



## The literary performance of the Brazilian storyteller Rolando Boldrin

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Literary performance promotes memory preservation through popular oral narratives, being, therefore, a form of resistance for Brazilian people and our culture. When it is developed using the stories, it becomes fascinating. Despite being an oral narrative that is not always valued, it carries the identity, traits and ways of typically Brazilian characters. **Objective:** The aim of this study was to analyze the literary performance of storyteller Rolando Boldrin, in the TV show Sr. Brasil. **Methodology:** As for methodological procedures, bibliographic, documentary and oral, descriptive and qualitative research was used. **Results:** Among the results achieved, we highlight that the stories narrated in Boldrin's narrated retrieves stories and memories of characters from popular culture. **Conclusions:** We conclude that the reader-narrator of stories needs to develop skills, among them not to lose the "thread of the skein" at the moment of the narrative, to use voice, body, space and presence, resources to draw attention and awaken the imaginary, the interest and the affective memory of reader-listeners in an engaging and surprising way.

### KEYWORDS

Oral mediation of literature. Literary performance. Storytelling. Rolando Boldrin. Brazilian popular culture.

## A performance literária do contador de causos brasileiros Rolando Boldrin

### RESUMO

**Introdução:** A *performance* literária propicia a preservação da memória por meio das narrativas orais populares, sendo, portanto, uma forma de resistência a favor das gentes do Brasil e de nossa cultura. Quando é desenvolvida utilizando os causos, torna-se fascinante. Apesar de ser uma narrativa oral que nem sempre é valorizada, carrega a identidade, os traços e jeitos de personagens tipicamente brasileiros. **Objetivo:** O objetivo deste estudo consiste em analisar a *performance* literária do contador de causos Rolando Boldrin, no programa de TV, Sr. Brasil. **Metodologia:** Quanto aos procedimentos metodológicos, utiliza-se a pesquisa bibliográfica, documental e oral, descritiva e qualitativa. **Resultados:** Entre os resultados alcançados, ressalta-se que os causos narrados por Boldrin, apresentam histórias e memórias de personagens da cultura popular. **Conclusão:** Conclui-se que o leitor-narrador de causos precisa desenvolver habilidades, dentre elas não perder o "fio da meada" no momento da narrativa, utilizar recursos de voz, corpo, espaço e presença para chamar a atenção e despertar o imaginário, o interesse e a memória afetiva dos leitores-ouvintes de modo envolvente e

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| 2



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

How good it is to hear a story: funny, surprising, mysterious or even sad ... But contemporary society does not always recognize and give due importance to oral narratives of popular culture, which often does not find spaces for its appropriation. It is a delight to get to know Brazilian types and ways, just as it is “magical” to hear and experience a well-told story. With no specific moment to enjoy such narratives, whether after a meal or even at a funeral, we have seized this opportunity on the living room sofa or in the audience of the TV show Sr. Brasil, which completed 15 years of existence in 2020. A gift for Brazil and for Brazilians.

Following the show is indeed a gift, but also a privilege to learn about a project that values and praises what is ours in every way. Created in Brazil, from Brazil, and to Brazil to get to know ourselves: our art, artisans, culture, singers, poets, stories, among others, that the show seeks to value and preserve over the years, connected with the ideas of its director and presenter Rolando Boldrin. With his own unique way of singing, enchanting and giving life to characters from a country of a thousand and one faces, he has been enchanting different generations that follow him to meet composers, music and, of course, to listen to his *causos* (stories) that can happen face-to-face, by integrating the audience of his show, or mediated (at home, on television).

As stated, the repertoire of the show Sr. Brasil is plural and varied, but this study analyzes the *causos* (stories) told by Boldrin. To start our discussion, we borrow a story by Cornélio Pires, told by Boldrin in his shows and which is in the book “Rolando Boldrin: palco Brasil” (ABREU, 2005, p. 50-52):

*A caboclo was crouched on the edge of a ranch and a car passes, with a person from the city who gets out and decides to talk or joke with him.*  
- Hey caboclo, does this land yield cotton?  
- Cotton? Cotton doesn't yield.  
- Does it yield rice?  
- Rice won't do.  
- And bean?  
- Beans also doesn't.  
*In this land, no beans.*  
- And peanuts?  
- Peanuts doesn't yield, peanuts don't yield at all.  
- But have you planted to see if it yields?  
- if you plant, it does, of course!”

| 3

When Boldrin tells this story, the reaction is the same: the audience laughs (ABREU, 2005) and is enchanted by the Brazilian's perspicacity. In general, his stories are humorous, but sometimes the audience is brought to tears as well. With a literary performance that cherishes human ways and types<sup>1</sup>, of *caboclos* from his land, he preserves Brazilian popular culture, with his voice, body, space and presence. Thus, the question guiding this research was: How does the literary performance of the storyteller (or joker<sup>2</sup> as he prefers to call himself) Rolando Boldrin develop?

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<sup>1</sup> “The list of types is extensive and includes professionals, priests, politicians, legends and even parakeets and Brazilian panthers. What makes this spectrum so linked and varied in types is the fact that their history takes place in Brazil. This gives Boldrin the opportunity to interpret and perform what he considers to be the Brazilian way of acting in certain situations.” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 126 – our translation).

<sup>2</sup> For Boldrin, the storyteller is a joker because they enjoy situations with funny outcomes. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f12ZignOohs>

This article aims to analyze the literary performance of the storyteller Rolando Boldrin in the show *Sr. Brasil* on TV Cultura in São Paulo. To this end, we adopted bibliographic and documentary and oral research, considering that orality is present in Boldrin's speeches. The research period was the year 2020; it has with a qualitative approach and descriptive character, in which we surveyed and analyzed some national productions on the addressed subject. In addition, we chose a narrative storytelling by Rolando Boldrin and weave a brief analysis focusing on its performance. For this analysis, we rely on Paul Zumthor's theory when he argues that performance can provoke feelings of joy, sadness, anguish, fun, in the listeners, but also identification. (ZUMTHOR, 2005). In this research, we highlight the emphasis that the aforementioned story teller gives to the different Brazils.

