

On the Portuguese-Brazilian Practices of Representation of the Seventeenth Century (1580-1750)

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*Abstract: Nowadays, the Portuguese-Brazilian representations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are stylistically classified as "baroque". The classification is anachronic, for it generalizes, in a transhistoric fashion, the neokantian, positivist-romantic conception proposed as a deductive pattern of description for the art of the seventeenth century, by Heinrich Wölfflin in his works *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888) and *Fundamental Principles of the History of Art* (1915). As practices pertaining to Ancien Régime, the Portuguese-Brazilian representations are not "baroque" and the deductive usage of the "baroque" category for classifying them is not historically pertinent. In the present text, I deal with representations in a historical sense and I propose that it is useful to examine the historical specificity of the practices in those centuries considering the material and institutional conditionings, the bibliographical as well as the rhetorical-poetic and theological-political codes of these representations. I believe it is obvious that the colonial past is not something positive, that can be just simply recognized. I briefly recollect here that, as presented in this text, it results from a particular reconstitution, i.e., the colonial past to which I schematically refer to is represented as a verisimilar construct, produced by my usage of materials from Portuguese and Brazilian files.*

I will deal here, mainly, with colonial *lettres*, making a few references to the plastic arts produced in the State of Brazil, as well as in the State of Maranhao and Grão Pará. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the State of Brazil corresponded basically to the capitaney of the Northeast, Bahia and Pernambuco. Throughout the seventeenth century, they were, mainly, economic centers based on the great sugar plantations. The State of Brazil also included the capitancies of the Southeast, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Vicente (today São Paulo). These divisions, particularly São Vicente, were little developed. The village of São Paulo de Piratininga, located in São Vicente, was inhabited by "bandeirantes", men known for their continuous

attacks upon the Jesuitic reductions of Guairá and Paraguai, where they would imprison the Indians and sell them as slaves to the whole Colony.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Spanish government founded the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará, whose territory corresponded, approximately, to what are now known as the States of the Northeast and the North of the country, Ceará, Maranhão, Piauí, Pará, Tocantins and part of the Amazon. When talking about the Portuguese colonization, we should bear in mind two economic and administrative areas, the State of Brazil and the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará. At the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, gold was found in the interior of the territory, where today the States of Minas Gerais and Goiás are. Soon afterwards, diamond ores were discovered. The initial wealth furnished by gold and precious stones financed the enterprises of religious sodalities and administrative authorities in these regions. A great number of religious monuments were built in Vila Rica, Congonhas do Campo, São João d'el Rei, Catas Altas, Sabará, Santa Bárbara, etc. Gold also financed the building of the convent-palace of Mafra in Portugal, as well as the luxurious court of King Dom João V.

In this text, the expression "seventeenth century" is used to refer to the colonial period of the Spanish and Portuguese "Catholic policy" in Brazil and in Maranhão and Grão Pará. This "Catholic policy" is characterized by the intimate fusion of theology and counter-reformist action. It radically denies Luther's thesis that original sin prevents the Almighty's natural light from illuminating human choices. Furthermore, it also denies Machiavelli's thesis that proposes that God is not necessary to establish the effective reality of power. The Portuguese and Spanish texts produced in Brazil in the seventeenth century always assert the presence of the Almighty's natural light in nature and in history, stating that political action *should have* an ethical basis. This is the case of the Jesuitic texts that defend the humanity of the Indians, arguing that despite their primitive habits, Divinity illuminates their will, memory and intelligence.

I suggest as time boundaries for the duration of the so-called 'Catholic policy' in Brazil and Maranhão the year 1580, that marks the beginning of the Iberic Union, and 1750, year of the death of the Portuguese King Dom João V. As it is well-known, the Portuguese King Dom Sebastião died in 1578, in a crusade against the moors in the North of Africa. He was single, took the vow of chastity and had no descendants. His cousin, the King of Spain, Felipe II, was considered the legitimate heir and came to the Portuguese throne in 1580, ruling the country as Felipe I of Portugal. The Spanish sovereignty of the Habsburgs lasted until 1640, when the Restoration wars for the independence of Portugal broke out or 1668 when independence was officially recognized. Throughout these 60 or 80 years, Spanish literary and artistic models were adopted by poets and craftsmen in Portugal, Brazil and Maranhão and Grão Pará. The Spanish authors of the *Siglo de Oro*, such as Góngora, Quevedo, Lope de Vega and Cervantes, were then very much imitated. Also, Italian artistic models reached Brazil through Spain. During this time, bilingualism was a common practice.

The second date, 1750, corresponds to the year of the death of King Dom João V and the beginning of the political and cultural transformation of the Catholic Illustration led by the Marquis of Pombal, Sebastião de Carvalho e Mello. In 1759, after the Jesuits were expelled by the Marquis, elementary and higher education in the country underwent changes that aimed at the substitution of the academic tradition based on the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle by English empiricist science and French Illuminist philosophy. From 1760 on, the models of artistic representation known today as “baroque” were replaced by French, Prussian, Italian and Austrian neoclassical ones.

