

The Utopia of the Divine in Luso-Brazilian Culture

Joachim of Fiore and Ariano Suassuna's *A Pedra do Reino*

ABSTRACT: This article investigates the presence of the utopia of the Divine, originated in the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore's (1135–1202) philosophical work, in the novel *A Pedra do Reino* (The Stone of the Kingdom), by the Brazilian novelist Ariano Suassuna. Joachite thought can be located in two of the novel's characteristic elements. The first regards the use of the same symbolic hermeneutic *per concordiam* (by harmony). The second regards the theory of the three states of the world and the utopia of the Divine, as found in the first and last parts of the novel's plot.

KEYWORDS: Joachim of Fiore, symbolic hermeneutic, utopia of the Divine, Ariano Suassuna.

Published in 1971, *O Romance d'A Pedra do Reino e o príncipe do sangue do vai-e-volta*, a novel by the Brazilian writer Ariano Suassuna (b. 1927), is already in its sixth edition. Recently, the most popular Brazilian television network, Rede Globo, produced and aired the miniseries *A Pedra do Reino*, under the direction of Luiz Fernando Carvalho.¹ In this analysis, despite the spin-offs inspired by the work, we will focus only on Suassuna's text.

Besides its colorful narrative, this novel may surprise those familiar with the thought of the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore, who lived in the twelfth century and established a reformed branch of the Cistercian order, the order of San Giovanni in Fiore, whose members would later be known as the Florentians. Although Suassuna's novel makes no real reference to Fiore, some characteristic aspects of his doctrine, as well as his strategy of symbolical interpretation by harmony, arise at several moments. Above all, the novel contains Joachite thinking by similitude, wherein—reflecting Neoplatonic tendencies—certain images, namely the Holy Trinity, are reproduced at different points over the course of the narrative.

The four senses of the Scriptures from medieval hermeneutics, with a strong Joachite connotation, are also employed in Suassuna's plot. Allegory and typol-

ogy are used as means to articulate the meanings of the distinct types (characters and events), which are taken from different literary or historical contexts, as well as to give meaning to new types and antitypes. And harmony, as found in Fiore's hermeneutical strategy, is one of the resources—perhaps the main resource—employed in the novel as a common interpretative thread, ultimately serving a unitary role for the plot's fabric.

Moreover, the theory of the three states of the world, an identifying feature of Joachimism, permeates the structure of the novel in a very peculiar way, most clearly in the opening and closing scenes, where one of the main characters, a monk, holds the Banner of the Divine. This event, a key episode of the novel, situates the plot at the threshold where the Age of the Son gives way to the Age of the Holy Spirit. In addition, still attached to the scheme that attributes specific roles for each of the Trinitarian figures within the three states of the world, the same monk reveals the mission of the Envoy of the Divine in a Joachite key: he has come to avenge his Father, to prove himself his Son, and to bring the fire of the Spirit.

Joachim of Fiore in Luso-Brazilian Culture

The doctrine of Joachim of Fiore—and/or that of his followers—reached the Americas very early and lives on even today in iconography and literature, as well as in manifold popular manifestations in Brazil, the United States, and Canada.² Whether through the discoverer Christopher Columbus, who read the events of his own time in a prophetic-apocalyptic key, or through the formation, behavior, and mentality of a number of Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits and Franciscans who took part in the new spiritual conquest, these ideas arrived in the New World.³ Historical records indicate that the cult of the Holy Spirit was spread in Brazil by immigrants from the Portuguese Azores islands, from the eighteenth century on, most notably in the states of Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. In the nineteenth century, the Azorean immigrants would introduce the same cult in the United States (Massachusetts, California, and the future state of Hawaii) and in Canada (Ontario).⁴

That is how Renaissance Joachimism, remarkably prophetic and utopian, seems to have extended its tentacles to the fecund soil of South and North America. The same imaginary certainly also spurred the Venetian editions of Fiore's three main works between 1519 and 1527—*Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (Harmony of the Old and New Testaments), *Psalterium Decem Chordarum* (Psaltery of Ten

Strings), and *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (Exposition of the Book of Revelation)—and all sorts of other prophetic and apocalyptic texts attributed to him.⁵

In Portuguese lands, one of the clear connections between Joachim of Fiore's works—whether apocryphal or authentic—and Renaissance imaginary can be found in the well-known Festivals of the Empire of the Divine Holy Spirit (*Festas do Império do Divino Espírito Santo*). The liaison between the empire and the divine dates to the thirteenth-century seizure of the south of Italy by the Crown of Aragon. In 1292, Isabel (1269–1336), the Holy Queen—the sister of Frederico, who was the son of Pedro III of Aragon, the ruler of Sicily from 1296 to 1337—was married to Don Dinis, king of Portugal. In that same year (1292), Queen Isabel established the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit of Alenquer (*Confraria do Espírito Santo de Alenquer*) in Portugal. And it was from the Village of Alenquer, then under the queen's domain, that Spiritual Franciscanism, the propeller of Joachite ideas, would be spread in Portuguese lands.⁶

Other historical connections fill out the picture of the encounter between the empire and the divine. Queen Isabel had been educated in Barcelona, then capital of the kingdom of Aragon, where the Spiritual Franciscans would flock and consequently the site of the Joachite doctrine of the new age of the Holy Spirit. It was probably then that Queen Isabel met a notorious Joachite, the Catalan philosopher and physician Arnold of Villanova (1238–1316), chancellor of the queen's two brothers, Frederico II of Sicily and Jaime II of Aragon.

