

Imagery and Arguments Pertaining to the Issue of Free Immigration in the Anglo-Irish Press in Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract: *This paper will examine the early relationship between a mid – to late nineteenth century Anglo-Irish newspaper, ‘The Anglo-Brazilian Times’ (1865-1884), and the political élites of the Brazilian Second Empire (1840-1889). The argumentation departs from the hypothesis that Great Britain, from around 1865 onwards, had devised a plan whereby Brazil would be persuaded into abolishing slavery through the liberalization of her immigration policy. This way, the massive introduction of Europeans into the country would render slavery obsolete. The activities of the editor and proprietor of that newspaper, the Irish-born journalist William Scully, look consistent with that course of action and seem to have relied at least partially on the financial support of the British Government. This strategy was short-lived and seems to have generated a serious political crisis in Brazil, which would have accounted for the failure of an English-speaking colony that was established on the margins of the Itajahy-Mirim river valley, in 1867, in the southern Brazilian province of Santa Catarina. That colony was partially occupied by Irish settlers introduced in Brazil in connection with Scully.*

Although this has been largely unacknowledged, Irish immigration, along with free immigration, was regarded in Brazil, at a certain point in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, as a component of a policy designed to people the country in such a way that the process leading up to the abolition of slavery would be accelerated. It did not become effective, though, having been successfully opposed by those who believed that the country had to avert the prospect of a great social and economic upheaval, that might ensue should slavery be abolished too quickly.

Even in the 1860’s, Brazilian exports (mostly coffee) depended nearly entirely on the use of slaves and most policy makers feared that the sudden adoption of a legislation that imposed a final ban on that practice might disrupt the domestic economic life. Yet the importation of enslaved African workforce had already been prohibited in

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1850. Thenceforwards, an internal Emancipationist movement had grown, even though it did not present itself as a real threat to the slavery system. When major hostilities between Brazil and Paraguay broke out in late 1864, however, large quantities of Afro-Brazilian workers were increasingly drawn to the front line. Plantations were thereby depleted of manpower, to a certain extent, and this reinforced the conviction that the days of slavery were numbered.¹

Together with other schemes, free European immigration was thought of, then, as a solution for the now permanent labour shortage. Irish immigration, in particular, was hailed by Catholics as one of the best options, but appears to have been identified with a cunning British colonialist manoeuvre and was therefore rejected by the Brazilian ruling élites. This paper is an attempt at understanding how the Irish-born journalist William Scully, seemingly the principal advocate of Irish immigration in Brazil at that moment, interacted with the Brazilian Imperial society and came very close to actually establishing a potentially steady inflow of Irish colonists and free labourers into Brazil, starting in 1865/6.

Between 1865 and 1884, William Scully resided in Rio de Janeiro, then capital of the Brazilian Empire.² During that entire period he published a newspaper, 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' which appears to have been partially sponsored by the British Government. The enterprise seems to have been connected with previous initiatives, diplomatic and military, carried out by Britain in order to obtain from Brazil a commitment to end slavery.³

The goal of complete Abolition in Brazil was accomplished only on May 13, 1888. Long before the question was settled, Brazilian policy makers, businessmen and intellectuals engaged in a domestic debate about the alternatives to a national economy nearly entirely sustained by slave labour. During the 1860's, as free immigration emerged as a potentially viable solution, foreign interests, along with Liberal politicians in Brazil, supported the idea of a massive introduction of white European free workers into the country, so as to render slavery obsolete.

That strategy is evident in an article published on February 2, 1866, by William Scully: '[...] the prosperity of Brazil depends on the development of free labour and on the influx of foreign hands and capital. The supersedure of slave labour requires abundance of free labour or a current of spontaneous immigration.' Amongst the prominent Brazilian politicians aligned with that current of thought was Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos, who, under the pseudonym "The Solitary," was the author of a series of letters later compiled in an influential book, "Cartas do Solitário."⁴

Such course of action seemed to offer good prospects for Irish emigrants, who sought desperately for escape from the economic and demographic pressures engendered by the years of the Famine, between 1845 and 1849.⁵ Plans to either help them settle in colonies on Brazilian territory or afford them free access to employment or land acquisition, however, were not successful, since Brazil may have perceived the establishment of Irish colonizers in her territory as a national security breach. Understandably, they were treated as British subjects and, at that juncture (1865/70),

probably considered suspicious of being part of a bigger scheme designed to underpin or (depending on the point of view) restore British pre-eminence in Brazil. This contention, despite the clear participation of William Scully in an unsuccessful attempt at promoting the settlement of Irish families in southern Brazil, involves some degree of conjecturing, since the main evidence, diplomatic and other, is lacking.

