

Gaicho Clothing: a study about regional identities in Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil¹

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Abstract: In this reflection I intend to show an ethnography about The Gaicho Traditionalist as a cultural movement that worships the historical and mythical figure of the gaicho in the present - a diacritic that potentialize identifications related to the affirmation of the regional. The Traditionalists represent the invention of the gaicho in various ways, producing a complex cultural universe that includes, among other elements: clothing, language, dance, food, animals, songs, work. These representations are characterized as gaicho traditions and related to the typical gaicho. My objective is, on one side, to perform a reflection about the set of circumstances that led the Traditionalists to produce the *prenda dress* as a typical feminine outfit, to be used by women (called prendas) in the Gaicho Tradition Centers (CTGs). The Center of Gaicho Traditions (or just CTG) is a space where the gaicho is venerated, a kind of social club where fandangos (balls) and other Traditionalist activities are organized. The CTG, in its structure, appropriates and re-signifies the names of ancient farms. On the other side, I want to show that the *prenda dress* and the other pieces of the Traditionalist clothing can be understood as artifacts that possess multiple meanings and agency. They constitute elements responsible by the production of the gaicho and traditions, becoming a passport to penetrate the past and live it in the present. This way, reflecting about the gaicho clothing, its uses and multiple significations implies revisiting a series of questions that refer to individual and collective identities, the living of the typical and its consumption in current days. Questions intersected by the ideas of nation and region, folklore and history, education, pedagogy and imaginary, closely related to the outfits and their history.

Keywords: gaicho clothing, pedagogy, *prenda dress*

Before the *pilcha*³

In this text I wish to propose a reflection about the Gaicho clothing and especially about the *prenda dress* in Rio Grande do Sul. I intend to show a little of its history, relating it to the other Traditionalist outfits, presented by some historians of clothing and folklorists. I want to situate the creation of the *prenda dress* in the context of elaboration of the Gaicho Traditionalist Movement (MTG), in the 1950's.

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This article is inserted in the reflections of the project *The Gaicho Traditionalist Movement and the School. Educational and Pedagogical Perspectives. An Anthropological Analysis on the (Re)configurations of the Plural Identities*, that I have been developing in the Social Sciences Department of the Federal University of Santa Maria since 2006.

Besides the issue of the relation school/Traditionalist, in general lines, the project aims at characterizing the Gaicho Traditionalist Movement or the Traditionalism as a cultural movement that worships the historical and mythical figure of the gaicho in the present. For such endeavor the Traditionalists represent it in various ways, producing a complex cultural universe that includes, among other elements: clothing, language, dance, food, animals, songs, work. These representations are characterized as gaicho traditions and related to the typical gaicho, diacritics that potentialize collective and individual identifications related to the affirmation of the "regional" in the Rio Grande do Sul.

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³ Pilcha, according to Nunes (1993: 373) is a valuable object such as an adornment, jewel, money. In the language of the Gaicho Traditionalist Movement this means the typical gaicho clothing, as I will mention throughout this text.

My objective is, on one side, to perform a reflection about the set of circumstances that led the Traditionalists to produce the *prenda dress* as a typical feminine outfit, to be used by women (called *prendas*) in the Gaucho Tradition Centers (CTGs).⁴ On the other side, I want to show that the *prenda dress* and the other pieces of the Traditionalist clothing can be understood as artifacts that possess multiple meanings and *agency*. They constitute elements responsible by the production of the gaucho region and traditions, becoming a passport to penetrate the past and live it in the present.

This way, reflecting about the gaucho clothing, its uses and multiple significations implies revisiting a series of questions that refer to individual and collective identities, the living of the typical and its consumption in current days. Questions intersected by the ideas of nation and region, folklore and history, education, pedagogy, imaginary and representation, closely related to the outfits and their history.

This text was produced from a set of fieldwork that I have been developing among participants of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement, between 1995 and 2013. These fieldworks refer, on a first moment, (1995) to the study of gaucho clothing and harness⁵ with the objective of using them in the teaching of regional history, for the initial grades of Fundamental School.⁶ My main concern was to reflect about the possibility of pedagogical application of the folklore in educational museums, in terms of informal education, from the selection of a set of outfits presented by some folklorists and historians of clothing.

Later, from the observation of the outfits used by dance groups and participants of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement, in Gaucho-glorification ritualized activities, at the CTGs (Gaucho Tradition Centers), I started to put together a documental and bibliographic research with the objective of putting into perspective the history of production of these typical outfits.

⁴ The Center of Gaucho Traditions (or just CTG) is a space where the gaucho is venerated, a kind of social club where *fandangos* (balls) and other Traditionalist activities are organized. The CTG, in its structure, appropriates and re-signifies the names of ancient farms. Its president is designated as "patrão", the comptroller is the "agregado das patacas", etc. The man that frequents the place receives the designation of *peão*, and the woman, of *prenda*.

⁵ In Portuguese, harness is "arreamento", related to "arreio". Set of pieces used on horses for riding and traction (saddles, bridles, stirrups, etc.).

⁶ I refer to the Project Folklore at the Museum, which I took part with a Scientific Initiation Scholarship in 1995 and that resulted in the exhibit *The evolution of clothing and arreamento in Rio Grande do Sul*. In the context of the exhibit, the history of Rio Grande do Sul was explained in relation to the diversity of outfits. I used to emphasize the relation between them and the economical activities; the social and ethnical differences, as well as the process of social exclusion of blacks and indians in Rio Grande do Sul. After a guided tour of the exhibit, the children could watch to videos, slides and debate about their understanding of what they saw through drawings and texts. In Brum, 1997 (p.212) I state that the education conception adopted in the development of the project was the search for the comprehension of the complex relation between folklore and education and its consequences. The clothing was perceived as bearer of individual and collective meanings. However, the approximation folklore/education and the very questioning of the clothing as folklore or *fakelore*, according to Dundes (1985) implied on a constant alert. To perform this reflection was like walking "over a blade", as we demonstrated in (Brum and Cunha, 1998).

One of the issues that intrigued me was to understand why the *prenda dress* (female outfit) and the components of the male clothing (the bombacha⁷, boots, handkerchief, shirt, hat) started to be signified by the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement as the Gaucho's traditional clothing⁸. The question above has, as an unfolding, the relation that the Traditionalists establish between the past and the present in various dimensions. One of them refers to the selection of some elements of the past to be lived in the present, as tradition. These traditions start to be referred to as the gaucho's typical way of life in the past.

Another unfolding refers to the very concept of tradition that crosses the imaginary of the Traditionalist subjects, in their practices and representations of identity affirmation, in this universe. For tradition is signified, preferably, as what "really" happened in the past. Its living in the present is given in terms of recovery/rescue of the ancient gaucho costumes, on a mythical perspective.

I think clothing is a historical product continuously "culturalized", bearer of significations which are mutable and related to the objectives and aesthetics of whom bears it, on a given historical and cultural context. I refer, specifically, to the question of functionality/meanings of usage of certain pieces of clothing for field activities in the past and the use of the same pieces currently in urban festivities of gaucho glorification.

As Miller proposes (2007), clothes can be thought of as artifacts and "the consumption could be manifested as production of social groups and these had to be examined each one on their way." Throughout this text I intend to demonstrate that the Traditionalist gaucho clothing in Rio Grande do Sul can be thought of from its materiality – "clothing from the point of view of what actually means to wear specific clothes" (Miller, 2007: 49).

In this sense, to be *pilchado*⁹ means to be identified with a cultural project of affirmation of *gauchism*. As Ortner proposes (2006: 59) while mentioning the politics of *agency*, in terms of gender relations there is a whole cultural work in the distribution of the process that creates people appropriately defined and differentially empowered. My hypothesis is that the Traditionalist clothing (added to other Traditionalist artifacts and values) is, in a certain sense, holder of *agency*. It provides to whom adequately dresses it both his/her empowering/passport to act in the traditionalist world of the typical gaucho living and the individual recognition for his/her action in the affirmation in favor of the construction of these collective identities.

⁷ Bombachas are the baggy pants that make easier the gaucho's locomotion in the field activities. They are worn inside the boots. According to Fagundes (1992), the bombachas were introduced in Rio Grande do Sul after the Paraguay War.

⁸ The gaucho is considered the characteristic regional type from Rio Grande do Sul, being referred to as the characteristic national type of Uruguay and Argentina. The references to the gaucho refer to the free man that inhabited the southern part of South America between the 17th and 19th centuries and extracted the cattle leather to commercialize it. It was a man with no fix address, no family and that had a lot of horse-riding ability.

⁹ The term *pilchado* is the participle of the verb *pilchar* and means to be wearing the typical clothes of Traditionalism.

However, to understand the current multiple meanings of usage of these outfits in the Gaucho Tradition Centers and other Traditionalist territories, I realized the need to revisit the writings of folklorists and historians of clothing on which I was based for the use of outfits for the teaching of regional history in 1995. This is justified because I have been considering these folklorists and historians as important agents in the process of production of the typical gaucho and its living. Trying to understand how to adequately worship the gaucho traditions implies on realizing the issue of cultural learning, of a sentimental education (Geertz, 1989:317), in which agents are configured, that I identify as the folklorists and historians.

The history of the traditional clothing of Rio Grande do Sul seems to me very much related to the very history of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement and its agents. Thus, the traditionality of the outfits and their *agency*, as a synchronic and diachronic process, possesses an educational and pedagogical dimension, that I relate to a model of folkloric and historiographic construction of these outfits and their present usages and meanings.

The Gauchism

The perspective of researching and publicizing the typical outfits of Rio Grande do Sul and other regions of southern South America is directly related to the popularization of the gaucho as the characteristic national figure in Argentina and Uruguay and characteristic regional figure in Rio Grande do Sul and the living of these traditions. The study of gaucho clothing seems modeled to the need of “incarnating” correctly the gaucho, through the production of representations. The folklorist and traditionalist Antônio Augusto Fagundes, in the Introduction of the 5th edition of the book *Gaucho Clothing* presents this concern:

It is neither the artists nor the tourists, but simply those who consider themselves the sorcerers of the cult of tradition those who fantasize the clothing, change the dancing style and introduce alien musical instruments in musical groups that call themselves gauchos. (...).The solution of all these problems that are causing a huge harm to the gaucho culture, and will become irreversible if not defeated on time, is very easy. It is only needed that the traditionalist leaders – *patrões* and *posteiros*¹⁰ of the Gaucho Tradition Centers, MTG (Gaucho Traditionalist Movement) counselors and coordinators – become aware of the mistakes they commit, correcting them and making their followers correct themselves. (Fagundes, 1992: 9-10)

The gaucho culture that the author refers to is Gauchism. This includes a diversity of people and groups that identify themselves of various forms with the glorification of what they refer to as regional usages and costumes and that activate them as criteria of definition. Gauchism (in its most varied expressions) involves millions of people in its commemorative dates and activities that happen throughout the year. The use of the term encloses a series of

¹⁰ The term *posteiro* in a farm is used to designate the employee that resides in its borders, whose objective is to avoid land invasion. At the CTGs, with the re-signification of the term, the *posteiro* is usually the person in charge of the artistic group.

manifestations and subjects that exert the appropriation of the gaucho figure in the production of their representations. According to Maciel (2001: 245), the difference between Gauchism and other expressions of regionalism is in the reverence through the incarnation and representation of authenticity of the true gaucho.

In the author's perspective, in current days, various groups who are concerned about regional traditions take part in this universe, such as: the poets from the Estância da Poesia Crioula (a kind of regionalist gaucho writing academy); the poets and musicians that take part in the nativist festivals, many of them also members of the EPC; the participants of the Gaucho Tradition Centers, the CTGs, and the leaders of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement; some folklorists and directors of the FIGTF (Institute of Tradition and Folklore Foundation) and CGF (Gaucho Folklore Commission),¹¹ as well as the very public that consumes these productions and events.

In the Gauchism universe, the actions of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement, or just Traditionalism, preponderate. These can be understood as a set of organized and regulated activities that have as objective to celebrate the gaucho figure and his way of life in a relatively distant past, such as the participants, and mostly the researchers of the Movement¹² perceive it and define it in their writing. They institute worshipping practices around which a past, continuously updated and interpreted in the present, is glorified. The responsible for the Traditionalist activities in Rio Grande do Sul is the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement.

It is an associative entity, that congregates more than 1400 legally constituted Traditionalist Entities, known as Gaucho Tradition Centers or Nativist Groups or Native Art Groups or Piquete de Laçadores¹³ or Folkloric Research Groups or other denominations, that identify themselves with the objective that they propose, which are the "related entities". The Traditionalist entities affiliated to the MTG are distributed in the 30 Traditionalist Regions, which congregate 500 towns of our State. It is a civic, cultural and associative movement. (...) The MTG is defined as a civil entity with non-profit purposes, dedicated to the preservation, rescue and development of the gaucho culture, through the understanding that the Traditionalism is a social organism of nativist, civic, literary, artistic and folkloric nature, as the MTG Coat of Arms symbolically describes, with the seven (7) new leaves, growing from the trunk of the past. (www.mtg.org.br).

