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PROE 
Pró-reitoria de extensão

REVISTA DO FÓRUM INTERNACIONAL DE IDEIAS

Revista
do Fórum Internacional de Ideias
English version
Volume 10, number 1
Intermittent Diaries by Celso Furtado

ISSN: 2527-1377

Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto

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The Intermittent Diaries by Celso Furtado

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: We are starting another edition of the International Forum of Ideas and today (September 28th, 2019) Rosa Freire d’Aguiar, born in Rio de Janeiro and trained as a journalist at the Catholic University of Rio. Rosa has been a reporter for magazines *Manchete and Istoé*, and also for the newspaper *Jornal da República*. Also, she has translated more than sixty titles from Italian, Spanish, and French to Portuguese. In 2011 she got an award from the Latin Union of Technical and Scientific Translation, and in 2009 she received the Jabuti award for translation. Currently she is in working on the archives from Celso Furtado, with whom she was married for a long time. She is now organizing his letters, and this will soon result in the release of *Diários Intermitentes: de 1937 to 2002*¹ (I).

Today we also have the presence of Professor José Medeiros da Silva speaking from Hangzhou, China, of Professor Jorge Costa giving us all the tech support, and of myself Antonio Marcelo Jackson. That said, Rosa, it is a pleasure to have you participate in our project and please feel free to present all of your fantastic work on the Celso Furtado archives, and any comment you wish to make.

Rosa Freire d’Aguiar: Thank you, Marcelo, Jorge, and José who is on the other side of the globe having his morning tea (in China it was already the morning of the 29th), while we are here at 7:00 PM.

In any case, Celso’s archives. Talking about them is to speak about a whole world, an ocean really. I will try to summarize what I have done since his death in 2004 – 15 years have gone by already. I was the heiress to the archives: on the one hand the books, and on the other all the paperwork. Celso had a vast work as an economist and essayist. His last pieces are four essay books, three book of memoirs, and three intellectual autobiographies. So, when he died, my idea was to give the new generations some access to his work. I have been working at publishing houses for years, and I know that books are a work of love, but if they are not pretty, well made, if they are not a best-seller, they are put aside. So, the idea was, first, to edit some of Celso’s books in a way as to make them more approachable to the younger generations. His better-known book is *Formação Econômica do Brasil*², and I worked on editions called “definitive”. These editions are usually carried out by people who had an intense contact with the work or with the author. I worked on the definitive edition of *Formação Econômica do Brasil*, and for each of his books I asked up-to-date people to edit their old prefaces, or to work on new ones. After that I worked on *Economia Latino-Americana*³, which is a work on history and economics, and on my favourite one: *Cultura e Desenvolvimento em Épocas de Crise*⁴, which is his least economic book.

Reediting his works is a permanent work for me. However, we need to know the texts and contexts to understand his reason to write that. We need to know what was going in

¹ *Intermittent Diaries: from 1937 to 2002*, to be released in Portuguese by Companhia das Letras publishing house.

² Translated as *The Economic Growth of Brazil: a survey from colonial to modern times* (University of California Press, 1963).

³ *Latin-American Economy*. A version of this title was published in English as the *Economic Development of Latin America : Historical Background and Contemporary Problems* (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

⁴ *Culture and Development in times of crisis* (in Portuguese, 1984).

Brazil, his surroundings, and his ideas at the time of writing each book. From that I had the idea of building a collection – which I named the Celso Furtado Archives – in order to piece together his texts that were stored in a drawer unpublished and publish them thematically. The first one was published in 2008: I took several of Celso’s long writings; three studies on Venezuela in the 50s. It’s a quite technical report done when he was an economist for ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) in Chile. Afterwards there were some political texts that – despite being from the 50s and the 70s – touched upon the sore spot of having an abundance of foreign currency and yet not developing. In other words: there was money to develop a country, and yet it didn’t develop.

The second book was more political. This happened after some economists coming up with the term “Dutch disease”⁵, but this expression was not often used at the time. As it happens, this particular book came out when the pre-salt layer oil was found, which generated a debate about Brazilian deindustrialization. This debate made a book on the same topic – but about Venezuela and many years before – very successful, and this imbued me to go on with the collection, always grouping text thematically.