The survey of these productions was carried out in Google Scholar, without time delimitation. The reason for proposing this study, as mentioned, is the possibility of revealing, through the narration of stories, a process of oral mediation of Brazilian popular culture. It is noteworthy that the stories need more spaces for their appropriation, in addition to television or the YouTube video sharing platform. Thus, to understand these relationships, we discuss aspects that involve the oral mediation of reading and literature, the narration of stories by Boldrin, the use of his voice, body, space and presence followed by final considerations.

## 2 ORAL MEDIATION OF LITERATURE: THE NARRATOR AND THE LISTENER ON THE SCENE

When telling and listening to a narrative, such as a story for example, we participate in a process/moment of oral mediation. The mediator/storyteller or reader-narrator is the subject who tells the story, and the reader-listener is the one who listens. Both the terms reader-narrator and reader-listener were appropriated from the area of Languages by Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2011). We agree that whether reading, narrating or listening, these two "characters" are readers, even though the literary performance and reception occur differently.

Thus, in oral mediation, regardless of the role played, two "characters" are essential: the reader-narrator or mediator and the reader-listener. From Bortolin and Almeida Júnior's (2011) understanding, the reader-narrator is the subject who provides the convergence of the reader-listener with written or oral texts, using the voice to read or tell, considering that there is a difference between reading and telling/narrating a story whose performance intensity will be lesser or greater. Seen in this way, the reader-narrator is a mediator who, with his voice and sensitivity, provides readers with the experience of listening and feeling a certain text. It is worth noting that when reading, the narrator is more faithful and relies on the written text. Narrating is different, as the reader-narrator articulates the resources of orality, improvises, interprets and creates; and carries out three roles:

[...] **narrating**, is the performer sensitive to the audience, as they embody the voice of the community; **listen**, exchange experiences with other narrators and absorb the stories they tell; and **create**, become responsible for constituting a meaning for what they had heard, as well as for updating it with different signifiers and meanings. (FERNANDES, 2003, p. 34, our translation, emphasis added).

In turn, the reader-listener is the subject who has his reading mediated, that is, who receives oral interference from a mediator to converge with different texts, that can also be called a reader who reads with the ears (BORTOLIN; ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2011), but also with the eyes, depending on how the reader-narrator uses the body and the space.

In Cavalcante (2015), the reader-narrator or mediator lends his voice to bring the text to life and the listener (reader), on the other hand, offers to listen, which occurs in rhythms and expressions sharpened by the possibility of enchantment. We highlight that the body and the space are other elements that, together with the voice, bring the text and its characters to life.

We comply with the author when she infers that mediating is an act of enchantment. In this sense, the reader-narrator needs to enchant the reader-listener with his voice, body, space and presence (as we discuss later) whether reading or narrating a text. These elements are intertwined, because “[...] the voice emanates from the body, but without the body the voice is nothing.” (ZUMTHOR, 2005, p. 89, our translation). Furthermore, it is in space where the voice and the body manifest and the presence is concretized. Presence that only occurs when a relationship is established between narrator and listener or between listeners.

In addition to this reflection, we highlight that mediation is not just and only a moment, it is also configured as a process (ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2015). Thus, mediation cannot be planned in an uncompromising and unintended manner, that is, it is necessary to consider how the text will be offered to the reader, especially oral mediation, whose preparation and, afterwards, the action, influences the reader's training and can reflect on appropriation, whether reading or listening.

It is worth remembering that when the readers are people with disabilities, greater care should be necessary, we can state that deaf people are readers who appropriate with their eyes, so it is necessary to prepare and develop strategies for such audiences. The body should be used even more in telling, especially the hands, and this requires a greater use of gestures and facial expressions associated with the signs of the narrative in Sign Language. According to Silva (2022, verbal information) it makes all the difference in the life of the deaf child if during the storytelling, in addition to interpretation (gestures and facial expressions) and costumes, if the witch (character) communicates in Libras<sup>3</sup>. It is worth noting that “[...] Visual stimulation is of fundamental importance for people with hearing loss/deafness” (HONORA; FRIZANCO, 2008, p. 62, our translation) and this can also be explored.

For blind readers, the mediator's voice overlaps other elements and a successful alternative is to ask the child to handle a puppet or objects used during the performance. As for reader-listeners, the reader-narrator (mediator) or storyteller (focus of this study) needs to develop several skills, among which we name: narrating without losing the narrative thread, provoking the interest of listeners maintaining a dialogue with them, with or without interventions, giving references to the listener's imagination. (BATISTA, 2007).

We agree with the author when she claims that the storyteller cannot lose the “thread of the skein”, that is, the reader needs to “be involved or enchanted” from the beginning to the end of the narrative, at the same time that it provokes interest by drawing attention to details, gestures, ways, instigating the imaginary, making it understood in an engaging and pleasurable way, such as Rolando Boldrin, who, in the show<sup>4</sup>, mends a story after a song, or a speech from his guests that reminds him of some story, and, when necessary, complements with explanations.

“Authentic *CAUSO*-TELLERS [...] are those ordinary individuals from a town or a place who, in a natural and creative way, reproduce some hilarious incident that happened to 'another' [...].” (BOLDRIN, 2012, p 18, emphasis added – our translation). Cavalcante (2015) explains that the storyteller is, above all, a reader who shares stories, whose role in the life of the other must result in effective and affective mediation actions for readings and re-readings.

