explains the case of satanic rituals performed in Pedra Bonita, located in the interior of the state of Pernambuco and also mentioned by Euclides da Cunha in *Os Sertões*.

Euclides describes the ritual in Pedra Bonita as: “sinistras solenidades religiosas dos Ashanti” (*Os Sertões* 244). The Ashanti people are from the region of Ghana in Mid-West Africa. Formed by several tribes, their religion has characteristics of animism and in the past included the practice of human sacrifices (244). Euclides identifies the events in Pedra Bonita in 1837 as the result of “*um frêmito de nevrose,*” a collective neurosis that involved the sacrifice of humans and dogs:

Em torno da ara monstruosa comprimiam-se as mães erguendo os filhos pequeninos e lutavam, procurando-lhes a primazia no sacrifício... O sangue espadanava sobre a rocha jorrando, acumulando-se em torno; e afirmam os jornais do tempo, em cópia tal que, depois de desfeita aquela lúgubre farsa, era impossível a permanência no lugar infeccionado. (*Os Sertões* 244)

Gustavo Barroso classifies these events as part of a satanic fanaticism that started in the region with João Antônio dos Santos, an old man who preached that D. Sebastião would resurrect when the rocks in Pedra Bonita were washed by human blood. Pedra Bonita attracted a group of fanatics living under the rule of the self-proclaimed king of “Reino Encantado”, João Ferreira. An unconventional society started to take shape. They practiced polygamy and participated in rituals involving songs, the consumption of a special wine made of *jurema* and *manacá*, and the smoke of tobacco in pipes (*cachimbos*).

Human sacrifices in Pedra Bonita were part of a ritual that promised their devotees a return in another life as young, white, and immortal. The human sacrifices happened only in three days, with the killing of thirty children, twelve men, eleven women, and fourteen dogs (Barroso 322). In a description that involves high levels of superstition, Gustavo Barroso identifies the ceremonies as satanic: “A depravação satânica é manifesta. Não é atoa que a Igreja denomina o demônio Pai da Mentira. O culto orgiaco foi o seu começo. O culto sangrento vai ser o seu fim” (319-20). Guided also by superstition and mysticism, historian Gustavo Barroso attests that the cult leader, João Ferreira, was possessed by the Devil and goes on to describe the human sacrifices in Pedra Bonita as a part of black magic and satanic rituals.

Nonetheless, both Euclides da Cunha and Gustavo Barroso have the same opinion on human-sacrifices in Pedra Bonita, arguing that the *sertanejo* is somewhat easily fanaticized, as in the words of Euclides: “A alma de um matuto é inerte ante as influências que a agitam. De acordo com estas pode ir de extrema brutalidade ao máximo devotamento” (*Os Sertões* 244).

Gustavo Barroso includes the copy of a telegram from the Republic of Liberia which was printed in the newspaper *O Globo* on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1937, as evidence of satanic societies in Africa:

Marshall, Liberia, 24 (U.P.) – O governo acaba de descobrir que as cerimônias de adoração do diabo, que ocupam as atenções de uma grande parte da população do sexo masculino, são a verdadeira causa da extraordinária escassez de arroz ultimamente verificada. Em vista disso, foram expedidas ordens severas no sentido de que as “escolas” do Diabo encerrem dentro de um mês as suas longas sessões, afim de que os seus membros possam voltar às fainas rurais.

Quando se produziu o declínio das safras de arroz, assumindo proporções alarmantes, as investigações realizadas pelas autoridades revelaram que a terça parte dos habitantes do sexo masculino da República negra estava no “bosque do Diabo”, e que alguns ali se achavam há cerca de cinco anos.

(332)

Barroso posits that Pedra Bonita was a secret satanic society as the one in Liberia described in the telegram above.

### ***Antônio Conselheiro, An Insane Messiah***

Euclides da Cunha depicts Antônio Conselheiro as an insane messiah: “Doente grave, só lhe pode ser aplicado o conceito da paranoia, de Tanzi e Riva” (*Os Sertões* 253). Conselheiro and his followers shared the belief that they were part of an apocalyptic world in which they idealized the notion of becoming martyrs and were willing to sacrifice their lives to save their souls. Euclides compares these “*desordens sertanejas*” of insane messiahs with instances of prophets in the Iberian Peninsula, such as the King of Penamacor, the King of Ericeira, Miguelinho, and Bandarra.<sup>29</sup>

The King of Penamacor was a potter (*oleiro*) who in 1584 walked in Serra da Estrela in Portugal, on the border with Spain, telling stories about the Moroccan War and proclaiming himself as D. Sebastião. He was captured by the Portuguese authorities, punished in public, and condemned to life in prison. The King of Ericeira was Mateus Álvares, a mason (*pedreiro*) who appeared in Serra de Sintra in 1585 and presented himself as D. Sebastião. He was also captured by the Portuguese authorities, had his right hand cut off for signing papers with the intention of presenting them as authentic royal documents and was later sentenced to death on the scaffold. Their stories are not very different from that of Antônio Conselheiro, with the exception that the messiah from the Brazilian *sertão* appeared in 1893. Just as the two Portuguese messiahs, Antônio Conselheiro was also a simple man who believed he was a prophet sent by God to save Christians from

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<sup>29</sup> “Os profetas, o Bandarra, e Simão Gomes, o *sapateiro-santo*, inspirados, cantavam a epopéia do heroe, e as condições em que viria a aparecer para redimir o seu povo: como na Judéa, tambem, o Christo fôra uma salvador da nação, antes de ser redentor das almas. Tambem o Christo portuguez havia de alargar o seu imperio por longes terras, e a sua edade seria a éra da redempção. Tambem o messianismo da Judéa fôra buscar ás lembranças proximas do reinado glorioso de Hyrcan a raiz positiva da formação aerea – como a pessoa do imberbe principe desgraçado era a raiz do edificio mystico portuguez” (Martins, *História* 2: 77).

demoniacal forces. Euclides da Cunha explains the distance of three hundred years as a result of the isolation of the society in the Brazilian backlands in relation to the rest of the world: “Esta justaposição histórica calca-se sobre três séculos. Mas é, exata, completa, sem dobrar. Imóvel o tempo sobre a rústica sociedade sertaneja, despeada do movimento geral da evolução humana” (*Os Sertões* 241).

Euclides also mentions that Sebastianism, extinct in Portugal, was still alive in the Brazilian backlands (*Os Sertões* 241).<sup>30</sup> Antônio Conselheiro was compared to D. Sebastião, as in the popular *Literatura de Cordel* verses, such as the one below:

Visita nos vem fazer  
Nosso rei D. Sebastião.  
Coitado daquele pobre  
Que estiver na lei do *cão!* (*Os Sertões* 320)

King D. Sebastião was seen as a messiah in Portugal. Oliveira Martins describes D. Sebastião as an insane king who little by little became aware of the nation’s need for a messiah, a position that he would then try to fit: “Vagamente percebia que a nação, desesperada, pedia um messias, e tinha para si talhado o papel de salvador” (Martins, *História* 2: 50). It was his role and his dubious death in the war against Africa which raised D. Sebastião to the status of a messiah. With the king’s death, Portugal was united with Castile and the Portuguese lost hope in their future, becoming, as Oliveira Martins calls “a quimera do messianismo,” a place where the only hope was a miracle: the return of D. Sebastião, whose body was never recovered and for that same reason, many thought he

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<sup>30</sup> “Nem lhe falta, para completar o símile, o misticismo político do *sebastianismo*. Extinto em Portugal, ele persiste todo, hoje, de modo singularmente impressionador, nos sertões do Norte” (Cunha, *Os Sertões* 241).

would still be alive. D. Sebastião became a symbol of hope: “O povo cristalizava os seus ideais, transfigurando o homem num símbolo das suas esperanças e desejos.” (Martins, *História 2*: 76). Thus, D. Sebastião became a myth, a national legend.

According to Gustavo Barroso, the myth of D. Sebastião was alive in the *sertão* of Pernambuco since 1819 (333). The population of Canudos was familiarized with Sebastianism, especially because of its diffusion through Cordel literature. Furthermore, it was part of the imagination of the *sertanejo* that Antônio Conselheiro was a messiah who had miraculous powers and was a religious visionary who could make prophecies about the future and defend the populations from the demoniacal forces, from *a lei do cão*.

Both places, sixteenth-century Portugal and the *sertão* of the nineteenth century, experienced a staggering number of deaths. Starting in 1569, Portugal was beset with the Great Plague which killed one third of the population of Lisbon, around 40,000 people (Martins, *História 47*, vol. II). Between 1877 and 1879, the Brazilian backlands suffered the most severe droughts in Brazilian history. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people died.<sup>31</sup> Given the despair and uncontrollable deaths, the population put their hopes in prophecies and in self-proclaimed messiahs. Kenneth Burke explains in *A Grammar of Motives* that although mysticism may happen at any period in history, during a time of confusion and skepticism there is the appearance of “mystical philosophies” as a general social manifestation. Burke defends that it is a mark of transition when the public does not know how life will end and when life has become weakened and disorganized.

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<sup>31</sup> Pompeu Sobrinho says that over 300,000 people died in the drought of 1877 (*O Problema das Secas* 19). Eloy de Souza speculates that it might have been around 500,000 deaths (*O Calvário das Secas* 23).

The mystic comes as an answer for the doubts regarding human purpose “by submerging himself in some vision of a *universal*, or *absolute* or *transcendent* purpose, with which he would identify himself” (288). In other words, mysticism is the unity of the individual with some cosmic or universal purpose (288).<sup>32</sup>

Oliveira Martins describes the mental state of the Portuguese as devastated by fear and with high hopes of miracles and superstitions: “A dureza das infelicidades d a pátria levava os espíritos ao estado de uma loucura febril, de uma superstição idiota, de um furor de devassidão, de medo e de extravagância. Tudo se acreditava possível, com o desvairamento do delírio” (*História* 2: 48). There were those who attributed this catastrophe in Portugal to revenge from God because the kings D. Manuel and D. João III had protected the Jews. There was also the popular belief that the catastrophe was an act of Satan.<sup>33</sup> This environment of religious fanaticism is also found in the Brazilian *sertão* of Antônio Conselheiro.

The *romarias* (pilgrimages) are an example of the extreme religious devotion of the *sertanejos*. With the great droughts (*as secas*), the population of the *sertões* hope for a miracle and for a better future to alleviate their suffering. Moved by their faith, they make promises to Catholic saints and participate in *romarias* which have become wide spread in the *sertões* of Brazil. An example of *romarias* is the one to the sanctuary Bom Jesus da Lapa

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<sup>32</sup> Burke refers to Tolstoy’s account for the drought that preceded his rebirth in the words of Tolstoy: “Is there in life any purpose which the inevitable death awaiting me does not undo and destroy?” (288).

<sup>33</sup> “Em julho e Agosto d’esse anno [1569] morriam setecentas pessoas por dia em Lisboa, e já não havia onde enterrar os cadaveres. Abriam-se valas, onde se lançavam aos cincoenta e mais de cada vez. Era uma doença fulminante; e sem duvida alguma um castigo do céu, pelos peccados dos christãos-novos; quando não era o maleficio dos bruxos, vendidos a sataná’s” (Martins, *História* 2: 46).

in the interior of Bahia. In 1691, the Bom Jesus da Lapa Cavern was declared a sanctuary by the Portuguese monk Francisco Mendonça Mar and has since received millions of *romeiros* (pilgrims). The pilgrimages have become more intense over the three hundred years since it started. It is estimated that in the year 2000 alone, the sanctuary of Bom Jesus da Lapa received over one million *romeiros*.<sup>34</sup> This is one of many examples of pilgrimages in Brazil, such as the *romarias* in Juazeiro do Norte (also in Bahia) in honor of Father Cícero (*Padim Cicho*) or the *romarias* of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, in Belém; Bom Jesus do Bonfim, in Salvador; and Nossa Senhora Aparecida, in Aparecida, São Paulo, just to mention some. Not too far from Canudos, the city of Monte Santo was also a center of *romarias* with the via-sacra to the top of the hill. In a telegram dated September 8, 1897, Euclides da Cunha describes the via-sacra in Monte Santo:

Quem sobe a longa via-sacra de três quilômetros, ladeada de capelas desde a base ate o cimo, do Monte Santo, compreende bem a tenacidade incoercível do sertanejo fanatizado. É dificilmente concebível o esforço despendido para o levantamento dessa maravilha dos sertões. (Cunha, *Diário* 168)

Euclides was surprised with the large scale of the via-sacra in Monte Santo. He saw it as a proof of the fanaticism of the *sertanejos*, a proof that these people were capable of constructing what Euclides calls one of these ‘wonders’ of the *sertões*. As Walnice Nogueira Galvão points out in *O Império de Belo Monte*: “legiões de beatos eram um espetáculo

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<sup>34</sup> According to the information on the official web-site for the sanctuary of Bom Jesus da Lapa ([www.bomjesusdalapa.org](http://www.bomjesusdalapa.org)): “No ano de 2000, o santuário foi visitado por mais de 1.200.000 romeiros e, em 2001, a Polícia Militar calcula que, no dia da festa, a cidade recebeu quase 300.000 pessoas.”



corrente no sertão”, and it continues to be so (65). Perhaps, Canudos itself would have become a place of *romarias*, if it was not for the military intervention of the Brazilian Government and the consequent destruction of the village.

### **The Millenarianism of Canudos**

To add momentum to the superstitious beliefs of *conselheiristas*, the proximity to the turn of the century stood out, and with the new millennium there were a number of apocalyptic predictions from self-proclaimed messiahs. Antônio Conselheiro preached the end of the world and the salvation of those who followed him to an eternal life. Euclides da Cunha transcribed in *Os sertões* Antônio Conselheiro’s famous passage from his notebooks:

... Em 1894 há de vir rebanhos mil correndo do centro da Praia para o sertão; então o sertão virará Praia e a Praia virará sertão.

Em 1897 haverá muito pasto e pouco rasto e um só Pastor e um só rebanho.

Em 1898 haverá muitos chapéus e poucas cabeças.

Em 1899 converterá-se as águas em sangue e o planeta há de aparecer no nascente com o raio do Sol que o ramo se confrontará com a terra e a terra em algum lugar se confrontará no céu...

Há de chover uma grande chuva de estrelas e aí será o fim do Mundo. Em 1901 se apagarão as luzes. Deus disse no Evangelho: eu tenho um rebanho que ando fora desse aprisco e é preciso que se reúnam, porque há um só Pastor e um só rebanho! (*Os Sertões* 277)

According to Conselheiro's millenarian predictions, in 1899 the waters would become blood and in 1901 the lights would be gone. In his readings of the scriptures, God had declared that there was only one flock and only one shepherd, suggesting that he was the one sent by God to save his followers. His message of salvation resembles the apocalyptic message from the Book of Mathew: "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

There is an element of fear that encouraged the *conselheiristas* to follow the lead of their messiah, the fear of going to hell and of losing one's soul forever. This is a crucial element in understanding the image of the Devil as the *conselheiristas* hoped for their salvation. This justifies the unconditional devotion of the *conselheiristas* to their leader. It also answers the question that was wisely raised by Machado de Assis in his chronicle of January 31, 1897: "Se na última batalha é certo haverem morrido novecentos deles e o resto não se despega de tal apóstolo, é que algum vínculo moral e fortíssimo os prende até a morte. Que vínculo é esse?" (qtd. in Lima, Euclides 21).

*Conselheiristas* were assuring their salvation by fighting the Devil in the Battle of Canudos. They believed that the End was approaching and those who persevered and had trust in Antônio Conselheiro and in God would then be saved, therefore death was a transition to Heaven. As Frank Kermode stated in *The Sense of an Ending*, those who believe in the Apocalypse, fear the end of times: "The End they imagine will reflect their irreducibly intermediary preoccupations. They fear it, and as far as we can see have always done so; the End is a figure for their own deaths" (7).

According to Kermode, the end of a millennium is the propitious moment for the end of the world or of epochs. The attraction for ends, in Kermode's words: "lies partly in their cyclical character – as we celebrate birthdays and other anniversaries – and partly in the fact that they mark or threaten a linear ending" (251). To give grave importance to centuries and millennia, one has to be part of a culture that accepts the Christian calendar, despite of other perfectly serviceable calendars (251).

In Conselheiro's preaching, the last years of the nineteenth-century are purposefully marking the stages for the end of the world, starting with the predictions for 1894, followed by the prediction of events for 1897, 1898, 1899, and 1901. The human desire for an end, argued by Kermode, associated with the predictions of Conselheiro, and the accounts for the end of the world in the scriptures justified the credulity of *conselheiristas*.

Certainly, the millenarian society of Canudos is not an isolated case. Millenarian activities have happened throughout history in many parts of the world and most notably in the late Middle Ages. In the contemporary world, there are well-documented cases of millenarian movements with apocalyptic ideologies that led them to acts of violence or of collective suicide. Among the many examples, there is the case of Jonestown in Guyana in 1978 where over 900 members of the Peoples Temple died in an act of collective suicide. Jonestown was established by a religious movement from California led by Jim Jones (Wallis 25). Another recent case of significance happened in Uganda in the spring of 2000

where 780 members of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (hereafter MRTCG) died in a sequence of murder-suicides (26).<sup>35</sup>

For *conselheiristas* the end of the world was preceded by a decadence of times as it was anticipated in the apocalyptic texts from the Bible. The decadence observed by Antônio Conselheiro was of moral values and also based on the fact that the Church was disassociated from the State in the republican system. Conselheiro saw the establishment of the republic as the consolidation of the Kingdom of Satan which implied the acceptance, for instance, of civil unions, which were by all means against the moral values preached by Conselheiro. For him, only the Church (the Catholic Church) had the power to unite a man and a woman under the blessing of God. In addition to civil unions, Conselheiro condemned the imposition of taxes from the Government and their new currency. Conselheiro preached that the Devil was a constant threat for Christians and one had to live a life of penitence, prayers, and modesty in order to be free from demoniacal forces. Walnice Nogueira Galvão highlights the importance of the image of the Devil and of human sacrifices in *O Império de Belo Monte*: “O Diabo está atento e para não se condenar à danação o homem deve praticar a ascese, a oração e a penitência. A ressurreição só é mencionada uma vez, enquanto a ênfase recai sobre a morte em seu aspecto sacrificial” (106). The ultimate sacrifice is dying in the name of God, fighting against the Devil. For *conselheiristas*, taking part in the Battle of Canudos guaranteed the salvation of their souls.

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<sup>35</sup> In “Millenarianism and Violence in the Contemporary World”, John Wallis lists other contemporary cases of violence related to apocalyptic and millenarian ideologies: The US Branch Davidians of the Seventh-Day Adventist in Waco, Texas; the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland, Quebec, and France (between 1994 and 1997); the Aum Shinrikyo in Japan (1995); and the Heaven’s Gate (1997).

Conselheiro's ideologies were rooted in the Catholic religion and most specifically in apocalyptic texts: The Book of Revelation, the Book of Mathew, and the Book of Daniel. Although his ideologies had serious political implications, they were rooted in his radical religious views and not in a political agenda in alliance with monarchists as most of the newspapers at the time had reported. Conselheiro was not supported by the Brazilian Monarchy, nor did he have any external help from other nations, which was another accusation on the part of the republicans. Instead, he was acting alone in the formation of his own fanatic religious society and for that reason a Marxist and communist reading of Canudos, as many scholars have incorrectly carried out, disregards the fanatic mission of Conselheiro of saving his followers' souls. Moreover, much of the content of Conselheiro's manuscripts involves retellings of Biblical stories and beliefs based on *Horas Marianas* and *Missão Abreviada*, as we will see in more details in the next chapter. Within this context, the representation of the Devil is a key component in understanding the Battle of Canudos.

If it wasn't for the association of the Devil with the republicans and the conviction that the *conselheiristas* were fighting demoniacal forces, perhaps the Battle of Canudos would not have happened, or it would not have endured for as long as it did. For the *conselheiristas* the only response to the attacks to their holy city was to fight back since they refused to consider turning themselves in or running away from the "demoniacal forces" of the republicans.

As Kermode puts forth, millenarianism is: "A radical way of making sense of the world" (29). The religious radicalism of Antônio Conselheiro is not an isolated case in time, as one can nowadays witness the several upheavals of radical religious groups around the

world. Furthermore, to understand the radical ways of making sense of the world is pivotal in dealing with radical religious groups. In the case of Canudos, their radical ways of understanding the world were intrinsically connected to the *conselheiristas'* acceptance that the world was approaching its End and that they were destined to fight the demoniacal forces of the Kingdom of Satan.

The notion of Apocalypse in the narrative of Antônio Conselheiro blends the tragedy of the battle upon the Village of Canudos with the dominance of the Devil. Kermode argues in *The Sense of an Ending* that the Apocalypse: “allows itself to be diffused, blended with other varieties of fiction-tragedy, for example, myths of Empire and of Decadence – and yet it can survive in very naïve forms. Probably the most sophisticated of us is capable at times of naïve reactions to the End” (8-9). In Canudos, the decadence of the Monarchy in Brazil was read as a sign by *conselheiristas* of the End of times. In the rather radical religious views of Conselheiro, the monarch represented God while the Republican president was the Anti-Christ. This thought guided *conselheiristas* to fight the republicans. Borrowing the words of Bultmann when referring to the early Christians, in Canudos, there was a ‘eschatological despair’ (9).

After more than one hundred years since the Battle of Canudos, representations of the Devil and the notion of the world facing the Apocalypse are still important beliefs for many religious groups. In fact, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the evangelical churches (*Igrejas Evangélicas*) began establishing their temples in Brazil. The *Igrejas Evangélicas* place an important role in the Apocalypse and the image of the Devil associated to the establishment of the Kingdom of Satan. While in the Anglo-Saxon world

the term 'evangelicals' refers mostly to Christian protestants, in Brazil *evangélicos* are part of the Pentecostal and the neo-Pentecostal movements. Among the many *igrejas evangélicas* in Brazil, the following are the most well-known: Assembléia de Deus, Congregação Cristã no Brasil, Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular, Igreja Pentecostal "O Brasil para Cristo", Igreja Pentecostal Deus e Amor, Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, Igreja Internacional da Graça de Deus, Igreja Apostólica Renascer em Cristo, and Comunidade Evangélica Sara Nossa Terra.

According to estimate numbers, Brazil has 27.6 million members of evangelical churches (*Veja online*). This shows the contemporaneity of the fear imposed by the image of the Devil, since most of these churches follow practices that deal with demoniacal forces as a threat to their faith. Most Brazilian evangelicals believe that the Devil can possess the bodies of the sinners and that the end of the world is eminent.

In *Os Sertões*, the mentions of the Devil appear in the narrative in different occasions from the descriptions of the religiosity and mysticism of the *sertanejo*, the characterization of Antônio Conselheiro and his followers, and the motivations behind the battle. Nonetheless, what sustains the main importance in the narrative is the war itself.

The book is divided in three parts: The Land, The Men, and The War, but by far the last one is the longest part of the narrative. Representations of the Devil are more prominent in the second part of the book: The men. Nonetheless, the image of the Devil is crucial in understanding the origins of the conflict in Canudos.

### ***Antônio Conselheiro – Delegado dos Céus***

The idea of hell, heaven, and salvation was crucial to Antônio Conselheiro's message. Only those who had followed him and who had fought against the Devil would have their places in heaven. It is most likely, however, that the Brazilian government and the military did not understand, at least not until the end of the war, the motivation for *conselheiristas* to fight in the Battle of Canudos: the salvation of their souls.

In a news piece from *O Estado de São Paulo* dated from August 19, 1897, Bahia, Euclides da Cunha describes the interrogation of Agostinho, a fourteen year-old *jagunço* that was brought from Canudos by Colonel Carlos Teles. When asked about the miracles attributed to Antônio Conselheiro, the *jagunço* claimed not to be aware of any of Conselheiro's miracles; he had never heard of such a thing.<sup>36</sup> When asked about Conselheiro's promises of resurrection to those *jagunços* that fought in Canudos, Agostinho also denied that Conselheiro had made any promises of resurrection. The promise was salvation of the soul: “- Mas o que promete afinal ele aos que morrem? A resposta foi absolutamente inesperada. – Salvar a alma” (Cunha, *Diário* 110-11).

In *Os Sertões*, Euclides stresses that the path to salvation was the primary message of Conselheiro's prophecies:

Era o profeta, o emissário das alturas, transfigurado por ilapso estupendo, mas adstrito a todas as contingências humanas, passível do sofrimento e da morte, e tendo uma função exclusiva: apontar aos pecadores o caminho da

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<sup>36</sup> In *Lendas* Euclides da Cunha explains that the *sertanejos* started attributing miracles to Conselheiro that perhaps he had not even thought about: “O povo começava a grande série de milagres de que não cogitava talvez o infeliz...” (*Os Sertões* 273)



salvação. Satisfez-se sempre com este papel de delegado dos céus. Não foi além.” (256)

Antônio Conselheiro acted as the “delegado dos céus.” For Euclides, Conselheiro represents a condensation of all credulities, from barbaric fetishisms to Catholic aberrations, and mystic and extravagant beliefs; all taking shape in the undisciplined life of the backlands and the tendencies of inferior races to participate in acts of fanaticism (*Os Sertões* 252). Overall, Antônio Conselheiro is seen as “um gnóstico bronco.” His prophecies mirror those from the beginning of Christianity in cults such as: “montanistas da Frígia, os adamitas infames, os ofiólatras, os maniqueus bifrontes entre o ideal cristão emergente e o budismo antigo, os discípulos de Markos, os encratitas abstinentes e macerados de flagícios” (255).

A closer look at each cult explains some of the similarities. The Phrygian Montanist cult was founded by Montano during the second century in Phrygia, modern day Turkey, which professed the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and extreme moral standards. The Adamites were part of a heretic sect from the second century; its members participated nude in ceremonies with the intent of resembling the innocence of Adam before his sin. The ophiolaters were snake worshippers (*oradores de serpentes*); they were part of a cult that was supposedly developed in Assyria and became popular in Egypt, Phrygia, and Phoenicia. Also, in the Appalachian region of Southern United States, there are Snake Handlers, who are members of the independent Pentecostal Holiness churches. As part of their worship ritual the Snake Handlers engage in a trance experience, which they interpret as the possession of the Holy Ghost (Kane 293). They believe that the Holy Ghost gives

them the power to “take up the serpents,” handle fire, and drink deadly doses of strychnine solution.<sup>37</sup> Manichaeism was a cult from the Persian Mani or Manes from third century present in India, China, Africa, Italy, and south of Spain. They believed that the universe was created according to two antagonist principles: the absolute goodness – God, and the absolute badness – the Devil. And finally, the Encratites were a group combining beliefs of emergent Christianity and the ancient Buddhist tradition. They condemned sex inside of matrimonies, the consumption of wine and meat; their beliefs expanded into Asia and Rome. Euclides sees in Conselheiro a repetition of the ancient cults: “A história repete-se. Antônio Conselheiro foi um gnóstico bruto” (*Os Sertões* 255).

Euclides da Cunha describes the appearance of the prophet Antônio Conselheiro as a translation of the latent idealization of the masses. The *sertanejos* had created the myth around him, seeking for a religious leader who would lead them to salvation: “Precisava de alguém [a multidão] que lhe traduzisse a idealização indefinida, e a guiasse nas trilhas misteriosas dos céus...” (*Os Sertões* 268).

Silvio Romero (1851-1914), in “A poesia popular no Brasil” (*Revista Brasileira* 1) registered the popular belief of Conselheiro as a savior. In the folklore that surrounds his image, Conselheiro was seen as the one who would forgive the Christians’ sins and allow his followers to go to Heaven when Doomsday approached:

Do céu veio uma luz

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<sup>37</sup> “In 1909 in the remote mountain community of Sale Creek, Tennessee, religious serpent handling presently has followers throughout the Southern Appalachian region, as well as in and near a number of major industrial centers in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. [...] The Holiness serpent handlers of Southern Appalachia are coal miners, mill and factory workers, and small-scale farmers of predominantly Scotch-Irish and English descent. Their system of ritual and belief is based upon a literal and plenary interpretation of King James Version of the Bible, which they believe to be the eternal and inerrant Word of God” (Kane 293).

Que Jesus Cristo mandou  
Santo Antônio Aparecido  
Dos castigos nos livrou  
  
Quem ouvir e não aprender  
Quem souber e não ensinar  
No dia de Juízo  
A sua alma penará.

In popular poetry, Conselheiro appears as Santo Antônio Aparecido. The belief of some was that the prophet was in fact a saint and only those who followed him on Doomsday would be saved. In part, his messianic figure was cultivated by the *sertanejos* as a result of their fear of not having their sins forgiven and having to end up in hell. For the *sertanejos*, Antônio Conselheiro held the keys of heaven. He is compared to Saint Antônio, one of the most beloved Catholic saints to whom many Christians make religious promises. The coincidences go beyond the same name – Antônio. In Catholicism, Santo Antônio is believed to be the savior of the souls. Santo Antônio was also the patron of Canudos. The folklore around Conselheiro's image was also promoted by cordel literature and by some of the local newspapers, as in the case of the prayer (*oração*) that was published in *Diário da Bahia* on May 19, 1897:

O sol já se levanta  
Cheio de seu resplendor  
Antônio substitui Jesus

Que do castigo nos livrou.<sup>38</sup>

In this prayer, Conselheiro is portrayed as a new Christ who came to save the population of the Brazilian backlands. The concept of a martyr is well-known by the *sertanejos*, who see in messianic figures hope for rain in the *sertão* and for salvation when the end of the world comes.

As mentioned before, Euclides da Cunha sees Antônio Conselheiro as a prophet that was forged by the people of the backlands, his religious role was a result of people's needs: "Agiu passivo, como uma sombra" (*Os Sertões* 268). He appears in response to the religious aspirations of the *sertanejos* who are constantly attempting to explain the world through the existence of miracles. Conselheiro was their creation: "Criava-o. Ampliava-lhe, desmesuradamente, a vida, lançando-lhe dentro os erros de dois mil anos" (268).

José Calasans shares a similar explanation, saying that Conselheiro was made Saint by the people of the backlands: "Fizeram-no Santo" (*O Cilco* 34). According to Calasans, Conselheiro had not, at least in the beginning, declared himself as a savior sent by God, neither had he claimed responsibility for any miracles. Conselheiro's role as a savior was shaped by the *sertanejos* and later on adopted by Conselheiro himself.

José Calasans, in *O ciclo folclórico do Bom Jesus Conselheiro* (1950), argues that the folkloric representations of Conselheiro and the Battle of Canudos are among the most important in Brazilian folklore. Calasans divides the folklore about Conselheiro in three phases: the apostolate, the campaign, and messianism. In the last phase, there is the belief

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<sup>38</sup> This prayer (poem) comes from Calasan's *O ciclo folclórico do Bom Jesus Conselheiro* (31). See Bibliography References.

that Conselheiro would resurrect to take part in the wars of Horácio de Matos or to give an end to Lampião.