Now I am working on books sourced from the Celso Furtado Archives. I made one about culture that worked out very well (he was Culture Minister from 1986-1988 and had many writings about Brazilian cultural formation); I released another one about when he was heading the Superintendence on Northeast Development (SUDENE in the Portuguese acronym); other thematic volumes worked better, others not so much. Now I am working on the thoroughly fascinating Diaries. Celso was not an avid journal writer, in the sense that he didn’t come home and wrote down what was most important in the day. But he had a certain necessity to come back to what he wrote as notes during certain moments of his life. So much so that the book that is coming out now⁶ is not immensely big. It has almost 500 pages, which, for 65 years of living and writing (I started from 1937, when Celso was a teenager, and compiled until 2002) is not so much. There are certain moments in his life when you can feel he needed to write, such as with travel discoveries; for example in our first trip to China, which yielded the picture that is at the book’s back cover.

Later, there are moments in which he was struggling with great battles, like with the implementation of SUDENE: in came a bold and modern project for the time, which would shift priorities from the ones held by northeastern politicians. There was a clash between a modernizing project and the Northeastern established structure of using public moneys to fund elections. Celso wanted to change all that. It was a battle! At that time he wrote loads, as if he wanted to decompress. He was alone in the northeast and, at the time, working for President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961).

Celso went to war when he was 24; he was of draft age when Brazil declared war against the axis countries in 1942, and he gets sent to the front in 1944. It was a heavy experience for him, and he wrote profusely in his war diaries (He was a part of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force that fought in Italy during World War II).

He could go 3-4 years without touching his diary, no entries whatsoever. I found them when I was searching for a different project about his letters. I found 50 of his notebooks, all of them not completely written – some had writings in only 10 pages. This probably

⁵ Economic problem when a country has an abundance of foreign currency, which overvalues their currency and hampers its capacity for development.

⁶ The book was released on October 8th 2019.

happened because he could no longer recall where he left the notebook, or because we would travel and he would buy a new one. I remember him trying to come to an understanding with a Chinese man to buy a notebook. These diaries are, without a doubt, his most intimate work. They are the most revealing of who he really was.

Another very interesting feature are his 3 or 4 life assessments when he needed to rethink his life course. Interestingly, when he comes back from the war as a 25-year-old, he performs a very mature life assessment. He had graduated in Law and went to war, but when he came back he said, without yet pointing at economics: “I don’t want to be a lawyer, don’t want a lawyer’s career, I want to study Brazil from the vantage point of the human and social sciences”. From there he becomes interested in studying economics and starts turning his attention towards that field. Another important life assessment happened during his first days in exile: with the Military Coup in March-April of 1964, he gets put on the first list of ‘barred’ politicians (and he was not even one!), and soon goes into exile. He spent a few months in Chile and then to Yale. As soon as he arrives, on his second day there, he writes, in a tough moment, – new life, no job, small children – another life assessment where he mulls over the thought that our generation failed. I think these were the kinds of moments when he resorted to the diary. I thought it was very interesting, and I decided to publish the diaries, so we will see what happens. A book is always hard work and it creates expectations. Now, I can finally dedicate myself to the letters project, and I hope I can have time to work on it next year.

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: I have a list of around 75 questions (sic), but after *Carioca* Rosa spoke about *Paraibano* Celso Furtado, I will give the floor to a *Potiguar*⁷. As such, we stay in the northeast! José, the floor is all yours.

Professor José Medeiros: It is an ineffable honor to listen to Rosa. In fact, I’m very moved. The work Rosa is undertaking is inspiring. I believe it is very important for the young people of Brazil to know the work and contribution given by Celso Furtado to our country. Rosa made this a part of her life, sacrificing – almost alone – some of her time to registering and publishing these memories she just described. First, as a Brazilian from the northeast, I would like to express my gratitude. I would like Celso’s name to be remembered by my community in the countryside of Brazil (Cana Brava, township of Pureza, Rio Grande do Norte) through my project, the Garden of Science. Maybe you can even go there and plant a tree so that he is engraved in the memory of the people who live there.