¹¹ The Nativist Festivals are music contests with regional themes and rhythms that take place in various cities in Rio Grande do Sul. The most famous is the "Califórnia da Canção", that happens annually in Uruguaiana - a city that borders Argentina. The IGTFRGS is a state governmental institution which is responsible for the research and promotion of the Gauchism in Rio Grande do Sul. The EPC congregates poets and musicians that are dedicated to poetic representations, prose and songs that have the Gaucho as a theme.

¹² The MTG researchers are Traditionalist leaders that are concerned about the authenticity in the cult of traditions and produce, such as Antônio Augusto Fagundes, in the text quoted above about clothing, research that influence the Traditionalist followers. In this sense is necessary to name the folklorists Paixão Cortes and Marina Cortes with their broad bibliographic production and Traditionalist dance courses that are taught in CTGs in Rio Grande do Sul and other places in Brazil. The very direction of the MTG makes available and indicates personnel and courses for the CTGs to prepare them for the Traditionalist contests.

¹³ Such as the CTGs, the Piquetes are Traditionalist associations, but in a smaller dimension.

The Traditionalism as a cultural movement¹⁴ is also common to Argentina and Uruguay, territories in which the presence of the gaucho identified to the rural life is historically referred to, and in which the main economic activity consisted in the imprisoning of wild cattle for the commercialization of leather. In a similar perspective to the Traditionalist and folklorist Fagundes, the Uruguayan Fernando O. Assunção, in *Pilchas Criollas*, approaches the gaucho as a transnational phenomenon:

But it has never been a work written only for the orientales but for the rioplatenses in general, inclosing in the denomination, also the riograndense Brazilian brothers, with whom the Argentineans and Uruguayan share the gaucho, its costumes, origins and cultural manners. A material and spiritual repertoire that make us similar and, also, in the little costume details, make us different. All of that, with a deep affection for this gaucho leading character, was put in the “*pilchas*”, as a kind of anticipation of the times we face now. (Assunção, 1992: 9)¹⁵.

The appearance of gauchism, in the platin space, is inscribed in the history of relations between the national and the regional, and manifested in the representations of the regions produced by intellectuals, that celebrate it, searching a re-definition of its history and of the costumes to be glorified. This glorification happens from the production of narratives about the gaucho, whose first references appear in the regionalist literature¹⁶ in the 19th century. Besides

¹⁴ The gaucho Traditionalism is considered by its members as the biggest cultural movement in the world. This information is spread in the opening and closing speeches in the official sessions, as well as by politicians and other authorities, but there is no data that can actually prove this assertion. The gaucho Traditionalism from Rio Grande do Sul, as a movement, has expanded to many states of Brazil, being celebrated by gauchos, its descendents and sympathizers. According to the Traditionalist, the cult of gaucho traditions happens in New York, in Lisbon and in Japan, as a consequence of the ‘diaspora’ of the gauchos from Rio Grande do Sul throughout Brazil and around the world (Kaiser, 1999.)

¹⁵ The terms *orientales* and *riograndenses* refer to the inhabitants of Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul. The term *rioplatenses* has the objective to englobate the gaúcho as a spacial product from the Rio de La Plata Basin, that extends through the territories of Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay. The Rio de la Plata Basin is the second biggest watershed in the planet, with 1.397.905 km².

¹⁶ Flávio Loureiro Chaves, in *Matéria e Invenção* (1994:12) traces a script to understand it in Rio Grande do Sul. He considers Caldre e Fião as the patriarch of the gaucho literature that, with the publishing of *Divina Pastora* (Divine Shepherd, 1847), placed the gaucho in the Brazilian fiction, followed by José de Alencar (1870) when *The Gaucho* is released. The importance of the reception of José de Alencar’s work is felt in Rio Grande do Sul, according to Chaves, through the use of the thematic adopted by Apolinário Porto Alegre in the publishing of *O Vaqueano* (The cattleman, 1872). This was one of the authors that made part of the Parthenon Literary society, which was created in 1868 and can be understood as an association that contemplates the transition of the Gaucho figure to the fictional ground, passing, from excluded social type, to historical ancestor literarily idealized. With the Literary Parthenon the grounds for a *south-riograndense* regionalism are launched. The institution congregated literate young man that transmitted their liberal, abolitionist and nativist ideals. In the beginning of the 20th century there is an intensification of the gaucho theme with the works of Luis Araújo Filho, Alcides Maya and the consolidation of the regionalist literature in Rio Grande do Sul with Simões Lopes Neto, Ramiro Barcellos and Augusto Meyer, followed by Cyro Martins and Érico Veríssimo. Each one of these authors corresponds to specific moments and peculiar visions on the gaucho and of a regionalist literature in the ensemble of their works.

the literary representations that refer to the figure of the gaucho, at that moment began the appearance of entities (clubs) that propose to worship gaucho traditions.

The second moment of the history of the cult to the gaucho traditions happens with the organization of the Traditionalism as movement - the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement (MTG). It happens, in Rio Grande do Sul, after the first half of the 20th century, with the creation of the 35 CTG in Porto Alegre, in 1948.

In a first moment of Traditionalism, in Rio Grande do Sul, it is necessary to point out the actions of João Cezimbra Jacques, who idealized the first Traditionalist entity – the Gaucho Grêmio – created in Porto Alegre, in 1898. Jacques had a whole project for the cult of the gaucho traditions. In the book *Costumes of Rio Grande do Sul* [1883] he proposes a definition of the gaucho in the 19th century, relating him to the primitive gaucho:

Such was then the gaucho of these primitive ages, but today, even though the meaning of this word still actually has something in common with its ancient meaning, it extends itself not only here but in the Plata river republics, to every inhabitant of the fields; of what results a higher meaning. Happening in general as we have already seen, that these countrymen are naturally bearers of many noble feelings, of a certain agility and physical strength, it follows that being a good horseman, knowing how to handle a horse, the lasso and the “balls”, the spear and the sword and not refusing danger, facing the hassles and the strikes of luck with indifference, keeping the once given word, telling whomever what he frankly feels (...) to be, after all, a man for whatever is said, for whatever is offered, here is the true gaucho. So that this word is taken today as a synonym for gentleman; thus, saying that a man from the pampas is a real gaucho, means saying that he is a perfect gentleman (Jacques, 1883:59)¹⁷.

Jacques traces the relation of the past with the present through the broadening of the sense that he grants to the term gaucho, where the conducting line is the permanence of the countrymen in the Plata region and of some of their traditional habits. As he defines the broadening in the meaning of the term, he provides the re-creation of the gaucho in the plain of the imaginary, giving it universal characteristics to which this figure forged from this regional type has to adapt itself. The relationship between the modern and the traditional gaucho is expressed in the composition that Jacques does from the horseman with the gentleman, putting in evidence values such as honor, honesty, prudence, helpfulness, solidarity and hospitality as indispensable characteristics of the present gaucho of his time.

¹⁷ The balls that the author refers to are the *boleadeiras*. An artifact composed by round-shaped stones set together by long strips of braided leather. The *boleadeiras* were broadly used before the fencing of the fields in the Platin regions, which happened in the 19th century, according to Pesavento (1990). The *boleadeiras* were used for wild animal hunting by the gauchos. They were thrown at the animal's feet as they ran in the open field. The balls made them stop so that they could be abated. The lasso that Jacques refers to is still used nowadays in herding activities to catch cattle, horses and even lamb in the field or in corrals. The presence of these artifacts refers to the gaucho's Traditionalist clothing in his country work routine. In current Traditionalist parties they are little used, except the lasso in the Traditionalist rodeos and country parties, since in these rodeos are re-created the gaucho rural activities through contests of his field-working abilities such as lasso contests, horse riding contests, etc.

There is a structured plan to re-live the past expressed in his second book *Issues of Rio Grande do Sul* (1912) that becomes clear when Jacques points to the role to be performed by the Traditionalist association Grêmio Gaúcho:

The relics of the past are divided in two groups: the first is made of acts which are necessary to keep written in memory and in the heart in a latent state to reproduce in our celebrations through the word and actions and the second is made of the so called artifacts and utensils or instruments of the past, which not only remind of the actions but also can serve to help the reproductions of these in our celebration parties (p.48/9). And don't say that the facts we have just quoted are sporadic, because we see in all peoples with more or less intensity the noble tendency and honorable preoccupation of re-living the past (p.53). It is a sociology law *the conscious turn for the starting point from which the peoples begin unconscious* (Jacques: 1912, 54).

From Jacques's project, it is possible to understand which symbolic construction of the gaucho figure mirrors the adaptation of the term gaucho, an adaptation related to one of the human types that inhabited the region, that happened due to the process of search for affirmation of the Platin spaces that originated, in the 19th century, the national states of Uruguay and Argentina and Rio Grande do Sul in the southernmost region of Brazil. On these re-configured spaces the gaucho is chosen as a founding hero to symbolize, as an emblem, the saga of territory domestication through the glorification of the bravery of his double performance as a countryman and a warrior. In Argentina and Uruguay¹⁸, the gaucho starts to be considered a national symbol, while in Rio Grande do Sul it is transformed into an emblem of regionalism. Garavaglia (2003: 147-9), mentions the reasons for this adoption, pointing its connection to the land as fundamental in the construction of a mythical sign in societies already urbanized at that moment.

The adoption of this sign constitutes an important element in the analysis of the history of gauchism in the regions mentioned, regarding the formation of the newborn nations, because with the process of mythicizing of the gaucho laying on the exploration of the pampa region and with the exclusion of the figure of the countrymen/immigrants of this representational universe there is a clear demonstration of hispanophilia as support of the singular archetype on which the gaucho is constituted.

In the cases of Argentina and Uruguay, the construction of the typical element, the gaucho, points to the issue of the land in relation to its "proclaimed singular inhabitant". This, in the moment of amalgam of newborn nations, creating the gaucho as a national symbol (Thiesse, 1999: 59), as it connects the nation to the land, is configured into producing an identifying element to be lived as a myth.

¹⁸ According to Oliven (2006:103) the creation of the Traditionalist movement in Uruguay happened in 1894, with the foundation, in Montevideo, of the *Sociedad Criolla*. In Argentina, the mark of Traditionalism, according to Fradkin (2003:133) was the production of the myth of the gaucho as narrative. That refers to two contexts: 1870 (moment of literary acclamation of the myth), historically characterized for deep transformations in agriculture and during which borders are demarcated; and 1913 (moment of reconfiguration of the myth), determined by the construction of the nation, trying to define it in terms of tradition.

To Lévi-Strauss (1996:241) the myth has as object the resolution of contradictions. In the case of the gaucho figure, from its symbolic use, in the construction of the nations and the region, I perceive a search for sublimation of the constitutive contradictions of these historical processes, as well as the overcoming of the contrasts referring to the figure of the gaucho - invented up to some point - to be worshiped. An excluded social type that becomes a symbol of glorification, as Teixeira shows when he mentions the semantic trajectory of the word:

The term gaucho, of imprecise origin, had a noticeable semantic trajectory. In the beginning it meant smuggler, vagabond, anti-gregarious, uncivilized, anti-social and referred to a big number of individuals that circulated by the cattle raising areas in the border zones of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Later it started to designate the symbol social type of those countries, as well as from Rio Grande do Sul, even naming its gentilic (...). Today, in the rio-grandense context, the term gaucho started to mean nobility, pride, dignity, bravery, honor, confidence, loyalty, simplicity, authenticity. Gauchão means all of this in a high degree (Teixeira, 1988:53).

The consolidation of the gaucho semantic trajectory happens with the creation of the Traditionalism as a cultural movement, of which Cezimbra Jacques becomes patron and founding hero, being honored, by its participants, next to other heroes of Rio Grande do Sul's history. It is in this perspective that I would like to point out the peculiarities and configurations of the project of cult of traditions and perform an anthropological analysis of the Traditionalist pedagogy of the *pilchas* in Rio Grande do Sul.

The Gaucho Traditionalism

One of the marks of the creation of the Traditionalism as a movement is the foundation of the "35 CTG" in Porto Alegre, in 1948, by a few young men from the countryside who studied in the state capital. The creation of this cultural movement, that changed the ways of glorification of the gaucho figure, inside and outside the state, is perceived by the founding Traditionalists themselves.