If, in fact, Conselheiro had not started preaching in the *sertão* as an *enviado de Deus*, he later changed his message with his popular recognition as a messianic figure. Calasans points out that Conselheiro later on started announcing himself as the one sent by God to save the *sertanejos* when the world would come to an end. He starts to be known as: “Bom Jesus Conselheiro”:

Na época dessas profecias, avaramente guardadas em cadernos pelos fiéis, Antônio Conselheiro já não se apresenta como um simples penitente. Está convencido do seu papel divino, julgando-se um enviado de Deus para anunciar o fim do mundo. O próprio Cristo predissera a vinda do Bom Jesus Conselheiro. Estava escrito na Escritura Sagrada: “Há de aparecer um anjo mandado por meu pai terno, pregando sermão pelas portas, fazendo povoações nos desertos, fazendo igrejas e capelinhas e dando conselhos ...” (Calasans, *O Ciclo* 37).

## Chapter 2

### Representations of the Devil in Conselheiro's Manuscript,

#### *Missão Abreviada*, and *Os Sertões*

This chapter explores representations of the Devil in the narrative of Canudos through the lenses of three texts: the last manuscript of Antônio Conselheiro (1897), the religious guidebook *Missão Abreviada* (1859, 1<sup>st</sup> ed.), and Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (1902). The triangulation of these texts provides a rich picture of said representations and their importance in the Battle of Canudos.

We will start this chapter by contextualizing the religious readings that had an impact on Conselheiro's prophecies and preaching. We will then analyze the representation of the Devil in the three works mentioned before and compare and contrast the religious teachings of Conselheiro with his engagement in the war against the republicans.

#### **Conselheiro's Religious Beliefs and his Extremism**

When the *conselheiristas* were defeated in the Battle of Canudos, the republican troops found a manuscript with the body of Antônio Conselheiro, which included a farewell letter to his followers.<sup>39</sup> Conselheiro's manuscript was found by Dr. João de Souza Pondé

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<sup>39</sup> Antônio Conselheiro left two manuscripts. The first manuscript is from 1895 and parts of it were published in a volume organized by Walnice Nogueira Galvão and Fernando da Rocha Peres: *Breviário de Antônio Conselheiro* (2002). The complete manuscript, however, is only available in the original text at Centro de Estudos Baianos (CEB), Núcleo Sertão, and has not been digitalized. We have not been able to travel to Bahia to investigate this manuscript at this point of our present research. For this reason, our analysis of Conselheiro's writings will be made on the last manuscript (1897), which was published by Ataliba Nogueira in *Antônio Conselheiro e Canudos* (1974).

(1874-1934) and it was later given to Euclides da Cunha a few years before his death, and was therefore not used as research material for *Os Sertões*.<sup>40</sup> This document is of vital importance in understanding some of the religious beliefs of Antônio Conselheiro, including the representations of the Devil in his prophecies. It is, however, in conjunction with the moralist religious guide *Missão Abreviada* that the reader can better trace the religious roots of Conselheiro and how the Devil played a central role in his prophecies.

Antônio Conselheiro carried with him in his pilgrimages two books about the Scriptures: *Missão Abreviada* and *Horas Marianas*. Euclides da Cunha mentions this biographical aspect of Conselheiro in *Os Sertões*, under the section: *Peregrinações e Martírios*, referring to Conselheiro's visit to the city of Itabaiana in Sergipe in 1974: "Ali chegou, como em toda a parte, desconhecido e suspeito, impressionando pelos trajas esquisitos – camisolão azul, sem cintura; chapéu de abas largas, derrubadas, e sandálias. Às costas um surrão de couro em que trazia papel, pena e tinta; a *Missão Abreviada* e *Horas Marianas*" (*Os Sertões* 268). Both books were very popular in the Brazilian *sertões*, and to the *sertanejos* they can be considered as important as the Bible. Conselheiro preached the content of these texts.

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<sup>40</sup> The preface of the manuscript has the following message, which was written by João Pondé: "No dia 5 de outubro de 1897, em que as tropas legais sob o commando do general Artur Oscar de Andrade Guimarães assenhorearam-se vitoriosa e decisivamente do arraial de Canudos, dando busca no lugar denominado Santuário em que morou o célebre Antônio Conselheiro, foi este livro encontrado, em uma velha caixa de madeira, por mim, que me achava como médico em comissão do governo estadual e que fiz parte da junta de peritos que no dia 6 exumou e reconheceu a identidade do cadáver do grande fanático.

Submetido ao testemunho de muitos conselheiristas, este livro foi reconhecido ser o mesmo que, em vida, acompanhava nos últimos dias a Antônio Maciel – Conselheiro - Bahia, março de 1898. João Pondé.

Este livro foi-me oferecido pelo meu amigo e companheiro de estudos João Pondé, que no 6º ano médico partiu para Canudos como cirurgião da expedição militar Artur Oscar (1897).

Passo-o a Euclides da Cunha na esperança de lhe informar alguma nota dos seus miríficos 'Sertões.' A Peixoto."

For the purpose of this dissertation we are analyzing the content of *Missão Abreviada* because of its wide representation of the Devil and the apocalypse, which helped shape Conselheiro's apocalyptic prophecies. Nevertheless, *Horas Marianas* was also fundamental for the teachings of Antônio Conselheiro.<sup>41</sup> His religious message emphasizes, among other elements, the veneration of the Virgin Mary. *Horas Marianas* was a popular book of devotions in the *sertões*, written in 1807 by the Portuguese Father Francisco de Jesus Maria Sarmiento.

The devotion to the Virgin Mary is understandable in the context of the apocalypse predicted by Antônio Conselheiro and the search for salvation. Moreover, Marianism is an important aspect of Catholicism and *the conselheiristas* followed the steps of most Catholics, praying to the Virgin Mary to help them achieve their salvation. In the Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*), the message of salvation is emphasized at the end of the prayer:

Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.

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<sup>41</sup> Libraries in the United States do not own a copy of this book, and was therefore unavailable for review through interlibrary loans. For this reason, the content of *Horas Marianas* is not being analyzed in this dissertation.



The Hail Mary summarizes the Virgin Mary's role of helping sinners, not only during their lives but also at the moment of their deaths. In Catholicism, she is the one who intercedes with God in favor of sinners and against the disguises and tricks of the Devil.<sup>42</sup> Although *Horas Marianas* is an important reading in the formation of Conselheiro's religious thoughts, *Missão Abreviada* is the religious text that had a larger impact regarding the role of the Devil in Conselheiro's religious beliefs. Ataliba Nogueira describes *Horas Marianas* as a book of devotions and nothing else: "As *Horas Marianas* reúnem grande número de preces e outros atos de piedade. É devocionário. Nada mais" (29).<sup>43</sup>

While the focus of *Horas Marianas* is that of salvation through the veneration of the Virgin Mary, *Missão Abreviada* focuses on salvation through conversion of the sinner, penitence, and the awareness of the Devil's disguises.<sup>44</sup>

Nonetheless, the Virgin Mary is also mentioned in *Missão Abreviada* in many instances; for example, part one of the book begins with two prayers for the Virgin Mary.

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<sup>42</sup> In 1854, Pope Pius IX introduced the papal bull, *Inefabilis Deus*, in which the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary is recognized as a dogma in the Catholic Church. Walnice Nogueira Galvão reminds us that: "... Nossa Senhora só recentemente tivera sua Imaculada Conceição tornado dogma pelo papa, em 1854, num século que presidiu as várias de suas aparições miraculosas" (*O Império do Belo Monte* 30).

<sup>43</sup> "A *Missão Abreviada* poderia fornecer-lhe uns poucos elementos, mas distribui as matérias de modo diferente e as desenvolve de outra maneira. Era corrente àquele tempo outra obra, *Práticas Mandamentais*, cujo conteúdo é análogo às prédicas de Conselheiro, mas de arranjo e redação diferentes" (Nogueira 29).

*Práticas Mandamentais* was written by Manuel da Madre de Deus. The Father's last name is a clear reference to the Virgin Mary: *Madre de Deus*. (Casa de Cruz Coutinho, Porto, 1861). The longer title is: *Reflexões morais sobre os mandamentos da lei de Deus e os abusos que lhe são opostos, seguidas de outras práticas e missões sobre as principais festividades do ano e sobre outras matérias muito importantes para uso dos reverendos párocos, capelães, pregadores e para todas as pessoas que se quiserem aproveitar da sua leitura, pois vão compostas num estilo acomodado à capacidade de todos*.

<sup>44</sup> Otten explains that 'conversion' refers to a life renovation and not the conversion to Christianity per se. It was assumed that everyone in the society was already Christian: "Segundo as diretrizes baseadas 'na teologia pastoral do Concílio de Trento', visam eles a conversão do cristão: 'A missão partia do pressuposto de que a sociedade era cristã. Se falava em conversão, era no sentido de renovação da vida, sob um prisma moralizante, mas não no sentido de opção diante de Cristo e do Evangelho'" (116).

Each prayer is accompanied by an explanation of its purpose. Prayer one, for instance, aims to help priests with their preaching and also anyone who recites it for the salvation of the soul: “Sendo Sacerdote, goza de altar privilegiado nos dias em que o fizer; bem como qualquer pessoa que o fizer, goza do privilégio de tirar do purgatório tantas almas, quantas missas ouvir nas segundas feiras” (10).

Instruction 44 of *Missão Abreviada – Sobre a Devoção à Maria Santíssima*, in part three of the book, begins by saying that every Christian should be a devotee of Mary: “Todo o cristão deve ser verdadeiro e cordial devoto de Maria Santíssima” (577). It goes on to explain that since Mary is the mother of God, she can intervene with her mercy in the moment of final judgment giving the protection needed from the Devil: “Ela é pois a porta do Céu, é a chave do Paraíso, é o refúgio dos pecadores, é nossa Mãe, nossa advogada, nossa protetora, nossa esperança; finalmente, depois de Deus é Ela a quem tudo devemos!...” (577-79).<sup>45</sup>

The first part of Conselheiro’s manuscript, which corresponds to approximately one third of his text, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary.<sup>46</sup> It tells the story of the Virgin Mary and her suffering from the birth of Jesus to the crucifixion of Christ. There is scarcely any portrayal of the Devil in this section. On the other hand, the remaining parts of the

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<sup>45</sup> “Esta cordial devoção à Mãe de Deus é um remédio eficaz para sair do pecado e nunca mais tornar a ele; porque Maria Santíssima, como mãe de Deus, tem todo o poder para pedir, mas até mandar, diz São Boaventura; e manda com império de Mãe ao mesmo Filho, que nos perdoe e nos dê a sua graça para o servirmos e amarmos ... Ainda que o pecador se veja já em um abismo de tristeza, já desesperado, mesmo às portas do inferno, se deveras e de coração puser os olhos em Maria, dirigindo-lhe fervorosas súplicas, logo há de sentir na sua alma as luzes da divina graça e as doces consolações da divina misericórdia. ... À vista disto, diz Boaventura que as portas do Céu se abrem diante de todos aqueles que, confiados na proteção de Maria, a procuram com verdadeira devoção” (*Missão* 577-79).

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix I for the Table of Content to Conselheiro’s manuscript.

manuscript present the image of the Devil on several occasions: *The 10 Commandments* in part 2, *Texts from the Scripture* in section 3, and *Sermons, About the Republic, and Farewell letter* in part 4. We will explore these passages later in this chapter.

There are at least three important elements that informed the teachings of Antônio Conselheiro: the veneration of Virgin Mary, the coming of the Apocalypse, and the threats imposed by the Devil. In the aftermath, the *conselheiristas* aimed for salvation. Conselheiro preached that to reach salvation, his followers should live a life of prayers, penitence, and confessions, and that only those who fully understood the importance of such a life would be saved.

### **Conselheiro and his Religious Guide: *Missão Abreviada***

*Missão Abreviada: para despertar os descuidados, converter os pecadores e sustentar os frutos das Missões* (Portugal, 1859) was written by the Portuguese Father Manuel José Gonçalves do Couto (1819-1897) with the consent of the Catholic Church.<sup>47</sup> However, because of the moral severity of its message and its extreme views, especially on penitence, *Missão Abreviada* was eventually forbidden by the Catholic Church in Bahia as historian José Calasans explains: “Aquela moral ‘excessivamente rígida’ a que aludiu o Arcebispo D. Luís Antônio dos Santos, vinha em grande parte, da observância dos conceitos

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<sup>47</sup> “Tem sido indicada como fonte mais imediata do Conselheiro a *Missão Abreviada*, um sermonário popular oitocentista originário de Portugal e sancionado pela Igreja. Teve papel de relevo naqueles tempos e, largamente divulgado em nosso país, viria a se tornar um eficiente instrumento para o apostolado leigo, onipresente nas mãos de pregadores beatos. Esses sermões do Conselheiro adaptam a *Missão Abreviada*, resumindo, explicitando, operando permutas e combinações de suas partes, mas deixando o modelo reconhecível. Outras fontes já foram assinaladas, como o devocionário *Horas Marianas* e as *Práticas Mandamentais*” (Nogueira Galvão (ed.), *Breviário* 15)

inscritos na *Missão*, livro depois proibido, por isso mesmo e em virtude do desenvolvimento do Belo Monte, por outro prelado da Bahia, D. Jerônimo Tomé da Silva” (50).<sup>48</sup>

As the full title states, *Missão Abreviada* aims to raise awareness in those who are not following the religious precepts of Catholicism. Its goal is to be a wake-up call for the *descuidados* and to convert sinners. In this guidebook, the *descuidados* are the ones in eminent danger of being taken by the Devil. *Missão Abreviada* is a guide for conversion, penitence, and salvation. Its title page sets clear the intentions of serving as a guide: “É destinado este livro para fazer orações e instruções ao povo. Particularmente, povo da aldeia. Obra utilíssima para os párocos, para os capelões, para qualquer sacerdote que deseja salvar almas, e finalmente, para qualquer pessoa que faz oração pública.”<sup>49</sup>

*Missão Abreviada* is accompanied by an addendum entitled: “*Aditamento à Missão Abreviada*, which gives an overview of *Missão Abreviada*. It was written to be read on religious occasions, including Sundays and sanctified days.<sup>50</sup> We will refer to *Aditamento à*

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<sup>48</sup> José Calasans explains with the following his source for this comment: “Não entrei o ato do Arcebispo. Refiro-me ao fato por informações do padre Heitor Otaviano de Araújo e do capuchinho Frei Inocência” (50).

<sup>49</sup> Alexandre Otten defends that the religious formation of the *sertanejo* was formed based on the itinerant missions: “Os estudiosos do catolicismo sertanejo, como também Cândido da Costa e Silva, constataam que a “formação cristã da gente sertaneja deve-se basicamente às missões itinerantes” (Otten 115).

<sup>50</sup> “Breves Práticas - Que se devem ler ao povo por ocasião da oração e nos domingos e dias santificados, ou mesmo qualquer pessoa pode ler para seu maior aproveitamento espiritual. Pelo Pe Manoel José Gonçalves Couto.”

Com licença de S. Exo , o Snr Bispo desta Diocese. Porto. Tipografia de Sebastião José Pereira, Editor  
Rua do Almada, 644 - 1868

“Ao leitor

Tendo eu sumo desejo de procurar a honra e glória de Deus e o bem espiritual das almas; e vendo ao mesmo tempo o grande fruto que tem produzido estas breves práticas onde elas se tem lido ao povo; por isso me resolvi dá-las à luz para glória e honra de Deus, e aproveitamento espiritual dos meus próximos. Entretanto, rogarei a Deus por vós no Santo Sacrifício da Missa.”

*Missão Abreviada* in this dissertation only when the text proposes other nuances on the representation of the Devil since most of its content is already covered in *Missão Abreviada*.

The introductory section - *Advertência da Maior Importância* – expresses the significance of having a missionary in every village (*povoação*), someone who can read well, a man or a woman capable of reading the prayers of *Missão Abreviada* every day, especially during the winter (7). It teaches how to use the book, when the prayers should be read, and how to proceed on Sundays and sanctified days.<sup>51</sup>

The description of *Missão Abreviada* fits Antônio Conselheiro's profile; it is a book for anyone who does public prayers (*orações públicas*) and in particular for the peasants (*povo da aldeia*).<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the severe morality of the book is in alignment with the rigid penitence and extreme moral conduct defended by Conselheiro in his writings, although, in practice, neither Conselheiro nor his followers lived according to everything that was preached as we will see in more detail in chapter three of this dissertation.

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Coração sagrado de Maria,  
Sede minha ajuda e guia.  
Couto.

<sup>51</sup> “Então com um destes livros deve fazer a Oração ao povo pelo menos nos meses do inverno, isto pela manhã cedo, mas não de noite: sinal com o sino: em quanto o povo não acaba de chegar, vão-se fazendo as visitas ao Santíssimo Sacramento, e de Nossa Senhora; em seguida a novena das almas; depois disto a Oração como está no livro; cada dia uma meditação; estas concluídas, uma instrução em lugar de meditação; e depois das instruções as vidas dos Santos. Em todos os domingos e dias santos de tarde, e em todo o ano, fazer o exercício dos irmãos do Santíssimo e Imaculado Coração de Maria, o qual vai no fim do livro. Para este fim devem ter uma imagem ou um quadro do Santíssimo e Imaculado Coração no altar onde fizerem o exercício” (*Missão* 7).

<sup>52</sup> The introduction of the sixth edition of *Missão Abreviada* starts by pointing out that the book had 36,000 copies since its first publication, denoting the importance of its message for the conversion, confessions, and salvation of Christians.

In addition, the simple and direct language of *Missão Abreviada* is more accessible to the uneducated *sertanejos*. One must keep in mind that most *sertanejos* were illiterate and needed a reader in order to have access to the prayers and religious messages. Antônio Conselheiro represented an access to the Scriptures for most of his followers. In addition, he was also seen as prophet and their saint protector, the one who would help them achieve salvation on Doomsday.

Euclides da Cunha explains that Conselheiro's followers started attributing to him a series of miracles: "O povo começava a série de milagres de que não cogitava talvez o infeliz..." (*Os Sertões* 273). One of the first miracles attributed to him takes place during a procession to the *via-sacra* in Monte Santo. The legend says that once Conselheiro entered the church on the top of the hill, two tears of blood rolled down the face of the Virgin Mary's statue: "Ao abeirar-se do altar-mor, porém, ergue o rosto pálido, emoldurado pelos cabelos em desalinho. E a multidão estremece toda, assombrada... Duas lágrimas sangrentas rolam, vagorosamente, no rosto imaculado da Virgem Santíssima ..." (*Os Sertões* 283). Euclides rightly considers this "miracle" as something natural in the *sertão*, as a reflection of the superstition and mysticism of the *sertanejos* (283).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> In his notes on *Caderneta de Campo*, Euclides writes about the mysticism of the *sertanejos*: "Nas lendas e contos sertanejos que não se resumem em narrativas singelas de vida pastoril, a ação do maravilhoso caracteriza-se sempre pelo definir no homem uma posição de fraqueza absoluta. A ação realmente vigorosa dos missionários dos dois primeiros séculos fez descer sobre as crenças primitivas do índio e do negro a concepção mais elevada do ideal cristão e sem desuni-las – quase que justaposto – apenas aos velhos erros das raças criou o misto extravagante e sem originalidade de uma religião sujeita ao fanatismo bíblico da providência divina.

Daí etc (ver acima) – Não há deuses, não há heróis que regulem e debelem os elementos porque o superintendente geral da vida nas alturas absorve todas as funções, regula todos os fatos naturais, discrimina todos os destinos humanos" (Cunha, *Caderneta* 148).

It is worthwhile to remember that Brazil, as a large Catholic country, has many stories of miracles, not only in the *sertão*, but nationwide. To illustrate the importance of miracles for the country, the most emblematic example is probably the case of the patroness of Brazil, *Nossa Senhora Aparecida* (Our Lady of Aparecida). The account of the miracle states that in 1717 three fishermen found a headless black statue of the Virgin Mary followed by the statue's head after invoking her blessings in the Paraíba River. The legend tells that after their finding, the three fishermen had an abundance of fish; more than they could carry on their boats. The statue of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição Aparecida* is kept in the Basilica with the same name, in Aparecida, São Paulo, which receives thousands of devotees every year.<sup>54</sup> Considering this example, it is not surprising that *sertanejos* would also believe in the miracles attributed to Conselheiro.

Conselheiro's image as a prophet consolidated in the two decades before his arrival in Canudos in 1893. Euclides describes the impression that Conselheiro left during his preaching as a man who was introspective, incisive, distant, enigmatic, and intimidating at the same time:

Tinha, entretanto, ao que parece, a preocupação do efeito produzido por uma ou outra frase mais incisiva. Enunciava-a e emudecia; alevantava a cabeça, descerrava de golpe as pálpebras; viam-se-lhe então os olhos extremamente negros e vivos, e o olhar – uma cintilação ofuscante...

Ninguém ousava contemplá-lo. A multidão sucumbida abaixava, por sua vez,

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<sup>54</sup> On October 12, 1980, Pope John Paul II consecrated the Basilica Nossa Senhora Aparecida and since then October 12 is considered a national holiday in Brazil. The Basilica of Nossa Senhora Aparecida is the second largest Catholic temple in the world with the capacity of 40,000 people.

as vistas, fascinada, sob o estranho hipnotismo daquela insânia formidável.

(*Os Sertões* 275)

Conselheiro's image was biblical, with his long hair and beard, wearing a blue robe without a belt, a brimmed hat and sandals. His presence was of impact. Nonetheless, his relationship with the Catholic Fathers and the Church had its ups and downs. Conselheiro was condemned by the Church for preaching in some dioceses and had a troubled relationship with some of the clergy. Euclides da Cunha points out the antagonism of the Church when dealing with Conselheiro. It was a relationship of conveniences and advantages, a business-like behavior of the Fathers and of Conselheiro as well:

Não o contrariava [a Conselheiro] o antagonismo de um adversário perigoso, o padre. A dar-se crédito a testemunho valioso, aquele, em geral, estimulava-lhe ou permitia-lhe as práticas pelas quais, sem nada usufruir, promovia todos os atos de onde saem os rendimentos do clero: batizados, desobrigas, festas e novenas.

Os vigários toleravam com boa sombra os despropósitos do Santo endemoninhado que ao menos lhes crescia a cônica reduzida.

(*Os Sertões* 280)<sup>55</sup>

It was a lucrative business for the priests to let Antônio Conselheiro preach in their dioceses since he was able to mobilize the *sertanejos* in the reconstruction of churches and cemeteries. Euclides comments that the unpaid labor was in fact a religious

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<sup>55</sup> It is also believed that Conselheiro was not allowed to conduct baptisms, marriages, sacraments, etc. Because he was not a priest, the Fathers did not allow him to do his teaching from the altar of the churches either (Nogueira, *Civilização e Exclusão*, 165).



promise for a piece of land in heaven: “Durante dias seguidos, na azáfama piedosa, se agitavam os operários cujos salários se averbavam nos céus” (*Os Sertões* 279). The practice of selling indulgences has a long history in the Catholic Church and was particularly prominent during the Middle Ages. The old doctrine of indulgences was only revised by the Catholic Church in 1967 with the papal bull *Indulgentiarum doctrina* by Pope Paul VI. It is reasonable to argue that the *sertanejos* who volunteered their time and gave alms to the reconstruction of the churches and cemeteries probably believed that their indulgence would relieve some of their sins and help with their salvation, as Euclides da Cunha humorously mentions: “their salaries were being registered in Heaven” (*Os Sertões* 279).

Conselheiro preached the content of *Missão Abreviada* to the population of the backlands, in Canudos, and throughout his writings. It is crucial to note the overwhelming representation of the Devil in *Missão Abreviada*. The Devil is represented not only in a section of the book, but it is part of the narrative as a whole.

### **The Teachings about the Devil, Hell, and Purgatory**

Antônio Conselheiro, in the third section of his manuscript – *Textos Extraídos da Sagrada Escritura*, describes the Devil:

O demônio é criatura tão mofina, vil e miserável, que ainda o mais pobre mendigo necessitado, que há e pode haver, é mais rico que o demônio: porque, além de viver o mendigo nas esperanças de gozar da eterna Glória, pois está em via de merecer, vive fora do inferno. Porém o demônio tem perdido toda esperança de ver Deus: mora no mais ínfimo lugar da terra,

que é o centro do inferno e tem perdido tudo porque perdeu a graça divina.

(Conselheiro 156-57)

The image of the Devil was an important aspect of the fanatic beliefs of Conselheiro. José Calasans writes two elucidating paragraphs about the image of the Devil in *O Ciclo Folclórico do Bom Jesus Conselheiro*. Calasans's account for the role of the Devil in Canudos is rare to find among historians, with the exception of the descriptions done by Euclides da Cunha. José Calasans based his information on an article from the *Jornal de Notícias* and on the oral tradition of the *sertão*. According to the historian, the idea of the Devil dominated the minds of the *nordestinos*. Calasans points out the importance given to the Devil on the pages of *Missão Abreviada* and *Aditamento*: “A ideia do Demônio, constantemente ressaltada nas páginas da *Missão* e do *Aditamento*, dominou inteiramente o vesano nordestino” (Calasans, *O Ciclo* 49). He explains that Conselheiro saw the Devil and his agents multiplying everywhere: “Ele via o Demo, cujos agentes se multiplicavam, em toda parte. O governo era o Diabo. A lei republicana era do Cão. A polícia era das trevas. O dedo de Belzebú surgia invariavelmente” (49).

On June 3, 1897, an article from the newspaper *Jornal de Notícias* describes a situation in which Conselheiro believed to be disturbed by demons while preaching in Senhor dos Araçás, Bahia. Antônio Conselheiro stopped his sermon because of ants (*formigas caracemas*), alleging that they were possessed by demons.<sup>56</sup> In another story from Juazeiro, Bahia, Conselheiro heard a man saying the name Lucifer while carrying a

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<sup>56</sup> “Na freguesia do Senhor Menino dos Araçás, durante uma pregação do asceta, atiraram no local umas formigas caçaremas. Retirou-se, irritado, imediatamente, o Bom Jesus, porque não podia continuar num lugar infestado de demônios, que se haviam transformado em formigas. – *Jornal de Notícias* – 6-3-1897” (Calasans, *O Ciclo* 49).

rock to a construction site. He immediately told him to leave the rock behind because it belonged to the Devil.<sup>57</sup> Calasans mentions a final story about Conselheiro's habit of walking at the end of the afternoon in his construction sites looking for rocks that belonged to the Devil.<sup>58</sup>

Apart from the representation of the Devil through Conselheiro's eyes, in the narrative of Canudos, Euclides da Cunha also uses the image of the Devil to portray the village to his readers. Evidently, Euclides da Cunha's use of the word "Devil" does not carry the same meaning as for Conselheiro. Euclides da Cunha uses it in the figurative sense of the word. The author of *Os Sertões* wrote an article for the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, published on October 11, 1897, in which the destroyed city of Canudos is depicted as: "uma legião invisível e intangível de demônios..."<sup>59</sup> Also in Euclides da Cunha's *Caderneta de Campo*, the author of *Os Sertões* refers to the temple in Canudos as: "igreja satânica."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "Se alguém carregando pedras para qualquer construção, pronunciava o nome de Lúcifer, o Conselheiro dizia logo e logo: "Esta já não serve; pertence ao Diabo. Vamos buscar outra." – Cm. por Altamiro Leal, que ouviu a tradição em Juazeiro" (Calasans, *O Ciclo* 49).

<sup>58</sup> "Reza também a tradição: no fim da tarde, com seu cajado, ia descobrir, entre as centenas de pedras trazidas no correr do dia, aquelas que, pelo motivo apontado, eram do senhor dos infernos. Cm. por Virgílio Ferreira Lima" (Calasans, *O Ciclo* 49).

<sup>59</sup> This article is part of *Diário de uma expedição*, dated September 10, 1897, about a month before the end of the Battle of Canudos.

"E olha-se para a aldeia enorme e não se loriga um único habitante. Lembra uma cidade bíblica fulminada pela maldição tremenda dos profetas. E quando os tiros dela parte, de todos os pontos da linha amplíssima do cerco, a fantasia apenas divisa ali dentro uma legião invisível e intangível de demônios..." (*O Estado de São Paulo*, October 11, 1987).

<sup>60</sup> "Dia 26 – Os jagunços encurralados na igreja nova e no santuário desde as 10 horas da noite de ontem até o momento em que escrevo (10 ¼ da manhã) atiram desordenadamente numa fuzilaria contínua frouxa às vezes, recrudescendo repentinamente outras. Não apontam mais, atiram ao acaso, para todos os pontos do

Both Euclides da Cunha and José Calasans share the correct interpretation of Antônio Conselheiro as a religious fanatic, but not all researchers and historians share the same understanding. For instance, historian Ataliba Nogueira defends that Antônio Conselheiro was not a fanatic or an insane man and refers instead to the leader of Canudos as an exceptional man: “Nem insano, nem fanático. Homem excepcional, sim; embora extremamente simples. Amante de seu povo, para cujo serviço sofreu muito e para cujo bem e progresso foi chefe e condutor” (40-41). In the introduction of Conselheiro’s second manuscript, Ataliba Nogueira presents a romanticized image of Conselheiro as a man of great moral and intellect. The introduction of Ataliba’s book is a blind defense of Conselheiro as a leader of great moral standards. The historian goes as far as to argue that if Euclides would re-write *Os Sertões*, he would change his views on Antônio Conselheiro.<sup>61</sup>

Ataliba Nogueira’s understanding of Antônio Conselheiro is framed by his religiosity as well. Only by adding more mysticism to Conselheiro’s image can the historian justify that the leader of Canudos was not a fanatic, but rather an exceptional man. In contrast to Ataliba, Euclides da Cunha was, above anything, a scientist, interested in facts and basing his analysis of Conselheiro on eye witnesses, events, and his own close observation of life in the *sertões*.

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horizonte, desesperadamente. É um vulcão numa erupção de balas aquela igreja satânica” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 63).

<sup>61</sup> “Temos a convicção de que o brilhante e inconfundível Euclides, que no início da sua obra máxima afirma ter sido crime a guerra contra Canudos, e, na derradeira linha do livro acrescenta haver sido loucura da nacionalidade – temos a convicção, repetimos, de que hoje o reescreveria para fazer justiça àquele que, com bastante exatidão biografou as páginas 226 – e somente aí – do seu monumental *Os Sertões*” (Nogueira 42).

As we will see in more details in chapter three of this dissertation, Conselheiro's radical interpretations of the Bible and his severe doctrine contributed to an unfair and radical society in Canudos in addition to the clashes with the republicans.

The roles of Purgatory and Hell are of accentuated importance in the narrative of *Missão Abreviada*. Some of the prayers in the book ask for redemption and forgiveness of the sins: "Pesa-me, Senhor, de vos ter ofendido tão gravemente com as minhas culpas, não só porque me podeis privar da glória e castigar com o inferno, mas principalmente porque sois tão bom, tão Santo ..." (*Missão* 14).<sup>62</sup> The repentance of the sinner is one of the most important factors for salvation according to this guide. In order to be saved, the sinner has to ask for forgiveness, but this alone is not enough. There is the need for true redemption and to devoting one's life to God.