Irish emigration to the United States played a significant role in North American demography and nation-building. Estimates suggest that around 7 million Irish immigrants settled in U.S. territory between the seventeenth century and the early 1900's. The cultural and economic influence exerted by the Irish and their descendents upon the development of that country could be attested, among innumerable other evidences, by the 1997 White House Proclamation establishing March of that year as the Irish-American Heritage Month.

In South America, economic growth and demographics in Argentina, especially, also benefited greatly from an inflow of Irish families during the nineteenth century.⁶ On the other hand, in the first quarter of that century Irish military had a measurable importance in the establishment of some of the Spanish American republics and were instrumental, as well, in helping Brazilians, in 1822, secure their independence from Portugal.⁷ At that time Britain tried to persuade Brazil into abolishing slavery, already, but she was contented with securing a set of commercial privileges in exchange for the recognition of Brazilian sovereignty.⁸

The first problem to be tackled in respect to the complete abolition of slavery in Brazil regarded the Atlantic slave traffic, which was notoriously lucrative for the Brazilian and Portuguese merchant companies involved therein. In 1826, Great Britain and Brazil had come to a major settlement designed to stop the slave trade, but the latter, after successive negotiations and the domestic 1831 Law, that actually imposed a curb on the introduction of enslaved Africans into the country, failed to comply with her obligations.

This led to diplomatic conflict with the British government and legislation was passed in Parliament in 1845 (the Aberdeen Act) that unilaterally bolstered British military action against vessels engaged in the Atlantic slave trade. Finally, effective legal measures were taken by Brazilian authorities to stop it, in 1850. From 1853 onwards the traffic had completely ceased.⁹

Nevertheless, Great Britain still demanded that Brazil, among other things, comply with specific clauses of the past agreements, regarding slaves illegally imported after 1830. A Minister Plenipotentiary, William Dougall Christie, was designated to settle those matters.¹⁰

Christie's heavy-handed Palmerstonian, aristocratic style of diplomatic action led to a controversy over affairs that Brazilians deemed internal and affecting the nation's sovereignty. Eventually, minor incidents precipitated a serious confrontation, in 1862/63, with the British minister ordering a naval blockade that resulted in the seizure of five Brazilian ships outside the Rio de Janeiro harbour. In its wake, this crisis brought about the severance of bilateral relations between Brazil and Great Britain.¹¹

Thus, in the early to mid-1860's, the next move for British foreign policy, as regarded slavery in Brazil, seems to have involved a reorientation towards encouraging Emancipation, by means other than pure gun-boat diplomacy. Thenceforth, it would try to avoid meddling into Brazilian internal affairs, which carried with it the risk of jeopardizing existing and prospective British investments in railroads, public utilities, mining, commerce, shipping, and other businesses, in Brazil.

Since the Brazilian domestic slave labour force was effectively tending to dwindle, owing to the absence of fresh supplies from Africa, a potential interest in supporting journalistic activity designed to disseminate Liberal doctrines among Brazilian intellectuals and policy makers may have developed in Britain by the prospects of boosting, in a business-like fashion, the substitution of Africans in Brazil by European free labourers. This would be especially true if the workers were Irish –given the demographic and political problems Ireland presented to Britain in the 1860's.

Such a niche of capitalist activity would have perfectly suited authentically mid – to late nineteenth century modernizing and enterprising British Liberal (as opposed to Tory) immigration agents, for whom journalism would have looked like a tool for them to achieve goals that, apart from individual satisfaction, might prove strategically important, from an institutional standpoint. Actual newspapermanship would thus be combined with political and ideological propaganda, in an effort to influence the hammering-out of public policies, in Brazil, designed to end slavery and pave the way for demographic growth and economic development.

Technical novelties such as the telegraph and steamers enhanced the material conditions that made those objectives seem feasible, and desirable in the short term. William Scully's articles about those matters, in 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' dating from 1865 to 1870, look entirely consistent with this interpretation.

According to estimates presented by Leslie Bethell, 371,615 slaves were smuggled into Brazil between 1840 and 1851, in anticipation of the end of the traffic.¹² This circumstance greatly magnified already existing fears that the domestic white population might be decivilized or engulfed by the hosts of Africans newly reduced to slavery.