According to Paixão Cortes (1994: 38), the Traditionalism was a kind of reaction to the entrance of the North-american culture and its products in the state, as a consequence of the ascension of the United States after World War II. Oliven systematizes the first moments of Traditionalism in Rio Grande do Sul:

The creation of the "35" is preceded by the foundation, in 1947, by the same young men, of the Gaucho Traditions Department of the Students Society of the State School Julio de Castilhos, by that time considered a model public school and where most of them studied. They organized the first Gaucho Round (today called "Farroupilha Week"), that took place from September 7th to 30th, that year. Taking a spark from the symbolic fire in the Patria Flame before its extinction at midnight on September 7th, they transported it to the hall of the Julio de Castilhos School, where they lit the "Creole Flame" on a rustic lamp (Oliven, 2006:106).¹⁹

¹⁹ The MTG site refers as most important dates in its constitution: April 24th, 1948, marks the beginning of the historical trajectory of the organized Traditionalism, occasion in which a group

The initial period of 1947/48 demonstrates the attempt of creation of specific spaces and moments for the worshipping of gaucho traditions and the valorization of the regional in a mostly urban scenario, through demonstrations of civility in the reverence to symbols of the “regional soul”, based on the knowledge and references that they had available from the past. There is a project for the collective identification of the gauchos and affirmation of regionalism. The folklorist and Traditionalist Barbosa Lessa (1985: 58) defines the action of his group focusing on the incarnation of the figure of the past gaucho in the present, through its traditions. The wish to glorify the regional, recreating the gaucho in his clothes, habitat, work, food, leisure, is similar to the references of Lofgren and Thiesse to the projects of symbolic and material elaboration, aiming at the collective construction of the national identities. According to the author:

Today we can establish a list of symbolic and material elements that a nation deserving of that name must present: a history that establishes a continuity with the noble ancestors, a series of heroic models of the national virtues, a language, cultural monuments, a folklore, elected places and a typical landscape, a specific mentality, official representations – anthem and flag - and picturesque identification – clothes, culinary specialties or an emblematic animal (Thiesse, 2000:19)²⁰.

The Traditionalists also had this symbolic and material concern in the "collective" construction of the regional identities. Analyzing the characteristics of Traditionalism as a cultural movement, it is clear the effort on the creation of symbols that identify it, as diacritic signals and that make possible to characterize the Traditionalism itself as a movement. Thiesse refers to the elaboration of a peculiar universe that justifies the celebration of an originary place and time with characteristics which are needed to be shown to the world and to the other nations. That means a nation-construction project is justified in the necessity of differentiation through common-lived experiences, costumes, etc.

In this meaning, the 1947/48 Traditionalists, with Paixão Cortes and Barbosa Lessa, and, even before that, Cezimbra Jacques, were concerned about justifying the necessity of creation of Traditionalism to show and celebrate Rio Grande as a unique place considering the rest of Brazil. The process of creation of these elements is perceptible in Barbosa Lessa's comment about the purposes of the 35 CTG:

of young men, with a sharp civic spirit, founded the 35 Center of Gaucho Traditions in Porto Alegre, motivating the proliferation of a great number of other nucleus of preservation of the gaucho tradition; July 1st to 4th, 1954, the movement is reunited in the 1st Traditionalist Convention, in Santa Maria, where took place a reflection about the importance of Traditionalism, with the approval of the thesis “The meaning and value of Traditionalism”, from Luiz Carlos Barbosa Lessa; December 17th to 20th, 1959, the movement is institutionalized in Cachoeira do Sul, with the creation of the Coordinating Council, during the 6th Traditionalist Convention when, also, João Cezimbra Jacques was chosen Patron of Traditionalism; October 28th, 1966, in Tramandaí, during the 12th Traditionalist Convention, the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement, as federative entity, with a juridical character, was created. At this same date the “Coat of Arms of Traditionalism” was adopted, and became the current brand of MTG (www.mtg.org.br).

²⁰ The presentation of Thiesse's identity *check-list* is based in the discussions of Orwar Löftgrena in *The nationalization of culture*, (1989:9).

“The center will have as purpose to keep the traditions of Rio Grande do Sul, its history, its legends, songs, costumes...” The costumes, the language, the way to bridle a horse and ride away, all of this we knew. But regarding the rest, the issue was becoming more complex. History is a very serious social science and we were not historians; and history can not be invented. Folklore is a very serious social science and we were not folklorists; and Folklore can not be invented (...)
But we were Traditionalists. People actively keeping aspects of the past while envisioning the future. When some element was missing for our action we would have to fill the gap some way or another (Lessa, 1985:64).

This “lack” of elements of the traditionalist universe is exemplified by Lessa regarding language and clothing, demonstrating the appropriation of ancient terms to their new objectives, as happened to the expression *pilcha*:

Thus, for example, which would be the adjective we would call ourselves when we were dressed like gauchos? Someone suggested “aperado”. But “aperado” is horse clothing and the term didn’t go well. So in the minutes of May 3rd, 1948, the secretary Antônio Cândido remembered that *pilcha* is money or an object of personal use that may have some pecuniary value. “Let’s offer to our honor patron Paixão a barbecue in which the indians should all come *pilchada*.” And that invention stuck! (Lessa: 1985, 64).²¹

The quotation makes explicit the term’s re-signification as it is appropriated, which leads to the establishing of a re-invention of the past and its traditions as a logic to justify the very traditionality of the used terms, as Maciel suggests (2001:258). The re-creation of the term and the use, after that, of the verb “l” to designate being dressed appropriately as a gaucho are inscribed in the list of material and symbolic elements described by Thiesse²².

However, the term *pilcha*, beyond a matter of adequation to the Traditionalist universe, in phase of elaboration, presents a practical dimension already expressed in Lessa’s speech – to dress appropriately as a gaucho. What did this mean at that moment for the young founders of traditionalism? What to wear? How about women? According to Lessa:

²¹ The term “aperado” means the use of harness (on the horse). The term “indiada”, very common among the Traditionalists, is a male word of address that means a group of untamed gauchos – as the indians.

²² The use of the epic landscape happened – the *pampa*, the horse as emblematic animal, the *chimarrão* as a drink and the barbecue as the typical dish. The creation of cultural monuments is another aspect that is present within the Traditionalists. The statue of the *Laçador* – representation of the farm working gaucho – in Porto Alegre is inserted in the issue of glorification of the regional, to which are also aggregated elements that approximate on the gaucho as representational figure.

The relation that the Traditionalists establish with the folklore and history is equally important, because it’s from them that they extract material for their representations, since the Traditionalist consider themselves heirs of their ancestors and propose to continue with a glorious history as they identify themselves with and produce representations of the true gaucho in their dances, songs, poems, parades, balls and horse rides, for example. So they refer to the Movement as a space that preserves values of this past as honor, family, honesty, the given word, portrayed as they mention the speeches of the heroes, and try to establish continuity with the noble ancestors even through the color of their kerchiefs.

The ancestors worshiped by the Traditionalists and the historical process they insert themselves in, in a past of fighting, such as the Guaranic Wars (1754-1756) and the Farroupilha Revolution (1835-1845). The main model of virtue worshiped by the Traditionalist is the warrior.

And how the lady's dresses are like? As an approximate model, there were only the caipira dresses²³, from the June parties from São Paulo, or the annual calendars distributed by the Co. Alpargatas from Argentina. Paixão stubbornly insisted that they should be long dresses, down to the ankles; I insisted that I us lads were wearing our customary *bombachas*, it was not necessary for the girls to turn so far into the past; that wasn't put into vote, but the big-mustached Paixão beat us all on that (Lessa, 1985: 66).

It is in this context that the *peão* and *prenda* denominations appeared, and the *prenda* dress itself - a feminine gaucho outfit that should be worn by the Traditionalist ladies in artistic presentations and *fangangos*, the balls organized at the Gaucho Tradition Centers.

The term *prenda*, that "originally", according to Nunes (1993) meant an object of value, a preciousness, starts to designate the Traditionalist woman. This construction of new meanings for old terms is a constant in the Traditionalist universe and mirrors the identification mechanisms and processes of construction of the collective memory.

To Maciel (2001: 257) the term *prenda*, which has the meaning of gift and present (for its preciousness) is also the imperative of the verb *prender* (to imprison). This is very meaningful in the gauchism representational universe, with his archetype the free man. The *prenda* means, in this context, not only the family ties that imprison the woman, but the counterpart of the positivist ideal of a providing man, the submissive woman and the virtuous daughter.

The Traditionalism is a male movement by excellence. It was the men who defined the clothing that should be worn by women, as well as the language, dance, food and etc. In the reports of the first Traditionalists with Paixão Cortes and Barbosa Lessa there are no references regarding women's participation in the choosing of clothing. The reports mention only men making decisions regarding this movement.

As women are associated to preciousities it is expressed the dimension of care and concern about the *prendas*. The *prenda* dress as an outfit must provide an image that matches the patterns of femininity of the Traditionalism. Clothes must mirror the feminine modesty and produce a model to be lived. For this reason, I think that the *prenda* dress was conceived to be down to the ankles, with no cleavage. The flounces and the full dress, on their turn, invite us to reflect about their effect in the gaucho traditional dances.

Such measures, conceived by the Traditionalists, translate an educational and pedagogical attitude of the *pilchas* that refers to a positivistic and functionalist perspective of education. To Durkheim, (s/d: 57) education is thought of as a continuous process and pedagogy as something intermittent. Pedagogy refers to the practices that serve as a plan of action, as models to be implemented. Education is related to the moral and provides the integration of the individual into the group. It has the commitment of making the individuals share and propagate the collective representations. "The man, that the education must form in each one of us, is not the man that nature formed, but the man that society wants him to be,

²³ Caipira dresses are the dresses worn by ladies that celebrate June parties in the Southwest of Brasil. The term "caipira" refers to the rural worker in relation to its anachronism with the city inhabitants. In this case, the caipira dress was a (regional) model used in the elaboration of the *prenda* dress.

and it wants it according to what its internal economy demands, its balance" (Durkheim, s/d: 81).

Choosing Durkheim to reflect upon the pedagogy of the *pilchas* is not aleatory. It refers to the conceptions of culture and society that permeate the Traditionalist universe, as Oliven points while analyzing Barbosa Lessa's formation and the philosophy of the Letter of Principles of the MTG, proposed by him in 1954:

The main thesis of Traditionalism starts emphasizing the importance of culture, transmitted as tradition for a society to work as a unit. All the problem resides on the fact that this wouldn't be happening satisfactorily since "western culture and society are suffering a frightening process of disintegration" (Oliven: 2006, 117).

Still according to Oliven, (p.119) in this durkheimian conception, society, because of the weakening of local culture, is in a state of *anomy*. The Traditionalist's role is to present a solution for this crisis through the strengthening of the Traditionalism itself as a popular Cultural Movement that battles against the factors of disaggregation of the local culture. The identification with the popular social levels implies a separation between these and the intellectual elite. It suits to the latter group to format the meaning of Traditionalism and take it "to be appropriately lived" (my marks) by the participants of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement.

It's these intellectuals (folklorists, mostly) that produce the knowledge to be consumed by the Traditionalists, a knowledge that refers to the gaucho culture in the past, but that must be lived in the present. A culture that functions as a guarantee of social cohesion and as the overcoming of the state of *anomy*.

The Traditionalist education corresponds, in this perspective, to a continuous process composed by a complex set of teachings to be apprehended and behaviors to be inculcated, producing a way of being Traditionalist, an *ethos* or a Traditionalist culture, as Maciel suggests (2001: 260). In this sense, the relation between the *pilchas* and the pedagogy is evident to the extent that clothes constitute a mean to live the true gaucho, configuring itself, pedagogically, as an individual scenario for the Traditionalist performance that provides a transport to the past, which is collectively shared from its standards.

Thus, the issue of the gaucho clothing, configures a very peculiar case, together with other elements that I named (Brum, 2006: 56) "the Traditionalist kit for the construction of the regional soul", for, as I intend to demonstrate, it's not only about signing the invention of a tradition and detecting its impropriety in the history of clothing, but also of perceiving the dimensions that the clothing occupies in the Traditionalist universe, in collective and individual terms, and its power of *agency*, as a cultural project of preservation of the gaucho.

It is necessary to understand that the cultural project of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement limits itself to the cult of the true gaucho traditions. In this sense, the folklorists (also agents of the gauchism) that research these costumes get concerned about signaling its authenticity. They want to demonstrate how the gaucho "really" dressed, historically, so it is possible to understand (pedagogically) the correct outfits to be worn in the Traditionalist

territories nowadays. A Traditionalist pedagogy of dressing to worship the traditions, as I can perceive in the statements on the historian of clothing Vera Zattera:

Inside the thought of the popular culture or the popular art we try to rescue, in this study, the gaucho clothing in various moments of our history. (...) Being that way, the popular art of the gauderio²⁴ dressing has suffered transformations that tell its very history, its heritage, in an evolution that grants it, beyond beauty, authenticity. (...) We hope that this study may have contributed to the rescue of the gaucho history in his way of being and in his way of dressing. We understand that this registry must preserve the authenticity of the gaucho *pilcha*, an element of utmost importance in our regional personality (Zattera, 1989: 17-19).

This intention of rescuing and cultural preservation is expressed, also, in the congruence throughout the texts of Fagundes and Assunção, regarding the characterization of the clothing in three or four ages, related to the transformations through which passed the regions inhabited by the gaucho. Through the history of clothing is presented the history of the colonization of the Platin region and its transformation. To Fagundes:

Roughly there are four complexes of male clothing in Rio Grande do Sul, if we pay attention on the piece that dominates the set: 1º) the primitive *chiripa*; 2º) the *bragas*; 3º) the *farroupilha chiripá* and 4º) the *bombachas*. To each one of these complexes corresponds, naturally - and also, in a rough manner - a feminine outfit (Fagundes, 1992: 10).