With his *causos* (stories), Boldrin shares narratives that report us to a naive, cunning, countryman Brazil, full of cleverness and intelligence. We are led to know and recognize in his memories, “caboclos” from his land, simple men from the countryside in unusual situations, full of grace and affection that represent some region of the country. Boldrin has essential

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<sup>3</sup> Reflections from the course *Teaching and Libras in the inclusive context* promoted by the Accessibility Center (NAC) of the State University of Londrina (UEL, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Currently, the show *Sr. Brasil* is on TV Cultura, on Sundays at 9 am, focusing on “[...] urban and regional cultural manifestations from all corners of Brazil, passing through samba, choro, bossa- new, the northeastern rhythms, such as baião, xote, from the center and north of Minas Gerais and the regional manifestations of the South, Center-West and North of Brazil.” (RIZZO, 2019, p. 265 – our translation).

elements of a typical storyteller, as, in addition to mastering this language of the hick universe, he uses the knowledge he has accumulated to create statements that incite the viewers' imagination to build an image of the stories he tells. (GONÇALVES, 2018).

Boldrin is an actor, but currently, he represents himself, as he says “[...] I only tell stories, I improvise a lot and I always do well. The stories have not changed. Brazilians do not change their way, even with the progress of technology and fashion. I tell *causos*, stories from 50 years ago that still provoke the same reaction.” (ABREU, 2005, p. 50 – our translation). We show that Boldrin is creative, imperceptible when improvising, because everything happens naturally in the representation of himself.

In fact, the stories and Brazilians have not changed, and therein lies one of the most fascinating aspects of his stories, which are timeless. In this context, in line with Bortolin (2016) we understand that Boldrin's *causos* are “remedies for the soul”. And this is justified by the fact that the narration of *causos* is one of the most anticipated moments by the audience that sings and is enchanted by his memories and stories.

### 3 BOLDRIN TELLING CAUSOS (STORIES)

Caso (case) or *causo* (story)? Before we start the discussion about Boldrin's performance, we need to clarify and justify, in this study, the use of the word *causo* (with u) and not *caso* (the formal word for *causo*). For Boldrin (2012, p. 18) it is “[...] perfectly correct to say CAUSO, therefore, this word, as many people think, is not the wrong or 'hick' way of saying CASO (case), with the U in the middle (caso without the U is something different).”

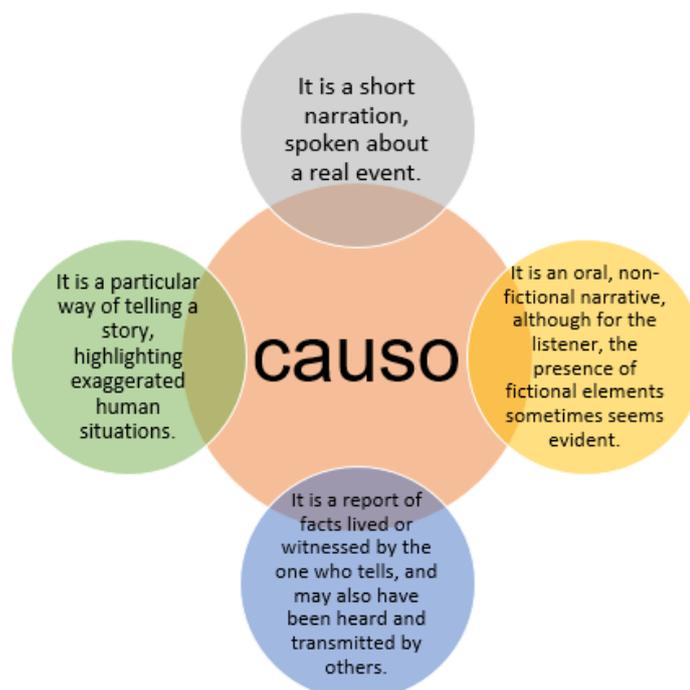
In our conception, the word *causo* is correct and appropriate considering that it constitutes a specific discursive genre and, as such, it is distinguished from the variety of meanings attributed to the word *caso* (case), as when one says: 'tell me a *causo* (story)', the connoisseur of the genre knows the characteristics of the narrative he will hear (BATISTA, 2007). Therefore, we agree with the author when she explains that a *causo* (story) is characterized as a short oral narrative, interspersed in a dialogue in which the storyteller is a character, if he witnessed what happened. The *causo* is located in time, by marks such as “in my grandfather's time”, “when I was a child” (BATISTA, 2007).

In addition to the above, Oliveira (2006) explains that the *causos* are close to comedy, joke, prank, absurdity, revealing themselves almost always as hyperbole of hyperboles, since, as storytellers claim, the storyteller does not lie in a story, he only exaggerates a little. Sometimes it is possible to notice the presence of exaggeration, but it is exactly this characteristic that denotes the storyteller's creativity.

Boldrin (2016) explains that he always likes to tell stories of Brazilian types, from his homeland: “[...] and a lot of people think it's a joke of mine, an invention, there are many types, and most of the types that I tell, all are true, so they are true, I have lived with several of them [...]”. Another characteristic element of the stories, real characters and not created or fanciful. Fact that feeds the listener's imagination.

In our perspective, the *causo* assumes mediation, interference between reader-narrator (mediator/storyteller) and reader-listener in the encounter, exchange and interaction between them. (OLIVEIRA, 2006). According to the statement, Coelho (2019) points out that *causo*-tellers are diggers of memories, because the act of telling a *causo* is a return to something that happened in the past, whether distant or close, that the *causo*-teller heard or that he himself have lived. Memories that are perpetuated through orality. In Figure 1, we can find characteristics of the *causo* according to the perspective of Gedoz and Costa-Hübes (2011, p. 11):

Figure 1. Genre *Causo*: definitions and characteristics



Source: Elaborated from Gedoz and Costa-Hübes (2011, p. 11).