Bethell quotes a Brazilian journalist, Evaristo da Veiga, who, as early as 1834, argued that "[...] 'our country is inundated without measure by a rude and stupid race, the number of whom [...] ought to alarm us'."¹³ Brazilian Liberals, in particular, embraced the idea that this should be countered by the introduction of white labourers, and their families, from Europe, so as to make viable the constitution of a so perceived better national "race," identified with the ideals of progress and civilization.¹⁴

International diplomatic, demographic and ideological pressures for greater political openness and free immigration, coupled with similar domestic demands, seem to have been perceived by the Brazilian Conservative ruling élites, however, as a major threat. This situation became more alarming in the mid-1860's, when open warfare between Brazil and Paraguay was drawing to the front line large numbers of Afro-Brazilian workers. Among other measures, a governmental decree of November 1866

made provisions to compensate proprietors who liberated slaves that were willing to go to war.¹⁵ Many ex-slaves also joined the national corps of volunteers, called '*Voluntários da Pátria*'.¹⁶

Conservatives, thence, appear to have summoned up their domestic political strength in defence of Brazilian national sovereignty against foreign pressures and against Paraguay. Equally, and ironically, they were keen on defending slavery, insofar as both, the country's sovereignty and slavery, seem to have been considered to be under menace, respectively by an invading Paraguayan army and by Liberal doctrine.

Apart from strategic, military considerations, this may have accounted for the fact that the war against Paraguay dragged on until March 1870. Conservatives seem to have needed to buy time and rid the domestic political arena of excessively Liberal tendencies, and, sovereignly, address the problem of slavery.

The odds were not against Brazilian Conservatives. In 1864 there were approximately only 1,7 million slaves in the country, out of a total population of 10,245 million. Even though slaves accounted for the bulk of the production of exportable commodities, especially coffee, politically they did not matter at all, of course. Voters consisted mainly of free small tenants whose economic well-being and social standing relied heavily upon arrangements worked out with large estate owners, whereby the formers' right to vote overlapped with their access to the latter's property. Political allegiance secured the tenants the use of land and, if their income entitled them to, the right (which in fact was an imposition, a duty) to cast a ballot.¹⁷

The Brazilian political system was parliamentary and had been conceived of after the British model. However, there was an important distinction: in Brazil the 1824 Constitution had established the existence of four powers: apart from the Judiciary, the Legislative and the Executive, the Emperor was invested with the function of a Moderator (the '*Poder Moderador*'). The monarch, thus, had acquired the aura of an Enlightened Despot.

When Parliamentarism came fully and effectively into practice, in 1847, that special legal provision was employed by Dom Pedro II, the Emperor, to appoint and dismiss Prime Ministers at his own discretion. That system was, by Brazilian themselves, scornfully referred to as "Parliamentarism in reverse" ('*Parlamentarismo às avessas*'): whenever the monarch chose a new Prime Minister, new majorities, accordingly, had to be assembled, which lent to the polling process the appearance of mere theatrics.¹⁸ Elections' results were, then, conveniently arranged in advance. Retainers and tenants had no choice but to vote in accordance with their patrons' orientation, thereby securing their land titles or rights.

Those arrangements, moreover, had serious administrative effects. In the wake of each Cabinet change, there took place innumerable new appointments to positions within the entire Imperial bureaucracy, so as to adjust it to the new political environment. Those sweeping administrative reshuffles were known as '*derrubadas*,' (or 'downfalls,' probably evoking something like the collapsing of a castle of cards).

The recurrent *derrubadas* produced great administrative instability. This enhanced enormously the importance of patronage. Brazilian politicians actually had to spend most of their time writing letters of recommendation on behalf of their friends, relatives and protégés, in the effort to fill the administrative positions in harmony with the Emperor's wishes or strategic goals.

Those practices had the effect of blurring the ideological distinctions between the existing political parties. An opinion was generally shared by Brazilians, according to which there was no real difference between Liberals (or '*luzias*') and Conservatives (or '*saquaremas*'). William Scully himself noted, in a article published on May 24, 1865, that '[...] if the truth be told, [...]' any differences originated '[...] more in the desire for place and patronage than in disapproval of the policy of the Government.'

That deceptive indistinctiveness, though, often concealed the fact that there were, actually, characteristically Liberal propositions on the table, like Emancipation. With the notable exception of the Catholic Ultramontanes (which will be discussed below), most Conservatives were not at all inclined to accept it, whereas those willing to support the Emancipationist cause would normally join the Liberal Party. Other points of contention, like the free navigation of the Amazon River, clearly separated '*saquaremas*' from '*luzias*,' the former being fiercely against that measure until it became law, in December 1866.¹⁹

In addition to the concentration of political power, land policies were tailored to suit the large estates' owners' interests, especially from a Conservative standpoint.²⁰ However abundant, arable land was not cheap, the best tracts really being affordable only to the very rich. Scarcely any good terrain was left over for the purposes of European colonization, which, being additionally subjected to State control, was thus severely restricted.