That is also the alloy between the Portuguese Empire and the divine Holy Spirit. The struggle of the Spiritual Franciscans and the Confraternities of the Holy Spirit, with their ideals of evangelical poverty and prophetic preaching on the advent of a new age when the clergy would no longer be necessary as intermediaries between God and men, met the interests of the rising European monarchies. Around the same time, Marsiglio of Padua (1285–1343), who supported the Spiritual Franciscans, blamed the papacy for divisions among Christians, meanwhile viewing the monarchy as *defensor pax*. The promise of a universal empire on earth, an empire of peace, solidarity, and charity, would always be part of the Franciscan worldview. And in Portugal, such an approach would revive the ancient Joachite prophecy of the emperor of the last days (*dux novus*), aiding in the formulation of the messianic theory of the Fifth Universal Empire.⁷ Symbolic and theoretical references to such themes, common to both Sebastianism and Joachimism, appear in the works of the Jesuit Antônio Vieira (1608–1694), who preached on the return of the deceased king Don João IV and the advent of

the Fifth Empire, along with the poetry of Fernando Pessoa (*Mensagem*), much as these references appeared in the *trovas* of the poet and prophet Antônio Gonçalves Annes Bandarra (1500–1556).⁸

Joachimist echoes in Portugal, despite their richness, are beyond the scope of this piece.⁹ Instead, our aim is to draw on our previous work to establish criteria capable of indicating and evaluating the possible presence of Joachimism in Suassuna's novel.

In another text, Rossatto sought to prove the presence of the Joachite tradition in the structure and symbolism of the Festivals of the Empire of the Divine, citing these manifestations as a real Joachite celebration of the Third Age of the World.¹⁰ Rossatto also added a new kind of proof based on comparative analysis that included the works of Joachim of Fiore, along with his followers and other sources.¹¹ In addition, doctrinal elements akin to Joachite thought reappear in literary fiction and historiography covering events in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Brazil, among them *Os Sertões* (Rebellion in the Backlands), by Euclides da Cunha, and *La guerra del fin del mundo* (The War of the End of the World), by Mario Vargas Llosa, and the historiography dedicated to the theme of the "Contestado War."¹²

Among the doctrinal elements that reappear in the symbolism of the Festivals of the Divine, three deserve special attention. The first is that the festival's main ceremony, with rare exceptions, traditionally consists of a triple coronation (one imperial and two royal), in which a boy-emperor, alongside a young and an old king, is the main figure. This feature was encouraged by the ideas surrounding the Contestado War, particularly in the character Joachim, the boy-god. According to the sociologist José de Souza Martins, "In Contestado, one had to die in order to be reborn in the divine army of Saint Sebastian; the elders should become young, wisdom and power were with the children."¹³

The second feature is that the celebration of the third state, as the Age of the Spirit, reappears in the fulfillment of the expectation of a time of complete spiritual freedom, during which children rule the world, property is divided among the people, and prisoners are released. One of Fiore's best-known passages in *Concordia* shows these expectations to be a response to the symbolical representation of the three states of the world (f. 112a): the first state belongs to the elders, the second to the young, and the third to the boys ("Primus senum, secundus iuvenum, tertius puerorum").

The third feature, in accord with the Joachimism of the Portuguese Spiritual

Franciscans, is that the ideal of the divine empire predicted that the domination of one emperor over other kings would owe more to prestige than to power, since such an outcome would reflect a real spiritual empire. According to the same *Concordia* (f. 122a), in the third state, rule would be administered amid a scene of complete friendship, freedom, and peace. Relatedly, recent studies show that some migration movements from northeastern Brazil to the Amazon region are guided by popular prophecies grounded in Joachite doctrine: one of these foresees a mythical place, after the crossing of the big river, named Paradise of the Divine.¹⁴

Furthermore, the festivities of the divine, which, according to Joachim, mark the crisis of the Age of the Son (or Age of the Church) and the celebration of the Age of the Spirit,¹⁵ were not always well accepted in ecclesiastical environments. Nor were the ideas of Fiore himself. One of the festivities' most polemical aspects, which soon became a prime target for Catholic orthodoxy, involves the nonparticipation of the clergy (*ordo clericorum*), given that the third state would belong to the monks (*ordo monachorum*). Such a practice may have been sustained beginning with radical interpretations of the Joachite tradition by the Spiritual Franciscans in the late thirteenth century. Such an interpretation, censured by the Commission of Anagni,¹⁶ staged a confrontation between the clerical and the monastic life. However, Franciscan radicalism happens to be rooted in the words of Joachim of Fiore himself. The abbot writes in the *Concordia* (f. 56d) that, in the first state, attributed to the Father, the order of the married (*ordo coniugatorum*) shone; in the second, attributed to the Son, the order of the clerics (*ordo clericorum*) shines; and in the third, attributed to the Spirit, the order of the monks (*ordo monachorum*) would shine. This certainly explains why, even today, the direction and organization of the Festivals of the Divine typically elude clerical control.¹⁷

After having briefly analyzed the main elements concerning the reception of Joachimism in Luso-Brazilian culture, we must now answer the question that motivates this article: what aspects suggest Joachite ideas in Ariano Suassuna's novel *A Pedra do Reino*?