The two dates that delimit the object of study are merely indicative. When classification and unification made by deductive stylistic categories such as “baroque” are disregarded, it is possible to move these imaginary boundaries backwards and forwards considering that, in the case of *lettres* and the arts, many different and diverse cultural references coexist in the object of study. They are long-lasting references, such as Greek, Latin, Patristic, Scholastic and Neoscholastic patterns –among others—repeatedly imitated by colonial poets and craftsmen before and after the time span comprehended by these dates. Such is the case of Antônio Francisco Lisboa, the most famous colonial architect and sculptor, who came to be known as ‘Aleijadinho’. Son of a Portuguese man and a slave woman, he created his masterpieces at the end of the eighteenth century in the gold and diamond region of Minas Gerais. He also died there in 1817 after having produced countless religious masterpieces such as sculptures, church ornamentations, altars, pulpits and churches.

Aleijadinho’s sculpture works present deformations of the *figura serpentinata*. The bodies of the saints usually have the shape of the letter S revolving around an imaginary axis that goes from head to toe. The face, hands and gestures are very dramatic and represent intense passion. The raiments of the saints generally have flat folds, geometrically disposed, which contrast with the crooked shape of the bodies. Nationalist interpretations, articulated after the romantic imagery created around the figure of the genius-artist, attribute the stylistic deformation that characterizes Aleijadinho’s art to the author’s disease, leprosy. This illness was put down to his being a mulatto in a slave society where the stereotype of ‘blood cleansing’, a common belief among the Portuguese and the Spaniards, classified the Africans and their descendants as inferior beings. The deformations would be the expression of the affliction and revolt against the privileges of the Portuguese *Ancien Régime*. In the 1930’s and 1940’s, however, European researchers demonstrated that the sculptures romantically attributed to Aleijadinho’s disease and race imitate the images of carvings that reached Minas Gerais from Italy, countries in Central Europe, such as Tchechoslovakia and regions from the south of Germany, as is the case of Bavaria. The same stylistic pattern of deformation can be observed in carvings that, evidently, were not done by sick mulattos in their countries of origin.



Aleijadinho. Pormenor do púlpito. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 21. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)



Aleijadinho. Profeta Isaías. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 28. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)



Aleijadinho. Atlante suporte do coro. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 49. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)



Aleijadinho. Pastor, figura de presépio. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 68. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)

In 1640, the Portuguese war of Restoration against Spain broke out and only ended in 1668. Also in 1640, the Duke of Bragança was proclaimed King of Portugal and was crowned as Dom João IV. He died in 1656 and his widow, Luisa de Gusmão, exercised the regency until 1662, when their son came to the throne as Dom Afonso VI. He was dethroned in 1667 by a coup led by his brother Prince Pedro who was appointed Regent in 1668. In turn, Dom Afonso VI's wife, Marie-Françoise-Isabelle of Savoy, cousin of King Louis XIV of France, had their marriage annulled, pleading her husband's sexual impotence in order to marry her brother-in-law. In 1683, when the dethroned Dom Afonso VI died, the Prince Regent succeeded as Dom Pedro II. As his Queen died, leaving him without male heirs, he married Maria Sofia Isabel of Neuburg, who gave birth to his son, João. In 1661, when one of Dom João IV's daughters, the infant Catarina, married King Charles II from the House of Stuart, Portugal definitely came under the influence of England. According to one of the marriage clauses, the English were granted countless commercial privileges in the Portuguese colonies. Many historians have demonstrated that the gold found in Brazil at end of the seventeenth century, once en route to Portugal, was diverted to England, hence becoming one of the main economic factors for the constitution of the British Empire in the eighteenth century.

Between 1580 and 1750, there is a great number of literary representations that deal with the political, economic, religious, hierarchical, and administrative questions of the Colony. I shall refer here to only four of these questions namely, the subjection of the Indians to the condition of slaves, encompassing the years that go from 1580 to 1662; the wars against the Dutch from 1624 to 1654; the sugar economic crisis between 1675 and 1700; the gold and diamond cycle between 1690-1750. Due to the scope of the present work, these subjects will be referred to in a schematic way.

When the first Jesuitic mission commanded by Father Manuel da Nobrega arrived in Bahia in March 1549, the Society of Jesus started to organize the Indians from the Brazilian coast in settlements in order to indoctrinate them. As a religious order subordinated to the Portuguese crown, the Jesuits had jurisdiction over the catechized Indians, fact that brought about a head-on confrontation with the settlers who needed slave manpower for agriculture as well as other jobs. In *Descriptive Treaty of Brazil in 1587*, book written in the style of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Gabriel Soares de Sousa, landowner from Bahia and staunch enemy of the Jesuits, supplies interesting information about the fauna and the flora of the region, the Indians and the process of colonization.

Openly revealing his antagonism against the priests, Gabriel Soares wrote *Chapters by Gabriel Soares de Sousa against the Fathers from the Society of Jesus who live in Brazil*. This work synthetizes the settlers' motivations for their fight against the Jesuits. As they are poor, they need hand work. But, as they cannot buy African slaves since they are too expensive, they need to enslave the Indians. According to de Sousa, the Jesuits compete disloyally with the settlers, for they keep the Indians under their control in order to exploit them in their sugar mills and plantations.