Given the above circumstances, the idea of free immigration stood hardly any chance of being spoused by the Emperor, or of being seriously considered by most Brazilian statesmen. However, the perception, especially from 1865 onwards, that the domestic slave workforce would inevitably diminish opened up prospects for Liberals in Brazil to make alliances with foreign interests and so advance the ideological propaganda advocating the free introduction of white, Christian, and so depicted progressive and hard working agriculturists in Brazil. Foreigners like Scully were quite optimistic about it, as the following quotation from the May 23, 1867 edition of 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times' shows:

Should Europe pour in here her superabundant population, where employment could be given to 20,000,000 of them, then the Government of Brazil can emancipate the slaves without ruining the production of the country and with some prospect of providing for the future of the freedmen.

Paradoxically, this also appealed to Ultramontane Catholic Conservatives. Free European immigration was regarded by this ultra-radical branch of Catholics as an opportunity for Brazil to admit authentically Catholic immigrants into her territory. As

for the suitability of the Irish to people the territory of Brazil, Scully made the following assessment:

The Irishman, perhaps justly accused of unthriftiness and insubordination at home, for he is hopeless there and has the tradition of a bitter oppression to make him feel discontented, becomes active, industrious, and energetic when abroad; intelligent he always is. He soon rids himself of his peculiarities and prejudices, and assimilates himself so rapidly with the progressive people around him that his children no longer can be distinguished from the American of centuries of descent. ('The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' January 23, 1867.)

Politically, Irish immigration looked like a means to enlarge the flocks of those truly faithful to the Holy See (and to Pope Pius IX). Catholic clergymen would thereby stand on firmer grounds and lay stronger claims for a ban on the Emperor's religious privileges. The Brazilian Imperial ruler, Dom Pedro II, was constitutionally empowered as Head of the Brazilian Catholic Church and had, thus, religious prerogatives, like the right to vetoing bulls issued by the Vatican. Greater immigration of European Catholics was also thought of as a sort of deterrent, preventing the number of incoming Protestants from Germany and, once the Civil War ended, the United States, from becoming disproportionately large.²¹

Having aligned themselves with the Progressive faction of the Conservative Party, Brazilian Ultramontanes joined forces with the Liberal movement, in opposition to the monarch. Led by the Ultramontane Senator Zacarias de Góes e Vasconcelos, a Liberal-Progressive parliamentary majority gradually developed and materialized, in 1866, that was sympathetic towards new immigration policies.

All this seems to account for the fervent optimism with which Scully began publishing 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times.' Playing a strategically convenient role for Great Britain as regards her political determination to end slavery in Brazil, he appears to have envisaged an opportunity to thrash Conservative powers in Brazil and make way for radical Liberal policies to step onto the country's political stage.

During an initial four-year period of intense activity, the Irish newspaperman argued in favour of the progress to be derived from the introduction of new fiscal legislation, from the admission of free western labourers into the Brazilian economy, greater financial flexibility, fiscal reform and easier credit for immigrants to buy land. He also emphasized the need for closer commercial, technical and scientific relationship with Great Britain. Diplomatic relations between the two countries, meanwhile, were resumed in July 1865. Also, a loan was floated in London to help Brazil fight the 1864/1870 war against Paraguay.²²

On the other hand, Scully's paper featured critical portraits of the Brazilian Conservative ruling classes, despite his initial commitment to avoid comments on personalities. A number of aspects of such criticism deserve closer analysis. First, the

slavery system was persistently deemed 'irrational,' and directly identified with those responsible for its survival. In other words, Conservatism was tantamount to irrationality.

Secondly, Scully regarded the country's political life with considerable contempt, even though the all-embracing Brazilian system of patronage actually elicited seemingly ambiguous responses from him. At various times he would either praise it, as if he desperately needed to appease the Brazilian Emperor, or decry it violently, showing how it hindered the country's institutional and economic development.

If one takes it that he was a Catholic Liberal, possibly aligned with the political currents that supported William Gladstone at home, it could be assumed that, although he may have counted on British official sponsorship, he was left, in a foreign country, to fend for himself, so to say, since Liberals in Britain did not have so steady a hold on to national political power, and were constantly vying with Tories like Lord Derby and Disraeli, between 1865 to 1868, for control over Britain's destiny.²³ The Irish Question and the rise of Fenianism, which were Gladstone's concerns, may also have accounted for the degree of isolation Scully appears to have been forced to endure in Brazil.

English merchants in Rio de Janeiro seem not to have regarded Scully's initiatives with optimism, but rather derisively. Letters were published in his paper that clearly show this. Actually, their commercial interests could be jeopardized should the abolition of slavery in Brazil be brought about too soon – which carried with it the prospect of a rapid, albeit temporary, disorganization of the country's plantation economy. Even the British São João D'El Rey Mining Company, in the Brazilian province of Minas Gerais, hired slaves to work the mines.²⁴ Both Brazilian coffee planters and large British trading companies, therefore, not to mention wealthy British financiers, had good reason to be cautious about the issue of European free immigration.