Joachimism and Utopia of the Divine in *A Pedra do Reino*

For our purposes, an analysis of the beginning of the first chapter of Suassuna's novel, as well as the last chapters, which lead to the climax, will suffice. However, a few general remarks about the plot are necessary.

O Romance d'A Pedra do Reino e o príncipe do sangue do vai-e-volta, which takes place between 1935 and 1938, begins with a great “cavalcade” or “Moorish parade” (*desfilada moura*), as the narrator calls it, on the eve of 1935 Pentecost—that is, before a festival dedicated to the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ The narration by various characters, however, takes place in 1939, after the events. One protagonist is Don Pedro Dinis Ferreira-Quaderna, a kind of synthetic character: a left-wing monarchist, representing a “brown Sebastianism” (*sebastianismo castanho*), which incorporates the ideological, moral, and racial synthesis of two other important characters—Dr. Samuel Wandernes, a poet, prosecutor, nobleman, monarchist, and knight, and Professor Clemente, a criminal lawyer, schoolmaster, philosopher, and communist. Like the figures on playing cards or the characters in the “Cavalcadas” or the “Folias do Divino,” one character functions as the opposite of the other. Samuel is the white knight and, in the festivals, plays the role of the Christian Crusader of the Blue Cord; Clemente, for his part, is black and parades as the Moorish knight of the Red Cord.

The narrator then highlights two singularities of the cavalcade that opens the novel. The first is that this episode, as if the characters moved freely from literary narratives or popular imaginary to the living stage of history, had already been predicted by an “enlightened” and “visionary” Brazilian, the poet Gonçalves Dias (1823–1864).

The second singularity is that the cavalcade is led by three men: the first sits on a horse and holds a banner with three red jaguars; the second, right behind him, walks carrying a wooden cross with sparrow hawks, or *carcarás*; the third, called Friar Simão, sits on a white horse and is identified as a bandit-friar or a knight-monk. He holds a banner on which a sun’s rays beam over a red field and, in the center, a ring circles a flying white dove. According to the narrator, this is the banner of the Divine Holy Spirit of the Backlands (*Divino Espírito Santo do Sertão*).¹⁹

In the three men at the head of the cavalcade, we already see a certain proximity with medieval symbology and, in particular, with that spread in Joachite circles. The animals in the scene reference the four senses of the Scriptures that normally compose the Figure of the World in its distinct and manifold medieval reproductions and that, in Fiore’s works, is reproduced in the *Tavola XV* from the *Liber Figurarum*.²⁰ It is worth remembering that the four senses of the Scriptures are literal or historical, moral, allegorical, and anagogical. In the traditional Figure of the World, which results, among other things, from

the comparison between the visions narrated in the revelations of John, Daniel and Ezekiel, and from the relation with the theory of the four elements, with its platonic-pitagoric bias, four animals appear: the eagle, indicating the air; the ox, indicating the earth; the angel or man, indicating water; and the lion, indicating fire. The author consciously substitutes the sparrow hawk, or *carcará*, for the eagle and the jaguar for the lion. As one of the characters explains, the author is making use of animals from the Brazilian backlands, not foreign ones. This sort of adaptation is also commonly found in medieval iconography, where sometimes the lion is replaced by the bear, as in Beatus of Liébena's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, composed in eleventh-century Spain.²¹ As one of the main characters, Pedro Diniz Quaderna, states, "[I]n my language, lions or eagles, foreign animals, are never found, but jaguars and sparrow-hawks are."²² However, he does use the angel and the ox, according to the standard symbolism.

All the same, it is important to notice here the three main characters in this "cavalhada of the world," according to the expression used by the narrator, given their direct referencing to Joachite symbology and doctrine.²³ The first man, like the first state of the world, is symbolized by the jaguar, indicating the Father period, lived under the regime of a *terribilis dominus*, in which violence, wars, atrocities, servitude, and fear prevail. The second man, characterized by the symbols of the cross, the sparrow hawks, indicates the second state, the Son period, ruled by Christ and his church, lived partially under the law, grace, and freedom. And, most clearly, the third state is personified by a monk, or friar, completely in accordance with the third Joachite period, as propagated by the Spiritual Franciscan friars beginning in the thirteenth century and in which monks would be the main figures. In this the direct correlation between *friar* and the Franciscan order is central. According to Joachim of Fiore, in his *Liber Introductorius* (in *Expositio*, f. 5v), the first of the three states was under the law; the second was under the Letter of the Gospels; and the third would be in complete freedom of the spirit. Yet, according to the *Concordia* (f. 112a), the first state was lived in the servitude of the slaves, the second in the servitude of the children, and the third would be lived in complete freedom of the spirit; the first in fear, the second in faith, and the third in charity; the first, the servant's, the second, the free man's, the third, the friend's.