Celso contributed not only for matters of economics and development – themes which are still influencing current generations. But he mainly was willing to think about how to construct Brazil having the human being as the focal point. That is why he did not discriminate between cultural, historical, and economic development. He sees all of these factors as composing of something bigger, which is mankind and its relationship with its surroundings. In this sense, Celso’s thinking will never be dated; firstly because he understood the necessity of seeking direction, which is what we currently need in Brazil.

Certainly, your work will endure generations because, even when times are tough, there will always be someone who perceives its relevance. Just for the record, in my personal library in China, I have some works from Celso, such as the *Economic Growth of Brazil*.

Rosa Freire: This is one of the definitive editions.

⁷ Brazilian denonyms: *Carioca* refers to people from the state of Rio de Janeiro. *Paraibano* and *Potiguar* refer to people from the states of Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte respectively [T.N.].

Professor José Medeiros: I also have two of his books translated into Chinese. One of them is *The Economic Growth of Brazil* (巴西经济的形成), and the other is *Economic Development of Latin America* (拉丁美洲经济的发展), which is an older edition done when China was poorer.

Rosa Freire: This is great, and yes, the cover was cheaper.

Professor José Medeiros: It is interesting to see how it evolved. I hope Rosa's work serves to wake up the Chinese so that they work on new translations. Certainly, it would get a very nice edition, since the material wealth in China has reached a level which Celso could never envision to be achieved so quickly. Also, I have recently bought here in China this small volume named *O Longo Amanhecer*⁸, and in the dedication, Celso states: "To Rosa, who taught me how to be patient". Thus, Rosa, I would like to know what have you taught Celso? Also, I would like you to look at today's Brazil through Celso's perspective of *the long dawn*..

Rosa Freire: Thank you José. I really liked your books, they are rare editions. Celso did not know about these translations. One time he knew, when a Chinese translator contacted him about the older one, *Economic Development of Latin America*. We even have a small card from him inside of the edition we have here at home, I will show you later.

About this dedication at the *Long Dawn*: when it comes to Celso – and when it comes to anyone really, but anyway – you cannot separate his life from his writings. I am not particularly patient, but he was. I could almost say the opposite, that Celso taught me to be patient. But when he wrote this book, he had had a health problem, a stroke. He found it very difficult to keep writing by hand. And he wanted to write a few essays, but he had even more difficulties working with a computer – he had no ability with a mouse. Then I always said: "Calm down and wait, Celso. You will get better. Your therapy is going to work!".

See what he wrote by hand here, exactly in this book *The Long Dawn*. He wrote: "The Long march: a subsidy to think about Brazil". You can see that Celso had a Chinese side. But later on he changed it, and then there is the dedication here, the one you just read. So, what I want to say is this: this matter of patience was nothing exceptional, because he was running out of it because of the physiotherapy, which was very boring. This book, if I'm not mistaken is from 1999, and then he wrote this dedication. I too was surprised, I was not expecting this dedication.

Still about patience, some people ask me: "was Celso pessimistic when he died?". I'm not a medium, so I cannot answer for him. But what I can say is that in 1992 he wrote a boo named *Brasil, a construção interrompida*⁹. He could see the project of constructing Brazil since 1950! When you look at the letters he exchanged with some of his friends in 1960, already during exile, you could see something quite unique: a group of intellectuals thinking about Brazil in the morning, afternoon and night, and always with a very high quality. Only this week I was reading his letters with Octavio Ianni¹⁰, Florestan

⁸ *The Long Dawn* (Paz e Terra 1999).

⁹ *Brazil: an interrupted construction* (Paz e Terra 1992).

¹⁰ 1926-2004. Ianni was a sociologist focused on matters of ethnicity, populism, imperialism, and on a critical analysis of capitalism.

Fernandes¹¹, Hélio Jaguaribe¹², Fernando Henrique Cardoso¹³ – who later changed. Today's Fernando Henrique would not recognize himself in these letters in the 60s. There's another sociologist that you probably know, Luciano Martins. That is: this was quite a heavyweight group thinking about Brazil all day. These letters were about imagining Brazil as a viable country. The motto was: Brazil must succeed! This was very marked in the 1950s with Juscelino... but then the military coup interrupts this process, or at least changes its focus. From that moment, Brazil ceases to have a national project – even Jaguaribe admitted to that – and becomes the backyard of the US, the “great democracy”. Sometimes it seems we are constantly starting from square one. I think this is what the “Long Dawn” means: morning never breaks, it struggles to do so. It's like you are building and then someone comes... that's when Celso writes *Interrupted Construction*. Years later he writes about the *Long Dawn* that doesn't bring the morning. Celso had very nice book titles.