Conselheiro set the example regarding penitence and sacrifices. Euclides describes Conselheiro's long fasting and physical deprivation, which added more validation to his prophetic aura among his followers. Conselheiro's penitence went to the extreme of putting his own life at risk: "Abeirara muitas vezes a morte nos jejuns prolongados, com requinte de ascetismo que surpreenderia Tertuliano, esse sombrio propagandista da eliminação lenta da matéria..." (*Os Sertões* 272). The author of *Os Sertões* portrays the penitential life of Conselheiro through his extreme poverty, starvation, thirst, living from

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<sup>62</sup> Owen Chadwick explains in *A History of Christianity* that the idea of hell was introduced to early Christians by Jews, but not much attention was given to it at the beginning. Early Christians believed in paradise to all Christians after death. It was only with early popes in the Middle Ages that more consideration was given to the concept of hell. Pope Gregory I was one of them. He wrote *Vision of St. Paul* in the fourth century. Chadwick points out that "The *Vision* painted hell with an intent to terrify." (136). There was the need to condemn criminal acts with the threatening of going to hell.

alms, sleeping in the *caatingas*, and all kinds of destitutions.<sup>63</sup> In fact, Conselheiro lived and promoted a life of penitence that was extreme, even for the Catholic Church. He impressed his followers who had him as saint, their “Bom Jesus.”

Conselheiro’s radicalism took overwhelming proportions with his hostile and violent reaction towards the establishment of the Republic. His decision of engaging his followers in a direct confrontation with the government’s troops goes against the biblical message of peace and non-violence preached by him. In his manuscript, Conselheiro wrote in defense of embracing the enemy as our own, under the fifth Commandment:

Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo disse a seus discípulos: Tendes ouvido o que foi dito aos antigos: Amarás ao teu próximo e aborrecerás ao teu inimigo. Mas Eu vos digo: amai a vossos inimigos, fazei bem aos que têm ódio: e orai pelos que vos perseguem e caluniam: Ego autem dico vobis: diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his, qui oderunt vos e orate pro persecquentibus et calumniantibus vos (Mat., c 5, v. 44). Para serdes filhos de vosso Pai que está nos céus: o qual faz nascer o seu sol sobre bons e maus e vir chuva sobre justo e injustos. Por que se vós não amais senão aos que vos amam, que recompensa haveis de ter? (Manuscrito 126)

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<sup>63</sup> “Como quer que fosse, porém, o certo é que em 1876 a repressão legal o atingiu quando já se ultimara a evolução do seu espírito, imerso de todo no sonho de onde não mais despertaria. O asceta despontava, inteiriço, da rudeza disciplinar de quinze anos de penitência. Requentara nessa aprendizagem, martírios, que tanto preconizam os velhos luminares da Igreja. Vinha do tirocínio brutal da fome, da sede, das fadigas, das angústias recalçadas e das misérias fundas. Não tinha dores desconhecidas. A epiderme seca rugava-se-lhe como uma couraça amolgada e rota sobre a carne morta. Anestesiara-a com a própria dor; macerara-a e sarjara-a de cílios mais duros que os buréis de esparto; trouxera-a, de rojo, pelas pedras dos caminhos; esturrara-a nos rescaldos das secas; inteiraçara-a nos relentos frios; adormecera-a, em transitórios repousos, nos leitos dilacerantes das *caatingas*...” (*Os Sertões* 271).

Perhaps, Conselheiro justified the killings of his enemies with his belief that they were possessed by the Devil. It is very probable that the leader of Canudos considered the military troops to be possessed by the Devil, just like he believed the ants were possessed by the Devil in the story told by José Calasans. In any case, Conselheiro's reasoning for the killings was justified by his religious fanaticism and was in discrepancy with the biblical teachings of *Missão Abreviada*.

Chadwick, in *The History of Christianity*, explains that the first Christians were against the use of force and that: 'Thou shalt not kill' was a commandment from God to the Jews (41). As Christianity developed and the number of Christians grew, they started questioning if the killing of enemies was against the Church principles: "Was the army an honorable way to earn a living? Men who were already soldiers were converted; must they leave the army? The question arose in the form of whether war or capital punishment is the same, morally, as murder" (Chadwick 44). Around the year 200 there was a consensus among leaders of the Church that the killing of enemies was the same as murdering. Clement of Alexandria had called Christians "the peaceful race" (44). Nonetheless, Chadwick underlines that the Church's position regarding killings was not unanimous throughout the history of Christianity.

In Canudos, Conselheiro did not follow the non-violent principles of the early Christians that were vehemently defended in *Missão Abreviada*. Instead, Conselheiro opted for confrontation. The *jagunços* who already defended him, engaged in attacks of the troops. Conselheiro followed the steps of Pope Julius II, who led armies twice in attacks of cities in northern Italy (Chadwick 45). The *conselheiristas* fought in the Battle of Canudos

with great determination and resisted the invasion of their 'sacred' village at the price of their lives.

Instruction 16, in part 3 of *Missão Abreviada* explains the importance of a true confession in the story of Jesus visiting the house of Annaz. In this story, Jesus is hit on the face by one of the ministers of the Pontificate. The instruction makes an analogy between the hit taken by Jesus and sins, for every sin committed is equivalent to hitting Jesus on the face: “E que fazes tu, pecador, quando pecas? Não fazes o mesmo? Não descarregas grandes bofetadas em Jesus Cristo e bem a sangue frio e sem estremeceres?” (308).<sup>64</sup> The analogy is strong and graphical. It is certainly intended to generate a sense of guilt in the sinner.

The sinner is described as someone who is stepping closer to Hell; he is also depicted as the one who does not make a true confession, but rather carries out “*confissões nulas*” and “*engana o confessor,*” sacrileges which will take him to Hell. On the other hand, according to St. Gregory, the wrong confessor can also take many souls to Hell by not conducting the appropriate confession.<sup>65</sup>

Instruction 16 finishes with a message of hope, asking the sinner to change his life and accept God: “Que tens merecido? A quem tens servido? Ah! Conhece as tuas grandes misérias e volta já para Deus, em quanto ele te oferece a sua misericórdia.” (*Missão* 309).

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix II for the full story.

<sup>65</sup> Instruction 44 – “[...] finalmente, a nossa mesma alma, que é o mais precioso que temos; deve ser bom porque é uma guia que tomamos para nos dirigir no difícil trilho do Reino do Céu; e se for mau, por certo que estamos em grande risco de perdição eterna; deve ser bom, porque imensas almas se confessam e vivem sempre mal, e se perdem por não ter um Confessor certo e bom que as afaste do caminho do inferno: o mau Confessor ainda conduz mais almas para o inferno do que para o céu; assim o diz S. Gregório” (*Missão* 374).



The message of hope for the salvation of the sinners becomes more common as the narrative progresses in *Missão Abreviada*.<sup>66</sup> There is, for instance, a moment in the text when the author establishes a conversation with the sinner's soul asking it to give up on the Devil and accept God: "Não sejas ingrata; abre-me as portas do teu coração; olha que és minha esposa; deixa o demônio que é teu inimigo; não faças mais a vontade à tua carne porque tudo vem a parar em fel e amargura ... "(553).<sup>67</sup>

Conselheiro had adopted a conservative religious position that resembles those of the Montanists as Euclides da Cunha registered on the pages of *Os Sertões*: "É um dissidente do molde exato de Themison. Insurge-se contra a Igreja romana, e vibra-lhe objurgatórias, estadeando o mesmo argumento que aquele: ela perdeu sua glória e obedece a Satanás" (275). Euclides compares Conselheiro to Themison (A.C. 214), the Montanist leader, who presented himself as a martyr a few decades after Montano. Themison followed extreme moral standards and criticized some aspects of the Catholic Church as evil.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Appendix III for instruction 54, which states at the end the hope for salvation.

<sup>67</sup> Instrução 39a – Sobre a Ingratidão da Alma Pecadora: "Ó ingrata! Ó alma pecadora! Conhece as suas maldades e ingratidões!! Aqui o filho de Deus, movido de compaixão, com amor lhe diz: Ó alma, ó esposa minha, que mal te fiz eu para me deixares? Porque me ofendes assim? Por que me aborreces? Por ventura será porque te criei do nada e te dei existência? Será porque me entreguei a ti com todas as minhas riquezas? Será porque mandei os demônios que fugissem de ti e te não levassem para o inferno? Será porque me entreguei à morte para te dar uma vida eterna na glória? São esses os agradecimentos dos trabalhos, injúrias, açoutes e tormentos que eu padeci por teu amor?" (*Missão* 553).

<sup>68</sup> In *A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, Themison is presented as a self-proclaimed martyr who followed the "ridiculous" precepts of the Montanists. The theology author, presents the words of Appolonius describing Themison as an affront to the Catholic Church: "He [Themison] exalted himself as a martyr, and was so imprudent to imitate the Apostle, and to compose a certain Catholic Epistle, preceding thereby to give instruction to those, who were better Christians than himself, and contending for the ridiculous doctrine of the Montanists, and speaking of evil of our Lord and his Apostles, and the Holy Church" (Jones 391).

In *Missão Abreviada*, the sinner who persists in the sin is considered as someone who serves the Devil and by doing so is against God. The book adverts that those who live this kind of life will inevitably end up with the Devil as well.<sup>69</sup> After a long description about the Passion of Christ, the end of the text reminds the sinner of his end in Hell if he follows what his predecessors did during the passion of Christ: “E também ai de ti, pecador, que cantando e rindo andas a fazer pecados e mais pecados sem considerar nos tormentos de Jesus Christo: ai de ti! Porque cantando e rindo vais caminhando para o fogo eterno!...”(*Missão* 137). There is, however, the possibility for the sinner to escape Hell through repentance. This section of *Missão Abreviada* suggests that the sinner has to recognize his sins, show true repentance, and ask for forgiveness to God and the Virgin Mary: “Apaga já essa fogueira do inferno: as lágrimas de um verdadeiro arrependimento são as que vão apagar esse fogo; chora pois os teus pecados e pede perdão a Deus enquanto Ele te confida para a penitência e recorre também à Maria”(*Missão* 138).<sup>70</sup> In a similar light, further along in the text, the author recommends that the sinner should ask

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<sup>69</sup> “Ó fraqueza humana! Tantas confissões, tantas comunhões, tantas rezas, tantas missões e tantos sermões, e o pecado não se deixa! Em que virá isto a parar? Hás de viver no pecado; hás de morrer no pecado; e hás de cair sem remédio no fogo eterno, porque não amas a Deus; porque não mereces os bens eternos da glória; finalmente, porque serves ao demônio e mereces eternos castigos...” (*Missão* 129). See also - *Meditação 22ª – Também da Paixão* (130).

<sup>70</sup> “Que me dizes, pecador? Quando acabarás com as tuas loucuras e tolices? Não sabes tu que já tens lá a tua fogueira já bem acesa? Quantos pecados já terás feito em toda a tua vida? Pois considera que são outros tantos molhos de lenha que tens talhado para lá queimares” (*Missão* 137).

“Que me dizes, pecador? Ouves estas coisas, e ainda não aborreces, nem deixas o pecado? Ah! Quantos infernos serão precisos para castigar as tuas ingratidões? Nem mil infernos! Mil infernos ainda não são suficientes...” (*Missão* 141 - *Meditação 24ª – Também sobre a Paixão*).

Jesus for forgiveness. He stresses the importance of true repentance in order for the sinner to be free from the Devil and embrace Jesus.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, Antônio Conselheiro writes in his manuscript the importance of penitence (*penitência*) for the salvation of the sinner. Conselheiro's message mirrors the content of *Missão Abreviada*: "O que pecou necessariamente se se quiser salvar, há de fazer penitência, e se a faz, por mais graves que sejam seus pecados, pode contar com a misericórdia de Deus, que lhos perdoará" (Conselheiro 127).<sup>72</sup>

The manuscript of Conselheiro reflects the teachings of *Missão Abreviada*. The second part of the manuscript is entitled: *Os Dez Mandamentos da Lei de Deus*. At the end of the First Commandment, Conselheiro writes a message of love to God, asking for his salvation:

Espero firmemente que vós, ó meu Redentor, que tanto tendes feito e sofrido por minha salvação, não me recusareis algumas das graças que me sejam necessárias para me salvar. À vista destas verdades, como pode temer a condenação eterna aquele que abandona o pecado. Demonstrada como se

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<sup>71</sup> "Há! Pecador! Aqui não há que responder senão derramar lágrimas e mais lágrimas; e pouco era se fossem de sangue!! Ora pois, responde a Jesus, dizendo: Ó meus Jesus! Aqui estou, Senhor: que quereis que eu faça? Que deixe o pecado? Pois não quero pecar mais; tirai-me a vida, antes que torne a ofender-vos; porque antes quero morrer mil vezes, antes cair no fogo eterno, do que tornar a cair em tais maldades!! Perdoai-me pois tanta ingratidões e ofensas que vos tenho feito; adeus demônio, nada mais quero contigo que és meu inimigo; só quero Jesus, que é meu Deus, meu Esposo, meu tesouro e meu tudo; bem sei que tenho sido um ingrato, mas estou arrependido deveras e peço-vos perdão; perdoai-me, Senhor, pela vossa infinita misericórdia" (*Missão* 554-555).

<sup>72</sup> In reference to penitence, Alexandre Otten explains that the missions in the *sertões* emphasized the importance of penitence: "Os sermões revelamos um cunho forte de penitência. A sua meta era a conversão dos ouvintes para assegurar-lhes a vida eternal; era mister salvar a alma e entrar no céu. Segundo a ciência do bem-morrer se deve aproveitar da vida fugaz: "Eis meus irmãos, a solução: ou chorar enquanto é tempo, ou arder para sempre na eternidade: ou inferno ou penitência." Com outras palavras: "Ou fazer nesta terra uma penitência passageira, voluntária, ou ter no inferno uma vida de tormentos. Eis o que vos apresento Evangelho [...]" (Otten 117).

acha a realidade desta proposição, é evidente que aqueles que vivem no pecado devem abandoná-lo. Deus usará de sua infinita bondade e misericórdia para com eles, visto como deseja que ninguém se perca.

(*Manuscrito*: in Nogueira 111)

Similarly to the previous quote from *Missão Abreviada*, Conselheiro praises the goodness of God and asks for his mercy. Conselheiro also argues that those who stop committing sins should have trust in God, since he is merciful and does not want Christians to be condemned.

In another part of Conselheiro's manuscript, in the fifth Commandment, the leader of Canudos writes again about the mercy of God, the need of penitence, and the urgency for men not to live in sin:

Diz o profeta Isaias: que a grandeza que Deus mostra é quando aos pecadores perdoa. E assim se vê que esta foi a razão porque disse Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo: que assim haverá maior júbilo no céu, por um pecador que fizer penitência, que por noventa e nove justos que não hão mister de penitência (Luc., c. 15 v. 7). Diz David: Misericordioso e suave é o Senhor e suas misericórdias são em todas as suas obras: isto é, que se preza grandemente de misericordioso. O homem que vive no pecado é um grande impedimento para ser de Deus ouvido, Deus não ouve os pecadores, diz a Sagrada Escritura. (Jo., c.9, v. 31). Isto é: enquanto o pecador não se arrepende, não o ouve Deus. Mas na hora em que de coração lhe pede perdão se justifica, e é de Deus ouvido. (128)

Purgatory and Hell are presented throughout *Missão Abreviada* as a reminder of what can happen to those who do not follow the precepts of the Catholic Church: “Oh! Quão grande é a misericórdia do nosso Deus! Que excessos de amor! Que grande cegueira de pecador! Ai dele que se ainda agora não acorda! Oh! Como será ele acordado pelo fogo do inferno, se agora não quiser levantar-se desse sonho infernal da culpa” (22-23).

Purgatory is also mentioned in Instruction 48 of *Missão Abreviada* when talking about the importance of not lying. It explains that purgatory is full of souls of those who lied: “E se sim ou não pouco importam, vós o sabereis e sentireis, quando vos virdes enterrados em camas de fogo no purgatório por via delas! Portanto a mentira é sempre um pecado e nem Deus a perdoa enquanto não houver emenda; ... ” (384).<sup>73</sup> Further in the text (part 3), purgatory is now described in detail and is depicted as the place with the most suffering. The text describes the suffering of purgatory mentioning the explanations of Saint Anselm, Saint Bernardino, and E.S. Cyril, affirming that the sufferings in purgatory are the worst kind and it is not less than what one goes through in Hell. The only difference being that the suffering in purgatory is not eternal: “Talvez que no purgatório; e lá estão padecendo mais do que todos os mártires do mundo, mais do que Jesus Cristo na cruz,

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<sup>73</sup> Instrução 48ª – “Enquanto às mentiras, deveis saber que são más de sua natureza; em caso nenhum é lícito mentir, nem para livrar o pai da morte, nem para salvar o mundo inteiro, nem para livrar do inferno todas as almas que lá estão condenadas; porque na verdade são ofensas a Deus. Mas que se observa? Quase ninguém faz escrúpulo de mentir, ou para se não ralhar, ou para desculpar ou para compor, para não ficar mal e para evitar qualquer coisa e por qualquer motivo se diz uma mentira com plena advertência. [...] Poderão dizer: elas não dão perca, por isso pouco importam. Não dão perca? Pois dão perca e uma grande perca, mas é na alma de quem as diz, porque são pecado” (*Missão* 384).

mais do que as mães nos seus partos, mais do que os facínoras e moribundos; finalmente, lá estão padecendo tormentos tais quais os do inferno...” (*Missão* 529).<sup>74</sup>

As was pointed out in chapter one of this dissertation, the concept of Hell was not inherent to the native populations of Brazil and neither was monotheism. The Jesuits worked intensively in their missions trying to convey their Catholic dogmas to the aboriginal populations of Brazil. Euclides explain in *Os Sertões* that the Jesuits went to the backlands of Brazil with their missions in an effort to convert the native Brazilians to Catholicism: “ ... os aldeamentos, centros de força atrativa do apostolado, fundiam as malocas em aldeias; unificavam as cabildas; integravam as tribos. Penetrando fundo nos sertões, graças ao esforço secular, os missionários salvaram em parte este fator das nossas raças” (*Os Sertões* 179). Along with the intensive work of the Jesuits in the *sertões*, promoting Catholicism and the threats of sins, Hell, and purgatory with the indigenous tribes, there is the mysticism of the populations of the backlands.

Euclides da Cunha emphasizes that the religiosity of the *sertanejo* is linked to the “maravilhoso,” imbibed in mysticism; it constitutes a mix of beliefs: “A sua religião é como

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<sup>74</sup> Owen Chadwick explains that the concept of Purgatory was introduced by the early Church with the intent of portraying the mercy of God. Otherwise, the severity of God’s punishment was seen as non-Christian. The Purgatory gave another dimension to God as an entity who had mercy. The concept of Purgatory was slow to form: “It is hard to know whether purgatory was a moral support to society; but for two centuries it helped the peoples of the West to preserve their faith in the mercy of God” (139).

In *Missão Abreviada* both Purgatory and Hell are equally terrifying, the only difference is temporal. Nonetheless, this view of Purgatory is not unanimous in the Catholic Church or in Christianity. There are several interpretations of purgatory that happened throughout the centuries and there is not a consensus among Christians of purgatory, its concept varies depending on the theologies and the interpretations of the Bible. In *The Decline of Hell*, D. P. Walker explains, for instance, that for Leibniz ‘mitigation’ (which could be the purgatory) may occur with the complete absence of pain. In the orthodox doctrine, the damned are not all punished equally in the purgatory. Instead, the intensity of the punishment will depend of the quantity and quality of the sins (Walker 64).

D. P. Walker says that the doctrine of purgatory for Catholics does not correspond to mitigation since the habitants of purgatory are saved. Unlike the purgatory, limbo is “a real mitigation of hell” (61).

ele, mestiça” (*Os Sertões* 238). As mentioned at length in chapter one, Euclides defends that the *sertanejos* believe in demoniacal forces, such as: “os *sacis* diabólicos de barrete vermelho à cabeça, assaltando o viandante retardatário, nas noites aziagas das sextas-feiras, de parceria com os *lobisomens* e *mulas-sem-cabeça* noctívagos; todos os mau-assombramentos, todas as *tentações do maldito* ou do diabo – esse trágico emissário dos rancores celestes em comissão na terra ...” (*Os Sertões* 238).

Euclides describes the *sertanejos* as a population that has many mystical beliefs. The concepts of Hell and purgatory preached by the missionaries found in the *sertões* a place for their expansion. The *sertanejo*, as Euclides points out, has already the propensity to believe in many religious manifestations: fantastic apparitions, prophecies, messiahs, pilgrimages, and miracles, among other things (*Os Sertões* 239). For the *conselheiristas*, Hell and purgatory were real threats and the teachings of Conselheiro were not to be taken lightly. They were, however, intensified by what Euclides calls “exaltação religiosa,” in which the *sertanejos* incorporate their mystical beliefs and legends of other demoniacal forces. Euclides da Cunha explains the syncretism of the *sertanejos* results in “a misunderstood Catholicism” (*catolicismo incompreendido*) (*Os Sertões* 242).<sup>75</sup>

We argue in this chapter that the *conselheiristas* believed firmly in the teachings of Antônio Conselheiro and intensified their fear of the Devil, Hell and purgatory based on their other mysticism about demons and demoniacal beings. Under the title *Estrada para o Céu*, Euclides explains that the *sertanejo* stories contributed to their belief in Hell: “Os

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<sup>75</sup> “Os ensinamentos dos missionários não poderiam exercitar-se estremes das tendências gerais da sua época. Por isto, como um palimpsesto, a consciência imperfeita dos matutos revela nas quadras agitadas, rompendo dentre os ideais belíssimos do catolicismo incompreendido, todos os estigmas de estádio inferior” (*Os Sertões* 242).

ingênuos contos sertanejos desde muito lhes haviam revelado as estradas fascinadoramente traiçoeiras que levam ao Inferno. Canudos, imunda ante-sala do Paraíso, pobre peristilo dos céus, devia ser assim mesmo – repugnante, aterrador, horrendo...” (*Os Sertões* 308).

*Missão Abreviada* repeats its most important message throughout the book: only by following the principles of Christianity, by listening to God and through his infinite mercy can a sinner find his escape from Hell, from the “fogo do inferno” as the book emphasizes:

Agora mesmo estás dormindo no sono da culpa, te está Deus chamando;  
Deus ainda tem maior empenho em valer-te, Deus ainda faz maiores excessos, e tem tido maiores trabalhos para salvar-te, do que tu tens tido e tens para te livrar do fogo do inferno... Oh! Quão grande é a misericórdia do nosso Deus! Que excessos d’amor! Que grande cegueira do pecador! Ai dele, se ainda agora não acorda! Oh! Como será ele acordado pelo fogo do inferno, se agora não quiser levantar-se desse sono infernal da culpa!

(*Missão* 22-23)

As the narrative of *Missão Abreviada* progresses, it becomes even clearer that this book is a guide to salvation, a wake-up call for sinners; as it mentions repeatedly, the main intention is “acordar os descuidados.” Instruction 36a reminds the sinner that his careless behavior will condemn him. There is the need to wake up to reality and face the fact that without change nothing will be achieved: “Ainda não acordas? Tu já vês que pelos teus



crimes estás condenado ao inferno e então ainda queres cometer mais e mais crimes para depois escapar do inferno?! Ó grande cegueira! Ó fúria diabólica!” (*Missão* 355).<sup>76</sup>

As much as it can be argued that Conselheiro wanted genuinely to save his followers, we cannot ignore that their salvation came with a price tag. The *conselheiristas* left most of their possessions to their leader and worked day after day in the construction of their temple, which was Conselheiro’s master project. The temple was not a Catholic Church, but the Church of Conselheiro, his own. This adds to the claims of priests that Conselheiro was competing with the Catholic Church by deviating their followers to his own Church.

In his manuscript, Antônio Conselheiro echoes the message of condemnation to Hell to those who insist in committing sins and not following the precepts of Catholicism; in his words: “Como são injustos aqueles que ofendem a honra de Deus, que pode lançá-los vivos no inferno: se eles trouxessem gravados em seus corações o preceito da Santa Igreja, quando o Ministro no dia de cinzas pronuncia estas palavras: Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris! Certamente eles não cometeram tão gravíssima ofensa” (Conselheiro 116).

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<sup>76</sup> Instrução 36a – “Não o podes duvidar, pecador: tu, quando consideras profundamente na tua má vida e sobre ti mesmo; quando olhas para Deus e para as verdades eternas; finalmente, quando consideras no destino que há de ter a tua alma, inquietas-te, afliges-te e repreendes-te a ti mesmo; a tua consciência grita contra ti; tudo isto é verdade. E então tu observas estas coisas e ainda te fazes de surdo? Ainda não acordas? Tu já vês que pelos teus crimes estás condenado ao inferno e então ainda queres cometer mais e mais crimes para depois escapar do inferno?! Ó grande cegueira! Ó fúria diabólica! Já condenado ao inferno e então ainda cometer mais e mais crimes com intenção de escapar do inferno? Que é isto pecador? Que esperanças são as tuas de salvação? Desengana-te: se não cuidas já de reformar a tua vida, podes contar com a tua condenação eterna” (*Missão* 355-6).

When discussing the Passion of Christ, the author of *Missão Abreviada*, emphasizes the fact that Jesus has already saved the sinners from Hell by giving his own life.<sup>77</sup> However, many continue to live in sin, despite of Jesus' sacrifice. Those are seen as ungrateful people who gave their souls to the Devil: "... Ó homem cego, louco e ingrato vai lançar a Jesus fora do seu coração para se entregar às criaturas, ao mundo e ao demônio" (125).

Again, Antônio Conselheiro resonates the message above by making reference in his manuscript to the Passion of Christ and the fact that he died in name of our sins:

... sacrificou sua sagrada pessoa em satisfação das nossas culpas: dela como de baluarte fortíssimo, pelejou contra os inimigos mortais, apoderados do mundo pelo pecado ... Estas glórias, estas ditas logram sim os fiéis cristãos de verem na cruz de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo ... E para o demônio e todo o inferno não pode haver maior terror do que verem a cruz de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo. (162)

The leader of Canudos does not deviate from the Bible texts in his manuscript, and his teachings mirror the content of *Missão Abreviada* and *Horas Marianas*. The representation of republicans as the Devil, the threat of Hell, and the search for salvation motivated *the conselheiristas* to take part in the Battle of Canudos; without the representations of the Devil, the battle would probably have taken another turn.

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<sup>77</sup> See Meditação 20a – Da Paixão de Cristo and Meditação 21ª – Também da Paixão – sobre os açoites: "Tu, pecador, já devias estar a arder no inferno, e já há muitos anos; porém Jesus Cristo por teu amor, para te livrar desses tormentos eternos, quis ser rasgado com açoites e rasgado até lhe cair a carne a pedaços, até mesmo se lhe verem os ossos!" (*Missão* 126).

## Republicans as the Devil

“O Anti-Cristo nasceu  
Para o Brasil governar  
Mas aí está o Conselheiro  
Para deles nos livrar!” (*Os Sertões* 320)

The poem above was popular in the *sertões* of Brazil. Euclides published it in *Os Sertões*, under the headline “O governo demoníaco, porém desaparecerá em breve,” to exemplify the type of message that was disseminated among the *sertanejos* in the interior of Bahia (319). This kind of poetry helped create the folkloric and martyr image of Conselheiro as the savior of *the sertanejos*, the one sent by God to save the inhabitants of Canudos from the Anti-Christ.

The poem above has a religious and political message. In addition to the apocalyptic implications of having the appearance of the Anti-Crist, there is the claim that the Anti-Christ was born to govern Brazil. It supported the insurgency of Canudos in not accepting the republican president as a legitimate leader. The *conselheiristas'* insubordination created a political turmoil in Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil at the time.

The oral tradition of the Northeast of Brazil in combination with “Literatura de Cordel” helped promote the notion of Canudos being attacked by the demoniacal forces of the republicans. Euclides registered in his *caderneta de campo* the Cordel literature about Canudos, also referred to as the ABCs. The following poems were copied by Euclides in his *caderneta*:

Grandeza só tem Jesus

que nos livra de toudo mal  
assim como nos livramos  
deste castigo mortal  
daquele ímpio suberbo  
que vinha nos acabá.

Homem que só maginando  
em matá os inocente  
P.m Deus o castigou  
em uma hora de repente  
morreu logo os generais  
comandantes e sargentos.

indo ele com muita fúria  
ao Belo Monte arrasá  
mas ele se enganou  
que vinhero se acabá  
que Deus não ajuntou seu povo  
para o demonho espalhá. (*Canudos na Literatura de Cordel* 16-17)

The poem above promotes the idea that God punished the *generais*, *comandantes*, and *sargentos* with their sudden death for trying to destroy the sacred land of Canudos. It

attributes the death of the military to a punishment of God, giving a mystical explanation to it.

It is important to note that Conselheiro had the aura of a saint for his followers. The miraculous aura of Antônio Conselheiro had been spreading through the *sertões* for over two decades prior the Battle of Canudos. By the time Conselheiro established the village of Canudos in 1893, the *sertanejos* had heard of him and his prophecies for a good part of their lives. As Euclides points out, Conselheiro was seen by his followers as “o Santo protector” (*Os Sertões* 305). He was referred to as Saint Anthony,<sup>78</sup> in reference to the Catholic saint who protects the souls, in verses that had been around the *sertões* for over twenty years:

Do Céu veio uma luz

Que Jesus Cristo mandou.

Santo Antônio Aparecido

Dos castigos nos livrou!

Quem ouvir e não aprender

Quem souber e não ensinar

No dia do Juízo

A sua alma penará! (*Os Sertões* 305)

Even towards the end of the battle, many *conselheiristas* believed that their leader had left Canudos for Heaven, from where he would punish the Government. They thought

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<sup>78</sup> Saint Anthony was also the patron of Canudos.

that after punishing the Government, Conselheiro would return to Belo Monte and live there in peace (Rabelo 163).<sup>79</sup>

Euclides da Cunha states in *Os Sertões* that Conselheiro preached against the republicans: “Pregava contra a República; é certo” (316). Under the ironic title “Por que não pregar contra a República?,” Euclides explains that Conselheiro’s aversion for the republican system was a mystical exacerbation (*exarcebação mística*) and a religious delirium (*delírio religioso*) (316). He does not believe that the *sertanejos*, including Conselheiro, had a political understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of the monarchy or the republic for Brazil.<sup>80</sup> Euclides da Cunha identifies Antônio Conselheiro’s beliefs as a product of his distorted religiosity, in which the republic was associated with the demoniacal forces and the triumph of the Anti-Christ, as Euclides stated in *Os Sertões*: “O rebelado arremetia com a ordem constituída porque se lhe afigurava iminente o reino de delícias prometido. Prenunciava-o a República – pecado mortal de um povo – heresia suprema indicadora do triunfo efêmero do Anticristo” (319). In fact, the *sertanejo* had very little access to education, high levels of illiteracy, and a deficient understanding of the politics in the capital of Brazil. Despite the positivist cloud that was part of Euclides da

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<sup>79</sup> “Soube-se por eles [prisioneiros de Canudos] que há muito ninguém dava notícias do Bom Jesus. Havia quem acreditasse que ele tinha subido ao céu, em busca de castigo para o governo que queria arrasar a sua terra e a sua gente. Ele haveria de voltar e então Belo Monte ia ter de novo sossego. Sossego para sempre” (Rabelo 263).