Moreover, and more evidently, the third character holds the Banner of the Divine in its traditional red color, in itself a clear allusion to the Joachite celebration of the Third Age of the World, according to Luso-Brazilian tradition. It is

important to stress that, in the different *figurae* presented by Joachim of Fiore throughout his texts, which are gathered in the thirteenth-century *Liber Figurarum*, the first state is always represented in green, the second in blue, and the third in red.²⁴

But there is other, no less meaningful evidence. As in the strategies of medieval interpretation, Suassuna draws from world or Brazilian history and literature to reveal meanings through allegory and typology—that is, the spiritual sense is taken from the historical or literal sense (in the tradition of Augustine’s *translatā signa*). One example is the similitude established between Peri, a character from the novel *The Guarani*, by the Brazilian writer José de Alencar (1829–1877), and Perival or Perseval, a character from the twelfth-century chivalric romance *The Story of the Grail*, by Chrétien de Troyes. Accordingly, there is parity between Don Antônio Mariz, a Portuguese nobleman, and a character of the same name from *The Guarani*, a prior from the city of Crato, in the Brazilian state of Ceará.²⁵ We may even compare Antônio Villar, the name used by Luiz Carlos Prestes (1898–1990), a Brazilian army lieutenant who later became a communist leader and, nicknamed the Knight of Hope, returned to Brazil disguised as a priest, and another Antônio Villar, a notorious landholder in the novel.²⁶ On this count, we may recall that Jorge Amado (1912–2001) wrote the fictional narrative *The Knight of Hope* (1942), which is a sort of biography of Luiz Carlos Prestes.

We can highlight still other examples in Suassuna’s novel that are closely related to medieval allegorical comprehension (*intellectus allegoricus*), including through peculiarities of character and individual virtues or vices. One such contrasting set of values plays out in different female characters, where animal nature (“beast,” “female ass in heat”) is placed against the divine (“angelical nature,” “chaste”). We may view a similar incarnation of this perception of female qualities in the contrast between the blonde, tender, sweet Ceci and the provocative brunette Isabel, both characters from Alencar’s *The Guarani*. In Alencar’s homonymous novel, animal and divine nature are in conflict within a single character, Luciola. In Suassuna’s novel, it is Heliana, the new feminine type, who constitutes the dialectical synthesis of these two extremes.²⁷

In a very similar way, although with the focus specifically turned to biblical text and the history of mankind, Joachim of Fiore would understand the meaning of an Old Testament figure in terms of a similar figure from the New Testament or from ulterior history. For example, in the *Concordia* (f. 60d), a woman is understood through another woman, a child through another child, a war

through another war, an empire through another empire. Thus "the woman dressed with the sun," from the Revelations of John in the New Testament, reprises Judith, a figure from the Old Testament; and the Old Testament story of Abraham, an old man when he expects a son (Isaac) from his previously barren wife, Sarah, is compared to that of Zachariah, also an old man, married to Isabel, also barren, who gives birth to John the Baptist (*Concordia*, f. 118b and 23b). To Joachim, in short, Abraham is the same (*id ipsum*) as Zachariah; John the Baptist is the same as Isaac; likewise, Sarah and Isabel are the same.

The Hermeneutics *Per Concordiam*

According to our analysis, the end of Suassuna's novel contains additional evidence of the Joachite influence. Relevant passages, besides textually suggesting the Joachite theory of the three states of the world, signal the author's use of a hermeneutical resource very similar to that used by Joachim of Fiore.

By means of an interpreter-character, the popular poet Lino Pedra-Verde, Suassuna develops a hermeneutical strategy that perfectly fulfills the basic requisite for the "by harmony" (*per concordiam*) method created by Joachim of Fiore. Moreover, this interpreter-character shows the thread of the entire plot in figurative terms, decoding what seems absurd in the eyes of other characters, who are blindly grounded in the literal sense of the events.

To Joachim of Fiore, the allegorical and typological interpretations help apprehend characters' roles through their similarities, with the sole purpose of setting them in a historical plan. Harmony, in a different way, serves to reduce the multiplicity of these signifiers, apprehended through allegory and typology and scattered in space and time, to one meaning. The general rule of harmony is the following: two signifiers (or even three) hold only one meaning ("*duo significantia unum significatum ostendentia*," *Concordia*, f. 7c, 18b, 23b, 42d). And this conforms strictly to the Joachite Trinitarian theory, summed up in the following formula from the *Psalterium decem chordarum* (f. 225): "*tres sunt unum et unum tres*" (three are one and one three).