In summary, a *causo* is a short story usually with a funny ending. Boldrin (2012, p. 18, emphasis added) emphasizes that “[...] *causo* is not a *joke*, but, like *jokes*, the *causo* also has no owner, authorship. Sometimes it runs the world in different versions.” In the past, *causo* telling took place in different settings: at family meals or at funerals held at homes when “[...] it was customary to tell stories about the deceased.” (BATISTA, 2007, p. [118]).

In the same sense, Stocker (2019, p. 27) explains that in Brazil, the root of oral tradition is found around *causos* organized “[...] after supper, in farm sheds, on the covered porches, in the backyards, around the fire, or even on the sidewalks. It was where the *causo*-teller, usually a visitor, narrated to that group of listeners, a *causo* (happened or imagined) [...]”.

It is possible to state that the creation of these settings has been lost over time, however it is noteworthy that the *causo* telling can happen anywhere, whether in the living room of a house, in the barn of a farm, on the edge of a stream, in a corn field, etc. As well as at any time of the day, all it needs is a person who tells the *causos* and another person to listen.” (COELHO, 2019).

Nevertheless, in contemporary times, we do not always find moments and places to listen to or to narrate a *causo* (story). In this context, we highlight the importance of the show *Sr. Brasil*, which, with its historical, cultural and collective value, can support different institutions, including educational and cultural ones.

The mediation or narration of a *causo* requires the involvement of the reader-narrator, but especially, of the reader-listener so that he can experience it as an aesthetic experience. According to Lucas (2019, p. 92, emphasis added – our translation) “[...] This puts the *causo* telling within the scope of the **experience, and as such, it is unique, even if repeated on other occasions**. There is an aesthetic component in this that works together with the communicative act [...]”. In the performance of the storyteller, there is personal interference, therefore a co-authorship, which produces an effect that is pleasant to see, listen and read. The *causos*, for example, convey the way of thinking and being of a culture, involving ways of speaking, of behaving, having both an aesthetic and an ethical function (COELHO, 2019), cultural and historical with diverse functions and value. In this regard, Batista (2007, p. [116] our

translation) highlights that the *causo* is “[...] typical of the culture of simple people<sup>5</sup>, who do not have the domain of writing, [and perhaps the reason why] not valued, as it does not enter with the same strength of other genres legitimized by writing in the relations of power-knowledge present in society.”

We are attuned with the author when she says that when compared to other genres, the *causo* does not have due recognition by society for its origin and popular essence. We believe that when mediators praise and take ownership of such narratives, this prejudice will, even if gradually, be overcome, as we can see in Rolando Boldrin's performance.

Lucas (2019, p. 93, emphasis added – our translation) explains that listening to a story by Boldrin “[...] **is participating in a recognition of traits** that are also ours, our families’ and aspects of our culture that we often barely know, but we still appreciate. And that does not depend on the region of the country.” In this sense, Boldrin's *causos* evoke feelings and reactions in such a way that we identify ourselves with the characters, with the culture and the different faces of Brazil.

Thus, it is possible to claim that *Sr. Brasil* is essential, as it aims to cherish the memory and history of popular characters (LUCAS, 2019). In this TV show, stories of animals, comrades and liars, of priests, bully and cowards, authorities, tight-fisted people come to life; or from *mineiro* (from Minas Gerais) or *gaúcho* (from southern Brazil), northeastern or *paulista* (from São Paulo), *catarinense* (from Santa Catarina) or *paranaense* (from Paraná) people; stories from the radio, from the beginning of television, theater and cinema, from the music 'naïve, naïve' (ABREU, 2005).

As mentioned, the stories told by Boldrin are linked to characters and situations witnessed by him or arising from reports of acquaintances, which leads us to believe that everything actually happened (LUCAS, 2019). Boldrin himself points out: “I record incredible things, of children, human types with whom I have lived and spoken until today on the stage, some of them still live, others have already traveled to the other side [...]” (ABREU, 2005, p. 26 – our translation). In this sense, the *causo* teller is a reader of characters and living stories that he often deals with, with the conflicting issues when denouncing the ills of the rural population and the social exclusions motivated by prejudice against rural language, the way of life of the countryman, etc. (GONÇALVES, 2018).

Boldrin's *causos* are told at the beginning or during the show between chats with guests. Usually, Boldrin chooses the *causo* according to the guest's region of origin or homeland to break the ice. If the singer is from Minas Gerais, he tells a story from Minas Gerais, if he comes from Bahia, he tells a story from Bahia. Before the narration he uses expressions to set the time: “I ‘was’ recalling here”; “I ‘was’ recalling a story”; “I remembered a caboclo from my land”, among others, followed by a brief explanation when necessary.

These are narratives that he saw or heard, and as Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2011) argue, some people, even though they are not experiencing a certain situation, know how to describe it naturally and rich of details just because they have heard someone narrate it. This is the case of Rolando Boldrin, “[...] there is no grandiloquence, but a painstaking work of vocal interpretation, punctuated by gestures that express **the manias and the way of being** of the characters. It is this bodily work that creates the extra-everyday and spectacular situation [...]” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 126, emphasis added – our translation).

Boldrin's “simplicity and informality” makes his performance even more natural and authentic, planned and prepared with intentionality, coherence, harmony, which attracts the listener to the set: voice, body, space and presence. These concatenated elements enrich the story, so that the alternation between gesture and word is also a device to make the listener

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<sup>5</sup> According to Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2015), the art produced by the popular classes is not considered exactly as an art. Thus, it does not have structured spaces to be transmitted and disseminated. And that is true for all artistic expressions, including *causos*.

engage in the story told. (LUCAS, 2019). Therefore, in this study we analyze the voice, the body, the space and the presence that make up the literary performance of the “king of the *causos*” (CORRÊA; TAIRA, 2017) - Rolando Boldrin.