He has some good titles. I was just seeing a picture the other day, some type of carousel. In a carousel you take a place, you circle around, and you come back to the same point. It seems like you have gone forward miles and then there is the 1964 coup that sends many people into exile. Then there is resistance, pro-amnesty movements, the exiles return, there is a new constitution, new president Sarney, Tancredo... we go through so much and we come back to the same place, it doesn't go forward. What's that? I don't believe this to be any kind of fatalism. We cannot believe in historical fatalism, otherwise we wouldn't be able to get out of bed.

I believe this is where “long dawn” comes from. Celso was interdisciplinary *par excellence*, and this small book is – evidently – more focused in economics, but it traversed many disciplines as if economic had become restrictive, small. So, he widened to these disciplinary boundaries, connecting history to economics and putting his thesis as economic history. But after that he incorporates sociology, anthropology, culture, and philosophy to his analysis. It is as if he was a little constrained, narrowed in that box of the Economics discipline.

I will say something that sometimes is in my mind: as time went by, Celso started to think so globally that it resembles more the thoughts of a philosopher than of a social scientist. He never left economics, but, as he said, he never thought there was merely an economic problem. He sometimes repeated a phrase: “I never thought inflation was *just* an economic problem”.

Another interesting thought: is he a thinker of development? Yes. Even more so of underdevelopment. He starts with economic development – probably his whole generation after the war – because Brazil really needed to develop economically. But then he starts to incorporate other dimensions. At the end of the 50s he introduces something that people say he was a pioneer on – I don't really like calling anybody a pioneer because it looks like you're trying to single a person out – which is to incorporate a cultural dimension into the analysis of development and underdevelopment. He annexes other

¹¹ 1920-1995. Fernandes was a sociologist who studied ethnology and political changes in Brazil. His book *Revolução Burguesa no Brasil (Brazil's Bourgeois Revolution, Zahar, 1975)* is, to this day, one of the most important Brazilian sociological works.

¹² 1923-2018. Jaguaribe was a political and sociologist who was exiled after criticizing the 1964 military coup. He taught at Harvard, Stanford and MIT before returning to Brazil and having a political and academic career.

¹³ 1931-. FHC was a sociologist who had a prolific academic career before going into politics and eventually becoming Brazil's 34th president in 1994.

dimensions; his thinking was multidisciplinary, and I think that is what makes his work less studied in economics departments than in other. Celso's work is nowadays widely studied in cultural studies and International Relations, both of which didn't exist systematically in his time. It is a very multidimensional brain, let's say. He always saw multiple dimensions of the same problem, and I believe that is his originality. To me, a non-economist, I believe that to be the most fascinating aspect: the multidimensionality of his thinking.

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: Rosa, you made many considerations regarding Celso Furtado, and I was reminded of a thinker from Alagoas who I studied during my PhD thesis: Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos¹⁴. My master's was on 19th century political thought, and my doctorate ended up having the same historical scope, but focused only on the person of Tavares Bastos. I'm bringing him up firstly because, when we talk about Brazilian political thinking we talk about Tavares Bastos, but we reduce him to one book: *A Província* (The Province). Even when he published so many others. Secondly, there is another problem which you are solving in Celso Furtado's case which is: Tavares died in 1875 and nothing was done to his archives, diaries, notes. This fact generated one of the weirdest situations in Brazilian academia: a doctoral thesis in Political Science citing manuscripts. This was unusual in the old IUPERJ (Research University Institute of Rio de Janeiro) in the long-gone year of 2005.