The following examples of the interpretation by harmony are central in the works of Joachim of Fiore. According to harmony (*Concordia*, f. 7 d–8a and 18a), we have seen that Abraham means the same (*id ipsum significat*) as Zachariah, Isaac the same as John the Baptist. In addition, Jacob is the same as Jesus the man; Jerusalem is the same as the Roman Church; Samaria is Constantinople;

the Babylonian Empire is the Roman Empire; and the twelve Old Testament patriarchs are the twelve apostles of the New Testament, among other cases.

By the end of the novel (Pamphlet LXXXII: “The Quest for the Sangral”), the poet Lino Pedra-Verde gives an interpretation that, besides revealing the symbolical reading of the novel’s events, is very similar to the “by harmony” hermeneutic proposed by Joachim of Fiore. He reveals the meaning hidden in the entire plot through likenesses found in different characters, contexts, and episodes. This rereading, which harmonizes characters and episodes, allows for all events up to this point to be ascribed new meanings along with the literal or historical ones. However, what could be here perfectly identified as the spiritual sense (*intellectio spiritualis*) in the tradition of medieval *lectio historiae* seems to gain a purely aesthetic function.

According to the likenesses model, Lino Pedra-Verde relates episodes taken from very different sources. Certain similar events—such as “to cut one’s head off” and “to have the throat cut”—and different characters (signifiers) end up having a single meaning. King Herod, who ordered the beheading of John the Baptist in the New Testament, ends up being the same as Colonel Moreira César, who led the nineteenth-century War of Canudos, with the mission of taking Antônio Conselheiro’s head to the capital of the republic, who is the same as Caesar, the Roman Emperor who authorized the beheading of Saint Sebastian.²⁸ A similar system pertains to a number of historical comparisons. Other signifiers, such as a horse’s color, serve as unifiers, as the following excerpt shows: “And that’s when you really see the reason for their fear: Saint Sebastian is the same as Saint George, on the back of a white horse killing the dragon; and he’s the same as Don Sebastião, who releases the brown Jaguar and sets it on the white Pig that comes from abroad! And he’s the same as Don Pedro Sebastião, Don Sinésio Sebastião’s father, the one who had the throat cut! They’re all only one person.”²⁹

In the same way, regarding the question asked by Lino Pedra-Verde about one of the novel’s main characters—“Who did give the white horse to Sinésio Sebastião?”—two conflicting answers are offered. Some say the animal was given by Jorge de Albuquerque Coelho, who lives in a sugar mill in the backlands of Pajeú. Thence comes the following explanation: “Of course, Doctor, it was Saint George who appeared in the Pajeú, who gave the white horse to the King! It’s the Saint Sebastian who appeared in the Stone of the Kingdom, who

is the same Don Sebastião who appeared in that Troy, in that Africa that was the Empire of Canudos."³⁰

The reduction here centers on the names Sebastião (Sebastian) and Jorge (George): Sinésio Sebastião, a character in the novel, Saint George and Saint Sebastian, two popular saints, Don Sebastião, the king of Portugal who disappeared in the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (Morocco, 1578), and Jorge de Albuquerque, another character in the novel.

Moreover, the reduction owes to parallelism created through similar contexts of war and persecution.

The second answer to Lino Pedra-Verde's question assumes the white horse has been given by Don Antônio, prior of Crato. The text illustrates as follows: "One of the kings of the Stone of the Kingdom was called João Antônio, and he ended up going to Crato, in the Ceará backlands. And if this Don Antônio who gave the horse to Don Sebastião was Prior of Crato, who knows if it wasn't him who was in the Battle of Africa—our King of the Stone of the Kingdom, João Antônio, Prior of Crato! And that's what it is, because they're all the same person—Don Sebastião Barbosa, Saint Sebastian, Don Antônio Galarraz, Don João Quaderna, Don Antônio Conselheiro, Don Pedro I—all these holy and war-like people . . ."³¹

The text elaborates: "Every time that he [the man in the white horse] appears, he adopts a different name, according to the necessities and perils of the War of the Kingdom! He's Don Sebastião, he's Don Pedro, he's Don Pedro Sebastião, he's Don Antônio Conselheiro, he's Don Pedro Antônio, he's Antônio Mariz, he's Peri, he's Peri-val, he's Persival, he's Antônio Gala-Foice, he's Antônio Galarraz, he's Sinésio Sebastião, son of Don Pedro Sebastião, and it goes on and on."³² Yet: "That's why I was saying: it's all only one thing, it's the Monarchy of Don Sebastião of Brazil, of the Backlands, of Portugal, of Africa and of the Empire of the Stone of the Kingdom!"³³

The kingdom is the same, the war is the same—just as the spirit acts upon human history with one purpose and the characters, although different, repeat the same names: Sebastião, João, Pedro, Antônio. The traces of likeness serve to identify, to denounce, and to reveal what is hidden.