Between 1570 and 1600, the Jesuits staged sacramental plays, written after the Portuguese and Castilian Medieval plays. One such example would be the texts by the Portuguese writer Gil Vicente. They represent Catholic mysteries, sacraments and principles and were aimed, mainly, at catechizing the Indians as well as moralizing the settlers. The values being portrayed in them pertain to the Iberian “Catholic policy”, already referred to, in its struggle against Luther, Calvin and Machiavelli in Europe and against traditional Indian practices, defined by priests as evidence of the Devil’s actions, in Brazil. Hence, these religious plays dramatize the endless fight between God and the Devil. In their colonial expression, they take shape in the representation of sins that have to do with the Indians’ cultural practices, namely xamanism, nomadism, intertribal wars, polygamy, nudity and ritual cannibalism. They also portray the settlers’ sins, mainly, sexual ones, as a consequence of the freedom in their relations with Indian women. A proverb of the times asserted that *Ultra aequinoxialem non pecari* (there is no sin below the equator). The Devil generally speaks Tupi, the language of the Indians that inhabited the Brazilian litoral in the sixteenth century; devils usually have names of Indian leaders that allied with the invaders of the territory, such as the French Huguenots of Villegagnon, who occupied the Guanabara bay in Rio de Janeiro. On the other hand, the angel that fights against the Devil speaks Portuguese and Spanish and, sometimes, Latin. The Jesuits adapted the Tupi language and the indigenous ritual instruments to the representations, decontextualizing them through the Christian usage.

The texts produced by the Jesuits are utilitarian and Brazilian literary histories do not ascribe to them too much importance. They are very much appreciated, though, by historians and anthropologists as documents that attest to the initial processes of territory occupation and spiritual conquest of the natives. Controversy on the matter of Indian slavery appears again in the works of the Jesuit Antonio Vieira, written between 1651 and 1662, topic that will be duly discussed in the present paper.

According to literary histories, the “baroque” in Brazil begins with the publication of *Prosopopéia*, a short epic poem by Bento Teixeira, written in 1601. It is an imitation of *Os Lusíadas*, by Luis Vaz de Camões, and it celebrates Jorge de Albuquerque Coelho’s war deeds. He was the owner of the Pernambuco hereditary capitancy. During the Dutch wars many genres were prolifically produced such as Jesuitic letters, sermons, chronicles and narratives. In 1624, the Dutch invaded Bahia. They were sent by the WIC, the *West Indische Compagnie* – the Company of the West Indies – that belonged to the commercial corporations of the Netherlands which, at that moment, were at war with Spain. The Dutch came with the double objective of getting hold of the sugar plantations and dominating the slave trade. At that moment, the traffic of black people, brought from Angola and Guinea Bay by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, was a very profitable business due to the fact that the Crown had the monopoly of this trade and sold the slaves not only in Brazil but also in the three Americas. The Dutch were expelled from Bahia in 1625. In 1626, Antonio Vieira, who was by then 18 years old and a seminarist at the Society of Jesus, wrote in Latin *Carta Anua*, in which he reports the invasion and

resistance of the inhabitants of Salvador. The superior stylistic quality of *Carta Anua* foreshadows the magnitude of his later works: sermons, letters and prophetic texts. Father Vieira's long life and action (1608-1697) covers the entire seventeenth century and, amazingly, deals with *all* the controversial issues that involved Portuguese trade with Spain, France, Savoy, Rome, Naples, Austria, England, Holland, Angola, Guinea, Birmania, Japan and India during this period of time. The Dutch came back in 1630 and invaded Pernambuco. From there, they occupied other regions of the Northeast, until they were definitely expelled in 1654. During the Dutch occupation, the priests from the Society of Jesus and other religious orders would deliver sermons to the white, indian, black, mulatto and *mameluco* (name given to the descendants of white and indian) populations, expounding on the moral, political and religious need of facing the Calvinist enemy. The sermons were based on "predicable concepts", i.e., excerpts from the Old and the New Testament that were applied to the local circumstances. Temporal matters, such as wars, were interpreted prophetically through biblical texts and canonical authorities who had commented on the episodes. Vieira is famous for his "Sermon for the Success of the Portuguese Arms against Holland" in 1640. Quoting a biblical passage in which Moses addresses himself to God, demanding from Him an explanation of why He sleeps while he asks for help against the Pharaoh's army, Vieira audaciously speaks to God, telling Him that if He does not wake up in time, the world will end up by saying that "God is Dutch". On the Dutch side, many naturalists such as Marcgraff, Piso, Barleu and painters, like Franz Post, Zacharias Waguener e Albert Eckhout devoted themselves to the painting of landscapes and produced magnificent canvases that document the habits of indians, blacks and mulattos as well as the everyday life in the sugar plantation areas of Pernambuco and Cidade Maurícia, name attributed to the city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco, initially ruled by the Prince of Orange, Mauricio de Nassau. He sponsored the arts, made urban reforms and allowed freedom of cult to the Sephardic Jews, who could then have their synagogues in the Northeast. When the Portuguese and Spanish people took over the region once more, the Jews fled from the Inquisition and headed for Manhattan or New York. The episodes of the wars against the Dutch as well as the human types involved in them – Portuguese, Spanish, indians and blacks – were treated by many authors, such as Duarte de Albuquerque Coelho in his *Daily Memoirs of the War of Brazil*; Diogo Lopes Santiago's *History of the War of Pernambuco* and Frei Manuel Calado's *The Courageous Lucideno*. These historical texts imitate Latin historians, such as Titus Livius, Suetone and Tacitus. Having been written by Catholic Portuguese-Brazilian authors, they interpret the experience reported by means of a ciceronian model that defines history as *magistra vitae*, master of life, proposing the war deeds of the Portuguese, Spanish and even indian and black heroes as ethical-political examples to be imitated because they embody the distinctive quality of Iberian chivalry. These texts generally interpret events as signs of the divine Providence in favour of the Catholics in history.