Interestingly, one comment by Tavares Bastos brings me the idea of tradition. In the one hand, he reflected on Brazil, theorized Brazil. On the other hand, he was a politician – a provincial deputy at the time, which would be a federal deputy nowadays. At one point he says politics had reached an impact. Saying that in 1870 makes one cry! His exact words are: “with the kind of people that here inhabit the political arena, it seems the only solution is tyranny”. And he goes on: “I don't want that in Brazil. If I reach the conclusion that the only solution is tyranny, I will not go on”. I'm citing him because it seems this is some kind of tradition among Brazilian thinkers – and Celso Furtado among them – that it comes a time when they get discouraged and they say: “in the end, what happened?”, “where did we go wrong?” Curiously, there is also a similarity between Tavares Bastos and Celso Furtado: he is not only an intellectual thinking about the country, but he also acts. He is there when ECLAC is founded, he also creates the SUDENE. There are numerous projects that were born out of his thinking.

That put, what I wanted to ask – and you who not only lived with him, but also accessed his diaries, could answer – did Celso Furtado, at any point, think: “this is where I was wrong”, or “I was less incisive than I should when I had power?” Something like a self-criticism. As if Celso the intellectual criticized Celso Furtado the politician. When you looked at his diaries did you come across this at any point?

Rosa Freire: Marcelo, this certainly happened. In the diaries you will see this in three specific points. Celso was a man of thinking and of action. He was a man of action when he had to start SUDENE. There, there was some kind of interregnum. He was Brazil's Ministers for Planning in Jango's presidency because of his crafting of the ambitious 3-year-plan. After that he was the Minister for Culture for president Sarney. He also had other appointments: for a short time he was the Brazilian ambassador to the European Union, for example. On the case of SUDENE he didn't engage properly in self-criticism. Instead, what can be noticed on his biography is that he taught the project was too bold,

¹⁴ 1839-1875. Tavares Bastos was a politician, writer and journalist who was an early defender of decentralized governance.

too audacious for the region. Celso was in his 30s when he worked at SUDENE, he was too young and had no political experience. He was coming out of 10 years of theory. SUDENE was a synthetic moment in his life since he managed to put practice and theory together. He spent 10 years at ECLAC working on theory... a theory of planning for Latin America, and now, all of a sudden he was going to put these into practice.

Now he had a project to develop the northeast of Brazil, and he had to put all of the ECLAC theories into practice. This is why I think it was some sort of synthesis: this was the time when he developed a technical – and maybe a tad political – viewpoint. He was never a party member, he never wanted that, but he always said he could have had more clout if he was, for example. I believe he reckons things could have been different if he had engaged in the political game instead of trying to impose a technical project from top-down. At the same time, he also believed he could have more independence if he kept parties at arm's-length, which was true.

To be sure, he was very close to the more progressive state governors like Miguel Arraes¹⁵ who was governing *Rio Grande do Norte* at the time. I wouldn't say he then engages on self-criticism, but he takes notice of that. So much so that when he engaged in the political fight for re-democratization he *did* join a party. He didn't "play the economist" called to aid Ulysses Guimarães, but he became a member of PMDB. And then there was the party hierarchy, conventions, and all the party political game... this was the only party of which he became a member, the PMDB. Maybe that was the criticism he made. When he was Minister for Culture it was an exceptionally complicated time, because he was still under the old constitution. Of course nobody engaged in censorship anymore, but in 1986 we still didn't have the somewhat social-democratic 1988 constitution (nowadays it became a bit of patchwork, but anyway). In the old constitution you still had the National Information Service (SNI)¹⁶, and each ministry had to have some military man from the SNI. Celso's great triumph was to put civilians into these positions. With the end of the dictatorship we had Sarney and that complicated transition, so we couldn't even think of putting the military to deal with artists. It was very difficult because the ministry was very new. It was only 8-months-old when Celso takes office, and he was already the third minister. There was not even an organizational chart when he arrives. They had to rush because the ministry had been created by a provisional measure that was about to expire¹⁷. At the time several artists and intellectuals were contesting the very existence of the ministry and there was a debate whether it was really necessary. I have a letter from a late great historian from Minas Gerais – Francisco Iglésias – who was Celso's close friend. Celso had just taken office and Iglésias was saying he didn't think necessary a Ministry for Culture. So it was a difficult time.