According to our initial hypothesis, the strategy of interpretation by harmony, as elaborated by Joachim of Fiore, is manifested as one procedure—and perhaps the main procedure—used in Suassuna's novel to regulate and reduce the understanding of the manifold and diverse types of signifiers throughout

the narrative. Yet if this argument seems somehow not yet convincing, we can still explore another route, which focuses on characteristic traces of Joachite thought present in the festivities of the Empire of the Divine Holy Spirit. The next section follows this route.

The Three States and the Utopia of the Divine

Near the end of the book (Pamphlet LXXXIV: “The Envoy of the Divine”), we find two paradigmatic passages in which the task or mission of one of the novel’s main characters, who, as the equally narrator himself states, is the “reason and honor” of the entire cavalcade, in our opinion, is given in Joachite terms.³⁴ In these two passages, the three Joachite states (*status*) are highlighted, with each commanded by a figure of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and each figure plays the same role attributed to him by Joachite doctrine.

According to Joachim, the Father, throughout the Old Testament, presents himself as a terrible and cruel God characterized by the use of strength, war, and slavery; the Son, throughout the New Testament and the history of the church, presents himself as a more tender God, who preaches love, redemption, forgiveness, and grace; and the Holy Spirit, crowning this sequence, would come to establish a new and more perfect kingdom of grace and total spiritual freedom. In a famous passage of the *Concordia* (f. 112a), Joachim of Fiore says that the first state is characterized by submission to the law, by slavery, exasperation, fear, by the elders, by the winter and nettles; the second is characterized by grace, filial servitude, faith, the young, by the spring and roses; the third, in turn, is characterized by amplified grace, complete freedom, charity, the children, the summer and lilies.

Similar characteristics, attributed by Joachim to each of the states of the world, can be found in this passage of *A Pedra do Reino*:

This banner that I bring here with me, and that I’ve never abandoned since the day when I took my mission with our prince, is the banner of Pentecost, is the banner of the Crown, of the Sun and of the fires of the Divine Holy Spirit. It celebrates the day in which the fire of Pentecost burned forever our brute flesh and our pagan blood, ironing us with the divine seal, a sign to remind us to the end of times that our passage through this brown land of the Backlands, through this immense *segre* that is the World, is a mere banishment, a mere exile. The Father came to raise, to punish and to expel. The Son came

to redeem and forgive. The Holy Spirit comes to reign and illuminate! The Kingdom of the Father is over, and we are approaching the end of the Kingdom of the Son. The Kingdom of the Holy Spirit is about to begin, and woe to those who are found with a stain of sin on their blood.³⁵

A second passage illuminates, behind the questions, the same characterization of the three states of the world. Moreover, it is a friar who answers these questions, explaining that the Third Kingdom is that of the divine Holy Spirit:

"Mr. Friar, forgive me for asking, but we need to know it in order to be ready!"—cried near us the one-eyed singer Lino Pedra-Verde. "Are you Friar Simão, the holy friar of the Serra do Rodeador and of the Stone of the Kingdom? Is the young man who's come with you our Prince, the Saint-of-the-white-horse, who comes to command the Backlands men to our War of the Kingdom? Is it true that he's come to avenge his Father, to prove being his Son and at the same time to bring the fire of the Holy Spirit to put an end to the injustices and the sufferings of the world?"³⁶

In this passage, a new element appears that indicates a possible answer to the riddle proposed on the novel's first pages, after the sudden reappearance of the "dangerous" and "mysterious" young-man-on-the-white-horse: that Sinésio Sebastião would be the very envoy of the divine. And he would come to repair all the evil and injustices committed, to reveal himself as Son, and to begin the much-awaited Kingdom of the Spirit. In Suassuna's novel, a strategically constructed ambivalence allows one to trace the equivalence between the history of the main character's personal life (that of Sinésio Sebastião) and the history of the world. The polysemy of the terms and the multiplicity of readings within the narrative, two characteristics that pervade the entire plot, eventually acquire a unity of sense and meaning. Curiously, it is here possible to obtain the same result through two different reading strategies: the literal and the figurative.

Literally, we have the following conclusion of the story: Sinésio Sebastião, who had disappeared on the tragic day when his father—the King of the Fifth Empire of the Stone of the Kingdom, Don Pedro Sebastião Garcia-Barreto—had his throat mysteriously cut, reappears to avenge the Father (his own father), to prove he is his Son (who had disappeared without a trace), and then to succeed him and command the new kingdom, which is the spiritual kingdom.

The figurative (or aesthetic) interpretation is the following: the young-man-

on-the-white-horse, like so many other men who had disappeared during the War of the Kingdom (Saint George, Saint Sebastian, Don Sebastião, Antônio Conselheiro, Antônio Villar), returns triumphantly to avenge the Father (like-wise the action of the avenging God of the Old Testament, in the first state of the Joachite world), to prove himself the son (when he reappears, disenchant, or resuscitates), putting an end to the second period (referring to the second Joachite state) and eventually beginning a new Kingdom of the Spirit.

Moreover, the two passages just cited are meaningful in situating the cavalcade—marking both the initial and final episodes of the novel—in a chronological moment analogous to the one in which Joachim of Fiore, back in the late twelfth century, thought he was writing his works: the moment when the Kingdom of the Father had reached its end, the Kingdom of the Son was about to be completed, and the Kingdom of the Spirit, after its blossoming, was beginning to produce its first ripe fruits.