To Zattera:

When we opt on separating the gaucho clothing in four ages, we base ourselves in historical and sociological events that might have interfered in the changes of the typical clothing of the inhabitant of Rio Grande do Sul. These separations, however, do not intend to be rigorous or definitive, because we know that the fashion doesn't stop on a given moment. (Zattera: 1995, 18).

The history of the gaucho traditional clothing, for the authors quoted above, begins in the 18th century²⁵. Regarding Argentina and Uruguay, the dates correspond to "the disintegration of the colonial society according to the Spanish patterns to its definition as 'criolla' or national" (Assunção, 1992: 22).

But, to better analyze the issue of the traditional clothing and the "creation of the *prenda dress*" and its pedagogical dimension, I present a relation of traditional clothes, in Zattera's perspective.

²⁴ "Gaudério" is a designation used for the first gauchos who were free workers and didn't have families. It is from the image of the gaudério gaucho that the gaucho myth, as lived by the Traditionalists, is produced.

²⁵ Fagundes mentions three moments: Gaucho Outfit (1750-1820); (1820-1865); (1875-1976). Assunção also establishes three moments: First Age (1780-1820), Second Age (1820-1870) and Third Age (1871-1920). Zattera mentions four moments: First age, the Gauderio Gaucho (1730-1820); Second Age, the Charqueador Gaucho (1820-1865); Third Age, the Farmer Gaucho (1865-1950) and the Fourth Age with the Traditionalist Gaucho from 1950 to our current days.

- The *Gaudério Gaucho* - Characteristics of the First Age Clothing (1730-1820)

Farm owner:

He wears socks and long-johns with embroidery and lace. Strong boots or *garrão* boots and silver spurs. Unbuttoned shorts below the knees, a velvet or wool coat with silver coin buttons. Silk or cotton vest over a linen shirt with laces. A small neckcloth. At the waist, he wears a belt over a band, as well as a pistol. On the hand, a whip, and on the head a mariner-style kerchief and a high felt hat with a silk *barbicacho*. On the shoulder, the poncho made of silk of light vicuña wool.

Peão:

Barefoot or *garrão* boots tied below the knee with leather stripes. Spurs, underwear inside the boots or bare feet. *Skirt-chiripá* and a leather belt over a fabric band. *Boleadeiras* and pistol on the waist. A knife on the back near the kidneys. White cotton shirt. Vest and *bichará poncho*. On the head, the long hair is tied by a leather strip of a mariner-like kerchief. Wears a straw or felt hat.

Lady farm owner:

Shoes and silk stockings, petticoats and bodice. Silk or cotton dress, with a cut below the bust. Fan and handkerchiefs and excessive jewelry. Protects from the cold with a coat or shawl. On the head, the long hair is tied with ribbons and flowers.

Rural Woman:

Wears a light wool skirt and a long cotton shirt down to the knees or below them, or still a light cotton dress. Bare feet. Uses long and braided hair, sometimes a kerchief on the head, tied below the chin (Zattera, 1995: 71).

- The *charqueador gaucho* - Characteristics of the Second Age Clothing (1820-1865)

Farm owner or *charqueador*:

Russilhonas or "*granadeira*" boots, worn up and with pants inside them, being this with a triangular cut in the fly. A fabric band on the waist with coin or *rastra* ornaments. White cotton or silk shirt with lace. Silk neck cloth. Cotton or silk vest and velvet or wool coat with silver buttons. On the head a high hat. At the back bear the kidneys, a knife, and a whip on his hand. The boots with silver spurs.

Peão:

Strong or *garrão* boots, long-johns, *chiripá* or diaper-like *chiripá*, a fabric band on the waist and a belt with pockets. White shirt, cotton or silk vest. Coat and kerchief around the neck or on the head. Poncho with a red inside and knife. Hat, *tirador* and lasso. Iron or silver spurs.

Woman Farm Owner:

Long silk or velvet dress, with a waist cut. Sort of a large cleavage, showing the neck. Sleeves: fluffy down to the elbow and tight down to the fist. Brooch on the neck and earrings. Hair up with combs or flowers. Hands a fan. Outside, she wears a hat with ribbons and ostrich feathers. A mantilla over the head when she goes to church, or over the shoulders when outside.

Rural Woman:

Sleeved blouse with lace finishings, long and full skirt, complemented with a short waist-cut jacket made in light fabric. Combs or flowers on the hair. In the end of the

period the parasol starts to be used. The skirt has a flounce in its barr. She wears socks and women boots or short boots (Zattera, 1995:105).

- The farmer gaucho Characteristics of the Third Age Clothing (1865-1950)

The city gaucho

Wears a white shirt with a collar and a full suit with long pants, vest and jacket. Neck cloth or necktie. Felt hat, shoes and, sometimes, gaiters. Wears a clock in the vest pocket.

The farmer gaucho:

Wears *bombachas* and strong boots. Vest and jacket. White shirt and kerchief and a belt over the waist band. Felt hat and poncho. Silver spurs and a whip.

The city woman

In the end of the last century she wears a silk dress with a V cut in the waist, jabot and a lace fichu. The sleeves are straight or fluffy down to the elbow and after that, tight. Holds a fan, and, sometimes, a parasol. Bears brooch and earrings. Hair is fixed with combs. On the feet, boots or shoes.

The Rural Woman:

Wears a skirt and blouse or a dress. The skirt is many times patterned and in light fabric. Its cut determines a flounce in the barr and it's not to full as in the previous age. The blouse has fluffy sleeves down to the elbow and straight down to the fist. The front part of the blouse is ornamented by small flounces or laces and as finishings, takes a fichu. The silhouette is marked by a very tight belt. Her accessories are the parasol or the fan, the earrings and the gold necklace or the brooch. On the feet, wears boots or shoes. Besides the skirt and the blouse the new gaucho woman doesn't stop wearing the skirt and jacket the characterized the previous era.

Peão:

Wears *bombachas* with honeycombs on the side, or pleats. *Alpagartas* or strong boots and hat or barret. Wears white, stripped or checked shirt, jeans or wool jacket, *guaiaca*, fabric band and poncho. The neck cloth and the vest sometimes appear. Wears a knife and a grinder near the kidneys, in the belt. In rare occasions, can be seen wearing rubber sandals, rubber boots or leather sandals. The spurs are made of iron (Zattera, 1995: 126).

- The traditionalist gaucho Characteristics of the Fourth Age – 1950 up to nowadays

Peão:

Wears *bombachas* with honeycombs or pleats, *alpargatas* or strong boots and hat or barret, stripped or checked shirt, jeans or wool jacket, *guaiaca* and poncho. The neckcloth, the waist band and the vest sometimes appear. Wears the knife and the grinder. Not in rare occasions, the countrymen can be seen wearing flip flops, rubber boots or leather sandals. The spurs are made of iron.

The prenda

Wears a prenda dress with a full skirt and flounces, both in cotton, with small "broderie" stamps or a single color fabric. The tight body is closed on the neck, taking lace ornaments or ornaments made with the same fabric of the dress. $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeves, fluffy or not, down to the elbow, with flounce finishings. When it doesn't have flounces in the body, it has a crochet lace fichu, attached by the brooch.

White socks, little bombachas and black shoes. The wool shawl in crochet lace is the protection against the cold. The hair, loose or tied, takes a flower, and on the ears, long and loose earrings (Zattera, 1995:149).



Pictures taken from the book *Typical Gaucho Clothing* from Vera Zattera.

In the clothes described and presented above there is a discontinuity between the feminine clothing of the three first ages and the fourth age, when the *prenda dress* appears as a traditional outfit to be worn by women. According to Zattera (1995: 134) the *prenda dress* was created by the Traditionalists to make dancing easier and because the clothing from the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century was very sad. Fagundes (1992:28) goes a little beyond and admits the clothes invention: “And then, consulting ancient family pictures and also inspired in the 'china clothes’²⁶ from the Uruguayan Traditionalist and even – which is hard

²⁶ The word “china dresses” in the Uruguayan Traditionalism designates one of the outfits of the rural women. In Rio Grande do Sul, although the outfit has been used as a model in the elaboration of the *prenda dress*, the word china has a pejorative meaning and is opposed to the term *prenda*.

to recognize – in the *caipira* dress that they used to fight, created the currently famous "*prenda dress*".

In this sense, it is flagrant to recognize its dimension of invention/falsification - *fakelore* (Dundes, 1985:11), next to clothes that are inserted in a logic of tradition/lived – folklore, as in the case of the *bombacha* and its accessories, still in full use of its original functionality, in the rural work and that is also activated as the gaucho traditional clothing.

That means, regarding Traditionalism, it is needed to analyze the representations produced, contemplating them with the plurality of social aspects to try to understand how they are articulated in practice. This goes beyond Eric Hobsbawn's perspective of invention of traditions (1984:10), since I understand traditions as invented by groups, in the sense that their creation and their use are historically situated, even in terms of the lived social imaginary.

The issue that I have been trying to investigate is not the fakeness or veracity of the representations, but the appropriations effectuated by the groups, in the relation established with the past and its symbolic delimitations, as they re-create it in the past giving it new meanings. According to Pesavento (2002: 24), "it is still through the ways of the imaginary that we invent the past (...)". Or, according to Oliven:

An ideology is successful in the extent it manages to pass the impression of unifying the interests of different social groups. For that, it is necessary that a discourse, as it reaches subjects, sends a veracious message, because, for the ideology to work as such, to 'capture' subjects, to provoke their adhesion, it is necessary that the meanings produced by its discourse find an echo in the imaginary of the individuals it is directed to, that means, it is necessary to exist a certain adequation between the meanings of this discourse and the representations of the subjects (Oliven, 1992: 21).

The cult of gaucho traditions finds an echo in the imaginary of who takes part of it. In this sense, the *prenda dress* is received and signified as traditional and as a fundamental artifact in this process. And the pedagogical performance of the Traditionalism agents configures itself into a constitutive and instituting element of this imaginary.

An analysis of the sources: from the contradictions to the Traditionalist pedagogy of the *pilchas*

It is necessary to point out here the double dimension of the historical and folkloric research of the traditional clothing in Rio Grande do Sul. The researchers use documentation (written and pictographic) left by travelers and missionaries, added to the Traditionalist clothes of current days. Regarding the objectives, the history of these clothes is thought of in terms of its authentic usage (Traditionalist) in the present. Because of that, the relation/selection with the historical moments is not compromised with a pedagogical project clearly expressed, but with its pedagogical application.

It is necessary to understand that history takes part as an evolutive scenario in which the clothes parade, and not the other way around - even though the clothes, up to a certain

point, as elements of material culture, are able to show certain aspects of the Platin history, such as the economic activities and the social and ethnical diversity.

The history of the gaucho clothing is inscribed in the scientific matrix of history as science, which, according to Bourdieu (1989) unravels the origins, legitimizing certain choices in terms of dates and historical subjects. Well, it is in this sense that we can understand a series of contradictions that run through the historiographic constructions regarding the clothing, as the exclusion of certain moments and some characters, as the indians and the black slaves, for example.

Characters and events which are interesting for the Traditionalists to place their focus on or make invisible, in the production of an imaginary that matches their cultural project, as I present in the following examples. In Rio Grande do Sul, the variation of the classification of the authors corresponds to the process of the Portuguese colonization and the insertion of its agents. Zattera (1995: 42) signs the beginning of the First Age from 1726 to 1730 with the distribution of the first *sesmarias*²⁷ to the Azorean immigrants and the arrival of the *tropeiros*²⁸. There aren't, in the authors mentioned, references to the Spanish presence in Rio Grande and, in the Plata Basin (The Jesuitic Missions), in terms of its influence in the gaucho traditional clothing.

This imbricated question of territory exchange between Portugal and Spain that starts to unfold after 1750, the moment of the signature of the Madrid Treaty, is not mentioned. As a consequence, the process of incorporation of Rio Grande do Sul and, logically, from its originary inhabitants, to Brazil, is seen as an "outside" matter in the history of traditional clothing.

I consider this issue of fundamental importance, for the model the gaucho cult to traditions is clearly hispanic, having been constructed as referent to the Pampa region, with a rural scenery, as Oliven proposes (2006: 97) when he mentions the model on which the Traditionalists are based to live the gaucho. In the same sense, Garavaglia (2003: 147) interprets *hispanophilia* as a referent to the growing movement of European immigration in the 19th century and the threat that it starts to represent for the Argentinean nation, in phase of consolidation.

The *Hispanophilia* as a criterion of definition is very excluding. To Quesada, quoted by Garavaglia (p.147) three factors initially defined the gaucho: his andalusian origin, his Christian condition and his purity. The indians, in this perspective (when they are not excluded, as in the work of Assunção), are naturalized. They still are not recognized as true gauchos. The gauchos will appear later and will be identified to the Iberians, mostly to the Hispanics.

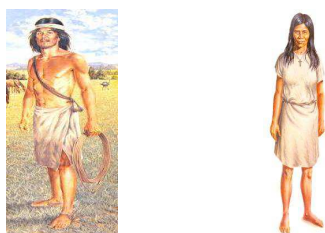
²⁷ Large portions of land given to the first colonizers of the Brazilian territory by the Portuguese crown.