That said, Celso could perhaps have had a closer contact with the artists. It was very difficult to understand them at the time. They wanted the state's money, of course, but not its custody. So, this was a difficult time...but I believe his biggest regret, so to speak, was to always have appeared more as a technician at the time of SUDENE. Perhaps if he had a stronger partisan connection at the time... now, if you ask me which party, I

¹⁵ 1916-2005. Arraes was a Brazilian politician who governed Pernambuco in three different periods of time (one just before the dictatorship, and two after democracy was restored). He also held other public offices for Pernambuco and left an enormous political legacy in the state.

¹⁶ Founded in 1964, the SNI was the intelligence arm of the dictatorship responsible for surveilling activities in Brazil and abroad. The *Service* was responsible for many political arrests across its 26 years of existence.

¹⁷ In Brazil, the executive can take myriad of actions via provisional measures. These have to be voted by parliament after entering into force lest they expire and become null and void.

wouldn't be able to say. He never wanted to be from the Communist Party. He was invited and, since he was a man from the left, it was only natural for him to join as a young man after the war. He told me a story, when he went to France to work on his thesis in 1947. This was right after the Communist Party was forbidden by the Dutra government. Many communists then go to Europe. People like Jorge Amado¹⁸ and Carlos Scliar¹⁹ went to Paris. Celso became very close to them there. At a certain point he got an indirect invitation, Jorge Amado didn't talk to him personally, but he sends someone to contact him and ask if he wanted to write an article for the Communist Party magazine. Probably the invitation to become a member would come later, but this never came. Celso said yes, wrote an article, and then this contact who was not an intellectual, but a party person said: well, now we need to send your text to the Party commission, to which Celso said: what do you mean? Someone will read my text and censor me? Of course, he was 26 at the time. Perhaps if he was 35 or 40 he wouldn't. But he got angry, outraged. He said no text of his would be censored for political or ideological reasons and decided not to publish. Surely the invitation to join the Communist Party never came. After that, in 1947 in France Jorge Amado writes him to try a rapprochement.

At the time of SUDENE he could have joined PTB²⁰, more on the nationalist side that would later be represented by Almino Afonso²¹. At the time you had a nationalist parliamentary caucus that would have been easier for him to fit in... or maybe not, because this would label him as "Celso from the party" and all that... I don't know. He doesn't talk about regret, but you can read between the lines that he could have participated more actively in politics.

This is what I can tell you. Now, what he *did do* was to revisit some of his ideas and change them. That he did with ease. He would elaborate a thought little by little in a way that 10 years later he would think a bit differently than he did before. Then he would re-elaborate and keep going. Such was his intellectual work.

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: Please, José the floor is yours, my friend.

Professor José Medeiros. This was one of my best mornings here in China, I have no doubt about that, and that is saying something because my mornings are usually very good. In a way – even if in an isolated fashion – my main occupation here in China is to think about Brazil. Think about the country from the perspective of wanderers like Antônio Conselheiro²² and others who were born and raised in Brazil and who possess a sense of "Brazilianness" in their hearts. How does this feeling evolve? How does it reach a child in the drylands of the northeast, a place that didn't even have the television? (To give my own experience as an example, I grew until 16 years old in a place with no electricity or television). So, how does this Brazilian feeling reach these places? Why

¹⁸ 1912-2001. Amado is one of the most known and best-selling Brazilian writers of all time. His two better known novels are *Captains of the Sands* (Penguin 2013) and *Dona Flor and her Two Husbands* (Harper-Collins 1977).

¹⁹ 1920-2001. Scliar was a Brazilian painter, designer and scenographer.

²⁰ The Brazilian Labour Party was founded by president Getúlio Vargas in 1945 and was connected to trade unions and to "labourism". The party made a sharper turn to the left during the government of João Goulart immediately before the 1964 military coup. The party was re-founded in 1981, but now with a much weaker ideological preference, becoming quite conservative.

²¹ 1929-. Afonso was labour minister under the João Goulart administration and lived in exile for 12 years after the 1964 coup.