Hence Scully's comment, on the bilateral crisis triggered off by William Christie, that '[...] the Brazilian is innately courteous, and, appreciating in a high degree the quality in others, will yield much more to the politeness and suavity of the stranger than could be extorted by the menaces of the Foreign Office.'²⁵ In several other instances he conveyed his seemingly acceptance of the practice of patronage and the perception that the Brazilian Imperial government was 'stable and strong.' The country itself, Brazil, was said to be 'the destined rival on the Southern Continent of the great Anglo-Saxon nation of the North' ('Anglo-Brazilian Times,' Feb. 25 1865).

However, in spite of his own appreciation that Brazilians expected 'politeness and suavity' on the part of foreigners and abhorred English arrogance, Scully's impatience with the Brazilian patronage system was soon made patent. After having published (March 24, 1865) a lengthy article in defence of the official Brazilian stance on specific questions regarding illegally enslaved Africans, and against the patronizing disposition of W. D. Christie, he complained bitterly that Brazilian congressmen spent most of their time with the task of writing letters of recommendation, dedicating scarcely any attention to actual legislative duties. According to the Irish newspaperman, the volume of individual requests for employment and appointments was so massive that '[...] the life of a Brazilian Minister is a life of downright slavery.' (May 24, 1865.)

Thirdly, and in connection with the foregoing aspects of his position, Scully made disparaging parallels between Brazilian slaveowners and the Chinese governing élites of the time. The former, and their male offspring, were deemed idle and unimaginative, living parasitically out of employments afforded to them within the public administration: ‘true, our Brazilian boy is not unlearned [...] still, all his studies are without an aim, his only view in life is towards the ‘dolce far niente’ of a government employment [...]’

According to him, those traits were akin to those of the ruling classes in Asian societies. Curiously, Brazilian Conservatives at that time also put forward proposals for alternative immigration projects, aiming at the introduction of Chinese workers. Again, Scully disapproved of the initiative and wrote successive articles in defense of his arguments on this question. Further, Scully stressed, rather threateningly, that [...].

[...] the Brazilian educated classes have through indolence and pride abandoned to the more utilitarian foreigner engineering, mining, trades, commerce, and manufactures, and leave the resources and the riches of their wonderful country undeveloped until the educated science of some enterprising foreigner finds out the treasure and turns it to his own advantage. (April 8, 1865.)

Nearly a century after Scully’s first articles in ‘The Anglo-Brazilian Times,’ the late Brazilian sociologist Gilberto de Mello Freyre, in his classical work on the Brazilian colonial and imperial societies, ‘The Masters and the Slaves,’ quoted several European observers whose impressions on the education of the young Brazilian male clearly matched Scully’s perceptions and apprehensions about the fate of the country’s ruling élites. Freyre noted that the main concern of Brazilian young males was ‘to syphilize themselves as soon as possible, thereby acquiring those glorious scars in the bouts of Venus that Spix and Martius were so horrified to see Brazilians proudly displaying.’²⁶ Scully’s opinions might be endorsed by the quotation below, again from Freyre:

The Brazil of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers came near to being a land without children. At the age of seven many a shaver could repeat for you by heart the names of the European capitals, could tell you the ‘three enemies of the soul,’ could add, subtract, multiply, and divide, decline in Latin, and recite in French. We may picture him as he looked at his first communion: black topcoat and black boots – all this funereal black contrasting with the sickly yellow of his anemic countenance. It was then that the child became a youth.²⁷

Other remarks bluntly made by Scully on the Brazilian aristocracies’ lifestyle, however, did touch on a rather sensitive aspect of the image of the Brazilian male:

[...] Again we repeat that mind and body react upon each other and enervate together, and we warn our Brazilian youth that, if they suffer to degenerate and become emasculated through their indolence and contempt for usefulness, they

will 'ere long endure the mortification of being ousted even out of their present stronghold of the public service, by those other classes whose pursuits they affect so much to scorn, when once the energies that win for these their wealth be directed to the loaves and fishes of government employ. (April 8, 1865.)

Such disparaging comments on the so-perceived slothfulness that allegedly pervaded the Brazilian slave-owning aristocracy's way of life reveal two prominent features of Scully's discourse: on the one hand, there stood his conviction that the Brazilian people had to be regenerated, *as a whole* –and not only the 'colored race.'

