

Caio Yurgel

Landscape's Revenge



The ecology of failure in Robert Walser
and Bernardo Carvalho

DE GRUYTER

Contents

Acknowledgement — V

- 1 Introduction — 1
 - Table of abbreviations — 10
- 2 Literature review: Landscape's revenge — 11
- 3 From the unreal to the apocalypse: The landscape as a function of language and narrative in Walser and Carvalho — 47
 - 3.1 Walser: *Träumen* (1913–1920) and the short prose — 49
 - 3.1.1 The dissolution of the landscape into language in Walser's short prose — 49
 - 3.1.2 The quest for movement and the use of adjectives — 51
 - 3.1.3 Portrayals of people and the 'what-if' scenarios of *Konjunktiv II* — 53
 - 3.1.4 The unheimlich and the first signs of a dark and unsettling landscape — 56
 - 3.1.5 The rift between indicative and subjunctive fiction: Walser's penchant for miniaturization — 60
 - 3.1.6 A defeatist's answer in face of the unreal: The retreat into a world of objects and the option for the margins — 64
 - 3.2 Carvalho: *Aberração* (1993) and the early novels — 69
 - 3.2.1 The Romantic longing for homecoming and the exile of the mind — 69
 - 3.2.2 Carvalho's intellectual and linguistic post-apocalyptic scenario — 73
 - 3.2.3 The problem of geography: Carvalho's civilizing project — 84
 - 3.2.4 The last human beings: On Carvalho's poetics of subtraction — 97
 - 3.2.5 Um romance sem descendência: The politics of epidemics in Carvalho's early novels in light of Susan Sontag's take on the "rise in apocalyptic thinking" — 102
- 4 The disappearing act: Moving towards the margins — 110
 - 4.1 Walser: *Fritz Kochers Aufsätze* (1904) — 111
 - 4.1.1 A Romantic death fifty years too late: *Fritz Kochers Aufsätze* as a program of Walser's entire oeuvre — 111
 - 4.1.2 The nature of the *Aufsatz*: From Romantic idyll to language's artifice — 113

- 4.1.3 The found manuscript: Fritz’s unnamed teacher as the narrative mastermind behind the *Aufsätze* — 119
- 4.1.4 The bared text: Walser’s interweaving of narrative voices and displacement of narrative authority — 124
- 4.2 Carvalho: *Mongólia* (2003) — 128
 - 4.2.1 The overlapping of narrative voices and the systemic refusal of manual labor — 128
 - 4.2.2 A minor literature: The case for marginality — 138
 - 4.2.3 A “minor” reading of Machado de Assis’ narrators and their influence on Carvalho’s work — 142
 - 4.2.4 What is literature and where does it happen?: The displacement of reality into the act of representing — 150
- 5 **How to do things with fire: The desert as landscape’s final revenge and as the culmination of Walser’s and Carvalho’s literary projects — 158**
 - 5.1 Walser: *Jakob von Gunten* (1909) — 159
 - 5.1.1 A dreamlike atmosphere — 160
 - 5.1.2 The slow onset of madness and the ghost of truth — 164
 - 5.1.3 The anti-hero: A departure from Romanticism — 170
 - 5.1.4 Jakob’s conflict between the world of culture and the world of nature — 178
 - 5.1.5 Brother ex-machina: The role of the eldest brother in *Jakob von Gunten* — 184
 - 5.1.6 Johann’s seventh labor: To become a tree — 190
 - 5.1.7 Walser’s politics of fire and the desert as the inevitable end — 196
 - 5.2 Carvalho: *Nove Noites* (2002) — 201
 - 5.2.1 Buell Quain: A tragic in the tropics — 201
 - 5.2.2 The making of a Walserian character — 203
 - 5.2.3 L’auteur avant sa mort: Adding Walser to a Structuralist recipe — 210
 - 5.2.4 Carvalho’s Napoleon: Truth, historical truth, and (auto) biography — 221
 - 5.2.5 Orphans of civilization: The quest for a paternal figure — 224
 - 5.2.6 “Daqui para frente, é o deserto”: The fire and the desert in Carvalho’s work — 237
- 6 **The desert for conclusion — 242**
- References — 248