From 1675 on, due to customs restrictions imposed by England, France and Holland, on the distribution of Brazilian sugar in European markets, stocks soared in the warehouses in Lisbon. The Portuguese Crown, then, ordered that prices be lowered, so that Brazilian sugar would be more competitive in European markets. In Bahia and Pernambuco, the decrease in prices had an immediate impact on the payroll of clergymen and the bureaucracy. The value and price of African slaves, as well as of the materials used in the sugar manufacturing areas increased astronomically. Landowners ran out of money and started to depend on credit loans. Soon, though, due to their inability to meet their debts, they went bankrupt and had to close down their sugar mills. The decrease in Brazilian sugar prices also affected the collection of doles and tithes, fact that intensified poverty amongst the population which was chronically in a miserable condition. The crisis worsened when the Portuguese gold and silver currency was rated at a nominal value inferior to the currency in circulation in Brazil. This measure caused the evasion of metals from Brazil to Portugal, coupled with a great price increase in the products of that kind. In 1688, after the 20% devaluation of the Spanish *pataca*, the Portuguese currency became more vulnerable to smuggling, as well as other illegal practices. It was common, for example, for goldsmiths to cut the coins' edges and melt the gold and silver chips, for the production of ingots, table-ware and other luxurious objects made of such metals. Together with tobacco and white rum, sugar cane brandy was bartered for slaves in Angola and in the Gulf of Guinea. In 1692, the governor Luis Gonçalves da Câmara Coutinho wrote to the king to communicate that the crisis was so intense that there were no coins left to give alms to the poor. He demanded measures to put an end to this lack of charity. Besides, between the 1680 and 1700, there had been a high number of deaths amongst the African slave population of Bahia and other places in the Northeast. These deaths were caused by the *bicha*, the yellow fever, brought by slave ships. Therefore, the Northeast and Bahia faced countless misfortunes: the moaning of the sick and hungry mob; the uprising of unpaid soldiers from Salvador's infantry whose task was to protect the city against the attacks of English, French and Dutch pirates; the rebellion of slaves who would then seek refuge in the *quilombos* (African name given to the redoubts where slaves fleeing from slavery took sanctuary); attacks from Indians like the Aimorés who resisted the Jesuits' indoctrination and would assault Portuguese villages, setting the sugar mills on fire and beating the settlers to death or killing them with arrows to finally cannibalize them.

In those days, merchants and members of mechanical orders considered "inferior", mainly, Jews and New Christians, obtained nobility titles and got a position among the aristocracy in exchange for loans given to the Crown. Many of them, New Christians' sons, would thus get access to the University of Coimbra and with a doctorate degree, would obtain jobs in the bureaucracy, getting closer to the circles of central power and the Court. The old aristocracy associated with the Holy Office of the Inquisition strongly resisted them. Father Vieira had already returned to Brazil in 1681. He had previously been a preacher at the Roman court of Queen Cristina of Sweden. Vieira had

gone to Rome in 1669 to obtain the Pope's protection, after having been made prisoner by the Holy Office of the Portuguese Inquisition between 1663 and 1667. He had been to Maranhão e Grão Pará between 1651 and 1662, leading a Jesuitic mission. There, he had defended the freedom to practice the Christian faith by the Indians settled by the Society of Jesus, coming into conflict with the settlers who expelled the Jesuits in 1662. In his heated defence of the Indians, Vieira preached audacious sermons, such as the sermon of the lies, in which he uses the letter M, from "Maranhão" ("*maranha*" means "trick", "lie", and "*Maranhão*" can be understood as "big lie") to accuse the people of Maranhão of "hypocrisy". Or the sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fish, in which he employs images of several species of sea animals, in an allegorical fashion, in order to accuse governors, settlers and Carmelite priests of greed and avarice and, also, to make dangerous insinuations against the Portuguese Inquisition. It is said that when he was preaching this sermon, he dramatically abandoned the church and went to the beach, asserting that he was going to preach to the fish, because it would surely be easier to be listened to by sea beings rather than by such wicked people. Resorting to the use of witty metaphors and allegories as well as plastic antithesis – characteristic of the literary style of the times – Vieira states that the population of São Luis de Maranhão is responsible for the death of thousands of Indians. The worst part of it is that, being Catholics, these people allowed the Indian souls to go to Hell without Baptism. In 1662, back in Portugal, he preached to the whole congregated Court the "Sermon of the Epiphany", in which he again accuses the settlers and talks about the Portuguese Catholic mission around the world. The sermon moved the audience deeply. Nevertheless, the measures adopted on the issue of the Indians' indoctrination did not favour Father Vieira who was not allowed to return to Maranhão. In 1659, in the Amazon, Vieira had written a letter to another jesuit, André Fernandes, who was named Bishop of Japan. The main theme of the letter was the prophetic interpretation of *Trovas* or poems by a sixteenth century Portuguese shoemaker, Bandarra. The letter, known as "The Bishop of Japan's Letter" was intercepted by the Inquisition. According to Vieira, Bandarra's *Trovas* demonstrate that a "Hidden" or "Fatal Prince" will eventually come back. It is King Dom João IV and the following one, whose *persona mystica* will turn Portugal into the Fifth World Empire (the others were the Chaldaic, Persian, Greek and Roman empires). His interpretation is a new version of Sebastianism, the Portuguese messianic belief in the seventeenth century.