NOTES

1. Suassuna, A. *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino e o príncipe do sangue do vai-e-volta*, 6th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editores, 1995). On Rede Globo's miniseries, see http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Pedra_do_Reino.

2. See N. D. Rossatto, *Joaquim de Fiore: Trindade e nova era* (Porto Alegre: EdPUCRS, 2004), p. 360; *O simbolismo das festas do divino* (Santa Maria: NedMidia/UFSM, 2003); and "L'Abate Gioacchino e la 'Festa del Divino': Una celebrazione luso-brasiliana dell'Età dello Spirito," *Florença* (Bulletino del Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti) XVIII–XIX, nos. 18/19 (2005): 173–185. See also O. F. Bauchwitz, "Joaquín de Fiore en el contexto utópico de Oswald de Andrade: La antropofagia como consumación de la historia," *Florença* (Bulletino del Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti) XVIII–XIX, nos. 18/19 (2005): 51–57; J. A. Mourão and J. E. Franco, "A influência de Joaquim de Fiore em Portugal e na Europa," in *Escritos de Natália Correia sobre a utopia da Idade Feminina do Espírito Santo* (Lisbon: Roma, 2005).

3. Christopher Columbus, *Libro de las profecías* (Madrid: Alianza editorial, 1992); *Book of Prophecy* (Barcelona: Libros Clie, 1991). On the Franciscans, see L. Duch, *La memòria dels sants: El projecte dels franciscans a Mèxic* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1992); J. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). On the Jesuits: A. Milhou, "El mesianismo joaquinita del círculo jesuíta de Francisco de Borja (1548–1550)," in *Storia e figure dell'Apocalisse fra '500 e '600: Atti Del 4 Congresso Internazionale di studi gioachimiti* (San Giovanni in Fiore, September 14–17, 1994) (Rome: Viella, 1996), 203–24. About the same theme in general:

T. Todorov, *La conquista de América: La cuestión del otro* (México: Siglo XXI editores, 1987); M. Bataillon, *Evangelisme et millénarisme au nouveau monde* (Paris: PUF, 1959); C. Bernard and S. Gruzinski, *Histoire du Nouveau Monde: De la découverte à la conquête, une expérience européenne—1492–1550* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1991).

4. See http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irmandades_do_Divino_Espirito_Santo and http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joaquim_de_Fiore.

5. Joachim of Fiore, *Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), 135ff; E. Randolph Daniel, ed., *Liber de Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 73, no. 8] (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983), 336; Joachim of Fiore, *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (*Liber introductorius in Apocalypsim*) (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), 224ff.; Joachim of Fiore, *Psalterium decem chordarum* (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), f. 259v–260r. On prophecy in the thought of Joachim of Fiore, see M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1993), 592; B. McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1985).

6. J. Lupi, “Origens das festas do Divino Espírito Santo,” in *O simbolismo das festas do divino*, ed. N. D. Rossatto (Santa Maria: NedMidia/Ufsm, 2003), 13–32.

7. J. Lupi, “A doutrina de Joaquim de Fiore sobre o Espírito Santo,” in *O simbolismo das festas do divino*, ed. N. D. Rossatto (Santa Maria: NedMidia/Ufsm, 2003), 47–58.

8. Vieira’s prophetic conception is sketched in three main works: *Esperanças de Portugal* (Hopes of Portugal; 1659), the unfinished *História do Futuro* (1659), and *Clavis Prophetarum* (1663). For more on the theme, see J. Beseelaar, *Antônio Vieira: Profecia e polêmica* (Rio de Janeiro: Eduerj, 2002), 508.

9. About the possible presence of Joachite ideas in the millenarian thought of Antônio Vieira, see M. de Martini and N. D. Rossatto, “Milenarismo na obra profética de Padre Antônio Vieira,” *Revista Letras*, no. 43 (2011).

10. See Rossatto, “L’abate Gioacchino e la ‘festa del divino’”; VVAA, “O Império do Divino Espírito Santo,” p. 2, accessed October 1, 2010, from <http://www.emportugal.com/in/icone/CimperioES.htm>; VVAA, “O Culto do Império do Espírito Santo,” p. 2, accessed October 1, 2010, from <http://portugalsecreto.no.sapo.pt/dsebastiao.htm>; C. R. Brandão, *O Divino, o Santo e a Senhora* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1978).

11. See N. D. Rossatto, “Simbólica e mística do Divino: Remanescentes joaquimitas na cultura luso-brasileira,” *Sociais e Humanas* 19, no. 1 (2006): 9–20.

12. About Canudos, see *Os sertões*, by Euclides da Cunha, and *La guerra del fin del mundo*, by Mario Vargas Llosa. Also: R. B. Graham, *A Brazilian Mystic, Being the Life and Miracles of Antonio Conselheiro* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971). About the Contestado, see E. Serpa, *A guerra do contestado* (1912–1916) (Florianópolis: Editora da UFSC, 1991); M. Auras, *A guerra do contestado: A organização da irmandade cabocla* (Florianópolis: Editora da UFSC, 2001).