### 3.1 The voice, the body, space and the presence of Rolando Boldrin

To describe Boldrin's literary performance, we analyze the way he uses his voice, body, space and presence. In the conception by Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2011), the voice conveys literature, beautifies and warms the emotion of the narrator and the listener, converges ideas, shares affections and, when necessary, silences preparing the return to other texts. We find all these elements in Boldrin's voice: literary texts, beauty, feelings, sensitivity, in a natural and affective way. Regarding naturalness, he says: “[...] the way I talk to people in the movies, in the theater is the way I talk to anyone, as naturally as possible, even when playing the character.” (ABREU, 2005, p. 43 – our translation).

Boldrin has a unique and creative ability with words that further enrich the stories introduced through his voice. According to Manila ([200?], p. 05, our translation) “Oral literature is first and foremost a vehicle of immediate emotions, open to a multiplicity of nuances that are outlined in the rhythm of a voice.” With well-defined rhythm and intonation, the voice tells and enchants, plays, involves, making the reader-listener live and relive memories, meeting characters from Brazil with great narrative power and vocal power, mastering the word and, in some moments, of the sung word.

Such naturalness and spontaneity (without exaggeration) bring us closer to the narrative. “From everyday stories, Rolando embodies types and human profiles that we have heard about or that relate to popular myth, or still have characteristics we can identify in ourselves.” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 128 – our translation). This facilitates our convergence with the text by identifying ourselves with the characters, because Boldrin is the type of person who enchants with his voice and, therefore, is magical when he tells *causos* and stories (BORTOLIN; ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2011). Nevertheless, he admits that he is not a speller, but a speller-teller. Gonçalves (2018, p.95, our translation) points out that Boldrin, “[...] with over eight decades of life has consolidated an aura of respect in his works, declaring a deep love for Brazilian people [...] with his voice and intonation striking, added to an exceptional interpretation [...]” The fact that the *causos* take place in Brazil “gives Boldrin the opportunity to interpret and perform what he considers to be the Brazilian way of acting in certain situations.” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 126, our translation).

When telling “[...] a *causo*, a story, the teller organizes the linguistic material, has the voice, the knowledge of the narrated world, establishes the order of the facts and chooses the words that seem most appropriate to tell the story.” (BARBOSA, 2011, p. 38, our translation). In addition to his voice, he has his body at his disposal to enrich the text that materializes when narrated.

Boldrin's love for Brazil and for Brazilians is reflected in the personification of people and voices. Such elements, mentioned by Gonçalves (2018), influence the appropriation of literature by the audience. He has the ability to “grasp” us from beginning to end of the narrative, we want to savor his words, listen to his way of speaking and see his body expressing. For Hartmann (2011), the body is the vehicle that gives shape to what one wants to communicate. The body also speaks and with facial expressions, for example, it is possible to express.

[...] the **feelings** of the characters, the pain, the sadness, the joy, the fear, the anger ... These expressions result from the textual **appropriation** of the narrator, appropriation that, when done with intensity and realism, **captivates** the reader -listener. A blink, the exaggerated opening of the eyes or the forced closing, as if one did not want to open them, are physical manifestations that have a **lot of effect** on the reader-listener.

Also, the saddened look, filled with tears, the distant look, as if looking for something, the joyful and vibrant look, like rays of light, **are striking and narrow the relationship** between reader-narrator and reader-listener. (BORTOLIN; ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2011, p. 803, emphasis added – our translation).

Hartmann (2000) further explains that by its own form, the body has a potentially expressive and communicative load. Sitting in the straw chair or in the famous wooden bench with his blue eyes that resemble marbles, he travels in stories and memories (ABREU, 2005), Boldrin conveys reactions and emotions of the characters providing effect and affection, as we can see below in Figures 2 and 3, when he narrates the *causo* “Mariquinha Teimosa” (Mariquinha, the stubborn) shown on *Sr. Brasil* on September 12, 2015.

In this *causo*, he tells that Mariquinha was a cabocla from his homeland who insisted on everything, that's why the name *Mariquinha Teimosa* (Mariquinha, the stubborn). Once, at a June party she insisted she wanted to light a firework. To bring this story to life, Boldrin uses gestures and expressions that resemble and interpret movements of lighting fireworks, typical of the June festivities. It is possible to notice cohesion between hands, look, gestures, and voice reproducing the noise, among others. So, one needs to be attentive, because in the blink of an eye one can lose a gesture or movement that confirms appropriation.

Figure 2. Detail of Boldrin's hands



Source: Sr. Brasil Show - TV Cultura (YouTube, 2015).

We can see that in Boldrin's literary performance, the body, and especially, the look and the hands speak and express the characters' actions and feelings in harmony with the words, and this is essential for the appropriation of the story by the listeners. As seen in Figure 2, the opening and positioning of the hands have something to say, and they enrich the audience's experience.

By using different strategies, the accountant requires “[...] resources capable of explaining the inexplicable and describing the indescribable. Gestures, facial expressions, gazing in different directions, frowning, muttering, silence are some of the many resources that the storyteller uses to make sense of what is being told.” (BARBOSA, 2011, p. 12, our translation). We highlight that one of the strategies used by Boldrin is the narration in the third person, but in some situations he puts himself in the place of the character and assumes his characteristics.

Still analyzing Boldrin's movements in the “Mariquinha Teimosa” *causo*, we identified other gestures that stand out in the composition of the story, facial expressions in line with the narrated events and the actions and reactions of characters, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Detail of Boldrin's hands and facial expression



Source: Sr. Brasil show - TV Cultura (YouTube, 2015).

Gestures and movements are important as, in addition to drawing attention and awakening sensations, they provoke the imagination of the reader who “travels” together with the narrator (BORTOLIN; ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2011). At home or in the audience, we follow every of Boldrin’s movement which, with a certain boldness, he teases us and directs our gaze.