²² 1830-1897. Conselheiro was the leader of the *Canudos Revolt* (1896-1897) and a religious leader. Under his guidance, the poor community of Canudos was organized in an egalitarian and communitarian fashion. The community was quashed in 1897 by federal forces.

does it reach a group of people who puts their country as a priority? Usually, it is by chance. This, I believe, is one of our problems: this feeling should not casually reach one heart or another. It must contact people because there is a national structure transmitting it, a cultural environment where this feeling is embedded.

The basis for this is transmitting the memory of certain role models. For this reason, the reflections of people who researched and fought for Brazil, who aimed at building the nation should not be forgotten. For example, when I was in Rio de Janeiro, at Rosa's house, my attention was drawn to a Cordel about Celso²³. Nothing is more accessible than Cordel literature. The quintessential northeastern popular soul resides in this literary genre. It comes from an old Iberian oral tradition that reaches Brazil and stays there.

I believe the big challenge nowadays is to find ways to motivate young Brazilians to look to our past and study the contributions given by people like Celso.

Rosa just mentioned a generation of giants, and Rosa herself is a magnificent figure. People like Câmara Cascudo²⁴, with his grandiose contributions. I have no idea how they produced so much. I have no idea how Rosa produces so much. They have energy, dedication, passion, stature.

Celso's life was fantastic. We need movies, comic books about it. Who could imagine a person who was born in the Brazilian drylands, in Paraíba, in the 1920s and goes to the large intellectual centers of the world? He is on par with any other intellectual of his time from any part of the globe. And then this same person loves his country and goes to war for it... this is really an inspiring story of intellectual work which Rosa is fortunately making available to new generations.

Celso's generation taught us to think big, as Brazil is big. And Rosa's work is, I repeat, monumental. Rosa, you are doing a very special work for Brazil, and the coming generations will thank you and recognize your work.

To conclude, I would like to read this passage from "Message to young economists" (from the book *The Long Dawn*), because I see it as a very inspiring message to all young Brazilians: "The challenge's origins: to think about Brazil was the challenge that always guided my reflections. Very early on, still as a teenager, my spirit was touched by matters such as: why do certain Brazilian regions appear to be condemned to abject poverty with so much potential wealth?" This question remains current, especially if we look at the regions and think about the people living in urban centers and the peripheries.

That's why discussing Celso's work is also to search for a guiding light so we can redirect this 'carousel'. Nowadays with the new technologies we can move this carousel wherever we want.

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: Rosa, I would like to give you the floor for final remarks, but I would like to piggyback on Professor Medeiros's words. Again, when I was in my doctorate I was speaking to a professor who was a scholar of Alexis de Tocqueville, a French thinker of the 19th century, and I asked him if he had any difficulties working on Tocqueville here in Brazil. He said no because even Tocqueville's letter to his grocer was somehow published in France. Of course he was exaggerating, but it is

²³ Cordel literature is a literary genre especially popular in the northeast of Brazil. Cordel usually merges poems with xylographs and deals with popular themes.

²⁴ 1898-1986. Câmara Cascudo was a historian and anthropologist responsible for creating true anthologies of Brazilian folklore and cuisine.

true that when you want to work on an author in France, England, Germany, Italy, and probably also in Portugal and Spain – and even in Latin America this seems to be more frequent – you have published not only the authors’ books but all other materials. Diaries, letters, notes, correspondence and more which are going to give more scope for the student to really delve into that work and get a better understanding of it. This enhanced understanding will also give hints to reflect about the country, the region, everything that surrounds the author. So, repeating what José Medeiros said, your work, *Rosa*, is pivotal. It is pivotal because it is about one of the greatest Brazilian thinkers, and it is pivotal because we are still very poor in this practice. A work like yours almost saves us from an absolute hell. We can still have hope, but it’s possible that others won’t. To give you the floor, I will cite a phrase uttered by Tavares Bastos in 1861, which I used as an epigraph for my doctoral dissertation: “In the end, through what ways have we reached the labyrinth of the present”.

Rosa Freire: Tavares Bastos knew what he was talking about. I will finish briefly, just a few things. This work with the letters and all is very hard, but it’s also very pleasant, because I have some distance. Of course, everything I write about Celso – and I do it a lot – has a side to it which goes much beyond sympathy and goes into affection. This is inevitable. I lived with him for 26 years, which is not a short-term relationship, but a long, intense one, also an intellectual one. But, quite frankly, if I didn’t do it, someone else probably would. The advantage I have is that there are certain things that only I know, the hours-long conversations about his life, his archives, about one person or another. This personal touch is indeed mine, because life was like that.