As Antônio Conselheiro became more affluent in the *sertões*, his followers started referring to him in a more religious manner as well: “... à proporção que ia ganhando fama nos sertões brasileiros, tornou-se Irmão Antônio, Antônio Conselheiro, Santo Antônio Aparecido, Bom Jesus Conselheiro” (Calasans 22).

<sup>80</sup> “Mas não traduzia o mais pálido intuito político: o jagunço é tão inapto para aprender a forma republicana como a monárquico-constitucional. Ambas lhe são abstrações inacessíveis. É espontaneamente adversário de ambas. Está na fase evolutiva em que só é conceptível o império de um chefe sacerdotal ou guerreiro” (*Os Sertões* 316).

Cunha's theories - which classified the *sertanejos* as people in a stage of evolution and incapable of learning about any government systems, except for the most primitive ones – the fact is that Euclides da Cunha was correct in identifying the *conselheiristas* opposition to the republicans because of their radical religious views. Although this war had clear political implications, most *conselheiristas* had a very limited understanding of the politics and they took part in the battle mostly because of their religious fanaticism, their fear of the Devil and of eternal condemnation.

In his manuscript, under the subtitle *Sobre a República*, Conselheiro starts by affirming that the republicans were the greatest misfortune of Brazil (*o grande mal*). For him, republicans had the ultimate goal of exterminating religion:

Agora tenho de falar-vos de um assunto que tem sido o assombro e o abalo dos fiéis, de um assunto que só a incredulidade do homem ocasionaria semelhante acontecimento: a república, que é incontestavelmente um grande mal para o Brasil que era outrora tão bela a sua estrela. Hoje, porém foge toda a segurança, porque um novo governo acaba de ter o seu invento e do seu emprego se lança mão como meio mais eficaz e pronto para o extermínio da religião. (Conselheiro 175)<sup>81</sup>

For Conselheiro, the Portuguese monarch and the Portuguese Royal family were legitimated by God and were the only ones who could govern Brazil. The republican President of Brazil was then acting against God's will. Antônio Conselheiro considered the

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<sup>81</sup> We are using Conselheiro's manuscript that was published by Ataliba Nogueira in *Antônio Conselheiro e Canudos, revisão histórica. A obra manuscrita de Antônio Conselheiro e que pertenceu a Euclides da Cunha* (1974).

Brazilian President an incredulous man who was not blessed by God to lead the country. In his manuscript, Conselheiro registered his fierce position against the republican President:

O presidente da república, porém, movido pela incredulidade que tem atraído sobre ele toda sorte de ilusões, entende que pode governar o Brasil como se fora um monarca legitimamente constituído por Deus; tanta injustiça os católicos contemplam amargurados. Oh! Homem incrédulo, quanto pesa a tua incredulidade diante de Deus! E para fazê-la mais patente vejam que diz Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo (Mat., cap. 16, v. 16). (176)

Conselheiro's view of the Portuguese monarch as a representative of God was in alignment with the medieval understanding of the role of the Portuguese monarchs as absolutist and ultimate judges, whose actions were informed by the Scriptures and had a divine essence to them, a view that changed over the centuries. Ataliba Nogueira indicates in the introduction of Conselheiro's manuscript that the "*direito divino*" attributed to the Portuguese monarchs was a doctrine condemned by the Catholic Church and consisted in a mistake on Conselheiro's part.<sup>82</sup>

Euclides da Cunha defends that the Battle of Canudos was a war of an insane man living in the past, in an old society:

Insistamos sobre esta verdade: a guerra de Canudos foi um refluxo em nossa história. Tivemos, inopinadamente, ressurrecta e em armas em nossa frente, uma sociedade velha, uma sociedade morta, galvanizada por um doido. Não

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<sup>82</sup> "O erro do Conselheiro é ser partidário do direito divino dos reis, doutrina condenada pela Igreja, desde o seu aparecimento, mas, contudo, aceita pela maioria dos monárquicos do Brasil ..." (Nogueira 39).



conhecemos. Não podíamos conhecê-la. Os aventureiros do século XVII, porém, nela topariam relações antigas, da mesma sorte que os iluminados da Idade Média se sentiriam à vontade, neste século entre *demonopatas* de Verzegnis ou entre os *Stundistas* da Rússia. (*Os Sertões* 316)

Euclides da Cunha argues that the visionaries from the Middle Ages would be at home in Canudos as they would be among the type of “denomopathy” (*demonopata*) of Verzegnis. Euclides da Cunha compares the inhabitants of Canudos and their obsession with the Devil (*demonopata*) with the population of Verzegnis in Italy, in the nineteenth century. In 1879, an infuriated mob carried out a procession in the city of Verzegnis asking for the expulsion of the Devil from the patients of the Hospital of Udine in order to cure them. Euclides da Cunha also compares the *conselheiristas* with the Stundists in Russia, a group of evangelical Protestants who have the habit of reading the Bible at every hour.<sup>83</sup>

The isolation of the *sertões* and the heavy colonization of Brazil during the monarchy of D. João III, mentioned in chapter one of this dissertation, made the *sertões* of Brazil a propitious place for the endurance of an old society. Euclides da Cunha has pointed out this fact in *Os Sertões*: “O povoamento do Brasil fez-se, intenso, com D. João III, precisamente no fastígio de completo desequilíbrio moral, quando todos os terrores da Idade Média tinham cristalizado no catolicismo peninsular” (*Os Sertões* 297).

Walnice Nogueira Galvão in *O Império do Belo Monte* highlights the fact that the *conselheiristas* followed a traditional or rustic (*rústico*) Catholicism which was typical of the

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<sup>83</sup> The word *stunde* means hour in German.

regions in the interior of Brazil (30).<sup>84</sup> Nogueira Galvão emphasizes that the Romanization of the Catholic Church in the middle of the nineteenth century strengthened the Catholic tradition in the Northeast of Brazil with the foundation of seminaries and the arrival of more priests.<sup>85</sup> During this time, there was the appearance of other messiahs as well, such as Padre Cícero (1844-1934) and Padre José Maria Ibiapina (1806-1883).

In his manuscript, Conselheiro defends that the republicans were repressing the Church and prohibiting the activities of the Jesuits. Conselheiro writes that the republican system goes against the wishes of God and the divine law (176). In the same letter about the republic, Conselheiro explains that not everyone will go to Heaven (*O Reino dos Céus*). Using Christ as an example and quoting passages from the Bible (Matt 7: 21 and Matt. 26: 39), Conselheiro argues that in order to reach salvation it is necessary to suffer as Jesus suffered on the cross and to combat the Devil who wishes to destroy the Church:

É necessário que se sofra para obter a verdadeira felicidade, que é a glória de Deus. É necessário que se sustente a fé da sua Igreja. É necessário enfim que se faça a sua divina vontade, combatendo o demônio que quer acabar

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<sup>84</sup> Alexandre Otten explains the concept of “rustic catholicism” as:

“Sendo rústico, ele se opõe ao catolicismo citadino, que primeiro se centrava em organizações leigas como irmandades, confrarias e ordens terceiras, mas com a forte urbanização a partir da Independência se transformava ou se secularizava. O catolicismo rústico demonstra uma visão sacral do mundo, contém “sobrevivências de uma ‘mística da natureza’ em que o homem se vê numa dependência incondicional em face das forças do cosmo, vividas como manifestações do sagrado.”

Obviamente, não existe “o” catolicismo rústico. Há uma aglomeração de práticas e crenças que passou a chamar-se como tal, tanto mais que o conceito abrange formas de regiões tão afastadas uma da outra quanto o sertão de Santa Catarina e o sertão da Bahia. Mas nesta diversidade, observam-se grande semelhança e coesão. Estas se revelam ao redor dos temas gerais...” (Otten 93-4).

<sup>85</sup> “Com a *romanização*, no Nordeste brasileiro deu-se uma rearticulação de dioceses, uma reaproximação com o povo, um reavivamento espiritual conduzido pela hierarquia, combinando-se com a fundação de seminários e uma injeção de sangue novo por meio do chegado aos postos locais de padres que representavam o novo ideário” (*O Império de Belo Monte* 30).

com a fé da Igreja. A religião santifica tudo e não destrói coisa alguma,  
exceto o pecado. (177)

As mentioned before, the belief that republicans represented evil was also portrayed by local *sertanejo* poets, whom Euclides da Cunha refers to as “rudes poetas.” Euclides transcribed some of the popular verses in *Os Sertões*. The first short poem argues that once D. Pedro left Brazil, the country was left in uncertainty:

Saiu D. Pedro segundo  
Para o reino de Lisboa  
Acabou-se a monarquia  
O Brasil ficou atoa. (*Os Sertões* 319)

The sequential poem, under Euclides da Cunha’s heading “A República era a impiedade,” tells the story of the republicans taking over the Brazilian government, and it portrays a battle and its two sides: the side of God and the side of the Devil. The popular poem explains that there is the law of the Devil (*a lei do cão*) and the law of God; the *conselheiristas* are defending the law of God against the republicans, who represent the Devil:

Garantidos pela lei  
Aqueles malvados estão  
Nós temos a lei de Deus  
Eles têm a lei do cão!  
  
Bem desgraçados são eles

Para fazerem a eleição

Abatendo a lei de Deus

Suspendendo a lei do cão! (319)

We argue in this chapter that “A lei do cão” and the idea of a battle against the devil, as the poem above makes reference, are the main motivations for the *conselheiristas* to engage in a war against republicans. As indicated before, the Battle of Canudos constitutes a religious war from the *conselheiristas*’ perspective with political implications. The same cannot be said about the Brazilian government’s side. For the republican President, Prudente de Morais, the Battle of Canudos represented a political demonstration of authority and sovereignty. As the republican system struggled to be established, the Government would not accept insurgencies in the Brazilian territory since they jeopardized the establishment of the republican system.<sup>86</sup> Canudos served as an example for the rest of the country, this was not a religious war for the republicans.

### **Salvation for the Inhabitants of Canudos**

Conselheiro’s followers thought firmly that their lives would be continued in Heaven as the Earth was being taken over by the Devil. Euclides transcribed in his *Caderneta de Campo* the words of a *conselheirista* in a letter addressed to his son, asking

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<sup>86</sup> Brazil became a republic in November of 1889. In 1892, there was the revolt of the Fort of Santa Cruz (January 19, 1892) and several smaller insurgencies against the republican system. In 1893, the Federal Revolution (*Revolução Federalista*) in Rio Grande do Sul was, in the words of Luiz Lima, a real civil war (“uma verdadeira guerra civil”) which lasted from 1893 until 1895 (Lima, *Euclides* 11). There was also the insurgency of the *Revolta Armada* on September 6, 1893, which bombarded the city of Rio de Janeiro, and smaller revolts in São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and Mato Grosso.

him to come to Canudos in order to be saved. The *sertanejo* explains that Antônio Conselheiro had guaranteed ‘three times’ that those who die in Canudos will be saved:

Louvado S. N. Senhor Jesus Cristo, Belo Monte 3 de 10

Rosendo estimou-te boa saúde em comp.<sup>a</sup> da sua fam.<sup>a</sup>. Meu Conselheiro está procurando por vocês venha embora breve que está se vendo não entrar mais ninguém causa os republicano venham com sentido assim diz meu conselheiro. O que eles apanhar mata venha morrer nos pés do bom. Js. O Conselheiro disse três vezes que o que morreu no Belo Monte ele agarante a salvação. Já morreu dos nossos irmãos 74 no fogo que houve morreu 5 republicano e morreu muito cabeludo. O Conselheiro está interessado que vocês venham hoje a golpe na chegada do princípio não passa janeiro por nenhuma.

Aos conhecidos. Aqui fica teu Pai.

Bonifácio Mel João (21)

This letter shows the nature of the millenarian dialogue of Conselheiro. His followers were recruiting the *sertanejos* to come to the *Canaan* of the *sertões*. The fact that Euclides copied this letter in his *caderneta* demonstrates his interest in collecting factual information about the narrative of Canudos and it translates to the accuracy of the events described in the classic *Os Sertões*.

The inhabitants of Canudos understood that the ones who did not listen to the message of conversion, penitence, and salvation would be destined to Hell, as in the words

of *Missão Abreviada*: “[...] desprezas a minha misericórdia, és um ingrato, e por isso hei de castigar-te no fogo eterno” (24).

As the teachings of *Missão Abreviada* present, men were created by God to be loved by him and to love him above all things. The retribution for a life devoted to God is eternal salvation:

Deus amou-te ainda mais que o teu pai carnal deste mundo, e criou-te para o amares também, e servires nesta vida, para depois dar-te em recompensa a glória eterna. Oh! Que fim este tão sobrenatural, o fim último do homem! É uma glória eterna! Uma eterna Bem aventurança. (*Missão* 24-25)

Salvation is a common theme throughout *Missão Abreviada*.<sup>87</sup> It is not surprisingly then that salvation versus condemnation to Hell is one of the core messages of *Missão Abreviada* and also of Antônio Conselheiro. Eternity goes in both directions when the final day comes: it could be an eternal salvation or the *fogo eterno* (*Missão* 24). In *Missão Abreviada*, under the subtitle “Sobre o último Fim do Homem,” the main message of the book reappears again, now focusing on the last day, when the sinner will have to face the torment and suffering that comes with Hell: “Oh! Se eles soubessem e considerassem o que quer dizer inferno! Que coisa será perder a Deus! Perder o Céu! Condenar a alma! E Cair nas penas eternas!” (*Missão* 27).

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<sup>87</sup> “Ninguém pode duvidar do Evangelho, sem que com iguais razões duvide de tudo; há uma vida eterna depois desta, em que os bons são premiados com a glória e os maus castigados com o inferno” (*Missão* 325).

Instrução 22<sup>a</sup> – “Quem se quiser salvar, deve tratar da sua salvação decididamente; não deve ter medo, nem vergonha de confessar a Jesus Cristo em toda a parte do mundo, seja perante quem for. As almas caem no inferno tão espessas como cai a chuva lá do ar; assim foi representado à Santa Tereza. Ora, a vista do que diz esta Santa, mesmo aqueles que tratam deveras da salvação, vão arriscados; logo, quanto mais vós, se ainda tendes vergonha, medo, ou covardia!” (*Missão* 327).

The message of salvation from *Missão Abreviada* is clearly laid out in Conselheiro's farewell letter. After apologizing for having possibly offended some of his followers, Conselheiro justifies his firm attitude and language, based on his ultimate desire of providing guidance to his people to achieve their salvation:

Como não ficarei plenamente satisfeito sabendo da conversão, por mim tão ardentemente desejada. Outra coisa, porém, não é de esperar de vós à vista do fervor e animação com que tendes ocorrido para ouvirdes a palavra de Deus, o que é uma prova que atesta o vosso zelo religioso. Antes de fazer-vos a minha despedida, peço-vos perdão se nos conselhos vos tenho ofendido. Conquanto em algumas ocasiões proferisse palavras excessivamente rígidas, combatendo a maldita república, repreendendo os vícios e movendo o coração ao santo temor e amor de Deus, todavia não concebam que eu nutrisse o mínimo desejo de macular a vossa reputação. Sim, o desejo que tenho da vossa salvação (que fala mais alto do que tudo quanto eu pudesse aqui deduzir) me forçou a proceder daquela maneira. Se porém, se acham ressentidos de mim, peço-vos que me perdoeis pelo amor de Deus. (181-82)

Although conversion is an important aspect of the religious teachings of Antônio Conselheiro; as he describes in his letter, the most important element is salvation. The combination of elements -- conversion, penitence, and salvation -- was crucial for Conselheiro and his followers.

Alexandre H. Otten in *Só Deus é Grande* explains that the Catholic missionaries in the *sertões* reinforced the desire for an eternal salvation in their sermons and by their life examples, including their rigorous penitence. Otten argues that the missionaries' penitence, asceticism, and escapism coincided with the religious profile of the *sertanejos*, their "*alma religiosa popular*." In previous popular movements of sanctification, the penitential element and peregrinations were of great importance (Otten 123).<sup>88</sup>

Conselheiro preached the relevance of salvation to his followers and, at the same time, portrayed the perception of Canudos as the Canaan of the *sertanejos*. The *conselheiristas* saw the invasion of their sacred land as a sign that the world was coming to an end. Euclides explains that the followers of Conselheiro were convinced that the world was being contaminated by the republicans and Canudos was the only place to reach their salvation:

Os aliciadores da seita se ocupam em persuadir o povo de que todo aquele que se quiser salvar precisa vir para Canudos, porque nos outros lugares tudo está contaminado e perdido pela República. Ali, porém, nem é preciso trabalhar, é terra da promessa, onde corre um rio de leite e são de cuscuz de milho as barrancas.<sup>89</sup> (*Os Sertões* 308)

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<sup>88</sup> "Os missionários, por seus sermões e por seu exemplo de vida, fortaleceram no sertão esta visão de ânsia pela salvação eterna, de fuga do mundo, de rigorismo penitencial" (Otten 123).

<sup>89</sup> "Nota do autor: Vide relatório de Fr. João Evangelista de Monte-Marciano. Nota do Editor: Afirmo Lelis Piedade que: "conforme um jagunço, [o conselheiro] dissera numa de suas práticas que , quando os republicanos chegassem, a água do Vaza-Barris se transformaria em sangue para eles, ao passo que seria de leite para seus fiéis, que as pedras de Canudos seriam para estes pães e para aqueles pedras" (*Jornal de Notícias*, 7.9.1897).



The apocalyptic prophecies of Antônio Conselheiro went hand-in-hand with the desire for salvation. In his manuscript, Conselheiro writes about salvation in a section entitled *Dor de Maria na perda de seu Filho no Templo*:

Ah! Jesus diz à sua Mãe, quando ela o achou no Templo, que tinha obrigação de se ocupar nos negócios de seu Eterno Pai; e que negócio mais importante podemos nós ter que o da salvação? Diamante sem brilho, ouro sem beleza, assim é o nosso coração separado de Deus; e ainda queremos viver nas trevas, sendo que a culpa separa de nós a verdadeira luz? (71)

Conselheiro explains that “*O negócio da salvação*” is the most important aspect of being a Christian. Even though, Conselheiro is ultimately writing about Mary, who is represented in more than one third of his manuscript, he also mentions salvation and the darkness (*as trevas*).

The theme of salvation, very common in *Missão Abreviada*, resonates in Conselheiro’s manuscript. The language is the same; salvation is referred to as a “negócio” in both texts. For instance, in a discussion about the possibility of going to Heaven or Hell, the excerpt below from *Missão Abreviada* refers to salvation as a “negócio” as well: “Pois sabe que o negócio da tua salvação é o teu negócio grande; ou justo, ou pecador; aqui não há meio termo: ou Céu para sempre, ou para sempre condenado ao inferno...” (108). It is clear that Antônio Conselheiro found inspiration and the words to talk about salvation in his manuscript from *Missão Abreviada*.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Also, in his writings, Conselheiro at times reproduces the dialogues between Mary and Jesus, resembling the same technique used in parts of *Missão Abreviada*, where the voice of the Virgin Mary, God, Jesus, and saints are heard also in the form of dialogues.

The image of the Devil is used to persuade the sinner. If he doesn't devote his life to Christ he will not be able to reverse the consequences of a life dedicated to the Devil, as it is argued in *Missão Abreviada, Meditação 7ª: Sobre a Morte*. Salvation of the soul is the central focus of this section:

... pensa bem, pecador, nesse momento terrível, quando estiveres lutando braço a braço com a morte! Que me dizes! Será então ocasião de conquistar o Reino do Céu, tendo trabalhado até ali sempre com o demônio, sempre pelo inferno? (51). ... o inferno aberto debaixo do teu leito; os demônios em roda dele para te arrastarem a esses abismos infernais: quem te há de valer então, pecador? Quem há de acudir-te e defender-te desses lobos do inferno?" (*Missão 52*)

In Instruction 16, the narrative follows the same pattern. It starts by praising God and those who follow his lead. It reminds the reader of God as a just entity who will save those who deserve to be saved and condemn those who should be condemned, that justice will be done. It finishes by reminding the sinner of what awaits him after a whole life of ignoring the Scriptures: "E que me dizes, pecador descuidado e preguiçoso? Para que serve agora a tua alma? Para que serve a lenha da vinha morta? Para o fogo, poderás tu dizer; pois assim os teus pecados são a lenha do fogo do inferno" (*Missão 184*).

Furthermore, the sinner is not only missing out on his salvation and ending up in Hell, the book emphasizes the sinner's role as an agent of the Devil ("ministro do demônio") who is

also responsible for taking other souls to Hell and for that reason works for the Devil, in the benefit of the Devil.<sup>91</sup>

As the instructions progress there is a plea to the sinner to return to God and by doing so to find his salvation. First, the sinner is presented as a person, who loves the Devil, follows his directions, and for that reason will end his existence in Hell: “O inferno é a última paga que o demônio dá a quem o serve; grande recompensa!” (*Missão* 239). Then, the end of the passage says that there is time for hope and the sinner’s last chance is to follow God’s lead and forget about the Devil. There is a message of hope and conversion. In the end this is also the message of Antônio Conselheiro, which is probably how Conselheiro converted many *jagunços*, by showing them that salvation was also a matter of choice; salvation was for those who chose God’s lead over the Devil’s lead.<sup>92</sup>

Further in the text of *Missão Abreviada*, in part three, the theme of salvation is introduced in relation to the sinners who are unaware of their sins. The text pictures Hell with its abysses and demons ready to take the sinner from his death bed. This image is of impact to *the conselheiristas*, who held the salvation of their souls as their main goal in life.

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<sup>91</sup> “... um pecador já é um ministro do demônio do inferno; já o demônio serve dele para arrastar as almas ao inferno; ele zomba dos ministros mais exemplares na virtude; ele escarnece da virtude, ou de quem a pratica; fala contra a oração e frequência dos sacramentos; desta sorte retira muitas almas dos santos exercícios; perverte outras muitas; impede a conversão de muitos pecadores; rouba muitas almas a Deus, e trabalha sempre como o demônio!” (*Missão* 191).

<sup>92</sup> Instrução 38 – “Um pecador, na verdade, é um ingrato para com Deus; nem conhece os benefícios que Deus lhe tem feito, nem Lhos agradece. Que grande cegueira! Pois vai amar uma criatura vil e infame, que só o mete em trabalhos, tristezas, amarguras e responsabilidades, e por fim atira com ele ao fogo eterno! O inferno é a última paga que o demônio dá a quem o serve; grande recompensa! [...] Que sortes as mais infelizes! Sem honra, sem fama, sem vergonha, sem juízo, na tristeza, na amargura, e por fim ainda cair no fogo eterno! Que maior infelicidade neste e no outro mundo! Ora pois, volta para Jesus; Ele é o vosso bom pastor, que vos pode e quer acolher e dar o Reino dos Céus; por isso não fujais mais” (*Missão Abreviada* 239-40).

Instruction 33 - *Sobre a Tibieza* – explains that this is the most dangerous stage for salvation: “Viver em culpa grave e não saber que vive nela, que maior perigo para a salvação eterna?” (*Missão* 531). The solution is to have faith (*fervor*) because salvation can be risky: “Fervor, meus irmãos; haja fervor e emenda de vida, quando não, a salvação vai muito arriscada” (*Missão* 533).<sup>93</sup>

### **Devil as the God of Republicans**

When discussing the sins in *Missão Abreviada (Meditação 5a – Sobre o pecado)*, a sinner is described as a person who disobeys God’s wishes and ends up following the Devil’s wishes instead. According to this description, the sinner sees the Devil as his God: “O pecador diz a Deus com as suas obras: apartai-vos de mim; eu estou com o demônio... o meu Deus é o demônio.” (*Missão* 39). Further in the text, in part three, the Devil is again mentioned as the subject of adoration by the sinners: “Até fazes desta criatura o teu Deus” (*Missão* 391).<sup>94</sup>

According to *Conselheiro*, the republicans were replacing God with the Devil. On the other hand, wasn’t *Conselheiro* doing something similar with his followers? After all, many *sertanejos* thought of him as their God, their “Bom Jesus *Conselheiro*.” Euclides da

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<sup>93</sup> “Não há estado mais perigoso para a salvação que a tibieza; porque o túbio facilmente pode viver em culpa grave; e como se não conhece por tal, com há de dar remédio ao seu pecado? [...] Viver na tibieza, talvez em culpa grave, sem saber que vive nela; ir assim enganado ao inferno!...” (*Missão* 531-3).

<sup>94</sup> Instrução 51ª – “Conhece, pecador amancebado, conhece as tuas loucuras, ingratidões e a gravidade do teu pecado! Jesus Cristo quer o teu coração todo e tem direito a ele; porém tu negas, negas esse teu coração a Jesus e vais entregá-lo com todos os seus amores e afetos a essa criatura infame que te anda arrastando para o inferno! Até fazes desta criatura o teu Deus; ela é o objeto que amas e o ídolo que adoras! Tu deixas a Deus por via dessa criatura e negas a Deus com as obras; que maior crime! S. Paulo diz: o pecador desonesto não há de entrar no Reino dos Céus. Que terrível maldição está caindo sobre a tua alma, quando está cometendo esse pecado! Que sentença de condenação eterna já está contra ti?!” (*Missão* 390-1).

Cunha wrote in his *caderneta* accounts for the war in which *the sertanejos* invoked the name of Conselheiro in the battle lines, as their savior:

Estes avançam sempre aos gritos: VIVA o Bom Jesus! Viva o nosso Conselheiro! Viva a Monarquia! Chegando alguns a investirem de facão contra os soldados. Um deles trazia alçada grande cruz de madeira e carregavam outros imagens de santos de diversos tamanhos. Serviam-se de apitos estridentes para a execução de movimentos e manobras. As praças calculavam em três mil! Eram em número menor, de mil talvez. (Cunha, *Caderneta* 95-95)

*Missão Abreviada* presents several passages about the sinner taking the Devil's side and engaging in a war against God. The following passage reinforces Conselheiro's position in the Battle of Canudos: "O pecador anda em guerra com Deus; vive alistado debaixo das bandeiras do demônio" (38).<sup>95</sup> While it is not possible to pinpoint how Conselheiro used or interpreted each section of *Missão Abreviada*, he was indeed very familiar with the content of this book and he used it as part of his daily sermons and prayers in the village of Canudos. The message of the sinner engaging in a war with the Devil against God translated well with the Battle of Canudos.

Conselheiro was known for his determination in following a simple life and his condemnation of what he believed to be sins. His firm attitude is comparable with the core values of *Missão Abreviada*: "[...] e só um pecado, que converteu milhões de milhões de

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<sup>95</sup> "Que ingratidões! Que desatino! O homem criado por Deus, cheio de benefícios divinos, rebelar-se contra o mesmo Deus, ofendê-lo, desprezá-lo, fazer-lhe guerra juntamente como o demônio?!" (*Missão* 39).

Anjos em milhões de demônios, os quais de estrelas do céu ficaram sendo negros tições para o inferno” (41). A single sin can change the world. *Missão Abreviada* presents several sections about the dark power of the sins, arguing in some instances that the results of a sin can be worse than the torments of Hell: “ ... finalmente, diz Santo Ignácio de Loyola, é pior [o pecado] que todos os tormentos do inferno...” (*Missão* 45). In *Meditação 5ª: Sobre o pecado* and *Meditação 6ª - Também sobre o pecado*, a sin is interpreted as an offence to God and to the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>96</sup> The central argument is that the sinner is serving the Devil and for that reason will end up in Hell:

Ó fúria do demônio... E como ofende a Deus quando peca? Ofende a Deus com um desprezo inaudito, sabendo muito bem os grandes castigos que Deus tem dado aos pecadores; sabendo muito bem que no outro mundo há um inferno para castigar, e que esse inferno é eterno e de um fogo o mais devorante; ofende a Deus, sabendo muito bem que morreu o Filho de Deus em uma cruz por via do pecado; sabendo que desagrada a Deus e que dá gosto ao demônio;... (*Missão* 47)

Similarly to the excerpt above, Antônio Conselheiro writes in his manuscript about the fact that a sin is an offence to the creator. Conselheiro’s message about sin and the sacrifice of Christ mirrors the content of *Missão Abreviada*. The following excerpt comes from the third Commandment in Conselheiro’s manuscript:

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<sup>96</sup> The sin is seen as an offence to God also in other parts of the text, as in part 3 (Instruction 40): “Deves considerar que tu, como pecador, tens ofendido muito a Deus; pelo pecado tens-te rebelado contra o mesmo Deus; chegaste a crucificar a Jesus Cristo, que te tinha enchido dos maiores benefícios; pelo pecado trocaste o Céu pelo inferno; trocaste a Deus pelo demônio; vendeste a alma ao mesmo demônio; já merecias muitos infernos” (*Missão* 365).

O doutor angélico Santo Tomás afirma que o pecado é quase infinito por ser feito contra a majestade infinita. Aumenta sua graveza pela vileza da pessoa que o comete, por ser um bichinho da terra, contra o seu criador, benfeitor e Redentor. Não devem proceder de semelhante modo que revela ingratidão, que excede a compreensão humana! Correspondam generosamente aos benefícios de Deus, que para tirar-nos das mãos de Lúcifer deu sua vida divina. (*Manuscrito*: in Nogueira 117)

### **The Concept of Hell**

*Missão Abreviada* repeatedly mentions how a sinner can finish his days in Hell if he continues to live in sin.<sup>97</sup> Hell is used as a reminder and a threat that life after death can be an eternal suffering. In *The Decline of Hell*, D. P. Walker explains that the greatest strength of hell is its “deterrent effect,” the fear of it is so immense that even the lowest place in Paradise is better than ending in hell (41-42).<sup>98</sup>

Conselheiro explored the deterrent effect of Hell with his followers and the guidebook *Missão Abreviada* was his greatest ally. The excerpt below describes the end of the sinner, explaining that the Devil will come for him and condemn him until the last minute:

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<sup>97</sup> “Hoje mesmo, mesmo nesta hora podes morrer. Que seria de ti, pecador, se tiveras morrido em tal dia ou tal noite, quando caíste naquele pecado? Aonde estaria agora a tua alma? Há quantos anos já estaria ardendo no fogo do inferno?” (*Missão* 55).