It is worth noting that “[...] popular literature designates what comes from the people and for the people, extends over time and passes from word to mouth, or from ear to mouth, so it translates into active performance/ passive, it is woven, and whoever counts it adjusts to their way of thinking/seeing/hearing” (BARBOSA, 2011, p. 22, our translation) and feeling. It belongs to the people, built with the people, passed on from generation to generation, by those who lived or heard it. The teller can add or modify some elements, because “Oral narratives [...] are constituted in the verbal, musical and gestural. They reveal an endless number of stories spun, woven, intertwined in time and remain to this day teaching and enchanted.” (BARBOSA, 2011, p. 36, our translation).

With that, Boldrin's audience feels inserted, welcomed and at ease in a space so rich and plural, which reports us to different corners of Brazil. In addition to producing the sensation and feeling of identification, the space revives the desire for attachment or detachment, familiarity, security and, consequently, a spontaneous appropriation; this appropriation, in general, occurs when the subject identifies with the environment, that is, he likes to stay in it for a long time (BORTOLIN; ALMEIDA JÚNIOR, 2011) and feels that he belongs to the setting and to Brazil itself.

Over time, the conception of the setting in Boldrin's TV shows has been transformed. In Rede Globo's *Som Brasil* show, on the air between 1981/1983, the scenario resembled an old grocery store in the country (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Scenario of *Som Brasil* show



Source: Abreu (2005, p. 124).

Figure 4 represents the second scenario designed by the scenographer José de Anchieta Costa, who was inspired by a typical Brazilian emporium: painted whitewash wall, support to put hats, bags of groceries on display, as if they were being sold in bulk. In each bag, a wood with an inscription identifies each product: Rice, corn, cornmeal, beans (RIZZO, 2019). There is an intention here, that is, displaying a setting that represents Brazil through the scenario, leading the public to identify themselves.

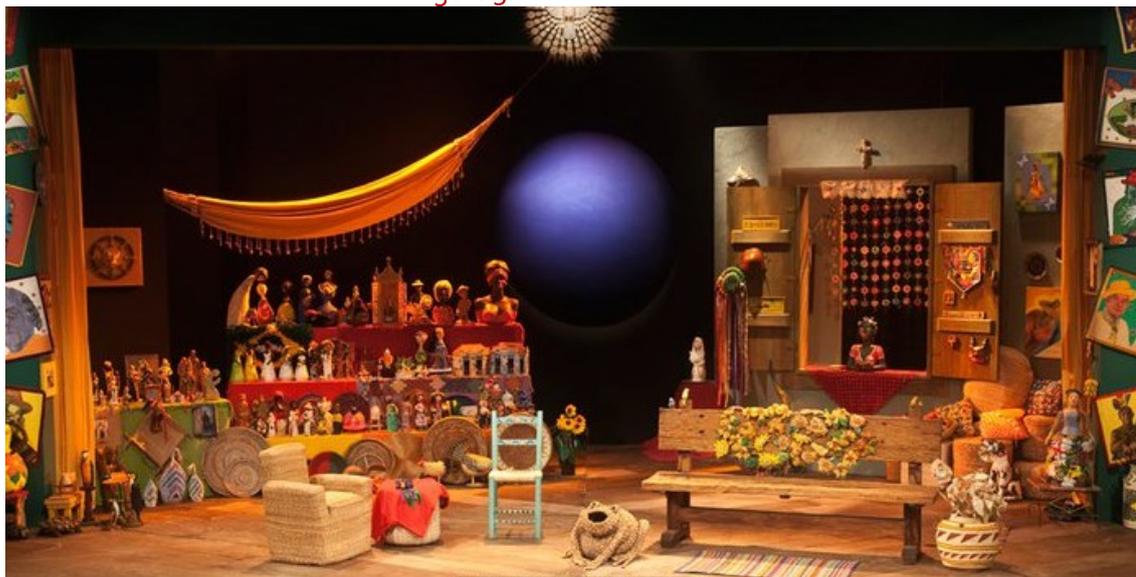
We report to *Som Brasil* scenario to demonstrate the search for Brazilian identity on the stage of *Sr. Brasil*, considering that the composition of the space also interferes in the appropriation of listeners. Thus, as the purpose of *Sr. Brasil* show, which has been on the air since July 5, 2005 on TV Cultura, is to enhance Brazilian popular culture, currently, the scenario (including the opening vignette<sup>6</sup> until mid 2022s) is composed of objects seen in the Figures from 08 to 15.

The project is conceived by the producer and set designer Patrícia Maia Boldrin in partnership with Boldrin himself (CORRÊA; TAIRA, 2017), who sought to appropriate Brazilian handicrafts to bring even more Brazilianness to the space. By valuing elements of popular culture, the composition of *Sr. Brasil*'s scenario praises the work of artisans and this has an effect on the audience.

A pleasant, delightful, beautiful and inviting place: the face of Brazil; and when one sees it, one feels like being there and staying in it. It is as if we were inside a country house, in a cozy place, at a window “on the lookout” for good chat. Figure 5 presents these elements of *Sr. Brasil*'s space, which is currently installed on the stage of the Sesc Pompéia theater (São Paulo).

<sup>6</sup> In 2022 the show *Sr. Brasil* presented a new vignette. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC7rJrHVsjE>

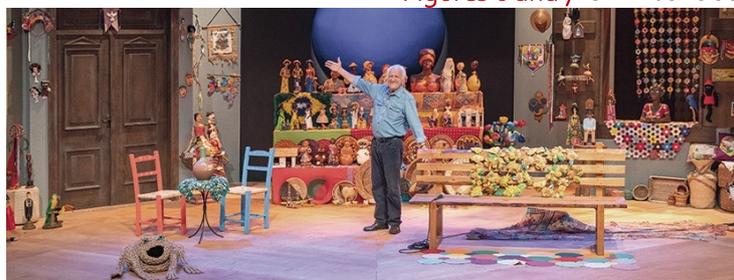
Figure 5. Sr. Brasil's scenario



Source: Artesanato Sustentável (Facebook, 2018).