On the other hand, that first aspect was coupled with his strong attachment to British values. Although he upheld internationalist and somewhat pacifist Liberal principles (as in an October 9, 1866 article against the destructiveness entailed by the war Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay were waging against Paraguay), he enthusiastically called for the introduction of classes of physical education into the syllabuses adopted by the incipient Brazilian school system. Thus, the Brazilian youth might develop a greater sense of discipline, responsibility, and a stronger character, emulating, or adopting, British models of education. Physical education was referred to as the tool which "[...] joined with Western utilitarian science, makes two hundred thousand Europeans the arbiters of two hundred millions of the inhabitants of Indian climes." Further, Brazilians had to remember that "[...] Waterloo was won at Eton and Harrow" (April 8, 1865). Those observations could easily be taken for an ingredient of a British colonialist strategy.

Scully's writings appear to fit into the wider context of Anglo-Irish Victorianism in an authentic way, with a discourse that combined Liberal ideas and patronizing Conservative (Tory) attitudes.²⁸ As discussed above, the British policy towards Brazil in 1865 could no longer afford to follow guidelines related to a purely commercial kind of hegemony, as expressed by the Anglo-Brazilian Treaties of 1810 and 1827, whereby Britain secured significant customs' privileges, and other, from Portuguese and Brazilian authorities. Although the aristocratic, Palmerstonian kind of diplomacy had become inadequate, the middle-class, Liberal substitute, however persuasive, intrusive, officially non-diplomatic, *journalistic*, nevertheless had to be pungent, aggressive, whenever necessary.

Turning the focus of this discussion, at this point, to the symbolic aspects of Scully's *colonialist* discourse and its emphasis on the risk of the Brazilian aristocracy becoming emasculated 'through indolence,' it could be argued that he tentatively spearheaded the reproduction, in mid – to late nineteenth century Brazil, of the male/female, either/or, kind of dichotomy that the ideal of an intellectual, transcendental androgyny later embodied in James Joyce's 'Ulysses' appears to have disavowed, as Declan Kiberd puts it:

In spousing the ideal of androgyny, just one year after the declaration of the Irish Free State, Ulysses proclaims itself a central text of national liberation.

Against the either/or antitheses of British Imperial psychology, it demonstrated the superior validity of a both/and philosophy.²⁹

The subsequent quotation seems illustrative of how the Victorian mentality operated, in Ireland:

[...] Antithesis had been the master-key to the Imperial mind, causing people to make absolute divisions between English – and Irish, but also between men and women. By this mechanism the British male could attribute to the Irish all those traits of poetry, emotion and hypersensitivity which a stern muscular code had led to suppress in himself. In like manner, Victorian men insisted that their women epitomize domestic virtues and emotional expressiveness which a harsh mercantile ethic had led them to deny in themselves.³⁰

Scully's 1865 article on Education in Brazil seem to reflect very clearly an urge to persuade the local aristocracy into adopting a similar 'stern muscular code.' The warnings against the slave-owning élites becoming emasculated, and prospectively inferior to the European immigrant, tally with the either/or antitheses characteristic of British colonial psychology and must have had, in the eyes of the Brazilian Imperial government, the ring of a future colonial subjection that had to be prevented at any costs.

After having drawn a depressing picture of the Brazilian upper-classes' youth, and of their presumable fate, Scully started to describe the kind of remedy necessary to improve the fabric of the Brazilian society. Apart from the proposed educational reform, the 'regeneration' should be triggered by the massive introduction in Brazil of Irish and other sanguine, labourious, disciplined and forward-looking European immigrants. Incoming former Confederates, displaced by the North American Civil War and emigrating to Brazil in 1865/67, were also depicted favourably.

Signs that the Brazilian Imperial government really favoured European immigration came, officially, on May 22, 1867, when the Emperor delivered his inaugural speech ('*Fala do Trono*') to the Chamber of Representatives. He showed concern about the problem of the shortage of labour affecting the country's main industry, agriculture, and drew the attention of the legislators to the question of Emancipation, urging them to note that '[...] promoting colonization has to be an object of your particular solicitude.'³¹

Meanwhile, early in 1866 a group of immigration agents, journalists, Brazilian Government officials and politicians had established the International Society of Emigration, with the professed aim of facilitating 'the settlement of the emigrants in the territory of Brazil, to advise them, protect them, and remove any embarrassments with which they may have to struggle.' Scully became one of its directors, but, during the preparatory meetings he made it clear that such 'an association of gentlemen' ought to be '*entirely unconnected with, and independent of the Government and of any emigration projects.*' Also:

The object of the association ought not to be take any *direct* part in the bringing of emigrants to this country; _that is the province of the Government and parties directly interested in the matter. But the society can, *indirectly*, largely supplement the direct efforts to promote emigration. (January, 1866.)