According to Vieira, God firstly creates the world all by himself; secondly, He helps Portugal to discover Brazil, for Portugal had the prophetic mission of guiding the New world as well as the Indians to Christianity. That is why subjecting the Indians to the condition of slaves is regarded as a sin. Considering that the Indians were renowned for their ability at archery, Vieira came to propose that they could fight against the Ottoman Empire in Europe before Christ's second coming. For the success of that prophetic mission, it was necessary to boost the Portuguese economy, very much weakened after the wars against Spain and Holland, through the founding of a Brazilian Trade Company. Judaeo-Portuguese funds were, in their most part, in Holland where

Jewish and the persecuted New Christians found refuge. The Judaic funds were very often used to finance Dutch expeditions to attack Brazil. Vieira had often made contact with Jews from Rouen, Amsterdam and the Hague, negotiating with the Crown and the Roman Curia for a “general forgiveness” from the Inquisition in exchange of loans. In Amsterdam, he had discussed theology and the destiny of the lost tribes of Israel with the rabbi, Menassesh ben Israel, whose prophetic book, *Hope of Judah*, inspired his letter to André Fernandes, text which also came to be known as *Hopes of Portugal*. In 1663, the Inquisition arrested Vieira, on the grounds that his interpretation of Bandarra was an heterodox one. When he returned to Bahia in 1681, Vieira started writing letters to the King, proposing various political and economic measures, which met an unfavourable response.

Due to the general crisis between 1675 and 1700, the hierarchy undergoes a steadfast instability in Portugal and Brazil, particularly in Maranhão. All these important questions are dealt with in Vieira’s letters, sermons and prophetic work and that is why he is certainly the most remarkable author of Portuguese-Brazilian colonial letters. His work is quite long – about 700 letters, 300 sermons and prophetic work, such as *Hopes of Portugal*, *History of the Future* and *Clavis Prophetarum*, along with a great number of texts with his views on various topics known in Portuguese as ‘*pareceres*’. The most controversial one authorizes the destruction of the *quilombo* of Palmares – a hiding place for thousands of runaway slaves in Pernambuco. In 1697, this *quilombo* was destroyed by the members of an armed band from São Paulo (the *bandeirantes*) and thousands were killed or arrested. It was Vieira who wrote the *parecer* in favor of the military expedition against the ‘quilombo’, stating that the runaway slaves resisted being converted to the Catholic faith as well as yielding to the power of the Crown.

Many of the issues related to the sugar crisis, such as the continuous exchange of social roles, are represented in the satires attributed to Gregório de Matos e Guerra, poet from Bahia who came to be known as “Mouth of Hell”. He was the son of one of the wealthiest sugar plantation and mill owners in Bahia, where he was born in 1636. He studied Canonical Law at Coimbra University and worked as a lawyer for many years in Lisbon until he moved back to Bahia in 1682. For unknown reasons, Gregório de Matos was deported to Angola in 1695. He returned to Brazil in 1696 and died in Recife that same year. Nowadays Gregório de Matos as well as Father Vieira are considered as the most prominent names of Brazilian “baroque literature”. As in the case of “Aleijadinho”, the most notorious interpretations of Gregório de Matos’ poetry are from the romantic-nationalist tradition. These texts follow a biographic and psychological criteria which is permeated by a strong political interest in ‘inventing traditions’ (Hobsbawm’s concept), and they anachronically state that Gregório de Matos was one of the heralds of the Independence of Brazil (September 7th, 1822). There is no consistency in the romantic-nationalist criteria, since there are no autographic texts by the poet. Furthermore, as he never published during his lifetime, all that has been said about him is merely hypothetical. Indeed, the poems ascribed to him are apographs. They were collected by men of letters

from Bahia, who wrote a great deal of codices in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fact that comes to demonstrate that there was a culture of scribes dedicated to handwriting. The poems, which circulated among the people of Salvador either orally or in leaflets, remind of the Spanish *pliegos sueltos*. Quite often, these leaflets were anonymously stuck on the door of churches very late in the evening. As they were read aloud by a man of letters to the illiterate mob, many local residents as aristocrats, common people, slaves, nuns and priests came under the poet's obscene attack. The satires comprise the two Aristotelian variants of the comic: the ridicule and vilification. When the vices of the types satirized were minor and, hence, only deserved ironic scorn, the poems imitated Horatius' Roman satire. By contrast, when the vices were serious and harmful to the community, the poems became examples of vilification. The use of eschatology and verbal abuse is very common in this sort of poetry which has as its target a family's name, race discrimination, sexual preferences and the dignity of those who are satirized. In this sense, this kind of satire comes to imitate Juvenal's Roman poetry. Most of these poems circulated orally. The codices encompass a great number of writings that reproduce the oral quality of the poems, leading us to believe that the name Gregório de Matos refers to some type of anonymous, collective subject.