<sup>98</sup> D. P. Walker argues that the effectiveness of Hell as a moral deterrent can be questioned or disapproved if one considers the vindictive justice implications of God. According to this, hell would become useless after the Last Day in the “orthodox morally static afterlife: “ ... its deterrent function [of hell] ceases abruptly, and it is difficult to conceive of any other function except that of giving pleasure to the blessed, an idea which was becoming distasteful and hence obsolescent” (42).

Porque se não deixares o pecado, a morte há de tirar-te dos braços do pecado e depositar-te nos braços do demônio, e o demônio malhará contigo no fogo eterno... Os demônios, sabendo que é a última ocasião de ganharem a tua alma, hão de acometer-te com todas as forças, e todos hão de trabalhar eficazmente na tua condenação. (*Missão 58*)

The *conselheiristas* believed in the eternal salvation of their souls as much as they believed in the eternal condemnation of it. For those who go to Hell, *Missão Abreviada* warns that the sinner will be left without his soul and without another life. He will not have friends other than the demons, and he will suffer in Hell.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, once the sinner is condemned to Hell, he cannot count on God or the Virgin Mary, his destiny will be traced forever:

Ah! Ficarás confuso e aterrado, e serás condenado! Ao mesmo tempo serás desamparado de Deus e de Maria Santíssima; serás desamparado dos Anjos e dos Santos; serás entregue aos demônios, a esses lobos do inferno, que já lhes estão rangendo os dentes, e até desesperados, para te despedaçarem e arrastarem aos abismos infernais!... (*Missão 69*)

The eternity of Hell is emphasized in *Meditação 14ª – Sobre a eternidade* (*Missão 90*), warning the sinner that the worse aspect of Hell is its eternity. The divine plan is

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<sup>99</sup> “A tua morte será péssima, porque depois de morto não terás outra alma senão a mesma que perdeste que só serve para receber tormentos eternos. Não terás outro mundo senão um inferno eterno. Não terás outra vida senão a morte eterna. Não terás outros amigos senão os demônios e outros condenados do inferno. Não terás outros divertimentos senão blasfemar de Deus e Maria Santíssima; amaldiçoar o pai, a mãe, e o confessor, que te perderam; blasfêmias, maldições, gritos, alaridos, e o ranger dos dentes serão as tuas cantigas lá no inferno. Não terás outras honras senão a dos maiores tormentos, e de um lugar no mais profundo dos abismos” (*Missão 63*).



salvation, not condemnation (*Meditação 15a – Sobre a misericórdia de Deus*). Nonetheless, the book warns that God is just and will condemn those who don't confess their sins; most of the sinners will not be saved (*Missão 95-97*). A passage in part three of *Missão Abreviada* explains that from one hundred thousand sinners, only one will be saved.<sup>100</sup> Also, Instruction 35, entitled - *Poucos se Salvam* – states that to achieve salvation a Christian has to live according to the maxims of Jesus (“*as máximas de Jesus Cristo*”), however, only very few do this (*Missão 538*).

In order to visualize Hell, the text of *Missão Abreviada* describes at length a vision that Mother Anne of St. Augustine had of Hell. She describes it as a large and spacious path that leads to a narrow and cramped path, which she was forced to go into. In her description, Mother Anne was received with great clatter and noise by two demons who sent her to Hell, where there was a great number of demons and flames. She was then led to a deep cavern where she witnessed horrific images and an uncountable number of demons and sinners in great confusion. There were long groans and screams, with sinners crying in despair and gnashing their teeth. She also saw beasts roaring, demons howling, and dragons whistling, forming a sad and horrific song. There were forts and walls of fire; in parts of Hell it was only darkness and an excessive smell of fire which was tormenting. She also saw all kinds of people in Hell: “Que vira lá pessoas de todas as qualidades,

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<sup>100</sup> Instrução 41a – “De sorte que de cem mil pecadores, apenas se salvará um na hora da sua morte; e é mais fácil ressuscitar um defunto; assim o diz algum dos Santos Padres. Desgraçado pecador, considera tuas grandes misérias! Não sabes que tens mais pecados do que os demônios todos do inferno? Não sabes que por sete ou oito pecados mereces mais sete ou oito infernos? Ou hás de ser castigado mais sete ou oito vezes? Se já te converteras, ainda assim mesmo o demônio te fará uma grande guerra lá no dia do juízo: e não sabes porquê? Porque o melhor da tua vida, a tua mocidade, tem sido do mesmo demônio: logo, que podes esperar, se acrescentares pecados sobre pecados, crimes sobre crimes? Se não tratas pois já de reformar a tua vida, podes contar com a tua condenação eterna!” (*Missão 367*).

Anachoretas, Padres, leigos, casados, solteiros, ricos, pobres, Freiras e Frades... Também lá viu a Lúcifer e Judas” (*Missão* 575). After visiting Hell, Mother Anne was not the same person, she was pale, could not sleep well, became sick, would forget to eat, and was always shaky and tormented.

At the end of this instruction there is a message of change. The author calls the “desenganados” to change their lives and follow the sacraments. He reminds the sinner of how his life can finish.

### **The end of the world**

Frank Kermode, in *The Sense of an Ending*, argues that there is a human interest in endings, being it an end of a fictional plot or of an epoch. This interest for an end “may derive from a common desire to defeat chronicity” (250). As Kermode points out, this principle is clearly seen in religious thought, as in the apocalyptic texts of Daniel and Revelations. In the Battle of Canudos, Conselheiro’s followers were motivated to fight in a war against the Devil also because of their belief of the world coming to an end. For Conselheiro and his group, the establishment of the Republican system and the attacks on their village by military forces signaled the end of times. With the approach of the apocalypse, *the conselheiristas* believed that dying in the Battle of Canudos was a way to put an end to their lives on earth and to reach their own salvation. Having this conviction, their deaths were firmly justified.

Euclides da Cunha explains that prophecies about the end of the world appeared in a large number of small notebooks that were found in Canudos, such as: “Há de chover

uma grande chuva de estrelas e aí será o fim do Mundo. Em 1901 se apagarão as luzes” (*Os Sertões* 277).<sup>101</sup> Conselheiro’s prophecies about the end of the world had an important impact on the Battle of Canudos. The arrival of the turn of the century also emphasized the apocalyptic predictions, since the Battle of Canudos took place between 1896 and 1897. In his manuscript, in *Prédicas de Circunstâncias e Discursos – Sobre a Cruz* - Conselheiro wrote about the importance of the Cross in Catholicism, at the end of which he refers to the signification of the cross in Doomsday. Conselheiro finishes his preaching saying that God will punish the sinners and save the blessed ones:

Tu [a cruz] és minha coroa, minha glória e minha esperança no tremendo dia do juízo. Amém. Cruz estandarte da glória, símbolo da fé, chave do paraíso, divino arco-íris da paz entre Deus e os homens, terror do inferno, espada contra o demônio, alegria dos Cristãos, esforço dos fracos, estudo dos fortes justificados na graça de Deus, cruz bendita, sempre estimada de Deus, desde o princípio do mundo, no fim do qual haveis de aparecer como estandarte real nas mãos do verdadeiro Deus, castigando com a sua justiça os maus, e triunfo de glória para os bem-aventurados. (164-65)

Conselheiro would find in *Missão Abreviada* the confirmation for this apocalyptic prophecy: “Considera, pecador, que este mundo brevemente há de acabar; e perto do seu fim ele há de ser atribulado com grandes pestes, fomes, guerras, inundações e terremotos” (*Missão* 72). There was the belief in Canudos that Conselheiro was the martyr sent by God

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<sup>101</sup> See chapter one of this dissertation for the complete text of this prophecy. Euclides da Cunha’s note in *Os Sertões* about the prophecies reads: “Os dizeres destas profecias estavam escritos em grande número de pequenos cadernos encontrados em Canudos. Os que aí vão, foram, lá mesmo, copiados de um deles, pertencente ao secretário do comandante-em-chefe da campanha” (*Os Sertões* 277n129).

to save his followers. Euclides da Cunha observed this fact in *Os Sertões* by including part of a text that was found in many places in the village:

Como os antigos, o predestinado atingia a terra pela vontade divina. Fora o próprio Cristo que pressagiara a sua vinda.

“Então na hora nona descansando no Monte das Oliveiras um dos seus apóstolos, pergunta-lhe: Senhor! Para o fim desta idade que sinais vós deixais?

Ele respondeu: muitos sinais na Lua, no Sol e nas Estrelas. Há de aparecer um Anjo mandado por meu pai eterno, pregando sermões pelas portas, fazendo povoações nos desertos, fazendo igrejas e capelinhas e dando seus conselhos...” (277)

There was no doubt for most inhabitants of *Canudos* that Conselheiro was the angel mentioned in the notebooks that circulated in the village. The text above describes the life of Conselheiro, a man who preached in the *sertões*, from village to village, rebuilding churches and chapels and giving religious advice to the *sertanejos*. If Conselheiro did not present himself as a messiah, he was certainly taken as one by his followers. For them, Conselheiro was the one sent by God to save them.

Silvio Rabelo in *Euclides da Cunha* (1948) describes the legend of Antônio Conselheiro in the *sertões* as a messiah. Millions of *sertanejos* from São Francisco to Itapicuru believed that Conselheiro was a prophet, a man sent by God to save them. The *sertanejos* started following Conselheiro in the *sertões* until he established his residence in Canudos: “Como na legenda de todos os profetas, o peregrino já não andava só. Os

primeiros fiéis se incorporaram à sua vida errante, partilhando com ele as mesmas fadigas e as mesmas necessidades” (Rabelo 89).

With the end of the world, every man would have to face his destiny: eternal life in peace or Hell. The latter is the constant threat to sinners throughout *Missão Abreviada*. God is the decider, not the Devil. However, the Devil acts as an accuser, making sure that every sin will be exposed at the final moments. The book repeats his message of fear, over and over:

Naquele grande dia do juízo ouvirás aquelas palavras: - Levantai-vos, mortos, e vinde a juízo. Há de ouvi-las pecador e há de obedecer, porque Deus é o que manda. Mas donde te levantarás? Há de ser do inferno, porque se te não emendas, lá te vão arrojarem os teus delitos; lá sairás do inferno, pecador, para lá tornares a cair em corpo e alma por toda a eternidade; sairás do inferno para seres publicamente acusado, convencido e envergonhado; para seres condenado com os homens mais infames do mundo; para um juízo de condenação eterna, sem remédio e sem fim!  
*(Missão 75)*

*Missão Abreviada* predicted that the world would eventually come to an end and that no one would be left. It speculated on the date of the end of the world by saying that some people believe it to be the end of the second millennium, the year 2,000. Although the text does not give a precise date for the apocalypse, it affirms that the end is near. It also mentions the coming of the Anti-Christ: “Alguns dizem que há de vir o Anticristo antes de se completarem os dois mil anos; e outros no princípio da época que entra; certeza não

há sobre isto; é certo, sim, que há grandes preparos para a sua chegada; mas ainda há justos que suspendem os raios da justiça divina” (*Missão* 549).<sup>102</sup>

Instruction 4 of *Missão Abreviada – Sobre o Anticristo e o Fim do Mundo* – explains that the end of the world is about to happen, given that the world is taken over by sins and malice. The author defends that the apocalypse will happen once malice reaches its peak. This section is based on the insights of Catholic saints, such as St. Paul and St. Jerome; St. Paul says that the Apocalypse happens with the coming of the Antichrist while St. Jerome refers to the arrival of “the son of the Devil.” The list of names attributed to the Devil goes on: “... O Santo Evangelho chama-lhe a Besta-fera; S. Paulo, homem do diabo; S. Gregório, rei da soberba; S. Agostinho, o ruinoso; S. Tomás, o cabeça dos ímpios” (*Missão* 567). Despite the name, there is the prediction that the Anti-Christ will come to Earth and will take it over. The apocalyptic prophecy is of a demoniacal war against the Catholic Church and the end of times:

Jesus Cristo veio ao mundo para salvar a todos e o Anticristo há de vir ao mundo para desmoralizar tudo, e perder tudo: e na verdade ele há de reunir todos os ímpios do mundo debaixo de seu governo, para trabalharem todos ao mesmo tempo na destruição do catolicismo... Que grande guerra! Toda a impiedade reunida a trabalhar contra a Santa Religião! (*Missão* 567)

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<sup>102</sup> Instrução 38ª – “Quão Poucos são os Justos no Mundo e Quanto Vale a Sua Oração Diante de Deus. No tempo de Noé a maldade tinha chegado ao seu cume e porque nesse tempo havia poucos justos, Deus acabou com o mundo inteiro, menos umas oito pessoas!! Agora mesmo a maldade vai reinando e triunfando por toda a parte e logo que ela chegue ao seu cume, também se acaba o mundo, mas sem ficar pessoa alguma; e não poderá tardar muito tempo, porque já há muito pouca fé e por toda a parte se escarnece da santa Religião e de quem a pratica” (*Missão* 549).

The apocalyptic message of *Missão Abreviada* resonates with *the conselheiristas*. There was a real concern with salvation of the soul and with the idea that the Catholic Church was being attacked by republicans. For most *conselheiristas*, it was preferable to die in the Battle of Canudos than to accept being governed by republicans, or the Devil, as they saw it. After all, that was part of the prophecy that *the conselheiristas* strongly believed:

Todos os fiéis à força de tormentos de ferro e fogo serão obrigados a negar Jesus Cristo e adorar a imagem do Anticristo que há de estar colocada nos templos do mundo! Todos serão obrigados a trazer o sinal do seu culto, quando não, serão mortos à força de tormentos, os mais cruéis! Esta perseguição há de ser geral em todo o mundo; e onde ele não puder chegar, chegará por meio de seus ímpios ministros! (*Missão* 568).

The Battle of Canudos is the result of the religious radicalism of the group headed by Antônio Conselheiro and the violent reaction of both the *conselheiristas* and the military troops. Canudos was decimated by the Brazilian military. While the violence of *the conselheiristas* was a result of their fanaticism and misinterpretations of the Bible, the Brazilian military also turned the battle into a bloodbath.

The republicans did not completely understand the religious reasons for *the conselheiristas* to engage in the Battle of Canudos, and instead believed in the possibility that the insurgency of Canudos was being financed by some European Monarchy, possibly the British. Euclides da Cunha had the initial impression that the *conselheiristas* were being militarily supported by a foreign power: “Não é possível que a munição de guerra daquela

gente seja unicamente devida às deixadas pelas expedições anteriores. A nossa esgota-se todos os dias; todos os dias entram comboios carregados e no entanto já não temos hoje mais de cem mil tiros de infantaria” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 65).<sup>103</sup>

In the introduction to the publication of Euclides da Cunha’s *Caderneta de Campo*, Olímpio de Souza Andrade explains that after witnessing the battle in Canudos, Euclides da Cunha understood clearly that the *conselheiristas* were alone in the battle, that there was no support coming from any European nation.<sup>104</sup>

In the initial confrontation, the Brazilian military was defeated by the *sertanejos*, which was humiliating for the republicans and brought into question their military power, which in turn resulted in the expeditions that followed becoming increasingly more violent. Euclides da Cunha had a clear vision of the irregularities of the military and the atrocities of war. Under the subtitle “*Incompreensão da Campanha*”, he explains his position:

A história militar é toda feita de contrastes singulares. Além disto a guerra é uma coisa monstruosa e ilógica em tudo. Na sua maneira atual é uma organização técnica superior. Mas inquinam-na todos os estigmas do banditismo original. Sobranceiras ao rigorismo da estratégia, aos preceitos

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<sup>103</sup> “Como explicar essa prodigalidade assombrosa dos jagunços? Não nos iludamos. Há nesta luta uma face misteriosa que deve ser desvendada” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 65-66).

<sup>104</sup> “É que, talvez, para encobrir a incompetência das três primeiras e desastradas expedições a Canudos, inventou-se a extraordinária balela de que algum poderoso reino estrangeiro (a Inglaterra, possivelmente) supria os revoltosos de farta e moderna munição e até, quem sabe, de treinamento militar específico, para trazer D. Pedro II de volta ao trono do Brasil. Isso iria explicar o fabuloso poder de fogo dos jagunços e as suas espantosas e sempre eficiente técnicas de guerrilha. O Euclides amadurecido de *Os Sertões*, depois de tudo o que viu em Canudos, não acreditará em nada disso. E isso deve, entre outros fatores, à sua grande curiosidade intelectual – inicialmente, dir-se-ia, curiosidade de repórter, mais tarde apurada pela reflexão e pelo saber científico” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 11-12).



da tática, à segurança dos aparelhos sinistros, a toda a altitude de uma arte sombria, que põe dentro da frieza de uma fórmula matemática o arrebetamento de um *shrapnel* e subordina a parábolas invioláveis o curso violento das balas, permanecem - intactas – todas as brutalidades do homem primitivo. E estas são, ainda, a *vis a tergo* dos combatentes. (Cunha, *Os Sertões* 379-80)

Euclides da Cunha's comments are as valid nowadays as they were over one hundred years ago, especially if one considers the wars against terrorist groups that the world has recently witnessed. In the end, the military interventions and confrontations against radical religious groups generate more radicalism. Euclides da Cunha argues that during a war all the brutality of primitive man is still intact and, as in any war, the military apparatus and tactics contribute to the brutality of the confrontations. In the case of Canudos, the violence was generalized.

There are records of Euclides da Cunha's particular stance in regards to military violence against war enemies. While in the military, prior to the Battle of Canudos, he wrote an article in opposition to the massive shootings proposed by some against the insurgents of the *Revolta da Armada* in 1893. Because of his outspoken views, he was transferred to the interior of Minas Gerais in 1894, which eventually resulted in his resignation from the military forces in 1896, when he retired as a capitán (Lima, Euclides 12).

Furthermore, he explains his sentiment towards the victims in the Battle of Canudos in a letter to his friend Francisco Escobar on April 21, 1902. Euclides da Cunha viewed his

book as a contribution to the *sertanejos* who were massacred in confrontations with the Brazilian military: “Serei um vingador e terei desempenhado um grande papel na vida – o de advogado dos pobres sertanejos assassinados por uma sociedade pulha, covarde e sanguinária” (Cunha, *Correspondência de Euclides da Cunha*).

After being defeated in two confrontations by the *conselheiristas*, Brazilian President Prudente de Morais nominated colonel Moreira César as the military leader of an expedition against Canudos. Moreira César was known as *corta-cabeça* or *corta-pescoço* (cutthroat). In *Os Sertões*, under the subtitle *A Degola*, Euclides da Cunha portrays the extreme violence of the republican troops cutting the throats of the *conselheiristas* captured alive in the war: “Agarravam-na [a vítima] pelos cabelos, dobrando-lhe a cabeça, esgargalando-lhe o pescoço; e, francamente exposta a garganta, degolavam-na. Não raro a sofreguidão do assassino repulsava esses preparativos lúgubres. O processo era, então, mais expedito: varavam-na, prestes, a facão” (726). Euclides da Cunha refers to those in the military who practiced this as barbarians, saying that not even the *conselheiristas*, who were living three hundred years in the past thought of killing their enemies in the same manner.<sup>105</sup>

Nonetheless, the *conselheiristas* were also extremely violent in their attacks against government troops. After defeating the third military expedition and killing the feared commandant Moreira César, the *conselheiristas* decapitated their enemies’ corpses, burned them, and distributed their heads along the road in what Euclides da Cunha

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<sup>105</sup> “Tínhamos valentes que ansiavam por essas covardias repugnantes, tácita e explicitamente sancionadas pelos chefes militares. Apesar de três séculos de atraso os sertanejos não lhes levavam a palma no estadear de idênticas barbaridades” (*Os Sertões* 727).

describes as a kind of sinister entertainment that was reminiscent of the tragic religiosity of the Ashanti: “Alinharam depois, nas duas bordas da estrada, as cabeças, regularmente espaçadas, fronteando-se, faces volvidas para o caminho” (*Os Sertões* 492).

In an entry in Euclides da Cunha’s *caderneta*, dated August 20, 1897, Euclides da Cunha mentions an attack of the *conselheiristas* in which a soldier from the Brazilian military was killed and beheaded: “Atacada a guarda avançada por grande multidão de fanáticos fez fogo em retirada. Ficou retardatário um soldado estropiado Teotônio Pereira Bacelar – foi degolado...” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 95).

At the end of the war, the Brazilian intellectuals understood that the actions of the excessive military force were perhaps unnecessary and condemnable from a civilized perspective. Euclides da Cunha had the correct understanding about the inhumane military practices and compared the bloodshed of the war with a “*charqueada*” (*Os Sertões* 734).<sup>106</sup>

The *conselheiristas* were not interested in establishing a dialogue with the republicans, nor were they willing to accept their dominance. Their persistence in battle is proof of their faith. They praised Conselheiro throughout the battles, and even when they were captured by the republicans they continued to call the name of their leader. Euclides da Cunha depicts in his *caderneta* the loyalty and faith of the *conselheiristas* in their leader: “Não fazem a revelação mais insignificante e mesmo ladeados pelos soldados, é sempre com veneração mais profunda refletida na palavra e no gesto que se referem *ao nosso*

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<sup>106</sup> “A degolação era, por isto, infinitamente mais prática, dizia-se nuamente. Aquilo não era uma campanha, era uma charqueada. Não era a ação severa das leis, era a vingança. Dente por dente. Naqueles ares pairava, ainda, a poeira de Moreira César, queimado; devia-se queimar. Adiante, o arcabouço decapitado de Tamarindo; devia-se degolar. A repressão tinha dois pólos – o incêndio e a faca” (*Os Sertões* 734).

*Conselheiro.*” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 65). In another note from Euclides da Cunha, he registered the capture of a *jagunço* and his interaction with a colonel:

Dia 23 – Levantaram acampamento às 8 horas chegando à lagoa da Laje às 11 horas. Foram ouvidos tiros. Aproximou-se uma praça avisando que o piquete havia-se encontrado com alguns jagunços perseguiu-os, conseguindo prender um que com outros destelhavam e queimavam a casa da fazenda desse nome. Imediatamente o cel. Determinou que ele fugisse – repetindo sempre – estou aqui a mandato de meu amo e de meu governo e aos ser a ordem dada proferiu: Viva o nosso Bom Jesus, nosso bom salvador e o imperador! E assim exalou o último suspiro. (Cunha, *Caderneta* 124)

The followers of *Conselheiro* acted in faith that their dedication to protect Canudos would be rewarded with their salvation. Faith is at the core of the Battle of Canudos: faith in God and in the Devil. After all, the *conselheiristas* believed in their leader. Their faith, however, was used to justify their violent actions as well. It was fanaticism.

Euclides da Cunha documented the prophecies in the populations of Canudos that were present in the form of the texts that circulated in the village. These stated clearly that the end of the world was associated with the domination of republicans:

E no meio desse extravagar adoidado, rompendo dentre o messianismo religioso, o messianismo da raça levando-o à insurreição contra a forma republicana:

“Em verdade vos digo, quando as nações brigarem com as nações, o Brasil com o Brasil, a Inglaterra com a Inglaterra, a Prúcia com a Prúcia, das ondas do mar D. Sebastião sairá com todo o seu exército.

Desde o princípio do mundo que encantou com todo seu exército e o restituiu em guerra. E quando encantou-se afincou a espada na pedra, ela foi até os campos e disse: Adeus Mundo! Até mil e tantos a dois mil anos não chegarás!

Nesse dia quando sair com o seu exército tira a todos no fio da espada deste papel da república. O fim desta guerra se acabará na casa Santa de Roma e o sangue há de ir até à junta Grossa.” (*Os Sertões* 277-78)

It is not possible to confirm the authorship of the passage above, however it was a text that had wide circulation in Canudos. We can speculate that it was possibly written by Antônio Conselheiro or one of his religious leaders. The fact is that this text had an impact on the *conselheiristas*. The myth of D. Sebastião was alive in the *sertões* and for many *sertanejos* Conselheiro was his reincarnation. Euclides da Cunha refers to this Portuguese myth in *Os Sertões*: “Existinto em Portugal [o Sebastianismo], ele persiste todo, hoje, de modo singularmente impressionador, nos sertões do Norte” (241).

The events of Pedra Bonita in 1836 and 1838 provide strong evidence of the importance of *Sebastianismo* in the Brazilian backlands. Calasans interpreted *Sebastianismo* in Canudos as one of the fundamental factor of Conselheiro’s restorative movement of the Monarchy. The appearance of D. Sebastião was associated with the restoration of the Monarchy and victory against the enemy: “Essa força [mística], o velho

Conselheiro foi achar na crença sebastianista, que três séculos de tradição haviam plantado na alma coletiva dos rudes sertanejos” (Calasans, *Ciclo* 39).

The prophecy above predicts that the end of the war was going to be determined by God and his Church. Leopoldo M. Bernucci explains that “Junta Grossa” is probably a reference to a supreme assembly directed by the Church and by God (*Os Sertões* 278). However, this statement lacks evidence. In fact, Conselheiro had somewhat of a disregard for the priests in his region. Perhaps the “Junta Grossa” refers to Canudos itself and to Conselheiro’s temple.

Instruction 4 of *Missão Abreviada* gives a lengthy description about the end of the world, explaining how during the apocalypse there will not be many people with faith in God and, instead, people will have faith in the Devil. This section goes on to explain how Jesus will be the only salvation for humanity. In order to defeat the kingdom of Satan, Jesus will stop the rains, transform the waters into blood, and bring fire from the skies to hit those who are following the Devil. God will save only those who have faith in him:

... serão mortos e os mais desprezados; mas passados três dias e meio, se levantarão vivos, ficando tudo assombrado, até caindo muitos por terra! E logo soará uma grande voz lá do Céu, que todos ouvirão, a qual dirá: “Vinde já, subi cá para cima.” Então eles, na presença dos seus inimigos, subirão triunfantes ao Céu! Ao mesmo tempo, a terra há de tremer e abalar-se com tão grande movimento, que se arruinará a décima parte dela, como indignando-se de sustentar moradores tão ímpios! Finalmente, Jesus Cristo mandará o Arcanjo S. Miguel, o qual fará que a terra se abra e mandará um

raio, em cujo fogo envolvidos o Anticristo e o seu Profeta descerão aos infernos! Assim diz S. João – Ó Religião triunfante! Tu tens triunfado sempre da impiedade e hás de triunfar até ao fim do mundo!! Não temas, cristão. Prepara-te; os últimos tempos estão chegados; por esse mundo tudo é impiedade e falta de fé; já se fala em toda a parte contra Cristo e sua Igreja: que é o jornalismo em toda a Europa, senão um grito permanente contra o Pontífice e a mesma Igreja? Hoje, onde quer, em qualquer parte se ouvem imensas heresias, blasfêmias e impiedades! Preparai-vos pois, meus irmãos, para essa grande perseguição; e não vos admireis de ver já tão pouca fé, pois assim tem de acontecer; porque sem falta de fé não se pode chegar a tais excessos do demônio que então se hão de ver. Entretanto, vivamos para Deus, unidos sempre ao Vigário de Jesus Cristo e rogando sempre por estas necessidades da Santa Religião. (*Missão* 567-71)

The excerpt above calls for Christians to prepare themselves for Doomsday, and builds on the idea that the Church is being attacked by everyone, which is a sign that the Anti-Christ is coming to Earth. Conselheiro took the preparation for Doomsday of his people to the extremes of fanaticism. The next chapter will explore life in Canudos and the dissonances between the rigid moral theology of Conselheiro and the every-day practices observed by Euclides da Cunha.

## Chapter 3 – Evil Sins

### Representations of the Devil in the Life of the *Conselheiristas*

The theological discourse of Antônio Conselheiro had a moralizing impact in regards to a variety of elements of life in Canudos. This chapter explores representations of the Devil in Conselheiro's religious teachings, focusing on some of the sins that Conselheiro considered to interfere with salvation. We will examine the relation between the religious principles of Conselheiro and the moral customs in Canudos. Our analysis will focus on some aspects of life that were of fundamental importance for the *conselheiristas*, such as the sacrament of marriage, modesty (*pudor*), and abstinence from drinking. As we analyze the moralizing message preached by Conselheiro, we will compare Conselheiro's teachings in his manuscript and in the text of *Missão Abreviada* with the narration of events in Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões*, in his *Caderneta de Campo*, and in the articles published by Euclides da Cunha in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*.

The threat of going to hell and losing one's soul forever were an intrinsic aspect of the narrative of Antônio Conselheiro, as a reminder to his followers to abide by the precepts of Christianity and to stay away from committing sins. Conselheiro preached traditional values of Catholicism that resemble those of Portugal during the Middle Ages, referred to by some critics as "*catolicismo rústico*."<sup>107</sup> Rustic Catholicism is of popular origin and was introduced in Brazil by the Portuguese colonizers, having its roots in the "*catolicismo das aldeias portuguesas*" (Otten 93). This is not another religion per se, but a

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<sup>107</sup> Walnice Nogueira Galvão makes reference to the "*catolicismo rústico*" in *O Império de Belo Monte* (30). See also Alexandre Otten in *Só Deus é Grande* (93).



popular strand of Catholicism engraved in the rural areas of Portugal and in the interior of Brazil.

The images of the Devil played an important role in the moralization of Conselheiro's subjects. Alexandre Otten, in *Só Deus é Grande*, explains that the *sertanejo* was a defenseless man when facing the struggles of the *sertões*: the severe droughts, starvation, and sickness, among other challenges. Otten explains that when confronted with such adversities, the *sertanejo* would attribute to God or to the Devil ("em um Deus implacável ou nas forças demoníacas") the reason for natural disasters and their resulting misfortunes, as occurs with the English language expression: "an act of God" (Otten 102). As discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, the *sertanejos* are a mystical people who believe in and fear a variety of legends, from the wolf man to the *Saci-pererê*. Many of the legends in the *sertões* are associated with the Devil and demoniacal personifications:

O medo gera personificações demoníacas: o diabo de quem o povo sabe sem-número de sinônimos, sinal da sua onipresença, os demônios, grandes e pequenos, lobisomens, mulas-sem-cabeças, assombrações, mau-olhados, quebrantos, pesadelos. Atrás dos fatos que assustam há o mistério do mal. O mal representado pelo diabo percorre todo o espaço camponês. (Otten 103)

The Devil has several popular denominations in the *sertões*, such as: *o cão*, *demo*, *Que-Diga*, *capiroto*, *capeta*, *o coisa ruim*, *satanazim*, *o Tinhoso*, *o arrenegado*, and many

others.<sup>108</sup> The variety of names attributed to the Devil shows that he is part of the imaginary of the *sertanejos*. For the followers of Conselheiro, the Devil was more than just an image, it posed a real threat to their salvation. The *conselheiristas* believed that the Devil could interfere with their lives by disguising sinners during confessions, possessing the bodies of some, motivating Christians to commit sins, and condemning and disguising sinners during their final judgment, among other interventions.