Naturally, his propositions, which pointed to the adoption of policies suitable to the promotion of free immigration, failed to elicit a positive response. Among other dubious initiatives implemented by some of its Brazilian directors, the society was employed as a springboard for the establishment of an emigration agency in New York, the purpose of which was to recruit and remove to Brazil, in connection with the Brazil-United States Mail Steamship Company, emigrants that did not adapt to life in the United States. William Scully maintained a long and acrid series of accusations against one of the directors of that agency, the Brazilian journalist Quintino Bocayuva. According to the Irishman, the agency was sending to Brazil ‘the scum of New York,’ thereby undermining current colonization programmes.

Although free immigration was therefore out of question, arrangements were made between Scully and the Established Church of Ireland, in order to actually enlist Irish families willing to settle in Brazil. In October 1866, he personally addressed the Clergy of Ireland asking for immigrants and, even though he did not approve of governmental colonization schemes, approximately 330 Irish Catholics were sent to Brazil aboard the ship “Florence Chipman,” from Wednesbury, England. After having been greeted by the Emperor in person in Rio de Janeiro,³² they were dispatched to the then province of Santa Catarina, in Southern Brazil.³³

There, in April 1868, most Irish incomers joined a group of Confederates that had already settled on the Colony Príncipe Dom Pedro, on the margins of the Itajahy-Mirim River, along with colonists of various nationalities, including Irishmen recruited in New York by Bocayuva’s agency.³⁴ Upon arrival most of the Irish colonists from Wednesbury appear to have received the lots ascribed to them, but soon the whole enterprise collapsed.

That colony, created by the government in 1867, was located not far from the predominantly German settlement of Blumenau, which was already prospering.³⁵ The latter faced problems similar to the ones affecting the English-speaking settlement on the Itajahy-Mirim, but its founder, Dr. Hermann Blumenau, being one of the actual settlers, was personally involved in the task of establishing and administering the whole business, having become a real bulwark against administrative misconduct.

The English-speaking colony, on the other hand, as pointed out by Scully himself in an article of April 22, 1870 (‘Why the colony failed’), not only had to cope with the difficulties posed by the terrain, that was somewhat improper for cultivation and subject to flooding (as was also the case in Blumenau), but fell prey to other problems, administrative, logistical,³⁶ and inter-cultural. Eventually, the Irish colonists were forced to leave the country, in 1869, as did most of the first settlers. The original area was later

developed by immigrants from Poland. Nowadays it corresponds, to a certain extent, to the municipality of Brusque.

The deeper causes behind the failure of the colony seem to relate, actually, to the Cabinet change that took place in July 1868. The Progressive-Liberal cabinet was dissolved, by the Emperor, after a political crisis had been generated by Liberal criticism against the military operations on the Paraguayan front line. Given the Brazilian patronage system, the subsequent polling placed a strong Conservative majority in power. All support to the English-speaking colony in Santa Catarina, hence, appears to have been withdrawn.

That Liberal criticism was, unfortunately, initiated by Scully, according to whom the then Marquis of Caxias, Commander-in-Chief of the Brazilian armed forces and later of the combined Brazilian, Argentine and Uruguayan armies, was conducting the military operations in Paraguay very slowly, thereby allowing the enemy to regroup and set up new defensive lines. Besides, the alleged “moroseness” displayed by the Brazilian army under Caxias’ command was, again according to the journalist, remarkably costly. In an article of January 7, 1868, among several diatribes against the Brazilian general, he accused him to cause ‘[...] the war [...] to linger on as long as the country can find the gold to squander,’ and pointed out that the ‘[...] favorite weapon [...]’ of Caxias’ were ‘gold-bags.’

The accusations were echoed by the Brazilian Liberal press, producing a clamour so negative that prompted Caxias to submit his resignation. The Emperor refused it and the Progressive-Liberal Prime Minister, Zacarias de Góes e Vasconcelos, eventually had to step down.³⁷

From a military standpoint, the ‘moroseness’ Scully alluded to was a result of the strategy devised by Caxias, designed not to attack the Paraguayan capital directly.³⁸ Although the general refused to track down Solano López personally, in 1869, on grounds that such a role did not suit him, his plan, from the start, appears to have been directed towards the creation of a stifling effect on Paraguay and so afford no opportunity for the enemy to escape – or surrender. López was eventually killed on March 1st 1870, after having being chased from the beginning of the second semester of 1869 onwards.³⁹

Prime Minister Zacarias de Góis e Vasconcelos’ substitute, Joaquim José Rodrigues Torres, Viscount of Itaboraí, was an old *saquarema*. From his inauguration, on July 16, 1868, the English-speaking immigrants of the Príncipe Dom Pedro colony really seem to have been denied financial assistance.⁴⁰ Further, the *derrubada* that followed the Cabinet change, depriving Liberals of their appointments, must have ensured that they were kept unaided. All this bear resemblance to a retaliation against Scully.