Circa 1690, expeditions from Bahia and São Paulo set foot in the interior of the territory of Brazil where they discovered gold and diamonds – wealth which came to guarantee the pomp of the court of King Dom João V in the first half of the eighteenth century. The King sponsored the arts and donated some land for the construction of the Roman Arcade in Rome. He also loved opera, becoming one of the Patrons of a great number of musicians, architects, painters, sculptors as well as men of letters, mainly those from Germany, Austria and Italy, who worked in Portugal and were responsible for a great deal of artistic programmes there. During Dom João V's reign, Italian style and artistic precepts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were applied to architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, theater and music, following the teachings of Borromini, Palladio, Pozzo, Scamozzi, Serlio, Ripa, Possevino, Tesauro, Gilio, Marino, Guarini, Bernini, Monteverdi, among others. In Brazil the same styles appear in the academies, which were officially instituted from 1724 until the middle of the eighteenth century. At that time, the term "academy" meant not only an ordinary assembly of people but also a permanent association based on rules and statutes. The Academies were the first attempt to organize the colonial culture systematically. The first of them, *Academia Brasílica dos Esquecidos* (The Brazilic Academy of Forgotten People), was founded in Bahia in March 1724. The purpose of that institution was to write the various administrative, military and ecclesiastic histories of the Portuguese conquest of Brazil. The work of Sebastião da Rocha Pita, *History of Portuguese America*, written in 1730, resulted from that project. From 1750 onwards, as seventeenth-century Portuguese schemes of political theology and rhetoric were exhausted, they came to be replaced by models from the Arcadian Illustration. However, they were still followed in Brazil until the arrival of the French

Mission in 1817. This was a group of artists, scientists and French men of letters who were sent to Brazil by King Dom João VI. In 1808 the Portuguese Court moved to Brazil as it fled from Napoleon Bonaparte's troops which invaded Portugal due to the fact that they were allied to England in the war against France.

A typical example of the prevailing seventeenth-century models is *Poetic Works*, published in 1768 by the Arcadian poet Cláudio Manuel da Costa. This text imitates the pastoral style of Metastasio's neoclassic operas as well as the ingenious metaphors of Gongora's Asiatic style through its references to the mining landscapes. Also, the paintings of Manuel da Costa Athayde, who worked with Aleijadinho in several architectonic projects in the region of Vila Rica, could be considered as a similar example at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He painted the roof of the church of São Francisco de Assis in Vila Rica, after the style of the roof of Gesu, the church of the Society of Jesus in Rome, painted by Pozzo.

It is worth remembering that, unlike Spanish America, where universities were founded in Mexico City and Lima as early as the in the 16th century, universities came into existence in Brazil in 1930s. The great part of the colonial population was illiterate (more than 97%). Intellectual censorship became intense (texts for publication underwent three censorships: from the Holy Office of the Inquisition, the Ordinary Office of the regular church and the office of the Court (the Crown)). Between 1580 and 1750, censorship came to prohibit the publication and the reading of the Bible as well as of the works of Erasmus, Maquiavelli, Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Newton, Locke and Hobbes, among others. Along with these works, the seventeenth-century French libertines, Spanish picaresque novels and theatrical texts together with the 'indecent' ancient poets were also censored. In the eighteenth century, after the so-called "*reformas pombalinas*" (reforms carried out by the Marquis of Pombal, Sebastião José de Carvalho), censorship became milder. However, it still tried to bar the access of heterodox texts, which might deny or go against the Catholic dogma as well as subvert the hierarchy of the empire.

We are well aware that a great number of censored works were actually read as they were smuggled into Portugal and Brazil. A common way of bringing into the country prohibited texts was by hiding them in cod-fish barrels, boxes of sugar and containers of all sort. A very common Brazilian saying, "*Santinho do pau oco*" – name given to a religious image often made of hollow wood – is nowadays used to allude to someone of deceitful appearance and behaviour. In colonial times, the interior of these religious images used to be filled up with diamonds, gold, coins and other precious or prohibited objects. As Bourdieu points out, every interdict produces its own subversion.

Colonial *lettres*, currently classified as "baroque", are, indeed, neo-scholastic versions of *Book III* of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the new conceptualizations of dialectics and rhetoric in the second half of the sixteenth century in Rome, Florence, France, Spain, etc. At that time, dialectics had the task of stating the definition and counter-definition of the topics which were attributed exclusively to rhetoric. Then rhetoric underwent some modifications as a renewed doctrine of elocution or of the theory for