²⁸ *Tropeiros* were the men responsible for the transportation of the dried meat and leather from Rio Grande do Sul to the central states of Brazil in the 18th and 19th century, creating the first land routes from the south to these other states. They transported the products on mules, which were also a product sold in the markets of São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

Thus, it is important to explore these contradictions to understand, on one side, the exclusion of the indians from the national and regional imaginary in the construction of the typical, and, on the other, for us to understand that dressing the indians makes part of the civilizatory process that took place in these regions.

The folklorists and historians quoted above mention the indian clothes as an introductory chapter in their studies, as some kind of pre-history of clothing. The Guarani indians didn't know writing or weaving. Although, to Zattera, (1999: 26) indian groups from Mexico, Peru and northern Brazil already used the technique of the "waist loom". Corcuera states that: "The primitive americans only dressed in leather and fur, and the textile art didn't exist in these latitudes (2001:21)."

But, despite their unawareness of weaving, Fagundes and Zattera name two clothes worn by the horse-riding indians. Fagundes mentions the *chiripá* and the *cayapi*, based on D. José Saldanha descriptions, from 1787.



Pictures taken from the book *Typical Gaucho Clothing* from Vera Zattera.

The so-called horse-riding indians – six different groups, even enemies among themselves, but with the same general characteristics – worn two pieces of absolutely original indument, the **chiripá** and the **cayapi**. (...) The *chiripá* was then a kind of skirt, constituted by a rectangle of fabric worn from around the waist down to the knees. The *cayapi* from the Minuanos was, at this time, a whole cattle hide, worn on the back as a cape, with the fur in the inside and the leather outside, painted with vertical and horizontal gray and other inks. At night it served as a bed, on the floor. The Charruas called it "quillapi" and "toropi". (Fagundes: 1992, 13).

The mentioning of the indian clothing, as well as the presentation of descriptions of indian women with the *chiripá* and a bare thorax, suggests its use in moments prior to the colonization, but probably relates to an "evolution" (my marks) of the very success of the civilizatory process represented in dressing the indians.

A process that can be understood, as Elias proposes (1994:13) as related to the set of behaviors considered typical, characteristic, adequate to the civilized man and as a part of which dressing appropriately is fundamental. The descriptions of these folklorists present references of the skirt *chiripá* and the *cayapi* together with the Guarani clothes in the Jesuitic

Missions, expressing an idea of passage, from the protective function²⁹ of the clothes, a second nature (presented almost as barbarian) to an idea of culture that heads toward civilization, as the clothes worn in the Missions demonstrate.

Historically, the Guarani indians are considered by the Jesuits and by the other colonizers as more friendly than the indians from the Pampa. Such fact explains here the civilizatory process that took place in the Missions and that can be observed in the description of the feminine clothing – the *tipoy*:

Another piece worn by the indians was the *tipoy*, a shirt formed by two pieces of fabric sewn on the sides and with an opening for the arms and head, sometimes with a waist cord. After the contacts with the Spanish missionary, the indian women of the Guarani group also weaved and worn the *tipoy*, made in cotton and that, with constant use, became of an indeterminate color. In special occasions they wore another *tipoy* over the first one that could be of a more vivid color with purple and black. They still wore, sometimes, a crucifix hanging on the neck, showing faith or having been catechized. (Zattera, 1989:26)

And from the male clothes are the European shorts accompanied by the *poncho* or *pala bichará*:

The missionaries dressed, at the time, according to the severe Jesuitic moral. Since early they started to wear European shorts and later the shirt, introduced in the Missions with great success by the Priest Anton Sepp S.J. But the men still wore a non-European piece of clothing, proximally indian – “el poncho”, that is, the *pala bichará* – an outfit weaved with natural wool, with the hand loom. The *bichará* can be weaved in a manual or pedal loom. (Fagundes, 1992:12).

In this period, the radical transformation of the *ethos* of the originary inhabitants of the Plata region is also accompanied of the destruction of various indian groups that showed their refraction to the civilizatory process operated by the Jesuits and other colonial agents. In the Missions, the success of such project is related to the complexity of the relations established between the indians and the priests, as demonstrate the reports from Priest Antônio Sepp. He presents this concern in diverse moments in his writings, through the description of the wool and cotton usage in the confection of indian clothes (Sepp [1710] 1980: 145 and 211), mentioned as simple, but adequate to their activities and to the Christian decorum.

In his reports about the Jesuitic Missions in *Journeys to the Jesuitic Missions and Apostolic Words* from 1710, it is possible to perceive also the importance of the priest's clothes. Clothing, such as in the Traditionalist case, acquires a pedagogical dimension, being recognized as a key-element for the civilizatory process. The domestication, hygienization and moralization of the habits of the indians of these regions takes place, for their insertion in the colonial world, whose conductor is the Jesuitic priest, appropriately dressed, as Sepp points out:

²⁹ It's noticeable that the *cayapi* is a mantle to protect from the cold and also a bed. And that the *skirt-chiripá* is worn by the indian women, with bare chests, still without the idea/notion of shame imposed by the Jesuit Christian morality.

Our indument is this: the shoes are made of leather, but not tied with strips or buckles, but with a leather button, and also doesn't have a snag or heels, but only a straight sole. The socks are not made of fustian or linen, they are not weaved also, but made of black sheep leather, like the shoes. The clothes or the religious habit is black, yes, and almost like we use to wear it in Germany, but it's closed in the front part, therefore it's not crossed, but has sewing down to the ground, just like, as they piously believe, Christ carried his tunic. Besides that our outfit also doesn't have a backing and also doesn't have pockets, neither in the front, nor in the back, nor in the sewed barr. And many times it is not of simple teased fabric, but of black linen only (Sepp, 1980:150).

The pedagogical dimension of the priest's clothing is in the example of poverty of its image, which the Jesuit himself related to the symbolic representations adequate to the evangelization, in a comparative to the clothes of the Evangelizer by excellence – Christ – the ideal of preaching searched for and taken as example in the Missions. It's important to sign, though, the contrasts that exist between the self-image of poverty of the priest and the care regarding the ornamentation of the sacred objects in the Missions, both interacting in the art of convincing, thus, of the Guarani conversion. The characterization and the consequences of this missionary experience³⁰, logically, deserved a series of historical and anthropological considerations, especially regarding its signification for the Mbyá-guarani.

In this sense, despite the disaggregation of the Seven Peoples of the Missions in Rio Grande do Sul, I perceive a memory of this colonial experience among diverse, plural and heterogeneous social groups in the state, such as: among social movements, between the Traditionalists and the inhabitants of the ancient Mission settlements (Brum: 2006). The disaggregation of the Seven Peoples of the Missions happened with the Guaranitic War that happened from 1754 to 1756 and the consequent exchange of the Sacramento Colony for the Seven Peoples of the Missions, guaranteeing a contiguous territory for the two crowns and the incorporation of Rio Grande do Sul to Brazil,

Next to other elements mentioned as *missioner*, the indian feminine and masculine indument used in the Missions – the *tipoy* tied to the waist with the *chumbre* and sometimes the crucifix, and the *shorts* or *long johns* keep being worn by the Guarani groups in their choir performances. Curiously, the historical experience that has been interpreted as responsible for the disintegration of their *ethos*, has been chosen, by these groups, in terms of clothing, to represent the traditionality of the Guarani music and to refer unmistakably to this colonial past.

³⁰ According to Pompa (2003) the Jesuits, in their evangelistic task, effectuated more than an imposition of their values, in an acculturation process, as proposed by Schaden (1974). For the author, the Jesuits led a complex process of mutual translations in which the European missionaries read the Indian practices and discourses having as interpretation referents, for example, the biblical texts. On their way, the original inhabitants related the missionaries, in their interpretations, to being resembling *pajés* and prophets.



"Inhanderú Jeverá Choir – from Cantagalo, Viamão".

www.gravatai.rs.gov.br/.../noticias.php?id=7093

Such references happen both in musical performances (for the white people), scheduled with the Mbyá-guarani choirs³¹, as in special situations for the groups themselves, as in the picture below, taken during a set of celebrations to honor Sepé Tiaraju, in the city of São Gabriel, in February 2006.



Picture by the author. São Gabriel, Feb. 6th, 2005.

The historical and mythological figure of the indian Sepé Tiaraju is the main observed reference regarding the missionary past in Rio Grande do Sul. The indian Sepé takes part of the representational universe of the Traditionalist gauchos³² as a warrior that refused to give the lands of the Seven Peoples of the Mission to the Portuguese. In this sense, the statement “This land has owner”, that is attributed to him, is signified since then as the bravery of the gauchos – descendents of the indian Sepé. He was the commander of the missionary troops during the Guaranic War, being killed in 1756 in lands of the current town of São Gabriel, in a massacre of around 1500 indians in the Caiboaté Battle.

³¹ The pictures from the ethnologist Daiane dos Santos on July 7th, 2007, in Santa Maria, at the FEICOOP (International Fair of Cooperativism) are inserted in this context.

³² The term is here used as gentilic. I wish to refer to the people born in Rio Grande do Sul in a general manner.

In 2006, 250 years after his death, a big party took place in São Gabriel³³, which, during three days, put together around 3000 people celebrating Sepé Tiaraju and the Guarani warriors. It is in this context that the picture of the children is inserted. It suggests some reflections about the relations established with the past in the present and the selection of elements to externalize it. Beyond the issue of the opposition between the non-critical celebration (Todorov: 2001)³⁴ of a hero or his symbolic use as a flag of the change of the *status quo* that unmistakably refer to Sepé Tiaraju, it is important to focus the issue of the clothing in relation to the objectives of whom wears it, the meaning aimed by the agent or by the group.

In this perspective, the missionary clothes (the *tipoy*) worn by the Mbyá-guarani girls and the *shorts* that the boys are wearing, have as objective to characterize a past moment and provide a transport, building a scenery for the musical presentation. In sum, it is valid to say the clothing re-created in this context refers to a tradition. Re-created, for the moment of its usage is diverse from when it was originally used in the Missions. Here it presents a ritualistic and performative dimension and a meaning of traditionality - aiming at pointing how the Guarani dressed in the past. However, it is necessary to remember that the clothes worn to refer to their history by the groups, as I pointed earlier, signal a unique moment in the Guarani civilizatory process. Neither Sepé Tiaraju, the hero celebrated, is an original Guarani indian, but a missionary Guarani, already converted to Christianity.

Although the use of the clothing produces a certain strangeness, for not referring to the *ethos* of the original Guarani as they are activated by a Guarani group, it is necessary to recognize that there even more because in the Missions the music is one of the elements signaled by the Jesuits in the conversion of the Guaranis and its maintenance (Sepp [1710]1980: 137).

Comparing this ethnographic situation of the usage of a traditional clothing with the situations observed in the Traditionalist universe (in parades, parties and especially artistic contests and rural working contexts), I realized that the traditional clothes are also involved in very complex symbolic games, run through by the concept of tradition (activated in the worshiping of these gaucho traditions) and other elements of the affirmation of Gauchism as power, honor, prudence, individual and collective affirmation.

I realize their complexity through Ortner's perspective as serious games that imply the playing of actors, seen as agents: "The word agency refers to the autonomous, individualistic

³³ In the text *The myth of Sepé Tiaraju: ethnography of a celebration* (2006a) I perform a detailed analysis of this party.

³⁴ Todorov (2002), as he analyzes the issue of memory production and its consequences, presents three modalities of relations with the past: the characters of the historian, the celebrator and the witness. From a broader perspective, Habermas (1990) and Ricoeur (1985) approach the issue of the use of the past in the present, in terms of the relations that the events suscite on groups and individuals, and of their dimension in the constitution of the collective and individual identities. They refer to the issue of the celebration or execration of a historical event in the present.

and western actor” (2007: 46). The participation of the individuals in the Traditionalism can be thought as a serious game, for the action of the Traditionalist subjects implies the acceptance and submission to certain norms of behavior and their regulations. The freedom of the social actors and their agency are linked to the restrictions imposed by the groups – that “formulate” and submit to the cultural project of the Traditionalism.

Prenda Minha³⁵

The ethnographic situations that I present next refer to expressions of the Traditionalism, observed in Rio Grande do Sul, in Argentina and in the state of Paraná. In the last case, in a situation of deterritorialization of the Traditionalism and its expansion beyond the national and regional Plata borders, already mentioned. That’s the Gauchismo lived by descendants of gauchos or local sympathizers of Traditionalism, according to Kaiser (1999: 60). My initial focus lies on the traditionalist *prenda* in her performance, in terms of how the *prenda dress* is worn and its significations. What does it mean for these girls to be a *prenda* of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement?

Although the term *prenda* is used to designate the traditionalist women, it is important to clear that there are also the *sash prendas*. Every year, the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement in Rio Grande do Sul (and also in other states of Brazil where gaucho traditions are celebrated) chooses its representatives. The infant, youth and adult *prendas* (three in each category) are rigidly selected through an eliminatory contest with three phases. The phase winners in their CTG compete in the Traditionalist Region and, these, on their turn, compete on state-level³⁶.