13. J. S. Martins, *Fronteira: A degradação do Outro nos confins do humano*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Contexto, 2009), 165.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 177, n. 70.
15. H. Mottu, *La manifestation de l'esprit selon Joachim de Flora: Herméneutique et théologie de l'histoire d'après le "Traité sur les Quatre Évangiles"* (Neuchâtel-Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1977), 11.
16. L. Verardi, *Gioacchino da Fiore: Il Protocollo di Anagni* (Cosenza: Edizioni Orizzonti Meridionali), 1992.
17. See J. Cletison, "Festas do Divino Espírito Santo," NEA (Núcleo de Estudos Açorianos), accessed November 12, 2003, from http://www.nea.ufsc.br/artigos_joi.php.
18. Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, p. 35.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
20. The Figure of the World, in Joachim of Fiore, corresponds to Tavola XV of the *Liber Figurarum*, included in M. Bitonti and S. Oliverio, *Gioacchino: Abate di Fiore* (San Giovanni in Fiore: Amministrazione Comunale di San Giovanni in Fiore/Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti, 1998), 67.
21. Beato de Liébena, *Comentarios al Apocalipsis: Miniaturas del Beato de Liébena*, códice de Fernando I y Doña Sancha (Barcelona: Moleiro Editor, 1995).
22. Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 562.
23. *Ibid.*, 561.
24. M. Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 336; Bitonti and Oliverio, *Gioacchino*; L. Tondelli, M. Reeves, and B. Hirsch-Reich, eds., *Liber Figurarum: Il Libro delle Figure dell'Abate Gioacchino da Fiore* (Turin, 1953); C. D. West and S. Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
25. Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 709.
26. *Ibid.*, 269, 434.
27. *Ibid.*, 503, 512-13.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 698-702.
29. In the original text: "E é aí que se vê, mesmo, o motivo do medo deles: é que São Sebastião é o mesmo São Jorge, montado no cavalo branco matando o Dragão; e é o mesmo Dom Sebastião, que liberta a Onça castanha e manda ela matar o Porco branco que vem do estrangeiro! E é o mesmo Dom Pedro Sebastião, pai de Dom Sinésio Sebastião e que foi degolado! Todos esses são uma pessoa só" (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 598-99).
30. In the original text: "É claro, Doutor, que quem deu o cavalo branco ao Rei era o mesmo São Jorge, que apareceu no Pajeú! É o São Sebastião que apareceu na Pedra do Reino, que é o mesmo Dom Sebastião que apareceu naquela Tróia, naquela África que foi o Império de Canudos" (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 704).

31. In the original text: “Um dos Reis da Pedra do Reino chamava-se João Antônio, e terminou indo para o Crato, no Sertão do Ceará. E se esse tal Dom Antônio, que deu o cavalo a Dom Sebastião, era Prior do Crato, vá ver que era ele quem estava na Batalha da África—o nosso Rei da Pedra do Reino era ele quem estava na batalha da no Sert, João Antônio, Prior do Crato! E é isso mesmo, porque todos são uma pessoa só—Dom Sebastião Barbosa, São Sebastião, Dom Antônio Galarraz, Dom João Quaderna, Dom Antônio Conselheiro, Dom Pedro I—todo esse pessoal santo e guerreiro . . .” (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 704).

32. In the original text: “Cada vez que ele (o homem do cavalo-branco) aparece, adota um nome diferente, de acordo com as necessidades e perigos da Guerra do Reino! É Dom Sebastião, é Dom Pedro, é Dom Pedro Sebastião, é Dom Antônio Conselheiro, é Dom Pedro Antônio, é Antônio Mariz, é Peri, é Peri-val, é Persival, é Antônio Gala-Foice, é Antônio Galarraz, é Sinésio Sebastião, filho de Dom Pedro Sebastião, e por aí vai” (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 704–5).

33. In the original text: “É por isso que eu estava dizendo: tudo isso é uma coisa só, é a Monarquia de Dom Sebastião, do Brasil, do Sertão, de Portugal, da África e do Império da Pedra do Reino!” (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 703).

34. Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 45.

35. *Ibid.*, 725.

36. In the original text: “Seu Frade, me desculpe eu perguntar, mas a gente precisa saber, pra se garantir!”—gritou, perto de nós, o Cantador caolho, Lino Pedra-Verde—“O Senhor é Frei Simão, o frade santo da Serra do Rodeador e da Pedra do Reino? O Rapaz que veio com o senhor é o nosso Prinspe, o Santo-do-cavalo-branco, que vem comandar os Sertanejos para a nossa Guerra do Reino? É verdade que ele veio para vingar o Pai, provar que é o Filho e, ao mesmo tempo, trazer o fogo do Espírito Santo para acabar com as injustiças e os sofrimentos do mundo” (Suassuna, *Romance d'A Pedra do Reino*, 726).

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