the 'ornamentation' of themes and sub-themes which are achieved through dialectical analysis. All the major rhetorical poetic essays of the seventeenth century that reached Brazil, mainly, through the Society of Jesus, such as *Artificio y Arte de Ingenio*, by Baltazar Gracián (1644); *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico*, by Emanuele Tesauro (1654); *New Art of Conceptualizations* by Francisco Leitão Ferreira (1718), revert to *Organon* and *De anima*, proposing the ten Aristotelian categories and specifications on the syllogistic reasoning as schemes to define and arrange dialectically the arguments of the representation. By the same token, all of them recover, neo-scholastically, both the Aristotelian doctrine of metaphor, as presented in *Book III of Rhetoric*, and its readings made by Cicero and Quintilian, in order to deal with the ornamentation of the ten different themes gotten through the dialectical application of the categories to the subjects of the representations. Thus, it is very common to find in Spain, New Spain, Peru, the Kingdom of Naples, Rome as well as in Portugal essays written by Greek authors reproduced in Europe at the end of the sixteenth century in its Byzantine versions, such as those written by Longinus, *On the Sublime*, as well as those by Demetrius Falereus, Denis of Halicarnasse and Hermogenes on elocution. In the seventeenth century the readings of those Greek authors enriched the three styles based on Cicero and Quintilian – the high, medium and low – very much in vogue in the sixteenth century. They came to constitute the various styles of the arts which today are classified and unified deductively as “baroque”.¹ These arts are technically regulated and apply verisimilitude and decorum, which are specific of genres and styles, adapting the effects of meanings to the occasions of hierarchy as adequate representations of human types and affects for the centralization of monarchic power. This is what stands out when we read Vieira’s work, the poetry attributed to Gregorio de Matos, the chronicle of the Dutch wars, and the documents of the eighteenth-century academies. The “baroque arts” are far from the rich individualism of Romanticism since they foreground precodified types, characters, actions and passions. Thus, they imitate texts of ancient authors, mainly the Latin ones, such as Martial, Persius, Lucan, Juvenal, Petronius, Seneca who, in turn, were related in the seventeenth century to the authors they imitated from the sixteenth century, such as Cicero, Horatius, Ovid and Virgil.

The main technical procedure of colonial representations is the analogy, neo-scholastically defined as the metaphysical and logic participation of the language in God. This is the same procedure that can be observed in the metaphysical poetry of the English poets, John Donne and Andrew Marvell. In a metaphysical sense, through the analogy of attribution, only God ‘is’, a complete *Being*, while all other entities are merely His image and resemblance. Working the analogy of attribution – A:B:C – from the perspective of logics, the colonial men of letters set a relationship between two mental images or two metaphors through a third term common to both of them. For example, in poetry, words such as *snow* and *lily* are associated through a word common to both, such as *whiteness*. This is what helps the colonial poet say that snow is *the lily of winter* and the lily is *the snow of the meadow*. They consider this analogy too banal though and they, thus, prefer to evince erudition and wit by bringing together words semantically

remote. This is done through the analogy of proportion that metaphysically sets the hierarchical degrees of participation of the entities in the Being of God and logically establishes a relationship of resemblance between two genres common to two species – A:B::C:D – so that the relation between them is not clear in the first instance.

Manuel B. de Oliveira, poet from Bahia who is well-known for his book *Music of Parnasus* (1705), states in one of his sonnets, dealing with the cruel love of Anarda, his muse, that ‘A serpent is a wandering May of twisted flowers’. In the first instance, the relationship between the metaphor of the reptile ‘serpent’ and the month of May is opaque. However, if we strain our interpretative skills, we understand that what Botelho de Oliveira is trying to point out is that in the same way that the serpent moves and slides, time also moves as it passes by. In turn, due to the resemblance of both movements, physical and temporal, Botelho establishes an equivalence between the two species arguing that ‘serpent’ is ‘May’. Metaphorizing Fine Arts, it can be said that discourse becomes visual as Botelho de Oliveira puts forward that the month of May has its skin spotted with ‘twisted flowers’ just as a serpent that carries the European spring tattooed in its skin.

Consider now the example of an analogy of proportionality. Metaphysically, proportionality foregrounds that all living creatures concur in God. It logically sets up the relationship between A:B::C:D, though among terms which are rather distant semantically. The result may sound like a fantastic incongruence, as in the case of the sermons preached by Brother Antonio de Rosario in Bahia in 1699. He uses the names of more than twenty local fruits as an allegory of God’s love namely, peanut, ananás (pineapple), strawberry, guava, “*areticuapé*”, banana, the golden-yellow plumlike fruit of cajazeira, cashew, “*camboi*”, sugar cane, “*capucaia*”, coconuts, sugar apple, “*gargaúba*”, jaboticaba, genipap, juá, papaya, fruit of “*mangabeira*”, passion fruit, “*moresi*”, “*mucujê*”, “*mupurunga*”, “*oitiroco*”, “*oitiruba*”, “*piquiá*”, soapberry, imbu. In those days, as can be seen in *The Fair of Anexins* by Dom Francisco Manuel de Melo, it was usual in Portugal to write speeches using metaphors of sweets, heads, vegetables and fruits among others. As in the poetry attributed to Gregorio de Matos, where “*banto*” and “*tupi*” terms come together, imitating Quevedo’s satires against Gongora’s poetry, Antônio do Rosario also imitates the European style, adapting Catholicism to the tropical conditions. He writes that “*Ananás*” is the king of fruits, because its thorns and red color stand for the royal crown and cloak. Furthermore, he understands *ananás* as a metaphor for the rosary. He resorts to the same analogy when he states that “*‘Ananás’ is the same as Annanascitur. God’s mother was born of Saint Anne. Anne means grace; a hundred and fifty times Anne’s daughter, full of grace, is mentioned in the rosary*”.²