One of the objectives of the *prendas* contest, according to the Traditionalist legislation³⁷ that rules it, is, among others: “choosing annually among the candidates the one that best represent the virtues, the dignity, the grace, the culture, the artistic gifts, the beauty, the extroversion and the expression of the gaucho women” (MTG, 2001: 184) is also to foment the

³⁵ “My *prenda*” - The term refers to a folkloric gaucho song already know by the pioneers of Traditionalism, and on which they probably based on to start designating women as *prendas*.

³⁶ The State *prendas* contest, which usually happens in May, mobilizes millions of people, bringing together the *prendas*’ families, the CTG components, the leaders from the Traditionalist regions and from the MTG. There is still a national annual *prendas* contest promoted by the CBTG – Brazilian Confederation of the Gaucho Traditions, an entity that reunites the MTGs from various Brazilian states. However, the state *prendas* from Rio Grande do Sul, as well as the other winners from artistic and rural contests, can not participate, due to a prohibition established by the MTG from Rio Grande do Sul. The meaning of this rule seems to be that the Traditionalist champions from Rio Grande do Sul are *au concours* in terms of tradition. It’s important to assert that the Traditionalist has the contests as an important basis of individual affirmation. However, there is a current discourse that refers to the collective shared values in the veneration of the gaucho and a recurrence to the family – the Traditionalism as a single big family.

³⁷The rules for the state contests of *prenda* and *peão* are part of the 2001 Traditionalist Legislation.

participation of young people to form future leaders that, throughout the year (during the *prendado*)³⁸ represent the MTG as a cultural movement in its parties, conferences, etc.

The state *prendas* contest from MTG happens usually in May. The 90 candidates selected in the Traditionalist regions are submitted to general knowledge tests, like history and folklore of Rio Grande do Sul, artistic tests (such as singing, dancing, gaucho-themed poetry declamation), etc.

The nine state winners (as well as many other regional and CTG *prendas*, and also representatives of schools, clubs and Traditionalist Departments) receive, when they win these contests, a leather sash engraved with sayings. For example, “1st Juvenile *Prenda* of the 13th Traditionalist Region” and that must be always worn over the *prenda dress*, to identify them, for it institutes them as female representatives of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement.

Bourdieu (1998: 97), as he criticizes the expression ‘rite of passage’, suggests the expression *rite of institution* for its active meaning, of legitimation. The sash, to the *prenda* that bears it, acquires the meaning of an individual sign of difference, a sign of distinction and of institution, to the extent that, getting a sash implies having been successful in the institution rite, to which I relate the *prenda* contests. The instituted *prenda* is the bearer of a power. She is recognized, in and out the Traditionalist universe, as someone who knows the gaucho tradition and the correct forms of worshipping it. She has agency in a similar meaning to the one mentioned by Ortner, as she analyzes the action of female characters in fairy tales:

In sum, we can see these tales as cultural formations that build and distribute agency of particular ways as part of the cultural policy that creates appropriately defined people in terms of gender in a determined time and place. From the actor’s point of view the project of the story is the project of growing up, of making appropriate things to become adult men and women. In the cultural policy of gender difference and inequality that informs the tales, though, growing up means that the two parts of this relation – that, after all, is unequal – can not “have” agency. This is expressed in a language of (complementarity) activity and passivity. The prince can’t be a hero if the princess can save herself; even worse, the prince can’t be a hero if the princess can save him (Ortner, 2007: 61-62).

The *agency* is expressed in the *prendas* performance, as they are dressed with their instituting outfits. In this sense, I consider the traditionalist clothing as bearer of *agency*, providing an empowerment for whom wears it. This empowerment acquires an increase in proportions that is related to the recognition provided by the institution, as in the case of the *sash prendas*.

To Monique, who was infant and juvenile *prenda* of the MTG from Paraná and 2nd *prenda* of the CBTG, “to be a *prenda* is to not be ashamed of being Traditionalist, ready to defend your pago³⁹ as you would defend yourself, be ready to work and study, that’s it.” Her

³⁸ *Prendado* is the period of about a year in which the *prendas* wear the sashes, are instituted as official representatives of the CTGs, Traditionalist regions of from MTG.

³⁹ Pago means the same as “querência” – the place where one is born. To Nunes (1993: 340), it is also a derivative of *plaga*.

language and life story show the connection that she has with the Traditionalism and her insertion/understanding of its cultural project, of which she places herself as a very active agent. The fact of having won many sashes states her as a Traditionalist *prenda* of distinguished action and recognized empowerment that is identified from the dress, and, especially, from the sash.

However, it is needed to understand the scope of this empowerment through her statement. She expresses the honoring of Traditionalism in a Paranaense and Brazilian context, and when she refers to the dedication and struggle to the Gauchism cause, it is necessary to perceive the limits of her performance as connected to the Traditionalist culture and to the feminine models designed to be followed to be a *prenda*.

I think that the active part of the *prenda's* individual action is much more connected to the challenges of the contest to become instituted with achieving the sash, than with the *prendado* itself. For, in this one-year period, the *prenda* has to take part in the Traditionalist activities, always *pilchada* as expression of the beauty and model to be imitated by all Traditionalists, because it corresponds to the feminine standards demanded in the contests.

The fact of wearing the *prenda dress* and other garments in all Traditionalist activities is meaningful to be analyzed, because it doesn't matter the climate or the occasion that the *prenda* has to attend. Being *pilchada* demonstrates the pride on the clothes and the overcoming of the climatic and locomotion limits. Rio Grande do Sul has climatic variations from 0° to 40° Celsius and the *prenda dress* seems incompatible with it, especially during our "European" winter and "African" summer. In this sense, I point to an explicit signification from the *prendas* in relation to surpassing the sensations of love to Traditionalism and the desire to submit themselves to its criteria, accepting the gender relations proposed.

When I compare the male Traditionalist clothing with the female clothing regarding the perception of their meanings in the gender relations, as Ortner proposes when analyzing the fairy tales, I realize that the male clothes - *bombacha*, boots, hat, kerchief, that remind the field activities originally performed by the horse-riding gaucho in the cattle work – suggests an active posture of the gaucho.

The knife and/or the gun that compose the masculine clothing, are also inscribed in this sense and suggest a disposition for the war, "a gaucho ready for whatever presents", according to what was suggested for Cezimbra Jacques in his gaucho definition on the 19th century (1883: 59). The *guaiaca*, which is a broad belt with pockets and many times decorated with coins, shows the issue of economic power, the figure of the providing man, a connotation of male domination.

Although the Traditionalist gauchos do not keep their money or documents in the *guaiacas*, but in wallets kept in the back pockets of the *bombachas*, the appropriation of this artifact preserves its symbolic dimension of the man's economic power in relation to the woman.

Another example of the symbolic dimension of clothes is the white and red kerchiefs that had a political connotation that is currently (re)signified in the CTGs colors, usually.

To Fagundes *in* Zattera (1995: 180) the kerchiefs are a piece of the Brazilian and Castilian gaucho outfit. In Uruguay the *blancos* and the *colorados* were identified by the kerchief color. In Rio Grande do Sul, during the Farroupilha Revolution (1835-1845)⁴⁰, Fagundes identified three types of kerchiefs: “the Farroupilha soldiers wore red silk kerchiefs open over their shoulders.” But the most emphasized opposition in terms of kerchiefs was between *chimangos* and *maragatos*,⁴¹ with the kerchiefs worn in the Federalist Revolutions of 1893 and 1923.



Maragateria Typical Clothes. Pictures from the author, at Way the Saint Jacques Spain 2004

⁴⁰ According to Pesavento (1990) the Farroupilha Revolution was a rebellion with the objective of separating Rio Grande do Sul from the Brazilian Empire. It had as a major cause the low price paid to the *charque* (dried beef) from Rio Grande do Sul in relation to the price paid for the Uruguayan product. The dried beef produced in the farms in Rio Grande do Sul was sold in the most important cities of the country, being used to feed the slaves. During 10 years the gauchos from Rio Grande do Sul remained separated from Brazil and fought against the imperial troops. On September 20th, 1845, peace was sealed in a place called Ponche Verde, ending the Farroupilha Revolution. Rio Grande do Sul became a part of Brazil again. To Nunes, the term “farroupilha” (1993:186) is a diminutive related to rags, old and worn clothes such as the ones used by the revolutionary troops that didn't wear military uniforms, as the imperials did. In the Gauchism universe, the Farroupilha Revolution is known as a founding myth, in Rio Grande do Sul. To honor the revolution and its combatants, the Farroupilha Week is celebrated every September. The final moment of the celebrations happens on September 20th, with the Farroupilha Parade and the blowing out of the Creole Flame in all cities of Rio Grande do Sul. It is the major Traditionalist celebration in the state.

⁴¹ These are the names of the two main factions in the 1893 and 1923 Revolutions that happened in Rio Grande do Sul. The term *Maragato* had a pejorative meaning, attributed by the legalists to the rebels led by Gaspar Silveira Martins, who left their exile in Uruguay and entered Rio Grande do Sul with an army. Since the exile had taken place in a region of Uruguay colonized by people originally from Maragateria (in Spain), the republicans nicknamed them “maragatos”, trying to characterize a “foreign” identity to the federalists. As the time went by, the word lost its pejorative meaning and got a positive one, being accepted and defended by the federalists and their political successors. The red kerchief identified the *maragato*. *Chimango* or *ximango* is a rapine bird, falcon-like, resembling the *carcará*. It was a depreciative name given to the moderate liberals by the conservatives, in the beginning of the Brazilian Monarchy. In Rio Grande do Sul, in the 1920's, it was the name given by the federalist to the government supporters from the Republican Party. The white kerchief identified the *chimangos*.

The plurality of references to the male indument in its active dimension contrasts with the traditional female indument in its passivity. I relate the *agency* of the *prenda dress* and its complements with the celebration of this feminine model. The *prenda dress* is worn over a petticoat and this is placed over the underpinning, which is made in light fabric with the objective of keeping the dress supported. Under the skirt, the *prenda* wears a little bombacha, white socks and boots or low heel shoes, or of no heel at all. Jewelry must be discreet and the dress must have no cleavage and sleeves down to the elbows or fists.⁴² The clothes from the Traditionalist *prenda* make her mobility hard and reminds (because of the skirt and the fluffy sleeves) the clothing of the European princesses and their dignity on knowing how to behave in the tradition they worship, and whose simplicity is also expressed in the discreet make up and jewelry.

The little bombachas or panties were used as female underwear. The folklorist Elma Santana in *Gaicho Women Folklore* mentions the panties with openings, worn by the gaicho women in labor. The use of the little bombachas in the Traditionalist indument aims at avoiding that, during the dances, in which the *prendas* do some spinning and *sarandeios*⁴³, they intimate clothes appear, but only the little white bombacha over the white pantyhose.

To Maciel (2001: 259), the Traditionalist clothing is characterized by the symbolic excess, in the sense that the clothes have lost their functionality and that, to prove themselves as more gaicho, the Traditionalists use a series of ornaments. However, I think that this symbolic excess has to be understood as part of a Traditionalist pedagogy of the *pilchas* that objectivates the definition of roles in the gaicho worshipping territories. Thus, despite the resignification of the little bombacha's role, it is unthinkable for a *prenda* not to wear them, for this would correspond to a lack of prudence, a disrespect to the Traditionalist rules. On the other way, to the *peões* a larger freedom of dressing is permitted. Thanks to the active roles they have, as I have already demonstrated.

The issue of symbolic excess, in my understanding, is related to a desire for individual distinction broadly shared inside Traditionalism, legitimized by the Traditionalist contests and translated into their way of *pilchar* themselves. Such is the case of the *sash prendas* who place bottoms and allow their sashes to be signed (practices that have been very much reprimanded by the Traditionalist leaders).

Picture from the author, at the ENART 2001.

⁴² The regulation of the current Traditionalist clothing is formulated in the rules about the gaicho *pilcha* from the Traditionalist Legislation of 2001.

⁴³ Sarandeio is the movement executed in a dance (Nunes, 1993:447). In the Traditionalist dances, it is the movement that the *prendas* perform with their dresses a little elevated. The objective is to present themselves to their male pairs, during the dance. According to Rojane's assertion, who danced as a child in a dance group in her school: "smiles and looks to the pair, holding the dress."



These bottoms, according to the *prendas*, are “beautiful ornaments”, “gifts from friends”, religious or “gaucho symbols”, as a small rosary I observed attached to one of the girl’s sash. On the other hand, it is necessary to recognize that the Traditionalism is dynamic and that there are certain fashion tendencies in the usage of the *pilchas*. Even though the Traditionalists try to emphasize through the clothing, the authenticity of the cult of traditions, this cult happens in specific ritualized situations. The past lived in the present is run through by the signs of identification that these young people use in their daily routine.

The Lord of Bom Fim ribbons⁴⁴ visible on their arms and the tattoos that must obligatorily be hidden in the contests, as I observed regarding a tattoo on the neck of one of the *prendas*, which was covered on make up for a Traditionalist dance contest at the 2001 ENART.



Picture from the author, at the ENART 2001.