In the aftermath of this *débaçle* it would seem that renewed attempts to foster British colonization schemes in Brazil would be ruled out, but other colonies were established in the subsequent years, in the Paraná and São Paulo provinces.⁴¹ Measures to promote massive free immigration in Brazil, however, remained unadopted until the 1880’s.⁴²

Although Scully did not succeed either in helping Irish colonists settle in Brazil in large numbers or in having free immigration legislation adopted in the country, the

period spanning from 1865 to 1884, which corresponds to Scully's professional life in Brazil, saw the establishment in the Brazilian territory of various industries, the expansion of foreign trade, the construction of railroads, unprecedented urban growth and the improvement of public works, much of which was implemented with British capital and manpower.⁴³

It looks nearly impossible to make an assessment of the importance of Scully's activities as a journalist and businessman in the joint effort to make those economic developments come to life, from the inauguration of 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times' onwards. Many of Scully's original objectives, as featured in his newspaper's first issue, of February 7 1865, were never achieved. Massive free immigration, for instance, was only possible when the slave labour system finally showed signs of undeniable exhaustion and of its incapacity of sustaining the profitability of the Brazilian coffee production, in the 1880's. And Irish immigration, in particular, was rendered inviable.

Nation-building was, for nineteenth century Brazilian policy makers, a major challenge. Various problems had to be tackled simultaneously, that were complicated by material and political constraints. The preservation of the country's sovereignty was their main concern, in a domestic context dominated by a political life that gravitated around a hierarchically organized system of patronage, cunningly orchestrated by Dom Pedro II. Slavery, the territorial extension of the country (over 8 million km²), the lack of a military force compatible with the size of the territory, and an administrative structure dependent on revenues obtained from an economic infrastructure almost entirely concerned with the exportation of primary goods, all these were geopolitical and economic factors accounting for a certain degree of national decentralization and strategic vulnerability.

Brazilian Conservative politicians displayed greater aptitude to sort out those problems, during the Imperial period (1822-1889), and, justifiably, rejected Liberal policies.⁴⁴ The political changes that accompanied the end of the Empire and the installation of the current Republican régime also owed very little, if anything, to the old Liberalism of the 1860's. Positivism became the doctrine spoused by the ruling civil and military Republican élites, whereas the Conservative Party dissolved after the end of slavery.

Therefore, the remembrance of the legacy of William Scully's has been nearly completely, and undeservedly, neglected. Although pervaded by certain nineteenth century Victorian prejudices, his writings seem to be an acknowledgeable Anglo-Irish contribution to the History of Ideas and of Liberalism in Brazil, having played an arguably considerable, if controversial, role in the country's Political History.

Notes

- 1 Conrad 1972, 20-46.
- 2 Marshall 1996, 20.
- 3 Graham 1979, 68-70.

- 4 Azevedo 1997, 62-8; Vieira 1980, 95-112.
- 5 Ranelagh 1983, 125.
- 6 Korol & Sábato 1981.
- 7 For a brief account of the role played by Irish military in, for example, the building-up of Bolivia, please see Dunkerley 1996.
- 8 Manchester 1973; Bethell 1970.
- 9 Bethell 1970.
- 10 Bethell 1970, 382.
- 11 Manchester 1973; Graham 1979.
- 12 Bethell 1970, 388.
- 13 Bethell 1970, 72.
- 14 Azevedo 1987, 62-6.
- 15 Doratioto 2002, 272-76.
- 16 Salles 1990; Silva 1997.
- 17 Graham 1990.
- 18 Carvalho 1996.
- 19 Cervo 1981, 228.
- 20 Carvalho 1996, 301-25.
- 21 Vieira 1980, 245.
- 22 Bethell 1996, 26.
- 23 Robbins 1998, 161-86.
- 24 Libby 1984.
- 25 Scully 1866, X.
- 26 Freyre 1964, 358.
- 27 Freyre 1964, 359.
- 28 This argumentation draws on the distinctions between aristocratic and middle-class mentalities in Britain during the XIX century as expounded in Perkin 1978.
- 29 Kiberd 1992, Lxiv.
- 30 Kiberd 1992, Lxiv-lxv.
- 31 Brasil 1988, 264.
- 32 Platt 1964, 23.
- 33 Vieira 1980, 245; Marshall 1999.
- 34 Lauth 1987, 21.
- 35 Silva 1995, 74.
- 36 Lauth 1987.
- 37 Holanda 1972, 7-13 And 95-104. Doratioto 2002, 334; Vieira 1980, 247-53.
- 38 Doratioto 2002, 115-21.
- 39 Doratioto 2002, 383-455; Bethel 1996, 8.
- 40 Lauth, 1987, 73-80.
- 41 Marshall, 1999.
- 42 Hall, 1969, 4-11.
- 43 Graham, 1968.
- 44 Cervo, 1980.

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