As argued in chapter two of this dissertation, the guidebook *Missão Abreviada* had a substantial impact in the teachings of Conselheiro; this guidebook represents the “catolicismo rústico” mentioned earlier and was written for the peasants, the people of the “aldeias.” Conselheiro preached rigid moral standards, similar to those of *Missão Abreviada*. Nonetheless, we argue in this chapter that some of Conselheiro’s behavior with his community and his engagement in the battle, as the leader of the *jagunços*, contradict several of the religious principles taught by him. We base our arguments on the observations of Euclides da Cunha in his *Caderneta de Campo, Diário de uma Expedição*, and on the classic *Os Sertões*.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Guimarães Rosa in *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, uses a range of names for the Devil based on the popular names in the *sertões* of Minas Gerais and Bahia. The text below shows some of the names listed by Riobaldo: “E as ideias instruídas do senhor me fornecem paz. Principalmente a confirmação, que me deu, de que o Tal não existe; pois é não? O Arrenegado, o Cão, o Cramulhão, o Indivíduo, o Galhardo, o Pé-de-Pato, o Sujo, o Homem, o Tisnado, o Coxo, o Temba, o Azarape, o Coisa-Ruim, o Mafarro, o Pé-Preto, o Canho, o Duba-Dubá, o Rapaz, o Tristonho, o Não-sei-que-diga, O-que-nunca-se-ri, o Sem-Gracejos... Pois, não existe! E se não existe, como é que se pode se contratar pacto com ele? E a ideia me retorna” (37).

<sup>109</sup> Euclides da Cunha’s *Caderneta de Campo* is the notebook that the author of *Os Sertões* used in his trip to the *sertões* of Bahia. It includes his meticulous observations of events, copies of popular poems in the *sertões*, the oral tradition of the *sertão*, and dialogues with *conselheiristas*, among other things.

The narrative of Canudos is not uniform and neither are the critics' opinions regarding the fanaticism and radicalism of Antônio Conselheiro. Some critics tend to have a favorable opinion towards Conselheiro, as is the case of sociologist Robert Levine.

In the introductory pages of *Vale of Tears*, Levine states his favoritism for the *conselheiristas*: "Because the *conselheiristas* were attacked and not vice versa, our compassion tends to extend to them (perhaps also because we romanticize the courage they showed in choosing life in Canudos)..." (9). Levine goes as far as to say that Brazil marked the centenary of Canudos in 1997, the anniversary of its annihilation and not in 1993, as the author believes that it should be, since it would mark the anniversary of the settlement's foundation. Throughout his book, Levine depicts Antônio Conselheiro as a tolerant man, defending that the leader of Canudos served the Church and the local priests, and portraying Conselheiro as the victim of events and rather than agent. He also attributes much of Eulides descriptions in *Os Sertões* to what he calls "*visão do litoral*" – the negative perception of the modernized populations on the coast of Brazil towards the *sertanejos*.

Levine's account of the Battle of Canudos and for the religious influence of Antônio Conselheiro in the *sertões* ignores that the religious convictions of Conselheiro had political consequences: "Although Conselheiro did speak against Masonry, Protestantism, and secularism, mostly he preached penitence, morality, righteousness, and devotion" (Levine 131). In fact, Conselheiro's criticism of secularism implied that the republican system was not authorized by God, as we have discussed previously in this dissertation. Conselheiro's religious principles had serious political implications: his "devotion" justified his

engagement in the Battle of Canudos, since it was a war against the Devil. Levine's "noble savage," romantic description of Conselheiro sweeps under the carpet the undeniable fact that his religiosity took a radical turn, justifying his engagement in the Battle of Canudos and his anti-republican position.

The fact that Antônio Conselheiro was against secularism and challenged the authority of the Brazilian Government by burning the official public tax notifications of the republicans in a public plaza, for instance, added more momentum to his already tense relationship with the republicans. Furthermore, Conselheiro's religiosity and teachings differed from the moral practices in Canudos since the leader of the *conselheiristas* did not follow all the religious principles promoted by himself, as we will see in details presented in this chapter.

The *conselheiristas* were attacked by the Government because of their insubordination to the local police and political powers; nonetheless, one cannot disregard the excess of force on the part of the Brazilian military as well as the barbarity that characterized the war as Euclides da Cunha highlighted in *Os Sertões*. We don't know, however, if the Brazilian Government could have dealt with the insurgency in other ways in order to avoid the death of thousands of *sertanejos*. The situation at the time was complex: the republican State was dealing with several insurgencies in the country, from the naval rebellion to the crisis in Rio Grande do Sul; it was a time of political instability because of the transition from the monarchy to the republic.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> "The Canudos outbreak, coming as a painful surprise to the whole country and causing already heated passions to boil over, develops into another dangerous test for the Republic" (Bello 148).

Euclides da Cunha was able to capture the details of the *sertanejo's* life, his mysticisms, his attachment to the land of the *sertões*, and many other aspects which were not well known before the publication of *Os Sertões*. Most of all, the narration of events in *Os Sertões* is factual; it is a mesmerizing work of literature based on real life events. Critic Luiz Costa Lima correctly refers to the core of *Os Sertões* as scientific: “O núcleo seria científico – como se formou aquela terra, de quais condicionantes surgiu o sertanejo, como se explica que o governo preso ao litoral ignorasse a tal ponto o homem do interior” (Lima, *História* 383).<sup>111</sup> When comparing episodes in Euclides da Cunha’s *Caderneta de campo* and articles published by him in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* with the narration in *Os Sertões*, one can clearly identify that the book narrative follows the observations of the journalist framed in a literary language, as we will show in the following paragraphs through examples of interviews that Euclides da Cunha conducted or observed with the *conselheiristas*. For this reason, we validate the account of events in *Os Sertões* for being a literary product of facts.

Euclides da Cunha visited the *sertões* of Bahia as a correspondent for the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* during the last phase of the battle, from September 16<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1897.<sup>112</sup> He had firsthand access to the development of the war and had

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<sup>111</sup> Luiz Costa Lima analyzes the relationship between history, literature, and fiction in *Os Sertões*, arguing that Euclides da Cunha does a variation of science: “A proposta euclidiana se diferenciava da etnografia metafórica porque se cria praticamente de uma variedade de ciências, à qual a literatura se acrescentava por sua linguagem ornada. Conformava a concepção retórica de literatura com o prestígio contemporâneo incontestado da ciência” (Lima, *História* 383).

<sup>112</sup> “[Euclides da Cunha] Parte para o Rio de Janeiro de trem no dia 1º de agosto para apresentar-se ao Ministro de Guerra e de navio viaja para Salvador em 3 de agosto, chegando no dia 7, onde passará 23 dias hospedado na casa de seu tio paterno, José Rodrigues Pimenta da Cunha, na rua da Mangueira, no 8, atual rua Rocha Galvão, observando os acontecimentos, lendo os jornais baianos do ano e enviando ao jornal

direct contact with the *conselheiristas* who were captured by the military or who had turned themselves in. Euclides da Cunha's description of the moral practices in Canudos is based on his interviews, observation of events, and the eyewitness accounts.

Some of the passages in *Os Sertões* are based on interrogations with the *conselheiristas* which Euclides had either conducted, participated in, or witnessed. We will provide three examples which were important in the narration of Canudos: the captured woman, the *jagunço* Agostinho, and the conversation with João Abade.

Euclides da Cunha participated in an interrogation with a *conselheirista* woman who had lost her husband in the war. The content of the interview is in Euclides da Cunha's *caderneta* and was reproduced in an article for the Newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* on September 26, 1897. This episode was included in the narration of *Os Sertões*. The text below is a partial reproduction of the dialogue found in Euclides' *caderneta*:

- Onde estava seu marido quando foi morto?

Esta pergunta foi feita por mim, e em má hora a fiz. Fulminou-me com o olhar:

- E eu sei?! Então querem saber do miúdo e do graúdo? Que extremos! (64)

Euclides da Cunha was a keen interviewer, and he was aware of the interviewees' reactions, as noted in the dialogue above. His distinctive perception of events translates to

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paulistano algumas de suas reportagens que hoje estão publicadas sob o título "Diário de uma Expedição" em *Canudos e Inéditos*.

Em 30 de agosto deixa a capital para iniciar a grande jornada pelo sertão baiano: Alagoinhas, Queimadas (31 ago) e Monte Santo, onde chega a 6 de setembro e de onde parte no dia 13, para alcançar Canudos no dia 16, às duas da tarde. Com o material colhido, as observações feitas sobre os tipos e a campanha militar, principalmente referente à última, escreve as primeiras notas de *Os Sertões*. Terminada a luta, parte para o arraial no dia 3 de outubro, regressando a Salvador no dia 13, e depois ao Rio de Janeiro em 16 de outubro. Viaja a São Paulo no dia 21 e no dia 30 de outubro procura repouso na fazenda do pai" (*Os Sertões* 56).

the detailed and accurate narrations of *Os Sertões*. The full interview from which the citation above was obtained has around 20 lines and was summarized in the form of a narration in *Os Sertões*: “... O inquérito resumia-se às perguntas do costume – acerca do número de combatentes, estado em que se achavam, recursos que possuíam, e outras, de ordinário respondidas por um “sei não!” decisivo ou um “E eu sei?” vacilante e ambíguo ...” (*Os Sertões* 733). Euclides da Cunha’s narration of the interrogation in *Os Sertões* reflects the content of his notes. In addition, the author writes in *Os Sertões* that because of the woman’s insolence, she was beheaded by the military. This information is not present in his *caderneta*, nor was it published in the newspaper. The military practice of beheading the captured enemy was not of public knowledge at that time, but it was extensively narrated by Euclides in *Os Sertões*. The Brazilian military would normally decapitate the men, while most women, children, and the elderly were not beheaded. It is likely that Euclides da Cunha could not publish anything against the republicans in a republican newspaper. Nonetheless, he did not hide the crude side of the military in the narrative of *Os Sertões*. Euclides da Cunha portrays the sentiment of revenge that took over the soldiers in the “dente por dente” pay back towards the *sertanejos*: “Não era a ação severa das leis, era a vingança. Dente por dente. Naqueles ares pairava, ainda, a poeira de Moreira César, queimado; devia-se queimar. Adiante, o arcabouço decapitado de Tamarindo, devia-se degolar. A repressão tinha dois pólos – o incêndio e a faca” (*Os Sertões* 734)<sup>113</sup>. Euclides

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<sup>113</sup> Captain Moreira César was killed by the *jagunços* and his body was burned by them. Colonel Tamarindo was decapitated by the *jagunços*, his body was displayed on the street to Canudos, where it stayed for about three months. Euclides refers to the military payback reaction as a repression of two sides: fire and knife (*incêndio e a faca*).

da Cunha neither defended nor hid the barbaric practices of the Brazilian military in his epic *Os Sertões*, instead he denounced them.

Euclides paints a picture of the military troops who obtained a cruel pleasure from the suffering of the *jagunços* captured during the war. Conselheiro had instructed his people not to die by stabbing, otherwise they would lose their souls. Salvation was incorporated into the war itself, and the role of the Devil is key in Conselheiro's instructions, since it implied that the *conselheiristas* who died in battle by any cause other than gunfire would lose their souls and end up in hell. It was a superstition which was respected by the *conselheiristas* and became a well-known myth among the military troops, as Euclides da Cunha points out when describing the troops' reaction to the decision of killing their captured enemies by decapitating them: "Nesse momento, conforme o humor dos carrascos, surgiam ligeiras variantes. Como se sabia, o supremo pavor dos sertanejos era morrer a ferro frio, não pelo temor da morte senão pelas suas conseqüências, porque acreditavam que, por tal forma, não se lhes salvaria a alma" (*Os Sertões* 730). Euclides da Cunha explains that the Brazilian military used this myth to their advantage by promising the *conselheiristas* to kill them by gunfire if they revealed information about Canudos; however, Conselheiro's followers would rarely reveal anything. Euclides da Cunha explains that this myth also contributed to the determination of the *conselheiristas* to fight to their death, since they thought that if captured by the military they would lose their souls:

Os próprios jagunços, ao serem prisioneiros, conheciam a sorte que os aguardava. Sabia-se no arraial daquele processo sumaríssimo e isto, em



grande parte, contribui para a resistência doida que patentearam. Render-se-iam, certo, atenuando os estragos e o aspecto odioso da campanha, a outros adversários. Diante dos que lá estavam, porém, lutariam até a morte.  
(*Os Sertões* 730)

In addition, Euclides da Cunha points out that there was no justice in the *sertões*; this isolated region of the country was a lawless land where crimes were overlooked: “O sertão é homizio. Quem lhe rompe as trilhas, ao divisar à beira da Estrada a cruz sobre a cova do assassino, não indaga o crime. Tira o chapéu e passa” (*Os Sertões* 735).<sup>114</sup> Euclides da Cunha’s epic book made history, as it became a reference book about the unknown life of the *sertanejos* to the rest of the country; as Euclides writes: “A História não iria até ali” (*Os Sertões* 734).

In another interview registered in Euclides da Cunha’s *caderneta* and published in *O Estado de São Paulo*, Euclides transcribed his conversation with Agostinho, a fourteen-year-old *jagunço* who was captured by colonel Carlos Teles. Euclides da Cunha’s description of Agostinho is meticulous and demonstrates his commitment to an accurate narration of the people and the events observed. The excerpt below is the opening paragraph of Euclides da Cunha’s newspaper article from August 19, 1897:

O coronel Carlos Teles trouxe de Canudos um *jagunço* adolescente. Chama-se Agostinho – catorze anos, cor exatíssima de bronze; fragílimo e ágil; olhos

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<sup>114</sup> Euclides portrays the picture of injustice in the *sertões*, where there was not a constituted authority: “E lá não chegaria, certo, a correção dos poderes constituídos. O atentado era público. Conhecia-o, em Monte Santo, o principal representante do governo, e silenciara. Coonestara-o com a indiferença culposa. Desse modo a consciência da impunidade, do mesmo passo fortalecida pelo anonimato da culpa pela cumplicidade tácita dos únicos que podiam reprimi-la, amalgamou-se a todos os rancores acumulados, e arrojou, armada até aos dentes, em cima da mísera sociedade sertaneja, a multidão criminosa paga para matar.” (*Os Sertões* 735)

pardos, sem brilho; cabeça chata e fronte deprimida; lábios finos, incolores, entreabertos num leve sorriso perene, deixando perceber os dentes pequeninos e alvos. Responde com vivacidade e segurança a todas as perguntas. (*Diário* 105)

Euclides da Cunha portrays a clear picture of the physical features of Agostinho, his liveliness and confidence in answering all questions. Agostinho provides information about the leading *jagunços* who worked for Conselheiro: João Abade, Pajeú, Pedrão, Macambira, Manoel Quadrado, and José Felix, among others. The descriptions of these *jagunços* also appear with more details in *Os Sertões*, under the subtitle *Agrupamentos Bizarros*. In Agostinho's portrayal of Pedrão, for instance, Euclides da Cunha reports the following in the newspaper: "*Pedrão*, mestiço de porte gigantesco; atrevido e forte. Comandou os fanáticos na travessia formidável de Corobobó" (*Diário* 106). In Euclides da Cunha's *caderneta*, Pedrão is described as a large man: "*Pedrão* na Canabrava – Caboclo grande" (23). In *Os Sertões*, Pedrão is likewise introduced as a stocky mestizo who conducted his group of *jagunços* in crossing the arid lands of the backlands of Bahia. Euclides da Cunha is also more precise by specifying that Pedrão was leading thirty *jagunços*, as well as referring to Corobó as Canabrava, which probably reflects Euclides da Cunha's collection of additional information from other sources: "*Pedrão*, cafuz entroncado e bruto que com trinta homens escolhidos guardava as vertentes da Canabrava, mal se distingue, afastado, próximo de um digno êmulo de tropelias" (312). In *Os Sertões*, the narration is framed within literary language: the leader of the *jagunços*, Pedrão, is ironically referred to as the

“êmulos de tropelias,” the leader of the *tropel* - the confusion of the backlands.

Nonetheless, Euclides da Cunha remains attentive to the facts and the accuracy of events.

Given the language used in the news article, it is probably the case that Euclides da Cunha was responsible for Agostinho’s interrogation. His questions were carefully planned out, demonstrating his investigative nature, as one can appreciate in the sequence of questions below:

Indaguei sobre a natureza dos trabalhos agrícolas – rudimentares, quase nulos... Depois destas informações interroguei-o sobre questões mais sérias: ‘De onde provém todo o armamento dos jagunços? ... Terminamos o longo interrogatório inquirindo acerca dos milagres do Conselheiro... ‘Mas que promete afinal eles aos que morrem?’ A resposta foi absolutamente inesperada: ‘Salvar a alma.’ (*Diário* 109-11).

Euclides da Cunha is determined to understand life in Canudos, the beliefs of the *conselheiritas*, and their motivation for the war. The importance of his personal notes and the accuracy of his observations are well exemplified on the last pages of *Os Sertões*, where Euclides da Cunha transcribes, without any changes, his annotation of the last days in Canudos. He narrates the voluntary encounter of Conselheiro’s assistant, Beatinho, with the military troops, in which Beatinho asks for the military to save the lives of his people who want to turn themselves in:

Não foi perdida uma sílaba única do diálogo prontamente travado.

- Quem é você?

- Saiba o seu doutor general que sou Antônio Beato e eu mesmo vim por meu pé me entregar porque a gente não tem mais opinião e não aguenta mais.

E rodava levemente o gorro nas mãos lançando sobre os circunstantes um olhar sereno.

- Bem. E o Conselheiro?...

- O nosso bom Conselheiro está no céu... (*Os Sertões* 772)

In Euclides da Cunha's notes for *Os Sertões* he writes that everything in the reproduction of the dialogue follows what he had witnessed, word by word, the only changes were on the doubles 'ls' and 'rs' of the *sertanejo's* speech, and other dialectical modifications.<sup>115</sup>

In the introduction to the publication of *Cardeneta de Campo*, editor Olímpio de Souza Andrade points out the reporter's precision in the way that Euclides da Cunha wrote his notes:

O desejo de precisão era evidente no repórter, quando reescrevia suas anotações: nesse primeiro trecho, aqueles vagos "lampejos entre as ruínas", por exemplo, tornaram-se explícitos, claros, ao se transformar em "lampejos desde o leito do rio até às ruínas da igreja"; no segundo, referente ao major Queirós, vemos o ponto negro imperceptível a cinco passos" no caderninho,

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<sup>115</sup> "A extravagante denominação é textual [*seu doutor general*]. Devem recordar-se dela todos os que assistiram à interessante conferência. Ademais no que aí vai escrito só se altera a proposódia do sertanejo refratário aos rr, ll etc."

apresentar-se na correspondência mais de acordo com a realidade, a “dez passos”, como está no 7º parágrafo. (*Caderneta* 310)

Apart from being a journalist, Euclides da Cunha was an intellectual with a scientific mind who wanted to find the sources of things, whether in nature, or in the formation of Brazilians, or still in the reasons behind the Battle of Canudos. Although he was attracted, like so many intellectuals at the time, by the Positivist school, the work of Euclides da Cunha surpasses the positivist framework. One can notice the accuracy of his comments regarding the *sertanejos* in his *caderneta*: “Sertanejo é em geral - bom, simples, inteligente, inculto, desconfiado, altivo, leal, respeitador, econômico à parcimônia, pouco liberal, afeiçoado ou agradecido, probo e honesto” (Cunha, *Caderneta* 19).

Euclides da Cunha defended the veracity of the events in the narrative of Canudos in the introduction to the second edition of *Os Sertões*. He explains that he had either witnessed the events or had trustful sources for them. The author declares that everything he wrote was based on real facts: “... escrevi sem dar crédito às primeiras testemunhas que encontrei, nem às minhas próprias impressões, mas narrando apenas os acontecimentos de que fui espectador e sobre os quais tive informações seguras” (*Os Sertões* 784).

### **The “Evil Sin” of Civil Union**

Conselheiro vehemently condemned the adoption of civil unions proposed by republicans.<sup>116</sup> Republicans represented modernity and social advancement that was not

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<sup>116</sup> In 1890, the civil union (*casamento civil*) was approved by the Brazilian Constitution in the decree number 181.

acceptable by Antonio Conselheiro, for whom only the Catholic Church could bless and recognize the union between a man and a woman.

Euclides da Cunha registered the *sertanejo*'s opposition to civil unions in local poetry and ironically refers to it as the “segunda Bíblia do gênero humano”:<sup>117</sup>

Casamento vão fazendo

Só para o povo iludir

Vão casar o povo todo

No casamento civil! (*Os Sertões* 319)

In another: “quadra popular”:

D. Sebastião já chegou

E traz muito regimento

Acabando com o civil

E fazendo o casamento! (*Os Sertões* 320)

The *sertanejo* viewed civil union as an affront to the marriages held in Church, something that can be traced back to “*catolicismo rústico*” and the anti-secularist position of Conselheiro and his followers. The text of *Missão Abreviada* would reinforce this position.

Instruction 18 – *Matrimônios mal celebrados* – explains that Christ elevated marriage to a sacrament and gave it a noble dimension by representing also his union with the Church: “Jesus Cristo não só elevou o matrimônio à razão de sacramento, mas até o

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<sup>117</sup> “Os rudes poetas rimando-lhe os desvarios em quadras incolores, sem a espontaneidade forte dos improvises sertanejos, deixaram bem vivos documentos nos versos disparatados, que deletreamos pensando, como Renan, que há, rude e eloquente, a segunda Bíblia do gênero humano, nesse gaguejar do povo” (*Os Sertões* 319).

enobreceu, figurando nele a sua união com a Santa Igreja, dizendo S. Paulo: ‘Grande é este sacramento, enquanto representa a união de Cristo com a Igreja!’” (*Missão* 469). Marrying outside the Church was seen by the *conselheiristas* as a sin which would interfere with the eternal salvation of the soul. For them, a marriage was sacred and civil union was a mortal sin.

The sinful views of civil unions represented one of the main arguments of Conselheiro in his opposition to republicans. In his manuscript, he defended that a marriage is a contract between two parts connected by the love God gave them, justified with the grace of Jesus, and authorized with a ceremony in Church. Conselheiro explained that only the Church could unite two souls in one body. He also remembered the obligations that come with marriage: to live in their perfect state, without *encargos* and *desgostos*. Conselheiro defended that civil unions should not be adopted by Christian families and argued that they continued the unforgivable sin of scandal (*pecado do escandaloso*) for which there is no salvation. To visualize the impact of *Missão Abreviada* on the religious discourse of Conselheiro, we have placed in bold the words below in Conselheiro’s manuscript which are also found in instruction 18 of *Missão Abreviada*:

Estas verdades demonstram que o casamento é puramente da competência da Igreja, que só seus ministros têm poder para celebrá-lo; não pode portanto, o poder temporal de forma alguma intervir neste casamento, cujo matrimônio na lei da graça Nosso Senhor **Jesus Cristo** o **elevou** à dignidade de **sacramento, figurando nele a sua união com a santa Igreja**, como diz **São Paulo**. Assim pois, é prudente e justo que os pais de família não

obedeçam à lei do casamento civil, evitando a gravíssima ofensa em matéria religiosa que toca diretamente a consciência e a alma. [...] O casamento civil é incontestavelmente nulo, ocasiona o pecado do escândalo, que segundo diz o Evangelho de Deus não usará misericórdia quando dá ocasião ao escândalo. (Conselheiro 178-79)

In addition, the leader of Canudos established obligations that came with marriage. In order to comply to marriage as a sacrament, the instructions explain that a good confession is necessary as well as constantly praying to God, asking the Virgin Mary for salvation, fully understanding the roles of parenthood - regarding daily and the spiritual life, knowing the Christian doctrine and its obligations, and finally, using the sacrament of marriage to better serve God and to save the soul (*Missão* 469-80).

Marriages that do not follow sacramental commitments are attributed to the Devil's actions. Instruction 18 of *Missão Abreviada* defends that those marriages are not motivated by God but by the Devil: "Eis aqui como são quase todos os casamentos dos nossos dias; o mau espírito da sensualidade ou impureza é o que domina e faz perder a santidade de tão grande sacramento; faz casamentos amaldiçoados e faz desgraçados os contraentes; porque tais casamentos são feitos no poder do demônio!!" (*Missão* 471).<sup>118</sup>

Still discussing the importance of marriages, Instruction 19 advises that a woman should marry a man who respects the sacraments and who has God in his heart, otherwise the marriage will be governed by the Devil and so will the products of it. If the selection of a husband is not done carefully, it can result in two hells for a woman, one in life and

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<sup>118</sup> See Appendix IV for a length text about the sacramental of marriages (Instructions 18 and 19).



another after death, since non-sacramental marriages create chaos and end up with lost souls: “Perdereis muitas vezes a paciência, tereis maus filhos, cometereis muitos pecados e por via de tudo isso caireis no inferno!!” (*Missão* 476).

In order to prevent sins before marriage, Instruction 26 of *Missão Abreviada – Sobre Algumas Causas da Impureza*, makes recommendations on how a man and a woman should keep away from temptations. The first recommendation is not to accept gifts from someone of the opposite sex, otherwise: “prendem os corações às criaturas e ao demônio” (*Missão* 504). It also warns against keeping a picture of the loved one, and condemns those who have a matrimonial relationship without the sacrament of marriage: “Muitos amancebados, estando enfermos, são sacramentados, tendo em casa, ou mesmo à cabeceira da cama, a tal concubina: e que será isto? Isto é passar-lhes um passaporte para o inferno” (*Missão* 507).

In opposition to Conselheiro’s writings and the teachings of *Missão Abreviada*, Euclides da Cunha describes the religious leader as someone who tolerated free love (*amor livre*) in Canudos given the eminence of the end of the world. Marital relationships were not Conselheiro’s main focus, instead, his religious message emphasized the penitence and suffering necessary in order to save the soul:

Porque o dominador se não estimulava, tolerava o amor livre. Nos *conselhos* diários não cogitava da vida conjugal, traçando normas aos casais ingênuos. E era lógico. Contados os últimos dias do mundo, foram malbaratá-los agitando preceitos vãos, quando o cataclismo iminente viria, em breve, apagar para sempre as uniões mais íntimas, dispersar os lares e confundir o

vórtice todas as virtudes e todas as abominações. O que surgia era antecipá-lo pelas provações e pelo martírio. Pregava, então, os jejuns prolongados, as agonias da fome, a lenta exaustão da vida. (*Os Sertões* 301)

Euclides da Cunha noticed the importance of penitence for Conselheiro which included long days of fasting and a life of suffering, imitating the martyrdom of Christ. This was his main recipe for the salvation of the soul. Euclides da Cunha dismantles Conselheiro's preaching about marriages, as he observes that Conselheiro was not particularly concerned with the marital relations of his followers during his daily prayers. Euclides da Cunha explains that Canudos was a place of promiscuity: "Não é para admirar que se esboçasse logo, em Canudos, a promiscuidade de um heterismo infrene" (*Os Sertões* 301).

Arguing against Euclides da Cunha's description of promiscuity in Canudos, some critics maintain that the town of Canudos did not have any prostitution sites. Ataliba Nogueira, one of Conselheiro's biggest admirers, defends that there was not a single "*casa de mulher pública*" in Canudos: "Nesse vasto recinto de sertanejos ignorantes e rudes não havia uma só casa de mulher pública. Em nosso clima e com os nossos costumes é fato quase inacreditável" (11).<sup>119</sup> Alexandre Otten in *Só Deus é Grande* quotes Ataliba Nogueira and adds that Conselheiro did not tolerate free love and did not accept concubines in his village, every couple had to be married in Church; in addition, prostitutes were expelled from Canudos (173).

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<sup>119</sup> Ataliba Nogueira bases his comment on a book published by Libelo Wolsey in 1899 entitled *Republicano acompanhado de comentários sobre a campanha de Canudos* (Tipografia do Diário da Bahia), specifically pp. 22-24).

Nonetheless, prostitution was widely spread in the *sertões*. It is unlikely that a city like Canudos with approximately 25,000 inhabitants did not have any prostitution. As in any religion, organization, or sect, there are those who follow the rules and those who do not abide by it. To defend that Canudos was free of promiscuity and all married couples had a dignified life borders on the naïf, at best, or is a willful denial based on mere ideology. In regards to the prostitutes, they were also part of the military expeditions to Canudos, providing food and entertaining the troops.

In reference to Conselheiro's practices in Canudos, a close analysis of his manuscript shows that he did not follow everything that he preached. For instance, in the fifth Commandment, Conselheiro defends that a Christian has to love his enemy and not use violence against him, much less take part in killings. He gives the example of Jesus Christ: "Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo disse a seus discípulos: Tendes ouvido o que foi dito aos antigos: Amarás a teu próximo e aborrecerás ao teu inimigo. Mas Eu vos digo: amais a vossos inimigos, faze bem aos que têm ódio: e orai pelos que vos perseguem e caluniam..." (Conselheiro 126). In practice, however, *conselheiristas* engaged in a full attack against the republicans, killing hundreds of soldiers and leaving many injured. It was a head to head combat without any intention of establishing a dialogue with the republican forces until the very end of the war, when some *conselheiristas* turned themselves in with the hopes of saving their lives. If in fact Antônio Conselheiro had opposed the use of force and preached against violence, the Battle of Canudos would probably have never happened. History tells us another sequence of events with heavily armed *conselheiristas* fully engaging in the war.

Conselheiro's insubordination to the Catholic Church and to the new form of government was described in the pages of *Os Sertões*. Euclides da Cunha tells the story of a visit to Canudos by Friar Caetano de S. Leo and Friar João Evangelista de Monte-Marciano. During their visit, Friar João Evangelista tried to convince Antônio Conselheiro that the Catholic Church did not support revolts and that it accepted all forms of Government. Conselheiro replied by saying that he respected their mission, but would not disarm his people: “- Eu não desarmo a minha gente, mas também não estorvo a santa missão” (*Os Sertões* 325). In the end, the Battle of Canudos followed its course with the *conselheiristas* engaging in war. Thus, the Commandment taught by Antônio Conselheiro in his manuscript, *Não Matarás*, was not followed in practice.

### **The “Evil Sin” of the Scandalous Person (*O Escandaloso*)**

The first instruction of *Missão Abreviada* explains the signs of the second coming of Jesus. It argues that those who engage in profane behavior, including dancing, gambling, participating in comedies, and profane theater are setting themselves up for condemnation. It also criticizes in length those who participate in “scandalous conversations” with a person of the opposite sex; such behaviors cannot be forgiven.<sup>120</sup> Conselheiro preached this instruction as the code of conduct that was expected from his followers, one that was strict even by the standards of the Catholic Church at the time.

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<sup>120</sup> “Terá o verdadeiro e santo temor a Deus, quem ainda gosta e se entrega a esses divertimentos perigosos, como são bailes, jogos, comédias, e teatros profanos? Ou quem anda nessas conversas amatórias com pessoas de diferente sexo? Conversas, meus irmãos, as mais escandalosas, e de que se não faz caso algum? Desenganai-vos; quem anda nessas conversas amatórias, comete e faz cometer muitos pecados mortais, ainda que não hajam outras obrar; e nenhum confessor pode absolver semelhantes pessoas, sem primeiro acabarem com essas conversas e amores profanos” (*Missão* 150-151).