The issue of the signs of distinction also refers to the multiple identities of the Traditionalists in a constant process of re-configuration, in a contrast and dialectics with the Traditionalist model prescribed in the feminine and masculine roles. In this case the *agency* is explicit, for, even with the imposition of models or interdictions the *prendas* do not signify themselves as victims of men or as being in the margins of Traditionalism. It’s the other around. To be a *prenda* is an individual project shared by many girls, even though the acceptance of the male hegemony is not totally accepted by them in many circumstances of their lives.

⁴⁴ *The Lord of the Bom Fim ribbons* are cloth bracelets originated from the state of Bahia, in the northwest of Brazil. The ribbons are worn as amulets, tied around the fist. They must be kept there until the bracelet tears by itself. According to the belief, when the ribbon tears, the wishes made when tying it become true. Even though it is a regional amulet, the Lord of Bom Fim ribbons are popular in all of Brazil.

The social representation shared about the Traditionalist *prendas* determines their actions in the movement. There is a concern about placing feminine limits which is perceptible in the analysis of clothing. The fear of excess in the feminine outfit coincides with the representation that exists regarding libertine women, in Rio Grande do Sul, translatable in the term *china*. The Traditionalist feminine outfit has a connotation of sexual ruling of the *prenda* women (imprisoned, kept, taken care of by the gauchos), on opposition to the *chinas*.

The *prendas* are the incorporation of virtues and the *chinas*, their opposite. The term *china* was historically used to denominate the inhabitants originary of the platin region, because of their low stature, straight hair and squinted eyes, resembling *chinos* – chinese in Spanish. To Nunes (1993:141) the word china "seems to have come from the *quéchua* language and means maid".

The depreciatory meaning that the word acquires is related to the colonization of the region. Such process happened in the times in which the wandering gauchos captured the wild cattle and also took advantage of the *chinas*, to abandon them to their own luck afterwards. These women, many times, to survive, followed the armies and served the soldiers. While this happened the women and daughters of the army commanders stayed in the farms, supposedly protected, administrating them in the absence of men.

It is important to point out here the negative semantic trajectory of the term *china* compared to the already signaled ascension of the term gaucho. This, from originary inhabitant in the process of colonization and civilization, became the term chosen to denominate prostitutes in Rio Grande do Sul, but on the other hand, the term gaucho, from wild *gauderio*, became a synonym of work and honor. Therefore, I realize there is a very clear reference to the feminine borders that can not to be crossed. The fear of this action is perceptible in the Traditionalist activities, in its pedagogy, celebrated in its dances, songs and poems.

In the artistic contests as I analyse in Brum (2013: 328) the songs interpreted by the women celebrate the feminine model prescribed by Traditionalism. An example of that is the song *Mulher Tarefa* (Hardworking Woman), interpreted at the ENART 2001⁴⁵ and that the *prenda* announced as being from the *Carijo*, a nativist musical festival from the city of Palmeira das Missões.

⁴⁵ Encounter of Gaucho Art and Tradition - It's an annual artistic contest. Its third phase, state-level, happens in November in the city of Santa Cruz do Sul, in the central region of the state. The objectives and norms for collective and individual participation are written in its regulation that makes part of the Traditionalist Legislation. One of the contests is female singer. The main artistic activity at the ENART is the contest of traditional dances in which 30 entities affiliated to the MTG compete for a trophy. It's necessary to point out the dimension of competitiveness of Traditionalism as one of its main supports and an attractive to its participants. As I have said previously, there are also in Rio Grande do Sul nativist festivals with a more professional character, where the prizes are in cash. In the Traditionalist festivals such as the ENART, the prizes are trophies.

The song refers to the work of the gaúcho women throughout history, their partnership and submission to men. As we talked she told me she had chosen this song because it was from Palmeira das Missões, her hometown, and because it spoke about women, about work, about the boys and the *maté*⁴⁶ from the Missions: - "The *maté* has everything to do with the Missions, the indians, I believe and know for sure that the *maté* came from an indigenous culture that passed it to us by heritage, and we inherited it from them".

The choice of the song happened because of the *prenda*'s need to be identified as a person from Palmeira das Missões. The composition compliments the "hardworking" woman who is submissive to man – an image of women that matches the feminine representation from the CTG. The appropriation that is made and the representation that is produced (song and performance in the presentation) show the identities involved in this process. Feminine identities that maintain the social relations in Rio Grande do Sul. Thus, it's the Traditionalist space, the inside of the CTG, which constitutes itself as the guide for production of meaning.

It's the feeling of belongingness to the territory in which the *prenda* acts (the CTG) and that she represents, in the female singer contest, in the final phase of the ENART, which functions as determinant in her choice. Although in other relationships she might oppose herself to the ideology that the song brings, the identities are relational, contrastive, but coherent with the lived situation. In the domains of Gauchism, belongingness is expressed through the celebration of the costumes and traditions, classifying and marking the actions of whom performs it in relation to the universe of worshipping in some spaces that can be thought of as territories. For it is from these territories, and in relation to them, that the Traditionalist identities are built.

It is necessary to point out that the ritualized situations of cult to the gaúcho traditions presented above, demonstrate individual and collective identities of the Traditionalist subjects that affirm the local and regional realities that happen in a globalized world, dominated by the individualistic ideology. The Traditionalism in an urban cultural movement, with participants that are characterized by a plurality of identities that are relational and that are mutually influenced.

The affirmation of these collective and individual identities happens from the production of a "traditional culture as a culture of evocation", as Maciel mentions (2001: 260), that involves the constant re-creation of the past and its updating, through the Traditionalist activities. In this perspective, some Traditionalists, as they dance, perceive themselves as producers of an art form:

⁴⁶ The Chimarrão Mate or just Mate is a drink of indigenous origin common to the south region of South America. Since the beginning of the colonization of the region the Jesuits and other colonizers commercialized the mate herb and the cattle leather. The mate keeps having an important commercial value. The herb is deposited in a recipient made with a *porongo* (cuia) in a hot water infusion. The drink is served through a straw with a perforated ending, the "pump". The pumps were initially made in bamboo and their ending, in straw. Nowadays they are made of metal, and in some cases made of gold and silver with precious stones, as a true jewel.

-“For us, yes, there are ways to worship. Some people disagree; think it’s not like that. Since I take Drawing and Art at the university I have two ways of seeing art: I see it as dancer, dancing for me is the greatest thing, I think this is artistic, the people who are on the stage are dancers, so, through this side of work, of rehearsal, I see it as art. Now, from the art context, from what the artists say, dancing is not an art, not in their concept: dancing is dancing, is having fun, art is something very different, it’s the study of painters, of philosophers. And another consideration is that behind our dancing there is a huge historical part. There is a historical side, but long ago this was common, it was ordinary, it wasn’t art. For us now that are doing a representation of the past, now we think it’s art, but before it wasn’t art, it was people’s everyday routine, going to a ball to dance.” (ENART 2001, K-7 IA).

Fabiana points out two types of art: one recognized by her as the erudite, that excludes dance in general as art, and the other, valuing its peculiarities, where she places the Traditionalist dancing, in the sense that this makes a reading of the past. It is the historical character and the production of representation that characterize the Traditionalist art, for its work of creation and technical improvement. Her statement also shows that the identities activated by the *prenda* in terms of perception of a Traditionalist art are relational and contrastive, as Feldman-Bianco mentions (1997: 71). The author focuses on the representations of women in the gender relations among Portuguese immigrants, highlighting the identity negotiation of the intermediates as they re-create imaginaries relating to the past.

The *prenda*, in this sense, is an intermediate between two universes: the Traditionalist feminine where the model is the Traditionalist *prenda* and the university student, as she thinks about the traditionalist art (for its authenticity) in relation and in contrast to the erudite art standards. On her turn, as “intermediate”, the *prenda* is in communication with both universes and represents them as complementary as she signifies the dance contests as Traditionalist art. The production of an art in the contests makes me relate the contests done in the context of the Traditionalist Movement in Rio Grande do Sul, to the competitive and individualized world it is inscribed in. Dumont mentions the characteristics of modern ideology as their apparent contradictions as he characterizes the individualism and exemplifies its relation to nationalism:

The modern ideology is individualistic – being individualism sociologically defined from the point of view of the global values. (...)

Let’s see an example to appreciate the difference between the ordinary discourse and the sociological discourse we are dealing with. Someone opposes the individualism to the nationalism, with no explanation; no doubt, it is necessary to understand that the nationalism corresponds to a feeling of the groups that opposes to the “individualistic” feeling. (...) The nation is precisely the type of global society that corresponds to the kingdom of the individualism as value. It’s not only her that accompanies it historically, but the interdependence between both imposes itself, in a way that you can say that the nation is the global society composed by people that consider themselves individuals (Dumont: 1985, 21).

Dumont's collocations put in evidence the apparent contradictions as complementary, because, for the Traditionalists⁴⁷, as ordinary discourse, the individualism is not stated (said, spoken) as a value, but on the contrary, it is covered. However, it is lived as a sociologic discourse because one of the propelling factors of its expansion as movement is exactly the individualistic value that permeates it, in a scenery in which everyone is equal regarding the regulations - the modern ideology of equality, undeniably individualistic.

Manoelito Carlos Savaris, the ex-president of the MTG, emphasizes the importance of dancing for the gaucho Traditionalist movement and its relationship with the past:

- The CTG has a focus, which is: preservation, rescue and divulgation of history, of the historical, folkloric, and evidently traditional aspects. There is a whole stimulation for the CTG to make that turn to the past and represent diverse aspects nowadays. How can we do this? We can do this in many ways, but the way we found easiest and the most effective, which has the biggest meaning for people is through dance, through music and dance. Of course we also have some theater initiatives. There are some very interesting initiatives in the theater area in the CTGs, right. But that through dance, through representing, which actually is almost a theater, that's what they do. Getting specific aspects from the folklore, from history, and represent them today, making a trip in time. So this relation of history as an inanimate thing, something distant, unreachable for many people, it embodies in these activities that are done, because we understand that it's easier to teach history using a dance group to make the reconstruction. For example, at the ENART last year a CTG from Porto Alegre, the Raízes do Sul (Roots of the South) represented the Guaranitic war, right? Their representation, that was a better history class than many lectures that we could do to those young people. And not only the people that made the performance and the families involved in that because you have there twelve pairs, twelve youngsters dancing, plus six or seven in the music part, so you have 30 people, but these 30 people carry along three or four people each. We already got 100, 130 people involved in the process and understanding how that fact happened in history and that is presented at ENART that everybody sees and that brings up the curiosity, brings up reading interest, brings up the interest to know how that really happened, brings up the discussion of how it wasn't exactly like that and this is also important. (Interview, September 2002, K7 tape 1 side b).

Savaris relates the use of the past done by the dance groups as a pedagogical resource used by the gaucho Traditionalism. The quality of this creation is inserted and has as objective the dance contest, that, according to the ENART regulation, consists in the presentation by the artistic groups (called *invernadas*) of three traditional dances picked randomly from the *Dance Manual* by Paixão Cortes and Barbosa Lessa, for a judging committee. The presentation of these dances is preceded by an entrance dance and finished by an exit dance, which are free for the group to choose and show its creativity. These choreographies must serve as scenery for the presentation of the three required dances.

⁴⁷ Even though there is an anti-capitalist discourse from the part of Traditionalism, the movement incentives the individualism through the competitions as they award certificates and trophies. The fact that the prizes are not in cash doesn't change the tuning of Traditionalism with the capitalist world, since, winning a contest is corresponding to the providing of the authenticity of the representation related to the Gauchism. As in the case of the "ISO TCHE", a label of quality, authenticity and traditionality awarded to the MTG to the products it seconds.



Dance Group from the Traditionalist Department "Querência das Dores" at the ENART 2001. Picture from the author.

In the production of this pedagogical resource that objectives the Traditionalist education, as I analyse in (Brum 2010: 89) the clothing had an important role. Its *agency* relates to the capacity of linking the gaucho Traditionalist dances to the historical/folklorical situation that the groups wish to present. In this sense, the dance groups have some freedom to choose their clothes, which are not restricted to the pair *bombachas* and *prenda dresses*. Its use must obey the historical coherence of the traditionality of the *pilchas* already pointed by the folklorists and historians of clothing, regarding the correct way to worship traditions.

In the picture above, the outfits chosen by the dance group Traditionalist Department Querência das Dores, corresponds to the Second Age. The *prendas* wear a skirt and a jacket and the *peões* wear the 'diaper'-chiripá⁴⁸. The pedagogy and the education, in relation to the traditionalist project, are thought in its amplified dimension as inseparable from the living of this culture and of the produced representations about being a gaucho. The learning of Traditionalism happens in the Traditionalist territories through the pedagogical resources such as dance, which produces views on history and re-create costumes to be preserved. This education is, in sum, a sentimental education. According to Geertz (1989: 331), participating and watching the cock fights for the Balinese, propitiates them a process of sentimental education, in which happens the learning of the appearance of the *ethos* of their culture and their private sensibility.