Now, when it comes to the diaries, I’m under the impression that, if it wasn’t me, someone would someday find that and edit it. I only complement that with somethings that are very personal. I don’t know if you have read any of my texts, but if you get any of my texts about Celso, there is always something personal: a conversation we had, some perception he had and only I was there to hear. For instance, I went to China with him. What he wrote about China is one thing, but what we talked about China for an entire day is another.

There is also another thing I wanted to say: I believe Celso has a large *oeuvre*; he wrote more than 30 books, many of which on economic theory, others on economic policy, many books with economic recommendations, but I think there are some of those, 10 out of those 30 perhaps, which are extremely current. Some of the problems he dealt with, especially the matter of development and underdevelopment are current because they have endured. Whether we like it or not, I’m not saying that Brazil is an underdeveloped country, it’s not that! But the inequality between developed, less developed, and underdeveloped regions in Brazil is astounding, scandalous! This problem persists. One of these days I was watching a debate about the Northeast at Celso’s time and today, and there are totally different. When Celso goes to the northeast, he was still thinking about roads, sewage systems, electricity and the like, which had not yet reached Fortaleza. They had shortages everyday because Paulo Afonso was not there yet. Nowadays the northeast has startups, it’s supermodern, you can find whatever you want there, but the GDP of the northeast still represents only 12% of the Brazilian total. The disequilibrium is still there. It’s another level of disequilibrium, but the problems which Celso theorized about endure, and they are still, at the core, about the matter of underdevelopment. So, I believe he is very current.

My field is more about literature. I translated a book by Italo Calvino named *Why Read the Classics*. One of the reasons he gives to read the classics is that these books gain

dimensions each time we read them: a classic is a book that never ceases to make a point, that is more or less his phrase. And I believe some of Celso's books have that characteristic. We read them again and again and the book never ceases to make a point because it has remained current. Some of Celso's writings impress me because they seem like they were written last week. I won't even bring that to the present time, because it will get confusing, but I believe some of his writings have endured, especially the ones about Brazil, regional building, the multiple dimensions of development and underdevelopment.

That's my idea when I make these documents available, so maybe people will again start their thinking from certain theories. I believe that if one talks and writes about development, there is no way to escape the classics, and Celso is one of them without a doubt. All of this material I have together with the publishing of his archives can, I believe, contribute to the continuous interpretation to be done going through a Brazilian classic such as Celso and he is not the only one. I think that's the way to go. In any case, I'm happy to see that there is a hammock at José's place. The northeastern culture is within you. There's no escape, the "Brazilianness" is within us, one can go to China, but this will follow us. Jorge is in Minas, Marcelo is to the other side of Guanabara bay, José is in China, and we keep on being Brazilian. It's out country. We are a far cry from an ideal moment now, but it's a struggle, history is there, open. So, I want to thank you all very much, I'm lost for words and very happy. It is the first time I speak to a place so far. This was so good, it was excellent: Jorge, you are a pro! Not only in math, but also with these broadcasts!

Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson: Rosa, I want to thank you very much! Now, I have to make a statement: we are recording on a Saturday evening in Brazil, and Sunday morning in China. We have all been available and you, Jorge, on the tech support. José, who is my co-author in this project carries the burden with me. If we need to record before dawn we do so without a problem. Rosa, I want to thank you for your participation. I'm certain you need to participate in other editions of the forum, because, by my list I have "712 questions" (sic) and I only asked two, so I still have 710 left. I believe José has another 400. I want to thank Jorge for the effort, the support, our friendship, and all of your work with technology to make this broadcast possible. And José, it is unnecessary, but I always like saying it: your participation is central to the project of the International Forum of Ideas, which is today more than ever an international forum, but one that thinks about Brazil. We think about our country and we show how much it is necessary to constantly reflect and act. I believe that's the great lesson Celso Furtado has left us with. Thank you all very much again and see you on the next edition of our Forum.