Euclides da Cunha refers to the “excessive moral standards” of Conselheiro in a letter written by the Archbishop of Bahia in 1882, in which Conselheiro is called a man who preaches: “doutrinas supersticiosas e uma moral excessivamente rígida.”<sup>121</sup> The archbishop complains about the interference of Antônio Conselheiro in his diocese in a letter addressed to the priests, ordering them not to allow Conselheiro to preach in their churches: “... ordenamos a V. Revma., que não consinta em sua freguesia semelhante abuso, fazendo saber aos paroquianos que lhes proibimos, absolutamente, de se reunirem para tal pregação...” (*Os Sertões* 280). The archbishop’s plea was not enough to control the dominance of Conselheiro in the *sertões*, as he continued praying for large groups in his pilgrimages and was able to settle his group of followers in Canudos.

In Conselheiro’s manuscript, under Commandment 4, the leader of Canudos defends that a scandal (*escândalo*) is one of the worst kind of sins. The fourth Commandment states that sons should love their parents, respecting and obeying them. It explains that when a son abandons his parents’ house, in general, it happens for one of two reasons: because of bad examples or because of the sinner’s bad nature (*má inclinação*). Conselheiro says that the scandal of a son abandoning his home normally occurs because of bad examples from home and the lack of doctrine (*doutrina*) (121). Conselheiro illustrates what would constitute an “*escândalo*”; for instance, to let a daughter leave the house accompanied by a dishonest person without any objection.

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<sup>121</sup> “Chegando ao nosso conhecimento que, pelas freguesias do centro deste arcebispado anda um indivíduo denominado Antônio Conselheiro, pregando ao povo, que se reúne para ouvi-lo, doutrinas supersticiosas e uma moral excessivamente rígida com que está perturbando as consciências e enfraquecendo, não pouco, a autoridade dos párocos destes lugares [...]” (*Os Sertões* 280).

Conselheiro condemns scandalous behavior, giving the example of what Christ had said in regards to it:

... Quem desconhecerá o terrível efeito que produz o escândalo? Vários são os exemplos que acerca de semelhante procedimento se contam e se têm visto. E basta para a confirmação de tudo o que disse Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo, julgando por menos mal a qualquer homem ser lançado com uma pedra ao pescoço no fundo do mar, do que dar escândalo aos outros de pecados; porque a maior glória e honra que se pode dar a Deus é o exemplo e ensinar os ignorantes. (121-22)

Referring to the words of Christ and St. Paul, the scandalous person is considered the son of the Devil in *Missão Abreviada*. The text goes further by affirming that the “escandaloso” is worse than the Devil for bringing more souls to hell than the Devil himself: “O vosso pai é o diabo! Porque quereis fazer aquilo que faz o diabo! S. Paulo também repreendendo um escândalo, lhe disse: ‘Ó filho do diabo!, logo, os escandalosos são filhos do diabo e ainda são piores que seu pai, porque ainda arrastam mais almas ao inferno do que o próprio diabo!’”<sup>122</sup>

Along the same lines as in the excerpt above, *Aditamento à Missão Abreviada* argues that the scandalous person is worse than the Devil for being at times a disguised enemy (*inimigo encoberto*) and even acting as a friend. In *Prática 43ª – Sobre as más companhias*, the author makes the analogy of the *escandaloso* with a demoniacal hammer that keeps hurting the other person, over and over, a metaphor that associates the

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<sup>122</sup> See Appendix V for the full text (*Missão* 481-5)

demoniacal hammer with bad influences (*más companhias*). It warns that one should avoid such company at all costs and should not share meals, eat, sleep, live with, or talk to these types of friends (*amigos viciosos*):

Ó Santo Deus! Livrai-nos do demônio, mas antes das más companhias, dos amigos viciosos e escandalosos, porque são piores que o demônio; são piores porque o demônio é um inimigo declarado e bem conhecido, mas as más companhias são inimigos encobertos e desconhecidos e até muitas vezes se reputam amigos! (*Aditamento 158*)

In addition to avoiding the sin of scandal, Conselheiro preaches the importance of modesty. Conselheiro led a simple life and expected his followers to do the same; this included acting and dressing with modesty. In his manuscript, under Commandment nine, Antônio Conselheiro advises wives not to want more material goods than they can afford. He explains that once a wife shows greed (*cobiça*), the Devil will take her soul with him: “Não queiram em suas casas aparatos, mais do que as suas posses alcançam, porque para cobiça cairão no laço do demônio ...” (Conselheiro 140). In the same section, Conselheiro reminds wives of the importance of modesty. He emphasizes the need of married women to be strong, discreet, and prudent in their daily activities, inside and outside their houses: “Também devem ser muito honestas no vestir. E assim as mulheres casadas devem ser fortes, discretas e prudentes: dentro de suas casas zelosas, fora delas recatadas; e em todas as ocasiões exemplares...” (140).

Thus, Conselheiro became the leader of a theocracy. The *conselheiristas* were submitted to the rule of their leader and were punished by him whenever he decided to

set an example to the rest of the village. Euclides da Cunha denounces the autocracy of Conselheiro in an article published in *O Estado de São Paulo* on August 19, 1897. The author of *Os Sertões* explains that Conselheiro used violence and punished his subjects in public. João Abade, Conselheiro's closest assistant, was the executor of the punishments: "É o executor supremo das ordens do chefe. Castiga a palmatoada na praça, em frente às igrejas, aos que roubam ou vergasta as mulheres que procedem mal. Exerce estranho domínio sobre a população" (Cunha, *Diário* 106). In another passage, Euclides mentions the public punishment of the widows who had "forgot too early" about the passing away of their husbands. They were whipped in a public plaza by Conselheiro's assistants in front of the population and expelled from Canudos: "Tendo sucubindo muitos *jagunços* naquele combate, algumas viúvas esqueceram-se, cedo, escandalosamente, dos esposos mortos: amarradas firmemente em postes no largo em frente a toda a população convocada, foram rudemente vergastadas por João Abade e, depois expulsas do arraial" (Cunha, *Diário* 108-9). The punishments in Canudos resemble the practices that were common during the Inquisition in Portugal in the Plaza of Auto da Fé.

Public display of shameness was a tool used by Conselheiro to control his subjects. In addition, all "evil" acts could represent the loss of one's soul, thus if a *conselheirista* was condemned for committing a "sin," he could still achieve salvation by submitting himself to Conselheiro's rule. A less than perfect behavior on part of the *conselheiristas* resulted in giving Conselheiro more power over them.

In *Os Sertões*, Euclides da Cunha explains that the leader of Canudos had the strict behavior of a Phrygian and preached as a resentful man from Ceará on how young women



should dress with modesty and not use ornaments.<sup>123</sup> Euclides da Cunha comments on Conselheiro's aversion to beauty, explaining that for him it represented the face of Satan, and adds satirically that the religious leader avoided even the old sanctimonious women (*beatas*): "A beleza era-lhes a face tentadora de Satã. O Conselheiro extremou-se mesmo no mostrar por ela invencível horror. Nunca mais olhou para uma mulher. Falava de costas mesmo às beatas velhas, feitas para amansarem sátiros" (*Os Sertões* 276).

In fact, Conselheiro lived a life of reclusion and self-penitence. Before becoming a religious leader, he was married and abandoned by his wife, which explains Euclides da Cunha's analogy of Conselheiro to a resentful man from Ceará. Conselheiro's puritanism was an important aspect of his idealized community. Euclides da Cunha portrays the population of Canudos as a mixture of people from several walks of life, from *beatas* (sanctimonious women), mothers, and modest young women to prostitutes (*Os Sertões* 309). In particular, the *jagunços* who protected Conselheiro had a criminal past and Euclides describes some of them: João Venâncio "o terror da Volta Grande" had eighteen deaths under his belt; Joaquim *Tranca-pés*, a *sertanejo* warrior; the athletic Pajeú; Pedrão the brute; the fearless Major Sariema, and several others (*Os Sertões* 312-13).

The author of *Os Sertões* portrays Conselheiro as an authoritarian fanatic leader who incarcerated those who did not abide to his daily prayers, yet he oversees the fact that his *jagunços* have committed homicides:

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<sup>123</sup> By Phrygian, Euclides is referring to a person from Phrygia, located in present day Turkey. "O frígio pregava-a, talvez como o cearense, pelos ressaibos remanentes das desditas conjugais. Ambos proibem severamente que as moças se ataviem; bramam contra as vestes realçadoras; insistem do mesmo modo, especialmente, sobre o luxo dos toucados; e – que é singularíssimo – cominam, ambos o mesmo castigo a este pecado: o demônio dos cabelos, punindo as vaidosas com dilaceradores pentes de espinho" (*Os Sertões* 276).

Graças a seus braços fortes, Antônio Conselheiro dominava o arraial, corrigindo os que saíam das trilhas demarcadas. Na cadeia ali paradoxalmente instituída – a *poeira*, no dizer dos jagunços – viam-se, diariamente presos, pelos que haviam cometido a leve falta de alguns homicídios, os que haviam perpetrado o crime abominável de faltar às rezas. (*Os Sertões* 302)

In Euclides da Cunha's description, the leader of Canudos is far from being the saint figure of the *sertões*, instead he was an autocrat in control of a theocracy. Conselheiro was the city's decision maker, a mix of mayor, chief of police, and religious leader, he dictated the law in Canudos, having control of its local jail (*a poeira*) and deciding who should be punished. Euclides da Cunha depicts the injustices of a leader who valued his prayers over the criminal past of his *jagunços*. In an article published in *O Estado de São Paulo*, the author of *Os Sertões* describes the criminal engagement of Conselheiro in the killing of a man and his family for being possibly involved in protecting the military troops:

Depois do combate de Uauá, heroicamente sustentado pela primeira expedição do tenente Pires Ferreira, propalou-se no arraial que um de seus habitantes, um certo Mota, havia prevenido a força expedicionária do grande número de inimigos que a aguardavam mais adiante e que a dizimariam fatalmente. O Conselheiro murmurou uma ordem a Pajeú: no dia seguinte o traidor e toda a família eram mortos. (Cunha, *Diário* 108)

Euclides da Cunha dismantles the saintlike image of Conselheiro by denouncing acts of violence and even killings ordered by him. This certainly contradicts the message of

*Missão Abreviada* and of Conselheiro's manuscript, which, although being strict, it condemned the use of violence and much more of killings.

Still discussing the sins of the *escandaloso*, Instruction 49 of *Missão Abreviada* compares the scandalous person to Lucifer, explaining that a scandalous person brings more souls to hell with him.<sup>124</sup> Among the many examples of a scandalous person, the book emphasizes the prostitute: "É muito grande pecadora e escandalosa essa má mulher, que sem temor de Deus nem vergonha está publicamente na sua terra, entregando o seu corpo ao demônio, ..." (*Missão* 267).<sup>125</sup>

If on the one hand the prostitute was seen as a scandalous person for giving her body to the Devil, on the other hand, cases of sexual abuse in Canudos seemed to be overseen by Conselheiro and the blame fell upon the women and not on the men. Euclides da Cunha tells the case of a scandal involving a man who compromised the honor of a young woman. Conselheiro's answer to the incident was that the young woman had followed her destiny:

Ao saber de caso escandaloso em que a lubricidade de um devasso maculara incauta donzela teve, certa vez, uma frase ferozmente cínica, que os sertanejos repetiam depois sem lhe aquilatarem a torpeza: "Seguiu o

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<sup>124</sup> "O escandaloso, meus irmãos, é réu de todos os pecados que cometem aqueles a quem deu escândalo. As penas dos escandalosos lá no inferno estão sempre crescendo até ao dia do juízo, porque os seus pecados estão sempre causando novos pecados até o dia de juízo... O escandaloso é semelhante a Lúcifer; pois assim como Lúcifer com o seu mau exemplo perdeu a terça parte dos Anjos, assim o escandaloso arrasta muitas almas ao inferno com o seu escândalo!" (*Missão* 266).

<sup>125</sup> "[...] vivendo desonestamente: ela é uma rede do demônio; o demônio caça muitas almas com ela e por via dela! Até parece que muitas pessoas não ouvem missa, quando ela aparece nos templos, cheia de vaidade, com esses enfeites do pecado!..." (*Missão* 267).

destino de todas; passou por baixo da árvore do bem e do mal!" (*Os Sertões* 301)

Conselheiro's comments demonstrate misogyny for attributing only to the woman the responsibility for losing her reputation, echoing a crude reading and interpretation of Genesis, where Eve, tempted by the Serpent, is responsible for Adam's fall.

A final example of a scandalous person in *Missão Abreviada* is of one who defies God and the sacrament, which the book defines as a heretic.<sup>126</sup> Instruction 21 (Part 3) introduces Herodes as a sinner who received Christ with disdain and refused to listen to his words. It then explains that the sinner who does the same will inevitably finish his days in hell:

... se continuares com essas blasfêmias, hás de ser desamparado de Deus, hás de cair na dureza do coração e na insensibilidade e um pecador assim desamparado de Deus é já um condenado no inferno!! Ó malícia do demônio! Nem que vivêssemos já com hereges!... Pois então?... Ou é, ou não é! Ou a Religião de Jesus Cristo é verdadeira ou é falsa! (*Missão* 323-24)

Euclides da Cunha describes the moral standards of Antônio Conselheiro as controversial when applied to daily life in Canudos, where Conselheiro emphasized penitence more than the sins themselves. He argues that for Antônio Conselheiro penitence and redemption of his followers through prayers, fasting, promises, and

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<sup>126</sup> “É muito grande pecador e escandaloso quem anda a falar contra as coisas de Deus, contra a oração, contra a frequência dos sacramentos e contra outros atos de piedade; semelhante pecador até é blasfemo, herege, ou suspeito na Fé e então muito escandaloso, porque por esse modo aparta muitas almas dos santos exercícios, e assim as vai conduzindo ao inferno!...” (*Missão* 268)

See also Appendix V for more interpretations of “scandalous” people as sinners.

suffering was the most important aspect of his teachings; the true penitence would guarantee salvation. On the other hand, the sin itself was secondary to the suffering of the sinner and the process of redemption: “De todas as páginas de catecismo que soletrara ficara-lhe preceito único: *Bem-aventurados os que sofrem...*” (*Os Sertões* 300). Conselheiro followed the doctrine of earlier Christians, and his own suffering with long fasting days resemble the self-punishment of monks and the arduous penitence practices of the Middle Ages, which were also found in the *Nordeste* of Brazil. The *sertanejo* pilgrims (*romeiros*) participate in tenuous demonstrations of faith by carrying crosses during processions and walking the *via-sacra* on their knees. The *romeiros* pay the Catholic saints with pain in the exchange for the fulfillment of their requests. In the millenarian city of Canudos, suffering was a way to guarantee salvation. Conselheiro’s manuscript reflects the importance of suffering in order to attain salvation in the several pages dedicated to the sacrifice of Christ in the *via-cruz*. Suffering of the doer, as D. P. Walker points out in *The Decline of Hell*, is believed to annul or to compensate the bad consequences of an act.<sup>127</sup> As in the example of early Christians, Conselheiro presented himself as a martyr who was willing to give his life, as Jesus did, to save his followers. He convinced the inhabitants of Canudos of doing the same, depriving themselves of the “pleasures” of life and promoting the deprivation of the body in order to save the soul. This determination to save the soul and detachment of life was reflected in battle, where the *jagunços* fought until their death, without any fear of confronting the enemy, even if they were not well armed. Euclides da Cunha notes this in

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<sup>127</sup> “The Redemption, original sin, retributive justice, and expiation by suffering – this complex of interrelated doctrines of ideas rests an archaic and infantile moral assumption, namely that the bad consequences of an act can be annulled or compensated for by the suffering of the doer, or vicariously by someone else’s suffering. If therefore anyone attacks the doctrine of hell by denying this assumption, one can justifiably accuse him of also attacking these other fundamental Christian doctrines and conceptions.” (Walker 27)

his off-cited article “A Nossa Vendéia”: “O *jagunço* é uma tradução justalinear quase do *iluminismo* da Idade Média. O mesmo desprendimento pela vida e a mesma indiferença pela morte, dão-lhe o mesmo heroísmo mórbido e inconsciente de hipnotizados e implusivo” (Cunha, *Diário* 58). The military troops were intimidated by such determination, and in contrast to the *jagunços*, they were afraid of dying and left the battle camp in various expeditions when they found themselves outnumbered and facing defeat. The most notorious confrontation was the third expedition under the command of Captain Moreira César, who died during combat. The military troops were defeated and left the battle ground leaving behind their armament and the bodies of their soldiers, including that of their captain. This defeat caused great commotion in the country, especially in the capital Rio de Janeiro where it was considered a national shame, as registered by Euclides da Cunha in a letter to his friend João Luís Alves dated March 14, 1897: “Creio que como eu estás ainda sob a pressão do deplorável revés de Canudos aonde a nossa República tão heróica e tão forte curvou a cerviz ante uma horda desordenada de fanáticos maltrapilhos... Que imensa, que dolorosa, que profunda e que esmagadora vergonha, meu caro João Luís!” (Cunha, *Diário* 24).

Conselheiro had power over his followers because he was their link to salvation. His religious teachings, specially the threats imposed by the Devil and the fear of losing one’s soul forever acted as mechanisms of control. None of the Catholic priests in the *sertões* of that time had the kind of influence in the region that the leader of Canudos had. Antônio Conselheiro was a martyr for his followers, he was perceived as their savior, the *Bom Jesus Conselheiro* who was seen by some as Jesus, by others as a saint, and by others as D.

Sebastião. His mystical image and his millenarian prophecies were the catalyst that attracted thousands of *sertanejos* to Canudos. Euclides da Cunha transcribed in his *caderneta* the impressions of historian Durval Vieira de Aguiar regarding Conselheiro in his passage by Monte Santo:

Quando ali passamos (em Monte Santo) achava-se na povoação um célebre *Conselheiro*, sujeito baixo, moreno acaboclado, de barbas e cabelos pretos e crescidos, vestido de camisolão azul..... O povo costuma afluir em massa aos atos religiosos do Conselheiro, a cujo aceno cegamente obedece e resistirá ainda mesmo a qualquer ordem legal” (15-16).

This description comes from Durval’s 1889 book *Descrições Práticas da Província da Bahia*. Conselheiro had the charisma of a leader and his theatrical presence impressed the *sertanejos*. In his appearances during pilgrimages and in Canudos, Conselheiro was seen as a mystical force, a prophet. Through his contained gestures, clothing, and moments of silence, Conselheiro transmitted the image of a biblical martyr and attracted the devotion of the *sertanejos* who believed that he was the key to salvation and the answer to all the struggles of the *sertões*. Euclides da Cunha points out the theatricality of Conselheiro and how he captivated the attention of the *sertanejos*, giving the impression of being a somewhat fantastic or hunted man:

Tornou-se logo alguma coisa de fantástico ou *mal-assombrado* para aquelas gentes simples. Ao abeirar-se das rancharias dos tropeiros aquele velho singular, de pouco mais de trinta anos, fazia cessassem os improvisos e as violas festivas. Era natural. Ele surdia – esquelético e macerado – dentro do

hábito escorrido, sem relevos, mudo, como uma sombra, das chapadas povoadas de duentes... Passava, buscando outros lugares, deixando absortos os matutos supersticiosos. Dominava-os, por fim, sem o querer.

(*Os Sertões* 267)

The theatricalization of Conselheiro helped to build his power over the *sertanejos*, there was an element of fear as well. Was Conselheiro sent by God? Should the *sertanejos* believe in his prophecies? Was the Devil taking over the *sertões* as Conselheiro predicted? Those were the types of questions that permeated the world of the *sertanejos* who had contact with Conselheiro. His mystical image was of great impact and facilitated his acceptance as the prophet of the *sertões*, Conselheiro represented salvation and for that reason he had great power over his followers, who would then attend to his requests with great obedience.

The mystical image of Antonio Conselheiro had an effect on the *sertanejos'* military troops as well. After all, the *sertanejos* had heard of Conselheiro's miracles for over twenty years, and after consecutive defeats during the war, the troops started being subjected to Conselheiro's power to some level as well. Euclides da Cunha tells that on the night that the third expedition was defeated an atmosphere of mysticism began to take over the Brazilian troops:

Mas a luta sertaneja começara, naquela noite, a tomar feição misteriosa que conservaria até o fim. Na maioria mestiços, feitos da mesma massa dos matutos, os soldados, abatidos pelo contragolpe de inexplicável revés, em que baqueara o chefe reputado invencível, ficaram sob a sugestão



empolgante do maravilhoso, invadidos do terror sobrenatural, que extravagantes comentários agravaram. (*Os Sertões* 483)

Some of the military troops started believing that the *jagunços* were resurrecting from the former expedition, that they were fighting ghost warriors (*lutadores fantasmas*).

Conselheiro's influence over the military most probably contributed to weaken their war tactics, since some believed to be fighting against a supernatural force.

Conselheiro's power over his subjects can be explained through Foucault's theory of the *pouvoir pastoral* (*pastoral power of the priest*). In his influential article "Le sujet et le pouvoir", Foucault defines the *pouvoir pastoral* as an old power technique originating in Christian institutions which had political implications and was salvation oriented. Foucault's *pouvoir pastoral* considers that certain individuals achieve this kind of power because of their religious quality (*qualité religieuse*). He establishes four conditions for the achievement of this kind of religious-political power: (1) The ultimate goal of this power is to assure individual salvation in the next world (*le salut des individus dans l'autre monde*); (2) The leader who detains this power must be willing to sacrifice himself for the salvation of his flock; (3) It is a form of power that looks over each individual during their whole lives and not only the community as a whole; and (4) It implies a true knowledge of each individual, knowing the inside of their minds, and making them reveal their innermost secrets. Overall, it consists of "une connaissance de la conscience et une aptitude à la diriger" (Foucault, *Le Sujet*).

Foucault's *pouvoir pastoral* is a fitting description for the type of power that Conselheiro had, as it seems to concur with all the elements laid out before. First, salvation

of the soul was crucial in determining Conselheiro's power and because of that, the role of the Devil was also central, as we have repeated throughout this dissertation. Second, as all the events in Canudos indicate, Conselheiro's determination in following his religious/political beliefs implied dying in name of them as well; he was willing to give his life for his cause. Third, Conselheiro had a personal relationship with his followers and was the godfather (*padrinho*) of many sons and daughters in Canudos. The importance of the "compadrio" in the *Nordeste* is fundamental in understanding how people related to each other and trusted each other. In *Depoimento para a História* (1988), José Calasans interviewed some of the survivors of the Battle of Canudos. He reports in this interview what he had learned from them about Antônio Conselheiro and about the social organization of the village of Canudos:

Havia então muita gente séria que era conselheirista. Eu me lembro que naquelas ruas de lá eu encontrei um sujeito consertando um telhado. Eu perguntei: "o senhor conheceu o Conselheiro?" "Ele respondeu: "Foi meu padrinho! Eu era menino, não sabia nada". Quem me chamou a atenção para a importância do compadrio foi o Douglas Teixeira Monteiro. Para a força do compadrio, para agregar partidários. Não encontrei naturalmente muitos, mas, os meninos batizados no Itapicuru, desde 1875, o Conselheiro apadrinhou muitos meninos e meninas. (27)

Finally, the fourth aspect of the *pouvoir pastoral*: "une connaissance de la conscience," as Foucault establishes "sans les force à révéler leurs secrets les plus intimes" is certainly identified in Conselheiros power-relation to his followers (*Le Sujet*).

*Conselheiristas* were induced to reveal their “secrets/sins” or otherwise face the threat of losing their salvation. Conselheiro vehemently promoted the importance of confessing one’s sins. By setting himself as an example and by preaching the salvation of the soul, Conselheiro defended penitence, particularly fasting, which he could endure for days. As the leader, Conselheiro set the example of his suffering in order to find redemption. Following the steps of Catholic missionaries, as Friar Apolônio de Todi (1747-1828), who was one of the most famous missionaries in the *sertões* of Bahia, Conselheiro preached the importance of living a life of continuous penitence in order to have an existence in heaven. His behavior was a reason for admiration for his followers and validated him as their religious/political leader. Wasn’t this domination masquerading as religiousness? Perhaps Conselheiro was convinced that he was in fact a savior and his suffering would help with his salvation and that of his followers. Nonetheless, his “religious” beliefs had political implications.

Foucault defends that power relations are very complex and in order to explore a theory of power one needs to know the historical conditions which motivate the conceptualizations of power. The other aspect to consider is the type of reality with which one is dealing. In this sense, why is the *pouvoir pastoral* of Conselheiro a key component of the battle? First, Catholic priests did not have the same power over their subjects as Conselheiro did. Second, there was the political power struggle of the republic system facing the threat of the monarchists. Finally, Conselheiro’s power was in fact staggering; he was able to mobilize a whole population against the government to the extent of giving their lives for his cause. Conselheiro’s political and religious power contributed

exponentially to the resistance of the *conselheiristas* during the battles against the Brazilian troops.

In Foucault's essay *Le Sujet et le Pouvoir*, the French philosopher analyzes the ways in which human beings find themselves subjected to power. Foucault identifies three modes of objectification – modes that transform human beings into subjects. The first is the “différent modes d'investigation qui cherchent à accéder au statut de science.” Examples of this mode are the *grammaire générale*, philology, and linguistics. The second mode is the “pratiques divisantes,” in which the subject is either divided inside of himself or divided from others. Foucault gives as examples for the second mode the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the “gentil garçon.” The third mode of objectification to power concerns how humans turn themselves into subjects: “j'ai orienté mes recherches vers la sexualité, par exemple la manière dont l'homme a appris à se reconnaître comme sujet d'une 'sexualité'” (Foucault, *Le Sujet*).

If we adopt Foucault's framework, the second mode *pratiques divisantes* fits the way in which the *sertanejos* were made subjects of Conselheiro's power. Antônio Conselheiro had a binary division of the world between God or the Devil; his *catolicismo rústico* made his followers subjects of power by convincing them that they could either follow his advice, be on God's side and save their souls, or fall prey to sin and consequently be on the Devil's side and lose their souls.

We have argued in this dissertation that mysticism, despair brought upon by the droughts, and “the sense of an ending”, using Kermode's concept, can be conjured to help explain the main reasons for the *sertanejos* to be subjected to Conselheiro's power.

Following Foucault's reasoning, the *sertanejos'* religious dependence on Conselheiro makes them his subjects, since according to Foucault: "Il y a deux sens au mot "sujet": sujet soumis à l'autre par le contrôle et la dépendance, e le sujet attaché à sa propre identité par la conscience ou la connaissance de soi" (Foucault 239). The *conselheiristas* fit the first subject's description, they were controlled by their leader; they truly believed that he was the answer for their struggles, their salvation from the harsh life of the *sertões*. Thus, salvation of the soul was the answer for physical suffering in the *sertão*. In this context, the image of the Devil was exploited by Conselheiro as a reminder of what would happen to those who did not accept his religious dominance. The rhetoric of the sins, Hell, and the Devil are used by Conselheiro as part of a mechanism of control. The value of Hell is applied by Conselheiro as a "deterrent" of life, which according to D. P. Walker: "It is only by making this earthly life the unique period of trial that the greatest possible moral weight can be thrown on our present actions and the greatest force be given to the fear of hell" (24). The *conselheiristas* were controlled by the fear of being damned and of losing their souls forever. Salvation represented for the followers of Conselheiro "a complete moral freezing at death," in which the damned would continue to commit evil acts and would never be saved (Walker 23).

Foucault proposes an understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power, which he defines as: "*régime du savoir*" (*Le Sujet*). In the narrative of *Canudos*, Conselheiro was the keeper of religious knowledge. For his followers, he was more than a religious leader; he held the truth regarding their destinies.

Foucault identifies three power struggles: against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); against forms of exploitation; and against that which ties the individual to himself. These three types of struggles are correlated and can be found either isolated from each other or mixed together (Foucault, *The Subject* 781). Applied to the narrative of Canudos, one can easily identify Foucault's three power struggles.

First, there is religious domination: the conviction of the *sertanejos* that their eternal salvation depends on following Conselheiro's prescriptions.

Second, there is exploitation; the *conselheiristas* gave most of their belongings and their labor to the cause of Canudos, to the construction of the new temple and the maintenance of a communal life.<sup>128</sup> Euclides da Cunha explains that the inhabitants of Canudos had no desire for material goods: "Não queriam nada desta vida... Os recém-vindos entregavam ao Conselheiro noventa e nove por cento do que traziam, incluindo os santos destinados ao santuário comum" (299). Furthermore, Conselheiro used free labor in the construction of the church, exploiting the Faith of the *sertanejo*, and at the same time allowing some to make money in his village, as was the case of Vila-Nova, who had a very profitable commercial house in Canudos. Euclides da Cunha describes Vila-Nova as "comerciante, dono das melhores casas de negócio que constituíam o comércio, riquíssimo..." (Cunha, *Diário* 106). He was also one of the few that fled Canudos towards the end of the war, pointing to the conclusion that "Faith" was not what connected Vila-Nova to Canudos.

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<sup>128</sup> The financial exploitation is practiced by many evangelical churches in Brazil in the present day. One has only to see the criminal cases involving pastors and the corruption in the churches.

Third, the submission struggle proposed by Foucault is also seen in Canudos. In order for the *conselheiristas* to be accepted in their community they had to follow Conselheiro's strict behavior, submitting themselves to days of fasting, penitence, and daily prayers. There was also the incarceration of subjects who did not follow the rigid norms of the community, or even their expulsion. Euclides da Cunha describes Conselheiro's rules in *Os Sertões* as antagonistic and unjust. His religious and moral power did not match his practices in the village. Nonetheless, the *conselheiristas* were subjected to Conselheiro's control and placed in a position of dependence. Their dependence and obedience is a proof of their subjection to Conselheiro's religious and political power.

Euclides da Cunha's descriptions of Canudos encountered some criticism over the years. Robert Levine argues that Euclides da Cunha's portrayal of Canudos is "patently untrue" and based on the "narrowest sense of the *visão do litoral*: The truth is that few joined Conselheiro capriciously or because they were seduced by a crazed magician. Backlanders knew their immediate region intimately; they probably had heard that Canudos was fertile, and they likely had some sense of Conselheiro's good relations with at least some local *coronéis*" (132-33). Levine's account of events attributes to financial security the main reason for Conselheiro's followers to move to Canudos. His description of events is not based on historical facts but rather on his personal opinion of what "probably" happened. Levine undermines the religious motivations of the *conselheiristas* and the power that Conselheiro exerted over his followers. The historian places the religious motivations as secondary: "They were, of course, attracted by the hypnotic aura of his preachments" (133).