The sentimental education is what makes possible the participation of the agent subject *prenda/peão* in the cultural Traditionalist project they make part of. It is through the participation in the Traditionalist activities, either as a dancer or as a spectator, for example, that happens the learning of how the Traditionalist must behave, dress (*pilchar*) and express him or herself. The group culture is lived as a serious game in which internalizing the *ethos* is relative to its self-perception as an agent of Traditionalism. This happens preferably in the contests, in which are aimed the institution and the recognition in this universe.

⁴⁸ The outfits worn by the dance group above correspond to the outfits described earlier by Zattera - skirt and coat sets for the girls and *chiripá* for the boys.

This individual and collectively shared sensibility for the living of the gaucho traditions happens from being *pilchado* as a passport to live the gaucho. To conclude, it's necessary to reflect about what is tradition from the Traditionalists and how the traditional clothing is lived in a plural way among them.

Tradition as agency: final considerations

Throughout the text, I have referred many times to tradition and the importance given to this word in the Traditionalist universe. Tradition, from which the term Traditionalism comes from, unmistakably refers to the originary times of the gaucho, his uses and costumes. The Traditionalist's perception of tradition is essentialist. Traditionalist culture, as the cultural project it configures, refers to the recovery of the past. Thus, the traditional is the authentic, is what really was the true gaucho and for this, to live him in the present, interpretations are produced.

Throughout the text, I presented how the traditions, in which there were gaps, were filled by the Traditionalists. This is the case of the *prenda* dress that, despite being invented, became an outfit accepted and recognized as traditional not only by the group that wears it, but also outside the group, as the gaucho typical clothing. This is also the case of the use of the *tipoy* and the shorts by the Mbyá-guaraní⁴⁹

Thiesse (1997: 114), as he discusses the issue of celebration of the regional, in a context of affirmation of nationalism, states that the voluntarism in the celebration of traditions tries to impose the consensual image of the national community through the pacific cult of diversity, that has for objective offering the new generations a culture declared healthy, but obsolete, in opposition to a cosmopolite modernity.

The history of the Traditionalist cultural project is inscribed in this perspective: to cast the diverse traditions to be worshiped, in the sense of exploring the past, in a present that will conduct to the future. Thus, the project of cult of these traditions is crossed by diachronic relations that crystallize the past to use it as a dynamizer of a present cultural project

Lenclud (1994: 33), reflects about the term tradition from the problematic relation between its categories and history. A tradition is an answer found in the past to a questions formulated in the present – How to live this gaucho of the past? - An issue daily lived by the Traditionalists.

To Ricoeur (1985: 400) the tradition is the result of an exchange between the interpreted past and the interpreting present. Thus, the past is recognized by a necessarily discriminatory reading and the tradition is instituted by how it is seen. The past presents the materials or the noble forms to be used as appropriate in the present (Lenclud: 1994, 33).

⁴⁹ To understand the other's perception of tradition is significant to understand his/her representational universe. The tradition, for these groups, constitutes itself into an emic category.

The institution of tradition is doubly meaningful in the case of Traditionalism, since, who performs the selection of the "materials" are the holders of the monopoly of the power to name (Bourdieu,1989) the gaúcho. To say what his figure was is something that has continuously been disputed among diverse followers of Gauchism. The MTG occupies an important place, in this sense. Therefore, these same instituting subjects that dispute regarding the definition criteria, are the ones that recognized the authenticity of the true gaúcho lived in the Traditionalist territories.

It's in this symbolic and material context that the individual and collective identification is processed, with the Traditionalist universe behind its members. Searching for the cult of the true gaúcho, the Traditionalists establish a relation of belongingness with the traditions, through the acceptance and dissemination of their criteria of definition and institution, sharing a community of feelings⁵⁰ amongst themselves. In the Traditionalist universe, the relationship of belongingness is individually conceived and lived in relation to their life stories and their projects of recognition inside and outside the Traditionalist universe.

It's about going beyond the denouncing of the social construction of reality in their relations, and the strategies used in the construction of identities by the groups. For the appropriation and the use of the referentials in the social field happens from the claims of being a Traditionalist gaúcho, as an individual and collective disposition recognized in their participation, as I tried to demonstrate throughout the text.

The meanings of living the traditions through the contests, the Traditionalist art, the pride of being correctly "*pilchado*" and being individually different, the gender relations signified in the clothing, the *prenda* contests and their meaning, etc.

To think about identity and belongingness in this perspective implies on observing the place of the production of the feeling, because to belong means to feel connected to and to wish to show oneself in this perspective as identified with. However, up to what point "being identified with" is enough to understand the Traditionalist cultural project in its pedagogy, in relation to its agents and other groups?

Ricoeur (2007: 271) makes a criticism to the notion of belongingness. To him, it is not in the range of belongingness, but in the scope of mutual recognition that the asymmetry of the relation I/other is resolved. To him, even the unending disputes on the struggle for recognition are processual, have a path:

So appears, with effect, considered in its great lines the dynamic that I might begin to call a path. That is, the passage from the recognition-identification, in which the subject of thought tries effectively the domain of the senses, for the mutual recognition, in which the subjects places himself under the guardianship of a

⁵⁰ The community of feeling corresponds to Weber's definition of nation (1971:201), is being here used to pass the idea that the declaration of belongingness to a region has as reference the celebration of the nation.

reciprocity relation, passing through the recognition of the self in the variety of the capacities that mold his power of action, his agency (Ricoeur, 2007: 260).

In this perspective, it is needed to pass from the analysis of the reasons and emotions contained in the dynamics of the processes of identification and belongingness by the individuals and groups, of their manipulation and re-creation, thinking synchronically and diachronically these dispositions for the issue of recognition-identification, and from this, to mutual recognition.

Thinking about the *agency* of the Traditionalism as a cultural project, of the Traditionalist subjects and of the clothing that makes them typical, regarding the issue of tradition, I recall two situations regarding the relation between *agency* and recognition. The first is related to the "Pilchas Law", which recognizes the typical gaucho clothes as gala clothes in Rio Grande do Sul. The state law nº 8813 from 1989, makes official the use of the gaucho *pilcha* in official moments:

REPRESENTATIVE ALGIR LORENZON, President of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

I make public, following what is disposed on § 5º of the article 37 of the State Constitution, that the Legislative Assembly announced and I proclaim the following Law:

Art. 1º- It is made official as clothing of honor and preferential usage in Rio Grande do Sul, for both sexes, the indument named "PILCHA GAÚCHA".

Sole paragraph - Will be considered a "Pilcha Gaúcha" only the one that, with authenticity, reproduces with elegance, the sobriety of our historical indument, according to the regulations and guidelines stated by the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement.

Art. 2º- The "Pilcha Gaúcha" can substitute the conventional outfit in all official acts, public or private, performed in Rio Grande do Sul.

According to Zattera (1995: 139) "the gauchos want respect for their roots and for their culture. The diffusion and officialization of our typical clothes proves this." I realize that the promulgation of the Pilchas Law is configured as an expression of the *agency* of Gauchism and Traditionalism, for there is the juridical recognition of the gaucho typical clothing, as an official gala outfit in Rio Grande do Sul. Its connection to the guidelines of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement shows the success of the trajectory of the Traditionalist pedagogy of the *pilchas* in Rio Grande do Sul.

The second situation refers to the *poncho* contest that I observed in Argentina during the national Traditionalist party "*Tiempo de Gauchos*" (Gauchos Time), in December 2001.⁵¹

⁵¹The Argentinean Traditionalist Mariza Pulido mentioned that the people/entities that participate in the event *Tiempo de Gauchos* would come from different places in the province. This would be equal, in her perception, to a national party, being the portrait of Argentinean

It was Saturday at dusk and some adults and children wearing ponchos over their traditionalist outfits headed to the yard and formed a circle. Soon later the jury arrived, carefully analyzing the ponchos and the speaker announced the result.

One of the members of the jury – Gustavo Kagel – was one of our hosts. Gustavo is an antiquary, specialist in fabric restoration. He mentioned that the contests started around seven years before and that they consisted on the analysis of the originality, condition and beauty of the “original” piece (my quotes). He also said that the older pieces are back from the 15th century: “in my hands have passed pieces from since the 17th century - it's archeological”. According to him, there are two categories of people related to the ponchos: the collectors and the Traditionalists, who take part in the contests. With the collector's pieces he organizes exhibitions.

The occurrence of the poncho contests in Argentina, based on their authenticity, demonstrates the existence of a network of people – Traditionalists and collectors – that establish a relation with the past. These people are concerned about their preservation and memory, and the most obvious result of this is the re-signification of the ponchos in the present.



Picture from the author. At *Tiempo de Gauchos*,
Argentina, December, 2001.

Establishing a brief analogy between the issues of the Traditionalist clothing in Rio Grande do Sul and in Argentina, from the two situations above mentioned, it is possible to make some comparisons. The ponchos contest is an Argentinean peculiarity, since, in the gaucho Traditionalism, there are not clothing contests. However, being appropriately dressed in Traditionalist contests is obligatory⁵², constituting one of the criteria of evaluation in the artistic and field contest in the Brazilian and gaucho Traditionalism. When the jury of these contests considers the outfit as incorrect or uncharacteristic, the competitor loses points.

Traditionalism. People would come to participate on the rural contests (pealo; corrida de sortija; doma; tuse; entrevero de tropillas; jineteadas and muestra de recados and ponchos), beyond the participation of Saturday night in the *fogón criollo* – an artistic presentation from the dance groups, singers and poetry interpreters – and in the delegations parade on Sunday morning.

⁵² In these sense it's interesting to check the regulation from CBTG for the artistic and rural contests, at the site: <http://www.ftgpc.br/CBTG/regCBTG.htm>

On its turn, it's necessary to point that in the Argentinean Traditionalism there aren't artistic competitions – only demonstrations such as the *fogón criollo*, for example, that includes music and dance performance and *payadas*. The contests are relative to field activities and the ponchos contest is inserted in this modality. The differences signaled, it's necessary to conclude that, in both Traditionalist universes, there is a significant concern with the *pilchas* as tradition and a pedagogical attitude towards them, which is translated into regulations and contests. Although there are varied motivations for this pedagogy I believe that the creation of a model to be followed, as the true gaucho model, is preponderant and edifying, as a cultural project.

The recognition of the Traditionalist culture as a sociological project of affirmation of the local relates to Ricouer's references regarding the recognition. In the sense that, to the identification with this past by the living of the typical among the peers is added the search for mutual recognition, through juridical projects such as the creation of the Pilchas Law.

However, there is much to think about the scope of this legal recognition for the traditionalist daily routine in relation to the asymmetry I/other. In these cases, the agency has to be verified as a capacity that modulates the power of acting in specific situations. As in an occasion in 2006, that, in spite of the *Pilchas Law*, I witnessed a group of people wearing *pilchas* being not allowed to enter a TV recording for a New Year's Eve Ball where the gala outfit was demanded.

Thus, I think that the agency of the ponchos can be verified in the contests and equally the agency of the *prenda dress* in the Traditionalist territories, where a pedagogy of space is already consolidated, as Loftgreen proposes (1999: 6), and its recognition as Traditionalist territory.

Although there is the recognition of these typical clothes outside the groups, this recognition itself doesn't qualify as *agency*. This is relative to the individual and collective capacity, to the shared dynamic of making believe and making recognize of the cultural project it embodies, expressed in the clothes.

The disputes for this mutual recognition imply a circular and imbricated path, in which the clothes, as a passport to worship the gaucho, take a place of honor: naming, definition, identification, belongingness, recognition, agency, that signals a cultural project dynamically animated by an educational perspective, made effective in its pedagogical proposals.

In a small segment of my field notes I try to get closer to the meaning of Traditionalism to one of its exponents in Argentina:

The parade lasted for about three hours, passing in front of our eyes an ancient rural world worshiped in modernity, of which the Traditionalists have an immense pride: the opening dance – the *pericon* of the national union – commanded from the top of a horse by an instructor, through a wireless microphone, to the dancers of the ball groups of the present Traditionalist centers, the criollo horse with

baio/ruano⁵³ fur, the most celebrated; the silver harness and their clothes, elaborated through a history of heritage and richness, that they see as immortal, is able to make true Ziller's words:

"The Traditionalism is a way of living, thinking and feeling. Culture has no political frontier".

In this circumstance, I perceive that his agency, proved, and that the cultural project that he represents as agent even get confused. He is Mario Ziller in his first official parade as president of the International Confederation of the Gaucho Tradition. In this situation, there is the recognition of the importance and of the empowerment of the Traditionalism. The gaucho clothing, together with the other elements that I mentioned above, composes the scenery for the expression of this agency.

Or it even is, by extension to the very *agency*, in the dimension of a sentimental education in which the Traditionalism is elevated to the level of sensations to produce the thought about a gaucho way of life that doesn't dispense political frontiers, as a project that is cultural and that is of affirmation of the tradition lived by incarnation.

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⁵³ According to Zeno Nunes in the *Dictionary of Regionalisms from Rio Grande do Sul (1993:52-53)*: Baio – (adj.) Refers to an animal with a pale gold color. Baio-ruano - (adj.) Refers to the baio horse with white or light-yellow hair and neck.

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