Figure 5 shows images of composers on the wall, popular string poets, *repentes*, musicians, among others. It is noteworthy that the scenic objects are not fixed and are changed according to the “proposal” of each show, that is, they have a connection with the guests and the *causos* (stories). This is because “The works that make up the settings are selected according to the location of the guests, with the genre of the songs to be performed or even with the *causos* or poems that Rolando is going to declaim” (GONÇALVES, 2018, p. 87, our translation) (Figures 6 and 7).

Figures 6 and 7. Sr. Brasil's scenario



Source: Sr. Brasil show - TV Cultura (Facebook, 20197).



Source: OBVIUS ([2020]).

It is noteworthy that the show is full of colors that give life with typical Brazilian elements such as the girl at the window (popular sculpture), a hammock (Figure 7) among others that make us proud of our own art. We agree with Leal<sup>8</sup> (2016, verbal information) when he claims that the scenario is “[...] an interpretive mosaic of Brazil.”

Gonçalves (2018, p. 85, emphasis added) clarifies that the use of colored objects “[...] constituted a strong imaginary instrument to [...] inspire Brazilians, whether they are members of the audience or viewers [...] feelings of **contemplation and belonging** to the broad creative universe of these people.”

An appropriation of Brazilian art that also arouses the feeling of respect and appreciation, carried out responsibly, as this is the first scenario in the world to receive the FSC® certificate. “The seal was given by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), a forest

<sup>7</sup> Available on: <https://www.facebook.com/srbrasil.tvcultura/photos/a.735272886888577/804367159979149>

<sup>8</sup> Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQqout5QVJs>

management council, an international non-profit organization created to protect the world's forests, preventing predatory exploitation.” (CORRÊA; TAIRA, 2017, p. 202, our translation).

Corrêa and Taira (2017) point out that “From time to time, Boldrin talks about the pieces exhibited on the stage, yet another cultural item within the show's focus on valuing [...]” and honoring the Brazilian artist and art, full of meanings (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Popular pieces and sculptures from the *Sr. Brasil* show



Source: Artesanato Sustentável (2013a).

Among the categories of arts craft, we highlight: **varied crafts** (corn straw dolls, gourd, papier-maché, cardboard birds); **toys** (kite with bottle caps and wire, *saci* of fabric scraps); **ceramics** (dolls, girl at the window, saints, a sculpture of the popular poet Patativa do Assaré); **wood carvings** (Holy Spirit, Saint Frances); **musical instruments** (*agbê* made with gourd and beads, *kalimbas* produced with gourd and metal, *berimbau* with certified wood); **laces and embroidery** (pillows, towels); **weaving** (carpet with fabric scraps, nets); **handcrafts** (sacred banner, map of Brazil on fabrics, curtain with soda seals); **weaving and basketry** (baskets, vases) (ARTESANATO SUSTENTÁVEL, [201?], emphasis added) among others.

As mentioned before, handicrafts were also present in the opening vignette of the *Sr. Brasil*, in which is possible to notice the sculptures of the poet Patativa do Assaré and São Francisco de Assis. Allied to the cateretê *Vide vida marvada* composed by Boldrin himself, they remind us of Brazilianness, as seen in Figure 9. Thus, both music and vignette are cultural components of the show.

Figure 9. *Sr. Brasil's* opening vignette (2015)



Source: Sr. Brasil - TV Cultura (2015).

Currently, *Sr. Brasil* show has a new vignette, more towards the rural aspects of Brasil. Figures 10 and 11 below illustrate and detail other parts of the scenario.

Figure 10. Sr. Brasil's pieces



Source: Artesanato Sustentável (2013b).

Figure 11. Sr. Brasil's scenario



Source: Sr. Brasil - TV Cultura (YouTube, 2019)<sup>9</sup>.

Appropriating the conception of Gonçalves (2018), we understand that, in fact, there is a connection between the scenario and the purpose of *Sr. Brasil*. Such an intentional and committed connection with reality fulfills its role, letting us know, appreciate and contemplate Brazilian art and artists. In this sense, “The connection between the scene and the content of the show is clear, as the exhibited works “talk” with the musicality of the artists who perform together with Rolando” (GONÇALVES, 2018, p. 87, our translation) and the *causos* he tells.

We agree with Rizzo (2019, p. 269, our translation) when he says that “[...] the scenario of the show is modern, stripped down and more focused on Brazilian regional cultural production with its art and crafts instead of a country’s lifestyle” present at *Som Brasil*, and that impacts both the reception and the appropriation by the audience. In summary, we highlight the cultural elements of the show: the opening vignette, the soundtrack, the scenery and the crafts, the stories, the songs, the guests, the musical instruments, the rhythms and Boldrin himself.

When it comes to performance, another essential aspect is presence. According to Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2011, p. 807, our translation), the presence is “[...] the materialization or the concretization of the body and speech, which added to space and literature provide the performance [...], which is the result of the relationship between the reader-narrator and the reader-listener, and also of the reader-listeners among themselves.”