When describing life in Canudos, Robert Levine portrays a city where people had a regular life and were not forced to live by Conselheiro's standards:

Once in Canudos, some adopted more stringent forms of observance, while others did not. Several things did not happen: there was no enforced standard communal behavior, religious or otherwise, even though Conselheiro constantly reminded his congregants of their obligation to live according to God's law. There was no drunkenness, no prostitution, no hunger caused by lack of food. (133)

Again, Levine defends Conselheiro's ideology and the 'normality' of life in Canudos basing his arguments on his own fantasist and wishful version of events he did not witness. Supposing that Robert Levine is correct in arguing that there was no "enforced" communal behavior, which we doubt, even so, how can he conciliate this with the fact that the first thing the inhabitants of Canudos did when they first arrived was to donate most of their valuables to Conselheiro? The Conselheiristas were also expected to offer their labor for the construction of the new temple, which was the focus of Conselheiro's activities in the last two years of his life.

Levine mentions that Conselheiro "reminded" his followers of their obligations to live according to God's law. He underestimates over and over again Conselheiro's religious power, supposing it to be of secondary importance in Canudos. This type of supposition does not agree with the evidence presented by Conselheiro's readings and annotations, as we have demonstrated in this dissertation. Furthermore, it is clear that the daily prayers



and the teachings of a life of penitence aimed to save the *conselheiristas'* soul in the approaching Doomsday cannot be considered mere "reminders." They meant salvation.

In regards to life in Canudos, how can Levine argue that there was no drunkenness, prostitution, or hunger? Based on what evidence can Levine argue this? There is nothing in Levine's "study" to support his claims of a Canudos without any of the social issues mentioned before. How could a city with over twenty thousand inhabitants not have problems with drunkenness? Or prostitution? Or hunger? Levine has nothing concrete to offer in order to defend the image of Conselheiro as a victim of events and of Canudos as an organized and model city.

Returning to Foucault's theories, the French thinker argues that current struggles against forms of subjectivity – struggles against domination and exploitation, have not disappeared. Foucault explains that with Reformation, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries went through the greatest crisis of Western experience of subjectivity: "Le besoin alors ressenti d'une participation directe à la vie spirituelle, au travail du salut, à la vérité du Grand Livre – tout cela témoigne d'une lutte pour une nouvelle subjectivité" (*Le Sujet*). Canudos has all the trappings of a replica of old Christian society, of the archaic type, considering that the *conselheiristas* were under Conselheiro's own political ruling; Conselheiro was an autocrat in charge of a theocracy. The *conselheiristas* did not recognize the State, nor did they use the republican currency or followed their rules, as was the case with the tax system. Furthermore, Conselheiro was in disagreement with the Catholic Church, which abided by the government's rules.

Foucault points out that the kind of power he is discussing is the one in which one person has the capacity of inducing others to follow his/her authority. He is referring to power in which obedience is obtained through processes of domination, including power relation, relationships of communication, and objective capacities. Foucault theorizes that there are “blocks” in which the interrelationship of the elements cited before constitute regulated and concerted systems. He gives the example of educational institutions as the block of capacity-communication-power through the power relations that involve lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation of the “value” of each person and of the levels of knowledge. It is, however, the example of the power relation and obedience of the monastic or penitential type that fits the case of Canudos the best. As in the case of the educational institutions, the relations of power in the monastic/penitential type involve enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, and a pyramidal hierarchy. Conselheiro dominated his followers by being the keeper of their destinies; he was believed to have the knowledge and the divine power that would save them. The *conselheiristas*’ obedience is also subjected to the idea of surveillance, punishment through penitence and fasting, among other forms of control.

One of the demands for the establishment of the power relation in Foucault’s theory is related to “*Les Modalités instrumentales*” which refers to the power exercised by the effects of the word, the threat of arms, economic disparities surveillance systems, among other factors. In the narrative of Canudos, Conselheiro used the effect of his religious words to exercise his power. He also used his powers by persuading and reminding his followers of the omnipresence of God. Since no one can hide their sins from

God, this functioned as a surveillance system for *conselheiristas*: they were being watched by God himself, and tempted by the Devil himself, at all times.

Foucault explains that the kind of power he is theorizing about is the one exercised over free subjects. It is the type of power which is exercised upon the action of others: by the government of men by other men. He explains that slavery, for instance, is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, instead it is a question of a physical relationship of constraint. We see in Canudos power as a force that acts over free subjects. The *sertanejos* arrived in Canudos to join Conselheiro out of their own free will and they were not forced to stay in the village either. Nonetheless, power in Foucault does not exclude the use of violence, as Foucault explains that violence is an instrument used by power, but does not constitute its principle: “Le exercice du pouvoir peut bien susciter autant d’acceptation qu’on voudra: il peut accumuler les morts et s’abriter derrière toutes les menaces qu’il peut imaginer” (*Le Sujet*).

### **The Sin of Drinking**

Drinking was prohibited in Canudos. Conselheiro had a strict position on this issue, even more strict than the message of *Missão Abreviada*, which considered the excess of alcohol a sin, but did not eliminate drinking completely, as is stated in Instruction 54: “É verdade que se tem perdido muitas casas por via dos vícios, por via do jogo, por via do luxo e das desordens, por via do comer e beber com excesso, por via da preguiça e do desgoverno; porém nem uma só se tem perdido por via de esmolas...” (*Missão* 280-81) “*Beber com excesso*” in this passage is one of the addictions condemned, side by side with

gambling and disorders. This message is in support of alms, which were also a common practice in Canudos. In fact, *conselheiristas* gave more than alms, they donated their valuables to the community and kept only their personal possessions. Their financial resources were used towards the construction of the new temple in Canudos.

*Missão Abreviada* emphasizes the importance of having a balance, of not overeating or overdrinking. Such a behavior is comparable to that of irrational animals:

Aonde a virtude da temperança, se vós ainda comeis a fartar, como os irracionais; não podendo sossegar muitas vezes depois do jantar, tomando talvez uma indigestão, ou perdendo o juízo, bebendo com excesso? Perder o juízo, bebendo com excesso? Perder o juízo! Que loucura pecador! Perder e trocar o teu juízo por um pouco de vinho, ou qualquer bebida! Grande cegueira! Caíres em um estado ainda pior, ainda mais baixo do que o de um irracional! (*Missão* 317)

The abstinence of alcohol could not have been an easy measure to impose among the *sertanejos*, especially with the *jagunços* who were most likely used to drinking *aguardente*, or *cachaça*. In *Os Sertões*, under the subtitle *Polícia de Bandidos*, Euclides explains that drinking *aguardente* was considered a serious infraction in Canudos: “O uso da aguardente, por exemplo, era delito sério. Ai! Do dipsomaníaco incorrigível que rompesse o interdito imposto!” (303).

Drinking was considered a sin for Conselheiro and as such it could interfere with salvation. The leader of Canudos would find in *Missão Abreviada* plenty of passages to support his theories. Part three of the book criticizes the life style of sinners who pass

through life focusing on its pleasures and forgetting about their devotion to God. The book warns that those who focus mostly on their bodies and pleasures and neglect their souls will inevitably end up in Hell: “... assim vivem e assim morrem, e desgraçadamente vão para o inferno; porque sem a verdadeira devoção, não pode haver salvação”<sup>129</sup> (*Missão* 535).

In *Os Sertões*, Euclides da Cunha tells the story of some street sellers (*tropeiros*) from Juazeiro who were unaware of Conselheiro’s dry law. In their attempt to start doing business in Canudos, they took some barrels of alcohol to the village. The *conselheiristas* broke the barrels in half in the plaza immediately after they were unloaded and punished the sellers with a ferule: “Viram, ali mesmo, abertos os barris, a machado, e inutilizados o contrabando sacrilégio. E volveram rápidos, desapontados, tendo às mãos, ao invés do ganho apetecido, o ardor de muitas dúzias de palmatoadas, amargos bolos que os presenteara aquela gente ingrata” (303). Euclides da Cunha explains that Conselheiro considered alcohol the national hashish (303).

On the one hand, Conselheiro was a practical man who foresaw the problems that would happen in his village with the overconsumption of alcohol, especially among the *jagunços*. On the other hand, the abstinence of alcohol was an extreme decision; it was a

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<sup>129</sup> Instrução 34ª – Sobre a devoção (534) - “A maior parte da gente vive sem esta virtude, vive sem a verdadeira devoção: os seus corações andam sempre frios e cheios de preguiça; sempre com fastio para as coisas de Deus e as suas almas sempre cheias de pecados e misérias! Só tratam das coisas do mundo e pouco ou nada das coisas do Céu; só cuidam do corpo e pouco ou nada da alma: trabalhos domésticos, negócios, passeios, divertimentos, teatros, assembleias, prazeres sensuais, eis aqui no que se emprega, vivem como brutos animais; comem, bebem, e passam a vida como se não houvera Deus, alma, Céu, inferno, nem eternidade; assim vivem e assim morrem, e desgraçadamente vão para o inferno; porque sem a verdadeira devoção, não pode haver salvação” (*Missão* 535).

mechanism of control used by Conselheiro.<sup>130</sup> As any extreme rule, it is not only difficult to enforce, but impossible to maintain.

Euclides da Cunha noticed the contradictions in Conselheiro's puritanism. While the leader of Canudos imposed the dry law in his land, he chose to oversee the chaos of his *jagunços* outside Canudos, as long as it brought some benefit to his village and to the construction of his new temple: "Interdizia-o menos por debelar um vício que para prevenir desordens. Mas fora do povoado, estas podiam espalhar-se à larga. Dalí partiam bandos turbulentos arremetendo com os arredores. Toda a sorte de tropelias eram permitidas, desde que aumentassem o patrimônio da grei" (*Os Sertões* 303). One notices here the hypocrisy of Conselheiro since the abstinence from drinking was only imposed to *conselheiristas* while they were in Canudos. It also demonstrates his utilitarian moral standards: the dry law aimed to avoid disturbances in the village of Canudos; it was a way of controlling his followers. Conselheiro demonstrates his political ability, basing the dry law on a religious moral standard with the goal of keeping his power over the followers.

Euclides da Cunha describes the group of *jagunços* from Canudos as outlaws who would invade neighbor cities in the *sertões* and loot them. The *jagunços* were also used in local elections to collect votes for selected candidates: "Os grandes conquistadores de urnas... apelavam para Conselheiro" (*Os Sertões* 304). The illegal activities of *conselheiristas* had been noticed by the judge in the county and their crimes had been discussed in the

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<sup>130</sup> The abstinence from alcohol imposed in Canudos reminds of most of the evangelical Churches in Brazil nowadays and also many of the Muslim States where the consumption of alcohol is considered illegal, in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemem, Afghanistan, Sudan, Libya, Iran, and Pakistan, to mention a few.

State Assembly of Bahia (*Assembléia Estadual a Bahia*) without any practical repercussion in 1894 (303).

In addition to the sins discussed in this chapter, both *Missão Abreviada* and Conselheiro's manuscript present other sins, such as pride, gossip, faulty confessions, disrespect for parents, swearing, devotion to the Devil, and anger, among others. In almost every case, the Devil is represented as an agent who motivates the sinner to not follow the Commandments so as to take him to the kingdom of Satan. Overall, the "religious" message to the *conselheiristas* is that they have to be devoted to live a Christian life according to what Conselheiro preached and ordered them to do; otherwise they would not be saved. The following passage from *Aditamento* summarizes the message of Conselheiro:

Ai tantos servos maus! Tantos servos infiéis! Tantos cristãos preguiçosos!  
Tantas almas que não cuidam em negociar a sua salvação! Que será delas?  
Que lhes dirá o Senhor? Lançaia-as, dirá ele, nas trevas exteriores, onde  
haverá choro e ranger de dentes... E que destino é este irmãos? É o inferno;  
e lá no inferno onde há trevas, choros e ranger de dentes... (64)

The threat of being damned was a powerful tool used by Conselheiro. For the purpose of this dissertation we have chosen to focus this chapter on the sins that were mostly represented in *Os Sertões*; nonetheless, a more comprehensive study on the other sins is relevant in giving a full picture of the religious teachings of Conselheiro.

Above all, we argue that Conselheiro was a religious fanatic who used his religious and political powers in defense of his theocracy. The mystical philosophy of Conselheiro

was inspired by the *end*: the end of life, the end of times, and the end of suffering.

Borrowing the words from Burke, Conselheiro submerged himself in a “vision of a *universal, or absolute, or transcendent purpose,*” he became the mystic who was the All-Purpose, of a compulsion: “Just as the mystic oxymoron conceives of a black radiance, a bitter sweetness, a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), etc., so the mystic’s ‘free’ union with the All-Purpose becomes much as the same as a compulsion. Such consideration explains why the psychology of mysticism is close to the psychology of neurosis” (288).



## Conclusion

Myths about the Devil and the threats imposed by his image, which had a considerable impact during the Inquisition in Portugal, were incorporated in the religious fanaticism of Conselheiro. For the *conselheiristas* the Devil had the capacity of possessing bodies and of deceiving Christians to commit sins. This dissertation has defended that, above all, Conselheiro's followers believed that the republicans represented demoniacal forces, and that the governmental transition from monarchy to republic was a sign of the world coming to an end. In addition, the *conselheiristas* were determined to fight the demoniacal invasion of their land and to save their souls. Myths about the Devil were propagated among the followers of Conselheiro through his prayers, the oral tradition of *Literatura de Cordel*, and pamphlets of millenarian prophecies that circulated in the village.<sup>131</sup> Canudos was the Canaan of the *conselheiristas*.

In Machado de Assis's chronicle "Canção de Piratas," published in the *Gazeta de Notícias* in July of 1894, the Brazilian author reminds us of the alienation of the *conselheiristas*, comparing them with the pirates of Victor Hugo, and their disregard to the government rules: "Os partidários de Conselheiro lembraram-se dos piratas românticos, sacudiram as sandálias à porta da civilização e saíram à vida livre" (*Gazeta*). Machado de Assis ironically summarizes the life of the followers of Conselheiro and their refusal to be ruled by the Brazilian government.

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<sup>131</sup> It is important to keep in mind the high levels of illiteracy among *sertanejos* and for that reason the oral tradition, Conselheiro's sermons and the Cordel literature recited by some was the most effective way to promote the ideas of the Devil in Canudos. The written notes were only accessible to a minority of the inhabitants of the village.

The present study based the analysis of representations of the Devil in the narrative of Canudos in three primary texts: Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões*, the extremist religious guidebook *Missão Abreviada*, and the last manuscript of Antônio Conselheiro. By doing a close reading of these three texts it was concluded that much of what Conselheiro studied and preached from *Missão Abreviada* was not exercised by him. Some of the moral practices of Canudos are in contradiction with Conselheiro's religious teachings. For instance, while Antônio Conselheiro was against civil unions and preached high moral standards, he also tolerated the promiscuous behavior of some of his followers. Additionally, other issues point to Conselheiro's radicalism, such as the rigid moral habits expected from women and Conselheiro's misogyny. His theology was extremely conservative, even for the Catholic priests of his time. His focus was on conversion, penitence, and salvation, sometimes at the expense of various moral standards.

Furthermore, Conselheiro's political position was rooted in his fanatic belief that only the Portuguese monarch could govern Brazil since he was the one who represented God. His understanding of the world, based on medieval values, was not shared by the Catholic Church of his time. The local priests had tried to persuade Conselheiro into accepting the republican regime and not engaging in violent acts. Nonetheless, the leader of Canudos had chosen a path that would create tensions in the region with local politicians, the police, the Church, and ultimately with the Brazilian Government. The Catholic Church preached non-violence as contained in *Missão Abreviada* and also in Conselheiro's manuscript, but Conselheiro's actions were to engage in counter attacks against the Brazilian military forces, resulting in further escalation of battles and violence

that ended in the decimation of Canudos. In the aftermath of the battle, more than ten thousand people were killed; some figures go as high as twenty-five thousand.

The publication of *Os Sertões* in 1902 was pivotal in maintaining the history of the Battle of Canudos alive and in describing the religious dominance of Antônio Conselheiro. We have tried to show in this dissertation that Euclides da Cunha's portrayal of the battle and of life in Canudos is grounded in his personal observations of events and the factual description provided by eyewitnesses and other sources. *Os Sertões* portrays the picture of a fanatic leader preaching the salvation of his followers by engaging in a battle against demoniacal forces.

Other research material supported the argument of this thesis, in particular the *Diário de Uma Expedição*, which consists of a collection of articles and telegrams written by Euclides da Cunha; as well as his personal field notes entitled *Caderneta de Campo*. These sources attest to Euclides da Cunha's commitment to the facts and to his scientific mind. There is a division among the critics when analyzing *Os Sertões*. There are those who defend that Antônio Conselheiro was not a fanatic and that Canudos represented a balanced religious community, and there are critics who argue the opposite, that fanaticism was the fuse of the Battle of Canudos. We agree with the latter group of researchers. We perceive Antônio Conselheiro as a fanatic religious leader who took his followers to the extreme of giving their lives in order to save their souls because of millenarian beliefs and Conselheiro's theocratic and autocratic rule.

Supported by Foucault's theory of *Le Sujet et le Pouvoir*, we identified Conselheiro's actions and the professed fear of the Devil as part of a mechanism of control in

Conselheiro's religious dominance. We also fitted Conselheiro's power over his subjects in Foucault's theory of the *pouvoir pastoral*. In our analysis of events we have disagreed with several critics who present a romanticized view of Canudos as an idealist community where there was no drunkenness, no hunger, and no prostitution. In a city with over twenty thousand people, as most historians reported, in an adverse region of the country, we find it very unlikely that the population did not face several social problems.

We expect that this study will contribute to the body of work on the narrative of Canudos and that it will also help bring a fresh perspective on the role of the Devil in the narrative. Although much has been written about *Os Sertões* and the Battle of Canudos in general, not many studies have focused on the importance of the Devil. After our investigation we believe strongly that to understand Canudos one has to consider the role of the Devil as one of the primary motivations for the war.

The Battle of Canudos is also relevant in understanding the consequences of religious radicalism, which affected not only Canudos, but is currently a growing phenomenon. The *conselheiristas* were victims twice, first by the fanaticism of Conselheiro, by becoming subjects of his power, and secondly by the extreme forces of the Brazilian military.

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## APPENDICES

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## Appendix II

### Instrução 4ª (413) – Sobre a Comunhão Sacrilega

Quem comunga indignamente comete o mais horroroso e o mais enorme crime. Que maior crime, do que ofender o Rei em sua própria pessoa? Pois é crime de lesa majestade, é o mais punido; tal é a comunhão sacrilega, é crime de lesa Majestade Divina; com ela se ofende imediatamente o Rei dos Céus e da Terra; é crime que pode por em assombro as criaturas do Céu e da terra! [...] Esse Judas que entregou o Filho de Deus aos Judeus, não será digno de mil infernos? Pois o vosso crime de comunhão sacrilega é semelhante, é ainda maior na perversidade. [...] tu, pecador, que intentas quando comungas indignamente e assim tratas a Jesus Cristo? Não sabes perfeitamente que te tornas réu de seu corpo e sangue? Ah! Não o tens considerado; pois deves agora considerá-lo. Judas entregou a Cristo e pô-lo nas mãos dos Judeus, seus inimigos; e que fazes tu quando comungas indignamente? Não o entregas a ti mesmo que és o diabo e não o pões no poder dos mesmos demônios, seus inimigos? Não te admires por eu dizer que és o diabo; pois assim chamou Jesus Cristo a Judas, antes dele fazer tenção de o entregar: deu-lhe este nome só por viver no pecado mortal e estar já dominado da avareza, dizendo Ele: “Um de vós é o diabo – *Unus ex vobis diabolus est.*” (Joan VI, 71) Logo quem está em pecado mortal é o diabo, é membro do diabo, pertence ao diabo; e portanto, pecador, quando recebes a Jesus Cristo, tu o entregas a ti mesmo, isto é, entregá-lo ao diabo. Esta expressão não é minha, é do Evangelho, é do mesmo Filho de Deus. Que vos parece, meus irmãos? Que crime mais horroroso e mais enorme do que entregar o Deus dos Céus e da terra ao mesmo diabo, a esse capital inimigo?! E que vai nesse peito indigno, em que o pecador faz

entrar a Jesus Cristo? Ah! Melhor fora arrojá-lo com ele a uma esterqueira a mais imunda, como diz S. Bernardino! Judas pela entrega fez entrar o Senhor em casa de Annaz, de Caifaz, de Pilatos e Herodes; e de quem é essa casa em que o faz entrar o pecador que indignamente comunga? Diz o mesmo diabo, que é sua – *Revertar in domum meam*. O diabo domina aí como senhor em sua casa, aí governa e manda. Ó meu Jesus! Que ultrajes, insultos e desprezos não sofreis vós nos corações desses pecadores que indignamente vos recebem!? Nesses corações lá está o diabo assentado em seu trono e o Rei dos Céus e da terra como prostrado a seus pés! E que lhe poderá dizer o diabo, esse príncipe das trevas? Ó Deus, onde estão os vossos triunfos? Debalde vos lisonjeias de me haverdes vencido; eu aqui estou colocado no meu trono; aqui estou dominando nesta vossa criatura, em que vós não tendes parte, eu sou o senhor! Ó meu Jesus, eu pensava que era mais fácil habitar o lobo com a ovelha, do que vós com o demônio; porém no coração do pecador vos vejo habitar na mesma casa em que o demônio governa e domina! Que enormes ofensas, que malvados desprezos fazeis a Deus, pecadores? [...] Pois todos os anos a comungar e todos os anos a pecar mortalmente, que é isto? Isto é o caminho do inferno e enganai-vos. Não vos salvais, se não cuidais já em reformar a vossa vida, porque já estais mais criminosos que Judas; sim, Judas só o praticou uma vez e vós os tereis praticado mais de trinta vezes e muito mais! Conheci pois as vossas misérias e ingratidões e voltai já para Deus enquanto vos oferece a sua misericórdia e vos espera (416).

### Appendix III

#### Instrução 54ª

Os Santos temem, e tu carregado de crimes, nada temes, nada receias; andas-te rindo e brincando? Que confusão será a tua quando vires tudo contra ti? O sangue de Jesus Cristo estará contra ti; a misericórdia de Deus estará contra ti; quem te há de valer, pecador? O Anjo da tua guarda, até Maria Santíssima, os Confessores e Pregadores, todos aclamarão contra ti; a que hás de apegar-te pecador? Às tuas confissões? Não, porque foram nulas: às tuas comunhões? Também não, porque foram sacrílegas: às tuas boas obras? Também não, porque foram mortas: às tuas rezas? Também não porque foram infrutuosas: logo então, que te resta pecador? Só o inferno; pois é o que mereces em castigo das tuas ingratidões! Mas não seja assim; ainda tens remédio; Deus agora te chama pelas minhas palavras; por isso aproveita-te da sua misericórdia (*Missão 399*).



## Appendix IV

### Instrução 18ª – Matrimônio Mal Celebrados

Jesus Cristo não só elevou o matrimônio à razão de sacramento, mas até o enobreceu, figurando nele a sua união com a Santa Igreja, dizendo S. Paulo: “Grande é este sacramento, enquanto representa a união de Cristo com a Igreja!” No entanto, melhor é o estado de solteiro e muito melhor o estado virginal; sim, o estado virginal, porque faz neste mundo dos homens Anjos!! Bom era que muitos abraçassem estes dois estados; mas na sociedade também é necessário haver os matrimônios. Mas como se deve celebrar este tão grande sacramento? Que preparações devem haver? Que intenções devem levar? Eu vou dizê-lo: É necessário uma boa confissão, feita com um Sacerdote de ciência e virtude; e deve ser geral, se ainda a não tiver feito; aqui deve consultar o seu Padre espiritual sobre isto mesmo e não dar passo sem obediência; o qual aconselhará o que melhor convier à salvação daquela alma. [...] Deve-se fazer muita oração a Deus e recorre muito à Mãe Santíssima [...] Devem saber os deveres de pais para com os filhos no temporal e muito mais no espiritual [...] Devem saber perfeitamente a doutrina cristã e mais deveres cristãos [...] Finalmente, devem levar a pura intenção, isto é, devem tomar aquele estado para melhora servir a Deus e salvar a alma. Assim deve ser; mas quem observa? Quem entra neste estado com estes conselhos, com estas preparações, com estas obediências e com esta intenção? Quase ninguém: e por isso é que se diz que os casamentos dos nossos dias são quase todos casamentos do demônio, casamentos amaldiçoados, de onde provém males infinitos e misérias imensas!! Ordinariamente, os que pretendem o matrimônio não

sabem a doutrina cristã, nem depois a ensinam aos filhos. Não tem educação espiritual, nem depois dão aos filhos [...] Não sabem os deveres dos pais, nem depois cumprem com eles. [...] Nem tão pouco fazem súplicas a Deus e à Mãe Santíssima, afim de escolher o estado que melhor convier; pelo contrário, vão prestar obediência ao demônio, a quem mandam por padrinho, vivendo algum tempo em pecados de impureza, amores profanos, conversas amatórias e escandalosas!! Alguns outros, se nisto não pecam, pecam também por não levarem a pura intenção que devem levar, porque entram para aquele estado, não com o fim principal de dar glória a Deus e salvar a alma, mas sim para satisfazer paixões desordenadas e nada mais!!! Eis aqui como são quase todos os casamentos dos nossos dias; o mau espírito da sensualidade ou impureza é o que domina e faz perder a santidade de tão grande sacramento; faz casamentos amaldiçoados e faz desgraçados os contraentes; porque tais casamentos são feitos no poder do demônio!! Esta doutrina é do Arcanjo S. Rafael, o qual diz: “Aqueles que tomam o estado conjugal sem olhar a Deus, mas levados da sensualidade carnal, são como animais brutos e o demônio toma posse deles.” Logo que grande número de pessoas mal casadas e que receberam a maldição de Deus quando receberam a benção do Sacerdote?! E que tais sairão os filhos, se eles provém de matrimônios em que o demônio tem todo o poder! Alguns dirão: Nós, é verdade, que primeiro alguns pecados cometemos, alguns escândalos demos, mas nós tudo confessam nessas vésperas do casamento. (469-71)

### Instrução 19ª - Sobre a Eleição do Consorte (472)

Filhas que me ouvís, se Deus vos chama para esse estado, segui-o muito embora, ninguém vo-lo proíbe, apenas se vos dá um conselho e não é a todas; mas se tal coisa intentais, então escolhei um bom consorte; isto é, um homem que tenha coração, que frequente sacramentos, finalmente um homem que dê provas de que tem o temor de Deus e a religião no coração; fazei assim, que Deus abençoará o vosso casamento e tereis filhos de bênção, quando não, tereis dois infernos, um na vida e outro depois da morte; porque tereis grandes trabalhos e aflições. Perdereis muitas vezes a paciência, tereis maus filhos, cometereis muitos pecados e por via de tudo isso caireis no inferno!! No entanto, desenganai-vos; quem puder conservar-se, conserve-se, porque é melhor; assim o diz o Apóstolo que falou inspirado por Deus. (475-76)

## Appendix V

Instrução 21ª – Sobre o Escândalo (481)

“Ai daquele por quem vem o escândalo; melhor seria ser arrojado no mar com uma grande pedra ao pescoço!” Não há no mundo, meus irmãos, pecado maior do que o do escândalo, nem pecado que mais diretamente seja contra Deus, nem que faça o homem mais semelhante ao Diabo, nem finalmente que mais seja punido lá no inferno! No mundo não há pecador maior do que o escandaloso; e por quê? Porque peca e faz pecar; porque se condena a si e é causa de outros se condenarem: o escandaloso só em uma ação má pode escandalizar mais de mil pessoas e desta sorte cometer mais de mil pecados mortais e condenar outras tantas almas! Que crime mais horroroso e mais digno de tormentos eternos?! Ele peca e faz pecar; mete-se no inferno e lá vai arrastar os outros; que coisa pior no mundo? Também é o pecado que mais diretamente se opõe a Deus; o escandaloso até vive em uma guerra formal e declarada contra Deus: porque as almas são joias as mais preciosas que Deus criou à sua imagem e semelhança; para as salvar, Deus se fez homem, entregou-se a todo o padecer, aos maiores tormentos e desprezos; verteu todo o seu sangue, deu a própria vida ; finalmente, fez os maiores excessos; e que faz o escandaloso? Como lobo no meio das ovelhinhas, as degola, as mata, as perverte e condena ao inferno! Aqui se vê que o escandaloso é um lobo no meio das almas, que está causando o maior estrago no rebanho de Jesus Cristo! Ele persegue as almas e nisto mesmo persegue a Jesus Cristo! [...] O escandaloso não é só lobo perseguidor, mas até é um ladrão das almas; sim, é ladrão, porque anda roubando almas a Deus; almas que Jesus Cristo comprou com o preço

do seu sangue; porque as almas depois de batizadas ficam sendo de Deus, unidas a Deus e incorporadas com Jesus Cristo; e é depois o escandaloso que as vem roubar com seu pecado de escândalo e mau exemplo: que maior inimigo de Deus! Que maior guerra contra Deus! E à vista de tudo isto, que nome se poderá dar aos escandalosos? Homens do diabo: e não vos admireis desta expressão; porque nas divinas Escrituras são chamados homens de Deus aqueles que fazem as vezes de Deus e serviços a Deus; logo então que se deverá chamar àqueles que fazem as vezes do diabo e serviços ao diabo; quem mandam só a perverter as almas, pondo-as nas garras do demônio e arrojando com elas ao inferno, senão homens do diabo ou do demônio? Ainda não disse tudo; mais disse J. Cristo tratando com Judeus escandalosos; fazendo-lhe eles uma grande guerra, pondo todos os meios para impedir a sua santa doutrina e tendo eles a Deus por pai, lhes disse Jesus Cristo: “O vosso pai é o diabo! Porque quereis fazer aquilo que faz o diabo!” S. Paulo também repreendendo um escandaloso, lhe disse: “Ó filho do diabo!”, logo, os escandalosos são filhos do diabo e ainda são piores que seu pai, porque ainda arrastam mais almas ao inferno do que o próprio diabo! Diz o Defensor da Religião: “Eu antes queria ver uma alma cercada de demônios, do que na companhia de um escandaloso, homem ou mulher de má conduta.” E finalmente, o escândalo é o pecado que é mais punido lá no inferno; porque morrem os escandalosos e ainda ficam pecando neste mundo ou outros por via deles, que vale o mesmo e desta sorte se lhes estão aumentando os tormentos, mesmo até ao fim do mundo! Que coisa mais terrível! Depois de mortos ainda estar pecando neste mundo, e pecarem até ao fim do mundo; e lá no inferno, os tormentos crescendo sempre até ao fim do mundo!? Ai do mundo por causa de tantos escândalos, lamentava Jesus Cristo! O

mundo vai perdido por via dos escândalos e maus exemplos. [...] Que dificuldades! Que embaraços os mais terríveis!! Que me dizes, escandaloso? Ainda queres continuar os teus escândalos? Então não me digas que és cristão; sim, és filho do diabo, como dizem Jesus Cristo e S. Paulo: mas não seja assim; ainda tens remédio, se te quiseres aproveitar; Deus agora te chama pelas minhas vozes (*Missão* 481-85).