In the seventeenth century, from 1580 to 1750, the Portuguese colonial empire comprised, besides the State of Brazil and the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará, other regions of Africa and Asia. Numerous African, Arabic, Chinese, Birmanese and Hindu artistic styles were adapted in Brazil. These adaptations help us describe the colonial representation produced in those centuries as the historical result of the technical and

political processes of integration of various cultural codes, which came to adapt and distort the European as well as other models with patterns locally used. Between 1580 and 1750, the religious orders, tradesmen, members of guilds, travellers, smugglers etc. internationalized the models of rationalization of the Monarchic Catholic and absolutist court, leading men of letters and artisans, who then lived in Naples, Rome, Spain, Portugal, Bavaria, Peru, Mexico and, mainly, Brazil, to become acquainted with some of the rhetoric, theological and political references. Who were these colonial men of letters? They were generally white people or people classified as such. In general they were men who belonged to the bureaucracy or the clergy. These people were often graduates in Canonical law from the University of Coimbra or other courses of Theology taught by the Jesuits in Brazilian Seminars. As the artisans who worked for the brotherhoods and other religious orders, men of letters used to depend directly on the patrons of the arts or sponsors. From the time of the *Academy of the Forgotten*, in 1724, the sponsorship of men of letters by Viceroy was a common practice. The artisans were quite often “mulattos” and black people who were inhumanly scorned. Manual work, involved in the plastic arts, was belittled in the old Portuguese society as an activity characteristic of inferior people. Furthermore, black people and ‘mulattos’ were considered to have “dirty blood”, according to the stereotype of “blood cleansing” which was used to discriminate against ‘non-white’ types initiated in the heresies and idolatries namely, Jews, Arabs, mulattos, blacks, Indians and Orientals, among others.

The appropriation of ‘high’ cultural models by black artisans and mulattos can be regarded as an example of cultural ambiguity. This is the case, for example, of the use of shells, phallus, horns of goat, tubercles of yam as representations found in the altars of Santa Ifigênia, church built at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Vila Rica, Minas Gerais. In the carvings of the altars, the black artisans encrusted shells – ornaments which not only come as erudite references to ancient iconography, such as the myth of Aphrodite’s birth, but also to Christianity, for the labyrinthine structure of the shell is an allegory to the mysteries of Incarnation of Mary’s Love. In the churches of the black community, that worshipped Negro Saints, shells probably had the same values as they have nowadays in the ritual of the *candomblé* (religious rites) – one of African religions still practiced in Brazil. They have been recently studied by a Brazilian researcher, Professor Lázaro Francisco da Silva.³

In those days, the colonial man of letters did not partake of the social standing associated with the social imaginary.⁴ He was not yet an “author” or “writer”, in the Enlightenment and post- Enlightenment sense of the terms. On the other hand, he was no longer the ordinary scribe of the Medieval guilds. To outline his profile, the relevance of his representation in the society of the times should be stressed since that was a society in which the individual and his social role were defined as *representations* and *through representations*, i.e., bearing in mind the hierarchy of the individual in a group or social class. The social identity of the colonial man of letters was not defined within the field of letters, but in other ones. The few iconographic documents in which writers

appear are clear evidence of this fact. A sign of the conditions of the man of letters at the time is, then, the complete absence of such terms as 'author', 'writer' or 'man of letters' in the documents of the Portuguese administration. The writer was designated through professional categories (General Auditor, Judge from the Outside, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Priest, Colonel of Militia, etc.) or, through social positions (noblemen or plebeians) and, also, through professional qualification. For example, in Portuguese documents, 'a man of letters' quite often refers to a "graduate in law from the University of Coimbra". That is to say, the position of the man of letters was determined by the hierarchical and professional categories of his inclusion and subordination to the mystic corps of the State rather than by his authorial autonomy, disinterested contemplation, aesthetic autonomy, literary invention and originality as they are understood today. This form of inclusion of the man of letters within the hierarchy conditioned and determined the practice of the letters. The colonial men of letters wrote in Portuguese as well as in Spanish, Italian, Latin and Tupi. The representations they produced imitated the models of ancient authorities while adapting them to the local circumstances. These adaptations produced distortion of various degrees and values, which systematically reproduced the prescriptions of the schemes they imitated. The adaptations were material, institutional, formal and personal differences that functioned as particular interventions to the collective pattern. As already stated, they were substantialistic practices, metaphysically justified. In their utilitarian uses, they did not reflect the division of discursive regimes brought about by the Enlightenment.

Accordingly, the sociological scheme *author-work-public* was conceptualized in terms of "Catholic policy" which gave it its sense. In other words, these adaptations were neither "literature" nor "baroque" and they demand that their original norms be considered when a descriptive literary history is made of them and their uses after the eighteenth century.

Notes

- 1 Cf. Grigera, Luisa Lopez. *Anotações de Quevedo a la Retórica de Aristóteles*. Preliminar study, edition of Quevedo's notes on Aristotle's *Rhetorica*. Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, 1998, p. 83.
- 2 Rosário, Brother Antonio do, *Frutas do Brasil numa Nova e Ascética Monarchia, Consagrada à Santíssima Senhora do Rosário*. (*Brazilian Fruits in a New and Ascetic Monarchy, Acclaimed to the Most Holy Lady of Rosary*). Lisbon, Antonio Pedroso galram, 1701, p. 21.
- 3 Silva, Lázaro Francisco da. "Conjuração Negra em Minas" ("The Negro Conspiracy in Minas") in IFAC MAGAZINE. Ouro Preto, IFAC-UFOP, 1995. No. 2, pp. 68-78.
- 4 Viala, Alain. "Du caractère d'écrivain à l'Âge Classique" in *Textuel - Images de l'écrivain*. Paris, Université de Paris VII, 1989. No. 22, pp.51-52