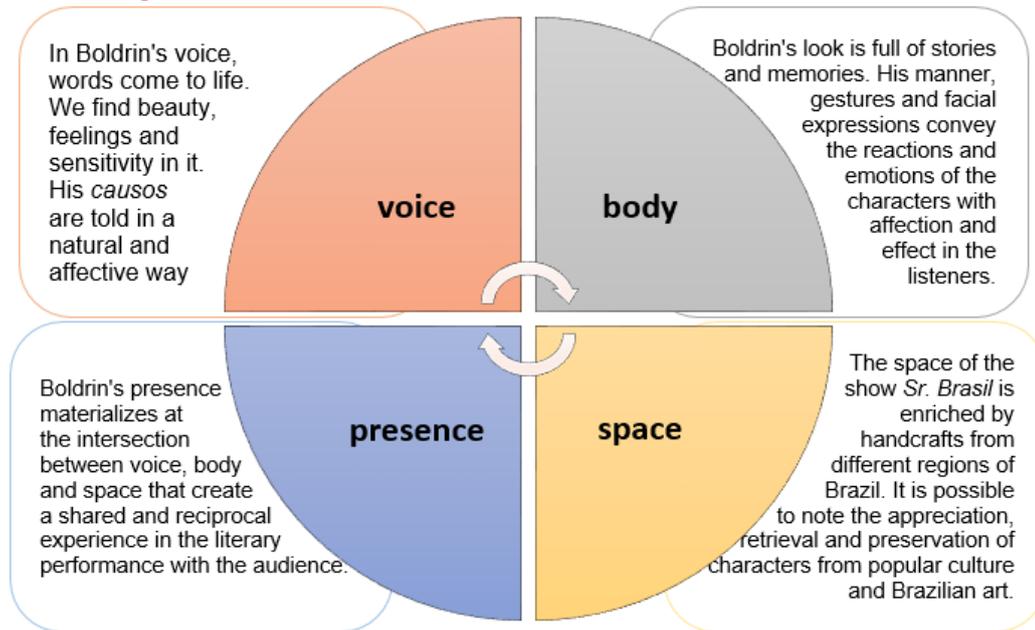
In the presence, the set: voice, body and space materialize in such a way that a reader-narrator and reader-listener relationship is created and constitute the performance that would not “[...] necessarily involve an audience, spectacular manifestation, but a 'way of behaving bodily' through which individuals and groups identify themselves” (HARTMANN, 2011, p. 209-210). Furthermore, the author says that some performance may bring:

[...] the possibility of playing, gaming, not only with social rules, but with words, with meanings, with one's own body and with contact with the other, providing, in addition to the transmission of codes of cultural behavior, entertainment and pleasure to all its participants. (HARTMANN, 2005, p. 140).

In Boldrin's literary performance, we find a “[...] shared experience, in which our senses feast and our state of mind creates the environment in which we feel pleasure in recognizing a part of us and our reactions in others who are part of the event” (LUCAS, 2019, p. 94). In short, “[...] the performance comprises the narrator's uses of his body [...]" (HARTMANN, 2000, p. 118), voice, space and presence. Figure 12 summarizes the four elements of Rolando Boldrin's literary performance, that is, his voice, body, space and presence.

<sup>9</sup> Barnabé in Sr. Brasil show (03/31/2019).

Figure 12. The four elements of Rolando Boldrin's literary performance



Source: Elaborated from Abreu (2005), Bortolin and Almeida Júnior (2011), Lucas (2019) and Rizzo (2019).

We believe that Boldrin's literary performance is permeated by these four elements and that these elements together enchant his listeners, turning the experience of listening to his *causos* into rich and unique encounter. As highlighted by Cavalcante (2015, p. 121, our translation) “the text narrated by the storyteller has a lot of tactics and creativity, in which the gesture permeates the narrative and unites voice, look, body and text in the reader's seduction, in an action of intentionality and reciprocity that transmits and transforms.” Using different resources, and in a creative and unique way, Boldrin unites voice, body, space and presence to transmit and preserve Brazilian memories and people, whether through mediation devices such as television or the YouTube video sharing platform.

In this perspective, Boldrin's literary performance embodies “[...] the Brazilian popular culture and reacts to the truculence and sabotage to which this culture is constantly subjected” (LUCAS, 2019, p. 89, our translation), oppressed and underestimated. Hartmann (2011, p. 239, our translation) points out that “[...] every performance act is reflective, creates an experience while reflecting on it”. Therefore, in line with the reflection by Lucas (2019) and Hartmann (2011), we understand that Boldrin's literary performance is necessary and indispensable as, by resisting and defending Brazilian popular culture, it fulfills its social role in a provocative, exciting and sensitive way. In this context, it is possible to claim that the *causos* are a way for Brazil to get to know and appreciate itself, thus: Long live Rolando Boldrin! Long live the *causos*! Long live the Brazilian popular culture!

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Our parents and grandparents used to follow Boldrin since the time of the show *Som Brasil* on Sunday mornings. It was with this reference that we met *Sr. Brasil* preserving the “habit” of listening to Brazilian music. Today we are invited to watch him by calling us with a “look at Boldrin”, “listen as he is going to tell a story” and attentively we follow the performance of this storyteller who knows how to touch us with his voice. Associated with the body, space and presence, this voice expresses a diversity of narratives and characters that make us feel as if we were somewhere else in Brazil.

Boldrin is one of those storytellers who plays with words, directs our gaze with typical caboclo manners and gestures, who preserves the memory and popular Brazilian culture. His program is one of the few or perhaps the only one that aims to present us Brazil as it is. In this respect, unfortunately, few initiatives tell and narrate stories in other cultural spaces. Without recognition and proper appropriation, these narratives are at risk of being lost due to the lack of moments that make this experience possible, except for research in Information Science, for example, which can retrieve and value storytellers.

Mediators need to appropriate more of the *causos* (stories), tales, and legends giving the novice reader (in this case the child and the adolescent) the opportunity to listen to them so that the experience is rich and unique, as in Boldrin's performance. We know that his experience as an actor favors the performance act, however there are excellent storytellers among us, in our families with many stories to share. In this sense, we agree with Plínio Marcos ([199?] apud CARVESAN, 2003) when he says that “A people that does not love and does not preserve their most authentic forms of expression will never be a free people”.

Finally, we infer that the narration of *causos* is configured as an oral mediation of literature, that is, a unique encounter with the text that takes place in a mutual process between the strength of the word, the speech and the listening, configuring, therefore, as a necessary and urgent appropriation of Brazilian popular culture.

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